

OPEN DOORS

CONNECT INSPIRE CREATE

Primary Schools Programme



2026 - 2027

Who are Open Doors?

Open Doors is an arts programme delivering free, creative activities across Newark and Sherwood.

Our projects encourage people of all ages and abilities to have fun, connect with their community, and experience something new.

Funded by Arts Council England and delivered by Newark and Sherwood District Council, you'll find our team running activities in museums, libraries, schools, theatres, and other venues across the district.

Our programme includes:

- Pop-up activities
- Theatre, music, and creative arts workshops in our sites across Newark and Sherwood
- Artists in schools and communities
- Professional development for creatives and teachers
- Workshops in schools, tailored to a range of ages and abilities
- Opportunities for young people, including the Arts Award qualifications Discover and Explore

Our sessions are:

- Delivered by experienced facilitators and creative arts experts
- Flexible
- Tailored to your needs
- Fully funded (at no cost to you!)



Our Creative Arts Learning Offer



Delivered by creative professionals, our Creative Arts Learning Offer will boost your pupils' confidence, encourage co-production, support classroom learning, and enable all learning styles to thrive!

We focus on the understanding, enjoyment, and passion of performance, introducing young people to the vibrant, diverse, and magical world of the arts.

“

**The session was amazing!
Inspirational music teaching, which
the children thrived on.**

”

Outreach Sessions

Book a full-day, half-day, or single-lesson session with one of our creative arts team.

We can bring exciting performance experiences to your classroom, from storytelling to puppet play, musical activities, and curriculum-linked drama sessions.

Theatre Tours

Bring your class to the Palace Theatre Newark, where they'll have a chance to peek behind the curtain and see what goes on backstage!

Loan Boxes

Borrow one of our story bags filled with props, costumes, British Sign Language signs, and music.

“

**The children
were hooked
immediately!**

”

Continuing Professional Development for Teachers

If you need help embedding music into the curriculum, we can provide planning advice, resources, and deliver staff meetings.

Outreach Sessions



We offer sessions for all ages and abilities that can be tailored to your pupils' needs.

Each session meets points of the national curriculum and aims to develop of a love of music, drama, storytelling, writing, and performance.

Every outreach sessions includes:

- A full or half-day's activity for up to thirty children
- Sessions led by experienced theatre and creative facilitators
- Props, costumes, signs, and music
- Tips for developing the work after the session has ended

Preschool – Palace Players

One
hour

Enjoy an hour of music and movement in these sessions, suitable for toddlers to children aged four.

- Discover the musical instruments in our big blue bag of jingles
- Listen and play along to music from around the world
- Enjoy parachute games, dancing, and sung storytime
- Meet our cuddly friends Octavius the Spider, Peekaboo the Bunny, Mother Duck and her naughty ducklings, and our five bouncing monkeys, who will help teach pulse, beat, and rhythm.

These sessions support children in developing fine and gross co-ordination skills, active listening, social skills, understanding of pulse and rhythm, and confidence.

Outreach session ☒

Digital resource ☐

Loans Box ☐



Key Stage One



Playbox

Full-day
session

Learn about the people who create theatre in this one-day interactive introduction.

Your class will discover what it takes to be a director, actor, or stage crew member, along with the ingredients for bringing an exciting story to life. They'll have the chance to delve into our box of costumes and props before performing their own production of Julia Donaldson's beloved children's story, *Room on the Broom*.

Outreach session ☒

Digital resource ☒

Loans Box ☒

Puppet Play

Full-day
session

Expect a full day of fun, creativity, and performance in this introduction to scriptwriting.

Our creative arts officer will visit your school and introduce your class to different types of plays. Your class will learn about the three-act structure and have a go at writing their own play, as well as create wooden-spoon puppet actors to perform in our pop-up theatre with their friends.

Outreach session ☒ Digital resource ☒ Loans Box ☒

Storybook Choir

Enjoy a magical day of singing and interactive storytelling.

One of our experienced facilitators will come to your classroom, equipped with their magical storybook bag, props, costumes, and more. They'll lead a day of learning, singing, and British Sign Language, performing songs from children's literature.

