



Howard Community Academy

The Arts and School Change: An Artsmark Case Study

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Executive Summary

Context

In 2017, before it joined Anglian Learning, Howard Community Academy (then known as Howard Community Primary School) was rated 'inadequate' by Ofsted.

Gradually, after some false starts, the school's response to the Ofsted Inspection was helped by joining Anglian Learning in 2020.

It was assisted in two ways that relate to this case study. First, Anglian Learning draws inspiration from the original vision of Henry Morris (1889-1961) who founded the village college model and championed a well-rounded, child-centred education that promoted civic-mindedness. Second, the arts play a key role in that vision and so it was proposed that Howard might drive some of its response to Ofsted challenges by mobilising a more strategic approach to the arts as a vehicle for learning.

The Arts Council England's Artsmark initiative provided the framework and timeline for this strategy. A Memorandum of Understanding was drawn up between Arts Council England (ACE) and Anglian Learning's CEO Jonathan Culpin, a recognition from ACE that the Trust was working in ways that might test ideas related to the arts and learning which may be of interest to the Council.

Delivery

By working within the wider Anglian Learning family Howard Community Academy was supported in building a revitalised arts offer. Key elements that helped drive this included the recruitment of a permanent headteacher, Alison Weir, who bought into the vision; support from senior leader within the Trust, Prue Rayner, who offered critical friendship throughout, additional capacity and insights from Lesley Morgan, the Trust's Arts Development Manager, as well as strategic CPD coordination and networking via Anglian Learning.

A wide range of artists and arts organisations fed into the school's Artsmark journey and these are touched on more in the main report. However, what is key is to note a distinction between different phases and choices of focus depending on the artists that were worked with.

Some artists were chosen to bring a **wow factor** – and experiential value that switched children back onto the idea of school being a fun, friendly, interactive space.

Some artists were chosen to model a **process related to learning** – it might be ways of making music, designing video games or re-working classroom spaces to be more creative. They worked alongside teachers and children to do this.

Other artists and organisations helped **unite the school together with venues and the wider community** – for example, the Theatre Royal, Snape Maltings – showcasing both process and performance and working with teachers to promote aspects of creativity alongside resilience and persistence.

The Artsmark journey was very much a curated experience, tailored to achieve different outcomes at different times and with varied age groups. Artists and arts organisations were deployed in ways with different intentions in mind.

Impacts and Effects

PASS (Pupil Attitude to Self and School) surveys point to a significant uptick in positive attitudes to learning and the desire to be at school.

Parents indicate their children are happier and feel safe and secure at Howard Community Academy.

Teachers feel a greater sense of professional autonomy, using Anglian Learning’s CPD networks and Artsmark’s framework as a way of reflecting on their own practice and building a sense of being in control of the arts as means of teaching and learning with intent.

Ofsted completed an inspection in 2023 and concluded that:

“Howard Community Academy has been through challenging times since the predecessor school was judged to be inadequate in 2017.

Prior to joining the Anglian Learning Multi-Academy Trust there have been changes of leadership within the school. This caused instability and unhappiness over several years.

All that has changed. The school now has strong leadership from school and trust leaders.

School and trust leaders have a strong and shared vision. They are committed to improving pupils’ outcomes. They have put in place support and training for teachers. This has helped the school to improve quickly.”

The way the arts have been deployed has been impressive and wide-ranging. The school has embedded new approaches to the arts in the curriculum that ensure greater and more regular access to opportunities to create, make and be inspired.

The arts are more visible around the school and are more valued as a means of teaching and learning the wider curriculum.

The headteacher Alison Weir is beginning to share the story of Howard's Artsmark journey more widely, writing for Creativity Exchange, attending the Local Cultural Education Partnership to offer input, presenting to the Arts Society in Bury St Edmunds, and attending the South-East England Headteachers' symposium where she contributed to reflections on Creativity and Culture in Education.

Children learn with focus and enthusiasm. While there are still some gaps to be filled, as Ofsted noted, the ways teachers teach, and learners learn make that a more deliverable goal now, and the arts have played an important role in that shift.

Howard Community Academy was awarded Artsmark Gold in August 2023.

Background and context

*“It is the intrinsic worth of the life that the **adult** leads, the working philosophy by which he lives, the politics of the community he serves in his maturity, the amount of efficient action he contributes to the community that should be the main concern of Education.”*

Henry Morris (1889-1961), founder of village colleges.

Howard Community Academy’s current pathway to whole school change was instigated in 2017. Ofsted’s inspection of that year determined the school’s provision ‘inadequate’ and this triggered a process of reflection and review. Since then, the school has passed through a period of very significant challenge as it sought to improve. Immediately following the summer of 2017, the interim executive headteacher in charge at the time of the inspection did not return to lead the school through the 2017-18 academic year. Instead, a succession of temporary, interim Headteachers were appointed, none of whom remained in post very long. The school, effectively, fell even further behind in its plans to respond to Ofsted’s recommendations.

Consequently, Ofsted’s interim monitoring report of 2018 suggested that much progress still needed to be made. The needs of learners were complex and multi-faceted, reflected in the high number eligible for pupil premium funding. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is also above average. A higher-than-average proportion of pupils also have an education, health and care plan (EHCP).

After something of a hiatus following the 2017 inspection, things really began to change in 2020. Until then Howard had been part of the Chilford Hundred Education Trust (CHET), a small trust (comprising one small secondary and three primaries). CHET joined Anglian Learning in 2020, automatically bringing Howard into the fold.

This move brought a step change to Howard’s plans for improvement. Anglian Learning comprised a larger group of schools and was heavily invested in the arts as part of its core values. It had a core vision, articulated by its CEO Jonathan Culpin, that the arts were integral to good schooling, and it saw an opportunity to bring more dynamic, creative approaches to learning front and centre, helping Howard to better meet the challenges first flagged by Ofsted in 2017. Culpin’s vision for education was very much a re-assertion of beliefs which underpinned the village college model, set up by Henry Morris and pioneered by several schools in the 1930s and 40s which are now part of Anglian Learning¹.

¹ <https://henrymorris.org/about-henry-morris/>

Thanks to Anglian Learning's particular commitment to the arts and creativity, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed with Arts Council England, with a view to working more closely together to better understand how the arts might enhance the quality of teaching and learning. At the first meeting it was suggested to ACE that Howard Community Academy might be a good focus as it was just about to join the Trust and was ambitious for change.

With Anglian Learning and ACE on board, the then acting headteacher at Howard, Alison Weir², sought with the help of her staff team, to re-value the school learning spaces and grounds, and to connect to the wider community. There have been numerous examples of the school's outward facing work. For instance, pupils have helped to plant bulbs on the adjacent Howard Estate, a collaborative effort with the Green Hearts group, town councillors and the school. And the school has been more active and visible in the community in other ways too, sharing cultural experiences together - trips to the local Marham Park Care Home at Christmas to sing carols with residents was also a good example of this more outward facing, connected vision for the school within the community.

The school identified literacy improvement as a priority and began the process of boosting reading habits by starting up reading cafes, where parents and guardians could go into the school to read with their children. This was particularly important as it was felt that the period leading up to the 2017 Ofsted Inspection had seen a deterioration in school-parent relations.

Core to the process of renewing vision and the approach to school change has been a deeper commitment to the use of the arts in teaching and learning, and utilising Artsmark as a scaffold for this. The senior leadership/Trust's rationale for seeing the potential of arts as a mechanism for school improvement is rooted in their belief that through the arts we are able not only to learn knowledge and skills, but also reflect on important questions of culture, identity and an appreciation of place which are so pertinent to Howard's journey out of special measures and the challenges of the past, toward a more productive future.

² Alison began as Acting Headteacher in April 2020 and then became permanent Head in May 2021.

The role of Anglian Learning

Howard Community Academy was able to draw on the wider network of leadership expertise and skills which are part of Anglian Learning. What this meant in real terms for their change journey was the ability to tap into a more collegiate network of support and guidance to support their own ambitions. Anglian Learning, a group of 16 academies³, can work in ways that bring key staff together in strategic groups and then share pooled learning across individual schools and within classrooms to explore the full potential of the arts as a means of enriching high-quality teaching and learning.

From a strategic perspective its partnership with Arts Council England allows it access to an even wider network to test ideas, compile evidence and share examples of good practice as it embarks on a trust-wide ambition to sustain the arts, culture and creativity as key components of its educational values and approach.

Jonathan Culpin, Anglian Learning's CEO, explains: "The formalising of this MOU demonstrates our commitment to work with arts and heritage partners in designing a culture-rich curriculum that enables all pupils to advance their creative skills and literacy regardless of their background or starting point. It is important to both Anglian Learning and Arts Council England that arts and culture play a significant role in the lives of children, supporting their personal development and progression into adulthood."

Children are given greater responsibility over their own learning more and can articulate why the arts matter in this context. Year 8 learners from Sawston Village College, also part of Anglian Learning, have summarised their perspective in a film available on the Trust's website (link below).⁴ "The arts are important because they give you expression, freedom and creativity," as one year 8 girl succinctly puts it.

Howard Community Academy also had a strong working relationship with Prue Rayner (now retired), former Deputy CEO and Director of Primary Education at Anglian Learning. Prue brought considerable experience of taking on the leadership of a school in special measures and bringing about substantial improvement. This was combined with a deep belief in and experience of the power of the arts to make learning an active process for young people and counterbalancing risks of more passive forms of learning linked to test preparation and knowledge transfer. Prue acted as a critical friend to Alison Weir, to provide oversight of plans and strategies and to offer some contextual assessment of progress made by referencing experiences of other primary schools within the Trust.

³ <https://anglianlearning.org/our-academies/>

⁴ <https://anglianlearning.org/2023/01/25/why-the-arts-matter/>

The role of Anglian Learning and the close association with an experienced school leader such as Prue is an important aspect of arts-rich initiatives and approaches, because without the support of senior leaders and their active interest in the philosophies underpinning the affordances of the arts in education, it can be difficult to maintain provision over time, or for day-to-day practice to achieve ‘escape velocity’ when seeking a break from older habits and cultures.

Working within the context of the original Henry Morris vision, Anglian Learning also has an advantage in that it invests in an Arts Development Manager one day per week – Lesley Morgan. Lesley is able to act as a link between individual schools within the Trust and the local arts infrastructure. Lesley, aside from managing a range of relationships and arts spaces, such as the cinema at Sawston Village College, where she works the rest of her time, can broker partnerships, using her knowledge to match local artists with school needs. For example, she assisted Howard in connecting with its local Arts Society which in turn was able to support the Alfie Carpenter artist residency, a significant step in the Artsmark journey. Lesley was also well positioned to offer additional critical friendship and advice during the Artsmark Statement of Commitment and Statement of Impact write up phases. These additional skills and expertise can be crucial as a school navigates a change strategy, helping to ‘hold the centre’ during a time of change and by assisting senior leaders to push on with focused commitments in areas – such as the arts – which can be susceptible to disruption from external pressures.

In addition to this, Anglian Learning has a strong strategy for CPD and particularly the identification and sharing of good practice. James Woodcock oversees several teacher-led subject groups focused on improved practice and spreading more of what works through the network of schools comprising the Trust. The strategy underpinning these groups is that they should be teacher owned and led, but within the broad parameters of the Trust’s vision and values which, in essence, draw on the ‘village’ college concept. The original pioneering group of rural schools in South Cambridgeshire included Sawston, Bottisham, Linton and Impington – with others (including Soham and Comberton) arriving later in similar spirit. Henry Morris, then chief education officer for Cambridgeshire, oversaw what became a forerunner for a kind of community-based comprehensive school, before the Butler Act in 1944. Morris believed that education should not just be a process of knowledge transfer, but a much broader induction into a way of life and set of values that were forward facing, an expression of the kinds of communities each school wanted to be part of, rather than a production line preparing for tests and exams. Naturally, the arts and culture, as a wellspring of new ideas and current thinking were vitally important to Morris’s vision as they are to Anglian Learning today.

The role of Artsmark

Many schools are attracted to Arts Council’s Artsmark initiative because it is a way of revaluing the role and purpose of the arts in education. Much of the thinking behind the scheme is rooted in evidence that suggests the arts can enrich learning, and as such the initiative seeks to promote practices associated with various artform domains – visual art, drama, music, dance, literature and so forth. However, Artsmark concerns itself with valuing the many ways schools can enable a growth in opportunities to learn *in and through* the arts. Artform knowledge and skills is valued, but so too are the ways in which the arts can improve access to and engagement with learning in a wider sense. This might range from a proliferation of after school clubs, visits to cultural venues through to significant development of day-to-day pedagogy or leading training in arts-rich teaching for other learning settings. Therefore, Artsmark is a means of giving greater visibility to processes and interventions where arts rich opportunities are strongly embedded in schools, and which give rise to pedagogies that may become part of the way teaching and learning is done day to day.

Some schools recognise Artsmark not only as a way of improving pedagogy and using arts-rich methods of engaging young people, but also as an innovative form of whole-school change. Howard Community Academy has certainly embraced this opportunity.

However, whole school change is not a straightforward undertaking, and the role the arts may play within it is still a subject being explored by educators and academics. This report adds to the growing understanding of just how the arts might be an aid to schools seeking to change their vision and values or to reboot and refresh after a challenging Ofsted inspection.

Artsmark is an initiative organised by levels – Silver, Gold and Platinum – which can also be thought of as incremental phases of activity that build in intensity and effect over time.

Overview	Silver	Gold	Platinum
Quality of provision	Emergent	Established	Stretching
Pedagogy	Develop expertise	Develop best practice	Opinion former
Impact	Tangible results	Measurable effects	Making a difference

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Initial work tends to build confidence and re-establish the value of the arts in education. As this develops further it can lead to transformations to teacher's practices which align more with open-ended forms of teaching, more exploratory approaches which are learner-centred in nature. As more time passes some schools rationalise how they are working, come to describe the process and practices more overtly, and thereby build a discourse to describe its features which can be shared with other settings, inspiring others to rethink their use of the arts in learning.

Schools are not required to see these levels as a hierarchy; many are happy to operate within a particular level and it suits their wider school strategy very well to remain there. Others, like Howard, are actively seeking significant school development and will plan for multiple cycles of Artsmark (each cycle lasting approximately two years) and use this as a means of sustaining momentum and embedding change over a longer period. For schools such as Howard this offers a chance to rethink not only how teaching and learning might operate better, but also to reconnect with the deeper purpose of education, to consider why, for example, they are engaged in some forms of pedagogy more deeply than others, arriving at a clearer sense of 'why' they do things the way they do as a team, all of which helps drive and sustain real change. In this way Artsmark promotes reflective practice and teacher autonomy, encouraging a culture of teaching with the arts acting as a pivot point for more informed decisions with clearer intentions.

This report concerns itself with the first cycle of activity at Howard Community Academy, beginning with initial projects in 2020 and running through to more established provision in 2022/23 (a period somewhat extended by delays arising from the Covid pandemic).

It will consider examples of projects and interventions adopted by the school and some of the important principles underpinning them.

Before we consider the programme in more detail and reflect on its impacts and effects, we must first understand the combination of approaches utilised by Howard as it seeks to transform its vision, values and practice through the arts.

There is a growing body of educational research related to whole school change (see Thomson, 2010)⁵ most of which acknowledges that change is now an ever-present feature of school life. But there is emerging consensus over what makes change in education more or less likely to be sustained. Based on conversations with senior staff at Howard Community Academy the following approaches, drawing on Thomson's work (2010), seem to be most relevant and at various points to have influenced vision and plans for the school.

