



EVALUATION REPORT

2020



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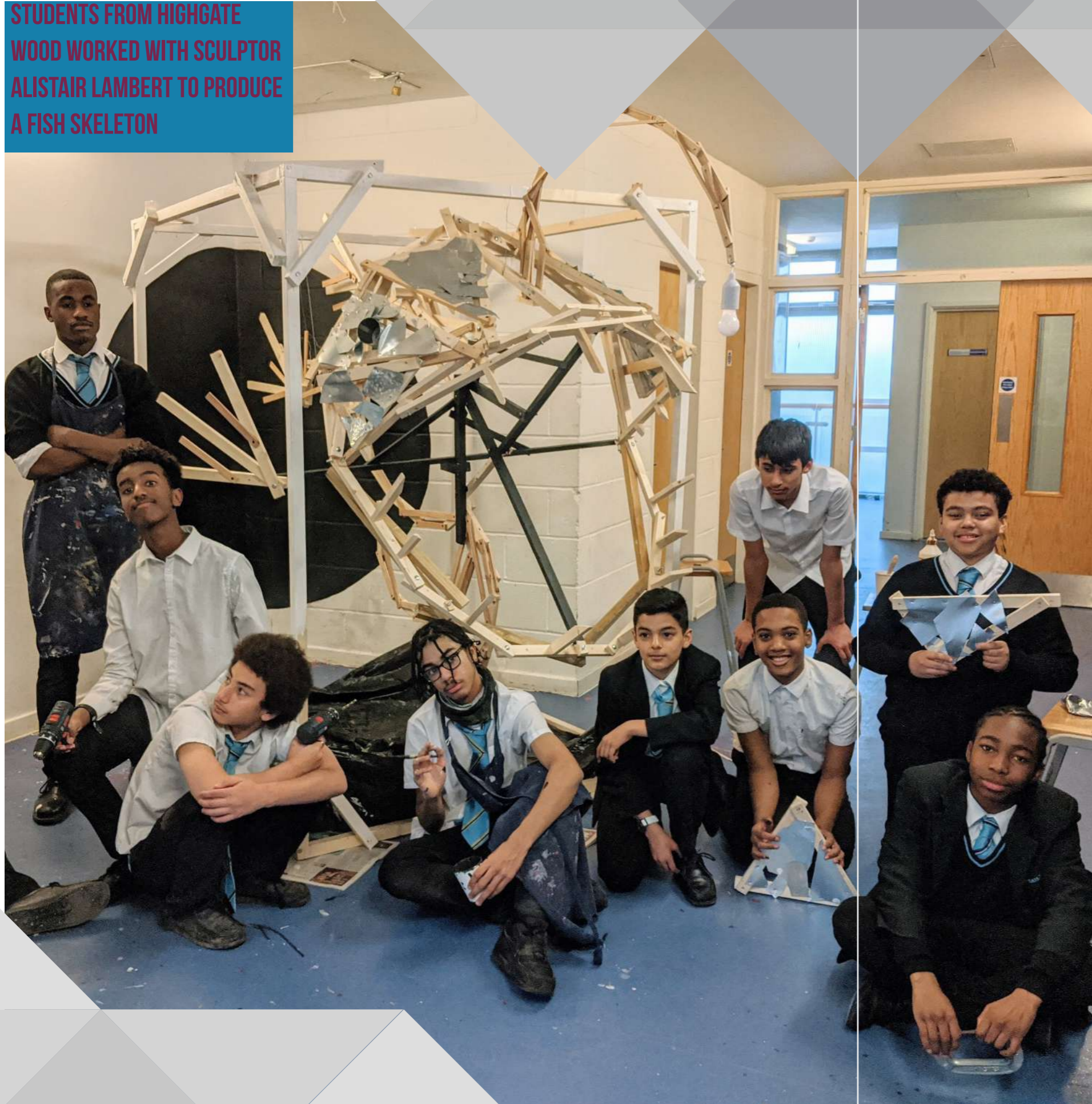
EVALUATION REPORT 2020

Artists in Residence

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STUDENTS FROM HIGHGATE WOOD WORKED WITH SCULPTOR ALISTAIR LAMBERT TO PRODUCE A FISH SKELETON



THE HUMAN RIGHT TO CREATE

AiR has established a transformative national offer of arts education delivered through a series of intensive residencies in which artists partner with a school to directly address specific learning ambitions.

AiR helps to co-design a residency project that meets the needs of individual schools and students, offering a chance to develop practical artistic skills and also offers an insight into what a career in the arts may look like.

Executive Summary

Over two academic years - 2018-2020 - AiR has worked with 3245 young people. By partnering with 32 schools and 195 teachers, the programme has offered projects of very high quality, drawing on the skills and capacities of 39 artists from a wide variety of specialist backgrounds.

AiR has an approach which is predicated on two important aspects. First, it takes the time to understand the ambitions and existing capacities of applicant schools. Second, it thoughtfully and purposefully pairs each with artists who bring an appropriate blend of skills and experience to meet the school's specific needs.

While the impact of Covid-19 disrupted delivery somewhat in 2020 there is enough monitoring and evaluation data across both years to be confident that AiR is making a positive difference to young people. It is doing so in the following ways:

- Improving the repertoire of creative pedagogies available in schools.
- Modelling creative skills and capacities through artist led projects which teachers can relate to and learn from.
- Unleashing the creative ambitions of young people related to the arts and creative industries.
- Helping schools begin the process of establishing and embedding arts rich curricula in sustainable ways.
- Illustrating the power of the arts to help improve student's attitudes to learning and overall sense of purpose within school settings in terms of specific arts and creative skills, accelerating young people's development.



