

# Violence Prevention Education Programme 2005 Evaluation Report



# It's Not Ok

A research evaluation of the pilot  
Schools Arts-in-Education  
Project 2005

Undertaken by  
**Creative Partnerships**  
Merseyside

June 2005

  
Creative Partnerships



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## 1. Research Objective

'It's Not OK' will raise participants knowledge of the issues associated with violence and change attitudes and opinions that may in the long term impact on behavioural change.



## 2. Introduction

The "It's Not OK!" Violence Prevention Education Programme is Liverpool Culture Company's 'Creative Communities' response to issues raised by Liverpool City Council's Community Safety Team, regarding the urgent need to address the deep-rooted problems of domestic violence, racial violence and gun crime in our communities.

"A research study of black and other minority pupils in comprehensives across Merseyside found that three-quarters had experienced racial harassment in the last year. In the same period, 90% of all students had observed some form of racial harassment and a significant percentage had engaged in such behaviour. More than half felt that racial harassment was common in their school and also in their neighbourhood".

(University of Liverpool, *'Racial Harassment on Merseyside'*, 1997)

A diverse range of partners were consulted in the design of a year long programme of Violence Prevention Education activity, with an emphasis on young people.

Partners include, DCMS, Children's Services, Merseyside Police, NSPCC, Social Inclusion, Youth Justice, Connexions and the Liverpool Anti-social Behaviour Unit.

The "It's Not OK!" programme is steered by a wide range of partner agencies and aims to build upon the work of the Liverpool Education and Lifelong Learning Service "Challenging Attitude to Violence" project. Funding for the programme has come from City Safe and the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund.

### 3. Methodology

#### Subjects:

Stage one of this programme was developed as Arts in Education project in 8 secondary schools of the Alt Valley neighbourhood area of Liverpool. Originally, issues of violence were to be explored through the mediums of movement, dance, drama, design, music and creative writing.

The project aimed to engage forty pupils from each school, working with an artistic team over a period of two days. Schools were free to establish their own criteria for selection of students and came from either a single year group or selected for a range of ages. The project examined violence as a means of communication through the broad themes of violence in music, media, television news, film, cartoons, PC and video games. Each school studied a different theme.

The output was the generation of innovative creative materials that would culminate in a performance at a city centre venue, the Neptune Theatre. A further objective was to provide a legacy for the project by embedding practice and learning into the PSHE curriculum of the schools involved.

This sustainability strategy was to be supported by an individual teacher in each school, who was responsible for taking the performance to school assemblies where issues of violence could be further discussed.

#### Creative Professionals:

In December 2004 The Liverpool Culture Company invited creative organisations to submit bids to provide the delivery of the pilot Arts-in Education project. As a result Culture Inc, part of the Liverpool organisation Hope Street Ltd, submitted a delivery proposal in January 2005 and were subsequently contracted to deliver the project.

The proposal offered additional elements to those originally requested in the tender documentation, including a delivery team comprising of six creative professionals. It was agreed that delivery would take place over a four-week period, with the artistic team spending two days each week in school, supported by a weekly team meeting to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the ongoing project. Additionally, and considering the subject matter it was intended for a counsellor to be present in each school.

Positively, a creative process was used to engage young people involved in the 'It's Not OK!' pilot project. The artistic team had three days lead-in time in which to investigate and research the themes and plan and organise the workshop sessions before arriving in school to begin delivery. This time was also used to collect materials and resources.

Work in school was delivered from Monday to Thursday with performances on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. The team met each Friday to evaluate the previous days work and to look ahead at the following week.

### Evaluation Procedure – A Qualitative Approach:

Creative Partnerships Merseyside undertook the evaluation of the project. An organisation funded by the Arts Council of England, established to develop collaborative partnerships between creative and cultural professionals and the education sector. At the core of creative partnerships delivery is research, planning, monitoring and evaluation, to ensure that a process is in place when schools are delivering creative programmes.

It was envisaged that the evaluation of the project would measure the impact of the pilot project and produce recommendations for the future. The evaluation completed by taking the following approaches:

#### Observations:

Observations took place in each of the schools and examined the following factors: planning; session structure; evidence of creative learning; students' feedback; partnerships and conclusions. It was crucial that observations were customised to the nature of the session and the first observation was used as pilot to refine tools of analysis.

#### Interviews:

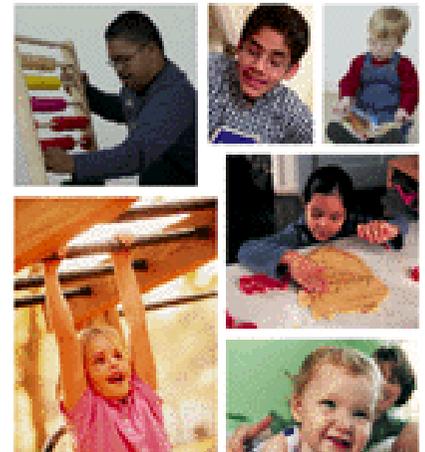
Interviews with a range of participants took place after workshops within schools. The aim was to measure change over time as so often participants can benefit from the immediacy of a project but learning can be lost over time.

### Attendance at Monitoring Meetings:

A member of the research team attended all relevant meetings and evidence was collated and the information was used as part of the evaluation.

Additionally, the researchers examined the sessions in relation to the Every Child Matters outcomes of:

- Be healthy
- Be safe
- Enjoying and achieving
- Making a positive contribution
- Economic well being



## 4. Previous Research

In *'The Invisible Dimension - A Teachers Handbook'* by Silvia Brown (Liverpool Education and Lifelong Learning Service, 1999), violence prevention education is defined as:

“an education that directly challenges the issue of violence. It is a focus on the prevention of violence before it happens by attempting to alter damaging attitudes, values and behaviour. The whole range of violence is addressed from social and sexual violence to domestic violence”.

“Violence is an issue that affects everyone in society and we all have a responsibility to reduce it or eliminate it. Schools are in a unique position to challenge young people’s misconception, stereotypical or prejudicial attitudes. However, schools cannot do this alone. This is best done by working with other agencies, parents, governors and the wider community”.

