

Culture at King's

Step by step: arts policy and young people 1944–2014

"The importance of the links
between culture and education,
conceived as a 'lifelong' process,
is one of the most important
gains of international thinking
on culture during the last
twenty years."

A large, stylized, handwritten signature in a light grey color, which appears to be 'R.S.', is positioned below the quote.

A memo to his Senior Education Officer from Roy Shaw,
Secretary-General of the Arts Council, on 12 December 1980,
quoting a report by the Director-General of UNESCO

Foreword

For anyone with an interest in policy and the arts, February 2015 is a significant date – the 50th anniversary of Jennie Lee's *A Policy for the Arts: The First Steps*. This first-ever government arts policy represents the first in a series of firsts in the pages that follow.



Our Cultural Enquiry into young people and arts policy over 70 years was motivated by speeches in June 2014 from two senior political figures, in which they set out a shared concern – across the political divide – about lack of equity in arts engagement. This inspired us to take a historical view of the ways in which successive governments have attempted to provide access to art for young people, bringing together in one place relevant data, analysis and evaluation to try to ensure that in shaping interventions in the future, we're equipped to build on learning from the past. I'm very grateful to James Doeser for his expertise in undertaking this work and authoring this report.

Through its programme of Cultural Enquiries, Culture at King's provides a neutral space in which the sector can come together to explore key opportunities and challenges, as well as access to the academic analysis and rigour that can inform debate. We have established a Major Events Consortium, arising from the recommendations of our first Enquiry into the value of culture in major events and we have recently launched a new Enquiry, with the BBC, into the role partnership plays in enabling organisations to achieve their aims.

The Enquiry that informs this report is one that's particularly close to my heart. Over twenty years as a performing artist I witnessed at first hand the benefits arts engagement brings to young people: increasing confidence, building new skills, raising aspirations and achievements, engendering empathy, tolerance and a deeper understanding of themselves and the world around them. Through my work at King's College London I've understood the extent to which those anecdotal impressions are backed up by a substantial body of academic evidence.

We've come a long way since Jennie Lee's first steps. There is now a broad consensus that engagement with the arts brings real value to young people – and because of that value, that access should be available to all. It's no longer a question of whether; but it is still a question of how. This report is not intended to be the last word on the subject, but we hope that in recording the history and impact of policy making in this area we're making a valuable contribution to an ongoing discussion.



Deborah Bull
King's College London

Executive summary

Step by step: arts policy and young people takes a historical stance on the development of government policy designed to increase arts engagement by children and young people and provides key recommendations to ensure that the lessons of the past are taken into account by policy makers in the future.

Our Enquiry was ignited by a realisation: contemporary cultural policy is frequently made without a proper understanding of what has been attempted before. To address this, we have taken the unusual step of assembling in one place a brief history of policy in this area, in order that contemporary practitioners and policymakers may recognise the key individuals, milestones and achievements of the last 70 years and, as a result, create better informed, more effective policy.

Few people nowadays would question the importance of ensuring everyone – child or adult – is able to benefit equally from the arts. An ever-growing body of evidence demonstrates the positive impacts the arts have on children's emotional, educational and creative development.ⁱ Yet despite successive governments making young people's engagement a priority, data continue to show that arts audiences of all ages do not reflect the make-up of the wider population: they tend to be better educated and more affluent. There is clearly still work to do: an 'engagement gap' to overcome and a need to ensure that government policy enables all children to access the arts, encouraging and instilling in them a familiarity and affinity with the arts. Policy will do this most effectively if it is historically informed.

Our story is underpinned by published literature, individual testimony and archive research. It begins in the 1940s, in a period of post-war reconstruction that includes the establishment of universal secondary education and the formation of the Arts Council of Great Britain. The first major milestone was the

appointment of Jennie Lee as the first government minister for the arts in 1964 and implementation of the first arts policy in 1965.ⁱⁱ Social and political changes through the 1960s and 1970s led to greater scrutiny of the work of the Arts Council and its client organisations, and policymakers increasingly sought to broaden the types of people benefiting from the arts. The concept of 'child-centred learning' began to develop at this time. The arrival of Roy Shaw at the Arts Council in the 1970s was a critical part of the story: he appointed the organisation's first Arts Education Liaison Officer in 1978 and oversaw the development of its first Arts and Education Policy in the early 1980s. Later that decade, the introduction of the National Curriculum and the devolution of power to individual schools had an immediate and tangible effect on arts engagement through the schools system. The mid-1990s saw the introduction of the National Lottery and the establishment of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). An increasing emphasis on fostering creativity through arts education reached its apogee in the development of Creative Partnerships in the early 2000s. By the time the Arts Council published its landmark strategy *Achieving great art for everyone* in 2010 a substantial infrastructure for children's arts engagement had developed and government policy was increasingly directed towards coordination of resources within a complex arts and education sector.

In reflecting on the past, it's clear that the arts sector we know today is the result of energetic and passionate people advocating for the interests of children and young people. The persistence of

pioneers like Jennie Lee and Roy Shaw (often with the assistance of the Gulbenkian Foundation) has resulted in a general consensus in the arts sector and government about the value of arts engagement for children and young people.

Despite this consensus, there remains a great deal of debate about how increased access and engagement should be achieved. Since the 1990s, the government has increasingly seen creativity (rather than simply 'the arts') as a key component in the development of children, as a way to develop rounded citizens, but also economically robust members of a future post-industrial workforce. Thereafter arts policy has frequently been deployed in the service of this agenda. This has tended to bring together different government ministries (Culture, Education and Business) in a way that is historically very unusual. A squeeze on public funding since 2010 means that current challenges are often less about 'making the case' than about ensuring there is sufficient resource available to achieve shared policy ambitions.

Given what evidence reveals about what works in other areas of policy, we were surprised at some of the elements missing from this story and suggest that these gaps may, in fact, offer the most important learning. First, we know from other areas of government that early intervention is crucial in shaping later outcomes in life: Graham Allen's 2011 report, *Early Intervention: The Next Steps*, recommended that the UK give the 'foundation' years – zero to five, including pregnancy – the same status as primary and secondary stages, saying that it is between the ages of zero and three that children acquire the 'social and emotional bedrock' that enables them to reach their full potential and to 'happily engage with others and with society'.ⁱⁱⁱ It is therefore highly likely that greater attention to arts engagement or very young children would have a significant impact on their engagement in later years.

Second, technology is making our world ever more connected, and we share the same policy challenges in different cultures and communities. But *In Harmony*, based on the Venezuelan *El Sistema*, is the exception that proves the general rule: that policy is usually developed in isolation from international best practice. We found no reference to overseas best practice in our exploration of the Arts Council archives.

The third overlooked policy strand is the use of families, parents, carers and guardians to encourage greater engagement in arts and culture. Building arts into the school curriculum – the default policy lever since the mid-1960s – disregards the key influence of family and social factors in shaping later behaviour and attitudes towards the arts.

Another conspicuous absence throughout most of this history is the clarity on objectives that allows for effective and thorough evaluation of outcomes. We began our Enquiry with an ambition to catalogue what



Jennie Lee. Image by Walter Bird.
© National Portrait Gallery, London

works in this area of policy and thereby evaluate various historical interventions by their own measures of success. But we consistently failed

in our search to find both the objectives that set out success criteria and the data that could be used to adjudicate it. It is only in 2010, with the publication of *Achieving great art for everyone*, that policy designed to increase the engagement of young people with art finally comes with clear measures of success attached.

We hope this report makes a useful and interesting contribution to contemporary policy debates around arts engagement by children and young people, and that it offers something distinct from the usual discourse. Limitations of time and space mean it is necessarily a limited survey of a 70-year period in English history: a whistle-stop tour through the main sites. However, by bringing this historical story to light, gathering its various components in one place and unearthing unheard voices in the archive and elsewhere, we hope to make policymakers and practitioners consider more thoroughly the efforts that have preceded them as they attempt to encourage arts engagement by young people today.

Lessons and recommendations

Our Cultural Enquiry into young people and the arts offers the following lessons – summarised below and in full on page 22 – to policymakers, practitioners and advocates in the cultural sector:

- DfE, DCMS and the Arts Council should evaluate historical precedents when formulating new policy in the area of arts engagement by children and young people, auditing the historical record and incorporating insights into the policy development process.
- DfE, DCMS and the Arts Council should recognise that the cost of organisational restructures is greater than simply the financial burden of severances and recruitment. To address the loss of insight and experience that comes with change we recommend that they embody best practice in

information management at all times, but especially in the lead up to any restructuring.

- Policymakers and practitioners (including the Arts Council and individual organisations) should have a strong, longitudinal evaluation framework in place before devising policies and interventions, to allow the relative efficacy of initiatives to be assessed. Higher education institutions can play a key role in making this happen.
- The Arts Council should work with scholars in cultural policy to support a programme of cataloguing, digitisation, research and publication of archive material that would produce accessible histories of arts policy and inform contemporary policy making.

