



Additional Information: A Theatre Trip for Every Child, Lewisham

We launched 'Every Child' because we believe every child should have the opportunity to benefit from early access to the arts: it contributes significantly to a child's development, sparking their curiosity and giving them new perspectives on the world

A great summary of how and why arts access aids child development, drawing on different studies, was published in Irish news in early 2018, read it [here](#).

London Borough of Lewisham has one of the highest rates in the UK for child poverty. [34.7% of Lewisham's children live in poverty](#). Families on low incomes often have least access to opportunities in London and that includes arts engagement.

For the Albany, the scheme is core to how we feel we can contribute to making Lewisham a healthier and happier Borough. We think it can be a key part of ensuring all children grow up to experience the wealth of what their borough has to offer, in this case arts and culture, regardless of their families' circumstances.

The Albany offered tickets funded by the scheme to schools with the highest proportion of free school meal places (or Pupil Premium) first. In the case of one of the first schools to take up free tickets, 84% of their student body are eligible for free school meals.

In its first year:

- Four out of the five schools with over 50% of students eligible for Pupil Premium in the borough attended the theatre through the scheme.
- The scheme funded free tickets for over half of all Lewisham primary schools or 2,300 primary school children to come and see shows at the Albany.
- We raised funds for additional 1,200 children to come to shows in 2018 – taking our year1 total to £35k and 3,500 tickets.
- Young audiences described the shows they saw and their trip to the theatre as 'brilliant', 'amazing', 'great', 'wonderful' and 'better than the chocolate pancakes I had for breakfast!'

There has been much in the news recently about the current threat to arts subjects in education, owing to funding cuts and increased pressures on the curriculum, as well as the popularity of the 'core' subject-focused EBacc at secondary level. In this climate, it is more important than ever for cultural organisations to support the engagement of young children with arts and culture, at the earliest possible opportunity.

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