⁵ <http://www.creativitycultureeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/cce-lit-review-whole-school-change-255.pdf>

1. *Problem-based approach*: an internal school audit or external inspection identify barriers to improvement. These might include parent-school relations, health and wellbeing or school ethos. The school designs an action plan to address them – this is one of the affordances of Artsmark as it provides an externally moderated framework for auditing and planning in recursive development cycles, providing an arts-based roadmap for making change happen.
2. *Data-driven approach*: the school seeks to chart change by monitoring its own data more closely and reflecting on analyses of it in ways that feed into strategy and planning. Howard Community Academy is motivated to mark improvement in attendance, tests and assessments. They are seeking improvements in parent satisfaction too. In relation to Artsmark, the issues identified by data will be addressed by a range of creative projects related to specific deficits, such as Reading Cafes, Jubilee outdoor events, festival celebrations and performances and so forth.
3. *Principles-driven approach*: here the focus is on the philosophy and practices of learning and establishing a vision for what those should be and how to put them into operation. Schools often join networks to achieve this – Artsmark may be considered such a network, especially with its connection to Bridge organisations and ultimately back to Arts Council England. In the case of Howard Community Academy there is also the important factor of Anglian Learning. The Trust has a vision and principles that value the arts very highly and see better learning outcomes as being directly linked to arts-based learning and the broader skills they help promote – for example, problem solving, independent learning, curiosity and collaboration.

As well as noting this range of ‘ways in’ to school change and the use of Artsmark as a driver, we also need to keep in mind the range of levers Howard Community Academy uses to effect change. These categories also drawn from Thomson (2010), show how motivations for improvement influence the modes of activity chosen which in turn feed through to the degree of intensity of change perceived.

1: WHERE – Starting points for change

This is summarised in Howard’s Statement of Commitment which is formally submitted to Arts Council England as part of the Artsmark process. It is included as appendix 3 to this report, but includes the following ambitions:

- Changing the way that pupils learn, placing more emphasis on creativity in teaching.
- Using the arts to stimulate the way learning can be organised differently, often focussing on blurring subject boundaries
- Considering alternative forms of assessment or a different focus for understanding impacts and successes, often finding more creative ways for pupils to reflect back their learning.

- Changing what counts as learning, but extending beyond the National Curriculum and incorporating wider skills and knowledge than the mandated minimum
- Changing school culture – focusing on the symbolic systems and enrichment activities of the school, the relationships with parents, community members and stakeholder organisations.
- Changing the way school is organised – the distribution of leadership, the spread of resources – money, time and/or space and the decision-making structures.

2: WHAT – dominant change strategies

- Large collaborative arts projects and performances
- Artists working alongside teachers for sustained periods
- Developing teachers’ understanding of creativity in their own professional lives and their ability to manage it as a repertoire of skills
- Mindfulness of staff and student wellbeing and the role the arts can play in boosting confidence and disposition to work and learning

3: HOW – degree of commitment to change

While Howard Community Academy is moving to an end goal that would constitute what Thomson (2011) calls ‘substantive’ change, during early stages of the Artsmark journey its work has been characterised more by the first two levels of commitment below.

- Affiliative – adopted the formal ‘Artsmark’ designation, used the logo, staff attended professional development activities linked to the arts and projects were highlighted in internal and external reports
- Symbolic – most school staff acknowledge the importance of the arts in learning with confidence and enthusiasm and it feels congruent with the way they want to teach and what education means to them.
- Substantive – most school staff reflect on the arts and consider their incorporation in strategies and plans and make repeated, sustained use of the arts more frequently with an aim to embed such practices day to day.

Artsmark covers a wide range of activities. It encompasses the start-up of new projects, extra-curricular clubs and arts related off-site visits.

It also may include, over time, more targeted teacher CPD and confidence building for staff and can lead to whole school change embedding arts-rich forms of pedagogy right across the curriculum, even in non-arts subjects.

And there is also an element of leadership and influencing too; settings with the most developed practice and track records of working successfully through the arts act as champions and advocates for Artsmark.

Howard's plans in relation to the aspects above will be explored below, reflecting on the extent to which they have contributed to the overarching aim of school change and resetting the learning ethos and the school's relationship to its own site and the wider community.

Phase 1 activities – increasing access to and engagement with learning in and through the arts

(Enrichment of learning, modelling what is possible, defining a vocabulary to describe arts-rich learning, increasing educator confidence, identifying learner capacity to engage)

Change – especially organisational change– usually begins with reflection on a setting's own context, being able to describe that in accessible ways, and expressing how actors within a setting want things to be different in the future. For schools this is often set in train by a constitutional or governance development, a change of senior staff or an external inspection, something that gives pause to consider the trajectory the school is on, its core identity, where it might go next and by what means it will get there.

Howard's response to their 2017 Ofsted inspection was to begin thinking of longer-term change as a process that could involve learners and the community. The senior leadership of the school, particularly under the auspices of Anglian Learning and the new headteacher Alison Weir, subscribed to the notion that recognition of learners, valuing what they bring to their own learning and the communities from which they come, was about ensuring their points of view were seen and heard throughout the school. Bringing external perspectives into the orbit of the school is often overlooked because of the high pace of curriculum delivery and the pressures to perform to external, national tests and assessments. Building a new narrative, telling different stories about what children learn and how they learn it was a key start point for the school.

Art was reformulated as a driver for change, but also had its own statement of intent. This statement gives a flavour of how Howard Community Academy situates Art and how they see its affordances in the context of teaching and learning.

The Howard Community Academy Arts intent is:

To develop an appreciation of the arts and reap the benefits of immersion in many rich and varied creative and cultural experiences.

In our art curriculum, children are taught to develop their knowledge and understanding of the work of artists, crafts people and designers from a range of times and cultures and apply this knowledge to create their own work.

We aim to develop an appreciation of the arts, to develop confidence through the arts and to further develop cultural capital through an exposure to and participation in many rich and varied cultural experiences.

Our vision for art is that all children will leave Howard having experienced 5 focused art forms – drawing, painting, printing, 3D and textiles. Children will recognise the names of the artists they have studied, and they will be able to name/recognise an artwork by the artist. Children will learn key skills by direct step by step modelled teaching which will enable them to use their creativity to apply this to their own ideas to create unique works of art. Through studying such a variety of art forms, we want children to enjoy experimenting with art techniques and see that the value is in the creating, not just the outcome.

Our art curriculum is designed to engage and inspire pupils to encourage them to be ambitious in art, experiment and to use art as a way of expressing themselves. Each half term unit of art includes an opportunity to discuss likes and dislikes about the artist's work, some knowledge about the artist's life and style of painting, the opportunity to learn skills in the style of the artist and an opportunity to produce a unique work of art based using these skills.

By looking at a range of artists and artistic styles, we aim to deepen their understanding of how art contributes to the culture and creativity our world. The artists studied represent a wide range of unique and diverse artists and craft makers both historical and contemporary.

Throughout their time at school, we aim to enrich our children's cultural capital through inviting artistic visitors into school to lead workshops and through taking trips to view art in museums and galleries. As we cannot guarantee how much access children have to the arts outside of school (particularly due to C-19), we will particularly promote opportunities for this moving forwards.

Our approach towards achieving this vision will involve:

- The building of an art roadmap to ensure there is a progression of skills in drawing, painting, printing, 3D and textiles throughout the art curriculum.*

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- *The building of a 2-year cycle plan of art lessons which will consist of units of drawing, painting, printing, 3D and textiles each year for every year group based on learning intentions from the road map.*
- *The planning of half termly units of art lessons by the art subject leader in the form of PowerPoints with step-by-step instructions to support the teachers to deliver the unit of lessons.*
- *Staff meetings with art specialists to develop teacher subject knowledge (clay)*
- *Enrichment opportunities for children and arts celebrations (including extra-curricular opportunities, trips, in school workshops and themed days)*
- *Pupil voice*
- *A prominent display of pupil's work in every year group which is updated at the end of each half term to celebrate the final artwork the pupils have created and to enable the children and staff to see the progression of skills throughout the school.*
- *Our commitment to Artsmark and the actions and improvements we have made as a result of this.*
- *The opportunity for year 4 children to gain Arts Award Discover and for Year 5/6 pupils to gain Arts Award Explore and to take part in enrichment activities to enable them to achieve these awards.*

The language of the Howard Statement of Intent for Art is an interesting mix, seeking to develop breadth of knowledge and understanding, and more traditional forms of arts knowledge discernment and appreciation. Howard provides a clear example of the mixture of motivations and ambitions a long-term project of art education is likely to contain. On one hand it is rooted in a well-defined artistic tradition of art as an academic domain (“*all children will leave Howard having experienced 5 focused art forms – drawing, painting, printing, 3D and textiles. Children will recognise the names of the artists they have studied, and they will be able to name/recognise an artwork by the artist. Children will learn key skills by direct step by step modelled teaching...*”) but also the more radical idea, and the one that may lead to more lasting pedagogical change, of artistic practice as a proxy for investigating, exploring and satisfying curiosities (“*...engage and inspire pupils to encourage them to be ambitious in art, experiment and to use art as a way of expressing themselves. Each half term unit of art includes an opportunity to discuss likes and dislikes... and an opportunity to produce a unique work of art based on using these skills...*”). In terms of creative practice, this is a hybrid of prescriptive and exploratory models of creativity. Prescribed in the sense that art and creativity are seen to conform to the norms and expectations of a curriculum subject with its stages, domains and linear forms of progression linked to age, and more open since it also points to development of the whole child through forms of personal expression and the use of oneself as a learning resource.

To help fulfil these intentions the school curated a range of early-stage projects which aimed to increase the visibility and value of the arts around the school, and to offer a wide range of pathways to engage learners and inspire teachers. These projects included:

- Virtual online visit from Author James Campbell
- Music therapist for nurture
- Virtual carol concert whole school
- Royal Ballet Nutcracker workshop Year 3/4 and Year 5
- Alfie Carpenter (<https://www.alfiecarpenter.com/>) working with children to produce an artwork for the main hall/reception area
- Cambridge Curiosity & Imagination (CCI), Lost Words and Found Connections: A pilot to begin to explore how CCI's creative practice can support a journey of school improvement.

The author visit by James Campbell was interesting as an early phase project because it showcased the importance of the self in creativity. Authors certainly link with other professionals – illustrators, editors, publishers, designers and so forth – but at the heart of the writing process is a focused, rather solitary form of creativity which draws on inner feelings and thoughts. This is an important aspect of the arts in education because it makes visible and values the self; it is affirming of the importance of individuality and expression, and it ties both to the process of learning. This seems to have been a feature teachers noted in their feedback around the James Campbell event which included the following observations:

- Liked the way pages were selected by the children.
- Engaged well with children.
- Children found him funny and engaging. They liked being able to ask him questions.
- Pupils were highly engaged with the author which led to a discussion as a class about publishing and writing a story.
- I always think it is good to listen to authors and find out their inspiration when writing books.
- They also explain how long it takes to write a book, editing, etc., which is good for the year 5/6 classes to hear.

One of the features of artists within education settings is that they are educators of a different sort, freer to let their personalities fuse with their work, usually to one side of whatever the school norm might be, bringing something of their creative practice and identity to their pedagogy in ways perhaps professional teachers are not always encouraged to. This is also an important aspect of arts and creative practice and has been written about extensively by Thomson et al (2012)⁶ in their 'Signature Pedagogies' Project. Not only is the individuality and personality of artists a key part of their process and their effectiveness as educators, but it also speaks to the values of the school that enables them to work in this way. Thomson suggests this is because such schools are:

⁶ Thomson, P, Hall, C., Jones, K. and Sefton-Green, J. (2012) The Signature Pedagogies Project, CCE. http://www.creativitycultureeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Signature_Pedagogies_Final_Report_April_2012.pdf

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“...willing and more able to let the outside world in through information and communication technologies, through creative practitioners, through community and family partnerships, and through the curriculum. This stands in contrast to the default school position of locked gates and doors, and net-nannied computer rooms. These more permeable schools often modified their physical learning environments by knocking down walls, building outside spaces, changing appearances of rooms and corridors.” p. 13

The importance of changing spaces was not lost on Howard Community Academy, and the last of the projects in the list above was a key one for the school. CCI is a creative organisation that works to inspire and enrich communities, to support them 'to believe in themselves and find their own voice'. CCI designs ways for people of all ages to develop their own curiosity and imagination by inviting them into playful environments, both indoors and outdoors, and giving them the permission to explore.

Howard co-created with CCI several interventions which served to re-establish forms of learning, ones that connected with more engaging processes for pupils – drawing on personal curiosity, a relationship to the local environment and varied ways to reflect back learning or perceptions. CCI coin the term 'artscaping' to describe this process and suggest it is defined as the ability:

- To affect and be affected by art and nature and space
- To create a response from materials and feelings in order to express new ideas
- To enhance the environment in ways that delight

The project at Howard Community Academy explored creative place-making and activism by inviting children to work within the spirit of CCI's manifesto for ArtScaping which invokes the right to:

Be free

Imagine anything

Have fun

Know anyone can do it, there are no wrong answers

Share and talk

Not rush

Try things out and experiment – make a mess

See that art is everywhere

Keep trying

Move around, be comfortable

Be brave and trust

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This invitation emerged from prior professional development with Howard teachers and support staff. Staff joined for a twilight workshop to talk about CCI's practice and think about the importance of art and nature in their own lives. This provoked useful reflection and discussion as teachers explored the underlying motivations and effects related to art and environment: "*you can pretend you are somewhere else... it is playful and imaginative and relaxing...beautiful and relaxing...looking at paintings is a way of exploring and escaping.*"

Artists Filipa Pereira Stubbs and Caroline Wendling, supported by volunteer Amanda Morris-Drake, worked with the youngest children aged between 3 and 6. Interacting with the outdoors was of prime importance. Small groups went out into the nearby fields that belong to the school and spent time together inside too, in a newly established art studio. The general idea was to rethink ways to relate to these spaces, inside and outside, and to consider how they might be made not just to feel, but to be more dynamic and democratic – properly child-centred - through creative thinking and making. Posts below from CCI's website share a flavour of these days.

It was such a lovely beginning to the week – the beautiful music, noticing the sky and what's around us. It's so different to everything else we do at school where everything is planned to the last minute so sometimes it can feel as though the children are not given enough space to answer. Here they had it. They had time and space. You gave them a lot of space and this space made them feel important and they like it. You could feel them coming back into the classroom much more peaceful.

That encouragement you've given them to try things out and make their own suggestions has meant they've all been so immersed into this exploratory space

I really liked how inclusive it was, this way of working with different age groups. Seeing the year 1 children be so kind and everyone helping each other. They weren't competitive at all.

Showing the children their work is important to us. It's so important for them to come and see their work still here. We want to work here again with them but we need to ask them how we might move their work around. It is their space. It can be so hard for us as adults who are used to being in control. We need to remember that and step back – we must keep that ownership and identity that this is the children's space

We are going to come in here on a weekly basis – having all this space with nothing on the walls and no distractions means things can evolve, we can add things. Just simply rolling around on the paper has been so joyful, they've loved the noise of the floor and being invited to draw on the floors and the walls.

The importance of redefining relationships to spaces and understanding new ways and alternative mindsets with which to approach learning was a foundational concept for Howard Community Academy. The school wanted to go back to first principles and consider what productive learning experiences might look and feel like for young people if they were given more agency by being invited to co-design and have more of a say. How did they imagine learning? CCI's Ruth Sapsed reflected on this process and suggested that creating a new learning space – what one pupil called *The Making and Theatre Room* – was a radical transformation from a storage space over three weeks into a dynamic space young people saw as their own.

