

THE ARTS
IN THE
PRIMARY
SCHOOL:

REFORMING TEACHER
EDUCATION



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FOREWORD

Although children in primary schools engage in creative activities naturally and spontaneously, few primary teachers have either the skills or the confidence to enable this to happen to the degree that it should. This is often because they themselves will have abandoned the arts during their early years in secondary school. It follows that the initial training in the arts of primary school teachers, where skills can be imparted and confidence restored, is crucial. Unfortunately this training is often woefully inadequate, as an earlier report by the National Foundation for Educational Research indicated.

It was these considerations that led the Gulbenkian Foundation, in conjunction with the NFER, to convene a seminar of HMIs, LEA advisers, teachers and teacher educators to share views on what was needed to improve the situation. The terms of reference reached beyond initial teacher training to include in-service provision. The recommendations that came from the seminar were reworked in a series of draft documents, of which this report is the final version. The report summarises the case for the reform of the initial training of primary school teachers in the arts and sets out a number of recommendations concerned with improving both initial training and in-service provision.

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"The curriculum for a maintained school satisfies the requirement of this section if it is a balanced and broadly based curriculum which -

a) promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society; and

b) prepares such pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life."

Education Reform Act, 1988

"A national curriculum which simply turned out children who had first rate numeracy and scientific skills would not be one which any of us would want. And pupils, teachers and parents would rightly rebel against it if it ever came into being. In my view it is education in the arts which makes a significant contribution to the way children develop their feelings and understand their emotions. It is this part of the curriculum which can play the most significant part in ensuring that children, when they leave schools and go out into adult life and employment, have developed emotionally in a way which complements the intellectual knowledge and skills which we all hope they will acquire. The arts then will also have provided a precious foundation which can be developed throughout their lives as adults and can be a continuing source of inspiration, pleasure and excitement."

Angela Rumbold, 28 October 1988. Speech to the National Association for Education in the Arts

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Education Reform Act confirms the importance of the arts (ie art, music, dance and drama) in general education. Encouraging developments in recent years have included the work of the NCC Arts in Schools Project, the increasing involvement of the Arts Council and Regional Arts Associations in schools and community arts, the enhanced professional qualifications of arts teachers, and the emergence of innovatory schemes of assessment and examination. However, despite these real achievements, the quality of arts education in primary classrooms remains patchy. In this paper we make the case for reform and indicate ways in which improvements might be brought about.

1.2 The arts make a vital contribution to the education of the whole child, both as subjects to be learnt and enjoyed in their own right and because they encourage and enrich learning in other subjects. In primary schools the arts subjects have traditionally been a powerful vehicle for education, with their strong emphasis on learning by doing, on stimulating the child's imagination and on generating manipulative, mental and inter-personal skills and values. Such an approach is widely regarded as especially appropriate for the early years of schooling.

1.3 The recent report *The Economic Importance of the Arts in Britain*, published by PSI, has revealed not only the growing employment opportunities available to young people with qualifications in the arts but also the considerable contribution being made by the arts to the nation's GNP. Turn-over in the arts, for instance, is now greater than in the motor industry.

1.4 The new Education Reform Act presents a number of challenges and opportunities to the arts in education. The remit of the NCC encompasses the whole curriculum, ie is not confined to the core and foundation subjects of the National Curriculum as specified in the Act. A balanced and broadly based curriculum promoting the educational objectives identified in the Act must include the arts - and Ministers have given ample evidence of their firm, personal commitment to the future of the arts in both primary and secondary schools. Music and art are to provide the basis of a general arts education for all - these subjects are both designated 'foundation' subjects in the National Curriculum - and drama and dance, we have been assured, are not to be neglected.

1.5 The phased introduction of the TGAT recommendations for testing and assessment, the serial publication of the Subject Working Party reports establishing profile components and attainment targets, and the commissioning of standard attainment tests, all indicate an education system which, by the mid 1990s, will differ in a number of respects from the present. Teachers will need new skills and understanding if they are to cope with the changes now afoot.

1.6 Unfortunately, these planned developments are taking place at a time when, due to a number of factors, there is likely to be a shortfall both in the numbers of primary generalist teachers and of graduate specialists required to deliver the National Curriculum. Since traditional routes for the training and supply of teachers are likely to prove inadequate, some radical alternatives are being sought.

