

# Camden Cultural Commissioning Model



## Context

The borough of Camden is home to a vibrant and growing cultural sector, including some of London's most creative organisations. Across the borough, education, arts and local authority partners are committed to ensuring that young people in Camden can access high-quality creative opportunities both in and out of school.

Over the past 3 years, partners from Camden's School Improvement and Arts & Tourism services have worked closely with Roundhouse in its role as an Arts Council Associate Bridge organisation for London, to develop a robust commissioning process that increases quality, reduces administration, and supports new partnerships between local schools and cultural organisations.



### **Building a Cultural Commissioning Model**

The Camden Cultural Commissioning Model (CCM) was developed in response to significant changes to funding and structures faced by schools, cultural providers and local authorities, alongside a shared desire to continue to maximise the unique cultural offer that exists in Camden.

The CCM supports schools and other education providers to develop innovative, creative, needs-led partnerships with cultural organisations, directly linked to school improvement priorities. Over the past 3 years, the CCM has evolved from pilot phase to a consortium of over 40 cultural and education partners from across the borough of Camden.

At a time of significant change for both the cultural and education sectors in London, the CCM has facilitated high-quality opportunities for schools to build links with Camden's dynamic creative sector, and to develop and share best practice around integrating creative opportunities across the curriculum.

# Vision



## The Challenge

Ensure all children and young people educated in Camden have access to cultural & creative opportunities

### Aims



- Embed arts & culture in schools**  
 Give children and young people the tools to develop their skills and talents through arts and culture, and have the opportunity to progress into a career in the sector.
- Encourage innovative commissioning**  
 Support schools and other education partners in navigating creative and cultural opportunities and commissioning innovative, needs-led interventions that link into school improvement priorities.
- Create a consortium of schools and cultural partners**  
 Provide a forum to share knowledge, ideas and best practice and discuss key challenges across cultural, education, and local authority partners.
- Support partnership development**  
 Provide a strategic and systematic approach to generating partnerships between schools and cultural organisations.
- Enhance coordination and consistency**  
 Provide insight into how creative interventions can support school priorities across the curriculum and align with other local creative offers.
- Facilitate collaboration**  
 Join up needs and combine resources to reduce time, administration and cost of commissioning high quality creative opportunities.

### Key

- New engagement of audiences
- New ways of embedding art & culture in schools
- Innovative partnerships
- Working with existing community capacity
- Innovative funding

### Partnerships



- Strategic Partners**  
 Roundhouse Associate Bridge  
 A New Direction  
 Camden School Improvement Service  
 Camden Arts and Tourism Service
- 19 School Partners**  
 Camden Centre for Learning  
 Gospel Oak Primary and Nursery School  
 Hampstead School  
 Haverstock School  
 Holy Trinity and St Silas C of E Primary School  
 Kentish Town C of E Primary School  
 Netley Primary School  
 Parliament Hill School  
 Primrose Hill Primary School  
 Regent High School  
 Rhyl Primary School  
 Royal Free Hospital School  
 St Alban's C of E Primary School  
 St Aloysius Infants School  
 St Joseph's Primary School  
 Swiss Cottage School, Development and Research Centre  
 Torriano Junior School  
 UCL Academy  
 Westminster Kingsway College
- 21 Cultural Partners**  
 British Library  
 British Museum  
 Camden Arts Centre  
 Camden City Learning Centre  
 Camden Music Hub  
 Camden Libraries  
 Charles Dickens Museum  
 Central Saint Martins  
 Central School of Speech and Drama  
 Complicite  
 English Folk Dance and Song Society  
 House of Illustration  
 Jewish Museum  
 October Gallery  
 Roundhouse  
 Shape Arts  
 The Place  
 Told by an Idiot  
 WAC Arts  
 Wellcome Collection  
 Zabłudowicz Collection

The Solution

Camden Cultural Commissioning Model



Activity strands



Commissioning Process



Project & Programme Reflection

Partners

- **Schools** - Strategy: Senior Leadership Teams
- **Schools** - Work on the ground: teachers, head of year
- **Cultural organisations**
- **Local Authority** - Arts & Tourism, School Improvement, Strategy teams, Music Hub
- **Working group** - Schools, Local Authority, Cultural organisations



# Programme highlights

19 

schools and colleges have taken part in the CCM including an early year's education centre, a Special school, a PRU and an FE college.