We suggest that through interventions in the following three specific areas,

government policy might more effectively address the persistent disparity in arts engagement across the country. We recommend that:

- Policymakers place greater emphasis on encouraging arts activity amongst pre-school-aged children, shaping encounters that may profoundly affect their subsequent engagement with the arts.
- Policy development take into account and learn from international best practice models, recognising that we share the same policy challenges with different communities and cultures around the world.
- Policymakers do more to support arts activity outside the schools system, recognising that the family and social life of young people plays a crucial role in their identity and later life.

i For examples see <http://www.culturecase.org> ii Jennie Lee, *A Policy for the Arts: The First Steps*, Cmnd 2601 (London: HMSO, 1965).
iii <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-intervention-the-next-steps-2>

ARTS COUNCIL

Press Release

7 April 1988

THE ARTS COUNCIL LAUNCHES EDUCATION POLICY

STRATEGIC ACTION : PARTNERSHIP : EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

The Arts Council today launches its new Education Policy for the next five years. The policy will unite all its Educational activities. The Council's policy will concentrate on five areas; advocacy, co-ordination, resources, training and information \ research

There are three main guiding principles to this new approach: Strategic Action in initiating projects, partnerships with other agencies and a focus on those groups with least access to the arts.

The Education Unit at the Arts Council will play a co-ordinating role with clients, the Regional Arts Associations and the educational sector. Within the Council itself the Unit will bring together the educational work of art form departments and make connections through multi-disciplinary projects.

The Unit will establish a resource centre holding information on current schemes and developments. Arts Council Officers will be involved in writing reports on pilot projects, work by Animateurs and new training materials.

Further information from Sue Rose, Press Officer, Arts Council, 105 Piccadilly, London W1V 0AU
Telephone: 01-629 9495 ext. 217/218 or 01-946 7563 (home)

Our approach

In June 2014 Harriet Harman (Shadow Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport) initiated a consultation entitled *Young People and the Arts*.¹ The consultation asked how future policy and practice might effectively increase the breadth and depth of arts engagement amongst young people.

Three days earlier, Sajid Javid, newly appointed Secretary of State for Culture, gave his first major speech, calling for arts organisations to do more to increase access, especially for young people.² While very welcome, this all felt familiar to long-standing observers of the arts sector.

Encouraging arts engagement amongst young people has been a priority within the broader realm of cultural policy for at least 30 years. The Labour government prior to 2010 devised and oversaw many substantial policies over 13 years directed at achieving the sorts of ambitions set out in *Young People and the Arts*. Since then, the coalition government has commissioned two major reviews from Darren Henley: the first of music education, the second of cultural education more broadly. Over the years there have been regular reviews of cultural policy (including that directed towards children and young people) and there is an ever-growing bank of literature and case studies to support policymakers in this area.

We were interested in what these two moments in June 2014 revealed about the policymaking process. Where was the institutional memory: the in-house wisdom contained within people or documentation that should ideally inform the development of plans and policies? Is cultural policy made without a proper understanding of the history that could (and should) inform it? And does this result from a lack of institutional memory, a policymaking culture that prizes freshness over precedent, or a wilful disregard by policymakers for the past (or a combination of all three)? We

decided to address these questions by taking a historical look at the development of policy designed to increase arts engagement by children and young people.

This report looks predominantly at how successive governments (or their policymaking agencies) have devised national policy and strategy in an attempt to increase young people's engagement in the arts. It describes changing policy over a period of 70 years. It is not an analysis of the aggregate effects of activity or funding, nor is it a catalogue of successive initiatives. It was not our intention to explore the finer details of how central government policy in this area is affected by changing artistic practice, broader education policy and pedagogical theory or rapid developments in technology (much of which is well covered elsewhere).³

Our Enquiry began with an ambition to catalogue *what works* in this area of policy, so that we could evaluate various interventions by their own articulated measures of success. But our search consistently failed to uncover either the objectives that set out success criteria or the data that could be used to adjudicate it. Alongside this omission, the Enquiry also exposed some missing elements in the story. We were surprised in our review of the archives to find so little reference to, or learning from, best practice overseas. There was also a notable lack of focus on the role of parents and families in encouraging arts participation, or on the encouragement of participation amongst very young children of pre-school age.

Methodology

Our research has taken published literature, the testimonies of individuals who have been architects or close observers of policy in this area and archive research to tell the story of how and why policy has been created over the last 70 years.

Published literature

There is relatively little material published on the history of arts policy for children and young people. Where it exists, the relevant literature falls into three broad categories: intellectual histories tracing the development of concepts of childhood or arts engagement, institutional histories documenting and reflecting on organisations' policies and the people behind them and, finally, memoirs or biographies of key architects or observers of policy in this area. All these sit against a backdrop of 70 years of Arts Council annual reviews, which provide a surprisingly candid indication of how senior policymakers have viewed the changing role and purpose of arts engagement.

Arts Council archive

Analysis of published material was supplemented by archive research. The archive of the Arts Council is part of the National Art Library at the Victoria & Albert Museum stores in Kensington, London.⁴ It was the most potentially fruitful repository to search, in order to examine the origins and internal details of the policymaking process during the period. After an initial search through the index, the material consulted for this Enquiry comprised more than 20 files spanning over 60 years.

The minutes and papers of the Council of the Arts Council (operating as a board of trustees for the organisation, with the power to make organisation-wide spending and policy decisions) and the files associated with education-related elements of the secretariat make up the backbone of

WHAT SHALL WE DO ABOUT THE ARTS?



SIR ROY SHAW
Secretary-General

Introduction

We need to do something about the arts, because they are undersubsidised, underpatronised, undervalued and, if I may coin a word, underdistributed. I will explain what I mean by these words, and although I am concerned with the arts in general, it will not be surprising if I tend mainly to take the theatre as a representative art.

Undersubsidised?

Most people know that the arts are in financial difficulty *now*, but they do not realise that they have been in difficulty for several years. Not since the glorious sixties, when Jennie Lee became the first Minister for the Arts, has public subsidy been anywhere near enough. Hence in 1978 the *Economist* described government spending on the arts as 'fairly miserly' and the Liberal Party described both the Labour and the Conservative record on the arts as 'rather mean'. In 1978, under Labour, we were spending 50p per head of the population on subsidising theatre, against Sweden's £4 and Germany's £7 a head. I know that those countries are more prosperous than ours, and I do not expect us to equal those subsidies, but surely the discrepancy is far greater than it should be?

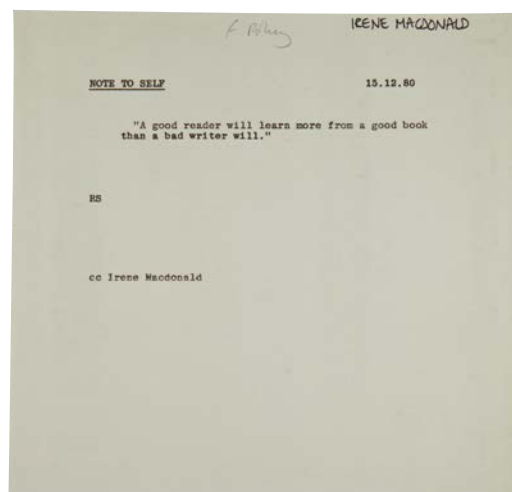
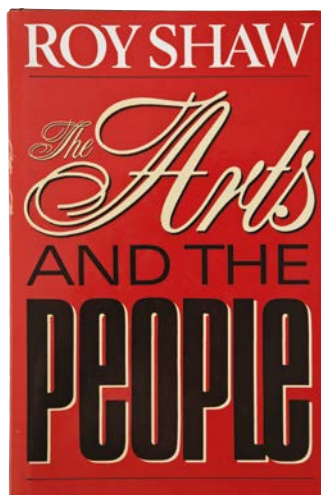
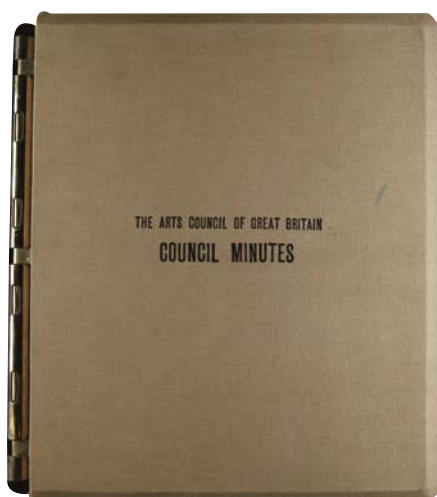
In 1978 a distinguished politician, with a deep and knowledgeable sympathy for the arts, put very well the need to do something about them:

"We cannot," he said, "continue to run the arts on a shoestring much longer, or the shoestring will snap. At present, by dint of scrimping and saving, we can hold our own in the world of international opera, theatre and music; but I doubt if our major national companies will be able to cope with inflation much longer unless the attitude of central government towards the arts undergoes a radical change."

How right Mr. Norman St. John-Stevás was when he said that a year before the election! And of course, since a Conservative government took over last May, the attitude of central government towards the arts *has* undergone a radical change, though not quite in the direction he was advocating; in exactly the opposite direction in fact, for the government has actually cut the grant to the Arts Council by over a million pounds — the first such cut in the Council's 33 years' history.

I do not make this point in any party-political spirit, still less as a criticism of Mr. St. John-Stevás. I am a servant of the Arts Council, and the duty of Council is to work with whatever government the people elect. Restraint on spending on the arts began in 1975, under Labour, and I did not hesitate then to emphasise the inadequacy of government funding; so much so that the then Minister asked me to stop it. I cannot stop it, because we in the Arts Council know more about the needs of the arts — the theatres, the opera companies, the orchestras, the community artists, individual writers, composers and painters — than any other people in the country. It is our duty to press on government and the nation the needs of all the arts, and we alone can do it with full knowledge. True, the distinguished Chairman of the Royal Opera House and the energetic Director of the Royal Shakespeare Company can, and do, claim space and time to press their case in the press and on radio and television. The Directors of the excellent Victoria Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent and the splendid Northern Sinfonia in Newcastle, to name but two of more than 1200 other clients subsidised by the Arts Council, have far less opportunity to press *their* case. So the Arts Council must do it for them. And we say to the government and the nation on behalf of the arts, that the shoestring is now nearer still to snapping and that the arts must have more money spent on them, not less.

