

What worked well in the Creative Youth Plan 2017 – 2022,

The Creative Youth Plan aimed to “give every child practical access to tuition, experience and participation in art, music, drama and coding by 2022”

Significant achievements have included providing for an all of government approach with creativity being placed at the centre of public policy. Successful initiatives included establishing innovative, multi-disciplinary Culture and Creativity Teams in every local authority and forging Partnerships with key organisations in the arts, culture, heritage, community and voluntary sectors.

In relation to schools: Aims included:

- ***Enhancing arts and creativity initiatives in schools and early years’ settings.***
- ***Teacher CPD: Increasing and enhancing teacher continuing professional development opportunities across primary, post-primary and early years’ settings.***
- ***Out-of-School: Improving cross-sectoral collaboration to support creativity for children and young people in the community***

To this end the following seemed to have worked well.

In terms of ‘enhancing arts and creativity initiatives in schools and early years’ settings.

- Teachers in primary schools already bring a wide range of creative skills and talents to their work in terms of music, art, drama, sport, IT, literature etc...
- The rolling out of Sfolta and Aistear programmes
- There is a growing awareness of the importance of creativity in schools.
- The creative clusters project involving 220 schools involving schools in collaboration on the design, implementation, evaluation and dissemination of an innovative arts and creative learning project.
- The Creative Schools Programme offers schools an opportunity to engage in creative projects.
- Fighting Words with free tutoring, mentoring and publishing in creative writing for more than 100,000 children and young people around the country since 2009.
- Music Generation providing access to high quality performance music education.
- The heritage in schools project provides access to a wide range of experts in areas including art, culture, heritage, environment etc.
- Digitals Schools Initiative as provided support and guidance on creative use of digital media in schools. There has also been enhanced funding for digital equipment.
- The Chief Inspector’s Report states that ‘In the Arts, there are examples of enjoyable and rich learning experiences, however (see below)
- Increasingly the importance of play and pupil directed activities is being acknowledged during school inspections
- There have been a number of highly successful collaborations involving partnerships between schools and agencies.

Teacher CPD: Increasing and enhancing teacher continuing professional development opportunities across primary, post-primary and early years’ settings.

- We understand that 1,304 teachers and 245 artists have taken part and that there were 535 residencies delivered as part of the programme.
- There has been increasing emphasis on the importance of the student voice.
- Looking at our Schools Primary values collaboration, autonomy, enquiring attitudes, relationships, reflection etc. as being indicative of effective or highly effective practice

- CPD to support inclusivity is made available in schools generally and in particular where special classes are opened

Out-of-School: Improving cross-sectoral collaboration to support creativity for children and young people in the community

- The Chief Inspector reports that ‘there are early indications that the range of activities, funded through the Creative Ireland programme to promote creativity in children and young people are progressing well’.
- The Student Enterprise Programme provides a mechanism for pupils / students to develop entrepreneurial, creative and communicative skills.
- Schools have increasingly been able to access cross sectoral support for projects by engaging with Local Creative partnerships, Children and Young Peoples Services Committees etc.
- The DEIS initiative has facilitated schools in funding a range of activities to enhance creativity and provide children with access to activities to which they otherwise would not have access to.
- External agencies often prioritise DEIS schools and/or provide activities at reduced prices.

What did not work well or should be revamped or redesigned.

- Schools are extremely busy places and most programmes require submitting applications which means that many children miss opportunities to engage in creative projects.
- The number of applications exceeds the number of places. Need to broaden supply.
- The Chief Inspector’s Report states that ‘In the Arts, there are examples of enjoyable and rich learning experiences... ***There is scope to promote pupils’ creativity and reflection further’.***
- The report also states that ‘there has been ongoing work to ensure that creativity is reflected adequately in redeveloped curriculum frameworks; a shared understanding of the meaning of creativity in educational contexts is now required’.....
- A lot more work needs to be done in primary schools in the area of ‘child voice’ letting ideas flow from young uncluttered minds.
- Teachers need continued support in terms of thinking about what we understand by creativity and how it can lead to richer learning experiences.
- Initial teacher education has a role to play in encouraging newly qualified teachers to harness their own creative talents for the benefit of pupils.
- Increase exposure to the arts as this influences children in all sorts of ways.
- Further supports for children who have limited access to music, dance, drama etc.
- It is important to recognise the therapeutic aspect of creativity. Allowing individual to express themselves has obvious benefits for mental health.
- Linking creativity and self-esteem improves social interaction, connection and understanding ourselves and our world.
- There needs to be a radical rethink around acknowledging and celebrating creative enterprises in schools.
- To sustain creativity in schools it needs to be integrated into all levels of teacher education, initial education and in-career CPD.
- Growth mindset, creative and critical thinking, problem solving, thinking skills need to be integrated in all aspects of school life and curriculum and routinely acknowledged and celebrated.

Outline the key elements your organisation would like to see in the Creative Youth Plan 2023-2027 ... Outline *any opportunities and/or challenges that the Department needs to be aware of* in formulating the new plan

- “What gets measured gets managed”. (Peter Drucker) ...‘Where focus goes energy flows’... The increasing preoccupation with Literacy and Maths standardised test results, risks perpetuating what Ken Robinson describes as the ‘hierarchy of subjects. At the top are mathematics and languages, then the humanities, and the bottom are the arts...and in pretty much every system too, there's a hierarchy within the arts. Art and music are normally given a higher status in schools than drama and dance’. There needs to be a greater acknowledgement by the inspectorate of creative work being done in schools across the country.
 - In relation to this the Chief Inspector refers to the ‘misperception that it is the role of ELC settings to prepare children for primary school, some settings have adopted an overly-formalised approach to learning.
 - We echo the findings in the Chief Inspectors report where he states that ‘there is need for early years educators and teachers to deepen their understanding of the educational power of creativity, critical thinking and innovation, and the multiple ways in which creativity can be promoted in teaching and learning.’ ***This requires acknowledgment and support from the inspectorate***
 - We support ‘the development of emergent, child-centred learning programmes and approaches to assessment, including the use of assessment information to inform the next steps in children’s learning, continue to present a challenge in ELC settings.
 - We echo the ‘need to support schools more systematically in their provision of extracurricular activities...in light of the potential of these activities to support pupils’ social and emotional development and to extend learning experiences and skills development beyond the curriculum.
 - Developing links with Colleges of Education to embrace, nurture and support creativity in all its forms.
 - Find ways to challenge false assumptions which impede creative thinking and expression. Children starting schools are naturally curious and creative. The problem isn’t about developing creativity, rather it is ensuring that the growth of creative thought and expression isn’t smothered by ‘the system’.
 - Find the ‘Bright Sparks’ and build on those. Where in the system is creativity evident in all its forms – share best practice
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- Please email your submission to creativyouth@h2.ie by 15th April 2022