

# School Leaders as Lead Learners in Embedding Learning Through the Arts in the Primary Curriculum

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# Project Background

- Paul Hamlyn Foundation – UK-wide charity whose mission is “to help people overcome disadvantage and lack of opportunity, so that they can realise their potential and enjoy fulfilling and creative lives”
- **Teacher Development Fund:** launched in June 2016 with the aim of *“building the skills, knowledge, confidence and interconnectedness of teachers. Funding continuing professional development & learning, across the four Home Nations, which could support teachers to embed learning through the arts in the curriculum”*
- Emphasis on five areas including:
  - The contributions of school leaders and arts practitioners as supporters of embedding learning through the arts in the curriculum (ELTAC), as well as professional learners themselves



# Overview of pilot projects

- ‘Cerdd Iaith/Listening to Language’ – led by the **British Council Wales** (focused on music, drama & dance)
- ‘The Art of Learning’ – led by **Creative Scotland** (focused on multiple art forms)
- ‘Concordia’ – led by **Hotspur Primary School** (focused on singing)
- ‘Full Steam Ahead’ – led by **Into Film** in Belfast (focused on film)
- ‘Performing Pedagogy’ – led by the **RSA** and **Arts Connect** (focused on drama)
- A project led by the **RSC** and **IVE** (formerly Cape UK) focused on drama and the use of learning through rehearsal room techniques



# Methodology & Scope

- Formative Evaluation – conducted using:
  - In Year 1 – documentary analysis; carefully designed practitioner/ leaders enquiry tools; evidence from site visits and cross-project Sharing Events; phone interviews with providers and project participants; and 3 separate participant surveys
  - In Year 2 – as above, in addition to CUREE case studies of successful embedding and leadership in four schools; and phone interviews with PHF staff plus for context, minutes from PHF Advisory Group meetings; collaborative work between CUREE and project grantees in framing pilot project theories of change;
- Evaluating the fund as a whole rather than individual projects\*
- Formative feedback on interim analyses of programme data through cross-project sharing events across the year and grant manager liaison



# Recognising the potential role of school leaders in embedding learning through the arts

- Only one project in Y1 positioned school leaders as learners
- Much ELTAC activity was being done by arts practitioners (APs) and classroom teachers, and viewed as project-specific, rather than building towards a whole school approach, with contributions from school leaders tending to fall into:
  - Organisational, problem-solving capacity (in the majority of schools)
  - Participating as learners in skills development alongside teachers



# School leaders recognising their potential

- Early survey evidence revealed an appetite amongst leaders to make strategic contributions to ELTAC and a number of ideas how to do so, including:
  - Creating the conditions for ELTAC – re-stating the vision curriculum and possible making this part of performance management
  - Ensuring planning is linked effectively to whole school-development
  - Going beyond up-skilling of teachers – wanting ELTAC to push teachers to approach the curriculum holistically



# How the role of leaders in ELTAC was realised in projects and schools (1)

## **School leaders participating as lead learners in project CPDL**

- In Y1, the CPDL leader involvement was usually slight and operational
- Only one project positioned school leaders as learners and even then support was more focussed on content than geared towards strategic leadership and/or the challenges of embedding practices across the school
- Awareness of the gap grew across the year through exploration of the projects evidence alongside broader research findings such as those from the Robinson BES on leadership that impacts of pupils success during sharing days
- This culminated in a leadership sharing day involving two leaders from each school in each project



# Key issues emerging from the leadership day

The cross-project leadership sharing day reinforced school leaders having an appetite to make strategic contributions to ELTAC. For example, seeing their potential contributions focusing on:

- Treating staff as their class and offering them ELTAC experiences
- Creating the conditions for ELTAC
- Showing colleagues examples of fantastic student work to make teachers' want to know "how can I do that?"
- Going beyond up-skilling of teachers –ELTAC has to push teachers to approach the curriculum holistically
- Understanding how ELTAC helps leaders with their key role in stripping back busyness to enable depth





# Other key findings re leadership from the year 1 report

- Role of APs as leaders and teachers
- Links between the intervention and the curriculum
  - Yr 1 there was clear evidence of projects making clear links between CPDL content, teaching practice based on CPDL, and content for teachers and some leaders.
  - Involvement of leaders was limited
- All projects need to make more strategic use of and provide for deeper support to and engagement of school leaders



