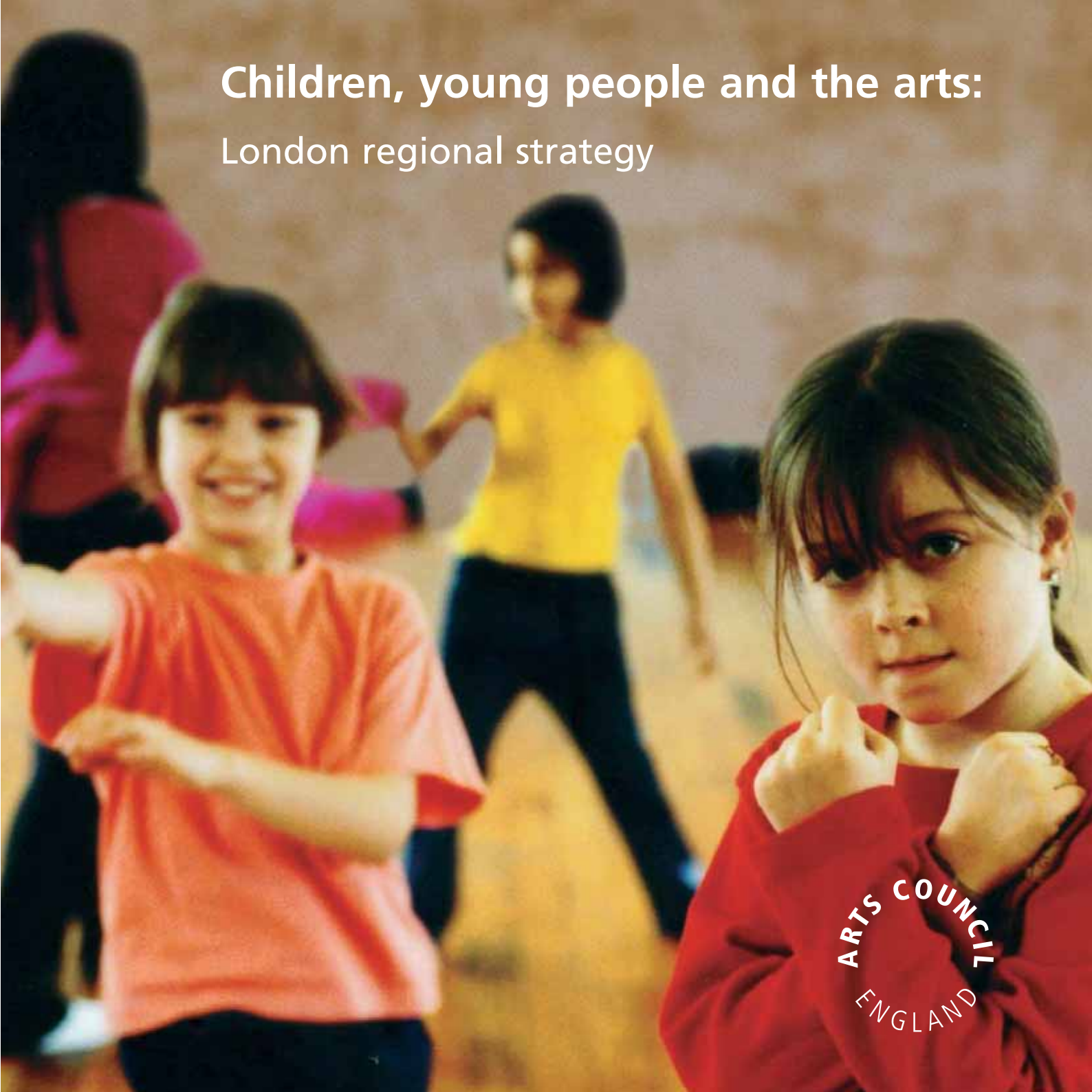


# Children, young people and the arts: London regional strategy



ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND



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**Cover image: Pupils from Chisenhale Primary School take part in a music and movement project, a collaboration between the school and Chisenhale Dance Space and Spitalfields Festival, two of our regularly funded organisations. Chisenhale Dance Space has a commitment to providing a wide range of opportunities for children and young people. In addition to regular dance classes across all age groups, the ReachOUT! Artists in the Community strand of the programme enables artists to collaborate with children with disabilities, teenage mothers and other disadvantaged young people. Photo: Keith Saunders**



