

Implementation Group of Arts in Education Charter

Introduction from Chairman, Professor John Coolahan:

A Changing Context for Arts in Education

It is gratifying that the opening sentence of a previous report on the arts in Irish education, “the arts have been neglected in Irish education”, no longer applies. There is now significant evidence that, in contemporary circumstances, arts in education are experiencing a vibrant, dynamic phase of development, with much promise for the future. A key feature of this changing context is the extent of co-operation, collaboration, networking and partnership of involved agencies which is becoming operative.

Noteworthy examples of fresh forms of collaboration between relevant agencies is the establishment, in 2015, of Encountering the Arts in Education (ETAI), as an organisation of over thirty agencies, now operating under its new Board of Directors. This development has great potential for the future. The National Cultural Institutions’ Education, Community and Outreach (ECO) grouping, is now re-energised with a new Policy Framework document, agreed in 2015. The grouping is making available a wide range of imaginative and high quality arts and cultural experiences for children and opening up for them the richness of these great cultural institutions. The Association of Teacher and Education Centres of Ireland (ATECI) has established a network for arts partnerships, with valuable opportunities for the regions. The Arts Council has produced a new Strategy for 2016 to 2025. Objective 8 is focused on arts for children and young people and makes a number of strong commitments in this regard. It also states that the Council will work to achieve “the full implementation of the Arts in Education Charter.” The Ark Cultural Centre for children is celebrating its 21st anniversary and its new strategic plan aims to have greater impact for arts in education. There is also evidence of renewed energy and activity in the many children’s arts organisations throughout the country. These agencies have built up important experience and expertise in arts in education and represent a valuable national asset which, with improved resourcing, can yield its potential.

The Arts in Education Charter

Within this context, the Arts in Education Charter, launched in 2013, has been a landmark development in relation to the culture change which is afoot. The Charter is an initiative of the Department of Education and Skills, the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, working in association with the Arts Council. This is an unprecedented commitment by the three entities/strands working in harmony, to promote arts in education. The Charter set out nineteen objectives. In furthering these objectives the Implementation Group for the Charter wishes to record its appreciation of the widespread goodwill, co-operation and support it has experienced from organisations and stakeholders in the arts and education sectors. This co-operation is indicated by the voluntary engagement of expert personnel from a wide range of arts and education agencies on advisory committees for the promotion of Charter objectives. The Implementation Group, as well as promoting the Charter's objectives, acts as a stimulating, facilitating and supportive agency, working in partnership with stakeholder agencies.



Arts-in-Education Initiative (AiE)- Exploring Teacher, Artist Partnership as a Model of CPD for Supporting & Enhancing Arts Education

The Arts in Education Portal

Ireland's first Arts in Education Portal, the key national digital recourse for arts in education in Ireland, was launched in May 2015. Already, it is proving to be a great success. Since its launch up to the end of March, there have been 18,145 visitors (per session) with 43,295 page views, an average of nearly 4,000 page views per month. In the context of social media and the Portal, there are 757 on Twitter, 620 Facebook, and 468 subscribers to the Newsletter. There have been 1,796 video plays to date. As a new agency on the scene, these figures betoken a very high level of engagement by interested parties in the years ahead. The Portal allows for two-way involvement, as contributors and receivers, with a key focus on quality. Plans for the next three-year period for the Arts in Education Portal are now being put in place, drawing on the experience and expertise of the Editorial Advisory Committee of distinguished personnel.

A celebration and demonstration of the success of the Portal formed part of the National Arts in Education Day, held at The Irish Museum of Modern Art (IMMA) on 23rd April. The programme of the day, attended by 200 participants, included a range of presentations, workshops, demonstrations and discussion sessions. A range of the arts for children were represented – drama, visual art, music, singing, photography, film, architecture. A great spirit of commitment and enthusiasm was in evidence from the talented contributors who came from many parts of the country.



Featured project "Finding our way"

Teacher – Artist Continuing Staff Development Sessions

A major new development is the more focused attention to helping artists and teachers to develop together their understanding, expertise and creative pitch for arts in education work for children at different age levels. A significant initiative in this regard was the initiation, in 2014, by the Charter Group of a pioneering programme of joint Teacher / Artist collaboration in continuing professional development. The scheme, “Exploring Teacher Artist Partnership as a Model of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for Supporting and Enhancing Arts Education” commenced in the summer of 2014 when six Lead Teacher-Artist pairs engaged in a five day residential personal and professional development programme.

