



The Madonna of the Pinks

Evaluation of the Education and Community Strategy for the
Madonna of the Pinks 2004 - 2007

The National Gallery





University of
Leicester

RCMG
Research Centre for
Museums and Galleries

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Part 1: Discussion of research findings



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PART 1: DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

1.1 Introduction

The research into the impact of the Madonna of the Pinks has extended over three years from June 2004 -2007. Several units of research have been carried out and each is subject to its own separate report as one component of the complete research report. Each unit of research is reported on separately and conclusions are drawn in each case. In this first section of the research report, these conclusions are assembled together and provide the basis of some answers to the research questions.

The units of the research:

- First case-study - Young mothers from the 'Books and Babies' project in South Wales
- Second case-study – Children from a rural primary school in County Durham
- Response cards – Bowes Museum, County Durham
- Response cards – National Gallery, London
- Observation of Family workshops at the National Gallery, London
- Observation of Teenage workshops at the National Gallery, London
- Interviews with a young mother from an Outer London borough and her tutor
- Interviews with three looked after young people from an Outer London borough and their mentors and tutors

This Discussion sets out the research findings for each of these units, suggests some answers to the research questions, and draws the various research units together by identifying the questions raised by the research project. A statement from the National Gallery is available that reflects on the research report as a whole.

Names of research participants and their locations have been changed to protect confidentiality.

1.1.1 Background

In 2004, the National Gallery purchased Raphael's Madonna of the Pinks with the aid of £11.5m from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). For some, this was a controversial use of HLF funds, and HLF was concerned that the grant should be seen to be put to good use. For the National Gallery, this meant that the Madonna of the Pinks should be seen by more than the visitors to the National Gallery in Trafalgar Square, and by more than traditional gallery visitors. A link to the government social inclusion agenda was also desired.

In order to respond to these imperatives, a national tour was devised for the painting. Venues included:

- Manchester Art Gallery (1st May – 27th June 2004)
- National Museum and Gallery, Cathays Park, Cardiff (3rd July-19th September 2004)
- The National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh (5th February–10th April 2005)
- Bowes Museum, County Durham (16th April – 26th June 2005).

From 20th October 2004–16th January 2005, the *Madonna of the Pinks* was exhibited in the National Gallery as part of the exhibition *Raphael: from Urbino to Rome*. On its return to London after the national tour, the painting was exhibited in Room 8 in the Sainsbury Wing.

1.1.2 The three year study

The Research Centre for Museums and Galleries (RCMG) at the University of Leicester was commissioned to carry out a three-year evaluation of the impact of *Madonna of the Pinks* on young people, focusing as far as possible on the perceptions, feelings and attitudes of young people who, while being unfamiliar with art galleries, had the opportunity for sustained engagement with the painting. It has attempted to investigate the short-term and long-term impact of engagement with the painting on the participants of the workshops based at the National Gallery, at the National Museum and Gallery of Wales in Cardiff, and at the Bowes Museum at Barnard Castle, County Durham.

The major research question was:

‘What do young people gain from engagement with paintings, using the *Madonna of the Pinks* as a specific example?’

This was developed as follows:

- Is a historic painting such as the *Madonna of the Pinks* relevant to audiences today, especially young audiences?
- How can the learning outcomes of engagement with the *Madonna of the Pinks* be characterised? How far is the learning collection or museum-related, and how far on other, more personal aspects?
- Which are the most significant learning outcomes to the participants – inspiration, new knowledge or skills, change in values, intentions to do new things? How do these outcomes for participants relate to the institutional desires to develop new audiences?
- Is the *Madonna of the Pinks* meaningful and relevant across cultures and ethnicities?
- When young people are unfamiliar with art galleries, does engagement with one painting (*Madonna of the Pinks*) open up the possibility of engagement with other paintings and art galleries in the

short-term and the long-term? How does this work with vulnerable young people?

1.2 The research findings: the case-studies

Two case-studies were carried out for the research. These were chosen partly because they were available at the time when the research needed to be carried out. They also fitted the research brief and offered opportunities to compare and contrast in terms of audience group, location, and community. The first case-study also offered the possibility of linking with earlier work that had been done with young mothers in London.

Three other outreach projects formed part of the national tour of the Madonna of the Pinks, but for logistical reasons concerned with timing, location, and availability of researchers, none of these projects could be chosen as case-studies. A Special School was involved in a project with the National Museums and Galleries of Wales in Cardiff in late July 2004; a project with young parents and lunchtime talks were run with Manchester Art Gallery from March 2004, and a series of workshops for new audiences were held in partnership with The National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh from March 2005.

- First case-study - Young mothers from the 'Books and Babies' project in South Wales

The first case-study for the research into the impact of the Madonna of the Pinks was carried out between July 2004 and January 2005. It focused on the use of the painting in Wales. The Madonna of the Pinks (MOP) was exhibited at the National Museums and Galleries of Wales (Cathays Park) Cardiff, from 3rd July – 19th September 2004.

- Second case-study - Children from a rural primary school in County Durham

The Madonna of the Pinks was exhibited at The Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle in County Durham from 16th April to 26th June 2005 as part the painting's national tour.

The case-studies raised a number of important issues that need to be considered when assessing the impact of the Madonna of the Pinks and the resulting learning outcomes. The impact of the painting on those who see it is affected by a number of elements, including:

- The amount of time spent looking at and discussing the painting itself and the quality of that engagement
- The knowledge and experience of those looking at the painting
- The way the painting was used as evidence or inspiration for subsequent workshops or activities and the participants' experience of the project as a whole
- The attitude to the value of the painting by significant adults (tutors, teachers) and this is affected by the quality of the relationship

between those using the painting (tutors, teachers) and those facilitating this use (museum education staff).

These elements are discussed here, comparing the two case-studies. This discussion is followed by a discussion of the impact of the painting on the two groups involved.

1.2.1 The amount of time spent looking at and discussing the painting itself and the quality of that engagement

The strength of the impact of any work of art on an individual is not *determined* by the amount of time spent looking at it, but this is an important factor. The time spent on discussing, analysing and using the painting (with or without the painting or related visual material) is also a factor.

- **The first case-study:**

The teenage mothers from South Wales spent approximately 40 minutes in total in front of the painting (over two visits) and very little more than this in discussing the painting. While on the whole the facilitation by the National Gallery lecturer during the first visit was good, and the atmosphere was warm and friendly, the young women offered only short comments on the painting and some of the points made by the young women were not extended by the lecturer, for example 'the painting is a loving thing'; 'the baby is standing up'; 'look at the details.' There was very limited discussion of the religious character of the painting - the main focus was on relationship between mother and child, discussed in a secular way. No work had been done before the museum visit, so this was the first time that the young women had seen the painting. The image of the Madonna was not used in any way after the initial discussion in front of the painting; there were no posters displayed, for example. The second visit to the museum was less productive than the first.

- **The second case-study:**

The school children from County Durham had done some preparatory work on the Madonna of the Pinks before their first visit to the Bowes Museum where they spent one hour and fifteen minutes working with and discussing the painting. An excellent session by the National Gallery lecturer engaged the children actively in exploring the Madonna of the Pinks through being 'art detectives' and through making links with their prior knowledge and the other paintings they could see. This introduction led to a lengthy project over several weeks where detailed discussion and carefully planned practical art work resulted in children's work that was competent, imaginative and innovative. During the sessions in the classroom, frequent references to the Madonna of the Pinks were made, and the activities planned for the children were based on the painting. For example, a life class with a real mother and baby was prefaced by discussions of Raphael's sketches from life using the white board in the classroom. Images of the painting and of the children's work were hung in the classroom and around the school, so that there were constant visual reminders. In addition, many of the class visited the National Gallery in London during the year following the project where they saw the Madonna of the Pinks again.

1.2.2 The knowledge and experience of those looking at the painting

- **The first case-study:**

The teenage mothers from South Wales that visited the National Museum at Cathays Park in September were aged 14 and 15 years, vulnerable young women who were lacking in confidence and inner resilience, prone to stress, tiredness or illness, and yet feisty and at times defiant.

Teenage pregnancy is associated with increased risk of poor social, economic and health outcomes for both mother and child. Teenage parents are more likely than their peers to live in poverty and unemployment. These young mothers had all completed their involvement with school and most had limited levels of literacy. On becoming pregnant, they had either excluded themselves or had been excluded from formal education. These young women had either no or very limited knowledge and experience of art and art appreciation, museums and the creative practice of artists. As one might expect they had no knowledge or experience of art history or specific periods in history such as the Renaissance. They had none of the skills used by experienced art museum visitors to look at paintings, and they had no context within which to place the work. Their responses to the questioning in front of the painting reveal both their very literal thought patterns and their lack of familiarity with symbolic meaning. The only strategies the young mothers had to make the painting meaningful were to connect the subject-matter (mother and child) to their own lives, and this they did to varying degrees. However, one of the young women who did not fit all elements of this somewhat stereotypical picture was able to respond in a very sophisticated manner to the Madonna of the Pinks.

- **The second case-study:**

The children that visited the Bowes Museum in Barnard Castle, County Durham, were from a small primary school that had been awarded a Gold Artsmark in 2002 for its work in art and culture; it also has Creative Partnership status. The rural community where the school is located is at risk from isolation from services and resources most urban dwellers take for granted. The Year 3 class who participated in the study consisted of twenty-seven 7-8 year olds (Key Stage 2). According to their class teacher, the class was academically average and very well behaved with one child who was statemented with special educational needs and four other children who have special educational needs. These children were used to seeing art around the school, but had no art historical knowledge and limited experience of making art.

The artist chosen by the Bowes Museum was highly skilled and had planned her work so that the children's knowledge grew incrementally, with each element of the work being built on the previous one and also providing skills and experience for the next. The confidence of the children to analyse and work with paintings grew considerably as their strategies for responding to the Madonna of the Pinks expanded. These strategies included life-drawing, oil painting, collage, observation and discussion. They also linked the painting to their own experience, for example of younger siblings.

1.2.3 The artists' and their use of the Madonna of the Pinks and the participants' experience of the project as a whole

- **The first case-study:**

Much of the delivery of the museum-based project was the responsibility of artists. Their skills, experience and confidence in using museum collections were of critical importance in the impact of the painting on those who saw it. The artists used in this project organised creative work based on the Madonna of the Pinks, but did not engage the young women in discussions about the painting and did not require them to look further into the painting.

Five pieces of work were produced by the young women during the museum-based project. Two of these pieces were clearly based on the subject matter of the Madonna of the Pinks; a small wax sculpture (model) of a mother and child, and a painting of each young woman and her baby based on a photograph taken by the artists. In the other three examples (bags, ponchos and birds) the relationships of the creative work to the painting was very weak. However, the young women enjoyed the workshops and were pleased with the things they made. They were challenged by the skills demanded of them and felt that they had achieved and done well. But, in the minds of the young women, this had very little to do with the painting Madonna of the Pinks. All three artists touched only very briefly indeed on the Madonna of the Pinks during their work with the young women. The main input from the artists concerned technical matters related to the craft involved in the production of the artefacts. All the artists talked a great deal about being mothers, but they did not discuss the representation of motherhood (either secular or religious). The young women clearly defined themselves as mothers – this is a vital facet of their identity. Representation, identity and motherhood could have been used to open up a way of engaging with the Madonna of the Pinks, but it was not.

While all three artists were very good indeed at relating to the young women, quickly making them feel at ease, and finding ways to enable all the young women to succeed on their own terms, there was no evidence that the artists were familiar with using museum collections in teaching. The workshops were enjoyed by the young women, and they felt they achieved a great deal. However, this achievement did not require any response to or use of the Madonna of the Pinks. The response to the painting from the two young women interviewed in detail suggests that there had been potential for the group to engage much more deeply with the painting and the issues could have been used to illuminate relevant themes had alternative workshops been organised to extend reflection on the painting and its relevance to the lives of these young women today. Had the skills of working with objects been more highly developed, particularly in the Cardiff-based artists, the young women as a group might have had a deeper learning experience.

- **The second case-study:**

The artist in the rural school at was very skilled at using the Madonna of the Pinks and related art works to stimulate and motivate the children. She had clearly planned the numerous sessions in great detail and with a deep knowledge of what was possible with such young children. Her relationship with the class teacher and the museum education officer was one of trust and familiarity. This benefited the National Gallery lecturer, who was able to

slip easily into this well-established team. The children were challenged to use new materials such as charcoal, oil paints, clay and collage. Importantly, the children were given enough time and enough support to achieve the ambitious tasks they were set. Breaking each task into small component parts meant that each child could find his or her own way of achieving what was asked. The artist stressed the importance of individual interpretation. The children were proud of what they had done and were able to describe it in detail during the final presentation at the museum.

The children were able to talk us through seven tasks they had completed for the project:

- Clay sculpture of a moving person
- Life drawing of a mother and child
- Ink stencil using string as the stencil
- Sketch interpretation of The Madonna of the Pinks which was a draft for their oil painting
- Oil painting interpretation of The Madonna of the Pinks
- Decorated folder in which to keep their oil painting
- Collage interpretation of The Madonna of the Pinks.

They gave the impression of having a close relationship with the Madonna of the Pinks as they had learnt facts about it and responded through their own artwork to many different facets of the painting.

1.2.4 The attitude to the use of the painting by the tutors and teachers and the quality of the partnerships

- **The first case-study:**

The activities of the first case-study occurred in September 2004. The arrangements for the establishment of the project had been difficult as two key people (the Outreach Officer at the National Museum of Wales and the National Gallery Families and Outreach Manager) were on maternity leave. In addition, the summer holiday seemed to prevent any strong relationship being established between the NMW and the 'Books and Babies' group. In addition to a weak partnership, the tutor from the group had not previously used a museum in her work with the teenage mothers, and was uncertain what to expect. She did not know in detail what was going to happen on the day at the museum, was not very clear about what the artist(s) would be doing and had made no plans to follow up the museum-based project. She was not convinced of the value of using either the museum or its collections. Her idea of the use of a historical painting in teaching and learning was focused on its use in an art historical context. Her support for and extension of the project were constrained by these factors, which were complicated by the museum workshop being right at the beginning of term and the general uncertainty about the group she would have to work with during the year. It was not until afterwards that the tutor began to think about the broad potential of the museum.

The tutor had low expectations of the museum project because of:

- The young women's lack of disciplinary background

- The young women's lack of intellectual and analytical capacity
- Teenagers' suspicion of the past and age in general
- The vulnerability of the young women and her protectiveness of them
- Session not making links between historical past and the present
- Her own unfamiliarity with using museums
- Her own limited approach to using collections/paintings.

Because of the tutor's low expectations, even where one of the young women (Sarah*) responded in a positive and, in some respects, quite remarkable way, the tutor did not perceive the significance of this. She was not really convinced that this project could have positive outcomes. As the tutor was not persuaded that Renaissance paintings could be relevant for teenagers today, she did not identify and extend the potential associations that the young women might have made, through drawing out, for instance, the similarities between the experience of motherhood then and now, images of motherhood then and now, motherhood and identity, and representation of mother love.

There are issues to be considered here in relation to raising the expectations and increasing the experience of those adults who provide the context for participants in museum workshops. Had the expectations of the tutor been higher and better informed by knowledge of the potential of using museum collections, the young women as a group might have had a deeper learning experience.

- **The second case-study:**

A strong partnership was established between the Bowes Museum, the rural primary school and the artist who worked with the children. The class teacher from the school had worked with the Bowes before and was very keen to be involved again. The National Gallery was slow to make contact with the Bowes Museum, partly because of the staff member on maternity leave, and partly because of distance, leading to the education officer establishing her own partnership work programme, which provided a strong basis on which the project could build.

The Bowes Museum education officer made the following comments on the 14th April 2005, a month before the National Gallery staff were due to come up to facilitate the first event of the project on the 17th May:

'We're still trying to get all the planning together, it's been difficult with I think distance has been a big factor with this. I mean I've been able to talk to the teacher easily and we can sort of meet ourselves but obviously we're trying to deal with London, which is a bit more of an issue.'

The majority of the planning between the museum partners (Bowes and National Gallery) took place through email and it was clear from talking to all the project team that this had caused a few difficulties:

- Difficulty finalising a specific timetable for the project
- The Bowes Museum education officer and artist did not know specifically what the National Gallery artist planned to do with the children

- The Bowes Museum artist was not able to plan her sessions to 'spring board' off the National Gallery sessions as she was not informed as to their content
- A team culture was able to be developed amongst the participants in County Durham from the initial planning stage of the project but this team culture was not able to include the National Gallery until the project events had already commenced and National Gallery staff met the other project participants face-to-face for the first time
- The researchers had to be very flexible to fit in with many changes to dates.

The aims and objectives document which framed the project as a whole was worked out between the class teacher, the Bowes Museum education officer and the Bowes Museum artist. The National Gallery sent an aims and objectives document to the Bowes Museum education officer and she was able to assimilate it into the primary aims and objectives statement; however, the National Gallery hadn't finalised the more detailed part of their statement and so could make no contribution at this point to the more detailed part of the project statement. The education programme was, therefore, primarily a partnership between the Bowes Museum and the primary school, with the exception of the day the National Gallery lecturer worked with the pupils.

Despite the initial difficulties with organising the project, all of the project team described the ultimate strength of the partnership and team as being one of the most important outcomes of the project.

All the adults concerned (the class teacher, the education officer at the Bowes Museum and the artist) had very high expectations of the children, who rose to the various challenges very well. This was despite the class teacher being initially unsure about the project, but very quickly she realised the value for the pupils. Parents, the head teacher and museum staff gave credibility to the project when they attended a presentation given by the pupils at the Bowes Museum, which was viewed as an important, high profile event. Parents also demonstrated the value they attached to the project by trusting the school in relation to the trip to the National Gallery in London, a considerable decision for parents anxious about terrorist threats and who, generally, rarely travel outside the local area. Indeed, some parents remained very cautious and did not allow their children to go.

1.3 The research questions – some answers from the case-studies

'What do young people gain from engagement with paintings, using the Madonna of the Pinks as a specific example?'

1.3.1 Is a historic painting such as the Madonna of the Pinks relevant to audiences today, especially young audiences?

It is certainly possible for young people to make links with historic paintings.

Where there are no other strategies available to be used, these links relate strongly to the lives of the young people concerned. Where other strategies can be offered and used by the young people, these strategies offer additional ways of making the painting meaningful.

In the first case-study, the young women had no interest in the Christian symbolism in the painting. They were not accustomed to symbolic meaning and they were not involved in this kind of thinking during the workshops. They did not respond to the spiritual elements of the painting. The art historical context of the painting was not of relevance to the young women. They were interested in the artist and in the intellectual puzzle of how a man might know about child-rearing, but this was not mentioned after the gallery-based discussions. The overwhelming connections made to the painting were through their experience of motherhood. The young women as a whole identified themselves through their experience as mothers, and this was the interpretive frame through which they made sense of the painting. The love of mothers for babies, as expressed in the Madonna of the Pinks, provided a strong focus for the young women in their interpretation of the painting. However, this interpretation was not sustained or reinforced during the workshops at the museum or subsequently because of the tutor's lack of conviction that learning could occur and the artists' lack of the skills of teaching from paintings. Relevance, therefore, remained at a weak level, except possibly in the case of one of the young women.

In the second case-study, the project team did not believe that the age of the painting meant that it was more difficult to relate to for the children. The team felt that because the subject of the painting (mother and child) is universal it is easy for people from all backgrounds to relate to. In addition to this 'human life' aspect to the painting, the children were systematically led through a large range of creative processes that required them to use the Madonna of the Pinks as an example. They developed problem-solving skills as 'art detectives', encouraged to question and think about the painting.

1.3.2 How can the learning outcomes of engagement with the Madonna of the Pinks be characterised? How far is the learning collection or museum-related, and how far on other, more personal aspects?

- **The first case-study:**

The young women experienced a museum, most for the first time, and on the whole this was a positive experience. They learnt that the building was impressive, the staff friendly, the food expensive. They learnt that the museum contains paintings and that the paintings are not very interesting. Having paid attention to the Madonna of the Pinks, but only for quite a short period

of time (40 minutes in two sessions over two weeks), some of the young mothers read their own circumstances of motherhood into the painting.

The learning outcomes were on the whole weak and were not reinforced by the workshops, although they may have been stimulated to some degree by the research processes (being interviewed, and discussing the painting). The learning outcomes can be characterised using the Generic Learning Outcomes (GLOs) and this analysis was carried out for two of the participants. Outcomes can be observed in both cases across all five dimensions. There was limited learning about museums and the Madonna of the Pinks in particular, and limited exposure to collections as the museum galleries were traversed to get to the education workshop and up to the painting galleries. The main impact of the engagement with the Madonna of the Pinks for this group was at a personal, identity-related level (the experience of motherhood).

- **The second case-study:**

All of the children experienced a visit to a local museum, some for the first time, and a number of the children also experienced a visit to the National Gallery. Very rich learning outcomes were observed by the researchers which were reinforced, enhanced and considerably extended by the classroom-based workshops. Discussions with the teacher, the education officer and the artist indicated strongly that they could identify specific learning outcomes. Discussions with the children produced the same picture of strong learning outcomes.

The class teacher believed that the children had progressed considerably through the project in their confidence to undertake a piece of creative work and in their ability to concentrate. The teacher also believed that as a result of an improvement in their visual literacy skills they were more likely to appreciate art. The Bowes Museum education officer believed that there had been a significant progression in the children's drawing skills over the period of the project especially in relation to understanding perspective and composition.

At the National Gallery, when the children saw the Madonna of the Pinks in the galleries their faces immediately lit up with smiles and wonder. They were delighted and excited to see the painting – one girl described it as 'seeing an old friend.' They remembered a great deal of what they had learnt a year ago. Many children remembered the concept of complementary colours, and one pupil remembered the lapis lazuli. They could use their 'art detective' skills and analysed a number of paintings through observing small details and working out what they meant. Some children also demonstrated an understanding of how artists create a sense of perspective by making details in the background smaller.

On return to school they were asked to complete response cards and overall, Knowledge and Understanding was the strongest GLO with just under half the cards coded in this way. Examples of Knowledge and Understanding displayed by the pupils included facts that they remembered about the history of the Madonna of the Pinks such as the amount of money it cost the nation, who painted the picture, who owned the painting, and where it had been found. Just over a third of the pupils used the response card to convey

their Enjoyment, Inspiration, Creativity regarding the experience of the project.

1.3.3 Which are the most significant learning outcomes to the participants – inspiration, new knowledge or skills, change in values, intentions to do new things? How do these outcomes for participants relate to the institutional desires to develop new audiences?

- **The first case-study:**

The most significant outcomes for the young women in the 'Books and Babies' case-study were the enjoyment of the workshops and the social experience of being in the museum, and a sense of personal achievement in having produced some art and craft work and in having this exhibited in the museum. These learning outcomes were much stronger than those relating to the engagement with the Madonna of the Pinks. The good experience of the museum might lead to future visits, although the culture in which the young women are embedded is likely to prove a stronger determinant than one enjoyable project. In addition, the tutor's lack of conviction of the value of the museum for learning throws up a powerful barrier to continued use of museums. There remain opportunities which could be developed with this group and with the tutor, but it would need a sustained and meaningful relationship to be built up over time. There are of course, resource implications here for NMGW.

- **The second case-study:**

Talking to the children it was clear that visual literacy skills were a major learning outcome of the project. The children were especially taken with their new knowledge of complementary colours. Some children connected with the painting simply because they enjoyed working with it. Other children were inspired by the painting because they were able to find ways of linking it with their personal experience. The children connected with the project through a variety of personal interests, one child using his interest in football to make the task he was doing more pertinent to his individual interests. A group of boys had displayed remarkable team working skills in a task where they had worked in teams to interpret the Madonna of the Pinks in a collage. These children were particularly inspired by thinking about the land that can be seen in the view from the window in the painting, which resonates with their own experiences.

The education officer believed that the most significant thing about the project for the children was their enjoyment and the fact that they had been able to do things they wouldn't usually do. The artist believed that the fact the children were encouraged to think for themselves about the Madonna of the Pinks and their interpretation of it led to the children being inspired. The teacher believed that the children's attitude to art had changed not just because they had improved visual literacy skills but that this in turn had given them more confidence to develop and express their own opinion about the art they saw. The teacher also believed that the children had gained a considerable increase in their knowledge and understanding as a result of the project:

'I think they have a vast knowledge now, a vast knowledge and understanding of a lot of different techniques, genres, all sorts of stuff, medium, the whole works.'

The teacher was particularly impressed that during the project the class had covered the majority of the KS2 art curriculum, working to a level that would be expected of pupils aged 11 and over. They were operating at a much more sophisticated level, above the older children in the school. Despite noting many learning outcomes however, it was the increase in skill that for her was the most important learning outcome.

1.3.4 Is the Madonna of the Pinks meaningful and relevant across cultures and ethnicities?

It was not possible to address this research question through these case-studies. All the young women in the first case-study were from the white working-class communities based in the South Wales valleys and the children in the second case-study were from a white rural area.

1.3.5 When young people are unfamiliar with art galleries, does engagement with one painting (Madonna of the Pinks) open up the possibility of engagement with other paintings and art galleries in the short-term and the long-term? How does this work with vulnerable young people?

This is extremely difficult to gauge. In the first case-study, considerable practical problems for the young women to revisit the museum exist; including transport, child-care responsibilities and exhaustion due to pregnancy. But the young women were used to going into Cardiff for purposes other than museum visiting, and the cultural barriers are almost certainly stronger than the practical problems. While the young women found the museum interesting and the staff friendly, it would take a far longer managed engagement for these young women to feel that museums and art galleries were natural places to include as part of their life-experience. A one-off project is not enough on its own to build a new audience, but it can arouse an interest and make further projects more likely and easier to manage. Certainly, on returning a few months after the end of the project, the researchers found that the tutor and the 'Books and Babies' group had worked with St. Fagan's Museum on a further project, thus extending the concept of the value of museums, but it was beyond the reach of this research to explore the outcomes of the second museum project. It is possible that the close look at the Madonna of the Pinks that the young women experienced may lead in the future to an interest in images, paintings or even Raphael's work, and certainly one girl (Sarah*) identified a second Raphael painting from a postcard during the visit of the researchers in November, but it is impossible to say whether this might have an impact in the future.

With the children in the second case-study, it is to be hoped that the very powerful learning outcomes that were extended over a period of time and that were reinforced one year later by further discussion of the Madonna of the Pinks and (for some) the visit to the National Gallery in London, will have a lasting effect. It is certainly possible that this potential has been opened up,

and for this group, the detailed and well-planned strategies of using the painting provide a strong background for future events. For instance, for the children who were not able to visit the National Gallery with the school some of their parents have promised to let them visit after seeing the impact it has had on their classmates.

1.4 The research findings: the response cards

Response cards were used in both the Bowes Museum and National Gallery to collect responses from visitors relating to their experience of engaging with the Madonna of the Pinks. A limited amount of demographic information about visitors to both museums was also collected.

1.4.1 Response cards at the Bowes Museum

The Madonna of the Pinks was displayed in the first floor gallery at the Bowes Museum from 16th April to 26th June 2005. For a period of one week, response cards were placed in the gallery near to the display. These were available for visitors to use to record any thoughts they might wish to share. One hundred and thirty-three (133) usable cards were collected.

1.4.1.1 Characteristics of the visitors who completed response cards at the Bowes Museum

Visitors who completed a response card at the Bowes Museum were likely to demonstrate the following characteristics:

- Be aged 45 or over
- Be female
- Be “very much” interested in art
- To not experience much, if any, social deprivation
- To be a ‘Wealthy achiever’ – based on the ACORN classification system and suggesting they are more likely to be affluent and educated
- To live in an urban area
- To live in the North East of England

These characteristics match closely the Bowes Museum audience profile as described by both the museum staff and the Yorkshire Tourist Board marketing survey carried out for the museum in 2005. It is also very close to the picture of art museum visitors as a whole.

1.4.1.2 The responses to the Madonna of the Pinks at the Bowes Museum

Over half (58%) of those who completed the response cards left a written comment that could be analysed. Respondents commented frequently on the style and general impression of the painting (colour, light, size), more rarely describing what they could actually see, and frequently using the language of the National Gallery leaflet to express themselves. Interpretation tended towards an art historical approach based on previous knowledge, setting the painting within a museum or art-related context, rather than a personal context. The language used to refer to the Madonna of the Pinks was overwhelmingly secular (mother and child) rather than religious. Visitors very much appreciated the painting and the opportunity to see it close to

home and enjoyed the chance to compare the Raphael with other paintings.

These are traditional museum / gallery visitors with traditional views on art and culture.

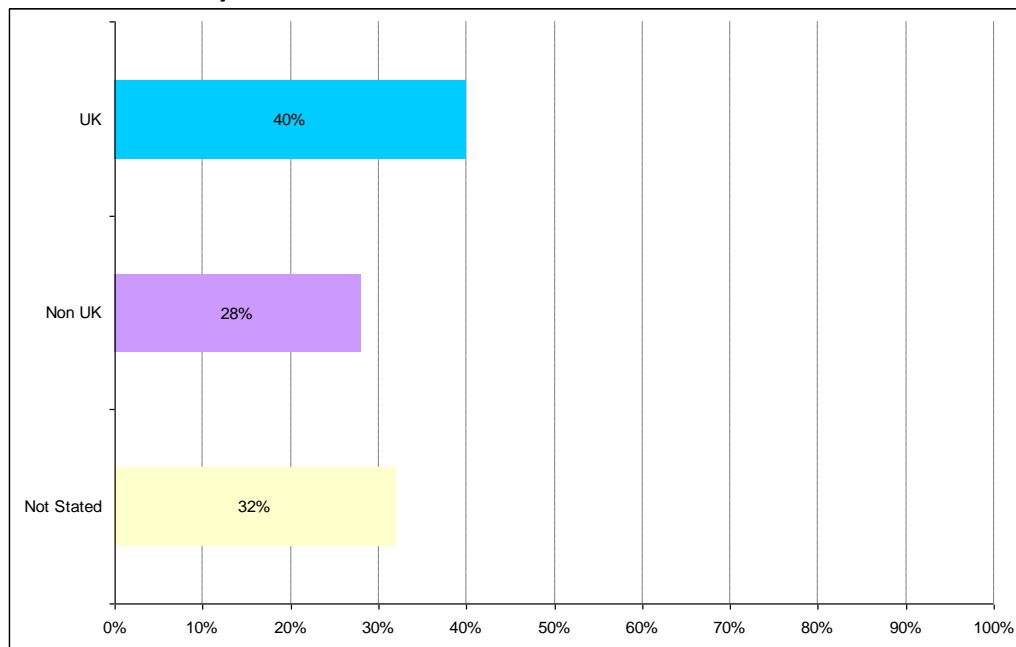
1.4.2 Response cards at the National Gallery

It was not deemed appropriate for response cards to be used in the exhibition *Raphael: from Urbino to Rome* which took place from 20th October 2004 – 16th January 2005 at the National Gallery. However, RCMG was permitted to use response cards during the half-term week in October 2005. In total 250 adult and 17 child response cards were completed over the week. Similar response cards to those used at the Bowes Museum were re-used at the National Gallery so that comparisons could be made between the two venues.

1.4.2.1 Characteristics of those who completed response cards at the National Gallery

The respondents at the National Gallery tended to be younger and slightly more diverse than those at the Bowes Museum. The group can be roughly divided into three, with one third from the UK, one third from a range of other countries, and one third not stating where they came from.

Fig. 1.4.2.1a: Country of origin for visitors completing response cards at the National Gallery



N=250

Typical respondents were divided into 'general' and 'UK' visitors; it was only possible to analyse the postcodes of the UK visitors, and some analysis could only be carried out for the English postcodes.

The typical 'general' National Gallery respondent was likely to be:

- Aged from 16 to 34 years
- Female
- Interested in art to some degree.

And for the UK visitors:

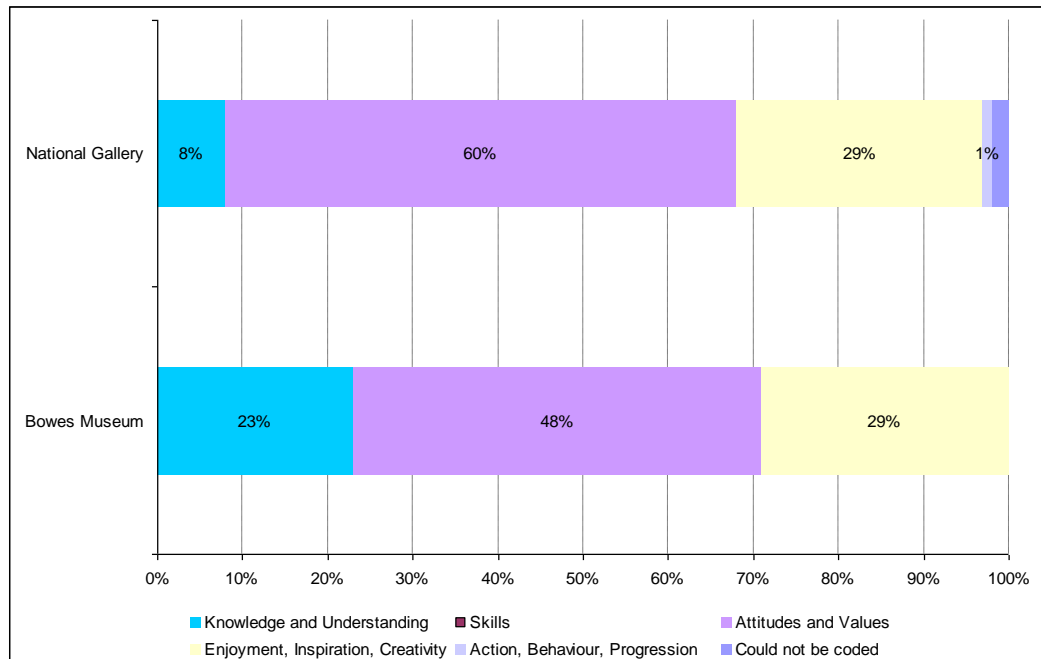
- Most UK respondents come from outside London (with 37% from London)
- According to the locations of their postcodes, most English respondents are not experiencing deprived social circumstances
- UK respondents are likely to be affluent and well educated - 'wealthy achievers' and 'urban prosperity' according to the ACORN analysis.

1.4.2.2 The responses of all who completed the cards to the Madonna of the Pinks at the National Gallery

Two hundred and fifty (250) adult response cards were collected, and 248 contained comments on the Madonna of the Pinks. These have been analysed together, with no split between geographical regions of the respondents.

In relation to the GLOs, most of the comments (60%) concerned Attitudes and Values. There were relatively low levels of comments that could be classified as about Knowledge and Understanding (8%), compared to the similar analysis at the Bowes Museum (23%) (See Fig. 1.4.2.2a below).

Fig. 1.4.2.2a: Respondents' comments coded using the Generic Learning Outcomes (GLOs), comparing the National Gallery with the Bowes Museum



National Gallery, N=250; The Bowes Museum, N=77

There were many comments on the style and immediate impression of the painting (colour, light, size), and smaller numbers of people used language

from the National Gallery interpretation (only 2% compared with 10% at the Bowes) but the words "gem-like", "tender" and "translucent" appear. Again, there were few references to the content of the painting, although there were some interesting comments on the way the face of the child was painted. References to the relationship of the mother and child within the painting tend to focus less on the religious themes than the more general themes associated with the love of a mother for her child. It is assumed by many respondents to be a loving relationship and evokes a sense of warmth, caring and calm for some. There were one or two personal references.

Seventeen (17) children's response cards were collected, many of which were incomplete. Written comments focused on the Madonna and child and how they looked to the child.

1.4.3 Conclusions from the analysis of the response cards

The visitors who completed the response cards at the Bowes Museum were typical of the majority of art museum visitors – comfortably or well off, educated, older and female. They understood art museums, most had some interest in or knowledge of art history and were content with the approach taken by the National Gallery to the interpretation of the painting, and to the exhibition as produced by the Bowes Museum.

In relation to learning impact, it is interesting that these visitors had the knowledge, experience and information to draw on in the deployment of interpretive strategies that were public, impersonal, sanctioned. Unlike the young women from South Wales, they had intellectual and cultural resources other than those rooted in their personal experiences on which to draw in making meaning from the painting. Their age and consequent distance in time from motherhood or parenthood (where this was relevant) may also have contributed to the non-use of the experience of motherhood to interpret the painting. Respondents often used emotional language in their comments, for example respondents felt 'privileged' to have seen it, finding it 'amazing' and 'wonderful', but these emotional terms seemed tools to be used in the discussion of the painting, rather than a way to engage personally with the painting; most regarded it as an interesting 'object' to look at, and could appreciate it within a framework of similar experiences. The mother and child relationship seemed less important to respondents than to the style and provenance of the painting; they made few connections on a personal level except as 'art-lovers.' The respondents positioned themselves as art enthusiasts and tried to convey a sense that they 'knew' about paintings. The National Gallery interpretation of the Madonna of the Pinks and accompanying paintings often gave them the language to accomplish this, coupled with their previous experience of visiting art galleries (although some referred to themselves as 'novices' and having only a 'rudimentary' knowledge).

The two audiences represented in the response cards from the Bowes Museum and the National Gallery display considerable differences. The audience reached at the National Gallery is younger and a little more socially diverse than that at the Bowes Museum and this may account for a slightly greater range of interpretive strategies. The response cards at the National Gallery were also returned from a mix of people from the UK and from other

countries, whereas at the Bowes Museum, the respondents were mainly located in the North of England. And it must also be remembered that the sample (at 250) is larger than that at the Bowes Museum (at 133). All of these factors may explain increased diversity of response at the National Gallery.

While the responses at the National Gallery are more varied than those of the Bowes, although in much the same way in both places, there are a number of responses where the respondents present themselves as 'art lover' or 'art critic' and focuses on a particular 'knowledge' of art history (e.g. focusing on style, colour, texture, or skill of the artist). However, some of the responses at the National Gallery give the impression of a greater personal involvement with the painting, for example there are a number where the respondent has an emotional response to the painting where they find personal relevance or find the atmosphere of the painting appealing.

Through its interpretation of the Madonna of the Pinks the National Gallery offers visitors different 'positions' from which to respond to the painting. Some respondents build their interpretation of the Madonna of the Pinks in synthesis with the themes presented by the gallery, even occasionally using the same language to express their opinion. This is generally done by those visitors who present themselves as 'art lovers', who talk about art in very traditional ways for example focusing on style, artist, and art historical context. They may also have been informed by their own knowledge of art and certainly respondents talked in this manner, for example, comparing the Madonna of the Pinks with other paintings they had seen, placing it in an historical context.

The National Gallery also highlights the secular relevance of the painting over and above its religious context. This is appealing not only for those who do not find religious painting appealing but in theory everyone can relate to the bond between a mother and child? It is interesting that in the National Gallery responses both men and women talked about the relationship in quite emotive terms, whereas at the Bowes it was mainly (though not exclusively) the women who commented on this. The painting presents an ideal of the mother/child relationship but one which is believable to many visitors.

Some respondents at the National Gallery presented their opinions about the Madonna of the Pinks in opposition to the National Gallery's interpretation, and this happened far more rarely at the Bowes Museum. For example, they questioned whether the painting was by Raphael or worthy of him (suggesting that they know more than the Gallery) or felt the painting did not reflect for them a believable mother/child relationship. Some respondents did not feel qualified to make a comment, for example one respondent said that they were not 'arty or religious' so the painting had little impact on them, and other respondents remarked that they preferred different kinds of art. But the interpretation provided by the gallery enabled these interpretations to happen - the respondents built their response against this 'official' view. Regarding the acquisition of the painting there were very few respondents from the Bowes Museum who questioned the act of buying the painting or its cost. There were far more challenges from the respondents at the National Gallery, although the dominant voice was still supportive of the purchase of the Madonna of the Pinks. Respondents approved of the idea that art should

be bought for the nation and put on public display; it was the cost that they had difficulty reconciling in some cases.

1.5 The research findings – the workshops at the National Gallery, London

1.5.1 The Family workshops

The National Gallery Education Department ran workshops for families every day for the half-term week 25th - 29th of October 2005. The workshops, which focused on drawing and engagement the Madonna of the Pinks, were run twice a day from 11-1pm and 2-4pm. On the 25th October, a researcher from RCMG observed the two workshops and asked participants to complete Response cards. Separate response cards were used for adults and children (Appendix 5.1.1 and 5.1.2). National Gallery staff asked participants in the workshops during the rest of the week if they would also complete response cards.

1.5.1.1 Participants in the family workshops

A typical adult participant at the National Gallery family workshops was likely to be:

- Aged between 35 and 54 years old
- Female
- Very much interested in art
- Not experiencing social deprivation,
- Living in London
- To fall into the “Urban prosperity” category as defined by ACORN classification system and therefore more likely to be affluent and well educated

The use of the National Gallery family mailing list (developed by collecting details from those people attending earlier workshops) to recruit participants means that they are likely to be attracting repeat users of the National Gallery and its educational provision.

1.5.1.2 The analysis of the written comments from the adult response cards

Generally the responses to the painting made by the participants were focused on specific themes, echoing closely the art interpreter's presentation. The participants' comments echoed words such as 'tender', 'loving' and 'protective' which were used during the workshop, and the focus on the mother and child relationship which was very much a feature of the presentation.

Some of the responses were very personal, hinting at connections made with the painting in terms of emotion (for example one respondent felt drawn to the painting although she did not normally like religious painting). The atmosphere of the painting was more important to some respondents rather than any specific element such as colour or light effects for example, and how it made them feel. For some respondents this was directly attributed to attending the workshop, commenting that they might otherwise have missed the picture walking round the gallery. But engaging with the painting for a

lengthy period of time (about an hour), understanding its context and having it explained perhaps initiated this feeling of 'closeness.'

Although the respondents were generally very similar to the typical visitor at the Bowes Museum - female and affluent, well educated, although younger than the Bowes audience - it was interesting that not so many respondents positioned themselves as 'art lovers' taking an interest in the style and history of the painting. Rather they positioned themselves more as a 'concerned parent' in relation to their concern for the children's learning in the workshop, or as someone making emotional and personal connections with the painting; they recognised the love in the painting and thus felt drawn to it.

1.5.1.3 The analysis of the children's response cards

The children appeared (from the response cards) to be confident in stating their opinion about what they found special about the Madonna of the Pinks. Some of the younger children perhaps had help from their parents but the comments are sufficiently different from the adult response cards to suggest that the children are expressing their own opinions.

The themes that stand out as important to the children include the baby, the workshop activity and the colours in the painting. There is evidence that the children were able to understand the emotions in the painting as some made references to how happy the painting was and how there was love between the Madonna and Jesus. Generally, whereas the Madonna was an important focus for the adult responses, for the children it was the baby or 'baby Jesus' that was referred to in many comments. This was particularly prevalent amongst the girls.

1.5.1.4 Conclusions from the Family workshops at the National Gallery

The evidence from the Family workshops suggests that it is mothers taking part with their children. It was interesting that most of the comments regarding the mother and the baby came from female respondents, whereas the male respondents tended not to leave a comment or talked more generally about the painting.

The adults showed a concern for their children to learn from the workshop and this may be reflected in the high number of comments from the children which showed what they felt had learnt (which was also encouraged in the phrasing of the question).

Despite it being a drop-in session the workshops attracted a particular audience to the Family workshops which was likely to be well educated and affluent and 'typical' visitors to art galleries and museums. These particular Family workshop participants were all (to some degree) likely to be regular users of the National Gallery because of the method of recruitment through the family mailing list.

How far does the 'background' of the respondents impact upon their response to the painting? Both the children and the adults gave the impression of being confident in their responses (based on the observation) and the postcode analysis suggests that they are comfortable with visiting art galleries and engaging in cultural activities. They engaged with the painting

in a different way however from the visitors to the Bowes Museum - instead of viewing it as part of an exhibition they viewed it as part of a focused workshop and the interpretation by the National Gallery was presented in a different way by gallery educators to reflect the level of adults and children. How far does the different interpretation elicit a different response from the participants? Participants are also bringing their own experience to the interpretation but these participants are not positioning themselves as 'art critics' like at Bowes.

1.5.2 The Teenage workshops

Workshops for young people were held at the National Gallery Education Centre during the October half term. There were two workshops each consisting of two days at the Gallery; one for age group 12-14 year olds held on the 25th and 26th of October and a second workshop for 15-17 year olds held on the 27th and 28th October. These workshops were not drop-in sessions (like the family workshops during the same period); due to the limited number of places young people have to register their interest prior to the session, but the workshops were free. A researcher from RCMG observed one of the workshop sessions that took place at the National Gallery on 25th October 2006 from 11.30-4.30pm. This was one of the sessions for the younger teenagers aged from 12-14 year olds and was the first day for that workshop. One of the participants in the sessions for younger teenagers was interviewed on 4th October 2006, nearly one year after the workshop in which she had participated.

1.5.2.1 Analysis of the teenage workshops

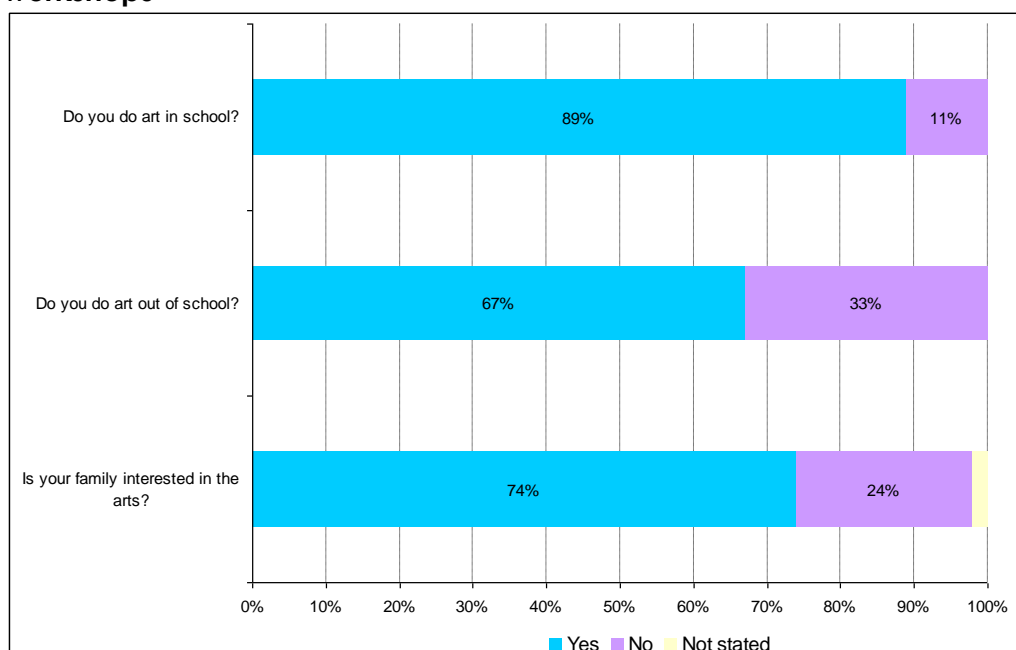
The evidence of the questionnaires, discussion with participants and observations reveals the following:

- **The young people:**
- Most of the participants (73%) were teenage girls. All but two of these teenagers had been recruited to the workshops through the National Galleries existing family mailing list; two of the young people were looked after and had been recruited through a borough council in North-East London.
- The background of most of the young people was on the whole affluent and educated but the data must be interpreted with caution. The IMD 2004 analysis indicates that some of the young people live in areas which could suggest that they are experiencing quite high levels of social deprivation, but other evidence suggests that for most of them, their personal circumstances do not reflect this. The ACORN analysis, for example, suggests that the families of 75% of the teenagers can be classified in groups as 'Wealthy achievers' or 'Urban prosperity.' A further 14% can be placed in the 'Comfortably off' category. Therefore, 89% of the families of participants live in areas where people are well off, settled, and educated. Most of the participants' families (89%) live in urban areas.
- It is clear that the privileged backgrounds of most of the participants contrasted with those of the two looked after young people, and as these

two young women only attended on one of the two days of the workshop, they can be seen as largely marginal to the events. However, the art therapist was of the view that the workshop was appropriate for the young women, and they themselves enjoyed their participation.

- All the young people were interested in art, with 72% either 'extremely' or 'very' interested in art. 89% do art at school and 67% do art out of school. The families of 74% were interested in art and the arts in general, and some of the parents were professionally concerned with the arts.

Fig. 1.5.2.1b: Responses to questions about participation in art, Teenage workshops



N=46

- In relation to ethnicity, the group was mixed; 54% defined themselves as white, 22% as mixed, and 12% as Black/British or Asian/British and quite a large minority (13%) did not respond to this question. The ethnic breakdown of the participants suggested that an interest in art can cross ethnic backgrounds.

• **The learning impact of the workshop:**

- Despite the privileged background of most of the young people and the observation during the workshop that they were confident and literate, overall the responses to the questionnaire were sparse and did not go into great detail. The younger participants (12-14 years) gave greater variety and richness in their responses to the older participants (15-17 years).
- Although the differences are generally very slight it does seem that the younger age group (12-14 years) were more enthusiastic in their responses to the questionnaire than the older participants (15-17 years).

- Young people talked about the practical art skills that they learnt, mostly around using colour which seemed to be a feature of their responses perhaps because this was relevant to their own art (which the majority did at both school and home).
- Some young people talked about the relationship between the Madonna and Jesus, which the National Gallery has highlighted in their presentation of the painting – mostly teenage girls talked about this aspect.
- Most of the learning outcomes stemming from the workshop were related to knowledge and understanding but perhaps because two of the questions related to this GLO on the questionnaire. The open answers gave evidence that participants had different attitudes towards art and art galleries as a result and one young person found direct application to their A-level work.
- There appeared to be a difference between the teenage boys' and girls' responses in that the boys were less expansive about their learning outcomes – also there were far less boys who attended the workshop in general.
- The young people are exposed to working with an artist – none of the young people mentioned that they found this special although one young person commented that 'the teachers were nice.'

1.5.2.2 Conclusions to Teenage workshops

The bulk of participants in the Teenage workshops, apart from the two looked after young people from East London, neither of whom completed questionnaires, came from privileged backgrounds where families already have a high degree of involvement in the arts. These participants were recruited through a family mailing list that had been compiled from participants in former workshops. The workshops had been advertised in Time Out, but the family mailing came first and the workshops were nearly filled through this means. These privileged young people came from social groups that used the National Gallery regularly and proactively. Where no specific action is taken by the National Gallery to extend its non-school users, half-term and holiday workshops will be largely taken up by those who are already integrated into the world of art museum education.

There is an emphasis in the National Gallery Education, Community and Interpretation Strategy on working towards social inclusion. Some work had been carried out with looked after young people prior to the purchase of the Madonna of the Pinks, as evidenced in the Line of Vision conference 24th March 2004 and it was presumably because of connections made at that time that one of the inner borough councils of London had asked if the two looked after young people could join the Teenage workshops in October 2005. While these two young women appeared to enjoy their day, there is some evidence from the interview with Niamh* that this enjoyment could not counter the lack of experience of art museums in such a way that the National Gallery could become a regular place to visit. More sustained contact with individuals is necessary for this to take place.

The interview with Niamh* strongly suggests that the impact of the painting on this teenager was based on her personal experience of being in a family, but not being looked after on a full-time basis by her own mother. In discussing the theme of mother and child in paintings she referred to the responsibilities of parenthood, and the vulnerability of children. There is a sense in her interview that art acts as a resource for her to manage her inner feelings. If this is the case, then she could have found more to value in a deeper relationship with the National Gallery and its collection, especially the Madonna of the Pinks.

1.6 The research findings - memories of the Madonna of the Pinks

Two units of the research were carried out with six young people from a young mother's group and a looked after young people's group from an outer borough of North-East London. The young people had worked with the Madonna of the Pinks and the National Gallery approximately 18 months prior to the time that the interviews were carried out. For both groups, the Madonna of the Pinks had been only one of a number of pictures that they had seen and the looked after young people had been involved in a number of other projects that had involved making videos and working with artists.

Both groups were composed of some of the most vulnerable young people; those who are in care, asylum seekers, and teenage mothers. These young people are at risk of social exclusion.

1.6.1 A young mother and her peers

An interview was carried out with Keira*, a young mother, and a Teenage Pregnancy Reintegration Officer working for EDuAction. As we only met one of the group of young women who visited the National Gallery, it is not possible to judge Keira* in relation to her peers. In terms of her attitude and aspirations however we can suggest that she did not appear to fit the conventional picture of teenage mothers that, for example, the young mothers involved with the Books and Babies project in Cardiff demonstrated. Although we found out very little about her background, she came across as very able and determined and it seems that her response to her experiences is to want to aim higher. Keira* had clear memories of her engagement with the National Gallery and she had produced some art work that she still valued.

Some of the other young women who had accompanied Keira* found the experience more challenging – or reacted less confidently to the challenge of visiting an institution of high culture in the middle of London. The Teenage Pregnancy Reintegration Officer described the group as needing a lot of support for their visit which was well outside their experience. The approach of the National Gallery staff played a significant role in the impact of the visit on the group. They were reassured by the experience at the National Gallery, where the group was treated extremely well, in her opinion. She also talked about the fact that the young women had been introduced to 'an area of cultural life' and to specific 'artistic skills' such as model-making and painting and thus that they had become aware of new things that they or their children could do. It widened their experiences and choices and their

expectations for the future. The group had learnt about the painting and its significance, including its religious or spiritual significance; they had discussed the fact that the painting had been valued at £22 million. Perhaps the most valuable thing for the officer was that the group had been taken seriously by representatives of high culture. She queried whether this was more important than being introduced to the specific painting, and asked whether any painting would have done instead. This is a very fair point; it was interesting to find out from Keira* that she did think the painting was a special one. But of course, it may well have been the activities and attention that positioned the Madonna of the Pinks as 'special' in her view.

1.6.2 The looked after young people's group interviews

Two visits were carried out as part of this unit of the research. The first involved interviews with the Quality Protects Programme Manager for the borough; a Children's Rights Officer working for Barnados, and a Participation Worker, who were interviewed at the offices of the North-East London borough's Social Services. Clearly the National Gallery project as a whole had made quite a good impression on the looked after young people as well as the staff from the borough council. The Programme Manager found that his preconceptions had changed as did the young people, who were able to extend their experiences. Not only had they seen the gallery in a new light, and worked with professional artists, but they had also visited new parts of London.

There had been an impact on the young people in terms of their learning experience. They were confident in talking about their experiences, except for one young woman who did not want to open up to the researchers, and as a group they were enthusiastic about working with artists and creating their own artworks. It is possible that their self-esteem had been given a boost from having their artwork on display, and certainly two of the four interviewees mentioned that they were doing GCSEs in Art as a result of their interest and participation at the gallery.

However, from the interview we did not obtain a strong sense of how the young people interacted with the Madonna of the Pinks. They remembered a few details about it, but we were only able to discuss the painting with one young person in great detail. The predominant impact that emerges from the interviews is in terms of citizenship. The young people are regularly consulted about their feelings on how life chances for looked after young people can be improved and this understanding came out in their responses. They were told about the amount of money spent on the Madonna of the Pinks and they could apply it to their situation and question whether that money could not have been spent better elsewhere.

1.6.3 Conclusions from these interviews

From the interviews with the young people and their key workers as part of these two research units, some reflections are worth noting. The prestige of working with the National Gallery, and the approach towards the young people, had a significant impact on the young people and their learning from the experience. All the young people remembered the experience of

the gallery as enjoyable, even if they had not made personal connections with the Madonna of the Pinks.

Several of the young people interviewed seemed aware of their social responsibility and were involved in raising awareness of services (Keira*) or consultation to help other looked after young people. They had an awareness of their role in society, which enabled one young person to openly question the amount of money spent on the Madonna of the Pinks in terms of his awareness of the need for the money in his community.

There is the potential for impact regarding their aspirations for the future and some of the young people expressed a determination to aim high in life. The extent to which their involvement with the Madonna of the Pinks and the National Gallery played a part in the development of their aspirations is difficult to disentangle but it is possible that it helped to widen their expectations and choice and open up new worlds to them. Two of the looked after young people had gone on to do GCSE Art as a result of working with the gallery but more widely the young people had been valued by a cultural institution and their opinions had been respected.

Working creatively with the painting and at the National Gallery had helped to spark an interest in art for some of the young people. Even if this was not demonstrated in formal qualifications, such as GCSE Art, it was evident in the pride that the young people felt for their artwork. The walls of the community centre used by the looked after young people were hung with examples of their work and Keira* had given the sculptures she made pride of place in her home. All the young people talked about the artworks they had made with evident enthusiasm. For Keira* it was because the Madonna of the Pinks enabled her to think about herself as a mother and to be able to express that, whilst for the looked after young people it was more about the process of doing art and being creative.

The support of key workers to any project like this is very important for it to be worthwhile. For both the young mother's group and the looked after young people's group the key contacts all seemed very positive towards the work that the young people had done, despite some initial scepticism. They were extremely supportive of the young people and had a good relationship with them, which also contributed towards the ability of the researchers to come into contact with these young people in the first place.

As researchers we did not experience the direct engagement of the young people with the painting. This raises questions which cannot be answered; for example what impact did the portrayal of a mother/child relationship have on the looked after young people considering their background of not living in families?

The young people interviewed were all vulnerable and expected to cope with far more challenging experiences than most young people their age. They often lack support networks and stability in life. Relationships with key workers are vulnerable, they are a moving and fluid population that are not 'local' to each other but come together because of their life experiences. Circumstances may constantly be changing. There is the potential for the young people's lives to be very isolated. Despite living in London, they lived in

an outer borough of North-East London. They are isolated from cultural opportunities and financially isolated. This is not only in terms of physical difference, for example it could take hours by bus to get to the West End, there is likely to be psychological and cultural barriers to accessing places like the National Gallery. For looked after young people opportunities may be very dependent on carers.

The impact of the National Gallery experience is therefore one of many other experiences the young people live daily. There is lots happening in their lives and it is difficult to isolate the impact of the National Gallery project when it is not an intensive experience. This presents a challenge for the research – how does it fit into the young people's lives and futures?

1.7 Conclusions

This is an important study because it presents evidence of learning outcomes from different kinds of users in relation to a single painting, from those that are able to respond from a position of having the experience and confidence of using art galleries and those that do not. The research shows that age, ability and previous knowledge of art are not pre-requisite for engaging with paintings like Madonna of the Pinks. The experiences of the young people were enjoyable, thought-provoking, in many cases enabling self-reflection and considerable skills to be developed.

The research raises many pertinent issues about both learning and teaching and about research processes, some of which we will identify here.

1.7.1 Learning and teaching

To engage vulnerable young people in paintings like the Madonna of the Pinks, how important is it to have:

- Skilled facilitation?
- How significant are the views and attitudes of key adults? How do galleries demonstrate to these adults the impact of using paintings like Madonna of the Pinks?
- How important is close collaboration between gallery educators, artists and key workers?
- How significant is the skill and the role of the artist, and their engagement with the painting?
- How important is it to have high expectations of the young people?
- How do you create a focus for looking at paintings which is relevant and meaningful to young people (e.g. their identity)?
- Working with vulnerable young people means an ongoing commitment and dialogue. How do galleries sustain this?

- How do you resolve the tension between the logistics of a touring exhibition and working with vulnerable young people?
- What pathways are there to support young people in using galleries or accessing and engaging with art on a more regular basis?

1.7.2 Research processes

- Broad and open-ended research questions, which can result from the undeveloped state of research into museums and learning, pose problems of focus.
- Research questions that concern future actions and behaviours cannot be answered.
- Research with vulnerable people raises complex ethical issues especially concerning confidentiality for the individuals subject to the research and the issue of trust where researchers are present in depth for a short period and then leave.
- There are considerable difficulties in maintaining contact and carrying out follow-up research where people are unemployed and changing their accommodation and at frequent intervals.
- The political contexts for research can raise expectations of a 'good result'.
- The role and influence of the researchers in relation to the work that is being evaluated needs careful clarification prior to the beginning of the research.

Part 2: The research context and approach



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PART 2: THE RESEARCH CONTEXT AND APPROACH

2.1 The context for the research

2.1.1 The purchase, the national tour and display of the Madonna of the Pinks at the National Gallery

In 2004, the National Gallery purchased Raphael's Madonna of the Pinks with the aid of £11.5m from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). For some, this was a controversial use of HLF funds, and HLF was concerned that the grant should be seen to be put to good use. For the National Gallery, this meant that the Madonna of the Pinks should be seen by more than the visitors to the National Gallery at Trafalgar Square, and by more than traditional gallery visitors. A link to the government social inclusion agenda was also desired.

In order to respond to these imperatives, a national tour was devised for the painting. Venues included:

- Manchester Art Gallery (1st May – 27th June 2004)
- National Museum and Gallery, Cathays Park, Cardiff (3rd July-19th September 2004)
- The National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh (5th February-10th April 2005)
- Bowes Museum, County Durham (16th April – 26th June 2005).

From 20th October 2004 – 16th January 2005, the Madonna of the Pinks was exhibited in the National Gallery as part of the exhibition *Raphael: from Urbino to Rome*.

On its return to London after the national tour, the painting was exhibited in Room 8 in the Sainsbury Wing with the following textual accompaniment:

Raphael (Raffaello Santi) (1483-1520)

The Madonna of the Pinks (La Madonna dei Garofani), about 1506-7

The youthful Virgin delights in playing with her baby. Christ's attention has been caught by the carnations (or pinks) she offers him. In Renaissance devotional paintings, pinks symbolise divine love.

Raphael here combines a precise technique inspired by Netherlandish painting with Leonardo's vision of the tender bond between mother and child.

Raphael's skill in depicting light and shade is evident in the folds of the Virgin's sleeve, the drapery around her hip, and in the subtle transitions of the flesh. The delicate modelling of the translucent veil as it passes over her ear and braided hair is a mark of the picture's excellent condition.

Oil on fruitwood (probably cherry)

NG6596. Bought with the assistance of the Heritage Lottery Fund, the National Art Collections Fund (with a contribution from the Wolfson Foundation), the American Friends of the National Gallery, the George Beaumont Group, Sir Christopher Ondaatje and through public appeal, 2004.

For the national tour, a special six-page leaflet was produced that discussed the painting in some detail, comparing it to related paintings of the Virgin and Child and to contemporary representations of mother and child, and discussing its symbolism and purpose.

2.1.2 The objectives of the Education, Community and Interpretation Strategy

The National Gallery had produced a specific Education, Community and Interpretation Strategy as part of the submission to HLF for support in purchasing the painting. This stated:

'The National Gallery is strongly committed to promoting social inclusion, and our strategy for the purchase of Raphael's *Madonna of the Pinks* is pivotal to the wider goals for audience development. Over the past four years, the Gallery has piloted a number of creative partnerships with children, families, young people, looked after children (children and young people in care), schools, the homeless and wider communities. Projects of this sort form an integral part of the Gallery's mission and complement the wider Gallery programmes.'

A number of specific goals were set out as part of the Strategy:

'Through the acquisition of Raphael's *Madonna of the Pinks* the Gallery aims to:

- Broaden access to the collection by developing new creative partnerships throughout London and the regions
- Development and cement links with new audiences (the socially excluded, those with special educational needs, ethnic minority groups and communities living in deprived areas of London and the regions)
- Encourage the direct participation of children, young people and communities
- Help foster social cohesion, promoting understanding and tolerance among different cultures
- Enhance virtual access and interpretation

2.2 The approach to the research

2.2.1 The aims of the evaluation

The Research Centre for Museums and Galleries (RCMG) at the University of Leicester was commissioned to carry out a three-year evaluation of the impact of the Madonna of the Pinks on young people, focusing as far as possible on the perceptions, feeling and attitudes of young people who, while being unfamiliar with art galleries, had the opportunity for sustained engagement with the painting. It has attempted to investigate the short-term and long-term impact of engagement with the painting on the participants of the workshops based at the National Gallery, at the National Museum and Gallery of Wales in Cardiff, and at the Bowes Museum at Barnard Castle, County Durham.

The major research question was:

'What do young people gain from engagement with paintings, using the Madonna of the Pinks as a specific example?'

This was developed as follows:

- Is a historic painting such as the Madonna of the Pinks relevant to audiences today, especially young audiences?
- How can the learning outcomes of engagement with the Madonna of the Pinks be characterised? How far is the learning collection or museum-related, and how far on other, more personal aspects?
- Which are the most significant learning outcomes to the participants – inspiration, new knowledge or skills, change in values, intentions to do new things? How do these outcomes for participants relate to the institutional desires to develop new audiences?
- Is the Madonna of the Pinks meaningful and relevant across cultures and ethnicities?
- When young people are unfamiliar with art galleries, does engagement with one painting (Madonna of the Pinks) open up the possibility of engagement with other paintings and art galleries in the short-term and the long-term? How does this work with vulnerable young people?

2.3 Research framework and methodologies

2.3.1 The Generic Learning Outcomes (GLOs)

The research has used the Generic Learning Outcomes (GLOs), an approach developed by RCMG through a number of projects.¹

Five GLOs of learning in museums and cultural settings are identified as the following:

- Increase or change in knowledge and understanding
- Increase or change in skills
- Change in attitudes or values
- Enjoyment, inspiration, creativity
- Action, behaviour, progression

The GLOs provided the conceptual structure for the research tools, and for the analysis and interpretation of the resulting data. For example, we asked to what extent children and adults enjoyed and/or were inspired by the Madonna of the Pinks, increased or modified their knowledge and understanding, developed skills, developed or change attitudes, and did or planned to do new things. RCMG took a broad approach to 'outcome' and 'impact', which could include increased knowledge of the painting, but might also include a more confident approach to learning, or a desire to make something of one's own. 'Outcome' was used to refer to change at the level of individual children or teachers, and 'impact' to the class or the school as a whole.

2.3.2 Qualitative methodologies: case studies, observations, interviews

Two major components of the research used the methods of qualitative research as these were the most appropriate in researching attitudes and perceptions. Two extended case studies were carried out (while the painting was in Cardiff and at the Bowes Museum) using observations, interviewing and the study of creative products. In addition, interviews were carried out with looked after young people and young mothers and their mentors and tutors in North-East London.

Qualitative research is based on interpretive philosophies,² where the focus is on understanding specific events in specific settings. It is recognised that there are multiple interpretations of events and diverse responses to social settings, and thus, interpretive research has a particular concern with the meanings accorded to situations – it seeks to understand what Mason calls

¹ For example see Hooper-Greenhill, E., Dodd, J., Moussouri, T., Jones, C., Pickford, C., Herman, C., Morrison, M., Vincent, J., and Toon, R., (2003), *The generic learning outcome system: measuring the outcomes and impact of learning in museums, archives and libraries. The Learning Impact Research Project (LIRP)*, and Hooper-Greenhill (2007) *Museums and education: purpose, pedagogy, performance*, Routledge for a full discussion

² Glesne, C. and Peshkin, A. (1992) *Becoming qualitative researchers: an introduction*, Longman

'intellectual puzzles.'³ While there are many forms of qualitative research, all have in common an emphasis on holistic understanding of events in their contexts, and a concern with meanings and actions.

Three key aspects of the processes of qualitative research are description (context, processes, intentions, events, multiple meanings); classification (breaking up the data, categorising it, and reassembling it through appropriate conceptualisation); and connections (finding patterns in the data, linking the evidence to broader themes, patterns or theories). Grounded theory allows concepts to emerge from the data – it is (to a degree) open-ended (but not atheoretical). Research processes proceed through progressive focusing – as the context, actors and issues within the context become familiar, themes begin to emerge, and the research puzzles are progressively refined to enable a close look in a narrow (but possibly previously unidentified) compass.

The experience, skill and knowledge of the researchers are of key importance in the gathering of evidence and the analysis of qualitative data. It influences the selection of what to look at, what to search for, what might be significant in the analysis of the intellectual puzzle, and the explanation of this significance. Researchers need to be aware of their position within the research and to act as reflexive researchers.

The researchers carried out all visits in pairs. This enabled a more detailed and rounded experience on each occasion. When interviews were carried out, one could take notes while the other concentrated on the interview (although the interviews were taped, this was judged necessary in case of failure to record, noise on the tape etc., in addition the second person was able to observe the interview and write reflections on it, thus enabling a comparison of perceptions and notes in the analysis). When it comes to analysing the research it is essential to have more than one perception of events and outcomes.

The detail of the case studies, observations and interviews are given in the various reports that follow.

2.3.3 Quantitative methodologies: response cards and their analysis

The opportunity also arose to gather some quantitative data through the use of response cards, and this opportunity was taken up. Response cards were used very successfully by Worts at the Art Gallery of Ontario⁴ in order to explore responses to paintings. They have also been used on a number of occasions by RCMG.

In this research, these cards provided an opportunity for adults and children to record their thoughts about the Madonna of the Pinks in an open-ended way, while also providing a small amount of demographic data. The cards were individually designed for each occasion but were similar enough in approach to enable a comparative analysis. Each card intended

³ Mason, J. (1996) *Qualitative researching*, Sage

⁴ Worts, D. (1995) Extending the frame: forging a new partnership with the public, in Pearce, S. (ed) *Art in museums*, Athlone, London, p164-191

to be used by adults consisted of a statement – ‘We are interested in what you think about the Madonna of the Pinks...’ which was placed at the top of the card, leaving a large blank space for comments. At the bottom of the card were four questions asking for basic demographic information: age, gender, level of interest in art, and postcode. Respondents were also asked if they would be willing to be involved in future research and if their response was positive, they could leave contact details on the back of the card.

Age categories and other demographic information were developed in conjunction with the National Gallery to ensure that the information was comparable with other visitor surveys.

The response cards for children were designed to be appealing and accessible for all ages. They consisted of the statement ‘For me the most special thing about Madonna of the Pinks is...’ on one side with a large space where children were invited to write or draw their response. On the back were a few questions asking for very basic information; the child's name, age, whether they were a boy or a girl and who they had visited the museum or gallery with, for instance with their family, with friends or with a group.

Response cards were used on several occasions:

- The Bowes Museum, April 2005
- National Gallery Family Workshops, October 2005
- National Gallery display spaces, October 2005

The analysis of the response cards involved a range of processes. The completed response cards were entered into EXCEL and SPSS databases where the quantitative elements of the response card could be analysed. The demographic data supplied by respondents was measured using SPSS and where postcodes were supplied a variety of databases were used (accessed through online search engines) to build a picture of the respondents. These were:

- Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2004 (IMD 2004)
- Urban / Rural morphology database
- ACORN classification

Qualitative data from the open question ‘We are interested in what you think about the Madonna of the Pinks...’ was analysed manually and using QSR N6. A coding tree was developed for this purpose which was used to analyse the response cards from the National Gallery. These processes are described in more detail in Appendix A.

2.3.4 Research ethics

All research was carried out within the University of Leicester's Research Code of Conduct and Data Protection Code of Practice (both available from <http://www.le.ac.uk/academic/quality/Codes/index.html>).

The following guidelines also provide a framework for RCMG research:

Statement of ethical practice for the British Sociological Association
<http://www.britisoc.co.uk>

Ethical Guidelines, Social Research Association
<http://www.the-sra.org.uk/>

Revised Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research
British Educational Research Association, <http://www.bera.ac.uk/>

Legal and ethical issues in interviewing children,
www.esds.ac.uk/aandp/create/guidelineschildren.asp

Guidelines for research among children and young people, Internet research guidelines, Qualitative research guidelines and The responsibilities of interviewers
The Market Research Society 2000, <http://www.mrs.org.uk>

There were specific ethical issues connected to this research. In gathering data for the case studies, researchers came into contact with children and vulnerable teenagers and young people. Where possible, researchers worked in pairs and were careful not to be left alone with participants. Care was taken to obtain the informed consent of participants to take part in the research, explaining to them in meaningful terms the purpose of the research, why they were involved, who was undertaking the research and how it would be used and disseminated.

To protect their confidentiality, the names of all research participants and their location (so the names of community centres, region and so on) have been changed. References which would therefore compromise the identity of research participants have been removed for the purposes of this online report.

Part 3: The first case study Books and Babies and the National Museums and Galleries of Wales



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PART 3: THE FIRST CASE STUDY

THE NATIONAL MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES OF WALES, CARDIFF (CATHAYS PARK) AND 'BOOKS AND BABIES'

3.1 Introduction

The first case-study for the research into the impact of the Madonna of the Pinks was carried out between July 2004 and January 2005. It focused on the use of the painting in Wales.

3.2 The Madonna of the Pinks at Cardiff

3.2.1 The painting exhibited

The Madonna of the Pinks (MOP) was exhibited at the National Museums and Galleries of Wales (Cathays Park) Cardiff, from 3 July – 19 September 2004. This museum is one of the group of museums that constitute the National Museums and Galleries of Wales (NMGW). Cathays Park is a multi-disciplinary city centre museum, with a classical façade and imposing entrance.

Plate 3.2.1a: The National Museums and Galleries of Wales, Cathays Park



The Raphael painting was accompanied by two others from the National Gallery, and was placed in a gallery together with approximately fifteen other Madonna and Child paintings from roughly the same historical period. Interpretive panels supplied by the National Gallery were supplemented by additional panels. In an adjacent room, a video made by a young mothers' group from North-East London who had previously worked with the painting was set up, showing how these young women had produced small wax models based on the Raphael painting.

There are a number of education officers at NMGW, with, at this point in time, one person responsible for outreach work. She was on maternity leave while the Madonna was in Cardiff. Some arrangements had been made prior to this, and the two organisations which would be involved in the educational project had been identified. Further administrative arrangements were taken over by another member of the team.

The timing of the visit of the painting to Cardiff presented organisational difficulties for the education and outreach work as the period straddled the summer holidays, with very little time on either side of the holiday period for work to be done.

3.2.2 Choosing the Welsh case study

There were two organisations that were involved with the Madonna of the Pinks at Cardiff. These were a Special School in Merthyr Tydfil and Books and Babies, an educational project for teenage mothers based in the Rhondda Valley. The special school work was carried out during the week beginning June 28th, when the RCMG research team was still completing research for an earlier project. It was thus not possible at that time to visit the special school and to use it as a case study.

This left the Books and Babies project as the Welsh case study, which seemed to be appropriate because:

- Young mothers from North-East London had already formed an audience for the project in London and so this case study would offer a comparative view
- Rhondda Cynon Taff is an area where those social elements that can give rise to social exclusion can be identified - low income, high unemployment, poor health, low educational attainment, living in a poor physical environment, and high levels of crime (and this would provide a link to the National Gallery Education strategy)
- The timing of the Books and Babies involvement with the Madonna of the Pinks in September 2004 allowed sufficient time for appropriate contacts to be made and research planning to be carried out.

3.3 Research methods

Research methods included visits, telephone interviews, observations, and perusal of visual and textual documents. The environment for the research was unpredictable and fluid; it was not always possible to know what was going to happen during a specific period of time and which of the research subjects would be present. It was important therefore to identify what the purpose of the research was and to adapt the methods to achieve the purpose. Clear objectives for each phase of the research, identified as the research proceeded, enabled useful evidence to be collected.

Initial contact with the National Museums and Galleries of Wales involved a face-to-face meeting in Cardiff in June, and contact with Books and Babies was established through a telephone call in July. The project was not to begin until September, and there was no activity that could be researched during the summer holidays. Prior to the beginning of the museum-based project, the researchers visited Books and Babies, and a number of visits were carried out between September and November to enable the evaluation of the project itself, and the exploration of the impact of the project on the participants.

A number of interviews were carried out and in almost all cases it was possible to tape them. These tapes were transcribed for analysis. There were a number of opportunities for observations and informal discussion, which also provided useful evidence. The teenage mothers proved problematic as research subjects and only two of the group consented to be interviewed. This group itself was unstable, with most being absent on more than one occasion because of their own or their babies' illness, or because of other reasons.

The following research activities were carried out:

Table 3.3a: Research activities for the first case study

Date	Research	Purpose
14 06 2004	EHG visit to NMGW Education staff, St Fagan's	Gain background and details of project plans, meet museum staff.
14 07 2004	JD telephone call to Books and Babies tutor	Introduce RCMG, background to group, agree visit dates.
03 09 2004	EHG and JD visit to the Community Centre where Books and Babies are based	Introduce evaluation and research team, view location, meet Joy, gather details of project, participants and research context.
07 09 2004	EHG and JD observe sessions at Cathays Park	Observe the interaction with the painting and the workshop with the artists.
08 09 2004	EHG and JD observe events at the Community Centre and interview two of the teenage mams, BB tutor, and two artists	Observe workshops with artists, explore responses and perceptions of young mothers and tutor.
16 09 2004	EHG and JD observe exhibition and workshop at Cathays Park with young	Observe events and explore short-term outcomes of project.

	mothers and special school, and interview tutor	
12 11 2004	EHG and JD visit the Community Centre and observe magazine-production workshop, interview the BB tutor and talk to the young women	Observe and explore mid-term outcomes of project after 2 months.
15 07 2005	JD and LG visit the launch of the magazine Teenage Mams Getting On With Life, Issue 4	Observe and explore outcomes of project after 10 months

The researchers carried out all visits together as a team. This enabled a more detailed and rounded experience on each occasion. When there were two activities happening simultaneously, both could be observed. When interviews were carried out, one could take notes while the other concentrated on the interview (although the interviews were taped, this was judged necessary in case of failure to record, noise on the tape). At the point of analysis of the project, it was essential to have more than one perception of events and outcomes.

3.4 The research context: The South Wales valleys and teenage pregnancy in Wales

3.4.1 The South Wales valleys

The Books and Babies project involved young women in the borough of Rhondda Cynon Taff. The geographical character of the long, parallel, and steep valleys in this part of South Wales has encouraged a degree of isolation in its communities; limited communication has led to an inward focus and a lack of awareness of a wider world among some of the young people.

