

Primary Arts Pilot

Final Evaluation: Executive Summary

Overview of the Primary Arts Programme

The Primary Arts programme, designed and coordinated by A New Direction (AND), was developed to increase access to high-quality, inspiring arts, cultural and creative opportunities for children and staff in London's primary schools and primary SEND settings. The programme, delivered during the 2023/24 academic year, was funded by the City of London Corporation City Educational Trust Fund and aimed to unlock the creative potential, cultural capital, and skills of teachers and children, fostering wellbeing and confidence. The programme was delivered in partnership with a range of cultural organisations, was free of charge to schools and had five strands:

In-Schools Touring: Delivered in partnership with five cultural organisations, this strand offered a performance and in-class workshops for pupils, plus staff CPD, resources, creative materials and books.

Masterclasses: Four CPD days exploring creative approaches to literacy and reader development in partnership with the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education.

Come & Try: Four creative, practical twilights for school staff, in partnership with the Crafts Council.

Cultural Education Leadership Programme: A six-month programme for mid-career primary teachers interested in leading change in their school's approach to arts, culture and creativity across all subject areas, in partnership with UCL Centre for Educational Leadership.

Go & See: Provided free tickets for pupils to experience film, performing and visual arts, in partnership with four cultural organisations.

Programme Reach

- 121 schools from 27 London boroughs
- 4,610 pupils directly participated
- 467 school staff participated in CPD
- 314 school staff accompanied pupils to arts events
- 12 cultural partners

The Evaluation

AND commissioned an evaluation of the pilot year with the following objectives:

- To evaluate the outcomes for participating pupils, school staff and cultural partners.
- To understand what worked well, what didn't, and why.
- To provide recommendations for future programme delivery.

The evaluator used a mixed-methods approach, including surveys, interviews, observation and thematic analysis, to gather data and assess the programme's outcomes.

Key Findings

In-Schools Touring

- **Recruitment and participation:** The programme was quickly oversubscribed, indicating a strong demand for such initiatives. A total of 25 schools participated.
- **Pupil outcomes:** Over 95% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that the programme's objectives for pupils were met. Key outcomes included enhanced engagement, creativity, collaboration, social skills and a sense of achievement. The programme successfully supported wellbeing with pupils reporting feelings of happiness, pride and curiosity after participating in the activities.
- **Teacher outcomes:** Teachers reported increased confidence and motivation to incorporate creative activities into their teaching. Schools that engaged in CPD recorded higher levels of achievement in programme objectives.

Masterclasses and Come & Try

- **Professional development:** The Masterclasses and Come & Try sessions were very well-received by participants, who appreciated the practical strategies and resources provided and were inspired by working with creative practitioners.
- **Wellbeing:** The Come & Try sessions not only provided staff with new creative ideas but also supported wellbeing, which is crucial for sustaining motivation and enthusiasm in teaching.
- **Impact on teaching/schools:** Teachers reported increased confidence and motivation to incorporate creative activities across the curriculum and work towards school-wide change.

Cultural Education Leadership Programme

- **Leadership development:** This strand successfully supported the development of leadership and advocacy skills. Participants reported enhanced confidence and motivation for leading creative initiatives within their schools and a greater understanding of how to embed arts and creativity across the curriculum.
- **Sustained impact:** Participants implemented new strategies and projects that have the potential to contribute to lasting change in their school and beyond.
- **Sharing best practice:** The programme also fostered a community of practice among participants, encouraging the exchange of ideas and collaboration.

