



encountering
THE **ARTS**

A Report on the **Encountering the Arts** Conference
The Irish Museum of Modern Art
5 November 2010

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ENCOUNTERING THE ARTS

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FOREWORD



FOREWORD

INTRODUCING ENCOUNTERING THE ARTS

Encountering the Arts was a one-day conference that took place at the Irish Museum of Modern Art on Friday 5 November 2010. This conference was the third in a series of events held throughout 2010, all of which attempted to interrogate the relationship between the arts and education, and to respond to the *Points of Alignment* report, published by the Arts Council in June 2008. *Encountering the Arts* thus reflected the ongoing and overlapping conversations that permeated each separate event; this third conference aimed to deepen an already specific and focused dialogue.

The first of these events, *Creating Conversations*, organised by the Department of Arts Education and Physical Education at Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick, took place in January 2010. The objective of this two-day colloquium was to provide an initial response to *Points of Alignment*, and to debate the role the third level sector could play in further developing the arts and education community, specifically in the areas of formal education, research, policy and leadership. The second event, *Art-Youth-Culture: FYI* was led by the Arts Council and brought together sixty young people between the ages of fifteen and twenty-three to discuss their participation in cultural life and the arts with their peers and key policy-makers during three days of arts-based workshops, discussions, and meetings. FYI was led by the Arts Council and funded with support from the European Commission through Leargas.

The third event – and the subject of this report – *Encountering the Arts* was organised by a Steering Group involving the National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals (**Derek West** – Arts and Education Officer), IMMA (**Helen O’Donoghue** – Head of Education and Community Programmes), Poetry Ireland (**Jane O’Hanlon** – Education Officer) and the Arts Council (**Gaye Tanham** – Young People, Children, and Education).

The day-long conference invited some sixty Irish and international delegates from a variety of artistic and educational work environments to continue the debate around the arts-in-education agenda in Ireland. Successfully integrated modes of practice in operation in the wider European context were detailed, with presentations from The Netherlands and UK, alongside an exemplary Irish case study. A presentation given by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment on the situation of the arts within the formal Irish curriculum encouraged open discussion on the ways in which the relationship between the arts and education might be further explored.

A full schedule of events is included in Appendix A.

CONTEXT AND DEFINITIONS

There are some one million young Irish citizens; 800,000 of these are school going. Their number and their economic dependence, combined with the critical developmental nature of childhood, are key imperatives that should be central to developing national policy, and a system of provision, that ensures equal access to quality arts experiences appropriate to age, abilities and cultural traditions. Ireland is a signatory to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, recognising the rights and entitlements of young people 'to participate freely in cultural life and the arts' and to freedom of expression 'in accordance with the age and maturity of the child'.¹

There are many good arts-in-education programmes and projects occurring throughout Ireland. These multiple programmes are typically designed and delivered independently of each other; reliant on key individuals, they lack the resources to adequately address issues such as training, evaluation, dissemination and research. Therefore, opportunities to inform, enhance, and grow the practice – as a national asset – continue to be lost. The Special Committee on Arts and Education was established by the Ministers for Arts and for Education to 'advise on how best to align Arts Council strategies for the promotion and encouragement of the arts with the priorities of the formal education system'. The hoped for synergies between the arts and education sectors, a move from random programming to a more systemic approach that would support arts-in-education within our national schools system and outwards into communities and families, has yet to be realised. *Encountering the Arts* and the two previous events, questioned the dormancy of the 2008 report of the Special Committee on the Arts and Education. They were organised with the intention of reinvigorating public debate on the arts and education in Ireland with a view to exploring viable interim measures that take cognisance of changed economic circumstances and that could, over time, lead to long-term sustainable development in the field of arts-in-education.

The field of arts and education practice is wide-ranging, sometimes leading to confusion as to the separate aspects of the practice and also, to the related matter of responsibility for policy and provision in this field. One of the points raised in *Creating Conversations*, and echoed in *Encountering the Arts*, was that terms of reference need to be clarified: '... there is clear delineation in government agencies between different areas of concern, and that in order to prosper and militate for change, it is incumbent upon us to understand these distinctions' (*Creating Conversations*).

¹ UN Convention on the Rights of the Child:

Article 31: 1. States Parties recognise the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.
2. States Parties shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity.

Article 12: 1. States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.

For purposes of clarity, and identifying where possibilities for joined-up policy and provision might lie, the following 'custom and practice' definitions are offered. Over-simplification is not the intention and, of course, there are overlaps and intersections between the three areas of practice, but their distinctive nature and purpose, and organisational frameworks are important to bear in mind:

- **Arts Education:** is the education of a (young) person's artistic and aesthetic intelligence and responsibility for it lies within primary and post-primary curriculum provision (in the same way as science education, language education, etc., is attended to). It might be said that the teacher is central to the mediation of the arts education of a (young) person and the remit for this lies with education policy-makers and providers.
- **Arts-in-Education:** refers to the parallel field of interventions by artists and arts organisations (of all disciplines) into the life and learning of young people, via visits, residencies, projects etc. Such interventions can occur within or without the school building/ timetable. It might be said that the artist is central to the mediation of arts-in-education experiences, and that responsibility for this field of endeavour falls more on arts policy-makers and providers.
- **Youth Arts:** in the out-of-school environment, it is also acknowledged that youth arts (broadly defined) is a field where young people take part voluntarily in creative, cultural or expressive activity outside of the formal education process. It can encompass participation and appreciation, as well as engagement with arts work specifically created by, with or for young people. Often, within this field, youth service providers and arts agencies act collaboratively to support such activity.

The subject of this current report on *Encountering the Arts* proceedings is 'arts-in-education', although it is acknowledged that discussions about any of the practice areas often spill over into each other.

SECTION 1



SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

The morning session was opened by **Mary Nunan** who welcomed the delegates. Emphasising the arts-in-education focus of *Encountering the Arts*, Nunan spoke of the conference as a means of progressing the *Points of Alignment* agenda, the latter being the catalyst for continued discussions. She noted that despite the obvious commitment to the arts-in-education agenda – as evidenced by the conference turnout – there is a continued frustration with the lack of commitment at policy level to develop the work that has already been done in this area. Despite the potential for fatigue, Nunan welcomed and praised the ongoing efforts within the arts and education arenas to effect sustained change.

Siobhán Parkinson (Laureate na nÓg/Children's Laureate) set the tone of the conference by emphasising the transformative power of the arts. Referencing the poem *On Turning Ten* by US poet Billy Collins, Parkinson discussed the childlike ability to believe anything is possible, and the melancholy that comes with the realisation that childhood does not last forever. This sense of ignorance with regard to the world's limitations unites children with artists, and it is through the arts that children can most fully lose abandon. The premise of unlocking the creativity of the child through an appreciation of culture remained the central theme of the conference, and was echoed by a number of other speakers.

