

The *Ildsjæl* in the Classroom
A Review of Danish Arts Education in the
Folkeskole

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April 2006



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Acknowledgements

The authors wish to thank teachers and principals at *Grantofteskolen* (Ballerup), *Humlehaveskolen* (Voldsmose, Odense), *Lisbjergskolen* (Aarhus), *Mattæusgade Skole* (City of Copenhagen) and *Åløkkeskolen* (Central Odense). We are grateful to staff from *Aarhus Dag- og Aftenseminarium*, *AROS*, *Billedskolen*, *Dansekonsulenterne*, *Levende Musik i Skolen*, *The Ministry of Education*, *The Ministry of Culture* and the *Danish UNESCO Committee* for taking time to see us. We are especially grateful to Jan Helmer-Pedersen (*Børnekulturnetværket*) and to Vagn Jelsøe (*Kunststyrelsen*).

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Organisation of the report

The Danish Arts Council commissioned a review of arts education provisions and quality within Danish *folkeskole*. The report presents a societal context of Danish arts education, and its philosophical underpinnings. The report analyses current Danish arts education in the light of the espoused ideals as outlined in primary and secondary legislation. An assessment of Danish arts education in comparative perspective (based on case studies as well as quantitative data) leads to a set of recommendations.

Terms of reference

To address the following questions within the context of *folkeskole* and related informal learning situation:

- What are the strengths and weaknesses of arts education for children between the ages of 5-15 years?
- In relation to international indicators of quality arts education, which characteristics are apparent in Danish arts education and which areas need attention?
- What recommendations, initiatives and strategies can be applied to improve arts education?



Introduction

The Danish Arts Council commissioned a review of arts education provisions and quality within Danish *folkeskole*. Though it is widely considered that Danish education is creative and supportive of arts outcomes, the results of this report suggest that a number of improvements are needed in enhancing the quality of arts education both within school and the informal leisure activities for children. Moreover, in the last round of *PISA* measurement, Danish education scored comparatively poorly on measurements of literacy and numeracy. Given the identified link between arts-rich education and the improvement of quality of traditional core subjects, this begs the question if Danish arts education is as good as has traditionally been assumed.

This report examines the connection between quality education and arts-rich education in Denmark. The research places the Danish system of arts education in the context of international research, which indicates that significant improvements in educational outcomes (especially in literacy) are achieved where embedded, arts-rich cultural education is in place.

Under the terms of reference, the following questions guided the study:

- What are the strengths and weaknesses of arts education for children between the ages of 5-15 years?
- In relation to international indicators of quality arts education, which characteristics are apparent in Danish arts education and which areas need attention?
- What recommendations, initiatives and strategies can be applied to improve arts education?

To determine this, the report uses existing research, interviews and field case studies to conduct a correlation study examining the connection between arts and creativity related variables and educational quality within Denmark. The study was undertaken by an arts education expert and a policy implementation expert. It involved:

- Examination of case studies from five selected schools from different areas and representing different levels of and contexts for arts education (based on teacher interviews); and,
- Content analysis of legislative changes, policy and reforms in *folkeskole* education and a brief review of historical development of arts-rich education in Denmark, including interviews with officials from ministries of culture, education as well as officials in contiguous organizations.

In addition the research team met with NGOs, public service and government (local and national) representatives. Further interviews were conducted with personnel from key arts institutions and cultural services. The researchers also had a number of team meetings.

The main findings of the report are:

- Arts education provisions in music, painting and craft range from being barely adequate to good;
- While some arts programmes seem consistent with the internationally recognised standards of arts-rich education there is insufficient evaluation of the quality of arts programmes. Evaluation of the quality of the projects and programmes through student-journals and teacher log-books would be desirable;
- Teachers require greater professional development in reflective practices in the arts and especially in ways of determining students' learning and ascertaining quality in creative arts programmes;
- At a time when the creative industries comprise a greater share of the economy, the Danish educational system, with its emphasis on creativity should be prepared for the 21st Century, however the evaluation of programmes must be improved;
- Greater sustained reflection in and through the arts is needed, especially in the middle and later school years;
- Provisions for drama, dance and design (especially multimedia) in the curriculum are below acceptable standards in a number of instances;

- Some head teachers expressed concern that recent reforms of teacher education meant that too few students were choosing art and music, and;
- Sustained partnerships between schools and cultural institutions should be encouraged.

The Context of Danish Art Education

The Danish economy and society traditionally revolved around agriculture and engineering. Strong economic growth was fuelled through food exports and the development of industrial manufacturing and shipping (e.g. *Carlsberg* and *Maersk*). In more recent years, the trend has been to the rapid expansion of knowledge based industries – such as the medical and pharmaceutical industry (e.g. *Novo Nordisk*) - and the development of the creative industries especially literature, ICT, film and music.

Traditionally based on smaller firms, the Danish economy has not had to follow the global trends of moving away from large centralised industry to smaller regionally based firms. Danish small businesses are recognised for their entrepreneurship, flexibility and strength in innovation. Danish design, especially in jewellery and furniture is well known as is their interior and exterior design (e.g. *Georg Jensen*) and architecture (e.g. *Arne Jacobsen* and *Jørn Utzon*). It is interesting that architecture is taught as 'art' within fine arts schools, but is not generally referred to in the *folkeskole* curricula.

Denmark enjoys a high standard of living with a per capita income only second to Luxembourg and Switzerland in Europe and considerably above the OECD average. While the annual growth rate of the economy is higher than the European average, it has fallen below the levels being experienced by other Nordic countries (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) 2004). Educational expenditure is second only to the amount spent by Norway yet educational performance remains below other Nordic countries (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) 2004).

While it is frequently the case that so-called 'soft' values are held up to be the main strengths of the Danish education system, it is less clear how evident these values really are (for example, children's behaviour is reported to be worse than Denmark's European neighbours) and furthermore, how the 'soft' values can be made tangible in terms of improvements in school achievement. There was a general feeling among more committed teachers that systems of accountability needed to be tightened up and that the arts should be more focused on 'deep' learning rather than the sort of superficial encounter most common in schools.

Arts in the Danish Educational System

Perhaps more than any other educational systems, the Danish is based on an explicit pedagogical philosophy of *skolen for livet* – the school for life. This underpinning philosophy of the *folkeskole* is more or less based on the teachings of N.F.S. Grundtvig (1783-1872) - a Danish clergyman and writer whose ideas of 'folk schools' were based on the suggestion that education should be available throughout life and should embrace citizenship and personal development. Inspired by the Romantics and general ideas of pedagogy developed by Rousseau, the philosophy of Grundtvig and Christian Kold (who implemented these ideas) was explicitly concerned with enlightening the ordinary people. Under the slogan '*fra almue til folk*' ('from mob to people'), it had from the start a democratic and egalitarian edge. These influences were initially trialled in the *højskoler* (colleges for adults) and in *friskoler* (independent schools for children). After the introduction of parliamentarianism in 1901, the ideas of *Grundtvigianism* gradually became part of the public educational system.

While the first schools were not arts-rich in the modern sense, the arts played a significant role. Grundtvig himself contributed to the teaching of history by emphasising the role of music in instruction, and by writing historical songs about the national heroes from the Viking age and themes from Nordic mythology. Many of these songs were published in

Højskolesangbogen – a collection of (mainly patriotic) songs which is still widely used.

Since the 1960s this emphasis on the role of arts in teaching was extended to other subjects – especially pictorial arts in the subject of *formning* (literally 'formation'), which comprised painting, drawing, sculpting and art appreciation. Since the mid 1990s this subject has been replaced – or rather renamed – by *billedkunst* (visual arts).



In addition to this subject, Danish pupils are taught *musik* (music), *håndarbejde* (craft), and *sløjd* (wood-craft). Drama is incorporated into the subject of Danish, while elements of dance are sometimes part of the curriculum for *idræt* (PE). Some schools have begun to offer alternative optional courses for grades 8-10. These include film, drama and photo.

In addition to the formal instruction in these subjects in the *folkeskole* (years 1-9), there exists extensive – if voluntary – programmes in arts (primarily music), which are available for students in their leisure time

(See the report: *Undervisningsministeriet Samarbejde mellem Folkeskole og Musikskole*, 1999 for an evaluation of this).

There are 233 music schools in Denmark with an enrolment of 131,000 students. These programmes are not free, although heavily subsidised by the government. According to the Ministry of Culture roughly “every fifth Dane sings or plays an instrument” (Ministry of Culture: Cultural Profile: Danish Cultural Policy, 2004).

In Copenhagen the music schools are complemented by parallel schools for painting, e.g. the *Billedskolen*. Like the music schools, these schools are privately funded though subsidised by the government. Some local areas may also support after school classes in dance or drama, though these are less common.

The Danish political system is comparatively decentralised. Many political decisions are taken by the *kommune* (local authorities). While the *kommune* facilitate the contact between individual schools and central authorities, the schools are given considerable freedom within the framework expressed in legislation.

Since the 1980s the teaching in each school is overseen by a *skolebestyrelse* (school board) with parental representation. However, the daily work is the responsibility of the *skolelederen* (principal). The principal has considerable discretion as to who teaches the different subjects. For example, if no teacher is qualified to teach, say music, the principal may allocate this task to a teacher who is deemed qualified – or at least interested – to teach this subject.

Review of Danish Arts Education

While espoused practices are not always implemented optimally, it is useful to take the official line as a point of departure.

The two main art subjects are *musik* (music) and *billedkunst* (visual arts). Bekendtgørelse Nr. 571 (23/06-03), a statutory instrument under the Act

(Folkeskoleloven 2000), outlines the aims of the two subjects. The aim of *billedkunst* is that the students:

1. “By creating, experiencing, and analysing pictures should be able to see and perceive in a rich and nuanced way, as well as be able to use and understand pictures as a personal means of communication and expression;
2. Should work with two and three dimensional objects as well as with electronic material in order to gain knowledge about and insight into using these for expressing them;
3. As a part of their aesthetic development as co-creators of culture, the pupils acquire confidence with the means of expression of the arts and mass media and will understand the importance hereof in both their own and foreign cultures” (Art. 16).

According to the same statutory instrument (Art. 13), the aim of instruction in *musik* is that:

1. “The pupils should develop their ability to experience music, and to express themselves in music. The instruction should provide them with competences for lifelong and active participation in musical life and enable them to independently assess the multifaceted offers of music in today’s society.
2. Through active and creative participation the instruction should contribute to the pupils’ emotional and intellectual development. It should contribute to their concentration and fine motor skills as well as their appreciation for being part of a community.
3. The instruction should promote the pupils’ understanding and appreciation of Danish and foreign musical traditions as a part of cultural life both in contemporary society as well as historically.”

