



Impact of Artsmark on schools in England
Matthews Millman, 2006

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Foreword

The Artsmark award scheme encourages schools to increase the range of arts they provide and to raise the profile of arts education throughout England. Since the first awards were made in January 2001, Arts Council England has received over 4,000 Artsmark applications from schools throughout the country. Thirteen per cent of all schools in England currently hold an Artsmark award.

Artsmark provides a benchmark for arts opportunities in schools; to receive an award schools must ensure that young people have a wide range of experiences in art, dance, drama and music. These include access to regularly timetabled curriculum hours, out of hours opportunities and the chance to work with professional artists and arts organisations. Gaining an Artsmark shows that a school has adopted a broad and balanced curriculum and is committed to providing a well-rounded education for its pupils. It demonstrates that a school values the development of young people as individuals and that it provides continuing professional development in the arts for teachers.

Applying for an Artsmark award encourages teachers, governors and the wider school community to come together and undertake a detailed audit of arts provision. Schools awarded an Artsmark have invested time in determining their strengths in the arts and identifying areas for future development. At a time when self-evaluation is increasingly important to schools, the Artsmark award provides a comprehensive framework assisting them to appraise their commitment to the arts.

This is the first large-scale evaluation of Artsmark and it is very encouraging to see that it has resolutely met its aims. Artsmark has brought the arts to the heart of school agendas and is identified here as a significant catalyst for change. A high proportion of schools have attributed the process of applying for an award with an increase in the range of arts curriculum activities they offer and in generating cross-curricular links. Artsmark is shown to help raise the profile of schools in local communities. LEA officers have stated that the award has also succeeded in raising the profile of the arts amongst staff in local government.

The ability to think creatively is intrinsic to the success of young people and I hope Artsmark will continue to play a significant role in creating opportunities for them to experience an education that is rich in artistic and creative experience.

Pauline Tambling
Executive Director, Development
Arts Council England

Executive summary

Arts Council England commissioned Matthews Millman Ltd to undertake an evaluation of Artsmark, a national award scheme that recognises and rewards schools that have a commitment to the arts. The first Artsmark awards were made in January 2001, and further rounds have since been held on an annual basis.

Artsmark has three levels: Artsmark, Artsmark silver, and Artsmark gold. The award is valid for three years: schools may reapply for a higher level of award within these three years if they wish, and also apply for a new award once the three years are over. Over 3,000 schools currently have an Artsmark.

This evaluation study assesses the impacts of the Artsmark scheme against its two key aims. These are to encourage schools to increase the quantity, range and type of arts that are provided to children in schools, and to raise the profile of arts education.

The main objectives of this evaluation were to:

- assess the impact of Artsmark on the quantity, range and type of arts provision in schools
- explore perceived changes in the ethos of schools receiving an award
- assess the impact of changes in provision and ethos on pupils, teachers, governors and parents in Artsmark schools
- explore changes in the perception of schools by external individuals and organisations, such as the local community and local education authorities (LEAs)
- explore the effects on schools of applying for an Artsmark award and failing to achieve an award

The findings also look at the role of Arts Council England in the administration of the Artsmark scheme and a comparison of the award across different phases of education.

Key findings

Impact of Artsmark on quantity, range and type of arts provision in schools

Artsmark had a strong impact on the range of curriculum activities and experiences available for the arts in schools. There was evidence not only of increased volume of activity, but also work to remedy gaps in provision.

Most teachers responding to the postal survey stated that one of their key motivations to apply for an Artsmark was the desire to increase the range of curriculum experiences and activities. This was the major motivation for almost one third of these teachers, and almost all of these believed that Artsmark had achieved an increased range of arts provision either very or quite well.

Six out of ten teachers reported that there had been an increase in the range of experiences as a result of the application process, while one third of the schools in the study reported no change in the level of provision. The application process was felt to have had greater impact on provision than the Artsmark award itself.

The impact of Artsmark on the relationship between the arts and other curriculum areas was also strong, and it was clear that Artsmark helped to position arts subjects more centrally within the context of the wider curriculum. More than half of the teachers and the 10 LEA advisers supported this view.

The number of lesson hours available within the compulsory curriculum is a relatively finite resource compared with other resources: it was therefore striking to note that almost one third of schools had managed to increase lesson hours available to arts subjects. The report showed that there were marked increases in out of school hours opportunities at key stage two and key stage four and for post 16s among schools applying in round one and subsequently reapplying.

Perceived changes in school ethos

The strongest impact arising from Artsmark was on levels of internal support for, and awareness of, arts policy and provision.

The report showed that the desire to increase support and recognition for the arts was a key motivation for most schools to apply for Artsmark. This was the main reason for one third of teachers, and almost all these teachers believed that Artsmark achieved this very or quite well.

The Artsmark application process was inclusive and cooperative in most schools, and 77 per cent of teachers agreed that Artsmark had significantly improved engagement with the arts among staff in their school. The report also found that there had been more emphasis on arts policy since their original Artsmark application. The findings of this study lead to the conclusion that Artsmark helped teachers to bring the arts closer to the centre of school agendas.

A common feature among the 41 head teachers and arts coordinators interviewed was their use of Artsmark as a form of recognition for their commitment to arts

provision. It was apparent that schools applying for Artsmark had a readiness and capacity for material change, and the 10 LEA advisers interviewed believed the award to be a validation of achievement that resulted in increased credibility.

Impact on pupils and teachers

Most of the 41 head teachers and arts coordinators interviewed reported that Artsmark had increased pride and self-esteem among pupils. The number of pupils accessing the arts curriculum remained the same in just over half of schools with an increase in over one third of schools.

Almost half of schools reported increases in professional development opportunities for staff. Increases in self-esteem for staff members and a focus upon arts skills and interests when recruiting staff were also recorded.

Just under three quarters of teachers in the postal survey said that Artsmark had enabled them to develop new external partnerships. However, the results of interviews also suggested that initiatives with associated funding achieved better results than Artsmark in this respect.

Most teachers strongly agreed or agreed (87 per cent) that Artsmark had raised the profile of the school in the local community. There was a range of individual examples where Artsmark had helped schools to adjust their reputation, gain recognition and had provided a steppingstone for other awards.

Evidence of using Artsmark to raise the profile of schools through the media was patchy: few of the 41 head teachers and arts coordinators interviewed had used the award to gain press coverage, and LEA advisers described media reporting as very localised.

Levels of resources for the arts remained the same in most schools, although just under one quarter reported increases in specialist teachers and financial resources as a result of Artsmark. Forty per cent reported increases in facilities and equipment. There was evidence of considerable material change as a result of Artsmark, which was particularly surprising for a scheme that provides no actual monetary reward to successful applicants.

Artsmark enabled schools to achieve positive change in the provision and profile of the arts in areas that went beyond the scope of the scheme's aims and objectives. For example, Artsmark has helped to enhance reputation, particularly among schools in areas of deprivation, or schools with low academic achievement.

The scheme helped schools and others to recognise ways in which arts provision can achieve a wide range of both academic and non-academic goals for pupils.

Perception and profile among local education authorities

LEA advisers reported that Artsmark had raised the profile of schools within the advisory network, and that in some instances there had been adjustments to provision: dance was most regularly mentioned, followed by drama.

LEA advisers were instrumental in assisting schools with their applications, and in the growth and development of the scheme. They believed that Artsmark had raised the profile of the arts throughout the local authority. Their views reinforced the conclusion that Artsmark has had a positive impact on the profile of arts policy, on generating links across the curriculum, and on increasing arts provision.

Effects of not achieving Artsmark

Over half of the head teachers interviewed in schools that had not achieved Artsmark understood and accepted the reasons why their school had not achieved an award, and were able to point to benefits of undergoing the application process. Most of these went on to reapply. Nevertheless, the application process was criticised by all 22 head teachers as being difficult, time consuming and formulaic.

The applicants who did not understand or accept the reasons for the decision identified feelings of demoralisation, demotivation and loss of confidence. The most negative perspectives came from smaller schools and special schools.

LEA advisers tended not to know which schools have applied and not achieved an award, and were therefore not in a position to assist with reapplications or work with a school to improve performance.

An important issue for future rounds of Artsmark applications is the management of disappointment, particularly the communication of full explanations and ensuring that schools understand the reasons.

A comparison across different phases of education

One of the most striking results of this evaluation of Artsmark lay in the enthusiastic engagement of primary schools, despite their relatively low levels of resources for the arts. Shared responsibility for the arts, organisational culture, and a less extensive range of measures of success in the arts would all have played a part in this. Although teachers in primary and special schools found the Artsmark application process more onerous than their colleagues in secondary schools, their responses to Artsmark were markedly more appreciative. It is

possible that succeeding with such a rigorous process may have carried a higher sense of achievement.

Primary schools were particularly strongly motivated to apply for an Artsmark award to increase and broaden pupil access to the arts curriculum. Achieving Artsmark resulted in a greater increase in awareness of arts policy among staff.

Secondary schools were particularly strongly motivated to apply to increase internal support and recognition for the arts. Achieving Artsmark resulted in a higher involvement of arts staff in the development of arts policy.

The role of Arts Council England

Arts Council England was viewed as the most relevant organisation to run Artsmark, and was perceived to have an objective, authoritative branding as a cultural organisation, independent from the Department for Education and Skills.

It was also significant that LEA advisers remarked on an educational process that has been mutually beneficial: Artsmark has enabled schools to become more aware of Arts Council England's role, and Arts Council England to have increased its understanding of the formal education sector.

Most of those interviewed for the study claimed to use the Arts Council England Artsmark logo, and to display awards certificates in school buildings.

Achievement of Artsmark aims

Over three quarters of respondents to the postal survey believed that the Artsmark application process and award had helped them to increase the range of arts provided to children in schools. Just under one fifth of schools did not agree.

Nine out of ten of the teachers involved in the postal survey agreed that Artsmark had been either very helpful or quite helpful in raising the profile of arts education.

