

## THE ASCENDANCY OF THE ARTS AWARD

*Schools are rewarding students for their engagement with the arts, but what's in it for the teachers? Jo Caird takes a look at the Trinity College London Arts Award, how it encourages thousands to pursue their dramatic prowess, and the benefits for teachers who qualify to advise them*

Since Trinity College London launched Arts Award ten years ago, more than 200,000 awards have been given out, with thousands of young people getting involved in everything from painting and poetry to fashion and film making, deepening their engagement with the arts and

developing valuable creative and leadership skills in the process.

Of the nearly 7,000 Arts Award centres in the UK, more than 3,000 are formal education settings like schools and colleges, meaning teachers play a huge part in guiding 11-25 year olds through their Bronze, Silver and Gold Arts

Awards – not to mention the primary school children dipping their toes into the programme with the Discover and Explore Arts Award frameworks.

### BENEFITTING EVERYONE

It's easy to see how Arts Award benefits the young people who do it: as well as the fun of taking part, they gain a national qualification, with UCAS points also awarded at Gold level. But the teachers also have a lot to gain, having trained as Arts Award advisors to deliver and moderate the programme.

Kathy Hofmeyr, drama lead at Glenthorne School in Sutton, qualified as an Arts Award advisor in October 2013 during her second year of teaching. The »

Students at Glenthorne School perform at the annual Creative Arts Evening



**“THE ONE-DAY TRAINING COURSE FOR DELIVERING AND ASSESSING ARTS AWARD QUALIFICATIONS WAS REALLY VALUABLE”**

one-day training course for delivering and assessing Arts Award qualifications was particularly valuable, says Hofmeyr: ‘It helped me see where I could develop the Arts Award at our school.’

But the training didn’t just get Hofmeyr thinking more creatively about how her students could get the best out of the programme – it also benefitted her personally when she joined a select group of colleagues already involved at Glenthorne.

‘Because we try and get the whole of our Year 7 cohort through [the Bronze Award], I have to liaise with teachers from different subjects and it builds relationships between us,’ she says.

There’s also a certain cachet to being involved with the programme. ‘The training is seen very highly within the school,’ adds Hofmeyr, whose experience as an Arts Award advisor is likely to be beneficial for a long time.

**CREATING AND COMMUNICATING**

Anne Dunkerley, curriculum leader for drama and dance at Guiseley School in Leeds, has also made professional gains from her involvement. She and the head of music at Guiseley did their advisor training in September 2010, working initially with a group of students with various special needs before including all of Year 9 – a total of 230 children.

‘In terms of continuing professional development, Arts Award has made me more aware of letting students create and communicate about their work in different ways,’ she says.



KRISTEN HOUST

Glenthorne School students have a number of staff members trained as Arts Award advisors

In the 2013/14 school year, Guiseley was one of a number of schools and institutions recognised as Arts Award Good Practice Centres, and Dunkerley took a lead role advocating on behalf of Arts Award and sharing Guiseley’s practice to inspire others.

‘It gave me the opportunity to speak and give presentations at arts events and be part of a steering group, which has allowed me the chance to reflect on my own and my school’s arts practice,’ she says. It has enabled her to engage with students in a refreshing new way, ‘offering them a clearly structured but very open and free way of working and learning.’

**EXTRACURRICULAR OPTIONS**

Schools are free to deliver Arts Award as part of the existing curriculum or as an extracurricular activity – the best approach depends entirely on the individual context of each school. Guiseley delivers the Bronze Arts Award to Year 9 students in the summer term across art, music and drama lessons, with the Gold Award available as an extracurricular option for students

in Year 12. Bronze and Silver Awards are taught as part of the curriculum at Glenthorne (for Years 7 and 11 respectively), though Arts Award is also available to students across the school on an extracurricular basis.

Hofmeyr particularly enjoys seeing her Year 7 students take part in the school’s annual Creative Arts Evening, where they perform two songs as the final element of their Bronze Award. She said: ‘It’s really lovely to see the students who wouldn’t normally perform get up and sing in front of an audience. Usually after this more students become interested in the arts and join more extracurricular clubs.’

Ultimately, one of the most rewarding aspects for teachers is seeing the impact of Arts Award on their students. There are moments of hard work that come with dreaming up creative projects with students, offering advice and support along the way and looking after that all important paperwork, but it’s all worth it in the end.

For Dunkerley, it’s all about ‘engaging with students and having the most wonderful conversations with them about their chosen skill when you have struggled to keep them interested and on-task in normal lessons all year.

‘When they have choice and freedom and the desire to try a new skill you can see them transform into young articulate adults!’

**“ARTS AWARD HAS MADE ME MORE AWARE OF LETTING STUDENTS CREATE AND COMMUNICATE ABOUT THEIR WORK IN DIFFERENT WAYS”**