



BRADFORD DIGITAL CREATIVES

Impact Report 2023-2026





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Bradford Digital Creatives (BDC) was a two-year pilot project designed to expand cultural participation, develop creative skills, and build future pathways into the creative industries for young people in Bradford. It was a collaborative project delivered by Born in Bradford and the National Science and Media Museum as part of the Bradford 2025 UK City of Culture programme. It was funded and supported by Bradford 2025, Born in Bradford, Bradford Council and Arts Council England.

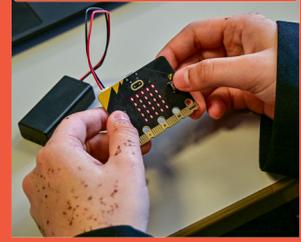
Targeted at six secondary schools with historically low levels of arts engagement, BDC empowered over 3,000 young people to explore their identities, experiences and aspirations through emerging digital artforms such as 360° video, VR, AI, gaming, coding, and audio storytelling. The project also supported teachers in building digital confidence and contributed to the internationally significant Age of Wonder study – the world’s largest longitudinal research programme into adolescent health and wellbeing.

Delivered between 2023 and 2026, BDC provided two complementary strands of activity:

- Artistic Events and Experiences, which introduced whole year groups to immersive, high-impact sessions with professional artists.
- Creative Workshops, offering smaller-scale, hands-on sessions focused on skills development and co-creation.

Students’ creative outputs were showcased publicly in Reel BFD: Digital Arts, Bradford Stories at the National Science and Media Museum, forming part of the official Bradford 2025 UK City of Culture programme.

The data in the following report is based on delivery up to September 2025. A further 27 workshops were held in four additional schools from January to March 2026 inclusive, but were not part of the research study.



Key Outcomes for Young People:

- **Increased engagement:** 52.8% of workshop participants reported a greater interest in digital arts (vs 28% of non-participants). Out of the students who indicated that they took part in a workshop, 36% said that they would be likely to look for digital arts activities to attend in the future, compared to 19% of students who indicated that they didn't take part in a workshop.
- **Raised aspirations:** Participants were more likely to consider creative careers and pursue further opportunities.
- **Skills and confidence:** Nearly 70% gained knowledge and over 65% developed new creative skills.

Key outcomes for Educators:

- 90.3% of school staff found the programme valuable for students; 63.3% reported personal benefit.
- Teachers gained knowledge and slightly improved confidence in delivering digital arts.
- Staff praised the in-school delivery model and direct artist involvement.

STRATEGIC LEARNING AND LEGACY

Bradford Digital Creatives has demonstrated that high-quality digital arts engagement can be both **inclusive and impactful**, particularly for underrepresented young people. Its success lies in:

- **Accessible, in-school delivery** that breaks down barriers to cultural participation.
- **Collaborative practice** between professional artists, schools, and communities.
- **Alignment with Arts Council priorities** by delivering creative skills, raising aspirations, and strengthening Bradford's cultural ecosystem.

Looking ahead, there is clear potential to build on this foundation:

- Embedding digital arts into the school curriculum would ensure lasting impact.
- Expanding CPD for teachers would deepen digital confidence and embed sustainable practice.
- Strengthening links between schools, industry and higher education could help young people access creative career pathways.

- Taking public showcases into community spaces would further amplify engagement, particularly among families.

BDC offers a scalable, place-based model for cultural learning and participation that supports the long-term growth of Bradford's creative economy - placing young people at the heart of its future.



