



# RE-MAKING

## Starting out

After taking part in the RSE professional learning workshops, I decided to start straight away. At the time we were having a big push on wellbeing anyway due to the covid-19 pandemic. We are a very diverse school and we have learners with a lot of well-being needs, so well-being is a high priority for us.



### School

Primary school.

### Creative audit participants

13 staff, 90 pupils.

### Creative audit activities

Wyred bodies;  
What Jars you;  
Crush card images (observe, wonder, infer (OWI);  
Stop-Start plates;  
Diversity Street

### Making RSE Matter

Relationship webs;  
Re-visiting diversity street; Junk model bodies; Storying puberty; Period products enquiry; "What Makes a Baby" sculptures with play-doh; Rainbow of Emotions.

# My creative audit

## Working with staff: building confidence

I decided to begin with the upper school (years 5 and 6) but before I conducted the creative audit with the pupils, I ran a staff audit. The head, the deputy head and the year 5 and 6 teachers were there, as well as another teacher from our health and well-being AOLE. I also wanted the TA's to be involved – we have two ELSA trained TAs and a nurture TA – so they were part of the team too.

**'TOP TIP Start at the top! Aim to present to SLT and then through teams. If SLT are on board then life is easier. Remind SLT that this will be statutory next year so it's vital to start somewhere!'**

I had to do the audit virtually because of the ongoing Covid-19 restrictions and I had an hour to pack everything in. We started with the **Wyred Bodies** activity where I asked staff to create a body out of pipe cleaners that captured how they were feeling about RSE and being part of the staff audit. Staff enjoyed this and came up with some interesting designs! Then we did the **What jars you?** which helped explore what staff were feeling about the new RSE curriculum. There was a lot of uncertainty about definitions and their abilities to explain things using terminology that they were not very comfortable with. There were questions such as – *Do we have to answer every/any question? How much detail do we go into?* And other things like dealing with misconceptions and disclosures. Since then, we have had quite a lot of safeguarding training to help staff feel confident managing disclosures.



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# OWI

OBSERVE

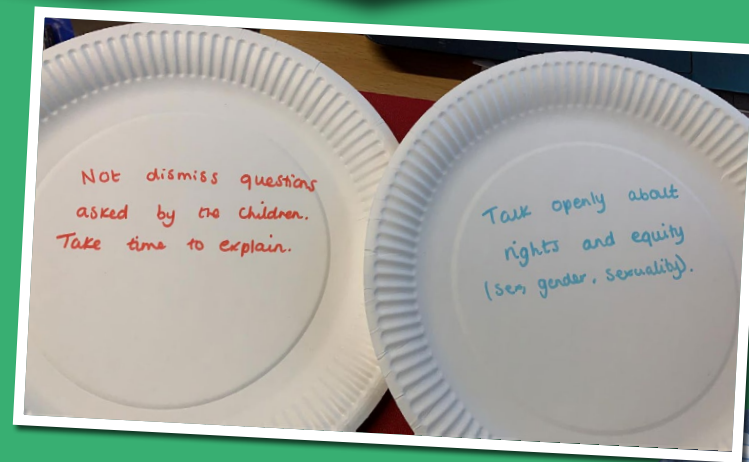
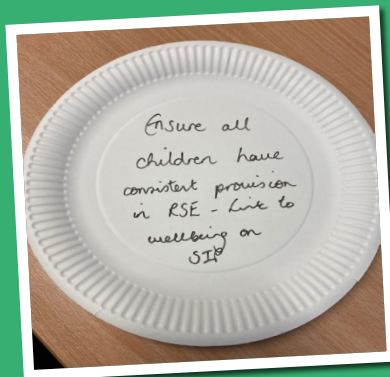
WONDER

INFER

We then moved on to discuss and categorise the CRUSH card images as we had done in the professional learning workshops. They categorised them in all kinds of different ways from gender stereotypes to well-being. We also did an OWI activity with the CRUSH cards, which is something that I use with the children. This is a Philosophy for Children (P4C) activity where you look at an image and you Observe, Wonder and Infer. I asked them to pick one of the images and use the OWI to imagine what the story was about, before turning it over and reading the case study on the back. They were quite surprised to see what the case study actually said. It just kind of showed that we sometimes have our own misconceptions. We put something in our head and stereotype it and that's that. It's quite surprising to find that something is the opposite or different to what you might feel or think that you know.



I finished the staff audit with the **STOP / START plates** where I asked them to say what they wanted to STOP and START about RSE. Overall, staff did enjoy the activities and they were happy to share. As a result, when we did the STOP / START activity they came out with a lot of green plates and were clear about the positive changes they wanted to make. Importantly, the head teacher was definitely on board and was keen for us to get going with making changes to RSE provision in our school. She wrote 'START to ensure all children have confident RSE provision.'



