

Child's Play is a big draw



This was a hands-on day, with an emphasis on making art creative and spontaneous. For example, we read a story about a boy who sailed to an island of monsters, and then we worked in pairs to decorate a corner of the room using the story as a starting point. There were lots of materials provided, and we even used the furniture. It was like being a child again.

All the activities involved using familiar materials in imaginative ways. It reminded me that art isn't just about ticking boxes and meeting criteria - it's about having fun.

We took a giant sheet of sugar paper and used masking tape to divide it into small boxes. We decorated each of the boxes using different materials, which produced a variety of results. There's so much you can do if you play around.

Art is important in our school. From an early age we teach children about the history of art, and encourage them to experiment. Even so, it's easy to get stuck in your ways, and a course like this proved refreshing. You come away with lots of ideas, which can be adapted to suit your pupils.

During the day, it struck me that making a piece of art as part of a group pulls people together. I am hoping to organise an Inset day so that staff can try the kind of activities we did on the course. It will be a great way of encouraging teamwork and bonding.

Brenda Davies is *art co-ordinator* at Blossom House in Wimbledon, an independent school for children with speech, language and communication difficulties. She was talking to **Steven Hastings**.