

2024 End of Year Report



ignite!

Letter from our Chair

● As we come to the end of 2024 we take some time to reflect and look back at all we've achieved this year. But, as Jonathan Larson asks, how do you measure a year?

We could measure our impact in many ways: perhaps through the value of the transformational grants that have solidified and expanded our game-changing programmes this year; or what about through the uplifting and heartwarming words we receive from parents and carers, children and young people, and our programme partners; or maybe through the data we collect that tell us we're reaching the right people and bringing about statistical change. Or could we find a way to bottle up and measure quiet moments of spark released by a young person

as they are given space to explore, discover, express and advocate for what they believe in?

How do you measure a year? Through sparks, impact, and quiet transformation.

Well, you'll be happy to know that we're not in the business of bottling up young people's sparks. Instead, this report combines bits of everything from above, and looks at our work through three key outcomes, Coming Together, Unlocking Creativity and Taking Control - illustrating how our work supports people and industries to come together for young people, unlock their unique creativity, and provide tools for them to take control of their futures.

I am sending a huge thanks to every member of our staff team and every volunteer for their dedication, drive, creativity and commitment - you are truly all wonderful and talented people and we are lucky to have you! Our trustees have worked tirelessly in the background this year and achieved really great things - I am especially grateful for their ongoing work. And finally, thank you to... you!, dear reader, for taking the time to read about Ignite!'s work this year.

Please connect with us in 2025 and support us if you can.

What role will you play this year in helping young people to ignite their futures?

Stay curious!

Joe Burton, Chair of the Ignite!
Board of Trustees



2024 Headline Stats

- We continue to punch above our weight, continuing to grow our reach and impact every year with our small but mighty team. We are focused on delivering high quality, dependable programmes that are trusted and respected by our partners and audiences, with a commitment to creating inclusive, safe and nurturing environments for all who engage with us.

+43%
Increase from 2023

	2024	2023	2022
Total engagements	8000 <small>Plus 15,000 participants in FOSAC24</small>	6500 <small>Plus 9500 participants in FOSAC23</small>	4556 <small>Plus 5000 participants in FOSAC22</small>
Individual participants	5670	5200	4119
Sessions	203	192	131
Primary schools	67	34	30
Secondary schools	14	14	16
Special/AP schools	9	7	3
Colleges	4	2	2
Staff	5	6	4
Freelancers	4	1	1
Trustees	9	8	9
Placement Students/interns	11	11	7
Paid work for creative practitioners	22	23	n/a
Volunteers	100+	100+	100+

OUTCOME ONE

Coming Together

We want to see the architecture, culture and networks of Nottinghamshire come together to provide for its children and young people.

01



Festival of Science and Curiosity

02



Curious Tots

03



Holiday Activities

04



Hidden Figures

01 5 - 16 Feb 2024

Festival of Science and Curiosity

● Our team continues to bring in new partners and nourish relationships that have grown over the nine years that the Festival of Science and Curiosity has been running. We have shaped the festival in response to emerging needs: 2024 saw a pilot Community Grants programmes aiming to reach black, disabled and remote audiences that have been underrepresented in our audiences; our relationships with special schools grew through our Come Alive with Chemistry programme which connected chemistry students with special schools to deliver practical chemistry in the classroom; we revisited our processes to programme school activities in response to what teachers told us would be beneficial for their pupils. 64% of researchers and STEM professionals contributing activities for the festival were doing so for the first time.



Watch the video here!

“This festival allows children the opportunity to create child-led investigations. The children enjoy this as they learn and investigate science which they are curious about. This is such a fantastic opportunity for our school which is in a deprived area of Nottingham.”

“We love being part of [FOSAC]. Always amazed at how the team manages to wrangle all the venues and the workshops with such good organisation and good humour! Thanks for involving us.”

“It’s great to engage with partners beyond the FOSAC team for potential opportunities for working together.”



