

# You are... a Pupil Referral Unit

**Artsmark works with an ever-growing network of schools and alternative education settings to develop and celebrate their commitment to arts, culture and creativity.**

Your  
Artsmark  
journey  
starts here

We support a wide range of education settings, including **Pupil Referral Units**, to achieve an Artsmark award.

While we consider the unique context of every setting, we understand that there may be additional considerations or challenges for your setting that you feel could affect your Artsmark journey.

The guidance below is designed to reassure you that:

- the Artsmark framework is **relevant** and **adaptable** to your setting
- we have an **awareness** and **understanding** of the key issues you may face on your Artsmark journey
- our assessment will be **sensitive** and **sympathetic** to the broader context of your setting
- we have a range of **support options available**, including resources, partnerships and networking opportunities, to support you through your Artsmark journey

For more information on how to embark on an Artsmark journey and what it involves, go to **Your Next Steps**

## Will Artsmark work for us?

Yes! Artsmark provides a **flexible framework** that is **adaptable** to a range of educational providers enabling them to champion arts, culture and creativity in their learning and teaching environments – Pupil Referral Units are no exception.

Arts engagement is an effective way for your setting to **broaden** and **enrich** its learning provision. Personalised learning plans offer rich scope to accommodate creative approaches to help pupils meet their individual learning objectives, and providing an outlet for creative expression can have **therapeutic**, as well as educational value.

Pupil Referral settings on their Artsmark journey have found that enhancing their arts and cultural provision is effective in helping children and young people:

- improve their **mental health** and **wellbeing**
- **express** themselves and articulate their issues and challenges
- take **ownership** over their creative expression
- have an **input** in their own learning and personal development
- build and develop **transferable** learning skills

## Your setting and the Artsmark criteria

We understand that some of the recommended steps outlined in our Artsmark criteria may pose some additional considerations or initial challenges for your setting, such as:

### Curriculum Design

We understand that your curriculum is highly personalised to your pupils' backgrounds, needs and learning plans which vary from pupil to pupil. We recognise that the ways in which you embed arts and creativity in your setting will be informed by the unique contexts of the children and young people you work with, rather than linking to an overall 'whole school' pedagogy. Depending on the varied and specific needs of the children and young people you work with, Pupil Referral settings may use the arts where they are deemed to be the best approach, potentially in a more focused and specific way.

**Our assessment will take into consideration that use of the Arts may not always be the central approach taken to teach across a range of subjects for all learners.**



*“The shift towards an arts-focused curriculum galvanised a feeling of pride in our school and our practice, giving pupils and staff a tangible sense of achievement and success.”*

**New Regent's College,  
Hackney, London**

### Partnerships

We encourage settings to connect with external partners such as arts and cultural organisations in your area, as well as other local educational settings, to help strengthen your delivery of quality arts and cultural education.

We appreciate that building relationships and forming local partnerships with a wide range of external organisations could be more challenging for your setting considering:

- the behavioural needs of some learners require a level of experience and expertise that may limit the range of arts organisations you can work with locally
- visits, workshops and other opportunities through partnerships will be offered where relevant and amenable to the cohort of children and young people you work with, rather than a cycle of pre-designed activities and experiences
- additional resources or staff support may be needed in order to make necessary adjustments to ensure pupils can benefit fully from the experience

**When deciding your award level, we will take into consideration that opportunities to work with a wider range of external partners may be more limited than in mainstream settings.**

## Continued Professional Development

We ask settings to demonstrate a clear commitment to arts and culture CPD for all members of staff, and to allocate the appropriate resources to do so.

We understand that the priority for CPD provision for staff may be focused on best practice in interpreting and meeting the wide range of learner needs of the children and young people you work with. Your CPD offer may incorporate the development of knowledge, skills and expertise in arts and cultural education where it is most useful and relevant to the core focus of learner needs. We will look for ways in which you explore arts-based approaches as part of wider CPD drivers such as mental health, wellbeing and behavioural management.



**Our assessment will take into account that use of the Arts in CPD provision will be driven by the backgrounds and needs of learners and welcome its use as a contributing factor rather than the primary focus.**

*“The cross-curricular approach in the arts has established strong links with other subjects and permeates through the entire curriculum.”*

**The CE Academy,  
Northampton**



## Awarding a level

Our assessment process reflects our commitment to support all educational settings to engage in arts and cultural learning:

- We give every submission an assessment that is equitable across all setting types.
- We ensure that the Artsmark award criteria are applied with a sensitive understanding and awareness of the broader context of your setting.



## Your next steps

Artsmark has proven to be a highly effective framework in supporting children and young people's learning, personal development and self-expression within alternative provision settings. We hope that this guidance reassures you that Artsmark offers a flexible framework that is right for your setting, and we look forward to following and supporting you on your unique Artsmark journey.

Find out more about Artsmark and the support on offer below, or to start your journey, [register for Artsmark](#) today.

## How we will support you

### Resources and Guidance

We have a wide range of [resources and guidance](#) to help get you started and to support you throughout your Artsmark journey.

- [Download our Artsmark booklet](#)
- Use our [Self-Assessment Framework](#) to consider your current arts and cultural provision and reflect on the areas you may wish to develop
- Read our [Artsmark application guidance booklet](#) to understand the process

Our full range of resources and application templates are always available on our [website](#).

### Your Bridge organisation

Your regional Bridge organisation offers ongoing support throughout your Artsmark journey, including 1-to-1 support sessions and practical resources. Your Bridge can also help you to connect with other Artsmark settings and with your local network of leading cultural organisations, including our Artsmark Partners.

Find your local [Bridge organisation here](#).

### Artsmark Partners

Artsmark Partners are our network of arts and cultural organisations that understand the Artsmark criteria and can support schools and education settings on their Artsmark journey.

Find your local [Artsmark Partners here](#).

### Contact us

If you have any questions or require further information and guidance, visit our website [www.artsmark.org.uk](http://www.artsmark.org.uk) or email us: [artsmark@artscouncil.org.uk](mailto:artsmark@artscouncil.org.uk)

“*The outcomes have far exceeded expectation; we have grown as educators and as a direct result, pupil outcomes have also noticeably improved.*”

**New Regent's College, Hackney, London**