

Learning together

Friday 13 September 2002
University of East Anglia

This report provides a summary of the contributions made by the conference speakers. A copy will be sent to every school in the county and the report is also on the Esinet website:

www.esinet.norfolk.gov.uk

This was our fourth annual Education Conference, Delegates from Primary, Secondary and Special schools all over Norfolk joined Education Officers and Advisers for the day. As well as providing inspiration at the start of a new academic year, the day was an endorsement of the partnership between schools and the Education Department.

Our speakers inspired and challenged us. The theme was Learning Together. The speakers helped us think through key challenges in education from political, research and personal perspectives. We may not agree with everything they had to say but we are privileged to have the challenge to our thinking provided by such expertise. While there are always things to improve, everyone acknowledged the continuing success of this important day in Norfolk's educational calendar.



Introduction

Bryan Slater welcomed colleagues to the fourth annual Education Conference. He expressed the hope that in this centenary year of the formation of LEAs, the government would recognise the need for an enlightened and radical debate on what sort of an education was appropriate for meeting the challenges of the 21st century. 'Only teachers can be the custodians of that debate and it is time for that to be recognised on high.' He approved of the greater flexibility that the Education Act 2002 should deliver and only hoped that the increased autonomy, promised by government to schools, would become a reality, allowing teachers ownership over the curriculum, and not just the freedom to carry out someone else's edicts. He was also pleased to be able to share with conference the findings of the recent Ofsted inspection, which revealed significant improvements in the grade judgements for the LEA. The fact that these were mirrored by similar improvements to the self-review grades of Norfolk schools suggested that the emphasis being placed on trust and partnership was achieving real success.

The Norfolk
Headteacher
Conference
2002-'03



Norfolk County Council
at your service



Norfolk County Council
at your service

***The 2003 conference for all Norfolk
headteachers***

Monday, 8 September 2003
University of East Anglia
9.00 am – 3.45 pm

Introduced by
Councillor Alec Byrne
Cabinet Member for Education

Chaired by
Bryan Slater
Director of Education

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***Keynote speakers will include:***

**Maggie Farrar**  
National College of School Leadership

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Professor Laurie Taylor
Sociologist, Broadcaster and Columnist

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**Gyles Brandreth**  
Writer, Raconteur and Broadcasting Personality

**TICKETS - £45.00**

This price has not been increased due to the UEA failing to produce puddings at last year's conference  
and refunding us accordingly

Please return the attached booking form to Anne Graveling at  
The Professional Development Centre, Woodside Road, Norwich, NR7 9QL  
Fax: 01603 700236 email: [anne.graveling@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:anne.graveling@norfolk.gov.uk)  
*Please book early to avoid disappointment*

## Booking Form

### ***The 2003 conference for all Norfolk headteachers***

Please return to Anne Graveling, Professional Development Centre  
Woodside Road, Norwich, NR7 9QL  
Fax: 01603 700236  
Email: [anne.graveling@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:anne.graveling@norfolk.gov.uk)

Please book a place for:

Name .....