Plate 3.4.1a: The South Wales valleys



High rates of unemployment during the 1980s and the collapse of traditional industries such as steel-making and mining led to pockets of unemployment in some of the South Wales valleys that were much higher than in England, and by 1991 was in some cases as high as 51% of the male population of working age.⁵ High levels of male unemployment have been found to coincide with high levels of lone parenthood and in some instances this has led to locations and communities that suffer from very negative perceptions, stigmatisation and marked social divisions.⁶ Many of the towns in these valleys are rated as among the most deprived in Wales. There is limited cultural provision, and unlike the Cardiff Bay cultural development, a planned and ambitious three-site heritage-leisure complex failed to develop.⁷

3.4.2 Teenage pregnancy in Wales

The UK has the highest rate of teenage conception in Europe; three times that of Germany and seven times the Dutch rate. Within the UK, Wales has the highest rate of teenage conception, and this rate has risen sharply over the last three years; in 1997, the rate per 1000 women aged 13-15 was 10.3 compared with 8.8 in England (although the rate of conception for women of all ages is lower than in England). Rates of teenage pregnancy are highest in areas of greatest deprivation and among the most vulnerable young people, including those who are in care and those who have been excluded from school.⁸

The National Assembly for Wales has developed *A Strategic Framework for Promoting Sexual Health in Wales: Better Health, Better Wales* (published by the Health Promotion Division, National Assembly for Wales, 1999). Regional variations in conception and abortion rates make it plain that teenage conceptions and birth rates are highest in areas with the greater levels of social exclusion, which score highly on indicators such as low income, high unemployment, poor health, low educational attainment, living in a poor physical environment, and high levels of crime. Young women who have low expectations of education or the job market may well see no reason against having a child and may regard motherhood as a positive option. This document points out that in Rhondda Cynon Taff, the rate of conception per women aged 15-17 years in 1995-97 was 65% (871 conceptions in 1000 young women).

3.4.3 The impact of teenage pregnancy on the young mothers

While not all teenage pregnancies are unwanted or unintended and sometimes the outcomes can be a positive experience for mother and child, there are a number of negative aspects associated with teenage pregnancy:

⁵ Dunkerley, D. and Thompson, A. (1999) *Wales today*, University of Wales Press, Cardiff, 42

⁶ Dunkerley, D. and Thompson, A. (1999) *Wales today*, University of Wales Press, Cardiff, 46-9

⁷ Dicks, B. (2003) *Culture on display: the production of contemporary visitability*, Open University Press, and McGraw Hill Education, Maidenhead, 90

⁸ <http://hebw.uwcm.ac.uk/healthyliving/chapter4.html> [accessed 27 07 2007]

- Teenage mothers have poor ante-natal health, lower birth weight babies and higher infant mortality rates. Their own health and that of their children is worse than average
- Relationship breakdown is more common among teenage parents
- Teenage parents usually have low incomes and teenage mothers are more likely to be more dependent on benefits than other single mothers
- The daughters of teenage mothers are more likely to become teenage parents themselves.

These aspects are strongly associated with poverty rather than pregnancy per se and the disadvantaged backgrounds of many of these teenagers contributes to these effects, but having a young baby makes their situation worse. Teenage pregnancies can be attributed to low expectations of life possibilities, ignorance of contraception, and a lack of consistency in the messages young people receive about sex.⁹

Teenage pregnancy is associated with increased risk of poor social, economic and health outcomes for both mother and child. Teenage parents are more likely than their peers to live in poverty and unemployment. Teenage mothers smoke more during pregnancy than mothers of any other age. They are at increased risk of suffering anaemia and pre-eclampsia. On average, children born to teenage young women have lower birth-weights, increased risk of infant mortality and an increased risk of some congenital abnormalities. They are less likely to be breastfed and more likely to live in deprived circumstances. The daughters of teenage mothers have a higher chance of becoming teenage mothers themselves.¹⁰

3.5 The Books and Babies project

3.5.1 Funding and purpose

The Books and Babies project offers an alternative education for pregnant young women and young mothers of school age in Rhondda Cynon Taff. It is funded by the County Borough Council and Sure Start.¹¹ Osler and Vincent point out that while official policy states that pregnancy is not a reason for exclusion from school, in practice, pregnancy and motherhood often mark the end of a girl's formal education.¹² Clearly this has an extremely negative effect on the life-chances of these young women and their children.

Until September 2004, Books and Babies offered educational provision for only two days per week to those teenage mothers who were not attending school. From 2004, the National Assembly for Wales required local councils to ensure that an education programme was available and Books and Babies in conjunction with Rhondda Cynon Taff Community Arts Project at the time of

⁹ National Assembly for Wales has developed *A Strategic Framework for Promoting Sexual Health in Wales: Better Health, Better Wales* (published by the Health Promotion Division, National Assembly for Wales, 1999, 9-10

¹⁰ <http://hebw.uwcm.ac.uk/healthyliving/chapter4.html> [accessed 27 07 2007]

¹¹ *Teenage Mams – Getting on with Life* (2) 2003:39

¹² Osler, A. and Vincent, K. (2003) *Young women and exclusion: rethinking the agenda*, RoutledgeFalmer, London and New York, 170

the research (for the first time) was able to offer a full five days provision. Participants could take GCSEs in maths and English, and in addition, have access to information about housing issues, child-care, health, cooking, nutrition and physical exercise or dance. Accredited work included an NVQ in Young Mums To Be, an Open College Network qualification in Budget Cooking and Nutrition and in Citizenship.

3.5.2 The participants

Young women are referred to the Books and Babies project by the Education Welfare system when they are pregnant, sometimes only one month before the baby is due. They continue their involvement after the birth, sometimes as early as two weeks afterwards. Numbers on roll have varied from 28 downwards, with the youngest being aged 13 years; generally however, the young women are aged 14/15 years. The funding on which Books and Babies depends is available for young people up to 16 years of age. The project has no funds to help young women older than this, although, if there is space, some of these older young women can come back if they wish, although the reality of caring for a young child makes a return to education highly problematic. The young women are generally involved with Books and Babies for one year (until they reached the age of 16 years) and after this it was very difficult for Books and Babies to keep in touch as the young women tended to move out of the parental home, and to change their mobile phone numbers.

3.5.3 Location and building

The project is based in the run-down primary school now operating as a Child Community Centre on one of the post-war estates built to alleviate housing problems in the valleys, which later came to be perceived as 'dwelling places for a new underclass.'¹³ Isolated from the shops and community facilities of the valley towns, the town in which the Community Centre is located is sited on a windy hilltop. However, though the project is located here, most of the young women and young women involved live elsewhere in the valleys and, as transport links are very poor, are brought to the Community Centre by taxi from a number of different neighbourhoods.

¹³ Dunkerley, D. and Thompson, A. (1999) *Wales today*, University of Wales, Cardiff, 14

Plate 3.5.3a: Post-war estate in Rhondda Cynon Taff



Plate 3.5.3b: The Community Centre



In contrast to the exterior of the building, the rooms used by Books and Babies are bright and welcoming, with wooden floors and contemporary furniture donated by IKEA. The energy and commitment of the tutors who work with the teenagers are very much in evidence. At the initial meeting between the Books and Babies tutor and the researchers on 3rd September, the tutor was struggling to get the rooms in order for the start of the new term in the following week as the project had only just been allocated the use of the building.

Plate 3.5.3c: The interior of the Community Centre



3.5.4 Staff

The project has one full-time tutor. A number of other adults are involved or visit. On Friday each week, two freelance arts workers funded by Rhondda Cynon Taff Community Arts Project work with the participants to produce a magazine: *Teenage Mams – Getting on with Life*. However, the Teenage Mams Magazine Project is a three-year project with funding from the Children's Promise, and at the time of the research, funding beyond this was uncertain. Also housed in the building was a project to care for babies – the Genesis project – and this crèche facility would continue to be available to the young mothers in various valley locations if they wished to continue to pursue their education.

3.5.5 Books and Babies - organisation of learning

The days at Books and Babies are very short, with work taking place only between 10.00am – 2.30pm. The day is punctuated by regular smoking breaks outside the building. The young women are dependent on taxis to get between their homes and the Community Centre, and their travel must be managed around the school runs carried out by the taxis. The educational philosophy prioritises the perceived needs of the young women rather than formal educational achievement. A considerable number of visits are carried out to broaden the horizons of the participants. As the tutor said:

'It's getting the girls out of the valley. I think it's a crucial thing because a lot of them are just very set on staying and they don't know what else there is really.' (Interview 03/09/04)

In the past, visits have been made to the National Assembly¹⁴ and to *Pregnancy and Birth* magazine in London.¹⁵ The visit to Cathays Park in Cardiff took its place within this context of visiting.

3.5.6 Teenage Mams Magazine Project

The Books and Babies Project is involved with Rhondda Cynon Taff Community Arts who work with the young women to produce a very professional magazine – the Teenage Mams Magazine Project. This magazine provides a forum for the young women to explore their experiences of pregnancy, birth and child-care, and offers them the opportunity to develop their knowledge of computer packages such as Quark and Photoshop and to become skilled in their use. Some material from the magazine has been adapted for the web.¹⁶

3.6 The research participants: the teenage mams

3.6.1 The characteristics of the teenage mothers and the difficulties they face

The participants in Books and Babies come from different towns and villages within the Rhondda and Cynon valleys and do not necessarily know each other outside the project. Many of them are referred only a month before their babies are due. At the beginning of the academic year 2004-05, the tutor was uncertain who would be referred to her, and thus who would be able to come on the museum project.

The young women who attend the Books and Babies project tend to have a poor record of attendance at school:

'...it seems to me that those who are achieving very well and are on target retain their place in school, often... with the girls who come to Books and Babies, they have a history of not being happy in school and for whatever reason they're not in school with a great attendance. They

¹⁴ *Teenage Mams – Getting on with Life* (2) 2003: 25

¹⁵ *Teenage Mams – Getting on with Life* (2) 2003: 26-7

¹⁶ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/wales/southeast/sites/teenmams/> [accessed 27 07 2007]

tend to be the girls who come.' (Interview with the Books and Babies tutor 03/09/04)

The majority of the young women we met seemed to lack confidence in learning, although this was not always the case:

'Because I had a problem with going to school. I weren't going I weren't attending school. That was a problem, I really didn't like school' (Interview with Cerys* 08/09/04)

'I always went, I did enjoy it, I've always enjoyed school.' (Interview with Sarah* 08/09/04)

In addition to being pregnant or caring for a young baby or child, the young women we met had to cope with other difficulties – their own mothers were not always there to support them, the fathers of the babies were not always interested or supportive, their current partners were not always the fathers of the babies.

'I live with my father, my mother left us about two weeks before I told my father I was pregnant, so I'm with my father.... I have another boyfriend now, and he's great with the baby.' (Interview with Sarah* 08/09/04)

'If you talk about the stereotype of the maybe a history of mum having been a teenage mum, that's often the case. If you talk about the history of unemployment cycle, you're there.' (Interview with the Books and Babies tutor 03/09/04)

The tutor pointed out that the young mothers enjoyed the first few months of having a young baby; for many of them there was little else that they wanted to do or felt enthusiastic about. Becoming a mother was the 'next thing to thoroughly enjoy.' Although the period after the first few months became more challenging for these young mothers, it was not uncommon for them to become pregnant again quite quickly. For them, teenage pregnancy was not a problem, although they were quite aware of the social stigma that is sometimes attached.

'We always have these discussions, you know: "What's wrong with teenage pregnancy, (Books and Babies tutor)?" So they argue quite vehemently really you know, that it's OK and I would say its correct and a lot of them do go on to produce more babies. They get bored and they start thinking pregnancy again. I've certainly had a few who by 18 had four – twins maybe or whatever they've had....' (Interview with the Books and Babies tutor 03/09/04)

One of the characteristics of these young mothers is low expectations. In addition, they seemed to have lost touch with their school-friends prior to pregnancy and seemed to be living lives in parallel to most young women. They did not go out much outside of the project, were focused on themselves and their babies, had very little money and very few friends. While Books and Babies gave the young women a friendly and caring environment, it also separated them from the lives of young women of their own age.

'Well you find out who your friends are and I haven't none so.' (Interview with Sarah* 08/09/04)

The group of young women that we met seemed to conform in many respects to the characteristics of the teenage mothers described in the literature.

3.6.2 Defining a group of participants

Attendance at Books and Babies was highly inconsistent. It was impossible to know who would attend each day until they had arrived. Reasons for non-attendance included the illness of the young women and/or their babies, exhaustion through child-care or pregnancy, giving birth or recovering. Once the young women did arrive, they tended to stay all day as there was no way in which they could get home.

Five young women began the Madonna of the Pinks project by visiting the museum on 7th September (which was the first day of their new term); initially, we regarded these five young women as the 'research participants.' They included Sarah*, Amy*, Meryl*, Cerys* and Jane*. However, the group did not remain cohesive throughout the research; one young woman (Jane*) did not attend any further sessions of the museum project as she was over 16 years old, another (Meryl*) did not attend the follow-up session on 16th September as her baby was in hospital, and Cerys* was missing on 12th November as she was very close to term. Amy* was also not present on this day, and neither was Meryl* as both their babies were sick. There was only one young woman (Sarah*) who followed the project right through to the 12th November visit. Other young women joined the group, including Emma*, who joined the workshop on 8th September and Lisa*, who came on the second visit to Cathays Park on 16th September and who wrote a long article in the magazine about her experience of being bullied.

Because of the volatility of the group, we extended the concept of 'research participants' to all the young women who were involved when we visited. Some of these young women were only present on a few of the days during the museum project and its accompanying events and activities. As a result of this intermittent attendance, it was difficult for the researchers to build up a relationship with the young women.

3.7 The museum project: an account of events

3.7.1 Establishing and preparing for the project

The establishment of the museum project in Wales was made more complex by two of the most important museum people, the outreach officers at the National Gallery and at NMGW, both being on maternity leave during the setting up period. In addition, the summer holiday period occupied the vast bulk of the time of the exhibition of the painting at Cathays Park.

The Books and Babies tutor met the NMGW education officer and one of the two artists at Cathays Park in July, but at this stage there was no detailed plan of what would happen. A further telephone call developed some details. The artist was chosen because she had worked with the museum before; she visited the Books and Babies project before the summer holidays and met some of the young women. During the project weeks, she was joined by a colleague, and the two worked as a team for the four days of each of the two projects – at the Special School and at Books and Babies.

For the group of young mothers, the four days consisted of the first day (Tuesday 7th September) at the National Museum at Cathays Park, where the Madonna of the Pinks was on display, and a further three days in the Books and Babies building. This coincided with the first week of term for the Books and Babies project, and for at least one of the young women (Cerys*), the day of the museum visit was her first day with the project. A second visit to the museum was made on 16th September, where the work produced by the young women was displayed alongside work produced by the pupils of the Special School. The two groups met each other and were both able to see the Madonna of the Pinks again.

The beginning of the project was difficult. Books and Babies had only just moved into the Child Community Centre the week before, and the new term began the day before the museum visit. The tutor had not worked with museums before and was very uncertain about what to expect at the museum:

'I'm really ill-informed about it because we've just met once and all I know is we've got the plan to go down next week to see the painting, to talk with (the artist) so that the young women can meet her and describe them, so (the artist) can describe to them her ideas really.'
(Interview with the Books and Babies tutor 03/09/04)

However, she was aware that the project would include making bags and ponchos for the babies. As this was the first time that she had worked with NMGW, she was unclear about what the learning outcomes might or could be, although it was already planned that the project would provide interesting material for the magazine. The group of young women that visited the museum did not all know each other, they did not all know the Books and Babies project or the tutor, and they had not yet bonded as a group. No preparation for the visit had been made prior to arriving at the museum.

3.7.2 The first museum visit

On 7th September 2004 a small group of five teenagers visited the museum to be introduced to the painting and to experience a workshop related to it. Four of the young women had already had their babies (Sarah*, Meryl* (her first day back after giving birth), Amy* and Jane*); one, Cerys*, was pregnant; it was her first day at the Books and Babies project. They were accompanied by their tutor. They were met at the museum by the NMGW education officer and the two artists, and also the three people from the National Gallery - a freelance education officer, a freelance lecturer, and a sculptor. The two researchers (EHG and JD) were also present throughout the day. Altogether there were nine adults and five young women. The young women were never properly introduced to the adults, and it was difficult for them to know who everyone was and what they were doing.

The young women were impressed by the size of the building and were lively and chatty on first arrival. They were led through the natural history gallery to the education room, and pointed out some of what they observed as they passed.

'I liked the scenery as well as you walk through to go to the room with all the birds and the sharks.' (Interview with Sarah* 08/09/04)

'Very big, you walk in and you go wow. It's just massive, huge.'
(Interview with Cerys* 08/09/04)

In the education room, the NMGW education officer briefly introduced the day, but did not introduce the museum and its purpose. She asked if they had heard about the painting at all, and one or two had heard about it on the news. After a few minutes, we all went up to the gallery to see the painting.

The freelance National Gallery lecturer knelt down beneath the Madonna of the Pinks. The room was quite full with the group, and quite echoey, so that it was difficult to hear. She spoke to the young women very quietly. A member of the public and one of the warders were having a conversation that they did not stop. Later, two members of warding staff chatted loudly in the corner of the room. The young women discussed the Madonna of the Pinks in front of the painting for about twenty minutes. They were interested to some degree in the painting and prepared to give their views about it. They discussed how the mother and baby looked, how you could tell if paintings were copies, and one commented that the painting was *'a loving kind of thing.'* The other paintings that were in the gallery were not discussed, except for a very brief mention of the Titian Madonna as the young women left the gallery. The discussion of the Madonna of the Pinks was followed by viewing the video made by a parallel group in London. This video was not discussed, but there were peals of laughter when the video mentioned that the young women might return independently with their children. This was followed by a smoking break outside the museum building. The rest of the day was spent back in the education room, where the young women made models from wax. Initially rather apprehensive, the young women worked quickly and efficiently and all completed models they were very pleased with.

Plate 3.7.2a: Making wax models in the gallery education room



The Madonna of the Pinks was referred to as a 'natural' painting by the National Gallery sculptor as she introduced the modelling exercise, but otherwise the painting was not discussed at all. During the morning the young women were given postcards of the painting and the National Gallery flyer. These were later used to roll out the wax on, as otherwise it stuck to the table. The day was punctuated by smoking breaks. The young women were generally enthusiastic about the museum and surprised at the friendliness of the staff.

'What did you think about the museum?'

Nice museum ... everything and really nice.

'What did you like when you say really nice?'

The way it was all set out with the paintings and I liked to walk round the paintings and see them all but not really talk about them...'

(Interview with Cerys 08/09/04)*

'I thought it was posh when I first seen it, but the people in there, you think they're going to be posh but they're not. They are but they're not, they're nice to you. I thought it was really nice and the food was expensive.' (Interview with Sarah* 08/09/04)

The young women found the day long and tiring compared to their normal short day. The work continued until 4.25 pm. Cerys* was particularly exhausted. The young women completed the models, photographed them with their mobile phones and began to work on the second phase of the project, trying to master the technique of basic crochet.

Plate 3.7.2b: Taking photographs of the completed models



The atmosphere in the room was warm and friendly; the young women were relaxed and chatty most of the time. The sessions were very unthreatening and the manner of the delivery was calm, warm and inclusive. The artists quickly gained the confidence of the young women who were happy to talk and were actively engaged in the activities. They all remained on task and were able to produce a final sculpture. The materials were very appropriate, and although they were unfamiliar, were easy to use and the young women developed their manipulative skills and their confidence. The theme of the day related very well to the young women's experience, and the artists drew on their experiences as mothers in their discussions as the sculptures were created. The young women were surprised by what they made and enjoyed the work.

'I weren't looking forward to it to start off with. I thought I was going to get really stressed. 'Cause I'm not usually good at art things and I really enjoyed it, I did really enjoy that... I was quite proud, I thought I couldn't do it and it turned out good. Well I think it did anyway.' (Interview with Sarah* 08/09/04)

'I really enjoyed the modelling.....I felt mmm, this is going to be hard and I'd done like, well I like art but never really been good at it. I was thinking, oh my god this is going to be a disaster now. But turned out alright.' (Interview with Cerys* 08/09/04)

At the end of the day, the two artists explained what would happen over the three remaining days of the project. This had three elements; the first was

that one of them would compose and take a photo of each young mother with their baby, posed as in the *Madonna of the Pinks*, with a rich fabric backdrop, and this photograph would form the basis of a painting on canvas that each girl would do. The second element was the production of a bag made out of cardboard (following a pattern) which would be covered with the same rich fabrics, and which could be worked on in between the processes involved in the first element. Thirdly, baby ponchos would be crocheted in any remaining time.

Plate 3.7.2c: The wax models made by the young mothers



3.7.3 The workshop at the Community Centre

Four of the five young women who went to the museum the day before were at the Books and Babies Project on the 8th September (Jane* was missing – she had already reached her sixteenth birthday and, although she had come on the museum visit because there was room, was no longer eligible for the Books and Babies project). Two other young women were present (Emma* and Abi*). They joined the museum project at this point. The day began with an introduction to crochet and ponchos, with a promise that the painting would be discussed later:

'...instead of me wasting time talking about the painting now... time is very limited.' (Artist, 08/09/04)

There was a very tenuous link between the baby ponchos and the painting. This was explained by the artists later as being a gift to the babies in the same way as the *Madonna* was giving pinks to her own baby. In the event, the poncho element of the project was overtaken by the amount of work

needed to complete the photographs and related paintings and the fabric bags and no ponchos were made.

The other elements of the workshop were also introduced. One of the artists showed briefly how the bags would be made and pointed out a link to the MOP:

'The bags are feminine and precious and I thought the painting was too.'

She explained how she would set up the photo shoot in the other room; one of the artists took over the organisation of bag-production while the other prepared the photos.

Plate 3.7.3a: The artist arranging materials for the photo-shoot



Plate 3.7.3b: One of the photographs taken of the young mothers with their babies



The day continued with the young women taking turns to have their photographs done, and meanwhile making the bags. Conversation flowed about general matters of concern to the young mothers (birth, babies etc). The young women worked well, but were easily discouraged: *'I'm pissed off now; this is going to be one ugly bag'* (Amy*).

Plate 3.7.3c: The young mothers working on their fabric bags



The day was punctuated by regular smoking breaks. The atmosphere was comfortable, but entirely on the young women's own terms. The emphasis of the teaching was on craft skills. There were no images of the Madonna of the Pinks or any other painting in the room, and no discussion of painting, image-making, identity and visual culture for instance. There was no intellectual challenge and no sustained attempt to do more than make craft objects.

The researchers were not able to observe during the other two days (9th and 10th September) that these activities continued. The paintings based on the photographs were completed, as were the bags, but there was not enough time to make the ponchos.

3.7.4 The second museum visit

On 16th September a second small group of teenagers visited the National Museum at Cathays Park to look at their exhibition in the museum, meet the other group which had also been involved and whose work was displayed alongside their own and to see the Madonna of the Pinks for the second time. The researchers were both present. The young women arrived at 11.00. The group from Books and Babies included Amy*, Cerys*, and Sarah* who had been part of the first visit, but also included two other teenagers who were pregnant, Eleri* and Lisa*. Lisa* was not feeling very well. Of the other young women who had been part of the five young women to visit the museum on 7th September, Jane* had been a participant in Books and Babies during 2003-04, and was now past the age-limit, and she had not been part of the project this year at all, and Meryl* was in hospital with her baby. The five

young women went to look at their work hanging in a space behind the main entrance hall of the museum (this is a space often used for displays of school work). Eleri* and Lisa* were rather detached from the group as they had not been part of the artist's workshops. The displayed work included the wax models, the paintings based on the photographs and the fabric bags. It was displayed in the same space as the work done for the same project by the Special School and together, the work looked very good. The young women were impressed.

Plate 3.7.4a: Artwork and fabric bags on display at the National Museum, Cathays Park



Plate 3.7.4b: The young women with their artwork



The young women then went to the education room for a drink (they were concerned that they would be able to have a drink and something to eat, especially Cerys* who had not yet had her baby) and having done this and met the other group, they jointly returned to view their joint exhibition.

Plate 3.7.4c: In the gallery at the National Museum, Cathays Park



There was much lively discussion among the young women, between the two groups, with the museum staff (we were joined by the NMGW Head of Education) and with one of the community artists from Rhondda Cynon Taff Community Arts. He took some photographs for the magazine project and then left.

Plate 3.7.4d: Looking at wax models



By 11.40am the whole group had gone up to see the Madonna of the Pinks displayed in the exhibition. The group was quite large and one elderly member of the public was heard to complain about the group 'monopolising' the painting. The same freelance National Gallery lecturer, as on the previous occasion, led a brief discussion; the pupils from the Special School were more engaged and seemed better informed about the painting than the young mothers. They answered the most questions (with one child mentioning a patch of orange and complimentary colours) while the young women seemed rather disengaged.

Plate 3.7.4e: The young mothers and pupils from the Special School gather around the Madonna of the Pinks in the gallery



Plate 3.7.4f: The National Gallery lecturer leading the discussion



Sarah* was the most interested and made a comment about which small bit of the picture she would like to take away: *'it would be the section with the Madonna's eyes looking down at the baby; it is the photos of me and Jack.'* Amy* looked around at the other paintings and commented on the placing of the baby's head in one of them, but in the general conversation between the lecturer and the large group, this went un-noticed. After fifteen to twenty minutes, the group broke up for lunch.

At 12.30, a workshop began with the young women making paper and polystyrene birds, led by the National Gallery sculptor. There was no further discussion of the Madonna. The young women enjoyed this exercise, which was completed successfully by 1.30, when the young women left.

This workshop involved the three artists and the freelance lecturer from the National Gallery. The young women were confident and the atmosphere was cheerful and relaxed. During the workshop, Meryl* called to speak to the Books and Babies tutor to tell her that her baby was now out of hospital.

Plate 3.7.4g: The workshop at the National Museum, Cathays Park



Plate 3.7.4f: Making the paper and polystyrene birds



3.7.5 The revisit to the Books and Babies Project

The two researchers revisited the Books and Babies project on 12th November 2004. The aims of the visit were to:

- Review the impact of the museum project and of the Madonna of the Pinks painting two months after the event
- Observe the use of this project in the magazine and to deepen, reinforce or challenge the existing evidence of impact.

The objectives of the visit were to conduct a round-table discussion with some of the young women if possible, and this had been discussed beforehand through email with one of the community art workers managing this project; to observe the magazine production; to interview the Books and Babies tutor again; and to interview the community art worker.

This was a Friday, and one of the days on which the magazine was produced. The rooms were set out with four to five laptops laid out for the young women to use. As the magazine project is funded through the Community Arts budget, the day was open to young women older than sixteen years. The two community arts workers ran the day, which began at 10.00 with a discussion of the current items to be included in the third issue of the magazine. An agenda had been prepared in advance for this editorial meeting, which was chaired by Sarah*.

The only one of the original five young women to be present was Sarah*; Lisa* who had accompanied the group on 16th September was also present. The babies of Amy* and Meryl* were sick and Cerys* was due to give birth very soon.

Sarah* was asked by the arts workers to describe the museum project. She mentioned that they had seen the famous painting the Madonna of the Pinks, made models and birds, met two people (the artists), made bags and portraits (but had not completed the crochet) and that these things were displayed in the museum in a big glass box. Sarah* asked when the things she had made would be returned (she was anxious before to know when she would be able to have her work). It would have been useful had the bags and paintings been returned and displayed in the Centre, as this would have presented a good opportunity to review the project as a whole.

The researchers were able to take this opportunity to provoke a discussion, and then used a range of postcards of various paintings of the Madonna to stimulate a short but lively conversation. Sarah* was explicit about how Raphael can be recognised through the clear style of the painting, the way the mother looks at the baby and the way the hands were drawn. While Sarah*, who had seen the Madonna of the Pinks and the exhibition twice in the museum was the main person to comment, the other young women were interested, and there was a sense that, had this kind of discussion been integrated into the earlier project work, it could have proved a useful way of stretching the interest and involvement of the young women in paintings and image-making.

A number of other issues were discussed which related to the work to be done for the magazine. One discussion point was bullying, as L had written a long article about her own experiences for the magazine. Other magazines concerning teenage mothers, including one from Leicester, were reviewed.

Sarah* was asked to take responsibility for the Madonna of the Pinks pages in the magazine, and agreed, though rather unwillingly. She worked on this during the morning, laying out the pages in Quark. She was frustrated because a piece she had written by hand previously could not be found by the Books and Babies tutor, and also because Amy*, who was to work with her and who had already written something, was not present. The researchers had a laptop with them, with images of the previous visits, and also with the text of the interview given on the 8th September by Sarah*, and this was transferred to her laptop using a USB pen-drive so that she could use it for her magazine article. The postcard of the Madonna of the Pinks was scanned, and a considerable amount of work was done in getting the pages up and running, although the text had not been selected or produced by the end of the day.

Plate 3.7.5a: Putting together the Teenage Mams magazine



Photocopies of the short diary accounts that the young women had written for the Open College Network accreditation were made available to the researchers.

3.8 Two studies of the young mothers – Sarah* and Cerys*

Two detailed interviews with two of the young women were carried out on 8th September, the day after the museum visit, at Penrhys. They are presented here as two case studies.

3.8.1 First study – Sarah*

Sarah* is 15 years old. She lives with her father and two sisters, one of whom at the time of the research had just discovered she was pregnant. Sarah*'s mother left two weeks before Sarah* told her father she was pregnant; her baby is now eight months old. She has a boyfriend who is not the baby's father. Sarah* was present during all of the museum and subsequent workshops.

Sarah* is a bright, lively girl who enjoyed school, although she found the secondary school difficult because she was constantly on the move, carrying heavy bags. She particularly enjoyed English. She has tried to return to school after the birth of her baby to do PHSE, but found herself working in a room on her own with no teacher. She has been coming to the Books and Babies project since she was seven months pregnant and finds it enjoyable and useful. Feeling that she has no friends left from her life before motherhood, she is appreciative of both the project and the tutor:

'It's great, you've got girls in the same situation as you and if you want to talk about anything you know you can turn to them. (The tutor's) great and that's (the tutor). The work they do as well and you'd never think that there's something like this or something made like this, for young mothers. And you think that you've just got to struggle through life, but you don't cause there's always stuff there for you.'

Sarah* enjoyed the museum project; she liked being 'out of school', looking at and talking about the paintings, and becoming emotionally engaged with the Madonna of the Pinks. She was very explicit about her response on an emotional level to the painting when interviewed the day after the museum visit. However, she was considerably more reluctant to discuss the painting and her reaction to it during the follow-up visit to Books and Babies.

Sarah* was open to the painting and the museum. She had a complex and relatively sophisticated response to her experience and, in the short term at least, experienced new ideas and new possibilities. However, these new ideas are unlikely to last as they were not followed up as part of the project or by the tutor at Books and Babies. The close engagement with the painting itself, even in a relatively short period of time, opened up new possibilities for Sarah*; the lack of skill and experience of working with artefacts of the artists and tutor meant that these possibilities were not noticed, extended or consolidated.

- **Reactions to the museum:**

Sarah* was interested in the museum. She enjoyed the impressive building, the theatricality of the natural history galleries (the 'scenery'), and the friendliness of the attendant staff.

'I thought it was posh when I first seen it, but the people in there, you think they're going to be posh but they're not. They are but they're not, they're nice to you. I thought it was really nice and the food was expensive...'

The one thing she mentioned as problematic was the temperature of the education room where the workshops were held:

'In the room yeah, it was hot. When I was making the model, if it didn't go the way I wanted I got a bit airiated [sic].'

This was not her first museum visit; she remembered her grandfather taking her to visit a museum in Cardiff, but did not think it was Cathay's Park.

- **Reactions to the painting:**

Sarah* was delighted and astonished by the painting.

'How anyone could do, paint as good as that and make it so imaginative kind of thing it's so real, it's like taking a photo and you know that it's true and it's actually somebody and to paint a picture like that I think it's astonishing maybe.'

She was particularly impressed by the emotional response that she found she had to the subject-matter. Most of the group discussion had focused on a secular interpretation of the mother and child relationship, and this is what Sarah* responded to. She interpreted the painting on the basis of her own experience of motherhood and its accompanying emotions (love, physical and emotional closeness to her baby).

'...you look at a picture and all these emotions come to you kind of thing.'

What sort of emotions came to you?

Like loving emotions, like what is like to be a mother and how the artist seemed to like know what it was like and it was I don't know, it was really touching I thought...'

'Well it's like the way she looks at the child and I look like that at Jack and I think, great he's mine and how much I love him and you can see it in her eyes kind of thing. And I know it's only a picture and it sounds a bit funny, but you can see it in her eyes how loving it is.'

Sarah* was impressed and touched by the idea that mothers have loved their babies throughout history. This would enable her to place herself within a continuum, to see her own life reflected in lives which are given status and significance.

'I don't know really, it's like as if the loving that has come from over the years kind of thing and it's not just people now who have children who care about their children so much; it's come from all the way through the past and that. I don't know it's touching.'

Sarah* looked closely at the Madonna and was then able to make another link with things that were familiar to her:

'...you had a look and you just see were she had her ear pierced and... you'd never look at it and think that she'd have her ear pierced.'

Sarah* is surprised and interested that there are stories in paintings; she is equally impressed by the emotional power of art:

'Really I never thought that art could be so interesting and how there's a story behind the painting kind of thing and how it tells a story and how it comes across like in how there's so much feeling in a painting.'

Sarah* makes a link between the emotional character of the subject matter and the character of the artist:

'Well it's the type of picture 'cause they seem so loving and caring, it's like as if it put across that's how the artist was. He cared about things and was really kind and generous kind of thing.'

Sarah* showed signs of beginning to develop awareness that there are different kinds of painting. She commented on the Titian hanging next to the Raphael Madonna of the Pinks:

'I liked the one next to it, the one with the really old one. I thought that was quite touching as well cause it had like the mother and child and the art, you could tell it was a different artist cause of the way it was painted and it was like, it looked like it was degraded kind of thing, and I thought that was nice; it was different.'

This awareness of different painting styles is mentioned again later:

'I enjoyed that 'cause you look at the pictures and it's like every picture has a different story type of thing and you can see the difference in the artists 'cause they've got like a different way to do it kind of thing.'

- **Responses to the workshops:**

Sarah* was a little apprehensive about making the sculptures based on the Madonna painting. She worried that she was not good at art and would get stressed. However, she had a go, and would have liked to produce a sculpture that represented how she played with her son. However, as she couldn't do this she produced a pregnant Madonna instead. She was surprised and pleased with the result, and was particularly intrigued by the way the actual process of producing the work evoked her own experiences of motherhood.

'It was good cause you'd never think that's how easy it is to do it and I loved the texture of the wax, I thought that was great. I like the way you can just change it, it won't settle you can change it. And it's like when I was doing it, it was like I could see me and Jack playing and that kind of thing. And I don't know it was weird.'

Sarah* felt interested and comfortable at the museum. She had new experiences, but found the new challenges interesting. She felt able to cope, and found the approach of the staff non-threatening and encouraging, even though she had to overcome some apprehension at times.

'I think it was like all the emotion and the feeling I really enjoyed and how to learn how to do different things like the modelling and finding out how to crochet and I think also seeing all the different things I'd come across after making a model and just looking at it. And with the picture, it's like when they was asking questions of the painting I didn't feel stupid saying what felt kind of thing. Whereas before I would've I think.'

She felt that she was in a supportive atmosphere which enabled her to explore new ideas without risk:

'And with the picture, it's like when they was asking questions of the painting I didn't feel stupid saying what felt kind of thing. Where as before I would've I think.'

Why would you have felt stupid do you feel?

I don't know, I just would've like, if the girls would have made fun or something.

These girls in Books and Babies or girls in school?

Well if I'd said that when I was in school I would've, but it's like I know the girls up here and there was bit more feeling there - I think cause there was so much feeling I felt like I wanted just to tell everyone kind of thing.'

Sarah* feels comfortable and supported by the Books and Babies project, and this, combined with the friendly and non-judgemental atmosphere in the museum session enables her to begin to explore her feelings and reactions to the paintings without being made to feel inadequate.

• **Learning outcomes:**

Interviewed one day after the museum visit, Sarah* was very explicit about what she felt she had achieved. She recognised that she had developed some new skills, but more importantly, had found a way to safely express some of her own deepest feelings:

'Do you feel you achieved anything yesterday?

Yeah, quite a lot of things really. I don't know, I achieved to know how to crochet and modelling. But like deep down I could like bring out what I felt inside kind of thing.'

While it was important for Sarah* to progress on the emotional side, she also found it significant that she had easily been able to learn new skills. She was pleased with her success in modelling, even though she had not used the

modelling wax before, and she was pleased that she found learning to crochet easy as she had previously not been successful in a family situation.

She finds she doesn't have the vocabulary or the concepts to discuss some of the things she wants to say, especially in relation to the skill and the power of the artist. When asked if she had changed her mind about what she previously thought about paintings during the museum visit she responded:

'Yeah, there's a story behind everything. I don't know how to say it really, but it's not just oh that's good, it's going like, how fantastic that is kind of thing and ... It's just fantastic like how someone can do that and I don't know it's just great knowing that someone can do that.'

Again, in discussing differences between painting styles she has no concepts to use and is reduced to inventing a new word to describe a Titian – 'degrained.'

On the revisit to the museum on 16th September, most of the young women were rather apathetic during the discussion in the gallery. The room was fairly full and at least one member of the public was hostile to the group as they 'monopolised' the Madonna of the Pinks. Sarah*, however, was attentive and when asked which bit of the painting she would take away if she could, she responded immediately:

'...it would be the section with the Madonna's eyes looking down at the baby – it is photos of me and Jack.'

She has identified closely with the painting, thinking that it expresses her love for her own baby.

In the discussion of the museum project during the return visit of the researchers on 12th November, Sarah* reviewed a group of six post-cards of Renaissance paintings of the Madonna and said firmly that you could distinguish Raphael from other artists by recognising his 'clear style' and 'the way the mother looks at the baby.'

The museum visit opened up new doors for Sarah*; however, she was the only young woman to have a strong and sustained response, and this response was not really noticed by her tutor.

Table 3.8.1a: Analysis of Sarah*'s learning using the Generic Learning Outcomes

Enjoyment, inspiration, creativity	<p>Enjoyed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talking about a painting • Emotional power of painting • Personal identification with painting • Making a small sculpture • Learning how to crochet • Not feeling put down by others
Knowledge and understanding	<p>Understood that paintings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can tell stories • Can open access to the past • Make links between people in the past and people today
Attitudes and values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some positive attitudes towards the museum • A sense of personal achievement
Skills	<p>Introduced to new creative skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using modelling wax • Crochet • Bag-making • Painting
Action, behaviour, progression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Made some sophisticated responses • Able to express deep feelings • Began to develop cultural knowledge and understanding

3.8.2 Second study – Cerys*

Cerys* is 15 years old. She was six months pregnant when we first met her in September – her baby was due just before Christmas and she was going to be sixteen very shortly afterwards. She lives with her mother who is planning to emigrate soon. The baby's father, her boyfriend, is (now) looking forward to the birth of the baby.

Cerys* told us that she had not been very successful at school. She did not attend, and after a few weeks of absence, found the thought of catching up the work she had missed quite over-whelming. Teachers were not optimistic that she could ever catch up. She began to help out at the primary school she had previously enjoyed, with a plan to attend the secondary school for one day per week, but then she found out she was pregnant.

'I'd gone to that school when I was little and I knew all the teachers and they all loved me up there but unfortunately about a week after I was up there I found out I was pregnant.'

Cerys* very much enjoyed Books and Babies, although the first workshop at the museum on 7th September had been her first complete day at the Community Centre.

'I love it up here, I don't think of it as school at all. It's not like school, you come up here and it's just socialising with other young mothers that have been in exactly the same as my shoes and still are. So I think that's a good thing socialising with people that are in the same situation as me.'

Cerys* enjoyed the museum visit and was delighted with her success in producing a small sculpture. However, she became tired quickly and found the day very long. She did not really enjoy talking about the painting, and was not interested to find out more about the museum, art, or paintings.

- **Reactions to the museum:**

In common with the other young women, Cerys* had been amazed by the size and scale of the museum building.

'Very big, you walk in and you go wow. It's just massive, huge.'

It was her first visit to the museum and she would have quite liked to have seen more of it. She didn't know what to expect to find in the museum, was not aware that it was free to go in, but thought, when asked that she might like to return, possibly even with her baby. Later in the interview, however, she told us that it would be impossible to have the babies at the museum workshops as the day had been far too long.

- **Reactions to the painting:**

Cerys* did not feel very enthusiastic about the Madonna of the Pinks. When asked what she enjoyed least about the museum day, she replied:

'Talking about the picture... I thought it was quite boring. I'm a girl who likes to do things and not sit there and listen to you know, talking and so.'

However, she had enjoyed being in the museum and walking through the galleries.

'The way it was all set out with the paintings and I liked to walk round the paintings and see them all but not really talk about them...'

She remembered how the painting looked, although she had misinterpreted some of the details.

'...Mother holding the baby and the background and the window with the sea looking out to it. And the dress seemed very old that she was wearing.'

She remembered the baby sitting on the pillow and had noticed that both mother and baby held flowers.

'...Sitting on a pillow and holding a flower and the woman had flowers in her hand as well.'

Although she states that she was not the sort of person to spend time in reflective mode in front of a painting, Cerys* had found the painting comforting to look at, although she was not very confident in the way that she expressed this.

'I don't know, it made me think of really loving picture, warm, comforting picture... the mother and baby, they both looked so happy in the picture and just don't know really.'

She made connections between herself and the painting through her (anticipated) state of motherhood. This was the interpretive frame that she used to make some sense out of the painting. Possibly the love she saw between mother and child had added poignancy because she knew her own mother was going to be leaving her.

'And because I'm going to be a mum myself as well so it's given me an idea like you know what mother and baby type of thing. You could tell they had a real bond between them.'

However, she was not willing to discuss the painting in any more depth, and did not really think this was the kind of thing she did.

'Never been interested in paintings really or anything... don't think of questions.'

- **Response to the workshops:**

Cerys* was very apprehensive about the sculpture workshop, especially after having seen the results of the workshop in London.

'...that's what made me a bit scared cause their [work]... looked good and it was like, mmmm never going to be able to do something like that!'

In the event, however, all was well.

'I really enjoyed the modelling... Just making your own thing and looking at other peoples and what they were doing... just amazing really how different everybody does do things, really good.'

On completing her work she felt 'proud' of what she had achieved.

Cerys* was similarly very pleased that she learnt how to crochet. She found this very difficult to master, and having begun to get the idea during the afternoon at the museum at a point when she was exhausted, she took it home to try again later. By the next morning, she knew what she was doing and proudly brought back her work to show what she had done. However, by then, things had moved on a bit, and the workshop at Penrhys was focusing on taking photographs and making bags. The crochet idea (poncho) had become incidental, only useful as a fill-in, and in the event was not developed. Cerys* had been looking forward to this, but she was also looking forward to making the bag. She could see no link between these activities and the painting she had looked at briefly the day before.

Although Cerys* enjoyed what she did at the museum, she found the day very long indeed and was completely exhausted at the end of it. She was very explicit about this.

'The only thing was it was a long day yesterday, from half past ten till well 5 o'clock, it was a really long day and really tiring. I think if it was a bit, if we weren't there so long perhaps it would have been more enjoyable and I could enjoy it more but because it was such a long day, I felt.'

She told us how she would be worried about revisiting in case she found it as tiring on another occasion. On the revisit to the museum on 16th September, Cerys* had brought a pot noodle with her and could not relax until she had been taken into the education room and been given a drink and an opportunity to use the kettle to prepare her food.

• Learning outcomes:

On asked what she had learnt during the museum workshops, Cerys* responded that she had learnt how to model and how to crochet. She had also learnt a little about the painting.

'And I learnt a bit about the painting, learnt what you know, it was about and that's it really.'

She had enjoyed being with her new friends.

'Just had a good laugh really, just enjoying ourselves.'

She had also learnt that museums were very big, and although they could be impressive, could also be very tiring and so might be difficult to manage.

Cerys* was not present on the revisit to the Books and Babies project on November 12th.

Table 3.8.2a: Analysis of Cerys*'s learning using the Generic Learning Outcomes

Enjoyment, inspiration, creativity	Enjoyed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being with new friends • sociability • making a small sculpture • learning how to crochet • enjoyment impaired by the long day and tiredness • did not find anything inspiring
Knowledge and understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grasped a little about the secular content of the painting • Made a personal identification with painting
Attitudes and values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some positive attitudes towards the museum • A sense of personal achievement in completing her work
Skills	Introduced to new creative skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using modelling wax • Crochet
Action, behaviour, progression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Might revisit the museum • Increased her experience of craft skills • Increased her self-confidence

3.9 The museum project: reflections and analysis

3.9.1 Factors influencing the impact of the painting

The impact of the Madonna of the Pinks (and of any painting) on those who see it is affected by a number of elements, including:

- The amount of time spent looking at and discussing the painting itself and the quality of that engagement
- The knowledge and experience of those looking at the painting (the young mothers)
- The way the painting was used as evidence or inspiration for subsequent workshops or activities (in this case the way the artists used the painting with the young mothers) and the participants' experience of the project as a whole
- The attitude to the value of the painting by significant adults (in this case the Books and Babies tutor).

3.9.2 The amount of time spent looking at and discussing the painting itself and the quality of that engagement

The strength of the impact of any work of art on an individual is not *determined by* the amount of time spent looking at it, but this is an important factor. The time spent on discussing and analysing the painting (with or without the painting or related visual material) is also a factor. The teenage mothers from the Rhondda spent approximately forty minutes in total in front of the painting and very little more than this in discussing the painting.

The length of time spent looking at the painting during the first visit to the museum was quite short (not more than twenty minutes) and this meant that the time afforded to the girls to engage with the painting was very limited. It also meant that much that could have been of interest to them was not raised in discussion. While the girls offered only short comments on the painting, some of the points made by the girls were not extended by the National Gallery lecturer – for instance *'the painting is a loving thing'*; *'the baby is standing up'*; *'look at the details.'* There was very limited discussion of the religious character of the painting- the main focus was on relationship between mother and child, discussed in a secular way. The discussion of the context of the painting was very short, although the young women were interested in the idea of a man being able to paint the relationship between a mother and her baby. While the discussion touched on the size of the painting and its portability, the fact that it was painted on wood was not mentioned. It is possible that the artists were not aware that the Madonna of the Pinks was painted on wood as they asked the young women to paint on canvas and did not point out that this was not used by Raphael.

No work had been done at the Community Centre before the museum visit, so this was the first time that the girls had seen the painting. The girls had not previously been introduced to the museum and its purpose or to painting or representation in general, or to the Madonna of the Pinks specifically. The image of the Madonna was not used in any way after the initial discussion in front of the painting; there were no posters displayed in the education room or at the Centre, for example. The other paintings in the exhibition were not

used much used, although the young women seemed fairly interested in them. The short discussion was, however, enough to introduce the painting from a number of points of view. The atmosphere was friendly, although the gallery itself was not a particularly welcoming place, and there was a feeling that the security staff did not really see the point of what was going on. However, none of the young women mentioned this at any point. They did not seem intimidated. The staff that they met and spoke to were extremely friendly and warm, and this was appreciated by the young women.

A further fifteen to twenty minutes was spent on 16th September looking at the Madonna of the Pinks. At this time, the girls were in a group together with pupils from the Special School. It was clear from the responses of the school pupils that they felt a closer relationship with the painting, had absorbed more information about it, and had spent some time looking at it in detail. The group from Books and Babies at this time included three who had visited previously and two others who had not and who did not really take part until the practical workshop. Again, the relationship with the painting was not a sustained one. The conversations were more limited than formerly, and the majority of the girls were not very interested in the Madonna of the Pinks.

3.9.3 The knowledge and experience of those looking at the painting (the young mothers)

The teenage mothers that visited the National Museum, Cathay's Park in September were not traditional museum visitors. They were vulnerable girls, lacking in confidence, prone to tiredness or illness, and yet feisty and at times defiant. Detailed interviews were carried out with two of the group, one of whom could remember being taken as a child to a museum in Cardiff and for the other this was her first museum visit. In the chatting of the group during the workshops, museums were never mentioned, and indeed, when there was a suggestion in the video at the museum that people might revisit, there was laughter from the Rhondda mums.

These young mothers had all completed their involvement with school. On becoming pregnant, they had either excluded themselves or had been excluded from formal education. As they were all under sixteen, none of the girls had had the opportunity to take any formal examinations. Their diaries describing the museum-based project demonstrate a range of levels of literacy.

The young women were unfamiliar with craft skills and techniques, and their tutor informed the artists that they had done no art work at Books and Babies. Some comments during the workshops indicated a fear of failing in art.

'I felt, mmm, this is going to be hard and I'd done like, well I like art but never really been good at it. I was thinking, oh my god this is going to be a disaster now. But turned out alright.' (Interview with Cerys* 08/09/04)

The girls were lacking in inner resilience, becoming stressed quickly. Sarah* commented during the afternoon of the museum workshop on the first visit *'This is restful. This morning was stressful a bit – the modelling, in case it goes*

wrong.' Cerys* commented: 'I'm getting stressed' as she struggled to work out how to do the crocheting.

These young women had either no or very limited knowledge and experience of art and museums, and, as one might expect, no previous knowledge of art history, the Renaissance, or art appreciation. They had none of the skills used by experienced art museum visitors to look at paintings, and they had no context within which to place the work. Their responses to the questioning in front of the painting reveal both their very literal thought patterns and their lack of familiarity with symbolic meaning.

NG lecturer: 'What is special about the child in this painting?'

Young woman: 'He is naked.'

NG lecturer: 'Why have the flowers in the painting?'

Young woman: 'The baby didn't have any toys.'

In addition, some of the young women were not disposed to think very seriously about the painting; they were unwilling to enter into the process of art appreciation, preferring to make rather flippant remarks:

Young woman: 'The baby looks evil – is he Chucky?'

NG lecturer: 'Is he happy?'

Young woman: 'He has shifty eyes.'

NG lecturer: 'Is she happy?'

Young woman: 'She looks drunk.'

The only strategies the young mothers had to make the painting meaningful were to connect the subject-matter (mother and child) to their own lives, and this they did to varying degrees. Both of the detailed interviews reveal responses to the 'loving' quality of the painting and to the powerful depiction of the relationship between mother and baby.

On the whole, as confirmed by their dairies, the young women enjoyed the museum visits and the workshops and were proud of their finished work. The activities of the project as a whole overshadowed the impact of the painting. While the dairies do mention and name the painting in three out of the six cases, all of them contain detailed descriptions of the technical processes necessary to make the bags and paintings.

3.9.4 The artists and their use of the Madonna of the Pinks and the participants' experience of the project as a whole

Much of the delivery of the museum-based project was the responsibility of artists. Their skills, experience and confidence in using museum collections were of critical importance in the impact of the painting on those who saw it. The artists organised creative work based on the Madonna of the Pinks, but did not engage the young women in discussions about the painting. Five pieces of work were produced by the young women during the museum-based project. Two of these pieces were clearly based on the subject matter of the Madonna of the Pinks; a small wax sculpture (model) of a mother and child, and a painting of each young woman and her baby based on a photograph. In the other three examples (bags, ponchos and birds) the relationships of the creative work to the painting was very weak. However, the young women enjoyed the workshops and were pleased with the things they made. They were challenged by the skills demanded of them and felt that they had achieved and done well. But, in the minds of the young women, this had very little to do with the painting Madonna of the Pinks.

Three artists were involved in this project. One was a London-based artist who had worked with the National Gallery on other occasions and had worked with a group of young mothers from North-East London in the same way in which she worked with the girls from Books and Babies. It was the London project that formed the basis of the video seen by the girls from Books and Babies. This artist ran two workshops for Books and Babies - the wax modelling workshop (7th September) and the Birds workshop (16th September). Both of these were designed to be portable and to be able to be used with different groups in different spaces. While the modelling workshop was closely related in subject to the Madonna of the Pinks, the link of the Birds workshop to the painting was more tenuous. However, the teenage mothers enjoyed both and were surprised and pleased with what they achieved on both occasions. The artist quickly established a rapport with the girls, the atmosphere was relaxing and conducive to working, and all the girls on both workshops completed work.

The other two artists were Cardiff-based. They were present at the sculpture/craft workshops in the National Museum, Cathay's Park as participants. Their own work with the young women took place in the Community Centre, where they spent three days. They did not re-introduce the painting as stimulus for the work they wanted the girls to do, and there were no images of the painting in the Centre.

All three artists touched only very briefly indeed on the Madonna of the Pinks during their work with the girls. The main input from the artists concerned technical matters related to the craft involved in the production of the artefacts. In all cases, there was a bit of a 'Blue Peter' feel to the workshops, as prepared materials and components were laid out and the girls told how to work with them, and this was particularly apparent in those pieces of work with the weaker link to the painting. All the artists talked a great deal about being mothers, but they did not discuss the representation of motherhood (either secular or religious). The young women clearly define themselves as mothers – this is a vital facet of their identity, as they have very few other successes to claim. Representation, identity and motherhood could have

been used to open up a way of engaging with the Madonna of the Pinks, but it was not.

While all three artists were very good indeed at relating to the girls, quickly making them feel at ease, and finding ways to enable all the girls to succeed on their own terms, there was no evidence that the artists were familiar with using museum collections in teaching. The skills of using museum collections in workshops are not the same skills as producing art or craft. Not all artists have these museum teaching skills. There are issues to be considered here of choice of artist, additional training in the use of museum collections, and in how the success of collection-based workshops is to be judged.

The workshops were enjoyed by the young women, and they felt they achieved a great deal. However, this achievement did not require any response to or use of the Madonna of the Pinks. The response to the painting from the two young women interviewed in detail suggests that there had been potential for the group to engage much more deeply with the painting and the issues could have been used to illuminate relevant themes had alternative workshops been organised to extend reflection on the painting and its relevance to the lives of these young women today. Had the skills of working with objects been more highly developed, the young women as a group might have had a deeper learning experience.

3.9.5 The attitude to the use of the painting by the Books and Babies' tutor

- **Uncertainty about what to expect and how to use the museum:**

The Books and Babies tutor had not previously used a museum in her work with the teenage mothers, and was uncertain what to expect. She did not know in detail what was going to happen on the day at the museum, was not very clear about what the artist(s) would be doing and had made no plans to follow up the museum-based project. She was not convinced of the value of using either the museum or its collections. Her idea of the use of a historical painting in teaching and learning was focused on its use in an art historical context. Her support for and extension of the project were constrained by these factors, which were complicated by the museum workshop being right at the beginning of term and the general uncertainty about the group she would have to work with during the year.

This was the first time that the Books and Babies tutor had been involved with the museum. She did not have much idea about what was going to happen and was uncertain what to expect in terms of educational or other value.

'I'm really ill-informed about it...' (Interview with Books and Babies tutor 03/09/04)

The tutor felt positive about the visit and that the value of using the museum was to broaden the experiences and aspirations of the group, and to show them what a museum is.

'I always feel that one of the central objectives of the groups should be to enlarge the experiences of the young women.' (Interview 08/09/04)

'Most of them haven't visited a museum before and I'm not even sure if many of them would be able to express or to sort of, to describe what a museum is and what its function is. I think many of them won't even have a grasp of that concept at all.' (Interview 08/09/04)

It was not until afterwards that the tutor began to think about the broad potential of the museum.

'I think it's kind of dawning on me that, how that in itself, the visit in itself once we start to talk about what it is and the sort of things they experience in the museum, we can start to look at ways that that could be useful to them throughout the year really and obviously as mums... So in respect to the girls the whole cycle there of their own benefits plus the benefits for the children, for the babies and for them to begin to understand how that can lead to all sorts of experimenting and knowledge, not just historical and natural history obviously because it can link into just so many things that we do with our projects and so on.' (Interview 08/09/04)

- **Would have preferred a more intellectually challenging project:**

In the event, the tutor was somewhat disappointed in the workshops, as she was expecting something more intellectually challenging for the group. She was not entirely critical, as she appreciated that the young women have been exposed to some new skills, but she would have liked something more demanding which would have enabled the young women to be more reflective.

'I was hoping that they would be doing something that was really quite abstract or unusual or just a very different experience. So when I discovered that it was crocheting and ponchos, I was a little disappointed because again it felt very craft based...'

'I think the portraiture idea was lovely, I think the bag idea was very pleasing to the girls and it does include skills, lots of skills really, so I think that's lovely... (But) I definitely would have liked to have had the girls make something that was really clearly reflective and make a statement that went up on the wall as a permanent statement of the work they made in the museum.' (Interview 08/09/04)

The tutor also considered that it might have been a good idea to have taken more time in the introductory phases of the project for the young women to have become acclimatised.

'... maybe having met the lovely bunch of young women who worked with them, who were all absolutely great. Maybe they could have met them over coffee first of all and they could have literally been a very informal looking at images and discussion.' (Interview 12/11/04)

She felt that the links between the workshop activities and the Madonna of the Pinks were very tenuous and that the amount of time spent looking at the painting and talking about it was low.

- **Strong views on how to interpret the painting:**

Six weeks after the museum project, the tutor had strong views on the way in which the Madonna of the Pinks might have been understood by the young women. The tutor was firm that in order to make the painting meaningful, an art historical background would have been necessary. She herself thought of the painting in an art historical interpretive framework, and knew that the young women did not have this kind of background. Because she thought this was the main way in which the painting could /should be interpreted, she did not expect the young women to be able to use the painting in any other way.

'I think for many of the women who we took down, they haven't had the experiences through, you know, I mean in many ways those experiences would come through being on something like being on an art course and looking at history of art and so on... I mean they have no idea about the history in a way, any history of art or how the church had influence on paintings and so on, and I think it's only when you understand paintings in that context that it becomes interesting for any of us, let alone for the girls. And maybe again the timing was an issue or if I'd had more time to look at maybe some very contemporary images maybe through photography, looked at images and started to discuss the differences. Because I think for many of them even talking about centuries doesn't really, I don't really think they switch into what we're talking about. If you're talking about 14th, 15th, 16th centuries.' (Interview 12/11/04)

The tutor suggests that, had the historical painting been compared to more recent images, this might have helped. However, she is also of the opinion that the young women are not used to thinking in an analytical or critical way, and are not used to thinking in a sustained manner.

'...and I think for many of them it is a totally alien experience analysing. I mean I find very, you know, very I find constantly when I'm doing English I'm always looking for very relevant material as opposed to material that I think they'd be disinterested in very quickly.' (Interview 12/11/04)

- **Strong views about the capacities of the young women:**

In addition to thinking that the young women did not have the necessary disciplinary background or the intellectual capacity, the tutor was also of the view that anything to do with age was suspect for these teenagers, and this poses particular problems for anything to do with museums.

'And I think at this age as well there is an almost immediate turn off at anything that's kind of older or, you know, historical and so I think that anything that has a historical context has to be approached in a very kind of innovative way. Which is a problem for you working in the museum.' (Interview 12/11/04)

- **Many reasons for low expectations:**

For the Books and Babies tutor, therefore, there were a number of reasons not to expect any enthusiasm about the painting from her charges. These reasons for a negative response to the painting included:

- Young women's lack of disciplinary background
- Young women's lack of intellectual and analytical capacity
- Teenagers' suspicion of the past and age in general
- Session not making links between historical past and the present

The tutor set out her view of the response of the young women:

'The painting, they've all said they hate it; but that's to be expected... I mean it was a very definite response and I think that's worthwhile because if it had been something very modern, they might have said they liked the colours, or they liked the shapes, or it might look nice in my bedroom.' (Interview 08/09/04)

In addition to the views of the tutor about the capacities of the girls and the character of the workshops, it is clear that there were other reasons why the expectations of the tutor were very low:

- Tutor's unfamiliarity with using museums
- Tutor's limited approach to using collections/paintings

- **The outcomes of low expectations:**

Because of the tutor's low expectations, even where one of the girls (Sarah*) responded in a positive and, in some respects, quite remarkable way, (as described below), the tutor did not perceive the significance of this. She was not really convinced that this project could have positive outcomes.

'I think, you know, passing the postcards round, I think I'm very aware how for most of them, other than I know we've had the odd positive statement from Abi... but I think generally, honestly, they do find it quite difficult to relate to and to express interest or to show any interest in the painting itself... But again I think they were kind of out of their, not out of their depth, but yes out of their depth and it was slightly alien for them and slightly more interested in who's walking in or out. So I don't think there was enormous interest in the painting.'* (Interview 12/11/04)

In the work that Sarah* did for the Open College Network, she referred specifically to a contemporary image from the National Gallery leaflet and compares this to the Madonna of the Pinks. However, the tutor did not remark on this in her interview.

'The picture (Madonna of the Pinks) seems to be really emotional and realistic compared to the other paintings because in most of the other paintings the adult and children do not touch. For instance take the picture by Ron Mueck, 'Mother and Child, the mother looks like she's detached from the baby like the babies just an object and she's restraining herself from the baby.' (Sarah*'s 'What I did today diary' for the Open College Network 07/09/04 – original spelling)

Sarah* was clearly not out of her depth, and did not find the painting either alien or boring. Nor was she unable to make connections between the past and the present, or to make other links and associations. She also wrote:

'When [the NGMW staff] took us up to see the painting I was stund to see that it was miniature compared to the others. The painting was in great detail and plenty of description to it. I think the painting is loving, careing and I think the artists had an understanding of the bonding and loving between mother and child... After seeing the painting we went and made models of mothers and children which was very, very fun! We made the model out of moulding wax which stays fresh and doesn't harden. It was nice to see everybodys end results because every model had a different personality and a different story just like the painting itself.'

(Sarah*'s 'What I did today diary' for the Open College Network
07/09/04 – original spelling)

Diaries were completed by six young women, and they show that Sarah* stands out among the group. Her work is a great deal more thoughtful than any of the others and her written thoughts relate strongly to and reinforce what she said to the researchers in an interview on 8th September. It is possible that the opportunity to talk about the painting with the interviewers deepened the response of this young woman. It is certainly the case that her response went a great deal further than her tutor expected. As the tutor was not persuaded that Renaissance paintings could be relevant for teenagers today, she did not identify and extend the potential associations that the young women might have made, through drawing out the similarities between, for instance, the experience of motherhood then and now, images of motherhood then and now, motherhood and identity, and representation of mother love.

There are issues to be considered here in relation to raising the expectations and increasing the experience of those adults who provide the context for participants in museum workshops. Had the expectations of the tutor been higher and better informed by knowledge of the potential of using museum collections, the young women as a group might have had a deeper learning experience.

3.10 The impact of the Madonna of the Pinks

3.10.1 Tangible outcomes from the project

The week-long project produced quite a number of tangible outcomes. These included:

- Five wax sculptures based on the Madonna of the Pinks
- Six posed photos of the girls and their babies taken by the artist as the basis of their paintings
- Six paintings in acrylic on canvas based on these photos
- Six fabric bags
- An exhibition of work in the National Museum with the girls and the special school's work
- Six dairies entries written by for the OCN credit
- One article in *Teenage Mams: Getting on with Life*, issue 4, 2005, pages 19-21.

3.10.2 Participants' experiences as outcomes

- Two visits to the museum
- Met three artists, two members of National Museum of Wales staff and two members of staff from the National Gallery
- Experience of meeting the special school pupils
- Experienced an exhibition of their work
- Experiences for Books and Babies tutor to build on
- Successful learning experiences for girls.

3.10.3 Skills development

- Crochet
- Painting
- Cardboard construction.

3.10.4 The research questions – some answers from this in-depth study

'What do young people gain from engagement with paintings, using the Madonna of the Pinks as a specific example?'

3.10.4.1 Is a historic painting such as the Madonna of the Pinks relevant to audiences today, especially young audiences?

It is certainly possible for young women to make links with historic paintings and these links relate strongly to their own lives. In the Books and Babies case study, the young women had no interest in the Christian symbolism in the painting. They were not accustomed to symbolic meaning and they were not involved in this kind of thinking during the workshops. They did not respond to the spiritual elements of the painting. The art historical context of the painting was not of relevance to the young women. They were interested in the artist and in the intellectual puzzle of how a man might know about child-rearing, but this was not mentioned after the gallery-based discussions.

The overwhelming connections made to the painting were through their experience of motherhood. The young women as a whole identified themselves through their experience as mothers, and this was the interpretive frame through which they made sense of the painting. The love of mothers for babies, as expressed in the Madonna of the Pinks, provided a strong focus for the young women in their interpretation of the painting. However, this interpretation was not sustained or reinforced during the workshops at the museum or subsequently. Relevance, therefore, remained at a weak level, except possibly in the case of one of the young women.

3.10.4.2 How can the learning outcomes of engagement with the Madonna of the Pinks be characterised? How far is the learning collection or museum-related, and how far on other, more personal aspects?

The young women experienced a museum, most for the first time, and on the whole this was a positive experience. They learnt that the building was impressive, the staff friendly, the food expensive. They learnt that the museum contains paintings and that the paintings are not very interesting. Having paid attention to the Madonna of the Pinks, but only for quite a short period of time (forty minutes in two sessions over two weeks), some of the young mothers read their own circumstances into the painting. The learning outcomes were on the whole weak and were not reinforced by the workshops, although they may have been stimulated to some degree by the research processes (being interviewed, and discussing the painting).

The learning outcomes can be characterised using the GLOs and this analysis was carried out for two of the participants. Outcomes can be observed in both cases across all five dimensions. There was limited learning about museums and the Madonna of the Pinks in particular, and limited exposure to collections as the museum galleries were traversed to get to the education workshop and up to the painting galleries. The main impact of the engagement with the Madonna of the Pinks was at a personal, identity-related level (the experience of motherhood).

3.10.4.3 Which are the most significant learning outcomes to the participants – inspiration, new knowledge or skills, change in values, intentions to do new things? How do these outcomes for participants relate to the institutional desires to develop new audiences?

The most significant outcomes for the young women in the Books and Babies case study were the enjoyment of the workshops and the social experience of being in the museum, and a sense of personal achievement in having produced some art and craft work and in having this exhibited in the museum. These learning outcomes were much stronger than those relating to the engagement with the Madonna of the Pinks. The good experience of the museum might lead to future visits, although the culture in which the young women are embedded is likely to prove a stronger determinant than one enjoyable project. In addition, the lack of conviction of the tutor in the value of the museum in learning, and for her students, throws up a powerful barrier to continued use of museums. There remain opportunities which could be developed with this group and with the tutor, but it would need a sustained and meaningful relationship to be built up over time. There are of course, resource implications here for NMGW.

3.10.4.4 Is the Madonna of the Pinks meaningful and relevant across cultures and ethnicities?

It was not possible to address this research question through this case study. All the young women were from the white working-class communities based in the Rhondda valley.

3.10.4.5 When young people are unfamiliar with art galleries, does engagement with one painting (the Madonna of the Pinks) open up the possibility of engagement with other paintings and art galleries in the short-term and the long-term? How does this work with vulnerable young people?

This is extremely difficult to gauge. Considerable practical problems for the young women to revisit the museum exist; including transport, child-care responsibilities and exhaustion due to pregnancy. But the young women were used to going into Cardiff for purposes other than museum visiting, and the cultural barriers are almost certainly stronger than the practical problems. While the girls found the museum interesting and the staff friendly, it would take a far longer managed engagement for these girls to feel that museums and art galleries were natural places to include as part of their life-experience. A one-off project is not enough on its own to build a new audience, but it can arouse an interest and make further projects more likely and easier to manage. Certainly the tutor and the Books and Babies group had worked with St. Fagan's Museum on a further project, thus extending the concept of the value of museums, but it was beyond the reach of this research to explore the outcomes of the second museum project. It is possible that the close look at the Madonna of the Pinks that the young women experienced may lead in the future to an interest in images, paintings or even Raphael's work, and certainly one young mother (Sarah*) identified a second Raphael painting from a postcard during the visit of the researchers in November, but it is impossible to say whether this might have an impact in the future.

3.10.5 Postscript

A follow-up visit was carried out by two RCMG researchers on 15th July 2005 on the occasion of the launch of Issue 4 of *Teenage Mams: Getting On With Life*. This was a very positive event for the participants, and it was attended by a number of figures of importance to the Books and Babies project and the young women. These included the local Member of Parliament, a local councillor, the Books and Babies tutor, a community artist (though not the two who had been involved in the Madonna project), and representatives from Sure Start, the LEA, the Open College Network and Social Services. The education staff from the National Museum had been invited, but did not attend. Although the magazine had a two-page spread on the Madonna of the Pinks and the related project, this was not mentioned during the launch.

Three young women from the research group were at the launch. The young women had news about their future plans; Sarah* was going to college to study ICT and administration and Cerys* was planning to study child-care. A third young woman had arranged to move into her own home. Challenges over child-care and transport in the continuation of their studies were identified. The young women took the opportunity to point out some of these

issues to their local MP. It did not prove possible on this occasion to raise the Madonna of the Pinks as part of the informal discussions with the girls.

3.10.6 One outcome of the evaluation

RCMG were able to make a number of recommendations to the National Gallery concerning considerations for the Madonna of the Pinks Touring Partnership. These were written up in March/April 2005 and after having been discussed with the outreach officer at the National Gallery, the recommendations were passed to the Bowes Museum.

3.10.7 References

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Part 4: The second case study, a Teesdale Primary School and the Bowes Museum



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PART 4: THE SECOND CASE STUDY

A TEESDALE PRIMARY SCHOOL AND THE BOWES MUSEUM

4.1 Introduction

The second case study concerned the observation of the arrangement, management and conduct of a partnership project involving a rural primary school in Teesdale, The Bowes Museum, County Durham, and the National Gallery, between May and July 2005.

4.2 The Madonna of the Pinks at The Bowes Museum, County Durham

4.2.1 The exhibition of the painting

'The Madonna of the Pinks' was exhibited at The Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle in County Durham from 16 April to 26 June 2005 as part the painting's national tour.

Plate 4.2.1a: The entrance to The Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle



4.2.2 The case study

Research focused on a partnership between the National Gallery, The Bowes Museum and a rural primary school in Teesdale, which involved a programme of facilitated engagements with 'The Madonna of the Pinks' over a month long period for a class of Year 3 (7-8 years old) Key Stage two (KS2) pupils.

4.3 Research Design

4.3.1 Research team

Eilean Hooper-Greenhill	EHG
Jocelyn Dodd	JD
Lisanne Gibson	LG
Ceri Jones	CJ

4.3.2 Research questions

The research questions which shaped the evaluation of this case-study were those of the project as a whole.

4.3.3 Choice of case study

'The Madonna of the Pinks' was toured to a number of regional museums including Cardiff, Manchester and Edinburgh during the timeframe of the project; The National Gallery, The Bowes Museum and Teesdale primary school project was chosen for the following reasons:

- **Timing:** the project occurred at the beginning of the second year of the research and thus was one of two major case studies researched that year (the other being the National Museums and Galleries of Wales and Books and Babies, the first case study).
- **Context of the school:** The school is in a rural area and many of the pupils live in very isolated parts of the surrounding area. These pupils have limited access to cultural resources and experience many of the other disadvantages of rural life, thus, they can be thought of as experiencing exclusion through their geographic isolation.¹⁷ The Teesdale case study thus provides a good contrast to the other major case study researched in year one of the project, which concerned a post-industrial 'fringe' community. In addition, other smaller studies, to be discussed later in this report were conducted with urban communities in London so the rural context of Teesdale provides a significant comparison to the other communities and groups studied.

¹⁷ See Commission for Rural Communities, 2005, *The State of the Countryside 2005: Summary*; The Countryside Agency, 2000, *Not seen, not heard? Social exclusion in rural areas*, Rural Media Company and Shucksmith, M., 2003, *Social Exclusion in Rural Areas: A review of recent research*, Defra, <http://www.defra.gov.uk/rural/research/default.htm> [accessed 28 06 2006]

Plate 4.3.3a: View of playground and surroundings of the school



Plate 4.3.3b: The main road running through the town where the school is located



- **Context of the museum:** The Bowes Museum has received funding since 2003 through the Museum, Library and Archives Council's (MLA) Renaissance in the Regions funding programme as a partner museum of the North-East Phase 1 Hub. RCMG was aware due to other research we have undertaken that The Bowes Museum was re-establishing and developing its education service.¹⁸ Thus, we hoped that The Bowes Museum would be a committed and thoughtful project partner and therefore an interesting research case study.

4.3.4 Research methods and objectives

The various research methods were selected and specific tools designed to produce evidence of the outcomes of museum-based learning. Table 4.3.4a below shows which methods and tools related to which objectives.

Table 4.3.4a: Relationship of research objectives to data generation methods

Objectives	Data generation methods
To gain an understanding of the school and the children's context	Contextual material about the school and the area gathered and analysed Visits to the school and the area Reflections on visits written-up and analysed, photographs taken and analysed
To gain an understanding of the context of The Bowes Museum	Contextual material from the museum gathered Interviews with key staff from the museum Visits to museum Tapes of interviews transcribed, reflections and notes from visits collected and analysed
To gain an understanding of the planning of the project and the nature of the partnership between the National Gallery, The Bowes Museum and Primary School	Interviews with all staff involved in the planning of the project Tapes of interviews transcribed, reflections and notes from visit collected and analysed Documentary material outlining various institutional aims and objectives collected and analysed
To gain an understanding of the impact of the project on the institutions involved	Interviews with key staff from the institutions involved in the project but not direct participants- The Bowes Museum staff (Director and marketing officer), National Gallery staff (Families and outreach manager)

¹⁸ See Hooper-Greenhill, E., Dodd, J., Gibson, L. Phillips, M., Jones, C. and Sullivan, E., 2006, *What did you learn at the museum today? Second study*, MLA and RCMG and Hooper-Greenhill, E., Dodd, J., Phillips, M., O'Riain, H., Jones, C., and Woodward, J., 2004, *What did you learn at the museum today? The evaluation of the impact of the Renaissance in the Regions Education Programme in the three Phase 1 Hubs*, MLA and RCMG

<p>To gain an understanding of the institutional outcomes of the project</p> <p>To find out what the partners have learnt from the project</p>	<p>Interviews with project participants during planning, commencement and completion stages of the project</p> <p>Tapes of interviews transcribed, reflections and notes from visits collected and analysed</p> <p>Documentary material outlining various institutional aims and objectives collected and analysed</p>
<p>To gain an understanding of how children engage with an historical painting such as 'The Madonna of the Pinks'</p> <p>To gain an understanding of how the learning outcomes of engagement with 'The Madonna of the Pinks' can be characterised.</p> <p>To find out how far the learning is collection or museum-related, and how far on other, more personal aspects for these children</p> <p>To understand the extent to which engagement with one painting ('The Madonna of the Pinks') by young people who are unfamiliar with art galleries may open up the possibility of engagement with other paintings and art galleries</p> <p>To find out the impact of the project on these children</p>	<p>Observation of the children engaging with the painting and material related to the painting on three separate occasions</p> <p>Interviews with children twice during the project and once after it was finished</p> <p>Tapes of interviews transcribed, reflections and notes from visits collected and analysed</p> <p>As above</p> <p>Visit with children to the National Gallery one year after initial project; visit to the school</p>
<p>To gain an understanding of the wider impact of 'The Madonna of the Pinks'</p> <p>To gain an understanding of how the learning outcomes of engagement with 'The Madonna of the Pinks' can be characterised</p> <p>To find out how far the learning is collection or museum-related, and how far on other, more personal aspects</p>	<p>Response card made available to the general public in 'The Madonna of the Pinks' gallery</p> <p>Quantitative data on response cards analysed using SPSS and qualitative data analysed using QSR N6</p> <p>As above</p>

4.3.5 Research material

Research methods involved visits to the school and museum, observations and interviews, gathering and analysis of contextual material about the school and the museum. Specifically, the following research material was gathered:

- Transcriptions of interviews with the following:

Table 4.3.5a: Details of interviews with pupils from Middleton-In-Teesdale School

Date	Pupils ¹⁹
20/05/05	Harry* Ellie* Ethan* Katy* Lucy* Jake*
17/06/05	Harry* Luke* Charlie* (and teaching assistant) Ellie* Poppy*
04/07/05	Luke* Harry* Ben* Ethan* Sophie* Megan* Hannah* Grace*

Table 4.3.5b: Details of interviews with project team and other staff from The Bowes Museum and the National Gallery

Date	Project team and other staff
14/04/05	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Bowes Museum education officer • The Bowes Museum Director • The Bowes Museum marketing officer
17/06/05	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary School Class 3 teacher • Artist organised by The Bowes Museum • The Bowes Museum education officer
04/07/05	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary School Class 3 teacher • Artist organised by The Bowes Museum • The Bowes Museum education officer
08/09/05	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Gallery Families and outreach manager • Freelance lecturer organised by the National Gallery

¹⁹ All pupils' names have been changed to protect their identities

- Observations and written reflections by four researchers on four separate visits to the museum and school.
- Contextual material about the school:
 - DCSF (formerly DfES) performance tables
 - Ofsted report
 - Census and deprivation indices data for the school's post-code
 - Information about art awards and programmes the school is involved with (Artsmark and Creative Partnerships).
- Material from The Bowes Museum:
 - Visitor Research Report
 - Museum school visitor figures 2003/4
 - Notes from internal meetings about the display of the painting.
- Material from the National Gallery:
 - Education, Community, and Interpretation Strategy for 'The Madonna of the Pinks' purchase
 - 'The Madonna of the Pinks' information leaflet
- Material from the project:
 - Timetable/ details of activities involving National Gallery staff
 - Timetable/ details of activities involving The Bowes Museum artist
 - School and museum aims and objectives document
 - National Gallery aims and objectives document
 - Copy of the presentation given by the children at The Bowes Museum
- One hundred and thirty-three (133) response cards filled out by the general public attending the gallery in which 'The Madonna of the Pinks' was on display.

4.3.6 Field research

Clear objectives for each phase of the research, identified as the research proceeded, enabled useful evidence to be collected.

Prior to the commencement of the project events the researchers made initial contact with The Bowes Museum and the school in order to be informed of the project planning taking place with the National Gallery. The researchers wanted to facilitate a relationship with the project participants from an early stage as we believed this would give us a better understanding of the project and the partnership process as it developed and would help to embed the evaluation into the project. To this end an early visit was made to interview staff at The Bowes Museum and while attempts were made to also meet with the class teacher from the school, circumstances meant that this was not possible. Through this early contact and additional relationship-building through email and telephone calls with The Bowes Museum education officer, and the class teacher, we were able to observe the development of the project and the partnership with the National Gallery.

