



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

The Welsh Government response
to Professor Dai Smith's Report on:
'Arts in Education in the Schools of Wales'

March 2013

“Most business is about working through and with people and that’s about learning. It’s not about fact. You can tell people a truth until they’re blue in the face. But unless they’re interested in and believe it, and find it emotionally assimilable, they won’t accept it. You learn through the arts...To cope with a changing world, we need people of imagination, creativity and vision and with the self-confidence to adapt.”

John Harvey-Jones, Industrialist (1924-2008)

Introduction

Learning about the arts and culture, and playing an active part in the cultural life of the school and wider communities, are vital to developing a young person’s identity and self-esteem. We agree with Dai Smith’s comment, at the start of his report, that:

‘We must, if we are to succeed economically and thrive socially, ground a quality education in both creativity as practice and culture as knowledge. At the heart of this unity are the arts – arts which inspire and then create our desired end of the creative society. Otherwise, at best, we will be imitative and therefore second rate’.

We also agree with, and are pleased to endorse, Professor Smith’s first recommendation which is that the Welsh Government should *‘formally assert the central role which it envisages for arts education in the schools of Wales by making a commitment to the provision of high quality arts education and access to the arts’*. We will do this more fully when our first ‘National Plan for Creative Learning’ is announced.

We would like to record our gratitude to Professor Dai Smith and his task group for their thorough and detailed approach in undertaking a review of this scale across such a divergent sector. His vision for excellence in cultural education, to enable children from all backgrounds and every part of Wales to have the opportunity to experience and enjoy the best that our unique cultural heritage has to offer, is one that we share. We would also like to express our thanks to everyone who contributed to the Review, including the Arts Council of Wales, an impressive number of young people, and a host of teachers, artists, arts organisations and educationalists.

We have set out below our initial response to the 12 recommendations in the report. These will be developed further in the National Plan for Creative Learning, and the first version of the plan will be issued this summer. We acknowledge the challenge of implementing Professor Smith’s recommendations at a time when budgets are under severe pressure, and we will therefore be looking carefully at options for working with existing programmes wherever possible to deliver sustainable, long-term outcomes. We are fully committed to working closely with the arts and education sectors, and other key partners, in taking forward this vital agenda.

John Griffiths

John Griffiths AC / AM

Y Gweinidog Diwylliant a Chwaraeon
Minister for Culture and Sport

Huw Lewis

Huw Lewis AC / AM

Y Gweinidog Addysg a Sgiliau
Minister for Education and Skills

Response to recommendations

Recommendation 1: The Welsh Government should formally assert the central role which it envisages for arts education in the schools of Wales by making a commitment to the provision of high quality arts education and access to the arts.

We agree. The arts have a major role to play in enriching the education of children and young people. We recognise and applaud the good practice taking place in many of our schools and the excellent education offer provided by many of our arts organisations, but we also recognise that action needs to be taken to ensure that the benefits of creativity and participation in the arts are available to learners in all our schools.

We will therefore develop a *National Plan for Creative Learning* which will be published this summer. The plan will address the recommendations of the Arts in Education report. It will set out how the education and arts sectors will be supported to work together to deliver a high quality arts offer to schools, and it will be aligned with the Welsh Government priorities of reducing the impact of poverty on attainment and improving standards of literacy and numeracy.

The plan will include actions for the Welsh Government, schools, education authorities and consortia, the Arts Council of Wales, arts and cultural bodies. It will also include information on accountability, timescale and evidence gathering in order to demonstrate the impact of arts interventions on educational outcomes.

Recommendation 2: The Welsh Government should promote the use of the arts in helping to deliver improved numeracy and literacy, and in reducing the attainment gap.

We agree, and we recognise the important role of the arts in supporting the development of literacy and numeracy skills. The Literacy and Numeracy Framework (LNF) has been developed to ensure that literacy and numeracy skills are embedded in all subjects across the curriculum, rather than focused on English, Welsh and mathematics lessons alone.

We will explore ways of using the arts to complement the National Literacy and Numeracy Framework, for example through the development of online exemplar materials for teachers. We will also integrate arts-based activities in the training provided by the National Support Programme which supports schools in implementing the LNF.

