inspiring inclusive creative learning

bow arts
supporting artists for 30 years

Bow Arts Learning Impact Report 2024-25



About Bow Arts Learning

This year we celebrate 30 years of Bow Arts. We exist to support artists and create opportunities to work, learn and enjoy affordable, lifelong access to the arts. With our innovative social enterprise model we seek to create sustainable local creative economies where donations from affordable artists studios help to subsidise our learning programme and community outreach.

We have been reflecting on all the children, teachers and artists we have worked with since the learning programme began. What started as a partnership with one local secondary school, St Pauls Way, has grown into a programme that engages 10,000 children and young people annually. This year also marked the tenth anniversary of the Poplar Consortium. As our longest running consortium and one of the first, the Poplar Consortium has helped to shape the way in which we currently work in partnership with schools.

Central to our model is the skilled pool of artist educators who work with children and teachers, developing exciting and impactful projects. Their skills, creativity and enthusiasm make our programme what it is and support children and teachers in realising their creative ideas. In turn, we aim to develop our artists' professional practice through a free programme of training. Our Artist Educator Trainee Programme, now in its eighth year, provides training for artists who want to develop their learning practice in school settings.

Our Access to Creative Careers programme aims to improve access to quality art education and remove barriers to working as a creative professional. We hope to see the young people we work with today become the creative professionals we collaborate with in the future.

A huge thank you to the team, artists, schools, teachers and children who have dedicated their time, energy and ideas to our programme over the past year and who continue to make our work the best it can be.

Helen Bradbury
Head of Learning

The Learning Team are:

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Learning Project Manager

Helen Bradbury
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With thanks to past team members:

