

Sensory Journeys Symposium
Wednesday 10th January 2018
14:00 – 17:00

The Mighty Creatives

Hazel Townsend, Development Manager

Lisa Jacques - So I'd just like to introduce Hazel Townsend from The Mighty Creatives, to discuss the Artsmark and Arts Award, and how that enables quality experiences of arts in the classroom and beyond, and also about how the enrichment of working with cultural partners as well.

Hazel - Firstly I'd like to start by saying thank you to Lisa for inviting me here, to hear about these projects from different partners, some from the schools, and some from the practitioners working in the schools, and just being completely inspired actually. And Abi was talking about magic moments and the importance of those, and I always start my sessions when I go to a school or in a setting talking about Artsmark and Arts Award and say what are those magic moments, what can you remember from that last year in school in terms of those individual impacts on those children and young people. Well Artsmark and Arts Award are tools really to help you create more of those magic moments. I'm afraid I haven't got any kind of amazing case studies to share with you. I'm going to tell you about the nuts and bolts of Artsmark and Arts Award, and there's some brochures on the desk as you go out. I just said to Lisa at the start I could do this really quickly as well, so if we're running over time I'm going to kind of whizz through the nuts and bolts of it really, and if you've got any individual questions about those programmes then do get in touch with us through my details on the last slide, okay.

Ok, a little bit about who I am now. So I work for an organisation called The Mighty Creatives, and you heard at the start of the day someone called us a kind of bridge organisation, what is that? So at the Mighty Creatives we are not the artists, we're not out there delivering in settings, but what we are doing is we really believe that creativity is vital, and I use that word purposely, it's vital for young people and children's development. So we are trying to create opportunities across the region to make that happen, and that's by securing investment partnerships, brokering. I get loads of schools phoning me up going

“who can we work with?” And I go “you must work with these people”, and it's about building those relationships and supporting and using frameworks so that they are successful relationships as well.

We are a bridge organisation. We're funded by Arts Council England, and it is what it says on the tin really, we're trying to bridge the gap between the arts and culture and children and young people. So we are the person they're signposting, we are the people they're advocating for Artsmark and Arts Award, and we are part of a network of ten organisations across the country, so we're not alone, but we work right across the East Midlands.

Two of the main programmes or products we deliver and advocate for are Artsmark and Arts Award, and I'm going to start with Artsmark, which is kind of the programme I lead on so I can rabbit away for ages on this, so please do stop me.

The key things in terms of the benefits of Artsmark... has anyone here been doing Artsmark in the room? Yeah, yeah? I recognise your face, yeah. So Artsmark's not a new thing. It's in its seventeenth year, but there was a key change two years ago where there has been lots of changes over the last few years in education, and it's Arts Council's kind of flagship programme. They said actually we need to kind of really look at this programme and make sure that it's as useful as it can be for schools, and the ethos of the programme has not changed. It's about developing and supporting schools and settings to develop their arts and culture provision, to get the most out of that and to celebrate that activity that's in there. We've heard that word a lot today, the importance of celebrating that activity, and the importance of thinking about why. Why do we do this work? So that it doesn't become something that happens as a treat on a Friday afternoon, it becomes embedded in kind of what we're doing. We're all educators in the room actually, so we're thinking about what are the outcomes of this work for our children and young people. Why are we investing in this? What's the importance? Why should we be providing these opportunities for our children and young people? So Artsmark is a creative quality award across the whole school, so it is the school going for the award, and where it works best is where the whole school are involved in that process. So it's really interesting to hear those schools talking about that ripple effect. So that's kind of what we're trying to aspire to as part of Artsmark, it's schools really valuing the arts and kind of understanding why they do

it, and that impact on that young person, and how it should be an entitlement for all the young people in school.

What it does, it doesn't do the kind of on-the-ground activity, it provides you with a framework. So it helps us sit down and go “what do we want to achieve? What are the priorities for us as a school? What are the priorities for our young people?”, and help you plan using some tools and tips to make sure those experiences that you do plan are of the best they can be, so we talk a lot about quality and how you can develop your practice and we look right across the school. So we've heard today people talk about CPD, we've heard about looking at different art forms, different sorts of experiences, so how important it is to come to a venue like this? How important it is to work with outside people to come into your school and setting? And what those partnerships can bring really. It's all about those different experiences and helping you think differently about what you're doing. And importantly, as I said before, it's very much about the evaluative side of that, so why are we doing this work and helping you think about that and reflect on that work.

It's not about doing something completely new, it's about building up what you're doing as a school, so actually the new process for Artsmark is much more forward-thinking in that they're actually starting with your school improvement plan and saying; what are your priorities as a school? How can the arts and culture support those priorities? Or where are arts and culture in that development plan actually? Should they be there actually? How can you utilise this? What is the impact on teaching and learning?

And an important point to make is that Artsmark and ethos hasn't changed, but the process has changed, and that's probably as a direct result of having engaged with schools in that evaluative process. So they did, and there still is an advisory group for Artsmark that's built up from a range of schools.

