



# UCA & Artswork - EKCEP Schools Connect Programme Summary Report May 2022

*Authored by: Holly Rogers, Louisa Clements, Emma Bunyard, Gill Coston*

## Contents

○ Programme Overview.....	3
○ Partners.....	3
○ Aims & Objectives.....	5
○ Programme Participation.....	6
○ Successes.....	7
○ Challenges.....	9
○ Learning.....	9
○ Legacy.....	12

# Programme Overview

The [Kent and Medway Collaborative Outreach Programme \(KaMCOP\)](#), part of the National [Uni Connect](#) initiative, aims to increase the number of young people from under-represented groups who go into Higher Education (HE). As the creative specialist in the KaMCOP programme, the [University for the Creative Arts \(UCA\)](#), promotes progression in creative arts, business and technology.

The Schools Connect programme was a partnership between [UCA KaMCOP](#) and [Artswork](#), Arts Council's South East Bridge, to increase cultural opportunities for young people living in the East Kent Cultural Education Partnership (EKCEP) region of Ashford, Canterbury, Dover, Shepway and Thanet.

The programme worked with target schools to raise attainment and increase knowledge of creative careers and progression routes, whilst providing opportunities for young people, aged 13-18, from less advantaged backgrounds to engage in the arts. Young people could also achieve [Arts Award](#) accreditation and all target schools were given the opportunity to register for [Artsmark](#) for free.

**The programme ran between January 2020 and April 2022, and in its duration:**

- Engaged young people in **43 unique activities** including: creative workshops; creative careers talks; campus and cultural visits; assemblies; mentoring and Arts Award programmes online, on campus, and in-school settings.
- Worked with **750 young people** aged 13-18 (21% living in KaMCOP [target wards](#)).
- Delivered a variety of Arts Award programmes, allowing young people to achieve a level of Arts Award. **124 Arts Award certificates** were awarded throughout the programme, at various levels: 63 Discover, 18 Explore, 39 Bronze and 4 Gold.
- Engaged **50 staff members** in **2** Creative Careers CPD events.
- Facilitated free **Arts Award Adviser training** for **56** adults including: teachers, tutors and support staff from schools and community organisations; and artist practitioners from the region.
- (Re-)registered **8 secondary schools** in the EKCEP region for **Artsmark** status, allowing them to start or continue on their Artsmark journey.

## Partners

KaMCOP works to engage and realise the aspirations of young people from specific wards (postcodes) in Kent and Medway, where participation in HE has historically been lower than expected, given the GCSE results of the young people who live there.

As part of KaMCOP, UCA promote creative subjects and progression through a variety of outreach activities with young people. As well as engaging young people in the region, UCA work closely with schools, colleges, tutors and community organisations to raise awareness and interest in creative subjects and pathways, while also emphasising the transferable nature of creative thinking and skills.

Artswork brings together the work of arts and cultural organisations with schools and communities in the South East region. Through the EKCEP, Artswork works with schools, the local authority, voluntary and community organisations, further and higher education, and music education hubs and funders to improve the alignment of cultural education for young people.

The programme was also supported by:

- [Kent and Medway Progression Federation \(KMPF\)](#)
- [Higher Education Access Tracker \(HEAT\)](#)
- [Artsmark Team](#)
- [Trinity College \(Arts Award\)](#)
- Individual Artists (from a pool of UCA Creative Workshop Tutors, including graphic designers, performers, fine artists, photographers, animators, game designers, media experts, branding specialists, life models and more)
- UCA Ambassadors (current students) from a range of disciplines
- [Julie Neville \(Artwork and Arts Award Consultant\)](#)
- [The Turner Contemporary Gallery](#)
- [The Marlowe Theatre](#)
- [The V&A Museum](#)
- [The Kent Mining Museum](#)
- UCA Outreach staff
- UCA Academics from a range of disciplines



*Figure 1 - Creative Workshop (in-school)*



## Aims & objectives

Working with target schools and young people from the EKCEP region, the Schools Connect programme was developed to support the core vision of the EKCEP: working collaboratively *‘to change lives and broaden horizons so that every child and young person in East Kent can enjoy and have access to the arts and culture’*.

