

Arts and Cultural Education in Outstanding Schools

Research study
undertaken by the
Royal Shakespeare
Company for Arts
Council England

Written and compiled by the Royal Shakespeare Company:
Jacqui O'Hanlon
Pat Cochrane (Lead researcher)
Maria Evans (Lead researcher)

Contents

Executive summary	2
1. Introduction	6
2. Research methodology	7
3. Findings	8
4. Conclusions	25
Appendix A – Invitation to schools	27
Appendix B – Online survey results	29
Appendix C – Case studies	37

Executive summary

In March 2019, the Royal Shakespeare Company was commissioned by Arts Council England to undertake a national research study into arts and cultural education in Ofsted rated Outstanding schools. We wanted to understand why and how outstanding schools integrate arts and cultural education as part of a rigorous academic curriculum.

We used two primary research methods:

1. An online survey which was completed by 50 schools
2. Case study visits to 20 of the 50 schools. The school visits allowed us to capture ethnographic observations whilst holding focus group meetings with key stakeholders (typically head teachers/SLT members/teachers/pupils/members of the governing body). During these visits we were able to undertake a greater level of interrogation of survey responses.

Survey responses

(see [Appendix B](#) for full survey results).

The top 12 ranked responses from 50 surveyed schools told us that Outstanding schools:

- Promote the arts through performances, events and celebrations (98%)
- Believe that the arts make a positive difference to the wellbeing and happiness of their children and young people (98%)
- Say that the greatest impact of the arts is on developing children's creativity (95%)
- Give children and young people the opportunity to lead and shape arts and cultural learning opportunities (95%)
- Form partnerships with arts and cultural organisations to deepen opportunities available to staff, and children and young people (95%)
- Cite an impact on overall engagement of children and young people as a result of the arts (94%)
- Ensure that every year, every pupil has the chance to work with professional artists and arts organisations (92%)
- Say that the arts are a strong part of their formal curriculum (89.5%)
- Include the arts in their development plans and budgets (89.5%)
- Have a strong extra-curricular offer (86.5%)
- Make sure their offer is accessible to all (86.5%)
- Recognise the impact of arts and cultural learning on overall school improvement (86.5%)

Case study visits

We framed school visits and conversations with teachers, senior leaders, pupils and governors around the role of arts and cultural education in five key areas:

- School improvement and development
- Impact
- Curriculum design
- Pupil engagement
- Parental engagement

We have provided key findings under each of these headings, supplemented with relevant references to survey responses.

School improvement and development

Although findings about the critical importance of **visionary leaders** are not new, it is vital not to overlook the fundamentally important role they play. In every case study school we visited, the strength of commitment to the arts had either been initiated or inherited by school leaders with firm beliefs in the educational and social value of the arts to children and young people. Many were deeply committed to the principles of a broad and balanced curriculum with the arts commanding **equal status and respect** with other subjects.

All schools visited had **arts specialists, champions** and/or **arts leads** who were exceptionally **passionate and committed teachers**. In two or three schools it was the passion and excellence of these teachers that had set the school on its journey towards outstanding arts provision, and in some cases, outstanding academic provision as well. Teachers talked about the value of **trust** and **autonomy**, while many SLT and teachers described school cultures of **risk taking, can-do attitudes**, and **entrepreneurialism** with **no fear of blame**. These are schools **open to opportunities**.

It is important to recognise that individual teachers can only go so far and need strong and supportive leaders for their work to flourish. In the same way, visionary heads can achieve little unless they put time, effort and, crucially, trust into recruiting and then supporting outstanding teachers to lead and support arts provision. **The interdependency of visionary leadership with passionate arts champions and/or teachers** is a key finding of this research.

Another feature of most case study schools was the quality of **behaviour** and **relationships**, including in schools with challenging demographics. Schools achieve more because, as one person said, they are not 'firefighting' all the time. Many felt that the arts have played an important role in generating these positive behaviour and relationships, while SLT in charge of **inclusion** suggest that arts subjects play a crucial role in working with disengaged children and young people.

Case study schools were genuinely committed to a **broad and balanced curriculum**, often driven by a sense of **entitlement to the arts** for all pupils, a sentiment shared with survey schools. **Excellence** and **professionalism** underpinned arts provision, alongside the **highest aspirations** for all children and young people. In some secondaries, it was the arts departments' commitment to excellence and quality, or in primary schools the arts or creativity lead teachers, that drove the school improvement journey; in others, through the visibility of performances or exhibitions, the arts modelled what quality looks like, for the benefit of children and young people but also other staff and parents.

Survey and case study schools gave **prominence** to arts and cultural learning through a range of events. Indeed, the arts are clearly a key platform for schools to **celebrate** achievements, **engage** with prospective children and young people, parents, staff and wider community, forming an important part of **school cultures and identities**. On numerous

occasions, staff and children and young people told us they were attracted to schools or chose to stay in schools specifically because of the arts provision, displaying the important role art plays in **recruitment and retention** of staff and children and young people alike.

Case study visits gave clear evidence that **location** plays an important part in the schools' access to high quality arts and cultural education. London schools clearly benefit not only from the wealth of cultural provision offered by a capital city, but also from **TfL's free transport scheme** for school groups. Some schools close to other city centres reflected on the relative ease of accessing arts enrichment opportunities but for many, **transport** is a clear barrier.

Partnerships and networks with arts and cultural providers, and links with other schools featured heavily and were often cited as being critical to the schools' arts provision. Some case study schools reflected that they would like **arts organisations** to be **more responsive** to their needs.

These generally positive characteristics contribute to perceptions of **impact**. All case study schools and the majority of survey schools reported the arts as playing a significant role in **school improvement** journeys, further noting positive changes in **recruitment and retention** of staff and pupils alike as well as **children and young people's knowledge, skills and behaviours**. The intrinsic value of arts subjects was taken as a given and instead, schools focused on more generic outcomes. At secondary, there were several comments about improvements to softer skills such as **confidence, teamwork** and **presentation skills**, with other comments being more specific about the **contribution of drama to English** outcomes. Within primary and special case study schools, staff perceived a very strong link between the arts and **language acquisition, development and resilience**. In several case

study schools, staff felt that the arts provision created children and young people's most positive **memories** of their time at school.

Generally, we saw **great consistency** between **survey responses and case study visits** in terms of school improvement and development. The area of **least consistency** is in **continuing professional development and learning** (CPDL). Seventy per cent of surveyed schools said that arts and cultural learning were an integral part of their CPDL offer to all staff. Sixty per cent of surveyed schools told us that subject specific development was available for specialist arts teachers and 68 per cent told us that non-specialist teachers could access training in arts subjects. However, this was not always evident in our visits to case study schools. Pressures of time, money and the need to attend training related to new curricula and exam specifications were cited as reasons for the lack of subject specific CPDL in some schools. Schools reported creating more **in-house CPDL** opportunities or using **CYP workshops with cultural organisations or practitioners as opportunities for staff learning**. Some of the examples provided for CPDL provision did not always appear to correlate with current thinking on what constitutes effective CPDL.¹

Curriculum design

Across survey and case study schools, arts and cultural learning were **strong elements** of the curriculum. There were a range of models. At primary and within special schools there were solid examples of the arts being taught **discretely** as well as being **integrated** into the teaching of other subjects. At secondary, what was particularly noteworthy were the schools **designing arts provision around the needs and interests of children and young people**, as well as those enabling children and young people to take **two arts GCSEs** if they chose, with one school making an arts subject compulsory at KS4.

¹ See 'Developing Great Teaching'. 2014. Teacher Development Trust – <http://www.curee.co.uk/files/shared/Developing-Great-Teaching-Summary.pdf>

The **extent of arts enrichment and extra-curricular opportunities** in most case study schools was nothing short of remarkable. Infant and primary school children from Norfolk come to London; primary school children from Plymouth perform at Wembley, despite a 5am return time; special school children and young people perform at the NEC and engage in a range of arts activities including circus skills; children and young people perform and exhibit their work at community events and in galleries and museums; schools run extensive lunch and after-school arts clubs and, in at least two instances, morning clubs. In many schools, if not all, there was a balance of audition versus open to all. In several, Pupil Premium children and young people are given priority.

Pupil engagement

All children and young people interviewed talked with visible **enthusiasm** and **pride** about their schools' arts provision. Many talked about how engagement with the arts had increased their **enjoyment** of school. Staff and children and young people alike cited the arts as contributing strongly to **inclusion, creativity** and a **non-judgemental** culture of there being no right or wrong, making strong links with the positive effect on **mental wellbeing**.

Parental engagement

In most, though not all, instances, parents were **highly supportive** of schools' arts and cultural learning offer. At secondary level, there were some references to parents not seeing arts subjects as valid choices at GCSE. What was noteworthy were the number of references to schools using their arts provision as **vehicles for parental engagement**, opportunities not only for schools to build relationships with parents but also to showcase children and young people's work, sometimes **challenging parental aspirations** for their children. Where parents had had a negative experience of education

themselves, the arts and creative activities and events were often cited as a way of connecting parents with their children's learning and enabling them to understand 'it's not just about English and Maths'. We heard several examples of parents being 'wowed' by their children's achievements.

Conclusions

The schools surveyed and visited demonstrate that outstanding academic provision can go hand in hand with equally strong arts provision and, in most cases, the latter supports the former. A rich arts and cultural learning offer is underpinned by a number of interdependent characteristics which are summarised above, but which have visionary leaders and passionate arts specialists and leads at their core.

1. Introduction

In March 2019, the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) was commissioned by Arts Council England to undertake a national research study into arts and cultural education in Ofsted rated Outstanding schools. The research brief was described as:

Arts Council England is seeking compelling evidence from schools in England that have achieved outstanding status whilst valuing and working through the arts, in order to inform its future plans and, specifically, how it designs support for schools. The ambition is to provide evidence of the nature of the creative skills and behaviours that children and young people develop through arts and cultural experience. Arts Council England wishes to understand how school leaders manage this, particularly in relation to school improvement planning, curriculum design, and pupil and parental engagement. Further, Arts Council England wishes to identify a network of leaders who can confidently articulate and advocate for the value of such an approach.

We issued a general call out to schools via various networks (including Artsmark schools, Bridge Organisations, local authority contacts, and the RSC school database, Whole Education). In the call out we included introductory context about the research as well as the criteria we were asking schools to match themselves against (see Appendix A). We invited schools who met the criteria to submit an expression of interest.

Our selection process was then based on achieving: a geographical spread; a representative sample of primary, secondary and special schools; a range of different school types (MATs, faith schools, academies, local authority controlled schools, free schools); a range of socio-economic backgrounds and ethnicities; and a balance of urban and rural settings.

Approximately 50 per cent of schools in the research sample have Artsmark – perhaps due to the recruitment call out including the Artsmark school list and Bridge Organisation contacts.

2 ● Research methodology

We used two primary research methods:

1. An online survey which was completed by 50 schools and consisted of a general set of questions about the drivers, place and importance of the arts and cultural education in their schools. Approximately 50 per cent of survey responses were completed by senior leaders and 50 per cent by arts subject leads. Half of surveys were completed by primary schools, two by infant schools, nine by SEN schools and the remainder by secondary schools. See [Appendix B](#) for full survey results.
2. Case study visits to 20 of the 50 schools. Case studies involved face-to-face school visits supplemented by desk-based research to capture a range of generic information (history of the school's arts engagement, a brief overview of school context, the School Improvement Plan, Artsmark documentation where applicable, and other kinds of supporting information). The school visits allowed us to capture ethnographic observations while holding focus group meetings with key stakeholders (typically head teachers/SLT members/teachers/pupils/members of the governing body). See [Appendix C](#) for 20 case studies. Examples from case studies are used throughout Section 3 alongside relevant information from survey results

3. Findings

We wanted to understand why and how outstanding schools integrate arts and cultural education as part of a rigorous academic curriculum.

We framed school visits and conversations with teachers, senior leaders, pupils and governors around the role of arts and cultural education in five key areas:

- School improvement and development
- Impact
- Curriculum design
- Pupil engagement
- Parental engagement

We have provided key findings under each of these headings.

School improvement and development

There are several features that contribute to arts and cultural education becoming a significant part of school life and therefore the schools ongoing improvement and development.

School leadership

In response to the survey question, 'How does leadership of your arts and cultural learning offer manifest itself in your school?', responses were as follows:

Our development or improvement plan demonstrates a commitment to a high-quality arts and cultural learning offer for all pupils	43
We have a dedicated member of staff responsible for arts and cultural learning	38
Budget is allocated to enable a breadth of arts and cultural learning	43
Specialist teachers are employed to teach arts subjects	41
There is parity of curriculum time given to each arts subject	31
There is parity of curriculum time given to arts and cultural learning in relation to other curriculum areas	30
We have a governor responsible for arts and cultural learning	26
Arts and cultural learning are reported on regularly at governors' meetings	26
We give prominence to our arts and cultural learning offer through school events, celebrations, parents evenings, open days, etc	49

² Green indicates the highest scores

School leadership clearly drives the above commitments and it was a key finding of case study schools in all phases that leadership, vision and support at the most senior level play a crucial, if not the most crucial, role in developing a high-quality arts and cultural education offer. Time and again teaching staff and teaching assistants/higher learning teaching assistants (HLTAs) talked about the importance of strong, supportive leadership to arts provision.

All school leaders interviewed could articulate the value of the arts in their school and the need to establish a culture in which all staff understand this and can apply it to their practice. In all schools visited there was a sense that commitment to the arts and the right of all children to rich arts learning infused the organisation as a whole and that staff were clear that this was a leadership priority. Leaders welcomed the case study researchers as they were confident that staff and pupils would advocate for the practice.

The head teacher at Baildon was clear that the arts will only thrive in a school where it is clearly supported by leadership. The head at Kings Oak talked of the need to build approaches to pedagogy and curriculum which are deeply embedded and not dependent on one or two members of staff. Setting aside budget and time for development are critical. But leaders also modelled this by making their commitment visible. So for example, rather than working only with teachers and pupils, the resident artist at Torriano works with the head to explore curriculum ideas, the head at Oak Field leads a weekly singing session, the Head at Mosley integrates drama based practice into his leadership of assemblies and commitment to imaginative immersive displays, the head at Sacred Heart advocates for the arts at national conferences, and Shiremoor's head talks about the importance of children being able to speak with confidence and the role of drama in supporting this.

However, it is not a quick fix! Many leaders in the case study schools have worked over long

periods of time to develop culture and ethos. Shiremoor's head teacher and art and design lead both started as teachers at the school about 26 years ago, with the current head taking on headship six years ago. Practice has evolved so that art now infuses the curriculum, bringing the best of international arts practice and combining it with local and community cultural opportunities.

The head at Kings Oak Primary Learning Centre talked of the need to build approaches to pedagogy and curriculum which are deeply embedded and not dependent on one or two members of staff.

Passionate and committed arts champions and teachers

In all schools, teachers were passionate about the role the arts play in the lives of children and young people.

Numerous examples were given, from the level of extra-curricular provision as referenced below, through to teaching assistants/higher learning teaching assistants giving up lunch breaks because they took such pride in refreshing art displays, and including very personal decisions not to compromise on arts provision. For example, at St John's Cathedral Catholic Primary, the deputy has made the decision to take on the additional SENCO role in order to protect budget driven cutting of the school's music provision.

Pupils reflected this finding, responding positively to it in unsolicited comments. For example, one student at Beaumont School said: 'Teachers love what they're teaching and that really comes across.'

- In several schools, a member of the SLT was from an arts background. They were therefore able to champion the needs of arts subjects and their impact at a senior level.
- In many case study schools there was at least one dedicated arts champion or lead, – a person who was responsible for ensuring high quality arts experiences for all children. This leadership role was sometimes taken by a

governor but more often by a dedicated post within the school. We saw examples where that dedicated champion made a significant difference. For example, in Marine Primary Academy, when the performing arts leader first arrived in the school, only eight pupils learned an instrument; two years later that number has increased to 76. At Kings Oak, one of the first appointments to the newly created primary school was a senior leader in teaching, learning and creativity, ensuring that from day one the approach to pedagogy was infused with creativity.

- 82% of survey respondents said that 'Specialist teachers are employed to teach arts subjects'.
- During case study visits we found specialist arts teachers in all secondaries and some primaries. In secondary schools, subject teachers were keen to introduce children and young people to artforms and enable them to make, produce, exhibit or perform. In primary schools, many of the arts subject leaders had taken on the role initially because of personal interest and then developed this further as their confidence and knowledge increased and the difference the arts made to children's learning became so evident. All primary schools visited had designated subject leaders. Some, such as St John's Primary, felt that subject expertise was crucial in delivering the extent and quality of arts provision.
- As 'all through' schools, both case study special schools benefited from having specialists in music, art and design, and either drama or dance.
- Some primary schools had gone to great lengths to recruit teachers and sometimes teaching assistants/HLTAs who had arts specialisms. In one primary school, a part-time music post had been specifically created as well as a full-time HLTA with a drama background who acted both as a teacher and an amateur.

- We heard from some head teachers who wanted artform champions; in one instance a head insisted on heads of different artform departments rather than one head of creative arts because, 'I wanted heads of department who are passionate about their subject' (Compton School).

Trust, respect and autonomy

A common feature in the schools we visited was for SLTs to model trust, respect and appropriate levels of autonomy; this led to staff feeling respected and valued. The arts appeared to flourish in this context of permission and professional respect. The SLT provided structure and rigour, but then staff were free to innovate.

Governing bodies

While only 52 per cent of survey schools told us that they had a governor responsible for arts and cultural learning, we found that several case study schools did report having a link governor for all subjects including for the arts. In some cases these governors had a professional background in the arts. For example, Torriano Primary School has a governor who is employed by the Royal Opera House, and the CEO of the Nottingham dance agency One Dance is a governor at Oak Field School & Sports College. In both cases the head also sits on the board of the arts organisation, creating the potential for a helpful strategic dialogue between the sectors. The lead governors for the arts at several schools were parent governors who could speak with personal experience about the arts in terms of the life experience they give the children and young people. At Baildon Church of England Primary School, for example, the governors had prioritised funding for music which they felt was an invaluable part of the primary school experience.

As well as advocating for the arts, case study schools reported that governors hold the school leadership to account. For example, the Kings Oak Primary Learning Centre Head described how, when the school curriculum was being developed with an emphasis on creativity and the

arts, governors required evidence that this was going to contribute to and sustain outcomes for children in one of the most deprived areas of the country.

Most case study schools talked of governors with a lead role in the arts having a link with the subject lead and carrying out regular learning walks around the school to observe and analyse practice and outcomes. In one primary school these walks were scheduled for a different day each year to enable all governors to see the full range of arts provision which falls on different days of the week.

Behaviour and relationships

In case study schools we saw very positive staff to staff and staff to pupil relationships. In every school we saw high standards of behaviour based on very strong relationships between staff and pupils and between staff. These were happy schools.

Partnerships and networks

Ninety-six per cent of survey respondents told us that they form relationships with arts and cultural organisations while 84 per cent said that they collaborated with networks of schools to develop and support their arts and cultural offer.

In case study schools we saw some outstanding examples of partnerships and collaborations with cultural organisations and schools. Norwich Theatre Royal was referenced by both Norwich schools, and Music Education Hubs had strong relationships with many of the schools – for example the Music Education Hub in Portsmouth was credited with supporting and developing much of the provision at St John's Primary and the Bradford Music Hub was highly supportive of music development at Baildon. Oak Field College had strong partnerships with local Nottingham organisations and also made sure pupils were able to take up the offer of annual visits to the Royal Opera House. Sacred Heart had multiple partnerships with organisations including Opera North, Northern Ballet and Northern Stage.

Relationships with other schools was also important for our case study schools and not just in terms of feeder primary schools or sixth form colleges. For example, in Norfolk, groups of schools have come together to develop a shared vision for what every child coming through the doors of their schools will get access to, including the arts. Arts leads from the staff from the Morley Academy meet regularly with subject leaders from other academies in their trust (Gorse) to plan curriculum developments and collaborate on projects such as a recent trust-wide Shakespeare week.

However, for some case study schools, partnerships were problematic. Some schools spoke of being overwhelmed by 'offers' from cultural sector organisations, particularly as their reputation as a school which was open to partnerships grew. The Torriano head teacher talked about not wanting 'off the peg offers' but seeking arts practitioners able to collaborate with the school's curriculum vision and approach to pedagogy. Organisations which were responsive to schools' needs and offered approaches which teachers could easily integrate into their practice were consistently referenced. For example, the head at Mosley who had taken part in RSC CPDL as a teacher, was still drawing on the processes he learnt in his role as a head. Arts-based approaches adopted by organisations which focus on pupil learning and professional development such as Centre for Literacy in Primary Education were also seen to be helpful.

National arts organisations such as Tate, RSC, Opera North and Northern Ballet were referred to positively by multiple schools, and many schools had links with local arts and cultural sector organisations. Sometimes these were facilitated by the local Bridge Organisation, who often made active links with their local community events and opportunities to perform.

But some rural schools or those in the outlying areas of towns reported they were rarely approached by arts and cultural sector organisations and had to forge their own links,

often with the support of the Music Education Hub or the local Bridge Organisation. Some schools felt that arts organisations needed to be more responsive to schools' needs.

The schools, irrespective of whether they are in a Multi Academy Trust or have a more formal teaching school role, are naturally drawn to partnerships and sharing practice and learning.

A broad and balanced curriculum and the intrinsic value of the arts

In case study schools, leaders, staff and governors were almost universally driven by a commitment to giving children high quality arts and cultural education experiences and providing a broad and balanced curriculum for all pupils. We consistently met staff who are committed to doing the best for their children by any means necessary.

'[The arts]...are crucial to enabling our students to find their voice and express their individuality.'

Head, Sacred Heart Catholic High School

'The wider curriculum and the wider opportunities we give children are what make this school special. The SATS result are a real bonus. If you're not careful, schools solely focus on data and results when actually the experiences we give the children are what they remember – they are what make them become decent adults.'

Head, The Mosley Academy

In St Richard's Catholic College many staff talked about the importance of educating the whole child, which meant giving them access to a wide range of educational and enrichment experiences and opportunities.

The head teacher at Baildon Church of England Primary School felt that the arts 'enhance pupils' motivation and are of value in their own right.'

At Sidney Stringer Academy the head of art and her teaching assistant reflected on the importance of arts subjects for developing cultural capital: 'We believe the arts should be wholly accessible and not just for the most able or "culturally rich" students'. The school has a designated teacher who leads on Cultural Capital – the school has a way of identifying pupils who are in danger of being less engaged and they participate in a cultural programme that focuses on the arts and heritage in Coventry.

