

# Crafting conversations



Key stages

2–3

Creative thinking habit – **Disciplined**

Developing techniques, reflecting critically, deliberate practice, crafting and improving in relation to communication.

Discipline prompts, questions and class discussion marked in orange.



**reset**

**Teaching for creativity**

Supporting teachers to develop young people's creativity through a broad and diverse curriculum

**A NEW  
DIRECTION**

We create **opportunity**

## Introduction

A New Direction is a London-based not-for-profit organisation that generates opportunities for children and young people to develop their creativity.

Of equal priority for us is helping to broaden and diversify the curriculum in response to the combined crises facing young people, including the climate crisis, the call for a more equitable society, prompted most recently by the Black Lives Matter movement, and the COVID-19 pandemic and its associated impact on the economy and wellbeing.

This pack draws on the expertise of London's cultural sector to provide rich learning materials that help develop young people's creativity and their ability to navigate these times. For those schools wishing to provide a broad and balanced curriculum, these thoughtful and engaging learning sequences explore some of the lives of individuals who are new to or under-represented in the curriculum, a focus on Black History in London, lessons that support the new Relationships and Sex Education programme of study, nature-inspired design activities for exploration within KS2 – 3 Design Technology, and pupil investigation in Geography exploring the climate crisis.

The resources employ a variety of strategies which place an emphasis on effective education being an active process that is participative in nature and which develops children's ongoing capacity for learning. As such, they can be used by teachers across the curriculum.

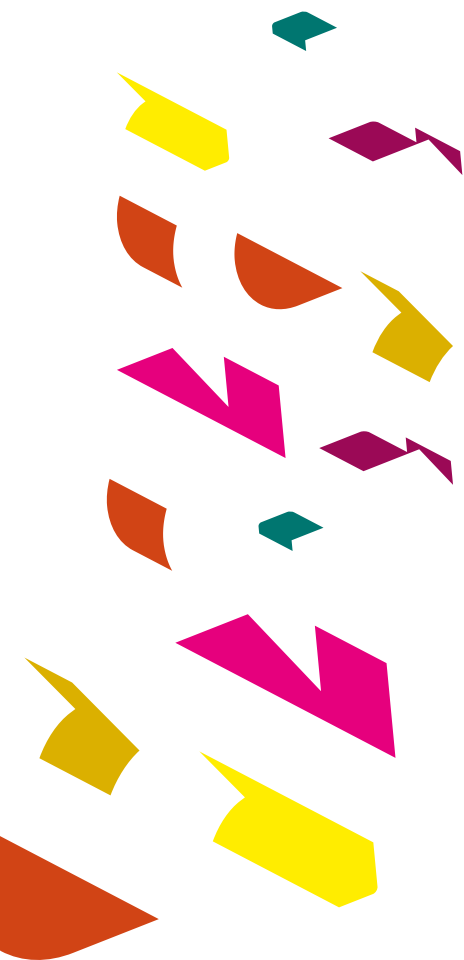
We believe in the possibility of a better world and want to support teachers and educators in doing what you do best. We have consulted with teachers throughout the development of these resources, which are part of a longer-term commitment to generating relevant and accessible learning materials that help us to have braver conversations in the classroom and to articulate the power of creativity.

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A special thank you to the teachers who took the time to read through drafts of this resource and provide feedback during such a busy time.



# The five-dimensional model of creative thinking

For creativity to flourish, it needs nurturing and young people need access to excellent resources.

**‘Creativity in the classroom does not happen by accident – we need to be deliberate and proactive in developing our pupils’ creative skills and habits. Now more than ever, creative thinking is the key to their future. These resources breathe life into new areas of the curriculum and make explicit the vital and life-giving creative habits which will enable students to thrive in complex times.’**

– Bill Lucas

These learning sequences focus on curriculum-linked topics for exploration with creative learning at its heart.

They are underpinned by the Creative Habits of Mind drawn from the five-dimensional creative thinking model and decades of research from Professor Bill Lucas, Professor Guy Claxton and Dr Ellen Spencer.

Creativity is a multi-dimensional idea and education researchers are showing just how valuable Creative Thinking is in helping our pupils learn in an increasingly complex world. The model has been widely adopted into learning policies across the globe, based on years of field trials through the Centre for Real-World Learning at the University of Winchester that included schools participating in Creative Partnerships, the UK government’s flagship creative learning programme (2002 – 2011).

