



IMPACT REPORT 2024-2025

Inspiring **LIMITLESS** choices
for the next generation



ABOUT

YOU BE YOU AND THE SOUTH ASIAN ART PROGRAMME

We want to build a world where every child feels seen, heard, and celebrated — where art is a bridge, not a barrier, and where identity is a source of strength, not silence.

At a time when too many students feel excluded by what and how they're taught, You Be You exists to radically reimagine what inclusive, creative education can look like — we see huge opportunity in placing culture, creativity, and inclusion at the heart of the classroom. We embed our work into the curriculum, train teachers to lead it, and equip artists to become educators. The challenges we face are real: racial and religious tensions in communities, underrepresentation in school curricula, and a lack of teacher confidence and resources to reflect their diverse classrooms. But we are motivated by the enormous opportunity to do things differently — to create learning environments where identity is recognised as a strength, and where art becomes the universal language of connection and belonging.

We do this by bringing together artist practitioners, educators, and communities to co-create arts-based learning experiences that

centre South Asian art, stories, and voices. From Warli storytelling to kantha stitch embroidery, from short films to art exhibitions, we help schools embed representation meaningfully across the curriculum. Our work is not an add-on — it is embedded, collaborative, and transformative. We don't drop in and leave — we build lasting relationships, rooted in trust, lived experience, and deep care. We are committed to learning, reflection, and growth

We are stubborn about hope. We know change is possible — because we've seen it. We've seen teachers rethink how they teach. We've seen school leaders shift whole-school visions toward equity and inclusion.

And we're just getting started.



Together, we ensure every child can say:

“ I SEE MYSELF.
I BELONG.
I CAN BE ME. ”



SUCCESS

The success of this programme is a testament to the power of collaboration and shared vision. At its heart are the exceptional artists whose creativity, passion, and commitment brought each workshop to life—turning classrooms into spaces of exploration, self-expression, and joy. We are deeply grateful to the dedicated teachers and leadership teams at our partner primary schools, who welcomed the programme into their communities with enthusiasm and care. We also thank the brilliant external practitioners in South Asian dance and music, whose cultural expertise and artistry added richness and authenticity to the experience.

This work has only been possible through the generous support of the Paul Hamlyn Foundation. Their funding didn't just enable delivery—it sparked transformation. It brought a vibrant arts education programme into schools across London, Birmingham, and Bradford, and made a lasting impact on pupils' confidence, creativity, and sense of cultural belonging. We know that meaningful access to the arts changes lives. In 2024–25, with your support, we brought that change to hundreds of children—each one inspired, engaged, and empowered through the magic of creative learning.



**DECEMBER 2024 TO JULY 2025
IN NUMBERS**

You Be You delivered a bold and transformative programme using the power of South Asian art, storytelling, music and dance to celebrate identity, build community, and embed inclusivity in the heart of education.

Across 5 partner schools in London, Birmingham, and Bradford, we...

3 CO-CREATED
COMMUNITY
ART GALLERIES



showcasing students' artwork and stories, and inviting families, teachers, local residents and Birmingham's Deputy Mayor to celebrate their identities and shared histories



facilitated
100 HOURS OF
ARTIST-LED
TEACHING

embedding cultural representation directly into the curriculum

delivered
50 ART-BASED
WORKSHOPS
rooted in South Asian heritage



engaged
180 PUPILS



All schools showed between

89.9% - 99.9%

POSITIVE ENGAGEMENT

showcasing exceptional reach across settings



From the classrooms of 3 vibrant cities, we worked in primary schools that reflect the richness and resilience of Britain's most dynamic urban communities

10 ARTISTS
CONTRACTED



including local bhangra and dhol experts and leading South Asian creatives, delivering culturally rich, community-rooted experiences

SOUTH ASIAN ART PROGRAMME IN SCHOOLS

Our programme delivered a vibrant, multi-sensory exploration of South Asian cultures through a structured series of 10 interactive workshops, each lasting 2 hours. Spanning six core themes, the sessions combined hands-on artistic activities with personal reflection, cultural literacy, and key social values.

The programme culminated in a public celebration and exhibition, where students, teachers, and families came together to reflect on a year of creative achievement and meaningful partnership.



DIYA LAMPS Diwali & Light Over Darkness

Students sculpted and decorated traditional clay lamps while exploring the meaning of Diwali and the theme of light overcoming darkness. The session connected cultural learning with personal values and global themes like peace and climate action, offering inclusive reflection for all students, regardless of faith background.

ARABIC CALLIGRAPHY Peace & Sacred Writing

Students painted the word Salaam in Arabic, connecting with the cultural and artistic traditions of South Asia and Islam. The session promoted inclusion, boosted artistic confidence, and encouraged all pupils to reflect on peace as a shared human value.



KANTHA EMBROIDERY Thread, Story, and South Asian Craft

Inspired by Bengali embroidery, students designed and stitched personal motifs, building fine motor skills, focus, and narrative thinking. The workshop particularly supported neurodiverse learners. One pupil was so inspired he began sewing makeup bags, sold his first for £12, and now owns his own sewing machine.



SOUTH ASIAN ART PROGRAMME IN SCHOOLS



MANDALA ART Harmony & Symmetry

Using diamond painting, children created mandalas while learning about their cultural and spiritual origins. The meditative process supported focus and calm, particularly among neurodivergent learners. Teachers noted improved attention spans and a surprising boost in self-esteem for children previously disengaged from art.