# London – the regional context

'Arts Council England, London aims to put children and young people at the centre and not at the fringes of the art we support. We recognise that excellence can occur at any age and that children and young people's creativity is inspiring and of great value to the arts sector. We also believe that the arts and creative learning are powerful forces that can have a significant impact on children's and young people's lives and, in turn, contribute to social cohesion and wider global thinking.'

**Lady Hollick**  
**Chair, Arts Council England, London**

Shown here is a dress rehearsal of *On Spital Fields* by Jonathan Dove, a cantata that reflects the diversity of the surrounding community. *On Spital Fields*, the largest-ever community project for the Spitalfields Festival, was a collaboration between Osmani and St Anne's primary schools, Mulberry School for Girls, the Wessex Singers, the Joyful Company of Singers, the Royal Academy of Music, the Chroma Ensemble and soloists Mary Plazas and Mark Wilde. Spitalfields Festival is one of our regularly funded organisations.  
Photo: Talula Sheppard

The quality, number and variety of arts experiences on offer in London reflect a thriving cultural capital. London's size, its importance as a financial and international centre, its cultural heritage and the diversity of its population all contribute to its standing as one of the world's greatest centres for traditional and contemporary arts.

London's energy, creativity and diversity are clearly visible in its children and young people. Almost a quarter of the capital's population is under the age of 20 and these numbers continue to grow. Just over 40 per cent of under-18s in London belong to a Black or minority ethnic group and more than 300 languages are spoken in London schools. Whether born in London or drawn to London to study or to work, children and young people have a central role to play in shaping the future of the capital and their cultural tastes and forms of artistic expression are constantly evolving.

In 2012, London will host the Olympic Games and children and young people were at the heart of the successful bid. The Games will create an unprecedented opportunity to link culture, education and sport with young people's aspirations on a global scale.

The 2012 Games will also lead to the creation of greater and better opportunities for more young Londoners to engage with the arts. While some already have easy access to the city's artistic and cultural riches as artists and as consumers, others face financial, social or cultural barriers, with an estimated 38 per cent of London's children living in poverty, rising to 54 per cent in the inner-city areas.

This strategy is designed to strengthen our connection with all young Londoners. It represents our commitment to listening to children and young people. It also demonstrates our commitment to working with schools, youth clubs, children's trusts, health and social services and others who have an impact on children and young people's lives, in order to increase their understanding of the potential for the arts to make a real difference.

# Our national aims for children and young people

The aims of Arts Council England for children and young people up to 2008 are:

- to foster a world-leading arts infrastructure alongside other cultural organisations that supports and values the cultural expression of children and young people and increases their opportunities to engage in activities relevant to their needs and interests
- to ensure the arts and creativity have a place within wider Government and other policy agendas that have an impact on children and young people
- to see wide social recognition of the value and transformational power of the arts and creativity, particularly in relation to children and young people

Arts Council England will achieve a high quality of creative arts and cultural engagement for all children and young people by:

- ensuring that we hear the views of children and young people, engage them in decisions that affect them and broaden the range and appeal of our 'offer' so that it is relevant
- identifying areas of need and targeting our resources strategically
- developing the skills, capacity and knowledge within our sector
- using our programmes and initiatives strategically
- working with our partner institutions to maximise the contribution of the arts to children and young people
- advocating for the arts through monitoring, evaluating and sharing high-quality work

# Our regional priorities for children and young people

We aim to achieve a fairer distribution of arts opportunities across the capital. To achieve this aim, we will focus especially on children and young people who are under 19 and those who need support in order to participate in the arts independently.

Our priority groups are those:

- living in low-income families
- living in areas of London with few, or no, appropriate cultural facilities or opportunities
- who are disabled
- who are vulnerable or at risk

We will also concentrate on work for families and on developing partnerships with the intermediaries who work with children and young people in London.