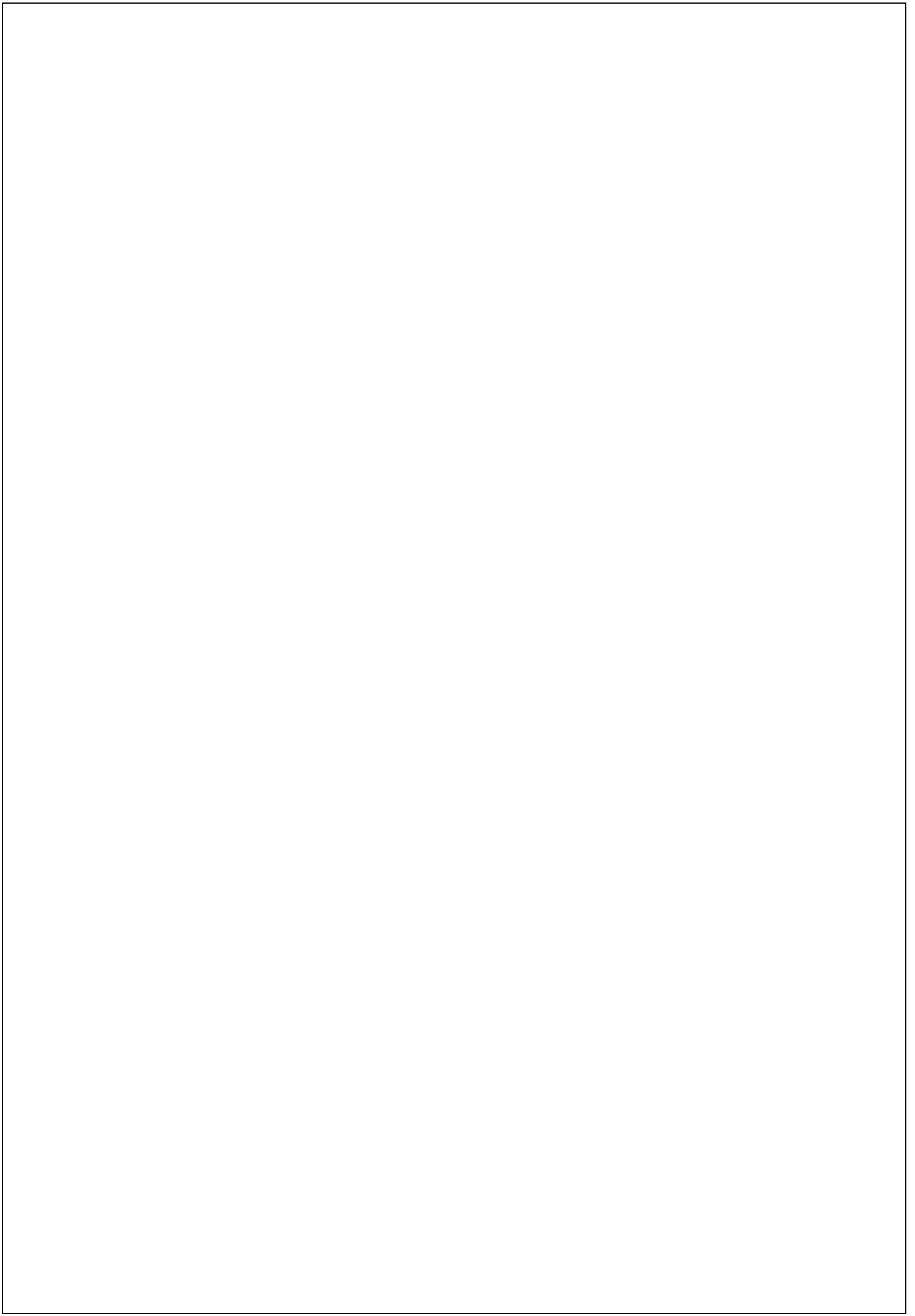
School .....

Payment of £45.00 (lunch included and puddings!)

***Payment details must be included  
with your application for a place.***

Payment will be made by direct debit – **please complete the following code**

E \_ \_ \_ \_ / \_ \_ \_ / \_ \_ \_ \_ \_  
(loc code / sub code / proj code) *please print clearly*





## Colleen Walker

### Chairman of Norfolk County Council



Reminding conference that the role of Chairman required her to stand above party politics, Colleen Walker was able to reassure delegates that education was strongly supported by all the parties within Norfolk County Council.

However, on a personal note she particularly welcomed the great efforts being made in Norfolk to respond to the government's inclusion policy and was delighted that the strenuous efforts to improve attendance figures was beginning to show results. She also praised the work being done here to tackle racism and to help the children of asylum seekers and travellers.

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*Colleen Walker lives and was educated in the Great Yarmouth area. Over the years, she has worked tirelessly to improve local services and among her community work she lists membership of the Gorleston Youth Forum, a founder member of the Yarmouth Unemployed Centre, a member of Norfolk Police Authority, a former Chair of the County Council's Fire and Community Safety review panel and a former member of Great Yarmouth Borough Council. Mrs Walker was also instrumental in bringing CCTV to Great Yarmouth and was a director of the company set up to oversee its introduction. Married with two children and one grandchild, she is also an avid sports fan.*

## John MacBeath

Professor of Educational Leadership,  
Cambridge School of Education



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*John Macbeath is the Chair of Educational Leadership at the University of Cambridge and until 2000, was Director of the Quality in Education Centre at the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow. He is Director of Learning for Leadership: the Cambridge Network and the Wallenberg Centre. He is Chairman of the International Network for Educational Improvement and consultant to the Hong Kong Education Department on school effectiveness. Other consultancies have included the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), UNESCO and ILO (International Labour Organisation), the Bertelsmann Foundation and the European Commission on a school self-evaluation and European indicators.*