STUDENTS PRACTICE SCREEN PRINTING

Introduction 04

Scale and Scope of AiR 06

Impact and Effect of AiR 08

Method and Approach 09

The 'Wow' Factor 09

The Learning Culture 11

'Character education' and wider 12

associated benefits of the arts

New repertoire of learning and 14

skills development

Creative skills and capacities 16

Legacy and sustainability 18

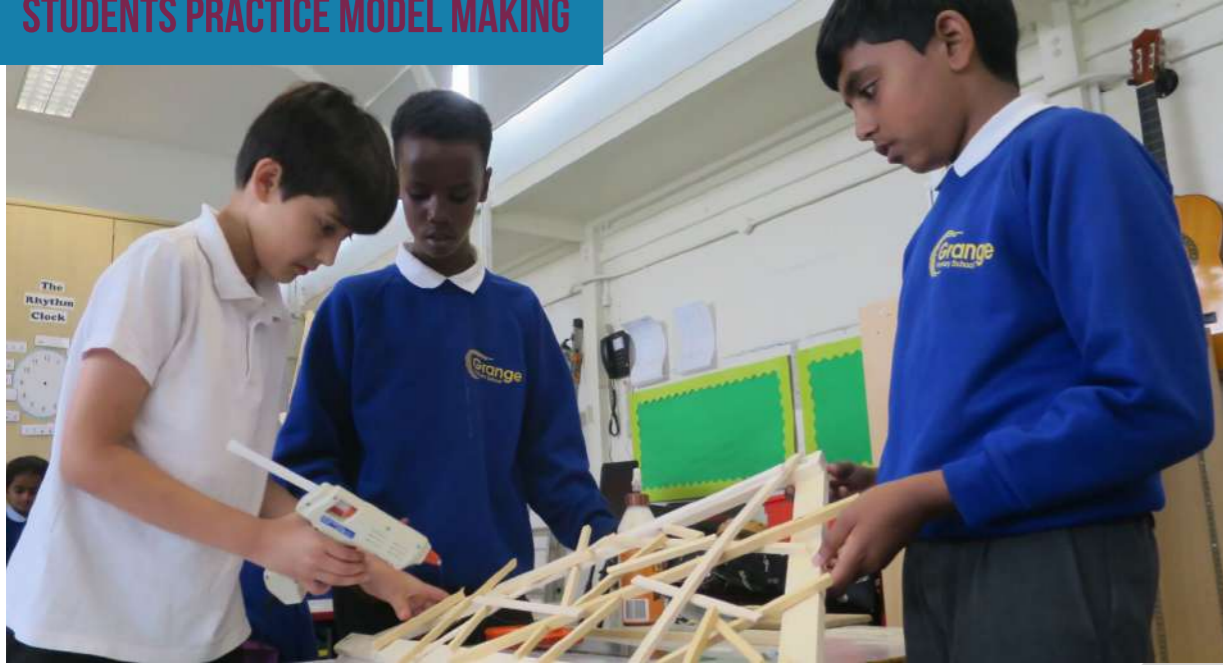
Conclusions and 20

Recommendations

References 22

Appendices 23

STUDENTS PRACTICE MODEL MAKING



Introduction

AiR (Artists in Residence) facilitates bespoke projects led by high-quality artists, adopting a residency model with schools across the UK. AiR seeks to help schools improve their art curriculum by connecting them with artists to co-design a residency project that meets the needs of individual schools and students. These residencies not only offer the students a chance to develop practical artistic skills but offer an insight into what a career in the arts may look like. Students are not the only ones to benefit from the residencies as they are also a great opportunity for teachers' professional development and help to raise the profile of the arts within the school.

As well as improving the art curriculum AiR also nurtures creative capacities, seeking to encourage ways of working and learning that unlock the potential of young people to drive their own development through curiosity, imagination, persistence, discipline and collaboration.

The objectives of AiR are to bring Artists into schools:

- To inspire young minds to explore pathways and progressions to a career within the creative and cultural industries.
- To raise the status and value of the Creative Arts in Education
- To create opportunities for the creative and cultural industries to work with schools
- To support schools to offer an enriching Arts Curriculum.

Over the past 2 years AiR has created bespoke residencies for schools which have covered a wide range of arts practices and which aimed to engage children and enhance the learning environment they work in. AiR facilitates partnerships between schools and artists from a variety of professions within the creative sector, which include; architecture, fine arts (painting, sculpture etc) and crafts, design (product, graphic and fashion etc), film, tv, video, radio and photography, literary arts (poetry, spoken word), music, performing, theatre visual arts and dance.

The work that AiR undertakes of course sits within a wider context. As teachers, governments and industrial sectors debate how to change education in ways that make it truly fit for purpose it has frequently become the case that the idea of making young people more creative seems a turnkey proposition.

However, what that means in practice is complicated. Most education systems are still beholden to regimes of accountability that foreground tests and external inspections as a means of judging success. So, while the everyday rhetoric is often positively disposed toward creativity, finding ways to value it within education is an altogether different proposition. All too often schools can feel pulled in competing directions, yoked to modes of knowledge transmission and fact-driven learning based on pedagogies of memorisation and exam skills while wanting to build capacities and skills within students that will help them in their further studies and in the world of work, but which are more difficult to measure.

In some respects, mobilisation of artists and the values associated with the arts and creative practice mirror longstanding debates about the purpose of education writ large. In many respects the parameters of such debates are based on strategic questions of what kinds of organisations schools are. Those that seek to inculcate creativity within learners also take care to build qualitatively different sorts of relationship between learners and teachers which in turn raise questions about identity, authority and the agency of young people in shaping their own futures.

AiR understands the arena into which its projects enter and know that in order for their impacts to be transformative there has to be a combination of two things: high quality interventions with talented artists modelling creative behaviours and a commitment from schools to build on such skills within the context of their overall learning strategies and philosophy. For this reason, the capacity of the school to leverage the benefits the AiR project can bring is very important. Therefore, AiR seeks applications from schools with appropriate vision and mindset that will enable the 'wow factor' AiR offers to kick-start a longer-term engagement with the arts and creative practice. The schools who participate seek to use AiR as momentum for ongoing development or a catalyst for new ways of working.

This evaluation report summarises the scale and scope of such activity and the range of impacts within participating schools to date, focusing on data gathered from 2018-2020.



STUDENTS ATTENDING AN ILLUSTRATION WORKSHOP

Monitoring Data - Scale and Scope of AiR 2018-2020

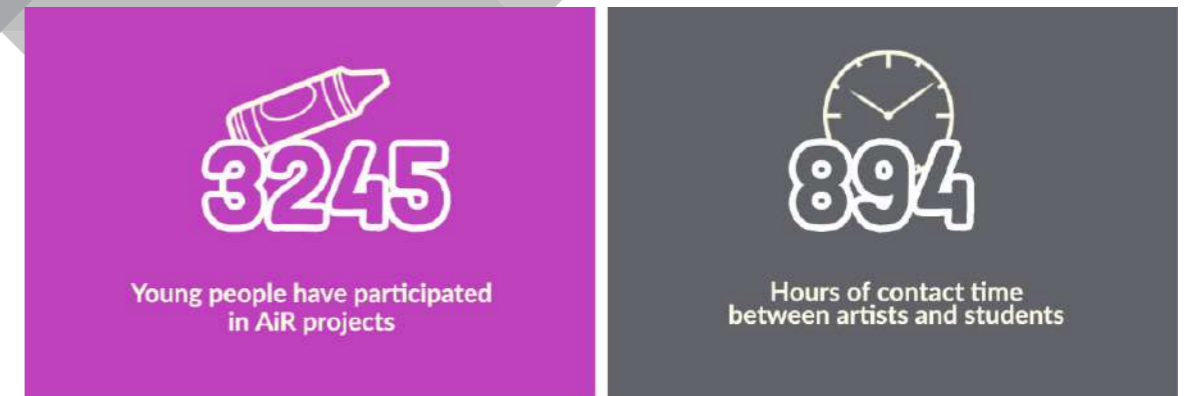
- 3245 young people have participated in AiR projects.
- 37 schools have worked strategically with AiR to welcome artists into their settings.
- In total 47 projects were completed. Some schools worked on more than one project.
- 195 teachers have benefited from professional development via AiR projects.
- 39 artists have been deployed to work in partnership with teachers.

AiR has worked with a significant number of schools and young learners over the 2 years it has been operating. Monitoring data tells us that over 2018-19 a total of 23 schools were participants in the AiR programme, co-creating programmes which reached 1777 young people. In 2019-20, with the academic year interrupted by Covid-19 and the associated lockdown, 14 settings participated, and 1468 young people took part.