During the period September 2014 to January 2015, six in-school arts projects took place in six primary schools across Ireland. A total of 20 hours duration was allocated to each project; 6 of those hours were allocated for ongoing project planning. The projects were in a variety of art forms: visual art (2), dance, drama, music and literature (language and arts).



An important aspect of the collaboration between teacher and artist is the respect given to each other's expertise.

Research was integral to this teacher-artist partnership initiative from its inception. The learning presented in the Research Report conducted during Phases 1 and 2 based on the experience of the teacher-artist partnerships examined was intended to inform the design of future partnership initiatives and to contribute to the development and sustainability of each partnerships in schools. In summer 2016, this training programme on Teacher/Artist partnership will engage 21 teachers and 21 artists in collaborative learning processes. The training will be extended further in the autumn when the teacher/artist pairs, who have participated in the Training of Trainers programme, will be facilitated to undertake a residency programme in respective teachers' schools.

It is intended that each Education Centre will have the capacity to implement this model locally and regionally into the future through strategic planning involving collaboration and co-operation with the various art organisations, educational institutions and school communities. Significant developments for arts in education for initial teacher education have also been taking place. Higher education institutions, particularly colleges of education, have been extending their offerings of arts in education courses and experience for student teachers. The provision of a set of artists in residency bursaries by the Arts Council, for such institutions has been a major boost to this work.

Artists-Schools Guidelines

The Artists-Schools Guidelines, published in 2006, were produced as a result of a collaborative initiative involving the then Department of Education and Science and the Arts Council. Led by a steering Group and benefitting from the expertise of a wide range of practitioners, the guidelines “set out the co-ordinates – both philosophical and practical – by which good practice [in the field of arts in education] can be understood and fostered.”

A number of changes have occurred in the arts in education landscape in Ireland since the Guidelines were first published. A significant change arising from the Charter is the launch of a national digital resource for the arts in education: www.artsineducation.ie. Given this changing landscape, the Arts Council, on behalf of the Implementation Group of the Arts in Education Charter, is currently reviewing the Artists-Schools Guidelines to examine whether and how they should be updated to continue to act as a useful resource and in particular, how might they be presented as a dynamic resource which could be integrated with the website www.artsineducation.ie. Kids' Own Publishing Partnership, are currently on behalf of the Arts Council, carrying out a research and development phase to inform the updating of Artists-Schools Guidelines. Please see www.artsineducation.ie for more information and to download your copy of the current Guidelines.

Nationwide Mapping of Arts Provision, Relevant to Education

Ireland is well known internationally for its creativity and achievement in many art forms. Throughout the country many artists and arts organisations exist and engage in high quality arts activities which could be more beneficially made available to young people. However, there has tended to be a lack of good information and communication which inhibits the maximum potential benefits of such a rich resource. The Implementation Group has initiated plans to remedy this situation. An interactive map of arts provision for schools across the country is planned for later this year. It is envisaged that the map will be accessible on www.artsineducation.ie and will provide information on local, regional, or national initiatives which support students and teaches to engage with the arts as a core part of their education in Ireland.

It is expected that the national mapping process will identify parts of the country served well by arts in education provision, and also where gaps may exist with a view to remediation in such areas. *St. Mary's National School in Blessington, Co Wicklow - CRAFTed Project courtesy of Ciara Harrison*

Music Generation

Music Generation is Ireland's recently established national non-mainstream infrastructure for performance music education; initiated by Music Network, philanthropically seed funded, and currently co-funded by U2 and The Ireland Funds, the Department of Education and Skills (DES) and Local Music Education Partnerships (MEPs). This infrastructure was set up for the first time in 2010. To date 11 locally based Music Education Partnerships have been established. Music Generation funded each MEP on a 50% basis for three years following which 50% funding is provided by the Department of Education and Skills. During the first five years the Music Generation initiative has incrementally supported, on a matched funding basis, 11 Music Education Partnerships (MEPs) to provide non-mainstream performance music education services in 12 locations throughout Ireland. MEPs are locally based and led by the Education and Training Board or Local Authority and an MEP co-ordinator. They call on a wide partnership across local statutory bodies and a range of locally based NGOs and other (including private) organisations. The MEPs work with a steering group to achieve the aim of providing high quality, inclusive, accessible, diverse, creative and sustainable vocal and instrumental music education, that is locally designed and provided, within a national infrastructure.