Forty children worked with artists over the five days of the project, together with their Howard Community Academy educators Michelle, Lorraine, Julia, Katie, Marta and Leila. CCI's emphasis had been on working with small numbers of children of mixed ages (from 3- to 6-year-olds) which meant that each child engaged directly in the project for five hours, but in an intensely focused way, with quality interactions. However, the location of the room did mean they could pop in to say hello informally and see the space evolve as they transitioned from final lessons to home time.

Groups were divided to work in different environments, some children working outside, some inside the new room. Prior to working in their designated spaces, the whole cohort discussed conceptual questions: what is the outdoors, what is art, and how to bring the outdoors inside. Having this focused discussion and bringing some of the learning intent to the fore, influenced oracy. It was noted that more words were used to articulate a richer range of ideas: art was not merely 'painting' but was now about many other forms of making and expressing ideas: sculpture, clay, shaping, tearing, drawing, chalk, reading a story, making, and music were all invoked by the group. The outdoors expanded as a broader sensory experience to include objects and processes which captured the imagination: raining, cold, birds, trees, forest, flowers, and grass.

The group working indoors focused attention on the nest one group had made using materials from outdoors and then spent time exploring a real bird's nest, filled with objects to hold, feel and wonder about - broken shell, acorns with tiny holes, and even tinier feathers. These reflections led to work with the book *The Lost Spells* which contained references to otters, owls, crows and more.

With the group inspired about animals it was time to make their own, one group using special pastels to draw animals, and the other groups shaping them using plasticine. The pastels organised carefully into a very effective and visually bold display. The plasticine was exciting to work with, and children enjoyed being hands on with resources in an environment of quiet music, which helped facilitate imagined stories about the animals. Sometimes other objects were made such as boats, and rockets, but throughout there was total absorption in the task.

At the heart of this work was the incorporation of cultural artefacts, artist's performances or interpretations and the way these were mobilised at the service of a therapeutic goal, a rebuilding of trust, respect and recognition of Howard Community Academy as a

supportive space for learning. Research suggests artists tend to admit emotions and personal anecdote into their practice more than educators ordinarily would, and to think about the environment as being conducive to the task at hand, nurturing ideas and helping creativity along. They will often talk explicitly of difficulties overcome, mistakes made, wrong turns taken, feelings of fear or anxiety as well as playfulness and enjoyment derived from working in the disciplines, they have a passion for. What might all this tell us about how a change process works in education?

Howard Community Academy's early steps to arts-rich school change used practices and forms of thinking characterised by creative work to reinvent what good learning looks like for young people. The stage 1 projects, as exemplified by CCI's work, set foundations that aim to positively shape the culture of learning and children's dispositions to the process, making it fun, inventive, something that they can drive themselves and fully own. Without establishing such foundations, it can be harder to work in more focused ways later – using the arts in targeted, cross-curricular ways for example. Additionally, by generating a child defined manifesto it also invites teachers to reconnect with deeper questions about the philosophy and purpose of education.

Some of the key features of new pedagogy in this first phase of Artsmark have been shaped by artists alongside teachers. They have been focused on enabling school to be a richer environment for learning, and projects as ways of trying out new ideas, testing some of the orthodoxies of standard lessons (with more rigid timespans and often formal use of space and limited range of resources). The aim for Howard is to use the arts to move away from the forms of teaching and learning and wider community relations that led to the difficulties of 2017, and instead to adopt new pedagogies that help fulfil its new ambitions.

Teachers and artists at Howard often referred to the ways in which Artsmark projects supported children and young people to gain 'confidence'. In the early stages of any arts transformation process confidence is a term that does a lot of heavy lifting. I would argue that Howard's first stage Artsmark journey is building capacity to do much more. It is beginning to provide specific affordances – events, activities, associations, conversations, processes of making meaning – which allow children and young people to choose to act in ways which foster a new embodied understanding of who they were, what they could do now, and what they might do in the future. This kind of learning – well exemplified by the CCI project - is profoundly social and highly dependent on the ways in which creative practitioners and teachers come together to produce temporary and fragile space/times within school where it is possible to be/do/know/live together differently. This is much more personalised learning, situating the 'self' more prominently in the process, the kind of 'becoming somebody' work artists often embody whereby learning or making isn't something you clock on and clock off for, as in a factory, but much more a part of who you are, and how you do things generally.

Artsmark is an intervention which at its best enables forms of education that emphasise the idea of 'becoming somebody' -not in the sense of celebrity culture of course, but in the sense of understanding personal talents, dispositions and interests, and knowing what motivates and energises you as you take on new skills and understanding. The process by which this happens is one where

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what we might think of as the usual pedagogies of school are directly challenged. A set of hybrid pedagogies – lifting aspects of teacher and artist practice - are developed inside the new spaces that Artsmark makes available. Where this occurs, it makes a tangible difference. Of course, its success depends on a school being open to external influences.

Howard was arguably more permeable than most schools. It had additional inputs from Anglian Learning and from Arts Council England. The initial stages of Howard's work seem to have been very successful because external providers such as CCI modelled practices which have inspired teachers to offer children more freedom to explore the potential such practices provide. This has led to the school deploying new and authentic processes of understanding the fundamentals of education, not tokenistic projects or ready-made, off-the-shelf solutions. The longer-term question will be how such practices are transferred more permanently to teachers and learners, in other words, how emerging narratives and a new relationship to place and self is transformed into lasting creative change and become part of the repertoire of the way teachers teach and the way learners learn. This doesn't mean teachers simply mimic arts practices as manifest by artists, but more the absorption of a philosophy of approach that maintains the impetus of projects such as those co-designed by CCI.

Howard's initial experiences with arts projects show us that a clear narrative underpinning the arts in school shapes a sense of collective purpose. This is key to establishing the kinds of values in practice that underpin longer term school change and is a vitally important form of professional learning which helps embed new principles and practice.

Phase 2 activities – building capacity of school staff to use arts-rich approaches

(Exploring what 'broad and balanced' can look like through the arts, understanding how teacher capacity is grown, what effective CPD looks like, how pedagogy changes, what characteristics in teacher style and approach are most key, and the main characteristics of effective arts-rich learning environments (High Functioning Classroom))

In late Spring of 2023, as Howard Community Academy came to the end of its first cycle of Artsmark, there were signs that some of the initiating projects of Phase 1, particularly work by CCI, had seeded the potential for more sustained change among staff at the school.

In this section of the report, we focus on the process of embedding change and moving from a culture of projects and interventions to one where the weekly routines of timetabled lessons begin to regularly draw on principles developed in collaboration with artists and creative professionals. Embedding any new practice takes considerable time and we might reasonably expect Howard Community Academy to be working through this phase at the time of writing, with much of the practice and confidence levels still emergent across the whole staff group. But the question we pose doesn't require a once-and-for-all summative response, what we

are interested in is the extent to which a step change might be happening and the direction of travel and sense of momentum within the school.

A wide variety of additional arts activities took place during this phase. These included partnering with the local Arts Society, supporting an artist-in-residence; hosting sessions by an authors' workshop, Lavenham Guild Weaver, a silkscreen printmaker the Gainsborough House printmakers as well as engaging with Bury Schools Partnership and CALSA-led Heritage projects.

Howard Community Academy also invested in the popular music scheme Charanga to build teacher confidence and to further develop the music curriculum through a more structured, quality assured scheme of work.

The school also began to plan longer term and established links with future partners including: the local Music Hub (including start-up of brass tuition for Y5s); Britten Pears Arts, (performing in their Celebration and The Big Sing); the Cathedral Choirmaster (which has since given rise to a thriving choir at Howard); a Rock Choir leader (incorporating singing/percussion workshops).

Pupils also performed at a variety of public events which took them to several significant cultural venues (Snape Maltings, The O2, St Edmundsbury Cathedral, West Road Concert Hall), building their confidence and their sense of ownership of new spaces – the foundation of future cultural capital.

Beginning to work more deeply with key partners is also a characteristic of Howard's current stage of development with the arts. They have formed a strong relationship with Theatre Royal, Bury St Edmunds (hosting regular productions and workshops in school; attending theatre performances - a first for many pupils and some staff); and have also continued participation in The Royal Ballet Steps Programme and had a dance professional deliver dance within the curriculum. The school is also about to embark on a DanceEast CPD programme, helping to consolidate some of the inspiring experiences by distilling key principles and incorporating them into regular teaching.

Many of the signs that indicate a deeper level of change is now occurring are not only the nature of partnerships and projects, but also different types of lesson planning, altered schemes of work and live workshop sessions. These too reflect the new ways of working Howard is exploring. During interviews and visits to the school the following framework, drawn from Thomson's Signature Pedagogies project⁷ was used to guide observations and a means of structuring discussions with teachers. The purpose of this framework is to isolate some of the most important elements of arts-rich learning sessions, and to consider how they might be designed and executed differently in ways that lead to changed and/or better outcomes.

⁷ http://www.creativitycultureeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Signature_Pedagogies_Final_Report_April_2012.pdf

Analytic Framework

Introductory activities (entrance, session opener, planning)	<i>Self-presentation of artist/teacher</i>
Resources (provided and created)	<i>Artefacts</i> <i>Cultural, intellectual resources</i> <i>Use of student work</i> <i>Use of artist's own work</i>
Classroom discourse (questions, responses, feedback, professional discourse, personal anecdote)	<i>Professional and technical language</i> <i>Prompts, suggestions</i> <i>Unanswered questions</i> <i>Change to IRF patterns</i> <i>Self conscious use of affect</i>
Flow (rhythm, transitions, timing, lesson sequences over time)	<i>Lesson shape</i> <i>Thinking time</i> <i>Taking a break</i> <i>Ongoing projects over days/weeks</i> <i>Pace</i> <i>Time for review</i>
Use of space (by pupils, by teachers)	<i>Organisation of space</i> <i>Movement within the space</i> <i>Personal space</i> <i>Symbolic spaces</i>
Behaviour management (communication of rules, teacher stance, where the authority lies)	<i>Authority of the discipline/endeavour</i> <i>Internalised codes of behaviour</i> <i>Explicit teaching of conduct</i> <i>Humour</i> <i>Public/private explanation of anti-social behaviours</i>
Teaching methods (direct instruction, coaching, modelling, experimentation)	<i>Individualised/group/whole class teaching</i> <i>Skill development</i> <i>Use of environment, artefacts, music, movement</i> <i>Provocations</i>
Framing (disciplinary [Art, etc], self expression, vocational/technical)	<i>Focus on the individual within a community, or part of a collective endeavour?</i> <i>Reference to the discipline specificity, traditions</i> <i>School subjects v professional practice</i> <i>Themes (eg making something from nothing, therapy)</i>

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Visits to the school in May 2023, and with the above framework in mind, it became clear some changes of this sort were occurring. Considering the organisation of space and the sharing of children's work throughout the school, in display cabinets, in the hall and on communal walls, it appeared that some well-developed shifts were occurring with regard to the elements listed above.

Children's artworks are displayed in corridors, in formal configurations, such as clay work in the school reception area, and some of the school's thinking and processes related to connecting back with their parent community are also rendered artistically. As well as making art more visible, as a means of celebrating children's achievements, there are also shifts in pedagogy too. Recent discussion about lesson flow prompted reflection on the ways in which activities are managed differently, to sustain interest, motivation and engagement. Headteacher Alison Weir explained: *"I definitely think flow is something that has changed, when I think of the ways activities are planned and the ways teachers move through phases of work differently by reading the mood and energy level of learners. There is more breaking up of activities in order to re-set and regroup, to recap the focus and to generally make learning a more intentional activity, not a passive one."*

Jane Ashdown, the Music lead at Howard Community Academy, also commented on changes to strategies employed during lessons, techniques which drew on approaches modelled by artists. *"We had some singing CPD that was effective; but not only because it made the teaching of singing more accessible. It also helped us think about the pace of lessons generally and how to keep our attention and focus sharp. If we feel the learning intention is getting lost or energy is dipping, we stop the task and take some time to stand up and do some movement exercises which help us get back to a frame of mind where we can concentrate."*

It was interesting to note when discussing the role of the arts in teaching and learning how it prompted reflections and acknowledgements that had not been noted or brought to the surface prior to my visit. This is not unusual of course, for reasons already touched on above – the pace of curriculum delivery and forward momentum of so much of school life – but it is a sign of an important distinction between different stages or types of arts-led change.

CPD can be integral to culture change, and to embedding new practices. However, its success rests largely on the extent to which teachers conceptualise and articulate arts-rich learning and creative strategies that draw on features of arts practice as a form of pedagogy. One of the ongoing challenges for schools, even those who are champions of the arts, is the relative paucity of discourse around more creative forms of teaching practice such that a causal relationship might be inferred between ways of teaching and better learning outcomes. This kind of discourse builds more overt intentionality that influences plans and activities and leaves behind a trace of connection, a sort of pedagogical heat map if you will, charting the relationship between the style of teaching and the learning outcome.

The strategy for CPD around the arts at Howard has been largely defined by cascading principles and sharing teacher to teacher. The impact of Covid may have had a role in this, making it harder for larger groups to gather from 2020-2021. Jane explained: *“We’ve been able to make use of screen printing by sharing techniques with other teachers as an element within another unit of work, so any teachers who were not part of the original project have come to understand the skills and pass those on to the children as and when opportunities emerge. Before Artsmark the attitude might have been to not explore those creative pathways quite so much but now we know there are ways to make it work, even if there is a bit of upskilling required initially, so the culture now is more about giving it a go or finding the staff member who can get you in a position to give it a go.”*

There is a world of difference between knowing how to use the screen-printing equipment, which is one sort of challenge, and knowing how to construct the pedagogic knowledge and principles which would fill out a lesson, or a unit of work to the extent that discrete skills, attitudes to learning, forms of collaboration and reflection and so forth, become part of an intended set of outcomes which are made possible by screen printing. That is another challenge altogether. This can be a sticking point in school change programmes. Research literature suggests a tendency for teachers to skirt some of the issues around concepts and principles in favour of skills development and mastery of tools or tech. Galton (2008) in his appraisal of work between artists and teachers noted that very few teachers *“wished to engage in discussions concerning the rationale for the creative partner’s approach to learning and creativity. Most wished for ‘hands on sessions’ where they could acquire new knowledge or skills. For some, it was simply a question of applying what was offered fairly uncritically ... Such transfer of knowledge between creative practitioner and teachers, without deeper understanding of the processes involved is ... likely to be superficial.”*⁸

Galton reminds us that it is important to reflect on the deeper aims and intended destinations for a school seeking to change, and to consider how CPD plays into this (or potentially works against it). Some schools and senior leaders embrace the arts and creativity because they see them as being interwoven with and in some senses indistinguishable from effective mainstream teaching. Such schools are more likely to be actively using CPD as a means of pushing arts and creativity principles right through the curriculum because they see the kinds of skills and thought processes they inculcate as being conducive to better learning writ large. They see an arts-rich school as being one that helps build learning resilience, persistence, self-direction, curiosity and a desire to try things out. Whereas a school not rich in the arts might be more aligned with knowledge transfer, memorisation of facts, preparation for tests, strong separation between subjects, more passive forms of learning and a need to wait to be told what to do.

In the case of Howard Community Academy, the initial ambition was to help change the mood associated with the school, and to enrich the learning experiences of children who outside of school may not be regularly engaging with arts activities or visiting

⁸ Galton, Maurice (2008) Creative Practitioners in Schools and Classrooms, University of Cambridge, Research Report, p.78

https://www.educ.cam.ac.uk/people/staff/galton/Creative_Partnershipfinalrept.pdf

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cultural venues. The arts, in this sense, were aiming to help develop more pro-learning attitudes: changing the perceptions of parents and carers who hitherto had begun to build some negative ideas about the education offered by the school. And changing the disposition of children, so they actively want to come to school and to relish not only the day-to-day menu of activities it offers but feel they play a part in shaping their own learning, and are active participants in the ebb and flow of school life.