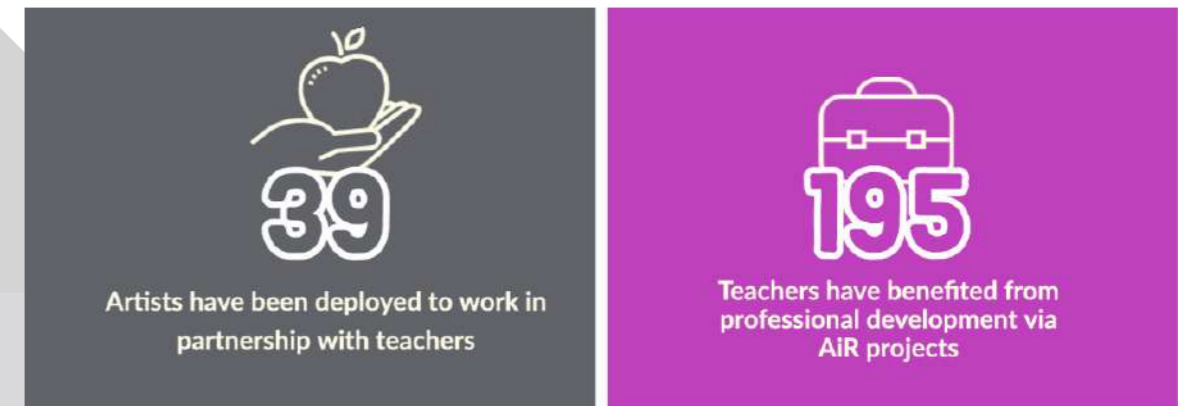
In terms of staff development, teachers engaging in CPD over 2018-19 numbered 123, and over 2019-20 a total of 72 were involved. This is an important aspect of the programme in terms of future legacy and so it is encouraging to see such high levels of teacher engagement. When asked if the curriculum offer was enhanced or if the project benefitted teacher development, across the 2 years of activity, respondents suggested that these were the two areas of greatest impact, another sign that AiR's approach can offer more than short term effects.



Other programmes operating in the arts education field, such as Artsmark for example, are predicated on principles of schools reshaping their curriculum and upskilling teachers. Artsmark operates over a 2-year cycle. It is interesting to see that teachers are reporting similar types of impact in relation to AiR and it would be interesting in the future to probe further how some of these schools embed and sustain lessons learned from visiting artists.



SCALE AND SCOPE OF AIR 2018-2020



Artists who have led residencies have brought specialisms into school ranging from sculpture to dance to textiles. Over the two years AiR has been operating; 39 different artists and/or arts organisations have engaged in work with schools, each artist reflecting in their own way the strategic and educational demands of their partner setting.

While teachers and staff engaging with CPD may devote time to extending activities and embedding new practices after the AiR project is over, the total number of contact hours, where artists were directly working with young people totalled 894 over 102 separate sessions from 2018-2020. This represents a significant investment of time and real additional value for young people engaging face to face with professional artists.

While AiR does not set rules around the numbers of young people eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) directly participating in projects (instead favouring an approach where schools identify the aims and priorities for each project based on their respective needs) it is interested in the percentage of children on roll who qualify for FSM and thereby who may indirectly benefit from AiR after the life of the project. On average 45% of pupils across all participating schools in 2018-19 were eligible for FSM, and in 2019-20 the figure was 42%. This suggests AiR is selecting schools where children from less advantaged backgrounds will potentially benefit, either through direct participation in projects or through the legacy work their school commits to. In the future it would be interesting to pursue these forms of legacy activity and to understand in greater detail how those learners eligible for FSM are benefitting from AiR learning after the lifespan of the original project.

Evaluation Data - Impact and effect of AiR

- **AiR is effective at inspiring teachers and learners through the arts with its impactful projects that showcase new skills and techniques; it brings a 'wow factor' to schools.**
- **There are signs that AiR is beginning to help to shift the learning culture in schools through a combination of teacher practice and leadership engagement; practice is more child centred, learners feel listened to and the freedom to take risk, experiment and embrace failed attempts as opportunities to learn characterises this shift.**
- **Initial benefits to learners point to those pre-conditions for effective learning that are so important for personal development as well as future academic success – confidence, a sense of purpose, positive disposition to learning, a feeling of connection to the school and a renewed energy toward lessons.**
- **Positive changes to teacher discourse which will help to sustain impacts over time; teachers report benefits from seeing and hearing artists model different ways of engaging learners.**
- **To sustain the impacts of AiR it is important to ensure that teachers are encouraged and empowered to be active participants in the inception, planning, delivery and reflection processes related to AiR projects.**

The most important message arising from the evaluation data is that the overall assessment of AiR over the first two years of operation and based on the feedback from artist and teacher participants, is that it has been an unequivocal success.

There may be elements that can be modified in some respects, and there will always be an appetite for more input (when in reality resources will never be infinite), but the headline finding is that AiR is certainly a success in schools.

'Amazing artist, with great ideas and a real can-do attitude to making things happen; subject matter chimed well with current issues around sustainability and climate change; support from parents; sensitive to schools' needs'

Tufnell Park School, Evaluation Form Feedback

'Fantastic collaboration, students really engaged and enjoyed learning about screen printing and working on a collaborative project over two days. Sarah Pimenta was very knowledgeable, and students and staff learnt a lot. The outcome is fantastic and will take pride of place in our school hall.'

Kenton School, Evaluation Form Feedback



STUDENTS RECEIVING FINAL PRINTS OF STORY BOOKS THEY CREATED

Method and Approach

Ascertaining just how AiR has had an impact has been a twofold process.

A common set of evaluation questions are asked of all AiR participants via online questionnaires. The lead contact for the school and the pool of AiR artists are the respondents but each will reflect on their impressions of impacts on students too.

In addition, and to offset some of the anticipated disruption of the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic to AiR delivery in schools, a small number of qualitative interviews were conducted by telephone to help round out the evaluation data and to surface some of the detail of project design and delivery.

While learning points for educators may be somewhat different to those of artists, the answers to evaluation questions are also triangulated to give an overall impression of each project.

Testimony is drawn from a mixture of forms and recorded interviews and the sources are indicated below each quote.

Looking at all data sources there are some key headlines that are worth drawing out and these are set out under thematic sub-headings below.

THE 'WOW' FACTOR

AiR projects are carefully planned with impact in mind. The AiR team help make the right connections between artists and schools, matching creative skills with learner needs. Part of that process involves making interventions sufficiently different from 'business-as-usual' in order that learners feel part of something special.

There is no doubt that the AiR intervention provides a 'wow factor' for schools and learners and this initial impact of seeing different practices, alternative approaches and often very high-quality outputs in the form of artistic work is not to be underestimated. It can live long in the memory and be powerfully transformative.

Why is this important? During early formative stages of life, children of pre-school age do best and thrive throughout their schooling and into adulthood where they have the opportunity to experience integrated learning, with a range of educational and cognitive stimuli. This begins quite naturally in many homes and other social settings. As Anne Bamford (2009) has noted:

"...we sing to young children. We fill their environment with colourful and enticing imagery. Our voices and hand gestures take on distinctly dramatic and exaggerated forms when we talk to young children and parents often dance, clap and move their young children in rhythmic patterns. Universally we apply the arts to the child's learning processes...By the time young children enter school they are equipped with a range of artistic abilities and have used these to learn to walk, talk and play. Unfortunately... the value of the arts as fundamental to human existence and learning is often overlooked in formal education..." (p.147-148)

AiR projects help to reconnect school learning with many vitally important modes of engaging the intellectual curiosity of young people which are first established in non-school settings and by experiences that have a novelty value, a 'wow' factor.



