

# A World Full of Imaginary Communities

## The Story So Far...



### Chol: Where Everything is Possible

Chol is a theatre company specialising in drama education. Chol's methods have been developed with, and in support of, teachers and children. We have been working with schools for 8 years and have become a trusted partner. Our core team understand the challenges and possibilities for creative learning within education. **We believe theatre is a space where everything is possible.**

### IMAGINARY COMMUNITIES



### Imaginary Communities

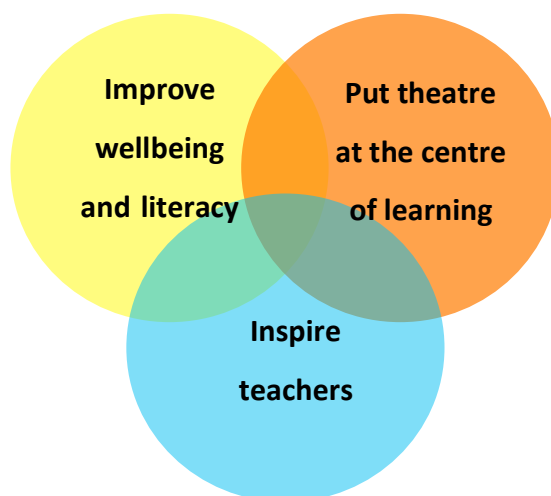
Imaginary Communities (IC) is Chol's unique approach to drama education. IC promotes play and imagination to aid writing and integrate theatre into the curriculum, nourishing wider learning through the imagined worlds created. **In giving children the opportunity to create their own worlds and characters they are acknowledged as equal playmakers.**

## The Next Chapter...

- 1** **A World Full of Imaginary Communities** launches the next 3-year phase of Chol's unique approach to drama education supported by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation. Between **2018 – 2021** Chol will work with **24 new schools**, each for **1 academic year**.
- 2** Having previously used IC with KS2 & 3, we have now worked with teachers and children in **KS1 and EYFS** to develop **specialised Imaginary Communities programmes** for these year groups.
- 3** Our **Story Clubs** are focussed on raising aspirations and developing confidence in young people through after school clubs delivered in libraries, communities and all types of schools.

**For more information or to speak to Chol about booking us to work with your school or community group please contact Lauren Ash, Creative Director at [lauren@choltheatre.co.uk](mailto:lauren@choltheatre.co.uk)**

## Imaginary Communities: Aims



### Improve wellbeing and literacy

Children become equal playmakers in IC when they imagine, create and act alongside peers and adults. A sense of belonging is developed in the class as children discover their unique voices together. Our research has shown that **children feel more positive about themselves, their peers, teachers and learning.**

The impact on children's engagement with writing is visible in the results over 3 years of intervention, showing 58% of pupils made progress that was 'better than expected' or 'outstanding'.

### Put theatre at the centre of learning

**IC is a joyful balance of theatre and curriculum that really works.** Teachers often express frustration that learning targets and arts are presented as a dichotomy in education. IC shows that theatre can nourish wider learning and improve pupil attainment across curriculum subjects.

### Inspire teachers

**We want Imaginary Communities to live on in schools beyond the workshops** by developing teachers' interests, skills and knowledge in drama education through effective CPDL. The Education Endowment Fund has evidenced valuable strategies that improve the attainment and wider outcomes of children and young people and many of these strategies are covered by our IC programmes, including arts participation, collaborative learning, digital technology, variety of learning styles, metacognition and self-regulation.

## Get involved: Imaginary Communities in the Classroom

IC practitioners work with children and young people ages 5-14, from Early Years to Key Stage 3.

Let us tell you a little bit about what the project looks like...

### September

First, your school is matched with an IC practitioner who will be working with you for the year. Lead teachers meet with the IC practitioner and discuss the topic to be explored. From this session the practitioner will work with the teachers to plan workshops. Teachers can share ideas and tell the practitioner about any particular areas they want to work on relating to literacy or wellbeing.

### October – February

The main project delivery is between October half term and February half term. The specifics of the sessions are developed in partnership between practitioner and teacher and will follow a 3-stage structure that encourages students to imagine, build and collaborate:



**Stage 1** Generate ideas



**Stage 2** Dramatic Setting



**Stage 3** Characters

In each session children will engage in a drama activity which will inform a writing task. Bringing imagined worlds and characters to life through play nourishes the writing activities as children document and create their story through words and drawing.

There is the option to train all staff using the approach so that teachers feel confident to 'have a go'.

### February - July

From February onwards the practitioner will visit each half term and continue to support pupils and teachers, gather research and discuss findings.

**Costs.** The project's funding from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation means we can offer schools this project at the heavily match-funded rate of £1000.

## The Adventure Continues: Imaginary Communities Story Clubs

**Imaginary Communities Story Clubs** move beyond the classroom and core-curriculum attainment, focussing on how the IC process **raises personal and collective aspiration** and **develops confidence** in children and young people.

The 90-minute afterschool workshops take place in schools, libraries and cultural spaces embedded in local communities. IC practitioners help participants imagine and create alternative worlds through the combination of performance and digital approaches:



### Week 1 Idea Generation

Ideas shared and explored



### Week 2 Our Imaginary World

Imaginary setting designed



"Thank you and your skilled practitioners for enriching the children's experiences with a very special story club" –

Dora Plant, Headteacher  
Ashbrow School

### Week 3 The Characters

Characters created

### Week 4 The Conflict

Dramatic event established

"I've enjoyed today it was very creative and action-ish" –

Ali, age 11



### Week 5 The Story Launch!

Drama is brought to life - 'live gaming' style!



### Weeks 6-8 The Live Project

Live and digital performances created and shared

**Costs.** Chol's unique programme of after school story clubs are £750 per 8-week block.

## Impact

### Student attainment

**58% of pupils made 'better than expected' or 'outstanding' progress in writing** during the project intervention in the final year. The results far exceed the original target of 10%. In the following term 54% of pupils continued to make 'better than expected' or 'outstanding progress' in writing.

"I think it has really helped my writing because **instead of just writing a story, I have lived it!** And it's really fun" – Kimberly, Y3 St Bede's, Rotherham

"initially it was hard to visualise what the impact was going to be. I had thought it was going to be a bit of fun, that the drama would be useful even if it didn't produce any good writing. But **there have been children who have flowered, because they are living it and doing it and then writing it.**" – Pauline Mclaughlan, Year 4 teacher, St Bede's, Rotherham

### Inspiring teachers

**Of the lead teachers from our previous IC project, 80% of Year 1 teachers continued to use IC, 89% from Year 2, and 90% from Year 3.**

IC gives schools, teachers and pupils the tools needed to address a number of the 14 high-priority issues identified by schools including behaviour, character and essential life skills, developing effective learners, enrichment language and literacy, staff deployment and development.

"For the first time this year he is engaged with learning, I wanted to cry with joy"  
– Year 5 teacher, Kirklees

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