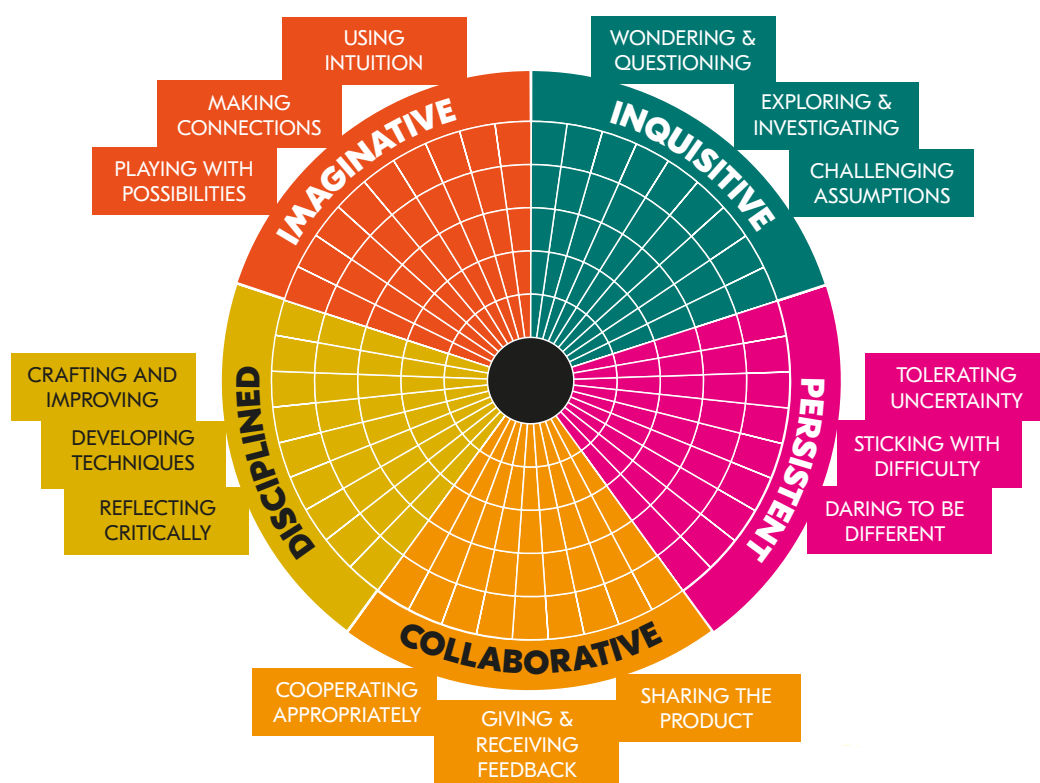
The Centre for Real-World Learning’s model below features five Creative Habits of Mind and offers a means of tracking the development of creativity in pupils.

A New Direction, like many others, believes creativity can be taught and learned, and we want to support schools and teachers to feel equipped to do just this. The five Creative Habits of Mind are drawn out in the resources, each resource making explicit one particular habit with learning strategies and class discussion for pupils to understand the definitions for their own learning and articulate their own skills development.

## Professor Bill Lucas

Director of the Centre for Real-World Learning, University of Winchester. Co-chair of the PISA 2021/2022 Test of Creative Thinking. Academic advisor on creativity to Arts Council England. Co-author of more than forty books including the internationally acclaimed, *Teaching Creative Thinking: Developing learners who generate ideas and can think critically*. Curator of Creativity Exchange platform: <https://www.creativityexchange.org.uk/>

Lucas, Bill and Spencer, Ellen (2017) *Teaching Creative Thinking: Developing learners who generate ideas and can think critically*, Carmarthen: Crown House Publishing Ltd



## Foreword

I warmly recommend this resource to you. Creativity in education is needed now more than ever.

We need teachers and leaders working within their communities who are focused on 'finding a way through' for all learners. As a headteacher, my own school was fortunate to receive funding as a School of Creativity, this was an initiative building on Creative Partnerships inspired by the work of the late great Sir Ken Robinson. We were able to share so many aspects of an alternative improvement agenda that was built on inclusion, trust and agency with high standards as a by-product replacing a deficit reinforcement of stereotype leading to failure.

Building on decades of rigorous research, the OECD ranks creativity and critical thinking amongst the top skills that our young people need. Teachers and leaders with creative approaches are able to use these skills to constantly navigate the challenges of the education system to positive effect. Having the humility and openness to work alongside artists as part of this leadership opens up new spaces in our collective thinking.

