THE BIRMINGHAM ARTS SCHOOL TOOLKIT

Foreword

The Birmingham Arts School (BAS) programme was created with a clear aim: to ensure all young people in Birmingham have access to high-quality arts education that nurtures creativity, critical thinking, and cultural awareness—helping them thrive in an increasingly complex world.

From September 2021 to July 2025, BAS brought together schools and arts professionals to place the arts at the heart of education. Through conferences, CPD, networks, one-to-one consultancy, and showcase events, we equipped teachers and arts educators with creative tools and pedagogies that addressed real challenges in schools—ensuring meaningful, impactful arts experiences for all students.

This toolkit is designed to support schools beyond the life of the BAS programme. It offers practical guidance to spark and sustain arts partnerships, deepen engagement, and develop sustainable, school-wide arts projects. It also includes insights on how to meaningfully progress through the Artsmark journey.

We hope this resource continues to inspire, drawing on the BAS story and the valuable contributions of those who helped shape it.

This toolkit has been authored by Bhavik Parmar, Director of Birmingham Arts School, alongside many contributions from staff at Birmingham Education Partnership, across Birmingham Schools and across Birmingham Arts Organisations.

All images used have been taken contributed by Arts Organisations as part of case studies or taken by Graeme Braidwood from our Arts in Schools Conference.

Contents

Embedding Arts in Education: Our Shared Responsibility

Arts education is not a luxury—it is a necessity. Across performance, music, drama, and visual arts, the arts have a profound impact on young people's development. At its best, arts education equips children and young people with the tools to express themselves, to understand others, to engage with the world, and to imagine and build a better future.

But to realise this potential, we need to think beyond one-off workshops or week-long placements. Instead, we must offer consistent, meaningful, and evolving arts experiences that accompany young people throughout their educational journey. This long-term engagement is only possible when teachers, schools, artists, and arts organisations work together in shared responsibility.

This document explores the profound value of arts education and outlines how each stakeholder can play an active role in embedding it more deeply into the fabric of school life.

The Importance of the Arts for Children and Young People
The following has been written and supported by Tania Yasmin, Headteacher of Greet Primary School

Engaging with the arts fosters creativity, emotional intelligence, and critical thinking—skills vital for navigating an increasingly complex world. It's not just about fostering talent, but nurturing the whole child.

1. Development of Life Skills

- *Creativity and Innovation*: The arts foster imaginative thinking and problem-solving.

- *Collaboration and Teamwork*: Shared creative projects build social and communication skills.

- *Communication Skills*: Children learn to articulate ideas, emotions, and stories in diverse ways.

2. Enhancing Wellbeing

- *Emotional Expression*: The arts are a safe outlet for self-expression and emotional exploration.

- *Sense of Belonging*: Participation nurtures inclusion and social connection.

- *Cognitive Development*: Arts engagement boosts brain development, supporting wider academic success.

3. Future Career Opportunities

- *Creative Careers*: Early arts exposure opens pathways into thriving creative industries.

- *Transferable Skills*: Skills like adaptability, innovation, and communication are valued across professions.

- *Lifelong Learning*: The arts encourage curiosity and flexible thinking.

4. Cultural Awareness and Appreciation

- *Understanding Diversity*: Through the arts, pupils explore different cultures and viewpoints.

- *Civic Engagement*: Creative expression connects young people to social causes and community issues.

Investing in arts education means investing in confident, empathetic, and capable future citizens.

Understanding the National Curriculum

The National Curriculum ensures all children in England receive a broad and balanced education. It promotes not only academic rigour but also personal development—including through the arts.

Purpose and Principles

- *Consistency*: A standard education across schools

- *Standards*: Clear progression benchmarks

- *Equity*: A shared entitlement for all children

- *Accountability*: Schools report progress and outcomes

- *Holistic Development*: Beyond grades to emotional, cultural and social growth

All maintained schools must follow the National Curriculum, while academies and free schools are expected to offer a similarly broad offer.

This reinforces why arts education must be a consistent thread throughout a child's school experience.

Why Are the Arts So Important—In Life and *To* Life?
The following has been written and supported by Tania Yasmin, Headteacher of Greet Primary School

"The arts are not a luxury. They are essential to what it means to be human." – Darren Walker

1. Expression of Humanity The arts transcend language and culture, offering powerful ways to share emotions, stories, and ideas.

2. Enhancing Mental Health and Wellbeing Research from the World Health Organisation links arts engagement with reduced stress, better mental health, and resilience building.

3. Community and Social Cohesion Art connects people. Participation can create pride, purpose, and shared identity.

4. Joy and Beauty Art provides beauty, celebration, and meaning—it enriches our lives.

5. Building Empathy and Understanding The arts foster perspective-taking and compassion: "Art is not a mirror to hold up to society, but a hammer with which to shape it." – Bertolt Brecht

6. Inspiring Creativity and Problem-Solving Creativity is among the most sought-after workplace skills: "Logic will get you from A to B. Imagination will take you everywhere." – Albert Einstein

7. Cultural and Historical Significance Arts preserve our heritage and help us understand where we come from and who we are.

8. Economic Impact The UK's creative industries contribute over £100 billion to the economy. This is a sector of real economic power.

9. Education and Learning Arts-based learning enhances cognition, academic outcomes, and emotional intelligence: "The future belongs to young people with an education and the imagination to create." – Barack Obama

At the secondary level, arts engagement also supports schools in meeting Gatsby Benchmarks for careers guidance.

A Shared Responsibility: From Exposure to Empowerment

Too often, arts engagement is treated as an introduction, a 'taste' of creativity. But if we want the arts to be truly impactful, we need to build continuous, developmental models of engagement—ones that allow young people to grow with the arts at every age and stage.

This requires collaboration:

- **Teachers** embedding arts across the curriculum and valuing creativity as a method of learning.

- **Schools** prioritising long-term partnerships with arts organisations, not one-off visits.

- **Arts Organisations** offering sustained pathways for engagement, mentoring, and real-world experience.

- **Artists** committing to developmental relationships with students, showing the arts as both expressive and viable careers.

When we all share the responsibility of embedding arts education, we don't just introduce young people to the arts—we give them a model to learn through, an outlet for expression, and a pathway to meaningful futures.

Let's move from 'exposure' to **empowerment**. Let's grow the next generation of thinkers, makers, and changemakers—together.

The BAS Journey: Responding to a Citywide Need

Birmingham Arts School (BAS) was created in direct response to the need for more meaningful, sustained arts education in schools. We recognised the inequalities in access, the growing disengagement of young people and the lack of effective collaboration between schools and the cultural sector.

What began as a bold idea has grown into a citywide movement. Over the past four years, BAS has actively championed the role of the arts in education—working alongside schools, artists and organisations to embed creativity at the heart of learning

With vital support from Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and Arts Connect in our first three years, we built a model that enabled long-term partnerships, high-impact professional development and opportunities for thousands of children and young people to access quality arts experiences.

The next section outlines the evolution of our programme and its growing reach and impact. For a detailed review of our first three years, you can explore our independent **Three-Year Evaluation Report** produced by Birmingham City University.

The BAS Journey: Evolution of the Programme

Birmingham Arts School (BAS) was born out of a commitment to ensure that every child and young person in Birmingham could experience and engage with the city's rich cultural offer. It sought to address the challenge that many of the city's cultural organisations were, in most cases, only engaging with a few selected schools—typically those where highly committed headteachers had developed long-term relationships with arts organisations.

Felix Pepler was appointed as BAS' first Principal in September 2021. He forged partnerships with schools across the city and managed *Commonwealth Connections*— a joint project with the British Council and the Birmingham Organising Committee for the 2022 Commonwealth Games. This project twinned 60 schools in the West Midlands with 60 overseas schools across 10 Commonwealth countries to co-design and deliver arts and sports activities.

Steve Ball led Birmingham Arts School from September 2022 to July 2024. His conversations with around 200 headteachers across the city led him to identify the key barriers that schools faced when engaging with cultural organisations. These were summarised as the six 'C's:

- **Communication** – inconsistent and not joined up
- **Curriculum** – cultural offers from arts organisations do not always align with schools' needs or the National Curriculum
- **Capacity** – schools and arts organisations often lack the capacity to develop, sustain, and resource new partnerships
- **Cost** – schools cannot always afford to invest in arts provision
- **Careers** – limited connection between cultural offers and careers in the creative industries
- **Coaches** – coach hire is expensive, and public transport is not always viable

  Taking these barriers into consideration, BAS developed a number of initiatives to address these challenges:

- **Communication** – establishing *The Hub*, a one-stop shop for cultural organisations' offers for schools, and *Cultural Landscapes*, a digital map identifying which schools are working with which arts organisations
- **Curriculum** – launching the *Arts in Schools* Conference and an annual CPD programme: for teachers led by cultural organisations, and for cultural organisations led by school leaders

- **Cost** – the *Proud to be a Brummie* festival provided schools that had not previously engaged with arts organisations with a free arts education offer, culminating in a festival at Symphony Hall in July 2024
- **Coaches** – increasing awareness of the National Express *Class Pass* scheme

In its final year, BAS was led by Bhavik Parmar, the author of this toolkit. Bhavik began as Deputy Director and then became Director following Steve Ball's retirement. While the first three years were funded by Esmée Fairbairn and Arts Connect, the final year was delivered without any existing funding. It was a sensitive and ambitious decision by Birmingham Education Partnership to continue supporting arts education in the face of ongoing funding challenges. This required a shift in the programme's income strategy, including:

- Corporate partnerships
- Membership fees from arts organisations
- The *BAS Package for Schools*
- Ticketed events
- Donations
- Continued funding from trusts and foundations

Additionally, BAS developed *Arts Consultancy* sessions, enabling headteachers to seek tailored advice to support their Artsmark journeys and broker relationships between schools and arts organisations.

During this year:

- 29 cultural partners supported BAS' membership programme
- A corporate partnership was formed with Colmore Partners
- The LearnPlay Foundation awarded funding for two term-long internships
- 202 teachers engaged with the BAS programme through 32 events (showcases, CPD, the *Arts in Schools* Conference, teacher networks), consultancy sessions, assemblies, and transition workshops
- 15 direct partnerships were curated between schools and arts organisations, enabling over 850 young people to access arts education as a result of our intervention
- 28 *Arts Consultancy* sessions took place with senior leadership staff
- 132 arts opportunities were shared on the Birmingham Education Hub
- 87 attendees participated in the *Arts in Schools* Conference in October 2024

These statistics do not include other partnerships that may have emerged from schools using the BAS directory of artists and organisations, those formed through

conference networking or training events, or schools accessing opportunities posted on the Birmingham Education Hub.

Feedback from the teachers:

"The consultancy session with Bhavik was extremely helpful in helping us to 'tune into' our Artsmark journey and consider our next steps. It was also great to receive appropriate signposting, meaning that we can ensure our arts provision meets the needs of all children—even those with the most diverse needs."
— *Rob Meadows, Headteacher, Sladefield Infant School*

"An inspiring and informative session with Bhavik. Really got us thinking about the what and the how to promote the 'Arts' in our setting."
— *Fiona Halliday, Deputy Headteacher, St Saviour's CofE Primary School*

"Our consultancy session was superb, with excellent time to reflect on our current provision and then fresh ideas on how we could expand what we offer. Bhavik quickly got the measure of where our school is on its arts journey, and he offered practical links and support. A valuable meeting!"
— *Oliver Wilson, Headteacher, Woodhouse Primary School*

"I absolutely loved the day. It was about a whole approach to education, rather than including the arts as one-off events. I just wish that those in power could see how this approach would change the lives of children and give them faith and confidence in themselves—as well as hope for the future! I feel privileged to have taken part."
— *Maureen Regan, Governor, Selly Oak Trust School (on the Arts in Schools Conference 2024)*

A Note from Bhavik:

"It has been both a privilege and an honour to connect with schools across Birmingham and meet so many passionate arts educators.

Regardless of the funding situations that arise, it brings me great confidence to know that this city has a beautiful array of change-makers who understand and activate arts opportunities for young people. I have enjoyed every part of the role I have played in shaping arts education in the city, and I know I will continue to advocate for this practice throughout my career.

Please use this toolkit whenever you need to—let it be something you return to as both a guide and a source of inspiration.

Thank you for the encounters I've had with you all across the cultural education sector.

Developing Effective Arts Partnerships

Arts Partnerships are an opportunity for schools and artists to work together to build meaningful, engaging programmes that both meet the needs of schools but also allow arts organisations to inspire their creative practice into your school. It is a joint venture which only works when there is not just a financial investment but a time investment from both groups involved. It requires schools to be able to find areas where learning and enrichment can be support, to communicate these needs and for arts organisations to see how their programmes can creatively support schools.

In order to build Arts partnerships it is important to recognise the barriers we say and the solutions we can put in place to combat those barriers. In our BAS Arts Coordinator Training in 2025 we put together all the following barriers faced by schools:

Financial & Resource Constraints

- **Limited Budget** – Schools may not have funds for external arts organisations or materials.

- **Lack of External Funding Knowledge** – Teachers may not know how to apply for grants or access funding streams.

- **Short-Term Funding Issues** – One-off funding makes it difficult to sustain long-term partnerships.

- **Hidden Costs** – Unexpected expenses (e.g., transport, extra materials, staff time).

Leadership & Strategic Barriers

- **Lack of Senior Leadership Buy-In** – If SLT (Senior Leadership Team) doesn't prioritise arts, partnerships may be seen as 'extra' rather than essential.

- **No Clear Arts Vision** – Without a strategic plan, arts engagement feels piecemeal rather than embedded.

- **Conflicting School Priorities** – Focus on core subjects like maths and English may push arts down the agenda.

- **Frequent Staff Turnover** – New leadership or staff changes can disrupt partnerships.

Curriculum & Time Pressures

- **Curriculum Overload** – Arts projects may be seen as an 'add-on' rather than integrated into learning.

- **Limited Teaching Hours** – Lack of flexibility in timetables to accommodate arts activities.

- **Mismatch Between School and Arts Organisation Goals** – Schools may prioritise specific curriculum outcomes, while arts partners focus on creativity and process.

Practical & Logistical Issues

- **Timetabling & Scheduling Conflicts** – Difficulties fitting arts projects around assemblies, assessments, and core subject lessons.

- **Space Constraints** – Lack of dedicated areas for arts activities (e.g., performance spaces, studios).

- **IT & Equipment Gaps** – Schools may not have the right technology or materials for digital/media arts.

- **Short Notice Planning** – Some schools invite artists in with little time to properly plan or integrate the experience.

Teacher Confidence & CPD Gaps

- **Lack of Staff Confidence in the Arts** – Some teachers may feel underqualified to lead or embed arts-based learning.

- **Limited CPD for Teachers** – Few opportunities for teachers to develop skills in working with arts organisations.

- **Difficulty in Communicating Needs to Arts Providers** – Schools may struggle to articulate what they want from an arts partnership.

Student Engagement & Inclusion Challenges

- **Varied Student Interest** – Some students may not engage with the arts due to lack of prior exposure.

- **SEN/D & Accessibility Considerations** – Ensuring projects are inclusive and cater to diverse needs.

- **Parental Perceptions** – Some parents may see arts activities as less valuable than STEM subjects.

Sustainability & Long-Term Impact

- **One-Off Engagements Without Lasting Impact** – Short-term projects that don't leave a legacy in the school.

- **Lack of Follow-Up After Projects** – Schools may not measure impact or continue momentum after an artist leaves.

- **Difficulty Embedding Arts into Whole-School Culture** – Arts work often sits with one enthusiastic teacher rather than becoming a school-wide initiative.

We discussed the above barriers and explored the following solutions that schools could use to combat the problems they faced. We acknowledged that not every solution will work for all schools, but the first step included a willingness to explore the solutions.

Financial & Resource Solutions

- **Collaborate with Other Schools** – Form partnerships with neighbouring schools to share the costs of artist workshops, performances, and projects.

- **Ask for Subsidised Opportunities** – Approach arts organisations for free or discounted tickets/workshops, especially if they have outreach or engagement targets.

- **Fundraising Through School Events** – Repurpose school performances as fundraising events, inviting local businesses to donate in exchange for promotional opportunities.

- **Leverage Digital Content for Additional Value** –

    - Film student reflections on projects (e.g., podcasts or mini-documentaries) and offer arts organisations the use of this content to promote their work in return for additional sessions or discounts.

    - Build an online gallery or student portfolio to showcase impact and attract further funding/support.

- **Be Aware of Funding Opportunities** – Schools can apply for funding from organisations such as:

    - **Arts Council England** (e.g., Artsmark, Arts Award, National Lottery Projects)

    - **Local Authorities & Cultural Education Partnerships**

    - **Heritage Lottery Fund** (for arts projects tied to history/culture)

    - **Ernest Cook Trust** (funding for creative outdoor learning)

    - **Foyle Foundation** (grants for arts education)

    - **Garfield Weston Foundation** (support for creative learning projects)

    - **Tesco/Greggs/Sainsbury's Community Grants** (often fund arts-based projects in schools)

    - **PTA & Crowdfunding** (using platforms like FundEd or GoFundMe)

- **Work as a School Consortium** – Share arts CPD, joint performances, or visiting artists across multiple schools to spread costs.

Leadership & Strategic Solutions

- **Make Arts a Whole-School Priority** – Work with SLT to integrate arts into the school's vision, values, and long-term improvement plan.

- **Link Arts to Curriculum & School Initiatives** – Align arts projects with school-wide themes such as:

    - **Cultural Awareness Week** – Tie arts projects to written English tasks, digital media creation, and careers talks.

    - **Wellbeing & Mental Health Initiatives** – Use music, drama, and visual arts to support emotional literacy.

    - **Community Engagement** – Bring in local artists/organisations to run parent workshops alongside student activities.

- **Ensure Staff Turnover Doesn't Disrupt Progress** –

    - Develop a **clear arts action plan** with a review schedule.

    - Have a **handover system** so a new coordinator can continue established partnerships.

    - Encourage **distributed leadership**, so responsibility for arts isn't on one person.

Overcoming Curriculum & Time Pressures

- **Position Arts as a Teaching Tool, Not an Extra** –

    - Embed arts across subjects (e.g., dance in PE, visual arts in history, storytelling in science).

    - Use arts to **support literacy and numeracy** (e.g., scriptwriting to develop language skills, music to reinforce rhythm and maths concepts).

- **Plan Jointly with Arts Organisations** –

    - Avoid one-off 'drop-in' workshops; instead, design projects with clear school outcomes.

    - Ensure artists know how their work contributes to wider school goals.

- **Make Timetabling Work for You** –

    - Ask arts organisations to **adapt their delivery** to fit lesson lengths.

- Schedule projects around less pressured times of the year (e.g., after exam periods).

- Incorporate projects into **after-school clubs or enrichment days**.

Practical & Logistical Solutions

- **Maximise Available Spaces** –

  - Use larger classrooms, halls, outdoor spaces, or even local community venues.

  - Plan space allocations in advance and communicate early with SLT/site staff.

- **Maintain Strong Communication with Arts Partners** –

  - Treat partnerships as long-term relationships, not just transactions.

  - Ensure external artists feel valued and supported in the school.

- **Workshops Can Be Remote or Blended** –

  - Use digital workshops where face-to-face is challenging.

  - Explore **hybrid models**, where artists visit for key sessions and follow-up work happens virtually.

  - Can any sessions be run if an arts organisations has their own venue? Is that an option? Can it be turned into a day where backstage tours/careers talks can be bolted on?

Teacher Confidence & CPD Solutions

- **Ensure Arts CPD is Built into the Partnership** –

  - Ask artists to **share their techniques** with staff rather than just running sessions for students.

  - Request **pre- and post-workshop resources** to support continued learning.

- **Use Arts Visits as Professional Development** –

  - Teachers should **observe and learn** from visiting artists rather than using workshops as PPA time.

  - Encourage **co-teaching models** where teachers and artists collaborate.

- **Set Up Peer Support** –

    - Develop a small **internal arts working group** where teachers share ideas and best practices.

    - Create a **resource bank** of successful projects for future reference.

Increasing Student Engagement & Inclusion

- **Use a Student Arts Council** –

    - Involve students in **shaping the arts offer**, ensuring projects reflect their interests.

    - Give students leadership roles in performances, exhibitions, and outreach.

- **Ensure SEN/D & EAL Students are Included** –

    - Work with arts organisations that specialise in **accessible creative education**.

    - Provide **alternative participation methods** (e.g., sensory-based activities for SEND students).

- **Use Cross-Year Collaboration** –

    - Have older students **mentor younger pupils** in arts projects.

    - Link projects to **Duke of Edinburgh/Arts Award leadership roles**.

Changing Parental Perceptions & Strengthening Community Links

- **Communicate the Value of the Arts Clearly** –

    - Arrange **talks from industry professionals** to show parents how arts careers are viable.

    - Provide data on **how arts participation improves confidence, resilience, and employability**.

- **Involve Parents in Arts Activities** –

    - Invite them to **family workshops** led by visiting artists.

    - Run **intergenerational projects** where students and parents collaborate.

- **Showcase Student Work Regularly** –

    - Create **a visible arts presence** (e.g., gallery spaces, video projects, performances).

- Use social media, newsletters, and school websites to **highlight achievements**.

Ensuring Sustainability & Long-Term Impact

Integrate Evaluation from the Start

- Use simple tracking methods (e.g., student reflections, teacher feedback, case studies).
- Measure success against **school improvement priorities** to justify ongoing investment.

Plan for Continuity Beyond Individual Projects

- Ensure every arts initiative contributes to **long-term school culture change**.
- Develop a **three-year arts strategy** with milestones and regular reviews.

Develop Local & National Partnerships

- Build relationships with **local businesses, universities, and cultural institutions**.
- Use student arts projects to **strengthen ties with the wider community**.

Having addressed the above we were able to develop a checklist for building strong arts partnerships:

Shared Vision & Goals

- Both the school and the arts organisation have a clear, agreed-upon purpose for the project.
- The partnership contributes meaningfully to the school's long-term arts plan and wider curriculum.

Early & Open Communication

- Regular planning meetings are set up in advance.
- Schools are clear on what they need from the arts organisation, and vice versa.
- Timetables, space requirements, and expected outcomes are discussed early on.

Curriculum & School Priorities Alignment

- The project enhances curriculum learning rather than being an 'add-on'.

- It connects to wider school priorities such as student leadership, cultural capital, or wellbeing.

Staff & Student Engagement

- Teachers are involved, not just as facilitators, but as active learners.

- Students have a say in shaping projects where possible (e.g. through student councils).

Practical & Logistical Feasibility

- The partnership is sustainable within the school's timetable and staffing capacity.

- Solutions are found for any space constraints or scheduling conflicts.

Funding & Resource Planning

- Costs are shared or subsidised where possible (e.g. through collaboration between schools or external funding).

- Additional resources (digital content, pre/post-session materials) are considered to maximise impact.

Parental & Community Engagement

- Parents are informed and involved in understanding the value of arts experiences.

- Where possible, projects include an element of community sharing.

Measuring Impact & Longevity

- There is a plan for evaluation throughout the process, not just at the end.

- The school considers how to sustain the learning beyond the project's timeline.

Questions for Schools to ask Arts Organisations when developing Arts Partnerships:

1. Vision & Aims

· What is the core purpose of your project/workshop?

· How does this align with our school's priorities (curriculum links, student leadership, wellbeing, etc.)?

· What long-term impact do you hope to achieve?

2. Practical & Logistical Considerations

· What is the ideal group size, and how flexible are you with different class sizes?

· What space/resources do you need? (E.g. hall, studio, outdoor area, tech requirements)

· What's the best way to fit this into our school timetable? Can you adapt to different lesson lengths?

· Do you provide pre/post workshop resources to extend learning?

3. Costs & Funding Support

· What are the costs involved, and do you offer any discounted/subsidised options?

· Are there opportunities to share costs with other schools or work as a consortium?

· Can you advise on any funding streams we could apply for together?

4. Staff & Student Engagement

· How can our teachers be involved in the process? (E.g. observing, co-delivering, skill-building)

· Do you offer any CPD sessions for teachers to embed learning beyond the project?

· Have you worked with student leadership groups before? How can we involve students in shaping the project?

5. Community & Parental Involvement

· Can this project include a showcase or sharing opportunity for parents and the wider community?

· Would you be open to speaking to parents about the value of arts education?

