

Creative Classrooms

Problem solving

PROBLEM SOLVING

Overcoming logistical challenges - students willingly look for pathways through a problem. They are curious about why something may not work and are keen to suggest ideas. In this next section we look at how the teachers use both music and model making and set building as a problem solving exercise.



PROBLEM SOLVING - MAKING MODELS & SET BUILDING

Though desirable for providing authenticity, tight budgets do not always allow for real life theatrical experiences such as back stage theatre visits. The creative arts team however has found innovative ways to build students problem solving skills whilst at the same time build confidence in performance.

To put together a theatrical performance students need to understand what a set or a prop actually is. Over time staff at Benton Dene Special School began to appreciate that models could be used to give their students a genuine sense of presence on stage without actually necessarily being on stage. For some students, for whom being on stage was too stressful or logistically challenging this was a revelation.



PROBLEM SOLVING - MAKING MODELS & SET BUILDING

Using the models helps the students to better communicate their emotions. It is also a way for them to have control over their environment by visualising how something might appear and feel. The models also give the students a chance to explore their wants, needs and feelings in a unique and creative way. This can also help students to not feel frustrated if they are struggling to communicate how they feel. For autistic students in particular, it is a way to develop their social skills.

“Using models for honing the sense of a scene and then using objects or pictures to represent themselves became a powerful visualisation tool.”
Clare Boreham, Subject Lead for Art and DT, Benton Dene Special School



PROBLEM SOLVING - MAKING MUSIC

“I take my lead from the students as it is really important that they enjoy what we are doing. If they are not keen on my idea, we do something else!”

Julie McKenna, Subject Lead for Music and Drama, Benton Dene Special School

Students enjoy working with a wide range of instruments though they predominantly enjoy tuned percussions due to limited motor skills. Access for all is a key priority so the subject lead often adapts instruments such as one string on a guitar. Colour coding also supports students to learn sequences of notes.

Each class has their own theme within the project. The current production involves the adventures of a flying carpet and so each class will take ownership of a different location visited by the carpet. For example, the magic carpet might land on a pirate ship or visit an underwater world. For the later, listening to Handel and Saint-Saëns: Carnival of the Animals whilst flying on a carpet seemed like a good place to start!



Exploring the magic carpet theme in drama whilst listening and appraising.