

Paul Hamlyn
Foundation

Teacher Development Fund

Embedding learning through the
arts in the primary curriculum

An independent evaluation of the pilot
programme 2016–18 by the Centre for the
Use of Research and Evidence in Education



“I have learned to try innovative approaches and be more flexible in my approach to teaching, enabling pupils to feel empowered to master language in a new way.”

Teacher, Burry Port Community Primary School



Senior leader observes film and literacy session in the classroom. Photo: Into Film.

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Foreword from Paul Hamlyn Foundation

The arts play a vital role in enriching young people's learning and educational experiences. Learning through the arts can engage and inspire young people, support their key educational outcomes and enable them to develop skills for life beyond school.

For many young people, particularly those experiencing the most disadvantage, the only opportunity to gain access to arts education is at school.

Improving young people's education and learning through the arts is central to the Teacher Development Fund (TDF). This Fund aims to enable teachers and school leaders to develop their skills, knowledge and experience in order to embed learning through the arts in the primary curriculum. The TDF was initially developed as a two-year pilot programme running from September 2016 to July 2018. This pilot comprised projects across England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, in which over 400 teachers and school leaders engaged in enquiry-based continuing professional development and learning (CPDL) facilitated by artist practitioners. Over 4,000 pupils were involved in the pilot projects.

This independent evaluation by the Centre for the Use of Research and Evidence in Education (CUREE) gives an overview of learning over the course of the two-year pilot programme and the experiences of those involved. Findings from the first year of the pilot programme can be accessed here: phf.org.uk/TDF/YearOnePilotEvaluation.

We would like to thank CUREE for their insight and analysis of the TDF pilot programme, as well as all those who took part in the pilot projects.

We hope the learning presented here can support more teachers, school leaders and arts/cultural organisations to embed learning through the arts in the primary curriculum.

To learn more about the Fund, please visit phf.org.uk/funds/TDF.

Context and rationale



Teachers take part in CPD session focusing on singing.
Photo: Stephen Beecroft.

Changes in the operating environment

Over the period of the Teacher Development Fund (TDF) pilot from 2016 to 2018, awareness of the challenges involved in prioritising learning through the arts in the primary curriculum began to gain momentum. In England, Ofsted has highlighted the risks of narrowing the curriculum to focus only on what is measured and emphasised the importance of breadth and depth. This has challenged schools and those who support them to consider the contribution of learning in and through the arts more seriously.

In Wales, the emphasis on the arts in the new National Curriculum and the work of designated Pioneer Schools are starting to move consideration of learning through the arts from aspiration towards supported planning and experimentation. Meanwhile the arts community is investing in and researching its own contribution. Key examples are the Durham Commission, the Learning About Culture partnership between the RSA and the Education Endowment Foundation, and the report from Tate and the Royal Shakespeare Company, *Time to Listen*.

Approaches to continuing professional development (CPD) offered to schools and teachers are changing too. The importance of focusing on how teachers reflect on and apply the new ideas and approaches they access through CPD support – that is, their ongoing continuing professional development and learning (CPDL) – is also becoming more widely recognised. Awareness of the importance of specialist contributions, like those of artist practitioners and arts/cultural organisations to CPDL, is also growing, as indicated by the work on applying the National CPD Standards in England and the reconvening of the Department for Education Expert Group to consider how these could be implemented more proactively.

“The children now don’t see learning through film as an add-on, they see it as part of their curriculum...It happens naturally. It is part of the process of teaching and learning, another resource, and another means of what makes our teaching and learning outstanding.”

Head teacher, St Patrick’s & St Brigid’s Primary School

Though newly prioritised, the challenges are not, of course, new. There have been a number of large-scale efforts to address them, such as Creative Partnerships. But the particular importance of focusing CPDL and learning through the arts on the needs of pupils experiencing disadvantage has perhaps been less systematically addressed. Certainly, less familiar is the importance of securing sustainability by systematising CPDL for embedding learning through the arts in the curriculum at whole-school level by building CPDL partnerships between arts/cultural organisations, artist practitioners, teachers and school leaders. In this context, the learning from this two-year pilot of enquiry-orientated CPDL support for embedding learning through the arts in the primary curriculum provides a timely and relevant seam of evidence. Its sponsors and authors hope it will inspire and inform practice as it develops to rise to these abidingly important and increasingly prominent challenges.

The Teacher Development Fund

Paul Hamlyn Foundation's (PHF) Teacher Development Fund aims to support teachers in embedding learning through the arts in the primary curriculum. The Fund focuses on:

- supporting CPDL through evidence-based approaches
- learning through the arts
- promoting effective partnerships between schools, arts/cultural organisations and artist practitioners
- the contributions of school leaders and artist practitioners as supporters of embedding learning through the arts in the curriculum, as well as professional learners themselves
- benefiting young people experiencing disadvantage

To understand the context of teacher CPDL across the UK and to develop a model for the Fund, PHF funded iterative development of the programme through a series of pilot projects from September 2016 to July 2018. In the first year, much of the work focused on developing innovative practices at classroom level. In the second year, the focus moved on to embedding these practices more widely across the school, understanding how positive developments relating to affect (pupils' emotional and subjective experiences) were linked to enhancing progress for pupils experiencing disadvantage and understanding how to support the learning of artist practitioners in relation to school leadership and the curriculum.

Context and rationale

The arts, cultural and educational organisations from across the four home nations that applied for and were granted funding to deliver pilot projects were:

- **British Council Wales** in partnership with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, the University of Wales Trinity St. David School of Education and Communities, and Ein Rhanbarth ar Waith for **Listening to Language/Cerdd Iaith**. This project aimed to embed trilingual language learning in the curriculum.
- **Creative Scotland** in partnership with Creativity, Culture & Education and Education Scotland for the **Art of Learning**. This programme aimed to develop executive function for pupils, learning through five different artforms.
- **Hotspur Primary School** led **Concordia**, a programme involving 16 schools in North East England. This project aimed to deepen and enrich whole-school approaches to singing as a way of enhancing individual and collective wellbeing.
- **Into Film** in partnership with Nerve Centre in Northern Ireland for **Full Steam Ahead**. This initiative aimed to develop teachers' and pupils' skills in analysing, making and deploying art through film across the curriculum, particularly in maths and literacy.
- **Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC)** in partnership with IVE (formerly Cape UK) on a project focused on using RSC approaches to teaching Shakespeare in primary schools in Hull. This programme aimed to develop teachers' skills in **RSC Rehearsal Room Techniques** to the point where they could deploy them across the curriculum.
- **RSA** in partnership with Arts Connect for **Performing Pedagogy**. This programme in the West Midlands aimed to use drama to enhance literacy.
- **Bath Cultural Education Partnership**, a joint initiative between 5x5x5=Creativity, the Egg Theatre, Bath Festivals, Mentoring Plus and Bath Spa University Institute for Education, for **School Without Walls**. This programme aimed to transpose 'school' into an arts environment or cultural setting. This pilot project ran from September 2016 to July 2017.