Watch the video showcasing the impact of the project on YouTube

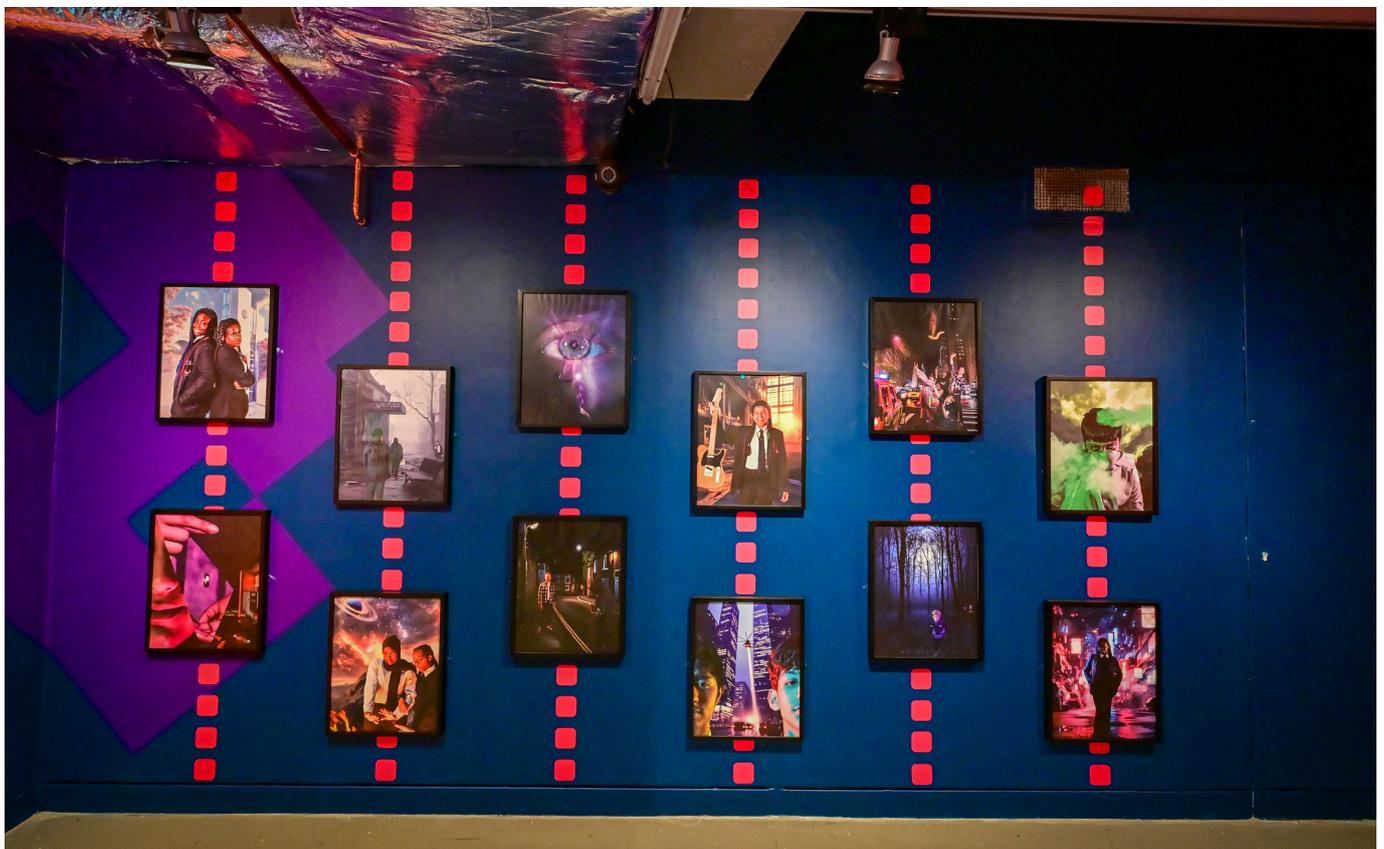
STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

How Bradford Digital Creatives Aligns with Let's Create

- **Creative People**

Bradford Digital Creatives gave young people meaningful opportunities to engage with high-quality creative experiences. Designed to empower students as makers, not just audiences, the programme placed creative agency in their hands. Over two years, participants worked alongside professional digital artists to

explore cutting-edge artforms - from VR and 360° filmmaking to AI and interactive storytelling. These experiences developed technical skills, artistic confidence and self-expression, particularly among students from communities with historically limited access to cultural activity. The programme's evaluation confirmed increased interest in digital



creativity and a measurable rise in aspirations to pursue further opportunities or careers in the creative industries. This directly supports Let's Create's aim to ensure that more people, particularly children and young people, have the opportunity to develop and express their creativity throughout their lives.

- **Cultural Communities**

Delivered through six secondary schools across Bradford, the project was embedded in the city's educational and cultural infrastructure. Schools were selected using demographic and engagement data to ensure meaningful inclusion and equity, particularly for communities underrepresented in the arts. The in-school model removed barriers to participation, while professional artists worked collaboratively with teachers and students, building trusted relationships and fostering long-term value. Public exhibition of student work - most notably the Reel BFD: Digital Arts, Bradford Stories exhibition - brought families, educators and wider communities together to celebrate local voices and cultural identity.

These place-based partnerships supported the development of stronger, more culturally confident communities, aligned with Let's Create's ambition to support communities in shaping and sharing their own cultural lives.

- **A Creative and Cultural Country**

Bradford Digital Creatives contributed to national sector development by demonstrating a scalable model for inclusive digital arts engagement. The programme drew on a diverse cohort of national and international digital artists, whose practices and perspectives enriched the learning environment for students and educators alike. Its inclusion in the Bradford 2025 UK City of Culture programme placed young people's creativity on a national stage, while its links to the Age of Wonder study positioned it within a global research context. By innovating across practice, pedagogy and participation, the project exemplified the role of creativity in shaping a more diverse, future-facing cultural sector - one that reflects the full breadth of England's talent and potential.

