EVALUATION BRIEF

Process Drama and Teacher Practice

Paul Hamlyn Foundation – Teacher Development Fund

Hull Collaborative Academy Trust (HCAT), in partnership with Hull Truck Theatre, is seeking an experienced freelance evaluator for *Process Drama and Teacher Practice*, a two-year arts-based teacher professional development programme funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation's Teacher Development Fund.

The programme involves nine primary schools across Hull and the East Riding of Yorkshire and explores how sustained professional learning alongside skilled drama practitioners can support teachers to develop, adapt and embed process drama within their everyday classroom practice.

The evaluation will be collaborative and formative, focusing on how teachers' practice changes over time, what enables or prevents meaningful change, and how new approaches become embedded and sustained.

EVALUATION FEE	Evaluation fee: £7,000 inclusive of evaluation design, preparation, delivery, analysis and final reporting. Travel expenses to be confirmed.
EVALUATION PERIOD	January 2027 – July 2028
APPLICATION DEADLINE	Wednesday 9th December 2026
INTERVIEWS	Monday 14th or Tuesday 15th December 2026 (online)
INITIAL PLANNING	January 2027

About the project and partners

Hull Collaborative Academy Trust (HCAT) is a multi-academy trust working with schools across Hull and the East Riding of Yorkshire. The Trust places a strong emphasis on arts and cultural education and the opportunities these provide for children and staff. Hull Collaborative Academy Trust - Home

Hull Truck Theatre is a producing theatre in Hull with an established programme of work with schools and communities, including using drama to support teaching and learning. Hull Truck Theatre | HullTruckTheatre

The project is funded by the **Paul Hamlyn Foundation's Teacher Development Fund,** which supports partnerships between schools and arts organisations to develop teachers' skills, knowledge and confidence in arts-based learning. Teacher Development Fund | Paul Hamlyn Foundation

Purpose of the evaluation

At the heart of this project is teacher practice.

The project is based on the belief that sustained professional learning alongside skilled arts practitioners can enable teachers to develop, adapt and ultimately own process drama as part of their everyday classroom practice.

We are therefore less interested in asking simply whether process drama 'works' and more interested in understanding:

How does process drama, supported by sustained professional learning alongside arts practitioners, enable teachers to make meaningful and lasting changes to their classroom practice?

We want the evaluation to help us understand how that change happens, what supports it, what gets in the way, what becomes embedded and what does not.

This reflects the Teacher Development Fund approach to evaluation: enquiry based, formative, robust and evidence informed, with an emphasis on learning and understanding rather than proving success.

Our professional learning model

The project has been designed around sustained professional learning rather than one-off training with the aim of developing greater teacher ownership and independent practice.

Three practitioners from Hull Truck Theatre will work alongside teachers over two academic years. We do not expect teachers to simply replicate the practice of the arts practitioners. We are interested in how they develop their own understanding of process drama and adapt it to suit their teaching. This might involve moving from initial exposure and participation through experimentation, adoption and adaptation towards embedded practice. We recognise that this journey will not be the same for every teacher, and we would welcome the evaluator's input into how we might understand and evidence these changes.

Alongside the work taking place in individual schools, we intend to bring teachers together as a wider community of practice. This may include a midpoint face-to-face session and online meetings where teachers can share experiences, reflect on their learning and discuss how they are developing their practice.

Teachers will also have opportunities for supported reflection through coaching sessions. These are intended to provide a confidential space for professional reflection and will not be recorded or shared as part of the evaluation.

Proposed overarching enquiry

Our starting question is:

How does process drama, supported by sustained professional learning alongside arts practitioners, enable teachers to make meaningful and lasting changes to their classroom practice?

We see this as a starting point rather than a fixed question and would like it to be challenged and refined.

Area of enquiry 1: Teacher change

How do teachers' knowledge, confidence, beliefs and classroom practice develop through the project?

We are particularly interested in change in practice rather than confidence alone. A teacher feeling more confident about drama is valuable, but we want to understand what they actually begin to do differently.

