

**ROOM 13
CASE STUDY REPORT**

FOREWORD

Room 13 began in 1994, and it has grown organically ever since. The process of growth has mainly been through a number of step changes, both in ambition and in resources. A key step change took place in 2002 at the original Room 13 in Caol Primary School, which kick-started the process of increasing the number of Room 13s, both in and beyond Fort William. These recent activities are already feeding into the future planning of further expansion and improvements.

NESTA has been closely engaged with Room 13's activities since 2003. As a public funder, NESTA's aims have included the testing of new ways to:

1. help the development of young people through their engagement with the arts;
2. enhance young people's understanding and knowledge of enterprise and entrepreneurial skills.

NESTA has been particularly interested in understanding and sharing the learning from the Room 13 experience in order to maximise the way that other individuals and organisations can learn from it too.

NESTA commissioned an external review in order to document some of the experiences of the last three years and explore what has been learnt during this period. Room 13 now has a considerable history, but given the ambitions that underpin its activities, it is also still young.

The writer of the following report is Mary Jane Drummond. She is a specialist in early childhood care and education, and a popular speaker who contributes to a variety of inter-disciplinary conferences, seminars and courses. She was an infant teacher for many years before becoming a lecturer at the Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge, teaching on a variety of continuing professional development courses. She has a distinguished record in research and evaluation, and is the author of a number of studies based on observations in nursery and primary classrooms. A new edition of her book 'Assessing Children's Learning' was published by David Fulton in 2003.

Since her recent retirement, she works closely with the Newcastle-based Sightlines Initiative, the UK reference point for Reggio Children, and centre of a national network of educators who are developing innovative and creative practice inspired by the pre-schools of Reggio Emilia, N. Italy. She also works as academic consultant to Big Wide Talk, a national research project funded by the Gatsby Foundation, which is developing radical new models of participation for families and practitioners.

While reading this report, we would like you to keep in mind the fundamental question of "what makes a room a Room 13?" Room 13 was not born out of an explicit aim created by educators. The original idea arose because particular primary school children experienced working alongside an artist, and wanted to continue the experience. When faced with the practical reality that he would stay if he was paid, they set about trying to do that. The subsequent determination, enthusiasm and

achievements of the members of Room 13 were sufficient to make the wider arts and learning communities take note and get involved.

By being an artist, by running a studio, by managing a social enterprise, by learning from one's peers, all Room 13 participants are developing the skills and attitudes that underpin innovation. Learning, in the context of a Room 13, develops self-awareness and ambition among all members, along with a sophisticated understanding of risk and collaboration skills. The members of Room 13, both young and old, continue to demonstrate their commitment to, and their capacity for, innovation.

It is important to note that there is not even the loosest prescribed learning agenda for the young artists; neither is there a prescribed teaching agenda for the paid artists. Additionally, there is no prescribed role for the school. Members of Room 13 argue that the rigour in their educational model comes through philosophical and moral teaching through the arts, with the aim of promoting intellectual and artistic development across all ages. But who learns what and how is in the hands of the learners, young and old.

Although the Room 13 model is not so hard to understand, conceptually, and has significant historic roots, it is not so easy for those who have not had a direct experience to comprehend what it does and how it works. Those who are directly involved are also still learning about how to develop the practice. Additionally, although the art work and music produced by Room 13 members, and some of the individual learning experiences are easy to merit, the connection between the work, the learning, the model and the activity is not a simple one.

We believe that this report builds on the work that has already been done by those involved in Room 13 and the earlier researchers, commentators and evaluators who have explored and analysed their activities. We have found the resultant document to be insightful, credible and valuable, and we hope that it will prove so to Room 13's many constituencies and all who are interested in their approach.

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	page 5
2. OUTLINE OF WHAT FOLLOWS	page 9
3. ROOM 13 IN ACTION	page 12
4. THE TRYPTICH	page 22
5. WHAT CAN BE LEARNED FROM ROOM 13?	page 43
REFERENCES	page 51
APPENDICES	
1. THE EXPANSION OF ROOM 13	page 53
2. LANDMARKS IN THE LIFE OF ROOM 13	page 58
3. THE WORK OF THE MANAGEMENT TEAMS	page 60
4. CRITICAL APPRECIATION	page 64
POSTSCRIPT	page 73

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 WHAT IS ROOM 13?

Room 13 is a democratically run studio that works along normal business lines. The unusual thing is that its management team is aged between 8 and 11. The project has been running for 10 years (in Caol Primary School, Fort William) and has grown organically from being a one day a week thing to now having its own room and two artists in residence. It is open from 8.30am until 6pm Monday to Friday. It is a meritocracy (though our idea of merit might well be different from yours) and we organise everything ourselves. It is quite possible to walk out of class and go to the studio at any point in the day...the only rule is that we must keep our class work up to date.

This description is taken from the original proposal submitted to NESTA, after preliminary discussions, in the spring of 2003. The proposal came from the P6 and P7 students (aged 9 – 11) who were managing Room 13 Caol at the time. Three years down the road from the NESTA award, which was made in the summer of 2003, there are six Room 13s in the UK, all in maintained schools, five fully functioning, one still in the process of realisation. Five are in primary schools and one is in a secondary school. Of the functioning studios, three of them, including Caol Primary School, focus their practice on the visual arts. The other two have developed into music studios. More details are given in Appendix One.

While every Room 13 is unique, each having arrived at its present form by different pathways, they all share common principles, priorities and passions.

- Room 13 is, again in the words of the proposal,

an autonomous arts studio run completely by the youngsters who use it. It works at a very high academic level, and teaches through a 'hands on' approach, everything from arts skills and business practice to personal development and philosophy.

The management group is elected by the young people who use the studio; they employ the artist in residence, apply for funds and order supplies; they give lectures and seminars at conferences; they manage their own finances; they engage in a variety of artistic activities, both within and outwith the school. More details are given in Appendices Two and Three.

- Room 13 is located within, yet independent from the host school: the school gives the students the room, heating and lighting, but does not interfere or intervene in the management of Room 13.
- Room 13 is truly innovative in that it tries to change people's minds about creativity and what young people can do. The young artists in Room 13 are engaged in demonstrating to adults, teachers, parents and the artistic community at large, that arts education should not

be confined to the timetabled lesson, or to teacher-initiated classroom projects. The young artists in Room 13 form an independent self-determining community.

- The key ideas at the heart of Room 13 are integrity and individuality, to be realised and expressed through training and practice in the arts; these experiences stimulate, support and sustain intellectual and artistic development for all those who participate, of what ever age.
- Room 13 participants are highly ambitious in their aspirations, both for their own local community, school and studio, but also in terms of the wider world. They want to spread the message that the whole enterprise of education, across the UK, across both primary and secondary phases, has something to learn from Room 13. Indeed, the original proposal declares:

We really do think we can prove that Room 13 is a new and exciting way of teaching all the things that are not taught in the curriculum (in both Scotland and England) at the moment, while raising the standards of those subjects that are.

These, in a nutshell, are the defining characteristics of the work of Room 13. It is a high profile and successful alternative educational project, working within mainstream education in ways that are, to one expert commentator, 'frankly incredible.'

1.2 WHAT IS IMPORTANT ABOUT ROOM 13?

This report draws on a wide variety of evidence to demonstrate the educational and artistic significance of Room 13 and what is done there. However, unlike many evaluation reports, documenting more conventional education projects, it has relatively little to say in terms of facts and figures: there are no charts, graphs or tables showing patterns of attendance at Room 13, length of stay or numbers of pupils using the studios. By and large, students are free to enter Room 13 when they choose, with the permission of their class teacher and as long as their class work is up to date. There is no formal register to clock their arrivals and departures. Whenever the studio is open (which varies from site to site), there are likely to be young people there. The purpose of this report is not to quantify their comings and goings, but to document the quality of what is done in Room 13 in all its richness and complexity; the Room 13 concept, as it is lived out in practice, cannot be reduced to inert numerical information.

This report poses a question of considerable interest to educators of every kind, to parents, artists, policy makers and potential funders: 'What can be learned from Room 13?' It argues that the answer is to be found in a close examination of what its participants do and learn, and in a critical appraisal of the value of that doing, thinking and learning.

1.3 IMPORTANT IDEAS, IMPORTANT LEARNING

In Room 13, as this report will show, young people encounter significant ideas and engage in significant acts of learning. But since Room 13 exists independently of the structures of SEED, DfES, QCA or the English Primary National Strategy, the learning of the participants cannot be neatly mapped on to the framework documents of national initiatives, or centrally produced official directives. An alternative analysis is appropriate.

In Room 13, young people are learning both identity and solidarity. They are learning to be themselves, unique individuals with ideas of their own, which can be expressed in a variety of ways, in a rich variety of media. At the same time they are learning the practice of solidarity: the management group works as a team, on behalf of the community of Room 13. They allocate roles and responsibilities (Chair, Managing Director, Treasurer, Materials Manager, and so on), and divide up their tasks accordingly. They collaboratively manage their finances, fundraising, strategic planning, responding to emails, commissions and invitations from the outside world.

Furthermore, the students in the original Room 13 at Caol Primary School see the expansion into other schools for which they were funded as a way of building a wider community in the Fort William region, aiming to ensure that every pupil has the same opportunities that they have had. This is citizenship in action: these young people are learning to use their strengths as individuals and teams in the interests of others. They are both hopeful and ambitious for the future of their ever-widening national and international community.

The students in Room 13 are able to take on these responsibilities (and deliver the goods) because they have developed a remarkable degree of confidence, based on the emotional security that is offered in Room 13. They feel safe and positive about their participation in the particular kinds of learning that go on there; they accept the challenges and the risk-taking that are part of the Room 13 concept. They are learning a sense of acceptance and belonging; they know that they are equal members of the community, and that their contributions are recognised and valued by their peers, as well as by the adults in Room 13.

The young artists are adamant that they are not especially talented or exceptional in any way; the adult artists who work alongside them agree. But the young people are happy to admit that in Room 13 they are learning to think about things, and act on the world, in a different way from people in ordinary classrooms. Everything they do in Room 13 is focussed and purposeful: their learning has personal purpose and direction. Their activities have significance in the real world, their projects make human sense to them; they experience a powerful sense of control. The work of Room 13 has real relevance to their lives and pressing concerns: in their artworks they have the freedom to discover new meanings, make new connections. Their experiences in Room 13

strengthen their feelings of competence and control; they are learning the joy of success and achievement.

Above all, Room 13 students are learning to think for themselves, to reflect on the big, difficult and philosophical ideas they encounter in their lives; they are learning to reflect, to discuss and debate any and every thing that touches them. They have manifold opportunities to express their own ideas, their growing understanding of the world, in ways of their own invention. They think individually and together, they discuss and decide; and then they act. They fully understand and appreciate the support they receive from the artists, teachers and headteachers, but they know and are prepared to argue that there is more to Room 13 than the quality of adult involvement.

Indeed, one of the reasons the Caol management team is so dedicated to expansion is to prove just this point. 'For the Room 13 concept to survive, it (has) to prove its ability to be transferred to other schools,' they convincingly argued in their NESTA proposal; they went on to show how the establishment of a second Room 13, at nearby Lochyside, would demonstrate, conclusively, that their ideas and ways of working are 'not completely reliant on Mr. Fairley' (the first Room 13 artist in residence). They are fiercely defensive of their intellectual independence.

These key themes. independence, identity, solidarity, community, agency, acceptance, belonging, contribution, purposefulness, making meaning, relevance, thoughtfulness, will appear again and again in the pages that follow, as the evidence unfolds. The report draws on the insights of a variety of expert witnesses; their different accounts and individual perspectives, taken together, reveal the ways in which the unique environment of Room 13 stimulates and supports all these desirable qualities, all this important learning.

2. OUTLINE OF WHAT FOLLOWS

2.1 THE REVIEW PROCESS

When NESTA began to negotiate the proposed review with members of the Room 13 community, there were, initially, expressions of anxiety, reluctance and even resistance. A letter from Rob Fairley in September 2005 reflects some of these early apprehensions:

As you will know from the extensive correspondence between Room 13 and NESTA there has been considerable concern over the evaluative procedure, many of us fearing it would get in the way of the 'real job'... Room 13 undoubtedly has a profound influence on any school that embraces the concept and indeed on the society from which that school draws its pupils. It is a very subtle thing that relies on time and the level of trust built over time by the artist in residence, (the) management team and the school staff. It is not a quick fix solution. The connections between Duns Scotus (Dr. Subtlety) and our modus operandi are not fanciful academic imaginings! I am not sure how we can formulate a recognised evaluative procedure to understand this. It will be fun trying though!

The review process, including this report, has attempted to honour this subtlety, and the ethic of trust that is one abiding characteristic of the work of Room 13; it is fully participative, in that the voices of young artists, teachers and other adults are all represented; indeed these people should properly be seen as co-authors of the report. Drafts of the proposed methodology were made available to the management team and artist(s), and, in due course, the proposals were approved.

The wealth of descriptive material in the archive, and the rich variety of sources of evidence have been used to develop what the distinguished authority on educational evaluation, Elliot Eisner, calls *educational connoisseurship* or *educational criticism*. According to Eisner, the practice of educational connoisseurship involves the writing of richly detailed narrative accounts, focusing on 'the particular qualities of life and learning' in the schools and classrooms being studied. The function of these narratives is 'to help people see, understand and appreciate the character and quality of educational practice and its consequences' (1985:180).

Eisner's approach requires the evaluator to act without the impartiality of the criminal investigator but rather with the warmth and involvement of the connoisseur, who values and appreciates the character and quality of what is being studied. In a parallel argument, the great sociologist Mannheim rejects the 'false ideal of a detached impersonal point of view'; this must be replaced by 'the ideal of an essentially human point of view, within the limits of a human perspective'. 'Knowledge' he concludes 'is always from a position' (Mannheim 1936). The position taken in this report is an abiding interest in the capacities of children as learners, a commitment to their powers to think, to do, to feel, to understand, to represent and express, in ways of their own invention, a desire to document what happens to learning and learners in the unique

environment of Room 13, and to find some answers to the over-arching question: what can be learned from Room 13?

2.2 THE MATERIAL USED

Room 13 has a rich archive of material collected over the years. These include:

- papers, articles and reports by artists, including Room 13 students
- letters, emails and reports from parents, schools and potential partners
- newspaper articles and other media reports
- films made by Room 13 students for Channel 4
- analytical/academic papers by other researchers and evaluators.

In addition to these, three of the studios collected material over a sample week in March 2006. The writer also had the opportunity to observe, more closely, Room 13 in action at Hareclive Primary School.

Most of the material used in the body of the report focuses on Room 13 Caol, Room 13 Hareclive and Room 13 Lochyside. Caol Primary School now has a long history of having a Room 13 in contrast to the newer experiences of Hareclive and Lochyside. They are all visual arts based studios. The two music studios are even newer, so there is less available material at this stage in the life of their Room 13s.

Material that has been used directly to support the commentary and analysis is included in the main body of the paper. However, given the wealth of available evidence, further valuable material has been included in the appendices.

2.3 THE STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

SECTION THREE, ROOM 13 IN ACTION is in three parts. The first is an account of what an experienced writer and teacher observed during two long visits to Room 13 Caol in 2004; the second is a report of the observations made by the writer during three one-day visits to Room 13 Hareclive in 2006. In the third part, similarities between the two accounts are identified, and the significance of the observers' conclusions is discussed.

SECTION FOUR, THE TRIPTYCH presents the views of the participants in Room 13, the insiders' voices, rather than those of the outsiders. The first part contains a selection of material authored by the young artists and managers in Caol, Lochyside, Hareclive and Lochaber High School. The second part turns to the teachers, with extracts from interviews with staff at Caol, and a presentation by the reception class teacher at Hareclive. In the third part, there are contributions from the resident artists at Caol and Lochyside. Finally, there is a brief commentary on the significance of the testimony of these various 'expert witnesses'.

SECTION FIVE, WHAT CAN BE LEARNED FROM ROOM 13? starts with an analysis of the salient characteristics of Room 13 (what makes a room a

Room 13?). It identifies the key values and the principles derived from them that have emerged from the main body of the report. These values and principles have their roots in a long radical tradition, and the work of some of the theorists and thinkers within this tradition is briefly described. This discussion leads into an analysis of the distinctive kinds of learning that take place in Room 13; this is developed with reference to a recent empirical study of young people's learning. The second part examines the role of the adults in Room 13, emphasising the principles of care, respect, trust and inclusion, and the underpinning assumption of children's competence and efficacy. The third and final part elaborates the lessons that can be learned from Room 13, from the close alignment of value and principle, and from its participants' commitment to a just, harmonious, democratic society.

APPENDICES

ONE: THE EXPANSION OF ROOM 13 - notes on the current sites, in the UK and overseas.

TWO: LANDMARKS IN THE LIFE OF ROOM 13 – a selection of key events in the public domain.

THREE: THE WORK OF THE MANAGEMENT TEAM - a selection of material to illustrate the work of the management team.

FOUR: CRITICAL APPRECIATION – a selection of extracts from reflective and analytical commentaries on Room 13 by a wide variety of authors.

3. ROOM 13 IN ACTION

3.1 ROOM 13 CAOL

The first account is an edited extract from a long paper by David Gribble, who made two long visits to the studio in March and December 2004. David Gribble is a writer and teacher with an abiding interest in democratic education, in student autonomy and new experiments in the progressive tradition (see, for example, his 1988 book *Real Education: Varieties of Freedom*). It is reproduced here by kind permission of the author.