The programme offered young people from disadvantaged backgrounds opportunities to:

- Take part in creative workshops, talks and visits.
- Engage in the arts and cultural sector.
- Raise attainment.
- Develop transferable skills.
- Increase knowledge of creative careers and progression routes.
- Achieve Arts Award accreditation.

The programme offered staff at target schools the opportunity to:

- (Re-)register for Artsmark status.
- Attend Arts Award Adviser Training.
- Attend Creative Careers CPD Conferences.
- Access Arts Award support and resources.



Figure 2- Staff attending a CPD life drawing workshop

## Programme Participation

Originally developed to engage selected target schools (\*'d below), the ensuing programme successfully delivered to **28 schools, colleges and community groups** in Kent and Medway.

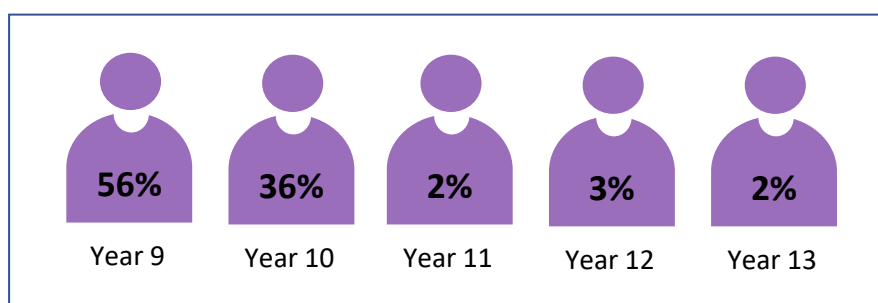
### Beneficiaries included:

- Ashford College
- Astor Secondary School\*
- Barton Court Grammar School
- Brompton Academy
- Chatham & Clarendon Grammar School\*
- Chatham Grammar School for Boys
- Chislehurst and Sidcup Grammar School
- Enterprise Learning Alliance\*
- Folkestone Academy
- Invicta Grammar School
- King Ethelbert School
- Northfleet School for Girls
- Rainham Mark Grammar School
- Simon Langton Grammar School for Boys
- St Anselm's Catholic School, Canterbury\*
- St George's Church of England Foundation School
- St John's Catholic Comprehensive
- The Abbey School
- The Leigh Academy
- The Malling School\*
- The Maplesden Noakes School
- The Marsh Academy\*
- The Whitstable School\*
- Towers School and Sixth Form Centre\*
- Tonbridge College

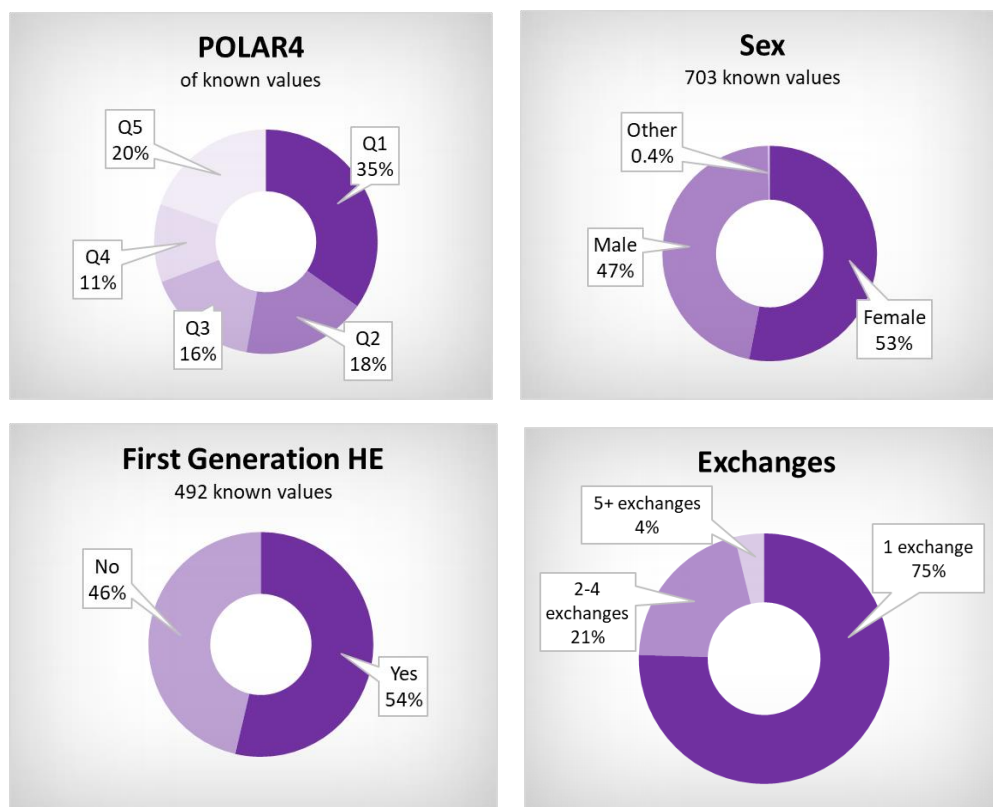
Participant data was collected at the outreach activities via registers and input into the Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT) database. The HEAT data is the source of the information in this summary.