How this has been achieved has slowly evolved over time. Initially, the wow factor of external partners leading projects was a huge benefit. New faces bringing new ideas – from Alfie Carpenter to Ruth Sapsed’s team at CCI – and the novelty of their approach helped make different ways of working more acceptable to children, parents and even teachers. However, the advent of lockdowns made external visitors to school a more complex undertaking and for a time it was impossible. This meant that, perhaps sooner than was originally intended, there has been a shift to teachers needing to model behaviours, values and skills they wish to see develop more in learners. And this has implications for CPD.

A teaching culture where trying new methods and approaches is embraced takes time to cultivate, especially after the pressures of a challenging Ofsted inspection, as was the case for Howard in 2017. Alison Weir reflected on that process: *“A lot of the difficulty comes from fear of judgement or failure, and that has become a bigger part of teaching than it perhaps used to be. It can slow change down to a standstill. For some teachers their original start point here was real discomfort at having any other adults in their classroom, a sense of needing a protected space to be able to teach. And that is impractical, not something we want to encourage. The arts have helped loosen up people’s expectations and made them more receptive to other viewpoints and suggestions without feeling judged. Those same teachers don’t have that issue now.”*

Part of the new confidence teachers feel is manifest through their capacity to let children take more decisions about their own learning. This doesn’t mean a reinvention of curriculum or what skills need to be developed, but it can mean a more democratic approach to choosing topics for themed learning days. Summer 2022 was a good example of this. Student Arts Leaders wanted to have a special ‘arts day’ focusing on learning on a particular set of skills and on a topic of their choosing. Teachers offered them the opportunity to canvas opinion from their peers across the school and the Arts Leaders found a consensus of interest around Minecraft, the immersive online world-building game using simple block-based pixel animated figures. This led to paper-based Minecraft designs being developed which were aggregated to fill a whole corridor with an integrated Minecraft world display.

The Minecraft project is interesting because it points to some of the features of a school moving from one paradigm to another, exhibiting features of each simultaneously. It is challenging to give children freedoms to choose and to plan, yet at the same time to design lessons and day-long activities that will push to meaningful learning outcomes and shareable artwork. Looking through some of the video footage of the Minecraft lessons one can sense the children’s excitement at seeing their own ideas define the school day, yet there are still major elements of control and almost Fordist production that creep in from time to time which may be

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an echo of an older way of working, with teachers needing to know exactly where they are going and what the outcomes will be. For example, one teacher in introducing the activity explains it thus: *“We’ve got some step-by-step instructions which we all need to follow at the same time, Step 1..with our pencils and our ruler we are going to draw a line down the middle of our page, next step we are going to add some eyes, and look at where they are, you want to be near the middle of the grid...”* This approach to making can lead to more homogeneity rather than unleashing the individuality of learners through art, but it is also a way of managing a process that lets the brake off a little more each time and exemplifies the incremental nature of the thawing effect the arts can have on learning that has been chilled by forms of prescriptivism. It is also entirely in line with the Howard Community Academy Statement of Intent for Art already referred to above in relation to phase 1.

But change *is* certainly occurring. As children at Howard Community Academy have recursive opportunities to work in this way, some signs of deeper developments have been noted. Anecdotally, the headteacher observes that the youngest children seem to have made the biggest shifts in confidence and their disposition to learning. This is, she suggests, partly attributable to the fact that they have been around and part of new ways of working longer than older children, some of whom have already moved on to secondary schools. But it may also reflect the affordances of the EYFS curriculum and its adaptability to arts-based strategies for learning. It has often been observed that the younger the learner and the lower the key stage the more likely learning is to still feel fun and involve elements of play, imagination and exploration. These aspects of learning emulate many of the practices associated with making and creative endeavour in the arts. It is what Peter Abbs calls the vertical axis ... *“the biological roots of art-making, that conversion of impulse and feeling and mood into symbolic form, that obscure, interior movement that animates, connects and spontaneously creates inner figurative and narrative patterns ... the rhythm of the body and the unconscious.”* The further up the key stages we go in education the less likely these aspects are to be a strong characteristic of a young person’s education experience. The arts-rich school manages to cultivate a pedagogy whereby the elements of Abbs’ vertical axis merge with those of his horizontal axis too, the means by which we *“draw on and draw in the inherited culture, all the artefacts that relate to the particular discipline, all the techniques that have been laboriously evolved, and as much of the relevant discourse as can be understood.”*⁹

In a school that is beginning to engage more deeply with the arts or creativity, there may be dozens of examples of this sort, techniques to change the dynamic, the power relations or the clarity of purpose within a classroom, all stemming from the practices of artists whose job, often, is to stay in a creative zone or productive space for as long as possible. However, in order to situate

⁹ Abbs, Peter (1989) ‘A’ is for Aesthetics, Falmer Press, UK, p.14.

such practices within a deeper enterprise of school change it is vitally important for school senior leaders to have an active interest in pedagogical expertise and to be engaged in the process of growing it.

We see this in The Creative School Change Project (Thomson et al, 2009)¹⁰ where research in several schools engaged in the then flagship government creative education programme, Creative Partnerships, provided a means of mapping key characteristics necessary to aggregate separate points of creative interest and turn them into foundational principles or lasting structures such as new strategies and curricula. One of the key findings of that project was that for schools to embed the potential learning from working in partnership with artists three important elements needed to be in focus from the school's perspective.

1. **Purpose** of investing in arts rich practices needed to be clear and shared with the wider community beyond the school gates.
2. Cooperation between a committed leadership and an enabling management team – forms of **distributed leadership** - was essential.
3. Accepting and **managing the turbulence** of change – to achieve lasting outcomes and embed practice difficulties have to be faced and overcome, pace will change, detours may be essential, but this is all possible if it is spoken about openly and actively managed.

There are signs that Howard Community Academy is acting in all three of these areas.

Intended purpose was clear from the outset and has been visible within Artsmark plans and the school SIP. The arts are being used to change the culture of the school, the relationship with parents and carers, and the ways children talk and write about their learning and wider experience.

More teachers are stepping up and participating in a way that drives arts-rich learning; they are owning the opportunity. For example, individual teachers are now leading on arts work across the school. Following a music CPD session led by the Arts lead, all teachers created and performed a sea shanty with their class. One teacher went further, using this learning in preparing a performance for the Heritage project across Bury St Edmunds. The school arts leader was trained as an Arts Award adviser, developed in confidence to lead staff training on different aspects of the arts and supported other staff to deliver the Arts Award. She was part of an academy trust- wide subject leader group, liaising with other leaders. This expertise is now being developed as part of the role of music subject leader in 2022/23.

¹⁰ <https://www.creativitycultureeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/creative-school-change.pdf>

Managing differentiated capacities and appetites for change within and beyond the school is more difficult to gauge at this point. Generally, pupil data on wellbeing, staff survey responses and anecdotal exchanges with parents during times of ‘school-gate’ drop-off and pick-up suggest that the direction the school is now moving in has been widely welcomed. Inevitably there has been some natural staff churn – in particular Sally Attwood the arts lead has moved on, and the current Music Lead, Jane Ashdown may come to assume a wider responsibility for the arts in 2023/24. This will be important to help consolidate progress to date, and plan strategically for ongoing development. However, in terms of wider influences on pedagogy, the staff have increasingly show greater receptivity to new approaches and willingness to explore the wider benefits the arts can bring to learning.

Some have gone further and are already making significant changes to their repertoire, taking markedly different approaches to the management of time and space, for example. All this has taken considerable time, and for two years, in parallel with managing impacts of the pandemic. This suggests that accepting the longer timescales required for significant change may be an important precursor to eventual success.

What are the features of classrooms at Howard Community Academy in terms of teaching practices and the philosophy of approach taken? Of course, it will vary from teacher to teacher, and will be dependent on what is being taught. But there are some broad features we can point to which help us understand better how focused use of the arts can induce certain types of culture change. And these features also help characterise the direction of travel the school may be on currently. This chart depicts features of two types of classrooms.



This schema, developed by the educational charity Creativity, Culture and Education (CCE)¹¹ comprises a list of important elements in classroom ecology (listed in the colour-filled column down the centre) and ways in which each element can be interpreted by teachers in schools which are more traditional in feel and approach (left side), and those which are more arts-rich and developmental (right side). For the purposes of debate, they are positioned at either ends of a notional spectrum, but realistically, we would expect to see features of both in actual classrooms from time to time depending on the nature of the task at hand. In this sense ‘low functioning’ is a somewhat misleading label, because aspects of such pedagogy have earned their place in any teacher’s repertoire, and it is unhelpful to think of these forms of teaching in a pejorative way (the Minecraft project would be a good example of this real-world blending).

However, in the case of a school such as Howard Community Academy, actively seeking to use the arts to help improve learning outcomes long-term, we might reasonably expect to see an increasing number of examples of features listed to the right of the diagram above. As one might expect with a complex change process it is very much a mixed picture and a work in progress.

The self as a learning resource is probably where Howard has made greatest progress, using the arts as a way of inviting the community into school and reflecting the reality of individual children’s lived experiences more fully than before. And as an aspect of this there is no doubt that *emotion* is more acknowledged than before and the question of how children feel about coming to school and the process of learning is one the Howard teachers are more tuned into now. *Organisation of time* has been somewhat flexible, with some themed days here and there. And a more *mobile approach to learning locations* is evident, making more extensive use of Howard’s school grounds as an outdoor classroom.

There are also features that emerge which are more in line with the left side characteristics in the diagram above. Even when mediating arts opportunities, for example, some projects are selective by design (the Royal Ballet is a good example) where a relatively small number of children will participate, and so it is not always *inclusive* for all, but sometimes targeted to give a boost to an identified sub-group of learners, or as a reward for engagement and commitment for others. And the *visibility of the learning process* is still perhaps not as high as it might be – which is to say that there is little or no overt use of learning schematics linked to the arts or creativity (such as Creative Habits of Mind¹²). *The role of the teacher* can still be one of step-by-step guide rather than more hands-off facilitator – the Minecraft example above attests to this. But there will be times when a much freer approach is taken and glimpses of that were noted in teachers’ responses to the early CCI project. It may be helpful at some point to make more explicit connections with forms of teaching and learning, theorised and described overtly, of the sort being developed among

¹¹ <https://www.creativitycultureeducation.org/>

¹² <https://www.creativityexchange.org.uk/ideas-hub/teaching-creative-thinking-developing-learners-who-generate-ideas-and-can-think-critically>

the Arts Council funded Creativity Collaboratives¹³? It helps to sharpen teaching intentions and expected learning outcomes when mediating the arts by giving teachers and learners alike access to a vocabulary of learning processes. This can help situate participants within the flow of that endeavour, boosting their autonomy and creating a shared code through which improved ways of teaching and learning can be as valued as the *outcomes* of knowledge transfer and curriculum content.

Aggregated impacts and effects

Assessing impact while a school is still moving through a change process is complicated. Aspects of school change are varied and include the school itself as an organisation, children and their attitudes to self and to learning, as well as teachers and their professional identities, skills and capacities.

We can begin by referring to Howard Community Academy's recent Ofsted report¹⁴, based on visits by inspectors in January 2023. It depicts a very different learning environment than was the case in 2017.

“The school is a happy and caring community. It is calm and purposeful. Positive relationships are central to the ethos, and pupils behave well in lessons and on the playground... Leaders have high expectations both for and of pupils. Pupils are developing positive attitudes towards learning. Due to the education, they have received in the past, there are gaps in pupils’ learning. Leaders have designed a curriculum that accounts for this. It is helping to support pupils to catch up... Families are involved in pupils’ learning through trips and visits. Pupils talk with excitement about these. Their experiences are further enhanced through the celebration of the school’s core values of aspiration, community, experience and nurture.”

Ofsted note the change in the tone and tenor of relationships with parents and the positive perceptions the wider community now have of the school. This is self-evidently an essential foundation for other ambitions the school has which are more specific to aspects of learning – such as oracy and literacy.

It is unsurprising that Ofsted do not overtly mention the arts. It is often the case that even in schools with a longstanding commitment to arts and creative approaches to teaching and learning, they are not picked up on strongly by Ofsted as a lever for

¹³ <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/developing-creativity-and-culture/children-and-young-people/creativity-collaboratives> - Creativity Collaboratives are an extension of and a response to ACE's interest in the ways the arts might contribute to developing creativity in education. They partly arise as a result of recommendations from the Durham Commission (<https://www.creativityexchange.org.uk/about/about-the-durham-commission>) and they explore the potential of lead schools to act as a hub for knowledge sharing among peers; they are interested in forms of pedagogy that draw on the essential characteristics of creative practice, many of which are effectively modelled in and through the arts. Anglian Learning leads the Creativity Collaborative for the South East.

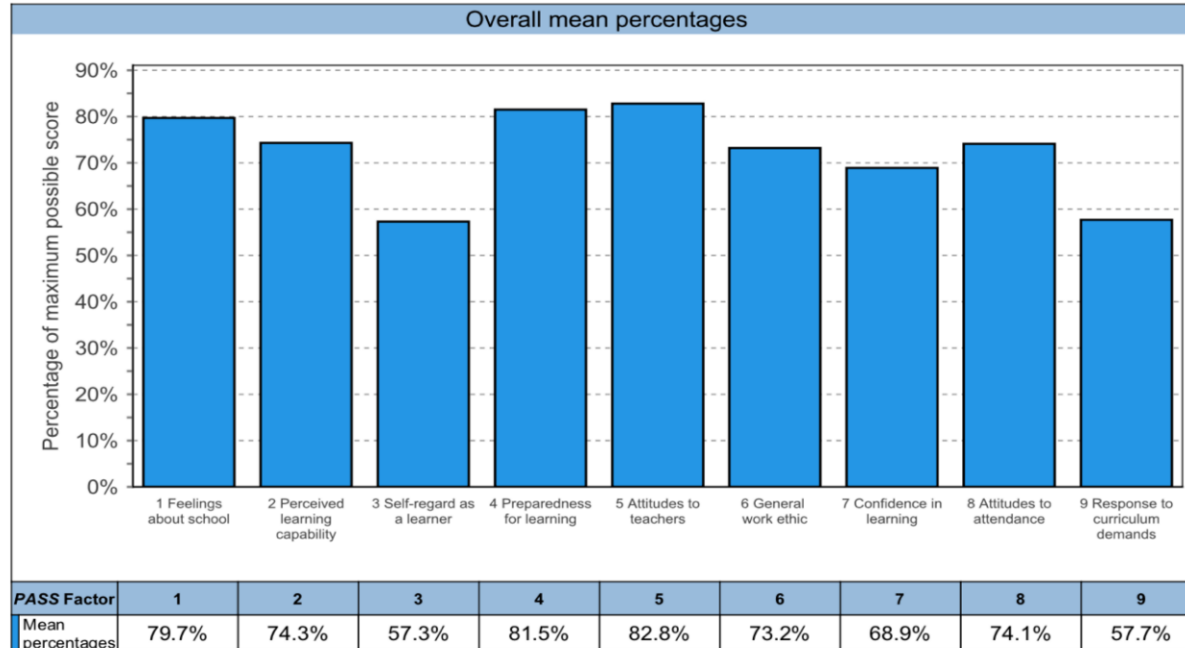
¹⁴ <https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50211804>

change. However, Ofsted do note the effects and outcomes of such approaches – the positive relationships, the shifts in emphasis and ethos affecting behaviour and disposition to learning. Trips and visits are usually mentioned, but the arts-rich nature of the visits, the creative focus and intent, less so. Artsmark too, is generally not something Ofsted overtly mention, but this is probably just as true of other schemes, initiatives and kitemarks where the assumption must be that they are put to the service of a school's own overarching vision and ethos, and that, ultimately, is what the inspectors are most focused on.