On the basis of the 'stated aims and objectives' and timetable documents we received from the partners (see Appendices B1 and B2) we were able to schedule our visits with key stages of the project as follows:

4.3.6a: Visits made as part of the second case study

Date	Research	Purpose
14 04 2005	JD visits The Bowes Museum	Interview The Bowes Museum Director, Education Officer and Marketing Officer
17 05 2005	JD and CJ visit The Bowes Museum and Primary School	Observe the pupils' visit to the museum (first viewing of 'The Madonna of the Pinks'), facilitated by National Gallery staff and session at the school led by National Gallery staff Introduce the researchers to the school
20 05 2005	EHG and JD visit the Primary School	Observe session led by artist organised by The Bowes Museum Interview Class 3 pupils
17 06 2005	JD and LG visit the Primary School and The Bowes Museum	Observe the final session led by the artist organised by The Bowes Museum Observe presentation by the pupils and 'award ceremony' at The Bowes Museum to mark end of the project Interview The Bowes Museum artist and Education Officer, the class teacher, and Class 3 pupils
04 07 2005	JD and LG visit the Primary School	Interview The Bowes Museum artist and Education Officer, class teacher, and Class 3 pupils
08 09 2005	JD and CJ visit the National Gallery London	Interview National Gallery Families and Outreach Manager and freelance lecturer
15 06 2006	JD and CJ visit the National Gallery London	Observation of pupils during their visit to the National Gallery
27 06 2006	JD and CJ revisit the Primary School	Interviews with the class teacher and pupils

Interviews were carried out with twenty-two people (including fifteen children). The Bowes Museum artist and class teacher were interviewed twice, at the beginning and end of the project. The Bowes Museum education officer was interviewed three times, during the planning of the project and then at its commencement and completion. Interviews were also conducted during the planning stage of the project with The Bowes Museum Director and marketing officer and after the project had finished with the National Gallery Families and outreach manager and freelance lecturer. Interviews were conducted with the children on three separate occasions; half way through and at the end of the project and then two weeks after the project was finished. Four of the children were interviewed twice with the remaining eleven interviewed once. All interviews were taped and transcribed for analysis.

In addition, observations were undertaken of the children in the museum with the National Gallery freelance artist and lecturer and in the classroom with the artist arranged by The Bowes Museum. Reflections were written about all of these visits to provide material for analysis.

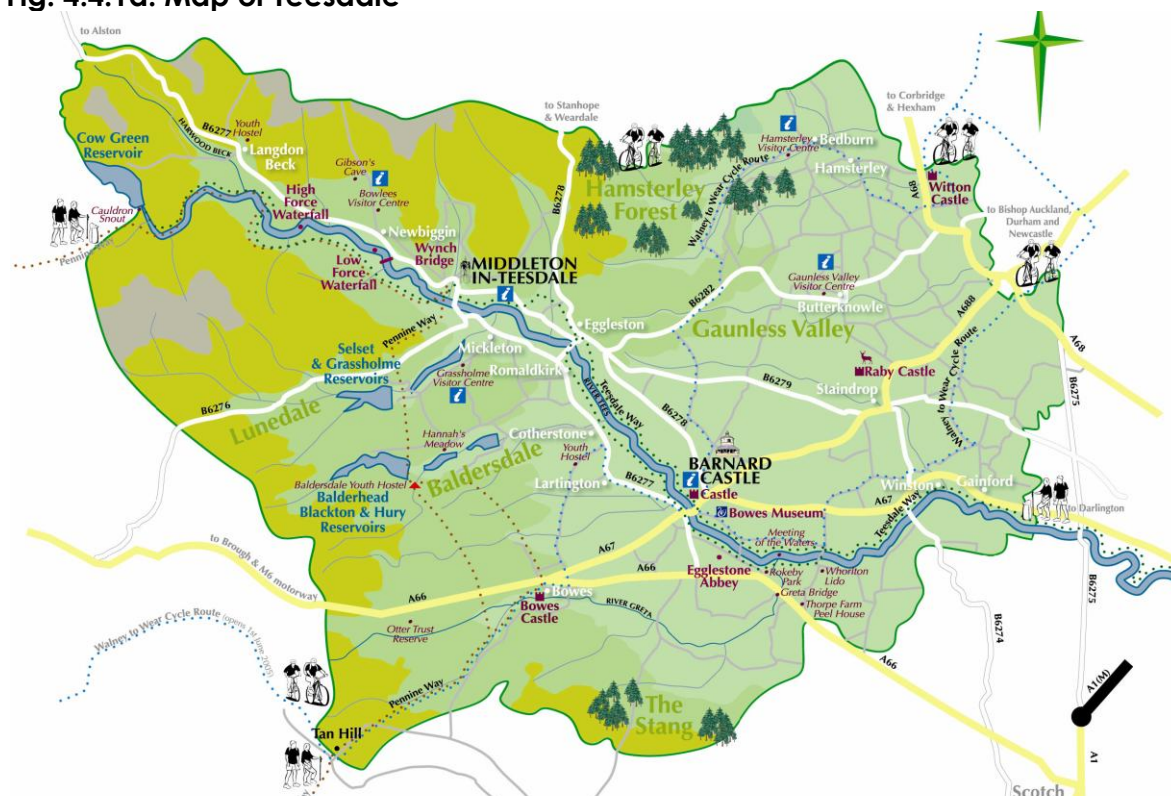
In order to ascertain the wider impact of the Madonna of the Pinks, a response card was designed that could be completed by general adult visitors to The Bowes Museum. In total one hundred and thirty-three (133) completed response cards were returned from the museum.

4.4 The research context

4.4.1 Teesdale

The Bowes Museum and the village in which the primary school is located are part of the district of Teesdale located in the North-East of England in County Durham. Teesdale is a predominantly rural area in the North Pennines and is markedly different to the lower Tees Valley, dominated by the heavily industrialised Teesside. Teesdale covers eight hundred and thirty-six (836) square kilometres and includes the Middle and Upper Tees Valley. In area it is the largest of the seven district councils in the county but has the lowest population. Because of this the Council has relatively small level of resources to deliver services to a dispersed rural population.²⁰

Fig. 4.4.1a: Map of Teesdale²¹



²⁰ <http://www.teesdale.gov.uk/category.asp?cat=549> [accessed 30 07 2007]

²¹ <http://www.teesdale.gov.uk/> [accessed 30 07 2007]

Three-quarters of the population of 24,500 live across the rural area and one-quarter in the historic market town and administrative centre of Barnard Castle. The population is spread thinly with only 29 people per square kilometre (where the average for England is 380 per square kilometre). The district consists of many very small communities where 22% of people are aged over 65, which is significantly more than the English average of 18% aged over 65. Transport and access to services and amenities are therefore vital issues.²²

Teesdale has a very small ethnic minority population, 1.8%, compared to the region (3.6%). Whilst overall deprivation is low, Teesdale has two wards located in the most 20% deprived wards in England and the levels of literacy and numeracy amongst adults in the district is lower than the average for England. Wages are low compared to the regional and national average, and rural deprivation certainly exists but is less transparent than urban deprivation and much more difficult to measure.²³

The majority of the working population of Teesdale, 68%, are involved in the service sector and tourism in particular. The Foot and Mouth epidemic of 2001 had a significant effect on both tourism and farming in the district and the area is still recovering.²⁴

The area has been designated as an 'Area of outstanding natural beauty.' Less than five miles away from the Primary School is the High Force waterfall, the highest unbroken fall of water in England.

Plate 4.4.1a: High Force Waterfall



²² <http://www.teesdale.gov.uk/category.asp?cat=549> [accessed 30 07 2007]

²³ <http://www.teesdale.gov.uk/category.asp?cat=549> [accessed 30 07 2007]

²⁴ <http://www.teesdale.gov.uk/category.asp?cat=549> [accessed 30 07 2007]

Plate 4.4.1b: Two views of High Force Waterfall



Plate 4.4.1c: High Force Waterfall



4.4.2 A village in Teesdale

The village in which the primary school is located is the second largest settlement in Teesdale and is situated 10 miles from Barnard Castle on the Pennine Way. The village is isolated and its residents have very limited access to many resources including cultural resources. The closest medium sized towns are Bishop Auckland (23 miles) and Darlington (32 miles); the closest cities are Middlesbrough (47 miles) and Newcastle-Upon-Tyne (51 miles).

The village has a population of around 1150.²⁵ Unemployment is significantly lower than the nation average at 2.1% where the average for England and Wales is 3.4%.²⁶ People are employed in agriculture, hunting or forestry, manufacturing, health and social work and the tourism-related service sectors. Like Teesdale more generally, the community is not ethnically mixed with 99.5% of people coming from a white ethnic background compared to 90.9% in England and Wales more generally.²⁷

In the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004 (IMD 2004) the village was ranked above average for all categories, with a top score for crime indicating that the crime rate there is almost non-existent (ranked 32,443 of 32,482).²⁸ However, the area ranks fairly low for the 'living environment' category of the IMD 2004 (which suggests social and private housing in poor condition, houses without central heating)²⁹ and is almost at the bottom of the scale for the 'barriers to housing and services' category reflecting the community's isolation from the kinds of services and resources most people take for granted.³⁰

The village is picturesque consisting mainly of a tree lined main street with a supermarket, church, pub, shops and cafes.

²⁵ http://www.teesdale.co.uk/view_content.php?page_id=86 [accessed 01 08 2007]

²⁶ <http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/AreaProfile1.do?tab=5> [accessed 30 07 2007]

²⁷ Neighbourhood Statistics, data available at ward level:

<http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/LeadTableView.do?a=3&b=5947261&c=Middleton-in-Teesdale&d=14&e=16&g=440916&i=1001x1003x1004&m=0&enc=1&dsFamilyId=890>

[accessed 30 07 2007]

²⁸ The following information is based on statistics available for the postcode of the Primary School (Lower layer Super Output Area for DL12 0TG) as deprivation indices are not available at ward level for the IMD 2004:

<http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/LeadTableView.do?a=3&b=305233&c=DL12+0TG&d=141&e=10&g=440920&i=1001x1003x1004&m=0&enc=1&dsFamilyId=800> [accessed 30 07 2007]

²⁹ The SOA is ranked 10,455 out of 32,482, source as above

³⁰ The SOA is ranked 1,363 out of 32,482, source as above

Plate 4.4.2a: The village centre



4.4.3 The primary school

The primary school that took part in the second case study is a community school, serving pupils aged from 3 to 11 years old. It is smaller than most primary schools and in 2005 it had 133 students on roll. It serves the local community as well as outlying farms and villages and a large number of pupils travel to school by bus or taxi. Overall, the school's socio-economic context is about average and its take-up for free school meals is below average. When children first start school, their attainment overall is broadly average but their communication skills are below average.³¹ The proportion of pupils in the school as a whole who are statemented with special educational needs is 3.8% and 19.5% of the pupils are identified as having special educational needs but without statements.³² These figures are above average for the UK, where in 2005 1.6% of primary school children were statemented with special educational needs and 15.2% of primary school children had special educational needs but were not statemented.³³ This is a good school and in the 2005 the KS2 children here did well matching the average for England in

³¹ Clark, L., *Ofsted inspection report 23-25 February 2004*, Crown Copyright, 2004, http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/reports/pdf/?inspectionNumber=256909&providerCategoryId=4096&fileName=\\school\\114\\s10_114109_20040520.pdf [accessed 30 07 2007]

³² http://www.dfes.gov.uk/cgi-bin/performancetables/dfepx1_05.pl?School=8402430&Mode=Z&Type= [accessed 27 07 2007]

³³ Department for Education and Skills (2005), *Statistics of Education: Education and Training Statistics for the United Kingdom*, Department for Education and Skills, p22
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an aggregated score of KS2 Level 4+ percentages in English, Maths and Science.³⁴

According to the recent Ofsted report (2004), the school has developed good links with the community and uses the surrounding area well to enhance the learning opportunities for the children. The school also visits museums and places of historical and national interest to broaden pupil's experiences.³⁵ As the Ofsted report notes, the school has a strong emphasis on pupils' participation in the arts, 'the art curriculum is planned in accordance with national guidelines but the school enhances this provision through a range of visitors including several 'artists' in residence.'³⁶

The school received a Gold Artsmark in 2002 in the national award scheme managed by Arts Council England. An Artsmark is awarded to schools who show a commitment to the full range of arts— music, dance, drama and art and design.³⁷ The school also has Creative Partnerships status: an essential prerequisite for this in County Durham and Sunderland is that the school had to provide evidence that it already had an active engagement with the creative arts. The Creative Partnerships programme offers a bridge between schools and cultural organisations and creative practitioners, providing school children with opportunities to develop creativity in learning and to take part in cultural activities of the highest quality.³⁸ The school has developed a sculpture/ art/sensory garden using Creative Partnerships funding.

Plate 4.4.3a: The school garden



³⁴ http://www.dfes.gov.uk/cgi-bin/performancetables/dfepx1_05.pl?School=8402430&Mode=Z&Type= [accessed 30 07 2007]

³⁵ Clark, L., (2004)

³⁶ Clark, L., (2004), p22

³⁷ <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/artsmark/whatis.htm> [accessed 30 07 2007]

³⁸ <http://www.creative-partnerships.com/aboutcp/> [accessed 30 07 2007]

The Year 3 class who participated in the study consisted of twenty-seven KS2 7-8 year olds. According to their class teacher the class is academically average and very well behaved which matches the school more generally, which she said very rarely had any children with behavioural problems. In the class there is one child who is statemented with special educational needs and four other children who have special educational needs.

This school and this class teacher have worked with The Bowes Museum in the past, including involvement in programmes consisting of artists visiting the school and working with the class. The class teacher was described by staff at the museum as having a very high motivation to work with the museum. The school was described by The Bowes Museum education officer as being untypical to other local schools due to its focus on creative arts of all kinds, not only visual arts. The previous head teacher was very committed to the creative arts focus of the school and is himself a practising artist and active member of the local amateur dramatics society. The class teacher describes the creative arts focus of the school as the legacy of this head teacher. The school is full of art; it is even a feature of the school grounds in the form of an 'art garden.'

Many of the children at the school are described by the Year 3 class teacher as 'farmers' children.' According to the class teacher, these children rarely travel outside their immediate area, because, as farms in this area rear livestock, parents have little flexibility to go away on annual holidays, and where there are vacations the families tend to take them in winter and close to home in case anything goes wrong with the farm. The class teacher believes that many of the children rarely get further south than North Yorkshire and that 80% of the children in the school would never have been to London.

4.4.4 The Bowes Museum

The Bowes Museum was purpose-built as a public art gallery for John Bowes, and his wife Countess Joséphine Benoîte who both died before it opened in 1892. It was designed by the French architect Jules Pellechet in a grand French style within landscaped gardens (see Plate 4.4.4a below).

The Bowes Museum has a nationally renowned art collection including paintings by El Greco, Goya, Canaletto, Boucher, and Fragonard and a sizable collection of decorative art, ceramics, textiles, tapestries, clocks and costumes, as well as older items of local history. A great attraction is the 18th-century Silver Swan automaton, which on the hour preens itself, looks round and appears to catch and swallow a fish.

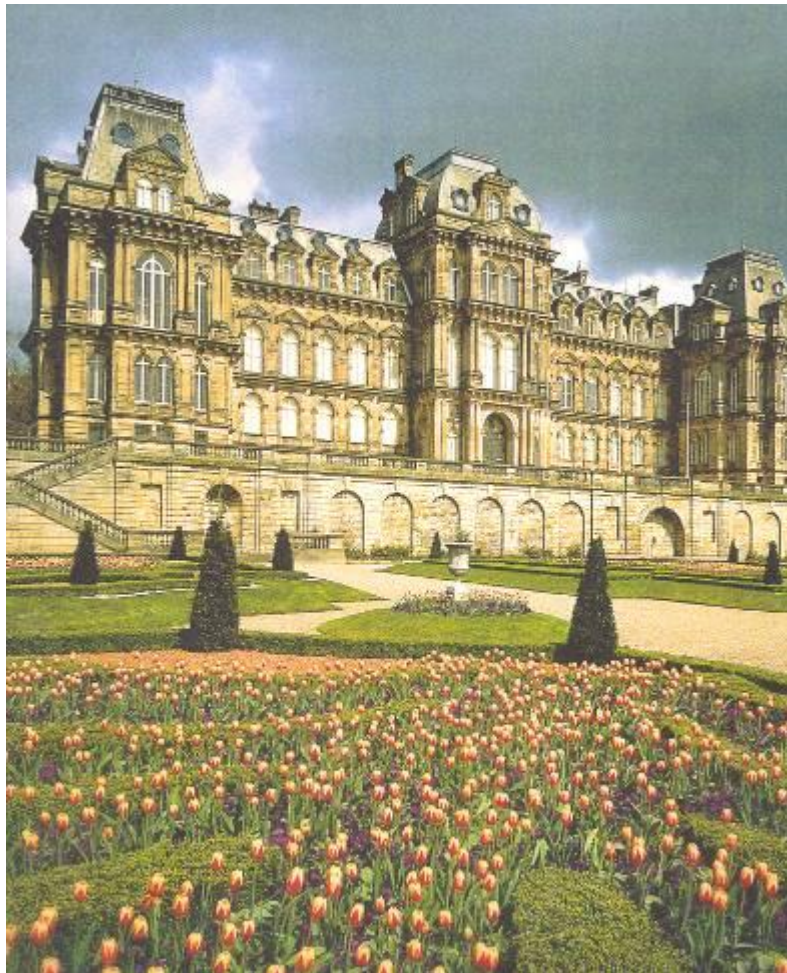
According to recent visitor research undertaken for The Bowes Museum the largest audience for the museum are female (59%) and in the 55- 64 age group with the 25- 34 age group being the most underrepresented.³⁹ These are a very enthusiastic audience with 98.8% of visitors saying they would recommend the museum to a friend or relative, they are also loyal with 42.8% stating they had visited within the last two years.⁴⁰ Most (58.7%) of the visitors

³⁹ Yorkshire Tourist Board, (2005), *Visitor Research Report: The Bowes Museum*, YTB, p6

⁴⁰ Yorkshire Tourist Board, (2005), p6-13

live locally or within a 'day-trip' drivable distance with only 3.1% of visitors from overseas, which is lower than the visitor attraction figure to Yorkshire overall which is 5%.⁴¹ However, the new marketing manager is committed to extending the museums' audience beyond this group.

Plate 4.4.4a: The Bowes Museum



The education officer in post at the time of the research was the Bowes Museum's first dedicated museum education position. This position commenced in 2000, although during the 1970's and 1980's the museum did have various short term teacher secondments. According to this officer, prior to this the museum had no real education programme. The museum's current education programme is mostly working with primary schools but they have an increasing number of partnerships with secondary schools, and they are also developing a number of long-term projects. Most of their projects focus on art and design elements in the curriculum as the museum is a museum of fine and decorative arts; however, they also have a number of projects working on French in the primary school curriculum.

The Bowes Museum has received funding since 2003 through the Museum, Library and Archives Council's (MLA) Renaissance in the Regions funding

⁴¹ Yorkshire Tourist Board, 2005, p. 20.

programme as a partner museum of the North-East Phase 1 Hub.⁴² The Education Officer noted that the Renaissance programme has had a 'huge impact' on the museum with two new members of an education team able to be paid for with Renaissance funding. This development in the Education Department has had real outcomes such that from 2003 to 2005 there has been a 35% increase in pupil contact with the museum.⁴³

4.5 The museum project: an account of events

4.5.1 Establishing and preparing for the project

It was identified early in the research that there were special challenges involved with planning this project due to the geographical distance between the two museum partners. In addition, the National Gallery Families and Outreach Manager was on maternity leave during the planning and early stages of the project, and she is the National Gallery staff member who would normally have been responsible for the development of this project and partnership. A National Gallery freelance lecturer was appointed as her maternity cover. Further, the National Gallery artist who was organised to work on this project had a bereavement which meant that she had to pull out of the project and the National Gallery needed to find another artist at short notice. Thus, there were a number of elements affecting the early planning of the project which made this process difficult.

The Bowes Museum Education Officer made the following comments on the 14th April 2005, a month before the National Gallery staff were due to come up to facilitate the first event of the project on the 17th May:

'We're still trying to get all the planning together, it's been difficult with I think distance has been a big factor with this. I mean I've been able to talk to the teacher easily and we can sort of meet ourselves but obviously we're trying to deal with London, which is a bit more of an issue.'

Eventually a timetable for the project was established but the National Gallery was only able to contribute to part of the project's aims and objectives statement. The aims and objectives document which framed the project as a whole (see Appendix B1) was worked out between the class teacher, The Bowes Museum education officer and The Bowes Museum artist. The National Gallery sent an aims and objectives document to The Bowes Museum education officer (see Appendix B2) and she was able to assimilate that into the primary aims and objectives statement; however, the National Gallery hadn't finalised the more detailed part of their statement and so could make no contribution at this point to the more detailed part of the

⁴² For information see <http://www.twmuseums.org.uk/hub/index.php> [accessed 30 07 2007]

⁴³ See Hooper-Greenhill, E., Dodd, J., Gibson, L. Phillips, M., Jones, C. and Sullivan, E., (2006), *What did you learn at the museum today? Second study*, MLA and RCMG, p54, <http://www.le.ac.uk/museumstudies/research/rcmgpublicationsandprojects.html> [accessed 30 07 2007]

project statement. The education programme was, therefore, primarily a Bowes Museum/ Middleton-in-Teesdale Primary School partnership, with the exception of the day the National Gallery worked with the pupils.

The majority of the planning between the museum partners took place through email and it was clear from talking to all the project team that this had caused a few difficulties:

- Difficulty finalising a specific timetable for the project
- The Bowes Museum Education Officer and artist did not know specifically what the National Gallery artist planned to do with the children
- The Bowes Museum artist was not able to plan her sessions to 'spring board' off the National Gallery sessions as she was not informed as to their content
- A team culture was able to be developed amongst the participants in County Durham from the initial planning stage of the project but this team culture was not able to include the National Gallery until the project events had already commenced and National Gallery staff met the other project participants face-to-face for the first time
- The researchers had to be very flexible to fit in with many changes to dates.

In the early stages of the project The Bowes Museum Education Officer commented that what this lack of initial contact meant that it had been difficult to facilitate a partnership between the museums because:

'We don't both really understand fully each other's situation of how we work cos we've not had the chance to do that and they probably don't have as much of an understanding of my stuff and how we're structured, and I don't have that much of an understanding of how their education stuff are structured... I think the distance impacts on the communication.'

The Bowes Museum Education Officer also noted that the museum was involved in a number of other partnerships at that time (including with another national organisation) and that the difficulties with the planning process for The Madonna of the Pinks project were taking a disproportionate amount of her time compared to the museum's other partnership activities.

The Bowes Museum artist had no contact with the National Gallery until the final day of the project, although her contact details were passed on to the National Gallery during the project planning stage. The Bowes Museum artist provided The Bowes Museum education officer with the detailed description of what she intended to do and these details were passed on to the National Gallery, but due to the lack of contact with the artist directly and the fact that the National Gallery did not tell The Bowes Museum education officer the specifics of the sessions they were planning, The Bowes Museum artist did not know what the National Gallery was planning for their sessions and thus could not plan her sessions accordingly. The artist was only able to find out what had occurred in the National Gallery's sessions by questioning the pupils when she had her first session with them. She commented that:

'...it would have been nice to have worked together a little bit more. Cos I've learned what the National Gallery artist has done through the children and through people telling me what they've done. That would have been quite nice to have had maybe a bit of a link there. Yeah it would have been nice to have possibly had a little bit more involvement from that side.'

It was ultimately identified by all participants in the project— The Bowes Museum Education Officer, the class teacher, The Bowes Museum artist, the National Gallery freelance lecturer and the National Gallery Families and outreach manager— that the planning process would have been significantly aided if a member of the National Gallery team had visited Barnard Castle to attend a face-to-face meeting with all project participants to work out a diary of events and agreed aims, objectives and outcomes for the project. However, as will be discussed in the next section, despite the initial difficulties all participants felt the partnership which eventually developed was one of the best outcomes of the project.

4.5.2 Project events

4.5.2.1 The first museum visit and working with the National Gallery

The first project event took place on 17th May 2005. Class 3, twenty-seven pupils in total, visited The Bowes Museum with their class teacher for an introductory session by the National Gallery and to see the Madonna of the Pinks. They arrived at 9.45am and left around 11.30am to return to the school for lunch. The afternoon session at the school involved making a figure based on some of the ideas of 'acting out' a scene from a painting and reinforcing earlier ideas introduced at The Bowes Museum.

When they first arrived the children were taken to the education room where they were introduced to The Bowes Museum education officer, National Gallery freelance lecturer, and National Gallery freelance artist. The children were well-behaved and listened intently. It was evident that they had done some preparatory work around the Madonna of the Pinks — most of them expected it to be small— and were enthusiastic to see the real painting. Many had visited The Bowes Museum before and could name some of the exhibits.

The group were taken upstairs to see the painting, which was displayed in the first floor gallery. The children were sat on the floor around the painting. For most of the morning there were no public in the gallery so the school were able to take up the whole space.

The room was well-lit and the painting was displayed with other representations of the Madonna and Child. The dynamics of the room made it difficult to hear some of the quieter children's responses; however the National Gallery freelance lecturer, who led the first session, helpfully repeated their answers for the benefit of the rest of the group.

Plate 4.5.2.1a: The first visit to see the Madonna of the Pinks at the Bowes Museum



• **The National Gallery freelance lecturer's session:**

This was an excellent session that focused clearly on the painting. It was a long session - 1 hour and 15 minutes - but throughout the children clearly enjoyed the session, were very focused and attentive, eager to contribute to discussions and willing to volunteer when asked. When the lecturer asked questions, a forest of hands went up. Throughout, the lecturer continually referred back to the Madonna of the Pinks but brought in other paintings where relevant to further probe elements in the Madonna of the Pinks and to enable the children to make links between them. The children were very adept at making these connections and many of them made links without being prompted. All children were involved and those with special needs well integrated.

The lecturer encouraged the children to be 'art detectives' and look for clues in the painting which would enable them to find out what the painting was about. This was achieved skilfully by drawing on children's experiences and making connections for instance when looking at how baby Jesus was portrayed in the paintings she asked the children to think about if they had any brothers and sisters.

The presentation was very energetic and dynamic, the lecturer continually making eye contact and changing pace, asking lots of questions and involving everyone. Actions were used where appropriate to emphasise or

involve the children in the concepts, for instance 'rowing' to distant lands to mine lapis lazuli. The children were involved in responding in a range of different ways, looking skills, story telling, using actions, deductions, and being 'art detectives.' Ground rules were set such as not touching the painting, which was taken to heart by the children who at one point told the lecturer off because they thought she was going to touch it. The context of the painting was introduced - how much it cost, where it was found and how a scan enabled them to know it was an authentic Raphael painting. Caroline told them how the shape of the painting and its size could help them to find out who owned the painting. The symbolism in the painting was introduced - religious symbolism, symbols of love, halos indicating that Mary is special because she is the 'Queen of Heaven.' The flowers that Jesus is giving to Mary (the children guessed they were cowslips or crocuses) and how they symbolise love and friendship.

The children explored colour and how paints are made with reference to the blue of the Madonna's robe and how it was made from a very precious stone called lapis lazuli (a child said 'it sounds precious'). The children were encouraged to 'row' to distant lands to find the stone, which they then used to make the paint (grinding the stone down to a powder and mixing with oil) called ultramarine. The concept of using contrasting colours to make them stand out more was explored, for instance juxtaposing orange and blue (colour wheel). The lecturer also contrasted colours in other paintings such as the Titian which was painted in darker, 'winter' colours.

The children looked at the position of the figures and how their hands created a 'special pattern of giving.' They imagined the movement of the baby Jesus as he 'wiggled' on his mother's lap. The children looked at the 'landscape' in the background of the painting and talked about what the children might see from their window - 'I can see houses, old houses'; 'I see fields and hills and trees'; 'my garden and some trees; from the front window, sheep and cows.' When the lecturer asked why the animals in the painting were so small, the children knew it was 'because they're far away.' The children looked at the expressions of the Madonna and Jesus.

The children were asked their opinion of the painting at the end of the session:

'They're sort of like joined together' (Madonna and Jesus)
'Because of where they found the picture'
'Because of the bright colours'
'The detail and how they made it'
'Because you can't see any of the wood'
'Because it's got Jesus and Jesus is special'
'How he [Raphael] put the halo'
'Happiness'
'Because of the pinks'

Without prompting one child said as they left, 'thank you that was good.'

- **The National Gallery artist's session:**

The National Gallery artist facilitated the rest of the session at the museum. Still focusing on the Madonna of the Pinks, she asked the children to act out

how they felt the figures in the painting felt. Again the children were keen to be involved and readily acted out the actions in the painting, such as, holding babies tenderly. The artist took the children into one of the Bowes Museum galleries housing the main museum collection; they used the same techniques with a variety of other paintings. The children were introduced to the activity that they would do at school that afternoon, making figurative sculptures. The children were asked to think about movement and how they could portray movement using static figures.

- **The afternoon session at the Primary School:**

As had been explained to them at the museum, the children were going to make 'armatures' - the structure on which a sculpture is built. In this case the children made wire figures which would then be covered with clay to form a sculpture. The emphasis was on action, but not on small, subtle gestures like that shown in the painting between a mother and child, the children were encouraged to do any action that they felt. The artist asked them to think about how the body is made as she showed them how they were going to make their wire 'skeleton.' They talked about bones and how they move so that they could pose their figure realistically. The children replicated different movements so that they could see how the various joints would work. To understand symmetry and proportion, the artist talked about how an average child's head will fit five times into their body and an adult's head would fit seven times into their body. The children enjoyed finding out if this theory was correct when it was tested on some volunteers. The children were very imaginative in making their figures, bending and shaping the wire until they were happy with the result. The teachers and museum staff helped them out with the more tricky aspects, for instance shaping the head and cutting the 'feet.'

After they had completed their figures, the children were sat down around the whiteboard for another story about a painting. The painting chosen for this session was 'Bacchus and Ariadne' by Titian. Similar themes from the session in the museum were covered to reinforce the concepts introduced, for example looking for clues in the painting, complementary colours, landscapes, looking at expression and movement. The children were able to recall a lot of these concepts, for instance the name of the blue paint (ultramarine). They were able to make their own links from characters in the painting to familiar stories, for instance there was a faun in the painting and the children recognised him from a similar character in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*.

After the talk, the children were divided into groups and asked to re-create frozen tableaux of the paintings.

To finish off, the children were asked what they had enjoyed most about the day. Most children liked 'all of it' but a few were more specific:

- 'I liked going to The Bowes Museum, I've never been to the top floor before'
- 'I liked where we had to copy off the posters'
- '[We] got to see the real Madonna of the Pinks'
- 'I saw the swan, I liked that, it catches the fish'
- 'Where we saw the painting.'

In her interview on 8th September 2005 The National Gallery Families and Outreach Manager described the interpretation process we observed at The Bowes Museum as the National Gallery's preferred strategy for facilitating access to paintings such as the Madonna of the Pinks. She thought that the way to use these paintings is to be group-specific, to get people to engage with the painting first-hand by looking at it and drawing from it in relation to aspects of it that would be familiar to them. This she felt, is a way of giving people ownership of the painting. This 'interactive looking' creates a catalyst which gives people a spark for further engagement.

4.5.2.2 The first observation of The Bowes Museum artist's classroom sessions at the primary school

This session was the fourth day of the project for the class.

- **The classroom:**

The classroom was bright and cheerful, if rather small for the twenty-seven 7-8 year-old children. It was laid out with three large tables, with eight to ten children around each. One of the boys with special needs was accompanied by a teaching assistant. The walls were covered with posters and children's work, including the oil-painting experiments that had been carried out the day before.

- **The teaching team:**

The class teacher was present, with the Bowes education officer, and the artist organised by The Bowes Museum (VH). The class teacher was in her second year of teaching at the school, having arrived as a newly qualified teacher. The Bowes artist had previously worked with the class teacher and six of the children in the class. This project was the second that had been carried out with The Bowes Museum.

Plate 4.5.2.a: Pupils working on their paintings



- **Resources:**

During the project, many resources were observed. The classroom was equipped with an interactive whiteboard, which was used frequently to show images such as artists' sketches, the Madonna of the Pinks, and other Madonna and Child paintings. There seemed to be ample supplies of good quality paper (some textured and not used before by the children), charcoal crayons, oil paint, brushes, and hardboard primed with white paint; the consumables were supplied from the project budget.

Plate 4.5.2.2b: Pupils at work



- **The session:**

At 9.30am the classroom was transformed into a life drawing class with the class observing and drawing a mother and her baby (this was the wife and child of the Director of The Bowes Museum, and the child's grandmother was also present). The aim of the first part of the morning was for the children to draw the mother and baby from life. The artist led the session, with support from the others. The artist used images of Raphael's sketches on the whiteboard to discuss how sketches can be used to draw from life, record movement, and plan a painting. She introduced the materials to be used (charcoal crayons/ pastels and textured paper) and discussed why these had been chosen. She demonstrated what she wanted the children to do and showed them how to do it. Throughout the day, she explained carefully and thoroughly what the children were to do, how they were to do it and how each element of the day's work built on the previous element and provided skills and experience for the next. Sessions were short and focused, with very clear directions as the children were shown specific skills. They were quite uneasy about sketching movement, which was a real challenge for some of the children. The careful planning was very impressive, and enabled all the children to succeed. The artist was aided by the Bowes education officer, who added additional information where it was needed, and who

supplied expertise about the paintings where it was relevant. The class teacher managed the class movement, noise, time and general ambience.

Plate 4.5.2.2c: Life models -mother and baby in the classroom



After 30 minutes, the artist changed the activity. She congratulated the children on their achievements ('improved since yesterday'), changed the position of the mother and baby and asked for a drawing on the same sheet, but in a different position. She pointed out how the baby (about 10 months) was moving around and discussed how this could be handled in the sketch.

At 10.25am, this session was concluded, the mother and baby thanked, and the children had their morning break.

Plate 4.5.2.2d: A pupil's sketch of the life models



Plate 4.5.2.2e: Pupils' sketches of the life models



Following the break, the children began to plan their oil painting which would be their own version of a Madonna and Child. They had by now carried out many pencil and charcoal sketches, and experimented with using oil paints, so they had an idea of what to do and the experience and the skills to carry it out. The artist explained how to do a light pencil outline on the hardboard to indicate where to paint. At lunchtime, the class teacher organised the class to clear up and go out for lunch.

Plate 4.5.2.2f: The class learn how to mix and apply 'skin-tones'



After lunch, on their return to the classroom, the children put on painting shirts and gathered round to see how to mix and apply 'skin-tones.' After reminding the class what they had done and why previously, the artist concentrated on three main points - the mixing of flesh-tones, the use of linseed oil, and blending on the wooden board. The children grasped these lessons and many were observed comparing their colour mix with their own skins, using the linseed oil and blending paints on the boards as the work progressed. The potential for mess and confusion was carefully defused through careful classroom and resource management: positioning of the palettes, the boards, the oil and the brushes. The mixing of skin-tones was a clear progression from the day before, when the children had learnt how to mix green and paint fabric. The use of tiny quantities of yellow and red was demonstrated, and the children found it worked well when they tried it themselves. They were well able to control the colours to get the effects they wanted; many children spent a considerable amount of time and effort discussing with each other whether they had achieved what they intended.

Plate 4.5.2.2g: Pupils mixing and applying 'skin-tones' to their paintings



To help reinforce the message about the range of skin-tones, the Bowes Museum education officer showed a number of Madonna and Child paintings on the white board, and these were discussed. Some complex ideas were introduced, such as the use of lighter and darker skin colour to show the solidity of a body (the term 'chiaroscuro' was not mentioned, but the idea was introduced), and the impact of the reflections of the surroundings on skin. The effect of light on skin, which becomes darker in shadow, was also introduced. During the painting period, one of the pupils asked how you 'could make it look 3D, like the Madonna.'

While the class was in session RCMG researchers interviewed some of the children in small groups in another room.

Plate 4.5.2.2h: Completed oil painting



Plate 4.5.2.2i: Completed oil painting



4.5.2.3 The second observation of The Bowes Museum artist's classroom sessions at the primary school and the final project presentation at The Bowes Museum

On RCMG's arrival at the school we noted that the armatures and oil paintings the children had made for the Madonna of the Pinks project were on display in the entrance of the school and in the classroom.

Plate 4.5.2.3a: Presenting the Madonna of the Pinks project to the rest of the school



Plate 4.5.2.3b: Examples of the pupils' oil paintings on display



- **The classroom session:**

The teacher, and the National Gallery freelance lecturer were present and the artist organised by The Bowes Museum led the class.

The artist set the children the task of doing a collage of the Madonna of the Pinks, for this task they were to work in teams. She instructed them on how they could use parts of photocopies of the original painting, photocopies of their own sketches and oil paintings (which were interpretations of the painting); they could also use paints and tissue paper.

Plate 4.5.2.3c: Making the Madonna of the Pinks collage



Plate 4.5.2.3d: Examples of the pupils' work



As this was the final task in the project's educational programme the artist aimed to draw on all the skills the children had learnt during the month of the project's duration - that is, sculptural skills and understanding of 3D, composition, complementary colours, and colour mixing. The artist discussed with the children the skills and knowledge they had learnt through the project and the children demonstrated very impressive factual knowledge with many children mentioning 'armatures', 'complementary colours', 'life drawing', 'lapis lazuli', and 'real gold' used in painting.

The artist emphasised that their collage should not be a copy of 'The Madonna of the Pinks' but their own 'interpretation' of the painting. Many of the children were observed taking a great deal of care over the texture and composition of their collage and some children were observed mixing paint to match their skin tone. Considerable progression was noted in the children's ability to synthesise skills learnt over the duration of the project and apply them to this new task.

While the class was at work RCMG researchers took some of the children into another room to interview them in small groups.

Plate 4.5.2.3e: An example of a completed collage



• **The children's presentation in the museum:**

After lunch the children were taken by coach to the museum where they were to give a special presentation about their participation in the project to invited guests. The presentation took place in the largest gallery on the second floor of the museum; chairs were laid out in the middle of the gallery to accommodate the audience. The setting was very grand and quite formal. There were a total of thirty-six adults in the audience including the

class teacher, class room assistant on her afternoon off, head teacher, The Bowes Museum artist and education officer, National Gallery freelance lecturer, and two RCMG researchers. The rest of the audience was made up of parents, extended family and friends of the pupils.

Plate 4.5.2.3f: Pupils from Class 3 at the Bowes Museum for their presentation



The entire class participated in the presentation with all pupils in view in front of the audience the whole time. In a line children took turns to read out what had been their favourite thing about working on the project (see Appendix B3 for the text of the presentation). There was a large range of responses, including comments relating to 'working with real artists,' 'going to a museum,' and seeing the Madonna of the Pinks.

Plate 4.5.2.3g: Pupils giving their presentation at the Bowes Museum



The children then got into smaller groups and each group did an individual presentation on a particular aspect of the work they had done. They explained what they had done and what they had learned. So for instance in relation to sculpture they explained how they had made 'armatures' first, then covered these with clay and what these were. The presentation was fun and inclusive; the children were very comfortable presenting their work and very proud of what they had done.

Each child was then presented with an individual named and signed certificate by the Bowes Museum education officer and the National Gallery freelance lecturer. Each child was applauded as they went up to collect their certificate.

Plate 4.5.2.3h: The individually named and signed certificates given to all the pupils



The school's head teacher then congratulated all who had taken part in the project.

The Bowes Museum Education Officer suggested that the children take their family and friends to see the Madonna of the Pinks and organised for them to do so. The children were very enthusiastic when showing the picture to their family and friends and were especially keen to have their photos taken with it.

All were then invited to a room downstairs in the museum to have food and drinks.

The final project event at The Bowes Museum had a significant sense of importance and a real celebratory atmosphere. This acted to give the

children a strong sense of achievement as their work was given value and significance through this public presentation in a grand setting and within a formalised framework. This event provided an important sense of culmination of the project and of bringing everyone together. The refreshments added to the celebratory feeling of the event in addition to facilitating a socialising opportunity and encouraging parents and friends of the children to come to the museum.

Plate 4.5.2.3i: The reception at the Bowes Museum



RCMG researchers interviewed The Bowes Museum artist and education officer, and the class teacher.

4.5.2.4 Final visit to the school and The Bowes Museum

On RCMG's final visit to the school we noted that the sculptures and oil paintings were still on display in the front entrance of the school and in the classroom.

We interviewed a selection of pupils and asked them to talk us through all the different tasks they had completed for the project.

The children were able to talk us through seven tasks they had completed for the project:

- A clay sculpture of a moving person
- A life drawing of a mother and child
- An ink stencil using string as the stencil

- a sketch interpretation of the Madonna of the Pinks which was a draft for their oil painting
- An oil painting interpretation of the Madonna of the Pinks
- A decorated folder in which to keep their oil painting
- A collage interpretation of the Madonna of the Pinks.

Plate 4.5.2.4a: Pupils with their clay sculptures



RCMG researchers interviewed The Bowes Museum artist and Education Officer, and the class teacher.

The outcomes of the project up to this point are discussed next. One year after the project, RCMG researchers observed some of the children when they visited the National Gallery in London on 15th June 2007 and a week later on 27th June the school was revisited. The outcomes of the project as observed one year after its completion will be discussed as the final section of the report on the second case study.

4.6 Outcomes of the project

4.6.1 Partnership

Despite the initial difficulties with organising the project, all of the project team described the ultimate strength of the partnership and team as being one of the most important outcomes of the project.

The class teacher:

'The relationship that has been formed between our school, Bowes Museum and the National Gallery from (the NG freelance lecturer), (the Bowes Education Officer) and myself, has just been great. If us three hadn't got on with each other and there had been any animosity between any of us and any sort of 'no you're not listening to me', and 'I don't want you to do this', and 'you're not coming in at this time', it just wouldn't have worked at all... I mean there was problems at the very beginning when we were talking about dates and times and things like that, and trying to fit into the school day and everything, but we were all willing to change.'

The teacher also identified that the strength of this collective partnership was beneficial to the children's learning experience:

'They know where everything is which is helpful and I think it's because other people were coming in, it was like someone else was coming into their space, so that was fine. And I just think the relationship between me, (the artist), (the Bowes Education Officer) and (the NG freelance lecturer) just clicked, it wasn't prescribed, I didn't say you go over there, you do that, I'll do this and we'll do that, we just did it. And I think it's because we've all worked in education that we know where to go and where to be and what to sort of do as it were.'

The teacher believed that the project had had a positive effect on the school's continuing relationship with The Bowes Museum. In addition, the teacher planned to take the children to the National Gallery the following year (15th June 2006) and believed that the continuing relationship between the three partners would be an important outcome for the project:

'I think the important thing that's come out of it is the fact that the linked relationships between myself and (the Bowes Education Officer) and (the NG freelance lecturer) have become that strong that we want to continue them, it's not something that we just, all three of us have said, it's far too frequent that you have a little project and it's a two week project, comes, goes, and that's it, and you think well that bore no impact on, it was good while it lasted, fantastic got some lush stuff, but it bore no impact on the future.'

The team members from the National Gallery considered that The Bowes Museum partnership had been a learning experience for them and acknowledged the external factors including lack of resources which had prevented a National Gallery staff member going up to County Durham during the planning stage of the project. There was recognition that such face-to-face meetings make the planning process easier and facilitate a better team and partnership relationship.

4.6.2 The project team's impression of the children's learning outcomes

- **Action, behaviour, progression:**

The class teacher believed that the children had progressed considerably through the project in their confidence to undertake a piece of creative work and their ability to concentrate:

'Some of the children in here find it exceptionally difficult to concentrate on something for more than about 15, 20 minutes. That's about the limit of their concentration really. However this time round, I think cos it's their piece of work, it's their idea, their basis, they've started it, they know what's going to happen and both (the artists) were very clear in saying it doesn't matter if it goes wrong, and because that risk free element was there, they just got on with it. And I think the fact that they knew it didn't matter if they made a mistake because it could be rectified, or if it went wrong anyway it doesn't matter cos that's part of the process and I think that's one of the most important things. The fact that they knew they couldn't make a mistake and because they weren't fearful of it, they just did it and we can see the results there, you know, fantastic. I think the biggest impact on them has been realising that they're capable of doing it. I think that's been the biggest thing, the 'I can' factor, 'gosh I can actually do that', 'I can do that.'

The teacher gave the specific example of one of the children in her class with special needs who did things which were unusual for him during the project, such as, being on task for long periods of time:

'...[he's] got physical difficulties in his hands, he's got what's called a collapsed tripart, so he cannot hold a pencil properly, he won't be able to manipulate things, he has very poor fine motor skills and he sat and got the paint brush and sat for 25 minutes and painted a picture and he was just quite happily painting and I was amazed, I sat back and it's the first time in two years, cos I've had (this child) for two years, that I've actually sat there and saw him just get on with something. And I just didn't say anything to him and he got on with it and he was explaining I'm going to put that and that together, they're complementary colours, I'm going to make that that colour and that that colour and just a tiny bit of blue and he did a tiny bit of blue.'

The teacher mentioned a change in behaviour of another boy in the class who was very quiet but during the project spoke more than usual:

'I was very surprised at the things that he came out with. And the words and he was just talking away and I said to him 'do you know what the nicest thing about this project's been for me? Hearing your voice', and he just looked at me and went 'ha-ha-ha' and carried on and I thought but it's so true, because there are children in here who'd start talking about things that I would never have heard before and it's given me a chance to sit back and listen, to them and watch them and hear them in talking to each other and engaging with each other.'

The Bowes Museum Education Officer believed that there had been a significant progression in the children's drawing skills over the period of the project especially in relation to understanding perspective and composition:

'It's quite interesting particularly with the drawings the children did of the mother and child, the first day that we actually worked on it, we just asked them for the last bit to do a sketch of they thought looking at the different pictures of Madonna and Child that we could provide them with, to do a quick sketch of their own Madonna and Child that they composed themselves. They just had no idea about body parts, how to compose a picture, how to draw figures and sizes and all sorts of different aspects, they had kind of banana bodies and different things like that. But [later] when we actually did the sketches with the [real] child, there was such a difference in the way that the children actually sketched, you could see that they were thinking very carefully about proportion, how body parts actually sit together, where arms come out of elbows and of shoulders and that kind of thing. They were just, you know, thinking very carefully about what they were actually sketching, and they were thinking about where the child sat in relation to the mother. So it made quite a big difference and you could see that. The hard bit then was trying to get them to actually relate their first picture the picture they'd done as a sketch into a final piece. But as soon as you started saying to them we'll take this bit and have you looked at how you've actually done that. The children actually then made the next link into actually producing their oil painting which showed a mother and child sitting.'

The Bowes Museum artist also noticed a progression in the children's skills over the period of the project:

'I think there is definitely a change in their skills; I think what they learnt through the practical things that we did using all the paints and different things like that. I think there was definitely a change there; I mean there's a clear change between just when we did the life-drawing sessions, the day before I did some work where I asked them to plan what they would do if they were going to [draw] your own mother and child. And they planned that and then the next time I was in we did life-drawing and I asked them to plan it again and you could see a huge difference in development between the first one, to once they'd done the life-drawing, the second one.'

- **Attitudes and values:**

The teacher also believed that as a result of an improvement in their visual literacy skills they were more likely to appreciate art:

'In terms of appreciation, they're more accepting of pieces of art now, last week we started some stuff on Kandinsky and they were much more 'oh well look at all the colour' and stuff and they weren't looking at the madness of it all, they didn't look at the abstractness of it, they were now looking at colour and line and shape.'

The teacher believed that the children's attitude to art had changed not just because they had improved visual literacy skills but that this in turn had given them more confidence to develop and express their own opinion about the art they saw:

'When we were at the museum, they looked at a massive range of paintings... and I asked the children, I said to them who likes this painting and some of them put their hand up and still to this day some of them will say 'I don't like that', some of them don't like 'The Madonna of the Pinks', they just don't like the painting. And I think they wouldn't have said that at one point, they'd have all said 'oh yeah it's really nice Miss', because they thought I liked it. Whereas now they've started to form their own opinions about things which, especially children this age, find so difficult cos they just want to go with their peers. And now they will stand their ground and say 'well no I don't like it because of that, or that, or that' and we've looked at other paintings, with my art class we're looking at some Kandinskys and things and they're starting to make judgements about things. They sat there and they said 'there are complementary colours in that one.'

- **Enjoyment, inspiration, creativity:**

The Education Officer believed that the most significant thing about the project for the children was their enjoyment and the fact that they had been able to do things they wouldn't usually do:

'I just think sheer enjoyment, they really enjoyed trying all the different materials and the different techniques that they would never get the chance to do normally. You could just see that the children kind of respecting [the oil paints] and trying to be very careful with them and then realising just how differently the actual paint responded. And they kept talking about how special it was and how you wouldn't normally work with these kind of things. They just really seemed to enjoy it; I think it made quite a big impact on them.'

The artist believed that the fact the children were encouraged to think for themselves about the Madonna of the Pinks and their interpretation of it led to the children being inspired:

'I think probably inspiration was quite a big part of what they were doing cos they had to really understand it to be inspired by it, to interpret it in their own way. So I think that idea of inspiration, you know, to think of new things and, so I think that was quite, when I was working with them anyway, I tried to really get them to think about it and think about what they were doing. It wasn't just about copying something or learning something and then just repeating it, you know, it was about them thinking about it as well.'

- **Knowledge and understanding:**

The teacher believed that the children had gained a considerable increase in their knowledge and understanding as a result of the project:

'I think they have a vast knowledge now, a vast knowledge and understanding of a lot of different techniques, genres, all sorts of stuff, medium, the whole works.'

- **Skills and the curriculum:**

The teacher was particularly impressed that during the project the class had covered the majority of the KS2 Art curriculum. Despite noting many learning outcomes it was the increase in skill that for her was the most important learning outcome:

'They've certainly learnt new skills, from my point of view as a teacher, that's probably one of the most important things because they have covered the whole of the key stage two curriculum in the space of three weeks, which for me as art coordinator is fantastic cos it means that I've got less of a job to do later on in school life, which is quite nice.'

4.6.3 The children's learning outcomes according to the children during the project

- **Action, behaviour, progression:**

Children discussed how challenging the life drawing session had been for them when they had to draw a 'real' mother and baby. In this session the artist had encouraged them to draw quick sketches - 'impressions' - to deal with the fact that the baby was moving:

'It was quite difficult cos I didn't know what really to do when she moved, I didn't know to put another baby here, the mum's foot down here and him coming up here.'

Another child:

'I don't really know cos I haven't been sketching with, well I have been sketching with pencils but not like not very quick, I don't normally sketch quick. This is probably the quickest sketch I've ever done.'

But despite the children's anxiety about 'doing it wrong' they also identified that this was how Raphael himself had done it too:

'I think he must have done some, he might have done a few mistakes, but then like covered, like made them into something else or something like that. And he might have practised before he did it'.

Another child especially liked the challenging element of this task, when asked what had been his favourite bit he said:

'And I like trying, I like when you have to try and draw the baby when it's moving'. Because you get to keep changing it. And it feels like you're drawing the Madonna of the Pinks.'

- **Enjoyment, inspiration, creativity:**

Some children connected with the painting simply because they enjoyed working with it:

'It was fun and we put [the oil paintings] in a special frames and they look really good.'

Another child:

'Everything but not as much as I liked getting messy. Because I love getting messy.'

Other children were inspired by the painting because it connected with their personal experience:

'When you did your painting, you did something that you made yours very different from other people cos you put something on it, what did you put on yours?'

Sort of willow and grass in a garden. Cos what happened was in my old house we used to have this garden with a willow arbour in it and I remember when I was young my mum with my brother, when my brother was young my mum used to sit him there holding him.'

Plate 4.6.3a: Pupils hard at work



- **Knowledge and understanding:**

The pupils were able to recount an impressive amount of facts about the painting including understanding the evidence that it was not a fake:

'The painting was done by Raphael, it was found in, I think it was the loft of a castle, yeah it was an attic or a loft. And I think some people found it and then this man from the National Gallery came. They scanned it to see if it was a copy... the way he drew it was like a signature. It wasn't a copy.'

Another child:

'We went to The Bowes Museum and saw 'The Madonna of the Pinks'. It's a famous painting. It's a very famous painting by Raphael.

Why is it so famous?

Because it's old and Raphael's famous.

How old is it then, is it about 20 years old?

500 years or something. Yeah it was painted in 1507, 1506-1507. And it was worth £22 million, no £35m to keep it in England.'

A number of the children were surprised by how small the painting is:

'I never knew it was going to be that small. Yeah I'd think it was huge, but then it was just a tiny little picture... it was quite interesting cos if I would have had that in my room I would have had that one.'

The children were particularly impressed by the ultramarine paint:

'It was painted on wood and it was painted with oil. With oil paints. And using very expensive paint called... And it was more expensive than real gold. It's a type of bluey. [Which part of the world did it come from?] Greece. It came from, Iraq, Afghanistan.'

Another child liked it:

'Cos it's special. Because it's very colourful and sometimes a bit, and it has the blue and the orange together and it looks quite nice... they're very special, especially the blue. It cost more than the gold. Yeah and it was found, you had to go down into a mine across the sea down into a mine.'

- **Skills:**

Talking to the children it was clear that visual literacy skills were a major learning outcome of the project. The children were especially taken with their new knowledge of complementary colours:

'It had blue and, it had blue and orange together... blue and orange together they look more... Make each other look bright... They're more than like, more orange, more blue... They're complementary'

Another child had learnt:

'And when she told us about the complementary colours. Well they sort of like make one look brighter than the other and well they both look brighter than each other'.

And another child was able to express his appreciation of the painting in terms of the complementary colours within it:

'Yeah I like it, yeah. It's nice and bright. Nice colours, it's the blue and orange looks bright. And it's quite a nice painting.'

A number of children were very thoughtful about the development of their skills in relation to painting with oil paints:

'What sort of paints have you painted with before?

Normal paint'.

So was it easier to mix the colours than with poster paint or was it different?

Yeah. Easier. It was easier to mix it with oil paint. Because when you put the linseed oil on it you could mix them together a bit easier.'

Another child:

'Yeah and you don't need much of the red to make the yellow go orange.'

Another child:

'Well it was quite hard painting with it cos if you had quite a lot on your brush it still wouldn't do the actual pattern, it would just do the pattern on the paper and it wouldn't actually fill the whole page up, so you have to get more paint on your brush to paint it.'

Another child:

'You had to get the right amount of Linseed oil cos if you got too much it would just drip off your brush.'

4.6.4 The children's learning outcomes according to the children after the project was finished (Year one)

We interviewed the children about their experiences and the work they had completed two weeks after the project had finished. The children were very articulate about the range of things they had achieved and learnt. We invited each child we interviewed to talk us through the various tasks they had undertaken and which aspects they had enjoyed best:

'First of all we started with wire and then did it to make an armature, and then we added clay to make it more. We kept adding it on until it looked like a proper man. And then we painted our sculptures in complementary colours.'

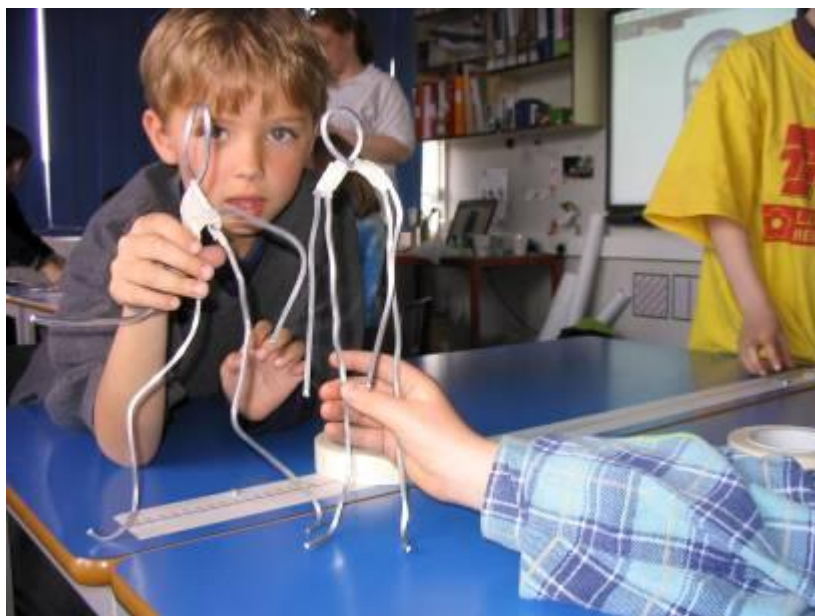
Had you decided what it was going to be?'

A man running and playing football and kicking a ball.

And what do you feel about it now it's complete?

'Well I think it's quite good because I thought it would, like you wouldn't need an armature at the start that would just make the clay' ... it was quite fun, it was like stopping someone in mid jump really and making a sculpture of them.'

Plate 4.6.4a: Making the wire armatures for the clay sculpture



The same boy was also very reflective about the life drawing exercise he did:

'Well we were doing a quick sketch of [the baby and mother] and we drew pictures of them, except every time they moved we had to change it if we were on the bit where they moved, so we had to change it. It was hard. I kept having to alter it.'

So what did you think it gave you a sense of when you started doing that, it's a little bit like the piece of sculpture that you did?

'Well it taught us how to like alter your drawings when you'd done them to make them look, instead of starting again on it, just alter it to a different.'

This boy was able to express his individuality through his oil painting which was very different to the other children's:

'Just wanted it to look different because everyone else was doing Mary and Jesus on their lap and I wanted to just change it to a different.'

Plate 4.6.4b: A very different interpretation of the mother and child in oils



Overall the boy felt he had achieved a great deal:

'How did you feel about what you've produced there?

'I think I've done well actually, I didn't think I could do that well in the sculpture though but did.

Another group of boys had displayed remarkable team working skills in a task where they had worked in teams to interpret the Madonna of the Pinks in a collage. The children were particularly inspired by thinking about the land that can be seen in the view from the window in the painting:

'Well we made a plan and we did ours on hills and things. And we decided to put some angels on. Then we wanted to be a little bit different so we could be outside.

So tell me why it was that you decided to do it outside?

Well we just wanted to be a bit different.

So who decided you wanted to be a bit different?

Well all of us really.

Well I decided I wanted to be outside.

My idea to be next to a lake and hills.

And where did you get the idea from?

Well I just thought...

It looks quite nice behind there.

Sort of the view outside the window.

The window of the Madonna of the Pinks, there's a window and you can see hills and castle.

It's sort of like in the sunset

It's sort of like a beachy sort of place.

We were going to do a house but it was too small.

Which was their house...

And who's that?

Joseph.

Plate 4.6.4c: An interpretation of the Madonna of the Pinks in collage



The pupils connected with the project through a variety of personal interests, one child used his interest in football to make the task he was doing more pertinent to his individual interests:

'Can you tell us what kind of movement has your sculpture got?

He's taking a penalty.

And what's that written on his front, what team is he from?

Newcastle.

Why isn't he in black and white then?

Cos we were only allowed to use complementary colours.

So who's that, is that Shearer?

Yeah. With the wrong number

You've given him the wrong number?

On purpose

Why on purpose?

Well it's my favourite number. Well my birthday's on that day.'

Plate 4.6.4c: Shaping the wire to make the armature for the clay sculpture



4.6.5 The context of the painting and the pupils' learning outcomes

4.6.5.1 The importance of mediation and the 'specialness' of the painting

All of the project team members noted the importance of the 'special' nature of the painting to the increased impact of this project on the children. The 'specialness' of the painting was communicated in a number of ways. It was 'special' at the simplest level because the children had access to a 'real' painting. For instance, the class teacher commented:

'I think having been, going and actually seeing it in front of them was one of the major factors, because they suddenly got an understanding.'

In the mediation provided by the National Gallery staff, much was made of the 'special' nature of the painting as it was used in its original context as a private devotional tool, also the fame and skill of Raphael, the regard in which the painting is held, the story of the 'discovery' of the painting, and how expensive it was for the National Gallery ('the country') to buy.

The Bowes Museum artist believed that the 'special' nature of the painting as it was communicated to the children gave them a sense of privilege in being able to access it and therefore increased its impact:

'I think because it was put across to them as a very special sort of private painting and also a very influential and the painter and everything like that.'

However, the artist went on to comment in such a way that raises the question of whether the increased impact on the children was due to the 'special' nature of the painting or the expertise of the mediation:

'If it had been another painting... but then again I suppose all paintings are special aren't they, so any painting could have been put across in that way.'

Nevertheless, the special, private nature of the painting as communicated in the interpretation had obviously had an impact on one girl who said she would have the picture in her bedroom:

'Well it was quite interesting cos if I would have had that in my room I would have had that one. Cos it's special.'

The class teacher also commented that the quality of the facilitation was crucial to the children's experience:

'So the mediation is important?'

I think it has to be, it has to be with children that age cos they have no concept of, well they just don't have any concept of paintings. I don't think they have any concept of what it is in front of them; they need it explained to them. It's like anything else; if you give them a plant and they wouldn't understand the context of it until you explain it to them. And I think with children, especially this age, they need to have that mediation to appreciate what is there.'

The Bowes Museum education officer commented that the intensity of the facilitation had given the children a sense of ownership towards the painting which she felt had increased their involvement and confidence in the museum as well:

'I think cos the kids feel like they've got some ownership on that painting now. The first day we were here, I introduced the museum and said, you know, have you been to the museum before, what do you know about the museum, no one had been here before. And... kept saying can we go and see the Madonna of the Pinks yet, they were dying to see it. So I think they feel, particularly after doing lot of work on it, they've got some ownership on it, so for them to go and show their parents the picture, it's special.'

4.6.5.2 The age of the painting and its relevance to the children

The project team did not believe that the age of the painting meant that it was more difficult to relate to for the children. The team felt that because the subject of the painting is universal it is easy for people from all backgrounds to relate to. For instance, The Bowes Museum artist commented that:

'I think that with it being obviously an older painting, sometimes it is difficult for children to relate to older works, just because of heavy style and things like that. But because it's quite representational of mother and child and that's a really important relationship for them at that

age, I think the Madonna of the Pinks in particular was something that they could sort of relate to. And we looked at how the painting portrayed that relationship, how they were looking at each other and their positions with each other and their interaction within the painting. So it's not just what the painting looks like on the surface, it's also about the interaction in the painting and what's happening and things, getting them to think a little bit more about just looking past the surface if you like.'

4.6.5.3 Cultural entitlement

The project team felt that participation in the project had given the children an increased knowledge of and confidence in visiting museums. In addition, they felt there had been a 'flow on' effect from the project such that it had also brought other members of the community associated with the children into the museum and that this contact would continue.

The Bowes Museum Education Officer believed that there had been a significant effect on the children's attitude to the museum:

'So you know, they come up and tell you things and they just chat to you like you're an everyday person, so I think they kind of feel that they can come into the museum, particularly if I'm here. I've said to them if you want to come and have a look round then please do. I think that's opened that up as well so they feel a bit of ownership. A lot of parents have said to me today, 'it's so nice for you to have us back here to come and see the museum and the children's work at the museum.'

The Education Officer also felt that attendance at the museum for the final project presentation would encourage parents to come back with their children:

'...the children are just that little bit further out than the immediate Barnard Castle and quite a few of those children are bussed into school, so it's getting into the very outskirts of the surrounding area and getting them back into the museum. And just from having the amount of parents that turned up here for the final presentation, people were coming up to me afterwards and saying 'thank you for letting us come, it's been great, we've never got to come before and that sort of thing.'

The teacher described the children as being unfamiliar with art galleries. That only 'eight or nine' of them would have been to The Bowes Museum with their parents 'but the rest of them they haven't got time, they're too busy working on the farm its just not part of their life.'

She felt that participation in this project would have substantially increased their confidence in accessing museums and especially that their may be increased use of The Bowes Museum as a result of the parents attending the final project presentation at the museum:

'I think because the presentation was over there, I think a lot of the parents have sort of woken up to it all and thought oh well actually it's accessible and there is stuff here that the kids will enjoy'. I think [the parents] were all a bit surprised by the amount that they'd done and the amount of input they had... one mum works here and she was saying that [her son] was chattering on about can we go to the Bowes Museum, I want to go and see this, this, this and this. And that's a miracle for [him] really cos, you know, ordinarily if it didn't involve a computer, he doesn't care.'

However, in the interview conducted with the teacher after the project had finished she felt unable to comment about the impact on the children in terms of their future confidence in visiting The Bowes Museum. She did believe that the trip to the National Gallery in London planned for June 2006 would have a particularly strong impact because of the novelty of going to London for these rurally based children:

'I don't know I've never taken them to a museum before and I think because we are so close to it, I think a lot of the children had already been to the Bowes. I think the impact on some of them, I think they were quite awestruck, some of them were just like 'oh there's lots of paintings around and I think it was very similar to what they expected it to be', but it's quite a small museum, it's not bigger than the places they will have been before, like the Metro Centre, for example. I know it's not a good example but it's a big space, so it's a similar sort of scale. We'll probably take them to London next year to the National Gallery because of the project, I think that impact will be huge and I think their whole entire attitude to going there, they're very excited about it.'

4.7 Conclusions

'What do young people gain from engagement with paintings, using the Madonna of the Pinks as a specific example?'

This was developed as follows:

- Is a historic painting such as the Madonna of the Pinks relevant to audiences today, especially young audiences?
- How can the learning outcomes of engagement with the Madonna of the Pinks be characterised? How far is the learning collection or museum-related, and how far on other, more personal aspects?
- Which are the most significant learning outcomes to the participants – inspiration, new knowledge or skills, change in values, intentions to do new things? How do these outcomes for participants relate to the institutional desires to develop new audiences?
- Is the Madonna of the Pinks meaningful and relevant across cultures and ethnicities?

- When young people are unfamiliar with art galleries, does engagement with one painting (Madonna of the Pinks) open up the possibility of engagement with other paintings and art galleries in the short-term and the long-term? How does this work with vulnerable young people?

4.7.1 Summary of key areas for analysis and discussion in final report

- **Impact of 'The Madonna of the Pinks' on young people:**
 - Significance of historic context of painting
 - Young people's learning outcomes
 - Effects of museum provided information and/ or facilitation
 - Effects of personal contexts
 - Potential for long term impact?
- **Impact of 'The Madonna of the Pinks' on people in general:**
 - Adult learning outcomes
 - Effects of museum provided information and/ or facilitation
 - Effects of personal contexts.
- **Audience development:**
 - Implications of young people findings
 - Implications of adult findings.
- **Partnerships:**
 - Institutional issues and impact
 - Planning process
 - Methods of facilitation.

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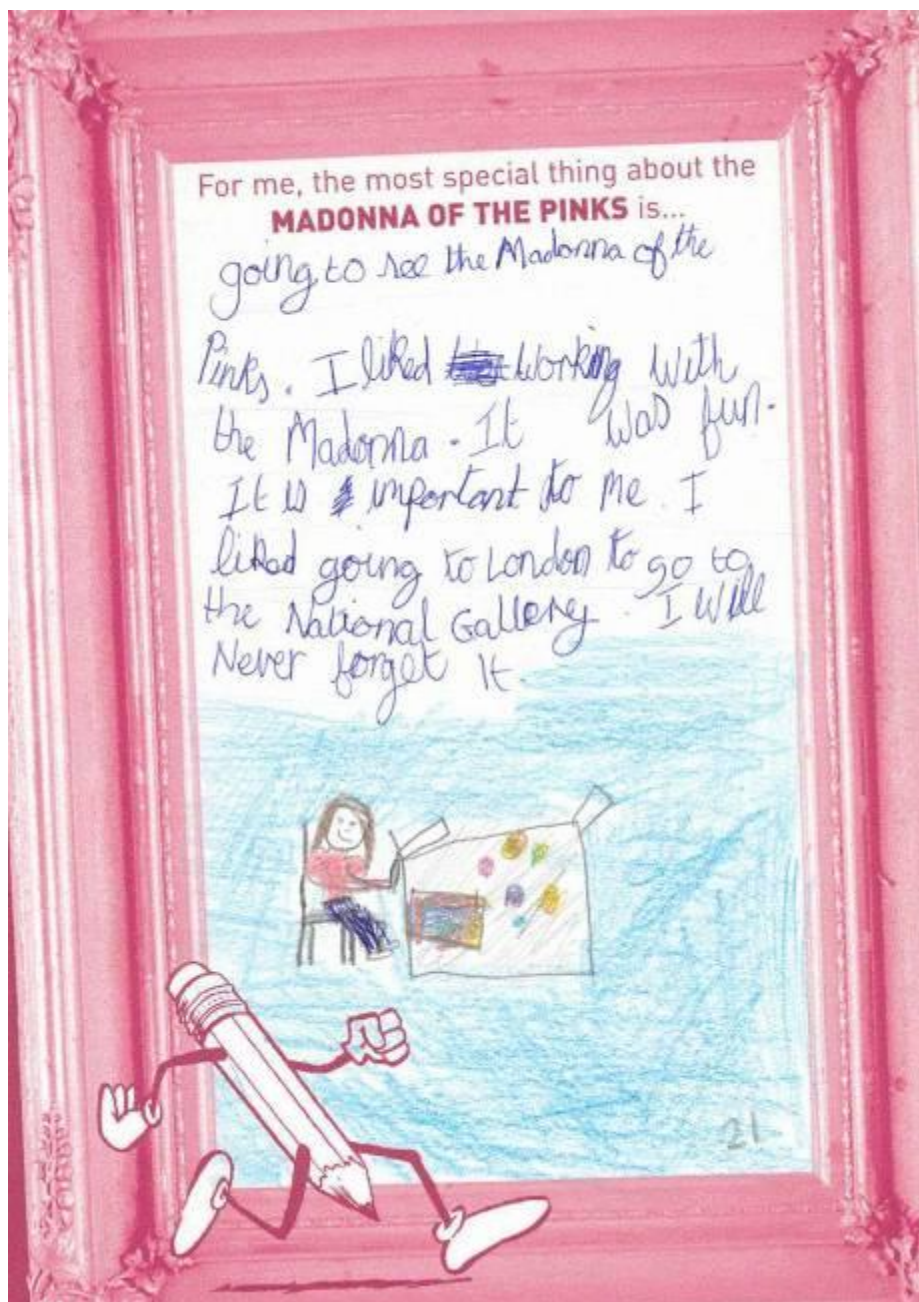
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Part 4: The second case study

Longer term impact on the
Teesdale Primary School: Visit to the
National Gallery and follow up visit
to the school a year later



PART 4: THE SECOND CASE STUDY

LONGER TERM IMPACT ON THE TEESDALE PRIMARY SCHOOL: VISIT TO THE NATIONAL GALLERY AND FOLLOW UP VISIT TO THE SCHOOL A YEAR LATER

4.8 Introduction

This section reports on the visit by the Teesdale Primary School to the National Gallery, London on the 15th June 2006 to see the Madonna of the Pinks. The visit was observed by two researchers from RCMG, and a follow-up visit was made by the same researchers to the Primary School in County Durham a week later on 27th June 2006. The intention was to observe the longer term impact on the pupils of engaging with the Madonna of the Pinks, almost a year after their initial contact with the painting.

4.8.1 The research context

The primary school had previously visited the Bowes Museum in June 2005 to see the Madonna of the Pinks and had undertaken in a series of workshops around the painting facilitated by the Bowes Museum and the National Gallery. The visit to the Bowes Museum and follow-up work in the classroom was observed by RCMG, and interviews were carried out with the project team, museum education staff, teachers and pupils.

This research in June 2006 involved observation of the visit to the National Gallery and a visit to the school a week later. There was also the opportunity to discuss the engagement with the Madonna of the Pinks with the whole class who had worked on the Madonna of the Pinks during the visit to the school. Since the project in 2005 the class members had been separated into two classes but they were brought together for our visit. To capture the experiences of the class as a whole, we asked the pupils to complete response cards reflecting on their experience of the Madonna of the Pinks.

In-depth interviews were held with the class teacher who had played an instrumental role in the project and the visit to London, and a selection of pupils who had and who had not been to London. These interviews were recorded and transcribed, although difficulties with the recording machine meant that a full transcript of the interviews was not possible.

The research process is summarised in Table 4.8.1a below.

Table 4.8.1a: Research methods, Middleton-in-Teesdale Primary School 15th & 27th June 2006

Date	Activity	RCMG Researchers	Research methods
15 06 2006	Primary school visit to the National Gallery, London	JD CJ	Observation
27 06 2006	Visit to the primary school	JD CJ	Discussion with two classes (T1 and T2) about the Madonna of the Pinks Response cards Interviews with pupils who did, and did not, visit the National Gallery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lucy* • Harry* • Jenny* • Sophie* • Luke* • Poppy* • Jack* Interview with the class teacher

4.8.2 The organisation of the London trip

The trip to London was organised by the class teacher, to take the pupils to see the Madonna of the Pinks on display at the National Gallery. Since the project with the Madonna of the Pinks, this class had been separated into two separate classes but they were brought together for the trip. Talking to the teachers on the day of the visit (15th June 2006) it was clear that the visit to London was a rare experience for the children. The school had been to London before to visit the Millennium Dome but it was very expensive so they could not do it very often (it had cost £40 for each parent and the school had raised the rest of the money). Whilst they were in London they also walked down Whitehall to do some sight-seeing and went on the London Eye.

Plate 4.8.2a: Pupils and teachers outside the National Gallery



The significance of the experience for the pupils was readily described by the teacher when we interviewed her at the school on the 27th June. It was a unique experience in a very unfamiliar social environment. Generally, these pupils rarely leave their local area, tending to travel no further than the largest local towns such as Barnard Castle or Darlington. Even when they go on holiday they tend to visit similar places like Darlington. One reason for this was the relatively 'narrow' horizons of families in the area:

'...they're very insular kind of people... without being disparaging of them [they are] a typical village community and whilst we get a lot of what they call outsiders in [there is] a lot less respect for those people and whether those people have come in and they've been in this village for 25 years [they are still seen as outsiders].' (Class teacher)

A visit to London was possibly outside the experience of the parents as much as their children, as was indicated by an extreme concern for the children's safety. Secondly the planning for the trip came after the London bombings on 7th July 2005 (the initial letter had been sent out in October 2005) so parents were even more concerned about sending their children to London and some pulled out. As the teacher explained, parents only see the dangerous side of London '*not the everyday sort of stuff.*' Those children who were allowed to go to London were mainly from families which could be described as 'outsiders' although 3 or 4 children who were 'Middleton-born' were also allowed to go on the trip. The teacher felt this was because their parents had a good relationship with the school and trusted the teachers, or they had personal experiences of visiting London. These parents were described as more 'open' to experiences but the teacher also felt that it was down to their faith in her.

4.9 Description of the two visits

4.9.1 The visit to the National Gallery, 15th June 2006

The school arrived at the National Gallery at lunchtime and decided to eat their lunch on the steps leading down to Trafalgar Square. The weather was warm and sunny with a slight breeze. Talking to the pupils it emerged that a few of them had been to London before or used to live there, but most had never been. There were sixteen pupils in the group and five teachers to accompany them.

After lunch they met the National Gallery freelance lecturer who had worked with the group at the Bowes Museum at the Orange Street entrance to begin their tour of the National Gallery. The tour started in the Gavon Room with an introduction to the National Gallery and the lecturer told the pupils that they were going to see lots of different paintings, some which they had seen before. She asked the children how many paintings they thought were in the gallery. The children's answers ranged from 'millions' to 'hundred thousand' to 'five hundred.' The lecturer reminded them of the rules they observed whilst at the Bowes Museum and the children were good at remembering them; to 'be quiet', 'don't touch the paintings' and 'don't run.' She asked them if they remembered why they shouldn't touch the paintings. One child thought it was because 'they might smudge' but others knew that it was because they were 'old.' They were told that the paintings in the National Gallery were aged from 100 to 700 years old. The lecturer linked the visit back to their visit to the Bowes saying that they were going to explore, tell stories and be like art detectives.

4.9.2 Exploring the National Gallery

As the children walked through the gallery they were able to see a real artist at work, making a copy of one of the paintings (Plate 4.9.2a). As they stood round the artist, the children were encouraged to talk about what they could see in the picture. The lecturer pointed out the palette of colour that the artist was using and talked about the smell of the oil paint. She asked them what the boy was holding and one boy read from the label that it was an eel. The lecturer asked them not to read the labels but instead look for themselves and try to understand what is happening in the painting. She encouraged them to think for themselves; 'We're being art detectives.'

Plate 4.9.2a: A boy and a girl with a cat and an eel by Judith Leyster (1609-1660)



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The next painting stood in a circular intersection where four corridors met, one of a series of four by Joachim Beuckelaer (16th century, Plate 4.9.2b).

It was quite a noisy part of the gallery, being a thoroughfare for visitors and it was difficult at times to hear the lecturer and the children's responses. The lecturer asked the children lots of questions about the content of the painting, for instance was it an indoor or an outdoor painting? They knew it was outside because they could see trees, a gate and a stream which are 'outdoor things.' The lecturer talked about the fruit and vegetables on display and compared what they had then with the food we have now – she talked about how there are no bananas or potatoes because these had not been discovered at the time. At this point a noisy adult group walked past so it was very hard to hear the discussion.

The lecturer explained that the painting was set in Antwerp in Belgium. The children were asked if they remembered the colours that they looked at in school – one pupil remembered the lapis lazuli and they also remembered the concept of complementary colours. They were able to see how the artist had put vegetables together to make them stand out, the red and the green for example. They also saw how the artist had placed some vegetables in bowls and baskets to show how important they are. The lecturer then asked them to think about what the lady in yellow is doing – is she buying or selling vegetables and how could they find out? They would use their 'detective skills' – she asked them to look closely at what people are doing in the picture, what can their postures tell us? Also she got the children to compare their costumes, to think about whose costume is grander and more special? The children thought that the lady in yellow was grander because of the 'frills

on her collar' and she had a 'cap on her head.' The lecturer linked this lady to another of the pictures in the series. She told the children that the lady in the yellow dress was a cook in a grand house in Antwerp. The children pointed out types of food they could see which included fish, eggs, duck, rabbit and bread.

Plate 4.9.2b: *The Four Elements: Earth A Fruit and Vegetable Market with the Flight into Egypt in the Background* (1569) by Joachim Beuckelaer



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The children were very good at finding small details in the paintings, for example they noticed the 'horse' going over the bridge in the background of the 'Earth' painting. When asked why it was small they said it was because "it was far away", showing their understanding of perspective. Although it was donkey rather than a horse, the lecturer explained to them how it was an allusion to the biblical story of Mary and Joseph's flight into Egypt. She described how each of the four paintings by Beuckelaer had a story hidden within them, although they did not know what all of them meant. The paintings also had a particular theme which she got the children to think about by asking them where things grow (earth), where do they come from (water), where do birds fly (air) and how is food cooked in a kitchen (fire). One 8-year old boy correctly guessed that these are the four 'elements.'