At Oak Field School and Sports College, the head believes in the right of every child to high quality arts experiences: 'The danger is that with pupils with learning difficulties the arts can be seen only as therapy, yet they have an entitlement to education. For instance, whilst music therapy has a place, a child also has a right to music education'.

In the survey in [Appendix B](#) we asked respondents to select the five reasons why a strong arts and cultural education offer were important for their school. The top five responses were:

To develop children and young people's creativity	48
To develop children and young people's knowledge and understanding of arts and culture because it is an important part of their educational experience/development and a right for every child	42
To improve children and young people's health and wellbeing	34
To develop pupil skills in team building, collaboration, problem solving	29
To open up cultural and creative industries as a career choice	29

The arts as an embedded part of school identity

We saw examples where successive heads not only maintained but built on the commitment of previous head teachers to high quality arts and cultural education. For example, in Wildern School, three successive heads had built on each other's work over several years. At Torriano Primary School the head worked as a deputy alongside a head committed to arts practice, and the head at The Mosley Academy spoke of starting there as a Newly Qualified Teacher and learning from the head at the time almost like an apprenticeship. In most case study schools this meant that the arts have become an embedded part of the school identity.

Repeatedly we witnessed the arts enabling children and young people of all ages to mix and learn from each other, or as a key vehicle for parental and community engagement, and for transition opportunities. We also saw the arts as the outward facing demonstration of a school's vision and ethos, or the manifestation of a school culture. For example, Beaumont School's commitment to the arts is a long-standing one and was consistently attributed to the previous head who was quoted as saying, 'if you get PE and the arts right, everything else will come with it, because of the community those subjects have built.'

Across most schools we visited we noticed the visibility of high-quality examples of student produced work including performances and exhibitions. In Torriano Primary School children's artwork is on display throughout the school making it feel like a contemporary art space. Displays share the outcomes of projects as well as processes of thinking, planning and learning. They are often experimental and work in progress rather than always a final product. Self-portraits on acetate inspired by a project with TATE hang at the top of a staircase; a model of Ada Lovelace made out of computer tape hangs in the hall along with suffragette banners; a huge whale choking on plastic bottles hangs in

the dining room; and the reception classroom is transformed into the forest of A Midsummer Night's Dream.

Excellence, professionalism and high aspirations

Many senior leaders typically see the arts as integral to raising and maintaining standards in the school, believing that the visibility of this work raises aspirations across the school, and in some cases has driven the agenda for whole school improvement. In The Compton School the Head believed that the visibility of student produced artwork '...can model and showcase what excellence looks like', a view echoed by staff at West Lakes Academy.

The arts were generally part of a whole school commitment to high-quality expectations in every subject. This included, in some cases, a commitment to using and providing high quality materials and spaces, such as at Marine Academy Primary and Wildern School. The schools apply professional qualities to the work and set and maintain standards. They treat young people as if they are professional artists. At Wildern, one pupil reflected on the quality of productions: 'We don't do a schooled down version – we do it as if it's a real West End performance and I think that's one of the reasons why it's so special to everyone here'.

A culture of high expectations and standards has led some, such as West Lakes Academy, to quality assure all aspects of arts provision, including extra-curricular activities. For example, all productions are checked before they reach a public performance to ensure they are at an appropriate level of professionalism. The vice principal explained, 'if you enable a dip in standards or drop in quality there, it doesn't take long before that becomes the expected standard'.

This has, in turn, led to enormous teacher pride in the quality of students' work. Again, at West Lakes Academy we heard about the quality of visual arts:

'From year 7 work is exhibited and students explore what the financial value of their work might be. By year 13 students establish websites to promote and sell their work. Student work is currently displayed in the offices of the DfE where officials have individually purchased work by WLA students. There are also pieces on display in the office of Amanda Spielman, HMCI, and one piece, having been on a tour with AQA as an exemplar piece of work, now hangs as a permanent installation in their newly refurbished Head offices.'

Developing a shared language around the value of the arts

In some schools there was evidence that leaders had put considerable time and energy into developing a shared language around the value of the arts and how this had informed curriculum change and school improvement. It was a striking characteristic of conversations not only with staff but also with some governors, particularly St Richard's Catholic College, Beaumont School and Mile Cross Primary School, indicating powerful lines of communication and engagement between school leaders and the governing body. It was also true of some primary schools such as Torriano Primary School and Kings Oak Primary School who cited this as a crucial part of the school improvement journey where schools were part of a merger.

Entrepreneurial energy and being open to opportunities

A common feature of these schools was their entrepreneurial energy. They would do their own fundraising, were open to partnerships and opportunities and were generally very outward-

looking. There were a number of references to high engagement with social media in order to hear about and take up free or subsidised offers around arts provision. This was particularly observed at Beaumont School, Marine Academy Primary and St John's Cathedral Catholic Primary.

Artsmark

A number of schools in the sample had Artsmark status and of those who held the award, all had achieved either Gold or Platinum status, many having sustained this over a number of years. Discussion with school leaders made it clear that they were interested in going on the journey where it would benefit their particular priorities as they had limited funds available to apply for awards. One school had not renewed Artsmark, but chosen to work on the Wellbeing Award at present, due to increasing concerns about mental health in children and young people.

Most found the application process itself helpful and cited the networks and support offered by the Bridge Organisations as beneficial. However, particularly at Platinum level, case study schools felt that the assessment process should have included a visit. It is also possible that where schools are integrating the arts deeply into their curriculum and pedagogy rather than teaching as a separate subject, it can be difficult for assessors to read the full value of this.

Continuing professional development and learning (CPDL)

Seventy per cent of survey respondents said that arts and cultural education are an integral part of the CPDL offer to all staff. We asked survey respondents to choose from a list of CPDL opportunities that were available to their staff; the top three responses were:

Non-specialist teachers can access training in arts subjects to ensure knowledge and confidence	34
Practical skills-based sessions	32
Subject specific development for specialist arts teachers	30

However, in case study schools we generally saw CPDL opportunities happening in-house or, occasionally, across schools. These schools also explained that CPDL opportunities generally focused on exam board training (due to new curricula). Schools occasionally cited CPDL opportunities through arts organisations but more generally we heard examples of CPDL being linked to an artist working with students with the teachers in attendance.

Case study visits suggest that some schools are interested in input from artists and arts organisations but that this feels less achievable. Sometimes that was due to budget pressures and sometimes lack of knowledge about where to look for those experiences. Less visible were instances of professional arts organisations or artists providing CPDL experiences (although there were some notable exceptions to this) as was referenced at St John's Cathedral Catholic Primary and The Compton School where the assistant head reflected that schools in general are moving away from going out of the school for CPDL but 'through partnerships with different organisations we're able to access free CPD as part of their work with students'. At Shiremoor Primary School, for example, a staff audit identified teachers' professional development needs in the arts, so when artists were commissioned to work in the school, they were matched with a teacher who would benefit from learning the range of skills the arts practitioner could bring.

There were several examples of primary schools commissioning a specialist teacher from a neighbouring secondary school and secondary schools talked of leading workshops with neighbouring primary schools. It is worth noting that in some cases, these examples of approaches to CPDL do not correspond with current thinking about what constitutes effective professional development for teachers. In the 2014 publication, *Developing Great Teaching*, the writers note that:

'The most effective professional development lasted at least two terms – more usually a year (or longer)...School leaders must ensure that staff are given to engage with longer term programmes – to cover not only a programme's initial input, but also subsequent class-based experimentation...'³

We recommend that this is an area that requires further investigation.

Location and demographic

The case study schools were selected in order to represent the experience of schools working in very different contexts. A number of them are located in disadvantaged communities where parents have low incomes and/or a low level of education. Sometimes these schools were also in areas where there are few arts and cultural facilities nearby. These schools focused on creating an atmosphere where the arts are valued. In schools with above average percentages of Pupil Premium students or with students with additional needs or disabilities, the arts are typically seen as providing opportunities students might not otherwise experience. Several schools talked of children leading very insular lives and that the school had a key role in sparking a lifelong interest in the arts and ensuring that children's entitlement to the arts was provided: 'Children have very limited vocabulary and limited opportunities to go beyond Shiremoor. If we don't take them, many of them would be unlikely to go'. This seemed even more pertinent in schools looking after children with profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD).

However, for those schools catering for pupils with special needs, entitlement to the arts had to be balanced with the particular needs of individual pupils. Both Wilson Stuart School and Arden Grove Infant and Nursery School talked about theatre visits being problematic, either because theatres do not provide enough wheelchair spaces or because children with

³ See 'Developing Great Teaching'. 2014. Teacher Development Trust – <http://www.curee.co.uk/files/shared/Developing-Great-Teaching-Summary.pdf>

autism can respond very badly to the sensory overload of many productions.

Conversely, some case study schools have a relatively privileged intake, but some are located in rural areas and have limited access to the arts and cultural sector. Proximity or ease of access to city centres – or the opposite – was clearly important as an enabler or barrier to engagement in arts enrichment activities. Transport costs were mentioned in both categories. Schools in London are able to benefit from TfL's free transport for school groups, while schools in Norwich are collaborating in order to try to come up with creative solutions to the cost of transport preventing pupils from engaging with arts provision.

Working to address challenges

There is no doubt that a commitment to outstanding arts provision is not without very real challenges. Unsurprisingly, the most frequently referenced were time and money, but location/transport and creating a culture of pupil/parental engagement were also mentioned in several schools. In terms of time, we saw secondaries commit to longer school days and/or different lesson timings in order to accommodate a broad and balanced curriculum that included the arts. Within primaries, some conversations focused on the integration of the arts into other subjects as a way of ensuring strong provision. Financial constraints were mentioned by all. Some schools talked about being unsure about how long they could continue with current provision; some had already had to make cuts to arts provision for budgetary reasons. Others talked about an increased focus on fundraising. Several talked about engagement with social media and local cultural organisations in order to benefit from free or subsidised offers.

Location can also prove challenging. Those in rural areas talked about isolation and limited local cultural provision. However, some of these talked of making the most of 21st technologies: live streaming, digital theatre, etc. For others, even in urban locations, transport is a major barrier. One

Norwich primary has invested in minibuses in order to be able to take whole year groups out.

For some schools there has been a clear journey to overcome pupil disengagement or awkwardness with the arts. Some, like Wildern School, talked about creating a culture of performance, with an expectation that all pupils would perform in front of each other, stamping out negative comments, and enabling them to get to a point where pupils interviewed did not feel in any way awkward about these expectations. Equally, at St John's Cathedral Catholic Primary School, all pupils sing from reception up; that is both expected and the norm. Those who don't enjoy singing participate anyway, in the same way that they would with a subject they didn't necessarily like. In at least two schools, staff have created boys only groups, responding to boys' desire to participate but not in front of girls.

Impact

There is currently no hard data that captures the impact of arts and cultural education on schools, and many case study schools reflected on the difficulties of quantifying effect and effectiveness of this provision. However, there were three clear areas of impact that we saw in case study schools.

Impact on school improvement

School leaders typically believed that the arts and cultural education played a significant role in school improvement and development. Sometimes this was hard to quantify in terms of attainment evidence. The head at Mile Cross Primary School (a primary that had gone from Satisfactory to Outstanding during his tenure) reflected on the difficulties of evidencing the impact of arts provision but talked about how 'The evidence is in their work, the quality of their work. Their ability and confidence' and seeing, for example, 'huge improvements' in children's confidence and language as demonstrated through class and year assemblies.

The head at Torriano Primary School described how transforming pedagogy by integrating arts and creative learning into teaching and learning had enabled the infant school to merge with the successful junior school and move from Requires Improvement to Outstanding in three years. Similarly, an intense period of reflection to integrate creative approaches to teaching and learning when three schools in Barnsley merged to create Kings Oak Primary Learning Centre led to an Outstanding school.

In Ricards Lodge High School the assistant head believed that arts provision had both contributed to, and been strengthened by, results: 'If results weren't going the way they are – then curriculum would be under scrutiny'. Staff cite increased results in English, for example, stating that 'all that we do in drama is fundamental to supporting that' and that success relies on students with good arts understanding: 'there's no question it's part of it'.

In West Lakes Academy the vice principal felt that strong arts provision has been an important part of the school's journey from Satisfactory to Outstanding:

'I think because of the quality and the passion of the teachers [who] have exceptionally high standards and expectations, they support the highest standards of learning. It's sometimes a naivety of people who view creative freedom as lack of structure and lack of rigour. Whereas what you actually find from the director of art, performing arts, music etc, it's exactly the opposite; that level of rigour drives those exceptional standards of the work they produce, and then that standard underpins the current throughout the academy'.

It appears that the history of achievement in the arts has therefore raised the bar for other areas.

In Wildern School, the head recalled a point in time when she was teaching at the school but not yet head teacher and it was not yet Outstanding. The arts, and the commitment to the arts buildings on site, make a 'statement about the school. From that moment we've

moved from strength to strength'. She declared that change had come about because SLT and the governing body had decided that the arts are 'critical to our students'.

Impact on children and young people's knowledge, skills and behaviours

Some senior leaders clearly believe that the arts play a valuable role in language development, particularly in schools where children start below expected age levels, such as Arden Grove Infant and Nursery School, Mile Cross Primary School and St John's Cathedral Catholic Primary. The deputy of the latter reflected that 'Given the demographic, with children arriving with limited vocabulary, speech and language development is the highest priority'. Staff clearly see a strong link between music, singing, and speech and language development.

Pupils at Kings Oak Primary Learning Centre spoke of how immersion in arts-based imaginative activity enabled them to retain knowledge which they could then apply within their writing: 'You can image it in your head and you can keep it in your head for when you get back into class.'

Elsewhere, senior leaders talked about other benefits: 'What the arts do potentially more than other subjects is they encourage [pupils] to talk and think and that's vital for their development' (The Compton School).

The performing arts leader at Marine Academy Primary School felt that the commitment to arts and cultural education has led to a school where children 'are able to cope, looking and not baulking, not worried about expressing themselves, it's that side of unlocking the other half of the human, it's that creative bit'.

In Shiremoor Primary School the arts were viewed as an essential part of learning and a key factor in raising the aspiration of children. Many staff talked about how there was 'no right and wrong in the arts' and so it gave children a context where they could express themselves without fear of being judged.

At Wilson Stuart School (a SEND school) staff referenced accelerated educational progress following non-verbal drama interventions, while others talked about increased engagement and enthusiasm: 'We've increasingly seen over the years the benefit of music and creative arts to help learners engage.' One person explained that some children 'wouldn't look at you, wouldn't respond or make choices'. However, through non-verbal drama, most 'would do things I'd never seen them do. It's amazing to see what they are capable of, given the right opportunities'.

At Oak Field School (also a SEND school) the head reflected that: 'The arts offer the possibility of a language we can understand and feel, a language based on emotion and sensation with no hierarchies, boundaries or privileges.'

In some schools there was a strong sense of increased resilience and work ethics due to engagement in the arts. At Wildern School, for example, one student commented:

'We're never complacent. We can always make it better. Our teachers always want to make it better. There's never an easy way. If you want something to be amazing the hard work has to come from everyone. We all know that because it's natural to us, because of our lessons, our rehearsals. If we want to make something amazing we have to put the time in'.

Some schools, such as Wilson Stuart School and Beaumont School, referenced perceptions of positive impact of the arts on mental wellbeing.

Impact on recruitment and retention of staff and pupils

The characteristics referenced above were clearly influential on recruitment and retention of both staff and children and young people alike. In response to the survey question about impact, 23 out of 50 respondents believed that arts and cultural education make a positive difference to staff recruitment and retention. This was backed up in case study visits. For example, in Ricards Lodge High School staff believe that the arts provision is 'one of the reasons why people choose to come', with the school oversubscribed by more than 50 per cent. The deputy reflected that at open mornings she is as likely to be asked about dance provision as science: 'Locally our reputation is as a centre of excellence for the arts', concluding that 'if the local community want strong arts provision they come to us'. Equally, Sacred Heart Catholic High School staff believe this is one of the reasons the school is oversubscribed, and at St John's Cathedral Catholic Primary School the deputy said that 'One of the reasons I wanted to come to this school was that I could see that arts were important'. Furthermore, some schools reflected that they saw a low turnover of key staff and believed that was due to the arts and cultural opportunities within the school.

Pupils interviewed frequently commented that a school's arts provision had influenced their or their parents' choice.

Curriculum Design

Survey respondents told us the following about their curriculum design and offer (ticking all categories that applied to their context):

Arts and cultural learning is a strong element of our curriculum	44
We provide wide-ranging and high-quality arts and cultural learning experiences within our timetabled curriculum	42
We teach arts subjects as discrete subjects	38
We offer a range of arts subjects at GCSE (dance, drama, art, music)	14
We integrate the arts into the teaching of other curriculum areas	41
We offer extra-curricular opportunities in a wide range of arts and cultural areas	43
The majority of our arts and cultural learning offer happens in curriculum time	37
The majority of our arts and cultural learning offer happens through after school clubs and/or extra-curricular activities	3
All of our arts and cultural learning offer is available and easily accessible to all our children and young people, regardless of age or ability	43

Status of arts subjects

In most of the schools visited arts subjects were given equal status to other subjects (outside of maths and English). At West Lakes Academy, for example, one teacher described how the Academy Leadership Group ‘see the arts as important...as equal’, while students talked about how ‘every department has the same standards’.

However, provision varied depending on artform and phase. Across primaries:

- Art and design and music appeared well catered for. Many were able to support a good music provision with the support of the local Music Education Hub. Where senior leaders were music specialists, as was the case at St John’s Cathedral Catholic Primary School and Marine Academy Primary, the quality and depth of provision

was exceptional, as was also the case in schools that had been able to appoint a music specialist (albeit on a part-time basis).

- Drama was patchier, but in many schools was successfully integrated into the teaching and learning of English, both written and spoken.
- Dance was the least evident of the four artforms in primary schools.

At secondary, and within special schools, provision varied again. Drama appeared much more solid but again, albeit with some very strong exceptions, dance provision was less prevalent. In most secondaries take-up of music at GCSE or A-Level was lower than art or drama, where it was offered. Secondary schools spoke of the importance of a high quality KS3 experience in introducing students to a subject which gave them the confidence to choose it as a GCSE option. Some schools spoke of pupils

dropping music at GCSE because of the need to be able to play a musical instrument and because of the increasing element of theory.

Arts subjects in the curriculum

84% of school survey respondents told us Eighty-four per cent of school survey respondents told us that a wide range of arts and cultural learning experiences were available within the timetabled curriculum. Many case study schools referred to 'looking again' at their curriculum mapping to ensure curricula are developmental with inbuilt progression. In many schools this was an annual process with teachers adapting the curriculum to relate to current events or opportunities in the local area or simply refreshing the focus so that teachers were, for example, working on a new drama text.

We also received some positive references to the new Ofsted framework. There was a feeling that it will enable teachers to do what they're best at – and ensure curriculum breadth. At Shiremoor Primary School for example, staff talked with enthusiasm about the new emphasis on curriculum following from the draft Ofsted framework which they believe may 'drive' schools to value and invest more in arts provision. Others felt it would give them an opportunity to demonstrate the depth of thought that had gone into their curriculum design and planning.

A typical shape for primary schools is English and maths in the morning, though often with arts and creativity infusing the approach to teaching and learning, and then afternoons on broader curriculum areas including arts subjects. The Mosley School head talked about his teachers being '...very good at finding the balance between high quality English and Maths and high-quality art,' while the arts lead at Mile Cross Primary School commented that they make the arts 'as cross curricular as possible – it's about getting it into the timetable as much as possible'.

In secondary schools we saw a range of approaches. Noticeable examples include:

- Schools (The Compton School and Sidney Stringer Academy) who designed KS4 timetables in response to student choices as opposed to a pre-designed timetable that students then make choices against.

'Very few students don't get what they choose'

The Compton School

'The curriculum has been designed to make it easier for pupils to choose subjects they love and are good at. The school timetable at year 9 and KS4 is personalised for every student. Students make their choices about the subjects they want to study, and the VP then creates a timetable that enables each student to take the subjects they've identified.'

Sidney Stringer Academy

- West Lakes Academy where at KS4 all students take one arts subject.
- In Wildern School, Beaumont School and Ricards Lodge High School they ensure there are two 'free' choices for students at KS4 alongside EBacc subjects. This gives students the ability to do two arts subjects if they wish.

Arts across the curriculum and as subjects in their own right

We saw examples of arts being taught across the curriculum as an integrated part of other subjects and of arts subjects taught discretely. Eighty-two per cent of survey respondents said that they integrate the arts into the teaching of other curriculum areas. Seventy-six per cent of survey respondents said that arts subjects were taught as discrete subjects. We saw both approaches in case study schools.

In Baildon Church of England Primary School:

'All the curriculum plans have been updated this year. The deputy head has led a review

of the curriculum...This has led to changes in the teaching of Art and Design Technology. These subjects are currently integrated with History and Geography topics in a 'creative curriculum'. This was felt to have led to a dilution of skills and lack of progression in the arts subjects and so they have decided to have a separate curriculum plan for Art and Design Technology allowing for greater emphasis on knowledge and understanding.'

In Kings Oak Primary Learning Centre, creative processes are embedded in teaching and learning. The leaders were careful to emphasise, 'this is not just cross curricular learning but deep explorations of how we teach creativity and how we integrate arts into topic work.' Children's artwork is on display throughout the school, often exploring a particular genre or artist.

In Sidney Stringer Academy art teaching was found in science. A science teacher interviewed during the school visit described how he incorporates arts activities into science lessons, for example asking his students to create paintings of chemical bonds or using plasticine to make a model of a skeleton. The teacher believes that it helps students play a more active role in their learning when they are applying skills used and learnt in other disciplines. He encourages the students to apply their arts experiences and knowledge to science. The teacher talked about the importance of understanding how the arts have been inspired by science and science by the arts: 'the art of science and the science of art'.

Cultural capital

Although most schools in the survey and case study were already giving children a rich cultural education, it seems that the inclusion of the term 'cultural capital' in the Ofsted new inspection criteria is increasing awareness of the value of building visits to theatres, museums, galleries and other opportunities into the curriculum. At Shiremoor Primary School children in all phases were being introduced to the work of internationally renowned artists, but

these were being connected imaginatively with local icons or events. So for example, strong angular charcoal drawings of the Tyne Bridge were replacing Mount Fuji in children's versions of Hokusai's famous painting, The Great Wave. As part of the summer celebrations, statues of Elmer the Elephant will be displayed throughout the North East. Children in each class were designing Elmer in the style of a famous artist, eg Kandinsky, Miro or Delaunay.

