ATTENBOROUGH ARTS CENTRE

SENsory Atelier

Interim Report

2025 - 2026



SENsory Atelier Interim Report_2025 -2026
Co-authored, Marianne Scahill Pape and Lisa Jacques

SENsory Atelier

2nd Interim Report to Paul Hamlyn Foundation: Arts Based Learning Fund

- Year 2: reporting period covered August 2025 – July 2026
- Report co-authors: Marianne Scahill-Pape, Learning and Communities Manager, **(MSP)** and Lisa Jacques, SENsory Atelier Programme Manager, **(LJ)** at Attenborough Arts Centre **(AAC)**.

Huge thanks to all at Paul Hamlyn Foundation for continuing to support this vital work in Leicester. We hope you enjoy this update!

An overview of work delivered over the past year:

Team: LJ leads the programme with MSP chairing the steering group and strategic elements and training. Our SENsory Atelier team has also grown:

- Sian Watson Taylor **(SWT)** recruited as Artist Ambassador **(AA).** Sian works one day per week during term time and has been a vital connector for new partner schools to the practice and programme.
- Re-commissioned Jo Stockdale, Well Within Reach **(JS)** as external evaluator to maintain consistency across the iterations of the programme.
- Lauren Russell, Learning Administrator **(LR)**. Recruitment to this post was delayed by twelve months as discussed in our meetings. Lauren joins us from August 2026, one day per week.
- Hannah Pillai, Project Coordinator, AAC **(HP)**, collaborated on Youth Music's Excluded by Design report which informed the development of our Community Ateliers.

Advocacy: In this reporting period, the change in government led to systemic changes in the National Curriculum; SEND Reforms and school structural shifts. We have responded widely to these changes advocating the SENsory Atelier approach at the core of our communications in readiness:

- **SEND Reform White paper**: Every Child Achieving and Thriving
  Attended pre and post consultation events in person, and online and responded to the **national conversations and consultations.** We believe we were the only cultural organisation in attendance, which led to our collaboration with the University of Leicester **(UoI)** Institute for Policy, co-producing a policy briefing paper and an accompanying short film. The paper was circulated to Westminster and shared widely to significant policy change makers throughout the education and culture sector. With an invitation to the **Houses of Parliament** by Talent25 to advocate for the arts in education, lobbying members, and ministers on SENsory Atelier in Special and Mainstream education.
- **CLASS (City of Leicester Association for Special Schools)**
  This professional network brings together the headteachers to share best practice and work together. They strongly advocate for SENsory Atelier, as such we have secured partnership with every member school of CLASS, increasing our total partnership schools to fourteen; twelve Special schools and two Mainstream with Designated Specialist Provision (DSP).
- **International methodological exchange with the Cuba-UK Disability Network** ("Toma Mi Mano" or Take My Hand) is an active academic partnership led by De Montfort University (DMU) in Leicester and the University of Granma in Cuba. It focuses on inclusive education, community development, and improving the accessibility and mobility of people with disabilities. This partnership has also resulted in our SENsory Atelier Code of Practice being translated into Spanish, to support more global reach.
  https://networkcuba-uk.com/sensory-atelier-methodological-exchange/
- **International, national, and regional conferences**
  Attending, sharing, presenting and delivering at prominent and significant cultural/education events, including handson!, Forest of Imagination, Museum+Heritage Show, HeartofGlass and The BIG Conversation, Raliegh Trust.
- **Publications/articles**
  We continue to share our work online and in print and through invitation with significant, meaningful organisations, populating blogs and articles including Arts Council England, Action for Children's Arts, Museums+Heritage, UoL and due to be published in September 2026 an article for Kunstzone Magazine.













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Awards / Commissions: Entering this reporting year as Museum + Heritage Learning Programme of the Year 2025 and with our advocacy work, has created rich opportunities and possibilities. Working towards a more sustainable model for SENsory Atelier we are rich in providing specialist knowledge and practice in inclusion and access as consultants and trainers. All the funds received for our commissioned work, (totalling almost £6K) support the delivery of the SENsory Atelier programme.

- **Inclusion specialists**
  Securing a 22-month contract with ChalleNGe, Nottingham City, Local Cultural Education Partner. Producing an overarching evaluation that collates case studies / trends/ recommendations and responds to reports by SEND Galleries Group to create a city-wide Action Plan for an accessible cultural education offer from venues in Nottingham.
- **Training**
  Bradford District Museums and Galleries Learning Teams, Oct 26.
- **Conference opportunities**
  A request for our AA to join a panel discussion and deliver a workshop at With For About 2026: Are you playing out? and invitations for SENsory Atelier to present at handson!, Forest of Imagination, Museum+Heritage Show, and The BIG Conversation, Raleigh Trust.





