

# 2012/13 Intelligence Gathering Report Focus: Schools and cultural education

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*RIO CIC, ACE Bridge Organisation for the SW of England*

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## **Appendix 1 – SERIO Schools’ Research Report**

## **Appendix 2 – SERIO Schools’ Evidence Database and Analysis**

## 2 Executive Summary

### 2.1 Aim and context

Part of our role, as an ACE-supported bridge organisation, is to assemble and disseminate information and ideas that shed light on the developing and changing relationships between the education and children and young people's sector, and the wider cultural sector – for the benefit of both. We are keen for this information to have a practical basis, to lead to improvement at this intersection – and to better outcomes for children and young people. The production of this report fits in with this part of our role.

The agreed aim of the report is 'to respond to; build on; add depth to; and provide regional and local contrast, context and nuance in relation to the NFER study recently produced for A New Direction (London Schools Research: Cultural Engagement)<sup>1</sup>. It therefore focuses on cultural education in schools in the SW, the extent and nature of schools' engagement with cultural organisations, and the opportunities, challenges and issues arising at the moment for all those involved in this area of work. Our intention is to produce an engaged and grounded response to the NFER study, pulling on local intelligence, networks and qualitative research and highlighting new ideas, areas of value, discussion and debate, choices, opportunities, challenges and practical ways forward for schools and the cultural sector.

This report also has a range of data appendices, produced by SERIO at the University of Plymouth. We encourage readers to dip into these appendices and familiarise themselves with the content. Schools are ever-more driven and informed by educational data analysis, tracking, performance and assessment measures and metrics and we think it important that all those seeking to engage schools in partnership working need to understand the frameworks that they are operating in.

### 2.2 Issues

It will be no surprise to learn that the central theme emerging from our research is one of overwhelming and all-encompassing change.

Within the cultural sector the changes over the last two years include:

- Henley reviews into music and cultural education, leading to shifts and developments on the ground, such as:
  - The advent of Music Education Hubs in local areas.
  - Initiatives such as the Heritage Schools and Museums in Schools programmes rolling out nationally<sup>2</sup>.
  - The development of pilot Cultural Education Partnership Groups, including one in Bristol, with an aim to link up cultural provision and

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<sup>1</sup> Lord, P., Dawson, A., Featherstone, G. and Sharp C. (2012). *London Schools Research: Cultural Engagement*. Slough: NFER.

<http://www.nfer.ac.uk/nfer/publications/ANDL02/ANDL02.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> In the SW region these initiatives taking place in Bristol; the latter with the SS Great Britain, working in partnership with the Science Museum in London <http://www.ssgreatbritain.org/>

activity for children and young people and encourage partners and providers to work more closely together in the new landscape.

- Wider reorganisation in this area, with museums, music education and aspects of libraries falling into the remit of the Arts Council and the notion of a 'cultural sector' taking firmer shape on the ground as a result.
- Cuts pretty much across the board, at national level, but also, and often most sharply felt, within LAs.
- Changes in policy direction and emphasis within ACE, including the end of many special initiatives, such as Creative Partnerships and Find Your Talent, the advent of bridge organisations but in a different space to this – directed to work strategically rather than on a project basis; plus an emphasis on scalable mechanisms such as the Arts Award to drive activity.

There are, if anything, even greater levels of change and reform taking place in the educational sector, with the following implications:

- This level of reform in a system leads to introversion (in schools and the educational sector) – whilst the reform is assimilated. It makes it harder to form partnerships and secure commitment across the boundary of the system – and this applies to cultural organisations seeking school engagement.
- The reforms encompass tensions and contradictions; they are not necessarily experienced as unified and flowing (e.g. aspects of the proposed new curriculum can be read as highly prescriptive, but at the same time free schools and academies have 'freedom' from this if they choose). Opportunities and massive challenges therefore exist side by side.
- The public realm is a really tough place to work at the moment, and there are no easy answers or magic wands to be waved. It is a very hard time for cultural and educational organisations and, whilst there are some areas of opportunity opening up, it is important not to overstate the potential – these opportunities are often hard to grasp and involve significantly different ways of operating in order to realise.

Specifically, we see four aspects of these educational changes with major implications for cultural education and cultural organisations:

1. Marketisation – by which we mean a 'freeing up' in terms of who can provide schooling and educational services for schools, and be paid to do so. This is therefore leading to very different flows of money in and around schools: in terms of who pays for what, to who, and why (including schools trading with other schools) – and also in terms of who can support cultural education and why they may do so (or not!)
2. Diversification – in terms of who runs, shapes and makes decisions about schools in each local area.
3. Curriculum change – affecting, in a very fundamental way, what is taught, learnt and considered important in schools.
4. Changes in school performance measures, participation and workforce – affecting what 'counts and is counted' in schools (and therefore also what is valued, financially and in terms of commitment, emphasis and time), and the shape and feel of the overall environment within each school, including the ability to engage in cultural partnerships.

Cultural organisations need to understand the forces at play here in order to make informed choices about their future direction, based on strategic analysis of the risks, challenges, and opportunities opening up as a result.

## 2.3 Findings and recommendations

### 2.3.1 What this means for schools

The NFER report drew the following conclusions for schools:

- Become aware of and access opportunities – be proactive, free up staff time to seek out opportunities and to develop partnerships, draw upon the capacity of support staff and parent volunteers, establish key roles amongst staff or allocate the role to your school’s art or music coordinator.
- Enable pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds to experience, enjoy and feel comfortable in accessing the richness of London’s cultural resources.
- Start local, network with other schools to boost contacts and share resources [we would also argue that schools should commission and enter into partnerships together: this will bring you economies of scale and, often, bigger and better work, particularly in relation to cultural engagement].
- Strategically seek out funding opportunities – free staff time to seek out funding opportunities, work with organisations that pursue funding themselves or collaborate with other schools to maximise value, draw on resources and facilities available to you locally.
- Develop and maintain momentum through a whole school approach – keep cultural engagement on the agenda by including it in your school development plan and championing it through the School Leadership Team, develop a vision for cultural engagement and establish a strategic approach to delivery.

Given the similarity of our own findings we concur with all of these and add the following recommendations for schools:

- Explore cooperative and enterprising responses in this space, therefore avoiding the worst aspects of markets and making the most of the opportunities opening up.
- Make the most of the freedoms opening up in relation to organisational and operating models, curricula, staffing and budgets. A theatre could run a drama department; a museum could underpin the history curriculum!
- Look for other forms of value and partnership with cultural organisations – not just traded or financial.
- Cultural education activity, partnerships and programmes are good ways to: take the school beyond its boundaries; draw in parents; and to market and differentiate the school, conveying what is special about it.
- Share your expertise around pupil tracking and assessment with cultural organisations; work together to carefully monitor and assess the impact of these interventions on individual pupil progress, and on teaching and learning.
- Deploy staff in creative ways to allow the school to network beyond its boundaries – with the cultural sector and other community partners. Roles with some element of coordination can feel like a luxury at the current time, but they

can bring outcomes for learners and additional resources and value to the table.

- Explore links between cultural education and creative enterprise. Youth unemployment is high and there is a lack of interesting and rewarding work for young people. Look at learning models that dovetail together cultural education, enterprise, income generation and positive outcomes for young people.

### 2.3.2 What this means for the cultural sector

The NFER reported the following implications for London's cultural sector:

- Tailor the offer and approach to schools – different schools have varying priorities, motivations and barriers. Consult schools (and possibly students too) on what it is they want to achieve, establish whether there is a target group and tailor the offer to their age group or level of ability.
- Strengthen how cultural organisations' offer is communicated – reach out to schools, meet staff face to face where possible, be clear and specific about how your scheme can contribute to their aims, be clear about your own agenda if you have one so that schools can meet you half way.
- Help schools to identify ways to engage parents (if this is their aim) – offering cultural opportunities to pupils *and* parents and families seems effective in reaping even greater benefits for young people.
- Be willing to travel to and host activities in facilities local to the school – to help to overcome some of the barriers that schools face in respect to travel costs and logistics (particularly for those in outer London).
- Develop an offer for children and young people with special educational needs.

We agree with all of these, and, furthermore, see the following implications and recommendations for cultural sector organisations:

- There is scope for radical innovation in the current context (e.g. cultural organisations supporting, running and shaping new schools).
- Avoid mission creep: just because you can support the opening of a new school or trade services does not mean that you should or even want to. Each organisation will need to think sharply and strategically about their place and way forward.
- Be realistic about the scale and nature of these possible opportunities; they exist in a different space and are not replacements for declining revenue funding.
- Think about the niche you occupy, the value you really offer to schools, and the nature of your work and ensure you will be able to work with continued integrity and quality in that space going forward. Do you actually love and enjoy working with schools. Can you do your best artistic or cultural work in this context?
- There may be a need to build the organisation's commercial and operational skills and capacity (e.g. through boards, training and recruitment) if developing in this direction.
- There is also the need for very different operating and business models in a traded or commercial space (with good analysis of risk, consideration of cashflow and, often, a need for initial investment).

- Look to cooperate and work together with other organisations, but within a pragmatic and business-like framework. Diverse consortia are likely to be a key way forward for all but the largest cultural organisations, enabling economies of scale, diversity of delivery approaches, and the ability to respond to significantly sized opportunities and commissions. However, be realistic, building consortia is time consuming and requires resourcing and needs to produce rewards proportional to real opportunity.
- There is scope to ‘leverage’ the brand value and nature of delivery of larger and better-known NPOs and cultural institutions in relation to the emerging school market. Smaller organisations face more challenging times but their flexibility may be an asset, allowing them to find a niche.
- There are, theoretically, lots of potential ‘customers’ out there for cultural education provision and services. Finding them is the first challenge (school by school, and through intelligent content-driven marketing), and creating scale is the next. This will require investment and like all new business development, returns will not be immediate.
- If you are able to secure long term investment or have good reserves, consider working with clusters, federations, chains, associations and influential schools in order to create this scale, access numbers of schools at once and achieve more strategic buy-in.
- Understand your offer and stick to it. Within this context, look for schools whose strategic priorities link with yours as they are more likely to have budgets that align too.
- Engage with schools as a knowledgeable and active partner, and familiarise yourself with a school’s data and development plans before approaching them about joint work.
- Within a school, aim to engage with senior management and the Head as well as lead teachers due to levels of influence, budget and the ability to endorse and make things happen.
- Are there other forms of value that you can create via joint school work or partnerships? Not all partnerships are based on monetary value. Are there other ways you could be helping schools that are of relatively high value to them, but easy for you to provide (e.g. expertise, advertising, networking opportunities, brand relationship?) What value can they give back to you in return (e.g. networks of parents and families, audience development?) However, be careful to understand the marginal costs to you of all activity and where it fits with your strategic priorities.
- We need to work harder to generate better evidence of the impact and outcomes for children and young people when participating in cultural education: at an individual level, cohort and school level. This includes understanding and using tracking and evaluation methods that have validity within a school and Ofsted context.

### 2.3.3 What this means for children and young people

The NFER report did not include a section directly about children and young people, and there is a real risk that in amongst the complexity of discussion around marketisation and diversification in the schools sector we forget their needs and views.

As the bridge organisation we are keen to support and develop a much wider and deeper network of young people able to contribute to these debates and lead arts and cultural practice at local level. We think the Gold Arts Award is an excellent vehicle for this development and are supporting organisations right across the SW to build work in this area.

#### 2.3.4 What this means for the bridge, ACE and other commissioners of arts and culture

The NFER report drew the following conclusions in this area:

- Increase engagement – consider prioritising strategies to reach the ‘intrigued engagers’ group [those schools who have a limited engagement but want help to do more] as these schools have an appetite to do more.
- Help cultural organisations build teacher skill development into their offer.
- Encourage school-to-school support for cultural engagement...and for sharing practice between schools.
- Encourage schools to access local opportunities.
- Join things up and create strong partnerships.
- Be mindful of schools’ budgets for arts and cultural learning – given that the Arts Award has a cost, and that Artsmark will in future incur a fee.
- Help schools to leverage funding and facilities – help schools to collaborate on commissioning, sharing transport and facilities, and make schools aware of the facilities available to them locally.