This was a pilot programme, and the PHF team worked with the projects in a reflective and developmental way to refine the design of the programme in the light of emerging evidence. The pilot projects were supported by:

- PHF Grant Managers, who kept in regular contact with project leads, including visiting schools and CPDL sessions
- the Centre for the Use of Research and Evidence in Education (CUREE), whose role was to provide regular snapshots of emerging evidence, and evidence from research, to inform, to help shape the development of the projects individually and collectively, and to help refine the design of the pilot programme
- the TDF Advisory Group, which met regularly throughout the programme to discuss progress and explore key decisions about the future of the Fund
- Cohort Learning Days in which project leads, PHF Grant Managers, members of the TDF Advisory Group and the CUREE team were brought together to explore the learning in greater depth

This evaluation

The aim of this evaluation was to examine the progress of the TDF pilot against its goals, with a particular focus on the learning from year one and year two in four key areas in order to inform the roll-out of the Fund. The methods for the evaluation are described at the end of this report.

The four key areas specified for the evaluation comprised the:

- nature of the CPDL being supported
- leadership of embedding learning through the arts, including the role of school leaders
- role of artist practitioners
- key issues involved in effectively embedding learning through the arts in the curriculum for pupils experiencing disadvantage

The evaluation explored these issues in the context of the Fund's focus on:

- supporting professional development and learning through evidence-based approaches
- learning through the arts
- promoting effective partnerships between schools and arts/cultural organisations and artist practitioners

The evaluation defined 'embedding learning through the arts in the curriculum' as a process designed to enable teachers and school leaders to make the development of arts-based skills and knowledge and/or the use of arts techniques, tools and artefacts, a regular feature of pupils' experiences at school in, and beyond, lessons.



Teacher CPD session explores how to use singing to support teaching and learning. Photo: Stephen Beecroft.

“I understand that the expressive arts can be a powerful tool for learning and can provide an engaging stimulus or ‘way in’ to [different] aspects of the curriculum.”

Teacher, Burry Port Community Primary School

Key thematic areas of development in year two



Pupils develop their team work skills as they collaborate on film and literacy activities. Photo: Into Film.

Features of continuing professional development and learning

At one level, all of this report is about CPDL. Each thematic section explores the implications of CPDL for teachers, school leaders, artist practitioners, schools and arts/cultural organisations. This section outlines key features of the CPDL models and CPD support adopted by project leads, and the distribution of the leadership of the CPDL over the two years of the project.

In the first year of the pilot, TDF projects approached the CPDL offer they were making implicitly. Subsequently in the second year, PHF made a particular point of asking project leads to specify the CPDL models and methodologies they were enabling.

In outline, the project reports and data from inter-project Cohort Learning Days in the second year suggested that all projects involved teachers and artist practitioners in a series of:

- **workshops**, including direct modelling of, or immersion or instruction in, new approaches, tools and resources, threaded through with peer support
- **specialist coaching** to support the development of new skills
- **experimenting** (more and less formally) **with new approaches** on a sustained basis supported by planning, often co-planning, with artist practitioners
- **monitoring and reflecting on the impact of new approaches on pupils** and using this evidence to refine approaches and plan next steps

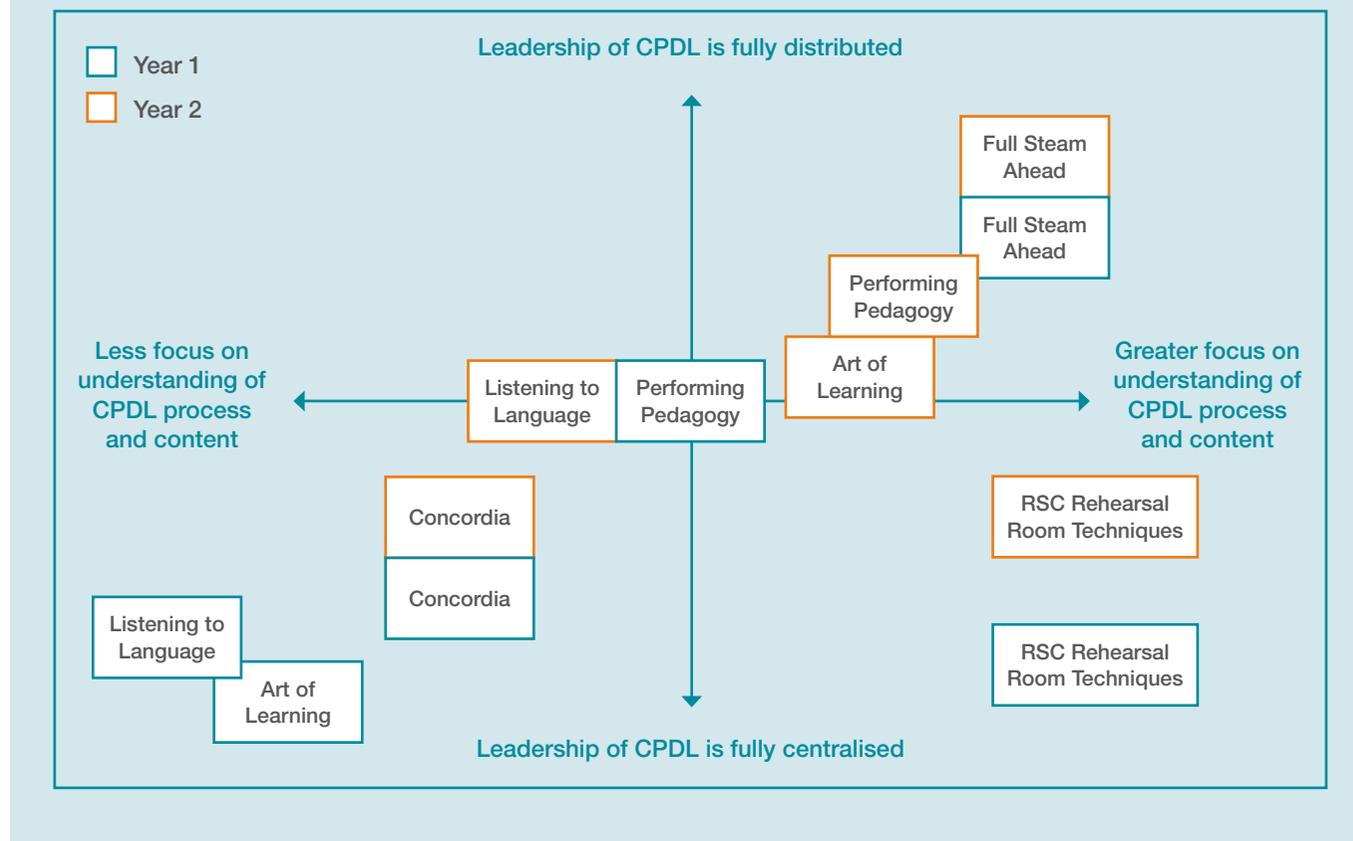
Key thematic areas of development in year two