The Welsh Government recognises the value of engaging with the arts sector in helping our children and young people to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. We will work with the arts and heritage sectors to promote these opportunities.

We agree that arts participation can be a useful way of engaging disaffected older learners. Evidence also shows that the progress of younger learners, in particular, can be supported by arts participation, provided that arts activities link to the curriculum in a

structured way. We will be developing case studies of effective practice, including examples of arts participation.

Recommendation 3: The Welsh Government should enhance the current curriculum to include creativity, alongside numeracy and literacy as a core theme across all the subject disciplines and in both primary and secondary education; further the Welsh Government should consider an arts rich education to be core to the whole school experience of all pupils, and should, with ACW, seek to enable wide experience of the arts outside school as well as interaction with professional artists in the school environment.

We agree that creativity should be an important element of the curriculum, so we have asked for this important recommendation to be considered by Professor Graham Donaldson as part of his independent review of our curriculum and assessment arrangements. Our recent Curriculum for Wales consultation included proposals to include creativity as a key theme under 'Wider Skills', with the intention of placing these skills on a statutory footing in the curriculum in Wales. The proposed list (critical thinking and problem solving; planning and organising; creativity and innovation; personal effectiveness; digital literacy) acknowledges the importance we place on the need for a curriculum that encourages creative approaches to learning. These skills would be a central feature of curriculum arrangements from Foundation Phase through to Key Stage 4 and would ensure alignment with, and progression towards, a revised model for the Welsh Baccalaureate.

The review will also consider a broader set of issues surrounding curriculum design. This will include looking at ways in which better links between schools and external bodies, e.g. arts organisations, might be developed to enrich the learning experiences of children in Wales. Consideration will also be given to how any of our curriculum changes are governed and implemented, including the need for any bespoke training to support their delivery.

Regarding the second part of this recommendation, **we agree** that an arts rich education should be central to the whole school experience of all learners. We will work with ACW to increase the educational 'offer' provided by arts organisations, and to make it more accessible for schools.

Recommendation 4: All initial teacher training (ITT) delivered by HE institutions in Wales should ensure that creative teaching methodology is 'core' to educational practice.

We agree. Whilst the Welsh Government does not set ITT course content for HE institutions, we have appointed an expert ITT adviser who will work closely with the sector and key stakeholders to help shape ITT in Wales. The role will include ensuring that best practice is recognised and shared across the wider ITT sector, including

examples of best practice in creative teaching methodology.

If creativity and innovation are accepted as 'wider skills' in the curriculum (see Recommendation 3) we would expect all HE institutions in Wales to include best practice on creative learning as part of ITT. Any changes to the National Curriculum would also be reflected in a revised version of the Qualified Teacher Status Standards for Wales.

Recommendation 5: The Welsh Government and ACW should work with a group of experienced education practitioners to develop a new framework for arts related continuing professional development (CPD). This should address the needs both of teachers and of arts practitioners, and support the national priorities of improving standards of literacy and numeracy and of narrowing the attainment gap.

We agree. The Welsh Government is currently developing an approach to effective professional development based on principles of collaborative learning and reflective practice. We will develop this approach in order to create an arts-related CPD framework which sets out to ensure that practitioners have the skills and knowledge needed to use the arts to help meet national priorities.

We will also explore how we can increase opportunities for high quality, arts-related CPD that support the national priorities of improving standards of literacy and numeracy and of narrowing the attainment gap. We will work with the Arts Council of Wales and the arts sector in order to ensure that this meets the needs of arts organisations as well as teachers.

Recommendation 6: The Welsh Government should support:

- The fostering of schools 'arts champions' within the new national plan for creative learning
- Welsh Arts Awards and/or medals for individual teachers

We agree that schools need recognition and incentives for supporting creative learning. We will therefore, in consultation with the four education consortia, ACW and other partners, explore options for raising the profile of the arts in schools and how specialist and non-specialist arts teachers can be supported.

We will also consider the establishment of a national, annual award that recognises and encourages good practice in the arts, culture and creativity.

Recommendation 7: ACW and Local Government should be remitted to work with local authorities and education consortia to prioritise a range of specific initiatives, to support and develop creative teaching, to include:

- 'WAM' (Wales Art Mark) Certificates

- Mentoring of teachers with arts practitioners and arts organisations
- Working with local government to identify, develop and sustain a system of schools 'arts champions'

We agree. We would welcome new partnerships between the Arts Council of Wales, local government and education consortia that result in improved provision for the arts in schools.