Picking up on the previous point relating to children and young people, there is a need for us all to work together to more clearly understand and then articulate the value of different aspects of cultural education – particularly in relation to schools, who are becoming significant commissioners of this type of work (even if small-scale individually).

We also see risks, within the wider cultural sector and particularly at times of austerity, of tensions between cultural forms, organisations, initiatives and sub-sectors. We all have a responsibility to focus externally on the big picture and the essential value of art and culture, and not over-focus on how a diminishing cake is sliced in the next round of public sector cuts and spending review.

- We need more active discussion about the potential ‘market’ aspects of cultural education – and the implications for all. These developments are so new we are not even clear on the business models we may need, the nature of the opportunities opening up, the pitfalls, the conflicts and challenges, and so on.
- The large number of schools in the region and the small size of many of them necessitate strategic frameworks or ways to work smartly with clusters, teaching schools and academy chains.
- Arts Award in particular has demonstrated real value during these difficult times; it is a clear and high quality framework that can drive activity on the ground that is young person led, purposeful, valued by schools and efficient.
- Key schools could be viewed differently in rural areas: as engines of cultural development, and often the most significant public investment/facility in an area. Is there scope for schools to be seen and treated as cultural organisations in areas where investment is otherwise thin on the ground? Their practice and

reach is often strong.

- New forms of investment are needed to allow cultural organisations to develop traded or more commercial services for the education market.
- We need to find ways to produce radical innovation and practice outside current systems and paradigms. There is a risk that, in a drive towards mixed-funding models and marketisation in the education sector, we produce work that meets market need but is of less artistic and cultural value as a result.

As the bridge organisation we have a particular responsibility to take forward actions in all of these areas, and are building our programme for 2013-15 to take this new analysis into account. Actions for the bridge organisation as a result:

- Providing direct and ongoing support for key cultural organisations seeking to shift their relationship with schools, the education sector and young people.
- Developing detailed work that allows the cultural sector to better articulate its impact, particular in relation to schools and education.
- Work to share and build improved knowledge and expertise in the cultural sector regarding educational practice, opportunities and challenges.
- An enhanced communication function, with improved website, email bulletins, twitter feed and social media presence – to share expertise, knowledge, and ideas, and encourage and facilitate debate and ‘joining up’.
- Continued strategic support for Arts Award and Artsmark across the region.
- Linked to this, some work to place children and young people more centrally in debates about arts and cultural practice in schools going forward.
- Local development in areas where cultural commissioners and strategic bodies such as ACE identify a need for more activity on the ground, but doing this within a sustainable framework.
- Work to develop genuinely radical innovations and new models: that seize new opportunities and make the most of some of the freedoms now becoming available.
- Providing particular support for new initiatives arising from the Henley Review.
- Work with key clusters of schools and strategic alliances or networks: by targeting networks and ‘influentials’ we can encourage and develop cultural practice and then spread this via wider school networks.
- Exploring new forms of investment that would allow cultural organisations to develop ideas, products and services in the new markets opening up to them – including crowdfunding and social investment vehicles.

### 3 Aim

Part of our role, as an ACE bridge organisation, is to assemble and disseminate data and information that sheds light on the developing and changing relationships between the education and children and young people's sector, and the wider cultural sector. We are keen for this information to have a practical (as oppose to purely theoretical) basis, and to lead to sharper and better practice at this intersection – and ultimately to better outcomes for children and young people.

For 2012/13 we are pleased that ACE has chosen a very specific and pertinent focus for this annual intelligence gathering and dissemination exercise. The volume of change and diversity in relation to both these sectors is unprecedented in recent history and it therefore feels crucial to attempt to get some sort of handle on the shifts and changes taking place at this intersection – and of the implications for children and young people.

The agreed aim of this report is 'to respond to; build on; add depth to; and provide regional and local contrast, context and nuance in relation to the NFER study recently produced for A New Direction (London Schools Research: Cultural Engagement)<sup>3</sup>.

Our intention is to produce an engaged and grounded response to this study, pulling on local intelligence, networks and qualitative research.

The aim of the NFER report was to 'investigate cultural education in London schools, including the extent and nature of London schools' engagement with cultural organisations. The research took place in 2012. It involved a rapid evidence assessment, a survey of senior leaders in London schools (achieving 366 responses from 2,890 schools), and detailed consultations with ten schools.'

The NFER report provides a good and solid foundation in this space and, despite what would appear, at first sight, as a very different geographical and educational context, schools in the SW concur with practically all the broad findings of that report: we summarise these findings in appropriate places throughout this document<sup>4</sup>. Though this report can be read as a stand-alone document, we would recommend that all those interested in this area also read the NFER report too. ACE agreed that it was of limited value producing similar quantitative surveys in other local areas around the country, as they would not necessarily add much new value to current findings.

However, there is scope to add additional layers to that report – highlighting differences from the London context; updating on developments since (given that the educational agenda is shifting so quickly and dramatically); adding a further layer of depth and qualitative research, and examples; as well as an engaged, provocative

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<sup>3</sup> Lord, P., Dawson, A., Featherstone, G. and Sharp C. (2012). *London Schools Research: Cultural Engagement*. Slough: NFER.  
<http://www.nfer.ac.uk/nfer/publications/ANDL02/ANDL02.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> We refer to the above report as 'the NFER report' in the rest of this document for the sake of expediency.

and committed response that poses challenges for the cultural sector and reveals areas of potential value and opportunity for all of those seeking to work in this area.

## 4 Methodology

We commissioned the team from SERIO at Plymouth University to produce an accessible and comprehensive overview of some high-level school and educational data in the SW region. Their report and accompanying database can be found in appendices 1 and 2, and we summarise some of the key findings in section 5.

The data is held within a set of easy-to-use excel spreadsheets. There are hyperlinks within the data fields; references; links to original data sources and a cover sheet that sits on top of all the separate categories of data. We would recommend that users familiarise themselves with the different pages and data fields within the database as well as the overview report. As they do so, patterns readily emerge and, because most of the data is broken down by LA area, comparisons can usefully be made, and cultural organisations can also access background and more detailed information about their own specific educational context.

We return to this point, but given increasingly data-driven approaches to teaching and learning, it is vital that cultural partners become aware of the significance of the range of key educational measures – particularly so because they play such significance in relation to strategy, budgets and investment decisions in schools. The SERIO database and report will also be useful when formulating applications for funding bids (where partners will need to display a solid grasp of the educational framework and rationale for their proposed project or programme) or when seeking to target work and interventions in relation to areas of particular need or potential.

Over the last year we have also visited key schools across the region, and met with a range of educational networks, teaching school clusters, federations, trusts and heads' associations in order to explore this area in more depth with them – and add further dimensions to the NFER's initial findings.

We need to stress, however, that this document represents our own views and take on the state and nature of relationships between the cultural and educational sectors. We want to provide thoughts and findings to push against and trigger debate and, where appropriate, lead to positive action – not just dry description.

## 5 Overview facts, figures and background – the school context in the SW

The SERIO report and database at appendix 1 and 2 provide a fuller picture. Here we summarise some of the most relevant findings and markers from this data; and we then move on to pull out some of the key trends and issues emerging from the current high volume of educational change and policy reform – attempting to look at these changes through a ‘cultural education’ lens and drawing out some of the most significant patterns.

SERIO have pulled together data covering the following areas:

### 5.1 Trends in school numbers

In 2012 there were 761,960 pupils in 2,584 schools in the South West, including 373,860 in 1,867 state-funded primary schools and 320,515 in 322 state-funded secondary schools. As the bridge organisation, this means we could not hope to work with all schools directly and therefore have to target effort and energy more strategically. For example, working with Heads’ networks and associations, or with Teaching School alliances – some of the new clusters and collectives becoming increasingly prominent in relation to education in local areas and discussed in more detail later in the report.

Since 2008 the number of schools in the region has decreased by 2.6% from 2,653 to its current level of 2,584. Correspondingly, the number of pupils has also fallen over the same time period by 0.4% from 764,700 in 2008, to 761,960 in 2012.

Of the 16 local authorities in the South West, all experienced either a decrease in the number of schools in their area between 2008 and 2012 (14), or reported that provision had remained the same (2). No area reported an increase in the number of schools. The biggest reduction in school numbers was found in Plymouth, which reduced by 10% from 110 in 2008 to 99 in 2012.

School budgets and futures link very closely to pupil numbers (since a pupil brings a per head funding amount to the school) so where there are falling numbers there can often be increased ‘competition’ between schools for pupils, and collaboration between schools can become harder against this backdrop. Similarly, proposed new or free schools opening in area where numbers have been falling (such as Plymouth) are also potentially more sensitive for these reasons – they can contribute, indirectly, to school closure or shrinkage elsewhere in their locality. Bigger picture, this also illustrates the need for the cultural sector to truly understand the educational context that they are working in, and demonstrate sensitivity and awareness of the impact of the data trends in their partner schools, and on the teachers and Heads they are seeking to work with.

Projecting forward, however, there is predicted to be an increase in demand for nursery and primary school places between 2013-20 (by 15% nationally) – with this leading to the need for new classes in existing schools and significant new school facilities. It will then obviously have a knock on demand for secondary places in the period beyond this.

## 5.2 Achievement on a Local Authority (LA) by LA basis

This table reveals a fairly even pattern across the SW. Areas that were significantly below the national average a few years ago (like Bristol) have been working hard to improve attainment and achievement levels in schools.

This area is, however, subject to significant change as a result of ongoing reforms. We will discuss some of these reforms in more detail later in the report but, in essence, as the role of LAs changes in relation to schools and as schools become increasingly independent, the issue of attainment and achievement now sits more closely with the school. And where LAs no longer support or run many of the schools in their area, their levers to make change happen are increasingly limited. Achievement therefore becomes more relevant on a school-by-school basis going forward, and comparisons between LAs become less valuable. Indeed, LAs can now find themselves in the tricky position of being criticised for overall school performance at the same time as lacking the levers to intervene in this situation.

Secondly, the nature and type of data in this area is changing too, both in terms of what 'counts' and is valued (e.g. what exams and performance criteria are used to judge achievement levels), and how (e.g. the nature of the Ofsted inspection regime is changing, as are exams and qualifications). This will all lead to significant shifts in schools over the next couple of years, and is likely to reveal different patterns of achievement and performance across schools and LA areas. For example, we are aware of several schools across the SW that were found to be 'good' by Ofsted a couple of years ago but have recently been re-inspected and found to be 'requiring improvement'; attainment and achievement are at very similar levels in these schools but the new Ofsted framework places value on different aspects of the school's performance, particularly overall quality of teaching and individualised pupil progress. Again, cultural organisations need to be aware of the sensitivities and pressures inherent in these shifts and changes.

## 5.3 High achieving providers

SERIO provide a list of these settings as we have found that these schools are often key drivers of innovation in their local areas, including in their approaches to culture and creative learning. They tend (and are able) to take more risks in relation to learning and the partnerships they enter into, and usually demonstrate a high degree of energy and commitment to community engagement, and creative approaches to the curriculum. The SW has a broadly average number of 'outstanding' and high achieving educational providers, but, for example, there is particular strength in the primary sector in Devon and Cornwall. These high achieving providers are also tending to become the leaders of federations and academies; or the lead schools in teaching school alliances (more discussion of these new groupings of schools, and their significance, in section 7). For cultural organisations seeking new partnerships or wanting to discuss innovative approaches within education, these schools are often good places to start.

