

Ramsey Arts Award

Ramsey's Arts Award project has been running for 4 years. The Level 3 youth worker for this area, Dibs Fletcher is responsible for its start up and development. The project began as a pilot and is now a successful, accredited part of Ramsey's youth provision; it also plays an important part in the local secondary school curriculum.

The Arts Award is a national Award that began in 2005 and is run through a partnership between Arts Council England and Trinity Guildhall. The Award aims to support any young person to enjoy the arts and develop creative leadership skills. The Award is offered at levels 1, 2 and 3 on the Qualifications and Credit Framework.

The Arts Award consists of three levels: Bronze, Silver and Gold and young people aged 11-25 can use different art forms including performing arts, visual arts, literature, media and multimedia to complete their Award. The Award aims to build confidence, ensure that young people have access and enjoy cultural activities and it can also prepare them for further education or employment.

The Arts Award project in Ramsey was set up as there were very limited artistic or cultural activities in the area. Due to the rural nature of the county access to cultural activities in other locations was also very difficult for young people and their families to access regularly.



The Arts Award project is run as part of Create youth club which takes place on a Wednesday evening, young people who are working on the Arts Award can also drop in any time after school to complete work or ask for support. Dibs has demonstrated the effectiveness of this work to her local secondary and now has a rolling programme of provision to which the school can refer young people to complete their Award in school time. Referrals can include young people who are not achieving in mainstream subject and young people who are high achievers in the Arts. This mixture of young people has been found to be useful as young people with different needs can provide support and encouragement to each other. Since the project started they have had 129 young people achieve their Bronze Award and 20 complete their Silver Award. There is another moderation coming up which will add a further 24 Bronze and 6 Silver.

School referred groups are usually made up of 6 young people and Dibs can run 3 groups over a 10 week period or 1 school term. The Award involves weekly meetings as well as 1 day to London to watch a cultural event, which young people evaluate and ½ day to a local junior school or elderly people's home where they lead a session for older people or younger children themselves. The Award is very flexible and is an excellent way to demonstrate achievement and gain accreditation for young people. The Arts award is the largest accredited piece of work Ramsey deliver.

The school has now been registered as a centre for Arts Award. This means they are able to claim exam points for Awards achieved by students. The school are piloting a foundation learning course next year and the Arts Award will make up part of the curriculum. School referred young people are funded by the school and sometimes the school will also contribute towards the trips.

Some young people who complete the Award in school want to take it further and can then complete their Silver Level in youth club. They often invite other friends along, who then do their Bronze level. These range of opportunities and the teaching of younger children develops peer mentoring and leadership which are important elements of the Awards but also develop individuals self esteem, confidence and awareness of the arts. Finally, the Arts Award work also supports secondary transition as children in school will have made positive contact with those at secondary school before they begin attending.

The Arts Award project work has made a real difference to young people, not only has it improved their access to cultural activities it also enables them to gain a qualification in the arts. The trip to London is often a totally new experience which young people would otherwise not have the chance to experience. The development of the project has resulted in excellent partnership working between the school and youth service as well as other community services including the police, town council and mayor who are invited to the award ceremonies. These ceremonies are community events where young people exhibit their work and portfolios and certificates are handed out formally. This event itself is a way of raising the profile of young people in the area and it also spreads the word about the positive youth work that is going on in Ramsey. The celebration event is also an opportunity to engage with young people's families.

Top Tip: In order to replicate this work youth workers will need to train an Arts Award Advisor. The Arts Award have a very good website with all the necessary information about setting up and running the Award (<http://www.artsaward.org.uk/>

