

Artsmark application guidance



**Your guide to
completing the
Artsmark Award**

Artsmark application guidance

Introduction

This document explains the Artsmark process that schools and education settings follow to work towards an award. Artsmark is awarded at three levels: Silver, Gold and Platinum. Find out how to complete your Artsmark submissions for assessment and discover tools and tips to support the planning, delivery and evaluation of your Artsmark journey.

The Artsmark process

1. Register online
2. Two members of staff, including a member of SLT, take the Artsmark e-learning module and Self-Assessment, then attend development training
3. Write and submit your Statement of Commitment
4. Deliver, develop and evaluate your goals
5. Write and submit your Statement of Impact
6. Receive your Artsmark Award and start celebrating!
7. Re-register for your next Artsmark

Take a look at the back page for a diagram that you can fill in to monitor progress at each stage of your journey.

"The Artsmark journey has been enlightening and enabling. [Staff] have gained in confidence and seen both the hard evidence a creative approach brings as well as experiencing the enjoyment and potential of creative projects."

**Shiremoor Primary School
North Tyneside**



Artsmark resources and templates

The Artsmark paperwork has been designed as a staged framework for planning, implementing and evaluating your journey.

Visit our website to download these documents: artsmark.org.uk/resources

Artsmark Framework

Criteria for the Artsmark Award which will be used to assess your application.

Undertake the Self-Assessment exercise with staff, senior leaders and governors to get a clear view of your current arts and cultural provision and to reflect on where you could develop further. Plan your Artsmark journey strategically together, using the Artsmark Award criteria and the Arts Council's Quality Principles to measure and improve the quality of your provision over time. You should refer to the Artsmark Framework throughout your Artsmark journey.

Statement of Commitment

The first submission which will be used to assess your application.

This submission should be a high-level roadmap that shows the Arts Council the broad direction of travel for arts, culture and creativity in your setting. Describe the current state of play in your setting and your overall plan for the arts. Your plan for Artsmark should have a live and ongoing relationship with your strategic improvement/development plan. Your Statement of Commitment will be used as a reference point when it is time to assess your progress, particularly the distance travelled since setting your objectives. You can download [guidance](#) to help you write this submission from our website and our national delivery partner, Goldsmiths, University of London, is on hand to support you.

Statement of Impact

The final submission which will be used to assess your application.

This evaluative submission should evidence the distance your arts and cultural provision has travelled since you wrote your Statement of Commitment. Showcase your achievements and provide evidence of the impact they have made on your whole setting. Provide evidence that shows how you have evaluated your journey, which should be more than just a list of the activities which have taken place. Focus on how far you've met the objectives you set, and provide evidence to illustrate these. You can download guidance to help you write this submission from our website and access further support from Goldsmiths – see our [Support and Resources web page](#).



Artsmark Criteria

The Artsmark journey is about establishing, embedding and evaluating the impact of the arts and cultural provision within your setting. You should align your journey to the Artsmark criteria.

There are eight Artsmark criteria, outlined in full in the Artsmark Framework:

Values and ethos	Demonstrate equity, relevance and diversity for all
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	Ensure equality and diversity for all
Leadership	Demonstrate ambitious and dynamic leadership
Children and young people	Engage and empower children and young people
Curriculum design and delivery	Develop creative children and young people
Range of offer	Develop cultural entitlement for all children and young people
Continuing Professional Development	Embed quality staff development
Cultural Collaborations	Build connections

Here is an overview of the three award levels: **Silver**, **Gold** and **Platinum**.

Overview	Silver	Gold	Platinum
Quality of provision	Emergent	Established	Stretching
Pedagogy and practice	Developing	Embedded	Advocating
Impact	Tangible results	Measurable effects	Making a difference

Your Statement of Commitment and Statement of Impact should reference the Artsmark criteria and evidence how you have developed against them. This should be written as a narrative that explains the impact, rather than a list of activities.

Alongside the Artsmark criteria, you should also reference Arts Council's Quality Principles, which are explained on the next page.

Arts Council England's Quality Principles

The [Quality Principles](#) are a key element of Artsmark. They are central to all of the Arts Council's work with children and young people. You should use them as a benchmark for planning and as a reference point to reflect on your journey. Show how they are embedded throughout your planning, delivery and evaluation.

The seven Quality Principles are outlined below. Each one is accompanied by prompts to support your planning and evaluation:

1

Striving for excellence and innovation

- Is there a real commitment to achieving excellence by, with and for children and young people?
- What resources are being used and are they likely to promote excellence and lead to high quality outcomes?
- Is enough time set aside in relation to expected outcomes; is time for reflection and feedback built in?

