



Essex

arts education strategy



**‘In Essex every learner is entitled to
a curriculum rich and varied...
so that all, for the benefit of all,
are able to shape their destinies
and create a better world.’**

Every learner – a framework for the curriculum in Essex

**‘Art is not a diversion or a side issue.
It is the most educational of
human activities and a place in which
the nature of morality can be seen.’**

Dame Iris Murdoch

The term **arts education**, as discussed in this document,
encompasses all artforms, all levels of engagement and includes all providers.

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foreword

The Essex Arts Education Strategy sets out the vision for Arts learning and teaching for the next 3 years, and how this will be achieved. The strategy recognises that Arts education is a key Essex priority. This is set out in Essex County Council's commitment to cultural development.

Similarly this Essex commitment reflects the Government recognition that 'promoting creativity is a powerful way of engaging pupils with their learning.' (*'Excellence and Enjoyment'*, DfES, 2003)

The Strategy has drawn upon research evidence from practitioners within and beyond Essex. This has confirmed the benefits of Arts education not just in ensuring its vibrant presence in schools but also because of the central contribution it can make to thinking and learning. As one headteacher put it: 'The opportunities (for children) to express themselves and to develop a whole range of skills, things like co-operative skills, interdependence and investigative skills, are strengthened through an arts-based curriculum.'

(*'Saving a place for the arts? A survey of the arts in primary schools in England.'* NFER, 2003). **Put simply the arts help children to learn more effectively.**

This is a practical document that seeks to make a real difference. It is based upon some fundamental beliefs about the nature of the arts and their contribution to education, individuals and society. This centres around the view that the arts are not just about the production of artefacts or performances but are an integral part of the nurturing and educative process.

If the Strategy is to achieve its ambitions then we would wish that all our Essex children and adults engaged in lifelong learning in Essex will be able to share the spirit of the writer Rebecca West's bold claim: 'Art is not a plaything, but a necessity, and its essence, its form, is not a decorative adjustment, but a cup into which life can be poured and lifted to the lips and tasted'. (*'Black Lamb and Grey Falcon'*, 1942). **We commend the Essex Arts Education Strategy to you and look forward to working with you on its implementation.**

Graham Handscomb,
Head of Best Practice and Research Essex County Council.

Executive Summary

The strategy is divided into two integrated and three specific themes which outline the broad objectives. A three-year action plan, to be reviewed annually, accompanies the strategy. **An on-line version can be found on www.e-gfl.org**

The Integrated Themes:

Information and Communication

To develop and sustain a range of information and communication systems for arts and education providers and audiences.

Access, Inclusion and Diversity

To support the development of policies and practices that provide access, inclusion and diversity in arts education programmes.



The Specific Themes

- **The Arts and Formal Education**

To promote and share good practice in and between schools, colleges, universities and arts providers.

- **The Arts and the Community**

To support and develop a range of coherent, high quality and relevant provision which involves people locally from all ages and all sectors, in and outside educational settings.

- **Professional Development**

To enable artists, education professionals and organisations to work together to develop their artistic abilities and experiences as well as their knowledge, skills, understanding and confidence as educators.



History and Background

People of all ages engaged in learning in the arts in Essex have access to a wide range of support. The Schools Service provides curricula (appendix 3) and extra-curricula support through The Advisory and Inspection Service and Essex Music Services. Arts Development provides support for working with artists and arts organisations. Adult Education provides a range of learning opportunities and borough and district council arts development officers support local community based projects. There is direct provision by artists and arts organisations.

Recent initiatives, including Creative Partnerships, Specialist Arts Colleges, Spaces for Sports and Arts and Advanced Skills Teachers have added to the opportunities for developing arts education provision across the county.

The Arts Education Strategy is part of this on-going process and is being given focus through the Essex Education Development Plan (EDP). It will enable the quality of arts education to be further developed and enriched.



Editorial and Steering groups (appendix 1) were established to manage the development of the strategy. A first consultation conference in November 2002 involved arts and education officers from Essex County Council, representatives from galleries and museums, arts organisations, early years settings, primary and secondary schools, sixth form, further and higher education, regional arts agencies, borough and district arts and leisure officers and independent artists.

The conference report was refined and developed. The resulting draft was presented at a second conference in April 2003. Further work, involving specialist focus groups, led to the publication of the strategy in April 2004.

From the outset this has been a mutually supportive and developmental process involving all partner organisations.



The Wider Context

Introduction to Essex

This strategy is informed by and reflects national, regional and local strategies for culture, the arts and education (appendices 2 & 4).

Essex is a county of diversity and contrasts. Within its borders is Colchester, the oldest known town in Britain, yet popular images of Essex are more likely to come from the new towns of Basildon and Harlow in the south and west of the county. For some, Essex is an extension of Greater London, for others the rural idyll of neighbouring Constable country. There is rich agricultural land in the centre and north of the county and Essex has 200 miles of coastline. It is a location gateway for trade and passenger movement to and from Europe.

