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Delivering Arts Award to young people with special needs



Introduction

At Greenfields School and Sports College we offer Arts Award at Bronze and Silver level. The aim of this resource is to share what we do and to give you some ideas of how to approach delivering Arts Award to young people with special needs. We will take you through our journey, the approach we have developed and the ideas and resources we have found to be successful. These include:

- ▶ getting to know students and finding out their interests
- ▶ ideas to facilitate and collect non-written reflective or review-based evidence
- ▶ supporting students to work in teams
- ▶ examples of Arts Award's impact on students' progression
- ▶ what goes in the portfolio?

Allowing students the time to explore the tasks for themselves is key to our approach. This helps students remember that there is no 'right' or 'wrong' and that exploration is part of their individual learning journey.

Signing

We encourage the use of a variety of communication methods at our school. Staff use signing with some students to support their communication and development of ideas. Ideas communicated by students are then scribed by staff.

Traffic lights

We use traffic lights to enable students to give simple yes/no answers. Higher ability students are able to use traffic lights to answer more complex questions, eg green = the right amount of paint, orange = not sure about the amount of paint, red = too much paint.

Traffic lights are an effective way to involve everybody in self-assessment. Students who are unable to make unsupported choices can make selections from different options.

Assemblage boxes

Assemblage boxes are a form of visual representation. They consist of two- or three-dimensional artistic displays of found objects

Our students create assemblage boxes to record their experiences of attending an arts event for Part B of their Bronze Arts Award.

Students are encouraged to look back at photographs and video footage that staff and students collect during the event. They are then presented with a selection of resources. The task of creating assemblage boxes as a form of review is broken down into manageable weekly tasks.

In creating their assemblage boxes, students are encouraged to focus on the background, setting and detail from the event, such as lighting and costume design, and to identify what is visible or remembered from the experience.

This method of reflection is particularly beneficial as it can be accessed by all students, regardless of ability or arts skill level.

Photographs

Lots of photographs are taken to use directly as evidence. Staff annotate photos to describe what is taking place and to indicate the level of support needed.

These images show a student creating silhouettes with adult support and the annotations accompanying them.



'Teddy was initially supported by an adult to identify and trace the silhouette edge. He then went on to attempt this independently.'



'Teddy's independent exploration of creating shadows.'

Supporting students to work in teams



Sometimes activities are engineered so there is limited equipment for students to use. We find that this is particularly beneficial for encouraging communication, as students have to share and request the equipment and resources they need. Observing others collecting resources and using equipment, provides a visual prompt for students' own activities.

We have forged successful links with two local mainstream schools. The mainstream students find that working with us gives them valuable work experience within a school as well as the opportunity to participate in Arts Award and acquire new skills. Our students get the chance to demonstrate their arts skills and to share their hard work with others.

The work from these activities is evidenced in a variety of ways, including symbols, mark-making and photographs of each session. The photographs provide visual records of students' work and enable them to reflect on their own achievements and to offer constructive feedback to others.

Impact on students' progression

Students' progress is measured in our school using the Bsquared assessment package. This package measures successfully mastered skills and skills that students are currently working towards.

It may take a number of weeks for our students to develop a particular skill. Because there are no time constraints for delivering Arts Award, our staff are able to take the time to develop and nurture students' talents or emergent skills.

Arts Award provides a multitude of opportunities for our students to develop PSHE self-help skills, independence, self-esteem and communication.

What goes in the portfolio?

Everything! Some students complete pieces of work that they aren't happy with or want to make changes to. We feel it is important that these pieces of work are included in their portfolios, along with staff annotations where necessary, to reflect the development of skills and the learning and evaluation journey of each student.