



Artsmark
AWARDED BY ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND

Statement of Commitment

Name of school/ educational setting: Beech Hill School

DfE number (seven digits): 381/ 2019

The questions below are designed to generate a summary of your current and future commitment to developing the arts within your school. The statement will be the foundation for the Artsmark journey your school will embark upon and should create a direct link between a] arts planning and provision and b] your school's long term strategy and vision.

Question 1 – Please explain the central importance of the arts to your school both at the level of principle (in terms of values/curriculum/developing the whole child) and pedagogically (in terms of impact on improving the quality of provision/teaching and raising standards). In your answer, please refer to both:

- (i) current provision and
- (ii) plans for future development of the arts

(No more than 500 words)

Through previously going through an Artsmark assessment and achieving the Gold standard, we have come to realise that at Beech Hill, the Arts play a key role in giving children at our school a vital channel for self-expression. We provide a wealth of opportunities for children to discover, explore and extend their natural talents. This is viewed as 'vital' as most of the children at Beech Hill come from disadvantaged backgrounds as well as having children New to English and EAL learners. The Arts are used as a vehicle to provide intrinsic, meaningful and essential learning opportunities and new experiences. Children who may not achieve academically can develop a sense of achievement, independence and creative freedom through the Arts. Our creative curriculum design means that the arts drive most subjects, enabling all children to develop a sense of accomplishment and confidence. The staff at Beech Hill have managed to promote and place the arts high on the agenda in a cultural background where the arts are not seen as important. The change in attitude is shared by pupils and parents alike. Improved parental involvement and support, coupled with raised levels of self-esteem and achievement in the children, are just a couple of examples of the impact we have seen. Beech Hill is very culturally diverse. We see this as a primary motivation to use the arts to celebrate our diversity. This enables the children to feel that they are valued and special. This is particularly significant for the Roma community at our school, a group that are often subject to discrimination and persecution. The impact of this has shown that pupils and parents are now proud to call themselves Roma where, previously, they were very hesitant to use this term. The arts are solely responsible for this.

We also have 5 Artists in Residence (AIR) who work with each year group every Tuesday afternoon throughout the school year. They provide high quality provision in the visual arts, music, dance, drama and poetry. As well as promoting the arts as a career choice for our children, this also enables us to upskill our own teaching staff and assistants in house.

Our future plans focus on:

- To continue to use the Arts subjects through the curriculum to provide high quality provision, to drive pupil progress and attainment and to actively seek opportunities for our children to showcase their talents and work with different organisations in an arts-based context.
- the development of student leadership by creating an 'Arts Council' to assist in curriculum planning, design and CPD.
- A Governor to take on the Arts as a focus. To be directly involved in the development and evaluation of arts provision.
- providing support for a local school within our newly formed Multi-Academy Trust (MAT). We endeavour to introduce our creative planning model, the Arts Award with a focus of local significance, our AIRs to share CPD, provision and the development of specialist arts practice and introducing and leading the school onto the Artsmark journey.

Question 2 – Following on from your answer above, please describe how and why Artsmark will contribute to your strategic school improvement plans?

(No more than 500 words)

The Artsmark self-assessment tool will give us a detailed indication of where we are now in terms of teaching and learning and will provide us with key areas which need to be developed. This assessment also provides a clear role for members of the senior leadership team and governors alike. The aim from our last Ofsted inspection in January 2016 is to 'further develop the skills of governors'; having a specifically named arts governor will ensure we are doing this. We are constantly striving for excellence and innovation at Beech Hill School; focusing on the Artsmark Platinum standard will ensure we provide the highest possible level of CPD for not only our staff, but staff within other settings, particularly as we embark on the process of becoming a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT). Authenticity is a high priority and, as explained in question one, we celebrate the diversity of our school by relating the arts to relevant cultures. By working in partnership with another school, we can encourage links between different cultures and communities, as well as embedding a solid working relationship between the schools and ensuring an inspiring arts curriculum across our MAT. We want to build on the good practice that is an integral part of our curriculum and has seen pupils achieve so much both collaboratively and as individuals. Currently, one child from each class throughout Beech Hill School acts as an arts ambassador and some of our year six children also have additional responsibilities as prefects. A priority is to establish greater 'pupil voice' in terms of the arts in order to allow for pupil ownership of the curriculum. Creating an Arts Council and involving these pupils in the delivery of CPD to other schools in our MAT would help to further strengthen this pupil voice. At the moment, children engage well with what is provided for them in the curriculum and we constantly strive to improve on this, as is clear in our School Improvement Plan (SIP) through our focus on providing rich learning experiences. Artsmark Platinum status would ensure children have more input into what is included in the curriculum and how best to work with other schools. Rolling out a pupil Arts Award with a local focus at Beech Hill with a view to sharing this with other schools will give

children further responsibility in this area. The senior leadership team will oversee all action points on the school improvement plan, providing valuable support for the arts subject manager as a middle leader. Artsmark will also enable us to introduce and lead our partner school onto the Artsmark journey. This will form a major part of the wider MAT action plan.

