



## WELCOME TO ARTSMARK MONTHLY



Hello!

I'm Abi, Education Programme Manager at Festival Bridge. I look after our Artsmark programme - so if you've attended one of our Development training/ support sessions, or received feedback on a Statement of Commitment or Impact, chances are you've encountered me along the way!

### Edition 4: Being Exciting, Inspiring and Engaging

With many of us already looking forward to summer, I have been contemplating terms like 'recovery' and 'catch-up' in a blog, (coming soon to the Festival Bridge website) reflecting on the Chartered College for Teaching webinar, 'A vision for recovery' with Sir Kevan Collins. So, what could be a better focus for this month's Artsmark Monthly than *Being Exciting, Inspiring and Engaging*?

### ARTSMARK AWARDS ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### Congratulations to:

- **Whatfield C of E Primary**, federated with Bildeston Primary, for their Gold Award
- **Ely College**, part of Cambridge Meridian Academies Trust, for their Silver award



## QUALITY PRINCIPLES UNPICKED

### Quality Principle 2: Being Exciting, Inspiring and Engaging

#### What does it mean?

The best quality teaching is exciting, inspiring and engaging. I think the reason that they feature as one of the principles for quality in the realm of arts and cultural activity is to emphasise the importance of excitement and enjoyment for their own sake. When we consider the losses for children and young people over last year, we are recognising that having experiences is what builds cultural capital - experiences that expose children and young people to something new. Artsmark schools are well placed over the coming years to advocate for the vital significance that quality arts and cultural provision has on whole-child development.

#### Some things to consider

As part of your Artsmark journey you will be using the self-assessment framework to develop your curriculum design and the engagement with partners such as artists and cultural organisations. To be exciting, inspiring and engaging you need to have a variety and range of offer, and get children involved in planning and delivering.

#### Inspiring people

Teachers' own attitudes towards creativity can have a huge impact on students. Do school leaders, teachers and support staff share a positivity and personal enthusiasm for music, art, dance, drama, film, literature etc with students and each other? Are creative careers explored? Are the arts given a high profile for their transferable and lifelong skills?

#### Raising aspirations

This is a common ambition for the Artsmark journey. Some ways to inspire are:

- Learning about or working with local people working in creative careers
- Harnessing school alumni who have gone on to work in the arts
- Profiling artists from similar heritage and background to students
- Having Arts Ambassadors or a student arts council to show that you value the voice of children who champion the arts
- Teachers who consider themselves as artists and creative practitioners. They continue to develop their own creative practice, whether this is as a graduate in a subject specialism, or to play creatively for their own enjoyment. A great way to explore this is through our [Native Creatives series](#).

#### What next?

Schools continually audit their curriculum and look at the progression of skills and knowledge. My challenge to you is to take time to reflect on the range of opportunities you have that are exciting, inspiring and engaging. When you offer a range of opportunities then you can celebrate them. Plan to develop this as a vitally important part of what quality arts and cultural education look like. You can look back at all 3 previous editions of Artsmark Monthly to support your thinking about this quality principle.



## SPOTLIGHT ON SCHOOLS

**These awarded schools have been exciting, inspiring and engaging:**

### **Nene Valley Primary School | Cambridgeshire**

Even prior to the pandemic, Nene Valley Primary School used the Arts to promote pupils' mental well-being by introducing mindful drawing (Zentangling) to the whole school. The range of new opportunities included bell-ringing, felt-making, a story-telling group and graphic design which was led by arts professionals as well as seeing live performances at the theatre, including ballet.

*Silver Artsmark Award*

### **Sexton Manor | Bury St Edmunds**

Funding difficulties did not stop this school from ensuring they were exciting, inspiring and engaging. They used teacher expertise and parental enthusiasm and were able to create projects that gave opportunities for visual arts, dance, design, sculpture and music. Connections to the Royal Ballet School enriched dance provision. A stimulating WW2 project offered multiple opportunities for the Arts to serve as a vehicle for historical learning.

*Silver Artsmark Award*

### **Castle School | Cambridgeshire**

Castle School have put great effort into ensuring their young people with SEND are exposed to inspiring and engaging creative experiences. Below are some quotes from their staff about the effects of this:

“One TA, after learning to crochet, started using his new skill in creative ways. He made items to use in science. His work inspired the boys in his class to crochet too. The teacher started a lunchtime yarn craft club, this in turn inspired a French knitting class as an easier alternative ensuring accessibility for students who don't have the fine motor skills needed for crochet.”

“The Music of Life Foundation were running a workshop; one pupil did not want to go into the hall. She finds it hard to engage in class and especially assemblies, but she stood watching from outside. She was really engaged (consistently looking at the singers) you could tell that she was listening. She reached out for an adults arm to indicate that she wanted to stay to listen and started to move in time with the beat.”

*Gold Artsmark Award*

### **Thomas Gainsborough School | Sudbury**

Shortlisted as one of the TES creative schools of the year, there is much to say about this school. The school hosts its own art gallery and when you walk the pristine halls you feel like you are in a curated space for displaying quality visual art. They employ a number of external partnerships to engage in cross curricular arts projects, expanding the students' awareness of the links between arts, culture and other areas of specialism or industry, particularly in the sciences.

They have developed a layered, extra-curricular programme of cultural capital activities and inputs, designed to expand the students' ability to make creative and cultural connections, and which has also been shared with trust and feeder primary and secondary schools and schools as far flung as Romford and Nuneaton.

*Platinum Artsmark Award*



## **DON'T MISS OUT**

### **Native Creatives**

Booking is now open for Native Creatives Summer Term Programme, taking place 15-17 June 2021. This series of workshops and discussions led by notable speakers are a place to learn, share and discover – it's not your traditional CPD! We want teachers to explore both their personal and professional practice, remembering you are not only educators but creatives too. [Browse the full line up and book your free tickets on our website.](#)

### **Local Cultural Education Partnerships**

If you don't know where to begin to find authentic arts and cultural providers than these networks are ideal. To find out more look on our [website](#) or contact [bridge@nnfestival.org.uk](mailto:bridge@nnfestival.org.uk) to find out more about an LCEP near you.

You can find all of our upcoming virtual [Development Days](#) and [Support Sessions](#) for all stages of the Artsmark journey on our website. Get in touch with any query, big or small, via [bridge@nnfestival.org.uk](mailto:bridge@nnfestival.org.uk).

### Artsmark Support

Looking for an organisation to partner with to improve your provision or work collaboratively with to share expertise? Check out our [Artsmark partner database](#).

**Thanks for reading - see you next month for issue number 5!**



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