FASHION DESIGNER CINTA MILLER WORKS WITH THE STUDENTS OF ALPERTON SCHOOL

'For me the real impact was around the importance of imagination, flexibility and factoring in time to allow natural inquiry to run its course. I was in the industry before I became a teacher so my understanding of that side of things was already strong. But having the stylist come in really reminded me that we can over-plan as teachers and it can shut down some fantastic learning opportunities if we are not careful. These one-off 'wow' moments can be great for teachers who already have technical skills but need a boost around how to convey them in engaging and fun ways. It is so easy to get into a routine driven by assessment, rather than quality learning. AiR was a great way to rebalance that.'
Aurora Thompson, interview response, Textiles Teacher, Alperton Community School

This tendency to plan lessons in ways that can unconsciously stifle creativity is a recurring theme in research around dominant modes of learning in contemporary education and is crystalised well in the well-known TED talk by Ken Robinson¹. Testimony such as Aurora's reminds us that a reflective teaching practitioner working alongside an Artist as part of an AiR project will likely be prompted to consider embracing risk, welcoming improvisation and tolerating uncertainty. These are important qualities to nurture within a rounded and balanced education offer and AiR offers a means of re-establishing them.

The 'wow factor' is also important in that it helps shape memorable and experiential learning. This is important because the arts and creative learning do often help create learning moments which are recalled later in terms of 'epiphanies' and help reset learning intentions and pathways for individuals. Recent research (Bowen and Kisida, 2019) which took a rigorous look at roll-out of arts education in Houston, Texas, indicates that arts-based learning can be powerful because it taps into the affective side of humanity and evokes emotions in ways that shape identity and principles for action in learning, in work and in wider society. The research – which used randomised control trials – found that a substantial increase in arts educational experiences had remarkable impacts on students' academic, social, and emotional outcomes. Relative to students assigned to the control group, treatment school students experienced a 3.6% reduction in disciplinary infractions, an improvement of 13% of a standard deviation in standardized writing scores, and an increase of 8% of a standard deviation in their compassion for others. In terms of the studies' measure of compassion for others, students who received more arts education experiences were more interested in how other people felt and were more likely to want to help people who were treated badly.

The fact that AiR is having effective impacts on young people, helping them relate their own experiences with those of others, bringing social and emotional aspects of learning to life in engaging ways bodes well for longer term outcomes, particularly where shifts towards more integrated arts curricula teacher professional development continue to be nurtured after the life of the AiR project.

¹ https://www.ted.com/talks/sir_ken_robinson_do_schools_kill_creativity

THE LEARNING CULTURE

AiR has ambitions to ensure that residencies can have lasting impact after the input from the artist is over. In order to achieve this, it is important for schools to embrace the residencies in such a way that CPD or updates to school strategy and vision are integrated. Shifts to learning culture take time and are difficult to embed within a school without high level buy-in by governors and senior leaders so we need to be careful not to overclaim for AiR in this regard. But at the same time, different learning cultures are rooted in alternative modes of teaching which in turn are characterised by markedly different discourses between teachers and students. These alternative ways of interacting are often modelled very successfully by artists and are remarked upon by teachers in evaluation feedback so the foundations for change are certainly present in the AiR model.

The ways in which learning looks and feels different through arts residencies is of potential benefit to participants on an individual level but also helps build a collective sense of togetherness and uplift through shared endeavour on worthwhile outcomes. Therefore, there is potential for learning culture to also be influenced by AiR in this way and we can see the beginnings of this shift in some teacher's feedback where they signal ambitions to continue with new ways of working:

'We already had some strengths in the arts but we also had a few less developed areas, one of which was screen printing. AiR offered us a bit of a CPD opportunity in a way. We had a two day workshop and it really passed the baton onto the teachers. The project was definitely an engagement strategy for students, they were very engaged and their interest was sparked. But it also left staff with new skills that they have been able to continue to use with real confidence and added a new technical skill to their repertoire, as well as new forms of work in student portfolios.'
Siobhan Verrall, Art Teacher, Kenton School, interview response



Sustaining these impacts is a challenge and is highly dependent on school leaders and their vision of education (Thomson and Sanders, 2009). However, where AiR is able to successfully select such schools through its application processes, the chances of longer-term success are improved.

We know how significant this 'matching' process can be from prior research. The National Foundation for Educational Research in its 2005 study 'The Arts-Education Interface: A Mutual Learning Triangle?' reminds us that ensuring school's needs and artist's capacities need to be well matched, and that children need to be part of the whole development process if benefits are to be maximised and sustained.

'This underlines the substantial benefits to be gained by ensuring that all three of the main participant groups: (i) pupils/young people/learners; (ii) teachers and schools and (iii) artists/arts organisations are fully engaged. The evidence from AEI frequently testified to the adverse consequences of omitting one side of the triangle.' (Harland et al, 2003, p.xvii)

Where AiR seems to work best it is often thanks to the active consideration and sensitivity towards matching school needs with the correct artist and ensuring that what is planned is feasible and can realistically deliver school priorities.

'What we planned with the artist was highly personalised to what we needed. We spent a lot of time thinking about what to do – I think we could have had a dance workshop at one point – lots of ideas were discussed. However, we felt textiles and screen printing really filled a skills gap for us, both for

teachers and students. I had lots of emails and phone calls with the artist, plenty of conversation and feeling our way towards an idea beforehand which really helped. She knew what we needed, and we knew, broadly speaking, what we were getting.' **Siobhan Verrall, Art Teacher, Kenton School, interview response.**

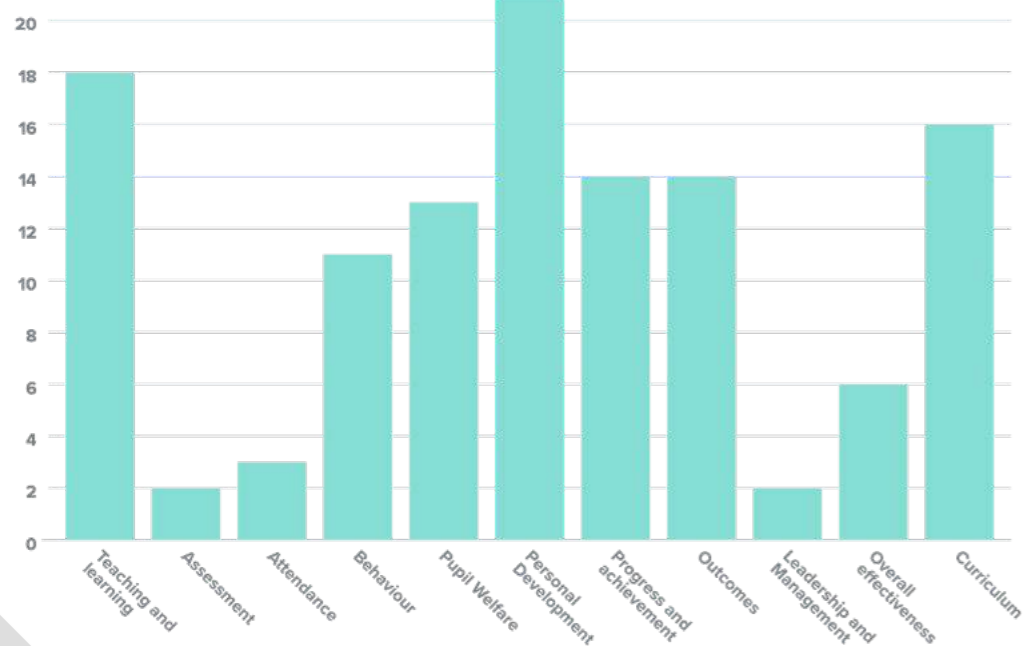
Teachers who are open to the CPD potential of AiR and are positively engaged with reflective conversations with the artists do notice shifts in the overall approach taken and this leads to deep questions around the nature of pedagogy in relation to arts development in schools.