I am quite sure that Mr. St. John-Stevás would wish to do this, but it seems that the Cabinet will not let him. They take the plausible view that the arts must bear cuts like all other services, such as the education service and the health service. There are two arguments against this. First, as Mr. St. John-Stevás pointed out, the arts were already seriously underfunded. Second, the arts budget is so tiny compared with the education or health budgets, that an increase (in real terms) of £10 million, which would make very little difference in these services where costs are in *thousands of millions*, would transform the arts scene, receiving at present only just over £60 million. Conversely, any economies that could be made in the arts, like the £1 million lopped off this year's grant, are so tiny that they can make no significant contribution to the national economy, but they do cause grave hardship in the arts world. Mrs. Thatcher put it exactly right when she assured the Chairman of the Arts Council before the election that



the material consulted for this Enquiry. In addition to opening up its archive, the Arts Council supplied us with its own digitised store of annual reports dating back to the very beginning. They not only document the range of activities undertaken or sponsored each year, but also form an extraordinarily public space for the Chair and Secretary-General to candidly state (or debate) the organisation's position on whatever political and practical challenges it faced at the time.

Historically, the Arts Council has not merely implemented government arts policy; it has essentially formulated it. For most of the period covered in this research it has been ultimately accountable to government in order to sustain its funding, but it has not been subject to extensive direction from Whitehall. This arms-length distance has arguably eroded over time with the trend for greater government oversight and accountability for public expenditure, especially since the introduction of targets and the establishment of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in the 1990s.

Witness Seminar

In order to address the lack of material that critically reflected on the history of this policy (either by scholars or policymakers) we conducted a Witness Seminar, using a format successfully deployed in a variety of contexts by Dr Michael

Kandiah and colleagues at King's College London's Institute of Contemporary British History.⁵ Witness Seminars bring together a group of people to share memories, thoughts and experiences about a particular topic or a moment in time. Participants in Witness Seminars can provide a candid, if unofficial, account of events and therefore highlight structures and agents of change that may otherwise remain hidden. The Witness Seminar brought together four key individuals who were working on young people's arts policy development in the late 1970s and 1980s:

- ♦ **Irene MacDonald:** the first person to be appointed Education Liaison Officer at the Arts Council, in 1978.
- ♦ **Sue Robertson:** Irene's successor to the Education Liaison Officer post in 1982. From 1983 she oversaw the dissemination and

implementation of the first substantial arts policy directed towards young people, *The Arts Council and Education*.

- ♦ **Pauline Tambling:** the first appointment to a new education team at the Royal Opera House, as Education Officer with responsibility for opera, in 1983.
- ♦ **Paul Roberts:** Director of Education in Nottingham in the 1980s. He has maintained an interest in arts education and was asked by government to conduct an enquiry into creativity, resulting in the publication *Nurturing Creativity in Young People*.⁶

The session was chaired by Adam Boulton, Political Editor of Sky News and Fellow of King's College London.

Quotes from the Witness Seminar are used to illustrate various points in this report. A full transcript is available on the Culture at King's webpages.

A note on terminology

In this report we define *children and young people* as people aged 16 and under; we use *young people* as shorthand for children and young people; by *engagement* we mean attending or participating in arts activity (but not formal training), and by *arts* we predominantly mean music, dance, literature, theatre and visual art. Analysis is limited to arts policy in England and focuses principally on the core art forms that have remained within the Arts Council's remit. Museums, libraries, craft and film are, therefore, mostly excluded. In addition, the report specifically looks at national policy. Finally, we have used *Arts Council* to refer to an organisation that has had minor variations to its name over time.

70 years of arts policy for young people

This Enquiry has identified a set of firsts: milestones that stand out as significant breaks with the past, establishing a new order or new approach to young people's arts policy and signalling a particular new approach to arts engagement by central government or its policymaking agencies. They all have long-lasting effects that still shape government policy today.

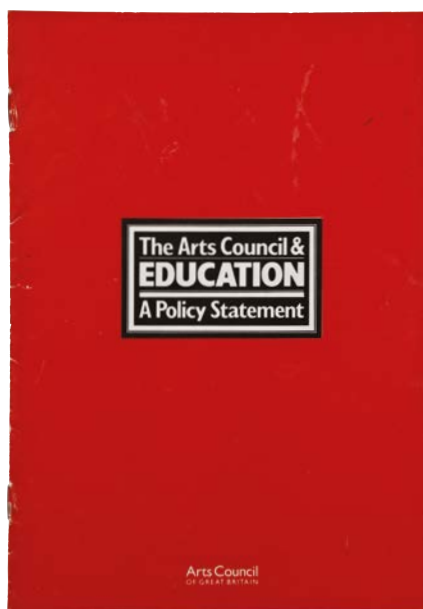
They are:

- **1965** The government White Paper *A Policy for the Arts: The First Steps*
- **1983** *The Arts Council and Education: A Policy Statement*
- **1988** The National Curriculum
- **2002** Creative Partnerships

The prelude (1944–65)

The administrative division between arts in schools and the broader arts sector was in place at least as early as the 1940s and has persisted through the following 70 years.⁷ A crucial starting point was the 1944 Education Act, which established free secondary education for all children until age 15. There was a place for arts in the schools system at this time, though there was no national standard or prescription as to what should be taught, or how.

Overall, our story is focused not on curriculum evolution, but instead on arts policy. John Maynard Keynes, in his 1945 vision for an Arts Council, spoke of the role that it would play in promoting the 'civilising arts'. However, this was not to be a sober and serious endeavour: 'do not think of the Arts Council as a schoolmaster. Your enjoyment will be our first aim,' he said. Keynes wanted to share the privilege that he enjoyed with all parts of the country: 'We look forward to the time when the theatre and the concert-hall and the gallery will be a living element in everyone's upbringing, and regular attendance at the theatre and at concerts a part of organised education.'⁸



The Arts Council was established in 1946 with a Royal Charter. From the start, young people were a subject of discussion within the Council. Secretary-General Mary Glasgow noted in a 1946 paper on the topic that there was 'nothing in the Council's Charter that limits interest to adults'.⁹ However, in the 20 years that followed neither government nor the Arts Council did very much about it.

Despite the lack of coordinated policy, there was vibrant work taking place around the country through the 1950s. A field report about Opera for All (a Gulbenkian Foundation funded scheme) from the 1955 Arts Council annual report illustrates the

enthusiastic (if chaotic) attempts to get art to young audiences: 'The school hall proved to be bare and difficult. The dressing-room was the school shower-bath. Would there be an audience? Of course there was: a packed house, wet, hotted-up and smelling. Dozens of children, many of them far too young. The hall was difficult acoustically, the piano inferior, and the children (some of them as young as four) talked, laughed, giggled, ate, scratched, cried, rustled sweet papers, went out and came back again regardless of what went on on the stage.'¹⁰

This enthusiastic but ad hoc approach to young people's arts engagement would persist until the mid-1960s and the development of the first ever government policy for the arts.

The First Steps (1965–73)

The first government arts policy took the form of a White Paper devised by Jennie Lee in 1965, a year after she took office as the first UK government Arts Minister (an appointment within the Department of Education and Science [DES]).

MILESTONES

A Policy for the Arts: The First Steps

Origins

The policy said that 'government aid to the arts has hitherto been on a relatively modest scale, and has grown up in response to spasmodic pressures rather than as a result of a coherent plan'. Education was to be at the heart of Lee's policy. Her biographer Patricia Hollis remarks how the school curriculum was incredibly impoverished in cultural terms in the 1950s and 1960s: books, plays and art were a small

element of most children's school experience.¹¹ Central government policy could not be used to supply access to culture in the home, but schools were a different matter.

Content

The policy contains a clear logic for why government should get involved in arts education: 'If children at an early age become accustomed to the idea of the arts as a part of everyday life, they are more likely in maturity first to accept them and then to demand them'. In the policy children are also seen as a kind of unbroken artist, and it is government's job to nurture that: 'Too often, as boys and girls grow up, the impetus seems to weaken, so that as adults we are more vulnerable than we should be to criticisms of our inadequate uses of literacy, of our failure to appreciate poetry, of our limited tastes in music and drama, of our ignorance of the visual arts and our blindness to good design.'

Impact

Although the White Paper makes a great deal of their importance, there were no substantial specific recommendations within it for young people or for education. There was no new fund, organisation or legislation, but it did set an agenda that included children as distinct constituents in arts policy, at least in theory. And it placed a burden on the Arts Council to deliver some of the policy's ambitions, providing, where necessary, funds for it to do so.

Legacy

The White Paper set a precedent for all subsequent UK government interventions in the arts. It established that there was a need for government to take an interest in the arts sector, legitimised by a democratic mandate that sought to expand and enhance the benefit of the arts for the widest possible number of people in the country.

It is worth reflecting on the attitudes that informed arts education around this time. In 1966 Lord Goodman (then Arts Council Chairman) said



1 *Angel of the Prisons*, 1959. Image courtesy of Theatre Centre.

that the Arts Council needed to counter the 'attraction of facile, slack and ultimately debasing forms of sub-artistic, under-civilized entertainment' that were so popular amongst young people.¹² Yet in policy terms, this tension between the elite and the accessible was not as linear or clear-cut during the Goodman-Lee years as one might imagine: the 1967 Charter Renewal of the Arts Council shifted the language of the organisation's objects from encouraging the 'fine arts exclusively' to simply, and more generously, 'the arts'.

