

The Education Programme

Review of 2005

During the year under review the Education Programme maintained three funding priorities. The first, established in 2002, helped schools to engage more effectively with parents they have traditionally found hard to reach, paying particular regard to parenting skills; and to offer all parents information and advice about child development during periods of transition, such as the move from primary to secondary school,

The second priority, also established in 2002, continued the Education Programme's tradition of supporting the arts in the lives of young people by promoting creative activities for the benefit of children at risk.

Entitled The Arts Included, it has focused its support on Pupil Referral Units and Learning Support Units. The third priority assisted projects outside the above categories that were considered to be of particular importance.

Although the parenting priority supported a number of enterprising projects during 2005 (see grants 73 to 82), it was discontinued at the end of the year. However, it is particularly heartening to record that our support for information and advice sessions for parents in schools on the subject of child development, embodied in a major collaborative project with the National Family and Parenting institute called PIP (Parent Information Point), is being taken forward by the Government. As of the autumn of 2006, projects of this nature



Children from Bradford taking part in the city highly successful Schools Linking Project, designed to help children from different cultures get to know and understand each other better. The second of the Education Programme new priorities will promote initiatives of this nature in secondary schools.

Photo: Yolande Armstrong.

will be funded in 500 schools, both primary and secondary, in ten local authorities across the Country as a precursor to a national roll-out by 2010.

The parenting priority is being replaced in 2006 by a new priority called Human Scale Schools. If children find the transition from primary to secondary schools difficult it is chiefly because the latter are often large and impersonal. This can result in a sense of alienation and disaffection among pupils which manifests itself in low academic achievement, disruptive behaviour and truancy. In the United States, where there is a much greater commitment to human scale' education, there is a growing body of evidence that shows the marked benefits of smaller scale learning communities, as they are termed. This is especially true for pupils from ethnic minority and low socio-economic backgrounds. The Education Programme's new funding priority offers support to secondary schools wishing to restructure; assists the innovative approaches to teaching, Learning and assessment that small learning communities make possible; and helps schools that are part of the Government's Building Schools for the Future initiative to think small scale'. The Human Scale Schools priority, developed in close collaboration with the organisation Human Scale Education, with whom we will continue to work, will run for three years and the projects it supports will be the subject of an independent evaluation. It is our hope that this development will play its part in encouraging a national shift towards a more personalised approach to education at secondary level.

2006 will also see the introduction of a priority called Cross-cultural Schools. The catalyst for this — provoked by the events in London of 7July — was the widely publicised debate concerning racial divisions within Britain's communities and, in particular, the alleged evidence that polarisation between and sometimes within schools was increasing. One newspaper article recalled the Cattle Report of 2001 into inner-city riots, which observed that some communities 'often do not seem to touch at any point, let alone overlap'. The role of schools in helping young people from one culture understand the values and customs of another, particularly where the schools in question are monocultural, can be critical, as Bradford local authority's excellent work. In this field has powerfully demonstrated. To some degree the school curriculum already seeks to encourage this understanding between pupils under the auspices of Citizenship and Personal, Social and Health Education. The Cross-cultural Schools priority aims to encourage secondary schools to implement these particular aspects of the curriculum more imaginatively and ambitiously. Initiatives we will be looking to support will include inter-school Linking projects, the involvement of local community groups and the enterprising use of the arts to deepen pupils' understanding and appreciation of different cultures.

Since its inception as a fully fledged priority in 2002, The Arts Included programme has funded training initiatives) the development of teacher networks, evaluation and dissemination. Projects supported during 2005 continued to illustrate these different categories (grants 47—66). In addition, we have taken a number of initiatives to help sustain future work in this area. For example, we launched a report entitled *Serious Play*, the first in-depth comparative study of arts projects in Pupil Referral Units and Learning Support Units, which testified to their value and stressed the importance of long-term support for arts projects for excluded pupils. We organised seminars for key government agencies, such as the DfES, DCMS and QCA, where the report's findings were promoted and debated. And, with Arts Council England, we commissioned a short introductory film about this work for use at national or regional conferences.

2006, however, is the final year of The Arts Included programme. Support for the dissemination of good practice by the units themselves, arts organisations and LEAs, so that the value of the work might be spread as widely as possible, is the single priority that now governs this programme's grant-giving.

A limited number of projects considered to be of particular importance were funded outside the above categories. For example, we helped a new organisation called *Generating Genius* address the under-achievement of African Caribbean boys at secondary level by establishing an annual summer school which focuses on English science and the arts (grant 69). And a grant to Kids Company contributed to the costs of a major research study, undertaken in collaboration with Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children and the Institute of Child Health, into the relationship between childhood neglect, brain function and conduct disorder in adolescents (grant 70).