'After the project I have sat down with English teachers, the whole department around the table, and they remark that I take a completely different approach to the text than they would. The main difference is that I am approaching it as drama, they tend to approach it as literature. But it does give them pause to think about how they are teaching Shakespeare and much that can be missed as a learning opportunity if you get too drawn into thinking of it as a book to be read, rather than a play to be performed.' **Michael Attenborough CBE, Artistic Director, interview response.**

'Character education' and wider associated benefits of arts and creative education

We know that the arts can help provide opportunities for personal growth and gains in confidence through personal expression. (Hinds, 2019) One of the most common elements in evaluation feedback from across a range of AiR projects is the immediate and noticeable impact such projects can have on the confidence and learning dispositions of the more diffident and reticent learners within cohorts.

School Improvement Impacts - AiR 2018-20



The learning culture also integrates within ambitions for school improvement and AiR is keen to engage with that agenda by asking participating schools to reflect on the ways in which resident artists can feed into relevant targets and goals. What is immediately apparent from school's responses to this

question is that three interconnected areas seem to benefit most: enhancements to pedagogy, to the curriculum offer and to personal development of participants. This speaks to the ways in which AiR projects are conceived, acting as collaborative opportunities for teachers to see alternative methods and approaches modelled, and to mobilise such opportunities through new curriculum offers.

'I became head of department 5 years ago and we wanted to build on what were already strong attainment results in the arts subjects. We wanted to maintain that, but also use the arts as a means of engagement for learners across the whole school and a selling point for the way we organise learning generally. Our headteacher – a physics teacher – could really see the value and the confidence the arts bring to our students. Attendance rates peak when students have art. It helps with behaviour. It's just a really strong central focal point within our school and helps maintain a sense of positivity and engagement with learning.' **Siobhan Verall, Art Teacher, Kenton School, interview response**

Siobhan Verall's take on why AiR was productive in her school reminds us of the importance of a school's own capacity to take on the AiR project as either a catalyst for change or as an enhancement of an already strong commitment to creative learning through the arts.

But it is also worth keeping in mind that these types of impacts are very much part of the pre-conditions for what the research literature characterises as being stepping-stones to more effective learning in a general academic sense (Verasova and Mala, 2019). Having a sense of individual confidence, feeling positive about being at school and recognising the purpose of learning as a deep process, regardless of the subject discipline in focus, is a solid foundation for later educational success.

Evaluation data suggests AiR is making a contribution to that process by creating learning opportunities that are perceived to be more purposeful, more student centred, more fun and crucially, that offer young people the chance to take risks, make mistakes, play with possibilities and generally take a chance on new ideas in ways that will be celebrated rather than judged.

Building a sense of confidence and agency among learners has a positive galvanising effect on the way young people feel about school and the relationship between learning and future pathways to higher education or careers. (Cook-Sather, 2002)

'We had sixth formers integrated in our screen printing project working as student ambassadors helping the artist mediate the skills to the Y9s, and that was a great learning opportunity for them, having to learn some new skills well enough to be able to explain them to younger learners. That was really good for their confidence and their skills development.' **Siobhan Verrall, Art teacher Kenton School, interview response**

A sense of personal aesthetic can also be reinforced by AiR projects in ways which can be transformative for young people keen to work in a creative field.

'One of my pupils who is now doing really well actually, I noticed that she really got a lot out of working on the project. I could see that she was running with concepts and ideas in a way that were more self-sustaining. Probably because of the way the artist modelled their processes, which was to push on with ideas and see where it takes you. And this pupil stopped asking me for reassurance frequently about whether or not something was good or correct, and she just took off.' **Aurora Thompson, Textiles Teacher, Alperton Community School, interview response.**

New repertoires of learning and skills development

As we have seen so far, AiR has as a primary goal the development of students' learning. It is both an immediately impactful project, but also has aspirations to build longer term change, by offering teachers and students inspirational ways to transform pedagogy. Most teachers indicated they had planned for future work that extended principles seeded through AiR projects although it is difficult to know the extent to which such plans will have been executed across all schools. Again, this would be a useful focus for longer term evaluation.

Schools approach the creativity agenda in varied ways, reflecting their own educational and social histories and contexts. This means that teachers will come at the AiR opportunity with their own start points, bringing greater or lesser degrees of theoretical and practical resource. The extent to which a school has a coherent philosophy of learning will also vary, meaning that the AiR team have to make a series of judgements about matching the right artists to the right schools.

'The children loved the sessions, they looked forward to them each week. The fact that they were working with an actual real artist supported their self-esteem, confidence and art skills. It also helped support us as a school to work with a mixture of children in a different way, seeing what they can achieve was great for us.' **Varna Community Primary School, Evaluation Form Feedback**

All teachers and artists interviewed spoke positively about AiR's capacity to do this well, or to correct where necessary.

'We had two goals really. One was to encourage underperforming boys to engage with writing and feel more positive and capable about their own abilities. Two was to have an artist model their creative skills and just act as an inspirational role model and I think with the illustration project we did it was a good match. The boys really were enthused and when they saw their completed books that was a big moment. And there is more belief in them now which the school needs to keep nurturing and sustain.' **Helen Kolowole, Art Teacher, Preston Park School, interview response.**

The ways in which AiR builds on the inculcation of individual learner confidence and positivity is driven to a significant degree by language. In all projects the artists instinctively modelled their own versions of child-centredness and this was manifest in the ways they would speak with young people, but also the ways they would listen and take note of learner viewpoints.

