

Primary Arts

Quarterly Report: December 2025

Introduction

A New Direction is pleased to share this quarterly update on delivery of the second year of Primary Arts at full scale for the City Educational Trust Fund. Year 2 builds on the success of Year 1 of the programme, in which we worked with 198 schools across 30 boroughs, including activity with 13,399 pupils and 1,234 members of school staff, working with 23 cultural partners.

The delivery model for the work in 2025/26 remains the same, with some small adjustments based on the recommendations put forward by our external evaluator at the end of Year 1. We are continuing relationships with some delivery partners, and have brought on new ones in order to refresh the programme offer to schools, and to meet recommendations made by schools in our consultation in January 2025 (for example we are now working with Historic Royal Palaces through the summer season of the Go & See programme as schools told us that for some of them, trips needed to be more centred on direct curriculum learning). By building on the strengths of last year's programme we hope to see further impact on pupils' enjoyment and cultural capital, and on teachers' confidence and capacity to deliver high quality cultural and creative opportunities for their pupils.

The five strands of the programme are:

For pupils (with support for staff)

- Go & See (offered in the autumn and summer terms)
- In-Schools Touring (offered in the spring term)

For teachers:

- Cultural Education Leadership Programme (year-long)
- Masterclasses (single day sessions delivered year-round)

For any school staff:

- Come & Try (twilights delivered year-round)

A list of partners can be found in the appendix at the end of this report.

Key Achievements This Quarter

Year 2 Programme Launch

The key achievement of the quarter is the successful launch of the second year of the programme offer on 10 September 2025 (with the exception of the summer season of Go & See, which will open for bookings in February 2026). We have been delighted with the continued interest in and uptake of the programme, with 586 settings now registered on our booking platform. This is an increase of 178 (43%) since July last year, and has also allowed us to ensure that we are working with as many new schools as possible, in order to extend the reach of the programme.

All London boroughs (including the City of London) are now represented across the registered schools. The proportion of these schools actively engaging with the programme so far this year varies, and is discussed in more detail in the 'Booked Places' section below.

The next key moment for school recruitment will be the launch of applications to the summer season of the Go & See programme in February. We continue to profile ongoing opportunities such as Masterclasses and Come & Try events through our schools e-newsletters, social media channels, and through programme partners.

Special Schools

We were extremely grateful for the board's decision in September 2025 to allow us to open up access to the programme to special schools working with pupils older than primary age but working at primary level. We have been delighted with the response to this from special schools, and have received a number of bookings for these pupils. Of the 20 special schools booked into the In-Schools Touring programme, four are all-through schools that may include older pupils in the experience, and six are schools for secondary aged pupils. Classes booked in range across Key Stage 3, Key Stage 4 and sixth form. For Go & See we have one school booked in for a trip that includes Key Stage 3 pupils.

Programme delivery

Following launch, bookings and an allocations phase, all strands of the programme except for In-Schools Touring are now in delivery. On-the-day evaluations are being undertaken and the leadership cohort and touring organisations have completed their baseline evaluation questionnaires. Feedback has been very positive so far and the team have been delighted to see children and teachers enjoying their experiences, learning, and being inspired.

Highlights

As mentioned above, the ongoing positive interest and uptake of the programme has been a significant highlight. We were also delighted to bring together all delivery

partners and members of the CETF team and board for a launch celebration in September.

Non-programme highlights:

Advisory Structures

Following the valuable contribution made by our Pathfinder Advisory Group last year, we have now:

- successfully recruited a new Schools Consultation Group (17 members across 12 boroughs),
- held our first schools consultation meeting,
- recruited our Strategic Advisory Group, which will meet for the first time in January.

Communications

- Ads (publications and reach)
Ads were placed in Teach Primary, SEN Mag, Schools Week and Education Today.

The Teach Primary (1/4 page) ad was placed within their weekly newsletter on Friday 19 September (seen [here](#)) with an overview as follows:

- Overall delivered to 53,403 recipients
 - Overall opens 17,300
 - This entry specifically received 74 clicks
- Page views (Sep – Dec 2025)
 - Primary Arts landing page: 2,064
 - In-Schools Touring landing page: 1,327
 - Go & See landing page: 682
 - Come & Try landing page: 379
 - Masterclasses landing page: 1,082
 - Inclusion page: 91
- Trailer views (all time): 295
- Year 2 programme brochure downloads (all time): 938
- Year 2 inclusion information downloads: 339
- Schools newsletter (10 Sep): 923 opens/ 181 clicks
- Schools final reminder email (1 Oct): 1069 opens/ 364 clicks
- Organic Press/media appearances:
 - [London schools to enjoy return of free arts scheme](#) - Arts Professional
 - Creative Wandsworth newsletter

- 7 partners shared on socials (Clowns Without Borders, CLPE, Groundswell Arts x2, London Mozart Players, Mbilla Arts, The Poetry Society, Postal Museum)

Programme highlights:

Go & See

- Winter season oversubscribed at launch.
- 125 school booking requests, 2,414 tickets allocated to 43 schools of which 34 have not previously engaged in pupil-facing strands of the programme.
- It has been joyful to see hundreds of excited children in cultural venues having a wonderful time.
- Very positive initial feedback to the programme — see quotes, below.

