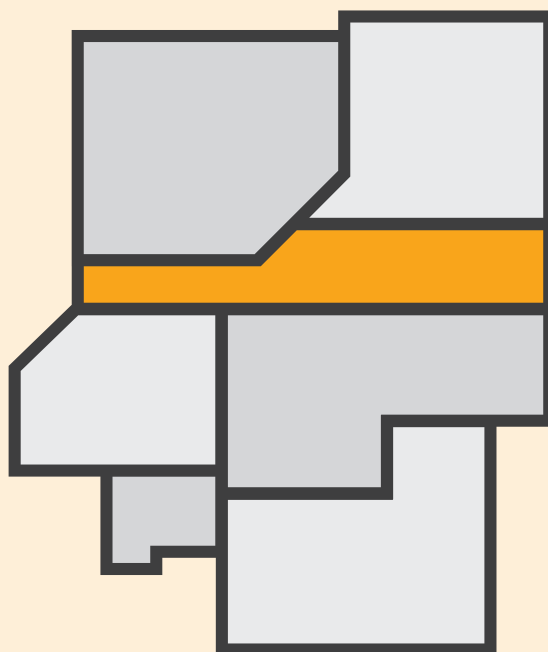


# TEACHERS' TOOLKIT

## Section 3



### Self-Assessment and Quality

This toolkit has been created by A New Direction to help you and your school more effectively use and promote the arts and cultural education as a critical component of a balanced, exciting curriculum. The toolkit is comprised of seven sections:

- [Making the Case for the Arts in Your School](#)
- [Leadership and Governance](#)
- [Self-Assessment and Quality](#)
- [Partnerships](#)
- [Continuing Professional Development \(CPD\)](#)
- [Documentation, Evaluation and Assessing Impact](#)
- [Creating an Arts Policy](#)

In each, you'll find basic guidance and definitions of terms, Top Tips for success, exercises and activities, and a list of relevant resources for further research and discussion. Some sections also include Case Studies of schools that have been particularly successful at delivering exciting arts activity.

Each section can be used as a stand-alone guide, or taken as a whole. At the end of each section is a box titled 'Pulling it together', and if you complete this section in all seven toolkit sections you should be ready to take your school's arts programme to the next level.

Most of what's in the toolkit has been inspired directly by best practice in schools, so don't hesitate to tell us how we can make this a better, more effective resource for you.

You can contact us at [schools@anewdirection.org.uk](mailto:schools@anewdirection.org.uk).

# ABOUT A NEW DIRECTION

## **We create opportunity**

**A New Direction is a London-based non-profit generating opportunities for children and young people to unlock their creativity.**

London is one of the greatest creative hubs in the world. Every day, thousands of the children and young people who live here are inspired by the city's culture to unleash their own creative side. They have the chance to develop their skills, talents and passions, becoming people who can thrive in a challenging, changing world and boost our wider society.

But there are also thousands of young people who miss out on London's creative opportunities. Barriers of inequality or simple lack of support stop young people from reaching their creative potential, which has knock-on effects for their chances of personal fulfilment and success in later life.

