

A CURIOUS PUBLICATION

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# Arts Award: School Case studies



## About Curious Minds

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**Curious Minds strives to improve the lives of children and young people by connecting them with the very best arts, culture and creative learning opportunities. We aim to drive greater access, continuous improvement and innovation in the field of cultural and creative education.**

As part of our role as Arts Council England's 'Bridge organisation' for the North West we support schools, colleges, universities and early years settings to develop and improve the quality of cultural education for their pupils. One way we do this is through Arts Award. Over the past 12 months we have been supporting several schools to explore ways in which Arts Award can be embedded across the whole school.

This publication is for schools who would like to learn more about how Arts Award can contribute to your schools priorities, offer children and young people an opportunity to gain recognition and a national qualification for the skills they learn through taking part in arts and cultural experiences and highlight some of the ways schools across the North West are using Arts Award.

This resource is designed to give you an insight into the different approaches schools can take, how Arts Award links to national initiatives such as Artsmark and the Cultural Education Challenge and how it is creating the leaders of the future.



In the last three years we have seen 171% growth in Arts Award activity across the North West.

Education establishments make up 50% of Arts Award delivery nationally.

# Curious Minds is the North West's lead organisation for creative and cultural education

For schools new to the principles of the Cultural Education Challenge, the definition below captures its intention. From the Arts Council's website: "The Cultural Education Challenge is a call for schools, arts and cultural organisations, music education hubs, local authorities, further and higher education institutions to come together to offer a consistent, and high quality, cultural education for all. We believe that every child should be able to create, compose, and perform their own musical or artistic work.

They should all be able to visit, experience and participate in extraordinary work, and be able to know more, understand more, and review the experiences they've had. But cultural education provision is still variable, excellent in some areas, in others much is fragmented, or lacks the profile to make it visible to schools, families and communities. There is great potential to do more to ensure that all children have access to great arts and culture.

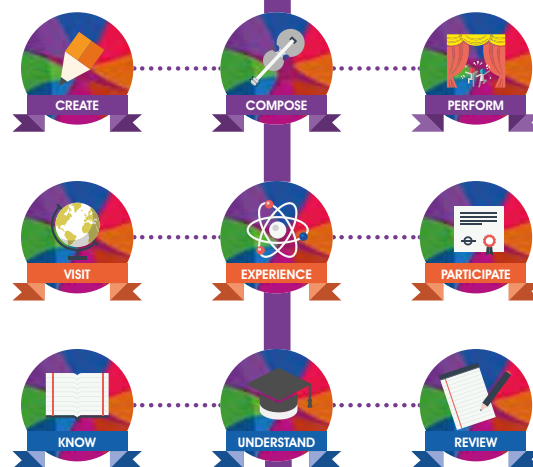
The Cultural Education Challenge will encourage the formation of local 'cultural education partnerships' to ensure access to and participation in the arts for all children and young people, and make best use of the resources available."

We believe schools, colleges and early years settings are vital to meeting the Cultural Education Challenge and ensuring every child has the opportunity to experience arts and culture. Through Arts Award children and young people gain the opportunity to experience the wide breadth of the arts that the Cultural Education Challenge is addressing; from participation in and understanding of different artforms, learning about arts, cultural and heritage organisations, meeting artists, forming opinions on what they experience and asking them to develop their skills both as artists and leaders of the future.

Curious Minds are offering every school in the North West a Cultural Education Challenge plaque so you can celebrate your arts engagement with your wider community. To learn more out this please contact us.

We believe that **all children and young people should be able to experience great art and culture.** Cultural education fosters creativity & innovation, unlocking vital skills that drive the creative industries.

Every child should have the chance to:



# What is Arts Award?

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Arts Award supports anyone aged up to 25 to grow as artists and arts leaders, inspiring them to connect with and take part in the wider arts world through setting personal challenges in an art form of their choice — from fashion to film making, pottery to poetry. Arts Award offers nationally recognised qualifications that enable young people to progress into further education and employment.

Young people not only gain art form knowledge and understanding but also develop leadership, creativity and communication skills. The flexible framework can work with any arts, cultural or media activity. It embraces all interests and abilities.