## 5.4 Key regional providers of education

There are dramatic changes taking place in terms of who provides and runs schools across the country. Five years ago the vast majority of schools were provided by LAs but there are significant shifts taking place each year as schools become trusts or federations, open as academies, merge with others, become part of an existing chain of academies, or new schools open any of these options and more, including free schools.

For example, as of the 1 March 2013 there were 396 academies in the South West. Of these, 64 were sponsor led academies, whilst 332 were academy convertors. Since the Academies Act (2010), the total number of academies in the region has grown by 366 (1220%) from 30 in 2010 to 396 in March 2013. As detailed earlier, the number of academies in the region is anticipated to increase by 32 (8%) to 428 by the end of the year. We are seeing increasing numbers of primary schools moving to academy status now (it used to be just secondary schools), and those primary schools deemed to be failing are strongly urged down this route now, working with an existing academy chain or provider. We discuss the implications of this fragmentation and diversification in the schools sector later in the report.

## 5.5 Key providers of education: character of the curriculum and schools' stated mission, values and ethos

SERIO have also pulled together a pictorial analysis of the 'character' of four of the main school types – with an emphasis on academies and free schools – in order to highlight some of the key differences from state maintained schools, and to provide an overview of the particular nature of their educational offer and vision. There is also more detailed data included in appendix 2 taken from desk research of various types of school mission and value statement. It is useful for cultural organisations to familiarise themselves with these broad-brush statements as it is possible to identify areas where cultural education can create value against a school's strategic framework, helping a school move forward at big picture level. These sections of the appendices will allow organisations to do this quickly and effectively, saving a lot of trawling through individual websites and dispersed data. In essence, unless an outside organisation can demonstrate value in relation to the overarching strategic aims and needs of a school, it will be hard to build an effective, impactful and long-lasting partnership with it.

## 5.6 LA policies relating to children and young people and education

These policies have been gathered by SERIO from most areas across the SW. They provide useful context but need to be read with the caveat outlined above – relating to the shifting role of LAs in relation to schools and the fact that they are themselves facing very tough challenges (including increasing need for their services at the same time as budgets decrease).

## 5.7 School expenditure

SERIO have done some limited work examining the breakdown of expenditure in schools; not surprisingly, staff costs are far and away the most significant aspect. We are interested in some sense of the budget potentially available here for cultural education, and where the points of purchase and scope for flexibility may be. Again, we return to this area later in the report. The NFER report suggests (via Heads) an estimate of in the region of 5% of school budgets spent on cultural and creative education and learning – though this is a rough estimate and is likely to include all aspects (staff costs, transport, project costs etc.), and not just budget that leaves the school for this purpose. It is also worth bearing in mind that many schools do not have an explicit budget line relating to ‘cultural or arts education’ but will instead spend in this area from other areas in their overarching budget (e.g. via teacher CPD, enrichment activities, or from within a particular curriculum area). Approaches to a school for cultural education activity/spend will therefore need to consider how it can deliver value against other areas of the school’s budget.

## 5.8 Reasons for school choice

We asked SERIO to look at existing research in this area for several reasons. We have already outlined the key link between pupil numbers (and therefore pupil and parent choice) and school budgets. We wondered what research around school choice would reveal about reasons for school choice amongst parents and young people, and whether access to culture and creativity through the school would have any bearing on this. The findings are useful and comprehensive but reveal that issues of geography and overall achievement are far and away the most significant factors underpinning these decisions.

Finally, we would recommend that all cultural organisations seeking to work in partnership with a school familiarise themselves fully with the performance data relating to that school, as well as its development plans, governance and ethos. We hope these overview figures are a useful start. Schools are highly scrutinised public institutions and exceedingly data rich. This data and these plans determine, to a very large extent, the priorities the school will be focussing on, investment decisions they will make, outcomes they will seek for pupils, and the likely focus of any work they undertake in partnership with others.

## 6 Cultural Education Policy Context and Landscape

The NFER report provides an excellent overview here (p1), revealing much change over the last two years including:

- Henley reviews into music and cultural education, leading to shifts and developments on the ground, including:
  - The advent of Music Education Hubs in local areas.
  - Initiatives such as the Heritage Schools and Museums in Schools programmes rolling out nationally<sup>5</sup>.
  - The development of pilot Cultural Education Partnership Groups, including one in Bristol, with an aim to link up cultural provision and activity for children and young people and encourage partners and providers to work more closely together in the new landscape.
- Wider reorganisation in this area, with museums, music education and aspects of libraries falling into the remit of the Arts Council and the notion of a 'cultural sector' taking firmer shape on the ground as a result.
- Cuts pretty much across the board, at national level, but also, and often most sharply felt, within LAs.
- Changes in policy direction and emphasis within ACE, including the end of many special initiatives, such as Creative Partnerships and Find Your Talent, the advent of bridge organisations but in a different space to this – directed to work strategically and at high level rather than on a project-by-project or locality basis, and forced to focus on very defined areas of endeavour due to lower levels of resources; plus an emphasis on scalable mechanisms such as the Arts Award to drive activity.

Taken together these changes have led to a very significant change on the ground and, given the predicted state of public finances going forward, there are likely to be more changes of this kind to come.

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<sup>5</sup> In the SW region these initiatives taking place in Bristol; the latter with the SS Great Britain, working in partnership with the Science Museum in London <http://www.ssgreatbritain.org/>

## 7 Schools and Education Policy Context and Landscape

We now turn to the educational context, and the picture is even more different, some would argue bewilderingly so. We attempt to pull out the key shifts and changes, though many are ongoing and this makes it even harder to summarise or pin down likely impact and implications; we also aim to outline the likely relevance of these key shifts to cultural organisations and cultural education in general, with recommendations and areas to think about provided as appropriate.

There are three overarching observations:

- This level of reform in a system leads to introversion (in schools and the educational sector) – whilst the reform is understood and assimilated. It makes it harder to form partnerships and secure commitment across the boundary of the system – and this applies to cultural organisations seeking school engagement in the current climate.
- The reforms encompass tensions and contradictions; they are not necessarily experienced as unified and flowing (e.g. aspects of the proposed new curriculum can be read as highly prescriptive, but at the same time free schools and academies have ‘freedom’ from this if they choose). Opportunities and massive challenges therefore exist side by side, leading to significant tension.
- The public realm is a really tough place to work at the moment, and there are no easy answers or magic wands to be waved. It is a very hard time for cultural and educational organisations and, whilst there are some limited areas of opportunity opening up, it is important not to overstate the potential here – these opportunities are often hard to grasp and involve significantly different ways of operating in order to realise (e.g. supporting the opening of a new school; or trading services with a group of schools). Reform and cuts hand in hand are challenging for all concerned.

And we see four aspects of these educational changes that have potentially highly significant implications for cultural education and cultural organisations:

1. Marketisation
2. Diversification
3. Curriculum change
4. Changes in school performance measures, participation and workforce

We explain and tackle each in turn. Where relevant we provide definitions, links and policies in the footnotes. We particularly recommend the DFE website: it provides clear definitions and background for those seeking further depth or detail in all of the areas we discuss.

### 7.1 Marketisation

We think this was a significant gap in the NFER report, and an area that has had an accelerating impact on cultural education, schools and organisations since the publication of that paper.

By marketisation we mean a change and freeing up in terms of who can provide schooling and educational services for schools, and be paid to do so. This shift has been driven by the declining role of LAs in relation to school provision (and a move into a more ‘hands-off’ overview role) – though worth noting that this has happened to different extents in each LA area (see the SERIO reports for more details of each LA profile) – hand-in-hand with increased independence for individual schools and a freeing up and diversification in terms of their overall organisation structure, governance and ‘ownership’ (discussed in more detail in the next section).

As a result of these educational reforms over the last few years, accelerated particularly in the last couple, there are now significant emerging markets for practically every aspect of children and young people’s education: learning materials; food and catering; ICT provision; curricula; staffing; sport; consultancy; school improvement services; subject specific support; CPD; transport; grounds maintenance; and more...including the provision of schools themselves.

This is therefore leading to very different flows of money in and around schools: in terms of who pays for what, to who, and why (including schools trading with other schools). And these flows of money link very closely to flows and numbers of children and young people, as well as their performance: as a school’s budget is heavily determined by its pupil numbers (e.g. some free schools have failed to open on time or at all because, in the end, they failed to secure pupil and parent commitment. If there aren’t enough pupils turning up the school loses a ‘per head’ amount for each one and at a certain cut-off point becomes non-viable).

It is important that cultural organisations understand these fundamental changes. They now find themselves operating in a mixed, fragmented, relatively immature and rather chaotic emerging market. We all face a range of decisions and choices about how we respond to and operate within this challenging context, and we need to make these decisions in a strategic and considered way on behalf of our organisations.

A potential advantage is that there are now lots of new ‘customers’ for cultural education (each school, Head, governing body, chain or federation); each with the ability to buy services, associations, partnerships, experiences and products in this space if they see the value in them. But we don’t want to overstate the opportunities here: the emerging educational market, due to its nature and size, is not a panacea for the cultural sector, nor does it offer a way to replace direct revenue funding for arts and cultural activity lost elsewhere.

Within this emerging market there are many highly significant challenges, including:

- Finding and reaching these customers.
- Securing decisions and buy-in from enough of them at scale and in a timely manner in order to deliver the project, programme or service in the first place.
- Providing a service and value to them that will lead to them paying an economic and appropriate price.
- Developing operating and commercial models that work for your organisation in this context (if organisations indeed choose to go down this route in the first place).

The operational implications for cultural organisations are particularly significant. If moving from grant-based provision of activity, they are likely to need to introduce new ways of managing workflow; a shift in the types of services provided (to ones which schools will pay for rather than a grant-maker); expertise and resources to cost and finance these new services properly (including cashflow, as school pay in arrears); possible shifts in the skills of staff and staff roles required; new forms of marketing and networking to reach these new customers; and enough investment to develop new services (as most small or medium-sized businesses would suggest that, on average, a 2 year period elapses before a new service area becomes profitable).

It is also particularly worth bearing in mind that schools (these customers) do not have an explicit budget for 'buying art or culture'. They are concerned with achieving and demonstrating diverse outcomes and progress for children and young people, and the model of delivery therefore has to convince in terms of how this will be secured. Artistic and cultural participation can be a great vehicle for achieving these types of positive outcomes, but it cannot be taken as read – there are many methods and approaches that achieve similar outcomes.

Each school will, in all likelihood, align its budget with its own development priorities as articulated in its development plan and be seeking to achieve progress in this direction.

Cultural organisations working in the education sector are therefore now operating in a far more complex space. There are a vast number of possible new roles that they could take here, including: consultant; partner; valuable brand; school governor; school sponsor; CPD provider; project deliverer; sub-contractor; department; school operator; curriculum author. And of course they can still deliver their core business for schools: provider of artistic and cultural experience, enrichment and engagement too – though how this gets paid for will be key and is now a far more complicated and challenging question.

The path through this complexity is likely to be very different and highly individualised for each organisation, with some very thorny choices to be made in each, and we are only at the very beginning of understanding what it may mean in terms of cultural and artistic production, education and engagement for children and young people. For example, what new forms of production and value emerge; will quality of production be enhanced or decline as a result of possible market pressures and context?

Each organisation will need to think sharply and strategically about their place and way forward in this new context and in relation to potential new markets.

Let's also focus, more specifically, on school budgets in relation to this area. The NFER report an estimate of 5% of a school's budget spent on some form of cultural engagement per annum (though this is likely to include transport, internal staffing costs and so on). It is also difficult to be accurate about the figure because of the way school budgets are structured (there is no separate reference to this type of work).

Overall, however, even if less than this, it still represents a significant figure once aggregated across upwards of 2500 schools in the SW. And, given the increasing marketisation of the sector itself, there is scope to grow and develop this strand of

the market: through combined advocacy and high quality delivery that delivers value that schools want and need.