Schools Delivery/outputs: All fourteen schools registered in SENsory Atelier partnership with AAC and have engaged throughout the year across our programming.

- **Youth Council:** Young Ambassadors **(YA)** recruited from each school to ensure pupil voice and choice is embedded throughout the programme. SWT delivers creative sessions to instigate activity and to pass over to the Teacher Ambassador to support. We ensure to liaise and include the YAs to support on artist recruitment workshops and selection of their Artist in Residence.
- **Young Ambassador Orientation Days:** Two delivered at AAC. These are a full venue take-over with artists and young people, with pupil-led sessions side by side with artist delivery sessions. See feedback and of images in the Padlet link.
- **Artist Residencies**: Established a process to continue to engage our experienced artists from phase 1 and 2, with the option for open recruitment and direct proposals depending on each school's needs. There are three residencies currently in progress / planning at Fullhurst Community College and Netherhall Mead Academy.
- **SENstations** – developed for each setting by SWT and Kerry Ojari **(KO),** ambassador teacher from Leicester Children's Hospital school. These are Reggio-Inspired curated spaces where young people can go to self-regulate. These have been

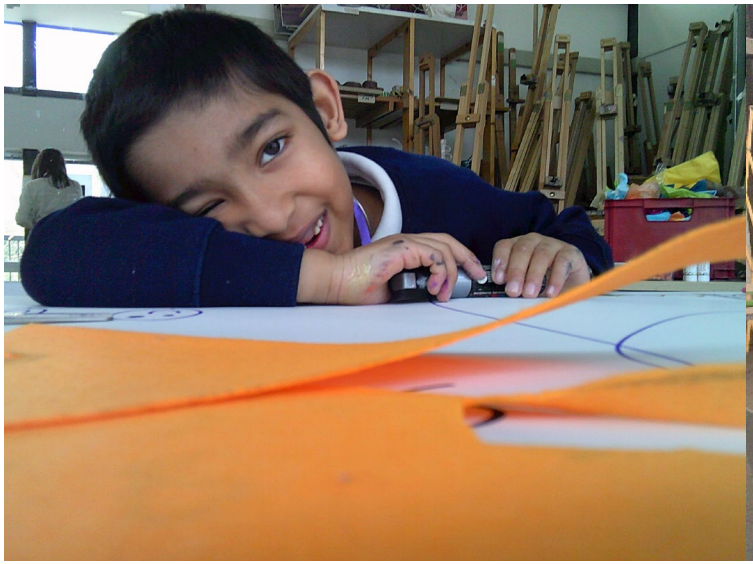
noted to have had a positive impact on learning outcomes. We are working with SWT, KO and JS to develop a SENstations Toolkit, with a bespoke evaluation tool so that best practice can be shared with our other partner settings to inform their SENstation.

- **Subject specific residencies:** A Royal Society of Chemistry grant is enabling a residency in two schools to explore inclusive chemistry and outdoor learning with *Bake Off* finalist and UoL Chemist, Josh Smalley supported by our Artist Ambassador SWT.
- **Gallery visits:** Five groups of pupils from our partner school, Ashmount College visited Angélica Teuta: Inner Jungle [Putumayo] immersive exhibition to produce work towards their Arts Award portfolios.
- **Offsite workshops:** SWT delivered a workshop for the pupils of Millgate at the Charnwood Eco Hub Scrap Store introducing them to recycled resources and sustainability. SWT delivered creative sessions throughout the day for 300+ pupils at Catherine Infant School, introducing them to the practices of the SENsory Atelier approach in readiness for their residency. SWT works with the YA across all settings.
- **Arts Award:** Bespoke group training for Discover and Explore delivered for all our partner schools followed by SEND portfolios training by SWT and Abi Steady, from our partner school, Ashmount College (Double Platinum Arts Marks school). This year 69 pupils from across three settings have completed their Arts Award portfolio, from Discover to Bronze supported by their Teacher Ambassadors and Attenborough Arts Centre.