To assess the quality – or otherwise – of Danish arts education requires that we assess whether these ideals are followed in practice and to compare actual practices with international measures of quality arts education.

This task is in itself intricate as Danish education in general - and arts education in particular - has been characterised by a lack of evaluative methods (Though see more recently:

<http://us.uvm.dk/grundskole/proeverogevaluering/menuid=1020>).

According to the UNESCO compendium on the impact of the arts in education (Bamford 2006) a quality arts programme includes:

- Active partnerships between schools and arts organisations and between teachers, artists and the community;
- Shared responsibility for planning, implementation and assessment and evaluation;
- Opportunities for public performance, exhibition and/or presentation;
- A combination of development within the specific art forms (education in the arts) with artistic and creative approaches to learning (education through the arts);
- Provision for critical reflection, problem solving and risk taking;
- Emphasis on collaboration;
- An inclusive stance with accessibility to all children;
- Detailed strategies for assessing and reporting on children's learning, experiences and development;
- Ongoing professional learning for teachers, artists and the community, and;
- Flexible school structures and permeable boundaries between schools and the community.

Through January and February 2006, the researchers visited five Danish schools to analyse arts education in these schools and more broadly to examine issues surrounding arts education provisions. These schools were: *Grantofteskolen* (Ballerup), *Humlehaveskolen* (Voldsmose, Odense), *Lisbjergskolen* (Aarhus), *Mattæusgade Skole* (City of Copenhagen) and *Åløkkeskolen* (Central Odense).

In addition, interviews were conducted with organisations responsible for arts education within both formal and informal education and meetings were carried out with officials from the relevant ministries and agencies, e.g. *Kulturministeriet*, *Undervisningsministeriet*, and *Kunststyrelsen*. Lecturers and the Principal from *Aarhus Dag- og Aftenseminarium* (a teacher training college) were also interviewed.

The study was undertaken through a series of structured interviews with practitioners (teachers, head-teachers), administrators (from ministries and agencies) and providers of external arts programmes (e.g. those organising music and dance programmes in schools and those conducting after school classes in art and music). A literature review of relevant documentation and evidence in both Danish and English was also undertaken.



Arts education is defined in widely diverse ways around the world. The individual character of arts education within particular countries is a strength. The arts should represent the culture, heritage and values of a given context. Having acknowledged this, arts education in Danish schools includes both education in and education through the arts.

In terms of education in the arts, the arts in *folkeskole* aim to build the whole child through an understanding of culture. From the interviews conducted by the researchers, it seems that the expressed aims of arts education include the development of creative thinking, expanding expressive modes of communication, for leisure and enjoyment (especially as a break from the more rigorous subjects in the curriculum) and as a way children develop artistic skills and knowledge of Danish culture.

As stated previously, arts provisions can include woodwork, home economics (primarily cooking) needlecraft, the visual arts (especially painting, drawing and printmaking) and music. Components of drama may be present in the Danish subject area, while dance may be – but rarely is – included within sport and physical education subjects. Audio visual arts (including computer arts) were described – particularly as part of projects conducted in partnership with visiting artists or cultural institutions – but we did not see these in practice. Literature was seen as being an art form within the Danish subject and the *Lyst til Læsning* ('Lust for Reading') programme was being developed to promote greater attention to literary study.

The study of religion and history may also include the arts but this tends to depend on the individual competencies and interests of the particular teacher.

Education *through* the arts is apparent in some schools where creative approaches to learning and interdisciplinary learning exist. The main examples described include the inclusion of drama to enrich Danish learning – especially for speakers of languages other than Danish– the use of the arts to engage children in project-based learning; cross curricula

learning; and to extend the educational opportunities of more marginalised learners.



In addition to education in and through the arts within school-based arts education, Denmark has a range of less formalised provisions in the arts. Within the school day, various schools have extra arts education provisions. These include annual whole school (or several grades) performances, concerts, assemblies and exhibitions. Other schools have 'creative weeks' where the usual timetable is suspended to allow for the investigation of creative projects within the arts across subjects and involving different age levels. Some *folkeskole* also have projects with visiting artists, visits from performance groups, and activities with local arts and cultural institutions such as galleries. In addition, organisations

like *Levende Musik i Skolen* (Live Music in the School) and – to a lesser degree – *Dansekonsulenterne* (an organisation that offers courses in dance for pupils) have been engaged in teaching at schools. There are no figures for the number of visits by these organisations.

As school generally finishes between 12-2pm each day, the after school hours provide supplementary time for other arts education experiences. In the foundation years, these after school activities are organised in *skolefritidsordningen* (after school clubs) and generally well attended. In later years, after around 10 years of age, the activities and after school clubs tends to be voluntary. Most after school activities stress play, involvement and participation more than formal opportunities. They tend to be taught by *pædagoger* – specially trained staff with expertise in leisure-time activities.

Schools appear to be well-resourced and funds are generally available to purchase art materials, equipment and to include artists in the school. There seems to be very few restrictions on taking children outside the school buildings and the use of community cultural faculties is encouraged.



In addition a number of funding programmes exist to support the arts in schools and in some instances funds have remained under subscribed (meaning there is an excess of funds available). All schools visited by the research team were well-maintained and well-equipped and there were

adequate resources for arts-rich education to occur. In some schools the standard of equipment seemed to be well above what would be required for effective arts education and this resulted in some under-utilisation of the potential of certain resources (for example in the area of wood and metal craft where more creative design projects of a higher professional level could be undertaken with the facilities provided).

In several schools visited, the excellent school facilities were also open to use by local community groups and the resources within the school were a source of pride to the local community.

A number of schools were also trialling a range of innovative and flexible approaches to organisation of the school day including team teaching, multi-aged classes, creative weeks, flexible timetables and integration of formal and informal learning – especially combining with arts learning in the community or after school setting. The relative autonomy of the school meant that innovations in the arts were easily achieved and could be implemented in a relatively short amount of time.

Despite some examples of exciting arts-rich innovations, these were often *not* adequately evaluated or reported so there was a general belief that while good practice in arts education existed in some schools, it did not by and large lead to a flow-on effect in surrounding schools or in other *kommune* (see later comments about evaluation and reporting).

The structuring of the school day meant that there was adequate time from planning, reflection and for collaboration. Teachers are allocated time for preparation, meetings, team and curriculum meetings, parent meetings and a range of other non-teaching activities.

Professional development and in-service education is available within contracted teaching hours. Teachers in Denmark have one of the lowest student-to-teacher ratios in the world (11.1). In Germany, by contrast the figure is 19.6 and in the United Kingdom 21.2. Only in Norway is the student-to-teacher ratio lower at (10.9) according to the *National Centre*

for *Education Statistics*. (See: <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs/eiip/eiipid39.asp>). Danish teachers also have the second lowest face-to-face teaching time in Europe with only high level French teachers having less 'in class' time

This is interesting as in the UNESCO world report, the major inhibitors of more arts education was seen to be lack of time, resources, facilities and teacher pupil ratio. None of these appear to be limiting factors within the Danish system.

Parents and pupils pay an important part in determining what subjects are offered within the *folkeskole* especially in the 8th and 9th grade. Parents can request that their children be taught a number of optional subjects. Arts education subjects such as computer graphics and media, visual culture, film, photography, art, drama, music needlework, wood and metal work and various creative industry vocational skills can be included in the school at the request of parents and children. If industry and parent groups were to combine their collective lobbying, arts-rich curricula could be extended into the upper grades through electives designed to equip the child with the sorts of arts-based literacies required for vocations and 21st century employment and learning.

While the amount of time given to music, art and the handicrafts of needlework and woodwork are relatively good in the middle school years (grades 4-6), these are not followed through into the upper age groups where children could arguably be learning the higher level critical, reflective and analytical skills associated with arts learning.

The PISA report categorised Denmark at the lower end of the scale on achievements in math and literacy (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) 2004) . It would appear that this result is – at least to a degree – a result of the lack of provisions of arts education in the *folkeskole* – especially in the latter years. Unlike in other countries – e.g. Canada and Britain – arts subject are *not* compulsory in the later years of education.

Given the international finding that arts-rich programmes improve literacy and (though to a lesser degree) numeracy it seems plausible that this explains, at least in part, the lower than expected scores especially in literacy for Denmark. As can be seen from Table One rather few children chose arts subjects in grades 8-10, and there is a considerable gender imbalance among those who chose these subjects – with more girls choosing arts subjects than boys.

Table 1: Gender Breakdown and Total Number of Pupils choosing Arts Programmes 1999-2000.

Subject	Gr.8	Boys%	Gr. 9	Gr.10	Total		
Pictorial arts	3.544	40	2.368	42	421	45	7.321
Drama	3.544	40	2.368	42	421	45	7.321
Film	830	52	411	57	101	54	1.452
Photography	3.550	42	2.540	43	520	40	6.739
Craft	2.195	32	2.256	37	343	30	4.794
Music	3.791	47	2.714	48	799	46	7.304
Woodcraft	4.084	67	3.491	64	535	73	8.036

Source: Danish Ministry of Education

While it is perhaps understandable that craft is more widely chosen by girls, it is surprising that all other arts subjects are dominated by girls. Whatever the reason for this gender imbalance, it is possible that the difference in arts education can also – at least in part - explain why girls tend to do better than boys in the tests after grade nine at the *Folkeskolens Afgangsprøve*.

This observation – which cannot be proved on the basis of the presently available figures – adds a new dimension to the findings of the PISA report. This is particularly important in the light of correlation investigations by the OECD that show that rich cultural capital is the best predictor of academic success and those school systems with arts-rich and comprehensive curricula consistently perform at the highest levels in terms of mathematic, literacy and scientific thinking achievement.

There has been a perception in Denmark that the very public results of PISA and other international monitoring reports have led to a focus on literacy and numeracy and a reduced focus on the arts. While it is debatable if there have been any changes to arts education, a case could be made for the view that greater provisions of quality arts education for all children, especially in the later years of schooling would strengthen achievements in mathematics, Danish and literacy.

Moreover, arts education for grades eight to ten might also be conducive to engendering the conditions for the rapidly growing creative industries.

It is somewhat ironic, as systems of education around the world are moving to models of more democratic engagement in learning, more flexible structures of instruction and greater senses of communities of learning; these may be the very elements of Danish education that is changing.

The recommendation of this research is that Denmark needs to maintain the qualities of:

- A combination of development within the specific art forms (education in the arts) with artistic and creative approaches to learning (education through the arts);
- Emphasis on collaboration;
- An inclusive stance with accessibility to all children; and
- Flexible school structures and permeable boundaries between schools and the community.

