

# Arts Award 2015/16

## Local Area Development

A New Direction wants all young Londoners to have a creative childhood. Arts Award is a key component to making this happen, so A New Direction are committed to ensuring more children and young people in London can celebrate their achievements and progression through Arts Award.

After an analysis of [Arts Award data in 2014/15](#), they identified London boroughs with low Arts Award engagement. In response to this, A New Direction set up a development programme to support organisations and partnerships to scale up their Arts Award offer and connect with more children and young people.

The aim was to create opportunities for more young people to consistently achieve Arts Award and progress through its levels. In order to do this, they chose to focus on the conditions and partnerships that need to be in place to make delivery of Arts Award a success. An Action Research approach was implemented to support learning and develop a deep understanding of how schools, local authorities, cultural organisations, freelancers and informal settings can all support children and young people to achieve through Arts Award.

The Local Area Development action research approach focused on the overarching question:

**“What conditions and partnerships need to be in place to make Arts Award work in areas of low engagement?”**

The exploration was structured to three meetings throughout the year. In the first, the development programmes established their own action research question that would explore a specific issue pertinent to their programme. This was followed by a visioning session, where the programmes set long term goals and a timeline. Specific tools, such as the [Harvard Compass Points](#), were used to flesh out the programmes and ensure that ideas were explored from all perspectives. The second meeting involved assessing what was working well and where the challenges were. Each programme explored the barriers they had faced so far and changes implemented to overcome said barriers. In this way, failure is reframed as a learning process and as a chance to regroup, change and develop. The final meeting saw each group answer their action research question in 3-5 compact points. The responses formulate the themes included in this report.

## 1. Programmes Summary

Lead organisation	Target Borough	Partners	Arts Award Level	Art Form	Type of delivery
<b>Bromley and Bexley libraries</b>	Bromley and Bexley	Spine Festival, freelance drama facilitator	Explore	Poetry, Theatre, Spoken word	One session per week, afterschool, over four weeks
<b>Eastside Educational Trust</b>	Redbridge	Seven Kings school, Redbridge college	Silver, Gold	Film	Term-time, in school
<b>Royal Borough of Kingston</b>	Kingston	Anstee Bridge, Rose Theatre, Stanley Picker Gallery, Lovelace Primary school, Kingston Primary School and Lime tree Primary School	Discover, Explore, Bronze	Drama, Music, Visual Art and Fashion	Varied
<b>Swiss Cottage School, Development and Research Centre</b>	Bromley	Riverside school, Marjorie McClure School, Corali Dance Company, freelance visual arts facilitator	Explore, Bronze	Dance and Visual Art	Arts workshop day
<b>The Museum of London Docklands</b>	Lewisham	The Fostering Network	Discover	Film	Half term programme

## **2. Programme Themes**

### **Sharing skills, knowledge and expertise**

- Make sure a programme is planned jointly with all staff and partners so that the most can be made of diverse skills, knowledge and expertise.
- Find out what partner organisations can offer and ensure that they are invested enough to offer expertise in their skill sets. This is particularly beneficial when working across different sectors.
- Consider working with organisations local to you.
- Make sure on the ground staff have input in planning, delivery and evaluation, not just senior management.

### **Advocating added value**

When working with external partners, it is important to demonstrate what additional benefits Arts Award can bring to young people's learning. It can ensure full support from both senior management and delivering practitioners, which is essential to the smooth running of a project.

- Make sure all partners understand what Arts Award involves and how it can help complement young people's learning elsewhere.
- When working with schools, map the award against other qualifications so that the overlaps are evident.
- Highlight the importance of creative and reflective thinking.

### **Identifying realistic resources and funding**

Map existing resources prior to a project commencing and make sure that all needs are communicated to funders and partners.

- Share resources wherever possible – particularly within your borough.
- Draw on your local supporters for portfolio guidance and helpful contacts in other sectors.
- Have a plan in place to ensure appropriate staffing numbers, access to training, funds for moderations, mentors from the arts sector, and sharing platforms.

### **Central Mentoring**

- It is beneficial if there is an experienced partner with a mentoring role.
- When developing consortiums, consider the project manager role and how they can drive a cohesive approach forward.
- Use a project mentor to offer new advisers support in planning and to help partners understand how Arts Award can run alongside their regular offer to young people.
- Project mentors can share learning and resources across organisations.
- Project mentors can manage regular meetings and communications.

