

# **REACH [City of York Local Education Partnership] Reconnecting Education, the Arts, Culture and Heritage**

## **REACH Progress Report to the Children, Education and Communities Policy and Scrutiny Committee**

**7 March 2023**

### **REACH**

REACH is the Local Cultural Education Partnership for York. It is made up of a diverse range of organisations from the local authority, public health, cultural education and community sectors who have agreed to work in partnership to provide opportunities for children and young people to benefit from the amazing creative and cultural offer across York.

Our core purpose is to strive for York to be the first city to achieve cultural entitlement for all children and young people, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

REACH is based on collaboration, co-production and active listening to our communities, our partners and most importantly our children and young people.

REACH is the delivery partner for the children and young people's element of the Culture Strategy 2020 – 2025, York's Creative Future, which aims to ensure that:

- Every child and young person will have the chance to create and make culture
- Creativity, arts and heritage engagement will be part of the core offer within schools
- The holistic benefits of creativity, arts and heritage engagement for children and young people will be recognised inside and outside the classroom
- All children and more young people will participate in, and experience arts and heritage activity
- York is recognised as a national exemplar with respect to cultural entitlement for children and young people with every child and young person having opportunities to create, play and participate.

## **Projects to date**

REACH has supported and implemented a number of exciting projects across the city which gave children and young people the opportunity to create and make culture, creating more opportunities for children and young people to participate in and experience arts and heritage activity.

- **Bags of Creativity**

The Bags of Creativity initiative brings a fantastic and magical set of resources, ideas and challenges to York's children and young people. The first round took place during in 2020 and saw 1,000 Bags of Creativity distributed to children and young people across York. Each brightly coloured cotton bag contained a range of art materials and resources, plus 20 printed postcards with prompts for creative activities inspired by the bag's contents. York-based artists and creatives designed and tested the activities.

The second round of Bags of Creativity was delivered in partnership with York's Festival of Ideas 2021! More than 2,000 children in receipt of free school meals from 51 schools across York received a Bag of Creativity, filled with ideas and resources for hands-on, creative activities for the whole family to enjoy.

The Bags of Creativity reached those families who often struggle to finance and resource the creative pursuits regularly accessed by our more advantaged children.

- **Creative Doodle Books**

Developed by Matthew Reason (Professor of Theatre, York St John University) and Brian Hartley in association with 'Mind the Gap', these Creative Doodle books were full of ideas to get children and young people thinking creatively. They were distributed to 1,000 primary and 1,000 secondary students.

- **UNESCO Drawing with Denmark Campaign**

During 2020, Viborg UNESCO Creative City spearheaded an international project, 'Draw with Denmark', which encouraged children to make drawings that give hope to children all over the world who have suffered because of COVID-19. Children from York UNESCO Creative City got involved and shared their drawings, which were featured in an inspiring film.

One of York's submitted drawings was even chosen by Viborg to be specially animated by animator Rasmus Nyhus Hansen.

- **50 Creative and Fun Things to Do in York before you are 12!**

From exploring the city to baking, a guide has been compiled to encourage children to try new things, be creative and experience the wonderful places in York! Activities have been chosen to be free, or as low cost as possible.

### **How has REACH used data and evidence to identify current priorities?**

York is a city where the gap is widening between those who succeed at school and those who don't. The gap is larger in York than in almost any other local authority in the county and has increased with the impact of the pandemic. [The Council Plan, City of York Council, 2021]

REACH wants to address this disparity, reducing the gap where engagement with arts, culture and creativity exists by embedding a network of REACH Cultural and Creative Leaders, connectors to creativity, arts and culture learning – in every school in York.

Across York schools, art, culture and creativity is at differing levels of priority and development. REACH aims to influence change in schools through advocacy and access to a strong network of CPD, information and support.

REACH is a delivery partner for York's Creative Future, the 2020-25 culture strategy and we are committed to achieving the outcomes for Children and Young People set out in that strategy. This clearly recognises the role of REACH in addressing the inequality in levels of Cultural Capital that children and young people currently experience in our city.

In consultation with the Assistant Director of Education and Skills at the City of York Council, REACH has identified a target group of 12 schools to be our focus during the first year of the project. These schools are in areas of low engagement in arts and cultural learning and are identified as serving the pupils aligning with the indices of disadvantage, which include those accessing free school meals, pupil premium funding and those with SEND

Of these 12 schools 11 have between 20% and 41% of pupils on free school meals; 3 of these schools are 'well below' national average in reading, writing and maths [in line with the lowest 10% schools in England]. The vast majority of the schools [8/12] have higher than the national average of pupils receiving SEN support. 3 of the schools have between 10% and 13% of pupils whose first language is not English ESOL.