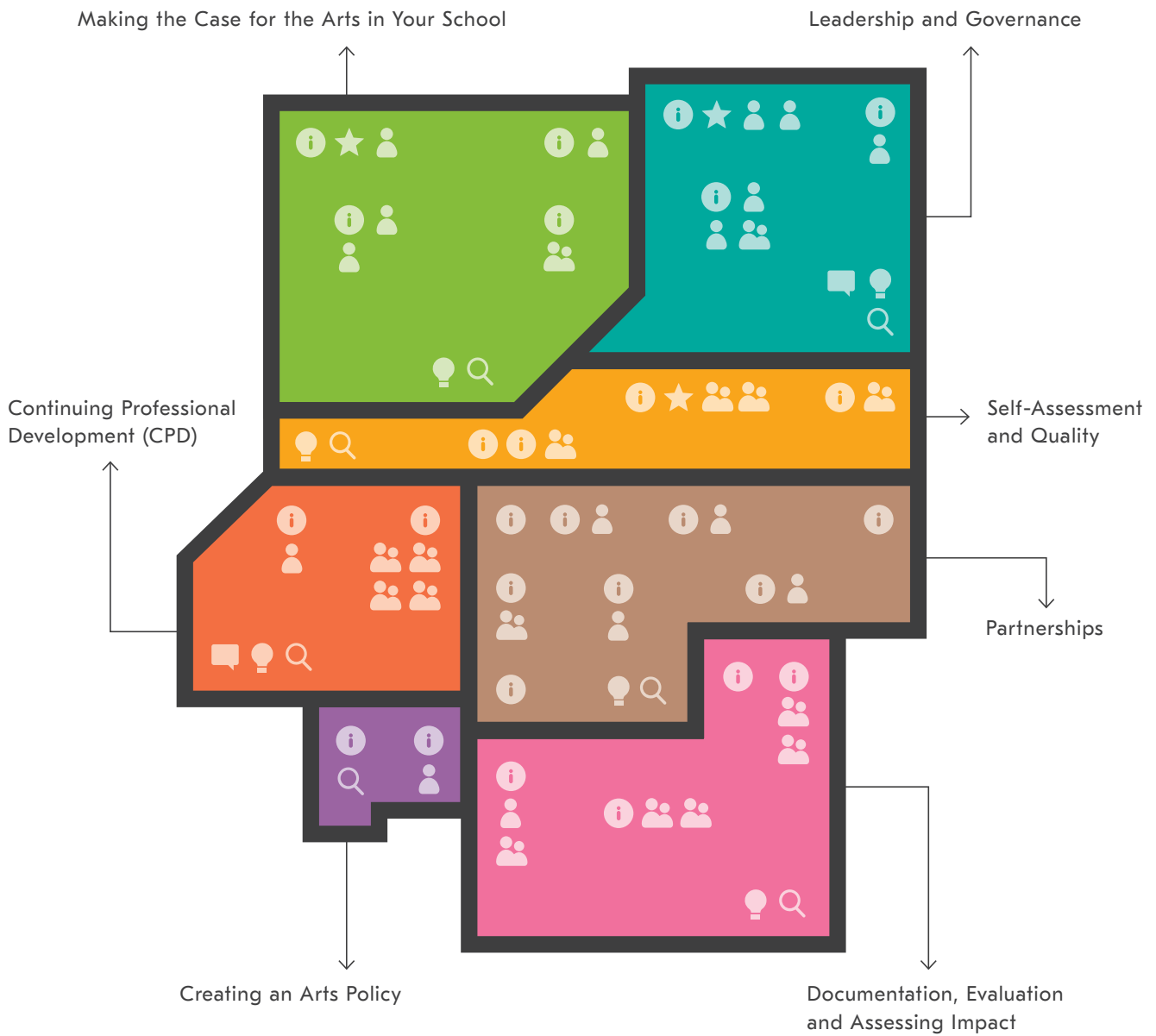
Inequality is not set in stone; we can make London into a city with equal opportunities to engage with culture and be creative for all young people and children. This is our vision.

We are working towards a society where all children and young people can thrive through developing their creativity.

We work directly with the organisations at the front line: schools, cultural venues, local authorities and businesses. We unite those organisations to campaign for better policies that serve children and young people. We organise joint events and projects to reach a broader audience. We connect young people to mentors, work experience and inspiration.

**Find out more at  
[www.anewdirection.org.uk/schools](http://www.anewdirection.org.uk/schools) or  
contact [schools@anewdirection.org.uk](mailto:schools@anewdirection.org.uk)**

# MAP OF THE TOOLKIT



**Key**

- Basic guidance
- Top tips for success
- Exercises
- Group activity
- Case studies
- Pulling it together
- Relevant resources



# Self-Assessment and Quality

In order to plan, improve and further develop the arts in your school, you need to know where you are right now. This means articulating the things you are already doing well and identifying key areas that could be improved.

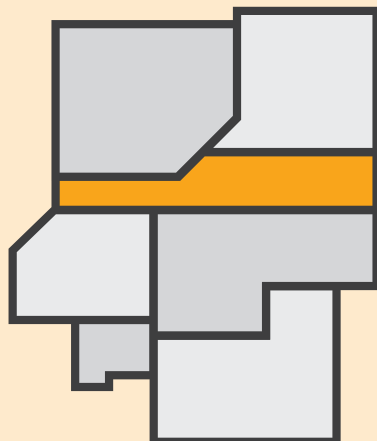
A thorough self-assessment can encourage cross-departmental conversations and promote a more joined-up approach to the consideration and delivery of arts and cultural activity in your school. When schools have invested time in this activity they have often been surprised at how much they

are already doing. This activity can also be very helpful in shaping the vision for the arts in your school.

Here are some suggestions:

- Begin your Self-Assessment
- Assessing Quality
- Student Consultation

It is important to engage as many staff members in the process as possible. Some of the group activities below encourage whole school participation.



