

Engage and Empower Children and Young People

An Artsmark Criteria Resource



In this resource, we aim to:

...help you understand, address, and fulfil the Children and Young People criterion in the Artsmark Framework through:

The Children and Young People criterion – An extract from the Artsmark Framework.



Questions and Activities – A series of prompt questions that relate to your existing provision and future plans.



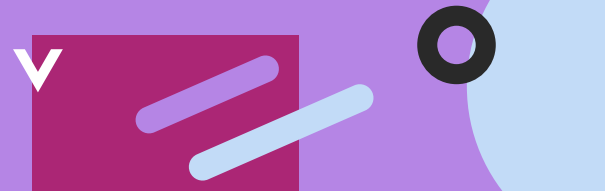
Arts Council's Seven Quality Principles – A look at how the Quality Principles can be mapped to your aims and activity.



Models for Engaging and Empowering Children and Young People – Co-created models of initiatives tested by Artsmark Settings and Artsmark Partners, including case studies.



Further support and resources – Support and resources to help you when writing your Artsmark documents and/or planning programmes.



The Children and Young People criterion

1

Children and young people have ownership of their creating and performing. They are enthusiastically engaged in a wide range of arts and cultural provision which inspires them and gives them joy. Exploring and expressing their views through the arts contributes to their personal development and wellbeing.

SILVER

The setting strives to increase engagement in opportunities to create and to perform. Children and young people are engaged in, and excited by, opportunities to develop and display their talents.

In the planning of arts and cultural experiences, the views of children and young people are considered. Arts and culture helps them make sense of themselves, their world, and contributes to their wellbeing.

GOLD

There is high engagement in arts and cultural provision and the setting demonstrates the developing voice and influence of all children and young people. They contribute actively to the planning and delivery of authentic arts, cultural and creative experiences and take ownership of their engagement and personal progression within the arts.

Through creative use of the arts, children and young people explore and give voice to issues that are important to themselves and their communities. There is more targeted use of arts and creative provision to address wellbeing. Arts and cultural activity uplifts and inspires children and young people and contributes to their personal development.

PLATINUM

Children and young people are given ownership of their creative use of the arts. Their voice has impact and influence within the setting and they may act as coaches, advocates or ambassadors for quality provision and arts, within and beyond the setting.

They may use their creativity in the arts to engage with, and contribute to, the wider community and to give voice to issues that affect their communities and their world. Children and young people value their engagement in arts learning and benefit from the setting's strategic approach to fostering wellbeing through the arts.

Information taken from **Arts Council England's Artsmark Framework** (2022).

Questions and Activities

2

Considering the descriptors above as they manifest in your setting...

- How are children and young people engaged in opportunities to create and perform?
- How are children and young people's views considered and acted upon in the planning, delivery, and evaluation of arts and culture?
- How do young people use the arts to give voice to the issues that are important to them?
- How does your creative provision support the wellbeing of children and young people?
- How are young people given ownership of their creative use of the arts?
- Where and when can they act as advocates and ambassadors for arts and culture?
- Where do they find joy in your arts and culture provision?

Think about your existing provision a bit more...

- Does your setting have a school council and are there opportunities to bring the arts to their agenda?
- Do you have a good understanding of the range of arts skills your students possess and the interests they have?
- Are there good channels of communication between young people and school leaders?



What kind of activities could you consider for this criterion?



Arts Week

A great opportunity for young people to get involved in the programming of a dedicated week of arts in your setting.



Arts Award

A unique qualification that supports children and young people to grow as artists and art leaders, inspiring them to connect with and take part in the wider arts world by taking on challenges in the arts.



School Newsletter

Opportunities for children and young people to write about their own arts experiences in schools.



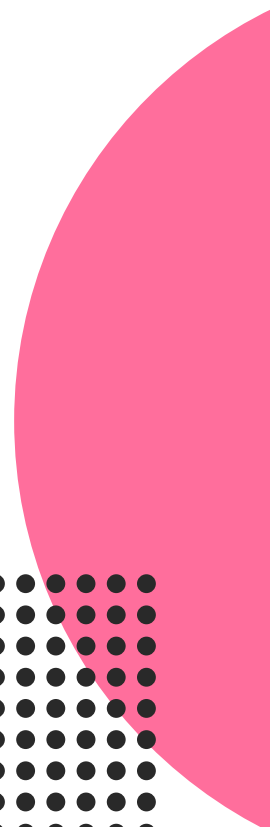
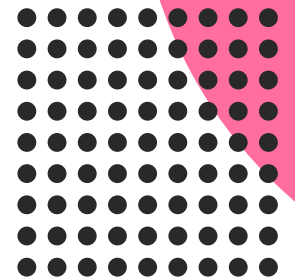
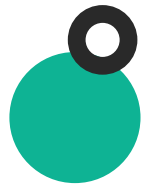
Assemblies

A chance for children and young people to share their arts skills and knowledge with their peers.