## Working with parents: sharing our approach

Before we undertook the creative audit we shared with parents what the audit would involve and took steps to gain their consent (SRE is still not statutory so we are required to do this until the new curriculum is in place). We wrote to parents explaining that we would be looking at all six of the new RSE themes and also gave them the opportunity to come to the school gate to ask any questions and clarify any misconceptions. For the few who had reservations, I was able to explain to them that this was a child-led creative audit where learners were invited to participate and share their views. This reassured most parents but there were still 8 families across the year groups who didn't allow their children to participate. Until RSE becomes statutory, we will continue to share with parents what we do and how, so that all children are able to participate in the responsive and holistic way in which we are now approaching RSE.

I had hoped to carry out a creative audit with parents but Covid-19 restrictions have made this difficult

## Working with children: our creative audit week!

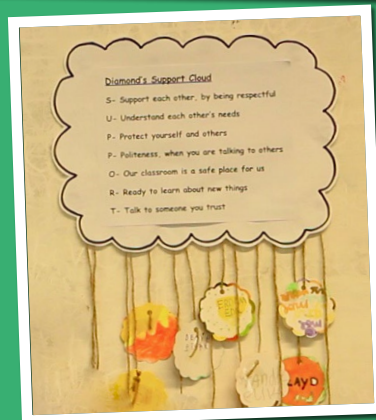
Our creative audit with children took place over one week. We worked with about 90 children from years 5 and 6 using literacy lesson time. Each class teacher ran the creative audit with their own class. They had all taken part in the staff audit so were familiar with the new approach to RSE. I created a list of activities that we could do and what we wanted to achieve from them but the conversations in each class were led by the children so each class went in a slightly different direction and staff adapted the activities as they went along.

What we learned from the creative audit was that children feel safe and secure in the school environment. We were quite overwhelmed with how the children responded. We thought it might take them some time to open up, but straight away they were into these discussions and were happy to come and happy to talk. We produced some wonderful darta.

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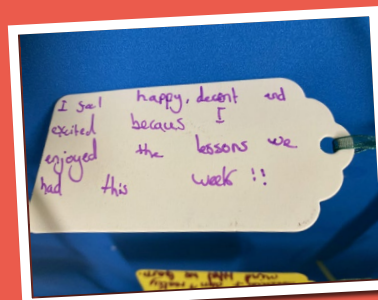
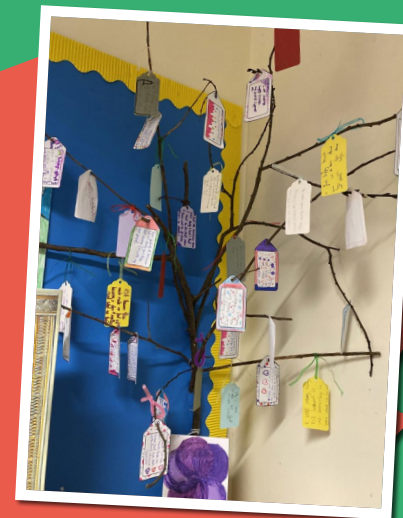
### Support clouds

We began with a support cloud lesson. We already have quite a lot of support systems in class, in school. We have a 'helping hands' activity where children identify five people that they can talk to and they know who to turn to if there's any difficulty. This can be other children or members of staff. There's also a poster on display in every class that says 'It's ok to have a wobble'. We are very open and honest with our children and they know that if they ever have a worry or a wobble they can come back from it and they can have discussions. So when it came to the support clouds, this was comfortable and familiar for them. They loved doing them and they created beautiful ones.



### Feelings tree

Inspired by the RSE Trees in the CRUSH resource case study, *Shaking Things Up*, we set up a feelings tree in every classroom. Every day children can add to it to say how they feel or if they have anything to say. They can go and access pipe cleaners and mould them into how they are feeling or get a tag and add that to the tree.