02 All year 2024

Curious Tots

● This year we brought together a partnership of five Nottingham city primary schools and Nottingham City Council's early years team to put together an application to Paul Hamlyn Foundation to extend our Curious Tots programme in these settings for three years. Since getting the news that our application was successful, we have continued to work closely to understand the individual needs of each school as we recruit our creative practitioners and put our plans in place for the programme for the next three years.

“Curious Tots would give our children exciting opportunities to spark language and opportunities to develop their senses. This would impact positively on later learning in Reception, as it will have laid the foundations for future learning. We hope that it will give staff in the Early Years the confidence to plan opportunities for learning which they may not have had before.”



03 Easter, Summer, October & Christmas Holiday Activities

● Our 2024 holiday activities programme specifically sought to open up Nottingham and its rich opportunities to refugee families living here. Over the course of the year we took families on eye-opening trips to Wollaton Hall, Nottingham Castle, Stonebridge City Farm, Primary, St Ann's Community Orchard, Green's Windmill & Science Centre and even the Nottingham Playhouse Panto! We worked closely with Nottingham & Nottinghamshire Refugee Forum as well as the Serco teams managing the two accommodation sites to ensure our activities were creative, fun and educational as well as responsive to the families' needs and requests.



★ Magic Moments ★

A coach full of families descended upon Wollaton Hall, relishing all it has to offer - the galleries inside, the lake, the deer, and even a funfair that was set up when we were there. After lunch we initiated a game of 'Red Light, Green Light' and we were joined not only by the children and some of their parents but also other children who were visiting Wollaton Hall with their families, with everyone playing together, making friends and having fun.



“Thank you so much for coming and offering these experiences to our children, it really means a lot to my two children, they miss you when you are not here and really look forward to seeing you again”

04 January - July 2024

Hidden Figures

● Hidden Figures brought together fantastic combinations of women scientists, artists and participants to explore, share and learn from one another about topics that mattered to them. The Nottingham & Nottinghamshire Refugee Forum's Pamoja Women's Together group had the opportunity to visit the Sutton Bonington Plant Science labs and created an exhibition in the Forum's garden, whilst the Heya Women's group ran their own 'Messy Kitchen for Better Sleep' events sharing what they'd explored about nutrition and sleep with families in their network.

"The way I see this project was that me, Emma and all of the Heya group were all collaborating and we were all on the same page, so this was quite a unique experience"

Chiara, Artist, Hidden Figures

"Before the project I would have been apprehensive about agreeing to communicate research in this way, but now I have already agreed to work with a different group looking at sleep and nutrition, and I feel more confident about bridging the gap between science and being able to communicate it to different groups of people"

Emma, Scientist, Hidden Figures



OUTCOME TWO

Unlocking Creativity

We want to see children and young people reach their potential in any path they desire.

01



Ada Lovelace Day

02



Creative Sparks

03



Festival of Science and Curiosity

04



Making Connections

05



Curious Tots

01 7 - 8 October 2024

Ada Lovelace Day

● Our annual Ada Lovelace Day once again opened up the opportunity for children and young people to meet and interact with scientists, develop their understanding of what it means to work in science and see themselves as scientists. By working with secondary pupils, primary pupils and, for the first time this year, children attending an alternative provision setting, this programme continued to be inclusive and ambitious for young people in our region. At the MediCity secondary school event this year, there was a 52% increase in the number of pupils who responded 'yes' to 'I want to be a scientist when I'm older' at the end of the session when compared with the start of the session.

I learnt that being a scientist is hard but fun

A lovely event to bring into teaching. It hinges the learning for our subject but also provides opportunities to ask the students questions about their learning

I learned about a scientist that came from the same country as me (Poland)