THE DUTCH MODEL

The Dutch Model was presented in two parts by **Jan Jaap Knol**, Director of the Utrecht-based Fund for Cultural Participation and **Piet Hagenaars**, Managing Director of Cultuurnetwerk Nederland. Proposing the notion that art is an acquired taste, and that it is appreciated more the earlier it is introduced, Knol referred to Rick van der Ploeg, the Dutch State Secretary for Culture (1998-2002), who advocated a series of measures to boost cultural education in Holland. School was here understood as being the most effective way to reach a large number of children, i.e., universal access. Far more than simply educating young people in the theory of aesthetics, Knoll echoed Martin Drury's assertion in his January 2010 text *The House of Possibility (Creating Conversations)*, that the arts are embedded in what it is to be human. It is through the arts that children can experience a boundless world of creative – and self – expression. Extending Knol's reference to government policies implemented throughout the 1990s, Hagenaars spoke of the significant impact of the Culture in Schools policy introduced in 1996, presenting it as a concrete example of the acquired taste approach proposed by Knoll. Throughout both presentations focus was drawn to a Dutch commitment to the development of the child's imaginative capabilities.

1a) JAN JAAP KNOL

At the centre of Knol's presentation was an examination of the administrative aspects of Dutch cultural policy and its assumed cohesion, although huge cuts recently announced have placed increasing pressure on the Dutch cultural system. Nevertheless, this does not alter the fact that, following the initiative of Rick van der

Ploeg, respective cabinets invested heavily in arts education. Collaboration between schools and cultural institutions was – and is – the binding factor within this system, and the merging of the Dutch ministries of education and culture in the 1990s constituted an important stimulus.

The fundamental elements of the Dutch model were outlined as:

Budget

In recent years the Dutch government has invested substantially in arts and heritage education, and cultural participation. As an example: in 2009, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science invested a budget of €80 million in art, culture and science in the primary education sector by providing €11 per pupil; €60 million in the 'culture pass' for secondary students (€15 a pupil); and €40 million for regional activities directed at promoting participation in cultural life. A sizeable investment, and when calculated in relative terms to the population of Ireland, would amount to a budget of €12.5 million a year.

Administrative agreements between governments

The Dutch government is a highly decentralised administration, allowing freedom for schools to structure education as they see fit. Besides this, arts and heritage education – and arts-in-education activities such as, for example, extra-curricular music education – are financed by municipalities and provinces, and as a result are well distributed throughout the country. Central government has established administrative agreements with the major municipalities and provinces over the last few years. This was motivated by the desire to ensure accessibility to cultural amenities, e.g., theatres and museums. In recent years, the emphasis has shifted from access to active participation across the various art forms – understanding active and receptive practice as co-dependent. In 2009, the Fund for Cultural Participation embarked on implementing the policy shift from 'access' to 'participation' and a number of flagship programmes were organised. More significantly, thirty-five municipalities and twelve provinces are now involved in administrative agreements whereby, a fixed amount of €80 cents per capitum for each participating town or province is pledged on condition that they match this sum. In total, €28 million per year is invested in broadening opportunities for participating in culture and promoting cultural innovation for schools. For municipalities and provinces this is a welcome investment, given that local funds for culture and art are limited and, of these, a sizeable portion goes into running premises and maintaining facilities. There is, therefore, limited room for encouraging innovation. Each of the participating cities and provinces had submitted a four-year plan to the Fund for Cultural Participation in advance of the roll-out of the fund in 2009, around which the agreements for local implementation were established.

Research and Reflection

A monitoring programme tracks progress, the emphasis being on learning and improving the programmes. Conferences are organised twice a year for the network of project leaders, alongside an annual questionnaire and production of a yearbook. There are 'Knowledge Studios' supporting a range of research and reflection activities and promotional aspects such as website design and communication campaigns.

To conclude:

- 1) The strength of the Dutch programme is the commitment of government departments to place participation in cultural life at the heart of their cultural policy. It is crucial that Ministers for Education and Culture see arts education for young children as a joint responsibility, and that they formulate policy together. This collaborative philosophy, ideally, filters through to all levels, from local government through to schools and local cultural institutions.
- 2) Extra money is an excellent binding factor, but isn't all that is needed. The goals of the programme must be agreed upon by all partners and it is vital that local government, schools and cultural institutions are themselves willing to invest.
- 3) Overarching supports are needed: conferences, promotion, publications, preferably managed by a national project team; and a research programme for monitoring and evaluation.
- 4) Local supports: positive attitudes towards learning and participation can be critical to programme success and are not dependent on funding. Cultural endeavour needs to invest in social impacts, e.g., friends, volunteers, sponsors, and educational activities for schoolchildren and their parents. Particularly in times of economic struggle, this can assist in building better relationships with government departments.

1b) PIET HAGENAARS

Hagenaars' focus was on policy governing arts and heritage education in Dutch schools from the mid-1990s until the present day.

Dutch government policy on culture in schools, together with municipal and provincial policies in this field, has been successful in building a bridge between arts education and culture. However, collaboration between the two was challenging, primarily because schools and cultural institutions differ in terms of their objectives and working processes. When the Culture in Schools policy began in the mid-1990s, the situation was far from ideal. Hagenaars referred to a statement from the leader of the Culture in Schools policy at the time to illustrate the issues. Art teachers were highly school-orientated and they didn't have an up-to-date picture of their immediate cultural environment. Conversely, cultural institutions were unsure how the school system worked, as well as being focused on high culture, needing some form of enticement to take cultural education seriously. Cultural activities were often restricted to a few schools and were dependent on the enthusiasm of a few dedicated teachers. Cultural activities had to be held after school hours and the pupils engaged on a voluntary basis. In general, there was a lack of sympathy between the two parties.

Currently however, every Dutch child receives arts education, both at primary (4-12 years) and secondary (12-18 years) level, receiving wide-ranging lessons in art, music, dance, and drama. The learning objectives and examination requirements specify what

knowledge and skills each pupil has to acquire in these various subjects, and the Dutch schools develop their own curriculum on this basis. Apart from the mastery of traditional disciplines (such as art and music), children are expected to look and listen to various forms of artistic and cultural expression. Alongside the professional spaces dedicated to art and music, any town of any size has a music school and an arts centre where children, young people and adults can learn to play musical instruments, sing, draw, dance or act. Artists and art collectors also offer a range of services.