### 3. The Programmes

#### **Bromley and Bexley Libraries**

##### **Borough: Bromley and Bexley**

<https://arena.yourlondonlibrary.net/web/bromley/home>

<https://arena.yourlondonlibrary.net/web/bexley/libraries>

**Context:** Bromley and Bexley had 3 and 5 active Arts Award centres (respectively) in 2014-15.

Neither of these boroughs had any Arts Award Explore delivered in that year. Bromley and Bexley Libraries are a shared library service who wanted to increase the number of libraries delivering Arts Award and to increase the number of levels awarded in their boroughs. They did this by developing their pre-existing Chatterbooks reading groups to deliver Arts Award Explore. Chatterbooks Groups are monthly reading groups for children aged 8 -11. They are held in all Bexley and Bromley libraries and run by library staff. The groups are well established and offer a flexible model that is coordinated by The Reading Agency in libraries and schools and is supported by publishers.

The project lasted 4 weeks, took place in four libraries and was integrated into the Spine Festival, involving performance poets and an independent drama teacher. This partnership included 19 staff members across boroughs, libraries and arts organisations. Whilst making use of library materials and staff expertise, they aimed to develop skills, models and toolkits for staff to roll out the award to other Chatterbooks groups in the future. 47 young people completed portfolios for moderation.

In the planning phase, they had assumed the reading groups would form the core of participants, but it turned out that over fifty percent of the attendees were new to the reading groups. There was initial concern around recruitment, but once the project was underway they were in fact oversubscribed. This demonstrates interest and demand in Arts Award in these areas.

**Challenges:** Surveys conducted with staff highlighted that the benefits of the programme needed to be communicated to both library managers and branch staff. Additionally, straight forward reporting and communication amongst staff members were needed and branch staff needed to have more input into the planning phase:

*"It is great to have outside people coming in to keep up the momentum and variety. It would also be good to have some more input into the planning, and maybe a choice of activities. We would have loved to take the children on a trip to a gallery".*

Staff also found that evidencing through folders and scrapbooks was an easier and more flexible approach for them than using the pre-determined Arts Award logbooks.

**Future:** In future programmes, this partnership plans to let the libraries be more autonomous in their delivery and to create scrapbooks as portfolios rather than using the logbook method. They found that there should ideally be a minimum of 3 staff on each delivery, identified the optimum length and frequency of sessions and how many young people they can successfully accommodate. Chatterbooks monthly reading groups are a good starting point for recruitment, but a longer programme will likely be targeted at a wider group. This development programme demonstrated that Arts Award Explore can successfully be delivered in libraries and that there is interest in Arts Award from librarians, carers and young people alike.

## **Eastside Educational Trust**

### **Borough: Redbridge**

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

**Context:** In 2014-15, there were 6 active and 16 non active Arts Award centres in Redbridge. Eastside Educational Trust is an arts education charity that chose to work in Redbridge to provide a framework for inactive school based Arts Award centres to forge links with cultural organisations. They considered what needs to happen in order to make Arts Award progression easier for schools and for cultural organisations to offer Arts Award support in a meaningful and engaging way. In order to do this, they mapped Arts Award into the curriculum for both GCSE and BTEC and created supporter packs to help local organisations develop their offer.

Eastside worked with 61 young people in total, at Arts Award Silver and also started Arts Award Gold with 5 of the participating students.

**Partners:** Eastside worked with a Year 10 GCSE class at Seven Kings School on their Media and Communication qualification and with Redbridge College on BTEC levels 2 and 3. Eastside provided a project manager, who acted as a mentor for the programme and consulted with the schools at key stages throughout the process. They worked closely with the Picture House education team and made contact with over seven local arts organisations.

To begin with, Eastside met with the Picture House team and highlighted areas of the programme they already ran which could support the Arts Award. For example, their work experience offer, screenings specifically for young people, and holiday clubs. The Picture House education team could see the value of supporting the Arts Award and put forward one of their education officers to attend Bronze and Silver Arts Award training. They provided discounted tickets for the young people's trip and hosted an 'industry day' for the young people to learn more about career pathways and professionals.

