



**Aspire**

Planning for Arts College status

Arts Council England works to get more art to more people in more places. We develop and promote the arts across England, acting as an independent body at arm's length from government.

Between 2006 and 2008, we will invest £1.1 billion of public money from government and the National Lottery in supporting the arts. This is the bedrock of support for the arts in England.

We believe that the arts have the power to change lives and communities, and to create opportunities for people throughout the country.

For 2006 to 2008, we have six priorities:

- taking part in the arts
- children and young people
- the creative economy
- vibrant communities
- internationalism
- celebrating diversity

Cover Image: An African Tale

Students from Abbey Hill School and Performing Arts College perform at the Regent Theatre, Staffordshire. The students worked with Trading Faces mask and physical theatre company, dancer Hayley Rose and actress Cathy Carter to produce a touring production. The cross-curricular term-long project gave pupils of all abilities an opportunity to create, devise and perform innovative new work based on traditional stories from African culture.

Photo: Davinder Claire, CC Images Ltd

# Contents

Foreword	2
Support for aspiring schools	4
The application process	
Steps to success	6
Planning	8
Consulting Arts Council England	10
A case study	12
Developing the community programme	16
Making links	18
Artsmark	
Creative Partnerships	
Arts Award	
Arts Council England publications	20
Other publications	22
Arts Council England contact	24

## Foreword

Arts Council England has a long track record of working with young people from all backgrounds and abilities. Over the last 30 years we have increased activities for, by and with young people, notably through our education work, through our funding from the National Lottery, through our funded organisations' programmes, through Creative Partnerships, Artsmark and most recently the Arts Award.

We believe that every young person has the right to participate in the widest possible range of artistic and creative activity: we work with many different partners to ensure young people are involved in the arts as participants, practitioners and audience members.

We recognise the important and valuable role Specialist Arts Colleges (and Music Colleges) play in providing opportunities for increasing numbers of young people to access the arts. This document outlines the support we can offer to aspiring Arts Colleges through our nine regional offices throughout England.

Our national strategy for children, young people and the arts sets out our vision and this is underpinned by our regional plans. Arts Colleges share many of our priorities: working with partners they change young people's lives through participation in the arts; they increase opportunities for cultural diversity in the arts; and they invest in the creative talent of artists. We look forward to working in partnership with Specialist Arts Colleges as we deliver our strategy between now and 2008.



‘Doing Art gives me the chance to be who I am and to show what I’m thinking and feeling, it makes me feel good.’

Umi 15

As part of their GCSE coursework and the community development plan, students from Holte Visual and Performing Arts College developed a visual art exhibition around a Healthy Lifestyles theme. They worked with artists and health professionals to research the subject and examine arts in health in the wider context. Their exhibition was showcased at the IKON gallery in Birmingham and also toured local community venues.

Photo: Davinder Claire, CC Images Ltd

## Support for aspiring schools

The Specialist Schools and Academies Trust (SSAT) is the leading national body for secondary education in England supporting the development of Specialist Arts and Music Colleges. The Trust offers guidance to schools on generic bid writing, sponsorship and networks. Aspirant specialist schools are encouraged to attend the workshops, consultations and bid screening clinics offered by the Trust to support the development of strong bids. Additionally aspirant schools can consult with National Specialism Co-ordinators.

Local Authorities play a key role in prioritising bids and help schools develop plans that include partner schools. They will advise a school on the relevance of their chosen specialism to the locality. They can also direct schools to their arts development officer who can help link a school to the local arts infrastructure. The Learning and Skills Council is able to help schools consider the learning and skills needs of the local community.

Arts Council England is very pleased to be working closely with DfES, SSAT and Local Authorities to support schools who aspire to attain Arts College status. We support schools as they raise standards and make their transition into a local arts organisation that shares resources, expertise and facilities with the wider community.



# The application process

## Steps to success

Developing an application will be an investment of time that varies from school to school. It could take from 6 to 18 months or longer, so you should schedule a timeframe that suits your school's particular needs. Preparing for and researching the process will sharpen focus and potentially save time.

