

# Statement of Commitment toolkit

Tips for completing your  
Statement of Commitment



**The Statement of Commitment is the first document you'll send to Arts Council England to determine your Artsmark award. It sets a baseline and is a valuable reference point as you progress through the Artsmark journey.**

In this toolkit, we would like to offer some tips to help you get the most from the process of completing it. Each statement will be different so we are not offering exemplars, but we will take you through each question and consider what needs to be included.

Be sure to read through the guidelines at the beginning of the Statement of Commitment before you start.

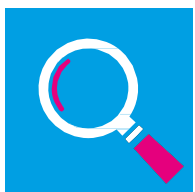
# A collaborative effort

It's difficult to write anything by committee, but bear in mind that completing the statement shouldn't be the work of one person. It should reflect a whole school vision and be shared as a celebration of strengths and a plan of action.

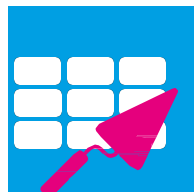
## Tips for collaboration

- » Use a staff INSET or team meeting to further develop the notes you made on the Development Day
- » Use a class or year group assembly to gather students' ideas about the arts in your school (see Section 3 of the Self-Assessment Framework)
- » Display your Artsmark plan of action as a working document on a wall in a staff room or department office to ensure that everyone can monitor progress
- » Plan in opportunities to share updates on your Artsmark journey with the children, parents and carers

# Top 10 tips for your Artsmark Statement of Commitment



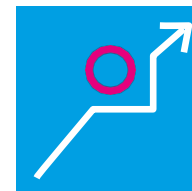
1. **Read** the questions and address **all** elements.



2. **Build** on existing priorities.



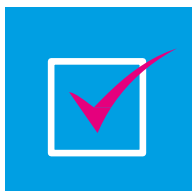
3. Ensure a **logical progression** from one question to the next.



4. Anticipate the final statement and **plan for impact** and change.



5. **Share** the statement with your colleagues.



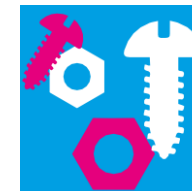
6. **Address all** the criteria in the self-assessment framework.



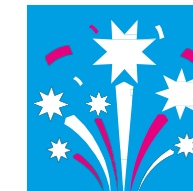
7. Keep in mind and use the language of the **quality principles** throughout.



8. Take advantage of **ongoing support** from A New Direction.



9. **Get the nuts and bolts right**: the name of your setting, your DfE number and the word count for each question.



10. **Celebrate** your offer and **share** your passion for arts and culture.

**If you need a bit  
more support with  
the individual  
questions, here  
goes!**

**Context** ➤

**Question 1** ➤

**Question 2** ➤

**Question 3** ➤

**Question 4** ➤

**Question 5** ➤

**Question 6** ➤

# Context

Describe the context of your school or education setting (for example your phase of education, establishment type, location, number on roll and so on).

No more than 150 words

The most recent versions of the Statement of Commitment have a space for you to write about your setting's context.

You may want to include details about

- » specialisms,
- » demographics
- » SEND provision
- » Have you joined a Multi-Academy Trust or Federation?
- » Has the governance structure in your setting recently changed?
- » Has your setting undergone expansion?

You can download the template from the Artsmark website [here](#).

# Question 1

How do arts and culture currently play a role within your setting's strategic values?

No more than 500 words

In question 1, it's tempting to want to list and showcase all the great things your school is doing in terms of arts and culture, but look first at the self-assessment framework, particularly the section on values on ethos.

Values are enduring and distinctive beliefs and are an essential part of developing your vision and strategy.