Full-day
session

Outreach session ☒ Digital resource ☒ Loans Box ☒

Key Stage Two



You Can Judge a Book by it's Cover!

These sessions are dedicated to creative writing, design, and art skills.

Your class will study different genres of fiction writing and cover art techniques, and learn what tempts readers to pick up a book and buy it. Using their newfound knowledge, pupils will plot out their own works of fiction, compose a blurb, and design a front cover of their own.

**Full-day
session**

Outreach session ☒ **Digital resource** ☒ **Loans Box** ☒

Chorus Kids

Full-day or
half-day
session

Chorus Kids is a full day of singing, music, and performance.

After physical, facial, and vocal warm-ups, your pupils will learn two songs to perform later in the day. This session can be linked with your school's curriculum, and if you have a school, concert, or assembly you're preparing for, we can tailor Chorus Kids to the songs your pupils need to learn and perform.

Outreach session ☒

Digital resource ☐

Loans Box ☐

Anglo Saxon Theatre

Discover the Anglo-Saxon tale of Beowulf in two days of games, drama workshops, interactive storytelling, and theatre learning.

Using costumes and music, your pupils will dive into a world of legends and create their own performance of this epic tale.

Full-day
session

This session will require the school hall.

Outreach session ☒

Digital resource ☐

Loans Box ☐

Much Ado About Shakespeare

Full-day
session

Choose from *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Tempest*, *Macbeth*, or *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and watch your pupils bring the play to life.

Using drama studio techniques, pupils will discover beloved characters and recreate scenes from the play, immersing themselves in the vibrant stories of William Shakespeare.

Outreach session ☒

Digital resource ☐

Loans Box ☐

Ancient Egyptian Theatre

Join us for two days of theatre learning, drama workshops, and history.

Your pupils will have the opportunity to learn, rehearse, and perform a short play based on the Egyptian myth of Rhodophis, the girl with the rose-red slippers. Led by a skilled facilitator, your class will learn about scripts, theatre jobs and roles, costuming, and puppet interpretation.

Two days
of theatre
learning

This session will require the school hall.

Outreach session ☒

Digital resource ☐

Loans Box ☐

Heka, Hathor, and Ihy

Full-day
session

Honour the Ancient Egyptian tale of creation with dance, drumming, and storytelling.

Divided into three workshops, this session works brilliantly for large groups of year threes and year fours. Rotating around three creative activities in one day, your pupils will be fully immersed in the sounds, movements, and tales of Ancient Egypt.

Led by one of our experienced facilitators, your teachers and teaching assistants will help deliver an amazing day of creativity filled with music, history, puppetry, and choreography.

This session will require the school hall.

Outreach session ☒

Digital resource ☐

Loans Box ☐

If running three workshops in one day doesn't work for you, we can break this session down into three separate visits from our team.



Music CPD for Teachers and Teaching Assistants

Need help embedding music into school life? Or want to learn more about teaching singing and music?

Through our continuing professional development sessions for teachers and teaching assistants, we can help you improve existing skills, use music to support other subjects, and boost pupils' emotional wellbeing, as well as support you with a specific part of the music curriculum.

Our CPD sessions include foundation years, Key Stage One, and Key Stage Two.

Outreach session ☒

Digital resource ☐

Loans Box ☐

We offer:

- CPD sessions
- Inset days
- Online teacher chats





Palace Theatre, Newark Learning Week

Monday 24 to Friday 28 May 2027

Join us at the Palace Theatre, Newark, for a full or half-day session, featuring:

- Theatre tours
- On-stage drama workshops
- Lessons in lighting design
- A chance to meet the Palace Theatre crew

Book your place as soon as possible—with only five days of theatre access per year, these sessions are sure to fill up fast!

Arts Awards

Give your class the opportunity to complete a Trinity College London Arts Award.

Delivered by an experienced creative arts officer, these awards can help start your pupils' journey into colour, creativity and wonder!

Arts Award Discover

An introductory award for ages five to nine. This award can be completed in one day.