# 1. Begin Your Self-Assessment



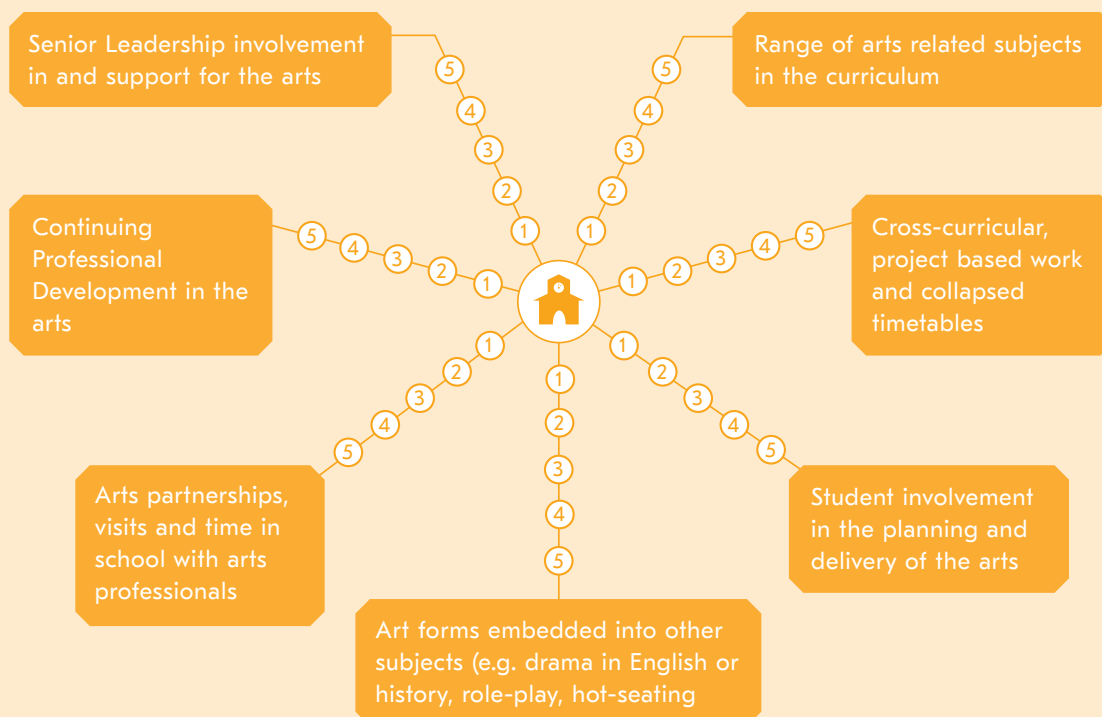
When starting to plan for your self-assessment, consider what areas you would like to assess; the more comprehensive you are at this stage, the more accurate your overview of the arts in your school will be.

Begin your self-assessment with a review of where and when the arts are happening in your school (tip: it happens more than you think!) You might want to consider:

- SLT involvement in and support for the arts
- Your curriculum – delivery of arts subjects and arts across your curriculum
- Staff CPD in the arts
- Student involvement in planning and delivering arts activity
- The range of arts opportunities on offer
- The school's partnerships with arts and cultural organisations, locally or nationally, and with other schools

## MINI EXERCISE

Try this individual self-assessment exercise about where and when the arts happen in school. Rate each of the categories on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 is not at all, and 5 is very much). You can compare your view to your colleagues', using the group activity on page 10.



## Self-Assessment

This is a simple and interactive activity to encourage teachers to reflect on where and when the arts happen in school, both directly with students and beyond. It takes between 20-30 minutes and requires some sticky notes.

### How to use this tool

**Step 1** Ask teachers to get into small groups. Each group must walk through the school and its classrooms and find at least 10 examples of artistic activity that might not be obvious. These might be things teachers can see, or examples they can recall in discussion or by visiting places in the school.

'Not obvious' means examples of artistic activity in non-arts settings, e.g. recalling hot-seating in history or displays of visual art (diagrams, sketchings) in science or maths. In order to avoid repetition, each group can be assigned a specific zone or area, e.g. inside the classroom, science block, etc.

At end of discovery period (10 minutes or so), groups return and give feedback on the things they have discovered. Use a large piece of paper listing what's been found.