02 All year 2024

Creative Sparks

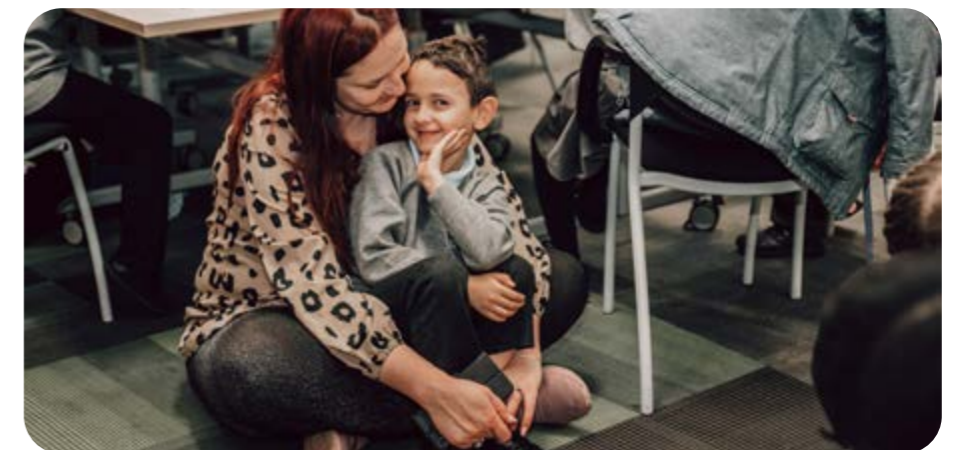
Our Creative Sparks programme has expanded to four settings this year as well as bringing in two new Creative Practitioners to deliver the sessions, who bring their extensive experience and creativity to the design and delivery of the programme. Our Creative Sparks have journeyed around the globe in their imaginations, created their own sedimentary rocks, constructed temples, houses and bridges, and experienced countless moments of inspiration, perseverance, confidence, laughter and pride.

[My son's] interest in all things science has really peaked, and his confidence around strangers and new people has grown massively. He's learning how to control his emotions also as he's tired when he comes, but still does all the activities and then tells others at school what he's done. It's nice that adults can join in too, I find the activities relaxing as well

"My child is more creative and more confident, they organise their work better by following certain steps before starting their crafts"

★ Magic Moments ★

We were doing a construction activity building bridges from scrap materials and one boy worked on his own bridge made from three plant pots glued to one piece of cardboard, which he turned over and put over the gap between the two tables. The pot in the middle fell off but the other two stayed on. Then we tried to put the animal on the top to test it, it stayed up but the two plant pots pushed out slightly. We asked him how he could make it more stable, he thought about it for a bit and then said that we could put two heavy things on top of the two plant pots to make it stay. We tried it out by putting two of the other animals on top of either side and it worked. Mum observed the whole interaction.



03 5 - 16 Feb 2024

Festival of Science and Curiosity

● The 2024 Festival of Science and Curiosity featured endless opportunities for children and families to meet and interact with research and researchers. We had plant scientists, engineers and neuroscientists going into schools, visits from pupils to pharmaceutical science companies and pharmacy labs, and everything from nuclear fusion to colourful chemistry to water ecology to brain scanners at our public events programme. The festival takes the incredible science and research happening across Nottinghamshire out from behind closed doors and demonstrates to children and families living here that they can be part of it too.

“It has broadened [my son’s] understanding of the different scientific fields” (Parent)

“Our children love science. They don’t have opportunities to see it outside of school due to their disadvantaged backgrounds. The project supported their ability to retain knowledge, to retrieve what they’ve learnt, and to talk about their experience. All of these are areas they usually struggle with.” (Teacher)



“My children had so much fun and loved participating. The explanation of complex terms were made accessible to such a young age group. My children knew about antibiotics and antibiotic resistance - this made the event excellent. Even though we are parents, we learnt something - Thank you! It was worth travelling from Nottingham for!” (Parent)



04 Sep - Dec 2024

Making Connections

● Building on from a pilot collaboration with Base 51's Outburst LGBT+ Youth Group and the Institute for Mental Health at University of Nottingham, this year our Making Connections project has focused on the creation of a graphic novella exploring mental health topics. The young people worked with graphic novelist Liam Mills to create a story inspired by their interests in gothic horror and exploring complex relationships. They collaboratively developed ideas for storytelling, world-building, character development and script-writing to shape the outcome, which was brought to life through illustrations by graphic design students at Confetti college



★ Magic Moments ★

One of the young people from the sessions didn't want to engage in the initial session which was focused around drawing - saying they're not good at drawing but they love painting. The next session, we brought along a set of oil paints and a canvas and they spent the whole session fully engaged, creating a cityscape painting which will be the setting for the story. Another participant in the group wouldn't talk in the initial session, preferring to write their incredibly imaginative ideas down and pass them to the session leaders. As the project went on, they grew in confidence, especially through connecting with the graphic novelist through a shared passion for creative storytelling, and by the end of the project were confidently chatting and sharing ideas with all of the adults involved in the project.



