

Final Evaluation Report for Inspiring Young Artists Project

September 2023



Phase 1

We invited expressions of interest from primary schools to take part in the programme. Working with data from National Museums Liverpool, we then selected 10 primary schools who have historically not connected with the Walker Art Gallery at all, and some of those had not visited any NML site in the last 3 years. We also ensured a geographical spread across the city, focussing on areas of deprivation, including: Speke, Everton, Kensington and Norris Green. We held an online briefing session to explain the project and its requirements.

Our Arts Award Assessor produced log books for the pupils to record their journey through the programme and these were printed and delivered to the schools. They were also given an online version should they need to print more. This proved useful late in the day when one school had a change of a member of staff and the original log books could not be located.

We advertised the project across the Liverpool Cultural Education Partnership contacts and asked for expressions of interest from illustrators and artists who specialise in portraits. These were then interviewed and we selected 8 as suitable to work on this project. Information about the artists was then shared with the schools so they could decide who to commission.

Phase 2

In January/early February, the pupils went on visits to Central Library where they saw the John James Audubon, *Birds of America*. They also saw exclusive works from the library's archive and spent some time in Discover, looking at illustrations in children's books. The second part of the day was spent visiting the Walker Art Gallery where staff took them on tour of the paintings and did a workshop with them focussing on women artists. We did not, in the end, link in with the Kate Pankhurst book as timings could not be accommodated.

All of the ten schools took part in the visits and there were several very positive comments and photographs on social media.

Schools invoiced LLP for their transport costs and for £300 for art materials to use as the project progressed. All schools submitted their invoices.

Phase 3

The ten schools all selected two artists to come into school each to deliver a half day workshop with the pupils. It was suggested to the schools that they selected one painter and

one illustrator. Most of this activity took place in March-May, with all of those visits completed by half term at the end of May. Schools then selected one of the artists to commission for further work, leading towards the display at The Walker in July. All of the artists were linked in with staff from the Walker to discuss space for displaying the pupils' artwork. As space was limited, LLP undertook to post the work online.

For the second half of the summer term, schools worked with their chosen artists on their individual pieces of work. Interestingly, some artists seem to resonate strongly with the pupils, so one artist is, for example, working with four of the schools on their final pieces of work. This artist also worked on Brave New World with secondary pupils.

The budget allowed for online follow up work as well as a whole day in school, but again, schools have adapted this as some preferred another physical session which the artists have been able to accommodate. One school found a whole day was too much for the pupils and opted for shorted sessions which impacts the budget slightly.

Phase 4

We asked schools to have the evidence for the Arts Award verification by the end of June. The logbooks were collected from the schools for assessment. Our Arts Award Assessor then assessed the work and submitted the entries for the Discover Awards before the end of term. Originally, we estimated 300 children would gain an Discover Arts Award and we submitted 278 entries. A few pupils did not complete their award due to absence or even moving schools.

Phase 5

We hosted a celebration event on July 11th, using the World Museum and the Walker for this. Six of the schools attended the event as it was close to the end of term and other school functions. Transport was also difficult to arrange due to end of term trips/availability of buses, etc. The pupils had an opportunity to reflect on their Discover Journey as well as try their hand at badge making, book design and other arts and crafts. Colleagues from the library came with books and comics for the pupils to take home. Then, in smaller groups the pupils and staff went to the art gallery to see their work displayed. This was a fantastic experience for the pupils and their delight was evident for all to see. The Walker displayed the art work for two weeks so families could visit to see the pieces in situ.

The project as it developed

An overview of the project can be seen on the Wakelet here:

https://wakelet.com/wake/rVPGcQyfx2ufDeeC_L16c

This is a compilation of social media insights from the schools and artists involved. The Liverpool Learning Partnership website has a larger collection of the pupils' work as well as other collected photographs from the celebration event and the art exhibition at the Walker: www.liverpoollearningpartnership.com/inspiring-young-artists

Project expenditure

The project largely ran to budget, though costs for the celebration event were more than anticipated due to the work needed to display the children's work and needing to use a second venue due to space constraints. LLP has absorbed this additional cost. The funding from Sister Gwen Appleton Trust is underspent by £150. A spreadsheet detailing all the expenditure against budget is attached for reference.

General evaluation

This was an ambitious project, covering 10 schools and up to 300 primary aged pupils. All the schools engaged well with the project, though changes in art leaders did, at times, interrupt the momentum of the project. The range of artists selected was appreciated by schools. Interestingly, some artists proved very popular with the schools and ended up with a few schools commissioning them to complete the final artwork. This indicated that the profile artists themselves shared with schools had a bearing on who was selected. Online presence, previous school experience and past project experience of this sort were examples cited for the choice of artist.

At the celebration event, the pupils were asked for comments on the project. Some posts included:

I enjoyed the art and I learned to be patient

I really enjoyed learning how to draw a portrait with Tina (one of the artists)

Art is fun for everyone

I liked doing the research about art

When you make a mistake you can make it better

I found out that graffiti is fun

It can take months to finish something so don't give up

The key in life is to be successful and to do that, you need to have confidence in yourself

The artists have inspired me to have resilience

I learned not to give up and how to make different tones and how to blend colours

I learned to create different moods by drawing pictures in a story

I loved seeing my work displayed in the gallery

The logbooks all the pupils completed showed some real insights into their journey as young artists. These children are only 7-10 years old. For example, one pupil commented: 'my

favourite part of the workshop was painting and trying to get the perfect skin tone by mixing different colours. I also learned how to go round facial features so they stand out.' Another wrote; 'The artist inspired me by showing us how to draw everything step by step and not to give up. I realised I could do it.'

Having a celebration event at the end of the summer term was not conducive to full attendance as schools have many competing pressures at that time of year. The project was constrained by timings: the availability of display space; the scheduling of artists, etc. However, the partnership working between National Museums Liverpool, Central Library, Liverpool Learning Partnership and the 10 schools was strong. As there are existing relationships, it was relatively easy to coordinate the project.

Hosting the artwork at the Walker was a definite highlight for the children and schools. Having visited the gallery early on in the project and had a workshop which looked at famous artists and their work, the pupils were inspired. Then, seeing their work in that same space was exciting and moving. The look on their faces when they first saw their work was memorable. One of the artists, present on the day, commented on how proud she was of the young people she had worked with.

The cost effectiveness of this project is evident. 278 pupils will achieve a Discover Arts Award at the end of the project. If this were the only benefit of the project, it breaks down to £75 per pupil, which is good value. Yet this project did far more: it enabled every child to work with two artists, one over a sustained period of time, they visited the Walker and Central Library, seeing works seldom on display. They attended a celebration event and saw their work on display in the Walker over a two week period. Looked at in this way, the cost of the project was very small in comparison with all that it delivered.

Liverpool Learning Partnership and the schools it serves are very grateful to the Trustees of the Sister Gwen Appleton Trust for their support in this and previous projects. Their generosity has made a significant difference in the lives of children and young people, introducing them to the world of art and creativity in a dynamic and engaging way.

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