**Step 2** Teachers work in small groups to respond to the 'Where and when the arts happen in school' chart (20 min). Each group can complete the entire chart and then compare ratings across the groups, or each group can be allocated one particular area to assess, to make one shared group chart. Allow time for discussion of the rating(s) each group has given. There might be one area that you would like to explore in more depth as a whole

group, such as "Art forms embedded into other subjects (e.g. drama in English or history, role-play, hot-seating)".

**Step 3** The session closes with a review of the information gathered and a reflection on the breadth and range of activities available and any strengths or challenges that have been revealed.

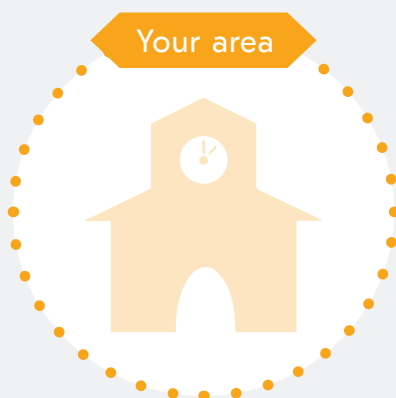
It is also possible to do this activity with students, and it can be focused on specific areas such as the classroom, playground and even the corridors.



## Self-Assessment

Walk through the school and its classrooms (or your allocated area) and find at least 10 examples of artistic activity that might not be obvious. Write down all you can see.