TAJ MAHAL 3D Architecture & Monumental Love

Using 3D puzzles, children learned about the Taj Mahal's architecture and symbolism. The collaborative building process fostered teamwork, spatial reasoning, and discussion about memory and legacy. Peer mentoring emerged naturally, strengthening classroom relationships.



WARLI ART Tribal Storytelling through Drawing

Students explored storytelling through Warli-style drawing, using simple stick figures to represent personal, imagined, or social narratives. The accessible format boosted artistic confidence and became a powerful tool for self-expression, especially for children who felt less skilled in traditional art.



BHANGRA & BOLLYWOOD Music, Dance & Celebration

High-energy sessions with dance, drumming, and dress-up introduced students to South Asian celebration. Cultural context was provided through visuals and discussion, while adaptations for SEND needs ensured inclusive participation. The workshops were joyful and empowering, helping South Asian pupils feel seen and celebrated.





BIRMINGHAM

“ FERNDALE PRIMARY SCHOOL ”

Children debunked theories and proved art is for anyone and any age.

ARTIST

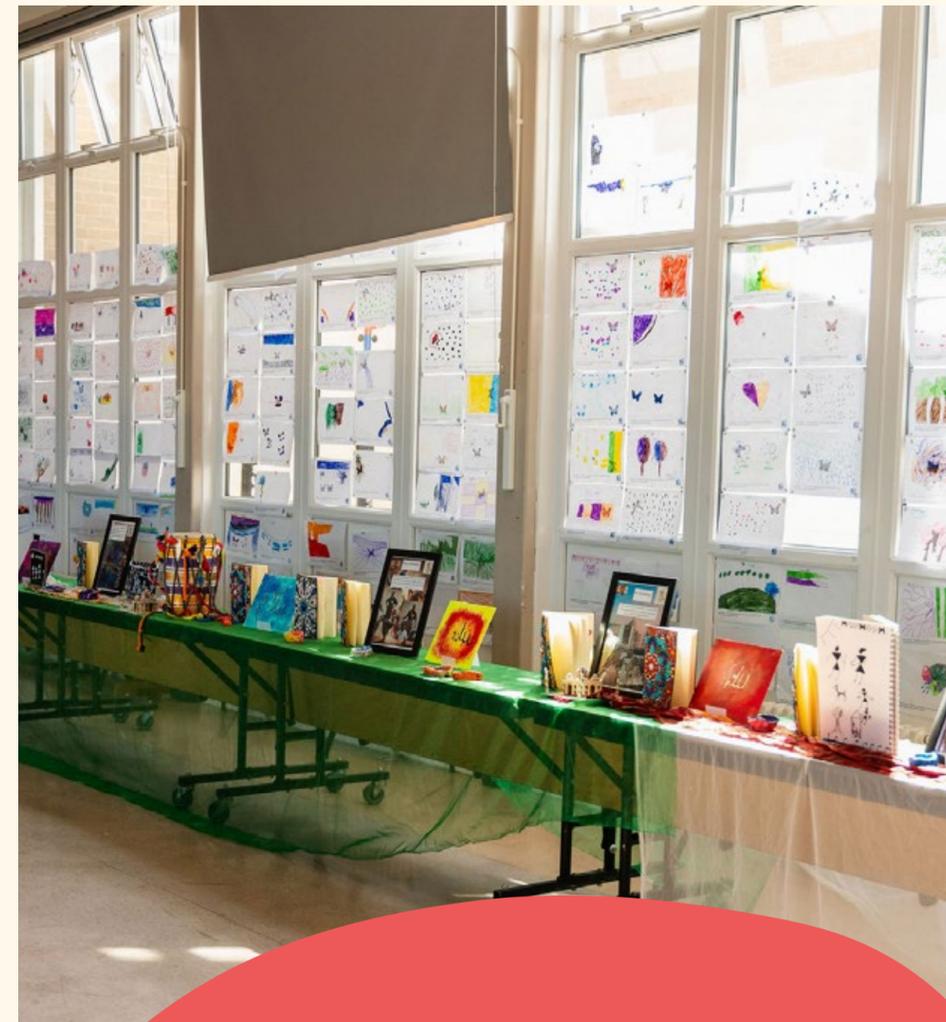
GREAT BARR, BIRMINGHAM



FERNDALE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Ferndale Primary School, in Great Barr, Birmingham, is a large and inclusive community school for children aged 3 to 11. With around 600 pupils, it reflects the area's rich cultural and social diversity. About 25% of pupils are White British, while roughly one-third are from Asian backgrounds, including Indian, Pakistani, and other Asian heritages. Around 16% are of mixed ethnicity, with smaller numbers from Black and other White backgrounds. The school supports a diverse linguistic community, with 28% of pupils speaking English as an additional language.

At Ferndale Primary School, creativity and cultural learning collided in a series of vibrant workshops that left lasting impressions on both pupils and educators. The feedback paints a clear picture: these workshops aren't just educational — they're empowering, joyful, and deeply memorable.



“ I enjoyed the Dance Workshop because it related to my culture. ”

PUPIL AT FERNDALE

★
100%

pupils said they learned a lot in both the Kantha Stitch and Taj Mahal workshops



100%

pupils said they really enjoyed the Islamic Calligraphy and Mandala Diamond Painting sessions.

Students' emotional engagement shone particularly in the Diwali Diya Lamp workshop, where

94.3%

felt very proud of their handmade creations.

Across all workshops,
85%+
felt very proud of what they created.

99%-100%
pupils reported that they learning something in every workshop — a powerful endorsement of learned impact.

"I like the name You Be You, it celebrates how to be yourself."