Lunchtime clubs

Older pupils may enjoy the opportunity to run a lunchtime arts club with younger pupils, sharing their skills and knowledge.

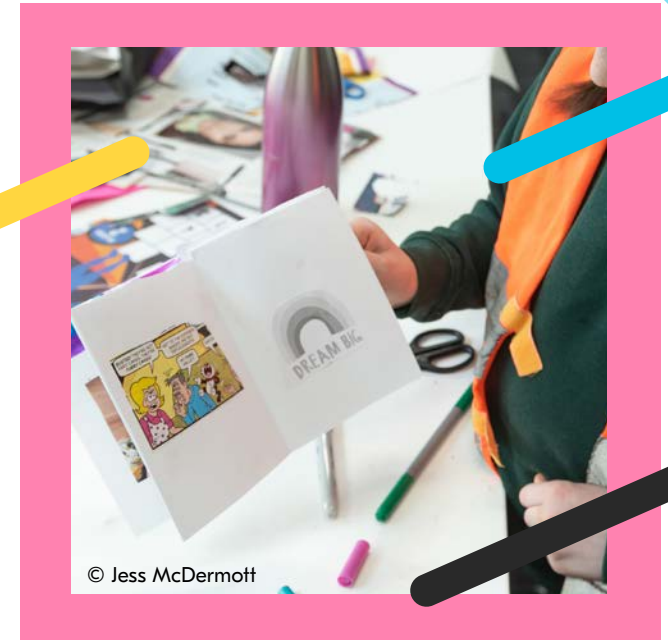


Arts Council's Seven Quality Principles

3

How could you demonstrate the Quality Principles with respect to this criterion?

- Co-design an **exciting and engaging curriculum** and enrichment offer.
- **Actively involve children and young people**, empowering them to give voice to their ideas.
- **Strive for excellence** in performance and participation.
- Develop **belonging and ownership** by establishing and nurturing bodies that can influence policies and strategies such as an arts council.
- Support **personal progression** for those who want to take a leadership role both in and beyond their setting.
- Offer opportunities for **authentic experiences** in community initiatives and partnerships where student voice has a tangible influence.



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Models for Engaging and Empowering Children and Young People

4

Through our innovative Artsmark Co-Creation Programme, we can showcase four models responding to the Children and Young People criterion that can inspire and be adapted for your setting.

A New Direction invited four Artsmark Schools and four Artsmark Partner organisations across a range of art forms to come together to each co-create an arts activity that addresses the Children and Young People Engagement criteria. Artsmark Partner organisations utilised their methods and techniques to support Artsmark Schools in developing a creative activity that any teacher would have the confidence to lead within their own setting.

The following models will explore:



Model 1

Classroom cohesion through the creation of a zine (visual arts).



Model 2

Interpretation of written text using an art form (dance).



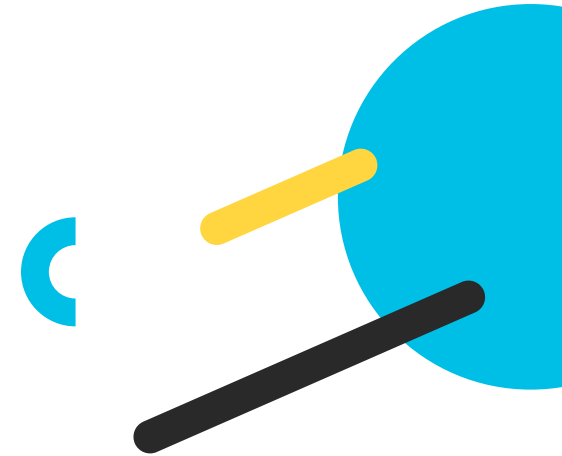
Model 3

A roadmap to establishing an arts council (advocacy, showcase, festival curation).



Model 4

Participation in a design consultation with a local authority (design technology).