The programme engaged young people in **43 unique activities** totalling **111 hours of delivery**. Young people received a total of **1,539 hours of activity**.

The majority of participants were in years 9 and 10, with over 50% in year 9 (Figure 3). Where available, the data showed that just over half of participants were female and 54% indicated that neither of their parents/carers had attended HE (Figure 4). 53% lived in POLAR4 quintile 1 or 2 postcode areas (and therefore have the lowest rates of participation in higher education). The majority of participants took part in one exchange, whilst 25% took part in 2 or more exchanges (i.e. took part in an activity that comprised of more than one session).



*Figure 3 – Schools Connect participants by year group*



*Figure 4 - Summary of the characteristics of participants in the Schools Connect programme.*

Pre and post-activity survey data was also collected from young people at the completion of intensive activities and gathered commentary on expected learning, attitudes to Higher Education and future study aspirations. Please refer to 'Learning & Impact ' in this report for qualitative outcomes.

The programme engaged a total of 50 adults/staff through CPD conferences and Artsmark support opportunities, and also enabled 56 adults/staff to attend Arts Award Adviser Training.

## Successes

- **Flexible delivery**

The programme saw great success even amidst the difficulties and restrictions of the Covid-19 pandemic. UCA developed online delivery platforms, and successfully engaged young people in virtual activities, including 1:1 Blackboard Collaborate mentoring with young people undertaking Arts Award. Online developments from Trinity College, including virtual Arts Award Adviser Training and Moderations, allowed the programme to successfully continue. In some cases, these virtual elements allowed greater access from young people and staff to engage in the programme.

Online delivery enabled expansion of the programme to schools outside of the initial target organisations, allowing arts and cultural opportunities to be accessed by additional staff and young people in Artsworld (South East Bridge) and Royal Opera House (North Kent Bridge) areas.

- **Resources – Arts Award student area**

Another success was the expansion of UCA's Get Creative initiative to include a designated Arts Award resource area. A demand for this was indicated by many teachers, who flagged the need for this continued support after the CPD conference: 'Set up an online shared folder with the resources and videos in. Even better if you can create a website that facilitates all of the above along with links to other resources and websites.' 'We struggle as to where to signpost them to once we have ignited a spark of creativity in them'. New free and accessible digital Arts Award resources were created for staff, young people and parents in the region – visit [uca.ac.uk/getcreative/what-is-arts-award](http://uca.ac.uk/getcreative/what-is-arts-award) for more information.



Figure 5 - Arts Award student work



## Challenges

- The **Covid-19 Pandemic and resulting disruptions** had a huge impact on the programme:
  - The East Kent region was particularly affected by repeated lockdowns and high levels of Covid-19, including new variants.
  - Repeated lockdowns and limited physical interaction at the beginning of the programme severely impacted Arts Award delivery – school staff found it difficult to deliver additional content alongside returning to their core curriculums, and young people found it difficult to engage with virtual programmes for a variety of reasons including digital poverty, and the pressure of missed learning.
  - As a result of these challenges, the programme was extended from its original end date of Summer 2021 to Spring 2022.