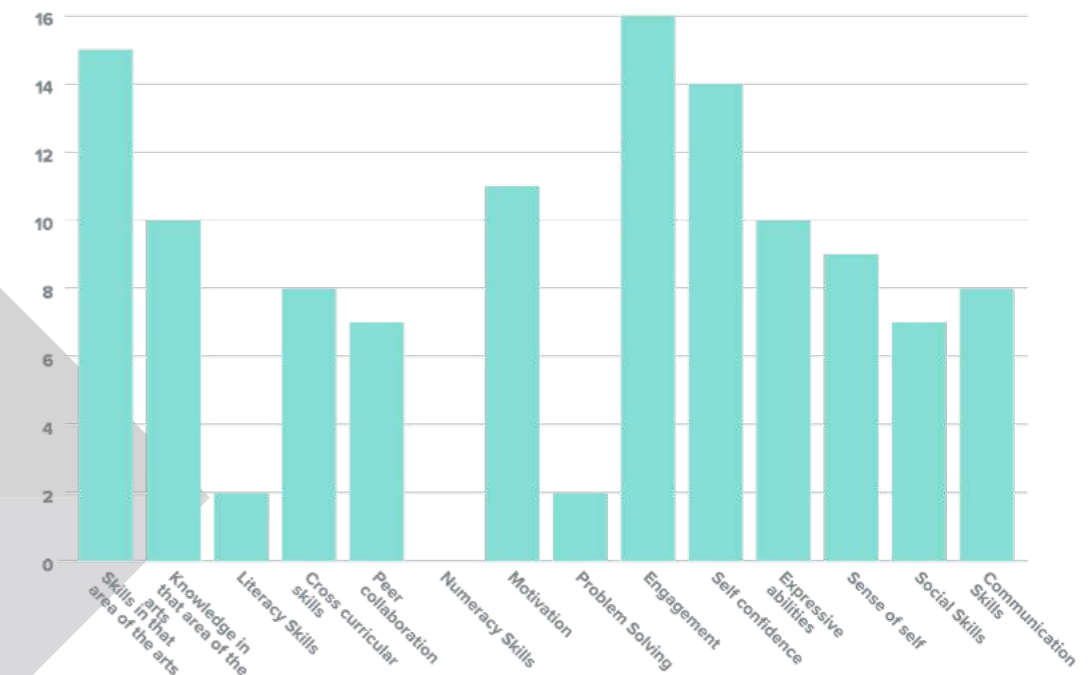


'I think my own approach works best with students who have even a spark of interest already. What I don't want to have to do is convert people. If they have an interest, however small, we can grow from that. I help to deal with their (often misplaced) fear of what they think of as elaborate language. I offer them the keys to open a door that makes Shakespeare's language infinitely easier to understand and to appreciate. They come to the realisation that this is a timeless writer who is tackling issues they care about and still have strong feelings towards. That's a process of me listening to them, hearing their own start points, and tuning those back into what Shakespeare is saying. There is a common language and we help one another with the translation across time to discover that commonality.' **Michael Attenborough, Artistic Director, interview response**

This way of working had three main effects. It helped build artform specific skills and knowledge, promoted learner engagement and boosted self-confidence, findings which are borne out by questionnaire responses below from 2018-20:

As the graph above indicates, there are immediate benefits to pupils which revolve around the affective power of the AiR intervention. Perceptual data from teachers and artists suggests the main benefits are

Range of pupil impacts - AiR 2018-20



felt in relation to practical arts and creative skills (the importance of hands-on learning), engagement (because the learning tasks are purposive, novel and out of the ordinary) and confidence (because the artists are adept at utilising modes of learning that help accelerate a pupil's sense of mastery and achievement).

One of the AiR artists, Andrew Hammond, felt that in order for creative skills to be developed it was very important from the outset to establish among the young people a sense that this learning was very much about taking a different vantage point and seeing goals or objectives through a different lens. This was a way of liberating young people to take risks, make mistakes and discover their own potential by not setting false limits.

'Trying to strip the fear away from the process of coming up with ideas is really important. I do that with children exactly the same way I would in my own practice. A lot of my work is comic based and the great thing about comics is that their parameters are absolutely defined by the capacities of the individual. The level of drawing doesn't have to be great, the level of writing range from deep philosophy right down to gags of just a few words, so we start off with free association games, then move on to build in steps toward a story, and while each person will have a different person, the process that generates their individual creativity is the same; it's about overcoming the fear of starting, and know that once you have momentum the ideas will come.' **Andrew Hammond, Illustrator, interview response.**

CREATIVE SKILLS AND CAPACITIES

During 2019-20 AiR began a process of incorporating a range of creativity focused questions throughout its evaluation processes. The idea being to elucidate some of the specific benefits accorded by this work which relate to the skills and attributes that are most associated with creative work. It is still very early in the process and the more data AiR gathers over time, the more compelling the narrative around this concept will become. For now, it is possible to say that the kinds of creative capacities AiR seeks to develop in the arts seem in a general sense to be inculcated effectively through this programme. As more time passes it may be possible to learn about the relationship between the affordances of particular artforms and the creative dispositions they help to nurture, or the different forms of pedagogy employed by artists working alongside teachers that is best suited to particular creative outcomes.

What are these creative capacities and why are they important?

The creative habits or dispositions which are integrated through the AiR approach can be learned by all children. The model AiR is using describes an approach to creativity that Anna Craft et al (2001) called "little-c creativity": the everyday capability of coming up with ideas and filtering their value in the light of experience and context. They are concepts which most teachers find agreeable and relatable to their practice which is also helpful in terms of longer-term application.

There are five dispositions which combine to describe creative modes of work or learning. They interconnect in different combinations depending on the nature of the task at hand, but comprise concepts which relate to the opening up of possibilities (Imaginative/Inquisitive) and the application of skills and knowledge to explore such possibilities (Persistence/Discipline) with an emphasis on reflecting back understanding or sharing products by working with peers (Collaboration).

If schools are to make creativity a normal aspect of pedagogical practice – a type of little 'c' creativity – then they need to think about the culture and environment they seek to create.

'My own practice, my own take on creativity, is that it starts with imagination and builds from there, but if you want to be more than just an ideas generator, chucking out scenes or characters or story ideas, then you need more than just imagination and I think that's the element perhaps the schools themselves are in a position to build on after we leave. Because I think the big impact we can have is to get past the fear of getting started on creative work but in a few days of working with young people it's harder to get into the discipline and persistence aspects.' **Andrew Hammond, Illustrator, Interview response.**

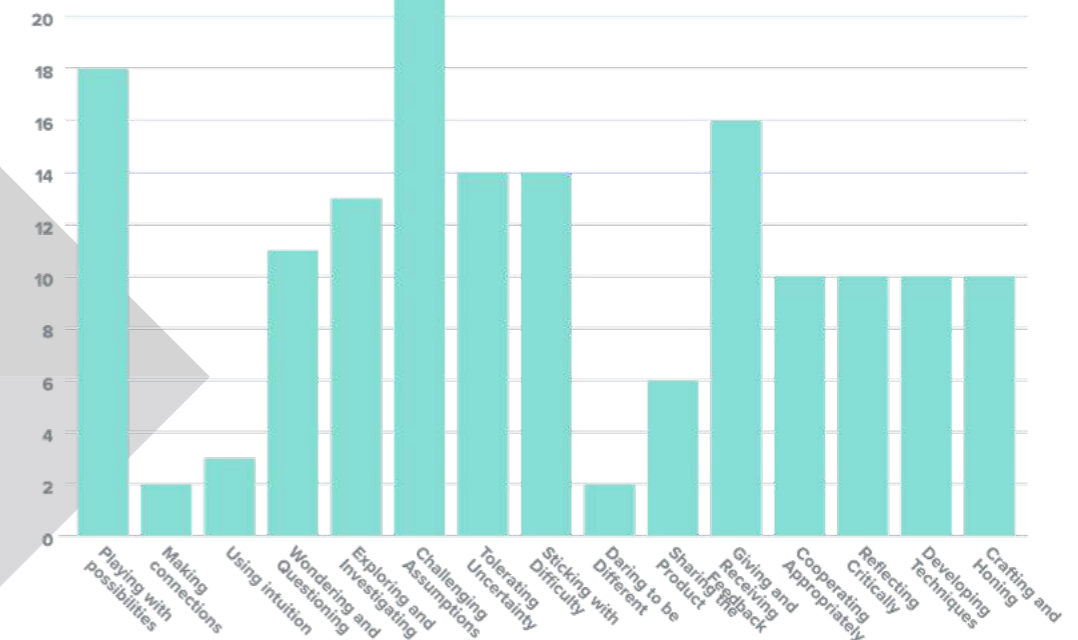
Research by Lucas, and Spencer (2017) focusing on this suite of creative capacities suggests that 10 key aspects of the classroom and staffroom ecology keep recurring and they fit very well with the AiR approach:

1. Learning is almost always framed by engaging questions which have no one right answer.
2. There is space for activities that are curious, authentic, extended in length, sometimes beyond school, collaborative and reflective.
3. There is the opportunity for play and experimentation.
4. There is opportunity for generative thought, where ideas are greeted openly.
5. There is opportunity for critical reflection in a supportive environment.
6. There is respect for difference and the creativity of others.
7. Creative processes are visible and valued.
8. Students are actively engaged, as co-designers.