I must start by describing what I saw.

Room 13 itself is as untidy as any professional artist's studio. There are finished and unfinished canvases propped up in several different places. There is a sink full of not very well-washed brushes and paint trays. In addition there are two sets of book-shelves, three computers, a desk for the treasure and the secretary, a shelf of files labelled "Letters," "Receipts and Invoices," "Lucy's emails," "History of Room 13 Photo Album," "Orders," "Minutes," and so on, and a few insecure chairs and battered arm-chairs, a step-ladder for children painting canvases too large for them to be able to reach the top and a number of pin-boards with a huge variety of information ranging from posters for art exhibitions to a rather crumpled list of rules.

During my first visit I made notes of what was going on in the studio. Some extracts will show how difficult it was to form any overall opinion.

Thursday afternoon

- Eleven people present
- Cameron and Nick preparing a power-point presentation about the school council on a computer, scanning something; Nick goes off to get stationery.
- One girl with a bit of A3 drawing a lot of red stick men.
- Rosie and Ami painting two canvases with black acrylic, trying various ways to get it even. Rob offers some advice. (This is Rob Fairley, artist in residence.)
- A girl reading Mega Sleep-over Club.
- Rosie keeping everybody in order, fairly strictly
- A girl and a boy together painting a foot-square piece of board white; it had been painted before, and has a bumpy surface.
- Lucy and a friend are going off to take photographs of 'nothing' for the cover of some document. The 'nothing' has to be bright-coloured and apparently abstract. They have a digital camera. Their eight best pictures will be submitted (I think with others) to whoever it is who has commissioned the project. (Scottish Arts Council)
- Cameron comes in with a pack of pages of the Annual Report.
- Lots of people go off to extra gym.
- Sean was, as far as I can see, drawing a maze. He has gone to help collate the pages of the Annual Report.

- Ami and Rosie have finished their painting. Ami is at a computer.
- ...
- Stephanie has noticed that my biro is running out and has got me another one from a drawer without me asking. Rosie has told Cameron off for leaving the drawer open.
- Ami says "This is a typical afternoon with everyone shouting at everyone else." When I asked if it would be different if Mr Fairley were there she said yes, everyone would be good. (It didn't actually seem to me to be particularly unruly.)
- The wee photographers are back. Lucy has put the camera batteries into the recharger. The other is painting a brown castle on dark grey paper. Lucy starts drawing in pastel on the same sort of dark grey paper.
- Three children on chairs, three on the floor.
- Then two on chairs, two on the floor, two standing.
- Then back to the previous arrangement, which was due in part to Ami suggesting a helpful way of separating complete copies of the annual report, which is 30 pages long.
- Lucy is now also painting a castle, but she already has a white pastel moon up in one corner. As yet it is just a tower, and looks rather good. My guess is that she will go right across the page and seem a bit clumsy, like the other one. Now I see that the other one has a white moon too.
- Cameron and Nick are discussing whose computer can cope with the size of the powerpoint presentation.
- Lucy's friend is doing a black sky with a roller – it can't go between the battlements or up to the moon.
- Lucy's castle has a big gateway in the middle (or perhaps it is just somewhere to hold the paper without getting paint on her hand)
- Rosie and Ami are back with two messages from the office, one of them about an attempt to pay a cheque which has been refused because there is no sort code.
- End of school.

Lunch break on Friday

- Lucy and her friend are adjusting their photographs on the computer.
- Some very small boys are collecting masses of paints and using very little.
- Two girls are painting A3 sheets, over and over again, in swirls of colour.
- When the bell goes, Ami gets a mop to try to clear up a crushed blue pastel on the floor.
- Everyone else left before or just after the bell, except Lucy.
- A parcel arrives containing a new camcorder. Ami opens it and starts reading the instructions.
- Ami gives out A3 paper to two boys and a girl.
- Jennifer McCleod is sitting in an armchair glumly eating an apple.
- Ami reads the rules (!) to three boys and has a bit of an argument.
- Jennifer, wearing a very painty sweater, has started painting her white board (the square that was being painted white yesterday). She has drawn on it carefully in biro, and now she is painting round

a shape in blue.

2.45 on Friday

- Jennifer has finished her piece – it is blue and green round the outside of a white circle. She explained that this was an inversion of the usual cartoon of the world, which has a blue and green globe in the centre. In her white circle she has written all the days of the week, muddled up, because nobody likes school.
- Lucy and her friend are painting now – apparently coloured rectangles.
- Ami is keeping order.
- A boy is reading the National Geographic.

[The account continues, more discursively.]

John MacGillivray has only just started coming to Room 13. He has done a picture called "Money isn't everything." He took me to see it in his classroom. It is 1p and 2p coins on a dark blue background, like the stars in the sky. Money isn't everything, he explained, you have your family and other things that are more important. He did this picture because Mr Fairley said "good art doesn't need to take a while." It had only taken him one afternoon. For his next work he wants to break a bottle and stick the bits on canvas to reflect the sun, but he doesn't know what to call it, and the broken glass may be dangerous.

Most of the time I was the only adult in the room, and I was in an inconspicuous corner sheltered by a book-case. That is one of the extraordinary things about my observations. Another is that when the parcel arrived containing the new camcorder it was one of the children who unpacked it and began to read the instructions. Another is that two eight-year-old girls were allowed to take a school digital camera wherever they liked, and that they were later able to work on their photographs at the computer. (I asked Rob what their designs were to be used for, and he told me it was probably the cover of the corporate report for the Scottish Arts Council. Other direct commissions had come at different times from Scottish Natural Heritage, The Guardian, the Scottish Arts Council, Grounds for Learning, the West Highland Museum and the Highland Council.)

Another extraordinary thing is that the children had prepared and printed a thirty-page annual report, which they were now collating. Another is that the two boys were preparing a powerpoint presentation to show the parents. And another is, of course, the extraordinary variety of artistic activity. All this without adult control, and almost with adult supervision.

[The management element of Room 13]... at first seems frankly incredible. It is run by a management team of children who really write the cheques, keep the accounts, write the letters, answer the emails and write applications for a quarter of a million pounds. They have access to a balance of £20,000 in their bank account, mainly from art awards, but also from business transactions like the sale of DVDs of the Channel 4 film at £10 each, and the school photographs which raise £500-£800 a year.

In the Channel 4 film *Ami Cameron*, (then) the managing director, says, "As managing director I have to run meetings and organise them, I have to keep the room well-stocked with paint, paint-brushes etcetera, I have to keep the letters and emails up to date and we have to sell Christmas cards, postcards, T-shirts and bags and we do our own school photographs to raise money. I also have to make sure everyone tidies up, and I have to manage the room as well."

To outsiders this seems amazing, but to the children it seems normal. "They do it without thinking," said Miss Cattanach (headteacher at Caol). "They don't see anything remarkable about that. I mean, 'What's the fuss? So we write letters. Doesn't everybody?'"

I have visited schools all over the world which children are thought to be running themselves, but all of them have adult staff to deal with the secretarial and financial affairs. Why? Room 13 raises the question.

After my first visit I asked Rob a question in an email: "Does a lot happen without being discussed in the management group?" Rob's reply was, "...This varies from year to year. Two years ago Fiona would run everything past a management meeting. Danielle ran it almost as a dictatorship and Rose and Ami sit comfortably between the extremes." The striking thing about this reply is that Rob completely misses the implication of my question, which was that adults might sometimes make decisions without consulting the children. He obviously found any such idea inconceivable.

There is no censorship of the children's work, either in terms of quality of subject-matter, except for a rule, decided by the management group in 2001, that says, "No bedroom door signs. No football slogans. No 'silly' cards. No cartoons. No pouring paint on to paper, card or canvas just to make a pretty mess."

The range of interests encouraged is too wide to describe easily. An indication is the variety of books in the book-case. Art-books dominate, but on a non-art shelf I found this group of books next-door to each other: *Children on the Oregon Trail*, *Finnegan's Wake*, *Philosophical Problems* (actually a book of logic puzzles), *Sophie's World*, *Swallows and Amazons*, *Martin Pippin in the Daisy Field* and *The Rough Guide to Kenya*.

Joanne Kane told me that she liked to come to Room 13 to talk to Mr Fairley, and to ask him what she could do on her canvas. He only tells her, she said, that she has to think of it for herself. I asked Rob himself what sort of guidance or stimulus he gives. "Only my own curiosity," he said. "In as much as I wouldn't go into a professional colleague's studio and expect to proselytise or teach. I would just ask the children questions about their work, and expect to get perfectly reasonable answers... So I think in that respect it is just a professional relationship... And possibly even in writing workshops when you actually look at a piece of work and then say what you know – 'Do you realise that if it was punctuated this way, or if you missed out those words it would still mean the same thing?'"

– maybe you'd get the same result more easily. It's still the same sort of criticism."

It occurred to me as I was writing this that Rob's approach reflected the discovery made by George Williamson and Innes Pearse at the Peckham Centre in the 1930s: that "individuals, from infants to old people, resent or fail to show any interest in anything initially presented to them through discipline, regulation or instruction which is another aspect of authority." (Williams and Pearse's report on the first eighteen months of the Peckham Centre, quoted in Alison Stallibrass's book, *Being me and Also Us.*) The re-emergence of this idea in a society which bases its educational practice on an opposite thesis is enormously important.

If I were asked to describe the Room 13 approach in a single phrase, I would say it was a profound manifestation of trust. Children are trusted to do real things, to administer their own studio affairs, to negotiate with adults from outside the school, to weigh up the significance of world events, to face physical difficulties, to formulate and express their own philosophical ideas.

3.2 ROOM 13 HARECLIVE

The account that follows is by the writer who made three visits to Room 13 Hareclive in March and May 2006.

My first impression was of the generosity of the provision, the richness of the resources, and the extraordinary variety of what the young artists and Room 13 managers were doing with this abundance. To start with the materials available: at any one moment of the day there were up to seven different media in simultaneous use; over the three days of observation the young artists were seen using pens and quills, oil paints, pastels, paint, glue, crayons, pencils and various combinations of these, making screen prints, working with overhead transparencies and their projections on to large sheets of paper, working on photocopies of photographs, sometimes seriously enlarged, modelling with card, wire, boxes and paint.

There was a rich variety too in the range of groupings that I observed: children work in pairs, or in solitude, or in groups of different sizes. Groups form and reform as someone passes by, drops in to lend a hand, then returns to his or her own project. They work peacefully around one another in the floor space which is none too big for them, and amicably share materials. These artistic activities are embedded in the language of authentic studio practice. There was talk of the young artists' sketch books, portfolios and canvases. The children are familiar with the terms used by their two resident artists, Shani Ali and Paul Bradley, and use their professional vocabulary: piece, image, print, ideas.

The range of activities is richer still; there is more to see than the art works the children were creating. The young people's understanding of what needs doing in Room 13 is extraordinarily wide, as the list below suggests.

Activities observed (in addition to the art works in progress)

- counting the money from the sale of pencils, rulers etc in the Room 13 shop.
- paying in cheques, checking them against invoices
- googling a topic that has arisen in conversation (eg Frida Kahlo, pyramids, eclipses)
- preparing a spoken/written presentation
- preparing a powerpoint presentation
- writing real letters for real purposes (eg to the Arts Council)
- going off to the school office (unaccompanied) to use the school photocopier
- writing messages about a top secret forthcoming committee meeting
- ordering pencil sharpeners for the shop
- phoning a mail-order firm to enquire about the price and quality of some materials
- looking at the monthly diary on the computer to check dates for filming
- using the Borders website to order a book/spend a book token
- taking part in a management meeting
- meeting the architect/designer to discuss their needs for proposed new Room 13
- filming the meeting
- wiring up professional radio mikes and trying them out
- using the resident artist's mobile to phone the adult from the film crew who is running late
- phoning the school kitchen to check the day's menu, and order a school dinner for the observer (and later, collecting it from the kitchen)
- eating their packed lunches, lounging on the pale blue sofa¹ or wandering around the room, through the throngs of active children
- making an announcement to the whole room about a forthcoming event.

To an experienced classroom teacher, and a researcher with many hours of classroom observation under her belt, this is a magnificent list – not just for its scope but for the degree of autonomy exhibited by the children, who are genuinely running their own lives, socially, intellectually, responsibly. The work of Room 13, if that term does not demean what goes on there, is complex, multiple, demanding, engaging and authentic.

At least as remarkable as the children's active, practical engagement in Room 13 is their talk. Classroom talk has been the focus of a number of

¹ I was intrigued to learn the history of this sofa from a piece written by a group of Room 13 artists for a forthcoming Creative Partnerships publication; they describe a visit to Spike Island studios in Bristol "to see how artists set up their studio spaces and their exhibitions. On one occasion, the Director of Spike Island gave us a privileged behind-the-scenes peek at an artist's studio... On first walking into Ged Quinn's studio it felt and smelt different to the gallery. It was a bit messy with all the unfinished paintings, photographs and postcards around the place but in comparison to Room 13, his studio was tidy because many young artists use our room. There was a sofa that looked comfy. We liked the idea of having a sofa in the studio so we went out and got our room a sofa."

recent observation studies, in which researchers have recorded students' use of spoken language during the Literacy Hour, a DfEE initiative in English primary schools with the aims of 'high quality oral work' and 'interactive teaching (where) pupils' contributions are encouraged, expected and extended.' (DfEE 1998). In one such study, English et al (2002) examined the length of pupil utterances during the Literacy Hour in a sample of 30 classrooms in 15 schools; two Literacy Hours were observed in each class. They found that only 10% of the observations included children's responses of more than three words; only 5% were longer than 10 words. Or, put it another way, "nine out of ten pupil contributions are of less than three words" (English et al 2002:24), and, indeed, 19 out of 20 utterances are less than 10 words long.

In Room 13, there are conversations going on all the time, in every corner of the room; the children's talk is complex, spontaneous, elaborated, extended. The sheer volume of talk ("these children talk in *paragraphs*" I wrote in my notebook) the breath and depth of their talk, are characteristics of Room 13 Hareclive that are completely at odds with the findings of empirical studies of classroom talk reaching back over many years, to the work of the ORACLE project in 1976, for example, (Galton et al 1980) and, more recently, the seminal cross-cultural study of Alexander (2000); in all these studies, children's talk is restricted, limited, constrained by the teacher's directives and choice of topic.

But not in Room 13. The range of interests, the fields of enquiry that I observed were extensive: in just one short morning's observation, the topics discussed included the artist's pregnancy (and other pregnancies), eclipses, beauty and ugliness, books and how to treat them, the need for ideas in making art works, children's feelings, families, specific techniques (for printing), hangovers, chimpanzees and bonobo monkeys, Bush and Blair, Irish dancing, heroes and heroines, Frida Kahlo, News Round, Marilyn Monroe, the contents of one child's portfolio, human faces, prices of goods for the Room 13 shop, costs, profits and bargains (with much accompanying mental arithmetic). On top of all this, at other times there were more formal discussions: with the film maker, with Rob Fairley, visiting for the day, with the architect working on the proposed new build, and in a student group discussing the first ideas for a top secret commission from the Hareclive teachers, to create an original art work to present to the headteacher, soon to leave the school.

One contributing factor to the quality and quantity of spoken language in this room may be found in Shani Ali's constant (but not domineering) emphasis on the importance of *ideas* in everything that goes on, and her repeated affirmations of children's capacity to think for themselves. She frequently makes comments such as these: "It's up to you." "What do *you* think?" "...working on your ideas" (in a child's sketch book), "developing your ideas" (for a canvas). The children are visibly learning that their ideas count, make a difference, are a valuable currency in Room 13.

Moreover they have the skill, the confidence and the desire to represent and express their ideas, not just in spoken language, but also in the

symbolic languages of paint, pastel, oils, photographs and 3D representations. The Reggio Emilia catch-phrase, coined by the founding father of the approach, Loris Malaguzzi, "the 100 languages of children" is no slogan here, but an arresting description of the artistic activity of Room 13.

Another kind of generosity, a different kind of richness, is to be seen in the acts of the adult artists, the ways in which they enact their role, not as teachers, more as companions and colleagues in a working studio-cum-business venture. They ask genuine questions, they make tentative suggestions, they invite ideas and express their own, they make their values explicit, they are partners in substantial passages of dialogue, they model techniques, slip in an appropriate piece of equipment, explain a practical detail. They are constantly edging children into independence, while modelling solidarity, generosity and a sense of community. Shani shares her mid-morning snack of raisins and nuts as well as her expertise with pencils and canvases. When the children thank her, she replies "You're more than welcome." In return, *they* are more than willing to do the necessary tidying up, not under compulsion, but because everyone else is doing it: the adult artists, brothers and sisters, classmates, the members of the managing group. And it is apparent that tidying up is done when it is necessary, after a major spill, or to clear a space for a meeting, not just to mark the end of a lesson period.

By and large, the young artists are themselves responsible for the friendly relations within the shifting population of Room 13; the adult artists invoke the rules of Room 13, but again, only when necessary, when invited to, when the harmony of the group is badly disturbed. Then they calmly step in to re-establish the tranquil working conditions that normally prevail, and warn the offender that the price to be paid for the offence is, simply, to be ejected from Room 13, which is a place of respect, free from aggression. The F word has no place here, and the one time I heard it used the near-by children objected violently and called in Shani to restore the order they prefer.