Credit - Designs by HE Graphics Students at Confetti Institute of Creative Technologies | Part of Nottingham Trent University

'I love script writing, I am so glad we get to do this project here, I wish I could work like this at College'

05 All year 2024

Curious Tots

● Now truly embedded within the Early Years Centre at Crabtree Farm, our Curious Tots programme has been having a noticeable impact on the children who engage with the sessions every week. Staff in the nursery have observed the children being more confident in speaking, and there have been countless moments of children engaging their imaginations, problem-solving skills, perseverance, inquisitiveness and ability to work with others through the Curious Tots sessions. Parents/carers and staff at Crabtree have benefited from connecting with the creative practitioner to developing ideas for activities that can nurture children's creativity. We have also been able to capture quantitative data demonstrating an increase in the number of children achieving expected level for two key Early Learning Goals: Creating with Materials and Being Imaginative and Expressive.

“What is very powerful and works really well is that Elaine follows the children's interests and will often take the activity in a different direction from the original plan, as she is listening to and observing the children in their play”



★ Magic Moments ★

One of the activities this term was linked to the book 'The Smeds and the Smoos' and so was all about colour mixing with red and blue paint. This activity opened up lots of conversations about what happens when you mix paint, why do bubbles appear when you stir things together. One child mixed the red and blue paint and observed how it changed colour to purple 'just like the baby smoo'. They then looked around for other things that are red and blue to add to the pot to see if they changed colour too.

One of the activities was all about going camping. Some of the children made a cardboard tent with a person made from a peg inside. One of the other children came over and said 'shhhh she's sleeping, it's night-time' and then decided they wanted to make a tent person and a tent too, this was decorated with pink heads and they 'made a mummy' to sleep inside it. They talked about what else they'd need on a campsite and one of the children said 'a fire' and so together some of the children made a fire from matchsticks. They then decided they would need hot chocolate, which they made from the cardboard cups. They then made a toilet with a big piece of card folded to make a cubicle with a door. One of the other children said it would be good to have a pool on the campsite and so a group worked together to make what they called 'a disco pool party' with blue paper and tape, and drew and talked all about what they were drawing as they did it.

OUTCOME THREE

Taking Control

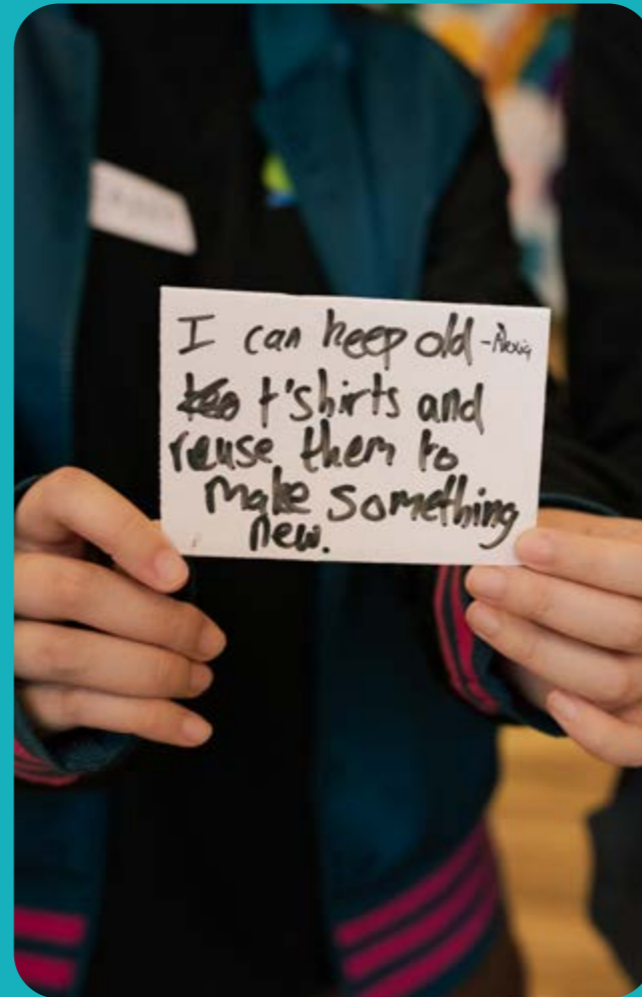
We want to see children and young people being heard and able to affect personal and societal change