10 examples



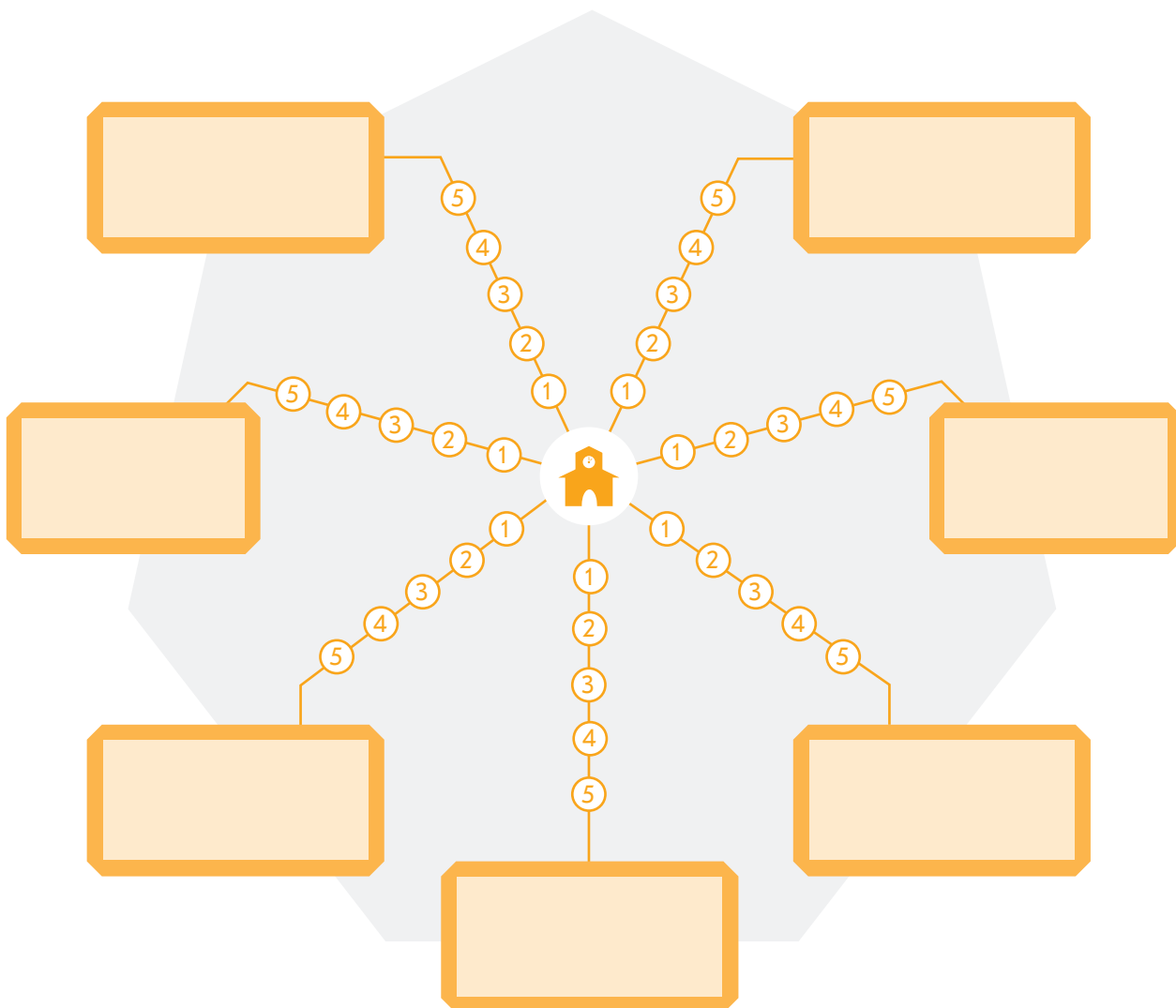
# Self-Assessment

Use the blank template below to complete the activity. You may prefer to identify your own category headings or use the suggested list below.

## Where and when the arts happen in school

### Suggestions

- Senior Leadership involvement in and support for the arts
- Range of arts related subjects in the curriculum
- Continuing Professional Development in the arts
- Cross-curricular, project based work and collapsed timetables
- Arts partnerships, visits and time in school with arts professionals
- Student involvement in the planning and delivery of the arts
- Art forms embedded into other subjects (e.g. drama in English or history, role-play, hot-seating)



## Self-Assessment

End the session by reviewing the information gathered and reflecting on the breadth and range of activities available, as well as any strengths or challenges / areas for improvement that have been revealed.

Summing up



Strengths

Challenges / areas for improvement

## 2. Assessing Quality



Once you have identified where arts and culture are taking place, assessing quality and impact will help you identify areas for improvement, plan more effectively and set further goals.

Creating time to consider how you and your school articulate and identify quality in the arts will also help develop a shared language about arts provision and the impact it has on the school.

### TOP TIP

Arts Council England has outlined seven quality principles relating to the delivery of arts activity with young people:

- 1 Striving for excellence and innovation
- 2 Being authentic
- 3 Being exciting, inspiring and engaging
- 4 Ensuring a positive and inclusive experience
- 5 Actively involving children and young people
- 6 Enabling personal progression
- 7 Developing belonging and ownership

## Articulating and Identifying Quality

This activity is designed to enable you to start to develop an individual quality framework for the arts in your school. Teachers can share their answers with each other about how they recognise each of the Arts Council England's seven quality principles in the school.

### How to use this tool

- Step 1** Teachers have 3 minutes to write down as much as possible about how they recognise each of the Arts Council England's seven quality principles in the school. It might be helpful to start the participants off with a sentence structure such as "I know our school strives for excellence in the arts when...." or "We actively involve children and young people in the arts by..."
- Step 2** In small groups, teachers share their answers with each other. Inspired by the responses, teachers then have 10 minutes in their small groups to amalgamate and refine their answers. Each group should end up with one sentence per principle.

### Arts Council England's seven quality principles

- 1 .....○ Striving for excellence and innovation
- 2 .....○ Being authentic
- 3 .....○ Being exciting, inspiring and engaging
- 4 .....○ Ensuring a positive and inclusive experience
- 5 .....○ Actively involving children and young people
- 6 .....○ Enabling personal progression
- 7 .....○ Developing belonging and ownership

# Articulating and Identifying Quality

Write down as much as possible about how you/your group recognise/s each of the Arts Council England's seven quality principles in your school.

## Arts Council England's seven quality principles

1

Striving for excellence and innovation

I know our school strives for excellence and innovation in the arts when...

---

2

Being authentic

We provide authentic experiences in the arts by...

---

3

Being exciting, inspiring and engaging

We inspire and engage our students in the arts by...

---

4

Ensuring a positive and inclusive experience

I know our school ensures a positive inclusive experience through...

---

5

Actively involving children and young people

We actively involve children and young people in the arts by...

---

6

Enabling personal progression

I know our school enables personal progression in the arts through...

---

7

Developing belonging and ownership

I know our school develops students' ownership of the arts and sense of belonging by...

---

## Spider Webs – Benchmarking and Quality

### How to use this tool

**Step 1** This activity requires coloured electrical tape, masking tape and an empty space. Before teachers arrive, activity leaders set up a five-sided 'spider web' on the floor using masking tape, with the numbers 1 to 5 evenly spaced out along each of the spokes – 1 is closest to the centre, 5 is at the outer edges. You can use the template provided if you prefer to use a paper tool.