Music Generation's most recent statistical report shows that currently over 26,000 children and young people participate in 80 different non-mainstream music education programmes in over 360 different centres, drawing on the expertise of over 300 musicians. Participation figures are steadily rising with 19,119 recorded in the previous year. However, strong participation numbers are but one aspect of the goal of Music Generation. They seek high artistic and educational standards within a non-mainstream educational and socially inclusive model.



ARIS – Arts Rich Schools

The Arts in Education Charter charges the Arts Council, in co-operation with the Department of Arts, Heritage and Gaeltacht, and the Department of Education and Skills, with the promotion of Arts Rich Schools (ARIS). According to the Charter – “ARIS will incentivise and recognise those schools (primary and post-primary) which in a range of ways make the arts a key part of school life and place the arts centrally within the life of the school community affecting pupils primarily but also teachers, parents, other staff and community.”

A working group, chaired by Dr. Michael Finneran on behalf of the Charter Implementation Group, is assisting with the development of Aris. The working group is meeting during the period March-July 2016 to develop a feasible implementation plan for a first phase of Arts over three years (2017-2019). In order to inform the working group’s process and to hear from a range of important stakeholders, the Arts Council has convened a number of dialogues, including a workshop at the recent National Arts in Education Day at the Irish Museum of Modern Art. Written submissions are warmly welcomed from anyone with an interest in this area, including students, teachers, school leaders, artists and school programmers of facilitators working with the Arts Council’s Young People, Children and Education team www.artscouncil.ie.

Local Arts Education Partnership (LAEPs)

An objective of the Arts in Education Charter which, as it evolves, will make a major contribution to rooting arts in education at local and regional level as normative provision, is the Local Arts Education Partnerships (LAEPs). Cavan – Monaghan LAEP has been a very successful pioneer in this arena, but other ETB’s, local authorities and other partners are planning initiatives along these lines. The impact of co-operative efforts by the statutory agencies, the local authorities and the ETBs, in conjunction with the regional education centres and other agencies, have potential to re-shape the landscape of arts in education provision in Ireland to the great benefit of young people throughout the country.

School Policies

The Charter envisages that schools, in their school policies and plans, shall incorporate arts in education opportunities as an important aspect of enriching the curriculum and the wider life of the school. The Implementation Group has got the agreement of the school inspectorate to assist schools in this aspect of their school planning and self-evaluation. The Group has also obtained the support of the authorities in the Department of Education and Skills that provision for arts in education practice will be reflected in the design and equipping of school buildings. The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment has established reciprocal partnership with the Arts Council in the promotion of the arts in schools, as set out in the Charter.



Arts in Junior Cycle Teacher's Summer Course-The aim of it is to enable participants an enhanced tool box of skills and knowledge, in order to effectively deliver the visual arts curriculum.

Research in Arts in Education

The Arts in Education Charter refers to the need for access to research that builds on existing good practice and explores new models of arts and school practice to create a source of knowledge and experience for policy makers and practitioners to draw on. The Implementation Group has had communications with higher education institutions and associated bodies on how best a repository of such research can be established as an on-going source of such provision. Discussions are still underway with the hope that such a repository can be established as part of a national digital resource.

Concluding Note

It is an exciting and challenging time to be involved in the promotion of arts in education in Ireland today. What is afoot in the last number of years is the forging of a culture change, whereby a new era is opening up for the universal integration of the arts as a core dimension of young Irish people's holistic education. About a million of our citizens are attending state-supported schools in Ireland. They are at formative, impressionable and inquiring stages of their development. Their curiosity, inventiveness, creativity, imagination and aesthetic development need to be fostered through engagement with the arts, - as receivers and as practitioners, both in-and-out of school. Such engagement can do much to nurture the creative, imaginative, innovative citizens for their own and society's benefit in the twenty-first century. To sustain the momentum requires the collaborative and co-operation of all involved agencies. The implementation of the Arts in Education Charter is a work in progress. The Implementation Group looks forward to working with all those interested in the Charter's objectives.

