

# Nurturing Creativity in Young People

## A report to Government to inform future policy

Paul Roberts  
July 2006



department for  
culture, media  
and sport



department for  
**education and skills**

Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport's aim is to improve the quality of life for all through cultural and sporting activities, support the pursuit of excellence, and champion the tourism, creative and leisure industries.

The Department for Education and Skills' aim is to help build a competitive economy and inclusive society by:

- Creating opportunities for everyone to develop their learning
- Releasing potential in people to make the most of themselves
- Achieving excellence in standards of education and levels of skills.



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This report was jointly commissioned by:

**Andrew Adonis** Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education and Skills  
**James Purnell** Minister for Creative Industries and Tourism (until May 2006)  
**David Lammy** Minister for Culture

Contributors

**Maria Balshaw** Director of External Relationships and Development, Arts Council England, West Midlands  
**Tom Bewick** Chief Executive, Creative and Cultural Skills  
**Pat Cochrane** Chief Executive, Cape UK  
**David Cracknell** Chair of Trustees, Cape UK  
**Jonathan Douglas** Head of Learning and Access at the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA)  
**Joe Hallgarten** Learning Director, Creative Partnerships  
**Valerie Hannon** Adviser on Creativity to DfES  
**Graham Jeffery** Senior Lecturer and Programme Leader for Performing Arts, University of East London  
**Charles Leadbeater** Associate, Demos  
**Ruth MacKenzie** Executive Director, Manchester International Festival  
**Pete McGuigan** Development Manager, Cape UK  
**Peter Muschamp** Former HMI and Ofsted's Specialist Adviser for Art and Design  
**Pauline Tambling** Executive Director, Development, Arts Council England  
**Shelagh Wright** Associate, Demos

Particular thanks also to **Sarah Songhurst-Thonet** and **Colleen Barron** from DCMS for their support in producing this report.

I was delighted to be asked by Ministers in DCMS and DfES to undertake this review. In it I have drawn on my experience as teacher, inspector, Director of Education in Nottingham and Haringey – but most of all on the large number of colleagues in the Education/Children’s Services and Creativity Sectors who have contributed to the debate and writing for this report.

I am particularly grateful to the Improvement and Development Agency for allowing me to undertake this work.

**Paul Roberts**

Director of Strategy (Improvement and Development Agency)  
([paul.roberts@idea.gov.uk](mailto:paul.roberts@idea.gov.uk))

