



**Centre:** Staffordshire Library Service Arts Award centre

**Adviser(s):** Terry Heath

## Context

Staffordshire library Service used Arts Award Discover and Explore as a way of encouraging children to expand their knowledge of the various art forms through fun activities with professional support, and to showcase the library resources available within Staffordshire with the aim of attracting new visitors. The programme was delivered in Cannock Library during October half term 2013.

All the activities were designed to be inclusive and to appeal to the fourteen children aged 5 to 13. Most of the children had an interest in drawing and Arts Award was considered an ideal way for them to expand their knowledge in other art forms.

## Approach

Arts Connect, the local Bridge Organisation, provided the funding for Arts Award adviser training. The funding also inspired the libraries to explore ways of delivering the Arts Award programme through a mixture of professional artist support and local interest and enthusiasm.

The events were promoted to all the local schools, Youth Groups, Arts Development Officers as well as local advertising within the libraries. Press releases went out to the local papers. The libraries hoped for a group of 20 children but felt that some parents were put off by the time commitment required over the week.

Activities were run by library staff and a range of arts partners who the children researched for Part B of their awards. Taking part activities [Part A] included:

- Shoo Rayner introduced Storytelling, Cartooning and Illustration and encouraged the children to recreate cartoon characters and old masterpiece paintings using templates and a range of colouring materials. They responded to famous paintings by adding thought or speech bubbles or acting out the scene, which was a great way to learn about pictures.
- Children explored costumes from the Staffordshire Museum Service and discussed the range of fabrics and textiles used. They painted a Picasso type design on a mug using porcelain pens and designed a mask using a range of materials. Research was undertaken on Picasso to help them select designs for the mugs and masks.

- 'Take a hint' Theatre Company performed a play based upon children's literature and famous characters from children's novels. The children (and parents!) were then encouraged to participate in a drama workshop.

Photos were taken of all the activities and added to the children's portfolios.

To enable the children to share their portfolios with other children and parents and present what they have learned, a small party was organised accompanied by French Cafe music. The children were also able to show their work to Janene Cox, Commissioner for Tourism and the Cultural County in Staffordshire, and Mike Lawrence, the Cabinet Member for Communities, Culture and Localism in Staffordshire.

## Impact

All the organisations worked with were very interested in Arts Award and showed an interest in developing closer links with the scheme in the future. The children asked if they were able to do more sessions and some of them took Shoo Rayner books home to read. Others were excited about visiting the Museum Service to see what else it has to offer.

One parent said that her son had now started to draw and paint at home where he had previously shown little interest in doing so. Two children sent the adviser a personal thank you card stating how grateful they were that he had volunteered to run Arts Award.



*Photos taken by Arts Award adviser Terry Heath Award adviser Terry Heath*