

Supporting Documents/ Project OK 2025/2026 'The Future is OK'

1.) Nicola Mills Head Teacher Shrubland Street Primary

We believe that access to high quality dance education as part of a broad and balanced curriculum is a fundamental right for every child. As a creative subject dance holds a unique place in the curriculum. The physical and mental well-being benefits of creative subjects are well documented. With the legacy of the pandemic enduring, childhood obesity is at its highest since records began (Diabetes Uk) and 1 in 6 children have mental health problems (according to the Children's Society) it is vital that we guarantee curriculum time for a subject that counters the effects of the pandemic and supports positive health and well-being.

Community projects help address and open up creative arts for all. Alongside this, they are invaluable opportunities for local children because many pupils lack the ability to understand, visit or interact with creative arts. Sadly, the dance curriculum, although high quality is not the same as working with and being inspired by dance professional who have the expertise, skills and knowledge to develop pupil's understanding and therefore performance.

Shrubland Street is in one of the most deprived areas of the Leamington being situated in the Brunswick ward, any projects that improve the local environment have a positive impact on the community. The project would be used to celebrate the cultural diversity of the school community (67% of the school population are EAL children with a large proportion originating from India – the school is represented by 26 different languages, further we have several refugee families from Hong Kong and Iran.

Shrubland Street Primary feel this project with EYFS and KS1, with a blend of PSHE and dance content, is essential to provide our youngest pupils with the creative, physical and mental well-being knowledge, skills, self-belief and cultural capital they need to succeed in life.

2.) Monday 3 March 2025 Yaël Owen Deputy CEO People Dancing & Head of Health and Wellbeing Programmes Statement of Support for 'OK'!

Kate Taylor Kate has been working with People Dancing for some time now on our flagship programme Live Well & Dance with Parkinson's, playing a crucial part as a dance teaching artist launching and leading 2 classes in Leamington Spa. The Live Well & Dance with Parkinson's programme has created opportunities for people with Parkinson's, their loved ones and carers to take part in high quality dance activity and in doing so establishing new communities and friendships. This is all central to the work of People Dancing, which is the development organisation for community and participatory dance We aim to drive forward inclusion and excellence and we support a UK-wide network of members - dance artists and organisations - who make great dance happen in all its diversity. www.communitydance.org.uk In this proposed development of Project OK! Kate's ambition to expand and build upon the work she did in 2024 across Warwickshire, especially in Southam, seeks to include some of the community of dancers with Parkinson's that we have built through the Live Well programme. I am delighted to support this project as an important part of the legacy of the Live Well programme and the inclusion of the local Parkinson's community that dance. I am also pleased to lend my support to this work in my role as Head of Health & Wellbeing through Dance, which is about developing leadership, and advocacy in this field and convening people toward exploring innovative and current practices. Yaël Owen Deputy CEO People Dancing & Head of Health and Wellbeing Programmes

3.) "We really value working in partnership with Project OK in order to improve mental health through creative expression. We are excited about the potential for further collaboration this year and look forward to increasing the scale and reach of our collective impact"
Louise Goulding (Director **The Together Project**)

4.)

Lynda and Andy Eadon
Len's Light
Pen-Y-Gaer
Rhydlewis
Llandysul
Ceredigion
SA44 5SG

2nd March 2025

Letter of Support for Project UK

Len's Light was created by us following the death of our 22-year son to suicide in January 2022. The aim of Len's Light is to raise awareness of mental health issues and reduce the stigma attached to suicide, particularly in the young rural community.

With this in mind we feel that what Project UK is proposing would be an ideal forum for a group of Young Farmers to work together creating something which would open up conversations about this difficult topic.

With the potential of the resulting film being aired to other, similar groups of young people in the rural community. This will provide a platform for them to open up and talk about their feelings not only with their peer group up also to the older members of the community.

Regards

Lynda and Andy Eadon

5.) Hi Kate

Hope you are well _ I would like to add my words of support to your project
I think it is great that you have an inclusive and diverse approach – I am particularly impressed by the mental health and wellbeing support that is being offered. Forming community led creative steering groups to help design and plan together is an example of what community involvement should be about. There will be many benefits around social cohesion as well as increased exposure to high quality cultural activities. I fully support this project.

Kind regards,
Andy Crump MP

6.) The Romero Catholic Multi Academy Company was set up in 2015. It takes its name from Oscar Romero, a priest and bishop in El Salvador. This company has seven primary schools and one

secondary school. All of the schools joined the company in August 2015 and all are located within Coventry local authority.

Across the company, approximately a third of pupils are classed as disadvantaged, which is above the national figure. Just over half of all pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and around a third speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average and this is growing significantly with each cohort. Each school within the MAC suffers from a lack of cultural capital, this is a key area of development through an experience-based curriculum, allowing exposure to the wider world.

Romero are committed to providing outstanding Catholic education to 3,500 pupils and students, here in Northeast Coventry, as well as providing an environment and culture within which both pupils, students and staff can flourish as members of a faith community.

Across the company, there have been a significant number of mental health related issues, as a result we are a trauma informed MAC. We recognise the impact of a sense of worth, enjoyment and experience of the wider culture can have on an individual. There is a current need for use of creativity to support wellness, confidence especially those who are identified as the most vulnerable and disadvantaged.