21 

creative and cultural organisations from across art forms and specialisms have participated in the CCM.

22 

new partnerships developed involving 11 school partners and 11 creative partners. These included;

- Schools and cultural partners co-designing projects
- Cultural partners working together to develop new initiatives for schools
- Projects developing across multiple partners

550 

young people have benefited from creative projects initiated through the CCM by end of spring term 2015.

Alongside commissioning activities, a number of **knowledge exchange opportunities** were developed in response to partner needs;

4 

learning walks took place in schools. Learning walks offered cultural partners and other schools in the CCM an opportunity to visit a school and gain insight into how creative and cultural activities are delivered within the school environment.

15 

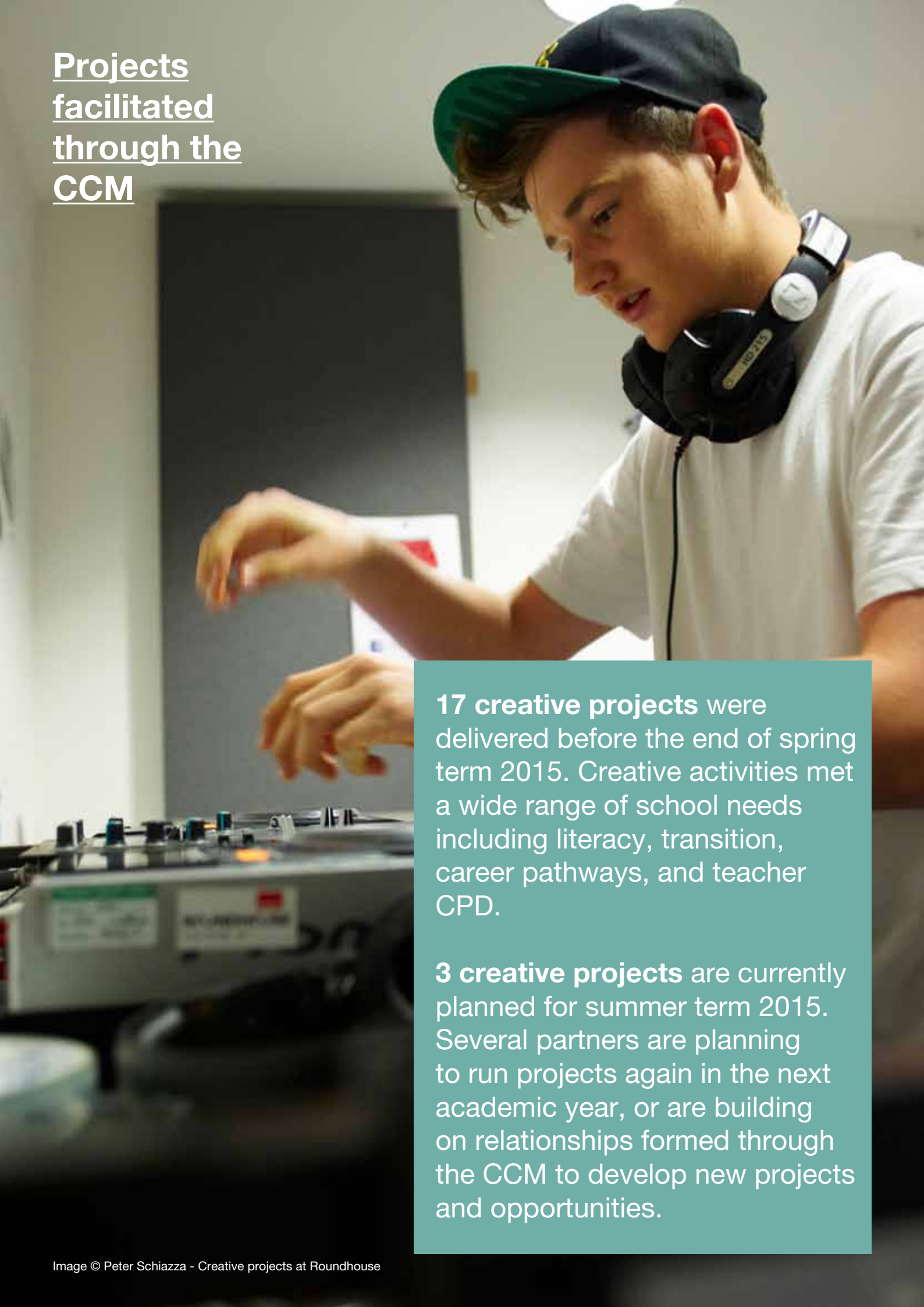
members of staff from 6 cultural organisations took part in mentoring training, to enable them to better support young people around pathways and progression routes into a range of job roles.