In year two, the CPD support offered by most projects also involved helping participants use new approaches to learning through the arts in additional subjects and/or helping other colleagues to develop their confidence and skills in embedding this in other year groups or more broadly across the school.

Projects were balancing a number of factors in complex ways as they made progress. The direction of development depended on starting points. In Figure 1, we have illustrated how the models of CPD and CPDL and their leadership progressed and intersected to provide an overview of:

- whether and how the focus of the intervention was on the CPDL (for example, reflective use of rehearsal techniques) or on content (the use of an artform to teach a particular subject)
- the extent to which the leadership of CPDL in the project was distributed
- how the project approaches changed from year one (blue) to year two (orange)

Figure 1. How far projects focused on CPDL in the context of the distribution of the leadership of CPDL



Key thematic areas of development in year two

As this illustrates, in year two all projects moved from central leadership of CPDL focused on the project's specific goals by project leads, towards a more distributed model of CPDL leadership by school leaders and, in some cases, teachers.

In year two, projects that had previously focused predominantly on the arts intervention started to put understanding and exploring effective CPDL processes for embedding learning through the arts at the centre of the project. This change was particularly noticeable for Art of Learning and Listening to Language. The increasing focus on the nature of CPDL as well as its content can be seen across all projects in year two, with the exception of Concordia. For example, many of the projects began to experiment with different CPDL processes for identifying and overcoming barriers to learning through the arts for pupils experiencing disadvantage. As for leadership, the changes seen in both Art of Learning and Listening to Language were particularly apparent.

Leadership of embedding learning through the arts in the curriculum

The role of school leaders

One of PHF's objectives for year two was to continue to explore and extend the ways projects were helping schools embed learning through the arts in their curriculum. This focused specifically on:

- building teacher confidence and autonomy to help them to independently facilitate learning through the arts in the curriculum
- applying skills, knowledge and pedagogies to other artforms or areas of the curriculum
- improving knowledge and skill transfer and dissemination within and between schools

Embedding learning through the arts in the curriculum is a whole-school matter and a core aim of the Fund was to involve school leaders as lead learners to that end. But in most cases the initial focus in the first year of the pilot was on artist practitioners working directly with pupils and/or classroom teachers. Even where, as in the Full Steam Ahead project, there was clarity from the beginning about the role of school leaders, the work started at classroom level with artist practitioners and teachers working together. Perhaps it is not surprising that it was only in the Full Steam Ahead project that early direct work between teachers and artist practitioners was accompanied by significant involvement of school leaders.

It is interesting to note how much progress Full Steam Ahead was able to make in embedding learning through the arts. In other projects in year one, school leaders were usually involved as problem solvers for logistics. However, as the need for leadership contributions and recognition of their skills and interest in embedding learning through the arts emerged, project leads began to identify new possibilities for involving school leaders. A Cohort Learning Day including school leaders at the end of year one also helped them to understand their pivotal contribution and to feel more confident about taking initiative.

Key thematic areas of development in year two

In year two, in line with an increased emphasis from PHF on embedding learning from the project across the school, leaders were much more actively engaged in all projects. At the end of the project, 50% of leaders and 40% of teachers reported that leaders were leading and promoting the embedding of learning through the arts in the curriculum much more effectively than they had been at the start.

It was also clear from many evidence strands that there was already significant variation between schools in most projects. All projects included at least one school where the embedding of learning through the arts in many significant aspects of school life was already well established. In projects where some schools lacked leadership capacity, it was important to provide more intense support if the risk of them withdrawing was to be avoided. For most there were also schools where new approaches were still mostly centred around the original participating teachers. It is interesting to note in this context that there is most consistency in widespread diffusion of practices across the schools in the Full Steam Ahead project, where school leaders were positioned as lead learners and asked to model CPDL for embedding learning through the arts from the start. Significantly, at a concluding Cohort Learning Day involving teachers, most project leads and teachers identified involvement of school leaders in CPDL as an area that needed a stronger focus.

Implementation at whole-school level: case study snapshots

Although the evaluation was focused at project rather than school level, it did include case studies of four individual schools participating in different TDF pilot projects, designed to illustrate more sophisticated practice in embedding learning through the arts in the curriculum. In general, within each initiative there was a range in the extent to which learning through the arts became embedded in the wider curriculum. At one end of the range are the four case study schools, chosen because they made extensive progress in embedding learning through the arts in every aspect of school life. At the other end are a small number of schools that chose to withdraw, either because of external challenges or because they felt they had accomplished all that was appropriate for their context and/or goals.

We found the processes and approaches to embedding learning through the arts in the curriculum to be different in all four case study schools, including those:

- where the embedding and mobilising of project learning was led by a lead teacher on the project or a middle leader, and other schools where it was led by a member of the senior leadership team
- that focused learning through the arts on wellbeing and creating a whole-school culture and ethos, and others that focused on curriculum development
- with a pre-existing disposition towards embedding learning through the arts in the curriculum, which the TDF enabled them to operationalise in greater depth, and others where this represented a new approach to teaching and learning that chimed with a previous disposition towards encouraging innovation and risk-taking

Key thematic areas of development in year two

The schools' progress in embedding learning through the arts in the curriculum reflects the focus of the TDF project in which they were participating. The ways in which they did this also reflect differences in the working contexts of the schools across the four home nations and in more structural features, including size, national curriculum frameworks, accountability regimes and links with other local partners.