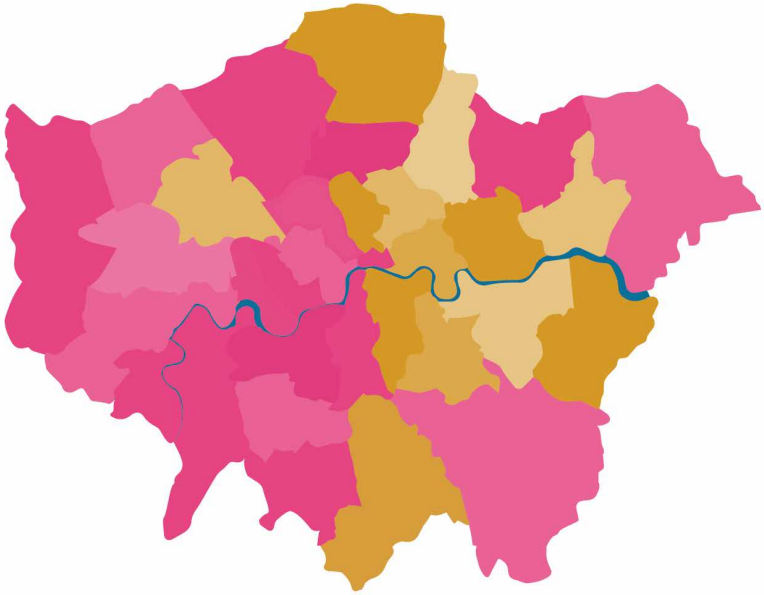
Laura Lloyd
Learning Project Manager

Tom Sherriff
Learning Project Manager

Natalia Skarpeta
Learning Project Manager

April 2024 to March 2025 in numbers

We have worked with **60** **schools** across **13** **boroughs***

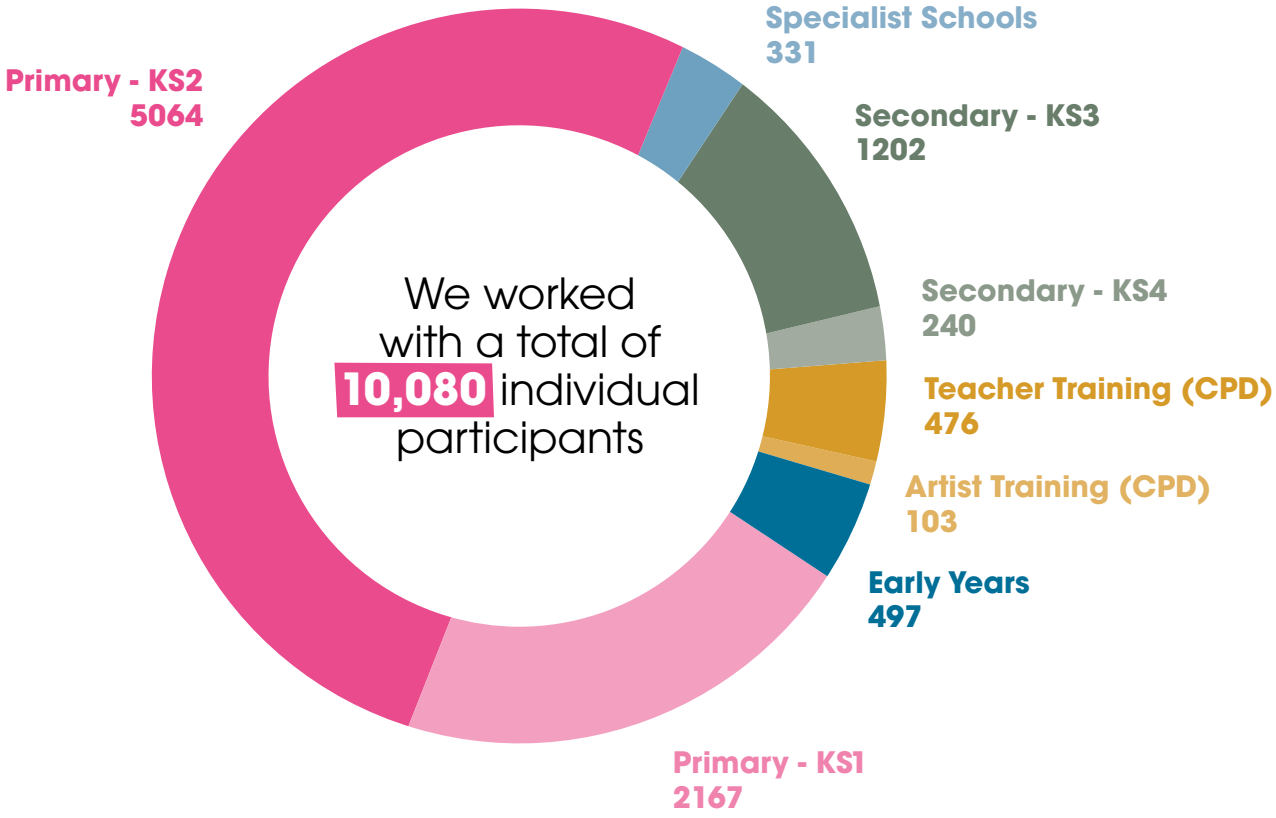


*Barking & Dagenham, Bexley, Brent, Croydon, Enfield, Greenwich, Hackney, Islington, Lewisham, Newham, Southwark, Tower Hamlets, Waltham Forest

Our artist educators have delivered **745** days of **workshops** in schools

We managed **91** **projects** with **163** artist contracts, & worked with **58** artist educators

119 young people completed an **Arts Award qualification** on our programme



94% of children & young people said they **enjoyed** Bow Arts projects

91% of children & young people said they **learnt something new**

100% of teachers said our CPDs would have an **impact** on their teaching. **39%** said the CPDs would have **some impact**, & **61%** said our CPDs would have **a significant impact**

95% of artists said they have **learnt new skills** from our CPDs that can be applied to their practice

Consortia highlights

Throughout 2024-25, we worked with four Consortia: Barking & Dagenham, Lewisham, Poplar & Sarah Bonnell (Newham).

Within the space of a year, each partner school completed their own bespoke project with our artist educators & participated in Continued Professional Development (CPD) sessions for teachers. In some consortia, the schools pooled resources together to deliver a shared Arts Award programme and celebration exhibition.



Barking & Dagenham Consortium

Partnership of four schools in Barking & Dagenham

Four schools in Barking and Dagenham came together to share teacher CPD opportunities throughout the year as part of their consortium programme. Based on a skills audit in their schools, Art Coordinators jointly selected focuses for the CPD workshops that would most benefit teaching staff, developing skills and confidence to teach art in their classrooms.