The key decision makers involved in setting budgets and determining priorities are individual Heads, senior and business managers, and governing bodies (where previously there would have been more scope to influence overall trends via the LA). These budgets are set annually in the run up to the end of the public sector financial year in March, and relate heavily to the development needs of the school as articulated in its strategic plan. We would recommend that cultural organisations talk strategically to schools, engage with senior management, and communicate early in their planning cycle because of these factors. It will also help if you are able to demonstrate impact, progress and outcomes in the kinds of areas that the school is seeking, and are able to back this up with evidence and a track record. This also reinforces our earlier point about the need for cultural organisations to increasingly understand and be familiar with the data-rich underpinnings and approaches of current educational practice if they choose to work in this area.

If this impact relates to particular groups of pupils (those eligible for free school meals) it may also be worth talking to the school about their use of the pupil premium<sup>6</sup>. Schools receive additional funding given to schools so that they can support their disadvantaged pupils and close the attainment gap between them and their peers. Schools receive £900 per 'disadvantaged' child, but are coming under increasing pressure and scrutiny about the use to which they are putting this additional funding. There is scope to develop interesting models relating to cultural engagement in this space; but potential providers will need to demonstrate and evidence, very clearly, the additional impact they can have on particular children or young people and how this can close identified gaps.

To summarise, we recommend that cultural organisations think long, hard and strategically about their place in relation new and emerging educational 'markets'. They need to make realistic, careful and considered choices about ways forward, in line with overall and wider aims and ambitions. Opportunities are opening up and are likely to continue to do so, but there are many hurdles to clear in seizing them. Consider the following questions as a starting point:

- Do you want to operate in this market in the first place? Do you love schools and want to work closely with them?
- Does it fit for you commercially, ethically, politically and in terms of your mission as an organisation?
- Are you happy and sustainable delivering as you are with schools anyway?
- If you want to trade, what value do you bring to schools (in a very precise way), and is this what your customers would say? Would they pay for this value?
- How can you create scale in this market and/or find your niche?
- How do you demonstrate to these customers: quality, value for money, impact, evidence, a track record?
- What is your operating and commercial model, and does it need to change to reflect the emerging market-driven nature of the educational sector?
- Will it deliver you 'profitability' (or at least not lead to losses)?

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/premium/a0076063/pp>

- Do you have the requisite cashflow and investment to get you to this position?
- Can you resource your work in this space in whatever way and do 'good work' with integrity in it?
- Do you have the staff skills and experience to operate in this space in new ways?
- Can you reach and market to your customers and ensure that they continue to procure or purchase from you?

## 7.2 Diversification

As the SERIO research illustrates, there are highly significant shifts taking place in terms of the make up of the school sector in the SW, and the organisational form, flavour and emphasis that each school can take going forward. The majority of schools are still held and supported by their LA but there has been an increasing diversification taking place here, driven by reforms aimed at providing more 'choice' in the school sector and introducing diversity and some elements of competition into the education 'market'. There are obviously heated and intense debates about whether these reforms are producing improvements in service and performance for parents and children, and how far the reforms can or will go..

We do know that in many LAs across the region, where a few years ago there would simply have been a mix of straightforward LA maintained and private schools, there is now a plethora of different school types, clusters, arrangements and providers including:

- Maintained schools - maintained schools are funded by central government via the local authority, and do not charge fees to students. The categories of maintained school are: community, community special, foundation (including trust), foundation special (including trust), voluntary aided and voluntary controlled. There are also maintained nursery schools and pupil referral units!
- Independent academies - schools who have gone down this route themselves and who have moved outside direct LA control and now receive their funding direct from central government. Academies also receive some additional freedoms (relating particularly to budget, staffing and curriculum).
- Academy chains (schools sponsored by an overarching academy sponsor and operator).
- Federated schools - schools who have joined together – can be a range of organisation forms and ages.
- Trusts - schools now held in some form of trust; such as those supported by the Cooperative Schools Trust.
- Emerging University Technical Colleges - UTCs are technical academies for 14- to 19-year-olds. They have university and employer sponsors and combine practical and academic studies.
- Emerging Free Schools - all-ability state-funded schools set up in response to what local people say they want and need in order to improve education for children in their community; being taken forward by a diverse range of community groups.
- Independent or private schools.

- Clusters of schools who work together in a range of ways, for example trading and procuring services jointly, often within an overall company or organisational form (either arising out of old LA clusters, or schools who simply get on well and have chosen to work together for pragmatic and supportive reasons to create economies of scale).
- Teaching schools (and their clusters) – teaching schools give outstanding schools a leading role in the training and professional development of teachers, support staff and headteachers, as well as contributing to the raising of standards through school-to-school support.

And these are just the main ones; there are more! It is complicated, and schools themselves voiced these concerns in our discussions with them; they find it tricky to navigate too. For more detailed definitions, glossary and background on all of these school types, clusters and models we recommend the DFE website<sup>7</sup>.

In relation to this pattern of diversification, the key implications and recommendations for the cultural sector include:

- Historically, the cultural sector has viewed schools as partners and some of will continue to work in this way, particularly if cultural organisations are able to continue to collaborate on externally funded projects. However, the profound changes described earlier mean schools can also be seen as potential customers. To engage effectively cultural organisations need to remember this difference and understand how it will affect behaviour. As partners spending other people's money, schools are far more likely to take risks and be less concerned if an initiative doesn't work. As customers, spending their own money, they will want excellent service and a successful outcome.
- Connecting with schools is a challenge; and the only answer really is lots of networking, ideally with Heads. These networking costs are real and will need to be thought about and built in to the costs of any delivery.
- Be realistic and decide if it is better to build a long term, deep, relationship with one school that repeatedly buys services or collaborates on projects.
- If you are a larger organisation with the ability to invest time and resources, it may be better to work 'up the chain' if you can (e.g. with the lead of federation or an academy chain) as this means you can reach more than one school at once.
- Think hard about the value you provide in relation to a school or cluster and bear in mind that, in a diversifying and differentiating market, they will all have their different emphases, flavours and takes on cultural education (which is both good and bad...if you meet someone who does not want what you hope to provide, there may be someone else just up the road who does! Equally, you may need to recognise that schools are not the market for you.)
- Perhaps most importantly there are new roles and spaces opening up as a result of these changes (e.g. in terms of who can open and run a school, support a trust, be a governor or sponsor of a school). We would suggest that cultural organisations explore all of these possibilities if seeking increased or enhanced involvement and influence in relation to schools.

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools>

- At the same time, bear in mind that this arena can be heavily politicised and sensitive. For example, involvement of the opening of a free school can produce a particular reaction amongst certain sections of the community; or increase competition for pupils between other local schools.

### 7.3 Curriculum change

The government recently published its plans to both revise and slim down the national curriculum followed by primary and secondary schools in England<sup>8</sup>. As with all other changes outlined here, this adds to the volume of reform needing to be assimilated by schools at the moment – and takes considerable school energy and resources to respond to.

Foreign languages will be compulsory for older primary school children, and computing will replace the more general information and communication technology (ICT) subject, as expected. The new curriculum also sets out detailed "essential knowledge" expected for core subjects of English, maths and science from children aged from four to 16; with less detailed programmes of study produced for other subjects such as history, and art and design.

The government therefore suggests that schools will have more freedom in what they teach on these subjects; hence less detail in the programmes of study. The new courses for children up to the age of 14 are due to come in from autumn next year (2014). GCSE-level changes are due to come in a year later, tied in with changes to GCSEs for some subjects.

This curriculum has to be followed by state-funded schools that are not academies. As discussed, more and more schools - especially secondaries - have become academies. These are free to set their own curriculum, although the government says the national framework it is setting out can just be a guide for them though, because their performance is largely judged via standard assessment frameworks, they will still need to ensure they hit key national targets, particularly in the core subject areas.

The new draft proposals for the curriculum also state that all state-funded schools must provide an education that is "balanced and broadly based and which promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society, and prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life". They must also publish their curriculum online.

We would recommend that cultural organisations:

- Investigate and understand the curriculum and the proposed changes at national level, and how this is playing out in schools they already work (and

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<sup>8</sup> See here for more details:

<https://www.education.gov.uk/schools/teachingandlearning/curriculum/nationalcurriculum2014>

this is likely to be individual to some extent). This will make it easier to work with and add value to the current development trajectory of the school.

- Respond and engage in curriculum consultations; it is there to be shaped to some extent. These consultations have been highly charged and somewhat polarised so far (e.g. does the curriculum mean more freedom or prescription and are school and teachers being tied down or set free?<sup>9</sup>; on the history curriculum in particular, are the right facts, knowledge and focus going to be taught – which merely indicates how political history is and always will be - and how can museums respond to the challenges here?<sup>10</sup>; and amongst art and design specialists, in school and out, some sense that because of the focus on core subjects, art is not a priority and ‘level 4s in maths and English is all they care about’).
- Explore opportunities to work with schools to help shape the curriculum and bring it to life in schools as it rolls out. Schools themselves are keen to work with others on this. For example, how can the programmes of study for art and design at KS3 be fleshed out and made rich. Many schools are convinced of the value of creative approaches to learning as this has brought them improvement already; they will happily work with partners to continue this progress. There is significant scope here for cultural organisations and cultural education to add value and support school delivery in this and many other areas.

## 7.4 Changes in school performance measures, participation and workforce

Finally, on our overview ‘tour’ through a vast array of school and educational reforms, in amongst a myriad of changes in this broad area, there are four key aspects worth pulling out and focusing on from a cultural education perspective.

### 7.4.1 A revised Ofsted inspection framework introduced in September 2012, with a greater focus on individual pupil progress and linked standards of teaching.

The Ofsted framework has changed significantly<sup>11</sup>: the previous rating of ‘satisfactory’ is now deemed to be unsatisfactory - all schools inspected by Ofsted must, at a minimum, be judged as ‘good’ to be deemed good enough for children and young people. It has also become harder to get an ‘outstanding’ rating – schools will only secure this rating if all lesson observations are found to be at that level. Ofsted are also looking to see more able learners properly stretched, and there is an increased focus on the individual progress of learners (with schools able to track and evidence this). This, of course, places a lot of pressure on teachers: they need to be able to produce outstanding teaching and lessons, as evidenced by pupil progress. Cultural education interventions will need to be able to support this overall drive; with the work of cultural organisations supporting outstanding teaching and lessons in a clear and evidenced way wherever possible.

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2013/mar/29/michael-gove-teachers>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/news/07022013-ebacc-plans-dropped-but-curriculum-changes-prompt-concerns>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/framework-for-school-inspection>

It is also worth noting that ‘community cohesion’ is no longer a focus for Ofsted – and this area had driven a lot of good quality cultural and community engagement work in schools (and allowed schools to account for that work externally). Instead schools must demonstrate to Ofsted that they are supporting the Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) development of their pupils. For example, that ‘the school’s curriculum provides highly positive, memorable experiences and rich opportunities for high quality learning, has a positive impact on all pupils’ behaviour and safety and contributes very well to pupils’ achievement and to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.’<sup>12</sup>

There are obvious links to be made here with cultural organisations and experiences, and we would recommend that where cultural organisations have partner schools they begin to discussions about how their work can better and more explicitly support and evidence the individual spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. Very little work has been done in this space and it merits exploration.

#### **7.4.2 Proposed changes to secondary school accountability and performance**

We would recommend reading the full details of the current government consultations on how to improve accountability for secondary schools in England here<sup>13</sup>. They are complex, but crucial, and include the following proposals:

- Publishing far more data about school performance and making it readily available to the public.
- Altering school performance measures (and therefore resulting tables), with this linked to reformed GCSEs and to the proposed ebacc suite of qualifications.