For further information about Arts Award please visit:

[www.artsaward.org.uk](http://www.artsaward.org.uk) and [www.voicemag.uk/artsaward](http://www.voicemag.uk/artsaward)

**There are five levels of Arts Award:**

**Discover** - Start the arts adventure

Designed for ages 5 and above but is open to anyone aged up to 25

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**Explore** - Explore the arts and be inspired

Designed for ages 7 and above, but is open to anyone aged up to 25

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**Bronze Arts Award** - Take part in the arts and share new skills

For ages 11 and above

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**Silver Arts Award** - Take on a challenge and lead others

Designed for ages 14 and above, but is open to anyone aged over 11

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**Gold Arts Award** - Develop arts skills and lead the way

Designed for ages 16 and above, but is open to anyone aged over 11

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“Working with these five very different schools has been a real privilege. In depth conversations and practical delivery models have helped them navigate their way to a successful first delivery of Arts Award. This increased confidence has had a real impact on the career development of teachers in these case studies, in particular the enhancement of their leadership skills. Now they are the ambassadors, together with the pupils who have had their own achievements celebrated through the award.”

Viv West, Curious Minds Arts Award Mentor



Arts Award Discover has raised the profile of arts and culture in the school, generating excitement throughout and waiting lists for the next Arts Award club. The flexibility means that you can adapt to the needs of the children, sometimes with surprising results. A Year 6 girl has created a final piece considered to be GCSE standard.

Kirsty Curran, Head of year 1  
Hindley All Saints Church of England  
Primary School

“The children have completed their Arts Award with great enthusiasm and it has highlighted how creative our pupils are in the disciplines of art, dance, music and drama. Through the award they now have a greater appreciation of the arts and have been able to participate in a wider range of art activities, which has developed their skills”.

Carolyn Duncan,  
Headteacher Orrets Meadow, Wirral





## Arts Award within an educational setting

Now more than ever it is important we offer children and young people an opportunity to learn and participate in high quality arts and cultural experiences and gain recognition for the skills and knowledge they gain through this process.

Arts Award is a personal learning framework which encourages children and young people to plan for, reflect on and evaluate their learning; in addition it enables them to take the lead in activities and projects. Arts Award accredits student's individual development in the arts and develops transferable skills such as teamwork, leadership, problem solving, project management, presentation, research and evaluation. Through artistic practice, confidence and reflective skills are developed.

Arts Award is an accessible way to introduce students and staff to the arts. For those students who already have a keen passion for the arts it enables them to focus on mastery and deepening their knowledge and skills. Through a flexible framework and evidencing process Arts Award works to the young person's strengths and enables them to see their own development and the transferable skills gained through this process.

The examples outlined in this resource show how Arts Award can be used to: raise attainment; support parental engagement and student voice; offer arts across the curriculum; add value to the whole school; bridge the gap (both in achievement and transitional stages of education) and introduce students to the arts. Arts Award provides measurable CPD opportunities for staff as well as enabling schools to make meaningful links with their local arts organisations. It demonstrates commitment to a broad and balanced curriculum offer and contributes significantly to SMSC requirements as defined by Ofsted Framework 2014.

The recent Arts Award Impact Study (2016) showed that young people completing Arts Award felt more engaged and motivated to progress in their education.

"Arts Award gives you confidence in your ability. Now if something goes wrong, I can handle the situation"

**Arts Award impact study**



"I used to be quite conventional in my thinking and schoolwork. I did what was required and nothing more, but now I think outside the box. I put on a musical and the organisation, logic and reasoning involved helped me to be more creative in my product design course"

**Arts Award impact study**

Artsmark celebrates schools that champion the arts and strive for excellence in their provision. Arts Award recognises the creative development of individual young people; and provides a framework which can support your Artsmark statement of commitment. It links to all of the themes under the self-assessment tool. For example Arts Award can:

- **Play a role in cross-curricular planning, providing a flexible framework to support the arts within other curriculum areas and establish a whole-school approach.**
- **Offer the opportunity to build partnerships with other Arts Award Centres and arts and cultural organisations. It can be used to capture evidence of progression, provide clear outcomes and support evaluation of the arts' impact on students.**
- **In-house Arts Award adviser training could be part of plans to invest in CPD and lead to whole school planning for Arts Award provision.**

## Supporting schools new to Arts Award

At Curious Minds we understand that running Arts Award for the first time can feel a little daunting. This is why we offer North West schools the opportunity to work with an Arts Award mentor, to support and guide newly trained Advisers through the Arts Award process. All the schools featured in this resource received support from a Curious Minds Arts Award mentor.