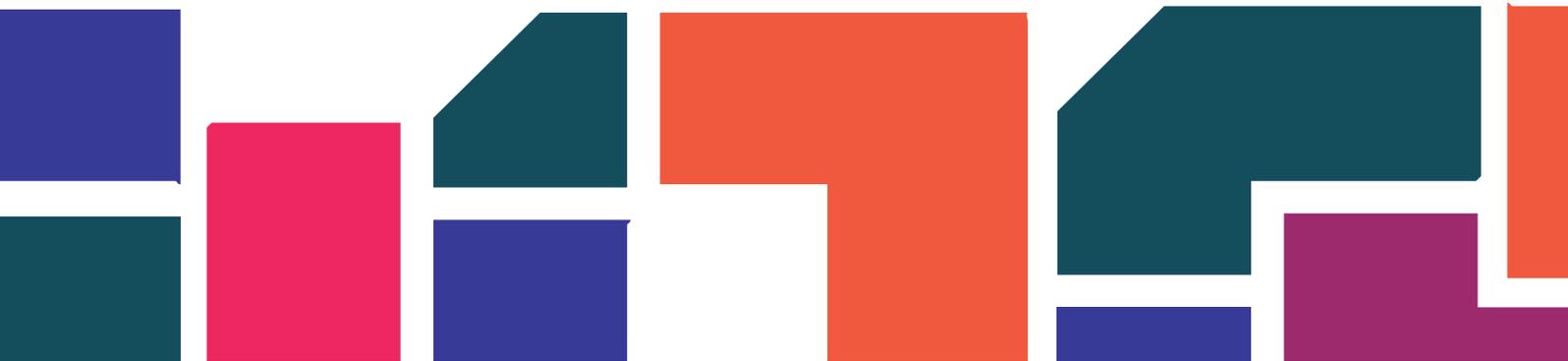
PROJECT OVERVIEW

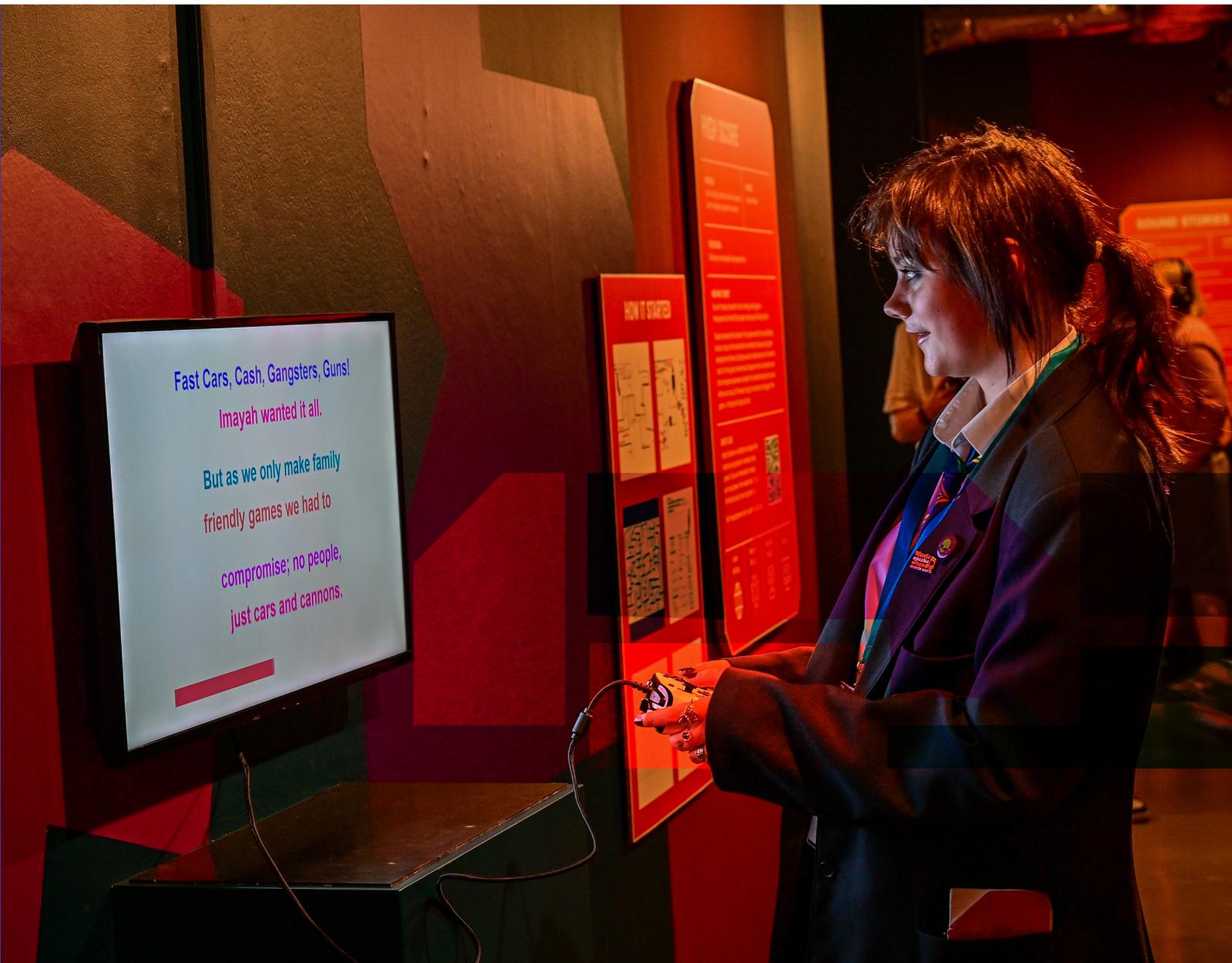
Bradford is the UK's youngest city and the fifth largest metropolitan district in England, with a population of over 560,000. It is also one of the most diverse, with over 32% of residents identifying as Asian or Asian British, primarily of Pakistani heritage. Despite its cultural richness, Bradford faces deep-rooted inequalities. A third of its population lives in areas ranked among the most deprived in England, and access to cultural opportunities remains unequal across the district.