But, while maintaining the qualities noted above, Denmark must give substantial attention to improving:

- Active partnerships between schools and arts organisations and between teachers, artists and the community;
- Shared responsibility for planning, implementation, assessment and evaluation;
- Provision for critical reflection, problem solving and risk taking;

- Opportunities for public performance, exhibition and/or presentation;
- Ongoing professional learning for teachers, artists and the community, and;
- Detailed strategies for assessing and reporting on children's learning, experiences and development.

Looking at arts education from an international standpoint – in reference to the known qualities of arts-rich education as stated earlier in this report – Danish education seems to possess several of the attributes that should promote arts-rich education. In other words, Danish education **should** be well above its world counterparts in arts and cultural education, but is generally not.

For example, in almost all Danish schools visited there was shared responsibility for planning, implementation and an emphasis on collaboration; a combination of development within the specific art forms (education in the arts) with artistic and creative approaches to learning (education through the arts), and; flexible school structures and permeable boundaries between schools and the community. In many examples there were active partnerships between schools and arts organisations and between teachers, artists and the community and opportunities for public performance, exhibition and/or presentation.

However, the major shortcoming seemed to be the lack of detailed strategies for assessing and reporting on children's learning, experiences and development in the arts and almost non-existent ongoing professional learning for teachers, artists and the community. Similarly, while it was likely that in high quality examples real arts learning was occurring, it was difficult to gather evidence that demonstrated that arts education in Denmark encouraged critical reflection, problem solving and risk taking.

Learning within the arts tended to be poorly documented. From the UNESCO study, it is evident that the processes of reflecting and reporting of arts learning are keys to the enhanced results noted in areas such as

literacy and numeracy. There is an urgent need to make reflection and evaluation a core part of arts provisions within Denmark.

There is some fear expressed within the school community about having to be more accountable. These fears are not connected with the results of accountability - as it is assumed that these will be good - but rather that the mere act of asking questions may disturb underlying confidence in the Danish system and decrease the opportunities for innovation, creation and arts-rich education in schools.

Furthermore, while there is a widely held belief that Danish education is arts-rich, this appears to be more the case in selected examples than broadly across the system. For example, in terms of recommended hours, the middle school years appear to be quite arts-rich with nearly 1/3 of the learning time being nominally available for arts-related learning. Conversely, by grades 8 and 9 a child could do almost no arts. This is a problem as the aims of arts education are centred round aspects of cultural and critical thinking that only can be understood by mature children. Similarly, while the *Folkeskoleloven 1993* (Primary Education Act of 1993) stressed the importance of a practical arts dimension to all learning (education through the arts), the 2003 standards for education do not appear to demonstrate the application of this ideal.

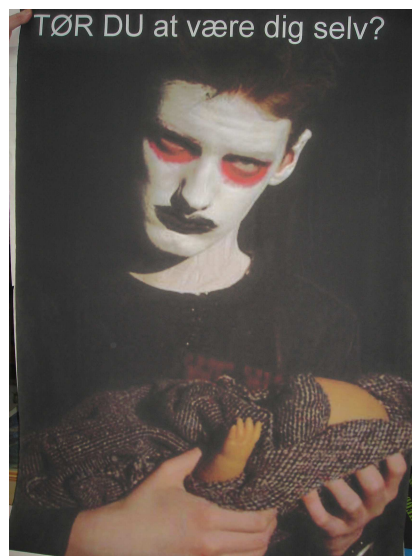
Anecdotal evidence from the schools suggests that the likelihood of a child receiving an arts-rich education may be more dependent on the personality and desires of their class teacher and the team of other teachers, than any policy. As an arts teacher put it "good arts education requires, above all, an *ildsjæl*". There is no English word for *ildsjæl*, but it means someone who has a "soul of fire".

Even where children appear to be receiving substantial arts education, it is almost impossible to determine the quality of this. A key aspect of the UNESCO report was that poor quality arts education, not only did nothing for the child, but in 22% of cases actually harmed the child.

Given this finding, it is important to know within Denmark, not simply how much education in and through the arts a child receives, but importantly, the quality of these programmes.

While not wanting to present a view that all countries in the world should have the same or uniform arts education – in fact the contrary should be the case – there is reasonable evidence to support the view that the arts included in Danish *folkeskole*, especially as a recommended programme, has *not* by its nature kept pace with the changing needs of future literacies, vocations or the knowledge-based economies.

There seems to be a lack of inclusion of new media work (especially in areas such as film making, sound recording, animation, web design and so on). Despite a strong world reputation, design practices seem to be under-represented in the Danish arts curriculum. There is also only limited evidence that the growing multicultural nature of Danish schools is being reflected in the choice of art forms being studied, with only token recognition of the arts of other cultures and the rich artistic heritage being brought by immigrant children.



By a world comparison, dance and drama are underrepresented in the Danish arts education, both within formal and informal provisions. These two areas require considerable professional development and focus.

In terms of education through the arts, the focus on creative, collaborative and innovative learning approaches is to be encouraged and supported, though clearer evaluation and reporting of these should be undertaken.

In the light of the global picture, it would appear that the Danish system **was** swimming ahead of other world countries in preparing the sorts of individuals needed in future economies based around innovation and knowledge, but that this early advantage is being lost as quality of arts-rich education declines and creative provisions fail to meet quality levels.

The global trend to smaller business units means that the skills of collaboration, self-direction and high level communication skills developed through the arts will continue to be required within the world economy. To ensure the current high level of Danish income and strong economic development, education through the arts has a powerful role to play in developing such competencies. In particular studies of visual culture, communication and the media can be explored directly through the arts and ensure the primacy of Danish design and innovation on the world stage.

It could be further argued that these 'new literacies' are vital for equipping all students to deal with the challenges of a world whose economic and democratic life is built around aesthetic modes of communication and presentational rather than representational skills.

It is important to note that there are many aspects existing within the Danish *folkeskole* that are highly conducive to effective arts systems. Danish education is known for its flexibility, and this seemed to be evident in most of the schools visited. However, the international research (Bamford 2006) indicates for arts education to be effective, it is not good enough to just have **some** of the indicators of quality. **All** indicators of quality are needed to make successful arts-rich education.

Currently there is a perception that the general under-performance of Danish education may be remedied through more rigid structures and a return to 'basics'. This would **not** be advisable as this research identifies specific issues that were also highlighted in other reviews. In particular this research corroborates the findings of previous international studies that identify the urgent need for improvements to teacher in-service training (and motivation for teachers to do such training), rigorous evaluation and quality assurance and the greater application of learning partnerships.

It would appear that the resources and structure are adequate within schools to ensure quality arts education but that a lack of teaching skills in the arts, time specifically allocated to the arts (especially in grades 6-10) and detailed models for assessment and evaluation in the arts are not only effected the **poor quality of arts education**, but would, as the research indicates (Bamford 2006) lead to declining literacy, language learning and general academic achievement.

By contrast, high quality arts education has direct benefits to enhancing literacy, numeracy and the general well-being of children and young people. There are a number of features that are current strengths of the Danish system and could be developed and supported to enhance arts education.

Key advantageous elements of Danish arts education

CHILD-CENTRED

Perhaps as a result of the ideas of Grundtvig and others, the Danish *folkeskole* is a very democratic example of education where the thoughts, actions and ideas of the child are treated as being valued and substantial. In relation to the arts, children's creative abilities (rather than adult exemplars) tend to form the backbone of all activities. While within woodwork and needlework, skill and knowledge plays a main part, within

the other areas of the arts most value is placed on encouraging the child's own creative expressions and talents.

These expressions are – and should be – valued in themselves yet instruction, reflection and criticism should also be strongly encouraged. It is generally regarded in Danish schools that it is a 'bad thing' to correct children's musical development, dramatic compositions or artworks. Similarly, it is viewed as important to respect all children's contributions regardless of quality. This appears to be at odds with the prevailing view that the arts involve rigorous areas of study that benefits from exposure to reflection, instruction and guided exposure to adult exemplars.

In the expressive conception of the arts common in Danish schools, the role of the teacher is to provide fertile ground for the arts to flourish, but to not overly interfere in that process. Children may also be encouraged to initiate and even lead the arts experiences and group creative projects are common. While this is commendable as an ideal, it has resulted in a situation where teachers provide almost no leadership or direction to the child in terms of the development of their arts thinking and practice.

Relatively small class sizes (cf. previous) and the wide adoption of team teaching and shared teaching means that child-centred approaches are feasible.

EXPRESSION

At all ages within the *folkeskole*, emphasis is given to individual needs and the child's desire to be expressing his/her uniqueness through the arts. Children and their creative efforts are respected in their own terms. However, there is little evidence that this is actually the case for children from ethnic backgrounds other than Danish. There seems to be very limited inclusion of the traditions of non-European cultures within the arts programmes observed.

It is generally valued that each child's creative attempts should be rewarded as a communication of self. In this regard, the arts are not

formally assessed and they are not compared either to adult exemplars or in relation to the creative efforts of their peers. Creative processes seem to be more highly valued over end products, though there appears to be a growing acknowledgement of the value of performance and exhibition to improved quality and enhanced learning outcomes in the arts.

Allied to the notion that the arts provide a means of expression, is the value of the arts as a form of communication. There was general recognition of the role of visual and aesthetic literacies in future communication and the media. The value of the arts as a form of communication was also incorporated in early years' education and within Danish language lessons for children from a background other than Danish speaking. In early years' education, the arts form an important part of language and the teachers spoke of valuing the many languages that young children use to communicate.



In the later years, there was less apparent recognition of the value of the arts in future communication and the way the arts might enhance knowledge presentation and transfer. There was also only limited

comment related to the visual, sound and dramatic aspects of future literacies and any reference to this was made by artists or arts experts rather than within the schools. References were made to the needs of industry in relation to communication, and more loose comments about the needs of 'future worlds' and knowledge economies' in terms of communicator competencies derived from the arts, but these tended to be unclear and not specifically linked to content, processes, or programmes.

PLAY

In early years' education, augmented and mediated play constitutes a major part of the arts education learning methodology. While several teachers spoke of a move to more structured encounters, play learning is a particularly important part of early years' arts education. The play approach is also followed in the middle school years in terms of after school arts education and clubs. As these are voluntary and taught by a range of trained and untrained educators, artists and *pædagog* it is seen that fun and enjoyment should be at the heart of any art learning. While enjoyment is an important aspect of arts learning, over emphasis on the play aspects, especially with older children, can lead to a devaluing of arts where it is seen purely as a recreational subject devoid of substantial academic rigour. Similarly, it should be viewed as a key component in the formation of communication and critical literacy and the arts' status as 'play' might adversely effect the perception of the arts within the minds of the children, their parents and teachers.

