



Duke's Secondary School

Part of The Northumbria Academy Trust.

Case study

#SECONDARIESCREATE

DUKE'S SECONDARY SCHOOL

As part of Culture Bridge North East (CBNE) secondary school #Secondariescreate focus we visited Duke's Secondary School to see how the school adapts their creative practice to support the needs of their pupils and also to understand how they are delivering Arts Award Gold in collaboration with BALTIC, Centre for Contemporary Art.

About the school

Duke's Secondary School is based in Ashington, Northumberland and currently has around 950 pupils. Duke's Secondary is a Church of England school and aims to provide an inclusive and diverse education for students within a distinctively Christian environment.

The teaching staff are very passionate about cultural and creative learning and put an emphasis on ensuring that all of their pupils can experience as many different activities and opportunities as possible. They feel that this will ensure their young people become compassionate, global citizens with a sense of community and social responsibility.

Who did we meet at the school?

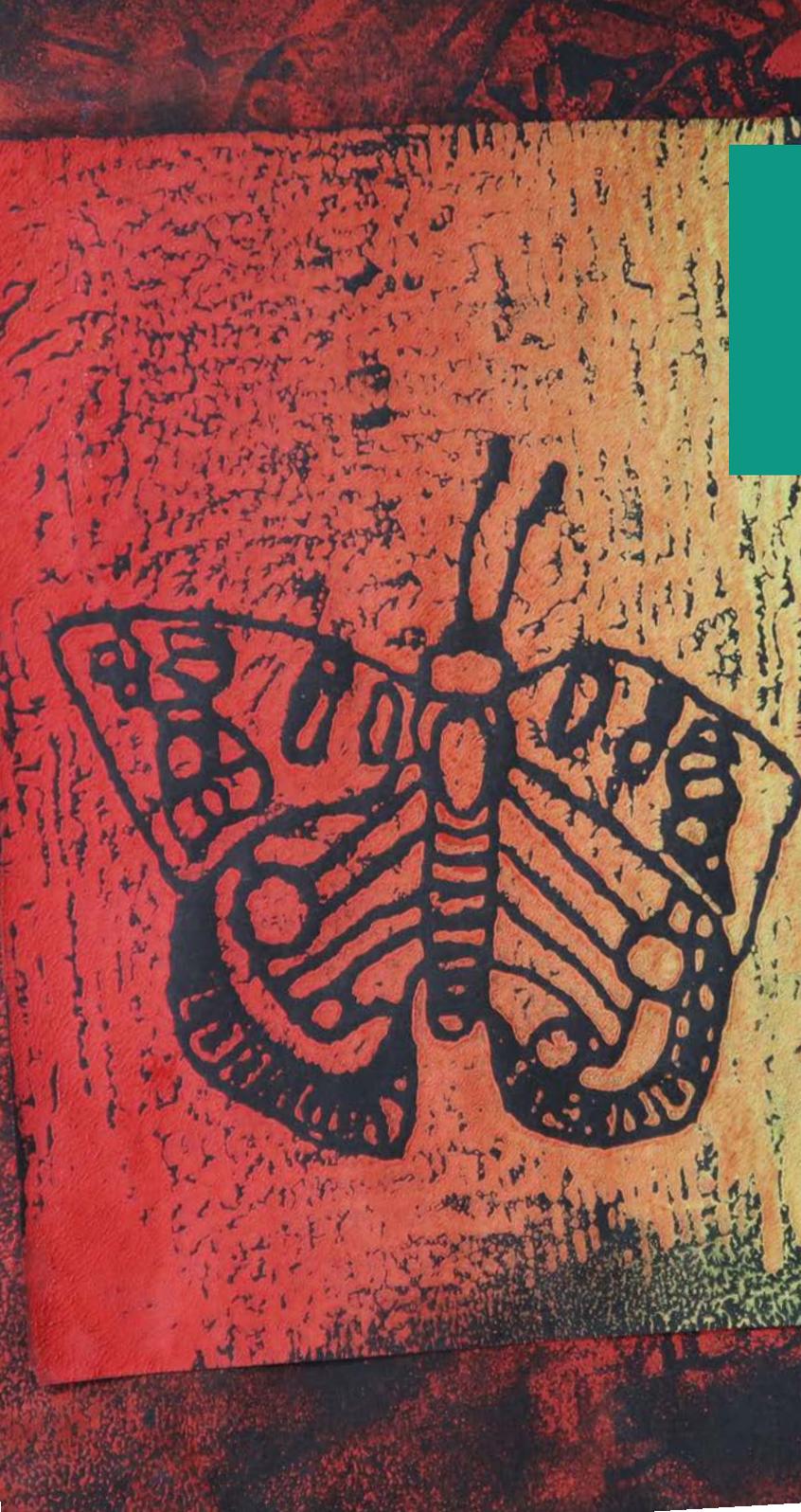
- Ms Louise Gatti, Subject Lead Art & Design
- Ms Franky Leigh, Teacher of Art & Design
- Rachael Rickwood, Assistant Producer (Children and Young People) BALTIC, Centre for Contemporary Art