The theme of respect runs through everything that happens in Room 13: a visiting film-maker, Jeremy, working on a commissioned film with a small group of Year 6 pupils, sits down with them to make more detailed plans for their next filming session. He asks them, very seriously, a number of genuine questions. 'Who is it aimed at?... How do you want them to react?' This is the children's film; they make the decisions. Earlier that day, one of the artists asked one of the film group: 'Fabien, tell me how the filming's going...' So he did, at considerable length. The same boy, in discussion with Jeremy, proposes three or four alternative endings to the film; Jeremy is impressed with the quality of his ideas and says so, warmly. I am equally impressed with the sheer length and complexity of Fabien's talk.

David Gribble's account ended with his appreciation of the profound sense of trust that pervades Room 13 Caol; the Hareclive studio is similarly trusting and its participants equally trustworthy. The commentary that follows identifies other themes that are common to the two sites, and

discusses the worthwhile dispositions that are developing alongside the rich and intrinsically rewarding activity of the young artists.

3.3 COMMENTARY

These two accounts of Room 13 in action are both the work of outsiders, looking at what goes on inside Room 13 with the eyes of experience, with assumptions and expectations shaped by many years of work (teaching, research and development) in a whole variety of classrooms. They cannot, of course, see everything, nor can they see things the way the participants do; the voices of the young artists, teachers and adult artists will be heard in the following section of the report.

But the observers can see many other things, and can compare what they see with what they are familiar with in other settings, drawing attention to what is different and unexpected, unpredictable and surprising. It is striking how much of what they see is consistent across the two sites, geographically far apart, but very close in many other ways. First, it is worth noting, there are shared absences from their accounts. The activities and processes they describe are free of regulation, formal instruction and the firm hand of adult authority. There are rules and regulations to be sure, but these are negotiable, and securely within the students' control. The working harmony of Room 13 is self-sustaining, not imposed from without.

Secondly, both observers were impressed by the variety of activities that make up the working day in Room 13, and no less struck by the degree and quality of independence that is shown by the young people who form the working community of Room 13. The students are in control, that is clear, but a more important observation is that the choices and decisions they take are by no means trivial or arbitrary. Many teachers in many classrooms offer their pupils a variety of choices and a certain degree of control; the difference is that in Room 13 the choices and decisions that the students make are highly significant in their intellectual and artistic lives, in their managerial roles, in their success as members of a thriving business venture. Their decisions impact on themselves as artists, and on Room 13 as a whole; their choices are not limited to relatively minor variations in classroom activities or student behaviours. These young people have control over their learning, their ways of being, and their doing of important things.

The exercise of independence and control, both observers note, is closely aligned to the exercise of responsibility; the young people's purposefulness is in the service of the aims and purposes of Room 13. They go there to think, and express their ideas: that is one of the purposes of the space that is Room 13. They go there to organise and direct their ownership of this privileged space: they act on the principle that the right to belong brings with it the responsibility to contribute.

The two accounts also concur in documenting how the two strands of Room 13 activities – art and business – sit comfortably together. For these young people, individual expression in their artworks is no barrier to

their entrepreneurial team-work. With minimal adult direction, with sensitive and negotiable adult involvement, Room 13 students are running this successful enterprise. And, as they do so, the observers note, they are developing a number of highly desirable dispositions: their personal well-being and self-awareness are evident. They move around the studio, helping themselves to materials and resources with an easy confidence and assuredness. There is no learned helplessness here. They are equally aware of the value of what gets done in Room 13. Visitors are given a mini-tour of the school, with critical commentaries on the art-works the children point out along the way, hanging on the walls and staircase. They calmly draw the visitor's attention to the differences between the Room 13 pieces and the things they do in their regular classrooms, between the official school photos and the ones taken by Room 13 photographers. They are quite at home with the worthwhileness of the products of Room 13, and equally convincing advocates for the worthwhileness of the process from which they spring.

Their capacity to commit themselves to the values of Room 13 is impressive; their integrity and dedication are not posed or pretentious, but whole-hearted. The next section shows how the salient characteristics of the Room 13 students identified by the observers are strongly corroborated by the students' own accounts of their experiences in Room 13.

4. THE TRIPTYCH

In this section, three groups of voices are heard. First, the voices of the student participants, the young artists and managers who are the leading actors in the Room 13 network. These are given school by school, drawing mainly on published materials, but also including recently collected data from Hareclive. Secondly, there are the voices of some of the teachers involved with Room 13, including contributions from Caol and Hareclive. And thirdly there are some selected extracts to illustrate the thinking, priorities and passions of Rob Fairley and Claire Gibb, the adult artists in residence at Room 13 Caol and Lochyside.

4.1 THE YOUNG ARTISTS

VOICES FROM ROOM 13 CAOL

Extracts from a chapter by Danielle Souness, Managing Director during the academic year 2002/3, published in *Social and Critical Practices in Art Education* (2005) Atkinson, D. and Dash, P. (eds) Stoke on Trent: Trentham Books

Ladies and Gentlemen; So! OK.

This is undoubtedly an eccentric way to start an academic essay but it *has* got your attention and *you* must be either one or the other or both, so I haven't insulted you...

This is an edited version of a speech I gave in Fort William in the late spring of 2003 and repeated at a *Creative Partnerships* conference in Dartington Hall that November. I hope it gives an indication of where I think arts education in Scotland, but probably all of the UK, has gone wrong, and how important it is that we correct it from the viewpoint of somebody who is still enduring it.

Room 13 is, it seems, unique... The fact that we are in charge is very important. I think that ever since I was quite wee I knew that there was a difference between *learning* and learning in school. The first was easy but in school you have to, and I do mean *have* to, learn things that a teacher thinks you have to learn. I don't have any real problems with this – after all the idea of learning is to get knowledge from people who are knowledgeable. But in school you are only allowed to learn things up to a standard that a teacher thinks you can understand and you have to go at roughly the same speed as the rest of the class. In Caol we are extremely lucky because we have a brilliant headteacher called Miss Cattanach and the best class teacher in the world called Mrs Smith. And we have Room 13.

Every teacher and every pupil knows that in any class there are people with different skills and interests. We (the students) know that we are all good at something but all we are judged on is our ability to fill in workbooks. Some people are really good at it, some even buy similar sorts of things to fill in time on the bus and train journeys – quiz and

game books and that sort of thing. Some people are really bad at it. Some people find it very boring. But we all *have* to do it. However I don't think it really helps you to learn. Anybody can look at the examples given on each page and work out the answer required, and those who struggle are often just bored by the whole idea. It teaches you how to think about how to answer questions but it doesn't tell you why the question exists.

Most people my age want to learn. We want to do things. (OK there are one or two who don't but most of us do.) What Room 13 does is allow us to take control of our learning. We can use the studio whenever we want with the only rule being that we must never fall behind with our class work – in our workbooks.

Until you, our readers, consider people my age (I am 11) as artists you can never support us. You can give us what you *think* we want, or more likely what you think we need, but at best all you provide is patronising praise.

Do you remember what it was like to be 11 or 12? Think!

You knew what was going on, *you* knew about war and sex, *you* didn't believe in Santa and the Tooth Fairy. *You* could think for yourselves. *You* occasionally got things wrong because you did not understand something – but even trained adult doctors and scientists do that. Can you remember what it was like for adults to treat you as if you were something slightly different from a human being? It was horrible, wasn't it? It still is.

I know that some adults think that teaching children to think is wrong and that it does not prepare them for the real world where all they will have to do is to do as they are told. So at what age *are* we allowed to think? At what age are we allowed to be artists? Because it is the same thing.

Picasso made some of the greatest works of the last century. They are beautiful and tell me a lot about what it is like to be an old man but even Picasso could never paint what it is like to be an eleven-year-old girl. I am *not* comparing myself to Picasso, but *I can* make art about being an eleven-year-old girl. *Your* problem as an adult is that you look at my work in a different way to the way you look at late Picasso. This I think is the biggest difference between Room 13 and other ways of working. It teaches us how to think, it treats our ideas, our dreams and thoughts seriously and, perhaps even more importantly, it allows us to find ways of expressing them.

Without Caol Primary School and Room 13 and working together I would have never seen the Matisse/Picasso exhibition, the Eva Hesse exhibition. I might have discovered Barnett Newman as his work is very important to me but I would never have had the chance to see his work for real. I wouldn't even have been allowed into the gallery to see Fiona Banner's work in the Tate, let alone been taken round it by one of the Turner Prize curators. Even secondary school students needed permission... How patronising is that? I wouldn't have discovered Norman MacCraig or

James Joyce. I wouldn't have discovered myself. Surely that is what education is meant to be?

Brief extracts from interviews conducted at Caol by Kelly Love, PhD student at the University of Edinburgh. The interview material is preceded by Kelly Love's explanation of the interview process and its purposes. These remarks are also relevant to the teacher interview data presented below in section 3.3

These interviews were designed to elicit (the participants') viewpoints in order to try and make explicit what Lynne Smith, classroom teacher in Room 13, Caol, calls the 'invisible structure' of Room 13.

The interview schedule was designed to ask fairly simple, open-ended questions to elicit an organic understanding of the participants' view of the philosophy/definition of the program, the underlying characteristics of the ethos of the arts within Room 13, and the development in the learner of a learning process that may (or may not) be affected by this ethos. I allowed the interview to be rather informal and to some extent directed by the flow of dialogue and intent of the interviewee.

Extracts from the interview with the outgoing Managing Director, 2003-4 (she is eleven years old)

Do you think having arts in school is important?

I think it can be because you've got a way to express your feelings, you've got a way to be creative, let your imagination just flow.

Do you think it changes the students that get to come to Room 13? Do you think they are different because of the time they're able to spend here?

Well, I don't know if I would be the person I am, if I didn't have room 13. Because I have been just expressing feelings in some of the art work, I don't think... if I couldn't have done that, I don't know how I would be feeling right now.

Is there anything else that you think is different about you?

I don't know if I would understand more about the different things that I do... because Mr Fairley just teaches us to think about different things, I didn't think in terms of the world before...

If you were going to try to explain to children your age why should they consider having a Room 13, what would you tell them?

I would tell them it's hard work but with the hard work comes fun as well. If you have Room 13, you get the chance... to think, to experience. It's nothing like the class work you get in school, because (in school) you are told that ok today we are going to paint a cow and we will use chalk... and you have to colour it black-white. Whereas in Room 13, you take your own ideas and express them as you please...

Extracts from an interview with a 10 year old student, an award winning artist.

Tell me about Room 13, what is it?

It's an art studio where you can paint, and sometimes learn things about arts.

How does it work?

Well the people who run it are the management team... I'm not a part of that.

But you are a definitely a part of Room 13... so what do you do?

Well, you just go up there and if you have a good idea, or a canvas or a board, you just ask Mr Fairley if you can try it out, if it's not good someone else may take it and they have another good idea but if it's good it may go on the wall or be kept in Room 13.

So sometimes you start a project and you may not care for it and another person may look at it and say can I add to that?

Well, if you have a canvas it's yours. But if you share it, you share with another person, nobody else can just go take it, like if you have told another person they can use it. They have your permission.

When they do that, do they totally paint over it? Or do they keep some of the work of the other person and add to it?

They paint a good idea.

I'm trying to make a case for the reasons why people should have something like Room 13 in their school. If you were trying to convince someone that having Room 13 is a good thing, what would you tell them?

*It's where you can learn new things, there's lots of textures in your learning. You can know new things and then come back to that. There's one other good thing about Room 13 I think... you **always**, whenever you do a painting you **always** feel proud of yourself at the end and it's **always so good**.*

VOICES FROM ROOM 13 LOCHYSIDE

Excerpts from a speech by the Managing Director of Room 13 Lochyside Primary School at the Creative Heads Conference November 2003.

Good morning.

Ladies and Gentlemen.

My name is Connor Gillies, I am eleven years old and I am Chairman of Room 13 in Lochyside Primary School, Fort William. Room 13 is an art studio in which the pupils of the school have full control of everything that goes on. It is run by a group of pupils who are elected to the management team from primaries 6 and 7 (the ages range from 9 – 11 years).

Before I begin to explain to you how we manage to run a business while going to Primary School (which seems to be enough of a days work for most young people) let me tell you about how it all began for me.

The very first time I came to know about Room 13, I was invited by Danielle Souness to visit the Room 13 studio in Caol Primary, which she was Managing Director of at the time. It took my breath away when I saw what went on. I began to dream that my school could have a Room 13 too. I didn't know at this point that Room 13 had already approached the other schools in the area, and that my headmistress, Miss Smith had already written back to say that she'd be really interested and keen to discuss the possibility of Lochside having its own Room 13 studio.

Well, we found out later that Miss Smith wasn't convinced by the idea of having pupils working completely independently in her school but went along to meet the management in Caol. She spent an afternoon speaking to Danielle and her colleagues and looking at the artworks in the school gallery and she was "just gobsmacked!"

The first Room 13 opened in Lochside about six months later, and the following June we held our first AGM electing a proper management team who would be in control for the following school year. At this point I became Chairman and Kirstin Moynihan took over as Managing Director. Teachers don't have any part to play in the Room 13 studio at all. In fact, they rarely come into the room unless we invite them.

Kirstin (who will you remember is Lochside's Managing Director) and I meet with Miss Smith once a month to keep her informed with what's going on and discuss any issues that affect the school. The teachers in the school are very good about supporting what we are doing. It might seem disturbing to have pupils walking in and out of class and I can imagine that you yourselves as teachers might find that difficult. We have to remember to think of this and be responsible about how we manage our time, so that we are back in class in time for the next lesson. As I am writing this I am in Room 13 and my class are doing maths. I know that I have to be back in class after playtime and the work that I've missed I will catch up on later or take it home to finish.

I spoke to a few teachers in preparation for today – I thought that you might be interested in their point of view. Miss Smith said that the project was excellent for the school. She was very impressed with our organisational skills when we arranged a fundraising disco. We did all the preparation and realised how much hard work it is even to arrange something fun. We also realised that we have to work with the teachers because there are some things we can't do – at the disco many teachers gave their time to come and supervise for us. If we didn't have the support of our teachers Room 13 would not work properly.

This conference is the first public talk Lochside Room 13 has been involved in so we have been really excited about it. When I was preparing what I was going to say to you all today I asked lots of people who use

the studio what they thought of it because I was wondering how I could describe what it means to us. The following comments are some of their answers combined with my own thoughts.

Until Room 13 opened in school learning wasn't really much fun. In class you do not have any choice about what you do, but in Room 13 you do. Everyone enjoys the freedom. Teachers don't always think that what we are doing up here is important, but they don't know the full details of what's going on.

We have our own library, which anyone is free to look at and get ideas for artworks. Artists in the school put a lot of serious thought into their artwork and are made to think very hard about what they are doing. The management are always busy doing the tasks that are needed to keep any business running smoothly. No-one is allowed to skive or mess around in Room 13 or they will be sent back to class. Usually there is no problem with bad behaviour because everyone is there by choice and doing things that they want to do. The good thing about Room 13 is that people look forward to coming to school because they know that no matter what subjects they are doing in class they will enjoy themselves in Room 13. It makes a difference to the school. We feel more respected because the teachers understand that we have our own responsibilities and they talk to us more like adults, which is how we should be treated.

I think the most important thing for me is that in Room 13 everything is real. Lots of children enjoy playing "Office", but because we are running a business for real, the lessons we are learning will stay with us for life. I think that it is much easier to learn and remember things if you are having fun doing it and that should be what going to school is all about. At the end of this year, I will be leaving Lochyside Primary to go to the High School and management of the Room 13 studio will be passed to the new team that will have been voted in.

I will find it hard to leave because Room 13 has become very important to me but I am proud of what we have achieved and I'm glad that I was part of the making of Lochyside Room 13. I know that the studio will be passed into good hands because the Primary 6 people in the management team have been learning about how to take charge of the business. After leaving primary school I will still be able to return to the studio after school hours, and take part in activities and trips such as this one.

So you see ladies and gentlemen, working in Room 13 when you are my age is like opening a door that lets you change the way you see things and the way you think about things. If you are eleven and running a successful business before you have even left Primary School, it gives you a huge boost and you can just imagine what you can achieve with the rest of your life!

Thank you very much for listening to me.

Voices of Lochyside students taken from the sound track of "Where Are They Now?" a 3 Minute Wonder Series about the whole Room 13 network broadcast by Channel 4 in March 2006

- Without Room 13, the world would be a place of work and sadness, not a place of thinking and expression, and I'd really miss it.
- It would be really boring and bad.
- I'd scream and never wish I'd been born

VOICES FROM HARECLIVE

Extracts from a Creative Partnerships (Bristol) publication *I had an idea*, which included material from students at Room 13 Hareclive in the academic year 2004-5.

My own artwork is about paradise and my dreams. It may seem strange to everyone else seeing a horse flying, elephants and bears in trees, birds of prey hanging upside down like bats and walls of flowers floating in the air. But it is what I see in my dreams and that is what my work is about, my dreams.

Amy Bryant
Press Officer, Room 13, Hareclive

How did you feel/think/behave beforehand?

I was bored at school.

What have you noticed?

That I think about my artwork and I talk more to people who ask me questions.

Has it made you think/behave differently?

I concentrate more on my homework and school work.

Is there one single moment that sticks in your mind?

The day I got chosen to be in the Core Team, that moment is still in my mind.