Artsmark is a rigorous process and the findings consistently point to higher impacts of the application process than the achievement of the award itself. Artsmark has played an important role in recognising existing strengths and pointing ways forward to new developments within schools. The rigour also provides the scheme and the schools that achieve awards with credibility and endorsement.

Achievement of an award is an affirmation for individual champions of arts in schools and has demonstrated how ownership of the arts can be broadened in schools, and how awareness both internally and externally can be raised.

Positive change has taken place in most areas of school practice. The scale of change to arts provision and policy points to Artsmark as being a significant catalyst. The formula for positive change involves the school's readiness for change at the point of applying for Artsmark; committed individuals to encourage this change; the Artsmark application process and award; and resulting changes in awareness and arts provision.

Taken from the perspective of the schools involved in Artsmark, this study concludes that the scheme has succeeded in achieving its twin aims to encourage schools to increase the quantity, range and type of arts that are provided to children in schools, and to raise the profile of arts education.

1 Introduction

1.1 Artsmark

Arts Council England commissioned Matthews Millman Ltd to undertake an evaluation of Artsmark, a national scheme open to all schools in England. The first Artsmark awards were made in January 2001, and further rounds have since been held on an annual basis.

This evaluation study assesses the impacts of the Artsmark scheme (the scheme) against its two key aims. These are to:

- encourage schools to increase the range, type and quantity of arts that are provided to children in schools
- raise the profile of arts education

1.2 Evaluation objectives

The main objectives of this evaluation were to:

- assess the impact of Artsmark on the quantity, range and type of arts provision in schools
- explore perceived changes in the ethos of schools receiving an award
- assess the impact of changes in provision and ethos on pupils, teachers, governors and parents in Artsmark schools
- explore changes in the perception of schools by external individuals and organisations, such as the local community and local education authorities (LEAs)
- explore the effects on schools of applying for an Artsmark award and failing to achieve an award

The findings also look at the role of Arts Council England in the administration of the Artsmark scheme and a comparison of the award across different phases of education.

1.3 Conventions

The following abbreviations are used throughout the report:

R1	round one applicants
R2	round two applicants
R3	round three applicants
R4	round four applicants
PRU	Pupil Referral Unit
KS1	Key Stage 1
KS2	Key Stage 2
KS3	Key Stage 3
KS4	Key Stage 4

The following conventions have been used within tables:

na	category not applicable
..	data not available
-	nil
*	less than 0.5%

Base sample refers to the number of people in each group who answered the question.

Row or column percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

1.4 Artsmark applications

Total applications

The numbers of applications have increased each year since the first round in 2001. Over the course of the four rounds the percentage of applications from primary schools has risen significantly from 28% of the total in R1 to 60% of the total in R4. Table 1 also shows a 220% growth in the total number of applications from R1 to R4.

Table 1: Artsmark applications by phase of school

	R1		R2		R3		R4	
		%		%		%		%
Primary	110	28	295	51	519	59	743	60
Secondary	263	68	258	45	318	36	431	35
Special	13	3	24	4	40	5	59	5
Pupil referral unit	-	-	-	-	1	*	3	*

Base: R1 386 schools; R2 577 schools; R3 878 schools; R4 1,236 schools

Source: Arts Council England

Over the four rounds there has been a small increase in the percentage of schools applying for Artsmark and Artsmark silver and a small decrease in the proportion of schools applying for Artsmark gold.

The percentage of schools not achieving an award has increased over the first four rounds from two per cent in R1, peaking at 10% in R3, before decreasing to eight per cent in R4.

Award level achieved by phase of school

Table 2 shows that there has been an increase in the proportion of primary schools achieving gold level awards and a reduction in the percentage of primary schools achieving an Artsmark level award.

Table 2: Award level, primary schools

	R1	R2	R3	R4
	%	%	%	%
Artsmark	35	28	22	24
Artsmark silver	31	30	31	31
Artsmark gold	28	40	34	34
Not achieved	4	1	13	10
Withdrawn	2	*	1	2

Base: R1 110 schools; R2 295 schools; R3 519 schools; R4 743 schools

Source: Arts Council England

At secondary school level there has been a slight increase in the proportion of schools achieving gold from R1 to R4. Table 3 shows that the notable exception to this was R3 when just 29% of the secondary schools achieved Artsmark gold. Achievement of silver and Artsmark level awards however has fluctuated slightly throughout the rounds.

Table 3: Award level, secondary schools

	R1	R2	R3	R4
	%	%	%	%
Artsmark	19	23	26	18
Artsmark silver	35	32	39	28
Artsmark gold	44	43	29	47
Not Achieved	1	2	6	6
Withdrawn	1	-	1	1

Base: R1 263 schools; R2 258 schools; R3 318 schools; R4 431 schools

Source: Arts Council England

Over the four rounds the number of special schools applying for Artsmark awards has increased steadily. Table 4 shows that the highest proportion of special schools have achieved Artsmark gold in all rounds except for R3.

Table 4: Award level, special schools

	R1	R2	R3	R4
	No. of schools	No. of schools	No. of schools	No. of schools
Artsmark	-	5	11	13
Artsmark silver	4	8	13	18
Artsmark gold	6	11	13	25
Not Achieved	-	-	3	1
Withdrawn	1	-	-	2

Base: R1 13 schools; R2 24 schools; R3 40 schools; R4 59 schools

Source: Arts Council England

PRUs began to apply for Artsmark status in R3. In R3 the one PRU to apply achieved a silver award. In R4 two PRUs achieved an Artsmark level award and one achieved Artsmark silver.

2 Methodology

2.1 Research methods and samples

The research was undertaken in four stages:

Stage one: desk research

An analysis of data provided by Arts Council England was undertaken in order to evaluate the number and type of applications made each year from 2001-2004 inclusive. Trends in proportions of applications for Artsmark, Artsmark silver and Artsmark gold were analysed, together with types of school applying and distribution by LEA area.

Stage two: baseline data analysis

In order to establish a baseline picture of the quantity, range and type of arts provision in Artsmark schools an analysis of information contained in application forms was completed. This analysis covered all R1 applications; all applications from those reapplying in R2, R3 and R4; and a sample of new applications in R4.

The number of applications analysed in each round was:

- 365 R1 applicants*
- 14 R2 repeat applicants
- Seven R3 repeat applicants
- 218 R4 repeat applicants
- 180 R4 new applicants

* A total of 386 applications was made in R1, but five schools withdrew and 16 application forms were missing. Therefore the sample analysed was smaller than the total number of original applications.

The sample of 180 R4 new applicants was selected to reflect the overall profile of all R4 new applicants by Arts Council England region, school phase, and final Artsmark award.

Stage three: quantitative research

Additional quantitative data was obtained through distribution of a self-completion questionnaire.

A total of 381 questionnaires were distributed to the schools that applied in R1, and this achieved a response of 206 completed questionnaires (54%). Of these 206 responses, 155 had reapplied successfully in R2, R3 or R4, while 51 had not reapplied.

A total of 180 questionnaires was also distributed to R4 first-time applicants, with a response of 96 completed questionnaires (53%).

Stage four: qualitative research

A programme of qualitative research was undertaken in order to explore changes in ethos, changes in schools' profile, and the effects of not achieving an Artsmark award. A total of 73 depth telephone interviews was conducted as follows:

- 17 head teachers from schools that achieved Artsmark
- 24 arts coordinators from schools that achieved Artsmark: these interviews were in addition to the 17 head teacher interviews
- 22 head teachers from schools that did not achieve Artsmark
- 10 Local Education Authority (LEA) advisers

The sample of schools awarded an Artsmark was selected to provide a representative mix of primary, secondary and special schools, together with schools achieving Artsmark, Artsmark silver and Artsmark gold. It also included a representative mix of schools situated within urban and rural contexts, and a broad geographic distribution.

The sample of schools not awarded an Artsmark was selected to provide a representative reflection of all schools not achieving Artsmark, and included a mix of Arts Council England regions and application rounds.

The sample of LEA advisers was selected to cover rural and urban areas and Arts Council England regions: this was to obtain a balanced mix of perspectives from advisers working in different contexts and geographic area.

2.2 Evaluation of methodology

Samples

The response rates arising from the primary quantitative and qualitative research were strong, particularly within the context of the time of year (May/June 2005). Schools that had achieved an Artsmark award as well as those that had not were keen to participate in the evaluation process. The contextual data supplied by schools revealed a range of types of schools applying and achieving Artsmark geographically, by school size and phase, and in terms of the diversity of school populations.

It is important to note that all of the 10 LEA advisers interviewed were involved with, and supporters of, Artsmark: for example, one adviser had been a validator

for Artsmark in the first year of the award, another had been involved at the pilot stage, and all had been encouraging schools to participate since R1 in 2001. It was not possible to secure interviews with those who were less involved. As a result the findings described here cannot claim to be representative of the views of the wider constituency, although those involved in these interviews were not uncritical of individual aspects of the awards.

Primary data

The value of combining qualitative and quantitative data sets is evident. In some cases qualitative information provided crucial supplementary evidence. Examples of this included interviews with teachers at smaller and special schools, who perceived the application process to be particularly difficult. Another specific example came from an LEA adviser who used Artsmark to highlight gaps in provision for boys' access to dance.

In some instances this methodology exposed contradictory evidence which has been taken into account in the analysis. For example, head teachers and arts coordinators interviewed say they have received little support from LEAs for the application process, whereas all 10 LEA advisers interviewed claim to provide hands on support. This is because the LEA interview sample was strongly biased towards those who support the scheme, whereas the schools involved in the research were based in a wider range of LEAs than those represented by the 10 advisers interviewed.

Overall methodology

The combination of desk research, detailed baseline data analysis, and primary research has resulted in a thorough and far-reaching study.

It has delivered comparisons between types of schools and KS; distinctions between the impacts of the application process and the award itself; and consideration of a wide range of evidence concerning both measurable and less concrete outcomes.

