

Report of Implementation Group for the Arts in Education Charter

Since its establishment in December 2012, the Implementation Group has had seven meetings. Having engaged in an initial review of its role and responsibilities in relation to the Charter, the following is a summary of its activities and reflections to date (July, 2013).

**4.1 In relation to Section 4.1** of the charter, “**Dialogue and Partnership**”, the group has had a sequence of meetings with key partners and stakeholders as follows:

- Arts Council Education and Youth Office
- Association for Creativity and Arts in Education (ACAE)
- Encountering the Arts (ETAI)
- Association of Teachers/Education Centres (ATECI)
- National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals (NAPD)
- Irish Primary Principals Network (IPPN)
- CNCI- ECO Working Group
- The School Inspectorate

### **Outcomes**

As well as relating to Section 4.1, these meetings covered a number of the Charter’s sections such as 4.4, 4.7 and 4.16. It is significant that the ACAE, ETAI and NCI-ECO represent a great range of agencies involved in arts education.

It was noteworthy that for each group, the representatives attending expressed a warm welcome for the Charter, were keen to be partners in the process, and provided useful information and suggestions for the operation of the Charter. As well as their oral input, the agencies also supplied written submissions. The positive attitude, engagement and commitment of these agencies bode well for constructive partnerships into the future.

**4.2** With regard to Section 4.2, “Wider Education Agenda”, formal letters were dispatched to key stakeholders and school leaders informing them of the Charter, and seeking their support.

As well as many informal inputs from various agencies, group members participated in dissemination/discussion sessions such as making presentations to the CNCI “*Lighting a Fire*”

conference on 19<sup>th</sup> April 2013, information for the Irish Times feature article on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2013, participation in the Kerry Schools Art Exhibition, and participation in the special RTÉ Radio One programme “*Arts Tonight*” on 10<sup>th</sup> May 2013.

**4.4** With regard to Section 4.4, “Outreach and Education at the NCI’s”, contact has been made with relevant institutions and dialogue is underway as to how best to achieve the desired aim.

**4.5** With regard to Section 4.5, “Information and Advice”, as well as the general dissemination of information which has been ongoing, the group has agreed that the Arts in School Directory (2004) and the Artists in the Schools Guidelines (2006) will be updated. The group is considering how this can be undertaken in the context of the current staff shortages in this area of the Arts Council. At present both the Arts Council and the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht are drawing up an audit of activity.

**4.7** With regard to Section 4.7, “School Policies”, the group’s discussions with the NAPD, the IPPN and the Schools Inspectorate have been very helpful in promoting this section of the Charter. The group plans to meet the NCCA and the Teaching Council soon to progress this dimension. It may also meet the body representing the Colleges of Education (CHOICE), in the autumn to promote this dimension in teacher education and to explore further development of Section 4.16, the Arts Council’s Artists Residencies in Colleges of Education.

The discussion with the NCCA in September will also deal with Section 4.11, on the NCCA’s consultation with the Arts Council.

**4.9** With regard to Section 4.9, “Research”, it is planned to update the register of research in the Arts in education area, and in the autumn up to date information on such research will be sought from higher education institutions in Ireland, North and South.

**4.12** With regard to Section 4.12, “Resource Sharing” (Portal Site), discussions have taken place with expert personnel on how best to prepare a feasibility study for the proposed portal. The Implementation Group regards such a portal as having great potential, but is anxious to ensure that the best planning goes into it. The Department of Arts Heritage and the Gaeltacht is prepared to finance the feasibility study in 2013 while Department of Education and Skills will

address funding of the website subject to outcome of feasibility study, proper procurement procedures etc. A roundtable/think tank was convened for 18<sup>th</sup> July 2013 of appropriate personnel to further the planning of the portal.

**4.17** With regard to Section 4.17, “Art Rich Schools (ARIS)”, research has been conducted on some models of the concept in other countries, and note has been taken of the “Creative School” experience here. A working group has been assembled by the Arts Council to focus on the best way forward to achieve the Charter policy. Discussions with various agencies have drawn attention to the desirability of getting the concept right for Irish circumstances. A good deal of agreement has emerged on the general character and spirit which should animate the initiative. The Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht has been having promising discussions with a possible sponsor for this project, when the planning is complete. Some members of the group attended a meeting of the working group on 18<sup>th</sup> July 2013.

**4.18** With regard to Section 4.18, “Music Generation”, music generation has been in contact with the Implementation Group and it is hoped to have dialogue with its personnel in the autumn.

### **Conclusion**

The Implementation Group considers that worthwhile progress has been made in establishing the Charter in the public consciousness, particularly among the arts/education community. Despite some hostile reaction to the PSED proposal in the Charter, there has been an impressive welcome for the Charter among the partners. To ensure that the hopes raised will be satisfied, it will be necessary for Ministers and the group to give sustained commitment and attention to ensure that the policy dimension of the Charter become grounded in experience. Plans are afoot to implement a range of the key initiatives, but it will take time, effort and resources to ensure that they are brought to satisfactory fruition.

Overall, this summary report indicates a work in progress. As the sean-fhocal has it “*Tús maith, leath na h-oibre*” We consider that a good start has been made, but we are under no illusions that much work lies ahead to ensure that the Arts in Education Charter will be, and be seen to be, a landmark for a new era for the arts in education. With a renewed sense of cooperation and collaboration by involved agencies, we are confident of achieving success.

Professor John Coolahan

Chair of Arts in Education Charter Implementation Group

July 2013