9. A range of assessment practices within teaching are integrated.
10. Space is left for the unexpected.

Emerging data from AiR's 2019-20 programme which focus on these creative dispositions tell us that the programme is helping to establish learning environments more conducive to creative learning.

Creative Dispositions developed through AiR



The chart above shows some of the creative capacities which are quickest to light up through AiR projects. Given the time limited duration of the residencies it is not surprising that the creative habits most readily nurtured by AiR are related to getting creative work started (challenging assumptions and playing with possibilities). It is important to stress that AiR, unless setting up an unusually long project with many sessions, would expect to find the areas of imagination and curiosity most conducive, but that this should not prevent the participating schools from considering how they can build on the momentum the artists instil. Schools are well placed to give learners the chance to revisit some of the skills and processes introduced by AiR, to help refine, edit, craft and hone skills begun alongside an artist, but within the current of everyday school life. For this reason it is important for AiR to always consider the school's own appetite and capacity to continue some of the principles introduced through the AiR intervention.

Reflection

Considering the aggregated evaluative comments from artists and teachers – both from evaluation forms and via telephone interviews – it is possible to summarise the following attributes of AiR's approach.

1. Resetting expectation – while the usual curriculum was by no means suspended during AiR interventions, it was the case that the usual outcomes were extended to include additional areas that teachers and artists strongly felt were relevant
2. Re-evaluating contributions – there was a generosity in defining what counted as knowledge and expertise, with many artists looking more intently for student's out of school experiences as a valuable reference point or resource.
3. Experiential depth – there was often an intensity to the projects that encouraged learners to go into deeper consideration of topics, with extensive discussions and additional research leading to a granularity which was not part of their everyday learning experience.
4. Wondering and reflecting – AiR encouraged the use of pre-project planning conversations and encouraged room for 'what if' thinking and flexibility of delivery so as to allow learners to move in directions their interest took them. This openness to embracing curiosity and exploratory pedagogy was a feature of the descriptions of successful work in evaluation interviews.

One of the AiR artists, Emma Jackson, emphasised how the AiR method is really driven by an approach to creativity that is largely child-centred rather than technical, or skills driven.

'Children often can't locate themselves readily in the arts. They don't see themselves in the books they read a lot of the time. My practice is about making the arts personal to them and allowing them to situate themselves at the heart of their own creative world. So I do that through illustration and book-making, but other artists will achieve similar ends using other artforms I guess. If the activity is relatable to their lives they can see themselves as an artist, an author, whatever. It very quickly becomes real. And when it is real to them it is meaningful and that helps build the kinds of creative skills we talked about – imagination, curiosity – there is always the next thing, something else to begin. When they get the books back it's always a great moment. They're like 'Wow, I'm an author now'. And yes, they are. That is their story.' **Emma Jackson, illustrator, interview response.**

LEGACY AND SUSTAINABILITY

Throughout this short evaluation report, and in relation to all aspects of AiR's emergent success, a recurring theme has been the importance of participating schools to be able to carry forward learning and skills arising from AiR in tangible ways. Evaluation form feedback offers an indication of each school's next steps and in their variety and ambition they give a flavour of the bespoke nature of this kind of intervention. This example from Kenton School shows how AiR will link to so many of the school's current and future plans and has the potential to have a hydraulic effect on many areas of teaching and learning.

'Kenton School is currently on a two year journey to Artsmark Platinum. Year 7 have taken part in Arts Award earlier this year. Art is at the core of the curriculum with every student at KS4 taking a Creative GCSE option.

Outreach is a vital part of our development to ensure our two-year journey from Gold to Platinum Artsmark is successful. In November we devised and hosted a Creative Teach meet at Kenton called 'Creative Magpie.' Inviting 21 outstanding creative speakers from across 35 schools with over 90 creative practitioners in attendance. This was the first of its kind in the North East, the feedback was overwhelmingly positive, connecting schools throughout the region, upskilling and sharing good practice.

We see the Arts as a driving force for meaningful cross curricular learning, a key factor in raising cultural awareness, inclusion and aspiration as well as an opportunity to excite, inspire and bring learning to life.

We have developed international links to connect our students with students around the world. The Peace Crane Project - students collaborated with 3 African schools in Sierra Leone, Ghana and Cameroon. All students were awarded a Global Leaders of Peace certificate in conjunction with World Peace Day. Students entered The UNESCO 20th Anniversary Project 'Children are painting the world' international Art Competition. Caitlin in year 12 was selected to represent England and invited to Kazakhstan to take part in an international arts project and awards ceremony. Kenton Art Department featured in The UNESCO International Arts Week. Students in the department exhibited artwork in Antarctica in a climate change project with former student Grant McDonald, a Glaciologist (University of Chicago).

'To continue student's environmental involvement, we have connected with Beijing City International School to produce artwork that will be digitised and transformed into QR codes. Trees will be planted at both schools and artwork will be exhibited in a public park in Beijing. We have also collaborated with the Royal Collection at Windsor Castle. The Head of the Leonardo Da Vinci Collection skyped students for a Q&A session from Windsor Castle showing rare Da Vinci drawings and discussed STEAM concepts within the work. The team also devised a World Mental Health Day project working with NHS Mental Health Practitioners looking at art practice to support relaxation. Other successful team projects such as the Equality and Diversity installation in conjunction with Northern Pride and Stonewall. Students were involved in the 'Fly the Flag project' in conjunction with the Fly the Flag 70th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights – learning about artist activist Ai Wei Wei and human rights. Students also entered The Show Racism The Red Card Competition with a student winning a National Award.' **Kenton School, Evaluation Form Feedback**

This insight into one school's plans cannot be said to be a template for what all schools are doing. There is an infinite variety of approach and priority. However, the sense of commitment evident here is definitely shared by the majority of AiR schools. And that is absolutely vital; without a school's own sense of forward momentum AiR interventions could offer a "wow without a why", a transitory respite from usual learning which is quickly replaced by normalised pedagogies and repertoires for learning. However, because AiR is careful to select schools which show potential for longer-term commitment the impact of residencies can be more deeply felt.

Building on this process of recruiting schools and matching artists to learner/teacher need is worth continuing to refine as AiR strengthens its offer and extends its reach. It may also be worth considering a process of mapping out the principles and processes currently undertaken in highly personalised and tailored ways by the AiR team so that an AiR 'way of working' can be identified for the future and be transferable if new staff members join the team.



**STUDENTS CREATING
COLOUR WINDOWS FROM
RECYCLED PLASTIC**

Conclusions and Recommendations

It is still relatively early for AiR as an intervention; it has been operational for two years, one of which has been disrupted by the wider societal consequences of Covid-19. Despite this, over that period it has already grown in reach, moving from a London centric focus to a national offer.