STUDENT

"The work on display is absolutely brilliant."

DEPUTY MAYOR

"South Asian art is colourful, and we explored many patterns which was enjoyable."

STUDENT

"Kantha embroidery developed perseverance and learnt new skills."

ARTIST

"We have children who are neurodivergent and low ability in their reading, writing and maths and they find everyday a struggle and need lots of support. But two of the children in my class, some of their outcomes were amazing and they were over the moon because they know they find the everyday things difficult."

TEACHER

"I am blown away. The amount of colour, joy and pride is a lovely thing to see."

ARTIST

"Some children showed that their strength is in their creativity."

TEACHER

"It is important to learn about other people's cultures."

STUDENT

"All children had a go, so it was inclusive of all children in the year group. They all achieved a good outcome. Proud to see it all out on display together."

TEACHER

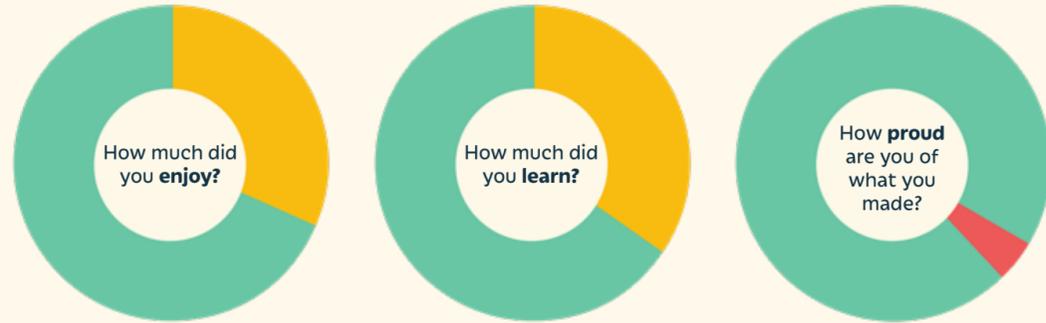
FEEDBACK

😊 Enjoyed / very proud

😐 Okay / a bit proud

😞 Not much / not proud

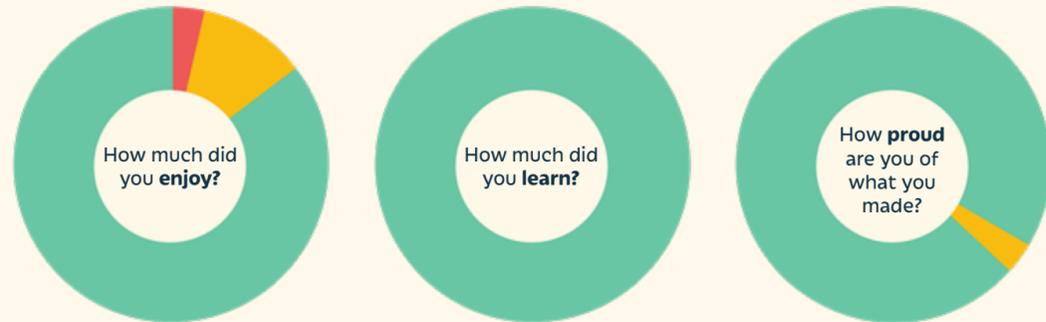
DIWALI DIYA LAMP (CLAY WORKSHOP)



MANDALA DIAMOND PAINTING



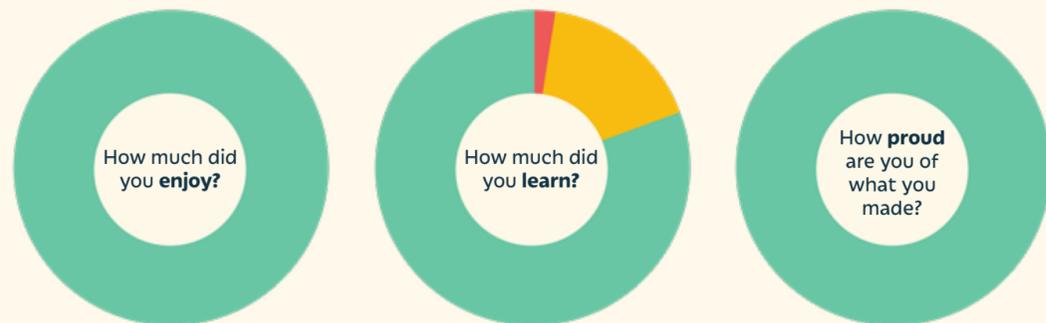
KANTHA STITCH CUSHIONS



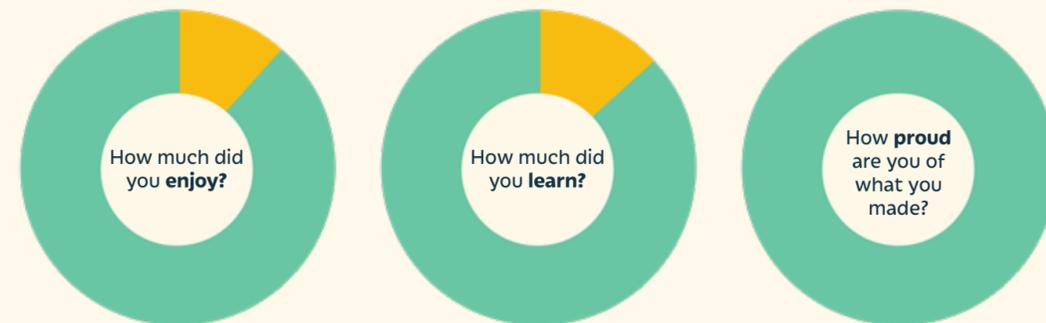
WARLI ART



ISLAMIC CALLIGRAPHY ART



DANCE WORKSHOP



LONDON

ALDERBROOK PRIMARY SCHOOL

“
Opened horizons to
different cultures.
I have learnt a lot.
”

TEACHER

BALHAM, LONDON



ALDERBROOK PRIMARY SCHOOL

Alderbrook Primary School, located in the heart of Balham, London (SW12), is a diverse and inclusive community school serving around 230 pupils aged 3 to 11, with over 35% of pupils speaking English as an additional language and 33.9% eligible for free school meals (well above the national average of 25.7%).

