



House of Commons

Children, Schools and Families  
Committee

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**Creative Partnerships  
and the Curriculum:  
Government Response  
to the Eleventh Report  
from the Education  
and Skills Committee,  
Session 2006–07**

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**First Special Report of Session  
2007–08**

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## The Children, Schools and Families Committee

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The current staff of the Committee are David Lloyd (Clerk), Sarah Thatcher, (Second Clerk), Emma Wisby (Committee Specialist), Judith Boyce (Committee Specialist), Katie Phelan (Committee Assistant), Susan Ramsay (Committee Secretary), and John Kittle (Senior Office Clerk).

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# First Special Report

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On 31 October 2007<sup>1</sup> the Education and Skills Committee published its Eleventh Report of Session 2006–07, *Creative Partnerships and the Curriculum* (HC 1034). The Government's response was received on 16 January 2008, and is published as Appendix 1 to this Report.

## Appendix 1

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### **Government's response to the Eleventh Report from the Education and Skills Committee, Session 2006–07**

The Government attaches great importance to creativity in the curriculum as a means of supporting children and young people's personal development and achievement. We agree that creativity is not just about the arts. It is about problem-solving, exploring ideas, making connections and being imaginative and innovative. And it applies across all subjects. Creativity in science and maths is just as important as in English and art. We recognise that creativity is one of the 'soft' skills which employers and HE providers value.

Creativity has featured increasingly in the Government's schools policies. The current education and childcare system delivers opportunities for children and young people to develop their creativity at all ages, both within and outside the curriculum. Creativity and creative skills are a key part of the curriculum from Foundation Stage right through to secondary education. They are not about placing an additional burden on schools and teachers but about using the opportunities schools already have to develop creativity through teaching and learning; this is what good teachers are already doing.

Creativity is embedded in the new secondary curriculum, within the personal learning and thinking skills framework, and as a key process across a number of subjects. The QCA is providing guidance and support to schools and their staff to develop a curriculum that supports creativity. The scope for supporting creativity in the primary curriculum will be considered in the primary curriculum review led by Sir Jim Rose. The review will look at promoting, assessing and recording creativity through the proposed primary profile.

A range of other work led by the DCSF supports the creativity agenda. This includes the drive to make the teaching of science and maths in schools more engaging and interactive; and the programme of work to encourage young enterprise. Investment in initiatives such as the Learning Outside the Classroom Manifesto and the setting up of extended schools enables extra activities to pupils, including creative and arts activities in schools and outside school hours.

Partnerships with creative individuals and bodies are important, but they are not the only way in which schools can develop pupils' creativity. Some schools are already exemplars of

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<sup>1</sup> Eleventh Report from the Education and Skills Committee, Session 2006–07, *Creative Partnerships and the Curriculum*, HC 1034.

effective practice in developing pupils' creativity and we want to spread excellent practice to all schools.

We will communicate clearly to school leadership teams and governors, local authorities and others, to support them in making a reality of the creativity agenda. We will consider how best to do this in consultation with partners and stakeholders including QCA, Ofsted, TDA, and SSAT.

Recognising that for many children and young people the first chance to develop their creativity comes from engagement with the arts and culture, the Children's Plan makes a commitment to developing a 'Cultural Offer'. This will ensure that all children and young people, no matter where they live and or what their background, can get involved in high quality cultural activities in and out of school. We will work towards a five hour offer to match that for sport. The aim will be to give young people the chance to develop as:

- informed spectators (through attending top quality theatre and dance performances, world class exhibitions, galleries, museums and heritage sites); and
- participants and creators (through learning a musical instrument, playing and singing in ensembles, taking part in theatre and dance performances, producing an artwork, making films and media art, or curating an exhibition).

A series of pilots will look at different approaches in different parts of the country, and we will establish a Youth Culture Trust to run these and promote cultural activities more widely. There will be an emphasis on young people working with the very best of the professional cultural sector. Where young people show particular talents in an area we will ensure that they have the opportunities to develop this and, where appropriate, progress into careers in the cultural and creative industries.