EXPERIENCE

In general, Danish schools have an atmosphere of inclusion rather than competition or excellence. This is true of arts education, where the focus is on the processes and experiences received by all children rather than extending the skills and knowledge of those children with particular artistic strengths. While this is the position within the schools, similarly it appears that the widespread after school music schools, also strive to give equity of access, creative processes and enjoyment rather than solely promoting excellence and outstanding abilities.

HERITAGE

With its emphasis of the egalitarianism – or *bredde kultur* (broad culture) – the Danes have traditionally been reluctant to embrace elite culture. More recently this has changed through the adoption of a Danish *canon* as significant texts – all incidentally by ethnic Danes (Kulturkontakten 2006).

Key historical figures of the arts, religious and cultural life of Danish society play quite a significant – and arguably growing – role in the underpinnings of contemporary Danish arts education. The writer Hans Christian Andersen, composer Carl Nielsen, architect Jørn Utzon, writer Isak Dinesen (Karen Blixen), designer Arne Jacobsen, and, more recently, film director Lars von Trier form part of the *canon*. Furthermore, within Danish heritage, protestant religion plays an important role in school life and is often the focus for arts activities and celebrations. Craft, art, songs and drama may all be learnt in preparation for a special religious celebration and these involve all the school regardless of the particular religious backgrounds for the children. An example of this is the aforementioned *Højskolesangbogen*. Despite containing religious songs, this song-book is considered as a part of national heritage even by Danes who are not religious.

DEMOCRACY

With its origins in the popular movements started by Grundtvig and Kold, it is not surprising that Danish education has a strong democratic ethos. Education in Denmark has always been seen as a part of enabling the pupils to become men, women and citizens!

It is in line with this that Danish schools are characterised by an open and democratic atmosphere. Children refer to teachers and the school principals by their first names and there is a relaxed community atmosphere apparent in schools. Teachers and principals are accessible to children and children have the freedom to use the classroom facilities in an open but responsible manner without teacher supervision.

Children are expected to behave in a thoughtful and social way determined by their own judgement of standards of behaviour rather than externally applied rules. Freedom of choice is important and children are given considerable options in regard to the ownership of their learning.

The strong democratic ethos at all levels of education could make learning appear haphazard, but there was some indication of internal cohesiveness and certainly there were teacher to teacher briefings and teacher and children meetings to build a level of structure within the freedom. Also different schools show varying levels of child freedom. In some schools, freedom of choice borders on the *laissez-faire*, while in others it would be more accurate to describe the climate as one of fenced freedom.

There is also an indication that increasingly applied external guidelines may be giving more direction – and conversely perhaps less freedom. At one level this is being favourably received by teachers, but at another level there is some hesitancy that overly applied structures could limit individual creative freedom. At this point in time, these structures have been applied to science, mathematics and Danish leaning, but there is an indication that music and art may soon be included within tightening of process, content and pedagogical approaches. Similarly, there seems to be some uncertainty between the national, municipal and school level as to the impact of these reforms on classroom practices and children's freedom of choice.

Issues of freedom within the arts education are mirrored in more general school education where the educational philosophy of Grundvig is still strong especially in relation to the value of talk and discussion and freedom of choice and thought. In relation to discussion, this is widely seen as the only way to evaluate arts learning and arts experiences involve considerable talk in planning, development and reflection phases.

Children generally only receive 'positive comments' about their creative work and while this generates higher levels of self esteem and may increase children's confidence in their creative expression (though

evidence to support this is only anecdotal), it could also lead to children having an inflated opinion of their abilities in the arts and a lack of motivation to strive for higher quality end products.

Group work and consensus form a strong part of how decisions of processes in the arts are made. These consensus decisions generally involve several teachers and groups of children. The exact nature of learning experiences emerges from this discussion and may evolve in a quite organic way throughout a unit of work or artistic investigation. In other examples, teachers see that they are fostering democracy by laying the 'seeds' of creative ideas on fertile ground and allowing children to grow their own ideas from these seeds.

TEACHER RETENTION

Unlike other systems in the world, Danish teachers tend to stay for a long time in the one teaching environment. As one teacher in her 60s explained, both she and the principal had been together longer than many marriages! Most of the teachers we met had been in the one school for more than 20 years. They seemed relatively happy and were obviously committed to the social and emotional well-being of their pupils. They spoke of the school as a community.

It was also frequently mentioned that this security and confidence that had accrued over years of working together meant that they were more willing to try new and innovative ideas. It also made the principals more willing to give responsibility to the staff even if it meant possible failure. For example, in one school a teacher had read that having children sitting on large balls for lessons would increase kinaesthetic learning. Despite his reservations, the principal supported the teacher's decision to try this idea. The idea did not work and the balls proved to be disruptive in the classroom, but the valuable lesson in risk-taking and innovation learnt by the teacher was supported and encouraged by the principal.

This has valuable implications for arts education as arts-rich learning tends to flourish in a climate that allows 'safe' risk-taking by both teachers

and children. The high level of trust built up over many years in Danish schools allows teachers to try more adventurous approaches to learning and to take greater responsibility for autonomous pedagogical decisions. Conversely, it could be argued that the autonomy given to the teachers by school leaders may be at the expense of greater direct academic leadership in arts education. In several examples, the principals had a clear vision for the value of the arts and backed this vision with a targeted approach of hiring creative and passionate teachers and proactively supporting community and artist partnership projects.

These schools seemed to have a higher level of documented success than schools where the leaders took a more ambivalent attitude, but further research would need to be undertaken to determine if this was the situation across a wider number of cases.

The other aspect about the long-term retention of staff is that it could be argued that if uncreative and non-arts staff stay for a long time (especially as the class teacher) certain children could experience an education with very little arts content. There are also concerns that without mandatory arts education professional development certain teachers may continue to teach in ways that do not align with contemporary pedagogy in the arts. This seems to be prevalent with arts education pedagogy being indicative of ways that have been used for some time. The involvement of artists could counteract the problems of lack of professional development and might serve to enrich the classroom practices by bringing a range of new approaches and ideas.

Improvements needed to Danish arts education

Introduction

The Danish schools are recognized for creativity and working with the total child, but in practice this is not tending to happen in and through the arts. In 1993 an Act of Parliament was passed underlying the value of the arts in all disciplines within the *folkeskole* curriculum. In practice though, this tends to be happening in a very limited and tokenistic way and is

largely dependent on whether there is a passionate and committed *ildsjæl*.

By and large, the arts are not taken seriously within the curriculum and their role in academic improvement is largely overlooked. There is a widely expressed view that the arts are a recreational part of the curriculum, as a break from the more rigorous aspects of the curriculum.

Even in schools committed to the arts, these are often done as 'an arts week' or block of time, largely separated from the main learning within the curriculum. In the light of the perceived problems with arts education within Danish school, this research identifies the areas of evaluation and accountability as being major areas that would lead to improvements in quality. Allied to this, greater sharing of practice and improved professional development of teachers would ensure more rapid and widespread improvements in the provisions received by children. While this would be of direct benefit to teachers currently working in schools, revision of teacher education ensures that pre-service teachers are equipped with the skills needed to successfully promote quality learning in the arts - prior to their appointment in schools. To inform this process, greater emphasis needs to be placed on the value of research and partnerships as a way of building an evidence base for practices and to determine the impact of any future reforms.

While these recommendations largely fall under the structural domains of education, there are also a number of recommendations more specifically targeted at the day-to-day, grassroots operations within schools. Of crucial importance is the need to re-examine the balance of curriculum time given to the arts, in particular the provisions across the arts and crafts areas. Children need to be able to present their art in a public forum and be able to reflect on and critique this process. The types of arts within the schools should reflect the increasingly multicultural nature of Danish classrooms and be a force for broader social and cultural engagement. Finally, the research recommends a review of the operation of after school provisions to ensure that these provide fertile ground for the development

of the arts and cultural dimensions of children's development. These recommendations are explained in more detail and exemplified through evidence in the following sections.

EVALUATION

Recommendation 1a

We recommend the establishment of a Task Force to examine benchmark standards for teaching in and through the arts. In particular, quality assurance and benchmarking needs to be in place to provide standards of instruction in visual arts, drama, music and dance.

Recommendation 1b

We recommend that evaluative data are collected on all arts areas and that these are provided to school as a measure of expected quality of student outcomes. These should also form the basis of standards indicators, providing students with meaningful models by which they can aim to increase the quality of their own work.

Recommendation 1c

We recommend that there is an urgent need for teachers to have access to wider forms evaluation and 'valuation' (in the sense of the Danish word 'vurdering') that can be used for creative learning in general, but importantly for documenting and benchmarking learning in the arts. We further recommend that meaningful criteria be developed for assessing children's learning in and through the arts.

In recent years public policies have been subject to evaluative programmes. Under the heading of 'evidence based' policy making, public policy specialists – including educationalists – have looked for evidence of best practice models. Some of these models of evaluation have been met with scepticism in the education establishment, and have been criticised for being too focused on quantitative methods (Fitz-Gibbon 2001). Hence, these methods are perceived to run counter to the humanistic models traditionally developed by educationalists.

While this criticism is not without merit, it is important to emphasise that evaluative methods need not be quantitative. Moreover – contrary to the common perception – even radical educationalists stress the necessity of evaluation (Dewey 1913 cited in Grissmer 1999, 231).

These ideas have not had much influence in Denmark. While the consultant firm *PLS RAMBØLL Management* conducted a study of arts education, it is not common practice in Danish schools to have well developed evaluation and reporting systems. In particular, there is not a culture of external accountability within the Danish system. While international assessment of quality, such as PISA have had some impact in terms of evaluation and monitoring within literacy, numeracy and the sciences, the arts sit outside this general trend. There is diverse opinion (both internationally and within Denmark) as to whether assessment (of children's learning) enhances the quality of arts education. While the UNESCO report showed that most countries **do** assess art learning in a formal way, there was a diversity of opinion as to whether this led to better performance and improved learning processes. This debate is similarly echoed within Denmark. While several of the people interviewed spoke of wanting to see music and art more formally assessed , as a way to lift the profile and legitimacy of these subjects within the schools, other respondents felt that all evaluation (not just within the arts) may limit creativity of children and disadvantage the cause of the arts within schools. Within the larger UNESCO global report, there is evidence to support both views, with world opinion suggesting that increased monitoring generally leads to higher quality arts education provisions, while rigid and overly structured outcomes driven modes of evaluation damage creativity and arts-rich education.

It ought to be added, perhaps, that Danish schools have little to fear from evaluations. In the aforementioned report by *PLS RAMBØLL Management*, it was concluded that the four evaluated schools (including Grantofteskolen in Ballerup and Åløggeskolen) "have made considerable progress...and that the result [or arts-education] is therefore very satisfactory" (PLS RAMBØLL 2002).