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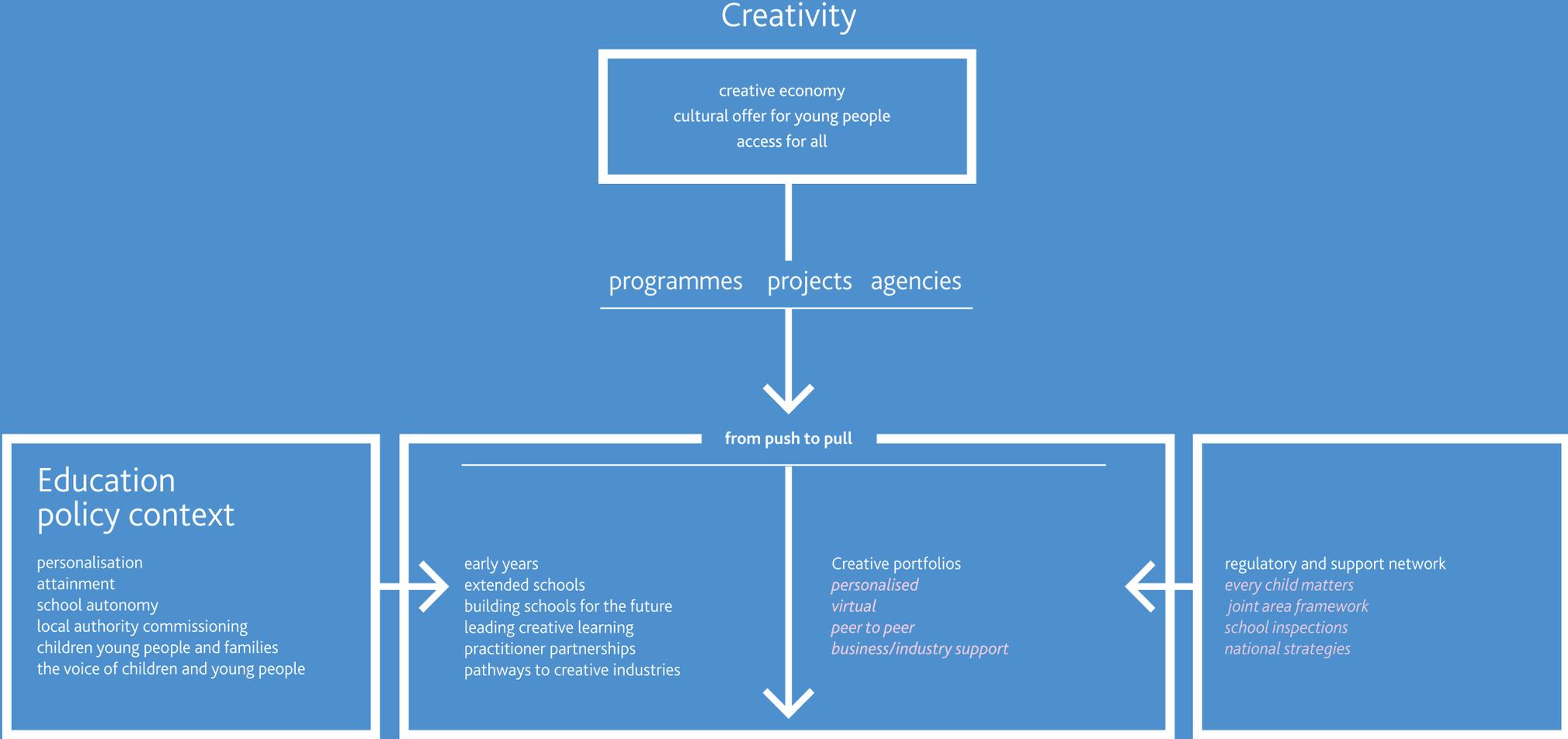
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## Executive Summary

### Background

In June 2005, James Purnell, Minister for Creative Industries, spoke at the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) conference, "Making Britain the World's Creative Hub". He reflected on what it was about our educational system that fosters creativity, indicating that "we should build our policies on that success... to look at what more we can do to nurture young creative talent", and to look for "a clear set of assumptions which will help to inform the basis of our future policy on creativity".

### This report is a direct response to James Purnell's request and offers:

- A clear framework for the further development of creativity for children and young people
- A progression within this framework that starts with the Early Years, is embedded in (but goes beyond) mainstream education, develops a personalised approach, seeks to be inclusive of and responsive to the voice of children and young people and leads to pathways into Creative Industries

### The key messages:

- There is a rich array of creativity work in pre- and main-school activity strongly, but not systemically, supported by the many creative programmes, projects and agencies
- The characteristics of the developing education policy context (autonomy, commissioning, personalisation) offer positive opportunities for the embedding of creativity in education
- Stronger connections between that creativity work and the emerging policy context in education and children's services would produce a "win-win" – creativity embedded in these developments and, reciprocally, these developments enhanced by the impact of creativity
- This would provide a more secure, valued and cost-effective framework for the further development of creativity, both its own right and as a support for economic growth, with better outcomes for children and young people
- There is a need to construct a more coherent 'creativity offer' which is then actively managed/brokered into the new context of school and personal autonomy

Key proposals:**Creative Portfolios**

- Develop a personal portfolio – a creative portfolio – incorporating both formal and informal learning, with the learner at the centre. Established by peer review, hosted and promoted by the Creative Industries, physical or virtual in form, it would support personalised learning, assessment for learning and routes into the Creativity sector
- Establish how Creative Portfolios can be applied in relation to, for example, the Early Years, Extended Schools, Pathways to Creativity

**Early Years**

- Ensure the visibility of creativity in the Early Learning goals and in the guidance for Children’s Centres
- Establish a best practice recognition scheme for creativity in Early Years settings with associated workforce development for education and creative practitioners
- Establish parental/family support programmes with creative parent/child learning

**Extended Schools**

- Set explicit expectations and incentives for creative activity in Extended Schools built on best practice in personalised learning and on partnership with appropriate Specialist Schools