(Silvia Brown *'The Invisible Dimension - A Teachers Handbook'*, Liverpool Education and Lifelong Learning Service, 1999).

### **The Context of 'Media Violence':**

The debate about the effects of media violence has eluded definitive answers for more than three decades. The debate has been dominated by one question: Does media violence cause real-life violence? There is also an ongoing political battle regarding censorship. Recent research suggests there is a real connection between media violence and societal violence. Increasingly the debate is focusing on the "culture of violence," and on the normalisation of aggression and a resulting lack of empathy within our society.

Some researchers have suggested that the connection between media violence and aggression is a psychological mechanism. L. Rowell Huesmann of the University of Michigan argues that children develop “cognitive scripts” that guide their own behaviour.

As they watch violent events or actions, children learn to internalise scripts that use violence as an appropriate method of problem solving. Others believe that physiological effects of media violence cause aggressive behaviour. Exposure to violent imagery is linked to increased heart rate, faster respiration and higher blood pressure. Some think that this simulated ‘fight-or-flight’ response predisposes people to act aggressively in the real world.

“Exposure to media violence causes children to behave more aggressively and affects them as adults years later”.

(L. Rowell Huesmann, University of Michigan, 2004).

“Recent American research points out that by the age of 12 most children have seen about 8,000 murders and more than 100,000 acts of violence on television”.

(Irene Macdonald, TES, 1999).

“Research on violent television, films, video games and music reveals unequivocally that media violence increases the likelihood of aggressive and violent behaviour in both immediate and long-term effects...We now know that playing violent video games increases aggressive behaviour and decreases pro-social behaviour in children and young adults”.

(Craig Anderson, *'The Influence of Media Violence on Youth'*, 2003).

## The Context of Youth Violence:

Youth violence is an issue that achieves a high profile in today's media. The Government continue to find solutions to what appears to be a growing problem and the following statistics do much to reinforce the view that much of the violent crime is carried out by young people.

"Youth Violence accounts for an estimated 60% of all violence committed in England and Wales".

(Centre of Public Health, '*Violent Britain*', 2005).

"The impacts of youth violence can be huge, including physical injury (sometimes lethal), mental health problems and suicide, with wider costs to society including fear of crime, destruction to property and disruption to essential services".

(Centre of Public Health, '*Violent Britain*', 2005).

"Nearly three quarters of firearms offences (71%) and incidents of alcohol related violence (72%) are committed by young people under the age of 30".

(Centre of Public Health, '*Violent Britain*', 2005).

This is not just a male issue, Home Office research revealed that

"2800 girls aged 14-17 were guilty or cautioned for violence against the person in 1997. In 1993, the numbers were 600 and 3100 respectively.

(Home Office 1998 and 1993)

In a UK survey on attitudes to violence of 2000 14-21 year olds, 1/2 of boys and 1/3 of the girls thought that there are some circumstances where it could be acceptable to hit a woman or force her to have sex.

(Engender – Zero Tolerance)



## 5. Project Delivery

### Planning:

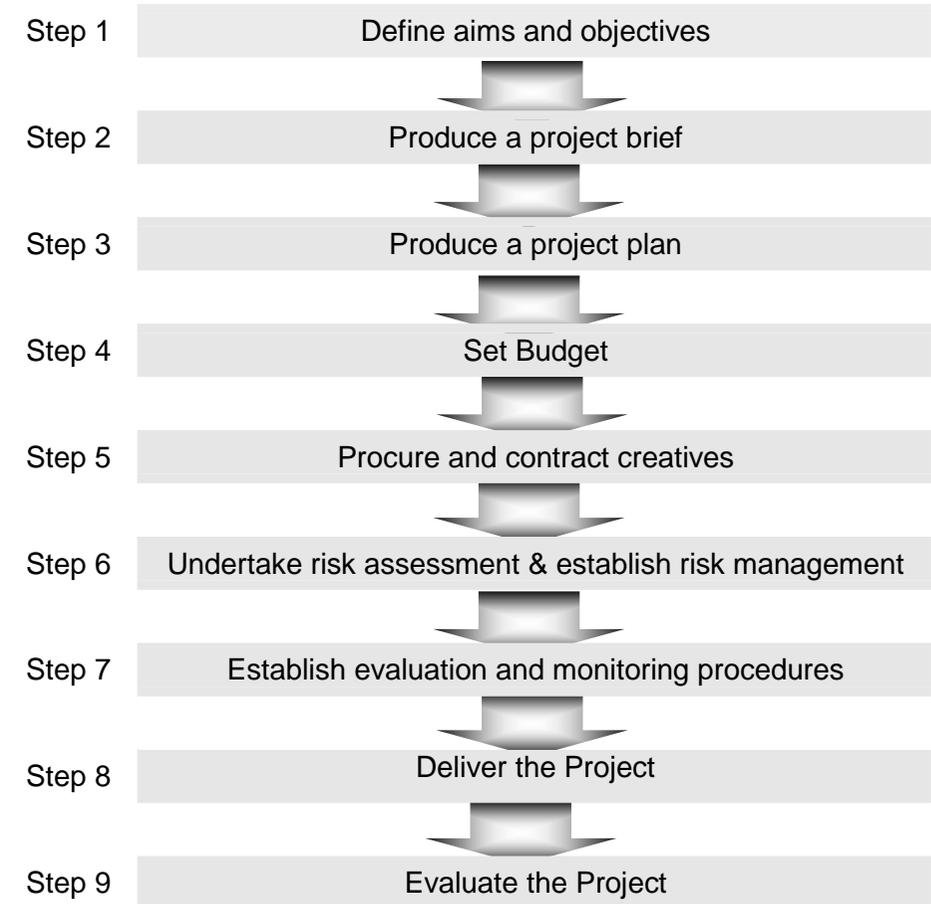
The first meeting of the project delivery group was held. The project was discussed in detail and the artistic team highlighted some concerns over the subject matter and their ability to cover the range of issues within such a short time period. It was agreed that as this was a pilot project, established to gather evidence it was more realistic to focus on violence in media, music, video games and films. It was proposed that these themes should appeal to the young people targeted and a delivery process could be successfully devised around these stimuli. The commissioner agreed this approach.