Correspondingly, the UNESCO world report, suggests that the benefits of arts-rich education only occur where there are high quality provisions. Given this, it would appear an imperative that quality is monitored and reported upon and that teachers have a clear understanding of the current quality of the programmes on offer and what is needed to enhance these programmes. In order to do this, teachers need sustained professional development in modes of evaluation of children's learning in the arts and training in how to analyse these qualitative results to form sound quality assurance frameworks for the improvement of arts-rich provisions within the school. Such evaluation should not be seen in the climate of greater external control or international comparisons, but rather as assessment **for learning** and the way to increase the quality and frequency of both education in and education through the arts within *folkeskole*. Frequently when asked of teachers 'what children learnt through arts education' or 'how they know' what children learn the answers were vague and lacked evidence.

There is also general confusion over the terminology used in evaluation. While the global use for various terms can be contentious, in Denmark this problem is further compounded by a lack of words in Danish to describe various forms of assessing and reflecting on children's learning. Commonly used terms in English such as assessment, evaluation, evidence, monitoring and so on, often have distinctly negative connotations in Danish translation. This adds to the confusing surrounding the use – and misuse – of these terms.

We have attempted to devise a Danish equivalent that could be used to describe an effective evaluation hierarchy for arts education.

Instead of the word *prøve* (test) – which entails a quantifiable element, it is perhaps more useful to use the word *vurdering* (valuation) when assessing the quality of arts education. In the middle grades the pupils do not get marks for their work. Instead they receive a *standpunkt karakter* – stand-point mark - which place their work in a non-quantifiable band of

high, middle and lower. A similar system could be devised for arts education. In practical terms this system of 'valuation' could be based on student logs or other methods of continued assessment.

It must be stressed that we are not recommending standardised testing in the arts area, but rather suggest that a whole raft of creative qualitative approaches can be used to document children's learning in the arts and reflect more broadly on the impact of arts learning. We further recommend that teachers be given substantial training in development of diverse *vurdering* methods that could be applied across all learning but have particular relevance for arts education.

It would also be reasonable to suggest that the model of quality arts education derived from international standards, could be applied to Danish education. It would be worthwhile conducting a discussion meeting with Danish arts educators and practitioners to determine the appropriateness of this model to *folkeskole* and - if needed - to adapt this model to form baseline quality recommendations for arts education in *folkeskole*.

There is a general absence of information about how students perform in the arts. This prevents adequate improvements to this area of the curriculum and means that Denmark is below international levels in terms of quality arts education.

In terms of assessment, some municipalities are exploring the use of portfolios to document and record learning. These are to be encouraged. Use of new media in the preparation of these portfolios - for both individual children and for the school in total - would be a good way to document arts learning. It is important to note, however, that these must be more than just descriptive collections.

Teachers and children need to be equipped with the skills to make critical reflections about the items included within the portfolios and to engage in meta-reflection about learning processes. Merely describing a creative or arts event is not enough. Quality in the arts is not about how many

children participated, or a sample painting, or a copy of a song or dance composed. True quality occurs only when children and teachers (and artists) reflect on these experiences and draw conclusions about their learning and the personal, social, intellectual and cultural value and impact of the arts. For very young children, this can be achieved through conversation and annotation. For older children, artists, and teachers, this process needs to be more formalised and can be achieved through narrative, writing, debate, discussion, audio-visual reflections, critique and review.

It is also important to highlight the need to not only assess children's learning in the arts, but also to more broadly look at school, *kommune* and systemic achievements in terms of arts education. While we have stressed the need for more rigorous documentation of arts learning, it is equally important that research is conducted into the implementation and management of arts education. This includes all levels of the deliver chain and should be exemplified through sound evaluation practices coming out of the relevant ministries, arms of the ministries and leading NGOs and cultural institutions. By themselves engaging in evaluating and reporting on their progress towards agreed standards they are exemplifying the approach they would like teachers to adopt in relation to the children's arts learning.

In a sample municipality, monitoring of schools was occurring. In this example, school inspectors visited the schools about twice a year to view school's self reporting and to determine priority areas for future improvement. The interview contained within Case Study 1 shows the issue of evaluation from the viewpoint of a principal and a teacher discussing the topic.

Case Study 1: An interview with a teacher and a school principal

To start with you need a teacher with drive; an *ildsjæl*. You can't change teachers to what you want. Every principal would like to do that but it is more about their personality. I think there is a problem with the way we are shaping the school in reaction to *PISA*. Some of the latest initiatives actually kill initiative. It is all top down instead of bottom up. Also if you are in

a good school the school grows very quickly and you can't make enough projects. We do need stronger management in schools and more direction in terms of evaluation methods. We try to work on flexible timetables, natural divisions and child-centred evaluation but now we feel we must do it this way [a way specified by government] and that makes negative thinking. I never feel like I am doing enough. The 'fire' is being killed off. Young teachers are more nervous. They read the papers and see the reports about how bad Danish schools are and they blame themselves and so are less likely to share what they are doing or try something new. But then I find teaching more fulfilling if I have more responsibility.

There is a big problem in schools with evaluation. How do we know what children learn? We are not good at sharing how good we are. In a way, the real evaluation – have we been successful in turning the children into good citizens – only really comes 10 years later when they are out in the world. Yet we know many children are not functioning to the correct level. We would like to have no losers. We could easily get the best *PISA* results in the world if that was our purpose. But I think it is more important to have a child who has personal and specific skills. We have started creating logs and journals to document a child's learning. We take the idea of the whole person very seriously we want children who are well-rounded. Why is the government turning away from the arts at a time when society really needs creative people? We need to understand more about the learning that is going on and then if we are going to use assessment, let us have assessment for learning.

In all instances, evaluation should be seen as existing within the context of improved future learning. It should be about exploring what schools are doing well, how improvements can be made and how we know or evidence ideas. The results of such investigations should be made public to ensure best practice models are shared and the results of initiatives are distributed in a way that avoids 'reinventing the wheel' and allows lessons to be learnt in a collegial way.

In line with the issue of quality monitoring, within the schools the chain of responsibility for arts education may be unclear. It is not always possible to ascertain who is responsible for determining the extent and nature of arts education within a school. While the democratic nature of *folkeskole* tends to mean that curriculum decisions and arts planning is very collaborative, less emphasis is placed on reflective and follow-up discussions to establish where quality could be improved, learning extended or equity determined. Furthermore, such discussions tend to be

conducted 'in house' and rarely involve the input from - or feedback to - external agencies. In some examples, closer working with arts and cultural institutions, particular artists and the community have incorporated not only shared planning but also shared reporting and reflecting.

Similarly, in relation to arts education, there is not accessible data about whether the mandated requirements for art and music are met and whether there is equity in arts education provisions between different schools within *kommune* or between the provisions experienced from one *kommune* to the next. Anecdotal evidence from teachers and those working within the non-formal arts education sectors suggest that there is inequity between the provisions received by children.

The actual 'coalface' provisions may depend less on prescribed policy, funding availability and desire to have quality arts programmes, and more on the individual passions or *ildsjæl* of a single teacher, artist, principal or administrator. In this regard, more detailed evaluation and monitoring strategies could be used to ascertain where high quality provisions are being received and where changes could be made to ensure equity of provisions and to lift the overall quality.

In addition to the initiatives suggested to increase quality through more detailed evaluation and monitoring, there is also a need for greater public reporting of best practice in arts education. The researchers noted examples of good practice in particular schools, cultural institutions and classrooms and certainly we met *ildsjæls*, but these examples of arts-rich education are rarely reported.

In some cases CDs, DVDs and websites had been produced to show high quality practice. In other examples, books, musical scores, journals and photographs had been used to exemplify practice (e.g. by *Grantofteskolen*). Yet generally fine practice was known by the children and the parents but rarely recognised beyond the school walls.

Teachers need to be encouraged to be active 'action researchers' and to document their practice and to publish this in the public and academic domains. In this way, Denmark and the world could become more informed about the good arts-rich education and the educational innovations occurring within Danish schools.

Allied to greater reporting is the need for more systemic reinforcement of effective achievement in art education. Both the arts and cultural ministries and NGOs could actively illuminate and reward good practices and initiatives in these fields.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Recommendation 2

We recommend that targets be set to improve the arts and funds be clearly allocated to these targets. It is not the recommendation that in total more funds are given to the arts, but rather, the funds that are currently allocated to this purpose, be more closely linked to identifiable targets, quality outcomes and greater accountability.

There is a strong culture of non-accountability within schools and within arts funding. At all levels, there is a lack of impact measurement. It is important that education, arts and cultural agencies model good practice in terms of impact measurement and quality assurance. It is not possible to ask teachers, artists and children to be more thorough in their reflections and evaluation if this is not occurring at the higher levels.

There is a fear of accountability and yet the teachers are not providing evidence that their teaching and learning strategies in the arts are working. They lack effective mechanisms of evaluation in the arts, especially the means to ensure that methods and learning is transparently evaluated and externally communicated.

The Arts Council was established only 2.5 years ago in Denmark and has begun to gather systematic quantitative and qualitative evaluation data about the arts and young people. It is also developing evaluation

guidelines for funded organisations and ensuring that children's provisions are a key part of arts funding. Similar efforts are also being pioneered by *Evalueringstinstituttet*, a public organisation for evaluation of education established in 1999 (Lov om Danmarks Evalueringstinstitut 6 Maj 1999).

The *kommune* play a major role in the delivery of teaching and learning. They are directly responsible for allocation of funds to schools; they develop and distribute teaching materials; they interpret centralised aims and develop curricula to support these aims. The *kommune* overview student and teacher ratio, school leadership and the allocation of time. In some *kommune* they also develop quality assurance mechanisms.

This relationship of the *kommune* within education is clearly described in this excerpt from an interview with a senior education official within one *kommune*:

Case Study 2: Senior *kommune* education official

The *kommune* has an important role to play in ensuring target setting in the arts and then developing assessment and evaluation levels to meet these targets. Portfolios are a good way to show progress and provide evidence. We need to look specifically at the competencies within the arts. We need to make the arts parts of the focus areas for local government.

The problem now is that there are good schools doing good things in the arts but this is totally dependent on dynamic teachers. The good practice is very local and does not influence the experiences of other schools.

The teaching union is very strong and often tries to block reforms. They have 100% representation and we wouldn't think of trying to get a reform without them being on side as it just would not happen. I think though if we had a clear statement from the Minister telling of the importance of the arts that would have a major impact. It would awake the media's interest in the arts as a vital concern. The media is a really important ally after all they are themselves reliant upon the arts... TV, radio, films.

