



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 Days, Support Sessions, or received feedback on a Statement of Commitment or Impact, chances are you've encountered me along the way!

QP 4: ensuring a positive and inclusive experience

I'm back again to spotlight the Artsmark schools that have been doing some amazing work and to dig a little deeper into one of Arts Council England's quality principles which are key for your Artsmark journey. This month I'm focussing on *ensuring a positive and inclusive experience* – I think this is really important as you and your students settle back into school.

ARTSMARK AWARDS ANNOUNCEMENTS

Congratulations to:

- **Elmswell Community Primary School** in Bury St Edmunds, for their Silver award
- **Bildeston Primary School** in Ipswich, for their Gold award



QUALITY PRINCIPLES UNPICKED

Edition 2: Ensuring a positive and inclusive experience

What does it mean?

Being 'positive' and 'inclusive' feel like natural attributes to aspire to in every classroom and in every lesson. The key thing here is to make sure everyone can take part, regardless of ability or background and that they enjoy the experience – this might mean having to tailor roles or tasks for different groups. You are being prompted to:

- Audit what equality of provision and resource looks like
- Check in with your children and young people's views
- Be passionate about the art form, culture or heritage you are exploring, and if you aren't; work with someone who is.
- Help students to develop as confident individuals and celebrate their achievements. This includes encouraging individual contributions and valuing diversity

How could it look in my school?

It isn't a realistic or useful ambition for every child to have the exact same opportunity; there are considerations such as budget and appropriateness of age. But when you are planning the development of cultural capital, what experiences can you embed in your curriculum so that there is an equity of arts and cultural experience? Think about how you'll ensure no child is at a disadvantage and create opportunities for all students to experience, visit, participate, create and perform in a range of arts, cultural and heritage activities.

You may be budget forecasting now. Many schools get creative with funding, using pupil premium or funding bids to cover costs for those who aren't able to access cultural experiences. Sports premium could pay for a dance specialist or pupil premium could provide simple craft activities in the home.

You could build on pupils' strengths and interests to find the right role for them in a project. Rather than acting in a production, someone might prefer backstage work if they're shy or want to design the programmes if they're artistic. However, it means everyone is still included. Doing so can also open their eyes to the wider careers in the creative industries.

Holding competitions in art forms such as short stories, poetry or visual art is a healthy reflection of the world; after all, only some paintings are hung in galleries, only some

books are published etc. However, as you shape this consider how you will value the creative process and make it a positive one whether the piece is deemed to be the 'winner' or not.

Another way we see this principle in action is where children and young people have an active role in the curating of opportunities and projects, with authentic practitioners and real resources and venues. Time is given to build the excitement and inspiration taken from working together, and the artist or practitioner has time factored in to talk to the teachers and/or young people to shape the work they will undertake together.

What next?

Look at the *Artsmark Self-Assessment Award Criteria Section 8: Equality and Diversity* and challenge yourselves to develop this further with your colleagues and across your setting. Check in with the other Quality Principles as they all knit together – I especially think 'actively involving children and young people' (QP5) and 'belonging & ownership' (QP7) align with this one. Where you are providing experiences that take students out of their comfort zones and how do you ensure that the process and outcome remain positive?



SPOTLIGHT ON SCHOOLS

These awarded schools have been able to develop a positive and inclusive experience in their setting:

St Alban's Catholic Primary School | Cambridgeshire

St Alban's Catholic Primary School have used the Artsmark process as a means of reflecting on and reviewing pre-existing practices within the school and this has generated some interesting learning. In particular, a more nuanced understanding around student performance anxiety which has led to changes in rehearsal techniques within the learning process which have been effective.

Silver Artsmark Award

Springwood High School | Kings Lynn

Springwood High School have considerably developed pupil engagement in singing and shown how this is a positive and inclusive part of the school's culture and ethos. They have more than tripled the number of students singing in school. This expansion was a result of student led promotion in year assemblies, along with a passion and drive from the headteacher. The choir's profile has been raised and they have had invitations to

perform at local and national events. For example, BBC Newsround and the 2019 Royal Albert Hall National Festival proms.

Gold Artsmark Award

Sidegate Primary School | Ipswich

Arts Ambassadors have a strong voice at Sidegate Primary. The school's commitment to closing the cultural capital gap is deeply impressive, translating into carefully planned projects that specifically address the needs of disadvantaged children and seek also to engage their parents. Ofsted's assessment that 'arts are taught to a very high standard' and have an 'extensive range of enrichment activities' is proof of the range of offer.

Platinum Artsmark Award



DON'T MISS OUT

Native Creatives

My fellow Education Manager Jen looks after all things CPD, and this month brought us the exciting new Native Creatives programme, designed to support your own creative practice. [You can find recordings of all the sessions on our website...](#) do catch up if you missed them!

You can also 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.

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 3!