We will shortly make a further announcement about the cultural offer and the future of Creative Partnerships and provide more information in the Creative Economy Strategy Document 'World's Creative Hubs: Challenges for the Creative Economy'.

In the meantime, below is our response to the Select Committee's report.

The Select Committee's recommendations are in bold text.

The Government's response is in plain text.

Some of the recommendations and responses have been grouped.

**1. Most now appear agreed on a definition of creativity which goes beyond the expressive and aesthetic arts, and agree that in educational terms creativity should extend right across the curriculum. In practice, while there are clearly examples of Creative Partnerships-funded work involving those from sectors other than the creative and expressive arts, such as industry, science and design, we nevertheless consider this to be an area in need of further development.**

**2. A closer relationship between Creative Partnerships and bodies such as the Design Council and the Royal Societies would ensure that creativity in all professional domains could be used to stimulate creativity in schools, and would firmly embed the notion of**

**creativity as a process rather than a preserve of ‘the arts’. Additionally, consideration should be given by the Government to whether the patronage of the Arts Council, with its very particular remit, is still appropriate given Creative Partnerships’ wider ambitions, and whether the current make-up of the Creative Partnerships board adequately reflects the full range of professions to which creativity is key.**

The majority of Creative Partnerships work has been with creative practitioners and cultural institutions. While there will always be scope for collaboration with other sectors, both Departments consider that Creative Partnerships’ principal focus should remain on arts and culture. Over the next three years the programme will continue its excellent work but will be rolled out to more areas, more schools and more young people.

While Creative Partnerships is a major initiative in this area, it is by no means the only one. The Government supports and values the work of a number of agencies, such as QCA, NCSL and NESTA, which are making significant contributions to this field. Through a number of organisations, schools are engaged in a wide range of enterprise, active learning and partnerships programmes which develop creative learning opportunities for young people.

An example of a successful programme is the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics network’s (STEMNET) Science and Engineering Ambassadors programme. Ambassadors are individuals from a wide variety of backgrounds who offer their time, enthusiasm and expertise to help schools inspire young people. They come from a broad spectrum of disciplines and careers at all levels, including marine biologists, mathematicians, aeronautical engineering apprentices, medical physicists, industrial chemists, electrical engineers and lab technicians.

Creativity and critical thinking is a key dimension of the new much more flexible, relevant, and responsive secondary curriculum that will allow schools greater opportunities to support creativity. There is more emphasis on using the whole curriculum to develop general skills such as initiative, enterprise, ability to work in teams, and the capacity to learn independently. Guidance on the new curriculum is clear that schools should give pupils the opportunity to learn in museums, art galleries, sports centres, theatres, and through fieldwork in different localities and work with a range of professionals on the school site and in workplaces. These include artists, scientists, sports people, mathematicians, musicians and writers, as well as a range of people in workplaces.

**3. Our evidence suggests a very high level of support for more creative approaches to teaching among school staff and creative practitioners, most of whom are clearly convinced that a wide range of positive effects follow from involvement in such programmes, particularly in terms of developing ‘softer’ skills such as team-working and self-confidence. This evidence should not be ignored, but needs to be more systematically collected and analysed more rigorously. The evidence linking creative programmes and better attainment remains tentative at best, but this does not concern us unduly: we believe that creativity has value in its own right and that improved attainment, while to be welcomed, should be viewed as an additional benefit rather than the main purpose of the programme.**

**4. We note that evidence on the impact of creative initiatives operating outside of the Creative Partnerships framework does not appear to have been collated or analysed systematically: this is a gap in knowledge that should be remedied.**

We agree that creativity has a value in its own right, but offering children and young people the opportunity to develop their creativity, both within and outside the curriculum, also benefits them in terms of developing ‘soft’ skills and raising academic standards.

