



Essential reading for Scotland's children's sector
August – September 2019 Issue 193

Children in Scotland magazine

art changes lives

**SCOTLAND'S MAKAR
JACKIE KAY ON THE
POWER OF POETRY**

**Change the Tune's fight to keep
music education alive**

**Community arts in action with
Karen McGrady-Parker**

**Authors Sophie Cameron and
Chris McQueer on creativity
and representation**

**Magic Torch light up comics
for schools**

... and much more

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to flourish.

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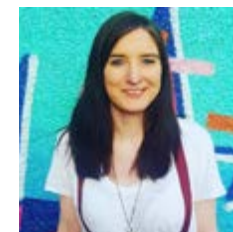
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Welcome...



Caitlin Logan
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...to a creative arts
special edition of
*Children in Scotland
Magazine*

This edition marks
my final magazine as
Acting Editor of the
magazine, as the team
welcomes back Jennifer
Drummond from her
time on maternity leave.
From 25 Calls to the

Year of Young People and Early Years, it's been
great to work on so many interesting special
editions over my time here. While I'm sad to be
leaving, I'm excited to be sharing this edition
which focuses on all things creative!

Inspired by Starcatchers' contribution to our
25 Calls campaign, this edition explores the
importance and centrality of art in everyone's
lives - from birth onwards.

In our lead interview with Scotland's Makar
(National Poet) Jackie Kay, Ruby from our Young
Media Voices project asks for advice for young
poets like herself, and we learn how poetry can
open up inspirational new worlds and provide a

vital refuge in the face of difficult experiences.
We're also delighted to reproduce a poem, 'The
Kindness of Trees' (page 9), written by Jackie
alongside a group of schoolchildren.

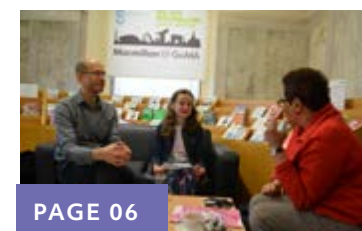
Our feature on the power of comics shares a
vibrant comic strip from Gourrock High School
and Magic Torch Comics. We also hear from
leading creative practitioners and artists including
Karen McGrady-Parker, who has recently been an
artist in residence in the East End of Glasgow.
And we highlight the work of innovative projects
working in communities across the country - from
hip hop song writing, to aerial performance to art
therapy, there's something for everyone!

Thank you to everyone who completed our
recent online magazine survey. The feedback has
shown how much you value the magazine as part
of our membership offer and given us a helpful
steer on improvements we could make. For more
on the results, see page five.

As everyone heads back to work and the new
school term starts, I hope you enjoy this special
issue. Happy reading!

Caitlin Logan

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about how art therapy works in practice
(page 32) and check in on a series of
projects engaging with young people
and providing support through the arts
(pages 34-37)

Change the Tune:

Cuts to music education contradict the aims of Curriculum for Excellence and the life-affirming impact which music has on all of us. *Jenny Kemp* tells us more about the campaign to give music its rightful place

Can you imagine a life without music? Imagine getting on the bus to school or work and popping your headphones on but hearing only white noise. All your favourite music streaming services become obsolete, and CDs and vinyl don't work anymore. You never again go to a gig, a concert or a festival. Adverts, films and TV shows no longer invoke laughter, terror or tears with stirring soundtracks, and no one picks up a guitar at parties or plays with a band.

It's a pretty dystopian thought, and one that those of us who enjoy music on a daily basis find hard to imagine. But there is a paradox at play: the value that the Scottish education system places on music seems to be diminishing, while our exposure to music, enjoyment of it, and realisation of its centrality to human life increases. This paradox must be challenged.

Leading the challenge is the Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS), Scotland's largest teaching union, which represents 80 per cent of teachers in Scotland, including a large body of Instrumental Music Teachers (IMTs). EIS has been running the 'Change the Tune' campaign over the last year, urging both local and national government to change direction on music education. We are urging the Scottish Government to protect and expand instrumental music in schools. In parallel, we urge local authorities to reject further cuts to music services and recognise the inequity of current approaches.

In case anyone is in doubt that the current situation is unsustainable, let us set out some of the challenges facing music education. They include: cuts to music service budgets,

charging regimes which deter pupils from taking part in instrumental music lessons, cuts to IMT numbers, diminishing stocks of resources (including instruments, past exam papers and sheet music), and, crucially, instrumental music being perceived as 'extra-curricular' rather than a core aspect of children's education which should be provided free of charge.