The secondary, Cardinal Wiseman is a larger than average Catholic secondary school, with 1446 students (c214 in Sixth Form) taking students from across the northeast of Coventry, with an increasing number of EAL students who have newly arrived to the country, with 47% of the school being EAL. The school is in Henley Ward which ranks as the most deprived ward in Coventry. The IDSR confirms quintile 5 as the school location deprivation indicator.

As with many 'faith' schools, there is a naive assumption that pupils who attend have been through a selection process and are privileged, this is a dangerous assumption as it means the deprived who attend Catholic schools are marginalised even further, cut out of local state arts funding, and allows the disadvantaged and cultural capital gap in faith schools to widen. Many of our Catholic schools were established in the 19th Century to meet the needs of poor Catholic immigrants from Ireland and that mission remains strong today, with our Catholic schools continuing to receive the disadvantaged from the new immigrant populations from across the world.

Catholic schools at the heart are equipped to welcome the stranger, feed the poor and look after the desolate. Irony at its best as many of the attendees of Catholic schools, also fit into this category.

Vice Principal Claire Restell

7.) *Homing* was developed by Kate during the Creative Explorers Place Partnership project in Nuneaton and performed as part of the outdoor Art on the Streets Day (August 2024).

It is an inspirational piece, devised in collaboration with and performed by local young people, which captured the imagination of audiences in its beauty and simplicity – the dancers becoming pigeons wearing oversized jackets which became the wings of the birds, as they played out their intricate social interactions.

It has strong potential to be developed, to involve and engage many more participant performers, supporting and extending a programme of legacy work to further engage young people and residents living in the most deprived neighbourhoods in the borough.

Local people have expressed a need, as part of Creative Explorers evaluation, to be part of more creative activity to bring their neighbourhoods together, tackle isolation, the lack of opportunity to be creative, develop more healthy and active communities.

Kate has the experience and expertise to continue to develop the project with young people as collaborators, with her overriding passion, to empower people through movement.

Following Creative Explorers, Nuneaton and Bedworth want to build on their experiences and create work which continues to represent the unique cultural identity of their towns. *Homing* is a celebration of place, the quirkiness, belonging, heads bobbing in greeting and the desire for people to come together.

Jane Hytch (Ex CEO Imagineer)

8.) Arts Uplift are thrilled to be partnering with the Project Ok programme and our Ageing Well arts and crafts project in Southam. Our older participants over 65 years are delighted to be able to exhibit their artwork at Southam library alongside young people and create an intergenerational experience for them and the viewers. It will be great to reach the local community and raise our profile through the exhibition and will be empowering for our participants to have their work witnessed.

Jenny Davis (Director Arts Uplift)

9.) Warwickshire Young Carers seeks to provide partnership opportunities that support young carers with creative experiences that will build resilience in their mental health & wellness.

We are excited at the prospect of collaborating with Project OK to enable young carers to explore core art form dance which allows for expression, as do other cross art forms, to create a sense of freedom. This will equip them with tools to overcome the challenges that the duty and responsibility of caring places on them.

Implementing a co-led framework through a young carers creative steering group will enable a sense of leadership and achievement to develop confidence & self-esteem. This will broaden the landscape of personal interests and give access to attainable creative education and career pathways.

Working together with community organisations facilitates a change in the narrative of existing support frameworks. Bringing young carers together to experience different types of activity that wouldn't ordinarily be available to them fosters a sense of inclusion and strengthens social networks. This is vital to assist these young people to tackle the involuntary isolation caring often imposes.

A partnership with Project OK will grow and develop based on the needs of young carers which will shape and evolve project delivery into the future of young carers support.

Sally Barton-Bodley
Engagement Coordinator

"Caregivers attract caregivers and live in a community of love. They are energized by their caring, fulfilled, and they love life." - Gary Zukav, author

10.) Hi Kate,

We would be absolutely over the moon here at ALP Nuneaton to host you during your rehearsal period and performance. Our learners who all have special educational needs would greatly benefit

from the interactive experience you're offering. We believe it would suit them perfectly and provide an invaluable opportunity.

Having professional artists come in and being exposed to such high-level work is incredibly inspiring for our students. The wellness and mental health themes in your work are an excellent outlet for them whether they're watching or even taking part.

The opportunity to engage with live art is vital and helps foster creativity, connection and self-expression which we are passionate about offering our young people. We can't wait to have you with us and offer our students this enriching experience.

Good luck with your funding bid and we are looking forward to hearing from you soon.

Best Regards,

David McKenna Dance and Drama Teacher

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11.) We at Coventry Cathedral are so excited to be working alongside Kate and Project Ok for a week in Summer 2025. We are pleased to be offering space in our Cathedral to host, create and explore through art.

We are happy to contribute our relationships with a diverse and inclusive reach to explore physical/mental wellness for all. As *most/all? * the activities will be free at the point of access, we will hope to break barriers to accessing cultural activity.

We are also very excited to be able to host professional artists in our space, setting professional examples and offering inspiration. "

Ruth Lubrano Lavadera (she/her)

Events and Community Coordinator

Phone: 02476 521288

Email: Ruth.LubranoLavadera@coventry.anglican.org

Coventry Cathedral, 11 Priory Row, CV1 5EX