Furthermore it was agreed that the artistic team would explore a different area of the themes each week. Weekly themes were agreed as follows:

- Week 1 - Violence through Music
- Week 2 - Violence through Media and Television News
- Week 3 - Violence through Film, Television and Cartoons
- Week 4 - Violence through PC and Video Games

As the workshop programme got under way, the weekly team meetings were used to highlight strengths, concerns and operational issues. In the second team meeting the artistic team raised the fact that counsellors were not present in the first two schools. It was explained that budgetary and availability issues had prevented a counsellor being available in each school. After consultation with the NSPCC, it was decided that the artistic team were equipped to deal with potential disclosures. Concerns or disclosures were to be reported immediately to the school's child protection contact and school procedures followed.

### Creative Partnerships Best Practice Planning Model



## Details of Delivery:

The artistic team began the two-day project with all 40 students for an introduction and warm-up session. The Artistic Director led this session and students were introduced to the artistic team, the project and the themes that were to be explored. The group were told that in two days they would have created a performance piece that would focus on issues of violence and explore violence as communication. It was highlighted that fun and creativity were the most important elements of the two-day project.

Workshops began with simple name games and physical warm-up exercises and stretching. Several workshop games were played to help the group develop focus. Themes were introduced gently through these games, as are notions of status, teamwork, concentration and body language. Examples of exercises used are:

- **Go/Stop/Jump/Clap**  
The whole group took part in this game designed to promote listening skills and concentration. The workshop leader shouted instructions for the students to follow. They walked around the space, moving, stopping, jumping and clapping when instructed. A variation was played with instructions in reverse, for example 'Stop' meaning 'Go' and 'Clap' meaning 'Jump'.
- **Beans**  
The four corners of the space were given a colour. A variety of actions (movement and vocalisation) were introduced and given a 'bean' name, e.g. 'Jumping beans' - jump, 'Baked beans' - three students link arms. The workshop leader shouted instructions for students to follow. The students then performed the action or moved to the corner of the space according to the given instruction. This exercise was used to develop concentration and listening skills.

- **African Song**  
The team musician introduced a simple African song to the group. The then sang the song as a vocal warm-up exercise.
- **Status**  
The group were split into two teams. The teams formed a line and faced each other to form two sides of a street. One student at a time was selected to play the game. They chose a playing card from a pack with Jack being the lowest status and King the highest status. The student could not look at the card, but hold it on their forehead and make a journey down the street. The other students reacted to the player, in terms of body language and vocalisation, according to the status represented on the card.
- **Eye Contact**  
The students stood in a circle. One student was selected to make a journey across the circle. The student made eye contact with another individual in the circle and moved towards him or her; this person must then continue the exercise in the same way. The game was played in silence. The game developed focus, while demonstrating the power of eye contact as a means of communication. A variation of the game was played with a blocking move added. Students were able to block an individual moving towards them by folding their arms.

## Reflection:

Games were followed by reflection and opportunities for discussion. The status and eye contact games were used as a starting point for discussion of themes. The games were used to introduce themes of power and violence. Students were asked to find words to describe how they felt taking part in the games. For example, how did it feel to be blocked? Alternatively, how did it feel to block someone? Positive and negative words are collected and were used as a starting point for discussion when the students were split into the four creative teams.

## **Group Work**

### **The Drama and Creative Writing Group:**

The drama and creative writing group were responsible for informing the storyline of the performance and create physical theatre pieces, poetry and dialogue. A variety of techniques and methods were used to encourage students to create. The workshop began with an open discussion of themes and topics raised in the introductory session. The pros and cons of the central theme were discussed and a list of positive and negative words created. These words were then used as a starting point for creative writing. Students were very much encouraged to direct the focus of sessions and created poetry or dialogue. Physical theatre techniques and mask were explored in work led by the drama practitioner. Students in improvisation can then use these techniques. Improvisation was used to explore themes and create dialogue and short scenes. Students also used themes to create stage montages and movement sequences.

### **The Dance Group:**

The dance students created and performed all the dance and movement for the performance. Students began with a discussion of themes and topics highlighted in the introductory session. Ideas for music and dance styles were discussed. Students then began with a physical warm-up. The dance practitioner taught students a variety of modern break dance and gymnastic dance moves. The students split into smaller groups to work on building a sequence of 16 and 32 beat dance moves. Sequences of moves were then blended into longer routines. The dance practitioner worked to create a beginning and end to routines. The routines created were dependant on ability and experience of the students taking part. Students were encouraged to use personal insight into themes when creating dance routines. Routines and movement sequences were rehearsed intensively. The dance students were encouraged to create additional movement and dance pieces in response to requests from the drama and music groups.

### **The Design Group:**

The design group was responsible for creating all settings, props, masks and costume items for the performance. The design practitioner had some pre-arranged ideas of techniques that could be used by the group, often determined by the overall theme and materials available. The group began with a discussion of themes and created a thought diagram. This determined set and props that were to be created. Additionally, the group is responded to requests for particular props from the dance, drama and music groups. Students began by preparing masks to be used in the performance. Once the initial work was completed, tasks were assigned to individuals and groups of individuals.

### **The Music Group:**

The Music group created all the music and songs used in the final performance. The musician had a template for a song chorus using the words 'It's Not OK', all other words and music were created by students in workshop sessions. Students were encouraged to talk about themes and their personal experience. The group listened to pop songs by various artists, including Jamilia, Peter Gabriel, Tracy Chapman, U2 and Skunk Anansie. Songs were selected for the lyrical content and themes. Students were provided with copies of lyrics and which were read as the song was played, they were then asked to comment on their understanding of the song and themes. Students were encouraged to talk about their favourite music and artists. Identity and image related to artists and music were discussed. As a group, students created a thought diagram of positive and negative words associated with the songs to which they have listened. Students were asked to pick one word at a time, and write a sentence using the chosen word. When the group had a selection of sentences, they began to choose those that could be used to create a song. The 'It's Not Ok' anthem was introduced as a chorus and verses created. Musical accompaniment was decided upon, depending on the skills of the students within the group. The group then rehearsed and developed their song.

**Plenary Session:**

For the last hour of day one, the four groups came back together to share the work they had created. Students performed their work and received positive feedback from the artistic team and fellow students. Requirements for the performance were discussed and requests made to other groups, for example, the music students may have been asked to create a chant for a particular scene, or design students asked to create a particular prop or mask.