The levels of satisfaction from participating schools are very high. Even if one accounts for the fact that the school is receiving this intervention at zero cost (which will naturally tend to inflate reported levels of satisfaction) there is an authenticity to the qualitative feedback and to the more focused closed questions on evaluation forms which suggest the positivity reported is reflective of real impacts ‘.

AiR appears to be making a difference on a number of levels.

It is well received by teachers who can see the arts-based learning opportunities it offers are both high quality but also rooted in an understanding of how schools work and their day to day cultures. This is vitally important if AiR is to succeed longer term in helping schools to establish and embed arts-rich curriculum offers. Early signs are positive.

It is having an impact on school cultures in small but significant ways, raising the visibility and reasserting the value of the arts within classroom settings. Teachers - especially the lead contact teachers - report that the visibility and value of the arts is improved by AiR.

It is modelling different forms of pedagogy; artists speak, act and reflect in ways that are often different from but complimentary to more orthodox teaching repertoires. This is part of the value AiR brings to schools by creating bridges between the worlds of education and the professional practices of artists. Teachers often instinctively connect with this and see it for the CPD opportunity it is but it would be good to build in processes that ensure the pedagogical development potential of AiR is not missed. For example, it might be an expectation that teachers engage with artist planning and commit to attend some if not all of the sessions to reflect on alternative ways of working.

It is building creative capacities and dispositions within young people who are responding to the exploratory and expressive nature of the AiR projects with enthusiasm and verve. It is clear from the teacher’s testimony that young people’s sense of capacity and ambition is positively impacted by AiR. The arts become domains they feel confident in appropriating and working within. Those who report longer term ambitions speak of imagining themselves as writers, illustrators, designers and so forth. AiR makes such occupations seem tangible and achievable for young people.

It is developing resilience and persistence in learners who embrace risk taking and the chance of failure as positive aspects of learning, offering chances to refine understanding and hone skills.

For students who are at risk of disengaging from education or who are quieter and more isolated in their learning habits it is offering a positive route back to everyday learning habits and a central relevance to schooling that are foundations for future academic success.

In summary:

1. AiR is operating in a complex policy environment where opportunities for arts and creative practice are somewhat constrained within the limits of the national curriculum and inspection regimes. In a national context it should certainly be seen as a successful pedagogical and learner development initiative. It fills an important space at a time when educators are looking for innovative ways to inspire learners and build staff capacity. There is good reason to be upbeat about what has been achieved in its first two years and it would be appropriate to showcase AiR internationally too, through conferences and education focused events.

2. One of the great strengths of AiR is that while it promotes standards it is not seeking to standardise approaches. This is important and should definitely be part of the ethos going forward. While the new evaluation questions AiR is embedding do bring some uniformity in terms of focus, the aim is to promote a shared language of creative learning with which to describe the varied impacts and effects of the initiative, allowing it to remain flexible and person focused.
3. Over time AiR may find that narratives of impact in schools it has partnered with develop and grow into larger stories of whole school change, where learning cultures shift and teachers show renewed energy to engage with creative pedagogies. In this way AiR could have much to offer in relation to school-change leadership and it may be worthwhile beginning to plan for alliances and partnerships that will be mechanisms to share future learning. This may be through alliances with Trusts or larger scale cultural venues who work on longer term programmes with schools.
4. Since AiR is implicitly offering CPD opportunities it is also important not to overlook learning within the context of teacher CPD. AiR may find that it is making a wider contribution to teacher development, capacity building in ways that point the way for school management and teacher discourse to allow creativity to thrive. As AiR continues to evolve it may find ways to sharpen its descriptions of the residency experience as a teacher development opportunity as much as an immediate benefit for young people.
5. AiR is helping to influence the aspirations and choices of young people, some of whom may choose to find a professional future in the creative industries. There may be merit in working with UniFrog or a similar digital platform to have AiR featured as a ‘special programme’ which may make future tracking easier in terms of learner careers and onward destinations.
6. AiR strikes a delicate balance between a high-impact, short duration arts project and a longer term, more traditional residency. In order for the novelty of the arts project not to unbalance the ambition for schools to sustain change it is vitally important for teachers to engage directly with the planning, delivery and reflection around the project and for the senior leadership within the school to envisage how AiR may be contributing to a broader strategic aim.
7. AiR is definitely making a difference. The immediate impact is felt through the medium you would expect given the premise underpinning the initiative, namely the artists themselves. Teacher feedback is rich with anecdotes and memories not only of the quality of the artist’s inputs, but most importantly of the effect they had on learners. The most memorable examples are often the most personal. The shy or diffident learner, lacking in confidence who finds renewed purpose. The enthusiast or hobbyist who through AiR begins to imagine a creative life as a career choice that is realistic and achievable. The disaffected or switched-off learners who now want to continue working through break-times, lunch-times and after school. The parents who report that their children seem more positive about going to school and more enthusiastic about learning. In this way AiR is not only offering memorable arts projects led by committed and talented artists, it is also strengthening the foundations for successful learning in the broadest sense.
8. AiR is succeeding in terms of its own objectives. Perceptual data from evaluation forms and via telephone interviews comprehensively shows that AiR is effectively:
 - Inspiring young minds to explore pathways and progressions to a career within the creative and cultural industries.
 - Raising the status and value of the Creative Arts in Education.
 - Creating opportunities for the creative and cultural industries to work with schools.
 - Supporting schools to offer an enriching Arts Curriculum.

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Appendices

Semi structured Interview Questions for Artists

- 1] Can you briefly describe why you were interested in participating in the AiR programme?
- 2] How did your AiR project operate within the school? (e.g. was it a one off workshop, a short series of collaborations, a longer term project?)
- 3] How was the project planned, and was it designed to connect with current learner objectives or be a more experiential event?
- 4] Thinking of the teachers who connected with you, were there any CPD benefits for them that arose from this project?
- 5] What are your perceptions around the impact on young people? (e.g. creative skills and capacities, specific artform knowledge, confidence and wellbeing, awareness of and ambitions related to creative careers)
- 6] Impacts on your own practice, related to education focused work or otherwise?
- 7] Any stories or anecdotes from you time in school that may help illustrate any of the impacts described already?
- 8] Any further thoughts or observations about the way AiR works and may work in the future?

Semi structured Interview Questions for Teachers

- 1] Can you give me a brief portrait of your school and your role within it?
- 2] Can you tell me what motivated your interest in AiR and how you came to arrive at the project you undertook?
- 3] Thinking of your wider school culture, can you describe the extent to which the arts are part of your whole school ethos, or more an enrichment activity to balance other goals? (e.g. are the arts part of the pedagogical culture of the school, or more a way of counterbalancing traditional forms of learning).
- 4] Thinking of how the project worked for teachers who were involved, was this a CPD opportunity for teachers, or a chance to give a class over to a special event you did not feel directly engaged in yourselves?
- 5] Impacts for young people – do you have a sense of what the children got out of the project? (e.g. transferable skills, personal wellbeing, specific arts skills and knowledge, creative capacities)
- 6] Legacy and the future – to what extent does AiR contribute to an ongoing journey for your school, or was it more a fun interlude, but not so connecting to a strategic vision?