1.7 If the quality of primary arts education is to be improved then arts educators themselves should now come forward with their own proposals as to how the arts are to respond to these various developments and, in particular, play the vital curricular role allotted to them. Thought should be given to the content of the arts curriculum and to the identification of a set of aims and objectives that respect both the separate identities of the different arts subjects and their common interests. Renewed attempts should be made to solve the complex and difficult problems associated with assessment and testing in this area.

1.8 With changes in initial teacher training - including the review of the CATE criteria - the arts require sustained support and a cogently argued and coherent programme of development to ensure that they remain a significant element in the training of primary teachers.

THE CASE FOR REFORM

2.1 The National Foundation for Educational Research, Her Majesty's Inspectorate and the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation have all recently pointed to the need to improve aspects of primary teacher education in relation to the arts.

2.2 The NFER's survey *The Arts: A Preparation to Teach*, carried out in the summer of 1985, looked at the initial training of primary teachers in four of the expressive arts - art, dance, drama and music. The report considered the patterns of compulsory and optional course provision in the arts on undergraduate and PGCE programmes; students' professional preparation for teaching the arts; tutors' perceptions of the role of a newly qualified teacher; the evaluation and assessment of students' and pupils' work and the nature of recent and proposed course changes. The findings painted a bleak picture of the problems associated with providing adequately for the arts in the preparation of primary teachers.

2.3 The HMI survey *Quality in Schools: the Initial Training of Teachers*, carried out between 1983 and 1985, looked at the whole range of initial training and found "inadequate provision for the expressive arts in virtually all the institutions". It concluded that "further consideration needs to be given to the time allocated for expressive arts if students are to be satisfactorily prepared to teach this important area of the primary school's curriculum".

2.4 Although the HMI report *The New Teacher in School*, published in November 1988, revealed general satisfaction among new teachers with their training - two thirds were content - "substantial proportions" criticised an over-emphasis on subject studies, and a lack of emphasis on professional matters such as teaching method and classroom observation. Some teachers, in the words of the report,

"...lacked confidence and understanding in subjects in which they had followed only professional or curriculum courses, physical education and art being the commonest".

2.5 The Gulbenkian Report *The Arts in Schools*, published in 1982, makes similar points, emphasising in particular the class teacher's general "lack of confidence" where the arts are concerned.

2.6 These reports identified several areas of particular concern:

a) Course organisation

- i. There was considerable variation in the character and balance of courses between different institutions.
- ii. The number of hours allotted to the arts varied widely from course to course.
- iii. The arts suffered disproportionately from inadequate resources of time, staffing, space and materials.

b) Subject Studies and Subject Method

- i. Too few courses helped students apply their specialist subject to children's learning.
- ii. Students generally lacked confidence about long-term planning and the progressive development of children's arts knowledge, concepts and skills.
- iii. There was insufficient emphasis upon training for curriculum leadership.

c) Educational and Professional Studies

- i. Those with limited previous arts experience often lacked confidence and did not gain the insights needed to teach the arts creatively.
- ii. Undergraduate and PGCE courses rarely considered the variety of pupils' needs.
- iii. The relationship between the expressive arts and the rest of the primary curriculum was little explored or systematically related to other parts of an undergraduate programme.
- iv. Insufficient attention was paid to the needs of ethnic minority pupils.
- v. The special needs of pupils with learning difficulties or particular strengths were not being adequately addressed.
- vi. Too few undergraduate and PGCE arts courses provided guidance in assessing or recording children's progress in the arts.
- vii. Developing critical awareness in student and child was not adequately considered in many of the PGCE courses surveyed.

THE TEACHERS WE NEED

3.1 Three kinds of teacher of the arts are needed in primary schools: *the generalist class teacher* confident enough to include the arts as part of a broad and balanced curriculum for all pupils; *the specialist teacher* able to offer practical expertise in one of the major art forms; and *the curriculum leader* capable of co-ordinating arts provision and staff development in the school as a whole.