It provides tools for further exploration in relation to the schools characterised, for example by poverty, diversity, or mobility. Further, it has resulted in identification of a range of impacts over and above the original objectives of the evaluation itself.

3 Impact of Artsmark on the quantity, range and type of arts provision in schools

3.1 Introduction

This chapter begins with contextual information about planning and management of the arts curricula, ways in which schools disseminate information about arts activity, and methods used for monitoring and reviewing the quality of arts provision. It then goes on to describe the impact of Artsmark on the range of arts curriculum activities available in schools. The links between arts subjects and other curriculum areas are examined, together with information upon timetabled sessions/lesson hours.

3.2 Leadership and management context

Planning and managing the arts curriculum

In order to obtain contextual information the postal questionnaire included a series of questions managing the arts curriculum. Table 5 shows that most schools believed their budgeting and administrative arrangements for the arts to be effective, and that roles and responsibilities were clear. Most schools had designated Governors, whereas half did not include some level of responsibility for arts or creativity in all teachers' job descriptions.

Table 5: Planning and managing the arts curricula

	Yes %	No %	N/a, no information %
Budgetary allocations and arrangements for all areas of the arts are transparent and used effectively	92	4	2
All teachers' job descriptions include some responsibility for all arts / creativity across the curriculum	38	50	7
Designated Governor (s) have special responsibility for arts provision	69	26	4
Management roles and responsibilities for all aspects of arts provision are clearly designated	95	3	1
Schemes of work for the arts are effectively used by both arts specialists at non specialists	87	9	3
Subject / curriculum coordinators for art and design, dance, music and drama regularly meet together	71	20	6
There are clearly designated responsibilities for coordinating the work of peripatetic staff / visiting artists	87	7	3

Base: 302 responses. Source: postal survey

Dissemination of information about the arts in schools

Teachers were asked to specify how they informed different people about the arts in their school. Table 6 shows that invitations to events were the most popular method used throughout. Open evenings and reports on pupil progress were also used for parents/carers, while the head teacher's report was used in most schools to keep Governors informed. Staff briefings were most frequently used for informing arts and other teaching staff. School websites also featured strongly for over half of schools.

Table 6: Method of disseminating information about the arts in schools

Communication methods	Teaching staff: arts %	Teaching staff: other %	Governors %	Parents / carers %	Pupils %	LEA %	N/a %
Arts newsletter	31	30	31	34	29	9	21
Copies of media coverage	48	51	51	43	43	14	7
Headteacher's report	54	54	88	49	25	31	1
Invitations to events e.g. arts assemblies, performances / exhibitions	70	75	88	89	78	43	-
Governor training / briefings by arts specialists	21	17	41	7	6	3	20
Parents open evenings	39	37	42	83	48	13	2
Reports on pupil progress to parents / carers	30	27	16	86	52	4	1
School website	54	57	57	65	60	41	8
Staff briefings	83	91	15	7	5	4	-
Other methods e.g. general newsletters and meetings	13	13	12	13	13	4	1

Base: 302 responses. Source: postal survey

Monitoring and reviewing the quality of arts provision in schools

Schools were asked to describe how they monitor and review the quality of arts provision. The results of the postal survey showed that observation and pupil feedback were most frequently used, followed by appraisals and reports:

- 99% used observation of pupils performance / work
- 93% used observation of teaching
- 90% used feedback from pupils
- 85% used appraisals of pupils' work
- 74% used reports to their senior leadership team

A range of other methods was also used by between one half and two thirds of 302 schools replying to the survey:

- 63% used analysis of attainment data
- 63% used regular reviews by arts subject curriculum coordinators, at least once a term
- 60% used feedback from parents / carers
- 56% used external reviews, for example by LEA advisers, teachers from another school, or artists
- 53% used regular reviews within teams of teachers, at least once a term

3.3 Impact of Artsmark on the range of arts curriculum activities/experiences

A key motivation for most schools applying for an Artsmark award was the desire to increase the range of available curriculum activities and experiences: 82% of the 302 respondents to the postal survey stated that this was one reason for applying.

Twenty-nine per cent of these same respondents stated that the desire to increase the range of the arts curriculum was their main reason for applying: 96% of those giving this as the main reason for applying believed that Artsmark had achieved this very or quite well.

Six out of ten schools reported that there had been an increase in the range of available curriculum experiences as a result of the Artsmark application process, although one third reported no change. Table 7 shows that schools tended to rate the application process as having had a higher impact on the range of curriculum activities available than the award.

Table 7: Change in range of available curriculum/experiences

	Increase %	The same %	Decrease %	N/a no information %
As a result of the Artsmark application process	60	33	-	4
As a result of the Artsmark award	55	38	-	2

Base: 302 Source: postal survey

These findings are endorsed by respondents' overall ratings of Artsmark as a tool to help with increasing the range of arts provision. Most of the 302 schools responding to the postal survey believed that the Artsmark application process and

the Award had helped them to increase the range of arts provision either very well or quite well, as Table 8 shows.

Table 8: Impact of Artsmark on range of arts provision

	Artsmark application process	Artsmark award
	%	%
Very well	24	27
Quite well	52	50
Not very well	12	11
Not at all well	7	5
No reply	5	7

Base sample: 302 Source: postal survey

The effectiveness of the application process was endorsed during telephone interviews. Over half of the 41 teachers and arts coordinators at schools that had achieved an award, and 15 of the 22 teachers at schools that had not achieved an award reported that the application process enabled them to identify gaps in provision. Individual examples given included identifying a bias towards provision for older pupils; the need to adjust boys’ access to dance; inclusion of more cultural diversity in the arts on offer; and more drama provision to improve linguistic skills.

3.4 Impact on links between arts subjects and other curriculum areas

Table 9 shows that more than half of the 302 schools replying to the postal questionnaire believed that Artsmark had a direct impact on increasing links between arts subjects and other curriculum areas. Over one third of respondents reported no change in this area.

Table 9: Impact of Artsmark on links between arts and other areas

	Increase	The same	Decrease	N/a, no information
	%	%	%	%
As a result of the Artsmark application process	56	37	-	3
As a result of the Artsmark award	52	41	-	3

Base sample: 302 Source: postal survey

Interviews with LEA advisers supported the view that Artsmark had encouraged increased links between the arts and other curriculum areas. All ten LEA advisers

interviewed believed that one of the key benefits of Artsmark was the encouragement for schools to examine the wider spectrum of arts provision within the context of the overall curriculum.

3.5 Impact on timetabled sessions/ lesson hours

Respondents to the postal survey were asked to state whether the number of timetabled sessions/lesson hours had changed as a result of Artsmark. Table 10 shows that most of the 302 schools replying to the survey reported that numbers had remained the same, with under one third reporting an increase.

Table 10: Impact of Artsmark on number of timetabled sessions

	Increase	The same	Decrease	N/a, no information
	%	%	%	%
As a result of the Artsmark application process	29	62	3	4
As a result of the Artsmark award	27	63	3	-

Base: 302 Source: postal survey

3.6 Impact on out of school hours opportunities

Analysis of the application forms for R1 in comparison with those of reapplicants showed that the number of regular weekly opportunities for pupils to take part in out of school hours arts activities had increased. The clearest example of this lies with the number of schools offering 51 or more out of school opportunities. The most marked increases were demonstrated at KS2 and KS4 and for post 16s, although of these cannot be attributed solely to Artsmark:

- at KS2 there had been a 13% increase in the number of schools offering this many out of school hours opportunities
- at KS4 there had been a 21% increase in the number of schools offering this many out of school hours opportunities
- for post 16s there has been a 20% increase in the number of schools offering this many out of school hours opportunities

3.7 Conclusions

Leadership and management context

The research findings showed that there were well-developed structures in schools through which arts initiatives such as Artsmark could be led and managed. It was also apparent that schools used a range of methods to inform people about the arts in their school, and placed a particular emphasis upon personal involvement through events, face to face reports, and open evenings. The schools

involved in this study also placed most emphasis upon personal observation and feedback for monitoring and reviewing the quality of arts provision.

Range of arts curriculum activities and links with other curriculum areas

Most schools perceived the Artsmark application process and award to have had a strong impact on the range of curriculum activities and experiences available. There was evidence not only of increased volume of activity as a result of Artsmark, but also work to remedy gaps in provision. The application process was clearly instrumental in helping staff to achieve this.

The impact of Artsmark on the relationship between the arts and other curriculum areas was also a positive one, and it is clear that Artsmark helped to position arts subjects more centrally within the context of the wider curriculum.

Timetabled sessions/ lesson hours

The number of lesson hours available within the compulsory curriculum is a relatively finite resource compared with other resources. Schools have to fit many competing priorities within the compulsory curriculum, not least those core subjects which feature most prominently in school performance tables. It was therefore striking to note that four in ten schools had managed to increase lesson hours available to arts subjects.

The lack of an increase in timetabled sessions/lesson hours in six out of ten schools may be because schools were already secure in their curriculum provision before deciding to apply for an Artsmark award.

Non-timetabled sessions

It was also noticeable that out of hours arts provision was increasing fast, particularly for schools that applied in R1 and subsequently reapplied. While Artsmark may not have been solely responsible for this, it supports the conclusion that most Artsmark schools experienced a wide ranging increase in opportunities for engagement with the arts.

4 Perceived changes in school ethos

4.1 Introduction

Chapter 4 explores the degree to which internal support for and involvement in the arts curriculum and in the development of arts policy has changed as a result of the Artsmark application process and award. This chapter also explores ways in which Artsmark enabled schools to recognise achievements in the arts.

4.2 Support for the arts

Teachers and arts coordinators were asked to identify their range of reasons for applying for an Artsmark award, and also to specify one main reason. Table 11 shows that nine out of ten of all schools were motivated to apply for Artsmark by the wish to increase internal support or recognition for the arts, and 29% gave this as their main reason for applying. Just over one third of schools were also motivated to apply because of the application process itself.

