

# BOX CLEVER

contemporary theatre for young people

## *THE HATE PLAY PROJECT*

in

**Brent**

**November/December 2013**

**Evaluation Report**

for



**JOHN LYON'S CHARITY**  
PART OF THE HARROW SCHOOL FOUNDATION



Box Clever Theatre Company is a registered charity (1054553)

[www.boxclevertheatre.com](http://www.boxclevertheatre.com)

Box Clever Theatre Company, Oval House, 52-54 Kennington Oval, London, SE11 5S

## THE PROJECT

Bullying, victimisation and hate crime appear to be licensed by an unwritten code of silence. Although the verbal and physical humiliation of the victim is often clearly visible, and shared through the means of social media sites, the victim often remains silent through shame and fear. More importantly the actions of the perpetrators also appear to be condoned by the silence of the majority in the community who are neither bullies nor bullied. *The Hate Play Project* aims, through powerful drama, interaction and creativity, to empower the students, to show them that they do have a voice and the means to effect real and positive changes in their community.

Since its inception, the play and the issues which it explores have become a key project in the Company's repertoire. Central to the project is the exploration of the issues through creative writing, a means of giving voice to the students' thoughts and feelings in a secure and supportive environment, and the subsequent sharing of that work between the students of different schools and different communities.

A central objective was to create and sustain a collective of young people from the different schools who would be able to meet and share their thoughts and ideas about bullying and hate crime in a creative environment. They would use writing as a tool of expression and empowerment, returning to their schools and communities to work for greater social cohesion.

Box Clever is very grateful to John Lyon's Charity for their support for the company's work in the borough.

### THE HATE PLAY PROJECT STRUCTURE

#### STAGE ONE

Box Clever Theatre Company performed their innovative and dynamic production of *The Hate Play*, dealing with the key issues of bullying, hate crime and victimisation, in each of the project schools.

#### STAGE TWO

Members of the company returned to each school to lead two workshops working with 20-25 students from Year 9 in order to explore the issues of the play through creative writing.

#### STAGE THREE

A Gathering was held at the Capital City Academy, at which students from each school met to share and perform their work.

In addition, Resource Packs containing a range of activities based on the play and using teaching strategies such as forum theatre and improvisation were sent to each partner school to extend the range and impact of the project.

## **STAGE ONE -THE HATE PLAY**

### THE SCHOOLS

A new production of *The Hate Play* toured to 3 secondary schools in the London Borough of Brent, giving 3 performances to a total of 570 students.

12/11/2013	Queens Park Community School	Year 9	160
13/11/2013	Alperton Community School	Year 9	220
13/11/2013	Capital City Academy	Year 9	190

School	Age range	type	gender	SEN students	English not first language	Free school meals	Achieving A*-C grades 2012	Most recent Ofsted grading
Queens Park Community School	11-19	Academy Converter mainstream comprehensive	mixed	10.3%	55.8%	25%	53%	Good (2012)
Alperton Community School	11-18	Academy Converter mainstream comprehensive	mixed	2.7%	84.4%	23%	56%	Outstanding (2011)
Capital City Academy	11-18	Academy Sponsor Led	mixed	11.7%	62.5%	37.4%	40%	Good (2012)

The activity in the schools was undertaken by the following members of Box Clever:

David Ajao, Miles Mitchell, Darrel Bailey, Asha Reid, OneNess Sankara, Matthew Rutherford.

The activity was supported by the following members of Box Clever:

Iqbal Khan (director), Michael Wicherek (writer), Anna Bosworth (film-maker), Pip Thurlow (production manager) Sarah Booth (costumes) Callie Brown (evaluation)

## Student evaluation

After each production, a representative sample of ten students was interviewed by members of the creative team. The questions are designed to elicit information regarding the quality of the play and performance and also the impact that it has had on its target audience.

	DISAGREE STRONGLY	DISAGREE SLIGHTLY	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	AGREE SLIGHTLY	AGREE STRONGLY
I thought <i>The Hate Play</i> was really good and I wanted to watch all the time.				33%	67%
<i>The Hate Play</i> made me think and understand more about bullying.				7%	93%
I felt involved with what was happening.			16%	47%	37%
I found the whole experience really worthwhile				6%	80%

What did you think was particularly good about *The Hate Play*? Think about the story, the characters, the way it was acted and how it showed what happened when someone was bullied.

