



**Artsmark**  
AWARDED BY ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND

# Case Study

<b>Name of school or education setting</b>	<b>Bowerham Primary and Nursery School</b>
<b>DfE number (seven digits)</b>	<b>888/2017</b>

## Guidance

Fill in this Case Study when you have achieved the aims you set out in your Statement of Commitment. There are five questions which you should use to reflect on the impact of your goals, objectives and experiences. This Case Study should reflect on your progress since filling in your Statement of Commitment, and evidence the impact the Artsmark Award has had in your setting over time.

Make sure you consider our [Self-Assessment framework](#) and your Statement of Commitment when filling in this Case Study. We will only consider the information you have written in this document when assessing your submission, we cannot accept any hyperlinks, pictures, additional evidence documents or appendices. Your submission will be returned if your answers run over the word limits and you have not included your setting's name and DfE number.

You should send your Case Study to Arts Council England within two years of submitting your Statement of Commitment. Please email your filled-in Case Study to Arts Council England via email at [artsmark@artscouncil.org.uk](mailto:artsmark@artscouncil.org.uk)

Or you can post a copy of it to:

Artsmark  
Arts Council England  
Brooklands  
24 Brooklands Avenue  
Cambridge  
CB2 8BU

If you need any help, you can look on our website at [artsmark.org.uk](http://artsmark.org.uk) or contact your local Bridge organisation. Our network of Bridge organisations are there to support you throughout your Artsmark journey. Find your local Bridge organisation on our website at [artsmark.org.uk/Bridge](http://artsmark.org.uk/Bridge)  
For more information on our assessment and awarding process, visit our website at [artsmark.org.uk/awarding](http://artsmark.org.uk/awarding)

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## Question 1

Reflecting back on your Statement of Commitment, your development or improvement plans and any associated reflections your setting has made on progress, how does your actual journey compare to the one you envisaged when you began? **Do not write more than 500 words.**

Our Artsmark journey has closely resembled the one we envisaged at the beginning, albeit with a few minor changes. Our aims, as set out in our School Improvement Plan and linked to our Artsmark journey, were to develop and improve children's skills of critical thinking and independence and to build on parental engagement and community links via the arts. This has been at the core of all our endeavours throughout the process.

We have continued and strengthened our partnership with The Dukes Theatre, liaising regularly to produce quality arts outcomes, placing children at the heart of decision-making processes. Throughout early 2018, years 1-5 designed and devised a series of acting scenes, alongside staff and Dukes staff, linked to the theme of "Desire Paths" – the children's sense of place and local connections, its past, present and ultimately its future. This culminated in a promenade-style performance in the local park in July, with 300 children performing to hundreds of parents.

Pupil voice has been at the heart of all our planning and decision making, with children from all year groups represented on the Arts Council helping to create quality, child-led outcomes. These children regularly update and take feedback from their classes, ensuring full coverage and communication across the school. It has also been instrumental in strengthening the bridge between school, parents and community (the school newspaper, The Voice, is published termly) and Bowerham is now at the forefront of arts projects in the district, including the annual schools' arts trail as well as networking between institutions and schools.

Central to developing children's skills of critical thinking has been to embed the arts throughout the curriculum, with a focus on speaking, listening and drama skills. We no longer use "curriculum connectors", however our learning overviews document how these vital skills are included in teaching and learning; combined with "choice and challenge", and all staff's meticulous use of the critical thinking questioning ladder during lessons, has had a huge positive effect on children's independence and ownership of learning. Since mid-2018, we have adopted and are developing the use of a more structured, hour-long Circle Time in classes, again focused on improving children's speaking, listening and communication skills.

Parts of the original plan have not happened, mainly the Arts Week, although the performance in the park took considerable time and effort to plan, design and deliver. We feel that it wasn't necessary in realising our goals and items for development in accordance with our school improvement plan and the principles of Artsmark. At the same time, we want to build on this legacy and continue to improve the arts at school, the local schools' network as well as in the local community.

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## Question 2

If there have been differences from your original plans, what have they been and how do you account for them? **Do not write more than 500 words.**

As mentioned previously, the Arts Week has not become a feature on the school calendar. We feel that this was not vital to the targets we set out to achieve linked to Artsmark, but rather that skills could and should be more embedded in and threaded through the curriculum and given the close partnership we enjoy with The Dukes.

The extensive range of arts activities we allow our children to experience is already rich and highly immersive: the schools' arts trail each July, four trips to see professional, live performances and shows (in 2017-18), Year 2 and Year 5 involvement in the district singing festival led by More Music, workshops with Northern Ballet for early years children, opportunities to take LAMDA exams, a strong and varied music curriculum delivered in partnership with Lancashire Music Service, plus three projects with The Dukes in 2018, ensures all our children have excellent learning opportunities.

We will continue to look at ways to develop and improve children's learning through the arts as we believe it allows them to be expressive and independent, critical thinkers. Our aims and purposes have still been, and continue to be, addressed in the way we have delivered arts teaching and learning. This can be accounted for through a much-improved and diverse partnership we now enjoy with parents and the wider community, improved academic performance and social and emotional development in our children as a result of our Artsmark process.

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## Question 3

What has been the impact of your Artsmark journey, and how would you summarise this in relation to children and young people, staff, parents and the wider community? **Do not write more than 500 words.**

Compared with two years ago, we are at a much more advanced stage in championing the arts and ensuring it impacts positively on children's learning and our community offer. On a base level, the range of activities, events and learning opportunities is much higher, with all children taking part in a variety of arts activities, events and workshops throughout the school year. This has helped foster a culture that envisages the arts as central to the learning process and the wider ethos and philosophy of the school.

