



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**



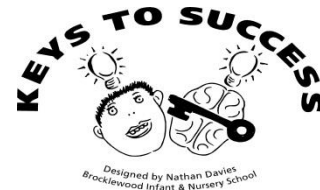
**Nottingham  
City Council**

**LAKESIDE**



**The University of  
Nottingham**

UNITED KINGDOM • CHINA • MALAYSIA



## **Family Arts in Bilborough (FAB) Project**

---

### **Interim Evaluation**

**July 2014**

This project is funded by:

Arts Council England (Lottery funding)

Nottingham City Council (Bilborough Ward Councillors)

Keys to Success Partnership schools:

Brocklewood Primary School

Djanogly Strelley Academy

Melbury Primary School

Firbeck Academy

Portland School

and Nottingham University Samworth Academy.

And supported by Lakeside Arts Centre (University of Nottingham).

Year 1 of the project has been very successful. One of our greatest achievements has been to attract a creative artist-in-residence with lots of artistic expertise who has built extremely positive relationships with a range of people. She has worked pro-actively with all age-groups from five-year-olds to adults, including groups of autistic and Special Needs children in the partnership schools. Evaluation feedback confirms that this is the case: 'I

enjoyed spending time with Shamila and I loved doing art' (child); 'Working with an artist has been fabulous. Shamila has entranced me with her lovely ideas. She has worked so well with our parents' (teacher); 'Great to have an expert and a real artist' (teacher); 'The sessions were well-structured and appropriate to the ability of the children' (teacher).

Staff feedback has confirmed that the artist's approachability helped break down different types of barriers - many families who wouldn't normally get involved in school activities became involved in this project because it wasn't perceived as threatening and relations between the schools and parents have improved as a result. Participants also valued the creative time spent together as a family and with others: 'Brought me and my sons together. Having twins aged four it was hard to spend time with them alone. Also I enjoy art myself so the project allowed me to have some fun' (mother); 'We had lots of fun!' (mother and father); 'I enjoyed every second' (child).

The artist included the participants in planning the activities and designs, which helped to instil a sense of shared ownership of the final pieces. Whether as part of a class or an after-school family club, people learnt how to work collaboratively and make decisions as a group. Inspiration was taken from the local area, natural forms and the work of both contemporary and iconic artists as well as 'The Wonder Room' at the secondary school . The exciting range of colourful, tactile media used by the artist helped to inspire 'hard-to-reach' children and families who worked with willow-sculpture, batik, tie-dye, collage, stencilling, graphite rubbings, sketching and painting, ceramics and mosaics.

The artist also involved the participants in the preparation and execution of the artwork so that family members got involved in, for example, colour-mixing paints, digging trenches and planting willow, mixing and applying dyes and tile adhesive/grout, glazing and firing clay and screwing used bottle-tops onto

boards. In this way, the 'mystique' of art was broken down and people learnt practical skills to make art more accessible to them and their families: 'I enjoyed participating and learning new methods and ideas' (father).

Bilborough is a very disadvantaged neighbourhood and the project helped to raise aspirations among the children and families. Staff overheard children saying 'I'm an artist' and participants have been very proud of the work they created together, as evaluation feedback confirms: 'I have enjoyed the excitement my boys achieved helping out on this project. They are so proud and enjoy showing off their work' (mother); 'The clay project was brilliant and the wall mural is great; the children will be able to see it as they grow, knowing it was their creation' (grandmother).

One of our aims was to make participants more aware of the opportunities available at Lakeside Arts Centre through this project. In previous years, we've struggled to attract local families to participate in the international Children's Festival at Lakeside – partly because it falls in the May/June half-term but also because families didn't seem to like the constraint of having a timetabled hired coach. As a result, this year we did things differently by offering to cover taxi fares for families who wanted to attend so that they could come and go at a time which suited their family. Only one family took up this offer and yet we had the best turn-out ever. We were very pleased that 14 Bilborough families made their own way to the festival to take part in the artist's workshops, mixing with people from different backgrounds. We feel the good turn-out was mainly a result of the rapport they had built up with the artist. This was a real achievement for the project and one that Lakeside Arts Centre was particularly pleased about as they'd hoped the project would help extend their reach into local disadvantaged communities.

In addition to the Children's Festival, we had two successful family visits to

Lakeside Arts Centre & St Mary's Church (Tess Jaray exhibition) and the Yorkshire Sculpture Park. Only about 10% of the families involved had been to these venues before, confirming that the project is reaching the target group, raising awareness of art and, hopefully, inspiring these families to visit art venues in the future.

The artist supported 80 children and young people across the partnership schools to prepare for their Arts Awards, using creative opportunities to do this. For example, a small group of secondary students preparing for their Bronze award planned and delivered an outdoor workshop (using natural materials) to young children and their families as part of the Yorkshire Sculpture Park visit.

One of our aims was to leave a legacy for the local community in terms of the artwork created by this project and this aim was met in the following ways: each school created one or more pieces of art through the artist and pupils/ families working together. The school art pieces included a wall mosaic (ceramic tiles created by pupils and families); children's representations of famous paintings by Van Gogh, Monet and Georgia O'Keeffe; living willow domes; large colourful painted murals on exterior walls; a mosaic of used plastic bottle-tops and a batik textile hanging made up of individual squares produced by children and sewn together.

In addition, the artist liaised with the local library and a community organisation to revitalise a small outdoor area earmarked as a community garden.

Participants at the Children's Festival worked with the artist to produce a set of clay tiles, based on a garden theme. These were then glazed and fired by local families working with the artist and together they designed and installed a wall mosaic which the community group were delighted with. Feedback from families involved in the project has indicated that they are very proud of their art pieces and see them as valuable community assets.

In terms of lessons learnt, we underestimated the amount of time required by the artist both for planning and for 'finishing off' some of the art pieces eg grouting, glazing etc. We're hoping to redress the balance next year by using more of the budget towards artists' fees so that this element of the project is adequately resourced.

Involving families at some of the schools was a little slower than anticipated and next year we intend to get this element of the project off the ground earlier through careful planning and liaison with key staff . The only disappointment this year was the low turn-out of families to the end-of-year project exhibition at the local library. It could have been due to the timing (after-school in the last few days of term) combined with extremely hot weather. We'll explore this more with families next year but as a result, we're thinking about holding next year's final exhibition during the school day (in a local school with air-conditioning) and providing transport for families to attend.

### **Project Outputs**

In terms of the outputs, we've achieved the following to date:

Estimated number of participants (over 2 years): 944

Actual number to date: 1087

Number of Bilborough families involved to date: 117

Estimated number of participatory sessions (over 2 years): 300

Actual Number to date: 213

Period of employment for artists (days) over 2 years: 175

Actual number of days to date: 92.5

Number of new products or commissions (over 2 years): 5

Actual number to date: 10

In conclusion, we feel we've had a very successful first year and the families involved really valued this project. We have some great ideas for next year and are looking forward to working with our artist, schools, families and other stakeholders to produce another exciting, imaginative programme.

For further information, please contact Carmel Bradley,  
Education Improvement Partnership Manager on 0115 9153298  
or [carmel.bradley@nottinghamcity.gov.uk](mailto:carmel.bradley@nottinghamcity.gov.uk)