## Consider the role arts and culture play in

- » Your setting's core values, mission statement, Rights Respecting agenda, faith school (or other) ethos
- » Programmes such as Growth Mindset or Building Learning Power
- » Developing children's creative expression
- » Development of the whole child: personal qualities such as confidence and resilience, transferable skills such as team-building and problem-solving
- » Opening up career pathways
- » Access and inclusion
- » Building cultural capital
- » Addressing wider issues such as social mobility, gender equality, LGBTQ+, the environment
- » Citizenship and British values
- » Love of learning and making connections across disciplines
- » Wellbeing and mental health
- » Behaviour, motivation, aspiration

How do the arts support the delivery of social, moral, spiritual and cultural (SMSC) education?

# Question 2

How and why will your Artsmark journey contribute to the priorities in your strategic improvement plan?

No more than 500 words

Perhaps your school improvement plan prioritises 'closing the gap' between groups of students, improving writing, developing a specific art form or increasing staff confidence in teaching arts subjects. These can make a great focus for your Artsmark journey.

By all means quote directly from your school improvement plan and explain how Artsmark can help you to deliver on actions and priorities.

Be selective. It's fine to choose one or two points and develop a detailed plan to address them rather than trying to cover everything in one Artsmark cycle.

Arts Council England encourages settings to make use of the two-year period so they can measure impact **over time**. Don't be too eager to complete the journey without having time and capacity to demonstrate this fully.

Being part of the Artsmark Community enables you to share ideas and practice with other schools and organisations. Here are some of the themes you might consider:

- » Excellence in teaching and learning
- » Development of pedagogy
- » Real world connections, authentic experiences
- » Artsmark as a driver of (systemic) change
- » Celebration and reward
- » A catalyst for exploring new art forms
- » A creative manifesto
- » Shared vision and shared ownership
- » Community engagement
- » New partnerships
- » A framework for self-assessment
- » A call for action research
- » Being part of a network of like-minded settings and cultural organisations

**“By all means, quote directly from your school improvement plan”**



# Question 3

Looking at the Artsmark criteria, where does your setting currently have strengths and where would you like to develop?

No more than 500 words

The [Self-Assessment Framework](#) is an important document that you will need to refer to throughout the Artsmark cycle.

Work through all eight of these criteria and offer strong examples of how you meet them.

1. Values and ethos
2. Leadership
3. Children and young people
4. Curriculum design
5. Range of offer
6. CPD
7. Partnerships
8. Equality and diversity

You can write a short paragraph for each of these criteria and work through the list systematically or you can group your strengths and areas for development in separate sections.

Look back at the notes you made at the Artsmark Development Day. Consult with other colleagues to ensure you paint an accurate and rounded picture of your setting.

You will be able to address gaps and areas for development in the questions that follow. Arts Council England will be looking for progression through your Artsmark journey. Use the criteria to drive this throughout.



# Question 4

What are the goals and ambitions for your Artsmark journey and what steps will you take to achieve these?

No more than 500 words

In this question, you can concentrate on aims, objectives and activity that will shape your Artsmark journey.

An **aim** reflects general direction or intent and long-term outcomes. These prompts might be useful:

- » Ambition/Vision
- » Design
- » Purpose
- » Intention

Next, you could consider **objectives**: short-term targets and specific goals. Are yours SMART?

Do they relate to your school improvement priorities and the development areas already identified in previous questions?

Do they take into account the Artsmark criteria in the [Self-assessment Framework](#) and the seven [Quality Principles](#)?

Finally, what are the main **activities** that will help you to achieve your aims and objectives? Give a summary; you don't need to list every task!

Do not include a chart or table in this or any other response. Use free text only.

You may have your own planning templates but you could also consider using the **logic model** or developing your own **theory of change**.

Our document on **evaluating impact** can be found [here](#).

Some schools have found it useful to have their Artsmark plan of action printed out on a wall in a staff room or department office to ensure that all members of staff involved can monitor progress and check milestones as they are completed.

## SMART objectives

Specific

Measurable

Achievable

Relevant

Time-bound

# Question 5

What support will you need and what resources will you commit to achieve your goals and ambitions?

No more than 500 words

This question offers you the opportunity to review your plans as outlined in your previous responses. How will you ensure their successful implementation?