Essex is one of the most populated counties in England. Its proximity to London in the south and East Anglia in the north, gives Essex immense strategic importance. This diversity brings with it significant cultural challenges.

As a result of Government decisions Southend on Sea and Thurrock became Unitary Authorities in 1998, responsible for running their own public services. The European Commission recognises Essex as a regional authority in its own right. Within the definition of the English 'regions' Essex is within the remit of the Government Office for the Eastern Region alongside Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire, Norfolk and Suffolk.

The Vision

Our aim is to provide a rich and relevant approach to learning in and through the arts for the people of Essex.



“We want Essex to be a truly cultural county, to be perceived beyond its boundaries as a thriving, energetic, innovative county in which to live and work.”

Celebrating Essex, a shared vision... – Cultural Services, Essex County Council.

“Culture is crucial to our way of life. It defines us, where we live and other people’s perceptions of us. It provides relief from work, yet generates millions of jobs. It is important to health, life long learning, economic development, the environment, community safety, regeneration and individual achievement.”

Celebrating Essex, a shared vision... – Cultural Services, Essex County Council.



“The engine of cultural change is the human capacity for creative thought and action”

All Our Futures: Creativity, Culture and Education – DfEE Publications, 1999.

Purpose of the Strategy

Guiding Principles

To provide a strategic framework for the development and provision of arts education in Essex.

Partnership: working in partnership is fundamental to achieving the vision, aims and objectives of this document.

Equality of Opportunity: relevant opportunities will be accessible to all sections of the community. No individual or group will be disadvantaged or excluded because of gender, ethnicity, social disadvantage or disability.

Quality: provision and services will be of a consistently high quality appropriate to the user.

Sustainability: the strategy will provide a secure foundation for the long-term development of arts education in Essex.

Accountability: action plans will be monitored and evaluated on a regular basis.

Health and Safety: all programmes will be conducted within a healthy and safe environment.

All activities within this strategy will conform to the following:

- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Race Relations Act (amended 2000)
- Age Discrimination Act 2004
- Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
- Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Essex County Council Race Equality Policy
- Essex County Council Child Protection Guidelines
- Essex County Council Health and Safety Codes of Practice

The Strategy

The Strategy is divided into two integrated and three specific themes which outline the broad objectives. A three-year action plan, to be reviewed annually, accompanies the strategy. An on-line version can be found on www.e-gfl.org

The Integrated Themes:

1 Information and Communication

Aim:

To develop and sustain a range of information and communication systems for arts and education providers and audiences to share good practice, build on existing experience, identify gaps in provision and promote partnership working.

Objectives:

- 1.1 Information about arts education provision is accessible to the widest audience.
- 1.2 Providers and users communicate effectively.
- 1.3 The Strategy is supported at all levels.

2 Access, Inclusion and Diversity

Access: embraces access in physical, emotional, attitudinal, and financial terms as well as participation in management and ownership.

Inclusion: Arts Council, England has agreed a definition of inclusion which takes low income as its starting point and focuses particularly on poverty in combination with other factors such as low educational attainment, poor health, crime and unemployment.

Diversity: as defined in 'Tackling Racism and Promoting Multicultural Awareness', Essex County Council 2001: taking full account of the richness and diversity of the world's cultures and developing understanding of and respect for people of different racial, ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

Aim:

To support the development of policies and practices that provide access, diversity and inclusion in arts education programmes.

Objectives:

- 2.1 All providers are aware of and work within inclusion policies so that there is equality of access to relevant arts education activities for individuals, schools and communities.
- 2.2 Arts education provision reflects historical, geographical and cultural diversity.
- 2.3 Expertise is actively shared between acknowledged centres of excellence and other providers.

3 The Specific Themes: The Arts and Formal Education

Aim:

To promote and share good practice in and between schools, colleges, universities and arts providers.

Objectives:

- 3.1 Appreciation of and participation in the arts is valued and embedded in and across the curriculum.
- 3.2 Best practice is shared in and between schools, colleges, universities and other settings.
- 3.3 Schools are involved in key local, regional and national arts education initiatives.
- 3.4 Education settings engage in sustained developmental work with arts professionals.



4 The Arts and the Community

Aim:

To support and develop a range of coherent high quality and relevant provision, which involves people locally from all ages and all sectors, in and outside educational settings.

Objectives:

- 4.1 Arts education providers and agencies work together to implement and support coherent and relevant programmes.
- 4.2 Mechanisms are developed to support the implementation of community plans.
- 4.3 There is greater community involvement in arts education activities and events.



5 Professional Development

Professional development includes formal and informal learning opportunities for arts and education professionals and organisations.