Bringing teachers together with the arts world can really make a difference.

SHARING GOOD PRACTICE

Recommendation 3

We recommend that the Network for Children be tasked with forming a cross-sectoral working group to examine strategies for promoting the sharing of best practice models across the arts and educational sectors.

Unlike a number of school systems around the world, teacher innovations rarely spread from one school to the next. While we visited schools with good teachers, the approaches used were not being rolled-out to other local schools or more broadly across the system. Consideration needs to be given to incentive models that could be used to encourage teachers to share best practice and to reward schools who move to adopt these models.

There is a lack of systematic sharing of good practice in the arts across schools, teachers and the education system. While attempts were being made by cultural institutions and those working within the arts sector on children's programmes to share good practice, the lack of a culture of collegial learning meant that teachers and the schools rarely made use of material or ideas shared nor participated in events aimed at bringing teachers together to share ideas.

There appears to be some policy developments that could address this issue. The selection of focus cultural schools may assist. Similarly projects of EU teacher exchange, "leadership for learning" and others could offer a valuable opportunity to lift the quality and status of arts education within Denmark.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Recommendation 4a

We recommend that government at the national and municipal level work closely with the Danish Union of Teachers to develop sustainable models of motivational and obligatory teacher in-service education in the arts and that this is conducted in conjunction with high quality culture and arts

agencies and organisations. These programmes of professional development in the arts should be linked to higher education qualifications and financial and promotional incentives to entice teachers to participate in such courses.

Recommendation 4b

We recommend that teachers be trained to adopt more research and evidence-based approaches to teaching in the arts.

There is very limited professional development in the arts. Where this is available, teachers do not feel motivated to attend. There is no demand – inherent or implied – for teacher to seek higher qualifications and the principle of democracy means that there are little systemic incentives for teacher to ‘move up the ladder’ within schools.

Teachers in schools with arts-supportive principals and school boards reported that they were more satisfied with their job; had a higher sense of psychological well-being; experienced higher teacher satisfaction with quality; had greater dialogue between teachers, management and the community; and, had greater opportunities for being flexible and creative. These teachers strongly praised the open-mindedness of their school leaders and felt that they were empowered to take risks and try new ideas. Similarly they felt they had more responsibility for the decisions they made. The important role of the school principal in providing opportunities for professional development and to support staff is clearly outlined in *Case Study 3* that contains an excerpt from an interview with a school principal.

Case Study 3: Discussion with a school principal

The secret to the success in this school is that I have the authority to employ the staff. Every time I employ staff, I look for creative approaches and personality. I also employ teachers that have done at least one creative subject. I have 10 music teachers for example and they rarely teach music but they bring their creative techniques to other learning. I also provide possibilities instead of restrictions. I give the teachers room to make mistakes. It is all about risk taking - creating places and being flexible.

I place a high priority on professional development and staff study groups.

In this school concerts are really important. The goal is to have every child experience what it is like to work alongside an artist. All children participate in everything and pupils are expected to show both initiative and duty.

We have a very different timetable. One week in every 10 weeks is called a 'flex' week. In this week there is no timetable. We do projects that are integrated and multi-aged. There are 30 lessons per week and these may all be the arts during this week. For example if we were putting on a play. We also have 90-minute periods, instead of the usual 60 minutes, so teachers can really do in-depth activities.

The major weakness I think is still formative evaluation. We talk with the children, but we need better schema for evaluation. We need to develop ways of sharing successful incidents. Logs and portfolios would be good with both the teacher and pupils writing.

I think a major problem is the conservatism of principals and teachers. The culture of teaching itself is not motivating there is little knowledge transfer. I think too economically there is less time for lessons in the arts. We find it hard to know what quality is. It is not defined. Teacher education is poor. There is not enough direction in the choosing of line subjects. Half of our teachers do cooking as their line subject. The teachers need more commitment to professional development. Not in this school, but generally so many teachers only do routine. There are lots of older teachers without enthusiasm. I would like to get more ethnically diverse teachers but it can be difficult to get jobs if you are an ethnic teacher.

TEACHER EDUCATION

Recommendation 5a

We recommend that pre-service and in-service training be provided to teachers of all subjects on the use of arts-based pedagogies and the use of the arts to improve the quality of teaching and learning. This is particularly the case in relation to the education of students from a non-Danish background, education of boys and education of more marginalised learners, including special needs learners.

Recommendation 5b

We recommend that core units related to education in and through the arts be included in all pre-service teacher education and that line electives be available for drama and dance as well as music and visual arts. We

further support the current move to ensure that teachers teaching in the arts in schools have 'line specialism' in the arts.

Recommendation 5C

We recommend that a higher degree (at MA level) in arts education be established at the CVUs or re-established at DPU. The absence of an advanced academic degree in the field of arts education is internationally unique and provides a disincentive for teachers wishing to further develop their skills.

Danish teacher education has been criticised and is – as a consequence - undergoing a period of considerable reform (*Danmarks Evalueringsinstitut*). The combination of a range of international and national reviews has led to the instigation of many changes to teacher education. Previously teachers received a three and a half year all-round course with two specialist subjects, e.g. in music and English.

Since the changes to the teacher education after the election of the current government, students choose four subjects in addition to didactic subjects (e.g. pedagogy). One of the four subjects must be either Danish or mathematics. Having received their bachelor degree, teachers take complete courses at either one of the newly established *Centres for Further Education (Centre for Videregående Uddannelse - CVUs)* or study for more advanced degrees at the *Danmark's Pædagogiske Universitet* (The Pedagogical University of Denmark). After the restructuring of the Danish Pedagogical University the MA in arts education (*Cand Pæd in 'Billedkunst'*) has been abolished. Teachers wishing to continue their training in the field can now only take diploma courses at two of the Centres for Continuous Learning (*Center for Videregående Uddannelse*), respectively at *Storstrøms Amt* and at *Jysk Center for Videregående Uddannelse* in Aarhus. It is not clear from the information available if other CVUs provide similar courses. The absence of an advanced academic degree in the field of art education is internationally unique and provides a disincentive for teachers wishing to further develop their skills.

While it is not the intention of this report to add to the fluidity of teacher education, there are specific elements of this that have direct bearing upon arts education.

Firstly, the need to develop more hands-on skills in evaluation 'tools' for all Danish teachers is an urgent one. Particularly in arts education, teachers need greater insight into the use of a range of arts-based, qualitative and narrative evaluation methods.

The international UNESCO report points to the importance of partnerships between schools and cultural institutions – teachers and artists – as an interesting and effective way of professional development. Danish teachers who had been involved in such projects previously reported that it gave them new teaching methods, refreshed their teaching pedagogy, made them more confident and allowed them to see the children in new ways. One suggestion would be that cultural institutions work more directly with schools to develop in-service education. This is particularly needed in the areas of design education, dance, ICT and drama but all areas of the arts could benefit from such an input.

The following excerpt from a focus group held with teacher educators shows the complex relationship between initial teacher education and the needs for ongoing teacher education. It also evidences the keenness of teacher education providers to extend teacher competences, but the lack of incentives for teachers to participate in such courses.

Case Study 4: Focus group of teacher educators

All teachers go through initial teacher education. But we find after they graduate they end up with schools with a lot of teachers that have been there for years and 5 years later they have changed from the things we have taught them.

More funds need to be available for professional development because that is where we could really change teachers' attitudes. The problem now is that schools are given one big bag of money and they should spend a percent on professional development - but no one checks this, so the money can be spent on anything and unless the teachers are paid, they simply won't come to events. The municipal authorities will even pay for teachers to come to

further education, but very few teachers attend. They might come to something about pedagogy but there will be no teachers interested in anything about the arts. For example, out of 40 schools, only one professional development programme had anything at all about the arts. The rest were about science, mathematics and reading.

I think teachers at the moment feel caught between numbers of different visions, so don't really do any of these properly. Young teachers feel pressure from the media, from parents and from the older teachers. There are not many applicants to become principals of school because basically that job sucks and the amount of money they get is not worth the extra responsibility.

There is a gender imbalance. Lots of women are teachers but very few are school principals. School leadership is largely a male world. I think higher wages for school leadership might encourage more incentive for career progression.

It is not easy to get into teacher education. We have 1500 applicants for only 390 positions. Almost all of these students graduate. If they train in this area, they tend to stay and teach in this area and they might stay in the one school for 20-25 years. All students have to do Danish or mathematics, but then they can choose electives. Over half of the students choose PE and cooking. Less than a ¼ choose anything in the arts. Dance is a special addition, but as it is optional only some students do this. We don't really do much drama other than in language learning.

We spend a lot of time on assessment and evaluation. We cover portfolios and processes of documentation. We talk a lot about setting expectations and goals and then ways of describing students' achievement.

Greater professional development should be given to whole schools. In relation to changing a school culture to more arts-rich environment, it is important that a whole school receives professional development as arts education is as much about cultural change as content learning. Teachers need greater levels of reflection and self-evaluation. Figures indicate that with the exception of French teachers, Danish teachers have the least face-to-face time with students of any teachers in the world. Currently, much of this time is taken up with meetings. While these build levels of collegiality, a greater percent of this time could be spent of reflection and evaluation. In terms of the arts, teachers would need clear guidelines on aspects of arts learning requiring a clear focus. The research team would

also suggest that processes of evaluation do not have to be viewed as laborious and restrictive processes, but rather can themselves be creative arts-rich tasks. For example, visual diaries, portfolios, prose, poetry, digital records, websites, DVDs and so on could all be used to gather evaluative data and to provide a system for sustained reflection.

RESEARCH

Recommendation 6

We recommend that an international task force be utilised to develop a Danish research group capable of initiating and maintaining impact measurement of arts expenditure and outcomes within education and more broadly the youth arts and cultural sector.

At the higher education, more research expertise needs to be developed within Denmark to support arts education. This includes designated chairs (professorships) in arts education, doctoral programmes in arts educational and the reintroduction of masters' qualifications in arts education.

As stated previously in relation to teacher education, a number of postgraduate options in arts education have been removed. Of particular concern is the lack of masters level courses, which means there is little chance of educators moving into doctoral studies in the arts education fields. The absence of an advanced academic degree in the field of art education is internationally unique and provides a disincentive for teachers wishing to further develop their skills.

PARTNERSHIPS

Recommendation 7a

We recommend that the arts and education Ministries, in collaboration with the Local Government Association -'Kommunenes Landsforening'- jointly develop benchmark standards for partnerships between arts and educational organisations.

Recommendation 7b

We recommend that the arts and education Ministries, in collaboration with skolenævn (parents' groups) and stakeholder organisations like 'Forældreorganisationen Skole og Samfund, jointly develop benchmark standards for partnerships between parents and the community and educational organisations.