Lauren Gardiner
Secretary, Room 13, Hareclive

How did you feel/think/behave beforehand?

I behaved badly.

What have you noticed?

I feel good about knowing that I had done something with my life.

What has changed?

My behaviour in school.

Has it made you think/behave differently?

I behave differently.

Is there one single moment that sticks in your mind?

Becoming the Materials Manager.

Harley David Brown

Materials Manager, Room 13, Hareclive

Before Room 13 was set up in our school I used to think art was just 2D and just a picture of a house or a collage. Also I thought all art had to be finished in one afternoon. I have noticed that Room 13 has changed my life. It has changed my life because I am doing speeches and going on trips, which help me learn. This will help me get a better job in the future.

I think I have changed because I'm more confident. Also I think my family has changed since Room 13 was set up – they are more interested in the things we do within the room. I think it has made me behave differently. I think differently because I used to be very shy and now it has helped me build up my confidence. I also act more sensibly. I think differently because I think more carefully now. I don't just think carefully and differently about art and Room 13, I think more about classwork as well.

Is there one single moment that sticks out in my mind? No, there isn't one single moment there are four moments. The first moment was when I was in class and Kim from the Core Team in Caol came in and gave me an invitation to go to Scotland. The second is when my class voted me in the Core Team. The third is when we were in Room 13 and Shani said "who should be the Managing Director?" and everyone shouted "Shannon!" Finally the fourth is when I did my first speech."

Shannon Coombs

Managing Director, Room 13, Hareclive

And an afterword from Shannon's mother.

Since Shannon has been going to Room 13 she has become more of an outgoing person who liked to air her opinions about art and all of her speeches. She used to be a shy, quiet child. I think Room 13 has improved Shannon 100% and her outlook on life in general. She has got so much confidence in herself and feels she can achieve anything with hard work and determination. I have attended Room 13 on several occasions to see Shannon at work, sending emails and talking on the phone. I am very proud of all the work she has achieved and the speeches she has attended. Shannon wouldn't have been able to do all of this without the help and support of Shani and Paul who help the children in Room 13.

I attended one of Shannon's speeches recently as this was the first one which wasn't too far away. To see Shannon actually speaking on behalf of Room 13 made me feel like the proudest person at the seminar. I am so proud of her achievement as Managing Director of Room 13.

Debbie Hazell
Shannon's mother

At a seminar in Bath, in March 2006, organised by the 5x5x5 network (a NESTA funded association of schools, artists and cultural centres) three generations of Room 13 participants made presentations, describing their work. The youngest of these students was Reece, currently in Year 5 (to check), and gives a vivid impression of the tasks of management seen through the eyes of one of the managers

Good afternoon Ladies and Gentlemen,

My name is Reece White.

I am the current materials manager and the treasurer of Room 13 Hareclive. I am the only Room 13er who can sign the cheques.

I have been visiting Room 13 ever since it has been open, so that's about 3 years. A friend and me started to research Leonardo da Vinci in Room 13 and then we tried to build possibly the first ever car that Leonardo designed.

Before there was a Room 13 my friend and me used to bang our heads against the wall at breaks and lunchtimes because we were SO BORED out in the playground. Now as there is a Room 13 I can go there every day it is open.

In the first year Room 13 was open, my friend and me started selling Room 13 postcards and Christmas cards. We also interviewed people asking them what they thought of Room 13, we did this using a mini disc, headphones, microphone and a notepad with our questions on it. Then this year we decided to make joke books. And I have just decided to make a comic book.

There are a number of jobs in Room 13.

This year's core team are:

- A Managing Director, Zoe
- A secretary, Amy
- Press relations managers, Fabien and Thomas
- A materials manager that is me
- Two treasurers Paige Hatherall and me
- And a Chief Fundraiser, Abbie

At the moment I am over run with responsibilities because I am in charge of the materials, making and selling joke books, (we have just sold 60

copies to the Bristol central library) and I am thinking of making a comic-book.

As the materials manager I have to order materials and make sure that there are enough materials in the cupboard and enough money in our bank account.

The last materials manager didn't do her job properly so the core team sacked her that's when I got voted in.

We have just set up a Room 13 shop, which is going really well. We have already made a profit. Not bad considering we have only been open for 3 days.

A lot of people like Room 13 and we have visitors every week. This means we are always really busy as we are only open two days a week.

Ladies and Gentlemen, can you imagine what school time would have been like for you with a Room 13 at your old school.

Thank you for listening.

In March 2006, at the invitation of the writer, the young people in the Hareclive studio designed and printed a simple report sheet to be completed by every visitor to the room over the two days it was open that week.

In Room 13 I am...
In Room 13 I feel...
In Room 13 I think about...

Some facts and figures

44 report sheets were completed, by children from Y2-Y6, 22 by girls, who made 31 visits, six visiting more than once, with one girl making four visits in the two days.

11 boys completed the sheet; they made 13 visits (two visited twice).

	Number of boys	Number of girls
Y2	3	3
Y3		6
Y4	1	8
Y5	5	2
Y6	2	3

Key words

The most commonly used word was **happy** (28 mentions).

Some examples: I feel ...very very happy

...very happy and very good

...so happy because I've never been here before.

Safe was used five times, three times in combination with **happy**. Fifteen young people used the words **art**, **artistic** or **artist**, or combinations of these. For example, Tiffany (Y6) wrote
In Room 13 I am... a mad artist that does anything of art

Other feelings

These include

In Room 13 I feel... confident and clever
happy and calm
creative and artistic
like an artist
like I can stay forever
free
free in my world
[This last example is Tiffany again]

Other insights

Jake in Y2 wrote: In Room 13 I am... me

Tommy in Y6 wrote: In Room 13 I am... good
I feel... funky
I thought about... Arty and good

A student from Y3 wrote: In Room 13 I am... creative and artist
I feel... like I can paint forever
I thought about... coming every day

Also from Y3: I thought about... going to paradise

Bobilee in Y3 wrote: I just want to say it is good to be here because good to be happy it makes me happy

Callum, Y5 and a member of the core Management group, wrote
In Room 13 I am... a treasurer and an artist
I feel... safe, active, reliable and happy
I thought about... art, presentations and designs

COMMENTS

This is, evidently, a small and unstructured sample. But the messages are plain: Room 13 is a good place to be. In Room 13, the children's well-being is revealed in a variety of forms, as feelings of happiness and safety, as an awareness of purpose in one's life ('I am an artist,' 'I am creative,' 'I am a painter,' 'a drawer,' 'interested in paint and ink,' 'I am an artist and press relations.'). Room 13 is experienced as a worthwhile state ('In Room 13 I am... very good'), as an awareness of self ('I am me'), as a place where thinking is an essential part of the experience: no-one left the third prompt ('I thought about...') incomplete. Even Reece in Y2, who has not completely mastered independent writing, used drawings of faces to respond to the prompts, and asked Shani to label the third face 'my Dad'. This could be read as a random, unconsidered response, but it

is more likely to be genuine evidence of this child's important thinking, since the week before, during one of my visits, Reece's conversation had been all about families. 'You got a family?' he asked me with some urgency – 'I got a family.' He went on to tell me his parents' names: "Cathy's a nice name, isn't it? They got married, years ago.' As we spoke he was writing the names of every member of his family, and drawing hearts beside each one of them. If you are Reece, Room 13 is a good place to think about your family. Indeed, it is a good place for every kind of thinking, as every expert witness, from Caol, Lochyside and Hareclive, makes abundantly clear.

A SONG FROM STUDIO 13 LOCHABER HIGH SCHOOL

It's where we go when we've got something to say
Something to express and something to play

Music they say can change the world
Emotion can rise from a song once heard
It can change the way we feel
It can change our moods
Simple notes can be powerful once understood

There's so much wrong all over this planet
It can get so bad you can barely stand it

But in this life we can still have some fun
Cos music's still there for everyone

Some people can't understand what I mean
We need to get these people down to Studio 13

from the soundtrack of "Where Are They Now?" a 3 Minute Wonder Series about the whole Room 13 network broadcast by Channel 4 in March 2006

4.2 THE TEACHERS' VOICES

Extract from an article by John Crace, which appeared in The Guardian June 18, 2002

It is well known that the arts have a positive impact on children's behaviour and punctuality, but many arts professionals are wary of making too many claims about the knock-on effects on other parts of the curriculum, even though they firmly believe they occur. Jennifer Cattanach, Caol's headteacher, has no such reservations. She took over the school four years ago and has transformed its academic and behavioural performance; she inherited Room 13 as a going concern and her only thought was how best to keep it going.

"The self-confidence that children get from what they do there is unbelievable," she says. "Kids who struggle in other areas no longer feel failures, and they feel able to have a go at difficult areas of the curriculum that they would otherwise decide were hard and boring. Through Room

13 we get to see the whole personality of the child, not just the bit that performs academically."

Extract from David Gribble's long paper about Room 13 Caol, describing the work of Lynne Smith, then class teacher of Primary 7 (equivalent to the English Y6), and her approach to learning, pedagogy and curriculum.

Lynne Smith, who has taught for thirteen years, four of them at Caol, said that when she arrived at Caol she didn't have to change, because she was at last able to be the way she had always wanted to be. She used to think she was doing it all wrong, and had to be a proper teacher. She used to have spelling tests and lining up in the corridors and she used to ask lots of questions, she said, but now she can justify what she likes doing and no longer does those things. She does her best to make sure that the children in her class do not waste time either (a) sitting about doing nothing ("listening") or (b) doing work that means nothing to them.

"There must be a place in every school," she told me, "where the whole school can have an opinion, think the unthinkable, make mistakes, be themselves, not expected to be an average child to fit in the group, freedom to use materials that artists would use (including dictionaries), a place where they are respected as the person they are."

By the time of my visits, Lynne and Rob (Fairley) were working as a team, and would often change places. Rob's work in the classroom was described to me by the children as "chatting". When Rob was with them, they chatted, for instance about current affairs.

Current affairs was one of the two most unusual subjects on the curriculum on the top floor, and often had a strong influence on the children's work. The other unusual subject is philosophy. *Sophie's World* is one of the books available in Room 13, and Rob often discusses the ideas of major philosophers with the children.

During a school year Lynne usually presents her class with five big questions:

- What happens to the part of you that is you when you die?
- What is beyond space?
- How did the universe begin?
- When and how will the world end?
- Why are we here?

Recently she asked her class how many of them had thought about these questions, and most of them had; then she asked how many of them had talked about them with other people, and very few had done so. She gives her pupils time to discuss these questions with each other, and admits that she does not know the answers herself.

Anne Cameron asked her, "May I ask a question? Why do you ask us questions when you don't know the answer?" and in doing so pinpointed one of the curiosities of conventional classroom technique. Ordinary people ask questions not just when they don't know the answer, but

precisely because they don't know the answers. Anne had become so used to being asked questions by teachers who already knew the answers that Lynne's admission of ignorance astonished her. It would actually be more reasonable to ask a conventional teacher, "Why do you ask us questions when you already know the answers?" – exactly the opposite of Anne's query. In areas where the children know less than the teachers, it is logical that the children should ask the questions and the teachers should provide the information. That is what usually happens in Room 13. It is not a place where children are told what to learn and then asked questions to find out whether they have learnt it; it is a place where they do what they want to do, and ask questions when they need help.

The striking fact about these two subjects – current affairs and philosophy – is that they both deal with the children's own concerns. In most schools these subjects are ignored, so the children see the horrors in the news on television and nobody asks them how they feel about it; they worry about the big philosophical questions and never get a chance to discuss them. In Room 13 and the Primary 7 classroom the children have the opportunity to talk, to listen, and to express their ideas in works of art.

Edited extracts from Kelly Love's interviews with Lynne Smith, Primary 7 teacher at Caol.

What is Room 13?

Room 13 is always changing but basically it's a million different activities that centre around a central resource. It is respect and trust and quality of freedom.

What are the philosophies or attitudes which underlie the key essences of Room 13?

It's really difficult, really difficult. I can only speak for myself and what I see and what I feel is important... it is the respect, for each other. Just because I'm older, doesn't mean I know better, doesn't mean I am wiser. I am not the fountain of all knowledge... So it's the quality of respect for each other. And I don't think that's always a part of traditional educational institutions. Freedom, freedom to think the unthinkable, freedom to come out with some bizarre idea... and then to run with it, or stop and change your mind. Freedom to go down a dangerous path, freedom to take the risk, to make mistakes.

Everything is unlimited. I love to see the expectations.

*There are no ceilings on the expectations so they really outdo themselves, even they are surprised. You give them a lot of freedom... Freedom, after a lot of training to get them out of doing what they're expected to do... **just** doing what they're expected to do... There's a lot of freedom. And they go do things and they interact with each other in ways that I see groups of adults at teacher training courses who can't actually interact... in as positive and productive ways as my Primary 7 can...*

From my point of view, I have to tick certain boxes because I am employed by the Highland Council. I have to go through the curriculum

but I believe you can twist it, you can do it in such a way that everyone of the 29 people in my class can follow what they are interested in, it's purposeful, it's relevant to them, and they value it, therefore they work really hard at it and I can tick all the boxes I have to tick. I don't choose to tick, I have to do it. I am stuck in the middle. But how we get to the aims... the aims are the same for every primary 7, I would imagine. Basically the aims are the same, the government produces them. How we get there in this school is different... Basically listening to what they want to, giving them what they want, and because it's what they want, they are on fire and they will work their socks off... And it is self-motivated, it is for them, it's not for me. They have to get away from pleasing this one person... (teacher).

[...]

Does learning through the arts work in conjunction with your attitude as a teacher and how you structure your classroom?

Yes definitely, but I haven't really investigated that in my mind too much. All I know is that the approach you can take, giving the creativity and freedom to express yourself, whether it's within drama, music, the arts, visual art. That's creativity... an openness that has to be used within language, and creative writing, it has to be used within reading and analysing books, in thinking about your feelings about things. And it just really ties everything together, everything is integrated... And I think the arts link all of these things together, your science and the mathematics, everything into a common context and because it is in a common context that is really fun for most of them... they love it, they enjoy it, it's purposeful, they go away and do it for themselves and not just for me.

[...]

Can you make any comment about how you might know your students are functioning at a higher level of cognition?

Yes, sometimes people say things that make you think or repeat things that make you think... Wow, one boy walked up to me just this morning and said, "I think therefore I am." And he's not one of the people I would have first thought to come up to me and say that. And there is realisation about some philosophical issues. That things are being thought about and discussed, not in front of me always but I am aware that's going on. I am aware that connections are being made. And by me seeing what they are doing by themselves... without me... tells me that there is a higher order thinking going on that is philosophical, that is spiritual, that is deep and questioning, fundamental, inside themselves. And I like that.

Do you think Room 13 fosters that?

I think Room 13 fosters that... and I think of my room as just an extension of Room 13.

Can you define your meaning of creativity without using the word?

To connect, you know, when everything is sinking in and the connections are being made, things are not separate... it's a deep level of thought.

Edited extracts from a presentation made by the reception class teacher from Hareclive Primary School at the 5x5x5 research seminar in Bath, in March 2006.

Room 13 is very similar to creative development within the Foundation Stage Curriculum. The children are able to freely explore and develop their own ideas. There is the potential to develop their imagination, self-confidence and independence. The ability to let children think outside the box is what links Room 13 and Reception together.

However, this disappears as the children move up through the school. Each year their individuality becomes less apparent, but Room 13 is giving the empowerment back to the children. They have a space where they are not confined to a table and chair to create art. They have the freedom to move around and use easels or even the floor.

Room 13 – the impact on me

I have developed relationships with the older children within the school. I have enjoyed trips to Scotland and seen Room 13 in Lochside and Caol. I have been to Ireland and participated in the residential studio experience at IMMA. Room 13 teaches the children philosophy, and I have been truly amazed by the thoughts and ideas of the children. The children see me as a 'friend' not a teacher.

The impact on the school

There is a sense of pride throughout the school. The artwork produced is displayed and everyone compliments us on it. Room 13 creates a chance for children to work on artwork for months at a time, not just one afternoon a week or month.

It's about real art. Individual art. Not displays of the same thing done 30 times. It's much more meaningful work. It represents the children's thoughts and experiences. Not that of a curriculum. It's the work of the children. It belongs to them and it shows what they really are capable of. Room 13 is not such a competitive environment. It's a place where the older children are able to comment on the younger children's work.

Room 13 has taught the children to perceive themselves as artists and now there is no stopping their motivation and enthusiasm for the room and their work. Room 13 is nothing but amazing achievement and goes beyond a primary school education. Why hasn't every school got one? In the words of Shannon Coombs, managing director of Room 13 2005, "can you imagine what you could have achieved if there was a Room 13 in your old school?"

It's easy for me. I don't do anything. None of the staff do anything. The children do it all. The Core Team. Shani and Paul support them. The children ask them if they need anything. Then occasionally the children ask me if they need anything. Like today!

4.4 THE VOICES OF THE ADULT ARTISTS

Extracts from a chapter by Rob Fairley, co-written with Danielle Souness, published in *Social and Critical Practices in Art Education* (2005)
Atkinson, D. and Dash, P. (eds) Stoke on Trent: Trentham Books

The ideas inherent in Room 13 began in Edinburgh College of Art in the 1970s and were developed and refined through artist-in-residence posts and through taking on apprentices. Its stimulus was exasperation at the lack of interest in teaching visual literacy as a general subject and the lack of interest in teaching the basic technical skills needed to express ideas through visual imagery. Its ethos has always been to provide philosophical and moral discipline and training through the visual arts and to mainstream a state of intellectual and artistic development across all ages. Room 13... places visual literacy, the ability to think and the skills of visual expression at its heart. Its core belief is in the importance of each individual's integrity and the expression of that individuality being essential to the health and wealth of the wider community.

