

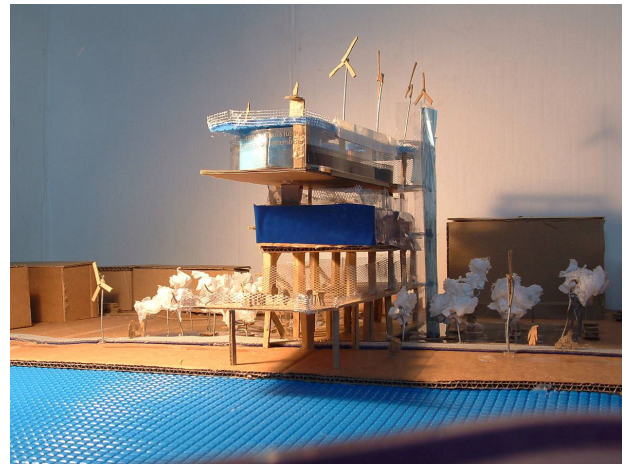
# Shaping Places

## education programme

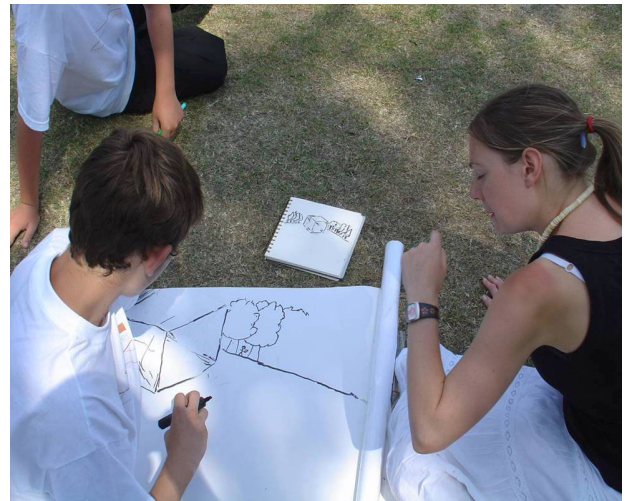
*Shaping Places* is the name of the education programme, developed by the Kent Architecture Centre, which aimed to bring together teachers, artists and built environment practitioners to develop projects in schools in south east England, which would introduce young people to the process of change in relation to a part of their local townscape.



The programme's long-term ambition is to engage young people in the urban design process in the hope that the next generation might be better prepared to play an active role in future in shaping the built environment, whether as citizens, designers or built environment practitioners. The stepping stone to this ambition was to work with a number of schools across the south east in order to generate a substantial body of knowledge about the scope of environmental design studies, to identify possible content and appropriate methods, and to make explicit the contributions from different subject disciplines and professions, which could then be shared more widely through publication, in both hard copy and web-based formats. The *Shaping Places* publication explains what has been learned from the process of inter-professional collaboration in education through projects in 15 schools and emphasises those ideas and methods of learning and teaching that can transfer to other schools and be used by other educators. The publication, while aimed primarily at teachers, may also be useful in relation to learning about design and change in the built environment in other settings.



The programme was piloted in two schools in each of two locations, Ramsgate and Havant, in the summer of 2004 and a further six projects took place involving 11 schools during the summer term 2005. Funding for the programme was secured from SEEDA (South East England Development Agency), cabé (Commission for Architecture & the Built Environment), and Arts Council England, South East. The programme has engaged with a wide range of partners, including Creative Partnerships, local authorities, RTPi (Royal Town Planning Institute) and RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects).



The original proposal contained ambitious targets for built environment practitioners and artists to work with pupils in schools across the south east region, and to work with teachers through in-service training sessions. The programme aimed to engage with a wide range of regional organisations in its delivery. This programme of activity with schools and teachers would produce a body of evidence, including case study material, which could then be evaluated and written up to be disseminated through some form of publication to be sent to every school in the region.

The underlying intention behind the programme was to identify strategies for engaging young people, for anticipating change and visioning, and to consider the pros and cons of a range of options, in the context of the development and/or regeneration of their local area, which could be transferable. In essence, the intention was to develop a robust process model.