Students highlighted in particular the quality of the acting in the play and the way in which the characters' emotions were portrayed so movingly and realistically:

*I thought it was really good the way the actors made it seem so real and they didn't laugh when the audience did. Also just the way they showed emotion*

*The ability of the actors and how they could show different feelings so easily. It was an amazing experience.*

The structure of the plot, its realism, the use of music and dance and also the interaction with the audience, especially the moments in which the choices the characters had before them were analysed, all had an impact on the students:

*The particular part I liked about the play was when the three bullies recognised their mistake and looked very astonished about what had happened.*

*I think I like best the part when different choices were considered resulting in various outcomes was good because it was unique to the play and it gives a better information on the characters and how they would cope*

*I really loved how they made links with actual life and that they asked us questions and let us be part of the play.*

It is also clear that the students felt that it enlarged their understanding of bullying and the effect it can have:

*I also learned a lot from it and what bullying could lead to*

*I thought 'The Hate Play' was a good way to make people aware of bullying*

*I think it related to bullying now and how the victim feels and a lot of other factors which are true*

Do you think that the play showed what is it really like when bullying happens in school? Try to think about the characters and how the story develops and explain your answer to this question as fully as you can.

The general consensus here is that the play was a realistic portrayal of bullying in schools, particularly in the way in which the accumulation of petty incidences led to something far worse. Students recognised the emotional impact of bullying on the victim as portrayed in the play and began to formulate ideas on what could prevent such situations from developing.

*Kind of because that is what bullying can lead to and what someone should do to be a true friend*

*Bullying is a bad and nasty habit or thing. And it made me realise what it can truly mean*

*Yes, the scenarios were completely true. Bullying develops easily from mild to dangerous I kind of think that the play showed what really happens when bullying occurs*

Two students qualified their answer to this question:

*It partly depends on the case of bullying. In some cases bullies are dealt with immediately and in some cases the bullying gets really bad so it depends on the bully, the timespan and the method*

*I don't think bullying like that happens in my school but there is teasing around like calling people names. I always try to stop it*

Has the play made you think about bullying in a different way? Think about things such as the different people in the story, and whether you have learnt anything from watching the play.

The majority of students felt that the play had enlarged their understanding of bullying significantly, again through the accurate and heart-felt portrayal of the effect of bullying on the victim and also the bully:

*Yes, it made me think about what the victim of bullying is feeling and what he/she is experiencing*

*Yes, I have thought about what bullying can lead to and how hurt the victim can be*

*Yes, because the characters in the play really did help me recognise what it feels like to be bullied and to be a bully*

They also began to recognise that they needed to consider their own actions and to realise that everyone in the community had a part to play in the prevention of bullying:

*Bullying someone can really hurt them but also laughing along doesn't help either*

*Yes, because now I know I should help more*

However, one student felt that little could effectively be done to prevent bullying

*Not really because this type of case has occurred many times in the past and will most probably happen again with almost the same consequences*

If you were in charge of stopping bullying in your school, what would you do? Has the play given you any ideas about what you could do or what you could organise in your school to help both those who are being bullied or the bullies or stop bullying from happening?

In their response to this question, students recognised that the wall of silence which often surrounds bullying needed to be broken down. Victims of bullying, and those who witnessed it, needed to be provided with a safe and secure means of communicating with responsible adults.

*I would make sure everyone is strong about telling the teacher and not scared*

*I would tell a grown-up or stand up for the person being bullied*

*Have a teacher just there for a student to talk to. This would mean they would feel secure to talk to them*

*I would make an anonymous 'complaint box' for people to write down who bullies them*

Some students felt that stronger punishments for those who were bullies would be an effective deterrent:

*I would introduce harsher punishments to psychologically put people off bullying.*

Other ideas included:

*I would make sure that all students are friendly with each other and I would give more lessons about it to make people realise what it could really do.*

*I would create a group of students and make/encourage them to play lead at lunchtime and to be on the look-out for any bullying*

*I will make posters and warn children in assemblies to stop bullying in school*

*I would invite 'The Hate Play' actors because they make a difference*

## Teacher evaluation

One member of staff from each school, a Head of Drama, CAL-PA and a Science teacher, completed an evaluation form after the performance

	DISAGREE STRONGLY	DISAGREE SLIGHTLY	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	AGREE SLIGHTLY	AGREE STRONGLY
I thought <i>The Hate Play</i> was really good and held the attention of the students.					<b>100%</b>
I felt that the students were challenged to think about bullying and ways in which to combat it.					<b>100%</b>
I felt that the students were really connected with the subject and with what was happening.					<b>100%</b>
I found the whole experience really worthwhile					<b>100%</b>

What did you think was particularly good about '*The Hate Play*? Are there any aspects of characterisation, plot development, staging or audience interaction that you would like to mention in particular?