Children's attitudes to learning have changed considerably. This was alluded to by Ofsted, but we can also point to positive shifts in survey data. The Pupil Attitude to Self and School is an insight into a whole cohort's overall feeling about being at school and their perception of learning and their capacity to engage with the process. The most recent PASS data for Howard Community Academy (see below) suggests the development of very positive attitudinal changes among young people to being at school when compared to what we know of the general ethos around the time of the 2017 Ofsted inspection.

PASS factor analysis

Level 1: Whole cohort profile



Anglian Learning’s experience of Artsmark, when set against data such as in this table and qualitative observations of practice, suggests that arts-rich schools, with opportunities to explore, be curious and problem solve greatly assist the growth of positive dispositions to learning. Seeing these improved PASS figures for the whole cohort implies that the culture of the school may well be shifting in the intended direction.

In 2017 teachers at Howard felt stressed and under great pressure. Relationships with the wider community did not feel positive and parents often took a confrontational attitude to teachers. Trust had broken down and connections needed to be re-established. None of this was conducive to teacher wellbeing. Since joining Anglian Learning and utilising cultural and creative activities as a driver for more effective learning, teachers seem

more engaged with pedagogy. They are beginning to think more creatively about innovative ways of delivering the curriculum, opening subject domains to larger numbers of children by using more participative, learner-led approaches. All of this helps to rebuild a sense of professional autonomy. Teacher survey data from 2021 suggests perceptions among staff about their role and their work environment are much more positive now. For example, almost all teachers (99%) said they knew who to talk to for support at school, and many noting collaboration had improved a great deal: “...we work really well as a team now.”

Parents have an entirely different view of Howard Community Academy six years on from its most challenging Ofsted inspection of 2017. The most recent inspection in January 2023 resulted in a much more positive set of parent perceptions (see below). The overwhelming sense within the parent community now is that school is a happy and safe place for their children to be, and of course that, as with broad disposition to learning, is a fundamentally important precursor for doing well at school.

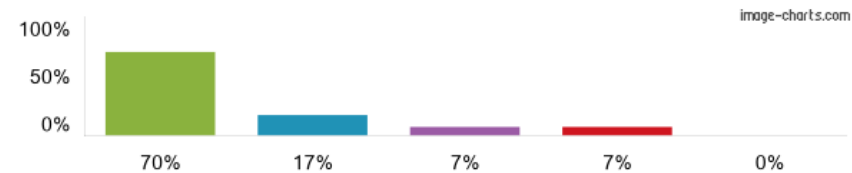
Ofsted Parent View

Ofsted Parent View results

Search results - Howard Community Academy

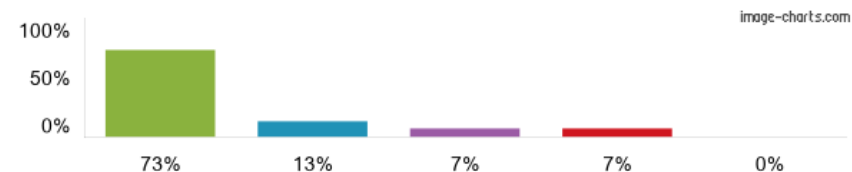
Howard Community Academy	URN: 146280
Beard Road	Telephone: 01284766278
Bury St Edmunds	Children on roll: 163
Suffolk	Responses for this school: 30
IP32 6SA	Responses for year: 2022/23
	View inspection reports

> 1. My child is happy at this school.



Figures based on 30 responses up to 19-01-2023

> 2. My child feels safe at this school.



Figures based on 30 responses up to 19-01-2023



In terms of pupil attainment, it is difficult to say what effects the arts may have had so far. This is because the first order challenge was to shift perceptions around the school and to improve basic dispositions to learning. These are the sorts of important condition-setting activities which help improve the quality of learning over time. Consequently, upticks on attainment are usually the last outcome to emerge with long term change interventions. For this reason, and to more equitably assess progress to date, we will close this case study not by rushing into risky claims about attainment, but by considering three of the facets that have been most important in underpinning Howard Community Academy's journey so far, and which will most likely be vital to maintain momentum.

Leadership – we know from research literature (Davies, *et al* 2013)¹⁵ that creative attitudes modelled by senior leaders enable other teachers around them, and that teachers modelling forms of creative work and approaches to learning support the development of similar skills among children. Therefore, building a culture of arts-rich learning is something that needs to be made visible and be valued by senior leaders via all the usual outlets, including CPD, Assemblies, imaginative timetabling, as well as regular opportunities to build a discourse around these ways of working. This is certainly beginning to happen at Howard Community Academy as can be seen from the extensive descriptions of strategies and new projects in prior sections of this report above and in Appendix 6 below. As the first Artsmark journey ends and before a new cycle begins it would be timely to consider how this style of leadership, and its distribution through the school can be factored into the second Artsmark journey. The headteacher Alison Weir is already beginning to share the journey of Howard Community Academy and the way it has engaged the arts as part of its change strategy. She has submitted a blog to Creativity Exchange, offered insights and advice to the Local Cultural Education Partnership, presented to the Arts Society in Bury St Edmunds and attended the South-East England Headteachers' symposium to offer input on cultural and creative education.

To what extent does Anglian Learning see Howard's journey as one all of its schools can tap into? How can more people be involved in decision making about the arts in ways that interconnects subjects, ideas and practices? And how can this more distributed ownership of the modes of arts teaching promote a discourse around pedagogy more reflective of the actual practice? Anglian Learning's wider strategy for CPD, led by subject specialists and informed by thematic interests (such as Artsmark and Creativity Collaboratives) can play a useful role here. Which leads us to the second important area of Howard's development to date.

CPD – the hardest part of any change programme is not getting it started so much as sustaining it and enabling it to spread. Currently, Howard Community Academy has had success by deploying arts projects which allow teachers to be participant observers, picking up new skills by being part of the project without having to lead on delivery all the time. This is a very effective

¹⁵ <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tsc.2012.07.004>

way of learning because many teachers prefer to grow new skills by watching practice rather than attending discussions or reading printed materials. To make this sustainable long term, and to segue to a scenario where teachers may regularly lead arts-driven approaches to pedagogy, as well as artists, it may be worth considering strategies to build up knowledge banks within staff teams or across Anglian Learning as a whole. By pooling emergent teacher expertise and providing forms of CPD which deepen that knowledge – through networks, discussion forums, planning and reflecting time to consider how things work not just whether they succeeded a community of practice is created that is as defined and informed by internal experience and skill as it is by external partnerships. It is clear from Anglian Learning's identification with the original village college philosophy that there is a culture of practice linked to a set of identifiable values that foreground the arts. At a level below that, where vision and values become day-to-day practice, there is always a need not only to reflect on what worked teaching-wise, but how it was effective. That is, what were the structures, characteristics or hallmarks of good arts-rich practice that enabled better learning? The observation framework from Thomson (see pp-20-21 above) might be a good start point to build some agreed features of Howard's (or more broadly Anglian Learning's) signature practices and pedagogies.

Partnerships – finally, one of the key aspects of this initial phase of Artsmark – disruptions of Covid notwithstanding – was the role of external partners. There are several facets to consider here. Firstly, it is important to distinguish between ways of working with artists. Some artists and arts-educators provide largely experiential learning for young people – via one-off workshops or events, such as a visiting theatre performance for example – but these types of intervention often bring with them no formal expectation of joint planning or joint-reflection with teachers. Whereas other approaches have, as an element of their design, a requirement for teachers and/or children to work alongside artists as co-creators. And of course, there are examples of blends of each as with any spectrum of practice. Categorising which type of intervention an artist is offering helps schools make more active decisions about what is right for their needs at any given time or for a particular topic, and as a result they become more informed commissioners of such work. It also has the effect of discouraging tendencies to consider the arts as being homogenous in some way or taking too broad a view of their educational value as being fun, novel or merely a 'break from the norm'. Therefore, arts partnerships are not so much forms of service delivery, but ways of schools actively deploying additional expertise in targeted, intentional ways and which may have some CPD or planning legacy built in. How did Howard Community Academy do this? It offered a blend of different kinds of opportunities. There were taster sessions and more after-school clubs to simply increase energy and shift the atmosphere around the school, but these were mixed with more recursive opportunities to develop ideas and arts installations over time, and for young people and teachers alike, to learn alongside artists. Some of these projects were about redefining space within the school – as with Alfie Carpenter, Eco-Capabilities and the Willow Sculpture project. Others, such as the use of off-site visits to Snape Maltings, the Royal Ballet etc, aimed at thinking about practice and process, often leading to a final performance. By interweaving these different types of partnership project Howard Community Academy has, arguably, accelerated its progress through Artsmark by transforming its own learning environment while also simultaneously developing teacher practices and learners' attitudes.

Version 0.7

Howard Community Academy and Anglian Learning
The Arts and School Change: An Artsmark Case Study
November 2023

Finally, Howard's submission of its Statement of Impact in the summer of 2023 led to its first Artsmark award. The efforts of all staff involved, the young people who fully engaged with the new arts opportunities and the wider support from Anglian Learning, helping to take stock and reflect on key learning led to a very impressive Gold Artsmark award after just one cycle of activity. Of course, such developments never stand still for long and embedding of this first phase and all the new ways of working it prompted will also bring new opportunities, and deeper understanding.

The next steps will be exciting, but also challenging. Consolidating learning will be key to longer term success. As with change in any field, initial gains often come quickest but establishing them over the long term as habits of mind or encultured practices – marking an identifiable way of doing things in this particular school or Trust for instance – can take much more time and require even greater focus. Usually, this is marked by a shift in arts-rich education characterised by affording as much profile for *how* things are done as is often given to what is going on. It is often exemplified by teaching professionals inhabiting the practices they see modelled by artists or which they have developed for themselves until they are describing them as much in terms of pedagogical processes as they might artform knowledge and skills. So, as well as being clearer about what children might learn within an artform discipline and how they might make progress within the bounds of a particular subject, teachers may also begin to talk, write and plan in ways that use the arts as a vehicle for learning more widely, encouraging children to be more active, exploratory, collaborative for instance, or to reflect back their understanding in a wider variety of modes or media.

All of this is contingent on establishing a professional discourse, a way of talking and thinking about the arts in new ways that empower teachers to make deeper and wider use of them. And this is why Howard Community Academy's journey to date, with its emphasis on leadership, CPD and partnerships, will very likely prepare it well for future educational successes in and through the arts.

Appendix 1 - Menu of arts activities

Howard Community Academy: ARTS Projects/Activities 2020-21			
AUTUMN 2020	Artist/Organisation	When	Number of children accessed
<p>Virtual online visit from Author James Campbell. 1.30-2.20pm on Tuesday 20th October.</p> <p>James has written various books such as Boyface and the Quantum Chromatic Disruption Machine. http://www.thejamescampbell.com/</p> <p>Reading extracts and taking questions from the children about his books / being an author.</p>		October 2020	Whole school
<p>Lost Words and Found Connections</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A pilot to begin to explore how CCI's creative practice can support a journey of school improvement. - Connecting young children, their families, and educators with each other and with nature. - Exploring, talking, listening and creating together in response to the world they find on their doorstep. - Taking inspiration from the Lost Words Book. <p>To include: Four school days of creative adventuring workshops / Two after school workshops for families to explore space and discover children's ideas / A workshop to establish the project for staff / Temporary displays of work/images created by artists (and children where appropriate) in agreed spaces in school during the project. / Work then curated and printed to form a series of four large panels for permanent display. / Project diaries written by artists on CCI website, shared to social media. / Postcards from panel artwork for school/community.</p> <p>Artists visiting school 23 Oct/Start work November (2 Nov – staff meeting 3.30-5pm for launch with staff) Adventuring days: Nov 9, 13, 16 and 20. Family day tbc Nov 23</p>	Cambridge Curiosity and Imagination	Nov 2020	EYFS / Year 1 28 children
<p>Alfie Carpenter (https://www.alfiecarpenter.com/) working with children to produce an artwork for the main hall/reception area – 1 day/week for 4 weeks (12 Nov, 26 Nov, 10 Dec, 17 Dec)</p> <p>Potentially 2 Nov for meeting with Ruth coming in last week of term 23rd March Tuesday Early years and year 1 to compete</p>	Alfie Carpenter (Bury St Edmunds Arts Society)	Nov 2020	Whole school

Film Club registration/induction	Into Film		Started with 5 children in lockdown 15 children from April
Working with Clay (CPD session for staff) – specialist practitioner – Bottisham	King Edward VI School teacher		
Charanga trial and purchased used in school curriculum			Use in all year groups throughout the school
Music therapist for nurture			? Children
Virtual carol concert whole school		Dec 2020	Whole school
Nativity Play (KS1) – to be filmed for sharing		Dec 2020	28 children took part the whole school watched
Nutcracker workshop year 3/4 and Year 5	Royal Ballet	Dec 2020	54 children in total
Christmas Song Concert	Emma Andrews (Primary Music Specialist)	Dec 2020	
Carol singing for Marham Park y2/3/4 War songs for Marham park year 5/6		Dec 2020	50 children 49 children
Virtual pantomime and linked activities		Dec 2020	Whole school
SPRING 2021			
Eco-Capabilities Project (Nicola Walshe ARU) – examining the impact of CCI art-in-nature practice on children’s wellbeing and connection to their environment = 8 x sessions for KS2 (60 children) + pre and post intervention research + festival to celebrate work in a gallery space (likely Cambridge). Project due in February (project for free at a value of ca £30k)	Cambridge Curiosity and Imagination	Feb 2021 Date now moved to March / April	Year ¼ 26 children Year 5 30 children
Film Club started/Into Film CPD session for teachers	Into Film		All teaching staff
Young Voices (Years 5/6)		Feb 2021	

Whole School Clay Project (to start kiln) Delayed due to COVID			
Royal Ballet School Project Year 3s delayed due to COVID	Royal Ballet	March	19 children
Willow Sculpture Project (for courtyard)	Liz Cooke, Lark Valley Willow		
Themed song concert/CD recorded	Emma Andrews (Primary Music Specialist)	Moved to Summer	
Discover and Explore Arts Award Adviser Training (x 2 teachers)		Sally completed February	1 staff
World Book Day Virtual Author workshop – illustration Gillian McClure			? children
SUMMER 2021			
CCI project continues (funding dependent)	Cambridge Curiosity and Imagination		
Tiny plays, big ideas - booked with the theatre Royal for year 6		May	19 pupils
Doorstep Theatre festival KS2 / KS1 – Link with arts award	Theatre Royal Bury St Edmunds	June	
Young Artist – mural painting – with children’s ideas and designs – link with discover and explore			
Carnival Workshops leading to float/procession in Bury St Edmunds Carnival (12-13 June 2021)Carnival Cancelled	Ricki and Carey Outis	May-June 2021	
School Production (UKS2/LKS2) KES support for directing	Specialist Support Emma Thompson		
Art lessons planned by Art subject leader for Y1 – Y6	Sally Attwood	Lessons taught in Summer term	Years 1-6 2 art units taught over the term

A) How much of your work has been about doing more - getting more experiential activities going and perhaps shifting perceptions about “doing” the arts among staff and learners through access to after school clubs and enrichment projects for example.

B) How much of your work has been about doing better - having focused learning intentions with some form of measurable success outcomes. These might be CPD objectives for staff or curriculum based outcomes for young people. And the beginnings of projects influencing practice in ways that appear more day to day as part of teaching practices rather than as part of special weeks or interventions?

