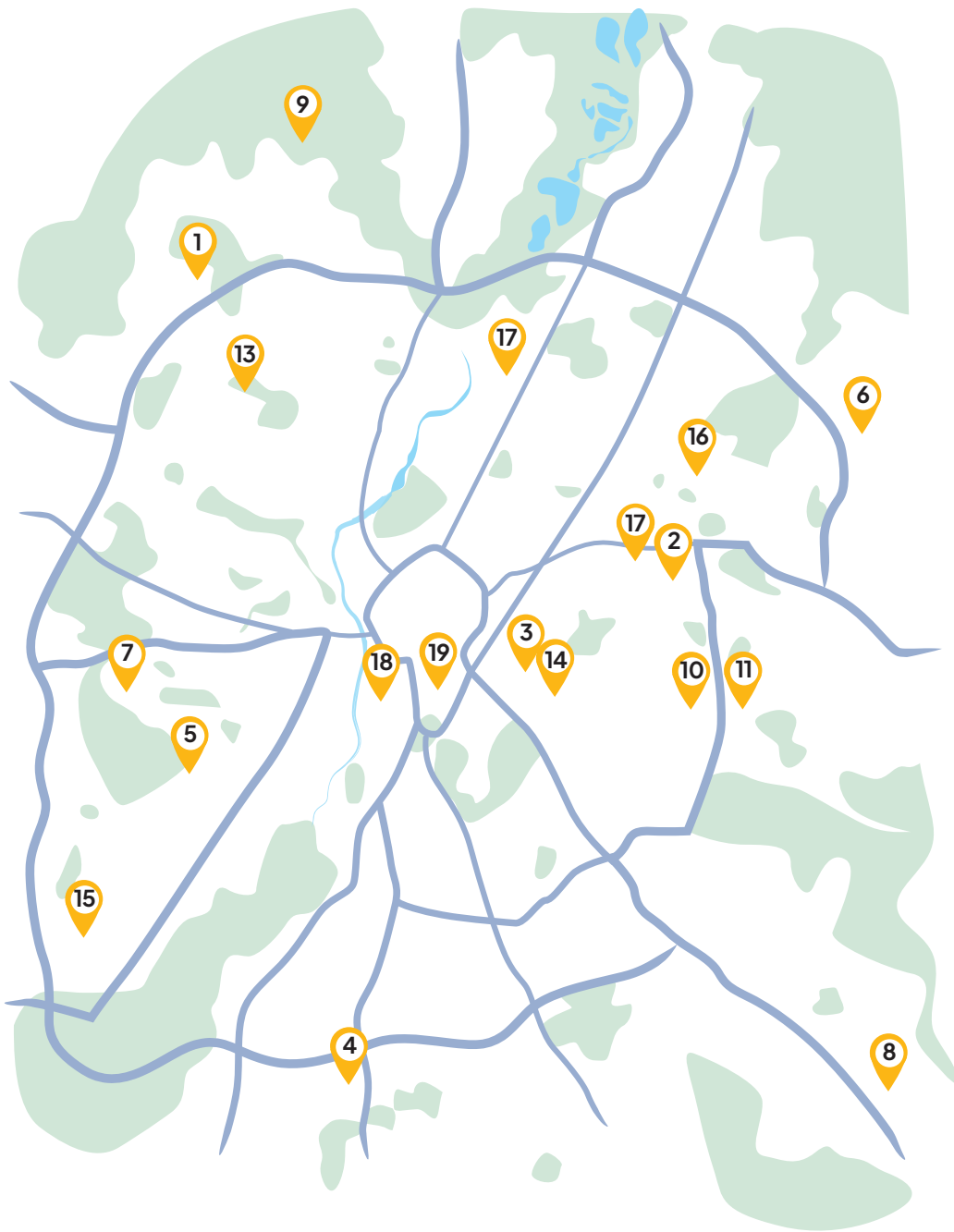


 the **spark live**

# Impact Report

*Spring / Summer 2025*





## 19 Leicester locations

- 1 Beaumont Leys Library
- 2 St Barnabas Library
- 3 Highfields Library
- 4 Pork Pie Library
- 5 The Brite Centre
- 6 Kestrel Mead Primary Academy
- 7 Queensmead Primary Academy
- 8 Woodland Grange Primary School
- 9 Glebelands Primary School
- 10 Mayflower Primary School
- 11 Ash Field Academy
- 12 Mellor Community Primary School
- 13 Barley Croft Primary School
- 14 Medway Community Primary School
- 15 Millfield LEAD Academy
- 16 Falcons Primary School
- 17 St Barnabas C of E Primary School
- 18 Leicester Museum and Art Gallery
- 19 The Gallery at De Montfort University

# Children creatively connect communities

In May 2025, **Spark LIVE!** launched as a year-round programme bringing meaningful, fun, high-quality arts experiences to all children across Leicester and Leicestershire. From local neighbourhoods to the city centre, children enjoyed inspiring performances, creative workshops and joyful events. Creativity, community and co-creation is at the heart of **Spark LIVE!**

Children and young people did not just take part - they helped shape what happened.