**Building Schools for the Future (BSF)**

- Create spaces for creativity and community use (linked to the community role of Specialist Schools) through the BSF programme
- Involve young people in creating the design specification of BSF programmes

**Leading Creative Learning**

- Prepare new entrants to the education workforce for the roles involved in developing partnerships with creative organisations
- Support the crucial role of education leaders in establishing the organisational climate and framework for creativity

**Practitioner Partnerships**

- Develop brokerage arrangements (and institutional links between schools/colleges and the Creative Industries) to build the capacity in education and creativity sectors for embedded practitioner partnerships
- Develop the contribution of creative practitioners in the Early Years and Extended Schools
- Create training, accreditation and recognition for creative practitioners

**Pathways to Creative Industries**

- Create a website to provide industry-approved careers advice and guidance
- Develop the 14-19 Creative and Media Diploma now in preparation
- Create links between course providers and industry practitioner networks, challenging industry to provide placement schemes

**Frameworks and Regulation**

- Encourage Ofsted recognition of creativity through school self-evaluation and through including creativity as one of the themes for the national review programme
- Build creativity into Every Child Matters Framework as an expectation on Children’s Trust commissioning (to include Youth Matters provision)

The way forward

These proposals need further development. They will build on existing success and further nurture young creative talent. If a stronger and more transparent coherence in the support for creativity can be connected with the policy directions in Education/Children’s Services then that success can become more systemic. The aim is to embed creativity in a coherent and progressive provision for children and young people. The outcome would be children and young people with creativity at the heart of their personal, educational and career development.



What is your sculpture about?

My Mum, Dad and sister.

Where did your ideas come from?

From my dreams.

How pleased are you with your sculpture?

I am very happy and excited to make the sculpture.

What was your favourite bit of the project?

Making the flowers.

What is your sculpture about?

Me and my daughter Jennifer. It's about the traditional houses years ago in my home country – Madeira, Portugal.

Where did your ideas come from?

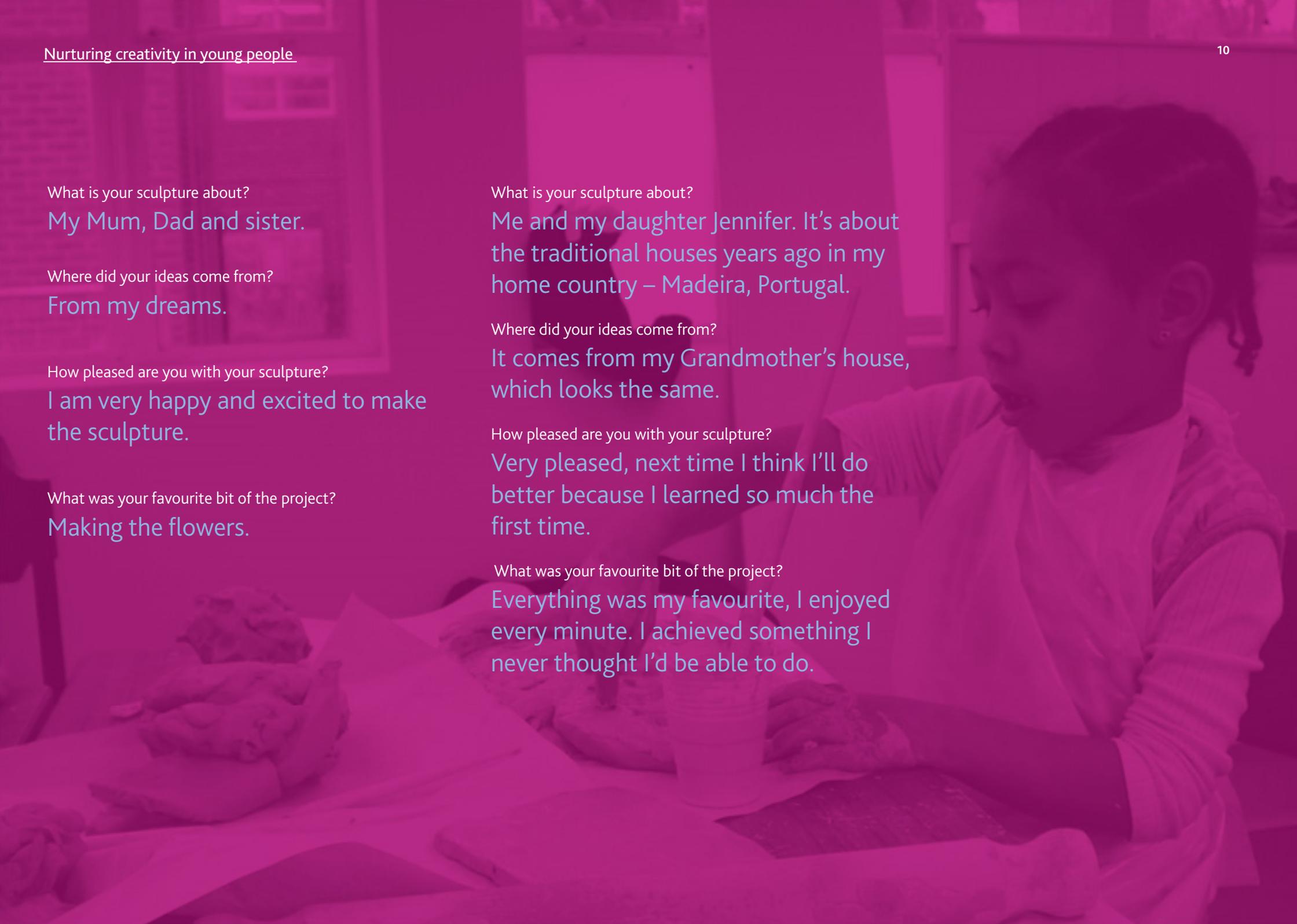
It comes from my Grandmother's house, which looks the same.