Despite this rhetoric, and the social change occurring throughout the 1960s, neither the Arts Council nor the DES did a great deal to practically alter the likelihood that young people would experience the arts. Most Arts Council funding was still directed towards professional arts rather than participatory activity. However, things were beginning to change, with Young People's Theatre attracting the Arts Council's attention and prompting a Young People's Theatre Enquiry in 1965. It is also worth noting the beginnings of Theatre-in-Education (TiE) at the same time.

Reporting in 1966, the Young People's Theatre Enquiry said that,

in part as a consequence of meagre funds, 'the standard of acting, presentation and material [...] was, in general, below the level of work which it considers should be offered to young people';¹³ that provision of discounted tickets, schools matinees, clubs and workshops for young people was inconsistent and in need of funds; and that while there were 81 drama advisers employed in schools (and many schools included drama on the timetable), 'too many different activities were claimed by teachers to be drama [...] and nor could they find a consistency in the quality of practice that matched the high claims that were made for the work.'¹⁴ The report's effects were almost immediate, with an injection of funds from the Arts Council Drama Contingencies Fund to five of the existing children's theatre companies and the setting up of a Young People's Theatre Panel to advise the Council on a £90,000 annual allocation. By 1971, the Arts Council could say that children's theatre was firmly established with a healthy 3 million audience members.¹⁵

TiE was a nascent field that directly benefited from this report and its recommendations. By 1965 the

Belgrade Theatre in Coventry had devised a unique citywide scheme that took actors with teaching qualifications into schools with drama programmes. The Secretary-General of the Arts Council would later reflect: 'Two important developments during the 60s and 70s were the Arts Council's decision to provide subsidy for Young People's Theatre, and the consequent burgeoning of this together with Theatre-in-Education.'¹⁶

Young people's arts were frequently associated with the growing Community Arts movement in the 1970s. This movement was a provocation to the establishment (disrupting the notion of 'quality' and 'the canon') and frequently involved an artist (or group of artists) devising work in collaboration with people who were untrained or lacked familiarity with the arts. Under the directorship of Peter Brinson, the UK branch of the Gulbenkian Foundation had funded a variety of arts projects focused on young people under a broader banner of Community Arts (such as the Centreprise community bookshop and Pavilions in the Parks). 'While the state, sometimes grudgingly, and sometimes at the Foundation's prompting, has taken increasing responsibility for the arts in Britain, the Foundation has concentrated on finding new ways, not simply

to fill the gaps, but to seed the experiments that lead to new work and new organisations.'¹⁷

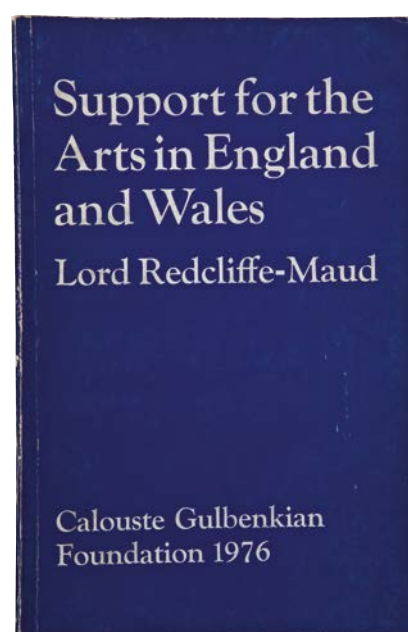
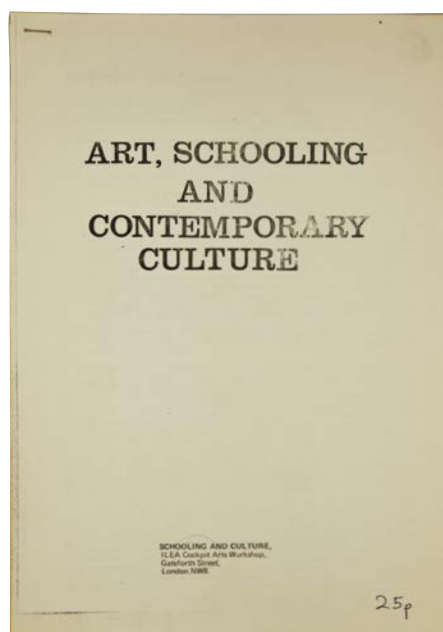
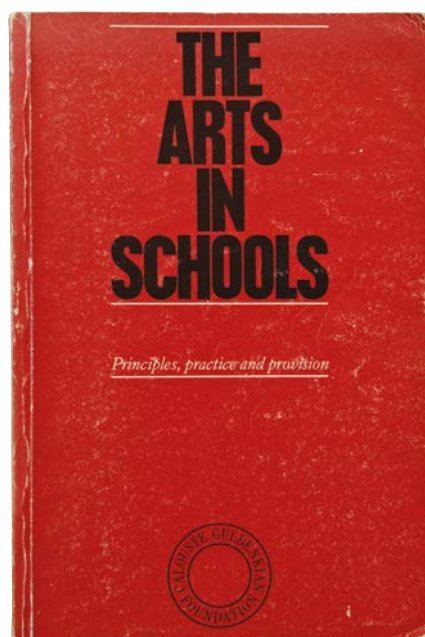
Establishing a consensus (1974–83)

Another Gulbenkian contribution at this time that reignited a great deal of debate in the arts (especially around children, audiences and education) was a 1976 report commissioned from John Redcliffe-Maud: *Support for the Arts in Britain*. Redcliffe-Maud's substantial review into the activities and funding of the Arts Council called for 'a revolution in educational policy over the next ten years' amongst other things to bring 'the arts nearer the heart of the curriculum in British schools'. In practice this translated into a call for Local Education Authorities (LEAs) to 'have the crucial duty of ensuring that no child leaves school without some personal experience of the arts'.¹⁸ 'Our children and grandchildren must have, at all stages of their education, the chance of acquiring arts and habits not only of reading, writing and mathematics but of discrimination and creative action – of making music, writing poetry and plays, acting and dancing, designing and applying creative skills.'¹⁹ In summarising the feedback he had garnered through consulting with local government officials and arts organisations, Redcliffe-Maud

concluded 'there had for long been a damaging gap in the area where the arts impinged on education, a gap which the Arts Council had made few efforts to bridge'.²⁰

If Jennie Lee was the dominant figure in this story in the 1960s, then it is Roy Shaw who takes that role in the 1970s, especially after he was appointed Secretary-General of the Arts Council in 1975. Shaw arrived from a background in adult education where he had developed a strong theory for its value, inspired by his friend and colleague Richard Hoggart.²¹ Shaw's background and approach (an academic, northern and Catholic) contrasted with the norm at the top of the arts in England, which still operated under an intellectual framework that was the legacy of Keynes's original vision for the Arts Council.²²

Shaw established the position of Arts Education Liaison Officer at the Arts Council in 1978. After anticipating Council resistance to providing financial support for education, he convinced Peter Brinson at the Gulbenkian to fund the post and an assistant. Brinson was sympathetic to Shaw's mission and he also had support from Norman St John-Stevas, Shadow Arts Minister in 1978 (later appointed to the cabinet by Margaret Thatcher after the 1979 general election).



Roy Shaw's style was not to everyone's taste. Richard Linklater (veteran of the Arts Council Drama Department) described his tenure as 'the Council [beginning] to introduce the frills – education and social welfare' and Andrew Sinclair's history of the Arts Council suggests that Shaw pursued the education agenda against the advice of his senior colleagues that it was 'a no-go area'.²³ Shaw's correspondence with Antony Field (Finance Director, Arts Council in the early 1980s) is particularly revealing. Field did not think that the Council should be in the business of changing people's tastes, and thought that technology had made art accessible in previously unimaginable ways.²⁴ Overall, a view persisted that Shaw's 'famous development was the creation of an education officer, which some [saw] as the beginning of the end of the Arts Council in that it developed an activity that wasn't an artform'.²⁵



It was quite a difficult time because there were a lot of people in opposition to the idea that the Arts Council should get involved in education. [...] Roy had a big debate with the community arts movement; he thought that in some ways they sold out to the working class by not giving them excellence – the best for the most. He was very much about bringing high art to the people.

Sue Robertson

In discussions with the DES in May 1979 the Arts Council understood that the DES Minister, St John-Stevas, 'would seek to promote a more active participation in the arts by the Department of Education and Science. There was an overlap between supporting the arts for adult audiences and preparing children to be the audiences of the future' thereby making their rationale pretty clear.²⁶ The arms-length principle as it applied to arts education was simple: anything that happened in relation to schools was the responsibility of the DES.²⁷ A key milestone in the work of the new Arts Council Education Unit was the publication of the Arts Council's first education policy.