How did the collaboration with BALTIC occur?

Every pupil within the sixth form is entitled to 2-hours of enrichment time every Tuesday, and so Louise Gatti, Subject Lead Art & Design wanted to think about what creative enrichment she could offer with regards to the art department. Pupils are able to choose to use their time to develop their sports, complete work experience or do extended projects within any subject area. Louise's idea was to offer something different for pupils who might not have taken an Art GCSE or A-level but who appreciate Art and have a passion for creative learning. Due to the relationship that Louise has built up with BALTIC she spoke to Rachael, Assistant Producer (Children and Young People) BALTIC, Centre for Contemporary Art and mentioned that she was considering offering Arts Award Gold. Then Rachael asked if Louise would consider delivering the program in partnership with BALTIC? The rest just fell into place.



What is Arts Award Gold?

Arts Award Gold is suitable for 16-25-year olds and is a unique qualification that helps young people to develop as artists and arts leaders. The award is worth 16 UCAS points and is the equivalent of gaining a B at A/S level.

What does Arts Award Gold teach students?

Arts Award Gold helps pupils to think creatively and be independent they can explore all aspects of creativity from computer game design to art curating, and as students learn about the different types of employment within the creative and cultural sectors they build upon their knowledge of the arts in general. Arts Award isn't about having an artistic practice such a painting it's about understanding the arts and forming and communicating your own views about art and how it sits in the wider world.



How does your collaboration with BALTIC, Centre for Contemporary Art work on a day-to-day basis, when delivering Arts Award Gold?

What's useful is that Rachael (Assistant Producer, BALTIC) has had the full Arts Award training, and so she is the Arts Award Adviser for Duke's and checks that students are meeting all of the targets for each stage as well as marking the student's sketchbooks and supplemental materials.

The teaching team that includes Franky (Teacher of Art & Design) & Louise (Subject Lead Art & Design) regularly meet up with Rachael to ensure that the teaching plan is mapped and that they have a clear understanding of all of the units that would be taught.

Rachael is always on hand and there is regular communication between school and Arts Award Adviser. This allows for resources to be provided and shared and in turn, the teaching staff turn these resources into teaching tools for delivery and information for students.

Rachael's role as Arts Award Adviser enables her to attend the school once a month for 2-hours to speak to the students and offer any in-house help and advice to the teaching staff. On average, the students will normally make at least 3 visits to BALTIC whilst completing their Arts Award.



What benefits are there to working with the BALTIC to deliver Arts Award Gold?

The teaching team found that it was great to have a pair of external eyes supporting them with Arts Award Gold so as to keep focused on the goals of Arts Award and the individual journey of each pupil. By having a non-teacher helping to deliver it, the staff have been able to teach in a range of new ways. It also takes some pressure off the teachers and allows them to have more time with the students. Plus the school is given access to the archive and international resources that BALTIC offer. BALTIC has enabled the school to make this a live project, bringing the Arts to life for both students and teachers.