Area of enquiry 2: The process of change

What is it about the professional learning model that appears to enable change?

We want to explore which elements of professional learning matter most, including modelling, co-planning, collaborative teaching, reflection, community of practice, relationships, trust and opportunities to take risks.

We are also interested in how collaboration influences the practice of both teachers and arts practitioners, ensuring we centre the reciprocal learning relationship at the heart of the project.

Area of enquiry 3: Ownership, embedding and sustainability

What happens as practitioner support reduces?

What enables teachers to move from taking part in somebody else's process-drama practice to owning a process-drama pedagogy themselves? What gets retained? What is adapted? What disappears? What begins to appear naturally in other lessons and curriculum areas?

How do we know when process drama has become part of a teacher's practice rather than something they do because they are participating in a project?

Area of enquiry 4: Wider school development and sustainability

How do school leadership, culture and priorities influence the wider adoption and sustainability of process drama?

We are interested in understanding what helps professional learning move beyond the individual teachers taking part in the project. What role do senior leaders play in supporting teachers to develop and share their practice? How do schools create opportunities for this learning to influence other teachers and wider approaches to teaching? What helps new approaches become part of everyday practice across a school, and what gets in the way?

We recognise that schools will approach this differently, and we want to understand how leadership decisions, school priorities and opportunities for collaboration influence what happens.

The place of children and executive function

Children matter enormously to the project, but we do not see measurable change in children's executive function as the primary outcome of this evaluation.

As part of teachers' professional development, they may focus their planning and reflections through a lens on executive functioning, considering how their changing practice is influencing children's experiences and learning.

In terms of the evaluation, we are interested in what teachers and artists are *noticing* and *how* this supports teachers to change and sustain new pedagogies and practice, rather than documenting impact on children.

Equity as a lens

Equity will run throughout the evaluation rather than sit alongside it as a separate workstream, with particular attention to representation, voice, participation, agency, influence and power. We want to explore how teachers' developing practice through process drama shapes opportunities for different children to be heard, contribute, make choices and influence their learning, and whether these opportunities are experienced equitably by all children.

As teacher practice develops, we want to remain curious about whose participation changes, whose does not, and what teachers learn about adapting their practice for different children. This is particularly relevant for children with SEND, children experiencing disadvantage and children who may experience other barriers to classroom learning.

What are teachers learning about creating more inclusive opportunities for children to participate in learning, and how does that learning influence their wider classroom practice?

Variation matters

We do not expect change to look the same for every teacher, and that variation could provide some of our most useful learning.

Some teachers may adopt the approach quickly. Others may need much greater practitioner support. Some may confidently adapt it. Some may use individual techniques without embracing the wider pedagogy. Some may stop using it.

School culture, leadership, curriculum expectations, teacher experience, relationships with practitioners and opportunities for reflection may all affect what becomes embedded. We are also interested in how senior leaders support professional learning and create opportunities for new practice to develop beyond the teachers directly involved.

Why did practice change here but not there?

We want an evaluation that is able to explore those differences rather than smoothing them out.

Approach to evaluation

We want the evaluation to be formative, collaborative and genuinely useful to the live project. We do not want to wait until the end of the project for somebody to tell us what happened.

Evidence should create regular opportunities to ask:

- What are we seeing?
- Why might that be happening?
- What does it tell us about our professional learning model?
- What should we keep?
- What should we change?
- What do we need to look at more closely next?

This reflects the TDF expectation that evaluation plans should remain flexible and responsive, with time built in to reflect, refine the project and refine the evaluation itself.

Evidence and methods

We deliberately do not want to prescribe a full methodology before appointing an evaluator.

However, we would expect the evidence to allow us to see practice changing over time rather than relying solely on retrospective accounts at the end.

Possible sources might include repeated teacher reflection, classroom observation, teacher-practitioner dialogue, examples of planning and curriculum work, practitioner reflection, teacher case studies, and child voice or observation where this helps illuminate changes in classroom practice.

