

City of London Corporation Committee Report

Committee(s): Education Board	Dated: 22/01/2026
Subject: Cultural & Creative Learning Fund 2024/25 Evaluation Report	Public report: For Information
This proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes	Diverse Engaged Communities Vibrant Thriving Destination Leading Sustainable Environment Flourishing Public Spaces
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	City's Estate
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	Yes
Report of:	Director of Community and Children's Services Department
Report author:	Caitlin McMillan, Education Strategy Unit

Summary

This report presents Members with key information relating to the second year of the City's Cultural and Creative Learning (CCL) funding model. 11 projects were awarded money from the CCL budget to the combined cost of £184,534. There was an underspend on one project of £2,258.02, taking the total spend across the projects to £182,276.

This report summarises findings from the evaluations returned by partners at the end of project delivery. An overview of the projects can be found in Appendix 1. A full collection of evaluations on each project can be found in Appendix 2.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the findings in this report.

Main Report

Background

1. The City of London Corporation (CoLC) is committed to 'Embracing culture, creativity and the arts' (Education Strategy 2024-29) and the City being a 'vibrant thriving destination' (Corporate Plan 2024-29).
2. The CoLC is currently producing a new cultural strategy. The Education Strategy Unit (ESU) has been a key voice in the conversations shaping this strategy.
3. In the current financial climate for cultural and creative institutions, it is becoming increasingly difficult for partners to access funding for projects.
4. According to the 'Arts in Schools' published by A New Direction (2023), 'there is a lack of value ascribed to the arts within the state education system in England'. The ESU is committed to redressing this finding by providing cultural and creative learning opportunities to young learners with a focus on social mobility.
5. The 2025 Curriculum and Assessment Review highlighted the value of arts subjects and made a series of recommendations to expand their delivery within the national curriculum from 2028.
6. The CCL Fund was established in 2023. This report relates to its second year of operation.
7. Priority for funding was given to organisations working in partnership with another City cultural venue.

Current Position

8. In the academic year 24/25, 11 projects were funded by the CCL Fund. These were:
 - a. Change the Record
 - b. Culturally Speaking
 - c. Dr Johnson's House – Enhancing & Expanding Learning Impact
 - d. Future City Makers
 - e. Green Changemakers
 - f. Gresham College Pilot School Series
 - g. Nature Learning
 - h. Reimagining Londinium
 - i. St John's Gate Gardening Club
 - j. Tots at the Docks
 - k. Young City Poets
9. All 11 of these projects were successfully delivered.
10. In total, £184,534 of funding was allocated.

11. There was an underspend on the Gresham College Pilot School Series project of £2,258.02, taking the total spend across the projects to £182,276.
12. 5,645 participants took part across the 11 projects.
13. Whilst each project was evaluated separately, there were some themes observed in their impacts including:
 - a. Multiple points of engagement – projects with multiple points of engagement as opposed to one-off interactions appeared to have the greatest impact on pupils. For example, 'St John's Gate Gardening Club' saw school attendance improve across the year for participating pupils. 'Nature Learning' saw students with complex needs expand their vocabulary and have improved emotional regulation.
 - b. Engagement with families/communities – the projects which demonstrated the greatest impact beyond initial delivery often engaged families/communities. Tots at the Docks saw a number of participating parents say that they planned to or had returned to the London Museum Docklands following programme attendance, while Dr Johnson's House will be expanding its home education programme following their funded project.
 - c. Cultural access & autonomy – feedback from participating young people makes it clear that agency and autonomy in cultural spaces is key to their engagement. Participants in 'Change the Record', for example, reported that being able to initially explore Keats House without adult guidance helped them to develop their own interpretations of historical objects. A pupil taking part in 'Young City Poets' reported increased confidence to speak in front of peers following their cultural visit.
 - d. CPD opportunities – as with family/community engagement, projects which included CPD for teachers reported lasting impact. For example, a majority of teachers participating in 'Young City Poets' agreed that taking part in the programme increased their knowledge and confidence for delivering writing for pleasure activities in their school.
14. A full collection of project evaluations can be found in Appendix 2. This includes evidence of how the projects addressed disadvantage and cultural capital, and the anticipated long-term impact of the projects.

Options

15. N/A

Proposals

16. The feedback from participants makes it clear that the fund is a valuable resource. It should therefore remain part of the City's cultural and creative learning offer.
17. Evaluation should continue to prioritise impact and addressing disadvantage, growing cultural capital and promoting upward social mobility.
18. Collaborations between the City's cultural institutions should continue to be prioritised, as should programmes with a family/community engagement component.

Key Data

19. See Appendix 1 and 2 for key data relating to this report.

Corporate & Strategic Implications –

Strategic implications – the CCL Fund contributes to the City's position as a vibrant thriving destination by bringing young people into the City's cultural venues. It also engages a diverse community of learners. The fund meets the City's 2024-29 education strategy aim of 'Embracing culture, creativity and the arts'.

Financial implications – Project funding was within allocated budget, with the underspend being reallocated according to the Education Board's strategic priorities.

Resource implications - The Education Strategy Unit continues to manage these budgets within existing officer capacity. Delivery of funded activities is supported by partner organisations, with no additional resource implications.

Legal implications - All grant allocations and expenditure have been made in line with the City Corporation's financial regulations and governance requirements.

Risk implications – risk assessments for all cultural and creative activities are carried out by the participating schools and venues.

Equalities implications – the CCL Fund provides access to cultural and creative opportunities for young people, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds and those protected by existing equality legislation.

Climate implications - a number of the funded projects focused on green skills and improving young people's relationships with the natural environment.

Security implications - None identified beyond standard data protection and financial controls.

Conclusion

20. The second year of the Cultural and Creative Learning Fund demonstrates clear and meaningful impact across the City's cultural ecosystem, providing thousands of young people with opportunities to build cultural capital, develop confidence, and engage more deeply with creative learning. The projects collectively highlight the value of sustained engagement, strong partnerships between cultural institutions, and meaningful involvement of families, communities, and educators. Evidence from evaluations suggests that the fund not only enhances pupils' experiences but also drives longer-term benefits, including improved wellbeing, expanded skills, and increased access to cultural spaces. Maintaining and strengthening the fund will support the City's strategic priorities and ensure that cultural and creative learning remains a vibrant, equitable, and transformative part of the City's offer.

Appendices

- Appendix 1. CCL Evaluation Overview 24.25
- Appendix 2. CCL Fund evaluations 24.25

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