**Challenges:** Eastside found that they needed to provide more mentoring and project management support than they had originally anticipated. There was some anxiety from new advisers about evidence collection and how to create the portfolios. For example, Redbridge College were concerned about their student's blogs and so Eastside ran a session with the students and met with staff to explain how they could be used in their Arts Award portfolios.

The partners found it challenging to do the more practical Arts Award elements within the school time table. They had to work sessions in around other classes, and therefore required the wider school and head teacher's full commitment so that they could be flexible with session scheduling where necessary.

There was also some difficulty around moderations, as they had to be done across different centres. This pushed the moderation date back and they therefore clashed with exams and end of term.

**Successes:** Teachers found that the curriculum mapping was especially useful. It included a breakdown of each Arts Award unit, the type of evidence needed and how the evidence could be used across BTEC, GCSE and the Arts Award. These types of shortcuts made it more manageable for teachers to map the award into an already busy curriculum. The partnerships also found that Silver Arts Award translates particularly well through to BTEC, and teachers fed back that having a weekly break down and timeline from Eastside was hugely helpful in their planning.

Eastside found that Arts Award Supporter organisations in the borough were keen to better support local schools. They offered event space, opportunities for students to volunteer at their premises, and meetings with a range of professionals. Although they had previously been to meetings about Arts Award they did not see a clear way to progress with it until now. They were also unsure if schools were in fact interested in forming partnerships. Meanwhile, teachers fed back that they would like local organisations to support them by offering activities that inform the young people's film projects, opportunities to interview professionals, check in sessions with Arts Award trained practitioners and feedback to the young people on their artistic processes.

*"When meeting the professionals they get the sense that they can learn a lot from them and it really adds value to their curriculum" Seven Kings school*

*"The end goal of having the Picture House to show their films in has really motivated them. It has been really positive" Redbridge College*

Eastside are encouraging supporters to run introductory Arts Award sessions in order to inspire schools and share their offers. They have created a detailed list of how supporters can do this, as well as a breakdown of the Silver Arts Award and the stages in which support is most needed. This development programme has equipped Redbridge with useful resources, new partnerships, a better dialogue between schools and supporters and clearer progression routes through Arts Award.

## **Royal Borough of Kingston**

### **Borough: Kingston**

<http://www.kingstonarts.co.uk/>

**Context:** In 2014-15, Kingston had 3 active Arts Award Centres and offered just 3 out of the 5 Arts Award Levels. Kingston's Music Service and the Royal Borough of Kingston Arts Commissioner worked to identify how the borough can create an infrastructure that offers young people in Kingston a greater range of opportunities to engage and progress within the Arts Award framework.

They formed a consortium with Anstee Bridge, Rose Theatre, Stanley Picker Gallery, Lovelace Primary school, Kingston Primary school and Lime tree Primary School for four projects. They worked with a total of 47 pupils, across drama, music, visual arts and fashion. They offered Discover, Explore and Bronze Arts Awards and developed an Arts Award network which enables local organisations to work collectively.

**Planning:** Planning the development programme was challenging, because delivery took place across multiple organisations and time frames. A clear project plan, regular meetings and established lines of communication were helpful in tackling this. The music service's role in managing the programme and providing advice and guidance was invaluable. The consortium reflected that next time; they would add an initial meeting between experienced and new Arts Award advisers into their planning phase.

**Outputs:** The consortium found that only a few organisations in Kingston had delivered Arts Award before, but that there was a keen interest in offering it. Once they were delivering, there were concerns across organisations around log books and the level of written work that needs to be supplied. This highlighted the need to share ideas more and to provide case studies for learning across organisations. The consortium therefore set up a network which identifies barriers to Arts Award uptake and meets regularly to discuss opportunities for collaboration and resource sharing. Going forward, this will be project managed by Kingston's Arts Commissioner. The final network meeting as part of this programme had 20 people in attendance and focused on the practical elements of Arts Award; they shared examples of log books and resources and discussed how moderations vary at different levels.

**Challenges:** The main challenges faced across the programme were around time management, evidence collection and portfolios. A few of the organisations found that the log books didn't fully represent all the creative work the young people accomplished. They found that they naturally had records of the young people's experience, such as videos and scrapbooks, which were easier to include as an embedded part of the project.