MILESTONES

The Arts Council and Education: A Policy Statement

Origins

The Arts Council published a consultative document along with a press release on 17 July 1980 with the intention 'to clarify both its relationship with the education system and its own educational responsibilities'.²⁸ At its core the document argued that the Arts Council's Royal Charter 'to develop the knowledge, understanding and practice of the arts' and 'to increase the accessibility of the arts to the public' gave the organisation a clear educational mandate. Critically, the document said that 'making the arts truly accessible involves more than making them physically available'.²⁹ Files in the Arts Council archive show that while some welcomed the opportunity for coherence in this area of policy, others wondered if this was something in which the Arts Council should be getting involved.³⁰ The DES said that they did not 'dictate arts/education policy from the centre'.³¹ The Gulbenkian published Ken Robinson's *The Arts In Schools* in 1981 'to put the arts firmly into the debate on the future of state education, [...] to put the case for the arts as clearly as possible to policy-makers at all levels, [...] to identify the real problems – practical and otherwise – that faced the full development of the arts in schools [and] to identify ways ahead'.³²

Content

After extensive consultation, *The Arts Council and Education: A Policy Statement*, was published in February 1983.³³ It articulated the Arts Council's approach to education strongly, clearly and concisely. The policy understood education in its widest sense, beyond the school curriculum. It had ten key action points, most of which were about better internal coordination and communication around arts and education and closer working with the DES. Two of the most important were:

- To establish separate funds for education and to devise initiatives with specialist departments to develop skills and test new ideas; and
- To adopt as a prime assessment criterion 'the extent and quality of efforts made to broaden the social composition of audiences, to develop response and to increase involvement in the arts. Each revenue client will be asked to provide a report of its work in this area when making its annual application'.³⁴

Impact

The launch of the Arts Council's policy signalled a serious commitment: from 1983–84 a separate budget and resource was available for education. In 1985 that budget nearly doubled from £85,000 to £160,000 and then increased to £235,000 a year later. Arts organisations began to take account of the Arts Council's lead, developing their own educational expertise in-house. Roy Shaw reflected in 1987 that 'attitudes to education within the Council and the arts world have thus almost completely been reversed within one decade'.³⁵

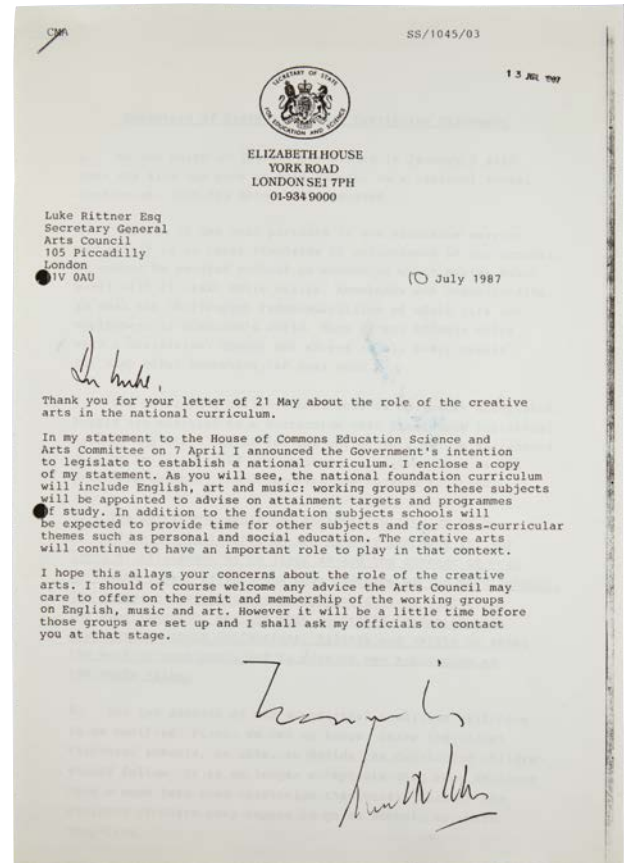
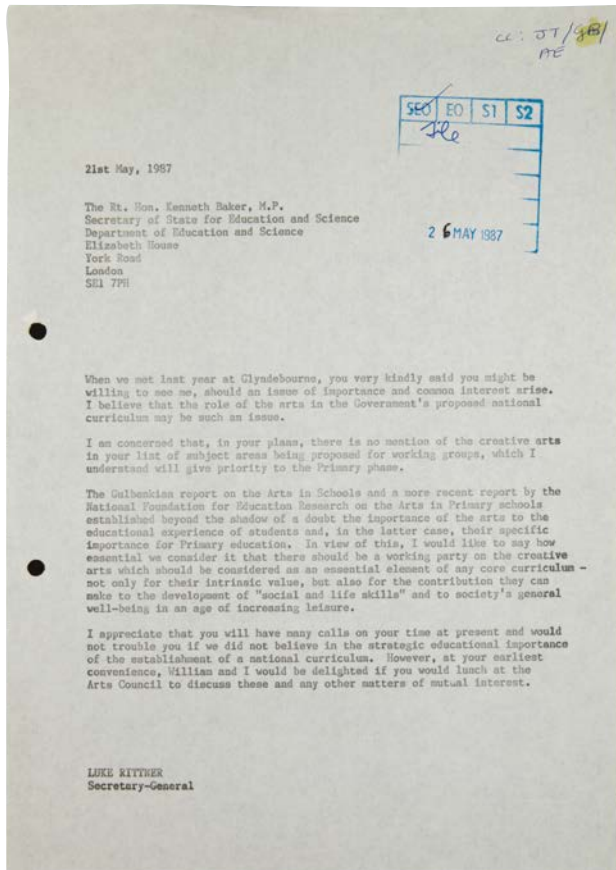
Legacy

The principles and parameters laid out in the 1983 Policy Statement have remained intact for the last 30 years. The principles of arts education (and the recognition that making things available does not make them accessible) still infuse thinking today. Collaboration and coordination remain at the heart of arts policy where it pertains to young people, and arts education (and work with, by and for young people) is now an accepted part of the Arts Council's remit.



The Arts Council stated that it would require all its funded organisations to engage in some form of education work and it also set a budget for education, which it used on a rolling basis with the art forms. That was a big change. [...] When we produced the education policy, it was quite unusual for the Arts Council to articulate policy in that way.

Sue Robertson



Arts within education (1984–92)

By 1984 the Arts Council had identified education as a nationwide priority: a position that remains unchanged. *The Glory of the Garden* (an Arts Council strategy published a year after the education policy) set out how it would make cuts in other areas of its work to fund six development areas, including education.³⁶ Education was allocated an extra £150,000 of the £6m total set aside to support new activity, the smallest of all the development areas.

By the end of 1984 Ken Robinson at the Schools Curriculum Development Committee had put together a draft National Curriculum Development Project in the Arts, following on from his report, *Arts In Schools*. The project covered what should be in an arts curriculum, how it should be taught and how it should be tested.³⁷ The Arts in Schools project was well developed but incomplete by the time the 1988 Education Reform Act was imminent and the next of our milestones was in sight.

MILESTONES

The National Curriculum

Origins

The senior staff of the Arts Council and Schools Curriculum Development Committee met with Kenneth Baker and colleagues at the DES in April 1988 to discuss the development of an arts curriculum. Meeting notes suggest that the discussion focused on the complexities of how the kind of arts education advocated in Robinson's 1981 report might be practically incorporated into a framework being proposed by Baker and the DES.³⁸ The arts sector was mobilised to vigorously lobby government to give proper recognition to arts subjects in the curriculum.

Content

The 1988 Education Reform Act introduced a radical set of changes to all levels of the UK education system. Key developments were the devising of a National Curriculum

and the devolution of powers to individual schools (and away from LEAs) through the Local Management of Schools system. In the National Curriculum, English was a core subject (and Literature and Drama featured within it); Art and Music were both foundation subjects (meaning that all 5–14 year olds had to study them, with 15–16 year olds having the option to do so); PE was also a foundation subject, with Dance a subset. The general requirements for programmes of study in arts subjects emphasised a mix of comprehension and appreciation as well as performance.

Impact

The National Curriculum was the most substantial element of the 1988 Act, embodying an approach to standardisation, testing and centralisation that reflected a radical change from what had gone before. But it was Local Management of Schools that had the most immediate and tangible effect on the arts sector. Previously, external arts provision

was managed by the LEA, resulting in a standard approach within each Authority. After 1988 it was down to individual schools to commission artists and arts organisations. The Arts Council was asked by DES to monitor the effects of the 1988 Act. Many concerns related to the fact that under Local Management of Schools, some schools charged pupils for after-hours arts activities, such as visits to theatre or music tuition, while others chose to forgo them altogether. 'Changes introduced by the legislation meant that arts organisations have had to adapt their work to position themselves within the competitive market place by making greater effort to publicise their work and making contact with individual schools. The most significant impact on arts education has been wrought by restructuring in areas such as local education authorities and Local Management of Schools.'³⁹

Legacy

Curriculum reform has been one of the most persistent flashpoints in arts education since 1944. The tension between centrally determined minimum standards and giving schools and parents the freedom to shape education is very much alive today, as can be seen in recent debates about

academies, free schools, curriculum choices and the English baccalaureate. The arts have tended to either suffer or thrive depending on the existing enthusiasm of teachers and governors, and the degree to which they are seen to enhance the overall educational experience or simply act as an optional extra.

The impact of the 1988 Education Reform Act was a key discussion point in the Witness Seminar.

“

Money that had been retained centrally and, in the best cases, used wisely and catalytically, disappeared into schools and, therefore, we left to chance whether children and young people experienced a broad and rich arts experience.

Paul Roberts

“

In music we got arguably the best curriculum we had ever had. In that time we were inundated with teachers wanting help with composers in schools [...] Drama and dance did not fare well at all because they were located with other subject areas [...] Art and Design arguably has thrived under the National Curriculum.