A recent Improvement Service report highlighted that there was "a sharp increase in fees compared to previous years" in 2018-19. It found that 38 per cent of local authorities raised tuition rates in 2018-19, including several authorities which introduced charges where tuition used to be free. The average group lesson fee now stands at £234.76, up 10.6 per cent from the previous year. In some areas the fees are much higher – as much as £430 per child per instrument. In EIS's view, that creates a culture where 'who pays, plays'. We find this unacceptable.

Although there were still 60,326 pupils receiving instrumental music lessons from their local authority service in 2017-18, this was the first school year in which overall pupil numbers fell. We believe that these developments sit in direct opposition to other education policies.

The Curriculum for Excellence has creativity and self-expression at its heart. It is rooted in a deep appreciation of children and young people's participation in arts and culture. The aspiration to excellence and equity for all children is undermined by a postcode lottery of access to music lessons, which we know boost confidence, mental health, organisational skills, teamwork skills, literacy and numeracy. These benefits should be equally accessible to all, free of charge.

children need music!

Be in no doubt that involvement in music is life-affirming and life-changing for young people. One local authority recently surveyed young people who took part in a residential rehearsal weekend for young musicians. The results both surprised and inspired the instrumental music teachers taking part and the teachers and parents who had organised the survey.

At a time when there is increased concern for children's mental health, over a fifth of the responses referred directly to mental health issues; words like "calm", "relax" and "chill" came up repeatedly. Other common themes included "increased confidence", "skills for life" and "a creative outlet". Children talked about "meeting like-minded people and wanting to spend more time with these types", "limitless creativity", and a "sense of purpose".

On their experience of making music, the young people reported: "it makes me happy", "it gives me confidence and makes me happy", "it calms me down", "it keeps me sane", and "I meet new people through music, form connections". One child said simply: "It's my life." Another captured the joy to be derived from music, saying "I feel free when I play". In a stressful and fast-evolving world, how wonderful, and how important, for children to feel happy and free. That is the power of music!

An Instrumental Music Teacher recently shared with us that a parent had thanked her for the difference music had made to her severely autistic child whose fine motor skills had significantly improved because of playing the cello, reminding us that music has the power to enrich the lives of children who face other challenges in our education system.

For all these reasons and more, EIS will be continuing our efforts to defend music education over the new school session. If you feel strongly about music education being freely available to all, please write to your local councillors and MSPs to let them know, and please support local demonstrations in defence of music services. We can't let the world fall silent. It's time to Change the Tune.

Jenny Kemp is National Officer (Education and Equality) at Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS)

> Find out more about the campaign at eis.org.uk/Campaigns/Music

"The average group lesson fee now stands at £234.76, up 10.6% from the previous year"



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Picture: Ceranna Photography

Arts and minds

An appreciation of the true impact of culture on wellbeing and learning should be embedded at all levels of policy, writes *Amy Woodhouse*



Amy Woodhouse is Children in Scotland's Head of Policy, Projects and Participation

@amywoodhouse

You may or may not be aware that Scotland has a National Outcome for Culture: "We are creative and our vibrant and diverse cultures are expressed and enjoyed widely."

The more I think about what this might mean for children and young people, the wider the subject matter becomes. I started by re-reading Call 24 of our #25Calls campaign, where Rhona Matheson of Starcatchers calls for all children to have the opportunity to participate in high-quality, innovative arts experiences from the earliest age.

There is evidence that participatory arts, where professional artists collaborate with children to create original art works, can have all sorts of positive impacts on children's lives. According to an Inquiry by the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Arts, Health and Wellbeing, this includes improved self-esteem, wellbeing, confidence and coping skills. Participatory arts are also a great way to break down generational barriers between children and older adults.

Ensuring adequate funding for participatory arts in a harsh funding climate, therefore, feels necessary, not just because the arts are good things in and of themselves, but also because of their potential contribution to improving wellbeing in ways that are truly engaging and child-led. See Me's success with FeelsFM, "the world's first emoji-powered jukebox for mental health", highlights the role of listening to music as a self-help strategy for many children and

young people. At the more specialist end of mental health support, art therapy can be used to support some of the most vulnerable children and young people to communicate and recover. It is a particularly helpful approach when children have communication needs or don't speak English.

