

How Artsmark can support recovery in schools

Many people would agree that the generosity of artists and entertainers during the lockdown has lifted spirits, stimulated creative activity and offered some light relief. Engaging in making art, music, writing and even dancing has given us a sense of purpose and kept us mentally, spiritually and physically fit.

Life in your school or setting probably looks very different at the moment, and Artsmark may not be at the top of your priority list. However, even if you're just thinking about registering in the future or if you're mid-way through the journey and putting the paperwork on hold, the self-assessment framework might help shape your thinking about arts and culture and the positive role they could play in your current offer.

Sharing skills, wellbeing, creative use of space and resources, communication and inclusion are themes that the Artsmark process can support and enhance.

Free to download, the [Artsmark self-assessment framework](#) is a great tool for auditing, reflecting and evaluating. If your existing action plan has been de-railed, you could use the framework to help you think about how to adapt and deliver it in these new circumstances.

Let's look at each of the eight Artsmark criteria in turn and suggest some questions and points for discussion as well as some practical activities and useful links.

Values & Ethos

Questions

- » If physical access to school is restricted, how are you using your online presence to reflect the richness of arts and culture in your setting?
- » How can the arts enhance the physical space in your school when there are many new rules and practices? (Think about visuals, sound and other sensory stimuli)

Silver

- » What regular cultural activity can you offer (safely) over a period of time through online meeting platforms or clubs where social distancing is possible?
- » Can you offer an accreditation to reward sustained commitment to a piece of work/ portfolio/ research project?
- » Would you consider offering [Arts Award](#) to some of your students as a way of motivating, mentoring, supporting and challenging them?

Gold

- » How can arts organisations' online offer contribute to students' cultural capital?
- » What is currently available that might have been difficult to access before?
- » What role can your setting play in helping students to navigate what's out there?

Platinum

- » What are the barriers to offering some GCSE subjects such as drama and dance, given that they involve contact and collaboration? How will you manage these?
- » How have professional practitioners approached this?
- » How can the use of film and audio recording support delivery?

Practical Activities

- » Devise a celebration to mark a transition, a significant milestone or the talents of your school community.
- » Review your current reward system. Are there any additional rewards that can be offered in recognition of achievements in arts and culture?

Leadership

Questions

- » What role can the SLT play in promoting arts and culture through signposting, modelling or online activity such as a quiz or challenge?

Silver

- » Have your ambitions for arts and culture changed during the lockdown? How?
- » Are you using the arts as a vehicle for escapism/supporting wellbeing or as a way to understand challenges, hopes and fears?

Gold

- » What does 'taking responsibility' (for arts and cultural provision) look like now?
- » What support can leaders and governors offer to staff to give them permission and confidence?

Platinum

- » How many other settings are you working with and what can you offer them from your own experience of working during and since the lockdown?

Practical Activities

- » A New Direction's website lists all Artsmark registered and awarded schools. Select two or three that have been awarded and visit their websites. Do their responses to the current situation reference arts and culture? How?
- » Review minutes from governors' meetings over the last year. How many references can you find to arts and culture? What practical steps could you take to increase the status of the arts within the governing body?

Children & Young People

Questions

- » At a time when children are learning at home or may feel disengaged with their education, what creative activities can settings facilitate to ensure students feel they have a voice?

Silver

- » Given some of the limitations of health and safety around Covid-19, how can you ensure that the art in your school is created and displayed effectively?

Gold

- » As students are transitioning back into school, in order for them to take ownership of their engagement and personal progression, how can you involve students in planning and delivering authentic arts and cultural experiences?

Platinum

- » During lockdown many students have developed their own creative skills. How can your setting provide opportunities for them to share their arts skills with others and take a leadership role?

Practical Activities

- » Set up your own 'arts council' which embeds student voice across school arts projects. Use the [Quality Principles](#) to guide your Advisory Group/Pupil Voice/Arts Council.
- » Create a digital art installation bringing together all the work created at home and in school which can be celebrated and shared with all key stakeholders
- » Run a student led Arts Week. Your 'arts council' could meet, plan the project and decide on a theme for the week.

Curriculum Design

Questions

- » As you plan work for both children in school and those remaining at home, how will you ensure that a broad arts and culture curriculum is still available?

Silver

- » How can you use an arts and culture curriculum to help children and young people explore or make connections in other subjects?

Gold

- » The Artsmark award is designed to use the arts to support whole school improvement. Thinking about your current planning for your recovery curriculum, how will you ensure that your arts and cultural provision can develop your approach to pedagogy in these uncertain times?

Platinum

- » How will you adapt your arts and culture curriculum to meet the evolving situation at school?
- » How could you support other settings to design their (recovery) curriculum?