Model 1 – Object storytelling and zine-making with Fossdene Primary School and SPACE

Classroom cohesion through the creation of a zine (visual arts)

Overall aims:

- To provide a positive and inclusive visual arts experience for all young people and introduce them to a variety of exciting and inspiring new art techniques.
- To develop classroom cohesion and student voice by encouraging students to share objects that are meaningful to them.



The partners: >>>>>>

Fossdene Primary School is a two-form entry primary school in Greenwich. Fossdene has six values, which are shared and shaped by all members of the school community and reflect their purpose and vision: Belonging, Equity, Resilience, Teamwork, Aspiration, and Creativity. Fossdene is currently on its first Artsmark journey.

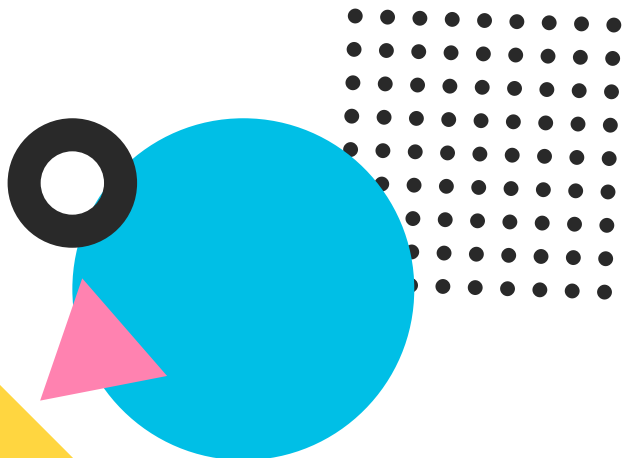
SPACE is a visual arts organisation founded on the belief that enjoyment of and access to the arts and creative processes are intrinsic to the development of a healthy and dynamic culture. SPACE runs arts and education programmes including exhibitions, events, neighbourhood-based learning and participation projects, as well as training for both young people and professional artists.

Model 1 – Object storytelling and zine-making with Fossdene Primary School and SPACE

What they did:

Students produced a series of RISO prints that linked to an object that was meaningful to them. The prints were gathered and curated into a whole class zine to celebrate the work of the cohort. Adult-led facilitation supported students to share the story of their object.

The process began with an open discussion and decision-making about what is meant by a meaningful object or an object that represents a meaningful story or memory. The adult facilitators modelled objects they would choose and why it is meaningful to them. The students then took home a worksheet asking key questions to help them explore which memorable objects they might choose and were encouraged to complete it with their parents or carers. The facilitators then shared a range of art techniques to capture this object, including sketching, collage, and RISO printing. By the end of the process, the students created a combined zine through collage to capture all their important objects in one place.



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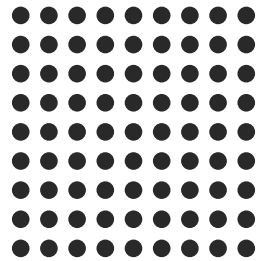
Model 1 – Object storytelling and zine-making with Fossdene Primary School and SPACE

Extension activity:

Young People could curate a gallery exhibition in school or in local community spaces to showcase their sketching, collage work, and RISO printing. Alongside their artwork, in-person or video interviews with students could be used to share their process to create a range of art inspired by an object which has meaning for them.

An adaptable model:

All settings can use a wide range of art techniques including sketching, collage, printmaking, painting, sculpture, textiles, and more for students to share objects that are meaningful to them. The project will enable students to choose their preferred medium, unlocking discussion that promotes creative storytelling and empathy. Students will have the opportunity to work individually on their own object and as part of a group to create a collaborative artwork encouraging shared decision making.



Model 1 – Object storytelling and zine-making with Fossdene Primary School and SPACE

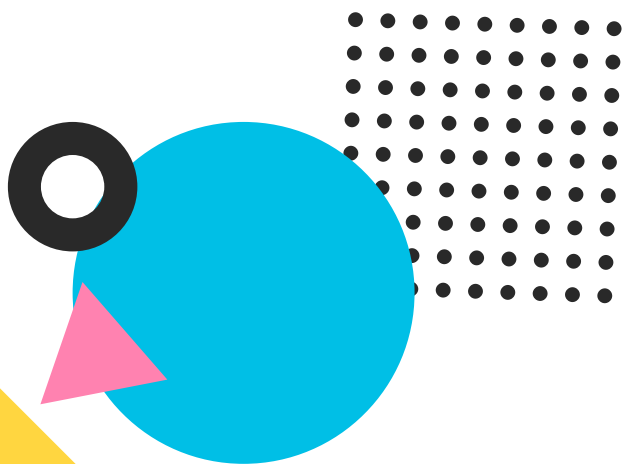
Artsmark mapping against the Children and Young People criterion:

- This approach enabled students to **make sense of themselves** and their world, **contributing to their wellbeing**.
- Students **contributed actively to the planning and delivery** of an authentic arts experience.
- Students **explored and gave voice to** issues that were important to them.