How pleased are you with your sculpture?

Very pleased, next time I think I'll do better because I learned so much the first time.

What was your favourite bit of the project?

Everything was my favourite, I enjoyed every minute. I achieved something I never thought I'd be able to do.



In his June 2005 speech at the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) conference, “Making Britain the World’s Creative Hub”, James Purnell, Minister for Creative Industries, reflected on what it was about our educational system that fosters creativity, indicating that “we should build our policies on that success... to look at what more we can do to nurture young creative talent”, and to look for “a clear set of assumptions which will help to inform the basis of our future policy on creativity”.<sup>1</sup>

This report is the response to that request to inform the basis of future policy on creativity.

### Building policies on success

#### The context

While “Britain has an enviable creative heritage and world class creative industries... we need a fresh impetus that builds on this rich tradition if we are to remain successful in a global market place.”<sup>2</sup> Over the last decade the Creative Industry sector has grown twice as fast as the overall economy. It employs two million people and accounts for one-twelfth of our economy. Globally the Creative Industries account for 7 percent of GDP and are growing at 10 percent a year. James Purnell’s challenge was to “set an ambitious but achievable goal... to make Britain the world’s creative hub”. The wider context is that creativity is increasingly required across the whole workforce – not just that of the Creative Industries.

<sup>1</sup> “Making Britain the World’s Creative Hub” James Purnell at Institute for Public Policy Research, June 16th 2006.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

While this economic and regeneration driver is compelling it is matched by an equal and moral imperative – the intrinsic importance of giving children and young people creative experience – both to develop personal identity and confidence and to understand and prepare for a 21st century society in which:

- Community cohesion is dependent on shared cultures
- There is the means for mass participation in (as opposed to observation of) art and culture
- Creativity offers the means of new levels of personalised learning for, and commitment by, young people
- Culture and creativity will increasingly provide our livelihoods
- The 2012 Olympiad will aim to demonstrate the kind of society that Britain aspires to become<sup>3</sup>

### The approach

This review has its origin in a consideration of how to develop the Creative Industries in Britain, particularly through schools – and how schools can provide an underpinning for that. While having a backcloth of creativity as defined by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport definition of the Creative Industries<sup>4</sup>, it develops a broader canvas to consider how to provide catalysts for creativity across the range of young people's experiences.

The review opened by a written consultation asking four key questions to a wide cross section of the education and creativity sectors:

- What is the notion of creativity that underpins the work of your organisation?
- What is it that generates creativity in children and young people?
- How do you assess the creative impact of work with children and young people and the outcomes for them?
- What is necessary to ensure sustainable provision for children and young people in respect of creativity?