65 

teachers benefited from CPD opportunities including school guidance around Arts Mark; and commissioned sessions with cultural partners.

Partner meetings, focus groups and networking sessions supported conversations between partners, knowledge sharing, development of ideas and refinement of programme structures.

Projects  
facilitated  
through the  
CCM



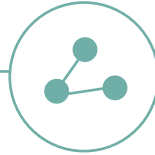
**17 creative projects** were delivered before the end of spring term 2015. Creative activities met a wide range of school needs including literacy, transition, career pathways, and teacher CPD.

**3 creative projects** are currently planned for summer term 2015. Several partners are planning to run projects again in the next academic year, or are building on relationships formed through the CCM to develop new projects and opportunities.

# Windrush project

## Torriano Junior School

A culturally diverse primary school which places a strong emphasis on arts subjects.



## WAC Arts

An inclusive and diverse performing arts organisation that works with gifted young people, often facing exceptional challenges and hardship.



Image © Peter Schiazza - Creative projects at Roundhouse

**“This creative work has perfectly dovetailed with the work that is happening in class.”**

Teacher, Torriano Junior School

One of 2 initial pilot projects developed through the CCM, the Windrush project drew on curriculum plans for Year 4 students at Torriano Junior School.

## School need

The school was interested in implementing creative arts into the history curriculum for Year 4 students studying the ‘Windrush generation’, who settled in the UK following Second World War.

## Creative project

Working closely with teachers, an artist-tutor from WAC designed a creative approach that would complement and enrich existing classroom activities. The tutor led weekly workshops for 60 Year 4 students, using drama, art, singing and photography to inspire participants and enhance student learning around the migration of British Caribbean families to the UK after the Second World War.



# Camden Calendar 2015

## Camden Centre for Learning (CCfL)

Camden's educational provision for secondary aged students whose primary need is their social, emotional or behavioural development.



## Shape Arts

Provides opportunities and support for disabled artists and cultural organisations to build a more inclusive and representative cultural sector.

After an initial conversation at a CCM partner's meeting in June 2014, teacher's from CCfL worked with artists from Shape Arts, to develop an exciting whole school project, which fostered professional skills and built local connections.

## School need

CCfL was interested in projects that could support skills development and involve students across the school.

## Creative Project

Students took part in practical photography sessions over a 10 week period, followed by 4 weeks of production time.

A further collaboration with Bay Media led to photographs from the project being displayed as street banners around the borough.



Image © Ellie Pinney - Shape Arts and CCfL street banners

**“We got involved in the project as I aim to give our students enriching opportunities and experiences they are not used to.”** Teacher, Camden Centre for Learning

# Let's Illustrate!

## Gospel Oak Primary School

A socially and ethnically mixed community school, with a creative ethos.

## Rhyl Primary School

A happy and diverse community school that provides a broad and creative curriculum within a stimulating learning environment.