In-Schools Touring

- Programme oversubscribed at launch.
- 100 schools participating, all of which have not previously engaged in pupil-facing strands of the programme.
- Two successful Network Meetings held with the 10 delivery organisations to support their onboarding and their planning around CPD and inclusion (working with pupils with additional needs, including those in receipt of an EHCP, in mainstream schools, and working in special schools).

Masterclasses

- One session fully booked, four sessions still booking.
- Successful delivery of our first session, 'Building Reading for Pleasure Schools' with CLPE, featuring author SF Said.

Come & Try

- First five sessions fully booked, final session has three spaces available.
- Successful delivery of session 1.

Cultural Education Leadership Programme

- 22 teachers participating, 100% attendance.
- Successful delivery of Warm-Up social evening (programme introduction, social mixer, theatre trip to *My Neighbour Totoro*), two teaching days, including cultural exploration visits at the Courtauld Institute and Discover Story Centre, plus learning visit to Lansbury Lawrence Primary School and London Museum Docklands.
- New 'CELP Alumni' programme established for past programme participants, with 18 participants registered (10 from pilot cohort, 8 from Year 1 cohort). Initial session delivered and peer learning pairs and triads established.

Number of booked places

- 586 Schools registered (of which 44 are SEND settings¹).
- 196 Touring Applications (100 selected)
- 125 Go & See Applications (43 selected)
- 51 Schools attending Masterclasses (79 individual teachers, representing 115 bookings in total)
- 54 Schools attending Come & Try sessions (68 individuals, representing 181 bookings in total)
- 22 Schools on leadership programme (recruited summer 2025)

Uptake by Borough

We undertook significant work in summer 2025 to promote the programme to schools in boroughs with relatively low registrations to the programme. This included targeted direct emails to schools, and a campaign to connect with organisations and networks in those boroughs already working with schools. This included school improvement teams, Music Education Hubs, Cultural Education Partnerships, and English hubs.

This was complemented by a direct postal mailing to all eligible schools, tailored to their borough, just prior to launch.

These campaigns, together with the programme trailer, have resulted in a significant increase in programme registrations, meaning that there are at least four schools registered for the programme in every London borough, and one in the City of London.

We continually review programme registrations, and are also looking at the schools registered for the programme but not yet active, with a view to activate these around the summer season of Go & See as well as into our third year of delivery.

¹ This includes special schools, PRUs, Hearing-Impaired Unit, Alternative Provision

Table: Uptake by Borough

The table below shows school engagement by borough on the basis of registrations and bookings made.

Please note: *Schools registered – all schools registered on booking platform.*

Schools engaged – schools that are actively signed up for any programme strands in Year 2 (counted only once irrespective of the number of individuals participating or the number of strands engaged with). Some schools not engaged in Year 2 were active in Year 1 and/or the programme pilot.

Borough	Schools registered	Schools registered as % of eligible schools in borough	No schools engaged in Y2 to date
Barking and Dagenham	13	25%	9
Barnet	14	14%	7
Bexley	9	14%	6
Brent	23	34%	15
Bromley	5	6%	3
Camden	23	53%	10
City of London	1	100%	0
Croydon	37	39%	21
Ealing	23	32%	13
Enfield	12	16%	6
Greenwich	20	30%	11
Hackney	25	44%	16
Hammersmith and Fulham	14	36%	7
Haringey	23	33%	10
Harrow	4	9%	3
Havering	17	27%	5
Hillingdon	14	19%	6

Borough	Schools registered	Schools registered as % of eligible schools in borough	No schools engaged in Y2 to date
Hounslow	13	22%	3
Islington	18	36%	13
Kensington and Chelsea	7	23%	2
Kingston	10	26%	3
Lambeth	28	43%	15
Lewisham	29	40%	10
Merton	27	57%	13
Newham	29	38%	11
Redbridge	16	26%	8
Richmond	15	31%	4
Southwark	28	37%	12
Sutton	6	13%	2
Tower Hamlets	30	42%	15
Waltham Forest	23	40%	12
Wandsworth	18	27%	8
Westminster	11	28%	2
	585		281