Some believe that this will lead to a subtle (or perhaps not so subtle) shift away from arts, design and creativity because of the increased focus on this ebacc suite. Each government wants to measure what it believes counts in schools, as this then directly and indirectly drives activity, investment, focus and progress. So shaping what gets counted is vitally important and the cultural education sector have to grapple with these structures in order to wire incentives to engage in art, culture, creativity and design into the hardware of schools. Having said that, as Einstein said, ‘not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted’!

#### **7.4.3 A raised participation age (RPA)**

The Government is increasing the age to which all young people in England must continue in education or training, requiring them to continue until the end of the academic year in which they turn 17 from 2013 and until their 18th birthday from 2015. Young people currently in Year 11 and below are affected.

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<sup>12</sup> <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/subsidiary-guidance-supporting-inspection-of-maintained-schools-and-academies-january-2012>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.education.gov.uk/consultations/index.cfm?action=conSection&consultationId=1882>

Raising the participation age does not mean young people must stay in school; they will be able to choose one of the following options post-16:

- Full-time education, such as school, college or home education.
- An apprenticeship.
- Part-time education or training if they are employed, self-employed or volunteering full-time (which is defined as 20 hours or more a week).

At present many of these options are not yet in place, and there is uncertainty in schools as to how all of this will work on the ground, and also be funded (as there are separate consultations and reforms taking place relating to qualifications).

Some Heads expressed a desire to work with cultural partners in this area, particularly around options and programmes for level 2 learners who stay on to retake GCSEs in year 12 but then want more practical courses in year 13 (e.g. around art, culture and enterprise). There would be scope to link with Arts Awards and real world challenges and organisations here.

We therefore recommend that where they can, cultural organisations begin talking to partner schools about ways that they could support courses and content for post-16s as the RPA comes into effect.

#### **7.4.4 Teachers' pay, conditions and morale**

Teachers have experienced the impact of a public sector pay squeeze. As new or converted schools (e.g. academies) come on line, they are also given some freedom from existing pay terms and conditions if they so choose and, as would be expected, there is considerable individual and union unrest about all of this. On top of these specific changes, the volume of reform hitting the sector is further affecting morale. We see evidence of this set of factors impacting on cultural participation and engagement (as some teachers work to rule; and others simply have less energy because of all they are dealing with elsewhere in the system).

Teachers have a difficult, and onerous job – and the context for their role is shifting and changing significantly. The impact of these changes needs to be understood first hand. We therefore recommend that cultural organisations engage with local teacher networks, or work to support and build networks of teachers interested in and supportive of their cultural role, or particular form of cultural practice. This will enable dialogue, learning about school context, and an increased understanding of teaching and learning. In turn, this can only improve the nature of the cultural offer back to schools.

## 8 Current picture in terms of how schools are engaging with the cultural sector

The NFER survey shows that London schools are overall **reasonably committed** to and active in their cultural engagement activities. However:

- A substantial minority do not refer to cultural education in their school development plans or have a member of the governing body with responsibilities for cultural education.
- They are far less engaged with the creative and cultural industries (e.g. digital arts, broadcasting) than they are with music, theatre, museums and galleries.
- They report less engagement initiated by the cultural sector than as a result of their own pro-activity in seeking out cultural engagement opportunities
- Schools in outer London are less engaged than those in inner London
- Independent schools appear least linked in to cultural services and have limited awareness of Artsmark and Arts Award.
- Special schools are less likely than others to visit cultural venues and face particular barriers around transport.

There was broad agreement with these findings amongst SW schools even though the context is very different:

- Rurality as a defining characteristic of a large part of the SW, with transport a real challenge and schools themselves often functioning as the key cultural and animating organisation in their areas.
- Far fewer significantly-sized cultural organisations in the region, and many parts of the region where there are no cultural organisations in close, working proximity to schools.
- The region lacks the binding and energising factor of place ('London' is a highly animating signifier for schools and children – witness the programmes around the 2012 Olympics, and ongoing work around the London curriculum for schools.)

Overall, we would agree that 'reasonably committed' is a fair summary for schools in the region, underpinned by an understandable sense that 'times are hard' at the moment. Overall:

- A few schools are actually beginning to do more creative and cultural education, and in radical and innovative ways (e.g. employing staff in a coordinating role; making use of new freedoms opening up to them around budgets and curriculum. We provide more detailed examples of these types of approaches later in the report.) If these approaches have delivered for them from a school improvement perspective, then they will continue to motor on.
- Some are doing less – for a whole range of reasons outlined earlier and including curriculum changes; the new performance frameworks being introduced, the volume of change that schools are needing to assimilate, and the impact of current context on teacher morale.
- And some are continuing with the same level of commitment and activity as they gradually assimilate and respond to wider changes.

So we see a picture of highs and lows across the region, with the forces outlined earlier playing out on the ground in complex and subtle ways: marketisation, diversification, curriculum change, and changes in school performance measures, participation and workforce.

For example, in Somerset a network of local schools in partnership with the LA have commissioned a consortium of local and leading arts organisations (SPAEDA, Take Art, Somerset Arts Works, Somerset Film) to bring the skills and experience of professional arts and media direct to schools and youth settings<sup>14</sup>. The commission is also complemented by a school/setting subscription service rolling out through 2013/14 and provides an exciting and diverse arts and cultural offer and set of services to schools. In Dorset, similarly, there are emerging groups of cultural partners working together to provide innovative new services for children and young people, supported by the Dorset Loves Arts network and commissioned by organisations including housing associations and the LA<sup>15</sup>. In Bristol, the picture is one of extreme diversity, both in terms of who runs and holds a stake in local schools, but also in terms of the emerging and ongoing partnerships between schools and the cultural sector. It will be interesting to see how the role of the CEPG in the city impacts on this context. At present it is providing a useful forum for some 'joining up' and sharing of expertise and ideas.

In Devon, the LA has formed a strategic partnership with Babcock, one of the country's leading and largest private sector providers of education support and improvement services<sup>16</sup>. In effect, some of the services once provided by the LA in this space are now delivered through this public-private partnership, with staff directly employed by the private sector partnership. This illustrates the ways that boundaries between public and private provision are blurring in the education field; though it is early days in terms of assessing the impact of this new form of delivery and support on the profile of cultural education in the county.

And in Plymouth leading NPOs are involved in support for and the development of proposed new free schools in the city and local area, including the innovative Plymouth School of Creative Arts<sup>17</sup>.

These examples illustrate the diversity of experience and context across the region. The picture is very patchy and locally specific; there are extreme differences between local areas – arising out of circumstance, local geography and politics, and, often, the work, ambitions and aims of key organisations and individuals. Against this backdrop, one-size-fits-all, top-down solutions are no longer appropriate. And, whilst there are opportunities and spaces opening up across the whole region because of the changes and reforms taking place, conversations with schools and cultural partners suggest that the overall picture is one of tough, chaotic and rather 'turmoiled' times in relation to schools, arts and cultural education.

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<sup>14</sup> <http://www.inspiresomerset.co.uk/>

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.dorsetforyou.com/405154>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.babcock-education.co.uk/ldp/default.asp?home=1>

<sup>17</sup> <http://plymouthschoolofcreativearts.co.uk/>

## 9 Barriers to engagement

The NFER report asked what is stopping schools, heads and teachers engaging with the cultural sector locally?

They found that the key barriers to schools' cultural engagement include:

- Lack of funding – the biggest and most significant barrier (including the fact that there is no funding in a school budget labeled 'cultural education' so it is up to individual schools to decide how to engage. This is unlikely to change under the current system, which sees schools given more freedom about budget choices.)
- Transport issues (also a massive issue in the rural SW).
- Lack of information about the available opportunities.
- Time to arrange activities.

Our contact with schools in the SW identified very similar issues – with general agreement, similarly, that these are far and away the main barriers. However, schools also identified the following as further issues and barriers too:

- The nature of the cultural offer to schools. Some schools observed that there is still a tendency for cultural organisations to develop 'projects' in a separate space from schools; with not enough work done to uncover the value that schools seek and need from these partnerships.
- Given the volume of current change, and resulting 'chaos' in the system, there is currently a degree of introversion in schools, and difficulty for cultural organisations who are seeking clear communications or decisions from them. 'Schools are busy with bigger and more difficult stuff'.
- At a time when schools are grappling with proposed new curricula, organisational forms, qualifications and policies, cultural engagement has slid down the agenda. This is compounded by the fact that it is not perceived as a government priority; schools do not perceive it as being trumpeted nationally. The general tone of the new curriculum is being perceived as one of drier fact and knowledge-based learning – which they see as running counter to creative and cultural learning.
- A considerable amount of creative and cultural education work was carried out under the 'community cohesion' banner (particularly in primary schools). This aspect is no longer part of the Ofsted framework – so cultural education has lost one of its main drivers.
- The declining role of LAs in relation to schools means there is less joint commissioning of cultural education projects and programmes across clusters of schools and wider areas (such as youth arts festivals): there are reduced/no budgets to do so; there are often now no staff in this overarching role; and schools have become independent of LAs and are going in their own direction.

- Every Head is now a potential customer for cultural education (which is a good thing) but this makes it incredibly time-consuming for a cultural organisation: understanding specific needs and 'getting to yes' across a set of schools or at sufficient scale to make a larger piece of work worthwhile or economic (since this development time would need to be costed and paid for within the overall operating model).
- Perceptions and practicalities relating to the ebacc (though not a singular certificate, schools will largely be judged performance-wise on this suite of qualifications). Creative or arts subjects are not currently part of the suite and schools report that this leads to subtle and insidious shifts in the system:
  - Young people are less likely to choose arts subjects because they are not included.
  - Schools are more likely to invest in the areas of the curriculum that bring them headline performance returns.
  - Teachers in 'non-ebacc' subjects worry about their jobs and their value.
- On a wider level, morale amongst the teaching profession was felt to be a very significant barrier to cultural engagement (with strikes, votes of no confidence, work-to-rule and considerable antipathy towards the raft of educational reforms taking place). In the early 1980s a series of teacher strikes and work-to-rule led to a significant drop off in culture and sport activity in schools – there are signs of similar patterns emerging now.

## 10 Motivations; why schools engage (or not) in cultural education?

The NFER report also examined the drivers for engagement in cultural education. They found that the main motivations for cultural engagement were:

- Intrinsic motivations – for the ultimate benefit of pupils – are the strongest of all, particularly around improving young people’s life chances...and developing positive attitudes towards arts and culture.
- Motivations around pupils’ arts specific learning, making a difference to young people’s future careers, and London-specific learning.
- Developing both teacher skills and confidence, through cultural engagement activity, are important to some schools, but not as motivating as intrinsic pupil benefits.

With these motivations particularly enabled by:

- The relevance of the activity to the curriculum.
- The flexibility of the cultural organisation to meet the school’s needs.
- The quality of the cultural organisation’s communication and planning.

The NFER then go on to suggest, therefore, that a ‘tailored offer’ from cultural organisations is key.

Again, it is testimony to the quality of the report that all of these findings are met with accord from SW schools even though they are working in a very different context. Their feedback adds colour and texture to these areas, rather than departing from them.

Intrinsic motivations - Heads by and large agreed that intrinsic motivations are of most value – the benefits that are seen in students (such as confidence, wider perspectives, more enjoyment of learning). Some Heads argued that there is actually increased scope to do this type of work now, with the Ofsted framework focused more on individual pupil progress.

However, they felt that we would all (particularly cultural organisations) need to get much better at evidencing the impact of our work in this way, using individual tracking systems and a clearer articulation of the types of impact and outcomes we are seeking and achieving. They also argue that this needs to be done within frameworks that carry value and can be readily understood by schools, rather than inventing or introducing new and external forms of monitoring and evaluation. There is scope here for interesting joint work between schools and cultural partners going forward. Cultural organisations need to work to make this area easy for their school partners.