In this context, BDC was developed to provide targeted, high-quality creative experiences to young people who are typically underrepresented in the arts or who may face barriers participating in arts and culture. The project recruited six secondary schools across Bradford - one from each key district - using demographic and Department for Education data to ensure a representative

cohort. Schools were chosen based on low levels of existing cultural engagement and socio-economic need, with particular attention to the proportion of students eligible for Free School Meals and those with Special Educational Needs.

Within schools, student selection combined staff nomination and self-selection, guided by workshop themes and inclusive access principles. Schools like Carlton Keighley actively ensured a spread of opportunities across students, rather than defaulting to the most academically able. Others, like Belle Vue Girls' Academy and Carlton Bolling, prioritised students who would benefit from confidence-building and exposure to new creative experiences. SEN students were intentionally included in tailored workshops, where content was adapted to be fully accessible and engaging.





BDC's artist recruitment was equally intentional. The programme team worked with Bradford 2025 and the National Science and Media Museum to select digital artforms that reflected both global innovation and local relevance. Artists were chosen not just for their expertise but for their experience and ability to connect with young people. Diversity and representation were key selection criteria, ensuring that students encountered relatable role models from across disciplines and backgrounds.

Artists included well-established names such as Marshmallow Laser Feast, Studio Playfool, and CosMos Planetarium, alongside regional practitioners like Tanya



Vital, Arfaan Amini, and Impact Gamers. Their workshops introduced students to artforms like AI-based gaming, VR cinema, 360° storytelling and coding - artforms that resonate with young people's digital lives but are rarely taught in schools.

Delivery was split into two strands: large-scale Artistic Events and Experiences (e.g. VR assemblies, interactive tech demonstrations), and smaller-scale Creative Workshops focused on co-creation and skills development. This dual model allowed for both broad engagement and deep artistic development. Each session was

outcome-driven, giving students a sense of achievement and ownership over their work, as well as something to take home or display at the end of it.

By placing high-quality, artist-led digital arts experiences directly into schools, Bradford Digital Creatives addressed structural inequalities in access to culture. In doing so, it advanced Arts Council England's goals by nurturing Creative People, building Cultural Communities, and contributing to a Creative and Cultural Country through innovative, inclusive and place-based practice.



INCLUSIVITY AND RELEVANCE

Inclusivity was a core principle of Bradford Digital Creatives, shaping both the design and delivery of the programme. The project actively sought to reach young people from underrepresented communities, including those facing barriers to cultural access due to socio-economic factors, ethnicity, special educational needs, or limited prior engagement with the arts.

All six participating schools were chosen for their diverse student populations and lower levels of cultural participation. Within schools, the recruitment process was deliberately flexible, allowing staff to nominate students who might not usually be selected for enrichment activities.

The demographics of those attending the workshops were:

- **47%** of all attendees were female. This varied by school - one school was an all-girls school, and at Bradford AP Academy a high proportion of students are male.
- Around half of students (**53%**) were from an Asian or Asian British background, **32%** from a White background and **12%** from other ethnic backgrounds.
- A proportion of the student cohort (15%) were identified as having Special Educational Needs (SEN), including those with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), a formal statement, or receiving SEN support.
- **34%** were eligible for Free School Meals.
- **34%** were identified as having English as an Additional Language.



Many workshops were specifically tailored to engage students who lacked confidence, had limited access to creative experiences, or were seeking a new way to connect with learning. For example, at Carlton Bolling, the team worked closely with staff to design bespoke sessions for Special Educational Needs (SEN) students. These included a VR Cinema experience that transported students beneath the ocean and into space - many for the first time - and a hands-on workshop exploring the science of sound through Oobleck and musical instruments. Content was adapted, group sizes were kept small, and artists ensured every student could fully participate. These moments of joy and wonder built confidence and affirmed that digital creativity is for everyone.

Artists across the programme brought a range of lived experiences and working styles that reflected the diversity of Bradford's communities. Workshops emphasised presence, play and experimentation over perfection, allowing students to express themselves freely. One artist described the "surprise and delight" when students saw their sounds or stories visualised, calling these moments "where real learning and confidence begins."