01



Primary Parliment

02



Fashion Fictions

03



Students and Interns

04



Refugee Families

01 26-28 Mar, 25-27 Jun, 15-17 Oct 2024

Primary Parliament

Through Primary Parliament, 350 children from 41 schools had their say on issues to do with online safety and health and wellbeing, and developed their skills in communicating their messages effectively. Both mainstream primary school pupils and children attending special schools were listened to by local elected representatives and decision-makers. This programme champions the power of children, and especially the voices of children who aren't usually included in these conversations (48% of schools attending were in the lowest 1 decile according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019).

When we asked the Primary Parliamentarians why their thoughts and ideas were important, they shared that "they can inspire", "children can change the world", and that "everyone needs to have a say".

★ Magic Moments ★

During the Summer term session, there was a group of girls who had been quieter than the other pupils during the workshops, focusing on the activity and working independently. Throughout the day, their confidence to share their ideas and collaborate with others grew, and during the final performances, they loudly and creatively shared their learning from the day, and had huge smiles on their faces whilst doing it. At the end of the session they reported feeling proud of themselves for their presentation.



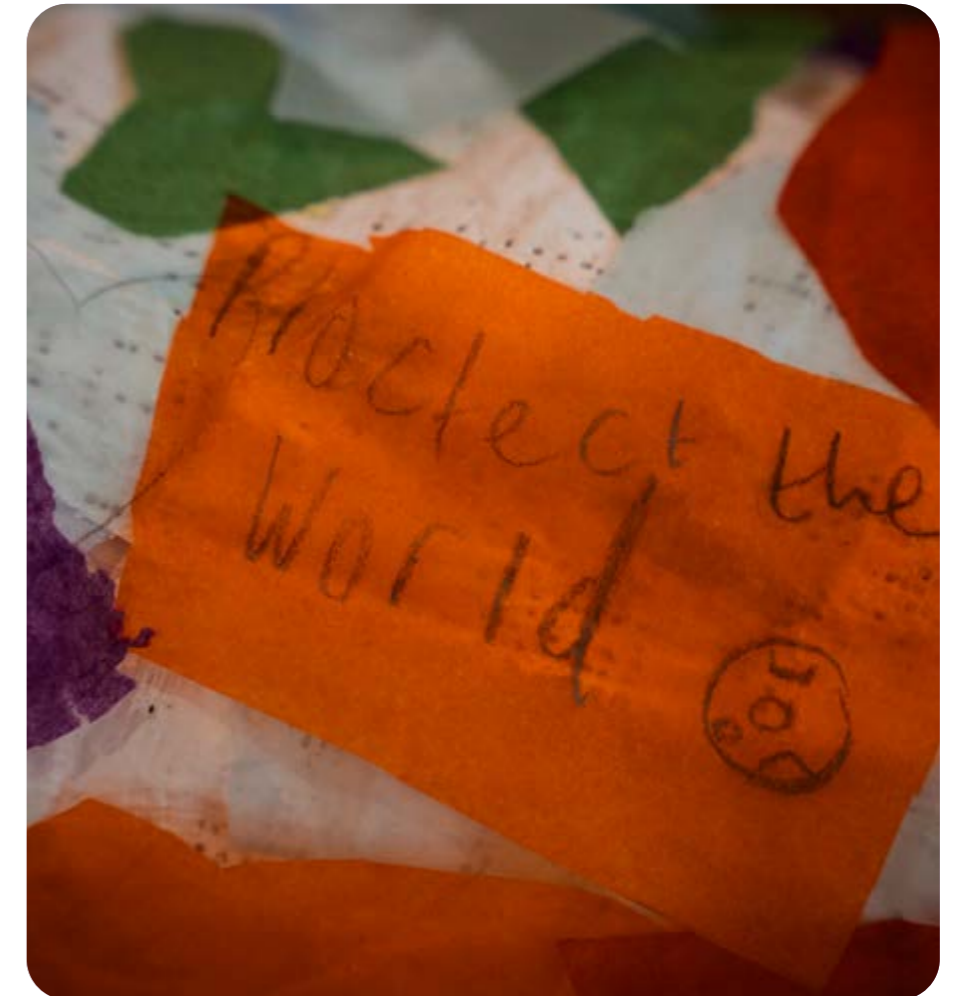
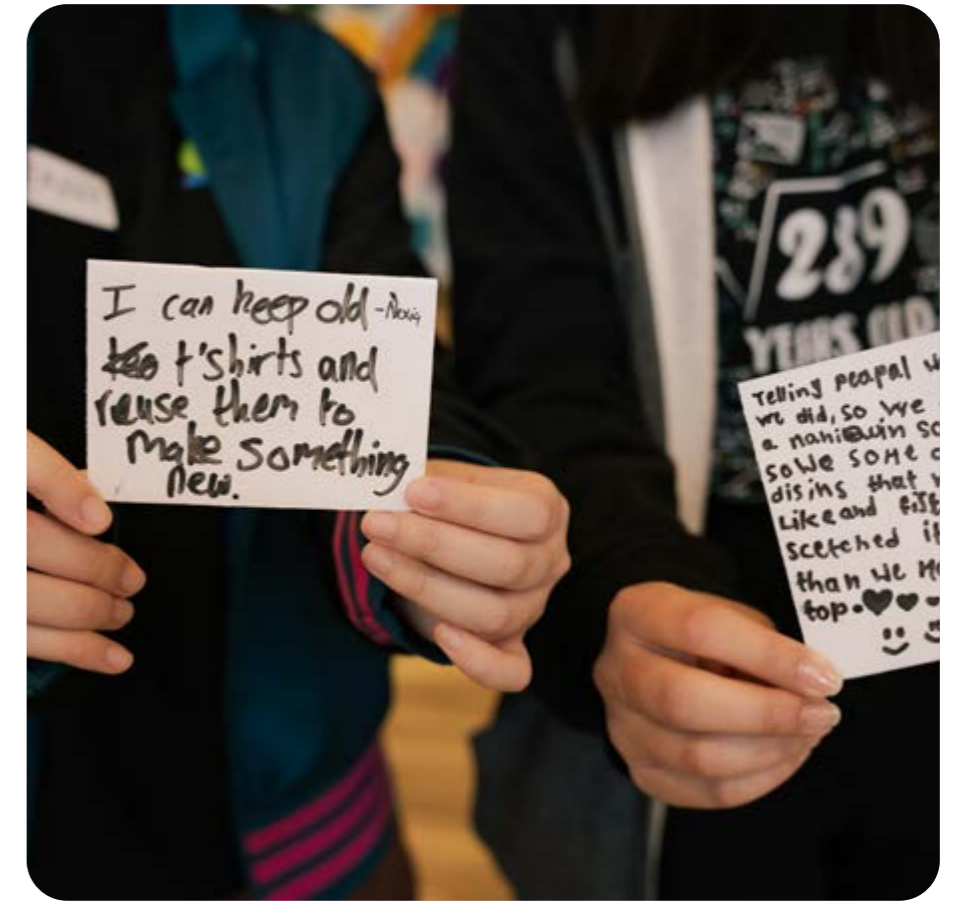
02 Mar - Jul 2024

Fashion Fictions

● Our ambitions for children's creativity to help them to explore and express important issues was enabled through the Fashion Fictions project this year. 360 children from six Bulwell primary schools worked in collaboration with creative practitioners to bring to life their ideas about how we could live differently with our clothes. Children explored sustainability through the lens of fashion, using their imagination and sense of playfulness to understand and communicate changes they hope to make in the world.

