



Working closely with the community

Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council's Adult and Family Learning Service (AFLS) offers a wide range of courses at its new home in Wellington House as well as throughout the borough.

It also works closely with a range of partners from the local community.

AFLS offers an exciting and diverse range of learning opportunities for adults aged 19 and over, with courses designed to meet the needs of a wide range of interests.

There are courses for families with babies and for those who are not so young – the oldest AFLS learner is 93!

People come to learn with the service for all kinds of reasons, from getting qualifications for work to learning new creative or leisure skills, improving their health and fitness, or getting to grips with modern technology.

During 2014, the art department of AFLS engaged with primary schools throughout Barnsley to celebrate the work of almost 30 local artists from the past.

This work was part of Barnsley Art on Your Doorstep's (BAYDS) exhibition 'The Hidden Art of Barnsley'.

The children and families associated with these schools learned about the 'hidden artists' and produced some amazing pieces of art that were

put on display in St Mary's Church in their own exhibition.

The schools each chose an individual artist featured in the exhibition and the children and their families worked together to produce an original piece of art inspired by their chosen artist. The families used multiple forms of media and worked on a diverse range of material such as plywood, vinyl tiles, fabric, canvas and art board.

Because of the deep mining tradition in Grimethorpe, Milefield School chose to base their artwork on coal mining artist Gilbert Daykin. With the help of AFLS they produced a large painting in acrylic paint, which is prominently displayed on a wall at the entrance to the school building.

The painting is in three sections, the first third showing the winding gear of the old Grimethorpe Colliery. This connection with local history and tradition encouraged interest for families who might previously not have participated in school activities.

On the remaining sections of the artwork one of Daykin's coal mining paintings was reproduced. Families also painted individual tiles before the whole lot was assembled to form one giant piece of art.

Summerfields Primary, in Royston, approached the project from a different angle and produced a magnificent hanging banner showcasing the travels

of Victorian artist Thomas Witlam Atkinson.

Families there used a variety of fabrics to depict animals, plants and people encountered by Atkinson on his way across Asia.

The parents of the children at Forest Academy in Kendray wanted their artwork to show how the landscape of their locality has changed in recent years.

Using Kenneth Graham's pen and ink drawings of old Barnsley as a starting point, they sourced old photographs of local buildings that no longer exist and using pen, ink and marker pens created drawings in Graham's style.

Community art projects like these provide an excellent means of getting people together to learn new skills, develop talents they didn't realise they had, and encourage new friendships.

Some of the parents from these families went on to join regular art classes at Wellington House in September so have continued to develop their new found skills.

If you are part of a community group and interested in a creative project of your own, why not contact the team for more information and let them help you discover your own hidden artists?

● For more details and a list of courses visit Wellington House, Second Floor, Market Street, Barnsley, or www.barnsley.gov.uk/adultlearning