

Cultural Rucksack –Development Meeting - Highlights

Our first Cultural Rucksack Development Meeting was held on the 14th January which began the process of updating teachers from across the City on progress with developing the Cultural Rucksack, while also capturing their thoughts and input to influence future development.

The Cultural Rucksack is working towards improving the relationship between Nottingham's Schools and the huge range of Cultural Partners across the City in order that young people can better access and engage with a broad range of arts and cultural experiences. The Cultural Rucksack will not only celebrate the cultural background of a young person but help them explore the diverse cultural landscape of Nottingham. We hope this will help them further develop their own cultural capital and lead them into a life-long engagement with the arts and for some a creative career.

The meeting included an overview of ChalleNGe, Nottingham's Cultural Education Partnership, under which the Cultural Rucksack will sit. Professor Chris Hall, from Nottingham University, then gave an overview of the Cultural Rucksack, which was followed by a more detailed outline of our thoughts, to date.

Key elements of the Cultural Rucksack and feedback from the meeting are outlined, in brief, below:

The Cultural Entitlement:

- A broad cultural offer or entitlement for young people in Nottingham that is linked to the curriculum and wider enrichment opportunities that will engage with arts partners across the City to help and support schools in their delivery.
- The entitlement should be characterised by dependable/sustained and regular programmes for schools – enabling schools to plan and embed creativity in their curriculum and life of the school.
- Recognising and celebrating the fact that children and young people arrive to us with their 'cultural rucksack' partly filled.
- That this entitlement should form the basis of a 'pledge', a right for our children and young people. Schools could sign up to the Cultural Rucksack and organisations/individuals pledge a commitment to support. City wide sign up?
- It will be important to have school senior management team 'buy in' – also need senior leadership advocacy across the City.
- Design and build in clear pathways to creative careers and industries.

Cultural Ambassadors in School:

- Don't just have one lead but consider a team of people, at least have one other staff member so that the initiative is not 'person dependent'. It should be a team effort and cross-disciplinary in nature.
- Some schools now looking at Cultural Leads in response to some Ofsted inspections.
- Important for a whole school approach and seek engagement from **all** staff.
- Input and participation of young people in developing the offer both at a City-wide level and within school. Make use of School Councils, Arts Ambassadors, Primary Parliament and Youth Cabinet, for example. Potential for an annual 'Youth Empowerment Festival of Ideas'.
- Also, important to engage families and local communities – bringing 'local culture' into the school while also sharing broader cultural experiences with them.

Support for Cultural Ambassadors and Schools:

- Provide support to schools in terms of curriculum planning for cultural education.
- Provide schools with a 'sign up' welcome pack.

- Develop partnerships between schools to provide mutual support hubs – linking those developing their cultural curriculum with those further down the line of development. Provide an outline to those with ‘emerging practice’ on the steps they should take towards ‘embedded practice’.
- Make the most of existing support groups such as NST/Schools of Tomorrow/City of Literature/Music Lead Networks etc. in developing hubs.
- Could we link up each school with an Arts Provider to help develop an in depth, high quality, look at one element of the Arts – ‘Adopt a School’? (This approach is already happening with a number of providers). This would be supplemented by a broader range of experiences. Consider ‘inquiry questions’ to bring the curriculum together in a sustained and inter-disciplinary way.
- Schools can also be ‘providers’ of cultural arts provision.
- Need for **clear signposting**. Develop a ‘Cultural Map of Nottingham’ – where is the provision? what is on offer? who can visit schools? There can be a lot of staff turn around and informing schools of what is available will be a never-ending job as new staff take up post.
- All providers in the City being clear on what they ‘can’ and ‘cannot’ offer – signposting to other provision if necessary. Engaging schools in the co-design of programmes and building relationships with teachers is key.
- Help schools and providers by having a ‘one-stop-shop- for venue/activity bookings, which could include transport – working with College Street to look at this idea.
- Look to build on work developed by previous initiatives such as Creative Partnerships.

Challenges

- Resourcing such an initiative could be an issue, however, it could also be argued that this is all a part of ‘what we do’ not something extra. How can it be delivered within existing resources? Partly assisted by how we can best use the provision that is out there – for this to happen teachers need to have a good understanding of the ‘offer’ and support available to them – and it will need some central coordination.
- Need to advocate the Cultural Rucksack with Senior Managers – to ensure resources such as teacher time is made available.

Teachers Development Meeting

We have a small teachers’ group who are helping to pull together some of the detail of the Cultural Rucksack and we are looking for additional input from schools. I am planning our next meeting to take place on Thursday 28th January, 15.45 – 17.00. The focus will be ‘The Entitlement’. If you are interested please contact Martin Smith, Cultural Rucksack Lead: martin.smith@greenwoodacademies.org

We are also looking to hold at another couple of wider **Cultural Rucksack Development Meetings** in the coming months:

March: Tuesday 9th March, 15.45 – 17.45

April: Thursday 29th April, 15.45 – 17.45

For further details and event tickets please see:

<https://challengenottingham.co.uk/cultural-rucksack>