Its pupil body includes a broad ethnic mix: approximately 26% White British, 25% Mixed backgrounds, 14% Other White, and notable groups of Black African, Caribbean, and South Asian heritage. From clay to calligraphy, every workshop at Alderbrook became a canvas for learning, pride, and joy.



“ I enjoyed the kantha pillows even though it was complex. ”
PUPIL AT ALDERBROOK

★
85%+

pupils felt “very proud” of what they created in the Diwali Diya workshop — reflecting a deep connection with their hands-on achievements.



71%

pupils said they “really enjoyed” the process of the Kantha Stitch Cushion session. It truly stitched together creativity and confidence.



With a consistent trend across all activities — high pride, enjoyment, and learning — Alderbrook’s story is one of artistic empowerment and rich cultural learning.

These workshops weren’t just fun — they were transformative.

South Asian Dance Workshop was a hit with

100%

of pupils saying they learned a lot and really enjoyed the experience.

96%-100%

pupils in each the Islamic Calligraphy, Warli Art, and Mandala Diamond Painting felt “very proud” or “really enjoyed” the sessions.

“Thank you for such informative and creative sessions that allowed all pupils to feel successful. The project has been excellent and celebrates diversity which we value within our community.”

TEACHER

“I didn't think I'd be good at art, but the mandala activity made me feel calm and confident. I want to do more of it.”

STUDENT

“The thing that sticks in your head is there's lots of vibrant colours, it's fun to do, and you're never gonna forget when you did it.”

STUDENT

“I had fun – it was a mixture of lessons. It was a variety of art topics from South Asia.”

STUDENT

“We had so much fun collaborating and learning about a variety of art forms. The storytelling brought the art to life and allowed pupils to connect with their pieces.”

ARTIST

“The diamond painting work was really fun and I wanted to make things even bigger than a bookmark, like a big painting!”

STUDENT

“It's important to study South Asian art because you can learn other stuff from different cultures, continents and countries. So when you're old, if you want to be an archaeologist you can know what countries or continents they're from.”

STUDENT

“It is important to learn about other people's cultures.”

STUDENT

“Thoroughly enjoyed the programme and grateful.”

TEACHER

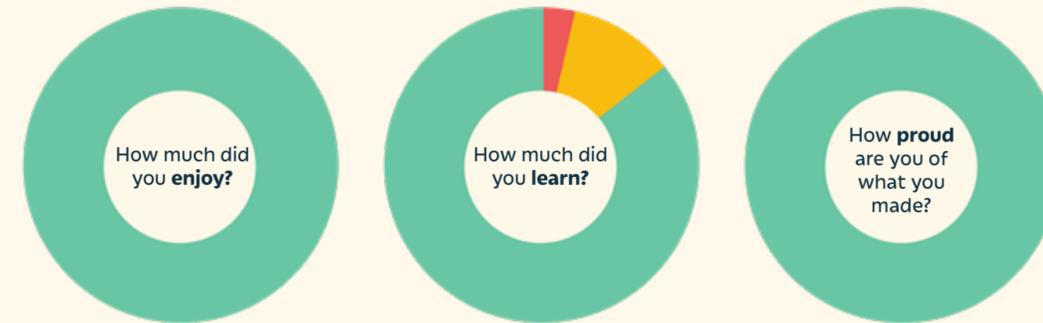
FEEDBACK



DIWALI DIYA LAMP (CLAY WORKSHOP)



MANDALA DIAMOND PAINTING



KANTHA STITCH CUSHIONS



WARLI ART



ISLAMIC CALLIGRAPHY ART



DANCE WORKSHOP





BRADFORD

BANKFOOT PRIMARY SCHOOL

You can learn new things and appreciate different cultures and what they do.