This section briefly highlights the achievements of these four schools at the end of the pilot, identifies shared approaches to embedding learning through the arts and examines the progress each has made in systematising a commitment to arts-based learning and CPDL. The full case studies are at phf.org.uk/publications.

The four case studies explore:

Burry Port Community Primary School/Ysgol Gynradd Gymunedol Porth Tywyn, Listening to Language/Cerdd Iaith (Burry Port, Wales) – how TDF has enabled a middle leader and colleagues to study and create a rich blend of music, language, technology, maths and more. The full case study is at phf.org.uk/TDF/BurryPort.

Heathfield Primary School, Art of Learning (South Ayrshire, Scotland) – the role of school leaders in using Art of Learning based approaches to extend and enhance the curriculum, to develop pupils' executive function and to encourage creativity and collaboration. The full case study is at phf.org.uk/TDF/Heathfield.

Hotspur Primary School, Concordia (Newcastle, England) – the way a school can connect the arts and each pupil's emotional development and wellbeing to develop confidence and resilience, and to enable highly differentiated choices about how to engage pupils experiencing disadvantage with the arts in response to individual needs. The full case study is at phf.org.uk/TDF/Hotspur.

St Patrick's & St Brigid's Primary School, Full Steam Ahead (Ballycastle, Northern Ireland) – how teachers acquired a sophisticated understanding of the technical aspects of film (as consumers and creators) and translated this understanding to pupils. It also looks at how this approach enabled pupils experiencing disadvantage to engage with film in a deep, critical fashion and become ambitious to push forward their own creative uses of film in multiple ways. The case study is at phf.org.uk/TDF/StPatricksStBrigids.



Pupils work on storyboarding their own film. Photo: Into Film.

Burry Port Community Primary
School/Ysgol Gynradd Gymunedol
Porth Tywyn, Listening to Language/
Cerdd Iaith
Burry Port, Wales

Project developed by British Council Wales, BBC
National Orchestra of Wales, the University of
Wales Trinity St. David School of Education and
Communities, and Ein Rhanbarth ar Waith

One of the most striking pupil impacts across all the schools, and in Burry Port School in particular, was the way in which pupils were, sometimes spontaneously, learning trilingually using music and drama, and also playing and solving problems trilingually. The school believes that much of what it has learned and done on the Listening to Language project to enable such embedded language learning will have a lasting impact. The school's progress, coupled with its enthusiasm for the new Welsh curriculum, leads it to believe that it has developed a "future-proof, thematic curriculum model". The activities incorporated into TDF are illustrative of an approach to the curriculum that it feels confident includes art throughout, as well as a rich blend of language, technology, maths and more. The resources, activities and strategies developed in the project, embedded in the Patagonia theme, provide a lasting legacy for the school that will be developed in future years.

Full case study: phf.org.uk/TDF/BurryPort

“One pupil in particular who usually finds it difficult to speak in front of the class totally surprised me when asked to sing the ‘Ton Gron’ in groups...He shone, and sang his solo with clear volume. This was a significant step forward for his development.”

Teacher, Burry Port Community Primary School

Heathfield Primary School,
Art of Learning
South Ayrshire, Scotland

Project developed by Creative Scotland;
Creativity, Culture & Education; and Education
Scotland

Teachers have built learning through the arts into a range of curriculum areas, developed a more creative approach to teaching and learning in which children can shape their own learning, and are using creative strategies from the CPDL that they have practised and refined with artist practitioners across their teaching. The school leaders are also building on Art of Learning to extend and enhance the curriculum offer on a strategic basis. The school is confident that it is already starting to see the lasting impact of the project taking shape, including in the development of teachers' and pupils' creativity skills and collaboration, and the development of a common language around creativity. It is looking now to strengthen and build on this in various ways.

Full case study: phf.org.uk/TDF/Heathfield

Hotspur Primary School, Concordia Newcastle, England

Extended CPD to develop teachers' and leaders' skills in singing, teaching singing and conducting singing helped teachers reach the point where they were confident to make music part of the fabric of everyday school life. The project and the school also developed a repertoire of songs that were carefully selected to enable all children, including those experiencing disadvantage, to experience excellence in singing in school and in public. Building on this foundation, the school draws connections between the arts and each pupil's emotional development and wellbeing, including confidence and resilience. By the end of the project, the school was also making highly differentiated choices about how to engage pupils experiencing disadvantage. For example, one child had a chance to shine in a performance, while another had the opportunity to be involved in making a reasoned selection of songs for different purposes. Teachers also saw children making connections between achievements in singing and in other areas, and in relation to how singing supports pupils' emotional development. As one pupil put it: "When I'm struggling, I think of a song I really like. It helps me to focus a lot more if I sing it in my head."

Full case study: phf.org.uk/TDF/Hotspur

St Patrick's & St Brigid's Primary School, Full Steam Ahead Ballycastle, Northern Ireland

Project developed by Into Film and Nerve Centre

Teachers have acquired a sophisticated understanding of the technical aspects of film (as consumers and creators) and of how to translate this understanding to pupils. Thanks to this awareness, pupils are increasingly engaging with film in a deep, critical fashion, and in many cases are becoming ambitious to push forward their own creative uses of film in multiple ways. Learning through film and film making is viewed by staff at the school as a valuable opportunity for overcoming barriers and enhancing learning opportunities for pupils who are experiencing disadvantage.



Pupils watch and analyse films to improve their literacy skills. Photo: Into Film.

This includes pupils with special educational needs, pupils speaking English as an additional language, pupils with poor skill levels in core subjects and looked-after children. The film leader observed that film making is a positive medium of expression because it enables pupils who find it difficult in other circumstances to articulate their thinking in confident and incisive ways. Most notably, it has been helpful for learners who are on the autistic spectrum. The use of group work and being able to visually represent what they have learned helps to generate a sense of achievement for learners who do not excel in other areas of the curriculum.

Full case study: phf.org.uk/TDF/StPatricksStBrigids

Key thematic areas of development in year two

Whilst, as these snapshots show, each school is different, the table below provides a brief overview of features that are shared across at least three of the case study schools and their strategies for, and approaches to, embedding learning through the arts in the curriculum.

Figure 2. Shared features across the case study schools

Our case study evidence suggests a number of areas of interesting commonality within this small sample of case study schools.