Inclusivity extended beyond schools into the wider community. The ReelBFD public programme at the National Science and Media Museum (July-Sept 2025) hosted 25 free, hands-on workshops for all ages and abilities. Spanning sound design, immersive theatre, and coding, the events welcomed 1,587 participants and offered a barrier-free invitation into creative technology and storytelling.

By centring accessibility and representation, Bradford Digital Creatives ensured that every young person - regardless of background or ability - could see themselves as a creative contributor to Bradford's future.



INNOVATION AND COLLABORATION

Bradford Digital Creatives was built on a foundation of creative risk-taking, cross-sector partnership, and a commitment to delivering high-quality, future-facing experiences for young people. At its core, the project asked: what happens when digital artists, educators, scientists and cultural organisations come together to reimagine how young people experience creativity?

The result was a pioneering programme that not only delivered artistic excellence but also positioned Bradford as a city of creative and technological ambition.

From the outset, the project team - comprising Born in Bradford, the National Science and Media Museum, Bradford 2025, Bradford Council and Bradford Cultural Education Partnership - worked collaboratively to shape a programme that was both locally grounded and globally informed. Workshops with internal stakeholders and Creative Technologists from Bradford 2025 ensured the selection of digital artforms reflected current trends at international cultural festivals, technology events, and within the wider creative industries. This approach led to a diverse and innovative mix of workshops spanning projection mapping, AI, 360° video, VR, sound art and interactive storytelling.

Collaboration was embedded at every level, from the artist-school relationship to institutional partnerships. Artists co-designed sessions with schools to meet students' interests and needs, while tailored delivery plans ensured relevance and feasibility across different educational settings. The ability to flex around each school's context ensured high engagement and helped embed digital creativity as something accessible and achievable for all.

A key strength of the programme was the direct collaboration between students and professional artists. These relationships fostered trust, creativity and shared ownership. At Carlton Bolling, for example, students worked side-by-side with world-leading VR creators Anagram to design their own escape rooms - experiences that were entirely student-led and professionally supported. These sessions offered rare insights into the creative industries and showed students that their ideas could lead to real-world creative outputs.

Standout moments also included the projection mapping residency at Carlton Bolling School. Guided by digital artists, students transformed their school building into a luminous, animated artwork. The project culminated in a community Iftar and





evening showcase that brought families, educators and neighbours together in a celebration of shared creativity and cultural pride.

Another groundbreaking moment came when students' digital work was exhibited at Jodrell Bank, the world-famous centre for astronomy. This marked the first time the scientific institution had hosted a digital arts showcase created by young people. For students, it was a powerful reminder that creativity knows no bounds - connecting their local stories to global platforms. It also highlighted the potential for innovative partnerships across art, science and education.

The ambition of Bradford Digital Creatives extended into its final phase with Reel BFD:

Digital Arts, Bradford Stories - a large-scale exhibition at the National Science and Media Museum. The exhibition included a range of the students' artwork and the creative journey behind them including storyboards and initial drafts. A dome showcased students' 360 degree videos, and visitors were able to play the students' video games.

Developed in collaboration with the Museum's Public Programmes team, the exhibition was accompanied by a public and schools engagement programme designed to be open, playful and welcoming. Over six themed weeks, 1,587 people of all ages and backgrounds participated in 25 hands-on digital arts sessions led by BDC artists, demystifying creative technology and making it accessible to new audiences.



OUTCOMES AND IMPACT

The project evaluation was split into the feasibility evaluation, focusing on how able the project was able to be implemented within the schools, and the project evaluation, focusing on the impact of the project on the staff and students who took part.

6a. Feasibility

The research team collected feasibility information from teachers within the school after each engagement through workshop data and a questionnaire.

- 97% of workshops ran as planned, with staff reporting having all the tech, tools and resources needed for the session to run effectively.
- The majority of staff reported student's engagement in the sessions to be good-to-very good (88%).
- 97% of staff reported enjoying the session themselves, and reported the sessions met their expectations. 96% of respondents reported that the session expanded their knowledge of digital arts activities.

6b. Project evaluation:

The project evaluation consisted of surveys and focus groups with both Year 9 students and staff at each of the six participating schools.

- **Creative development: Student skills and aspirations**

The impact on students' skills was clear.

From creating soundscapes and editing animations to filming with 360° cameras and designing video games, students across the district developed both technical and creative capabilities. At Appleton Academy, students recorded audio outdoors and transformed it into "otherworldly compositions." At Dixons Allerton, immersive 360° filming and stop-motion workshops helped students gain hands-on experience with tools they had never encountered before. One student shared, "I've always had an interest in filmmaking and directing, but I never really got the chance to act on it before... I even went home and started researching more about it."