2

Being authentic

- Is it authentic; is it the real thing?
- Is it possible to see a production in a theatre or to have a theatre group visit the setting?
- Can a local artist offer a Q and A session to relate learning opportunities to a working artist's context?

3

Being exciting, inspiring and engaging

- Are children and young people excited, engaged and inspired?
- What might be the most inspirational and engaging introduction to a new piece of work?
- Are you maximising the number of 'ways-in' for learners of different abilities and learning styles?

"Taking part in the Artsmark journey has raised the profile of the arts in the school and supported staff in showcasing the work that they do both in the classroom and as extra-curricular activities."

**Mrs Nichola Comben, Deputy Head,
Southfield Primary Academy**

Photo © The LPA,
Xavier Fiddes / Hillyfield
Primary Academy

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Ensuring a positive and inclusive experience

- Does it ensure a positive and inclusive experience?
- Do your plans include participatory work, as well as opportunities to be part of an audience?
- Whether children and young people are learning 'hands-on' or reflecting on a performance by others, is the activity pitched appropriately?

5

Actively involving children and young people

- Are children and young people actively involved?
- Participation is key, but can you involve learners in initial planning, or give them a say in what and how they might be actively involved?
- Can you find ways to bring learners to the heart of collaborations?

6

Enabling personal progression

- Do children and young people progress and know where to go next?
- Can you signpost to further schemes of work and offer additional stimulus opportunities?
- Are opportunities for individual growth followed up with support that develops personal expression and the development of individuality?

7

Developing belonging and ownership

- Do children and young people feel they belong, and it belongs to them?
- Can you showcase work around your setting to illustrate learning and develop a sense of ownership?
- Do parents and the wider community have opportunities to see work in an impressive light?

"Not only has Artsmark allowed us to create greater awareness of career pathways linked to the arts, we have had significantly greater numbers of pupils choosing to continue with their arts studies post 16, at the local colleges."

**Hospital and Outreach Education
Northamptonshire**



Planning your Artsmark journey

The Artsmark process is flexible to fit around your planning cycles and individual needs. Use this to your advantage and align your goals for Artsmark to your existing development plans.

What you need:	Who you need:
Artsmark Framework	Headteacher or member of the senior leadership team
Your setting's strategic improvement/development plan	Staff from across your setting
Statement of Commitment template	Children and young people from across your setting
Notes from Artsmark Development Training	Don't forget Goldsmiths, our national delivery partner, is on hand to support

Your plans for Artsmark should be outlined in your Statement of Commitment. Consider the following when planning your journey:

Spend time planning

Embedding new procedures, practices and extending opportunities for staff and young people cannot be rushed. By building in planning time you can create flexible approaches which both maximise the impact of the Artsmark journey and your ability to share successes.

Link your ambitions to expected outcomes

Your ambitions should be written as a set of steps that demonstrate why you think the outcomes you seek are likely to be delivered by the interventions you have chosen. In your planning, explain why it is reasonable to expect those outcomes.

Be realistic

Completing the Artsmark journey to create a lasting impact and legacy requires time. Being realistic enables you to focus on delivering sustainable, high-quality results within the two years available to you.

Plan to evaluate the impact

Ensure that you have a clear idea of the outcomes you are expecting to achieve. Match your success indicators accordingly so you can build assessment of impact in from the beginning.



Implementing your plans

Once your Statement of Commitment has been accepted you can start implementing your plans. Staff, young people and partners should work together to deliver your goals and to collect evidence of their impact along the way. Keep a copy of your Statement of Commitment where staff can access it. You could even print the back page of this booklet to monitor your journey together.

What you need:	Who you need:
Artsmark Framework	Headteacher or member of the senior leadership team
Your completed Statement of Commitment	Staff from across your setting
Your setting's strategic improvement/development plan	Children and young people from across your setting
Statement of Impact template	Any partners you work with

You have up to two years to deliver the goals from your Statement of Commitment. Consider the following when implementing your plans:

Have a flexible approach

Flexibility with your plans will help you to achieve your outcomes. Unforeseen constraints may limit your ability to deliver your plans, however, being flexible and creative in how the outcomes are achieved can help you overcome challenges.

Look for cultural partners in your area

Engaging with other settings, parents and the local community, organisations and artists can help you to develop collaborations and partnerships. There are hundreds of cultural organisations funded by the Arts Council that work with schools, and support children and young people's creativity. From National Portfolio Organisations, to Music Hubs to National Youth Music Organisations.