Table 11: Motivation to apply for Artsmark

	Any reason	Main reason
	%	%
To increase internal support/ recognition for the arts	90	29
To complete an audit of the school's arts provision	76	7

Base: 302 Source: postal survey

Most of the 29% of schools giving increased internal support for the arts as their main motivation to apply believed that the award had achieved this either very well (50%) or quite well (42%).

4.3 Development of arts policy

Responses to the postal survey showed that the process of applying for an Artsmark award was generally undertaken by more than one member of staff:

- 73% of schools involved arts teaching staff
- 40% of schools involved other teaching staff
- 33% of schools involved administrative staff in analysing facts and figures
- 42% of schools involved Governors in developing arts policy

There was less evidence to suggest that parents/carers were involved, and just 15% of schools stated that they had involved pupils in preparing the Artsmark application or developing arts policy.

Table 12 shows that 21% of schools strongly agreed and 56% quite agreed with the statement that Artsmark had significantly improved engagement with the arts among staff in the school.

Table 12: Impact of Artsmark on engagement with the arts

	%
Agree Strongly	21
Agree	56
Disagree	19
Disagree Strongly	1
No Reply	3
Base: 302 Source: postal survey	

More detailed responses are provided in Table 13. These findings showed that the area of greatest change was in increased awareness of arts policy among staff since the Artsmark application. It also showed that most schools (83%) believed that there had been change in arts policy since their original application.

Table 13: Development of arts policy since original Artsmark application

	%
Wider involvement of arts staff in the development of arts policy	53
Wider involvement of other staff in the development of arts policy	41
Increased awareness of arts policy among staff throughout the school	64
Increased policy awareness of parents / partner organisations / local community	46
There has been no change and arts policy since the original application	17
Base: 302 Source: postal survey	

4.4 Recognition of achievements

A common feature among the 41 head teachers and arts coordinators interviewed for this research was their main motivation to apply for Artsmark: all respondents referred to their wish to achieve recognition for a long standing commitment to arts provision. Individuals spoke passionately about their struggle to maintain an enriched curriculum that included arts experiences within the context of a focus upon core subjects.

Celebration was also important for all 41 of these interviewees: they expressed the view that achieving an Artsmark award had validated and refreshed their reputation.

All 10 LEA advisers interviewed described one of the impacts of the Artsmark application process and the award as increased credibility and self esteem. Three advisers provided evidence of schools where there had been an increased emphasis on the role of professional artists as a result of Artsmark. Individual LEA advisers also pointed to the role of Artsmark in raising the status of arts subjects that, alongside other practical subjects such as Physical Education and Design and Technology, had been traditionally perceived as 'non academic'.

4.5 Conclusions

Support and involvement

Among all of the areas examined in this study the strongest impact arising from Artsmark was on levels of internal support for, and awareness of arts policy and provision.

At first sight this seems a surprisingly intangible result for an application process that requires quantitative analysis of current provision. However, it was apparent that for those schools applying for Artsmark recognition there was a readiness and capacity for material change. This was triggered by their application and/or award with its associated evidence base. For example, it heightened awareness of strengths and weaknesses in relation to teacher numbers or range of provision.

Increases in internal support and awareness, and increased links across the curriculum, suggest that the Artsmark scheme helped schools to bring the arts closer to the centre of school agendas.

Responses to the postal survey showed that the Artsmark application process by necessity included a broad range of people, particularly teaching staff, administrative staff and Governors. This information, combined with the perspectives of LEA advisers, leads to the conclusion that Artsmark encouraged a broader range of people working in schools to engage with the arts.

5 Impact of changes in provision and ethos on pupils and teachers

5.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the degree to which Artsmark resulted in changes in the number of pupils accessing the arts curriculum, and any changes in professional development opportunities for staff. It then examines the impact on resources available for the arts in schools, usage of facilities for the arts, and any changes in external partnerships. Chapter 5 also assesses ways in which the external profile of schools has altered as a result of the Artsmark application process and award.

5.2 Impact on pupils

Teachers and arts coordinators were asked to identify whether there had been changes in the number of pupils accessing the arts curriculum as a result of the Artsmark application process and the award. Table 14 shows that more than half of schools stated that the number had remained the same, while over one third reported an increase.

Table 14: Impact of Artsmark on the number of pupils accessing the arts curriculum

	Increase	The same	Decrease	N/a, no information
	%	%	%	%
As a result of the Artsmark application process	39	51	1	6
As a result of the Artsmark award	35	56	1	3

Base sample: 302 Source: postal survey

When asked to describe the effects of an Artsmark award on pupils, most of the 41 head teachers and arts coordinators interviewed reported an increase in pride and self-esteem. However, seven comments were negative, with individuals believing that the impact was short lived and that an award with a financial benefit would have had a more lasting result.

5.3 Impact on staff

Levels of increases in staff support for and involvement in arts policy and practice have been described in Chapter 4 as one of the strongest impacts of Artsmark. Schools were also asked to identify any changes in levels of professional development opportunities for staff: as Table 15 shows the responses being

evenly divided between schools reporting increases and those for which levels remained the same.

Table 15: Impact of Artsmark on professional development opportunities for staff

	Increase %	The same %	Decrease %	N/a, no information %
As a result of the Artsmark application process	46	47	1	3
As a result of the Artsmark award	41	52	1	*

Base sample: 302 Source: postal survey

Most of the 41 head teachers and arts coordinators interviewed complained strongly about the time it took to complete the application process for Artsmark. They were of the opinion that Artsmark was more time consuming and onerous than other schemes such as Activemark, Investors in People, eco-schools, Healthy Schools and Beacon Status. The process was felt to be particularly difficult for small schools and special schools, with teachers struggling to complete the application.

However, the interviews also revealed that the benefits outweighed the problems. The main benefit identified was the increased profile of the arts in schools and, as a result, of the work of specialist teachers and those with some responsibility for the arts. The next benefit, identified by 26 of those interviewed, was the ability to make adjustments to provision, including staffing levels. Individual respondents talked of increased self esteem among staff members and also a focus upon arts skills and interests when recruiting classroom assistants.

5.4 Impact on resources available for arts in schools

The staff and pupils of Artsmark schools were also affected by the scheme’s impact upon the resources available for the arts. The results of the postal survey showed that resource levels for the arts had stayed the same in most schools. However, as tables 16a and 16b show, increases in human and financial resources were reported by just under one quarter of schools (24%), and increases in equipment were reported by four in ten schools.

Table 16a: Impact on resources as a result of the Artsmark application process

	Increase	The same	Decrease	N/a info not available
	%	%	%	%
Number of specialist teachers / teachers with an artform specialism	24	62	1	10
Financial resources available	24	65	4	6
Facilities and equipment	40	52	1	5

Base: 302 Source: postal survey

Table 16b: Impact on resources as a result of the Artsmark award

	Increase	The same	Decrease	N/a Info not available
	%	%	%	%
Number of specialist teachers / teachers with an artform specialism	25	62	1	1
Financial resources available	24	63	3	1
Facilities and equipment	37	55	1	*

Base: 302 Source: postal survey

5.5 Impact on facilities used for the arts in schools

Usage of onsite facilities

Analysis of application forms showed that schools reapplying for Artsmark or applying for the first time in R4 had higher usage of classrooms, ICT and other multimedia facilities for arts activities. However, as detailed in Table 17, R4 first time applicants were less likely to be using art and design classrooms, music rooms, specialist performing arts spaces or visual arts spaces.

Table 17: Usage of onsite facilities for arts activities

	R1	Reapplicants	R4 new applicants
	%	%	%
Art & Design Classrooms	79	81	46
Classrooms	30	28	73
ICT & other multi media facilities	66	91	87
Multipurpose hall	94	95	89
Multi-sensory room	2	2	2
Music room	81	84	57
Specialist music spaces	68	72	31
Specialist performing arts spaces	64	69	27
Specialist visual arts spaces	66	67	24

Base: R1 365 schools; Reapplicants 239 schools; R4 180 schools

Source: Artsmark application forms

Usage of offsite facilities

Artsmark application forms showed that schools reapplying after R1 had increased their usage of a range of offsite arts facilities, particularly of other schools, arts centres, and specialist performing arts spaces. Table 18 also shows that schools applying for the first time in R4 had higher levels of usage of other schools and art galleries than R1 applicants, but lower levels of most other offsite facilities.

Table 18: Usage of offsite arts facilities

	R1	Reapplicants	R4 first-time applicants
	%	%	%
None	22	7	16
Another school	24	43	36
Art Gallery	22	21	38
Arts Centre	24	36	14
Church / other religious building	13	12	11
Concert Hall	19	23	8
ICT & other multi media facilities	13	17	6
Library	3	3	4
Museum	4	4	4
Specialist music spaces	12	18	6
Specialist performing arts spaces	44	61	46

Base: R1 365 schools; Reapplicants 239 schools; R4 180 schools

Source: Artsmark application forms

5.6 Impact on external partnerships

Just under three quarters of the schools responding to the postal survey either strongly agreed (25%) or agreed (47%) with the statement that Artsmark had enabled them to develop new partnerships.

Almost seven in ten schools (69%) stated that the desire to develop new partnerships with professional arts organisations was a reason for applying for Artsmark, and three per cent stated this as their main reason. Table 19 below shows that respondents considered the application process to have resulted in more increases in partnerships than the award itself.

Table 19: Impact on external partnerships

	Increase	The same	Decrease	N/a no information
	%	%	%	%
As a result of the Artsmark application process	53	41	1	4
As a result of the Artsmark award	47	45	1	1

Base: 302 Source: postal survey

The results of the 41 telephone interviews with head teachers and arts coordinators at schools that had achieved an Artsmark award revealed few examples of the developments of new partnerships with external organisations. There were individual comments that initiatives with associated funding for arts partnership working, such as Creative Partnerships and schools with Specialist Arts status, achieved better results in this respect.