**Spark LIVE!** has grown from the trusted and much-loved Spark Festival. That festival still continues - now every two years - making room for Spark LIVE! to have a lasting impact throughout the year.

**Spark LIVE!** is designed to make sure every child has the chance to experience the arts close to home, all year round.



**4804**

children  
and families



**27**

artists



**72**

performances



May-June  
2025



“ One of the most joyful & rewarding projects I have ever been involved in. Touring this around to little humans in the community, especially those who have never experienced live music/ theatre before, really hit me as different. Sparkly wide eyes, contagious smiles & little arms running up to hug your legs... just some of the many magical moments I'll never forget

Roxanne Tataei, Performer

# The journey

From artists and children’s imaginations and insights to LIVE performances and interactive workshops in libraries, schools and venues.

**Spark LIVE!** started with *Les-tah to the Front*, a live band experience co-designed with families in Leicester for children aged 0–5. A punk-inspired interactive show celebrated creativity, individuality, and the vibrancy of Leicester, with children being encouraged to express themselves through music, singing, identity, dance and performance.

In Spring 2025, *Les-tah to the Front* toured five libraries across Leicester: Beaumont Leys, St Barnabas, Highfields, Pork Pie and The Brite Centre. These libraries are more than just spaces they are trusted, welcoming places at the heart of their communities.

By bringing live theatre directly into these communities, The Spark helped remove barriers that can prevent children and families from engaging with the arts.

Nursery groups, Virtual School children and families involved in The Spark’s early years programme also attended, showing how long standing relationships and a deep understanding of local needs can make a real difference.



**452**

participants



**100%**

of children  
enjoyed the show



**97%**

felt their child was  
actively engaged



**81%**

reported an increase in  
their child’s confidence



**94%**

would like to attend more  
shows in the library



**91%**

agreed the event gave them  
access to cultural activities they  
wouldn’t otherwise have



**100%**

found the event  
affordable



**The Spark have been culturally raising the children of Leicester (and beyond) for over 20 years**

# Key outcomes

## 1 Inclusive and representative programming:

The performance was recognised for its inclusive casting and the visibility of underrepresented groups, contributing to a more reflective and welcoming cultural experience.

“ *It was incredible to see a Black woman in the show – so important for representation.* ”

## 2 Accessible and affordable:

Hosting the event in a local library made it easier for families to attend, particularly those with additional needs. The low cost also removed financial barriers for many.

“ *It was very affordable. Two of my children have special needs, so it being at the local library where they were familiar meant we could access it.* ”

## 3 High quality and professional:

Audience feedback consistently highlighted the high standard of performance, organisation and delivery.

“ *Excellent show, highly engaging and high quality. Very impressed with the standard of events Sparks put on. This event exceeded expectations.* ”

## 4 Engaging, interactive, playful and educational:

Active play and participation through live music, movement and the inclusion made the performance engaging and accessible for a wide range of children.

“ *The songs were fantastic... there were signs in the show... the children loved having hands-on things to do.* ”

## 5 Local relevance and community focused:

Content was tailored to reflect the local context, particularly Leicester’s cultural diversity, which helped build a strong sense of belonging and community pride.

“ *The songs they made were catchy and relevant to Leicester locals... multiculturalism was well represented.* ”

Following the library tour, **Spark LIVE!** moved into two major Leicester venues for takeovers, creating a dynamic shift from library events to more immersive, large-scale events still powered by children for other children, young people and their families to get involved with.



**“ Thank you to the Spark team and the wonderful children from different schools for hosting such a fun event... It was most certainly a day packed full of fun, laughter, creativity, arts, music and imagination!**

Teacher

# Leicester Children Takeover

On Saturday 17 May, and Sunday 18 May, **Spark LIVE!** took over two of Leicester's key cultural venues, creating welcoming, accessible spaces for families and those families who might not typically visit these places.

Featuring a vibrant mix of interactive workshops, performances, and creative activities, the events were designed to engage children and families alike. The programme was developed in partnership with local schools, including Medway Community Primary, Ash Field Academy, Barley Croft Primary, and Charnwood Primary,

“ *Amazing job – I can't believe children organised all of this!* ”

Visitor



**1021**

children  
and families



**44**

Young Creativity  
Councillors helped  
design and lead events

**Saturday 17 May 2025** 11am – 3pm

Creativity Councillors from Medway Community School and Ash Field Academy worked with artists to take over Leicester Museum and Art Gallery. They programmed a number of activities including:

- *Fidget Toy Making* with artist Pasha Kincaid
- *Football Design* with Artsters
- *Music and Sound Sensory Space* with musician Phil Pearson
- *Brave Baker Dream Making* with artist Sophie Cullinan
- *Street dance* with Moving Together
- *Bollywood workshops* with Nupur Arts

**Sunday 18 May 2025** 11am – 3pm

Creativity Councillors from Barley Croft Primary and Charnwood Primary worked with artists to take over DMU Gallery. They programmed a number of activities including:

- *Performance Poetry* with artist Marcus Joseph
- *Origami and peace ceremony* with Mita Solanky
- *Music and Sound Sensory Space* with musician Phil Pearson
- *Bollywood workshops* with Nupur Arts
- *Mixed media workshop* with Artsters
- *Clowning workshop* with Sarah Hailstones



“ It was brilliant and engaged some of the boys who are usually less enthusiastic about writing and Literacy.