C) How much of your work has been about sharing practice and advocating its benefits - reflecting on what works and sharing it as a form of pedagogy among staff or with other settings? To what extent are you using the arts as the underpinning for your narratives about what works well and how successfully are you getting teacher or other schools to learn from your experiences?

Appendix 2 - Areas for improvement identified by Ofsted in 2017

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in July 2017

- Rapidly ensure that the local authority, the interim executive headteacher and governors work collectively to secure sustained capacity and improvements in leadership by:
 - clarifying leadership roles and accountabilities
 - establishing a line management system that holds leaders to account for their impact on raising standards
 - securing a fully functioning governing body with clear roles and responsibilities which has the capacity to fully address the urgent priorities in the school
 - embedding a consistent and balanced curriculum so that pupils receive high- quality opportunities both within and across year groups, including trips, visits, and enrichment and extra-curricular activities
 - planning and monitoring the impact of curriculum provision that develops pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding
 - ensuring that additional funding that the school receives raises the achievement and attendance of disadvantaged pupils
 - creating a thorough system for monitoring and improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, including high-quality training for staff
 - ensuring that new performance management systems hold staff rigorously to account for the achievement of pupils
 - reviewing the use of the sport premium so that leaders can assure its impact on pupils' enjoyment and achievement in sports and physical education
 - ensuring that the leader for special educational needs (SEN) has sufficient capacity to raise standards in the identification of and support for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- Ensure that leaders, governors and the local authority urgently address remaining safeguarding issues by:
 - making sure that there is a designated safeguarding leader on site who can lead and share the responsibility for supporting the most vulnerable pupils
 - being attentive to concerns that are reported by staff, so that they are actioned and referred on when appropriate

- clarifying roles and responsibilities for the safeguarding of vulnerable pupils, such as children looked after, and pupils in alternative provision, so that these pupils are well monitored and cared for
- reviewing the issues identified by the local authority in November 2016 and being assured that all of these have been fully addressed ensuring that the curriculum provides pupils with thorough information about how to keep themselves safe and that this evolves as pupils get older. Improve teaching, learning and assessment and raise achievement significantly by:
 - providing staff with ongoing training about how to use the new assessment system more effectively to plan for pupils' learning over time and to meet specific pupils' needs and interests
 - raising teachers' expectations about what pupils can achieve, notably the most able pupils, those from disadvantaged backgrounds, those who need to catch up and those pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities
 - ensuring that staff are confident to teach pupils the new national curriculum skills and content, so that standards rise rapidly, most notably in phonics and in reading, writing and mathematics in key stages 1 and 2.
- Embed recent improvements in the early years by:
 - improving the indoor and outdoor provision for children, including the
 - celebration of their work and learning
 - ensuring that there is clear monitoring of the early years pupil premium and that leaders measure the difference that it makes to disadvantaged children
 - developing communication and assessment practices between the Nursery and Reception provision, so that there is greater consistency in teaching, learning, assessment and transition
 - –reviewing the curriculum so that children access a fully enriched provision, including trips, visits and visitors
 - ensuring greater consistency between staff in the development of children's early language and phonics skills.
- Strengthen pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
 - reducing the absence and persistent absence of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with SEN and/or disabilities
 - identifying the right support and provision for pupils who exhibit significant difficulty in managing their own behaviour, so that incidents of extreme behaviour reduce
 - further embedding teachers' use of the new behaviour systems, so that pupils are confident in staff's ability to deal with poor behaviour consistently and fairly

- significantly reducing the numbers of pupils who lose focus in their lessons or become distracted.

An external review of the use of the pupil premium funding should be undertaken to assess how this aspect of leadership and engagement may be improved.

Appendix 3 – Howard Community Academy Artsmark Statement of Commitment



Artsmark
AWARDED BY ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND

Statement of Commitment

Application paperwork 1 of 2.

Name of school/education setting	Howard Community Academy
DfE number	935 / 2224
Support We are here if you need us.	
Download our guidance on how to complete your Statement of Commitment: https://www.artsmark.org.uk/about/artsmark-award-document-downloads	
Get in touch with your Bridge organisation, who offer support throughout your Artsmark journey. Their details can be found online: https://www.artsmark.org.uk/Bridge	



Context – up to 150 words

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

Howard Community Academy, Bury St Edmunds, has 151 pupils and caters from nursery-age to Year 6. Over the last 4 years, following an Ofsted report putting the school into special measures, there have been frequent changes in leadership, and changes in teaching staff. In 2018 the school became an academy sponsored by Chilford Hundred Education Trust (CHET). In April 2020 CHET joined Anglian Learning, a MAT comprising 13 academies in Cambridgeshire, Essex and Suffolk, and an acting Headteacher was appointed.

The school is on a housing estate in an area of disadvantage, and a significant proportion of pupils are from vulnerable circumstances. Children typically enter school with low language levels, poor speaking/listening skills and low attainment. Many work below age-related expectations in reading, writing and maths. Pupils eligible for PP = 38%, and SEND = 40%, both higher than national average. 13% of pupils' first language is not English.



Question 1 – up to 500 words

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

Anglian Learning prioritises a broad and balanced curriculum for all its pupils and sees the arts as playing a central role within this. This strong commitment to the arts was recognised in February 2020 when Anglian Learning signed a partnership agreement with Arts Council England, the first such agreement between a MAT and ACE. With our MAT having a strategic commitment to the arts at executive level and an arts strategy encouraging its schools to actively engage in Artsmark/Arts Award and to champion the arts, we are now in the process of establishing an ethos and developing a School Improvement Plan (SIP) reflective not only of this but, importantly, also of our own keen commitment to the arts.

We believe passionately in the power of the arts to impact positively on young lives. Our acting Headteacher joined us from an Artsmark-accredited school, has first-hand experience of the benefits of arts engagement and so would like to see the arts play a more prominent and sustained role within school.

To this end, we have recently introduced the new Cornerstones curriculum, which has art and music as key drivers for topics. Our hope is that this new approach, as well as having a positive impact on children and their outcomes, will also support us to sustainably embed inclusive arts within and beyond the curriculum, and establish a regular calendar of activity, all of which was absent throughout our recent turbulent history.

Currently, we:

- use art/drama in English lessons, with the Pie Corbett 'Talk for writing' and story mapping approach also used in parts across school.
- display artwork prominently in hallways/classrooms, and have a dedicated art room, art equipment in every classroom and a kiln.
- have visiting performers provide whole-school pantomimes/shows.
- attend events:
 - Year 3s attend a dance performance,
 - Years 5s/6s attended a musical by sixth formers at local King Edwards VI School (Artsmark Platinum), with whom we have a link.
 - Years 5s/6s also attended Young Voices events, which is set to be a regular occurrence.
- participate in:
 - The Royal Ballet School's annual primary programme offering 5 workshop sessions with a ballet teacher, building to a performance for families/friends, with selected children then further developing skills in a Royal Ballet-run after-school club.
 - local art competitions and have had children's work displayed at events/locations within the town centre.
- perform:
 - Early Years/Year 1 perform an annual Christmas nativity, and we have a carol service/songs around the Christmas tree for the whole school.
 - Other year groups stage performances at the end of the spring/summer terms, all of which are well attended by parents.

In the past we have also been supported through the Bridge's CALSA programme and by the then-CHET Head of Music at Linton VC (Artsmark Platinum) and welcome further and similar opportunities like this moving forward. Since joining Anglian Learning, we now have the support of a Director of Primary Education and the services of a part-time Arts Development Manager, which will further assist our realising our ambitions.



Question 2 – up to 500 words

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

At the start of a new stage in our development, our key priorities for 2020/21 are to establish a calm and inspiring environment, and to improve pupils' behaviour by developing therapeutic relationships and engaging them fully in practically-based activities through which they can build and increase self-confidence and self-esteem.

Priority 1: Ethos, Community and Behaviour

Developing an inspirational learning environment with opportunities for pupils and their families, as well as the wider community, to contribute collaboratively to supporting/developing the school's ethos is critical. We envision projects involving artists/musicians in residence, and professional practitioners working with pupils and families (Covid-19 permitting) to demonstrate what is achievable in different art forms and media, and giving our children access to authentic, exciting experiences.

Practically-based arts activities and specialist play and music therapy will be integral elements to support identified vulnerable pupils both in mainstream classes and within our nurture provision as part of individualised targeted support. The impact on progress towards identified social, emotional and mental health targets will be measured using the Thrive framework, Education and Health Care Plans and assessment, plan, do review cycles.

The models provided will inspire pupils and families to better appreciate and understand their own ability to achieve, as well as to enjoy and to participate in creative art, music and dance activities. We will also celebrate achievement with special assemblies and events to include parents.

Priority 2: Quality of Provision

Through our Artsmark journey, the models, skills and expertise that we access will support teachers to develop an understanding of how they can progressively teach skills and knowledge across the arts curriculum. High quality teaching and whole class inclusive provision will meet the needs of every learner. From this inclusive approach, all curricular areas, particularly the arts, will provide our children with key opportunities to experience success, pride and achievement despite low levels of literacy and numeracy.

Priority 3: Curriculum

We will develop our offer of a broad and balanced curriculum. Skills and knowledge will be taught through themed projects, engaging pupils with art, music and drama, specifically linked to supporting development of their literacy skills (in addition to emotional literacy through our restore and thrive approach to a post-Covid-19 curriculum). The arts will be used to emphasise how pupils visualise texts, enhance and develop rich and well-understood vocabulary and self-expression.

Embarking on our Artsmark journey is timely as Anglian Learning and ACE, having recently established a partnership, have also agreed to undertake a joint project examining the significance of the arts in school improvement, with our school as the focus. From a leadership perspective, engaging in the Artsmark process plays a key role in driving our planning to provide a rounded experience to ensure that our children experience success and thrive, preparing them for lifelong learning and attempting to redress the disadvantage in cultural capital that many of our pupils experience.



Question 3 – up to 500 words

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

Values and ethos: Establishing our values/ethos is part of our ongoing work. The introduction of the Cornerstones curriculum will support appropriate timetabling of arts and culture, and we look forward to seeing these become a mainstay of our ethos and our children being able to apply their arts learning in wider contexts.

Leadership: We have welcomed the appointments of our acting Headteacher, an Assistant Headteacher (SEND lead), and the support of Anglian Learning's Director of Primary Education. Stable leadership supports our developing a clear vision for our school, gives confidence to staff, pupils and parents, and allows for our planning/implementing approaches to improving our arts and cultural provision. Our acting Headteacher leads on this, supported by the Arts Coordinator, all staff and the MAT Arts Development Manager.

Engagement: Events are generally well supported by parents, and both pupils and parents value opportunities for arts engagement, with pupils particularly enjoying visual art, where they feel unconstrained by the usual barriers to their achieving; displays around school being testament to this. We would now like to engage pupils in planning for arts and cultural experiences, developing pupil voice and increasing confidence. This, in turn, should support pupils in performance, an area also requiring focus.

Curriculum design: Arts and culture are in evidence across the curriculum. However, there are no clear connections across subjects or progression in skills development over time, and we plan to address this.

Range of offer: We are ambitious for our provision. Within the curriculum we want to develop a broad and stimulating offer with opportunities for all children to create, experience, perform and lead in the arts. Supporting this, we also want to develop our extra-curricular activity.

CPD: We have had a period of changes in teaching staff and are now keen to establish a stable workforce. We recognise that CPD is important in improving both performance and staff retention and so this is a key area of our focus. We want to develop staff who enjoy and are confident in teaching art, music, drama and other art forms. Staff who do their jobs well are more likely to be content in their roles, to contribute effectively and to remain in post, and so we plan to establish CPD sessions with specialist arts teachers/practitioners.

Partnerships: We have a long-standing partnership with the Royal Ballet School and with a Male Voice Choir which rehearses in our buildings and has worked to support our singing. We recognise the mutual benefits partnership working can offer and so want to develop further links with arts organisations, practitioners, and schools. We would welcome further CALSA support, working with our LCEP (Periscope) partners, eg., Theatre Royal, working with our Music Education Hub, and our MAT and local schools, such as King Edward VI: a stronger relationship might, eg., see King Edward students lead Arts Award projects in our school.

Equality and diversity

Pupil Premium funding has always been used to ensure equality of opportunity, allowing all opportunities to be offered to all pupils without exception.



Question 4 – up to 500 words

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

Through stakeholder discussions, we have established the following goals/ambitions:

Demonstrate effective leadership: Artsmark supports our SIP aims to raise aspirations and improve pupils' self-esteem. Artsmark plans, and our progress against these, will be displayed in school, and our acting Headteacher will monitor/evaluate achievements

through the regular schedule integral to school improvement planning, and pupil/parent voice. All arts events/activities will be scheduled in the school calendar as part of our work plan.

Develop confident and skilled staff: We will provide effective CPD in music, filmmaking and arts skills, linked to our curriculum offer, and we will monitor and provide for specific needs. Staff meetings will regularly be devoted to developing arts skills/knowledge and delivered by professional practitioners. Staff will also work alongside practitioners, and some staff will be trained as Arts Award advisers.

Embed and strengthen the arts in our curriculum: We are delivering the Cornerstones curriculum, a creative/thematic approach to learning, which will support our pupils' consistent progression in arts skills. The arts will be embedded across our curriculum, eg., using History Off The Page to support cross-curricular drama, and introducing world art/music in Geography. Schemes supporting curriculum delivery, such as the Charanga music scheme, will also be used.

Extend our arts offer: We will increase our extracurricular offer, including introducing an Into Film film club. Within the curriculum we will introduce Arts Award (Discover and Explore), increase the number of arts specialists coming into school, eg., specialist music teachers supporting learning of tuned instruments, participate in local events, link up with other schools, and schedule school productions/relevant arts trips/visits.

Increase engagement: We will inspire engagement through:

- Showcasing pupil art - in school, newsletters, on our website, looking also for external exhibition opportunities.
- Creating opportunities for parents/children to work together, eg., creating a float for Bury St Edmunds carnival.
- Celebrating achievement: holding assemblies highlighting pupil achievement.
- Empowering our pupils: supporting pupils' development as arts leaders: allowing them to create displays/choose productions.
- Staging performances/concerts: encouraging pupils to perform and watch others perform: offering regular showcases of pupil music/singing for parents.

Be inclusive: Enrichment opportunities (eg. museums, performances, workshops) will be available to all pupils, with PTA/PP funding supporting this and individual places in paid-for arts clubs. Pupils will experience a range of artists/art forms, representative of different cultures.

Create a stimulating/inspiring school environment: We will set up one or more visual art project/s led by a professional artist/s working with pupils and parents and focused on creating/installing an art work/s in our indoor and/or courtyard spaces.

Develop relationships with professional practitioners and cultural organisations for new opportunities: We will strengthen our relationship with NNF Bridge and develop a relationship with our LCEP. We will explore opportunities through Suffolk Music Hub and identify/contact local groups, such as the Arts Society.

Develop relationships with other schools: We will explore opportunities to benefit from existing arts expertise/resources in our MAT (6 secondaries/7 primaries), eg., staff training in kiln use/clay work. We will also extend relationships with local schools, and share any learning from our journey.



Question 5 – up to 500 words

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

Our acting Headteacher and Arts Coordinator attended the Artsmark development day and have led on developing goals/ambitions for Artsmark in consultation with staff, our Interim Executive Board (there is currently no governing body), and other Anglian Learning staff members.