Muralist Will Redgrove worked with teachers from our Barking and Dagenham consortium to share insights into his practice and techniques to apply in the classroom. During the afterschool CPD, teachers participated hands-on using spray paint and stencils and exploring the process of scaling-up artworks. The group worked collaboratively with the opportunities to ask questions throughout.

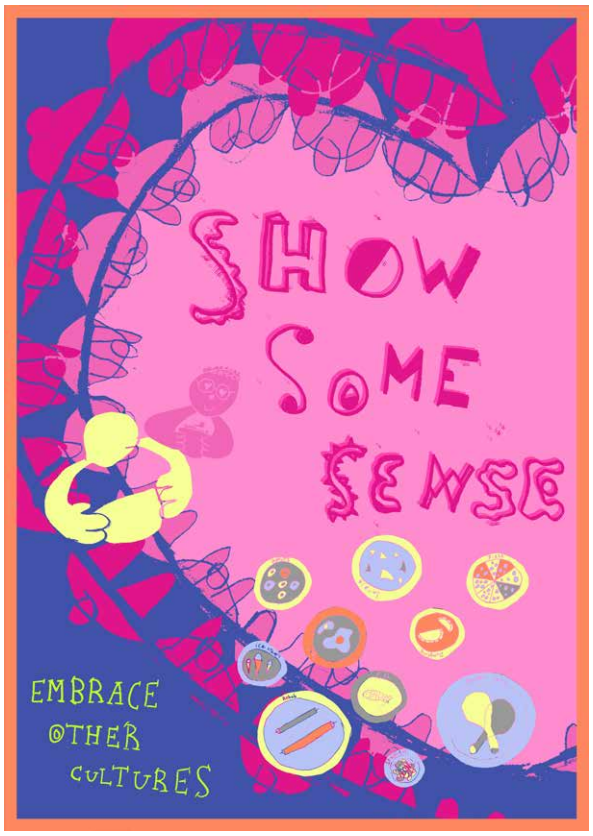
Sarah Bonnell Consortium

Partnership of seven schools in Newham

A common theme across this year's Sarah Bonnell consortium projects was identity. Projects focused on exploring students' individual, community and school identities through a variety of approaches to the topic.

A great example of this was the project at Selwyn Primary School led by artist educator Katka Krajči working with Year 5 pupils.





The project was linked to a Project Based Learning (PBL) initiative developed around the 'Art of Persuasion'. The project was designed for the artist and pupils to work collaboratively to produce a series of poster artworks, each responding to an issue of their choice. Katka and the Year 5's created six collaborative, expressive, and vibrant designs that platform and celebrate student voice and the power of advocacy.

Poplar Consortium

Partnership of seven schools in Tower Hamlets

> ***"The best part was seeing other schools' drawings and getting inspiration from it."***
> Student

This year was a special year for the Poplar Consortium, marking the tenth anniversary of partnership and collaboration between Bow Arts and schools across Tower Hamlets.