This work requires skilled professionals and a commitment within statutory services to see art therapy and the wider creative arts as part of holistic mental health provision. With that in mind, the importance of ensuring that the arts feature within the Children and Young People's Mental Health Taskforce, for example, becomes clear.

Seeing the arts as a valid and realistic career pathway is something that Tony Reekie, former director of the Edinburgh International Children's Festival, talks about in his recent response to Starcatchers' call. He highlights how music, dance and other arts qualifications are often sidelined within schools in favour of other more traditional academic subjects. Is this something that the emphasis on attainment in Scotland will improve or worsen? Sometimes arts subjects can be viewed as 'soft' qualifications – but what about the evidence that participating in the arts can actually improve attainment?

This connection was recently highlighted by the Scottish Parliament's Education and Skills Committee in its investigation, along with the Scottish Youth Parliament, into

the future of instrumental music tuition in schools. They found variable practice across Scotland and revealed alarming evidence of a drop in participation in music tuition when fees were introduced.

The Committee concluded that all children in receipt of free school meals should be exempt from tuition fees, and that this should ideally extend even further. For me, this might look something like the Finnish model. Their National Youth Work and Youth Policy Programme sets out five objectives, the first of which is that "every child and young person will be given a possibility to engage in at least one free-time hobby of their choice". Imagine if we had a similar commitment in Scotland which meant that every child could take part in an extracurricular arts activity of their choice, without cost.

Children and young people are an audience for the arts as well as creators. We should celebrate the increase in festivals, programming and events targeted at children and young people that has blossomed in recent years. The Year of Young People 2018 offered fantastic opportunities for young people to engage with arts in a variety of ways and opened up traditionally adult-orientated venues and events for younger ages. For example, the Young and the Wild programme in the Edinburgh International Film Festival, Glasgow International Comedy Festival's School of Stand-Up Comedy performances, and the 'Beginnings' theme of the Scottish Mental Health Arts Festival.

However, these positive examples are no cause for complacency. One of the main reasons Children in Scotland developed our Heritage Hunters project was that access to the arts and heritage is not equally distributed, and that the socio-economic status of parents is one of the strongest predictors of arts engagement. If you are from a wealthy family, you are much more likely to go to art galleries, museums and theatres than if your family experiences poverty. Children with disabilities, or from black and minority ethnic backgrounds are also less likely

to have visited arts venues. There are multiple reasons for this. Cost is obviously a consideration (not just for entry, but to cover transport). But wider accessibility is also important: how friendly and welcoming venues are; where they are located; and whether the focus of exhibitions relate to people's lives. All these factors can encourage or deter engagement.

Arts organisations can do a lot to make their spaces more welcoming for children and young people, particularly those experiencing additional barriers to access. We were pleased, therefore, that through Heritage Hunters we were able to support Edinburgh Young Carers to co-curate a display for the People's Story in Edinburgh. Visible representation will hopefully support further inclusion.

The Scottish Government has committed to producing a Culture Strategy, setting out a vision supported by a series of ambitions, aims and actions to deliver the national outcome. The consultation on this took place last year, but it has all gone a bit quiet since then. Perhaps it's time the children's sector collectively pushed the government to get on with it?

At Children in Scotland we will work to ensure we recognise how the arts fit within our wider work. So, when we respond to the consultation on incorporation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), for example, we should think about Article 31 – the right to leisure, play and culture. Or, in our response to what Public Health Scotland's priorities should be, we should encourage this new body to view itself as a promoter of the arts for health improvement.

We could, legitimately, arts-proof all of our policy work. We could ask ourselves, can we make a case for the arts here? What role could they have? The case feels pretty strong to me. The arts are health-promoting, inspiring, participative, rights-supporting. We're convinced it's worth investing in the arts for children and young people – will you join us?

Policy & Participation round-up

By Elaine Kerridge, Policy Manager (Participation)

The P&E team have had a great summer, working directly with lots of young people from across Scotland.



Young people at the UNCRC action day

Conventional wisdom

In July we held a UNCRC action day with 20 children and young people. The aim of the day was to discuss the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child as the Scottish Government prepares to incorporate it into Scots law. It was a fantastic and creative day with lots of engaging and thoughtful discussions about how children's rights can be better protected in Scotland.

