



SOUTH CRAVEN SCHOOL: A WORLD OF OPPORTUNITY

When you're young, the world is full of possibilities. But possibilities are simply pipedreams without options, chances and moments – points of opportunity that turn possibilities into something real. At South Craven School, four years of Burberry Inspire have represented opportunity after opportunity and a means to open up new worlds and ideas to their young people. Moreover, it's created the opportunity for the students to show what kind of people they are.

SOUTH CRAVEN SCHOOL PARTNER ALLOCATION:

2019 / YEAR ONE:
LEEDS PLAYHOUSE

2020 / YEAR TWO:
LEEDS YOUNG FILM

2021 / YEAR THREE:
THE HEPWORTH WAKEFIELD

2022 / YEAR FOUR:
NORTHERN BALLET





This isn't something that routinely happens. "They're thirteen. You never quite know what's going to come out of their mouths," laughs Karen Higson, who works in teacher development and ITT support at South Craven School. She has enjoyed watching the students take every opportunity presented to them with enthusiasm, excitement and a real sense of gratitude. In particular, during the second year of the programme and their time with Leeds Young Film, Karen recalls watching the students throw themselves into their tasks in a way that she'd never seen before. "I felt as proud of the students as I do of my own children," she admits. "Because they were so grown up. You could've had a group of adults doing what they were doing, and you wouldn't have got any better result. And the films were brilliant too – the students were so proud of themselves."

Karen admits that, like all schools, South Craven has its fair share of challenges. "As a school, we are quite fortunate, however, a lot of our children come from low-income families," so being able to provide the chance to go out on location for filming, as well as other trips and visits with Burberry Inspire arts partners, was a huge benefit of the programme. As Karen explains, the students inherently knew that this was special. "They were polite, they were respectful. I think it's because they've not had this opportunity before. So, they were like 'wow. we've got to make the most of this!'. This was most apparent when the staff at Leeds Grand Theatre singled the students out for their excellent behaviour and engagement with a performance by Northern Ballet. "They were mesmerised and it's since brought out a lot of thinking."

It's in planting these new ideas that the value of Burberry Inspire will live far beyond the four years of the programme. It has widened the students potential view of the future significantly beyond what they – and possibly their parents too – might have previously considered. Taking the students to the heritage railway for filming was, of course, an incredibly

creatively fulfilling endeavour, that introduced them to the intricate mechanics of filmmaking. However, it was not just about what it takes to bring a film to life, but who. "They did everything. All the staging, all the costumes, they were all actors in it, and they all took turns in doing different things," recalls Karen. "And the day after, they did all the editing themselves. They did everything, right from planning the story to editing it to showing it to a year group of their friends." In a school the size of South Craven, with nearly two thousand pupils, taking a group off-timetable every week to achieve this is no mean feat. "I'm thinking now, how did we manage it? Every Thursday!" laughs Karen. "But I'm so glad we did. I'm so glad I fought for it and shed the blood sweat and tears organising these trips."

Of course, the arrival of Covid 19 meant that all field trips went on hold. However, South Craven's art partner at the time, The Hepworth Gallery, simply postponed the students' visits. In the interim, they sent out creative packs of clay, pastels, sketchbooks and focused art tasks to every student in Key Stage 3. "It was like 'wow this is for us. Somebody's done this for us!'" remembers Karen. "Then of course we went back into lockdown and The Hepworth were still sending Zoom links for the kids to do at home. It's that investment, for a lot of them it's like somebody's actually taking an interest." They've since been able to revisit those on-site creative workshops at The Hepworth gallery, again a gargantuan task within such a large school. "We took nearly 400 students from Years 7, 8 and 9 over four days to The Hepworth Gallery to do the creative workshops that we should've done last year." Unlike theatre trips and the filming days, going to The Hepworth brought them into direct contact with the practitioners, outside of the school setting. "They're used to working with adults in school, but a lot of them aren't used to working with adults outside of school, other than their own family." Even so, they approached this new experience confidently, impressing South Craven staff and practitioners at the gallery alike.



“ WE WERE ACTUALLY ABLE TO GO OUT AND DO SOME FILMING AT OUR LOCAL KEIGHLEY & WORTH VALLEY RAILWAY, IT'S A HERITAGE RAILWAY AND THE KIDS JUST GOT SO MUCH OUT OF THAT. THE STUDENTS THAT TOOK PART ARE NOW IN YEAR 11 AND THEY ARE STILL TALKING ABOUT IT. ”

They say that 'once you see, you can't unsee' and this is certainly the case for South Craven School. Karen reports that arts subjects at GCSE have seen a boost over the last couple of years from the presence of Burberry Inspire and when talking to students, she has a sense that they are definitely looking at creative careers more seriously. "The students that have taken part have really grown in confidence. I think being able to share that experience with children who, quite frankly, school is their safe place, their routine, and who don't have that opportunity, it's just wonderful. And if they never go to the theatre again, at least they've had that experience in school. At least we've been able to provide that."



BURBERRY INSPIRE

The same can be said from the educator's point of view. For Karen, it's been a privilege to see the individual responses to the programme, from teamwork to confidence and resilience. "We talk about 'enquiry, courage and growth' throughout all of the school, and they were definitely three things that came out," she says. Parents agree. "I've had lots of lovely comments from parents when we've taken them anywhere – 'thank you for doing this, what a lovely opportunity' or 'they really enjoyed themselves, thank you' – and that is just wonderful," says Karen. "But the fact that the students have gone home and talked about it! One parent said, 'she's not stopped talking about it from the moment she got in the car to the moment she went to bed!' and that's just job done."

Right now, Karen, the teachers, practitioners and students are all looking forward to their final 'Cultural Runway' show at the end of the school year, which will also mark the end of four years of Burberry Inspire. For South Craven School, it's been the most extraordinary experience in an extraordinary time "and it probably couldn't have come at a better time," says Karen. "It's been hard work, it's been a learning curve, we learnt a heck of a lot. And it's made us stronger."



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