These steps to success are intended to help you with time management and assist the planning process.



Schedule contact for support with the SSAT.

Contact Local Authorities; access Arts Council England publications.

Consult the whole school, partner schools, local groups and the wider community; consult the Learning and Skills Council.

Contact local business and explore sponsorship opportunities; research arts partners; visit a Specialist Arts College.

Develop existing and new relationships with partners in the arts, creative and cultural industries.



Draft school and community programme; contact your regional office of Arts Council England.

Identify key staff roles and devise a recruitment plan if necessary. Submit draft bid to SSAT for screening.

Complete final draft of the four-year school development plan.

Gather all letters confirming sponsorship, endorsement and support.

Ensure all aspects of the application are complete, signed and ready for submission date.

# Planning

Arts Council England can offer guidance on the development of a community programme/plan and signpost schools towards local sources of information within the arts infrastructure. We can also help schools identify potential partners within the arts and cultural sectors.

Before you contact us we recommend that you carry out the following research:

- **Have you consulted with your Local Authority (County/District/Unitary) arts development officers?**  
Find out if they have a local arts plan and/or a children and young people's plan. Consider how you can contribute to them and how your school fits into their wider education, arts and cultural infrastructure.
- **Are you aware of the local arts infrastructure supported by Arts Council England?**  
Read the strategy documents for children, young people and the arts and other relevant Arts Council publications that will inform your application process.
- **Have you contacted any local arts organisations regularly funded by Arts Council England?**  
Ask their education officers about outreach programmes that you may be able to link to.
- **Does your school have existing links with professional artists and/or arts organisations?**  
Explore how artists/arts organisations are currently selected and used, and how you measure the impact of arts/education work on artists and participants. You should ensure that you have the appropriate safeguarding measures in place when selecting artists to work with your students.

- **Are there opportunities for continuing professional development for teachers, and do they develop their skills by working with professional artists?**  
Explore how your partnerships could help develop teachers' artistic skills and creative teaching and learning across the curriculum. Audit staff training needs.
- **Does your school provide a range of out of school and extended arts activities?**  
Explore how the clubs, visits, residencies and workshops that you offer serve the needs of your students and the wider community. Consider how you can address these needs in the future.
- **Have you consulted with your whole school community?**  
Consult staff, students, parents, governors and partner schools on your vision. This will help you to demonstrate the additional benefits of becoming an Arts College.
- **Have you consulted with local community groups?**  
Local contacts are vital for developing sustainable partnerships and relationships. Discuss your plans with the local authority(s), where relevant (eg. district council) and the business, voluntary and community sectors.
- **Have you contacted an existing Specialist Arts College?**  
They will be able to offer invaluable practical advice and share their experience. The SSAT and Local Authorities keep a list of Specialist Arts Colleges.
- **Do you have an Artsmark? If not, are you planning to make an application?**  
Artsmark is a valuable tool for a Specialist Arts College and their partner schools. It will help auditing, planning and delivery of arts provision.
- **Have you used *From Policy to Partnership*?**  
This guidance document will help your school develop an arts policy and partnerships with professional artists. (See page 20 for publication details).
- **Have you considered the implications of the development plan for staff?**  
You may need to plan to employ operational staff, for example you may need a community arts officer to help manage your community programme. You might also consider having a resident artist or arts partner based on site.

## Consulting Arts Council England

Applicant schools should contact their nearest Arts Council England regional office at least six months before their deadline date. The focus of the advice we offer would be around the community programme, arts development and links with professional artists and arts organisations.

In the first instance, a school should contact the team responsible for Education and Learning in their Arts Council regional office to discuss their application and arrange, if appropriate, to send a draft of their community programme to a named officer.

Given sufficient notice, we are generally happy to comment on a draft programme by telephone or email and in some cases it may be possible to book a consultation with one of our officers.