Pauline Tambling

Through the 1980s and 1990s, as policy evolved, education remained a priority for Arts Council. Its education policy was refreshed in 1988 and *Towards a National Arts and Media Strategy* (1992) featured education as one of the 10 principles and aims for the organisation, expressing the hope that 'education becomes more central to our work'.⁴⁰ It was the introduction of the National Lottery that would ensure there was sufficient funding available to deliver that aspiration.

Access and accountability (1993–2001)

Established by the National Lottery Act in 1993, the Lottery generates money for good causes (including the arts) and, specifically, elements not traditionally funded through government Grant in Aid (ie government tax-generated funds). Arts activities for young people tended to meet those criteria and could therefore be supported by Lottery funds.

Lottery requirements encouraged arts organisations to recruit educational experts to attract and manage funding. 'In 1996 Lottery rules were changed to accommodate one-off revenue projects, with specific emphasis on young people, access and participation and new work [...] The Arts for Everyone (A4E) scheme, established

I Witness Seminar.



in 1997, required all projects funded at £100,000 or above' to fulfil a set of criteria that included 'getting more young people actively involved in arts and cultural activities'.⁴¹

The 1998 Arts Council annual report reveals the sheer scale of the investment that Lottery generated: 'In 1997–98 175 Lottery capital awards totalling £89,464,546 were made to projects where children and young people are the primary beneficiaries. [...] In 1997–98, 56 A4E project grants totalling £878,613 were awarded specifically for work with young people of school age.'⁴² Compare these numbers to the £731,000 distributed via Grant in Aid to organisations and projects for education and training (which covers much more than just children's activities) for the same year.



When the Lottery came, education benefited disproportionately, because there was quite a lot of squabbling between the art forms and, often, the education work was seen as an acceptable area of new development.

Pauline Tambling

Through the 1990s and into the 2000s, in the context of increased government use of targets, the Arts Council began to account more effectively for its work for young people, mostly through data collection.

The new Labour government of 1997 introduced the first target (specifically '200,000 extra arts education sessions to be mounted by the Arts Council of England's and Regional Arts Boards' "clients" during the life of the current funding agreement').⁴³ As part of its funding agreement from the period 2004–8 the government set the Arts Council the objective of increasing both formal and informal learning sessions by organisations in receipt of regular Arts Council funding for 4–19 year olds by 2%. Since 2008 the Taking Part Survey has collected data on children's arts engagement, which has also helped accountability in the current age of impact measurement.⁴⁴

Creativity, creativity, creativity (2002–10)

Creative Partnerships, our last milestone, reflects a shift from arts engagement towards encouraging creativity.

MILESTONES

Creative Partnerships

Origins

In 1999 Ken Robinson (and colleagues at the National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education) published a landmark report, *All Our Futures*, which made radical and urgent recommendations to government about the place of culture and creativity in the

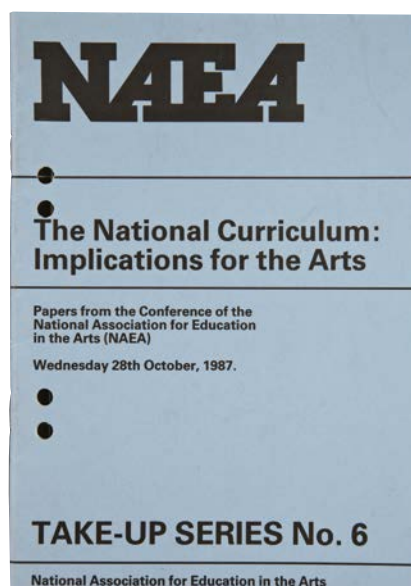
school curriculum. 'The key message of this report is the need for a new balance in education.'⁴⁵ This new balance, the report said, should be far more heavily weighted in favour of a creative and cultural education. In many ways it picks up the consequences of the 1988 Education Reform Act: 'Local Management of Schools has reduced many services and facilities that were once provided by Local Education Authorities to support creative and cultural education. Coordinated action is needed to provide these services in new and imaginative ways.'⁴⁶ The reforms Robinson wanted to see were problematic to implement in a rigid and entrenched curriculum, leading to the development of Creative Partnerships.

Content

Creative Partnerships was profoundly significant and very different from what had gone before. A flagship policy for the Arts Council and jointly funded by DCMS and Department for Education and Skills (DfES), it brought together creative professionals (artists, makers, architects, designers) with children and teachers to encourage creativity within schools. The scheme was run by Creativity, Culture and Education (CCE, an independent organisation). The numbers involved were substantial: 1 million children and 90,000 teachers involved in 8,000 projects over the period between 2002 and 2010. 'Because of its focus on creativity, Creative Partnerships did not see its outcomes as being about arts learning, but about learning more generally.'⁴⁷ These outcomes eventually included a wide range of categories including wellbeing, attainment, culture change, leadership, creativity and cultural engagement.

Impact

Creative Partnerships was not inherently about increasing arts engagement, although some people interpreted it that way. Creative Partnerships in effect conflated the concepts of creativity and the arts, and with multiple stakeholders and multiple intended outcomes it was difficult to account for its overall impact. It was not, however, devoid





I Conisborough School Kids in Museums Takeover Day. Image courtesy of Museum of London.

of evaluation or research – quite the opposite. One of the most substantial contributions of Creative Partnerships has been the extensive suite of research it has published in this area.⁴⁸

Legacy

Funding for Creative Partnerships was removed in 2010 as part of a range of government cuts. At the same time Find Your Talent, which ran 2008–11 and provided every child with five hours of high quality cultural experiences each week, was also cut. CCE continues to run Creative Partnerships, but overseas rather than in the UK. Many of the policies coming from DCMS and the Arts Council in recent years (Bridge Organisations and Music Education Hubs, for instance) have been attempts to replicate the linking role that Creative Partnerships provided.

Throughout this period, the Arts Council retained children and young people as a priority area. In 1999 it

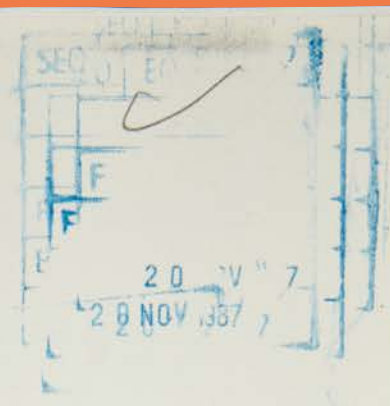
agreed five strategic priorities, including ‘Children, young people, lifelong learning’.⁴⁹ During 2003–6 one of the Arts Council’s six priorities was ‘offering opportunities for young people’⁵⁰ and in 2006–8 one of their new six priorities was simply ‘children and young people’.⁵¹ The 2008–11 strategy *Achieving great art for everyone* had ‘Children and Young People’ as one of the four priorities: ‘We want all children and young people in England to have contact with the arts – as participants and audience members’.⁵²

Policy though the 2000s continued to focus on fostering creativity, but the persistent challenge was to bring together education and the arts. In her essay *Government and the Value of Culture* the then Secretary of State Tessa Jowell said, ‘there is no point in my funding the Royal Opera House at one end if schools are not giving pupils the equipment to understand opera as an art form, therefore restricting future audiences to those who have the benefit of an elite education’.⁵³

The present state: coordination and consolidation (2010–15)

The current 10-year Arts Council strategy (updated in 2013 to incorporate museums and libraries) *Great art and culture for everyone* emphasises work with, by and for children and young people as one of its five strategic goals.⁵⁴ Specifically, that ‘every child and young person has the opportunity to experience the richness of the arts, museums and libraries’.⁵⁵ This ambition comes with an attached set of success criteria by which future researchers may be able to adjudicate the relative success or failure of the initiatives devised in accordance with the strategy. The articulation of these criteria represents a minor first in our story, which is worthy of note.

Many of the recommendations of the Henley Reviews in 2011 and 2012 related to better coordination and coherence for arts education.⁵⁶ The resulting policies (primarily in the form of the National Plan for Music Education and the more



EMBARGO: 00.01AM MONDAY 23 NOVEMBER 1987

ARTS BODIES WANT PARITY FOR THE ARTS WITH THE SCIENCES
IN THE CORE CURRICULUM

In an open letter today, to the Rt Hon Kenneth Baker MP, Secretary of State for Education, major arts organisations affiliated to the National Campaign for the Arts expressed great concern at the proposed role of the arts in the National Curriculum.

The attached letter - an unprecedented display of unity across all kinds of arts bodies - calls on Mr Baker:

- a) to ensure that all children have access to all the arts as foundation subjects of curriculum.
- b) to give the arts parity with the sciences in the curriculum.
- c) to establish a working group to look at possible targets and programmes of study across the arts and to invite the participation of the professional arts sector.

Simon Crine, Director of the NCA said today:

"The arts are crucial to the academic development of our children as well as to the quality of their lives. The sciences are to be assured of their status as foundation subjects in the core curriculum. If it is good enough for the sciences, it is good enough for the arts."

Malcolm Ross, Arts Education Lecturer at Exeter University said:

"Whilst Mr Baker has given some recognition to music and to art in the core curriculum, he is failing to give due recognition to drama, dance, film, design and other contemporary media. The arts deserve more than a token gesture.

Press contacts: Simon Crine: 01 828 4448 (work) 01 607 9073 (home)
Malcolm Ross: 0392 264829 (work) 0803 862550 (home)

President: Melvyn Bragg Director: Simon Crine

National Campaign for the Arts Ltd. Registered Office: Francis House,
Francis Street, London SW1P 1DE. Registered number 1930446 (England).