The teaching of philosophy from a comparatively early age (8yrs) is thought to be important to the artworks produced in the studio. All the students understand that their views are as important as an adult's – different possibly, but none the less important. [A student at Room 13 Caol, Danielle] Souness wrote '... I realise that I was *myself* and not *any* person. When I finally realised this I wanted to show everyone who *I* was. This is no different to any artist. Professor Jonathan Fineberg, in his ground-breaking and in some ways heretical book *The Innocent Eye*, shows how Miró, Klee, Picasso and Kandinsky were influenced by the collections of child art they possessed. Influenced to the extent of copying. If a copy of a young person's work by an adult is considered 'great art', why not the original? All Room 13 postulates is that a work is created with integrity if it aims at telling the 'truth' as the artist sees and believes it. Then the work stands or falls on its ability to convey this. The rules are no different for a nine year old or a ninety year old.

Watching 'adult' artists' reactions to the work produced in the studio is fascinating. One colleague who has a substantial international reputation looked at *The Magic Yellow Elephant*, a large colourful oil painting tenuously based on a Hindu creation myth transposed to the highlands of Scotland. She was enthusiastic and full of praise for a piece that indicated (apparently) a huge leap forward in what was seen as my work. She was totally dismissive about it when it was pointed out that the artist was eight. Why? The piece had not changed, the artist's thinking had not changed, only the information available to the viewer had changed. And this apparently transformed a fine piece of work into something to be disregarded.

Conventional art 'teaching' in schools in the UK does the arts no favours. Some years ago I had a young student who I met because she could not study art and music at school (can you imagine a system that would not allow physics and chemistry, or biology and chemistry to be studied

together?) and who chose to study art with me. She was astounded to the point of tears to realise that art was a creative process. She had always been taught that it was formulaic, that you applied a particular 'correct' formula for a still-life painting and a different 'correct' formula for a pencil portrait (the latter also requiring 'correct shading'). She could do all this but could not create work for herself. After a very tearful day and a lot of re-thinking of previously unimpeachable dogma she produced a startling self-portrait and never looked back.

Room 13 attempts to address these concerns. We take all well thought out ideas seriously and we are constantly on the look out for new ways of expressing serious ideas. We are a group of artists working together, with the only difference being that one or two of us are technically (and arguably emotionally – though this is dangerous territory) more experienced. Room 13 aims to support its artists for as long as they wish it. It works not only from the adult (nominally) in charge but across generations. It is, above all things, for everyone involved, both extraordinarily serious and quite excellent fun.

Extracts from an interview with Claire Gibb, artist in residence at Room 13 Lochyside, conducted by Kelly Love.

In your own words, what is Room 13?

Room 13 is an organisation which is working to educate through creative freedom.

What do you mean by creative freedom?

Giving people the opportunity or giving them the means to be creative without actually trying to direct their creativity... without telling them what they should do or how they should go about it.

You've talked a bit about the ethos of Room 13, would you mind talking more about that?

It's about the attitudes in your treatment of people, your treatment of children as people, intelligent people, who have as much to teach you as you have to teach them. This is an important attitude if you're working with Room 13.

A co-learner type of situation?

Our philosophy is really tied into that...

Can you articulate the philosophy of Room 13?

The philosophy is purely to... How do I put it into words? Prove the worth of the individual and to give the individual a chance to be an individual and learn as an individual.

What conditions are in place that fosters this process?

The conditions, the environment in here, the fact that the students who are working in the space, have ownership of the space, they have ownership of the materials they're using and the equipment that they're using.

How about in terms of a mental environment?

Well, there's no pressure in here to do anything except to be reasonable.

Is there anything else about the culture in Room 13 that makes it unique... in that conditions are unique, that you're trying to create?

I think it is so often the case that children in the schools have so little opportunity to do activities just because they want to, because it's something that is their idea, because everyone usually has the outcome set out for them, they don't get a chance to do what they feel like doing and it is not necessarily what the student next to them is doing...

Do you think having this type of classroom actually benefits the development of a child's mind? The learning experience?

Yes, I think it does or there would be no point in doing what we're doing. I definitely think it helps.

Can you tell me in what ways you think it helps?

It is room for growth, because they think when they're learning. You need to have time to fill your head with ideas, time to let them come out, time to let them grow, time and space... to let the process of your mind deal with the information you're being given.

What do you see expressed as children have space and time to express their own learning?

They express both themselves, but also their own development, their own emotional and physical development, also expressed is learning they're doing in class, and they express an interest in things that are connected or not connected to what they're learning in class...

What do you think is being developed?

I think what is being developed is a sense of yourself and your place within the world.

Because they have such a freedom to think, and express themselves, and also such a wide array of materials do you think those conditions facilitate a broad range of ideas, do they brainstorm more?

Yes! It's brilliant... A direct example is a poster over there on that wall that a boy made from Primary 6/Promary 7. I'll have to go and read it out... It says... "Why waste money on Iraq when the money can go to schools and other places. Why did they go to Iraq and have a war with Saddam Hussein? Was it because we thought he had big weapons? Why didn't we put money to schools it would have been a lot better than losing lives in Iraq"... and some of the younger girls saw that and said we think that's wrong. We object to that... I said, "Well what are you going to do about it?" And they said, "We want to make a banner of our own." So they made a big banner which says, "Why give the money to education when you can save lives." And while this is going on there was a much younger student who was painting and had seen both sides of the argument... and said the reasons that wars happen is because people aren't educated so maybe we should spend money on education and Iraq

and that would solve the problem. And that is just dialogue... and I wasn't any part of that, it's just kids talking... to each other and getting somewhere out of each other's ideas... crossing age ranges as well.

Another way of looking at it... if you were going to go into school, an arts-based school... What things would you look for to discern whether they have a similar culture as Room 13?

It's hard to describe and happened when we were at Hareclive in Bristol, it's just a feeling, you just walk in and the atmosphere is right... It is what we're talking about now, in the philosophies and attitudes of the people who are there... the idea that there is a deep connection between them...

When you say a deep connection do you mean the intimacy of the personal relationships or connections?

I think I mean the understanding, the understanding of whatever the conversation is, that it is conversation between co-learners... that is conversation between two people who are genuinely curious and interested in what they are talking about and not necessarily a child saying something to an adult and an adult talking down or back to them...

As far as Room 13 is concerned, obviously it's emerging, there are programs that are duplicating the essence although they will look different in practice... why do you think this is happening, why is there a sustainability aspect?

I think there is a sustainability to the program because it has been recognised that there is a distinct need for better teaching of the arts.

Is Room 13 actually about teaching of the arts though?

No it's more than that, but that's why it's been allowed to develop... it's developing to fulfil the requirements of the individuals who are part of it... because they are learning and with their learning they then want to push the boundaries further in the project and the project moves with them...

4.4 COMMENTARY

Nearly all the material presented in this section has been selected from a substantial archive of newspaper cuttings, articles in academic and professional journals, Room 13 public presentations, Annual Reports, papers by PhD students, correspondence with visitors, and narrative accounts of visits to Room 13. The impressive volume and variety of this archive material, collected by the artists in residence at Caol and Hareclive, is testimony to the widespread public interest in the Room 13 phenomenon, and the enthusiastic response of those who have visited Room 13 for themselves, or heard the young people on platforms, speaking about their experiences. A further selection of archive material appears in Appendix 4, illustrating some of the critical appreciations that have been written about Room 13.

The selection of extracts given in this section serves a different purpose: to allow the people who have invented Room 13, and re-invent it every day, to speak for themselves, to tell their own stories, to articulate their own convictions and commitments. The voices we hear, as we read these

passages, are distinct, individual, passionate. None of them is a mere echo of another; they each have particular things to say, and their own ways of making their position clear. But not one of them claims any kind of monopoly in the philosophy and practice of Room 13. Rather, they see themselves as members of a community of practice (1), each with a part to play, but no more than a part. None of them suggests that only extraordinary or exceptionally talented people can take part in their shared enterprise.

On the contrary, these expert witnesses identify the benefits of Room 13 for every young person, for every school. The 'deep level of thought' that Lynne Smith identifies, the 'unbelievable self-confidence' described by Jennifer Cattanach, the principle of creative freedom articulated by Claire Gibb: these are ways of being and doing that could – and should – be part of every learner's experience. The ideals of Room 13, 'the philosophical and moral discipline...visual literacy, the ability to think, the skills of visual expression', as Rob Fairley summarises them, are not a minority pursuit, or an expensive luxury, only suitable for an elite group of selected students or schools. These are universal goods, universally to be desired; they can be achieved in any setting and by any group with values and principles that are congruent with those so convincingly articulated by the authors of the speeches and papers reproduced above.

(1) For an elaboration of the concept of a 'community of practice', see the extracts from an academic paper by Dr. J. Adams, given in Appendix 4.

5. WHAT CAN BE LEARNED FROM ROOM 13?

Having documented what has been happening to learning and learners in the unique environment of Room 13, can we now suggest some answers to the over-arching question: what can be learned from Room 13? First, it is worth considering the reference point of this question: what sort of an entity *is* Room 13? Is it a successful formula? A particular way of hiring an artist in residence? A roundabout way of teaching young people business skills? Or none of these? Is there any consensus around the idea, or will Room 13 always mean different things to different people?

5.1 WHAT MAKES A ROOM A ROOM 13?

After weeks of immersion in the documentation of Room 13, listening to so many different voices, on the page and in the flesh, my considered response to this question is yes, there is consensus: there is substantial agreement about what Room 13 is - and what it is not. It is not, above all, a kit, a formula, a package, or a magic bullet. It cannot be bottled, cloned or marketed. But it can exist in a variety of places, because at its core are some deeply held values which are shared by many, both adults and young people. And these values can flourish anywhere there are people of whatever age committed to leading their lives in harmony with these values, and the principles that can be derived from them.

In other words, we can define Room 13 as an inhabited place, shaped by its members' values and principles; this may help us see it more clearly. We can look back over the pages of this report and pull out the values that lie just beneath the surface of the testimony presented here; we can note the emphasis on freedom of thought, autonomy of action, individual identity, integrity, expression, social harmony, mutual respect, solidarity, worthwhile learning. As we do so, we will realise that Room 13 may be a contemporary approach, but it is hardly new. The values we have identified here have a very long history; Rob Fairley traces them back to Plato. Moving forward through history, he aligns the practices of Room 13 with the generalist tradition of nineteenth century Scottish university education, once greatly revered. He compares the teaching of visual literacy in Room 13 with the pedagogy of the Scottish artist, William Johnstone, Principal of Camberwell School of Art in 1938.

Other comparisons are not far to seek. During my own observations in Room 13 Hareclive, I was constantly reminded of the Malting House, an experimental school directed by the great Susan Isaacs in the 1920s, where, she wrote, because of the relative freedom afforded to the children, aged between 3 and 10, 'there was more for us to see, and we could see it more plainly.' And what she and her colleagues saw was, in her own words, 'a greater dramatic vividness of their social and imaginative and intellectual life as a whole' (Isaacs 1930:12). Isaacs' own epithet for the environment of the Malting House, its copious resources, indoors and out, the range of activities available, is 'generous': as we have already seen, this term is an entirely appropriate way to characterise Room 13 Hareclive.

More importantly, Isaacs used her observations of the Malting House children to deduce three broad practical principles, 'which if fully understood would profoundly affect the whole organisation of life in the primary school as well as all the details of the curriculum and methods of teaching' (1932: 169). The first of these principles is that 'It is *the children's activity* that is the key to their full development.' In other words, it is not the teacher's activity that is the key; it is 'the children's own thinking and doing' that are the chief means to education. Her second principle is no less relevant to Room 13: "The children's activity is most fruitful when it is most concrete and practical." Even at ten and eleven, children need experiences with real things "that can be seen and handled and made and measured' (p170). And the third emphasises how children need 'the chance to put their experience into words, to describe, to discuss and to argue'; this freedom to use spoken language, with their teachers and their fellow learners is 'one of the most valuable means of intellectual and social growth.'

In the pedagogy of Room 13, we have seen these principles made manifest; and, as Isaacs predicted, they have transforming effects on the organisation of life in the studio, on the curriculum and methods of teaching. In Room 13, there are always active children, talking, thinking and doing, handling and making real things (using for example, canvases, computers, sketchbooks, paint, bank accounts, budgets, television cameras, radio microphones). Isaacs' words describe these children very well. One important aspect of Isaacs' work is that she put her empirical observations to such good use; in this particular text, *The Children We Teach*, she synthesises what she has seen into a robust theory of effective learning and teaching; what is more, I suggest, her three principles constitute a theory which goes a long way to explain the essence of Room 13, and the reasons for its effectiveness as a place of learning.

Other more recent researchers and theorists add further dimensions to our understanding of the Room 13 concept. For example, Carlina Rinaldi, until recently Director of Services for Young Children in the northern Italian region of Reggio Emilia, sets out the Reggio position on democracy, participation and culture:

There is the recurring question of whether the school is limited to transmitting culture or can be, as we in Reggio aspire to, a place where culture is constructed and democracy is lived. School and democracy, a theme that was dear to Dewey, is an important commitment for all of us: school as a place of democracy, in which we can all live democracy.
(Rinaldi 2006: 141)

This fine passage suggests that there are interesting parallels to be drawn between the practice of democracy and the construction of culture in Room 13, and services to young children in Reggio Emilia. Indeed, links have recently been made between Room 13 Caol, and the Sightlines Initiative in Newcastle, the UK reference point for the international Reggio Children Network.

What else is happening in Room 13 that contributes to its distinctive character? The young artists make, as we have seen, impressive claims about what they learn there. Danielle Souness summarises her experience as a Room 13 participant in no uncertain terms:

(Room 13) teaches us how to think, it treats our ideas, our dreams and thoughts seriously, and perhaps even more importantly, it allows us to find ways of expressing them.

Connor Gillies, managing director of Lochyside, makes an even more trenchant point about the activities of Room 13:

I think the most important thing for me is that in Room 13 everything is real.

These two pithy comments are only a fraction of the story: the whole report is rich in evidence of learning. On virtually every page we can see young people learning, above all, to be and to become, becoming artists in a range of media, expressing a wild variety of ideas, becoming citizens, members of a community of practice, contributing and participating, becoming the prime agents in their own learning. As Danielle Souness emphasises

Most people my age want to learn... What Room 13 does is allow us to take control of our learning.

Room 13 learners, it is clear, are in control of their learning; perhaps more significant though, is the value that the young people themselves attribute to their learning. All of them take their learning in Room 13 very seriously; all of them know that Room 13 is more than an art-studio; they recognise the difference between classroom learning and what happens in Room 13. As one of Kelly Love's interviewees puts it:

I don't know if I'd be the person I am, if I didn't have Room 13.

Back in her classroom, this student may be an exemplary learner, hard-working, high-achieving; but in Room 13, she knows she is a particular person, learning to become more fully herself. Danielle Souness makes the same point, arguing that:

without Caol Primary School and Room 13 and working together... I wouldn't have discovered myself. Surely that is what education is meant to be?

This sense of personal learning, learning that makes human sense to every individual, has been documented by Cooper et al (2000), in their partnership research project *Positive Alternatives to Exclusion*. The researchers studied six settings where there was a commitment to working to reduce and prevent exclusion. Their principal finding was that in the case study schools, which included an inner city primary school, one important factor in the prevention of exclusion was the concept of

personal experience. This emerged as a significant feature across all six case studies: “the degree to which staff and students make personal sense of what is happening to them in ways that contribute to their commitment to the purposes of their shared enterprise in school.” (Cooper et al 2000: 186)

In elaborating this concept, the researchers present their evidence that, in these schools, ‘the teacher, acting as a person, looks for the person within the student, rather than confining either party to an institutional role’ (op cit: 189). They conclude that when schools and classrooms are most effectively working against exclusion, towards inclusion, teachers’ and students’ personal experience includes:

- a sense of being valued as a person
- a sense of belonging and involvement
- a sense of personal satisfaction and achievement
- a sense of being accepted and listened to
- a sense of efficacy, of power to influence things for the better.

(op cit: 193)

They argue that these ‘structures of feeling’ are crucial components in the practice of inclusion.

This analysis can, I believe, help us appreciate the value of the learning that goes on in Room 13. In learning to belong, to be involved, to do meaningful learning, to influence things for the better, the young people in Room 13 are also learning – the practical way – to do inclusion. They are learning, as Rinaldi claims for the pre-school communities of Reggio Emilia, to ‘construct culture’ and to ‘live democracy’. The culture they construct, with the artists and teachers who support them, is one where personal satisfaction and achievement, in their work as artists, co-exist with solidarity and participation in their work as a community.

5.2 THE ROLE OF THE ADULTS IN ROOM 13

In considering what the adult artists and teachers do in Room 13, the work of Nel Noddings, mathematician, feminist and philosopher is helpful. In her challenging account of the concept of care in education, she argues that:

The desire to be cared for is almost certainly a universal human need. Not everyone wants to be cuddled or fussed over. But everyone wants to be received, to elicit a response that is congruent with an underlying need or desire.