After reviewing a copy of the final community programme, we will, where appropriate, provide a letter of support for the school to enclose with their application. This consultation process should be recorded on the application form in section F1a.

When you contact your regional office they will be able to talk you through the specific support that is available to you.



‘Arts Council England helped us identify professional theatre, music and dance practitioners who we were able to buy in to lead master classes and support our community plan. Our resident theatre company, Fizzog Theatre, will help us raise standards within our arts provision and innovate new work that impacts across the curriculum.’

John Nicol

Arts College Director  
Thorns Community  
and Specialist Arts College  
Brierley Hill

Thorns have an extensive range of dance activities for the whole community and excellent working relationships with professional dance artists. Thorns student resident dance company NRG perform at community events.

Photo: Davinder Claire, CC Images Ltd

## A case study

### **Abseiling Banana Event Management (ABE) St Margaret Ward Catholic High School and Specialist Arts College, Stoke-on-Trent**

After reviewing year three of their community plan St Margaret Ward Catholic High School wanted to extend the opportunities for young people to participate in community arts events through event management. As part of developing cross-curricular work young people were already working on arts events held at school and in the local community. The young people decided to form their own company and named it Abseiling Banana Event Management (ABE).

The next step was to extend existing partnerships and begin new ones that would respond to the young people's learning needs. The school talked to the Arts Council, a professional event management company and Stoke-on-Trent Theatres. They began working closely with these partners and young people commenced a training programme with theatre staff covering all aspects of professional arts event management. ABE ran two national events using an innovative range of arts, music and creative media activities within each event programme. Their innovation helped attract new business to the locality and improved relations between young people and their wider community.



Photo: Davinder Claire, CC Images Ltd

'By doing the work that has come about through ABE, I have learned how to manage an arts event and learned more technical skills through working with members of the crew at the theatre venues. This has been really interesting and it has been great to be a part of the team.'

Dean

Founder Member, ABE

'Students identified their learning needs and worked on all aspects of professional arts event management. After one event, the transformation in some of the students from quiet and reticent to being able to be assertive, helpful and quick thinking was astonishing.'

Sarah Baker

Head of Sixth Form



The Arts Council monitored the progress of this project and commissioned the group to run the West Midlands Artsmark celebration event 2006. This event was for 750 delegates and presented a considerable challenge. The group upscaled their operation and recruited young people from partner schools and provided training in arts event management.



‘The Artsmark Celebration at The Victoria Hall was a landmark event. ABE brought an exciting vision which our staff positively embraced. We are extremely proud to be a partner in this vital opportunity for young people from a Specialist Arts College and their partner schools, and of the excellent relationship between the schools and our Education and Outreach Department.’  
Richard Wingate  
Chief Executive  
Stoke-on-Trent Theatres

Supported by Creative Partnerships three young people without any previous experience became professional presenters and led the Artsmark presentation ceremony.

Photo: Davinder Claire, CC Images Ltd

'Nine months later the young people's work related skills have extensively matured. We work together as a professional and cohesive team worthy of any place of employment. Each member brings a unique contribution ranging from lateral thinking and problem solving to customer care, technical arts event management or programming. They have discovered that their voices are valid and valued and that they bring a fresh and innovative approach to ABE's business portfolio which goes from strength to strength.'

Jo Blagg

Arts College Manager

'The ethos of Specialist Arts Colleges includes the development of students' interpersonal skills through opportunities beyond the curriculum, such as communication, confidence, commitment and relationships with the wider community. Abseiling Banana Events is an exciting, perfect example of how this ethos has been realised.'

Chris Smith

Head Teacher

This project has enhanced the community plan and extended partnership working. It created a new resource that is used in schools and the wider community, and has become a self sustaining programme that acts as a model for other Arts Colleges looking to develop similar work.

## Developing the community programme

The community programme should be achievable and realistic. You should aim to put in place plans for progression in activities over the four-year period. Allow space for development and embed monitoring and evaluation. The strategy, based on clear objectives with measurable learning outcomes, should set out how a school will share expertise and facilities to benefit partner schools and the community.