3.2 *The Class Teacher* should

- a) have a clear grasp of the educational role of the arts, an understanding of how children learn through the arts, and a knowledge of the different stages of a child's aesthetic development;
- b) be personally interested in and familiar with at least one or two art forms;
- c) be confident in encouraging creative work across the whole range of the arts;
- d) be able to recognise and evaluate the artistic quality in children's work.

3.3 *The Specialist Teacher* should, in addition to the skills and understandings of the generalist class teacher,

- a) be able to offer practical expertise in one of the major arts disciplines (eg art, music);
- b) be able to apply that expertise in support of non-specialist colleagues.

Every school or cluster of small schools should, ideally, have a practising artist and a practising musician on the staff.

3.4 *The Curriculum Leader* should, in addition to the skills and understandings of the generalist class teacher,

- a) be fired by a personal enthusiasm for and understanding of the arts;
- b) be able to assist in the development of a comprehensive arts policy for a school;
- c) play an active role in staff development and the proper management of the arts curriculum;
- d) be a persuasive and articulate advocate for the arts with parents and governors.

INITIAL TEACHER TRAINING

With the recognition that the arts should form part of the curriculum we see the need for the following reforms:

4.1 Selection of Students

- a) Prospectuses should make clear and specific reference to the arts component in a course.
- b) Application forms should invite students to list their qualifications, particular interests and previous involvement in the arts.
- c) Procedures for selecting students for undergraduate and PGCE courses should, irrespective of main subject, reflect the role of the arts in primary education. Where appropriate, interviews should include practical arts workshops involving a variety of creative activities.
- d) Interviewers should build up a detailed profile of a student, through written and verbal means, and assess a student's enthusiasm for and commitment to the arts. Where possible, arts tutors should be involved in selection interviews to ensure that students are asked relevant questions about the arts.
- e) Students should be expected to demonstrate communication and inter-personal skills at interviews by participating additionally in simple workshops and simulation exercises.
- f) Interviewers should assess students' responses to children's arts work by showing slides, videos and actual examples.

4.2 Staff

- a) Staff should be qualified to educate and train the students in their main arts subjects at a level appropriate to higher education.
- b) Staff concerned with pedagogy should have had recent experience as teachers of the arts, ideally teaching pupils within the age range for which they are preparing students, and should maintain regular and frequent experience of classroom teaching.
- c) All staff should be encouraged to develop their personal interests in the arts and should appreciate the scope for arts education across the whole curriculum.

4.3 Course Organisation

- a) Close links should be established and maintained between courses, local schools and local professional arts organisations.
- b) Experienced arts teachers and arts workers should be involved in planning, supporting and appraising students' practical work in schools and in their training within the institution.
- c) Students should be able to work alongside a class teacher teaching the arts prior to teaching practice itself.
- d) Adequate and appropriate resources (staff, time, materials and equipment) are essential to successful work in the arts. For example, music making depends upon the possibility of "silence" and the control of "noise". Drama and dance need space, privacy and a suitable floor. Art needs the control of light source, the availability of basic mark making and modelling materials, tools and instruments, and of suitable working surfaces. New technology is rapidly revolutionising many arts experiences and opportunities for children, and students should be trained to exploit them.

4.4 Course Content

- a) Students should be prepared for the diversity of ability, behaviour, social background and ethnic and cultural origins encountered in ordinary schools, and to respond to that diversity.
- b) Students should be prepared to recognise, understand and cope with different expressive needs and levels of performance, including learning difficulties and special abilities.
- c) All students should be able to teach at least two of the arts during teaching practice - on a worthwhile scale.
- d) Students must be encouraged to see the "expressive" and the "aesthetic" as cross-curricular themes.
- e) Students should experience and understand the contribution of the new technologies to children's learning in the arts.

4.5 Subject Studies and Subject Method

- a) Courses in individual arts subjects should be designed to equip some students to act as curriculum leaders.
- b) It should be possible for students to have such practical experience of the other arts as would allow them to make connections across the arts and develop a coherent, inter-disciplinary understanding of the field.
- c) Combined Arts Courses should offer specialist training in each of the major arts domains and should prepare students to act as curriculum leaders in the arts.

