

RA



**Report on SEN Schools Weeks 2016-2017:
multi-sensory workshops at the Royal Academy**

Prepared for the Lord Leonard and Lady Estelle Wolfson Foundation

October 2017

Overview

In 2014, the Lord Leonard and Lady Estelle Wolfson Foundation made a highly generous commitment to fund three years of the RA's work with SEN schools. This report is for the third year of the programme and the workshops held between September 2016 and August 2017.

The RA's work with SEN schools focuses around a series of 'SEN Schools' Weeks' — multi-sensory workshops which engage students in the RA's exhibitions and in art-making, and encourage students' own creativity. The workshops include conversations about art, a guided tour through the galleries, as well as object-handling and creative workshops.

Each workshop is led by a team of experienced artist educators who tailor activities to the needs of the group. In the majority of cases, the educators visit the school in advance to discuss the workshop with teachers and meet the students in their school environment.

This year's workshops were based around the exhibitions *Abstract Expressionism*, *James Ensor the Summer Exhibition* and works from the RA Collection.

The workshops take place in the Learning Studio, a space which is on the same floor as the Main Galleries and which is available for the school's sole use throughout their visit.

The schools

Seventeen schools attended this year, three of which booked for two workshops (Linden Lodge, Riverside School and The Village School).

Two out of the 17 had never visited the RA before and we were delighted to welcome them. These were Aylands School, which was recommended to join by another school, and Riverside School, which came after their teacher attended the 'Why & how?' Conference in March. Belvue High Parayhouse and Greenvale all join for the second year running.

Schools who visited for the first time	Borough	Specialisms
Aylands School	Enfield	Mixed school for children aged 3-16 who have emotional or behavioural difficulties.
Riverside School	Barking and Dagenham	Mixed secondary school for pupils with mixed Autism.

Other schools who participated this year	Borough	Number of workshops	Specialisms
Linden Bridge School	Surrey	1	Complex social communication needs
Abingdon House School	Ken & Chelsea	1	Severe learning disabilities

Parayhouse School	Hammersmith & Fulham	1	Moderate learning difficulties and speech, language and communication needs.
College Park	Westminster	1	Full range of disabilities
The Village School	Brent	2	Severe learning disabilities
Queen Elizabeth II Jubilee	Westminster	1	Severe, profound and multiple learning disabilities
Linden Lodge	Wandsworth	2	Visual impairments and multiple disabilities
Greenvale School	Lewisham	2	Wheelchair users and profound learning disabilities
Belvue High School	Ealing	1	Moderate learning disorders
The Bridge School	Islington	1	Range of disabilities
Manor Green College	West Sussex	1	Developmental delay, autism and physical disabilities

Quotes

'SEN students need appropriate opportunities to experience external learning and the Royal Academy offers a wonderful safe but exciting environment for them to learn in a gallery space and gain first-hand experiences.'

'My students get the most from being able to make repeat visits due to the complexities of their condition (autism). Being able to make a number of repeat trips would be fantastic.'

'Having an open ended creative session facilitated by Abi and Harry...was very appropriate to give more time, space and freedom for experimentation and direct self-expression.'

'Since beginning of the academic year we are building it step by step. At this stage it was a nice way of sharing this experience together. We looked at the photographs the following day on the interactive screen. Children were engaged for almost 30 minutes, looking, answering simple questions, pointing to things and commenting with one word, or vocalizations on what they did the previous day. It was pure joy!'



Students visiting the Summer Exhibition, June 2017

Attendance

Week 1: 27 September - 3 October 2016, Responding creatively the movement, Abstract Expressionism

School	Borough	First time/ previous visitor	Group size	Access requirements of the group
The Bridge School	Islington	Previous	9	Range of disabilities
College Park	Westminster	Previous	9	Range of disabilities
Manor Green College	West Sussex	Previous	12	1 x wheelchair user, global developmental delay, autism spectrum
Abingdon House School	Westminster	Previous	7	ADHD and moderate to severe autism
Queen Elizabeth II Jubilee School	Westminster	Previous	8	Severe, profound and multiple learning disabilities
Total participants			45	

Week 2: 9 – 13 January 2017, Drawing inspiration from 'James Ensor by Luc Tuymans'

The Village School	Brent	Previous	8	Severe learning difficulties
Greenvale School	Lewisham	Previous	10	2 x wheelchair users, severe learning difficulties
Linden Lodge	Wandsworth	Previous	9	Partially sighted and additional special needs
Parayhouse School	Hammersmith	Previous	11	Mixed moderate learning difficulties
The Village School	Brent	Previous	8	Severe learning difficulties
Total participants			46	

Week 3: 6 and 7 March 2017, Exploring works from the RA Collection

Riverside School	Barking and Dagenham	First-time	8	Complex autism, non-verbal, 1 x wheelchair user
Aylands School	Enfield	First-time	10	Emotional behavioural disorder, autism, ADHD, dyslexia
Total participants			18	

Week 4: 26 - 30 June 2017, Engaging with the RA's Summer Exhibition

Linden Bridge School	Surrey	Previous	8	Mixed moderate learning difficulties
Linden Lodge	Wandsworth	Previous	9	Severe learning difficulties, autism spectrum disorder
Belvue High School	Ealing	Previous	12	Autism spectrum disorder, ADHD, moderate learning difficulties
Greenvale School	Lewisham	Previous	10	Moderate learning difficulties
Riverside School	Barking and Dagenham	First-time	7	Moderate and severe learning difficulties
Total participants			46	

Additional activities

Sensory Engagement Training with Joanna Grace

In January SEND and sensory engagement specialist Joanna Grace delivered a training session for members from the learning team and key artist educators working on our schools and families programmes.

The training involved an introduction to sensory processing disorder (SPD) and its links to challenging behaviour. We explored the rationale for sensory engagement and understanding what a powerful learning tool sensory experience can be.

We looked at strategies to support sensory engagement and learnt practical methods for supporting individuals with SPD and different ways to make our workshops easier for children with SEND to engage with.

Susan Potter's SEND resource research:

This year we commissioned researcher, Susan Potter, to review SEND resources in galleries and museums with a view to developing a range of resources over the next few years that will support children and young adults with SEND, and their teachers and parents, to better engage with the RA's artwork, architecture and history.

In December 2017 Susan will present her findings to the RA Access and Communities Manager and colleagues, and propose guidance on the potential development of RA SEND programmes and resources.

Plans for the next 3 years (2017-2020)

As the Royal Academy opens up its newly refurbished campus in their 250th year, including a link bridge between Burlington House and Burlington Gardens, a new state of the art auditorium, an expanded space for learning and new free of charge galleries showing works from our collections, the next three years will see the following developments to the programme:

- The completion of the SEN resource research will enable us to form a structured plan for the development of resources from mid-2018 – 2020.
- There will be the development of new Collection-Focused Workshops with specialist consultant and artist educators that we plan to add into our offer.
- Increase the number of workshops we are delivering to include more sessions on the collections, following the opening of the newly refurbished Collections Gallery in 2018. By 2020 we will be delivering 23 workshops a year which equates to just over 30% of all schools on-site school workshops.