



Sutton Community Academy

Artsmark Award Gold



"...if you work collaboratively, that's where real creativity happens."

background

Sutton Community Academy is a secondary school with a sixth form in Sutton-in-Ashfield, based in north Nottinghamshire. It has around 750 students on roll from a community with higher-than-average levels of socio-economic deprivation.

the challenges

The school wanted their students to see for themselves the impact their arts experiences had on their school life and personal development. It wanted students to view the arts as a viable career choice. The school wanted to advocate for the power of the arts across all departments and build the case for the arts being a driver of learning across the school and community.

where did the journey begin?

There were lots of great examples of creativity and artistic practice happening in pockets across the school. Sutton Academy wanted to bring this work together – from the curriculum, extra-curricular and community strands – to celebrate and strengthen what they did through impact assessments and deepen some of their community links and partnerships.

at a glance

- Sutton Community Academy is a secondary school in north Nottinghamshire with around 750 students on roll.
- The school wanted their students to see for themselves the impact their arts experiences had on their school life and personal development.
- key stage 4 students developed and delivered a CPD session for a cross section of staff. This gave examples, evidence and descriptions of how creativity can facilitate learning.
- All year 9 students now undertake Arts Award Bronze.

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education



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what happened



A range of trips, artist visits and projects served to broaden students understanding of career opportunities within the arts and creative sectors.

A partnership project with Voice Choice brought Arts Award Bronze into the school for year 9 students. After successful completion of the project and after moving into key stage 4, some students approached the Head of Performing Arts to ask how they could move onto Silver Arts Award. Together, they co-designed a project based on a blended curricular and extra-curricular timetable. To complete the leadership elements of the award, the students were able to mentor those younger than them who were starting their Bronze Award that year. In turn, they lead after school activity for a mixed group of younger students across feeder primary schools.

To further develop their leadership and advocacy skills, key stage 4 students developed and delivered a CPD session for a cross section of staff. This gave examples, evidence and descriptions of how creativity can facilitate learning.

the outcome

Students are now more likely to consider progression in the arts. Since the framework of Arts Award is embedded at both keys stage 3 and key stage 4 levels, students find the familiarity reassuring and progression is clearly mapped across all year groups.

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The mentoring model has increased the pass rate of Arts Award Bronze assessments, rising from 76% before the mentoring took place to 95% with the first mentored cohort.

The next group of students moving to key stage 4 are also keen to progress to Silver Arts Award and mentor younger students, as they recognise the impact their own mentoring experience had on their learning journey. This continues to build the legacy.

It has brought a leadership development framework in Arts Award to the centre of the school curriculum, positioning students as drivers of their own learning, progression and personal development. Thanks to the student-led CPD more teachers are now more aware of how creativity can facilitate learning and personal development, and recognise more fully the extra-curricular development of students and their growing role in the community. There is a strong engagement with creativity and the arts across all departments.



what advice do you have?



Set a vision early on and get as many people involved as possible. Bring colleagues in, speak to students, Governors, members of the community, professionals and partners. Then share the vision with those stakeholders throughout the Artsmark journey. It keeps everyone on the same page and ties everything together.