Go & See

- **Pupil experience:** Go & See provided pupils with valuable opportunities to experience cultural events, first-hand. Teachers noted that these experiences broadened pupils' horizons, inspiring curiosity and developing cultural capital.
- **Accessibility:** The provision of free tickets was crucial in making the arts accessible to all pupils, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Programme-wide recommendations

Based on the evaluation findings, the following recommendations are made for future iterations of the Primary Arts programme:

- **Refine school recruitment processes:** Given the high demand and the programme's aim of promoting more equitable access to cultural opportunities, consider if and how recruitment of teachers and schools will prioritise underserved settings and disadvantaged pupils.
- **Increase CPD engagement:** Encourage greater uptake of CPD sessions, as evidence indicated these enhanced outcomes for both staff and pupils.
- **Programme cohesion and relevance:** Consider mechanisms that promote a more cohesive sense of the programme and builds links with AND's mission and values, and to The Arts in Schools.¹
- **Refine the evaluation:** Use the findings from the pilot to review and refine the Theory of Change and evaluation frameworks and tools.
- **Promote a sense of place:** Explore ways of linking with LCEPs and other borough or sub-regional infrastructure to enhance teachers' access to the capital's creative assets and build pupils' connection to their area and London.

¹ <https://www.anewdirection.org.uk/the-arts-in-schools>

- **Sustain and scale the programme:** The success of the pilot year indicates that the Primary Arts programme has the potential to be scaled up. Future iterations should build on the learning from the pilot.
- **Monitor longer-term outcomes:** To fully understand the impact of the programme, it would be valuable to track longer-term outcomes for both pupils and staff where feasible. This could include follow-up surveys, case studies and longitudinal studies.

Conclusion

The Primary Arts pilot programme, with its holistic approach, combining direct arts experiences with professional development for teachers, has demonstrated its potential to unlock the creative potential of both children and educators. The evaluation indicates that the programme successfully met its objectives, with positive outcomes for both pupils and teachers. Evidence also confirms a great appetite for all programme strands and reaffirms how working with professional and experienced creative practitioners enhances outcomes for staff and pupils. Moving forward, the recommendations offered aim to build on this success, ensuring that the programme continues to grow and evolve, reaching more schools and children, and making a lasting impact on the cultural landscape of primary education in London.

ADDENDUM:

Primary Arts Pilot

Recommendations and Implementation

Introduction

The Primary Arts programme

Designed and coordinated by A New Direction, the Primary Arts programme aims to increase access to high quality, inspiring arts, cultural and creative opportunities for children and staff in London's primary schools and primary SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) settings. The programme is delivered in partnership with a range of cultural organisations and offers free opportunities for schools. It aims to unlock the creative potential, cultural capital and skills of teachers and children, offering opportunities to support wellbeing, confidence, personal interest and development.

The City of London Corporation City Educational Trust Fund supported this pilot programme during the 2023/24 academic year. It comprised five strands:

- In-Schools Touring – delivered in partnership with five cultural organisations, each working with five schools and offering a performance and in-class workshops for pupils within a single year group, plus staff CPD, resources, creative materials and books.
- Masterclasses – four CPD days exploring a range of creative approaches to literacy and reader development, in partnership with the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE).
- Come & Try – four creative, practical twilights for school staff, in partnership with the Crafts Council.
- Cultural Education Leadership Programme – a six-month programme for mid-career primary teachers interested in leading a change in their school's approach to arts, culture and creativity across all subject areas. Delivered in partnership with UCL Centre for Educational Leadership.
- Go & See - free tickets for pupils to experience film and the performing and visual arts, in partnership with four cultural organisations.

The Evaluation

An independent evaluation was undertaken by evaluator Hannah Wilmot. The full report and executive summary are available separately.

This document summarises the recommendations made in the evaluation, both for each strand of the programme and for the programme as a whole, and sets out the changes we have made in programme design and elsewhere to implement these recommendations.

Recommendations and Implementation for Rollout

Recommendations are set out for each programme as in the final evaluation report. Each implementation for rollout in response to a recommendation is indicated by an arrow symbol, →.

In-Schools Touring Programme

The following recommendations are drawn from discussions during the Cohort Learning Days; interviews with the Producer, Access and Inclusion Consultant and AND staff; feedback from the touring companies in Event Reports; and feedback from school staff and pupils via surveys and evaluation visits. Recommendations were made about the following aspects of the programme: partnership, application process, access & inclusion, marketing, planning & production, delivery.

Partnership:

- There is a need for information about the programme, its aims and values, and AND's role, to be communicated to all those delivering the programme in schools.