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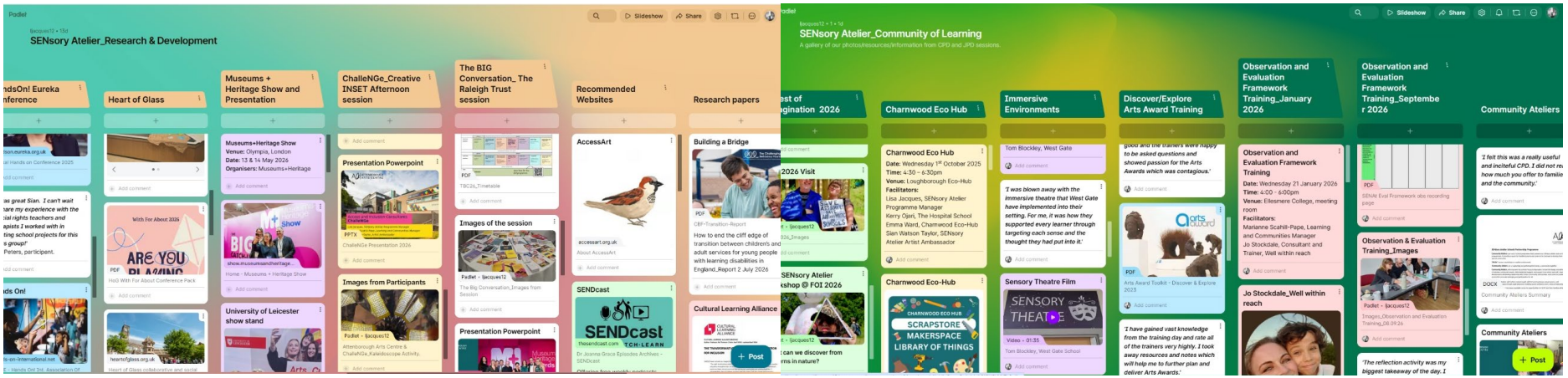
Professional Joint Practice Development: Our ***Community of Learning*** has provided opportunities to share best practice happening in our partner schools; hear from world leading artists; provided bespoke training to support understanding and delivery of the SENsory Atelier approach together with the methodology, as well as new experiences to spark creativity and imagination.

- **Nurture Network:** Five online events took place, including live gallery tours led by artists and curators, Jason Wilsher-Mills, Angelica Teuta, and Caroline Achaintre.
- **Teachers CPD/JPD:** Seven events/sessions planned and delivered, one of the programme highlights was the Forest of Imagination festival 2025. An overnight trip to Bath with artists and teachers to experience, explore and learn about FOI with artist-led workshops, talks, and observation of school groups. FOI **2026**: Invited to deliver a workshop on the opening day of the festival with Artist Ambassador SWT, LJ & MSP. Simon Taylor, a member of our steering group also attended, to support our work.
- **SENsory Atelier Padlets:** A new suite of resources and evidence-based practice, to share knowledge, feedback and evidence best practice happening throughout the programme. All our CPD/JPD events are documented here, together with relevant research and development we wish to share with our schools, and our Community Atelier programming strand. All links in supporting documentation.





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Assets: To share our evidence-based practice and present a consolidated programme of 10 years.

- **SENsory Atelier Group Evaluation Framework:** Jo Stockdale has reworked the framework to provide more consistency with the indicator sets across the Outcome themes. Second edition due Sept 26.
- **Unlocking the World** blog to be updated and migrated to AAC website, in progress.
- **SEND Code of Practice for Arts organisations, Artists, and Educators** – reprinted and distributed widely supporting the Policy Briefing paper circulation. This has been translated into Spanish for distribution in Cuba through the partnership with https://networkcuba-uk.com/ where SENsory Atelier is a key practice exchange model.
- **A Portfolio of Practice** together with **Staff Bio's** supporting funding and conferencing applications.
- **Physical assets:** Flyers, project banner, Group Evaluation Framework, SEND Code of Practice and a SENsory Atelier logo designed by CYP (in progress), developed from activity on our Young Ambassador Days.

New relationships / Partnerships: Continually sharing and advocating for our programme, together with researching the culture, education, and health sectors, in relation to access and inclusion, has developed a portfolio of new relationships and partnerships.

- **Charnwood Eco Hub :** To address sustainability with resources and processes, aligning with the principles of Reggio Children Remida. Each school received an annual membership and five basket tokens. We have delivered CPD/JPD and school sessions at the Hub Scrap-Store.
- **ChalleNGe** – Access and Inclusion Commission for city-wide action plan for cultural venues in Nottingham for LCEP.
- **SEND in Museums** – Sam Bowen, provides clear guidance for museum, heritage or other arts and cultural professionals, on supporting the inclusion of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).
- **The Sensory Projects** – Dr Jo Grace, thinking and leading on profound disability and neurodivergence & autistic experience. We have Jo booked on our CPD/JPD programme for Year 2.
- Our continuing partnership with **Professor Penny Hay**, and our Steering Group members, provides new opportunities and connections to explore and develop throughout the programme.