Arts Award Explore

An entry-level qualification (Entry Three, RQF) for ages seven to eleven. This award takes approximately three to four sessions to complete.

“

All children were able to access
and engage. Fabulous!

”

These awards:

- Can be tailored to the curriculum
- Are perfect for boosting wellbeing or as school-year transition sessions
- Can be run during lesson time or as an after-school activity
- Make brilliant end-of-term projects
- Are an opportunity for young learners to experience a range of creative arts and practices



Meet Our Team

Milly Lawson

Creative Arts Officer



With over 20 years of experience in creative performance, teaching, facilitating, and mentoring, Milly has been our Creative Arts Officer since 2023.

Milly trained at the Birmingham Conservatoire before starting her career as a professional musician. She has worked with Ninja Tune Records, the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, West Midlands Chamber Music Society, the University of Oxford and Nottingham Trent University.

Milly is trained in the Kodály method, an accessible musical education philosophy that uses singing and play to build musical literacy. She uses this method in many of our primary learning and continued professional development sessions for teachers. She has also trained with The Royal Shakespeare Company, using their techniques to make Shakespeare accessible and enjoyable for learners.

Milly works with learners of all ages, from early years to adults. She has experience working with SEND environments and in schools and colleges across Birmingham, Oxford, and now Newark and Sherwood District.

Claire Finn

Theatre Learning Facilitator

Claire Finn is an actor and creative practitioner who has worked on stage, television and radio.

Claire has previously worked for the New Perspectives Theatre Company, Leeds Playhouse, Nonsuch studios, and Nottingham Playhouse. She has extensive experience in creating and facilitating theatre workshops for all age groups and across various community, heritage and arts settings.



Dylan Bull

Theatre Learning Facilitator

An actor, musician, composer and facilitator, Dylan specialises in devised performance for young people and family audiences.

He is experienced in drama teaching, facilitating, and mentoring, particularly in working with care-experienced young people. He is passionate about taking arts out into the community and to non-traditional spaces.



Abigail Pidgeon

Theatre Learning Facilitator

Abigail is an actor, singer, writer, and facilitator who has been teaching performing arts for over 10 years.

After training as a secondary school drama teacher, Abigail graduated with an MA in Acting from the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire.

She continues to work professionally as a performer alongside her work with young people.



Robbie Bellekom

Theatre Learning Facilitator

Robbie is a writer, actor, puppeteer and puppet maker.

Along with a BA in Acting and Contemporary Theatre from East 15 Drama School, Robbie has an MA in Creative Writing from the University of Hull and is a graduate of the Curious School of Puppetry.

They have toured both nationally and internationally and are experienced in facilitating workshops for all ages.



Mike Payton

Theatre Learning Facilitator

Mike Payton has been an English and drama teacher for many years, working across Nottinghamshire.

As a performer and facilitator, Mike has worked with children and adults of all ages around the UK and beyond. Winner of the Black Country Story Slam, he has performed at museums, galleries, festivals, castles, and over 250 schools.



Frequently Asked Questions

How do I book?

Email us at opendoors@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk or call 07355 675069.

How much do sessions cost?

There is no cost! We are fully funded by Arts Council England and are delighted to offer sessions free of charge to schools and communities.

Can sessions be adapted for my class?

Of course! We are happy to tailor our visit to your needs.

Are activities risk assessed?

Yes. You will be emailed a risk assessment upon booking.

Is your team DBS checked?

Our team have passed enhanced DBS checks and will bring their paperwork along when they visit.



How do I prepare for your visit?

Full details will be included in your booking confirmation letter.

What if I need to cancel a session?

Please contact milly.lawson@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk or katy.culbard@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk as soon as possible to cancel your session.

Don't see your question here?

Email opendoors@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk, or call us on **07355 675069**. We'll be happy to answer your questions!

Get Involved

Find out more about our projects, exhibitions and events at: [**www.palacenewark.com/opendoors**](http://www.palacenewark.com/opendoors)

Or, check out our new website, launching Autumn 2026: [**opendoorsarts.co.ukopendoors**](http://opendoorsarts.co.ukopendoors)



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