



Centre: Staffordshire Library Service Arts Award Centre

Arts Award Good Practice Centre 2015-16

Context

Staffordshire Library Service Arts Award Centre is made up of public libraries in Cannock and Rugeley, Staffordshire. Together they offer Arts Award through targeted projects based at libraries and linked to local schools and community organisations in the area.

Staffordshire Library Service has been delivering Arts Award for two years and has so far put forward 86 young people for Discover, Explore and Bronze Arts Award. Their Arts Award model is led by the young people themselves and their projects are all done in a fun and relaxed setting.

Approach

Bronze is delivered through the annual Staffordshire Young Teen Fiction Award (YTF). YTF is aimed at Key Stage 3 pupils, aged 11 to 14, who live or go to school in Staffordshire, or who use Staffordshire Library Services. It is an opportunity for young people to read an assortment of fiction published in the preceding 12 months and nominate titles they have enjoyed. Schools that set up YTF Clubs can put themselves forward for their annual YTF Celebration Day in July where their club will champion one of the shortlisted book titles through some form of performance on the day. They work with schools to target young students they feel would benefit from being involved. They have several initial meetings with the young people to explain what they will need to do, the level of commitment required, what support they will need both personally and as a group and to go through the parts of Arts Award. The group are then supported on a day-to-day basis by the school librarian and have weekly reader development meetings and workshops with Arts Award advisers.

The young people used a mixture of approaches in creating their portfolios, including the Arts Award Bronze log book. The group also kept diaries and a folder to keep handouts in. They made great use of video and audio (recorded via mobile phone or iPad), blogging and online photo collages. Artsbox proved a useful tool for uploading and sharing evidence.

The YTF project for Bronze Arts Award was funded through public funding from Arts Council England; this covered the costs of engaging artists to work with the young people and moderation fees.

Impact

Using Arts Award is a strong framework for the centres creative programmes of work. Arts Award has helped the centre to secure external funding to run projects with a wide range of young people in their area. A young man in Year 5 took part in their Arts Award Explore project had a history of being disruptive at school and had been excluded from his previous schools. He attended the library on a class visit and although he demonstrated intelligence he was unwilling to engage. Staffordshire Library got him involved in an 'arts wall' project where he worked with a group of young people and a local urban artist to decorate a disused concrete wall adjacent to some local garages. As a result of this project, his behaviour and engagement at school improved dramatically and he finished primary school with Level 6s in his SATs and a place at the local grammar school. He is now starting to work on his Silver Arts Award with the library and aims to train as a police officer. His mother now brings his younger siblings to the library and they recently took part in Arts Award Discover as a family.

Comments

'I originally became an Arts Award adviser because it was part of CPD for my role, however, I quickly became completely obsessed by it and have gone on to train at all levels and embed it in as much of our delivery as possible. Delivering Arts Award is an amazing experience because of how diverse and accessible the programme is and how much it can contribute to the development of young people of all ages.'

Liz Gardener, Arts Award adviser, Staffordshire Libraries Arts Award Centre

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