Culture in Schools policy:

Launched in 1996 by Aad Nuis, Secretary of State for Culture from 1994-1998, the policy has since been implemented in a coordinated approach by central government, provincial and municipal authorities. According to Hagenars, three objectives received a great deal of attention in the Culture in Schools policy:

- 1) Developing the cultural competencies of pupils
 - 2) Giving cultural activities a regular place of their own in the curriculum
 - 3) Stimulation of cooperation between schools and their cultural environment
- The aim of Culture in Schools is to ensure that young people become acquainted with art and other forms of culture from an early age. Hagenars explained that if this happens early in school, it is more likely that school leavers will engage with art and culture in later life. The focus here is on the development of the child's imaginative capacities.
 - At central government level, the Culture in Schools project group has been in existence since 1997, and has many working relationships with the Dutch provinces and municipalities. Support is given to schools that want to organise cultural events and projects, as well as to schools and cultural institutions that want to develop structural relationships in this field. Schools work closely with cultural institutions to give support and organise cultural activities. Learning to enjoy and actively participate in cultural offerings is also part of the aim.
 - Hagenars made clear that arts and heritage education is seen as a way of achieving further goals, such as art appreciation, learning to work together, gaining self-esteem and fostering group cohesion
 - In the early years of the Culture in Schools policy, studies revealed that children and young people with low educational attainments did not participate much in cultural activities. Also, many better-educated young people, born in the Netherlands or abroad, were found to be uninterested in the established culture. The Culture in Schools policy aimed to remedy this. The opinion at the time was that the government had a duty to ensure that every child and young person should be a cultural citizen in society. It followed that every young person up to the age of 18 should be acquainted with one or more art forms, as participant or spectator. As stated by Knol, every primary school receives €11 per pupil per school year, and every secondary school pupil receives a digital cultural pass worth €15 each school year. These can be

used collectively within school or individually and accounts for 15% of the overall budget.

- A Culture in Schools policy demands more attention for art and heritage, not only in traditional art-related subjects but also in other subjects. The aim is to give art and cultural heritage an established place in the curriculum, from primary to secondary school. In this way, it is not seen as an add-on to the curriculum.
- The policy has enhanced the skills of teachers: many existing primary school teachers now train as internal Cultural Coordinators. These courses are offered at regional cultural and heritage centres by 125 specially- trained mentors. So far, 3,500 teachers have received certificates. These Cultural Coordinators are supported through network meetings, websites, e-zines and other cultural activities. Cultural Coordinators are also active in secondary schools. Teacher training colleges pay due attention to arts and cultural heritage and to ways of incorporating these elements into the primary and secondary curriculums. The Culture in Schools programme supports cultural workshops in these training colleges where the teaching staff and trainee teachers work together to find solutions to the practical problems facing arts and heritage education. The Culture in Schools programme subsidises these initiatives at a cost of approx. €1 million per annum.
- The Culture in Schools policy expects all cultural institutions, no matter what discipline, to be involved in cultural education. This policy has led artists and cultural institutions to become more interested in education – nowadays schools demand appropriate cultural input, often formulating their requirements at local educational networks, with local or regional advisors. Art colleges are paying more attention to various forms of cooperation with the education system, so that new artists take it for granted that schools are an important field of employment.
- Importance of research and evaluation: The magazine, *Cultuur en School* and the website *Cultuurplein* have been established to support the cooperation between education and culture. The funding for such initiatives amounts to €1.5 million per annum. School activities in this field have been monitored since the Culture in Schools programme began. Reviews show which arts disciplines are offered and how – in lessons, projects, or some other form. They also show the activities that take place in the cultural institutions that schools work with, highlighting the organisational aspects of cultural education, and showing how activities are evaluated and what results are obtained.

1c) AN INTEGRATED MODEL – POINTS FOR CONSIDERATION:

- There is a matrix of provision within the Dutch model compared to one of scattered provision (as in Ireland, for example). From an administrative viewpoint this relates to the decentralised nature of the Netherlands government, which enables regional provinces and municipalities a greater freedom.

- Three administrative features of government policy relating to art and education are key: substantial budgetary investment; administrative agreements between the government and provinces (the decentralised system); and an emphasis on research and reflection (including conferences, publications, e-zines and websites).
- There is constant collaboration between schools and cultural institutions. The merging of the Dutch ministries for culture and education in the 1990s was a pivotal moment in deepening this relationship.
- Aside from national cultural institutions, Dutch policy advocates that any town of any size should have a music school and an arts centre, serving to further promote the local alongside the national.
- The importance of grassroots support, even more crucial in times of economic hardship, was stressed.
- The rhetorical – and practical – importance of the shift from cultural access to cultural participation that occurred in Dutch policy.
- Centrality of the Culture in Schools policy, which fostered a system of cooperation and accorded cultural activities a central place in the curriculum – consequently, significant financial provisions are made per child in both primary and secondary school.
- The importance placed on the role of the Cultural Coordinator, the efforts to improve the skills of the teacher and the importance of evaluative feedback.
- The continued expectation that all cultural institutions, regardless of their discipline, be involved with cultural education.
- Broad understanding of arts to include all cultural activities: this expansive approach includes not only the ‘traditional’ arts subjects such as painting and music, but also dance and drama. They are considered as subjects in their own right, rather than being an add-on to the main curriculum.
First-hand experience of arts and culture is also promoted, with children actively encouraged to visit and engage with museums, galleries and other appropriate cultural institutions.
- The all-inclusive nature of the Culture in Schools policy, regardless of background or abilities. This further relates to the idea of a governmental moral duty to improve the cultural education of the child.

SECTION 2



SECTION 2

THE UK MODEL: FROM POLICY TO PRACTICE

The British perspective was presented in three separate but related presentations. **Rehana Mughal** spoke about her role as Cultural Programmes Manager at Creativity Culture and Education (CCE), a not-for-profit organisation based in the UK. Responsible for designing and managing national and international cultural partnership projects, CCE emphasises the importance of creative learning. Illustrating the possibilities inherent in fostering such cultural partnerships, the Thomas Tallis School was presented as a Creative School which has benefited from CCE's creative partnerships programme. Situated in south-east London, Thomas Tallis is a large, mixed community school, a Specialist Arts College and also a Leading Edge and National School of Creativity. Following a brief introduction from Head Teacher **Rob Thomas**, a more in-depth consideration of the creative and practical tools that are employed within the school was offered by **Deb Lemmer**, Curriculum Leader for the Faculty of Visual & Media Arts.

2a) REHANA MUGHAL (CCE)

Rehana Mughal presented an overview of the Creative Partnerships programme, including how the model works and some of the challenges inherent in delivering this model.