Work collaboratively across your setting

Staff and senior leaders underpin the delivery of the Artsmark journey and their involvement is key to its success. Time should be given to understanding their needs, gaining their buy-in and supporting them to work together throughout the journey.

Evidence and evaluate the impact

Monitor your success indicators and, where possible, start collecting evidence that will support you to write your Statement of Impact.



Evaluating your Artsmark journey

After implementing your plans, you need to evaluate your work and the impact it has had on your setting. Don't rush to evaluate your journey, allow time for your work to embed and the impact of your work to become evident.

What you need:	Who you need:
Artsmark Framework	Headteacher or member of the senior leadership team
Your completed Statement of Commitment	Staff from across your setting
Your setting's strategic improvement/development plan	Children and young people from across your setting
Statement of Impact template	Parents and members of the wider community

You must evaluate and provide evidence of the impact of your work, since submitting your Statement of Commitment. Consider the following when evaluating your journey:

Reflect on your success indicators

If you have been working towards expected outcomes, you should be able to reflect on your journey and evaluate how you have progressed against these. Now is the time to refine what evidence to include in the evaluative narrative of your Statement of Impact.

Accept that difficulties can arise along the way

Difficulties or unexpected outcomes should not be seen as failures or negative aspects of your Artsmark journey. They should be shared as examples of your commitment to development that other settings can learn from.

Evaluate the impact

It's important that your Statement of Impact is not just a list of activity that has taken place. Collect evidence that will support any statements you make about impact.

Celebrate your successes

Don't forget to celebrate all that you have achieved. Use your Statement of Impact to showcase your achievements and how they have made a difference to the creative lives of children and young people in your setting.



What do we mean by ‘evidence of impact’?

As part of your application, you need to provide written evidence that supports the assertions you make about how Artsmark has had an impact in your setting. This evidence should be included in your Statement of Impact, but you should start planning for it when writing your Statement of Commitment.

Go further than just relying on your own observations and anecdotes. The more views you canvass, the more robust your Statement of Impact can be. Consider:

Questionnaires or surveys

Regular school surveys to young people, parents and carers can be a useful source, so that the whole setting and wider community can contribute. You could write a short questionnaire to get feedback on a specific activity.

Monitoring progress over time

If you plan to track a small, focused group of students for quotes and perceptions, identify them early on and make them part of the process, encouraging them to reflect on their experiences and incorporate such ideas from the start.

Keep in mind that all evidence must be written within your application. We cannot accept any additional information or evidence such as images, multi-media, hyperlinks or web links that fall outside of our standard templates. This ensures that we can robustly assess each application under the same criteria.

Measuring progress over time

If you are hoping to extend the range and/or depth of your arts offer, can you confidently say how you would measure current provision and how you’d demonstrate an increase in new opportunities?

Data

Your setting may already collect data that could be used to evidence impact. If you want to collect data specifically for Artsmark, plan ahead and incorporate such ideas from the start.



“One of the exciting things about developing partnerships and relationships with artists and arts organisations has been the opportunity to learn from each other. All schools are different and every special school has its unique approach, influenced by its staff, leadership and pupil cohorts.”

**Brays School
Birmingham**

Photo © Roy Baron / The LPA

Support

Goldsmiths
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

Goldsmiths, University of London

Our national delivery partner, Goldsmiths, is here to help you get the most out of your Artsmark journey. They will deliver Artsmark Development Training and can offer you a range of support throughout your journey.

Find out more on our website: artsmark.org.uk/support.

Arts Council England

The Arts Council manage your registration and application to Artsmark. You can contact them to:

- Update your contact details
- Check the status of your journey
- Request a logo to show that you have submitted your Statement of Commitment or achieved an award

If you are experiencing difficulties with your journey, are struggling to reach the next stage in the process, or if you feel you may not be able to meet the deadlines for your submissions, contact the Arts Council as soon as possible.

@ artsmark@artscouncil.org.uk

artsmark.org.uk

Additional resources

Application templates and additional resources can be found on the Artsmark website:

artsmark.org.uk/resources

These include:

- The Artsmark Framework
- Statement of Commitment and Statement of Impact templates
- Guidance on how to complete your Statement of Commitment or Statement of Impact
- Celebration resources to use once you have achieved your award

Good luck and enjoy your journey!

Do you require this document in an alternative format? Please make your request using the contact details above or visit artscouncil.org.uk/access for more information.



The Artsmark Process

Use this diagram to monitor your progress through the Artsmark Award

