

Statement of Commitment

Establishment Details

Name: Christ Church CofE Primary School

DfE Number: 3913321

Bridge: Culture Bridge North East

Bridge details: www.culturebridgenortheast.org.uk

Context

Describe the context of your school or education setting (for example your phase of education, establishment type, location, number on roll and so on).

Christ Church School is a small voluntary aided church school in the centre of Newcastle-Upon-Tyne. We are a mixed gender school and currently have 141 children on role, ranging in age from 3-11. A much higher proportion of pupils join our school at times other than at the start of the year than is seen nationally. Mobility is very high with changes of up to 30% from the children on roll at the beginning of the year to the end. Our school serves an area of considerable economic and social deprivation and an increasingly diverse community. 71% of our children speak English as an additional language, which is well above the national average, with 24 different languages spoken.

We currently have 26 children receiving SEND support and a further 6 with EHCPs.

Our most recent OFSTED visit took place in November 2021 and reaffirmed our status as a good school.

Question 1

How do arts and culture currently play a role within your setting's strategic values?

Christ Church is a welcoming and inclusive school, thriving on a diverse intake and valuing everyone. Our foundations are built on the teachings of Jesus Christ, celebrating gifts we have been blessed with. Our curriculum has been developed to enable pupils to flourish through a creative curriculum that honours the range of cultures and experiences present. The content of our individualised curriculum is built around a "spiralised" approach, giving opportunities to build upon, and hone, skills as pupils travel along their academic journey. E.g - children create models of clay dragons in year 2, and again in year 4, enabling them to springboard from prior learning whilst also embedding skills gathered during the previous year in different contexts.

Many children join our school with little or no English, or start at a time in the academic year which requires them to make new friends. As a result of our ethos we have built an environment that welcomes and respects these differences, we use the arts to strip away barriers that may exist and embrace our children as respected and valued members of our Christ Church family. As a school we strongly believe that the arts are a global language and a gateway to success. Every September children create self-portraits, taking inspiration from artists that are relevant to the cohort, allowing them to explore their existing artistic heritage whilst not requiring them to use speaking skills to put forward a visual representation of themselves. Another example is how our EAL booster groups use drama and role play activities to making the acquisition of English language fun through replicating real-life situations. Using artistic practices, such as our recent drama workshop, we are able to bring more "academic" subjects such as Literacy to life, and thus push forward our children's learning.

Our children are immersed in the arts from Early Years and we offer a wide range of arts experiences both inside and outside the classroom. We offer extra-curricular clubs in dance, performance, arts and crafts and make regular use of the artistic venues in our vicinity. We visit performances at local theatres annually and host our own performances to welcome in the community and showcase our performance skills. The children often lead the way in these exhibitions and have huge input into the content, choreography and development of the shows. Christ Church's Got Talent is always a hit!

Staff have a wide range of skills and expertise and are committed to utilising these in a rich curriculum with arts and culture at its heart. Our Music coordinator is currently overhauling the way we teach National Curriculum music and driving forward our children's first-hand experiences in this subject. Curriculum enrichment in the arts, e.g. singing and performance has been a strength of Christ Church for many years. We have a new Performing Arts coordinator whose priority now is to reinstate the performances and shows shelved during covid, and expand our network of support and inspiration with our partner schools.

Question 2

How and why will your Artsmark journey contribute to the priorities in your strategic improvement plan?

Our school improvement plan builds upon the work we did on our last Artmark journey and continues to embed our belief that our school is a global representation of Arts and Culture as a result of the diversity of our children. Staff at Christ Church have a wide range of skills, expertise and passions and are committed to using these to enrich the curriculum, learning, and experiences of our children. We intend to use our Artmark journey as the fuel and incentive we need to boost our ongoing vision of what arts can achieve for our children.

We have broadened what we consider to fall under the umbrella of "the arts" and seek to refine this further through isolating three specific strands within our "arts" curriculum.

Firstly, we are elevating the status of our sketchbooks. Children currently use their sketchbooks sporadically and with high levels of adult direction. It is our intention to turn them into a valuable resource that children can use to explore and experiment as they progress through their own artistic adventure. We believe that as using our sketchbooks becomes more commonplace in the classroom children will use them to help their ideas grow and develop new ones through making connections and links, trialling ideas and processes, refining skills and opening that doorway of magic that happens when thoughts and ideas become externalised. For children who do not have English as their first language, or may not excel in written or spoken forms of communication, their sketchbooks provide an outlet for thoughts and ideas.