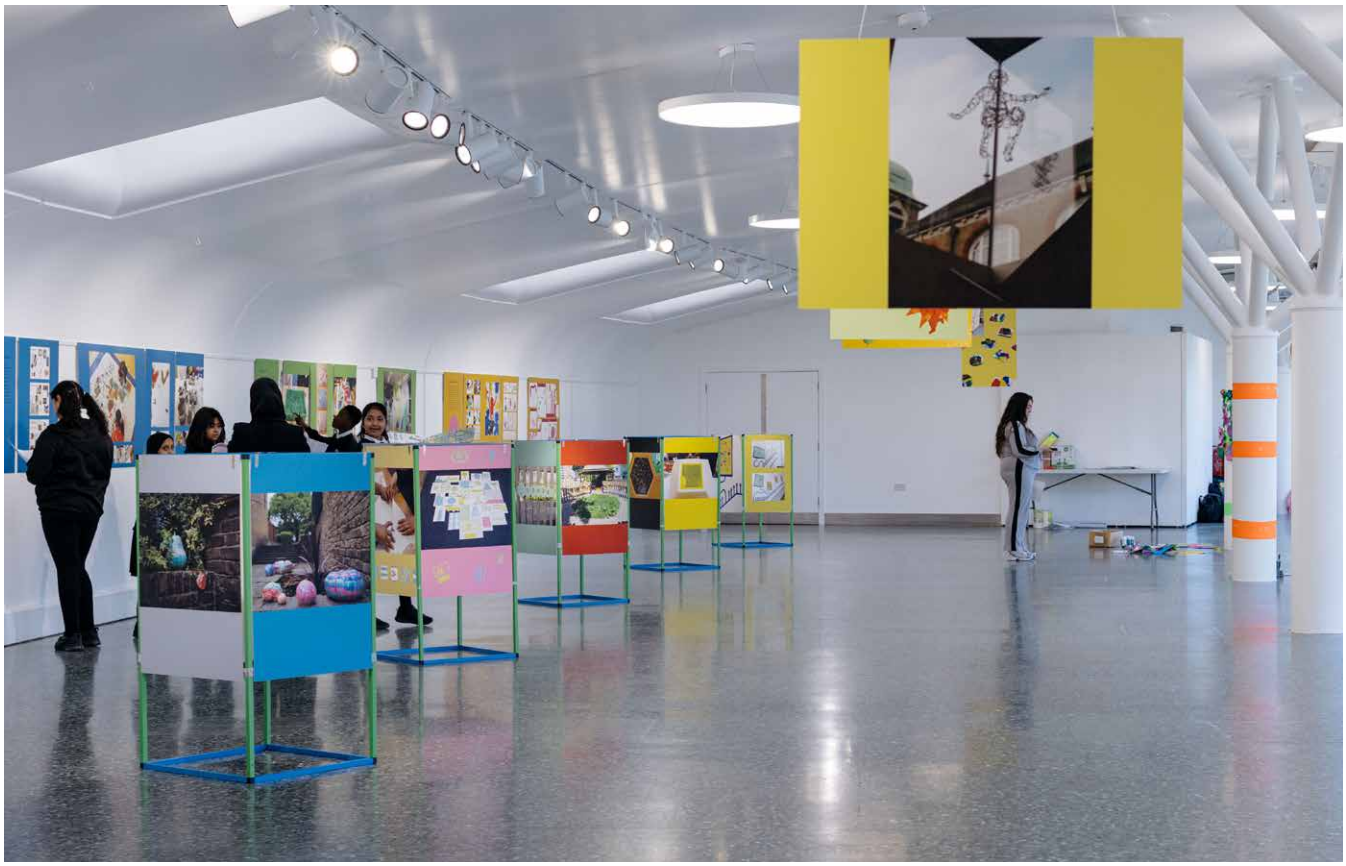
'The Poplar Consortium Exhibition: Celebrating 10 Years' was curated by Liane Harris and took place at The Art Pavilion, Mile End in March 2025.

We brought together work created in the past year by students and teachers across our seven 2024-2025 partner schools, as well as project highlights from the past decade – from collaborative woven hangings, to jesmonite fruit sculptures.



Around 90 students enjoyed a visit to the exhibition and got the chance to see their school's projects on display. They also participated in collaborative workshops, led by Bow Arts artist educators, Tom Berry and Esther Neslen, who had worked with the consortium in the partnership year.

> ***"I enjoyed it because I was using my brain and sharing my creativity"***
> Student



"I really enjoyed the roles everyone had and how we made a map with thread."
Student



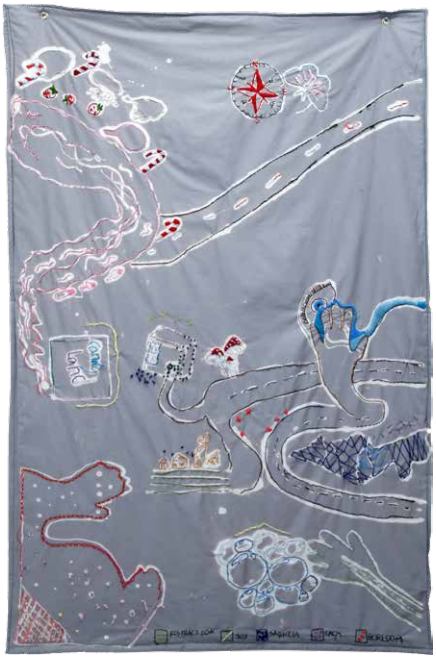
Lewisham Consortium

Partnership of three schools in Lewisham

This year, schools in the Lewisham consortium chose to develop their students' skills and knowledge of material processes, creating textile artworks to display.