The response (see Appendix 1 for a summary) produced an 'Olympic flag' of overlapping conceptual circles and broad consensus that reflects the legacy of recent research and reviews on creativity<sup>5</sup>. That valuable legacy developed both conceptual consensus and real provision (in, for example, Creative Partnerships) and my report does not attempt to duplicate that. Rather, this report examines the emerging policy context of the next decade and illuminates policy pathways that offer rich opportunity to embed creativity in the experience of all children and young people. The process of this review has shown how eager practitioners are to respond to a national conversation to that end.

The review draws on the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority work on creativity. This in turn takes a starting point of creativity as defined by the report of the National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education that there are "four characteristics of creative processes. First, they always involve thinking or behaving imaginatively. Second, overall this imaginative activity is purposeful: that is, it is directed to achieving an

objective. Third, these processes must generate something original. Fourth, the outcome must be of value in relation to the objective."

Respondents to this current review gave further emphasis to "imagining the world differently", creativity "permeating all aspects of life and learning and not being confined to cultural expression" and creativity "flourishing in a society that assumes everyone can be creative". There were important emphases on the overlap between creativity, independent and effective learning and critical thinking.

Further, the review engaged with the voice of children and young people by means of a day of workshops organised by Creative Partnerships (see [Appendix 2](#) for an outline of the day). The case for creativity was powerfully articulated. The workshop activity (exploring the experience of authentic contact with creative practitioners) was a compelling display of self-reflective young people, showing empathy and respect for each other and their teachers, understanding how to lead, take risk and responsibility and work in partnership.

A key element of the approach was a seminar with colleagues from the education and creativity sectors (see [Appendix 3](#) for details) that produced the core thesis of the review:

- There is a rich array of creativity work in pre- and main-school activity strongly, but not systemically, supported by the many creative programmes, projects and agencies
- The characteristics of the developing education policy context (autonomy, commissioning, personalisation) offer positive opportunities for the embedding of creativity in education
- Stronger connections between that creativity work and the emerging policy context in education and children’s services would produce a “win-win” - creativity embedded in these developments and, reciprocally, these developments enhanced by the impact of creativity
- This would provide a more secure, valued and cost-effective framework for the further development of creativity both its own right and as a support for economic growth – with better outcomes for children and young people

- There is a need to construct a more coherent ‘creativity offer’ which is then actively managed/brokered into the new context of school and personal autonomy

The rest of this report therefore offers ministers:

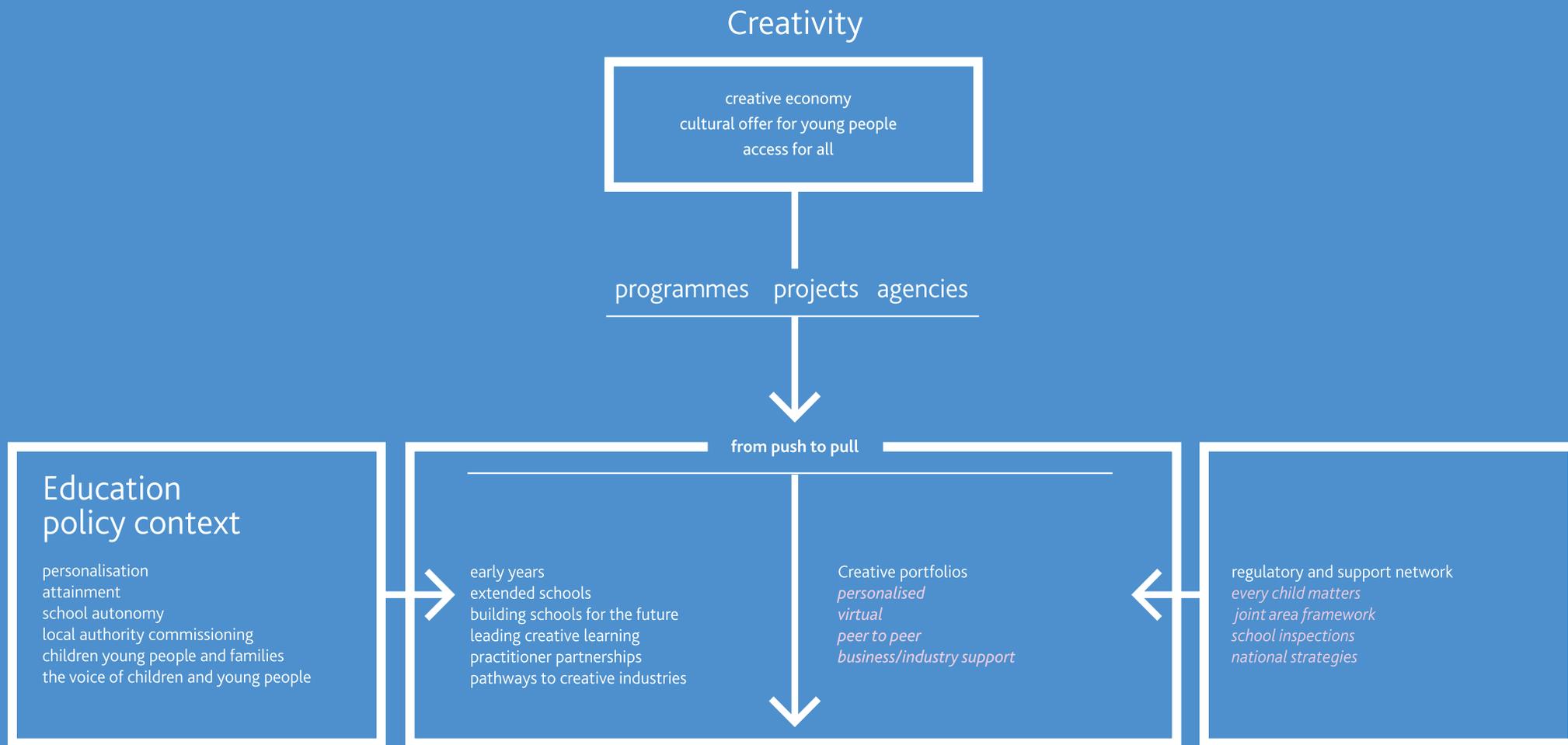
- A framework for the further development of creativity for children and young people
- A progression within this framework that starts with the Early Years, is embedded in (but goes beyond) mainstream education, develops a personalised approach, seeks to be inclusive of and responsive to the voice of children and young people and leads to pathways into Creative Industries

This is done in the form of [scoping papers on eight themes](#), each offering a commentary on ways in which policy might be further developed (the “assumptions which will help form the basis of our future policy on creativity” as requested from this review). These are not detailed proposals, rather they provide initial scoping for the next stage.

<sup>3</sup> Drawn from material by National Museum Directors’ Conference

<http://www.nationalmuseums.org.uk>  
<sup>4</sup> [http://www.culture.gov.uk/global/publications/archive\\_2001/ci\\_mapping\\_doc\\_2001.htm](http://www.culture.gov.uk/global/publications/archive_2001/ci_mapping_doc_2001.htm)

<sup>5</sup> Including Creativity section on ‘National Curriculum in Action’ section of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority website  
<http://www.ncaction.org.uk/creativity/whatis>  
 “All Our Futures: Creativity, Culture and Education”. National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education (NACCE). DfEE 1999  
 “Culture and Creativity: The Next Ten Years”. DCMS 2001



## The framework for creativity

### Creativity

Currently there is a commitment by Government to the Creative Economy and the pursuit of a cultural offer for young people. That offer is predicated on access for all. There is an undoubted richness and range in the current provision of programmes, projects and influences that originate from various agencies. But that very richness and range, while making for diverse, responsive and flexible provision, can produce barriers to effective impact. It can be difficult for schools to make and sustain the connections with provision that appears to them to be fragmented. This is of particular significance at a time when there is a policy to increase autonomy for schools. Schools need to be able to engage with a more visibly coherent provision so that the push from the creativity sector will be complemented by a pull on the creativity offer.