**Step 2** Teachers should have decided beforehand the area of arts provision that is going to be assessed. This could include reviewing the quality of:

- Training and development in arts for teachers
- Arts partnerships in school/outside of school
- Trips and visits
- Tools for evaluation and monitoring the arts
- Specific art forms or arts activities
- Whole-school arts activities

One of these headings, or any that are more relevant to your school, are placed at the top of each spoke.

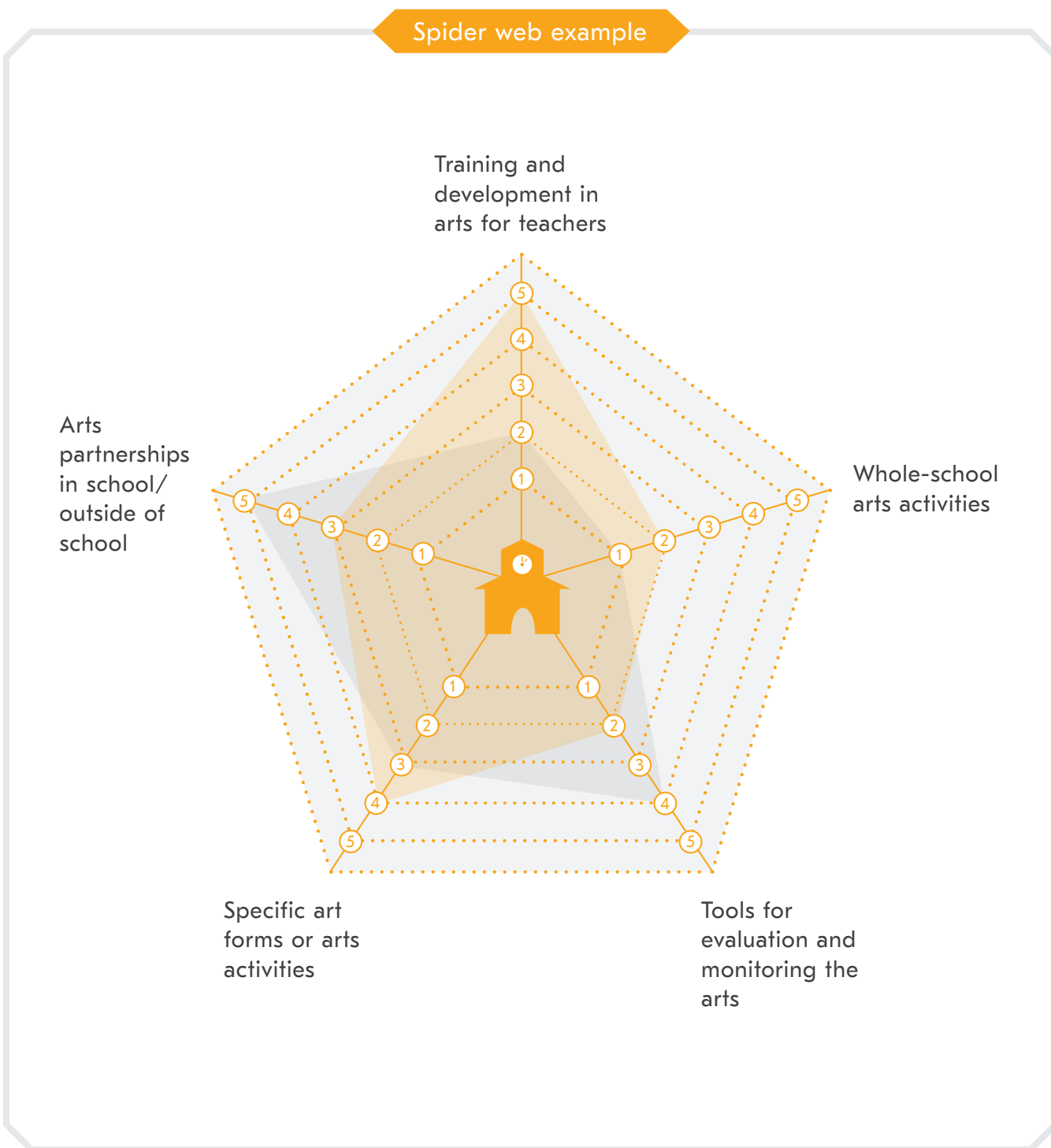
**Step 3** Each teacher is given some electrical tape and then plots where they feel the school is on a scale of 1–5 (where 1 is poor and 5 is excellent) being as

honest as possible. They are asked to join up all of their marks to create their own web. If there is a large group, teachers will need to break into small groups.

