

Creative Learning presents

# ARTS ACROSS LEARNING FESTIVAL

Report 2019



Daily Timetable Thursday the 7th // March 07 us 19  
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# ARTS ACROSS LEARNING FESTIVAL

Report



## INSPIRING CHILDREN AND LEARNING THROUGH THE ARTS

The Arts Across Learning Festival is Creative Learning's universal offer to primary schools and enables us to trial and showcase innovative high-quality creative approaches, to engage and inspire learning and teaching. The festival creates opportunities to enhance primary and nursery children's learning experiences; developing their individuality and uniqueness through self-expression and creating space to test and apply creativity skills.

Aberdeen's Arts Across Learning Festival is unique within Scottish education, bringing a diversity of art forms specifically designed for nursery and primary school children at no cost to the schools. Creative Learning work throughout the year to secure the necessary funding to make this possible.

Taking forward recommendations from the 2018 Festival and informed by Scotland's Creative Learning Plan and National Improvement Framework (NIF) drivers, Creative Learning's flagship festival once again brought high quality cultural learning experiences to primary schools across the city for two weeks from 25 February to 8 March 2019.

Evidence gathered throughout the 2019 festival demonstrated the impact the arts and creativity has on children's engagement and recognition of their own skills. The feedback from teachers recognised AALF's relevance to the NIF and how activity can be extended in class beyond the festival timetable.

The involvement of partners across the city enhances not only the experience of Festival participants but also that of partners themselves. This partnership approach is vital to the sustainability of this diverse creative and cultural offer to schools in the city by strengthening relationships and making new connections between organisations and schools.

In 2019 the Arts Across Learning Festival partners included;

- Aberdeen Performing Arts
- Belmont Filmhouse
- CityMoves Dance Agency
- The Elphinstone Institute – UoA
- The Gordon Highlanders Museum
- Libraries and Learning Service

**The 2020 Arts Across Learning Festival is in production and will take place across the city between 24 February and the 6 March.**





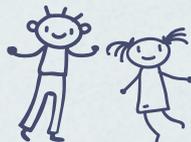
# OVERVIEW

## Festival Statistics

In 2019 Arts Across Learning worked with:



99% of teachers reported AALF activity as a quality learning experience



89% of teachers observed that children were engaged, motivated and eager to participate



97% of teachers reported that activity linked to the National Improvement Framework drivers



81% of teachers reported that the activity inspired them to extend children's learning in this area in class



92% of pupils could give an example of something they were good at during the activity



92% of pupils could give an example of a new thing or skills they had learned



# 2019 FESTIVAL OUTCOMES

In 2019 the festival aimed to:

- **enhance children's learning experiences** across the curriculum, through creative approaches and cultural participation and partnerships
- **improve children's knowledge and skills** in the Expressive Arts
- **give children the chance to express themselves**, shape their own learning, learn new creative skills and share their work with others
- **improve children's ability to recognise and articulate their own skills and potential**, through innovative arts and creative learning experiences
- **demonstrate Aberdeen is a city without creative barriers** where children and schools can experiment with and be transformed by the arts, creativity and culture



The 2019 Arts Across festival achieved this through the following case studies...



## Case Study 1: Engagement

# GETTING IT WRONG IS GETTING IT RIGHT WITH EOIN MCKENZIE OF HIDDEN GIANTS

Taking the impossible as a starting point, Getting It Wrong is Getting It Right provides a space to turn the impossible into a supply of creative writing possibilities! Led by performance maker Eoin McKenzie in association with creative learning consultancy Hidden Giants, this workshop blended movement, spoken word, and play to create unique choreographic sequences that effortlessly turned into short stories or poems. Outlining inventive and embodied approaches to turning our individual experiences into expressive physical and written responses!

Eoin McKenzie's work in schools develops experimental approaches to learning that encourage a deeper level of critical thinking about the processes and purposes of education; often in ways that are experiential, immersive, and positively disruptive. His workshop 'Getting it Wrong is Getting it Right' introduced pupils to these ideas.



The AALF sessions started by the pupils going around in a circle introducing themselves and sharing what they weren't good at - ranging from 'telling the time', 'leaving things at my nana's house', 'losing my glasses', and 'sometimes getting my spelling wrong'.



After a few games around the theme of success and failure, the children got into A-& B pairs. Group A were issued with an impossible task and asked to solve their task through movement while Group B watched their partner and wrote down what they were doing, thinking and feeling. This went on for a fair while, pushing the children to keep going, keep generating ideas, keep moving and watching to see what more children can give and think about.

The output of the workshop was different for each class, with some creating an impossible poem, or performing their task to the class for them to guess and making a certificate of appreciation for their attempts to try and fail at completing their impossible task.



### **Eion said of the workshops:**



"I was really struck by how when I introduced the idea behind the workshop - of making mistakes and trying to celebrate it - that the majority of students would get really excited; some would even cheer. To me it's clear that there is a desire for young students to be allowed to learn in ways that encourage trial and error, mistakes and revisions, even attempting things well beyond our reach. The student's reactions alone made me think lots about the potential benefits of creating more space in schools and classrooms for students to learn through attempting the impossible.