(Noddings 1992: 17)

There is ample evidence in this report that part of the work of the adults in Room 13 is to do just that: to *receive* the ideas and feelings of the young artists, and to offer a *response* that matches their underlying needs and desires. And we may also remember at this point that Isaacs argued, all her life, that children’s most passionate desires are twofold: to understand the world, and everything and everyone in it, *and* to be understood themselves (Drummond 2000). We have already seen how profoundly students appreciate the responses they find to their ideas and their feelings in Room 13, how keenly they sense whether they are being

taken seriously as *people*, or admired as precocious children. In a fascinating passage in the Annual Report 2003-4, the Caol Management Team describe an incident where they were not, in their eyes, taken seriously enough. They describe how having sent a rough cut of their documentary film to Channel 4,

they emailed us the next week saying they wanted more camera shake so as to make it look as if it had been done by children. Pretty cheeky! Anyway we didn't change it!

The young people dismiss the Channel 4 adults with a fairly restrained epithet, but their eagle eyes have detected the false reasoning behind the request for camera shake: to be acceptable as children's work, the film must be imperfect and unprofessional, since it is the nature of children, as incomplete adults, to demonstrate inadequacy and lack of expertise.

The adults in Room 13, in contrast, hold no such deficit view of children. Their work is based on an assumption of children's competence and efficacy; they assume they can learn as much from the children as the other way about. As Rob Fairley argues:

We are a group of artists working together, with the only difference being that one or two of us are technically... more experienced.

Another framework that can help us understand more fully the adults' role in Room 13, is to be found in the report of the research study, *Learning without Limits* (Hart et al 2004). This empirical study posits an alternative to deterministic approaches to education, in which ability labelling and ability-focused practices set clearly defined limits on students' learning. By analysing the practice of nine teachers committed to 'anti-determinist pedagogy', the researchers offer an alternative template, a different mind-set. They demonstrate the ways in which limits to learning can be placed on pupils by teachers' predictions of their future careers as learners; they go on to argue that these limits can be lifted, and the constraining predictions replaced by the teacher's commitment to transforming learning capacity. In this alternative, 'evidence-based', pedagogical model, teachers who teach for 'learning without limits' are guided by three key principles: trust, co-agency and inclusion, which last principle Hart et al define as 'the ethic of everybody.'

These three principles seem to characterise the work of everyone in Room 13, especially the adults. Like the teachers whose work is documented by Hart et al, they are committed to a view of teaching and learning as a joint enterprise, in which adults and young learners share responsibility, and act together. People in Room 13 may not use the word 'co-agency' but it is, I think, a useful term with which to describe the emphasis they place on the partnership between the artists of all ages. They are equally committed to the 'ethic of everybody,' the moral standpoint that insists that, in Room 13, everybody belongs, everybody contributes, everybody is important, everybody is a powerful learner. And thirdly, the principle of trust is plainly to be seen: the adults trust in the young artists' commitment to learning; they trust them to make meaning out of

whatever they encounter in the world; they trust them to make good choices and decisions. Indeed David Gribble, as we have seen, identifies trust as the key concept at the heart of it all:

If I were asked to describe the Room 13 approach in a single phrase, I would say it was a profound manifestation of trust.

5.3 WHAT CAN BE LEARNED FROM ROOM 13?

We have seen how Room 13 is shaped by a number of key principles, which Room 13 participants of all ages use to guide their activities and their aspirations. We have seen how these principles are themselves derived from a set of underlying values, ideas held to be good in themselves, which have been evidenced, if not made explicit, in every observation and every scrap of Room 13 documentation. So, when in doubt, people in Room 13 make the choices that are most closely congruent with these values. When young artists ask Shani, or Claire, or Rob, or Laura, what to do, or how to proceed, they are reminded of the values of individual identity, of freedom of thought. They are helped to act in tune with the corresponding principle: think for yourself. They are trusted to make sense of it (whatever it might be); the meanings they attribute to the subjects of their art works are recognised and appreciated, 'received' in Noddings' term, as worthwhile and valuable. Drawing on the work of Jane Roland Martin (1992), an eminent curriculum theorist, we can see how Room 13 students are being educated for *participation* rather than for *spectatorship*, Martin's useful gloss on the difference between active and passive learning. She contrasts education for spectatorship, in which learners are not required to bring their intelligence to bear on living, in which they are taught to be unthinking observers of the world, with education in which young people learn to live in the world, not just to hear about it from their teachers, to take part in it, not to suffer disconnection from it. With these distinctions in mind, we can see how, in Room 13, the core value of agency is translated into the principle of participation.

So what can we learn from these settings, where value and principle are so coherently aligned? First, perhaps, an insight into the concept of learner autonomy. In Room 13, autonomy does not mean anarchy or self-centredness. There is no compulsion to be self-consciously original. There are, as one observer remarks, plenty of kittens and elephants to be seen in the art works. The young artists use their autonomy responsibly and with integrity. They explore the ideas that interest and concern them. While one works on the catastrophe of 9/11 with 3000 burnt matches, Reece draws 'my Dad,' with a few casual strokes of pencil.

The Room 13 managers use *their* autonomy to keep their studios ticking over; they answer emails, keep accounts, prepare their power points, and apply for grants. Furthermore, they work to spread the word, the vision, the sense of community, in ways of their own invention. There is no blueprint for the expansion of Room 13, either nationally or internationally. The Room 13 community has invented it, autonomously, imaginatively. And yet this extreme degree of independence of spirit, of thought, of determined action, does not disable Room 13 students from

their other responsibilities. They attend regular lessons in their classrooms, they obey bells, and they keep their classwork and homework up to date. They are sometimes visionary entrepreneurs, and sometimes obedient (or disobedient) pupils. Their grasp of the value of autonomy allows them to be both.

Secondly, we may learn that the cost to adults of granting autonomy to students is the loss of certainty about the future. In Room 13, there is no way of predicting outcomes, except through the vaguest of generalisations. The adults who work in and support Room 13 must forego the classroom teacher's professional privilege of specifying learning outcomes or behaviours in advance. In Room 13, predictions are broken and assumptions challenged every day of the year. All that can be guaranteed is that the young artists are making meaning, pursuing their full-time project of making sense of the world. Whether they choose to spell out their discoveries in terms that correspond to the official structures of assessment and achievement is up to them. The adults in Room 13 have lost their purchase on the futures that other teachers predict in their long, medium and short-term planning. But they gain, I am arguing, in realising that every child's trajectory is different, that every learner's pathway is his or her own, and that there are more ways of appreciating learning than by constantly weighing and measuring it.

Furthermore, their work as educators is not constrained by the metaphors of achievement that are currently dominant in maintained schools and classrooms: grades, levels, standards or goals. They do not see learning as a straightforward progression from the bottom of the ladder to the top; they have no way of knowing what Room 13 students might do next. But this loss of predictability is offset by their trust in their students. They are playing the long game, since there is no reason for them to fret about short-term, quantifiable, bench-marks of achievement. So this is another lesson to be learned from Room 13: when educators relinquish the official structures of achievement, (the ladder model of learning), they are free to establish other priorities, more humane, more dynamic. They can come closer to Dewey's inspiring vision of education as growth:

Education has as its aim at every stage an added capacity for growth.

Dewey (1916: 54)

A fourth lesson is that if school is to be a place where young people learn to think, rather than a place where they learn to be stupid, as John Holt so scarily declaimed many years ago, then the conditions which will most fully support their thinking must be rigorously considered, and steps must be taken to put those conditions in place. Giving young people the opportunity to think for themselves does not mean leaving them mercilessly alone, unsupported, or unstimulated. The carefully constructed conditions of Room 13 are just one set of ways of supporting young thinkers; the advocates of Room 13 make no claim for theirs to be the only way. The principles of Room 13 may be necessary ones for the support of children's thinking, but it is unlikely that the adults in Room 13 have any kind of monopoly in translating them into practices.

There are, however, some aspects of Room 13 from which I believe we may draw robust generalisations. One of these is its commitment to an egalitarian, democratic state of society within its four walls, and its desire to enlarge those ways of being to others, children and adults, in the pursuit of a fairer society, more fit for its members. The community of Room 13 is, as we have seen, such a society in miniature; it offers its students *equal encouragement*, a concept elaborated by Arthur Pearl, a leading advocate for democratic education. According to Pearl, an effective alternative to the lasting social inequity created by unequal encouragement can only be found in classrooms which meet young people's universal, human desires; these include a desire for security, belonging and meaning, for creativity, excitement and hope (Pearl 1997). Each of these desires is fulfilled for the participants in Room 13, at least to some degree. Their studios are places of equal encouragement in just these ways; we have seen the evidence that they feel safe, free from the pain of boredom or loneliness. They belong to a place where their acknowledged purpose is to make meaning; their excitement and creativity are self-evident. They certainly know what it is to hope, especially if we supplement Pearl's comments with Mary Warnock's stimulating definition of this neglected virtue:

It seems to me that education is particularly fitted to (encourage hope)... To feel competent, able to act, able to change or control things, or even to create them, these are all aspects of feeling hope... To find that today you can begin to do something you could not do yesterday, is to begin to hope...

For someone to wake up in the morning, thinking 'Good: I can go on with it,' whatever 'it' is, this I suppose must be the chief goal of education.

Warnock (1986:183)

In recent years we have become accustomed to official descriptions of schools and classrooms, and what should go on there, in which the concept of desire would seem irredeemably out of place. There is no room for the term in the scripted lessons of the English national initiatives; it is not used as a criterion of quality in reports from SEED, DfES or Ofsted. Yet Simone Weil, the great French mystic and philosopher argues, convincingly in my view, that 'in human effort, the only source of energy is desire' (Weil 1941:265).

Reading and re-reading the mass of evidence of the work of Room 13, sifting the documentation again and again in search of the lessons that we can draw from the enterprise as a whole, these two terms, energy and desire, have slowly emerged as the values at its heart. Room 13 is unique in its structures and its practices, but at its core are these universal human attributes – energy and desire.

REFERENCES

- Adams, J. (2005) Room 13 and the Contemporary Practice of Artist-Learners *Studies in Art Education* 47. 1. pp23-33
- Alexander, R. (2000) *Culture and Pedagogy, International Comparisons in Primary Education* Oxford: Blackwell
- Atkinson, D. & Dash, P. (2005) *Social and Critical Practices in Art Education* Stoke on Trent: Trentham Books
- Cooper, P., Drummond, M. J., Hart, S., Lovey, J. & McLaughlin, C. (2000) *Positive Alternatives to School Exclusion* London: Routledge
- Dewey, J. (1916) *Democracy and Education* New York: Macmillan
- DfEE (1998) *The National Literacy Strategy Framework for Teaching* London: DfEE
- Drummond, M. J. (2000) Susan Isaacs: Pioneering Work in Understanding Children's Lives in M. Hilton & P. Hirsch (eds) *Practical Visionaries: Women, Education and Social Progress 1790 – 1930* Harlow: Longman
- Eisner, E. (1985) *The Art of Educational Evaluation* London: The Falmer Press
- English, E., Hargreaves, L. & Hislam, J. (2002) Pedagogical Dilemmas in the National Literacy Strategy: primary teachers' perceptions, reflections and classroom behaviour *Cambridge Journal of Education* 32. 1. pp9-26
- Fineberg, J. (1997) *The Innocent Eye* Princeton: Princeton University Press
- Galton, M., Simon, B. & Croll, P. (1980) *Inside the Primary Classroom* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul
- Gribble, D. (1998) *Real Education: Varieties of Freedom* Bristol: Libertarian Press
- Hart, S., Dixon, A., Drummond, M. J. & McIntyre, D. (2004) *Learning without Limits* Maidenhead: Open University Press
- Isaacs, S. (1930) *Intellectual Growth in Young Children* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul
- Isaacs, S. (1932) *The Children We Teach* London: University of London Press
- Lave, J. & Wenger, E. (1991) *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Mannheim, K. (1936) *Ideology and Utopia: an Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge* New York: Harcourt Brace

Martin, J. R. (1992) *The School Home: Rethinking Schools for Changing Families* Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press

Noddings, N. (1992) *The Challenge to Care in Schools: an Alternative Approach to Education* New York: Teachers College Press

Pearl, A. (1997) Democratic education as an alternative to deficit thinking in R. Valencia (ed) *The Evolution of Deficit Thinking: Educational Thought and Practice* London: Falmer Press

Rinaldi, C. (2006) *In Dialogue with Reggio Emilia, listening, researching and learning* London: Routledge

Warnock, M. (1986) The education of the emotions in D. Cooper (ed) *Education, Values and the Mind* London: Routledge

Weil, S. (1941) Pre-requisite to dignity of labour in S. Miles (1986) (ed) *Simone Weil An Anthology* London Virago

APPENDIX ONE: THE EXPANSION OF ROOM 13

As will be seen in the material collected here, the members of Room 13 Caol, who have long been committed to the development of the core idea in other schools and settings, have made remarkable progress in the last five years.

The expansion of Room 13 has taken three rather different forms; first there are the new Room 13s in Scotland, in nearby Lochyside Primary School, in Lochaber High School, the school to which virtually all Caol students transfer, and in Sacred Heart Primary School in Glasgow. It has always been part of the long-term strategy that new Room 13s should open in the Fort William region.

Secondly, there are two new Room 13s in England, material from one of which, Hareclive Primary School in Bristol, is well represented in this report. This development, like the other English Room 13, Aragon Primary School in the London Borough of Merton, came about as a result of the school approaching Room 13 Caol and seeking their support in setting up a studio of their own.

Thirdly there are international developments, two of which have come about through the developing relationship between Room 13 Caol and TWBA/, an international advertising agency, whose Director of Development wrote to the managing group at Caol in February 2004, after seeing the Channel 4 film broadcast in January that year.

Brief details of all these new sites are given below.

- In Room 13, Caol, the original Room 13, the resident artist (since the beginning of 2005) is Laura Kingswood, an ex-apprentice of Rob Fairley's, who also spent time in Room 13 as a teenager in the late 1990s.
- Room 13 Lochyside Primary School was the first new Room 13 to be established (in 2002) is the nearest primary school to Caol. The artist in residence is Claire Gibb, who had previously worked alongside Rob Fairley at Caol.
- Room 13 Hareclive Primary School, Hartcliffe, Bristol, was already working with Shani Ali, an artist in residence supported by funds from Creative Partnerships, South West, when the deputy head, Tim Sully, heard about Room 13. After members of staff visited Caol in September 2003, and a return visit from the Caol management team in November, it became a recognized member of the Room 13 network. Shani Ali and her partner Paul Bradley are the artists in residence and Room 13 is formally open to young people two days a week, though related activities take place (in the studio and off the school site) on many other days as well.
- Room 13 Sacred Heart Primary School, Glasgow, opened as a music studio in the autumn of 2004. The students work closely with the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama; the musician in

residence was Andrew Cruikshank, until October 2005, and is now Jon Keliehor.

- Studio 13 Lochaber High School, Fort William, is based in the school to which virtually all Caol students transfer at the age of 11. Opened in the autumn of 2004, it is a fully functioning sound recording and film studio, though still short of equipment. The musician in residence is Joe French, who has also worked professionally with young people with special needs. Before he was chosen by the managing group at Lochaber, he had worked in Room 13 Caol.
- Room 13 Aragon Primary School in the London Borough of Merton, the most recent site, opened in January 2006, though the management team had been in place since Easter 2005.

All these initiatives benefit directly from the NESTA Learning Programme funding.

There are also international developments. Through a close working relationship with TBWA/, an international advertising agency with a project to teach creativity to underprivileged children, two Room 13 studios have been set up in South Africa, in Sapebuso Primary School, Soweto, and in Mmulakgoro Intermediate School in rural Botshabelo. They are sponsored by Woolworths in a corporate sponsorship deal, brokered by TBWA/ agency in Johannesburg.

There is also a Room 13 (Visual Arts Studio) at the Helpless Children Mother Centre in Kathmandu, Nepal, funded by money donated by the management team at Room 13 Caol.

Room 13 in Tamil Nadu appears for the first time in the 2005-6 Annual Report, an initiative resulting from an encounter between teachers and children from the Arasavanangkadu Village School and the UK Room 13 delegation of adults and young people at the International Democratic Education Conference (IDEC) held in India in December 2004, in India. The same report refers to yet another initiative, Room 13 Aseema, a Visual Arts Studio in Mumbai, which is in its developmental stage.

The work of Room 13 International does not strictly lie within the remit of this report, but enough has been said here to demonstrate the international appeal of the Room 13 concept and the determination of the young people at the core of the organisation to bring their vision and their aspirations to other schools, other countries and other cultures.

Rob Fairley, the first Room 13 artist in residence, continues to practice as an artist in the Highlands, and also supports the development of the wider network of Room 13s, particularly with the international work. Additionally, he is working with them on how Room 13 can engage with tertiary education and take advantage of some of the commercial opportunities that are beginning to arise.

THE BIRTH OF A NEW ROOM 13

The following extracts are taken from the Room 13 Annual Report 2003/2004 by the Room 13 Caol managing group.

On 30th September we had one of the biggest visits ever and as it is working out one of the most important. My Bryan Hall who is the head of a Primary School in Bristol called Hareclive came with teachers, parents and governors and their artist in residence Shani Ali. Mr Hall said that as they drove up from Glasgow past Loch Lomond and through Glencoe that he thought it was all too beautiful and we were not remotely going to be the sort of school he had hoped to find...then when they drove into Caol he said he felt immediately at home. They stayed all afternoon and asked lots of questions and were really really nice...

