



## Creativity at Stoke Newington School and Sixth Form

### HISTORY

Stoke Newington School and Sixth Form is a mixed community comprehensive that has a long tradition of the arts and creative projects that is valued by parents, staff and students. Our media arts specialism and creative partnerships projects led to some ground-breaking work that continues to influence us even though we are now in a rather different climate. SNS was originally designated Media Arts College in 2001 (later followed by Science and Inclusion)

Giving us

- Money
- High profile specialist subjects of Music, Media and Art
- Time
- Equipment
- Staff
- The chance to share and develop expertise
- Partnerships
- Cross curricular projects between specialist and non-specialist
- A timeline of success and a high profile here and abroad

Artsmark Gold was first awarded in 2003

Our CP projects included the boiler-house chimney lights produced in partnership with SODA, our Rights2Rights website in partnership with Somethin' Else, the eight metre high Cube in partnership with our architects and CP consultants. This model of using new media, linking the arts with non-arts departments and engaging with professionals forms the basis for much of our current offer within and outside the curriculum.

Testament to their popularity, we have very large expressive arts departments; nine teachers in art and photography, four in drama, four in music, four in media all of whom contribute greatly to extra-curricular and cross-curricular projects, as well as producing outstanding results at GCSE and A level year-on-year. Last year they added on average half a grade to students' target grades.

Creativity and the arts are central to the strategy for the next three years. Our School Improvement Plan states:

“Creative **vision**: We ensure excellent achievement for every child in all our expressive arts subjects. Creative approaches permeate our work in all areas of the school. All of us are involved in the range of creative events across each year.”

# NOW

## KS3 CREATIVE DAYS

At the heart of our creative days is the desire to do all of the above and more. For creativity to flourish, schools have to feel free to innovate without fear of being penalised for not keeping with the set programme of study. At Stoke Newington we have days when students are all off timetable. There are three a year. They encourage experimentation and cross curricular projects and combine subjects in unusual ways. Students have an extended period of time to produce something from conception to realisation. The strict deadline of five hours encourages work to get done and provides the opportunity for real celebration at the end.

When students evaluate these events they say they love the collaboration, being part of something bigger and the fact that they learn without realising and without having a level set by the teacher.

These days have been some of the most memorable experiences for staff and students. We have produced plays, exhibited giant banners, made films, poetry, machines, mathematical structures and gone on a march to celebrate diversity.

In October 2015 we have the overarching theme of equality and these three events:

- Black History Month led by Music/Humanities
- Women and Sport led by PE/Technology/ICT
- Animal Farm led by English/Art

In the past we have also

- French play in a day (Candide)
- LGBT
- STEM
- Civil Rights
- Spy Day
- Islamic Tiles



Creative days lead to exciting cross curricular themes and break down barriers between subjects.

Students work in teams, to a strict deadline. Teachers and students work outside their comfort zone. They learn soft skills and British values of equality, diversity. Cultural capital is for everyone. The point of the creative day is to:

TAKE PART IN SOMETHING MUCH BIGGER  
SET A BRIEF AND MEET A CHALLENGING DEADLINE  
LEARN ABOUT OUR SHARED CULTURAL VALUES AND EMPATHISE WITH OTHERS  
BE OUTWARD FACING  
LEARN FROM CREATIVE PRACTITIONERS  
LINK TO LOCAL, NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL EVENTS  
CREATE SOMETHING OF WHICH STUDENTS ARE PROUD AND WHICH CAN BE CELEBRATED

It is great for relationships:

Teacher/Teacher  
Teacher/Student  
Student/Student

This also has a knock on effect:

Whole school study days at GCSE  
Cross curricular themes and creativity embedded in the curriculum  
Extended themes with higher level and work related learning

## **CREATIVITY ACROSS THE CURRICULUM**

We consult the students through student voice on a regular basis. As a result, we came up with the following principles for a

### **CREATIVE MANIFESTO**

In everyday lessons we will endeavour to:

**BE OPEN TO EXPLORE NEW WAYS OF DOING THINGS**  
**BE WILLING TO MAKE MISTAKES AND READY TO LEARN FROM THEM**  
**ENCOURAGE STUDENTS AND STAFF TO WORK COLLABORATIVELY AND LEARN FROM EACH OTHER**  
**EXPERIMENT THROUGH DOING, BUILDING AND CREATING**  
**LEARN OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM**

And to sum up the creative process could be defined as

**Research, explore, experiment, review, refine, perfect.**

Principles of creative teaching are central to planning they are embedded in our schemes of work there will be training this year and teachers given the opportunity to experience exemplar lessons. Our teaching and learning booklet reiterates these principles and they are rolled out to all new staff.

Enrichment co-ordinators in Technology, Science, Maths and Music help deliver enrichment opportunities in their subject area and help identify and monitor engaging and creative lessons.

Quotes from teachers and students provide a case for creative teaching,

Students: "I'm more engaged when I'm having fun" "It's a great way of interacting with the teacher"

Teacher: "Students become self-managers and reflective learners and they start questioning"

## CREATIVE SHOWCASES

We have a range of high quality showcases throughout the year and endeavour to work within the community where possible

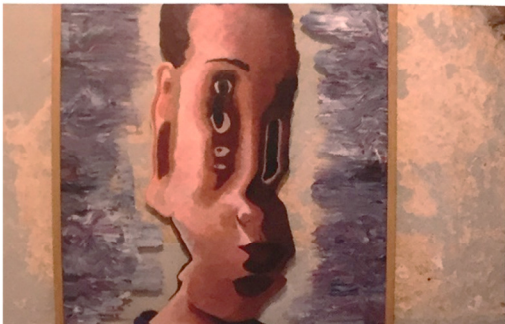
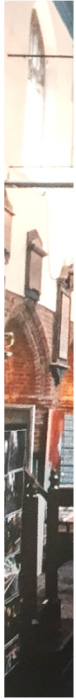
Hackney Empire each year hosts our school production. Last summer it was Hairspray

*Hairspray* at the Hackney Empire



We work closely with St Mary's old Church which is now used as an arts venue to put on exhibitions.





We exhibit every single art form in the Annual Summer Showcase.

There is a strong partnership with The Barbican and we will be looking to strengthen this further. We are in our fourth year of the Barbican Photobook and hope to extend our partnerships through Sean Gregory director of the creative learning team.

Recently we have also been involved in

BFI workshops

BBC e.g. ten easy pieces

Globe Shakespeare workshop in school

## **OUR COMMUNITY**

We work with local primaries, lead on arts events across the borough and invite further education providers to work with our students.

Our community continues to value the arts and we attract students, staff and parents who want to join in.

Sixth form destinations show that students go on to arts degrees we can only suppose that those that don't do the arts have the soft skills and cultural capital to last them a lifetime.