



Who we are

Square Circle Arts (SCA) is a Sheffield-based, not-for-profit participatory arts company which offers bespoke services using drama and multisensory, interactive storytelling. We have over ten years' experience of using these art forms as educational tools with children and young people with Special Educational Needs, from moderate and severe, to profound and multiple, to those with speech and language difficulties and Autistic Spectrum Disorder. Here at Square Circle Arts we believe that the social, cognitive, physical and emotional benefits of the performing arts can be far-reaching and profound.

Approach

SCA prides itself on its **flexible** and **exploratory** approach which tailors to the needs and dynamic of each group we work with. Our workshops are **inclusive, process-based** and **participatory**. We work **collaboratively** with staff by drawing on their strengths, in order to get the most out of both staff and pupils. Our **user-led ethos**, for which we place the student at the centre of his or her own learning or development, has proven to have long-lasting results in terms of **engagement, motivation, understanding** and **confidence**. By combining **capacity-** and **confidence-building**, we always aim to leave each project with a sustainable legacy rather than just 'a nice memory'.

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What we can offer you

- High quality, student-centred multi-sensory and interactive drama and storytelling activities tailored to the needs of a class, year group or a specifically selected group of students (e.g. to support learning, emotional or behavioural needs) within lesson times or Drama Club.
- Activities tailored towards the specific needs of students with MLD, SLD, PMLD, ASD and speech and language difficulties.
- An exciting, imaginative, engaging and relevant approach to the curriculum.
- Themed projects: SEAL, literacy, cross-curricular work, community cohesion, cultural awareness and Spanish.
- Skills, ideas and strategies to help you plan creatively in the future.
- Alternative PPA provision for your classroom.
- A unique, challenging and far-reaching way to help raise attainment for pupils who qualify for the Pupil Premium.
- **A free taster session before you commit to more sessions!**

Aims

- To increase wellbeing and enjoyment, engagement and attendance.
- To increase their ability to communicate and express themselves.
- To help build pupils' self-esteem and confidence.
- To promote independence and social skills, and encourage choice-making through child-led play and exploration.
- To promote an emotionally, socially and physically healthier lifestyle.
- To promote positive relationships and self-awareness.
- To add to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

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Themes

Building on the good work the school is already doing and adapting to fit in with your school's own unique character, we can tailor the following themes to your needs, integrating and overlapping where appropriate

- **Social and Emotional Aspects to Learning:** We can draw on any of the SEAL themes of New beginnings, Going for goals, Getting on and falling out, Good to be me, Relationships and Changes, in order to address self-awareness, managing feelings, motivation, empathy and social skills. Sessions focus on the pupils' ability to express, understand and reflect upon their needs, feelings, experiences, ideas and choices.
- **Literacy:** We will use creative literacy techniques to link in with National Curriculum Literacy targets. Through interactive storytelling or bringing stories to life through drama, we exercise their imaginations, promoting listening and oracy skills, vocabulary and expression, and confidence in communicating. We promote reading and writing through our activities. Please ask for our mainstream [literacy guide](#) which we can adapt to special needs.
- **Cross-curricular work:** A creative and imaginative, cross-curricular, topic-based approach, weaving in student outcomes for the school - such as communication skills, social skills, self-esteem, behaviour or attendance - whilst striving for results in engagement, understanding and attainment in the chosen subject (e.g. PSHE and ICT).
- **Community cohesion:** We can help the school to increase students' contribution to, to extend their awareness of, and to understand their place in the local and wider community. We can develop links with other local, national and even international groups, using Square Circle Arts' ties in South America. We can also develop drama and storytelling projects which enable students to work alongside their peers from mainstream schools, in order to enhance opportunities for inclusion within mainstream society and aid transition.
- **Cultural awareness:** Using drama and storytelling, we can prepare students for life in a multi-cultural society. We offer workshops designed to raise awareness about cultural difference and similarity, and to help students to respect and value diversity within our local and global society. We look at aspects of certain cultures, such as festivals, language, customs, food, religion and clothes. We are also in the middle of talks about bringing in refugees or students from other cultures to demonstrate dancing, music or storytelling.
- **Spanish:** Learning languages gives pupils opportunities to express themselves with increased confidence, independence and creativity. We at SCA are able to teach Spanish through drama. Please ask for more details.



Activities

We always strive to link our activities to national curriculum targets, as well as addressing other student outcomes for the school. All activities are suitable for pupils with speech and language difficulties.

PMLD

Sessions are inclusive and physically involve each student, offering sustained sensory stimulation and making them feel valued. We take into consideration sensory impairment and language delay, using repetitive and rhythmic sound phrases which give rise to feeling and build anticipation. We encourage staff to join in, creating a close physical and emotional connection between pupils and carers.

Example of activity

- Multisensory, interactive storytelling offering students unusual experiences involving touch, sight, sound, smell and movement. We use an array of simple visual stimuli, home-made 'musical instruments', household and natural objects, fabrics and interesting materials, puppets, essential oils, and human touch.

Examples of P-Scale Attainment targets met

P2(i) English: Pupils begin to respond consistently to familiar people, events and objects. They accept and engage in coactive exploration, for example, focusing their attention on sensory aspects of stories or rhymes when prompted.