You might find it useful to use the headings below to structure your response. You don't have to include them all if they aren't relevant to you.

**Space and time:** where and when will your activities take place? Is there capacity within the timetable? Will you need a large or special space for some of your activities? **Have you factored in planning and evaluation time?**

**Cost:** will your actions be covered from within your existing budget or will you have to bid for/raise more funds?

**Human resources:** who will be responsible for each element in your plan? Will you have an arts team? What role will students play?

**Evaluation:** [plan for this](#). It won't happen by itself and it's the element of most action plans that is neglected and/or left until the end.

**Materials and equipment**

**Expertise:** what skills do the people in your school community already have? What will you need to source from outside?

**Systems:** will you need to set up new systems, e.g. for tracking, documenting and [gathering evidence](#)?



# Question 6

How will you know you have achieved your goals and ambitions? What will success look like and how will you evidence it in the Statement of Impact?

No more than 500 words

Success criteria will be built into your plan of action. Write about them here and indicate how you will determine whether/when they have been achieved.

Link them to the [Self-assessment Framework](#) criteria and [Quality Principles](#).

Anticipate the questions in the [Statement of Impact](#).

Take time to [develop systems for effective monitoring](#) and evaluation and evidence-gathering. This will need to be a collaborative endeavour and include check-in points along the way as well as formative and summative assessment.

Your Statement of Impact will be strengthened by including a range of voices (from staff, pupils and community) and a clear indication that monitoring and evidence-gathering was systematic.

Consider a range of evidence: data, observations, surveys and questionnaires, quotes, parent feedback, meeting notes and minutes, planning and review documents, social media, photos, film. Having this range of evidence will help you when you come to write your Statement of Impact.

This evidence will show the **impact** of your interventions, and how you have met the Artsmark criteria and quality principles.

Arts Council England encourages settings to make use of the two-year period so they can measure impact **over time**. Don't be too eager to complete the journey without having time and capacity to demonstrate this fully.

# And finally...

## **Support for Artsmark schools:**

- » [1:1 telephone support](#) in developing your offer, guidance on delivery and detailed feedback on paperwork
- » [Face to face support surgeries](#) held throughout the year
- » [Practical online resources](#) and supporting documents
- » Opportunities to **connect with leading cultural organisations**
- » CPD – our [Creative INSET programme](#), delivered by Artsmark Partners
- » [Artsmark Connects](#) – twilight CPD and networking events for teachers and cultural organisations

When it comes to the nuts and bolts, **all the practical information you need to be able to submit the statement can be found on page one of the document template.** The most common reasons for the statement to be returned by Arts Council England are:

- » the DfE number is wrong or missing a digit
- » one or both of the required approvals are missing
- » the word count limit has been exceeded in one or more responses. This rule is very strictly applied.
- » charts, tables or photos have been included in the responses. They must all be in free text. Bullet points and sub-headings can be used, but lists can be dry and lacking context so narrative and explanation are welcomed.

If Arts Council England feels that your statement doesn't serve you as a strong baseline for your Artsmark journey, you will be put in contact with us at A New Direction. We can help you to redraft and submit it.

Once your Statement of Commitment has been accepted, you can start to deliver your action plan. Note that any activity delivered before that cannot be included in your Statement of Impact.

## **A New Direction helps London create, think and learn.**

Through our partnerships we create positive change across schools, education and communities to ensure that young people get the most out of London's extraordinary creative and cultural offer.

We want a London where :

- » cultural education is the best in the world
- » young people are able to access and influence culture
- » the right platforms are in place to identify and nourish young people's creative talents

This is the right of all young Londoners - regardless of wealth, geography or luck.

Find out more about how we work, the programmes and events we run, and opportunities to engage at [anewdirection.org.uk](http://anewdirection.org.uk).

**[anewdirection.org.uk](http://anewdirection.org.uk)**

**A\_New\_Direction**