Leading the Chartered College of Teaching, I am committed to building a profession that is confident about being open to new ideas, restless, inventive, persistent about what matters, generous and empathic. All of these dispositions offer states of mind that build capacity for learning amongst our children and young people. I encourage you to absorb these resources in pursuit of this goal.

### **Professor Dame Alison Peacock**

Chief Executive  
Chartered College of Teaching

## How to use this resource

These resources are designed to put the learner in the driving seat, with open-ended engaging activities, learning strategies and questions to prompt dialogue and debate, critical thinking, and creative response.

They take a **'split-screen' approach** covering both a curriculum area and a creative habit in a single set of activities.

There are three or four lessons in each topic that can be used as standalone activities with the noted minimal duration time or as fuller learning sequences to expand as you see best for your pupils.

To support each resource, you'll find downloadable and printable Appendix material, including differentiation tips for students with SEND and extension activities, hosted on

[www.anewdirection.org.uk](http://www.anewdirection.org.uk)

You are the experts, and these sequences just build on what you already do – pick from some or all to suit your needs. We would love to hear from you about how you get on, any questions you have, and what you'd like to see more of!

[#letsresettogether](https://twitter.com/letsresettogether)

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### Artsmark

If using these resources helps you to develop your curriculum, build skills and knowledge across a range of art forms, and support student voice and wellbeing, you could gain recognition and accreditation with an [Arts Council England Artsmark Award](#). The Artsmark Award is accredited by Arts Council England and presented to schools where arts and culture provision fulfils eight criteria and seven quality principles. It complements your school improvement plan and recognises commitment to a broad and balanced curriculum. Completing the activities in this resource can contribute to your Artsmark journey and provide evidence of impact in a number of areas. Links to each Artsmark criteria are highlighted in an [Appendix](#).

The Artsmark self-assessment framework and a suite of supporting documents are available and free to download on [A New Direction's website](#). Artsmark is a supported journey that connects you to a network of like-minded settings. Talk to the team at A New Direction if you want to find out more.

[#artsmark](https://twitter.com/artsmark)

[artsmark@anewdirection.org.uk](mailto:artsmark@anewdirection.org.uk)



**Writer** Abigail Hunt – Visual Artist and Creative Practitioner

**Duration** 3 x 1-hour lessons (or short activities to split across a longer period)

Extension activities offered in the [Appendix](#)

**Curriculum links:**

**KS2**

Caring Friendships – exploring characteristics; developing and improving conversation techniques.

Respectful Relationships – exploring the need for respect, listening, and communication.

Wellbeing – recognising the wide scale of emotions and their value.

**Objectives and outcomes**

- I can recognise that people respond differently to different situations and events.
- I can recognise the value of difference in skills sets and emotions.
- I have shown discipline in crafting and improving my conversation techniques.
- I have reflected critically on what communication skills I have developed.

**How can we support our pupils to celebrate and respect difference, recognising themselves and their own character, with self-respect within a wider world context?**

**In these three learning sequences, pupils explore their own emotions and expand their vocabulary around discussing their and other people's feelings. Drawing and sculptural exercises encourage conversations and opportunities to talk about real experiences and these activities provide a helpful way to tackle subjects which are often difficult to talk about.**

**Creative tasks help take the emphasis away from an embarrassing or delicate subject area, allowing space for pupils to feel safe and supported in exploring personal issues and enabling them to challenge and explore their feelings and the feelings of others. Whilst hands are busy, a mental space is created for reflections to be made without participants feeling under pressure.**

## **Being disciplined as a creative habit**

Pupil confidence can be built through creative activities that explore the uncertain or the unexpected. These sequences focus on the skill of being **disciplined**, with reflective elements to unpick how they felt about this creative habit. They start to use deliberate practice to target the hard parts of conversation skills and learn to articulate what it means to craft and improve, reflect critically and self-assess their own development.

## LESSON 1

# Improving my conversation skills

### Duration

1 hour or broken up into shorter sequences

### Resources

- Paper/card cut into roughly A6 size
- Pencils/pens
- Sticky tack
- A variety of building and sculpting materials e.g. small matchboxes, lolly sticks, blank postcards, cotton buds, lengths of wire, paper straws etc.
- Masking tape or string
- Scissors
- Paper or carrier bags / box lids to hide the sculptures

**Pupils will develop techniques that craft and refine their usable conversation skills, using topics of their own interest. In contrast, they will explore how it feels to try and be understood when trying to communicate something quite difficult and how it feels when someone else understands or misunderstands you.**

### Warm up and introduction: Rules of the room (15 minutes)

This quick classroom activity helps you create a collective understanding and written agreement of pupil expectations that can be referred back to. Pupils will feel more comfortable and future activities will be more successful in exploring personal issues more openly.