My favourite impossible task was 'Bring A Mountain Inside', I think it's quietly poetic and that allowed it to have lots of space for interpretation by the young people who got it. Some students pulled what appeared to be impossibly heavy weights, others transformed themselves into a mountain, one girl spent some time trying to make a huge lever.

My favourite response was when I walked through the playground to deliver an afternoon session in a school I'd been working in during the morning, and a girl from the earlier class ran up to me with her friends to ask, excitedly, if she could do more impossible tasks. When I told her they could do impossible tasks whenever they wanted as long as they could come up with their own, they ran off screaming with joy!"

### Best Bits:



96% of pupils spoke to someone about the event afterwards



100% named a new thing or skill they had learnt



100% gave an example of working with others



100% named something they were good at

### Teachers said:

*"The activity gave me lots of ideas about how this activity could be adapted and used for other activities. The pupils enjoyed using the drama as a stimulus for the writing activity."*

*"Creativity, drama, teamwork all being used in new contexts, some children struggle with these elements. All children were very engaged."*

*"Exceeded expectations as it really challenged and engaged all children in my class."*



## Case Study 2: Partnerships



# TIME TRAVELLERS WITH THE GORDON HIGHLANDERS MUSEUM



Time Travellers aimed to enhance children's learning experiences across the curriculum, through creative approaches, cultural participation and partnerships. The Gordon Highlanders provided the venue and context for Time Travellers by inviting the pupils to experience the museum's new World War One trench, handle Trench Art from 100 years ago and understand what being a Gordon Highlander is.

Time travellers also aimed to give children the chance to express themselves, shape their own learning, learn new creative skills and share their work with others.

Primary 5 classes from Hazelhead Primary school spent a day each at the museum bringing the past into the present exploring themes of conflict, heroism, bravery and storytelling.

Pupils were divided into three smaller groups visiting each of the activities for 40 minutes. Station one, World War One Trench was led by Lewis Gibbon, Education Officer at The Gordon Highlanders Museum. This enabled learners to understand the context of the museum and the regiment who's story it tells.

Station two developed resilience empathy and team building through Motivational Speaking, led by Aberdeen Performing Arts drama development officers. Drama techniques were used to discuss feelings and emotions to motivate a team into action.

Station three transported the learners to a trench set 100 years in the future. The group were invited to design and make useful products out of the plastic thrown away by humans in the past. Design skills were used to reflect on environmental issues, discussing emotions and sharing experience with others. These smaller groups provided focused learning deepening the experience and understanding for the learners.



At the end of the day the children shared their learning, presenting their product design, and confidently delivering motivational speeches to their peers, school staff and the festival team.

### Best Bits:



**100%** of pupils named a new skill or thing they had learnt



**77%** of pupils developed a deeper understanding of what trench life was like during World War One



**100%** of pupils spoke to someone about the event afterwards



**100%** of pupils could name an example of when they worked with others

### Teachers said:



**100%** of the children were able to explore and extend their understanding of the topic, whilst putting themselves in the shoes of a soldier

*"It was brilliantly organised, creative and experimental, engaged every child fully."*



## Case Study 3: Sustainability

# OUR HOUSE - FROZEN CHARLOTTE

Frozen Charlotte create work that is fun, playful but at its core poignant. Our House was developed through the dancers' personal experiences of growing up and relationships. Our House explored themes of sibling rivalry, jealousy, negotiation, approval and desire for own personal space.

In 2019 Frozen Charlotte took Our House to Hanover Street School and Holy Family Primary Schools. The performance was shared with 101 pupils, made up of one primary 5 and one primary 7 and two primary 1 classes.

The children had a lot of fun with the Frozen Charlotte team, taking part in performance workshops and drawing sessions after watching the dancers tell the story of the challenges between siblings through movement and music.



**Frozen Charlotte Creative Team said:**

*"The children were very focused and engaged during the performances and the workshops afterwards. Their own creative input, feedback and observations were very astute and brought up more questions for us to look at. We had a drawing session with P1's as part of the workshop and their visual work was incredible showing how much the performance had influenced and stimulated their imagination."*



**Best Bits:**

 **100%** of pupils named a new skill or thing they had learnt after taking part in the Our House performance and workshop

 **100%** of pupils could name an example of when they worked with others with 97% of pupils naming something they were good at.



**Teachers said:**

*"I feel this type of event benefits my pupils. Some of them are new to English and could take part with enthusiasm."*

*"Events like this encourage pupils to communicate with each other and with new adults. They had fun and loved the drawing afterwards."*

*"We are in the middle of our project on Dinosaurs and I can imagine doing more music and movement as a result."*



# FESTIVAL 2019 FINAL REFLECTIONS

## **Celebrate, Value & Inspire**

The Arts Across Learning Festival is a key opportunity in the academic year to celebrate, value and inspire learning and teaching. The festival promotes and realises engagement through, arts, creativity and culture that will stay with children and teachers far beyond the festival duration.



