

## Primary Arts Year 1 - Executive Summary

### Programme overview

The Primary Arts programme, designed and managed by A New Direction in partnership with 23 cultural organisations, aims to increase access to high-quality, inspiring arts, cultural and creative opportunities for children and staff in London's state mainstream primary schools and SEND settings. Building on a successful pilot programme in 2023/24, Year 1 of the expanded three-year initiative was supported by the City of London Corporation City Educational Trust Fund and delivered free opportunities across five programme strands.

The programme achieved significant scale and reach in Year 1, engaging **198 schools** from **30 London boroughs**, with **13,399 pupils** directly participating and **1,234 school staff participating in CPD activities**. An additional **647 school staff accompanied pupils to arts events**, demonstrating strong commitment from schools.

The evaluation, based on survey data, interviews, case studies and direct observation, assessed the outcomes and processes of the programme, focusing on what worked well and what could be improved for future iterations.

### Programme strands and delivery

The five programme strands comprised:

**In-Schools Touring** was delivered by 10 cultural organisations and provided performances and workshops to 9,471 pupils across 100 schools. Each school received a performance and workshops for pupils within a single year group, plus staff CPD (with 1,108 participants), resources, creative materials and books. Rated as high-quality and inclusive by schools, the programme supported pupils' creativity and cognitive, social and emotional development.

**Go & See** provided free tickets for 3,908 pupils to experience theatre, film and visual arts across 75 events at 10 cultural venues. The programme reached 68 schools and was particularly valued for developing pupils' cultural capital, with many experiencing live theatre for the first time.

**Masterclasses** delivered six CPD days exploring creative approaches to literacy and reader development in partnership with the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE), attracting 95 individuals in 143 attendances. Sessions were consistently rated as inspiring and informative.

**Come & Try** offered six creative, practical twilight sessions for school staff in partnership with the Crafts Council, engaging 53 individuals in 113 attendances. These sessions

successfully balanced personal creative exploration with professional development, providing wellbeing benefits alongside practical classroom applications.

**Cultural Education Leadership Programme (CELP)** supported 18 London primary teachers through an 11-month programme delivered in partnership with UCL Centre for Educational Leadership. Participants developed leadership skills, confidence and strategic thinking to drive cultural education change in their schools.

### Key outcomes for pupils

The evaluation provides compelling evidence of positive outcomes across all programme strands. Teachers consistently reported high achievement of intended pupil outcomes, with 99% of respondents strongly agreeing (85%) or agreeing (14%) that children enjoyed activities and had fun. The top three feelings selected by pupils in In-Schools Touring were 'amazed', 'happy' and 'proud', suggesting positive impact on children's mood and wellbeing.

Other significant outcomes included:

- **Creativity, curiosity and arts skills:** 97% of teachers strongly agreed (74%) or agreed (23%) that activities encouraged children to be curious by exploring new ideas, knowledge, artforms and places. Additionally, 92% of teachers strongly agreed (46%) or agreed (46%) that children developed new creative and/or artform skills.
- **Development of cultural capital:** Pupils gained new cultural experiences, often attending live performances for the first time. For Go & See, 93% of teachers strongly agreed (85%) or agreed (8%) that the programme developed cultural capital.
- **Inclusion and accessibility:** The inclusive nature of the programmes was praised and resulted in positive outcomes for all pupils. In-Schools Touring demonstrated particular success in SEND settings, with 100% of SEND school respondents strongly agreeing on the success of all programme aspects.
- **Sustained impact:** Follow-up surveys revealed lasting benefits, with children continuing to reference experiences as highlights of their year and demonstrating changed attitudes, motivation and enthusiasm towards arts and creative activities.

### Key outcomes for school staff

The programme achieved strong professional development outcomes. Most significantly, 94% of survey respondents strongly agreed (65%) or agreed (29%) that they felt more confident and motivated to apply new creative approaches across the curriculum. This was supported by practical outcomes, with 97% strongly agreeing (68%) or agreeing (29%) that they had been given new skills, practical strategies and resources to use in their classrooms.

