

REACH Progress Report

Introduction

There is increasing understanding that creativity should lie at the heart of a powerful curriculum offer where every child and young person experiences storytelling, art and design, dance, drama and music! We need teachers and schools that help grow, develop and nurture the designers, coaches, inventors, teachers, storytellers, carers, artisans, artists, dancers, musicians and performers of the future! In this new learning landscape where creativity, imagination and ideas matter so much, we need to focus on the arts, creativity and heritage as well as literacy and numeracy...the two must go hand in hand!

Why is this important?

REACH is the Local Cultural Education Partnership for York and is the delivery partner for the children and young people's element of the Culture Strategy 2020 – 2025, York's Creative Future. This aims for York to be a city where children and young people, within their school curriculum, have an entitlement to the arts, culture, creativity and heritage, particularly children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds and those with additional needs and/or disabilities. Putting cultural opportunities and creative skills within reach of every child and young person is a central aim of York as a UNESCO Creative City of Media Arts, linked as it is to the pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations. This matters because research tells us:

- Participation in structured arts activities increases cognitive abilities.
- Learning through arts and culture improves attainment in Maths and English.
- Learning through arts and culture develops skills and behaviour that lead children to do better in school.
- Students from low-income families who take part in arts activities at school are three times more likely to get a degree.
- Employability of students who study arts subjects is higher and they are more likely to stay in employment.

- Students from low-income families who engage in the arts at school are twice as likely to volunteer.
- Students from low-income families who engage in the arts at school are 20% more likely to vote as young adults.
- Young offenders who take part in arts activities are less likely to re-offend.
- Children who take part in arts activities in the home during their early years are ahead in reading and Maths at age nine.
- People who take part in the arts are more likely to report good health.

Key Research Findings by the Cultural Learning Alliance

Early Projects

Over the last few years, as we struggled to secure funding, REACH supported and implemented a number of exciting projects across the city, all targeted at children and young people likely to miss out on the opportunities the arts, creativity, culture and heritage have to offer.

- Bags of Creativity
- Creative Doodle Books
- UNESCO Drawing with Denmark Campaign
- 50 Creative and Fun Things to Do in York before you are 12!

Feedback on these projects was fantastic but we recognised that we needed to do more!


REACH Cultural and Creative Programme

In 2022, REACH submitted a Partnership Investment Bid and received £50,000 from IVE, the Arts Council Bridge Organisation for Yorkshire and the Humber, and £25,000 match funding from City of York Council. It is important to note that without the match funding from the City of York Council, none of the impact and outcomes detailed in this report would have been possible! This table gives a brief overview of what has been achieved.

REACH Pilot Programme Tracker 2023-2024	
Schools	
Schools in pilot	11
Primary schools in pilot	9
Secondary schools in pilot	1
Alternative provisions in pilot	1
Additional schools in the wider REACH partnership	6
Delivery in Schools	
REACH-funded Creative Activities	11
Different Providers	6
Beneficiaries of Creative Activities	730
REACH Mini Projects in School	11
Organisations supporting Mini Projects	9
Target Pupils in Schools	291
Schools participated in Draw With Denmark	6
Schools completing Arts Award	2
Pupils achieving Arts Award Discover Certificate	40
Champions	
Professionals from cultural sector engaged in pilot	11
Peer-learning meetings for Champions held	3
Champion Meetings with Schools held	33
Learning Programme	
Partnership Meetings	2
Newsletters	2
CPD Events	1
People/Organisations on Mailing List	127
REACH Partners	35

REACH Young People's Hub (MIY website)	
Providers on the directory	31
Views in total	2117

The REACH Pilot has the following strategic priorities:



REACH Pilot Programme Strategic Priorities	Collaborate with partners	Improve access to creativity and culture	Listen to and learn from children and young people	Advocate for a cultural entitlement within the curriculum	Develop a network of professionals within York and further afield.
<p><u>Children and Young People</u></p> <p>York's Creative Future</p> <p>Culture Strategy 2020-2025</p>	The holistic benefits of creativity, arts and heritage engagement for children and young people will be recognised inside and outside the classroom.	Every child and young person will experience and participate in creativity and culture.	Communities, partners and most importantly our children and young people are actively listened to.	Creative and cultural engagement will be part of the core offer within schools.	York is recognised as a national exemplar with respect to a cultural and creative entitlement.