→ Information will be shared with delivery organisations through a series of four network meetings (see below). In addition, all members of the delivery teams from each organisation (whether staff or freelance) will attend a 90 minute online briefing by way of induction to the programme. This will cover programme background, context and description, information about the funder and about A New Direction, induction into evaluation, risk management and inclusion, and an opportunity to ask questions. To ensure attendance at these sessions, they have been included in partner contracts and freelancers will be paid for their time.

- It would be useful to review and clarify the nature of the relationship between AND and the touring companies, and the purpose of the Cohort Learning Days including the enquiry questions.

→ The relationship between AND and delivery organisations in the pilot was characterised as one of partnership, but experience of the pilot suggests that the relationship is one of collaboration between a lead organisation (AND) and the organisations delivering. On this basis we have avoided using the word partnership when describing the rollout to organisations and have instead placed the emphasis on collaboration between organisations to deliver A New Direction's aims for the programme.

→ We have shifted approach in terms of the regular meetings we hold with delivery organisations for In-Schools Touring. Rather than focussing organisations on learning through an enquiry-based approach (each organisation setting their own aim for their learning through working on the programme), we have shifted to a peer-learning/ practice sharing approach that is grounded in the practicalities around delivery. This will enable us to

retain a focus on how to ensure the programme is delivered consistently and well but will respect organisations as experts in their own practice and encourage them, we hope, to learn with and from one another.

→ With the programme running over a longer period of time than in the pilot, we have shifted to hold four network meetings rather than the three cohort learning days held in the pilot. These will focus on:

- Onboarding (September 24)
- Access & Inclusion (November 24)
- Evaluation (January 25)
- Sharing and celebration (May 25)

Freelancer onboarding sessions will take place in February in preparation for delivery from end Feb to April.

Application process:

- Develop clear criteria for recruitment of touring companies that are informed by the learning from the pilot.

→ The expression of interest form (EOI) for organisations was amended to ask additional questions around access and inclusion, experience of delivering workshops, and experience of delivering teacher CPD.

- During the application process, it would be useful to ask companies what access and inclusion looks like in their practice.

→ All EOIs were scored by three members of the AND team and 12 organisations shortlisted. All 12 organisations were interviewed as part of the selection process, which included a conversation about their approach to access and inclusion and any support they might need to make their offer more inclusive. These conversations were revisited in our initial planning meetings with organisations post-selection, and contributed to our inclusion support planning.

- It would be useful for the brief for the touring companies to be explicit about the parameters of the programme, including the requirement to visit schools across the whole of Greater London and the varied size of primary schools.

→ A detailed information document was sent out alongside the EOI form, which included information about the geography of the programme and the range of sizes of schools in London. Informal feedback from organisations suggested that this guidance was clear and useful.

Access and Inclusion:

- Address the possible tension between AND asking for a pre-existing model/product from the companies and the potential need for the companies to make changes to improve accessibility.

→ We are taking a more tailored approach to access & inclusion for rollout. During selection and initial planning meetings we worked with organisations to get a sense of their current practice and level of confidence around inclusion, and gathered their thoughts on what additional support (if any) they might need in order to deliver their offer more inclusively. Based on these conversations, we are looking to scaffold a range of support options for organisations to make use of if they wish to. We are confident that the full offer has a good baseline of inclusivity based on the conversations we have had so far, and are happy to support organisations that wish to extend their practice further if needs be.

- It would be useful for AND to share their vision and commitment for access and inclusion and provide practical examples of what this means in practice.

→ This has been articulated through selection and initial planning meetings but will be explored in more detail in our second network meeting which will be a full day of focus on access & inclusion. Our approach will be exemplified through the example of our I Am programme (which works with SEND settings and DDND young people), as well as examples from partners we have worked with through that programme. Organisations will be supported to explore their own practice through scenarios and group planning.

- Encourage consistent use of the Sensory Box (access equipment) by the companies and their delivery team.