I *Gawain and the Green Knight*. Image courtesy of Alive And Kicking Theatre Company Leeds.

modest plan for Cultural Education) signal an attempt to bring together separate parts of the infrastructure, while acknowledging that schools perform a variety of functions beyond arts education and that there are many rich avenues to engage young people in the arts outside formal educational settings.⁵⁷

Several recent initiatives are in many ways reinventions of what has gone before – successors to previous policies that have seemed effective. We can see the reinstatement of a middle tier of infrastructure akin to the pre-1988 role of LEAs (between central government and on-the-ground-delivery) in the form of Bridge Organisations and Music Education Hubs (a point made by Paul Roberts in the Witness Seminar).⁵⁸ Arts Award acknowledges that progression is important in a young person's arts education, and that the formal curriculum is not necessarily the best mechanism

through which to pursue it.⁵⁹ Artsmark and the development of quality principles indicate that provision should be to a definable standard, and that young people are entitled to a quality arts experience.⁶⁰ But there are new departures: the recent development of In Harmony (the UK manifestation of the Venezuelan El Sistema programme) suggests there is still capacity for experimentation in arts engagement policy by government, though we eagerly await the findings of full evaluations of the scheme.⁶¹

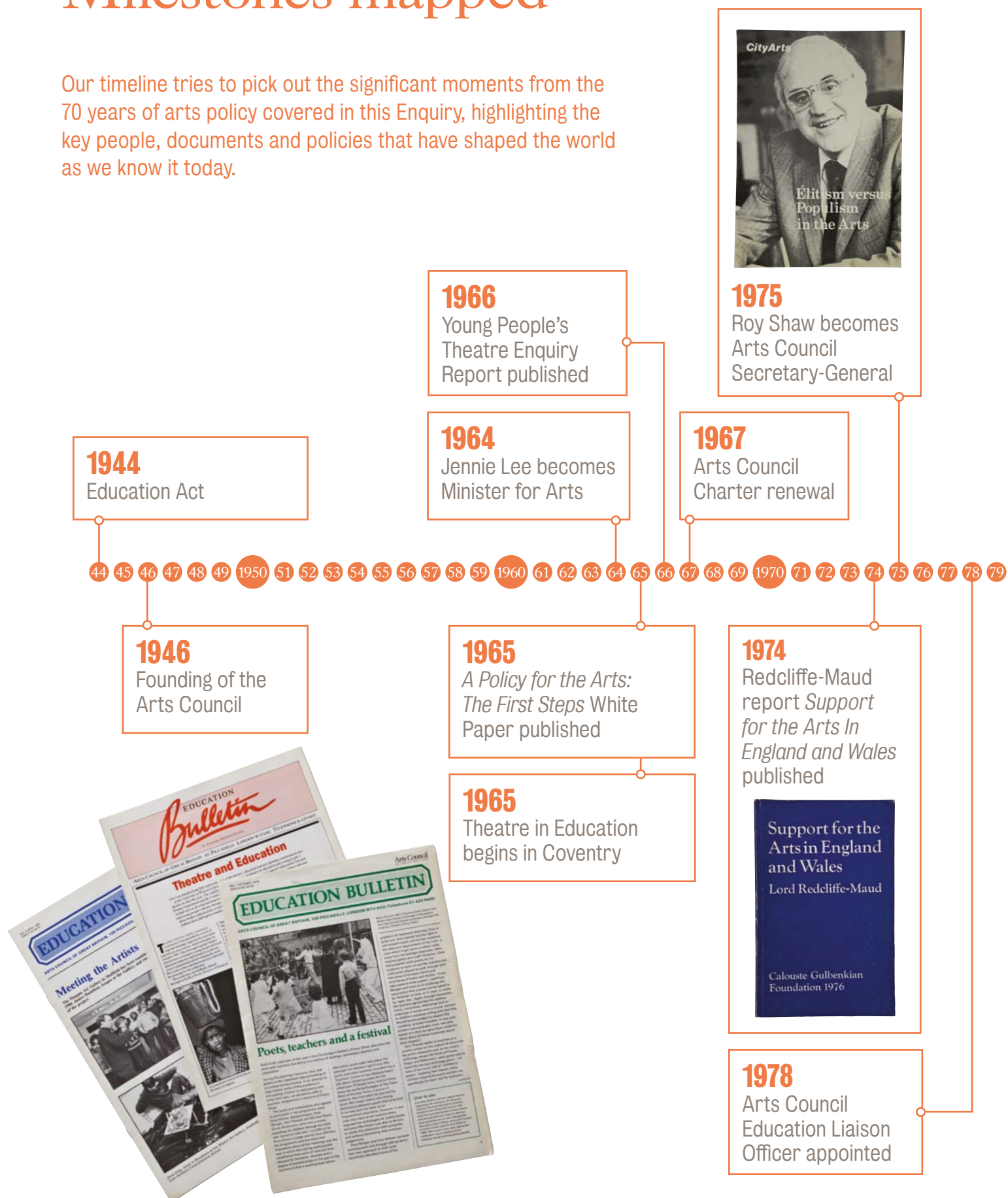
Radical changes to the National Curriculum in 2014, including the introduction of the English baccalaureate, have meant a return to previous debates about the place and emphasis given to arts subjects in their own right: how they integrate with and complement core subjects like English, Maths and Science and whether the curriculum should focus

on learning an approved canon and acquiring a discriminating taste or the ability to be self-expressive.

As this journey through 70 years of policy reveals, these questions are not new. Neither, it appears, are attitudes towards them. 'Very recently, the Conservative minister with responsibility for higher and further education, urged educators to steer young people away from the arts, which he dismissed as "softer options". Instead, they should be guided, he said, "towards the sort of subjects needed to underpin economic recovery". [...] Far from being "softer options", the direct experience of the arts and the study of them provides an intellectual and emotional discipline together with an expansion of consciousness, that can be got no other way.'⁶² This quote, from Roy Shaw's Secretary-General's Report in the 1982 Arts Council annual report, could have been written today.

Milestones mapped

Our timeline tries to pick out the significant moments from the 70 years of arts policy covered in this Enquiry, highlighting the key people, documents and policies that have shaped the world as we know it today.



1981

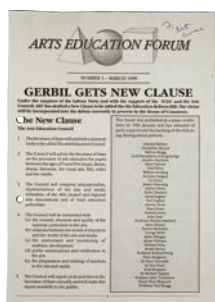
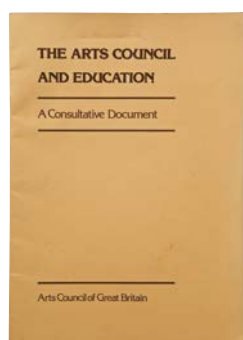
The Arts in Schools report published

1987

The Glory of the Garden Arts Council strategy published

1981

The Arts Council and Education: A Consultative Document published

**1988**

Education Reform Act including National Curriculum

2008

Find Your Talent established

2011

Henley Music Education Review published and National Plan for Music Education established

1994

National Lottery launched

1999

All Our Futures report published

1992

Arts subjects are taught as part of the National Curriculum

2002

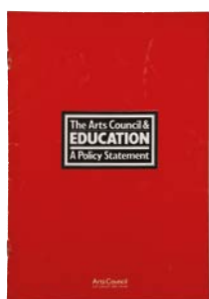
Creative Partnerships established

2010

Achieving great art for everyone Arts Council strategy published

1983

The Arts Council and Education: A Policy Statement published

**1997**

Department for Culture, Media and Sport created

2012

Henley Cultural Education Review

2012

Establishment of Bridge Organisations

2013

National Plan for Cultural Education established

Conclusion

Recurring themes

In tracing the history of arts policy, step by step, a number of themes recur over the past 70 years.

The end of the debate: what is arts policy for?

The tension between not being viewed ‘as a schoolmaster’ and fulfilling an aim to ‘develop and improve the knowledge, understanding and practice of the arts’⁶³ is at the heart of all arts policy. Is the job of public policy to respond to a self-identified demand, or is it to supply what some would see as the best of the arts? This question is at its sharpest when it relates to arts provision for young people, since they will not yet have formed ideas (or been taught) to think that one type of art or arts experience is intrinsically better than another. While Roy Shaw was a fierce proponent of arts education against some stiff resistance from some key people in the arts sector, he was not in favour of merely encouraging people to be creative and to express themselves. For him, arts education was ultimately in the service of giving people the desire and means to appreciate the best of the arts.

Over the decades government policy in this area has been about building an arts audience for the future, inculcating a certain civility in young people in preparation for adulthood, teaching them how to appraise and discriminate between art and fostering or unleashing their innate creativity. Today, all these things have come together and there is a broad consensus that arts engagement by children and young people should be about both their own self-expression and creativity and their understanding and appreciation of the richness of arts that already exist. One is not at the exclusion of the other.

Passionate individuals have shaped the arts sector as we know it now. It is worth pausing to celebrate the success that a generation of pioneering arts administrators have had in

shaping the arts sector we know today. There is plenty of evidence in the Arts Council archive of resistance by some in the arts sector to having to accommodate children as audience members (or relinquish their control over what constituted acceptable artistic output). Pioneers and advocates like the participants and attendees at the Witness Seminar should be celebrated: a generation of people starting out in the 1970s who (despite having the legacy and support of Jennie Lee and Roy Shaw behind them) still had to battle an entrenched culture in the arts that reflected wider social attitudes.



The sheer number of people who have come into arts education in the last 30–40 years is extraordinary. If we had known in the early 1980s how many people would be doing this work I think we would have been completely amazed.