5.7 Impact on profile

Motivation to apply

Just over seven out of ten of the 302 schools responding to the postal survey said that they were also motivated to apply for Artsmark in order to raise their schools’ external profile. Table 20 shows that just over seven in ten schools wished to raise profile in the local community, and just over six in ten through the local media.

Table 20: Motivation to apply for Artsmark

	Any reason %	Main reason %
To raise the profile of the school in the local community	71	10
To raise the profile of the school through the media	61	4

Base: 302 Source: postal survey

The results of the postal survey showed that just under six in ten (59%) of the 302 schools responding believed that the profile of arts provision had increased as a result of the application process. As table 21 shows, a similar proportion believed that the profile of arts provision had increased as a result of the award.

Table 21: Impact on profile of arts provision with staff / governors / parents / pupils / local community

	Increase %	The same %	Decrease %	Don’t know/not applicable %
As a result of the Artsmark application process	59	36	-	3
As a result of the Artsmark award	57	35	1	1

Base: 302 Source: postal survey

As well as raising the profile of arts provision, most schools surveyed (87%) agreed that Artsmark had raised the profile of the school in the local community, as shown in table 22.

Table 22: Impact on profile of the school in the local community

	%
Agree strongly	27
Agree	60
Disagree	9
Disagree strongly	1
No reply	3

Base: 302 Source: postal survey

Interviews with head teachers and arts coordinators working in areas of deprivation or low academic performance also revealed how the Artsmark award had enhanced their schools' reputation. One school that had been in special measures had used Artsmark status to improve the morale of teachers and as a first measurement of public success. Another school with a reputation for sporting achievements had used Artsmark status to balance its external reputation.

For schools with Business and Enterprise or Sports and Science Status, Artsmark was seen as a means of assuring parents that the arts are not neglected or less well taught than elsewhere. For others, it has provided a stepping stone to Specialist Arts Status or Performing Arts Status.

Evidence of using Artsmark to raise the profile of the school through the media was patchy. Very few of the 41 head teachers and arts coordinators interviewed at schools with Artsmark awards had used the award to pursue press coverage. All ten LEA advisers described media reporting as very localised, although there was one example of an LEA playing an active role in generating.

Arts Council England recently commissioned an analysis report by Metrica into media coverage of R4 of the award. The key findings from this report support the data gathered from LEA advisers here in that all coverage was published in the regional press.

This limited the reach of Artsmark media to 5% of adults and parents who live in England. However, the frequency of coverage was high with each adult and parent seeing an article about the award an average of 12.6 times. Audience reach and frequency varied regionally but was approximately evenly split across socio-economic groups.

The report further showed that 44% of articles were strongly favourable and 56% slightly favourable of the scheme.

5.8 Conclusion

Pupil access and staff professional development

Just over half of the schools responding to this research (51%) reported no change in the number of pupils accessing the arts curriculum. However, four in ten schools do report an increase. Taken with reported increases of provision both in and out of school hours these factors provide a picture of increased provision and increased access to that provision.

There is evidence of considerable material change as a result of Artsmark. It has increased professional development opportunities for staff, the range of available curriculum activities, and the number of pupils accessing the curriculum. The fact that the application process itself is perceived to have had a stronger impact in these areas than achievement of the award reinforces earlier findings. The process is able to trigger changes in provision through a combination of a sound evidence base, heightened awareness and capacity for change.

Resources and facilities for the arts in schools

Levels of increase in facilities and equipment, and in staffing and financial resources are particularly surprising. While the increases were less marked than in other aspects of the evaluation, Artsmark had clearly played a part in increasing resources at just under one quarter of schools involved in this study. This is surprising for a scheme that provides no actual monetary reward to successful applicants.

Analysis of usage of onsite facilities suggests that schools applying for the first time in R4 are using more ICT and multimedia facilities and fewer specialist arts spaces. This implies that Artsmark has broadened its base to include schools where there is less dedicated arts provision. This conclusion is reinforced by higher usage of offsite arts facilities among reapplicants and R4 first time applicants.

External partnerships

There is some evidence from the postal survey that Artsmark generated more external partnerships, with over half of all schools reporting an increase. Increased usage of facilities in other schools and art galleries also implies that schools in later rounds had more external links in these areas. However, the overall impact of Artsmark upon the development of external partnerships is unclear, with the

information yielded by interviews contradicting the generally positive picture provided by the postal survey.

Profile and identity

It is noticeable that Artsmark had enabled schools to achieve change in areas that go beyond the scope of the scheme's aims and objectives. These included realignment of schools' reputation; providing a stepping stone for other awards; raising the profile of subjects not normally perceived to be academic; and celebrating achievements.

There was also evidence from a number of schools that Artsmark has helped to enhance reputation: this was particularly the case among schools in areas of deprivation, or schools with low academic achievement. An Artsmark award is seen as an important qualitative indicator.

The scheme has also helped schools and others to recognise ways in which arts provision can achieve a wide range of both academic and non-academic goals for pupils.

It was also apparent that Artsmark is perceived to have played a role in countering an emphasis on SATS, league tables, and other performance measures, and to have reintroduced breadth and balance into school life.

6 Changes in the external perception and profile of schools among LEAs

6.1 Introduction

This chapter of the Artsmark evaluation presents the findings of interviews with LEA advisers. It describes advisers' perceptions of the impact of the award upon schools achieving Artsmark, and upon relationships between Artsmark schools and LEAs.

6.2 Awareness and profile

The ten LEA advisers interviewed believed that achieving an Artsmark award results in wider awareness and recognition of individual schools throughout the local authority: they gave examples where the Artsmark scheme has been championed across the advisory network, and also referred to the celebrations as an important tool for harnessing support.

Half of the advisers interviewed also perceived Artsmark schools to have increased credibility as a result of external validation and, in some instances, to have received increased support from the local authority.

Individual art forms are perceived by five advisers to have increased in provision: dance was most regularly mentioned, followed by drama. Individual interviewees also described how LEA strategy has been influenced as a result.

6.3 Relationships with LEAs

Information obtained through interviews with the ten LEA advisers provided a number of individual examples where relationships between those advisers and individual schools have strengthened as a result of Artsmark. Direct involvement by advisers in the application process was one reason for this, and the second was involvement in the celebrations on achievement of an award.

6.4 Changes in schools

Comments made by LEA interviewees highlighted changes in the ways in which schools understand and support the arts. Of most importance to LEA advisers was the belief that schools applying for Artsmark began to look at arts provision as a whole, and as a result took a broader view of the arts in relation to other aspects of the curriculum.

Three advisers also commented upon increased proficiency among schools in measuring, counting, and tracking provision.

Additional outcomes identified were more process than resource based, and included increased credibility, greater esteem, and improved motivation.

6.5 Impacts on LEAs

All ten of the advisers interviewed were of the opinion that Artsmark had succeeded in raising the profile of the arts within their LEAs. In three cases Artsmark had led directly to the development of an arts strategy.

In addition, three LEA advisers believed that Artsmark contributed to an increased profile for the arts with elected members. Additional comments identified Artsmark as valuable for supporting the work of Creative Partnerships, and also as a useful tool for identifying and then remedying areas of weakness.

6.6 Conclusions

The level of personal commitment to Artsmark shown by all ten LEA advisers interviewed was remarkable, particularly considering their involvement with a range of other initiatives. They act as publicists, advocates, guides and champions; they are instrumental in encouraging first time applicants and reapplicants; and are well positioned as critical friends of the Artsmark scheme.

The advisers identified two main impacts of Artsmark: the first of these was wider awareness of the arts and Artsmark schools within local authorities, across the advisory network, and among elected members.

The second principal change identified was the ability of schools to take a more comprehensive view of arts provision, and of the arts in relation to the wider curriculum. It is noticeable that this reflected the views of head teachers and arts coordinators who responded to the postal survey: Artsmark's impact on raising the profile of arts policy, generating links across the curriculum, and increasing dance and drama provision is further reinforced.

7 Artsmark across different phases of education: a comparison

7.1 Introduction

Chapter 7 firstly provides a contextual analysis of the different phases of school applying for, and achieving Artsmark during the first four rounds of the scheme. It then compares differences in resource levels, roles and responsibilities for the arts, and in methods of monitoring arts provision. The impact of Artsmark upon arts provision on primary, secondary and special schools is then evaluated.

7.2 Application by phase of school

In R1 of the scheme the largest proportion of primary schools applied for Artsmark, whereas the largest proportion of secondary schools applied for Artsmark gold, as table 23 shows. Most special schools applied for Artsmark silver.

Table 23: R1 applications by phase of school and level of application

	Primary %	Secondary %	Special No. of schools
Artsmark	39	15	2
Artsmark silver	29	34	6
Artsmark gold	32	51	4

Base: Primary 105 schools; Secondary 248 schools; Special 12 schools

Source: Arts Council England records

Table 24 details the phases of schools reapplying in R2, R3 and R4: reapplications among primary schools were more weighted towards Artsmark gold, and over eight in ten schools at secondary phase applied for Artsmark gold. Most special schools applied for Artsmark gold.

Table 24: R2, R3, R4 reapplications by phase of school and level of application

	Primary %	Secondary %	Special No. of schools
Artsmark	8	5	2
Artsmark silver	36	13	-
Artsmark gold	56	83	5

Base: Primary 64 schools; Secondary 168 schools; Special 7 schools

Source: Arts Council England records

Table 25 shows that the breakdown of the phases of schools applying for the first time in R4 was more evenly distributed across all Artsmark levels than in previous years.

Table 25: R4 1st time applications by phase of school and level of application

	Primary %	Secondary %	Special No. of schools	PRU No. of schools
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Artsmark	25	26	3	1
Artsmark silver	35	35	2	-
Artsmark gold	40	39	4	-

Base: Primary 124 schools; Secondary 46 schools; Special 9 schools; PRU 1 school

Source: Arts Council England records

7.3 Specialist arts teachers

Analysis of application forms for each Artsmark round has produced a detailed picture of the specialist arts resources available to primary, secondary and special schools. Key indicators are summarised below.