STUDENT

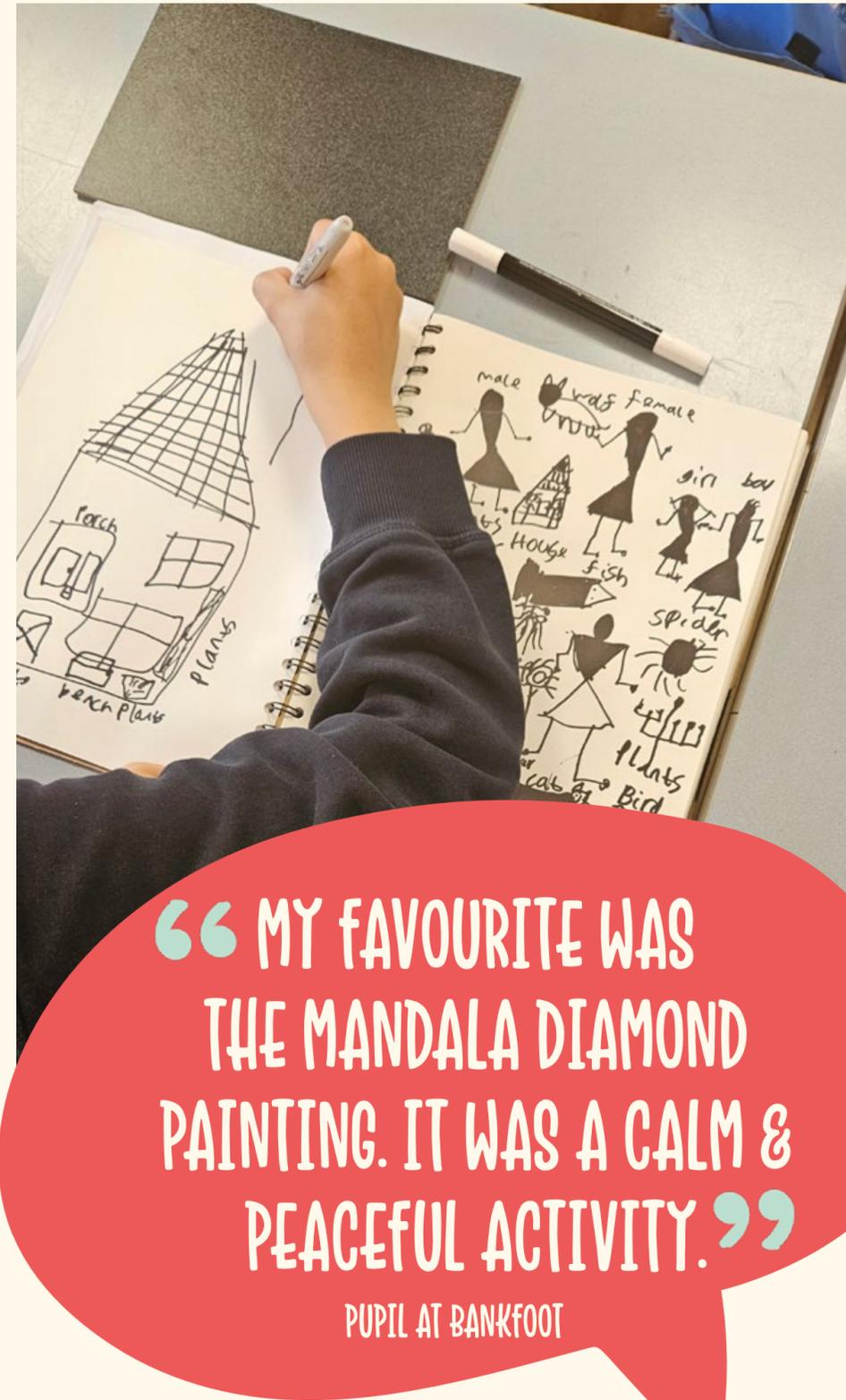
BRADFORD, WEST YORKSHIRE



BANKFOOT PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bankfoot Primary School in Bradford serves 266 pupils and reflects the area's strong South Asian heritage, with a high proportion of Pakistani and Bangladeshi families and nearly 50% of pupils speaking English as an additional language.

The school plays a vital role in promoting cohesion and aspiration within its multilingual, multicultural community. Despite socioeconomic challenges, Bankfoot upholds high academic standards and thrives on its rich cultural and linguistic diversity.



“ MY FAVOURITE WAS THE MANDALA DIAMOND PAINTING. IT WAS A CALM & PEACEFUL ACTIVITY. ”

PUPIL AT BANKFOOT

★
80%-90%

pupils across most workshops reported high or moderate engagement, confirming the programme's effectiveness in combining cultural education with creative confidence.



65%+

pupils had very proud feedback for the Mandala Diamond Painting and Warli Art session.



Across the board, pupils at Bankfoot engaged deeply — not just enjoying the sessions, but emerging with tangible pride and cultural understanding. These are more than workshops. They're experiences shaping confidence, creativity, and community.

77%

really enjoyed the Diya Lamp session, and 68% felt very proud of their creations.

75%-80%

pupils expressed high enjoyment and pride in Mandala, Kantha, and Calligraphy workshops.

BANKFOOT PRIMARY SCHOOL

"All the workshops are my favourite because every time we had fun and we learned something new, like Mandalas and Warli drawings from India."

STUDENT

"The project was a huge success in our school and we are so glad that we have access to this again next year."

TEACHER

"My favourite part was the diamond painting — it was really fun and it took time to finish, but that made it feel special."

STUDENT

"Delivering these South Asian workshops in schools has been insightful and rewarding for the pupils and myself, having the opportunity to share my craft and cultural background with pupils has been impactful."

ARTIST

"I liked the Islamic calligraphy and learned that the word Salaam means 'peace'."

STUDENT

"This is not something I ever had access to in school within the UK!"

ARTIST

"It felt good when the artists came to our school because we got to use new materials and learn different ways to make art that we don't normally do."

STUDENT

"The pupils were engaged and had access to a wealth of resources and new learning opportunities."

TEACHER

"I liked learning about South Asian art because it helped me find out about different cultures and how people in other places make their art."