The programme significantly boosted students' confidence and aspirations. A Belle Vue Girls' Academy student reflected, "It gave me a bit of a boost - like, I can do this if this person can do it too." At Carlton Keighley, a student said, "We're definitely more confident and more open to new things." The opportunity to showcase their work publicly at the National Science and Media Museum was a defining moment. "I felt proud of myself," said one student, while another added, "It shows that people born in Bradford aren't any different from people born in other cities...we're just as capable as anyone else."



LEEDS YOUNG FILM
VR CINEMA

The

Apple
VR



Artists' personal stories also made a lasting impression. One student at Carlton Bolling noted, "You may not do good in your GCSEs, but you can still become something. Put your head down and focus."

Quantitative evaluation data reinforces this feedback:

- **52.8%** of workshop participants reported a greater interest in digital arts, compared to **28%** of non-participants.
- **36%** of participants said they were likely to look for digital arts activities in future, versus **19%** of non-participants.
- Nearly **70%** reported increased knowledge of digital arts, and over **65%** said they had developed new creative skills.
- Students were also more likely to consider careers in digital arts and pursue further opportunities.

The workshops helped students connect creativity to career pathways. At Appleton, one student said, "We can sort of see how the digital and creative world is developing - so there are lots of new opportunities opening up." At Belle Vue Girls' Academy, a student aspiring to be an engineer said, "The coding really helped me a lot, especially the electrical stuff. I've never done that before."

The project has already sparked life-changing opportunities for young people:

- At Carlton Keighley, a Year 9 student transformed an idea born in a BDC workshop into Server Storm, a game concept that earned him a place as a finalist in the BAFTA Young Game Designers Awards.
- At Appleton Academy, a student discovered her natural talent for acting during a short film workshop with Tanya Vital—an experience so impactful it inspired her to change her GCSE options to pursue Drama, after seeing her performance celebrated on the big screen.
- And during a coding workshop with Junction Arts at Belle Vue Girls' Academy, another student, aspiring





to be an engineer, gained hands-on electrical and coding skills that connected directly to her future ambitions, giving her the confidence to pursue her passion.

- **Community engagement: Teacher involvement and school feedback**

Bradford Digital Creatives was a shared learning journey for students and educators. School staff played an essential role in shaping and sustaining the programme - and benefited in turn through professional development and access to new creative technologies. Staff across all schools consistently reported high levels of student engagement and enthusiasm.

Teachers also gained digital confidence. At Appleton Academy, a music teacher left a Soundscapes session with new ideas to bring into the classroom. Staff from multiple schools highlighted their own learning - particularly around tools like stop-motion, editing software, and VR. A teacher at Dixons Allerton said, "I learned a lot about stop motion animation... and how much time and patience it takes."

Feedback repeatedly emphasised the value of hearing artists' stories. These real-world insights helped students relate to creative careers and opened their minds to possibilities they hadn't previously considered. A staff member from Carlton



PRESS A BUTTON TO LISTEN
TO THE SOUND STORIES

Daily Life

Safety

What Makes Me Happy

DON'T STARTED

Bolling summarised the wider benefit: “It’s given them opportunities they otherwise wouldn’t have.”

Educators also reported a clear impact on student wellbeing, confidence and self-esteem - particularly among those who didn’t typically see themselves as high achievers. At Bradford AP Academy, staff shared, “Our kids tend to come here and they’ve never been told that they’re good at anything... for them to be successful and achieve something was really good.” Another added, “They were just so proud of it, which makes us proud that we can help them achieve something.”

Students and staff alike benefited from access to creative tools, resources and technologies they would not otherwise encounter. Staff at Dixons Allerton reflected, “I think that was the best outcome - the equipment, the software, and the skills they picked up,” also praising that students were shown how to use freely available tools beyond the classroom.

- **Sector growth: Artist development and organisational learning**

Bradford Digital Creatives was not only transformative for students and schools - it also offered meaningful opportunities for the artists involved, while shaping future practice across the sector. Artists were selected for their ability to work with young people as much as their creative excellence. Many described the experience as deeply fulfilling, and a powerful

reminder of the importance of accessible, inclusive creative education.

- o For sound artist Caro C, the project was about more than teaching skills: “They have so much of value to say... That sense of agency and belonging is invaluable.”
- o Stop-motion filmmaker Arfaan Amini described the programme’s long-term value: “By learning new skills we are giving the students a better chance of finding their ‘thing’... and hopefully allows them to follow their interest into a career.”
- o For Adam Syrop of Impact Gamers, BDC was an opportunity to work beyond his usual base and reach new schools across the district. “Helping them create something they genuinely want to make is the best part,” he said. “Those moments of shared laughter and pride are where real learning happens.”
- o Creative producer Tanya Vital highlighted the programme’s role in amplifying diverse stories: “We need stories from other walks of life and perspectives... they come alive when you just give them a smartphone or tablet and let them go.”
- o Zach Walker of Make Amplify reflected on the programme’s ethos: “If you give them an opportunity where it’s impossible to fail... it’ll just be amazing. It’s not about being perfect. It’s about being present.”