An update on progress against your agreed outcomes / objectives

Objectives:

- **Engage 12 school partners in 3 years of activity**. We have14 schools, who remain on board and committed to the programme. A phased delivery in progress.
- **Child-led enquiry to design learning outcomes.** This is central to our methodology and resulting in significant learning outcomes documented with our evaluation methods.
- **Teachers CPD/JPD**: significant work/training/events happening to support knowledge exchange, sharing learning through networks.
- **Develop a whole-school SENsory Atelier approach in each setting**. Netherhall is an ideal case study where SENsory Atelier has informed a total shift in how pathways and the curriculum is delivered with profound outcomes.
  An area of practice that has been successful from development in one setting and has been adopted by the whole network of partner schools, are the SENstations.
- **Artists as catalyst for change**. Skill sharing at CPD/JPD events has been so enabling, teachers are moving into specialist areas of practice and changing school environments for more outdoor learning. Visits to exhibitions has broadened pupil horizons and opened new perspectives and ways to respect and empathise with others.

Key points of learning we have identified:

- The arts provide a language for learning which is essential for all children – especially for Children with Special Rights, who may be nonverbal, and require bespoke adjustments to access schools and the national curriculum.
- A Disability/Accessibility Gain model of practice to ensure learning and pedagogical approaches accessible for all.
- Joint Practice Development (JPD)essential for building shared knowledge and understanding between teachers, and artists. This also provides social networking opportunities across the city to support teacher ambassadors with the challenges of their day-to-day roles.
- Significant learning from mainstream teachers through SENsory Atelier has contributed to them choosing to specialise in leading Inclusion Hubs (see testimonial).
- Young Ambassadors Orientation Days provided extremely positive visits with pupils of varying needs, and collaboration between them, AAC and schools. On these days new friends were made, together with significant developments with social interactions and behaviours amongst pupils.

Learning about safeguarding arising from the work delivered over the past year, including how your safeguarding approach is working, any key risks and (if not already reported) any safeguarding incidents.

- We have implemented a policy exchange between schools and AAC to ensure all staff/artists are working to the correct procedures in each setting; there have been no issues to date.
- MSP is Deputy DSO for AAC, and leads on DBS checks for the project, and leads staff briefings on safeguarding, identifying, and implementing relevant training for all staff where required. MSP achieved Level 3 Safeguarding this year.

Issues we would like to focus on in the conversation including, if relevant, any changes to the work or budget.

- **Sustainability**: SENsory Atelier is a wide-reaching offer, based right here in Leicester with significant interest globally. There is a huge demand and need for this work in education particularly considering the SEND Reforms and the development of Inclusion Hubs. We want to find a way to continue to partner with PHF beyond our current grant and start that thinking now. *What options are open to us to continue developing and sharing this approach and methodology with PHF's support?*

Budget and Financial Narrative

We continue to collaborate with the Advancement Office on strategic fundraising. We have submitted nine funding bids from 5K through to 200K. The success rate has been lower than anticipated (22%), with feedback from Trusts and Foundations consistently reporting this is not due to the quality of our programme, but to the overwhelming number of bids they are receiving. However, we have successfully secured the following match for our PHF grant this year, and diversified this match through earned income / commissions:

Grant income
Rix Thompson Rotherwell: £5,000
Royal Society of Chemistry: £10,000

Commissions:
SEND Inclusion specialist contract for ChalleNGe: £5,225
Heart of Glass Speaker (SWT): £500

Total match funding secured: £20,725

Supporting documentation available:

1. SENsory Atelier_ Portfolio of Practice_ July 26
2. SENsory Atelier_Padlet links
3. SENsory Atelier_SEND Reforms Policy Briefing Paper
4. SENsory Atelier_Summary
5. SENsory Atelier _Testimonials
6. SENsory Atelier_CYP Evaluations_YAD

Partner Schools

1. Ash Field Academy
2. Ashmount School
3. Birkett House School
4. Ellesmere College
5. Elmbrook School
6. Keyham Lodge School
7. Leicester Partnership School
8. Millgate School
9. Netherhall Mead Academy
10. Oaklands School
11. The Children's Hospital School
12. West Gate School
13. Catherine Infant School
14. Fullhurst Community College

With huge thanks to our funders, artists and all our partner schools.

























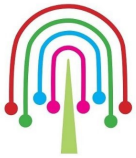























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