**Day Two:**

Students began the day in their four groups. Students worked with practitioners to rehearse and develop their work. With time allowing, students used techniques learned the previous day to create new work in response to requests from other groups. The focus of the day was the performance in the evening. Early in the afternoon, groups came together under the leadership of the artistic director. There was a sharing of work and then students began the process of linking pieces together to form a coherent whole performance. The creative team led the process, albeit that comment and input from students was encouraged. Students had a technical rehearsal, followed by at least one dress rehearsal.

**Neptune Theatre Performance**

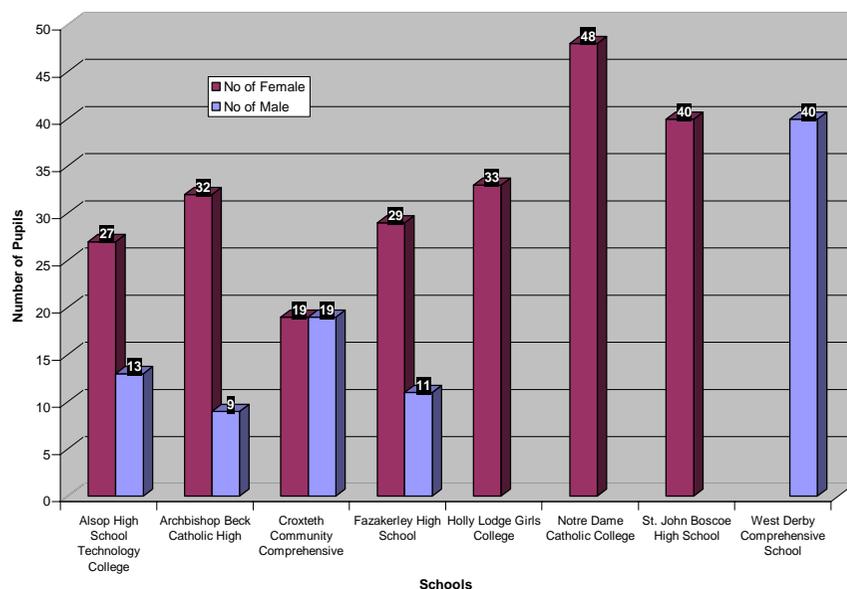
After the in-school workshops and performances, schools were invited to present their work to a larger audience in a high-profile performance at the Neptune Theatre. Performances were on Wednesday 6 April and Friday 8 April 2005. On each of the two nights, four schools took part in a multi-media performance. Schools had one full day in the theatre to work with the Artistic team, and each other, to produce a high quality cohesive performance.

**PSHE Follow-Up Resources:** Each school received a PSHE resource pack following the workshops in. Activity sheets provide learning objectives, strategies and teaching points for follow-up work within the school PSHE programme.

## 6. Analysis

### Schools:

The graph below provides details of the quantitative data and it does appear that more females took part in the programme than males; however, two of the schools namely Holly Lodge Girls School and Notre Dame Catholic High are single sex schools. Overall the target of 320 students participating in the project was reached.



Workshops took place as follows:

- Alsop High School Technology College 7/8 March 05
- Archbishop Beck Catholic High 14/15 March 05
- Croxteth Community Comprehensive 28 Feb/1 March 05
- Fazakerley High School 21/22 Feb 05
- Holly Lodge Girls College 9/10 March 05
- Notre Dame Catholic College 2/3 March 05
- St. John Bosco High School 23/24 Feb 05
- West Derby Comprehensive School 16/17 March 05

### Qualitative Observations:

Six sessions in schools were observed by a creative partnerships' researcher who focussed upon:

- The structure of the sessions.
- The way in which the sessions met the agreed objectives
- The link between the sessions and the Every Child Matters agenda.

These observations took place as follows:

|               |                 |             |
|---------------|-----------------|-------------|
| Observation 1 | Fazakerley      | 21 February |
| Observation 2 | Croxteth        | 28 February |
| Observation 3 | Notre Dame      | 03 March    |
| Observation 4 | Holly Lodge     | 09 March    |
| Observation 5 | Archbishop Beck | 15 March    |
| Observation 6 | West Derby      | 16 March    |

And the following were involved:

| School          | Culture Inc Team       | Teachers  | Year Groups |
|-----------------|------------------------|---|-------------|
| Fazakerley      | Austin Mitchell-Hewitt | Cathy Ormesher  | 7,8,10,12   |
| Croxteth        | Jameel Asije           | Sandra Rimmer<br>Katherine Short                                    | 7,9,10      |
| Notre Dame      | Helen Flocks           | Lesley Bentley<br>Elaine Neary                                      | 10/11       |
| Holly Lodge     | Paula Berry            | Jackie Ley, Viv Nixon,<br>Gary Force, Pat Dillon,<br>Hayley Marsden | 7,8,9,10    |
| Archbishop Beck | Helen Flocks           | Bruce Hicks   | 8           |
| West Derby      | Helen Davies           | Sian McCulloch<br>Helen Howe  |             |

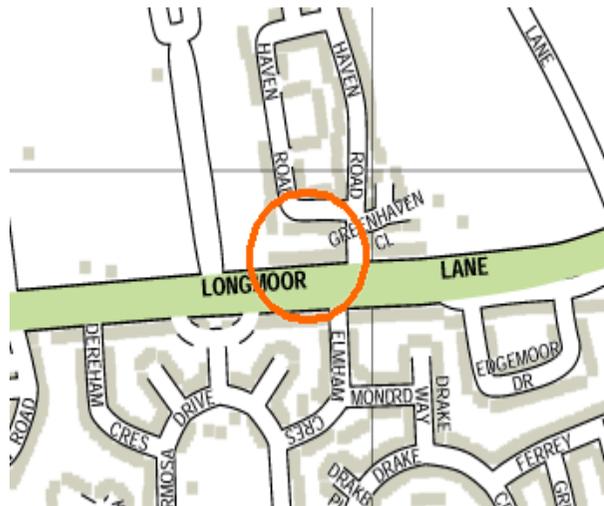
## Observation 1



**Fazakerley High School,**  
Sherwoods Lane,  
Liverpool,  
L10 1LB



Tel: 0151 524 4530      0151 524 4531  
Fax: 0151 524 4532



## Brief Outline of Session Observed

The main theme of the work produced in Fazakerley High school was violence as communication through music. Workshops sought to explore the influence of music and musicians in popular culture, the influence of music on personal identity and the use of violence, in terms of language and behaviour, by the music industry. The observed session was led by the team's drama and creative writing practitioner. The session taught mask work (Commedia dell'arte) and a practical demonstration with an explanation of the five points of reference in mask work was followed by a discussion and analysis by students. Students then practiced techniques in pairs with support from the creative. Individual's work was shared with the group as a whole.