→ An exploration of these resources will be included in the network meeting focussed on inclusion, and in freelancer onboarding. We will work to make it clearer that these are resources to be used by teachers (with support from organisations if needed), and will create a user guide to be shared with teachers prior to delivery in schools in order for them to be able to plan effectively.

- Gathering feedback from pupils for the evaluation needs to be reviewed to make it more inclusive.

→ Our evaluator has already started exploring more inclusive approaches to evaluation and will develop new tools to reflect this more inclusive approach.

Marketing:

- Explore alternative ways of sharing information with schools such as videos, that outline the offer from each company and could also be shared in advance with pupils. As an access and inclusion tool, it would be important for the video to include all the people that would be visiting the schools.

→ Each partner organisation has been asked to film a short (2-3 minute) video trailer outlining their offer. These will be used at launch to promote the programme.

→ As some organisations have not yet commissioned their delivery teams it has not been possible to include all people visiting school in these video trailers. We will instead explore creating a 'who's who' for schools prior to delivery taking place.

Planning and production:

- Consider how AND can ensure consistency and quality in the planning but hand over the relationship with the school to the companies at an earlier stage.

→ We have recruited a full time programme manager to manage the In-Schools Touring programme for rollout. Having this level of capacity on the programme will ensure quality assurance across it. The initial bookings, allocations and information gathering process will be done by A New Direction between September and December, with handover of school relationships to organisations in January. This will give organisations adequate time (at least half a term) to get to know their schools and their needs, build a relationship and plan together to ensure that the school gets what they need from the experience. This is reflected in organisation contracts which include days for coplanning.

Quality assurance will be ensured by the programme manager meeting with organisations on a regular basis from January into the delivery period, to support relationships and ensure that all risk assessments and other key planning is completed.

- Consider how to streamline the information gathering from the companies to avoid duplication.

→ This has been streamlined through the EOI process, with some elements of detail left to be discussed between organisation and school (eg planning around school day timings).

Delivery:

- Consider making the CPD compulsory as it improves outcomes for staff, pupils and also supports inclusion as staff know how to prepare the pupils for the visit.

→ CPD for teachers at schools participating in the In-Schools Touring programme is no longer presented as optional. CPD will be scheduled directly between the school and the organisation once the relationship has been handed over in January. For schools where CPD is an impossibility (an unlikely scenario), the organisation will be supported to share information in other ways, such as through a Zoom meeting, so that at minimum, key staff are prepared.

- Ensure that schools understand that the CPD will be relevant for all staff, not just those involved in the visit. This widens the impact of the programme.

→ This will be communicated by organisations when scheduling CPD sessions with schools. Our hope is also that a more direct personal relationship between school and organisation will be a motivating factor for our lead school contacts to encourage colleagues to attend CPD.

- Ensure that companies' programmes are designed to engage all pupils and give agency and creative freedom to the pupils in the workshop (and the performance where relevant).

→ This relates back to planning around access and inclusion, and will be supported through tailored support as well as network meeting 2 (see above).

- The resources, Creative Treasure Chest and book list and Book Box were greatly appreciated and instantly put to use. Consider sending out the resources and materials slightly earlier, perhaps two to three weeks before the visit.

→ As evaluation feedback did not give a clear steer on the exact timing that would be most useful to schools for this, our aim will be to send out books and materials three to four weeks in advance. We will evaluate this timeframe again at the end of Y1 and adjust for Y2 if needed.

Masterclasses and Come & Try

These two programme strands were grouped together in the evaluation as both are delivered through a series of standalone opportunities for teachers and school staff. The recommendations are drawn from interviews with the delivery partners and AND staff, and feedback from school staff gathered through surveys.

- Explore demand for a Masterclass that is more clearly aligned to the curriculum and needs of EYFS and SEND settings.

→ We have not implemented this recommendation in terms of a standalone session relating to these themes. Instead we have briefed our delivery partner (CLPE) to ensure that these elements are considered in their planning and better articulated in their content. We will review evaluation data from Y1 and adjust delivery further in Y2 if necessary – this may include an EYFS and/or SEND focussed session.

