



Centre: Civic Arts Centre

Context

The Civic Arts Centre is a thriving community arts centre and theatre in Oswaldtwistle, Lancashire. The centre has been delivering Arts Award for over three years and has so far taken 150 young people through to moderation. At the Civic, young people have the opportunity to take part in a wide range of art forms including music, dance, drama, new media and technical production.

At the heart of Civic Arts Centre's mission is the belief in the power of theatre to enhance and enrich lives, and a commitment to do so through a range of artistic activities, opportunities, projects and engagement with the community. Arts Award helps them to achieve this mission.

The centre offers young people opportunities to progress through all Arts Award levels from Discover to Gold at their own pace, supporting them at each step of the way.

Approach

Project Theatre Company is an approach to Silver and Gold Arts Award delivery set up by the Civic which supports groups of young people to take part. Running alongside this initiative are a number of additional Arts Award sessions enabling individuals to get involved in all levels throughout the year.

In 2015, Project Theatre Company gave 16 young people aged 12 to 18 the opportunity to learn how a professional show is created and how to run a theatre company. The centre provided training with industry professionals for participants to learn about a chosen role within the company. These skills then enabled them to create an in-house theatre company at the Civic Arts Centre.



To complete Silver Unit 1, young people aim to create every aspect of a working theatre company. Each young person develops their art form knowledge and understanding by choosing a specific role to challenge them and by learning new skills within that role, including: stage manager, marketing manager, photographer, theatre director, script writer, choreographer, make-up artist, sound and lighting designer/technician. Those who have already completed the Bronze Award are asked to apply to the

project, and the successful applicants are invited to interview, providing the young people with vital interview practice and training.

Participants go on theatre trips so they can witness their roles first hand in a professional setting. As part of this experience, the group had the privilege of taking part in a Q&A session with world famous choreographer, Mathew Bourne. Two of Mathew's dancers then ran an intense workshop with the group to show them how the Bourne productions are created. As part of developing their understanding of the arts sector, the Civic also helps young people to arrange work experience placements.

Young people working towards the Silver and Gold Awards apply the skills they have gained during Unit 1 to create a huge variety of performances as part of their Unit 2 arts leadership project. They audition other young people to take part, run rehearsals and host a final showcase event.

The nature of this approach means that no two participants will have the same experience, and the programme will always have different outcomes depending on the individual.

Each week the Civic runs drop in sessions to look at portfolios and help young people with their plans, they also work one to one with a number of participants.

Impact

The introduction of Project Theatre Company at the Civic has provided young people with a pathway to progress through the Arts Award levels. It supports young people working at different levels to work together and share their experiences and skills. The initiative has also enabled the centre to engage more fully with local schools, offering a clear framework of delivery beyond Bronze.

One 14 year old participant who lacked confidence in writing and articulating herself, wrote and produced a 20 minute play as part of the Silver Award, a major personal achievement for her.

'The sixteen young people who took part in the latest Arts Award project have benefited hugely from completing their Silver and Gold Awards. They have gained skills, experience and confidence that will make them more employable in the future, so they can pursue a career in the Arts.'

Gayle Knight, Arts Award adviser and Creative Director

Comments

'Our last journey was with a young six year old boy who found it particularly

difficult participating in art activities with others. He overcame this to successfully complete the Discover certificate and is now a regular arts activity member. We believe overall our Arts Award programme has had a huge impact on the young people using our centre.'

Gayle Knight, Arts Award adviser and Creative Director

'We're proud of our Arts Award programme. It helps young people achieve a qualification whilst enjoying themselves at the Civic.'

Bill Highton, Chair of Hyndburn Arts Trust

'I love doing Arts Award. My school were impressed that I have achieved Gold through the Civic'.

Trinity, 12, Gold Arts Award achiever

'I'm proud of my daughter. She loves being creative at the Civic'.

Anne Marie Moss, parent

September 2015



Project Theatre Company Arts Award participants