In planning, we have had extensive consultation with our staff through dedicated meetings. In these, staff have worked to support and shape our creative ambitions, and have expressed clear commitment and enthusiasm for these. There is therefore evident ownership of this project among staff, whom we know we can rely on for support. In return, we will commit to upskilling staff and training some as Arts Award advisers, so they are confident arts leaders able to realise our ambitions and bring about sustainable improvement. We will also seek to measure the impact of this commitment on staff.

We have clear and unequivocal support from our interim Executive Board, who recognise the importance of creativity in both children's progress and wellbeing, who will champion the arts on the school's behalf both within/beyond the school community and support monitoring of our Artsmark plans. Once a governing body is established at our school, a further key aim will be to ensure there is a specific governor with responsibility for overseeing our arts commitment/activity.

At MAT level, a group has been established to support our journey, comprising a secondary Principal, the Director of Primary Education and the Arts Development Manager. This group has experience of Artsmark and so is able to offer guidance, and we will ensure we meet regularly.

In addition to this, we will rely on our parents and children to support our creative activity and interventions. With parents, we will ensure we communicate clearly through newsletters, on our website and via social media and, through these channels, we will encourage and promote engagement. As well as inviting participation, we will also establish whether parents can lead or support activities: we may have a parent willing to run an after-school Film Club, or a parent working in the arts happy to talk about his/her career in an assembly or run a workshop. Meanwhile, we will also ensure pupils are actively involved in choosing creative activities/themes for projects so that pupil voice and leadership are developed and strengthened.

To support our creative ambitions, we will ensure we commit adequate funding for the arts. At the same time, we will also develop our fundraising abilities, seeking to discover different sources of funding and to develop skills in writing effective funding proposals/applications.

Finally, we recognise the vital role partnerships play in developing an arts offer and so will seek to strengthen existing partnerships and build new ones. We have welcomed getting to know NNF Bridge better and look forward to benefiting from their advice, eg., about establishing new partnerships through our LCEP, and through support from CALSAs. Furthermore, we would like to develop ties with our local Arts Society, make links with Suffolk Music Hub and explore opportunities for working with Cambridge Curiosity and Imagination.



Question 6 – up to 500 words

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?

Success will see:

- A school able to clearly articulate its ethos and values, with effective leadership and a clear vision for the future.
- A school providing an inspiring environment for its pupils, parents and wider community.
- Pupils who are engaged and happy in school.

- An offer of high quality arts opportunities within and beyond the curriculum established and maintained as part of the school's regular calendar of activity.
- Thriving relationships established with artists, arts organisations and other schools.
- A school community actively participating and engaging in the arts.
- Regular celebrations of pupil achievement.
- Pupils' engagement in the arts supporting them to feel confident and successful, able to express themselves creatively and building a wider cultural knowledge and understanding that they can apply beyond the school gates.
- Pupils taking on leadership roles in projects.
- Parents supporting and encouraging children's participation.
- Staff and pupils who are confident in using a wider range of media and approaches in the arts, using skills and knowledge that build progressively and cumulatively to achieve high standards in their work.
- A stable workforce.
- A school community which is enlivened by the arts, both in the environment and through accessing and participating in a wider range of activity and performances, with pupils benefiting socially and emotionally through engagement with their peers in collaborative projects.
- Pupils' success in the creative arts positively influencing and encouraging their engagement in wider subjects and, over time, this supporting improved academic achievement.
- The school being recognised for its aspirations and contribution to the arts in the local community and beyond.
- Pupils' achievements influencing their confidence and success as they transition to secondary school. Feedback showing that they continue high levels of engagement and involvement in the arts beyond primary school.

We will implement our plans from as soon as we can in the new academic year, 2020-21, but are aware we may need to adapt these, taking into account the changing Coronavirus situation.

We will evidence the achievement of our goals and ambitions and report on these in our Statement of Impact through regular monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of our plans. We will monitor using a range of methods, including surveys, questionnaires, feedback forms, focus groups, interviews, participation and attainment records. Depending on the activity and what impact we wish to measure, we will engage pupils, staff, parents, partners (other schools/practitioners/arts organisations) and the wider community in this process, where appropriate.

In particular, we will collect quantitative data to monitor opportunities, levels of engagement and attendance at events, and we will collect qualitative feedback from participants and audiences on the impact of their involvement. Over time, we would hope to see

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increases in opportunity, engagement and attendance, and we would hope, similarly, that feedback reflects increasingly positive experiences. Where we find we are not achieving as we had hoped, we will revisit our plans and revise as necessary.

Our hope is that this approach will support us to complete our Statement of Impact.

Approval

Click the box to agree to the statements and enter the name and date this was approved.

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:

Date:

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)

Chair of Governors Name:

Date:

Checklist

Make sure your Statement of Commitment is complete before you submit to us.

- My school/setting name is written at the top of this document
- My DfE number is at the top of this document and matches the one I registered with
- My answer to the Context question has no more than 150 words
- My answers to Questions 1-6 have no more than 500 words each
- The Headteacher and Chair of Governors have approved this document

Ready to submit?

You should submit your Statement of Commitment within **three months** of attending your Development Day training.

Email your Statement of Commitment as an attachment to artsmark@artscouncil.org.uk

We will confirm receipt within five working days.

Appendix 4 - Overview priorities from Howard Community Academy School Improvement Plan 2020-21

1. *Ethos, community and behaviour*

- Implement a therapeutic approach to managing pupils' behaviour and eradicate the significant disruption to learning and wellbeing that has been the recent experience at Howard.
- Rebuild community links and reputation by raising the profile of Howard Community Academy as a key player in the local community.
- Sustain and improve the sense of teamwork and collaboration established through the Covid 19 lockdown.
- Improve communication and engagement with parents to ensure parents feel valued, engaged and supported as part of the school community.
- Behaviours of a key number of children has historically disrupted learning for the majority of children, therefore an effective and therapeutic approach to behaviour is required to ensure learning for all.

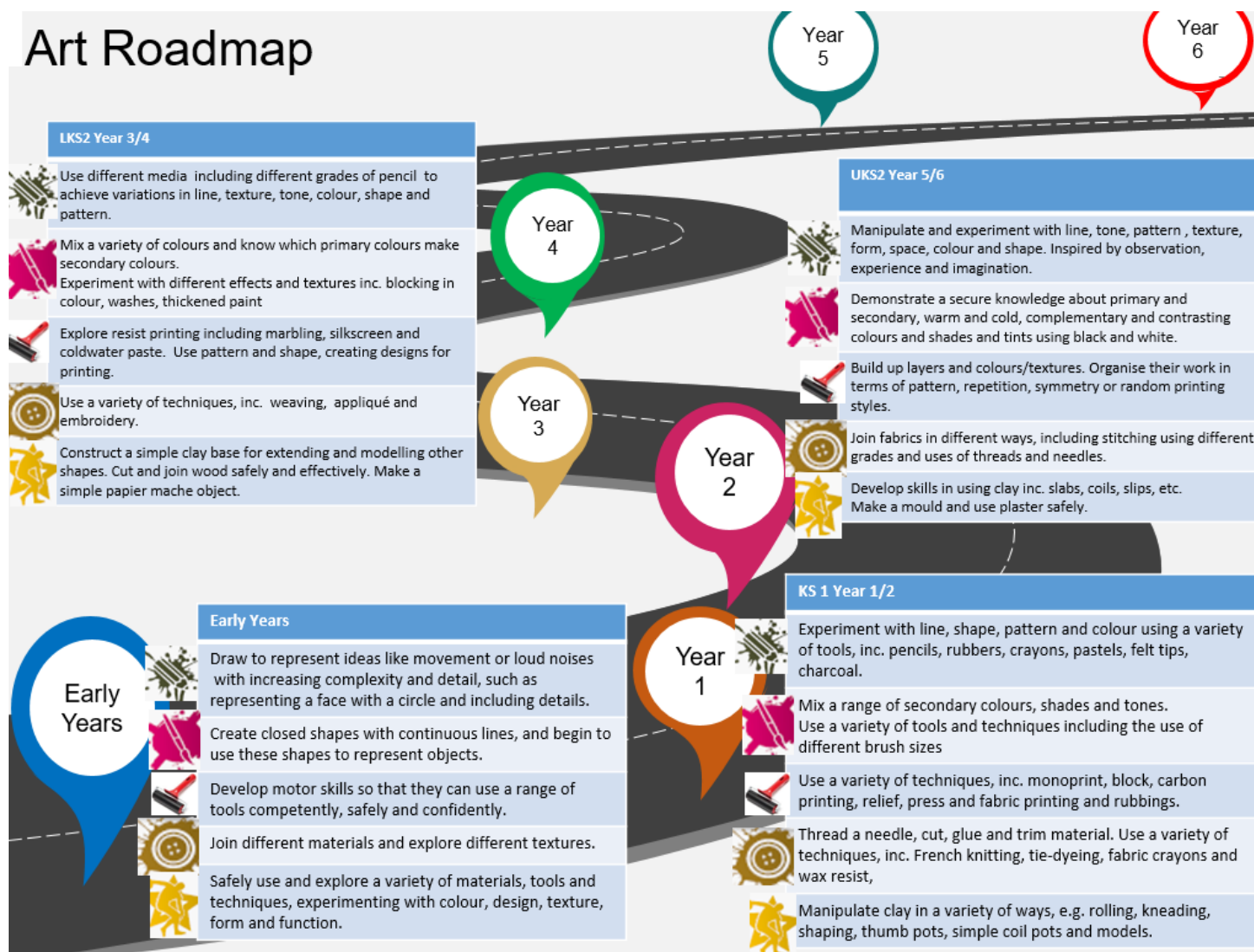
2. *Quality of Provision*

- Improve achievement addressing the concern that only ten pupils are working at age related expectations across the school. (see analysis above)
- Improve the analysis of SEND and address the lack of provision or identification of need for many pupils across the school.
- Ensure teachers and teaching assistants have a good understanding of pupils' learning needs, gaps in pupils learning and the necessary advice and resources to bring about improvements in pupils' engagement and learning progress.
- Ensure the use of formative and summative assessment is accurate and impactful.

3. *Curriculum*

- Ensure pupils are effectively supported to return successfully to school and thrive through the FLAMES recovery curriculum.
- Implement the new cohesive, broad and balanced whole school curriculum.
- Implement key phonics, NFER, Language Link and Thrive assessments to ensure provision is well matched to the needs of all pupils.
- Implement the bespoke maths curriculum and support all staff to teach mathematics with confidence and inspiration.

Appendix 5 – Howard Community Academy Arts Road Map



Appendix 6 – Howard Community Academy Artsmark Statement of Impact, 2023

Statement of Impact

Application paperwork 2 of 2

Name of school/education setting	Howard Community Academy
DfE number	_ _ _ / _ _ _ _

Support

We are here if you need us.

Use this template to draft and finalise your Statement of Impact.

Our submission process has changed. You must submit your Statement of Impact **online** - we no longer accept email submissions. Please read our [Submission Guidance](#) for the steps to follow.

Download our guidance on how to complete your Statement of Impact: artsmark.org.uk/resources and get in touch with your [Bridge organisation](#), who offer support throughout your Artsmark journey.

Tips

- We strongly recommend you use as much of the **available word counts** as possible when drafting your responses, to give us as much information as you can about the impact of your Artsmark journey
- We recommend you use as much of the **time available** to you as possible before submitting your Statement of Impact. If you are unsure of your deadline, please contact us at artsmark@artscouncil.org.uk

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- Artsmark cannot provide feedback on **draft submissions**. If you need feedback on your Statement of Impact before submitting it, please contact your Bridge organisation, their details are on our website [here](#)



Context – up to 150 words

If there have been changes to the context of your school or education setting since the submission of your Statement of Commitment, please describe them here.

(Enter your answer here)

We have rebranded as Howard Community Academy, with a new logo and website. Community is a key value. We see the power of community and the part the Arts can play in our community; accessible for all.

The acting Headteacher is now permanent, and staffing is stable. The school has benefited from being part of Anglian Learning, having a supportive Director of Primary Education and other senior leaders.

Our pupil roll has increased (now 187), with many joining following relocation from outside UK, thus increasing our % of pupils with EAL (16%). Our PP and SEND percentages also remain high, 33% and 31% respectively. We have capacity to grow further.

An Ofsted inspection in January 2023 rated our overall effectiveness as ‘requires improvement’ but found us to be ‘good’ in all categories other than quality of education. Pupils’ performance is improving, as is evidenced through standardised assessments.



Question 1 – up to 500 words

Reflecting on your Statement of Commitment and the Artsmark criteria, what was successful in your Artsmark journey and how did you achieve this? *(Enter your answer here)*

The Arts have played a key therapeutic role and driving force behind our school improvement journey. Successes have seen us increase the expertise and confidence of our staff to deliver lessons across a range of arts skills, engage parents to participate alongside their offspring and develop pupils who are confidently creative and able to articulate this.

We have developed relationships with other schools, artists and arts organisations with fruitful collaborations and projects, benefiting those involved and creating attractive displays, making our school an inspiring space. Our children have developed a clear sense of ownership and pride in their environment, having co-created murals with the artist Alfie Carpenter. The arts are now also firmly embedded across our curriculum, interwoven into every topic. Visitors regularly comment on our calm ethos and attractive environment.

Staff have benefited from CPD with arts practitioners/organisations (e.g. silkscreen printing; song writing, clay/kiln) and are involved in researching oracy development as a hub school in our Trust's ACE-funded Creativity Collaboratives project, exploring how teaching for creativity can contribute to school improvement.

We have established well-attended half-termly workshops for parents and children to co-create in the art classroom and host regular reading cafés,

Each class has had at least one external practitioner/organisation deliver an arts project in the academic year, reflected in Arts Award portfolios of two pupil cohorts, gaining Arts Award Discover and Explore, providing a huge boost to their confidence as artists. Harder-to-engage children have more readily accessed learning through the Arts, e.g. historical learning through participation in a heritage project. We have established KS2 Arts Leaders, who play a key role in assemblies and in a whole-school Art Day.

We worked with Cambridge Curiosity and Imagination on an extended 'artscaping' project and through Anglian Ruskin University's Eco Capabilities Project, exploring how creative adventuring with artists in nature supports wellbeing, culminating in an outdoor exhibition. Music therapy provided opportunities for pupils to express their emotions and make sense of experiences in a safe environment.

We partnered with our local Arts Society, supporting an artist-in-residence; authors' workshops; Lavenham Guild Weavers; a silkscreen printmaker; Gainsborough House printmakers; Bury Schools Partnership; CALSA-led Heritage projects.

We used Charanga to support teacher confidence and develop our music curriculum. We established links with: our local Music Hub (brass tuition for our Y5s); Britten Pears Arts, (performing in their Celebration; invited to perform in The Big Sing); the Cathedral Choirmaster (our now-thriving choir); a Rock Choir leader (singing/percussion workshops). Pupils have performed at myriad public events (Snape Maltings, The O2, St Edmundsbury Cathedral, West Road Concert Hall), providing exciting opportunities for all.

We have built a strong relationship with Theatre Royal, Bury St Edmunds (regular productions and workshops in school; attended theatre performances - a first for many pupils and some staff); continued participation in The Royal Ballet Steps Programme; had a dance professional deliver dance within the curriculum; are about to embark on a DanceEast CPD programme.

All of the above have seen our school become a place where pupils and staff thrive.



Question 2 – up to 500 words

What challenges did you face and how did you overcome them? Were there any differences from your original plans and how did you implement them? (*Enter your answer here*)

Covid presented a challenge, affecting our schedule and plans, and leading to some new ways of working.