Pauline Tambling

In reflecting on the work of the Education Liaison Officer in January 1981, Irene Macdonald said that the vast scope of the job was not a problem: ‘the major hindrance is that of negative attitudes amongst educators, artists and arts administrators.’



We are talking about a period in which we had to start from that having been taken as good words, to nothing having been done politically about them, to the Arts Council having to get external funding to do anything about the arts, having to fight against all the cultural and inbred class attitudes towards the fact that you just imbibe the arts at your mother’s knee.

Irene Macdonald

The Gulbenkian Foundation has played a critical role. Not only has it provided financial support where government (and its agents) have been reluctant to do

so, but it has also provided much of the intellectual framework through which policy has subsequently developed. Reports like those from John Redcliffe-Maud and Ken Robinson in particular have explicitly shaped the government’s approach to arts policy and (within that) arts policy as it pertains to young people. Through its support for local, experimental and more community-centred work, it has also been a practical agent in shaping delivery of policy. For example, the Greater London Arts Association managed to secure modest funding from the Gulbenkian to appoint an Education Liaison Officer in 1974. Three years later the post was made more substantial as an Arts Education Officer role and it would be yet another year after that before the Arts Council would make such an appointment.⁶⁴

Lessons learned

Our Cultural Enquiry into young people and the arts offers four clear lessons for policymakers, practitioners and advocates in the cultural sector today.

A good policy is a historically informed policy. This research has highlighted the fact that a huge amount of insight and expertise exists in archives, in living people and in libraries. Yet contemporary policymakers often fail to take advantage of the benefits that may be derived from better exploiting such resources. Reinventing the wheel is wasteful.

DfE, DCMS and the Arts Council should evaluate historical precedents when formulating new policy in the area of arts engagement by children and young people. This could be undertaken as a historical equivalent to an Equalities Impact Assessment, where the historical record is audited (whether in the form of documentation or people) in order to ensure that all useful insights are understood and



I Mimbres Youth Company at Sadler's Wells. Image by Gigi Giannella.

incorporated into the policy development process.

Institutional memory can be lost through restructures and churn. One of the reasons for a lack of institutional memory in the cultural policymaking process is the frequency with which governments have restructured the arts administration infrastructure in this country, leading to challenges around effective information management. Movement of staff within Whitehall is another factor, where civil servants are incentivised to move between Departments in order to expand their skills and experience while also maintaining a certain independence from the area of policy in which they are working.

When considering organisational change, DfE, DCMS and the Arts Council should properly take into account the overall cost of redundancies and redeployments, recognising that this cost is greater than simply the financial burden associated with severances and recruitment. To address the loss of insight, wisdom and experience

that comes with change we recommend that those same organisations embody best practice in information management at all times, but especially in the lead up to any restructuring.

Evaluation is crucial. This report began with an ambition to chart the development of policy in the last 70 years and to aggregate data that would allow for an evaluation of government policy in this area. We consistently failed in our search to find both the objectives that set out success criteria and the data that could be used to adjudicate it. This area of policy, like all others, is no longer immune to questions of accountability and oversight through evaluation. Robust evaluation is vital: not just so that recipients can give a good account of how public money has been spent, but also in order that future policy may be informed by a sound appreciation of what works.

Policymakers and practitioners (including the Arts Council and individual organisations) should have a strong evaluation framework in place before devising any kind of

policy or intervention. This evaluation must be sufficiently longitudinal to capture the later impacts of young people's engagement with the arts, and the results must be made publicly available. Without such frameworks in place it is impossible to assess the relative efficacy of any one scheme or initiative. Policymakers and practitioners in the arts should collaborate with researchers in higher education institutions to make this happen.

The Arts Council archives are a largely untapped resource. By working so intensively in the archives of the Arts Council it has become clear that there is an urgent need for rigorous and effective cataloguing of the material. There is also a need to conduct training and dissemination amongst staff at the Arts Council, the National Art Library and interested scholars in the field of history and cultural policy in order to raise awareness and understanding about what the archive contains. It surprised us that there was not a more extensive literature on the history of cultural policy in general and that in many cases contemporary

policyholders and practitioners in the arts were unaware of the history of their own sector.

The Arts Council should work with scholars in cultural policy to support a programme of cataloguing, digitisation, research and publication that would produce accessible histories of arts policy in order to address gaps in our knowledge of the history of cultural policy in this country, to inform contemporary policymaking and to aid future research into the history of arts policy.

Missing elements and recommendations for the future

Perhaps the most important lessons that we have learned from our analysis of 70 years of policy lie in the gaps in the story. Given what is known about what works in other areas of government, we suggest that through interventions in three specific areas, government policy might more effectively address the persistent disparity in arts engagement between those who have high levels of education and affluence, and those who do not.

Early years

We know from other areas of government that early intervention is crucial in shaping later outcomes in life. In 2011 Graham Allen MP authored for the UK government an independent report, *Early Intervention: The Next Steps*, in which he noted that, especially in children's earliest years, parenting is a 'bigger influence on their future than wealth, class, education or any other common social factor'.⁶⁵ The report recommends that the UK give the 'foundation' years – zero to five, including pregnancy – the same status as primary and secondary stages, saying that it is between the ages of zero and three that children acquire the 'social and emotional bedrock' that enables them to reach their full potential and to 'happily engage with others and with society'.⁶⁶ It is therefore highly likely that greater attention to arts engagement for very young children would have a significant impact on their engagement in later years, and surprising not to see more focus on policy directed towards achieving this aim. SureStart Centres

provide a ready-made infrastructure through which schemes for early years engagement might be delivered.

We recommend that policymakers place greater emphasis on encouraging arts activity amongst pre-school-aged children, shaping encounters that may profoundly affect their subsequent engagement with the arts.

International best practice

Technology continues to make our world ever more connected, and we know that we share the same policy challenges with different cultures and communities around the world. In Harmony, based on the Venezuelan El Sistema, is the exception that proves the general rule: that policy is often developed in isolation from international best practice.

We recommend that policy development take into account and learn from international best practice models, recognising that we share the same policy challenges with different communities and cultures around the world.

| Hackney Live. Image courtesy of Mimbire Youth Company.



Engagement beyond schools

The third overlooked policy strand is the use of families, parents, carers and guardians to encourage greater engagement in arts and culture. Ever since the mid-1960s the default policy lever used to encourage engagement with the arts has been to build it into the school curriculum. Yet this disregards the importance of family and social factors that have a key influencing role in shaping later behaviour and attitudes towards the arts. It is curious that the school curriculum is the preferred vehicle to provide encounters with a subject that seems to many to offer an antidote to formal and institutional learning.

We recommend that policymakers do more to support and encourage arts activity outside the schools system, recognising that the family and social life of young people plays a crucial role in their identity and later life.

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About Culture at King's

Through culture, King's College London is developing new ways to enhance the student and academic experience while adding value across arts and culture – creating connections across higher education and cultural practice that offer a different lens through which questions in art, culture and research can be explored. Culture at King's is under the leadership of Deborah Bull and two hubs bring the vision to life: the Cultural Institute at King's and Science Gallery London. [@CultureatKings](http://www.kcl.ac.uk/culture)

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CONFIDENTIAL

THE ARTS COUNCIL OF GREAT BRITAIN

123rd MEETING of the COUNCIL
held on WEDNESDAY, 31st MARCH 1965, at 2.30 p.m.,
at 4 ST. JAMES'S SQUARE

.....

MINUTES

Present:-

Lord Cottesloe	- in the Chair
Professor Sir William Coldstream	
Mr. T. E. Bean	
Colonel William Crawshaw	
Miss Constance Cummings	
Professor Gwyn Jones	
Professor Anthony Lewis	
Mr. Colin H. Mackenzie	
Mrs. Myfanwy Piper	
Dame Jean Roberts	
The Earl of Snowdon	
Mr. Hugh Willatt	
Mr. John Witt	
Miss Jennie Lee) for part of	
Mr. N. Summers) the meeting	
Mr. H. F. Rossetti	- for the Department of Education and Science
Mr. H. H. Donnelly	- for the Scottish Education Department
Mr. N. J. Abercrombie	- Secretary-General
Mr. M. J. McRobert	- Deputy Secretary and Finance Officer
Mr. Eric White	- Assistant Secretary
Mr. John Denison	- Music Director
Mr. J. L. Hodgkinson	- Drama Director
Mr. Gabriel White	- Art Director
Mr. D. P. Lund	- Accountant
Miss M. Endacott	- Minute Secretary

.....

1. The Chairman welcomed Miss Jennie Lee, M.P., Joint Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Education and Science, together with Mr. Nicholas Summers, her Private Secretary, and Mr. H. F. Rossetti who had been appointed Assessor to the Council for the Department of Education and Science in place of Mr. Norton of the Treasury.

The Chairman also welcomed Miss Constance Cummings, Mrs. Myfanwy Piper and Dame Jean Roberts who were attending their first meeting as members of the Council. He hoped they would find the work of the Council interesting and rewarding.

The Chairman, introducing Miss Lee, said it was without precedent to receive at a Council meeting the Minister responsible for the Arts Council's affairs.

2. The Minutes of the last meeting were approved and signed.

3. Arising out of these and other minutes:-

- (a) Government White Paper on the Arts (185th Executive, para. 10). Copies of the White Paper - "A Policy for the Arts: The First Steps" - had been circulated to all members of the Council, together with a summary of the principal points in the document as they affected the Arts Council.

The Chairman said the Council warmly welcomed the interest shown by the Government in the Arts which were now considered important enough to be the special responsibility of a Parliamentary Secretary.

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