Evidenced in workshop plan, activity worksheets, RISO prints, zines, gallery exhibition photographs, participants' feedback, partners' testimony.

Mapping against the Quality Principles:

- To provide a **positive and inclusive visual arts experience** for all young people to introduce them to a variety of exciting and inspiring new art techniques.
- **To develop belonging and ownership** by encouraging students to share objects that are meaningful to them.
- **Actively involving students** in order to support classroom cohesion and encouraging empathy.





Model 2 – Storytelling through movement and dance with Invicta Primary and Eastside

Interpretation of written text using an art form (dance)

Overall aims:

- To unlock, nurture, and celebrate how children and young people express themselves by using dance to explore a text.



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The partners: >>>>>

Invicta Primary School is a four-form entry school based in Lewisham. Invicta were awarded their Platinum Artsmark in 2016. They have reregistered and are currently on their second Artsmark journey.

Eastside is a leading youth arts organisation which uses poetry, spoken word, film, digital arts and drama to help young people develop their creative thinking, so that they are able to become the problem-solvers of tomorrow, empowered to build a better society.

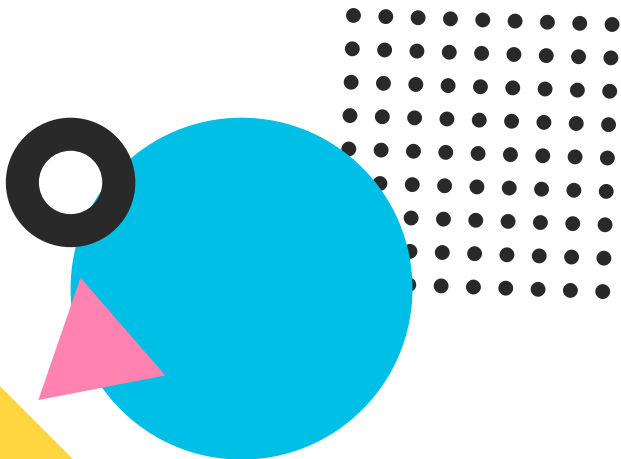
Model 2 – Storytelling through movement and dance with Invicta Primary and Eastside

What they did:

Students created an individual or group dance/movement piece inspired by a character in a book about Romulus and Remus they had read recently, culminating in a storytelling performance. Students could choose to be young producers, managing the marketing, and the logistics of the event or performers.

The students were inspired to create their own choreography by watching Matthew Bourne's Swan Lake and dance group, Diversity, and reflected how dance and movement can tell a story. They were then able to choose their own music and choreography to create their dance pieces.

The young producers curated and organised the performance, then led on sharing and celebrating outcomes through designing a newsletter to the whole school community highlighting interviews and reviews about the event.



Model 2 – Storytelling through movement and dance with Invicta Primary and Eastside

Extension activity:

Engage a panel of young people and adults to distribute awards to performers and creative producers based on positive attributes such as 'most brave', 'best storytelling', 'biggest risk taker', 'best organiser', etc. Young producers could meet with other schools and share the model with them to create their own dance slam events.

An adaptable model:

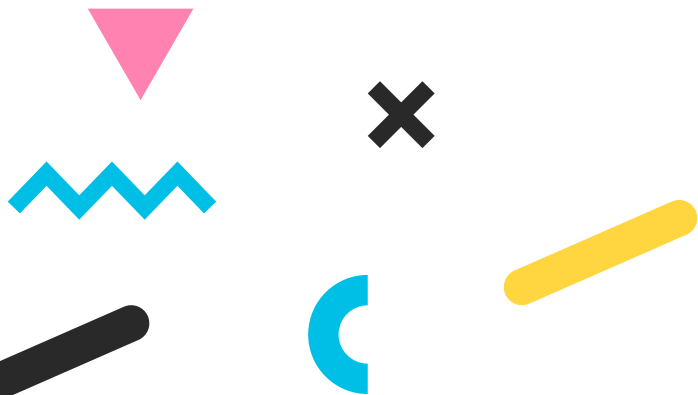
All settings can use dance, drama, music, or visual art to further explore a character from a text. Working to understand the characters' motivations, their personality traits, and character development, i.e., how the character changes throughout the narrative.