· Could there be a digital element (e.g. film, podcast, online exhibition) to reach a wider audience?

6. Evaluation & Long-Term Impact

· How do you measure impact, and what kind of feedback do you provide?

· Can you support us in evaluating the success of the project?

· How can we sustain the learning from this project beyond the workshop period?

To make projects sustainable all parties involved should consider:

1. Extending One-Off Workshops into Long-Term Projects

Key Message: A single workshop is a starting point, not the end. How can we build on it?

Strategies:

- Follow-Up Sessions: Plan at least one follow-up workshop, even if virtual. Student-Led Projects: Have students take what they learned and apply it in a school-wide project.
- Embedding in Curriculum: Link the workshop themes to future lessons across subjects.
- Showcasing Work: Turn workshop outputs into a display, performance, or digital content.
- Teacher-Led Continuation: Get lesson plans/resources from the artist and integrate them into future teaching.
- Cross-School Collaboration: Share learning with another school to keep momentum going.

2. Models for Sustainable Partnerships

Key Message: Sustainability isn't about repeating the same event—it's about deepening impact.

Sustainable Partnership Models:

- Artist Residencies: Rather than a single visit, invite an artist for a term-long engagement.
- Ongoing CPD for Staff: Train teachers so they can carry the learning forward.
- Student-Led Initiatives: Form an arts council or student ambassadors to continue creative projects.
- Multi-Year Partnerships: Work with an organisation on an evolving arts plan, not just a one-off event.
- Community Engagement: Invite local businesses and organisations to co-fund or co-host future activities.

3. Evaluating Impact

Key Message: Evaluation helps secure future funding & keeps leadership invested. Keep it simple.

- Quick & Effective Evaluation Strategies:
- Student Voice: Post-project reflections (written, filmed, podcast).
- Showcase & Discussion: Ask students to present what they learned.
- Teacher Feedback Forms: What worked? What could improve?
- Before/After Evidence: Photos/videos showing progression.
- Mini Case Studies: A short write-up of the impact—useful for funding and advocacy.

Arts Partnership Case Studies

Below are submitted case studies by arts organisations and schools where partnership work has thrived in supporting a school's curriculum development as well as developing cultural learning for students.

School Name: Bournville Village Primary School

Arts Provider Name: Sampad

Project Title: Sampad Associate Schools 2024-5

Project Outline (Short Overview)

In September 2024 Bournville Village Primary School joined the Sapphire tier of Sampad Associate Schools Sapphire School choosing workshops and performances which worked with their vision. They also took advantage of all the extra opportunities for enrichment and staff development that membership offered including being offered a 'try out' for 'Spirit of Light' which allowed one year group to experience the newly adapted Diwali performance for free.

Age Group of Young People Involved: Year 2 – 6 + staff

"I was looking for an arts-based project that was going to enhance our curriculum in a way that was over-and-above what we could deliver ourselves, but also a project that gave our staff the opportunity to develop their own skills for projects in future years. Being able to plan a 'bespoke' package was great for us; we focused on one term for the activities which helped with impact, and we could intertwine Sampad events into our existing plans such the Year Four Flash Mab dance on the playground at the end of our Celebrating Our Cultures day. All activities were highly inclusive and

it was a pleasure to have such a range of talented artists in our school, to inspire and motivate both pupils and staff." **(Amy Cooper Head Teacher Bournville Village Primary School)**

<u>Initial Engagement & Planning Process:</u>

An initial meeting between the Head Teacher (Amy Cooper) & Learning Manager (Gillian Twaite) was held in March 2024. This was essential for both partners to understand more fully the other and to consolidate their shared vision. This was also a chance to put in dates so that it fitted with the bigger picture in school. This was refined during the year and the positive relationship meant that both partners were able to communicate and check what would work or if other dates within the school calendar might necessitate some changes for the work to have full value.

An example of this was the 4-week block of work in 3 different year groups set up to coincide with the exhibition residency and parent evenings. During the year the school had decided to have a 'Celebrating our Cultures' at the end of term (therefore not needing the sharing 2 weeks earlier); as the artists had not yet been contracted it meant Sampad were able to shift the dates slightly to ensure the children would have the arts work fresh in their minds

The Head Teacher was the main contact with the relevant staff being linked with the Sampad Learning team prior to the their projects to ensure shared aims/ objectives as well as a smooth on the day experience. (This included staff CPD session on Drama and Oracy where the Learning Manager was met by a member of staff who had been briefed with a list of staff attending and who helped get the space ready/ was on hand throughout the session to support if needed.)

<u>Project Implementation:</u>

Whilst the Associate School Membership lasted the whole academic year, with a Heritage CPD for 2 members of staff in October, and the Creative Careers & Musician Assemblies in January, BVP chose to host the 'City of Empire to City of Diversity' photographic exhibition in the second half of the Spring Term in time for parents evening so that the wider community would have the chance to see it and for Year 6 to have small group workshops run 'in house' prior to their Theatre in Education experience and drama workshops which were also using the Migration Stories shown as stimulus.

Also in the Spring Term three-year groups (Year 2,4,& 6) participated in a four week Arts rich residency which led up to a 'Celebrating our Cultures' Day which the school were hosting on the 4th of April.

- Year 2 worked with 2 Artists to explore Islamic Printmaking and Henna influences. This became part of an outdoor exhibition on the Celebrating Cultures Day.
- Year 4 worked with a Bollywood Dance Facilitator who taught them a dance which they performed all together (90 children) in the playground, flashmob style to family and friends.

- Year 6 participated in a Theatre in Education piece 'My Journey My Birmingham' followed by 3 sessions developing their own performances based on the characters' lives for families and friends on the 4th.

Measuring Success:

Success was measured in a range of ways; some anecdotal with children or staff verbalising their response to others, some via feedback forms and some by the wider community. Sampad also measures success by dialogue with their artists, each other and with the arts lead in school; in this case the Head Teacher.

A successful project has a relationship at heart where one side can discuss any questions, concerns or adaptations which will improve the longer-term outcomes and where both parties know what is needed to work and create within a functioning school with all sorts of as yet unknown variables.

Also, success is measured by the school's original aims and to what extent this project fulfilled this vision.   Success can come in unexpected ways; for Sampad it was how the young people in year 6 responded to the challenges and opportunities for the characters they explored and how they created sensitive scenes identifying and showing how they felt. It was also the conversations with the Year 4 teachers who said how much **they** were also enjoying learning the flashmob dance sessions and it was when the drama facilitator rang after the Cultures Day to see how the young people got on with their performances.

It is also about how inclusive the project was. Did all the children involved participate in meaningful ways? How engaged were they? Did everyone have a voice? Was there space for them to have ownership? For the school to have ownership? Did it break down barriers?

Sampad created their Associate School Scheme to build more meaningful relationships with schools; an ongoing partnership which builds on the whole school vision for creative ways of working, having the arts at the centre of learning and the wider school experience.

Interested in having Sampad support your school? Find out more and get in touch via www.sampad.org.uk

Arts Partnership Case Studies (Continued)

School Name: St Saviours CofE Primary School

Arts Provider Name: Memorhyme Ltd

Project Title: Values, Virtues and Character, Literacy Engagement Day. Video here

Project Outline (Short Overview)

1 mass engagement specialist poet delivers a fun interactive 45 minute whole school assembly on 'Values, Virtues and Character'. KS2 return to classes to work on a 90 second whole class performance of a pre-written poem, incorporating, drama actions, posters, beatboxing and more. Poet satellite visits classes to support progress and hosts a Key Stage 2 Poetry Slam Showcase during the final hour of the school day. Key Stage 1 are also invited to watch, as-well as contribute to the showcase should KS1 teachers deem appropriate for their classes.

Above: 'Engage' launch assembly with KS1 & KS2. Image from Brandhall Primary School (2 form entry)

Above: 'KS2 Values Virtues & Character Showcase'. Whole class performances during

final hour of the day. KS1 hear older peers promote Values literacy. Image from St. Gerard's Catholic Primary School.

Age Group of Young People Involved: Key Stage 2 & Key Stage 1 (ages 5 – 11)

Key Contact Name and Role: Alan (Kurly) McGeachie, CEO.

Initial Engagement:

Initially, Memorhyme delivered a 'Values, Virtues & Character' literacy engagement presentation at Birmingham Arts School's 'Arts In Schools Conference' . School representatives approached for booking enquiries as the presentation met a range of desired outcomes related to: oracy, speaking and listening, promotion of inclusive language, wellbeing, cultural capital enrichment, as-well as literacy engagement and curricular attainment priorities.

Planning Process:

Preparation was mainly conducted via email. Artist shared a pre-visit resource which included: Teachers Q+A (what to expect on the day), an anthology of pre-written values poems, team/class name suggestions, KS2 performance tips with sample videos and a schedule of the day. Upon artist's arrival at the school, teachers would already have picked a poem and viewed sample videos of class performances with hints and tips around whole class performances. Multi-school partnership (and Multi Academy Trust) delivery prep/co-ordination can also be supported via phone call or Teams where appropriate.

Each school has their own series of values and virtues, we align a visit with each school's bespoke ethos, visions, values and virtues. An email conversation or visit to the schools' website also yields insights about curriculum priorities to inform artist's delivery.

A Headteacher, Deputy Head, Literacy or Safeguarding Lead would often be the initial contact to: confirm a booking date, distribute pre-visit workshop information and resources to staff, and clarify invoicing/finance contact details.

Planning together enables the artist and school to share best practice and procedures for the day, for example combining KS1 into one class to enable artist to visit them all at the same time to share a few fun poems should time allow.
This helps to ensure maximum value can be extracted from the visit and the resources, in the best interests of the children and staff.

Project Implementation:

Watch a short video summary of a typical visit by clicking here. Key activities include: a fun engaging launch assembly with interactive poems, freestyle poems which praise pupils and staff, and a clear plan of the day with resources and ideas for staff to deploy, and pupils to enjoy. The artist also visits classes throughout the day to help guide and support performance progress. Should time allow, the artist can also make a short visit to Key Stage 1 to perform a few fun poems. The Key Stage 2 showcase not only serves as a platform for pupil voice but also engages Key Stage 1 with poetry performances by their slightly older (and influential) peers. Reinforcing many key objectives around literacy engagement, desired behaviour, positive choices, and curricular attainment.

To avoid tokenistic engagement, the workshop provides pupils with a range of leadership roles and responsibilities, enabling a sense of ownership and a space for unique creative contributions within an inclusive, enriching curriculum experience on a scale they would not normally encounter.

Regarding a schools' long-term goals, pupils experiencing immediate, engaging, enriching activities with opportunities to receive positive praise for behaviours like 'being appropriately loud' - particularly disaffected students, can increase esteem, resilience and rapport conducive to increasing positive personal development/ behaviours that lead to long-term curricular outcomes.

Pupil premium funding would typically cover costs for specialist artist's visit and resources. This includes: the whole of Key Stage 2 and 1 being engaged during the visit, plus our 'Engage, Page and Stage' post-visit teaching resources available to schools to extend learning, as-well as 'Digital Age' staff CPDs, normally £550 - BAS school discount of £100 = £450 all inclusive.

There are opportunities for follow-up continual collaboration post visit, via our online CPD's for staff, where they learn how to animate poems using Google Slides. Options to discuss bespoke schemes of work with the project authors and specialist creators and the utilisation of our digital 'Praise'n'tations' to support the positive reinforcement of desired behaviours of disaffected students are also options to enhance each teachers' toolkit.

Measuring Success:

During the opening assembly the artist asks "Who thinks poetry is boring?" (typically many hands go up). During the closing comments just after the afternoon showcase the artist asks "Who thinks poetry is less boring, or more cooler, then when I first asked this

morning?" (Most, if not all hands go up, emphasizing progress, where perceptions of poetry have been enhanced by such a positively inclusive whole school experience).

Additional outcomes include digital content from schools recording pupils' performances. Often used for school websites and social media, as well as content for newsletters or ideas and content to consider rehearsing for upcoming summer showcase performances.

Reflection and Impact: Please see testimonials below.

We consider school improvement plans across a longer time period, recommending yearly support visits to allow students to graduate through various values topics/themes whilst compounding the benefits of an annual whole school showcase experience to help develop: oracy, literacy engagement, curricular attainment, social and emotional wellbeing outcomes. Celebrating the inclusive culture of the school environment and the variety talents across its community.

Advice to organisations would be to offer concise and prompt information when communicating with schools, providing relevant timescales and resources to maximise outcomes in the best interests of all children and staff.

Feedback and Testimonials:

Key Stage 2 and KS1 'Values Virtues & Character literacy engagement extension day'. - Brandhall Primary School - 10/3/25

"Loved how interactive it was! Built children's confidence with poetry." Mrs Shaheen - Year 4 Teacher

"I absolutely loved today! It was definitely different and it allowed the children to really come out of their shells! My class really enjoyed today too, they all commented on how brilliant you are, thank you so much!" - Mrs Zaman Year 5 Teacher

"Today was really enjoyable. It was great to see so many children engaged with the session. Kurly is very approachable and it is clear the children engage with his work." Mr Roberts - Class 6 teacher

"It was an amazing day with Mr McGeachie (Kurly). The children got to practice a range of poetry techniques, they loved it! Thank you!" - Miss Hussain - Year 3 Teacher

"Very engaging for all kids. Provided support throughout the day. Great experience!" Mr Wilson - Year 3 Teacher, St John Fisher 7/3/25
Good morning,

My name is Katie Barber and I'm the Literacy lead at St John Fisher. We had such a wonderful morning with Memorhyme on the 7th February and left our children very enthused about poetry! Two of our Year 6 pupils were so inspired, that they wanted to share their poetry rap with Memorhyme. Please find below our testimonials of the day.

Pupil's creative testimonial: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ui3NKkrlWqY

What an incredible morning we had with yourselves! Our children were engaged right from the start and really enjoyed it. They couldn't stop talking about the day and how much we all laughed at your brilliant rhyming abilities. Thank you for helping to inspire our children to love poetry with a modern twist!
Kind regards,
Katie Barber - Y6 Teacher
St Saviours CofE - 3/3/25

"A brilliant workshop. Bringing words alive in the classroom. A great way to teach values vocabulary and oracy." - Mr Hussain, Assistant Head Teacher - St Saviours CofE

"Interactive, at children's level. Engaging and funny. Linked actions, rapping and drama." - S. Kauser, Class 5 Teacher

"Great performances bringing the school together. Getting the children actively involved in poetry performance. The children loved it and will certainly remember this day. Thank you :)" - Miss Le, Year 4 Class Teacher

"It was an amazing start to a Monday morning, full of energy, kept the audience captivated even though the age ranged from 7- 11 yrs of age. Amazing delivery. 10/10" - Mrs Noreen, TA

"Kurly did a fantastic job engaging all of KS2 making poetry fun and interactive. His playful opening challenge captivated students and he clearly demonstrated how toperform poetry confidently. Thanks Kurly! :)" - Mrs Nadeem, Year 5 Class Teacher

"Children loved it. Fully engaged throughout the day and have a higher opinion of poetry than they did at the start of the day! - Mr Hussain, Year 4 Teacher

"Inspiring, interactive, imaginative. The children (and staff) loved the whole day. From the assembly in the morning to the performance in the afternoon, you could see their confidence grow." - Mr Skillen, Year 6 Class Teacher

On Friday 7th February 2025, we at St Brigid's welcomed Kurly and Dreadlock Alien to our school for a Memorhyme assembly.

Engaging and fun, the time flew by as the children marvelled at the demonstration of creativity and talent from the visitors, improvising rhymes that included a great number of staff and pupils' names. They gleefully awaiting the next reference and exclaimed when they heard their names or the names of their friends.

Having Memorhyme in meant we were able to celebrate the spoken word - the team exemplify the importance of oracy and public speaking as a life skill, through a humour-filled and inclusive approach. Taking time to ensure they attributed values and skills to specific members of our community really spoke to our Catholic ethos, exemplifying that all of us are created to be unique individuals with our own values and virtues.

Pupils and staff were invited to join in with their own contributions, beatboxing at the front of the stage! The sound of delighted pupils celebrating their peers was lovely sound that filled our hall. What a fun, powerful and uplifting message that Memorhyme champions and convey their work with young people. Birmingham schools should consider having Memorhyme visit to support in their personal development and behaviour and attitudes.

Mr Breslin Head Teacher

Interested in having Memorhyme Education support your school? Find out more and get in touch via https://www.memorhyme.org.uk/

Arts Partnership Case Studies (Continued)

School Name: Allens Croft Primary School

Arts Provider Name: Sonia Sabri Company

Project Title: South Asian Dance After-School Club

Project Outline (Short Overview)

The aim of the club was to make South Asian dance tuition as accessible as possible for teachers, parents and children, to bridge the current gap in dance provision in schools and make arts experiences easy and affordable for families to access. Open to children of all ages and backgrounds, the programme is designed to teach children the basics of South Asian Dance, based on Kathak classical dance and South Asian folk dances.

Age Group of Young People Involved:
5-11

Key Contact Name and Role (if applicable):
Mary Ryder, Programme Manager

Initial Engagement:

From years of working with schools in Birmingham, we were all too aware that access to dance tuition is limited, with both schools and parents struggling to afford them for their children and can feel unobtainable for those with little to no access the performing arts due to social, financial or cultural poverty.

To meet this need we created our after-school club, bringing high-quality South Asian dance tuition to schools via a widely accessible provision structure.

Furthermore, despite Birmingham's global majority demographic, there are not enough global majority artists working with children and young people, particularly in non-western artforms. Our club provided young people with South Asian heritage a positive role model in our lead artist, helped them feel pride in their culture and provided opportunities to explore traditional art forms that may be overshadowed by popular culture.

We advertised the programme on the BAS Hub, calling out for schools keen to diversify their extra-curricular offer. Allens Croft Primary was an early adopter of the programme!

Planning Process:

The club programme was designed to include fun and practical application of the KS1 and 2 physical education curriculums (movement skills, agility, balance, technique, control and coordination) but also maths, science and geography through movement

e.g. counting forwards and backwards, direction and positioning, shapes, symmetry, keeping and counting a beat, understanding weather patterns and seasons.

Project Implementation:

The after-school club was taught by our Associate Artists – Satyen Tawde and Aakanksha Rawat, both formally-trained, experienced Kathak dance artists who work with the company as performance artists and teachers.

We ran weekly, one-hour sessions from Allens Croft school after-school – running the programme long term over a number of terms meant pupils made good progress and developed good relationships with the teacher and each other.

Each week, we introduced the children to new dance steps and choreography, which explored animals, plants, weather and seasons through movement, together creating a narrative dance performance which was shared as a mini showcase for their parents at the end of term.

Measuring Success:

The dance tuition and guidance the children received provided many benefits, from learning about the world around them and new concepts e.g. monsoon season to following directions, patterns and choreography which enhances their recall, memory skills and self-discipline.

Exploring storytelling through movement built on their creative thinking, interpretation and communication skills, as well as their expression and reflection on themselves and the world around them. Games and group choreography developed their teamwork, communication and spatial awareness skills.

Over two terms, we delivered 20 sessions and worked with 19 pupils, resulting in 159 arts engagements. At the end of term, the pupils performed their full dance piece to their parents and carers, and we asked them what they thought of their experience:

- 91% of participants surveyed thought the club was good
- 89% of participants surveys would like to continue the club next term
- 78% participants surveyed would recommend the club to their friends

Reflection and Impact:

Through piloting this programme at Allens Croft, we've learnt that for programmes like this to succeed there still needs to be a committed partnership between us and the school. We are reliant on the school to communicate the offer parents and children throughout the year not just at the launch. Schools can make such a positive impact here by communicating the wider benefits of dance, music and movement (personal, academic and physical and mental wellbeing) to parents, so they understand its importance (as well as being something fun for their children to do after school). It is

important that schools understand that recruitment can take time, and it may take a full year to fully establish a good attendance at a brand-new club.

We've also learnt that new clubs work best when they are funded by the school or an external funder with either no or minimal costs passed onto the parents.

However, most of all, we've seen how effective a tool after-school clubs are in bringing arts experiences to pupils. We've seen students with real talent given the opportunity to dance when they otherwise would not have had the chance. We've also seen how accessible and enjoyable South Asian dance is for children of all heritages and backgrounds, so it is a real catalyst for community cohesion and inter-cultural dialogue. We've seen children building relationships with themselves and the leader, having fun getting active, being creative and growing in confidence!

Feedback and Testimonials:

"The ones who have attended regularly have thoroughly enjoyed it and everybody who has been in any of the sessions has always said what a great, fun and engaging time they have so a big thank you from all of us."
~ Dan Jones, Allens Croft Primary School

"I really enjoyed the lessons this term. Everyone should come again!"
~ Pupil, Allens Croft Primary School

Interested in having Sonia Sabri Company support your school? Find out more and get in touch via https://www.ssco.org.uk/

Arts Partnership Case Studies (Continued)

Case Study from Marsh Hill Primary School

Describe your partnership and the programme you created for the school. What made it exciting and impactful?

Since January 2025, Marsh Hill Nursery has enjoyed a strong and purposeful partnership with Eleanor, a highly experienced music specialist, who has played a key role in enriching our music provision. Her flexible and child-focused approach fits seamlessly within our setting, responding to the unique interests and needs of our children.

Eleanor visits twice a week and works closely with our staff, who share current themes and topics from the classroom. This helps ensure music is meaningfully linked to the children's wider learning and not treated as a separate activity.
Her sessions strike a balance between structure and freedom, allowing children to engage in ways that suit them best. Singing is central, and she encourages children to personalise songs by adapting the lyrics, making the experience more relatable and enjoyable—something that has had a clear and positive effect on language development.

Eleanor's music sessions are lively, playful, and highly engaging. She includes activities that promote both fine and gross motor skills, and the use of musical instruments and props adds a sense of excitement. The children look forward to her visits, always eager to see what surprises she brings.

Although she comes with a plan, Eleanor remains responsive to the moment. If a child brings up a topic like dinosaurs, she'll happily adjust the session - breaking into a themed song and inviting the group to join in, making every child feel heard and included.

What needs did your project address, and how did it benefit young people in terms of confidence, creativity, and cultural learning?

There is a growing and urgent need in education to support children's language acquisition. While there are many complex factors contributing to this challenge, at Marsh Hill we focus on practical, creative solutions—and we firmly believe in the power of singing and vocalising to support language acquisition.

Eleanor's music sessions are built around songs with repeated phrases and playful, adaptable lyrics. This approach supports all learners and makes sessions highly accessible, particularly for children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) or those learning English as an Additional Language (EAL). Her emphasis on singing creates an inclusive space where every child can participate in a way that suits them, without the need for separate or differentiated activities. In these shared experiences, children who might otherwise feel isolated are fully included—everyone is learning and engaging together.

Singing also naturally supports language development by slowing speech down, encouraging clear pronunciation, and enhancing understanding. The repetition of key words, combined with expressive movement, helps build vocabulary and strengthens communication skills. Eleanor's "my turn, your turn" technique promotes confident speech, clearer articulation, and improved voice projection.

Visitors often comment on how clearly and confidently our children speak—something we attribute in part to our strong integration of the arts in everyday learning.

In addition, our setting has embraced new practices to help children recognise and express their emotions, with tools like The Colour Monster. Eleanor's sessions reinforce this work, offering opportunities for emotional expression through music. Many of her songs focus on feelings, giving children language and confidence to name and explore how they feel in a supportive, creative way.

How will this work create a lasting impact and continue to benefit young people and the school?

Music sessions with Eleanor are designed with sustainability at their core. By ensuring that a member of staff is present during every session, we embed professional development into our daily practice. This hands-on experience allows staff to build confidence, observe high-quality modelling, and incorporate songs and strategies into everyday routines. Eleanor also shares resources, encourages recording in her classes, and simple, repeatable structures so that musical activities can be continued independently. Because sessions are closely tied to classroom themes, they are relevant and easily reinforced across other areas of learning. Over time, we believe that music becomes a natural part of the nursery's culture, not reliant on a single person, but supported and sustained by the whole team.

Eleanor sees her role as sparking curiosity—lighting a match, as she puts it—while recognising that long-term impact comes from enabling staff within the setting to keep

that spark alive.