Every Adviser and school's Arts Award journey is different. As such the support the mentor provides varies. However we know help with choosing the right level for pupils, mapping Arts Award activity to the curriculum, identifying the best ways to create and collect evidence and preparing for moderation can have a real impact on the experience of Arts Award delivery within schools. These case studies demonstrate not only how the schools have delivered Arts Award but also how it has been a spring board for:

- **Reevaluating and celebrating their arts offer; ensuring it is at the heart of their school development plans**
- **Beginning their Artsmark journey**
- **Forging stronger links with other local schools and arts and cultural organisations**
- **Staff development and promotion**
- **Increased parental engagement and whole school engagement**
- **Increased young people's confidence, communication skills and developed transferable skills**

Curious Minds can support you too. If you would like to know more about how we can help you embed Arts Award within your school please get in touch. If you are already delivering Arts Award and would like to contribute to a case study we would love to hear from you.

To hear how others are using Arts Award listen to our podcast series: [soundcloud.com/curiousmindsnw](https://soundcloud.com/curiousmindsnw)





# Hindley All Saints Church of England Primary School, Wigan

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## Context:

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Hindley All Saints Church of England Primary School in Wigan has 240 pupils aged between 3-11 yrs, a high proportion of whom are supported through Pupil Premium, have disabilities or special educational needs.

Class teacher Kirsty Curran, who was then Music Co-ordinator, heard about Arts Award through a flyer from Curious Minds and had previously attended an Arts Award information session at the Museum of Wigan Life. The school had not been aware of Arts Award previously and had not been an Artsmark school. As a result of this support from Curious Minds they now plan to make Arts Award available to all children and apply for Artsmark.

Before participating in Arts Award the children mainly engaged in arts and culture through the art curriculum, arts weeks and visits from local artists. As a result of Arts Award, Kirsty has found out about many local opportunities that are new to her; "there is so much more going on than I realise".

## Approach:

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Starting after May half term; all Year 2 – 5 pupils were offered a place on an after school club. Kirsty was supported by SMT and a Teaching Assistant who was to generate interest with both children and staff. It certainly worked as the after school club was oversubscribed, with a waiting list, 30 names were pulled out of a hat and their Discover Arts Award journey began. Discover extended into curriculum time too, involving music in Year 4 and 5 through Wider Opportunities with Wigan Music Education Hub and arts week.

## Part A - Discover

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Kirsty chose the theme 'Carnival of the Animals' by Saint-Saëns to inspire dance and visual art activities and a means to understand different artforms.

## Part B - Find Out

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Children selected their own artist to research, including Esher, Hunterwasser, Banksy and artists in residence at the local Cross Street Studios. They each produced a piece of artwork, documenting the artistic process, which although not required at Discover level, was a natural extension of the children's interests and developing skills.

## Part C - Share

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This took the form of an exhibition and celebration assembly with an after school gallery event open to the whole school and parents. Children shared what they had done for their Arts Award, what they liked and what they would like to do next.

Developing the use of sketchbooks has been an important part of documenting the process and had a positive impact on the children. "It has encouraged children to have the confidence to take a risk – there is no right or wrong answer – just have a go and don't be afraid", said Kirsty.

Kirsty reflected: "The Arts Award is about developing metacognition – it's more about the process and the outcome is a celebration. Start with a stimulus such as a painting or piece of music and be open minded about how children will link to other artforms".





## Impact

Kirsty says: "One child who was not initially keen in being involved (his mum made him!) really engaged. He is dispraxic and this helped him develop fine motor skills. Previously not communicative or expressive, he was unwilling to take a risk. However, there has been a massive shift, not just in his willingness to participate in anything creative, but also in his writing. He now takes more pride and care in his work, making links with the Arts Award process. It has really boosted his confidence and skills overall."

Two boys who have been working with a speech therapist and were very reluctant communicators have really blossomed and gained in confidence to the extent that they talked to camera with great enthusiasm when Kirsty was making a short film about Discover and their chosen artist. When asked "what's the best thing about Arts Award" one boy replied "I can now do proper good art". He had chosen Escher as his artist, creating a model of a house with staircases in Lego in the style of Escher.

Delivering Discover has had significant links with Kirsty's studies towards a Masters' through the National College (Teaching and Leadership) (NPQML) and with the work the school is doing around Carol Dweck's 'Theories of Intelligence'. She has recently been promoted to Head of Year 1, which she attributes in part to her Arts Award experience.