The education reform laws are very clear in requiring schools and parents and the community to cooperate, though it is less evidence in practice how this might be enacted to ensure quality arts education in *folkeskole*. While it is widely believed that parents are very satisfied with the *folkeskole* system, there is an increasing trend for children to move to private schools. For example, from 1983-2003 there was a 4.5% increase in children attending private schools.

In 2002 the Ministry for Culture published a cultural policy for children. A key aspect of this policy was to connect services concerned with children, culture and the arts. A vision is also being formulated for children, culture and the arts and a key aspect of this policy is that all children must be given an equal chance to meet the different expressions of arts and culture. This recommendation – while commendable – is not being addressed at the coal-face. For example, children are lucky if they receive some exposure to visual arts and music. There is very limited chance to experience either drama or dance. Similarly, while not defined, different expressions of culture should include exemplars from a range of cultures and arts forms and covering a range of time periods. However, from the examples we saw, there tends to be a predominance of Danish examples – from the more traditional cannon models – and well-known European works. We did not see clear evidence of attempts to engage in the arts and culture of the increasingly multicultural school population.

The *Børnekulturnetværket* (Network of Children and Culture) could be pivotal in leading reform to build high quality arts education for all children. This organisation has links across The Ministry for Education, The Ministry of Family and Consumer Affairs, The Danish National Library

Authority, The National Culture Heritage Agency, The Danish Arts Council and The Danish Film Institute. The Ministry of Culture is also represented as is the *Kommunenes Landsforening*. This Network could provide a most influential force in championing change in arts provisions to ensure improved educational outcomes.

There needs to be increased long-term involvement of artists within the school system. It is important to note, that the job of an artist within the school is **not** to replace the teacher or allow the teacher to abdicate their responsibility for arts education but rather to enrich and expand children's learning in the arts and provide professional development support for teachers.

Some initiatives are underway to increase children's involvement in the arts. For example, there are artists-in-residence programmes, children's theatre and music programmes for children. These activities are well-funded, but it is difficult to determine their impact. Certainly there appears to be some increased exposure to professional arts performances, but this tends to be just one performance (either theatre or music) per school per year. It could be argued that this is tokenistic and unlikely to lead to sustained interest and development in the arts. It is a recommendation that a detailed evaluation of children's provisions within the arts and cultural sector be undertaken to ascertain the impact of these programmes on:

- children's learning and educational achievement;
- attitude to the arts;
- access to the arts;
- participation in the arts;
- audience development; and
- equity of provisions.

A number of existing children's arts offerings are currently underutilised in the education sector. For example, while a grant of 8 million kroner was made to promote arts partnership programmes, the small number of

applications and generally low quality of these applications meant that only 2.5 million of this budget could be assigned to projects.

The analysis of the low level response attributed the lack of quality applications to a combination of insufficient knowledge about the funding programme, inadequate knowledge about or relationships with artists and a lack of interest from both teachers and artists. In an attempt to address some of these issues, a register of artists is being established that indicates those artists willing and able to work in educational settings. This register is also attempting to build a quality framework for artists. For example an author would need to have 2 books published; an artist two exhibitions in a gallery and so on.

The Network for Children and The Ministry of Culture work closely with The Arts Council to build programmes for young people. Greater cross-sector collaboration is needed between the arts and cultural sectors and education, as both aspects are vital to successful arts education in schools. Similarly, cooperation need to be forged between the Ministries' various services such as family and consumer affairs and services such as arts, cultural heritage, libraries, film institute and sports. This complex implementation chain is further complicated by the relationship between the central government and the local *kommune*. Despite central laws and recommendations, change within school is more likely to be driven by support in the local municipality, support from the school principal and energy and enthusiasm for the class teacher.

Many of the schools visited had very permeable boundaries with the community and were seen as community hubs. Schools that have opened their boundaries to the participation of artists and the community in a transparent way have seen marked improvements in school achievement and the school characteristics. This is evident in the following detailed Case Study 5:

Case Study 5: A school-based focus group with a teacher and a school principal

The school was facing the threat of closure [due to falling pupil numbers]. We decided we only had a few years to change the culture of the school. So we went out and targeted good people. We enticed a man back into teaching. We said to all the teachers that taking risks was important. We say "Do not ask for permission it is better to ask for forgiveness". We did some radical things, like we closed the school for a day so we could take all the teachers for professional development in Brussels. We also made the parents teachers for the day. It is about breaking rules but we usually find a solution. It is about leaders allowing things to happen. Providing space and flexibility but making the teachers have to step up and take responsibility and be accountable.

We developed self-governing school teams and then we resource these teams. They establish clear goals and must report the progress towards these goals and provide evidence. We see the class as a community that includes teachers, children, artists, parents and the community. We use all the talents within this community to improve the curriculum and learning. We ensure there is substantial yearly evaluation involving all the community. Teachers are the leaders.

Our school is also a cultural centre. We host people from the neighbourhood. We greatly benefit from opening-up the school to the community. For example a local choir practises in our classrooms, but they gave us 2 free concerts last year.

Performance is a very important part of our school. There are always performances and exhibitions and we open these up to the community or take them out into the community. Children really lift their energy, enthusiasm and quality when there is a real audience. We do very regular class performances and these help to create a strong school feeling.

Our buildings are small. There are no group rooms and you can see we are really bursting, but if you really want to do something, it is not about the buildings it is about the people and the energy. The teachers here work a longer day, but no one minds as the atmosphere is good. We plan together and prepare our teaching together. We are open-minded to our colleagues and share ideas through reflections and discussions.

From the artists' points of view, they would like to see opportunities developed for more extended work within schools. There was a general feeling expressed that artists participation in the schools was more like a visiting artist or artist-in-residence style of programme, where the artist would come into the school , 'do' their art and then leave. There was limited opportunity for extending children's learning and insufficient instances where the artists could work with teachers' professional

development. The artists saw the need for more substantial and longer-term approaches to partnerships with schools. While underlining the value of what they do, the artists felt undervalued by both the arts and culture sector and by the education sector. This is exemplified in *Case Study 6* that is taken from a focus group with arts and cultural professionals who work within schools or as key providers to the education system.

Case Study 6: A group of artists across art forms who work on delivering arts programmes in schools.

There is so little arts in the curriculum that when we come to the school it might be the only arts the children ever experience and it is lucky if we visit a school for even one day in the year. For us [a music group] we think the children are lucky if they have one of our concerts 2-3 times in their entire school life. We come into a school. Play a concert for 40 minutes and then go onto the next school and that is it for the child. It is a passive performance. There are no times for workshops.

We [a dance group] try to do more long-term projects with schools but that means we see less schools in a year. We always do a dance workshop with every dance presentation we do at a school. We look at audience development, physical learning, and social aspects. The arts are important for all sides of the personality. We need curly brains!

The arts are a way of communicating with people. Children have to be aware of the arts, like visual literacy... looking at commercials on TV and understanding how the arts have been used to manipulate. Also there is growing employment in the design and creative industries but we are not focusing on this.

We really want funders to think about children. We need more external evaluations so we can really show what we are doing. There is a lack of good educational research in the arts. There can be benefits for children, teachers, artists and schools but we need to document and analyse these. We need a centre of research competence in arts education research. We need to ensure quality and track this to see if it is actually happening in schools.

IMBALANCE IN CURRICULUM TIME

Recommendation 8

We recommend that current recommended hours for the arts be extending into grades 6-10 and that in all grades, instruction specifically in drama and dance be added to the curriculum.

The large amount of freedom of choice in Danish schools could be a real advantage to arts education, but conversely, as teachers tend to lack training in arts education, this freedom of choice actually works against children receiving quality arts education.

A more radical approach to curriculum reform has netted real benefits for a school especially when it has been combined with teacher professional development and clear and accountable instructional goals, as exemplified through a case study school located within a large public housing area. Close to 50% of the population is on either unemployment or other social benefit schemes. There are many single parent families and amongst the adults some substance abuse. The school has several special needs classes that are integrated into the school. There is a high level of ethnic diversity. The school is very well-equipped and has a strong technological focus. The school is a technological leader with electronic white boards in each class. The school also has the policy of integrating special needs children into the school programme in a system described as “a little school inside the school”. The school has strong international links and there are a number of opportunities for staff and students to participate in international exchanges via the internet. Despite the dedication of staff and support of leadership, this *Case Study 7* is very open to the shortcomings inherent within Danish arts education.

Case Study 7: Interview with a teacher and a school principal

Even though we try to do a lot in the arts in this school, I don't think in Denmark we have high quality arts education. The government has cut down on the lessons in music, drama, art and craft. The Arts Council is powerful and maybe if they speak about the value of arts education the Minister will listen. We could establish experimental schools specialising in the arts and see if it improved results “*den Kulturorienterede Skole*”.

Partnerships between the school and society are very important. We invite people into the school but we also go out into the community to establish connections. Working with artists makes the children livelier. Learning is fantastic and the children work more creatively. We tried it first as a pilot project but we continued to work on it even when the project was officially finished. Through this project we made contacts with other schools and have began a network to support teachers working with artists.

Often too it is about choosing the right people. You need creative people with enthusiasm. It can't be just top down. We make it free for teachers to join the network and they tell us suggestions. But Danish teachers are anarchists! It is *lidsjæl*... fire and soul. If you want something to burn you must light a fire! It grows from the bottom up and even if it means more work it is important that the teacher feel ownership.

Involving artists really helped the teachers. It made them more willing to try new projects, especially related to the arts and ICT and language learning. Partnerships with artists also gave new life to the pupils. They were more bubbly and enthusiastic and were confident to discover new talents and reveal new sides of themselves. We also have good pupil retention here.

Literacy has improved too, but we can't prove that. All the results are low in this area, and we are still on the bottom nationally, but we used to be the worst in the district and now we are the best and we are still creative. The teachers work together and share their experience. We see ourselves as *Forandringeragenter* (agents of change).

It is not normal in Denmark for teachers to share and discuss, but here we have studied about praxis learning. We learn from the artists and you are inspired to try things you never thought of. There is interaction between the artists and the teacher, and that is learning beyond words.

We do a lot of publicity about the school. The children write a school newsletter and we use the school website and home page. So much can be said through pictures.

REVISION OF CURRENT CRAFT SUBJECTS

Recommendation 9

*We recommend that a task force be established to review the current programmes of *håndarbejde* (sewing), and *sløjd* (woodwork) and examine ways of building greater critical thinking, design process, research orientation and creative inquiry into these subjects.*

There is insufficient time given to arts education within Danish schools especially in years 7-9 when children would have the greatest opportunity to develop higher level thinking skills and improved educational outcomes by participating in the arts.