REACH Pilot Programme – Theory of Change see APPENDIX TWO

Programme Elements

In 2023, REACH recruited an experienced Manager who provides additional capacity and has been focusing on developing the following in a carefully selected group of schools:

- **Develop REACH Cultural and Creative Leaders**

REACH is supporting 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.

- **Develop REACH Cultural and Creative Champions**

REACH is supporting Cultural and Creative Champions, representatives of REACH's partners, who work with our pilot schools to advocate for arts and cultural learning opportunities and assist with developing and promoting activities for children and young people and support and CPD for school staff.

- **Develop REACH Cultural and Creative Ambassadors**

REACH is supporting groups of children and young people in the pilot schools who act as Cultural and Creative Ambassadors, demonstrating the impact of arts, creativity and cultural learning within schools across the city.

- **Develop the REACH/'Make it York' Children and Young People's Hub' on the Make It York' website**

REACH has developed this much needed 'one stop shop' to give schools access to a single co-ordinated arts and culture offer for children and young people in York and makes it easier for creative partners to develop, share and showcase their arts, creative, cultural and heritage offer and opportunities.

How has REACH used data and evidence to identify priorities?

York is a city where the gap is widening between those who succeed at school and those who don't. That gap is larger in York than in almost any other local authority in the county and has increased with the impact of the pandemic. Attendance is also a problem locally and nationally. The REACH Partnership wants to address this disparity, reducing the gap where engagement with arts, culture and creativity exists and developing a more exciting curriculum offer within schools.

To find out more about the challenges facing schools and teachers, in 2023, REACH worked with Dr Federico Pendenza and Dr Liz Haddon from the University of York School of Arts and Creative Technologies to research Schools' Engagement with Creative and Cultural Education. The report they produced has helped us to identify and understand issues concerning engagement with cultural and creative education in specific primary and secondary schools within the City of York. The questionnaire was distributed among selected primary and secondary schools in the City of York in July 2023 and in September 2023. Fourteen respondents completed the questionnaire. The key findings were as follows:

- Connections between schools and local providers of cultural and creative education should be established to tackle limited awareness of the potential cultural and creative offer available across the City of York.
- Cultural and creative initiatives aimed at developing the curriculum offer, with cross-subject collaborations across the curriculum, should be

developed to promote cultural and creative education across different subjects and support students' learning and development.

- Hands-on activities should be prioritised to spark and enhance learning. These activities should include practical outcomes to boost children's motivation.
- Priority should be given to disciplines such as Visual Arts, Theatre and Performance, Digital Music, Music and Sound, Dance, Storytelling and Creative Writing.
- The provision of cultural and creative education should address and support the requirements of students with additional needs.
- To tackle accessibility and inclusion issues, extra-curricular activities should also be offered, but cost may need to be minimised and provision should ideally be within curricular hours.
- Specific work with target groups of students should be developed to enhance their confidence, self-esteem, and well-being. However, aims and feasibility may need to be discussed with the individual schools to mitigate potential frictions with school ethos and regulations regarding parity and equity.
- CPD on cultural and creative education for staff should be offered to help staff embed cultural and creative education into the curriculum. It is recommended that schools' interests are sought prior to discussing potential benefits and content.
- A REACH Schools Network could be developed to provide training opportunities for school staff and enhance networking between schools and local cultural organisations and providers. A hybrid approach (in-person/online) could be offered, with meetings taking place once a term and during twilight hours. Nevertheless, the feasibility of establishing a digital network via social media platforms (such as Facebook or Instagram) may require individual discussions with schools due to the limited consensus on this matter.

The findings in this report offer valuable insights into our current understanding of creative and cultural education, and are being used to guide future development of REACH's work with schools.

Our Target Schools

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

These schools have between 20% and 41% of children on free school meals; three 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 have higher than the national average of children receiving SEN support. Three of the schools have between 10% and 13% of children whose first language is not English.