Overview and values of CCE

Established initially for 18 months as a not-for-profit charity, CCE now delivers various programmes, the biggest one being Creative Partnerships which has been running for eight years. In addition to the Creative Partnerships programme, CCE also delivered 'Find your Talent' which looked at developing a minimum of five hours of high-quality cultural experiences for young people. CCE also works with the Crafts Council to enable crafts practitioners to work with schools; and a poetry project in conjunction with the Arts Council of England entitled 'Well Versed' which concentrates on helping teachers to develop their own creative writing skills. There is also an international strand to CCE's work. Mughal stated that the values that lie at the centre of the CCE organisation are embedded across all of their work. She outlined three key points that underpin CCE's working processes as follows:

- 1) Begin by asking a question.
- 2) Connect the programme with the appropriate arts and cultural practitioners.
- 3) Imagine the possibilities, and consistently reflect throughout the process.

CCE works with some 2,500 schools annually in the UK. The Creative Partnerships programme enables schools to work alongside artists for sustained periods – anything from three to six years. Artists can develop a relationship with the school and its teachers, equipping them to develop a programme in line with how the school operates. The programme is always school-led, beginning with a question that has been raised by the school. Since it began, Creative Partnerships has worked with

24,616 schools (figure as of September 2010) – over 22% of schools in the UK. Mughal suggested that no government in the world has made such public investment in this agenda; although she also acknowledged the financial instability now facing the CP programme resulting from Arts Council funding cuts (50%). This has alerted CCE to the heavy reliance that such programmes have on central government, and the difficulties facing the arts and education sector in general during times of economic downturn.

Aims of the work that CCE deliver

- 1) To develop the skills of teachers and creative practitioners, achieved through dialogue with cultural organisations and creative practitioners and by offering sustained periods of time for co-creation.
- 2) Move from project type initiatives ‘parachuted in’ by the cultural organisations, to more sustainable programmes with the aim of embedding the practice long-term.
- 3) Co-mentoring: the ‘Reflect Co-mentoring’ programme enables teachers to dialogue with, and work alongside educators from cultural organisations. This is a cost-effective method that works to the mutual benefit of both.
- 4) Sustainability: CCE aims to find links to existing frameworks e.g., the Arts Award which supports young people to develop as artists and arts leaders and is available throughout England. The Arts Award is a nationally recognised qualification at three levels – Bronze, Silver and Gold.

How does the CCE achieve its aims?

Schools apply to be part of the Creative Partnerships programme which has three distinct strands:

- 1) **Enquiry Schools:** This strand works with schools over a period of one year to explore how creative teaching and learning can enhance their practice. An enquiry school receives an approximate budget of £4,000, and are expected to contribute an additional 25% from own funds. The enquiry schools decide on a specific focus for their programme in relation to the broader needs of the school.
- 2) **Change Schools:** These usually are enquiry schools that have progressed to a more advanced level. Often located in areas of significant challenge, change schools engage in an intensive programme lasting between one and three years; moving away from a single enquiry in one department, this strand supports the creative development of the whole school.
- 3) **Creativity Schools:** [Thomas Tallis School is an example of this third strand] These are leading creative partnership schools who engage in innovative practice over a three year period, subject to annual review. They play a pivotal role in the strategic leadership of Creative Partnerships and support the development of creative learning across networks of schools, both nationally and internationally.

Key principles:

- Start with half-formed ideas, rather than solutions.
- Creative agents are crucial: the CCE has trained and developed approx. 500 arts practitioners who operate throughout the UK. Their role is to be 'a critical friend' to ensure that schools really are stretching their imaginations and building a strong programme.
- Strong planning framework – the creative agents are familiar with both this and the evaluative framework used to assess each project.
- Working long-term enables work to be embedded within the school: this means thinking about what will happen beyond the life of the Creative Partnerships programme.

Areas for improvement:

- 1) Over-valuing of creativity: Creativity is not the only problem, or solution, to the education system. In over-claiming the benefits of creativity it is possible to have under-claimed the value of partnership.
- 2) Under-valuing of the arts: it is possible to neglect the power of the arts, both in terms of consumption and participation. Whilst focusing on the school and the child, it is important to ensure that the vision of the artist is equally apparent.
- 3) Failed to meet the challenge of assessing creativity, of evaluating student-to-student behaviours.
- 4) Haven't made radical use of existing freedoms, of the capacity to think bigger. Schools could be pushed even further.
- 5) Haven't engaged sufficiently in Initial Teacher Education, despite examples such as the 'Well Versed' poetry programme.
- 6) Need to work more with parents in terms of thinking around new ways of learning.
- 7) In a time of plenty, CCE could have built more of a coalition, more of a campaign to think bigger and to strive for an education system that could thrive.

Mughal talked about the attempts to expand the CCE organisation through global networking and dialogue. [In Summer 2011 CCE will organise the 'Institute of Errors', seen as an opportunity for artists and teachers internationally to gather and learn from mistakes.]

Wider impact of CCE

There is an emphasis on evaluation. Mughal referenced an independent report commissioned by Price Waterhouse Cooper on the economic benefits of CCE's Creative Partnerships programme: for every £1 invested in the CP programme the return is £15.30. CCE is currently working in Germany, Lithuania, Austria and Saudi Arabia, helping to develop alternative, and more global, routes of creativity.

2b) ROB THOMAS & DEB LEMMER

THOMAS TALLIS SCHOOL: A PRACTICAL CASE STUDY

Rob Thomas highlighted how the school has used the arts to develop creativity, and creative approaches to learning. Thomas disputed the notion that creativity is an indefinable, loose term; rather it requires a level of self-discipline to think beyond the ordinary. The vision of the school is to develop young people as independent thinkers and learners. Empowering staff to deliver this vision is crucial, and he emphasised the importance of seeing teachers as learners, as well as encouraging staff and pupils to take risks. He stressed that many of the projects underway in the school require very little funding.

Action Research Groups

Thomas highlighted one low-cost, effective strategy. Working parties had been established to deal with a range of topics from assessment to behaviour. Proving unsuccessful, these parties became Action Research Groups (ARGs), asking staff which areas needed improving, and replacing structured meetings with more informal discussions. One such group was a Creativity Action Research Group [video].

Deb Lemmer discussed how the Creativity ARG worked in collaboration with Creative Agents from the CP programme, stating that one of the reasons for its success was the constant advice and support that it received. A manifesto for a 'Creative Tallis' was developed – a document encapsulating what the school was striving to achieve. This manifesto is now sent out to every prospective parent as part of school information, demonstrating a commitment to creative learning. As a Creative School under the CCE remit, Thomas Tallis has a responsibility to further develop its own creative learning, as well as encouraging a network of creative communities.