In music lessons across the school, teachers are following the recently introduced music scheme Charanga. Charanga provides an integrated, practical, exploratory, and child-led approach to musical learning. Building on our work on notation and reading music these units encourage the development of musical skills as the learning progresses through listening and appraising, differing musical activities (including creating and exploring) and performing. Over time, children can both develop new musical skills and concepts, and re-visit established musical skills and concepts.

Our school will be developing all children's cultural capital by seeking opportunities for children to deepen and understand the world around them. This will include both viewing and participating in performances for a wide variety of audiences. Additionally, we will be reinstating performance opportunities within school such as Christmas, spring and summer shows, X Factor competitions and whole school singing that has had to be put on hold due to COVID restrictions.

Question 3

Looking at the Artsmark Award criteria, where does your setting currently have strengths and where would you like to develop?

Christ Church offers an increasingly ambitious arts curriculum, as noted in our recent OFSTED report. Our topic plans are built upon a spiral framework allowing pupils to revisit skills as they move through the school and build up a bank of wide experiences and learning opportunities. Our curriculum leaders have a clear picture of the knowledge and skills we want our children to learn and take great care to enhance pupils' personal artistic and creative development. We make the most of any opportunity to incorporate artistic exploration and expression into our day-to-day learning, e.g. year 6 used art work depicting the Holocaust as a starting point to contemplate the injustices people faced during World War 2 as part of their termly topic. The exploration of these pieces sparked writing sessions and formed the backbone of empathetic and compassionate PSE discussions.

Our senior leadership team fully supports the application of cross curricular links, encourages the ongoing development of staff and pupils across all areas of the Arts curriculum and our Head regularly champions our singing and performances through her participation and engagement. We are aiming to equip even more staff with greater skills to contribute.

Each term every class is consulted about their new topic and are able to express their views and feelings on learning and experiences to be covered, staff listen to the children, note what they already know, what sparks their interest and what they are interested in learning more about. These views are taken into consideration and implemented in the future. We wish to develop this further and identify where they feel they require further support, input or opportunity to refine and consolidate their skills.

Away from the structure of the curriculum, one of our strengths is the enthusiasm and talents illustrated when children take the lead in showcasing their skills. We wish to develop this further through greater pupil voice and cultural diversity.

Our past Journey included an exhibition of children's art works which we plan to reinstate from this year onwards. We feel this gives the children to opportunity to share their successes and gives them the drive to produce their best work. This also applies to "The Big Sing" and "The Big Sing for Mini Singers" Pupils are active in choosing the pieces they display and perform giving them a real ownership over their creative displays.

The location of Christ Church places us within walking distances of numerous galleries, theatres, museums and local architecture. All children experience live performances, including visiting the Theatre Royal to watch the pantomime or attending author workshops at Seven Stories.

We feel we can strengthen the teaching of Music using Charanga as previously instrument tuition was delivered by an external body. We feel there is more to be done to showcase the cultural diversity within our school through performances that are led and driven by the children themselves. Finally, there is room to improve the way children evidence and record their developing artistic skills through the use of sketchbooks.

Question 4

What are the goals and ambitions for your Artsmark journey and what steps will you take to achieve these?

Our goal and ambitions for this current Artsmark journey can be clearly broken down into three distinct parts; 1- Use of sketchbooks. 2- development of the music curriculum. 3 – Raising the profile of Performing Arts across the school.

1 -Sketchbooks

Currently sketchbooks are used sporadically and serve a variety of purposes, including housing Design Technology work. By the end of next academic year they will be used in a much clearer and purposeful way. There are training opportunities available for the Coordinator on the use and value of sketchbooks in the primary curriculum which can then be fed back to staff. The long-term ambition is that the children will curate their sketchbooks from Year 1 until year 6, during which time they will build up a portfolio which showcases their developing skills, techniques, experiences and knowledge. The children will be able to use these sketchbooks as a reference for future artworks through reflecting on their prior learning. In addition to curating their art work children will be encouraged to use them whenever they feel the need, opening up potential dialogue through visual representations where spoken language presents a barrier. Our children with no English have historically used images to communicate with us and this is a method of interaction we value.

2- The Music Curriculum

Through singing and music lessons, teachers will promote further our love of music and singing across a richer musical heritage. Following the music scheme Charanga we hope to build a musical curriculum which develops learning and results in acquisition of knowledge of skills and improved well-being. We have recently purchased a whole class set of glockenspiels to promote a love of playing an instrument in class. Charanga lessons support teachers to confidently play the glockenspiel in weekly music lessons in the classroom. We will also welcome music workshops from Conductive Music to deliver engaging music learning programs for all school children, mixing the Arts with Technology, and championing the STEAM approach. In the Summer term we will again to take part in the Big Gig 2022 and be part of National Music Day.