We are currently working with the following eleven schools:

- York High School
- Inspire Alternative Provision
- Hob Moor Oaks Academy
- Burton Green Primary School
- Clifton Green Primary School
- Haxby Road Primary School
- Hob Moor Community Academy Primary School
- St. George's RC Primary School
- St Lawrence's CE Primary School
- Tang Hall Primary School
- Yearsley Grove Primary School

REACH Pilot Programme Funding for Schools

To enable schools to develop new ways of working and to establish new partnerships with the cultural and creative sector REACH has provided schools with two grants, one in the Spring Term and one in the Summer Term.

- i. Grant 1 – £250 per school: to book one creative activity with an organisation which is new to the school, using the REACH directory on the Make It York website <https://www.makeityork.com/culture/reach-young-people-hub/>
- ii. Grant 2 - £500 per school: to develop a mini project which strengthens cultural and creative provision in school. It is for activity which takes place in school and includes direct delivery with the schools' REACH target pupil group. Schools can use this grant to pay for:
 - Creative Practitioner (artist) time to deliver sessions in school, including planning and delivery
 - Developing curriculum links or embedding creativity into the curriculum
 - Materials and Resources for the Mini Project
 - Rewards/Prizes for REACH Ambassadors

The table below indicates how each school has utilised these grants. The Mini Projects will be completed by June 2024 and the impact of these activities will be showcased at the REACH Celebration Event on 17th July at the Barbican Centre. The table also shows which children each school has selected as their 'target group', this number is not the total number of children in the school.

School	Champion	Target Children	Creative Activity	Actual children	REACH Hub	Mini Project
St Lawrence's CE Primary School	CF	90	Org: Mediale Art form: Digital Arts	60	Yes	New after-school club Orchestra in the Age of Enlightenment
St George's RC Primary School	LD	8	Org: York Theatre Royal Art form: Puppetry	8	Yes	Jewellery making/Crafts
Clifton Green Primary School	KN	20	Org: Mediale Art Form: Digital Arts	19	Yes	Inclusion Exhibition Karen
Hob Moor Community Primary Academy	BH	6	Dance (details tbc)	tbc	Yes	TBC
Yearsley Grove Primary School	LH	60	Org: Mud Pie Art Form: Storytelling	61	Yes	Shadow Puppetry
Hob Moor Oaks Academy	ES	14	Org: Hannah Turlington Art Form: Visual Arts	16	No	Visual Arts Curriculum
Burton Green Primary School	KC	20	Org: Mud Pie Art Form: Storytelling	70	Yes	Grand Opera House Project
Tang Hall Primary School	JO	10	Org: Mud Pie Art Form: Storytelling	120	Yes	Digital Arts
Haxby Road Primary School	MS	16	Org: York Theatre Royal Art Form: Creative Writing	190	Yes	Digital Storytelling
York High School	OOS	17	Percussion (details tbc)	166	No	Art of Protest- Street art Project
Inspire	SOB	30	Org: Hannah Turlington Art Form: Visual Arts	20	No	Mural Painting
Totals	11 champions	291 children	11 creative workshops 6 different providers	730 children	8	11 school projects

REACH Champions

Eleven professionals, ranging from freelance creative practitioners to representatives from both York's leading and emerging arts organisations, are currently involved in the programme as REACH Champions. Each Champion is partnered with one of our target schools. Their role is to support the schools during the programme, helping them to understand the high-quality arts, creative, cultural and heritage sector in York and how schools can develop sustainable and impactful partnerships with the sector. Each Champion brings unique expertise into the programme which in turn means each partnership is entirely unique.

REACH convenes half-termly peer learning meetings for the Champions, providing a space for them to share insights and learning from their work with schools. It is a cross-discipline community where expertise and knowledge are shared, helping to develop how the creative and cultural sector in York can support schools with improving access to opportunities both within their curriculum and outside of school.

The Champions are also benefitting professionally through their engagement in the programme: developing their understanding of education, partnership working and community engagement and networking with a diverse range of people from across York's education and creative sector.