### Meeting the Project Objectives

The workshop explored issues of violence, gender, aggression, forms of intimidation and bullying. Mask work and physical theatre techniques were used to explore the power of body language. The judgments made by others that can be informed by body language and issues of identity were highlighted. Students were encouraged to investigate issues through a mixture of discussion and practical work. Students were continually asked to analyse their work, and the work of the team, in terms of feelings and emotions. The session involved work in pairs and as a team.

## 'Every Child Matters'

### ***Be Healthy***

The session was highly physical in nature, demonstrating a different approach to physical exercise. The nature of the work and exploration of the issues within the session promoted a positive attitude towards mental health. Issues of identity were discussed and the exploration of the power of body language promoted highlighted issues of positive body image and development of self-esteem.

### ***Be Safe***

Issues of domestic violence, victimisation and bullying were discussed.

### ***Enjoying and Achieving***

Students were taught new, flexible skills in analysis, communication and team working.

### ***Making a Positive Contribution***

All student comments were valued and treated as valid and useful. Students were encouraged to talk in terms of feelings and emotions.

### ***Economic Well Being***

The workshop was highly useful for developing self-confidence and building self-esteem.

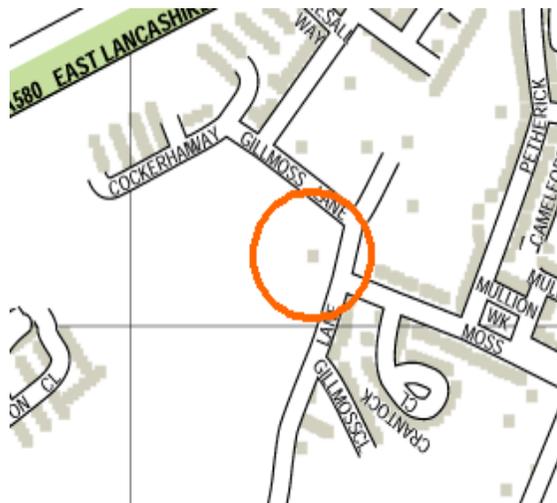
## Observation 2



**Croxtheth Community  
Comprehensive**  
Parkstile Road  
Liverpool  
L11 0BD

Tel: 0151 546 4168

Fax: 0151 548 4347



## Brief Outline of Session Observed

The main theme of the work produced in Croxtheth Comprehensive School was violence as communication through TV news and the media. Workshops sought to explore the influence of the media in popular culture, the use of violence as entertainment, media manipulation of the viewer and reader, and the quantity of violent imagery available through the media. The observed session was led by the team's choreographer. The session aimed to create and develop an MTV style dance for the final performance. Using TV news and war reporting as a starting point, the session began with a discussion of themes, the sensationalism of war reporting and TV news as entertainment. A practical lesson in break dance style movement led to students creating their own dance sequence.

### Meeting the Project Objectives

The workshop enabled students to create a dance that used the themes of war and gun violence as a starting point. As the sequence of movements developed, it was clear that the students had a clear and developed understanding of the issues. The piece had a defined rhythm and was performed to the Prodigy track 'Breathe', with music chosen by the students. The dance began with a sequence representing an individual flicking through television channels with a remote control and ended with the stylised shooting of dancers in the frontline of war.

## 'Every Child Matters'

### Be Healthy

The session was highly physical in nature, demonstrating a different approach to physical exercise. As a form of physical expression dance can also help to develop positive mental health.

### Be Safe

Students demonstrated an understanding of how the media can manipulate an individual's feelings and emotions.

### Enjoying and Achieving

Students were taught new skills in dance, communication and team working. Students were encouraged to try new dance moves and to push themselves into achieving.

### Making a Positive Contribution

All student comments were valued and treated as valid and useful. Students were encouraged to explore new concepts, analyse their work and make appropriate modifications and changes.

### Economic Well Being

The workshop was highly useful for developing self-confidence and building self-esteem. Students were offered a glimpse of alternative career paths in their work with a creative professional.

### Observation 3



**Notre Dame  
Catholic College**  
Everton Valley  
Liverpool  
L4 4EZ

Tel 0151 263 3104  
Fax: 0151 263 2689



#### **Brief Outline of Session Observed**

The main theme of the work produced was violence as communication through TV news and the media.

Workshops sought to explore the influence of the media in popular culture, the use of violence as entertainment, media manipulation of the viewer and reader, and the quantity of violent imagery available through the media. The observed session was led by the team's Artistic Director. The session involved bringing the dance, music and drama elements created by the students, along with props and setting created by the design students, together to create a whole performance piece. The session also included a full technical rehearsal for the show. The Artistic Director had a basic structure, but involved all the students and creative team in the process.

#### **Meeting the Project Objectives**

The session enabled students to see the creative processes involved in creating a public performance. Students witnessed the individual elements they had created coming together to form a cohesive whole. They also took part in a full technical rehearsal. Students' work was actively praised and the whole group applauded for their "absolutely fabulous creativity". Their patience with the technical rehearsal process was also positively commented upon. The students successfully created a performance that examined the stated themes of the project. The students were kept informed of the decision making process and actively consulted in the shaping of the performance. Technical issues were explained and students treated as a creative team.

### 'Every Child Matters'

#### **Be Healthy**

It is difficult to form links with the session observed.

#### **Be Safe**

Students demonstrated an understanding of how the media can manipulate an individual's feelings and emotions.

#### **Enjoying and Achieving**

Students were taught new skills in dance, communication and team working.

