

Great School Framework

Case Study - Woolenwick Infant and Nursey School

www.woolenwickinfants.herts.sch.uk

Focus area

Co-ordinated by Woolenwick Infant and Nursery School, *Arc of Hope* is a collaboration aiming to bring the community together, circumventing isolation during the lockdown imposed by Government because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Aims/rationale

Children, families and educators alike were navigating this new way of living and working, managing the anxiety it brings and finding new ways to connect in a meaningful way.

Arc of Hope evolved from an idea from the children themselves.

Background context

The installation responds to the overwhelming community spirit which has emerged during the lockdown, and the message of hope that *Rainbows for the NHS* has brought to the whole country. Woolenwick Infant and Nursery School is an outward looking school with strong links with a number of other schools and community partners. Despite the skeleton staff in most schools and the fact that many community partners were working from home, senior leaders used a variety of channels including email, Whatsapp and phone calls to encourage as many partners as possible to take part in the collaboration.

The story

Families emailed in photos of rainbows in support of the NHS which they had displayed their windows at home. They became part of an informal national trail which children in the community enjoyed spotting on their daily walks. We submitted the images to the local press and the story was published.

www.thecomet.net/news/stevenage-rainbow-trail-keeps-town-smiling-1-6582243

The children's interest continued to develop. The children became fascinated with the symbolism of rainbows. Individual children created rainbow pictures which we posted to the NHS. The keyworker children designed chalk rainbows on the playground to share on social media. But the children realised that the chalk would wash away and wanted something more permanent. Also, they were missing their friends and we talked about taking photographs.

At the same time, senior leaders worked with a local graphic designer to realise the children's idea for a rainbow of photographs.

Schools were emailed an explanatory sheet to share with families. The graphic designer had direct access to the inboxes, downloading images as they came in. This enabled the *Arc of Hope* to have a swift turn-around time of three weeks from inception to delivery.

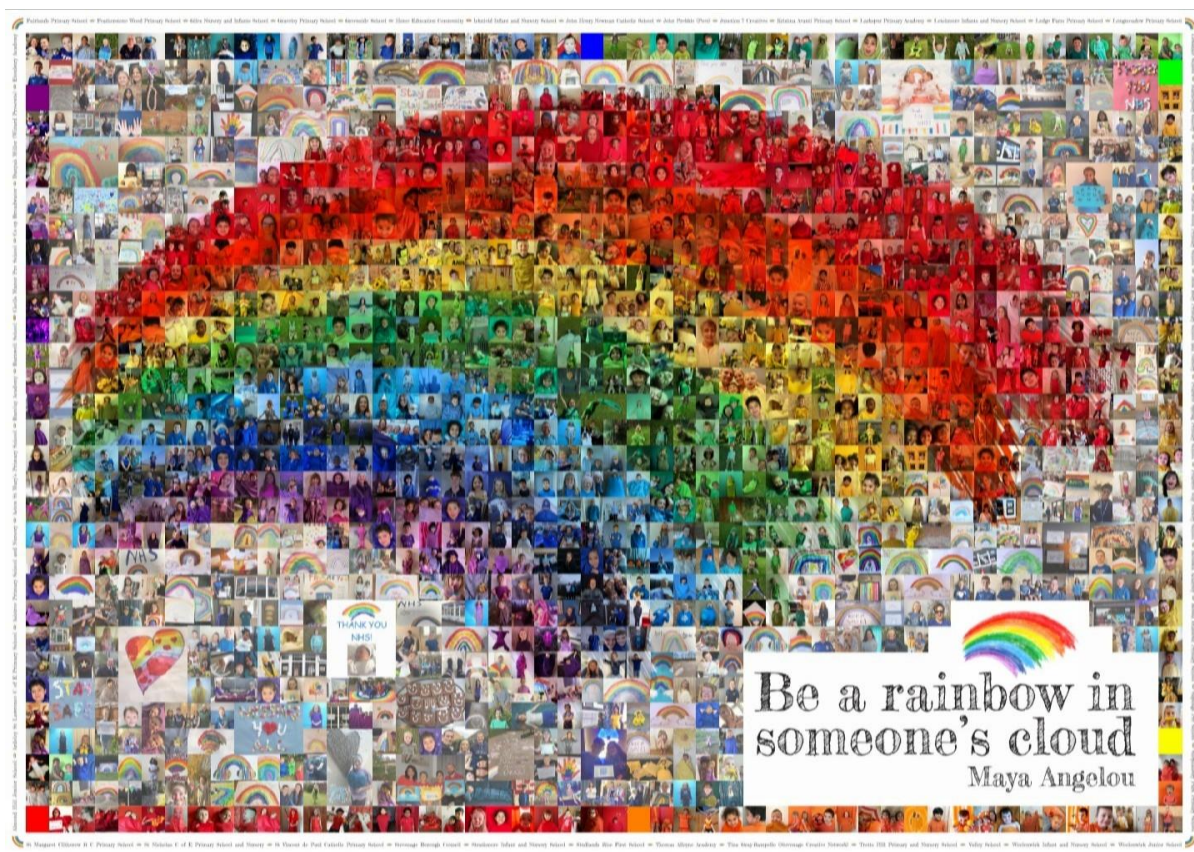
The digital rainbow is compiled of over 1,400 selfies of families from the community, dressed, draped or painted in one of the colours of the rainbow. This is surrounded by images of rainbows, created in support of all keyworkers.