It's easy to underestimate the value of specialist subject teachers in nursery settings—often, music is seen as simply singing a few nursery rhymes, something people think anyone can do. But high-quality music teaching is far more complex and impactful than it may first appear. At Marsh Hill, we are deeply committed to building a culture where all our educators feel confident and equipped to make music a regular, joyful part of children's learning. Whether or not Eleanor is present, her goal in her delivery of projects is to ensure that music continues to enrich an environment she has worked in, in meaningful and lasting ways.

Links to videos of Eleanors work:

IMG_0962.mov
IMG_1004.mov
IMG_0984.mov
IMG_0968.mov

Arts Partnership Case Studies (Continued)

School Name: Multiple Schools

Arts Provider Name: The Play House (B'ham)

Project Title: Does Birmingham Belong To Me?

Key Contact: Jo Sadler-Lovett: Director

In partnership with Dr Reza Gholami at the University of Birmingham, we created a theatre-based project which uses lived experience stories to explore a sense of belonging. Children hear stories and experiences from the people within their communities and responded creatively by making their own performances which explore citizenship.

This project is aimed at key stage 2. However, we have also taken the stories created by the children and turned them into EYFS story telling performances. This has enabled us to provide EYFS stories which reflect children's experience in Birmingham more accurately.

Initial Engagement:

The project is funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation. We worked with 2 schools in the first year and 6 schools in the second year. In the first year we explored the theme with the same classes for the duration of the year. In the second year, we have condensed the project into a 12 week structure and enabled more children to engage with the work.

Planning Process:

The sessions are designed to be relaxed, fun, and calm, with structured support during more exuberant activities. We ensure that all activities remain appropriate for everyone, preventing any child from feeling overwhelmed. After high-energy activities, children are guided back to a calm state, integrating seamlessly into their daily school routine. This was an important element of the creative process with the school as we needed this project to work with, not against their learning environment.

Learning experiences are both direct and indirect, allowing children to reflect accurately on their development. Understanding cultural nuances takes time, and this is respected in our approach. Many activities incorporate physical movement, kinetic learning, and tasks that are broken into manageable segments. The children were not able to reflect on or articulate their sense of belonging in a direct manner. However, they used various creative learning techniques and exercises where they could still explore identity and belonging where children were able express this in a more indirect or guided way. This supports children with additional needs and EAL to access the sessions. Also, the content of this work is very mature and can be differentiated to suit different ages. It was

important for us to work with the class teachers to understand where to pitch this work. As the project progressed, the teachers learned more about the children's understanding too.

Sessions are child-led, inviting thoughts, opinions, and input from the children in a co-constructive manner. There are no wrong answers, fostering an environment where children support each other's development and learn together. There was also a move away from emulating what the team were modelling and towards more independent thinking and individualistic expression. Children have expressed enjoyment of these sessions, noting their distinct difference from formal classroom learning. This element of delivery involved a lot of trust and we had to get their slowly. At first, sessions were structured in a traditional 'front-led' manner which meant that children became familiar with the project first, before we began to change the structure and open it up to become co-creation.

Project Implementation:

We started this work by inviting children from the participating school to help us interview and select the person delivering this work. We held a workshop with the children where different candidates worked with them delivering creative activities. After the workshop, we asked the children about their opinions. The children were shocked but delighted to be asked their opinion. This set the tone for the way in which we wanted to continue to deliver the project.

We started the project by collecting stories from adults in the school community. This included head teachers, lunchtime supervisors, class teachers and parents. These stories focussed on the theme *Does Birmingham Belong to Me?*

Alongside our research partners at UoB we collected the stories and retold them to the children. The children were then able to creatively explore these stories to build their understanding about the experiences that other people have faced. In our current version of the project, the children interview members of their community themselves and then present the stories back to their classmates.

The children then use these stories as way of identifying things that relate to them. This enables them to access and explore their own feelings of belonging. The children then create their own fictional story - a modern-day folk lore story about belonging and perform to family and friends.

In the original version of the project, we were able to take the children on away days. The two schools came together for a workshop day at one of the schools. They met children from an unfamiliar area of Birmingham and focussed on the similarities and celebrated the differences between them- highlighting that Birmingham is made up of so much diversity- and yet we can all identify and being a Brummie. Then the two schools came

together again later in the process, to perform to each other and celebrate each other's achievements.

Throughout this project, the creative material was sourced and generated by the school community and participants. It was important for us that this exploration of citizenship started with the people who it applied to. If we imposed too much of an agenda to begin with, we do offer anything different to the National Curriculum. The purpose of this project was to elevate the thoughts and opinions of the young people we worked with and to celebrate what belonging truly means to them.

We hope that by creating a smaller and more accessible version of the project, that we will be able to deliver this work in many more schools across Birmingham- each project being unique. We are restructuring activities in such a way that this project could be led by teachers independently, in the future.

Feedback and Testimonials:

Teachers

- 'Structure worked well. Both classes felt engaged and created some great physical work'

- 'Great discussions, classes are clearly very passionate about/motivated by sports'

- 'Conscience alley was great'

- 'Retained a lot from throughout the session, great energy, focus seems to be improving.'

- 'The pupils are always pleased when it's drama (our sessions)) no one ever moans'

- 'I've learnt a lot about how sessions can flow and to let go for the need for a tangible outcome'

- 'I've noticed that acting things out leads to better understanding'

- 'I'm more comfortable letting the children get on with something themselves and pushing them to be more creative or think for themselves'

- 'The project makes nice links with PHSE and British Citizenship. It will also feed into writing work when they are in Year 6'

- 'The children have a better understanding of the complexities of belonging and how you can belong to more than one thing'

- 'this project give them a safe place to explore these ideas and feelings'

- 'the age is perfect because it catches them while they're young and they're not set in their thinking'

- 'I've noticed the children sharing their ideas more and more originality'

- 'It's feeding into the classroom work and their personal development'

- 'They are asking more questions to clarify concepts, e.g. local? Is that Sparkbrook?'

- 'At the beginning of the project the children kept saying 'does Birmingham belong to US' and then it has become 'ME''

Children

- 'Home is sweet in Birmingham'

- 'Birmingham is diverse . . . my home is here'

- 'I don't like Birmingham but I like my area'

- 'Birmingham belongs to its people'

Case Study Overview: 'M'

M initially presented as a very shy student who rarely spoke. In the early stages of the program, he chose not to speak, and when he did, it was in a very low volume, minimizing his input. However, as the sessions progressed, M engaged deeply in the drama exercises, allowing him to momentarily forget his insecurities and express himself more freely.

Through his participation, M has developed notable skills in projection and expression. More importantly, he has shared truthful and insightful opinions about belonging and his identity as a Brummie citizen. These discussions have facilitated a deeper understanding of citizenship values, helping M to articulate his thoughts on community and identity effectively.

The transformation in M's confidence has been profound. Initially, teachers believed that a non-verbal role would be most suitable for him in the final performance. However, recognizing his potential, our facilitator has been working with M to create narration lines. This initiative is designed to further develop his personal confidence and shift the expectations that others have for him.

M's journey through these drama sessions underscores the importance of providing creative and supportive environments for students. His increased understanding of citizenship values and sense of belonging highlights the broader impact of our program. We are grateful for the support of our funders, which has made these vital sessions possible, fostering significant personal and social growth in students like M.

Interested in having The Play House support your school? Find out more and get in touch via Theatre In Education | The Play House | Birmingham

Arts Partnership Case Studies (Continued)

School Name: Bellfield Infant School, Bellfield Junior School and Longwill School for Deaf Children

Arts Provider Name: Autin Dance Theatre

Project Title: The Flock

Key Contact: Johnny Autin

The Flock was inclusive dance and puppetry project that was commissioned by Bellfield Infant School Bellfield Junior School, and Longwill School for Deaf Children in Birmingham, through Birmingham Arts School. All three schools worked together with Creative Director Johnny Autin and artists Kevaughn Liang, Billy Read and Stephanie Bentley over a several months, to create an environment where young people could share and celebrate their differences and similarities, and explore what home, inclusivity and migration meant to them. Each young person made a puppet and learned how to use the puppets bringing them to life with movement and sound. A final performance was shared with parents and also filmed.

Short 5 minute film -https://youtu.be/8FMKI1_Lsk0?si=E1Bd0EXLcNI5URvZ

15 minute film here - https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/m9wnrckk1bbv8so0cuet3/Flock-Performance.mp4?rlkey=kn258ocikly0p29du2ktigioh&st=xosqyhyq&dl=0

Images here
- https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/ebkrvf7r27crtyqmj1d28/AOl9dtFX57OrBDp3uwlsXb4?rlkey=3gxo459rnnp2jva7cy9wb44r1&st=g0sj7ge3&dl=0

Interested in having Autin Dance Theatre support your school? Find out more and get in touch via https://autindt.co.uk/

Arts Partnership Case Studies (Continued)

School Name: Woodgate Primary School

Arts Provider Name: Preme Productions Educational Theatre

Project Title: Production & Workshops of '*Guardians Of Humanity*' Online Safety project AND ongoing *'Development Workshops'* to support engagement, development and learning in the topics, delivered in a unique Arts-Enriching way.

Project outline (short overview): A big project day delivered to ALL of KS2 in the school to see a fun, engaging, immersive one-hour productions of '*Guardians Of Humanity*' with immersive workshops throughout a special day in anti-bullying week, followed by ongoing drama development weekly workshops specifically for Year 5 to further explore online safety & digital wellbeing, whilst developing drama skills through carefully designed workshops.

Age group of young people included: KS2 - years 3/4/5/6 - ages 7-11 (approx 240 participants)

Key contact name and role (if applicable): Mrs Debbie Colley (headteacher)

Initial engagement: The partnership with the school began from a friendly and swift introduction from Bhavik Parmar (Director at BAS) - he suggested our work might be beneficial at Debbie's school. They have a large SEND provision, and he thought our inclusive work may fit well here. We met up with Debbie the following week for an introductory meeting, a quick coffee and chat through all the projects and things that we can do, various ways we can create bespoke projects to support young people or include arts enrichment / drama within school.

Our BESPOKE Service: We offer FREE consultations to schools interested in partnering with us. We want to create unique work that directly supports an individual school, year group, class...whatever it is, we can shape our creative work to support those specific needs, and this is what we did here for Debbie and Woodgate Primary school. Partnering together also gives us better insight into how to support your school, bringing continuity to the children/participants, benefiting their development and enrichment over time. **Partner schools will also receive unique offers for new work, funded projects, and large discounts on our large-scale termly projects too!**

Planning & Development: We always offer to meet our contacts first before working with them. We feel a consultation is always best, allowing us to work bespokely; tailoring our specialities for each school's specific needs / criteria. Debbie talked

through topics she felt were of particular interest to her after hearing about various projects of ours. We aligned with Woodgate beautifully as Debbie is supportive of inclusive arts work and understands the power of drama particularly in emotional and social development, confidence, creativity and critical thinking. She also loved our particular focus on Digital Wellbeing, wanting to learn more of the children's own thoughts and views. We spoke through some initial quickfire ideas on how we could bring these topics of interest to life through adapting existing projects or creating new development workshops for her.

Debbie immediately liked the sound of our approach and got us booked in asap for multiple projects!

Part 1 - An initial project: We returned a few weeks later to deliver a big project for all of KS2 - 'Guardians Of Humanity' - a one-hour long production and immersive workshops for all the children in small groups. This was a fantastic day with KS2, exploring themes on *Digital Wellbeing, Online Safety, Grooming, Safe Relationships and Mental Health*. We delivered it in November to support and elevate Anti-Bullying Week!

Progression of work: We then BUILT on this project theme in a new piece of work, returning after the Christmas break on a weekly basis to work *with* Year 5 every Monday afternoon. We delivered a six-week development project, giving each class a weekly drama-based workshop exploring different skills and techniques in drama (such as projecting voices, portraying emotions, puppetry and voicing characters etc) all while developing ideas and stories into short performances on the theme of *Digital Wellbeing, Online issues* and around the stimulus of *'if in the UK at 7pm every night ALL technology shut down until 7am the next day what do you think would happen?'* - we saw amazing responses come from this and were overwhelmed by knowing what a strong impact our previous delivery of 'Guardians Of Humanity' had on the children months prior, as they recalled so much detailed information about the show, the characters, the workshops they were immersed in and participated in, and safeguarding elements they were taught about being online.... It's a truly incredible experience, and for us, a great example of how arts provision / drama can be such an asset to supporting other learning too.

Planning bespoke work: The planning of this project was simple. We pitched one of our "big" days, which are larger scale projects available for larger groups of children and made as accessible as possible. We try to do one of these big projects per term and tie them into national weeks/themes; whether that's for Anti-Bullying Week, Mental Health Awareness Week, encouraging children Outside / Healthy Lifestyles in the summer / Safer Internet Day. These are all huge and important learning points for children, and it is an easy starting point for us to then build on when creating bespoke workshops, development programmes and more. In this case Debbie was not only keen for Year 5 to

receive some drama experience (with many shy children, but most also who had not experienced drama, theatre or arts, and a large SEN cohort within the group). We really saw the development in the children's confidence and expression over the weeks, and how much they engaged with and loved our fun sessions! It was also great to see the topic of Digital Wellbeing and the children exploring their own thoughts and opinions about the Online World in a safe creative way, giving voice and validation to their thoughts, opinions and creative outlets.

The Result? Development along the way is the most important part for us. There were true glimmers of brilliance and unity, critical thinking and creativity amongst the groups over just the short 6 weeks. They LOVED it and had so much fun. And we learnt some fascinating thoughts and opinions of their young minds on the digital world too! A bonus? They also created some pretty awesome short performance pieces!

Accessibility / Our part-in-kind offer: We believe all children should have access to these kinds of projects and enrichment. All children deserve a creative education. We offer a part-in-kind deal to many schools we work with, to establish a working relationship where we do as much as we can for minimum cost. This has worked out well with Debbie as her school sits in an area of low social deprivation. We did our initial projects discussed above here at an in-kind rate. They were such a success, and we have been invited back for a more official, long-term working partnership, and we will be delivering several more projects to Woodgate throughout this year and next - some in-kind, some at full cost.

We are keeping costs low by having a simple, small team. By working in a bespoke way WITH schools in creative ways that don't require huge amounts of resources, by applying for support from funding bodies, to keep things accessible, and to have opportunities available for young people. By working in-kind in a way that pays back to and from our community.

Measuring success: When doing our "big day" projects such as *Guardians of Humanity,* we offer feedback forms to staff. We collect feedback from children in other ways than just a boring evaluation form, instead, we creatively make it part of the workshop they are immersed in. This tells us more accurately and from a deeper emotional level how much they have learnt, and better yet whether they can put any information or tools into action. Other forms of measuring success come from happiness, enrichment, and final products like at the end of a development period where children get to share and showcase their performances or creations. Smaller (but in many ways bigger) measures of success may come from a child who we are told never gets involved in class or doesn't usually vocalise at all who totally comes to life when with us. Success also comes from our safeguarding and preventative information. We also talk to staff on the

day as much as possible, to get their thoughts and opinions. We talk with our lead contact and give back to them a review of how we felt the day went and anything important they should note. We follow up on what we delivered and always hope there is scope to work together, support, and deliver more fun projects!

Continuation of work with Woodgate Primary School :
We've continued to deliver many other projects at Woodgate, and as a partner school they have benefitted from discounts and offers for more work and collaboration with us. Such as:

1) Mental Health Awareness Week workshops *(May 2025):*
Partnered work with Mental Health charity *'The Molly Rose Foundation'*, using drama and arts to raise awareness and inform on mental health in primary school. This workshop was part-funded with all resources donated by the charity!

2) Bespoke Arts Project 'Drama Development' for Yr6 *(June-July 2025):*
Over 6-weeks Year 6 will receive bespoke drama workshops developing ideas, drama/creative skills and performance to explore the topic of "transition" reflecting on their time over the years at Primary school, and what the next stage brings. *What does it look like? Positive futures? Worries or concerns? Transitioning to a new place, new age, new area?*

3) Environmental project *'Fantastic Wildlife'* immersive outdoor workshops *(June 2025):*
Designed for KS1, in June 2025 the Year 1 students will have an action-packed day enrolled as UK Woodland animals! Free craft resources are supplied by us that the children get to keep. Through their animal characters they explore a disaster which has been encountered by Mrs Fox. She takes them to her Fox den which has been destroyed by Humans dumping their rubbish. They collaboratively find solutions and explore materials and habitats.

4) Early Years 'StoryLand Adventure' drama workshops *(Autumn/winter term 2025)*:
These fun EYFS workshops use imaginative scenarios taken from popular children's stories (or original writing from our Director, Morgan), themed topics to support the class themes. Children travel from school to StoryLand where they explore the story through characters and scenarios. These workshops support linguistic and social development, phonics learning, collaboration and critical thinking.

Feedback and testimonials:

The feedback form reads:

1) **Please can you rate the following questions from 1-5, 1 being 'poor quality/bad' and 5 being 'excellent quality/good'.**

Question	Rating 1-5?	Is there a specific reason you can give?
Did your students enjoy / benefit from their experience with Preme Productions today? (1-5)	5	They were enjoying the session esp the acting
How would you rate the quality of the production and workshops provided today? (1-5)	5	Well prepared, very professional
Was the content relevant & helpful towards your PSHE/RSE topics / issues in school? (1-5)	5	The children were aware of the content esp "PANTS"
How would you rate the likelihood of booking Preme Productions back in the future to deliver more work? (1-5)	5	Very likely as the assembly was very useful esp with the action, children learn so much through acting and it stays with them for a long time.

2) **Would you consider using the 'FOUR' as a teaching framework / coping mechanism in bullying discussions? Why?**

Yes children will remember "four" as it is use daily.

3) **As a teaching professional, would you agree or disagree that your students benefit from external creative experiences like our 'Guardians of Humanity' performance today in using theatre and facilitation? Why?**

Agree they are exposed to and see first hand what impact that has in their daily life. Very educational.

4) **Please answer the following with a mark in the appropriate box.**

Question	YES	NO	MAYBE
Would you have Preme Productions back again to do more work with students at your school?	✓		
Were our performances engaging / insightful / creative?	✓		
Did you enjoy the work we produced today?	✓		

5) **Are there any other topics you would like to see included / covered in our anti-bullying programme "Guardians of Humanity"?**

Friendship issues, mental health, how to build up their self confidence and don't give up.

When asked 'write one word about how drama has been' the classes made us this!

Preme Productions

1) **Please can you rate the following questions from 1-5. 1 being 'poor quality/bad' and 5 being 'excellent quality/good'.**

Question	Rating 1-5?	Is there a specific reason you can give?
Did your students enjoy / benefit from their experience with Preme Productions today? (1-5)	5	child friendly & interactive
How would you rate the quality of the production and workshops provided today? (1-5)	5	current issues.
Was the content relevant & helpful towards your PSHE/RSE topics / issues in school? (1-5)	5	Re inforces what we're teaching
How would you rate the likelihood of booking Preme Productions back in the future to deliver more work? (1-5)	5	

2) **Would you consider using the 'FOUR' as a teaching framework / coping mechanism in bullying discussions? Why?**

Friendship issues, bullying in school happens over friendships, jealousy etc.

3) **As a teaching professional, would you agree or disagree that your students benefit from external creative experiences like our 'Guardians of Humanity' performance today in using theatre and facilitation? Why?**
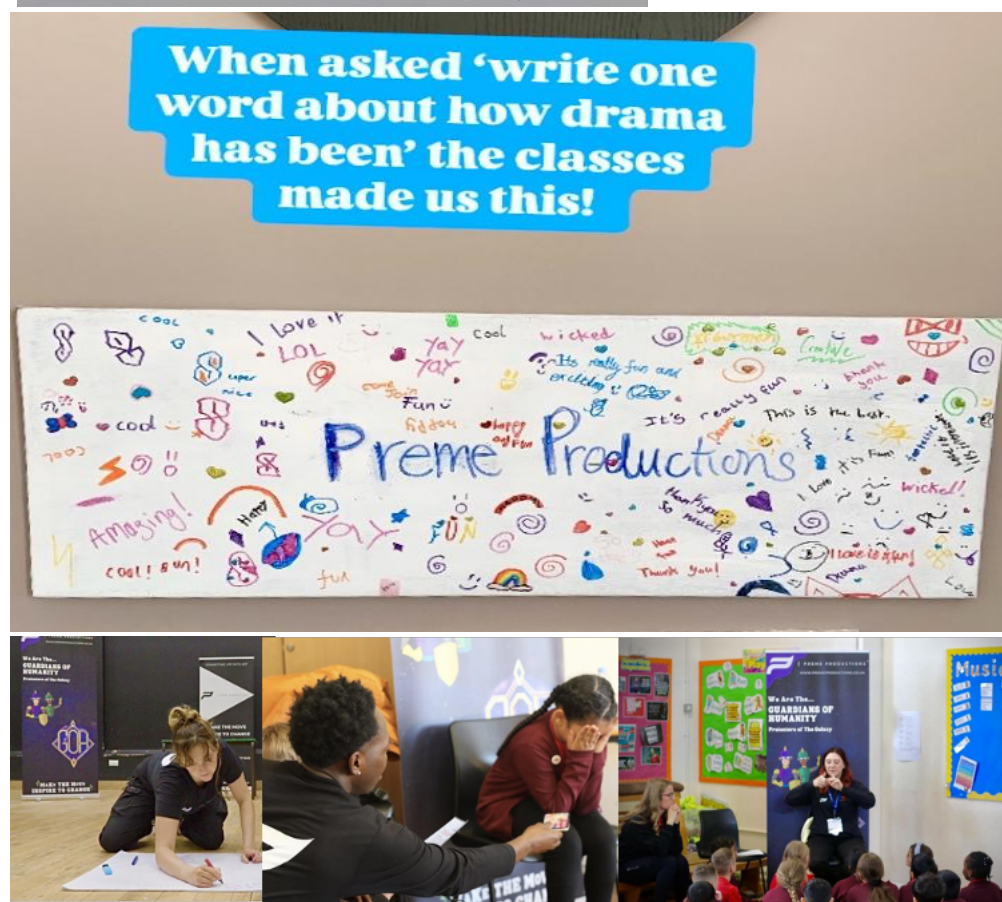
Yes.

4) **Please answer the following with a mark in the appropriate box.**

Question	YES	NO	MAYBE
Would you have Preme Productions back again to do more work with students at your school?	✓		
Were our performances engaging / insightful / creative?	✓		
Did you enjoy the work we produced today?	✓		

5) **Are there any other topics you would like to see included / covered in our anti-bullying programme "Guardians of Humanity"?**

Involvement in gangs, especially for year 6 children.

Some postcards to characters (Children 7-11)

Interested in having Preme Productions support your school? Find out more and get in touch via www.premeproductions.co.uk

Effective Evaluation Strategies

Why Evaluate?

Evaluation ensures arts programmes are impactful, relevant, and aligned with stakeholder expectations. Here's why it's essential in today's evolving educational and digital landscape:

Why Regular Feedback and Evaluation Are Crucial in the Digital Era

In today's fast-changing world, regularly capturing feedback and evaluating arts programmes is more critical than ever. Here's why:

1. The Changing Landscape of Education and Engagement

Adapting to New Learning Needs: Schools and young people are constantly evolving in how they learn and engage. Traditional arts projects may not resonate with students who are immersed in a digital, fast-paced environment.

Relevance in a Digital Age: With so much competition for attention (social media, gaming, etc.), arts programmes must demonstrate their value in helping students develop skills like creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking, which cannot always be provided through digital platforms alone.

2. Proving Impact in a Results-Oriented Environment

Funder and Stakeholder Expectations: Funders increasingly demand evidence of impact, especially quantitative and qualitative data that demonstrates how programmes meet their goals.

Accountability: Regular evaluation ensures transparency, showing that resources are being used effectively to deliver meaningful outcomes.

Building Credibility: An organisation that evaluates its work regularly can show growth and responsiveness, reinforcing its reputation as a professional, reflective, and impactful entity.

3. Staying Relevant in a Social Media and Digital World

Reaching Wider Audiences: Platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube allow organisations to showcase their work creatively and authentically to young audiences, funders, and communities.

Engaging Feedback Loops: Digital platforms provide real-time feedback mechanisms (e.g., polls, comments, likes) that are simple to use and highly engaging for young participants.

Amplifying Impact Stories: By sharing short videos of testimonials, creative outputs, or behind-the-scenes content, organisations can highlight their impact dynamically and reach new supporters.

