

darts



Case Study

Art Club family

Megan, Henry and Jacob's Art Club Journey

Art Club

Art Club is a programme of creative activity for children and their families in Doncaster, funded by Global's Make Some Noise between 2024-6. Weekly sessions take place at The Point – darts' Centre for Creative Health & Learning in the centre of Doncaster. Art Club is free and accessible to all families with children aged 5 – 11, with a particular focus on those facing barriers to arts engagement, including low-income families, families who speak English as an additional language and Disabled children and young people.

Megan* and her two sons, Henry and Jacob, have been regularly attending Art Club sessions for around a year. As a home-educating family, they already place a strong emphasis on creativity but have shared that the sessions offer something distinct and valuable that complements their learning at home.

Art Club provides an opportunity for focused, uninterrupted time as a family, something Megan describes as beneficial for her own wellbeing as well as her children's.

"We do lots of art at home, but you always have something else you're half doing at the same time," Megan explains. "Have I put the washing on? Do I need to start tea? When we come here, I don't get distracted, it's just us three and its quality time. I switch my phone off, and you're just together."

The expertise of the artists who deliver Art Club sessions is key to the family's enjoyment of the sessions, guiding the young people taking part while being responsive to their needs and ideas:

"I like how the artist can give them feedback as they're working. They can see and get their vision... and give advice on how to achieve that and make their work even better."

This was particularly evident during a sculpture project:

"When they made their sculptures, Dan suggested making a TV for Henry's fox to watch. He added a plastic screen, so it looked like a real telly. His little face just lit up, Dan properly got it."

The artist's validation and development of Henry's idea clearly had a big impact on Henry's engagement in the activity. Megan emphasises the importance of the programme's flexible and inclusive approach:

"They're really creative children, but they don't always like to do exactly what is planned. We love that the artists never hold them to the plan—they're encouraged to do something different if they want to."

Henry adds: ***"I feel excited, because you don't always know what you're going to do. I feel creative."***

Megan highlights the consistently positive, encouraging environment created by the artists:

"I love the encouragement that they get from the artists. They're always smiling!"

This supportive atmosphere helps both boys feel comfortable exploring their ideas, taking risks, and developing their skills at their own pace.

As a home-educating family, Art Club provides valuable opportunities for social interaction in a relaxed, creative setting:

“We might not be ‘socialising’ lots,” Megan explains, “but we’re in a sort of classroom setting with other people and that’s important.”

She also reflects on the wider benefits:

“At this age, lots of kids get lost to computer games and their phones. It’s good for them to be out, not glued to their screens, around other people and trying new things.”

Since attending the sessions, both Henry and Jacob have grown in confidence and creative ability:

“The boys definitely have more confidence. We get to try things we wouldn’t do at home, and we have expert guidance to help us when we get stuck.”

Henry agrees: ***“I think it has made me feel more confident. I have more ideas to talk about, so I talk more.”***

For Jacob, who is more reserved, the impact has been more gradual but equally meaningful:

“Jacob is very shy. When we started home educating, he was completely shut down and wouldn’t talk to anyone. But if it’s something he’s engaged with, he will talk a bit about the activity.”

The sessions provide gentle opportunities to communicate, whether that’s asking to use materials, taking part in a shared activity or engaging with artists, helping to build confidence in a supportive, low-pressure environment. Art Club has also inspired their creative activities at home. Many activities are continued or adapted beyond the sessions:

“There are lots of activities we’ve tried here, and I’ve thought ‘the materials aren’t that expensive’, so we’ll have a go at home.”

Both boys are actively pursuing their own creative projects, including designing a video game, creating posters and comics. *“We’ve got more papier mâché and painting planned for half term,”* Megan adds.

The combination of accessible materials and specialist techniques allows families to continue learning in ways that suit their resources and interests. The sessions allow families to experiment with materials and techniques that might otherwise feel inaccessible:

“Some of the equipment and materials might feel a bit specialist or expensive to try at home. Here, we can try them with support.”

For this family, Art Club has become a valued part of their weekly routine, supporting both creative development and family wellbeing. As Megan reflects, the sessions provide something unique: a space to learn, create, and connect without distraction, guided by artists who understand and nurture each child’s ideas.

Art Club has been generously funded by Global's Make Some Noise.
**Names have been changed.*