Question 3 – Referring to the self assessment tool, in your view, what Artsmark level best characterises your school at the moment?

(No more than 500 words)

We feel we are at Artsmark Gold, on the cusp of being a Platinum. We think this for the following reasons:

- Leadership in the arts and culture is well represented at senior level and the wider leadership group. The Assistant Head is responsible for overseeing the curriculum design and the Arts Lead is a member the middle management team. SLT are committed using arts and culture as a driving force to help us achieve SIP Priority Number 2: **‘To continue to provide rich learning experiences.**
- Our creative curriculum is thematic and requires teachers to make specific arts and culture links in the core subjects each half term. Topics are planned from an arts stimulus helping to seamlessly link subjects together. We have strong links with theatres, care homes and our AIRs. These present continuous opportunities for children to showcase their talents in every arts subject. We work in partnership with The Square Chapel Theatre and The Halifax Playhouse. Our children are able to see and take part in various performances. These include lots of diverse, cultural topics. We have visiting artists, so the children can gain knowledge of having a career in an arts subject. We have 5 AIRs delivering art, dance, drama, poetry and music every Tuesday afternoon, working with each year group for a half term. Teachers are present in these sessions in order to up-skill in-house. These sessions are always linked to the curriculum topics, enabling the teaching staff to extend these to other subjects. The AIRs also deliver a staff training session each, every year.
- We deliver the Arts Award Discovery for KS2 after SATS. Each year group has an arts, ambassador. Year 6 Arts Leaders have the responsibility of chairing meetings of the ambassadors to discuss visiting artists and the work of our AIRs. They help organise events such as parent/child art afternoons, arts week and working with other schools on arts based projects. We hold a gallery event every year to showcase the work completed in Arts Week. The whole school comes off timetable to devote a week entirely to the arts subjects. We aspire to have a wide range of arts and cultural trips and visits. Each year group experiences at least one high quality trip or event. The Year 5 children have an annual visit to a West End show in London and a visit to the Victoria and Albert Museum. We also boast an extensive range of after school clubs dedicated to the art subjects. The Year 6 end-of-year production is always performed at a local theatre with professional lighting and staging.
- The value and ethos focus runs through all other focuses because we do ‘actively promote, from an early age, the arts as a genuine career choice.’ It is also one of the reasons why we have chosen ‘The Year of the Woman’ to run as a theme through our curriculum this year, as it will help us to embed this further. The arts are the main driver behind this.

Question 4 – Thinking of your future work, what will your school's *action plan* look like? What steps will be essential in order for your school to complete your Artsmark journey? This might

include, but need not be restricted to:

- auditing current provision,
- establishing whole-school curriculum planning for the arts – where the arts are used to improve teaching and learning in other curriculum areas, or where other curriculum content links to arts areas of the curriculum,
- developing a CPD programme,
- building partnerships with other schools and other relevant organisations, developing approaches to capturing evidence of impact and evaluating progress

(No more than 500 words)

Our action plan broken down into Beech Hill action points and MAT School action points.

We have used the points on this plan to feed into our wider MAT action plan. These points will be delivered and evaluated as part of that. We feel that this is achievable in 3-4 terms time.

Beech Hill:

- A named governor, who will take responsibility for the Arts, will monitor the arts provision by visiting whole school art afternoons to do learning walks and be involved in work scrutinies to monitor and evaluate our provision.
- Develop more alternative arts and culture subjects such as digital installations and videography and seeing this type of art in the community. A club and dedicated space to be set up using school staff who have expertise in this area. Links to the ICT curriculum.
- Another member of staff to attend the Arts Award Advisor Training and roll out Discover into KS1 after the SATS.
- Working with Arts Award to develop a local area based project and delivering this to a wider range of schools.
- Continue to offer the extensive range of arts based after school clubs and trips to children throughout our school.
- To form an 'Arts Council' to establish a greater pupil voice. More opportunities to be given to The Arts Council to be involved in the delivery of CPD in other schools.
- Continue to provide a wealth of opportunities for our children to perform through the curriculum, afterschool clubs and through outside organisations.

MAT:

- To introduce Beech Hill's creative curriculum to the MAT school.
- Introduce an arts and culture link for every half term.
- Monitor the role that arts and culture play in subjects such as maths and English in our partner school.
- To complete joint work scrutinies in conjunction with the partnership school, reviewing the effectiveness and impact that the planning model has across the curriculum.
- To help the school make partnerships with arts and culture organisations and introduce at least one of our AIRs to work in partnership with the school.
- To introduce the school to Arts Award discovery and work in conjunction with them to

deliver it.

Evaluation and Monitoring-

Beech Hill:

- Evaluation at timed intervals after CPD sessions to monitor the impact the training has had on teaching and learning (teacher/pupil quotations)
- Arts Award- quantifiable data-Increase of children taking part compared to previous years.
- Arts Council- To produce a case study of how the children have impacted on the delivery of CPD-Child and staff quotations.