4. Driving Innovation and Continuous Improvement

Avoiding Stagnation: Delivering the same programmes without re-evaluation risks them becoming outdated or irrelevant to current audiences.

Encouraging Reflection: Regular evaluation fosters critical reflection on what works, what doesn't, and what can be improved.

Incorporating New Tools: The digital era provides access to innovative tools for capturing and presenting feedback, making evaluation easier and more impactful.

5. Building Stronger Connections with Schools

Understanding Teacher and Student Needs: Feedback from teachers and students helps align programmes with their priorities and challenges.

Supporting Curriculum Changes: Schools are adapting to new policies, technologies, and methods of teaching. Arts organisations that listen and adapt can provide more tailored, valuable support.

Addressing the Capacity and Cost Challenges of Evaluation

Many organisations struggle with evaluation due to limited time, money, or expertise. However, these challenges can be addressed by integrating evaluation into the core practice rather than treating it as an add-on.

1. Why Evaluation Should Be Core to Practice

Part of Programme Delivery: Evaluation is not an extra task; it's an essential step in ensuring the quality and effectiveness of your work.

Example: Ending a workshop with a 10-minute creative feedback activity (e.g., drawing their experience) is both part of delivery and evaluation.

Skill Development: Training existing staff in simple evaluation methods empowers them to integrate it into their work, rather than requiring a dedicated evaluator.

2. Strategies to Overcome "No Time/No Capacity" Challenges

Use Digital Tools: Leverage simple, accessible platforms like Google Forms, Mentimeter, or Slido to collect real-time data without adding significant workload.

Embed Feedback Collection: Integrate feedback activities seamlessly into programmes. For example:

Ask students to reflect on the session through a collaborative art piece.

Use exit tickets where participants answer one question as they leave.

Focus on Key Metrics: Identify 2-3 key indicators to track over time rather than attempting to evaluate everything at once.

Collaborate with Stakeholders: Teachers, parents, and even students can help with data collection, making evaluation a shared responsibility.

3. Why Evaluation Is an Investment, Not a Cost

Improved Outcomes: Regular evaluation leads to better, more impactful programmes, ensuring long-term success and funding.

Stronger Funding Bids: Funders are more likely to support organisations that demonstrate a commitment to evaluation and learning.

Community Engagement: Evaluation can double as a marketing tool, showcasing the value of your work to a broader audience.

Integrating Evaluation Into Everyday Practice

A Cultural Shift: Evaluation should be seen as a core element of arts delivery, not a separate function. It's about embedding reflection, improvement, and learning into the DNA of the organisation.

Train Your Team: Offer staff basic training in evaluation techniques so they can capture and use feedback confidently.

Keep It Simple: Evaluation doesn't need to be complex or expensive. Start small with quick surveys, creative feedback activities, or digital polls, and scale up as capacity grows.

The Role of Social Media in Capturing and Showcasing Impact

Engaging Young Audiences: Platforms like Instagram and TikTok resonate with younger audiences, making it easier to gather feedback creatively (e.g., polls, hashtags, comment threads).

Cost-Effective Promotion: Sharing project highlights on social media amplifies visibility and builds your organisation's credibility.

Dynamic Storytelling: A short video of participants enjoying a programme or describing its impact is often more powerful than written reports.

Evaluation is not a luxury; it's a necessity for arts organisations in today's dynamic, digital-first world. By embedding evaluation into your practice and leveraging digital tools to capture and share impact, you can ensure your work remains relevant, effective, and highly valued by both participants and funders. It's about reflecting, adapting, and innovating to meet the needs of modern audiences while proving the transformative power of the arts.

Creative Evaluation Strategies and Techniques for Arts Projects

This part of the toolkit provides arts organisations and schools with a comprehensive overview of evaluation strategies and creative approaches to capturing and showcasing feedback. These methods will help you gather meaningful qualitative and quantitative data. Creative evaluation not only enhances data collection but also engages participants and stakeholders effectively.

Evaluation Strategies

Evaluation involves gathering insights to understand and demonstrate the impact of your arts projects. Here are key strategies:

Strategy	Description
Formative Evaluation	Monitor progress throughout the project to make adjustments and improve outcomes.
Summative Evaluation	Evaluate the final outcomes of the project to measure success and impact.
Participatory Evaluation	Involve participants in the evaluation process to gather authentic feedback.
Mixed-Methods Evaluation	Combine qualitative and quantitative approaches for a comprehensive understanding.

1. Formative Evaluation

- **What It Is:** Ongoing feedback collection to monitor progress and make real-time improvements during the project.

- **Broader Organisational Goals:**

  o Enhances responsiveness by identifying and addressing challenges early.

  o Builds trust with participants by demonstrating a commitment to continuous improvement.

- **Examples for Arts Projects:**

  o Ask students to rate their engagement after each session using emoji cards or digital surveys.

  o Use facilitator observation logs to record student engagement and participation levels.

- Midway reflection activity: Participants write or sketch how they feel about their progress.

- **Practical Tools:**

    - **Observation Grids:** Track engagement metrics like participation, creativity, and collaboration.

    - **Real-Time Polling Apps:** Use tools like Mentimeter or Slido for instant feedback during workshops.

    - **Feedback Walls:** Participants place sticky notes with comments or drawings on a shared wall.

2. Summative Evaluation

- **What It Is:** Assessment of the overall success and impact of the project after its completion.

- **Broader Organisational Goals:**

    - Demonstrates accountability to funders by providing measurable outcomes.

    - Identifies best practices for future programming and marketing materials.

- **Examples for Arts Projects:**

    - Surveys assessing skills gained or emotional growth (e.g., confidence, teamwork).

    - Showcase events where participants share final pieces, accompanied by their reflections.

    - Data comparison: Assess how participants' attitudes or abilities have changed from baseline surveys to post-programme feedback.

- **Practical Tools:**

    - **Pre- and Post-Project Surveys:** Digital tools like Google Forms or Typeform.

    - **Case Studies:** Write detailed narratives showcasing individual or group success stories.

    - **Impact Reports:** Create visually engaging PDFs or infographics summarising findings.

3. Participatory Evaluation

- **What It Is:** Actively involving participants in the evaluation process.

- **Broader Organisational Goals:**

  o Empowers participants, fostering deeper connections and authentic feedback.

  o Builds inclusivity by ensuring diverse voices are heard and valued.

- **Examples for Arts Projects:**

  o Collaborative mural where participants contribute visual representations of their experiences.

  o Peer-to-peer interviews: Participants interview each other about their experiences.

  o Youth-led focus groups to discuss what worked well and what could be improved.

- **Practical Tools:**

  o **Feedback Trees:** Participants write feedback on leaves and attach them to a tree mural.

  o **Video Diaries:** Provide participants with a space to record their thoughts creatively.

  o **Interactive Workshops:** Sessions designed for participants to co-create feedback tools.

4. Mixed-Methods Evaluation

- **What It Is:** Combining qualitative and quantitative approaches to get a complete picture.

- **Broader Organisational Goals:**

  o Balances storytelling with measurable data to create compelling narratives for funders.

  o Provides comprehensive insights that guide strategic decisions.

- **Examples for Arts Projects:**

  o Quantitative: Track participation numbers, session attendance, and survey scores.

  o Qualitative: Collect quotes, photos, or videos illustrating emotional and creative impact.

  o Triangulation: Compare observational data, participant feedback, and facilitator reflections.

- **Practical Tools:**

  o **Data Analytics Platforms:** Tools like Excel or Tableau for analysing quantitative data.

  o **Padlet Boards:** Participants upload photos or videos of their work and reflect on their experiences.

  o **Storytelling Reports:** Combine data charts with narratives, quotes, and visuals.

How These Strategies Support Broader Organisational Goals

1. **Increased Stakeholder Confidence:**

   o Funders and partners are more likely to invest in organisations that demonstrate a commitment to measuring and improving their impact.

2. **Enhanced Programme Quality:**

   o Evaluation drives better delivery by identifying what works and refining areas for improvement.

3. **Sustainable Growth:**

   o By consistently proving value, organisations can attract new audiences and funders, ensuring longevity.

4. **Stronger Advocacy:**

   o Compelling data and testimonials strengthen the case for arts education's importance in schools and communities.

Practical Tools for Each Strategy

Tool	Purpose	How to Use
Google Forms	Digital surveys	Create pre- and post-project forms to gather feedback quickly and efficiently.
Mentimeter	Real-time polling	Use for live feedback during sessions or workshops.
Padlet	Collaborative visual boards	Participants upload images, reflections, or feedback.
Canva	Infographic design	Create visually engaging reports or summary sheets for stakeholders.
Animoto	Video storytelling	Combine participant testimonials and event footage to create impactful videos.
Observation Logs	Tracking engagement	Facilitators document participation and engagement trends during sessions.

How to Use Evaluation for Next Steps

1. **Share Findings Effectively:**

   o Create infographics, videos, and case studies to communicate outcomes to funders and stakeholders.

   o Publish results on your website or social media to increase visibility and attract new audiences.

2. **Refine Programmes:**

   o Use insights to address weaknesses, enhance strengths, and innovate.

   o Involve participants in co-creating future projects based on evaluation results.

3. **Strengthen Funding Applications:**

   o Include quantitative metrics and qualitative stories to demonstrate impact.

   o Highlight how evaluation results are driving improvement and accountability.

4. **Build Community Engagement:**

   o Share evaluation outcomes with participants and their communities to foster trust and transparency.

   o Organise showcase events to celebrate success and gather additional feedback.

Creative Techniques for Capturing Feedback

Move beyond traditional forms with these innovative approaches:

Technique	Description
Interactive Feedback Stations	Set up stations with emotion boards, sticky notes for reflections, or mood jars where participants drop tokens to represent their experience.
Artistic Expression	Encourage participants to draw, sketch, or create a short poem reflecting their experience.
Video Booths or Diaries	Provide spaces for recording short video testimonials. Prompt them with open-ended questions like 'What did you enjoy most?'.
Audience Response Technology	Use tools like Slido or Mentimeter to collect live poll responses or qualitative feedback anonymously.
Exit Activities	Have participants leave a word, drawing, or a quick audio clip summarising their experience as they exit.
Social Media Engagement	Encourage participants or parents to share their experiences online with a specific hashtag. Curate these posts for reporting.

Creative Ways to Showcase Feedback

Highlight your project's impact by presenting feedback creatively:

Showcasing Method	Description
Infographics	Create visuals that combine data with quotes or participant artwork.
Video Montages	Edit together testimonials and event highlights to create an engaging story.
Gallery Exhibitions	Display art, quotes, and photos from the project in physical or virtual exhibitions.

Case Studies	Develop detailed examples of successful projects, integrating feedback and visual content.
Digital Reports	Publish interactive PDF or web-based reports that include embedded videos and images.
Celebratory Zines (Portfolio Books)	Compile participants' feedback into a booklet or digital zine to share with the community.

Online Resources

Here are some online tools and resources to support your evaluation process:

1. Slido: https://www.sli.do - Use for live polls and Q&A during events.

2. Mentimeter: https://www.mentimeter.com - Collect real-time participant responses.

3. Canva: https://www.canva.com - Design infographics and visual reports.

4. Animoto: https://animoto.com - Create professional video montages from feedback.

5. SurveyMonkey: https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk - Design custom surveys.

6. Padlet: https://padlet.com - Collaborative online wall for gathering feedback.

Step-by-Step Guide: Effective Evaluation Strategies for Capturing Feedback from Young People in Arts Projects

Step 1: Define Clear Objectives

Why: Evaluation must align with the goals of your arts project. Knowing what you want to achieve helps you design effective feedback tools.

How:

Identify what success looks like. For example:

Increased confidence or creativity.

Development of specific skills (e.g., teamwork, artistic techniques).

Emotional impact or enjoyment.

Develop SMART objectives (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound).

Example Objective: "80% of participants will report improved confidence in public speaking after the drama workshop."

Step 2: Understand Your Audience

Why: Young people respond best to evaluation methods that are engaging, age-appropriate, and creative.

How:

Consider their age, learning preferences, and comfort levels.

Use simple, accessible language for instructions and questions.

Tailor tools to different age groups (e.g., drawings for younger children, reflective journaling for teens).

Step 3: Choose the Right Evaluation Methods

Why: Different projects and age groups require different methods for capturing meaningful feedback.

How: Use a mix of methods to gather both qualitative and quantitative data. Examples include:

Creative Feedback Tools:

Art Journals: Ask participants to draw or sketch their favourite part of the project.

Photo Collages: Participants use images to represent how the project made them feel.

Movement Reflection: In dance projects, let participants create a short movement to express their experience.

Interactive Activities:

Emoji Walls: Participants place emojis on a board to indicate their feelings about the project.

Word Clouds: Use tools like Mentimeter to create word clouds summarising participant feedback.

Verbal and Written Feedback:

Short, guided discussions or reflection circles.

Exit tickets where participants answer one or two quick questions.

Step 4: Make the Process Fun and Non-Intrusive

Why: Young people are more likely to engage with feedback activities that feel like part of the creative process rather than a chore.

How:

Integrate evaluation into the session. For example:

Use storytelling as a way to gather reflections ("Tell me a story about how this workshop felt for you").

Create a collective mural at the end of the project, where each participant adds a personal reflection.

Keep sessions interactive and informal, avoiding a "survey" vibe.

Step 5: Collect Feedback at the Right Time

Why: Timing affects the quality and accuracy of the feedback.

How:

Gather immediate impressions at the end of the session for emotional responses.

Conduct follow-up evaluations 2-4 weeks later to assess long-term impact (e.g., how skills are being applied).

Step 6: Capture Feedback in Real-Time

Why: Immediate feedback can be more authentic and detailed.

How:

Use digital tools like Slido or Google Forms for quick responses during or immediately after a session.

Record short video testimonials or audio snippets from participants.

Step 7: Involve Participants in the Evaluation Process

Why: Young people often have valuable insights into what worked well and what could improve.

How:

Ask them to co-create feedback tools (e.g., let them design their own survey questions).

Include them in group reflections to identify common themes.

Step 8: Analyse and Summarise Feedback

Why: Organising feedback helps you identify patterns and actionable insights.

How:

Use software like Excel or Google Sheets to categorise and analyse responses.

Look for trends in qualitative data (e.g., recurring themes in testimonials).

Quantify results where possible (e.g., "75% of participants rated the project 8/10 or higher").

Step 9: Use Feedback to Improve Future Projects

Why: Continuous improvement ensures your projects stay relevant and impactful.

How:

Identify strengths to maintain and areas for development.

Share feedback with facilitators to adapt future delivery methods.

Discuss feedback with participants when designing future sessions, ensuring their voice shapes the programme.

Step 10: Share Feedback with Stakeholders

Why: Transparent reporting builds trust and attracts funding.

How:

Present findings creatively to stakeholders, funders, or school leaders:

Infographics summarising key results.

Video montages of testimonials and artwork.

Case studies with participant quotes and visual evidence.

Example Evaluation Process Timeline

Stage	Action
Before the Project	Define objectives and design age-appropriate feedback tools.
During the Project	Use interactive or creative methods to gather real-time feedback.
End of Each Session	Collect immediate reflections using quick, fun methods (e.g., emoji walls).
Post-Project Follow-Up	Conduct surveys or interviews to assess long-term impact.
Analysis	Review and summarise data, identifying key themes and insights.
Reporting	Share results creatively with stakeholders and funders.

Most Effective Ways of Showcasing Feedback to Funders

1. Visual Storytelling

Infographics: Use charts, graphs, and images to summarise data. Highlight metrics like the number of participants impacted, demographic reach, and key success indicators.

Photo and Video Evidence: Include visuals of participants engaging in activities. Pair these with short testimonials or voiceovers explaining the outcomes.

Before-and-After Comparisons: Showcase transformations, e.g., initial skills assessment versus end-of-project outcomes.

2. Compelling Quotes and Testimonials

Highlight Key Voices: Use feedback from teachers, students, or parents that resonates emotionally and illustrates direct impact.

Diverse Perspectives: Include quotes from different stakeholders (e.g., young people, educators, and community leaders) to show the broad appeal of your project.

3. Interactive Presentations

Dynamic Slide Decks: Use PowerPoint, Prezi, or Canva to create presentations that combine visuals, animations, and live testimonials.

Immersive Media: Share short documentary-style videos or montages of events, interviews, and outcomes.

4. Case Studies

Develop one-page stories that describe specific instances of success. Include:

Context (the challenge addressed).

Approach (what the project involved).

Outcomes (the impact supported by data and quotes).

5. Participant Creations

Showcase artwork, poetry, or performances created by participants as a result of your project. Use these outputs as evidence of engagement and skills development.

6. Data-Driven Reports

Present concise, visually appealing reports combining:

Quantitative data (e.g., participation numbers, survey results).

Qualitative data (e.g., personal stories, open-text feedback).

Make reports downloadable or interactive if submitted online.

Tips for Using Feedback to Elevate Pitches to Funders or Donors

1. Align Feedback with Funder Goals

Research the funder's mission and priorities (e.g., social impact, equity, arts education).

Highlight feedback that directly supports these objectives.

Example: If a funder prioritises youth engagement, focus on young people's testimonials and participation statistics.

2. Emphasise Tangible Outcomes

Use feedback to show measurable impact.

Example: "92% of participating teachers reported increased confidence in using drama techniques in their classrooms."

Connect outcomes to broader societal benefits, such as improving mental health, fostering inclusion, or boosting academic success.

3. Create Emotional Resonance

Lead with a story or quote that captures the essence of the project's impact.

Example: "One student shared, 'This workshop made me believe I could be a poet.'"

Funders often respond to personal, human-centred stories that make them feel part of a transformative journey.

4. Leverage Multi-Sensory Experiences

Incorporate feedback into your pitch using video or audio testimonials. Hearing directly from participants can be more powerful than reading text.

Provide funders with tactile elements, like zines or art samples created during the project.

5. Showcase Community Engagement

Highlight feedback that shows wide-ranging community involvement and buy-in.

Example: "Feedback from parents revealed that 80% felt more connected to the school after attending our performances."

6. Demonstrate Sustainability

Use feedback to prove that the project has lasting value.

Example: Include teacher comments about how the project influenced their teaching or young people describing newfound skills.

7. Present Success with Honesty

Acknowledge challenges and show how feedback is being used to improve future projects.

Example: "While 20% of participants suggested shorter sessions, this feedback will shape our next programme design."

8. Tailor the Feedback Presentation

Customise your materials for each funder.

For corporate funders: Emphasise branding opportunities or workplace skills development.

For arts funders: Showcase creativity, innovation, and cultural impact.

For social impact funders: Highlight equity, diversity, and inclusion outcomes.

9. Create a "Takeaway"

Design a polished leave-behind item such as:

A summary brochure with visuals and testimonials.

A digital portfolio of feedback and outcomes accessible via a QR code.

10. Collaborate with Participants

Invite participants (e.g., young people, teachers) to share their feedback directly with funders in meetings or events.

Arrange live showcases of performances or projects as part of your pitch.

Key Questions Funders Want Answered Through Feedback

What was the impact of this project?

How does this align with our priorities?

Who benefited, and how?

What feedback shows long-term value?

Why should we continue or expand funding?

Incorporating these strategies will not only demonstrate your project's success but also position your organisation as one that listens, adapts, and creates meaningful change.

Common Mistakes in Project Evaluation

1. Lack of Clear Objectives

Mistake: Starting evaluation without well-defined goals or success criteria.

Example: Evaluating "overall satisfaction" without specific indicators like skill development or emotional engagement.

Tip: Set SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) objectives at the project's start to guide the evaluation process.

2. Using Generic or Inappropriate Tools

Mistake: Relying on generic feedback forms or surveys that don't reflect the project's unique goals or participants.

Example: Using a standard form for a poetry workshop that doesn't ask about creative confidence or literacy skills.

Tip: Tailor tools to the project's needs, incorporating specific questions and creative methods that align with the art form.

3. Overloading Participants with Questions

Mistake: Asking too many questions, leading to participant fatigue and rushed or incomplete answers.

Example: A feedback form with 50 questions is unlikely to get thoughtful responses.

Tip: Prioritise concise, meaningful questions. Focus on quality over quantity.

4. Ignoring Qualitative Feedback

Mistake: Focusing only on numerical data and neglecting personal stories, quotes, or creative expressions.

Example: Reporting a 90% satisfaction rate but failing to include participant testimonials that highlight emotional impact.

Tip: Balance quantitative data with qualitative insights to provide a richer picture of the project's impact.

5. Collecting Feedback at the Wrong Time

Mistake: Asking for feedback too early (before participants can process the experience) or too late (when details are forgotten).

Example: Sending a survey weeks after a performance workshop.

Tip: Gather feedback promptly after the activity or in stages (e.g., immediate impressions followed by longer-term reflections).

6. Failing to Engage Stakeholders

Mistake: Only focusing on participants and ignoring feedback from other stakeholders, such as teachers, parents, or community members.

Example: Not asking teachers how an arts programme integrated with their curriculum.

Tip: Include multiple perspectives to understand the project's broader impact.

7. Using Complex Language

Mistake: Writing questions or evaluation forms that are too technical, vague, or difficult to understand.

Example: Asking young participants, "How has this activity contributed to your socio-emotional learning?"

Tip: Use simple, age-appropriate, and accessible language.

8. Not Acting on Feedback

Mistake: Collecting feedback but failing to analyse or use it for improvement.

Example: Repeating the same mistakes in future projects because feedback wasn't reviewed.

Tip: Create an action plan based on feedback, and communicate changes to stakeholders to show responsiveness.

9. Focusing Only on Positive Feedback

Mistake: Ignoring constructive or negative feedback to present the project in an overly flattering light.

Example: Filtering out criticism when reporting to funders.

Tip: Embrace constructive feedback as an opportunity for growth. Highlight how challenges will inform future projects.

10. Overemphasising Metrics

Mistake: Treating evaluation as a box-ticking exercise by focusing solely on numbers and graphs.

Example: Reporting 500 participants attended a session but failing to explore their engagement or learning outcomes.

Tip: Use a mixed-methods approach, combining metrics with personal stories and creative outputs to provide context.

11. Ignoring Accessibility

Mistake: Using evaluation tools or methods that exclude certain participants (e.g., those with disabilities or language barriers).

Example: Providing written feedback forms without considering visual or verbal alternatives.

Tip: Design inclusive tools that cater to different needs, such as verbal interviews, visuals, or translations.

12. Lack of Consistency

Mistake: Changing evaluation methods midway through the project, making it hard to compare data.

Example: Using surveys for some sessions and interviews for others without clear rationale.

Tip: Plan your evaluation approach at the start and stick to it, allowing for consistent data collection.

13. Not Contextualising Results

Mistake: Presenting feedback without context or failing to explain why certain outcomes occurred.

Example: Reporting that "20% of participants didn't enjoy the session" without acknowledging external factors like bad weather or timing.

Tip: Provide context for anomalies or unexpected results to avoid misinterpretation.

14. Overlooking Staff and Facilitator Feedback

Mistake: Only gathering feedback from participants and neglecting the insights of those delivering the project.

Example: Not asking facilitators about challenges or unexpected successes they observed.

Tip: Include facilitators in the evaluation process to gain a fuller picture of the project.

15. Treating Evaluation as a One-Off Task

Mistake: Conducting evaluation only at the project's end and missing opportunities to adjust during delivery.

Example: Discovering participants were disengaged too late to make changes.

Tip: Use ongoing (formative) evaluation to monitor progress and adapt as needed.

How to Avoid These Mistakes

Plan Early: Integrate evaluation into the project design, not as an afterthought.

Engage Participants Creatively: Use diverse, fun methods to collect feedback.

Involve Stakeholders: Include teachers, parents, and facilitators in the process.

Analyse and Act: Use feedback to make meaningful improvements and report impact effectively.

Communicate Results: Share findings with stakeholders to build trust and transparency.

By avoiding these pitfalls, arts organisations can ensure their evaluation processes are robust, inclusive, and truly reflective of their project's impact.

<u>Funding Opportunities for Schools</u>

Why Fundraising for the Arts Matters in Schools

Quality arts education unlocks creativity, boosts confidence, supports oracy and literacy, and connects young people to their cultural identity. Yet, many schools face real challenges: shrinking budgets, growing pupil needs, and families who simply cannot afford to subsidise arts activities. But that doesn't mean the arts are out of reach.