A good exploration or starting point for creating a movement/art/music/drama activity could be:

- Creating a freeze frame (with your body or by drawing it) of that character at a key plot point in the story.
- Thinking about how we can use our bodies and make it clear to the audience what we are feeling and where we are?
- Once you created your freeze frame, think about how you can bring it to life with eight counts of clear movement that can be repeated.
- Give it rhythm – a beginning, a middle, and an end.
- Find music or a sound that matches the feeling of that character in the story.

Questions for students to ask themselves:

- Is there a part of the story I really love that I want to share with an audience?
- Is there a style of dance/art/music/drama I want to tell this story in?
- Is there a different version of this story I want to tell through movement/dance/drama/art?
- Is there a theme that I really relate to that I want to explore through dance/drama/music/art?



Model 2 – Storytelling through movement and dance with Invicta Primary and Eastside

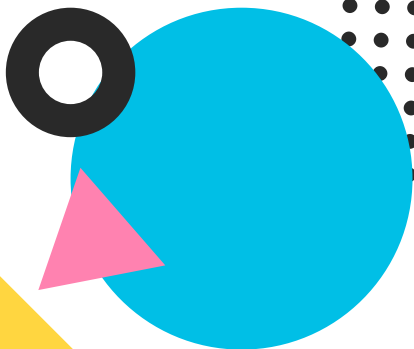
Artsmark mapping against the Children and Young People criterion:

- This programme aims to **increase engagement in opportunities for children and young people to create and perform.**
- Students **took ownership of their engagement and personal progression** within the arts.
- Students were **encouraged to experiment and take risks.**
- Students were **engaged in, and excited by, opportunities to develop and display their talents.**

Evidenced in session plans, performance recording, audience feedback, award distributions.

Mapping against the Quality Principles:

- **Increasing confidence, teamwork, communication**, and a deeper understanding of text through dance and movement.
- To **create an exciting and inspiring cultural event** in the community which will inspire future performances and experiences in the setting.
- To **enable personal progression** by improving student's literacy and emotional intelligence: exploring books through dance and movement gives them empathy, and finding a deeper understanding of their motivation by 'becoming' characters.
- **Actively involving children and young people** in the curation, devising, and performance of the programme.





Model 3 – Six steps to make an arts council with Overton Grange School and Creative Youth

A roadmap to establishing an arts council (advocacy, showcase, festival curation)



Overall aims:

- To create a roadmap for the school to set up and embed its own arts council.



The partners: >>>>>>

Overton Grange School is a secondary school which was about to celebrate its 25th anniversary. It is located in the London borough of Sutton and serves a diverse community with a strong arts and enrichment offer. The school has a Silver Artsmark Award.

Creative Youth is an organisation that delivers innovative projects to create futures for young people through the arts. Through an ideas lab model, a range of media, rigorous documentation processes, and visual resources, they create opportunities for young people to express and challenge themselves.

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Model 3 – Six steps to make an arts council with Overton Grange School and Creative Youth

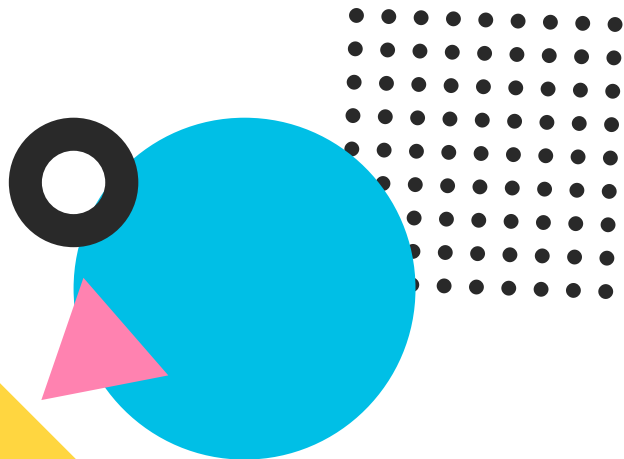
What they did:

The school set up an arts council to give a voice to their students within the arts specifically: they would generate ideas, design and deliver arts activities, and run a social media account as a means of driving communication and capturing the process.