Three categories related to National Schools of Creativity:

1) Commitment to the transformation of one's own school: one of the striking things that Thomas Tallis did was to change the curriculum with the help of CCE's Creative Partnerships programme:

- Taking Information Communications Technology (ICT) away from the lower curriculum as it had previously been, the school developed a more enquiry-led programme. 'Tallis Lab' operates on the basis of personal learning and thinking skills, as well as utilising free digital technologies such as 'Tumblr' as a blogging device and other forms of online mind-mapping methods. This commitment to 21st century learning aided the enquiry-led approach that isn't housed in any particular subject area.
- Project-based Artists-in-Residence. The school had learned that the 'parachuted-in' model was very expensive and incapable of being sustained. It required something more embedded to the framework of the school, hence the Action Research Groups. Importantly, the Creativity ARG now commissions any new initiatives. Artists-in-Residence are interviewed by a panel that includes students and staff, in conjunction with the CP creative agent.

2) Responsibility to the network of other creative communities and family of schools:

- Support staff that have worked in the creative industries bring their specific skills into the school. The school utilises the skills of these ‘non-teachers’ in exciting and cost-effective ways. These skilled practitioners are also sent into the community to run outreach projects with targeted groups.
- The Footsteps Programme pairs role models from the local community with vulnerable young students. Emphasis here is on building positive mentor relationships *via* engaging in creative activities.
- Focus is given to ‘satisfactory’ [OFSTED] local primary schools: meeting the schools to discuss their attainment needs and problems. There is also a website and a team of creative support officers who engage in creative learning projects tailor-made for these primary schools, and motivated through the use of digital technologies.
- Higher Education partnerships are in place to raise students’ own expectations. ‘Tallis TV’ appears monthly and was developed in conjunction with Ravensbourne Art and Communication Vocational College, London. This shows the importance of peer-mentoring in developing the creative skills of students.

3) Development of international partnerships as a response to the national agenda:

- Tallis offers visiting teachers from Sweden and Denmark, in London for the British Educational Training and Technology Show (BETT), a half-day conference and showcase on the school’s ongoing creative work. The emphasis here is on establishing networks.
- Sending a group of teachers and students to the World Creativity Forum in the USA. Have teamed up with a school in Oklahoma and will create a ‘pop-up’, temporary school at the conference to highlight the fact that arts education and creativity can happen anywhere.

2c) CREATIVE PARTNERSHIPS & CREATIVE LEARNING – POINTS FOR CONSIDERATION:

- Programmes are tailor-made according to the needs of the school in question.
- There is an emphasis on longevity and embedded practice, rather than the adoption of a ‘parachuted-in’ approach.
- Continued collaboration between cultural practitioners and teachers, with particular emphasis on developing the creative skill-base of teachers.
- The use of Creativity Action Research Groups within schools to formalise creativity as a valid learning tool within the school environment.
- The use of an enquiry-led approach to develop the curriculum. This isn’t rooted in any particular subject but works across all subject areas.
- The consistent reviewing of progress and continued evaluation.
- There is an emphasis on 21st century learning and the use of technology to modernise the curriculum, including blogs, mind-mapping programmes and interactive resources.
- The centrality of involving students in the decision-making process.

- The importance of involving parents: the Thomas Tallis manifesto is sent to every parent indicating its commitment to creative learning. It is about making this a legitimate way of both teaching and learning, and of presenting art within the curriculum, rather than outside.
- Peer-mentoring through Higher Education partnerships.
- The importance of thinking globally and of building international exchanges and networking opportunities.
- Encouraging children to think differently and challenge assumptions.
- Importance of taking risks.

SECTION 3



SECTION THREE:

IRISH CONTEXT AND POSSIBILITIES WITHIN THE CURRICULUM

3a) PAT KINSELLA: FRAMEWORK OF AN ARTS-RICH SCHOOL

- Structure of the second level curriculum into segmented compartments militates against the idea of a fruitful relationship between the arts and education within Ireland.
- The creativity experience within subjects is ring-fenced and so does not always overflow into other learning situations.
- The optional nature of subjects means that the creative experience is inaccessible to many students.
- The freedom and possibilities of the syllabus remain unrealised. Pressures on teachers are so great that they can't afford to indulge in more creative modes of engagement.

Kinsella argued that there is inherent potential in an integrated approach; the boundaries between subjects should be more blurred than they are already. This served to reinforce the necessity of the co-curricular experience. Elaborating a number of examples, Kinsella highlighted how the visual may be used as an aid to the teaching activity. The challenge is therefore to transform the rhetoric of the syllabi into a reality, so that art is acknowledged *as* knowledge. The place of the arts in education will continue to be undervalued, according to Kinsella, until we commit to the integration of the arts in the curriculum, as subject matter and as pedagogy. The challenge calls for a change in mindset that allows us to see the integration of arts as a rich source of learning. This reflects a more philosophical approach to the act of teaching where the ultimate goal is the nurturing of the human spirit, linking Kinsella's view with that of the Dutch framework, and its emphasis on expanding the creative capacity of the child. It also reflects the general aims of education as envisaged in the syllabi, to contribute to all aspects of the individual's development, including the aesthetic, critical, cultural and emotional.

Experience within the school and the extra-curricular environment:

- **Music:** School houses an orchestra, traditional groups, ensembles, battle of the bands, two choirs, multiple performance opportunities and 250 hours of music tuition in the week after school. This is a unique scheme that operates in County Cork. Kinsella also stressed the importance of enthusiastic teachers.
- **Drama:** Eight different productions in the last year and involvement in multiple drama festivals. Created a drama space from a redundant area within the school. Currently creating a performance on bullying. Multiple theatre trips are organised by the school, with Kinsella indicating the need to actively create consumers.
- **Art:** The school has its own exhibition space, and many visual techniques such as collage, are utilised as teaching methods.

3b) ANNE LOONEY: FORMAL CURRICULUM PERSPECTIVE

Chief Executive of the National Council of Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) Anne Looney called for public re-engagement with the dynamics of school life. She drew attention to issues relating to identity formation and power, particularly 'youth voice' within the classroom. She also discussed the status of the arts generally, within the wider community.

Looney addressed some of the ideas presented in Martin Drury's January address (*Creating Conversations*). She particularly liked his idea of the 'double helix of self-creation' – the process wherein young people become 'themselves' through encounters with cultural experiences in which the self is created, but which are also created by the self. Looney objected, however, to Drury's negative reasoning in setting up the curriculum as a contract between the state and the individual. The inference being that the state has failed in its commitment to nurture the education of the whole child through neglecting to provide adequate artistic/aesthetic experiences within the curriculum. Referring back to Siobhán Parkinson's talk, Looney likened the curriculum to a compendium of 'fixed sets' of learning materials that gather together the stories which one generation chooses to tell the next. In addition to the sheer volume of 'stories', the problem with this storytelling image, and the idea of delivering the terms of a contract between individual and state, is one of 'voice' – it reinforces the educational archetype of a speaking teacher and a silent student.