4.9.3 Two familiar paintings

Moving on through the gallery, the children were taken to see a painting that they recognised from their work with the lecturer in the Summer of 2005. At

the time they had only seen a copy of *Bacchus and Ariadne* but now they were able to see the real thing.

The lecturer asked the children what they remembered about the painting. They remembered that the lady was saying 'stop' because somebody 'went off in a boat' which they could see in the distance. They talked about how the scene would have been very noisy because of the people carrying instruments like 'cymbals' and a 'tambourine.' They could see examples of complementary colours like blue and orange, they remembered that purple and yellow are also examples of this. The children had keen eyes and one girl saw that there was a man playing a horn 'see that donkey, the man behind it.' None of the teachers were able to spot this until she pointed it out to them. They also saw the circle of stars like a 'halo' in the sky and one child called it 'the king's stars.' The lecturer reminded them that the island was called Naxos and encouraged the children to look at the moment of the people in the painting – 'they're dancing,' 'having a party.'

Plate 4.9.3a: *Bacchus and Ariadne* (1520-3) by Titian



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They remembered that the man - one child remembered his name was Bacchus - jumping off the carriage was a god because of the halo of leaves, and one child observed that the halo of stars was also above his head. They noticed that there was a 'faun' in the picture and 'one man's wearing a snake' so lots of noise and drama. The lecturer also explained to them how the painter had left his name on the picture written on the goblet in the bottom left hand corner in Latin. They remembered that Ariadne's husband Theseus was on the boat and that she had helped him to escape the Minotaur with a ball of string, and that he had abandoned her on the island. One child asked if Theseus had 'run off because he's scared of them (Bacchus)?' and the lecturer encouraged them to find why Theseus had left

when they returned to school especially if they liked horrid endings to stories. The lecturer reminded them that Ariadne and Bacchus had fallen in love and because she was a mortal, Bacchus had made her Queen of the heavens. The children noticed the lapis lazuli used in the painting and how it stood out; the lecturer asked if they remembered how to make it and one child remembered that you had to 'crush the stone' and make it into a powder. They had to mix it not with 'water' or with 'wine' but with 'oil' and one boy remembered that its name was 'ultramarine.'

The group quickly moved on to the corner of the gallery where the Madonna of the Pinks is displayed.

Plate 4.9.3b: *The Madonna of the Pinks* (1506-7) by Raphael



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When the children saw the Madonna their faces immediately lit up with smiles and wonder. Most of them were happy and surprised to see the painting; when asked, one child said they were surprised because they 'forgot it was so small.' The lecturer asked them why it was so small and they remembered that it was for 'a widow' and it would have been in a little book. They remembered that the Madonna was passing pinks to Jesus as a symbol of love; they remembered that her dress was painted in ultramarine and they pointed out the delicate halo around her head. The children commented that 'you can hardly see' Jesus' halo. They mentioned the castle in the background and the bed behind her – the 'curtains hang down' – the tiny animals in the distance 'on the hill'. One of the children asked the lecturer 'how come it's so small but it stands out?' First she asked the children to think

about this and they suggested it stood out because of the big frame or the fact it was really precious. The lecturer suggested that it was because they were familiar with the picture and to them it was like an old friend. The children agreed with this and they genuinely were excited to see the painting again.

4.9.4 Two new paintings

Leaving the Madonna of the Pinks, as the children walked through the gallery the lecturer asked them what it reminded them of. One said it was like a 'cathedral' and another like a 'church.' The lecturer told them that the part of the gallery they were in had purposely been built to look like a church in the 'olden days' with columns. The children were remarkably quiet and well-behaved as they walked through the gallery, opening doors for their teachers and for other visitors.

When they reached the painting of *St Michael Triumphant over the Devil* (15th century, Plate 4.9.4a) the lecturer gathered them around and asked them to imagine what it would have been like in a church in the olden days. The children responded that it would have been dark and lit with candles. When asked what stood out on this next painting immediately the children said 'the gold' especially because it would have been lit by candles. The lecturer asked if they thought it was real or pretend gold; after the children had voted (hands went up for both possible answers) she told them that it was both. The armour was painted in colours to look like gold but the background was real gold leaf. Then the lecturer showed them how to make gold leaf through actions; they would beat gold coins until they were thin (mimed beating the gold with their hands) and delicate. Then she asked them what colour was beneath the gold and the children correctly identified that it was red. The lecturer told them it was made from clay and was called 'bole.' She linked this to the sculptures made by the children with the artist AI and how they had used clay. Over this clay the gold leaf was placed and then it would be polished and rubbed to burnish it (mimed with the hands). They talked about how a tooth would have been used to polish the gold, usually a dog's tooth. She pointed out how the gold was covered in patterns called 'punching holes' along with leaves and swirly patterns.

Attention was then focused on the figure in the painting and the lecturer asked who the children thought it was. They thought it was a Christian because of the cross on his head, but The lecturer asked them why they thought it was a he. Some children thought it was a she because the figure is wearing jewellery and had 'woman's hair' and pale skin. Another child pointed out that s/he had no stubble or rough skin. The lecturer explained that it was a man but that it was the fashion to make men look like ladies with soft lips and high eyebrows. Did the children notice anything about his forehead? They noticed 'his hair is trimmed back' and the lecturer explained how men would pluck out their hairs for a high forehead. What else could they see about the figure? He 'is standing on something' and he has wings. The children thought he looked like an angel. The lecturer asks them what an angel is; they replied 'somebody who's doing things for God.' The figure is Saint Michael who was a messenger for God and in charge of God's army of good angels. The lecturer asked the children what he is doing and they

replied that he is 'pulling his sword out' or about to 'kill that thing.' One of the children thought it looked like 'a robot' and another compared it to a 'tortoise.' The lecturer says that it is made out of a number of animals – can they see what they are? The children said it was made of 'dragons', 'snakes' 'monkey' 'bat ears' 'sharks teeth' and 'claws.' They noticed the snakes coming out of its belly and the teachers were amazed because they had not noticed them. The lecturer describes to them how the creature has three arms, big eyes opened in shock and spikes on its eyes. Another child pointed out that there are snake's heads on its elbows. The lecturer asked if the children find the monster funny or scary. Most of them voted that it was scary especially 'if it came up to you.' The lecturer got them to imagine what it would have been like for people in the past to have seen this picture. They would have had no television, no films and they would have gone into the dark church with flickering candles and been confronted with pictures like this. This time even more children voted that the picture was scary.

Plate 4.9.4a: *St Michael triumphant over the Devil* (1468) by Bartolome Bermejo



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They looked in the painting for complementary colours and noticed the red poppies set against the green grass. The lecturer pointed out how the creature's red eyes look like poppies. She told them that the creature

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represents the Devil, who leads God's army of bad angels, and that St Michael has come to destroy the Devil and trample him down back to earth. She asked the children why the devil looks scared. One child suggested it was because 'is he looking at us?' The lecturer then asked them to describe what St Michael is holding – 'is it a wheel?' She told them that it is a shield with what looks like 'a pearl' on it. The devil is scared of his own reflection. The children also noticed that the devil has a snake's tail and that there is a man kneeling to the left of the picture. The lecturer explained that this is a 'real' historical person called Don Antonio Juan who has been painted as a 'real' man with 'spots and wrinkles and crinkles' to contrast with the perfection of the angel. This man paid to have the painting placed inside the church. The artists' name has been written on the piece of paper to the bottom left (which one child asks why did they always put their name there) and The lecturer told them that is says Bartholomew Rubeo (sp.) which means 'the red' because they believe he had red hair.

By now the school had spent a long time in the gallery and there was some concern about the time. But they were able to see one more painting before they had to leave. They headed back to one of the earlier galleries they had passed through.

The last two pictures the group looked at with the lecturer showed scenes of Venice by Canaletto (18th century, Plates 4.9.4b and 4.9.4c). The lecturer asked the children if they knew where the paintings were set and one of the children correctly pointed out that it was Venice. He knew this because of the water and his mother had been there on holiday. They talked about how you have to take a boat taxi because there are no roads. The boats in the picture were identified as gondolas on the Grand Canal which are taking part in a regatta (race). The lecturer pointed out that the artist's name meant 'little canal.' They talked about how the two paintings were of the same scene but were different and the lecturer asked the children why they were different. The children suggested that the water was different colours but also because the light in the picture was different which made the buildings different colours.

The lecturer asked the children to imagine how the water was painted - what type of brush would they have used and how would they move the brush? One boy talked about how the water would have painted first then white marks would have been painted over this with a delicate brush. The lecturer described how the picture would have been a 'postcard' that people would have bought whilst they were on a Grand Tour of Europe as a souvenir of their visit. To demonstrate to the children how the scene was not a 'true' representation of the Grand Canal but an artist's impression, The lecturer asked the children to name three things that they would put onto a postcard of London. They chose the London Eye, the National Gallery and a red bus. The lecturer explained that like these three things would not be together in London, Canaletto had chosen the best parts of Venice to include in his painting and put them together. After a few questions the children left with the teachers to fetch their coats and bags.

Plate 4.9.4b: A Regatta on the Grand Canal (1735) by Canaletto



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Plate 4.9.4c: A Regatta on the Grand Canal (1740) by Canaletto



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4.9.5 Reflections on the behaviour and responses of the children

During the visit of one and half hours the children were unfailingly focused. They were well-behaved, did not shout out their responses and always put their hands up to answer the lecturer's questions. They were also extremely polite and helpful and willingly opened doors for their teachers and for other visitors to the gallery. They did not seem distracted by the number of people in the galleries or by the considerable noise in some areas. They were very happy and confident in the gallery despite the unfamiliar surroundings.

Plate 4.9.5a: Pupils in the National Gallery



The children looked carefully at the paintings and remembered all the visual literacy skills they had developed from the Madonna of the Pinks project. They saw a lot of detail that the adults missed and remembered much of the terminology, drawing on their knowledge and applying it to new contexts. It was evident that they had been well-prepared for the visit by the previous work they had done. They were perceptive and asked relevant questions. In particular, the wonder on their faces when they saw the Madonna was testament to the enjoyment they gained from seeing it again and many children commented to the lecturer that they were very happy to have seen it. Evidently there had been a very personal connection forged with the Madonna of the Pinks and many children described as their favourite painting. The lecturer was also impressed by the amount that the children remembered and how focused they were, describing them as a 'model group'.

4.9.6 The organisation and facilitation of the session

The accompanying adults were focused and well briefed and the visit went ahead very smoothly, obviously well organised. They were supportive of the children and visibly delighted when the children remembered so much. They were as enthusiastic about the visit as the children, looking at the paintings as they walked through the galleries and asking questions where they could. This was combined with skilful and high quality facilitation from the lecturer which introduced new paintings at the same time as revisiting familiar works with the children.

4.10 The return visit to the school

Two researchers from RCMG travelled up to Teesdale on 27th June to visit the primary school and assess the longer-term impact of the Madonna of the Pinks project on the pupils. It was also intended to talk to the children about their trip to London the week before (15th June) and to talk to some of the children who hadn't been able to go to London to examine the difference in their recall of the projects and attitudes towards the Madonna of the Pinks.

4.10.1 Meeting the class

After their lunch, the children were brought together in the same classroom by their teachers to talk about the Madonna of the Pinks. The children were enthusiastic when they were asked to recall the project; all of them remembered the Madonna of the Pinks, they remembered the name of the artist and they remembered that Jocelyn (and other RCMG researchers) had previously been to their school. As a class, they felt that they had learnt the following skills from their involvement in the project (recalled with some help from researchers and teachers):

- How to build clay models
- That you need to build the armature first
- Made me learn about the lapis lazuli
- To make different colours by mixing colours
- Complementary colours
- Drawing 'real life' people
- Quick drawing
- Drawing shadows

The children were then asked what they remembered about going to see the Madonna of the Pinks in the Bowes Museum / National Gallery. They replied:

- We learnt about it
- It was smaller
- It stood out more if you looked at it
- [It was] precious
- Was it Raphael made a lot of things?
- [Who was Raphael?] The painter that did the Madonna of the Pinks
- Very old
- About 5 million... hundred years old
- [Why was it precious?] Was it precious because Raphael got asked to paint it by a widow, she wanted to pray to it
- It's because its Christian, its about Mary and Jesus
- Because it cost a lot
- £24 million pounds

They were asked if it was worth spending the money and unanimously the children agreed that it was:

- 'Because we got to learn about it'

They all agreed that it was a special or precious painting. They remembered that it was found in a loft, in a castle [Alnwick]. The children all agreed that they wanted to go and see the painting again. One child's mum had written to the school to say that they would visit the Bowes museum and see more paintings. A brief show of hands showed that most children (19) felt that they could take their family or friends to the museum and act as a tour guide.

This discussion revealed the sheer amount of information that the children remembered about the Madonna of the Pinks, considering that a year had passed since the project (and not all of them had had the opportunity to go to London). To capture their experiences more tangibly, the pupils were asked to complete a response card in response to the statement, 'For me, the most special thing about the Madonna of the Pinks is...'⁴⁴ They could either draw or write about what they found special. All of the children accomplished this, with some help from the teachers and researchers when they needed it. They were very careful in their responses and these have been analysed below (see section 4.11).

Separate interviews were then held with a selection of young people chosen by teachers and researchers. Four of the children had been on the London trip and three who had not been on the trip. The interviews were held in the library opposite the classroom. Unfortunately there were frequent disruptions to the interviews, for instance at one point the photocopier was in use and there was banging and drilling from outside. The class teacher was also interviewed.

The interviews were recorded. One researcher interviewed the children individually and in pairs whilst detailed notes were taken by the second researcher. A problem with the tape machine meant that the recordings were very poor and transcriptions were not complete. The following interviews have been reconstructed using the handwritten notes and transcriptions where possible.

4.10.2 Interview with Harry* and Lucy*

Both Harry* and Lucy* had been on the London trip. Harry* had been particularly impressive during the National Gallery visit by remembering many of the concepts they had learnt such as the four elements and complementary colours, and Lucy* too had demonstrated her grasp of vocabulary and acting as an 'art detective.' Both of them were very articulate and vivacious children, quite happy to talk to the researchers about their experiences.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ The same response cards used in the Bowes Museum and National Gallery over the Summer / half term 2005

⁴⁵ The tape recording of this interview was very difficult to transcribe because of background noise and there was a problem with the tape recorder so has been largely reconstructed from the written notes. Quotes from the written notes are in single brackets and quotes from the tape are in italics for clarity

- **What had they found special?**

Both children read out the response cards they had written in the classroom. They had quite different responses to the statement 'For me the most special thing about the Madonna of the Pinks is...' Lucy* felt that lots of different aspects of the project were special:

'I liked the painting because of all the history it had about it, and learning new skills like sculpting and drawing real life people. I also liked meeting artists and one of the best things was go to London.'

Harry* was more focused on the armatures that the class made the year before as that was the kind of thing he liked to do, and it had helped him to improve his art skills in a direct way:

'The armatures because I like making things better than drawing or painting. It helped me understand why my clay models at home kept falling down. The reason was that I didn't make wire armatures first.'

They both enjoyed the visit to London. Lucy* said it was the best thing they had done because they had done all the work first and so she could just enjoy it. It also surprised her to see the Madonna of the Pinks again. Harry* thought that against all the other paintings it 'looked tiny' but Lucy* felt that helped it to stand out. They decided this was because the Madonna of the Pinks was so familiar; they had worked with it for a long time and they knew it really well:

'...it's an old friend you're going to see.'

- **Working on a long term project:**

On the whole both children had enjoyed working with the Madonna for such a long time. Harry* enjoyed it because it had been different to 'normal' lessons. Usually they do drawing rather than painting and this gave them the chance to try out new skills and techniques. Harry* did qualify his comment as he felt like they had gone over some of the concepts like complementary colours too many times but Lucy* was positive about this because she felt she remembered more because they had gone over it so many times:

'I felt when we went over it again and again it sort of comes into your head and getting more in and you know more about the painting.'

- **What did they remember about the painting?**

The children remembered that the Madonna of the Pinks had been painted for a widow, who was a nun, it had been found in an attic and it had been painted by Raphael. Lucy* felt the painting was so special because she felt that something is going on in the painting and 'you have to fathom out what's going on.' It was special to Harry* because they had worked with it for such a long time. Otherwise it would have been like any other painting in his opinion.

Using copies as prompts Lucy* and Harry* talked about the other paintings they had seen whilst at the National Gallery. They liked the fact that each painting had a story behind it. Lucy* felt that seeing the paintings helped her

to think in different ways, she had not thought, for example, that 'you'd put real gold on a painting.' They also appreciated that paintings were made for different reasons for example the picture of St Michael and the devil was made for a church. Lucy* said that she would like to see more paintings and to learn about them. However they were not the same as the Madonna of the Pinks which was most special because 'it's just the one and we've experienced it.'

- **Visiting museums:**

In Harry's mind the National Gallery seemed like other art galleries 'just bigger.' He felt it was similar to the Bowes, although Lucy* pointed out that there was no furniture in the National Gallery like there had been at the Bowes. She liked visiting art galleries with school because they 'got to know the things behind the painting' rather than just going to look at them. She liked learning about the people in the background of the paintings because it was 'like a mystery' that needed to be solved. Harry* also liked the facilitation they had experienced with school because it told them the story behind the painting.

When asked if they had been back to the Bowes museum, or another museum, since the visit with school, Lucy* said that she had been back to the Bowes. She had visited with a friend and her mum and they had a fun time at the museum. In the same room where she had seen the Madonna of the Pinks there had been an exhibition on Turner with pictures of landscapes. Harry* had not been back to the museum since but he had made some models like those they had made during the project (clay over wire armatures). He felt they were of a better standard to those he had made before but he was unable to find thick enough wire.

- **Impressions of London:**

London was not as busy as Harry* had expected, 'not jam-packed.' Lucy* thought it was busy but it 'was nice to see the nice parts' like Trafalgar Square, and they could see the 'famous things' like St Paul's Cathedral, the fountains in Trafalgar Square and the pigeons. Neither of them thought that the London Eye felt very high whilst they were on it but they were surprised that it only went round once very slowly and that landmarks like Big Ben looked 'tiny' from the top. Both of them were excited to have been to London. Harry* had never been before so was excited to have seen all the 'new things' and Lucy* had been before but she had been to the shops rather than any museums so it was a very different experience for both of them. They both liked going to London on the train and being with their friends, although they had not enjoyed it so much going back because they had been tired.

- **Impressions of the project:**

Harry* appreciated being able to focus on one painting because he felt that if you are 'doing lots of things you only get a little bit out of it' whereas with one painting 'then you get to do lots.' Lucy* felt very lucky to have been part of the project and she still thinks about the Madonna when doing art. The impact on their art work has been significant. Lucy* felt that before the project she 'never used to draw big, I used to draw tiny.' But now she feels that she is better at drawing because she can draw 'bigger' and she is

'better at drawing people.' Harry* said that he is better at drawing shadows. Both felt that they were more confident in art and Lucy* added that she 'learnt art's fun, it's really fun.'

Both Harry* and Lucy* enjoyed the opportunity to work with artists. It exposed them to new techniques in art which they had not learnt from their teacher but also changed their opinion of what an artist would be like. Lucy* for instance thought they would be like 'posh people' who sat at home painting. She was surprised to see that they were just like normal people. Working with the artists helped them to draw more confidently and Harry* learnt that 'you don't always have to draw things that are still.' They also grasped the idea that it was okay to make mistakes when drawing. This was evidence that their concept of art had changed as a result of working with the National Gallery. For instance Lucy* had thought that 'art had to be exact, bang on, but it doesn't have to be.' They cited the example of Canaletto who had moved buildings around in his painting of Venice and demonstrated that they grasped the concept that art was not always real - 'you don't have to draw things as they are.'

- **The importance of facilitation:**

It was important to have someone like the lecturer facilitating the pupils' experience with the paintings. Both Lucy* and Harry* said that they would like to take someone around the Gallery and show them the painting. It seemed that facilitation acted as a catalyst for the pupils to want to find out more for themselves, for instance Harry* felt that 'once you've seen things you might like to go and find out about them for yourself instead of being told or [having to] ask someone else.' Lucy* realised how 'lucky' they were to have had the experience as not everyone gets to work so closely with a painting except those who look after it. Harry* added that 'it could have been any school but it was us.' Both children felt that they were special.

- **Aspirations:**

When asked what they wanted to be when they grew up, Harry* said immediately that he wanted to live on a farm and be a farmer. He liked doing practical things, he knew a lot about farming 'and been there all my life.' On his farm he kept sheep, cows and dogs. His whole family was involved in farming; his granddad lived just down the road and helped out on his dad's farm, and his uncle lived across the road from his granddad and he also had his own farm. It was what he knew best.

Lucy* was less influenced by her background than Harry*. Her family were farmers, although Lucy*'s dad owned a landscaping company, and she knew that she did not want to be a farmer or a landscaper as it was not a 'girl thing... you don't see many girls doing it.' She did not know what she wanted to do except be 'good at art and do something like that' perhaps like (her teacher).

4.10.3 Interview with Jenny* and Sophie*

Neither Jenny* nor Sophie* had been on the trip to London. Both pupils were much less confident than Harry* and Lucy* and there was some trouble

getting the tape started before the interview which may also have made the girls more nervous.

- **What had they found special about the project?**

Jenny* enjoyed making the sculptures most of all, which she wrote about on her response card:

'When we did the patins of awer owne and the stachows. I've still got the stachow. But it is crumblin a bit. When we got the acrylic pante I got it on my cloths and it dos not come off...' [Actual spelling]

Jenny* had kept all the art work that she had made because it reminded her of the things that they had done. She liked art and '*getting messy and stuff*' as well as drawing. Making their own version of the Madonna was special because they used oil paints and it looked like it was actually a proper painting when she had gone to look at it from the opposite end of the classroom.

Sophie* had also kept all the artwork that they had made, her sculpture, painting and sketches. Her painting had been hung on the stairs at home and her family had loved it. Sophie*'s response card talked about her memories of seeing the Madonna of the Pinks in the Bowes Museum and the fine details in the painting:

'We saw the picture in the Bowes Museum. It took 22 million to keep in the country. When we saw it in the Museum we saw that Mary and Jesus had a halow [sic]. It was painted by Raphael. The castle through the window in the background.' [Written beneath a picture of a castle]

- **Remembering the Madonna:**

Both girls remembered seeing the painting at the Bowes Museum, and some of the facts that they had learnt about it including that it cost 'two million' to keep in the country and it had been painted by Raphael. They remembered that the clothes in the painting were different to what we would wear today and that there was a lot of colour in the background. Both girls remembered that the pinks that Mary and Jesus were holding are flowers.

Jenny* remembered seeing the Madonna of the Pinks was better than she thought it would be because although it was small it was very detailed ('it had a lot on it.') Jenny* felt Raphael 'did a good job fitting all the things on a small painting' and how he had used all the colours. Both girls thought it was worth the money, as Jenny* explained 'for people who are like here to be able to go and see it sometimes.'

- **The impact of seeing the painting**

Both Jenny* and Sophie* had tried to draw the Madonna again since they had finished the project, Sophie* in the holidays. Jenny* wanted to see if she could 'improve what I did last time.' Sophie* felt she had been unsuccessful in drawing the Madonna again, she had 'improved the skirt and that's it.' Jenny* had been bought some oil paints by her mother so was going to have a go with those and Sophie* had also got some watercolours for Christmas.

- **Aspirations:**

When asked what they wanted to be when they grew up, Sophie* said she liked horses and dogs so might want to do something with those. Although Jenny* had not decided yet she said that she liked sponsoring dogs so considered that 'I think I might work somewhere like a dog's trust.'

- **Visiting museums:**

Jenny* had been to the Bowes once with her Grandma, who was also going to take her to Edinburgh Castle. They had looked around and seen all kinds of paintings. Sophie* had been to the Bowes too but not into the museum, she had been to a fair in the grounds. Her parents hadn't let her go inside the museum even though she had wanted to go.

When asked why they hadn't gone on the London trip, Sophie* said she had been on holiday at the time but her mum and dad might be able to take her to London instead. Jenny* had written on her response card about the London trip:

'I did not come to London but I bet it was good fun but my mum said that her and my dad would take me when I am older...'

- **The impact of the project:**

Sophie* felt that she was better at art as a result of working with the Madonna – 'there was a lot of art involved and we got used to doing it.' Jenny* felt that she was better at making things, especially since they had been making some moving monsters recently.

4.10.4 Interview with Luke*

Luke* had not been on the trip to London and he was confident in responding to the questions asked by the researchers. The response card he had written in the classroom talked about the sculpture he had made:

'I liked making the armatures because it was very creative and I can remember how to do it in the future. I also liked it because it could be anything you wanted and mine was a footballer. I treasure mine very much and keep it on a stand in my bedroom.'

- **Experience of the project:**

Luke* thought that the project was fun because 'it got you more involved in art than you thought you would.' During the project he had painted a very different picture to the other pupils. It was a triptych with a beam of light coming down, with Joseph in one corner, Mary in the other corner and an angel coming down with Jesus. He was evidently proud of his picture as it was 'hanging on the wall in my bedroom in a frame.' He kept all the things he had made in a folder to remind him of the project. The sculpture he made was on display in his bedroom. He would like to do the project again; it had been fun and enabled him to be creative. He appreciated the fact that 'you could make anything as long as it was human and mine was a footballer.'

- **Remembering the painting:**

Seeing the Madonna had shocked Luke* because of its size. He had expected it to be larger. He remembered that it had been found in an attic, that Raphael had painted it for a widow who worshipped it and that 'it costed £22 million I think.' Luke* liked the detail in the painting, like the castle in the background which stood out, and the complementary colours. It made him 'think about Jesus' whom he had learned about in RE lessons because he doesn't go to church.

- **Visiting museums:**

The visit to The Bowes Museum was the first time Luke* had been to an art gallery and he had not visited any since. He would have liked to have gone to the National Gallery but he also wanted to visit the museum with the '*glass pyramid thing*' which his teacher had told them about [The Louvre]. He thought his family would be interested in going to the Bowes.

- **Aspirations:**

Luke* couldn't decide what he wanted to be when he was older, an artist or a footballer. If he was a cartoon artist he would not copy other people's work but draw his own. They had worked with artists on the project and T felt it had helped them to paint in greater detail 'rather than drawing a stickman.' The artists were as he expected because they were 'friendly and knew a lot about art - they taught us everything they know.' He felt that art was better because of the new techniques that they had learnt. In the art lessons they had learned to copy a painting in 3D and learnt about perspective.

- **Finding out more:**

Luke* would like to see the Madonna of the Pinks again, 'to see the colours.' He had looked on the Internet to find out more about the painting and had found out 'the same that they told us.' He wasn't able to find out any more about other paintings they had looked at because he didn't know their names.

He enjoyed the project because he liked learning about the Madonna, meeting the artists and seeing the painting at the Bowes Museum was worth it. The three best things about the project for T were making the armatures, 'drawing our own paintings' and 'seeing the paintings.'

4.10.5 Interview with Poppy* and Jack*

Both Poppy* and Jack* had been on the trip to London. They responded to the researcher well and were thoughtful in their replies.

Poppy* wrote on her response card that what made the Madonna of the Pinks special to her was:

'It has a story behind it and the pinks make it look special. It's nice because it's small.'

Jack* drew a picture of the Madonna and Jesus and wrote:

'I like the complementary colour.'

- **The trip to London:**

Poppy* had been to London before but it was the first time that Jack* had been to the capital. He had been happy and excited to go but nervous because he didn't know what it would be like. He had not thought that the buildings would be so big. The National Gallery too was:

'Big but when you went in it was even bigger...'

Poppy* enjoyed going on the London Eye most. From the top she remembered:

'...you could see the whole of London, you can see the River Thames and um, the um the park bit down below.'

They both saw the Houses of Parliament and Big Ben. Jack* also remembered seeing a building which *'was like a rocket but it had twirls on it and I dunno what it [was].'* Poppy* admitted that she 'felt a bit scared' when they got to London because she was not used to all the people around. Neither had she enjoyed the train journey on the way back:

'...it took ages and we were going backwards. But when you went through the tunnels your ears popped.'

- **The National Gallery:**

They remembered some of the detail about the paintings they had seen in the National Gallery apart from the Madonna of the Pinks:

'...most of them were quite big... sort of around people and (...) boat race.'

'That one...[pointing to St Michael triumphant over the Devil] the man in it is the leader of God's angels and that one there is the... the leader of the devils...'

Poppy* felt that the Madonna was very small in comparison to the other paintings they saw. Jack* remembered that at the Bowes Museum it had had its name across the top so it was different to how he remembered it; 'it said Madonna of the Pinks and said the author was Raphael.' When he looked for it and it wasn't there he 'knew we were in the National Gallery.' Because it was small the children recognised it and it 'made you want to have a look at it.' In terms of the content of the Madonna of the Pinks they remembered about the complementary colours and that it had a view of a castle in the window. Jack* recalled how 'Jesus was giving his mum the flowers of love.'

- **Treasuring their artwork:**

The children had made a special folder at school to keep all their paintings in. Like other pupils Poppy* had her work displayed at home in the room where her family kept their books. Jack* said that he too had one of his paintings up

on his bedroom wall but he had taken it down because it was his birthday and he had put it away so his cousins 'don't wreck it'.

- **Making the artworks:**

Jack* liked it when they were drawing but, unlike Poppy* who enjoyed making the armatures best, he did not like making the 'metal bendy thing' because it kept going wrong and once the wire was bent he found it hard to get it straight again.

They liked working with the artists because they knew what they were doing and they had special skills which they taught them. They knew how to mix the paints correctly and how to 'put the wires right' when making the armatures. Jack* had tried to make another model after the project but it had not worked properly - 'when I put the clay on it fell off.' His dad had bought him the clay. Poppy* said that she was making a model out of toilet rolls and papier maché. There was a link to art with her family background as she explained:

'...my grandma's into doing pottery and stuff.'

- **Visiting museums:**

Jack* had not been back to the Bowes Museum because his mum and dad had been too busy on the farm; they had 'just finished lambing now.' It was unlikely that he would visit a museum but he would like to go back and see the paintings again because he would understand them better. Poppy* was much more likely to visit museums in the future and had been to the Bowes Museum a few weeks before the interview:

'I like wandering round and just having a look at things.'

She felt happy to be able to go back with her mum and her nanna so that she could tell them the names of the paintings.

- **Their attitudes to art:**

Both children wanted to go back to London again, including the National Gallery:

'I'd like to have a better look at the gallery in London and just have a look round it y'know?'

Poppy* felt that her attitude to art had changed because of the project, 'before I like saw paintings and explored about them but didn't feel that bothered. Now I see more to them than before.' Jack* agreed and he felt that the cost of a painting was justified; 'I don't think they're a waste of money.' Poppy* agreed with this, 'if a painting's good and if someone's put a lot of time and effort into it than it's worth the money.'

4.10.6 Interview with the Class Teacher

The teacher, who had been the class teacher for the whole group in 2005, was astounded by how much the pupils had remembered about the Madonna of the Pinks. Prior to the London visit they had gone over the

project again and this had demonstrated to her the extent of the children's knowledge and understanding:

'...we filled the white board with information that even I couldn't remember...'

During the visit to the National Gallery the children further surprised the teacher with their new capabilities, able to use their visual literacy skills in new contexts:

'...but what hit me more than anything else was ... they could actually use that in context with other [paintings].'

The teacher felt that they had been able to surpass what she might have expected the children to learn as a result of the school art curriculum. Not only had their understanding and skills increased but also their confidence has increased:

'I think their confidence in art has improved... [they are] more willing to make mistakes, they understand the need to make mistakes...'

Although they have always been enthusiastic children, the teacher felt that as a result of the project the pupils have a more positive attitude towards art, they are more confident and able.

- **Difference between the children who went to London and those who did not:**

The teacher noticed a marked contrast between those children who went to London and those who did not. Those children who did not go to London had less technical knowledge and also showed less interest in new paintings.

'[They] were sort of playing catch up, they couldn't remember as much technical knowledge.'

The children who did go to London felt it had been a special experience. Some of them had been overwhelmed at first:

'When they arrived at, when they arrived at Kings Cross their eyes were open, you know, I got them to write down the day after they came back all of their [thoughts] about London in general and they were sort of saying y'know I was scared...'

The children found it was astonishing when they were on the London Eye, seeing London and comparing the city to where they lived; that there was there was no green, it was dirtier and they couldn't believe that so many buildings were crammed into such a small space.

'...experiences like that you can't take away from them, they'll always remember that for the rest of their lives.'

The teacher repeatedly stated how astounded she was by how much the children remembered in the context of the trip when they went round the National Gallery.

'Just all sorts of little things ... they put things into context so well and they remembered quite a lot of the stuff about Bacchus and Ariadne which I just, I couldn't believe it ... they came up with some amazing ideas for things which you couldn't ... you know, you couldn't have asked ... any other child and I had a bit of a joke about it with the lecturer and said you know they will all have PhDs in art history...'

The children had gained knowledge of art far beyond what the teacher would expect for their age and she felt it was good for them to have a chance to demonstrate that knowledge in the gallery:

'...they do have an extensive knowledge way beyond what would be expected of a child of Y6 let alone a child in Y3 or 4 and (...) as I said last time they've covered so much in such a short space of time but its information that they have remembered and yes, granted sometimes they need prompting about it but it was nice for them...'

She also felt that the children would be much more likely to visit a museum or art gallery with their parents. Prior to the project the children said honestly that they would have been less than keen "whereas now they'd be more than happy to go, more than happy to go to any museum and show their parents around..." This was testified to by several of the children interviewed who had subsequently been to the Bowes Museum with their families after the project had ended.

- **Influence of background and the trip to London:**

Some of the children had not been allowed to go on the London trip. As the teacher explained, these children rarely leave their village. The furthest they go is to Barnard Castle or Darlington. They go on holiday but to similar places to Darlington. The aim of the London trip for the teacher was not only to see the Madonna of the Pinks but also to expose them to new experiences outside of their everyday context. The enormity of the visit for these children, especially those who did not travel much, should not be underestimated. The recent bombings also worried parents; even those parents with experience of London were concerned:

'[PT's] mum is a villager but she was very much, she's been to London, she has experiences herself of London but she was like very cautious when they left us at the station.'

It was difficult for the children who had not been to London when the value of the visit became apparent to those who had gone. Many of them felt left out especially when they saw how much their classmates had enjoyed it:

'I think to be honest a lot of the parents realised ... it was a real case of we have allowed our child to miss out on a fantastic opportunity because when we came back the parents [of those pupils who had been] were singing and dancing about it...'

- **The rural context:**

Regarding the social context of the children, it was felt that their life experiences would condition their aspirations for the future. A lot of the children, for example, would aspire to be farmers because it was all they knew and what their families did. The teacher felt that not many pupils would go against the grain and that they would tend to follow the example of their parents. For example some of them would go to University but more likely those with University-educated parents. She felt she could predict fairly comfortably the types of jobs that the children would have, middle management, everyday jobs, some would become a teacher for example:

'...those children who are rebellious are the children who come into the village from outside.'

The rural context and isolation of their village and surrounding settlements means that these children are excluded in terms of their situation and their location:

'...their location ... it limits access to all sorts of things. They've got to plan things a lot more, they're very planning [children]... everything is still very much planned for them.'

As a result the teacher felt that their lives are quite protected compared to the life experiences of other children, they do not have the same exposure to 'challenging' situations:

'...they are very children's children. They're not grown up children (...) they don't have adult heads on them, those children are their age. They haven't had to grow up.'

At the school they try to give them as broad an experience as possible but the teacher finds it very difficult as there is little diversity in the population.

- **The impact of the Madonna of the Pinks project – children, families and school**

Ordinarily the teacher would not have been happy to carry out such a big project in such a small space of time but the impact of the Madonna of the Pinks on the pupils made her keen to carry it on. She felt it had opened up a doorway that the families could choose to take further if they wished. In relation to whether more families would visit art galleries with their children, the teacher felt there would be a mixed response from parents. Some would only go to the art gallery 'if it's on the doorstep' but would be unlikely to plan a holiday around a visit to an art gallery. Other parents would jump at the chance, for example some parents would take their children to London because they realise how much of a valuable experience it had been.

The uniqueness of the project was conveyed in the children's response to the artworks that they had made. The teacher felt it was unusual that the children had kept so much of their artwork and put them on display at home. She could not put her finger on why the Madonna of the Pinks was so special to them but she remarked that despite their age the children are very astute:

'...even though they are very young... I think they realise that well actually it is a once in a lifetime's opportunity.'

The impact of the project on the school has been complex. After the visit to the Bowes Museum a close relationship had developed between the museum and the school but the teacher has not always been in a position to capitalise on that relationship. At the beginning of the year the school management side of the teacher's role had taken precedence which diminished the amount of time she could spend on art and music. However the outcomes from the project will be used to inform art in the future.

The teacher is also leaving the school to go to a new job and when asked what the impact of her leaving will be, she commented that she believed that the levels of creativity would fall unless another member of staff was brought in:

'I don't think the school will be as artistic, I think this school would be exceptionally sports-orientated...'

The teacher hopes that the school will realise that relationships need to be developed with the Bowes. Thinking about the future of the children and their relationship with the project, the teacher felt that if she stayed at the school the children would still be using what they had learned into Year 6 but she was not sure about the longer-term impact. It depends upon how much creative work the children would do once they went to Teesdale Comprehensive in Barnard Castle, which the school had little contact with as an artistic unit.

- **Impact on the teacher as a teacher:**

Being involved with the Madonna of the Pinks has greatly increased the teacher's confidence working with museums. She felt that although some teachers were afraid to approach museums:

'I wouldn't think twice now about approaching a museum and saying 'come and help me, send somebody in and do this.' And I'd be cheeky about it, I'd say do it for free, come on. Bring it here! But I think there's a lot of people who wouldn't do that and I wouldn't have done that if it hadn't been (...) approached in the first place by those museums.'

Now that she has seen the impact that it has on the children she would be willing to 'fight for it' but fears that when she leaves few other teachers will be prepared to do this. However, although she is leaving to become a science teacher, she can see how the skills and knowledge that she had learnt can be applied to other contexts:

'I was actually quite disappointed when I got my job because I suddenly realised that actually it's a totally different aspect of the curriculum ... but then I suddenly started to thinking well actually a lot of the stuff that I've learnt ... a lot of the creativity that I have, I can then use to ... teach science... especially with all the links I now have

with the National Gallery and I think a lot of that stuff can be... science-based. It's just doing it in a different way.'

This was despite the teacher's initial concern that it was taking so much time out of her curriculum. It also exposed her to professionals like the National Gallery freelance lecturer which not only enabled her to try out new things but it brought the children into contact with someone new which kept them interested:

'...there are elements like the oil painting. I could never have done that and I wouldn't have even attempted it (...) [the children] knew in the classroom (it was) a huge special thing and they automatically engaged. If they look at the same person every single day, 24 7 they're not gonna be as engaged.'

Overall the teacher conveyed to the researchers that the project had been a success and very beneficial to the children in so many ways, which can be summarised as:

- Visual literacy skills and using these in different contexts
- Recall of topics studied previously
- Broadening of their experience including the London trip
- Experience of museums and art galleries
- Working with artists and exposure to specialists e.g. The lecturer Marcus
- Increased understanding and knowledge of painting
- New attitudes towards art.

These outcomes are reinforced by the learning which the children talked about in their interviews and, more broadly, in their responses to the statement "For me the most special thing about the Madonna of the Pinks is...". These findings will be discussed below.

4.11 Analysis of the response cards completed by the pupils on the 27th June

Pupils from both classes were asked to complete a response card to capture some of the longer-term responses they had to the Madonna of the Pinks. In total twenty-six (26) pupils completed a response card, split equally amongst boys and girls (13 of each). Pupils were asked to write or draw in response to the statement on the card, 'For me the most special thing about the Madonna of the Pinks is...' Most pupils chose to write their response rather than draw a picture. Their responses have been analysed using the Generic Learning Outcomes (GLOs) to give a flavour of the impact of the project.

The twenty-six response cards were categorised according to the GLO that was the strongest. Ten of the comments were felt to display evidence of more than one GLO. For example quite a few of the pupils talked about their enjoyment of the experience of the project at the same time as demonstrating their knowledge of terms such as complementary colours or small details from the picture such as the castle in the background. The link

between enjoyment of the project and remembering these details may therefore be worth noting as an outcome.

Overall, Knowledge and Understanding was the strongest GLO with just under half the cards coded in this way.

Examples of Knowledge and Understanding displayed by the pupils included facts that they remembered about the history of the Madonna of the Pinks such as the amount of money it cost the nation, who painted the picture, who owned the painting, and where it had been found:

We saw the picture in the Bowes Museum. It took 22 million to keep in the country. When we saw it in the museum we saw that Mary and Jesus had a halow. It was painted by Raphael... [Sophie]*

The painting was made for a widow. The widow prayed to the painting because the painting was precious to her. The painting was found in the loft... [Katy]*

Six children demonstrated their knowledge of how Raphael used colour in the painting and other aspects of colour including how they were made:

The lapulaz lazulie [sic]. It was a stone that you grind up to make a special blue

All of the complementary colours. They all standed out very well. And my favrout couler is the blue. The blue it was very precious

Perhaps because they had worked very closely with the painting, eight children remembered the smaller details within the painting such as the halo and the castle in the background:

That she is an old pictuer and she is werth more than a £1000. We nottest that there was a castal in the bak ground with sheep and cows [Megan]*

I think the castle in the background was the best bit. Because it was very deetald... [Harry]*

Just over a third of the pupils used the response card to convey their Enjoyment, Inspiration, Creativity regarding the experience of the project. Five pupils talked about the workshop activity in general as the most special part of the project, particularly making the sculptures. Two children had kept their sculptures, T, who enjoyed the creative freedom of the project, and S:

I liked making the armatures because it was very creative and I can remember how to do it in the future. I also liked it because it could be anything you wanted and mine was a footballer. I treasure mine very much and keep it on a stand in my bedroom [Luke]*

I've still got the stachow but it is crumblin a bit [Jenny]*

Like Luke*, Harry* suggests he will use the knowledge and skills he has gained from the project to improve models that he will make in the future:

The armatures because I like making things better than drawing or painting. It helped me understand why my clay models at home kept falling down. The reason was that I didn't make wire armatures first.

Other comments coded under Enjoyment, Inspiration, Creativity referred to the pupil's enjoyment of the experience in general; for example Lucy*'s response which talks about the new knowledge and skills she learnt but within the context of enjoying the whole experience. There is not one special thing which she can isolate:

I liked the painting because of all the history it had about it and learning new skills like sculpting and drawing real people. I also liked meeting artists and one of the best things was go to London

A few of the children expressed an attitude about the painting in their response to the statement, particularly their feelings towards the relationship portrayed in the painting between Madonna and Jesus:

Mare [sic] and Jesus giving flowers. Love is important

It reminded me about Mum's love us and when we went to the National Gallery it was special to me

Two of the girls talked about how seeing the Madonna of the Pinks made them feel, in particular Caitlin* who felt the experience of going to London was so special that she would never forget it:

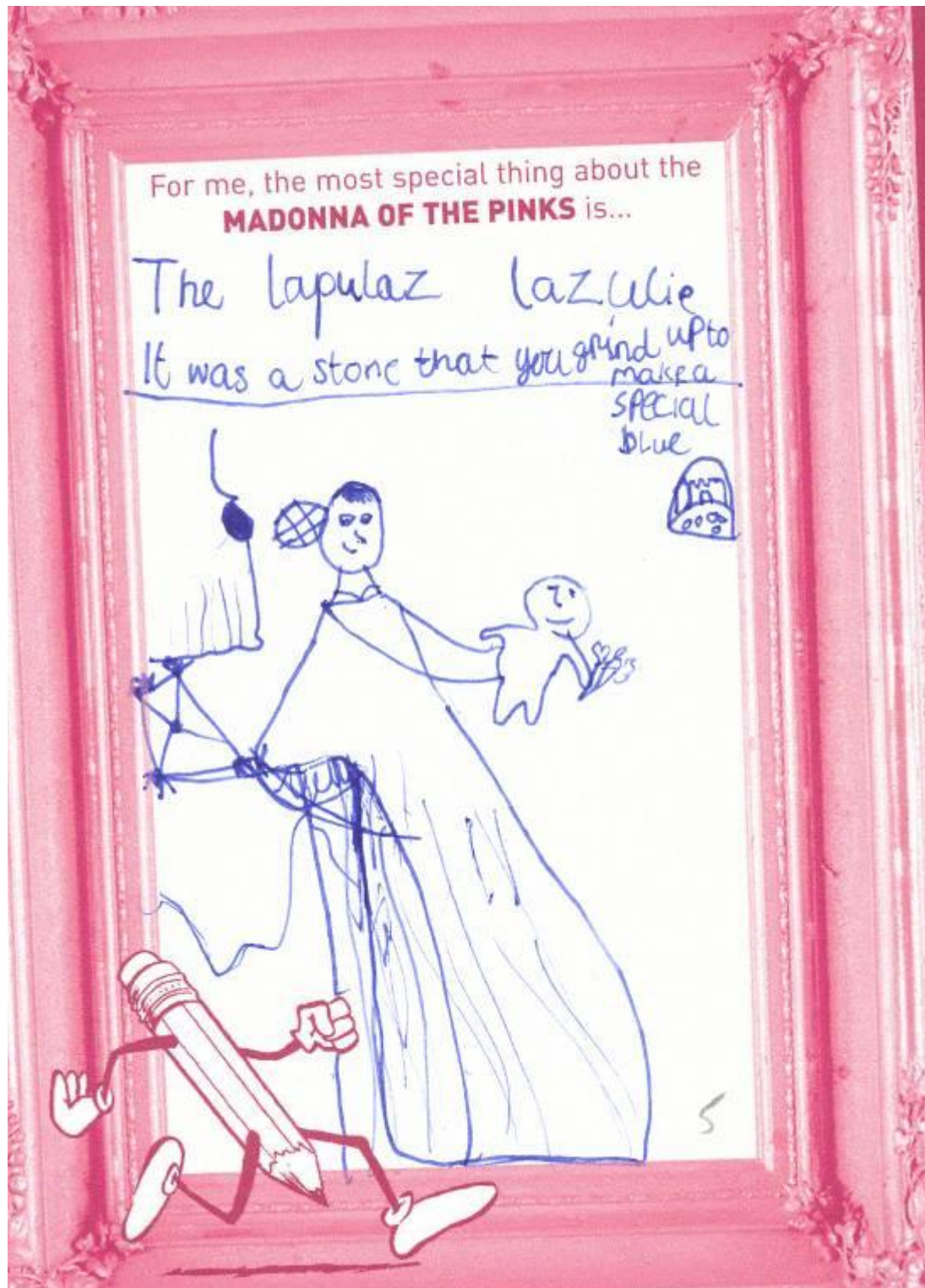
Seeing it in real life is very exciting. When I saw the pichter [sic] in real life made me feel happy [Katy]*

Going to see the Madonna of the Pinks. I liked working with the Madonna. It was fun. It is important to me. I liked going to London to go to the National Gallery. I will never forget it. [Caitlin]*

In general the responses of the children were very varied and covered a broad range of subjects. There can be seen some trends within the data which are worth mentioning:

- An emphasis on the facts and information that they had learned about the history of the painting, for instance who painted it, the cost, Madonna giving the pinks to Jesus.
- The use of colour in the painting by Raphael.
- Quite a few of the children mention the smaller details in the painting such as the castle in the background - it would be interesting to speculate why these smaller details caught their attention so much, was it because they felt like they had discovered them?

Plate 4.11a: Response card completed by Eillie* showing her interpretation of the Madonna of the Pinks



4.12 Emerging thoughts about the long term outcomes of engagement with the Madonna of the Pinks

The intensive period of work that the pupils had undertaken with the Madonna of the Pinks in the Summer 2005 appears to have led to an enduring relationship with the painting. During the observation of the visit to the National Gallery, the reaction of the children when they saw the Madonna of the Pinks – one of awe and wonder, and lots of smiles – conveys that it is not only the experience that has imbued it with a specialness but the painting itself has become special to them. Some reasons why the painting has become so special to the children include the length of time that they initially spent working on the painting, that they were able to see it both at the Bowes Museum and at the National Gallery 'for real', the enthusiasm of their teachers, and the facilitation and enthusiasm of the National Gallery staff. As Lucy* said at the National Gallery, it had become like an 'old friend', they felt they knew it really well and with this came confidence.

Based on the interviews with the children, the impact of the London visit in terms of learning is perhaps less important than expected or suggested by the teacher. Certainly those who had not been to London generally seemed less confident talking about the experience, but all three children who had not been to London had found other ways to continue their interest in the Madonna of the Pinks. This included continuing to treasure the artworks they had created during the project and continue to draw and paint the Madonna of the Pinks; two of the girls mentioned getting watercolour and oil paints for Christmas in order to do this. This was not unique to those children who had not been to London and others mentioned having their artwork on display at home. They wanted to be reminded of the experience and were obviously proud of their achievements. They had an enthusiasm for art, all of the pupils interviewed mentioned doing art at home as well as at school, and some of them talked about wanting to be artists when they were older. It may have helped that they were able to interact with artists during the Madonna of the Pinks project and found out, as Lucy* said, that they were 'normal people' like them.

The pupils' interaction with the painting was very much about increasing their understanding of art and giving them the skills to dissect a painting in order to find out what it means. That the children had got to grips with this approach was amply demonstrated during the visit to the National Gallery and from the perception of the teacher and her amazement at how they could apply their new skills and understanding to different contexts. The evidence of impact increased the confidence of the teacher but it was clear that the support and enthusiasm of the teachers helped to support the enthusiasm of the pupils; both could see the benefits of the experience and this was conveyed in the interviews.

It is interesting to speculate on the longer-term impact of the engagement with the Madonna of the Pinks. The loss of the teacher and her enthusiasm for art suggests that opportunities in the future for art may not be capitalised on by the school, to the detriment of the children whose enthusiasm has been fired evidently by this project.

Part 5: Response cards at The Bowes Museum and the National Gallery

RAPHAEL'S MADONNA OF THE PINKS

1. We are interested in what you think about the Madonna of the Pinks.....

WRITE/DRAW HERE



2. Your age?* 0-3 4-11 12-16 17-24 25-34 35-44 45-54 55-64 65+

3. Your gender?* Male Female

4. How interested are you in art?* Not at all A little bit Very much

5. Your postcode?* Q112 8JW

* This information will only be used so that we can learn more about our visitors

Please Turn Over... 

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PART 5: RESPONSE CARDS AT THE BOWES MUSEUM AND AT THE NATIONAL GALLERY

Summary of findings

S5.1 Response cards at the Bowes Museum

S5.1.1 Characteristics of the visitors who completed response cards at the Bowes Museum

The typical visitor who completed a response card at the Bowes Museum is likely to demonstrate the following characteristics:

- Be aged 45 or over
- Be female
- Be “very much” interested in art
- Not to be experiencing significant levels of personal deprivation
- To be a ‘Wealthy achiever’
- To live in an urban area
- To live in the North-East of England.

These characteristics match closely the Bowes Museum audience profile in general as described by both the museum staff and the Yorkshire Tourist Board marketing survey carried out for the museum in 2005. It is also very close to the picture of art museum visitors as a whole.

S5.1.2 The responses to the Madonna of the Pinks at the Bowes Museum

Over half (58%) of those who completed the Response cards left a written comment that could be analysed. Respondents commented frequently on the style and general impression of the painting (colour, light, size), rarely describing what they could actually see, and frequently using the language of the National Gallery leaflet to express themselves. Interpretation tended towards an art historical approach based on previous knowledge, setting the painting within a museum or art-related context, rather than a personal context. The language used to refer to the Madonna was overwhelmingly secular (mother and child) rather than religious. Visitors very much appreciated the painting and the opportunity to see close to home and enjoyed the chance to compare the Raphael with other paintings.

These are traditional museum / gallery visitors with traditional views on art and culture.

S5.2 Response cards at the National Gallery

S5.2.1 Characteristics of those who completed response cards at the National Gallery

The respondents at the National Gallery tended to be younger and slightly more diverse than those at the Bowes Museum. The group can be roughly divided into three, with one third from the UK, one third from a range of other countries, and one third not stating where they came from.

Typical respondents were divided into 'general' and 'UK' visitors; it was only possible to analyse the postcodes of the UK visitors, and some analysis could only be carried out for the English postcodes.

The typical 'general' National Gallery respondent was more likely to be:

- Aged from 16 to 34 years
- Female (but not by much)
- Interested in art to some degree

And for the UK visitors:

- Most UK respondents come from outside London (with 37% from London)
- According to the locations of their postcodes, most English respondents are not likely to be experiencing deprived social circumstances
- UK respondents are likely to be affluent and well educated - 'wealthy achievers' and 'urban prosperity' according to the ACORN analysis.

S5.2.2 The responses of all who completed the cards to the Madonna of the Pinks at the National Gallery

Two hundred and fifty (250) adult response cards were collected, and 248 contained comments on the Madonna of the Pinks. These have been analysed together, with no split between geographical origin of the respondent. In relation to the GLOs, most of the comments (60%) concerned Attitudes and Values. There were relatively low levels of comments that could be classified as about Knowledge and Understanding (8%), compared to the similar analysis at The Bowes Museum (23%). There were many comments on the style and immediate impression of the painting (colour, light, size), and smaller numbers of people used language from the National Gallery interpretation (only 2% compared with 10% at the Bowes) but the words "gem-like", "tender" and "translucent" appear. Again, there were few references to the content of the painting, although there were some interesting comments on the way the face of the child was painted. References to the relationship of the mother and child within the painting tend to focus less on the religious themes than the more general themes associated with the love of a mother for her child. It is assumed by many respondents to be a loving relationship and evokes a sense of warmth, caring and calm for some. There were one or two personal references. Seventeen (17) children's response cards were collected, many of which were

incomplete. Written comments focused on the Madonna and child and how they looked to the child.

S5.3 General conclusions to Part 5

The two audiences represented in the response cards from The Bowes Museum and the National Gallery display considerable differences. The audience reached at the National Gallery is younger and a little more socially diverse than that at the Bowes Museum and this may account for a slightly greater range of interpretive strategies. The response cards at the National Gallery were also returned from a mix of people from the UK and from other countries, whereas at The Bowes Museum, the respondents were mainly located in the North of England. And it must also be remembered that the sample (at 250) is larger than that at The Bowes Museum (at 133). All of these factors may explain increased diversity of response at the National Gallery.

While the responses at the National Gallery are more varied than those of the Bowes, although in much the same way in both places, there are a number of responses where the respondents present themselves as 'art lover' or 'art critic' and focuses on a particular 'knowledge' of art history (e.g. focusing on style, colour, texture, skill of the artist...). However, some of the responses at the National Gallery give the impression of a greater personal involvement with the painting, for example there are a number where the respondent has an emotional response to the painting where they find personal relevance or find the atmosphere of the painting appealing.

The National Gallery through its interpretation of the Madonna of the Pinks offers visitors different 'positions' from which to respond to the painting. Some respondents build their interpretation of the Madonna of the Pinks in synthesis with the themes presented by the gallery, even occasionally using the same language to express their opinion. This is generally done by those visitors who present themselves as 'art lovers', who talk about art in very traditional ways for example focusing on style, artist, and art historical context. They may also have been informed by their own knowledge of art and certainly respondents talked in this manner, for example, comparing the Madonna with other paintings they had seen, placing it in an historical context.

The National Gallery also highlights the secular relevance of the painting over and above its religious context. This is appealing not only for those who do not find religious painting appealing but in theory everyone can relate to the bond between a mother and child? It is interesting that in the National Gallery responses both men and women talked about the relationship in quite emotive terms, whereas at the Bowes it was mainly (though not exclusively) the women who commented on this. The painting presents an ideal of the mother/child relationship but one which is believable to many visitors.

Some respondents presented their opinions about the Madonna of the Pinks in opposition to the National Gallery interpretation, and this happened far more rarely at The Bowes Museum. For example, they questioned whether the painting was by Raphael or worthy of him (suggesting that they know

more than the gallery) or felt the painting did not reflect for them a believable mother/child relationship. Some respondents did not feel qualified to make a comment for example one respondent said that they were not 'arty or religious' so the painting had little impact on them or other respondents remarked that they preferred different kinds of art. But the interpretation provided by the gallery enabled these interpretations to happen - the respondents built their response against this 'official' view.

Regarding the acquisition of the painting there were very few respondents from the Bowes Museum who questioned the act of buying the painting or its cost. There were far more challenges from the respondents at the National Gallery, although the dominant voice was still supportive of the purchase of the Madonna. Respondents approved of the idea that art should be bought for the nation and put on public display; it was the cost that they had difficulty reconciling in some cases.

5.1 ANALYSIS OF THE RESPONSE CARDS USED AT THE BOWES MUSEUM

5.1.1 Introduction

The Madonna of the Pinks was displayed in the first floor gallery at the Bowes Museum from 16th April to 26th June 2005. For a period of one week, Response cards were placed in the gallery near to the display. These were available for visitors to use to record any thoughts they might wish to share. The idea of using the response cards was first discussed during interview with the Marketing Manager on 14th April 2005, and permission was given for the researchers to adopt this approach.

One hundred and thirty-three (133) usable cards were collected.

5.1.2 Background and context

5.1.2.1 The Madonna of the Pinks on display at The Bowes Museum

The Madonna of the Pinks was displayed in the first floor gallery at the Bowes Museum from 16th April to 26th June 2005, along with two accompanying paintings by Titian and Ghirlandaio on loan from the National Gallery, London. The exhibition highlighted the 'human and familiar' depiction of the Virgin and Child by Raphael, rather than an account of Raphael's career. Domenico Ghirlandaio's Virgin and Child (1480s) was also exhibited, and it featured as a contrast as it 'retains the formalised, hieratic qualities of traditional representations'. The second accompanying painting was Titian's *Madonna and Child* (1570s) in which the artist 'indicated the power of the spiritual and human love between Mother and Child by showing them almost dissolving into one another'.⁴⁶

The exhibition was supplemented with further paintings of the same theme from the Bowes' collections including a less conventional depiction of Joseph feeding the Christ Child, assisted by an angel (Plate 5.1.2.1a below).⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Information taken from the *Education, Community and Interpretation strategy for purchasing Raphael's Madonna of the Pinks*, National Gallery, undated, p4

⁴⁷ Triptych: The Holy Family with St. Catherine and St. Barbara, Circle of Bernard Van Orley c1492-1542, Flemish school,

<http://www.thebowesmuseum.org.uk/collections/paintingresults.php3?Description=joseph&Collection=Paintings&t=19&pos=10> (accessed 25 09 2006)

Plate 5.1.2.1a: The triptych from the Bowes Museum showing Joseph feeding the Christ Child, assisted by an angel (c1492-1542)



5.1.2.2 Visitor research at The Bowes Museum

An interview with the marketing manager (14/4/2005) revealed that the Bowes Museum had undertaken some visitor research through the Yorkshire Tourist Board ⁴⁸ as part of a wider research and brand development programme running through late 2004 to early 2005. This was a research project into the motivations, attitudes, level of satisfaction and experiences of visitors to The Bowes Museum. Self-completion questionnaires were distributed at strategic points throughout the museum, with four hundred and twenty-three (423) being completed. Self-completion questionnaires are likely to attract those people who enjoy and feel comfortable filling in survey documents, and this may not be entirely representative of the museum's visitors; however, once this is accepted, the sample size in this instance was large enough to inspire high levels of confidence in the results.⁴⁹

This marketing survey can usefully give some context to the demographic information drawn from the response cards used by RCMG. There are a number of caveats when attempting to compare evidence that has not been collected in the same manner or for the same purpose; for instance the response cards administered by RCMG were intended to capture responses solely in relation to the Madonna of the Pinks, whereas the Yorkshire Tourist Board research covered the whole of The Bowes Museum. But both datasets provide similar demographic information about the respondents, and both pieces of research used self-completion instruments. The sample size of the RCMG response cards, at one hundred and thirty-three (133) is considerably smaller than that of the marketing survey, with correspondingly lower levels of

⁴⁸ *Visitor Research Report: The Bowes Museum*, Yorkshire Tourist Board, York, 15/02/2005

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, p4

confidence, but as we shall see, there are strong similarities between the demographic profile of those completing questionnaires for the Yorkshire Tourist Board and those completing response cards for RCMG.

In the interview with the marketing manager at the Bowes Museum the types of visitors who come to the Bowes were discussed. Visitors encompassed a broad spectrum, from local families to members of fine art societies who represented *'the academic world of the collection.'*

The Yorkshire Tourist Board research states in their summary that:

'The visitors themselves appeared to epitomise two groups; the older visitors, often with grandchildren, and older families whose children are late teen's/early 20's thus leaving the parents more time and money to pursue their own interests. The age groups of visitors tended to be within the broad 45 to 65 age groups and most visitors reside in the North of England (from the Scottish Border, coast to coast, down to Yorkshire and Lancashire).'⁵⁰

This visitor research found that 59% of visitors who completed questionnaires were female, with the most prevalent age group being the 55 to 64 age group. The 25 to 34 age group contained the least visitors. Fifty-eight point seven per cent (58.7%) of respondents were on a visit from their permanent home, with 24.6% visiting from holiday accommodation.⁵¹ These visitors were very happy with their experience, as the research shows:

'The Bowes Museum visitor research has shown that the museum would appear to have a very strong and solid base of loyal visitors, with many being repeat visitors, combined with very high levels of satisfaction that is apparent through the results of the survey. 98% of visitors stated their visit met their expectations and 98.8% stated they would recommend The Bowes Museum to others, demonstrating an incredible level of visitor satisfaction, which was reflected through the very high overall satisfaction rating and value for money rating.'⁵²

Most visitors (63%) were repeat visitors, with the average number of previous visits being five. A majority of visitors, 52.82%, completely agreed that a visit to The Bowes Museum was a learning experience, and as 32.82% also agreed with this statement, overall, 85.64% felt positively towards this description of the museum.⁵³

Although this was marketing survey produced very positive findings for the museum, the staff are keen to encourage more local people to visit:

'We are trying to encourage more locals to visit the museum and we've got ideas of different schemes that we could perhaps introduce to get repeat visits from locals to see all the exhibitions...'

⁵⁰ Ibid, p37

⁵¹ Ibid, p5-6

⁵² Ibid, p 37

⁵³ Ibid, p26

[Marketing manager, 14/4/2005]

'We're still in a very rural kind of underdeveloped way with a big museum in here, so you have to work in a different way with the community in terms of the fact that they can see it as being quite daunting, they have been once and they don't come back. It's trying to give them that ownership back and trying to get them to see that the museum in kind of an interesting place.' (Education manager, 14/4/2005]

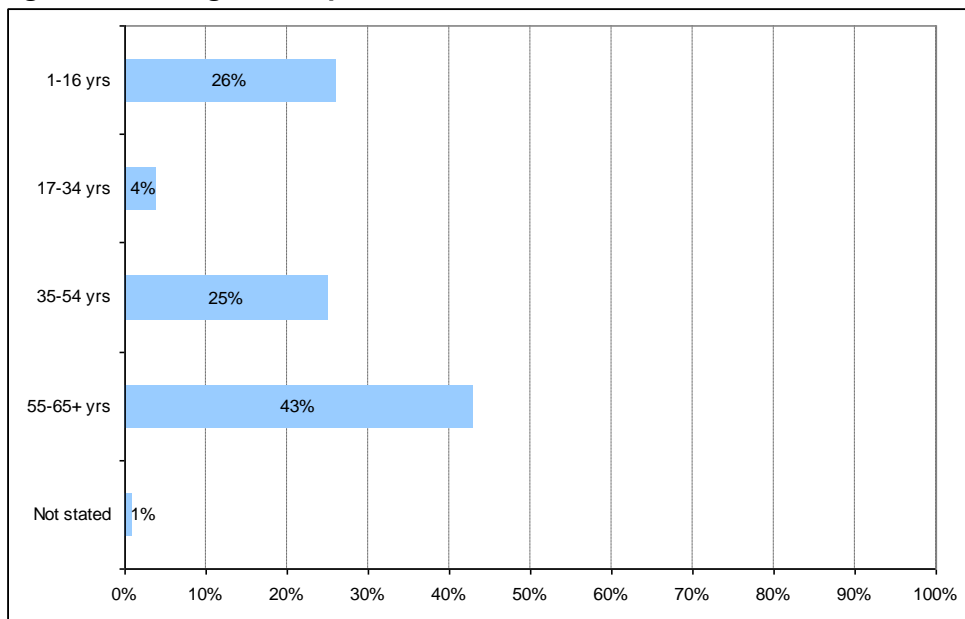
5.1.3 The demographic findings from the RCMG response cards

5.1.3.1 Age and gender of respondents

One hundred and thirty-three (133) response cards were completed by visitors to the gallery where the Madonna of the Pinks was exhibited. Due to the small sample size no statistically significant differences were found and thus any differences between groups should be considered to refer only to those individuals taking part in the research and not generalised to the wider population of museum visitors.

The demographic findings from the response cards indicate that the group of people who recorded their views of the Madonna were very typical of the general visitor to the Bowes Museum as a whole. Looking at the results for the age of the respondents, Fig. 5.1.31a shows that visitors who completed response cards tended to be older, with 60% of respondents aged 45 and over. There were fewer numbers of younger visitors completing response cards, particularly the young adult age group; there were only 4% of responses from visitors aged 17-34 years.

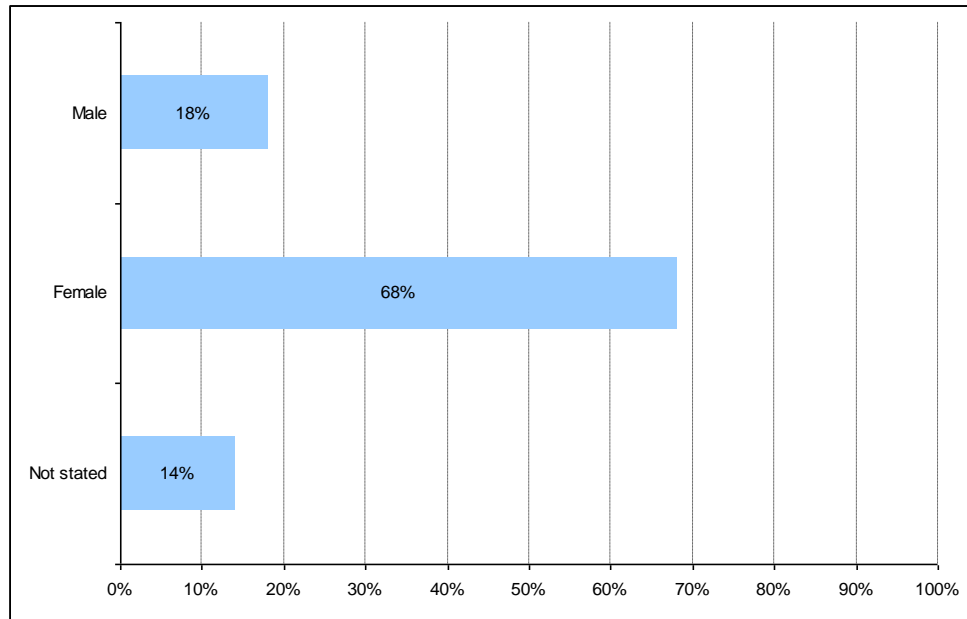
Fig. 5.1.3.1a: Age of respondents, The Bowes Museum



N= 133

The majority of visitors who completed a response card were female (68%). When the Yorkshire Tourist Board conducted their survey into Bowes Museum visitors they found that 59% of respondents were female (compared to 41% male), with the most prevalent age group being the 55 to 65 age group. The 24-34 age group contained the least visitors, both male and female.⁵⁴ Respondents to the Madonna of the Pinks response cards therefore reflect closely the age and gender profile identified in previous research undertaken for the museum.

Fig. 5.1.3.1b: Gender of respondents, The Bowes Museum



N=133

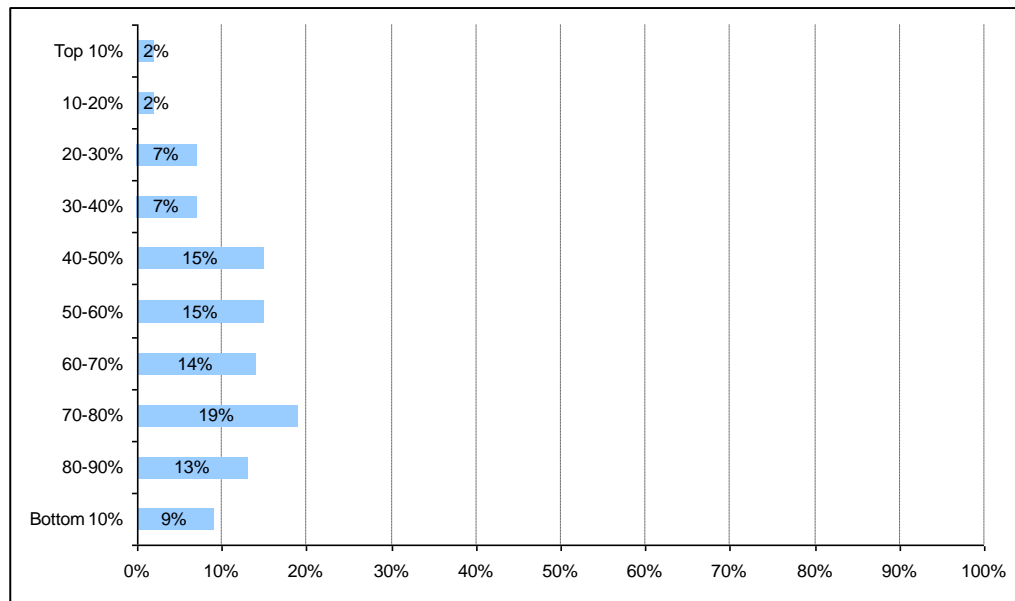
5.1.3.2 Analysing the postcodes

Respondents were asked to give details of their postcode on the response card. Most respondents were happy to do so (118, 89%).

From the postcodes we can see that most of the visitors who completed a response card are more likely to come from less deprived circumstances according to the IMD 2004. Only 4% of visitors live in the top 20% deprived areas of England (see Fig. 5.1.3.2a below).

⁵⁴ *Visitor Research Report: The Bowes Museum*, Yorkshire Tourist Board, York, 15/02/2005, p5-6

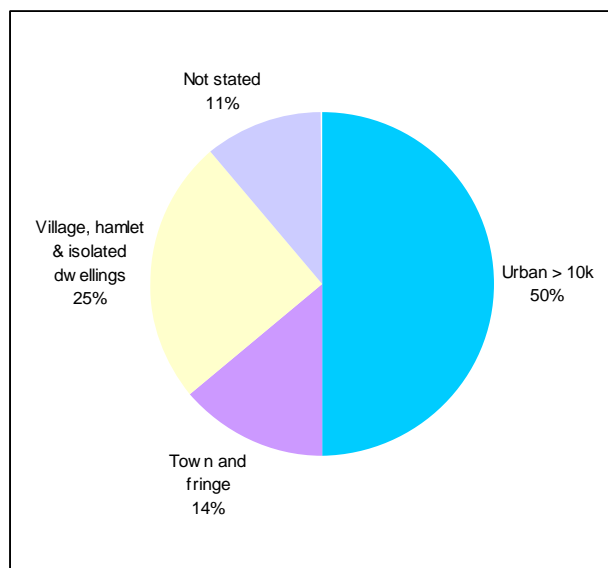
Fig. 5.1.3.2a: Analysis of the respondents' postcodes by the IMD 2004, The Bowes Museum



N=118

It is also possible to analyse the type of area in which respondents live using a Rural/Urban morphology database, and this analysis suggested that half of the respondents lived in urban settlements with populations of over 10,000, followed by 25% of respondents who lived in Villages, Hamlets & Isolated dwellings (25%), and a much smaller 14% of respondents living in Town and Fringe settlements.

Fig. 5.1.3.2b: Analysis of respondents' postcodes to show area type, The Bowes Museum

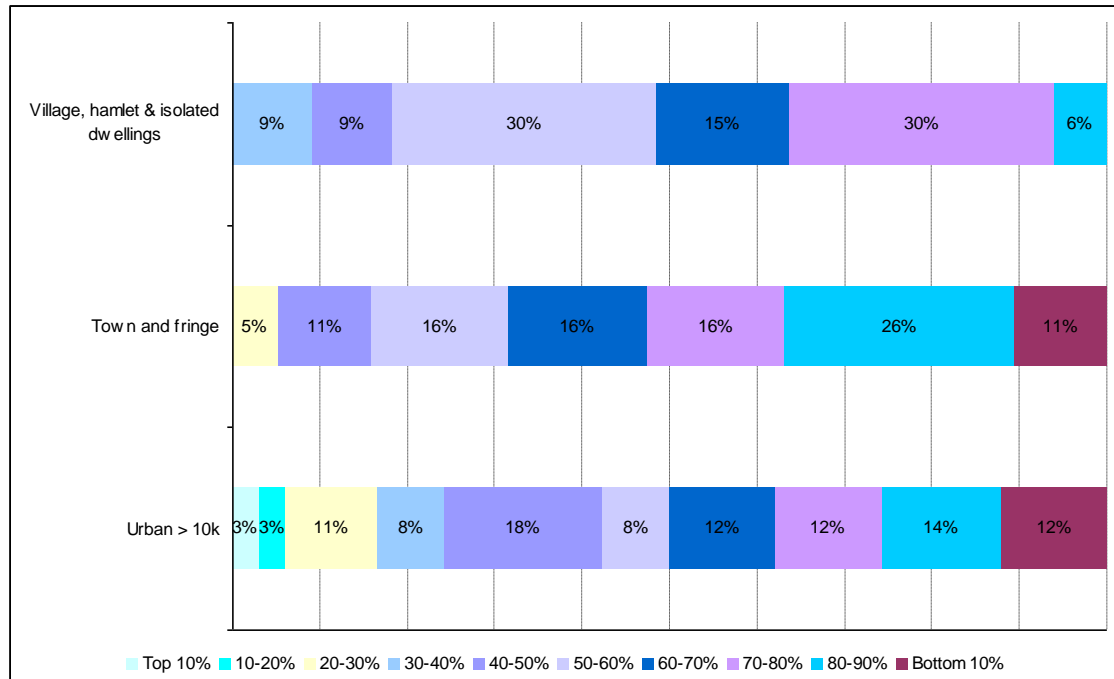


N=133

Well over half of the visitors who completed response cards (64%, missing excluded) live in urban areas. This suggests that it tends to be city-dwellers

who make the journey to The Bowes Museum. However, 25% of visitors live in rural areas. Linking the type of area that visitors come from to the IMD 2004, Fig. 5.1.3.2c shows that rural visitors are not experiencing high levels of deprivation. The postcodes of 6% of visitors are located in Urban areas classified as among the 20% most deprived in England; 17% of visitors live in areas described as among the 30% most deprived. Very few of these visitors can be expected to be experiencing hardship or poverty.

Fig. 5.1.3.2c: Respondent's postcodes analysed by the Urban/Rural morphology database and the IMD 2004, The Bowes Museum



N=118

There was only one postcode from Middleton-in-Teesdale, which is ranked 12,220 by the IMD 2004 (out of 32,482) which places it in the top 30-40% most deprived areas of England.⁵⁵

5.1.3.3 Marketing data – ACORN classification

The website <http://www.upmystreet.com/> enables access to the ACORN classification system, a geo-demographic tool which can be used to identify and understand the UK population for marketing purposes. The ACORN tool categorizes people into 'types' and gives details of what their income, lifestyle choices and social class are likely to be. For example someone identified as likely to be 'type 32' are likely to be retired home owners, typically 'they are over 60 and no longer work. As a result they have modest incomes but are comfortably off. The vast majority of them own their own homes outright. Typically they live in bungalows with two or three bedrooms.'⁵⁶

⁵⁵ <http://www.uklocalarea.com/index.php?q=DL12+OUY> [accessed 30 07 2007]

⁵⁶ Taken from <http://www.upmystreet.com/> [accessed 30 07 2007]

From the 133 response cards, 120 postcodes could be matched to an ACORN 'type.' All UK postcodes, except Northern Ireland, can be categorized under the ACORN system so postcodes from Wales and Scotland, which had to be excluded under the IMD 2004, were included here. Based on the analysis of the postcodes obtained from the Madonna of the Pinks exhibition, there is no dominant 'type' whom completed a response card. However if we collapse the 'types' into the larger categories identified within the ACORN system we can get a broad overview of the types of neighbourhoods from which the respondents came.⁵⁷

Table and Fig. 5.1.3.3a show that the majority of those visitors who completed RCMG response cards (53%) are located within the group known as 'Wealthy achievers', amongst the most affluent and successful people in the UK. Another substantial category is 'Comfortably off' with 29% of respondents likely to be living in neighbourhoods where people are financially stable and are more likely to be home-owners. Those of more 'Moderate means' or 'Hard-pressed' are much less likely to be represented in this sample.