Key outcomes for school staff included:

- **Enhanced confidence:** Teachers reported increased confidence in delivering creative subjects, particularly in previously intimidating areas such as poetry and drama, and using creative approaches across the curriculum.
- **Practical application:** Staff identified specific activities and approaches they planned to utilise, with evidence from follow-up surveys confirming implementation of these intended actions including curriculum revisions and staff training.
- **Leadership development:** CELP participants demonstrated substantial growth, with 100% rating their capabilities in advocacy, utilising the creative sector and leadership confidence as high or very high by the end of the programme.
- **Wellbeing benefits:** Creative CPD sessions contributed to teacher wellbeing, with over 98% strongly agreeing or agreeing that sessions left them feeling valued as educational professionals and supported by their peers.

### Key outcomes for cultural organisations

The programme supported professional development for cultural organisations delivering In-Schools Touring. Delivery organisations demonstrated increased confidence and understanding across programme objectives, with the greatest change recorded for confidence in designing CPD to meet school priorities (+0.95 on a five-point scale).

Key outcomes included increased knowledge and confidence to work with SEND children, greater appreciation of the diversity of school environments across London, developed practice for primary schools and enhanced skills in evaluation, CPD design and delivery, and inclusive practice.

### Evidence of sustained impact

The evaluation incorporated mechanisms to assess longer-term impact, including follow-up surveys and longitudinal tracking of CELP participants. Evidence demonstrated:

- **School-level change:** Teachers used their learning to advocate for cultural education, revise curriculum areas and share knowledge with colleagues through staff meetings and CPD.
- **Use of Primary Arts resources:** All strands provided resources to enable follow-up work which were well received. For In-Schools Touring, for example, 64% undertook follow-up activities using the resources provided.
- **Leadership impact:** CELP participants from the pilot year continued to demonstrate impact on their schools, with over 75% reporting high levels of impact on their skills and confidence as leaders of cultural education. Evidence from other strands, such as Masterclasses, also highlighted how the CPD provided knowledge, inspiration and motivation to middle and senior leaders to lead change in their subject areas.

## Programme quality and Mechanisms of Change

The evaluation identified key mechanisms contributing to programme success:

- **High-quality arts and cultural experiences:** Consistently high ratings for programme quality, with participants praising skilled, inspiring practitioners delivering new creative activities.
- **Practical application:** Emphasis on providing ready-to-use classroom strategies and resources that teachers could immediately implement.
- **Inclusive practice:** Strong commitment to access and inclusion, with particular success in SEND settings and provision of access budgets to support participation.
- **Peer learning and support:** Valued opportunities for professional dialogue and networking, contributing to teachers feeling supported and connected to peers.

## Programme-wide recommendations.

Alongside recommendations linked to each strand, the evaluation identified a small number of programme-wide recommendations to maintain and enhance programme effectiveness:

- **Extend programme reach:** Introduce booking limits for CPD and explore ways of engaging new schools in Primary Arts.
- **Consolidate best practice:** Share learning from Year 1 with partners in Year 2.
- **Maintain inclusive practice:** Support diverse learning needs of pupils and teachers.
- **Promote sustainable impact:** Encourage schools to engage further with CPD, share learning across staff teams and embed creative approaches in planning and practice.
- **Further refine the evaluation:** Use the findings from Year 1 to review and refine the Theory of Change and evaluation frameworks and tools.

## Conclusions and future sustainability

The Year 1 evaluation provides clear evidence that Primary Arts is achieving strong outcomes against its Theory of Change, for all stakeholder groups. The programme demonstrates particular strength in combining immediate positive experiences with sustained professional development that extends impact beyond participating individuals to the whole-school community.

The programme's success rests on its core features of high-quality arts and cultural experiences, skilled practitioners, inclusive practices and opportunities for creative participation. These elements, combined with generous and well-organised support from A New Direction, create the conditions for sustainable impact through embedding creative approaches in school planning and practice.