As a subset here, several Heads saw particular power in the use of cultural education and creative learning in relation to students with special educational needs (SEN), or with those who were disengaging from conventional learning. Again, though, they felt that we need to get better at explaining why this might be the case and evidencing the progress made as a result – towards key outcomes for the young person. That would, to a greater extent, then justify spend on this area. If we can do that, they felt

there is scope for more work here.

Heads also touched upon the vital role of the committed and passionate individual (usually a Head or senior manager within the school) as a motivating factor in cultural education engagement. They also noted that these individuals would, in some ways, have more freedom now to develop these approaches within their schools. We think this is a very important motivating factor and one that tends to get overlooked because it seems so obvious: a keen and passionate Head with a particular set of interests to a significant extent determines the flavour of the learning in a school.

Most cultural organisations will have been in a position where they work to a high level with a school over a number of years because of a good relationship with an interested Head, but then work tails away once that person leaves or moves on. This is a reality, but it does not mean that cultural education is necessarily sustainable or structural within schools.

As discussed, community cohesion is no longer a driver for cultural education via the Ofsted framework. However, we met many schools who are still taking responsibility for cultural endeavour and engagement in their wider community. They are doing this because they argue that it impacts back directly on learning (through engaged parents and young people, wider horizons established and more support for the school). Schools still see the sense in sitting at the heart of and animating their local community, and feel they can easily justify this in terms of learning outcomes.

And, linked to this point, in an increasingly 'competitive' marketplace, with schools keen to keep their pupil numbers high, some Heads can see that cultural education work, done well, serves a very useful purpose in terms of marketing, communication and community building. Events, festivals, exhibitions, productions, residencies, films and so on carry the school out into its community in very effective ways – often better and more powerfully and imaginatively than conventional communication forms.

Vice versa, we think that cultural organisations can find and explore new forms of value through their partnership work with schools (and, to cut to the chase, not just 'chase the money'.) In times of cuts and austerity there is of course a tendency to think forcefully about money and funding – and, with the trends toward marketization in the education sector, a risk that we approach all potential new schools' work with an unrealistic financial imperative.

There are lots of other ways that a good and long-standing school partnership can benefit a cultural organisation, including: bringing audience development benefits (since schools are incredibly well networked in their local areas via parents, and communicate regularly with them); resource sharing (e.g. space, people, events); scope to work together on joint initiatives and areas of common interest (again, particularly in rural areas schools are often the most significant community and cultural institution operating).

Finally, though we would agree with the NFER that, on the one hand, a 'tailored offer' from cultural organisations is key, this poses real challenges and tensions within an increasingly market driven context – where standardization and operation at scale is often only way to keep costs down and ensure viability of a particular piece of cultural educational endeavour. In essence, bespoke and tailored work is very expensive and

time-consuming and we don't see a massive appetite or ability to pay for this type of work in the current climate.

## 11 Opportunities, scope for innovation, and areas of joint value

As in the NFER report, we have produced a series of vignettes that illustrate the forces, opportunities, elements and scope for innovation and creation of joint value in the cultural education space going forward. As previously discussed, this mutual value is not always financial and we would therefore encourage openness and imagination when exploring scope for new work with schools. There are win-wins opening up that deliver different forms of benefit to cultural organisations and still, in an indirect way, impact on their bottom line.

All of the vignettes are based on aspects of real schools and cultural organisations we have talked to in the SW. However, for those that like to play ‘spot the school or organisation’, they are likely to be disappointed. We have merged examples together, amplified aspects of projects, programmes and organisations; and projected ahead from current work and ideas in order to produce vignettes that are hyper-real – and therefore, we hope, more immediately and directly illustrative of possibility and context for others.

### 11.1 Vignette 1: School developing a creative business

School A is a medium-sized secondary school, with sixth form, on the outskirts of one of the SW’s large towns. They are a LA-supported school with a good performance record and a history of engagement with several of the area’s cultural organisations and museums – though this engagement usually takes the form of one-off visits and short projects in order to enrich the curriculum and provide students with additional activity and experience. They have a good track record in relation to Arts Award, and use the award to support young people to develop their own arts activities, often in an enterprising way (e.g. band nights).

Their school backs on to the local high street and the school have recently taken over one of the shop front units and have begun to operate a small-scale trading creative communication business – supported by staff but with students (GCSE and A Level) working out of the premises, providing services for paying customers and local businesses, and therefore building up high quality ‘real world’ portfolios and work experience. This enterprising approach to arts and cultural education:

- Generates some financial return back to the school, as well as corporate sponsorship – with local companies keen to back the enterprising approach of the school.
- Provides essential and innovative work and career development experience for students.
- Helps build the school’s profile and relationship with the local community, taking it out into the area and allowing it to help sustain the local high street.

### 11.2 Vignette 2: Theatre developing socially enterprising traded services with partner schools and businesses

Theatre B has a strong track record, both as a producing house but also in terms of their work with children and young people. They run a weekly youth theatre (over-subscribed, with places largely paid for by parents), a mixed young people's group to provide progression beyond this youth theatre, and traditionally have worked with a range of schools in the surrounding area – delivering workshops linked to key plays; supporting a vibrant teacher network (with termly meetings and CPD); and offering subsidised tickets to productions for partner schools.

In the last couple of years, in response to developments in the education sector outlined elsewhere, their approach has begun to shift and accelerate. Rather than 'pitching projects' at schools or running workshops with them, they have developed a traded service that provides high quality drama clubs, enrichment and courses for a range of partner schools. Schools pay an annual fee for this service and in addition get access to the brand value and networks of the cultural organisation. The drama sessions in the schools are run jointly by young people emerging from the youth theatre and young people's group and an experienced practitioner from the theatre – which provides an additional training opportunity for young people (which the schools in turn are keen to see and support).

The theatre have also worked well to bring in private sponsorship to subsidise some of the school work, as well as provide bursaries for young people experiencing disadvantage – enabling them to play a full part in the youth theatres, and move though from the school setting to the theatre itself.

Overall, it is an interesting and emerging model that:

- Uses enterprise and mixed funding approaches to build a multi-faceted service that schools really want and value – evidenced by the fact that they buy it.
- Creates a strong, clear and balanced customer relationship between school and cultural organisation.
- Exploits the brand and networks of the cultural organisation in a very positive way (with schools enjoying the association, and the cultural cachet that this brings in terms of marketing themselves to their wider community).
- Brings business partners to the table in a clear and concrete way, with their support being used to create equality and diversity of participation in the core offer (rather than seeking additional funding to do 'special projects' with groups of young people defined by a particular need or 'issue'. There is, instead, an ambition to build genuinely diverse groups of young people producing high quality work).
- Creates solid and valued pathways for individuals – from the youth theatre, through to young people's production group and on to the industry (with some of these pathways supported by bursaries).
- Assists with audience development, taking the theatre's brand and marketing materials out through the school to parents who are newly receptive to the institution because of their first hand experience of the work they are now doing in their local area.
- Takes children and young people's ideas and art seriously. The theatre provides real platforms, audiences, networks and spaces for these ideas and passions to develop that are aligned as closely as possible with their wider work and operate to similar quality standards.

### **11.3 Vignette 3: Digital media organisation providing curriculum support and development to schools**

Digital media organisation C had very little track record working with schools – though they have always done interesting developmental work with young people (particularly students and sixth formers). Their expertise lies in cutting edge technologies and practice. Recent rapid changes to the ICT curriculum have meant that secondary schools are faced with a real (but arguably positive) challenge: moving quickly from a curriculum where students learn to use well-known packages and software to one where they are expected to programme and understand, in a very hands-on and practical way, what lies beneath and behind ICT.

Organisation C have paired up with a local secondary school and are now acting as an informal (but paid) curriculum advisor – helping put together an exciting and innovative programme of study and learning. This service would once have been provided via the LA, but they would not normally have had the cutting edge industry experience and ideas that the cultural organisation were able to bring to the table – doing what they do best, and having a long term impact on hundreds of young people.

### **11.4 Vignette 4: School as cultural producer and coordinator**

School D are an ‘outstanding’ primary academy based in a rural part of the south west. There are no significant cultural organisations within easy travel distance but the school has a vibrant and creative approach to arts and culture (running festivals, doing joint work with parents, and providing lots of opportunities for children to make and see cultural activity).

The school have recently become a teaching school and now coordinate and develop programmes of CPD and teacher support across a cluster of over 40 schools (secondary and primary) in their wider area. At present these programmes focus largely on the key identified development needs in their cluster and, therefore, are skewed more towards maths, literacy, subject leadership, teaching excellence and so on.

However, the school do want to build partnerships with arts and cultural organisations. Their main motivations in doing this are:

- To further develop their teachers’ skills by allowing them to plan and work alongside professional practitioners.
- To provide real and valued platforms for children and young people’s artistic endeavour beyond the school boundary,
- To provide cultural enrichment for children and parents, in an area where they may not otherwise encounter theatre, museums, visual art, dance etc.

So the school are, in essence, taking responsibility for cultural education in a location where there is no formal cultural infrastructure – and this is a common pattern in rural areas, with school under-recognised and under-funded for this role.

In order to overcome the identified barriers of time and communications, the school are using some limited resources to free up a teacher for part of the week (through backfilling) to enable them to network with other schools and potential cultural partners, develop cross-cluster ideas, put on CPD events, and drive cultural education forward. This is a similar model, though on a smaller scale, to the well-known school-sports partnerships. It proves that schools – including ‘outstanding’ ones - do value high quality cultural education, take responsibility for it and see it as part of their ongoing development plans. Cultural organisations (e.g. local arts venue, heritage site) are already benefitting from this strategic approach because the lead teacher provides them with a point of purchase, clear communication, support with planning, and guidance as to their approach in the classroom.

### **11.5 Vignette 5: Free school with culture and creativity at its heart in development with cultural organisation**

School E will be opening in autumn 2013. The school is based in a large rural village and is designed to replace the village school, which was shut several years ago in a round of local cuts. There is evidenced parent demand for a re-opened school (the original closure was unpopular) and at the moment children have to travel on buses or private transport to neighbouring areas for their education.

Cultural organisation F is a lead partner in the school – which is being taken forward as a ‘free school’. They are working closely with the local community and church and have helped with all stages of the application, planning and development process. A successful ‘free school’ application to the DFE led to funds being made available for this process, and some of these are used to resource the support activity of organisation F, on a consultancy and contract basis.

Within very clear performance and financial parameters, there is considerable freedom to develop a specific approach for a free school, and the organisation can therefore bring their particular flavour of creative learning, culture and community enterprise to bear, in turn impacting in a positive way on the local area and children and achieving very significant and long-lasting outcomes in line with their aims and mission. It also allows them to use and be fairly remunerated for their expertise in fund-raising, planning, operations and project management. The free school movement is still in its relative infancy but there is lots of scope for other cultural organisations to get involved in the development and running of schools if they so choose.

### **11.6 Vignette 6: Museum developing traded services with schools**

Museum G has a solid educational track record and a set of longstanding partnerships with tens of schools across their wider local area. They offer loan boxes and workshops to schools, but most of their work involves schools coming to them for educational visits – either as enrichment, or to add value to parts of the curriculum. They also do sustained projects and programmes across a year or term, with individual or small groups of schools: providing teacher CPD, materials and visits to maintain and develop a key theme.

They have particularly strong networks with primary schools as their collection and approach has fitted well with the key stage 2 curriculum to date. As schools have moved to take up the new freedoms available to them the museum has responded by building a fairly health traded service income, providing visits, workshops, teacher networks, conferences and events, curriculum support and development – all with a local history and ‘place-based’ flavour. They are now becoming a hub of expertise in this area.

This also gives them an increasingly mixed funding model: they receive grants from their LA and via ACE for their core; schools pay appropriate fees for the various services; parents pay through the school for visits and workshops; and the museum seek additional funds for particular projects with key groups of young people or schools. Transport costs are reported as the main barrier for all of this work.