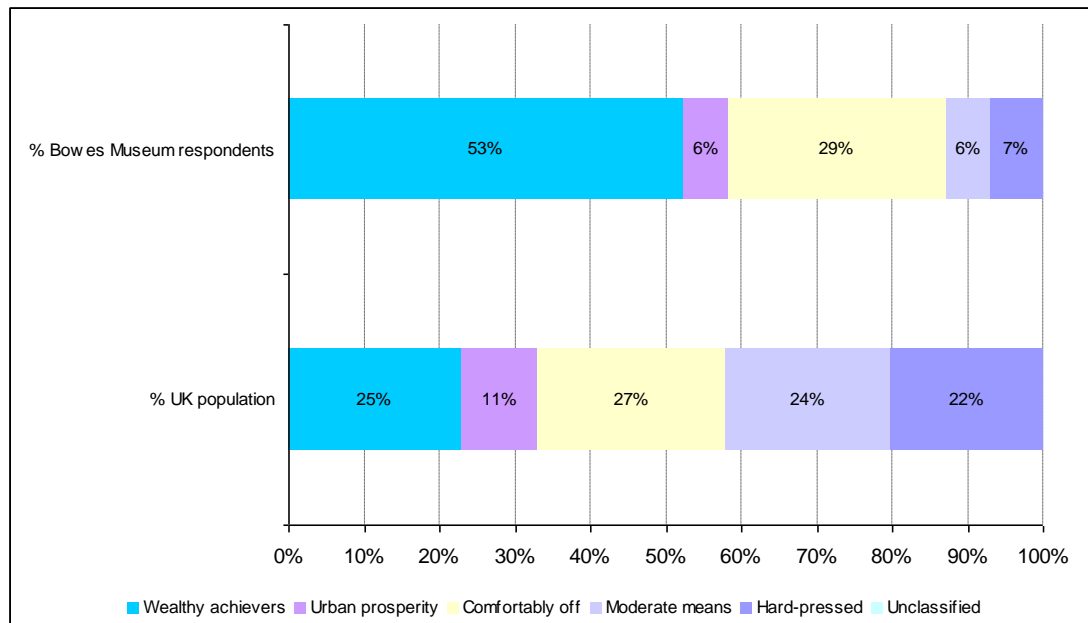
Table 5.1.3.3a: The Bowes Museum response card sample and ACORN classification

Category	Group		UK population	The Bowes Museum sample
Wealthy achievers	A	Wealthy executives	8.6%	20%
	B	Affluent greys	7.7%	21%
	C	Flourishing families	8.8%	12%
Urban prosperity	D	Prosperous professionals	2.2%	1%
	E	Educated urbanites	4.6%	3%
	F	Aspiring singles	3.9%	2%
Comfortably off	G	Starting out	2.5%	7%
	H	Secure families	15.5%	13%
	I	Settled Suburbia	6%	9%
	J	Prudent pensioners	2.6%	0%
Moderate means	K	Asian communities	2.5%	0%
	L	Post-industrial families	15.5%	3%
	M	Blue-collar roots	6%	3%
Hard-pressed	N	Struggling families	14.1%	4%
	O	Burdened singles	4.5%	3%
	P	High-rise hardship	1.6%	0%
	Q	Inner city adversity	2.1%	0%

The Bowes Museum, N=120

⁵⁷ Categories taken from Acorn: the smarter consumer classification, CACI, 2004, from <http://www.caci.co.uk> [accessed 30 07 2007]

Fig. 5.1.3.3a: ACORN classification, comparing the Bowes Museum sample with the UK population



The Bowes Museum, N=120

This picture links closely to the visitor profile identified in the Yorkshire Tourist Board survey,⁵⁸ although more rural located visitors were captured in their research than through the RCMG response cards. According to the marketing survey, the Bowes Museum attracts a diverse audience but the top five main markets for the Bowes Museum were identified as 'Wealthy Older Families in Exclusive Areas', 'Older Rural Communities', 'Rural Older Families', 'Affluent Older Families in Urban Areas' and 'Older Couples and Young Singles'.⁵⁹

Bearing in mind the limitations of the RCMG data in terms of size of sample, the information from the indicators used appears to confirm the findings from the IMD 2004 that the RCMG respondents represent a diverse sample but the majority are from affluent and educated backgrounds.

5.1.3.4 Regional impact of the Madonna of the Pinks

Those people who completed the RCMG response cards represented all English regions, but most of the respondents (51%) came from the North-East followed by 15% from Yorkshire and the Humber. The Yorkshire Tourist Board research for the Bowes Museum found that 55% of visitors came from the North of England, with 17% from Yorkshire & Humber,⁶⁰ very similar to these

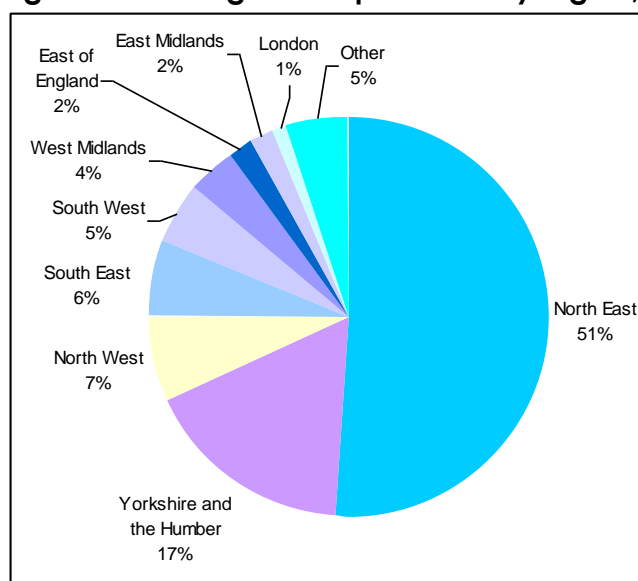
⁵⁸ The Yorkshire Tourist Board marketing survey postcode analysis used the TARGET system, which divides people into 50 separate segments based on various attributes such as life stage, family composition, affluence, and newspaper readership, which is similar to ACORN

⁵⁹ Yorkshire Tourist Board, (2005), *Visitor Research Report: The Bowes Museum*, YTB, p34

⁶⁰ *Visitor Research Report: The Bowes Museum*, Yorkshire Tourist Board, York, 15/02/2005: 5-6.

findings from the response cards (although in the marketing survey 'the North of England' included Cumbria).

Fig. 5.1.3.4a: Origin of respondents by region, The Bowes Museum



N=125

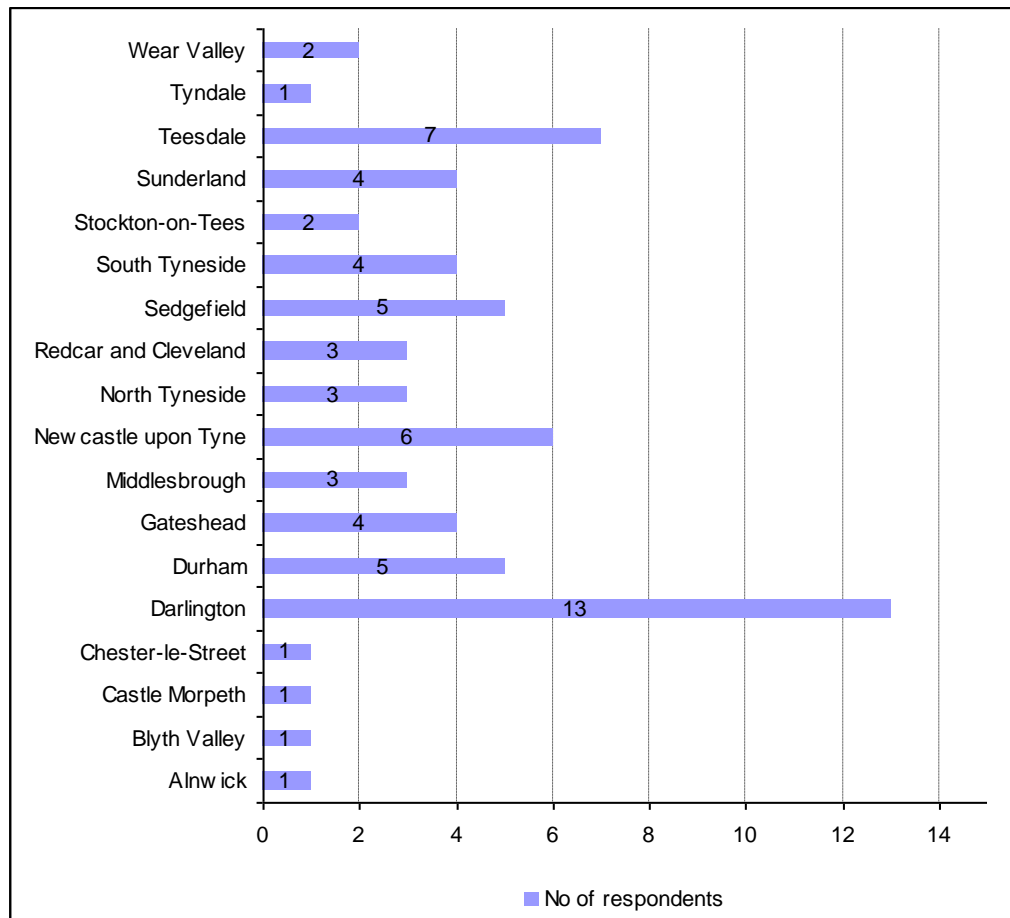
Visitors from outside of England were classified under 'Other' and these visitors, who represented 5% of the sample, came from Cardiff and Pembrokeshire in Wales, Dumfries and Galloway and Highland in Scotland, Hamburg in Germany and Belfast in Northern Ireland.

As one of the objectives of Bowes Museum is to increase the number of local people who visit, it is useful to break down the visits from the North-East to ascertain the penetration of the Bowes Museum in the local area,⁶¹ bearing in mind that the response cards do not include all those visiting during the period of the research.

From those respondents visiting from the North-East, the largest proportion of respondents came from areas identified as near Darlington (20%). Eleven per cent (11%) of respondents came from Teesdale, the region in which Bowes Museum is located and, breaking this down further, we see that three respondents came from Barnard Castle and one respondent is from the village where the case study primary school is located (Fig. 5.1.3.4b).

⁶¹ Information was obtained from <http://www.uklocalarea.com/> (accessed 19/09/2006)

Fig. 5.1.3.4b: Origin of respondents in the North-East, The Bowes Museum



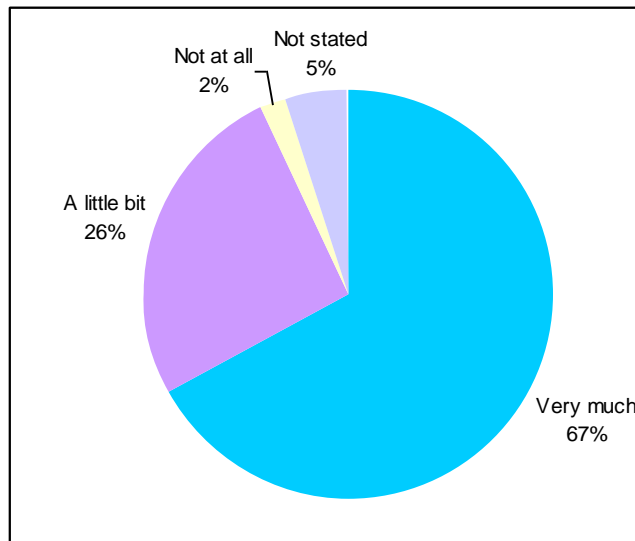
N=66

The involvement of the case study primary school with the Madonna of the Pinks, through museum visits and sessions in school, may have stimulated an interest within the community and possibly encouraged this visit. One parent in conversation with the researchers after a presentation of the children's work at the Bowes Museum on 17th June 2005 commented that people in the village were asking what the Madonna of the Pinks was all about, as there had been posters around the place. This parent had been able to explain what it was about because of the infectious enthusiasm of her child, who had been very enthusiastic about the experience. (It would be interesting to speculate if this visit to the Bowes Museum by someone from Middleton-in-Teesdale was precipitated by the school's involvement. The response card in question (ID 118) was completed by a woman aged 65+, who was 'very much' interested in art.)

5.1.3.5 Interest in art

Respondents completing the RCMG response cards were asked how interested they were in art and could choose from three responses: 'Not at all', 'a little bit' and 'very much.' Analysing the responses, most respondents (67%) indicated that they were 'very much' interested in art, and only 2% were 'not at all' interested in art.

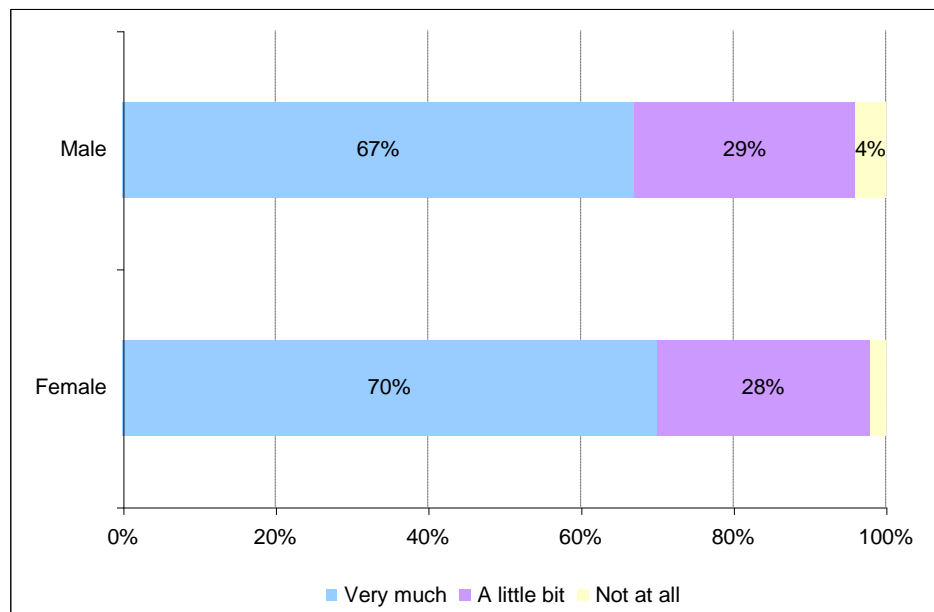
Fig. 5.1.3.5a: Interest in art, The Bowes Museum



N=133

The research undertaken by the Yorkshire Tourist Board also found that for 59% of visitors the art in the museum was 'very important.'⁶² There is no indication of a relationship between interest in art and gender. Almost the same number of males and females agreed that they are 'very much' interested in art.

Fig. 5.1.3.5b: Interest in art comparison by gender, The Bowes Museum



Male, N=24; Female, N=89

An analysis of interest in art and location based on postcode was undertaken to see if there was any relationship between the two, but the sample size was too small to provide any useful results.

⁶² Yorkshire Tourist Board, (2005), *Visitor Research Report: The Bowes Museum*, YTB, p14
 PART 5: RESPONSE CARDS AT THE BOWES MUSEUM AND THE NATIONAL GALLERY 201

5.1.3.6 Conclusions: the typical characteristics of the Bowes visitor who completed an RCMG response card

From the findings of our sample of response cards completed in The Bowes Museum we can deduce that the typical visitor who completed a response card may be likely to demonstrate the following characteristics:

- Is likely to be aged 45 or over
- Is likely to be female
- Is likely to be 'very much' interested in art
- Is likely not to be experiencing personal deprivation
- Is likely to be a 'Wealthy achiever'
- Is likely to live in an urban area
- Is likely to come from the North-East

These characteristics match closely the audience profile described by both the museum staff and the Yorkshire Tourist Board marketing survey and this is a profile for art gallery visitors that has been identified more generally.⁶³

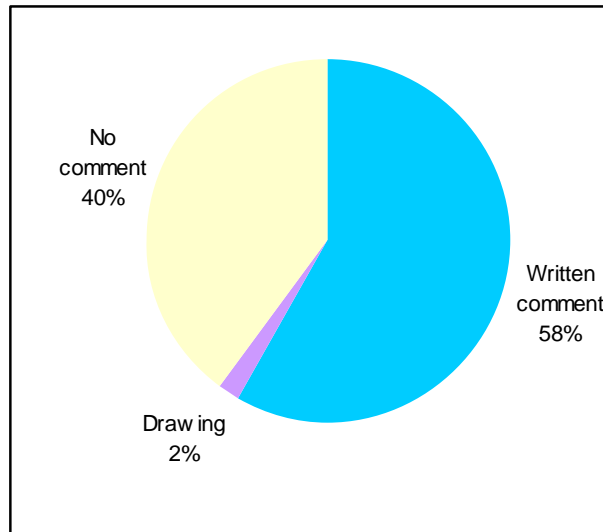
It seems clear from this sample that the Madonna of the Pinks exhibition has not attracted new audiences to the Bowes Museum, at least not during the research period. However it may also be that more 'traditional' audiences are more likely to complete a response card.

5.1.4 Responses to the Madonna of the Pinks

Visitors to the Madonna of the Pinks exhibition at the Bowes Museum were invited to make a comment in response to the following open question 'We are interested what you think about Madonna of the Pinks...' Visitors could choose to write or draw their comments. Of the one hundred and thirty-three (133) visitors who completed a response card, seventy-seven (77,58%) made a written comment in response to the exhibition, three young people made a drawing and fifty-three (53) made no comment at all but completed the demographic information on the back of the response card.

⁶³ See for example Schuster, D. M. (1995) The public interest in the art museum's public, in Pearce, S. (ed) *Art in museums*, Athlone Press, London, p109-142

Fig. 5.1.4a: Responses to 'We are interested in what you think about the Madonna of the Pinks...' The Bowes Museum



N=133

According to the National Gallery's Education, Communication and Interpretation strategy for *Madonna of the Pinks*,⁶⁴ the painting underpins many of the gallery's programmes which explore the cross-cultural themes of mother and child, family relationships, self awareness and identity. It is felt that the picture's scale is similar to that of a family snapshot which enables and 'enhances its accessibility to a contemporary audience who might otherwise struggle to relate to old Master paintings.' Furthermore the painting was exhibited 'primarily in its original cultural and art historical context while making connections to present day experience.' In particular, the gallery concentrated on the image of the Virgin and Child, showing how Raphael's 'envisioning of the subject established the human and familiar depiction of the relationship.'⁶⁵

5.1.4.1 Analysis of the written comments

The seventy-seven (77) written comments were analysed for common themes manually using the Generic Learning Outcomes (GLOs) as a means of understanding the learning impact of the painting upon respondents. From this analysis emerged a set of 'sub-themes' by which the comments could be coded using the computer software QSR N6. An index tree was composed based on themes extracted from the comments and this was then used to categorise responses so that comparisons could be made. Based on this index tree we can extract the most 'common' themes which respondents talked about in their comments. In total, seventy-four (74) comments could be categorised into a theme and this approach will be used to organise the information below.

This thematic method of coding which emerged during the analysis of the response cards collected at The Bowes Museum was then also used at the

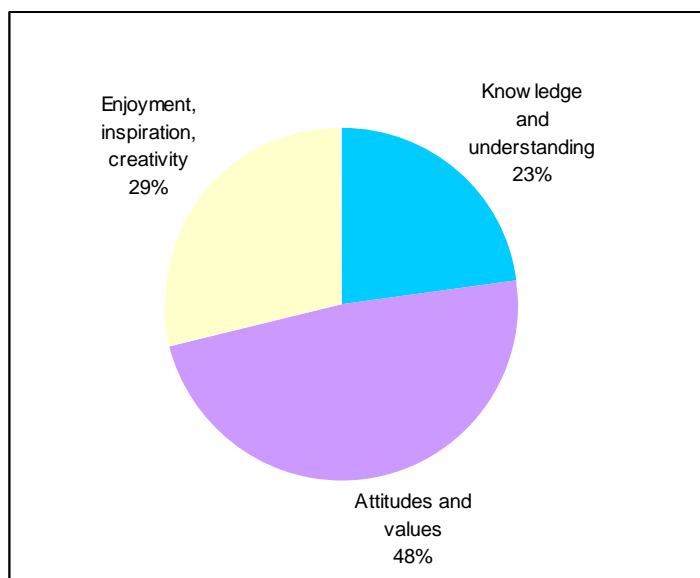
⁶⁴ National Gallery, undated

⁶⁵ Ibid, p2

National Gallery as a means of comparing visitor responses to the Madonna of the Pinks.

Initially, the response cards were coded in relation to the Generic Learning Outcomes (GLOs) on the basis of choosing the 'strongest' GLO to represent the impact upon the respondent. As a percentage, the most dominant GLO was felt to be Attitudes and Values (48%) as the open nature of the question seemed to encourage respondents to express their opinion of various aspects of the painting and the exhibition. This was followed by Enjoyment, Inspiration, Creativity (29%) and Knowledge and Understanding (23%). There were not felt to be any instances of an increase in Skills or references to Action, Behaviour, Progression from the comments.

Fig. 5.1.4.1a: Analysis of respondents' comments by the GLOs, The Bowes Museum



N=77

In some instances (16 responses) the attitudes towards the Madonna of the Pinks appeared to be informed by the respondent's knowledge of art so there was an important interplay between these two outcomes. For example the following comment expresses an attitude about the acquisition of the painting (that it is a good thing) which seems informed by a particular approach to art as 'art for art's sake':

When seeing true craft and quality there is little concern over the value and 'price' of such pieces. Collecting and exhibiting representations from styles and periods are our responsibility not a thing to be 'saved'. The artists are worth their salt. [Male, aged 45-54, very much interested in art]

As most of the comments were lengthy and frequently used the GLOs in combination, a thematic analysis was felt to be useful. The themes that emerged were classified as:

- Specific reference to the style of painting (colour, light, size, art historical context)
- Reference to the depiction of the subject matter (what could actually be seen)
- Attitudes to the painting (appreciation, criticism, language used)
- Discussion of the relationship between Madonna and child
- Acquisition of the painting, cost, national tour
- Opinions of the exhibition

- **Specific reference to the style of the painting:**

Possibly drawing on their previous experiences of art and paintings, respondents talked about the Madonna of the Pinks in terms of its use of colour, light and the size of the painting. Most of the adult respondents gave the impression, based on the language that they used and were comfortable with, that they were used to thinking about art. Fifteen per cent (15%) of respondents, for example, remarked on the use of colour in the painting, particularly how fresh and vibrant the colours were which some respondents found astonishing:

A beautifully natural girl with her child. Good fresh colours! It gets better + better looking at it... [55-64 yrs, gender not stated]

The colours were so fresh + vibrant it is hard to imagine it is nearly 500 years old... [55-64 yrs, female]

Several respondents mentioned the use of light in the picture, referring to it as 'luminous' as a way of describing the effect created:

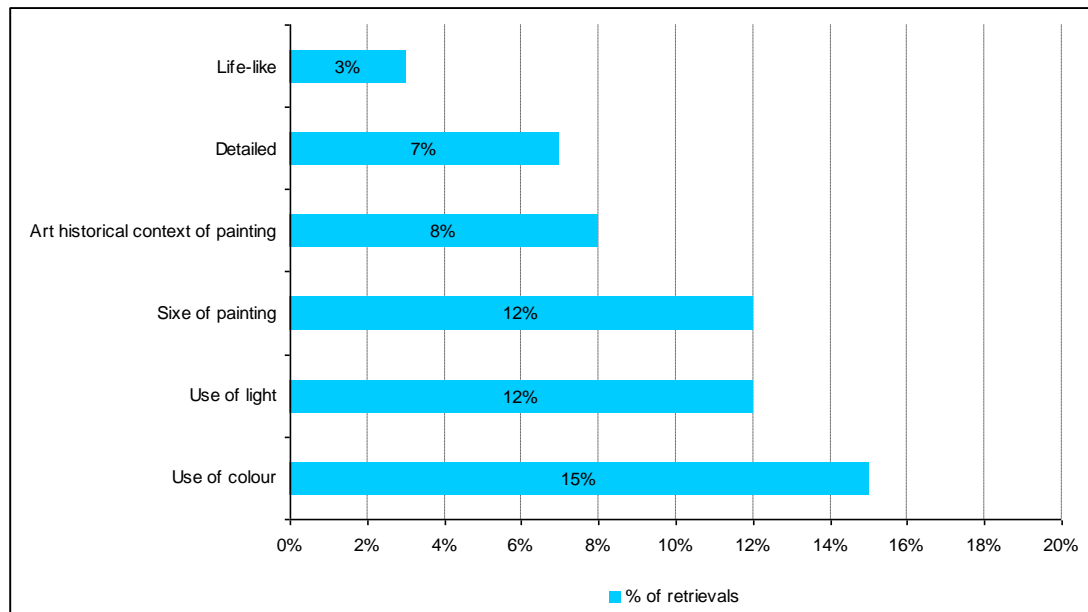
The picture shines, it appears to be luminescent (perhaps it is clever lighting!)... [45-54, female]

There is a wonderful luminosity in the painting... [35-44 yrs, female]

Fig. 5.1.4.1b below summarises the analysis of the seventy-four (74) written comments in relation to themes which refer directly to the style of the painting.⁶⁶

⁶⁶ There were 77 written comments in total but only 74 have been analysed using QSR N6

Fig. 5.1.4.1b: Reference to the style of the painting, The Bowes Museum

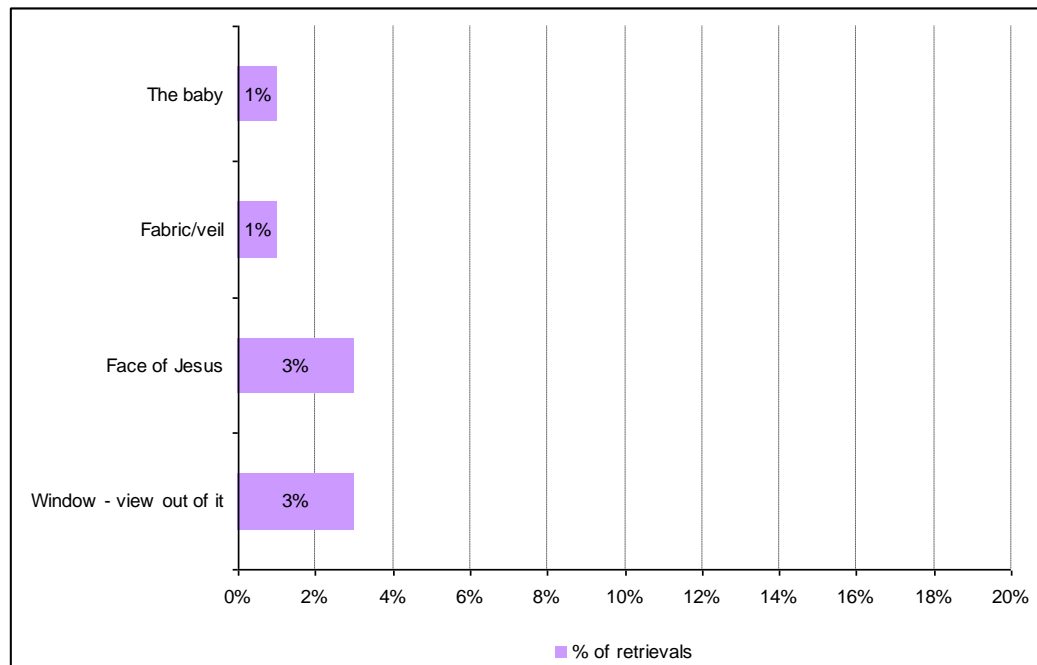


N=74

- **References to the depiction of the subject matter:**

Perhaps surprisingly, respondents made very few descriptive references to the actual content of the painting, what they could see in the first instance.

Fig. 5.1.4.1c: Reference to the depiction of the subject matter, The Bowes Museum



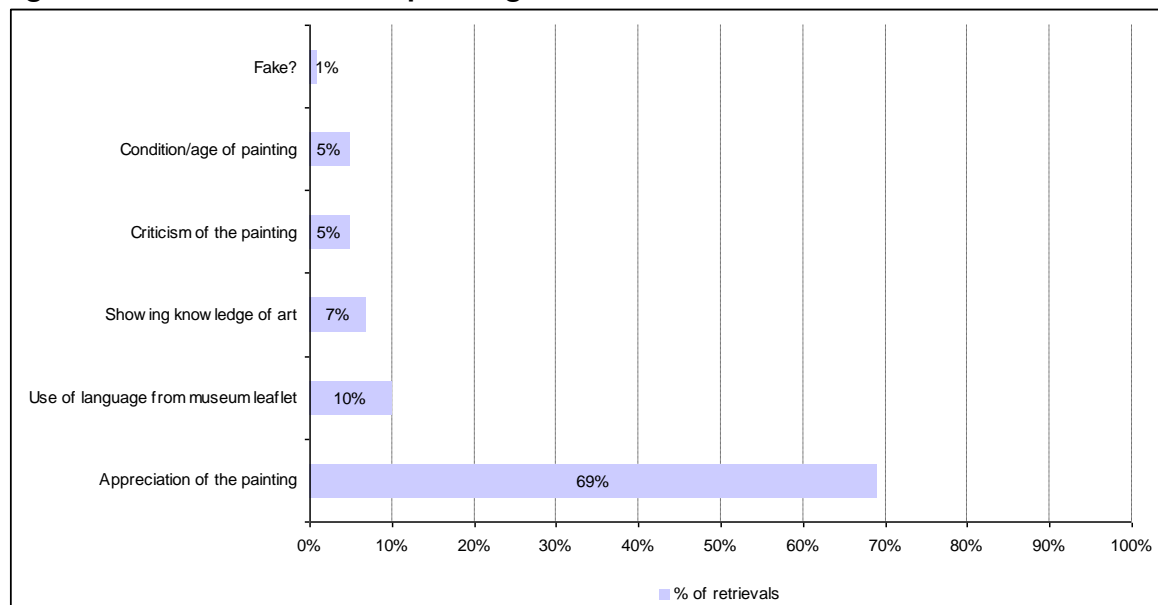
N=74

- **Attitudes to the painting:**

The Madonna of the Pinks was highly appreciated by 69% of respondents and the attitudes expressed towards it and the accompanying paintings were very favourable. Some strong, emotive words were used to describe

engagement with the painting such as 'stunning', 'wonderful', 'beautiful', 'breath-taking' and 'miracle'; however, there is at the same time a sense of personal distance. Respondents appreciated the painting in terms of the greatness of the art but did not often discuss its personal relevance to them.

Fig. 5.1.4.1d: Attitudes to the painting, The Bowes Museum



N=74

Responses were not always so positive; while some participants took issue over the acquisition of the painting, which will be discussed elsewhere, a small selection of respondents felt that the painting was not to their taste, and some writers buttressed their opinions with art historical references:

Personally I preferred the Titian and the Ghirlandaio... Although Raphael is a good draughtsman, some parts of its painting (especially the babe's feet) are not worthy of him, but overall it is an attractive painting. The Titian is finer and the earlier more stylised work [that] accompanied both was I thought both tender and highly accomplished. [Male, aged 65+, a little bit interested in art]

This respondent also questions tacitly whether Raphael actually painted the Madonna of the Pinks and is the only respondent to do so. A second respondent questioned the appeal of the painting and took a stance that was very different from that of the National Gallery leaflet:

Very small - the child looks unexpressive and shows no emotion. Is it valuable because of its age, the artists name or because it is well painted I wonder?!! [Gender unknown, 45-54 years]

Comments such as that above were rare; whether consciously or subconsciously, ten per cent (10%) of respondents imitated the language used in the leaflet that accompanied the exhibition in answering the open question and this included the direct use of words such as 'exquisite' (used 5 times) and 'tender' (used 3 times) which are used in the leaflet, but also

included references to the themes reflected in the National Gallery's interpretation of the painting. The exhibition leaflet, for example, states: 'The three paintings from the National Gallery displayed in this exhibition show how representations of this subject became increasingly naturalistic during the Italian Renaissance' which is reflected in the following:

The body language between the mother and child manages to look natural and loving as in the Titian painting... [17-24 yrs, female].

Other examples:

It's like an exquisite, tiny jewel - beautiful [female aged 65+] - leaflet refers to the 'exquisite grace and idealisation of the human form'

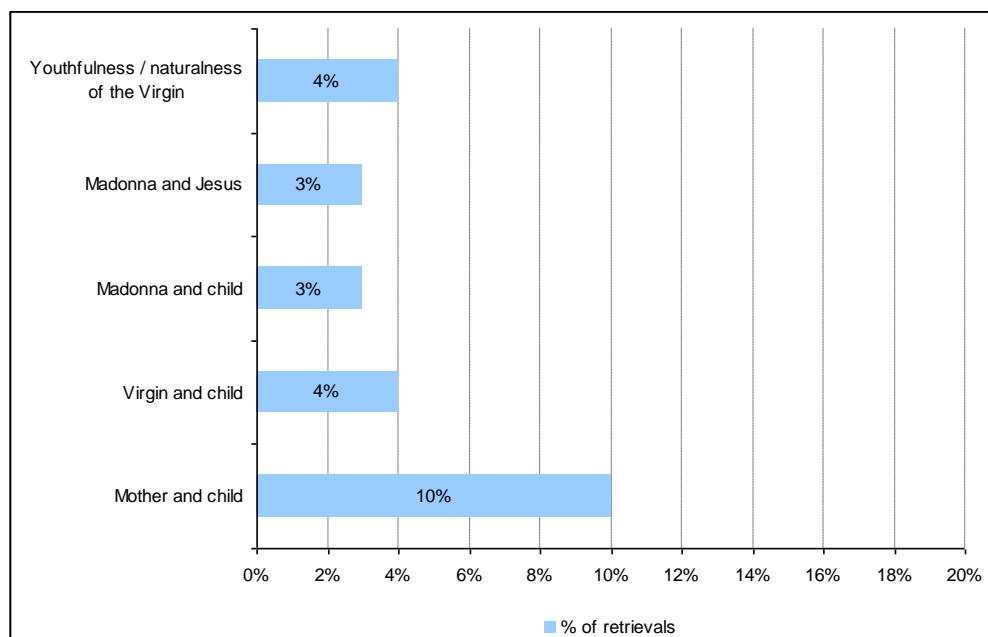
Amazing clarity, beautiful yet subtle colours... [45-54 yrs, female] - close to the 'subdued colour range' referred to in the leaflet

'The resemblance to his mother, especially about the eyes is also worth noting' [65+ years, gender not stated] - from the exhibition leaflet, 'Christ, who looks very like his young mother, sits naked on a cushion on her knee.'

Other participants talked about the painting 'glowing' or its 'luminosity', echoing the leaflet which compares the Madonna to an 'illuminated' manuscript.

Within the National Gallery interpretation the Madonna and Christ are variously referred to as the 'Virgin and child', 'Christ', and as 'mother and child.' Respondents were happier using the secular references rather than 'Virgin and child'.

Fig. 5.1.4.1e: Variable references to the Madonna and Child, The Bowes Museum



N=74

- **The relationship of the Madonna and Child:**

Seven per cent (7%) of comments spoke directly about the relationship depicted in the painting between the Madonna and Child. It was described generally in terms of it being a tender, loving and protective relationship, perhaps encouraged by the leaflet's interpretation. For three respondents, it was effective because the relationship portrayed was believable - it was how they felt a mother and child should interact:

A perfect composition between Mother and Child displaying the interaction well known by any parent... [45-54 yrs, female]

A comfortable pleasing picture of mother and child... [65+ years, female]

Mary looks like a young girl (rather than the more doleful other-worldly way she is often portrayed) who is delighted and a little awe-struck by the child on her lap... [35-44 yrs, female]

Conversely where respondents did not feel the relationship was portrayed effectively they preferred other paintings in the exhibition which conveyed for them a more 'realistic' relationship between mother and child, for instance:

...the depiction of Mary and Jesus by Titian is probably the most accurate recreation of the atmosphere and conditions of the time without the romanticised and 'squeaky clean' images portrayed by others [Male, aged 35-44 years]

Prefer the painting by Titian which depicts a more realistic representation of a woman and baby, even to the child's rosy cheeks [Female, aged 55-64]

Another respondent found it a difficult painting to engage with because of the religious connotations of the painting, something which she did not share:

I think it is very beautiful, showing great depth and use of light. However I also believe it is a representation of the virgin and child that is exclusive to the Roman Catholic Church and shows how some believe you can buy your place in heaven. [Female, 35-44 years]

- **Attitudes to the acquisition, cost and national tour of the Madonna of the Pinks:**

The response card enabled some of the respondents to express their attitudes towards the acquisition of the Madonna of the Pinks, both positive and negative. Twelve per cent (12%) of respondents talked about how they felt it was positive that the Madonna of the Pinks had been saved for the nation. Two respondents referred to their experience as a 'privilege' and this attitude was for one respondent linked to the ability to see the painting in the North-East:

A great privilege to see it at Bowes (i.e. out of London!) close up, no barriers and fewer people. A wonderful example of Renaissance Art + a great saving for the nation [Female, 55-64]

Other respondents valued the opportunity to see the Madonna of the Pinks in 'their' area which also reflects in the 51% of respondents who came from the North-East - it would be interesting to speculate how much of a draw the Madonna of the Pinks was to their visiting of the Bowes Museum. Only one comment suggests directly that the respondents travelled especially to see the Madonna of the Pinks:

Wonderful! Well worth the drive in great heat! Such a 'glow' to the figures [Female aged 65+ years from Bishop Auckland, County Durham]

The controversy surrounding the painting regarding its purchase was not referred to by many respondents as most of them seemed to accept that buying the artwork was a good thing. Some saw the publicity as beneficial. Even those respondents who did disagree, implicitly or explicitly, with the amount of money spent, valued the painting itself and the opportunity to see it:

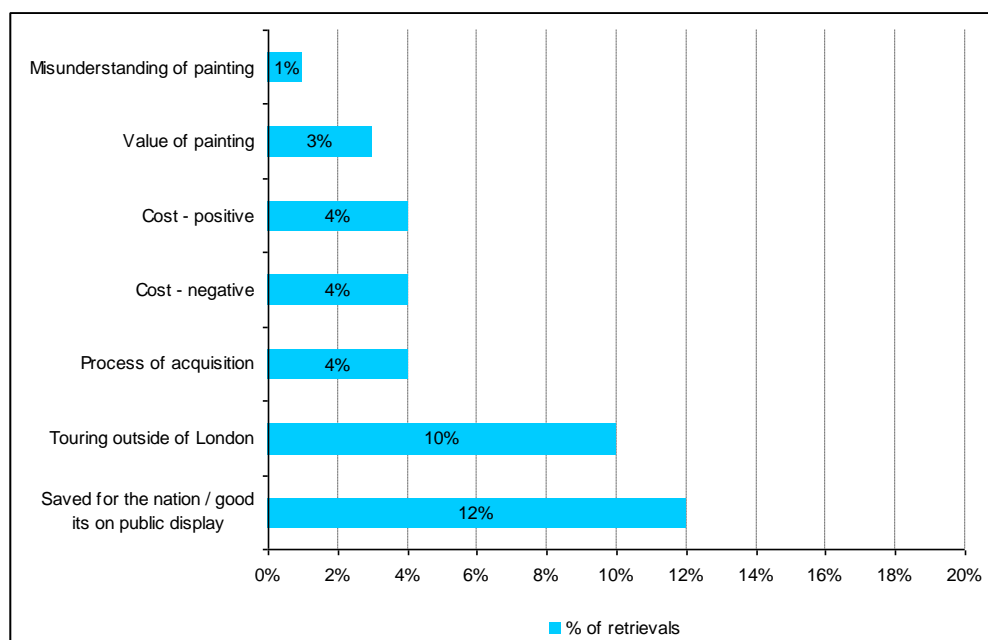
I think it is a stunning painting- great skill in composition & execution. Such a shame the Duke of Northumberland didn't feel able to donate it to the nation [Gender not stated, 55-64 years]

Personally, it really pisses me off that so much public and quasi-public (lottery) money was spent on a lucky find to line the pockets of a feudal aristocratic family who still lord it over their lands from a stately pile... Having said that, I applaud the efforts to make it more accessible to the likes of us poor serfs - and have its contexts explained ref: symbolism to us. Still doesn't justify the costs tho... [Male, 45-54 years]

There was only one respondent who appeared to misunderstand the meaning of the Madonna of the Pinks, judged by the following comment:

Beautiful rendition of the human form. Almost religious [Male, aged 45-54]

Fig. 5.1.4.1f: Acquisition, cost and tour of the Madonna of the Pinks, The Bowes Museum



N=74

- **Opinions of the exhibition:**

Reasons why 14% of the respondents praised the exhibition included the opportunity to see the contrasting paintings on the theme of mother and child together and the contextual information given. There were few criticisms made of the exhibition itself:

Great to see the contrast between the different painters/ styles. The colours, light and detail of the "masters" are quite astonishing and awe-inspiring... A good thought-provoking exhibition - I got a lot out of it [Male, 35-44 years]

My Wife is always dragging me round exhibitions with mixed success. I really enjoyed seeing this masterpiece [Male, aged 55-64, a little bit interested in art]

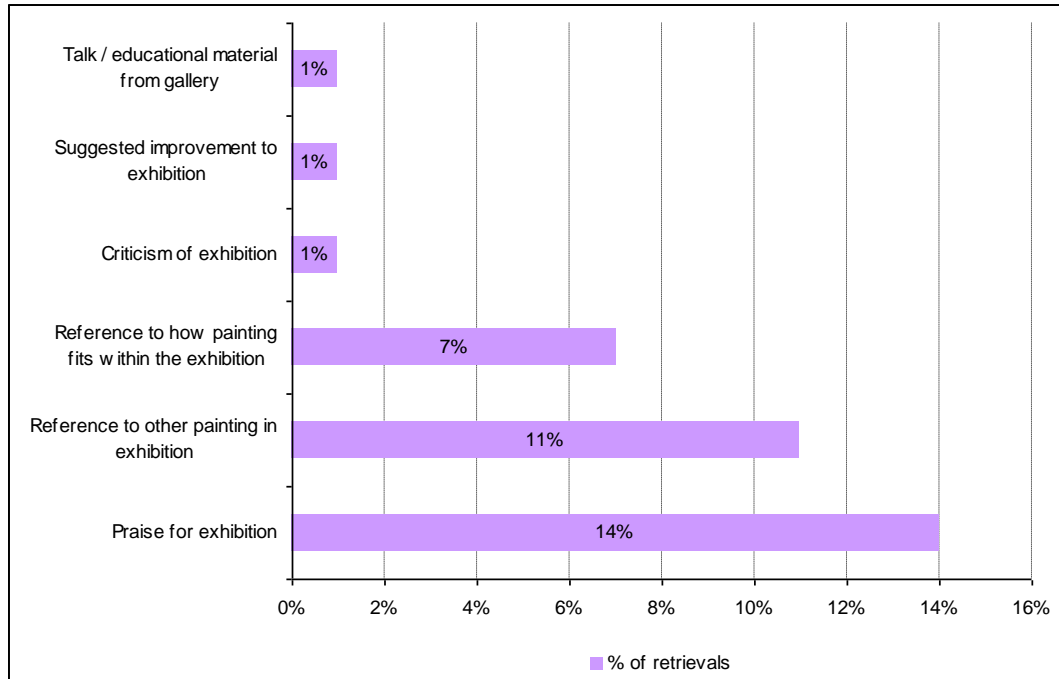
V. interesting to see the combination of the mother/ child theme with the Ghirlandaio, Titian, Raphael. Also interesting how it came into the national ownership- it raises controversial matters; so it those two contexts it has been a rewarding and fascinating visit [Female aged 65+, very interested in art]

I thought the exhibition was exquisite. I saw the M of P at the National but here it was just so wonderful to be able to see it at very close quarters. Lighting was brill. The steward actually loved it too- good to talk to someone really interested in their task. Many thanks [Female, aged 55-64]

Some responses referred to the layout of the exhibition which enabled visitors to feel they were 'close' to the painting:

Totally beautiful. Great to be able to see it at head height and uninterrupted. Good context display for a complete art novice like me. Let's have displays in the regions like this... [Female aged 45-54]

Fig. 5.1.4.1g: Opinions of the exhibition, The Bowes Museum



N=74

5.1.4.2 Conclusions to the analysis of the written comments

Over half (58%) of those who completed the response cards left a written comment that could be analysed. Most of the other cards contained demographic data only. In relation to the GLOs, taking one single most evident GLO per card, nearly half (48%) of the comments could be classified as comments concerned with Attitudes and Values, with about a quarter of the remaining comments concerned with each of two other GLOs (Enjoyment, inspiration, Creativity (29%) and Knowledge and Understanding (23%)).

Respondents commented frequently on the style and general impression of the painting (colour, light, size), rarely describing what they could actually see, and frequently using the language of the National Gallery leaflet to express an opinion of the painting. Interpretation tended towards an art historical approach based on previous knowledge, setting the painting within a museum or art-related context, rather than a personal context. The language used to refer to the Madonna was overwhelmingly secular (mother and child) rather than religious. Visitors very much appreciated the painting and the opportunity to see close to home and enjoyed the chance to compare the Raphael with other paintings. Where the money spent on the painting was questioned or openly disagreed with, more ire was reserved for the Duke of Northumberland rather than the idea of buying a painting for the

nation. This idea of purchasing the painting was not questioned -just the amount and who benefited.

5.1.5 General conclusions

The visitors who completed the response cards at the Bowes Museum were typical of the majority of art museum visitors – comfortably or well off, educated, older and female. They understood art museums, most had some interest in or knowledge of art history and were content with the approach taken by the National Gallery to the interpretation of the painting, and to the exhibition as produced by The Bowes Museum.

In relation to learning impact, it is interesting that these visitors had the knowledge, experience and information to draw on in the deployment of interpretive strategies that were public, impersonal, sanctioned. Unlike the young women from the Rhondda, they had intellectual and cultural resources other than those rooted in their personal experiences on which to draw in making meaning from the painting. Their age and consequent distance in time from motherhood or parenthood (where this was relevant) may also have contributed to the non-use of the experience of motherhood to interpret the painting.

Respondents often used emotional language in their comments, for example respondents felt 'privileged' to have seen it, find it 'amazing' and 'wonderful' etc but these emotional terms seemed tools to be used in the discussion of the painting, rather than a way to engage personally with the painting; most regarded it as an interesting 'object' to look at, and could appreciate it within a framework of similar experiences. The mother and child relationship seemed less important to respondents than to the style and provenance of the painting; they made few connections on a personal level except as 'art-lovers.'

The respondents positioned themselves as art enthusiasts and tried to convey a sense that they 'knew' about paintings. The National Gallery interpretation of the Madonna of the Pinks and accompanying paintings often gave them the language to accomplish this, coupled with their previous experience of visiting art galleries (although some referred to themselves as 'novices' and having only a 'rudimentary' knowledge).

The quantitative analysis of the respondents establishes them as part of the typical art museum audience and the responses from the open question also establishes the particular approach to art that the respondents favour which is based on one art historical knowledge and the value art for art's sake, rather than its relevance to contemporary society. Respondents on the whole were happy that art should be saved for the nation (that is the job of the art museum) for the public who are able to appreciate it in quiet surroundings. These are traditional museum / gallery visitors with traditional views on art and culture.

5.2 NATIONAL GALLERY MADONNA OF THE PINKS EXHIBITION – ADULT AND CHILD RESPONSE CARDS

5.2.1 Introduction

It was not deemed appropriate for response cards to be used in the exhibition *Raphael: from Urbino to Rome* which took place from 20th October 2004 – 16th January 2005 at the National Gallery. However, RCMG was permitted to use response cards during the half-term week in October 2005.

Two different types of response cards were left in Room 8 of the National Gallery during half term for adult and children visitors to complete (see Appendix C). The target agreed with the National Gallery was to collect a total of 300 response cards, adult and children, from the half term period. In total the National Gallery collected two hundred and fifty (250) adult and seventeen (17) child response cards over the week. Similar response cards to those used at the Bowes Museum were re-used at the National Gallery so that comparisons could be made between the two venues.

The cards were not left unattended in the gallery as they were at The Bowes Museum. The National Gallery arranged for a member of museum staff to remain in the space and approach visitors to ask them to complete a response card. This proved to be a very effective method although the member of staff had to leave the gallery during the workshop periods which perhaps explain the slight shortfall in the target of three hundred. Very few additional response cards were collected from children (17 in total) as most of them had already attended the family workshops.

The section on Research context and approach explains how the response cards were analysed (see Part 2, section 2.3.3).

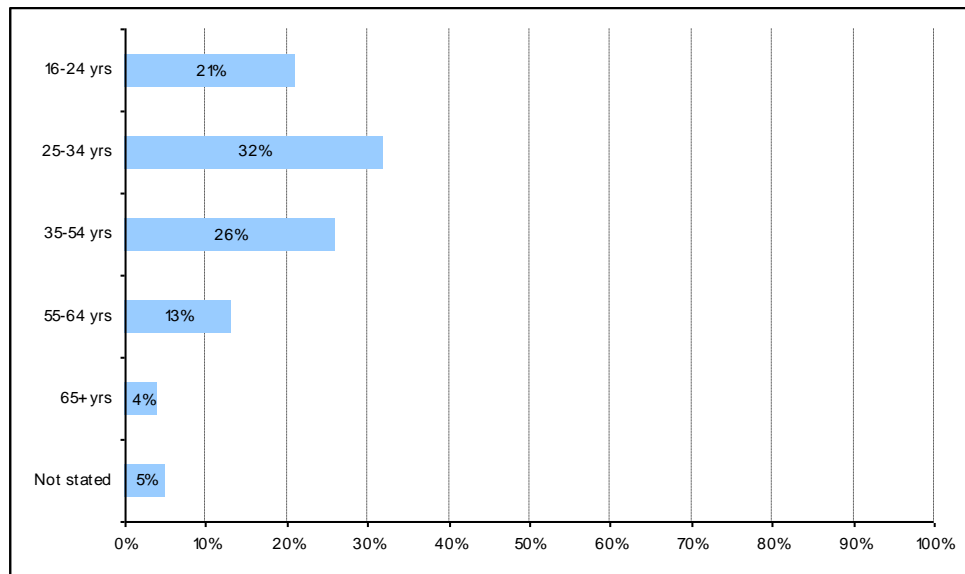
5.2.2 The demographic findings from the adult response cards at the National Gallery

5.2.2.1 Age and gender of respondents

Over half of the visitors who completed a response card (53%) were aged between 16 and 34 years old. There are much fewer respondents aged 55 years and over (17%). This suggests that the National Gallery was attracting a fairly young audience during the October half term.

This is a much younger audience than at the Bowes Museum, where 60% of those who completed response cards were aged 45 or over.

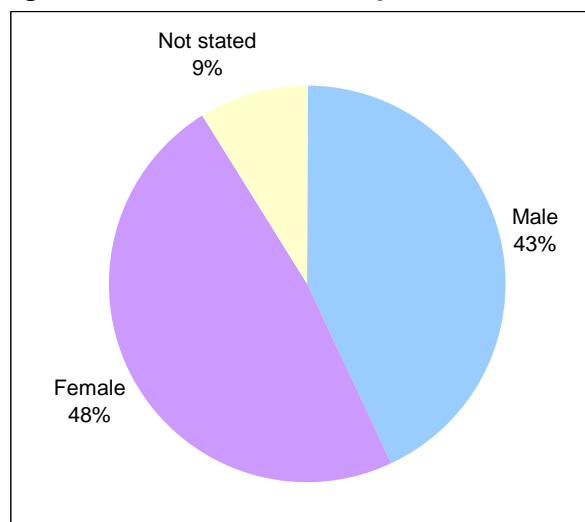
Fig. 5.2.2.1a: Age of respondents, The National Gallery



N=250

There is an almost equal split in the gender of the respondents from the National Gallery, with 48% of response cards completed by women and 43% completed by men. Again, this is very different from the audience profile of respondents at the Bowes Museum, where 68% of those completing cards were women.

Fig. 5.2.2.1b: Gender of respondents, The National Gallery



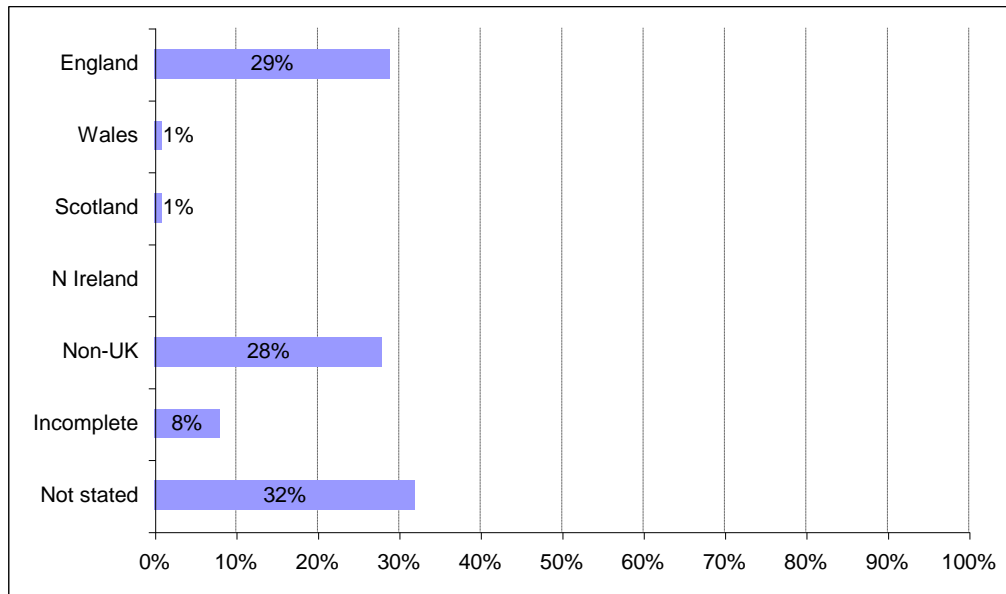
N=250

5.2.2.2 Postcode analysis

From the 250 response cards, there were 73 English postcodes that could be analysed using the IMD 2004 (29%), although in total 39% of respondents gave a UK postcode. The remainder could not be analysed because some were from Wales and Scotland which have their own indices of deprivation, 28% were non-UK postcodes, 8% were incomplete or would not be recognised by the search engine (potentially these were mis-spelt) and a further 32%

respondents did not wish to give their postcode. Therefore only a relatively small number of postcodes (73) could be analysed for the purposes of this evaluation and this will only give us a very tentative picture of respondents living in England. This picture cannot be presented as a general one for the National Gallery exhibition respondents.

Fig. 5.2.2a: National Gallery exhibition, initial analysis of the postcodes given by respondents

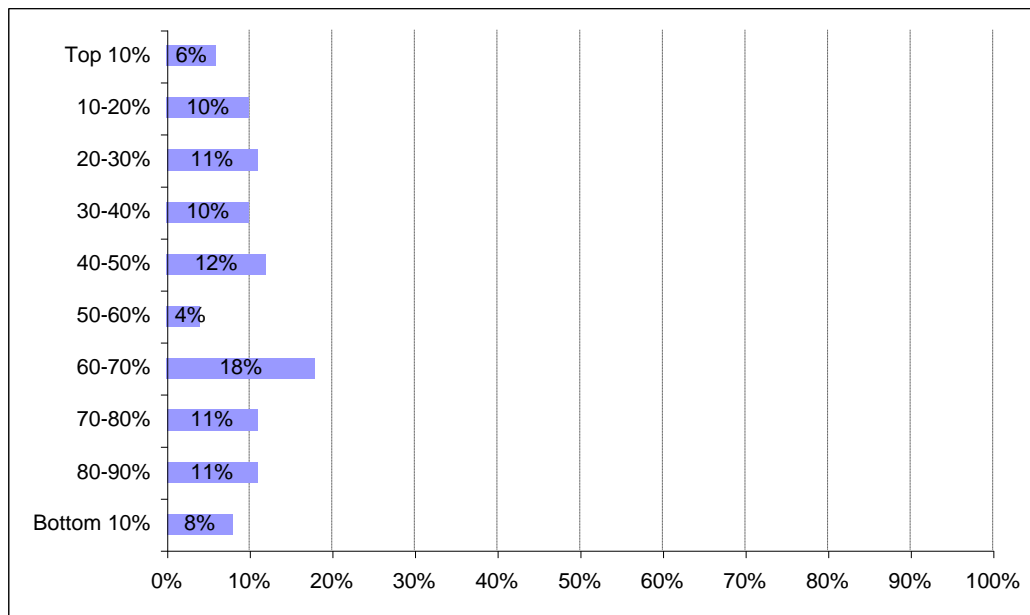


N=250

The geographical distribution is not unexpected and can be explained by the National Gallery's location in the centre of London as an attraction to foreign as well as national tourists.

Analysing the 73 postcodes of visitors from England using the IMD 2004 reveals that although most English respondents are likely to be experiencing low levels of social deprivation, if any at all, 16% of respondents are located in the 20% most deprived areas in England. The profile is more broadly spread than at the Bowes Museum, where only 4% live in these areas.

Fig. 5.2.2.2b: Analysis of English postcodes by IMD 2004, The National Gallery



N=73

Respondents visiting the National Gallery came from across the UK. Thirty-seven per cent (37%) of these respondents were from London.

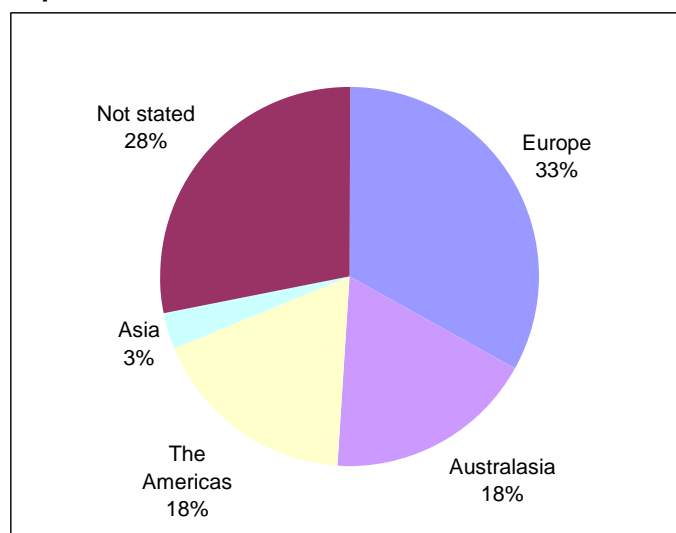
Fig. 5.2.2.2c: Analysis of the UK postcodes by region, The National Gallery



N=78

In total there were 71 postcodes that could be identified as non-UK and 54 of these respondents identified which country they had come from. It revealed that respondents from a wide range of countries chose to complete a response card, including people from Australia, the USA, South Korea and Europe. Thirty-three per cent (33%) of respondents came from Europe, 18% from Australasia and the Americas, and the remaining 3% from Asia.

Fig. 5.2.2.2d: National Gallery response cards, country of origin of non-UK respondents



N=71

5.2.2.3 ACORN classification

Using the ACORN classification system it is possible to identify an approximation of the types of people who have completed a Response card, but only for those respondents from the UK. It is a UK-wide system unlike the IMD 2004, so including the Welsh and Scottish postcodes in total 78 postcodes could be matched to their ACORN 'type.'

The postcodes of the majority of the respondents (64%) fell into the two categories representing the most affluent neighbourhoods in the UK, the 'Wealthy achievers' (29%) and 'Urban prosperity' (34%), and within this latter category, the highest concentration of postcodes fall into the 'Educated urbanites' group (23%).

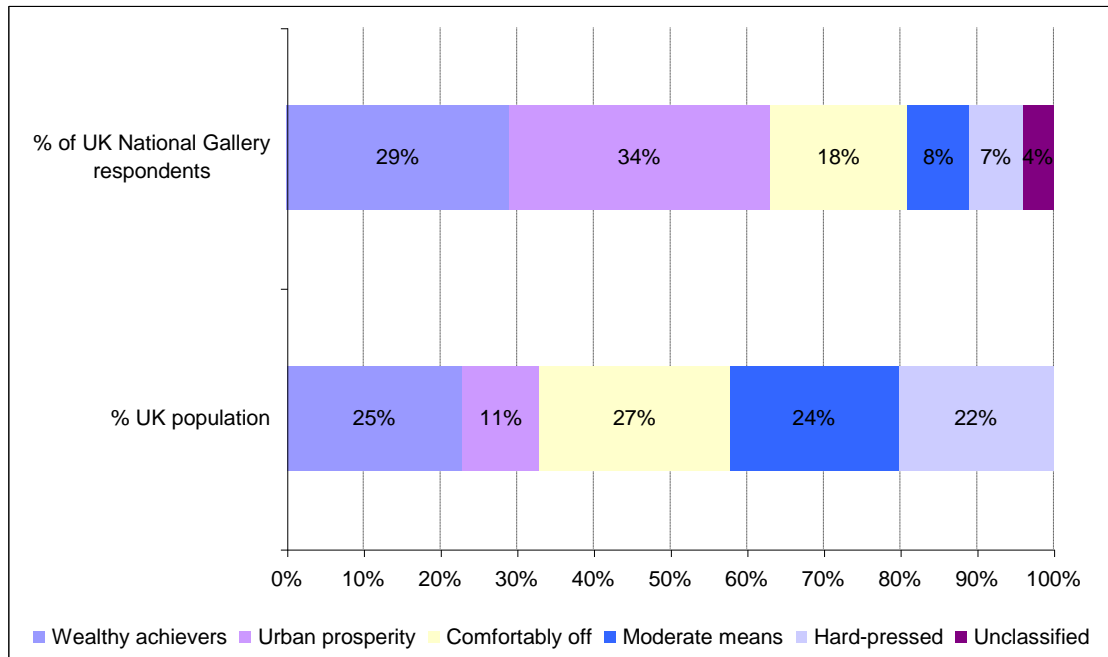
Table 5.2.2.3a: Analysis of respondents' postcodes using ACORN, The National Gallery

Category	Group	% of UK population	Adults from the National Gallery sample
Wealthy achievers	A Wealthy executives	8.6%	14%
	B Affluent greys	7.7%	6%
	C Flourishing families	8.8%	9%
Urban prosperity	D Prosperous professionals	2.2%	6%
	E Educated urbanites	4.6%	23%
	F Aspiring singles	3.9%	5%
Comfortably off	G Starting out	2.5%	3%
	H Secure families	15.5%	9%
	I Settled Suburbia	6%	3%
	J Prudent pensioners	2.6%	3%
Moderate means	K Asian communities	2.5%	0%
	L Post-industrial families	15.5%	3%
	M Blue-collar roots	6%	5%

Hard-pressed	N	Struggling families	14.1%	0%
	O	Burdened singles	4.5%	0%
	P	High-rise hardship	1.6%	1%
	Q	Inner city adversity	2.1%	6%
	U	Unclassified	0.3%	4%

National Gallery, N=78

Fig. 5.2.2.3a: Analysis of respondents' postcodes using ACORN, The National Gallery compared with the UK population



National Gallery, N=78

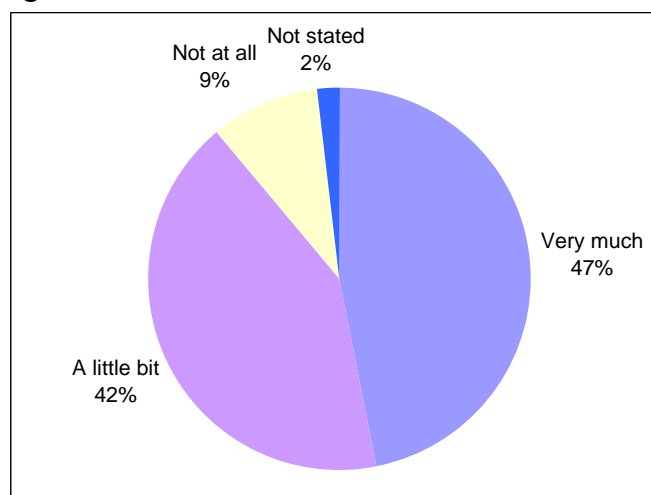
This analysis appears to fit with the picture from the IMD 2004 that most respondents are living comfortable, educated lives.

Bearing in mind the different sample sizes and the warning that this is only an approximation of the types of neighbourhood that respondents may represent, we can see that there are some differences in the audiences for the National Gallery and for the Bowes, namely in that visitors to the Bowes are more likely to be classified as 'Wealthy achievers' whereas at the National Gallery, with a younger audience overall, postcodes are less likely to fall within this category and more likely to fall into the 'Educated urbanites' category.

5.2.2.4 How interested are you in art?

Visitors to the National Gallery who completed a response card in the gallery were asked how interested they were in art, and the responses were not always very enthusiastic. Forty-seven per cent (47%) of respondents stated that they were 'very much' interested in art, while 42% said that they were interested in art 'a little bit.' A further 2% said that they were 'not at all' interested in art.

Fig. 5.2.2.4a: Interest in art, The National Gallery



N=250

These categories were broken down by age and gender, and although some variations in attitude did appear, in some cases numbers were too small to be useful, and in no cases did a chi square test confirm significance. These figures are therefore omitted from this report.

5.2.2.5 A sketch of a 'typical' National Gallery respondent

Using the demographic material as evidence we can construct a quick sketch of a typical National Gallery visitor who completed a response card during the research period. This process was more difficult than for the Bowes Museum visitors, as a high proportion of visitors were not from the UK so we are unable to analyse their postcodes. Therefore the sketch will be divided into general and UK visitors to take this into account

The general picture of a National Gallery respondent suggests that they are most likely to be:

- Aged from 16 to 34 years
- Female (but not by much)
- Interested in art to some degree

There was little numerical difference between the non-UK visitors (28% of the whole) and the UK visitors (31%) completing a response card. From those visitors who gave us a UK postcode we can put together a brief sketch of their social context through analysis of their postcode:

- Most UK respondents come from outside London
- On the whole English respondents are not likely to be experiencing deprived social circumstances (based on the evidence from their postcodes and the IMD 2004)
- UK respondents are likely to be affluent and well educated – 'wealthy achievers' and 'urban prosperity' according to the ACORN analysis.

5.2.3 'We are interested in what you think about the Madonna of the Pinks...'

In total from the 250 response cards completed, 248 participants left a written comment regarding their thoughts on the Madonna of the Pinks.

5.2.3.1 Learning outcomes for the adult respondents

The 248 comments that respondents left in response to the question, 'We are interested in what you think about the Madonna of the Pinks...' were coded using the Generic Learning Outcomes (GLOs). Each response was assigned a single GLO based on which one was felt to be the most appropriate. It was felt that most of the respondents used the open format of the question to give an attitude or opinion about the Madonna of the Pinks, its acquisition or its position within the exhibition. Some participants, such as this woman aged 25-34, found that their attitudes changed as a result of seeing the painting:

The picture is in excellent condition- a plus. It is great to see the shadowing distinct yet have such minute detail. I am not a fan of the blue-eyed, blond Jesus, but this painting is a superb example of Raphael's work.

During this process it was noted that a number of responses revealed a subtle interplay between two of the GLOs. It was felt that at least 38 responses could be coded by multiple GLOs (15% of 248 responses), and this mostly took the form of respondents demonstrating an attitude or opinion about the painting which appeared to be based on knowledge of art. Quite a few of the respondents used the language of the National Gallery interpretation or reflected themes within the text to help inform their responses, demonstrating its impact upon their understanding of the painting.

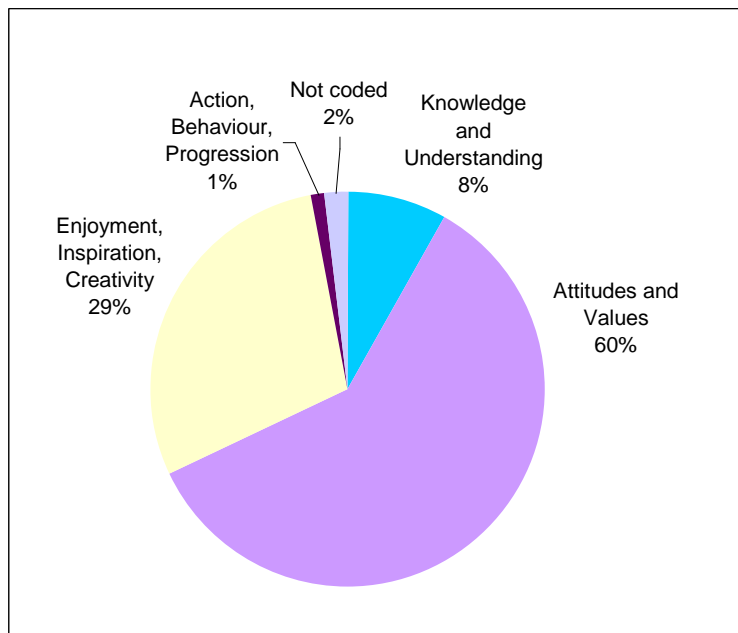
Eight percent (8%) of respondents conveyed their knowledge or understanding of the painting in terms of content or through demonstrating their own knowledge of art, whilst 29% of respondents talked about their enjoyment of the painting, often in quite emotional terms:

Beautiful mother and child painting. Natural and happy, pure and I love the offering of the carnations- I really feel warm and happy when I look at it. Beautiful detail. [Female, aged 35-54]

Two comments (1 %) were felt to demonstrate Action, Behaviour, Progression because the respondents had purposefully visited the National Gallery to see the painting, one woman for her studies in art history:

I am doing an art history course and came to see C 14th-C 16th paintings. Have spent some time looking at the Raphaels in the room. Was very pleased to see this painting - have followed the story of its finding in the media.... [Female, aged 55-64]

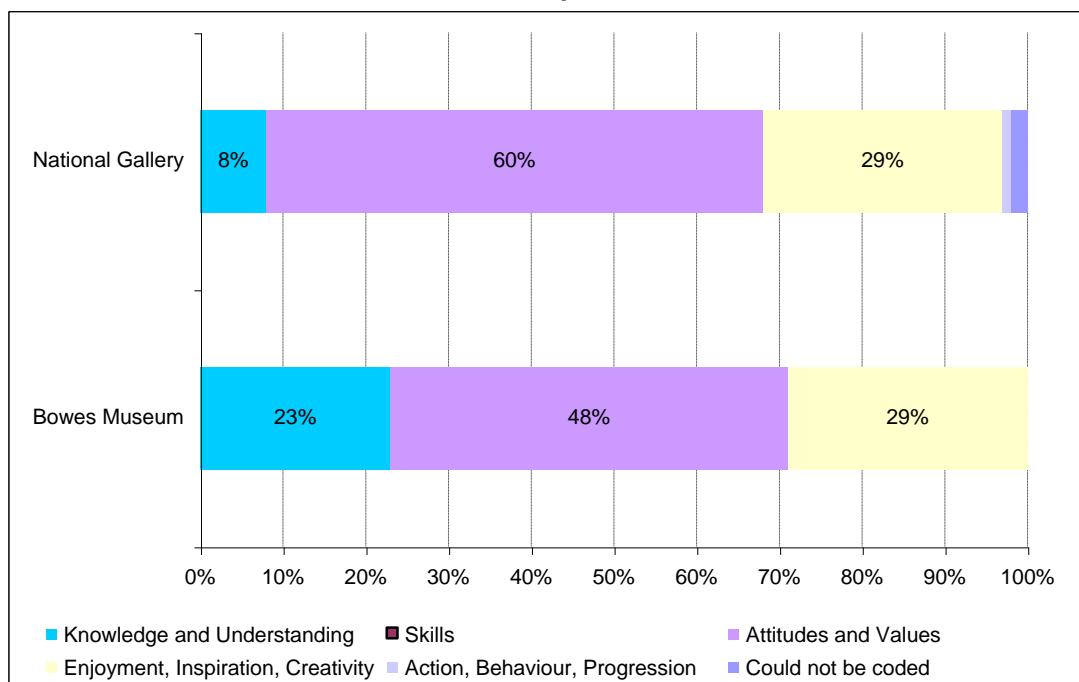
Fig. 5.2.3.1a: Adult responses analysed using the GLOs, The National Gallery



N=248

Comparing this with the similar analysis at the Bowes Museum, it is interesting to note that while the percentage of respondents making comments that could be classified as about Enjoyment, Inspiration, Creativity remains the same at 29%, those comments that demonstrated Knowledge and Understanding make up a much higher percentage (23% at the Bowes, 8% at the National Gallery).

Fig. 5.2.3.1b: Adult responses analysed using the GLOs, comparison between the Bowes Museum and National Gallery



National Gallery, N=248; Bowes Museum, N=77

5.2.3.2 Analysing the written responses using QSR N6

Using sub-themes developed from the coding of the Bowes Museum response cards, 237 comments were analysed using QSR N6 to ascertain the frequency with which respondents alluded to particular themes. These are explored below.

- **Reference to the style of the painting:**

Like the visitors to the Bowes Museum, the respondents from the National Gallery exhibition were keen to talk about the style of the painting in terms of the use of colour and light, often positioning themselves as 'knowledgeable' about art.

It's a typical Renaissance composition, in a pyramidal shape. There's a double attention: the kid towards the pinks; and the mother towards the kid. A very nice work in the transparent veil and the folded clothes. As a beholder we find a quiet and sweet relationship between both.
[Male, aged 35-54]

Some of the respondents drew on the language used by the National Gallery to convey their thoughts about the painting for example the word 'gem-like' echoes the description of the colours in the National Gallery interpretation:

I think in a gallery with quite a few Raphaels, Madonna of the Pinks stands out as a unique example and strengthens the collection of Raphaels as a whole. Despite its size it appears to be the most vibrant; it is gem-like in it's scope of the others [Male, aged 25-34]

It was felt by some respondents that the way in which Raphael had used the colours and the delicacy of the figures of Madonna and Christ helped to make them look life-like. There was also more discussion of the interplay between the darkness and light within the picture and how the elements combined to create the atmosphere of the painting:

I like it. It invokes feelings of tenderness + innocence. In very good condition also good use of light and shade. The delicacy of the veil and its translucency is very clever [Female, aged 25-34]

Although a religious painting, several respondents found the Madonna of the Pinks appealing because Raphael had sought to present the Virgin and child as human. Respondents could relate more directly to the 'life-like' figures than something that was more consciously divine:

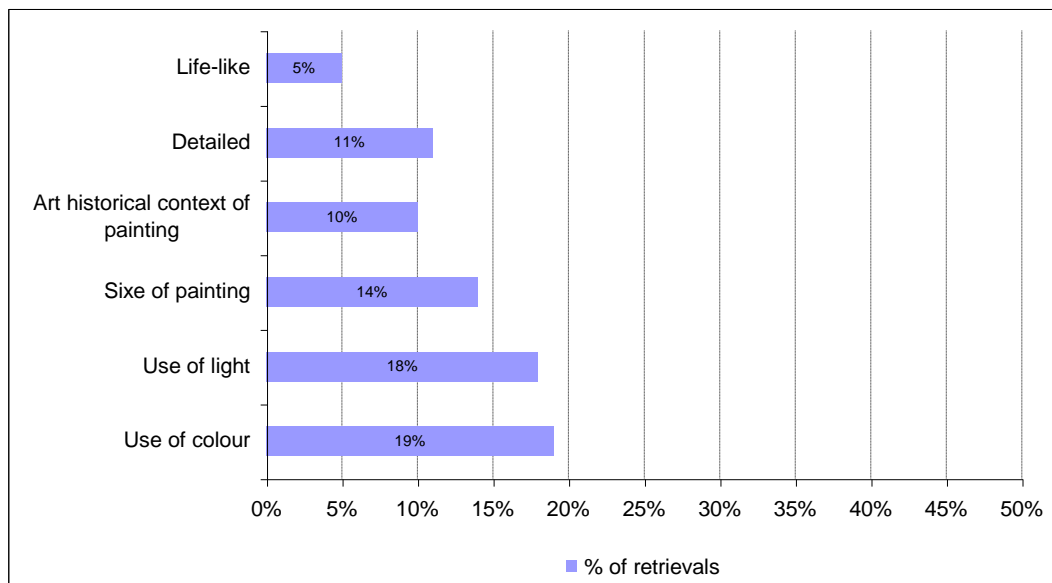
Interesting, the baby or Christ is actually represented as a baby where in others/ paintings in gallery Christ is shown to be able to understand and do adult things. Madonna is also very depicted as a simple mother above all else, like Christ in most others she is represented as a saint or of importance, this painting shows the two to be of simple human/person origin. It is a refreshing representations [Female, aged 25-34]

This respondent also reveals an admiration for the artist's skill, and this is something which comes out more strongly in the responses from the National Gallery than at the Bowes Museum.

I think this picture isn't the most famous picture of the Raphael, but the light's treatment, the volume and relation in the picture with shadows of the dressers and the delicate portrait of Maria and Christ make this picture one of the best. I liked so much! [Male, aged 25-34]

In general, the pattern of references to the style of the painting is much the same as at the Bowes Museum.

Fig. 5.2.3.2a: Reference to the style of the painting, The National Gallery



N=237

- **References to the depiction of the subject matter:**

Again, as at the Bowes Museum, there were relatively few comments referring to the content of the painting. References were made to the view out of the window and the fabric / veil of the Virgin's dress, which may suggest detailed or close study of the painting.