There is a growing body of evidence that creative teaching and learning does have an impact on attainment (for example the Paul Hamlyn Musical Futures Programme) and on achievement more widely (Creative Action Research Awards). Ofsted associate Creative Partnerships with improved literacy, numeracy, ICT, self confidence, team-working, and an ability to show enterprise and handle change. An independent survey of Head Teachers (BRMB) found that over 70% thought that the Creative Partnerships programme had led to an improvement in attainment. Evaluation studies of current major creative and cultural programmes such as Museum Strategic Commissioning and the three Cultural Hubs show that these types of interventions help young people achieve all of the Every Child Matters outcomes.

There is also evidence (both international,<sup>2</sup> for example, and from our own programmes) that active engagement with the arts can be hugely motivating; promotes self-discipline and team work; and helps to develop self-confidence and an ability to actively listen and communicate. The arts can also play an important part in changing attitudes to learning and improving behaviour, and offer opportunities to stimulate children’s creativity. As the 10 Year Youth Strategy makes clear, there is international evidence that participation in creative arts and other cultural activities can have a significant impact on young people’s outcomes in later life.

Playing for Success (Pfs) is an innovative out of school hours programme that successfully links sport to hard educational outcomes but does not focus on playing sport. Learning Centres are set up in sports clubs’ venues where sport is used as a motivational and curriculum tool to improve young people’s literacy and numeracy skills. Centres are staffed by experienced, qualified teachers, supported by assistants and volunteer mentors and each has developed a range of creative approaches to inspiring young people to learn. Evaluation results are impressive. An example is Speedway Racing, where pupils interview riders and managers. In preparation for this, students consider appropriate questions to obtain an accurate profile and compile magazine articles.

DCSF will undertake some mapping of existing research, to analyse the characteristics and success factors of other programmes which contribute to creativity in the curriculum and involve school-focused partnerships or engagement, including areas such as science and enterprise.

**5. Developing new methods of assessing incremental progress is an urgent priority, but currently no-one appears to be taking this forward. Existing measures of progress, which focus on the attainment of Key Stages, are unlikely to capture small but steady improvements, or progress in areas such as self-confidence, team-working, and risk**

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2 For example, *Champions of Change Research: Impact of the Arts on Learning*: <http://www.aep-arts.org/files/publications/ChampsReport.pdf>

taking. The Department for Children, Schools and Families should lead and own this work, in order to ensure that it values the assessments that are made as a consequence. The useful expertise from the special schooling sector in developing assessment methodologies of this kind should be capitalised upon.

**6. One area which should be better developed is the systematic collection of students' own views and experiences of creative learning programmes. In our recent report on Citizenship Education, we were strongly supportive of moves to increase the student voice in schools; closer relationships between Creative Partnerships and school councils could contribute to both of these ends.**

We agree that assessing progress is a key area to be investigated. DCSF will map work currently being undertaken on developing an approach to the assessment of creativity by QCA, Creative Partnerships and others. QCA have recently commissioned a mapping exercise to analyse and compare a number of existing approaches to assessment of personal skills and competencies (Futurelab, 2007). This provides a useful starting point, and emphasizes the interrelationships between assessment, curriculum, pedagogy and school cultures.

**7. Extending creative approaches beyond a particular activity and firmly embedding them in the wider curriculum remains a key challenge for schools and also for Creative Partnerships as an organisation. The National Foundation for Educational Research is due to publish research identifying the factors which are associated with creativity becoming firmly embedded. Their findings need to be widely disseminated, in a form accessible to school staff. Ofsted should also continue to focus on the extent to which the lessons from creative activities have been embedded into other school domains.**