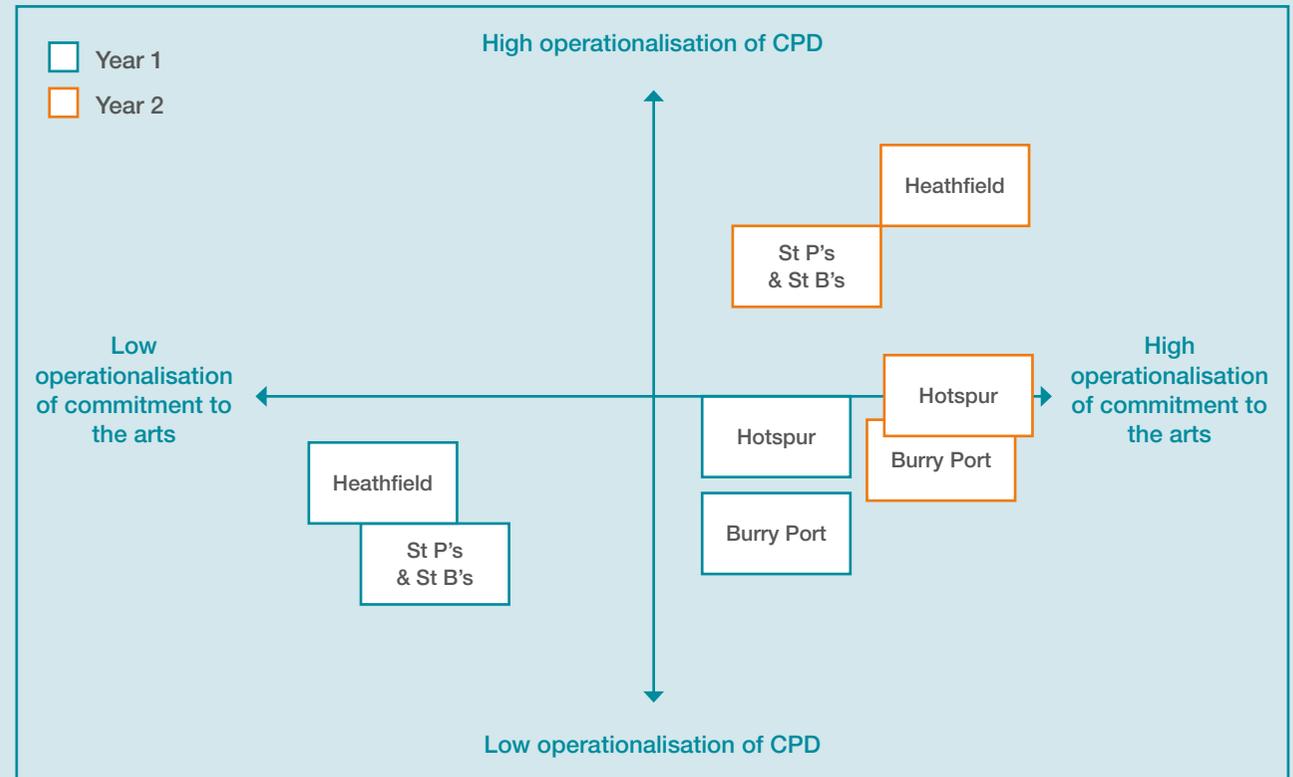
Feature of how the school is embedding learning through the arts	School			
	Burry Port (Listening to Language)	Heathfield (Art of Learning)	Hotspur (Concordia)	St Patrick's & St Brigid's (Full Steam Ahead)
Learning through the arts has been incorporated into the School Development Plan		✓	✓	✓
School leaders have been involved in project CPD and in developing the approach more broadly for their school		✓	✓	✓
Arts-based approaches are being used in teaching and learning for literacy/English	✓	✓	✓	✓
Arts-based approaches are being used in teaching and learning for maths/numeracy	✓		✓	✓
Arts-based approaches are being used in teaching and learning for topic-based/ interdisciplinary learning	✓	✓	✓	✓
The school is planning to extend the reach of the approach to other year groups	✓	✓		✓

Key thematic areas of development in year two

The strength of the connections between embedding learning through the arts and literacy/English reflects the centrality of this to the primary curriculum and the fact that language and expression played such an important role in each of these four projects.

Embedding learning through the arts through CPDL at whole-school level inevitably means attending to both the content and the process of operationalising and systematising a commitment to learning through the arts and to CPD of colleagues. Figure 3 illustrates how the four case study schools balanced these two key factors. The position of the case study schools in year one is indicated in blue and their position in year two is indicated in orange. It highlights the way schools at the earlier stage of development at the start made most progress through the project. It also suggests that Hotspur and Burry Port schools' pre-existing commitment to operationalising and systematising learning through the arts left them with relatively little room to make progress and less inclined to position CPDL as a key lever for whole-school change.

Figure 3. Balance between operationalising learning through the arts and CPDL



Key thematic areas of development in year two

Although the case studies illustrate what can be achieved, in this formative evaluation it is impossible to determine the role that school leaders and their capacity for leading arts-based learning played in this progress, as compared with the nature and richness of the CPDL model. There is no comparative group against which such a proposition could be tested. We also lack in-depth whole-school data for all but our four case study schools.

However, it is clear that all, or at minimum three, of the four case study schools had specific types of capacity in common, which supported their ability to progress in the pilot project:

- **Prior knowledge, skills, capacity and roles related to embedding learning through the arts:** The teachers selected had personal skills and interests in learning through the arts, and leadership roles that enabled them to feed their learning and interests into wider school contexts.
- **Alignment with a pre-existing, sophisticated professional learning environment:** The case study schools' curriculum and vision were already closely aligned with learning through the arts in principle if not in practice.

- **Capacity to draw skillfully on specialist support:** Case study schools had some confidence at the start in specifying the kinds of specialist support they were looking for. This grew through the pilot and as they saw their partners' skills and willingness to respond flexibly to their changing needs as they took more control.
- **Evidence and reflection:** The case study schools all had significant pre-existing reflection and enquiry skills.
- **Alignment between the TDF goals and the school's existing model of teaching and learning:** The case study schools had already started to prioritise risk-taking and creativity at the start of the project.

The role of artist practitioners

Artist practitioners in a TDF context are understood as people who practice professionally in one or several arts disciplines, whose role was to facilitate CPD for teachers and leaders. Between years one and two, most projects significantly reduced the team of artist practitioners to concentrate on those with most capacity to focus on embedding learning through the arts in the curriculum and across the school.

