

# House of Illustration / *Let's Illustrate!* Case studies

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## A Central London Primary: A springboard for learning

This inner-city primary school, has no dedicated arts provision and had identified a skills and confidence gap amongst its pupils in Key Stage 2, as well as a need to improve engagement in literacy-based projects. Children lacked the resources to express themselves creatively and lacked pride in much of their art-based output. Teachers also lacked the wherewithal and confidence to teach creatively across the curriculum.

It was from this perspective and with clear intentions that Year 3 teachers seized the opportunity to launch its spring term topic 'Vikings' through House of Illustration's *Let's Illustrate!* outreach project. High quality art-based outputs delivered with the support of a visiting professional illustrator would **capture the imaginations** of pupils of all abilities. New approaches to learning and an accessible medium would challenge all children to **perceive their skills differently**. High quality outputs would **showcase learning** to the school community and **embed the topic** in pupils' minds.

In fact the school's House of Illustration project exceeded even these expectations. Delivering 'Story Islands' over three weeks with two Year 3 classes, a visiting professional illustrator engaged children at every level, drawing out those with less confidence in their artistic abilities and stretching those with a wider sphere of reference to draw upon.

Step by step over three weeks every child created elaborate settings for their character, their imaginative capacities stretched and their vocabulary expanded through the illustrator's input. High quality creative outputs compiled as a book that has since been shared with the school provided a platform for subsequent written work that reflected children's ownership of the topic. Teachers reflect on the quality of this work and the sustained engagement with both the topic and the materials produced. To this day the books produced remain the most looked-at item in the class library. Children's pride in their work is palpable.

**“That's the book they pick up most.... it gives them a sense of pride. Something that they can show is their own personal professional work....”**

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## **A London Hospital Child and Adolescent Mental Health Unit: Every young person can be proud of their work**

The *Let's Illustrate!* model is designed to support children and young people of all ability and confidence levels. Creative outputs developed in conjunction with the support of an experienced professional illustrator can inspire further written or performance-based work but have inherent value in themselves. **Participants draw on their own experiences and contexts when developing their ideas, they develop their work over a number of sessions and are justly proud when it is formally presented across their community.**

The Child and adolescent mental health unit at this central London hospital chose to deliver *Let's Illustrate!* with some of the young people in its care for these reasons. With many unable to participate in formal schooling for significant lengths of time and / or facing personal and emotional issues, the unit recognized the potential to give every young person a positive and tangible output of which they could be proud.

The unit elected to deliver 'Box of Beginnings' over three consecutive days in its half term. Ten young people aged 10-16 benefited by the continuity and impact this offered, supported by a lead illustrator who helped them focus on each task.

The creation of a safe environment ensured every young person could contribute to the best of their ability, as did the highly accessible and inclusive nature of the creative approaches employed. Staff commented on the extent to which participation had provided them with *accelerated insight into the needs and perspectives of the young people in their care.*

**“The long-term value is in their pleasure in doing something that was unhurried and purely creative.”**

Whilst participant enjoyment and engagement had been expected, staff members were thrilled at the pride engendered amongst their young people who tackled a number of emotional and social challenges in order to fully take part and to produce work of a high quality. They commented that children and young people's self esteem was enhanced by their ability to have worked and reworked their piece to their best ability and to have shared their piece with their peers and families.