Arts Council England, London will also work to improve the quality of arts experiences for young Londoners. To do this, we will:

- support activity that broadens young people's experience of different artforms, practices and traditions
- support activity that provides young people with routes for progression through their arts experiences
- adapt the ways we work to allow for more coherent planning and direct engagement with children and young people and their services
- identify organisations with the skills and commitment to pioneer new ways of working with and for children and young people
- review our portfolio of regularly funded organisations to ensure that we are supporting a wide range of high-quality provision for children and young people

We will explore the feasibility of a London-wide consortium to promote integrated arts planning and provision for children and young people. Such a consortium would be composed of organisations with a remit for children and young people and a commitment to working through the arts and would make a collective case for investment in this area.

We will also initiate sub-regional children, young people and the arts teams alongside local partners. These teams would facilitate work building on existing arts provision, achieve local ownership, collate evidence from evaluation and monitoring, provide training and networking opportunities and further develop the reach and innovation of our four Creative Partnerships.

***Oily Cart's Moving Pictures was a production for young people with complex disabilities written and directed by Tim Webb and designed by Amanda Webb. The play takes place in Boing Club, an exotic nightspot, somewhere in the Hollywood Hills. Moving Pictures features a number of successful innovations, in particular the legendary flying carpet ride (or fabulous trip on a trampoline) and extensive use of projected video to enhance self-awareness. Oily Cart is one of our regularly funded organisations. The photograph features a pupil from Paddock School, Wandsworth.***

**Photo: Patrick Baldwin**



# Regularly funded organisations and initiatives in the region

The implementation of our strategy will depend on the participation of artists and arts organisations who share our commitment to creating opportunities in the arts for all of London's children and young people. These opportunities will be achieved and sustained through creative evolution, addressing London's diversity and achieving sustainability through partnership.

**Creative evolution** Our partners will be those who:

- listen to children and young people and act on what they hear
- are willing to explore new ways to engage children and young people in the arts
- evaluate their work and share their learning, skills and resources locally, nationally and internationally
- are prepared to invest time in learning from experience about how to engage and retain young people's interest and progression through the arts

**Addressing London's diversity** Our partners will be those who:

- want to work with our priority groups
- work to identify and lower barriers to participation by children, young people and their families – including barriers created by the programme, the venue or staff attitudes
- look for opportunities to increase the number of Black and minority ethnic artists and managers working with children and young people

**Sustainability through partnership** Our partners will be those who:

- identify sources of finance for their work with young Londoners beyond Arts Council England
- share ownership of their work with partners in children's and young people's statutory services and voluntary groups
- invest in training that will enhance their ability to respond to the diverse needs of children and young people



# Collaboration

We aim to work in partnership with those organisations whose objectives are complementary to our own.

Schools are among our key partners, with their potential to influence young people's engagement with the arts.

We also recognise that other sectors such as housing and community development and children's and youth services are vital to our ambitious aim of reaching those who need extra support to participate in the arts. It is therefore our intention to initiate regional and sub-regional groupings and other forums.

**The Tomoko Takahashi workshops at the Serpentine Gallery, one of our regularly funded organisations, were part of the 15/21 series of peer-led, out-of-school courses. These courses for young people aged 15 to 21 from diverse socio-economic backgrounds enable them to access the gallery's exhibition and architecture programmes on a regular, long-term basis. During the Tomoko Takahashi exhibition, 15 participatory workshops were designed to meet the needs of different groups, including young homeless people, young offenders, unaccompanied asylum-seekers and young people with specific learning, emotional and mental health needs.**

**Photo: David Bebber**

# How to work with us

Would you like to work with us for young Londoners?

We recognise that consultation is essential as we start to turn these ideas into action plans and we intend to talk to artists and arts organisations, children and young people and children and young people's services.

If you would like further information about how you can get involved in the realisation of this strategy please send an email with a subject heading 'London CYP Strategy' to:

[enquiries@artscouncil.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@artscouncil.org.uk)



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We are committed to being open and accessible. We welcome all comments on our work. Please send these to Moira Sinclair, Director London (Development) at the Arts Council England, London address above.