## House of Illustration (HOI)

The home for the art of illustration, House of Illustration opened a gallery in King's Cross in 2014.

House of Illustration worked with school partners from Gospel Oak and Rhyl Primary Schools to develop tailored illustrator led projects that responded to individual school priorities identified through the CCM. Career and professional development (CPD) sessions for teachers were delivered alongside school projects to develop teacher skills and embed creative learning approaches.



Image © Ellie Pinney - Let's illustrate! session at Rhyl Primary School

**“Great ideas for starting creative thinking in an accessible way.”** Teacher, Gospel Oak school



Image © Ellie Pinney - Let's illustrate! session at Rhyl Primary School

## Gospel Oak Primary School

### School Need

The school was interested in widening arts provision through visiting artists working with both staff in a CPD session, and directly with a selected year group.

### Creative Projects

After initial discussions with teachers, House of Illustration developed a project for 60 Year 3 students to work with an illustrator to create an Interactive Encyclopedia on the theme of rain forests.

This cross-curricular approach directly addressed the identified issue of “trying to fit arts into the new curriculum”.

The whole staff team also took part in a 2-hour CPD session delivered by 2 illustrators, in which each teacher created a unique character for a book called The Ghouls of Gospel Oak.

## Rhyl Primary School

### School Need

The school was keen to develop creative writing, as part of the raising aspirations agenda, through both whole-school CPD and an illustrator working with 2 Year 5 classes.

### Creative Projects

Teachers worked closely with an illustrator from House of Illustration to develop a 3-day project supporting imaginative writing. 6 Year 5 students made a Box of Beginnings: a project in which children created the characters and settings for the beginning of a story.

As well as illustration, students learned about layout, typography and storytelling and produced a new classroom resource.

All staff attended an illustrator-led CPD session at House of Illustration where they undertook an inspiring workshop with many ideas for use in the classroom.

# Most valuable aspect of being part of the CCM...



## Schools

“Meeting professionals who can offer opportunities for students to visit arts institutions and meet people working in the arts industry.”

“Making partnerships with people we otherwise wouldn’t have known about.”

“Meeting and talking to other schools and arts organisations, getting ideas and seeing how other schools manage things.”

**“We feel that we met lots of potential future partners, who we can see ourselves working with further along the line.”**

“Having an opportunity to meet new practitioners and colleagues from other schools; being able to co-develop an idea for a project to enhance what we already do; having a space to advocate for arts education.”



## Cultural Partners

“Feeling more connected to a network of local organisations.”

**“Being able to have face to face contact with schools and gaining first-hand knowledge of their requirements when working with a cultural organisation was very useful for successful programing.”**

“Seeing what activities schools were interested in and how they wanted cultural organisations to offer projects which supported the curriculum.”

“Networking, talking about school’s curriculum, learning more about what they actually need to support the pupils.”

“Meeting schools, getting that initial contact, telling people what we offer, finding out what schools want.”



# Impact of the CCM

*Drawn from Roundhouse Associate Bridge Critical Reflections and Learning Points report, April 2014, Tom Fleming Creative Consultancy*

## A new process of needs-led, co-created cultural programming has been initiated

Some of Camden's key cultural and creative organisations have worked with Roundhouse Associate Bridge to develop the shape and priorities for the project and liaised with a range of schools to co-create a set of specially commissioned cultural activities.

These are activities which, without the project, would have been dependent on a more ad hoc approach which would, relatively speaking, lack:

- A dedicated approach to co-creation where new cultural projects are commissioned based on the agreed development needs of the schools and through increased pupil voice.
- The opportunity to discuss how long term collaboration can be developed planning provision beyond the urgency of the moment.
- The profile and strategic positioning of the project – especially in terms of how cultural and creative education can play a role at the heart of the learning landscape.
- A direct link between education and economic development agendas – where the creative industries are a priority 'Growth Sector' for Camden Council and viewed as a sector which can provide pathways to employment for young people.