Two students per year group were chosen to be part of the arts council, with applications open to all abilities and interests. Selection criteria were clear, meetings were scheduled once a term with flexibility to respond to special events, space and materials were provided by the school, and the council was led by a teacher with support from Creative Youth.



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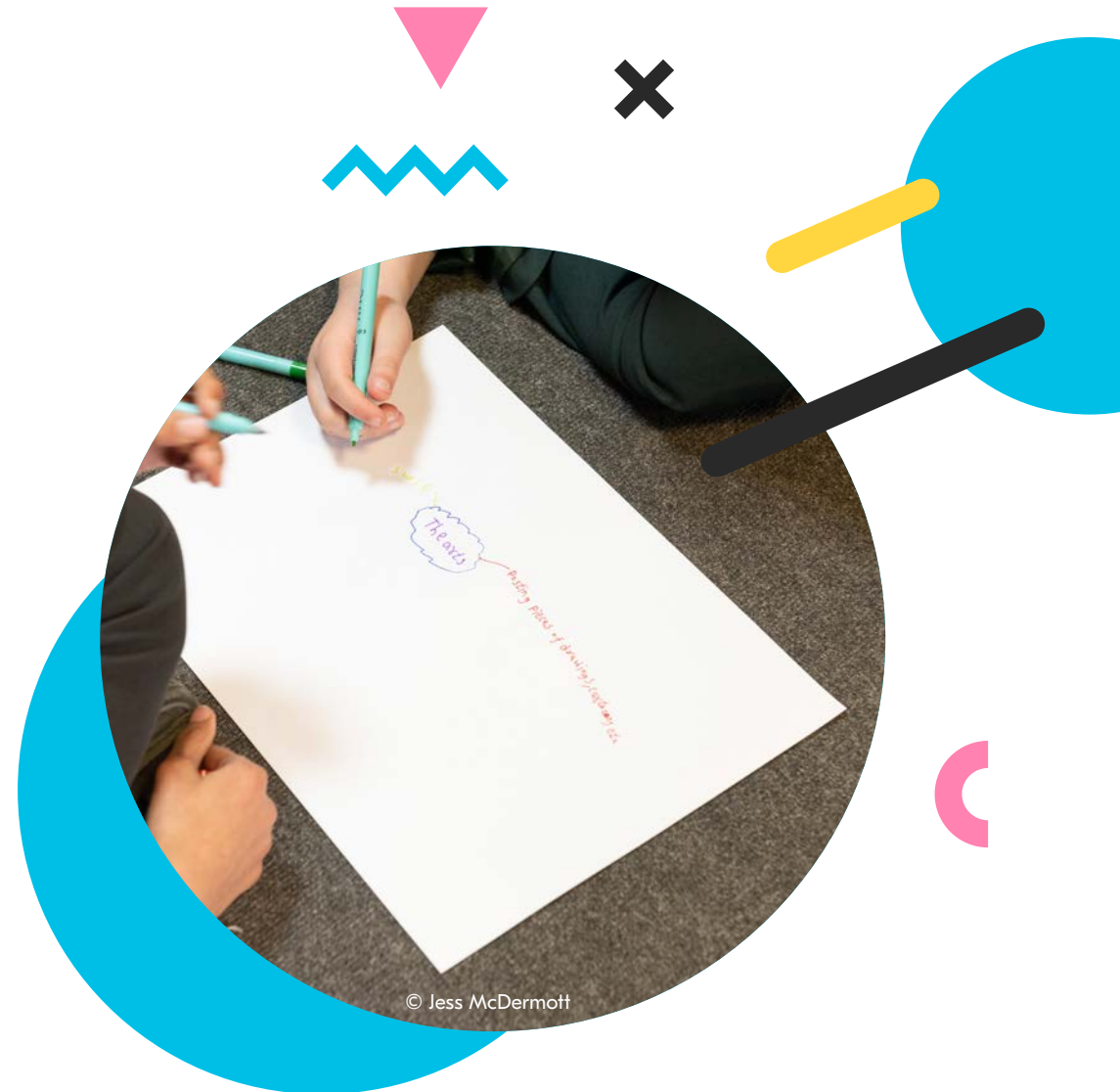
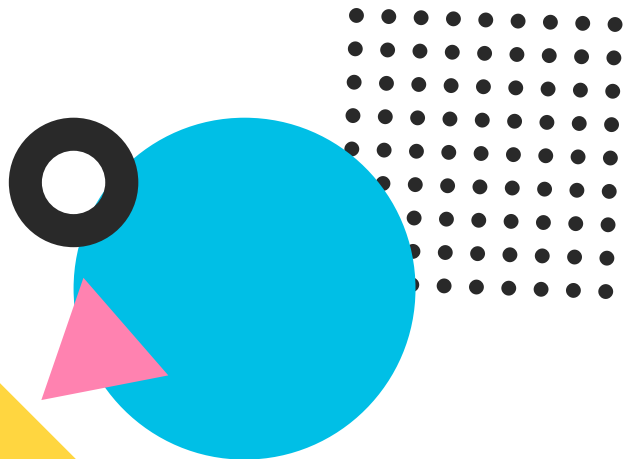


