



## Centre: Queen Elizabeth School Good Practice Centre 2015-2016

### Context

Queen Elizabeth School (QES) is a secondary academy in Carnforth, Lancashire. With over three years experience delivering Arts Award from Bronze to Gold levels, they offer students opportunities to try a wide range of art forms including music, dance, drama, design and photography.

The young people that take part in Arts Award at QES range from Years 7 to 12, with mixed abilities and interests. Students are taught art and drama during their first three years at school and can then opt in or out of subjects when they move into Year 10. Many begin the Arts Awards journey because they feel they don't have enough time in their favourite creative subject on the timetable and have a desire to do more in their spare time.

Students support each other and enjoy working together at QES. Their interest and passion for the arts, mixed with the sharing and social aspect that the Arts Award sessions provide, motivates participants. Many students live in rural locations and Arts Award provides them with the chance to form new friendships and improve their communication skills.

### Approach

Young people choose their own art form to focus on for their award. This allows them to research and try things they may not have otherwise been able to. At the Arts Award club, students taking part in different levels of the award are mixed together, creating an integrated approach to delivery. Gold participants often provide advice and help for those doing Silver, who then support the Bronze group.

Having been inspired by a visit to the National Comic Book Event at the Brewery Arts Centre in Kendal, a Gold participant created a comic book drawing group as part of her Unit 2 leadership project. She worked alongside school library staff and other students to recruit, teach and support other young people at the school, who then displayed their art work in an exhibition.

The same student is now the Arts Award Representative for QES. In this role, she promotes the award and the benefits it has to students in their wider learning. Her role has helped her become part of the school's prefect team by giving her confidence and problem solving skills. She has said that her Arts Award journey from Bronze to Gold has been life changing and has shaped the person she is today.

In order to provide students with experience of arts organisations, QES has formed a relationship with Live at LICA based at Lancaster University, Nuffield Theatre. This partnership provides opportunities for young people to explore the arts, visit an arts venue, witness live theatre, display their work, and take part in Q and A sessions with artists.

In the past, QES has worked with the Brewery Arts Centre which offered training opportunities for Gold participants as well as arts events for Bronze and Silver students.

## Impact

The impact that Arts Award has on participants is evident at all levels. The confidence, interpersonal skills and art form knowledge that they develop by taking part in Arts Award is considered by many teachers to support wider curriculum learning. A large number of Arts Award students have gone on to pursue creative courses at university and college.

Rachael is in Year 12 at QES, and completed the Gold Award in 2014. Rachael often suffers from panic and self doubt and was able to overcome this through her Gold project. Her passion is performing and she has said that the workload for the Gold Award helped prepare her for the A Level journey. She became a much more confident person and is now passing these skills on to others in the QES Arts Award community.

In 2015, QES were invited to talk about Arts Award and share their work at an event at the Lowry in Manchester. Students Imogen and Florence shared their stories and experiences with the audience, confidently delivering presentations about the impact of Arts Awards on their lives. Both girls have completed the Bronze Award and are working towards the Silver Award. Before taking part in Arts Award, both had been extremely shy and nervous in social situations. Speaking at the event showed how far they had developed their skills and self esteem.

Reflecting on her own experience as an adviser, Laura Shepherd, teacher of theatre arts and community says: *'Arts Award allows me to get to know young people in my school, it helps me understand their interests, to stay in touch with technology and develop my skills as a facilitator and educator.'*

## Comments

*'Arts Awards at QES is more than just an after school club. It is a holistic, creative experience that links so many different events, subjects and people together. Working alongside professional arts organisations ensures that not only exceptional experiences are had but also real theoretical art form knowledge is developed. Arts Award is a large part of our educational establishment here at Queen Elizabeth School.'*

**Laura Shepherd, teacher of theatre arts and community.**

*'I can honestly say, Arts Award has been one of my best experiences. It has made me more confident as a person and an artist, which I think is a very important value that has helped me in and out of Arts Award.'*

**Imogen, Bronze Arts Award achiever.**

*'Arts Award has definitely helped my self confidence and creativity. It's a really fun way to spend Thursday afternoons and I feel like it's helped with my effort in lessons as well as its given me a sense of the effort and standard of work needed to do a good job, and progress in later life.'*

**Florence, Bronze Arts Award achiever.**

*September 2015*