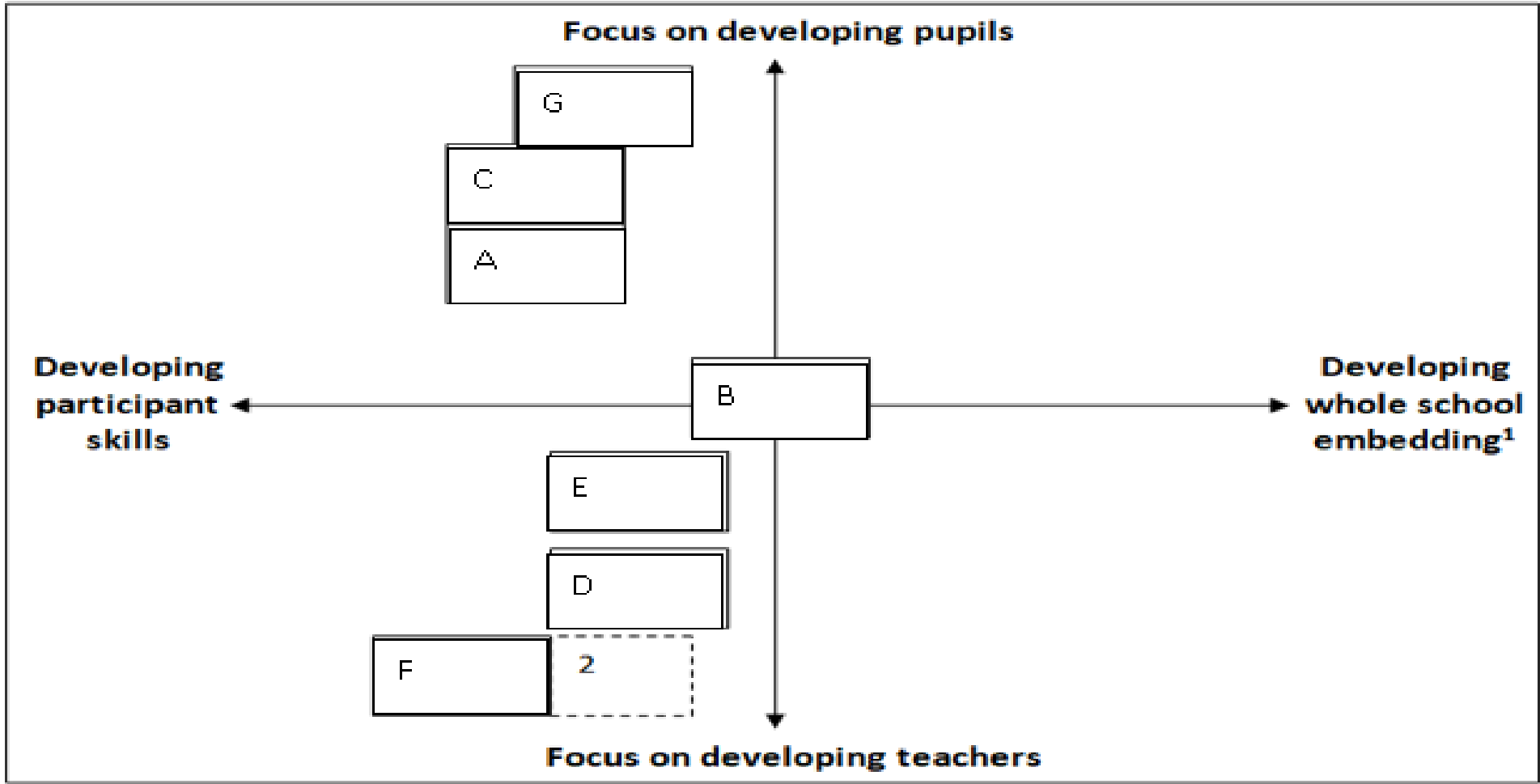


# Realising leadership contributions to ELTAC towards the end of Year 1 and increasingly in Year 2 (2)

**School leaders interacting with the interventions in school, including:**

- In one project, requiring leaders to monitor the impact of the intervention by observing arts-based learning in lessons and providing feedback to project managers
- Reflecting on their strategic role in whole school learning and cascade, by contributing to enquiry tools





<sup>1</sup> In the first pilot year whole school embedding efforts were preliminary



# Moving from year 1 to year 2

- In the light of the evaluation from year 1 of the pilot, applications for a second year's funding required a strong focus on embedding ELTAC and positioning leaders as lead learners.
- So Y2 design for projects included specific CPDL opportunities for leaders, including:
  - Initial meetings between grantees, all leaders (and often APs) to lay a deeper foundation of relationships and shared knowledge about the schools for the focus on embedding ELTAC
  - Encouraging leaders to attend teacher development days and providing specific sessions to address their needs and interests and build networks between them
  - (In some projects) specific sessions for whole schools, focused on peer learning around school development, curriculum mapping and embedding



# How the role of leaders in ELTAC was realised in projects and schools (3)

**Leadership support for sustainability in year 2** – this was also prevalent from the strongest enquiry tools submitted by schools, which offered sophisticated reflections from leaders about maintaining momentum, including:

- Building the approach into wider school systems around peer learning, coaching and monitoring systems
- Prioritising learning through the arts in whole school planning
- Identifying opportunities to widen the reach e.g. to pupils in other year groups or other areas of the curriculum