STUDENT

FEEDBACK



Enjoyed / very proud



Okay / a bit proud

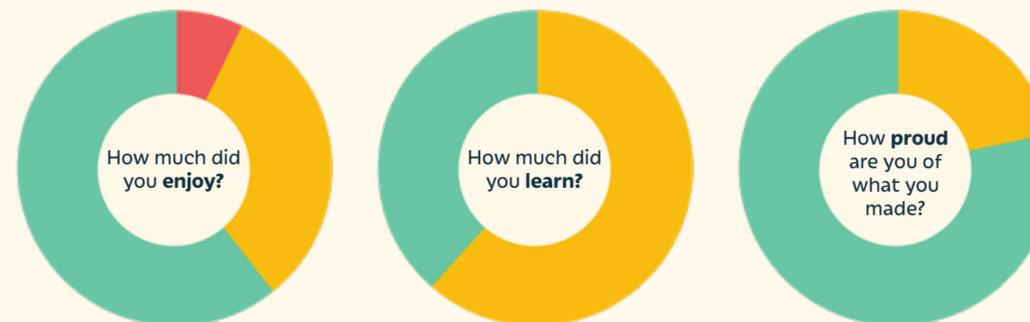


Not much / not proud

DIWALI DIYA LAMP (CLAY WORKSHOP)



MANDALA DIAMOND PAINTING



KANTHA STITCH CUSHIONS



WARLI ART



ISLAMIC CALLIGRAPHY ART



DANCE WORKSHOP





LONDON

REAY PRIMARY SCHOOL

It has broadened their horizons and increased visibility.

TEACHER

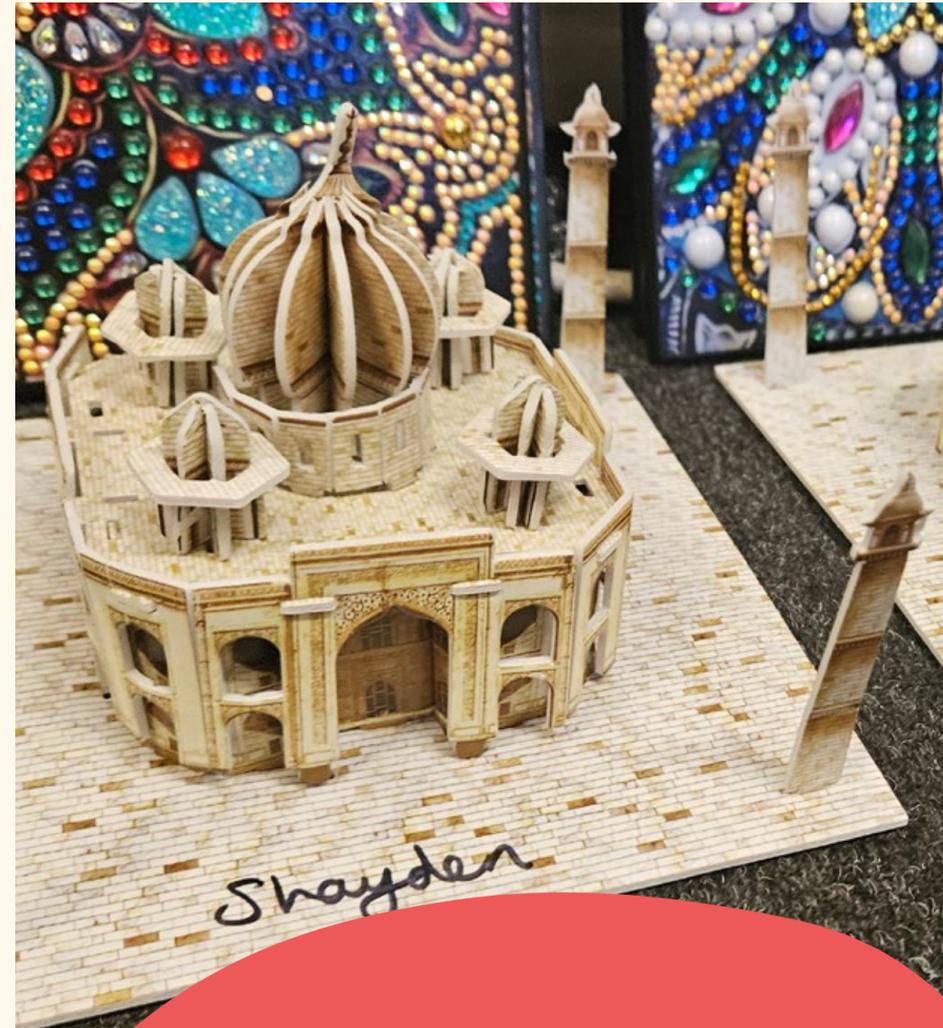
STOCKWELL, LONDON



REAY PRIMARY SCHOOL

At Reay Primary School in Stockwell, South London—a richly diverse setting where 48% of pupils speak English as an additional language and nearly half are eligible for pupil premium—our South Asian arts programme became a powerful vehicle for inclusion, expression, and learning. Pupils explored culture through hands-on workshops, from stitching Kantha cushions to painting mandalas, sculpting clay diyas, and writing in Arabic calligraphy.

High pride scores across sessions reflected not just enjoyment, but ownership and connection. All these workshops helped Reay's pupils engage meaningfully with heritage, focus deeply, and leave with a lasting sense of confidence, cultural curiosity, and creative pride. Across the week, Reay's pupils were challenged to think, make, move, and reflect. Whether carefully aligning jewels in a mandala or stitching patterns by hand, they weren't just "doing art" — they were engaging with heritage, exercising focus, building pride, and expanding their cultural literacy. These workshops planted seeds that will grow in confidence, memory, and understanding.



“ I'd Change My
age so I could
do it all again! ”

PUPIL AT REAY

★
78%

pupils really enjoyed the Kantha Stitch workshop



63%+

pupils in most workshops reported learning something new. High pride scores across sessions reflected not just enjoyment, but ownership and connection.