*The interaction with the students. Current issues were dealt with in a way they could really relate to.*

(wished to remain anonymous)

*The students were challenged and connected to the play. The whole play was brilliant.*

(comments not to be used for publicity or marketing purposes)

*The chance to revisit situations and then to ask the students what they would change and the implications of their actions.*

Science teacher, Alperton Community College

Were there any aspects that you think could have been improved or presented differently? We are always developing and refining our work so will be interest to hear any suggestions that you might make.

*The only thing is that when asking the students the questions during the workshop, the student should have had access to the microphone so that everyone could hear their comments*

(comments not to be used for publicity or marketing purposes)

*The chance to revisit more scenes, maybe when Cal sees Vic just before he gets back on the bike and what could be changed.*

Science teacher, Alperton Community College

Do you think that *The Hate Play* provides an effective learning experience for your students?  
We would be interested to hear the reasons behind your answer to this question

*Yes, it really made them think about the subject of Hate and it was extremely well acted and moving.*

(comments not to be used for publicity or marketing purposes)

*Yes as it involves the students and allows them to use their own actions in the play, to see them revisited and to see the consequences that may follow*

Science teacher, Alperton Community College

Do you have any other comments or suggestions?

*It was brilliant. Well done. The students were all involved and connected to the play.*

(comments not to be used for publicity or marketing purposes)

**Finally, how many stars would you give the attitude and organisation of the company?**

*	**	***	****	*****
				<b>100%</b>

### **STAGE TWO: FOLLOW-UP WORKSHOPS AND THE GATHERING**

At the end of the Gathering at Capital City Academy, 45 students, spread across the three schools, completed evaluation forms.

	DISAGREE STRONGLY	DISAGREE SLIGHTLY	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	AGREE SLIGHTLY	AGREE STRONGLY
I really enjoyed being part of the workshops and the Gathering.		2%	2%	24%	71%
Writing creatively about the issues involved in bullying and hate crime was really helpful and interesting		2%	15%	31%	52%
I enjoyed sharing what we had all done with the other schools and hearing their work.	2%		7%	42%	49%
I found the whole experience really worthwhile			9%	24%	67%

What did you think was particularly good about the workshops and the Gathering? Think about what you enjoyed the most, what you got out of the sessions and whether they have made you feel differently about bullying and what can be done to stop it.

Students felt that their knowledge and understanding of bullying continued to grow through the workshops and the Gathering:

*It really made me think differently about how bullying works*

*It made me realise the issues about bullying*

*I think it made us realise the power of bullying*

The activities also came in for praise:

*I thought the singing and composing were good*

*The lyrical improvisation*

*It was a way for us to write what we thought about bullying and how it could be stopped*

*I really enjoyed it and it helped me on my drama skills*

*My favourite part of the workshop was when I got to act with the characters one part of the play. I also enjoyed doing the poems on love and hate*

However, the chief value of the experience, according to an overwhelming number of students, came from the interaction with new people from different schools. Old friends were reunited, new ones made, perceived differences between the schools were broken down as ideas and creative approaches were shared. Students commented also on the effect that this had on their confidence and their social skills.

*Meeting new people and having to be talkative (since I'm very shy)*

*I think hearing everyone else's verdict on love and hate*

*It was fun to go and learn from other schools*

*Learning from different people*

*That different schools were involved and sitting in groups with different people and getting to know each other*

Would you like to meet up with the people from the other schools again to share your work and perhaps ideas on how you might stop the bullies and help the people who are being bullied?

Although a large number of students said yes to this question few elaborated on their answer. Those who did had varied views of the worth of such an experience:

*Yes because it was interesting seeing new people and a new idea to prevent bullying.*

*Yes, it would be beneficial however it interrupts school learning for GCSE*

*No because I didn't get to know them too well. If we had more time to socialise then yes*

*Definitely, it was a good experience and I would do it again*

*Maybe, but I feel we've said all we need to say*

*No, I'm busy. Well, if we miss school time and lessons I would come*

*Yes, I would because bullying is a serious topic and to see other people's feelings is great*

After seeing the play and being part of the workshops and the gathering, do you have any ideas on how people in your school community can live and work together with mutual respect?