Curriculum enrichment and extra-curricular provision

Eighty-six per cent of survey school respondents told us that they offered extra-curricular opportunities in a wide range of arts and cultural areas. Eighty-six per cent of survey school respondents also told us that they provide wide-ranging and high-quality arts and cultural learning experiences within their timetabled curriculum. Seventy-four per cent of survey respondents told us that most of their arts and cultural learning offer happened in curriculum time. Only 6 per cent of survey respondents said that much of their arts offer happened through after school clubs or extra-curricular activities.

Within case study schools, the extent of arts-based curriculum enrichment and extra-curricular opportunities was often extraordinary.

Curriculum enrichment ranged from children attending Arden Grove Infant and Nursery School in Norwich benefiting from an annual year 2 trip to see a production in London, to SEND children at Wilson Stuart learning circus skills. Extra-curricular provision was often just as impressive. For example, in Mile Cross Primary School, arts options and activities make up about 40 per cent of overall extra-curricular provision. At Beaumont School extra-curricular clubs are offered not only at lunchtimes and after school but also in the morning before the school day starts. Participation in local events were frequently mentioned, as were large-scale national arts events such as Big Dance Off, Rock Challenge, and NT Connections. Some schools overcame huge obstacles of demographic or

location in order to give their pupils opportunities to participate in such events. For example, Wilson Stuart School participates every year at the NEC's Young Voices, whilst Marine Academy Primary in Plymouth recently took part in Voice in a Million, despite a 12-hour return journey to Wembley, including a 4am return.

Pupil engagement

The top three survey responses to the engagement of children and young people in arts subjects and experiences are as follows (respondents were invited to tick all statements that applied to their contexts):

Children and young people are given opportunities to lead or shape arts and cultural learning in our school and to perform and exhibit their work	48
Each year all children and young people have access to arts and cultural activities offered by a professional artist/organisation (eg going on visits to a museum or theatre or working with an arts specialist in dance, music, drama or visual arts)	46
All children and young people in our school can talk enthusiastically about, and demonstrate their knowledge, skills, understanding and experience of, a broad range of arts and cultural learning	39

Enjoyment and ownership

Case study visits corroborated these findings. We saw genuine pride about, and ownership of, the arts and cultural education offer in their schools in the pupils we spoke to during case study visits. For example, at Shiremoor Primary School, children were evidently knowledgeable about art and able to talk confidently and enthusiastically about different genres and

artists. At Wilson Stuart School, chatting to reception children it was clear that they derived great pleasure from arts activities. One of the children's eyes lit up every time she talked about arts activities. They described loving singing and drama. Sixth formers described how arts activities made them feel 'happy'. Students talked about how arts subjects felt 'different' from other subjects. Arts subjects equalled fun as well as quality and rigour. Pupils at The Compton School described parents as being 'happy that I've come to a school with lots of arts provision'. One pupil commented that 'Whenever I explain to my parents what I'm doing they say how lucky I am'.

There was also evidence of responsiveness to pupil voice and leadership. Ninety-six per cent of survey respondents said that pupils were given opportunities to lead or shape arts and cultural education in their school. We saw pupils running their own arts clubs at lunchtime and older pupils trained to lead arts clubs for younger children.

There was a belief from teachers that arts and cultural education were the things that pupils would remember, as evidenced in one comment by a senior leader from Wildern School: 'We're making memories for life, we're not just giving them the curriculum'.

Inclusion and tackling disengagement

There was a strong commitment to inclusion across many case study schools and a belief that the arts are a vital tool in tackling disengagement. For example, at St Richard's Catholic College, the arts are used to hook back in students at 'risk of exclusion': '...a lot of those pupils are unsuccessful elsewhere but they have success in our subjects and it makes a difference. It makes them positive about school'. Some schools talked about ensuring a fair balance of extra-curricular provision between opportunities open to all and audition/invitation only groups to support those with particular artistic talents.

Parental engagement

There was general agreement among case study schools that parents were supportive of arts subjects and experiences. At both primary and secondary phases, arts subjects and experiences can be the things that bring parents positively into the school.

However, there are also examples where parents value the arts as part of the school experience but are not convinced of the long-term importance of arts subjects for academic or career development. At Sacred Heart Catholic High School, 'Parents value the arts and want their daughters to be "well rounded human beings", but when it comes to making choices about options and careers some have been influenced to believe that the arts is not a viable option.' The school has initiated a performing arts campaign to champion the value of the arts with pupils and parents to inspire them about possibilities and options. Beautifully designed posters are displayed around the school showing the paths that former pupils have taken and the many careers the arts have opened to them, from critical care nurse to dancer with Rambert.

At primaries, it was more likely that the school aimed to include parents in arts activities and experiences to extend their horizons. For example, at Arden Grove Infant and Nursery School, year 2 children and their parents were invited to see Northern Ballet at Norwich Theatre Royal:

'Often parents have never experienced ballet before or live performance or a show. It opens their eyes to different opportunities that they have for their children...It gives them time with their children. The opportunity to enjoy a ballet which not a lot of them ever get to do'.

At Baildon Church of England Primary School, teachers run 'Don't be scared of Shakespeare' workshops for parents that have proved so popular they are expanding the number of sessions in 2019/20. The school open days have been transformed to enable parents to see

the whole range of opportunities available to children rather than just focus on attainment in English and maths.

Ofsted has picked up on parental engagement levels in some instances. For example, in Arden Grove Infant and Nursery School Ofsted inspection from 2015:

'The variety of performing arts that the pupils experience at Arden Grove is exceptional. The opportunity to challenge themselves to perform for an audience on a professional stage as part of a large ensemble is extraordinary. Parents say they are stunned by their pupils' accomplishments'.

Teachers often reflected that arts activities are what can get children talking to parents about their learning. For example, at Mile Cross Primary School a teacher noted:

'At one recent exhibition a parent commented "I know all about this". She explained that usually she got "absolutely nothing" out of her children about the school day but that "Through this project I've been told about pop-art, digital skills..." There are a wide range of events at the school that encourage parental engagement, including "cafes" with a range of activities on different tables, often craft-based, so that parents work alongside children'

Assemblies for parents at Torriano Primary School have become 'teaching assemblies' with children creating immersive experiences for their parents, for example making them join in a space shuttle lift-off or creating a foundingling school which parents entered as orphans and foundlings.

At Oak Field School and Sports College some staff had had little arts experience as part of their own education and therefore the school is also a learning environment for those adults. 'It's not just about pupils – it's about staff and parents.' The head spoke of the importance for parents of children with severe learning difficulties (SLD) and profound and multiple

learning difficulties (PMLD) to see their children succeeding. The arts allow these children to be successful and give enjoyment, and the school ensures parents can celebrate this success.

At Ricards Lodge High School, parents 'flock' to various arts performances and the annual school production has three nights and a matinee because it is 'so popular'.

There are also examples of schools drawing on parent expertise. At Torriano Primary School the school invites parents to contribute to projects. For example, a town planner helped devise an EYFS project with children making a model of their local community and designing a better future:

'All of these very young children were telling their families where they lived, where their houses were and where somebody else's house was and how to improve the environment. The children developed oracy skills and geographic and humanities understanding.'

4 ● Conclusions

Through the research we set out to understand why and how outstanding schools integrate arts and cultural education as part of a rigorous academic curriculum. We saw interesting similarities across the schools we visited that help answer those questions.

We commonly saw the following features in case study schools.

- Arts and cultural education was viewed as a visible expression of the overall excellence, quality and identity of the whole school.
- The head teacher and SLT displayed a passion for and commitment to ensuring all children in their school experienced high-quality arts and cultural education.
- The schools all benefited from having a senior champion and/or lead for arts and cultural education in their school as well as specialist teachers employed to teach those subjects.
- The school typically felt that the arts and cultural education helped them to set really high expectations for all students. There was a belief that children could behave differently or show a different part of themselves through arts subjects and experiences and this then changed teacher and parent perceptions of what these young people are capable of. The arts act as a vehicle to change the mindsets of the people around the children – including parents.
- There was a recognition of the time commitment required to ensure and maintain quality arts experiences. These schools know how to commission the arts.
- We typically saw a strong commitment to children going out on visits and experiencing arts activities in galleries, theatres and museums. We heard schools reflect on how these experiences then had a positive impact on children's writing – particularly where children were starting school below expected age levels. 'When they come back from things some of the writing is the best we will have seen, because they're excited and want to write' (Arden Grove Infant and Nursery School).
- There was a commitment to using high quality materials. 'The respect that children have if they're being given high quality materials is huge.' Quality materials are more likely to be robust and provide an opportunity to build pupils' respect. The school could 'get them to respect the art' (Marine Academy Primary School).
- Schools that had an Artsmark award were generally positive about the value of going on the Artsmark journey; it was a reflective tool that helped them think through their offer. We also heard positive responses about support received from Bridge Organisations and Music Education Hubs.
- Partnerships are key; the schools typically enjoyed relationships with artists and arts organisations and were outward facing in terms of strong relationships with other schools. But in some cases schools want arts organisations to be more responsive to their needs.

- There was strong support for the new Ofsted framework. Staff talked with enthusiasm about the new emphasis on curriculum.
- There was less consistency or clarity about the schools' approach to continuing professional development and learning.
- Transport came up as both a positive and negative issue. It is noticeable that in London (with a free TfL offer for school groups), getting out of school to visit galleries and arts organisations was relatively easy. In other parts of the country where free travel was not available, travel was a significant issue. 'Transport costs are a massive barrier' (Arden Grove Infant and Nursery School).

Appendix A – Invitation to schools

Dear Colleague,

The Royal Shakespeare Company has been commissioned by Arts Council England to undertake research into arts and cultural provision in schools with an Outstanding Ofsted rating.

We are looking for a representative sample of schools from across the country to participate in the research.

By participating, you will contribute to a national piece of work that will help schools and arts organisations across the country understand the role that the arts can play in school improvement, curriculum design and pupil and parental engagement. The research will also influence the future support that Arts Council England designs for schools and further our understanding of the importance of creative skills and behaviours in young people.

We are particularly interested in hearing from schools who:

- Are a Primary, Secondary, PRU, SEND or Infant School (state-maintained, free or an Academy/ part of a MAT)
- Hold an Outstanding Ofsted report that was awarded in the last five years*
- Enter 50% or more students for the English Baccalaureate (if you are a mainstream Secondary School)
- Have a strong commitment to the arts and culture
- We would welcome interest from schools who have progressed from Requires Improvement or Good and feel that their arts and cultural provision played a role in that development

We would welcome interest from schools with above average percentages of pupil premium students.

*If schools meet all other criteria but have an older Ofsted inspection we would still like to hear from you.

There are two ways you can participate in this research.

1. By receiving a half day or daylong visit from our researchers
2. By completing an online survey

We hope that participating schools will work with us as research partners and directly benefit from the findings. If this sounds of interest, please email emma.gibbons@rsc.org.uk by 30 April 2019 (or earlier if at all possible) letting us know which of the above criteria you meet. School visit dates will be negotiated directly with you and would happen during the summer term on a date that best suits you.

We really look forward to hearing from you.

Appendix B – Online survey results

Royal Shakespeare Company and Arts Council England Research into Cultural Learning

Online Survey

4. Values and ethos

Multiple choice

Please tell us why having a strong arts and cultural learning offer is important to your school. Please select the **five reasons** that are most important to you

To give children and young people access to their cultural heritage	22
To open up cultural and creative industries as a career choice	29
To improve children and young people's health and wellbeing	34
To give children and young people a voice	25
To develop children and young people's creativity	48
To improve pupil behaviour	4
To develop pupil skills in team building, collaboration, problem solving	29
To support learning across the curriculum	26
To develop children and young people's knowledge and understanding of arts and culture because it is an important part of their educational experience/development and a right for every child	42
To motivate children and young people who have disengaged from learning	17
Other, please detail at the end	6

5. Leadership

Multiple choice

How does leadership of your arts and cultural learning offer manifest itself in your school?
Please tick all those that apply

Our development or improvement plan demonstrates a commitment to a high-quality arts and cultural learning offer for all pupils	43
We have clear milestones and methods of evaluating impact of arts and cultural learning in place	19
We have a dedicated member of staff responsible for arts and cultural learning	38
Budget is allocated to enable a breadth of arts and cultural learning	43
Specialist teachers are employed to teach arts subjects	41
There is parity of curriculum time given to each arts subject	31
There is parity of curriculum time given to arts and cultural learning in relation to other curriculum areas	30
We have a governor responsible for arts and cultural learning	26
Arts and cultural learning are reported on regularly at governors' meetings	26
We give prominence to our arts and cultural learning offer through school events, celebrations, parents evenings, open days etc	49
Other, please detail at the end	3

6. Children and young people

Multiple choice

Please tick all those that apply

All children and young people in our school can talk enthusiastically about, and demonstrate their knowledge, skills, understanding and experience of, a broad range of arts and cultural learning	39
We offer Arts Award to some of our children and young people	18
We offer Arts Award to all of our children and young people	8
Each year all children and young people have access to arts and cultural activities offered by a professional artist/organisation (eg going on visits to a museum or theatre or working with an arts specialist in dance, music, drama or visual arts)	46
Children and young people are given opportunities to lead or shape arts and cultural learning in our school and to perform and exhibit their work	48
Other, please detail at the end	1

7. Curriculum design and range of offer

Multiple choice

Please tick all that apply in your school

Arts and cultural learning is a strong element of our curriculum	44
We provide wide-ranging and high-quality arts and cultural learning experiences within our timetabled curriculum	42
We teach arts subjects as discrete subjects	38
We offer a range of arts subjects at GCSE (dance, drama, art, music)	14
We integrate the arts into the teaching of other curriculum areas	41
We offer extra-curricular opportunities in a wide range of arts and cultural areas	43
The majority of our arts and cultural learning offer happens in curriculum time	37
The majority of our arts and cultural learning offer happens through after school clubs and/or extra-curricular activities	3
All of our arts and cultural learning offer is available and easily accessible to all our children and young people, regardless of age or ability	43

8. Continued Professional Development and Learning (CPDL)

Single choice

Arts and cultural learning are an integral part of our CPDL offer to all staff:

Yes 35

No 15

9. Continued Professional Development and Learning (CPDL)

Multiple choice

What type of CPDL opportunities are available to staff? Please tick all those that apply.

Subject specific development for specialist arts teachers	30
Non-specialist can teachers access training in arts subjects to ensure knowledge and confidence	34
Practical skills-based sessions	32
Action research	15
Communities of practice	16

10. Partnerships

Single choice

We form relationships with arts and cultural organisations to deepen the opportunities available to staff and children and young people.

Yes 48

No 2

11. Partnerships

Single choice

We collaborate with networks of schools to develop and support our arts and cultural offer.

Yes 42

No 8

12. Impact

Multiple choice

We believe that our arts and cultural learning offer makes a significant and positive difference to...

Please tick all those that apply

Engagement of our children and young people	47
Well-being and happiness of our children and young people	49
Parental engagement	42
Community engagement	33
Curriculum design	42
Overall school improvement	43
Staff recruitment and retention	23
Other, please detail at the end	3

13. Additional Information

Single-line text

Please make any additional comments here, particularly if there are aspects of your arts and cultural learning offer that haven't been captured through the survey questions above. If your comment refers to earlier questions, please quote the question number.

Brunel Field Primary School is 1 of 2 schools under the umbrella of Ashley Down Schools Federation (comprising Ashley Down Primary School and Brunel Field Primary School). The two schools share a music teacher, SLT and board of governors. Whilst this survey is being completed under the title 'Brunel Field', the answers would mirror those of Ashley Down. You would be welcome to visit both sites.

In relation to question 4 and 12, we believe that cultural education improves the confidence and self esteem of children. This has a positive impact on their learning in More formal subjects.

We have a strong visual and Performing Arts dept at Westfield where students can experience Music, Dance and Drama from primary through to KS5. KS4/5 students take part in SSF and National Theatre Connections Festival Annually. We have a purpose built drama studio where students can experience both being on stage and also the technical aspects of theatre. We are part of the Dorset Special Schools network and regularly meet to collaborate on arts and music. This year we hope to begin collaborative work in Drama.

We have a writer in residence who works with the students to produce their own poems (especially vulnerable and EAL students/refugees). We also collaborate with Oxford University to run poetry workshops for EAL students, and we produce our own anthologies of students' poetry. We have the Art Room on site, and vulnerable Y7s are given the opportunity to attend art therapy sessions there once a week.

We have been an Arts Mark Gold school in previous years and are in the process of applying for Arts mark this year. We have taken part in the Time to Listen launch of the new study into the impact of the arts and cultural education on the lives of young people at the Palace of Westminster. We have been an education partner with the RSC for several years

We are at the beginning of our journey into a new curriculum model which has the arts and cultural learning at the heart of it. We believe that the new curriculum model will ensure that pupils are more engaged in their curriculum themes and also this has a great impact on the work completed in many other curriculum areas. We also aim to inspire an increased love of learning and engagement with some of our pupils who may not particularly succeed in the core primary areas of Reading, Writing, Mathematics and Science; the new curriculum which is hugely influenced by the arts and performance will enable pupils to demonstrate their skills, knowledge and understanding in the areas of dance, drama, art, design and presenting.

We are an Arts Mark Platinum School – I am a co-founder of a Cultural Education partnership. I am PASSIONATE about and have seen the transformative power of Arts, Culture, Creativity and Connection in young people's lives!

Art and Music is vital to our catchment area, as it is highly deprived and the opportunity to give inspirational, aspirational ideas to our children is paramount for us. To reach potential, all children need to be well rounded, global citizens who understand how they can make a difference in the world, through whatever medium suits them best, be it Academic or Artistic and having exposure to the Arts, in whatever form they take, is vital in this 'whole child' development. Low or High, the Art is inside them, whether they know it or not!

We have engaged with The Birmingham Rep. for over two years in a non-verbal drama project to improve student self-confidence, self-esteem, empathy and communication skills.

We have really grown the Arts at The Westminster School over the last 6 years. This coincided with our Ofsted inspections and since gaining good in 2013 we have developed the Arts significantly and this has continued to grow up to and beyond our grading of outstanding in 2017. The Arts have grown over this time and now have full time provision in Art, Drama, Music and Dance and this is led by our own specialist school staff and visiting practitioners from the community. 95% of pupils in school now access the Arts each week as part of their curriculum and we offer a range of suitable accreditations that they can access dependent on their ability and needs. These accreditations include Arts Award, BTEC, Open College Network West Midlands, AQA Unit Award Scheme and Rock School. The Arts are a driving force within the school and in the community; we have developed links with local theatres and Arts Centres across the Midlands region. This has developed the range of opportunities for pupils to access quality cultural experiences, particularly theatre visits, concerts and musicals. We are developing our links with the Birmingham REP to enable our pupils to be able to access career opportunities like work experience and supported internships. Although the Arts at The Westminster school is at its most successful period in its history we are now finding that funding is creating a struggle for us to progress further. We have had to look at external funding grants in order to run projects in school and we are struggling to be able to work with our local music hub due to the cost of the tuition, this is at a detriment of some of our most gifted pupils.

We are a Platinum Sing Up school and Arts Mark Gold school

Question 5 We don't employ specific arts staff, but we do have service level agreements for music tuition, such as woodwind, strings and steel pans. We use private companies to deliver arts workshops, such as drama days and art days.

(Q2-9) Torriano is the lead school for the Camden STEAM hub. STEAM is an acronym for Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics. The hub's conviction is that creativity, expressed here as the A for Arts, is as integral to learning as the other STEM subjects. The development of STEAM through the expertise of our artist in residence, CPD for the staff and partnerships with cultural, scientific and work based organisations, have led to sharing of practice across the hub. This includes placing the arts as a focus in curriculum design and pedagogy, connecting skills and concepts, whilst ensuring the integrity of the STEAM disciplines. Our staff have and children have greatly benefitted from this system leadership approach and have been able to shape and evaluate the development of this programme through coaching and sharing across the 22 schools in the hub. The hub are working with Central St Martin's students to develop an artist in residence aspect to the course, based on the model developed at Torriano and as a career pathway.

Lots of our children have barriers to speech and language. Art subjects help them to overcome these barriers and find their creative gifts and talents.

We are a complex needs school and the children really enjoy incorporating music drama into all aspects of the curriculum. I have only been in this post for a year and have begun to develop arts award. Prior to my post parkside have been committed to including the arts into every day life here. Putting on performances and recently exploring arts award. We have a specialist music teacher that delivered lessons across ks1- ks4. This is the beginning of our new journey building on the excellent job done in the past .

Arden Grove is part of the Umbrella Trust with both Hellesdon High School, Firside and Norwich Theatre Royal. This is called Norfolk Schools and Theatre Royal Trust. This brings the school exciting, creative opportunities that enrich our provision for the Arts (music, dance, drama, and Art). We involve parents in Arts based trips too – Year 2 take children and parents to watch a ballet. The school also offers a trip to London every year to watch a musical. We host an Arts Week every year where the children take part in workshops ranging from street dance, drama and enjoy performances from local companies.

We use our rehearsal room techniques as taught by the RSC in all aspects of our school curriculum. We particularly look at our GD children and the impact this has on reading and writing. We have since developed a staff training scheme that gives our staff the confidence and knowledge to use the techniques.

Each day, term, year I am utterly stunned by the exceptional delivery of our staff and their commitment to the arts through the quality of education they provide. It gives me goosebumps and makes me emotional when I see how this manifests in the young people and their work. It is world-beating.

The arts and cultural learning of our pupils is on the increase as we apply for our Gold Artsmark Award. We currently hold the Silver Award and have seen such benefits in the confidence and well being for our children that we are keen to develop further. I will email our current Artsmark Statement of Commitment separately.

Appendix D – Case studies

Arden Grove Infant and Nursery School, Norwich, Norfolk

Arden Grove Infant and Nursery School on the outskirts of Norwich caters for three- to seven-year-olds. It has 222 pupils: 8.5 per cent are in receipt of free school meals, 2.3 per cent have special educational needs (SEN), 3.6 per cent speak English as an additional language (EAL). Standards in reading, writing and maths are consistently higher than the national average. Ofsted rated it Outstanding in 2015 following two previous ratings of Good in 2009 and 2006. It has Artsmark Gold.

What was significant:

- Extent of arts provision
- Belief that arts address language problems
- Nature of relationships with schools and cultural providers
- Parental engagement
- Catering for children who struggle with participation

School Improvement and Development

The head feels that arts and cultural learning have 'undoubtedly played a role in the school improvement journey'. The vision for the arts predates the previous head, though he was instrumental in creating key arts-based partnerships with the local theatre and local schools. The ethos of the school is about 'having happy, well-developed learners'. The head believes that, 'You can't have progress

in the academic if you haven't got people who are engaged and love their learning'. The arts are seen as critical, as well as contributing to 'children's wellbeing, their social and emotional development'.