On individual cards, pupils write five things that they think are important to consider in a session that will be exploring personal issues, emotions and potentially sensitive topics e.g. respecting privacy, safe space, listening, non-judgemental.

Put the class into groups of four, mix up all the cards and share them between the groups to explore and discuss them. They try to order them in terms of importance, tacking them up to a wall so they can be easily seen, but also moved about. Pupils may not fully agree on the order, but this will generate interesting discussion.

Each group then feeds back to the class and collectively the 'rules of the room' are decided upon. It is essential to ensure that everyone understands the meaning of each card, so take care to unpick anything which may be unclear or confusing.

Print or write up the rules as a poster that can be displayed in full view and referred back to in each future lesson.

- *Why is it important to make rules together in our classroom for lessons like these?*
- *How do you think it might change what happens?*
- *How do you think it might help you talk more openly about things you feel?*

### Activity 1: Conversation skills (15 minutes)

*You're going to work in pairs to interview each other about something that interests you.*

*Take turns to ask a question, listen to the answer and respond carefully with a different question on the subject that reflects what you have heard.*

*As the interviewer, be careful not to change the subject but to use your questions to encourage the interviewee to continue talking about the subject.*

*Then swap over and see how it feels being in the other role.*

*Now with your partner, you're going to have another conversation and see if you can draw a diagram while you talk that represents your conversation.*

- *What should it include and how should it progress?*

- *How can your drawing represent pauses, listening, repeating, questions and changing the subject?*

*Be ready to share your finished drawings with the group so we can see how they compare to others.*

Lead a shared conversation with the class:

- *How difficult was it to represent a conversation as a drawing?*
- *Can conversations have shapes?*
- *What shapes represent different moments in a conversation?*

### **Activity 2: Follow me... (25 minutes)**

Each pupil selects four different types of building materials to work with. They work individually to create a small abstract sculpture. Screen the finished sculptures from view, for example, with a paper bag or box lid so only the original makers can see them.

Mix the group so they are working in pairs with someone new who hasn't had any chance to see what they have been making. Ask each pupil to gather exactly the same small selection of materials that they used to make their sculpture.

Taking it in turns within their pair, they describe the process of making their sculpture as exactly as they can to the other. They can look back at their hidden sculpture as much as they need to but should try to keep it hidden from their partner.

Without physical help, and only from listening to the instructions, each should try and recreate the sculpture as exactly as they can.

They should then swap the describing and making roles and, once they have both finished the sculptures, the originals can be retrieved and compared.

- *How did making the two sculptures feel different?*
- *What difficulties did you find in listening to instructions and trying to make something you couldn't see?*
- *Which role did you find easier, listener or describer?*
- *How could you improve and refine your skills in each of those roles next time?*

You could find time within a subsequent lesson to repeat the activity for pupils to practise further and see their improvement in action.

### **Plenary and self-reflection (5 minutes)**

- *Why is listening important?*
- *How do you feel when you are being listened to?*
- *What about when you feel like you're not being listened to?*
- *What questions do you have about communicating with others?*
- *How can we develop and practise our conversation skills?*





## LESSON 2

# This is me

### Duration

1 hour or broken up into shorter sequences

### Resources

- Flexible materials, e.g. a length of wool, a pipe cleaner, a rubber band, a paper clip, a piece of wire
- Images of everyday objects or real objects from your classroom that could take on human-like features
- Paper
- Pencils
- Air-drying or modelling clay
- Cameras

**Pupils use a creative process to explore the scale of emotions and recognise the importance of giving themselves permission to feel particular emotions. Developing making techniques, they will explore and celebrate similarities and differences within positive relationships.**

### Warm up and introduction: Flexibility (5 minutes)

Give each pupil a flexible object that suggests a line. Use these props to discuss together the idea of flexibility using their physical properties. Link to how each of us has the capacity to be flexible and to adapt to different situations, but the way we adapt will vary.

For example, the wool is entirely flexible and can take unlimited shapes and lines – stretched out tight or rolled into a ball. The paper clip is different – much more fixed, but it can still move and adapt if it needs to.