So we've heard some of the benefits today, just to echo some of those... so, it is about strengthening your school's arts and culture provision; it's about bringing that arts and culture all to life. So you heard today Abi Steady talking about “well it's about the office talking about it and they understand the value of arts.” It's about bringing it to life in school, and people talking about it, particularly in education and today we heard lots of schools

talking about how the arts are being squeezed et cetera, so it's about asking the questions: Why are we doing this? Why should young people have access to the arts?

It's providing evidence, so you can share that in your classroom and talk about it. So we've heard a lot about that documentation, and projects and processes, and the importance of that. It's about having that to share outwardly, to show parents actually why are you engaging in this activity, and to show external bodies. So we got lots of schools making links in terms of OFSTED requirements, and it provides a valuable evidence base for that as well. Importantly – these are two of the really important points for me – it's about supporting more of.

So we hear a lot today about some of the impacts on children, so it's about helping schools and settings and partners think about and build more experiences that can help develop confidence, resilience and drive, that will help the holistic development of children and young people that they're working with. And sometimes it's about giving those experiences for the first time, so it might be introducing to a different sort of experience, a sensory experience: coming to a theatre production, et cetera, which they might not get outside of school.

We've heard today – I'm kind of preaching to the converted really, but I just wanted to share some quotes from some young people from some of the evaluation reports that I get through, in terms of the impact. So, as we've heard today, the importance of the impact of the arts on wellbeing, I have another quote from a young person: “Your mind wouldn't really expand the same way unless creative things develop...” so, the importance of developing important cognitive skills. And this one: “Art is great fun, and it helps your brain to learn better”. That's one I quite like.

So it's about having a dialogue and a conversation about those things. It's about looking at your whole school, so it now enables you to have a conversation about what is happening across your schools. So I've recently been to a school who said, “actually, what it [Artsmark] did is give us a chance to step back and kind of look at what we're doing, look at where our strengths were, and what we wanted to develop as a school, and showcase that, so really think what's important to us, and how we can share that outwardly.”

As I said before Artsmark can be used differently by different schools, so it's really flexible, it's about what you need. This is a quote from a secondary school who already worked with quite a range of different partners, but they wanted to think differently about how they got the most out of that work. The Artsmark process has allowed us to explore new methods of teaching and curriculum design in order to provide students with inspiring and engaging stimuli by introducing them to arts companies and professionals.” And a key part of that was about their own professional development as teachers as well. So often your starting point is; what is going to benefit our young people most?

As you said previously with the two case studies we've heard today the importance is actually staff learning. Learning alongside those practitioners and building that planning from the start, so again we've heard today about the importance of planning and communication between partnerships. And that is something that Artsmark can support, and helping that sustainability of the work.

Also, Artsmark, what it helps you do is to think about the impact and why they do the arts, and what they can look like across the school and how they can share practice. So this is an extract from a case study from a large secondary. In reflecting on their Artsmark journey they said: “Another area of impact has been on the behaviour and motivation of students across the performing arts and art. The number of incidents of behaviour across all four subjects counts for less than 5% of across all incidents across the entire school. This shows that they are receiving a positive child-centred experience where they are inspired and engaged reflected in their behaviour.”

This, and looking through the lens of Artsmark, of practice across the school, and some of the staff that are already available to them, allow them as a department to have a conversation with their senior leadership team and go, well, actually: Is there practice here in our performing arts department that we can share across the school? So as a result those practitioners then lead a CPD for other members of their staff team, looking at that creative teaching practice that was happening, and the importance of that.

So that's a bit about why, and what it can do, but this is the actual process of Artsmark. So

you heard someone reference earlier the statement of commitment and something else, and the two settings that you've heard from today are at different stages in this journey. Artsmark takes up to two years in terms of the journey of Artsmark itself, and then you achieve the award at the end of that two years, and then you hold the award for a further two years, if that's makes sense. So here you've got a two-year trajectory. You start by registering. We ask settings to do a self-assessment to look at what's happening in their school already and have those conversations back in the school. We ask schools to come to something called a Development Day. So those partners in the room, we've had partners and organisations come to those development days. We also run lots of support sessions as the journey kind of progresses. During that development day we set out what you're doing already, we bring lots of different schools together, we often host them in a cultural venue. So we've had sessions here, at Attenborough, and it's about thinking about your vision for the arts and putting a plan together and thinking about who you would like to work with and why. We put up a two-year plan together on that day, and we capture it in something called a statement of commitment, which basically outlines your plan for that two years trajectory. That's then submitted to Arts Council and at that point you become part of the Artsmark community and you're an Artsmark school working towards a set level that you decide. That's the process of how you work, it takes up to two years as I said before, so you go away, and when you're active and back in school with your partners et cetera. We provide lots of support during that period of time, so if you want to come to one of our sessions to look at your evaluations or case studies et cetera, schools can come along and share practice. And then at the end of that period of time you capture that learning. So what we want to find out from you is: What's the change been? What's the impact on your children and young people during that time? Because actually Artsmark is not just about your school, it's about making the case right across the country for the value of arts. It's about Arts Council bringing together all those voices and all those different schools to put forward a valid argument for the importance of arts and what the impact of the arts is, and building that collective voice.