Going forward they are looking to build an increasingly commercial partnership to further develop their place-based curriculum in partnership with a private local school improvement consultancy. They have taken on a set of partner schools and are also looking to offer wider CPD and events that fit and support the revised primary curriculum. This will need some change and shift in their approach, materials and displays. Overall, they are now a trusted and important educational provider for a significant number of schools.

### **11.7 Vignette 7: School cluster forms joint social enterprise to buy, sell, deliver and commission jointly**

Cluster H are comprised of 42 schools covering a mixed urban and semi-rural part of the SW. There are primary, secondary and a couple of special schools in the cluster – and they are a mix of academies and LA schools. Together they have formed a teaching school cluster, and they also work together as a group in a range of other ways, including:

- Heads and Deputies providing high level consultancy and school improvement support to each other on a traded basis.
- Schools developing particular types of expertise, which they then provide back to the cluster in the form of traded consultancy, mentoring and CPD.
- Commissioning joint projects and interventions from external partners (from school improvement consultancy through to environmental work and sports and cultural activity.)
- Creating joint opportunities to platform the work of young people (e.g. festivals and exhibitions).
- Buying in services at economies of scale (e.g. ICT support – bought from one of the leading secondary schools; catering contracts).
- Operating their own social enterprise supply teacher and recruitment agency (avoiding large private sector fees, assuring their own quality, and keeping their money within the cluster)

They have established an overarching social enterprise company structure (a Community Interest Company) to carry out this joint activity, and Heads act as

directors of this company. Any profits resulting are used for the good of the overall cluster; they argue that this keeps money within their school system and allows them local determination.

To engage with this set of schools strategically and long term, cultural organisations will increasingly need to work through this coordinating body and identify areas of joint value or priorities they can meet for and with them, and then sort out the financing of this (though schools may still get involved in very short term visits or performances on an individual basis).

An advantage here is that the schools take more responsibility for coordination and communication across the cluster, and there is senior buy-in from the very beginning of the work. A challenge is that an external provider must secure commitment from a single overarching structure in order to work in the cluster and, in some senses, may even end up in partial competition with them (as they may prefer to deliver the work or outcomes themselves using their own approaches, schools, facilities and staff).

### **11.8 Vignette 8: diversity of approaches in a particular LA area**

In contrast, part of LA area J covers a very similar geographical area and number of schools. The schools have less track record working together and as the new educational freedoms have arrived they have tended to all go their own individual directions. There are now: individual academies; LA schools still running in the same way; several academies working as part of wider national chains; cooperative trust schools (again, part of a national movement); a new free school opening on the patch; and federated schools.

The context is highly diverse. Each Head, school or chain has its own flavour and emphasis; its own approach to the curriculum; and within this, its own take on the value of cultural education. Some of the schools are now doing more in this area (as their academy status has given them more freedom) – including entering into partnerships with a leading museum around curriculum support and enrichment. Any cultural organisation seeking to work with these schools faces both opportunities, and challenges.

There is more freedom, and more potential ‘customers’ for the projects, services and opportunities offered by the cultural organisation (each Head, governing body, federation or chain can commit or not, often to a significant level); but the flipside is the time needed to develop this many individual relationships in order to get a more significant piece of work off the ground with more than a single school. Previously the cultural organisation would have achieved this with a degree of LA coordination and support, saving some time and energy – but at the expense, sometimes, of true school buy-in.

### **11.9 Vignette 9: School employ cultural manager and ‘grow their own’ using Arts Award**

Secondary School K have ‘outstanding’ status and were one of the first schools in the SW to become an academy because they wanted more freedom around their curriculum and greater control over their budget. They have a great track record of arts, cultural and creative practice and use the Arts Award to underpin much of this. They now employ a full-time ‘cultural manager’ as part of their teaching staff, responsible for developing the extra-curricular cultural offer around the school.

They have some limited relationships with a few cultural organisations in their vicinity but there are no large organisations near by and their approach has been very much to ‘grow their own’, again using the Arts Award to do this. They organise their own festivals (and pull on the resources and spaces of cultural organisations to do this but in a fairly limited, bought-in or commissioned basis), events, exhibitions, productions, and awards – all designed to make the cultural offer as real, purposeful and high quality as possible for young people. The school feels incredibly vibrant and functions as a cultural venue and source of energy in an area with few other facilities. They have managed to secure a high level of business sponsorship and support for their activities: they report that local business likes to help schools and young people, particularly if given concrete ways of doing so that also create value for the business, and they have become skilled at ensuring these partnerships are win-win for all involved. Young people from this school have gone on to a wide range of creative industry careers and pathways over the last few years, and now work all over the country.

### **11.10 Vignette 10: Visual arts gallery in mutually supportive development partnership with local primary school**

Arts organisation L is based in the same small town as a leading contemporary arts and crafts gallery. The school have a strong creative arts curriculum, but because of their relatively small size they do not have a large budget to spend or commission out on this area, and often rely on donations and the goodwill of parents to support additional activity and ‘offer’. However, the school and the arts organisation still work closely together in a range of areas. Every couple of years or so, they bid together for relevant funding pots as they emerge (largely to pay for new projects or research and development, to keep each of them ‘fresh’), and they often find that opportunities for funding open up to them that would not be available separately, directly because they work together on these.

They each share space – the gallery provides bespoke private views and special events for a school audience, including VIPs and governors; and the school provides the gallery with meeting rooms and a hall for larger events, including film screenings. No finances change hands here as each partner believes that the benefits balance out between them. They have an open and friendly relationship, and the gallery supply marketing material each term that the school distribute through school bags to parents. In turn this delivers regular peaks in visitor numbers, and goodwill amongst the wider community; with particularly high take up of ‘creative craft’ Saturday morning sessions run at the gallery by local artists for families. These sessions often pick up on or cover topics or ideas floated by the school. This illustrates the ways that

value can be created between schools and cultural organisations without recourse to trading or direct financial transactions, and the real benefits of open and generous partnership working.

### **11.11 Vignette 11: Cultural organisation provide bespoke CPD for teaching school**

Cultural organisation M runs a range of high quality literature and poetry events and festivals in a large market town in the SW. Their networks are fantastic, they have been working in the same area for many years, and they are able to call upon some very high quality and well-known authors and poets, as well as supporting upcoming writers and new voices. They have always offered subsidised and free tickets to local schools, and they build in school workshops and visits around their festival programme; again these are often free or very cheap and paid for out of grant income. Interestingly, several local private schools take out high value advertising in their festival programme because they have found this is a good way to reach their target audience (prospective parents with the right level of income); plus these schools like the brand association with high quality culture.

Recently they received an additional grant from a national foundation to develop teacher CPD – pairing teachers with poets and writers, and designing and running a series of events to promote more imaginative and creative approaches to literacy in school. This programme went very well and the feedback was great; they were also able to demonstrate outcomes and impact back on children in the classroom as they evaluated the pilot in partnership with a local university.

On the back of this, they have now managed to ‘sell’ this programme as a costed service back into a local teaching school, who offer it as part of their wider programme of CPD. Initially this took a lot of work (building the relationship with the school and remodelling their programme so it is deliverable as a service, well-costed, and competitively priced.) This means that the cultural organisation can reach a potential market of over 50 schools through the lead teaching school - and benefit from their networks, backing and coordination - and the teaching school can offer a strand of high quality and innovative CPD, with a solid evidence base of impact in the classroom.

## 12 Conclusions and implications

### 12.1 What this means for schools

The NFER report drew the following conclusions for schools:

- Become aware of and access opportunities – be proactive, free up staff time to seek out opportunities and to develop partnerships, draw upon the capacity of support staff and parent volunteers, establish key roles amongst staff or allocate the role to your school’s art or music coordinator.
- Enable pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds to experience, enjoy and feel comfortable in accessing the richness of London’s cultural resources.
- Start local, network with other schools to boost contacts and share resources [we would also argue that schools should commission and enter into partnerships together: this will bring you economies of scale and, often, bigger and better work, particularly in relation to cultural engagement].
- Strategically seek out funding opportunities – free staff time to seek out funding opportunities, work with organisations that pursue funding themselves or collaborate with other schools to maximise value, draw on resources and facilities available to you locally.
- Develop and maintain momentum through a whole school approach – keep cultural engagement on the agenda by including it in your school development plan and championing it through the School Leadership Team, develop a vision for cultural engagement and establish a strategic approach to delivery.

Given the similarity of our own findings we would concur with all of these and add the following:

- Explore cooperative and enterprising responses in this space, therefore avoiding the worst aspects of markets and, hopefully, making the most of the opportunities opening up (see the vignettes for examples here).
- Be imaginative, brave and bold, and make the most of the freedoms opening up in relation to organisational and operating models, curricula, staffing and budgets. A theatre could run your drama department! A museum could underpin your history curriculum!
- Also look for other forms of value and partnership with cultural organisations – not just traded or financial. Talk openly about the challenges faced and opportunities opening up, and see where the overlaps may be.
- Cultural education activity, partnerships and programmes are good ways to: take the school beyond its boundaries; draw in parents to the school; market the school to its community in an animated and subtle way (including, if secondary, to primary schools and their children); and to differentiate the school and convey what is special about it.
- Share your expertise around pupil tracking and assessment with cultural

organisations and, when engaged in joint work with them, work together to carefully monitor and assess the impact of these interventions on individual pupil progress, and on teaching and learning. This will act to upskill the sector and, more widely, begin to provide a clearer and more grounded articulation of the impact and value of this type of approach.

- Deploy staff in creative ways and think about roles that allow the school to network beyond its boundaries – with the cultural sector and other community partners. Roles with some element of coordination and networking can feel like a luxury at the current time, but they can bring rewards, outcomes for learners and additional resources and value to the table.
- Explore the links between cultural education and creative enterprise. Youth unemployment is high and there is a lack of interesting and rewarding work for young people emerging from education. There is scope to look at learning models that dovetail together cultural education, enterprise, income generation and positive outcomes for young people (again, see the vignettes for examples).

## 12.2 What this means for the cultural sector

The NFER reported the following implications for London's cultural sector:

- Tailor the offer and approach to schools – different schools have varying priorities, motivations and barriers. Consult schools (and possibly students too) on what it is they want to achieve, establish whether there is a target group and tailor the offer to their age group or level of ability.
- Strengthen how cultural organisations' offer is communicated – reach out to schools, meet staff face to face where possible, be clear and specific about how your scheme can contribute to their aims, be clear about your own agenda if you have one so that schools can meet you half way.
- Help schools to identify ways to engage parents (if this is their aim) – offering cultural opportunities to pupils *and* parents and families seems effective in reaping even greater benefits for young people.
- Be willing to travel to and host activities in facilities local to the school – to help to overcome some of the barriers that schools face in respect to travel costs and logistics (particularly for those in outer London).
- Develop an offer for children and young people with special educational needs.

We agree with all these, but given the additional complexity, threat and opportunity brought by the forces of marketization, diversification and reform, based on conversations with a range of schools we would add the following implications and recommendations for the cultural sector:

- There is scope for radical innovation, commercial models and partnership in the current context (e.g. supporting and shaping a new school). Look hard at the opportunities opening up and talk to schools and partners in an open way about the possibilities here.
- But avoid mission creep: just because you can support the opening of a new school or trade services does not mean that you should or even want to. Each organisation will need to think sharply and strategically about their place and way forward in this new context and in relation to potential new markets. The path for each organisation is likely to be very different and highly individualised.
- Also be realistic about the scale and nature of these possible opportunities; they exist in a different space and are not replacements or mechanisms for replacing or supplanting declining revenue funding for artistic or cultural production. There are no easy answers or solutions, and we heard time and again from schools and cultural organisations that 'times are tough.
- Think about the niche you occupy, the value you really offer to schools, and the nature of your work and ensure you will be able to work with continued integrity and quality in that space going forward. Also think about whether you actually love and enjoy working with schools. Can you do your best artistic or cultural work in this context?

