

bamboozle

EDUCATION PACK



bamboozle Education & training programmes

As well as offering theatrical performances Bamboozle also delivers a wide range of staff development and student experience programmes specifically designed for schools for children who have special needs. All our work is delivered by skilled practitioners and is underpinned by a tried and tested methodology which we are passionate about sharing with the schools we visit. Every project is designed around the needs of your school and offers a wide range of benefits for both students and staff. Included below are some examples of the sorts of projects we deliver.

INSET days & twilight sessions

Bamboozle provides whole staff INSET training covering a wide range of topics including:

- An introduction to the Bamboozle Approach
- Greater engagement for students described as having PMLD or SLD or those on the Autism spectrum
- Creative approaches for the whole curriculum
- Working with behaviour that presents challenges
- Creating and using multi-sensory environments.

Each INSET is designed around the needs of your school.

Short-term & pilot projects

These three-day projects include a planning and training day with staff followed by two contact days with staff *and* students. A Bamboozle team works with students while staff observe and then the team spends time with staff to explore and analyse.

Long-term culture change projects

Bamboozle has undertaken a variety of long-term projects addressing schools' specific requirements - whether it's adopting a more creative approach to the curriculum, seeking greater engagement with students described as being hard-to-reach or working with behaviour that presents challenges. These programmes draw on Bamboozle's project models and deliver greater student engagement as well as tailored staff development. Case studies of these projects are available on our website.

Residencies

Bamboozle's signature programme offers a week-long fully immersive experience for around 20 students. Bamboozle provides a full team of creative practitioners and a complete theatrical setting at your school. We start the week with a predetermined theme and take the students on an adventure which they generally define themselves. Two-day mini residencies are also available at a reduced cost.

Our pricing is currently under review, please contact Bamboozle for further information.

If you would like any more information or if we can be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us: 0116 255 2065
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bamboozle Centrally located courses

As well as providing school-specific on-site training programmes Bamboozle delivers courses throughout the year on a wide variety of topics - these usually take place in the Leicester area close to Bamboozle's HQ but some courses are now also available as online options. Please check our website for more information on current courses and availability.

An introduction to The Bamboozle

Approach

This introductory course explores the principles and philosophy behind Bamboozle's unique way of working with learning disabled children and young people. The course also demonstrates a range of practical creative techniques and behavioural-linguistic strategies that can be applied to classroom practice straight away.

The Bamboozle Approach: Masterclass

This intensive six-day masterclass covers all the fundamental aspects of the Bamboozle Approach and offers participants the opportunity to put theory into practice by designing and facilitating their own session with a group of students. The course is led by Bamboozle's Artistic Director and a range of highly experienced artist practitioners.

Creating & using multi-sensory environments

This practical course demonstrates how simple materials and methods can be used to create stimulating environments that offer multiple teaching and learning opportunities. It takes into account the two major challenges that teachers face: not enough time and not enough money.

The course is based on the book: *Creating Multi-Sensory Environments – Practical Ideas for Teaching and Learning*, written by Christopher Davies, Bamboozle's Artistic Director – which can be purchased from the Shop on Bamboozle's website.

Creative ways to engage children on the Autism Spectrum

This one-day course explores how the Bamboozle Approach can be used to engage young people on the Autism spectrum. The course includes demonstrations of practical creative workshop ideas that can be used in classrooms straight away. It also covers behavioural and linguistic strategies that create a safe space for all students, even those described as hard-to-reach, to engage, explore and flourish.

Puppetry for engagement & learning

During this one-day course you will create a simple puppet of your own and learn how to manipulate it as well as explore ideas for puppet workshops. The session also looks at how puppets can be used to engage young people and nurture their interaction and communication skills.

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Bamboozle's new online courses give the opportunity for teachers to connect with Bamboozle's work remotely and meet peers and practitioners from all over the UK and around the world. Our online courses break some of the longer form courses into smaller sections which are delivered in a series over four weeks after the school day has finished. This means that teachers don't need to be away from their classrooms to take part.

An Introduction to the Bamboozle Approach

This online course is delivered in four 90-minute sessions over a four-week period. The course mixes video demonstrations with practical examples and session ideas.

Week one – creating an Enabled Space.

Week two – using characters and narrative.

Week three – ritual.

Week four – free exploratory play.

How to reduce conflict and anxiety when working with children on the autistic spectrum

This online course will demonstrate ways of enabling children to relax and give you strategies for the classroom that you can use immediately:

Week one – creating an Enabled Space.

Week two – How exploratory play builds trust, reduces anxiety and provides child-centred opportunities for expression and learning.

Week three – The Wildings. A case study of the Bamboozle Approach used outdoors.

Week four – Advanced techniques for building connections with children and young people who might be described as being “hard-to-reach”.