Nicole Morris worked with Year 6 students at St William of York Primary School to create a series of fabric artworks using resist, bleach and embroidery techniques. They responded to the theme of mapping to tie in with their geography project.

Students created initial drawings in their sketchbooks before scaling up designs to collate onto larger, collaborative compositions. The final designs were transferred onto fabric with carbon paper to be drawn on permanently with bleach and embroidered. Nicole demonstrated a range of embroidery and applique techniques for students to select and apply to their final artworks, which were then made into hangings and installed in the school hall.







Programme highlights

We design innovative arts-based learning for early years, primary, secondary & college settings, inspiring both students & staff. Tailored to each school's needs, projects range from curriculum-focused & skills-based to artwork commissions.

Our Access to Creative Careers initiative connects the young people in the communities we work in with professionals in the creative industries.

Additionally, we support teachers by enhancing their skills through artist-led Teacher Continued Professional Development (CPD) workshops, introducing them to new creative approaches.



Primary

In a year, we have developed & delivered 570 full day sessions for primary school children.

Artist educator Reza Ben Gajra worked with Year 6 students and teachers at Grafton Primary School (Islington) to make a stop-frame animation inspired by the poem 'All Day It Has Rained' by Alun Lewis. The project was part of their Autumn WW2 topic, and provided opportunities for students to consolidate their learning from other areas of the curriculum as well as creatively explore the theme.

The students worked in groups to design characters and backgrounds, considering the use of transparent layers and silhouettes to create striking compositions within the animation. Reza introduced them to animation techniques, and students were actively involved in setting up and animating using a camera, tripod, computer and lightbox. Finally, students recorded their own voices reading the poem to narrate their animation.



"We're all delighted. Children see that there's something to aspire to."
Teacher



Secondary

Throughout the year we developed & delivered 55 days of workshops for secondary school children.

Students in Year 10 at Riverside School (Barking) worked with artist Liane Harris on a photography project exploring the theme of identity.

Students took inspiration from their homes, their cultures and their school surroundings for their photographs. They developed their photography skills, thinking about the placement of a model in the photo, the props, backgrounds and lighting, to create striking photographic portraits. The final portraits were shown in the celebration exhibition in October at The Wilds in Barking Riverside.

Specialist

Children & young people participated in accessible & inclusive activities during 93 days of workshops developed for specialist settings.

Phoenix Secondary (Tower Hamlets), a specialist school dedicated to educating autistic children and young people, collaborated with Bow Arts for their Work-Related Learning module. Artist educator Jenny Pengilly worked with students to explore mark-making inspired by natural resources such as leaves, stones, charcoal and chalk.

Jenny worked with one class over the course of a term to explore mark making in its various forms. The students were introduced to different drawing materials, tools and surfaces with sensory activities incorporated into the process. The project encouraged students to work collaboratively in small groups and to develop skills necessary for a working environment such as; setting up, tidying away, managing their workspace, using equipment, and asking for help if needed.



Artist Educator Residencies

In 2024-2025, 4 schools worked with an artist educator in residence.

Artist educators Julie Vermeille and Natalie Ryde worked across the school at Columbia Primary School (Tower Hamlets) to deliver weekly practical art lessons to the students throughout the academic year. Together, Julie and Natalie designed art projects in response to each class's overarching termly topic.

Sketchbooks were used in the sessions for project development and to demonstrate skill progression, and students were introduced to new artists, processes and approaches through their projects. Over the course of the year, Julie and Natalie worked with 420 students and provided a form of live CPD for the teaching staff.



"I have learnt the importance of making links between 'real art'/ artists' work & what the children are doing in class."

Teacher

Arts Award

This year, 119 children & young people built upon their artistic skills & knowledge to achieve their Arts Award qualifications.

Arts Award aims to provide children with experiences that develop their creativity, communication, reflective thinking and confidence. Participants are guided through the programme to achieve a recognised qualification and introduced to new processes and approaches throughout.

> *"I learnt how to cast and how to write about important things and learn about new artists and how special they are."*
> Student



Twenty-two KS2 students from our Lewisham Consortium schools achieved their Arts Award Discover qualifications over the May half term. The students explored painting, mark-making, collage and sensory artworks alongside artist educators Emily Hopkins and Leanne Ingram. At the end of the programme, the students curated an exhibition of their work to celebrate their achievements and share with family and friends.