**8. There are clearly many who believe that the National Curriculum, particularly at the primary level, is still too narrowly prescriptive and constrains the development of a more creative approach. Nevertheless, our evidence demonstrates that there are schools and settings providing inspiring, creative learning while fulfilling National Curriculum requirements. This is an issue we urge our successor Committee to investigate further—in particular, to establish whether the solution simply lies in giving schools greater confidence and encouragement to adapt the curriculum to their needs, or whether more fundamental changes to structure and content are required.**

Creativity is strongly embedded in the new Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) which will come into force from 2008. Creative development is one of six areas of learning and development. It recognises that being creative involves the whole curriculum, enabling children to make connections between one area of learning and another and so extend their understanding. The EYFS obliges providers to ensure that practitioners extend children's creativity by actively encouraging curiosity, exploration and play and units of training under development are designed to help them do so effectively.

At primary level, creative thinking is identified as essential to effective learning and opportunities to teach and learn these skills are threaded through the curriculum. We will begin a review of the primary curriculum in spring 2008 to establish the essential knowledge, skills and understanding our schools will teach all our primary aged pupils for years to come. Among the key aims of the review will be to provide greater flexibility and

personalisation within the primary curriculum and to provide a coherent framework to support children's personal, social and emotional development, including creativity.

Creativity features prominently in our new secondary curriculum and encourages schools to build creativity into the school day in a way that reflects the specific needs and interest of their pupils. Creativity and critical thinking is one of the cross-curriculum dimensions that provide a focus for work within and between subjects and across the curriculum. To develop creativity and critical thinking pupils should have opportunities to engage in creative activities in all subjects, exploring links between subjects and wider aspects of learning.

The proposals for the cultural offer, as outlined in the Children's Plan, will give children and young people the chance to learn through culture—using engagement with the arts and other activities to boost creative skills, attainment and personal development.

The NFER evaluation of sharing practice within Creative Partnerships (published September 2007) contributes to a significant body of research about embedding innovative approaches to teaching and learning in school settings. In 2005 NCSL analysed practice in primary schools which had achieved high attainment levels as well as providing a broad and balanced curriculum for children. The findings were published in a report and practical toolkit, *Developing Leadership for Creativity in Primary schools NCSL 2005*.

DCSF will collate the key findings of existing evidence drawn from Creative Partnerships and wider practice within settings across all phases and make this available in an accessible format to schools, and share it with key agencies such as Ofsted, NCSL and QCA.

**9. We agree with Creative Partnerships that continuing professional development is of fundamental importance to embedding more creative approaches to teaching and learning, and should be seen as the core of the operation. We also encourage Creative Partnerships to consider ways in which mentoring of teachers by creative professionals, and of creative professionals by teachers, could be further encouraged—for example, through the introduction of short, structured sabbaticals for teachers.**

We agree that CPD is of huge importance. Research on the CPD opportunities provided by Creative Partnerships from Oxford Brookes was very positive. Creative Partnerships is also working with other providers such as the Museums Libraries and Archives Council to develop tools to support placements of student teachers in creative, non-school settings so that trainee teachers are aware of the range of cultural opportunities available to young people, and are confident in accessing these throughout their careers. We will build on this work over the next three years. DCSF will also work with Creative Partnerships to analyse the CPD programmes which it has supported to help develop replicable models.

DCMS will support Creative Partnerships in developing approaches to professional development of personnel from the creative and cultural sector in collaboration with the education sector and the relevant sector skills councils .

**10. It is regrettable that a more systematic and co-ordinated approach has not been taken in respect of creative partnerships work in extended schools. Given the importance the Government clearly now attaches to involving parents in their children's learning, and to providing opportunities for parents in difficult**



circumstances to develop their skills and confidence, this is a significant missed opportunity.

