

**Curious
Minds**



The Artsmark Careers & Employability Toolkit

A guide to linking Artsmark with
Careers Education in your setting



Introduction

This guide has been created to join the dots between how creativity and cultural education play an important part in careers education and developing essential skills* for children and young people.

It maps the Artsmark Framework, where schools are recognised for their exceptional commitment to creativity via the Artsmark Award, to the Gatsby Benchmarks, the nationally recognised standards for high-quality careers education. It is intended for the reader to apply the suggestions and prompts to their own setting and find what works best for them.

* By **essential skills** we mean the skills that people need for learning, work, and life. Examples include active listening, critical thinking, problem solving, teamwork, etc. These can sometimes be referred to as soft skills, transferable skills or employability skills.



Setting the scene

The creative and cultural industries are one of the fastest growing sectors in the UK's economy today.

- Creative Industries contribute **£116 billion** to the UK economy, that's more than aerospace, automotive, life sciences and oil and gas sectors combined.

Source: [The UK Creative Industries: unleashing the power and potential of creativity \[report\], 2021](#)

- Around **300,000**, or over **1 in 8** UK businesses (11.8%) in 2019 are part of the Creative Industries.

Source: [DCMS 2022 via Creative Industries policy and Evidence Centre](#)

- **3.5 million** jobs were reliant on the Creative Industries in 2019 – more than **1 in 10** UK jobs and 4 times the workforce of the 5 largest UK supermarkets combined.

Source: [The UK Creative Industries: unleashing the power and potential of creativity \[report\], 2021](#)

Opportunities to have a creative career are wide and varied. From roles that make and create art to invaluable 'behind the scenes' roles such as accountants and business development teams – the list is endless. Yet, it can be a complex landscape to navigate as there isn't one clear or defined pathway into any career. Portfolio careers are common in the creative industries, where professionals have multiple jobs at the same time through part time, freelance or contract work. Self-employed professionals make up **28%** of the workforce, in comparison to **14%** in the rest of the economy (Source: DCMS via Creative Industries policy and Evidence Centre). Engagement with creative professionals makes for opportunities for children and young people to think differently about what's possible.

Creativity itself has long been a desirable skill for employers. Its value has increased significantly in recent years, with some now citing it as the top skill needed for the workplace. Engagement with high-quality arts and culture helps children and young people develop essential skills, such as creativity, problem solving, communication skills and cultural intelligence*. For example, visual art develops critical thinking by analysing why the artist had made a particular choice and the impact of this. As part of their careers education, young people need to recognise the development of their essential skills, as well as developing their social and cultural capital. They need to learn how to use these tools to navigate the future world of work and find and create opportunities for themselves.



* By **cultural intelligence** we mean the ability to work effectively in culturally diverse settings, being able to recognise and adapt to cultural differences.

Why is this important?



For schools

- Raise the overall value and status of arts and culture in your setting by making the case for how a strong commitment to creativity and cultural education makes significant contributions to achieving the Gatsby Benchmarks.
- Both Artsmark and the Gatsby Benchmarks require robust evidence collection to clearly demonstrate their impact. Advocate for sharing evaluation resources and collaborating with colleagues to build a stronger evidence base for both sets of standards.
- This is an opportunity to collaborate with your Careers Leader and establish a joined-up approach across your setting, encouraging an innovative approach to both your Artsmark journey and achieving the Gatsby Benchmarks.

For children & young people

- They can be exposed to a wide variety of jobs and opportunities in one of the UK's biggest industries. They will understand that jobs in the creative and cultural sector can be for them if they choose.
- Bringing together arts and culture with careers education develops children and young people's understanding that working life will increasingly rely on human capacity for creativity, responsiveness, and our ability to keep learning.
- Every child and young person needs to develop essential skills to make them work-ready for any industry.

Artsmark criteria



Values & ethos

Demonstrate commitment to arts & culture

LINKS TO

Gatsby Benchmark 1
A stable careers programme

By embedding creative careers within your wider careers programme, you will emphasise the value arts and culture holds within your setting. You will collect evidence to showcase the impact of arts and culture beyond subject learning and extra-curricular activities. Demonstrating that it helps children and young people to become work-ready and understand the job opportunities in one of the UK's biggest industries. Mapping Artsmark to this benchmark will demonstrate your commitment to arts and culture to pupils, parents, teachers, governors, and employers alike.