Multi- Sensory Approaches

This course is particularly suitable for teaching staff or practitioners who work with young people who might be described as having profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD).

Week One - An introduction to the beliefs and principles of the Bamboozle Approach.

Week Two - Using characters, narrative and multi-sensory environments for immersive learning experiences.

Week Three - Exploring ritual and how to develop ritual as a tool for enabling engagement.

Week Four - This session will focus on communication, minimising our language and listening to the whole person.

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bamboozle Hub schools programme

In 2023 Bamboozle embarked on an ambitious new programme to create a network of training hub schools in Arts Council England's priority areas following an uplift in its National Portfolio funding. Programme delivery takes place at three hub schools based in the southeast, the midlands and the northeast. Bamboozle has a long-term relationship with all three hub schools and is thrilled to be continuing to establish stronger links through this training programme.

"Yeoman Park Academy has been working with Bamboozle for many years and they have a history of engaging not only with our whole school population with a wow factor but also those children who are hard to reach and engage because of the complex nature of their autism or learning disability. I'm delighted to be involved in a wider project that goes across and outside of Diverse Academies Trust and does not just involve children and staff at special schools but also those in mainstream. These courses share the philosophy and techniques used by Bamboozle but also give staff members the opportunity to work with similar minded colleagues and to discuss, share and be confident in taking back ideas to their own schools to broaden opportunities for their own children and staff." Courtney Hoop, Principal - Yeoman Park Academy

Now in its third year we have trained just over 150 teachers and support staff and 20 artists in the Bamboozle Approach across all three hub areas. As well as running three residency experiences with participating schools.

Our three HUB schools are:

[Lady Zia Wernher School](#)
[Luton](#)

[Yeoman Park Academy](#)
[Mansfield](#)

[Priory Woods School & Arts College](#)
[Middlesbrough](#)

We hope to be able to expand the programme and reach more areas in future. If you would like any other information or are interested in becoming a hub school in future, please contact our Education and Training Project Manager natalie@bamboozletheatre.co.uk.

Feedback from the first round of training sessions:

"Informative, based in theory, trialled and perfected in practice. Combines real life examples and performance with the Bamboozle method/pedagogy. Effective! Thanks!"

Kathryn, participant at Priory Woods training session.

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bamboozle Case Studies

Here are just some examples of the bespoke education programmes we've delivered in the past few years – if you would like to discuss possibilities for your school please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Culture Change in the Learning Environment for Children on the Autism Spectrum

The brief

This project focused on staff development in the teaching and learning environment for children with Autism at Lakeside School in Welwyn Garden City. We also worked with one group of students with complex needs from the Extended Learning Base – this was to demonstrate that the Approach could be applied to different learning environments and differentiated for all students.

The project

The project – a series of 40 consultancy sessions (10 for each of the four participating groups) spaced throughout the academic year – was organised into three phases:

- Observation – staff observe and analyse Bamboozle practitioners working with their students.
- Exploration – staff join in with Bamboozle practitioners to explore different creative learning scenarios.
- Consolidation – staff take the lead in devising and reflecting on creative learning sessions with Bamboozle's support.

The project also included an INSET day where staff presented their work on the project to their colleagues.

Outcomes

The desired outcomes were met and exceeded as the project progressed - the school was assessed by the National Autistic Society and awarded Advanced Status Accreditation with the Bamboozle project work gaining a commendation for excellence in practice.

"We bought the Bamboozle team in to improve engagement and teach our staff what engagement looks like in very hard-to-reach and challenging pupils. We were successful, the evidence for this is not simply anecdotal. We use a measure for staff skill. It is called the transaction scale and is taken from the highly regarded SCERTS model for teaching pupils with autism (social communication, emotional regulation and transactive support). There were 25 staff on the year-long project. Over the 12-month period staff were able to improve their engagement abilities on the scale by at least 60%. 15 of the staff increased by 90% and over.

The learning is deep because you cannot unlearn what Bamboozle teaches you about how our children think and act. They support staff to get to the heart of what we do and change behaviour through mutual consent and trust. This has then provided a direct springboard for other progress in hard-to-reach children. There is no longer a gap between our hard-to-reach pupils and the others.

For Lakeside, the relationship between us and Bamboozle is unbreakable because of the firm foundation their approaches provide our staff and pupils." - Lynnette Johnson, Headteacher

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Enriching the Learning Experience for Secondary Students with Complex Needs

The brief

The Senior Leadership Team at Woodlands Secondary School in Luton wanted to focus on enabling students with complex needs to achieve their full potential. Staff wanted to explore how to create meaningful, immersive learning experiences and celebrate their students' achievements.