*"We felt it had to be shoehorned in rather than embedded. The logbooks were too prescriptive – especially for the older young people. Filming our own videos worked well and creative evidence collection activities worked best. The young people engaged with the arts and enjoyed being critical. They were suddenly in an environment where they could tell each other what they think was positive and what needed improving. This leadership element was particularly useful. It was great to have peer to peer learning".*

*"Because the group were quite young, they needed a lot of guidance with the log books, which was hard and time intensive if anyone missed a session. Delivering the award makes a lot more sense now that I've done it once; I definitely think it will be easier next time as I can be more flexible with it."*

*“Arts Award is about the journey for the young people and them being reflective, not just the art form or the qualification. If you make your own creative way to capture the evidence then you can make it embed it in the process and journey.”*

**Successes:** Arts Award’s focus on reflection and leadership was a recurring positive outcome for the organisations. Anstee Bridge, for instance, had students working towards their Silver Arts Award deliver Discover for Year 3 pupils at Limetree School. It culminated in an event for 200 people at the Rose theatre, with certificates presented by the mayor of Kingston. Anstee Bridge would like to roll this programme out to more schools and have already been approached by several schools.

*“Arts Award supports individual learning and nurtures a sense of achievement for vulnerable, disengaged students”*

*“It made them think about why they want to do something and what inspires them. They liked the breadth of finding out about musicians and giving creative presentations”.*

This development programme brought organisations together across sectors, art forms and Arts Award levels. It enabled them to learn from each other and develop a more joined up approach so that young people in the borough can more easily access and progress through Arts Award.



## Swiss Cottage School, Development and Research Centre

**Borough: Bromley**

<http://swisscottage.camden.sch.uk/>

**Context:** With only 3 active Arts Award Centres in 2014-15, Bromley had low Arts Award participation rates. Swiss Cottage School, Development and Research Centre are an all-age provision, working with learners with a range of complex needs, including autism and Profound and multiple Learning Disabilities. They partnered with Bromley based schools; Riverside Special School and Marjorie *McClure School*, in order to use their teaching school resources to help SEND learners overcome barriers to achieving Arts Award. They wanted to use teaching school resources to help other schools build capacity, learn how to deliver Arts Award and develop new partnerships. They did this through support visits and moderation support. They engaged a total of 28 young people in a day of arts workshops, leading to a mixture of Bronze and Explore Arts Awards.

**Outputs:** Initially, Swiss Cottage School planned to run 'Arts Award Activity Days', which would culminate in performances. Throughout the course of the programme, they decided that a workshop day which focused on process would be more beneficial to the young people than a sharing or performance day. The performance element was not necessary and would in fact limit participation for some young people.

They therefore set up a workshop day with Corali Dance Company and a freelance visual artist. It was flexible and free flowing and allowed *advisers to come together at the end of the day to discuss and compare portfolios*. There is now scope for these workshop days to continue, with multiple workshops occurring throughout year.

**Challenge:** One key challenge Swiss Cottage School faced was timetabling the Arts Award programme with their partners and mapping it into the school year. Next time, they would set the dates with their stakeholders in the planning phase rather than fitting them in retrospectively.

The geographical location of partnerships was also a challenge. Swiss Cottage School found that travel was an obstacle for getting their young people to the workshop day, so changed their focus to supporting Bromley based schools in a mentoring role. They are currently searching for more local contacts to create a partnership where their learners can participate too.

**Learning:** Through the programme, they found that the Development and Research Centre is well situated to offer resources such as a meeting space for training, support from Specialist Leaders in Education and qualitative assessment expertise. The teaching school's provision to send teachers out to support was invaluable and is definitely something they plan to utilise more with regards to Arts Award.

As part of this development programme, Swiss Cottage School learned the value of simplifying their offer. Rather than planning high profile days, they found that local workshops and mentoring support were better fit for purpose. Future partnerships will be shaped with partners from their conception, to ensure they are manageable for all involved.

**Success:** One key success they experienced was running an SEND focused Arts Award training day. This focus enabled them to cover more ground across different Arts Award levels, team build and share practice about how to creatively capture evidence for portfolio building.