Equality, diversity & inclusion

Demonstrate equity, relevance & diversity for all

LINKS TO

Gatsby Benchmark 5
Encounters with employers and employees
Gatsby Benchmark 6
Experiences of workplaces

Seeing somebody who looks or sounds like them doing a creative job contributes to a sense of entitlement and possibility for children and young people – ‘this career can be for me if I choose’. For some, school is their best chance, or indeed only chance, to access high-quality art and culture and develop that sense of belonging. By working with your Careers Leader, you can challenge stereotypes and assumptions made about creative careers as well as developing cultural intelligence as an essential skill.



Leadership

Demonstrate ambitious & dynamic leadership

LINKS TO

Your settings Careers Leader

The national ‘Careers Strategy: making the most of everyone’s skills and talents’, outlines how each secondary school and college has a nominated Careers Leader, responsible and accountable for their setting’s careers programme and meeting the Gatsby Benchmarks. Collaborating with your Careers Leader throughout your Artsmark journey ensures a strategic, joined-up approach that will ultimately demonstrate the value that arts and culture has in careers education and how the two can be mutually beneficial. Consider what impact this could have in your wider community and promoting creative careers beyond your setting.



Children & young people

Engage & empower children & young people

LINKS TO

Gatsby Benchmark 2
Learning from career and labour market information
Gatsby Benchmark 5
Encounters with employers and employees

By empowering children and young people to take ownership over their engagement with arts and culture, they will have opportunities to understand arts and cultural provision in their local area. They can speak to artists and arts organisations as employers and industry professionals, and ask questions about jobs, qualifications, and work experience. By including youth voice opportunities, pupils will take ownership over their personal progression within the arts and learn about the job opportunities and pathways that exist where they live.

Artsmark criteria



Curriculum design & delivery

Develop creative children & young people

Gatsby Benchmark 4
Linking curriculum learning to careers

LINKS TO

Embedding careers education within your Artsmark journey can showcase creativity as an essential skill. Consider demonstrating how creativity is needed across a wide range of occupations, not just creative jobs, and work towards raising its status in your setting. Pupils understanding of how the classroom links to their future is crucial, making learning feel more relevant and engaging to all.



Range of offer

Develop cultural entitlement for all children & young people

Gatsby Benchmark 2
Learning from career and labour market information

Gatsby Benchmark 5
Encounters with employers and employees

Gatsby Benchmark 6
Experiences of workplaces

LINKS TO

Work with your Careers Leader to use local labour market information in your setting. Local employers can provide insight into pathways and progression opportunities across your area and improve your pupils' knowledge of what they can do next. Consider how those employers are contributing to diversity and inclusion messages; do they come from different backgrounds and lived experiences? Do they use different artforms? Are they from different types of organisations or employment, such as freelancers, grassroots organisations, and larger publicly funded organisations?



Professional development

Embed quality staff development

Gatsby Benchmark 2
Learning from career and labour market information

Gatsby Benchmark 4
Linking curriculum learning to careers

Gatsby Benchmark 8
Personal guidance

LINKS TO

Consider how a knowledge exchange can be facilitated between subject teachers, the artists and employers involved in your Artsmark journey and Careers Advisors. This will ensure that your staff have robust knowledge and understanding of creative careers that can be applied to both formal and informal information, advice, and guidance opportunities with pupils. Draw on industry resources such as Discover! Creative Careers to continue learning and improving the quality of colleagues' knowledge.



Cultural collaborations

Build connections

Gatsby Benchmark 5
Encounters with employers and employees

Gatsby Benchmark 6
Experiences of workplaces

LINKS TO

Connections with creative employers and collaborating with industry professionals are key to embedding careers education into your Artsmark journey. When designing creative projects or establishing cultural partnerships, ask artists to talk about their own career path, ask organisations if they offer work experience or work shadowing opportunities that your pupils can access. When visiting cultural venues encourage pupils to identify how many different types of jobs they can see in the building, so it becomes a potential workplace for them. Consider how your engagement with families can influence their knowledge and understanding of creative careers.