Arts Award Discover has raised the profile of arts and culture in the school, generating excitement throughout and waiting lists for the next Arts Award club. The flexibility means that you can adapt to the needs of the children, sometimes with surprising results. A Year 6 girl has created a final piece considered to be GCSE standard.

The school is in a deprived area, however the investment, level of engagement, commitment, ownership and independence shown by the children has been "massive", Kirsty says. She has been surprised by the positive impact and enthusiasm throughout the whole school, not just in terms of the arts skills developed but also confidence, communication and determination which will influence all areas of their lives.

For Kirsty professionally, this has been an opportunity to lead whole school development, developing her own arts skills and knowledge in addition to pedagogically for herself and her colleagues. She would recommend Arts Award to others so they can experience the benefits for their children, staff, parents and the school as a whole.

## What's next?



**Arts Award will become part of the whole school approach to a 'continuum of experiences' where all children have the opportunity to experience the arts as well as other developmental activities to promote resilience. The arts will be integrated into all areas so that a similar skillset can be applied throughout and be child led; developing confidence and perseverance.**

**Kirsty and her colleagues will continue to promote Arts Award to other local schools, giving presentations about their experiences and providing support. The school plans to train more teachers as Arts Award Advisers so Discover and Explore will be available to all children.**

Increased  
confidence and  
communication  
skills



## Orrets Meadow, Wirral

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### Context:

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Orrets Meadow is a special school in the Wirral with 77 children between the ages of 6 and 12. They provide a broad and balanced curriculum primarily for children with dyslexia and autistic spectrum conditions.

The school was delivering Arts Award for the first time, after teacher Linda Tunna attended a briefing session about the Award at the nearby Williamson Art Gallery and Museum delivered by Curious Minds.

The relationship with The Williamson Art Gallery and Museum has been an important part of the school's arts curriculum in the past, with students attending exhibitions and workshops with artists. Delivering Arts Award Discover has opened up new opportunities for gallery visits and support with the award through workshops and research opportunities.

### Approach:

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It was important for Linda to introduce Arts Award to the whole school and share her delivery plans. Through an 'Arts Award implementation – Action Plan, Discover' she could explain the process and benefits to the school.

Linda delivered Discover Arts Award with her class of 12 children across Years 4/5. It mainly took place over six weeks, starting after May half term and finishing at the end of the Summer term.

Linking with  
Artsmark

### Part A - Discover

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Focusing on a theme of 'happiness' across all aspects of Discover, children were able to identify and try a range of different artforms. These included textiles, collage, print making and craft activities led by Linda and local sculptor Ian Fennelly. Children in each class visited The Williamson Art Gallery and Museum to take part in workshops with Education Officer Kathy Heywood, looking at what clothing in portraits tell us as well as drawing skills. "They had a range of new experiences", said Linda. All the children's work was recorded in a special 'Discover log' provided by The Williamson Art Gallery and Museum.

Sketching trips to West Kirby beach and Birkenhead Priory revealed how valuable these opportunities were for one girl in particular; "she looked so carefully; the children seem happy when they're doing it and it has broadened my view of how valuable the arts are", said Linda.

### Part B - Find Out

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Children researched 'topic related' artists, ranging from Banksy to Picasso to artists at The Williamson Art Gallery and Museum. They took the opportunity to ask Ian Fennelly about how and why he became a sculptor; "Children are used to doing research and each has a laptop but this opened up new possibilities", said Linda.

"Children researched an artist and engaged in discussions about what they found out, forming opinions about colour, personal taste and artistic merit. They led a discussion in an assembly, finishing with Q and A about their research and this generated interest in Discover across the school", explained Linda.

### Part C - Share

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Part C involved the whole school and parents in an assembly to show off their Discover logbooks and share with each other their Arts Award journey. Printed textiles were sold to raise funds for more children to experience Discover Arts Award. The whole experience really developed the confidence and communication skills of the children as well as creating a 'buzz' in the school.