As I said before, there's a few different levels. So silver, gold and platinum, and schools choose their entry points, and choose which level they want to aim for as part of that two year programme. And the key differences between the levels is silver is about undertaking some activity in school and looking at the results of that, so it can be quite project-led.

Gold is where that practice is more embedded in the school, happening right across the school, and we've heard a little bit about some examples of that I think today in terms of measuring the impact of that work across the school, and understanding the value of the arts right across the school. And the key difference between the gold and platinum level, is that the platinum level we're asking settings to share that learning more broadly, so sharing it with their cohorts of schools they might be working with or with partners within their wider community, so sharing that learning and expertise.

And for those partners and practitioners in the room, you can get involved in Artsmark as well, simply by understanding how the framework works. So as a practitioner, if you're working with a school or setting, it's worth having that conversation, are you an Artsmark school, what's your priority? What's your plan? And Arts Council have just recently launched something called the Artsmark Partnership Programme, which has endorsed a network for arts and cultural organisations who can support Artsmark settings. So they'll be setting up a database of Artsmark partners across the country, supporting those organisations to understand Artsmark better but also to build those relationships with schools and partnerships as we talked about today.

Quickly moving on to Arts Award. Have we got anyone in the room who's delivered Arts Award previously, and got an understanding of Arts Award? Quite a few people. So Arts Award, the difference is, as it's confusing sometimes, it's an individual accreditation for a young person. There's five different levels: Discover, Explore, Bronze, Silver and Gold, and it can be achieved by any young person from age 5 up to 25. And the key thing about Arts Award that might've been touched on today, one of the key things is about that young person developing their creative voice and their critical voice in terms of them thinking about what they enjoy, what experiences they like, what they don't like, and finding out about arts practitioners and artists and venues et cetera, and sharing that learning back. But importantly it's often used as a tool to support leadership skills, those young people being able to lead and take control, and lead activity in those settings.

We've heard today about some of the benefits in terms of what Arts Award can do. So, having a positive impact on students' literacy, engagement and attendance, it helps build student skills. As I mentioned before it is a qualification, so that sense of pride in terms of

young people achieving those qualifications validated by Trinity College and that sense of progression, we get lots of settings that hold the award, and you might go to a setting, so Arts Award is not just run by schools. Lots of cultural organisations run Arts Award, clubs, community organisations, so that a young person can carry on that journey in terms of that award they've achieved and, importantly, it's fun.

There's five levels as I've mentioned before, and there's more details in the brochure if you're interested in what they look like. It's broad in the flexibility within those different levels, so from Discover right through to Gold which has UCAS point. How does it work? So the process to run Arts Award, you need an Arts Award advisor. That can be anyone, it can be your artist, it could be your setting, your venue that you might work at with your partner, they might be an Arts Award advisor, or it could be a teacher. We've got some schools who have trained up their teaching assistants within schools, who've got a cohort of teaching assistants who use Arts Award with their students, it's really flexible. That advisor doesn't have to be an expert in art, they just have to take young people through that process, so they have to understand how they work with young people and take them through that teaching and learning process. You undertake an advisor training and then you're able to run the award. Arts Award is really flexible in how it works so as we've heard today it's been run alongside quite a large project, but we do have schools who run it as part of an after-school club, a Saturday club, as part of their curriculum, offering it as a module at a secondary level. That work can be undertaken over a period of time, there's no time limit on how that works. The work is assessed, moderated, certificated and celebrated, importantly.

And as I said before, there are lots of people out there who can support settings if you're interested in Arts Award. So you can become a supporter as an arts organisation, or you can look out for the Arts Award supporter badge. So when you're looking at artists and arts organisations that you might visit as a setting, or as a practitioner, you'll see a little Arts Award Supporter badge, and that means that they've got things that you can access as part of an Arts Award process and programme that might be able to be helpful for you.

I'm just going to talk through the next steps if you are interested. So Arts Mark, part of our role at The Mighty Creatives is supporting settings and developing their cultural education

at whatever their starting points, and we've got a team of five consultants who are experts in their field, so they've often from an artistic background but they understand education and are really well connected in terms of art and cultural opportunities in their region. They can come out to your setting for free and visit you in school. You can find out more about Artsmark on the national website, and that's where you register as well, and there's some dates there for some of the development days that are coming.

And then in terms of Arts Award next steps, if you're interested, as I said before please do come and grab me, but there's more information in terms of the training dates if you're interested in becoming an advisor on the website here. That training is held publicly around the country all year round, or we get some settings who arrange their own training especially for them. And there's lots of resources, case studies and support on our website The Mighty Creatives. I just want to flag up as well, we've got an Arts Award conference in Leicester on the 13th of March if you're interested in learning more and we've got lots of schools and settings, practitioners, resources and support and keynotes there if you're interested in finding out more.

Thank you.

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