Being at Dartington in November gave a group of students from Fort William the chance to get home via Bristol and to pay a return visit to Hareclive. They found Hareclive just as exciting as their team had found us. Mr Fairley said that wandering round Hareclive was like discovering a part of Caol that you had never been in. It was really smart to see their studio, also at the top of the school, and to meet their management team. It took Danielle, Claire and Connor a very short space of time to decide that they wanted to work with Hareclive and so over lunch Mr Fairley and Danielle did a lot of sums to find out if it was possible. It was and they decided to speak to Rosie and me about making Hareclive a proper offer to become a full Room 13. We agreed completely and so now we are three studios! It is seriously cool to be working as three studios...

We do not usually have adults writing in our annual report but when we asked our newest Room 13 (Hareclive) for a contribution this is what they sent, written by Mr Sully (deputy head). We think you will see why we decided to publish it anyway.

In his office the head teacher is deep in conversation discussing the 'break in' which occurred over Christmas. Two new classrooms were stripped bare as past pupils from the local community caused £30,000 worth of damage. From time to time, he stops, opens his door, and walks to the doorway of Room 13. In contrast to the negativity of insurance assessors and shutter security, Room 13 is a picture of intense concentration and creativity. Year 6 children sprawl over the floor in a variety of postures, all deeply engaged in their own work. The silence is palpable. Shani Ali, the resident artist walks between them discussing their work and posing them questions which challenge the direction of their work. The head returns to his office with a glimmer of hope that in the future children will return to visit the school for more positive reasons, to maintain their connection with the school's most exciting project for decades, Room 13.

Hareclive's connection with Room 13 began in the summer term of 2003. Creative Partnerships had provided the finance for a summer project on 'Bridges', a mixture of dance, story telling, drama and two dimensional art. It was a brilliant week which left the school crying out for more artistic intervention on a long term basis. It was then announced to

schools in the zone that they would have a creative budget which they could spend in any way they thought was suitable to their school. Hareclive already had an idea of what the Caol Primary School Room 13 looked like through an article which had appeared in The Guardian, and decided, with the help of Creative Partnerships, to do some action research. As a result, the head, four teachers, two artists and a school governor made the long trip to Fort William in autumn 2003 and the project really took off.

From the outside the two schools appeared really similar, both in the middle of housing estates, both looking neglected and tired. This pleased the visitors who had long been put off by initiatives begun in the leafy suburbs which bore no relation to the real life of schools in socially deprived areas. Once inside all similarity ended. The school was beautiful, cared for, clean, orderly and with the most beautiful art work on the walls. The children were bright, articulate and friendly and the atmosphere was wonderful. All the visitors from Hareclive were overwhelmed by what they saw.

On returning to Bristol a management group was formed to move the project forward. It was called the Core and was composed of eight Year 6 children. They began a regular contact with their counterparts in Caol and then established a base in a disused computer suite in the school. Shani was employed, using Creative Partnerships money, as a resident artist two days a week.

The Core decided that all children should have the opportunity to see what Hareclive's 'Art Room' was all about and Shani wanted to get to know the children; so slowly, in small groups, all the children visited and played and drew and talked, and Room 13 became an established feature of the school.

In late autumn, Rob Fairley brought representatives from Caol and Lochyside, for the first of many visits (hopefully). They talked to the whole of Key Stage 2 and held the children spellbound while they showed them slides of the work created in Caol. Later, in the evening, Rob spoke to a group of parents and children about a visit to Everest Base Camp he had made with a group of children. It was inspirational and raised the aspirations of the families who attended. It was co-incidentally, the largest 'turn out' by parents for a voluntary 'in school' meeting in the last 10 years. Since then Room 13 has gone from strength to strength. Funding has been secured from Caol Room 13 to move the project into the academic years 2004-5 and it has officially taken on the 'Room 13' name. There has been an exhibition of some of the children's work in Bristol and there is a feel of permanence radiating from Room 13. This is very important to the children who often have little security in their own lives.

The management team have drawn up a plan to visit Caol after Easter. Two girls will go on the visit accompanied by two staff. They haven't decided who the staff will be but they are thinking that it might be best if the staff write to the Core to show why they are interested in coming and

what they hope to get out of the visit. Then they can decide who should come. Two of the boys have decided that their maths skills would lend itself to doing the books so they have volunteered to become Room 13's accountants. Shani has just ordered some canvases for the children to paint on. For the first time ever in the history of the school, the children will be able to paint on canvas. It is a momentous occasion.

Rob Fairley and the team in Caol remain in close contact with Hareclive, providing practical advice and encouragement. Projects between the 'Room 13' groups are in the pipeline including an internet based 'Digital Conversations'. The staff at Hareclive are under no illusions that without the help and example of the young people in Caol their own project wouldn't have got off the ground.

There is of course a degree of uncertainty about the long term viability of the project, not in terms of children wanting to use the room but in terms of funding the project. Writing bids for funding is becoming an increasingly daily part of teachers' lives but the experience of applying for arts grants is a new one. Again, Caol Room 13 has been hugely helpful in funding Shani's residence in the short term. The school meanwhile is hoping that the benefits of having Room 13 on site will open the door to securing more funding, when people see what the children can achieve and what an impact it has on the community at large.

These first-hand accounts of the origins of Room 13 Hareclive convey something of the enthusiasm and energy that seem to be characteristic of all Room 13 participants. It is important to note, in addition, that while each of the current Room 13s share ideas, priorities and principles, they are all different, and each has arrived at its present modus operandi along very different pathways. As the 2005-6 Annual Report comments, the variety of Room 13s is part and parcel of its developmental history:

Every Room 13 studio is slightly different – they are run differently by their individual management teams, have different artists, keep different business hours and all have slightly different ways of working. It really depends on what works best for the students, educators, artists and the community they are working in. One thing we have found though is that every Room 13 "feels" the same, and it is easy for us to feel at home in one another's studios.

As the ideas inherent in Room 13 have developed, it has become clear that the philosophy and ethos that make a Room 13 'work' can be transferred to any creative process so we are beginning to experiment with this a little more, as you will see from the reports submitted from the various Room 13s.

APPENDIX TWO: LANDMARKS IN THE LIFE OF ROOM 13

This section gives brief details of some of the major public events in the recent history of the various UK Room 13s. The selection illustrates that the public involvement and recognition of Room 13 artists take a wide variety of forms.

March 2003 A long article about Room 13 Caol appeared in the weekend Telegraph magazine, written by journalist by Craig McLean, with stunning photographs by Pål Hansen.

June 2003 An exhibit of works by Room 13 Caol artists at the West Highland Museum, showing pieces created since the award of the Barbie Prize in October 2002. Room 13 Caol produced a catalogue to accompany this exhibit *What Age Can You Start Being an Artist?* which included an extended version of McLean's Telegraph article.

July 2003 Room 13 Caol artists received prizes in two categories of the national Artworks competition, with a special award for Rob Fairley, at a ceremony at Tate Modern.

November 2003 Artists from Room 13 Lochyside and Caol spoke at the *Creative Heads* conference at Dartington, organised by Creative Partnerships South West. Extracts from the speech made by Connor Gillies, Chair of Room 13 Lochyside, are given in section six.

Joint commission (Lochyside and Caol) for a Christmas card for the Scottish Arts Council.

January 2004 A Channel 4 film, made and edited by Room 13 Caol students was broadcast; Room 13 received a large number of emails after the screening and in the two days following there were 2930 hits on the Room 13 website. This film was later shortlisted for the prestigious Grierson Award for documentary films.

October – November 2004 The National Campaign for Arts organised a joint exhibition for Caol, Lochyside and Hareclive artists in London, which moved to Inverness for November – January 2005. The show was curated and hung by the young artists from the three sites working together for the first time.

November 2004 Artists from Hareclive spoke at the NESTA futurelab 'Beyond the Blackboard' conference at Robinson College, Cambridge.

December 2004 Delegates from Caol attended the International Democratic Education conference in India, at the suggestion of David Gribble, a leading authority on democratic education, and a founder member of IDEN (International Democratic Education Network).

March 2005 Art For Whose Sake? a national conference commissioned by Creative Partnerships London East, was held in London with presentations

by Room 13 Hareclive artists, and reported in *Artists Newsletter*, April 2005.

June 2005 Artists from Caol and Hareclive spoke at the Artworks Conference at the Tate Modern, sharing a platform with David Lammy MP, Minister for Culture; Sir Nicholas Serota, Director, Tate; Anthony Gormley, artist; Tom Bentley, Director, Demos and Jonathan Fineberg, Professor of Art History, University of Illinois, among others. A report of this conference *How Old Do You Have To Be To Be An Artist* was published by Artworks, in partnership with NESTA, Tate and Demos.

July 2005 A publication by Creative Partnerships Bristol, *I had an idea* included an account of Room 13 Hareclive and contributions from Hareclive students. Some of these are included in section six.

July 2005 A two-week residency at the Irish Museum of Modern Art (IMMA) in Dublin was attended by artists from Caol, Lochyside and Hareclive. Extracts from their report of this experience are given in section six.

In March 2006 Channel 4 screened four new films about Room 13, showing recent developments in the UK and in South Africa.

In June 2006 an article appeared in the Business section of the Sunday Times describing the financial and business organisation of Room 13 Lochyside.

APPENDIX THREE: THE WORK OF THE MANAGEMENT TEAMS – MINUTES AND REPORTS

This section contains brief extracts from the minutes of the Caol management group, collected by writer and educator David Gribble on his long visits to Caol in 2004, and longer extracts from the annual reports for 2004 and 2005, written by the management team at Hareclive.

8th September

Lucy [the current Managing Director) said that we should start to look at the London Exhibition and it was decided to get Aardvark to come and get the work and take it to London. It was also decided that we should be the centre for collecting and that Lochyside [the other primary school in Fort William with a Room 13] should get their stuff to us. Lucy said she would get Mr Fairley to book sleeper tickets as it might need his Visa card.

We decided that Hayley or Nikki should go to the opening and that one person from Lochyside should go.

Lucy said that she wanted to go and bring the pictures back but thought she would find it difficult to get the time off, and instead Stephen [current Chair of the management committee] should go.

We then discussed fund-raising. Advent Calendars, Christmas cards, postcards and mouse mats made in the shape of a mousehole.

22nd September

A big discussion on what paintings had to go to London. It was sort of decided. If Nikki is going to be one of the main artists, then we thought that she should go to London at the start of the show and speak to Channel 4 about the new film.

A big discussion on the ordering of materials and Hayley said she would look after getting this done.

Eileen and Ann said they would see about getting people to tidy the sink and Lucy said that Mr Fairley has been complaining about food being left in the studio.

REPORTS FROM HARECLIVE

In 2003-4, the year it opened, Hareclive's annual report was written by Tim Sully, deputy head at the school. But in 2004 and 2005, the student management team took over this responsibility. Extracts from the two reports, given below, show how fast the seed of a idea can grow, take root and bear fruit. The events described in these Hareclive reports are only a beginning!

From the 2004 Report

On the 8th March our management team set out on a trip to see Bristol

City Museum and Art Gallery to see an art exhibition called *Making Faces* where we saw paintings by the artists Rembrandt, Goya, Hogarth, Renoir, Bacon and Warhol.

Also as well on the 8th March we went on a trip to *Flat out and Bluesome*. This was a contemporary art exhibition at Spike Island showing 10 taxidermied polar bears from the United Kingdom, which had been tracked down by the artists Bryndis Sneabjornsdottir and Mark Wilson.

On the 29th of March 2004 at the Helen Bloom Centre, we set up an installation including some paintings and drawings created by the artists in Room 13 Hareclive. Kim James and Stacy Filer gave a speech to all the assembled teachers and head teachers.

From the 16th-18th of June 2004 four of our artists from Room 13 Hareclive and some teachers went on a two-day trip to Room 13 Caol and Lochyside Primary School where we enjoyed meeting the artists and artists in residence there. We also had the chance to swap ideas and see how they run things.

On the 12th of July 2004 Room 13 Hareclive took school leavers photographs of all the year six children at Hareclive Primary and then sold them to pupils and their parents.

From the 12th to 15th July there was the Big M touring multimedia exhibition of art projects in Hartcliffe and Withywood, which included films and powerpoints from Room 13 Hareclive.

On the 5th of October Room 13 Hareclive went to Bannerman Road Primary, Bristol, to talk to Year 6 pupils about Room 13 and then ten days later on the 15th October we went back to the same area to take part in an inner city street festival selling art cards designed by us about what home means to us.

On the 4th of November Shannon and Amy from the core team went to the NESTA futurelab 'Beyond the Blackboard' conference at Robinson College, Cambridge to deliver their speech about Room 13, explaining what we do in Room 13 and how we can connect with all the other Room 13s.

26th of October – 6th of November
Kingly Court, London Exhibition.

Artists and adult representatives from each Room 13 met in London, curated and then hung paintings, drawings, sculptures, and photograph at Kingly Court Gallery. We were given this opportunity by the National Campaign for Arts who had contacted Room 13 Caol. We filmed the entire setting up process and the private view. The Caol team took down the exhibition as it coincided with them going to the Grierson Award presentation and then they took our work North to be exhibited in the Eden Court Theatre gallery in Inverness between 29th November 2004 and the 5th of January 2005.

In December 2004 our work was showcased at the 'creative revolution' an

exhibition organised by Creative Partnerships Cornwall to celebrate work from across the southwest. Just before Christmas we sold calendars for 2005 to teachers for ten pounds a calendar. We made about £130. Then we designed Christmas cards on the computer and we printed loads of them out and sold them at break time and lunchtime for 25p.

We had loads of visitors during the year.

12 March 2004

DfES visit.

12 July 2004

Head of Local Education Authority and Head of Arts from Bristol City Council.

22 September 2004

Bristol South MP Ms. Primarolo visited Room 13.

13 December 2004

'Arts and business' came to Room 13 to talk to us about sponsorship. Who we would want as sponsors, and who we would not want as sponsors, and if they did sponsor us what we would have to do in return.

From the 2005 Report

Great news, we now have our very own treasurer's bank account. Thank you Bank of Scotland!

Speeches

Dissemination has become an important part of what we do. It seems that a lot of people want to know about what we do in Room 13.

Shannon Coombs and Amy Bryant undertook the role of being the studio's speakers at 'Young Peoples Voices' – Creative Partnerships, Watershed, Bristol.

LEA Powerful Partnership, a Head Teachers conference in Bristol where Shannon, Amy and Mr Hall went head to head in their presentation 'Who's the boss?'

'How Old Do You Have To Be To Be An Artist?' conference at the Tate Modern. It may have been in front of 250 people, yet Shannon and Amy claim that they were not nervous.

Zoë James and Amy Phillips have spoken at –
Be Creative – Bournemouth,

This was our first speech for Room 13. For our second speech we headed south again to Cornwall and spoke for the South West Regional Youth Arts Network.

Engage conference

Shannon and Amy agreed to run a break out session for the Engage International conference 2005.

On 17th November, 16 people from galleries and museums around the

country turned up at our school. This is when our fun began, as we were in charge of our adult visitors, answering their questions and running a workshop.

The feedback we have received from our break out session has been very positive. It just goes to show, if you give us young people a chance we can do anything!

We have since been asked to submit a report about our experiences for an engage publication in association with Creative Partnerships. 5000 copies will be sent to all the galleries and museums in the country.

Visitors	Publicity
<p>We have had visitors from all over the UK</p> <p>David Lammy MP – Minister for Culture</p> <p>Many Head teachers and teachers from other schools</p> <p>Matt Little and Amanda Colbourne – Creative Partnerships</p> <p>David Gribble – Writer</p> <p>Claire Gibb – Room 13 Lochyside</p> <p>Rod Wright – from TBWA\</p> <p>Helen Storey – Artist</p> <p>Representatives from Arts Council South West</p> <p>Michael Prior – Arnolfini</p> <p>James Taljaard – Arts and Business</p> <p>Representatives from Bristol Airport</p>	<p>Shannon and Amy were featured in the Artists Newsletter after they gave a speech for the 'Arts for whose sake?' conference in Artsadmin in London.</p> <p>Amy Bryant worked on a press release with Arts and Business. Since then we have had BBC Radio Bristol and Venue Magazine interview the management team.</p> <p>We also were featured in Bristol Evening Post; once on 24th May seminar and again on 6th of October when David Lammy came to visit our studio</p>

Residency at Irish Museum of Modern Art

The residency at the Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin was important to us because we were being treated as equals living and working in a world of adult artists.

At IMMA we lived practically next door to our studio, this meant we could go there even in the middle of the night in our pyjamas if we wanted to. It was not a bit like school. We could work late into the night and early in the mornings. We felt free like all the other artists.

Near the end of our residency we took part in an open studio with all the other Room 13s.

We would like to thank Danielle Souness from Room 13 Scotland for opening up her two-week residency to three of the Room 13s.

Projects

We worked with a sound artist and a visual artist on a Creative Partnerships/Creative Team project. The project gave us the opportunity to make trips to look at all sorts of creative spaces: galleries, art colleges, artist's studios and libraries. A filmmaker from 'Calling the Shots' with

Teyfant media club pupils helped us make a year 6 school leavers film.

Reading Agency project – Room 13 Hareclive have been asked to lead a project using the Central Libraries Art Archive. We are working with the library staff and another Primary school in Bristol.