*"It was particularly useful to have the training with practitioners from other SEN schools because I was able to reflect on my own practice. Many of the other practitioners had experience in recording*

*and documenting and were used to the framework, it was easy to listen and learn from their experience”.*

Swiss Cottage School also found that they are used to delivering qualitative assessments. This was a positive realisation for the teachers as it gave them confidence to deliver Arts Award in the future:

*“The training was perfect for all of our students, what I actually realised throughout the day was that we are already doing these awards without recognising it. Both Discover and Explore are, I believe, within reach of every student in our school. It is such a perfect way to enable our students to obtain a certificate regardless of their learning levels”*

The main success from the arts workshop day was the embedding of local partnerships. Riverside School and Marjorie McClure School worked together for the first time and found that their offers are complementary to each other. Where Riverside School have a performing arts expertise, Marjorie McClure School have visual art knowledge. They intend to work together more closely in the future so that this compatibility can enhance their delivery. The Swiss Cottage School Arts Award team will also continue visits to Riverside School, enabling them to take advantage of its fantastic performing arts resources.

*"We found our students completely engaged and thoroughly enjoyed all the activities. They talked about the experience all the way back to school, which is praise indeed from our students!"*

## The Museum of London Docklands

**Borough: Lewisham**

[www.museumoflondon.org.uk/museum-london-docklands](http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/museum-london-docklands)

**Context:** Despite Lewisham having 41 registered Arts Award centres, only 6 were active in 2014-15. The Museum of London Docklands (MoL) worked with The Fostering Network to set up a partnership introducing Lewisham based looked after children and foster carers to Arts Award. They delivered a workshop programme which led to moderation at the Discover level for 14 participants. The programme aimed to actively involve the children and young people, providing a sense of personal progression and developing a sense of ownership and belonging – all of which are vital for building the resilience of looked after children.

**Partnerships:** They worked with Chocolate Films over February 2016 half term, for 3 hours per day. The recruitment process and pastoral care was led by The Fostering Network and the delivery and arts partnerships were managed by the Museum of London. In addition to project management staff from MoL, there was an Educational Champion from the fostering network present every day, which demonstrated interest and commitment from both sides of the partnership. The roles of each partner were very clear, so they were able to specifically communicate around the young people's needs and what they wanted to get out of this. This new partnership was a particular strength of the programme.

**Outputs:** The project led to a Family Festival weekend, where people were invited to watch the young people's final film. There was also a professionals' skills sharing morning for other museums, arts organisations and fostering services to learn from this development programme. With 32 attendees, there was a good level of interest in this event. MoL plan to focus more on these professional development opportunities in the future by extending it into a full day conversation and inviting other partnerships and programmes to speak about their work with looked after children.

**Challenges:** The biggest challenge for the programme was trying to incorporate technology for digital learning. Due to safeguarding issues, the iPads that were being used had to be removed from the project, which meant the young people had to use Arts Award's log books to document their learning. This didn't reflect the project's digital focus and made the project feel more like school for the young people. MoL also found that an extra staff member was needed for pulling together portfolio evidence and that in the future, a group this large will need longer than a week.

**Successes:** Other successes for this programme included sufficient planning time and dedicated meetings to set up the partnership, clear project management and expectations and an embedded evaluation that used the Action Research approach first introduced for this report. It was particularly beneficial that the Fostering Network's Education Champion had pre-existing relationships with the young people and that the MoL learning spaces enabled the young people to feel safe and comfortable to participate.

This development programme saw an exciting new partnership form, brought very different expertise together, and identified an interest from museums, arts organisations and fostering services for more programmes of this kind.

#### **4. Conclusions**

**Arts Award is a great way for children and young people to be inspired by and enjoy the arts. It offers a framework that partners across sectors can use to help young people develop and share their creativity and skills. Arts Award emphasises the importance of process and reflection and can easily be embedded into pre-existing programmes.**

**The 2015-16 development programmes all found that the experience, rather than the outcome was most important for the young people. Arts Award is a tool that can be applied to enhance projects and can and should be used creatively and flexibly wherever possible.**

**All the programmes highlighted the importance of communicating Arts Award's benefits to their partners. They expressed how essential it is to find ways to tie Arts Award in to other modes of learning and make the process transparent and accessible.**

**This area development programme reached over 200 young people, with 151 of them sending their Arts Award portfolios for moderation. It offered organisations a chance to develop their knowledge about what was being offered in a specific borough or to a target group of young people. They built lasting relationships between local organisations and developed models that they will continue to use going forward. They have shared their professional learning across networks, sectors and partnerships and have worked towards enhancing provision in areas of low Arts Award engagement.**