

Pilrig Park School pupils learn through dance



A special school in Edinburgh is helping its learners develop skills they can use in their adult life thanks to an innovative theatre arts course that has helped them stage sold-out shows at one of Europe's biggest theatres.

Pilrig Park School for children and young people with additional support needs, uses dance across its curriculum to help its learners develop valuable skills for learning, life and work. Problem solving, team building, confidence and social skills learned through the course have given the pupils the confidence to create an end of year show at Edinburgh's Festival Theatre.

The shows, which have been running for the past seven years, provide the opportunity for learners at Pilrig Park to showcase their talents thanks to the inclusive approach to learning about theatre. Using the skills learned through dance and choreography in different contexts allows learners to solve problems in lessons on numeracy and literacy skills for example that has had a positive effect on their learning outcomes, confidence and self-esteem.

The innovative approach has been used in a [case study film](#), Creativity through dance at Pilrig Park School that is featured as an example of good practice by Education Scotland on their Journey to Excellence website to inspire practitioners from across the country. The film has been designed to complement Education Scotland's 3-18 thematic review of creativity, which was published last year.



Ellen Muir, Headteacher of Pilrig Park School said: "The theatre course at Pilrig Park has massive benefits for the children and young people who take part as it allows them to work collaboratively with each other, as well as parents, staff and partners across all aspects of theatre production including the actual content and choreography of the show, as well as set design, marketing and promotion which gives them a truly holistic experience.

"The course gives learners the chance to develop their confidence and skills that will benefit them when they leave school, which is the ultimate aim for us as practitioners, while also offering professional learning opportunities for staff to gain further qualifications in stage management for example.

"We're really privileged to feature on Education Scotland's Journey to Excellence website as an example of good practice in creativity and hope that the work we do at Pilrig Park School will inspire others."

Lesley Brown, Assistant Director for Families, Inclusion and Local Authorities at Education Scotland, said: "We are really pleased to launch this case study from Pilrig Park School exemplifying features of innovative work in Creativity.

"We hope this is a helpful professional learning resource that will support practitioners in developing their practice that in turn improves outcomes for children and young people. I would like to thank the practitioners, learners and all who were involved in sharing their practice. We look forward to further expanding on this with more examples of how our schools are leading the way in developing learning opportunities unique to their learners."

The case study film by Pilrig Park is one of 34 case studies available from the Journey to Excellence website to demonstrate the breadth and depth of quality learning

experiences for children and young people across a range of settings.

The films will sit alongside a range of resources on the JtE website for practitioners to build their capacity for improvement through reflection, discussion and planning for change. The case study film is available to download free from our Journey to Excellence website or iTunesU.