## Target Schools

- Vale of York
- York High
- Applefields
- Hob Moor Oaks
- Burton Green Primary
- Clifton Green Primary
- Haxby Road Primary
- Hob Moor Primary
- New Earswick Primary
- St Lawrence's Primary
- Tang Hall Primary
- Westfield Primary

This targeted approach will develop an infrastructure to advocate for and align opportunities via REACH's cross-sector partnership, to support schools and ensure more of their children and young people have access to more of the cultural and learning opportunities available to them.

## What are the current priorities?

REACH submitted a revised and successful Partnership Investment Bid, receiving £50,000 from IVE, the Arts Council Bridge Organisation for Yorkshire and the Humber and £25,000 match funding was provided from City of York Council. REACH has recruited a Network Manager who will provide capacity and will focus on developing the following strategic objectives:

- **pilot and develop the REACH Cultural and Creative Leaders Programme;**  
REACH will support the creation of Cultural and Creative Leaders in each pilot school. Leaders will be school subject leaders/SLT who advocate and work to improve access to arts, culture and creativity, developing the appetite and confidence in schools to access it. They will provide links to the REACH network, access to CPD, the REACH/Make it York Hub and Arts Award initiatives.
- **pilot and develop REACH Cultural and Creative Champions;**  
representatives of REACH's partners who advocate for arts and cultural learning opportunities in schools will assist with developing and promoting activities for children and young people and support and CPD for school staff.

- **pilot and develop REACH Cultural and Creative Ambassadors;** within the target schools children and young people will act as Cultural and Creative Ambassadors, demonstrating the impact of arts, creativity and cultural learning within schools across the city.
- **rebrand and develop the 'Make It York' website as the REACH/'Make it York' Children and Young People's Hub** the development of this much needed 'one stop shop' addresses the lack of a co-ordinated arts and culture offer for children and young people in York and will make it easier for partners to develop arts, creative and heritage opportunities, and provide a platform for young people to share and showcase their work.

### **What has been achieved?**

REACH has invited new partners to join both the full partnership and the steering group which will provide the required strategic involvement for delivery of REACH's objectives. The steering group has become more diverse with representatives of schools, colleges and universities.

The REACH Steering Group has established three task and finish groups focused on our key priorities; engaging schools led by James Rourke and Maxine Squire, developing the Cultural and Creative programme led by Chris Edwards and Chris Bailey, and developing the Make it York/REACH Hub led by Bethan Gibb-Reid.

A full partnership meeting was held in 2022, with 3 meetings scheduled throughout 2023: 28 February, 29 June, 8 November.

The REACH Steering Group worked to promote the Network Manager role, carried out a shortlisting and interview process and successfully recruited Allison Freeman as our REACH Manager. This will enable REACH to share 'what works', develop new partners, partnerships and collaborative activities, engage and connect with more education partners.

**REACH Cultural and Creative Leaders:** REACH attended the City of York Curriculum Conference 15 September and presented to all schools about the programme. Following the presentation and networking several more schools expressed interest in joining the REACH network and have subsequently joined and identified at least one member of staff to be a cultural leader for their school. Cultural Leaders have been created in 9 of the 12 target schools, and in 11 other schools, to help co-ordinate and drive the schools' programme.

### **REACH Pilot Schools**

- Millthorpe

- York High
- Hob Moor Oaks
- Burton Green Primary
- Carr Junior
- Clifton Green Primary
- Haxby Road Primary
- Knavesmire Primary
- Lord Deramore's Primary
- New Earswick Primary
- Ralph Butterfield Primary
- Scarcroft Primary
- St George's Primary
- St Lawrence's Primary
- St Mary's Primary
- St Wilfrid's Primary
- Tang Hall Primary
- Westfield Primary
- Woodthorpe Primary
- Yearsley Grove Primary

**REACH Online Hub:** with input from the task and finish group, and a variety of schools, the REACH Online Hub has been built and tested. The hub is now live with York and North Yorkshire based creatives and cultural organisations invited to submit their offers for schools. REACH presented at the Yorkshire Museums and Heritage Conference 1 February 2023 about the new hub. A hub launch is scheduled for the REACH partnership meeting on Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> February.