To find out more about how the BALTIC works with Secondary Schools to deliver Arts Award Gold read our latest blog >> [LINK](#)

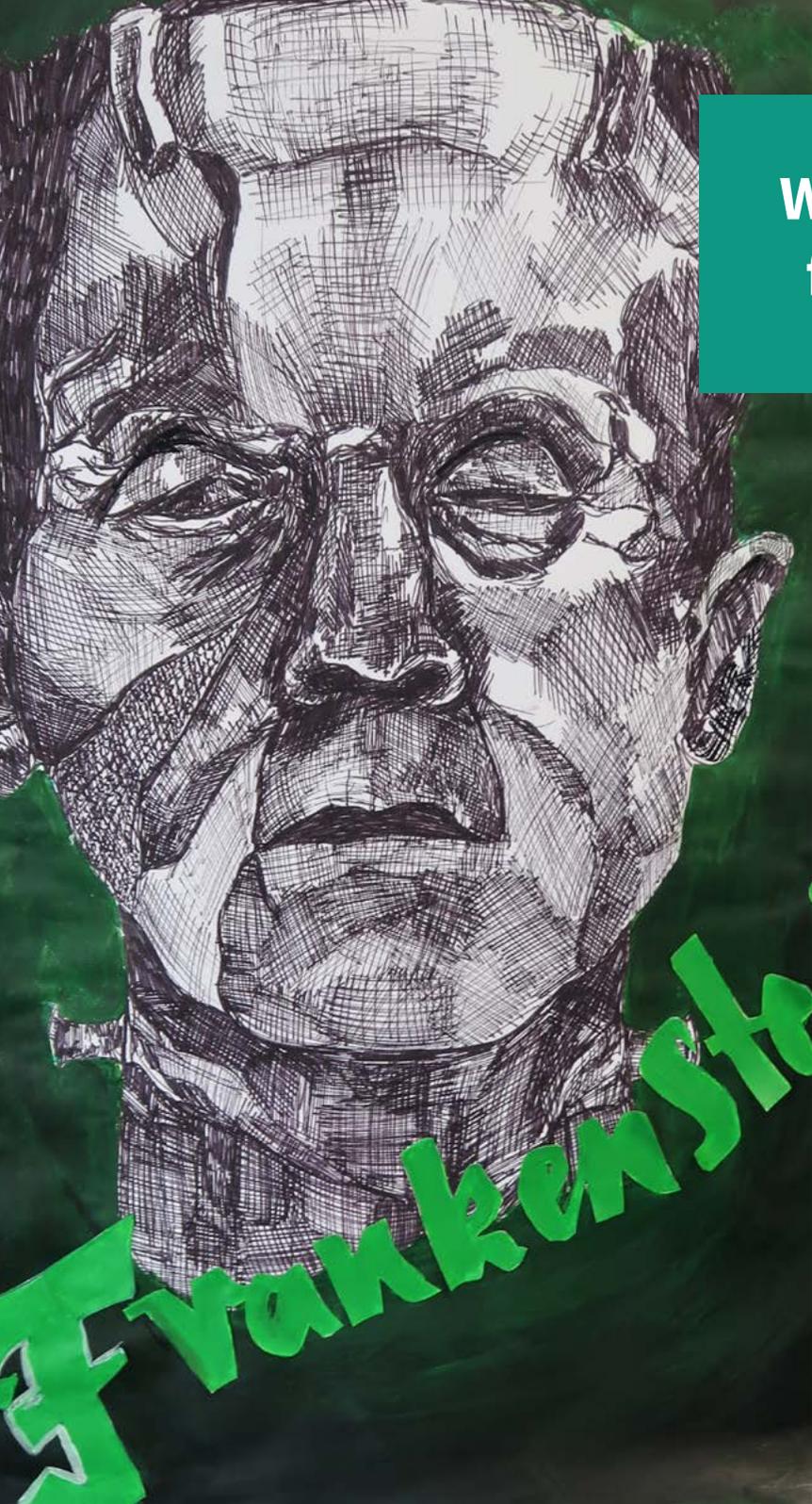
How does the teaching team view Arts Award Gold?