## Learning & Impact

- **The impact of Arts Award activities:**

A huge success from the programme was the increase in young people's perception of their skills and progression as a result of achieving Arts Award. Young people particularly commented on how the skills they learnt will enable them to achieve in future studies: *'I plan to take Art and DT at GCSE so these skills and knowledge gained will support me with this.'*

Learning recognised by participants indicated a **positive attitudinal shift to future selves, creative study and careers** after taking part in the Bronze Arts Award activities:

- 'Seeing other artists work ... encourages [you] to see if you can make it.'
- 'I got to try out new things that will improve my portfolio and the award ... will improve my chances of getting into university and can help me in the future.'
- 'I ... plan to use the research and development skills I've gained to improve my art in future.'
- 'It's helped me to develop painting at a large scale, working and teaching children, researching artists and their work and more!'

Participants also indicated **skills development**, both creative and transferable/soft skills, as the most beneficial part of the Bronze Arts Award activities:

- 'Introducing/learning a new skill'
- '[The activity] helped my confidence and social skills.'
- 'You can learn new skills and expand your creative arts techniques.'
- 'Interactive workshops ... where we are taught a new skill.'
- 'It helped me with time management and confidence. I needed to do my work in time and I enjoyed it.'
- 'It's helped me with time management and being more confident with sharing my art with other people.'

Participants also included references to how the landscape of creative education has changed dramatically as a result of Covid-19, touching on themes of **connection, support and creative autonomy**:

- 'Connecting with others and being able to feel inspired by seeing each other's work and being with those who praise one another when it comes to their work.'
- 'The most beneficial part was the in person stuff as there was a lot of support.'
- 'Having a lot of freedom in the tasks.'
- 'I would love for all the workshops to be in person'



*Figure 6 - Student exhibiting work on a cultural visit*

- **Staff CPD Conferences:**

The staff CPD conferences set out to enable and empower local educators, and provide an opportunity to create new partnerships between groups. In a pre-event survey, attendees expressed a desire to ‘connect with others’, ‘connect, [gain] ideas for arts award, be inspired!’, and ‘connect with other practitioners’.

The conferences successfully facilitated the opportunity for staff to link networks and connections, and many attendees agreed that the main outcome they took away from the events was ‘contacts’ and a desire to ‘champion [the] creative sector.’

Attendees also agreed that attending had allowed them to ‘develop [an] understanding of arts landscape in terms of education regionally’ and that the ‘day [was] really helpful in building [their] understanding of the educational landscape across Canterbury and Kent regionally; it was helpful as a teacher of arts to know what other colleagues are doing in local schools and the opportunity to network was valuable.’



*Figure 7 - Creative Careers Conference*

Feedback gathered from the CPD events was incredibly positive:

- In the feedback collected over 80% of attendees identified that:
  - Attending the events had increased their confidence in advising students about careers and opportunities in the creative industries.
  - After attending the events, [they were] more aware of the opportunities available through the study of creative subjects.
  - After attending the events, [they had] an increased understanding of Creative Career pathways and progression routes.

- All attendees identified that they would be 'Likely' or 'Very Likely' to recommend that colleagues book similar events in the future.
- Comments included:
  - *'The most beneficial part... was the information about the Arts Awards. I picked up lots of helpful information about transferable skills in the arts and learnt a lot from each speaker.'*
  - *'Having my eyes opened to the wealth of career opportunities out there and also how big the creative careers industry is [was beneficial]. The workshop with the professional photographer was a brilliant insight into his career and full of inspiration and advice I can take back to my students. The whole day was full of great, practical ideas and resources.'*
  - *'Getting an insight into how alumni have made careers within the industry is incredibly helpful. It is easier to give advice to students if you are sure you know what you are talking about.'*
- *'I found the day really helpful in building my understanding of the educational landscape across Canterbury and Kent regionally; it was helpful as a teacher of arts to know what other colleagues are doing in local schools and the opportunity to network was valuable. On reflection, it was an eye-opening experience to be able to take part in an arts activity that was totally outside my sphere of experience (I dropped visual arts in Y9 – over 25 years ago), so it was a valuable exercise to see how students can feel totally out of their depth when studying or training in a totally new art for the first time.'*