Looney put forward that in advocating for the arts and in seeking a 'point of alignment', it is important to look at the process of identity formation that happens within schools. It is about seeing each learner as an artist, in all of their subject lessons. This is to not ignore the specific contribution of the arts, but to recognise the artist in all students. Echoing her earlier point, she stated that this does not happen often because it means, again, that students will have a voice. Schools should be seen more as studios, where creativity becomes the defining process and multiple voices are heard.

Looney drew attention to research in the field of early childhood education and how it is informing NCCA developments within the junior and senior infants primary school curriculum. There are 6,000 content objectives in the primary school curriculum; 2000 of which are for junior and senior infants alone. Interesting findings have emerged around the idea of play, which is fundamental to how children learn. Part of the problem, however, is public expectations with regard to learning – creative play is not always accessible to, or understood by parents as an adequate educational method. Education isn't isolated from society, it is a reflection of the public perception of where and how the voices of children should be heard and managed.

Referencing Drury, Looney suggested that one of the unintentional outcomes of education is that it can perpetuate cultural exclusion. By increasingly allowing arts experiences to be pushed to the edges of the school experience we ensure that it becomes only for an elite. Looney holds that there is a very powerful public perception that art is for an elite rather than a public pursuit, not because of a class concern but because of issues relating to power and control. She concluded by suggesting that

the image of a curriculum as a contract between the state and individual works as long as the inter-generational promise holds and emphasised, again, the importance of the student's 'voice' as central to the creation of a more shared learning experience.

3c) POINTS FOR CONSIDERATION

- Cross-curricular experience.
- Encouraging the voice of the student.
- The idea of the learner as an artist and the classroom as studio.
- Public perception – education is also tied to the demands of a society. There is thus a need for some public re-engagement with education.
- Problem of parental expectations.
- The need to open out the arts as a pursuit to be enjoyed by the many and not the few – it is about working against cultural exclusion.

SECTION 4



SECTION FOUR

Address by Mary Hanafin, Minister for Tourism, Culture & Sport

Minister for Tourism, Culture and Sport, Mary Hanafin attended both the 'Animating the Space' aspect of the conference and the open discussion. 'Animating the Space' consisted of a number of examples of exemplary youth arts practice and the Minister met some of those involved over lunch.

In her address, the Minister welcomed conference delegates and welcomed the initiative itself. She stressed however, that with regard to the *Points of Alignment* agenda, resources in the future would be in very short supply. Therefore, with regard to new structures, units or organisations, outlined in recommendations set out in the report, she did not see these as being feasible if they entailed the commitment of additional resources. Rather, she called for structured coordination within the sector that would have to be created without a reliance on edifices or offices. She stated that there would be the same commitment, and an increased energy, devoted to using the arts to lift people out of economically difficult periods and went on to praise regional Arts Officers who, she said, could be utilised more. She urged educational and cultural practitioners to work together and to draw on their own reserves and resources; stressing that in the future it would be a case of doing more with less. Pragmatic, real suggestions would be more likely to get consideration over demands for increased or new resources.

The Minister remained for the duration of the open discussion.

WIDENING THE DEBATE: VOICES FROM THE FLOOR

Issues raised throughout this participative session included:

- The need to clarify terms was again called for – the emphasis here is on 'arts-in-education' rather than 'arts education'; the relationship of arts activities to the curriculum being one of enrichment. In this way, arts and cultural experiences may be used as a vehicle to support learning and creativity.
- The Dutch model was consistently praised, and it was noted that, tellingly, the Ministry in the Netherlands is the Ministry of Culture *and* Education. The model was seen as living up to the spirit of the UN convention on the Rights of the Child. In contrast, the Irish system is highly centralised and arts-in-education programmes can mask the deficiencies of an education system that fails to give adequate cultural opportunities to children. It was argued that a radical review of the Irish agenda needs to occur: the arts tend to be aimed at the middle classes with extra resources in schools being provided by parents. Correspondingly, the arts need to be part of a much wider political discussion, and any action taken must be systemic in nature. By changing global systems, there is a greater capacity to address issues of equality.
- Reference was made to *Points of Alignment* and its recommendation that a national unit for arts and education be established. Although sympathetic with Minister Hanafin's claim that there will be no new entities, it was argued that this does not preclude more networking, more coordination, given the vast

amount of arts bodies that emerged in the wake of economic growth. The benefit of returning to this document was stated, in order to uncover the ways in which existing bodies can be facilitated in working together. This may not cost anything extra, perhaps just the establishment of some coordinating body that would facilitate the actions that are already taking place.

- In similar terms, the creation of some form of 'New Deal' was suggested, with the associated claim that the issue is not monetary – although it is unsatisfactory that only 5% of the Arts Council budget goes on children and young people – but about a duty of care. It was proposed that we look at our education colleges and create a development unit, which need only be composed of 2/3 people. There is a moral imperative to find points of alignment.
- It was stated that the Department of Education and Skills (DES) spends a lot on arts education, however this is largely hidden. Taking visual arts, music and drama at primary level and applying the apportionment of that time to teacher costs equals some €340 million a year, not counting the role of the arts across the language subjects, drama, SPHE, dance in PE, history and other areas. Music and Visual Arts are taught at post primary level and there are ample opportunities to embed the arts right across the curriculum. Scoilnet and 'I am an artist' websites are funded, and a number of arts and multimedia programmes across further and higher education. What isn't funded is specialist teacher provision at primary level, and artists' costs of arts-in-education practice. In the past decade, any additional expenditure was swallowed up by growth in enrolment, by extra resources for students with special needs, by 'English as a foreign language' resources, and by increases in both higher education and student supports. It was put forward that when *Points of Alignment* was published, DES and the Department for Arts had discussions with the Arts Council about how to move the vision forward in a small way, but what was on offer at the time was not, in the Arts Council's view, enough to make it viable. Things are now worse and the need to focus on working with what we have was stressed.
- The question of professional development for teachers, and the increasing supports for this through the Education Centres, was raised. How to expand creative learning approaches – for example, artists might be brought in for a day to work with teachers to show how music can be used in the English curriculum, how dance can be used in teaching a foreign language etc. The ongoing commitment to teacher development by the Centres was noted, and there is now a more collaborative approach to continued professional development. Although our system is not as formalised or decentralised as the Dutch system, there is a regional infrastructure emerging.
- The importance of the teacher as facilitator was consistently asserted, as was the need for children to be allowed the freedom to discuss their learning with the teacher. As a step forward it is important to look at how we enable the teacher to flourish, to unlock their own creativity. The lack of profiling good teaching and learning was mentioned – there is exemplary practice going on throughout the country.
- It was noted that in terms of arts education, there is much more at stake than simply changing the curriculum. The inference was that little will change if the

emphasis remains on *what* children are taught, rather than reassessing *how* they are taught and examined. It was suggested that learning is secondary to employability; life-skills like analysis and problem solving, debate and discussion, are not prioritised. There is therefore, a need to encourage young people to think for themselves.