The teaching team told us that they see (AAG) as an extension of the curriculum. They feel it's a great way of developing the students as cultural citizens. It allows their young people to appreciate the arts and develop that passion without the pressure of being graded specifically on their ability to say sketch or paint.



Can you share some positive stories about any of your students who are currently completing Arts Award Gold or any that have previously completed the Award?

'We had one student who had no art qualifications who did Arts Award Gold - and she came into her own - someone who wasn't a naturally skilled artist had her love of art ignited again. Once she gained her Arts Award Gold she went on to do a design qualification at college. We have had many students who are taking science-based A-levels who complete Arts Award Gold as they want to show universities that they are well-rounded individuals with a diverse skill set.' Louise Gatti, Subject Lead Art & Design.



What do you think the students gain from completing Arts Award Gold?

‘One of the wonderful things about Arts Award Gold is that it teaches the students so many life skills. They have to learn how to manage their time, complete research, be independent, think critically. A big part of the Award is also teaching another person a skill, presenting your ideas and critiquing a fellow students work in a sensitive and helpful way.’ Louise Gatti, Head of Art

The teaching team have seen pupils grow into confident individuals with excellent communication skills. ‘Once students come to complete their final unit, they can express themselves concisely and have developed both leadership and team building skills’ Ms Franky Leigh, Teacher of Art & Design.



Comments from some of the students

'Seeing all of the art installations at Baltic was so exciting because I never knew art could look like that.'

'I get very stressed doing exams, and that's why I wanted to do Arts Award Gold as it's all coursework based so I can take my time and do my best work.'

'There is more freedom - you're not restricted to doing one thing and it doesn't feel as pressured as my other A-level subjects'