## Legacy

### **Legacy for partnered schools:**

- CPD opportunities delivered as part of the programme have enabled and increased knowledge surrounding arts and cultural education, and as a result schools will be able to embed this learning and experience into their individual policies and delivery.
- For some schools, the Schools Connect programme allowed them to deliver Arts Award activities to multiple groups – for example, Astor Secondary School successfully engaged young people to achieve their Explore, Bronze and Gold levels. Astor are continuing to embed Arts Award in their curriculum for the next academic year. St Anselm's Catholic School are also planning to deliver an extra-curricular Arts Award Club next academic year.
- Schools will also continue their commitment to arts and culture in their organisations through their continued Artsmark journeys.

### **Legacy for UCA:**

- KaMCOP has received funding from the Office for Students (OfS) to continue for a further year. As part of our project plans, UCA will continue to offer strategic Arts Award Programmes for under-represented young people across Kent and Medway.

- UCA's ongoing relationships with schools has been further developed over the past two years. UCA continue to work with these schools through the continuing KaMCOP programme and UCA's general Outreach provision.
- With numerous staff and practitioners trained as Arts Award Advisers, from a variety of settings as part of the programme we anticipate a number of Arts Award programmes to continue in schools and the wider East Kent region.
- UCA's KaMCOP team have developed virtual and blended Arts Award activities to complement our physical activities, and have successfully encouraged other UCA outreach programmes to adopt Arts Award. This developed outreach offer will enable the schools and students involved in this programme to continue to access opportunities beyond the life of the Schools Connect and KaMCOP programmes.
- UCA have had their status as a Trinity Champion Centre renewed for a further academic year, on the basis of outputs including the Schools Connect programme.
- UCA are also a continued Artsmark Partner to further support schools on their Artsmark journeys.
- UCA's collaborative relationship with Artsworld continues to champion arts and culture in East Kent and beyond. Feedback from Artsworld has been incredibly positive: 'I wanted to extend a massive thank you from Artsworld for your dedication to bringing the Schools Connect programme to competition. It's not been an easy journey, but you've been incredibly adaptable, consistent, and optimistic - it's been a pleasure to navigate the programme with you.' - *Leanne Macdonald, Artsworld Education Development Manager – Kent.*

## Closing comments

**'Involvement with arts and culture is crucial to imagination, self-expression and creativity in young people.'** (*Arts Council, 2019*)

Opportunities, such as those provided by the Schools Connect programme, give young people the means to engage in arts and culture, develop social capital, and increase their knowledge of creative careers and progression. For many young people, this participation is a catalyst for raising aspirations and breaking down barriers to education and careers: 'Unequal access to culture; disparities in participation and achievement in cultural education; and a lack of visible role models – set those from working-class backgrounds at a distinct disadvantage to their privileged counterparts in getting in and getting on in the Creative Industries.' (*Creative Industries Policy & Evidence Centre, September 2021*)

Programmes such as the Schools Connect initiative are well placed to raise aspirations for young people in Kent and Medway, a region containing 15.2% of all jobs in the UK creative industry. (*Digital Culture Media & Sports Statistics, June 2019*)

Engagement in creative outreach activities is key in promoting social mobility, encouraging access to HE and ultimately progression into careers: 'Young people from a privileged background with a degree-level qualification are more than five times more likely to land a creative job than those from a working class background only qualified to GCSE-level.' (*Creative Industries Policy & Evidence Centre, August 2020*)



UCA, in collaboration with many networks across the South East, has a long history of working to raise the aspirations and attainment of young people who may not consider progression to HE as a route to success. Expanding on the success of the Schools Connect programme, UCA continue to champion the impact of creative outreach.

‘It has been brilliant be involved in the delivery of the Schools Connect programme. Working with each school has been a pleasure and I am looking forward to seeing the continuation of their Artsmark journeys and future collaborations with UCA. It is rewarding to see within this report the many successes of the programme, particularly despite the challenges we faced as a result of the pandemic. It is great to see such positive feedback from the young people and staff we engaged with, and I am pleased that the work we have done has provided opportunities for young people to access and experience arts and culture.’ - *Louisa Clements, UCA’s Arts Award lead and lead delivery for Schools Connect Programme.*