The project

The project focussed on staff development and included four elements: performances of a Bamboozle show designed for complex needs audiences, the creation of a multi-sensory environment in the school's dedicated studio, a series of classroom-based consultancy sessions, and a twilight INSET session to share the work with the wider school. The project focussed on:

- Supporting staff teams in developing strategies to enhance learning opportunities for students through a creative, non-judgemental approach to teaching and learning.
- A "less is more" approach both to the classroom environment and to the teaching and learning process.
- How to enhance the atmosphere of the learning environment so that it nurtures both staff and student focus.
- Ways of seeking greater engagement from students with complex needs and enhancing the quality of the attention given to them.
- Giving staff the confidence to observe how their students engage and interact and then find ways of building those interactions into deeper learning experiences.
- Ways of valuing student input and empowering and enabling students to take a more active role in their learning.
- Creative ways to enhance narrative beyond traditional storytelling and out-of-the-box story packages.

Outcomes

"The project has been a success on many levels:-

- *It has given people license to be creative.*
- *It has made staff think differently and try other approaches.*
- *It has given time for reflection.*
- *Break-out sessions have allowed staff to talk through ideas.*
- *Groups have worked together.*
- *Really excellent CPD for staff. Good value for money – hands on training.*
- *Staff feel empowered."*

Debbie Foolkes, Headteacher

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Pupil Voice in Primary Learning for Children with Complex Needs

The brief

Lady Zia Wernher School in Luton wanted to ensure that the voices of its young learners with complex needs were being heard and commissioned Bamboozle to work with staff towards:

- The establishment of a totally inclusive learning environment with a recognised and shared learning ethos.
- The recognition and development of “Pupil Voice” – where communication is observed and built upon and learning is not exclusively adult initiated.
- The opportunity being given for engagement, interaction and communication between students as well as between an individual student and members of staff.
- Improved use of the physical learning environment.
- A “best-practice” folder with reference information about all the work that has been done as part of the project.

The project

Bamboozle worked with four teachers and their class groups; there were four phases to the project:

1. Residency week – a series of day-long immersive sessions, one for each group, exploring the creation of a multi-sensory environment and how to use it as well as introducing the Bamboozle Approach.
2. Performances of Bamboozle’s *Meadow Land* – a production for audiences with complex needs.
3. A series of 32 consultancy sessions – eight for each class group – throughout the year.
4. Mini-residencies – Lady Zia Wernher staff worked with Bamboozle to create immersive experiences for their own class groups – this was the consolidation phase of the project which drew on the work that had been done in phases one and three.

In addition to this there were two INSET sessions – one a twilight session for support staff and the other a full day session for the teaching staff.

Outcomes

“The Bamboozle Approach has been liberating! I feel I have now got the freedom to teach the children in the way they need to learn. I would like to explore the approaches further and develop these in the coming term. I have been surprised at how simple it is to adapt an existing topic/idea into a Bamboozle-style activity. Although I met with some resistance from the staff initially, they are getting used to the approaches and are observing much more. The progress of the children has been wonderful to see and the opportunities we have had to allow them to contribute have been much more. Thank you!”

Karen Warne, Class Teacher

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An Immersive Adventure for INSET Day

The brief

The Deputy Head at Watling View School asked Bamboozle to provide a training day for the whole staff team at his school:

“We are very much after how teachers can use a creative approach to support throughout the curriculum as well as making sure they are confident in using the schools’ Creative Arts Room when teaching creative subjects.”

The project

Instead of delivering a more standard training package – where facilitators do a lot of the talking – we decided to send the staff on a one-day interactive adventure to demonstrate how we work with groups of children and the potential of immersive, theatrical experiences. The activities of the day were interspersed with introductory training and Q&A with a specific focus on how to adapt each activity to different cohorts of students and tailor experiences to meet the needs of progress targets and the curriculum. We created a story that the school staff would participate in and then have a go at a range of workshop activities.

The narrative of the day centred on a character from an old village where the well water was making everyone sick. It transpired that the stones that kept the well water pure had been stolen by a troll who lived on the other side of a forest. The staff group had to interact with the character to establish the story and the quest, they then had to build the forest (an interactive, multi-sensory obstacle course) and journey through it to encounter the troll and retrieve the stones – for which they also created a cave and accompanying soundscape.

Outcomes

Staff threw themselves into the day and generated lots of ideas for activities and experiences they could provide for their students during the upcoming academic year. Feedback at the end of the day included:

“Inspirational. I have used characters/problem solving in the woods at Forest School but without a facilitator. Now so many of us have done this training I think it could be a lot more successful/meaningful. Really liked the concept of being able to ‘freeze’ the story and step back into it, allowing spontaneity but having a way to bring it back to a structure.”

“Very interesting and inspiring! I particularly liked the part about holding silences for students – there’s not enough of this in education!”

“So many fantastic ideas for using in class. I love the idea of the Bamboozle Approach for use with valuing all students and ensuring all students are included.”