Practical Activities

- » Consider your current arts and culture provision. Use the following headings to map your existing provision so that you can identify where you can develop more opportunities for creativity across the curriculum. (1) Create (2) Compose (3) Perform (4) Visit (5) Experience (6) Participate (7) Evaluate (8) Reflect (9) Understand (10) Know.
- » Identify the key pedagogical approaches used in your setting and create a map of how these approaches can be used to develop your arts and culture provision. E.g. Growth Mind Set, Philosophy for Children, Problem Solving, Critical Thinking and Mastery.
- » Develop a creative curriculum planning resources to share with your partner schools. Read Barry Carpenter think piece on '[A recovery curriculum](#)'. Loss and Life for our children and schools post pandemic. This document focuses on 5 key levers for developing a curriculum that responds to the scale of impact of the Covid-19 epidemic. (1) Relationships (2) Community (3) Transparent Curriculum (4) Metacognition (5) Space.

Range of offer

Questions

- » With many children and young people engaging with creative activities at home during lockdown, what opportunities can you provide in your setting for students to share their creative projects, ideas and skills?

Silver

- » Whilst the school is in transition, what opportunities are there for arts activities that go beyond formal teaching?

Gold

- » How will you gather evidence to illustrate that you have had an established arts and cultural offer in the past?
- » How will you continue to provide a range of opportunities for children and young people to engage in the arts both in and outside of curriculum time.

Platinum

- » How can you evidence that children and young people are engaging in challenging arts and cultural activity that is stretching their knowledge, skills and understanding?

Practical Activities

- » Signpost students and their families to creative online resources in our database called [Lookup](#) which is an online tool designed to navigate, search and engage with arts and cultural organisations.

- » Using our resource '[Evaluating Impact](#)' you can use the logic model to chart the success of a previous arts or cultural project/activity. You can also use this model to plan for future arts and cultural provision.
- » The Artsmark Award requires settings to demonstrate the seven Quality Principles created by Arts Council England to inspire planning for high quality arts learning experiences. The Quality Principles can be used as a tool to devise questions for interviews, questionnaires and focus groups to gain feedback from students on how their knowledge, skills and understanding have increased.

CPD

Questions

- » With so many online learning opportunities, how can you acknowledge and facilitate sharing of team members' (newly acquired) skills and knowledge (without intruding on what might be for them welcome escapism or 'me-time!')?
- » How can you evaluate the relevance and effectiveness of this type of CPD and support it being put into practice?

Silver

- » What platforms could support in-house sharing?
- » Would sharing something pre-recorded/pre-made be preferable to sharing something live?

Gold

- » There is a wealth of resources for creative learning online, especially those posted by arts organisations including Artsmark Partners. Are you familiar with them?
- » How could you set up a schedule for navigating these and enabling sharing across your staff team?

Platinum

- » How could your specialist staff support teachers in other settings?
- » Do you have resources you could offer to another school or on a more open platform such as your website?

Practical Activities

- » Create a regular slot on your website or social media where a staff member or student nominates a resource:
 - » To promote wellbeing
 - » As a creative challenge
 - » To enhance cultural capital

Partnerships

Questions

- » What does your setting's most current risk assessment say about external artists in schools and visiting arts and cultural venues? Ensure that you regularly review this guidance and ensure your Artsmark planning aligns to that timeline.

Silver

- » How can you use this opportunity - as students transition back to school - to work in partnership with other settings?
- » What is the most effective way for you to share creative resources with other settings?

Gold

- » How can you use this time effectively to research and communicate with artists/arts organisations to plan for arts activities in future, once social distancing measures have been eased?

Platinum

- » How can you share your setting's arts and cultural expertise with other schools during this time of transition?

Practical Activities

- » Complete an audit of the artists/arts organisations you have engaged with in the last year. Identify their online resources you could access and/or contact them to see if there are ways you can collaborate virtually whilst social distancing rules are in place.
- » A New Direction has a searchable database of arts organisations in London. On [Lookup](#) you can search organisations by art form, key stage and whether their work is accessible for SEND students. There are also lots of free online creative resources provided here and on our website.
- » Create a webinar or upload content to your school website which promotes your excellent art, drama, music or dance provision. Ensure you highlight the steps you took in creating this provision and signpost the pedagogy which underpins this work so that other settings can replicate.

Equality & Diversity

Questions

- » In your school community, who has been affected most during the lockdown period?
- » Have you been able to offer support through creative stimulus and activity?
- » How have you supported students with no internet access/ hardware?
- » Have there been any positive benefits e.g. some students preferring online learning?

Silver

- » Have you been able to monitor and/or direct how students have accessed cultural activities during the lockdown?
- » Do the resources you are signposting reflect the diversity of your school community?

Gold

- » Has this experience prompted you to review policies and practice with respect to equality and diversity? How?
- » What are you learning through staff and student responses to this challenge?

Platinum

- » What role can your SMSC governor play in supporting leaders, staff and students, ensuring an inclusive approach?

Practical Activities

- » Map the different ways you have communicated with your students and staff during lockdown. How have you ensured full inclusion and follow-up?
- » Track where these communications have included any reference to arts and culture.
- » Note any opportunities to enhance your arts offer to disadvantaged students including content and channels for communication.