Busting the jargon

Over the summer we also delivered two focus groups on the EU Settlement Scheme for the Home Office and the University of Liverpool to help ensure information for children and families is accessible.

Getting it right

My Rights, My Say has started working with a group of students and staff at Bell Baxter High School in Fife to ensure children know about their rights to support at school and support Bell Baxter to develop their practice.

Expanding our world

We are pleased to say our children and young people's advisory group, Changing Our World, has expanded. We now have 15 members from across Scotland, aged 8-21. Over the summer we have been able to hold a number of meetings focusing on what the current 'hot topics' are for children and young people and developing our thoughts and plans for the coming months.

> For more information on our policy, projects and participation work, visit childreninscotland.org.uk



Image: iStockphoto.com @FatCamera

Letters to the future

Jane Miller explains how the art of storytelling has allowed a group of young mums to create a powerful piece of heritage to pass on to their children



Illustrations by Anders Frang for *Every Day is a New Day* storybook

Every day is a new day

A story by young mums
for their babies – so be read
when they are older.



“If you’re old enough to read this, then you and I will have been through a lot together.”

These powerful words are spoken directly from young mums to their children as part of a book, *Every Day is a New Day*, which they created to highlight their lived experience of being a young parent.

I was lucky enough to work alongside the young mum groups from The Citadel Youth Centre in Edinburgh to help them create a beautiful and emotive storybook for their children when they grow up. Working alongside Museums and Galleries Edinburgh and children’s writer Mike Nicholson, the mums were able to create a story that captures the challenges and joys of being a young mum.

For the past year, Children in Scotland has been delivering the Heritage Hunters project. The aim of the project was to connect heritage organisations with groups of young people who

don’t often have opportunities to engage with the sector, using a co-produced and youth-led approach.

Encouraging creative expression is a key element of participation, and storytelling is often used to help young people express their views and experiences safely. With this project the young mums were able to use the medium of heritage to share their unique voices. The group explored different options and soon settled on creating a children’s book, as they felt that this would be something their children would engage with.

The story itself brings to life different experiences and explores themes of friendship, learning new skills, feeling supported by other young mums, and the special bond they have with their child. However, the story doesn’t shy away from some of the more negative aspects of being a young mum, including judgement, stigma, stress and money worries. At its core, the story highlights the need to respect these young women and their courage.



“It’s our everyday life. This is us, this is who we are. Take it or leave it.” — Young mum

The most powerful part of this experience was watching the young mums perform the book reading at the launch event. It was inspiring to see young women taking up space and feeling empowered to share their stories on their own terms. The young mums embodied the qualities of the young mum in the book: being brave and confident, and standing strong with their children in their arms.

Photo: Launch of storybook with young mums group, Mike Nicholson and partners



“I wouldn’t change being a mum for the world.” — Young mum

The story reflects on the past and present and leaves a legacy for children and families in the future. The book is now its own piece of heritage, ensuring that the voices of the young mums will continue to be heard.

“You and me... I wouldn’t have it any other way. So lucky you!”

“You have a mum who loves you and wants the best for you... and she is brave, resilient, sensible, confident and has lots of energy!”

“Did you know that?”

— Extract from *Every Day is a New Day*

“I love working with people to hear their story and then finding a way of telling it in their own words. This group of young mothers gave me an insight into their daily lives; the things they love and the struggles they have. They also told me the characteristics they have that help them get through. Hopefully this book will now let other people hear their story.”

— Writer Mike Nicholson

“The book has been a fantastic and exciting opportunity for all the mums involved. Together as a group they shared their experiences, and from this they have created an emotional and inspiring story that is a true reflection of their day to day lives. The group wanted to highlight the challenges and achievements of being a young mum as a way to reach out to other young mums, and for it to be used as a resource for young people. But mostly importantly they wanted a real story that they can read to their children when they are older about what it was like for them being a young parent.”

— The Citadel Youth Centre

“Every Day is a New Day is an emotional insight into the hardships young mums face, and the resilience that this group of young women have shown. It was a pleasure to work with them and their children and to discuss how parenthood has and hasn’t changed over the years.”