**11. More generally, we are not convinced that there is a coherent view on creativity's place in wider policy of children's services at the national level. The obvious links between creativity and other priorities such as Every Child Matters and the personalisation agenda, as well as with extended schools, are under-developed: currently, the appearance is one of creative partnerships as a rather separate entity which nevertheless shares common ends with many of these other programmes of reform.**

**12. The DCSF gives the impression that these issues concerning creativity are peripheral to their core responsibilities in education and children's services. We believe that the best education has creativity at its very heart. We recommend that the DCSF reviews policies such as *Every Child Matters* and personalised learning to ensure that creativity is established as a core principle in learning and development.**

Our education and childcare system delivers opportunities for children and young people to develop their creativity at all ages, both within and outside the curriculum. Creativity has featured increasingly in the Government's schools policies. Creativity and creative skills are a key part of the curriculum from Foundation Stage right through to Secondary education.

Creativity is strongly embedded in the new Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) which will come into force from 2008. The new secondary curriculum gives creativity far more prominence than previously. It will allow schools greater opportunities to support creativity. Schools are encouraged to build creativity into their curriculum in a way that reflects the specific needs and interest of their learners.

Personalising learning means actively engaging pupils in learning and helping them to reach their full potential. This includes using curriculum flexibilities to engage with individual interests and needs; ensuring all children have equal access to cultural and enrichment opportunities; helping them to discover or develop new interests and talents; and developing 'soft' skills that employers value, such as communication and working in a team.

Extended schools are helping to make personalised learning real. Through their core offer extended schools deliver a coherent package of support to children and young people. This includes a focus on a wide variety of opportunities for learning beyond the classroom, making full use of other providers within the community. Our investment in the extended schools programme will allow children to try new activities that support their learning, and provide opportunities for young people and those working with them to be creative in more informal learning environments. It will enable schools to offer extra activities to pupils, including creative and arts activities.

There are no statutory requirements on schools to develop extended services and the Government does not prescribe the particular activities and services that schools should offer. This is a decision they need to take for themselves, based on consultation with pupils, parents and the wider community which enables them to establish local need and demand and subsequently shape provision around those needs. Schools will be planning and developing extended services so that they are integral to their school improvement plan.

Guidance encourages schools to develop creative activity as part of the range of extended activities and services on offer within and beyond the school day. Some schools have already developed a range of extended activities which focus on arts and creativity.

We want all schools to offer access to extended services by 2010, providing a core range of activities, with at least half of all primary and a third of secondary schools doing so by 2008. The growing enthusiasm for extended schools is demonstrated by over 8,400 schools in England (1 in 3) now offering access to the core offer of extended services. Around 72 per cent of schools in England are already offering some extended provision. The Government has invested £680 million to deliver the vision for extended schools, and we made a commitment in the Children's Plan to a further £1.3 billion over the next three years.

In setting out a long term vision for children and children's services the Children's Plan builds on the reforms introduced by Every Child Matters, and particularly its holistic approach to childhood and children's outcomes. The Children's Plan affirms that *'Participation in cultural activity is enriching and contributes to the Every Child Matters outcomes.'* The development of a cultural offer will help take this vision forward.

**13. We agree with the Government that Ofsted should be required to look for evidence of creative approaches and opportunities during its subject studies, and not solely when a school refers to creativity on its Self Evaluation Form. As has happened with other new curricular developments such as Citizenship, we would also urge Ofsted to carry out regular thematic reviews on creativity, which would prove useful for assessing progress over time at the national level.**

The new Self-Evaluation Form (SEF) for schools from September 2007 includes a reference to creativity in the section on quality of provision. It asks about 'the extent to which learners have opportunities to develop creativity'. We will discuss with Ofsted how they can assist in the ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of schools in embedding creativity as part of improving outcomes for their pupils.

We will work with Ofsted in drawing together examples of how schools have provided evidence of effective work in relation to creativity across the curriculum.