Again, students who answered this question (and not all of them did) had a variety of ideas both practical and ideological:

*We can talk to overcome our differences*

*Yes, people should respect each other no matter what their background*

*We can help each other, not betray each other, give moral support and make gatherings to discuss things*

*Bullying-see something, say something*

*Yes, I think there should be more councils on bullying*

*It would be a good idea to have a mentor/ friend in Year 11 or VI form*

One student felt that the Gathering showed in microcosm how communities could exist in mutual harmony and respect:

*Yes, the activity that we did in the Gathering demonstrated that*

Have you noticed any changes in yourself, in the way that you think, or write or behave, from being part of this project?

Opinion was divided on whether the experience had changed them, but the majority of students felt that it had. It had increased their confidence, their knowledge, their awareness of themselves and others, and also their circle of friends.

*I have more PSN friends and I am friendlier now*

*I have gained in confidence*

*Yes, I have made more friends which helped me think more*

*Yes, it has made me a better person*

*I've improved how I write (making it more descriptive) and I'm more aware*

*I am nicer than I was before then*

## Teacher evaluation

Four members of staff, a Head of Performing Arts, an Art Technician and a Year Nine Deputy Year Co-ordinator and a Teaching Assistant, completed an evaluation form after the Gathering although one had not been present for either the play or the workshops in schools so did not complete the chart below.

	DISAGREE STRONGLY	DISAGREE SLIGHTLY	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	AGREE SLIGHTLY	AGREE STRONGLY
I thought that the workshops were really good and helped to build the students' confidence in themselves and their writing					100%
I felt that the students were encouraged to think very carefully about the impact of bullying and hate crime				67%	33%
I felt that the students were really connected with what was happening.				33%	67%
I found the whole experience really worthwhile				67%	33%

What did you think was particularly good about workshops and the Gathering?

*The chance for the students to mix with other schools*

(comments not to be used for publicity or marketing purposes)

*It is a fantastic idea to get the schools to meet and I think we need stronger community ties.*

(comments not to be used for publicity or marketing purposes)

*The students were encouraged to engage with their peers from other schools effectively.*

(wished to remain anonymous)

*The workshops and gathering really got the students engaged and actively involved on the subject of hate and bullying. The poetry task I felt was particularly good because the students were given freedom to create and express their own ideas on topics they encounter every day of their school lives.*

Teaching Assistant, Queens Park Community School

Have you noticed any changes in the students who have been part of the project? These may relate to their confidence/articulacy/relationships with others and/or their perception of bullying.

*The students are now willing to write about drama*

(comments not to be used for publicity or marketing purposes)

*One student who has had behavioural problems was particularly inspired to write her piece.*

(comments not to be used for publicity or marketing purposes)

*Yes, they seem more open to working with children from other schools in the future.*  
 (wished to remain anonymous)

*Yes, some students seem to grow in confidence during the workshops.*  
 Teaching Assistant, Queens Park Community School

Do you think that the work done in the project (and that includes anything that you may wish to use from the resource pack) can feed back into your school and help combat bullying in the long term? If so, what do you think has been the most effective part of the project?

One member of staff did not record a comment in this section

*I like the idea of the '10 things to combat bullying' that you asked the students to complete. .*  
 (comments not to be used for publicity or marketing purposes)

*Yes, this might, I hope, in the future lead to a more inclusive debate about the problem of bullying and its possible solutions.*  
 (wished to remain anonymous)

*Yes, the most effective part of the project was the gathering of all three schools. It was nice to meet up as a community and share ideas*  
 Teaching Assistant, Queens Park Community School

Do you have any other comments or suggestions?

Two members of staff only recorded comments in this section

*I think all of our students would have wanted to do more performance work with the writing that they'd created.*  
 (comments not to be used for publicity or marketing purposes)

*A clearer introduction at the beginning of the session would have been helpful so that students had a greater understanding of the purpose of the Gathering.*  
 (wished to remain anonymous)

Finally, how many stars would you give the attitude and organisation of the company?

*	**	***	****	*****
			25%	75%