Quality principles

<p>Quality principle 1</p>	 <p>Striving for excellence & innovation</p>	<p>LINKS TO</p> <p>Gatsby Benchmark 1 A stable careers programme</p>	<p>By embedding careers and employability in your Artsmark journey you will be creating a joined-up approach, combining high-quality resources that will benefit your pupils in the next phase of their education, employment, or training. Taking this approach could transform how the Gatsby Benchmarks are achieved across your setting demonstrating your commitment to excellence and innovation.</p>
<p>Quality principle 2</p>	 <p>Being authentic</p>	<p>LINKS TO</p> <p>Gatsby Benchmark 2 Learning from career and labour market information</p> <p>Gatsby Benchmark 4 Linking curriculum learning to careers</p> <p>Gatsby Benchmark 5 Encounters with employers and employees.</p> <p>Gatsby Benchmark 6 Experiences of workplaces</p>	<p>Working with local arts and cultural organisations to draw on their knowledge and expertise will ensure authenticity in your approach to careers education within Artsmark. Staff will know what skills employers are looking for when recruiting and what pathways and progression routes are available for their pupils. They can apply this knowledge in the classroom, ensuring that pupils are more work-ready and are aware of the opportunities for a creative career.</p>
<p>Quality principle 3</p>	 <p>Being exciting, inspiring & engaging</p>	<p>LINKS TO</p> <p>Gatsby Benchmark 5 Encounters with employers and employees</p> <p>Gatsby Benchmark 6 Experiences of workplaces</p>	<p>Pupils benefit enormously from working alongside industry professionals and experiencing workplaces directly. By collaborating with your Careers Leader, you can get your pupils excited about the possibilities of a creative career whilst they are also experiencing great art and culture. Consider how you can collaborate with cultural partners to bring in early career professionals to inspire pupils, raising their aspirations by engaging with someone who is relatable.</p>

Quality principles

Quality principle 4



Ensuring a positive & inclusive experience

LINKS TO

- Gatsby Benchmark 3**
Addressing the needs of each pupil
- Gatsby Benchmark 5**
Encounters with employers and employees
- Gatsby Benchmark 6**
Experiences of workplaces

At all times, Artsmark and the Gatsby Benchmarks are working to ensure an inclusive approach. By ensuring they meet professionals from different backgrounds and lived experiences, and offering a variety of creative opportunities that suit different needs, advice and support can be given in different ways tailored to pupils. From participation to being an audience member and youth voice opportunities, you can engage and inspire children and young people on several different levels.

Quality principle 5



Actively involving children & young people

LINKS TO

- All the Gatsby Benchmarks

Children and young people are at the centre of both your Artsmark journey and the Gatsby Benchmarks. They must be actively engaged throughout both processes to meet the criteria, but more importantly to receive the benefits. Involve them in planning, delivery, and evaluation of your creative career activities to develop your knowledge and understanding of what works best for your pupils.

Quality principle 6



Enabling personal progression

LINKS TO

- Gatsby Benchmark 2**
Learning from career and labour market information
- Gatsby Benchmark 5**
Encounters with employers and employees
- Gatsby Benchmark 6**
Experiences of workplaces
- Gatsby Benchmark 7**
Encounters with Further and Higher Education

Arts and culture is a vital tool to prepare young people for the next stage of education, employment or training. As part of your Artsmark journey consider how the range of offer is enabling personal progression and preparing pupils for the next stage. Are there opportunities to engage with external providers about creative apprenticeships and Further Education courses? How does that link to conversations with employers about what they are looking for? Look for opportunities for pupils to progress and develop their creative potential alongside specialist arts teachers and industry experts.

Further support & resources

FOR YOUR ARTSMARK JOURNEY

The **Artsmark Award** is accredited by Arts Council England. The programme recognises schools' exceptional commitment to creativity with the Artsmark Award – the only award for arts and cultural provision in England.

To access professional support, advice, and resources to strengthen your arts provision, please visit:

artsmark.org.uk/support-resources

Or get in touch with the Artsmark team by emailing:

artsmark@arts council.org.uk

FOR CREATIVE CAREERS

Discover! Creative Careers is an industry-led programme that is working to ensure there is a larger and more diverse intake of talent via a broader range of routes into the creative industries. It is funded by DCMS, with additional support from Arts Council England.

To access a full suite of resources for teachers and Careers Leaders, please visit:

discovercreative.careers



Next steps

What's one thing you can do now to start bringing arts and cultural and careers education closer together in your setting?

Can you...

- Ask arts and cultural professionals to talk about their career journey as part of their work with you?
- Invite arts and cultural organisations to your Careers Fairs? Maybe encourage them to send junior members of staff where appropriate to make it more relatable to your pupils. Remember to give them plenty of notice where possible.
- Explore the Discover! Creative Careers website and choose one resource to use in a lesson in the near future?

Most importantly, **start the conversation** with your Careers Leader and start collaborating on your Artsmark journey and how they can help you achieve the Gatsby Benchmarks.



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