**14. We welcome the confirmation that reductions in Creative Partnerships funding are not foreseen over the next Comprehensive Spending Review period. However, the imbalance in levels of funding for the project between the two Departments does little to allay perceptions that creativity is a second-order priority for the Department for Children, Schools and Families. As we have previously suggested, we also feel that the DCSF could do more in terms of offering non-financial support—for example, by developing a system in which improvements in soft skills can be assessed and valued equally alongside more quantifiable achievements in terms of SAT scores.**

DCSF funding is increasingly devolved to schools to give them the freedom to meet the needs of their pupils and local community. Schools can access creative practitioners through other avenues, either because Creative Partnerships are not active in their area or because, as autonomous institutions, they prefer another approach. A number of local authorities (for example Leeds and Warwickshire) have teams dedicated to supporting schools to work in arts partnerships.

As already mentioned, developing creative skills has featured increasingly in the Government's schools policies. Key features of personalised learning include developing pupils' skills of working independently and in groups, exploring ideas and reflecting on learning, and a curriculum that takes account of prior learning and experiences, tailored to motivations of different learners.

More flexibility in the curriculum will give teachers greater freedom to use their professional judgement to decide how to assess their learners, taking into account the personalisation agenda. They will also be able to help learners recognise the progress they are making within, across and beyond subject disciplines, broadening the measures of success. We will map work currently being undertaken on developing an approach to the assessment of creativity by QCA, Creative Partnerships and others. The cultural offer pilots will also be relevant here.

**15. At its best, when Creative Partnerships starts with a school development plan and builds a strong relationship between teachers and creative practitioners it can significantly expand the capacity and ambition of a school to teach creatively.**

We are aware of research currently being conducted on behalf of Creative Partnerships by a team from Nottingham and Keele universities to analyse the impact of Creative Partnerships on whole school change. The analysis of the Creative Action Research Awards (October 2007) suggests that enquiry based partnership between teachers and creative practitioners has a significant impact. We will draw on the evidence from these and other reports to prepare accessible guidance for schools on approaches to supporting school change.

**16. We accept that funding levels may never be such that all schools can access individual, tailored support, and that funding for Creative Partnerships as a supporting organisation may be time-limited. However, we do not believe completely devolved funding would be appropriate at the moment, when much still remains to be done to embed creative teaching and learning. A priority now for Creative Partnerships and its two sponsoring Government departments in planning for the future should be to produce replicable models or templates, which can then be used and adapted to initiate work in other schools. This would act as a means of ensuring that all schools could benefit from the investment made in Creative Partnerships, even if they have not participated directly to date. If creativity is at the heart of every successful school, it is essential that all schools have access to the necessary resources—such as external co-ordination, creative professionals and continuing professional development for teachers—to enable it to become established through the school system.**

Recognising that, as stressed by Ofsted in its report on Creative Partnerships, schools require different levels of support depending on where they are in their creative development, from 2008 two distinct tiers of schools programmes are being considered by Creative Partnerships. The Change Schools programme will allow schools with significant challenges to engage in an intensive three year programme that supports the creative development of the whole school. Enquiry Schools will allow any school to engage in shorter creative learning programmes targeted at a specific group of pupils and teachers.

Creative Partnerships is already developing tools and templates which schools can use themselves. Creative Partnerships has developed a 'Creativity' self evaluation form to be used by schools alongside their standard Self Evaluation Form. It is intended to help them analyse how they are working to ensure that creativity is at the heart of learning, teaching and school organisation. Creative Partnerships has also made available to all schools a useful publication about setting up creative partnerships: 'Building creative partnerships—a handbook for schools'. It provides practical guidance to any school that wishes to work with external partners to broaden and deepen its cultural and creative offer to young people and to inspire learning.

We are committed to ensuring that all children benefit from creative and cultural activities, and have the opportunity to discover and pursue their particular interests and talents.

The Creative and Cultural Education Advisory Board that we set up has done useful work in bringing forward the commitments made in the Government's response to Paul Roberts' review of creativity. The Board, chaired by Paul Roberts, has helped us bring together the cultural and education sectors—key to the development of a longer term cultural offer that we announced in the Children's Plan. DCSF and DCMS are working together to develop the cultural offer.