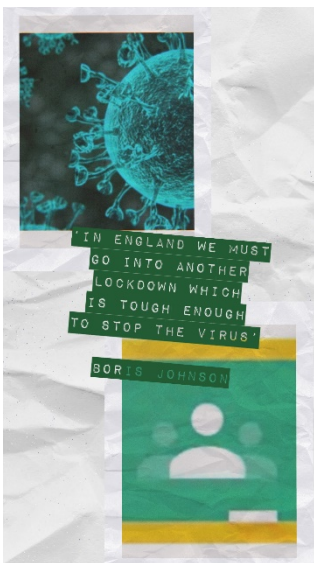


Arts Award - How Creativity Will Always Win

Julie Hogg

I'm an Arts Award Adviser!

An Arts Award toolkit tucked firmly under my arm, I sashay into the first day of the Spring Term 2021 at Corpus Christi RC Primary School. As stated in our Artsmark Statement of Commitment, here at the school we have a strong vision and belief we can make a difference; we want to celebrate the children's cultural achievements which complement our core values of independence, resilience, reflection, enterprise, and creativity whilst providing challenge for every pupil and ensuring everyone's voice is heard. Unequivocally, being a Discover and Explore Advisor will enable me to propel all pupils in their creative journeys.



6th January 2021 - England enters third national lockdown

Following one day in school, a 'stay at home' rule applies with in-person teaching available for vulnerable and key-workers' children only. With art galleries closed, musical venues shut, Author visits unallowed, performing arts presentations to audiences unable to go ahead, singing discouraged, our school brass band ensemble disbanded, heritage projects with museums unavailable, my Arts Award toolkit remains unopened and seems redundant in the dire circumstances of a new wave of pandemic infection. Luckily, there is a glimmer of hope ahead on the distant horizon; this lockdown coincides with registration on the Cultural Leadership in Education opportunity at Newcastle University.

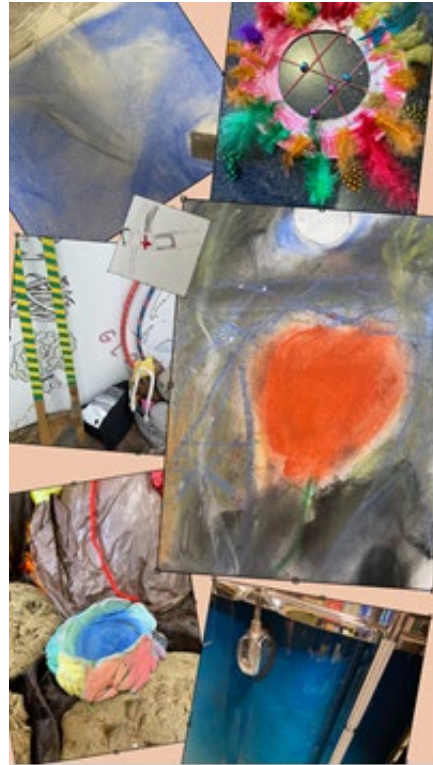
No teacher is an island...

As usual, in times of challenge at our small primary school, we revisit our common vision. Golden question – How can our pupils work towards their Arts Award in these unprecedented circumstances? Realising I can't achieve this alone, I summon the help of my colleagues, arranging an early win by beginning to teach Art and Music across the whole school via google classrooms. Fabulous parents support the children with their creative tasks at home, all resilient under pressure with a close eye on well-being. Special thanks to creative guru Mark Robinson's mantra: 'Connect, Collaborate, Multiply' Our eye is on the prize.



Hooray!

It's Spring, all pupils return to school with a solid foundation of artistic exploration for their Arts Awards which they build upon and continue with all covid protocols adhered to. They sketch, paint, print, sculpt, collage, photograph, dance, song write, smile, sing, creative write with virtual Seven Stories Authors and Arvon Poets, begin to play instruments once again – our drummers performing via Youtube in collaboration with our friends at Music and Apollo Creative Studies. Their achievements are recognised and shared with peers in their bubbles then zoomed throughout the school. The children are flourishing in the arts and feel successful.



*'I like drumming to the beat
and creating my own rhythm.'*
Alice



*'Love one another
as I have loved you'*

How do I know the children feel successful?

I ask them. In a series of interviews their immense enjoyment of their arts experiences is articulated, together with their ideas of how our evolving schools' cultural offer can be innovatively improved. A selection of our pupils will achieve Arts Award Discover before school breaks up for summer holidays and, oh, how we will celebrate this! Corpus Christi RC Primary School has everything crossed for venues opening up to our students in the Autumn term; MIMA welcoming us back to its galleries and Sage Gateshead flinging open its auditorium doors. We have the highest of hopes for our creative futures.