Fundraising can transform what's possible. It can enable your school to run:

- Arts weeks and festivals

- Specialist workshops (in dance, drama, music, visual art, poetry, digital art)

- Artist residencies

- School-wide or multi-school collaborative projects

- Cross-curricular enrichment through creativity

We often hear: "We can't afford it – and our parents can't either."
That's exactly why external funding exists. Many grants are *not means-tested on parent income*, and are specifically designed to support arts access in schools with high levels of deprivation or limited cultural capital. You don't have to be an experienced bid-writer – just clear, passionate, and prepared.

Where to Find Arts Funding for Schools

Top Funds and Opportunities to Explore

1. Arts Council England – Project Grants (National Lottery)

- **Focus:** Broad arts engagement and creative projects

- **Who Can Apply:** Schools (if working with a professional artist/organisation)

- **Amount:** £1,000–£100,000+

- **Link:** www.artscouncil.org.uk/projectgrants

- **Tip:** Partner with an artist or arts organisation to strengthen your bid.

- **Eligibility:** Schools can apply *only if* the project is *not* part of the statutory curriculum and offers significant engagement with and benefits to the wider community.

2. Children & the Arts (Paul Hamlyn Foundation)

- **Focus:** Equal access to high-quality arts experiences for children and young people

- **Link:** https://www.phf.org.uk/funding

- **Tip:** Look out for the *Arts-based Learning Fund* and *Teacher Development Fund* (great for CPD-linked projects).

- **Eligibility:** Schools are not eligible to apply directly. However, arts and cultural organisations can apply in partnership with schools to deliver arts-based learning projects.

3. Youth Music

- **Focus:** Music-making projects for young people, especially those facing barriers

- **Amount:** Up to £30,000

- **Link:** https://www.youthmusic.org.uk/funding/i-need-funding

- **Tip:** Strong applications show youth voice and a clear plan for impact and inclusion.

- **Eligibility:** Schools can apply if the project has a significant element of innovative and genuine partnership, benefits the wider community, and focuses on engaging children and young people in challenging circumstances.

4. The Foyle Foundation – Schools Library and Arts Fund

- **Focus:** Improving arts provision, particularly in deprived areas

- **Amount:** £1,000 – £10,000

- **Link:** www.foylefoundation.org.uk

- **Eligibility:** Primarily supports UK-based charities with a core remit of the arts or learning. Schools are not directly eligible; however, they can benefit through partnerships with eligible charities.

- **Application Tip:** Collaborate with a registered charity to access funding for arts projects benefiting your school.

5. The Ernest Cook Trust

- **Focus:** Creative outdoor learning and arts in education

- **Amount:** Small and larger grants available

- **Link:** www.ernestcooktrust.org.uk

- **Eligibility:** UK state-funded secondary schools, including special schools working with secondary-age children, located in specific regions (e.g., parts of Cumbria, Lancashire, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, Avon, and Leicestershire) are eligible.

- **Application Tip:** Ensure your project aligns with the Trust's focus on outdoor learning and environmental education.

6. National Lottery Community Fund – Awards for All

- **Focus:** Community building, wellbeing, including arts & culture projects

- **Amount:** £300–£10,000

- **Link:** www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk

- **Eligibility:** Schools can apply if the project benefits the wider community and is not solely for educational purposes.

- **Application Tip:** Demonstrate how your project will engage the broader community beyond the school.

7. The Ragdoll Foundation

- **Focus:** Arts with and for children and young people, particularly innovative or participatory approaches

- **Amount:** Up to £50,000

- **Link:** www.ragdollfoundation.org.uk

- **Eligibility:** Schools and other formal education institutions (state, private, mainstream, or special) are eligible to apply, including 'Friends of' school groups.

- **Focus:** Supports innovative, arts-based projects that involve children and young people.

8. The Hedley Foundation

- **Focus:** Enabling access to arts for disadvantaged children

- **Amount:** Average grant £2,000

- **Link:** www.hedleyfoundation.org.uk

- **Eligibility:** Only UK-registered charities with an annual income below £1 million are eligible. Schools are not directly eligible but can partner with eligible charities.

- **Application Tip:** Collaborate with a small charity to develop a project that benefits your students.

10. Music for All

- **Focus:** Musical instruments, tuition, and music education projects

- **Link:** www.musicforall.org.uk

- **Eligibility:** Schools can apply for funding to support music-making projects and access to musical instruments.

- **Application Tip:** Clearly outline how the funding will enhance music education and accessibility in your school.

🔍 **How to Stay Up-to-Date on New Funding Opportunities**

Use these websites to monitor live funding calls:

- **Arts Professional Funding Guide**
  https://www.artsprofessional.co.uk/news/funding-fundraising

- **Grants for Schools**
  https://www.grants4schools.info/

- **Education Endowment Foundation (EEF)** – good for wider school development funding with creative elements
  https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/

Tips for Writing a Strong Arts Funding Bid

Even small bids benefit from clear, compelling storytelling. Keep it simple, structured, and student-focused.

DO:

- **Demonstrate Need:** Use facts (e.g. % FSM, EAL, SEND) and explain what pupils currently miss out on.

- **Set Clear Aims:** What will change for pupils as a result?

- **Include Quotes:** From pupils or teachers, showing why the activity matters.

- **Show Partnerships:** Work with artists/arts orgs – it boosts your credibility and delivery capacity.

- **Plan for Impact:** Think about legacy – how will the work live on after the funding?

DON'T:

- Use jargon or vague statements ("pupils will engage in the arts" – say *how*, *why*, *with whom*).

- Ask for funding without a breakdown of costs.

- Assume funders know your school context – paint the picture.

Every child deserves access to powerful, inspiring, and inclusive arts education. Don't let budget limitations stand in the way of bold, creative teaching. Funding is out there – and your school is worth it.

Embedding Arts Education in Primary Schools

Understanding the National Curriculum is essential for arts organisations looking to deliver programmes in schools. By aligning their offerings with the curriculum, these organisations can enhance the educational experience of pupils and contribute to their holistic development. Engaging with schools in a way that complements the National Curriculum can lead to successful partnerships that benefit both pupils and the wider community.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a81a9abe5274a2e8ab55319/PRIMARY_national_curriculum.pdf

Linking the Arts to the National Curriculum: A Guide for Arts Organisations and Primary Schools looking to increase their arts provision (Written by Tania Yasmin, Headteacher, Greet Primary School)

Introduction

The integration of the arts into the National Curriculum provides a unique opportunity for arts organisations and artists to enhance the educational experience of pupils. By aligning arts initiatives with curriculum objectives, arts organisations can contribute to the holistic development of children and young people while fostering a love for the arts. This document outlines practical strategies for arts organisations to link their programmes to the curriculum, ensuring relevance and impact.

Strategies for Linking Arts to the Curriculum

1. Identify Curriculum Objectives

- **Familiarise with the National Curriculum**: Understand the key objectives and content areas outlined in the National Curriculum. Focus on subjects such as Art and Design, Music, Drama, and English, which naturally align with arts activities.
- **Target Specific Learning Outcomes**: Identify specific learning outcomes within the curriculum that your arts programmes can support. For example, if a school aims to enhance pupils' creativity and critical thinking, design workshops that encourage exploration and innovation.

2. Develop Thematic Projects

- **Cross-Curricular Themes**: Create projects that combine multiple subjects. For instance, a project on "The Environment" could integrate visual arts, science, and geography, allowing pupils to express their understanding of environmental issues through art.
- **Cultural and Historical Context**: Develop programmes that explore cultural and historical themes relevant to the curriculum. This could include workshops on

historical art movements or the role of art in different cultures, linking to History and Geography objectives.

3. Use Art Media to Enhance Learning

- **Visual Arts**: Incorporate drawing, painting, sculpture, and digital media to help pupils express their ideas and experiences. For example, a visual arts project could focus on creating a mural that reflects the school's values or local history.
- **Performing Arts**: Use drama and music to enhance storytelling and communication skills. Workshops can focus on character development, improvisation, and performance, supporting English language skills and personal development.
- **Multimedia and Technology**: Integrate technology into arts programmes by using digital tools for creating art, music production, or video projects. This aligns with the Computing curriculum and prepares pupils for the digital age.

4. Provide Professional Development for Teachers

- **Workshops and Training**: Offer professional development sessions for teachers to enhance their understanding of how to integrate the arts into their teaching. This could include training on using art as a tool for teaching other subjects or developing creative lesson plans.
- **Collaborative Planning**: Work with teachers to co-design arts-based projects that align with their curriculum goals. This collaboration ensures that the arts initiatives are relevant and beneficial to the pupils' learning experiences.

5. Create Assessment and Evaluation Tools

- **Align with Assessment Criteria**: Develop assessment tools that align with the National Curriculum's assessment criteria. This can help teachers evaluate pupils' progress in both arts and academic subjects.
- **Feedback Mechanisms**: Implement feedback systems to gather insights from teachers and pupils about the effectiveness of arts programmes. Use this information to refine and improve offerings.

6. Foster Community Engagement

- **Involve Parents and Community**: Encourage community involvement in arts projects. Organise exhibitions, performances, or workshops that invite parents and the local community to engage with pupils' artistic work.
- **Partnerships with Schools**: Establish partnerships with schools to create ongoing arts programmes that support curriculum delivery. This can include residencies, after-school clubs, or holiday workshops.

By linking arts initiatives to the National Curriculum, arts organisations and artists can play a vital role in enriching the educational landscape for children and young people. Tailoring programmes to meet curriculum needs not only enhances pupils' learning experiences but also fosters a deeper appreciation for the arts. We encourage arts organisations to embrace this opportunity, collaborate with schools, and contribute to the holistic development of our future generations.

Case Study: Using Drama to Explore the Shang Dynasty

Using drama as a teaching tool can effectively engage pupils in historical topics, such as the Shang Dynasty, while developing their language skills and soft skills. This approach allows pupils to immerse themselves in the historical context, encouraging active participation and deeper understanding.

Objectives

1. **Enhance Historical Knowledge**: Pupils will gain a deeper understanding of the Shang Dynasty, including its culture, governance, and significant events.
2. **Develop Language Skills**: Pupils will improve their spoken English, vocabulary, and ability to articulate thoughts and ideas.
3. **Foster Soft Skills**: Pupils will cultivate listening skills, confidence in public speaking, and resilience in overcoming challenges during the learning process.

Drama Activities to Explore the Shang Dynasty

1. Role-Playing Historical Figures

- **Activity**: Assign pupils different roles as historical figures from the Shang Dynasty, such as the king, artisans, farmers, or priests. Provide background information on each character's role in society.
- **Execution**: Pupils can prepare short monologues or dialogues that reflect their character's perspective on key events, such as the construction of bronze vessels or the significance of ancestor worship.
- **Skills Developed**:
    - **Historical Knowledge**: Understanding the social structure and culture of the Shang Dynasty.
    - **Language Development**: Crafting and delivering speeches enhances vocabulary and articulation.
    - **Soft Skills**: Listening to peers and responding appropriately builds communication skills and confidence.

2. Creating a Historical Scene

- **Activity**: In groups, pupils can create a short scene depicting daily life in the Shang Dynasty, such as a market day, a religious ceremony, or a royal court meeting.
- **Execution**: Pupils will write a script, assign roles, and rehearse their scenes. They can incorporate props (e.g., replicas of Shang Dynasty artefacts) to enhance their performance.
- **Skills Developed**:
    - o **Historical Knowledge**: Exploring the daily lives and customs of the Shang people.
    - o **Language Development**: Collaborative scriptwriting encourages vocabulary expansion and narrative skills.
    - o **Soft Skills**: Teamwork fosters collaboration, and performing in front of peers builds confidence. Resilience is developed through rehearsal and performance challenges.

3. Improvisation Based on Historical Events

- **Activity**: Present pupils with significant events from the Shang Dynasty, such as the rise and fall of a king or the discovery of bronze working. Ask them to improvise a scene based on these events.
- **Execution**: Encourage pupils to think on their feet and create dialogue and actions that reflect the historical context. This can be done in small groups or as a class.
- **Skills Developed**:
    - o **Historical Knowledge**: Engaging with key events deepens understanding of the Shang Dynasty's significance.
    - o **Language Development**: Improvisation enhances spontaneous speaking skills and vocabulary usage.
    - o **Soft Skills**: Listening to others and adapting to the flow of the scene fosters resilience and adaptability.

4. Storytelling Through Movement

- **Activity**: Use movement and physical theatre to tell a story from the Shang Dynasty, such as a myth or legend.
- **Execution**: Pupils can create a movement piece that represents the story, using gestures, expressions, and body language to convey meaning without words. This can be accompanied by narration or music.
- **Skills Developed**:
    - o **Historical Knowledge**: Understanding cultural narratives and their significance in Shang society.
    - o **Language Development**: Narrating the story enhances spoken language skills and comprehension.

o **Soft Skills**: Engaging in physical expression builds confidence and encourages resilience through creative exploration.

Incorporating drama into the study of the Shang Dynasty not only brings history to life but also enriches pupils' educational experiences. By engaging in role-play, creating scenes, improvising, and using movement, pupils can develop historical knowledge, language skills, and essential soft skills. This dynamic approach fosters a love for learning and encourages resilience, preparing pupils for future challenges in and out of the classroom.

Creative Teaching Example: Storytelling with the Water Cycle

Lesson Overview

Objective: Pupils will understand the water cycle and the process of how rain is formed.

Age Group: Key Stage 1 (Year 1-2)

Materials Needed:

- Story props (e.g., images of the sun, clouds, raindrops, and bodies of water)
- A large sheet of paper or a whiteboard for drawing
- Simple illustrations or a storybook about the water cycle (optional)

Lesson Structure

1. Introduction to the Concept (5 minutes)

- **Discussion**: Begin with a brief discussion about weather and water. Ask pupils questions like, "What happens when it gets hot outside?" or "Where does the rain come from?"
- **Set the Scene**: Explain that they will hear a story about how rain is made, introducing key vocabulary such as evaporation, condensation, and precipitation.

2. Storytelling Activity (15 minutes)

- **Narrative Creation**: Create a simple, engaging story that personifies elements of the water cycle. For example:

Title: "The Journey of Water: A Raindrop's Adventure"

Story Outline:

o **Introduction**: Introduce a character named "Wally the Water Droplet," who lives in a big blue ocean.

- ο **Evaporation**: One sunny day, Wally feels warm from the sun's rays and starts to rise into the sky. "I'm getting lighter and lighter!" he exclaims as he evaporates into vapour.
- ο **Condensation**: As Wally floats up, he meets his friends, "Cumulus the Cloud." Together, they gather more water droplets and become a fluffy cloud. "Look how big we are getting!" says Cumulus.
- ο **Precipitation**: Eventually, Wally and his friends become heavy with water. "Uh-oh, we're too heavy!" Wally shouts. They start to fall back to the ground as rain. "We're going back home!" he cheers as he falls to the earth.
- ο **Conclusion**: Wally lands in a puddle and eventually flows back to the ocean, ready to start his adventure all over again.

3. Interactive Elements (10 minutes)

- **Props and Illustrations**: Use props to represent different stages of the water cycle. For example, hold up a sun cutout when discussing evaporation, a cloud when discussing condensation, and a raindrop when discussing precipitation.
- **Pupil Participation**: Encourage pupils to act out parts of the story. For instance, they can pretend to be the sun by stretching their arms wide, or they can form a cloud by linking arms and swaying side to side.

4. Discussion and Reflection (10 minutes)

- **Group Discussion**: After the story, gather pupils to discuss what they learned. Ask questions like:
    - ο "What happens to Wally when the sun shines?"
    - ο "How do clouds form?"
    - ο "What does it mean when it rains?"
- **Vocabulary Reinforcement**: Write key vocabulary words on the board and discuss their meanings, reinforcing the scientific concepts learned through the story.

5. Conclusion and Assessment (10 minutes)

- **Wrap-Up**: Summarise the water cycle and how rain is made, connecting back to the story of Wally.
- **Assessment Activity**: Have pupils draw their version of Wally's journey through the water cycle, labelling the stages of evaporation, condensation, and precipitation. This visual representation reinforces their understanding of the process.

Benefits of Using Storytelling

- **Engagement**: Storytelling captivates pupils' attention and makes learning enjoyable.
- **Understanding**: A narrative framework helps simplify complex scientific concepts, making them relatable and easier to remember.
- **Language Development**: Pupils practice listening skills and vocabulary acquisition through the storytelling process.
- **Critical Thinking**: Discussing the story encourages pupils to think critically about the scientific concepts involved in the water cycle.

This structured approach demonstrates how storytelling can effectively teach the science objective of how rain is made, fostering a deeper understanding of the water cycle while engaging pupils in a creative and interactive way.

Example Story: The Journey of Wally the Water Droplet

Once upon a time in a big blue ocean…

There lived a cheerful little water droplet named **Wally**. Wally loved to play with his friends, splashing around in the warm sun. Every day was an adventure, but Wally often wondered what lay beyond the ocean.

One sunny day…

As Wally floated on the surface, he felt the sun's warm rays shining down. "Oh, how lovely it is today!" he exclaimed. Suddenly, he noticed something magical happening. The sun was warming him up, and he began to feel lighter and lighter.

"What's happening to me?" Wally wondered.

Before he knew it, Wally started to rise into the sky! "I'm flying!" he shouted with joy. He was turning into water vapour!

Up, up, up he went…

Wally floated higher and higher, leaving the ocean behind. As he reached the clouds, he met a fluffy, white cloud named **Cumulus**. "Hello, Wally!" Cumulus greeted him. "Welcome to the sky! Would you like to join me?"

"Yes, please!" Wally replied excitedly.

Wally and Cumulus danced together in the gentle breeze, gathering more and more water droplets. They were becoming a big, fluffy cloud filled with tiny water droplets, just like Wally!

As time went by…

The sun continued to shine brightly, and Wally and his friends grew bigger and heavier. "Uh-oh!" Wally exclaimed. "I think we're getting too heavy! What will happen now?"

Suddenly, dark clouds began to form…

Wally felt a change in the air. "We need to let some of this water go!" Cumulus said. "It's time to fall back to the ground as rain!"

"Here we go!" Wally shouted.

With a whoosh, Wally and his friends began to tumble down from the sky. "We're falling! We're falling!" they cheered as they transformed into raindrops.

Splash!

Wally landed in a puddle on the ground. "Wow! This is so exciting!" he said, splashing around. He saw other droplets joining him, and together they created a little stream that flowed towards a nearby river.

As Wally flowed along…

He saw trees, flowers, and animals drinking the fresh water. "Look how happy everyone is!" he thought. Wally felt proud to be part of the water cycle, helping plants and animals grow.

But Wally's journey wasn't over yet…

Eventually, Wally made his way back to the ocean, where he started his adventure all over again. "I can't wait to see what happens next!" he said with a smile.

And so, Wally the Water Droplet…

Continued his journey through the water cycle, reminding everyone that every drop of water has a story to tell.

The End

Practical Lesson Ideas: Using the Arts to Enrich Curriculum Learning

The following lesson plans demonstrate how creative approaches can bring core curriculum subjects to life through the arts. Designed to be flexible and adaptable, each plan showcases how drama, storytelling, visual arts, and other artistic methods can support key learning objectives across a range of topics and key stages. Arts organisations can use these examples as inspiration when co-creating workshops with schools, aligning with curriculum goals while also nurturing pupils' creativity, communication skills, and confidence. Teachers can also adapt these ideas to incorporate into classroom practice, helping embed the arts across the wider curriculum.

Lesson Plan 1: Music

Objective:

Pupils will learn about the water cycle and how rain is made through music, enhancing their understanding of the concepts through song and sound.

Activities:

1. **Singing (15 minutes)**:
   o Introduce a song about the water cycle, such as "The Water Cycle Song."
   o Teach the lyrics and melody, encouraging pupils to sing along.
   o Discuss the meaning of the song and how it relates to the water cycle.
2. **Instrument Play (15 minutes)**:
   o Provide simple instruments (e.g., tambourines, xylophones).
   o Assign different instruments to represent elements of the water cycle (e.g., tambourines for rain, xylophones for the sound of flowing water).
   o Have pupils play their instruments as you narrate the water cycle, allowing them to create sound effects that correspond to the story.
3. **Rhythm Activities (10 minutes)**:
   o Engage pupils in clapping or tapping out rhythms that represent different stages of the water cycle.
   o For example, clap softly for evaporation, tap louder for precipitation, and create a steady beat for flowing rivers.

Assessment:

Pupils will demonstrate their understanding by participating in the song and instrument activities, showing their ability to connect music with the water cycle.

Lesson Plan 2: Drama and Performance Art

Objective:

Pupils will act out the water cycle, embodying different elements to understand how rain is made.

Activities:

1. **Role Play (20 minutes)**:
   o Assign roles to pupils (e.g., water droplets, clouds, the sun).
   o Guide them in acting out the water cycle, starting with evaporation, moving to condensation, and ending with precipitation.
   o Encourage pupils to use their bodies and voices to express their roles.
2. **Puppet Shows (15 minutes)**:
   o Provide materials for pupils to create simple puppets representing characters in the water cycle (e.g., a sun puppet, cloud puppet).
   o Allow pupils to perform short puppet shows illustrating how rain is made.
3. **Storytelling (10 minutes)**:

- Narrate a story about the water cycle, using expressive language and gestures.
- Invite pupils to join in with sound effects or actions as you tell the story.

Assessment:

Pupils will demonstrate their understanding of the water cycle through their participation in role play and puppet shows, showcasing their ability to embody different elements.

Lesson Plan 3: Dance and Movement

Objective:

Pupils will express their understanding of the water cycle through creative movement and dance.

Activities:

1. **Creative Movement (15 minutes)**:
   - Lead pupils in a warm-up, encouraging them to stretch and move like water droplets.
   - Guide them to mimic the movement of rain falling, swirling clouds, and flowing rivers.
2. **Choreography (20 minutes)**:
   - Divide pupils into small groups and ask them to create a short dance routine that represents the stages of the water cycle.
   - Encourage them to use movements that reflect evaporation, condensation, and precipitation.
3. **Performance (10 minutes)**:
   - Have each group perform their dance for the class.
   - Discuss how their movements relate to the water cycle.

Assessment:

Pupils will demonstrate their understanding of the water cycle through their dance performances, showcasing their creativity and ability to express concepts through movement.

Lesson Plan 4: Digital Arts

Objective:

Pupils will create digital projects to explain how rain is made, enhancing their understanding through technology.

Activities:

1. **Video Creation (30 minutes)**:
   - Introduce pupils to basic video editing software.

ο Have them create short videos explaining the water cycle, using drawings, animations, or recorded narrations.

ο Encourage them to include sound effects that represent rain and water flow.

2. **Music Production (30 minutes)**:

ο Provide access to basic music production software.

ο Guide pupils in composing their own soundscapes related to the water cycle, incorporating sounds of rain, rivers, and wind.

Assessment:

Pupils will demonstrate their understanding by creating digital projects that accurately represent the water cycle and how rain is made.

Lesson Plan 5: Storytelling and Spoken Word

Objective:

Pupils will explore the water cycle through poetry and storytelling, enhancing their language skills and creativity.

Activities:

1. **Poetry Writing (20 minutes)**:

ο Encourage pupils to write poems about the water cycle, focusing on elements like rain, clouds, and the sun.

ο Provide examples of simple rhymes or structures to help them get started.

2. **Spoken Word Performance (20 minutes)**:

ο Organise a session where pupils can perform their poems for the class.

ο Encourage them to focus on expression and delivery, using gestures and voice modulation.

Assessment:

Pupils will demonstrate their understanding of the water cycle through their poetry and spoken word performances, showcasing their creativity and communication skills.

Lesson Plan 6: Textile Arts

Objective:

Pupils will create textile art that represents the water cycle, exploring texture and design.

Activities:

1. **Collage Making (30 minutes)**:

ο Provide a variety of fabric scraps and materials for pupils to create collages representing different elements of the water cycle (e.g., blue fabric for water, white for clouds).

o   Encourage pupils to discuss their choices and the meanings behind their designs.

2. **Tapestry Creation (30 minutes)**:
   o   Guide pupils in creating a tapestry that illustrates the water cycle, using weaving or sewing techniques.
   o   Discuss the importance of each element in the cycle as they work.

Assessment:

Pupils will demonstrate their understanding of the water cycle through their textile art creations, showcasing their ability to represent concepts visually.