This change related partly to quality, which was variable in projects where artist practitioners were recruited from the local pool of freelance specialists. It is also linked to a significant change in the focus and nature of the artist practitioner role between the two years of the pilot. In year one, many artist practitioners assumed their role would be to work directly with pupils or, less commonly, with teachers. They had little experience of working with school leaders and a limited sense of their potential contribution to embedding learning through the arts in the curriculum.

As the assumptions of all stakeholders became increasingly explicit during year one, these assumptions began to change. In year two, with support from project leads in understanding school leadership and the curriculum, and recognising the schools' starting points at a more strategic level, the artist practitioners' focus moved from the direct implementation on arts-based learning towards collaborating with colleagues to embed teaching and learning through the arts in the curriculum. By the end of the second year, 100% of artist practitioners had focused on embedding learning through the arts in their own learning and 71% described this as their main focus.

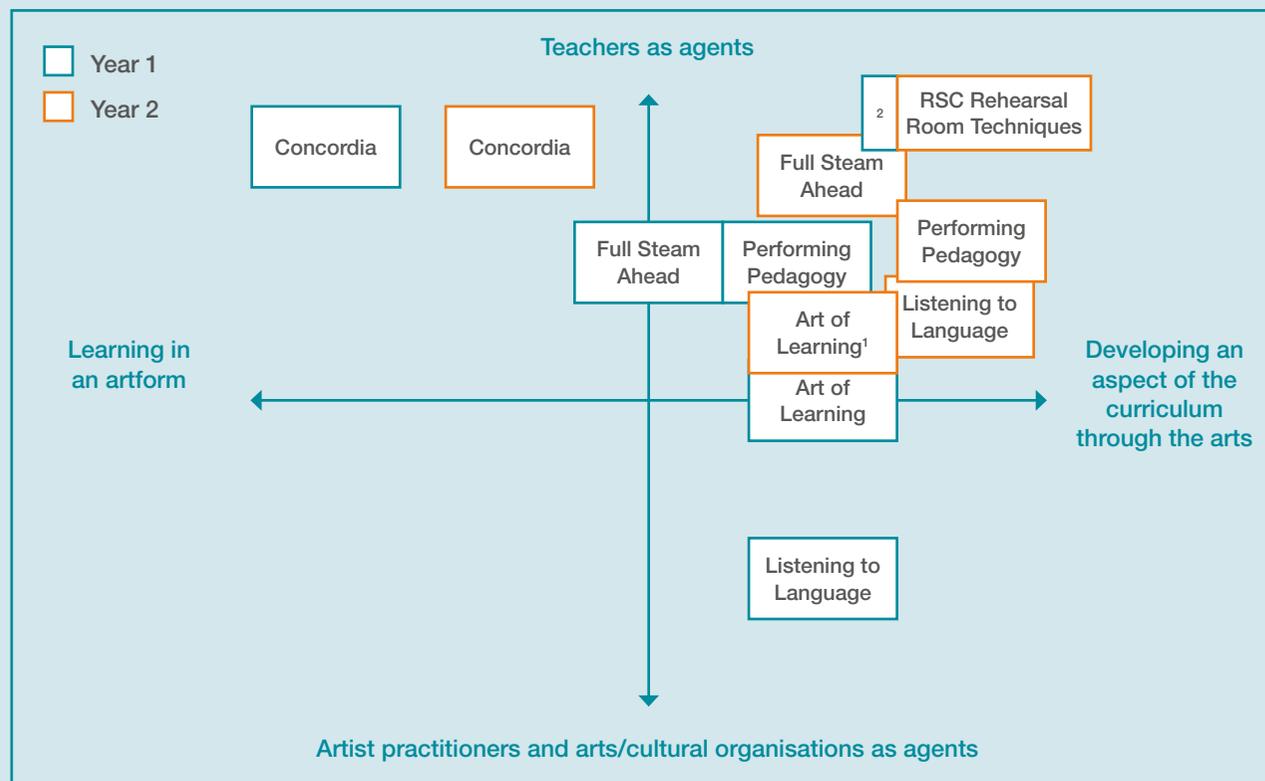
Key thematic areas of development in year two

In all projects where there had previously been an emphasis on direct delivery to pupils by artist practitioners, there was in year two a stronger focus on skills transfer to teachers and, to a lesser extent, school leaders; increased time working with teachers; and reduced time working with pupils. By the end of year two, teachers and artist practitioners reported working in partnership, or sometimes co-delivery, as the main activity.

The developing balance in agency between teachers and artist practitioners is illustrated in Figure 4, which provides an overview of the range of approaches and changes from year one (blue) to year two (orange). It also illustrates the range of ways projects positioned creativity in embedding learning through the arts in the curriculum. As can be observed, the second year also brought an increasing emphasis on relating the embedding of learning through the arts to the wider curriculum.

As can be seen, Concordia is distinctive in its emphasis on developing singing as a key medium for enriching whole-school culture. The other projects tended to explore how specific arts techniques and artefacts could enhance the curriculum.

Figure 4. Main purpose for the use of art and creativity against the main agent to achieve this



¹ For this project, the main focus was not on learning in an artform or for use in the wider curriculum, but rather on executive function as an outcome of learning through the arts, so it does not move in the same way from years one to two.