We would be particularly interested in approaches that allow us to follow a smaller number of teachers' journeys in depth alongside broader evidence from the whole cohort.

We want to avoid collecting large quantities of low-value data. TDF guidance specifically warns against trying to evaluate everything and instead encourages a focused enquiry that is doable and observable.

We would like the evaluator to challenge us on the best way to create credible evidence of practice change without creating unreasonable workload for teachers or practitioners.

Reflection as professional learning and evidence

Reflection is deliberately built into the project, and we see it as more than a data-collection activity. Regular opportunities for teachers and arts practitioners to consider what they have tried, what happened and what they might change next are an important part of the professional development itself.

We would welcome the evaluator's thinking on how reflection can contribute to the evaluation while remaining meaningful and manageable for teachers and practitioners.

Relationship with the external evaluator

We want the evaluation planning, delivery, analysis and write-up to be a collaborative, dialogic process where the core team are very much part of the ongoing conversations and analysis, and can influence the shape and feel of the final evaluation documents.

We are not looking for an evaluator to be framed as an independent, objective expert sharing back final findings to a team. That said, we do want somebody with the expertise to challenge our assumptions, question our interpretations and tell us when the evidence does not support the story we are telling.

One of the headteachers from the project will act as the project's Evaluation Champion and have time dedicated to working closely with the external evaluator. For example, we expect the Evaluation Champion and the external evaluator to work together to refine the enquiry, engage with relevant research, co-develop appropriate tools, participate in observations and enquiry activity, analyse the evidence, identify emerging patterns and decide what we need to explore next.

The headteacher working as Evaluation Champion hopes to develop their own expertise in evaluation as part of this project. We expect the external evaluator to share methodological expertise, offer critical challenge and provide guidance throughout the design, interpretation, analysis and creation of final outputs.

Timeline & deliverables

Deadline for applications: Wednesday 9th December 2026

Shortlisting: Week commencing 7th December 2026

Online interviews: Monday 14th or Tuesday 15th December 2026

Appointment: December 2026

Initial evaluation planning: January 2027

Applicants should indicate their availability for the proposed interview dates.

Expected Deliverables (to be negotiated once the evaluation plan is co-developed)

- **Ongoing formative evaluation:** Regular opportunities to share emerging findings, reflect with the project team and inform the ongoing development of the programme.
- **Interim evaluation report (September 2027):** A summary of emerging themes, evidence of changes in teacher practice and areas for further exploration.
- **Final evaluation documents (July 2028):** A series of final evaluation documents, including a written evaluation report and teacher case studies, drawing together the key findings, learning and implications for future practice.

Evaluator Specification

- Experience of designing and delivering evaluations of arts education projects in schools.
- Knowledge of arts-based learning and teacher professional development in primary education.
- Experience of collaborative evaluation approaches and a willingness to work closely with the project's Evaluation Champion.
- Experience of collecting, managing and analysing a range of qualitative and quantitative evidence.
- Strong communication skills, including the ability to present findings in accessible, high-quality written reports and other evaluation documents.
- A current enhanced DBS certificate, or willingness to undergo an enhanced DBS check, subject to eligibility, before undertaking school-based activities.

How to apply

- **Examples of previous work:** Between one and three examples of relevant evaluation projects.
- **Letter of interest:** A brief letter (no more than one side of A4) outlining your relevant skills and experience, alongside a short proposal describing how you would approach the commission and use your time. We are not expecting a detailed evaluation plan at this stage; we are interested in understanding your approach to collaborative evaluation.
- **Budget breakdown:** An outline of your proposed allocation of days and fees within the £7,000 budget.
- **CV:** A short, up-to-date CV.
- **References:** Contact details for two referees.

Please send applications and enquiries to Mrs Louisa Waldron at **louisa.waldron@hcat.org.uk** by **Wednesday 9th December 2026.**

Shortlisted applicants will be invited to an online interview on **Monday 14th or Tuesday 15th December 2026**. Please indicate your availability for these dates when applying.