Staff strongly believe the arts play a crucial role in overcoming the very low levels of language skills when children enter the nursery, addressing not only gaps in these skills but also the absence of experiences, where children have not been exposed to traditional tales or bedtime stories. The head believes:

'...the arts opens them up to a whole world of creativity and imagination. The children have got to have exposure to this if we ever want them to be creative themselves. If they cannot articulate an imaginative story, they will never be able to write. It doesn't matter how much phonics we do. They need to be inspired. They need to explore language. They need to acquire a much wider vocabulary'.

The extent of arts provision is impressive and was praised in Ofsted's 2015 inspection: 'The variety of performing arts that the pupils experience at Arden Grove is exceptional. Parents say they are stunned by their pupils' accomplishments'.

Although none of the teachers are subject specialists, one of the teachers is also the dedicated arts lead, responsible for making sure the arts are in the curriculum. In addition, the school has a music lead who organises a range of live music. The head reflected that 'We

have really good subject leaders who are really passionate’.

References to CPDL were limited, although the arts lead referenced Arts Award training and risk assessment training in order to support teachers organising trips.

Although there is no named arts governor, the school has benefited from an associate governor who is very supportive of arts provision and was instrumental in setting up the collaboration with Norwich Theatre Royal (NTR).

The nature of this collaboration, alongside other partnerships with local schools, is a key characteristic of the school’s arts and cultural learning offer. The partnership with NTR includes two further schools: the junior and high school which most of its pupils will attend. It came about when funding for previous arts provision came to an end, with the school keen to ensure the school’s focus on arts and cultural learning continued. The arts lead is on an operational board for the partnership.

The school has a range of links with other cultural providers, as well as being part of the Wensum Trust, bringing together 12 schools in and around Norwich. The group has chosen to come together to work collaboratively on how to provide education for any pupil who might attend one of their schools. The head commented that the arts play:

‘...quite a significant role. We are working on how we can work more closely with the Theatre Royal across all schools. Even down to can we improve the cost of transport to enable us to get people to the theatre. Transport costs are a massive barrier’.

For the arts lead, this collaboration is important in ensuring continuity of arts opportunities for pupils when they leave Arden Grove: ‘We start them off here with such a broad variety of things – we want that to continue. We don’t want them to lose that love for the arts’.

Curriculum design

Mornings are spent focusing on phonics, literacy and maths, with afternoons spent on topic work. However, staff struggled to quantify the extent of arts provision within the curriculum because it is integrated into topic work rather than taught discretely. Furthermore, drama is used to support literacy; for example, within music and art and design, skills and knowledge are planned from nursery to year 3 through the use of curriculum maps which go up to year 3 because the school used to have children in this year group. The maps have been retained with the upper age range so that staff know how to push their higher attainers.

Extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities are impressive, given pupils’ ages. There is an annual trip to London to see a musical with year 2s. This takes place during the school’s Arts Week when ‘children take part in workshops ranging from street dance, drama and enjoy performances from local companies.’ One year this involved a circus group with a Big Top on the playing fields.

After school clubs offer a combination of sport and arts. The Christmas carol concert and year 2 leavers’ show offer opportunities to perform. The school currently offers Arts Award Explore, although this is under review due to costs.

Pupil engagement

Pupil feedback is very positive about arts and cultural learning, which clearly has a positive effect on educational progress. For example, the head talked about how, ‘When they come back from things some of the writing is best we will have seen, because they’re excited and want to write’.

Pupil Premium funding is used to ensure no pupil is excluded from arts activities. The school also works hard to cater to the needs of children with autism or high level needs who can find creative activities and ‘lack of structure’ difficult. The head talked about how a creative week such as the Arts Week, ‘lovely though that it is

for the mainstream can be very distressing for some of our children.’ With these children they look at ways to ‘keep it normal. We will try and select things they can access’ or plan ‘escape routes’ for those who are on stage, or allow them to work outside the classroom. Some of these children do not go on the London trip because ‘Theatre is not necessarily friendly for children with autism. It’s the sound. The sensory overload’.

Parental engagement

Staff talked about how parents both rate the school because of its arts provision, and are deliberately targeted as part of that provision. This is most evident in an annual year 2 trip to watch Northern Ballet at NTR, with all parents/carers invited: ‘Often parents have never experienced ballet or a live performance before. It opens their eyes to different opportunities that they can provide for their children’. In a cohort of 60 there have been only a handful whose parents – or sometimes grandparents – couldn’t attend. While a tiny minority have not enjoyed the experience, on the whole it has been so successful that the school has opened up the offer to year 1 pupils and parents as well. However, the school flagged up that although parents are very supportive of the arts provision, they struggle to get financial contributions.

Baildon Church of England Primary School, Shipley, West Yorkshire

Baildon is a Church of England Primary school in Baildon on the outskirts of Shipley. A larger than average primary school, there are 451 pupils on roll. Six per cent of children are in receipt of free school meals and 6 per cent speak EAL. The school achieved Ofsted Outstanding in 2010 and 2013 and is Artsmark Gold (autumn 2018).

What was significant;

- Commitment to creating part-time music post
- Addressing dilution of arts specialist learning and lack of progression
- Pupil leadership of the arts

The school has a strong Christian ethos. Principles of ‘growth mindset’ are firmly embedded in the school culture. The arts are seen as an entitlement which both ‘enhance pupils’ motivation and are of value in their own right’. The school’s Artsmark statement spells this out:

‘Preparing children for a rich, meaningful life begins with the holistic spectrum of the arts. Imperative to a broad and balanced curriculum are: literary arts of creative writing and poetry, performing arts of dance theatre and film; and visual arts of painting, sculpture, digital media and installations. Enabling us to make sense of our world, the arts empower us to imagine the unimaginable. Alongside developing dexterity and motor skills, creative arts support language development, decision making, inventiveness, cultural awareness and academic performance. Moreover exploring, experimenting and creating strengthens students’ problem solving and critical thinking skills.’

Governors are fully supportive, valuing the long-term benefits of a rich art provision which enables all children to experience success. They also cite potential mental health benefits. They have budgeted to fund a part-time specialist music teacher to ensure that all children have access to high quality music provision and instrumental lessons in years 3, 4, 5 and 6.

School improvement and development

The arts are seen as integral to raising standards and are championed by the head and senior leaders. Teachers speak of leadership being supportive: curriculum change is developed through consultation, is evidence-based and staff are given time to reflect and prepare for any new development.

Children’s high quality artwork is on display throughout the school, demonstrating process as well as final product. The school has very strong music provision and children regularly perform at community events and at a biannual whole school music concert. The choirs take

part in Young Voices and the orchestra performs in St George's Hall in Bradford city centre. 'There are so many opportunities we have to turn some down.'

The arts were described as giving children time to be fully immersed in a topic or idea and helping them express ideas. Even in year 6, when some schools are tempted to focus on revision, teachers aim to continue to seek to inspire children. 'Why give them a year of boredom?'

Involvement in arts projects is seen as nurturing the resilience, creativity, problem solving, independence, team work, motivation, involvement and engagement that the school aspires to develop in pupils.

Curriculum design

The National Curriculum is used as the starting point to design a rich curriculum which draws on local resources and wherever possible has a real life outcome or purpose 'Most days children are accessing art'. This is often through English and RE. Children sing regularly.

All the curriculum plans have been updated this year. The curriculum lead has led a review of the curriculum through detailed discussions with staff, critiquing current provision and redesigning it where appropriate. This has led to changes in the teaching of art and design technology. These subjects are currently integrated with history and geography topics in a 'creative curriculum'. This was felt to have led to a dilution of skills and lack of progression in the arts subjects and so they have decided to have a separate curriculum plan for art and design technology allowing for greater emphasis on skills, knowledge and understanding. As well as weekly lessons in this subject, each year group will now have three project days in the year, enabling a topic and skill to be explored in greater depth.

CPDL has to demonstrate real impact on children's learning and engagement. So for example, it was only when the English lead

realised that the skills and approaches in the RSC's rehearsal room process could be applied across the curriculum and that teachers could easily integrate them into their teaching repertoire, leading to increased engagement and learning, that she was convinced.

All children in the school now have the opportunity to work on a Shakespeare inspired curriculum. Large worksheets on the wall showed detailed planning for each age group, where the purpose, content, curriculum links (including oracy, vocabulary development, art and design, personal, social, health and citizens education, history) to be introduced were mapped out in detail by staff teams. Pupils' work shows serious intent and fun so, for example, one wall of pupils' work looked for all Shakespeare's insults including 'thou art like a stewed prune!'

Most CPDL is led by teachers accessing training and then cascading it to other staff. Although the Artsmark lead spoke positively about training opportunities being offered through the Bridge Organisation and the Cultural Education Partnership, including creative writing, drama, dance, and music, there is little development available for teachers, with one teacher when asked how he accessed CPDL suggesting 'YouTube is useful'. Where professionals are commissioned (eg a photographer), the teachers consciously seek to learn from their expertise.

The school has an exceptionally stable workforce including:

- A higher learning teaching assistant (HTLA) with a professional background as an actor. Drama and imaginative role play is seamlessly introduced into activities on a day to day basis
- A part time music specialist who teaches curriculum music across school, singing in all key stages and leading a number of musical groups, orchestra and two choirs

The head has taken the opportunity of a maternity leave cover to appoint an art specialist who has shared her skills with other staff.

An 'Aspire to be' week introduces children to careers. Visitors have included a graphic designer, a sound technician, a choreographer, set designer, actor and fashion designer. Teachers spoke of how important it was for children to see themselves as artists, musicians and writers and to see people making a living as artists.

Pupil engagement

Children are encouraged to take the initiative in all aspects of school life including the arts. Ten pupils from years 5 and 6 carried out an audit of creative activities in the school. As well as the many clubs run by staff, many of the pupils run arts activities for younger children at lunch time and after school. These have included a Shakespeare club, art clubs, and a dance club. The children were enthusiastic about this opportunity to lead the learning of younger pupils.

Children observed and spoken to were hugely engaged in the high quality singing assembly, confident in explaining their design technology projects, proud of their artistic achievements and Shakespeare work.

Parental engagement

Parents are invited to contribute to learning wherever possible and the school draws on the experience of parents who work in the arts – a set designer and a choreographer:

'We run lots of events for parents to demonstrate what it is that we are doing in the wider curriculum and to show that school is not just about teaching English and Maths – parents see all aspects of school life – including art drama, performances, choirs and outdoor activities. Feedback was amazing'.

An event, 'Don't be scared of Shakespeare' successfully convinced sceptical parents that primary school children could engage with Shakespeare.

Beaumont School, St Albans, Hertfordshire

Beaumont School is an 11-18 Academy in St Albans with 1,264 pupils: 8.4 per cent are in receipt of free school meals; 1.4 per cent have SEN; and 12.8 per cent are EAL. Progress 8 is 0.84; 87 per cent of pupils were entered for the Ebacc with 50 per cent achieving it. It achieved an Ofsted ranking of Outstanding in 2014 following a previous ranking of Good and holds Artsmark Platinum.

What was significant:

- KS4 offer is driven by pupil choice
- Pupils can take two arts GCSEs
- Older pupils run some arts clubs
- Extra-curricular offer is balanced between inclusion and audition only

School improvement and development

Beaumont School's commitment to the arts is a long-standing one and was consistently attributed to the previous head who was quoted as saying, 'if you get PE and the arts right, everything else will come with it, because of the community those subjects have built.' She also fought to ensure that pupils could, if they want, choose to do two arts subjects at GCSE, a commitment sustained by the new head. He feels that arts and cultural learning have played an important role in school improvement, explaining that 'our strap-line is enjoy and excel – it's in that order for a reason', believing that the arts play a critical role in ensuring pupils enjoy school. One of the governors explained what he perceived as the specific role of the arts: 'a lot of what we do in terms of school improvement is looking at specific year groups. What I see the arts doing is providing a vertical gel through the years. Mixing Year 7s with Year 10s etc...' through, for example, whole school shows.

Arts subjects are taught by specialists. There was a consistent theme around recruiting and then supporting high quality staff, with the word

'passion' being used frequently: 'SLT have a passion to employ the best practitioners they can' and 'we are very passionate about our jobs.'

A supportive culture was referenced a number of times, coupled with a strong sense of being valued. This has had an impact on staff retention ('Staff stay because they feel valued here') and motivation ('Because the SLT are encouraging, and the students are up for it, there are no barriers. It makes a huge difference that you're not battling for things.') Furthermore, teachers described a culture of respect and a recognition that they were on a par with other teachers. The arts are treated equally and staff value 'the arts as a choice for students.' The deputy talked about 'respecting every subject as of equal value and a worthy part of education.'

Alongside feeling valued, teaching staff appeared very confident about their teaching. This confidence perhaps stems from being given autonomy, a term used unprompted on several occasions. The governor commented that, 'What staff like is that they know they've been given autonomy, therefore they have ownership.' One of the music teachers gave a specific example when referencing extra-curricular clubs: 'We're never asked to do it – our additional commitments are what we think is best for us or our students. We're in charge.' One teacher described the positive effect of this by contrasting it with alternatives: 'Micromanaging wears passionate teachers down.'

Quality and high expectations were frequently referenced, both in terms of curriculum provision but also extra-curricular activities: 'We won't accept anything else. We show them what the best looks like.' Teachers also talked about ensuring quality of resources, investing time and expertise in assessing resources or making decisions about individuals and organisations who might come in to work with pupils – suggesting a relentless focus on seeking out and critiquing the best teaching and learning opportunities.

Staff are outward-facing and entrepreneurial. This was perhaps best exemplified in a project led by one teacher for which she had secured Lottery funding, enabling her to commission a playwright to write a play that pupils will perform at Edinburgh. This project also received national news coverage via BBC News. In addition, there were interesting conversations about the positive role that teacher engagement with social media had on the school, while a wide range of partnerships and networks were referenced.

Beaumont creates and runs most of its CPDL in-house, and much of it has been developed by arts teachers. As a result, staff do not see a distinction between arts approaches and other teaching approaches: 'it's embedded; it's a part of our culture.' The focus of any external CPDL has mostly been exam-based due to recent changes in specifications. However, one teacher has helped set up a local drama teacher network which offers some CPDL opportunities, though another teacher felt that she would look outside for her CPDL: 'I do stuff outside school that interests me.'

Governance is strong and supportive. One of the governing body's strategic priorities is the improvement of facilities, with a specific reference to developing and funding a performing arts centre in order to: improve facilities for pupils; increase capacity due to the growing popularity of arts events; and support and retain staff. 'We are very strong on the arts, but you have to make it a school that can attract the staff. Looking at the facilities we have, they need something better, so that they want to stay.'

Curriculum design

Beaumont changed its curriculum design around 13 years ago when the school went to a seven period day (six on a Friday), changing lesson times from 50 to 45 minutes. According to the head, there were several drivers: having to increase the amount of English and maths; wanting to keep a broad curriculum that included

the arts; and offering pupils the opportunities to take up to 10 GCSEs. It is this model which, according to the head, 'allows us to address the Ebacc whilst still championing the arts and breadth of curriculum.' Staff are very proud that pupils can choose to take up to two arts GCSEs.

There is an extensive range of extra-curricular clubs. There is a deliberate mix of clubs open to all and several that are invitation/audition only. Anyone in an advanced group is expected to join non-audition groups, so that pupils of all ages and abilities participate alongside each other. Some clubs are run by older pupils, 'trained' by staff: 'That's how we manage to do so much'. In addition, pupils talked enthusiastically about special projects and extra-curricular trips.

Pupil engagement

Pupil engagement is underpinned by the time and expertise which staff put into developing a fascinating, challenging curriculum, high quality resources and wide-ranging extra-curricular activities to cater for all students. In terms of the arts, the governor described how, 'Students love music and drama' and therefore, 'We've got to make sure that students have those opportunities.' This has significant implications for subjects and staff, with subjects offered – or not – depending on pupil choice.

Several unprompted discussions referenced the role of arts and cultural learning in helping to support pupils' mental health. While staff readily acknowledged that the intake is relatively privileged, teachers explained that 'our mental health issues are huge because of the pressures some of these children are under.' In addition, the arts are used to tackle disengagement, helping pupils 'find a home where they can express themselves.'

Pupils respond very positively to teaching and opportunities provided. One commented that teachers 'love what they're teaching and that really comes across. They offer so much.' Pupils talked enthusiastically about the range of the extra-curricular offer and described wanting to

come to the school because they knew about its arts provision.

Parental engagement

Parental engagement with the arts is strong. Location and demographics clearly play a role, given the school's proximity to London: 'lots of parents work in the creative industries' which is 'really helpful in validating those subjects.'

The Compton School, North Finchley, London

The Compton School is a heavily over-subscribed, mixed-sex, non-selective 11-18 Academy in North London, repeatedly rated Outstanding by Ofsted. Its latest inspection took place in 2018 following the opening of its sixth form. Latest figures record 1,305 pupils on roll; of these 37.4 per cent are in receipt of free school meals, 42.5 per cent speak EAL, and 2.7% are SEN or education health and care. Progress 8 is 0.72, which is well above average. Thirty-five per cent of pupils currently achieve the Ebacc. The school has held Artsmark Gold for a number of years.

What was significant:

- Focus on inclusion
- Timetabling designed around student choice
- Can choose up to three arts subjects at KS4
- Arts perceived as modelling excellence for the whole school

School improvement and development

The vision and values for the school are summarised in what the school's website describes as 'The Compton's DNA', which includes an 'Unfailing belief in the potential of all staff and students', a focus on quality and high standards, positive relationships, being outward-facing, and 'intensive and effective CPD provision'.

There is an evident belief in the value of the arts to pupils in the catchment area: the arts

have 'such a positive impact on our pupil community'. The head teacher stated that she would 'be reluctant to narrow the curriculum to get results up because actually I don't think they would go up' because of the contribution that arts subjects make to other areas ('These subjects genuinely help students become better learners'). She particularly feels 'We have a large number of PP and EAL students – their communication skills are greatly advanced by being in a drama lesson where you have to talk; in music where you have to listen and articulate a response about how it might make you feel.' The head also feels that the arts have contributed in other ways to the school's successes. She described how the work of the art department, because it is so visible around the school, 'can model and showcase what excellence looks like'. She believes it 'raises aspirations', both for younger pupils already attending the school, but also for visiting year 6s. Finally, the head commented on perception that the arts have contributed to the good behaviour visible throughout the school.

All subjects across the school are taught by subject specialists, and all arts areas have a head of department. The head explained that the rationale is around ensuring fair representation of all art forms: 'I wanted Heads of Department who are passionate about their subject.'

According to the head, arts subjects are monitored 'in exactly the same way as science, for example. We insist on very strong curriculum plans. We're always looking for the curriculum to be broad and well planned'.

Both the head and the assistant head have been at the school for a very long time; the latter explained that things were always changing, which kept her interested. The assistant head was previously head of drama and therefore brings an arts specialism into the SLT.

Inclusion was referenced more than any other topic, with the assistant head declaring that 'Every child is a valued part of the arts community. We don't exclude anyone'. This

focus on inclusion was demonstrated in two particular ways: GCSE choices and enrichment opportunities.

- a) GCSE choices operate through a timetabling system which the assistant head explained has to be recreated each year because the school shapes 'our curriculum and our options around what our students have chosen. So group numbers can change. Very few students don't get what they choose'.
- b) Extra-curricular activities are equally inclusive, with many after school clubs offered on a drop-in basis to reduce barriers to engagement. While auditions are held for music and drama performances, 'every child who wants to take part, can'. Theatre companies are invited in to perform, to ensure every pupil has an experience of live performance. Where trips are organised, they are analysed to monitor how inclusive they are: 'all staff are expected to keep a register of number of boys, girls, PP pupils' to make sure they are not getting all white, middle class pupils.

The school's location in London enables it to include a rich and varied arts provision for all its pupils. As the art teacher explained, 'So much provision is freely available'. TfL offers free travel passes for school groups travelling together.

All corridors are heavily populated with displays of work, many of them reflecting the arts or exhibiting pupils' own work. The school has a policy of always exhibiting current work and invests money to get student work professionally printed and displayed. The head expressed her commitment to continuing this practice as long as budgets allowed: 'Students feel very proud when they see their canvases. It shows the whole community that we value their work, we value the arts. Hopefully students feel more invested in the school and walk in feeling more comfortable'.

Curriculum design

Pupils are taught art, music and drama throughout KS3. The curriculum model is 'as broad as we can make it'. English and maths aside, all subjects, including arts subjects, are 'given equal value'. The school operates a two-week timetable. Within each fortnight there are three lessons of 50 minutes each per arts subject, typically, though not always, one double and one single per fortnight. Pupils and parents are informed of EBacc requirements at year 9 options evenings but while all pupils have to study one humanities subject the school does not make it compulsory to study a language. This frees up options at KS4, meaning that pupils can choose up to three arts subjects.

The assistant head (previously head of drama for the school for 10 years) reflected that 'arts organisations are really looking to engage with schools – if you show willing it tends to lead to very fruitful partnerships'. She described this becoming an even more important characteristic with the recent changes in the drama GCSE and the increased focus on design, which can be outside the skill-set of some drama teachers.

Pupil engagement

High levels of inclusion and support clearly contribute towards pupil engagement. In addition, several staff talked about student consultation groups, which helped pupils feel involved and engaged with decision making processes.

The pupils interviewed talked enthusiastically about the arts, describing a level of trust and interpretive freedom that they perhaps do not experience in other subjects: 'In the arts you can get more diverse ideas...you can explore interpretation'. Pupils' engagement appeared enhanced because they could clearly see the value of participating in arts subjects. One pupil commented that 'Drama, even if you're not going to be an actor, helps with public speaking and talking in front of crowds; art helps me to be more creative and express my ideas. Drama

helps with communication. A creative mindset helps you work through problems.'

Parental engagement

Pupils described parents as being 'happy that I've come to a school with lots of arts provision'. One pupil commented that 'Whenever I explain to my parents what I'm doing they say how lucky I am', with several peers echoing this sentiment. One pupil commented that 'My parents are still trying to accept drama as a real subject' but others felt that through seeing performances, and the emphasis given to arts subjects, it's helping parents 'learn to understand' the benefits.