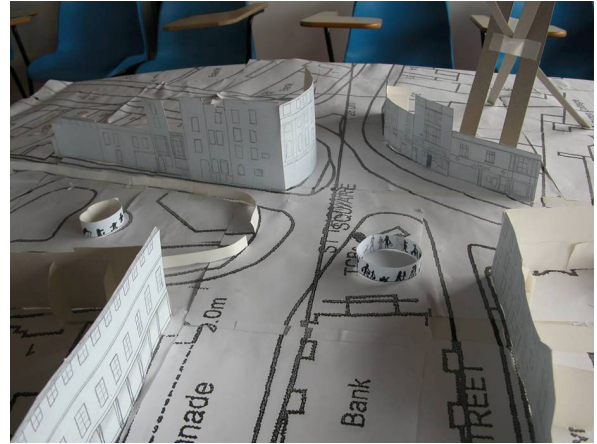
The evaluation of the programme by Eileen Adams confirmed that the *Shaping Places* programme had succeeded in achieving all its broad objectives.

The projects in schools raised pupils' awareness of and increased their interest in the built environment. They developed pupils' ability to participate in the process of shaping the environment by developing positive attitudes to dealing with change and by nurturing skills to enable them to visualise the possible impact of proposed changes.



Teachers adapted ways of working in art and design and geography to contribute to built environment education, environmental design and education for sustainability.

Artists and built environment practitioners shared their expertise and gained an understanding of how young people learn in schools.



Inter-professional collaboration helped to develop new strategies for learning and teaching through project work, using a range of media, including 2D, 3D, photographic media and words, making connections between visual literacy and verbal literacy. Spatial understanding was a key element. The use of project work and design activity featured importantly in how learning was organised.



The programme developed the capacity of two architecture centres and supported the development of their architecture education programmes: The Kent Architecture Centre in Chatham and the Solent Architecture Centre for Architecture + Design in Southampton. The programme brought the two architecture centres into a close working partnership, and helped to develop their work and strengthened links between them and organisations across the region.

By means of regional seminars organised by the Kent Architecture Centre, the programme created a forum through which teachers, artists and built environment practitioners could report on work in progress and come together as educators, sharing their knowledge and skills.



The programme involved a wide range of organisations across the southeast region with interest in built environment education, strengthening links between, promoting networking and mutual support and establishing a regional network.



The programme established a forum for wide dissemination of the project through the publication of *Shaping Places*. Planning for an associated INSET / CPD programme in the region is currently being developed in collaboration with local education authorities. Through publication of the book, *Shaping Places*, and the intention to make pdf copies more widely available, the programme has created guidelines for learning and teaching for use in schools and community settings not only regionally, but nationally, and internationally.

The evaluation process identified a number of benefits that arose through participation in the *Shaping Places* programme, for the pupils, the professionals and the schools themselves.



The benefits identified for pupils included:

- Enriched learning experience through opportunities to work with people from different professional communities.
- Opportunity for children in the transition phase between Key Stages 2 and 3 to engage in project work and make connections between different areas of study.
- Opportunities for experiential learning outside school.
- Experience of project work, involving a variety of learning styles and media.
- Experience of groupwork involving cooperation and collaboration.
- Experience of study that was relevant and important to their locality and their future lives as citizens.
- The development of a wide range of skills, including intellectual skills, both subject-based and generic, design, communication and social skills.



The benefits for professionals were:

- Working with colleagues from other disciplines and professions was an opportunity to experience a variety of approaches to environmental design education and provided a new perspective for many as to how they viewed their professional role.
- The programme provided support for teachers from art and design and geography departments to work with artists and built environment professionals for environmental design projects. Teachers were able to extend their professional boundaries, acquire new subject-knowledge and develop new ways of supporting learning activities.
- The experience of working with architects influenced teachers' thinking about the built environment and the challenge of dealing with change. The programme obliged teachers to consider how to accommodate these ideas into their teaching.
- Artists and built environment professionals saw how their professional knowledge could transfer to a setting outside their usual field of work and had relevance for general education.
- Artists and built environment professionals learnt about the constraints on learning imposed by precedent, established departmental relationships and hierarchies, the school timetable, the weight of administrative duties, health and safety considerations and pupils' expectations.
- Teachers, artists and built environment professionals had extensive support from the two architecture centres for inter-professional collaboration, not only through establishing partnerships between teachers, artists and built environment professionals to work on the projects in schools, but in providing a conceptual framework for the projects, educational expertise and managerial assistance.



The benefits for participating schools included:

- The cross-phase connections strengthened links between the secondary schools and their feeder primaries and showed how learning and teaching strategies could be adapted to suit the needs of different age groups.
- An enhanced curriculum and cross-curriculum connections.
- Greater social relevance to school topics.
- Raised levels of achievement.
- Creative approaches to learning and teaching.
- A wider range of community links and a raised public profile.