**REACH Cultural and Creative Ambassadors:** working with Make it York, children from one of our pilot schools have been sharing their experiences of culture and creativity, creative careers and discovering York's heritage and culture, to create three short films which will be used on the REACH Hub and social channels to promote the cultural and creative ambassadors programme.

### **What are the next steps?**

- The REACH Network manager will share 'what works', develop new partners, partnerships and collaborative activities, engage and connect with more education partners.
- **REACH Online Hub**  
The REACH Manager will also work to further develop, maintain and actively promote the 'Make It York' digital platform with website and social media links which will be rebranded as the REACH/'Make it York'

children and young people's hub making it easier for partners to communicate their offer to schools and for partners to further develop arts, creative and heritage opportunities.

- **REACH Cultural and Creative Champions**

Meetings are scheduled for creatives and cultural organisations who are keen to support and work with schools.

- **UNESCO Drawing with Denmark Campaign**

REACH will work with a group of our pilot schools to support many more children and young people to be part of this year's Drawing with Denmark campaign – this year's theme is Go Green Together and looks for positive responses to the current climate situation. The project allows for long term skills development and delivery of Arts Award Discover in our group of schools.

- **Bags of Creativity**

A 'Green' Bag of Creativity is currently at the planning stage, focussing on the environment, climate and sustainability. The focus of this bag is the support of engagement with arts and the achievement of Arts Award in our target schools, with the desire to scale up to all project schools but this would be funding dependent.

- **School VIP Culture Passes**

Working with Make It York we have created a VIP culture pass for each project school. This will allow one member of staff to visit York's culture and heritage organisations free of charge to view exhibitions etc so as to increase the use of York's museums, culture and heritage in teaching in York schools. This is a innovative new trial inspired by recent National Art Fund research 'What do teachers' want from museums?'

### **Are there any concerns, significant developments or local changes that may affect the programme?**

The REACH network manager contracted COVID at the beginning of October 2022 and was ill throughout October and November, taking some time to recover. This has led to a delay in the scheduling of task and finish group meetings, meetings with schools and cultural champions. This should not affect the success of the project long-term – it means that there has been a hiatus in October/November. The network manager has now returned to work.

### **Summary**

REACH has used the IVE Partnership funding and the match funding received from the City of York Council to employ an experienced Partnership

Manager who will help REACH take its work to the next level by implementing our Cultural and Creative Programme with a small group of target schools before taking it to all the schools across the City of York. The REACH Partnership is more engaged as a result and we are looking forward to piloting and developing the REACH Cultural and Creative Programme through the identification of REACH Cultural and Creative Leaders in schools, supported by REACH Cultural and Creative Champions from the REACH Partnership and identifying REACH Cultural and Creative Ambassadors from the target schools to ensure that young people's voices shape and further develop everything we do. This will all be supported by rebranding and developing of the 'Make It York' website as the REACH/'Make it York' Children and Young People's Hub.... exciting times!

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**REACH Network Manager: Allison Freeman**  
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**REACH Steering Committee:**

Chris Bailey	Clerk, York Guild of Media Arts
Chris Edwards	Independent Chair
Bethan Gibb-Reid	Creative and Cultural Development Manager, Make It York
Millie Raw Mckenzie	York Music Hub
Lynne Minett	Head of Learning, National Railway Museum
Sarah O'Brien	Associate Head of Performance, York St John University
Julian Ollive	Head of Creative Engagement, York Theatre Royal
James Rourke	Headteacher, Lord Deramore's Primary School
Maxine Squire	Assistant Director of Education, City of York Council



Barbara Swinn

Head of Strategy and Engagement,  
Explore York Libraries and Archives

## **REACH PARTNERSHIP**

City of York Council  
Creative Learning Partnership  
York Culture Forum  
English Heritage  
Explore York Libraries and Archives  
Guild of Media Arts  
Independent artists  
Joseph Rowntree Theatre  
LazenbyBrown  
Make it York  
National Centre for Early Music  
National Railway Museum  
NYBEP  
York Primary Schools  
Pupil Referral Units  
York Secondary Schools  
York Special Schools  
University of York  
Voluntary & Community organisations  
Pilot Theatre  
York Army Museum  
York College  
York Dance Space  
York Minster  
York Museums Trust  
York Music Hub  
York Hospital NHS Foundation Trust  
York St John University  
York Theatre Royal  
Yorvik Group/YAT  
IVE (Arts Council Bridge Organisation)