*Today we're going to think a lot about ourselves. We'll be exploring how people respond differently to different situations and people.*

- *Why do you think that, as individuals, we need to be able to adapt and change?*
- *How fixed are we, and how are we movable?*
- *How is it useful and helpful – sometimes essential – for us to be able to behave differently in different situations?*
- *Can we think of examples where we would need to show this?*
- *Is flexibility and adaptability a useful skill?*
- *How might we improve and build on this skill? Could we practise it?*

### Activity 1: Everyday objects with personalities (10 minutes)

Use images or everyday objects from around the classroom that could appear to have human-like characteristics.

Either print out some of these images or put them up on the board in your classroom to discuss collectively what pupils think these characters might be like. Build stories around them and how they might interact with each other.

- *Why do we think this character is male/female/grumpy/hungry/cool etc?*
- *What about them means we think they are angry/sad/kind?*
- *How does what we see inform how we think?*

*That's interesting isn't it? What does it make you think about how you are seen or how you see others?*

### Activity 2: Impression of me (35 minutes)

In this sculpture activity, pupils will now go on to explore how we respond to each other and think about the ever-changing and adapting nature of healthy friendships.

Give each pupil a lump of clay that they will knead until it becomes soft and flexible.

Ask them to make a form or shape that they feel could represent them – they shouldn't try to make something that looks like anything real. It might



be shaping the clay as they grip it in their fist, something that shows their fingerprints in the clay or a more angular form, or curved shape – abstract is good!

Bring together the clay shapes and forms that everyone has created and look together at the varied collection of shapes – one for each person in the class.

Now, working in groups of three or four, and with a smaller collection of the shapes, each group should photograph or draw the shapes set up in as many different arrangements as they can.

Can they be balanced on top of each other? Leaned against each other? Grouped tightly together or spaced out?

Pupils should think carefully about the relationships between the objects and try out as many different combinations as possible.

Prompt each group to think about these questions together:

- *How do all the parts make a whole?*
- *What are the relationships between the objects?*
- *Where are the similarities and the differences?*
- *How would you choose to sculpt yourself or another person, or the whole group, differently?*

### **Plenary and self-reflection (10 minutes)**

- *What do you think this collection of sculptures represents?*
- *Can you make a link between relationships and the activity, and how they often change?*
- *You worked hard to practise your conversation skills last lesson. How might these conversation skills help in your friendships and other relationships?*
- *What are the hard bits in a conversation with your friends?*
- *Is this something that can be practised, do you think? We could call this deliberate practice.*

*You are practising hard already with your conversation skills. You are crafting and improving them and you are thinking. All this takes discipline – it's a great creative habit to have. We'll continue to practise in the next lesson.*



### LESSON 3

## Are you listening to me?

**Creative drawing in this lesson helps pupils to experience responsiveness – both their own and in others.**

**They will be able to recognise and value the skills of different individuals and build on this to collectively practise and problem solve.**

#### Duration

1 hour or broken up into shorter sequences

#### Resources

- Drawing paper
- A4 paper
- Pencils
- Pens
- Scissors
- Tape
- Staples
- Paper fasteners

#### Warm up and introduction: Drawn conversations (15 minutes)

Many surrealist artists used a drawing technique called Entopic Graphomania, where points of imperfection on a piece of paper were used as the starting point for an automatic drawing. This activity illustrates communication techniques to explore and build on.

Working with a partner, they are given a piece of drawing paper between them – they look closely to identify tiny flaws, marking each one with a dot – it might be a small crease or a point where a paper fibre is a slightly different colour.

Encourage them to look very closely as they can be hard to find! They need to find and mark at least eight tiny imperfections in their paper.

*In your pairs, and without speaking, you're going to take turns to link up these points that you've marked – decide each time if you're going to use curved, straight or a different kind of line, e.g. heavy, faint, a crease you make instead of a drawn line.*

*You can link your point multiple times to other points but it's important that each of you responds in turn, one line at a time, to what your partner has just done. Think about how you feel when you are doing this together. What is it making you think about?*

*Yes, it's like a conversation on paper! Keep on working without speaking and let your pencils do the talking.*

In a longer activity, these collaborative drawings could continue – adding colour into the spaces created on the page, or even collage, but still continuing the same, 'draw, observe, respond' process of a drawn conversation.