3 – Profile of the Performing Arts

The profile of performing arts is being raised within school by enhancing opportunities to view performances outside of school and be given more opportunities to perform outside of school. The Performing arts co-ordinator will also be exploring pupil voice and staff voice within school which will be useful in raising areas of Performing Arts that require work and support. The dance curriculum at school will also be developed by the Performing Arts Co-ordinator and a map of progression from EYFS to Year 6 will be established. Staff meetings and CPD surrounding Performing Arts will also be held. In addition to the progression map, a Performing Arts Policy will be created.

The role of arts ambassadors will be developed within school to deepen and encourage children who have a love for the arts and will include termly teaching, participating and planning activities by the children.

Question 5

What support will you need and what resources will you commit to achieve your goals and ambitions?

The biggest resource we will require to achieve our goals is time; time for coordinators to attend CPD courses and feed information back to staff, time to implement changes, and regular periods of time within and after the school day for children to focus fully on the Arts curriculum.

We will require the support of our senior leadership team as we explore opportunities for increased time and focus for teaching the arts. Identifying an allocated training day would ensure all staff had the opportunity for CPD. We will also need to continue to support each other through sharing of knowledge and skills. This is something we already excel at, partly because we are a small school but also because we recognise the value each member of staff contributes to the learning environment. As a staff it is imperative we recognise the high importance of our Arts Curriculum in the school and the role it plays in celebrating the skills and diverse culture our children bless us with.

We have some partnerships in place with local schools as part of the Ouseburn Learning Trust. Covid restrictions

have changed so we will be rekindling existing partnerships and establishing new ones to support us on our Artsmark journey. In addition to this we intend to make use of the Artsmark council culture bridge, The Forge, looking at the CPD opportunities on offer and keeping up to date with events taking place across the north east.

In relation to Performing Arts, new links are going to be made with established businesses and universities within the local area, something else we intend to use the link established by the Forge.

Question 6

How will you know you have achieved your goals and ambitions? What will success look like and how will you evidence it in your Statement of Impact?

We will know we have achieved our goals and ambitions in several ways.

First and foremost, we will see the continued celebration of the cultural diversity present in our school. The events and festivals we have engaged in in the past, such as The Big Gig, The Big Sing and our Christmas Carol services with the church, will be reinstated and serve to bring together our pupils, families and community through a mutual respect and appreciation of the global artistic heritage our school represents.

The number and range of performances our children spearhead will increase, as will the range of cultural representations contained within them. Our pupils will feel confident in taking ownership of their cultural diversity and proud to showcase their artistic skills and capabilities to their peers, family and community.

Our music curriculum will be firmly embedded and taught with confidence by all staff from EYFS up to Year 6. Children will have opportunities to play musical instruments in class and enjoy performing with their peers. In Early Years children have opportunities to play percussion instruments and the glockenspiel to some well-known action rhymes. KS1 and KS2 also have opportunities to play the glockenspiel and recorders. Some upper KS2 will have opportunities to learn the clarinet in music lessons. Singing will be at the heart of our community and children can enjoy expressing themselves through a love of singing and performing. We hope to see smiles on faces and feedback from children and parent/carers to confirm our success. As a small school we are lucky enough to engage with parents in an informal context during drop off and collection times, as well as more formal "parents' meetings" three times a year, and we are confident they will share their views as the opportunities arise.

Children will be working in sketchbooks that hold value, function and purpose in equal measure. They will be on the pathway to owning an item that puts them at the centre of their artistic thinking, enabling them to connect their ideas, express their creativity and uniqueness through different media and artistic formats. It will be their support as they draw inspiration from significant artists throughout history and from a range of cultures, and develop the confidence they need to become capable of expressing their creative uniqueness.

The arts ambassador's group will be established and working within school. Children will have the opportunity to support arts classes, teach arts classes and develop their passions and skills. They will have termly voice meetings and provide feedback to their classes. Additionally, there will be opportunities to showcase their works across school

Through talking to the ambassadors we will support them in selecting and establishing the best method to showcase their work and talents to their peers, family, friends and the wider community.

I confirm that I have read, approved and endorsed the Statement of Commitment and agree to oversee and support the Artsmark journey

I agree to the Artsmark Award Terms and Conditions (These are available online at [artsmark.org.uk/terms-and-conditions](https://www.artsmark.org.uk/terms-and-conditions))

Headteacher name: Sandra Furno

Chair of Governors name: Linsley de la Hunt