Through your planning you should identify your commitment to offering diverse and inclusive practice and highlight community needs that are currently not being met. The programme should detail how you intend to respond to these needs through using your schools' expertise and good practice in its chosen specialism, and how the work of the professional arts sector can help facilitate the delivery of your plan.

## Objectives and targets

- **Are your objectives and associated targets relevant to your community programme?**  
All objectives should address an issue identified by your audit and reflect the community aims for learning within the arts.
- **Do you have clear objectives, targets and implementation strategies for partnership working with schools?**  
Targets for your work with partner schools should describe specific learning outcomes and fit with your schools overall development priorities.
- **Are your objectives and targets measurable?**  
Your objectives must specify a clear starting point that is measurable.  
Targets should be realistic and achievable and set within a clear timeframe.

# Audit

- Have you identified your partner schools?

You will need a minimum of five partner schools including at least one secondary school. Special schools with secondary age students can be partners and partnerships with Pupil Referral Units are also encouraged.

- Have you conducted an audit in consultation with them?

Highlight current activities, learning needs and gaps in provision and plan your collaborative work with partner schools in response to these. Think about the role of arts practitioners within professional development for staff.

- Have you been able to identify community groups as partners and plan work that will develop provision in your specialist subjects?

Clearly identify what support you provide and facilitate to improve participation and learning, and, in your development plan, show how links with community partners will extend arts provision for the wider community.

## Monitoring and evaluation

- Does your monitoring and evaluation process measure progress against objectives and targets?

Show how you will monitor progress at subject and individual levels and measure the quality and impact of teaching and learning; indicate your strategies for accountability; and consider your response should targets not be achieved.

- How are participants and service providers involved in monitoring and evaluation?

Young people, community groups, artists and practitioners will have valuable insights and are an excellent resource to use, take account of their views.

- Are your partners and school governors involved in monitoring and evaluation?

Think about how to involve people from outside your school in monitoring and evaluation; consider using an external agency to assess your data and evidence.

# Making links

## Artsmark

Artsmark is a national award scheme managed by Arts Council England that recognises schools with a high level of provision in the arts.

The scheme helps develop an understanding of the arts in the broadest sense and is endorsed by the DfES, DCMS, QCA and OfSTED.

Artsmark has a direct relevance to Arts Colleges and their partner schools and many have cited the application process as beneficial in auditing, evaluating and developing their arts provision. Helping other schools apply for an Artsmark can help an Arts College fulfill their community plan.

[www.artsmark.org.uk](http://www.artsmark.org.uk)

## Creative Partnerships

Creative Partnerships is the government's flagship creativity programme for schools managed by Arts Council England and funded by the DCMS and the DfES. The programme supports partnerships between creative practitioners, cultural organisations, businesses and schools.

The national programme operates in 36 areas in England and is working intensively with around 1,100 schools, many of which are Arts Colleges. To find out if you can link to this work and view the numerous case studies visit: [www.creative-partnerships.com](http://www.creative-partnerships.com)

# Arts Award

The Arts Award is an accredited programme that recognises young people's development as artists and arts leaders. The award has two strands: personal arts development and arts leadership.

Many Arts Colleges are running the award and use it to celebrate young people's extra curricular achievements and add value to their arts offer. They support their community partners by hosting training and moderation and providing advice on assessment. As one teacher from a Performing Arts College says: 'The Arts Award hugely increases the amount of arts work that goes on, as we now have so many arts leaders in the school.'

## Becoming an Arts Award Centre

Arts Colleges should send a member of staff to train as an Arts Award adviser. You can register to become a centre and book your training on the Arts Award website.

[www.artsaward.org.uk](http://www.artsaward.org.uk)

Dan achieved his Gold award in the Arts Award pilot in Cornwall. He was commissioned to produce a series of images for the Arts Award launch materials.