- Consider how best to attract greater numbers of non-teaching staff to Come & Try.

→ We have more clearly articulated that these sessions are open to anyone working in a school setting and will work with our advisory group to identify additional ways to increase uptake from non-teachers. We will more closely monitor uptake of the programme and look to target marketing to non-teaching staff if necessary.

- Consider seeking permission (preferably on the day) from participants to share their contact details with the group to facilitate ongoing dialogue and sharing of practice, thus meeting one of the programme's objectives.

→ We will seek permission from attendees to share contact details at the end of each session and identify the most suitable mechanism for this.

Cultural Education Leadership Programme

The following recommendations are drawn from interviews with the delivery partner and AND staff, and feedback from participants gathered through baseline and endpoint surveys.

- Provide more guidance and support on the Leadership for Change project: perhaps providing examples of previous projects; giving inputs on how to gather evidence; and allowing more time for peer discussion and support at the start, middle and end of the project.

→ We will work with UCL to improve information given to participants about the project, and will invite one or two of last year's cohort to talk about their experience of undertaking their own project during the pilot.

→ Peer discussion and support will be facilitated in all sessions through a dedicated slot in the afternoon once taught content is completed – there is greater space for this in the programme at rollout as content will be delivered through eight sessions rather than six – this compressed timeline affected participant experience in the pilot.

- Consider ways of encouraging schools to give participants more designated release time to undertake work related to the course.

→ We have tried to make expectations around release time clearer from the outset, by including a question to headteachers in their supporting statement to be submitted with an application. This asks how the applicant will be supported to undertake their project and asks the headteacher to agree to release time for project work. Where supporting statements have not made this support clear, we will not accept applicants on to the programme.

- Ensure that cultural venues visited are located in varied parts of London (even if this is confined to inner London).

→ We are looking at a range of venues, including Discover (Newham), the National Theatre (Southwark), Kensington Palace (Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea), and Guildhall Art Gallery (City of London). With both delivery partners (A New Direction and UCL) being based in East London (with UCL using UCL East as their base for this work) we are aware this may skew bias to the east, so we will proactively seek venues further west.

- With the Leadership alumni, explore ways of sustaining the community of practice and their relationship with AND; this could benefit AND and also help to embed learning for the participants from the course.

→ The Leadership Alumni have, independently of AND, set up a WhatsApp group through which they are all in regular contact and are supporting one another. Our offer to them will include opportunities to meet in person in cultural venues, as well as inviting them to support delivery of the Y1 programme (eg through talking about their projects as described above).

- Conduct follow-up interviews with a sample of participants in 12 months' time (or more) to explore personal outcomes and impact within their school(s) and locality.

→ Plans for this are in place and have been included in the evaluation brief for 2024/25.

Go & See

The following recommendations are drawn from interviews with the delivery partners and AND staff, and feedback from participants gathered through surveys.

- Continue to offer events that link to the curriculum such as adaptations of books being studied.

→ We will implement this where possible, though for the theatre strand we are dependent on the shows being offered by each venue.

- Offer events in venues in varied locations across London to facilitate the greatest access for schools.

→ We are working with a larger number of partners for rollout of the Go & See programme. As such we have worked to curate a better geographical spread so that schools in all boroughs are within easy reach of a venue (aiming to limit travel time to 1h15 or less each way).

- Offer online CPD and if possible, access to recordings of CPD, to encourage participation and maximise the impact of the events.

→ The CPD for the theatre and visual arts strands of the programme will be delivered as prerecorded sessions that can be accessed online whenever is convenient for teachers, and as many times as they wish. For film, these will be delivered online in person but will be recorded for sharing after the event.

Programme-wide conclusions and recommendations

Evidence presented throughout the evaluation report demonstrates the success of the models developed and the outcomes achieved. Further endorsement was received from respondents to the surveys for Touring, the Masterclasses, Come & Try and Go & See, who were asked if, based on their experience, they would consider booking another AND event in the future. All 166 respondents across these four strands replied 'yes'.