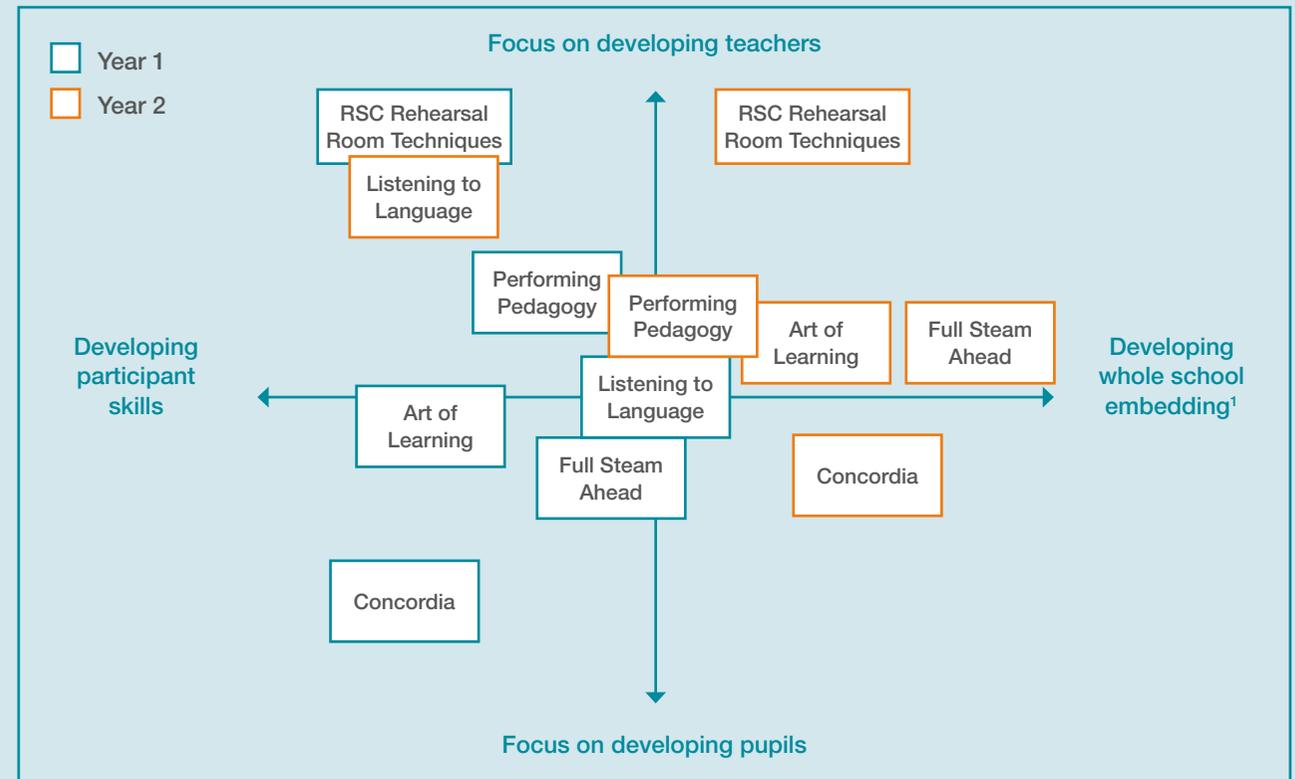
² RSC Rehearsal Room Techniques over the two years of the pilot remained consistent in relation to using teachers as agents. However, they have progressed further in developing an aspect of the curriculum through the arts.

Key thematic areas of development in year two

Figure 5 provides an overview of the movement away from developing specific skills towards understanding how the skills developed through the project relate to the wider curriculum in the context of the focus on the learning of pupils and of teachers.

Here RSC Rehearsal Room Techniques is distinctive in that, from the start, it set out to work directly with teachers rather than pupils and to concentrate on enhancing their confidence and skills in supporting learning through the arts for pupils. But all projects made significant movement, in line with the goals of the project, towards supporting wider curriculum development.

Figure 5. Balance in the focus of development between a) pupils versus teachers and b) participant skills and whole-school embedding



¹ In the first pilot year, whole-school embedding efforts were preliminary.

Embedding learning through the arts for pupils experiencing disadvantage

In year one, three significant factors affected projects' exploration of this area:

- At the start, the focus on pupils experiencing disadvantage took second place to establishing new approaches to learning through the arts more generally.
- Part way through year one, the evaluation evidence revealed a diverse set of understandings of disadvantage across the projects, not all of which were wholly aligned with PHF's own developing focus on long-term and systemic disadvantage.
- Where the needs and contributions of this group of pupils were in view, they tended to be organised principally around affect (pupils' emotional and subjective experiences) and engagement. There was little direct emphasis on the particular ways the benefits in terms of confidence, wellbeing and social skills connected with progress and learning outcomes for pupils experiencing disadvantage, nor was there much exploration of the ways in which projects had to adapt to meet the needs of pupils experiencing disadvantage to address and overcome barriers to learning.

In response to evidence about diverse starting points and PHF's own interest in exploring the experiences and needs of pupils experiencing disadvantage, the first Cohort Learning Day in year two involved focus group activities to explore how the different projects could or would respond to the needs and experiences of pupils featured in the Teaching and Leadership Enquiry Tools used for the evaluation. These activities were subsequently used in project-based CPDL activities by several projects and with artist practitioners and teachers. These activities moved the spotlight on to identifying and removing obstacles to making progress in learning through the arts in response to diverse experiences of disadvantage.

This change was linked with increases in teachers', artist practitioners' and school leaders' orientation to focusing on the complex mix of skills, needs and experiences of individuals in relation to learning through the arts and on differentiating support in response to them. An interesting and important feature of a number of the accounts of what learning through the arts had meant for pupils experiencing disadvantage was the way in which introducing a completely new medium for learning, or way of communicating (such as musical notation, singing in rounds, or film making), had "re-set normal expectations about whether and how such pupils succeed". There was also a strong theme of success around engaging the pupils whom teachers felt were usually hard to reach in a consistent fashion. There was evidence to suggest that this was linked, at least in part, with greater confidence in the arts among teachers alongside the increasingly strong emphasis on supporting pupils experiencing disadvantage flowing from PHF through to project participants.

“Music is such a great vehicle for language learning – it is so inclusive. All children are engaged.”

Deputy head teacher, Burry Port Community Primary School

Key thematic areas of development in year two

More broadly, there were consistent reports in all projects of the ways in which this enhanced the social capital of pupils, including those experiencing disadvantage. For example, there are many accounts of the ways in which projects succeeded in expanding and deepening pupils' engagement in learning. In some projects, there was also evidence about impact on pupil progress in specifically targeted areas of the curriculum or particular learning skills such as trilingual problem solving and play in Wales, literacy in Hull and the development of pupils' executive function in Scotland. As one PHF Grant Manager commented, "The projects have understood, through the lens of the Fund, what they are dealing with – how the challenges these children face translate into educational inequality and how the Fund might support them."

Nonetheless, all participants also recognised that understanding and overcoming obstacles to learning through the arts in order to accelerate the learning progress of pupils experiencing disadvantage was an aspect of the TDF where there was still considerable progress to be made at the end of year two.



Teachers from across schools in the Concordia project learn songs and activities to enhance teaching and learning. Photo: Stephen Beecroft.

