

THE SATURDAY ARTS CLUB



BETSY'S STORY

The Saturday Arts Club sees young people aged 13-17 from the Black Country and Telford and Wrekin come to the University of Wolverhampton every Saturday to experience a range of different art activities. It is an opportunity to widen participation in the arts for young people,

as well as giving them a taster of what a university environment is like. The Saturday Arts Club is designed and delivered by the Faculty of Arts at the University of Wolverhampton in partnership with the Saturday Club Trust and is funded by Aspire to HE.

BETSY'S STORY

Betsy is fifteen years old and is currently in year eleven. She attends college to study Art and Design Level 2 and has also been home schooled since year eight.

She has been attending the Saturday Arts Club for the past two academic years and this year she is a participant in the Fashion and Business course that the club runs.

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“I’ve always had an interest in art,” says Betsy. Before joining the club, she had a limited experience of the arts. **“I’ve got family who do sewing and I crochet, so I did stuff like that, but not really anything else.”** The Saturday Arts Club has widened her access to the arts by giving her the opportunity to take part in a range of different art activities, including screen printing and collage work, and last year she went on a trip with other club members to Somerset House in London.

“We’ve done loads. We try everything different,” says Betsy. **“Because I’m home schooled I don’t have access to a lot of stuff so it’s really good to come and try to learn new skills that I never really thought of. It’s really good for that.”**

Her favourite activity was designing kids’ Kicker shoes. Her design was one of a few that were selected to be made, which was a really positive experience for her.

Taking part in the Saturday Arts Club has been helpful in seeing what a university campus is like, as the sessions take place in the Faculty of Arts’ George Wallis building at the University of Wolverhampton. Getting this weekly experience of actually being in a university environment has helped change Betsy’s perception of higher education and what it would be like to be a student in the future.

“I didn’t really know a lot about university. It just seemed like another school thing. But the Saturday Arts Club has been really fun. And because it’s in a university, I know what kind of facilities they have and they have all different things and all the arts stuff, so it has been good,” she says.

Studying the Fashion and Business course at the Saturday Arts Club has helped Betsy think about a career in the arts. **“They’ve talked about setting up our own business and how to design certain things and looking at different ways and inspiration,”** she explains.

Being involved in the Saturday Arts Club and the different activities she has been able to try has impacted her ambitions for her future. **“I want to be a clothing or shoe designer, or work in film and TV design,”** says Betsy. Going to university is now something she would quite like to try, as **“it’s something that’s going to help me in the future, to go and learn from it.”**

Taking part in the Saturday Arts Club has influenced Betsy’s interest in progressing to higher education by giving her a taster of the university experience and the opportunities HE can provide, and has been successful in widening her access to the arts.

ASPIRE TO HE

Aspire to HE aims to increase the number of disadvantaged young people entering higher education, by bringing together partnerships of universities, colleges and schools. In working together, Aspire HE is aiming to ensure that regardless of their context or background, all young people have a fair and equal chance of fulfilling their potential.

At Aspire to HE, our vision drives everything we do. Working across the Black Country and Telford and Wrekin, our team wants every young person in our region to be in a position to make an informed and ambitious decision about higher education and their future.

Lead by the University of Wolverhampton and in partnership with further education colleges, we are working in all of our target wards across Sandwell, Dudley, Walsall, Wolverhampton, and Telford and Wrekin.