John Macbeath began by acknowledging that the concept of learning together was an idea that was now finding favour with the politicians and that it could and should be applied to learning beyond the school gates, as well as to learning within the classroom. Neuroscientists were explaining to us more fully than ever before how the brain worked but the more that was being found out the more apparent it became that we were 'still only in the foothills' of our understanding of the nature of learning. One thing was apparent however, that in trying to understand the brain, we should not forget the mind and that where science could not deliver solutions the arts may provide a way forward. There was a real need now, in this age of paradoxes, for effective leadership and learning that could harness dualities - the masculine and feminine side of the brain, the intuitive and the logical, science and art because powerful and effective learning was about engaging feelings as well as thought processes.

He suggested that 'taming the wild' was an appropriate metaphor for our current system of education, which resembled a process of pruning down. 'Children come to school with a hundred languages and leave with one.' (Carpe Vita) In an age of knowledge explosion, he questioned the validity of an education system, which placed so much emphasis on the ability to store facts within our brain when it was now so easy to store information succinctly and in such an accessible format outside our body. It was time not to stop at thinking about what we learned but about how we learned. For instance, was it valid to present knowledge in single disciplines when we did not apply it like that? Why did we place so much emphasis on individual achievement when in the real world it was more often collaborative effort that was responsible for major breakthroughs? Intelligence should be perceived as a shared phenomenon. It did not reside in individuals. Education that encouraged and developed the skills required for working and learning together should be valued more highly as was already the case in Eastern cultures. There was a danger inherent in a situation where people 'bowled alone'. Society needed people who were able to network and tap into different relationships for different things. We also were only just beginning to appreciate how much peer pressure, self-doubt and misconception inhibited the progress of learning.

This raised the question for schools as to how far they should go in giving pupils supported initiative, because pupils were not just consumers of knowledge but also producers of it. Could we establish classrooms where not all relationships fed back through a controlling adult and schools where pupils would have a genuine say in the way that it was run? This would result in a building up of 'organisation capital' – a wealth of shared values

and beliefs. He cautioned conference that an organisation that did not listen to and learn from its junior members was a disabled community. The best schools and organisations were those that used the different strengths and weaknesses of all their members, to work as a team. He regretted that teachers today were, more often than not, too busy to find time to talk over their day with colleagues. It was a missed opportunity for building up plural knowledge. The challenge facing us today, was to put some of the wildness back into education; to recognise that learning happens in all sorts of places and in all sorts of ways and to value those differences. In order to achieve this, it was essential that we moved on from our limited notion of measurable outcomes and external assessment to a system based upon continual self-review, in which people were helped to discern patterns of meaning in their existence. Such a system could nurture not just individual intelligence, but plural intelligence and build up the social capital enabling us to celebrate differences, grasp paradoxes, live with ambiguities and manage conflicts.

*From 1997 to 2001 he was a member of the Government's Task Force on Standards and from 1997 to 1999 Scotland's Action Group Standards. He is a member of a number of Government working parties on Beacon Schools, on Schools in Challenging Circumstances and Lord Puttnam's Education and the Media policy group. He has also written numerous books on education and leadership issues.*



## Dr Val Besag



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*Dr. Val Besag is a former teacher who is now a consultant educational psychologist. She is recognised as an international expert on bullying in schools. She has completed several lecture tours abroad, especially in Australia and New Zealand. In 1994, she was awarded an NUT/Walter Hinde scholarship in order to exchange views on challenging and bullying behaviour with colleagues in the USA. She received a Winston Churchill Fellowship in 1999 to carry out a world tour to study putting in place peer support systems to counter bullying in a variety of cultural settings.*

Val Besag said she wanted to address conference about bullying and some of the most aggressive and the most vulnerable pupils because, in her opinion, the covert social curriculum that existed in our schools was just as important and influential as the academic one. She acknowledged that there was nothing new about the problem of bullying, neither the physically aggressive bullying of boys, nor the way girls used their friendship groups to exert control. New research, however, could help us develop more effective strategies for identifying and helping pupils at risk. However, she warned against expecting any miracle cures.

She began by stressing the importance of working in close partnership with the family. There was a weight of evidence to prove that especially in the early years, family influence was the critical factor in the development of an individual's behaviour. Then in the last years of primary schooling, through to the early years of secondary schooling, peer pressure started to play a huge part.