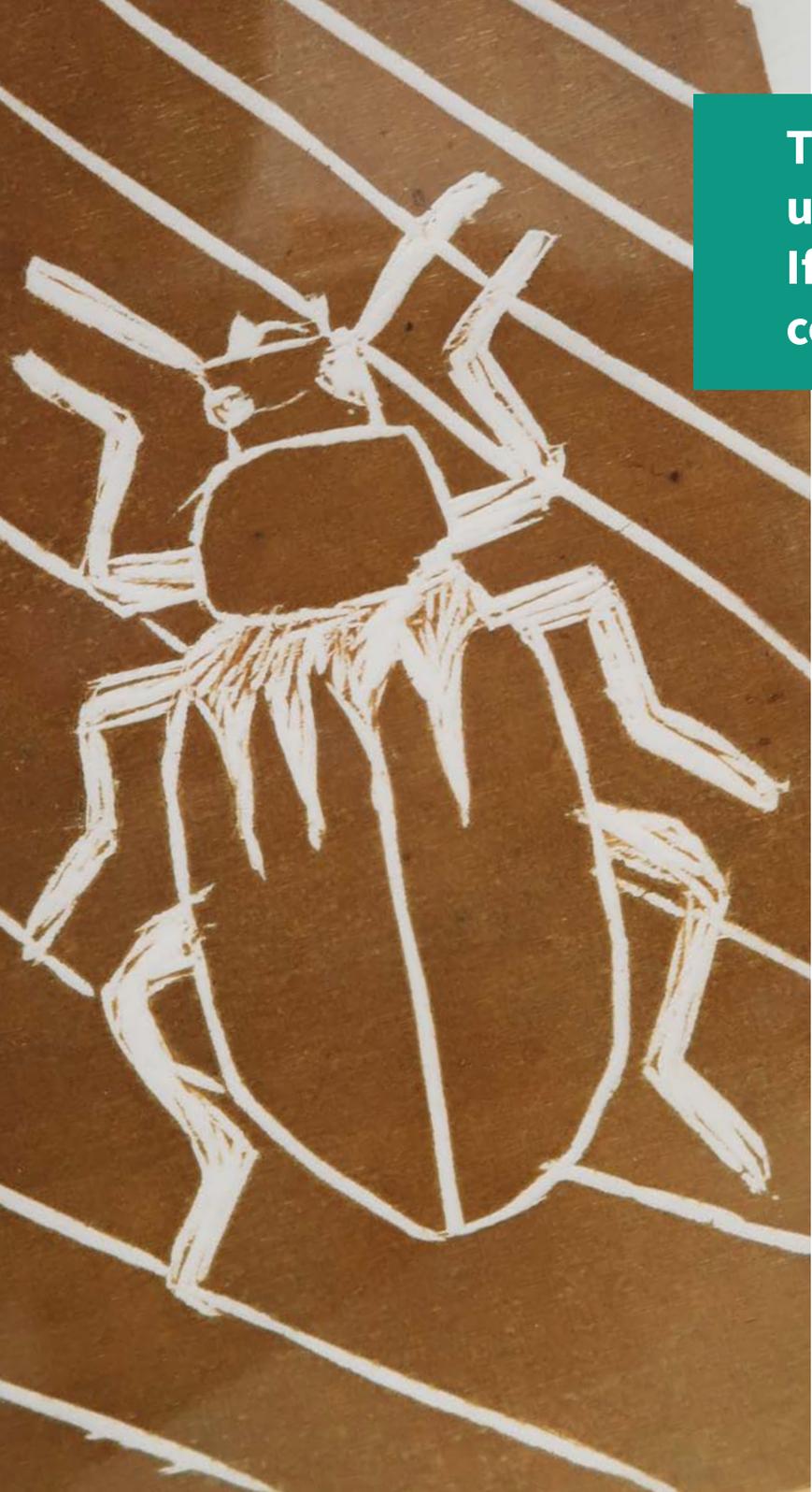
'I had two artists from London say I could come and visit them at their studio which was insane! Real artists wanted to meet me, all because I did Arts Award.'



What other creative ideas have come out of working with BALTIC?

The Arts Award Gold pupils were inspired after attending a creative jobs event at the BALTIC where they learnt all about the different roles within the creative industries. This led the teaching team at Duke's to decide to hold a 'World of Work Day' that would specifically focus on the creative industries.

The Art faculty hosted a set of creative workshops on the day that were aimed at their year 9 pupils. The creative workshops were led by local businesses that included a 3D design company, an audio-visual theatre professional, a make-up artist, a prop creator and an architectural firm. The whole Art department enjoyed seeing how the year 9 students reacted. This experience helped to inform the pupils of the types of jobs that creative subjects can offer them once they complete their studies.



There are fears that fewer boys are taking up creative subjects, have you noticed this? If so have you implemented any changes to counteract this trend?

The teaching team told us that they were fully aware that the department is made up of women and they certainly didn't want that fact to put off any boys who were considering taking creative subjects. That's why the school is continually looking at ways to ensure that all of their pupils needs are catered for no matter what their gender. That's why over the last few years, the team have started a boys-only choir, a rock band group and have implemented a new zombie special effects make-up project for year eight pupils. The teaching team also feel it's important to make sure that a wide variety of artists with different cultural backgrounds and genders are studied. As their pupils are so diverse, it's essential that the curriculum reflect that.



What makes the teaching team at Duke's Secondary so special?

From what we have observed it's clear that the whole team are passionate about the arts and they support each other to deliver as many opportunities for their students as possible.

They also listen to the pupils and find out what their interests are to try and adapt and include their passions within the structure of the curriculum. The team like to spark conversations and debates with pupils about the wider world and wish to help students form their own identity and creative practice whatever that may be. Louise Gatti, Subject Lead Art & Design shared this lovely quote, and we think it's the perfect why to end this case study:

'Art transcends all language barriers and allows you to communicate your emotions with anyone.'



Find out more

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