

EXCELLENCE THROUGH INSPIRATION NOT LEAGUE TABLES

Nord Anglia Education's collaboration with The Juilliard School is the latest step on our journey towards revolutionising what quality education means in the modern world.

At the heart of our ethos is our philosophy of being ambitious – ambitious for our students, ambitious for our curriculum and ambitious for our schools. For us, this means creating a learning experience that leads to academic success for every student and also nurturing the key skills that will enable them to succeed anywhere in the world once they've left school.

To do this, we need to constantly review and evolve our educational offer. Sadly, there is too much acceptance of the status quo across too many schools, as measured by league tables of examination results. 'Business as usual' isn't good enough for us, and it shouldn't be for anyone working in education. We need to think about how to we develop an education which prepares young people for the future world, for jobs which don't yet exist – igniting their curiosity, their creativity and continually challenging and broadening their horizons.

Too many league tables

It's a common criticism of many schools, and indeed education systems themselves. Through an over focus – or obsession – with league tables, school curriculums have narrowed, limiting children's education. We believe that education should do more than this, and instead focus on educating the whole child.

Young people need to be inspired into making the most of these most precious years in school, and it is our duty as educators to inspire them.

Interestingly many of the world's truly leading institutions do not rely on league tables of public examination results. True excellence is not something that can be put into a tiny box. For example, Cambridge is re-introducing its own assessments as the league tables themselves don't help them detect the best and the brightest. Elsewhere, Harvard looks at the 'whole child' achievement rather than just exam performance in its admissions. Educating the whole child – academically, culturally and emotionally – is our aim.

So how do we do this in our classrooms?

Bringing excellence to every classroom

At Nord Anglia Education, we believe that one way to inspire our students is to collaborate with leading institutions from around the world to bring their excellence into our classrooms.

Working with the best is inspirational. How many times can any of us truly say we have had the opportunity to work with the best? At Nord Anglia Education, we want it to be a daily occurrence for every student. And our collaboration with The Juilliard School does just that.

The orchestration of academic performance

Why begin with the performing arts when we know how much weight is placed on conventional academic performance? Because we believe that the performing arts can act as a key, unlocking many of those skills that inspire children to engage with all their studies and love learning. Skills which can therefore support academic success.

The programme is not trying to develop world-leading musicians, actors and dancers – that's the job of The Juilliard School. But we do want to use their expertise and the power of the performing arts to inspire and engage our students. It is well documented that young people in particular relate to music and the performing arts in a way that can rarely be replicated across the board in other academic subjects. If we can ignite their love of learning with music and the performing arts, we can ensure this flows across their studies.

This is just the first of several collaborations that we will implement over the coming years but in many ways, it is the most important. It links directly to our vision to provide a holistic education – one that helps shape our young people to go out into the world as engaging, culturally literate global citizens. The performing arts represent one of the foundations through which we will help them get there.

THE VALUE OF PERFORMING ARTS

These are the ways the performing arts collaboration with Juilliard will enhance learning for our students.

Learning music and the performing arts can increase academic development

Learning music and the performing arts is linked to high academic performance^{1,2}, helping students to improve literacy³, mathematics⁴ and cognitive development.⁵

Evidence suggests that students who participate in learning the arts achieve higher grades in school, and musically-trained students demonstrate enhanced brain performance⁶. Music also helps develop various

¹ Catterall, J., Chapleau, R., & Iwanaga, J. (1999). Involvement in the arts and human development: General involvement and intensive involvement in music and theater arts. IN Fiske (1999) *Champions of change: The impact of the arts on learning*, 1-18: Washington.

² Winner, E., T. Goldstein and S. Vincent-Lancrin (2013), *Art for Art's Sake?: The Impact of Arts Education*, Educational Research and Innovation, OECD Publishing, Paris. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264180789-en>

³ Salmon, A. (2010). Using Music to Promote Children's Thinking and Enhance Their Literacy Development. *Early Child Development and Care*, 180(7), 937-945.

⁴ Smithrim, K., & Uptis, R. (2005). Learning through the Arts: Lessons of Engagement. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 28(1/2), 109-127

⁵ Schellenberg, E. (2004). Music lessons enhance IQ. *Psychological Science*, 15, 511 - 514.

⁶ Curtis, L., & Fallin, J. (2014). Neuroeducation and Music: Collaboration for Student Success. *Music Educators Journal*, 101(2), 52-56.

attributes – from motor skills⁷ by learning to play a musical instrument, through to an appreciation of mathematics via rhythm and tempo⁸.

So while some education systems focus on exam after exam, they are missing the whole picture. If they also created time for the performing arts, they would see their students achieve even more.

The performing arts teach young people a range of personal skills that help them thrive

The performing arts teach young people a range of personal skills that enable them to shine in every aspect of their lives – both at school and in the world of work. In fact, they teach young people exactly the attributes required in the modern workplace - creativity⁹, critical thinking, the ability to collaborate and various social skills¹⁰.

Studying rehearsing and learning to perform teaches young people various character traits including confidence, self-esteem and discipline¹¹.

A lot of educators talk now about the need to build character – the performing arts do exactly that.

Learning music can inspire joy in learning that can spread to other subjects

Learning music and the performing arts more widely exposes young people to a form of learning that is increasingly rare for young people – one to one (or one to a few) tuition. Learning at this level and in this way helps ignite sparks in young people who may not have previously engaged with academic learning, enhancing satisfaction and sense of achievement in school¹².

And once they get the love of learning, this can transfer across to all their subjects.

An appreciation of the performing arts makes for more engaging global citizens

⁷ Hyde, K. L., Lerch, J., Norton, A., Forgeard, M., Winner, E., Evans, A. C., & Schlaug, G. (2009). Musical training shapes structural brain development. *The Journal of Neuroscience*, 29(10), 3019-3025.

⁸ Shilling, W. A. (2002). Mathematics, music and movement: Exploring concepts and connections. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 29, 179–184.

⁹ Koutsoupidou, T., & Hargreaves, D. (2009). An experimental study of the effects of improvisation on the development of children's creative thinking in music. *Psychology of Music*, 37(3), 251–278.

¹⁰ Hallam, S. (2010) "The Power of Music: Its Impact on the Intellectual, Social and Personal Development of Children and Young People." *International Journal Of Music Education*. 28(3), 269-289. ERIC, EBSCOhost (accessed October 5, 2015).

¹¹ Hallam, S. (2010).

¹² Päivi-Sisko Eerola & Tuomas Eerola (2014) Extended music education enhances the quality of school life, *Music Education Research*, 16(1), 88-104, DOI: 10.1080/14613808.2013.829428.

An appreciation and understanding of the arts makes for engaging, curious and culturally rich global citizens – which we believe is a key component of education.

Put simply, the world is a better place with music in it – it transcends cultural barriers, provides connections between people with little or nothing in common¹³. The more people who understand music and the performing arts, the more the world will connect.

¹³ Wright, C. H. (1994). The Value of Performing Arts Education in Our Schools. *NASSP Bulletin*, 78(561), 39-42.