Kings Oak Primary Learning Centre, Barnsley, South Yorkshire

Kings Oak is located in a former mining community in Wombwell. The school was formed out of three former schools in 2006 – a junior and infant school and a nursery unit. All three were closed and then reopened as a new school. A two-form entry primary school with 466 pupils on roll, 44.7 per cent of whom are eligible for free school meals, and SEN support is at 18 per cent. High rates of teenage pregnancy in the area were reported, resulting in many young parents and low aspirations, and 40 per cent of the families are 'involved in some level of social care.' Many children have not been out of Wombwell and language acquisition on entry to school is extremely poor. Reading standards are well above the national average and the school was judged to be Outstanding at its Ofsted inspection in 2019.

What was significant:

- Embedding of creative processes in teaching and learning
- Sharing of arts work after each topic
- A sensory room to provide immersive arts experiences

School improvement and development

The school is driven by a strong sense of moral purpose aiming for children to thrive both socially and emotionally: they have an entitlement to a broad and balanced curriculum. This aspiration is supported by a strong culture of reflection and planning in which teachers develop a shared understanding of how children learn, and the curriculum is designed to support this. Creative teaching and learning and inclusion are central to the vision, and the school aims to broaden children's experiences, to support children's language development and to engage with parents.

Creative processes are embedded in teaching and learning. The leaders were careful to emphasise, 'this is not just cross curricular learning but deep explorations of how we teach creativity and how we integrate arts into topic work.' Children's artwork is on display throughout the school, often exploring a particular genre or artist.

The head and the senior lead for creativity and teaching and learning have both been at the school since 2006. At that point, an intensive process of professional learning was launched with five full days of INSET about how children learn, the brain, visioning and curriculum design 'revising what creativity means for the school.' 'We now have an amazing set of teaching assistants and fab team all up for anything. All love their jobs.'

The school is taking a lead in developing the cultural education partnership and excited by the opportunities of collaboration with creative and cultural partners that this brings, such as teach-meets focused on the arts, a celebration of arts achievement at a local high school where children from each school will perform, and feeding into the Barnsley arts festival.

Curriculum design

The curriculum aims to be inspiring, introducing children to a wide range of experiences, and

is regularly reviewed and updated to relate to current issues and local interest. A new topic is introduced every half term. Staff at each key stage plan together and benefit from a wide range of expertise and specialisms. Teachers have the freedom to be creative in their response as long as it is clear that children are making progress. Activities capture the children's imagination, introducing them to new concepts through creative activities. So for example, when the topic was the Romans, teachers created a dig in the school grounds and children became archaeologists, made shields, and designed frescoes and tiles.

Each topic of work culminates in a production, performance or exhibition of pupils' work. This sharing of work is seen as an important element of pupils' learning. Teachers described how in one project, year 3 and 4 children designed and made 'moving dragons' which were then displayed in the hall as a gallery. The children had all used different approaches and techniques and could discuss and reflect on how others had tackled the same challenge, what was different, which had the most creative effects, which was the tallest. In another project children made clay monsters, created their landscapes, wrote a story – as a script which could be recorded – and composed music to go with their story. 'Children were really eager to show each other what they had done'. Younger children felt proud to see their work on the same platform as older children. Less able children were able to experience success through working as part of a group.

The school collaborates with creative practitioners whenever possible; 'when you work with creative practitioners it gets you buzzing'. As well as working directly with pupils, they collaborate with a lead teacher in designing and planning the intervention to ensure that curriculum links and outcomes for pupils are clear and respond to the needs of children at different phases. The creativity senior leader spoke of how teachers have developed

confidence – she described it as ‘bravery’ – in this collaborative process, ensuring that the arts and learning processes are equally valued.

Similarly, the art and music lead teachers take time to plan and develop an approach to a unit of work which is then shared more widely across the school. Projects are ambitious and make use of staff’s subject skills.

The music lead is working with year 6 children to write a concert and perform it in a week. The timetable will be collapsed and children will design and make sets and costumes, as well as writing, singing and performing the music themselves.

The art and creativity lead is developing the use of sketchbooks throughout the school. Children are asked to reflect on an activity and capture their response at regular points in the year through drawing, poetry, music, design and technology. The sketchbooks follow the children throughout their life at school and so can be used for children and teachers to reflect on their progress.

The school has invested in a sensory room which uses multimedia technology to create an imaginative environment for children. Large scale images can be projected onto each wall and smell, temperature, sound and vibration can transform the space to immerse children in new experiences. The room is used as a stimulus for learning – examples were travelling on a polar express train and catching snowflakes on their tongues, meeting the BFG and having him reach into the room. A drama practitioner worked with teachers to imagine how best to use the room. The benefits of this space are, as one child put it, ‘you can image it in your head and you can keep it in your head for when you get back into class.’

Pupil engagement

Children spoke fluently and enthusiastically about their experiences, drawing images based on the Mexican Day of the Dead, eating porridge in an orphanage on the Victorian day,

writing with a quill pen, learning about crime and punishment by visiting the national justice museum and visiting Whitby Abbey where Dracula was set.

Parental engagement

Many parents had negative experiences of school themselves and so the teachers have worked hard to involve them in positive experiences. They are invited into productions and end of topic events and exhibitions which are scheduled well in advance so that working parents can arrange to be there and ‘good numbers’ are now coming. They are also encouraged to support their children with creative projects every half term, such as making models and food and to join in project workshops.

Termly newsletters tailored for each year group explain the topics to be covered and related subject content and skills. Parents are encouraged to support their children, particularly in reading.

Marine Academy Primary, Plymouth, Devon

Plymouth University, Cornwall College and Plymouth Local Authority. It was established under the free school programme and opened in 2013 and now has pupils in every year group, with a total of 425 on roll. It serves an area ranked by the Index of Multiple Deprivation as in the most deprived 15 per cent nationally. Most pupils are white British, 30.1 per cent are in receipt of free school meals, and 16 per cent have SEN. In 2015 the school was rated Outstanding and in 2017 it was awarded Artsmark Gold. 2018 saw the first cohort of year 6 pupils sit SATs: 79 per cent of pupils met expected standards for reading, writing and maths, while 87 per cent of children designated as disadvantaged met expected standards.

What was significant:

- Redesign of arts curriculum to focus on progression
- A dedicated pupil journal per artform to track progress throughout school career
- Focus on quality including of resources and materials

School improvement and development

Marine Academy Primary is a young school with a commitment to the arts from its beginning. The performing arts leader suggested this is strongly linked to the catchment area: 'Because of where we are, we've got a desperate need for all of our children to be functioning, successful members of the world'. At the same time there is a culture of high aspirations, with a strong sense that the limitations of some pupils' home lives should not affect what they go on to do, and a belief that: 'their potential is astronomical'. This culture of high aspirations was consistently re-enforced throughout the visit, and the arts are clearly seen as an important ingredient in helping the school achieve its ambitions for their pupils, giving them a 'sense of identity', and the opportunity to 'validate yourselves'.

The arts flourish – and in turn contribute to the school's successes – due to several key characteristics. First and foremost are the founding group and head's vision, leadership and support, which have been critical in establishing the prominence of the arts in the first place.

This commitment to the arts has been further realised through creating the post of performing arts leader, which is one of eight roles within the SMT. The job is split into two: half the week is spent engaged in planning, developing and delivering arts provision, the other half doing planning, preparation and assessment cover and, within that, delivering more of the school's arts provision. When the performing arts leader arrived, only eight pupils learned an instrument; two years later that number has increased to 76. Amongst other staff, three have drama expertise

and one is an artist. One teacher was a classical musician and then went into teaching.

The arts are visible throughout the school: there are displays and pupils' artworks in and outside of classrooms, hanging from the ceilings in most areas, while musical instruments such as drum kits are present in communal areas.

The school has a clear emphasis on positivity, with several references to promoting what is known as a 'growth mindset' to help foster resilience in pupils. The performing arts leader referred to the importance of staff as well as pupils having a positive 'can do' attitude, a willingness to try out new ideas: 'We embrace change...we have a constant positive way of doing things; we don't refuse; willingness to embrace change is key; part of a core MAP value'.

There is a strong focus on quality. The performing arts leader talked about not having 'dumbed down resources' and using 'good artists, proper musicians'. What was particularly interesting was that the school considered quality of materials integral to its approach and that this in turn would engender respect and good behaviour amongst pupils. One example cited was around the purchase and use of quality art materials; the performing arts leader described the dual benefits of this approach in terms of buying art materials: 'If you buy cheap materials, you're going to pay for them again, again and again'. Quality materials are more likely to be robust and provide an opportunity to build pupils' respect; the school could 'get them to respect the art' because there had been an investment.

Curriculum design

Marine Academy has adopted the International Primary Curriculum (IPC). Many of the topics covered lend themselves to creative work. However, the performing arts leader was adamant that, while always looking for opportunities to integrate arts practices into topics, these have to feel 'natural' and 'valid',

otherwise 'you're just paying lip service and you're doing damage to the children and to the art form'.

Children in KS1 and KS2 experience approximately 35-60 minutes per week per curriculum subject; art can be about an hour if doing painting, dance and drama approximately 35-45 minutes per week.

The performing arts leader is in the process of overhauling the arts curriculum. One of the key drivers has been to ensure progression of knowledge and experience. The new model will see pupils experiencing one or two artforms a term (the rationale being that pupils can still experience quality of content without staff feeling overwhelmed), which will then alternate over the year to ensure full coverage. In KS2 pupils will receive between 35 to 60 minutes per week per artform. From year 2, pupils will have one book per artform in which to record their work all the way up to year 6. Class teachers as well as the performing arts leader can quickly check what a pupil has already done/achieved or indeed not done in previous years; pupils can easily see their own progress.

The school programmes an annual arts festival when the entire school does arts including photography, drama and sketching. This is programmed in the last two weeks of term.

Music lessons are offered in school time and are rotated so that they do not impact on the same curriculum area each week. Funding for disadvantaged pupils comes out of either Pupil Premium money or the arts budget.

The performing arts leader brought with him, or has developed, a wide range of contacts and partnerships with arts-related individuals and organisations, while the head has a strong connection with Plymouth Theatre Royal, the school's main 'go to' for arts opportunities. There are various local networks and hubs, including the local Music Education Hub, which were also cited as providing opportunities and support.

Pupil engagement

The school's approach is to try to ensure a wide variety of opportunities that may address the interests of different pupils. Theatre is a popular artform within the school. The children wouldn't otherwise get these opportunities and therefore the school feels it's an important part of what they need to provide.

The performing arts leader believes that the strong focus on the arts has 'enabled children to work hard and play hard'. He felt that it has led to a school where children 'are able to cope... not worried about expressing themselves, it's that side of unlocking the other half of the human, it's that creative bit'. He felt that the arts were also a key motivator for the children. The school is committed to equality of access to arts and cultural learning and ensures that Pupil Premium children are always included in arts activities; finances are never a barrier for any child's engagement.

Parental and engagement

Parental engagement is positive 'because they love seeing their children perform.' School concerts are always very well attended. The school wants to bring in more classical artforms like ballet and violin lessons to extend experiences of parents and children alongside contemporary arts experiences.

Mile Cross Primary School, Norwich, Norfolk

Mile Cross Primary in Norwich has 460 pupils: 29.3 per cent receive free school meals, 19.3% have SEN, and 28% speak EAL. It is in an area of acute deprivation. Progress in reading, writing and maths is in line with national averages. It was rated Outstanding in 2017, following previous ratings of Good in 2014 and Satisfactory in 2012. It has Artsmark Gold.

What was significant:

- Equality among subjects
- Extensive range of activities, experiences and visitors
- Parental engagement
- Building – design, pride, displays

School improvement and development

Since the school was first established 12 years ago, it has gone from Satisfactory to Good to Outstanding. The deputy head teacher believes the arts have '100% played a role in the school improvement journey', with others all echoing this sentiment. However, the head was honest about how the initial focus had to be on English and maths, with the school under significant pressure to improve.

Yet the school has always had a rich curriculum with the arts as an integral part. This commitment is driven by the head's vision for 'a really broad and balanced curriculum...every subject is as important as each other'. Arts are not therefore prioritised – everything's a priority – but they are treated equally. The vision is underpinned by a twin focus on improving teaching and attendance by 'making the whole curriculum exciting. All of our children want to come to school'.

The arts play a key role, though the arts leader described financial and time obstacles. The school does extensive fundraising to address the first and with the second makes the arts 'as

cross curricular as possible – it's about getting it into the timetable as much as possible'.

The head feels stability of staff has been critical alongside building up expertise and creating a 'very positive culture'. The head actively encourages risk-taking: 'Even before we were Outstanding, I was asking teachers to be brave. Please take risks'. All staff are 'very enthusiastic' with the words 'passion' and 'energy' frequently used.

All subjects have a subject lead. Although not a deliberate choice to recruit arts specialists, a number of staff and teaching assistants have arts backgrounds or interests: the arts lead has a background in art, a member of staff has an interest in contemporary dance, etc.

Both the head and chair of governors believe in the importance of investing in staff. The arts leader joined the school as an NQT and has had extensive training, though not all arts-related. She has completed a course on how to be an arts co-ordinator, alongside Arts Award training and CPD offered by the local Bridge Organisation. The whole school received training on theatre-based approaches to Shakespeare.

A wide range of partnerships and networks are in place and the school is 'getting a reputation for saying yes'. A strong relationship with Norwich Theatre Royal is now becoming formalised through an education partnership for 2019 and beyond.

The school building and facilities play their part. Walls are brimming with art displays, inside there are immersive areas such as an area recreated as an Anderson shelter, while outside play areas have been imaginatively designed to stimulate children's imaginations and support independent learning. Teaching assistants/higher learning teaching assistants (HLTAs) take pride in regularly refreshing displays. There are four minibuses so the school can take a whole year group out without charging parents. Much of this has been funded through Pupil Premium.

Governance is very strong. The chair was supportive and proud of the arts as both a governor and parent. There had previously been a governor with particular expertise in arts and cultural learning, but the school hasn't yet been able to replace her.

The last four years have been particularly significant in the school's journey – and in its capacity to take up opportunities. With increased staff capacity and skills the head has been able to say yes to lots more things and has really seen the impact, reflecting on what appears to be a snowball effect 'from nursery and early years, as their communication and language skills improve they're able to access more of these opportunities'.

However, the head reflected on the difficulty of quantifying impact of arts provision, but talked about how 'The evidence is in their work, the quality of their work. Their ability and confidence' and seeing, for example, 'huge improvements' in class assemblies and year assemblies. The chair supported this, explaining that 'years ago it used to be that some children didn't want to take part. Now they're all desperate for a line and it's a fight over who gets the most speaking parts'.

Curriculum design

Mornings are spent on English and maths, with drama used extensively to support English. Afternoons are spent on Curriculum Learning Journeys: humanities, science, etc. Dance is taught within PE and taught by specialists from within school and a community sports organisation. The arts are mostly integrated into the curriculum, rather than taught discretely, making it hard to quantify curriculum time, particularly as enrichment is extensive. Examples include current year 5s engaged in a project run by a local cultural provider in the production of *Anglia Square: A Love Story* – about a 1960s shopping area likely to be demolished. Year 5 involvement has included a session with a professional photographer, singing, pop-art, and screen-printing. BBC

Sounds producers came in to help with interviewing techniques, after which pupils spoke to camera for seven to eight minutes. The footage was shown at a monthly art performance and given language start points, a credible indication of progress.

The previous year 5 cohort did a 10-week opera project which saw children write, compose and perform their own operetta onstage at the Theatre Royal 'with hundreds of people watching'. Current year 6s talked enthusiastically about this; one said it 'made me feel special' and another 'it made me feel outstanding'.

In addition, the school has taken part in a public art open studio event and in national competitions. One, run by John Lewis, invited children to submit pictures of someone who inspired them. One of their pupils won the national prize while others had portraits displayed in the local store.

Each year group has a trip out each half-term or a visitor in. According to the deputy, this is one of the school's 'non-negotiables: It's fundamental to our school that we make it experiential'.

About 40 per cent of extra-curricular clubs are arts-related, for which parents are charged a nominal fee.

Pupil engagement

Pupils described the arts provision as 'brilliant', saying 'we're always doing something different'. This was backed up by another who commented 'we don't do normal arts', describing screen-printing and arts-related work on computers. Another described how including arts 'makes subjects more fun'. Staff are proud of an inclusive ethos, ensuring that it's not the same children who get repeatedly picked for participation.

Parental engagement

The school works hard on parental engagement and parents are very supportive of the arts, not least because they appear to promote

family conversations. At one recent exhibition a parent commented 'I know all about this'. She explained that usually she got 'absolutely nothing' out of her children about the school day but that 'Through this project I've been told about pop-art, digital skills...' There are a wide range of events that encourage parental engagement, including 'cafes' with a range of activities on different tables, often craft-based, so that parents work alongside children. Events are often programmed at the end of the day, and staff try to make them 'as appealing as possible so it's not extra work for them'.

The Morley Academy, Leeds, West Yorkshire

The Morley Academy is an 11-16 secondary school in Morley, a market town five miles south of Leeds. The school is part of the Gorse Academy Trust, including five primary, five 11-16 secondary schools, one sixth form college and an academy offering alternative provision for children. One of the first to convert to academy status in 2010, the school achieved Ofsted Outstanding in 2013. 23.2 per cent of pupils are in receipt of free school meals and 6 per cent speak EAL. Attainment 8 score and Progress 8 score are well above the national average at 53.9 and 0.53 respectively. Forty-four per cent of pupils enter the EBacc with pupils gaining an average point score of 4.8.

What was significant:

- Resident artist
- Sharing of ideas and practice across the MAT
- Ambitious choice of texts for drama

School improvement and development

The ethos of the school focuses on opportunity and high performance. The school:

'prides itself on providing the highest standard of education to all students, regardless of their background. Indeed, we believe that those who have the least should be given

the most. We achieve this through providing all students, but particularly those who have the most challenging and complex backgrounds, with a rigorous and academic education which challenges them, not only academically, but also in terms of their place in society.'

Equally high aspirations apply to the teaching of arts subjects, for example grades in drama were some of the best results in the school while 'The music curriculum is designed to inspire students and nurture their talent and love for music.'

Students' art and achievement in the arts is on display around the school, produced to a high quality by the trust's resident artist. Accommodation, facilities and resources for the arts are of high quality. Arts teachers feel the subjects are valued and supported, citing for example that students are allowed time off the timetable for practical work and productions in drama and music. As a number of arts teachers are employed on a part-time basis, departments can draw on a range of complementary skills.

The arts are used imaginatively to provide opportunities for inclusion. For example, a joint group of students from Morley and the alternative provision academy are working together to explore a Shakespeare text through drama and music in preparation for the Trust Shakespeare Festival. Both staff and students were enthused: 'It's one of my favourite parts of the week.'

The trust has developed an approach to assessment across all subjects which includes grading for effort and attitude to learning. A process called the purple zone has also been introduced which aims to instil resilience and sits well with the self-critique inherent in arts practice. In each lesson time is set aside for students to reflect on a challenging aspect of learning, applying themselves to the task and working through this on their own without teacher support. In some arts areas where

collaboration is a requirement they work in a group. The trust provides initial teacher education through its school-centred initial teacher training (SCITT) for approximately 180 trainees per year including in art and design, design technology, drama, music and PE. One of the current drama teachers trained within the SCITT and was then recruited to the school. There is a strong culture of collaboration and skills sharing between the schools in the trust, which includes schools in communities with different levels of disadvantage. Middle leaders meet with others in their subject specialism across the trust every six weeks, 'to share ideas and practices.'

Schools collaborate and have regular timetabled subject related sessions where teachers can share practice. For example, the head of drama at one of the academies has organised workshops for teachers on Shakespeare in the run-up to a Shakespeare Performance Festival which will involve young people from all trust schools. In a separate process, drama based approaches to teaching and learning in English have been embraced as they have been shown to enhance learning and increase engagement: 'the curriculum impact for us has been massive'.

Curriculum design

'There is a big focus on curriculum mapping, looking at the bigger picture, analysing what we do, how do we assess and why'. This is a trust wide process which includes the arts. For example, the head of performing arts works with other subject middle leaders across the trust to develop an overview, but there is then an open dialogue between staff in the school. Knowledge, skills and assessment processes are outlined in a detailed plan for each year group for each half term. The process reviews what opportunities or 'cultural capital' students are experiencing, making sure pupils have access to cultural venues and high-quality experiences such as visits to Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Tate Liverpool, York Dungeons and theatre productions at theatres in the region.

At KS3, pupils are timetabled one hour of drama, music and art per week. At GCSE this is increased to three separate one-hour lessons a week. The popularity of arts subjects at KS3 leads to a high percentage choosing drama and art and design at GCSE. A higher percentage of girls choose drama as a GCSE but emphasis on the rigour in drama as 'a challenging subject in itself' was thought to be leading to higher uptake by boys. The choice of texts is ambitious: year 9 worked on *4.48 Psychosis* by Sarah Caine, so that students experience working with challenging contemporary material. The play deals with issues of mental health and suicide and was performed in front of an invited audience of parents and teachers as part of a PSHE day. All of year 9 and year 10 saw the play.

GCSE photography is offered as well as art and design. Design technology describe the arts as core to their 'vibrant culture': 'Through exploration and creative thinking students are able to problem solve, learn about themselves and the world around them.'

Music is championed through extra-curricular opportunities but uptake for GCSE music is lower because of the requirement to play a musical instrument.

Pupil engagement

Students are encouraged to join in extra-curricular activities, particularly music, where the department provides:

'an all-inclusive, rich and diverse extra-curricular programme where all students can get involved in some form of practical music making, regardless of their current musical ability. This includes regular performance opportunities for all students to engage in, from small concerts for the less confident performers to larger audiences at prestigious events in the wider community.'

Primary schools are invited to watch the concerts and inspire students. Pupils perform at

the Remembrance Day Ceremony and at local nursing homes. A fashion show is held annually showcasing the work in textiles. Each year, year 7 are given the challenge of working on a project at home. This year the topic was 'change the world'. Although students could respond in any way they wanted, many were craft based and will be exhibited in primary schools within the trust.

Parental engagement

Parents are invited to the many concerts, performances, exhibitions and productions and the school's assessment processes aim to give them a good overview of pupil progress. Drama productions are performed for parents and pupils. The popular annual musical is described as an 'essential part of academy life', the announcement of the choice of musical being eagerly awaited. (In the past it's been *Sister Act*, *Hairspray*, and *Grease*). Drama and music staff collaborate, supporting students to act, perform in the band and sing as soloists and in small groups.

The Mosley Academy, Burton on Trent, Staffordshire

'The Mosley Academy is a popular village primary school in which children thrive because they enjoy school and feel happy, safe and valued.' The school is an oversubscribed single form entry primary school on the outskirts of Burton on Trent. 7.3 per cent of children are eligible for free school meals and only 0.6% speak EAL. Rapid expansion of the town and popularity of the school has led to significant expansion over the last few years. The school's pleasant and spacious accommodation provides the canvas for pupils' creative work and imaginative displays. The school's most recent Ofsted inspection in 2014 achieved Outstanding status.