## A structured and strategic approach to building local partnerships has been established

The Camden Education Commission's (CEC) final report in 2011 talks of the need and opportunity to establish Camden as "the best place to be educated and the best place to work in education". This includes recommendations for much stronger and more effective partnerships; for every effort to be made in 'closing the gap'; and for programmes of pupil enrichment. The Camden Cultural Commissioning Model can be understood as the type of pan institutional and cross-sector partnership that will be needed for the recommendations of the CEC to be delivered.

With a Steering Group that includes senior colleagues from Camden Council, A New Direction, and representatives from the cultural sector and schools, plus with a delivery group of schools and cultural organisations, the project is being shaped by a cross-sector partnership. It is therefore motivated by several strategic agendas at the same time – including those of different parts of the local authority and a range of schools and cultural organisations. Notionally at least, this is giving cultural education a more prominent strategic position than might have otherwise been achieved.



# Key Learnings

## What made the difference

Drawn from Roundhouse Associate Bridge Critical Reflections and Learning Points report, April 2014, Tom Fleming Creative Consultancy



### Fostering a sense of collaboration and distributed ownership

Roundhouse has worked hard to ensure the process of project development and delivery has been open and engaging for partners.

Care was taken not to impose structure and focus and partners have talked warmly of how the project genuinely seems to be born of co-creation.

In addition, partners have emphasised the value of a lead organisation – to coordinate meetings, provide deadlines, and generally drive the process.



### Active testing of ideas and developing models

'Prototyping' the Model has facilitated critical reflection and refinement that has fed into programme planning and development of structures throughout the process.

The conversations and activity that has been part of work to date has shed light on considerations and opportunities in a way that wouldn't have been possible without on the ground exploration and active testing of ideas.



### Achieving 'step change'

Cultural education partnerships often grow out of existing relationships between organisations with a track record in delivering high quality outcomes for children and young people.

At a time of dwindling resource, it is pragmatic to go 'where the energy is' and to develop collaborations that help organisations do what they do well.

To achieve a 'step change' in cultural provision for young people, projects need to reach and engage a diversity of organisations whose current activities may be limited or disconnected from the wider offer.

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# Building a long-term vision

## Next steps

The Camden Cultural Commissioning Model has been successful in testing out new ways for partners from the education and cultural sectors to work together to create efficiencies, maximise resources and support high quality creative opportunities for every child and young person in the borough.

The connections and relationships facilitated through the CCM support the development of sustainable local partnerships and long term collaborations.

In a survey of partners;

All respondents said they had made contacts they otherwise would not have made.

A majority of respondents felt that the CCM contributes to the efficiency of making links with partners.

**All school respondents felt that they had gained a better understanding of creative opportunities in Camden as a result of being part of the CCM.**

A majority of cultural partners felt they gained a better understanding of how to support a school's strategic priorities.

Increased confidence around working in partnership was highlighted across school and cultural partners.

The partnerships and projects developed through the CCM have delivered meaningful outcomes for schools, cultural providers and children and young people across Camden. There is still work to be done to expand the reach of the CCM and embed new ways of working together. Partners have noted ongoing challenges around capacity to develop and design creative projects and the cost of activities in a climate of reduced funding.

At the time of writing, a new Governance Board comprising key strategic partners has been established to take the CCM into its next phase.