Aim:

To enable artists, education professionals and organisations to work together to develop their artistic abilities and experiences as well as their knowledge, skills, understanding and confidence as educators.

Objectives:

- 5.1 Arts and education professionals work together, to develop best practice in teaching and learning in the arts.
- 5.2 Arts and education professionals work together to develop their own artistic abilities and experiences.
- 5.3 Professional development for artists and education providers is accredited when appropriate.
- 5.4 Senior managers promote and develop effective and challenging programmes for arts education in their institutions and settings.

Appendix 1

Editorial Group

Jo Brockis:	Essex Advisory and Inspection Service Curriculum Development Adviser Music
Mike Cundy:	Essex Advisory and Inspection Service Curriculum Development Adviser Art and Design
Ronessa Knock:	Arts Development Team, Arts Education Co-ordinator.

Steering Group

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Gary Griffiths:	Essex Music Services
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Chris Kirk:	Post 16 – Lifelong Learning, ECC
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Adrian Stokes:	Associate Director, Mercury Theatre
Chris Webster:	Head Teacher, Kingston Primary School
Fran Wilde:	Arts Council England, East.
Graham Handscomb	Head of Best Practice and Research EAIS

Appendix 2: Websites

National:

The Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) www.culture.gov.uk
Arts Council England www.artscouncil.org.uk
Department for Education and Skills (DfES) www.dfes.gov.uk
The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) www.qca.org.uk
Creative Partnerships www.creative-partnerships.com

Regional :

ArtsEdEast: the partnership of arts education co-ordinators in the eastern region. www.artseast.org.uk
Arts Council England, East www.artscouncil.org.uk/aboutus/myregion-east
Living East: the regional cultural consortium. www.livingeast.org.uk

Essex County Council:

General www.essexcc.gov.uk
Schools and curriculum development www.e-gfl.org
Artists database www.artistsineducation.org

Borough and District Councils:

www.colchester.gov.uk	www.southend.gov.uk
www.chelmsfordbc.gov.uk	www.uttlesford.gov.uk
www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk	www.thurrock.gov.uk
www.castlepoint.gov.uk	www.braintree.gov.uk
www.basildon.gov.uk	www.brentwood-council.gov.uk
www.rochford.gov.uk	www.harlow.gov.uk
www.maldon.gov.uk	

Appendix 3: The Arts in the National Curriculum

All pupils and students in maintained schools have an entitlement to a broad range of learning experiences in the arts. Within the curriculum these include art and design and music as foundation subjects, each with a recommended minimum allocation of one hour per week for all pupils until the age of 14. Dance and drama appear within the PE and English programmes of study respectively. Beyond the age of 14 they can all be taken as external examinations in a variety of forms.

Within the schools curriculum this includes:

- The foundation stage
- The national curriculum (Key Stages 1 to 3)
- Examination syllabi at Key Stages 3 and post 16
- Extra-curricular activities
- Cross phase activity

In addition to schools, arts provision within lifelong learning, further and higher education are targeted under this heading.

Appendix 4: The national, regional and local context.

Arts Council England, East

Arts Council England is the national development agency for the arts. Arts Council England, East's core purpose is to generate growth in resources and raise ambition for the arts and creative industries in East England. They encourage schools to work as partners with artists and arts organisations and to regard themselves as a resource for the arts in their local communities.

Essex based partners and providers:

Learners in Essex have access to a range of provision and support including:

- **curriculum advice** through the Advisory and Inspection Service arts advisers, advanced skills arts teachers, and specialist arts schools
- **access to and support for** working with artists and arts organisations through ECC Arts Education Team
- **support from borough and district councils** through their Leisure Officers and Arts Development Officers (ADOs).
- **direct provision** by artists and arts organisations

appendices

National Initiatives

- **Specialist Arts Colleges:** funded through The Technology Colleges Trust to become centres of excellence in designated curriculum areas.
- **Spaces for Sports and Arts:** primary schools that receive additional funds for new buildings to develop their facilities for curriculum and community use.
- **Artsmark:** a nationally run self-audit of the arts in schools, leading to an award.
- **Creative Partnerships:** a programme to promote arts focused learning in schools with community impact. It is targeted in areas of particular need: Basildon, Tendring and Thurrock.



Civilisations past and present are interpreted by their arts and architecture.

Engagement in the arts is central to human development.

Essex County Council is committed to cultural development and this strategy is a pivotal element in that process.

We offer our wholehearted support for the arts education strategy, its accompanying action plan and the rich learning in and through the arts that it promises for the people of Essex.

Cllr. Jeremy Lucas, Deputy to Cabinet Member for Culture and Heritage

Cllr. Mrs Iris Pummell, Cabinet Member for Education

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development www.e-gfl.org

East England Artists
in Education Database www.artistsineducation.org

**Photography: Douglas Atfield
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