- There may be a need to build the organisation's commercial and operational skills and capacity (e.g. through boards, training and recruitment) if developing in this direction.
- There is also the need for very different operating and business models in a traded or commercial space – services delivered in this way operate very differently to funded projects. Ensure you have investigated and planned appropriately, as well as analysed risk, cashflow and investment needs before moving into this space.
- Look to cooperate and work together with other organisations, but within a pragmatic and business-like framework. In the right contexts, diverse consortia are likely to be a key way forward for all but the largest cultural organisations, enabling economies of scale, diversity of delivery approaches, and the ability to respond to significantly sized opportunities and commissions. However, be realistic, building consortia is time consuming and requires resourcing and needs produce reward proportional to real opportunity.
- Where appropriate, work beyond sub-sector or artform-based boundaries. For example, new cultural partnerships between arts organisations, museums and libraries can provide a richer and more diverse cultural offer and set of pathways for schools, children and young people. Museums and libraries in particular often have very strong local networks and presence, and are highly valued by families and local commissioners.
- Be prepared for these consortia to coalesce and gel and then dissolve when appropriate, and keep focussed on the business purpose and rationale when working in them. Hold them lightly, and look to build and sit within a wide range of partnerships – not just single sets of organisations.
- There is considerable scope to 'leverage' the brand value and nature of delivery of larger and better-known NPOs and cultural institutions in relation to the emerging school market (if desired of course – it is a complex, strategic and political choice). Smaller organisations may well face more challenging times but their flexibility will be an asset, perhaps allowing them to find a key niche and school partner, and then monetise these relationships in some way.
- If you are trading or engaged in partnership work with a school, focus on the school's needs as a 'customer'. What value are you bringing them and what is their perception of this, and the relationship with them?
- As a result of the current changes in education there are, theoretically, lots of potential 'customers' out there for cultural education provision and services. Securing the investment needed to develop your offer and finding them is the first challenge (school by school, and through intelligent content-driven marketing), and creating the scale needed to run a sustainable service is the next. This will require investment and like all new business development, returns will not be immediate.

- If you are able to secure long term investment, are large and secure enough, or have good reserves, consider working with clusters, federations, chains, associations and influential schools in order to create this scale, access numbers of schools at once and achieve more strategic buy-in.
- Understand your offer and stick to it. Within this context, look for schools whose strategic priorities link with yours as they are more likely to have budgets that align too.
- Engage with schools as a knowledgeable and active partner: learn more about the current reforms and proposed curricula in detail; serve as a governor in a local school; become a trust partner with a school at institutional level; respond to calls for feedback on the new curriculum – policies and practice can be shaped. Familiarise yourself with a school's data and development plans before approaching them about joint work.
- Within a school, aim to engage with senior management and the Head as well as lead teachers due to levels of influence, budget and the ability to endorse and make things happen.
- But also consider establishing close relationships with teachers and teacher networks – to understand the pressures and challenges they face, and so that cultural practice can be informed by their skills, interests and expertise in an ongoing way.
- Talk openly and at senior level to schools and existing educational partners about ways that cultural organisations could add value and meet needs (e.g. schools talked about the need for help animating and addressing the new primary curriculum - help schools solve the problems it has presented to them – work with schools to formulate approaches to the changes; and partnership delivery models for 16-18 year olds who will soon be staying on in some form of education or training but are not suited to A levels or academic programmes of study).
- Are there other forms of value that you can create via joint school work or partnerships? Not all partnerships are based on monetary value. Are there other ways you could be helping schools that are of relatively high value to them, but easy for you to provide (e.g. expertise, advertising, networking opportunities, brand relationship?) What value can they give back to you in return (e.g. networks of parents and families, audience development?) However, be careful to understand the marginal costs to you of all activity and where it fits with your strategic priorities.
- We need to work harder to generate better evidence of the impact and outcomes for children and young people when participating in cultural education: at an individual level, cohort and school level. This includes understanding and using tracking and evaluation methods that have validity within a school and Ofsted context. Develop and use clear arguments and analysis that links work to evidence of impact and progress in pupils.

### 12.3 What this means for children and young people

The NFER report did not include a section directly about children and young people, and there is a real risk that in amongst the complexity of discussion around marketisation and diversification in the schools sector we forget their needs and views.

In debates about new curricula and performance measures, traded services and educational markets, and frameworks for pupil progress and outcomes, children and young people are the ones who experience the service (positively or not), are measured and examined (as successes or failures), attempt to absorb the knowledge and develop the skills that the schemes of work and curricula require, and yet they have very little direct voice in all of this.

There is ongoing debate about the value of art and culture to society at a time of austerity. These debates peak around the times of spending reviews and national budget setting; and also rise in response to LAs cutting allocations for art and culture at local level. The debate is heated but the arguments used still feel under-developed. We know that the making of culture is (surely unarguably?) a vital component of this country's economy for example. But we struggle to connect this back into the shape of schools and the curriculum. Similarly, we have some sense of the personal health and wellbeing that arises through cultural production and participation but, again, aren't clear about the link back into school and the type of learning that therefore should be happening in these institutions in order to build this more fully and proactively.

We need to develop and articulate a more useful, less fuzzy, sharper and fuller paradigm for cultural education in order to begin to fill in all of these gaps; explaining more clearly, concisely and quantitatively what value we think that culture has in relation to schools, education, children and young people – and why. And we need to involve children and young people in that process; they are usually more concrete than adults when faced with the big questions!

As the bridge organisation we are keen to support and develop a much wider and deeper network of young people able to contribute to these debates and lead arts and cultural practice at local level. We think the Gold Arts Award is an excellent vehicle for this development and are supporting organisations right across the SW to build work in this area.

## 12.4 What this means for the bridge, ACE and other commissioners of arts and culture

The NFER report drew the following conclusions in this area:

- Increase engagement – consider prioritising strategies to reach the ‘intrigued engagers’ group [those schools who have a limited engagement but want help to do more] as these schools have an appetite to do more.
- Help cultural organisations build teacher skill development into their offer.
- Encourage school-to-school support for cultural engagement...and for sharing practice between schools.
- Encourage schools to access local opportunities.
- Join things up and create strong partnerships.
- Be mindful of schools’ budgets for arts and cultural learning – given that the Arts Award has a cost, and that Artsmark will in future incur a fee.
- Help schools to leverage funding and facilities – help schools to collaborate on commissioning, sharing transport and facilities, and make schools aware of the facilities available to them locally.

Picking up on the previous point relating to children and young people, we think there is a need for us all to work together to more clearly understand and then articulate the value of different aspects of cultural education – particularly in relation to schools, who are becoming significant commissioners of this type of work (even if small-scale individually). In turn this could help ‘grow the market’ for cultural education activity, though this should not be the prime aim of the endeavour, or we risk coming up with low grade PR rather than solid arguments and evidence.

We also see risks, within the wider cultural sector and particularly at times of austerity, of tensions between art forms and sub-sectors (e.g. with organisations, initiatives and sub-sectors arguing amongst themselves about their respective value and effectiveness). Commissioners and strategic bodies have a responsibility to do all they can to ensure that these arguments move to the big picture and to the essential value of art and culture, and do not over-focus on how a diminishing cake is sliced in the next round of public sector cuts and spending review. All aspects of art and culture suffer if this situation comes to pass. As individuals we all have a responsibility to argue for the big picture rather than turning inward.

- Above and beyond this, we need more thinking and active discussion about the potential ‘market’ and trading aspects of cultural education – and the implications for all (from schools through to cultural organisations and grant-givers whose investment now plays out in this mixed model arena). These developments are so new we are not even clear on the business models we may need, the genuine nature of the opportunities opening up, the pitfalls, the conflicts and challenges, and so on. We need to work together to build and share practical expertise and lessons in this area.
- The large number of schools in the region and the small size of many of them necessitate strategic frameworks or ways to work smartly with clusters, teaching schools and academy chains.

- We think that Arts Award in particular has demonstrated real value during these difficult times; it is a clear and high quality framework that can drive activity on the ground that is young person led, purposeful, valued by schools and efficient. We need to keep building on the region's strengths in this area.
- We also think that schools could be viewed differently in rural areas: as engines of cultural activity and development, and often the most significant public investment and facility in an area. Down the line, is there scope for schools to be seen and treated as NPOs or cultural organisations in areas where cultural investment is otherwise very thin on the ground? Their practice and reach is often innovative and strong.
- New forms of investment are needed to allow cultural organisations to develop traded or more commercial services for the education market. It may take several years for these services to become profitable (if at all), and there is a need to support this period of systematic research and development.
- If we are asking schools to be brave and imaginative, we need to act similarly. Bravery and imagination will be needed to spot and seize some of the new opportunities opening up to us all – but we also have to be conscious that some of what we try will work, and some won't; and this demands a different attitude and approach to risk within a largely risk averse public realm.
- In particular, and whether this involves schools or not, we need to find ways to continue to produce radical innovation and practice outside current systems and paradigms. There is a risk that, in a drive towards mixed-funding models and marketization in the education sector, we begin to produce work that meets market needs but is of less artistic and cultural value as a result. Nothing speaks better of the value of arts and culture than great work itself.

As the bridge organisation we have a particular responsibility to take forward actions in all of these areas, and are building our programme for 2013-15 to take this new analysis into account. Our actions:

- Providing direct and ongoing support for key cultural organisations seeking to shift their relationship with schools, the education sector and young people – via a wide range of events across the region, seminars, and bespoke consultancy support.
- Developing detailed work that allows the cultural sector to better articulate its impact, particular in relation to schools and education; beginning in 2013/14 with a set of seminars and workshop sessions focused on practical ways to consider the impact and value of arts and cultural practice in relation to children and young people.
- Work to share and build improved knowledge and expertise in the cultural sector regarding educational practice, opportunities and challenges. This report will help provide a foundation in this area but we are following it up with a range of seminars, events and more active dissemination activities.

- An enhanced communication function, with improved website, email bulletins, twitter feed and social media presence – to share expertise, knowledge, and ideas, and encourage and facilitate debate and ‘joining up’.
- Continued strategic support for Arts Award and Artsmark across the region, as well as enhanced support for key strands of activity in this area (e.g. Gold Arts Award commissions). These frameworks have particular currency and value in changing and challenging times and are generally understood and well-received by schools, as well as driving high quality arts and cultural activity.
- Linked to this, some work to place children and young people more centrally in debates about arts and cultural practice in schools going forward: including supporting a new and vibrant network of Gold Arts Award students across the region.
- Local development in areas where cultural commissioners and strategic bodies such as ACE identify a need for more activity on the ground with children and young people, but doing this within a sustainable framework and in partnership with schools wherever possible.
- Work to develop genuinely radical innovations and new models: that seize new opportunities and make the most of some of the freedoms now becoming available (e.g. support for organisations developing free schools from an arts and cultural perspective; work with consortia and cultural organisations to develop joint delivery vehicles that can operate at scale and draw down different, and more sustainable, strands of funding – as in Bristol via the CEPG.)
- Providing particular support for new initiatives arising from the Henley Review (e.g. Museums and Schools initiative; Heritage Schools), including practical support to embed Arts Award within them.
- Work with key clusters of schools and strategic alliances or networks. For example, supporting teaching school alliances to include programmes of development and CPD encompassing cultural education and partnerships within their core offer. Limited resources and a large numbers of schools in the SW means that we can’t work in depth on a one-to-one basis with schools, but by targeting networks and ‘influentials’ we can encourage and develop cultural practice and then seek to spread this via wider school networks.
- Beginning to explore new forms of investment that would allow cultural organisations to develop ideas, products and services in the new markets opening up to them – including crowdfunding and social investment vehicles.

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