#### **Making a Positive Contribution**

All student comments were valued and treated as valid and useful. Students were involved in the decision making process.

#### **Economic Well Being**

The session was highly useful for developing self-confidence and building self-esteem. Students were offered a glimpse of alternative career paths in their work with a creative professional.

## Observation 4



**Holly Lodge Girls School**  
Queens Drive  
Liverpool  
L13 0AF

Tel: 0151 228 3773

Fax: 0151 228 0161



### Brief Outline of Session Observed

The main theme of the work produced in Holly Lodge Girls' College was violence as communication through Film, Reality Television and cartoons.

Workshops explored a range of issues, and explored the levels of violence depicted in the entertainment industry and the influence that violent imagery can have on the viewer.

In this school, students taking part in the 'It's Not Ok!' project were selected from both Year 10 and 11. Some girls came from the Uplands Project. The Uplands Project takes girls that have been excluded from mainstream education. Students have a range of emotional, behavioural and anger management issues. The session observed was led by the creative team's music specialist. The session was designed to provide a starting point for students responsible for creating the music and songs for the final performance. The discussion based workshop began with students talking about their favourite styles of music, their views on changing musical style, and how personal identity can be shaped by music and the music industry. Students were then played a series of pop music tracks and asked to read the lyrics along with the song. Students discussed the song and the themes, which included bullying, domestic violence. Songs were discussed in both positive and negative terms.

### Meeting the Project Objectives

The workshop explored issues of domestic violence, bullying and personal identity. The discussions developed to demonstrate the girls' clear understanding of the above issues, particularly in their interpretation of song lyrics. The song 'Thank You' by Jamelia prompted a particularly lively discussion. The song, that deals with the artist's own experience of domestic violence was seen as a positive, powerful and uplifting track. Lyrics were discussed as was the artist's background and status.

Students were questioned by the workshop leader and asked to give their impressions and comments in emotional terms. Personal responses were valued and positive.

### 'Every Child Matters'

#### Be Healthy

The workshop powerfully dealt with issues of domestic violence and promoted self-belief, self-esteem and positive mental health.

#### Be Safe

Students demonstrated an understanding of how the media can manipulate an individual's feelings and emotions. The session discussed issues of bullying and domestic violence and touched upon strategies on how to deal with these issues.

#### Enjoying and Achieving

Students were taught new skills in music appreciation, communication and team working. Analytical skills were developed.

#### Making a Positive Contribution

All student comments were valued and treated as valid and useful. Emotional responses were welcomed and valued.

#### Economic Well Being

The session was highly useful for developing self-confidence and building self-esteem. Students were offered a glimpse of alternative career paths in their work with a creative professional.

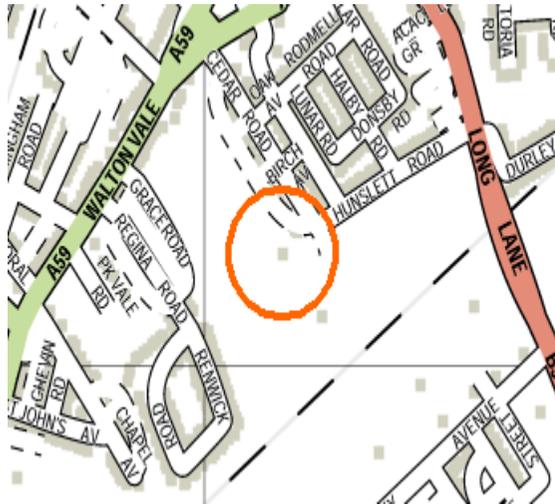
## Observation 5



**Archbishop Beck Catholic High School**  
Cedar Road  
Liverpool  
L9 0AF

Tel: 0151 525 6326

Fax: 0151 524 2465



### Brief Outline of Session Observed

The main theme of the work produced in Archbishop Beck Catholic High School was violence as communication through games. This included PC and Video games and sports games such as football. Workshops looked at the feelings of power and control encouraged by some games.

The levels of violent imagery and nature of violence used as entertainments in some games were discussed, as were issues of guilt and addiction. The nature and power of team games were also discussed. This also involved a discussion of crowd violence in team games such as football. The observed session was led by the team's Artistic Director. The session involved bringing the dance, music and drama elements created by the students, along with props and setting created by the design students, together to create a whole performance piece. The session also included a full technical rehearsal for the show. The Artistic Director had a basic structure, but involved all the students and creative team in the process.

### Meeting the Project Objectives

The session enabled students to see the creative processes involved in creating a public performance. Students witnessed the individual elements they had created coming together to form a cohesive whole. They also took part in a full technical rehearsal. Students' work was actively praised and the whole group applauded for their "amazing creativity". Their patience with the technical rehearsal process was also positively commented upon.

The students successfully created a performance that examined the stated themes of the project. Issues of football and gang violence were highlighted as were the anti-social and addictive nature of computer games.

The students were kept informed of the decision making process and actively consulted in the shaping of the performance. Technical issues were explained and students treated as a creative team.

### 'Every Child Matters'

#### Be Healthy

The threat to mental health posed by computer and video games was touched upon.

#### Be Safe

Issues of victimisation and bullying were discussed as was the nature of 'gang' and peer related violence.

#### Enjoying and Achieving

Students were taught new skills in arts, communication and team working. All enjoyed the experience.

#### Making a Positive Contribution

All student comments were valued and treated as valid and useful. Emotional responses were welcomed and valued. Students were involved in the decision making process.

#### Economic Well Being

The session was highly useful for developing self-confidence and building self-esteem. Students were offered a glimpse of alternative career paths in their work with a creative professional.