Photo: Dan Ponting



# Arts Council England

## Publications

The following publications can be downloaded from

[www.artscouncil.org.uk/publications](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/publications).

They will help you develop your community programme and partnerships with artists and arts organisations. They will also provide information about the wider arts infrastructure.

### From Policy to Partnership Developing the arts in schools

A useful, practical guide for schools on developing an arts policy, arts strategy and initiating and maintaining arts partnerships.

ISBN: 0-7287-07799-3

### Partnerships for Learning A guide to Evaluating Arts Education Projects

A practical approach to evaluation that includes a flexible framework and several case study examples of good evaluation practice.

ISBN: 0-7287-0791-8

### Artists working in partnership with schools

This report suggests measures that can be used to ensure a positive partnership and subsequently successful partnerships between artists and schools.

ISBN: 0-7287-1049-8



### Providing the best

This document defines the characteristics of high quality activities for and with children and young people and, using prompt questions, enables artists and arts organisations to assess and assure this work.

ISBN: 0-7287-1174-5

### Children, young people and the arts

This is the Arts Council's strategy for work with, for and by children and young people. It explains how we will put young people at the centre of our work, and commits us to ensuring that we consult and listen to them in developing our policies and programmes.

ISBN: 0-7287-1140-0

Each regional office of the Arts Council has a complementary strategy for children, young people and the arts. These outline the key priorities and actions for each region.

### Local government and the arts A vision for partnership

Looks at how Local Authorities and the Arts Council work together to develop the arts in England. Describes four themes for future joint activity: the creative economy, healthy communities, vital neighbourhoods and engaging young people.

ISBN: 0-7287-0916-3

## Other Publications

The first four publications are available from the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust. To obtain them and see their full publication list visit: [www.ssatrust.org.uk](http://www.ssatrust.org.uk)

### The best of both worlds Developing successful partnerships between schools and the arts

Provides guidelines for schools and arts practitioners seeking to develop creative, reflective and productive arts partnerships. Celebrates good practice and uses several case studies to highlight key points.

ISBN: 1-905150-31-8

### Best practice in arts colleges

This guide shows how Arts Colleges have developed a particular identity and approach to suit its own students. The exemplars share common themes for success-setting, clear goals and targets, offering extra opportunities within and beyond the school day.

ISBN: 1-873882-74-2

### Learning to think, learning to learn

Three case studies show how schools have achieved marked improvements through the application of different approaches to thinking skills. An account from an Arts College describes an approach that builds on and makes best use of existing staff skills and interests.

ISBN: 1-873882-87-4

### Seeking sponsorship

Working with sponsors, especially if they're based locally, is an important way of developing community networks. Businesses can participate actively in the education system which is developing the next generation of citizens, employees and parents.

ISBN 1-873882-63-7

### Every Child Matters Department for Education and Skills, 2003

A summary and an overview of some key documents relating to this green paper. Every Child Matters is a shared programme of change for children and young people. It is the government's vision for enhancement of the way in which professionals work together to provide care and services for children and young people.

[www.everychildmatters.gov.uk](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk)

### Nurturing Creativity in Young People

A report to Government to inform future policy

A DFES and DCMS publication July 2006

A clear framework for the further development of creativity for children and young people. This report is designed to help in form the basis of future policy on creativity.

[www.culture.gov.uk/Reference\\_library/Publications](http://www.culture.gov.uk/Reference_library/Publications)

# Arts Council England

## Contact

There are nine Arts Council England regional offices in England. They are based in the East, East Midlands, London, North East, North West, South East, South West, West Midlands, and Yorkshire.

To contact the team responsible for Education and Learning in your regional office, telephone the general enquiries number.

Telephone 0845 300 6200

Alternatively, you may wish to visit [www.artscouncil.org.uk/regions](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/regions). Click on your region, either on the tool bar or map and you will be taken to your regional home page. Click **contact us** to view the full staff contact list for your regional office and telephone or email an Officer directly.

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