- Most secondary schools employ at least one full time specialist arts teacher for each subject. In R1 over one half (53%) of secondary schools employed between 11 and 20 full time specialist arts teaching staff. Among R4 first time applicants the figures were lower, with just 11% employing 11 – 20 full time specialist arts teaching staff.
- Figures for primary schools show lower levels of employment of full time specialist arts teachers. In R1 over eight in ten schools did not have full time specialist dance, drama, music, or art and design teachers.
- Primary schools are more reliant upon part time specialist arts teachers, and peripatetic instrument teachers are more numerous.
- Few primary schools employ one full time specialist arts teacher for each subject.

7.4 Roles and responsibilities

The findings of the postal survey showed that higher proportions of secondary schools had clear roles and budgetary responsibilities for arts provision; had a designated Governor with responsibility for the arts; and held regular reviews by arts subject curriculum coordinators. Table 26 provides the full details by phase of school.

Table 26: Roles and responsibilities for arts provision and policy

	Primary (130 schools) %	Secondary (163 schools) %	Special (9 schools) No. of schools
Budgetary allocations and arrangements for all areas of the arts are transparent and used effectively	86	95	9
All teachers job descriptions include some responsibility for all arts / creativity across the curriculum	63	17	3
Designated Governor(s) have special responsibility for arts provision	63	76	5
Management roles and responsibilities for all aspects of arts provision are clearly designated	92	98	9
Schemes of work for the arts are effectively used by both arts specialists and non specialists	96	79	8
Subject / curriculum coordinators for art and design, dance, music and drama regularly meet together (at least termly)	56	82	7

Base: 302 Source: postal survey

Information obtained during interviews with head teachers and arts coordinators also revealed that responsibility for arts provision at primary schools tends to be shared, with most job descriptions including some aspects of arts activity.

Head teachers in primary schools and special schools were also more involved in the co-ordination of the Artsmark application: six head teachers in these phases personally co-ordinated the application, and at ten other schools the head teacher was part of a working group. In the 17 secondary schools included in the study the Artsmark application process was led by an arts coordinator, specialist arts teacher, and/or head of an arts department.

7.5 Methods of monitoring arts provision

Respondents were asked to identify which, if any methods they use to monitor arts provision in their schools. The main difference between the different phases was the higher use of reports to senior leadership teams, and use of attainment data in secondary schools.

Observation of pupils, feedback from pupils, and observation of teaching were used by high proportions of schools across all phases, as Table 27 shows.

Table 27: Monitoring methods used

	Primary (130 schools) %	Secondary (163 schools) %	Special (9 schools) No. of schools
Observation of pupils performance / work	97	100	9
Feedback from pupils	85	93	9
Appraisal of pupils' work	78	89	9
Observation of teaching	85	99	9
Regular reviews by arts subject curriculum coordinators	51	71	6
Regular reviews within teams of teachers	34	69	4
Reports to senior leadership team	52	91	6
Feedback from parents / carers	56	60	8
Analysis of attainment data	23	96	5
External review	48	61	7

Base: 302 Source: postal Survey

7.6 Motivation to apply for an Artsmark award

Table 28 presents schools' main reasons for applying for an Artsmark award, detailed by phase of school. This shows that the largest proportion of primary schools (37%) was motivated to apply in order to increase and broaden pupil access to the arts curriculum. The largest proportion of secondary schools (34%) was motivated to apply to increase internal support and recognition for the arts. Special schools' motivations were evenly divided between these two reasons.

Table 28: Main reason for applying for Artsmark

	Primary (130 schools) %	Secondary (163 schools) %	Special (9 schools) No. of schools
To increase internal support / recognition for the arts	23	34	22
To develop new partnerships with professional arts providers	4	3	-
To increase and broaden pupil access to the arts curriculum	37	23	22
To raise the profile of the school through the media	2	4	-
To raise the profile of the school in the local community	8	12	11
To complete an audit of the school's art provision	8	6	-
Other	8	7	11
No reply	10	10	33

Base: 302 Source: postal survey

7.7 Impact of Artsmark upon arts policy and involvement

An analysis of schools' evaluation of the development of arts policy since their Artsmark application showed that primary schools reported a greater increase in awareness of policy among staff, and involvement of other staff, than secondary schools. Table 29 also shows that secondary schools reported a wider involvement of arts staff in the development of policy.

Table 29: Development of arts policy since Artsmark application

	Primary (130 schools)	Secondary (163 schools)	Special (9 schools)
	%	%	No. of schools
Increased awareness of arts policy among staff throughout the school	74	56	5
wider involvement of arts staff in the development of arts policy since the application	42	63	4
increased policy awareness among parents, partners organisations and the local community	45	47	4
wider involvement of other staff in the development of arts policy	50	34	5
there has been no change in arts policy	16	17	1

Base: 302 Source: postal survey

Table 30 also shows that respondents in primary schools were more likely to agree with the statement that Artsmark improved staff engagement with the arts.

Table 30: Artsmark has significantly improved engagement with the arts among staff in our school

	Primary (130 schools)	Secondary (163 schools)	Special (9 schools)
	%	%	No. of schools
Agree strongly	28	15	3
Agree	58	55	4
Disagree	10	28	1
Disagree strongly	1	1	-
No reply	3	2	1

Base: 302 Source: postal survey

7.8 Impact of Artsmark on school profile

When asked to evaluate whether Artsmark has raised the profile of the school in the local community responses were similar across primary, secondary and

special schools. Table 31 shows that most respondents either strongly agreed or agreed with this statement.

Table 31: Artsmark has raised the profile of our school in the local community

	Primary (130 schools) %	Secondary (163 schools) %	Special (9 schools) %
Agree strongly	30	25	33
Agree	57	63	56
Disagree	8	11	-
Disagree strongly	1	1	-
No reply	5	1	11

Base: 302 Source: postal survey

7.9 Overall response to Artsmark

During interviews with head teachers and arts coordinators, the 16 respondents from primary and special schools raised repeated concerns about the level of resources required to complete the Artsmark application process. Despite these reservations, the results of the postal survey showed that primary schools were significantly more positive about the impact of the application process and award.

Respondents from primary schools were markedly more positive than secondary schools in a number of key areas. Higher proportions of primary schools:

- Stated that Artsmark has been very useful in meeting their main reason for applying
- Reported increases in awareness of arts policy and wider engagement of staff
- Referred to wider involvement of staff other than specialist arts teachers in the development of arts policy
- Reported an increase in the range of arts provision
- Reported an increased profile of arts education
- Cited development of new partnerships

Interviews with four teachers in special schools revealed a perception that the Artsmark application criteria are biased against special schools, and that it is particularly difficult for them to achieve the volume of arts provision required.

7.10 Conclusions Applications

As the Artsmark scheme has matured the base number of primary schools applying has grown steadily, and it is apparent that schools at both primary and secondary phases have grown more ambitious in their applications for gold.

Resource levels

Secondary schools appeared to be far better resourced to complete the application process, meet the Artsmark criteria, and to achieve an award than primary schools. Indeed, secondary schools were more likely to apply for Artsmark gold, and to want to use the Artsmark award to raise external profile over and above achieving internal change.

Head teachers and arts coordinators working in primary schools described particular difficulties with completing the application forms, and figures for specialist arts staff and other resources showed that were working from a lower resource base.

However, it is clear that the arts is more of a shared activity at the primary phase, with stronger ownership and shared responsibilities. In relation to this, it is also significant that applications from primary schools were more reliant on one individual to drive the process.

Monitoring of arts provision

Secondary schools have become increasingly accustomed to the routine collection and interpretation of data, and Artsmark schools in this phase clearly make regular and systematic use of attainment data. This is another reason why the application process would have felt less onerous for head teachers and arts coordinators in secondary schools.

Value of Artsmark: secondary phase

One of the most striking ingredients of this evaluation of Artsmark lies in the responses of head teachers and arts coordinators in primary schools compared with secondary schools. Secondary school respondents were less enthusiastic about the value of the Artsmark application process and the award than their counterparts in primary schools. Although the majority of areas were rated as 'quite good', they are less inclined to rate the impacts of the scheme as 'very good'.

The reasons for their more equivocal views are complex. Firstly, the quantitative research findings showed that the Artsmark award is perceived to be least successful in raising the external profile of schools: with profile raising being a more significant motivator for secondary schools it is therefore

logical that they should provide a weaker rating for the impact of Artsmark as a whole.

Information provided during interviews with head teachers and arts coordinators showed less evidence of individual drive and ownership of the process in secondary schools. In part this would be because of the range of specialist teachers involved. It may also be a reflection of the organisational culture in larger organisations. Thirdly, as there already exists a more extensive range of measures of success in the arts in secondary than in primary schools, in the form of examination results at 16 and beyond, it may be that additional forms of accreditation carry relatively less weight.

Fourthly, the Artsmark application process was seen as less onerous for secondary schools: as a result, the sense of reward and achievement may be lower than for primary schools.

Value of Artsmark: primary phase

Interviews with head teachers and arts coordinators show that the process in primary schools was more likely to be driven by one enthusiast. Most commonly this was a head teacher who owned the project and therefore felt a personal sense of reward from a successful application.

Secondly, primary schools were starting from a lower base in resources for arts provision and development of arts policy. Positive change is therefore more marked.

Thirdly, although teachers in primary schools found the application process more difficult and time consuming most felt that the process itself had been very helpful: achieving an award through such a rigorous procedure had enhanced their appreciation of the process.

Value of Artsmark: special schools

While special schools have not been less successful in achieving an Artsmark Award, it is clear that perceptions of bias and concerns about difficulty of the application process need to be addressed.

8 Effects of not achieving Artsmark

8.1 Introduction

This chapter evaluates the positive and negative impact upon schools that applied for Artsmark and did not achieve success with their first application. The information is derived from 22 telephone interviews with head teachers, and also takes account of the perspectives of LEA advisers.