It was our turn to help our Artists in Residence when four of us worked with Shani and Paul to set up their artwork at the Spike Island open studios in 2005.

Selling

We are gradually moving into being the school photographers, starting with taking the class photographs.

Jordan and Reece launched their monthly joke book in November.

Mr Hall our headteacher has asked us if Room 13 would be interested in setting up and running a school shop – selling things like stationery.

Not a bad idea as we would keep the profits!

Urban2 Commission

Paige, Abbie and Tom took on a commission to design the cover for an employment guide that will go to every household in South Bristol.

Lending books

Since we have been working with Bristol Central Library and the Reading Agency on a research project, we have been issued with a library card that allows us to get all sorts of books out without Shani and Paul getting fines for late returns. This now means we have started some kind of lending service in the studio for all the book lovers that use Room 13.

We also hope to make a visit to the Scottish studios soon.

Room 13 has given us real life experiences and we would like to thank everyone who has helped us on our way.

APPENDIX FOUR: CRITICAL APPRECIATION

This section contains a selection of extracts from commentaries on Room 13 from a wide range of authors, including politicians, artists, academics, educationalists and researchers.

Sir Nicholas Serota, Director Tate Galleries from his speech to the Artworks conference, Tate Modern, June 30, 2005:

Room 13 is the most important model for artistic teaching in school we have in the UK.

An extract from an article in *Artists Newsletter* April 2005, reporting on the Creative Partnerships Conference, Art for Whose Sake? Held in London in March 2005:

It was in particular the energy of Room 13 that seemed to both excite and inspire the conference. What it prompted was a sense of renewed faith in the ability of practices to redefine institutes and policies, rather than the practice conforming or being somehow curtailed by these frameworks. This energy brought to the game a new perspective, rewriting the script for 'who' participated, 'who' made the work and 'who' the work was for, and happily smudged the markers between all these. Art for whose sake? Frances Scott is an artist and writer

An extract from the introduction to *Social and Critical Practices in Art Education* (2005) Stoke on Trent: Trentham Books – a collection of essays edited by Dennis Atkinson and Paul Dash, both lecturers in arts education at Goldsmiths College London:

Danielle Souness and Rob Fairley give an account of the remarkable *Room 13*, a dynamic space for art practice at remarkable *Room 13*, a dynamic space for art practice at Caol Primary School in Fort William, Scotland. Here children are producing art work that has been acknowledged by leading critics and major contemporary art galleries. Starting with discussion of their ideas, the children, helped by adult facilitators, are producing art work that explores issues of personal and social identity, and work that takes the form of a critical analysis of events in the wider world. It is difficult for adults to comprehend that *Room 13* is run by the children themselves and that they have secured generous funding and have given keynote talks at national conferences – as well as co-writing this chapter.

Extracts from a paper by Jeffrey Adams, also a lecturer at Goldsmiths College: Adams, J. (2005) Room 13 and the Contemporary Practice of Artist-Learners *Studies in Art Education* 47.1. pp 23-33.

Room 13 and the Contemporary Practice of Artist Learners

This paper explores the possibilities of repositioning classroom art practices within the field of contemporary art... The purpose of this exercise is to elevate the status and legitimacy of classroom art education... [in a context in which] art education [is] sometimes almost erased from the UK's primary school curriculum and in constant status flux in secondary schools; both sectors having to fight frequently ideological battles against the centralized prescription of 'core' subjects. Hence the necessity to demonstrate that the practices that are found in the classroom may be seen as part of the wider contemporary art movement, and not merely as an obscure adjunct operating within a proscribed institutional pedagogy which often prohibits both legitimacy and authority... Classroom art practice has for too long been subject to the marginalisation processes that have been part of the government reconstruction of the school institution under the uncritically adopted notion of a curriculum with 'core' subjects.²

Room 13, a Scottish primary school art group that is pupil-managed, maintains a programme of artists in residence, exhibitions and some commercial activity. Pupils have a designated space ('Room 13') where they can 'drop in' during the school day and make art, in the presence of a resident artist. Art is given a high priority, and they may leave their other lessons to participate in Room 13 activities, provided that they do not fall behind with other work.

The Room 13 project has been the beneficiary of substantial funding from both local government and national art bodies, which has undoubtedly facilitated this diversity of art production. It includes performance and digital animation, supported by seminars on theory and philosophy of the arts; collaborative work is also common. When asked about the generation of ideas in Room 13, 11-year-old managing director Ami Cameron replied:

This is really difficult to answer because who really knows where ideas come from. Certainly we learn from adults... but sometimes the best lessons are from people who come into the class or studio, we have lots of visitors and you learn from what they say and sometimes this can lead to an artwork. Sometimes a piece of work will come from just using stuff...

The presence of artist-teachers (in particular long-term artist in residence Rob Fairley) has not prevented the pupils developing a high degree of autonomy, with pupil management and administration. Perhaps the most telling remark from my discussion with Ami Cameron occurred when she was asked about the difference in the modes of learning in Room 13. Her unsolicited imposition of the value of the different activities is striking: We have normal art classes but they are very different from our studio, they usually mean an art teacher will show you how to do something then everybody in the class has to copy her. In the studio we make our own things about things which are important to us.

² Of which Arts education is not one (editor's note)

Room 13's internet presence (a pupil designed and maintained web site) has helped overcome its geographical remoteness (Fort William in the Scottish Highlands) and helps it maintain an extensive audience. Room 13's production is self-consciously contemporary, as the pupils proselytise (see for example their Channel 4 film broadcast in January 2004) and it has been surprisingly innovative in terms of the willingness of their artist-pupils to imitate the varied forms of contemporary art.

[Drawing on Lave and Wenger's challenging and rewarding concept of *communities of practice*, Adams goes on to argue that Room 13 is just such a community, but is not the 'community of schooled adults' normally to be found within the school institution.]

Using Lave and Wenger's model of the community of practice, the community that is reproduced in the art classroom need not, principally, be that of the 'schooled adults'. The community of practice that is reproduced through Room 13 can also be conceived as a community of practitioners. Of course, the replication of the school learners' community of practice is inevitable, but with a transformed pedagogical structure, it seems that there are good reasons to describe the community that is reproduced as one of art *practitioners*, as well as one of schooled-adults. The evidence for this is to be found in both pedagogy and production – the way that the material and theoretical production of the artist-pupil and teacher serves as a means of acquiring new insights and expertise – and also in the capability of the pupil producers to instruct through their acquired competence. This capacity for the learners to instruct their apprentices is evident in Room 13 as Ami Cameron explained, when questioned about the process of learning from peers:

As I am writing this Rosie is teaching P3 [another school group]... the best example of one of us teaching younger ones is Danielle (who works almost totally in words and digital images) showing one of the younger ones in P4 that cutting and pasting in Photoshop was just the same as making a collage...

The new critical pedagogy that occurs, through new productions and performances, means that *instruct* need not mean the orthodox method of verbal didacticism. In the classroom art studio this may be accomplished by the critical reception of work through observation, experience and reproduction.

Adams concludes his highly academic and insightful article with a claim for the essentially egalitarian character of the key features of Room 13's community of practice.

The way that collaboration and open theorising are features of Room 13 is one particularly significant aspect of the artist-pupil formation. Strategies like these represent resistance to the imposition of the negative instrumentalist and formulaic pedagogic models that so effectively replicate social inequalities.

This extract is reproduced here, with the author's permission, from a long paper *Views from Room 13: A Studio for the Art of Learning* (2004) by Kelly Love, PhD student in the Department of Higher and Community Education, University of Edinburgh.

Room 13 is a shining example of how the power of arts-based education can help all those involved foster their own innate creativity. It is in bringing this capacity to fruition that many of the instrumental values of the arts become most evident. The conversations I am having with the participants of Room 13 are a dialogue that reinforces the importance of the enquiries being pursued through [my] research concerning an arts-based ethos and its effect on the development of the learner. The rich data accumulating is a fertile ground for insights that may shed light on the transformational learning that is an inherent aspect of this program. Through analysis, moving toward the goal of a synthesis of understanding, hopefully further understanding of the concept of creativity will be revealed. As one student stated, Room 13 "leads you to your imagination and lets it go free..."

Extracts from an article in The Sunday Times – Scotland edition June 25, 2005

Cash runs out for the children of Room 13

An innovative art project in a Fort William primary school, which has won global plaudits for liberating its pupils, may have to close, writes Gillian Bowditch.

Caol primary is a squat, drab building of stained grey concrete, but it nestles amid exquisite scenery. Today it is 24C in Fort William and the teachers are eating lunch outside in the lee of Ben Nevis. Inside, the management committee of Room 13, Mairi MacRae, Shanna Michie and Kimberlee MacAllister, are taking me on a guided tour.

The room has a gallery space and the art is in marked contrast to the homogenized drawings outside the conventional classrooms. Its boldness and confidence hit you like a paint ball. But there is also something disturbing about elements of it that display a conceptualism beyond the children's years.

"Room 13 is different from most school art rooms," says Laura Kingswood, artist in residence. "The pupils decide when to come and they don't have to achieve anything. They can come and just sit. Their work isn't going to get marked and there is no pressure. That frees them up. They can express themselves in a more open way.

"I am sometimes quite shocked by the things they tell me and the life experiences they have, but they do work things out through the art."

The idea hit the headlines in 2002 when the school won the £20,000 Barbie prize awarded by the toy maker Mattel, which is considered to be the children's equivalent to the Turner Prize. The £1,000 individual award that year went to Jodie Fraser for her work 911, an abstract piece which

used 3,000 burnt matchsticks to represent the lives of the victims of the 9/11 attack in America and which hangs in the school's art gallery.

It's not easy to know how to respond to this. Should we applaud her talent, or book her a session with a psychologist? Is this level of precocity appropriate for children for whom death and disaster are not, thankfully, part of their world? Kingswood has no concerns about the work the children produce. "The thing you could notice about the art here is its variety," she says. "Somebody will be drawing clouds and flowers but somebody else might be working on something more serious. They can do whatever they want. The important thing is that they are encouraged to think."

Ultimately what gives Room 13 its energy and purpose is not the dark, award-winning art that revisits 9/11 but the life-affirming, innocent energy of works such as Rabbits in the Sky, Golden Elephant, Deep Blue Sea and Dizzy Wizzy; conventional subject matter treated in a bolder, more thoughtful and imaginative way.

The children choose to express their individuality rather than follow the model which landed them the Barbie prize. The usual childhood subjects predominate their works. There is an abundance of kittens and elephants.

"Room 13 means a lot to me because my old school didn't have one," says Mairi, 10. "I think more about art now. I know about famous artists. We go to galleries and we get to do workshops. I like using shampoo in my pictures."

"Every child is different," says Kingswood, who has been with the project since it was first established by Rob Fairley in 1994. "Room 13 gives them great confidence. It is not just the art but the autonomy it gives them."

That Room 13 is an enterprising and successful project is not in doubt, but does it merit £200,000 of lottery money? Grant Bage of NESTA believes it is a gamble that has paid off. The grant, however, was only ever meant to be start-up funding. The scheme that awards the funding has been wound up and no further money is likely to come from NESTA. "The evaluation report of the project will be published in the next few weeks and [this may help] secure other funding," says Bage. "All the indications are that Room 13 has been a success."

Another PhD student, Judy Silver, at the University of Exeter has been studying Room 13 in Caol and Lochyside, as part of her enquiry into educational approaches that are most likely to support all students and their capacity to learn. NESTA invited her to contribute to the report and her response is reproduced below

Introduction

In March 2003, the Daily Telegraph published an article about Room 13 Caol. Since I have a personal background in art I was immediately

attracted to the idea of education through the medium of art and creativity. As an educational researcher I was fascinated by what I read. I wrote to Jennifer Cattanach, Head of Caol Primary to ask if I might visit the school to learn more about this unusual learning environment. I was particularly struck by Jennifer's comment quoted in that article: 'We see a difference in the child as a whole. We see their self-confidence building, their whole attitude changing. It is something that everybody in the school welcomes.'

Three days later I received an email from the eleven-year-old Managing Director of Room 13: 'Your letter has been passed on to me for my attention', and thus I had my first taste of the culture of Room 13. Henceforth, I learnt to address any future correspondence to the Managing Director. I had my knuckles firmly rapped: I was not to make the same mistake again.

My initial questions for research were:

- What is going on here?
- What intellectual, social and emotional changes occur in the development of these children as a direct result of this experience?
- How has the experience affected their lives?
- What conclusions can be drawn from this project and, can this serve as an example for future projects? And furthermore,
- What can we, as educators in the broadest sense, learn from this?

On my first visit to Caol in June 2003, I learnt from Rob Fairley, Artist in Residence, of the major contribution made by Jennifer to Room 13's modest beginnings. I also learnt from Jennifer about the huge contribution and unflinching patience that Rob has contributed not only to the studio but to the life of the school. In the beginning, Room 13 operated part-time to offer an activity for children who enjoyed painting and making things and loved working with Rob. He will deny any influence but the impact of this experience on the development of these first children cannot be ignored. Jennifer's own contribution was having the foresight and leadership skills to make Room 13 happen together with a deep professional trust and respect for Rob and her teaching colleagues.

The organic growth of Room 13 since that time is a culmination of the social, historic and cultural contributions of all its participants: teachers, Rob, Jennifer and its young artists. In this first visit I conducted a group assessment of some of the young artists, looking at cognitive skills and expressive language. The exercise revealed that despite the maturity of their art work and organisational skills in the context of Room 13, cognitive skills and expressive language appeared to be fairly average for a rural community and did not seem to indicate any significant transfer of learning from one area of cognition to another.

However, further examination of intellectual change might prove revealing since this same group of children were applying for grants to large corporations, writing business letters to different organisations, dealing with the Room 13 bank account, managing day-to-day issues, budgeting money for purchasing paper, brushes and canvas and generally

taking on the adult activities and responsibilities of professional artists within a democratically elected community.

Of course, they had help: the role of the Artist in Residence is not only to develop and encourage the individual creativity of the young artists, but to advise on any decision made through the democratic process. This and the hierarchal order of both new and more experienced Directors ensures the smooth running of the studio in successive generations of its participants.

On my second visit to Caol and my first to Lochyside in June 2004 it became apparent that there is an interest and pride felt by the wider community in Room 13's achievements and accolades. Thus the community of Room 13 influences the life and culture of the village and in turn the local culture influences Room 13. I saw artworks which made use of local debris: bones and teeth of small rodents found in the fells around Ben Nevis. The Highlands museum in Fort William is a familiar setting to Room 13 for local exhibitions, including one which displayed works by the studios.

I conducted a number of interviews with young artists, Artists in Residence and members of community has for Room 13, the key participants of its studios and the contribution it had made to the life of the village

In October 2005 I returned to the Highlands again, for a brief visit with no agenda but to catch up with recent developments and reacquaint myself with the studios. A third studio had been established in Lochaber High, a secondary school in Fort William. This was not an art studio but a sound studio, served by the enthusiasm and commitment of its Musician in Residence and is a perfect example of the innovation and creativity which has become the hallmark of Room 13. The studio provides a service to the community of the school by encouraging reluctant students on to school premises and giving young people the chance to express themselves through a medium which is culturally so important to many teenagers.

Summary

In the three years since I began to study Room 13 there have been some significant developments. The concept of Room 13 is becoming increasingly respected in the art community, in education, and in studios from the Highlands of Scotland to the slums of India.

Room 13 appears to correspond to the socio-cultural model of mediation and cultural transmission (Vygotsky, 1978; Feuerstein, 1994; Kozulin, 2003). Furthermore, this growing and dynamic community of communities serves as an example that change is normal (Fullan, 1993). The different personalities, talents and influences of the generations of its participants have developed communities which have their own history, heroes and traditions, and as this community of communities grows, so will its impact. Young artists and musicians will continue to benefit from

exchanges between these diverse communities and cultures and this will generate another level of complexity in this fascinating project.

What has become clear is that whilst Rob Fairley and Claire Gibbs have provided the blue touch paper for studios in the Highlands, other studios are developing without their direct influence. Whether these new studios will carry the same ethos and values as the original studios, only time will tell.

However, like many others I feel that I have barely begun to unravel the complexities of this growing project. Like an artist painting a beautiful landscape, narrative research can only illuminate and emphasise some essential aspects of what it is attempting to convey. To this end, it would make a fascinating study to visit all the studios around the world; to learn more about their diversities and similarities, and describe the local cultures in which they flourish; this will become the focus for further investigation.

REFERENCES

Feuerstein, R., Klein, P., Tannenbaum, A. J., 1994, *Mediated Learning Experience (MLE): theoretical, psychological and learning implications*. Freund Publishing House, 2nd Edition

Fullan, M., 1993, *Change Forces*, RoutledgeFalmer

Kozulin, A. et al (Edit.), 2003, *Vygotsky's Educational Theory in Cultural Context*, Cambridge University Press

Vygotsky, L. S., 1978, *Mind in Society*, Harvard University Press

Judy Silver, MSc Exeter University, June 2006

POSTSCRIPT

From a letter to all at Room 13 Caol, February 2004

P.S. I have never felt so intimidated writing a letter to anyone before. It is very humbling. Thank you for the challenge you present. You force people to think harder and to confront their perceptions of normality.

This letter is from the World Wide Director of Development from the advertising group, TBWA, and marks the start of the collaboration that sparked the development of Room 13s in South Africa.