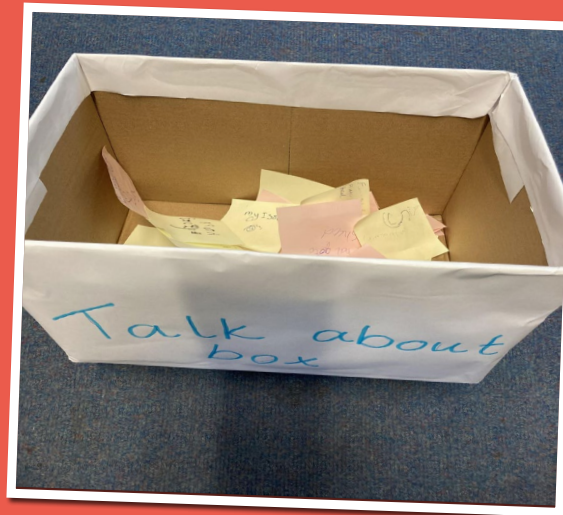


We introduced these during the creative audit week but have left them in the classrooms as a visual legacy of how feelings matter. We are finding that it can be an opening of a conversation between a pupil and a teacher.

## The talk-about-box

As part of the audit we put a 'talk-about-box' in every classroom. This is a box that children can use to put their worries, feelings or questions in or to identify an adult they would like to speak to. We called it a 'talk-about-box' so that the children who are new to the English language or those who might not be able to write down what they are feeling, can still use the box as an opportunity to ask for help or to start a conversation.

As part of the creative audit we introduced a talk-about-box to every class. The children used them every day during the creative audit week and the children have carried on using them since. It's just there in the class and there are post-its on our desks. The children can come and get a post it note and add to it whenever they want to. I check them once a week or sometimes more frequently when the children come up and tell me that they've added something.



Just the other day one boy posted about how much he is missing his mum, who he can't see at the moment, which helped us to reach out to him and offer him some support. Another girl told us that she was getting unwanted messages from someone in the class. The message was anonymous so even though I knew who had written it, I decided to talk to the whole class about the issue in general terms, exploring issues of consent and relationships.

## Wyred bodies and worry dolls

The children worked with pipe cleaners to make **wyred bodies** to show how they were feeling. They put the bodies in a box and then took someone else's wyred body out of the box. The children tried to guess what each others' bodies were feeling and talk about why they might be feeling that way. They captured their thoughts on coloured tags. We used this activity to talk about good and bad feelings and explore how our bodies react when we are feeling different emotions.

Some of the classes created worry dolls and mapped out their worries and other feelings across the body. At the end of the day they wanted to take the worry dolls home to put them under their pillow or to hold them and talk to them.

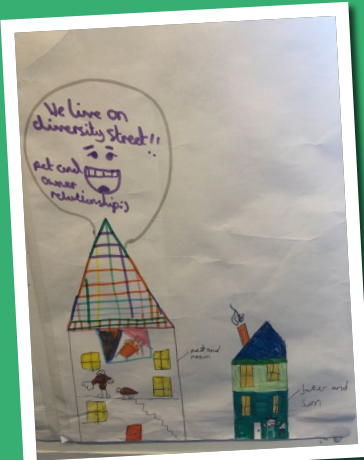


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# DIVERSITY STREET

Adapting an activity from another teacher in a previous cohort of the PLP, we introduced the children to an activity called Diversity Street by imagining all the different people that could live in a diverse street.

I have a class who are from so many different places and as an introduction I got them to tell everyone else where they are from and what languages they speak. Then I asked them to each draw a house and think about who lived there. They really took it all on board and were thinking about all the different types of families and relationships. They were very aware and accepting of differences. We stuck all of the pictures from the different classes together to create one long 'diversity street' which we have displayed down the hallways and corridors. It looks beautiful.



The stop start plates activity really brought home the idea that the children were really ready to talk about this stuff and wanted "to start learning more about RSE". I felt how they felt empowered by the process.



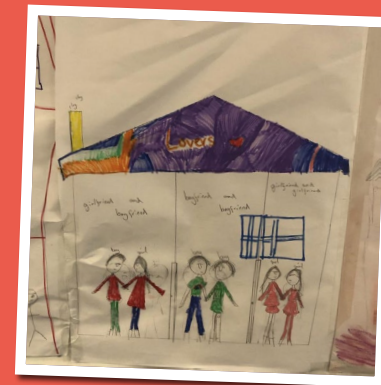
## STOP / START plates

The children came out with some amazing STOP / START plates. Even at the new to-english level children were able to respond by drawing or providing some words about how they were going to move forward. Themes that emerged included looking after and being respectful to each other. The theme of equity came out too – children talked about knowing that we were the kind of school that is very accepting because we have children from all walks of life and how they wanted to take that further in their learning.

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## Responding to what matters

During the creative audit week we did the same activities with each of the four classes but they responded differently. Two classes in particular really got stuck into the discussions about gender and sexuality at length. They were very keen on talking about what different identities mean, being inquisitive about what they are and how they are celebrated and then talking about the Pride festival. Children in another class were most interested in the theme of gender equality and in my class, the new to English class, children talked about bodies and body image at length. What we and the children were realising and learning was just how important it is for pupils to share their views.