- As a corollary to discussions revolving around methods of teaching, it was asserted on numerous occasions that children and young people must be involved in the process, and that student voices need to be constantly encouraged. The Thomas Tallis model, it may be argued, is successful precisely because it allows young people a certain level of freedom and control within the learning environment.
- It was noted that in the international systems looked at, significant action has been realised because there was leadership from government, in the form of cultural policy or a significant funding commitment. It was argued that there does need to be a lead from government, even from a coordination or communication perspective. This should then filter down through the various levels. It was further highlighted that the notion of leadership is actually missing in strategic positions, and that sympathy for the arts must be present in positions of authority. This is crucial to advancing the arts agenda in educational institutions.
- Continually throughout this feedback session, the importance of enthusiasm, keeping-in-touch, and being partnership-spirited was highlighted. The very diversity of approaches and practices make it necessary to open out the conversation and to think in more global terms. This means encouraging knowledge sharing and fostering a collaborative atmosphere.

In his concluding remarks **Gary Granville**, Head of Education at the National College of Art and Design (NCAD), made two key points:

1. On the matter of developing of a 'unit', Granville proposed NCAD as a potential base. He stated that NCAD, together with the Art Teachers' Association (ATAI), hopes to generate a model that will introduce change within the national system without incurring cost-intensive procedures associated with syllabus revisions, which is the remit of the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) and Minister for Education and Skills. In this context, NCAD facilities were offered as a means of enabling wider engagement with arts and education.
2. Granville argued that for systemic change to occur, the status quo needs to be constantly challenged. Change is most effective when it is generated first at ground level, then adopted at national level. There is, however, always loss in the shift from local impetus to national adoption which brings with it a sense of 'colonisation'; the conviction generated at ground level is usually dissipated when local action is systematised. There's a tension here that needs resolving – the groundswell agrees we need systemic change, but systemic change cannot occur, or be sustained, by top-down measures alone. Therefore, despite the lack of resources, we must strive for constancy in seeking and maintaining the necessary changes; we must step in and act rather than wait for national agreement.

SECTION 5



SECTION FIVE

TOWARDS A FUTURE MODEL: PLENARY SESSION

Encountering the Arts ended with a plenary session that invited twenty of the conference delegates to engage in a smaller and more informal conversation. Chaired by **Mary Shine Thompson**, the emphasis was upon advancing the day's discussions by focusing upon the concrete and practical steps that might be taken to pro-actively develop the arts-in- education agenda.

1. It was agreed that a 'unit' would need to be established to ensure that the project moves forward. This was prompted by Gary Granville's offer of NCAD as a potential platform for use, as well as consistent calls throughout the day for a stronger sense of leadership. The terms of reference for this group would need to be strongly defined, but it was suggested that membership would emerge from the conference delegates with the specific aim of advancing the **Points of Alignment** recommendations. The group would be formed from existing people and locales, rather than creating a wholly new – and potentially expensive – unit. Following the proposed circulation of an *Encountering the Arts* report, plans were made to reconvene a follow-up meeting with the aim of developing a working group.
2. The **Points of Alignment** document remained a constant reference, and it was continually stated that it should form the basis of any future agenda. The elaborate and thorough nature of this report should – in positive terms – become the basis of any further strategy. Consequently, it was argued that, until implemented, **Points of Alignment** remains no more than a static reference point. An additional point made was that the report continues to inform the Arts Council's agenda.
3. Discussion also took place around the importance of political expediency and of challenging issues such as the Croke Park Agreement. It could be argued that the Dutch model is successful not only because of the decentralised nature of the government, but also by virtue of support from within central government towards advancing the arts-in-education agenda. It was suggested that a future group might need to: challenge and propose change; seek assistance of government officials; exert pressure regarding funding and practical support. Nevertheless, the principles of general consensus and collaboration were thought to be primary. There was speculation that funding might be generated from within existing resources.
4. It was suggested that the focus might need to be on 'education' within the arts-in-education agenda. Change could be facilitated through collaborations with the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and teacher education providers, alongside art practitioners. Thus the aim would be on developing these relationships and assessing the ways in which they might link up. There were also a number of suggestions relating to how stronger links might be forged between the arts and education fields by, for example, offering reciprocal arrangements between arts and education practitioners on a free and mutual basis. Stronger cultural links with Education Centres in regional areas could be established, rather than assuming that such relationships already exist.

5. Emerging from the presentations of the Dutch and UK models, it was acknowledged that research and promotion is key to progressing the arts-in-education strategy. Central to this, would be the consolidation of the proposed 'unit' through collecting and documenting relevant materials, as well as producing a website that might offer a platform for participation and related comments/additional ideas. The Arts Council's link with the National Irish Visual Arts Library (NIVAL) was cited as an example of an existing tool that could be mined.

Plenary discussions were inconclusive. Delegates were firm in their view that further debate would be welcomed and asked the Steering Group to reconvene the meeting at a future date.

ADDENDUM

The Plenary Session reconvened on the 4 February 2011 at IMMA, chaired by Mary Shine Thompson. It was decided that the *Points of Alignment* agenda would remain as the 'baseline' for any future action. A new Working Group was established to continue the work of *Encountering the Arts* and previous 2010 events.

APPENDICES



APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Timetable of Events

ENCOUNTERING THE ARTS: 5 November 2010, IMMA (Johnston Suite)

10.15 - 10.45 Registration & Tea/Coffee (*Animating the Space*)

Morning Session: 11am – 1.30pm Chair: Mary Nunan

- 11am Opening comments – Mary Nunan
- 11.10 Siobhan Parkinson – Laureate na nÓg/Children’s Laureate
- 11.20 Jan Jaap Knol and Piet Hagens – Dutch framework
- 11.50 Rehana Mughal and Rob Thomas/Deb Lemmer – UK framework
- 12.20 Pat Kinsella – response to the international frameworks and an overview of the Irish situation by a Principal of an arts-rich school (Coláiste Choilm, Community College, Ballincollig).
- 12.40 Dr. Anne Looney – on the formal curriculum and the arts.
- 1pm Discussion - Open to the Floor

Lunch: 1.30pm – 2pm (*Animating the Space*)

- 2pm Mary Hanafin, Minister for Tourism, Culture and Sport will address the conference.

Afternoon Session: 2.15pm – 3.30pm Chair: Michael McCann

- 2.15 Next Steps – Discussion open to the Floor
This session will close with a reflection by Gary Granville, Head of Education NCAD.

