

## Arts Backpack UK – November update

At the start of November, we began piloting the Arts Backpack in six Fife primary schools. We are working with ten teachers and around 200 children. The schools we are working in are:

Cowdenbeath Primary School, Kelty Primary School, Benarty Primary School, Hill of Beath Primary School, Fulford Primary School, and Cardenden Primary School. These pilots will run until the end of March 2021.

## Arts Backpack Experiences

Amanda Glover and Mimi Doulton have selected 28 Arts Backpack experiences, which are available to view on a private area of the ACA website. Two were submitted by ACA Members (Magic Lantern and Theatre Alibi); eleven were selected from Scottish arts organisations (Imagine, National Galleries of Scotland, Scottish Opera, National Theatre of Scotland, Fife Contemporary, V&A Dundee); and the remaining activities were chosen from leading arts organisations across the UK, including the Royal Opera House, Little Angel Theatre and the National Theatre.

Experiences are graded according to duration and come with guidance about making them Covid-secure. Each experience also links to suggested partner experiences within the Backpack, so that children can engage in greater depth. The process of selecting experiences will be interrogated by Michael Judge as part of the evaluation.

Classes will choose 2-3 experiences over the course of the pilot. In addition to this, we have a fund of £500/class for the children to commission their own piece of interactive online content. Amanda is preparing a list of ideas for them in collaboration with our Scottish partners, but the children can request whatever they like. Amanda and I will aim to commission this work from Scottish-based artists by the end of January.

## Student Reflection

Each school has a password protected page on the ACA website, where they can upload digital responses to the Arts Backpack. This will be accessible to teachers, students, families and carers in an anonymised form.

Children can also reflect in their Arts Backpack workbooks, which were made by the School Planner Company. This is a 64-page exercise book containing free-writing and drawing pages, as well as prompts such as 'What did I see today?', 'What did I make today?' and 'My arts inspiration'. At the end of the pilot, we will collect these books in to use for our evaluation.

## Teacher training

We have managed to free up more budget to be used towards teacher training, in order that they feel comfortable delivering the content of the Backpack.

## The future of the Backpack

There are a number of productive ongoing conversations about the future of the Arts Backpack. We will share more information about this as partners are agreed. We are interested in hearing from potential partners in Manchester, Northern Ireland and the Scottish Highlands for future pilots. All pilots will be complete by autumn 2022.