The data that we collected in our Creative Audit Week showed that our children really took on board the whole diversity and equity aspects of RSE. There were so many positive comments about the lessons from the children, and I think through the grapevine the other children who weren't allowed to join felt a little bit disappointed that they couldn't share their views.

Everything that we've done is amazing and I'd love to revisit the activities everyday. It's just time restraints that stop us from doing that.

## RSE is changing: building a more holistic curriculum

After we returned to school after lockdown the school was sent a set of books, **lechyd da**, that covered a range of health and wellbeing topics. We looked at the books and planned two weeks of RSE / English lessons around them. Each class teacher choose different books that we thought would best suit our classes and used them to explore different RSE themes and in ways that responded to the children's questions, views and interests from the creative audit darta

A lot of the stories focussed on the theme of change. At this point in year 6 there's a lot of changes going on – there's the forthcoming transition to high school, we are in and out of lockdown, and bodily changes are starting to happen.

In my class we looked at *Keffin y Coala Carcus*. We wrote stories and explored feelings and wrote about ourselves to promote the qualities and strengths that we have. We read another story called *The New Girl* and so many themes came out of our discussions – acceptance, equality, equity, everything! As we explored this book we made origami. The book is about a girl from Japan and about being left out and being different. She creates these origami flowers to intrigue the other children and they become friends. In our class we created origami flowers and then they wrote the instructions on how to create the flowers and then we wrote our own stories.

When we did the review of the year's work, they had forgotten about the book and the story, but they remembered the origami!



## Transforming RSE week

A few months after the creative audit I was doing a recap on the changes to the curriculum across all areas of learning. All the activities that they remembered across the curriculum were the creative and the practical ones. So they remembered making origami flowers and creating support clouds. This is what they enjoy and it really helps them to open up.



The lightbulb moment for me came after the creative audit when I was thinking about our summer RSE week. Every year we design a week of RSE lessons focussing on relationships and puberty. I was thinking about it with dread. And then I had that moment where I was like – 'oh – why can't I do it that way, via the new RSE approach'. So I decided to transform our RSE week – not by changing content so much (although we did ask again what children wanted to learn about) but by changing our approach. By becoming more creative with our teaching and learning, you move away from spoon feeding the children information. It's much more child led. As a teacher this means you have to adapt as you go.



## Re-visiting our feelings and making more support clouds

This year we started by returning to some of the things we had made during the creative audit week. We returned to our feelings tree. We talked again about how to take care of our feelings and the feelings of others over time. We re-made our wyred bodies, created more support clouds and added them all to our feelings tree. We talked about how to look after our feelings tree and one boy imagined the tree coming to life: "If we add more feelings it might bring it to life".





## Making bodies, body parts and babies

We used recycled materials to make junk model bodies in small groups. We returned to these bodies again and again, thinking about what different body parts they could have and how they might need to be taken care of. We learnt about reproduction and menstruation in new and creative ways, making and learning as we go.

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Children created their own stories from some of the crush card images, which enabled a wider discussion about what they were already learning and experiencing around puberty in the context of their own peer cultures. We undertook a science enquiry project in small groups on the absorbency of different period products. They dipped different products in water and we talked about what happens when bodies menstruate.



To support our understanding of reproduction, we looked at *What Makes a Baby* by Cory Silverberg and then asked the children to make a character or element from the story using playdoh. They created all kinds of things – a sperm, a foetus, a baby. And as they were making and sharing their sculptures we could find out what they already knew and didn't know and what more they wanted to know.



These creative and hands-on activities were fun, and created a lively atmosphere. They allowed us to work with any feelings of embarrassment that children expressed by returning to our junk bodies, the feelings tree, our support clouds and our diversity street.

At the end of the week the children made a junk body to reflect upon how they felt about the sessions. They ended up creating me, their teacher! Their sticky notes will stay with me, reminding me just how important it is to find creative ways to normalise how we learn about RSE in school:

"I feel good", "I feel joy", "I feel normal" "I feel happy"  
"i feel interested because we learned so many things in the last few days. I loved it".



## Moving forward

We used to teach RSE at the end of the summer term and approach RSE using very formal methods of teaching. We now look at RSE almost like a fluid, ever changing, adapting conversation with our children, which we can add to and adapt as and when the need arises with the pupils. And the creative sessions give pupils an opportunity to express themselves in different ways. They can show us a lot of what they are thinking through different modes of learning and what they have understood and we can learn *with them* to progress our learning further.