**Step 4** Each teacher or group takes a picture of their web. Strengths, challenges and solutions should be discussed and documented. If using this over a long period of assessment and activity, this exercise could be revisited at a later date to see if the school has improved in a given area of arts activity.

# Spider Webs – Benchmarking and Quality

When you try this activity, try to make it look similar to the template below. If you prefer to use a paper template, use the blank version on the next page.



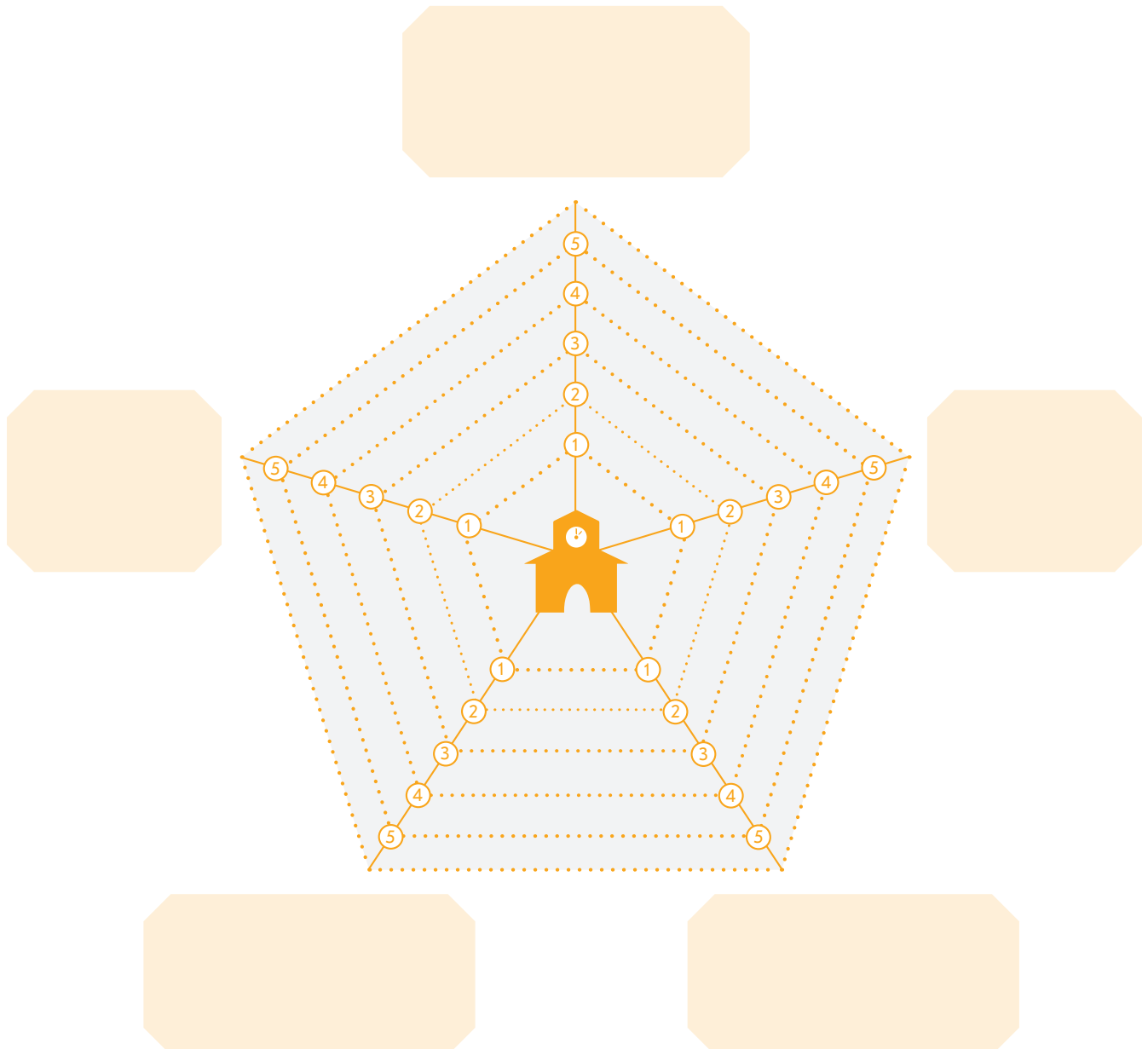


## Spider Webs – Benchmarking and Quality

Write down the area of arts provision that is going to be assessed at the top of each spoke. Then plot where you feel the school is on a scale of 1–5 (where 1 is poor and 5 is excellent) being as honest as possible.

