

## **Impact Report: Art Nest – Claire Feren, Executive Principal.**

### **Overview**

Art Nest provides invaluable support to some of our most vulnerable pupils, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), English as an Additional Language (EAL), and those eligible for Free School Meals (FSM). Through its unique integration of art as therapy, Art Nest has created a safe, creative environment that fosters personal growth, emotional well-being, and academic progress for these pupils. This report outlines the positive impact of Art Nest on these pupils, highlighting its contribution to safeguarding, social interaction, mental health, creativity, and artistic achievement.

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### **1. Building Positive, Trusted Relationships**

At the heart of Art Nest is the ability to nurture trusted relationships between pupils and staff. Vulnerable pupils often find it challenging to build connections, especially in a traditional academic setting. Art therapy provides a non-verbal, emotionally supportive outlet that helps build trust through creative expression. The therapeutic space offers children a judgment-free environment where they feel seen and heard, allowing them to gradually open up.

- **Impact on Safeguarding:** These relationships are critical for safeguarding. Vulnerable pupils are more likely to communicate their concerns when they have established trust with adults in the school. By creating a safe emotional outlet, Art Nest staff increase the ability to identify early warning signs of emotional distress, anxiety, or other issues that may require intervention. This deep connection enables more timely and effective safeguarding responses, ensuring that our school remains a safe space for all.

### **2. Supporting Social Interaction and Emotional Coaching**

Many of our pupils with SEND, EAL, and FSM backgrounds struggle with social interaction, finding it difficult to relate to peers or navigate emotional experiences. Art Nest facilitates a setting where these pupils can participate in small group sessions, promoting positive social interaction through collaboration on creative projects.

- **Emotional Coaching:** By combining art with emotional coaching, pupils learn to understand and express their emotions constructively. This support helps pupils with emotional regulation, enhancing their ability to cope with stress, anxiety, and other mental health challenges. The art sessions provide a safe space to explore their feelings, supported by empathetic adults who offer guidance.
- **Social Development:** Vulnerable pupils, who might typically shy away from group settings, experience increased confidence as they work alongside peers in a shared creative process. Art Nest encourages teamwork, communication, and problem-solving, helping pupils build social skills in a supportive environment. As their confidence grows, many of these pupils show improvements in their classroom interactions and relationships outside of school.

### **3. Enhancing Mental Health and Well-being**

The mental health benefits of Art Nest cannot be overstated. Many of our vulnerable pupils face significant emotional and psychological challenges, including trauma, anxiety, and isolation. Art therapy offers a powerful tool for self-expression, giving pupils a way to process their emotions in a positive, non-threatening manner.

- **Stress Relief and Coping Mechanisms:** By creating art, pupils experience a form of catharsis, reducing stress and anxiety levels. For pupils with SEND, art therapy provides an alternative method of communication, allowing them to express themselves without the pressure of language. For EAL students, art helps bridge cultural and linguistic gaps, offering a universal language through which they can express their feelings and share their stories.
- **Improving Overall Well-being:** Pupils who participate in Art Nest often display improved emotional resilience and self-esteem. The act of creating something beautiful and meaningful helps them feel accomplished and valued, promoting a sense of self-worth that carries over into their broader school experience.

#### **4. High-Quality Artistic Outcomes with Purpose**

Art Nest is not only therapeutic; it also promotes high artistic standards. The work produced by pupils is of exceptional quality and holds real value and purpose. This gives pupils a sense of pride in their accomplishments, which further bolsters their self-esteem.

- **Real-World Value:** The artworks created in Art Nest often reflect personal or community narratives, lending them an authentic sense of purpose. Whether through visual storytelling or abstract expression, pupils are able to communicate complex emotions and ideas, demonstrating the true power of art as a medium for change and connection.
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#### **5. Privilege and Envy of Art Nest**

Art Nest is a highly valued resource within the school and the wider community. Many visitors to the school express envy at the comprehensive and impactful nature of this provision. We are incredibly privileged to offer this creative and therapeutic space to our families, many of whom would not otherwise have access to such services. Art Nest stands as a beacon of hope and progress, showing what can be achieved when education and therapy are combined in a thoughtful, nurturing way.

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#### **Conclusion**

The impact of Art Nest on our most vulnerable pupils cannot be overstated. Through fostering trusted relationships, supporting social interaction, promoting mental health, and enabling high-quality artistic expression, Art Nest is transforming lives. The provision helps create a school environment where every pupil feels safe, valued, and capable of success. We are immensely proud and grateful to offer this therapeutic resource, which is not only a crucial part of our school's safeguarding and support systems but also a key contributor to the mental, emotional, and social development of our pupils. Art Nest continues to be a source of inspiration and pride for our school and community.