

Statement of Commitment

Establishment Details

Name: St Benedict's Primary School

DfE Number: 3302183

Bridge: Goldsmiths

Bridge details: <https://www.artsmark.org.uk/support-resources/artsmark-support-and-training>

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).

St. Benedict's Primary is in one of the most deprived areas of Birmingham. We have approximately 350 pupils on role, 98% of whom have EAL, and many are newly arrived to the country with no, or limited English. In addition, many have other barriers to learning: our Pupil Premium numbers are currently 42% and we have a high proportion of pupils with complex SEND or additional needs. Our pupils are not able to access the arts due to financial constraints, or due to a lack of community aspirations. The profound mobility challenges, and other issues within the local community, have resulted in falling pupil numbers and financial constraints. The school has faced financial hardship for several years and has been unable to spend money on curriculum development. The arts have been neglected up until this year. Now, it is one of our key improvement priorities.

Question 1

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

We believe that all children at St Benedict's Primary school have artistic potential; therefore, we ensure that this creativity is nurtured and developed. By offering a wide, varied, stimulating and carefully structured experience in the arts, we enable each individual pupil to develop the capacity and the capability for artistic thought and critical awareness, and develop the necessary skills to enable them to succeed. We are committed to providing this through the visual arts, music, drama, dance, creative writing and storytelling and across all aspects of the school curriculum. We recognise that if our children have access to high quality experiences this will ultimately raise standards and promote accelerated learning.

Talk for Writing in EYFS (learn text through actions). Our English Lead attended a Pie Corbett conference and delivered an INSET session to train staff. Older children do writing tasks taken from the creative Cornerstone framework, allowing freedom to write about any subject / genre. This has contributed to improved writing.

History is brought alive with hot seating; teachers have gone into character to give a more authentic feel.

Music is used to enhance all subject areas e.g., Maths. The power of song has impacted the learning of different maths concepts in a fun way i.e., Rockstar music program to learn times tables. This has revolutionised the way in which tables are taught and has led to a significant improvement in results.

Annual Arts Competitions run several times through the year.

Children use songs to enrich their topics using the Charanga scheme website and other sources. These songs are also performed as part of their whole school and class assembly to the school and parents.

A range of annual productions: Harvest Festival and Christmas productions performed by Reception and KS1. Summer Talent show where children can perform. Children achieve a high level of performance from quality singing with good diction and tuning with varying complexities of style; confident actors and well-choreographed dances. The children have benefited from various teaching staff who are passionate about art.

External dance teacher from Footie bugs for after school clubs.

The music curriculum has been under development the past year and the subject now shows clear progression of skills. This is integral to the improvement of teachers' knowledge and confidence. Pupils across the school have regular opportunities to play instruments such as the ukulele and recorder. A robust yearly overview has been planned so that every class is completing a progressive Charanga Scheme of music every term, topped up by a term of lessons with a peripatetic musician.

At St Benedict's Primary school, we consistently see the value and impact that the arts have on our more vulnerable pupils and therefore, as well as the music and arts budgets, Pupil Premium funding has been used effectively to promote and develop ways to support pupils. It has been used to heavily subsidise residential trips and cultural experiences.

Question 2

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

Our school improvement plan outlines our goals for improvement, and how and when these goals will be achieved, to improve student achievement by enhancing the way the curriculum is delivered. We plan to place creativity at the heart of the curriculum, giving pupils the opportunity to become creative individuals academically, socially and emotionally with a knowledge and understanding of other cultures.

One of our key priorities for this year is to 'ensure all teachers are fully knowledgeable and confident in delivering the arts curricula.' Our Artsmark journey will form part of this development, working alongside outside agencies to ensure we are well resourced and equipped to deliver a quality arts curriculum. One action has been the appointment of an Artsmark co-ordinator, with the specific task to plan and deliver CPD for staff. Furthermore, we have successfully applied for funding to purchase resources to ensure our curriculum is adequately resourced.

We are seeking to enhance both our core curriculum provision and our enrichment curriculum: one of our key priorities is to 'enable pupils to take part in a rich variety of activities through after-school clubs,' specifically art and music clubs. Both our own staff, and experts that we have employed have already started to deliver these clubs this year.

Furthermore, the Artsmark journey will contribute to another key priority to 'encourage successful communication, through an oracy framework.' Language and communication are a key barrier for our pupils and by developing a rich range of opportunities to communicate and concentrate through the arts, we can support personal and academic development. For example, we have started to work with Birmingham REP, who have provided CPD for staff and worked with children on their performance skills.

In September 2022, we achieved 'Gold Rights Respecting Award'. As a school we are committed at every level to continuing to raise the importance of arts within the curriculum, and the need to build links to other subject areas to develop key skills, resources, create partnerships with other schools and organisations as well as continuing to work with artists within the local area. Through our school development plan, we aim to 'strengthen our rights respecting approach through School of Sanctuary and Arts Mark accreditation.' These areas are interlinked; children's rights can be promoted through arts and the accessibility of arts is a key children's right.