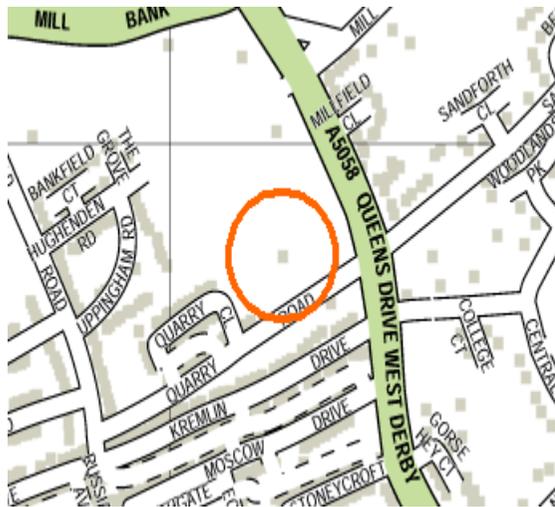
## Observation 6



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### Brief Outline of Session Observed

The main theme of the work produced in West Derby Comprehensive School was violence as communication through games. This included PC and Video games and sports games such as football.

Workshops looked at the feelings of power and control encouraged by some games. The levels of violent imagery and the nature of violence used as entertainments in some games were discussed, as were issues of guilt and addiction. The nature and power of team games were also discussed. This also involved a discussion of crowd violence in team games such as football. The observed session was led by a project designer. The design team are responsible for producing all settings, properties and costume items for the final performance.

The session began with a discussion of themes leading on from the initial introduction session. The group began 'thought mapping' ideas based around the main theme. The artistic director joined the group to request certain items, including character masks for the actors. These were added to the list of considerations and groups and individuals identified to create particular items. The creative then led the group in techniques used in mask making. All students participated in this activity.

### Meeting the Project Objectives

The workshop in design was limited by time and resources. There was real pressure for the group to produce props and settings for the show at the end of the second day. The session began with a discussion leading on from the initial introductory session. Discussion of the themes was limited and the workshop focused on the real practicality of creating items for the show.

Students learned new skills in art and design and were well supported by the creative throughout. Students were encouraged to make suggestions, show initiative, work as part of a team

### 'Every Child Matters'

#### Be Healthy

Links were unclear in the session observed.

#### Be Safe

Again links were unclear in the particular session observed.

#### Enjoying and Achieving

Students were taught new skills in art and design, communication and team working. All had enjoyed the experience.

#### Making a Positive Contribution

All student comments were valued and treated as valid and useful. Emotional responses were welcomed and valued. Students were involved in the decision making process.

#### Economic Well Being

The project was highly useful for developing self-confidence and building self-esteem. Students were offered a glimpse of alternative career paths in their work with a creative professional.

## 7. Results: Constructive Participant Feedback

### Students Comments:



#### Fazakerley High School

Students commented that the session had been enjoyable and fun.

Students do not have practical drama lessons as a part of the school curriculum and the experience had been different and challenging.

One boy commented that he felt **“learning was more enjoyable”** working with a creative; he felt **“more comfortable talking”** and asking questions in the session than in a regular lesson.

Another boy commented that he had been surprised by what he had learned about the power of body language and **“talking to other people without words”**.



#### Croxteth Community Comprehensive

Students commented that the session had been great fun.

It had been enjoyable and a **fantastic experience to work with a professional choreographer** and learn new break dance style movements.

One female student responsible for organising an after-school dance club, particularly valued the experience. She hoped to be able **to teach other members of the club the movements she had learned**.

She also commented that it had been interesting creating a dance in response to a particular theme. She would not have considered creating a dance about war.



#### Notre Dame Catholic College

Students commented that the project had been an excellent experience and great fun.

A female student stated that the experience had raised her awareness of violence in the media. She said that she had not realised how much violent imagery was available to individuals through the media.

Another girl added that she now felt **“more informed”** and that she would see issues and violence on the TV news as **“real-life”** rather than fiction.

Another girl quoted the statistic of the number of violent acts a child of 12 will have witnessed in their lifetime and stated that she had not realised that she had witnessed so much violence in the media.

Other students commented that the project had afforded them **creative freedom** they had not experience in school work before.

She cited a scene created by her and fellow drama students that used a Jerry Springer / Trisha TV format to discuss issues of domestic violence. She felt that her team had the creative freedom to **suggest and then develop ideas**.

## Students Comments: (Cont.)



### Holly Lodge Girls School

Students commented that the session had been enjoyable and different to regular school music lessons.

They felt that using pop music, as a starting point for discussion was helpful and enabled them to think more clearly about themes.

The session observed was the first of Day One, and students were unsure at this point, how the project would develop and grow into a performance.

They had enjoyed a positive working relationship with the creative leading the session and felt that this would be helpful in creating the music for the performance.

When discussing the wider issue of violence in the media, two students mentioned that the Iraq war was the issue that chiefly concerned them.

**Students believed that there is too much violence available to them through the TV news.**



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### West Derby Comprehensive School

Students commented that the workshop was interesting and enjoyable.

They were learning new techniques and were using a range of new and exciting materials.

Students stated that they had enjoyed the opening introduction session but were keen to start making items for the performance.

They enjoyed making masks and were happy to remain in the classroom during break time to complete the task.



### Archbishop Beck Catholic High School

Students commented that taking part in the project had been a **'fantastic experience'**.

They all stated that they had really enjoyed taking part. Music students commented that writing a 'rap' piece had been great fun and very different to anything they had done before.

One female student stated that she felt she had been able to **participate in the full creative process**. In creating a rap or performance, she, and the others in the musical team, had been responsible for forming lyrics, melody and tune. It had been a difficult process but had been enjoyable and rewarding.

Students also said that the project had **'made them more aware'** of the issues of violence and in particular the issues surrounding the level of violence in some video games. One stated that, although she played computer games, it had not been an issue she had thought about until now.

Two boys that had been a part of the design team also stated that they were unaware of how much violence was used in computer games. They both played games and had heard about the issue on television, but **had not considered the consequences before**. The pair had enjoyed the experience, describing the two-day project as **'great fun'**.

## Teachers Comments:



### Fazakerley High School

Responsibility for the project allocated to the school PSE co-ordinator by the Deputy Head teacher. Communication with the Culture Company had occurred but information was somewhat limited and within tight timescales. Letters had arrived just before spring half-term and the project started on the first day back. Letters and forms provided had, however, been invaluable. No choice of dates had been given and this had worked well.

Motivated students were selected to take part in the project, albeit that some had behavioural issues. A recent violence related issue within school had not been initially communicated to the creative team, which in the circumstances should have been discussed. The project was welcomed within the school and could be used as a part of the newly updated PSE programme designed to tackle issues of racism, bullying and anti-social behaviour. The PSE resources provided were very useful.