What was significant:

- Tradition of creating immersive and imaginative environments

- Focus on creative practice within teacher recruitment and pedagogy
- Extent of extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities

School improvement and development

Arts and creativity are integral to the life of the school and inseparable from school improvement. The school has a longstanding commitment to creative teaching and learning. They aspire for the curriculum:

'...to be engaging and exciting; broad and balanced; to foster a love of learning, creativity and risk taking; to allow children to make connections between subjects, topics and themes, and to develop conceptual understanding as well as supporting and developing key skills in English, Maths and all subject areas and finally to give children wonderful enrichment opportunities and experiences.'

The current head started as an NQT at Mosley, working with a creative head, which deeply influenced his practice. After five years in headship elsewhere he returned to Mosley:

'We work really hard at recruitment and retention. I always look for technical skills but also personality and creativity. I don't want everyone the same. I have a team of great teachers. They are very good at finding the balance between high quality English and Maths and high-quality art.'

The school is driven by respect for children and the conviction that 'if they are happy and engaged, they will do well'. Creative work is seen as of value in itself but also an important release for children who are struggling with maths and English. The many productions supported by the school give children the opportunity to experience the challenge and enjoyment of performance.

The school has a well-established tradition of creating immersive and imaginative environments which complement the curriculum

or activities in school. This combines children's artwork with large inspirational displays. For example, the summer display relates to the school's summer production; another relates to the production they will see at Derby Theatre. In November, staff work to transform the school so that when children come back one day everything has changed. Each of these experiences act as a stimulus for children's learning.

The Mosley Academy has now joined a MAT of three high schools and nine primary schools and is sharing creative practice within this network of schools by, for example, leading a project influenced by Anthony Gormley's Field project. Children from eight of the primary schools and pupils from years 7 and 8 in the secondaries will read *The Fire Children*, a west African creation tale, and each will make their own clay figure. Hundreds of these will be exhibited together at one of the secondaries to make a collective art piece with a special viewing for school councils.

Professional development is largely led in house. Subject leaders in art and dance have led training sessions followed up by informal observation to improve teaching. The head shares his expertise in rehearsal room processes by modelling this with year 5 and 6 pupils. Whole school assemblies are active, often using arts-based approaches – drawing, drama influenced processes, and imagination games. Although this improves teachers' skills, confidence and the quality of teaching and learning, the head recognises that this does not substitute for training from specialist arts practitioners – but this is not affordable within current budget constraints.

All new teachers attend a Talk for Writing course as 'we know this is effective' and two teachers a year attend Young Voices training.

Curriculum design

Curriculum planning is led by the head. There is an overall topic plan and a separate plan for English and maths. Each subject leader prepares

a detailed subject plan: 'We try to be as cross curricular as we can'. They tackle challenging subjects such as the Second World War and Anne Frank in year 4 and have themed weeks, for example, Shakespeare week and arts weeks. In English, pupils: 'read a whole book not extracts. We pick really fantastic books.'

All year 4 children learn the violin. Although children are encouraged to carry on playing there is a drop off in numbers when parents have to cover the cost of music tuition. Peripatetic teachers support piano, flute, guitar and recorder.

The school offers a remarkable range of extra-curricular activities and enrichment activities. The creative curriculum strategy lists 101 activities to do before children leave the school. These include arts activities such as: 'see live theatre, go to the cinema, make a musical instrument.'

'The wider curriculum and the wider opportunities we give children are what make this school special. The SATs result are a real bonus. If you're not careful, schools solely focus on data and results when actually the experiences we give the children are what they remember – they are what make them become decent adults and that's why we made this list – 101 things to do. These are the things most children will remember – not doing their SATs in May.'

Opportunities include

- Film club with children participating in the Into Film festival
- Young Voices – working towards a national performance
- Choir: all children at KS2 take part every Friday morning
- Dance
- Yoga for the infants
- Drama: an annual summer production
- Annual Christmas nativity and carol service

All children see a production at Derby Theatre as the experience of going to the theatre is seen as important. Creative people are invited in to give 'wow days'. For example, last year they invited in the world champion beat boxer.

Pupil engagement

Children in the school parliament, which consists of one child for each year group and three in year 6, talked enthusiastically about the opportunities the school offers. As well as there being 'kind people and no fighting', 'you learn a lot'.

The children talked about the fun creative environment, the choices and interactive lessons: 'We all do singing'; 'We enjoy singing and dance'; 'The good thing about art is that it's very creative. You can let your imagination run wild.' Almost all KS2 children and their parents came to the Young Voices concert.

High quality children's work is on display throughout the school. Creative homework projects each term give children the freedom to respond individually to a topic – such as the fire of London which generated models of buildings in flames, a PowerPoint presentation and a mechanical cardboard project that sprayed water.

Parental engagement

The school 'works hard at parental involvement'. Parents are encouraged to come into school and join in activities such as artwork and food technology and to work with their children on project work. A Christmas crafts workshop enables children and parents to make 'wonderful things' together. Conscious that working parents can't come in during the day, there are regular evening events – including three concerts a year, an annual play and exhibitions of project work. The head wants to demonstrate to the parents how good the children's work is and these are well attended by parents.

Oak Field School and Specialist Sports College, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire

Oak Field School caters for pupils aged 3-19 with extensive, complex, learning and physical disabilities. The school is working with children with increasingly complex and severe levels of need. More than 50 per cent of the children are eligible for Pupil Premium funding and a higher than average percentage of pupils speak EAL. Pupils travel to the school from across Nottingham, which has 168 pupils and 120 staff. The college holds Artmark Gold status and has been rated Outstanding by Ofsted in 2011, 2014 and 2018.

What was significant:

- Importance of arts education for all children
- Focus on inclusion
- Creative approach to arts staff recruitment

School improvement and development

The school is a creative, arts rich and inclusive environment committed to offering learning opportunities for all children. The head has been at the school for 39 years and is retiring this summer. His own passion for the arts translated into an absolute commitment that all children have the right to experience and enjoy all that the arts have to offer.

As an 'all through' school, it benefits from having specialist staff in arts subjects – music, dance, art and design. These specialist teachers lead the curriculum across the school as a whole and offer training and support to other staff.

There have been some challenges in recruiting staff, but the head has overcome this by identifying potential staff through a whole range of 'different routes and home grown'.

The current music teacher collaborated with the school when he was in his teens, working at summer schools before joining the school once he had his degree. The school has worked with the Arts Council to provide internships for

dance teachers. Several staff had been involved in the inclusive theatre company in the city as teenagers and had later joined the staff. They described being fascinated by the work and have stayed since. All staff contribute to the learning of pupils. Some staff had had little arts experience as part of their own education and therefore the school is also a learning environment for those adults: 'It's not just about pupils – it's about staff and parents.'

A commitment to inclusion and access is at the heart of everything the school does. Remarkable efforts are made to ensure that children can engage in all areas of the curriculum. The head talked about seeking out areas 'where the children can succeed, where they can achieve.' An example of this is that those children with the most complex medical needs are still enabled to engage in all arts activities.

The head has a strong team of governors which includes the CEO of dance, the local dance agency (currently vice chair) and a number of local university academics.

In order to keep a high profile they take part in local events such as the big annual dance festival in Nottingham and put on a Christmas show, which includes all pupils and is a well-known feature in the city.

Most CPDL in the arts is led in house by arts subject specialists. Teachers are encouraged to engage with local arts organisations, galleries and museums.

As an RSC Associate School, teachers have access to high quality training in teaching Shakespeare and rehearsal room processes. The English teacher talked enthusiastically of attending a residential and, although this was open to mainstream schools, she felt it was tailored to her needs in the special school context. Specialists from RSC also work in the school introducing teachers to practical skills, which they can apply in their practice.

The school engages with research with the two local universities, where it contributes to pupils'

learning. For example, the arts team talked about a collaboration with Nottingham University in which pupils used an LED 'light sabre' to explore mindfulness. Pupils were able to hold the sabre and move it, and pupils who use wheelchairs were able to participate.

Curriculum design

The arts are seen as an essential dimension of the curriculum which is of particular value to children and young people with special needs:

'The arts within Oak Field School holds a central position in the curriculum. It allows students to work creatively and independently often setting their own standards and criteria. The arts is understood to include fine arts – painting, drawing, printing, sculpture, textiles etc – music, dance, drama and the creative use of language. These subjects are a valuable means of expression for many students, sometimes allowing them the highest form of expression that they achieve.'

All children are offered high quality arts provision in music, dance, and art and design. These are taught as subjects in their own right. The school seeks every way possible for pupils of all learning abilities to access the arts for their inherent value and not as a form of therapy:

'The danger is that with pupils with learning difficulties the arts can be seen only as therapy, yet they have an entitlement to education. For instance, whilst music therapy has a place, a child also has a right to music education.'

'The arts offer the possibility of a language we can understand and feel, a language based on emotion and sensation with no hierarchies, boundaries or privileges.'

Considerable preparation and planning goes into working out how children can access each subject area. The arts infuse the curriculum as a whole. For example:

'...the school recognises that music can play a very important role in the development of the pupils, including influencing the improvement of listening, communication, problem solving, critical thinking skills and motor skills.'

Teachers identify arts qualifications which enable the children to develop and demonstrate their skills. For example, the school now prepares students for the Cambridge Technical Theatre Qualification rather than GCSE expressive arts which has become more theoretical and therefore is felt to be inappropriate for many Oak Field students.

The children have access to high quality arts experiences as part of the curriculum. The school is determined to overcome practical difficulties to ensure that children can experience live productions in a venue. Sometimes this means booking a year in advance to ensure wheelchair access. The school will also take advantage of live streaming of productions – although the head was clear that this must not become the alternative for live performance.

The school seeks out extra-curricular and enrichment activities for pupils and is involved in a remarkable range of partnerships and networks, partly because of the head teacher's absolute commitment to the arts: 'Of course we have contacts. They [arts organisations] know you'll be interested. They approach us...It's my responsibility to make sure we have those relationships'. These partnerships often offer opportunities for the children, such as going to an after-school dance club organised with Dance4, and they have accessed experiences with Rambert, RSC, Northern Ballet and Opera North.

Pupil engagement

The school nurtures the capacities of each pupil, making every effort to engage them in learning and to connect with opportunities beyond the school. The arts are constantly referred to as a

way for pupils with SLD and PMLD to express themselves where written and spoken language are not an option.

Parental engagement

The head spoke of the importance for parents of children with SLD and PMLD to see their children succeeding. The arts allow these children to be successful and give enjoyment, and the school ensures parents can celebrate this success.

Ricards Lodge High School, Wimbledon, London

Ricards Lodge is an 11-18 community school in South London for 1,302 girls: 29.6 per cent are in receipt of free school meals; 1.5 per cent have SEN; and 41 per cent speak EAL. Progress 8 is .54 and 61 per cent of pupils achieved the Ebacc. It was rated Outstanding in 2017 following three previous ratings of Good.

What was significant:

- Parity with other subjects
- Adaptation of arts provision to match cultural backgrounds
- Option to do two or more KS4 arts subjects
- Extent of enrichment

School improvement and development

Staff believe the arts have played an important role in school improvement. A commitment to the arts has 'always been there', based on a belief that it is what 'these students want and need'. However, there was a sense that the school had plateaued prior to the arrival of a new head 14 years ago, followed shortly by the deputy. She took over curriculum design, and introduced BTECs, passionately believing that they are the 'industry standard' and are 'not just for those who can't do GCSE'. The assistant head feels this was a significant turning point: 'It made the students see that the arts are for

everybody'. A decision to re-open the sixth form was also credited as essential, with a strong focus on arts provision, which has 'been really important for year 7 recruitment'.

Indeed, staff believe that the arts provision is 'one of the reasons why people choose to come', with the school oversubscribed by more than 50 per cent. The deputy reflected that at open mornings she is as likely to be asked about dance provision as science: 'Locally our reputation is as a centre of excellence for the arts', concluding that 'if the local community want strong arts provision they come to us'.

Arts provision has both contributed to, and been strengthened by, results: 'If results weren't going the way they are – then curriculum would be under scrutiny'. Staff cite increased results in English, for example, stating that 'all that we do in drama is fundamental to supporting that' and that success relies on students with good arts understanding: 'there's no question it's part of it'.

Staff work collaboratively and support each other: 'Because the arts are so intrinsic at Ricards, whenever there's a production, the staff will come and watch it'. Trips are often planned across departments such as a German and art trip to Berlin. The drama department used to deliver speaking and listening when it was a more examined part of the English GCSE; Shakespeare is taught within KS3 drama to support KS4 English. Staff are clearly enthusiastic and are more likely to come to SLT asking to take on projects than the other way around: 'Staff want to do lots of these things'. Staff described being trusted by the head.

Arts subjects are taught by specialists. Although CPDL budgets are 'tight', staff benefit from whole staff and subject specific CPDL. The school has facilitated arts leaders becoming examiners in their subjects and has supported two art teachers who were going to start teaching art textiles at KS4 and paid for their attendance at an evening class at a local college. Within drama, CPDL is often incorporated into the many projects the school is engaged

in, with staff referencing CPDL as part of NT Connections, projects with the RSC and the Donmar, while dance staff have had CPDL via Rambert, for example. Staff will cover for each other and frequently offer CPDL to other schools.

Partnerships with local schools are strong and include opportunities for pupils to lead arts projects, and to have other pupils watch their performances, for example. Staff referenced being in the second year of a relationship with a local private school. One project – Battle of the Bands – has seen the two music departments work together, culminating in a performance at the private school, which 'gives our students the chance to perform at another venue'.

Relationships with cultural providers appear equally solid, with 'insider contacts' benefiting the school through access to 'cheap tickets'. Pupils are offered further opportunities to perform onstage at the local Wimbledon theatre. Pupils also benefit from participation in projects such as a BFI short film competition, with one group winning an award.

Staff talked about being restricted by the spaces available: 'The only thing that stops us is space'. On the flip side, there is no doubt that location helps, with staff commenting that 'We're really well situated because of being in London'.

Governance is strong and there is a dedicated arts governor who used to work at the local theatre and 'comes to everything'.

Curriculum design

The school operates a fortnightly timetable of 50 one-hour sessions. At KS3 art, dance, music and drama get two hours each and design and technology three. Pupils work within literacy groupings with department heads teaching least able groups, because 'this could be one of the subjects that opens doors for them'.

At KS4 all GCSE and BTEC arts subjects get five hours a fortnight, matching all non-core subjects.

The school has 'battled against trends' of a three-year KS4, wanting pupils to access maximum arts provision for at least three years. The school has remained committed to pupils having at least two free choices in KS4 options. Fifty-five per cent of pupils are required to take the Ebacc, with others choosing to do so. In part, the school benefits from the number of EAL pupils: 'A number do their home language which releases a free option'. The school offers a 'really large suite of qualifications' which include art, textiles, drama, performing arts, production arts, musical theatre, media and film. Lots of pupils choose to do two arts 'including the more able' and staff are 'passionate' that there is no distinction between GCSE and BTEC.

Content has been specifically adapted to reflect cultural backgrounds, with the inclusion of Bollywood dance, and a focus on Black playwrights, for example. Staff reflected on this inclusive approach which has resulted in pupils, regardless of religious or cultural backgrounds, taking up and being successful in arts subjects, stating that 'Muslim girls do music, dance, and drama'. They were particularly proud of one ex-student from an Asian background who is now an established playwright.

The curriculum is supported through extensive enrichment and extra-curricular activities. In addition to opportunities already referenced there are a number of arts clubs including, for example, a junior and senior dance company. They compete in the London Youth Games and plan to compete in The Great Big Dance Off. There are two choirs, an orchestra, guitar club and steel pan club. Friday night is 'Bands night'. Year 7 drama club puts on a production at the end of year, while there is a yearly whole school production with dance, drama and music working together.

Pupil engagement

Pupils' feedback on arts provision is captured through Student voice, for example. They report that the arts help them to 'feel part of the Ricards family'. Lots of extra-curricular provision

is across year groups and staff feel that's 'one of the real strengths' that they 'really feel part of a community. It gives them confidence'. Furthermore, staff believe it gives them a 'hook into school', that attendance benefits because pupils don't want to miss after-school clubs.

Parental engagement

Parents 'flock' to various arts performances and the annual school production has three nights and a matinee because it is 'so popular'. Staff referenced significant parental engagement via the school's twitter account. For example, one parent recently tweeted: 'Love that daughter's school [@RicardsTweets](#) has a full set of steel pans (And students know how to use them!)'.

Sacred Heart Secondary School, Newcastle Upon Tyne, Tyne and Wear

Sacred Heart is a Roman Catholic secondary school for girls. It is a popular and oversubscribed school with 1,403 pupils on roll: 33 per cent are in receipt of free school meals and 27.2 per cent speak EAL. The Attainment 8 score is 54.5 and Progress 8 is 0.41. Forty-eight per cent of the 211 pupils in KS4 enter the EBacc with an average point score of 4.65. The school was graded Outstanding in 2007, achieving Outstanding recognition again in 2013, and holds the Artsmark Platinum award.

Staff described Sacred Heart as 'a truly comprehensive school' with a complete mix of pupils from advantaged and disadvantaged backgrounds.

What was significant:

- Reflective processes within the arts
- Extent of arts extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities
- Confidently expressing the value of the arts to parents

School improvement and development

The arts are visible as soon as you enter the school. Access to a rich arts experience is seen as a crucial part of a good education. As the head explains, the arts 'are crucial to enabling our students to find their voice and express their individuality'.

The school goes to exceptional lengths to introduce young people to high quality arts experiences and opportunities with excellent resources and exceptional facilities, including a newly opened auditorium and specialist dance studio.

The school is keen to maintain a broad curriculum so that pupils who are less academic have the opportunity to achieve in other areas. There are experienced specialist staff in each of the art forms – dance, drama, music and visual arts. Staff feel supported and valued by school leadership. Leadership go out of their way to make sure there is a range of skills and expertise in the arts teams and that options for students are kept open. For example, the school has two specialist dance teachers who 'bring such rich extra curriculum experience as well as lessons'.

In order to keep this expertise in the school, both teachers have wider responsibilities, one with a pastoral role as head of year group, and another covering out-of-school provision. Although there are very low numbers wishing to take up music at A-level, the school is maintaining this option and actively trying to encourage more take up.

Students' progress in arts development is carefully observed and tracked through reflective processes and peer critiquing. For example, in art and design a self-assessment tool is customised to each project outlining the specific skills which relate to the project and pupils assess their own progress.

Pupil Premium funds enable pupils to access arts activities by purchasing specialist art and design equipment, buying books written by

visiting authors and covering the cost of some instrumental lessons and LAMDA lessons.

Staff spoke of sharing skills and learning from each other or from other teachers through subject specific networks such as the North East Arts Teachers Education network. Moderation meetings and online courses available from exam boards were also a source of CPD. The dance teachers in particular spoke of the value of 'being around professionals'. Training in the arts that related directly to teaching and learning was particularly valued.

Curriculum design

Pupils are grouped into one of two broad bands or a 'nurture group' based on assessment of ability on entry to the school. The arts curriculum at KS3 and GCSE options in the arts are tailored to meet the perceived needs and abilities of learners in each of these bands, with the aim of offering all pupils a chance of success. (This system is being changed as school leadership reports that they have more able students entering year 7 than ever before, so they now have a larger band of higher ability students. Their SATs results indicate more are working at greater depth so the new structure reflects this).

All arts subjects are offered at A-level even though the numbers opting for A-level music are low.

At KS3 all pupils are taught art and design and music, with three lessons every two weeks. Drama has a lower allocation of time with one lesson every two weeks. Dance only has curriculum time allocated in year 8, but students are encouraged to join one of the many lunchtime and after school clubs.

KS3 art and design introduces students to a range of processes including fine art, painting, drawing, installations, ceramics and textiles, with a more structured programme for the less able pupils. Students can then specialise in ceramics, textiles, or art and design at GCSE.

In drama the curriculum covers different periods of theatrical history (from *Antigone* to the *Caucasian Chalk Circle*) but wherever possible relates to current issues and links across the curriculum. A new Shakespeare script is introduced every year. Drama results are 'phenomenal'. Pupils say that drama is their toughest course because of extra hours for rehearsal and preparation.

The school is committed to making music learning accessible to all pupils and is constantly looking at how to encourage girls to study at GCSE and A level.

At KS3 great emphasis is placed on opening up the curriculum to non-players to introduce them to music and musicianship and to increase 'cultural capital'. But the requirement to play an instrument and the increasing volume of theory in the music GCSE means that some pupils are overwhelmed by the volume of work.

There are extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities such as popular lunch time and after school clubs including contemporary dance, hip hop, musical theatre, jazz, choreography, a year 9 dance company, ceramic workshop, digital workshop, and rock bands. Regular dance, drama and music performances and productions showcase pupils' work. The school collaborates with numerous cultural partners including Phoenix Dance, Northern Stage, Opera North, English Touring Opera, Seven Stories, the Royal Shakespeare Company, Culture North East, the Music Hub and LAMDA.

Art and design pupils visit final degree shows in Northumbria, Sunderland and Edinburgh universities to see different course options. Dance and drama students visit productions. The school's commitment to arts and cultural opportunities means that they are approached with opportunities. So, for example, Ken Loach has recruited actors for his recent films from the school including for *Sorry We Missed You*.

Pupil engagement

Pupils appreciate the remarkable opportunities the school gives them. When the head recently agreed to exhibit one of the National Gallery's paintings, Artemisia Gentileschi's self-portrait, they were moved to see their own work displayed at the same time. The deputy head talked of the impact that having the painting on site had on the pupils. She describes how every day she would find different children coming to look at the painting. At the opening night, pupils' work was exhibited alongside this masterpiece.

Pupils enjoy the many opportunities to perform and display their work through high quality productions, exhibitions and shows.

Pupils are excited by their learning and their confidence across the curriculum is increased by working through the arts. For example, one young pupil developed such a good understanding of *Macbeth* through drama processes that her older brother asked her to help out with his revision.

Parental engagement

Parents value the arts and want their daughters to be 'well rounded human beings', but when it comes to making choices about options and careers, some have been influenced to believe that the arts are not a viable option.

The school has initiated a powerful performing arts campaign to champion the value of the arts with pupils and parents to inspire them about possibilities and options. Beautifully designed posters are displayed around the school, showing the paths that former pupils have taken and the many careers the arts have opened up for them, from critical care nurse to dancer with Rambert.

