

You are... a Special educational needs & disability (SEND) school or college

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 **SEND primary and secondary schools** and colleges, 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 SEND 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** to help educational settings champion arts, culture and creativity in their learning and teaching environments, and SEND settings are no exception.

Arts engagement is an effective way for your setting to broaden and enrich its learning provision. The highly personalised learning plans that SEND settings use offer rich scope to accommodate creative approaches to help meet your pupils' broader learning objectives. Providing an outlet for creative expression and offering arts and cultural activities and opportunities can also have therapeutic, as well as educational value.



By following the Artsmark framework, SEND schools on their Artsmark journey have found that enhancing their arts and cultural provision is effective in helping pupils to:

- express themselves and develop a sense of **identity**
- improve their **awareness** and **engagement** with the wider world, beyond the classroom
- interact with new people and feel **comfortable** in new situations
- develop their own cultural taste and **ownership** over their creative expression
- build and develop **transferable** learning skills such as collaboration, reflection, sharing knowledge with peers, honing and crafting performances and products



Photo © Mehul Patel /
James Brindley Academy

“Through Artsmark we are seeing the positive results of our endeavours, with improved emotional resilience, creativity and self-esteem in our pupils and young people.”

**North Ridge Community School,
Doncaster**

“Artsmark allows us to cater for the increasingly diverse ability range of pupils, we aim to engage the least able and challenge and stretch the most able, ensuring a positive and inclusive experience for all.”

Victoria School, Birmingham

Your SEND 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:

Partnerships

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

We appreciate that building long-lasting partnerships with a wide range of external organisations could be more challenging for your setting if:

- some external venues are unable to meet access requirements and additional support needs of learners
- the learning behaviours and physical needs of some learners require a level of experience and expertise that may limit the range of arts organisations and practitioners you can work with locally
- additional resources or staff support are needed in order to make necessary adjustments to ensure pupils feel safe and 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 your staff will always be primarily centred on the diverse needs, challenges and innovations for SEND learners.

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.

Our assessment will take into account that use of the Arts in SEND settings may not always be the key driver in CPD provision.



Photo © Xavier Fiddes / Northway Primary School

Curriculum Design

We understand the flexible position the arts and creativity may hold within the broader spectrum of your learning strategy and curriculum, especially where highly personalised methods are required to support varied and specific learner needs.

Depending on the changing needs of learners, SEND settings may sometimes embed creative approaches in a curriculum design offered to all students, or at other times apply them in targeted and highly innovative ways to small groups or individuals.

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.

Photo © Mehul Patel / James Brindley Academy

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.



Your next steps

SEND schools are often sources for some of the most innovative practice in arts and creative education. 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 or email us: artsmark@artscouncil.org.uk

“*During our Artsmark journey, the varying abilities of pupils were represented and celebrated. They were inspired to be their best and many students exceeded expectation as self-confidence was boosted by arts activities.*”

Addington School, Reading