- Pupils at risk often shared common characteristics such as:
- An external locus of control which left them feeling disempowered
- Low self-esteem which in extremes led to depression and self-harm
- A negative attitude towards schooling
- A highly developed social awareness
- A predisposition towards the primitive and intuitive responses rather than the cognitive thought processes.

Such young people often pursued an alternative, anti-social career path. They worked hard to achieve a high self-esteem and status within their peer group, which became a substitute family. These groups had their own rules, sets of values and a hierarchy of membership. More often than not, their actions revealed a complete disregard for law and order and respect was earned within the peer group by the flouting of authority. Young people often made the crucial decision about which career path to follow during the last year of primary schooling, which was why this was such a critical time for pre-emptive work.

Having identified the youngsters most at risk, what actions could we take? Ignoring concerns at this stage could lead to personal tragedy, whilst resorting to exclusion only exacerbated the situation. Excluded youngsters, deprived of positive role models and the life chances education could bring, were likely to become even more of a problem both to themselves and to society. A recent report had revealed that 75% of criminal offenders had been excluded from school. To have any chance of success, it was

vital to adopt a holistic approach. We had to ensure that all the staff worked together in a non judgmental way; pupils were encouraged to participate in 'no blame' reporting of aggressive, unacceptable behaviour; peer support systems were put in place and vulnerable youngsters were given help to improve their emotional literacy and cognitive skills. Beyond the school, outside agencies such as the police and community schemes could all contribute to providing a raft of support for the pupil and the family.

Val concluded by showing an extract from a training video. It showed how bullying could occur in a typical school playground and how the work done by the pupils, staff and community, to make the playground more attractive, solved the problem and gave the children a sense of pride and ownership of their environment. It was reassuring to know that Norfolk Psychological Service had been the first LEA in the UK to receive the latest groundbreaking training that had been developed in Australia.

*Val has written several books and training manuals as well as the material for the award winning CD ROM 'Coping with Bullying' which is available to all schools in the UK and Eire, from Val herself or through the Rotary Club. Her doctorate work was on girls' bullying and her specialist interests include bullying and gender issues, dyspraxia and depression in the young.*

## Professor David Hopkins

Head of the Standards and Effectiveness Unit, Department for Education and Skills



David Hopkins spoke about his personal view of what learning together means and how this would impact upon his new role as Head of the Standards and Effectiveness Unit.

For him, the most important thing was that student progress and attainment should be balanced with creating powerful learners. He described powerful learners as people who were equipped with the range of learning skills that would enable them to cope confidently in a knowledge based society. It was the acquisition of learning skills that would have enduring impact. In order to do this, we needed to set up opportunities for colleagues within education to learn from each other. The future lay in networking. The curriculum was more or less fixed, and the inherent ability level of the pupil was not within our control but the area over which we had the most influence was the choice of teaching strategies. We needed to be doing all we could to increase teachers' skills for creating situations in which students could learn. That was why teaching should be at the centre of the policy agenda.

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*David Hopkins has recently been appointed Head of the Standards and Effectiveness Unit at the Department for Education and Skills and in that position succeeds Michael Barber as the Chief Adviser to Ministers on Standards issues. Between 1999–2002 he was Chair of the Leicester City Partnership Board and a member of the Governing Council of the National Colleges for School Leadership. Previously, between 1996 and 2002, David was Professor of Education at the University of Nottingham where he served as both Head of the School, Dean of the Faculty of Education and now as Professor Emeritus. Prior to that, he was a Tutor at the University of Cambridge Institute of Education, a Secondary School teacher and Outward Bound Instructor.*

He identified effective teachers as competent classroom managers with the ability to pace a lesson, set the content and ask the right questions. The quality of the relationships that they established within the classroom was also crucial. However, outstanding teachers shared a third attribute, which was that they also provided a good teaching model. In other words, they had the ability to call upon a range of teaching skills and select the technique that was most appropriate for creating an effective learning situation. In this regard, there was much that colleagues could learn from one another and he called on headteachers, supported by each other, to take the initiative in leading the management of teaching and learning within their schools. This would enable change to be driven from within rather than by policy imposed from without and, ultimately, we could achieve a complete network of strongly led, inter supportive schools in which powerful teaching created powerful learners.

In the recent past, he believed the government approach had been a prescriptive one but he hoped that in the future there would be a greater sense of partnership and that the policy agenda would be driven by an informed professional debate. This would require the following building blocks to be in place:

- A focus on learning
- The celebration of teaching
- The establishment of professional learning communities

- Leadership of transformation
- Networks and federations
- A framework for accountability
- A commitment to innovation.