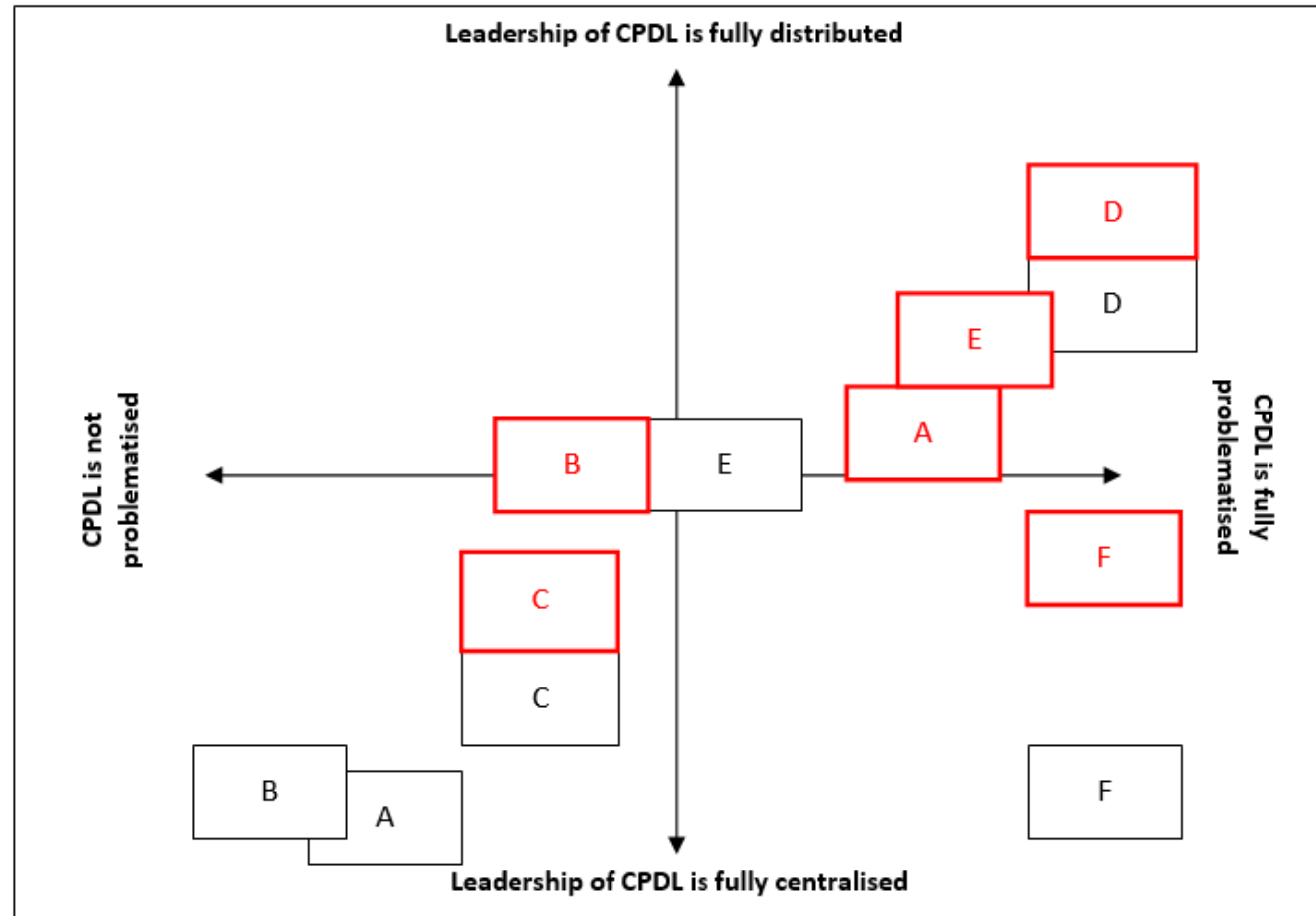


# Headline Findings from Y2

- Leading and promoting ELTAC was reported as more effective within their schools
- In majority of projects strong evidence of school leaders reflecting on their strategic role in whole school learning and cascade
- Increased commitment to ELTAC resulting in maintained momentum and potential progress



# Demonstrating the movement from Y1-2



Black: position of project in Y1, Red: position of project in Y2





# Project Case Study

- A series of CPDL sessions were conducted, with a group consisting of leaders, teachers and APs
  - **First session:** session promoted professional collaboration as part of the CPDL content, whilst clarifying the specific foci.
  - **Second session:** demonstrate progress so far, followed by discussion with lead AP, providing tool and advice. Leaders were taken to another room and given specific CPDL to help support colleagues and act in a “champion”-type capacity in the project
  - **Rest of sessions:** light-touch coaching to help them use what they have learned





# Project Case Study

- On the whole, the quality of the CPDL for embedding learning through the arts in the curriculum (ELTAC) is very high
- **Design for the project provides not only rhythm but a strong, natural, non-repetitive and differentiated structure throughout the year**, with multiple opportunities for professional reflection on practice, consolidating learning and celebrating achievements
- The structure is **designed with an eye to collaboration and public sharing and delivery** (although the focus in terms of the specific content is more on collaboration between pupils than colleagues collaborating with each other), and has **space made for leadership input and learning as well as just classroom practitioners**, meaning that there is an eye for sustainability.



# What's happening next?

- Evaluators –
  - Currently finalising the pilot final report for the Foundation
  - Co-constructing with PHF colleagues and TDF pilot grantees a public-facing report, to be published later this year
- For the Fund –
  - 6 projects have been awarded grants for the 2018 roll-out of the Fund
  - Delivery is due to commence this month
  - A new round call for proposals will open in later 2018/ early 2019



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