In addition to the programme-specific recommendations above, further recommendations have arisen through the evaluation that have programme-wide implications. These include:

- Refine school recruitment processes: Given the high demand and the programme's aim of promoting more equitable access to cultural opportunities, consider if and how recruitment of teachers and schools will prioritise underserved settings and disadvantaged pupils; and the geographic spread of schools.

→ In order to test the programme during the pilot, we did not set any selection criteria for schools to participate in the programme – for expediency, we focussed on programme capacity and took a first-come, first-served approach. For rollout, we have developed a selection matrix which considers:

- Disadvantage (indicated through proxies commonly used in education – school percentages for Pupil Premium, Special Educational Needs, children in receipt of an Education Health and Care Plan, and children with English as an Additional Language)
 - Under/overserving – looking at pilot data to ensure that we prioritise bookings for Touring and Go & See from schools that have not previously participated in the programme. Similarly, coordinating allocations to Go & See and Touring so that schools applying to both strands are not overserved by the programme if there are others that have applied to only one strand.
 - Geography – aiming to ensure a fair spread across boroughs
- Increase CPD engagement: Encourage greater uptake of CPD sessions, as evidence indicates these enhanced outcomes for both staff and pupils. This could include offering additional sessions, exploring different formats and/or providing follow-up support to help teachers implement what they have learnt.

→ As outlined in the strand-specific recommendations above, we will:

- Position CPD through the In-Schools Touring programme as not optional
- Host CPD for the Go & See programme flexibly online

And also

- Consider programming additional Masterclasses if the programme is significantly oversubscribed (budget permitting)
- Share some CPD highlights through blogs or other light-touch resources for teachers

- Consider filming CPD sessions to share in future years of the programme (budget permitting)

- Enhance programme cohesion and relevance: Consider mechanisms that promote a more cohesive sense of the programme and build links with AND's mission and values, and to The Arts in Schools. For example, by considering how the programme relates to the 'five core practice and provision principles essential in enabling a school to become arts-rich'.
 - For programme cohesion we have planned a launch evening at the end of September to bring together all partners and the AND team (staff and freelance) to meet, mingle and hear about each other's contributions to the wider programme.
 - Partners will be invited to contribute to blogs hosted by AND and shared with all partners
 - A New Direction will produce a blog linking Primary Arts to the core practice and provision principles outlined in the Arts in Schools.

- Refine the evaluation: Use the findings from the pilot to review and refine the Theory of Change and evaluation frameworks and tools.
 - The Theory of Change has been revised – the new iteration is shared alongside this report.
 - The evaluation framework is being adjusted on the basis of the new Theory of Change (ToC)
 - On the basis of the new evaluation framework, we are reviewing and adjusting all evaluation tools, as well as factoring in considerations about inclusive approaches to evaluation for pupils with additional needs and very young pupils (EYFS), and reviewing approaches used for pupil evaluation in the Touring programme where we may need to take a more consistent approach than that used in the pilot programme (in which partners created their own tools that were in keeping with their own practice).

- Promote a sense of place: Explore ways of linking with Local Cultural Education Partnerships and other borough or sub-regional infrastructure to enhance teachers' access to the capital's creative assets and build pupils' connection to their area and London.
 - An initial step towards this is taking place in September through an online briefing for LCEPs about the programme.
 - We will work with our advisory group to consider other steps around place.

- Sustain and scale the programme: The success of the pilot year indicates that the Primary Arts programme has the potential to be scaled up. Future iterations should build on the learning from the pilot.
 - With the rollout moving us to full-scale delivery of the programme (rather than a staged approach), we will evaluate the programme rigorously, consider budgets, and look at what further developments may be possible in Year 2.
- Monitor longer-term outcomes: To fully understand the impact of the programme, it would be valuable to track longer-term outcomes for both pupils and staff where feasible. This could include follow-up surveys, case studies and longitudinal studies.
 - We have commissioned the evaluator to undertake case studies and follow-up surveys as we move in to rollout of the programme.