Finally, the Artsmark journey is also linked to our development plan for collaboration. We work with 5 other local authority schools to provide mutual support. This year we have all identified the arts as a key area for development and aim to do this collaboratively by providing opportunities for shared arts experiences. For example, we plan for create shared musical experiences, where pupils can perform in front of audiences from another school.

Question 3

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

1. As a Rights Respecting gold school, we value and promote arts and culture. Article 31 is a key part of our SIP: every child has the right to take part in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities. Pupils are beginning to enjoy a range of cultural and arts experiences within and beyond the school day and, with further development, these opportunities will solidify the importance of the arts for wellbeing, enjoyment and as careers opportunities.

2 As an inclusive school, we give all pupils access to the arts. For example, additional clubs for pupils with SEND and the recent purchase of instruments representative of the cultural heritage of our pupils. We now need to monitor the inclusiveness of our arts provision and to use it to promote tolerance and understanding of different cultures.

3 The Artsmark journey is embedded in our SIP and the Statement of Commitment has been produced in collaboration with SLT. Next, we will increase the involvement of other leaders and governors, so that the leadership is sustainable.

4 We provide opportunities to ensure every child can perform throughout the academic year in arts and cultural activities, but this is still in a developmental phase. Pupil voice is strong, with our School Council being the vehicle for much decision making. We recognise where this can be utilised more fully to engage and empower our children in arts and cultural planning.

5 Last term, we introduced new art and music curricula with clear progression in knowledge and skills. Our recent purchase of new instruments and a bespoke 'Music and Arts Centre' enables us to provide a range of opportunities to learn percussion and tuned instruments, through whole class, or specialist tuition, with the local Music Education Hub. We look forward to seeing the impact of this.

6 We are beginning to provide engaging and relevant creative and cultural learning experiences. A visiting theatre company is scheduled this term, and we are now a Sampad associate school. Our recent 'Festival of Sanctuary' included drama, dance and music, as well as the use of digital media. This is an area we plan to strengthen, with opportunities for our pupils to showcase their talents to wider audiences in the community.

7 We recognise that staff expertise and confidence in the delivery of arts is a priority. Arts CPD time is dedicated throughout this year, and we are communicating with other organisations to provide high-quality training. For example, the REP recently provided training on the use of drama and the Music Hub is scheduled to deliver initial training on music teaching.

8 We have begun to engage with creative organisations (Restore the Music, Sampad and the REP) to support a broader range of arts experiences. Although these collaborations are in their infancy, they have injected enthusiasm and energy into our arts provision. We are planning a collaborative project, involving other local schools, which we hope to provide our children with opportunities to connect with the local community.

Question 4

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

1. Our commitment to arts and culture will be evident in our curriculum, environment and shared language; our holistic approach to the arts will ensure that they are valued for wellbeing, enjoyment and as careers opportunities. Communicating our ambitions with all stakeholders will be key to ensuring that they are owned by all.

2 We will improve diversity and equitable access by monitoring the inclusiveness of our current arts provision and formulating plans to address any areas of development. In planning our arts provision, we will be more explicit and intentional in our aim to promote and celebrate one another's cultures.

3. We will demonstrate committed and ambitious leadership at all levels. At our next Governance Day, the arts will be an area of focus: our Statement of Commitment will be reviewed and plans to review and monitor arts provision will be formulated. The leadership of arts will be developed amongst staff, with the establishment of an artsmark team.

4 Our children will develop ownership of our artsmark journey so that it is authentic and tailored to our needs. We will establish an arts branch within our School Council, supported by SLT and other arts leaders. Pupil voice will be used to ensure the arts opportunities are enjoyable and add to the wellbeing and personal development of pupils.

5 We will develop creative children who excel in the arts. We need to embed our new curriculum for art and music and to allow staff time and opportunities to enhance their understanding of what quality in the arts curriculum looks like. We will review it systematically to ensure that there are strong outcomes.

6 We will embed and develop our arts and cultural entitlement by increasing the number and breadth of performance opportunities, both for pupils to perform in and for them to view and evaluate. We will build upon recent successes to create further opportunities, such as 'Ambition Shows' (where children perform and display their own creative pieces) and a 'Festival of Culture' (performances aimed at celebrating our diversity).

7 We will empower and enthuse staff to engage more deeply with arts, culture and creativity. Through sharing the artsmark vision and plans, staff will have a greater understanding of our common goal and commitment to achieving excellence. We will continue to develop our links with outside agencies to provide further training opportunities. With time, we will monitor the impact that this training is having on staff confidence and expertise, and ultimately, outcomes for pupils.

8 Our collaborations will contribute greatly to quality arts and cultural education and experiences. Our collaborations with creative organisations are in their infancy and need time to embed and for the impact to be evident. Furthermore, our planned collaborative projects with other schools will strengthen the sense of community and support wider community engagement. Our overarching aim is to achieve a life-long love for learning and enjoyment of arts and culture.

