

THE VILLAGE SCHOOL EXPRESSIVE ARTS FUTURE PATHWAYS POLICY AND PRACTICE

In the last two years we have seen a huge increase in the number of learning disabled actors on our TV screens. Expressive arts is a realistic future pathway for students at The Village School; any limitations placed on a person's ability to participate in society, caused by a learning disability, do not need to affect participation in the arts.

(see article here: <https://www.bigissueshop.com/products/issue-1281-the>)

At The Village School, students' learning takes place across three pathways: Stepping Stones, Tracks and Lanes. These pathways reflect the wide spectrum of pupil need in the school and preferred learning styles.

Every student at the Village, no matter what their need or disability, has equal access to expressive arts opportunities, which includes a core curriculum offer of music, art, dance and drama and enrichment activities across all art forms. Both the core offer and the enrichment will look different according to pupil need and preference. For example, some classes will attend a concert at The Wigmore Hall whilst others will work with professional musicians in our own building; some classes will take a musical trip on a narrowboat on the canal whilst others will experience a multi-sensory world in the school garden. This equality of access is monitored every year using The Village School's own "SAFE-ARTS" audit praised by The Arts Council here:

<https://www.anewdirection.org.uk/research/artsmark-in-special-schools-case-studies>

Essential to all these experiences is the building of strong partnerships with a large number of arts organisations who support our work with workshops, performances, work experience opportunities and providing role models in the adults with learning disabilities that they employ. We currently work in partnership with these organisations; (those in red currently employ adult artists with learning disabilities and we are lobbying for many of the others to do so):

- Live Music Now
- Fresh Arts Theatre Company
- Action Space
- Face Front Theatre
- Blink Dance Theatre
- Mousetrap Theatre Company
- A New Direction's The Tate Exchange
- Soundabout
- Royal Academy
- Wigmore Hall
- Wac Arts
- Iroko Theatre Company
- Real Time Arts
- Step Into Dance
- ACAVA studios
- The LSO
- Tate Britain
- The Arts Depot
- National Gallery
- Music For Youth
- Flying Pizza Theatre Company

At The Village we frequently see children exceeding expectations in the expressive arts and the emphasis we place on the arts reflects our belief that for some of our Lanes students this can be a realistic future employment opportunity whilst for others it will be a lifelong interest and should be a lifelong entitlement.

Parental involvement is crucial to our students' future opportunities and we aim to include parents in sharing events, decision-making about future choices and activities beyond school. A parent's page dedicated to relevant and recommended arts opportunities beyond school is provided on our website:

http://www.tvs.brent.sch.uk/website/expressive_arts_events_for_families/318373

We aim to facilitate parental involvement in our events, for example, by assisting with transport to venues and including parents in events, for example, our arts-focussed “One World Week” festival.

The Village School is one of the signatories to the Cultural Inclusion Manifesto and as such aims to push for more opportunities and accessibility for our young people in the arts. We do not believe in a twentieth-century version of a concert, exhibition or show; we wish to re-frame the experience of these things into something relevant for our population. To us this means being more adventurous with art, music, drama and dance, not having a set idea about what is “art” and believing that the art world will ultimately be a better place with our young people in it and contributing. It is our aim that all our students will continue to contribute to the art world, and be enriched by it, beyond the age at which they leave our school at 19.

To this end, we offer a range of targeted opportunities including:

- Arts-based work experience for all Key Stage 5 students that have an interest in the arts
- Participation in a school-based theatre school for students on the Lanes pathway
- A link to the Central School of Speech and Drama through our “Future Pathway Course” for gifted and talented Lanes students aged 12-19
- A partnership with Face Front Theatre for all Tracks and Lanes students at Key Stage 4, focusing on future choices
- Arts Awards for ALL students at Key Stages 2-5 from pre-Entry Level (DISCOVER) to Level 1 (BRONZE).
- SOUNDS OF INTENT focused music lessons for ALL students, throughout their time at school, with accredited awards at every level.
- Access to the SOUNDABOUT charity for all students on the Stepping Stones pathway so that they develop a love of multi-sensory learning, sound and music
- Access to working with professional artists, musicians, actors and dancers for ALL our children and young people