Our artist in residence, scheduled to work with every pupil, had to work with children in bubbles, meaning work was created in parts for later construction into one piece. All still participated. As parents were not allowed into school, performances were recorded for sharing. Children sang to local care home residents from outside the building. The CCI Eco Capabilities project exhibition was moved outdoors (to a 'secret field'), to allow parents to attend. The planned visit to Anglian Ruskin University for the final sharing could not take place. Links with the other schools participating in the project had to be maintained remotely.

As children could not mix, our plan for projects led by art students at a local high school had to be abandoned and, instead, remote working became the norm. For example, The Royal Ballet Steps Programme Nutcracker Workshops and author visits were accessed remotely to allow children's participation, and the school used social media to keep parents involved and informed about such engagement. Photos and films were taken and shared on Twitter, the school website and parent mail via weekly newsletters.

We had planned to ensure that every year group had an arts trip, such as a gallery visit. However, Covid meant trips could not take place and so, instead, where possible, we invited artists from the organisations we had hoped to visit into school for in-school workshops and used this opportunity to have children's arts experiences enhance our school environment.

As well as managing the challenges of Covid, we also recognised that our Cornerstones curriculum required adapting to allow for the progression of art skills through theme-related sequences of lessons, rather than art being based on one-off lessons. To this end, a new 2-year cycle art curriculum was developed by the Art Subject Leader. This established progression in the development of skills (something which was previously lacking) and supported pupils learning about a variety of artists from different

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cultures/time periods, as well as developing their skills in drawing, painting, printing, 3D and textiles through sequences of lessons in each area every year, also building on the skills and knowledge developed in the previous year.

Growing our Art Leader through high quality professional development opportunities, enabled her to provide teachers with step-by-step instructions on delivering this, which teachers found valuable, and the quality of the end-of-unit work displayed evidenced a clear improvement in the quality of teaching and pupil work. A recent peer review identified our lesson sequencing as an area of strength, and so our next steps will see our embedding further opportunities for skills development.

We put in place a Music Leader in September 2022 and, since our Art Leader left in October 2022, senior leaders have been working to develop her subject leader skills with a view to her taking on this role in September when she completes her ECT training.



Question 3 – up to 500 words

What impact has the Artsmark journey had on your children and young people and how can you evidence this? *(Enter your answer here)*

Our goal was to provide an inspiring environment for our pupils and to create a community where all children actively participate in and enjoy the arts and, through doing so, improve knowledge and understanding, skills, creativity, communication and confidence. To achieve this, we focused on embedding the arts in our curriculum, on working with professional practitioners/arts organisations, and on offering/extending high-quality, inclusive opportunities.

In the CCI project, children looked closely at the environment as inspiration for their art. They learned new skills, attitudes and language (their vocabulary noticeably improved); became open to new learning (spent more time practising/developing their work) and willing to rethink/refine (following an author visit, made improvements to their work by proofreading, self-editing and revising for display).

Children's arts experiences have been celebrated in displays and performances, leading to their feeling pride, their being inspired by the work of others, and our building a sense of community and ambition. In recent pupil voice conversations with leaders and Ofsted inspectors, some children expressed desire to become artists when older, understanding this as a valid career choice.

Four classes completed Arts Award Discover, persevering through challenges to finish their awards, with their achievements then recognised in a celebration assembly. 11 children went on to gain Arts Award Explore. This allowed the children to develop a sense of pride and achievement through their learning in the Arts. Many, not necessarily successful in other academic areas, experienced success, boosting their self-confidence.

Pupil voice is important: through pupil voice conversations, we engaged a music teacher in response to a request from Y5s to learn brass instruments. Appointing Y6 Arts Leaders has seen these pupils positively empowered. In spring 2022, our Arts Leaders led a whole school Art Day, first consulting classes on what they would like to do, and deciding to have the school create a Minecraft world based on responses. Staff were delighted to support our learners and commented positively on the children's engagement. They then worked with different classes to support this aim and mounted a whole school display of the work produced. Children and parents then visited the exhibition corridor. The day was filmed and is on our website.

Pupil comments included: 'I like doing art. It's calm, and you can use your imagination and do loads of creative stuff.' Y4 pupil. 'I think it's really good for a school to have an Art Day like this because it gives the pupils opportunities to show what they can do.' Y6 Arts Leader.

Our children are becoming more confident performers: at the Celebration event (Britten Pears Art), one child commented, 'I was very scared before I went on stage, but I am glad I did it.'

Following The Royal Ballet Steps Programme, at least three children each year have continued with Royal Ballet dance classes outside school; three former pupils are now programme Ambassadors. Through the Cathedral Choirmaster's involvement, pupils were invited to a chorister experience day; two children were pleased to be invited to audition for the Cathedral choir.



Question 4 – up to 500 words

What impact has the Artsmark journey had on your staff, leadership team and wider community and how can you evidence this?

(Enter your answer here)

Since starting Artsmark, arts-related CPD has been a priority, and our staff has become increasingly competent, knowledgeable and confident across a wide range of arts skills.

In 2022-23, we created a Music Subject Leader role. Through CPD in music relating to composition/performance, a whole-school project was established: teachers and pupils created a sea shanty and performed this in an end-of-year assembly. With increased confidence, teachers began to introduce music across subjects – e.g., a history teacher prepared a class performance of singing, poetry and a play, all written by pupils, through the CALSA-led Heritage project.

Individual teachers now lead on arts across the school. Our Art Subject Leader completed Arts Award adviser training, set up the school as an Arts Award centre, led staff training in arts skills and supported staff to deliver Arts Award Discover and Explore. She has joined a Trust-wide subject leadership group, liaising with other leaders, sharing expertise with other schools.

Following CPD in clay-work, led by a teacher from another school, our teachers now deliver classes in clay and firing, using our (previously unused) kiln. Our Y2s currently have impressive fired and glazed Greek-inspired plates on display. The Arts Society, Bury St Edmunds, has funded and is keen to maintain our partnership: our Headteacher recently presented our activities and plans.

Senior Leaders maintain their strong vision for the arts. The Headteacher participated in the South-East England Headteacher Symposium on Creativity and Culture in Education, was invited to join the Building Cultural and Creative Education in Suffolk workshop, has written a reflective blog for Creativity Exchange, and attends Periscope, the West Suffolk LCEP – keeping the arts top of our agenda, integral to our school vision and improvement journey.

Parents and carers have a vital role, and leaders now plan regular art workshops with them. Those who came to their children's performance in a percussion workshop joined in the performance. A History Off The Page workshop enabled children creatively to share their learning. Our recent Ofsted report commented: 'Families are involved in pupils' learning through trips and visits. Pupils talk with excitement about these.' Parent feedback further indicated the positive benefits from the CCI projects for their children: 'My children certainly enjoyed the pride of having the special map of their school printed in their hands. I think that project gave them a pride in their contributions and made them feel valued.'

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As a result of the CCI project, the teachers involved engaged positively and have become strong advocates for the arts in the outdoors; evidenced through their classroom practice.

Partners in our community, such as the Royal British Legion, have complimented our pupils on the impact of their art: 'We are still marvelling at your pupils' work, in fact we became so engrossed in the artwork, I feel sure we could see more details than the various artists intended, in fact that is the true inspiration of art, allowing others to interpret as their minds allow.'



Question 5 – up to 500 words

How has your Artsmark journey influenced change to your strategic values and the priorities in your strategic improvement plan?

(Enter your answer here)

Our Artsmark journey has supported our strategic values and priorities:

Staffing is now stable, and we have an established leadership team with a permanent Headteacher and experienced Deputy Head, ably supported by the Early Years Leader and SENDCo. This has led to a notable change of culture in school, with staff more positive and confident. Noticeably, staff are willing to run after-school clubs and keen to invite parents to join workshops with pupils, which was not necessarily previously the case.

We have also developed and established our values, which are - aspiration, experience, nurturing and community, and we have seen how all of the activities of our Artsmark journey have embraced and supported these, particularly in our developing enriching and inclusive arts experiences across the curriculum for our children and in our development of community links.

Our recent Ofsted inspection, which included meeting with Arts Subject Leaders and looking at our curriculum for arts, recognised the key steps we have made on our improvement journey and the strength of leadership and vision for the school, commenting, 'Leaders have united, galvanised and enthused the staff through their vision for success. They have worked effectively to build positive relationships with the community.'

Having introduced staff and pupils to a wide range of arts experiences at the start of our Artsmark journey, we have since worked to develop and refine these, ensuring the opportunities we offer are both tailored and relevant, and relate to both our taught and wider curriculums.

Theatre visits, storyteller and author visits, reading cafés, art workshops with parents, visiting artist workshops, and visits and trips are all now part of our regular provision, with recent playwriting workshops with the Theatre Royal encouraging and inspiring our Y6s to write their own plays.

These experiences mean our children and staff have developed confidence and expertise and are now willing to share skills and knowledge. The film of our Art Day was made specifically to share with other schools as a good example of a successful whole school project, and our Art Leader made all materials relating to the project available. Similarly, our Headteacher is often invited to talk about the impact of the school's Artsmark journey on the positive changes in school, most recently at an Arts Society meeting and shortly at the Anglian Learning Cultural Leadership day, where she will share a platform with a representative from Norfolk and Norwich Festival Connect & Create.

Developing expertise that allows us to have an impact beyond our school boundaries has been a new and pleasing experience for Howard Community Academy. We were delighted to join the hub of ten Anglian Learning schools working on the Creativity Collaboratives project, for which we have been focusing on deliberate practice in creativity in the context of oracy, which also remains a key school improvement priority. We have enjoyed working with UCL Institute of Education, our project partner, and other hub schools, and sharing our findings.

This is an area of research we will continue to develop.



Question 6 – up to 500

What are your future goals and ambitions for developing the role of arts and culture in your setting? *(Enter your answer here)*

We see the arts as a vital element in a child's education and we see the school as a centre and catalyst for the arts within its community. This is why our vision is to see our pupils, staff and community flourish through inspiring opportunities in the arts. Our arts journey will therefore continue and in this we are supported by our Trust, which also sees the arts as a key component of a broad and balanced education.

We will continue to offer inspiring CPD to our staff and to engage in projects across the Trust and with external partners. We will train at least two further staff as Arts Award advisers, to expand and enhance our Arts Award delivery, increasing the number of pupils who achieve at Discover and Explore levels, enabling experiences in the Arts for all.

We will ensure the arts are embedded across our curriculum, e.g. using History Off The Page to support drama, and introducing world art/music in Geography.

Our Creativity Collaboratives research project will continue to focus on deliberate practice, with our findings influencing future implementation plans for teaching for creativity pedagogies.

We will maintain the appointment of pupil Arts Leaders, developing their role championing the arts and support them to create inspiring whole-school Art Days, shared with other schools.

To develop our performing arts provision further through dance and theatre work, we are already discussing a Trust-wide collaborative dance project, instigated and led by Howard Community Academy. Our links with DanceEast mean we will be using their digital programme next academic year. We would also like to develop our community work with parents further, running creative dance and theatre workshops with them.

In a recently developed partnership with West Suffolk College, we will develop and run a community wide arts project, looking to develop a community choir with parents, staff and pupil involvement.

To enhance our school environment, we have plans for a joint arts project, involving local secondary/sixth forms, which will culminate in a collaborative sculpture for one of our outside courtyard areas.

We will continue to champion reading with daily story times, increased library use and our regular reading cafés.

We will increase our programme of after school activities, running an Into Film film club, which will support literacy development.

We will continue to engage with the Bury Schools Partnership and what were previously CALSA-led arts projects. (Last year the focus was on the 100-year celebration of the Abbey, while this year the theme is Crime and Punishment.)

We will continue to play a role in our local LCEP, and with cultural education partners and initiatives across Suffolk and beyond.

At Howard Community Academy we see the arts contributing positively to mental and physical health, wellbeing and resilience, educational outcomes, attendance and behaviour. The arts will always be a priority us.

“My children certainly enjoyed having their special map of their school printed in their hands. I think that project gave them a pride in their contributions and made them feel valued.” (Parent)

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Approval

Click the box to agree to the statement and enter the name and date this was approved.

I confirm that I have read, approved and endorsed the Statement of Impact and agree that it represents an accurate evaluative account of the Artsmark journey

Headteacher Name:

Date:

I confirm that I have read, approved, and endorsed the Statement of Impact and agree that it represents an accurate evaluative account of the Artsmark journey

Chair of Governors Name:

Date:

Checklist

Make sure you've checked the following before you submit online:

- If applicable, my answer to the Context question has no more than 150 words
- My answers to Questions 1-6 have no more than 500 words each
- I have not included any additional information or evidence such as images, media, hyperlinks or weblinks
- The Headteacher and Chair of Governors (or where these positions don't exist, persons of equivalent levels of responsibility) have approved this document

Ready to submit?

You must submit your Statement of Impact within **two years** of submitting your Statement of Commitment.

Once you've finalised your answers and have completed the checklist above, you are ready to submit **online**. **We no longer accept submissions by email**. Copy and paste your answers into your online Statement of Impact form using the unique web link we emailed to you. Can't find your link? Get in touch to request it by emailing artsmark@artscouncil.org.uk

Appendix 7 – Arts Council England, Artsmark Award Letter

Dear Alison Weir,

Howard Community Academy
9352224

Thank you for your recent submission, and congratulations on completing your Artsmark journey.

You've achieved an Artsmark Gold Award!

We are delighted to inform you that your setting has been awarded an Artsmark Gold Award. Congratulations!

Your Statement of Commitment and Statement of Impact have been assessed and we're pleased to share this feedback from our assessors with you:

'Howard Community Academy's first Artsmark journey has seen the Arts take a central role in developing the school's values, vision and ethos. The school's commitment to research, assessing the significance of the Arts in school improvement, is potentially very valuable and we look forward to hearing the outcomes of this work. It has connected Howard Community Academy with a range of creative practitioners and organisations which have contributed to the evolution of the arts offer, including the local Music Hub, the Theatre Royal, Cambridge Curiosity and Imagination and the ARU Eco-Capabilities project. From these links, you have developed a sustainable and embedded offer, particularly in Art and Music. The Art curriculum has been revised; developing skills progression, and CPD, especially in clay work, has increased staff confidence and the consequent quality of outcomes. Likewise in Music, the use of the Charanga scheme, the creation of a Music Lead post and further links with the Music Hub have seen positive developments, including the excitements of the choir performing in a range of venues and the introduction of Brass teaching as a result of pupil requests. Discover and Explore Arts Awards have increased pupil engagement and the creation of Arts Leaders has given these pupils in particular a strong degree of ownership of their arts learning. The whole school Art Day that these pupils created was a great success and was filmed as a model to be shared with other schools. Pupils report greater confidence in performing and in their skills. The Arts have also been used to support SEMH in more vulnerable pupils. Parents have greatly appreciated your arts developments, supporting performances and attending arts workshops, further strengthening your community. Going forward, you have plans to develop your offer in Dance and Drama and it will be valuable to work with arts organisations to offer specialist CPD and to enrich your pupil's experiences further. Drama in particular might support your focus on developing oracy, and it might give your children the opportunity to explore and give voice to issues that are important to them and

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to their community. Could you include your children even more in decision-making about their arts experiences and learning, perhaps involving them in considering how the Arts can reflect and celebrate the diversity of society? As you develop your links to other schools, it will be good to gather further evidence of the impact of the Arts on your children's learning across the curriculum and on their personal development. Such evidence will be valuable as you develop your influence beyond the school, contributing to your LCEP and to wider educational networks. Howard Community Academy's example of how to build a new and nurturing school culture and community with the Arts at the centre is a powerful one and we look forward greatly to hearing of how your journey continues.'

Congratulations on your Artsmark Gold Award!

Your award is valid for two years and will expire on **16/08/2025**