### From push to pull

The increased autonomy of schools, the commissioning of services, the personalisation of learning, the increasing respect for the voice of children and young people, the freedoms and choices available through

technology characterise a context in which it will no longer be adequate merely to offer or even to exhort in order to develop creativity in young people. The “push” approach will have limited impact at either a school or individual level. We must embed creativity in our systems so that schools, colleges and individuals “pull” on the opportunities, recognising the significance and benefits of creative experience, recognising that the development of imagination, purpose, originality and value will motivate pupils in their learning.

At the heart of this it is vital that creativity and attainment are not depicted as in competition – they are different sides of the same coin. There is increasing evidence that headteachers are seeing creativity in the curriculum as the way of achieving the next step change in pupil attainment.

The eight themes in this review aim to embed the opportunities for creativity in the settings that surround children and young people – giving them and their schools ongoing and systemic opportunities to experience creativity.

### Access and inclusion

This review is predicated on a core belief – that all children and young people can be creative and should have access to creative experience, irrespective of, for example, race, gender or special educational need. This is not currently the case – and the further development of the elements of the framework (see next section) should be subject to an “access scrutiny”. Programmes and projects should be closely monitored not only for the intention but the practice of inclusion. The Creative Partnerships workshop on the Voice of Children and Young People illustrated the successes that are available to young people provided that both full access and high expectation is central to creative experience.

There are particular opportunities in relation to the contribution that creativity should make to the experience of young people disaffected or at risk of exclusion from mainstream provision. While it is vital that “Youth Matters” and “Respect” provision is developed with a positive rather than deficit model of young people, both will offer funded opportunities to construct creative experiences for young people at risk

of social exclusion. Programmes and projects that flow from the Framework below need to be tested for their contribution to social inclusion.

### Evaluation, Impact And Knowledge Transfer

There are predictable and understandable difficulties relating to the evaluation of creativity programmes and projects – there is nervousness that the adoption of simplistic measures of success cannot do justice to the gains for young people from creative experience. This debate needs to move into a more productive frame. Programmes and projects must build in evaluation from the start – not only as accountability for the expenditure of public funds but equally as a source for learning to be transferred to other programmes. Developments in Children’s Services offer some openings in this respect – evaluation needs to be focused on the impact of programmes in the form of improved outcomes for children and young people, their voice needs to be at the centre of evaluation. We should seek an appropriate blend of performance indicators and individual testimony.



### The Elements of the Framework (see Appendices for details)

#### Creative Portfolios (Section A)

The Creative Portfolio proposes an underpinning for the framework: a personal portfolio, incorporating both formal and informal learning with the learner at the centre. Established by peer review, hosted by the Creative Industries, physical or virtual in form, it would support personalised learning, assessment for learning and routes into the creativity sector.<sup>6</sup>

#### The Early Years (Section B)

Early Years provision has seen major policy and programme development in recent years and this will accelerate further under the Government's Ten Year Childcare Strategy, including the Early Years Foundation Stage. This includes commitment to a broad and balanced play-based curriculum. In its website summary of the Childcare Bill, Government recognises that "the quality of early years experiences is the most important factor bar none in determining a child's life chances". This section of the review argues for creativity being at the heart of that quality with the prospect that

supporting creativity in the early years provides a cornerstone for successful lifelong learning. It proposes a greater focus on the development of creative behaviours in the early years, suggests a scheme of recognition and sharing of best practice, indicates the importance of linking this to workforce development (including the involvement of creative practitioners) and shows how creativity can be a powerful underpinning for parental/family support.

#### Extended Schools (Section C)

Government has committed to a vision of Extended Schools providing a range of services and activities to meet the needs of children, their families and wider community, with the ambition that one-third of all secondary schools and half of all primary schools be open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. all year round by 2008. This offers huge potential for the extension and enrichment of the school curriculum with an opportunity to use the freedom and flexibilities of this provision to develop creativity. This section argues for strong connection between Extended Schools and the developing network of Specialist Schools, Academies and Colleges. It draws the distinction between diversionary activity for young

people and that which enables them to take greater control of their learning. It also paints a picture of the style and range of activities that will make Extended Schools creative.