Across *all sessions*, the majority of pupils felt they learned a lot, showing that the workshops were both meaningful and educational.

Mandala Diamond Painting achieved near-perfect emotional impact, with

96%

saying they learned a lot or felt very proud.

Most sessions recorded only 0–1 pupils selected the lowest category (“Not much / Not proud”), indicating a *near-universal positive experience*.

REAY PRIMARY SCHOOL

"I learnt new things such as Bollywood dancing."

STUDENT

"Since doing the amazing kantha cushions at school, we now have fabric, embroidery sets and a sewing machine at home. He has been making me make up bags. It has really sparked his imagination."

PARENT

"South Asian art helped with my focus and calmness."

STUDENT

"Inclusion really is a key to having better empathy and community."

ARTIST

"In Year 4 the children learn about India, providing a basic understanding but this programme has broadened and enriched their experiences "

TEACHER

"Hearing them say stuff like 'this is so beautiful' and 'I can't wait to share this with my friends/family,' just really heals a part of me that felt unseen back when I was their age."

ARTIST

"We have so many South Asian children in our community, and it's important that they feel included and represented. And as much as they're learning about their own cultures and heritages, it's important for the whole school community to be able to understand and learn about their cultures and heritages too."

TEACHER

"I think this should be once a week not once a month."

STUDENT

"They really enjoyed the learning about the flags and the countries that they may not have necessarily heard of before, and it gave them an opportunity to find out a bit more about them as well."

TEACHER

FEEDBACK

😊 Enjoyed / very proud

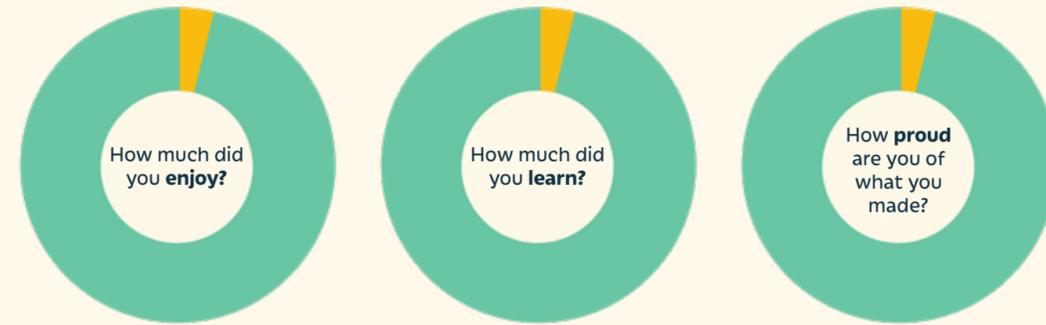
😐 Okay / a bit proud

☹️ Not much / not proud

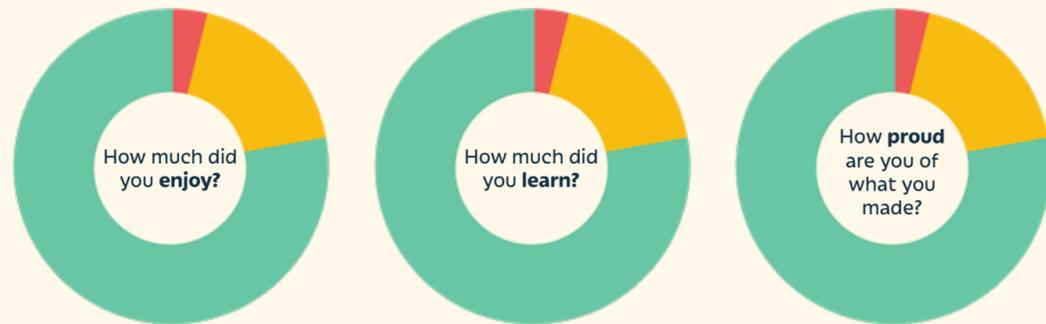
DIWALI DIYA LAMP (CLAY WORKSHOP)



MANDALA DIAMOND PAINTING



KANTHA STITCH CUSHIONS



WARLI ART



ISLAMIC CALLIGRAPHY ART



DANCE WORKSHOP



OLDBURY

“

CAUSEWAY PRIMARY SCHOOL

”

**Thanks to You be You for
this opportunity.**

TEACHER

OLDBURY

CAUSEWAY PRIMARY SCHOOL



Causeway Green Primary School in Oldbury serves approximately 450 pupils within a culturally and socially diverse community. Around one-third of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds—predominantly of South Asian heritage—and a similar proportion speak English as an additional language. Located in the Sandwell borough, an area marked by both economic challenge and rich cultural diversity, Causeway Green plays a key role in fostering confidence, belonging, and aspiration among its pupils. At Causeway Primary, pupils stepped into a programme of joyful artistic expression.

Ultimately, the programme at Causeway left its mark not just in artworks but in how pupils felt about themselves and each other: proud, engaged, and inspired.



“ I'M GIVING MY
DIYA LAMP TO
MY MUM! ”

PUPIL AT CAUSEWAY

Over
80%

of all feedback scores were the highest possible rating.

Only 3 pupils, on average per workshop, selected low to moderate ratings indicating that pupils gained:

- New artistic techniques
 - Cultural knowledge
 - Hands-on skills
- Confidence exploring unfamiliar media

Pupils delivered an overwhelmingly positive response, with 274 top ratings across 341 feedback points—showing that the cultural arts programme consistently inspired high enjoyment, strong learning, and real creative pride in every session.

