

In our 2015 AND Schools Conference session, 'Whole School Improvement through the Arts', we brainstormed how Art, Dance, Drama, Heritage/Museums, Music, and Other art forms could be used to support key learning challenges faced by schools. Here is a selection of what was offered, with some responses combined for brevity's sake.

Art

- Creating anti-bullying posters and ad campaigns as a 'way in' to discussing the subject
- Use classic paintings as a stimulus for project or theme work in a variety of subjects
- Create self-portraits combined with poems on the subject, 'I am', to support PSHCE
- Using art, both popular and classical, from other cultures as a tool to explore those cultures, which supports PSHCE, History and Geography
- Using the 'language' of art to explore language and communication, i.e., seeing art as a form of communication: supports Literacy, History, multiple skill development
- Creating and displaying a timeline of history, as a combined Art and History project
- Using famous works of art as a stimulus for drama, story writing or a musical composition
- Using art works in Literacy to explore emotional language, e.g., what words describe this setting, or this character? What do they mean?
- Children designing a logo or emblem for their class that reflects their collective values and 'culture', supporting PSHCE
- Working with professional artists or an artist in residence to design and make, with children, interactive playground sculptures
- Make a model of a newly-discovered creature for non-chronological report writing
- Explore local history through local artists
- Use symmetry as a principle to design artwork linking to Maths
- Link Art, DT and Maths by designing and perhaps building windmills

Dance/Movement

- Movement activities as part of sensory/relaxation sessions, e.g., using scarves, parachutes
- Listen to music and interpret what's heard through movement
- Using ideas about balance and space to demonstrate principles in science
- Teaching Brownian motion via dance and movement, i.e., what happens to bodies moving randomly in a space
- Showing weather patterns via dance and movement (science)
- Creating a group choreography to build cohesion, identity
- Teaching the motions and interactions of solids, liquids and gases via dance; dancing together to express chemical bonds

Drama

- Using mantle of the expert to teach various subjects
- Perform a recipe as if you were a chef on TV...could be the recipe for a chemical compound, or could be an equation
- Act out scenarios in PSHE to explore ideas, themes
- Reader's Theatre of a myth or legend
- Creating mini-plays out of Literacy texts to embed ideas, skills
- Using Simon Says to act out verbs, adverbs, adjectives
- Create an Oscar-style awards ceremony to celebrate achievement in any subject or skill area
- Using role-play and tableaux to explore empathy, i.e., seeing through the eyes of others, supporting PSHE
- History, Art combination via costume design
- Developing leadership through any number of theatrical production roles, e.g., stage manager, lighting director, etc.
- Re-enactment of key historical moments

- Role play of news readers, reporters, to embed current events or even historical events, e.g., Horrible Histories news
- School Character Days: teachers to hot seat historical or literary characters
- History + Maths + Drama = create mini play of the life of famous or important maths people

Heritage/Museums

- Getting loans of handling collections to explore History; also good for Literacy, to describe objects
- Displaying or even creating at school replicas of objects/artefacts seen in museums
- Write a guidebook for a museum
- Mask work at Horniman Museum
- Investigating local history through art and architecture
- Seeing Magna Carta exhibition and creating art and writing based on it
- Creating a video of a gallery visit

Music

- Nature/Science + Musical Composition = Weather
- Literacy via exploring song meanings and messages
- Creating stories and/or poetry and setting to music
- Cognition and science, exploring cause and effect via musical instruments (e.g., pluck a string, get a vibration, what causes that?)
- History by 'arranging' different eras as musical movements
- Creating or finding topic-related songs
- Teaching times table via songs
- Using music to teach skills of practice, crafting/refining, research and collaboration

- Art and Music to explore painters who worked with sound, base a project on Kandinsky
- Spelling rhymes/songs
- Exploring global culture via traditional music, what are the messages, themes, ideas?
- Teaching the science of sound through music, including ideas about frequency, pitch, percussion, waveforms
- Teaching logic via the structure of musical composition
- Day-of-the-week songs
- Use music to explore emotions, useful for literacy as well
- Teaching business, numeracy via looking at the music business; or form a music production company for a term, also teaches collaboration, creativity, self-discipline

Other

- Exploring the physics of light through photography
- Exploring business, collaboration, design, performance and culture by staging a fashion show
- Using iPads to make a movie trailer for Norse mythology
- Sewing, quilting and knitting to develop fine motor skills
- Literacy via blogging about home life, school trips, school activities
- Literacy via creating a school podcast
- Invite architects to speak about art, design, history, maths skills that combine in that profession
- Web design as a way to improve collaboration, cohesion