

Case Study: Admiral Lord Nelson School



Nys Hardingham – Headteacher, Artsmark Platinum Award

Here at Admiral Lord Nelson School we see the arts subjects and cultural experiences as is fundamental to the curriculum experience as English and Maths is. We've always had a really well defined and well thought out curriculum policy, so our purpose in terms of designing the curriculum is to give them as broad a range of opportunities to develop themselves as creative learners through arts and cultural experiences, so that our children all still study a creative subject to GCSE as part of their compulsory education.

We have as part of our personal development curriculum 12 days during the course of the year that we call PD days – Personal Development Days. One of those days that we do is based around one of the articles within the Convention on the Rights of a Child, which is the right to leisure, play, and culture, giving them the creative freedom to be able to express themselves, the arts, culture, it goes across all aspects of the curriculum and the development of our creative skills are the foundations of our abilities to be able to learn, to be able to solve problems in mathematics, to be able to look for connections in the world scientifically, to be able to design, to be able to perform, to be able to set goals.

Our young people are going to experience so many different jobs, the world has changed so much in the last 20 years, they need the confidence to be adaptable, to be confident in themselves, to be able to be flexible in how they learn through the arts, through all of the cultural capital type activities, you know, through having theatre companies. We may have students who may not feel confident to go to a theatre even on a theatre trip but I make sure we have theatre companies come into school so that every child sees at least two theatre experiences within school. So when it comes to harsh budget decisions do I cut the £500 in costs to get that theatre company in? No I don't because that theatre company will have an impact on 400 children that would cost me so much more to try and send them out to a local

theatre, I know that they are getting that experience, you know so I know that there is value for money there.

I can think of countless examples of children who have experienced success within the arts particularly perhaps with the performance subjects and then have gone onto local colleges, and we have two very strong local colleges. And they've gone on to be successful there and now have been able to sustain careers in the arts, working with local theatres, or working nationally, or working abroad, that perhaps they financially would not have ever considered as options for them but because that passion was ignited at school and because they saw success at school and because they felt the confidence that that gave them, that confidence allows learners – staff and students – to go on and tackle anything, to work outside their comfort zone.