Shiremoor Primary School, Newcastle Upon Tyne, Tyne and Wear

Shiremoor Primary is located on the outskirts of Newcastle in a former mining community with high levels of unemployment. There are 440 pupils on roll of which 11.4 per cent have SEN, 5.2 per cent speak EAL and 36.9 per cent are in receipt of free school meals. The head believes that the percentage of pupils eligible for Pupil Premium funding is higher than the official figure as many parents of reception children do not register for free school meals, since these are free for all pupils. Social services are also engaged with some children in the school.

Most children come from white working-class backgrounds with a very small number of children from minority ethnic groups/asylum seeker backgrounds. The school is under local authority control.

What was significant:

- Role of arts in developing language of children
- Contribution of arts to experience deficit
- Dedicated head of arts

School improvement and development

The school is committed to offering a rich learning environment for children, providing opportunities and experiences that they would otherwise not encounter. Arts and cultural experiences are viewed as a key entitlement. The head talked about the importance of introducing pupils to experiences such as theatre trips or visits to galleries so that they would feel able to take these up in later life. The head sees a clear school improvement role in exposure to the arts: 'Children have very limited vocabulary and limited opportunities to go beyond Shiremoor. If we don't take them, many of them would be unlikely to go.'

The school has always valued drama as it sees this as linking with developing vocabulary and self-confidence. It is committed to all children learning musical instruments with the aim that pupils leave the school being able to play at least

one instrument. All the costs of music tuition are covered by the school and there is no private tuition.

The arts were seen as an essential part of learning and a key factor in raising the aspiration of children. Many staff talked about how there was 'no right and wrong in the arts' and so it gave children a context where they could express themselves without fear of being judged. This is accompanied by a strong philosophy informed by Carole Dweck's theories of 'growth mindset'. The 'affirmations' are displayed on the corridor and referred to by pupils and staff. They connect well with arts learning.

Children's artwork is on display throughout the school. Teachers seek every opportunity they can to link the school with local community events and opportunities for presentation and display.

Drama approaches are being utilised across literacy classes: 'The quality of resultant writing is amazing'. Art is seen as integral to the school improvement journey.

The school seeks out and proactively manages learning opportunities for staff. Staff were all clear that when an arts organisation or practitioner comes to lead a project or activity with children that this will be used as an opportunity for teachers to also build their knowledge.

The head of art was not an arts specialist, but over the years has built expertise and confidence. Her enthusiasm about art is infectious and her influence can be seen through the confident practice of the other teachers she supports.

All subject leaders are also subject leaders in another school as well (a less successful school that Shiremoor are partnered with to improve standards). The head believes that being involved in the audit of what needs to change in another school influences the quality of art in their own school.

The head has been at the school for 26 years, joining as an NQT and taking over the headship six years ago. The head of art has also been at the school for 27 years. However, there has been a high level of teacher turnover in the past. The school used to employ a lot of NQT's who would move on after qualifying. Over the past few years this has been turned around because of the opportunities the school now offers. 'If they are happy in the job, they want to stay. Staff like working here.'

The school is on the outskirts of Newcastle but has good, affordable transport links to central Newcastle using the metro. Several teachers talked of how they could visit cultural venues easily in this way.

Curriculum design

Staff talked with enthusiasm about the new emphasis on curriculum following the draft Ofsted framework which they believe may 'drive' schools to value and invest more in arts provision. The arts are both taught as freestanding subjects as well as infusing the curriculum wherever they can enhance learning. The timetable is designed so that children focus on English and maths in the morning and have the afternoon for wider areas (including the arts).

The art curriculum links to local artists such as the Pitman Painters, and civic icons such as the *Angel of the North* and the Newcastle bridge.

Children at an early age are introduced to thinking about genre and were able to confidently discuss major artists (for example, year 2 were able to talk about abstract art and pop art and the work of Roy Fox Lichtenstein as well as Robert Delaunay). Dance is part of PE and timetabled throughout the year. There are many extra-curricular and after school opportunities led by staff on a voluntary basis including guitar, art clubs and choir. The school is well embedded in many partnerships and networks and thrives on the opportunities this offers.

Pupil engagement

The emphasis on pupil voice and pupil engagement was tangible in the school. Pupils in every class visited were confident, outgoing and keen to share their knowledge and understanding about both art and the arts more generally. Children were evidently knowledgeable about art and able to talk confidently and enthusiastically about different genres and artists.

Pupils spoke enthusiastically about the work they do on productions and dance festivals and the annual school play. For example, one group prepared a version of *Bohemian Rhapsody* for a dance festival. Another group talked of developing a Christmas show based on *Aladdin* – 'A lad in trouble'.

Parental engagement

Parents are invited to learning assemblies which are held each term and where children demonstrate and share their learning through songs and artwork. For example, one group told the story of Shackleton in their own words, which they acted out and narrated.

The school is very active in its engagement with a local annual fair called The Treat which originated 112 year ago. The school has influenced it to become a showcase for the children's work. The school fundraised for a tent and stage and the tent becomes an art gallery while KS1 and KS2 children perform music (the choir) and dance on the stage. Parents now also regularly get involved with The Treat. The school puts on regular events and plays for parents.

Sidney Stringer Academy, Coventry, Warwickshire

Sidney Stringer Academy is a large secondary academy and sixth form in the centre of Coventry for students aged 11-18. The school was rated Outstanding in its latest Ofsted inspection in 2013. The school has 1,350 students including sixth form. Attracting students from very diverse backgrounds, inclusion and multiculturalism are at the heart of the school's ethos.

In 2017 the academy won the West Midlands Pupil Premium Award and was a finalist for the national award. They are an Inclusion Quality Mark Flagship school. Seventy-nine per cent of the students speak EAL, 44 per cent are Pupil Premium and 27 per cent SEND.

Sidney Stringer is the lead school in the Sidney Stringer MAT and there are currently five schools in the trust.

What was significant:

- Innovative KS4 curriculum design led by student choice
- Excellence of arts facilities
- Arts integrated into science

School improvement and development

There was a clear belief from all staff interviewed that providing 'the best quality education is what matters.' The arts are viewed as part of that quality education. According to their vice principle, the arts '...form an important role in terms of both enriching the lives of our students and in developing good teaching and learning practice'.

That same vice principle believes arts subjects are important academically and in terms of building character. A school improvement target is to embed 'Character, Currency and Culture' in students. The commitment to developing emotionally aware, mature young people is of central importance to the school's inclusive ethos. 'It is our belief that a more substantial

arts curriculum supports this principle by developing specific art form skills, artistic voice, self-esteem and resilience within students.'

The arts are seen as an important way of extending student experiences and horizons. Staff talk about the important role the arts play in helping students gain the ability to express themselves. 'Art is a visual language in itself' (Head of Art).

There is clear support in the SLT for arts subjects; the senior vice principal who wasn't interviewed as part of this study is a drama teacher by trade. And creativity is important to the school as a whole: 'everyone shares responsibility for creativity'.

High quality artwork is visible around the school. The head of art talks about how the students increasingly 'want to show their creativity'. Examples of student work were on display in a public exhibition at Fargo Village – an artistically repurposed industrial space in Coventry City Centre which includes an exhibition space open to the public. The students work was professionally mounted and available for the public to view.

There are outstanding arts facilities at the school including two drama studios, three art rooms, two working kilns, two music rooms, a textile room, a recording studio and a 280-seater theatre, all housed on a performing arts floor in the main school building. Students have access to specialist music teachers and lessons are offered for free. Teachers noted that students are not entering the school with musical skills and therefore it is harder to pick up at secondary.

Conversations with the head of art and teaching assistant reflected on the importance of arts subjects for developing cultural capital: 'We believe the arts should be wholly accessible and not just for the most able or "culturally rich" students.'

The school has a designated teacher who leads on 'Cultural Capital'. The school has a

way of identifying pupils who are in danger of being less engaged and they participate in a cultural programme that focuses on the arts and heritage in Coventry.

Curriculum design

The arts are delivered both as lessons in the formal curriculum and through enrichment activities. At KS3, students study music and drama for an hour every week and art and design technology on a rotation basis throughout the year. All arts subjects become an option to study at KS4/5. 'All students have access to outstanding facilities that motivate our young people to create high-quality work'.

Teaching is often thematic across the school and the arts are used to link across different subjects. For example, the school explored the Day of the Dead and studied it in Spanish, RE and art lessons.

There are 11 specialist teachers of arts subjects. Students choose options at years 9, 10 and 11. A range of arts subjects are on offer at the school: photography; drama; art; product design; graphics; dance; music; and textiles. The school wants to develop a love of different subject areas in pupils, so they are able to 'think like a historian or like an artist'.

The curriculum has been designed to make it easier for pupils to choose subjects they love and are good at. The school timetable at year 9 and KS4 is personalised for every student. Students make their choices about the subjects they want to study, and the head teacher then creates the blocks to enable each student to take the subjects they've identified.

The school operates one, two and three year study options for GCSE subjects. This has led to a larger take up of arts subjects, although not all subjects are offered as a one year option.

Art teaching is evident in other subject areas. A science teacher interviewed incorporates arts activities into science lessons, for example asking his students to create paintings of

chemical bonds or using plasticine to make a model of a skeleton. The teacher believes that it helps students play a more active role in their learning when they are applying skills used and learnt in other disciplines. He encourages the students to apply their arts experiences and knowledge to science. The teacher talked about the importance of understanding how the arts have been inspired by science and science by the arts: 'the art of science and the science of art'.

In terms of enrichment activities, MAT Live is an annual festival led by Sidney Stringer and involving other MAT schools. The event has grown in scale and ambition and now involves 300 students over three days. The head of drama described how it brings the community together, including children who can feel on the outside. He referenced a transgender child who had experienced a difficult transition in school but participated in MAT Live and received huge community approval for their performance. The head of drama describes MAT Live and the arts as enabling 'a different expression of self'.

Pupil engagement

Seven pupils from different year groups were interviewed; all spoke of the difference that arts subjects make to their school experience. It builds their confidence and they were pleased that their school offered such a wide range of arts opportunities. Students reflected they are less able to pursue arts subjects outside of school and therefore it is important they can pursue them in the curriculum.

Parental engagement

Parents and members of the local community have visited the exhibition of students' work at Fargo Village. The head of drama describes parents as being open to their children choosing arts subjects. The school wants to develop stronger links with its parent community and see the arts as a way of achieving that, for example through more performance festival opportunities at year 7.

The school is very engaged in wider community initiatives, for example by active involvement with planning around Coventry City of Culture Coventry 2021. The school is also part of the Coventry Cultural Education Partnership and contributes to the Coventry Cultural Strategy – a 10-year plan for arts and culture for the city.

St John's Cathedral Catholic Primary School, Portsmouth, Hampshire

St John's Cathedral Catholic Primary School in Portsmouth has 236 pupils on roll: 24.6 per cent are in receipt of free school meals; 2.1 per cent have SEN; and 61.9 per cent speak EAL. Eighty-one per cent of pupils achieve the expected standard in reading, writing and maths. It was reported as Outstanding by Ofsted in 2008, following a previous rating of Good in 2004. It holds Artsmark Gold.

What was significant:

- Current head is continually building upon the foundations of arts provision under her predecessor
- Appointment of specialists
- Extent of singing and performances – from reception upwards
- Link with developing language

School improvement and development

Staff believe that arts and cultural learning have played an important part in school improvement. The vision for a strong arts provision originated with the previous head who was a 'keen musician'. The current head, who was previously a class teacher at the school, is passionate about continuing to offer the pupils quality arts provision and is in full support of the specialists appointed to teach. Music underpins the school being a place of worship and each day begins with singing at assembly. Staff commented that there is 'always something musical happening' with a specific emphasis on singing which is 'at the heart of what we do'.

Given the demographic, with children arriving with limited vocabulary, speech and language development is the highest priority. Staff clearly see a strong link between music, singing and speech and language development. Singing is seen as something that 'enriches what therapy and teaching they're getting'.

This vision is underpinned by a belief that the arts benefit particular children:

'Often the children that have a flair for the arts are the ones who are not so strong academically. When they're painting, acting, singing, they're given the opportunity to thrive. Once they realise they're good at something, you see the benefits in other areas'.

Staff added further that 'Some of our best artists are our weakest linguists. If we don't give them those outlets, especially in a school like ours where language is an issue, they can't thrive. It's too difficult for them'.

Provision strengthened over the years. Initially it 'was very much learning the songs for the Christmas concert, or the year 6 show. Now it's broader because they have more opportunities'. The deputy has driven these changes, aiming 'to give children a diet of a broad range of music. They're exposed to everything now. We learn about music history. We talk about different singing styles. They understand a bit more about the mechanics of music'.

The special education needs co-ordinator (SENCO) described a positive attitude to music throughout the school 'because it comes from the staff, the Head'. The commitment to the arts starts at nursery: 'They're taught music from the very beginning. These children are told that they're very good at it from very early on. They're not afraid to show that they're good at it because we tell them'.

The vision and commitment has clearly contributed to staff recruitment and a focus on specialist expertise. The deputy explained

that 'One of the reasons I wanted to come to this school was that I could see that arts were important'. In addition to the deputy, the previous head appointed a teacher who is a dance specialist. Two music specialists come in weekly to deliver instrumental tuition, a third teacher comes in to teach art two afternoons a week, and a drama specialist works with each year group once a year. Staff commented that 'Specialists are attracted to work in good schools where they're valued alongside other subjects'.

The school finances this specialist provision through a decision not to have a supply budget (with illnesses covered by two members of the SLT who are out of the classroom). However, specialist provision has been reduced over the years and remains under threat due to financial pressures.

The drama teacher used to work in the school every Friday, but the school had to cut her hours significantly. In addition, the SENCO is leaving and is not being replaced; the deputy has decided to take on the role because 'Otherwise we would have to drop the music provision'.

The school has a very strong partnership with Portsmouth Music Hub whose support has been crucial to 'the amount of music and cultural activities that we've offered'. The deputy is on twitter and Facebook: 'Anything that's free I sign up for'. The deputy described how, the more things they turn up to, the more they get invited to. Being in the city centre has helped the school make the most of such opportunities.

The deputy admitted that staff want more CPDL than the school can afford. However, some music CPDL is offered by the Music Education Hub while the school uses visiting specialists as a mechanism for professional development. The deputy described teachers sitting in when music specialists come in to teach instrumental lessons which has 'had the biggest impact of all'. As a result, teachers learn to read notation with the children, for example.

Governance has been a weakness but is now improving. There is no dedicated arts governor, a decision that mirrors the approach at SLT where, with a small team, everyone is expected to know what's going on.

Curriculum design

Mornings are spent on the 'core' subjects of English, maths and RE alongside daily collective worship. Afternoons are for 'foundation' subjects, which include music, art, design and technology, and PE. KS1 have 40 minutes each of music and art per week; KS2 have roughly 1 hour of music and art, every other half term, per week. Art subjects, topics and RE opportunities are offered in addition to this throughout the term. In addition, year 3 have one hour of recorder, and year 4 one hour of clarinet. However, staff found it 'Hard to identify the amount of arts because it's woven through everything we do', with a wide range of arts trips and opportunities as well as topic work which might incorporate arts.

There are a number of arts extra-curricular clubs which are provided for free by the school. The deputy was emphatic that these opportunities are open to all and that she would 'never turn a child away. If I have children who can't sing in tune I'll work with them 'til they can'. Pupil Premium children get priority attendance at ukulele band, in order to 'give them the opportunities that perhaps more financially secure parents can give'.

The schools' enrichment books capture the wealth of opportunities offered to pupils, many of which are arts related. There is one for each year group and separate ones for music and drama. Pictures were of anything from theatre trips to the pupils – including infants – singing at external events.

Pupil engagement

The pupils interviewed, despite some only being in year 3, and given the language challenges referenced above, spoke enthusiastically and

confidently about their experiences of arts and cultural learning. One pupil commented that 'I used to think that school would be really boring, but when I started realising there were really good opportunities to show a hidden talent then I really enjoyed it here', while another reflected that 'I think this school has really good arts – if you were really sad or angry doing art would make you feel better'.

Along with the wide range of staff-directed arts experiences, pupils' engagement has been strengthened through a Leading Learners project whereby older pupils teach younger ones, with the teacher facilitating. Although not subject specific many were arts-based: 'We had children in Year 4 making a video about the school for Reception; mixed choir leaders leading the infants; Year 5 teaching Year 3s animation'. The initiative has increased pupil resilience and independence and helped teachers see what pupils are capable of.

Parental engagement

Parental support for the arts is good: 'the majority are highly engaged in their children's education' and will respond to letters about arts opportunities or attend end of term assemblies, for example.

St Richard's Catholic College, Bexhill on Sea, East Sussex

St Richard's Catholic College in Bexhill is an 11-16 secondary with 1,020 pupils on roll: 8.6 per cent are in receipt of free school meals; 7.6 per cent are SEN; and 12.5 per cent speak EAL. In 2018, 62 per cent of year 11s achieved the Ebacc. Progress 8 is 0.56. It was last reported as Outstanding by Ofsted in 2006 and in November 2018 it was assessed as Outstanding in its Diocesan inspection.

What was significant:

- Tight fit between arts-rich ethos and implementation
- Quality and rigour of arts provision driving up standards across the school

- Arts' role within pupil engagement and inclusion
- Willingness to experiment with different curriculum designs

School improvement and development

All staff, alongside the chair of governors, spoke convincingly about the importance of an arts-rich provision complementing and contributing to the college's academic successes. Staff consistently described the importance of the school's mission and values and how arts provision is seen as fundamental to delivering them. For example, the vice principal reflected that 'our mission statement is all about allowing children to flourish and to develop as a whole' and that 'the arts has a major role within that', while the principal talked about doing 'injustice' to children if the school focused solely on academic subjects.

For staff, this clearly relates to the Catholic faith underpinning the college. For example, the chair described how the 'management team has always seen the value of the arts, partly because there is so much worship and expression'. The 2018 Diocesan inspection report commented that, 'Many celebrations are enhanced by music, drama and dance.' Teachers believe these events play an important role, not only in providing performance opportunities but also raising the visibility and status of the arts across the college.

The arts are perceived as playing an important role in supporting the highly aspirational nature of the college in both setting and achieving high standards. The principal reflected that 'If the performing arts have such high standards and are receiving constant praise, everyone else starts competing to have the same high standards' while the vice principal talked about seeing 'an academic rigour' to the arts. The chair supported these statements, talking about arts staff having 'very high expectations of children'.

Implementation of the college's ethos appears further complemented by a supportive whole school culture, references to which featured in

every conversation. One teacher recounted how 'I don't ever feel that there's anything we've presented to them [SLT] that they have said no to. They have a huge amount of trust in [us]'. Support extends beyond SLT to colleagues who regularly help with productions.

Trust, respect and equity with other subjects were also referenced on multiple occasions. The vice principal talked about respecting arts staff because they were delivering high quality provision.

Staffing and structure have made further important contributions. The drama teacher felt that 'Staffing has been the thing. The performing arts faculty is hugely dedicated'. Bringing together music, drama and dance into one performing arts faculty was also credited as highly beneficial and had facilitated co-planning. Staff passion and enthusiasm shone through. Teachers are clearly proactive about developing relationships with local arts and/or education providers.

Strong working relationships also appeared to benefit CPDL. Staff described doubling up on classes 'allowing others to go out on INSET'. Staff talked positively about both whole school and specialist CPDL opportunities which they described as 'fantastic'. In addition, arts' staff are asked to contribute to whole school CPDL. One of the drama teachers explained that, 'We're asked to give advice and share best practice,' reflecting that she is treated as if she has 'got as much to offer as other subjects'.

Governance is strong and very supportive of arts provision. Until recently there had been a governor with extensive arts expertise but she had recently retired. Her replacement will commence in September.

Curriculum design

The curriculum has changed significantly in the last few years. The college has historically offered one lesson each of music and art throughout KS3. Dance was initially taught within PE and, according to the dance teacher

who has been at the college for eight years, 'Felt a bit token'. Over time she was able to increase the amount of dance offered, until the point where drama and dance were offered throughout KS3, alternating weekly, receiving one lesson each per fortnight. The first change, put forward by arts staff, was to teach only one subject per term. Over a six-term year, each subject would thus get three terms. The rationale was that progression would be enhanced and that each term could end with a subject specific performance.

However, there were no opportunities for pupils to study dance at KS4. Furthermore, teachers felt that pupil engagement was falling in year 9. A second change was therefore explored, creating a new model for non-EBacc subjects in year 9. Pupils continue with EBacc subjects as usual but choose two further subjects at the end of year 8, taken from a subject pool of drama, music, performing arts, computing, ICT, and art. At the end of year 9, the majority of pupils then choose one of these to continue in KS4. Staff have seen a reduction in behaviour management problems and increased achievement: 'I've found that the ability level at Year 10 is much higher. We can get into skills building earlier'. Furthermore, the new model has allowed the school to offer performing arts in year 9, with the additional advantage that the school can now offer the Bronze Arts Award to this year group within curriculum time. Finally, for the 30 per cent who are not entered into the EBacc, there is the option of dropping a language and pursuing an additional, vocational subject through a new BTEC in performing arts.

The curriculum is complemented by a wealth of activities offered both within the school day and as extra-curricular opportunities. Pupils talked enthusiastically about trips to the theatre, and staff referenced a number of visits and workshops run by local individuals and organisations. Staff are clearly responsive to pupil interests. For example, the dance teacher currently offers three after-school clubs for juniors, seniors and boys. When asked about

the driver behind the latter she explained, 'They asked me!'. There is an annual musical, which brings together teachers across the performing arts faculty, all of which is in addition to regular liturgical events and subject-specific shows/performances. The performing arts teachers individually and collectively lead contributions to a wide range of initiatives from NT Connections to Great Big Dance Off to the East Sussex Music Festival.

Pupil engagement

The arts make a significant contribution to the pastoral role of the college, particularly supporting the ethos of inclusion. The vice principal, whose job focuses on pastoral care, talked about how the arts are 'crucially, right at the centre' of what she does. She gave multiple examples of working with the arts departments to support children experiencing disadvantage or disengagement and referenced various success stories. This was echoed by one of the drama teachers who commented that 'a lot of those pupils are unsuccessful elsewhere, but they have success in our subjects and it makes a difference. It makes them positive about school'.

Parental engagement

Parents were cited as 'really seeing the value' of arts and cultural learning. One teacher described having to limit attendance at school shows due to space in the hall, because parents would otherwise come to every performance because they are 'huge supporters'.