4.6 Educational and Professional Studies

- a) *All* students should receive a basic arts course that includes art, music, dance and drama. Time allowed for these subjects together should be generally equivalent to that for other major curriculum areas such as maths, language, science/technology.
- b) Optional courses in individual arts subjects should be provided where possible (approximately 60 hours) which, taken in conjunction with other relevant arts experience, would equip the student with a particular arts strength and - after say two years in a school - with the personal resources needed for curriculum leadership in the arts.

4.7 Student Assessment and Certification

- a) Modes of assessment should reflect the special character of work in the arts and be consistent with procedures advocated for use in schools. Students should be assessed on the basis of whether or not they reach the criteria specified in the various tasks they are assigned.
- b) Criteria should be drawn from the course aims and objectives - that students should be aware of and have confidence in the arts, be effective in organising learning, and be sensitive to children's aesthetic development.
- c) The emphasis on assessing students should shift from their written work to their responses to children's work, as set down for example in student's personal logs.
- d) Students should be familiar with relevant publications on the arts in education.

- e) Course work might be examined by continuous assessment recorded in a student profile, with a final assessment which could comprise written exam, personal interview, group seminar and public presentation. The profile would serve two basic purposes - to help determine whether or not a student be awarded a certificate, and to act as a detailed source of reference, including evidence of the student's involvement in the arts, both for the student's first post and for subsequent posts.

5.1 The Arts: A National Priority

In 1987 the Government established the LEA Training Grants Scheme (LEATGS) following its decision in the 1985 White Paper *Better Schools* that "a much more systematic approach is needed to the planning of in-service training at school and LEA level". In addition, the 1988 Education Act has given new responsibilities to school heads and governing bodies: schools are to manage their own finances, must publish full details of their curriculum and take overall charge of staff recruitment, development and in-service training. Our recommendations in this report for initial training, if adopted, are likely to take time to bear fruit: more immediate would be the impact of our recommended changes in in-service training. The problems facing the arts in primary schools are deep-rooted: they could be addressed immediately by making the arts a national INSET priority.

5.2 Planning INSET

a) INSET should be planned through a combination of award-bearing and other professional courses. Such courses should, where appropriate, be supported by learning packs, devised at national and local levels. Accreditation of modular part-time professional INSET should be linked to nationally validated awards and possibly, in time, to National Council for Vocational Qualifications (NCVQ) levels of competence. Consideration should be given to participation in any network of regional centres which might be established as a result of the NCC Arts in Schools Project.

b) INSET planning can enable teachers to take ownership of the National Curriculum and translate it in ways appropriate to the children they teach. Planners should take account of the size and range of the staff team, locally available resources, children's cultural and linguistic needs, and a school's location in the community.

c) Priority should be given to establishing school-focussed in-service training programmes related to school development plans and with teachers, including peripatetic teachers, working as a team.

5.3 The Focus of INSET in the Arts

a) *The Whole Curriculum:* Schools will need to ensure a broad and balanced educational experience for their pupils and, in the time remaining outside the National Curriculum, should accommodate these other subjects traditionally taught in schools. Drama and dance should both receive consideration in terms of the school's whole curriculum and INSET courses of all kinds should be available to teachers in these areas.

b) *The National Curriculum:* It is to be expected that the National Curriculum will exert a major influence upon future INSET provision. Where the arts are concerned there will be particular additional demands for training in the two foundation subjects, music and art. Drama teachers should be provided for alongside English colleagues, and dance teachers within the arrangements made for PE. Apart from offering specialist training such courses should address the issue of cross-curricular themes - in particular the cross-curricular aspects of the arts: creativity, self-expression, aesthetic judgement and enjoyment.

c) *The Arts Curriculum:* INSET programmes should be developed which will ensure balance between the various arts disciplines and, within each art form, balance between creative activity, enjoyment and critical reflection. Through their INSET courses teachers should be encouraged to realise the six objectives identified for arts education in the Gulbenkian Report *The Arts in Schools*:

- developing the full variety of human intelligence
- developing creativity
- educating in feeling and sensibility
- exploring values
- understanding cultural change and differences
- developing physical and perceptual skills.

Courses should consider the questions of "progression" and "continuity" and be sensitive to children's varying rates of development. (It is worth noting that at least 60% of primary schools currently have classes comprising two or more year groups.) Courses should also include experience from outside the school, such as links with community arts groups, arts centres, theatres, museums and galleries, artists and parents.