With reference to Christ's face there was a conflict between those respondents who felt that he had been sensitively depicted with the face of a baby and those who felt his face was unrealistic or had a peculiar expression. For some, the sense that the baby was not realistic was acceptable:

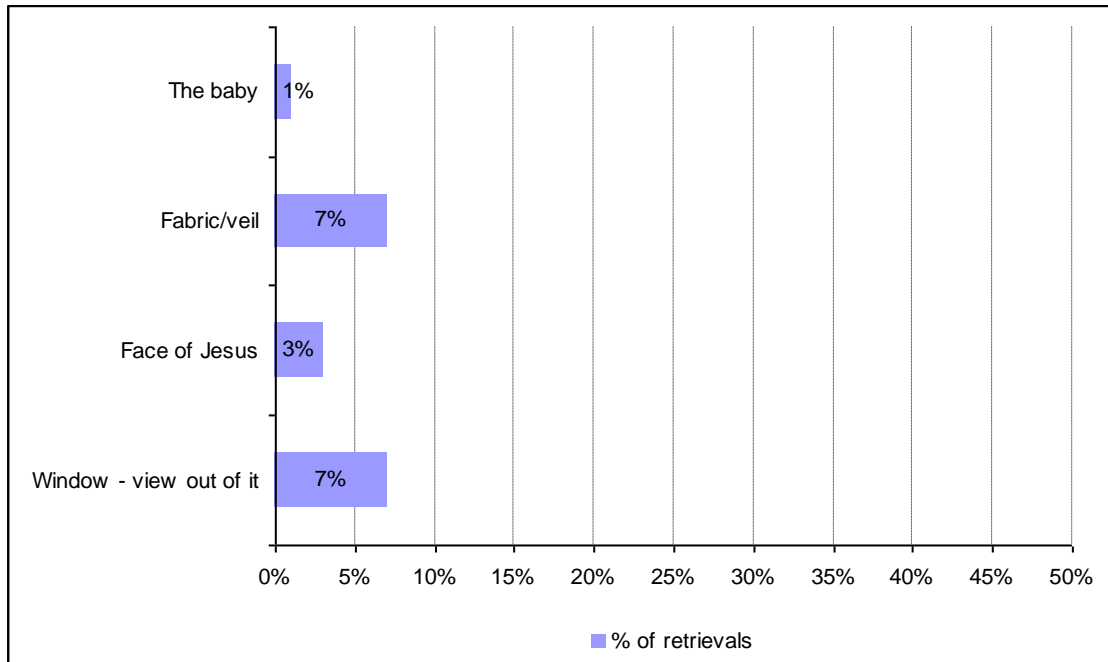
I like the colours in this picture, I like the complexion of Christ. Although he looks like an old man. He has the face of an old man. I think it's beautiful. [Male, aged 34-54]

Dark and slightly quizzical look of Christ figure is intriguing. Obviously good! [Male, aged 35-54]

For others it was not:

Personally I don't like it but I appreciate the beautiful texture of the cloth and face details. It feels a little dreary, the faces are scary and the child conveys age older than of a baby. The window gives light and hope. Maybe a child with no real father? [Male, aged 25-34]

Fig. 5.2.3.2b: References to the depiction of the subject matter, The National Gallery



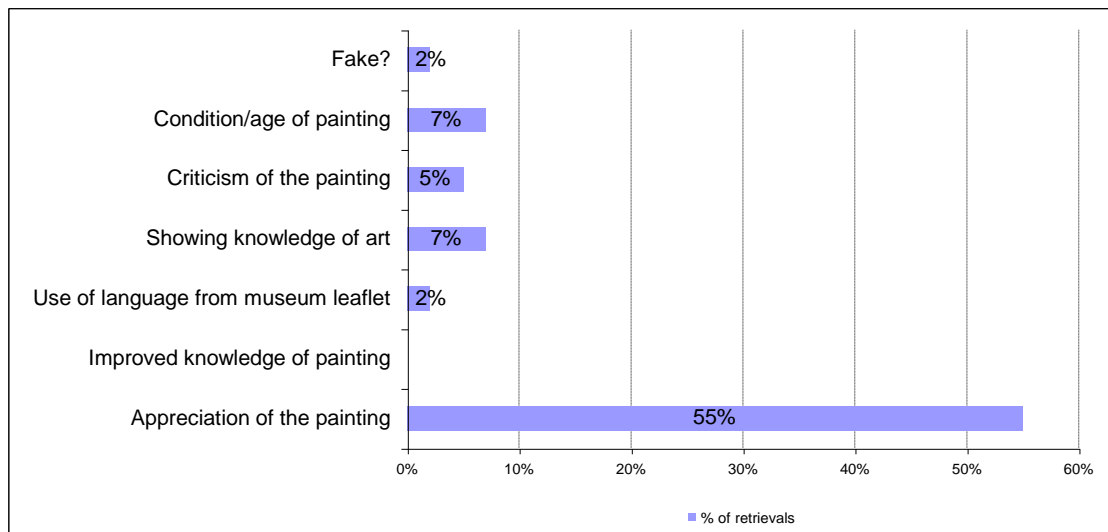
N=237

- **Attitudes to the painting:**

The majority of respondents (55%) enjoyed the Madonna of the Pinks and conveyed their appreciation in their comments. The painting was appealing for a number of reasons, including the technical skill of the artist (a few respondents talked about Raphael being their favourite painter) and the wealth of detail. Other respondents favoured the atmosphere created by the painting or how it made them feel. The following visitor from Sweden, a young woman aged 16-24, felt both were important; it is the details in the picture that create the image of love she obviously found appealing:

What do I think of her? It's hard to say. I've never seen her before. I think she looks very kind and friendly. You can really see how much she loves that little boy. I think it's a very cosy picture, I like watching it. I really like the detail with the flowers they are holding in their hands and the landscape outside the window is very beautiful. Like many other artists he has really succeeded with the fabrics. The best thing about the picture is the mother's obvious feelings of love to the baby.

Fig. 5.2.3.2c: Attitudes to the painting, The National Gallery



N=237

As pointed out earlier some respondents (2%) used the language from the museum leaflet to help convey their ideas about the painting, whilst 7% conveyed their knowledge of art. This often seemed to underpin their attitudes towards the Madonna of the Pinks.

There was some discussion about the painting in terms of it being a fake and also criticism of various elements in the painting. Already it has been noted the difference of opinion regarding the baby's expression. A few respondents questioned whether the painting was worthy to be painted by Raphael:

...Is it really by Raphael?? Proportions seem wrong. Madonna's leg is in the wrong place. Christ's face seems incorrect. Possibly by a follower of Raphael?... [Male, aged 35-54]

Other respondents commented that they preferred other types of art such as 'modern' art or 'landscapes and seascapes' to the type of painting represented by the Madonna of the Pinks.

References to the condition or the age of the painting (7%) mainly referred to the amazement some respondents felt that the painting was so old yet managed to look so fresh.

- **Discussion of the Madonna and Child:**

Eighteen per cent (18%) of respondents who completed a response card in the National Gallery exhibition remarked on the relationship between the Madonna and Child. Within these comments respondents talked about the relationship as being very realistic and believable - as a relationship between a mother and child 'should' be.

It looks like a very sweet relationship between mother and child - a nurturing relationship [Female, aged 35-54]

One young man, aged 16-24, made the point why it was so relevant because it portrayed a relationship most people can understand:

It's very human, easy to relate to seeing a mother with her child.

The young woman below, aged 16-24, contrasts the depiction of the relationship with other paintings of the period, her attitude informed by a knowledge of earlier styles of painting:

A beautiful painting of a more personal moment between Christ and his mother. A move away from the more functional representations of a static and un-naturalistic baby figure and his mother.

Not all respondents agreed with this depiction of the mother/child relationship however, for example this woman (aged 35-54) questioned the gallery's interpretation of the relationship as tender based on her own interpretation of the painting's details:

The scene out of the window reflects they live a happy life, but the flowers are not fresh and the eyes of the baby seem not to be innocent. That's why I wonder their relationship is tender or not...

However the atmosphere of the painting, created from the same details, helped to create the sense of 'maternal' love and warmth that some respondents felt when viewing it:

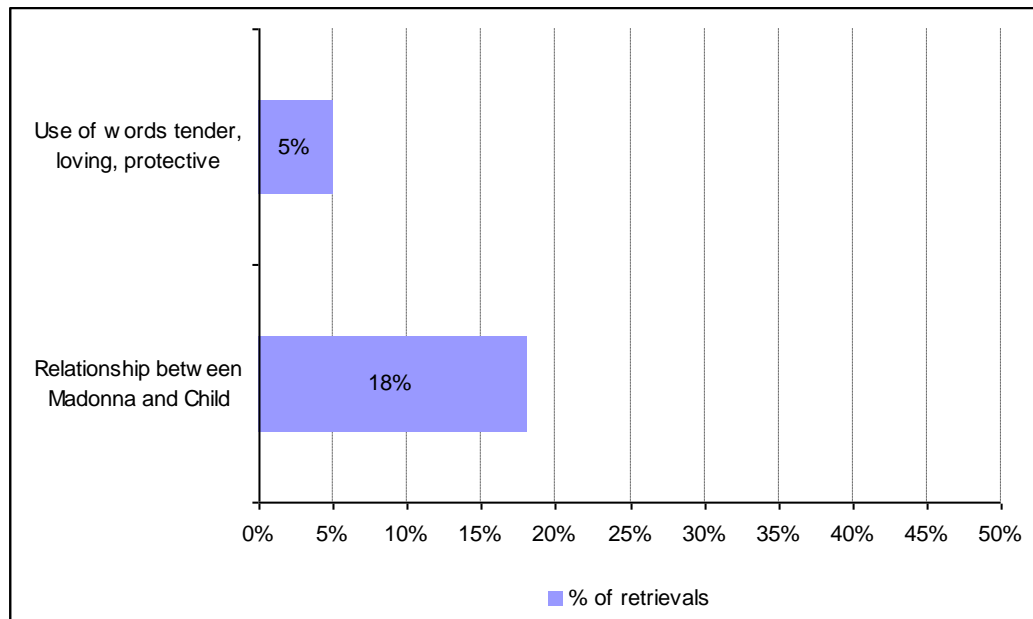
...Room inside as the place of warmth, safe place, symbol of love. Outside there is a castle as a rough place where everything is wild and full of evil.... [Male, aged 35-54]

For one young man, aged 25-34, the relationship in the painting was directly personal to his own experience:

It is such an intimate scene of a family unit in which everything seem to be stopped but the relationship between mother and child. The mother's face shows a kind of rejection of her own life in favour of her child's and the child seems to consider his surroundings as the only possible world. Fantastic it reminds me of my mum!

It was noticeable from these response cards from the National Gallery that both men and women offered comments on the relationship between the Madonna and Child, whereas much fewer comments from men were found at the Bowes Museum.

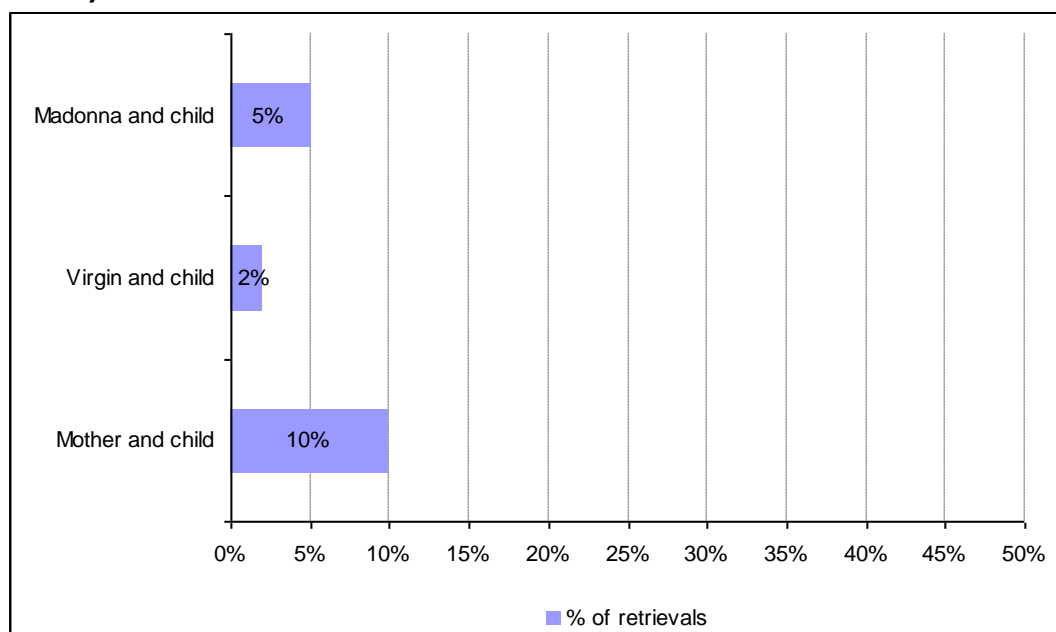
Fig. 5.2.3.2d: References to the Madonna and Child, The National Gallery



N=237

Looking at the use of language regarding the Madonna and Jesus, it is noticeable that whilst 10% of retrievals referred to them as 'mother and child' there are fewer references made to more 'religious' names, for instance 'Virgin and child.' This suggests that visitors are happier using the secular terms. (However the QSR N6 analysis does not pick up on the use of 'Madonna' and 'Christ / Jesus' separately so there might be slightly more respondents who are happy using the 'religious' names than Fig. 5.2.3.2e suggests.)

Fig. 5.2.3.2e: Variable references to the Madonna and Child, The National Gallery



N=237

- **Attitudes to the acquisition, cost and national tour of the Madonna of the Pinks:**

The acquisition of the Madonna of the Pinks was an area of conflicting responses from the National Gallery respondents, mainly regarding the amount of money spent on its purchase. Some readily questioned the amount spent, even if they felt the painting was appealing:

I think £22 million is a lot of money for art. [Female 35-54]

Whilst the painting is technically proficient is any painting worth £22 million? [Male, aged 65+]

Beautiful piece of artwork but the price of it could of wiped out Africa's debt [Gender unknown, aged 16-24]

Some participants reserved their criticism for the Duke of Northumberland rather than criticising the act of buying the painting, or qualified their criticism because despite the cost, the painting is on public display:

The Duke of Northumberland behaved appallingly and is very greedy [Male aged 55-64]

It would have been better if Duke of Northumbria had bequeathed it to the nation- we are still subsidising the aristocracy [Female, aged 35-54]

It's quite a nice picture, but £22 million seems like a lot of money to spend on it considering the other things that it could have been spent on. However, it is good that it's a public display rather than in a private collection. [Female aged 16-24]

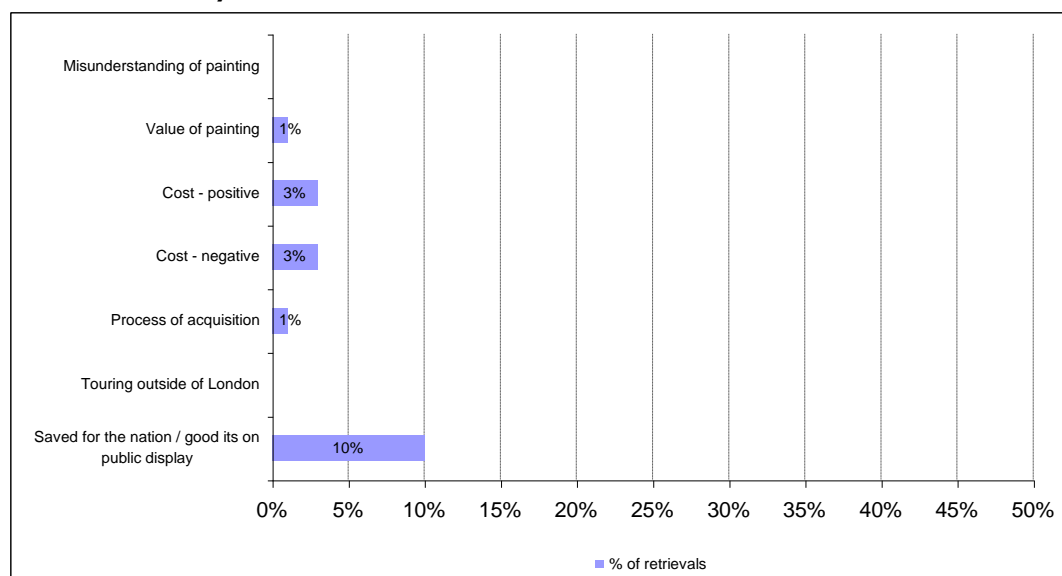
The dominant voice therefore was that it was good to purchase the Madonna of the Pinks so that it could be publicly accessible - respondents bought into the idea that it is good (and right) to have public access to art:

An absolute masterpiece which I am enormously pleased to be able to appreciate without travelling abroad or perhaps never seeing it because its at the back of some vault somewhere [Male, aged 35-54]

Beautiful picture, my first visit to an art museum and this is the kind of classical technical picture that should be for public view. It is a shame so much beautiful art is held in private. Whatever it cost it was a bargain. [Male, aged 25-34]

Beautiful, very pleased to see it here in London. We are very fortunate to have such a rich collection of art in our own city. [Male, aged 35-54]

Fig. 5.2.3.2f: Acquisition, cost and tour of the Madonna of the Pinks, The National Gallery



N=237

Reviewing the comments on this theme with those of the respondents at the Bowes Museum, it is interesting to note that there were no comments in London about the national tour, whereas at the Bowes Museum, 10% of comments referred to this in an approving and appreciative fashion.

- **Attitudes to the display of the painting:**

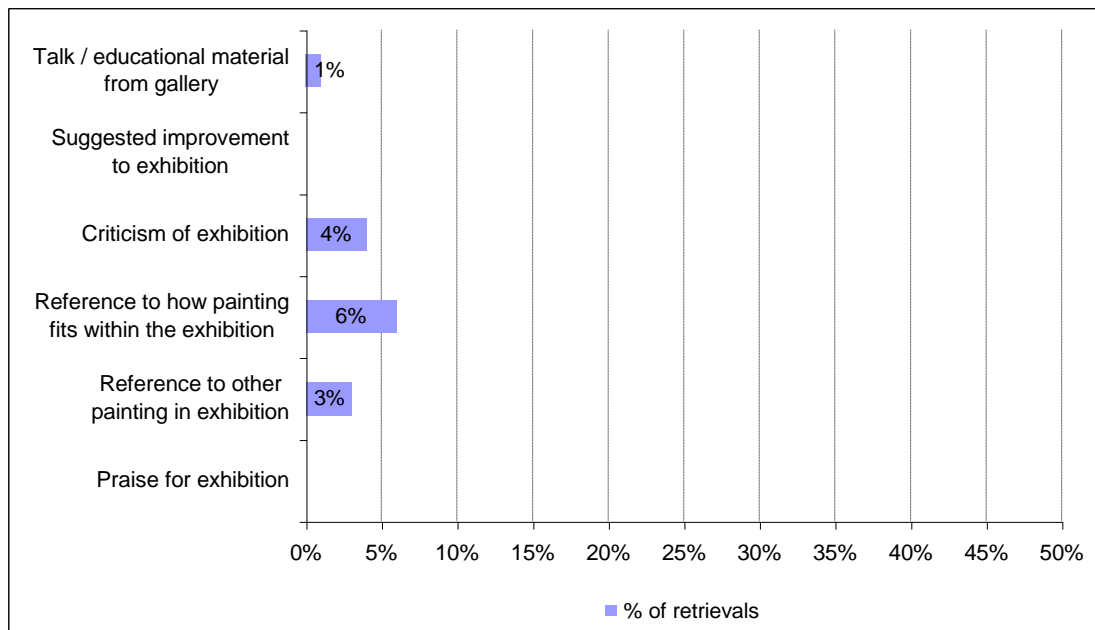
Response cards were not used in the Raphael exhibition (20th October 2004 – 16th January 2005), but were used in Room 8 of the Sainsbury Wing, where a small special display was set up, with an interpretive panel. Most of the comments from the response cards focused directly on the Madonna of the Pinks rather than on aspects of display. Within this category a relatively small number of respondents (6%) talked about how the painting fitted into the rest of the display, often referring to other paintings by Raphael as a comparison. The size of the painting, which captivated some respondents, was felt to be problematic for others:

Delightful, but perhaps overshadowed by some of the many other Raphael works in the room, in particular, the enormous crucifixion scene it hangs next to rather dominates it [Male aged 25-34]

Most of the criticism of the display was related to the lighting of the painting, which was felt by some respondents to be very poor. Several complained of a large shadow falling across the painting and interrupted their enjoyment of it.

...Frame casts an unfortunate shadow- should be changed. Her face deserves to be seen clearly... [Male, aged 35-54]

Fig. 5.2.3.2g: Comments on the display of the painting, The National Gallery



N=237

On the whole, comments were few. In contrast, at the Bowes Museum, there were a range of enthusiastic comments about the exhibition of the painting (11%), about the other paintings that were also sent from the National Gallery (11%) and about how the Madonna of the Pinks fitted into this context (7%).

5.2.3.3 Conclusions from the analysis of the written comments

Two hundred and fifty (250) response cards were collected, and 248 contained comments on the Madonna of the Pinks. In relation to the GLOs, most of the comments (60%) concerned Attitudes and Values. There were relatively low levels of comments that could be classified as about Knowledge and Understanding (8%), compared to the similar analysis at The Bowes Museum (23%). In both cases, there were many comments on the style and immediate impression of the painting (colour, light, size), but smaller numbers of people used language from the National Gallery interpretation (only 2% compared with 10% at the Bowes) but the words 'gem-like,' 'tender' and 'translucent' appear. Again, there were few references to the content of the painting, although there were some interesting comments on the way the face of the child was painted.

References to the relationship of the mother and child within the painting tend to focus less on the religious themes than the more general themes associated with the love of a mother for her child. It is assumed by many respondents to be a loving relationship and evokes a sense of warmth, caring and calm for some. There were one or two personal references.

Compared to the responses at The Bowes Museum, more respondents question the purchase or criticise the painting. However the dominant view is that the painting is very appealing to a broad spectrum of visitors to the National Gallery and it is a worthwhile addition to the collection. Even those

respondents that disagree with the cost on the whole tend to agree that it was good to purchase it for the nation.

5.2.4 Analysis of children's response cards from the National Gallery exhibition

In total, 17 response cards completed by children were collected during the October half term. There is no way of linking the children's response cards to the adults whom they may have accompanied as this was not built into the research process. This is a very small sample so must be analysed with care.

There are quite a high number of response cards that were only partially completed, for instance the young person completed a picture or left a written comment but did not complete the small demographic details on the back of the card (47%).

5.2.4.1 Age and gender

Of the 17 children who completed a response card in the national gallery exhibition, 9 children recorded their age. The youngest child to complete a response card (probably with an adult's help) was aged 4 years, the eldest children to complete a response card were 11 years old.

More girls (35%) completed a response card than boys (18%).

5.2.4.2 'For me, the most special thing about the Madonna of the Pinks is...'

Children were asked to respond to this statement with either a written comment or a drawing. Eleven (11) young people did a picture or drawing and the remaining 6 left a written comment:

- *I was giving Mary a flower as a symbol of his love father. I like it a lot - this comment is unusual because it seems the child is 'talking' from the point of view of the baby*
- *The when the Virgin Mary is giving Christ the carnation as a symbol of her love - expressing an understanding of the painting's content*
- *Baby and I like Mary she is very pretty. I also like the landscape outside*
- *I enjoy the way she is looking at the baby and that she seems to be smiling in her head half showing it. I think it was worthwhile*
- *Jesus very valuable. They look really happy. I think it was worth £22m*
- *Flowers (pink) don't seem to be fresh so I doubt their relationship is really good*

The limited number of responses means that we cannot deduce any general points about the children's interaction with the Madonna of the Pinks, although from the above comments it seems that the children found the relationship between the Mother and Child to be special - although one

young person (Yasutaka) wondered if their relationship was 'really good' based on her interpretation that the flowers were not 'fresh.' It is interesting that one of the adults also questioned the freshness of the pinks so could this have influenced this child's response? Two children felt that the relationship between the Virgin and Child was a happy one.

5.3 General conclusions – response cards from the Bowes Museum and the National Gallery

The two audiences represented in the response cards from the Bowes Museum and the National Gallery display considerable differences. The audience reached at the National Gallery is younger and a little more socially diverse than that at the Bowes Museum and this may account for a slightly greater range of interpretive strategies. The response cards at the National Gallery were also returned from a mix of people from the UK and from other countries, whereas at the Bowes Museum, the respondents were mainly located in the North of England. And it must also be remembered that the sample (at 250) is larger than that at the Bowes Museum (at 133).

The responses at the National Gallery are more varied than those of the Bowes, although in much the same way in both places, there are a number of responses where the respondents present themselves as 'art lover' or 'art critic' and focuses on a particular 'knowledge' of art history (e.g. focusing on style, colour, texture, skill of the artist...). However, some of the responses at the National Gallery give the impression of a greater personal involvement with the painting, for example there are a number where the respondent has an emotional response to the painting where they find personal relevance or find the atmosphere of the painting appealing.

The National Gallery through its interpretation of the Madonna of the Pinks offers visitors different 'positions' from which to respond to the painting. Some respondents build their interpretation of the Madonna of the Pinks in synthesis with the themes presented by the gallery, even occasionally using the same language to express their opinion. This is generally done by those visitors who present themselves as 'art lovers,' who talk about art in very traditional ways for example focusing on style, artist, and art historical context. They may also have been informed by their own knowledge of art and certainly respondents talked in this manner, for example, comparing the Madonna with other paintings they had seen, placing it in an historical context.

The National Gallery also highlights the secular relevance of the painting over and above its religious context. This is appealing not only for those who do not find religious painting appealing but in theory everyone can relate to the bond between a mother and child? It is interesting that in the National Gallery responses both men and women talked about the relationship in quite emotive terms, whereas at the Bowes Museum it was mainly (though not exclusively) the women who commented on this. The painting presents an ideal of the mother/child relationship but one which is believable to many visitors.

Some respondents presented their opinions about the Madonna of the Pinks in opposition to the National Gallery interpretation, and this happened far more rarely at the Bowes Museum. For example, they questioned whether the painting was by Raphael or worthy of him (suggesting that they know more than the gallery) or felt the painting did not reflect for them a believable mother/child relationship. Some respondents did not feel qualified to make a comment for example one respondent said that they were not 'arty or religious' so the painting had little impact on them or other respondents remarked that they preferred different kinds of art. But the interpretation provided by the gallery enabled these interpretations to happen - the respondents built their response against this 'official' view.

Regarding the acquisition of the painting there were very few respondents from the Bowes Museum who questioned the act of buying the painting or its cost. There were far more challenges from the respondents at the National Gallery, although the dominant voice was still supportive of the purchase of the Madonna of the Pinks. Respondents approved of the idea that art should be bought for the nation and put on public display; it was the cost that they had difficulty reconciling in some cases.

Part 6: Workshops at the National Gallery



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PART 6: WORKSHOPS AT THE NATIONAL GALLERY

S6.1 Summary of research findings

S6.1.1 Introduction and context

By the Autumn of 2005, the Madonna of the Pinks had completed its national tour and had returned to the National Gallery, where it was displayed in Room 8.

Part 6 of the final report presents an analysis of two sets of workshops that took place at the National Gallery in London during the week of half-term October 2005. Two Family workshops and two Teenage workshops were observed and the participants also completed response cards

One of the key findings is that these workshops, which relied on word-of-mouth and a mailing list did not recruit participants that are unfamiliar with art galleries. Participants in these workshops represent what might be termed the 'default audience' for art galleries.

S6.1.2 Characteristics of the participants at the National Gallery Family workshops

A typical adult participant at the National Gallery family workshops was found to be likely to be:

- Aged between 35 and 54 years old
- Female
- Very much interested in art
- Not experiencing social deprivation
- Living in London
- To fall into the 'Urban prosperity' category as defined by ACORN classification system and therefore more likely to be affluent and well educated.

The use of the National Gallery family mailing list (developed by collecting details from those people attending earlier workshops) to recruit participants means that they are likely to be attracting repeat users of the National Gallery and its educational provision.

S6.1.3 Conclusions to the analysis of the written comments from the adult response cards

Generally the responses to the painting made by the participants were focused on specific themes, echoing closely the art interpreter's presentation. The participants' comments echoed words such as 'tender,' 'loving' and 'protective' which were used during the workshop, and the focus on the mother and child relationship was very much a feature of the presentation.

Some of the responses were very personal, hinting at connections made with the painting in terms of emotion (for example one respondent felt drawn to the painting although she did not normally like religious painting). The

atmosphere of the painting was more important to some respondents rather than any specific element such as colour or light effects for example, and how it made them feel. For some respondents this was directly attributed to attending the workshop, commenting that they might otherwise have missed the picture walking round the gallery. But engaging with the painting for a lengthy period of time (about an hour), understanding its context and having it explained perhaps initiated this feeling of 'closeness.'

Although the respondents were generally very similar to the typical visitor at the Bowes Museum - female and affluent, well educated, although younger than the Bowes Museum audience - it was interesting that not so many respondents positioned themselves as 'art lovers' taking an interest in the style and history of the painting. Rather they positioned themselves more as a 'concerned parent' in relation to their concern for the children's learning in the workshop, or as someone making emotional and personal connections with the painting; they recognised the love in the painting and thus felt drawn to it.

S6.1.4 Conclusions from the children's response cards

The children appeared (from the response cards) to be confident in stating their opinion about what they found special about the Madonna of the Pinks. Some of the younger children perhaps had help from their parents but the comments are sufficiently different from the adult response cards to suggest that the children are expressing their own opinions.

The themes that stand out as important to the children include the baby, the workshop activity and the colours in the painting. There is evidence that the children were able to understand the emotions in the painting as some made references to how happy the painting was and how there was love between the Madonna and Jesus.

They love each other [Gabriel, age 5]

Generally, whereas the Madonna was an important focus for the adult responses, for the children it was the baby or 'baby Jesus' that was referred to in many comments. This was particularly prevalent amongst the girls.

S6.1.5 Overall conclusions from the Family workshops at the National Gallery

The evidence from the Family workshops suggests that it is mothers taking part with their children. It was interesting that most of the comments regarding the mother and the baby came from female respondents, whereas the male respondents tended not to leave a comment or talked more generally about the painting.

The adults showed a concern for their children to learn from the workshop which is reflected in the high number of comments from the children which showed what they felt had learnt, or expressing an opinion about the Madonna of the Pinks (which was also encouraged in the phrasing of the question). That some of the children had help with their answers (especially

the younger ones) may indicate this concern to be seen to have learnt something from the workshop?

Despite it being a drop-in session the workshops attracted a particular audience to the Family workshops which was likely to be well educated and affluent and 'typical' visitors to art galleries and museums. These particular Family workshop participants were all (to some degree) likely to be regular users of the National Gallery because of the method of recruitment through the family mailing list.

How far does the 'background' of the respondents impact upon their response to the painting? Both the children and the adults gave the impression of being confident in their responses (based on the observation) and the postcode analysis suggests that they are comfortable with visiting art galleries and engaging in cultural activities. They engaged with the painting in a different way however to the visitors to the Bowes Museum - instead of viewing it as part of an exhibition they viewed it as part of a focused workshop and the interpretation by the National Gallery was presented in a different way by gallery educators to reflect the level of adults and children. How far does the different interpretation elicit a different response from the participants? Participants are also bringing their own experience to the interpretation but these participants are not positioning themselves as 'art critics' like at Bowes.

Do participants respond to the interpretation that fits their sense of self-identity? Latch on to the 'discourse' around the Madonna of the Pinks that represents their view of art and what they want to get from the experience. For example some of the respondents from the Family workshop valued the way in which the painting made them feel, which was not the same for the visitors at the Bowes Museum.

6.1 FAMILY WORKSHOPS AT THE NATIONAL GALLERY, OCTOBER 2005

6.1.1 The Family workshops

The National Gallery Education Department ran workshops for families every day for the half-term week 25th - 29th of October 2005. The workshops, which focused on drawing and engagement with the Madonna of the Pinks, were run twice a day from 11-1pm and 2-4pm. These workshops were free, and did not need to be booked in advance. Numbers of participants were much lower than the expected hundred, possibly because of continuing fears of terrorism following the July 2005 bombings. Participants at the Family workshops were attracted through the family mailing list which has been developed over the previous six years by the gallery. The workshops were also advertised in local press and press listings which were free of charge. On Monday 24th October, *The Times* had listed the workshops as one of the ten best free things to do for families with children over the half-term holiday.

Plate 6.1.1a: A Family workshop



6.1.2 Research methods

On the 25th October, a researcher from RCMG observed the two workshops and asked participants to complete response cards. Separate response cards were used for adults and children (Appendix C).

National Gallery staff asked participants in the workshops during the rest of the week if they would also complete response cards.

This report describes the workshops which were observed and presents an analysis of the response cards completed during the period.

6.1.3 Observation of the Family workshops, 25th October 2005

The first workshop at 11am attracted an audience of sixteen adults and twenty children. Almost all the adults were women, with only three men present, and amongst the children there were seven boys and nine girls. The children were very young, around six years old on average. Most of the children were white Caucasian. On the whole, the children who attended these Family workshops tended to be between the ages of 5 and 11; younger children were advised to take part in the 'Magic carpet' sessions which were designed for them.

The staff pitched the session depending upon the general age of the group. The educator running the session was one of the gallery's pool of freelancers. She started the workshop by laying the ground 'rules' such as no running, no shouting, no touching and no adults wandering off (although they were presented more as reasonable requests than rules). The participants were then introduced to the National Gallery and roughly three-quarters of the participants said that they had visited the gallery before, which is to be expected if one of the principal advertising means is through the gallery's established mailing lists. It was emphasised that the National Gallery has 2500 pictures and that they belong to 'you' (the audience). The educator introduced a 'real life' artist who they were 'lucky' to be working with. When she asked how many children want to be an artist when they grow up about half of them put their hands up. The focus then turned to the Madonna of the Pinks, described as a really special painting that they (the National Gallery) didn't think that they were going to be able to keep. This set the scene for the next part of the workshop which was going to see the Madonna of the Pinks in the gallery itself.

The group spent about an hour with the Madonna of the Pinks in a roped off area so that the public did not disturb them. The group sat on the floor in front of the painting, as did the educator and the artist. The educator started by explaining the Madonna of the Pinks to the group by describing what is in the picture, for instance:

- 'What is in the picture?' – a baby
- 'Why can you notice him?' – because he is light on a dark background
- 'What are they [mother and baby] doing?' – she is playing with the baby

During this time the educator asked the children lots of questions about the painting which they were capable of answering, drawing lots of parallels with things relevant to the children such as 'it is a picture of a mummy playing with a baby.' The artist then talked about the 'secret' of what's underneath the painting and introduced their activity for the rest of the morning which was to paint the Madonna, then paint the secret life beneath the Madonna. They engaged the parents and the children at every opportunity.

The group then went to the art room where there were examples of the artist's work around the walls. They were shown a PowerPoint of the X-rays which revealed the hidden drawings underneath the Madonna of the Pinks, the drawings that are taken as proof that it is a work by Raphael. These drawings were also used to convey that 'real' artists like Raphael have to draw different lines and make mistakes when they are drawing a picture (emphasising that its okay to make mistakes) but instead of rubbing them out or starting again they keep going. The artist then talked them through some of his work which was executed in inks. He showed them some techniques when working with ink, for instance how to mix colours to get green. The group were then taken to the activity room where they spent the next forty-five minutes working on their own pictures.

During this time the RCMG researcher took the opportunity to talk to some parents and children from the group. Five of the parents she spoke to had all done the workshop before. All of them were keen to talk about how they came to the National Gallery every holiday and how fantastic the service was. For the children 'its fun' and they are introduced to the gallery (at an early age) and made to feel comfortable there. For the adults it enables them to learn more about art and learn how to look at a painting more closely; two of the parents commented that the workshop also gave them the opportunity to spend time with their children. One mother said that her boys didn't like to come so it was a mother-daughter occasion, and a second mother said it was a fun thing to do with her two sons, one of whom can be quite stressful but she finds that he concentrates during the workshops.

The second workshop in the afternoon was identical in format to the morning workshop. There were sixteen adults (12 women and 4 men) and twenty-one children (13 girls and 8 boys), the ethnic mix about 90% white. Like the children who took part in the morning session the children were very confident in their responses.

6.1.4 The response cards

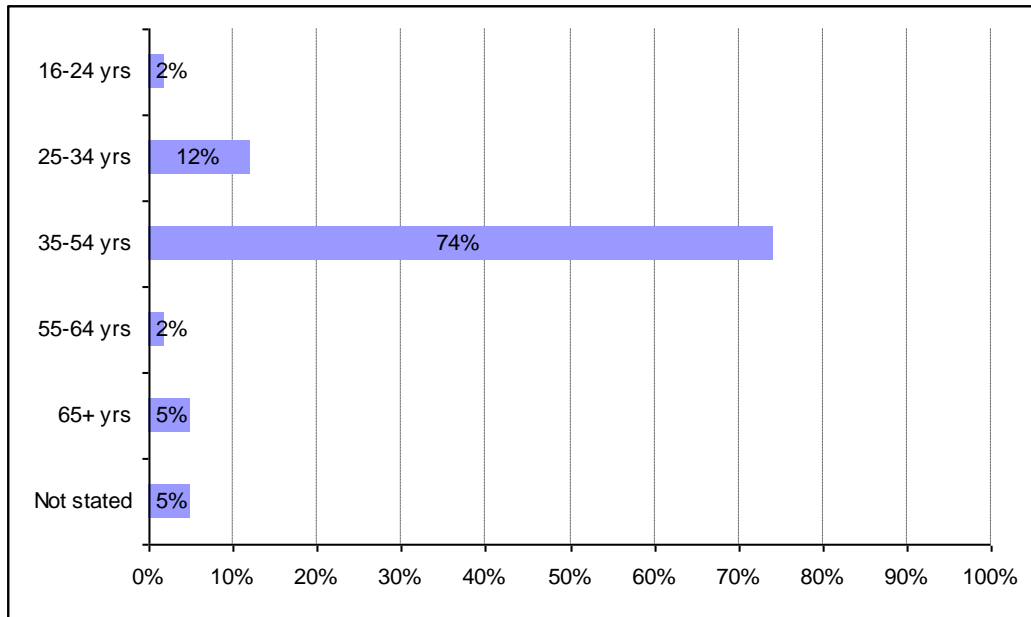
Response cards for adults and children attending the workshop were returned from workshops on the 26th and 28th October. In total 43 adult response cards and 61 children's response cards were returned to RCMG. These have been analysed using EXCEL, SPSS and QSR N6 as they contained a mixture of quantitative and qualitative data. Sample sizes are very small, and so only broad conclusions can be drawn.

6.1.4.1 Demographic information about the adult respondents

A limited amount of demographic information was collected from adults who attended the family workshops, namely age, gender, and postcode. They were also asked to report their interest in art.

Fig. 6.1.4.1a shows that the predominant age of the adults at the family workshops who completed a response card was 35-54 years, with 74% (32 responses) of cases falling into this category. The other categories are very poorly represented in comparison.

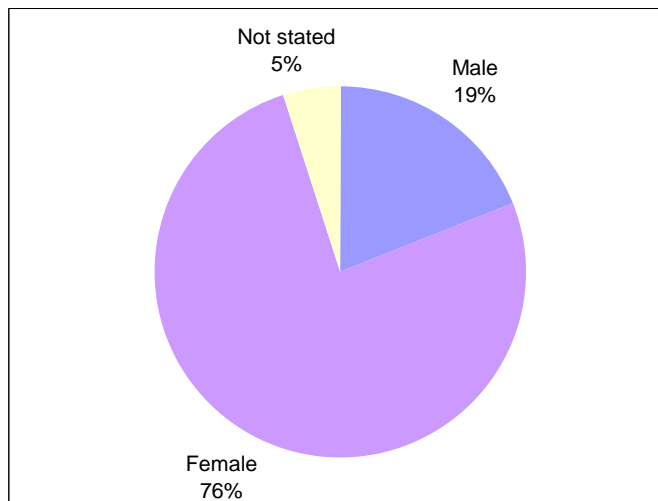
Fig. 6.1.4.1a: Age of adult respondents, Family workshops



N=43

Looking at the respondents in relation to gender, it can be seen that the majority of those who completed a response card were female (77%). There are very few males in comparison. The observation of the session on the 25th October and discussion with National Gallery staff confirmed that this accurately reflects the composition of the workshops and it was not the case that more females than males completed response cards.

Fig. 6.1.4.1b: Gender of adult respondents, Family workshops

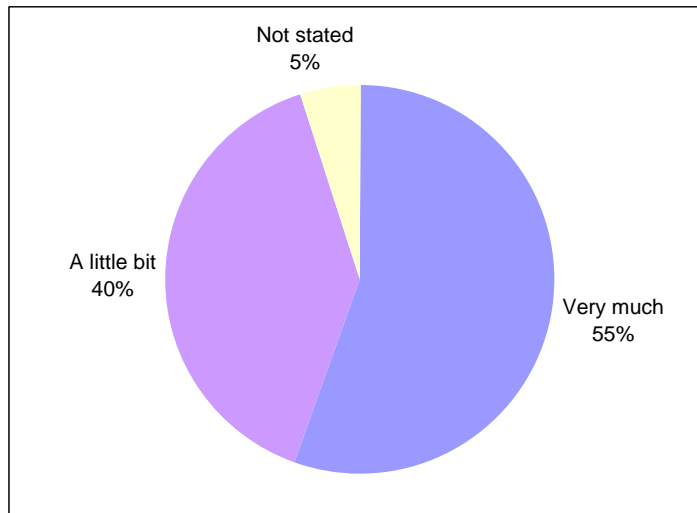


N=43

- **Interest in art:**

In their response to Q4, 'How interested are you in art?' the majority of respondents said that they liked art 'very much' followed by 40% who liked art a 'little bit.' Since participants are self-selecting in attending the Family workshops it is not surprising that no respondents admitted that they did not like art at all.

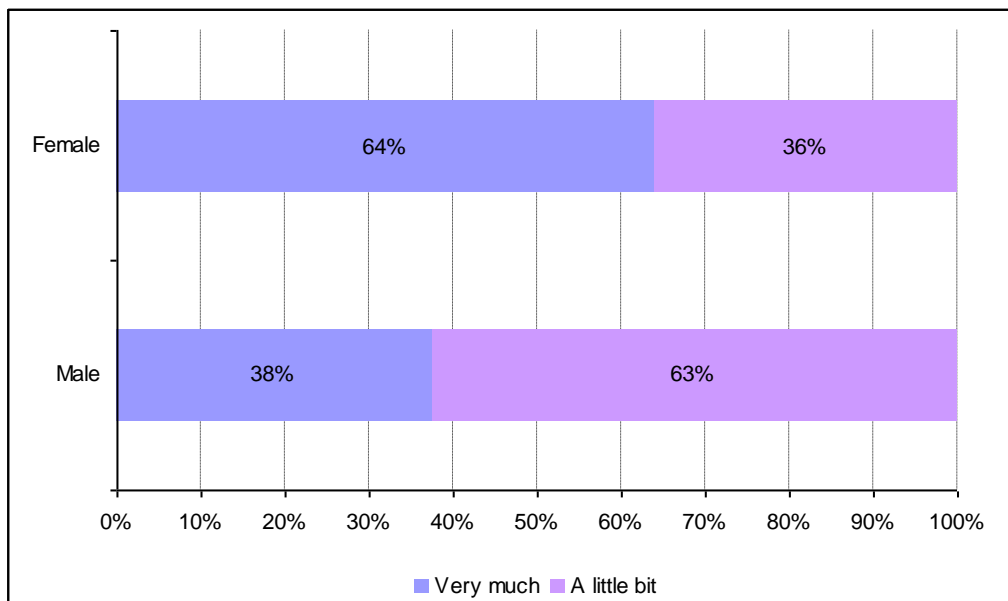
Fig. 6.1.4.1c: Interest in art, Family workshops



N=43

Breaking down interest in art by gender reveals that there is potentially an interest in art related to gender.⁶⁷ More women were 'very much' interested in art, whereas more men were only interested in art 'a little bit.' The men appear to be much more lukewarm in their approach to art.

Fig. 6.1.4.1d: Interest in art compared with gender, Family workshops



N=41

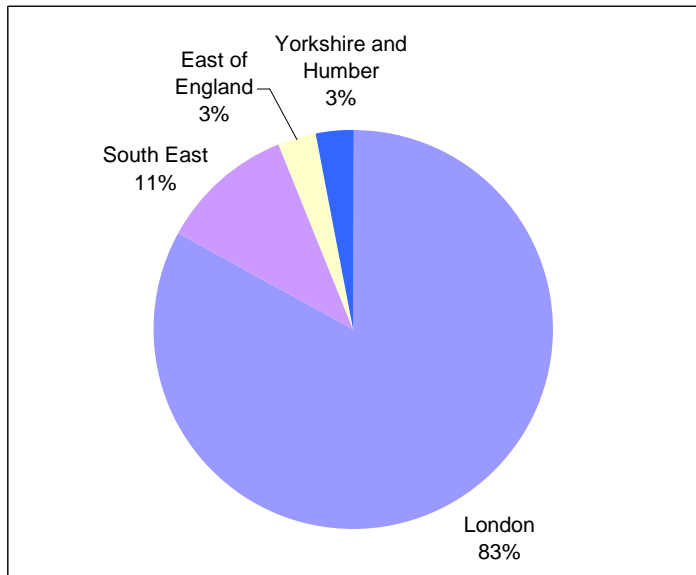
⁶⁷ No respondents did not like art so this category was excluded from the analysis
PART 6: WORKSHOPS AT THE NATIONAL GALLERY

- **Analysis of the respondents' postcodes:**

Of the 43 response cards from the Family workshops, 36 complete postcodes could be analysed using a variety of databases in order to obtain as much about the context of the respondents as possible. The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004, the Rural/Urban morphology database and ACORN classification system were all used to build a tentative picture of the respondents which could then be compared with the information from the National Gallery. From the rest of the postcodes, four were incomplete and three were not stated which meant they could not be analysed. The postcode analysis was undertaken using the Neighbourhood statistics search engine through the National Statistics website (<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/>) and then supplemented with information from <http://www.uklocalarea.com/>.

Most of the respondents who completed a response card at the Family workshops came from London (83%) with very small numbers coming from other regions including the South-East, East of England and Yorkshire and Humber.

Fig. 6.1.4.1e: Origins of respondent by region, Family workshops

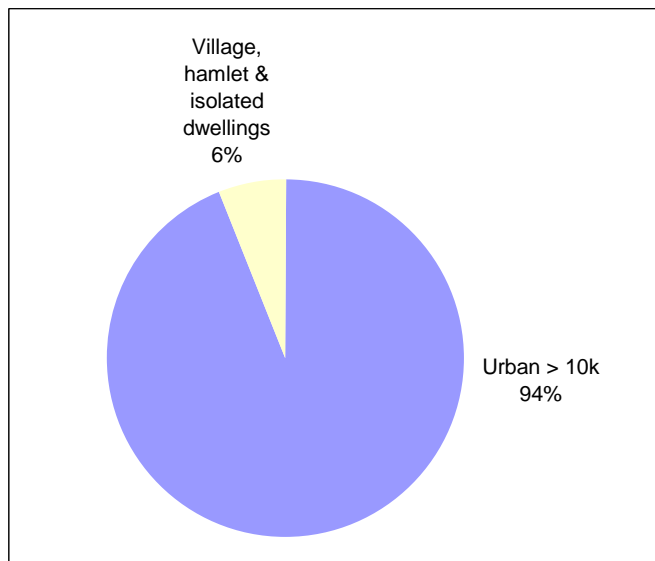


N=36

Within London the largest concentration of respondents came from postcodes in Barnet in North West London (8 respondents).

Using the Rural/Urban morphology database, the 36 postcodes can be analysed against the type of settlement in which they are located. Overwhelmingly, (94%) of the postcodes that could be matched came from Urban areas with populations of over 100,000 which corresponds to the high proportion of postcodes from London. The remaining 6% of postcodes (please note that this is only two postcodes) are located in an area designated as Village, Hamlet & Isolated dwellings and both these postcodes are within the South-East region.

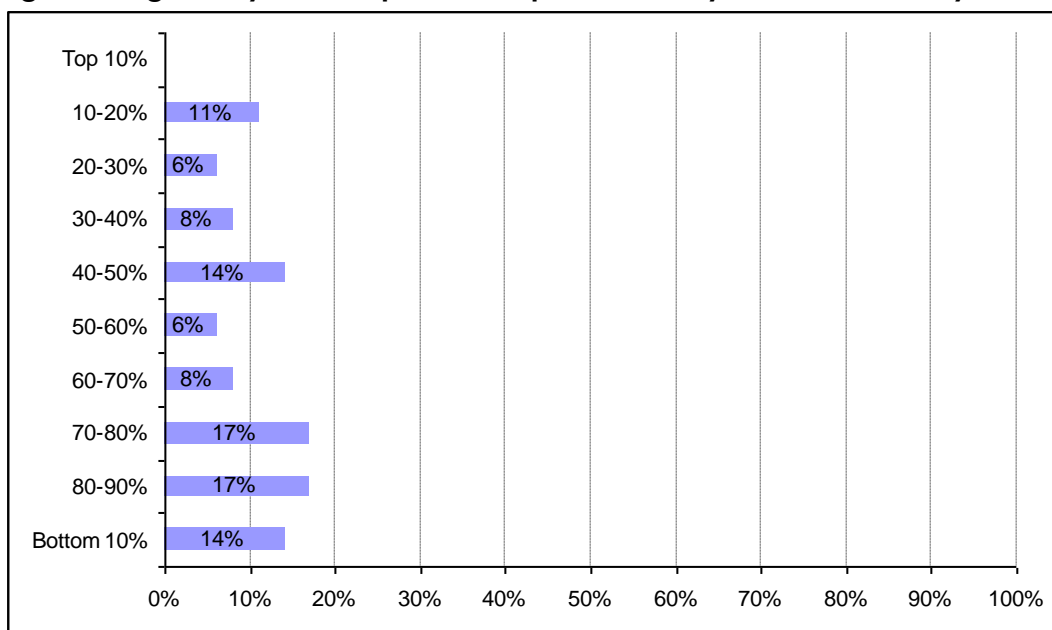
Fig. 6.1.4.1f: Origins of respondents by type of area, Family workshops



N=36

The postcodes were also linked to their IMD 2004 rank based on the Lower Layer Super Output Area (SOA) in which the postcode is located. Fig. 6.1.4.1g shows that there is an uneven distribution regarding the postcodes, with no discernible pattern. Generally, however, it seems likely that few of the respondents are experiencing substantial personal deprivation. There are no respondents whose postcodes are amongst the top 10% of deprived areas in England, and only 11% who fall into the top 20% deprived areas in England. A clear majority (76%) are living in areas which would suggest that they are not likely to be experiencing social deprivation.

Fig. 6.1.4.1g: Analysis of respondents' postcodes by IMD 2004, Family workshops



N=36

Using the ACORN classification system it is possible to gain a broad overview of the types of people who have completed a response card. This analysis

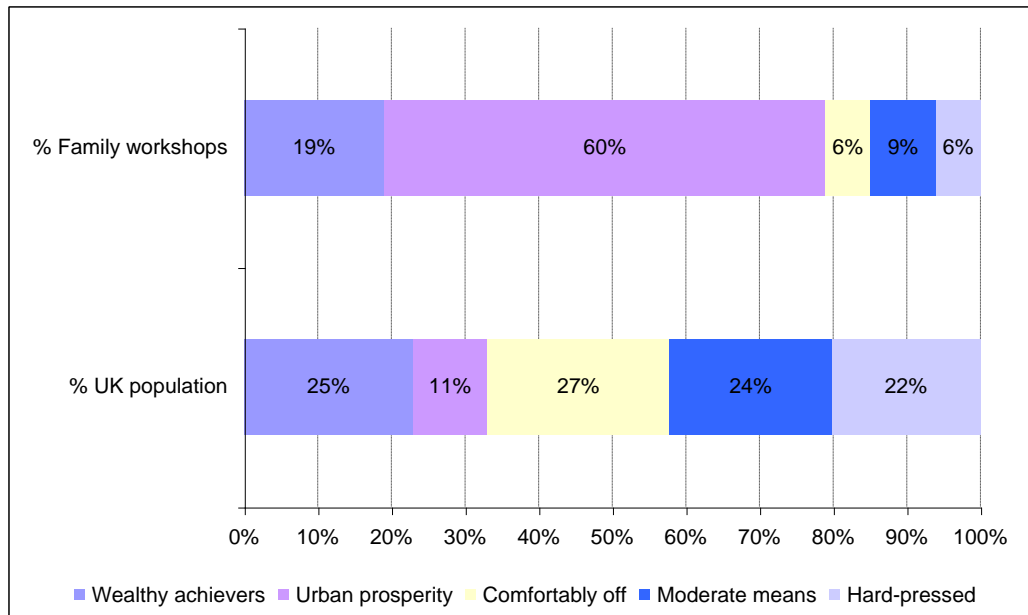
locates most of the respondents from the Family workshops in the 'Urban prosperity' category (61%) with the highest concentration of postcodes falling into the 'Educated urbanites' sub-group (33%). The postcodes of 85% of participants fall into the three categories that suggest that they live comfortable lives ('Wealthy achievers,' 'Urban prosperity' and 'Comfortably off').

Table 6.1.4.1a: Analysis of respondents' postcodes by ACORN, Family workshops

Category	Group		% of UK population	The Family workshops sample
Wealthy achievers	A	Wealthy executives	8.6%	8%
	B	Affluent greys	7.7%	0%
	C	Flourishing families	8.8%	11%
Urban prosperity	D	Prosperous professionals	2.2%	19%
	E	Educated urbanites	4.6%	33%
	F	Aspiring singles	3.9%	8%
Comfortably off	G	Starting out	2.5%	3%
	H	Secure families	15.5%	3%
	I	Settled Suburbia	6%	0%
	J	Prudent pensioners	2.6%	0%
Moderate means	K	Asian communities	2.5%	0%
	L	Post-industrial families	15.5%	6%
	M	Blue-collar roots	6%	3%
Hard-pressed	N	Struggling families	14.1%	3%
	O	Burdened singles	4.5%	0%
	P	High-rise hardship	1.6%	0%
	Q	Inner city adversity	2.1%	3%

Family workshops, N=36

Fig. 6.1.4.1h: Analysis of respondents' postcodes by ACORN, comparing the Family workshops with the UK population



Family workshops, N=36

Based on the information obtained from the analysis of the postcodes and from the demographic information on the response card it is possible to build a tentative sketch of a typical adult participant at the National Gallery Family workshops during the research period. This 'typical person' is likely to be:

- Aged between 35 and 54 years old
- Female
- Very much interested in art
- Not experiencing social deprivation
- Living in London
- To fall into the 'Urban prosperity' category as defined by ACORN classification system and therefore more likely to be affluent and well educated

This impression is confirmed to some extent by an informal conversation with the facilitator of the family workshops, who stated that participants in the workshops are likely to be highly educated and in fact typical of National Gallery visitors in general. The use of the National Gallery family mailing list (developed by collecting details from those people attending earlier workshops) to recruit participants means that these Family workshops are likely to be attracting repeat users of the National Gallery who are already familiar with its educational provision.

6.1.4.2 'We are interested in what you think about the Madonna of the Pinks...'

How did these typical National Gallery visitors respond to the Madonna of the Pinks? The analysis below reviews the adult response card comments classified in relation to the Generic Learning Outcomes (GLOs) and then

explores the occurrences of the themes that emerged during the analysis of the response cards at the Bowes Museum.

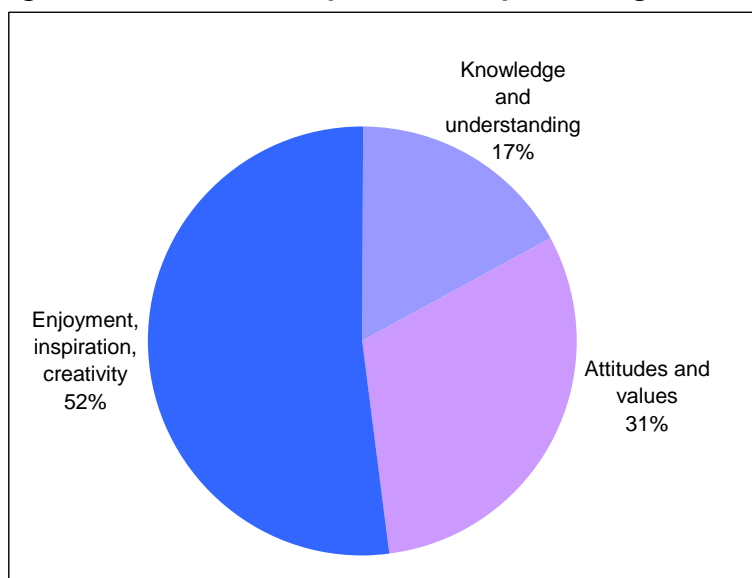
In total from the 43 response cards completed at the family workshops, 29 participants made a comment regarding their thoughts on the Madonna of the Pinks. Of those 29 comments, 28 written comments were analysed and coded using QSR N6 to ascertain the frequency with which particular themes were alluded to by respondents. The remaining comment was in the form of a drawing and could not be analysed in the same manner.

A coding tree was developed in QSR N6 from themes picked out from analysis of the responses and was used to give an idea of how many Family workshop participants responded to a particular theme. These themes ranged from making references to the painting, the content of the painting and comments regarding the acquisition of the painting (see Appendix D for full coding tree). Please note that the sample size is very small and the percentages reproduced here are for visual purposes only; these illustrations of the data enable comparison with the Bowes Museum and other National Gallery responses to get an overview of how participants in these workshops engaged with the Madonna of the Pinks. The percentage refers to the number of times the 'theme' appears in the 28 analysed responses and is not a 'measure' of how many participants mentioned that theme.

- **Learning impact of the workshops – analysis using the GLOs:**

Twenty-nine comments were analysed using the GLOs. Each comment was coded using the single GLO that was felt to be most appropriate for the whole comment rather than assigning multiple GLOs.

Fig. 6.1.4.2a: Written responses analysed using the GLOs, Family workshops



N=29

Most of the comments (52%), referred to the participant's or their children's perceived enjoyment of the workshop which it was suggested led to

increased understanding of the Madonna of the Pinks or a greater appreciation for the painting.

I very much enjoyed looking at the painting- a very calm picture. I felt I could spend along time just looking and enjoying it. [Female, aged 35-54]

Thirty-one per cent (31%) of comments expressed an attitude towards the Madonna of the Pinks which was generally favourable, such as that of the following young woman:

I thought it was the one painting in the room that stood out and I wanted to look at it in detail. It drew me in. I am in general not a big fan of religious painting but really felt drawn to this. [Female, aged 25-34]

Quite a few of the responses to the painting were 'emotional' in this manner, possibly reflecting a personal connection that the participant made to the painting? One respondent was explicit about the connection made:

It is beautiful + reminds me very much of playing with my babies. I loved hearing more about it. [Female, aged 34-54]

Lastly, 17% of the responses referred predominantly to an increased understanding of the Madonna of the Pinks as a result of attending the workshop, such as the following participant:

Before this workshop I wouldn't have paid much attention to this painting, but having listened to (the artist) I now realise there is more to it than just a woman with child [Female, aged 35-54]

Eight of the respondents (28%) referred to the learning impact of the workshop upon their children or grandchildren, suggesting that this was the predominant reason that some of the adults attended the workshop (rather than considering their own learning).

I think this session is fantastic for the kids, this is the third time we've done this and each one has been interesting, fun and the children have reflected for along time (and remembered the info) afterwards. Thanks to the team that's the reason its so great [Female, aged 25-34]

There were no comments which were felt to refer to new skills learnt (although one participant did refer to her children using inks for the first time as an artistic medium) or future action, behaviour or progression.

The twenty-eight responses from the family workshops were also coded using the themes developed from the coding of the Bowes Museum Response cards.

- **Reference to the style of the painting:**

Regarding references made to the style of the painting, just under a quarter of respondents (21%) remarked upon the size of the painting - mainly how small it was:

I was quite surprised at the size of this painting, much smaller than I expected but it's got so many beautiful details. Virgin Mary's pink cheeks, beautiful dress, flowers, and a castle in the distance [Female aged 25-34]

A couple of participants remarked that if it was not for the workshop they may not even have noticed the painting in the gallery:

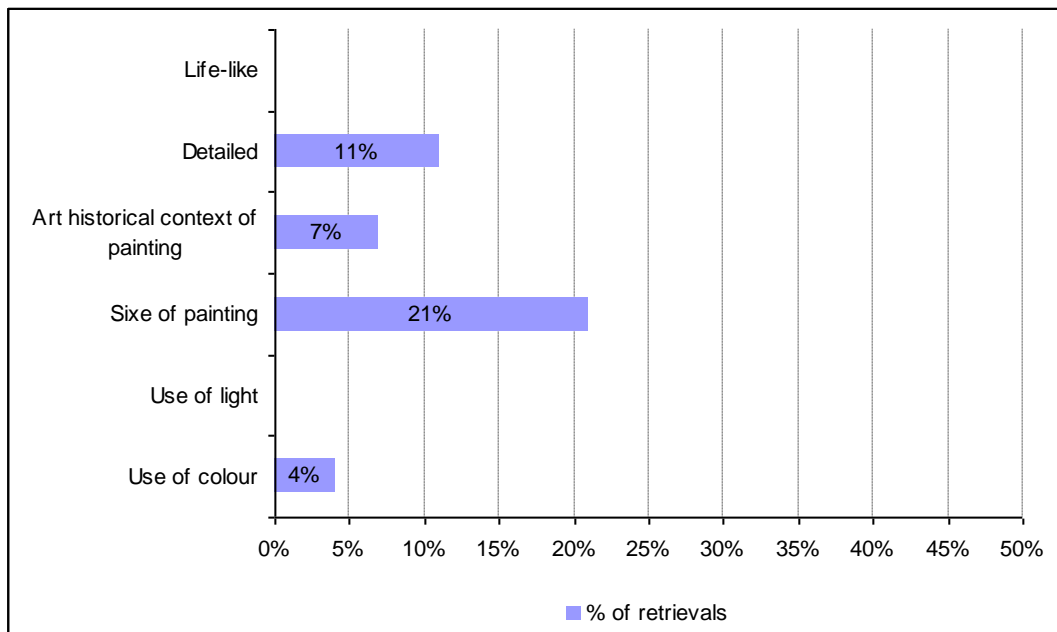
It was great to learn about a small painting that I would have probably just walked past [Female, aged 35-54]

A few respondents noted the detail in the picture and the art historical context of the painting. One participant was keen to learn more about such works of art in general as a result of the workshop:

The historical element is fascinating and it has inspired me to find out more about paintings from the past [Female, aged 35-54]

No respondents talked about the use of light in the picture or how life-like the Madonna and Christ figures appeared.

Fig. 6.1.4.2b: Reference to the style of the painting, Family workshops



N=28

- **References to the depiction of the subject matter:**

Relatively few respondents talked about the content of the painting, and those that did commented on the window and the veil, two elements that are quite difficult to 'see' as the detail is very fine. This reflects perhaps the

detailed study of the painting which took place between the National Gallery educator and the workshop participants.

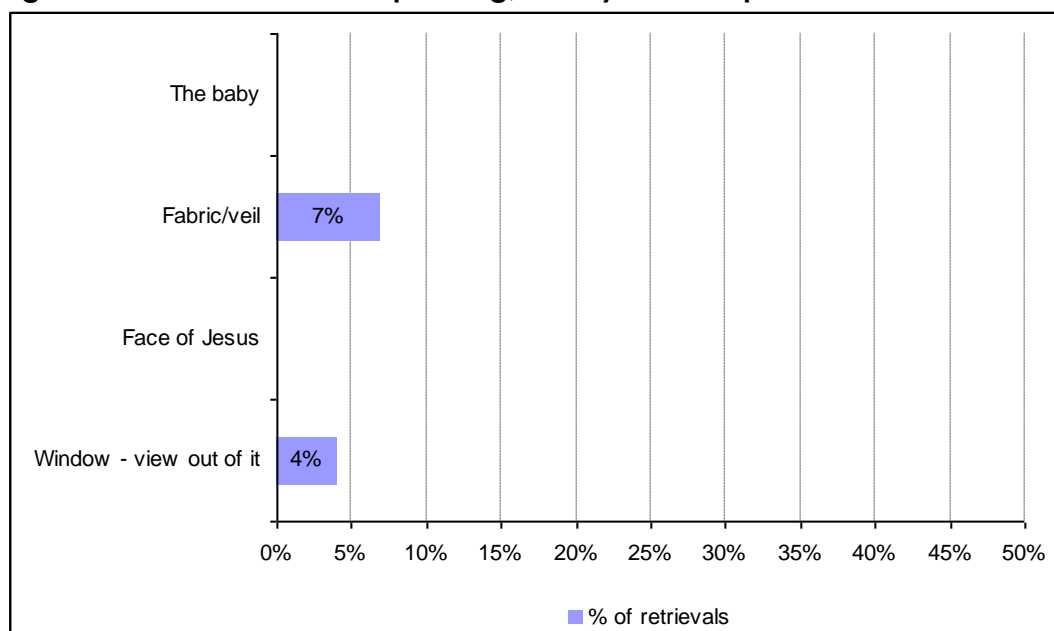
For one lady, aged 35-54, her perception of the texture of the veil was linked to her interpretation of the 'calming' atmosphere of the painting, felt through all the elements of the painting, content, colour, expression:

It's the delicate expression, skin colour and that veil- such softness. It imparts such serenity, calming.

There were no comments that directly referred to the life-like nature of the Madonna and child figures. One respondent felt that the painting conveyed the opposite effect:

I wonder why humans look different than today- a tradition? To make them look special and divine? [Male, aged 35-54]

Fig. 6.1.4.2c: Content of the painting, Family workshops



N=28

- **The relationship of the Madonna and child:**

Three respondents (11%), all women and in the same age category, mentioned the relationship between the Madonna and child as interesting them most about the painting. They use language evocative of strong emotion between a mother and child - intimate, love, beautiful - and one participant made a direct connection between the relationship in the painting and the interaction with her own children:

I like the unusual nature of it. Its a very intimate image of a mother and child. The scale is quite surprising and I would have easily missed it had I not been part of the workshop [Female, aged 35-54]

When I looked at the picture, even I'm not very good for the art but I feel lots of love from that picture. Madonna's love to the baby is very very strong. Its a beautiful picture [Female, aged 35-54]

It is beautiful and reminds me very much of playing with my babies... [Female, aged 35-54]

The National Gallery interpretation stresses the loving and protective nature of the relationship portrayed within the Madonna of the Pinks and the respondents in some cases are using this language to express their views of the painting, for example the use of the word 'tender:'

I think she is beautiful, beside the Madonna I love the landscape, it's a tender picture. I have been many times but not spent enough time looking at this [Female, aged 25-34]

There were only two instances where both mother and child were mentioned together and in both instances the writer calls them 'mother and child.' This would suggest that participants were happy with the secular interpretation of the painting as presented by the National Gallery. However when referring to the Madonna alone participants were happy to use the words 'Madonna' and 'Virgin Mary.' It is worth pointing out that there are no single references to Christ or Jesus.

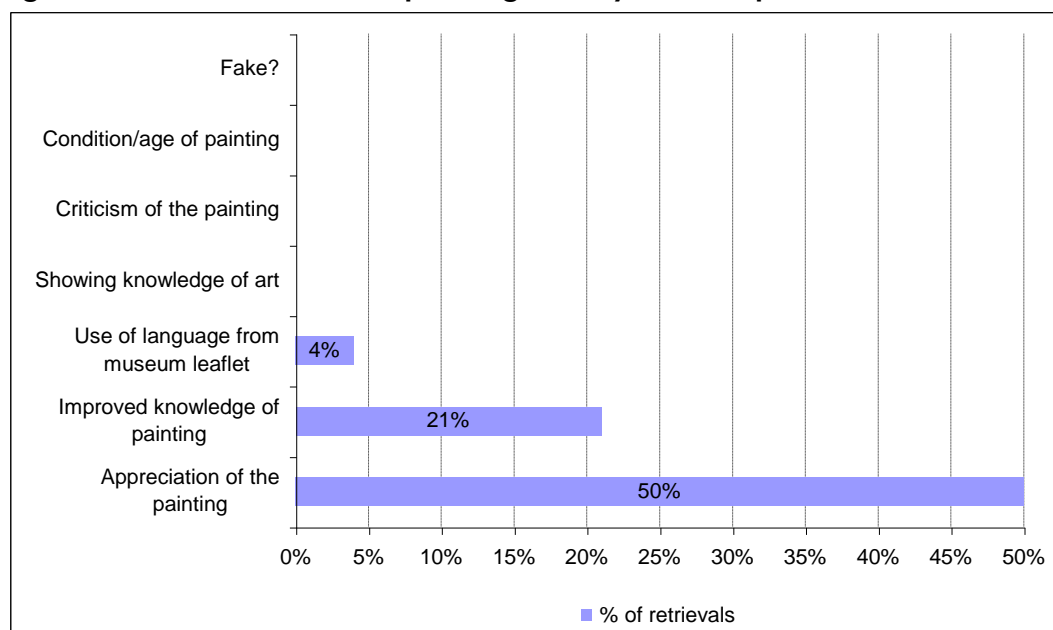
- **Attitudes to the painting:**

Fifty per cent (50%) of the comments made by participants from the family workshops expressed an appreciation for the Madonna of the Pinks, comments not only focused on the content of the painting that respondents found appealing but also how the painting made respondents feel. The picture evoked emotions such as 'love', 'calm, and 'serenity' through the subject matter. One participant admitted that even though she was not a fan of the type of painting she found it appealing:

It's very small but very impressive. I like it even I'm not a fan of this kind of painting. (I don't speak English very well so I can't express myself how I'd like to) [Female, aged 16-24]

At the same time there were no criticisms made of the painting nor did any of the respondents feel it was important to discuss the condition or age of the painting, although 21% of respondents mentioned that their knowledge of the painting had improved.

Fig. 6.1.4.2d: Attitudes to the painting, Family workshops



N=28

- **Acquisition:**

Within this sub-theme, one participant referred to the acquisition of the painting with the opinion that it was good to save it for the nation (1 retrieval, 4%).

The workshop is fantastic, perfectly pitched for the age group and very interesting giving the right amount of information. The enthusiasm of the guide fed into the children and they all enthusiastically finished their painting. I enjoyed learning about the painting and feel that historically it's important to be in the gallery [Female, aged 35-54]

There were no further direct references made to the acquisition of the Madonna of the Pinks or were any comments made about the cost of the painting, whether positive or negative, except that one respondent mentioned that this information during the workshop helped to set the painting within its context:

...a bit of explanation about this painting (e.g. new to the gallery, how they proved it was not fake and its cost) made a great difference [female, aged 35-54]

There were no references made to the other themes in this category as there had been at the Bowes and by general National Gallery visitors.

- **Attitudes to the workshop:**

There were a number of comments focusing on the learning impact of the workshops particularly for the children or grandchildren who accompanied the adult to the workshop. These comments were generally favourable and formed part of the 43% of comments regarding the excellence of the workshop.

Some of the participants noted how they could obtain a greater understanding of the painting by attending the workshop rather than seeing it solely in the exhibition as more information could be imparted:

Great workshop as usual- loved hearing about the painting in more detail than you can get from the information to the side of it. Inks were a new medium for my children to work with and dried easily for the journey home [Female, aged 35-54]

The comment above also reminds us that these Family workshop participants are frequent users of the National Gallery and its educational provision.

Other respondents appreciated learning about the context of the painting, and how the workshop was pitched at a suitable level for their children. There were few comments made in relation to the activity except from the point of view that it was enjoyable for the children. However one participant who did not state their age or gender was quite passionate about the activity and working with the specialists:

I like it, I like it, it's so fun I can't stop doing it. I keep thinking of more + more colours + adding it to my picture. I like the picture because its so detailed with all the stuff inside it. I liked to listen to(the artist's) talk and I like the artist.

Despite the visit to see the Madonna of the Pinks *in situ* there were very few comments made about the display. These respondents were focused on the workshop.

6.1.4.3 Conclusions to the analysis of the written comments from the adult response cards

Generally the responses to the painting made by the participants were focused on specific themes, echoing closely the art interpreter's presentation. The participants' comments echoed words such as 'tender', 'loving' and 'protective' which were used during the workshop, and the focus on the mother and child relationship was very much a feature of the presentation.

Some of the responses were very personal, hinting at connections made with the painting in terms of emotion (for example one respondent felt drawn to the painting although she did not normally like religious painting). The atmosphere of the painting was more important to some respondents rather than any specific element such as colour or light effects for example, and how it made them feel. For some respondents this was directly attributed to attending the workshop, commenting that they might otherwise have missed the picture walking round the gallery. But engaging with the painting for a lengthy period of time (about an hour), understanding its context and having it explained perhaps initiated this feeling of 'closeness.'

Although the respondents were generally very similar to the typical visitor at the Bowes Museum - female and affluent, well educated, although younger than the Bowes audience - it was interesting that not so many respondents positioned themselves as 'art lovers' taking an interest in the style and history

of the painting. Rather they positioned themselves more as a 'concerned parent' in relation to their concern for the children's learning in the workshop, or as someone making emotional and personal connections with the painting; they recognised the love in the painting and thus felt drawn to it.

6.1.4.4 Family workshops at the National Gallery – the children's responses

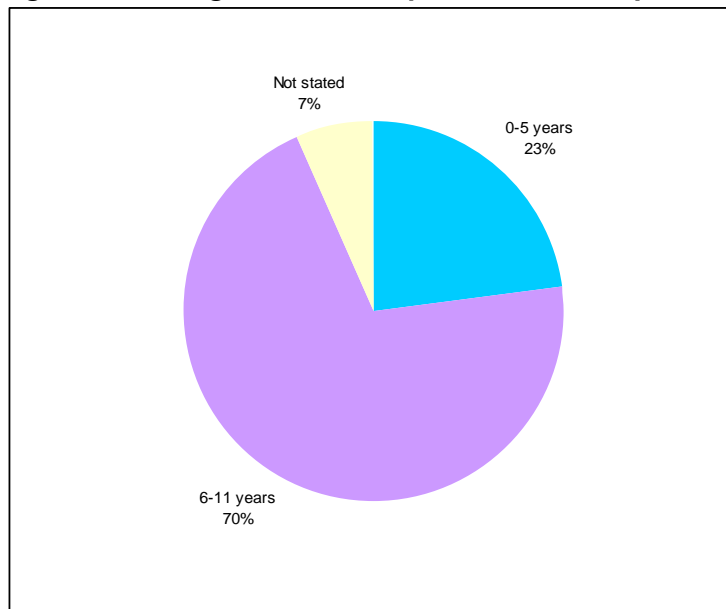
In total 61 responses were collected from children who attended the family workshops. The children's response cards were analysed using SPSS, EXCEL and QSR N6 but there was no postcode information collected from the children. However the responses from the adults who attended the workshop will help to give an idea of the children's backgrounds as most of them who attended with their families.

- **Demographic information about the children:**

As with the adult response cards, the children's response cards asked a number of quantifiable questions to give some background to the children's comments.

In terms of age, the majority of children who completed a response card were aged between 6-11 years (70%) and much less smaller numbers aged between 0-5 years (23%). The gallery had alternative activities for the very young children (the 'Magic carpet') which may explain the smaller number of cards completed by very young children, but this may also be because the response card was not intended to be suitable for very young children.

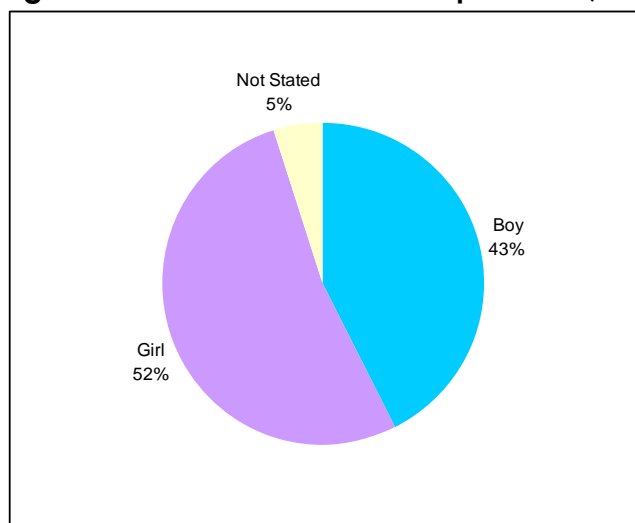
Fig. 6.1.4.4a: Age of child respondents, Family workshops



N=61

There were more girls who completed a response card compared to boys but the difference is relatively small at 9%.

Fig. 6.1.4.4b: Gender of child respondents, Family workshops



N=61

6.1.4.5 'For me, the most special thing about the Madonna of the Pinks is...'

Children were asked to draw or comment on what was special about the Madonna of the Pinks. Although 7 children did not respond with a picture or a drawing, 6 children drew a picture and most of the children, 48, left a written comment, although not all of these were related to the Madonna of the Pinks.

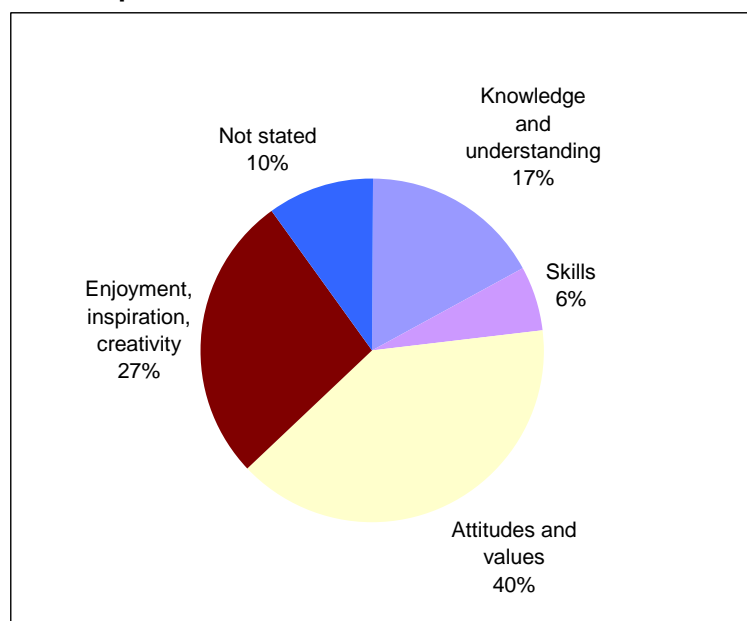
- **Learning outcomes:**

Analysing the 48 comments using the Generic Learning Outcomes shows that most of the GLOs, except Action, Behaviour, Progression, are represented within the children's comments.

The open question enabled the children to express their attitude to and opinion about what they felt was special about the Madonna of the Pinks and these were coded under Attitudes and Values (40%). Rachel aged 6 felt the painting was special because it showed how a mother should be, although she perhaps had some help from her mother to write her response:

Very realistic and loving as well happy and just like a mother should be.

Fig. 6.1.4.5a: Analysis of the children's responses using the GLOs, Family workshops



N=48

Although forty-eight children left a written comment not all of these could be analysed as they could not be read or did not relate directly to the workshop. As with the adult response cards, the children's cards were analysed with QSR N6 to identify familiar themes across their comments. In total 45 responses were analysed in QSR N6 and these are explored below.

In general, it was felt that the baby was very important to the children and many responses talked about the baby Jesus. This was particularly prevalent amongst the girls.