When they have finished, the class looks together at their drawings as you lead the following questions:

- *How did this process make you feel?*
- *What do you think your partner was thinking about?*
- *How many different ways do we communicate in our lives?*
- *When you don't use words, how does this change your actions?*

#### Activity: Paper stretch (30 minutes)

This activity focuses on teamwork and sharing ideas as well as helping pupils to think about improving their skills and valuing the input of others. They will explore flexible possibilities and work together in creative and practical ways.

In pairs, they each discuss and write down at least three skills, qualities and strengths they each feel their partner is good at.

E.g. funny, clever, kind, hard-working, generous, careful, thoughtful, good at maths, great at sport, excellent at music.

*Now each of you is going to look carefully at the list that your partner has written about you. Wow, how does that feel when you read those qualities and skills? Your partner must think you are pretty special.*

*No need to share, you can keep this to yourself, but have a think about whether you would have been able to list these same qualities and strengths about yourself. You might agree with your partner, or you might not have thought of these things at all.*

*Keeping these strengths and qualities in mind, you're going to work together on a shared challenge.*

*Begin the challenge with only paper.*

- *Using A4 paper – see what interesting things you can do with only paper (forget paper planes!)*
- *What can you make it do?*
- *What about other materials?*
- *How far can you stretch it? How long could it get?*
- *What can you build with it? How tall can it become?*
- *Can it stand up on its own?*
- *How can you link it to something else?*
- *How can you refine and improve it, so it gets better in its performance?*
- *Can you go back to a tricky bit and get it to work?*

Show together and discuss the results, allowing each pair to talk about what their ideas were and how they changed, how they improved, how they went back to the hard bits to make them work better.

- *How did individual skills influence the activity, your dynamic, and how you worked together?*
- *How good were you both at listening?*
- *What parts were challenging and why? Did you go back to improve and strengthen them?*
- *How easy was it to combine ideas?*

### **Plenary and self-reflection (15 minutes)**

*You have worked so well together – I have seen so many improvements in your techniques; but what about you?*

- *How do you think you have improved?*  
*(listening, questioning, taking time, understanding difference, thinking about people's qualities and strengths)*

With this being the last in the sequence, pupils revisit the learning objectives and compare their outcomes:

- I can recognise that people respond differently to different situations and events
- I can recognise the value of difference in skills sets and emotions
- I have shown discipline in crafting and improving my conversation techniques
- I have reflected critically on what communication skills I have developed



**Abigail Hunt** is a visual artist whose practice includes sculpture, collage and installation. She has shown at Whitechapel Art Gallery, Camden Arts Centre, Platform for Art, London Underground, EAST International, 5 Years, and Sid Motion Gallery. She has created a wide range of limited-edition artworks, publications and resources for schools and families exploring interpretations of contemporary art and has written for A New Direction, Tate, Whitechapel, UP Projects and The Science Gallery. In addition, her separate collaborative practice with artist Kieren Reed explores socially engaged practice and involves a direct interaction with audiences within built environments, events and situations. Together they have worked on commissions for Tate Britain, IKON Gallery, the Herbert Read Gallery, The New Art Gallery Walsall and the Folkestone Triennial.

This resource is delivered as part of Reset – our programme of support in response to the pandemic.

Though COVID-19 has caused huge disruption to our lives, our professions, and our learning, it is important to remember that we are resilient, strong and good at what we do.

We know that we can adapt and work differently, move quickly and innovate. Let's take this chance to reset and move forward with what we know works, leave behind what doesn't, and introduce new ways of working, together.

To find out more, go to:

**[www.anewdirection.org.uk/reset](http://www.anewdirection.org.uk/reset)**

## LookUp

Our online LookUp platform allows you to quickly and easily browse schools programmes, events, resources and opportunities from London's arts & cultural sector, and refine results based on Key Stage, artform and more: **[lookup.anewdirection.org.uk](http://lookup.anewdirection.org.uk)**

## Subscribe to our e-newsletter

Each term we send out relevant information about A New Direction's programmes and content, ranging from the latest blogs, events, and opportunities to engage with our work. If you're interested in hearing from us, sign up online: **[anewdirection.org.uk/schools-eneews](http://anewdirection.org.uk/schools-eneews)**

## Join our Creative Teaching Community

Our Creative Teaching Community provides a relaxed and friendly online space to chat, share resources, get advice, and connect with like-minded colleagues over a shared love of arts, culture and creativity: **[anewdirection.org.uk/ctc](http://anewdirection.org.uk/ctc)**

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