



MK Gallery

Shortlisted for Innovation in Family Learning

The MK Gallery in Milton Keynes is a cultural art venue with a mission to provide access to high quality and innovative programmes that bring people and communities together in collaboration to create, participate, and debate. They strive to create dynamic, creative and accessible programmes for their communities, focusing on accessibility for adults, children, and families.

The gallery has been shortlisted in the Innovation category for the Arts & Us programme within the Art Together initiative. After working with families on a long-term basis, the organisation identified the need for another programme to meet demand. Based on feedback from the community and other organisations, Art & Us is a one-to-one programme that matches artists and families - including those with children with additional needs - to work directly together as part of a strong, meaningful and fun creative partnership. Not only does the programme increase social opportunities for families, but the associate artists were able to co-deliver their interventions and work together to bring this project to life.

Judges from Campaign for Learning and CACHE Alumni noted the "wonderful creative approach" that brought real inclusivity for all and deserved to be "shared across the sector".

Family learning provision

Inspired by a successful SEND photography session in 2022, the Milton Keynes Gallery has developed a multi-session, collaborative set of holiday workshops for participants aged 5 - 25 with additional and complex support needs. Designed and delivered by specialist artists, the sessions explore a variety of art skills including sculpture, building and constructing, sound production, and immersive painting.

The original programme design was extended to offer a wider range of support and engagement, with changes to session times and break-out areas. Parent feedback has given the gallery ideas on how to make the sessions more widely accessible, with discussions around how best to create bespoke sessions and widen the programme to provide for families with children with profound and multiple learning (PMLD) disabilities.



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Impact and next steps

Sessions have been very well received and are fully booked, with many requests for more to be scheduled. Families previously excluded by transport scheduling are now able to attend. The eventual goal is to run the sessions during every school holiday.

“To find somewhere that everyone can join in, is unheard of. Usually her sisters can play, while she has to watch, or she gets special help, while they have to sit on the side. This is totally unique and amazing, thank you.”

The programme also supports team working and professional development for seven artists, with five new artist collaborations in place. The positive impact has been seen across the gallery’s programming, leading to a new partnership with a specialist school and a continued partnership approach for future planning.