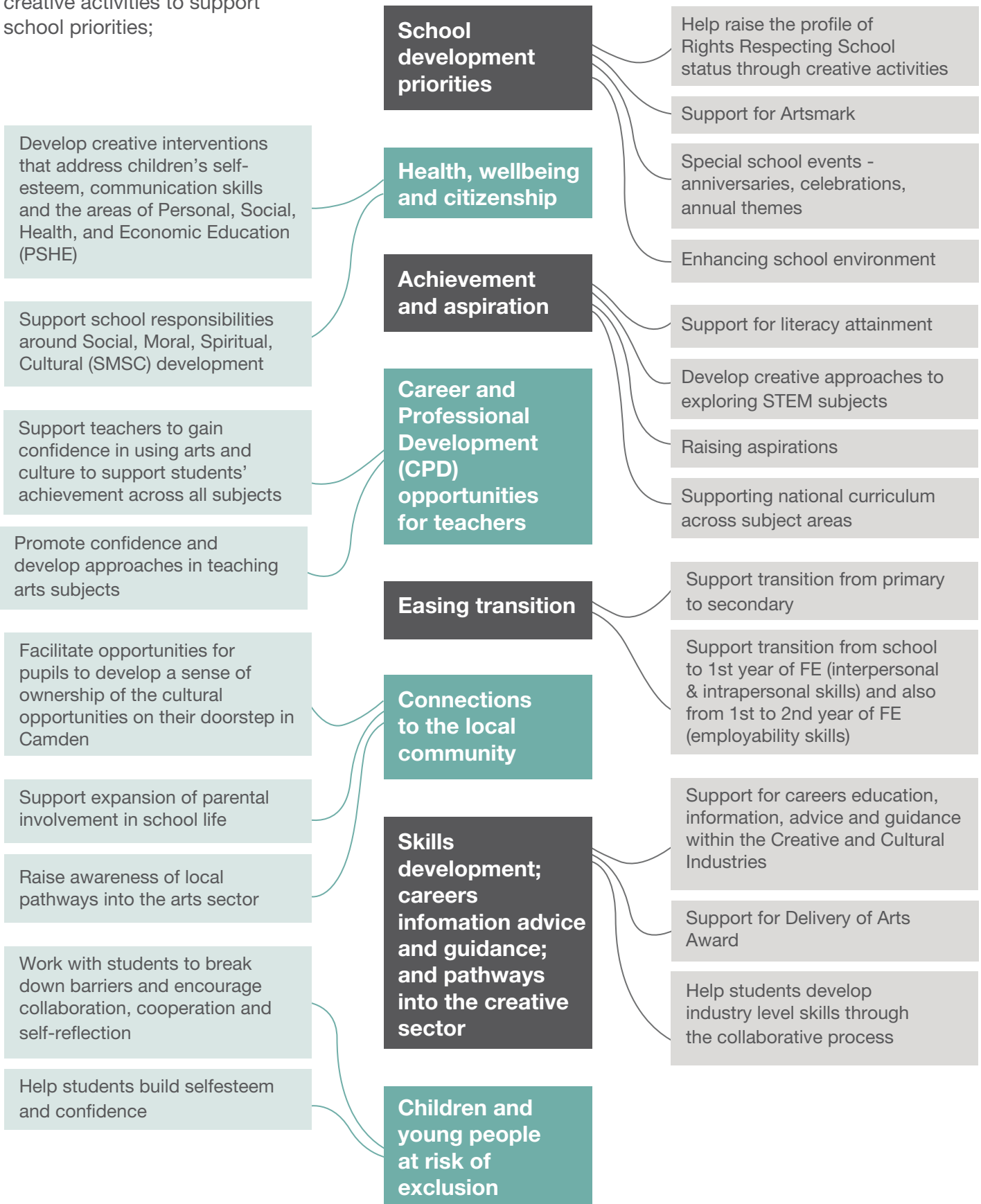
Across partners there is a strong commitment to ensuring that the structures we have built together can be sustained and can continue to develop and grow - giving all children and young people in Camden the opportunity to connect with the incredible cultural offer on their doorstep!