Lesson Plan 7: Photography and Visual Storytelling

Objective:

Pupils will use photography to capture elements of the water cycle, creating a visual story.

Activities:

1. **Photo Projects (30 minutes)**:
   o   Take pupils outside to capture images of elements related to the water cycle (e.g., puddles, clouds, plants).
   o   Discuss what they are looking for and how it connects to the water cycle.
2. **Collage Making (30 minutes)**:
   o   Have pupils create collages using their photographs and printed materials that represent the water cycle.
   o   Encourage them to tell a story through their visual compositions.

Assessment:

Pupils will demonstrate their understanding of the water cycle through their photography and collages, showcasing their ability to tell a visual story.

By embedding the arts within the framework of the National Curriculum, arts organisations and educators can create powerful, immersive learning experiences that support academic attainment, creativity, and personal development. Whether through historical reenactment, storytelling, or cross-curricular projects, arts-based approaches enrich the curriculum and foster essential skills in young learners. We encourage schools and cultural partners to collaborate meaningfully, align their objectives, and unlock the full potential of arts education in the primary phase.

<u>Activity Ideas: Using the Arts to Support KS2 National Curriculum Topics</u>

The activities below are ways in which you can support learning in a cross-curricular way. While the topics below are suggested for KS2, they can be tweaked in difficulty to support young people across any key stage. These suggested activities can be wrapped around your lesson plans rather than adding to your workload as standalone lessons.

English (Reading, Writing, Spoken Language)

Reading Comprehension & Themes

- **Drama: Hot-seating** (students take on a character's role and answer questions in character).

- **Dance:** Create a **movement piece** reflecting the emotions in a story.

- **Music:** Create a **soundtrack** for a book (e.g., suspenseful sounds for *The Lion, The Witch & The Wardrobe*).

- **Visual Art: Storyboard a scene** from a book with a different setting or ending.

- **Digital Arts: Podcast book reviews** or create a **green screen trailer** for a novel.

- **Poetry:** Write a **'found poem'** using words/phrases from the text.

Spelling, Vocabulary, Grammar

- **Drama: Freeze-frame grammar** (students freeze in positions that reflect nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc.).

- **Dance: Act out punctuation** (full stop = stillness, comma = pause, exclamation = jump).

- **Music: Rap grammar rules** (e.g., contractions, suffixes).

- **Visual Art: Create word collages** for tricky spelling words.

- **Digital Arts: Use stop-motion animation** to explain tricky words or homophones.

- **Poetry: Write nonsense poems** using new vocabulary.

Mathematics

Fractions, Decimals & Percentages

- **Drama: 'Fraction Families'** – Act out how fractions relate (e.g., ½ is the parent of ¼ & ¼).

- **Dance: Move in fractional speeds** (whole = fast, half = medium, quarter = slow).

- **Music: Layer rhythms** to represent fractions (whole note, half note, quarter note).

- **Visual Art: Fraction mosaics** to represent proportions.

- **Digital Arts: Create a stop-motion animation** showing fractions splitting and recombining.

- **Poetry: Write a 'Maths Riddle Poem'** where the answer is a fraction.

Geometry (Shapes, Angles, Symmetry)

- **Drama: Human Angles** (students form different angles with their bodies).

- **Dance: Choreograph symmetrical & asymmetrical moves.**

- **Music: Create a 'Shape Soundscape'** where different shapes = different beats.

- **Visual Art: Kandinsky-inspired abstract shape art.**

- **Digital Arts: Use green screen to 'step inside' a shape.**

- **Poetry: Write a poem from the perspective of a triangle or a circle.**

Science

Forces (Gravity, Friction, Air Resistance, Magnetism)

- **Drama: Slow-motion gravity simulation** (act out dropping objects in space vs. Earth).

- **Dance: Create movement sequences that show forces acting on a body.**

- **Music: Use different instruments to 'feel' friction (smooth = violin, rough = drums).**

- **Visual Art: Create paintings using friction (chalk smudging, crayon resist).**

- **Digital Arts: Slow-motion videos showing force in action.**

- **Poetry: Personify Gravity in a poem.**

Evolution & Inheritance

- **Drama: 'Evolution Interviews'** (students roleplay an evolving species).

- **Dance: Show movement evolution from fish to land animals to humans.**

- **Music: Create a melody that 'evolves' over time.**

- **Visual Art: Create a family tree of fictional creatures.**

- **Digital Arts: Use AI to generate 'future humans'.**

- **Poetry: Write a poem from the perspective of a fossil.**

Art & Design

Studying Famous Artists (e.g., Van Gogh, Frida Kahlo)

- **Drama: Interview a 'famous artist' about their work.**

- **Dance: Interpret brushstrokes through movement.**

- **Music: Create a soundscape inspired by paintings.**

- **Visual Art: Recreate a famous work using a modern twist.**

- **Digital Arts: Animate a famous painting.**

- **Poetry: Ekphrastic poetry (descriptive poetry about a piece of art). Ekphrastic Poetry (pronounced *ek-frass-tik*) is a poem about a piece of art (a painting, sculpture, or photograph). Think of it like this:**

  You look at a painting.

  You imagine the story, emotions, or meaning behind it.

  You write a poem inspired by what you see.

  Example

  Painting: *Mona Lisa*
  Poem:
  "She sits so still, a hidden smile,
  Her eyes have watched for quite a while.
  What secret does she hide from me?
  A mystery for eternity."

Citizenship (PSHE)

Democracy & Government

- **Drama: Mock elections or parliament debates.**

- **Dance: Group formations to represent unity vs. division.**

- **Music: Write a national anthem for an imaginary country.**

- **Visual Art: Design campaign posters.**

- Digital Arts: Create a political meme or animation.
- Poetry: Protest poems or spoken word.

Computing

Online Safety & Fake News

- Drama: 'Cyber Consequences' roleplay scenarios.
- Dance: Use movement to show how online dangers can spread.
- Music: Create a 'fake news jingle'.
- Visual Art: Draw 'digital footprints' to show online identity.
- Digital Arts: Make a deepfake awareness video.
- Poetry: Write a haiku about digital privacy.

Design & Technology

Structures & Model Building

- Drama: Students 'become' parts of a building and explain their role.
- Dance: 'Building Dance' showing construction through movement.
- Music: Create a 'hammering and drilling' soundscape.
- Visual Art: Build models using unusual materials.
- Digital Arts: Design a 3D model on a computer.
- Poetry: Write a poem from the perspective of a bridge.

Geography

Rivers & Water Cycle

- Drama: Act out the journey of a raindrop.
- Dance: Choreograph a 'water cycle' dance.
- Music: Create sounds that represent water moving through different stages.
- Visual Art: Paint a river's journey from source to mouth.
- Digital Arts: Time-lapse video of condensation forming.

- **Poetry: Write a river's autobiography.**

History

Ancient Egyptians

- **Drama: Mummification roleplay.**

- **Dance: Recreate ancient Egyptian ceremonial movements.**

- **Music: Recreate Egyptian-style drumming.**

- **Visual Art: Design tomb murals.**

- **Digital Arts: Create 'VR tomb tours'.**

- **Poetry: Write a poem as an Egyptian god.**

Music

Composing & Performing Songs

- **Drama: Write a play with music to tell a story.**

- **Dance: Choreograph a routine to match a musical composition.**

- **Visual Art: Create album covers for compositions.**

- **Digital Arts: Use GarageBand or Soundtrap to layer sounds.**

- **Poetry: Lyrics writing exercise.**

Physical Education

Athletics & Movement

- **Drama: Olympic-style commentary roleplay.**

- **Dance: Relay race movements turned into choreography.**

- **Music: Create rhythm games to match sprinting paces.**

- **Visual Art: Draw athletes in motion.**

- **Digital Arts: Slow-motion sports analysis video. Get a student to commentate while others move in slow motion. Breaking down movements, techniques, how to pick up speed, showing an understanding of commentating in sport.**

Embedding the Arts in Secondary Schools

A young person's journey through secondary school is a pivotal stage in life where the decisions they make begin to shape their future pathways. Whether it's the subjects they choose or the extra-curricular opportunities they access, the arts can play a transformative role in shaping identity, confidence, creativity, and ambition.

Let's begin by exploring **why the arts matter to young people**. This section has been co-created with Harpinder Singh (Queensbridge School).

Why the Arts Matter in Secondary Schools

- **Developing Creativity and Imagination**
  The arts nurture a young person's ability to think creatively and imagine new possibilities—essential skills for innovation, entrepreneurship, and problem-solving.

- **Supporting Emotional Expression and Wellbeing**
  Through the arts, young people explore and process their emotions, develop empathy, and build resilience.
  "Art washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life." – Pablo Picasso

- **Building Confidence and Self-Identity**
  From performing to exhibiting to discussing their ideas, young people grow in confidence and gain a stronger sense of self.

- **Fostering Collaboration and Communication**
  Artistic projects demand teamwork, active listening, and negotiation—critical skills that empower learners in life and work.

- **Enhancing Academic and Cognitive Skills**
  There is growing evidence that the arts improve memory, focus, literacy, numeracy, and overall academic attainment.

- **Preparing for Future Careers and Transferable Skills**
  The arts cultivate adaptability, leadership, and creativity—essential attributes for the 21st-century workforce. Creative industries are booming, and early exposure in school can open doors.

Challenges Faced by Secondary Schools

Often, arts organisations assume the barrier is finance. In reality, it's more often **capacity**, **competing priorities**, and **timetable constraints**. Here's what secondary schools are navigating:

Operational and Staffing Challenges

- Staff must be present at events (safeguarding, first aid, fire safety, behaviour)

- Backup plans are needed for staff absence

- Who manages signing visitors in/out, DBS checks, lanyards, lunch?

- Finding a space/room large enough can be a logistical challenge

Timetabling and Curriculum Conflicts

- What else is happening that week? Mock exams, NEAs, key interventions?

- When are specific texts or topics being taught? (Don't offer Macbeth when they're on Inspector Calls)

- PSHE and pastoral events often respond to national/international events on short notice

Teacher Workload

- Most HoDs teach 17–18 out of 25 periods

- Limited PPA time must cover planning, assessment, leading departments, appraisals, calendaring, and curriculum planning

- Taking time for a workshop often means something else gets dropped

Strategic Priorities

- Narrowing attainment gaps in Pupil Premium and reading

- Mental health and wellbeing support

- Career readiness (Gatsby Benchmarks)

- Character education (DfE framework)

- UNCRC, PSHE, SEND inclusion

What Makes a Strong Arts Partnership in a Secondary School?

For arts partnerships to be truly embedded, they must be **relevant, responsive, and realistic**.

Checklist: Foundations of a Strong Partnership

- Is the project aligned with the school's curriculum **at the right time of year**?

- Are the aims and outcomes clearly defined—and do they connect to **curriculum goals, not just engagement**?

- Does it support whole-school priorities (e.g. closing the attainment gap, building character, or supporting mental health)?

- Has the school helped shape the content and format of the project?

- Is the project timetable-aware? (e.g. fits within lesson lengths, avoids mock/exam season)

- Is there a clear plan for **logistics**—room booking, staffing, sign-in, DBS, communication?

- Can the partnership grow over time? (e.g. staff CPD, repeated engagement with students, building to a performance or showcase)

- Has the impact been evaluated and shared in a way the school can use?

- Are students given opportunities for **leadership**, **reflection**, or **public sharing** of their learning?

- Are there opportunities to bring parents or carers into the project?

You can't just 'drop in' with a great offer. If it's not tied to our curriculum, linked to priorities like reading or Pupil Premium, or doesn't land at the right time of year—we just can't do it

Make Your Offer Relevant

Help schools say **yes** by making it easier for them:

- Ask for **curriculum maps** to align your offer

- Be flexible with format and timings

- Offer **resources for pre- or post-workshop learning**

- Provide clear **impact measurement tools** schools can use (e.g. pupil voice forms, reflection templates)

- Focus on **fewer schools, deeper partnerships** - include CPD or co-delivery options for staff

Creative Well-being: Using the Arts to Support Mental Health in Schools

This section of toolkit has been co-authored with Anna Robinson, Director of Mental Health and Wellbeing at Birmingham Education Partnership. There is growing evidence that using the arts in schools can really help support young people's mental health. A major review by the World Health Organization (Chatterjee et al., 2018) looked at over 3,000 studies and found that creative activities can reduce anxiety, boost mood, and help young people feel more connected. Research by Daykin et al. (2017) also shows that the arts can build emotional literacy, resilience, and a sense of belonging, especially when young people are involved in shaping the experience.

Neuroscience backs this up too. We know well now about how plastic our brains are and the field of neuroscience helps to explain how creative play activates core emotional systems in the brain, helping with regulation, expression, and connection. UK-based studies, like those from Arts Council England (2021) and A New Direction (2020), have found that regular arts engagement can improve confidence, classroom behaviour, and wellbeing, especially when it's part of a wider whole-school approach. The Mental Health In Schools Framework (DfE, 2021) endorse creative methods as part of effective early intervention.

What makes the biggest difference is how the arts are used. The best results come when programmes are co-designed with young people, delivered by skilled and trusted adults, and happen regularly over time, not just as one-offs. Arts work has the most impact when it feels part of everyday school life, is supported by school leaders, and is linked to wider work on wellbeing and inclusion. Creative activities that are identity-affirming, inclusive, and relational can be especially powerful for pupils (and staff!) who struggle with verbal expression or feel like they do not quite fit.

There is a strong and growing case that the arts aren't just "nice extras" – they're a valuable way to support emotional wellbeing in schools.

This toolkit is not just about preaching the value of the arts—it's about *practising* it. You'll find evidence-led insights on why the arts support mental health and well-being, but more importantly, you'll find *immediately usable activities* for students and staff. These don't need big budgets or long rehearsals. They just need space, time, and a facilitator willing to create moments of connection, expression, and restoration.

Why the Arts Support Well-being

What the Research Says:

- **Emotional Regulation**: The arts support the processing of complex emotions, reducing anxiety and improving self-awareness (National Endowment for the Arts, 2019).

- **Stress Relief**: Music, visual arts, and movement-based practices help to lower cortisol levels.

- **Social Connection**: Drama and collaborative arts build empathy, belonging, and teamwork.

- **Cognitive Reframing**: Creative tasks allow students to reframe experiences and build resilience.

- **Staff Burnout Prevention**: Regular arts-based sessions for staff can alleviate stress and increase morale (Wellcome Trust, 2022).

The arts partially open the door so that participants come through at their own pace.

How to use this part of the toolkit:

Below is a range of activities that can be used in school (or within arts organisations) as part of both staff training or activities with young people. Designed for PSHE, Enrichment Days, Staff INSETs, Tutor Time, or Well-being Weeks. Activities require minimal resources and can be scaled for any age group. Each section includes a practical activity, a discussion or reflection point, and how to adapt for staff or students.

At-a-Glance Activities Table

Art Form	Student Activity	Staff Adaptation Idea	Time
Drama	Walk around as if (emotions)	Use as an energiser at staff briefings	7 min
Music	Freeze & build a scene from sound	Use music & drawing to process stress	7 min
Dance	Diamond leadership movement	Used in CPD as team-building energiser	7 min
Visual Art	Draw your happy place	Gratitude journaling with doodles	7 min
Poetry	Describe feelings through senses	Used in morning reflection emails	7 min

Workshop Breakdown (45 minutes total)

1. Warm-up & Introduction (5 mins)

- **Activity:** *"The Race"* – Each participant passes a ball around a circle as the facilitator moves on the outer edge of the circle. The facilitator contextualise different scenarios to change the speed of their movement, which challenges participants to move quicker. This activity is to quickly get participants to understand that they are in a team, required to create a safe space in the room.

- **Activity:** *"Name & Movement"* – Each participant introduces themselves with a movement that represents how they feel today. Others mirror it back. Great way to check in and see who you can rely on and where you may need to put in further support.

- **Discussion Prompt:** *"What role does creativity play in your well-being?"* (1-minute pair discussion)

2. Drama: Role-Playing Emotions (7 mins)

- **Activity:** *"Walk around as if"* – Participants walk around the space. You set a scenario of where they are, what the weather is like. You prompt emotions for them to think about. You take them on relatable journeys. The space can turn into anything from sand, ice, a bouncy floor. With young people you can take them into sillier more imaginative spaces but throughout make sure you bring them back to thoughts and feelings.

- **Reflection:** How does the body store emotion? How can drama help students express and release emotions?

3. Music: Sound & Mood (7 mins)

- **Activity:** '*Adding to an image'. Play a song, ask a volunteer to enter the space and freeze, creating and image in which they have personally responded to the music. Gradually invite others to interpret what they see and add to this image. Add one person, 2, 4, half a class. Give them moments to see each other's creations and responses. Shift them between audiences and performers. It is crucial that the music helps guide this imagination. Do not set a story or a place for them, let them know the space is a canvas for them to create on. Change the music completely and repeat. There is no pressure to add dialogue but as the activity progresses movement, dialogue and development to scenes can take place if your participants are really enjoying the activity.*

- **Reflection:** How does sound influence our mental state? How can music help regulate emotions in the classroom?

4. Dance & Movement: Releasing Stress (7 mins)

- **Activity:** '*Diamonds'* - Ask participants to form into the shape of a diamond. One person at the front, one behind them. Two on the side. Everyone faces in one direction, making the person at the front of the Diamond 'the leader'. Using music, the leader guides the rest of the group around the space which the others copy the actions. You play some music and shout "change". They can turn to left, right or turn all the way around the face the back. This turn causes a change in who the leader is. Continually shift leaders giving people the freedom to creatively move their group.

- **Discussion:** Movement as a tool for stress release—how can we use dance and physical expression for student well-being?

5. Visual Art: Reflection through Drawing (7 mins)

- **Activity:** *"Draw your happy place"* – On a piece of paper, participants use colors, shapes, and lines to express a place (real or imaginary) where they feel most at peace. This space can have anything they want in it. Play music that seems to neutral and therefore not pushing any particular emotion.

- **Reflection:** How can visual art provide a non-verbal way for students to process emotions?

6. Poetry (Processing Feelings)

Activity: Words to Senses. Find a few words to do with wellbeing and ask people to turn them into the 5 senses. E.g the words could include 'Stress', 'Positivity', 'Confusion' and ask them to describe Stress as a sound (they may say drilling). Describe Stress as something you can taste (they may say stale popcorn). Describe Stress as something you can touch (they may crumbling chalk). Describe Stress as something you can hear (they may say peak-hour traffic). Describe stress as something you see (They may say people arguing). It's a way for them to show you their interpretation of these words and how they perceive them.

- **Reflection – How can we indirectly ask people to respond to themes through poetry?**

7. Closing Reflection (5 mins)

Every activity allowed individuals to respond with their own ideas. Every activity took away the burden of 'expressing' feelings but rather processing them. This is to create a safe space for them to open up their vulnerability. The Arts allow you to navigate between spaces and emotions without a need for any explaining. They partially open the door so that participants come through that door at their own pace. Vulnerability

requires vulnerability. Your staff have to acknowledge that in order for us to engage with these topics, we have to look after ourselves too in the process.

Suggested Additions for Long-Term Integration

For Students:

- **Creative Check-Ins (Weekly)**: Use the "Name & Movement" or "Describe a Feeling as a Sound" activities to start PSHE or Tutor Time.

- **"Creative Quiet Time" Corners**: Visual journaling stations in libraries or wellbeing spaces.

- **Peer-Led Arts Clubs**: Students lead drop-in drama, poetry or movement sessions.

For Staff:

- **5-minute Mindful Drawing at CPD**: Start each meeting with reflective sketching or colouring-in.

- **Sound & Silence Breaks**: Curate staff playlists for wellbeing zones or lunchtime recharge spaces.

- **Well-being Champions**: Train 2–3 staff to facilitate monthly arts wellbeing sessions

Building Cultural Capital Through Arts Projects: Exploring Identity, Community, and Belonging

Cultural capital is the knowledge, skills, experiences, and values that young people develop through their engagement with the world around them. By embedding arts projects into the curriculum, schools can provide students with opportunities to explore their cultural heritage, understand the diversity of their communities, and develop a sense of pride in where they come from. Arts projects not only celebrate who students are but also empower them to shape their own futures and contribute meaningfully to their cities.

Birmingham is one of the UK's most diverse cities, with a rich tapestry of cultures and communities. Its arts industry is booming, with a vibrant array of organisations supporting creative practice across the city. In 2024, Birmingham Arts School (BAS) is working with 29 cultural organisations across drama, dance, digital art, music, poetry, and visual art, all of whom are integral to delivering high-quality arts experiences for young people. These partnerships create a wealth of opportunities for schools to engage with diverse artistic practices, making arts education not only accessible but deeply connected to the local cultural landscape.

Through the arts, young people in Birmingham can explore their identities, learn about the diversity of their city, and take pride in their heritage. These projects foster a greater sense of belonging and empower students to actively contribute to their communities. They also provide pathways to understanding the wide array of opportunities available to them in Birmingham's growing arts sector.

Why Cultural Projects Matter:

Cultural projects are not just about showcasing talent; they are about nurturing young people's understanding of their place in the world. These projects encourage young people to explore who they are, where they come from, and what makes their communities unique. Through creative expression, students can begin to build connections between their personal experiences and the wider world, helping them feel part of a larger story—both locally and globally.

Such projects also open doors to future opportunities by showcasing the potential of arts and culture as career pathways, particularly in cities like Birmingham, where the arts scene is thriving. Whether through drama, poetry, dance, music, or visual arts, young people can develop skills that go beyond creative expression—skills like communication, teamwork, and critical thinking, which are essential for success in any career. Moreover, cultural projects provide a sense of purpose and empowerment, helping students recognise the value of their contributions to their communities and society at large.

Practical Ideas for Schools to Explore Cultural Awareness:

Below are some examples of how arts projects can play a vital role in supporting young people's exploration of their identities and sense of community:

- **Object-based Storytelling**: Students bring in meaningful objects from their families and create stories or drama performances using these items. This project not only explores personal history but also encourages communication between children and parents, strengthening family connections. It can also be an opportunity for students to share cultural traditions, such as clothing worn on special occasions.
- **Cultural Performance Days**: Organise drama performances that explore global languages, traditions, and celebrations. This can foster an appreciation of diversity while showcasing the shared humanity that connects us all.
- **Cultural Careers Talks**: Invite speakers from a variety of community groups to talk about careers in the arts. This provides students with role models from similar backgrounds and demonstrates that arts careers are accessible to everyone, regardless of their cultural heritage.
- **Poetry Projects**: Collaborate with students and their parents on projects like "This is Me," where students write poems reflecting on their identity and cultural roots. This is a creative way to explore who they are and where they come from.
- **Cultural Food Sharing**: Encourage parents to bring traditional dishes into the school, sharing stories and memories behind these meals. This could include family recipes that hold special meaning, helping students learn about each other's backgrounds and traditions.
- **Literacy and Creative Arts Projects**: Use diverse literature as a springboard for creating music, drama, dance, poetry, digital content, or visual art. This allows students to connect with different cultural narratives and express their creativity through various artistic mediums,

How Arts Organisations Can Support Cultural Projects:

To further enrich cultural projects, schools can partner with a wide range of arts organisations that bring expertise and resources to enhance the learning experience. In Birmingham, a city brimming with creative energy, there are numerous arts organisations that can help schools deliver festivals, melas, performance projects, showcases, and other creative initiatives. These collaborations offer opportunities for young people to engage directly with professional artists and gain exposure to diverse cultural forms.

In 2024, Birmingham Arts School's partnerships with 29 cultural organisations are a testament to the city's thriving arts industry. These organisations span a range of disciplines, including drama, dance, digital arts, music, poetry, and visual art, providing schools with a vast pool of resources and expertise to draw from. Whether it's a large-scale community festival or a smaller, intimate performance project, these partnerships offer a wealth of creative possibilities that can enrich the school curriculum and help students develop their cultural capital.

Integrating Cultural Projects into the Curriculum:

While cultural projects are invaluable, it's essential that they are not just standalone events. They should be woven into the broader curriculum, allowing for a more holistic approach to learning. Integrating cultural projects with subjects like history, geography, and literacy can enhance their impact and relevance. Additionally, schools should ensure that evaluation is embedded into every project, helping to track progress and outcomes while capturing students' reflections and learnings. Digital tools, such as QR codes linked to video interviews or voice recordings, offer innovative ways to capture the students' voices and experiences throughout the process.

