



Whitemoor Academy

Artsmark Award Gold



"You can be creative and do what you want; there is not a right or wrong answer."

background

Whitemoor Academy has 463 children on roll from nursery up to year 6 and is a part of the SHINE Multi Academy Trust of schools. It is based on the edge of Nottingham city within a diverse community.

the challenges

CPD was a strategic priority for the school, in order to expand the skills, quality and ownership of the arts across the school – and – to, in turn, underpin the school's aims of a broader and more balanced curriculum.

The quality principles that particularly supported this priority were 'being exciting, inspiring and engaging', 'enabling personal progression' and 'developing belonging and ownership'.

where did the journey begin?

In the first instance the SHINE Multi Academy Trust identified the Artsmark opportunity for its schools; and for Whitemoor Academy it looked like a positive way to progress its arts provision and join up with colleagues in the trust, while working within a creative framework.

at a glance

- Whitemoor Academy is a part of the SHINE Multi Academy Trust of schools. It is based on the edge of Nottingham city within a diverse community.
- CPD was a strategic priority for the school to expand the quality of the arts across the school.
- The CPD opportunities responded to both the weaker areas of arts provision and built upon disciplines that were already strong in school.
- Students understand the school commitment to all classes being able to have equal access to arts trips, visitors, and experiences.

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what happened

The school invested in CPD in many ways: some staff went on courses; - some collaborated with, and shadowed - artists when they came into school for projects; others were a part of observation groups and more. The CPD opportunities responded to both the weaker areas of arts provision and built upon disciplines that were already strong in school.

Over the two years, 47 staff members attended 32 different CPD events both in and outside school from local and national arts institutions, freelance practitioners and education colleagues. To take the learning, reflection, and expertise to the next level (alongside the CPD events), a new and robust framework of dissemination across the school meant staff could learn new skills, techniques, and knowledge from other staff members. This was facilitated by whole staff meetings structured as workshops and staff had autonomy to decide what to access. As a result, all teaching and teaching support staff have led some of a staff meeting at some point during the two year Artsmark programme.

the outcome

The arts are now so embedded into school life that students expect to have a quality arts experience as a part of their everyday learning.

They know that if they do not have an artist in their class, their teacher will deliver an exciting arts lesson independently.

Staff now have broader expertise, interests and abilities to introduce and teach different disciplines. Students' perceptions of what the arts include has changed and they are more open to trying new disciplines as a result. For example, year 6 students accepted the challenge to try different styles of dance when their previous experience was only of street dance. Students now also hear more about careers in the arts, through work experience with arts partners, and engagement with local visiting artists.

The Artsmark process challenged and altered school staff's perceptions of what art is and supported colleagues to reflect on that change. The arts are truly embedded across the whole of school life and their opportunities go beyond, and forge connections with, the arts sector and creative industries. Their ambitions and standards for the arts are significantly higher as a result of Artsmark and will push the school further in the coming years.



what advice do you have?

Be sure to have the full support of the Senior Leadership Team from the outset and a dedicated coordinator for the work. This combination can breed empowerment, autonomy and collaboration, which enables the rest of the staff to feel like a part of the Artsmark journey and supported in their contributions.

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