**“The more you collaborate with somebody, the more possibilities for collaboration you see.”**

CCM Partner

# School needs

Needs identified by schools through the CCM have covered a wide spectrum, reflecting the breadth of opportunities for creative activities to support school priorities;



**“The workshop had a really positive effect on the learner’s self-esteem.”** Teaching Assistant, Camden Centre for Learning






# Full list of partnerships

School	Creative partner	when	what	young people & teachers involved
Torriano	WAC	2013/14 Autumn term	Artist led drama, art, singing and photography workshops linked to class theme 'Who are the people of Britain?'.	60 year 4 students
Torriano	House of Illustration	2013/14 Summer term	Students developed an illustrated book of story openings about the riches of the rainforest.	120 year 3 students
n/a	House of Illustration, British Library	2013/14 Summer term	Teachers CPD opportunity as part of the Comic Unmasked exhibition.	20 teachers
Parliament Hill School	Complicite	2014/15 Academic year	On-going partnership work including workshops and CPD opportunities.	n/a
n/a	Shape and October Gallery	2014/15 Academic year	FREE art workshops for SEN Schools and groups for participants aged 14 and over.	n/a
Swiss Cottage School	Shape	2014/15 Academic year	An artist from Shape leads weekly classes with a group of learners aged 14-16.	42 learners aged 14-16
Swiss Cottage School	British Museum	2014/15 Academic year	Sessions for PMLD learners developed around exploring the museum's collections through the different senses.	40 learners
Camden Centre for Learning	Shape	2014/15 Autumn term	10 week photography project in which students worked with a photographer to create a calendar, and later a series of street banners in Camden town.	62 learners – year 10 and 11
Royal Free Hospital School	Shape	2014/15 Autumn term	Learners worked with an artist over a 6 week project, using applique and mixed media fabric work techniques.	16 learners
Haverstock	The Place	2014/15 Autumn term	'Movement for Actors' workshop. 2 students subsequently spent half a day at The Place observing rehearsals and classes and interviewing staff and artists.	16 year 12 and 13 students



St Alban's School	October Gallery	2014/15 Autumn term	Class visit to the gallery.	25 reception students
Camden Centre for Learning	Central Saint Martins	2014/15 Spring term	Students worked with a graphics tutor and 3 student ambassadors from Central Saint Martin's over ten weeks.	3 students, year 10 and 11
Gospel Oak	House of Illustration	2014/15 Spring term	Teacher INSET at the school.	20 teachers
Gospel Oak	House of Illustration	2014/15 Spring term	Students created a Box of Beginnings over 3 sessions.	60 year 5 students
Rhyl School	House of Illustration	2014/15 Spring term	Teacher CPD session in the gallery.	20 teachers
Rhyl School	House of Illustration	2014/15 Spring term	Students created an Interactive Encyclopaedia on a rainforest theme.	60 year 3 students
Hampstead School	October Gallery	2014/15 Spring term	The Art Collective project works with students to create a professional set of art pieces which all include elements of photography and moving images.	20 AS level students
Rhyl School	October Gallery	2014/15 Spring term	Calligraphy workshops exploring the works of October Gallery artists who use text in their work to link art with literacy.	20 students
Royal Free Hospital School	October Gallery	2014/15 Summer term	Development of animation and illustration skills in response to themes exhibited in the gallery.	10 students
Gospel Oak	The Place	2014/15 Summer term	Creative dance project focusing on the theme of 'volcanoes'.	40 year 4/5 students
Regent High School	Camden Arts Centre, Central Saint Martin's	2014/15 Summer term	Insights project around career pathways and options in visual arts.	20 year 11/12 students



**Roundhouse**  
**Associate Bridge:**

Roundhouse is home to a bold and exciting programme of live music, theatre, dance, circus, installations and new media. Young people are at the heart of everything we do. They're on our board and help plan and perform at our events. We offer a year-round schedule of creative projects for 11–25 year olds in 24 state-of-the-art studios.

Between 2012 – 2015, Roundhouse became an Arts Council England Associate Bridge Organisation for London, which saw us take on the role of helping children and young people better connect with creative and cultural opportunities.

**Roundhouse**  
[www.roundhouse.org.uk](http://www.roundhouse.org.uk)

**A New Direction**  
[www.anewdirection.org.uk](http://www.anewdirection.org.uk)

**Camden Council**  
[www.camden.gov.uk](http://www.camden.gov.uk)

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