Creative Cover

Across the academic year, 5 schools benefitted from Artist Cover for teacher Planning, Preparation & Assessment (PPA) time.

At Moreland Primary School (Islington) Artist educators Emma Jacobs and Christina Rose Brown have provided Creative Cover for teacher's PPA throughout 2024-25. Both artists have become an established presence in the school and this year have worked with students in Years 2, 3 and 5.

The students have covered a range of topics and learned skills working with a variety art materials throughout the year including; textiles – inspired by artists like Alice Kettle and Hannah Rae, gestural drawing – inspired by cave paintings and the work of Henry Moore, paper sculptures and origami looking at the work of Gabby O'Connor and Kody Kato, and drawing London's architecture looking at Vincent Alexander Booth and Jo Peel. Both artists have built strong connections in the school with staff and pupils and will be continuing to work together in the next academic year.





Permanent Artworks

We have created 19 permanent artworks with bespoke designs responding to their unique school environments.

Together with artist educator Miyuki Kasahara, Year 3 students from Southwood Primary School (Barking and Dagenham) created a vibrant sculptural installation in their school garden that doubles up as a teaching resource. Students applied learning from their science topic 'Plants' with Miyuki to create gigantic sculptural flowers that clearly demonstrate the anatomic parts of a flower. Each student created a mould and cast a petal in jesmonite, all of which were used during the construction of the sculptures.







Partnerships

Bow Arts works with partners to expand opportunities for schools to take part in creative projects.



This year saw Bow Arts Trust purchase the Lakeside Centre, which sits on Southmere Lake in Thamesmead, securing a permanent home for creatives to work in the area. In Autumn 2024, six local schools in Thamesmead worked with Bow Arts and artist educator Matt Ponting on a project to celebrate and explore Southmere Lake. Together, they created an illustrated map of the lake and its surroundings based on the drawings created by pupils, which aims to encourage local children and families to explore the area.

Through outdoor drawing workshops, the children explored the lake, wildlife and habitats around Thamesmead, encouraging them to discover the natural environment on their doorstep. Over 1000 drawings were made in total by 140 students, with images and elements of the children's artwork coming together to create this map, which is available in print at the library and on our website.

The project was commissioned by Peabody and supported by The London Borough of Bexley as part of the Schools Super Zone health initiative.

Access To Creative Careers

Over 600 children took part in careers-linked events & workshops in 24-25.

Our Access to Creative Careers projects aim to develop children and young people's understanding of the creative industries, equipping them with the knowledge they need to make informed decisions about their future. These projects offer students first-hand experience of speaking to and working alongside professional creatives with flexible formats, such as creative careers fairs and careers-linked workshops. By delivering accessible and inclusive career-focused experiences to children and young people in schools, we hope to contribute towards better representation within the creative industries as a longer-term goal.

> ***"Having an opportunity of asking questions about their professional journeys and seeing how they work and having the opportunity to use their equipment made a huge impact on our pupils."***
>
> Teacher





Studio Visits

With studios across east and southeast London and an eclectic mix of studio holders, Bow Arts can offer exciting studio visits for students to discover what professional studios look like and speak to artists, designers and makers about their work and career pathways.

Eight Year 8 students from Eko Pathway School (Newham) visited our Bow Road studio site to meet sound artist Joanna Penso and photographer Jonny Bosworth. Joanna introduced students to her sound-led experiments exploring bodily sounds as artistic material and invited students to record their own sound piece making their own weird and wonderful noises. Jonny gave an introduction to his portrait photography practice and provided a professional set-up for students to have their own photo shoot. Students also visited Bow Arts' Nunnery Gallery and took part in a workshop led by artist educator Sara Heywood where they responded to themes in the exhibition.





Careers-linked workshops

Artist educator and illustrator Tom Berry spent three days at Willow Bank Primary (Bexley) to help Year 1 students learn about being an illustrator and respond to Caryl Hart's book 'Meet the Weather'. Working in small groups, the students got stuck into processes like marbling, block-printing, collaging and cyanotype printing, and as such gained experience of a number of creative techniques to apply to illustration.