Model 3 – Six steps to make an arts council with Overton Grange School and Creative Youth

Extension activity:

As an extension activity, students were invited to take part in the FUSE International Festival by Creative Youth, where they could showcase their work and could have a role in planning and curation. Students could also engage further with Creative Youth in their ideas labs, document their activity in creative ways, and develop artistic resources (particularly visual materials).

In the longer term, an ongoing arts council could be established, which would be open for applications each year and is not dependent on the availability of one teacher. A social media account can continue to capture the 'journey' and communicate with other students about activities and opportunities. Students will be more engaged in the arts when they are approached to get involved by their peers.



Model 3 – Six steps to make an arts council with Overton Grange School and Creative Youth

An adaptable model:

The process of establishing an arts council can be adapted to all settings. The roadmap below is a breakdown of possible stages:

- 1. Agreeing scope:** what do you want your arts council to do? i.e., take a strategic role, organise activities, develop and showcase skills, advocate for the arts in school and beyond.
- 2. Support from staff and senior leadership team:** who will lead the arts council? What support does your setting have in place to ensure the arts council continues if staff availability changes?
- 3. Recruiting student members:** carefully consider your selection criteria (thinking about equality, diversity, and inclusion) and length of term.
- 4. Inaugural meeting schedule:** how often will your arts council meet? Who will be responsible for certain roles? i.e., chairing, minutes, etc.
- 5. Hands-on activity, if appropriate:** how can you enable students to create their own projects? i.e., gather creative materials and resources, provide a space to for students to experiment, and collect group feedback.
- 6. Additional considerations:** how can you evaluate effectiveness? What partnerships can the arts council build within the school and with the wider school community? What skills can arts council members develop using social media, introducing Arts Award?

To write your own 6 steps for your setting, consider your school's contexts, as well as your students' needs and interests. Check out Overton Grange School's and Creative Youth's "6 Steps to Make an Arts Council" (2022) poster as an example:



Model 3 – Six steps to make an arts council with Overton Grange School and Creative Youth

Artsmark mapping against the Children and Young People criterion:

- Increasing student engagement in arts and culture.
- Empowering young people to **take ownership of arts activity**
- **Creating channels for young people to express themselves** and explore issues important to them through arts and culture.
- Supporting children and young people to act **as advocates.**
- Contributing to the **development of skills and increased wellbeing.**
- Building community connections through partnership.
- Showcasing students' skills and talents.

Evidenced in recruitment applications, meeting notes, outputs, participation data, social media.

Mapping against the Quality Principles:

- To **actively involve young people** in meaningful activity that will have an impact on their education setting.
- To **create a sense of belonging and ownership** through demonstrating leadership and curating school celebration and community festival content.



Model 4 – Designing a community skate park with Riverside School and Open City

Participation in a design consultation with a local authority (design technology).



Overall aims:

- To engage with changes in the local area.
- To explore how communities are shaped through design and consultation.
- To give voice to young people who are directly affected.

The partners: >>>>>

Riverside School is a 142-place community secondary school on the Wood Green inclusive campus in Haringey. Students at Riverside experience a wide range of general, moderate, severe, and profound multiple learning difficulties, from the highest-functioning to the most complex. On average, two-thirds of the student population in any one year have a diagnosis of autism, one third have a variety of other **needs**.