Recommendations for the roll-out of the Fund

The evaluation was a formative one and interim reports offered a mirror and overview of progress that enabled the PHF programme team and TDF Advisory Group to make significant adjustments to the design of the Fund as the pilot progressed. Cohort Learning Days represented key moments when the PHF programme team, project leads, members of the TDF Advisory Group and the evaluation team worked together to interpret the emerging evidence and its implications for future action. In the view of the evaluators, much of the strength of the pilot rests in the genuinely open and reflective ways in which stakeholders responded to emerging evidence about the challenges as well as successes of the projects.

Learning from mistakes, progress and risk-taking are hallmarks of TDF-supported CPDL and effective project leadership and learning through the arts. In this respect, the TDF has practised what was being preached. This concluding report of the pilot is, in that sense, an afterword. But it also represents an opportunity to inform the future work of the TDF and of other programmes seeking to embed learning through the arts in the primary curriculum. So the last reflection takes the form of specific recommendations arising from this evidence from the pilot to inform the roll-out of the Fund.

Programme leadership

All stakeholders need to consider and explore ways of:

- Developing a shared understanding of TDF aims, CPDL and clear, specific roles
- Enhancing the focus of CPDL for embedding learning through the arts in the curriculum on pupil outcomes
- Establishing clarity around key concepts and how they are used
- Developing concrete indicators for developing genuine sustainability around embedding learning through the arts in the curriculum at scale
- Capitalising on the two-year duration of the Fund and not repeating the same ground

Recommendations for the roll-out of the Fund

The role and contributions of school leaders

All projects should consider and explore ways of:

- Engaging school leaders fully in the programme as lead learners from the start (for example, help other colleagues in school understand and support the programme aims)
- Capturing, calibrating and celebrating school leaders' interest in and capacity to lead embedding learning through the arts in the curriculum and be effective partners to other schools and arts/cultural organisations
- Providing additional support to senior leaders in schools struggling to source leadership capacity
- Providing deeper CPDL support for school leaders to help them position themselves as lead learners about and modellers of embedding learning through the arts in the curriculum

The role and contributions of artist practitioners

All projects should consider and explore ways of:

- Identifying and securing quality in artist practitioners' expertise and their capacity to deploy their skills in the context of TDF aims
- Creating a stronger focus on artist practitioners' learning and how they will use it in future
- Describing, illustrating and making explicit the assumptions that project leads, arts/cultural organisations and artist practitioners are making about learning through the arts
- Helping to develop artist practitioners' understanding of school leadership and the curriculum
- Helping artist practitioners to identify and understand the starting points of project schools
- Facilitating conversations about progress in learning for teachers and artist practitioners

Understanding disadvantage

All projects should help stakeholders consider and explore ways of:

- Understanding how disadvantage intersects with learning through the arts
- Focusing on differentiation: identifying and removing different barriers to progress in learning through the arts for different pupils
- Connecting the relationship between embedding learning through the arts in the curriculum and affect (pupils' emotional and subjective experiences), with ways of overcoming barriers to progress in learning

Methods

Throughout the two-year pilot programme, CUREE collected and analysed the evidence and information about project activities and progress. The principle sources of evidence were:

Participant surveys

Participants were asked to complete three surveys across each year: a baseline survey to capture attitudes at the beginning of the project and create a baseline against which progress could be measured; a midpoint survey in March to track emerging successes and obstacles; and a final survey in June to identify what had been achieved over the year and to capture thoughts on sustainability. Evaluators worked in partnership with grantees, who gave regular feedback about response rates.

Blob tree enquiry tools, teacher journals, and Teacher and Leadership Enquiry Tools

Practical local evaluation tools were provided by CUREE to the programme participants to build a coherent picture of how the project was affecting pupils, teachers and school leaders. The 'blob tree' tools for exploring the impact on affect (pupils' emotional and subjective experiences), engagement and wellbeing were widely used and welcomed by teachers.

The Teacher and Leadership Enquiry tools were most useful in enabling the evaluation team to explore the impact of project learning on pupil progress and activity for participants across schools (pupils, teachers and school leaders). Where these were used longitudinally, they allowed valuable insight into learning and progress.

Interviews

These were held with a wide range of stakeholders, including PHF Grant Managers, project leads, teachers and leaders in case study schools. All projects were asked to submit interim and final reports to PHF, which CUREE used to gain insight into the projects' own self-assessment of the successes and progress made during the pilot year, improvements still to be made, and plans for continuation. To supplement this, CUREE also conducted phone interviews with project leads from May to June 2017.

Project applications for the year two pilot

Projects were required to reapply to participate in the second year of the pilot. The applications provided a useful source of data for evaluating how aims and objectives of projects had evolved during the year one pilot, and how projects were strategically planning in order to build on successes and overcome obstacles in year two.

TDF Advisory Group meetings

Research notes from the TDF Advisory Group meetings were used as a way of tracking the nature of the support provided to the projects and the way the programme was refined in the light of unfolding evidence.

Glossary

Continuing professional development (CPD)

The support offered to teachers to develop their skills, knowledge and experience, beyond their initial teacher training.

Continuing professional development and learning (CPDL)

The processes and activities teachers undertake as they participate in and respond to CPD.

Curriculum

Schools often mean different things when they say ‘curriculum’. Some are referring to subject areas, or topics; others think beyond this, for example, to metacognitive or social development. The TDF defines curriculum as all of the learning experiences schools offer to their pupils.

Embedding learning through the arts in the curriculum

The process designed to enable teachers and school leaders to make the development of arts-based skills and knowledge and/or the use of arts techniques, tools and artefacts, a regular feature of pupils’ experiences at school in, and beyond, lessons.

Artist practitioner

For the purpose of the Fund, this is understood as referring to a person who practices professionally in one or several arts disciplines (including, but not exclusive to, dance, drama, film or music), whose role in this programme was to facilitate CPD for teachers and school leaders to enable them to embed learning through the arts in their classroom and in the curriculum.

School leader

For the purpose of the Fund, this was originally understood as being members of the school senior leadership team, but it may also refer to a wider group encompassing heads of department or year/phase.

Disadvantage

PHF funds work that supports learners experiencing disadvantage and those encountering specific barriers to accessing arts-based learning opportunities. PHF’s understanding of disadvantage within primary school settings covers a wide variety of circumstances – for example, looked-after pupils, learners with special educational needs or those attracting pupil premium. Barriers to accessing arts-based learning might include rural isolation or economic deprivation. The TDF focuses on the notion that disadvantage is long-term and systemic.

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