3.30pm – 4pm Tea/Coffee (*Animating the Space*)

Following the conference, a small group of people attending are invited to meet, with Dr. Mary Shine Thompson chairing, to further explore next steps.

(Animating the Space): During the day, delegates are invited to encounter examples of arts-in-education practice including: the Cairde Quartet (Cork), Fresh Film Festival (Limerick), sean nós dancing (Steven Coohill, Clifden), Kids’ Own (Sligo), and ‘A Room of One’s Own’ (one of eight touring exhibitions commissioned by the Arts Council for schools audiences).

APPENDIX B: Speakers' Profiles

Siobhan Parkinson was inaugurated as Ireland's first **Laureate na nÓg/Children's Laureate** by President Mary McAleese at a ceremony at the Arts Council in May 2010. She studied English Literature and German at Trinity College Dublin and went on to take her doctorate in English Literature. She is an active member of the writers-in-schools scheme, and gives workshops in creative writing and talks on her work regularly. Her books have won numerous awards and been translated into many languages.

Jan Jaap Knol (NL) studied Dutch Language and Literature at Rijksuniversiteit Groningen. From 1992 he worked as communication advisor and senior policy advisor for theatre and arts education at the Netherlands Ministry of Education, Science and Culture. In 2004 he became Head of the Unit for Cultural Outreach and Head of the Culture and School Programme. Jan Jaap currently directs the new **Fund for Cultural Participation**, based in Utrecht. As its name implies, the Fund promotes participation in culture, especially by encouraging people to engage in the arts and culture themselves. The fund does this, as an example, by means of arrangements with the provinces and municipalities and by subsidising cultural institutions. The fund also encourages debate, initiates research, and ensures knowledge-sharing in the field of cultural education, the amateur arts, and popular culture.

Piet Hagenaars (NL) is Managing Director of **Cultuurnetwerk Nederland** (2001-present). He began his career as a secondary school teacher of art and art history (1970-1979) before going on to become director and curator of the Jan Cunen Museum in Oss (1979-1992). This was followed by a number of years as head of the Department for Education and Welfare in the same municipality (1989-1992). In 1992, he took up the post of Director of the Faculty of Arts at the Fontys University of Fine and Performing Arts, of which the Academy of Fine Arts and Education is a part. In 1999, he became Managing Director of LOKV, the Netherlands Institute for Education in the Arts, in Utrecht and then Managing Director of Cultuurnetwerk Nederland. Hagenaars has written a significant number of policy-related and practical publications in the field of education, the arts and culture. Outside his daily work, he is also actively involved in provincial and national institutes and commissions in his capacity as policy advisor, board member and chairman. He was also made a crown member of the Arts & Culture Council in the Netherlands, the highest advisory board to the Dutch government for arts and culture.

Rehana Mughal (UK) is Cultural Programmes Manager at **Creativity Culture and Education (CCE)**, a not-for-profit organisation based in England. CCE delivers projects in the UK and abroad, the aim being to transform the lives of children and young families by harnessing the potential of creative learning and cultural opportunity to enhance their aspirations, achievements and skills. Mughal is responsible for designing and managing national and international cultural partnership projects. Prior to working at Creativity Culture and Education, she spent six years working with Arts Council England where she developed collaborative cultural programmes with teachers and artists in London. Mughal graduated from the Slade School of Art at University College London with a Masters in Fine Art Sculpture and after graduating she worked in higher

education, lecturing at universities on both BA and MA courses. She is a board member at Performing Arts Labs PAL and a Trustee for the Kingsgate Gallery and Workshops in London. She is also a Fellow of the Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (RSA).

Rob Thomas is Head Teacher at **Thomas Tallis School** an SSAT Arts College, Leading Edge and National School of Creativity in south-east London. The school is a large mixed community school which has a truly comprehensive intake. Tallis students come from the most affluent and the most deprived parts of the borough. The student profile mirrors the diversity which exists in Greenwich and their ability ranges from those who will become Oxbridge entrants to those who have reading ages of 6 or 7 even in KS4. The school is successful across the ability range and last year its results placed it in the top 500 in the country at KS4 and KS5. However, the ethos of the school is underpinned by its pride in the achievement of all its students. Rob has worked in schools in Greenwich since 1981 and has detailed understanding of the issues faced in working with young people. He has worked throughout his teaching career in a range of different comprehensive schools and is fully committed to raising aspirations for all students in an inclusive educational setting. He has been head teacher at Tallis for 8 years and has overseen the design of a new school build under the Building Schools for the Future programme that will open in October 2011. This is a hugely exciting opportunity which has helped the school community to reflect on its view learning in the 21st century.

Deb Lemmer (UK) is currently Curriculum Leader for the Faculty of Visual & Media Arts at **Thomas Tallis School**. English, Media and Drama trained, Deb has been teaching in secondary education for 19 years. Previously working as a Deputy Head of English, she then completed an MA in Cultural Theory and Film in 1999, before returning to Tallis in 2000. In the last 10 years she has established a thriving and successful Media Arts Department, been at the forefront of developing the school's approach to vocational arts, led the new Visual & Media Arts Faculty and worked to integrate creative approaches to learning and teaching across the whole school curriculum.

Pat Kinsella is Principal of **Coláiste Choilm, Community College**, Ballincollig, Co. Cork. The school was established in 1987 and has an enrolment of about 950 students.

Dr. Anne Looney, from Dublin, is Chief Executive of the NCCA. A former post-primary teacher of Religious Education and English, she joined the full-time staff of the NCCA in 1997 and was appointed CEO in 2001. She holds a Doctorate in Education from the Institute of Education of the University of London. She has published on curriculum and assessment policy, school culture and ethos, and religious education. She is the outgoing president of the Consortium of Institutions for Development and Research in Education in Europe (CIDREE).

SESSION CHAIRS

Mary Nunan is an independent artist, choreographer and performer. She is currently Course Director of an MA in Contemporary Dance Performance at the [University of Limerick](#). Mary served as a board member of the Arts Council 2003-2008, and was Chair of the Special Committee on the Arts and Education.

Michael McCann was Principal of [Presentation Secondary School](#) in Galway for 18 years until his retirement in 2006. He was President of the National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals (NAPD) in 2004-05 and is still actively engaged in LDS (The Leadership Development Service for Schools) providing in-service for school leaders.

Mary Shine Thompson is the former dean and lecturer in the English department at [St Patrick's College](#), Drumcondra, a college of Dublin City University. She also held the position of College Research Officer. Her major research specialism is in the field of 20th century Anglo-Irish literature and she has carried out extensive work for the National Library of Ireland on its Austin Clarke holdings. Mary has also made a significant contribution to the development of children's literature in Ireland, editing numerous publications, scholarly articles and reviews and contributing to the field of research and policy making on the topic of citizenship and young people.