

OPEN DOORS

CONNECT INSPIRE CREATE

Secondary 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 outreach sessions 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. Each full-day, half-day, or single-lesson session meets points of the national curriculum and aims to develop a love of music, drama, writing and storytelling.

“

“All the students got involved and loved the activities. Great energy, loads of fun.”

”

Key Stage Three

50 - 60
minutes

Play On!

Shakespeare is in the house for “Play On!”

This interactive theatre experience will transport your students to 1611, when the first performance of Macbeth took place at the Globe Theatre.

Students will experience the show like a true Shakespearean audience, exploring the customs and manners of seventeenth-century England and comparing them to today. They’ll discover how actors performed in Shakespeare’s time, and how it felt to be part of a raucous crowd.

This session is all about energy, enthusiasm, and engagement. Students should be ready to dress up and enjoy theatre as the Bard intended.

Location: School hall, theatre, or sports hall.

“ The sensory aspect of going to the theatre in the 1600s, the placarding of archaic language, and the contextual knowledge of audience tiering and etiquette — all brilliant! ”

Page to Stage

50 - 60
minutes

Designed for pupils in years seven, eight, and nine, Page to Stage is a practical and engaging introduction to some of Shakespeare's most famous plays.

Through games, visual prompts, and interactive drama techniques, pupils will improve their understanding of plot, rhythm, and structure, while strengthening their performance and interpretation skills.

These workshops are ideal at any point in the term, whether you're introducing a play, boosting engagement mid-term, or reinforcing key learning at the end of the year.

Students will be encouraged to think creatively and collaborate, stepping into the characters' shoes and re-imagining the stage as their own.

Location: School hall, theatre, or sports hall. This session can be extended if required.

**Choose from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*,
The Tempest, or *Romeo and Juliet*.**

Key Stage Four

Revision Theatre

Bring exam texts to life with our Revision Theatre learning sessions.

Through drama studio techniques and immersive workshops, your students will dive deep into the heart of their GCSE plays.

They will explore the characters' thoughts and behaviours, developing a richer understanding of their motivations.

Focusing on pivotal scenes and themes, students will better understand the text they're studying and the historical context that shaped it.

Location: School hall, theatre, or sports hall.

Plays offered include:

- *An Inspector Calls*
- *Macbeth*
- *Blood Brothers*
- *A Christmas Carol*

Revision Theatre can be delivered as a single lesson or extended to a full or half-day session, tailored to your needs.

Key Stage Three, Four, and Five

Commedia dell'Arte

Journey to the streets of sixteenth-century Italy and the world of Commedia dell'Arte—where masks come to life, characters leap off the stage, and laughter echoes through time.

Your students will be swept into an energetic, hands-on session bursting with movement, comedy, costume, mask work, history, and creative drama exercises.

Uncover the fascinating roots of this theatrical tradition, and see how its elements still shine in today's theatre and film.

Location: School or sports hall, theatre, or drama studio.



“

An immersive and interactive session, led by knowledgeable and enthusiastic facilitators.

”

50 – 60
minutes



Pupils will:

- Meet an unforgettable cast of characters and discover the modern roles they've inspired
- Move, laugh, improvise and create
- From physical comedy to storytelling, these sessions are designed to keep students engaged, inspired and entertained!

Sessions can be booked as a one-off experience or as a series, in which pupils focus on developing performance pieces and capturing them on film.



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!

Creative Futures

Do you have students interested in a theatre career?

We've created a series of short films introducing young people to the varied opportunities available, both on stage and off!

Creative Futures is a series of short, filmed interviews with theatre industry professionals offering career advice and guidance, along with sharing their own creative journeys.

Led by our Creative Influencers youth panel, these online interviews are a handy guide on turning passion into a career.

Hear from:

- Actors
- Scriptwriters
- Theatre managers
- Production crew members, and more!

Watch now at: www.youtube.com/@OpenDoorsNewark

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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