“Benefits to me: to understand the benefits of true value and attention over repetitive praise, not to underestimate children’s understanding and awareness, the power of story to motivate.”

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War Horse Residency with The National Theatre and six London Special Schools

As well as taking our touring shows to schools and theatres, we also work with theatres on their education and outreach programmes, making their shows accessible to learning disabled audiences. We worked with the National Theatre on their internationally acclaimed production, *War Horse*, creating a multi-sensory experience of the production for local schools.

The brief

In collaboration with the National Theatre the brief was to make the Olivier stage production of *War Horse* more accessible to students who have learning disabilities.

Project structure

1. Initial meeting between National Theatre, Bamboozle and schools.
2. INSET day for school staff with Bamboozle's Artistic Director.
3. Planning days for Bamboozle team and input from school staff.
4. Three residency weeks in participating schools.
5. Students see *War Horse* at the National.
6. A day on the Olivier stage for students described as having PMLD - with the *War Horse* puppets and members of the cast.
7. Follow up INSET for staff.

Each of the six participating schools brought between eight and 18 students to one of the three residency weeks (72 students in all). Other students at the host schools were able to visit the set and meet the horse puppets at the end of each day.

At the end of each residency week, the students informally shared some of what they had been doing with an audience of parents, other students, staff and governors.

Outcomes

Just one story of many: Jyoti is a student accustomed to receiving a lot of help and support. When her turn came to crawl under the camouflage net, she stood up to approach the task and two members of staff immediately came to help. They were asked to wait so that we could see what happened. It took time, but Jyoti struggled through and did it virtually unaided - another student helped her untangle her foot on one occasion). In the feedback she reported that the camouflage net was her favourite bit. A considerable physical achievement.

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Family sessions during school holidays

Many families with disabled children struggle to find activities they can all enjoy together; activities where their disabled child is involved and engaged with the rest of the family. Bamboozle offers just this sort of experience with its established programme of multi-sensory experiences for families during the school holidays.

- The holiday sessions provide an opportunity for the whole family to play and explore a multi-sensory world of visual delights, music, puppets and live characters together.
- We offer specialised experiences for children who have with profound and multiple learning disabilities and for children with Autism.
- The sessions are an opportunity for families to meet or catch up with other families.
- Any family members, friends or carers can attend.
- Each experience provides places for six families.
- Sessions typically run for one, two or three days.
- All programmes are run by a team of highly experienced Bamboozle facilitators and artists who bring a wide range of skills from many artistic disciplines to create a fully immersive adventure for all the family.

What families say about our work

"The time we spend with Bamboozle is very special, it allows us as a family to truly enter into Hope's world, it is a magical experience. We always leave feeling emotional, inspired and that we have spent quality time together. Bamboozle makes a difference by truly understanding us as a family, Bamboozle exceeds our needs and it feels very comfortable sharing the experience with local children and parents who appreciate what a joy it is when your child simply 'smiles'." Kate

"Bamboozle offers us a unique platform in often pressurised lives to meet up with other families who share our problems and understand the issues we face. Bamboozle has brought us friendship and support."

Kerry Nelson

"It was lovely to do something we would all enjoy. Harry really enjoyed being part of something creative. Usually we struggle to find things to satisfy a teenager!" Alex Clayton

"A truly magical multi-sensory experience full of special moments for me and my family - many, many thanks to all involved." Claire Blakey

Find out more about our family offer on our website here:

<https://bamboozletheatre.co.uk/families-community/>

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bamboozle Coming soon

New touring show – Winter 2025/2026

Bamboozle will be creating a new show for children and young people who can be described as having PMLD or complex needs. The show will tour in the winter season 2025-2026. We will be sending out details to schools as soon as they're available. But in the meantime, please register your interest here:

<https://forms.office.com/e/RmxrfQZDkQ>

Moon Song re-tour – Spring 2026

We're delighted to be touring Moon Song once again in Spring 2026. This show has just finished a sold out five-week schools tour.

Dates will take place between 24th February – 27th March 2026.

Please send expressions of interest vis this application form: <https://forms.office.com/e/q1Mz9iYCOV>

Live online training



Live Online Training Courses – October – December 2025

Bamboozle are excited to announce a new series of **live online courses** that share the key elements of our methodology which have been developed by Bamboozle practitioners over the past 30 years of working with learning disabled children and young people.

To find out more and to book please visit our website:

[Introduction to the Bamboozle Approach – Online Training Series – Bamboozle Theatre](#)



Summer School – Character and Narrative – July 2025

This three-day Summer School course will demonstrate how you can use characters and storytelling to create immersive, interactive experiences for all learning-disabled children and young people.

To find out more and book please a place/s please visit our website:

[Bamboozle Summer School: Narrative & Character – Bamboozle Theatre](#)

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