



Arts and culture policy 2017

Date of Policy: January 2017

Date of Review: January 2019

1. Overview

At the Thomas Gainsborough School we passionately believe in providing students with a breadth of experience, academic, social and cultural. As a school which carries the name of one of Britain's greatest painters, we feel it is our responsibility to provide the students of the Thomas Gainsborough School with a high quality, enriching experience of culture and the Arts. The creative sectors in Britain, such as design, graphics, music and film are among the strongest and most successful in the world and we aim to provide students with experience which equips them to understand the value of the Arts and the possible further education and career pathways they might embark on after their time in our school. In doing so we intend to not only make our students more competitive in the contemporary workplace, but to enrich their experience of life and develop a creative approach to their work.

2. Aims of the policy

This policy aims to embed creative learning and a strong appreciation of the Arts and culture at the heart of the culture of our school. This objective is undertaken through the following approaches:

- A vibrant and effective program of curriculum options available to all students, including Art and Design, Photography, Textiles, Drama, Music, Dance and Media. In delivering an outstanding range of Arts subjects at all levels of the school we provide students with a broad choice of study suitable to their individual learning styles.
- An outstanding program of enrichment opportunities for all students in the Arts, both linked to the curriculum and encompassing additional extra-curricular opportunities such as performance and exhibitions.
- Opportunities to gain additional qualifications in the Arts, including the Art Award (awarded by Trinity College) which is offered to all students in key stage three (with the chance to gain higher level qualifications once the bronze level award has been achieved) and the LAMDA award.
- Arts and cultural trips, visits and events offered voluntarily and as part of the enrichment day program.
- Dedicated gallery spaces throughout the school sites through which students may experience outstanding visual Arts exhibitions and exhibit and curate their own. Students are also able to interact by exhibitions of work provided by outside agencies and visiting Artists.
- The embedding of Arts and culture through lesson planning across the wider school curriculum and through activities delivered in academic tutoring sessions and enrichment days.

- High quality links between the school and outside agencies, such as Gainsborough's House in Sudbury which enhance the school's Art and cultural offer.

3. Artsmark

Our school holds platinum level Artsmark status, which recognises outstanding provision in the creative Arts and is awarded by the Arts Council of England. Artsmark is similar to other statuses which recognise a school adding value in a specific area (such as investors in people) and assesses the whole school contribution to the creative development of students. The Thomas Gainsborough School began the process of applying for Artsmark in spring 2016 and has now successfully achieved the status. The 4 key principles in point 4 were developed as part of the school's statement of commitment to the Artsmark process, and are the basis of our school's creative ethos. As an Artsmark school we are committed to making our school a hub of Arts excellence in our community and a leading school in our academy trust. Artsmark status also provides us with the opportunity to access external resources such as visiting Artists, programs of Arts activities and partnerships with Arts providers, which we will deploy to enhance the access of our students to a wider range of experiences. Our school has active links with Gainsborough House in Sudbury, with whom we run workshops connecting our students with the work of Thomas Gainsborough and enhancing their knowledge of his roots in the local area.

4. The 4 key principles

The four key principles our school has committed to in our work through the Artsmark process are as follows:

- **Communication and expression:** through the work undertaken in our curriculum and the broad range of Arts activities available, students are able to develop their ability to express their thoughts, ideas and feelings through different media and approaches, including the development of personal visual language. Students are able to learn to thoughtfully interpret the meaning behind the ideas and thoughts of others, and to respect their value.
- **Cultural understanding and cohesion:** by engaging with the work of others and developing an understanding of their meaning, students are able to improve their understanding of other cultures and consider issues that affect others, thus broadening their viewpoint. By working collaboratively to create performances and exhibitions, students learn tolerance and teamwork skills.
- **Questioning and thinking about alternative ideas:** through their work in the Arts, students are encouraged to consider alternative approaches to problem solving, different approaches to idea development and a willingness to accept alternatives. Students learn to question the meaning behind the work of others and what they may be trying to express.
- **Challenging conceptions:** through their work, students are encouraged to question core concepts and adopt a flexible and innovative mind-set in their approach to learning. This is a transferrable skill which will benefit them across and beyond the school.

5. Curriculum links

We believe that Arts, creativity and culture should not be limited to teaching and learning in the Arts subjects, but rather crosses over and links with all aspects of the curriculum. We also believe that the cultural development of our students is intrinsically linked to our agenda of embedding core British values in the development of our students. Britain has always been a world leading centre of arts and culture, and this must be reflected through the work we undertake in our lessons. All

lessons at our school are now encouraged to make links with Arts and culture, providing deeper meaning and context to the work that the students undertake.