

# OCM Education and Outreach Project Journey Log

## Canal Sounds

**In December 2012, OCM was awarded funding from the Oxford City culture fund to develop and deliver Canal Sounds.**

**Working with sound artist Charlie Henry, Canal Sounds was designed to be an interactive sound art project working with three classes from three local primary schools from Oxford.**

**The aim for the project was to capture and edit sounds from the Oxford Canal and then transform those sounds into sound collages to be played through a sound installation under a bridge for each school along the Oxford Canal.**

**This project was an arts award project and concluded in a sharing event for parents and the public to attend and see what the students created.**

We wanted to deliver a project where young people could showcase their creativity to the Oxford community. We also wanted the learning to encompass many art forms and highlight the potential role projects like this can play in supporting a schools curriculum and other subject areas.

Canals are part of the year 6 curriculum and looking at circuitry provides a clear link to science.

We were also keen to experiment with and develop a model of working where we could get a large number of young people to achieve an arts award with compromising on the quality of delivery.

The next few slides demonstrate how we achieved it.

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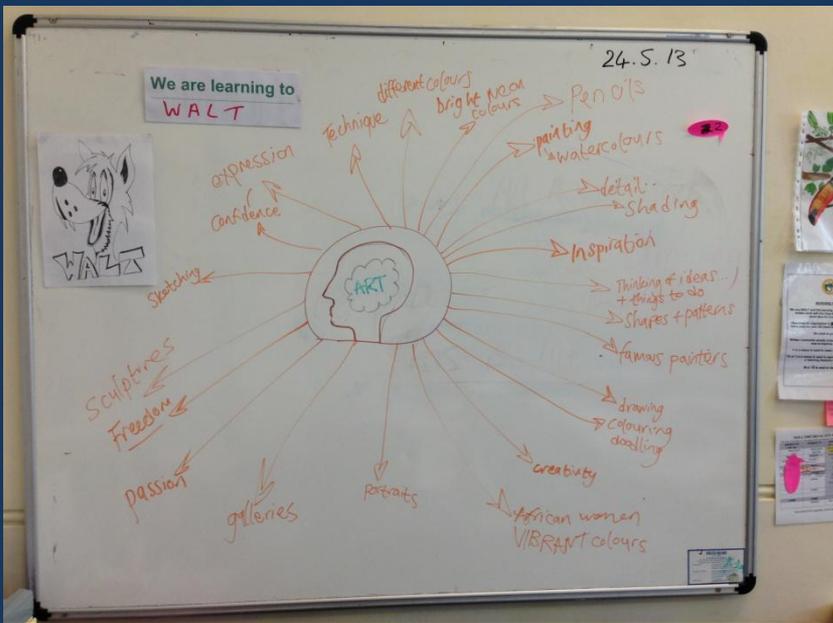
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## Wolvercote Primary School

Wolvercote Primary School was the first school that we worked with. We began our first session by getting to know the students and brainstorming ideas about what arts is and what it takes to be an explorer.

Using the arts award log books as guides we structured our sessions so that the students could easily transfer what they were doing practically over to their books, however we soon discovered that this way of working was slowly becoming a hindrance on the groups and we decided to use the books during the reflection sessions rather than complete them at the same time.

We broke the class into groups and gave them H2 Zoom recorders to use on the project. We taught them how to record, and edit sounds as well as build their own sound installation system for their class which they got to keep.



## Northern House Primary School

Northern House was the smallest group involved in the project and we were able to work with two classes from the school.

As part of the project students walked to the canal with their audio recorders to capture sounds and create drawings inspired by the project.

Students from Northern House School were excited and enthused about the project from the start, they took to the technology and were not shy about recording any sound that they could.

Due to the time restrictions on the project there was not enough time for everyone to contribute to the building of the sound installation, however everyone had the opportunity to design their own mini system, and thanks to the I.T resources and a helpful technician, everyone had the chance to edit and add effects to their captures sounds.



## St John Fisher Catholic Primary School

At St John Fisher, we worked with a year 4 class which was both a younger and larger group than we had originally planned. To compensate for this we worked with this class for an extra day and divided the group of 30 into two groups of 15 which was a lot more manageable.

Once again the arts award log books started to slow down the momentum of the group but they were helpful when used at the start as an Ice breaker technique.

The students at the school were both equally excited by the arts side of this project as well as the science side as they each contributed to building sections of the circuits for each groups speaker system.

The classes ended up building two speaker units after working with us for three days. Unfortunately the computer systems at the school were not performing their best so editing time was limited which was a shame but the students all brought their A-Game to the project.



## Students at Wolvercote Primary School

Students at Wolvercote Primary school seemed to naturally gel with the project and once they started they needed very little input from their teachers and the workshop leaders.

Keeping inline with the theme of the Oxford Canal students were inspired to create paintings and poetry to compliment their audio recording and sound installation.





## Students at Northern House School

The groups from this school were not without their challenges, however the project was a real project that had purpose and opened them up to new experiences. This greatly aided us in being able to keep momentum going and the students on track.

One student was having a particularly bad day during our first project session, but once he was in front of a computer conducting his own edits, he truly excelled at this and even took on extra tasks helping Charlie organise the schools edits.

## Students at St John Fisher Primary School

Working with such a large group it was quite difficult to single out and track the impact on individual participants.

Over the course of the project we noticed that students became more open with sharing their ideas and collaborating with each other.

This project was an excellent motivator for them as it was a real project with a real life outcome. The students really took this on board particularly when they were thinking about how they would design their sound installations.

With the exception of two students from this class, everyone went through to moderation to get an Arts Award at Discover or Explore level.



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## Sound Installation Speakers



St John Fisher School



Northern House Primary School



Wolvercote Primary School

## Audio Collages



Each school and group created their own audio collages to use in the sound installations.

## Arts Award Certificates



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**This project success of this project was down to three key things:**

- The project was well resourced , organised and funded
- It had a purpose and a real life outcome
- There was great team work between OCM, school staff and our artist Charlie Henry

**If we had the chance to do the project again we would probably:**

- Continue to use Arts Award, however stress that Explore level projects be for year 5 & 6 students only.
- Break whole project days down into two or three weekly sessions, for groups with learning difficulties.
- Build a little extra time into the project to relieve the pressure of getting the project finished in a short period of time.

**Thank you for taking the time to read this project log. We would like to take this opportunity to thank:**

- PYE Charitable Trust, Oxford City Council culture fund, Arts Award Access Fund, Charlie Henry, Wolvercote Primary School, Northern House School, St John Fisher Catholic Primary School and Ray Lee.

**Oxford  
Contemporary  
Music**