5.4 Curriculum Leaders and Specialist Teachers

a) Curriculum leaders, including headteachers, are crucial to the successful development of the arts within the National Curriculum. Such leaders need in-service training in arts skills and INSET development skills. Focussing curriculum leadership training on teachers' centres can encourage teachers to see their role as wider than their own school.

b) Curriculum leaders need substantial training to manage the complex range of resources available to them and to run staff development and training for their colleagues. LEAs could establish an inventory of resources and make teachers aware of this during their training.

c) Each school would benefit from the presence of a specialist in music and art. Appropriate specialist courses should be provided as part of a school's total INSET programme.

5.5 Professional Qualification

Where possible INSET programmes should allow teachers to participate in full-time and part-time courses leading to higher degrees and to build up accreditation for professional awards through CNAA and Institutions of Higher Education. Such courses can provide valuable incentives and support for professional updating and renewal and should not be lost sight of as other, relatively less intensive training schemes become available.

5.6 Evaluating INSET

a) With teachers publicly accountable for the effective delivery of the National Curriculum they will need to spend more time on the cyclical process of monitoring, evaluating, planning and delivering the arts work of the school. Teachers' directed time and training days can be used to appraise and evaluate the school curriculum and the INSET programmes needed to sustain and develop the school's work.

b) Curriculum leaders are key people in appraising the effectiveness of the arts curriculum and evaluating INSET programmes. They need to distinguish between long-term evaluation and more immediate requirements in implementing the National Curriculum. Feedback from teachers after six weeks or one term of application in the class-

room can help short-term evaluation of INSET, which can influence planning and delivery of subsequent programmes concerned with the introduction of the National Curriculum.

c) The evaluation of the arts INSET programmes for their long-term effects on the quality of children's learning should be related to school development plans and involve people in the arts from outside the school. Such long-term evaluation can be supported and augmented by the national or regional curriculum resource centres linked to training institutions in the regions, and co-ordinated by LEA advisers and inspectors.

d) Heads bear a central responsibility for implementing school development plans and for reporting publicly on the success of those plans. Their arts in-service training programme needs to include training as arts curriculum leaders and training in evaluating balance in the arts curriculum, in the broader sense, across the school.

PRINCIPAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Initial Training

- 1 *Selection* procedures should reflect the importance attached to learning in and through the arts. 4.1
- 2 *Staff* must have recent relevant experience of teaching the arts in schools. 4.2
- 3 Adequate and appropriate *resources* are essential to successful work in the arts. 4.3
- 4 Students must apprehend the scope for the expressive and the aesthetic as *cross-curricular* themes. 4.4
- 5 Courses should equip students to work as *curriculum leaders* and (eg in music) as *subject specialists*. 4.5
- 6 All students require a *basic course* in the arts meriting equal status with maths, language, science/technology. 4.6
- 7 Students should learn about the special character of *assessment* in the arts and this should be reflected in their own experience on the course. 4.7
- 8 In granting students Qualified Teacher Status the quality of their practical arts work in the *classroom* should be taken into account. 4.7

INSET and Staff Development

- 9 Consideration should be given to making the arts a *national INSET priority*. 5.1
- 10 INSET programmes should combine *award-bearing courses* and other professional courses organised locally and through regional development centres. 5.2
- 11 The arts teacher's role in National Curriculum *assessment* should receive INSET attention. 5.3
- 12 *Parents* and *governors* should be invited to participate in school-based INSET. 5.3
- 13 INSET courses should address the issue of pupils' *aesthetic development*. 5.3
- 14 *Continuity* between primary and secondary sectors should be a major concern of future INSET programmes. 5.3
- 15 *Heads* must be given help in appreciating the special importance of the educational role of the arts. 5.4
- 16 Priority should be given to INSET for arts *specialists* and *curriculum leaders*. 5.4

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" This is a most valuable publication, and it has come at a most important time. I do hope it will receive the attention it merits from teacher training institutions, thus laying the right foundations for arts education in the age of the National Curriculum."

David Hargreaves

*Professor of Education
University of Cambridge*

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