Torriano Primary School, Camden, London

Torriano Primary school in Kentish Town, Camden, was formed in 2015 following the merger of the consistently outstanding Torriano Junior with the neighbouring infants school which had been deemed to be Requiring Improvement. The merged school is now Outstanding, following an Ofsted inspection in September 2018. Of the 443 children on roll over, half speak EAL, 45.8 per cent are eligible for free school meals and 9.7 per cent have SEN.

Inspiring leadership from the head teacher establishes the ethos of the school informed by a set of core values including the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child, the UN's sustainable development goals, and the role of the arts in promoting innovation in pedagogy, particularly in relation to STEAM.

What was significant:

- Quality of displays that capture process as well as end product
- Interlinking of pupil and parental engagement through the arts
- Role of the arts in promoting innovation and pedagogy

School improvement and development

The arts infuse all aspects of school life and play an invaluable role in creating an ambitious, exploratory climate which generates pupil engagement and high-quality learning, with the aim of 'teaching complex concepts through the arts'.

'Our approach to pedagogy is all agreed and tested through research. That is the starting point and the arts are planned all the way through the curriculum.' The school's focus has recently shifted from seeing the arts as 'enrichment' in curriculum, to the critical role of the arts in promoting innovation in pedagogy, deepening children's learning in the core subjects.

Staff spoke consistently about the central role of the arts in learning in the school. Teachers are confident working creatively. Rigorous planning combined with encouragement to experiment and design ambitious learning opportunities means teachers are inspired and children are confident in doing excellent work.

Children's artwork is on display throughout the school, making it feel like a contemporary art space. Displays share the outcomes of projects as well as processes of thinking, planning and learning. They are often experimental and work in progress rather than always a final product. They include self-portraits based on a project with TATE, a model of Ada Lovelace made out of computer tape which hangs in the hall along with suffragette banners, a huge whale choking on plastic bottles which hangs in the dining room, and the reception classroom is transformed into the forest of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

An artist in residence has worked in the school for the past six years for about eight days a term. The head explained that she wanted an artist who would collaborate with teachers and the school's curriculum approach rather than just offering an off-the-peg package. Many teachers have their own creative practice: a specialist music teacher works three days a week, the PSHE lead is a drama practitioner by background and all teachers are appointed for their enthusiasm about combining arts with subject learning. The result is a vibrant, creative, collaborative practice which fuses the best of great teaching with the power of imagination and outstanding arts practice.

INSET days at the start of each year give teachers time to explore the approach. Whenever anything new is introduced time is allocated to ensure that all staff understand the purpose and process: 'There's a kind of ecology. It feels like there's a learning community. You don't sit still. Every year is like a new job'.

Curriculum design

SLT and relevant curriculum leaders plan each year, agreeing the topics, seeking relevance to current issues, links with the sustainable development goals and setting key objectives. Music, art, and dance all tie in with the topic explored. For example, children exploring space composed music based on Holst's *The Planets* combined with sounds sampled from interference on a solar panel. Every topic has an outcome or 'crescendo' which pulls together the learning into an ambitious presentation, exhibition or production:

'Everyone is part of the process. We look at how it relates to different age groups and how each will contribute. Then how the community are going to be involved and which cultural organisations it would be helpful to involve. What's the experience, what's the end point, and how do we evaluate the impact of that.'

The school has been investigating how to integrate the arts into the science curriculum as a STEAM curriculum. The lead English teacher explained how children investigated renewable energy sources, becoming enthused by solar powered handheld reading lamps. They wrote and presented poems inspired by light dressed in scientists' white coats to explain the process.

The school has a large range of free clubs including choir, band, drama, pottery and film clubs. The school is proactive in seeking out opportunities for pupils and benefits from having access to many arts and cultural organisations: 'Once you've established a reputation as a school which is open to collaboration and keen to respond to opportunities, the offers come.'

On the week of the visit year 5 pupils performed as a culmination of a dance project with professional dancers. Children were also hosted a visit from Helen Pankhurst and interviewed her about her work as part of the Young Journalist

Academy. Tate, Little Angel theatre, the Poetry Society, the Royal Academy of Music, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment are a few of the cultural organisations with which the school has active links.

Pupil engagement

Children take the lead and are actively engaged in activities throughout the school: 'Wherever you can you've got children sharing, planning developing.'

Community and parental involvement are integral to curriculum design and delivery. For example, the school celebrated the 100-year anniversary of women's suffrage. The project involved all children from nursery to year 6, who all learnt about the movement for suffrage. With support from a parent with art and craft skills, every year group designed and stitched a banner and they all marched around the community. They learnt songs and 'so many people marched in the streets it was amazing'. The project supported learning in English, history, music, art and design – all were central to the success of the project.

Parental engagement

The school draws on the expertise of the parents who are invited to contribute to projects. For example, a town planner helped devise an EYFS project with children making a model of their local community and designing a better future:

'All of these very young children were telling their families where they lived, where their houses were and where somebody else's house was. The children developed oracy skills and geographic and humanities understanding.'

Assemblies have been changed to live lessons in which the children teach lessons to the parents through immersive experience – the arts becoming a means for the children to communicate their learning and the parents becoming the audience. All children contribute at the level they can to share their learning.

In one assembly the children shared learning from a trip to the Foundling Museum. Teachers and pupils turned the hall into the foundling school. Parents arrived and were inducted as foundlings. In another assembly pupils learnt about space exploration and all the parents were inducted as astronauts.

West Lakes Academy, Egremont, Cumbria

West Lakes Academy sits within a very rural area within Cumbria. It is a non-selective secondary academy, part of West Lakes Multi-Academy Trust, which is sponsored by the University of Central Lancashire, the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority, and Sellafield Ltd. Ofsted reports highlight the academy's journey from Satisfactory in 2011 to Good in 2013 and Outstanding in 2017. In the academic year 2017/18, Progress 8 score was +0.5 (considered 'well above average' by the DfE), Ebacc entries were 55 per cent, and 57 per cent achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths. A total of 1,198 students were on roll, of which 22 per cent were in receipt of free school meals, 6.8 per cent were SEND and 0.7 per cent EAL. The 2017 Ofsted report commented that 'Outcomes in sciences, English, art and design and performing arts are particularly impressive'.

What was significant:

- It is compulsory for all KS4 students to take an arts subject
- Evidence of excellence in student artwork and commitment to excellence, eg all performances seen by SLT before opening to public
- Belief that excellence in arts equals excellence across the school

School improvement and development

The vice principal felt that strong arts provision has been an important part of the journey from Satisfactory to Outstanding. He reflected that:

'I think because of the quality and the passion of the teachers [who] have exceptionally high standards and expectations, they support the highest standards of learning. It's sometimes a naivety of people who view creative freedom as lack of structure and lack of rigour. Whereas what you actually find from the director of art, performing arts, music etc, it's exactly the opposite, that level of rigour drives those exceptional standards of the work they produce, and then that standard underpins the current throughout the academy.'

It appears that the history of achievement in the arts in the academy has raised the bar for other areas. The prevalent culture of high expectations and standards across the academy has led to the Academy Leadership Group (ALG) quality assuring all aspects of arts provision, including extra-curricular activities. For example, all productions are checked before they reach a public performance to ensure they are at an appropriate level of professionalism. The vice principal explained, 'if you enable a dip in standards or drop in quality there, it doesn't take long before that becomes the expected standard'.

This approach is coupled with an equality among subjects. While recognising that English and maths get significant attention, the vice principal suggested that all subjects are valued highly, a view corroborated by staff and students. One teacher described how the ALG 'see the arts as important...as equal', while students talked about how 'every department has the same standards'.

Teachers reflected on the supportive environment in the academy. The music teacher felt that 'There's always someone there to fight your battles'. She explained the process behind putting forward new ideas or making requests. The ALG would ask, 'why do you want to do it, what's behind it, what's the research behind it, how's it going to impact on the students?' She explained that if teachers could address these points then ALG would lend their support and

then 'they love seeing it in action. After, they go "Right, that worked. What can we do next?"'

Curriculum design

West Lakes Academy operates a longer than average academy day through an earlier start, later finish, and shorter breaks, allowing it to programme six 55-minute lessons per day. All students are taught music, art, and performing arts throughout years 7 and 8 through one lesson a week per subject/area. Dance is taught under performing arts alongside drama. At KS4 all students take one arts subject.

Across the arts, students are given multiple opportunities to perform/exhibit their work. The large atrium that forms the academy's entrance is frequently used for art installations and has been designed in such a way that artworks can be easily hung along the walls. The head of performing arts explained that live performances average around 10 a year, either in class time or extra-curricular. These are not only used as a mechanism to enable young people to develop their own performance skills, but also to model those skills for the benefit of other students: 'My year 9 are audiences for my sixth formers. They're inspired by it.'

In music there are fortnightly 'Friday Live' sessions for musicians, enabling the academy to support GCSE music requirements. 'Friday Live' is part of a strong programme of extra-curricular activity. Many of these take place during lunch as the rural nature of the academy means that after school clubs prove challenging for many students. The one exception appears to be Rock Challenge, described in more detail below. The rural nature of the academy also means that trips to theatres, museums, galleries and so forth are equally challenging. The vice principal explained that this is where the 21st century 'has been a boon for us because of the availability of online materials'. While recognising that digital access will never be the same as first-hand experience, they do make good use of opportunities such as live streaming of theatre productions at the nearest cinema, for example.

The head of performing arts talked about many primary school students wanting to come to West Lakes Academy because of Rock Challenge, a view echoed by some of the students interviewed. It has its own budget, fundraising activities and the academy plans and integrates extra rehearsals around revision booster classes. It started small, with only 23 students taking part, and the head of performing arts was keen to stress that it has taken many years to achieve its current status. Now the academy takes the maximum 100 participants each year. Last year they were second in the national final and are the reigning North of England Champions, the only school in the competition's history to win the title for three consecutive years.

Pupil engagement

Take up of art GCSE and photography GCSE is particularly high at West Lakes Academy. The head of art credited this level of engagement to the academy's approach of helping students to see the value of art. From year 7 work is exhibited, and students explore what the financial value of their work might be. By year 13, students establish websites to promote and sell their work. Student work is currently displayed in the offices of the DfE where officials have individually purchased work by West Lakes Academy students. There are also pieces on display in the office of Amanda Spielman, HMCI, and one piece, having been on a tour with AQA as an exemplar piece of work, now hangs as a permanent installation in their newly refurbished head offices.

Both staff and students suggest that pupil engagement is helped when teachers are practising artists. Without prompting, both the music teacher and students separately talked positively about the music teacher singing and playing with students as part of the 'Friday Live' sessions. The head of performing arts felt that students valued that she was a dancer, a view corroborated by the vice principal who described her as 'a passionate dancer and performer and [she] instils that passion in the students'.

Disengaged and disadvantaged students appear to be well supported. Equality of approach to all subjects means that disengagement is picked up and addressed quickly: 'We value all subjects equally. If [a student is] underperforming in any area, we take it seriously'. Staff felt that disadvantaged students do particularly well at West Lakes Academy. Staff described being actively encouraged to bid for Pupil Premium funding, explaining that any arts resources needed, eg instruments, were 100 per cent funded.

Parental engagement

The vice principal felt that there were 'very few parents who have concerns about students studying the arts. Partly because students are very engaged and passionate'. The head of performing arts suggested that many students come to West Lakes Academy having already had significant access to dance training through local provision. Finally, students interviewed cited parental support for the arts through encouragement to play musical instruments outside the academy. This parental engagement was particularly evident around support for 'Rock Challenge', which 'has to be biggest mobilisation of parents and students' through co-ordination of lifts and car-sharing, both for rehearsals and attending the competitions themselves.

Wildern School, Southampton, Hampshire

Wildern School in Southampton is an 11-16 secondary with 1,904 pupils: 12.5 per cent are in receipt of free school meals, 0.8 per cent have SEN, and 2.6 per cent speak EAL. In 2018, 27 per cent of year 11s achieved the Ebacc, while Progress 8 is 0.2. The school was rated Outstanding in 2012, 2008 and 2006 and holds Platinum Artsmark.

What was significant:

- Vision which established d.@art centre and The Berry Theatre on site and impact this has had
- Community engagement and commitment to being more than a school
- Teaching in local primaries
- Pupils can take two arts GCSEs

School improvement and development

All those spoken to during the visit felt the arts had played a significant role in Wildern's school improvement journey. The director of learning for creative and media (DLCM) spoke of the arts as 'integral. Everything that we do is based around the arts...the curriculum, quality of teaching and learning, enrichment, the wider community'. The current head supported this, recalling the school achieving Performing Arts status: 'When a new head teacher joined in 1996 the school hadn't been doing well', but the arts made a 'statement about the school. From that moment we've moved from strength to strength', due in large part to SLT and governors deciding the arts are 'critical to our students'.

The chair of governors has over 20 years' association with the school and reflected that Wildern School has been run by three head teachers with a very strong commitment to the arts. It was the vision of the first that led to the creation of the d.@rt centre, a local arts centre, and then, through securing local borough funding, The Berry Theatre. Both are local community resources but ones that the school can access.

Having these facilities is very important: 'it's about having high expectations and enabling students to be taught in a professional environment...We don't shy away from a level of professionalism'. School performances take place at The Berry but the theatre plays a part in the school's vision 'to serve the community', 'to be more than just a school'. The DLCM described this as 'Important because we are not standalone...we have a status within the community' and wanting to forge 'relationships with local businesses, care homes and vulnerable people in the community'. There are also extensive relationships with local primaries, where the DLCM teaches dance for example. This is driven partly by a desire to know more about the primary curriculum, but also to help with pupils' transition into secondary, ensuring they are 'not coming to us with absolutely zero knowledge' of the arts.

According to the chair, leadership has been critical, alongside 'appointing the right staff'. The DLCM supported this, describing staff as wanting 'to share our enthusiasm and passion. We model what we want to see from our students'. Students echoed this. One described how 'You can tell they have a real passion for their teaching. They're just as involved as we are. That helps you to connect'.

All arts subjects are taught by specialists. Staff talked about the school's commitment to the arts influencing their desire to work there. One commented 'that's what really grabbed me. It was part of the school's ethos'. Staff described a supportive working environment, a sense of openness, the ease of approaching SLT. The head believes in supporting new staff but then backing off, trusting staff because 'It would stifle [the work] if we micromanaged at that level'. She encourages a reflective culture with 'no blame'. Arts staff also talked about feeling valued and commanding respect amongst their peers. Teachers are very proactive: 'There's always things out there – you just have to go looking' and 'We're always looking at new options or new opportunities for us or our students'.

Staff referenced a lot of online CPDL such as subject webinars run by AQA, while the head of art described CPD through her role within the school's SCITT. Other CPDL came through learning walks at other schools or networks and relationships.

All of the above have clearly had an impact on quality and standards. The chair reflected on the 'quality of performance' at the school while the head of music commented that 'our standards are really high'. This is linked to a strong work ethic. One pupil talked about how 'we're never complacent. Our teachers always want to make it better. There's never an easy way. If we want to make something amazing we have to put the time in'. This pays off in terms of results. In 2017, 92 per cent of pupils achieved A*-C in GCSE dance and 95 per cent A*-C in GCSE art. Pupil Premium students do well at the school. According to the DLCM this is down to a culture of 'inclusivity and accessibility'. Inclusivity is a school feature of which the chair is particularly proud: 'it's a school that's not just providing performing arts for the elitists, we try to provide them for everybody'.

Governance is strong. The school has a named governor for arts and culture and governors 'come to all our evening performances'.

There are solid links with the Berry Theatre and the d.@rt arts centre, alongside strong partnerships with local colleges and universities and a very good relationship with the local Bridge Organisation, which alerts the school to possible funding, for example.

Curriculum design

The timetable operates on a fortnightly basis of 50 periods. At KS3, foundation subjects, which include art, music, drama and dance (all taught discretely), get two lessons each per fortnight. At KS4, foundation subjects get five hours every fortnight. At KS4 pupils can choose two foundation subjects out of 16, many of which are arts-based; pupils can therefore take two arts GCSEs.

There is an extensive range of extra-curricular activities and pupils are very appreciative of the range of opportunities available. For example, the school has been doing Rock Challenge ever since it started and now take the maximum 100 pupils each year. It's open to all year 8s to year 11s and the school doesn't audition as, for Wildern School, it's about promoting a work ethic rather than focusing on the best performers. Amongst many other opportunities there are also busking sites around the school.

Pupil engagement

The DLCM described an embedded arts culture: 'It's cool to be part of the arts. The students hold it in high regard. Students respect peers who are involved'. Pupils were very enthusiastic about the arts provision, particularly the professionalism:

'I think schools are supposed to set you up for what life is, and the arts departments have really got that right here. We don't do a schooled down version – we do it [performance] as if it's a real West End performance, and I think that's one of the reasons why it's so special to everyone here'.

Pupils talked extensively about the influence of the arts culture, describing it as affecting choices to come to the school, their enjoyment once there, and contributing to their development. For example, they are all comfortable participating and performing, encouraged to support each other with any negative comments 'always stamped on quickly by teachers'. Others talked about how 'if you've been in a group for dance or drama you're able to work together as a team' while another commented, 'Maths and English it's focused on your own abilities. In the arts you're able to work off each other as much as you learn from the teacher'.

Parental engagement

The DLCM described parents as 'hugely supportive. They see the prestige in sending their children here and knowing they can be part of that arts journey'.

Wilson Stuart School, Birmingham, West Midlands

Wilson Stuart is a special school in Birmingham for children aged 2-19 with 100 per cent SEN and 44 per cent with speech and language difficulties. A total of 231 pupils are on roll: 57.3 per cent are in receipt of free school meals; 36.8 per cent speak EAL. Ofsted graded it Outstanding in 2019, 2015, 2010, 2006, 2001 and 1997.

What was significant:

- Commitment to giving arts opportunities to children
- Extent of arts provision within and outside curriculum
- Strong belief that arts have a positive impact on self-esteem, confidence and communication
- Effect of non-verbal drama

School improvement and development

SLT agreed that arts and cultural learning had played an important role in school improvement and development. The school's commitment to a strong arts provision dated back at least 30 years, with three characteristics appearing to underpin current commitment. Firstly, equality of opportunity. Staff feel the school needs to provide opportunities because otherwise most pupils would have a restricted access to the arts 'because they can be restricted in their out of school experiences because of mobility and access issues'.

Secondly, seeing the educational and social benefits of participation. For example, staff referenced accelerated educational progress following non-verbal drama interventions, others talked about increased engagement and enthusiasm: 'We've increasingly seen over the years the benefit of music and creative arts to help learners engage', while the head talked about a noticeable energy in the school after arts performances. Another perceived benefit was around generating memories. Staff

described how 'With many of our students, sitting them down or standing in front of them as a teacher will not provide the stimulus they need to learn and establish vivid memories. Arts provide such wonderful memories that they talk about years later'.

The case study visit had a particular focus on the benefits of a non-verbal drama intervention delivered through a partnership between Birmingham Rep and Open Theatre. The latter's director talked about how non-verbal physical theatre releases the potential for young people to create in ways that are not hampered or distracted by language. He explained that even those who can talk are not necessarily able to articulate feelings. Being released from words allows children to explore other ways of expressing: 'They discover a way of communicating that is far more appropriate to them than language. Language can be developed and become part of that communication but it's not the primary focus'. A member of SLT explained that some children 'wouldn't look at you, wouldn't respond or make choices'. However, through non-verbal drama most 'would do things I'd never seen them do. It's amazing to see what they are capable of, given the right opportunities', concluding that the 'most positive impact has been on self-esteem and confidence. Children are better communicators'.

The third driver is the perceived link between the arts and mental wellbeing. Again, talking about non-verbal drama with PMLD, a member of SLT talked about perceived benefits on 'mental wellness – that's the big thing that we ensure for our students with using the arts as we do. It really is powerful', while the head of English and communication described benefits for pupils with complex medical needs and serious health conditions.

The success of the school's arts provision relies on a number of features that include staffing and support, funding, a commitment to quality and high expectations, CPDL and strong governance. Staff are very passionate and clearly committed;

many are arts specialists. Teachers described the head as being 'very supportive' of the arts. One teacher recounted her experience as an NQT trained in secondary drama and 'what appealed to me was how open they were to me teaching through drama'. Another described being 'very encouraged by SLT to bring my creative ideas into the school' and a teaching assistant explained that the school funded him to attend a postgraduate course looking at ways of assessing music within SEND provision. Another commented on risk-taking: 'We're always encouraged as staff to take risks. One of the most powerful things the school does for us as staff is say it's okay to take risks – we're encouraged to try new things'.

According to the governor, the school has 'always been very successful' at securing funding for its arts provision, and staff are tasked with securing that funding. Sources include Arts Council England and the local Bridge Organisation.

There were comments about the importance of quality in arts provision: 'You have to have quality. And quality is expensive'. For example, they described a visit by a brass band group: 'The group went into the audience and allowed the pupils to experience the tuba right next to them, to feel the vibrations. They were interacting with all the learners', reflecting on the high level of skills needed for this type of musical intervention. Notes from the art teacher referenced how 'high expectations are set' and that one pupil had won a national 'aspirational award for art'. Staff described access to CPDL through projects with external companies such as Oily Cart or through the OpenRep partnership.

Governors are supportive though there is no specific arts' governor.

Curriculum design

The extent of timetabled arts provision is difficult to quantify as it varies depending on type of need with, for example, PMLD children

following a very different curriculum. For others, music and art are taught discretely and dance is taught within PE. Most get a session of non-verbal drama a week. Furthermore, arts are integrated into a range of teaching across the school. The arts are also a key focus of half-termly days off timetable.

Staff made numerous references to enrichment projects and activities. Sixth form productions and the Christmas concert are clear annual highlights. The music department log of events listed a range of extra-curricular opportunities, such as annual participation in 'Young Voices' at the NEC and regular attendance of concerts at CBSO, for example. Other staff described theatre trips. However, increasingly companies are invited in to perform at the school. Transport and access arrangements can be barriers and in addition 'theatres don't have enough wheelchair spaces'.

Pupils also have the option of learning music/musical instruments delivered by peripatetic teachers which is heavily subsidised by the school.

The school has an extensive range of partnerships and networks to support all the provision referenced.

Pupil engagement

Staff gave various examples of pupil engagement. Describing the sixth form production, one teacher explained that: 'students just love doing it and feel really proud of themselves,' while another described how 'children embrace the Christmas concert. It has a really special kind of atmosphere – it's the must-see event of the year'.

Chatting with the reception children it was clear that they derived great pleasure from arts activities. One of the children's eyes lit up every time she talked about arts activities. They described loving singing and drama. Sixth formers described how arts activities made them feel 'happy'.