He suggested we should be moving on from the existing framework for accountability and assessment, which held every school accountable for its own performance, to a system which involved lateral accountability, where we assumed some responsibility for the movement as a whole. We also needed to become much more assessment literate, able to interpret and respond to the findings of our data.

With regards to innovation, the establishment of an Innovation Unit this June was an indication that the government was intent upon promoting and legitimising innovation and was committed to learning from examples of outstanding practice within the profession. To conclude, as we moved into a different era of collaboration, the quality of leadership and the ability to understand and manage change would be increasingly important and the support from LEAs in the crucial area of teaching and learning would be fundamental. David Hopkins ended his address by taking questions from the floor of the house.

*He has published over 30 books on education and leadership and is also a very able mountaineer being one of the ten British Mountain Guides to first receive the international mountain guides (UIAGM) carnet in 1978 and was for five years Chair of the Mountain Guides Professional Standards Committee. He is married with three children.*

## Peter Jenkinson OBE



Peter Jenkinson explained to conference that Creative Partnerships was an exciting £40 million initiative, being launched to help develop long term association between schools, cultural and creative organisations and artists. He believed it was one of the most important new arts education programmes in a generation. It would give tens of thousands of children the opportunity for unprecedented access to the wealth of cultural experience, available across the whole country, over a period of two years. From his involvement in the New Art Gallery Walsall, he was convinced that cultural resources could have a radical and lasting impact on peoples' hearts and minds.

It was becoming more and more apparent that our 19th century education system was no longer fit for the task of equipping children for the challenges of the 21st century. In these rapidly changing times, it was not enough for government to offer an improvement to existing practices. A completely different approach was needed, which would embrace creativity and innovation. Around the world, governments were beginning to appreciate this and in England, a report had been commissioned to look at these issues. It questioned why so many of our children left the education system branded as failures and asked for a broader definition of intelligence, which acknowledged the value of creativity. Some very valuable initiatives had emerged from this report such as the Music Entitlement Scheme, recommending every child have access to a musical instrument, the Arts Mark Award, which recognises a school's commitment to the arts and the QCA study into how creativity can be monitored and evaluated. Another important recommendation was that schools would benefit from working in much broader partnerships with the wider community.

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*Peter Jenkinson was appointed National Director of Creative Partnerships on 1st October 2001. He has been Director of Museums and Galleries in Walsall, West Midlands since 1989 and with his team, recently opened the internationally acclaimed, award winning £21 million gallery, The New Art Gallery Walsall. The gallery is noted for its pioneering work in developing broad audiences for the best in modern and contemporary art and its commitment to free admission.*

Significantly, this talk of change and reform has been accompanied by the announcement of a huge uplift in funding for education, including a sum of £40 million, which has been allocated to the setting up of Creative Partnerships. This will provide for the launching and running of projects in 16 areas of the country, including Norfolk. The locations have been selected to provide a mix of rural, urban and coastal communities, united not only by economic and social deprivation but also by a poverty of aspiration and imagination. In each area, 25 schools have been chosen and although there will be a national framework, they will be encouraged to develop a local vision and form their own programmes of creative and cultural activities. To drive things forward, steering groups have been formed in the 16 regions, each one headed by a Creative Director. The aim is to tap into the wonderful cultural diversity that exists within areas such as the fashion, film and music industries and to build up lasting working

partnerships. Teacher support and development will be at the core of the scheme and teachers will be given every opportunity to reconnect with their innate creativity and in doing so, have access to a global network of knowledge.

Peter Jenkinson sincerely hoped that unlike the temporary one-off events of the past, Creative Partnerships would be a long-term and sustainable initiative that could re-energise our schools and he was delighted and encouraged by the wholehearted support it was receiving at the highest of levels.

*Previously, Peter worked in museums in the London Borough of Brent, Birmingham, Weybridge and Norwich. He is committed to education in its broadest sense and has lectured around the world. He is the Chair of the Visual Arts and Galleries Association, a board member of Warwick Arts Centre, a member of the West Midlands Regional Cultural Consortium and plays an active role in many other cultural agencies.*

*Peter was awarded the OBE in the 2001 New Years Honours.*

## A date for your diary

*The 2003 Norfolk Education  
Conference will take place at  
the University of East Anglia  
on Monday 8 September*



**Norfolk** County Council