- **Reference to the style of the painting:**

Quite a few of the children were able to talk about the use of colour in the painting, although in some cases this was conditioned by favourite colour being included within the painting:

The flowers, because they were pink (Tilly, aged 5)

Pretty and her favourite colour is blue (Abolanie, aged 8)

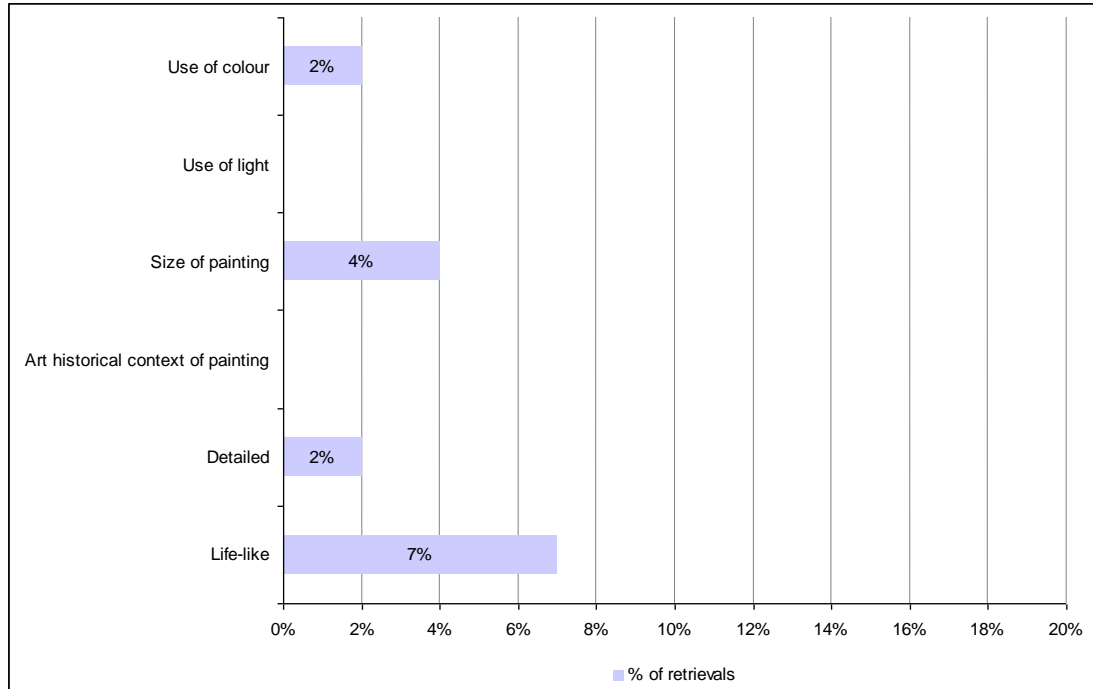
Fewer children noted the size of the painting, but Jade aged 9 reflected some of the comments made by the adults in suggesting that its size made it difficult to spot in the gallery:

Colourful, I think it was very small and surrounded by big pictures which made it difficult to spot

Amy aged 8 felt that the representation of the painting was very life like, drawing attention to the realistic 'chubbiness' of the baby:

The effects, the use of colours and the accuracy of the painting and the chubbiness of the baby

Fig. 6.1.4.5b: Reference to the painting, Family workshops (children)



N=45

- **References to the depiction of the subject matter:**

Perhaps because the children were younger, more of them talked about the content of the painting than the adults tended to. For example, 10 of the children (22%) talked about the baby as something they found special and it is notable that most of these respondents were girls.

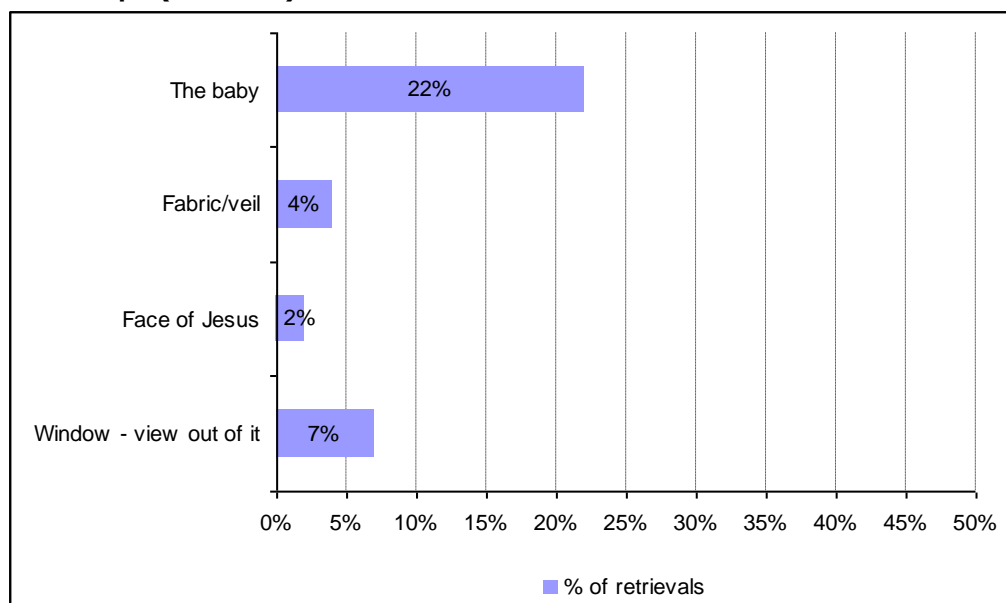
Nice... I like the flowers. I love the baby, the most special thing about the Madonna of the Pinks is Baby, his colour, hair (Jade, age 5)

Baby Jesus (Kristian, age 5)

I like the baby best (India, age 6)

The baby Jesus and I liked it (Jessica, age 9)

Fig. 6.1.4.5c: Reference to the depiction of the subject matter, Family workshops (children)



N=45

- **The relationship of the Madonna and child:**

A few of the children talked about how they found the relationship between the mother and child special (9%). The word 'love' was commonly used to describe the relationship portrayed.

Mum and the baby looking at each other (Jacqui, age 7) Its happy and full of love (Madeleine, aged 11)

Baby and Madonna hugging each other and loving each other and swapping flower to each other (Emily, age 7)

They love each other (Gabriel, age 5)

Perhaps this is because it represents what is held as a 'natural' relationship between mother and child, which a few children reflected upon, although their young age suggests that they might have had adult help in their responses!

Very realistic and loving as well happy and just like a mother should be (Rachel, age 6)

Very protective and very loving just like a mother should be (Child, age 6)

- **Attitudes to the painting:**

Far fewer of the children expressed their appreciation of the painting compared to the adults (16% compared to 50%). Those that did like the painting stated various reasons including one boy who felt it was 'easy' to copy, obviously a budding Raphael!

That it is small and easy to copy/ paint (William, age 8)

They were very careful with their paintings (Thomas, age 8)

What I like most about the Madonna of the Pinks is the beautiful colours (Patrick, age 7)

Rebecca aged 10 demonstrated increased knowledge of how the painting was constructed, referring to the x-rays showing the 'hidden' drawings by Raphael underneath:

The x-ray that was taken showing the sketch of the picture and how Raphael drew so many lines and didn't rub out incorrect ones

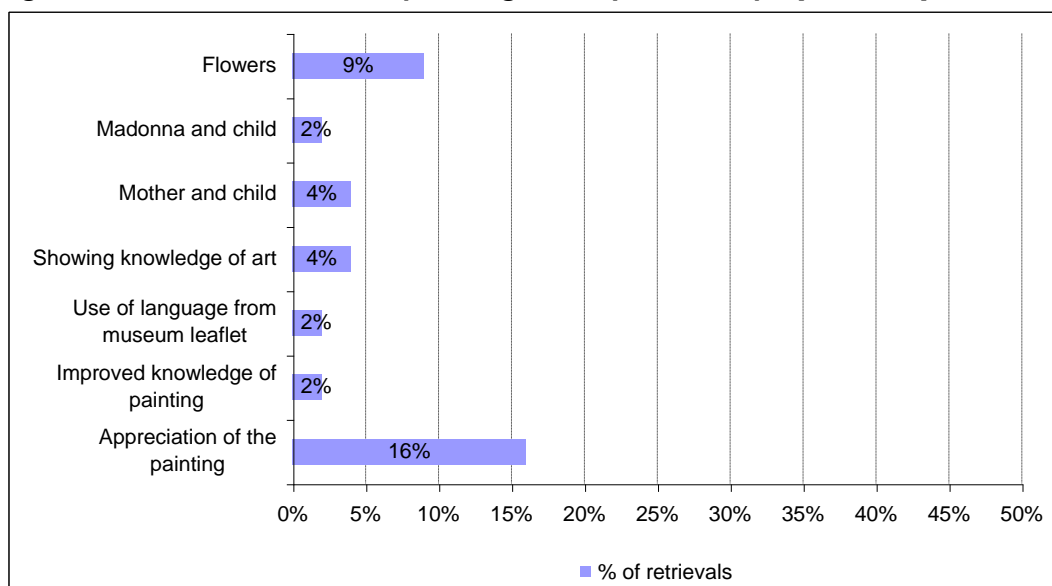
The children seemed happy to use the 'religious' names of the Madonna and Jesus, although this was not picked up by the QSR N6 analysis. For example five references were made to the 'Baby Jesus:'

I loved doing my own painting. They told me the story again of baby Jesus (Maya age 4)

Its got Mary and Jesus (Lucy age 6)

For some of these children because the painting was of Mary and Jesus it seemed to make it special to them automatically.

Fig. 6.1.4.5d: Attitudes to the painting, Family workshops (children)



N=45

● **Attitudes to the workshop:**

Some of the comments from the children related to learning outcomes from the workshop they attended. For example one anonymous child felt that the workshop had helped to stimulate their thinking:

I enjoyed the art session as it helps me think (Unknown)

Other children talked about how they enjoyed the workshop:

I enjoyed drawing and painting it in (James, age 4)

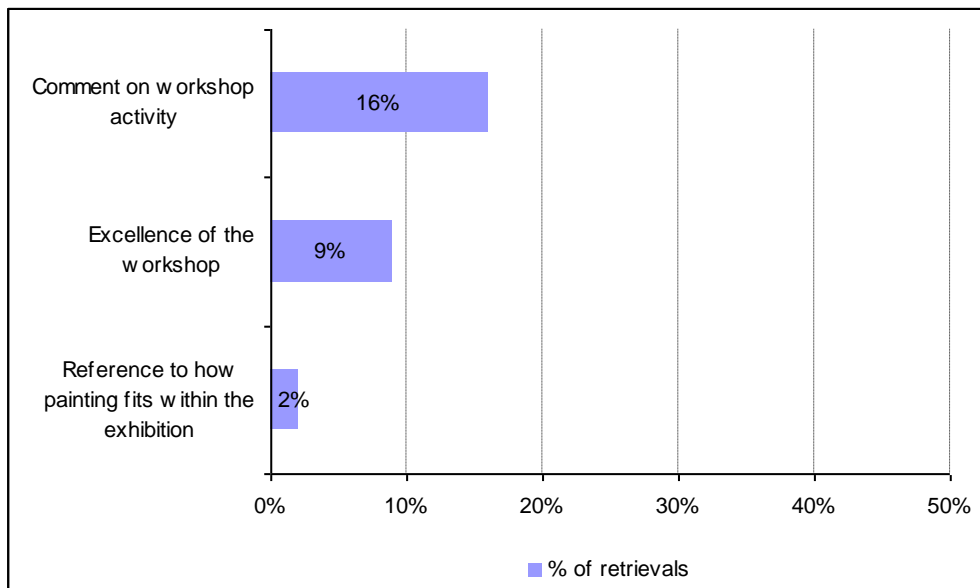
I liked talking about the colours of the painting and how they made it (Katie age 10)

I enjoyed the art work, learnt about colours and different ways of thinking about painting

There was a single reference made to how the painting fits within its display:

...I think it was very small and surrounded by big pictures which made it difficult to spot (Jade age 9)

Fig. 6.1.4.5e: References to the workshop, Family workshops (children)



N=45

6.1.4.6 Conclusions from the children's response cards

The children appeared (from the response cards) to be confident in stating their opinion about what they found special about the Madonna of the Pinks. Some of the younger children perhaps had help from their parents but the comments are sufficiently different from the adult response cards to suggest that the children are expressing their own opinions.

The themes that stand out as important to the children include the baby, the workshop activity and the colours in the painting. There is evidence that the children were able to understand the emotions in the painting as some made references to how happy the painting was and how there was love between the Madonna and Jesus.

They love each other [Gabriel, age 5]

Generally, whereas the Madonna was an important focus for the adult responses, for the children it was the baby or 'baby Jesus' that was referred to in many comments. This was particularly prevalent amongst the girls.

6.1.5 Overall conclusions from the Family workshops at the National Gallery

The evidence from the Family workshops suggests that it is mothers taking part with their children. It was interesting that most of the comments regarding the mother and the baby came from female respondents, whereas the male respondents tended not to leave a comment or talked more generally about the painting.

The adults showed a concern for their children to learn from the workshop which is reflected in the high number of comments from the children which showed what they felt had learnt, or expressing an opinion about the Madonna of the Pinks (which was also encouraged in the phrasing of the question). That some of the children had help with their answers (especially the younger ones) may indicate this concern to be seen to have learnt something from the workshop?

Despite it being a drop-in session the workshops attracted a particular audience to the Family workshops which was likely to be well educated and affluent and 'typical' visitors to art galleries and museums. These particular Family workshop participants were all (to some degree) likely to be regular users of the National Gallery because of the method of recruitment through the family mailing list.

How far does the 'background' of the respondents impact upon their response to the painting? Both the children and the adults gave the impression of being confident in their responses (based on the observation) and the postcode analysis suggests that they are comfortable with visiting art galleries and engaging in cultural activities. They engaged with the painting in a different way however to the visitors to the Bowes Museum - instead of viewing it as part of an exhibition they viewed it as part of a focused workshop and the interpretation by the National Gallery was presented in a different way by gallery educators to reflect the level of adults and children. How far does the different interpretation elicit a different response from the participants? Participants are also bringing their own experience to the interpretation but these participants are not positioning themselves as 'art critics' like at Bowes.

Do participants respond to the interpretation that fits their sense of self-identity? Latch on to the 'discourse' around the Madonna of the Pinks that represents their view of art and what they want to get from the experience. For example some of the respondents from the Family workshop valued the way in which the painting made them feel, which was not the same for the visitors at the Bowes Museum.

6.2 TEENAGE WORKSHOPS AT THE NATIONAL GALLERY, OCTOBER 2005

6.2.1 The Teenage workshops

Workshops for young people were held at the National Gallery Education Centre during the October half term. There were two workshops each consisting of two days at the Gallery; one for age group 12-14 year olds held on the 25th and 26th of October and a second workshop for 15-17 year olds held on the 27th and 28th October. The content of the workshops was closely related to the Madonna of the Pinks.

The workshops for teenagers are relatively new at the National Gallery and have been extremely popular. In total there are around thirty places in each workshop and these have tended to be oversubscribed. Most of the young people attending the October workshops had been recruited through the National Gallery family mailing list and had already taken part in similar workshops. The workshops were also advertised in Time Out; however by the time the advertisement appeared, the workshops were almost full due to the response from the initial mail out.

These workshops were not drop-in sessions (like the family workshops during the same period); due to the limited number of places young people have to register their interest prior to the session, but the workshops were free.

6.2.2 Research methods

A researcher from RCMG observed one of the workshop sessions that took place at the National Gallery on 25th October 2006 from 11.30-4.30pm. This was one of the sessions for the younger teenagers aged from 12-14 year olds and was the first day for that workshop. The same session was being observed by an art therapist. The young people who participated in both the workshops were asked to complete a questionnaire about their responses to the painting, their interest in art and their family background on the second day of the two-day workshop (Appendix C). One of the participants in the sessions for younger teenagers was interviewed on 4th October 2006, nearly one year after the workshop in which she had participated. RCMG tried to contact some of the other participants in the workshops, but this proved impossible.

Table 6.2.2a: Research activities

Date	Research	Purpose
25 10 2005 (Half-term week)	Observation of two-day Teenage Workshop at National Gallery	Identify participants and explore their learning outcomes
26 10 2005 28 10 2005	Participants in workshops complete questionnaires	As above
04 10 2006	Interview with participant in workshop (Looked After Young Person)	Ascertain impact of the workshop after one year.

6.2.3 Observation of a Teenage workshop, 25th October 2005

The workshop was run by one of the National Gallery's pool freelance educators, and an artist also employed on a freelance basis by the gallery. The workshop was held for the most part in the education centre at the gallery, and there were large canvasses of the artist's work on the walls.

Twenty-six (26) young people attended the workshop, nineteen (19) girls and seven (7) boys. The group was fairly diverse with around a third of the young people coming from Non-European backgrounds. Some of the young people had come alone; others came with their brothers and sisters or with friends. These young people were self-selecting, based on their response to the National Gallery flyer and media advertisements.

Two looked after young people from an inner East London borough attended the workshop. The borough council had approached the National Gallery after the summer holiday workshops to see if some of their young people could become involved and two places had been reserved at these workshops for them.

The East London borough is described as a place of contrasts, "a vibrant and lively borough with a high degree of strength and determination within its diverse communities"⁶⁸ but with high levels of deprivation and social instability, and with increasing polarisation between those residents who have high income jobs and can afford the high prices for private housing, and those who are caught in a cycle of poverty dependent on social welfare. The borough has one of the worst unemployment rates in the country (10.7%) which is substantially higher than that of London (7.6%)⁶⁹ and for the UK as a whole (5.5%).⁷⁰ Forty per cent (44%) of families are dependent on means-tested benefits and the disability allowance.⁷¹ High numbers of residents (50.8%) are living in social accommodation, much of which is in poor condition. Other indicators of deprivation include high levels of mental health problems amongst residents, homelessness and overcrowding. With an estimated 210,000 residents, the borough has the third highest population density in the UK and a fast-growing population. High levels of migration of young people and a high birth rate mean that young people and children under 18 years make up a quarter of the population, and this is projected to increase.⁷² According to government statistics for 2006 there are 480 looked

⁶⁸ [Inner East London Borough] *Crime and Disorder Reduction and Controlling Substance Misuse Strategy, 1st year progress report 2005-2006*, Safer and Cleaner place to live Partnership, April 2006, [reference to website omitted for reasons of confidentiality], p4

⁶⁹ 2005-2006, <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?id=1606> [accessed 31 07 2007]

⁷⁰ 2005-2006, <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?id=12> [accessed 31 07 2007]

⁷¹ *Mind the gap: [Inner East London Borough] strategy to reduce inequalities and poverty*, p3

⁷² [Inner East London Borough] *Children and Young people's plan 2006-2009*, Children and young people's services, undated, [reference to website omitted for reasons of confidentiality], section 2, p1

after children in the borough in a population of 49,595 children under 18 years (roughly 1%).⁷³

The two young people from the East London borough who attended were self-selecting after the council had asked for volunteers to attend the workshop. Unfortunately there was some confusion regarding the involvement of the looked after young people and they only attended the first day of the workshop. Concerned that the young people might find it difficult to mix with the other workshop participants, the National Gallery asked an art therapist to observe the session to ensure that the environment was suitable for the looked after young people.

The workshop ran to a similar format and used similar content to the Family workshops also held at the gallery during this month, although pitched appropriately to the teenage audience. On the day that the RCMG researcher visited to observe, the workshop was mainly held in the Education Centre, with a visit to the gallery to see the Madonna of the Pinks in the morning.

The educator first introduced the session, talking to the young people about what they would be doing, introducing the gallery and the Madonna of the Pinks, and finally introducing The artist as a 'real' artist whom the young people would be working with. The educator used a poster to introduce the Madonna of the Pinks. She described it as a 'special' painting because of its nature and how they, as the public, are very lucky to own it and the gallery was very lucky to have been able to keep it. The educator talked about the mystery of what lies beneath the painting and how this proved its authenticity.

After being introduced, the artist told the young people a bit about:

- How he became an artist, the first in his family to go to Art College, and introducing the idea of art as a vocation
- How he practices as an artist, the idea of art in the real world
- The concept of visual literacy, the shapes and designs that you can see in paintings
- Challenging the young peoples' possible perceptions of art, the artist commented that he 'used to think that painting was only for rich people' but how he visited an art gallery and fell in love with the paintings
- Relationships in art, interpretation
- Symbolism in the Madonna of the Pinks - comparisons made with other paintings of the Madonna and child (using posters at this point).

After the introduction in the education space, the young people were taken into the gallery itself to see the Madonna of the Pinks. In total they spent forty-five minutes engaging with the painting. The young people were given privileged access to the painting, which was roped off, and they all sat on chairs in front of it. This was meant to deter the public from disturbing the

⁷³ Written answers Tues 12 Dec 2006, <http://www.theyworkforyou.com/wrans/?id=2006-12-12a.103814.h> [accessed 31 07 2007]

session but at one point a woman moved the rope to stand next to the educator to see the painting despite being told that the session was coming to an end, and other members of the public gathered to listen to what was happening.

The educator began by talking about the painting's content that made it special and how it was rare to have a depiction of the Madonna playing with the baby Jesus. The fact it is painted by Raphael also makes it special, which introduces the young people to the 'mystery underneath' and the controversy of whether it was actually painted by Raphael and the excitement of the discovery finding the drawing underneath the painting, revealed by an x-ray, which proved it was authentic. Throughout the talk, the educator continually asked questions of the young people and, where possible, made the painting relevant to their everyday life. Key themes covered through this session included:

- Visual literacy and learning to look at a painting
- The construction of the painting, how it is 'jewel-like' as if illuminated from within and how that effect was achieved by Raphael
- The potential for emotional involvement with a painting, how the colours in the painting impact upon the emotions and making comparisons with more recent artists such as Van Gogh and Matisse who used similar effects
- How lovely babies are, the special feelings that mothers have for their babies and the reciprocal feelings of the child for its mother
- The nature of the painting as a devotional piece of art but also its resemblance to a family photo.

The culmination of the talk was a relatively short exercise with water colour pencils where the young people had to gather as much information as they could about the design and colour from the painting, which they would then be using back in the education centre. There were asked to complete two very quick sketches, about five minutes each.

Throughout the session the educator and the artist were very encouraging and supportive of the young people, building their confidence in their art by saying how everyone is different and draws differently, praising their efforts and encouraging them to see art as an individual response, and to not worry about what others are doing.

After spending some time with the Madonna of the Pinks, the young people moved on to examining the painting *The Madonna of the Meadow* (c.1500) by Giovanni Bellini (Plate 6.2.3a). They spent around an hour with this painting, which the artist introduced as the 'best' painting in the world for him. The educator talked them through the painting, covering the following topics:

- What was similar to the Madonna of the Pinks and what was different about it
- Reading the painting, taking note of symbols, design, colour, meaning, the emotional content (sad not playful), the anticipation of the death of Christ

- How the painting is very different to what would usually be expected from Italian painters, quite 'radical.' This introduces the differences between Northern and Southern Europe in terms of painting trends
- The origins of the painting, how it was easier to get blue pigment in Venice and the symbolism of colour; for example, yellow stands for cowardice and we still use this today.

Plate 6.2.3a: The Madonna of the Meadow by Giovanni Bellini



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The young people repeated the same exercise of making a couple of quick sketches as they had with the Madonna of the Pinks. Throughout the session the young people remained attentive and responsive to questions. Many were very literate and confident in their replies; for example one young person put forward the idea that the Madonna was sitting on the ground to symbolise being close to nature.

The young people return to the education centre for lunch; after that they were asked to paint a life model from two different angles using acrylic paints. They use palettes and wooden easels which caused much excited nudging and raising of eyebrows.

Plate 6.2.3b: The teenagers and their life class



For around one and half hours the young people were very focused on their painting, although towards the end they started to get a little playful with each other. Whilst they are painting, the educator and the artist were very interactive, helping the young people and boosting their confidence by emphasising that all people have different ways of doing things that are all equally as good, and being very positive about their work.

Plate 6.2.3c: One of the paintings from the life-class



Plate 6.2.3d: A second painting from the Teenage workshops



6.2.3.1 The attitudes of the participants to the workshop

During the afternoon session, the RCMG researcher went round and talked informally to ten of the young people about their experience. She asked them:

- Whether they had done the summer workshop
- Whether they did art outside of school
- Whether they had been to the gallery before
- Whether they visit other art galleries
- Why they were interested in art
- Whether their parents were interested in art

Most of the young people had taken part in the summer workshops, three had been involved in other art workshops at Brighton Pavilion and one had been part of an art event with Rolf Harris that took place in Trafalgar Square. All of the young people said that they did art at home; one boy whose mother was a watercolour artist had a wooden palette at home. Some had

parents that were interested in art, but others said they had parents and grandparents which couldn't draw so 'they don't know where I get it!'

Talking with the art therapist, it was felt that the workshops had been very good for the looked after young people as a very supportive and positive atmosphere had been created. She believed that any slim chance the young people had of feeling inadequate compared to their peers was outweighed by the positive examples, and the encouraging nature of the artist and educator. The art therapist commented that the two young women had been excellent, very focused and seemed to be enjoying what they were doing, and this assessment was confirmed by speaking with the two young people (Niamh* and Yasmin*).

In terms of previous experiences, both young people were very different. Niamh* had been to the workshop in the summer and liked it but the second girl, Yasmin*, had never been to an art gallery or an art workshop previously. There was a radical difference therefore in their level of art skill, and the more experienced girl at times told the less experienced girl that she was doing it wrong. However, with positive encouragement from the artist, the latter stood her ground and continued working the way she wanted, focusing on texture rather than shape or colour like the other young people were. This young person did not exhibit a negative response to the criticism of her peer either but responded to the researcher's questions that she was really enjoying herself, no doubt helped by the positive atmosphere created within the group. She loved the gallery and had challenged her own prior conceptions; she thought the gallery would be boring and the people would be posh but instead she loved the building, which also impressed her with its size, and felt that the people were 'really nice.'

Three of the other teenage girls interviewed expressed some anxiety about going to the gallery because they had not painted before although they all did extra-curricular drawing. However, they all had a great time and were very happy with what they had produced. In contrast, the teenage boys were incredibly confident no matter what they did.

Plate 6.2.3.1a: The teenagers at work



6.2.3.2 Conclusions from the observation

The facilitators of the session seemed determined to enable the young people to participate in a supportive and encouraging atmosphere which is reflected in the positive responses obtained from the young people interviewed.

Most of the young people were immersed in art in their school and home lives and were used to visiting art galleries so they already felt comfortable in the environment. It was an environment that they were used to.

Despite some concern from the gallery over the integration of the two looked after young people their experience was very positive; one of the young people (Niamh*) was already familiar with art and visiting art galleries and despite some negative preconceptions of the gallery and some criticism from her peer, the second young person said she enjoyed her experience very much. How far this was a result of the girl's character and the impact of the supportive and encouraging atmosphere can only be speculated.

Plate 6.2.3.2a: A third painting from the teenage workshops



6.2.4 The questionnaires

A questionnaire was distributed to the teenage participants to elicit more in-depth responses from the young people and to explore the impact that the painting had upon them. The young people were asked to complete the questionnaire on the final day of their two day workshop. In total, forty-six (46) responses were received. There was an almost even split in terms of sample from both the workshops on the 26th and 28th October 2005. The responses from the two workshops have been analysed together and where there are relevant differences between the responses of the young age group from the older age group, these will be flagged up.

As the total sample is very small for a statistical analysis, the analysis remains at a very straightforward level. It is not possible to develop a more detailed approach, as cross-tabulations would not be meaningful with very small numbers.

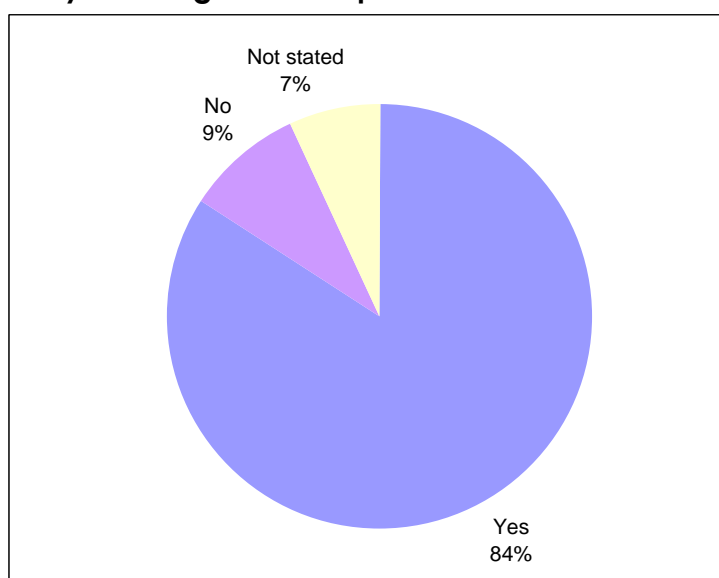
6.2.4.1 Learning outcomes from the workshops

Three of the questions on the teenagers' questionnaire asked the young people to reflect on their learning from the session, focusing in particular on their knowledge and understanding of the painting, any new skills they might have learnt and if they felt their understanding of the painting had increased as a result of the workshop. These are directly related to the Generic Learning Outcomes (GLOs) Knowledge and Understanding and Skills. A further question was more general and invited the young people to write or draw in response to the statement 'what difference has coming here today made to you?'

- **Have you learnt any facts about the Madonna of the Pinks today?**

The majority of the young people who took part in both workshops felt that they had learnt some new facts about the Madonna of the Pinks (84%).

Fig. 6.2.4.1a: Have you learnt any facts about the Madonna of the Pinks today? Teenage workshops



N=46

The facts that the young people had learned during the workshop ranged from the history of the painting to the use of colour and symbolism by Raphael:

The flowers in the picture are called carnations or pinks and Jesus is giving Mary them (Female, 12-14 years)

The carnation means lots of love (Female 12-14 years)

I have learnt that it was painted by Raphael (Female, 12-14 years)

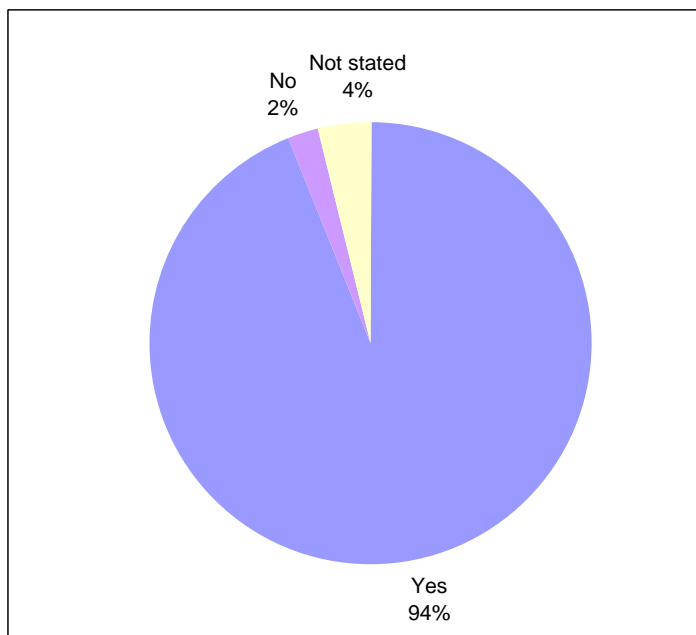
The painting is called Madonna of the Pinks because Mary and Jesus are exchanging flowers called carnations or pinks (Female 12-14 years)

Artist information, information about the colours used and their historical context (Female, 15-17 years)

- **Do you understand the painting better now than when you first saw it?**

A clear majority of the young people agreed that they understood the painting better as a result of the workshop than when they first saw it (94%). Only one young person (12-14 years) felt she did not understand the painting better and that was because she had not attended the previous day's session.

Fig. 6.2.4.1b: Do you understand the painting better now than when you first saw it? Teenage workshops



N=46

Many of the young people highlighted the in-depth discussion of the painting with the two facilitators as enabling to them achieve a greater understanding:

Because it was explained in great detail (Male 12-14 years)

Taught me a different way of looking at paintings (Female, 15-17 years)

The educator went through the whole painting with us (Female, 12-14 years)

The length of the workshop also helped one male from the 15-17 age group:

Because it was more clearer when I go to places a couple of times

Having access to the real painting was valued by one female aged 12-14:

It's easier seeing it in real life and having it explained.

Interaction with more than one painting was also alluded to by a couple of the young people:

Way in which it was painted + comparing it to other Madonnas in the gallery (Female 12-14 years)

Many different artists use different colours and moods on Mary and Jesus (Female 12-14 years)

Other responses focused on their understanding of the hidden meanings in the painting and that colours and symbols were used purposefully by the artist rather than being arbitrary:

I understand the symbolism of the colours and the goings on in the picture, who, what, where etc (Female, 12-14 yrs)

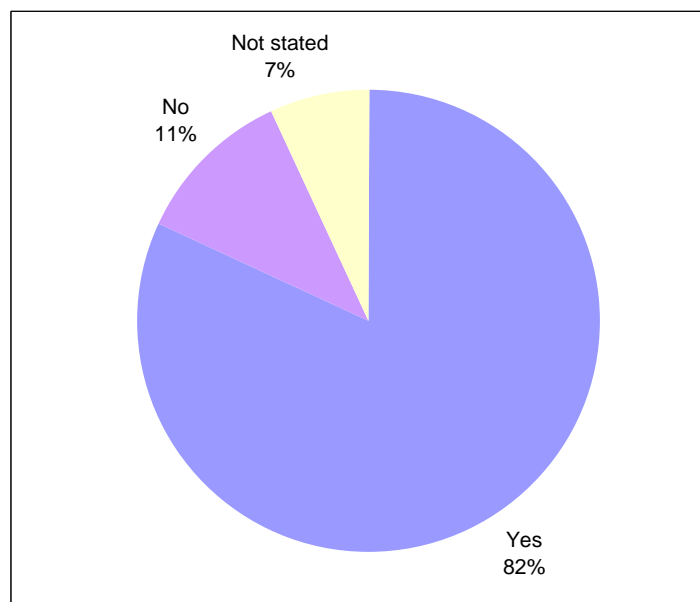
I understand the colours and why they are used (Male, 12-14 years)

Yes I understand the history and how aspects of a painting change its symbolism (Female, 15-17 years)

- **Have you learnt any new skills today?**

Although the majority of the young people agreed that they had learnt new skills as a result of the workshop, this agreement was less unanimous compared with the other questions. Eleven per cent (11%), for example, felt that they had not learnt any new skills.

Fig. 6.2.4.1c: Have you learnt any new skills today? Teenage workshops



N=46

The younger age group were slightly more likely to feel that they had learnt some new skills as a result of the workshop than the older age group, with a difference of 11%.

Some of the young people talked about their new skills in terms of form and composition, particularly colour:

How to use colours to make the picture more interesting (Female 12-14 years)

Be adventurous with colour (Female 15-17 years)

Using the contrast of colours and the effects colours have on each other (Female, 15-17 years)

To pay attention to colour and shape (Female 15-17 years)

Others talking more generally about how they had learnt to draw or paint in different ways, also using equipment that was different:

Be able to draw faster than usual (Female 15-17 years)

How to paint with canvas and on an easel (Female 15-17 years)

Colour mixing, water colour pencils, canvas painting and lots of experimenting with the equipment and colours (Female, 12-14 years)

Two of the young people felt that the workshop had helped them to improve their own art:

I learnt how to use colour to improve my pictures (Female 12-14 years)

How to improve my painting (Female 12-14 years)

6.2.4.2 What difference has coming here today made to you?

As well as the questions which focused specifically on learning, there was also a more general question asking the participants to talk about 'What difference has coming here today made to you?' The responses to this question were made through both writing and drawing and include responses from both workshops.

The written statements were coded using the GLOs; the three preceding questions were based around Knowledge and Understanding and Skills so this question gives evidence of wider learning outcomes from the workshops for the young people.

- **Knowledge and Understanding:**

Despite two questions already focused on this learning outcome, around 13 young people talked about their increased knowledge and understanding as a result of the workshop in response to this question. Several young people talked about improving their visual literacy as a result of the workshop:

Taught how to look at ways of responding to paintings (Female, 12-14 years)

I've been learning most old pictures have symbolic meanings (Female, 12-14 years)

Increased knowledge could also be very general, such as the girl aged 12-14 years who replied: *I have learned a lot about different types of artists and their styles or more focused on the Madonna and the Pinks; I understand where he [Raphael] drew inspiration from and why he used the colours he did (Female 12-14 years).*

One young person who only 'sometimes' visited the art gallery commented that as a result of the workshop *I know more about the gallery than I did.*

- **Skills:**

There were fewer responses that could be classified as Skills and most of these comments reiterated the practical skills that the young people talked about in Q6.

I have learnt how to use colours (Female, 12-14 years)

I learnt to paint with acrylic paints – I only used water colour before (Female 15-17 years)

Be able to draw faster than usual (Female, 15-17 years)

- **Attitudes and Values:**

Twelve of the young people talked about a change in their attitudes as a result of attending the workshop. This included several young people who felt that their confidence to do art had improved as a result:

It has proved that I am good at art and given me confidence (Male, 12-14 years)

I think I have become more confident about painting because before I was convinced I was no good but now I realise I love it! (Female 12-14 years)

I feel more comfortable with other art techniques (Female 12-14 years)

As a result of their increased understanding, some young people felt able to appreciate art and art galleries in a different way to before:

It's made me understand art and appreciate it more (Female, 12-14 years)

I've become more artistic, in that I look at paintings differently (Female 15-17 years)

It made me realise that museums are more interesting than they look if you know what the paintings are about (Female 15-17 years)

All of the young people who made these comments were already visitors to museums and galleries, however. None of the young people who had 'never' visited an art gallery before used the questionnaire to report that they

had changed their attitudes about art and art galleries as a result of the workshop.

- **Enjoyment, Inspiration, Creativity:**

Around nine young people talked about their enjoyment of the workshop and how it had made them feel.

It was fun and I learnt a lot (Male 12-14 years)

I have had great fun and I will definitely be coming back on another workshop (Female 12-14 years)

A better way of helping people and myself who enjoy art [to] learning more (Female 15-17 years)

I really enjoyed painting and drawing and learned how to analyse + therefore understand paintings (Female 15-17 years)

- **Action, Behaviour, Progression**

Some of the young people talked about how the workshops had improved their confidence in art as reported under attitudes and values. A few of the young people also talked about what the impact of the workshop might be in terms of their subsequent behaviour but only one young person saw a clear link between the workshop and her school studies.

Helped with my current art project for A Level, because one of my sketch books is entitled 'colour', so this workshop is really appropriate and has given me ideas and material to use for it (Female 15-17 years)

- **Other themes emerging from the data:**

In order to compare the data from the Teenage workshops with the other response cards analysis from the Family workshops and the cards distributed in the gallery itself, a small amount of analysis was carried out QSR N6.

It was noted from the questionnaires that the teenagers talked more about their experiences in doing art rather than their interaction with the Madonna of the Pinks, perhaps because they enjoyed the practical art work and found that more relevant. Therefore they made little comment about the exhibition or about the acquisition of the painting although they visited the gallery and had been given a lengthy introduction to the painting's acquisition by the National Gallery.

Some of the young people, predominantly the 12-14 years group, mentioned the relationship between the Madonna and Jesus, describing it in the way presented to them by the facilitators, as loving, playful and intimate.

... Also that its size shows you how you can enter their private life (Male 12-14 years)

Baby Jesus is offering a pink carnation to Mary v. loving relationship portrayed (Female 12-14 years)

She and the baby are playing together and giving each other a flower
(Female 12-14 years)

Other participants mentioned aspects of the painting such as colour, light effects, and symbolism which again featured in the National Gallery's interpretation of both Madonna paintings:

She [Mary] is signified by the white lily (Female 12-14 years)

The carnation means lots of love (Female 12-14 years)

...that instead of blue the artist used green. Also that it size shows you can enter their private life and it shows the light effects in the picture
(Male 12-14 years)

6.2.4.3 The visiting habits of the young people

A couple of questions asked the young people about their visiting habits to art galleries and to the museum itself – were these young people who had already been exposed to art or museums prior to their visit?

Previous research has suggested that children who visit museums are on the whole more affluent, arty, confident and extrovert. Their parents/carers tend so see museums as part of an 'all-round' education and have an innate interest and enthusiasm for museums.⁷⁴ Did the participants in the Teenage workshops conform to this pattern?

- **Do you visit art galleries?**

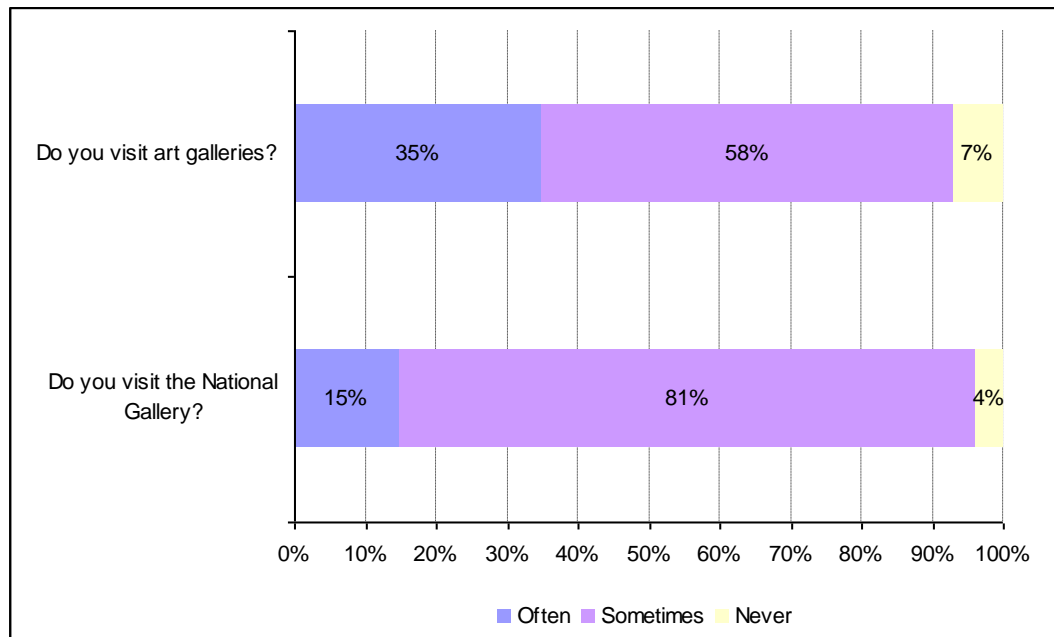
Most of the young people who took part in the workshops had visited art galleries previously, although it is unclear in what context they have visited. 58% of the respondents visited art galleries 'sometimes' and 35% visited art galleries 'often' and 7% 'never' visited art galleries (Fig. 6.2.4.3a below).

- **Do you visit the National Gallery?**

In response to the question 'Do you visit the National Gallery?' it was found that the majority (81%) visited 'sometimes' and a further 15% visited 'often' revealing that the workshop participants are young people familiar with the National Gallery and some of them had attended art workshops at the gallery previously (this was one of the means of targeting them for the current workshop). Only 4% of respondents had 'never' visited the National Gallery prior to their involvement in the workshop (Fig. 6.2.4.3a).

⁷⁴ *Children as an audience for museums and galleries*, prepared for The Arts Council / Museums and Galleries Commission and prepared by Harris Qualitative, Surrey, July 1997

Fig. 6.2.4.3a: Visiting habits of participants, Teenage workshops



N=46

6.2.4.4 Interest in art

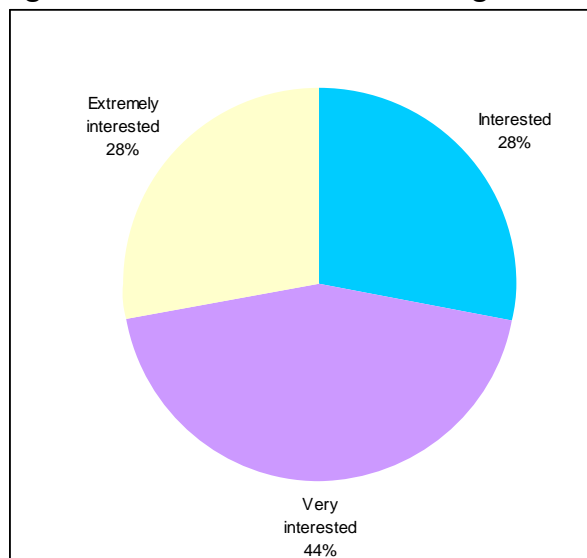
A number of questions were designed to probe the young peoples' interest in art; when they took part in art, were they interested in art and did that reflect their family's' interest in art?

- **How interested are you in art?**

The young people were asked to respond to how interested they were in art, if they were interested, very interested or extremely interested.⁷⁵ Only 28% of the young people were 'interested in art' whilst the majority (72%) were either very interested or extremely interested in art.

⁷⁵ There was an assumption that if the young people were attending a National Gallery workshop they would be interested in art to some degree.

Fig. 6.2.4.4a: Interest in art, Teenage workshops



N=46

- **Do you do art in school?**

Across the two workshops, the majority of the young people were doing art in school (89%).

- **Do you do art out of school?**

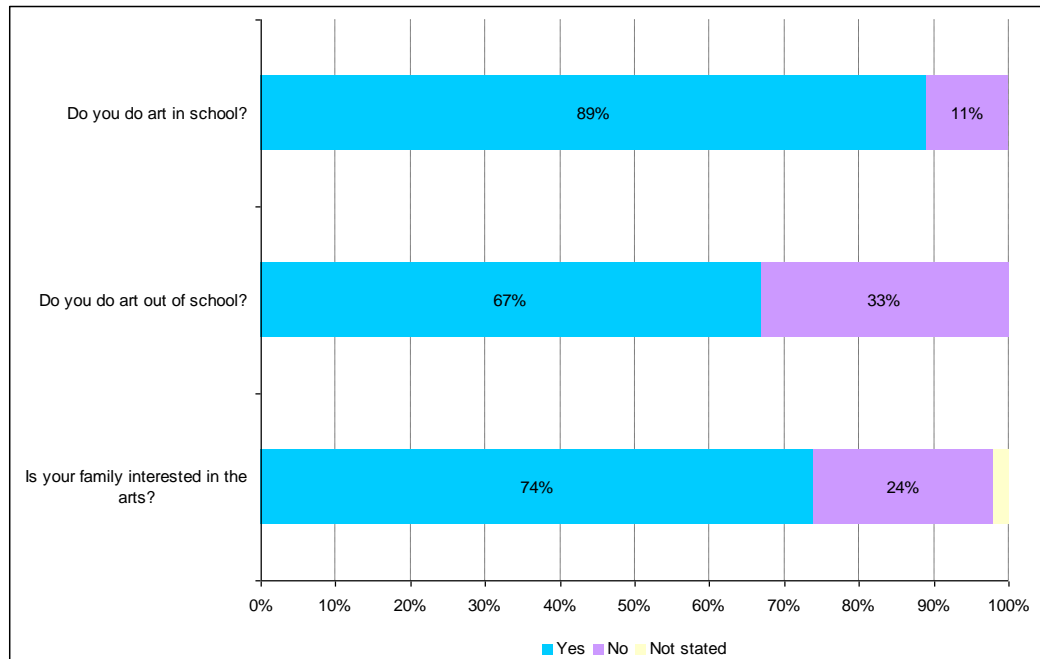
Question 13 shows that whilst the majority of young people attending both workshops are interested enough in art to do art outside of schools (67%), fewer of the participants are doing art at home as well as in school.

- **Is your family interested in the arts?**

Generally the young people attending the workshop come from family backgrounds with an interest in the arts, only 24% of young people said that their family was not interested in the arts.

Fig. 6.2.4.4b below summarises the responses to these three questions.

Fig. 6.2.4.4b: Young people's participation in the arts, Teenage workshops



N=46

With most of the teenagers' families interested in the arts, some of them were interested in a professional capacity. It is notable that young people categorised 'arts' in a very broad manner to include music, fashion, photography, sculpture as well as going to the theatre, visiting museums and art galleries.

Mother is an artist / art historian and works at the National Portrait Gallery (Female 15-17 years)

Parents love music + always dragged me + my sister to art galleries / museums (Female 15-17 years)

My dad is an architect and draws and paints (Male 12-14 years)

They go to lots of theatre productions (Female 12-14 years)

6.2.4.5 The young people – demographic information

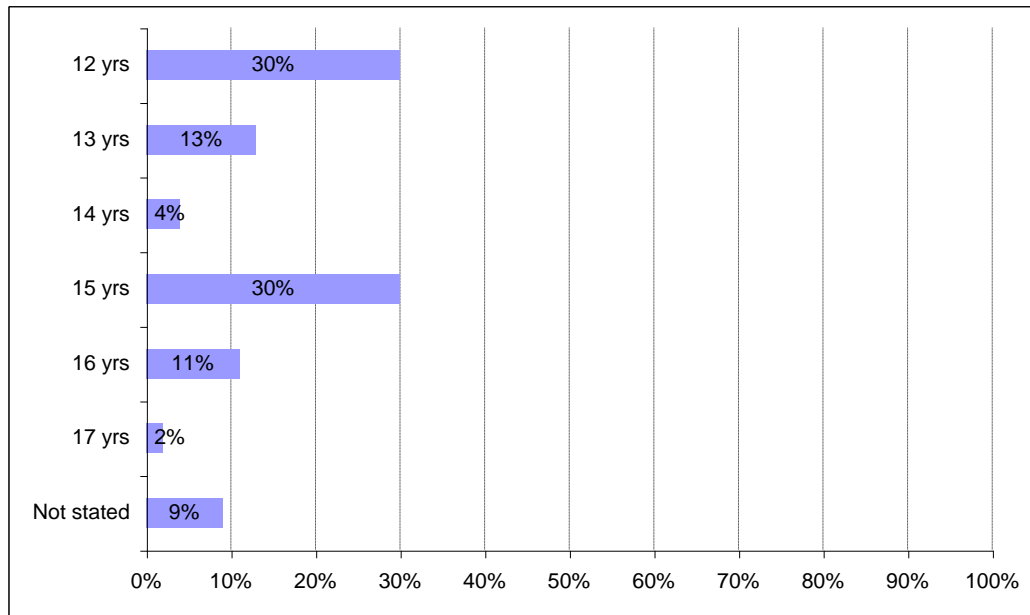
In order to understand the impact of the Madonna of the Pinks in relation to young people of different backgrounds some demographic information was collected from the young people who completed a questionnaire. This included their age, gender, ethnicity, home address and postcode and school address and postcode.

- **Age:**

Looking across the two workshops we can see that the respondents were of variable age between the age of 12 and 17 years old. Most of the respondents were aged either 12 years (30%) or 15 years old (30%), the 'lowest' ages for each of the two workshop groups. Slightly more young

people completed a questionnaire from the 12-14 age group (24) than the 15-17 age group (22).

Fig. 6.2.4.5a: Age of participants, Teenage workshops

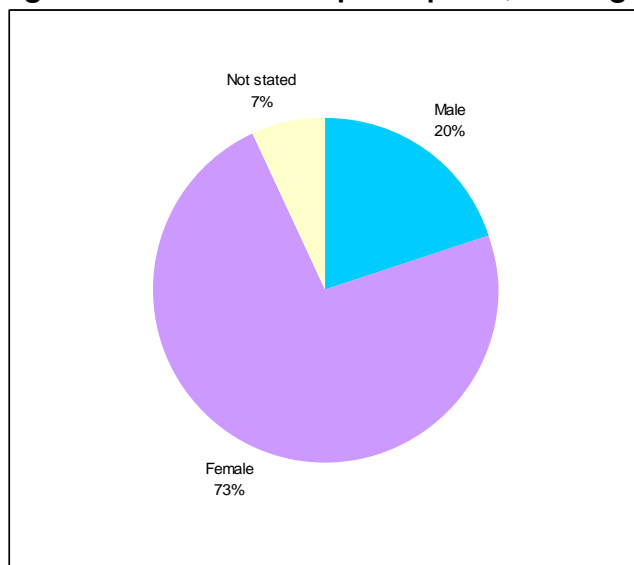


N=46

• **Gender:**

Most of the teenage participants in the workshops were female (73%) with a much smaller number of males present (20%). It may be that more teenage girls are generally interested in art than teenage boys or it might be that the subject matter (Madonna and child) is more appealing to teenage girls? This is comparable with the responses from the Family workshops where more girls and women took part.

Fig. 6.2.4.5b: Gender of participants, Teenage workshops

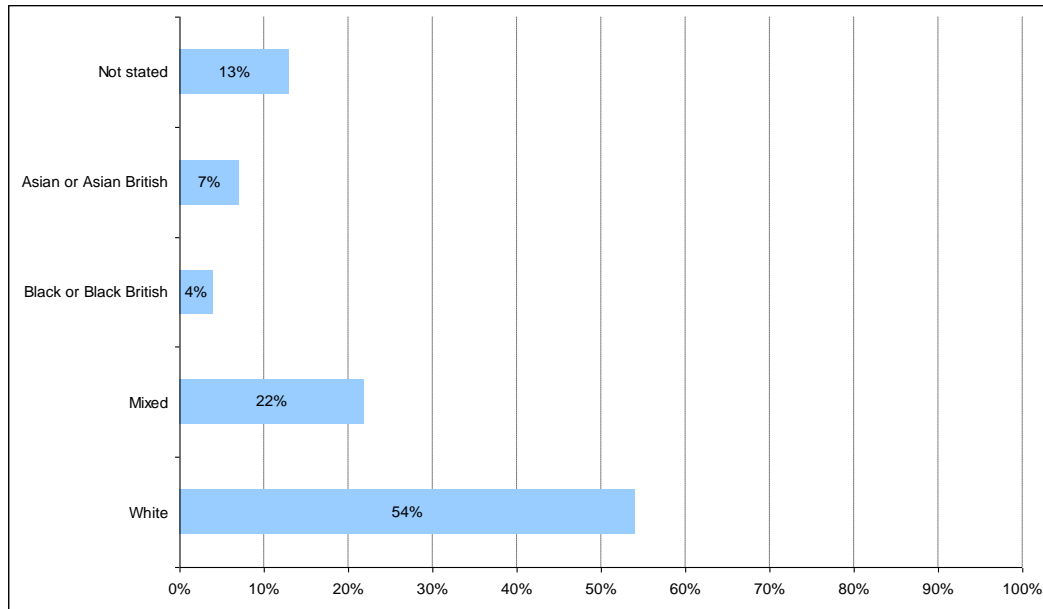


N=46

- **Ethnicity:**

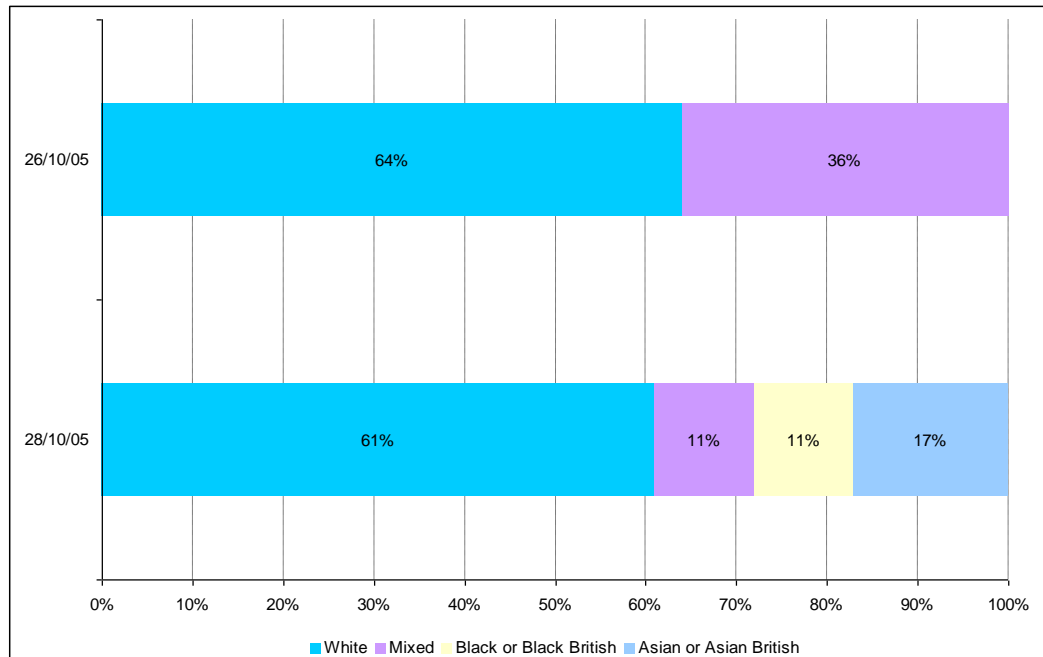
Slightly over half of the young people attending both workshops defined their ethnicity as White (54%); there were 22% of participants who described their ethnicity as 'Mixed', there were much smaller percentages of young people who described themselves as Black or Asian.

Fig. 6.2.4.5c: Ethnicity of participants, Teenage workshops



N=46

Fig. 6.2.4.5d: Ethnicity of participants comparing 26/10/05 workshop with 28/10/05 workshop, Teenage workshops



26/10/05 workshop, N=22; 28/10/05 workshop, N=18

6.2.4.6 Analysis of participant postcodes – home and school

The questionnaire asked the young people to give their home address and their school address, both of which would yield information about their backgrounds.

- **Analysis of the home postcodes:**

From the response cards, thirty-eight (38) young people provided an address complete with postcode or enough of the address so that the postcode could be found using Royal Mail's online Postcode Finder.⁷⁶ It was noted that not all the postcodes given are from home addresses, for instance an address was given for Bodhisattva Buddhist Centre in Brighton and another for 'Education for looked after children.'

The National Gallery also provided a list of the postcodes of the participants in the October workshops. There were some discrepancies between the postcodes reported in this list and the postcodes given by the young people on the response cards:

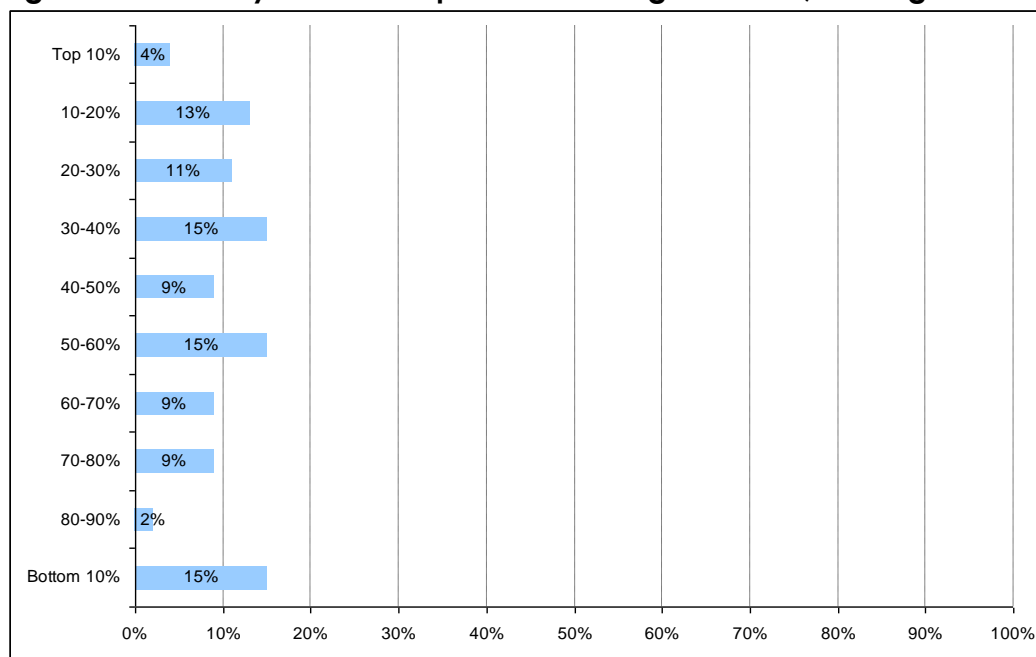
- The National Gallery list only contained 36 postcodes in total, when there were 46 response cards from the young people (this can, in part, be explained by some repetition of postcodes, for instance where two participants came from the same household)
- When comparing the National Gallery list with the response card postcodes, 9 postcodes cannot be accounted for, although there are only 8 participants who do not give any address details that would enable us to identify their postcodes
- There are 6 postcodes which are reported on the response cards which do not correspond with any postcode on the National Gallery list.

Assuming that the National Gallery was not able to record all the postcodes of the participants and/or not all the participants attending the workshops completed a response card, the analysis is presented with the additional postcodes included making 47 postcodes in total.

Fig. 6.2.4.6a below shows the results of the postcode analysis according to the rank given by the IMD 2004. Participants in the Teenage workshops are shown to be living in areas that are classified across the social spectrum. Whereas 17% of the young people are living in the 20% most deprived areas in England, 15% are living in the least deprived (and most affluent) areas of England, and others are spread across the different ranks.

⁷⁶ <http://www.royalmail.com/portal/rm> [accessed 31 07 2007]

Fig. 6.2.4.6a: Analysis of home postcodes using IMD 2004, Teenage workshops



N=47

Other analytical perspectives present a rather different picture, and suggest that most of the young people attending the workshop are from relatively affluent backgrounds. The ACORN classification, for example, can be used to identify an alternative view of the teenagers' backgrounds and frequently, this approach indicates that although areas might be classified as 'deprived' according to the IMD 2004 rank, the households within that area may not be deprived if assessed by other indicators.

Table 6.2.4.6a and Fig. 6.2.4.6b show that participants from the Teenage workshops can be identified as coming from neighbourhoods where the households are generally more affluent, for example 'Wealthy achievers' and 'Urban prosperity.' Note the concentration, for example, of postcodes in the 'Urban prosperity' category (58%). There are far fewer postcodes located under 'Moderate means' (4%) or 'Hard-pressed' (6%).

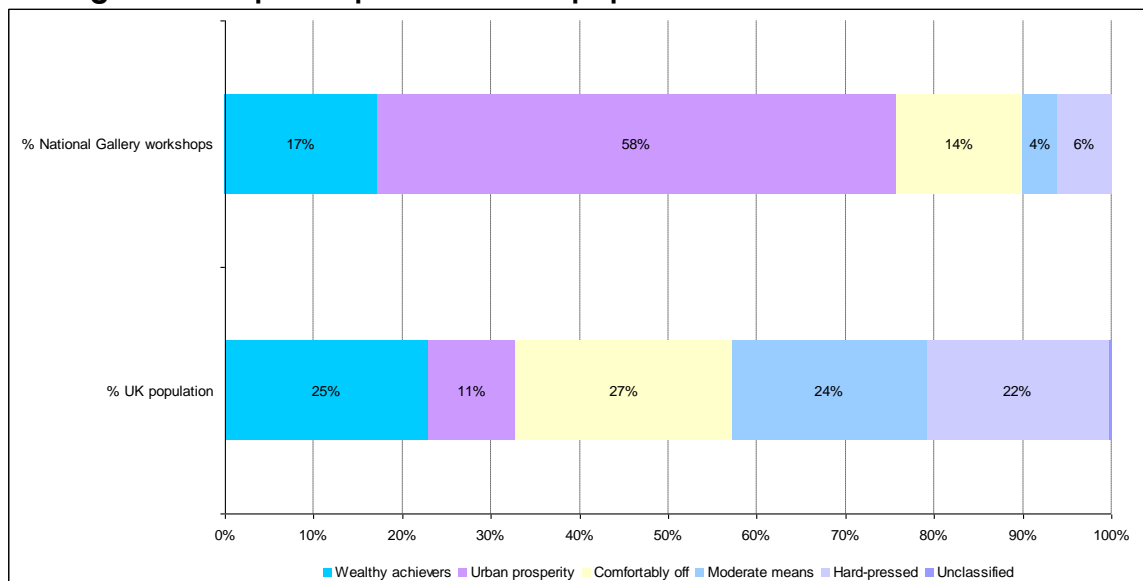
Table 6.2.4.6a: Analysis of home postcodes using ACORN, Teenage workshops

Category	Group	% of UK population	Teenage workshops sample
Wealthy achievers	A Wealthy executives	8.6%	13%
	B Affluent greys	7.7%	2%
	C Flourishing families	8.8%	2%
Urban prosperity	D Prosperous professionals	2.2%	17%
	E Educated urbanites	4.6%	30%
	F Aspiring singles	3.9%	11%
Comfortably off	G Starting out	2.5%	4%
	H Secure families	15.5%	4%
	I Settled Suburbia	6%	-

	J	Prudent pensioners	2.6%	6%
Moderate means	K	Asian communities	2.5%	2%
	L	Post-industrial families	15.5%	-
	M	Blue-collar roots	6%	2%
Hard-pressed	N	Struggling families	14.1%	-
	O	Burdened singles	4.5%	-
	P	High-rise hardship	1.6%	-
	Q	Inner city adversity	2.1%	6%
	U	Unclassified	0.3%	-

Teenage workshops, N=47

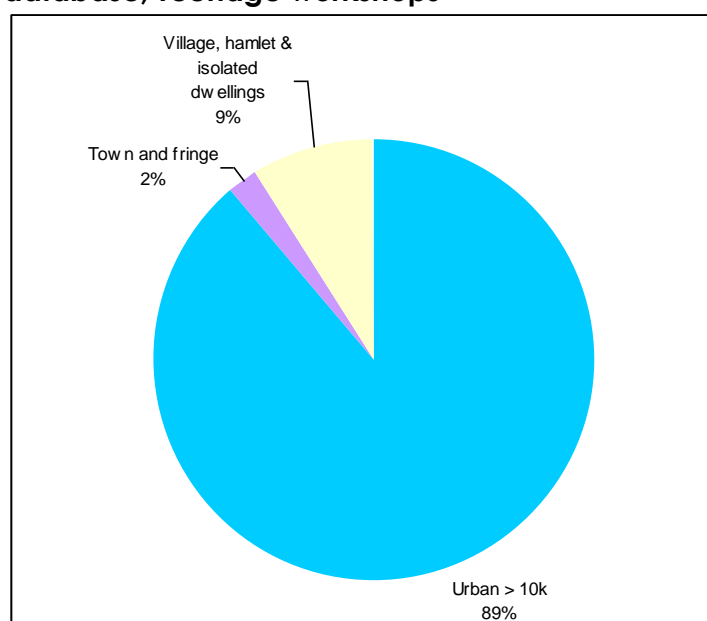
Fig. 6.2.4.6b: Analysis of home postcodes using ACORN, comparison of Teenage workshops sample with the UK population



Teenage workshops, N=47

Using the Rural/Urban Morphology database, which suggests the type of rural or urban area where postcodes are located, it can be seen that most of the postcodes of the teenagers who attended the workshops can be located within an urban area (89%), and this reinforces the picture of urban affluence that has been created for most of these participants.

Fig. 6.2.4.6c: Analysis of home postcodes using Rural/Urban Morphology database, Teenage workshops



N=47

- **Analysis of the school postcodes:**

The teenagers who attended the workshop were asked to give the name and address of their school. In forty-three (43) cases, young people completed a response card with information which could be recognised by the various databases. Addresses and postcodes that were incomplete were traced using the internet. One participant identified their 'school' as '[Name of East London Borough] Education for Looked after Children' and this was excluded from the analysis as this cannot be classified as a school.

Using a database supplied by DCSF (formerly the DfES) we were able to look up the type of school and the IMD 2004 rank of the school. We could also discover the number of pupils entitled to free school meals at the school, as this is the measure used by DfES to assess child poverty and deprivation. This information all helps to build further a picture of the types of young people who attended the Teenage workshops.

- **The type of school:**

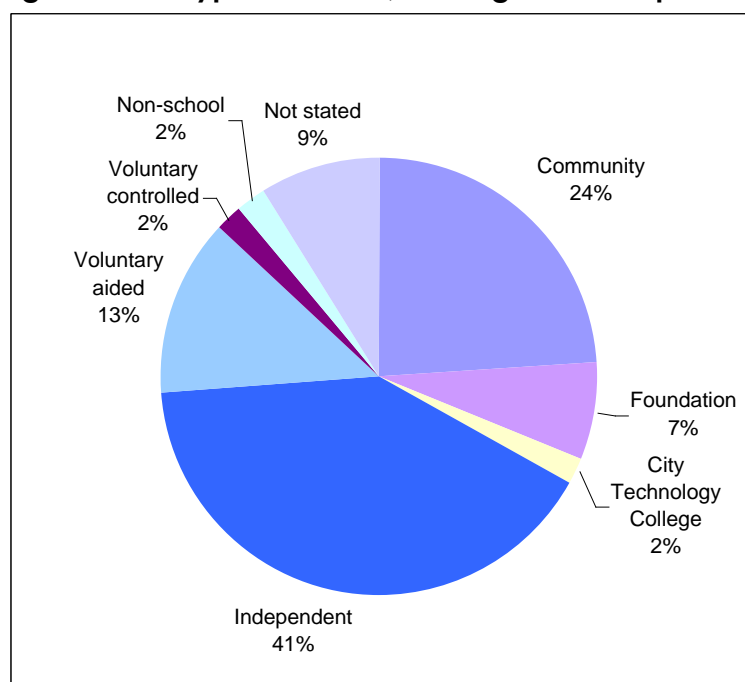
Using the DfES database categories for types of school, it emerges that a substantial number of the young people attending the National Gallery workshops attend schools that can be classed as Independent (41%).⁷⁷ City Technology schools (2%) are also classified as Independent although they are publicly funded.⁷⁸ A further 9% of participants attend schools that are selective where the school governing body decides on admission (Foundation and Voluntary-controlled). The remaining participants (37%)

⁷⁷ Independent schools are not part of the DfES database but were identified using the Internet through reference to the school websites

⁷⁸ <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/popularquestions/questions.cfm?keywords=-1&gatewayCategoryID=0&mainCategoryID=0&expandID=3549&new=0> [accessed 23 October 2006]

attend community and voluntary aided schools where admissions are decided by the Local Education authority.⁷⁹

Fig. 6.2.4.6d: Type of school, Teenage workshops



N=46

- **Free school meals analysis:**

The DfES database gives details of the number of pupils eligible for free school meals and this could be identified for 22 of the school postcodes. As independent schools do not receive any public funding, they were excluded from the free school meals analysis.

To take account of the distribution of schools with very low numbers of pupils eligible and those with very high numbers of pupils eligible for free school meals, the postcodes have been classified according to their positions within 'quartiles' within the national distribution as calculated from the DfES database.⁸⁰ The boundaries of the national quartiles are set to each encompass a quarter of schools in England.

As can be seen in Table 6.2.4.6b, 45% of the schools of the participants in the teenage workshops (excluding the Independent schools) are to be found in the second quartile, where fewer pupils (up to 10.9%) who are entitled to free school meals are to be found. However, 36% of the schools are classified as being in the third quartile, where up to nearly one quarter of pupils are eligible for free school meals and therefore, according to the DfES, at risk of poverty or deprivation. And 18% of the schools represented might have a very high number of such pupils. However, it must be remembered that these

⁷⁹ Information from the "Popular questions" section of the DfES website <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/popularquestions/> (accessed 23 October 2006)

⁸⁰ We have adopted this approach on other occasions and this has proved acceptable to DCMS and MLA.

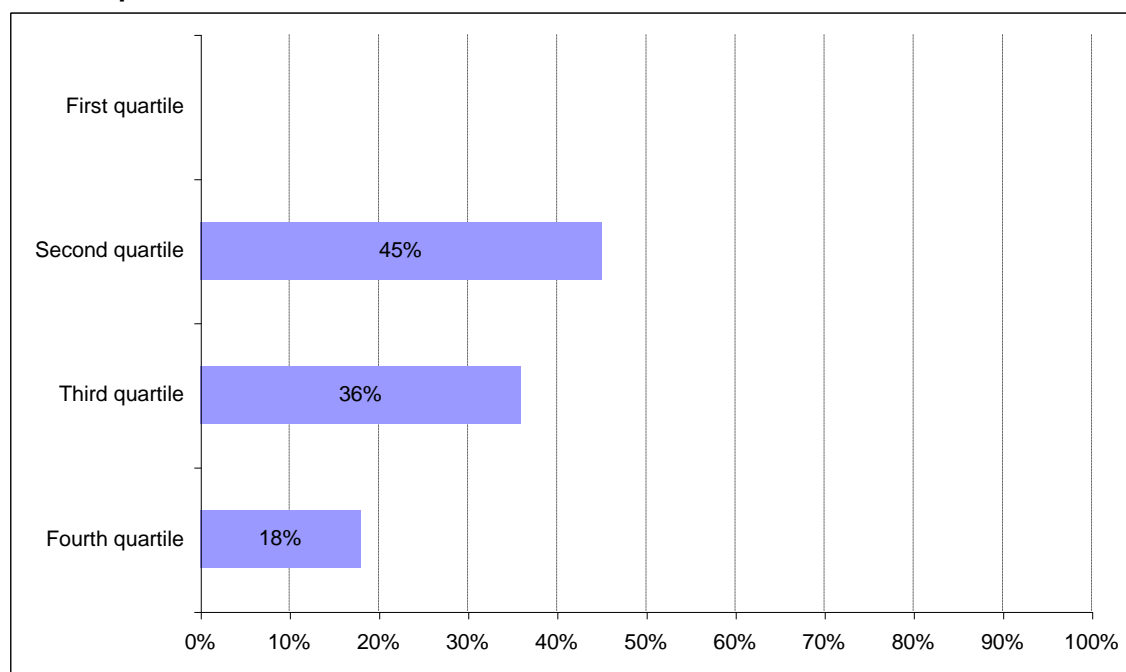
percentages represent very tiny actual numbers of participants, as the total in this case is only of 22 schools.

Table 6.2.4.6b: Free school meals analysis for participants' schools, Teenage workshops

National quartile	Range of % of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	Number of schools	% of schools
First	0 – 4.6%	0	0%
Second	4.7 – 10.9%	10	45%
Third	11.0 – 24.2%	8	36%
Fourth	24.3 – 100%	4	18%

N=22

Fig. 6.2.4.6e: Free school meals analysis for participants' schools, Teenage workshops



N=22

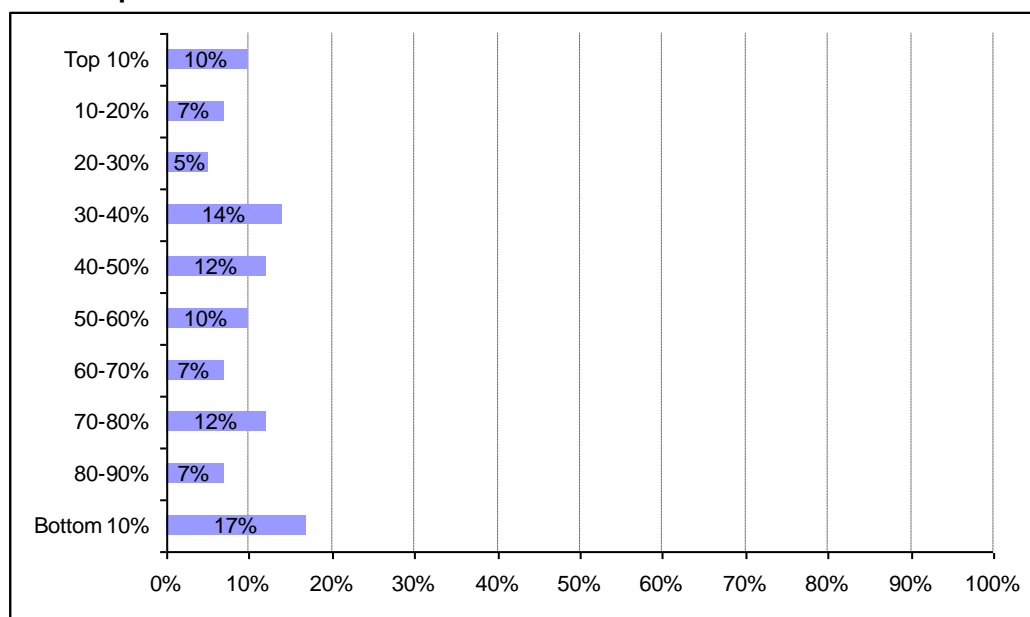
Some of the schools attended by the participants potentially serve young people in very socially deprived circumstances. For instance Ravenscroft School, which is a Technology College, has 40.4% of its pupils eligible for free school meals and 50.3% of the pupils attending Clapton Girls' Technology College are eligible for free school meals. Clapton Technology College is also located in a very deprived area ranked 3,205 by the IMD 2004. However the participant who attends this school lives, according to their home address postcode, in an area which is ranked 24,316 by the IMD 2004 (i.e. very little risk of social deprivation) confirming the need for multiple sets of data in order to establish the context for participants.

We can also look at the IMD 2004 rankings of all the school postcodes, including the Independent schools, and RCMG has used this in the past to

identify the circumstances of young people visiting museums.⁸¹ Fig. 6.2.4.6f shows a different pattern to the home address rankings (see Fig. 6.2.4.6a) with postcodes ranged more evenly across the categories. However, generally there are fewer schools in areas where pupils are experiencing high levels of social deprivation.

It is also important to bear in mind that the social classification of the location of the school does not necessarily adequately reflect the social circumstances of its pupils; some of the Independent schools, for example, are found in areas of relatively high social deprivation.

Fig. 6.2.4.6f: Analysis of school postcodes by IMD 2004 rank, Teenage workshops



N=42

6.2.5 Analysis

The evidence of the questionnaires, discussion with participants and observations reveals the following:

6.2.5.1 The young people

- Most of the participants (73%) were teenage girls. All but two of these teenagers had been recruited to the workshops through the National Galleries existing family mailing list; two of the young people had been recruited through an East London borough council and were looked after.
- The background of most of the young people was on the whole affluent and educated but the data must be interpreted with caution. The IMD 2004 analysis indicates that some of the young people live in areas which could suggest that they are experiencing quite high levels of social

⁸¹ For example *What did you learn at the museum today? Second Study, Evaluation of the outcome and impact of learning through implementation of Education Delivery Plans across nine Regional Hubs (2006)*, RCMG

deprivation, but other evidence suggests that for most of them, their personal circumstances do not reflect this. The ACORN analysis, for example, suggests that the families of 75% of the teenagers can be classified in groups as 'Wealthy achievers' or 'Urban prosperity.' A further 14% can be placed in the 'Comfortably off' category. Therefore, 89% of the families of participants live in areas where people are well off, settled, and educated. Most of the participants' families (89%) live in urban areas.

- It is clear that the privileged backgrounds of most of the participants contrasted with those of the two looked after young people, and as these two girls only attended on one of the two days of the workshop, they can be seen as largely marginal to the events. However, the art therapist was of the view that the workshop was appropriate for the girls, and they themselves enjoyed their participation.
- All the young people were interested in art, with 72% either 'extremely' or 'very' interested in art. 89% do art at school and 67% do art out of school. The families of 74% were interested in art and the arts in general, and some of the parents were professionally concerned with the arts.
- In relation to ethnicity, the group was mixed; 54% defined themselves as white, 22% as mixed, and 12% as Black/British or Asian/British and quite a large minority (13%) did not respond to this question. The ethnic breakdown of the participants suggested that an interest in art can cross ethnic backgrounds.