Sessions Taken Place

Date	Strand	Event	Venue
23/09/25	Leadership	Warm up	Phoenix Garden/ My Neighbour Totoro
29/09/25	Touring	Network meeting 1	Good Growth Hub
09/10/25	Leadership	Session 1: Foundations of successful schools and effective cultural education	Somerset House/ Courtauld Gallery
21/10/25	Schools advisory	Intro	October gallery
12/11/25	Leadership	School visit	Lansbury Lawrence Primary School/ London Museum Docklands
13/11/25	Masterclasses	Developing a Reading for Pleasure School (with S.F. Said)	CLPE
17/11/25	Touring	Network meeting 2	Good Growth Hub
18/11/25	Leadership Alumni	Session 1	Young V&A
25/11/25	Come & Try	Found objects & collograph printing (Kim Chin)	Crafts Council
01/12/25	Go & See (Winter)	Frameless Relaxed	Frameless
02/12/25	Leadership	Session 2: Understanding self and planning for impact	UCL East/ Discover
03/12/25	Go & See (Winter)	The Firework Maker's Daughter	Polka Theatre
03/12/25	Go & See (Winter)	How Does Santa Go Down the Chimney?	Unicorn Theatre
04/12/25	Go & See (Winter)	Jack & the Beanstalk	Lyric Hammersmith
04/12/25	Go & See (Winter)	The Firework Maker's Daughter	Polka Theatre
04/12/25	Go & See (Winter)	How Does Santa Go Down the Chimney?	Unicorn Theatre
05/12/25	Go & See (Winter)	The Storm Whale	Little Angel Theatre
05/12/25	Go & See (Winter)	The Storm Whale	Little Angel Theatre
10/12/25	Go & See (Winter)	The Storm Whale	Little Angel Theatre
10/12/25	Go & See (Winter)	The Storm Whale	Little Angel Theatre
10/12/25	Go & See (Winter)	Jack & the Beanstalk	Lyric Hammersmith
10/12/25	Go & See (Winter)	Mama Goose	Theatre Royal Stratford East
11/12/25	Go & See (Winter)	Mama Goose	Theatre Royal Stratford East
12/12/25	Go & See (Winter)	The Firework Maker's Daughter	Polka Theatre
15/12/25	Go & See (Winter)	Frameless	Frameless

No of children/teachers involved over the quarter

Please note some numbers are based on bookings rather than actual attendance as monitoring forms have not yet been received for all sessions.

Some teachers may have participated in more than one strand of the programme — please note these figures have not been deduplicated.

For Go & See and Come & Try the total for 'teachers' includes non-teaching adults such as parent helpers supporting Go & See visits, or non-teaching school staff attending a Go & See session.

Strand	Children	Teachers	Booked or actual	Notes
Go & See	1,972	442	Booked	May include other adults (eg parent helpers)
In-Schools Touring	n/a	n/a	n/a	Delivery commences February
Masterclasses	n/a	23	Actual	All teachers
Come & Try	n/a	18	Actual	May include non-teaching staff
Leadership	n/a	22	Actual	All teachers
TOTAL	1,972	469		

Case Studies/ Quotes

Go & See (Theatre)

It is amazing to be able to offer this experience to the children and parents without a financial burden, especially at an already very expensive time of year. It also excites the children as young performers about to do their Nativity. In terms of benefits for school staff who are marking end of term assessments, submitting data, rehearsing for the Nativity, supporting worried parents, along with many other responsibilities, it was a joy to be able to escape that for the morning and share some Christmas joy with our students.

Masterclasses

I found everything useful but in particular ideas to implement within my school to encourage pleasure for reading. The hands on learning approach helped me visualise what barriers I may face as a teacher alongside the successes. I definitely want to do more training.

[The session gave] practical tips on how to encourage reading for pleasure. Actionable steps to feedback to my school. Resources and knowledge to support development for reading for pleasure in my school.

Come & Try

A beautiful, positive, creative experience.

Excellent - love these [sessions]! It is always such a treat to go to a creative workshop where someone else has resourced, planned and prepped the event for me to enjoy, thank you.

Impact quotes

We have completed on-the-day evaluation of sessions (see above) but have not yet undertaken follow-up surveys as these will be done around half a term after delivery.

The evaluation for the programme is based on our Theory of Change (ToC), which has been adjusted very slightly since Year 1 of the programme. Linked to this ToC is an overarching evaluation framework for the programme. From this, our independent evaluator has developed a series of evaluation tools and approaches for each strand of the programme, including:

Cultural Education Leadership Programme:

- Baseline & endpoint questionnaires for all participants.
- On-the-day 'what went well' / 'even better if' feedback for iterative programme design.
- Follow up questionnaire one term after completing the programme.
- End of programme evaluation for Alumni programme.