	Champion	Organisation	Role	Discipline
1	Dr. Liam Herringshaw (LH)	York's Hidden History Yorkshire Fossil Festival	Lead/Co-Director	Archaeology / STEAM
2	Louise Dwyer (LD)	Freelance	Curator and Jeweller	Crafts
3	Karen Newell (KN)	Toy Like Me	Co-Founder	Play / Media
4	Cherry Fricker (CF)	National Centre for Early Music	Director Finance and Operations	Music
5	Kelly Culver (KC)	Grand Opera House	Creative Learning Producer	Performing Arts
6	Julian Ollive (JO)	York Theatre Royal	Head of Creative Engagement	Performing Arts
7	EI Stanage (EL)	Next Door But One	Creative Engagement Manager	Applied Theatre
8	Marnie Simpson (MS)	Mediale	Assistant Producer	Digital Arts
9	Oli O'Shea (OOS)	Pilot Theatre	Associate Director	Performing Arts
10	Rebecca Hill (RH)	National Railway Museum	Schools and Families Manager	STEM /STEAM
11	Dr. Sarah O'Brien (SOB)	York St. John University	Associate Head: Performance	Performing Arts

REACH Champions work directly with their partner school, meeting with their School Leader every half term. The Champions act as critical friend, providing support and guidance so that schools can engage effectively in the pilot programme. To date Champions have been providing schools with expertise on:

- Inclusion, focusing specifically on additional needs and disabilities
- Costings for how to engage professional artists
- Funding opportunities for schools
- Teaching science through creativity
- How to engage with Digital Arts and Media in school
- Visiting organisations and creative opportunities for schools
- Access to Higher Education

'Visit York' VIP Passes

Working with Make It York we have also given each pilot school a 'Visit York' VIP Pass. 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 understanding of what is available across York's museums, culture, heritage and creative sector to support creativity, culture, the arts and heritage teaching and learning in York schools.

REACH Ambassadors

A core component of the REACH pilot programme is the 'REACH Ambassadors' who are children and young people from within our target schools who have been identified by their teachers to take on the role of Ambassador. Schools Leaders have selected pupils who would perhaps not normally be involved in Youth Voice initiatives or School Councils, they have either been selected because of their strong interest in the arts or because they would benefit from taking on this role and opportunity, to develop their communication skills and self-confidence.

REACH Ambassadors have all had the opportunity to meet with their teachers to discuss the pilot programme and additionally, they have all met with their school's Champion, providing an opportunity for them to meet a new creative professional from the city and to learn about their organisation and what they do.

Youth Voice Development

REACH has been piloting some different youth voice activities, including surveys, focus groups and creative workshops. We are also in the process of developing a Youth Voice Framework, working in collaboration with Youth Voice expert Marie Millward. Here is an example of feedback from an ambassador group after they had taken part in a collage-making activity with a visiting artist, who is also the schools' Champion. The pupils began with making surface patterns and ended up with a paper-collage animal. The teacher shared that it was a different way of working creatively which the children had not experienced before. This was an introductory session in November 2023. (Photos: Mary Owoo).



Tang Hall Ambassador Group – *What does creativity mean to you?*
The REACH Manager tested out some youth voice baseline questions at Tang Hall Primary School. The image below shows the pupils responses when asked **what they enjoyed about a creative activity and how it made them feel.**

Youth Voice Theory of Change – see APPENDIX 3.



Arts Award

REACH has also provided all schools in the pilot programme with the opportunity to begin delivering Arts Award or to develop their Arts Award provision. “Arts Award takes children and young people on a creative journey, exploring the arts world, discovering their potential as artists, developing leadership skills – and gaining a recognised qualification along the way. Open to anyone aged 25 or under, this unique set of arts qualifications builds skills essential for success in the 21st century: Creativity and communication, along with problem-solving, reflective-thinking and confidence.” ([What is Arts Award?](#))

Two schools have opted to take advantage of this, Hob Moor Oaks Primary and Burton Green Primary. We anticipate that through the training of three new Arts Award Advisors in these schools, approximately 40 children will achieve their first Arts Award certificate in the Discover level, during the REACH pilot programme. With new Arts Award Advisors trained in these schools the ambition is that the number of children achieving their first Arts Award will increase up to 80 between 2024-2025.

The training which REACH are funding schools to access includes two levels ‘[Discover](#)’ and ‘[Explore](#)’ which enables children to also progress on to achieve their Explore Qualification. Arts Award Explore is designed for ages 7 and above and is open to anyone aged 25 and under, it is an Entry Level (Entry 3) qualification on the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF).