#### Building Schools for the Future (Section D)

Building Schools for the Future (BSF) is the programme of investment in buildings and ICT that aims to rebuild or renew every secondary school in England over a 10-15 year period. At the heart of every BSF programme must be a vision of innovation and transformation – and proposals for buildings that will be a catalyst for new approaches to teaching and learning and for a new degree of extended use of schools by local communities. BSF offers two unprecedented opportunities. The first is to give young people an authentic creative experience in the process by which schools are designed. The second is to ensure that BSF results in spaces that support creativity: for both formal and informal learning; for use by creative practitioners and that go beyond the school and take the school into the community.

<sup>6</sup> This proposal acknowledges, but explores a significant development of, the Arts Award – a scheme to recognise young people's engagement with and enjoyment of the arts, wherever they choose to practice them, as well as their development as young artists and young arts leaders. It does not restrict young people to a prescriptive menu of artforms, rather it encourages them to select the one that most interests them, be that film, hip hop, sculpture or dance. Each young person is supported throughout the award by an Arts Award adviser who works with the young person to develop a scheme of work based on the individual's existing level of knowledge and skills. The award is run by Arts Council England and Trinity Guildhall. It can be taken at Bronze, Silver and Gold levels, which are accredited at levels 1, 2 and 3 on the National Qualifications Framework. It is for young people between 11 and 25 and celebrates their individual, creative progress and not simply their artistic skill. It allows for the individual to record and present their work in the way that best suits them: this can be a traditional folder, a DVD, a CD or a mixture of all three.



### Leading creative learning (Section E)

This review argues for a new degree of connection between the creativity and education sectors and offers a framework in which that can flourish. This requires strong and distributed leadership: especially in the context of autonomy, personalisation, flexibilities to innovate, networks, partnerships and federations. This section of the review establishes how vital it is to support the crucial role of leaders in establishing the organisational climate and framework for creativity and innovation. It suggests drawing further on the work of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority in relation to creativity and suggests ways of developing teaching as a 'creative profession'. It also indicates how initial teacher education and continuing professional development of teachers can serve creativity more effectively.

### Practitioner partnerships (Section F)

The development of school partnerships with creative practitioners has been a strong theme in recent years, complementing wider developments in schools employing a broader workforce and seeking the benefit of the schools being open to a range of partnership

relations. This development has particular resonance with emerging policy on, for example, Early Years, Extended Schools and Building Schools for the Future. The experience of Creative Partnerships gives a rich resource on which to build this approach into future contexts. This section of the review looks at developments in funding and the professional development associated with practitioner partnerships. It suggests the need for structures to rationalise the current complexity of practitioner partnership arrangements and to develop the capacity both in schools and in the Creative Industries sector (where that capacity varies across the country).

### Pathways to Creative Industries (Section G)

Compared with more established professions, qualification and entry routes into Creative Industries are opaque and lack clear progression. This may in part explain the significant gap between the current profile of the Creative Industries workforce and that of the communities which it serves. There is a moral and a business case for achieving a more diverse workforce. This section proposes ways of improving

pathways to the Creative Industries through careers advice, a new qualification route, work-based training, education-business partnerships, mentoring networks and demand-led skills provision.

### Frameworks of regulation and support (Section H)

Regulatory and support frameworks should be significant catalysts for change. This section explores how the frameworks of the National Strategies, Every Child Matters (and the associated Five Outcomes), and local authority and school inspection may support the development, recognition and, most importantly, spread of successful practice. It suggests that the Outcomes Framework be more explicit about creative experiences for young people, encouraging the commissioners of services (local authorities, schools and partners) to give specific attention to assessing creative engagement. It identifies the potential for Youth Matters to impact positively on creative opportunities for young people and suggests ways in which Ofsted and the National Strategies could promote creativity.

### Conclusion

This argument for building greater connection between the creativity and Education/Children's Services sector aims to provide a framework within which the full impact of synergies between the two can flourish.

The framework offered in this review responds to the initial request for "assumptions which will help to inform the basis of our future policy on creativity" by illustrating what works. This confirms that there is considerable success to be built on and developed. This review identifies and illuminates policy pathways in the hope that they will be adopted for further development.

If stronger, more transparent and more coherent support for creativity can be connected with the policy directions in Education/Children's Services then that success can become more systemic. The aim is to embed creativity in the provision for children and young people. That provision will be coherent and progressive. The outcome would be a generation of children and young people with creativity at the heart of their personal, educational and career development.