8.2 Positive effects of not achieving Artsmark

Twelve of the 22 head teachers interviewed understood and accepted the reasons why their school had not achieved an Artsmark award, and were able to point to benefits of undergoing the application process.

They commented that the audit of arts provision had helped them to clarify arts policy and arts planning; had proved a good team building exercise; and had provided good models and standards. The rigour of the process was important to these people.

There was no evidence that the amount or range of arts provision has decreased within schools that did not achieve an award, nor that partnerships or resources had been withdrawn.

Eight of the 22 schools involved in this aspect of the evaluation went on to reapply successfully, and at the time of interview four were planning to reapply.

8.3 Negative effects of not achieving Artsmark

There was strong criticism from all 22 head teacher interviewees that the process is difficult, time consuming, formulaic, old fashioned, irrelevant and confusing.

Ten of the 22 interviewees cannot identify beneficial results of the application process. Instead they describe demoralisation, demotivation, and loss of confidence in key arts personnel. Criticisms are also raised that the Artsmark scheme focuses on quantity at the expense of quality.

Likewise, 10 of those interviewed said they would not apply again: the most negative perspectives originated from smaller smaller schools and special schools. LEA advisers also confirmed that the process has been particularly difficult for special schools.

The 10 LEA advisers interviewed tended not to know which schools in their area had applied for Artsmark and not achieved an award. They identified this as a

problem with the process, since they are not in a position to assist with reapplications, or to work with a school to improve performance. In some instances, LEA advisers questioned the criteria that had been used to judge individual schools, and stated that they would welcome a closer dialogue with the Artsmark assessors.

8.4 Conclusions

The most disturbing feature of interviews with the head teachers in schools that did not achieve Artsmark was the degree of disaffection expressed. Management of disappointment is an important issue here, particularly the communication of full explanations and ensuring that schools understand the reasons.

In addition there were examples where more after care or assistance from LEA advisers could have minimised damaged feelings and reduced the negative impacts on staff. However, unless LEA advisers know which schools have applied and been turned down for an award, they are not in a position to help with this.

It comes as a surprise, therefore, that although the application process was severely criticised by all 22 of the head teachers interviewed, more than half of these describe the outcome of the application process as beneficial.

There is an apparent contradiction, therefore, between their complaints about the level of detail required and their appreciation of a process that is rigorous: it is clear that the management and communication of the decision is more at issue than the application process itself.

9 The role of Arts Council England

9.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an evaluation of the role of Arts Council England in delivering Artsmark. It is based upon the findings of interviews with head teachers and arts coordinators at schools that achieved an Artsmark award, and also with those who did not achieve an award. The views of LEA advisers are also included.

9.2 The role of Arts Council England

Seventy out of the total of 73 head teachers, arts coordinators LEA advisers interviewed believed that Arts Council England is the most relevant organisation to design, administer and deliver Artsmark. The main reason for this was the view that Arts Council England has an authoritative branding as a cultural organisation, and brings with it the ability to strengthen the profile of arts in schools. Additional reasons included the perceptions that Arts Council England brings credibility to the awards; that it is independent of the DfES; and that it is an objective body with no direct influence over schools.

Three LEA advisers also commented that Artsmark had raised awareness of Arts Council England among some schools, and that it had no undue positive or negative influence on the kinds of schools that apply.

Most of those interviewed for this study claimed to use the Arts Council England/Artsmark logo on school letterheads, and to display awards certificates in school buildings. However, three LEA advisers were concerned that schools continued to use the logo after the term of their Artsmark award had expired.

9.3 Conclusions

There is clear-cut support for Arts Council England as the organisation that is most appropriate to design and deliver Artsmark. Arts Council England's branding and its independence from the DfES are of particular importance.

It is also significant that LEA advisers remarked on an educational process that has been mutually beneficial: they perceived schools to have become more aware of Arts Council England's role, and Arts Council England to have increased its understanding of the formal education sector.

10 Achievement of Artsmark aims

10.1 Introduction

Chapter 10 restates the two main aims of Artsmark, and evaluates the degree to which respondents involved in this study believed these aims had been achieved.

10.2 Artsmark aim 1: to encourage schools to increase the range of arts that are provided to children in schools

Over three quarters of the respondents to the postal survey (76%) believed that the Artsmark application process had helped them to increase the range of arts provision in their school: 24% stated that the process had increased the range of arts provided very well, and 52% quite well.

Table 32 shows that a slightly higher proportion felt that the award had assisted with increased provision than those who felt that the application process had helped them to increase provision.

Table 32: Evaluation of Artsmark Aim 1: to encourage schools to increase the range of arts provision

	Very well %	Quite well %	Not very well %	Not at all well %
How well has the application process increased the range of arts that are provided to children in your school	24	52	12	7
How well has the award increased the range of arts that are provided to children in your school	27	50	11	5

Base: 302 Source: postal survey

Table 33 overleaf summarises the details obtained from application forms for each round of Artsmark, and shows increases in usage of onsite facilities for the arts in all areas except for specialist music spaces and classrooms. The greatest increase was in the usage of IT and other multimedia facilities.

Table 33: Change in usage of onsite facilities used for the arts

	R1	R2, R3 & R4 reapplicants
	%	%
multipurpose hall	94	95
music room	81	84
art and design classrooms	79	81
specialist music spaces	68	72
ICT and other multimedia facilities	66	91
specialist visual arts spaces	66	67
specialist performing arts spaces	64	69
other	52	54
classrooms	30	28
multi-sensory room	2	2

Base: R1 365 schools; R2, R3, R4 239 schools

Source: Artsmark application forms

10.3 Artsmark aim 2: to raise the profile of arts education

Nine out of ten respondents to the postal survey (90%) also stated that the Artsmark award has been either very helpful or quite helpful in raising the profile of arts education in school: 51% stated that the award had raised the profile very well, and 39% stated that the award had raised the profile quite well.

Table 34 shows that 84% of respondents to the postal survey stated that the Artsmark application process had raised the profile of arts education in their school either very well or quite well.

Table 34: Evaluation of Artsmark aim 2: to raise the profile of arts education

	Very well	Quite well	Not very well	Not at all well
	%	%	%	%
How well has the application process raised the profile of arts education in your school	33	51	9	2
How well has the award raised the profile of arts education in your school	51	39	5	2

Base sample: 302 Source: postal survey

10.4 Conclusions

The findings described above, together with the overall picture provided by other chapters of this study, add up to a positive assessment of the impact of Artsmark. This conclusion is underpinned by head teachers' and arts coordinators' assessment of the degree to which the Artsmark scheme has achieved its aims, and the results are unambiguous. Most of those involved in this evaluation believed that Artsmark has encouraged schools to increase the range of arts provision provided to children in schools, and has raised the profile of arts education.

11 Key themes

11.1 Introduction

Chapter 11 provides the consultancy team's interpretation of the main themes and messages arising from the research data. It begins by describing the importance of Artsmark's rigorous application process, and then identifies ways in which Artsmark has helped to achieve wider recognition and ownership of the arts in schools. The chapter also describes the wider range of impacts achieved by Artsmark, and its reliance upon support from committed individuals.

11.2 A rigorous process

Impact of application process

The analysis in the previous chapters of this evaluation not only demonstrated that most schools in this study believed that the Artsmark scheme achieved its aims, but also showed that additional outcomes had been achieved.

Analysis of the postal survey responses consistently pointed to higher impacts arising from the application process rather than from the achievement of the award itself. This was supported by evidence from interviews, for while head teachers and arts coordinators expressed considerable concern about the resources required to complete the application, they also appreciated its rigour.

The rigour in turn provides the scheme, and the schools who achieve awards, with added credibility and endorsement. Unlike some other awards mentioned by teachers and LEA advisers, Artsmark is not simply a badge collection exercise.

11.3 Looking outwards

Recognition

The Artsmark scheme has played an important role in recognising schools' existing strengths, improving processes and procedures, and pointing to ways forward in engaging in new developments.

The evaluation has shown the degree to which individual schools' engagement with Artsmark is dependent on the energy and commitment of key individuals, whether they be a head teacher, an arts coordinator, or an LEA advisor.

Achievement of an award, therefore, is an important source of affirmation for individual champions of arts developments in schools. This is particularly the case where, for some time, they have had to compete for resources with colleagues responsible for curriculum areas that have traditionally had higher status.

Broader ownership

Artsmark has demonstrated how ownership of the arts can be broadened by harnessing the commitment and energy of individual arts specialists alongside other colleagues and partners in evaluation of provision and policy.

This evaluation has identified a number of indicators of broadening ownership of the arts in schools. For example, respondents to the postal survey believed that Artsmark had broadened ownership of the arts beyond arts specialists to include other staff; links with other areas of the curriculum have also increased; there is wider involvement in development of arts policy; and a sizeable number of schools have designated governors with specialist responsibility for arts provision.

Increased awareness

Increased awareness among parents, partner organisations and the local community, coupled with increased use of offsite arts facilities, also illustrate the degree to which Artsmark has helped schools to widen ownership of arts policy and provision. The Artsmark process can also lead to a more outward facing culture of development.

11.4 Range of outcomes, scale of change

Degrees of change

Change has taken place in most areas of school practice: generally half or more schools point to very or quite high degrees of change, and change has taken place in most areas for more than one quarter of respondents.

The highest degree of change has been in internal school processes and procedures. This is consistent with schools' main reasons for applying for Artsmark. It is evident that changed processes are necessary to achieving changed outcomes.

The extent of these changes is surprising because of the lack of funding associated with Artsmark. While some respondents have expressed regret that there are not more concrete outcomes associated with achieving Artsmark status, the data demonstrates extensive tangible changes in Artsmark schools.

The results of this evaluation show increases in curriculum provision; resource allocation such as equipment, specialist teachers, and timetabled arts time; links with other subjects; and professional development for teachers.