MAT School:

- Quantifiable data: Increased pupil attainment, especially in English writing where arts have had a direct impact
- Conduct book scrutinies to monitor impact- teacher and pupil feedback.
- Quantifiable data-uptake in clubs compared to previous years
- Pupil/parent feedback on the clubs that are on offer.

Child/staff/parent (sample from each year group) evaluation at the start and the end of this journey to produce some quantifiable data for the case study. To focus on SMSC, attainment and the direct impact that arts and culture have upon these aspects.

Question 5 – What support will your school factor in to maximise chances of Artsmark success?

This might include, but need not be restricted to:

- overall funding for the arts in the school,
- investment in CPD,
- opportunities for whole school planning,
- utilisation of external expertise – technical or otherwise

(No more than 500 words)

- 3-4 terms is a sufficient amount of time to implement the action plan. With the school being newly appointed as a MAT, this provides us with the perfect opportunity to be able to build partnerships and share our current areas of expertise. An informed and committed team will ensure the success of implementing the action plan in the required amount of time.
- The school budget is already designed to incorporate a considerable amount towards the arts and culture provision. An extra allocation of funds has already been incorporated in the 2017-2018 budget to ensure the implementation of this Artsmark action plan.
- The provision for the arts across the school is run by a dedicated Arts and Culture Team consisting of a middle manager as the Arts and Culture Lead, and two other teachers. The provision is overseen by a member of SLT who is responsible for the curriculum and a named arts governor. The Arts and Culture Lead and SLT will work in conjunction with a school in our MAT to implement the action planning detailed in question 4.
- **Beech Hill**-The staff have already had two meetings to look at the assessment tool and devise the proposed plan to work towards achieving Artsmark Platinum in 3 – 4 terms' time. The Artsmark journey took high priority in the Whole School SIP meeting in July 2017.

Stakeholders such as governors, parents, teaching staff, support staff and SLT were all involved and agreed on the action moving forward.

- **MAT School:** A member of Beech Hill's SLT will be shortly be taking over as Head of the school we are in partnership with. Our plans can be implemented with ease as the newly appointed head knows exactly what is on our agenda and how to get the staff to 'buy into' this fantastic opportunity.
- A separate meeting involving the Arts and Culture Lead, SLT and the Governors has been held to share this Statement of Commitment. This outlined the commitment we are making and the actions the school must take in order to make this achievable. SLT see the journey to Artsmark Platinum as a perfect opportunity to form partnerships with the other school in our MAT and it forms a part of the wider MAT action plan. Opportunities for shared CPD and best practice are also high on the agenda.
- A committee of arts ambassadors has already been formed and a meeting conducted to outline what Artsmark is and what it means to them. The children are excited by their responsibilities and enthused for the future, particularly the newly formed Arts Council. We will use our own pupil's expertise in the arts to help demonstrate to the children at the MAT school, how the arts can help them to have exciting and meaningful learning experiences.
- Excellent partnerships with our AIRs and local arts and culture settings and organisations are already in place. We seek to further maximise these to provide more experiences for our school and others within our MAT.

Question 6 – Artsmark will help create a network of like-minded schools. In what areas does your school already have strength in the arts and how do you know this? What areas of expertise will you share with other schools in the Artsmark family?

(No more than 500 words)

Strength: A creative curriculum which allows the arts and SMSC to run seamlessly throughout. This is strongly embedded as it has been in place for over 3 years and staff constantly review their delivery and pedagogy to ensure the children are receiving the best possible teaching and learning opportunities. *'The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is highly successful and outstanding.'* (Ofsted 2016) The curriculum is very well managed by the Arts and Culture middle leader and SLT. The overall curriculum allows the arts to be used as a vehicle for other areas of the curriculum, including the core subjects of English and maths. The children explore different cultures through the arts across various areas of the curriculum. Just one example of this is when the Year 6 children watched a dance by a Roma couple and turned it into a visual animation using drawings and paintings. They did this with a professional animator. This also celebrated the culture and traditions of the large Roma community we have at Beech Hill, linking in well with their topic of 'On the Move' which looks at refugees. They then produced fantastic pieces of writing to go with the animation which had emotional and intrinsic value for lots of our children.

Moving forward, we intend to share this model of using arts and culture as a stimulus and basis for whole topic planning with the school within our MAT to raise standards and drive progress.

Strength: Our Artists in Residence

We are now in the fourth year of working in partnership with our AIRs. This is a massive strength

because the skill levels for all the arts subjects have improved dramatically as demonstrated through entertaining productions throughout and at the end of the year, creative dance performances by each year group, high quality visual and 3d art displayed around school, musical knowledge (including vocabulary and skills such as rhythm and pulse) and an extensive poetry repertoire across all year groups. Staff are being upskilled through lesson participation and twilight CPD. It also provides our children with the opportunity to work with an arts professional year on year.

We will share this model with our MAT and invite their staff to participate in CPD with these specialists in order to upskill, increase knowledge and raise standards in the arts subjects. We hope to have one of our AIRs working within the school before the end of the year.

Signed by Headteacher

Signed by Chair of Governors