To examine this in more detail, children in the first class should receive on average 30 lessons per year for both art and music. This in real terms means around 94 minutes per week. In second, third and fourth class, this figure doubles, with children receiving 60 lessons per year, or around 180 minutes per week. Additionally, in fourth class children also receive 180 lessons per year – around 540 minutes per week (this equates to around 2 days per week) of a combination of handicrafts, woodwork and home economics (cooking). This seems to be an enormous part of the curriculum but in years 5 and 6 these areas receive even more time. In grades 5 and 6 children receive 360 lessons per year in handicrafts, woodwork and home economics (cooking) – around 570 minutes per week or around 2.5 days per week. To dedicate half of the week to these areas of the curriculum is questionable particularly when instruction in music and art is around 180 minutes per week in grade 5 and less than 94 minutes per week in grade 6. By the time a child is in year 7 they **do not receive any arts education allocation**, while still getting 270 lessons per year or around one day per week of handicrafts, woodwork and home economics (cooking). In years 8 and 9 there is not any arts education and while there is the possibility of doing around 1.5 hours per week in elective subjects, no data was available on how many children choose arts-based electives. Considering that many after school clubs and leisure activities also focus on cooking, crafts (and sport and play) there appears to be an unreasonably large amount of time given to these areas of the curriculum.

While related to the aforementioned point on allocation of time for the arts, these figures also point to the need for a major overhaul of offerings especially in the craft, design and needlework areas to make them more in keeping with current trends towards new media, design and the creative industries. Globally, economies are moving away from an emphasis on manufacturing and moving towards a knowledge and creativity driven economy based on technology and consumer demand. Design process and the aesthetic of consumerism need to be stronger aspects of the craft related offerings in the curriculum.

MAKING ARTS PUBLIC

Recommendation 10

We recommend that greater attention be given to external performance and exhibitions of the arts produced by children.

Evidence indicates (Bamford 2006) that provisions of meaningful public performance and exhibition opportunities greatly increases the standard of children's artwork and the teacher's commitment to children's learning in the arts. Lack of quality work exhibited around the school or the use of artistic exemplars is likely to inhibit the development of children's artistic practices.

There was a lack of expectation of excellence in the arts and a failure to challenge children to go beyond their current ideas and skills level. A strong child orientation and an emphasis on free individual or group expression – without systematic guidance, reference to quality aesthetic samples, or clear goals – meant that most students had underdeveloped understanding of artistic languages and the final work seen was generally of a low quality.

MULTICULTURALISM

Recommendation 11

We recommend that a task force be developed that has democratic representation across various ethnic groups and from both education and the arts sectors to examine curricula and exemplars in arts education to determine ways for more fully acknowledging the multicultural and technological realities of 21st culture.

The Danish school system faces the challenge of building Danish culture while at the same time developing dialogues with the other cultures on an increasingly multicultural education system. Many schools have high levels of bi-lingual or multi-lingual students. Similarly, while tradition is strong, teachers face the challenge of responding to the rapid expansion in technology, youth culture and more globalised international culture. The current situation is tending to package the arts as something existing

outside the social world of young people, and while they will put their music straight into their ears the minute they leave school, such culture is largely outside the formal provisions.

AFTER SCHOOL CLASSES

Recommendation 12

We recommend that the system of 'clubs' for children aged over 8 years of age be reviewed to consider ways that these might provide systematic arts provisions. This is an important equity consideration as the current provisions appear to be inadequately targeting more marginalised learners within the community.

There is an extensive network of leisure time activities in the arts. In more affluent areas – and with younger children – these offerings tend to be popular and well attended, but in more socially and educationally marginalised communities, a smaller proportion of children attend these activities, and 'clubs' are seen to be 'uncool' for older children. For example, in relation to the extensive after school music programme – funded to the tune of 745.3 million Danish Kroner each year on average only 20% of children attend (Kulturministeriet: Danish Cultural Policy 2004). If these figures are further explored, figures as high as 80% attendance were reported in affluent areas, while below 2% were reported in more disadvantaged communities. There also appears to be contradictory rationale for the expenditure on the after school music.

While at a policy level, the aim is to produce musicians and singers of excellence, at an implementation level, the aims appear more to be experience, attendance and participation, with less emphasis on skill development, performance outcomes and talent development. It was reported anecdotally that interest in attending after school music has grown over the last 10 years, but evidence was not supplied.

Similarly, state supported local gallery programmes visited were of very high quality but these were also often isolated 'one off' days at the gallery rather than longer term partnerships. At two such centres visited, the

programmes were of a very high quality and the expertise amongst educational staff of the highest standard. There was also an attitude of flexibility and outreach, but despite all that, both settings reported that it was difficult to get schools to attend programmes and even more difficult to get teacher involvement or enthusiasm either as part of the children's programme or in the context of professional development opportunities.

Several schools are trialling more innovative and experimental integration between after school and in school arts education. At a time when it is being discussed whether the school day should be extended – in one form or other, a case could be made for introducing a more structured programme of creative learning.

Areas requiring further research

During the process of conducting this evaluation of Danish arts education, several areas were noted that were either outside the scope of this current project or required more sustained investigation than the limits of this research allowed. In particular the areas of special needs education; arts provisions in private schools and arts specialist *gymnasier*, and; new media education warrant more specific study.

"*Psykisk udviklingshæmmede*" (children with moderate learning disabilities) may be placed with 'buddy classes' under so-called *værtsklassesarbejde*. While there appears to be valuable initiatives in this area, further research is needed to determine the effect of such schemes. Evaluation of how children with learning disabilities' learning 'through the arts' is an area requiring further research.

The scope of this research was limited to investigating the arts education experiences within *folkeskole* and associated after school activities. During this work a number of people have suggested extending the study to look at 'free schools'. Similarly, arts-focused *gymnasia* (senior secondary colleges) would be useful to evaluate to ascertain if there are models of good practice that could inform developments in the *folkeskole* sector.

Also “Billedskolen” may provide models of practice that could be extended to become key informal offerings or to inform school practices. Arts education contributes to ‘*bildung*’, in the sense that education contributes to making children rounded individuals with an understanding of both the practical and artistic aspects of a full life. Especially schools outside the state sector are well-known for having pioneered this form of learning.

There is a generally expressed view that the “free schools’ especially those with an arts focus are doing a better job of educating children especially in and through the arts. Within the scope of this research, the focus was on arts education within the mainstream *folkeskole* system, but it is a recommendation that models of best practice be derived from a range of school types – including free schools – and that these be widely published as models for all schools.

New media education in Danish schools seems to be lagging behind the achievements of the developed and developing world. While some schools visited had excellent technical resources, these were under utilised in terms of their artistic potential. A technology baseline needs to be established for areas such as digital art, digital music, film-making and animation, amongst others.

Conclusion

The real per head cost of education in Denmark is continuing to rise every year and is already one of the most generous in the world. For example there was an 18% increase in real terms over the 5 years from 1995-2000 and expenditure per student is the highest of any country in the world (Directorate for Education 2004). The curriculum is largely based around projects. Team teaching and children working in small learning groups is common. Class sizes are small by international standards and pupil to teacher ratios low.

Within all the NGOs, government officials and school staff we got the impression that the arts matter and they are seen as being a valued part

of education. While people working more directly in the delivery of arts programmes – either within the schools or as part of children’s cultural provisions – bemoaned the quality of arts education and expressed a lack of support in and interest for the arts. It would be accurate to say, that those connected with the arts were more aware of the shortcomings in arts and cultural education while those in education were less aware of the low quality that generally exists.

In response to the questions as to ‘what would be needed to have more effective arts education’ the general response within schools was for better facilities. The impression of the research team was that in the schools visited the physical facilities were in all cases more than adequate - and in many cases of very high quality – to enable quality arts-rich education to occur. While it could be argued that the schools we saw were atypical of the situation in general, the level of funding would suggest that faculties are at least well above the world average. It is also important to note that the international research (Bamford 2006) indicates that high quality arts education can exist even where educational resources are very limited. For example, Kenya, Nigeria, Colombia, Cambodia and others have all managed to have high quality programmes under very small education budgets.

Of more concern was the level of arts training of the teachers. The school personnel tend to lack any specialist skills in the arts and this is particularly problematic in the areas of drama and dance.

The Ministry of Education inaugurated a “millennium programme for improvement” in schools (Directorate for Education 2004). This programme encouraged improvement in reading, writing and arithmetic and also information technology. While not specifically addressing the arts (this absence is of itself regrettable) it does stress the need to improve creativity, cooperation, independence and academic skills. International research supports the notion that these are most successfully achieved through arts-rich education (Bamford 2006).

In our visits and discussion it was noted that at almost all levels there was a total absence of understanding of the value of evaluation in the arts nor any methods for determining achievement of aims or to document students' learning. While teachers and those working in the delivery of arts programmes for children frequently reported positive learning experiences and attitudes, when the research team asked them to provide evidence, or even "how do you know" such questions were met with an admission that there was no evidence and no methods for gathering and analysing such evidence. There is also no understanding of international standards of quality arts education or recognition of the learning (especially the literacy values of the arts).

Based on the examination of case studies from the selected schools from different areas and representing different levels of and contexts for arts education this report found some examples of high level arts education. It was also found that Denmark – unlike other comparable countries (e.g. the UK) - has a high level of teacher retention.

When examining the list of qualities that comprise effective arts education, Denmark has been leaders in many of these. For example, there are flexible structures, integrated learning, and some evidence of partnerships with artists. Teacher to pupil ratios are low by developed world standards and schools are generally well-equipped. Ironically, in response to international testing such as PISA and others there is a danger that these 'good qualities' may be lost without addressing the major areas of weakness – namely, evaluation and reflection, sustained programmes and education both in and through the arts.

Denmark should and could be an international role model of creative and artistic education, but instead it has slipped behind most of the developed countries in terms of arts education provisions and is particularly lacking in relation to near neighbours such as Finland.

On the positive side, it was found that the Danish system is well-equipped for the future. At a time when the creative industries comprise a greater

share of the global economy the Danish educational system, with its emphasis on creativity has the potential to produce young people who are well-prepared for the 21st century.

However, to maintain its edge it is imperative that the arts programmes be better evaluated. Moreover, it is a cause for concern that arts education is not compulsory in grades 8-10, especially as the aims of arts education are focused on critical thinking and empowering – which require learner maturity.

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The Ildsjæl in the Classroom
A Review of Danish Arts Education in the Folkeskole

Udgivet af

Kunstrådet
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DK-1050 København K

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www.kunstraadet.dk

Ophavsret:
Ophavsretten tilhører Kunstrådet.

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