For many artists, the workshops were moments of shared discovery. As Adam Syrop put it: “Every time a student creates



STEAM

days

a game, I see ideas I'd never have thought of myself. Those fresh perspectives are what keep this work exciting and vital."

At an organisational level, the programme fostered meaningful collaboration between the National Science and Media Museum, Born in Bradford, Bradford Council and Bradford 2025. The experience helped shape best practice in digital engagement, co-creation, and cross-sector delivery - learnings that will inform future projects and contribute to wider sector growth. The

project was also exhibited/presented at the following events to share our learnings with the wider sector:

- Connected Audience Conference 2025, Berlin (May 2025)
- Society for Social Medicine and Population Health Annual Scientific Meeting, Bradford (Sept 2025)
- MuseumNext Creative Museums Summit, virtual/global (October 2025)





LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Reflections and lessons learnt

Delivering BDC across six diverse schools required a responsive and relationship-led approach. One of the most important lessons was the need for **flexibility and sensitivity to school contexts**. Coordinating with each school's existing timetable, events calendar and staffing pressures was a challenge - particularly during busy periods such as exam seasons, Ofsted inspections, and the beginning and end of terms. Early engagement and consultation with school staff helped the project team adapt delivery schedules and research activities to minimise disruption. Communication methods were adjusted accordingly, with a shift towards phone calls and in-person meetings where email responses lagged.

Having a single named contact within each school emerged as critical to success. These individuals provided consistency, helped navigate internal systems, and championed the project within their settings.

The importance of accessibility and relatability in workshop delivery was another key insight. Artforms that used intuitive, entry-level tools - and were led by local, relatable artists - generated higher levels of student engagement and satisfaction. In contrast, workshops involving more complex technology, such as VR and 360° film, faced challenges. Technical issues occasionally interrupted the flow of sessions, limiting students' hands-on time. Feedback also revealed that without simpler entry points, some students struggled to engage meaningfully with these more advanced formats.

Showcasing student work emerged as a powerful tool for building confidence and ownership. While the Reel BFD: Digital Arts, Bradford Stories exhibition at the National Science and Media





should incorporate more structured, in-school sharing moments, allowing students to reflect, present, and gain recognition from peers and staff alike.

Longevity of the Project

BDC has shown clear potential for long-term impact. Students not only gained skills and confidence, but also developed sustained interest in creative technologies and career pathways. Schools reported that the project exposed students - and staff - to tools and opportunities they

otherwise would not have encountered. The involvement of artists who use accessible and free tools further supports ongoing creative exploration beyond the life of the project. Many students reported continuing to explore their ideas at home, while teachers began integrating techniques into their own departments. This suggests a clear opportunity for BDC to develop as a long-term, embedded programme within school settings, with potential links to curriculum and extracurricular enrichment.

Moving forward, future versions of Bradford Digital Creatives should:

- **Embed more structured opportunities for student celebration and peer-to-peer sharing**, particularly within school environments.
- **Prioritise accessibility in artform selection**, favouring tools that are intuitive, low-cost, and easily continued beyond the workshop.
- **Maintain flexibility in delivery**, but build in longer lead times to allow for more strategic planning and integration with school calendars.
- **Support teachers through light-touch CPD and exposure to creative technologies**, enabling them to act as advocates and facilitators of ongoing digital arts activity.
- **Refine complex sessions like VR and 360° film**, developing clear, hands-on entry points to improve technical accessibility and student engagement.

The lessons learnt here can shape not only future phases of BDC, but also inform broader strategies for engaging young people in high-quality, future-facing cultural experiences.

COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The communications campaign for BDC raised awareness of the project across Bradford and beyond, engaging local audiences, cultural stakeholders, and young people. By combining press coverage, digital promotion, school-led communication, and targeted outreach, the project has achieved a broad and meaningful reach.

Extensive local and regional coverage:

- Featured in Telegraph & Argus, Keighley News, Yorkshire Post (50,000+ views), Yorkshire Evening Post, In Your Area, and Living North.
- Broadcast coverage included BBC Radio Leeds and BCB Radio, ensuring local voices and project stories reached a wide audience.
- Bradford 2025's digital team filmed interviews with students and artists, amplifying the project across partner channels.

Strong partner engagement:

- Project updates shared across partner websites, including NSMM, Bradford 2025, Born in Bradford, and Bradford Council.
- Inclusion in multiple newsletters: NSMM (to 60,000+ subscribers), Age of Wonder schools and internal newsletters, Bradford Cultural Voice Forum, Bradford Schools Online, and Council bulletins.

Youth and school involvement:

- Schools actively promoted the project through their newsletters and social media, e.g. Carlton Bolling, Carlton Keighley, and Belle Vue Girls' Academy.
- Student-led input shaped the branding of the showcase, with the title "ReelBFD" chosen during a naming workshop led by a local facilitator.
- Young participants featured in media coverage and in project content, including blogs, videos, and the launch of ReelBFD: Digital Arts, Bradford Stories.