This collaborative project involved 39 schools across all phases, as well as community groups and friends of the schools, all credited in the border.

Impact

Headteacher, Usha Dhorajiwala commented,

"Everyone appreciates a positive message in these difficult times. Arc of Hope has been a fantastic way of bringing the community together and giving everyone who sees it a reason to smile."



"Thank you so much for sending this through to me - it's truly glorious what an incredible project - Well done, Woolenwick!!! You must be so proud of yourselves and the whole Woolenwick family! I really hope that it wins the award - it certainly deserves to. I'm keeping everything crossed!"
Danyah Miller, Storyteller and Performer, Wizard Presents.

"It looks great and so warm and bright during these difficult times."
Stephen McPartland, Member of Parliament for Stevenage.

"We at ROH Bridge are so impressed with your artwork that we would love to order a copy of the print to display in our office at Purfleet."
Sally Manser, Head of ROH Bridge Programme, Learning and Participation, Royal Opera House.

"The Arc of Hope is truly beautiful and, as its name suggests, a representation of everything positive in these difficult days."

Anne Peck, District Schools Effectiveness Advisor, Herts for Learning Ltd.

"This is wonderful. Thanks so much for sending it over. We'll include it in the newsletter."

Liz Gore, Project Co-ordinator, Hertfordshire Year of Culture.

"This is absolutely lovely! What a fantastic idea to bring together the community in such challenging times. Thank you for sharing this with me – did put a much-needed smile on my face."

Lucky Khera, Lead Early Years Adviser, Herts for Learning Ltd.

"What a wonderful piece of work. Please pass on my thanks and congratulations to the children and staff for an extraordinary and outstanding effort."

Sharon Taylor, OBE, BA (Hons),

Leader of the Council, Stevenage Borough Council.

"Congratulations! Such special work under such challenging circumstances.

Well Done!"

Christina Luchies, Head of Centre, Stevenage Music Centre.

"The Arc of Hope is absolutely stunning! It brought a tear to my eye. What an amazing thing to do. It's beautiful."

Leanne Merrigan, Parent.

"Such a beautiful and meaningful project! It is so true that during such different times, positive energy like this is so crucial."

Yuyin Xie, Teacher from New Zealand.

"I think this artwork is wonderful and my daughter took part, so I am especially proud."

Chantelle Pitts, Parent.

"What a wonderful idea! It is truly inspirational and has such an impact."

Anne Spencer, IQM Assessor and Cluster Lead.

The story was covered by the local press and shared with the national press.

www.thecomet.net/news/woolenwick-stevenage-leads-arc-of-hope-project-during-coronavirus-pandemic-1-6622325

Reflections

A small number of Stevenage schools were unable to participate.

Circumstances intervened for some partners (including the East of England Ambulance Service) which prevented their participation.

All participants and interested parties were able to purchase a professionally printed, high resolution copy of the design on Foamex. For example, the Royal Opera House Bridge were unable to take part because staff were furloughed but have ordered a copy for the ROHB office in Purfleet.

Next steps

Arc of Hope has been submitted to the Royal Academy for the Young Artists' Summer Show 2020.

There has also been interest in displaying the installation in the public domain in Stevenage.

We hope to gift a permanent board of the image to the NHS at Lister Hospital to express gratitude from the whole community.

We are investigating the possibility of co-ordinating a fundraising event across all Stevenage schools and wider, once schools reopen.