> ***"Children were introduced to basic printing techniques, allowing them to explore textures, patterns, and colour mixing. They experimented freely, which encouraged imaginative thinking and personal expression."***
>
> Teacher

> ***"It was wonderful, there were many activities and multiple opportunities. Everyone was nice and I took part in many activities."***
>
> Student



Creative Careers Events

Students from Langdon Academy developed their understanding of the creative industries at a creative careers fair held at the school. Students engaged with twenty-three different stallholders alongside their parents and siblings. The stallholders represented a wide range of creative careers, such as textile design, documentary film-making, 3D games animation and architecture as well as stalls from colleges and universities so that students could explore educational pathways. From screen printing to handling professional filming equipment, there were interactive activities that left students with practical insights into the careers and courses they discovered.

100% of students enjoyed the event

100% of students learnt something new

91% have a better understanding of creative pathways

91% have a better understanding of the skills needed for a creative career

73% feel they have or can develop the skills needed to have a career in the creative industries

Higher Education

Working with universities allows for two-way learning in creative education practice.

Goldsmiths MA Arts and Learning students visited Bow Arts to explore the research theme 'known and unknown' with our Learning team and artist educator Jasmin Bhanji. Jasmin's practice looks at the concept of learning through process, and during the session she shared ideas about what naivety and unknowing can bring to learning. The discussion centred on the differences between product and process driven projects within a classroom setting, drawing on Jasmin's research interrogating how perceptions of 'artistic skill' can be a barrier to learning.

During discussion we shared examples of previous Bow Arts Learning projects with the MA group before a workshop led by Jasmin that considered the characteristics of different materials and the groups of thought they can trigger.

This has become an annual visit to share arts education practice and ideas where both facilitators and participants learn from each other.





Curriculum Development

We are currently halfway through a curriculum development programme, exploring how to support schools to create art and design curricula which are relevant to and representative of their student communities. Artist educator Jasmin Bhanji has been working with Capel Manor Primary School (Enfield) over the last year, revising their curriculum based on feedback from children and teachers. Jasmin and the art coordinator have developed schemes of learning which refer to diverse artists, movements and processes, and encourage children to respond in a way informed by their own experiences.

Next year we will broaden the project out to more schools and share our findings about devising art and design curricula which are relevant to, and informed by, the children and young people in our schools.

> ***"After the CPD I saw teachers put into practice what they'd learnt"***
> Art Coordinator

Teacher Continued Professional Development (CPD)

Over 470 teachers took part in some form of training session with us over the past year.

Our artist-led sessions introduce teachers to new approaches and ideas. They aim to be practical and focus on how to use tools and resources already available in schools to run arts-based activities in the classroom. We encourage participating teachers to consider the benefits of integrating art into other subject areas. By embedding creativity across the curriculum, we believe in fostering a creative curriculum and a creative culture in order to engage students in alternative ways.

Artist educator Amy Leung led a shared CPD for staff members across our six Poplar Consortium schools. The session focused on playful and exploratory methods to introduce artmaking to early years and KS1 children with additional educational needs.

Drawing on different education theory and principles, the workshop demonstrated how sensory, hands-on play can support children's communication and foster independence.

Collaboration was a big part of the session, with teachers sharing ideas and working together to create



activities with their students' needs in mind. Staff left with valuable new skills: a better understanding of how to use a range of materials, plenty of inspiration for ways to nurture independent creative play in their classrooms, and effective differentiation while ensuring language progression and skill development.

100% of teachers said this specialist training would have a significant impact on their teaching practice



Our artist educators

We value the vital role our artist educators play in the successful delivery of our programme & seek to create opportunities for growth & development. We currently have a community of 70 artist educators, with diverse artistic practices & specialisms.

Our annual artist educator survey shows that 87% of respondents said that their art practice has been influenced by their work with Bow Arts.

"My whole practice is education so it's a constant cycle of practice & reflection. I have learnt so much working with Bow. It has been a huge part of my professional development. Because I've worked in so many different ways, so many different situations & Bow Arts seem to believe in me & trust me. Which has been hugely supportive & encouraging."

Artist educator



Artist Continued Professional Development (CPD)

This year we held 6 CPD sessions for our artist educators offering space to learn & share experiences & skills with each other as well as external training facilitators.

We encourage our artist educators to continue developing both their artistic and educational practices. Bow Arts supports this by providing a programme of free training opportunities in response to the needs of the artist educators we work with.