“ I was really impressed with the performers and their engagement with the children. My class were involved in a prior workshop to the show and they really enjoyed it. Children of all needs and abilities were included and made to feel that their contributions were relevant.

# Spark LIVE! in schools

From 20–23 May 2025, **Spark LIVE!** brought the excitement of 24 live performances into 11 school halls across Leicester and Leicestershire.

The school tour offered a mix of theatre, storytelling, music and spoken word, creating a rich and immersive arts experience for children of all ages.

Performance Highlights:

## **Mughal Miniatures:**

### **The Elephant and the Drummer**

**presented by Sonia Sabri Company**

A storytelling performance combining Kathak dance, puppetry, and physical theatre.

## **Make Some Noise**

**presented by Dommy B**

A poetry and spoken word show by Dommy B, celebrating sound, imagination, and friendship.

## **Les-tah to the Front**

**presented by Crescendorious**

A live band experience for younger children, exploring creativity through punk-inspired music.



**12**

**schools**



**24**

**performances**



**3030**

**children  
attended**

Across the week performances toured to the following :

- Kestrel Mead Primary Academy
- Queensmead Primary Academy
- Woodland Grange Primary School
- Glebelands Primary School
- Mayflower Primary School
- Ash Field Academy
- Mellor Community Primary School
- Barley Croft Primary School
- Medway Community Primary School
- Millfield LEAD Primary
- Falcons Primary School
- St Barnabas C of E Primary School

## **Additional school initiatives:**

### **Learning Resources & Workshops for Schools:**

Spark Arts for Children also offers educational resources for schools to help embed the arts experience into the curriculum.

### **The Mega Bosses of Spark:**

Spark's children's action group, The Mega Bosses of Spark, ensures that the programming reflects what children and young people want to experience, further enhancing the relevance of **Spark LIVE!** to the local community.



The art school demonstrated by its presence that art was not remote and inaccessible something we did, there are other galleries, museums, etc.



“ *Today was the best day ever!* ”

One of The Spark's Mega Bosses  
(Spark's children's action group)

# Spark LIVE! at Riverside Festival

**Spark LIVE!** successfully joined the Riverside Festival on Sunday 8 June, contributing to a vibrant day of creativity and community, attended by an estimated 75,000 people. The event, themed Let's Talk About... Having Your Say!, offered a dynamic platform for children, young people and families to express themselves through the arts and creative conversations!

From 12–3pm, children and families engaged in a range of free drop-in workshops including visual art with Pasha Kincaid, weaving and braiding with Mita Solanky (Sainted Amok), and sound and listening activities led by Corey Mwamba, Morgan Stockton and Tia Chand-Corey from Open Play Early Years. These workshops encouraged open-ended play and creative exploration designed for babies and young children.

The day culminated in a powerful spoken word performance led by Coventry poet laureate John Bernard. This collaborative session brought together children, families, artists, students from Law and International Policy Making and Assistant City Mayor – Children and Young People, Elaine Pantling to talk about how creativity can build a collective identity towards a world in which childrens and families voices are heard.

Overall, **Spark LIVE!** created a meaningful space for children and young people to explore their creativity, be heard, and contribute to a shared community experience – leaving lasting memories and inspiring confidence in creative self-expression.

Impact of **Spark LIVE!** at Riverside festival:



Sunday  
8 June

Reach of  
Riverside Festival

75,000



301

children  
and families



6

artists



5

activities



**“ Spark always manages to consider inclusivity, creativity and participation in their programmes.**

Creativity Councillor

# The overall impact of Spark LIVE! Spring / Summer 2025:

Spark LIVE! is an exciting journey, bringing together artists and audiences. From libraries to schools and cultural venues. The impact has been felt in every community, with hundreds of children participating in creative workshops, performances and activities. The programme has given young people the chance to interact with new forms of art, express themselves creatively, and be a part of their local cultural scene.



**4804**

participants



**13**

schools



**34**

performances



**44**

children  
co-created  
events



**5**

Leicester  
Libraries



**38**

workshops

## What is next...

Following the success of Spark LIVE! Spring / Summer 2025, we're building momentum with even more creative programmes that will bring high quality arts experiences to children and families across Leicester and Leicestershire.

Save the date, 16–24 May 2026, when **The Spark LIVE Festival** returns, with a powerful new theme chosen by our Mega Bosses (aka children!): **Peace, Play and Equity**. The theme reflects what matters most to them right now: For everyone to feel safe, have fun and be treated fairly. We will be sprouting this seed over the coming months, come back and see how it grows.

We're inviting businesses and organisations to **collaborate** with us. By working together, we can:

- **Increase access** to the arts for children from all backgrounds
- **Support wellbeing** through joyful, creative experiences
- **Strengthen communities** by investing in cultural opportunities.

We can ensure even more children and young people can experience joy and the transformative impact of music, theatre, dance, and storytelling.

**Let's talk about how we can work together.**

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