Targeted campaign for ReelBFD:

- Coordinated promotional push including press releases, social media toolkits for partners and schools, listings on cultural platforms, and city-wide advertising (Council digital screens, City Park Big Screen, Meta, YouTube, and VisitBradford).
- Stakeholder event covered by BBC Look North, Telegraph & Argus, and BCB Radio, with strong partner amplification.
- Flyers and digital advertising specifically targeted communities around participating schools to reach families and young people who may not typically engage with digital arts (translated to Urdu for some schools).

Content creation and legacy:

- Launch of a dedicated webpage on NSMM and Bradford 2025 sites, supported by branded assets and Communications Packs for schools, artists, and media.
 - Production of blogs, artist interviews, and video content capturing the breadth of the project and its impact – blog updated at least monthly with new content.
- Development of a data visualisation infographic with Born in Bradford to communicate project reach and impact in an accessible way.





ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

The project team recognised the importance of minimising the project's environmental impact and embedding sustainable practices across the programme wherever possible.

Throughout delivery, the team made conscious choices to reduce waste and source materials sustainably. For example, printed participation stickers were produced using biodegradable materials, and other workshop materials were either reused from existing stock or selected for their low environmental impact. This approach ensured that creative activity did not come at the cost of environmental responsibility.

Travel logistics were carefully considered across the project. Staff travel to schools and events was coordinated to minimise trips and encourage car-sharing, while participating artists were supported to use public transport wherever feasible. These efforts helped to reduce the project's carbon footprint.

The digital focus of the programme significantly reduced the need for physical resources. Students created work using audio, video, coding, and immersive technologies - artforms that are inherently low-waste and do not rely on traditional materials such as paints, canvases, or paper. Equipment such as laptops, VR headsets, and sound equipment was used across multiple schools and sessions, maximising the lifespan and efficiency of resources. The use of free, digital tools also encouraged long-term, sustainable engagement without requiring students to purchase specialist equipment.



NEXT STEPS

Bradford Digital Creatives has demonstrated the transformative potential of placing digital creativity at the heart of cultural learning in schools. Over two years, the project has provided more than 3,000 young people with hands-on experiences in emerging artforms, delivered by professional artists from across the UK and beyond. Students have developed new skills, grown in confidence, and seen their ideas brought to life and shared with the public - many for the first time. Teachers have expanded their own digital capabilities and reported lasting impacts on student engagement, creativity and self-esteem.

The legacy of the project lies not only in the work created, but in the infrastructure it has helped build. Schools now have stronger connections to cultural partners; artists have developed deeper experience working in education; and the steering group has grown into a dynamic forum for innovation, co-design and collaboration across the cultural, education and research sectors. The project has strengthened the capacity of all involved to deliver inclusive, high-quality cultural experiences for young people - and created a model that can be replicated and scaled.

To support this ambition, an extension to the project has been approved by the steering group and funders. This will allow the remaining budget to be used to extend key staff roles until March

2026, enabling continued engagement with participating schools and the opportunity to develop relationships with additional schools and delivery partners across the Bradford district. This next phase will focus on co-designing a longer-term delivery model and funding strategy, with the aim of embedding digital creativity in schools and securing investment to support future roll-out.

Discussions are already underway within the steering group around a range of scaling options. These include expanding the number of schools, developing a CPD offer for teachers, integrating the programme into curriculum and enrichment structures, and exploring partnerships with further education and creative industry organisations. The learnings from the pilot will be central to shaping this next stage, ensuring that any future delivery builds on what worked - and continues to adapt to meet the needs of Bradford's young people.

Ultimately, Bradford Digital Creatives has laid the foundation for a sustainable, place-based model of digital cultural engagement - one that champions inclusion, creativity and future-facing skills. With the right investment, it has the potential to become a core part of Bradford's cultural and educational infrastructure, and a national example of how arts, education and research can come together to change lives.



BRADFORD DIGITAL

CREATIVES

LITTER

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Continue developing a scalable model for delivery**

Building on the success of the pilot, future phases will focus on testing and refining a delivery model that can be expanded across Bradford sustainably. The model should continue to prioritise inclusion at every stage.

- **Progress sourcing of future funders for the project**

To secure the long-term sustainability of Bradford Digital Creatives, a mixed-income funding model should be explored, combining public investment, grants, and private sponsorship. Opportunities for innovation funding (e.g. youth skills, digital inclusion, levelling-up) should be actively pursued.

- **Continue strengthening links with education and cultural partners in the district**

Deepening partnerships with local schools /MATs, artists, and cultural organisations is essential. Team should prioritise horizon-scanning for collaborative opportunities and continue to deliver regular communications to education and cultural stakeholders. Future co-designed public showcases can reflect young people's voices and strengthen cultural participation at community level.





WITH THANKS TO:



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UK City of Culture

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