REACH Learning Programme

Partnership Meetings

REACH provides in-person cross-sector networking meetings each term, these Partnership Meetings are an important opportunity for people to share project updates, best practice and expertise. Recent meetings have taken place at York St. John University on 29th June 2023 and 29th January 2024; we have received positive feedback that the Partnership Meetings are a useful space for people to interact, network and collaborate. The next Partnership Meeting will be held on 22nd May 2024.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

To date, we have delivered a CPD sessions: ‘Funding for Schools’ took place on 5th March 2024. We had 8 schools register to attend and 4 schools which attended on the day. The participants all indicated through feedback that they had developed their confidence and knowledge of how to develop funding applications for projects which support the arts in school.

Communications

As part of the pilot, we have launched a termly newsletter which goes out to schools and the cultural sector. We have also developed the REACH database and mailing list; we now manage our mailing list through Mailchimp which enables us to track open and click rates, providing us with insight into our audience engagement. The table below demonstrates strong engagement with our mailing list recipients.

Self-Reported Business Type	Average Open Rate	Average Click Rate
Government	40.55%	4.58%
Education and training	35.64%	3.016%
Non-profit	40.03%	3.27%
Email Marketing Benchmarks & Industry Statistics Mailchimp		
REACH Stats	Actual Open Rate	Actual Click Rate
REACH Autumn Newsletter 27 th September 2023	64.1%	21.4%
REACH CPD for Schools 23 rd January 2024	72.7%	9.1%
REACH Winter Newsletter 25 th January 2024	53.6%	8%
REACH Mailshot 14 th March 2024	61.9%	8.8%

Next Steps

REACH will continue to share 'what works', developing new partners, partnerships and collaborative activities and will engage and connect with more education partners.

- **New Partnerships**

REACH has established eleven new partnerships in the city between schools and creative and cultural organisations, with 300 children and young people benefitting directly from delivery in schools which supports their mental health and wellbeing, employability skills, sense of belonging and enjoyment of school. It is important that these relationships can be sustained in 2024-2025 so that schools can continue to develop their provision of cultural and creative education.

- **REACH Celebration Event**

REACH has been given a Concessionary Day at the Barbican: Wednesday 17th July 2024. The event will celebrate York's children and young people and their achievements; it is an opportunity for pupils to share their creativity, and what they've learned and enjoyed through the REACH programme, with their teachers, peers, parents and carers. There are 11 schools in the pilot programme and each school will be given a slot during the event for sharing. There will also be an Arts and Culture Marketplace for teachers and pupils to visit during the event.

- **Creative Skills Framework**

We have an opportunity in the City of York to do things differently, working with providers across the City of York, and looking at the national and international research, we could develop a creative skill set which will better equip our young people for life and success in the world of work and help them improve their attendance, behaviour and school work. The skills framework would focus specifically on outcomes for young people, rather than the provision in which they engage/participate. It would focus on young people's development and how we can develop the skills and abilities that research suggests creates happy, healthy, safe and increasingly successful young people as they navigate their way through school, and into work and adult life.

- **UNESCO Drawing with Denmark Campaign**

REACH worked 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 was Go Green Together and looks for children and young people's responses to the current climate situation. The theme for 2024 is 'My hopes for the place where I live'.

- **Bags of Creativity**

We have been working with students at York College to develop a 'Green' Bag of Creativity. This is currently at the planning stage, but will focus on the environment, climate and sustainability but this is again funding dependent.

- **Charitable Incorporated Organisation**

The funding for REACH finishes in July 2024 and we are looking for creative ways to maintain and develop the work we have been doing. REACH exists at the moment as an informal partnership and we are looking at establishing REACH as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. A CIO is a new legal form for a charity crafted in response to requests from charities for a new structure which could provide some of the benefits of being a company but without some of the burdens. Importantly, it would provide us with access to sources of funding or finance, or partnerships that have been unavailable to REACH.

Appendices

Appendix 1: REACH Contacts

Appendix 2: Vision for Pilot Programme

Appendix 3: REACH Theory of Change