**Artsmark FAQs**

**Registration**

**What happens once I’ve registered?**

You will receive confirmation from the Arts Council as well as your invoice. A New Direction will then invite you to a development day.

**Development Days**

**What happens at a development day?**

Together with peers from other schools across the capital you will gain a full understanding of the Artsmark process and take part in activities to help you write your statement of commitment. These will include exercises to review current provision and to help develop an action plan. There will be opportunities to share ideas and examples of good practice with others.

**Why do we have to send two members of staff, including a member of SLT?**

By involving SLT from the start, you can ensure that your arts and culture provision will be an integral element of school life and align with whole school improvement strategies. Part of the development day is spent devising an action plan that will need senior leadership buy-in from the start. Previous participants have commented that having a whole day to plan, away from the pressures of the school day, has helped them to be both creative and productive.

**Statement of Commitment**

**Is there any guidance on planning and completing the statement of commitment?**

This will be covered in detail at your development day. You can also find guidance on the Artsmark website here

<http://www.artsmark.org.uk/get-involved/how-artsmark-works>

<http://artsmark.org.uk/sites/default/files/Artsmark%20award%20guidance%20and%20FAQs.pdf>

**Is there a template/example for the action plan (question 4)?**

The Arts Council prefers not to offer exemplars; each school’s Artsmark plan will be unique and there is no ‘right way’ to do it. AND has a useful checklist that you might find helpful when getting ready to submit your statement.

All responses are to be written as ‘free text’ with no charts or tables. Bullet points and sub-headings are fine.

**Is it OK to focus on one thing in our action plan?**

Absolutely. You are aiming to marry whole school priorities with addressing areas for development in your arts and culture provision, but it’s fine to concentrate on one or two areas. That way, your plans will be realistic and achievable.

**Where can we find the statement of commitment form?**

All forms can be found here

<http://www.artsmark.org.uk/get-involved/how-artsmark-works>

**How strict is the word limit for each question?**

Arts Council England asks that you respect the 500 word limit for each section. A few words over may get through, but exceeding the limit can result in your having to re-edit your statement.

**Where do we send the completed form?**

artsmark@artscouncil.org.uk

**What about signing it?**

The statement needs to be signed by your head teacher and chair of governors. Simply typing in their names will not be sufficient. If they don’t have an electronic signature, they could print the final page, sign it and then scan it.

Unsigned forms are always returned and recorded as ‘incomplete’.

**What if we’re completely off track with our statement of commitment?**

While you won’t receive detailed feedback on your statement, Arts Council England will refer it back to A New Direction if they feel it doesn’t serve you as a good baseline. You will then be offered further support to help you revise and then re-submit it.

**How long do we have to deliver our action plan?**

**Up to** two years after you submit your statement of commitment.

**Artsmark Support Surgeries**

**What is an Artsmark support surgery?**

You may find you need some extra help after your development day. Support with devising an action plan, getting to grips with the new emphasis on evaluating impact and completing that statement of commitment are all included in our offer. Sessions will draw on the knowledge and experience of your peers in a series of facilitated exercises. They will help you to ask questions, to clarify your thinking around objectives and outcomes and to communicate these in your Artsmark documents.

Typically, surgeries will be two-hour twilight sessions for up to 15 participants. Details of dates and venues can be found on the AND website.

**Case Study**

**Where can we find the case study form?**

All Artsmark forms can be found here

<http://www.artsmark.org.uk/get-involved/how-artsmark-works>

**Are there case study exemplars available?**

The Arts Council prefers to offer exemplars; each school’s Artsmark journey will be unique and there is no ‘right way’ to do it. Your case study should reflect back on your statement of commitment and show **what has changed** as a result of the actions you took. It’s all about the impact.

**Can we attach other evidence?**

No. Please don’t send any supporting material with your case study. You can, of course, refer to the evidence you have gathered, including data, observations, surveys, children’s work, quotes, photos and film.

**When should we send the completed case study?**

There are three dates set for the academic year 2016 – 2017:

16th December

31st March

17th July

Schools that submit their case studies by these dates will be notified of their award at the beginning of the following term.

**Levelling**

**Is it possible to gain a higher (or lower) level than we bid for?**

You will be awarded a level based on the information you give in your statement of commitment and your case study. The panel will make a judgment on this that may differ from your own assessment. If you do not meet the criteria for the silver award, you will be offered further support from A New Direction.

**How will we find out which level we have been awarded?**

Arts Council England will inform you by the beginning of the following term.

**What will we get to celebrate our new award?**

Arts Council England has commissioned artist, Coralie Bickford Smith, to design the new Artsmark certificates. See here for more information

<http://www.artsmark.org.uk/top-childrens-author-designs-new-artsmark-certificates-and-plaques>

Once your level has been determined, you will receive your certificate. A plaque will be available to purchase.

**General**

**We’re stuck! Where can we find support?**

A New Direction is running a programme of support surgeries covering areas such as designing an effective action plan, completing your statement of commitment, evaluating impact and writing a persuasive case study. To see the full programme and to book a free place, go to

<https://www.anewdirection.org.uk/what-we-do/artsmark>

For individual enquiries, contact

artsmark@anewdirection.org.uk

**How can we find quality arts partners to work with?**

**As** well as sharing ideas with other local schools, you can find useful information on our ANDtogether page

<https://www.andtogether.london/>

**What further support is available from our local bridge?**

As well as supporting Artsmark specifically, A New Direction runs an annual programme for schools that includes skills-based Inset in the arts, a leadership development programme, teachers’ evenings in some of London’s best cultural venues and support for schools wanting to deliver Arts Award.

You can find information here

<https://www.anewdirection.org.uk/what-we-do/schools>

You might also want to download our Teachers’ Toolkit, a free resource in seven sections that helps you to audit and develop your arts and culture provision. You can find it here

<https://www.anewdirection.org.uk/resources/teachers-toolkit>