### Croxteth Community Comprehensive

The school drama teacher had taken responsibility for co coordinating the project in school. Communication prior to the project beginning had been good. The school had been flexible in terms of dates and finding appropriate space for the work, however there was some concern that the artistic team had not visited the school before commencement of the project. Performing Arts was a new subject for the school and the project was seen as a fantastic opportunity for the school and students. It had been well supported within school.

The work witnessed by the teacher was described as "amazing and brilliant". There are some issues of violence within the school and local area, which are tackled through the school PSE programme. PSE resources were welcomed and useful, however, there was some concern that the artistic team had not been able to discuss issues particular to the school before the project began.

It was also stated that some problems of violence that exist with in the school were the result of "inherited values from family and the local area". These issues are difficult to tackle in such a short space of time.



### Notre Dame Catholic College

The PA to the Notre Dame Performing Arts College co-ordinated the project within the school. Generally, she was happy with the communication prior to the project, however, she felt that more information about the nature of the project would have helped the school make a more informed choice of students to take part. The school had managed with the dates allocated, but supply cover had been difficult to arrange. Although useful in theory, parental permission letters provided by the Culture Company had caused problems. Letters stated that students should wear comfortable clothing, while the school had requested students wear school uniform. The letter had also offered parents two tickets for the final performance. The school had not produced tickets and received many telephone enquires from parents.

With the nature and circumstances of some students taking part, it was felt that a 3.30pm performance would have been more suitable than a performance at 7.00pm. It was felt that a planning meeting prior to the start of the project would have enabled the school to raise their concerns.

## Teachers Comments: (Cont.)



### Holly Lodge Girls School

The project was co coordinated in school by the Director of the Visual Arts College.

It was felt that this project was valuable in school and was particularly of use to students from the Uplands project. Communication from the Capital of Culture Company had been good but it was felt that the timescales involved had been limiting.

More detailed planning and discussions before the project started would have enabled all those involved to discuss issues within school, particularly in relation to the Uplands students and their particular needs.

The school was well resourced and had been able to provide staff to take part in the project and observe workshops.

It was unclear how the project would be moved forward within school after the creative team had left.



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### West Derby Comprehensive School

The school would have welcomed more planning time prior to commencement of the project.

They valued the project, albeit that time scales were tight.



### Archbishop Beck Catholic High School

The co-ordination of the project within school was the responsibility of the Director of Music. He stated that additional information prior to project commencement would have been helpful. He had, however, been very keen to take part and believed the project would be very valuable to students.

The school had selected 'Gifted and Talented' students to take part in the project. Communication with Culture Company had been limited but useful, particularly with the provision of letters and proformas. Timescales had been very tight, but he had been well supported within school and had been taken off timetable for the duration of the project.

There was much praise for the creative team. He was 'delighted' by the work undertaken and thought the project an 'amazing enterprise'. He had been 'really impressed' by the work produced and would wish for this type of activity in school again. The teacher stated that he did not believe there would be any follow-up work in school and at that time was unaware of any PSE materials available for use in school. There was also the feeling that dates for the final performance should have been decided before the project began.

## 8. Recommendations

It is important to recognise that this element of 'It's Not OK' is a pilot and therefore it concerns learning for future development. Crucially, the project was valued by the key participants - the students, and as the comments reveal, provoked thoughts and developed new skills. Time constraints were an issue, as were the capacity of schools to implement an innovative programme.

### Learning points are outlined below:

#### Planning:

In general a planning meeting prior to commencement would have been welcomed, thus providing a more process driven approach and provoking a shared understanding between the artistic team and participation schools.

It is recommended that future planning meetings should:

- Discuss aims and objectives of the programme, so that schools have an understanding of the outcomes required as a result of project delivery.
- Identify an individual within school for communication purposes, as at times communication with schools can prove difficult.
- Discuss operational issues, including school procedures, appropriate time and space for delivery and the attendance of school staff.
- Selection of students, as frequently schools tend to select the better behaved students, who are seldom the youngsters that this project could support in the longer term.
- Integration into the school curriculum and the responsibility of the school to ensure that the project is embedded and whole school learning takes place.
- Issues that the subject matter raises in school and any incidents affecting students that may have taken place in the past.
- Monitoring and evaluation of the project and the responsibility to undertake this task be all parties involved.

#### Delivery:

Overall the delivery of the programme was an extremely positive experience for all participants. However, in future it could be worth while to:

- Provide funding for schools for supply cover so that school staff are fully involved in the creative process **or** make it a condition of the project that school staff must be available at all times during the delivery, if only to develop their own skills.
- Make it a condition of delivery that the whole school is aware that the programme is taking place and that high quality PSHE materials have been produced so that school staff could make use of materials throughout the school year and when appropriate.

#### Monitoring and Evaluation:

Positively, school staff and students had an opportunity to respond and feedback on their experience, thus providing robust evidence for future delivery. Time was made for this feedback and is an element of the project that should remain.

#### Child Protection:

This complex area of the project delivery should receive further deliberation prior to roll out of the project and may require additional training and policy documentation for all those involved in the delivery. Some consideration should be given to the following:

- Reporting mechanisms and or confidentiality guidelines when students raise issues of concern.
- A staff member being present at all times.
- Counselling support for young people if sensitive issues are raised, this may be undertaken within school by a qualified member of staff.
- A policy for child protection following the code established by Liverpool City Council and that should be adhered to in schools

## 9. Conclusion

'It's Not OK' has real potential and the initial evaluation demonstrated that it raised participant's knowledge of the issues associated with violence. It is more problematic to state that it changed longer term attitudes and opinions, which would require assessment at a later date. In addition, the majority of the delivery did relate to the Every Child Matters agenda, although these priorities should receive further consideration in the future.

Significantly, the students enjoyed the experience, which reflects the quality of delivery and the expertise of the creative team. Organisation was at times constrained by time, nevertheless it remains a fact that this was a pilot and all involved worked extremely hard to make the project a success.



# It's Not Ok

**A research evaluation of the pilot  
Schools Arts-in-Education Project 2005**

**Creative Partnerships Merseyside**

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June 2005

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