The Artsmark process has, through our focus on critical thinking, seen the school make changes to policies and curriculum delivery. The use of a questioning ladder used by staff and children in order to advance children's understanding, analytical and evaluative skills; children's voice through regular curriculum reviews of their topics; the adoption of structured, formal Circle Time lessons; the setting up of the Arts Council; through to pupil-led design of the "Desire Paths" performance in July 2018; these have all helped contribute to a more dynamic and vibrant atmosphere. Added to

that, academic achievement amongst cohorts have all improved linked to curriculum levels, especially those linked to the arts and humanities including history, geography, music and literacy.

With regards to the development of community links and parental engagement, we have seen increased numbers of parents attending events and activities, taking active roles in helping to improve them too. Members of the governing body have been consulted on the Artsmark journey throughout the process. We have strengthened and extended our links with local schools and arts organisations which have helped broaden the arts offer to our pupils, but also give us an important voice in championing and leading the arts locally for young people. Bowerham is the lead school in delivering the local district schools' arts trail each July, working each year to widen its reach and impact within the community. We are also helping lead the newly formed Lancaster and Morecambe Cultural Education Partnership, working with other local institutions and schools to boost arts provision for young people in the area.

Most importantly, our Artsmark journey has given us better knowledge of what quality arts provision is and we are committed to continue the work we have started, to continue to embed the arts as central to our curriculum and to continue our links with the wider community.

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#### **Question 4**

How can you further demonstrate the seven Quality Principles?

- Striving for excellence and innovation
- Being authentic
- Being exciting, inspiring and engaging
- Ensuring a positive and inclusive experience
- Actively involving children and young people
- Enabling personal progression
- Developing belonging and ownership

***Do not write more than 500 words.***

The "Desire Paths" project in 2018 was the culmination of all our work so far linked to Artsmark. The performance was planned and began being prepared for four months in advance, with a close working relationship with The Dukes Theatre and its creative education team. The project centred around how the children envisioned Lancaster as a place in years to come, researching its rich history and discussing their understanding of its present. Staff worked alongside children to guide and nurture their performances, with each class developing a short scene that represented an episode in Lancaster's history, before Year 5 performed what its future would be, in their eyes. We believe this to be innovative, authentic and inspiring, current and meaningful, whilst working with industry experts to create something original and appropriate.

Being inclusive is a huge part of our initiative in promoting the arts. For example, children of disadvantaged backgrounds, from foreign countries or different cultures and backgrounds have visited the theatre or been on arts-related trips on three occasions this year: a trip to see Peter Pan at The Dukes; visiting Lancaster on Ice and taking part in related creative workshops; and taking part in The Dukes' Schools' Festival in June, devising and performing a short piece of

drama. As well as providing them with experiences they may not necessarily enjoy outside school, they are directly involved in the planning, delivery and evaluation processes.

Our commitment to involving children in planning is reflected in our setting up of the Arts Council (including a chair and deputy in Year 6) which meets weekly to discuss activities, events and learning opportunities, with feedback to and from classes and to the Arts Lead. This way of working is embedded throughout school, with pupil voice a major part of our whole curriculum. During the Year 6 end-of-year production in 2018, children also took roles in choreographing dances and blocking scenes, helping produce set and props and also joined staff on the technical team, working lights and sound.

We strive to enable all our pupils the opportunity to make personal progress. Nearly 30 children are learning musical instruments with peripatetic teachers, a steady rise on two years ago. They perform regularly for audiences, including at the annual music celebration concert for parents held every May. There are after-school or external clubs related to the arts including choir, dance, steel pans and drama, in which children can take LAMDA exams – we have just held our 4<sup>th</sup> set of exams in November 2018, with 16 children earning passes or passes with merit or distinction, thereby continuing our 100% success rate. We also intend to assess the possibility of running Arts Award in school too as a way of boosting further children's sense of personal progression.

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### **Question 5**

Has your Artsmark journey influenced any change for the better at a whole-setting level, such as a change in policy, establishing new partnerships, reviewing pedagogy? ***Do not write more than 500 words.***

Our Artsmark journey has contributed to changes and additions to whole-setting policies and procedures. It is a non-negotiable that all children will be involved in arts learning activities throughout the year, such as trips, visits, parent assemblies and our partnership with The Dukes running each year. We have also created specific speaking, listening and drama skills to be incorporated into the curriculum alongside the core subjects, giving these vital skills the prestige and focus they deserve and demand. The Circle Time initiative, whilst not primarily being an arts focus, arose from the recognition that it positively supports our target of improving critical thinking and associated skills of communication. With regards to music, we focused on building staff confidence in teaching skills through working alongside independent music providers, before adopting fully the local music service's interactive music scheme.

At a wider level, we have established new partnerships with more local schools through the schools' arts trail and institutions, such as More Music in Morecambe through the singing festival (again providing examples of inclusivity, ownership and community links) whilst strengthening our partnership with The Dukes. Perhaps most significantly is our lead role in the setting up of the Lancaster and Morecambe Cultural Education Partnership in association with Curious Minds. One of only two schools currently on it, we want to bring more schools on board with the aim of improving the arts for young people in the area. We fully recognise the need for collaboration and

cooperation between organisations and institutions, sharing good practice and ideas in order to effect better change and outcomes at school setting level.

In conclusion, we will continue to review our action plans – linked to our Arts school improvement plan – in conjunction with the quality principles of Artsmark, in order to give our children and wider community the opportunities to reach their potential in or through the arts. Our Artsmark journey has not finished but has provided our school with a legacy, a core of principles and ideas which have become part of our school ethos, and which we fully intend to continue to build upon.