

# Specialist Leaders in Cultural Education (SLiCE®)

## Cultural Partner Case Study 2018/19

<b>Cultural Organisation and SLiCE Lead</b>	Tate Liverpool
<b>SLiCE Fellow and Partner School</b>	Colette Bentley, East Prescot Road Nursery
<b>Action Research Question</b>	<i>“How far and in what ways can you evidence the impact on your organisation of working with a SLiCE fellow and their teaching school alliance?”</i>
<b>Other Partners</b>	Blackmoor Park Junior School, Liverpool Hope University, Manchester Metropolitan University

### Background of cultural organisation

Tate Liverpool hosts the national collection of modern and contemporary art. It is the most visited modern and contemporary art gallery among the museums of Liverpool and the United Kingdom, among those not located in London. Tate’s learning programme works with audiences that are representative of our diverse communities across Liverpool and Merseyside creating relevant, engaging and inclusive experience for all audiences, ensuring that children and young people, families and adults have access to and are able to participate in the future of the gallery; increasing their knowledge and understanding of art; learn and develop new skills; co-author programmes, therefore actively contributing to the gallery, the cultural life of their communities and the City Region.

### Project Summary (Context and Objectives)

An action research project exploring innovative early years practice involving a long-term residency with an artist, filmmaker and staff from Tate Liverpool and supporting the Head in the preparation for the residency through attending conferences and meetings with Learning staff. The project set out to explore the key differences between a visit and a process of discovery and support the wellbeing of staff and children.

The residency explored active learning, investigated creativity and explored critical thinking and risk taking. The residency was designed to support practitioner research & development

encouraging staff to learn alongside the children therefore enabling the staff to understand how children learn in a different context.

### Impacts and Outcomes (Understanding key learning)

- **Investment in staff** – working with the Head sending out the right message embedding the relationship and practice and strategic planning in the nursery therefore valuing and investing in staff and their expertise.
- **Out of comfort zone** – The nursery recognizing and finding a balance about getting people to step out of their comfort zone whilst not jeopardising their wellbeing. The preparation beforehand was key to the project's success. It was reinforced that it's not necessary to have subject knowledge to connect the work to your practice with the work the children are doing.
- We recognized it would be useful for us to participate in something we haven't done before in order to expand and develop our own practice by also taking us out of our comfort zone, seeing how impactful this was we would like to put ourselves in that position.
- **Physical outcome** – 'Joe and the lion' this particular gem that happened during a trip into the gallery space has informed the development of resources at early years level, from seeing the responses of young children to specific artworks.
- **Hybrid practice** -Developing a context for the SLICE and nursery staff to develop their own practice that they can continue to develop independently. Making it relevant to their creative practice, empowering staff and developing their confidence in their own practice. Providing opportunities for staff to continue to develop in a more sustainable way that doesn't involve us a delivery model. The key value was a common language to develop institutional practice which involved no experts but all working to common cause and same level.

### Obstacles and issues

- Obstacles became a key part of the organisational learning (training) Informed future staff training from issues that came up with staff welcome
- We anticipate this to be an obstacle but surprised at how available and how seriously the Head took up the role.
- Obstacles managing spaces in gallery and staff welcome recognizing behaviors of young children in the gallery spaces. FOH gallery staff not welcoming , recognising that they have a security role but there is an 'approach' that didn't feel right with a particular member of staff and he didn't feel that he had the right skill set to deal with the situation. The Head and the artist were 'told off' in the gallery, it was non-inclusive not valuing the children as visitors, this flagged up the need for creating an understanding of where the visits come from strategy -speak in an inclusive way.

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## Next steps and futures

- Residency and research part of a wider body of research activity with Wendy James national/International network and our partnership project work with Edge Hill University.
- Build on relationship with EPR to develop self-directed visits
- Develop partnership further with EPR to become an advocate to other settings to develop as a model for early years residency as an offer.
- Address welcome training in the gallery
- Participate in something we haven't done expand and develop our practice more by taking us out of our comfort zone, seeing how impactful this was we would like to put ourselves in that position.

## Wellbeing

### Research:

- Context for research framed discoveries and explorations which in turn supported staff thinking. The support for the Head changed the mind set of the nursery and wellbeing of staff. Head supported and valued staff and their contributions. The residency gave the Head and staff the skills and opportunity to step back and reflect on what they were doing.
- The staff recognizing and finding a balance between stepping out of their comfort zone but not jeopardising their wellbeing

## Quotes

*“The SLICE project enabled us to immerse ourselves in children’s learning in the gallery, I found ‘learning at the same time’ empowering to both the children and staff, it was a really powerful and genuine partnership between the Head and Tate which we hope to continue to develop further.”*

Debbie Goldsmith, Education Officer – Tate Liverpool

*“This has been a truly inspiring experience. Colette and her staff have maximised every potential opportunity out of this project and learning and reflecting alongside them has enabled us as an organisation to consolidate our recent research on working with early years groups and providing residency opportunities. We have developed a strategic, yet warm and generous partnership through SLICE and one which I know will have a fantastic legacy.”*

Deborah Riding, Programme Manager: Children and Young People – Tate Liverpool

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*“Our children, families and staff team had an amazing time and their experiences have had a resounding impact on our practice and provision at East Prescott Road. We have still to look at the data in terms of digital recordings but the real-life evidence of the children engaging with the gallery, studio and Tate environment was awesome. We have definitely grown as a team in response to, and as direct result of, the innovative opportunities created, due to your careful consideration, we felt safe and secure in travelling into and around the building, which as always is an ultimate priority and that sense of security galvanized our experience.*

*Our children settled immediately into their new surroundings and responded enthusiastically to the new environments. This, I feel was testament to the preparations you all made in advance of our visit. The children demonstrated their excitement every morning as they arrived and prepared to travel to the Tate. Parents shared that their children were loving the experience. If there was ever any doubt about the value of such an experience and the positive impact on children’s wellbeing it was soon diminished as we observed them interacting with each other familiar and unfamiliar adults and the gallery as a whole.”*

Colette Bentley, Headteacher - East Prescott Road Nursery

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