100% of participants said the sessions were useful & relevant

95% of participants said they had gained new skills or knowledge to apply to their practice

Artist educator Miyuki Kasahara delivered a twilight skills exchange to share processes and practical tips for jesmonite casting in the classroom. Miyuki walked artists through the process of creating textured impressions in clay moulds, measuring and mixing jesmonite before casting and cleaning their final objects. Following the session, artists were provided with information about suppliers and quantities for different volumes in order to mitigate waste materials. The session was open to both our lead and trainee artist educators, and provided space for them to develop their knowledge in a hands-on yet laid back environment, while making connections with fellow artist educators.



"I observed different ways of engaging the students, like introducing context/ art history, comparing and contrasting two artists' work, asking questions/opinions."

Artist educator trainee

"I've picked up useful teaching strategies and frameworks that I've been able to apply in workshops and school sessions."

Artist educator



Artist Educator Trainee Programme

2024-25 marked the 8th iteration of our annual Artist Educator Trainee Programme, where 4 aspiring artist educators successfully completed the traineeship.

Each trainee had up to 15 opportunities to shadow lead artists delivering arts-based learning projects across primary, secondary and specialist settings.

The programme includes the chance to lead an activity or session with support from a lead artist educator with the aim that they are ready to join our pool of lead artist educators by the end of the programme.

Alongside school observations, all trainees had access to professional development through artist-led training sessions – designed by our team in accordance with suggestions by our artist educators. Sessions this year covered areas such as Behaviour Management led by facilitator Claire Zanelli & Working with SEND children and young people led by artist educator Jenny Pengilly.

The Artist Educator Trainee Programme is a paid traineeship opportunity, designed for artists who are passionate about arts education, looking to gain hands-on skills and experience working in schools, and are currently underrepresented in the arts sector.



"This residency has been pivotal in shaping both my personal artistic development and my teaching approach. The skills and experiences I've gained will undoubtedly benefit my students, as I can now offer them a richer and more informed perspective on the art world. The studio has become more than just a workspace; it is a springboard for my future artistic endeavours and a catalyst for my growth as both an artist and an educator."

Teacher residency artist

Teacher Studio Residency

In 2024-25, we offered residencies for 6 teachers to develop their personal art practices in central London.

We believe students have a richer art education when their teachers are engaged in their personal practice, and consequently this year we gave teachers the opportunity to have a free studio space in our meanwhile space in Shaftesbury Avenue. The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive and the two key aims have been achieved for all participants:

All teacher residency artists stated that the residency had a significant impact on their personal practice

All teacher residency artists stated that the residency had a fair amount or significant impact on their classroom practice/the work of their students





Educator Conference 2025

This year we hosted our first educator conference, open to artists and teachers, focused on 'Reimagining an Art Curriculum for All'. Held over two days in our meanwhile space on Shaftesbury Avenue the programme consisted of talks, workshops and panel discussions looking at how to make the curriculum more relevant and representative of a range of abilities, neurodiversity, races, genders and class.

Our keynotes were delivered by Bennie Kara, school leader and founder of Diverse Educators; Marlene Wylie, creative education consultant and former President of the NSEAD (National Society of Education in Art and Design) and Dr Penny Hay, artist, professor and researcher. Our artist educators lead workshops on themes of gender identity, representation, challenging norms and making practice accessible.



95% of attendees said they learnt new skills or gained knowledge to apply to their education practice or career

79% of attendees said they now feel more equipped to incorporate art as part of wider curricula

82% of attendees said they feel confident to implement diversity-focused teaching strategies to increase inclusion in the classroom

"I was encouraged and inspired and I hope to have the courage to make the small but necessary changes in my school."
Teacher

The year ahead

Next year will bring some exciting opportunities to expand our networks & support more artists, teachers & children in their creative practice, including a new consortium of schools in Hackney.



Photo credits:
6, 8, 17, 21: Emily-Jayne Nolan;
7: Selwyn Primary School students;
9: Nicole Morris; 11: Riverside School students; 12: Jenny Pengilly;
13: Christina Rose Brown;
14: Miyuki Kasahara; Sean Orr;
15: Courtesy of Peabody;
16 (right): Jonny Bosworth;
20, 22, 23: Hallie Primus

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Contact us

If you are interested in working with us this year or would like to know more about our programme, please explore our website or get in touch:

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