'[The children] all made a little tag that says the emotion that they feel or how you might help someone that's feeling angry - how you can make them feel happy again. It's a beautiful piece of work and they've talked about it so much. They said it was even better than the trip to the seaside.'

-Teacher



03 All year 2024

Students and Interns

● By welcoming in students and interns to work on our programmes, we let young people take the reins, develop their skills and influence the way we work. The Festival Magazine this year epitomises this: it was designed and illustrated by graphic design students from Confetti college, content was written by sixth formers and it was copy-edited by secondary school pupils. University students have supported our community programmes, bringing their understanding of young people, vibrancy and ideas to our sessions

“As an intern ... I learnt a lot about being flexible and adaptive to the needs of the children on the day. Taking a leadership role and leading by example is so important and I learnt this really well with ignite. My own individual knowledge of psychology and research has helped shape the programme which I also love.”

“I found it very inspiring how you do so much for young people. I am sure all those you meet will be touched in a positive way. I am honoured and grateful to have experienced a marvellous week”



04 Summer - December 2024 Refugee Families

● Our work with refugee families this year has been shaped by a continuous conversation about how our programmes can work better for them. We used our understanding of barriers faced by families in attending our off-site activities to shape our programme for 2024 and this year our HAF programme was delivered in the locations where refugee families are living - a hotel and an apartment block - and led to much increased participation. When we found the activity space in the apartment block uninspiring and uninviting, we renovated the space to provide a more welcoming environment full of educational activities. When the children told us they missed our activities between holidays, we responded with a new Creative Sparks programme to deliver weekly sessions with them.

“Thank you both for your big hearts and for bringing joy to our flat. Your kindness and efforts to help the kids are truly appreciated”

‘Please, can you come everyday, and take us on more trips? We love it when you come here!’

‘[The mural] is so beautiful’

★ Magic Moments ★

During one of the sessions during the holidays, we started by inviting the children to draw their ideas for how we could make the room we're in better. One of the girls didn't want to draw as she said she wasn't very good at drawing, even when assured by the team that the drawings didn't have to be perfect. Later on in the day, we were using chalk to write and draw on the concrete outside, with different shapes and games scaffolded by the team. The girl began to try with the chalk and showed us what she'd done - 'I did it!', and we replied 'See, you can do anything!', to which she repeated 'I can do anything'. Then we went back inside for our final activity and she did lots of drawings on paper, having grown in confidence and a sense that she can give things a go.



2024 Thank yous!

Programme Partners

Base 51 & Outburst
Bluebell Hill Primary School
Bulwell Arts Festival
Crabtree Farm Primary & Nursery
School
Environment Agency
Firbeck Academy
FOSAC Steering Group
Hempshill Hall Primary School
Heya Nottingham
MediCity & BioCity Nottingham
Nottingham City Council
Nottingham City Libraries
Nottingham & Nottinghamshire
Refugee Forum
Nottingham Trent University
Serco and SD Commercial
University of Nottingham
Whitemoor Academy

List of funders in 2024

BBC Children in Need
B&Q Foundation
Boots Charitable Trust
Browne Jacobson Charitable Trust
Catalent
ChalleNGe Nottingham
Child Friendly Nottingham
Department for Education via
Nottingham City Council
National Lottery Awards for All
Nottingham City Council Area Based
Grants via Renewal Trust
Nottingham Trent University
Paul Hamlyn Foundation
Pioneer Group
Small Steps Big Changes
St James' Place Charitable
Foundation
The Nottingham Festival of Science
and Curiosity
The Gemini Fund

Get in touch!

We'd love to work with you to continue to develop impactful programmes that nurture creativity and curiosity in children and young people in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire.

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