## Impact

Once she started Discover, Linda was delighted to report: "The Head Teacher is fully on board as a result of seeing how the children – and the whole school – are benefitting from Discover. The children have completed their Arts Award with great enthusiasm and it has highlighted how creative our pupils are in the disciplines of art, dance, music and drama. Through the award they now have a greater appreciation of the arts and have been able to participate in a wider range of art activities, which has developed their skills. The delivery of Discover resulted in a 'Subject Review' of arts across the school, leading to the school embarking on their Artsmark journey. The arts will be embedded in our School Development Plan and this, again, is a direct result of the Discover Arts Award opportunity by Curious Minds", Linda reflected. To build the confidence of staff and get them involved, she ran an arts and craft skills session. It was a great success, with all the staff excited about both Arts Award and Artsmark, not just the ones who saw themselves as 'artistic'.

Professionally, Arts Award has been significant for Linda and is now included in her Performance Management. Sharing techniques, learning about different media and ensuring the appropriate resources are available have benefitted her, the staff and the children. They are all more confident, prepared to experiment and have a greater understanding of what needs to be in place for the learners.

## What's next?



**Arts Award Discover will become part of the arts curriculum at Orrets Meadow, embedded in the School Development Plan and through Artsmark. Linda will deliver Discover again with Years 4,5 and 6, building on the important relationships developed through the pilot.**

Partnership  
working

Whole school  
engagement



## St John's C.E. Primary School, Leigh

### Context:

St John's C.E. Primary School, Leigh, completed Arts Award for the first time in 2016 with their Year 2 pupils. The Art co-ordinator, Lauren Cunniffe, attended an Arts Award training session through Girlguiding North West England and decided to promote and complete the award in school too. St John's is a growing Primary School with approximately 165 on role from Reception through to Year 3, which will increase as the school grows into a full primary school.

Art has always been a key part of the school with lots of staff members who enjoy teaching Art and Design. After Lauren took on the role of Art, DT and Music Co-ordinator, there have been more opportunities for the children to be involved in creative activities, as well as learning more specialised skills in drawing, painting, clay and printing.

The school have made strong links with their local art gallery, The Turnpike, as well as having several visits from Wigan Music Service. The children now have lots of opportunities to take part in musical productions due to a strong links with their local high school, Bedford High.

### Approach:

In addition to Lauren running masterclasses in clay work at school, she also took the children to a family event at their local arts organisation The Turnpike to see the 'Drumrnoon Exhibition' where they could explore many different artforms and visit the library downstairs to research their chosen artist. Some children chose artists in the exhibition to create some of their own artwork, documenting the artistic process, which although not required at Discover level, was a natural extension of the children's interests and developing skills.

Lauren created a bespoke Arts Award logbook designed especially for the visit which helped to ensure the children could complete all aspects of the Arts Award. There were sections for mark making, creating their own art work, reflecting on the work of other artists as well as completing artist research. The children also used these booklets to record the art that they could see in the local area when spending time with their families. Once back at school the children shared their visit and Arts Award experience with the Year 1 children.

"It was lovely today watching them tell the Year 1s about the project and sharing their learning journals with them"



Increased  
confidence

## Impact

Lauren observed that Discover has given all the children confidence to try new things. In particular one young person who was initially not engaged with Discover and normally very nervous, lacking in self-esteem and unwilling to try new things and take part in group events. Even when working in small groups within the classroom setting, she would rarely contribute to discussions.

When completing her learning, she would not willingly share what she had achieved with her peers. When completing Arts Award, she was so proud of her achievements that she could not wait to share her findings about her chosen artist with her friends. She insisted that her family come into school to view her drawing of a flower that she had produced.

Her family had not previously been into school however this encouraged them to support her with her project and even attended the family event at The Turnpike Art Gallery and have since attended other events at the school. By the end of the project, she was beaming with pride and had started to believe in herself. She even had a main role in the nativity production in which she acted and spoke on the stage in front of a large audience.

Through seeing her success and beginning to believe in herself, she was more willing to work as part of a team and share her own thoughts and ideas with her friends and adults alike.

Student  
Voice

## What's next?



**St John's will continue to deliver Discover with their Year 2 children and start to deliver Explore with their Year 4 children. Lauren will be team teaching with other staff members to share subject knowledge so they can all support the delivery of Arts Award within other subject areas including Wider Opportunities in year 4.**

**Arts Award has encouraged Lauren to make closer links with the local secondary school, with opportunities for older students to perform and lead workshops as part of their Arts Award. The school is currently in the process of starting their Artsmark journey.**

Increased  
confidence and  
communication  
skills



Increased  
confidence

## Wirral Grammar School for Girls

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### Context:

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Wirral Grammar School for Girls is an Academy with just over 1,000 pupils between the ages of 11-19 and has a sixth form of 300. The school was judged as outstanding in the most recent Ofsted.