The Power of Partnership in Arts Projects:

The beauty of working in partnership with arts organisations is that these partnerships offer valuable support in planning and developing cultural projects that meet the specific needs and budgetary constraints of schools. By collaborating with local organisations, schools can tap into a wealth of expertise, ensuring that the projects are both creatively ambitious and logistically achievable. Whether it's designing a large-scale arts festival, a community mela, or a smaller performance project, arts organisations work alongside schools to develop activities that are not only inspiring for students but also realistic and sustainable within the school's resources. This partnership approach ensures that cultural projects are delivered effectively, with consideration for the practicalities and goals of the school, while maximising the impact of arts education for young people.

By making cultural projects an integral part of their students' learning journey, schools not only build cultural capital but also contribute to the personal growth and empowerment of young people, preparing them to thrive in a diverse, interconnected world.

The Artsmark Journey

This resource has been created by Birmingham Arts School. The information is correct and up to date as of July 2024. Please do check official information about Artsmark here: https://www.artsmark.org.uk

Why should you pursue the Artsmark Award for your school?

Embarking on an Artsmark journey is a valuable investment that brings significant benefits to both schools and their students. For a £500 fee, schools receive a comprehensive package of support and resources, along with the opportunity to earn **nationally recognised accreditation** in the form of an **Artsmark award** (Silver, Gold, or Platinum). Here's why it's worth considering:

1. **Tailored Support and Guidance**: Schools receive personalized consultancy from Artsmark advisors, helping them develop a strategic plan to embed high-quality arts and cultural education across the curriculum. This support is invaluable in creating a cohesive and impactful arts strategy.
2. **Accreditation and Recognition**: Successfully completing the Artsmark process leads to formal accreditation, which acts as a national stamp of excellence. Schools can proudly showcase their achievement, signaling a commitment to arts education to parents, students, and the wider community.
3. **Access to Exclusive Resources**: Artsmark schools benefit from practical toolkits, planning frameworks, case studies, and professional development opportunities for teachers. These resources help schools to strengthen their arts provision and continuously improve.
4. **Boosting Reputation and Partnerships**: Earning an Artsmark award elevates a school's profile, making it more attractive to parents, arts partners, and potential collaborators. Schools also gain access to a network of arts and

cultural organizations, creating new opportunities for student engagement through workshops, projects, and performances.

5. **Student Wellbeing and Engagement**: Arts education is proven to support mental health, confidence, and social skills. Through Artsmark, schools provide students with creative outlets that positively impact both academic achievement and personal development.

6. **Contributing to Cultural Capital**: Artsmark ensures that all students, regardless of background, benefit from high-quality cultural education. This builds their cultural capital and prepares them for future opportunities.

7. **Framework for Continuous Improvement**: Artsmark offers a structured framework that aligns arts education with broader school improvement goals. It helps schools reflect on their current provision, identify areas for growth, and celebrate successes.

8. **Opportunities for Funding**: Artsmark accreditation also makes schools more attractive candidates for arts and cultural funding, as it highlights their commitment and strategic approach to arts education.

In summary, embarking on the Artsmark journey is not just about gaining accreditation; it's about investing in the future of students, staff, and the school community. The process enriches the curriculum, enhances student wellbeing, and positions the school as a leader in arts and cultural education.

Any school or education setting in England can sign up for Artsmark, regardless of their current level of arts engagement. Schools don't need to already be heavily involved in arts activities to begin their Artsmark journey. Artsmark is designed to help schools develop or enhance their arts provision, guiding them through a structured process of improvement and embedding arts and culture into the curriculum. Schools at any stage—whether just starting out with arts activities or already well-established in their arts practice—can apply and benefit from the framework.

Once a school registers for Artsmark, they begin their journey by committing to developing their arts provision, but simply registering doesn't automatically move them toward accreditation. Staff development workshops, early-stage partnerships, and working with local artists—are steps that help schools progress, but they alone don't guarantee the Silver accreditation.

Steps After Registration (to work towards Silver):

1. **Self-Assessment**: Schools begin by reflecting on their current arts provision and completing an Artsmark Self-Assessment to identify strengths and areas for development.

2. **Create a Statement of Commitment**: Schools draft a Statement of Commitment, outlining their plans for improving and embedding high-quality arts education. This is a roadmap that must be signed off by senior leadership and linked to the school's wider development goals.

3. **Start Implementation**: To work towards Silver, schools need to actively implement the goals in their Statement of Commitment. Some common activities include:
   - **Staff Development Workshops**: Teachers should receive CPD training on delivering high-quality arts education.
   - **Early-Stage Partnerships**: Begin building partnerships with local artists, arts organizations, and external providers to support arts learning.
   - **Engage School Community**: Involve parents, governors, and the wider school community in arts events and exhibitions.
   - **Arts-Rich Curriculum**: Start developing and delivering cross-curricular arts projects that integrate arts education across various subjects.

Requirements for Silver Accreditation:

1. **Whole School Involvement**: Arts activities should involve the whole school, showing clear development in the quality of arts provision.
2. **Developing Partnerships**: Schools need to demonstrate they have started partnerships with external arts providers and artists, with plans to build on this further.
3. **Improved Arts Access**: There should be evidence of improved access to arts education for all students, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds.
4. **Sustainable Planning**: Schools need to show how they will sustain and further develop their arts provision in the long term.

Key Outcome:

Silver is awarded when a school demonstrates they are **embedding arts and culture across the curriculum** and are on a clear path of improvement, with plans and activities to continue developing their arts provision.

Moving from Silver to Gold

Key Steps to Move from Silver to Gold:

1. **Deepen Whole-School Involvement:**
   - Arts should be fully embedded across the curriculum and school ethos.
   - Increase engagement with all stakeholders (staff, students, parents) through performances and exhibitions.
2. **Increase Leadership in the Arts:**
   - Establish arts leadership roles (e.g., arts coordinators) who drive the school's arts vision.
   - Senior leaders regularly champion arts in school development plans.
3. **Expand Partnerships and Collaboration:**
   - Build long-term partnerships with external arts organizations and local artists.

o   Work collaboratively with arts partners to co-deliver projects and residencies.

4. **Promote Cross-Curricular Arts Projects:**
   o   Design and implement arts projects that span multiple subjects.
   o   Organize school-wide events (e.g., arts festivals, creative weeks) that involve all students.

5. **Encourage Student Leadership in the Arts:**
   o   Empower students to take on arts leadership roles (e.g., arts councils, drama captains).
   o   Offer platforms for students to lead arts activities and showcase their work.

6. **Demonstrate Impact and Evaluation:**
   o   Collect evidence of the positive impact of arts on students' academic and personal development.
   o   Use data-driven evaluations to improve arts provision.

7. **Contribute to Arts Advocacy:**
   o   Actively promote arts education beyond the school through partnerships, events, or sharing best practices.
   o   Join regional or national networks to advocate for arts education.

Gold Accreditation Requirements:

- **Arts Leadership**: Clear leadership structure and senior management commitment to arts education.
- **Sustainability**: Long-term plans for embedding arts across the school.
- **Excellence in Arts Education**: High-quality arts provision integrated across all stages.
- **Broader Influence**: Demonstrated advocacy and influence in the arts education sector beyond the school.

Moving from Gold to Platinum

Key Steps to Move from Gold to Platinum:

1. **Embed Arts as a Core Element of School Identity:**
   o   Arts should be central to the school's vision and ethos, influencing all areas of school life.
   o   Evidence that arts provision supports whole-school improvement and student outcomes across the curriculum.

2. **Drive Innovation in Arts Education:**
   o   Lead innovative arts projects that inspire and engage the whole school community.
   o   Showcase groundbreaking cross-curricular arts initiatives, demonstrating creativity and originality.

3. **Strengthen External Partnerships and Arts Advocacy:**

- Form influential, long-term partnerships with national and regional arts organizations.
- Schools should contribute to shaping arts education policies and practices on a regional or national level.

4. **Provide Opportunities for Teacher Development:**
   - Support staff in continuous professional development (CPD) to improve the quality of arts teaching.
   - Encourage teachers to lead or participate in arts education research and share findings within the broader community.

5. **Empower Students to be Creative Leaders:**
   - Foster student-led arts initiatives that influence both the school and the wider community.
   - Provide leadership opportunities for students to shape and deliver arts projects, extending beyond school walls.

6. **Lead as a Hub of Arts Learning in the Community:**
   - Be a central figure in promoting arts education across other schools, collaborating with networks to share resources and best practices.
   - Lead arts education events and festivals that engage local schools, organizations, and communities.

7. **Evaluate and Share Impact Nationally:**
   - Demonstrate measurable impact of arts education on students' academic, personal, and social development, using rigorous data.
   - Publish or present findings on successful arts strategies and practices, influencing arts education across the sector.
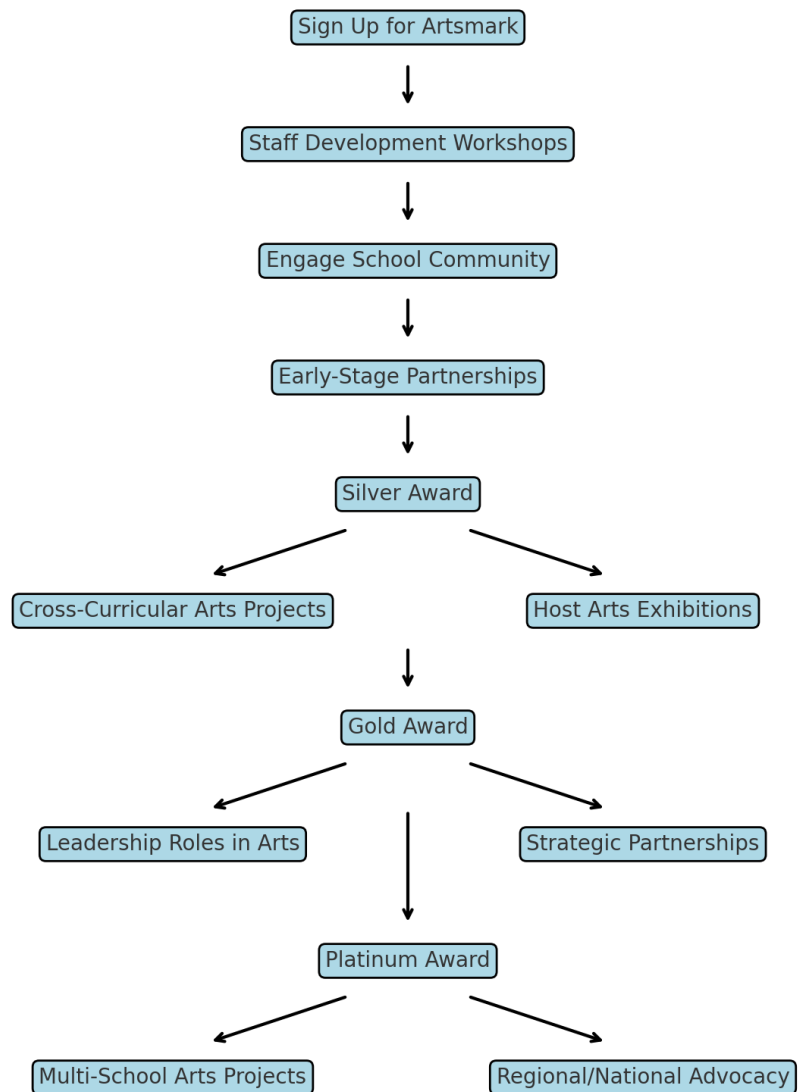
Platinum Accreditation Requirements:

- **Arts as School Identity**: The school's ethos and identity are clearly centered on the arts, with leadership fully committed to its long-term sustainability.
- **Innovation and Leadership**: Schools demonstrate cutting-edge, creative arts practices and take a leadership role in national and regional arts education.
- **Community and National Influence**: Schools must act as a hub of arts education, supporting not just their own students but the wider educational community.

Summary of Progression from Silver to Platinum:

- **Silver**: Focus on embedding arts across the curriculum and creating partnerships.
- **Gold**: Strengthen leadership, deepen arts integration, expand partnerships, and show impact.
- **Platinum**: Lead innovation, influence arts education nationally, embed arts as core to the school's identity, and demonstrate lasting impact.

Each step involves increasing levels of engagement, leadership, and influence, both within the school and beyond into the wider community and arts education sector.

Flowchart of Activities and Ideas to Move Between Artsmark Awards

```
                    Sign Up for Artsmark
                            │
                            ▼
                 Staff Development Workshops
                            │
                            ▼
                  Engage School Community
                            │
                            ▼
                  Early-Stage Partnerships
                            │
                            ▼
                       Silver Award
                       ╱        ╲
                      ▼          ▼
    Cross-Curricular Arts Projects    Host Arts Exhibitions
                            │
                            ▼
                       Gold Award
                      ╱     │      ╲
                     ▼      ▼       ▼
   Leadership Roles in Arts      Strategic Partnerships
                            │
                            ▼
                     Platinum Award
                     ╱          ╲
                    ▼            ▼
    Multi-School Arts Projects     Regional/National Advocacy
```

Digital Resources from Arts Organisations

We asked arts organisations in the city if there were any digital resources that schools could purchase or could have access to if freely available. Below are the contributions we received.

Digital resources from Big Brum TIE

'Socially Distant' (Secondary)

Book (print or digital) and Digital Film.

What happens when we're deprived of human contact? Join us as we tell the story of a teacher in isolation working through the death of his son. Our digital Theatre in Education programme, 'Socially Distant', is inspired by the themes that came to light during the Covid pandemic, as well as those found in Shakespeare's 'Romeo and Juliet' – disconnection, isolation, repression and civil dissonance. Tried and tested by our school and university partners, the monodrama aims to help young people talk about their own experiences of lockdown, the pandemic and loss. The four-part film is supported by educational resources, empowering teachers to facilitate a highly impactful Theatre in Education experience. It is especially ideal for teachers and lecturers of drama, and for PSHE and SMSC purposes. The resources include Chris Cooper's playscript.

Available on request. Details: https://bigbrum.org.uk/socially-distant

'Hansel and Gretel' (Primary)

Digital film and teachers' resource.

An adaptation of the Grimms' brothers' fairy tale for primary and special schools

To request further information: https://bigbrum.org.uk/appointments-3

'The Giant's Embrace' (Primary)

Digital film, print storybooks and teacher materials

A fairy-tale that explores the relationship between a young boy and a greedy giant.

Available at a small cost. Details: https://bigbrum.org.uk/tours/giants-embrace

The End of Reason: 1914-18 (Secondary and Upper KS2)

Digital and print copies of plays and teaching resources

'The End of Reason 1914-1918' is a cycle of five plays, marking the centenary of the First World War and touring from 2014-2018. The plays were written by Chris Cooper for Big Brum to use as part of an integrated Theatre in Education experience for

young people, making a 100-year-old conflict resonate with the lives of young people today. They are supported by a separate volume of teaching resources.

Freely available to Birmingham schools. Contact: judy@bigbrum.org.uk.

'Creating Schools of Recovery' (Primary)

Digital report, short films and related materials. Report also available in print.

Materials from Big Brum's emerging partnership model with primary schools.

Freely available at https://bigbrum.org.uk/sor

'To Be Project' (All)

Digital curriculum, guidebook and research report. Handbook also available in print.

Materials from a European project which explore how Drama in Education and Theatre in Education can be used in collaboration with teachers to support the wellbeing of children and especially those at risk of exclusion.

Digital materials freely available at https://bigbrum.org.uk/projects/to-be

'Engaging, Exploring, Expressing - the case for Theatre in Education' (All)

Digital report and related materials

Freely available at https://bigbrum.org.uk/projects/the-case-for-theatre-in-education

'The Needs and Wants of Learners with Physical Disabilities' (All/SEND)

Digital Report with PDnet

Freely available at https://pdnet.org.uk/big-brum-report-2018/

Digital resources from BCMG:

Welcome to BCMG's Learning Resource Hub. There are resources and activities here for young people, parents, composers and teachers (secondary music teachers, generalist primary teachers, instrumental teachers) mainly focused on supporting young people to compose. We are delighted to be able to make the resources free but would ask that you credit BCMG if you use them.

https://resources.bcmg.org.uk/welcome-to-bcmgs-learning-resources/

BAS Cultural Partners and Artists (2024)

Birmingham Arts School (BAS) was partnered with 27 of the city's leading cultural organisations to enrich the lives of young people through the arts. Together, we support schools across Birmingham, fostering creativity, confidence, and cultural capital in the next generation. With a focus on equality in arts access, our partnerships help ensure that arts education is available to all. Below is a list of all our supporting arts organisations and we hope you can use this part of the toolkit to find organisations you are interested in developing relationships with.

Autin Dance Company

Autin Dance Theatre is an award-winning, interdisciplinary touring company based in Birmingham.

Autin Dance Theatre is a collaborative ensemble of creatives who devise & produce aspirational, socially engaged & mass participatory movement projects regionally & internationally. Autin Dance Theatre's distinctive artistic voice draws on contemporary social issues (environment, community, relationships & identities) to make engaging, accessible, relevant performance work.

We aim to inspire, educate & instigate positive social change through highly responsive, multi-disciplinary art in theatres, outdoors & non-traditional spaces.

Art Form: Dance, Multi-Disciplinary
Website: www.autindt.co.uk
Email: hello@autindt.co.uk

B:Music

B:Music run free and accessible outreach programs that enrich the musical experiences for young children in both primary and secondary schools. We run two main programs in schools. B:and Together is a creative music making programme that gives young people the opportunity to play their chosen instrument in a large or medium sized group, creating their own music or songs from their musical heritage, culture or simply from their musical preferences. stE.P is a DJing and Production programme for young people in primary and secondary schools. Students learn how to DJ using DJ controllers as well as producing their own music.

Art Form: Music
Website: www.bmusic.co.uk
Email: lucy-ellen.parker@bmusic.co.uk

Big Brum

Big Brum uses theatre and drama to help young people to make meaning of their lives and the world around them. Big Brum is an Arts Council NPO and an award-winning charity pioneered in 1982 to educate young people through Theatre in Education (TIE) learning programmes. We deliver most of our work in learning settings located in areas of high economic and social deprivation, where children and young people are least engaged with creativity and culture

Art Form: Theatre
Website: www.bigbrum.org.uk
Email: tie@bigbrum.org.uk

Birmingham Contemporary Music Group

BCMG is one of Europe's leading new music ensembles. Based at CBSO Centre, the ensemble performs in Birmingham, nationally and internationally, and has commissioned over 200 new works from living composers. Since 2000, BCMG has worked in schools supporting children and their teachers with the composing element of the music curriculum. BCMG is recognised as an international leader in this area and won the 2024 Music and Drama Award for Excellence in Primary/Early Years for its 2-year action research project *Listen Imagine Compose Primary (LICP)*. The Listen Imagine Composer Primary Toolkit was published in 2024 and is available on their website for free alongside many other free resources to support children's composing. After receiving further funding from Paul Hamlyn Foundation, LICP will continue with 5 new schools from September 2025.

Art Form: Music
Website: www.bcmg.org.uk
Email: nancy@bcmg.org.uk

Birmingham Museums Trust

Birmingham Museums Trust runs 9 venues across the city, including Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery (currently closed), Thinktank Science Museum and 6 Historic Properties. Our education programme offers a wide range of stimulating and memorable experiences for your school, all of which are designed to inspire and engage your students. We offer:

Taught on-site sessions at six of our venues
Outreach sessions with our mobile planetarium
Online sessions where we broadcast direct into your school
Museum in a box loans service with over 200 loans boxes to choose from
Teacher CPD sessions
Free Resources

Art Form: Museum and Gallery
Website: https://www.birminghammuseums.org.uk/schools
Email: amy.cheng@birminghammuseums.org.uk

Birmingham Repertory Theatre

Birmingham Repertory Theatre aims to grow a love of theatre for all. The Creative Learning team works with a range of schools, colleges and universities. Our Drama Practitioners support both curriculum aims and provide opportunities for young people to connect with the theatre industry. As well as providing bespoke workshops, the Rep offers partnership programmes where practitioners are embedded into your school programme. These partnerships also come with the benefits of backstage tours, performance opportunities in our auditoriums, career panels with Rep staff, teacher CPD and more. You can find out about these partnerships on the following link: https://www.birmingham-rep.co.uk/take-part/education-2/schools-colleges-universities/

The aims of our programme are to instil creativity in young people, develop students' and teacher's confidence in using drama as a medium for learning and to inspire careers in the arts.

Art Form: Drama/Theatre
Website: www.birmingham-rep.co.uk/take-part
Email: learning@birmingham-rep.co.uk

Birmingham Open Media

BOM (Birmingham Open Media) is an immersive Arts Organisation, empowering communities through immersive innovation & learning.

Their create award-winning interactive experiences in VR, AR and games that have strong social purpose. Their learning programmes engage underserved children, young people and adults through accessible formal and informal education, giving people creative digital skills to progress into careers in the creative industries. Their schools programmes are empowering young Black and SEND learners across Birmingham and beyond to unleash their creative potential using digital. They also run monthly creative coding workshops and our flagship annual Summer Camp

Art Form: Visual Arts/ Multi-Disciplinary/ Multimedia/ Performance
Website: https://bom.org.uk/
Email: adanna@bom.org.uk

Birmingham Royal Ballet

The **LEAP (Learning, Engagement, Access and Participation)** department at **Birmingham Royal Ballet** works closely with Birmingham Primary schools to inspire, educate, and nurture young people through dance. One of our flagship initiatives is the **Dance Track** talent identification programme, which seeks out potential in children aged 6–7. Selected participants are invited onto the programme, receiving **free ballet tuition, uniform, and opportunities to attend Birmingham Royal Ballet performances**, helping to remove barriers to participation and support emerging talent.

We also work in partnership with **multi-academy trusts** to deliver **long-term, bespoke school projects**, tailored to the needs of the schools and aligned with Birmingham Royal Ballet's repertoire and availability. These collaborations are designed to create meaningful, sustained engagement with dance and the arts.

In addition, we offer:

- **Bespoke workshops** for both **primary and secondary schools**, designed to complement the curriculum and introduce students to the world of ballet in an engaging and accessible way. These workshops can be adapted to suit different age groups, themes, or areas of focus, such as storytelling through movement, choreography, or performance skills.
- **CPD (Continuing Professional Development) sessions for teachers**, equipping educators with the tools and confidence to integrate dance and movement into their teaching practice. These sessions are practical, creative, and linked to curriculum outcomes, supporting both specialist and non-specialist teachers.
- **Relaxed performances**, specially adapted for audiences who may benefit from a more informal theatre environment. These performances are ideal for individuals with autism, sensory sensitivities, or learning disabilities, and include adjusted lighting and sound, a relaxed attitude to movement and noise in the auditorium, and dedicated quiet spaces.
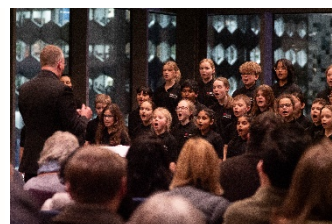
Art Form: Dance/Music
Website: www.brb.org.uk
Email: Rebeccabrookes@brb.org.uk

City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra

The City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra (CBSO) is a family of incredible musicians, choirs and youth ensembles, making music that matters to the people of Birmingham, the West Midlands and beyond.

We deliver over 300 creative workshops and performances every year in schools in Birmingham and the wider West Midlands. In addition, we give annual Key Stage concerts at Symphony Hall and Relaxed concerts for Special School pupils at the fully accessible CBSO Centre.

The CBSO also provides heavily subsidised tickets for schools to all our main season Birmingham concerts - so why not bring a group of students to experience a concert: with repertoire ranging from Harry Potter to Beethoven, and from orchestral rock to qawwali, there really is something for every musical taste and interest.

Find out more about what we can offer your school by going to https://cbso.co.uk/take-part/schools.

Art Form: Music
Website: https://cbso.co.uk/
Email: education@cbso.co.uk

Desi Blitz Magazine

Our DESIblitz Truck Art Bus is a vibrant masterpiece handcrafted by the world's foremost truck artist, Haider Ali. Our remarkable bus serves as a hub for a multitude of creative events, fostering engagement with schools to ignite the imaginations of the next generation of readers. With author workshops, talks, and events, we strive to inspire and empower students.