We will work with ACW and the education consortia to develop mentoring arrangements between teachers and arts organisations, and ways of recognising best practice in the arts in schools.

Recommendation 8: The Welsh Government and ACW should ensure that a Creative Education Portal is developed, as an additional, integrated element of 'Hwb', the all-Wales Digital Learning Platform

We agree. The Welsh Government is committed to improving communication of the arts offer to schools, and to providing access to high quality resources and examples of best practice.

Working with the Arts Council of Wales, we will conduct a scoping exercise to determine the content and functionality of a suitable creative education portal to be integrated with Hwb, the all-Wales learning platform. The aim will be to develop a platform for arts and education practitioners which will:

- provide information on the national and regional arts in education 'offer'
- host/link to teaching and learning resources
- host best practice case studies
- showcase arts interventions which support literacy, numeracy and narrowing the gap
- link to opportunities for continuing professional development (CPD).

Recommendation 9: ACW should be remitted to work with its revenue funded clients and other cultural institutions to establish 'Creative Learning Networks' to encourage arts, artists, teachers, parents and educationalists to exchange ideas and information, and to work together with Professional Learning Communities to improve standards of creative learning in schools. The Networks should reflect and inform the four regional education consortia.

We agree, and will remit the Arts Council of Wales to develop such networks, in consultation with arts, artists, teachers, educationalists, parents and other community organisers.

In doing so, we will remit ACW to explore the cost and feasibility for linking the networks to a series of new 'Creative Learning Hubs', which would work closely with the regional education consortia. Such Hubs could become responsible for co-ordinating and delivering the new National Plan for Creative Learning at a regional level.

Recommendation 10: The Welsh Government should explore funding options aimed at ensuring that equitable provision is available to young people in all art forms, and that exceptionally talented young people are able to pursue and develop their talent.

We agree to explore funding options aimed at more equitable provision for young people in all art forms.

The Pupil Deprivation Grant (PDG) is paid directly to schools to support pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. Schools may choose to use the PDG to support pupils to access enrichment activities. For example, schools may identify exceptionally talented young people and support them to develop that talent.

We agree that exceptionally talented young people should be able to pursue and develop their talent. In developing our National Plan for Creative Learning, we will undertake further work on the progression routes for all the major art forms. This will identify what action can be taken to improve the adequacy, coverage and affordability of such routes for young people throughout the country.

Recommendation 11: The Welsh Government and Careers Wales should work in partnership to support a stronger focus on providing more balanced careers advice to young people to highlight opportunities and pathways in the arts and creative industries sector.

We agree. Careers Choices Dewis Gyrfa Ltd (Careers Wales) is now a wholly owned subsidiary of the Welsh Government with a remit to increase its work with young people. The service provides impartial advice through an enhanced website, telephone and face-to-face guidance where appropriate.

We will continue to work with Careers Wales to improve the communication and relevance of Labour Market Intelligence published on Careerswales.com to support young people who are making career choices. Careerswales.com provides information on working in the arts and creative industries, including videos of artists and creative industry professionals. We will encourage Careers Wales to work with the creative industries sector, to provide up-to-date and accessible online information about occupations in the arts and the creative industries.

With regard to improving careers advice delivered in schools, we are taking action in response to the 2012 Estyn report, *Informed Decisions - The Implementation of the Careers and the World of Work Framework*. We will take forward an application to WEFO (Welsh European Funding Office) for an ESF (European Social Fund) supported project which seeks to build capacity and support schools' delivery of the Careers and World of Work curriculum, with the objective of developing young people's career management skills.

Recommendation 12: The Welsh Government should require Estyn to undertake a periodic audit of Welsh schools to assess the embedding of creative learning, and the quality of the on-going arts experience and its impact on literacy and numeracy outcomes.

We agree. We are in discussion with Estyn to agree the scope of a review of the arts: to provide information on the quality of arts teaching and learning experiences in primary and secondary schools; to examine how schools use the arts to support literacy and numeracy and reduce the impact of poverty on attainment; and to highlight best practice in all arts subjects.