Wirral Girls ran Arts Award for the first time in 2016/17 with 44 young people achieving Bronze Arts Award in May '17. Drama teacher Clare Rogers knew about Arts Award from her previous school and was keen to give the girls in her class the opportunity to do Bronze. She attended an Arts Award briefing which took place at the nearby Williamson Art Gallery and Museum enabling her to learn more about the Awards and develop partnerships with other schools and arts organisations.

### Approach:

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Two advisers were trained at Bronze and Silver levels, - Assistant Head Teacher Julie Taylor and class teacher Clare Rogers.

Arts Award was a 'good fit' for this academic school, providing a balance of interests alongside sporting, academic and other achievements. The flexibility has allowed the young people to open up, to follow and develop interests in the arts; it has "given the girls a sense of how broad the arts are" said Clare.

Bronze Arts Award was delivered over three terms in a combination of curriculum time, some off timetable sessions and on occasion during holidays, but mainly run in drama by Clare, with other elements being delivered alongside Music and PSE.

### Part A - Exploring The Arts As A Participant

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This involved all the pupils learning and performing extracts from specific shows during an event - 'Cantata' - attended by the whole school. This enabled the girls to develop their abilities in a wide range of artforms such as drama, music, costume, set design and back stage roles.

### Part B - Explore The Arts As An Audience Member

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All attended the Christmas pantomime however some girls chose to review events attended outside of school, enabling them to share with each other their interests outside of the class room. "It's an opportunity to include interests from outside school, not just drama-related" said Clare.

### Part C - Arts Inspiration

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This was led by Assistant Headteacher Julie and linked to PSE allowing a very wide range of choices. It was completed as homework over the summer holiday and autumn half term. The young people held an exhibition of their research in school with a half day off timetable to create posters, discussing their choices during a creative sharing.

Clare said, "Many were family members or other people not necessarily famous, providing an opportunity to find out about them as artists/creative people, again encouraging free choice and independence."

Independent  
working

Developing  
partnerships

## Part D - Arts Skills Share

The young people decided to share individual skills learned in Part A during the autumn term, the girls worked independently and shared their skills with other pupils and even family members. The skills share had an impact on relationships outside of school – for example one girl taught her dad to sew - something completely new to both of them.

Certificates were handed out in a special assembly with the future Year 7s present. This gave the school an opportunity to showcase Arts Award to future pupils. All work went on display in July, with an exhibition for parents and nearby Wirral Grammar school for boys providing an opportunity to be “an ambassador for the benefits of Arts Award”, said Clare.

## Impact

“Arts Award has been a window to the arts, an opportunity to mention it and a celebration alongside other achievements. It has given the school something different to shout about outside of the usual; the process of Arts Award has been valuable – and the moderation was important in terms of recognition for the girls”, reflected Clare.

Clare laughed when she said delivering Arts Award has encouraged her to be less ‘teachery’ – able to let go. Clare was surprised how confidently the girls communicated with the moderator and felt she had misjudged the ones she thought weren’t getting much out of it; “sometimes you can only see the impact at the end of the process”, she honestly reflected.

“Some of the quieter girls have really flourished. One girl in particular has struggled with school and was considering moving but her Bronze Arts Award is motivating her and is a factor in wanting to stay at the school.”

Personalised  
learning

## What's next?



**Wirral Grammar School for Girls are now embedding Bronze, Silver and Gold Arts Award across their school. Bronze will be launched to all year 7s at the end of the summer term ready to start in Year 8. Silver and Gold will be offered as extracurricular opportunities in Year 12 and Year 13. Assistant Head Teacher Julie is due to attend Gold training as the UCAS points carried by Gold are ‘an important factor’ for many girls.**

**“Lots of the Bronze girls want to do Silver and Gold. Arts Award has created an extra-curricular opportunity for Silver and Gold, with Bronze offered to all girls in Year 8 during curriculum time,” said Clare.**

**“Running and celebrating Arts Award has given an enthusiasm for engaging and benefiting from the arts more broadly and as a direct result Wirral Girls are in the process of applying for Artsmark. They have attended a Development Day and are currently writing their statement of commitment while we are in the momentum” commented Clare!**

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