P3(ii) English: Pupils participate in shared activities with less support. They explore materials in increasingly complex ways, for example, reaching out and feeling for objects as tactile clues to events.

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SLD

Our activities provide for the various sensory, physical, emotional and social difficulties a child with SLD might encounter. Using an engaging variety of multisensory and tactile techniques, we are able to draw on each individual's sensory learning style, to enable them to learn more easily and to retain and apply concepts more readily to future learning. Activities are also designed to increase communication and social skills, and self-awareness.

Examples of activities

- Interactive 'storymaking', involving students in the process of creating a collaborative story, using sound, movement and the spoken word, and encouraging them to participate through whichever means of communication appropriate to them.
- Dressing up in character using hats, walking sticks and handbags.
- Games and exercises using a parachute, ribbons and different fabrics.

Examples of P-scale attainment targets met

P4 PSHE and Citizenship: Pupils express their feelings, needs, likes and dislikes using single elements of communication (words, gestures, signs or symbols). They engage in parallel activity with several others.

P7 English: Pupils contribute appropriately ... in small group discussions and role play.

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MLD

We offer a range of interactive drama-based activities which have the following set of additional criteria:

- To promote independence through ownership and responsibility, by encouraging decision-making and problem-solving.
- To improve social and communication skills, leadership and team work.
- To enhance cognitive and motor skills.

Examples of activities

- Image and mask work
- Use of provocations (e.g. a treasure chest, footprints, half eaten bowl of porridge)
- Group storytelling
- Character-work and re-enactments

Examples of National Curriculum attainment targets met

N1 PSHE and Citizenship: Pupils consider what their opinions are and share their ideas with others. They describe some of the groups and communities they belong to and recognise that people in their communities are different.

N2 History: Pupils show knowledge and understanding of aspects of the past beyond living memory, and of some of the main events and people they have studied.

N3 Literacy: Pupils talk and listen confidently in different contexts, exploring and communicating ideas.

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ASD

Our multi-sensory activities work very well with children with ASD, because we adapt to their capacity for visual, practical and experiential learning. For ASD children who can't latch onto concept easily, participating in a story – by, say, imitating facial expressions and sounds and doing things 'with' the storyteller - leads to joint attention, and therefore, to them 'feeling' what you mean and fixing the meaning in their mind. The SCA storyteller uses tuneful rhythms which are attractive and memorable to the student, and speaks 'while' the student is 'doing', thus creating linguistic perception. We use repetitive actions and songs, coupled with stimulating visual and tactile stimuli, packaged in ritual.

Activities vary considerably depending on age and severity of the condition, and include those mentioned (multi-sensory storytelling, soundscapes, mask work, dressing up, imagery, and repetitive games and exercises).

Likewise, we aim our activities at a wide range of national curriculum targets, depending on age and severity of the condition.

We invite parents and carers to join in sessions with their children, to contribute to their child's learning, and to take ideas home.

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Experience and expertise

Square Circle Arts is run by Drama and Storytelling practitioner Shuna Beckett. All sessions are currently designed and delivered by her.

Shuna has fifteen years' experience of working with vulnerable children and adults in both school and community settings, including four years in some of the most deprived areas of South America. There, she trained with Centre for Theatre of the Oppressed, Rio de Janeiro. Shuna has a Masters degree in Theatre and Development Studies, for which she studied participatory and human development and explored in-depth how the performing arts can empower children and young people. She also has a Diploma in Child Psychology.

As well as her extensive experience of working with children and adults with SEN, Shuna has worked with both children and adults who have/are: emotional and behavioural issues, mental health issues, Black and Minority Ethnic, English as an Additional Language, refugees and asylum seekers, survivors of torture and abuse, offenders, in care, on the streets, substance and alcohol misusers.

Examples of current and past projects with SEN

- **Northridge Special School, Doncaster:** Creative Partnerships project for two terms on the SEAL topic 'It's good to be me', supporting Year 4-6 pupils' transition and merger with another school (SLD/ASD).
- **Freeman College (Ruskin Mill Educational Trust) Sheffield:** Shuna has worked as a full-time Drama Tutor to sixth form students with ASD.
- **Bag Books:** Multi-sensory storytelling to primary and secondary age students across schools in Yorkshire (PMLD/SLD/ASD).

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Further information

- We can provide stand-alone sessions with different groups of students, or longer term projects where we build upon each session.
- Particularly if working on a long-term project with you, we will endeavour to learn about the students' needs and to individualise the programme with you. We will create a coordinated approach with teaching staff, speech and language therapists, and parents and carers, to identify your targets and find the best way to address these using drama and storytelling.
- We can work across the school to develop a whole-school approach – or with individual classes.
- We can offer consultation, staff training/ in-set days etc.
- We fill out regular detailed session plans outlining activity aims and student learning outcomes, which will be submitted to you in advance. Progress is regularly monitored and reviewed and key achievements recorded.
- Prices: £100 for half a day, £200 for full day, £50 for after-school clubs or staff training, inclusive of planning and preparation time and materials. Shorter workshops are negotiable.
- We offer a free half hour taster session so that we can get to know the pupils, and you can be sure of the quality of our service. We also request the opportunity here to discuss the plans and learning outcomes with you. All free of charge.

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