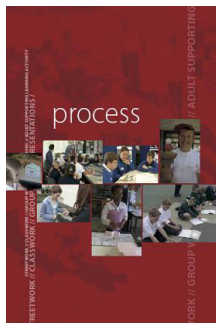


Although there were clearly many benefits to being involved in the Shaping Places programme, it was not without its problems. Many schools were not geared up to accommodate the ways of working required by project-based learning related to environmental design and to inter-professional collaboration in education. The use of the environment as an educational resource, working

outside the classroom, learning based on experiential, investigatory and experimental modes, stronger community links, the use of a wide range of resources and the need for flexibility and adaptability made demands on schools that challenged traditional timetables and established organisational patterns. However, I think it is fair to say that in all cases the benefits far outweighed the problems.

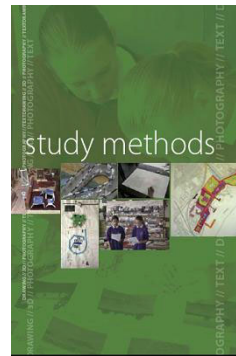
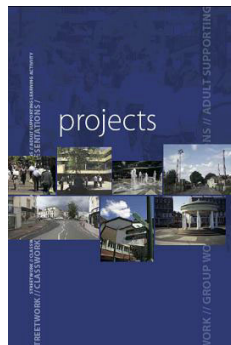


The key outcome of the evaluation was the book, *Shaping Places*, which goes beyond the usual presentation of case studies and is in four parts: process; projects; study methods; and working together.



Process explains how involvement in design and designing can be a learning process for pupils, extending their experience of the built environment, deepening their understanding and helping them to think about the process of change.

Projects describes ways in which schools in the programme developed studies related to environmental issues in their local area. Students in secondary schools and pupils in their primary feeder schools followed similar programmes of study, adapted for the different age groups. A key factor in all the projects was the need to consider possibilities for change.



Study methods explains methods and techniques used in the programme that can be adapted by any school. Many of the approaches will be familiar to geography and art and design teachers. The aim here is to clarify how these methods can be used in environmental design projects and the sequence of study that other schools can adopt to develop their own environmental design projects and provides a wealth of study activities that can be adapted to suit different age groups.

Working together focuses on relationships, particularly the value of group work. Approaches were developed through teachers from different disciplines and phases working with artists and built environmental professionals. The methods shown here can be adapted to a variety of settings.



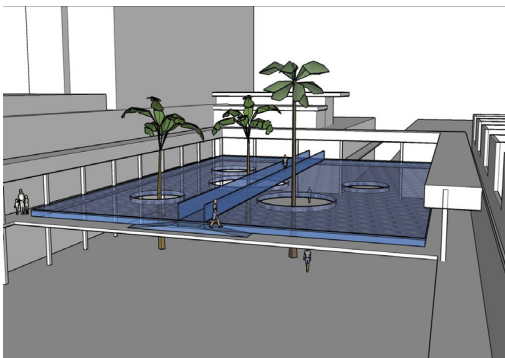
The sections on Projects and Working Together include quotes from participants to illuminate their particular experiences and clarify what they had learned. The sections on Process and Study Methods identify frameworks and ways of working that can transfer to other schools. The section on Working Together raises issues related to inter-professional collaboration in education.



The range of projects and study methods is not exhaustive or comprehensive, but the book does identify a wide variety of models, approaches and techniques that can be adapted to different situations. In addition, the book:

- Provides evidence of inter-professional collaboration in education.
- Argues the case for environmental design projects to be included in the school curriculum.
- Exemplifies possible content of projects and explains methods involved in project-based learning.
- Can be used to develop a policy for environmental education, to ensure that pupils experience different kinds of environments and a variety of study methods in successive years.
- Can be used by different subject teachers in secondary schools (particularly art and design, geography and design technology) to develop multi-disciplinary or interdisciplinary projects.
- Can help artists and built environment professionals contribute to educational programmes.

The book is intended for teachers who wish to develop environmental design projects dealing with change. It will be of particular interest to teachers in art / design, geography, design technology and ICT in secondary schools and teachers in primary schools. The intention is to provide prompts and inspiration as well as a framework and strategies for study for both experienced teachers and for those contemplating environmental and design projects for the first time. A copy will be sent free of charge to every school in the south east region during the next few months, and the pdf version is available via email.



The publication of Shaping Places does not mark the end of a programme, but launches the beginning of a new phase of development, when other schools will be invited to develop their own projects.



If you would like to know more about the programme, please get in touch with Annette Hards at the Kent Architecture Centre- on 01634 401166 or [annette.hards@kentarchitecture.co.uk](mailto:annette.hards@kentarchitecture.co.uk)