Cultural understanding was strengthened through practice-based learning. Pupils actively explored South Asian textile heritage, Islamic artistic traditions and symbolic clay craft providing tangible cultural insight, not just theoretical learning.

Pupils felt proud of what they created, with the vast majority selecting “very proud” for their final pieces.

"It's really lovely when the children show their enthusiasm and express genuine excitement for new forms of art and learning about a new culture."

ARTIST

"I think the children have really shown an interest in the workshops, and some of them have really come out of their shells which is always lovely to see."

TEACHER

"The mandala book was my favourite because we got to use some many gems and it was so sparkly."

STUDENT

"They're always so excited when they know Waheeda is coming to do a workshop because they know they will be doing something different."

TEACHER

"My favourite art was the calligraphy because we got to learn to write salaam, I learnt something about a new language. I'm going to hang my canvas in my bedroom."

STUDENT

"This programme is an amazing idea and very refreshing seeing children learn about a region of the world they wouldn't have learnt about at their age typically."

ARTIST

"It's fun learning about how people in other places make their art — it makes me want to travel and see it for real one day."

STUDENT

"We've seen a range of children who would typically find writing and reading difficult but would excel at the practical parts of the workshop because they're doing something creative."

TEACHER

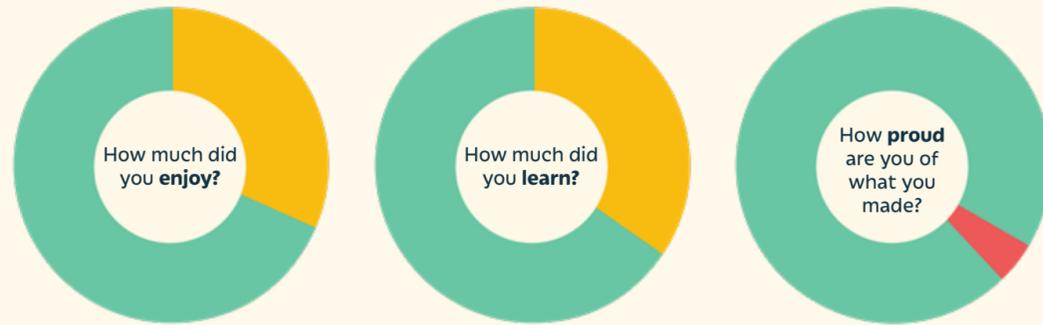
"I really enjoyed the Diya lamps workshop because we got to use clay and they looked so beautiful when they were painted and had a tea light inside."

STUDENT

FEEDBACK



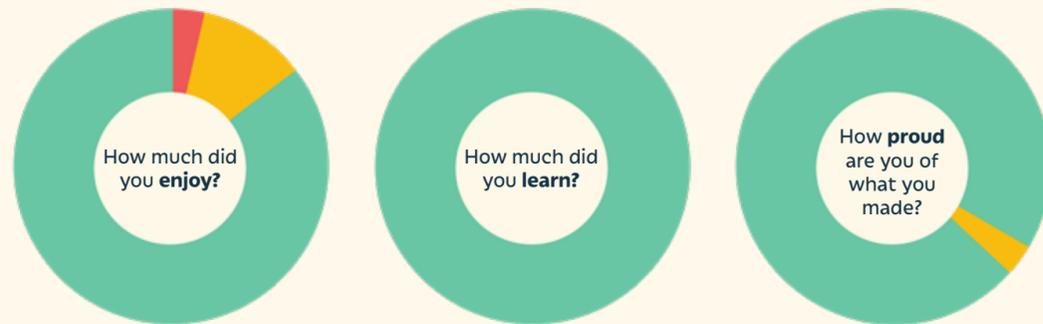
DIWALI DIYA LAMP (CLAY WORKSHOP)



MANDALA DIAMOND PAINTING



KANTHA STITCH CUSHIONS



WARLI ART



ISLAMIC CALLIGRAPHY ART



DANCE WORKSHOP



EXHIBITION & COMMUNITY IMPACT



A final exhibition showcased student work, giving families and school communities an opportunity to see the outcomes firsthand. Reay Primary was visited by Alan from *Brixton Blog*, and Ferndale Primary welcomed Birmingham's Deputy Mayor. The exhibition brought the school to life with impressive art, vibrant dancers, uplifting music — and of course, plenty of delightful samosas.

Displays included diya lamps, Warli drawings, mandala art, Arabic calligraphy, and Taj Mahal models. For many pupils, this was their first public presentation of artwork— an affirming and confidence-building experience.

Schools that applied for funding received support for exhibition costs and display materials. The exhibitions not only celebrated creativity but also increased the visibility of South Asian culture within school environments. Teachers and parents reported a noticeable boost in student pride, along with a deeper integration of cultural diversity across school life.

“ AS A COLLECTIVE IT LOOKS GREAT ALTOGETHER & ASPIRATIONAL FOR THE CHILDREN. ”

SAM, TEACHER
AT FERNDALE PRIMARY SCHOOL





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Across all schools, the South Asian workshops received overwhelmingly positive feedback. Activities such as Mandala Diamond Painting, Kantha Stitch Cushions, Warli Art, and Islamic Calligraphy were especially well received, with the vast majority of students (85%–100%) giving the highest possible ratings across all three pillars: **Enjoyment**, **Learning**, and **Pride**.

This feedback demonstrated that the programme succeeded not only in engaging children but also in building cultural confidence and creativity. Most notably, several workshops fostered exceptional inclusion of neurodivergent pupils and elevated the voices of Muslim and South Asian students in authentic, peer-led contexts.





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