Question 5

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

- 1 Communicating our commitment to arts and culture will require time with governors and staff through an effective communication strategy. Regular staff meeting time is dedicated to the arts and the next one will be to share our artsmark vision. In January, we have planned an inset day to look at the vision for collaboration with other schools. Time at our next governance day is also committed to sharing our artsmark vision and plans.
- 2 Monitoring and improving the diversity and equitable access to arts will be explored through the use of our Edukey system. It will take time to set up this system and to produce actionable data. Further conversations with Birmingham Arts School will ensure a diverse range of arts industries are accessed.
- 3 Developing committed and ambitious leadership at all levels will require the support of SLT and a nominated governor. The school has committed to cover the costs of a TLR for this academic year to set up the leadership for the artsmark process. In the long term, for the artsmark process to be sustainable, we need both strategic leadership and a team approach.
- 4 Pupil voice in the artsmark journey will be through dedicated School Council time. Leaders will be dedicated to making this happen. It would also be beneficial for us to explore how this level of pupil leadership impacts in other settings and the artsmark network will be helpful for this.
- 5 We recognise that it will take time for our curriculum to be embedded so pupils excel in arts. Specific time will be allocated to review arts subject areas, including observing lessons, talking to staff and pupils and reviewing the standard of work produced. This systematic review will take place with the support of the headteacher.
- 6 Increasing the breadth and number of performance opportunities will take organisation, financial commitments and the support of all stakeholders. We are committing to increasing the scope of our current opportunities this year and then planning further for the following year, with the support of Restore the Music, Sampad, Birmingham Arts School and BEP. Our headteacher is committed to organising finances to ensure there is a budget for performing arts. We also need to improve our family and community engagement as adults need to be committed to attending performances and supporting their children.
- 7 Empowering and enthusing staff can only be achieved through ambitious and creative leadership and a supportive governing board. We have dedicated regular CPD time to the arts and now need to implement the delivery of this, either through existing networks or access to digital resources.
- 8 Developing collaborations is going to be one of our greatest sources of support during the artsmark process. Some of these costs we are already paying for directly out of our curriculum budget, but we will need to also explore other forms of funding. For example, Restore the Music have supplied £10,000 of instruments. The school will also continue to build its partnerships with Artsmark.

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 your Statement of Impact?

- 1 Arts and culture will be fully embedded into our school's ethos and philosophy. Success will be evident in the form of pupils having the opportunity to experience arts and developing their self-knowledge, self-esteem, confidence, initiative and understanding of how they can contribute positively to the lives of those living and working in the locality of the school and to society more widely. The arts and culture will be routinely celebrated

through the curriculum, events, assemblies, communication and within the school environment. Staff voice will demonstrate a shared understanding and value of the arts, for their own sake and for the benefits on pupils' well-being and personal development. Pupil voice will evidence the importance of the arts within school life and beyond: they will identify artists that inspire them.

2 We will shine as a 'School of Sanctuary', using the arts as a vehicle for inclusion and celebrating cultural diversity. Our data will demonstrate where deficiencies in our arts provision have been addressed. We will also begin to monitor incidences of discrimination and the reduction in this, although it may take time for the impact to be seen.

3 Our ambitious and dynamic leadership will be evidenced in our 'Subject Reviews'. These clear, systematic methods for evaluating impact will provide evidence for our statement of impact. Governance meetings will demonstrate an increase in the level of challenge and support being dedicated to the arts.

4 Our pupil voice from school council will demonstrate a 'you said, we did' approach. Minutes of meetings will provide us with a clear starting point and chronological narrative of progress made towards goals set. Pupil voice will demonstrate that they are actively involved in the arts process, in planning, participating and evaluating the arts.

5 Our curriculum design and delivery will result in pupils being more successful in the arts curricula. The evidence of this will be documented through our 'Subject Reviews'. Pupil voice will demonstrate an increase in confidence and enjoyment.

6 Our improved cultural entitlement will be showcased through social media and our website, involving our pupils in this process. By recording and documenting our participation in arts projects and gathering pupil voice we will develop evidence to support the impact.

7 An empowered and enthusiastic staff team, will encourage other staff to engage more deeply with arts, culture and creativity. Staff voice and feedback from lessons, will demonstrate that staff are more confident and knowledgeable in teaching the arts.

8 Our collaborations will be a source of increased enjoyment and participation in the arts. We will maintain a record of arts participation and evaluate these accordingly. Pupil voice will demonstrate an increased willingness to participate, and parents will be engaged and supportive. We will evidence our success in the statement of impact by attainment data, quotes from staff and pupils following art related days and activities. Staff confidence levels and the level of engagement from parents and will have developed within the wider community.

I confirm that I have read, approved and endorsed the Statement of Commitment and agree to oversee and support the Artsmark journey

I agree to the Artsmark Award Terms and Conditions (These are available online at artsmark.org.uk/terms-and-conditions)

Headteacher name: Emma Nott

Chair of Governors name: Andrea Vaughan