### Suggestions

- Training and development in arts for teachers
- Arts partnerships in school/outside of school
- Trips and visits
- Tools for evaluation and monitoring the arts
- Specific art forms or arts activities
- Whole-school arts activities



## Spider Webs – Benchmarking and Quality

Discuss and document the strengths, challenges and solutions, in the areas you have identified on the spokes of the webs.

Strengths

Challenges

Solutions

### 3. Artsmark



Artsmark is an award that recognises quality provision and helps a school to embed arts and culture in its School Improvement or Development Plan.

The Artsmark journey starts with a self-assessment exercise, leading to a statement of commitment to the arts and a plan of action.

Schools can gain Artsmark at Silver, Gold or Platinum level. A table of level descriptors can be found on the website and this acts as the starting point for schools that have registered to apply.

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

#### First steps to Artsmark

- 1** ..... ○ **Start a conversation in your school**  
Use the Teachers' Toolkit to assess what you do well and what you would like to develop.
- 2** ..... ○ **Come to an information session**  
A New Direction runs regular sessions across London where you can explore the award creatively with peers and ask questions about the process.
- 3** ..... ○ **Find out who has Artsmark near you**  
Enter your school postcode on the website home page.  
[www.artsmark.org.uk](http://www.artsmark.org.uk)
- 4** ..... ○ **Register on the Artsmark website**  
When you are ready to apply, click the link on the Artsmark website to register.  
[www.artsmark.org.uk/registration](http://www.artsmark.org.uk/registration)

## 4. Student Consultation



Consulting with students about strengths and weaknesses and what they would like more/less of in arts and culture in the school might be an illuminating and useful experience in your self-assessment process.

This could be done by:

- Tapping into your Arts Award programme, if you have one
- Consulting the School Council, or asking them to consult their peers on your behalf
- Creating an Arts Ambassador role for each class or year group
- Doing a whole-school questionnaire on the arts
- Allocating discussion time in assembly followed up with a classroom discussion

Notes on ideas for student consultation

### TOP TIP



Encourage students to take responsibility for cultural activities such as planning and managing trips or making arts purchases using the school budget.

This can encourage a greater sense of ownership and relevance for the arts, and also support the development of key skills in other subjects including maths (budgeting, income and expenditure) and English/ literacy (writing trip plans and reports).

## Student Consultation

Use this page to note feedback from students about the school's arts and culture provision.

Strengths	Weaknesses

I would like...	
more of in arts and culture	less of in arts and culture
	

# Pulling It Together



What does quality mean for your school?

How do you ensure quality in your arts and cultural provision?

How well are you documenting, evaluating and communicating the quality of your provision?



Arts Award is range of qualifications accrediting student engagement, skills development and leadership in the arts. More details can be found at

→ [www.innovationunit.org/resources/engaging-school-handbook-school-leaders](http://www.innovationunit.org/resources/engaging-school-handbook-school-leaders)

Arts Council England has an excellent database of quality frameworks drawn from a range of arts agencies. This might be a useful starting point to explore how successful arts organisations identify and assess quality in the arts:

→ [www.artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/our-priorities-2011-15/children-and-young-people/quality](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/our-priorities-2011-15/children-and-young-people/quality)

“Providing The Best” is another Arts Council England resource that defines some characteristics of high quality arts activities with children and young people. Though primarily aimed at artists and arts organisations, the prompt questions and detailed explanations of child-centred arts projects provide a useful overview of how to encourage effective self-assessment.

→ [www.artscouncil.org.uk/publication\\_archive/providing-the-best/](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/publication_archive/providing-the-best/)

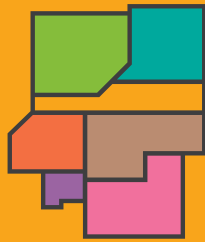
An overview of Arts Council England’s quality principles can be found at

→ [www.artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/our-priorities-2011-15/children-and-young-people/quality](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/our-priorities-2011-15/children-and-young-people/quality)

A nationally recognised award, Artsmark supports you to assess and improve the quality of your arts provision.

→ [www.artsmark.org.uk](http://www.artsmark.org.uk)

# TEACHERS' TOOLKIT



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[www.anewdirection.org.uk/schools](http://www.anewdirection.org.uk/schools)  
or contact [schools@anewdirection.org.uk](mailto:schools@anewdirection.org.uk)  
and follow us on Twitter @A\_New\_Direction