

THE CREATIVE CURRICULUM

It's well known that the creative arts and physical movement can have a huge impact on improving feelings of wellbeing. For vulnerable young people experiencing a crisis it is an essential part of the curriculum. Through my experience of working in alternative provisions, I know that opportunities for success in this area, will improve engagement and confidence across all subjects.

Why? In simple terms:-

- It allows the expression of emotions
- It helps the managing and transforming of emotions
- It provides a distraction from problems
- It helps to facilitate social support and relationships
- It contributes to the identity of the young person

For the young people at all our Cygnets CAMHS Schools these foundation subjects are a vital resource for overcoming negative emotions and an essential part of the recovery journey.

At Excel and Exceed we reviewed our curriculum for this academic year and enhanced our creative offer with the addition of Music and Sport and extended our Art provision. Now, on our new Friday options day, students have the choice of a double session in their area of interest and move to the subject, rather than the subject being brought to them, as happens during the rest of the week. This simple change of walking to the workshop room may not seem important, but it is actually a young person making a positive step towards something that they have chosen to do. The benefits for the teaching staff are that rooms can be set up as workshops for the day, extended projects can be offered and students can explore topics and skills in more detail. Students are encouraged to follow accredited qualification pathways through the Prince's Trust Achieve programme and Arts Awards.

Our students have already:-

- Set up a SoundCloud account and uploaded songs and sounds that they have created. One of our students has written a Christmas song for performance at the Christmas Fair.
- Performed weekly group singing sessions which also include playing piano, guitar and drums.
- Produced detailed art work and three dimensional studies based on the work of Yayoi Kusama ready for a Christmas Art Exhibition
- Developed skills in archery, badminton, table tennis and football. An off-site trip to the local tennis court allowed the young people to compete against staff in an organised tournament on a full sized court.

It's still early days but "that Friday feeling" is becoming a very positive one.

Wendy Webster
Head Teacher—Excel & Exceed

Phoenix School (Sheffield), Excel & Exceed Centre (Bury) and The Summit (Coventry) are DfE registered special schools, providing education for young people admitted to their co-located hospital services.

Our schools are regulated by OFSTED and were all rated GOOD at their last inspection.

[Excel & Exceed Centre](#)

[Phoenix School](#)

[Summit School](#)



IT'S YOUR CHOICE



MUSIC



ART



SPORT

SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

What we've been up to this month.....



Anti-Bullying week was 13th—17th November. The Phoenix School hosted the **Sheffield Wednesday Community Outreach team.** They came to deliver a workshop around prejudices and discrimination that can lead to bullying, using the context of professional football to show the negative impact that this can have on communities. They spoke about the importance of representation in sport, and how young people are more likely to dream big if they have role models that "look like" them. After an interesting discussion around what bullying is, how to prevent it and who to speak to if you experience it the group headed outside for some fresh air and a game of "football cricket". The young people particularly enjoyed the physical part of the session, showing off their competitive nature and their ball skills.

In addition to activities taking place around this in our schools [read the blog from Ed Hall](#) during which he reflects on the impact of bullying in schools and how it can be tackled.

Excel and Exceed have begun to run **choir classes** on a Thursday evening as an hour long after school activity. We've had the pleasure of hosting Voice Assembly, who have acted as our choir masters. The new activity has proved a success, with regulars and as a growing number of young people attending each week. We hope that participants who have joined in with this activity will be prepared to perform at Cygnet Bury's Christmas Fair to showcase their talent and hard work.



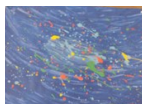
Phoenix School has recently completed their **Spotlight on Africa project** which is a celebration of the cultural diversity of the continent of Africa. [Read all about it here.](#)



The **festival of Diwali** was celebrated at Cygnet Bury on 8th November. Diwali is the festival of light and was celebrated worldwide for five days as of November 12th. It is considered the most important festival of the Hindu calendar, though is also observed by Sikhs, Buddhists and Jains, as followers celebrate the triumph of good over evil; of light over darkness. Stalls offered to the Young People at Excel and Exceed included mehndi designs, rangoli making, and Diwali arts and crafts such as elephant embroidery and stain glass lanterns. Mehndi is the art of dyeing the skin with a plant extract, meanwhile, rangoli includes creating intricate sand or powder designs that feature bright colours that are believed to bring good luck and prosperity. Additionally, an assortment of Indian snacks were on offer for individuals to sample.

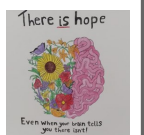
Big thanks to Excel and Exceed teacher Shaneela for organising the activities and to the wider staff at Cygnet Bury for providing their services to support this.

This month there have been some amazing pieces of **art work** at Summit School and all with a different purpose. One young person entered the Cygnet Art Competition with a beautiful butterfly picture. They have a real interest in all kinds of bugs and chose one of their favourites to draw for the competition.



In addition, this is going to become a mural of an Australian themed ocean in order to help with reintegration and stabilisation for a young person who loves to use art as an escape. They also produced an abstract piece as a gift for a family member.

Lastly, a young person was tasked with creating a piece of art for the walls of the hospital for everyone to see. I'm sure you can agree there is a lot of talent here and it will bring hope to others.



Excel and Exceed staff have created a giant **Sudoku board** to promote numeracy skills and logical thinking. The game is designed to be one that is interactive and can be changed as frequently as needed in order to promote engagement. The new display is situated in the main school corridor and has received plenty of interest already with a spot prize awarded to those who complete it. We hope that it will be enjoyed by many more young people in the future.