Art Form: Multi-Disciplinary
Website: https://www.desiblitz.com/
Email: indi.deol@desiblitz.com

Ex Cathedra

We believe singing should be at the heart of every school community. Singing is really powerful for the wellbeing of individuals and communities. Our schools' programmes have been developed by our award-winning team over many years to enable and inspire schools to do just that. We offer a suite of innovative, exciting and inclusive activities for Primary and Secondary schools across Birmingham and throughout the world. From online resources, to school visits, to Big Sing events, our website has all of the details.

Art Form: Music
Website: www.singingschools.co.uk
Email: education@excathedra.co.uk

Fabric

Our vision is to inspire people through dance, transforming lives, communities and places. We believe dance is remarkable and is vital in shaping the future. The FABRIC school programme is an integral part of our outreach strategy, aiming to extend our engagement with children and young people in diverse communities across the city, and to develop the next generation of audiences, performers and leaders. Through our schools' work, we aim to develop the skills, creativity, confidence and wellbeing of the students and to inspire the teaching workforce with creative approaches they can use beyond our sessions.

Art Form: Dance
Website: https://fabric.dance/schools-programme/
Email: becky@fabric.dance

Ikon Gallery

Ikon Gallery welcomes school groups and offers tours, workshops, free online resources and activity packs.

The gallery, situated in central Birmingham, shows work by artists from around the world in a variety of media including sound, film, mixed media, photography, painting, sculpture and installation.

Ikon's tours and workshops are perfect for introducing students to the exhibitions, aiming to develop students' creative and critical thinking skills when talking about and making art in relation to different subjects. Speak to the Education Team about how these tours and workshops can support curriculum areas.
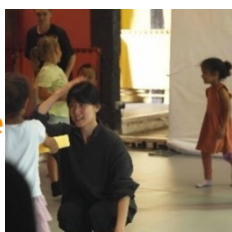
Art Form: Visual Arts/Gallery
Website: www.ikon-gallery.org
Email: education@ikon-gallery.org

Keneish Dance

Keneish Dance is a vibrant Dance company using dance and movement to make sense of ourselves and the world around us. To do this they use heritage and creative health focused experiences. They run Black Heritage dance workshops and tour innovative contemporary dance works and workshops.

Art Form: Dance
Website: https://www.keneishdance.com
Email: info@keneishdance.com

Loudeemy Productions

Our theatre, workshops, and training programmes are tailored to the specific needs and requests of schools, catering to both primary and secondary students from Years 2-18. These programs focus on mental health, wellbeing, resilience, and problem-solving, particularly addressing needs of challenging students. We work with children and young people facing exclusion, unsettled home lives, homelessness, and caregiving responsibilities. Additionally, we provide similar programmes for teachers to explore best practices in a safe and supportive environment. Each programme is fun, inclusive, and collaboratively planned with the schools to address their unique concerns.

Art Form: Theatre/Visual Arts/Multi-disciplinary/Film/Multimedia
Website: www.loudeemy.co.uk
Email: louise@loudeemy.co.uk

Loudmouth

Birmingham based Loudmouth, was established in 1994 and uses drama to support children and young people to have happy, healthy and safe lives. We create and run theatre in education programmes for primary, secondary and college aged young people and specialise in education on safeguarding and RSHE issues including child exploitation and abuse, puberty and sexual health.

We run over 1,000 sessions a year across the Midlands and beyond, reaching around 100,000 children and young people. We use theatre performances, character interviews and discussion-based workshops to gently explore, educate and support the students around the topics being covered. We supply teachers and parents with support material.

Art Form: Theatre-In-Education
Website: www.loudmouth.co.uk
Email: matt@loudmouth.co.uk

Memorhyme

Memorhyme are a Birmingham based collective of mass literacy engagement specialists who have been recognised by HM The Queen, performed at the Royal Albert Hall and briefed the Cabinet Office. Clients include: Birmingham City University, Premiere League, National Literacy Trust, Multi-Academy Trusts, Library Services, NHS, Writing West Midlands and more. They deliver poetry workshops, CPD training and resources to enrich: literacy engagement, curricular attainment, oracy, cultural capital, well being and safeguarding. For Key Stage 1 & 2 they deliver 'Values, Virtues & Character' mass engagement days, beginning with a fun and engaging whole school assembly, onto a variety of performance poetry tasks, closing with a whole school poetry performance showcase the final hour of the school day. Their 'Engage' package for Key Stage 3, promotes inclusive language in a series of back to back 1 hour year group assemblies, with Year 7 exploring 'Bully Vs Banter', the fine line between appropriate language and behaviour. Year 8's 'Forbid & Forgive', the language of de-escalation and reconciliation to avoid unnecessary conflict. Year 9's 'Words of Wisdom' where pupils share wise words and insights to achieve success both in and out of school.

Memohyme also specialise in delivering 'Diversity Days', 'Protected Characteristics', 'Black History', introduction to GCSE anthologies and much more.

Art Form: Poetry, theatre, digital media
Website: www.memorhyme.org.uk
Email: schoolbooking@memorhyme.org.uk

One Dance UK

One Dance UK is the national support organisation for dance and Subject Association for dance in schools. Our aim is to increase access, raise standards and improve progression routes in dance on a national scale and support the teachers and leaders who deliver dance both in and out of school settings. We offer two signature CPD packages to support the delivery of primary and Key Stage 3 dance, in addition to bespoke sessions tailor-made for a specific school or setting. We also deliver national programmes that inspire children and young people, raising aspirations and celebrating excellence. Our programmes provide essential platforms for engaging young people in dance from first steps to training for a professional career. We create lifelong dance participants and audiences as well as the next generation of dance artists and leaders.

Art Form: Dance
Website: https://www.onedanceuk.org/
Email: cpd@onedanceuk.org

Open Theatre

We work in over 20 special schools and SEN units across Birmingham and Coventry and beyond, using nonverbal physical theatre to explore young people's creativity to enable agency, capability, and connection. We work with over 2000 young people in year-round weekly engagements within partnerships with those schools that have been sustained in many cases for over 10 years. We aim through our work to have a positive impact on learning outcomes, capacity to learn, confidence and sense of self, and the roles young people can play in the world when they leave school.

Nonverbal physical theatre involves play, simple props, music and movement. It's a highly adaptive and individual process, and we work with a small pool of specially trained facilitators.

Art Form: Drama – Non Verbal Physical Theatre
Website: www.opentheatre.co.uk
Email: lucy@opentheatre.co.uk

Preme Productions

Preme Productions specialise in providing Educational Theatre. Using their bespoke facilitation techniques delivering programmes of engaging interactive theatre performances and immersive creative workshops and projects across schools they help audiences to develop critical thinking skills, empathy and awareness on a variety of social topics, with work in education settings supporting the PSHE curriculum. Their emphasis on using the four learning styles through immersive drama techniques, fun, and impressive adaptability means they are suitable for all, are inclusive, and can offer their work (including sensory adaptations) for Special Schools. They can hone their facilitation in on specific topics desirable for your school, helping young people to engage and thrive in our ever changing fast paced world and communities.

Art Form: Educational Theatre/Multi-disciplinary
Website: www.premeproductions.co.uk
Email: info@premeproductions.co.uk

Purbanat CIC

Purbanat works collaboratively with their partners to create theatre that works across cultures, specialising in producing new plays, adaptations of existing international written works. Purbanat became an established theatre company in West Midlands. Recently the company has been evolving and extending its creative activities beyond the traditional concept of theatre. Purbanat believes in positive change, their work with young people: youth participation, and celebrating shared Bangla and South Asian heritage and culture plays a significant role in achieving this positive change.

Art Form: Dance/Theatre/ Creative Writing/ Multi-disciplinary/Multimedia/ Bangla and South Asian heritage art practice
Website: http://www.purbanat.com/
Email: purbanat@gmail.com

Sampad

Sampad is a highly regarded Art and Heritage organisation who has worked with schools across the region for more than 20 years. Our *City of Empire to City of Diversity – a visual journey exhibition* for schools, which tracks migration through the Dyche photographic collection, was part of a 3 year heritage project working with 20 Birmingham schools in the lead up to and following the Commonwealth Games. Both the exhibition (2 week residency in school to fit with your curriculum) and the supporting online library of resources are available to all Associate Schools free of charge.

Our Sampad Associate Schools programme allows us to build more impactful relationships with a number of schools, offering them a wealth of creative opportunities including ' *My Journey My Birmingham*' a 90 minute Theatre in Education piece which links to our exhibition, 30 minute Musician Assemblies, Bhangra & Bollywood dance workshops & flashmobs, Islamic Art workshops as well as a range of performances and workshops linked to a range of cultural events (e.g Diwali, Eid, Holi, Vaisakhi)

Our team also run bespoke staff CPD in Oracy/ Drama, Dance , Art and Writing as well as careers assemblies/days and Summer Schools. Please get in touch if you would like to find out more or go to our website to download our current offer.

Art Form: Dance/Drama/Music/Visual Arts/ Multidisciplinary/ Film/ Multimedia/ Exhibition/ Cross Arts
Website: www.sampad.org.uk
Email: Learning@sampad.org.uk

Sangat Studio

Sangat Studio aims work with children and young people from deprived areas across Birmingham and across the Midlands to use TV studio technology, access tools for creative and responsible media. Their experienced team can guide young people through a range of workshops and CPD.

Art Form: Music/Visual Arts/Film/Multimedia
Website: www.sangatstudio.co.uk
Email: education@sangattelevision.org

Services for Education

Services For Education (Music Service) is the lead organisation for the Birmingham Music Education Partnership (BMEP) which deploys the central government funding to extend and coordinate music education provision as set out in the DfE National Plan for Music Education. The Music Service has worked in close partnership with Birmingham schools for more than sixty years in supporting and enhancing music education for all pupils through our extensive programme of high-quality support delivered by our specialist instrumental, vocal and classroom teachers.

Art Form: Music
Website: www.servicesforeducation.co.uk
Email: hello@servicesforeducation.co.uk

Sonia Sabri Company

Sonia Sabri Company is the UK's leading South Asian dance and music company; creating and touring performances nationally and internationally. We have 20 years' experience of working with schools, cultural organisations and communities in Birmingham, the West Midlands and across the UK.

From this wealth of experience, we can provide unique, enjoyable, and meaningful learning opportunities for people of all ages and abilities. Our range of artist-led workshops and activities span dance, music, storytelling and visual arts to explore South Asian culture, and is perfect for schools and HE/FE establishments.

Art Form: Dance/Music/ Visual Arts/Multidisciplinary
Website: https://www.ssco.org.uk/
Email: mary@ssco.org.uk

Stan's Café

We are an internationally acclaimed touring theatre company, based in Birmingham.

Through our Creative Learning work we specialise in helping schools address their curriculum needs and those of their school improvement plans. To achieve this we use the arts projects as a pedagogical tool. We work across the curriculum and all our work is bespoke; designed for your particular context and requirements.

Art Form: Multidisciplinary
Website: https://stans.cafe
Email: admin@stanscafe.co.uk

The Play House

Bringing creativity into learning: Empowering children and bringing their worlds to life through stories and participatory theatre: The Play House Theatre in Education company has been helping schools bring the wonder of the world into their classrooms for 30 years. We work in over fifty schools a year with our touring programme which brings the curriculum to life for children aged 3-11 and beyond. We also create bespoke projects for schools, offer CPD for teachers and work with a range of partners to put drama and imagination at the heart of the learning experience for children.

Art Form: Theatre in Education/ Drama and Performance
Website: https://www.theplayhouse.org.uk/
Email: bookings@theplayhouse.org.uk

Vamos

Winners of a Music and Drama Magazine Education Award 2022, Vamos Theatre - the UK's leading full mask theatre company - offers a wide range of workshops and resources for schools plus popular professional development for teachers. As one of the country's most recognised performers of non-verbal theatre, workshops focus on mask, physicality, character development, and devising, helping students develop physical confidence and clarity on stage. CPD workshops for teachers support the teaching of drama, particularly around physical theatre and devising. At www.vamostheatre.co.uk, the company also offers free resources to support learning, and runs the popular digital learning platform, mask.ED.

Art Form: Mask Theatre
Website: www.vamostheatre.co.uk
Email: abbie@vamostheatre.co.uk

Individual Artists

Benny Semp

Benny uses a wide variety of creative materials and techniques, including drawing and painting, textiles, print making, clay, recycled objects and much more besides. Benny's work with schools ranges from bespoke creative projects and workshops to curriculum enrichment, residencies, clubs and CPD. Benny's practice is built around a fun and accessible creative process that leads to high quality artistic outcomes.

Art Form/Specialty: Visual Arts
Website: www.bennysemp.co.uk
Email: bensemp@gmail.com

<u>Daya Bhatti</u>

Daya is a visual Artist with experience working within the community and educational settings with a wide range of people of different ages, backgrounds and abilities. Exploring storytelling through portraiture, fashion illustrations and animations to painting, textiles and the use of recycled materials. Daya aims to create a safe space for participants to explore their own identity and creativity through engaging workshops. Daya's practice is an exploration of British Asian identity and culture. She has exhibited in various galleries across the UK and commissioned by clients such as Manchester Museums, Newham Council, Preston Park and Museum and more.

Art Form/Specialty: Visual Arts/Gallery
Website: www.dayaillustrations.co.uk
Email: daya_bhatti@outlook.com

Gareth Courage

Gareth's work encompasses a range of diverse visual outputs, primarily encompassing the medium of collage. His work has included analogue and digital illustrations, filmmaking, graphic design and performance.

His work has evolved as commissions for galleries, editorial and publishing, and he has delivered sessions to support & inform projects in a variety of public settings, including schools, galleries and libraries. He is committed to exploring the use of the democratic collage-making process when working on educational projects that actively involve all learners in developing and producing outcomes, empowering them in the creative process.

Gareth is comfortable collaborating with pupils through design and illustrative workshops, linking to specific subjects, and offering school projects a high-end industry standard graphic finish
that represents pupil voice and ideas.

In his freelance work, Gareth specialises in designing and illustrating for art practice, performance, and sound, collaborating with experimental, small-scale companies and practitioners. Gareth is also a Lecturer in Illustration at Birmingham City University, where he coordinates the first-year undergraduate program.

Art Form/Specialty: Visual Arts/Multi-disciplinary/Film/Multimedia/New Technology
Website: http://www.garethcourage.co.uk
Email: gareth@garethcourage.co.uk

Garry Jones

Garry Jones, founder of "Off our Trolley Arts" is a professional artist and designer. With over 30 years' experience, he specialises in art in education, community and carnival arts. He is available for arts projects and workshops. Examples of his work are shown below. Previous projects have included murals, paintings, mosaics, push along 3D carnival floats, costumes, head- dresses, lanterns and carnival backpacks. He has a particular interest in using recycled materials to create art. He says "I believe passionately in what I do and in using art as a way of engaging individuals and groups. Not only can art be used to inform, educate and train but it can make learning fun, raise self-esteem and create lasting, happy memories"

Art Form/Speciality: Visual Arts/ Multi-Disciplinary / Carnival Art
Website: www.offourtrolleyarts.com
Email: garry@offourtrolleyarts.com

Ian Billings

Ian Billings has worked in 2500 schools in 20 countries delivering inspiring literacy workshops. He was written 36 children's books, 6 radio plays, 53 pantomimes and children's plays. He has delivered 8 ACE funded *That's Your Story* projects into schools creating books, radio plays, podcasts, song cycles and comics based on pupil input.

Art Form/Specialty: Drama, Literacy, Comedy, Script writing
Website: www.ianbillings.com
Email: ian@ianbllings.com

Ildiko Nagy

Ildiko Nagy is an established interdisciplinary artist and workshop facilitator who focuses on well-being, nature, encouraging creative self- expression and tackling ecological issues. Ildiko is passionate about taking forward environmental matters through a wide range of methods and mediums. Ildiko has designed and created many sculptures, installations, furnishings, paintings, decorations and environments using natural and repurposed materials. With their Hungarian heritage, they are passionate about preserving ancient crafts (such as weaving, basketry, willow sculpture and felting) as well as creating new ways of up-cycling in their workshops. They have also led the making of several participatory sculptures using natural and reclaimed materials. Ildiko is always open to explore new territories of visual arts as well as keen to share their knowledge and experiences. They enjoy being flexible, structured and well organised in the delivery of projects, workshops and artwork.

Art Form/Specialty: Visual Arts/Multi-disciplinary/Gallery/Willow Weaving/Felt Making/ Up-Cycling
Website:www.ildikonagyart.com
Email: nagyildi@gmail.com

Imogen Morris

Imogen is a thread and nail artist and has ran workshops with schools of Primary and Secondary ages. Imogen provides the opportunity for children to make either a collaborative piece together, or individual works. In her specialist workshops the students can create portrait works, or text based and emoji works. These workshops help students learn skills like tying knots, wrapping thread around nails, and hammering, as well as encouraging their creativity, focus and patience

Art Form/Specialty: Visual Arts and Crafts
Website: www.imogenmorrisart.com
Email: imogenmorrisart@gmail.com

Karoline Rerrie

Karoline is an illustrator and screen printer. In schools and colleges, Karoline teaches screen printing on paper using hand cut stencils and can provide equipment for this. Karoline also teaches screen printing with photo stencils where there are the facilities for this. As well as working with students, Karoline runs screen print workshops for teaching staff and technicians.

Art Form/Specialty: Visual Arts - Screen Print
Website: http://karolinemadethis.blogspot.com/
Email: Karoline.rerrie@yahoo.com

Mark Riley

Mark has over 20 years of experience in delivering creative visual arts projects for Early Years (including Reggio approach), primary and secondary, SEND, newly arrived children, alternative provisions and referral units. Schools projects can be varied in nature. They can be stand alone artworks for a particular space indoors or outdoors, using creative processes to think critically through a curriculum topic, delivering aspects of the art curriculum or providing enrichment and wellbeing sessions. He uses a broad range of 2D and 3D techniques in his work. Projects are co-created with the participants, and as far as possible the projects are developed from the their ideas and are all their own work, facilitated by Mark.

Art Form/Specialty: Visual Arts
Website: www.creative-states.co.uk
Email: mark@creative-states.co.uk

Peter Wynne-Wilson

Peter Wynn Wilson is a very experienced drama practitioner, based in Handsworth, who has always combined writing and directing plays for young audiences with his own individual work in schools, which ranges from story-making sessions with early years, to creative writing residencies right across the education spectrum. He was the founding director of Big Brum Theatre-in-Education Company in 1982, and since then has worked with most of the theatre companies in Birmingham and many of the schools. If you would like someone to come in and work with your school, working through play to make up stories at Foundation and KS1, or running a poetry writing session with older students, set up a drama group, or run staff training around creative writing. Across a wide range of drama and writing activities, Peter is someone who can make a real difference.

Art Form/Specialty: Drama/Story-Making/Creative Writing
Website: www.peterww.co.uk
Email: pwynne@blueyonder.co.uk

Sally Harper

For over 25 years Sally Harper has been working with schools and community groups, delivering tailored projects in textiles, sculpture and fine art. Projects have included work with Early Years children creating exciting environments using light and shadow projection, large scale painting, outdoor sculptures and offering open ended activities. Eco fashion shows, felt panels, glass painted murals and batik hangings with primary children, young enterprise schemes with Special needs students and textile banners and 3D sculpture with local community groups to name a few. She loves to adapt, and trial new techniques making every project exciting and dynamic, allowing for new ideas to develop and evolve. Sally is also a successful milliner, creating bespoke headwear for weddings, the races and social occasions.

Art Form/Specialty: Visual Arts
Website: www.sharper-arts.co.uk
Email: sharperarts@btinternet.com

Sue Guthrie

Sue is an experienced visual artist and art tutor who has much experience of working with schools to improve their arts provision through workshops, teaching, CPD and specific projects such as murals and displays. Sue teaches drawing, painting, basic printmaking and sculpture. She has been artist in residence in a number of schools and likes to share her passion for the visual arts through the study of both contemporary and historical artists alongside practical skills based creative learning.

Art Form/Specialty: Visual arts – drawing, painting, sculpture, mosaic, printmaking, CPD
Website: www.sueguthrie.co.uk
Email: sueguthrie17@gmail.com

Teresa Buzkova

Since the beginning of October 2017, Tereza became the artist in residence at Chad Vale Primary School in Edgbaston. Tereza has been running weekly after school art clubs to encourage a fresh perspective on art and to build confidence. Each week the children taking part explore the works of a different influential artist or art movement to inform their creation of a new piece. This is a rare opportunity for children to freely express themselves, experiment and learn under my tuition. Tereza is a successful mid-career multidisciplinary artist with a Masters Degree from the Royal College of Art.

Art Form/Specialty: Visual Arts/Multi-disciplinary/Printmaking
Website: www.terezabuskova.com
Email: tereza.buskova@network.rca.ac.uk

What's Next?

Over the past decade, the West Midlands has been home to a wide range of cultural education initiatives that have left a significant mark on the region. From **Creative Partnerships** and **Arts Connect** to **Culture Central's Arts Learning Group**, the **Arts Education Directory**, local authority-led creative teams, and subject-specific networks such as the **Music Advisors Group**, these programmes have helped to shape best practice, forge strong partnerships and enable schools to access high-quality arts experiences. While some of these initiatives have now concluded, others have been reshaped or evolved to meet changing needs. Their legacy continues to ripple across the city and region.

This is the nature of the arts education infrastructure—it adapts with time, policy, leadership, and available resources. What remains constant, however, is the core principle that **arts education is a shared responsibility,** held between the education and cultural sectors. When these two sectors work in partnership, the outcomes for young people are more ambitious, more meaningful, and more sustainable.

BEP has had a significant part to play in the prioritisation of arts provision, through its host role. This is because as an organisation we place a high value on the impact that access to the arts can have for all of the children in our city. We recognise the importance of the equity of that provision, and we are committed to champion the continuance of that opportunity through our own services as well as through our ongoing relationship with arts providers, and specifically Bhavik Parmar. BEP remain an advocate of the arts and will be both proactive and responsive to opportunities that arise to ensure the longevity of this work.

While Birmingham Arts School may be coming to an end, this is by no means the end of the journey. Organisations may come and go, but the need remains. New ventures will continue to emerge—including those supported by frameworks like **Arts Council England's Cultural Education Partnerships and Networks** ([see more](#)). This toolkit was created as a resource to help you carry that momentum forward.

This toolkit hoped to outline how **arts education thrives when schools and cultural organisations work together**. When schools form clusters, pool resources, support artists and organisations in building funding bids, or co-develop project ideas, the impact multiplies. You do not have to wait for another large-scale programme like BAS to arrive. You can shape the next phase of cultural education—in your setting, your network, your community.

Schools are well placed to articulate what their young people need. And arts organisations often rely on this clarity when making the case to funders. When a group of schools comes together with a shared message— **"We need to do something about**

X"—you create demand, urgency, and purpose. This makes it far easier for cultural organisations to secure funding for projects that serve you. Contained within this toolkit is a rich directory of artists, organisations, case studies, and practical steps to help you develop meaningful arts partnerships.

These artists are ready. These organisations are ready. The next step is yours. And for me—**Bhavik Parmar**, the author of this toolkit—this is also the beginning of a new chapter. I will be launching a new venture:

[Adversity Creative Education](#) is a response to my own lived experiences—turning adversity into a driver for creativity, confidence, and change. Through this new venture, I will continue to support schools and cultural partners through:

- Tailored leadership programmes
- Mentoring for emerging artists
- In-school arts festivals
- Creative consultancy and strategic advice

I remain committed to the young people of this city—and to the educators and creatives who support them.

A Final Word

As you explore the ideas and opportunities within this toolkit, remember this:

Arts education doesn't have to wait. You don't need to do it alone. Together, we can build what comes next.

Let's keep the conversation going, the partnerships growing, and the creative spirit alive—for every child and young person in Birmingham and beyond.

A special thank you to Juliet Silverton,CEO of Birmingham Education Partnership, the BEP Team, Birmingham teachers and headteachers, artists and arts organisations that have supported the development of this toolkit. Including all the members of the BAS Strategic Advisory Board (including previous members) below:

Rachael Thomas	Steve Ball	Rob Elkington
Sarah Thomas	Dan Jones	Dave Howard
Richard Mabbott	Ayan Aden	Tania Yasmin
Harpinder Singh	Martin Straker Welds	Nancy Evans
Dr Victoria Kinsella	Aisha Abdirashid	Indi Deol
	Angela Lowry	