6.2.5.2 The learning impact of the workshop

- Despite the privileged background of most of the young people and the observation during the workshop that they were confident and literate, overall the responses to the questionnaire were sparse and did not go into great detail. The younger participants (12-14 years) also gave greater variety and richness in their responses to the older participants (15-17 years).
- Although the differences are generally very slight it does seem that the younger age group (12-14 years) were more enthusiastic in their responses to the questionnaire than the older participants (15-17 years).
- Young people talked about the practical art skills that they learnt, mostly around using colour which seemed to be a feature of their responses perhaps because this was relevant to their own art (which the majority did at both school and home).
- Some young people talked about the relationship between the Madonna and Jesus, which the National Gallery has highlighted in their presentation of the painting – mostly girls talked about this aspect.
- Most of the learning outcomes stemming from the workshop were related to knowledge and understanding but perhaps because two of the questions related to this GLO on the questionnaire. The open answers gave evidence that participants had different attitudes towards art and

art galleries as a result and one young person found direct application to their A-level work

- There appeared to be a difference between the boys and girls responses in that the boys were less expansive about their learning outcomes – also there were far less boys who attended the workshop in general
- The young people are exposed to working with an artist – none of the young people mentioned that they found this special although one young person commented that ‘the teachers were nice.’

6.2.6 Interview with Niamh* one year later

Niamh* was one of the two looked after young people who had attended the first day of the two-day Teenage Workshop on 25th October 2005. Because of some confusion, she did not attend on the second day, and she would not therefore have completed a questionnaire. She had chosen to come because of her interest in art and had been accompanied by another girl who proved impossible to trace. It also proved impossible to contact the other participants in the workshops, although RCMG did try to contact them by phone. Niamh* was 17 years old at the time of the workshop, but had taken part in the day for younger teenagers.

Niamh* was living semi-independently at the time of the interview, but had been in care since she was two years old. She was in regular contact with her brother, who had been in care since he was 6 months. She also saw her mother weekly. The RCMG researchers were shown a video of both young people which voiced their views of the care system, explained some of the shortcomings and described some of the experiences, which were both positive and negative.

The Teenage workshop and the Madonna of the Pinks were brought up in the course of the conversation. Niamh* remembered the workshop:

‘Yeah cos we did this big, I did a big picture... We had to, we looked around the gallery and we had to draw like parts of pictures and then we went back, we had to put like all the pictures together and make a big piece... We did one canvas and we had to draw a person sitting in the middle with a cloth around her and whatever angle we was at, we had to draw her from that angle.

I think you looked around the gallery in the morning?

Yeah we did. Like what we did the other time, we looked around at different paintings and the texture of the painting and how the painter used different painting strokes and stuff.’

Niamh* had participated in a summer workshop, and remembered both occasions positively. She was aware that close looking at paintings revealed things that were not always evident from an initial look, and she was aware that if there was someone like a facilitator to help she understood more.

‘That’s good cos you get to understand how the paintings felt at the time and why they painted it and like the painting techniques that they used.’

Niamh* had also experienced a school visit to the National Gallery when she was about seven:

'Is that the first time you've been to the National Gallery?

Yeah. No I went there like when I was younger, but that was like when I was really young, like about seven.

And was that with school?

Yeah.

Yeah, and what was that like?

I don't remember, I just got a picture of a drawing that I copied (...)

Really? What was that then?

It was a picture of Mary and the baby (...)

Oh that's lovely. Was it a bit special to you?

I just kept it like I've got all my drawings in a book that I've kept when I was younger.'

Niamh* had kept lots of art work, including the work she had done as part of the Teenage workshop at the National Gallery. She found that art helped her express her feelings and emotions in a constructive way:

'Cos that's how I can express myself, I draw angry faces when I'm angry. I draw characters that are really like, you know, vicious characters out of the paints that my aunt got. And I draw happy characters and happy and things like that.'

'You'll be able to like, instead of like say if you're angry, instead of screaming and shouting, you can pick up a paint brush and paint.'

Niamh* had very much enjoyed meeting the artist:

'And he made these, did a big canvas and he said that when he does his canvases and he does something wrong, he just doesn't wash, rub it out, he just paints over it and does it again.'

She was intrigued that: *'He was any ordinary person in jeans and t-shirt.'*

The best thing for her had been meeting the artist and identifying with him:

'Seeing the actual artist cos like we always talk about like all these other painters and they're not really alive so you can't talk to them, but then seeing an artist and he's expressing how he feels through art and what made him want to do art, it's nice.... It's like, to express how he feels cos he was doing another painting, an oil painting he was doing of like the future and this is what he feels the future's going to be like... Some of the paintings like the firework on I could just, you didn't even have to talk to him that much to understand him cos I could just feel the way he felt when he was doing his painting.'

Niamh* made a number of comments about the potential the future might have. She mentioned this in connection with the artist and his work (above), but also used this as a way on interpreting paintings on the mother and child theme:

'And do you think that a painting of a mother and a baby, what do you think about that?

Like it means that the world should go on kind of thing.

Tell me a bit more about that?

Because like the painting, obviously the painting, yeah it's of Mary and Jesus, but Mary had Jesus so that the world could go on. So then therefore it's kind of saying to other mothers, look after your children cos without them there'll be no future.'

Niamh* felt strongly about the responsibilities of motherhood:

'That parents, mother should care for their children and don't let anything happen to them.'

She used these feelings to describe her memories of the Madonna of the Pinks:

'What does it feel like when you can see like that little baby in the painting and the mother looking at each other, how did they look, can you remember how they looked at each other?

No not really. But maybe the mother was like happy, she was like charmed and blessed with her child and that she can ensure her love to the child but she won't be able to like, she can give the child a future, but it's for the child to understand the future that its mother wants it to have. So then looking at each other means that the mum is trying to tell the child I'm here for you, and then the child is knowing that the mum's there for them, but still going to have to do things for itself.'

She made a very strong personal connection to this image:

'Yeah, I wonder if like my mum would look at me like that or something.'

And she referred to one of her own photographs of herself with her mother and brother.

Niamh* emerged as a strong young woman who was coping well with very difficult personal circumstances. She had found that making art had helped her cope with her anger and frustrations, and she felt confident about her own use of art. She described how she had originally intended to become a social worker, but having started out on that track, had not found it appropriate and was currently training in drama. Clearly the arts in general, particularly in relation to self-expression, were important to her. She had found much of interest in the Teenage workshops the year before, including making paintings, which she had added to her collection of her own art-work, meeting an artist, and responding to mother and child paintings. Her interpretation of the Madonna of the Pinks was very much related to her views of the responsibilities of mothers for their children, but also the responsibilities that people must take for their own futures.

Niamh* had visited the National Gallery on her own, but she was not very confident, had become lost within the building and on discovering the exit had left and returned home:

'I got lost [laughs]. I was there for like half an hour and I was lost and I just found the exit so I went home... Like I walked around, but I didn't touch anything. So I was just walking around and looking and just looking... No I felt I could do it, but then I didn't know if, I didn't know if I should be there like cos I was by myself.'

6.2.7 Conclusions

The bulk of participants in the Teenage workshops, apart from the two looked after young people from East London, neither of whom completed questionnaires, came from privileged backgrounds where families already have a high degree of involvement in the arts. These participants were recruited through a family mailing list that had been compiled from participants in former workshops. The workshops had been advertised in Time Out, but the family mailing came first and the workshops were nearly filled through this means. These privileged young people came from social groups that used the National Gallery regularly and proactively. Where no specific action is taken by the National Gallery to extend its non-school users, half-term and holiday workshops will be largely taken up by those who are already integrated into the world of art museum education.

There is an emphasis in the National Gallery Education, Community and Interpretation Strategy on working towards social inclusion. Some work had been carried out with looked after young people prior to the purchase of the Madonna of the Pinks, as evidenced in the Line of Vision conference 24th March 2004 and it was presumably because of connections made at that time that the inner East London borough council had asked if the two looked after young people could join the Teenage Workshops in October 2005. While these two young women appeared to enjoy their day, there is some evidence from the interview with Niamh* that this enjoyment could not counter the lack of experience of art museums in such a way that the National Gallery could become a regular place to visit. More sustained contact with individuals is necessary for this to take place.

The interview with Niamh* strongly suggests that the impact of the painting on this teenager was based on her personal experience of being in a family, but not being looked after on a full-time basis by her own mother. In discussing the theme of mother and child in paintings she referred to the responsibilities of parenthood, and the vulnerability of children. There is a sense in her interview that art acts as a resource for her to manage her inner feelings. If this is the case, then she could have found more to value in a deeper relationship with the National Gallery and its collection, especially the Madonna of the Pinks.

Part 7: Memories of the Madonna of the Pinks

Retrospective evaluation of young people from an outer North-East London borough and the Madonna of the Pinks: A Young Mother's Group and Looked After Young People's Group



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PART 7: MEMORIES OF THE MADONNA OF THE PINKS

RETROSPECTIVE EVALUATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE FROM AN OUTER NORTH-EAST LONDON BOROUGH AND THE MADONNA OF THE PINKS: A YOUNG MOTHER'S GROUP AND LOOKED AFTER YOUNG PEOPLE'S GROUP

7.1 Background and context

Two units of the research were carried out with six young people from a Young Mother's Group and a Looked after Young People's Group from an outer North-East London borough. The young people had worked with the Madonna of the Pinks and the National Gallery approximately eighteen months prior to the time that the interviews were carried out. For both groups, the Madonna of the Pinks had been only one of a number of pictures that they had seen and the looked after young people had been involved in a number of other projects that had involved making videos and working with artists.

Both groups were composed of some of the most vulnerable young people; those who are in care, asylum seekers, and teenage mothers. These young people are at risk of social exclusion.

Table 7.1a: Details of interviews held with the two research groups

Group	Date	Details (interviewee(s), researchers, location...)
Young Mother's group	08 11 2004	Interviews held at an Early Years Centre, London, with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teenage Pregnancy Reintegration Officer, EDuAction • Member of the young mother's group (Keira*) • Researchers: EHG and JD
Looked After Young People's Group	16 12 2004	Interview held at the borough council's Municipal Offices, North-East London, with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Commissioning and partnership manager, Children's Services • Children's Rights Officer, Barnados • Participation Worker, borough council • Researchers: EHG and JD
	20 01 2005	Group discussion and interviews held at a Community and Children's Centre, North-East London, with five young people from the looked after children's group (Kyle*, Isaac*, Jolene*, Tyler*, Jayden* – not interviewed separately) Also present Children's Rights Officer, and participation worker, Barnados Researchers: JD and CJ

7.1.1 Characteristics of the groups

The young people interviewed for these research units are characterised by generally unstable home lives and they can be described as a fluid research population. Whilst making contact with the young people was not always straightforward, it was possible for the researchers to meet with and interview one young mother and a group of five looked after young people during the research period.

The reasons for the instability of the young peoples' lives are many. Young mothers often have to cope with limited resources, both in terms of financial resources and in terms of their life skills. The Young Mothers Group is a dispersed community, its members drawn from across the outer North-East London borough and their only commonality is their identity as young mothers. They are a group brought together for that purpose and may not have had a relationship outside this group. The life of a young mother may therefore be isolated. In arranging the interview, the researchers relied on the relationships built between the young mothers and the Teenage Pregnancy Reintegration Officer who runs the group. Because the lives of the young mothers were unsettled and they were frequently on the move in terms of home life and accommodation, contacts were often through mobile phone numbers which were subject to change. They may have had many commitments which may also have made them unavailable for the interview, or transport to the venue may have difficult.

For the looked after young people there are many parallels with the circumstances of the young mothers. Their lives are unstable and sometimes unsettled, with many looked after young people facing upheaval in their home and school lives. As with the young mothers, the only commonality between the group members is their status as looked after young people; they are drawn from across a wide area and may not necessarily constitute a close knit community. They may also have limited resources in terms of financial matters and life skills. Building relationships with young people in this position presents a challenge. Furthermore there are other demands on their time, for example the time allotted for interviewing the young people clashed with paid consultation work they were undertaking for the Borough and this meant the researcher's contact with the young people was limited to a 2-hour slot within a longer session.

7.1.2 The intention of the research

The interviews with the young people were intended to find out whether and to what extent these young people could recall the Madonna of the Pinks, and what it had meant to them, if anything. Because their involvement had been part of a more general involvement with paintings and the National Gallery, this also posed a challenge and this is perhaps reflected in the limited engagement of some young people with the Madonna of the Pinks in their responses. It also reflects a challenge for the researchers who were not present during the visits and workshops that these young people attended. The lack of context presented difficulties to understanding the young people's experiences from an external position or to provide a starting point for discussion, and it may also have constrained the ability of the researcher to probe further when the young people were remembering their visits.

7.1.3 The context for the outer North-East London borough

The case study involved an outer London borough to the north-east of the capital, bordered by the Lea Valley on the western side and Epping Forest on the north and east sides. Although it is one of the greenest boroughs in London, it shares many features with its inner-city neighbours, including significant deprivation, unemployment and ethnic diversity.⁸² The north is largely affluent and suburban whilst the south is very ethnically and culturally diverse,⁸³ with areas that are amongst the top 10% most deprived areas in England, with 45 of the 145 SOAs⁸⁴ in the borough being in the top 20% of deprived areas, and overall, the borough is in the top 10% of deprived authorities in England.⁸⁵ Child poverty is also a problem with 30% of children in living in overcrowded accommodation and 29% of children living in households where there is no adult in work.⁸⁶ Although crime levels have recently fallen there is concern about the links between young people and anti-social behaviour and the Borough has the 8th highest level of youth offending in London.⁸⁷

The borough is predominantly residential interspersed with areas of industry. There are 218,341 residents according to Census 2001.⁸⁸ The borough is comparatively youthful with 26% of residents under 20 years old with high proportions of young people aged 16 and under belonging to ethnic communities.⁸⁹ There is also a high proportion of 25-39 year olds reflecting an influx of young adults looking for employment or returning home from studying. From the age of 40 years, numbers begin to decline rapidly as people move out of the borough.⁹⁰ Unemployment is higher than the average for England and Wales and most residents work outside the borough (62,720). The two most common occupations are administrative and secretarial, with the borough council being one of the largest local employers. Transport links are good with two overground railway services, the Underground network and the third busiest bus station in London.

⁸² *Inspection of London Borough of [outer North-East London] Local Education Authority*, Ofsted and Audit Commission, May 2000, available from <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/reports/index.cfm?fuseaction=lea&id=320> [accessed 2/06/2006]

⁸³ *Inspection report [outer North- East London] Local Education Authority*, Ofsted and Audit Commission, September 2002, available from <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/reports/index.cfm?fuseaction=lea&id=320> [accessed 2/06/2006]

⁸⁴ Super output areas have replaced wards as the unit of measurement for deprivation

⁸⁵ Ranked 25 of 354 local authorities

⁸⁶ www.lbwf.gov.uk [accessed 2/06/2006]

⁸⁷ [Outer North-East London borough] Youth Crime Reduction Strategy 2002 – 2005 available from http://www.met.police.uk/foi/full_publications_list.htm [accessed 2/06/2006]

⁸⁸ This was found to be an underestimate, the real number is circa 223,230 residents (2002)

⁸⁹ *Inspection of London Borough of [North- East London] Local Education Authority*, Ofsted and Audit Commission, May 2000

⁹⁰ See <http://www.walthamforest-pct.nhs.uk/Publications/docs/Chapters1-3.PDF> and <http://www.lbwf.gov.uk> for an overview of census 2001 information

Over fifty percent of the borough's pupils are of ethnic minority origin and mobility rates are high, due in part to increasing numbers of new arrivals.⁹¹ Education in the borough is steadily improving after an Ofsted inspection in 2000 that criticised the LEA for failing its most vulnerable pupils and also highlighted the high number of exclusions, almost double the national average.⁹² To improve the strategic management of schools, an external contractor, EduAction, took over some of the LEA's school improvement functions in 2003. The most recent Ofsted report in 2005 has found that although the LEA has improved considerably since 2002, more remains to be done to improve pupils' attainment and to consolidate recent improvements.⁹³

7.2 The Young Mother's Group

7.2.1 Teenage pregnancy in London

The UK has the highest teenage pregnancy rate in Western Europe, and the second highest in the developed world after the US. The Government has identified teenage pregnancy as a major social and economic problem and aims at reducing teenage pregnancy by half by 2010.⁹⁴ Early pregnancy has been linked with social and economic disadvantage and it can further isolate young females from education and employment opportunities. This can perpetuate the cycle of disadvantage, potentially to the young mother's children and their children.⁹⁵

Overall, the rate of teenage pregnancy is falling. In 2003 the under-18 conception rate in England was 42.1 per 1000 girls, a fall of 9.8% since 1998.⁹⁶ In 2004 the under-18 conception rate has fallen again to 41.5 per 1000 girls.⁹⁷ However in London this national trend has not been replicated. The rate of teenage pregnancy has risen from 51.0 in 1998 to 52.0 in 2002. Teenage pregnancy in London is also associated with high rates of abortion. In 2001,

⁹¹ *Inspection report [Outer North-East London Borough] Local Education Authority, Ofsted and Audit Commission, September 2002, available from <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/reports/index.cfm?fuseaction=lea&id=320> [accessed 2/06/2006]*

⁹² *Inspection of London Borough of [Outer North-East London] Local Education Authority, Ofsted and Audit Commission, May 2000 available from <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/reports/index.cfm?fuseaction=lea&id=320> [accessed 2/06/2006]*

⁹³ *[Outer North-East London Borough] Local Education Authority Inspection Report, January 2005, Crown Copyright, available from <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/reports/index.cfm?fuseaction=lea&id=320> [accessed 2/06/2006]*

⁹⁴ SCARE Research briefing 09: Preventing teenage pregnancy in looked after children, August 2004, <http://www.elsc.org.uk/briefings/briefing09> [no longer available]

⁹⁵ Robson, K., and Berthoud, R., 'Young motherhood and disadvantage: a comparison between ethnic groups,' *Working papers of the Institute for Social and economic research*, paper 2003-29, Colchester, University of Essex, 2003

⁹⁶ Teenage pregnancy unit, *Teenage conception statistics for England 1998-2003*, published February 2005

⁹⁷ National and local authority conception statistics, Teenage Pregnancy Unit, http://www.dfes.gov.uk/teenagepregnancy/dsp_content.cfm?pageid=245 [accessed 2/06/2006]

nearly 60% of pregnancies to females aged 18 years and under in London were terminated compared to 46% nationally. Whereas nationally, abortions are associated with less deprived areas and low teenage pregnancy rates, in London abortions occur irrespective of conception rates or levels of deprivation.⁹⁸

Teenage pregnancy in the case study borough is more closely related to rates in inner London which tend to be higher than those for outer London boroughs.⁹⁹

7.2.1.1 Who is at risk from teenage pregnancy?

A strong link has been established between deprivation and the likelihood of becoming pregnant at a young age. Deprivation can be both a cause and a consequence of teenage pregnancy. In London, high rates of teenage pregnancy correspond with areas of deprivation, particularly in inner London. Thirty-eight percent (38%) of London's children are living in poverty, rising to 54% for inner London, compared to 29% across England on average. London also has a comparatively youthful population compared with the rest of the UK.¹⁰⁰

The following groups identified from the research as vulnerable to early childbearing are also most at risk from or experiencing disadvantage and exclusion:

- Lower socio-economic class
- Young women in or leaving care
- Homeless young people
- Those excluded or truanting or underperforming at school
- Children of teenage mothers
- Young women from Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi families
- Young people involved in crime
- Young people with mental health problems

Early pregnancy has been linked with low educational achievement. Teenage mothers may be disengaged or excluded from education prior to becoming pregnant or may feel that there are limited educational or employment opportunities available to them. Some may therefore perceive motherhood as a rational and meaningful life option or alternative vocation.¹⁰¹

Exposure to a disrupted or chaotic home or family life can increase the risk of early childbearing. Young people in difficult circumstances may have to 'grow up' faster than their peers in order to cope. They may have limited

⁹⁸ As of 2/06/2006 these are the most recent statistics for London, *The State of London's Children report*, Greater London Authority, December 2004

⁹⁹ *Sexual health in [Outer North-East London Borough]*, undated, <http://www.lbwf.gov.uk/comp-sexualhealthsumm.pdf> [accessed 2/06/2006]

¹⁰⁰ *The State of London's Children report*, Greater London Authority, December 2004

¹⁰¹ Arai, L., 'Low expectations, sexual attitudes and knowledge: explaining teenage pregnancy and fertility in English communities, Insights from qualitative research,' (2003) *The Sociological Review*, 51 (2), p199-217

access to or a lack of consistent and positive adult support.¹⁰² They may have to play a significant role in caring for others in the household, including younger siblings.¹⁰³ Violence in the home and bullying at school are also important themes in teenage mother's backgrounds.¹⁰⁴ Pregnancy may be a way of attracting attention or expressing a sense of self¹⁰⁵ or it might be the first time that a young woman feels loved by another person.¹⁰⁶

Perceptions of motherhood, as well as expectations for the future, may be shaped by community and family views and experience, including the extent to which having children early is accepted and seen as normal.¹⁰⁷

'Roma girls are not interested in education. Their culture is such that being pregnant at 12, 13, 14, is okay and education is then seen as deemed to be irrelevant and stopped. So you don't get Roma girls back' (Reintegration Officer for EduAction)

Children whose mother had no qualifications are twice as likely to give birth at a younger age, as are young women born to a young mother.¹⁰⁸

7.2.1.2 The impact of teenage pregnancy

A young woman's socio-economic circumstances will influence the impact of teenage pregnancy. Giving birth at an early age does not intrinsically lead to disadvantage but the social and economic context into which the child is born does.¹⁰⁹ Negative attitudes disseminated by the media can also create damaging misconceptions about teenage mothers. During this research, for example, the young women involved experienced negative media coverage:

'...the Sunday Times journalist also interviewed (one of the young mothers) by telephone and then wrote what we all thought was a

¹⁰² SCARE Research briefing 09: Preventing teenage pregnancy in looked after children, August 2004, <http://www.elsc.org.uk/briefings/briefing09> [no longer available]

¹⁰³ Teenage pregnancy Unit, *Lifestyles and media consumption of disadvantaged teenagers* (2001)
http://www.dfes.gov.uk/teenagepregnancy/dsp_content.cfm?pagelid=217
[accessed 2/06/2006]

¹⁰⁴ *The State of London's Children report*, (2004) Greater London Authority

¹⁰⁵ Teenage pregnancy Unit, *Lifestyles and media consumption of disadvantaged teenagers*, (2001),
http://www.dfes.gov.uk/teenagepregnancy/dsp_content.cfm?pagelid=217
[accessed 2/06/2006]

¹⁰⁶ McCarthy, H., *The self-esteem society*, (2004), Demos/The Cosmetic Toiletry and Perfumery Association

¹⁰⁷ Lee, E., Clements, S., Ingham, R., and Stone, N., *A matter of choice? Explaining national variations in teenage abortion and motherhood*, (2004) Joseph Rowntree Foundation, York

¹⁰⁸ *Long-term consequences of Teenage births for parents and their children* (2004), Teenage pregnancy research Programme research briefing, Teenage pregnancy unit/Dept of Health

¹⁰⁹ Robson, K., and Berthoud, R., 'Young motherhood and disadvantage: a comparison between ethnic groups,' *Working papers of the Institute for Social and economic research*, (2003), paper 2003-29, Colchester, University of Essex

travesty of an article so we wrote to him... He portrayed them as a disadvantaged group of... you know, they felt they'd been kind of stereotyped" (Reintegration Officer for EduAction)

The stigma attached to teenage pregnancy may further limit young mothers and constrain or prevent them from realising the options available to them.¹¹⁰

Young mothers are more likely to have poor mental health outcomes with 40% of teenage mothers having an episode of depression within one year of childbirth. Young mothers are less likely to have qualifications, more likely to be in receipt of benefits (90% rely on income support) or employed on lower incomes than their peers.¹¹¹ Benefits recipients generally have a lower standard of living and non-working families with children are three times more likely to have an income below the poverty line than working families.¹¹² Young mothers are less likely to be owner-occupiers, with 80% of young mothers under 18 years living in someone else's household and 40% of the under-20s. Teenage mothers are also more likely to be lone parents or experience family conflict. In 2003 90% of teenage births took place outside marriage.¹¹³ Relationship breakdown is also more common among teenage parents.¹¹⁴ Where young mothers do find partners they are more likely to be poorly qualified and more likely to experience unemployment.¹¹⁵

Babies of teenage mothers are generally more at risk from poverty, poor housing and bad nutrition. They may have lower than average birth weights and the infant mortality rate for babies born to young mothers is higher – 60% more than for 'older' women. Only 44% of mothers under 20 years of age breastfeed compared to 64% of mothers aged 20-24 years, and almost half of teenage mothers smoke during pregnancy which has health and economic consequences for the mother and baby.¹¹⁶ They may also experience, as their mother is likely to have done, lower educational attainment and economic inactivity.

For some young women, pregnancy may be seen as a positive experience. There is some evidence that pregnancy increases the desire for education

¹¹⁰ Bullen, E., Kenway, J., and Hay, V., 'New Labour, social exclusion and educational risk management: the case of 'gymslip mums', (2000), *British educational research journal*, 26 (4), p441-456

¹¹¹ Swann, C., Bowe K., McCormick, G., and Kosmin, M., *Teenage pregnancy and parenthood: a review of reviews, Evidence briefing*, (2003), Health Development Agency, <http://www.nice.org.uk/page.aspx?o=502529> [accessed 2/06/2006]

¹¹² Robson, K., and Berthoud, R., 'Young motherhood and disadvantage: a comparison between ethnic groups,' *Working papers of the Institute for Social and economic research*, (2003), paper 2003-29, Colchester, University of Essex

¹¹³ *Population Trends*, (2004), No 118, National Statistics, London

¹¹⁴ Swann, C., Bowe K., McCormick, G., and Kosmin, M., *Teenage pregnancy and parenthood: a review of reviews, Evidence briefing*, (2003), Health Development Agency, <http://www.nice.org.uk/page.aspx?o=502529> [accessed 02/06/2006]

¹¹⁵ *Long-term consequences of Teenage births for parents and their children*, (2004), Teenage pregnancy research Programme research briefing, Teenage pregnancy unit/Dept of Health

¹¹⁶ Swann, C., Bowe K., McCormick, G., and Kosmin, M., *Teenage pregnancy and parenthood: a review of reviews, Evidence briefing*, (2003), Health Development Agency, <http://www.nice.org.uk/page.aspx?o=502529> [accessed 02/06/2006]

and the determination to get a decent job¹¹⁷ and some young mothers may feel that having a child is a positive direction in life, giving them an opportunity to take personal responsibility and averting more disastrous consequences such as going to jail.¹¹⁸ A comment heard by the researchers illustrates this:

'I don't think I've ever really met anybody who hasn't wanted to, at some level... continue their education. A lot of people that do this kind of work have found that. It's been almost like a fresh opportunity, a new opportunity for them.' (Reintegration Officer for EduAction)

7.2.2 The Young Parent's Project

7.2.2.1 Funding and purpose

The Young Mother's group is a weekly peer support programme for pregnant women and young mothers up to the age of 19 years to support their personal, social and educational development and address relevant health and social issues.¹¹⁹ It was established in response to the Government's teenage pregnancy strategy, launched in 1999, which aims to increase the participation of teenage mothers in education, training or work to 60% by 2010 and reduce the negative impact of social exclusion.¹²⁰

The group is a separate strand of the Young Parent's project, which works with teenage parents in order to support them throughout pregnancy, to support their education through school or home teaching and overall to ensure continuity and reintegration into the community. Work is co-ordinated across several departments through a Reintegration Officer (17 years and under), Connexions (new referrals aged 16-17 years) and the Youth and Community Service (18 years and over), who provide help and support depending on the age of the young parents:

'...the Young Persons project is an umbrella organisation, virtual organisation really, that supports young parents in a variety of ways.' (Reintegration Officer)

Funding is from numerous sources including the (then) DfES Standards Fund, in particular the vulnerable children's grant, awarded to local authorities to support education initiatives, the European Social Fund, Teenage Pregnancy local partnership fund and local charities.

7.2.2.2 The participants and organisation

The Young Mother's group meets once a week on a Thursday:

¹¹⁷ <http://www.ywca-gb.org.uk/newsarticle.asp?ID=154> [accessed 2/06/2006]

¹¹⁸ Lee, E., Clements, S., Ingham, R., and Stone, N., *A matter of choice? Explaining national variations in teenage abortion and motherhood*, (2004), Joseph Rowntree Foundation, York

¹¹⁹ Burchett, H., and Seeley, A., *Good enough to eat? The diet of pregnant teenagers*, (2003), The Maternity Alliance/The Food Commission

¹²⁰ Teenage Pregnancy Unit, http://www.dfes.gov.uk/teenagepregnancy/dsp_content.cfm?pageID=84 [accessed 2/06/2006]

'The Young Mother's Group gives them their sort of social support group once a week.' (Reintegration Officer)

The day is divided into three: a morning session held as an open study support session with access to computers and facilities, or an access point for information about benefits and advice. Formal sessions are not held in the morning because of the difficulties of expecting young parents to attend early sessions. After lunch, more formal and discrete sessions are held. One of the successes of the project for the Reintegration Officer and leader of the project, is that they continue to support young parents after their statutory education has finished:

'I think that's been our big success, actually. Because although I was like a lone voice in the wilderness for many years and necessarily restricted to the school age one of the things we've been able to as a result of the Teenage Pregnancy strategy has been to bring people on board and develop it in the direction of continuity...'

The emphasis is on supporting parents in a holistic sense including safety, behavioural management of children and healthy eating. Courses can also be taken for example English GCSE, City & Guilds Numeracy and childcare. The personal development of the young parents is also seen as crucial:

'But then the other thing...is the personal development programme... they might be pregnant or they might be a young parent and they're still a student, but they have another identity which is about awareness developing human beings, and that's the bit I really care very much about.' (Reintegration Officer)

There is some consensus in the literature that such development programmes, which support and teach confidence, self-esteem and negotiation skills, can also be effective in preventing unintended teenage pregnancies alongside other interventions such as school and community based sex education.¹²¹

7.2.2.3 Location and building

There is not a specific school, centre or programme for young mothers in the borough but a variety of services available at different levels from a variety of sources. Three types of support are given; birth classes, support during the young mother's education and support after education. On the whole it is still very rare for local authorities to provide such services.

Education within the borough is steadily improving after an Ofsted inspection in 2000 criticised the LEA for failing its most vulnerable pupils. For example, exclusions were almost double the national average.¹²² A recent inspection in 2005 finds that although achievement is improving, performance is consistently below national levels. High mobility of pupils is identified as a

¹²¹ Swann, C., Bowe K., McCormick, G., and Kosmin, M., *Teenage pregnancy and parenthood: a review of reviews, Evidence briefing*, (2003), Health Development Agency, <http://www.nice.org.uk/page.aspx?o=502529> [accessed 2/06/2006]

¹²² *Inspection of London Borough of [Outer North- East London Authority] Local Education Authority*, (2000) Ofsted and Audit Commission

significant issue for the borough's schools.¹²³ Exclusion or disruption of education is seen as increasing the risk of teenage pregnancy, and presents a challenge for continuing education which is part of the aim of the young mother's project:

"...of course it is [a challenge] because a lot of the girls, increasingly now in this part of London, we are seeing a lot of people not in school anyway, they're asylum seekers or they're looked after..."
(Reintegration Officer)

Numbers of young mothers involved in the project are also limited as currently the crèche can only hold 12 babies:

"We can do more than 12 because some girls will be pregnant and then that won't impact upon them but 15 would be [the most]"

7.2.2.4 Staff

The project was established and is co-ordinated by a Reintegration Officer, who works primarily with teenage parents, a role created in 2000 as part of the teenage pregnancy strategy. The Reintegration Officer also works for EduAction, a private company running the borough's Education Department.¹²⁴

The Reintegration Officer supports teenage parents mainly around access to education and training, for example work experience courses and the Aim Higher project which facilitates access to university level education, linking in with services and organisations to provide other sources of support and advice.

7.2.3 Interview with Keira* a member of the Young Mother's Group

An interview was held on the 8 November 2004 with one of the members of the young mother's group, Kiera*, who had made the journey to meet with the researchers at an Early Years Centre in the borough. Aged 19, Keira* had been involved with the young mother's group for two years:

'I was working during my pregnancy, and I stopped probably about six weeks before I was due and then I went to do pre-birth classes with [the Reintegration Officer].'

Keira*'s experience and attitude were not always what might be expected of a young mother as identified in the literature where teenage pregnancy is associated with low expectations and aspirations in life. Keira* presented herself as very able and very confident in terms of her learning. She remarked that she was working towards going to University:

¹²³ Chivers, V., [North-East London Borough] Local Education Authority Inspection Report, (2005), <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/reports/manreports/2481.pdf> [accessed 2/06/2006]

¹²⁴ <http://www.eduaction.com/index.cfm?alias=home> [accessed 2/06/2006]

'I went and done a year's GNVQ Health and Social Care... which I've finished at the beginning, sorry, Summer this year. [I] did want to go and do access to university course, but because of my age you have to be 19 or over... so I'm planning to that that next year.'

She also had clear aspirations for the future and gave the impression of not allowing anything to restrict her, taking advantage of opportunities:

'I'm not a 100% certain. I know I'd like to work with people... cos originally I did maybe think about social work cos there was an access to social work course but I wouldn't want to go and do a degree in social work cos I think it would restrict me. I think maybe if I went and done social sciences and humanities, that sort of... there's lots of things that I could maybe do.'

As well as working throughout her pregnancy, Keira* had been very proactive in gaining experience:

'But until then, I'm... looking at doing maybe like voluntary work and just little bits and pieces that will help me in the future, like experience, I am just trying to get some experience while I am not at college.'

As well as gaining experience for herself, Keira* had been sharing her experiences as a young mother with other young people, helping to raise awareness about the services on offer:

'I've done a workshop with four young people in the borough, and it was kind of aimed at sort of letting them know what services are available and things like that and like Health Services, Sexual Health Services... I was the only, me and one other girl from the group was the only actually teen mums or teen parents there. But they just wanted us, they thought we would help, you know, like we came up with everything ourselves so they just thought with our experiences and things like that. We looked at things like what would we, or how did we find it, you know, at the time...'

For the young people 'it seems like some of them don't really know about some of the places to go' and she suggested that this had also been her experience:

'I didn't actually know that there was a group or anything until late pregnancy.'

It seems that teenage pregnancy is something that Keira* has had time to accept (she was 17 when she gave birth) and during the interview she did not refer to it as a problem. However she was aware of the stigma that is attached to being a young mother. The Young Mothers group emailed a journalist to protest after he wrote about their experience at the National Gallery in negative terms:

'We was just a bit disappointed at the way we were portrayed in the interview, because like you said it was all a bit negative when it wasn't actually, it was all quite positive for everyone.'

7.2.3.1 Memories of the project with the Madonna of the Pinks at the National Gallery

The Young Mothers' Group from the borough had been involved with the National Gallery prior to the acquisition of the Madonna of the Pinks. The Education Department at the National Gallery worked with the group to illustrate the educational potential of the painting and, later, the group had been involved more actively in promoting the painting as part of the negotiations to purchase the Madonna of the Pinks for the nation. The interview with Keira* took place around 18 months after her involvement with the National Gallery.

Keira* had clear memories of the National Gallery project and could recall quite vividly the first time she had met with the National Gallery staff:

'The first time, they came to visit us and they bought some pinks, flowers and basically just told us all about the painting, and we sort of was doing a bit of drawing, just like messing around so they were just saying like I think most of us that were there at the time.. [we] wasn't really very arty like. I've never really done art at school or anything. I didn't choose it as an option ... then we got to take them home. It was a nice little gift from them and they just told us about the painting and things.

You took the pinks home or the drawings or both?

Yeah, both. And it was just sort of like an introduction because we were going to go to the National Gallery and do workshops looking at the painting. So it was just sort of telling what it was all about and stuff.'

Keira*'s memory of the introduction to the project closely matched that of the Reintegration Officer, who organised it with the National Gallery:

'Well, they came, they first of all came, just two of them. I think the first one where they bought all the flowers. It was amazing really, they came staggering in with these cardboard trays of little violets, I think they were. They got them at [name removed] market. They got off the train, and got these things and come up to us. They brought lots of posters and paintings... They had lunch with us as well and they got to know the girls, they're really good with the girls, which is quite an important thing. They got to know them and then by the afternoon formal session, the ice had been broken. And they did some drawing, sketching of hands, and they introduced the painting a little bit, not a lot but a little bit. They looked at the hands, and the pose, and looked at the context and underneath the context a little bit, and then the next week, we went to the National Gallery.'

Keira* had not been especially interested in the Madonna of the Pinks at first, but she found that the more she looked at it and found out about it, the more interesting it became:

'So first impressions I thought oh okay, I didn't really think about it much. But then when I actually, when they told us about it and I actually, you know, you can sort of look into the painting and kind of it's more interesting once you know I think a little bit more about it.'

Although she had been to museums previously, the National Gallery was the first art gallery that Keira* had ever visited. She described how, on the first visit, she and her group had worked with the sculptor to produce small maquettes or models of mother and child figures. Throughout the discussion, Keira* referred to the meaning of the image of the Madonna of the Pinks in secular and personal terms; the religious meaning did not seem to be of any relevance to her. She did use the expression Madonna however; did she use this term as a reference to the Virgin Mary and assume the religious significance of the painting was a given? However, as will be shown, considerable personal meaning was attached by Keira* to the painting.

Keira* remembered enjoying the sculpture workshop, and had been impressed by the amount of work she had done as she completed two models:

'And that was nice to work with the wax, we just made a frame from like a drainpipey metal thing that you can bend. So you just sort of make a frame and we was just looking at the paintings that inspired them.'

Keira* broadened her view of art through making the sculpture, and had been pleased with her own achievement, especially the degree to which she considered the second to be more accomplished than the first

'Yeah and then also I think it's not so much, cos I always though that art, you know, it's just I always looked at art that it's, you know, like if you're a good drawer or something like that. Whereas the, you know, if you really like my second sculpture, the way I pasted it down and everything like that and smoothed it, it's like a lot more smoother than the first one and it almost looks, I don't know, it can be you know, if you really smooth it out it just goes really sort of soft, it's got a smooth look to it. Whereas the other one maybe it's not it's a bit more, sort of taught me probably you have to find like fine little details as well. It just sort of made you use your hands a little bit more.'

The sculpture had been given a special place in her home and was regarded as something to be proud of:

'I wouldn't have expected to make something as nice, and then even when I took them home, they're still at my mum's now, so she was like, oh, and she put them up so that was quite nice.'

Keira* considered that all the group which had gone to the National Gallery had enjoyed themselves, even though they had not necessarily expected to do so.

'I wouldn't say there was anyone that really didn't enjoy it. Even some people that don't really like art or think it's boring, I think we all seemed to enjoy it and have a good time.'

7.2.3.2 Making personal connections with the Madonna of the Pinks

Keira* was able to connect with the painting and to use it to inspire her sculpture. Through the experience of motherhood, and her memories of how she felt about her own little boy, she was able to invest the sculpture with personal meaning:

'I think with the maybe with the second one where she was actually holding him, it was sort of in a position maybe where you would breastfeed, so I was just sort of saying, just trying to show a relationship between a mother and child, and that love and that bond that you have like, cos I breastfeed [my son] for quite a long time. So I was just sort of showing that in the second one.'

Keira* thought that making the sculpture and looking at and talking about the painting of the Madonna of the Pinks was not something that she would normally have done, and she appreciated being able to reflect upon and express the love she felt for her own child. She felt that she was able to understand the painting because of her own, personal experiences:

'Because I have [my son] and I understand the relationship between a mother and a child, and because of obviously like how much I love him and things like that; I can maybe look at the picture and relate to it a little bit, and sort of maybe look at her and like see what she's feeling kind of thing, you know like that. So maybe if I didn't have [my son] I've maybe not have thought about it in so much depth.'

7.2.3.3 Remembering the Madonna of the Pinks

Keira* had not seen the painting for many months and we were interested to know whether she could recall the painting in any depth. We decided to test this by showing her a group of six postcards of paintings of Madonna and Child. This contained one other by Raphael, and a group of other of varying degrees of naturalism. The Madonna of the Pinks was picked out with great rapidity. On being asked how she recognised it so quickly, Keira* talked about the experience of seeing the real thing in the National Gallery:

'When we went to see the actual painting the way, I don't know, the paint like the blue on the painting in the gallery is like really, it's really strong you know, it kind of strikes you when you look at it.... it was in like such, you know, considering it's so old, like it's really, I don't know just the quality of it and it just looks really, really nice.'

'I think probably seeing it at the gallery, I didn't expect it to be so small...'

Looking at the postcard of the painting, Keira* mentioned the blue in the painting twice. She also mentioned the translucent veil and the halo of the Madonna, delicate and difficult features to see:

'I think also, you know, like the way she's got this sort of veil that you can see.

That's amazing isn't it?

And then you can see she's actually got a halo.

Halo yeah.

Like an angel over her head.'

It is the natural quality of the Madonna of the Pinks that seems to have impressed Sabrina the most. She compared the naturalness of the pose in the painting with some of the others in the postcards she was shown. She also remembered the name of the artist, 'Raphael' and was able to identify the other painting by him in the group of six that she was shown, through recognising the hands as being by the same artist.

7.2.3.4 Learning outcomes from her engagement with the painting

Keira* was explicit, when asked, about some of the things she had learnt from the day. Her learning can be identified across a number of dimensions:

- To keep an open mind about new experiences- *'I think I learnt... not to be put off, you know, by the first impression of something.'*
- That art might be more than she had previously thought – *'it just sort of opened my eyes up a little bit to what art is actually about; because I'd never really thought about it before.'*
- That she can confidently pass on her enjoyment in making art – *'I think maybe it would encourage me to do more creative and arty things with [my son] as well. I take him once a week like a, it's kind of like a little arty thing that they do for young children... So it's probably made me, cos I enjoyed it, it's made me maybe encourage him to be creative and.... Yes cos you can pass on that excitement really.'*
- That the Madonna of the Pinks is a special painting – *'I do think that it is a special painting... Cos we looked around in the gallery as well at other paintings in the same sort of room, it was again like mother and baby, but no. And some of them do seem to tend to be either like that or like that, unnatural or everyone, it's sort of they're sitting like this, you know, like and it's very just sort of for the picture, you know not natural. No, and even maybe just her facial expression, it's different to all of them paintings that we've got here. She looks like content and sort of happy, you know just kind of like ahhh, you know like when you're just content, that's how she looks.'*

During the interview, Keira* was able to carry out a broad-ranging discussion of the project that she had been engaged in with the National Gallery, she confidently selected the Madonna of the Pinks from a group of six images, and she gave good reasons why she thought the Madonna was a more 'special' painting than some others she had seen, both using the postcards she had in front of her and recalling her experience in the National Gallery itself.

7.2.4 Conclusions: Keira* and her peers

As we only met one of the group of young women who visited the National Gallery, it is not possible to judge Keira* in relation to her peers. In terms of her attitude and aspirations however we can suggest that she did not appear to

fit the conventional picture of teenage mothers that, for example, the young mothers involved with the Books and Babies project in Cardiff demonstrated. Although we found out very little about her background, she came across as very able and determined and it seems that her response to her experiences is to want to aim higher.

Certainly some of the other young women who had accompanied Keira* found the experience more challenging – or reacted less confidently to the challenge of visiting an institution of high culture in the middle of London. The Reintegration officer describes the group as needing a lot of support for their visit which was well outside their experience:

'I think they needed quite a lot of support in making that step... I mean one girl who's an asylum seeker actually had a panic attack on the coach, and I think it was about the fact that she had never done anything like this before. Another girl, who is another asylum seeker sat in the front and was just kind of, her eyes were out on stalks really.'

The approach of the National Gallery staff played a significant role in the impact of the visit on the group. They were reassured by the experience at the National Gallery, where the group was treated extremely well, in her opinion:

'They were just being treated with respect and treated as honoured guests and I think that's really important.'

The Reintegration officer felt that the involvement with the Gallery and the fact that the National Gallery had treated them in this way was very important to their self-perceptions:

'Well I'm sure it has had an impact, but you know, I can't say that they walked taller when they came out of the National Gallery and they were immediately better parents and went back to education the next day. I think it will have a longer-term outcome. I think some of the other things like this, and the fact that society as a whole valued what they did, makes them feel included doesn't it in a way. What's the word? Social currency, where they have an increase in their social value?'

She also talked about the fact that the young women had been introduced to 'an area of cultural life', and to specific 'artistic skills' such as model-making and painting and thus that they had become aware of new things that they or their children could do. It widened their experiences and choices and their expectations for the future. The group had learnt about the painting and its significance, including its religious or spiritual significance; they had discussed the fact that the painting had been valued at £22 million. Perhaps the most valuable thing, for the Reintegration officer was that the group had been taken seriously by representatives of high culture. She queried whether this was more important than being introduced to the specific painting, and asked whether any painting would have done instead. This is a very fair point; it was interesting to find out from Keira* that she did think the painting was a special one. But of course, it may well have been the activities and attention that positioned the Madonna of the Pinks as 'special' in her view.

7.3 The Looked after young people

7.3.1 Looked after young people in London

Looked after young people account for 27% of children classified as 'in need.' The term 'looked after' refers to all children and young people subject to a care order or provided with accommodation on a voluntary basis for more than 24 hours. Since the Children's Act of 1989, where possible the strategy has been to keep young people with their families through the provision of high quality preventative or support services.¹²⁵ However, if a child is felt to be at risk of 'significant harm' the local authority will intervene in the best interests of the child.¹²⁶ In 2001 there were 58,900 looked after children and young people in England, placed in a variety of situations:

- 37,800 children under care orders, with 65% of these in foster placements
- 6400 in children's homes
- 6900 placed with their parents
- 3100 adopted.

Young people enter care at a variety of ages and remain in care for various lengths of time. Nearly 40% return home after less than 8 weeks, 50% go home in 6 months and 70% go home within one year.¹²⁷

London has a higher rate of looked after children than average and numbers have been rising, particularly in outer London where the case study group are located. In 2003 there were 11,375 looked after children in London, 54% in outer London and 46% in inner London. There are slightly more boys (57%) compared to girls (43%). Also, 71% of England's 2400 looked after unaccompanied asylum-seeking children are in London. In London, one concern is the number of young people placed in out-of-borough placements due to the problem of finding good quality and culturally suitable placements in London.¹²⁸

In terms of educational attainment, increased numbers of young people have left care with at least one GCSE or GNVQ since 1999 and more looked after children in London go onto full time education compared to England as a whole. However the attainment of young people in the care system continues to be unfavourable compared to their non-looked after peers; only 34% of looked after children achieve 5 GCSEs grade A*-G compared to 90% of all children in London.¹²⁹

Looked-after children have been identified as an 'at-risk' group, which has led to increasing emphasis on the need to improve their life chances and educational opportunities. Alongside the National Gallery project, other projects aimed at looked-after children included Right to Read, funded by

¹²⁵ *The State of London's Children report (2004)*, Greater London Authority

¹²⁶ *Working together to safeguard children*, (1999), Department of Health, Home Office and DfEE, The Stationary Office, London

¹²⁷ Richardson and Lelliott, 'Mental health of looked after children,' (2003), *Advances in psychiatric treatment*, vol 9, pp249-256

¹²⁸ *The State of London's Children report*, (2004), Greater London Authority

¹²⁹ Ibid

the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, which encouraged libraries to work closely with Social Services and Children's Services and with Educational departments 'to get looked after children (LAC) and their carers excited about books and to ensure that libraries were reaching out to LAC and providing them with the tailored support they needed.'¹³⁰

7.3.1.1 The impact of being in care on young people

Being in public care is linked with social exclusion, homelessness, higher conviction rates and poor general health. Young people may face a greater risk of teenage pregnancy, substance misuse and mental illness.¹³¹ Protective factors, such as acceptance and affection from carers, stability and continuity of care and safe environments in which to live, may help young people cope with the adverse experiences that lead them to being taken into care.¹³² Some young people also feel that they progress better in care away from the disruption of family life.¹³³ On the whole, children and young people in public care are at a higher risk of social disadvantage, ill health and poor educational achievement.

In seeking to explain these findings, it has been very difficult for researchers and policy-makers to disentangle the impact of early life experiences from the impact of care. Young people may be vulnerable to a number of factors including inherited characteristics and adverse pre-care histories.¹³⁴ The main reasons for young people to enter care in 2001 were:

- Abuse and neglect (62%)
- Family dysfunction (10%)
- Family in acute stress (7%)
- Parental illness/disability (6%)
- Absent parenting (6%)
- Socially unacceptable behaviour (4%)
- Disability (4%)
- Low income (1%)¹³⁵

Abuse and neglect are known to be associated with psychological harm and mental violence.¹³⁶ Such experiences can be devastating in the short and long term to a young person's development. Young people in care may also

¹³⁰ Paul Hamlyn Foundation Reading and Libraries Challenge Fund, *Right to Read 2001-2005, Summary of the current outcome*

<http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/phffund/evaluation.html> [accessed 19 06 2006]

¹³¹ Viner, R.M., and Taylor, B., 'Adult health and social outcomes of children who have been in public care: population-based study,' *Pediatrics*, 115 (4), April 2005, pp894-899

¹³² Dent, R.J., and Cameron, R.J.S, 'Developing resilience in children who are in public care: the educational psychology perspective,' *Educational psychology in practice*, 19 (1), 2003, p3-19

¹³³ Richardson and Lelliott, 'Mental health of looked after children,' *Advances in psychiatric treatment*, vol 9, 2003, pp249-256.

¹³⁴ A. Rushton and C. Dance, 'Quality Protects: A commentary on the Government's agenda and the evidence base,' *Child and adolescent health*, 7 (2), 2002, p60-65

¹³⁵ Richardson and Lelliott, 'Mental health of looked after children,' *Advances in psychiatric treatment*, vol 9, 2003, pp 249-256

¹³⁶ *The State of London's Children report*, (2004), Greater London Authority

be more likely to put themselves at risk because of low self-esteem, which may prevent them from caring about their future.¹³⁷ Looked after children and young people from BME groups are more likely to have difficulties concerning their confidence, self-esteem and ethnic identity.¹³⁸ Educational underachievement has been connected with placement instability, school transfer, distress entering care, lack of someone showing interest or encouragement and negative labelling, for example, seen as deviant because in care.¹³⁹

The effectiveness of care services have also been blamed for leaving young people vulnerable to exclusion and not equipping them with the ability to cope with their experiences. Low expectations that society holds generally for looked after children may lead to the failure of those who care for them to identify emotional or behavioural problems.¹⁴⁰ Continuing instability of placements may also exacerbate the disruption caused by being taken into care, for instance the lack of suitable placements or resource limitations.¹⁴¹ Approximately 16% of looked after children experience three or more placements per year, moving most frequently in the first year.¹⁴² Young people often lack the opportunity to develop close relationships with those in charge of their care because of high staff turnovers and demands on their time.¹⁴³

'One of the main ones I would say...would be around the consistency of social workers and that young people have so many changes... that I would say is a major thing for the young people, that they raise all the time. And not seeing them enough because their cases are so huge... they need to build a relationship with anybody they're going to work with to be able to trust them. And that's difficult to do if you're only seeing someone every 6 months or they're changing.'
(Commissioning and partnership manager, Children's Services)

Attitudes towards young people may also deny them a say in their future; they may be considered inconsistent, untrustworthy and unable to make valid decisions because of their age.¹⁴⁴ Young people themselves have identified a lack of a child-centred approach, inadequate support and a sense of

¹³⁷ Munro, E., 'Empowering looked after children,' *Child and family social work*, 6, 2001, pp 129-137

¹³⁸ *The State of London's Children report*, Greater London Authority, December 2004

¹³⁹ Harker, R.M, Dobel-Ober, D., Lawrence, J., Berridge, D., and Sinclair, R., 'Who takes care of education? Looked after children's perceptions of support for the educational process' *Child and family social work*, 8, 2003, pp89-100

¹⁴⁰ Munro, E., 'Empowering looked after children,' *Child and family social work*, 6, 2001, pp 129-137

¹⁴¹ Harker, R.M, Dobel-Ober, D., Lawrence, J., Berridge, D., and Sinclair, R., 'Who takes care of education? Looked after children's perceptions of support for the educational process' *Child and family social work*, 8, 2003, pp89-100

¹⁴² Ward, H., Lynch, M., Skuse, T., and Jones, H., 'Issues concerning the health of looked after children,' *Adoption and fostering journal*, 26 (4), 2002, p8-18.

¹⁴³ Munro, E., 'Empowering looked after children,' *Child and family social work*, 6, 2001, pp 129-137

¹⁴⁴ Morris, J., *Having someone who cares? Barriers to change in the social care system*, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, National Children's Bureau Enterprises, London, 2000, <http://www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/socialcare/380.asp> [accessed 19 06 2006]

stigmatisation that goes with being in care as creating barriers to opportunities.¹⁴⁵

It is evident therefore looked after children and young people are presented with significant challenges in life. Compared with young people in the general population they often have to cope with the challenges and changes of independence far earlier. Very few young people remain in placements after sixteen and "in short they have compressed and accelerated transitions to adulthood."¹⁴⁶

7.3.2 The National Gallery project: Barnados / Quality Protects

7.3.2.1 Funding and purpose

The Government in 1998 launched Quality Protects to improve the standards of service to children in need and children in care:

'Quality Protects was about ensuring better outcomes for looked after children really, because the messages from research and from experience had indicated that outcomes had been pretty bad really.'
(Commissioning and partnership manager, Children's Services)

£375 million was provided originally for three years but the project was extended to £885 million, to which local authorities could bid. Quality Protects was nested within a framework of developments, including Sure Start and the Children's Fund, with wider social aims for example to eliminate poverty and crime and enhance educational and employment opportunities for all children and their families. The Government have established 11 objectives for the planning and delivery of social services for children, with three in particular related to the needs of looked after young people:

- To ensure that children looked after gain maximum life chance benefits from educational opportunities, health and social care
- To ensure that young people leaving care, as they enter adulthood, are not isolated and can participate socially and economically as citizens
- To actively involve users and carers in planning services.¹⁴⁷

The local authority is regarded as a 'corporate parent'; to seek for looked after children the outcomes that "every good parent would want to seek for their own child."¹⁴⁸ The emphasis is on understanding the needs of individual young people and ensuring that they have similar life chances to that of their peers instead of being further disadvantaged by the social services system:

¹⁴⁵ *The State of London's Children report*, Greater London Authority, December 2004

¹⁴⁶ Stein, M., *What works in leaving care? – Summary*, Barnados, 1997, available from http://www.barnados.org.uk/resources/research_and_publications/research_and_publications_what_works.htm [accessed 19 06 2006]

¹⁴⁷ A. Rushton and C. Dance, 'Quality Protects: A commentary on the Government's agenda and the evidence base,' *Child and adolescent health*, 7 (2), 2002, p60-65

¹⁴⁸ Crowe, J., *If this were my child: a councillor's guide to being a good corporate parent*, DfES/Local Government Information Unit, London, October 2003

'There were things around the stability of placements, again that's kind of sort of crucial so its about ensuring that there weren't many changes of placements for children that were looked after and that they were placed in sort of permanent situations as quickly as possible.'

(Commissioning and partnership manager, Children's Services)

There is evidence that well matched placements can result in fewer placement breakdowns and placement stability is also associated with improved educational attainment and a better life chance.¹⁴⁹

7.3.2.2 Integration into broader goals

Although the Quality Protects programme ended in 2003, its objectives have become part of the borough's core provision. To ensure that effective mechanisms are in place to handle complaints and that looked after children have a trusted person "to whom they can speak to and who will speak on their behalf to local authorities,"¹⁵⁰ the borough works closely with the Children's Rights Officer from Barnados, as an independent advocate for the looked after young people:

'...part of my role is advocating for young people, so it's very important that I underpin that from the borough, for them to be able to raise those issues and part of it is to also support young people if they're making a complaint. So it's very important there that I'm independent and not part of the service.' (Children's Rights Officer).

Other things that looked after children can expect from the borough council include a care plan, reviewed at least twice a year, a personal education plan and that their "interests in sports and arts are supported and encouraged."¹⁵¹

'In a sense most of the initiatives were part of making things better for young people, so there's a focus on health, there's a focus on education, there's a focus on sort of identity... And in terms of children and young people, their emotional development, again a host of elements are associated with that in terms of stable relationships, in terms of access, there are a host of things around leisure...'
(Commissioning and partnership manager, Children's Services)

The project with the National Gallery supports this and wider aims:

'Our partnership with the [National Gallery] came on... about improving the life chances of looked after children so it was on that particular objective that we were able to allocate some funds towards this...' (Commissioning and partnership manager, Children's Services)

¹⁴⁹ <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/socialcare/lookedafterchildren/fostercare/> [accessed 21 06 2006]

¹⁵⁰ <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/qualityprotects/info/publications/objectives.shtml> [accessed 21 06 2006]

¹⁵¹ http://www.lbwf.gov.uk/com-pdf-corporate_parenting_final.pdf [accessed 21 06 2006]

7.3.2.3 Improving the life chances of looked after young people

The young people of the borough have taken part in consultations to give the views of looked after young people, undertaken by Barnados for the borough council, and art-related projects at the National Gallery. These activities are linked to the borough's objective to improve the life chances of looked after young people. The young people were paid for their consultation, which enabled them to go on visits for fun such as go-carting. The young people interviewed understood the importance of their work – they were aware that they could make a difference:

'It feels good to do it...'

'We're helping other people aren't we?'

The young people had been involved in different projects, such as *Line of Vision*, at the National Gallery, and some of them talked about visiting the Gallery around ten or fifteen times.

7.3.3 Research processes and participants

7.3.3.1 The research visits and interviews

Two visits were carried out as part of this unit of the research. The first involved interviews with the Quality Protects Programme Manager, the Children's Rights Officer and young person's Participation Worker from Barnados, who were interviewed at the offices of the borough council's Social Services by two RCMG researchers on 16th December, 2004.

The second visit was to the Looked after Young People's Group, who meet at a Community and Children's Centre in one of the larger towns in the borough, which was made by two RCMG researchers on 20th January 2005. There was the opportunity to speak to the group of five young people, aged around 14-16 years, together as a group and to interview them separately. However other activities were taking place that night so it was only possible to interview four of the young people and one of the interviews was unfortunately interrupted.

7.3.3.2 Looked after young people in North-East London

The number of looked after young people in the outer North-East borough of London is slightly higher than the national average; the rate per 1000 being 6.22 compared to 5.5 nationally and 6.0 for London. Total numbers of young people looked after by the borough have generally risen from 295 in 2001 to 358 in February 2005. The majority of looked after young people (67%) are in foster placements. The current ethnic breakdown for looked after children in the borough does not match the current population with a lower proportion of White looked after children and an over-representation of Mixed and Black/Black British young people. Overall, more boys than girls are currently in care.¹⁵²

¹⁵² Summary report of children looked after by [outer North-East London borough] Social Services children and families division, February 2005

The group reflected many of the above characteristics of looked after young people in the borough, but their experiences were very varied within the group:

'[For] one young person it's the first time they've been into care, they've been living with their [...] since they were sort of two and just going into care at 15 so this is a whole new experience for them, and they're in a children's home. And two young people... that have been in foster care and they have learning difficulties, but slight learning difficulties... It's very individual.' (Children's Rights Officer)

Some of the young people had been involved with the group for several years, but they had only recently started meeting at the community centre.

7.3.3.3 Location and building

The young people meet twice a month at a Community and Children's Centre in one of the larger towns in the borough. The centre is located about 5 minutes walk from a bus and Tube station, close to a marketplace and in an area of typically dense nineteenth century terraced housing. The building is a renovated stable, very clean and newly decorated. At the time of the visit, paintings and drawings by the young people covered the walls.

Arrangements were informal and relaxed with beanbags and sofas for the young people and staff, and food such as pizza was provided for them.

7.3.3.4 Staff

Two members of staff were present when the researchers went to visit the community centre, the Children's Rights Officer for Barnados, and young person's Participation Worker who works for the borough council. There was an informal and friendly relationship between the staff and the young people, which suggested a mutual respect and understanding of the complexity of the needs of the young people. This is consistent with the ethos of the group, which is very much about the young people and their participation:

'We've had experiences of some people find it quite hard to work with our group because they are so vocal and because they're coming from a group that's about participation... we run the group in a way, well they run it, we all sort of run it.' (Children's Rights Officer).

7.3.3.5 The characteristics of the young people who were interviewed

Interviews were undertaken with four of the young people at the community centre: Isaac*, Jolene*, Tyler* and Kyle*. The same night, the young people were involved in paid consultation work so we had to fit our evaluation into their timescale. As a result we were not able to interview all members of the group, and the joint interview with Tyler* and Kyle* was cut short before the researchers were able to discuss in any depth their memories of Madonna of the Pinks because they had to go and take part in the evaluation. Like the Young Mother's Group, the researchers had not been present at the sessions the young people had been involved with at the National Gallery and therefore could not use this experience to inform the interviews with the young people.

In many ways the young people were similar to most young people of their age, busy at school with GCSEs and liked playing sports and going out with friends. However their family circumstances are very different. For example Isaac* describes his family arrangements:

'I've got about, I have to count. I've got two brothers in Scotland, my sister, my brother, my little brother [...], I think I've got about eight brothers and sisters.'

One of his brothers was *'like in a jail place, kind of secure unit,'* and only one of his sisters was living with him. Two of his younger brothers and sisters were living in London but one of his brothers he wasn't sure: *'I don't know where he lives, I think he's in care as well but I don't know where he is.'* Most of the contact that Isaac* has with them is through letters, *'[I] send pictures and then they'll send back through the social workers.'*

Tyler* and Kyle* had also experienced disruption in their lives. Tyler* had been living in London for five years, previously he had been living in Suffolk; Kyle* had been living in South London for a year before moving to North-East London, where he had lived for the last four years. Such disruption is common for looked after children with only 4% remaining in the same placement until 16 years of age:

'[Certain] groups and certain children are easier to place than others, younger children are easier to place than teenagers... and you know there are gender issues, cultural issues which impact upon the stability of placements. But a lot of kids have had three or more placements...'
(Commissioning and partnership manager, Children's Services)

Although educational attainment is suggested to be low for looked after children, particularly for those who remain in care for a long time, the young people interviewed appeared to be doing well at school – certainly they did not mention a dislike of school during the interview. Tyler* and Kyle* had ambitions to be a social worker, bus driver or PE teacher and Isaac* was very conscientious:

'I play football, I play for the school team, but a few clubs want me but I have to just sort out my coursework and that cos I can't be playing football when I'm a bit, I'm not behind on my coursework but it's hard, so I have to keep going, cos everyday I'm getting coursework.'

Research suggests that there are a number of protective factors that can mitigate against the circumstances of being in care: the individual child's means of coping and adapting, support from a family and social network and the impact of interventions.¹⁵³ Although evidence from the interview is slight, Isaac*'s experience suggests that some of these factors are present in his situation for example he suggested that he had good relationships and support from his carer;

'My carer, she's always helping me out asking me if I need anything.'

¹⁵³ *Working together to safeguard children*, Department of Health, Home Office and DfEE, The Stationary Office, London, 1999

Support from his teachers, who had seen the work he had done with the National Gallery:

'Well I know that I'm doing it and no-one else has done it, and then I felt quite proud when I finished cos some of my teachers went to see the exhibition, that when I started to feel like an artist...'

And he seemed very positive about the work they were doing to help other young people like them in care:

'We just try, every time we come here, we try and improve some of the things. What happens at home, whatever we do, whatever the activities... for others and for us like next time.'

Jolene*, another interviewee, was much more withdrawn and uncommunicative and it was difficult to get a sense of what her circumstances were, how she felt about life in general, and how she felt about the National Gallery project.

7.3.4 The views of the staff

7.3.4.1 Interview with Commissioning and partnership manager, Children's Services

Initially, the Commissioning and partnership manager from the borough council had not been particularly enthusiastic about becoming involved with the National Gallery. He was worried that the National Gallery would not be able to respond to the young people. He had a long-held view that places like the National Gallery were out of touch with current social issues:

'Well I must admit, initially I was a bit resistant to the idea, I must admit I thought the National Gallery was a bit of a dinosaur really, particularly in terms of, you know, its framework and the years etc., and its relevance to kids growing up in a sort of multicultural context is always a bit of an issue for me really.'

However, once the project had begun, he found that the more they learnt about the Madonna of the Pinks and the other paintings, the more interesting it all became for both himself and the young people. The value of the Madonna of the Pinks began to be able to be imagined, initially in terms of its financial cost:

'There was an issue just in terms of whether it was worthwhile saving the... Madonna of the Pinks. So [the National Gallery Education Officer] arranged a discussion if you like with the curator and our young people just to think about their view on this really. And of course there was very strong feeling about... whether it was worthwhile paying sort of £10m and what £10m could achieve in other ways, you know, another sort of worthwhile cause really.'

And later in broader terms:

'And then we learnt more about the history of the painting, the more time we spent in the art gallery, we all started to value the paintings a lot more and where they came from and the stories; and I think that changed a lot of their views from thinking first of all how they could have a football pitch or we could have a hospital. But I think they learned to value it more when we learn more about it.'

Both he and the young people had been impressed by the enthusiasm shown by the curators and educators they had met at the gallery, and they were also impressed by the numbers of people who visited the National Gallery. They began to appreciate the longer-term value that might be accorded to paintings:

'But I also think what was actually a key element in persuading them, a) I think it was about the sort of passion of the curator about their art, so that was actually good. But another key element was the number of people who accessed the gallery and saw the painting, the impact on them and the consequences of that impact, so yes responding to the needs of the homeless might be immediate but in fact the implications are much longer term in terms of the painting. And I think they began to get just a sense of those sorts of issues really.'

He perceived 'a resonance' between the experiences of gallery visitors and the young people for whom he was responsible:

'They were exposed to the gallery and the consequence of that is that their horizons were broadened to a certain extent. And I think it was similar, the sort of similar experience for the people. Because you access paintings, you have a sense of the stories behind the paintings, it had an impact on you and consequently enriched you as a person really.'

As a result of spending time in the gallery, the environment became less alarming:

'...even the building when we first went in the gallery is quite intimidating... and it became a place that we all felt very comfortable and relaxed.'

And this began to open up art and art galleries as places that might have relevance for them:

'And I think now when you offered them somewhere else or they were asked to go somewhere else, that they might have been a little bit, I think the same for me, a little bit... they are now a much more open.'

The Commissioning and partnership manager was very clear about the elements in the gallery experience that had made the project a success for the young people. These included:

- The enthusiasm, vision and commitment of the National Gallery Education officer with whom they had worked.

- The flexibility of the gallery team in working with the young people, and a genuine possibility of change if it seemed appropriate.
- The encouragement that the young people experienced.
- The fact that they were able to express themselves, and that this 'empowered' them.
- Having the National Gallery described (by the Education officer) as 'yours.'

He pointed out that his group was not always easy to work with, as they were very outspoken ('vocal').

7.3.4.2 The views of the Children's Rights Officer, Barnados, and Children's Participation Worker

The other two staff members had joined the Commissioning and partnership manager during the interview. The discussions with them came towards the end of the interview. Their memories of working with the Madonna of the Pinks had become mixed with other memories from the project with the National Gallery, and they did not recall much detail.

'I can't remember the story, I barely remember the painting.'

There were some strong memories of the project as a whole, but little that was specific to the Madonna of the Pinks.

'It was such a long time ago, it seems that we've done so much work with the gallery that even though this was that long ago that I can't remember it now.'

Both were confident about the impact that the project as a whole had had on the young people:

'Definitely in terms of confidence, I mean they were extremely [proud] of the work that they did, the exhibition, the experience is not just of I think being proud of their work but experiencing some of it, the opening of it and having their pictures taken and meeting certain people and explaining about their work.'

'And one of them's kind of going to take Art as a GCSE...'

They also talked about the development of the consultation group:

'The boys and girls and the young people who went to the National Gallery are part of our consultation group, so across the last couple of years really they've become quite a strong group really and we've used them in a variety of ways. So it started off with the gallery but it's actually developed in lots of ways...'

And the staff were of the opinion that the involvement with the looked after young people had changed the outlook of the National Gallery:

'Yes, but also I think the gallery itself has changed... they've had to listen to the young people and yes the paintings at the gallery reflect a particular sort of time in our history but they needed to recognise that if it has to be meaningful, then they had to sort of export sort of creative ways of making those connections really and I think they've done that, creating a relevance if you like of that institution to the sort of way of the world really.'

7.3.4.3 Specific outcomes from the National Gallery project for this group

A number of outcomes can be identified from this group interview with the staff. This includes:

- A further project with the National Portrait Gallery.
- An openness to and awareness of other art projects involving young people, such as Shrinking Childhoods at Tate Modern.
- One participant taking GCSE in Art.
- The development of a strong consultation group.

7.3.5 Interviews with the looked after young people

7.3.5.1 Group discussion

During the group discussion, the young people talked about the artwork on the walls of the community centre and remembered how they had worked with artists at the National Gallery on this particular project. They emerged as quite feisty and keen to talk about the meaning behind their paintings. There was the sense that they had enjoyed the activity at the National Gallery and learnt new techniques. One young person said it was the first time that they had 'done that kind of stuff' and Isaac* talked about how 'free' he felt when they were painting, there was not so much pressure as at school. As a group they said less about the Madonna of the Pinks, but they remembered that it was a small painting and that the National Gallery was raising money to keep it in Britain, although some of the young people questioned whether the picture was worth the amount spent on it.

7.3.5.2 The interview with Isaac*

Isaac* was the most articulate young person from the group to be interviewed. He was described by the staff as a talented young person with many options open to him for the future. In spite of having complex and turbulent family circumstances, he seemed confident and outward-looking.

Isaac* had found the National Gallery projects productive and interesting. He had been involved over a three-year period with a number of different projects, and although occasionally he had found the visits over-long and a bit boring, he was developing a strong interest in art which was reflected in his choice of GCSEs:

'What subjects are you doing for your GCSEs?

Art, Drama, humanities, English, Science, maths, I'm doing double Art as well.'

He described the open-ended form of teaching used at the National Gallery:

'They will show us a few (paintings) and they would ask us what they think about it, and we would just like think, everyone will have different ideas and some of them they'll be very surprised and they'll be like yeah very good, and like they never thought of it like that. And then all our ideas that we have of the picture, we would go and take that back and draw what we think but then they will tell us the real story and they will show us how close we are to the real story.'

The Madonna of the Pinks had been just one of the paintings that he had encountered at the National Gallery. He immediately named the artist when the Madonna was introduced into the discussion. When asked how he could remember this name he responded:

'I don't know, cos we was doing a project and they was telling us to do some stuff to help save it, but I can't remember what we was doing. I think it was doing some paintings to say help raise money, and then I just recognised it.'

He had not been convinced that the painting was worth the money. Firstly, it was very small, and secondly, he didn't know if it was original or not. He had better ideas about what you could spend a lot of money on:

'Spend it on places around where I live. Cos when you, West End it's all looking nice, but then cos there's a lot of people that live on the outskirts, they don't all live in the West End, that's mostly when you go shopping, and that should just be build up a bit and they should have a few youth clubs for children, so they're not always on the road and getting in trouble and things happening. They can be in youth clubs having a bit of fun.'

He had not been able to make a strong relationship with the Madonna of the Pinks, unlike the teenage mothers who connected immediately through the experience of motherhood. Although he had been involved in making a small sculpture based on the painting, this had not really become very meaningful:

'Like yeah we had to draw it I think and there was, I think we was doing the clay. They made us look like look at this painting, I don't know why.'

When shown the postcard during the interview he noticed the halo, though did not initially recall the expression:

'I'm looking at it now and I'm seeing, I think they've got like dead angels, it's like Jesus and Mary.'

He described the environment within the painting as hot, as neither 'she' nor 'the baby' were wearing much. It was probably set in Israel, where it is hot. However, he was certain the mother loved the baby:

'She's like playing with him, she's got him on her lap and she's just looking at him, got the flower giving it to him.'

He described the atmosphere in the painting as 'calm', and realised that the halo had a certain significance, but was not quite sure what:

'...you don't feel saddened by it or nothing, you just, you don't even feel happy, you just feel calm, you just see it's like a natural environment. But when you see the halos, you think there's something strange about it, there's something different about it cos they're not normal... Something to do with it's either she's dead or something to do with royalty or something, like God.'

Isaac* made a good stab at the date the painting was made:

'1500s I think it was.'

And he enjoyed the brighter colours of the painting:

'Yeah the blue in it, like you see every colour's not that very bright, and then you just see the blue and the orange and that's, you either look at the background or you look at her blue and orange kind of skirt thing.'

On the whole, although Isaac* had been a bit apprehensive, he had found the experience at the National Gallery interesting:

'It's quite, at first I thought it would be not all that, but then it just started getting good, started doing a bit more work. The first day was a kind of talking, but we did do, and then when we met a few people, I thought like yeah I want to come again. It's not like you don't want to come again, you do.'

He had enjoyed doing new things, and once his work had been exhibited, he had felt very proud, and 'like an artist.' And he was doing better at art and doing extra art work for his GCSE:

'I'm doing quite good in art now, I'm moving up cos it's helped me as well, I thought let me go cos I want to do good in art cos I do like art.'

7.3.5.3 The interviews with three more looked after young people

Kyle* and Tyler* were interviewed together but their interview was very short because of their need to participate in the consultation work that was also taking place on the evening of the interview. They discussed their interests generally, which mainly focused on sports, and talked briefly about their experience of the National Gallery. Both had been many times (10-15 times), and had initially thought it would be boring, but both had found the things they did at the gallery had been fun:

'It's cos the activities we get to do ain't boring. They make it like, it could be boring but they make it exciting.' (Tyler*)

'They make it fun ain't it.' (Kyle*)

They had enjoyed being involved in making a video and in putting on an exhibition for the public, and also participating in the Line of Vision conference. One of the young people, Kyle*, had enjoyed the events at the National Gallery and as a result was doing art at GCSE:

'Doing it as a GCSE now, doing it as a GCSE.'

Oh right okay, and why did you choose to do it as a GCSE?

Cos I had fun at the art gallery and I started getting into like drawing and that, so I just thought I'd try it...'

Just as the discussion turned to the Madonna of the Pinks, the two young people were asked to participate in the consultation work downstairs, although Tyler* mentioned that he remembered the National Gallery had been given public money to save the painting.

The interview with the fourth member of the group, Jolene*, was very short, and she was very uncommunicative. She recalled being involved with the National Gallery, but not in any detail. While she had enjoyed working with the artists at the National Gallery and doing 'different things', she did not open up with any more detailed memories.

7.3.6 Conclusions from the Looked after Young People's group interviews

Clearly the National Gallery project as a whole had made quite a good impression on the looked after young people as well as the staff from the borough council. The Commissioning and partnership manager found that his preconceptions had changed as did the young people, who were able to extend their experiences. Not only had they seen the National Gallery in a new light, and worked with professional artists, but they had also visited new parts of London.

There had been an impact on the young people in terms of their learning experience. They were confident in talking about their experiences, except for Jolene* who did not want to open up to the researchers, and as a group they were enthusiastic about working with artists and creating their own artworks. Their self-esteem is likely to have been given a boost from having their artwork on display, and certainly two of the four interviewees mentioned that they were doing GCSE's in Art as a result of their interest and participation at the gallery.

However, from the interview we did not obtain a strong sense of how the young people interacted with the Madonna of the Pinks. They remembered a few details about it, but we were only able to discuss the painting with one young person in great detail. The predominant impact that emerges from the interviews is in terms of citizenship. The young people are regularly consulted about their feelings on how life chances for looked after young people can be improved and this understanding came out in their responses. They were

told about the amount of money spent on the Madonna of the Pinks and they could apply it to their situation and question whether that money could not have been spent better elsewhere.

7.4 Analysis and reflections

From the interviews with the young people and their key workers as part of these two research units, some reflections are worth noting.

The prestige of working with the National Gallery, and the approach towards the young people, had a significant impact on the young people and their learning from the experience. All the young people remembered the experience of the gallery as enjoyable, even if they had not made personal connections with the Madonna of the Pinks.

Several of the young people interviewed seemed aware of their social responsibility and were involved in raising awareness of services (Keira*) or consultation to help other looked after young people. They had an awareness of their role in society, which enabled one young person to openly question the amount of money spent on the Madonna of the Pinks in terms of his awareness of the need for the money in his community.

There is the potential for impact regarding their aspirations for the future and some of the young people expressed a determination to aim high in life. The extent to which their involvement with the Madonna of the Pinks and the National Gallery played a part in the development of their aspirations is difficult to disentangle but it is likely it helped to widen their expectations and choice and open up new worlds to them. Two of the looked after young people had gone on to do GCSE Art as a result of working with the National Gallery but more widely the young people had been valued by a cultural institution and their opinions had been respected.

Working creatively with the painting and at the National Gallery had helped to spark an interest in art for some of the young people. Even if this was not demonstrated in formal qualifications, such as Art GCSE, it was evident in the pride that the young people felt for their artwork. The Community Centre walls were hung with the young people's work and Keira* had given the sculptures she made pride of place in her home. All the young people talked about the artworks they had made with evident enthusiasm. For Keira* it was because the Madonna of the Pinks enabled her to think about herself as a mother and to be able to express that, whilst for the looked after young people it was more about the process of doing art and being creative.

- Art as a way of exploring your identity in an 'uncertain' world?
- The creative process as a means of self-expression.
- The young people were able to engage with the Madonna of the Pinks but it was level of facilitation by the National Gallery that enabled it to happen.

The support of key workers to any project like this is very important for it to be worthwhile. For both the Young Mother's group and the Looked After Young People's group the key contacts all seemed very positive towards the work that the young people had done, despite some initial scepticism. They were extremely supportive of the young people and had a good relationship with them, which also contributed towards the ability of the researchers to come into contact with these young people in the first place.

As researchers we did not experience the direct engagement of the young people with the painting. This raises questions which cannot be answered for example what impact did the portrayal of a mother/child relationship have on the looked after young people considering their backgrounds?

The young people interviewed were all vulnerable and expected to cope with far more challenging experiences than most young people their age. They often lack support networks and stability in life. Relationships with key workers are vulnerable, they are a moving and fluid population that are not 'local' to each other but come together because of their life experiences. Circumstances may constantly be changing. There is the potential for the young people's lives to be very isolating. Despite living in London, they lived in an outer borough of London. They are isolated from cultural opportunities and financially isolated. This is not only in terms of physical difference, for example it could take hours by bus to get to the West End, there is likely to be psychological and cultural barriers to accessing places like the National Gallery. For looked after children opportunities may be very dependent on carers.

The impact of the National Gallery experience is therefore one of many other experiences the young people live daily. There is lots happening in their lives and it is difficult to isolate the impact of the National Gallery project when it is not an intensive experience. This presents a challenge for the research – how does it fit into the young people's lives and future.