## **Investment for Engagement in Learning**

The Festival brings a vital injection of Expressive Arts and Creativity to Aberdeen's Primary schools. Expressive Arts and Creativity skills stimulate imagination, critical questioning and thinking, innovation, self-expression and alternative approaches to engagement in learning.

Investment at primary level is the impetus required now to ensure value and support for Aberdeen City's children to experience and excel in the arts and learning in the future. The learning opportunities provided by the Festival plant the seeds and demonstrates pathways to careers within the ever-growing Creative Industries, as well as being a unique contribution to the development of higher order thinking skills transferable to the wider world of work.

Teachers highlighted that taking part in the 2019 Arts Across Learning Festival gave pupils:

*"Exposure to abstract drama, freedom to interpret without worry of being wrong."*

*"As we have no visiting specialists it was so beneficial for the children to have the opportunity to work with someone who is an expert in the field of dance. The workshops undoubtedly provided the children with an experience to learn new creative skills and enhance their knowledge and skills in the expressive arts".*



### Keep in Touch...

If you have any comments or queries, please do drop us a line:  
[creativelearning@aberdeencity.gov.uk](mailto:creativelearning@aberdeencity.gov.uk).

Creative Learning are delighted to be able to sustain the vibrancy and integrity of festival activity throughout the year via Creative Learning's Abernet pages. Please visit us at: [www.abernet.org](http://www.abernet.org)

In 2019/20 we are working with Kirkhill School across the academic year with their PEF programme to improve engagement and attainment in writing for children through creative outdoor approaches. If your school would be interested in working with us to look at creative approaches to meet your school improvement plan please get in touch.

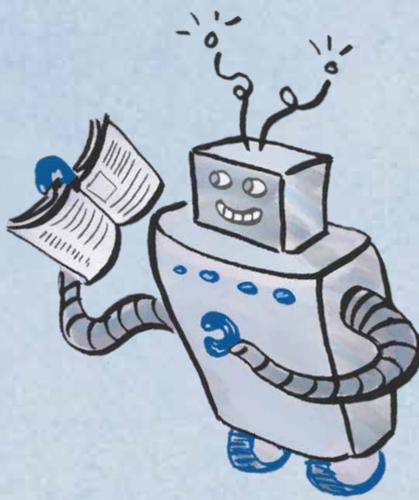


### Look Out for Festival 2020!

In 2020 the Arts Across Learning Festival will be running from **24th February – 6th March**.

The digital brochure will be landing in your schools in-box mid January!





# THANKS

Aberdeen City Council Creative Learning is proud to have delivered another Arts Across Learning Festival and is once again indebted to all the individuals and organisations who have supported and contributed to its organisation and delivery. The festival is a flagship piece of work, which brings the very best in creative and cultural education to Aberdeen and works with many of the city's early years and primary age pupils. Each year the festival works with different partners across the city to develop unique creative learning opportunities. Thank you to all our creative practitioners, partners and colleagues for your imaginative input, your passion, enthusiasm and the integrity that you bring to the festival.

## Credits

Festival Coordination and Administration  
Creative Learning, Aberdeen City Council  
Festival 2019 Programmers

Alison Black, Lindsay Dawson, Mandy Clarke, Margaret Stewart,

### Thank you to our 2019 Creative Practitioners & Partners

- Aberdeen City Libraries
- Aberdeen Performing Arts Creative Learning Team
- The Gordon Highlanders Museum
- Citymoves Dance Agency
- The Elphinstone Institute – University of Aberdeen
- Belmont Filmhouse
- Digital Maker CIC
- Doric Skateboards
- Hidden Giants – Eoin McKenzie
- Catherine Wheels
- Flotsam and Jetsam - Ailie Rennie
- Frozen Charlotte - Mhairi Allan and Heather Fulton
- Kathleen Cowie
- Ken Cockburn
- Eco Drama - Nina Docherty
- Theatre Sans Accents – Marion Geoffray
- Shirin Karbor
- Alison Muir
- Cate Garrow
- Into Film
- Gabrielle Reith
- Philip Thompson





The festival is also supported by the Creative Learning Network Fund, a partnership between Creative Scotland and Education Scotland under Scotland's Creative Learning Plan.

**CREATIVE  
LEARNING  
NETWORKS**



Central Library Adventures in Libraries sessions were jointly supported by Arts Across Learning and the Live Literature Fund, which is supported by The National Lottery through Creative Scotland and managed by Scottish Book Trust.

Special thanks also to Grant Anderson for capturing this year's festival activity so brilliantly with his photographs and to Shirin Karbor for her beautiful character creation and illustrations.

Without the dedication and energy given by festival artists and companies, partners and venues, teaching staff, volunteers, Creative Learning staff and others, the festival would not be able to deliver such a stimulating and inspiring programme for Aberdeen's younger learners and their schools.

**Thank you!**





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