Masterclasses:

- On-the-day evaluation.
- Follow up questionnaire half a term after completing the programme.
- Come & Try:
- On-the-day evaluation.
- Follow up questionnaire half a term after completing the programme.

Go & See

- Post trip evaluation.
- Follow up questionnaire half a term after completing the programme.

In-Schools Touring

- Baseline and endpoint evaluation with delivery organisations, including delivery teams.
- On-the-day evaluation of staff CPD session.
- On-the-day evaluation with pupils.
- On-the-day evaluation with teachers.
- On-the-day event report from delivery organisations.
- Follow up questionnaire half a term after completing the programme.

We will also be creating a series of case studies for the programme, to complement the ones created at the end of Year 1. These will be completed over summer 2026 and shared in the autumn, and will include longitudinal interviews with programme participants from the pilot and/ or Year 1 (particularly with the leadership cohorts from those years). The case study topics for Year 2 are:

- Wider school impact
- Cultural capital
- Peer learning
- Kindness/ inclusion
- Play.

Challenges you are overcoming

The programme evaluation for Year 1 identified that there was a high rate of repeat attendance at Masterclass sessions, and made the following recommendation:

Consider introducing booking limitations: Given that the strand was over-subscribed, consider introducing limits on the number of sessions a school or individual can book to extend the programme's reach.

As a response to this recommendation, we introduced a booking limitation to Masterclasses this year, limiting each school to booking no more than three Masterclass sessions. We made the decision to run the same sessions in 2025/26 as we did in 2024/25, to further discourage repeat attendance.

Booking data for the Masterclasses so far suggests that this means this measure has been successful as the number of repeat attenders is lower. However, this has also meant that the programme has not booked up as quickly as in 2024/25, with spaces still available on four of the six sessions on offer, and a total of 115 bookings out of the 180 spaces available on the programme. We had not anticipated this due to the popularity of the sessions last year, but it is clear from conversations with teachers that it is increasingly difficult for them to get permission to be out of school for non-statutory training. This may, at least in part, explain why bookings have been slower than expected.

We are next meeting with our Schools Advisory Group in January 2026, and will explore this issue with them then with a view to better understanding barriers schools are currently facing to out-of-school CPD, finding ways to increase uptake for this year, and to consider any adjustments we might need to make to programme design for 2026/27.

Advisory Group Learnings

Our first meeting with our Schools Consultation Group explored the In-Schools Touring programme, and was generally very positive with the programme praised for its inclusivity. Areas for development suggested by the group included:

- Streamlining admin processes further (this has already been addressed following evaluation recommendations).
- Increasing diversity of organisations delivering the programme.
- Increasing range of cross curricular links.

These elements will be included in forward planning for Year 3 of the programme.

The Strategic Development group will meet for the first time in January 2026. The Schools Consultation Group will meet for a full-day session also in January 2026, in which we will explore the challenges around uptake of Masterclasses, our initial plans for dissemination and sharing in 2027/28, and the creative power of play for pupils and teachers.

Appendix I: List of Partners

Go & See

Winter season:

The Winter offer for Go & See focusses on visual art and theatre.

- Frameless
- Little Angel Theatre
- Lyric Hammersmith
- Polka Theatre
- Theatre Royal Stratford East
- Unicorn Theatre

Summer season:

The Summer season focusses on visual art, film, theatre and museums/ heritage.

- Frameless
- Royal Academy
- BFI
- Into Film
- Aardman Animation
- Half Moon Theatre
- Little Angel Theatre
- Polka Theatre
- Historic Royal Palaces
 - Hampton Court Palace
 - Kensington Palace
 - Tower of London
- The Postal Museum

In-Schools Touring Programme

- Arvon
- Clowns Without Borders
- Discover
- Emergency Exit Arts
- Groundswell Arts
- LAStheatre
- London Mozart Players
- Mbilla Arts

- The Poetry Society
- SLiDE

Cultural Education Leadership Programme

Delivered in partnership with UCL Centre for Educational Leadership, and supported by:

- Lansbury Lawrence Primary School
- Somerset House
- Courtauld Gallery
- Discover
- London Museum Docklands
- London Museum Studios
- Tower Bridge
- Guildhall Art Gallery

Alumni programme supported by:

- Young V&A
- Whitechapel Gallery

Masterclasses

Delivered in partnership with the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education.

Come & Try

Delivered in partnership with the Crafts Council.