The scale of change that has been associated with applying and, in many cases, achieving an Artsmark award points to Artsmark as being a significant catalyst. It appears that those schools applying for an award had a range of conditions in place that facilitated subsequent change. It may be that one of the most important features of Artsmark is a school's ability to apply at a time that best suits its stage of development in the arts, as well as its capacity to develop further.

The change process

Overall this evaluation suggests that the formula for change involves a school's readiness for change at the point of applying for Artsmark; committed individuals who act as drivers for change; the Artsmark application process and award; and resulting changes in awareness and provision.

Range of impacts

This study has also identified a wide range of impacts that exceed the original Artsmark scheme's aims to increase the range of arts provided and to raise the profile of arts education. These include increased support and awareness among staff, governors, parents and the LEA; validation for and celebration of the arts in schools; changes to individual schools' reputation and profile; and increased status of arts subjects, reflecting perhaps an awareness of the significance of the arts to children's academic learning and personal development.

11.5 Sustained engagement

Commitment

Artsmark is an inclusive process, and its success relies on highly committed individuals in arts roles in schools and LEAs.

The LEA regions that have retained a consistent interest in Artsmark from R1 to R4 demonstrate consistent support from enthusiastic teachers, often guided by equally committed LEA advisers. This is also the case with schools that have made reapplications.

The need for support

It is apparent that many Artsmark schools have strong leadership and management structures in place. Some, particularly smaller schools, special schools and primary schools, have a weaker infrastructure for arts provision, although strong leadership may be in place. The importance of supporting applicants with different levels of need and experience, and keeping them informed, is key to positive engagement with Artsmark.

The same is true of schools that did not achieve Artsmark. While some acknowledge positive outcomes of the application process, staff in key roles felt professionally damaged and de-motivated as a result. Negative results also need to be managed carefully, and turned to advantage wherever possible.

12 Areas for consideration and development

12.1 Introduction

The final chapter of this evaluation provides a list of potential areas for the further development of the Artsmark application process and of the Artsmark award. Chapter 12 covers administrative aspects of Artsmark, from the application process to the three levels of the award, from criteria for different types of schools to communication and dissemination. The suggestions included in this chapter are made by the consultancy team unless stated otherwise.

12.2 The application process

Although there has been substantial criticism of the resources required to complete the application form it would be a mistake to opt for a procedure that is less rigorous. This would devalue the award itself and the sense of achievement.

While there should be no relaxation in the information required of schools when applying for Artsmark, Arts Council England needs to do everything possible to simplify the procedures.

One interviewee suggested the refinement of online application forms to make them as easy as possible to complete, with facilities such as wizards to make calculations easy. A number of comments referred to the ease with which online forms could be updated.

12.3 Artsmark levels

A review of comments concerning the structure of the award concludes that is no need to revise the tiers of the award, although consideration does need to be given to the next steps for schools achieving Artsmark gold. One option would be for these schools to be invited to become Artsmark Leaders, requiring them to support other LEA schools in applying for Artsmark.

12.4 Applicant profile

Only one in 20 of the first-time applicants in R4 have any full-time arts teachers, suggesting that the scheme may now be reaching schools that are starting from a lower resource base. In future it would be useful for Arts Council England to evaluate whether schools that are less secure about their curricular provision are beginning to apply, and whether in turn a broader range of schools are responding to the Artsmark scheme.

12.5 Application criteria

Flexibility for small primary schools and special schools

Representatives of small primary and special schools, together with LEA advisers, made a strong case for more flexibility in key criteria / supporting evidence as these relate to special schools and very small primary schools. This would ensure that criteria associated with each Artsmark tier enables appropriate judgments to be made about range of provision that are within the capacity of smaller schools.

Individual suggestions made by teachers included a more flexible framework for calculating lesson time: school days in special schools are typically more integrated. Another example provided was the volume of out of hours arts experience required for special schools, since health and safety, accommodation and transport requirements can constrain access to provision.

Arts Council England guidelines do describe flexibilities for small schools, special schools and PRUs. However, the consultation process highlighted patchy awareness of these, and as a result highlights the need for a bolder, more transparent articulation of such flexibilities.

Additional suggestions

Additional criteria that might be incorporated in future, as suggested by teachers and LEA advisers, are as follows:

- consideration of whether there is sufficient evaluation of inclusion of different groups of pupils and their parents/carers in school provision. For example, the proportions of minority ethnic groups, gifted and talented pupils, mobile pupils, looked after children or pupils with Special Educational Needs who take part in school performances compared with the proportions of these groups in the school's pupil population as a whole
- development of awards for individual pupils who demonstrate particular achievements or progress in engaging with the arts
- examination of school charging policies for involvement in arts events to support access of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds
- evidence that schools in receipt of targeted arts funding from Creative Partnerships or as Specialist Arts Schools are supporting developments in non-targeted schools

- evidence that any expansion of out of hours provision is accompanied by an expansion, rather than a diminution, of timetabled day time provision
- confirmation that schools have robust systems in place for counting curriculum provision and uptake, tracking provision, and monitoring change
- proof that school evaluation of provision draws on satisfaction surveys of pupils and their parents/carers
- evidence of communication / publicity strategies, and monitoring of these. For example, through the collection of local newspaper cuttings

The consultancy team also suggests that Arts Council England might also consider asking schools to provide one case study to illustrate key criteria and highlight quality rather than range of provision. This would be particularly helpful in supporting judgements about applications from smaller schools, and would necessarily include evaluation evidence from pupils. Such an approach would help to offset criticisms by some head teachers and LEA advisers that Artsmark takes too little account of quality rather than quantity of provision.

Artsmark assessors would need to receive guidance and training on any changes in criteria and supporting evidence.

12.6 Communication

Management of expectations

Arts Council England does need to check and challenge the transparency of its decision making processes, and improve communication of the criteria to schools that do not achieve an award.

Management of expectations and disappointments is a particular issue. Early interventions might minimise this problem. This could include providing support for applicants, through the LEA adviser or from elsewhere, who have not fulfilled all criteria during the initial application/ validation process.

There needs to be an aftercare system for schools that do not achieve an award, including personal as well as written communication; suggestions for ways in which gaps could be filled; provision of relevant examples of schools that have achieved an award; and encouraging liaison with the LEA Arts adviser where possible.

Recognition and reward

Artsmark's reliance on committed individuals has already been observed. Consideration needs to be given as to how these key people can be rewarded in the long term. The awards ceremonies are clearly a means of achieving this, and Arts Council England needs to ensure that these are of a consistently high standard. The opportunity to meet high profile artists and makers at the ceremonies would also prove very rewarding for individual teachers and LEA advisers.

Increased media profile

There is evidence from the interviews with head teachers and LEA advisers that there are wasted opportunities for achieving media profile. This applies to Arts Council England, the LEAs, and the schools involved. There needs to be a more coherent strategy for cultivating media coverage, and it is clear that schools need assistance with this.

It may be that Arts Council England's press office could make more of the opportunities provided by Artsmark, and that Arts Council England could play a role in brokering coverage between the schools and LEA advisers. Part of the media strategy would also be the publicising of successful case studies, particularly of schools that have grown and changed since the inception of the Artsmark scheme.

In the meantime, Arts Council England has commissioned a separate analysis of the media coverage generated by Artsmark.

Dissemination

Dissemination of schools' experiences of applying for Artsmark, and the results they have achieved, is also an important part of the communication process. While some LEAs are keenly involved in this there would be opportunities for Arts Council England intervention in areas where there is less activity or where there is no designated LEA arts adviser.

Clear communication procedures

Reference has been made to schools that are operating within the Creative Partnerships scheme, and to schools that have Specialist Arts Status. Teachers and LEA advisers interviewed for this evaluation themselves referred to a range of other initiatives to which Artsmark contributes.

As the context for schools becomes more complex arts teachers and advisers need to be clear about the range of cultural initiatives that are developing with and for the education sector. They also need to be clear about the ways in which these can contribute to achieving educational outcomes.

The consultancy team believes that it is therefore important that Arts Council England takes a lead in ensuring:

- clear communication strategies to explain the difference and relative benefits of individual initiatives
- comparable data collection requirements so that schools involved in applying for more than one scheme can use one data set
- collation and dissemination of evaluation results to provide a wider picture

12.7 LEAs

LEA advisers

The relationship between LEA advisers and schools that are applying to Artsmark for the first time is very important. This study has shown that where advisers are supportive and active the schools benefit greatly, particularly in being motivated to apply and in preparing their applications.

The advisers interviewed for this evaluation are also major advocates for Artsmark and in this respect undertake a validating role similar to the Arts Council England network of validators. It is therefore important to see them as an extension of the Arts Council England Artsmark team, and to reward them as much as possible. The Arts Council could run regional events/ surgeries for LEA advisers encouraging and evidencing impact of central support and involvement in the process.

Further involvement of LEAs

By the same token, Arts Council England needs to consider ways of supporting schools where the LEA is less involved or where there is no designated LEA Arts adviser. It may be that those advisers who have acted as advocates of the award, could be used to re-invigorate the profile of Artsmark in local regions where it appears to have lost momentum.

One option would be for Arts Council England to identify leading Artsmark LEAs, for example based on those who consistently achieve a year on year increase in

applications and awards. These leading LEAs could then act as peer reviewers for other LEAs in their region, assisted by officers from Arts Council England.

Another option would be for officers in Arts Council regions to target LEAs that are not yet participating, and develop a peer review framework among schools and LEAs. Indeed, peer review could be a significant source of evidence when schools apply for Artsmark gold or to become an Artsmark Leader.

There are also strong arguments for informing LEA advisors about schools that have applied for Artsmark and have not achieved an award. As well as encouraging schools to contact their LEA, Arts Council England might suggest that schools invite their adviser to share in the feedback.

An alternative approach would be to define a core of information that schools understand will be shared with the LEA, with confidentiality retained over other aspects of the application form.

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