Open City is a charity dedicated to making London and its architecture more open, accessible, and equitable. They engage citizens, particularly from under-represented backgrounds, in architecture and city-making. Programmes, including the Open House Festival, opening up buildings, conversations, and careers to those normally locked out of them.



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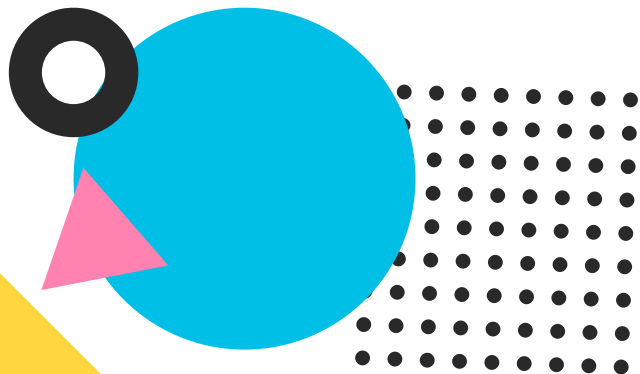
Model 4 – Designing a community skate park with Riverside School and Open City

What they did:

The project activity focused on skatepark design, which was organised over eight sessions including site visits to contrasting existing skate park facilities, research into designs across the world, time in the art room using Minecraft to create digital designs, and then a final workshop to create three-dimensional models using pizza boxes and other recycled materials. Sessions were led by the school's art teacher and their creative partners from Open City.

The models and other project elements were shared in a presentation to local authority officers, councillors, and cabinet members as a response to the intense development and transformation of their local environment, as well as the need for young people's voices to be heard. These models gave students a vehicle through which they could express their ideas, supporting their verbal communication.

Local authority representatives were interested in continuing the conversation about regeneration and provision of recreational sites in the borough, as well as showcasing students' design work.



Model 4 – Designing a community skate park with Riverside School and Open City

An adaptable model:

The intended legacy of this project was to build a sense of empowerment, confidence, and belonging amongst learners as well as a range of new skills, an understanding of how communities are shaped through the design and consultation process, and an awareness of future career opportunities using art and design.

The main elements of the project include:

1. Identification of issue or campaign and the target audience (led by young people's interests and local issues).
 2. Research.
 3. Site visits, meetings with stakeholders, partners, etc.
 4. Design activity, staged to include a range of approaches and materials.
 5. Organise sharing/showcase for intended audience.
 6. Wider sharing including social media if appropriate.
 7. Introduction of Arts Award if appropriate.
- Evaluate responses and possible next steps.



Model 4 – Designing a community skate park with Riverside School and Open City

Artsmark mapping against the Children and Young People criterion:

- **Giving due consideration** to young people's views.
- Helping children and young people **make sense of themselves and their world.**
- **Giving young people a voice in issues that are important to them** and their community through creative use of the arts.
- **Offering authentic arts experiences** with real-world connections.
- Building a **sense of empowerment and belonging** in high-stakes situations.

Evidenced in session notes, worksheets, audience feedback, partners' testimony, consultation documents.

Mapping against the Quality Principles:

- To create a sense of belonging and ownership in their local community
- To participate in authentic dialogue with an arts organisation and local authority representatives



Further support and resources

5

For further support with your Artsmark journey, you can find a full suite of resources on the [Artsmark Resources and Supporting Documents](#) page of our website.

A New Direction offers unlimited one-to-one support calls with our Artsmark Officers, where you can get advice throughout your journey and have your draft Statements reviewed before submitting them to Arts Council England. Please visit our [Artsmark Support Sessions](#) webpage to see upcoming dates and book as often as you need.

The Artsmark framework encourages schools to develop partnerships, including developing relationships with local arts organisations. Check out our [Artsmark Partners](#) webpage to connect with a range of London-based arts organisations with an understanding of Artsmark that could support you on your journey.

If you have any questions or require further support, please don't hesitate to email us at artsmark@anewdirection.org.uk.

Thank you!

With thanks to the following Artsmark Schools and Artsmark Partner organisations for their contributions to this resource:

[Invicta Primary School](#)

[Fossdene Primary School](#)

[Overton Grange School](#)

[Riverside School](#)

[Creative Youth](#)

[Eastside](#)

[Open City](#)

[SPACE Studios](#)

This resource was created by **A New Direction** Artsmark Consultants, Lynne Brackley and Sonia Hyams, with the support of Programmes Officer, Joyce Voegler, and Programmes Manager, Chloe Randall.