— Museums and Galleries Edinburgh

Jane Miller is Policy and Participation Officer at Children in Scotland

> The book currently features as part of the **Bringing up Baby** exhibition at the Museum of Childhood and will become part of the permanent collection at Edinburgh’s Museums Collection Centre

> *Every Day is a New Day* can be downloaded at bit.ly/2LYR1bh

> Find out more about our **Heritage Hunters** projects at childreninscotland.org.uk/heritage-hunters



Photograph: Impact Arts

"It's a place where I get to be myself"

Impact Arts recently expanded its Glasgow art therapy programme into North Ayrshire. The success of the project demonstrates the potential of art to change lives for the better, as art therapists *Danielle Devin* and *Alison Peebles* explain

"Our work can mitigate the effects of ACEs at an early stage, enabling children and young people to 'get back on track'"

At Impact Arts our mission is to help people and communities transform their lives through creativity and the arts, focusing in particular on children, young people, older people and communities.

Our Art Therapy Programmes in Glasgow and North Ayrshire provide a creative therapeutic intervention to primary school-age children and families who are experiencing adversity in their lives, particularly those affected by familial drug or alcohol use. This includes one-to-one therapy for children aged five to 12, Dyadic Art Therapy (supporting parent and carers and children in joint therapy), and Therapeutic Group Work for children and young people aged five to 15.

Through these sessions we aim to develop a co-operative and trusting therapeutic relationship. We offer a safe space where the arts can be used as a tool for the expression of feelings and thoughts, to develop emotional resilience, self-esteem, coping skills, confidence and self-awareness, and to build on strengths and

enhance communication.

The impact of the work itself is intended to act as an early intervention where adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) could otherwise have a lasting and, often increasingly, negative effect on the future progression and outcomes of individuals. Our work can mitigate the effects of ACEs at an early stage, enabling children and young people to "get back on track" towards achieving their full potential.

Persistent poverty and parental addiction has significant effects on children's social, emotional and behavioural development. The issues experienced by the children we work with, which also include loss, bereavement and poor mental health, can lead to lack of engagement with education, poor attainment, poor transitions, anti-social behaviour, poor interpersonal relationships and substance misuse. Our experience tells us that creative interventions can have a significant and positive impact. In Glasgow, which has some of the worst

alcohol and drugs problems in the UK – with an estimated 5,283 children directly affected by parental addictions – Impact Arts received 50 referrals to our Art Therapy Programme in 2018-19. An evaluation of the programme found that 100 per cent of children improved in communication and were more willing to try new tasks; 100 per cent were able to set their own goals and were actively involved in creating their own art work; and 100 per cent increased their coping skills and self-awareness.

"I like coming to art therapy because it's a place where I get to be myself."

"It helped me relax and focus."

"It keeps me calm."

— *Children who attended art therapy*

"My daughter and I were put in touch with Impact Arts after having a couple of difficult years. We didn't really enjoy spending time together. From the outset Alison was very approachable, understanding and non-judgemental. Gradually over a number of sessions my daughter and I found it much easier being together, whether it's doing art projects (sometimes messy!) or more imaginative play. Our relationship is much better now and our time together is much more relaxed and fun for both of us."

— *Parent who attended art therapy*

"Two pupils have received one-to-one support on a weekly basis. Within the school setting, we have noticed a difference in the participation of the children in their own classes and their interactions with other pupils. In addition to the children really enjoying the sessions in school, the feedback from our families has also been positive. The families who have been engaging in the work have been more supportive within the school, attending sessions more regularly than had been the case. Our families speak of the relationships being more positive at home, with the children better able to share what has been taking place, both in school and to an extent, in the sessions."

— *Head Teacher*

North Ayrshire

North Ayrshire has some of the most highly concentrated areas of deprivation in Scotland. Impact Arts has worked in North Ayrshire for many years, embedded in the community with our permanent base, and we have developed an understanding of local people and communities. Through our consultations with social workers, teachers, community development workers and children and young people we have learned that there is a high demand for a therapeutic arts project to support children and families in the area. As a result of all our findings we launched our North Ayrshire Art Therapy service on 1 May 2019.

A pilot project with Cornerstone in North Ayrshire highlighted the value of providing wider family support. Statutory partners reported that there are 310 children in kinship care as a result of parental substance misuse. Feedback from Health Visiting teams reinforces the need for family approaches, expressing that the Dyadic Art Therapy model (supporting parent/carers and children in joint therapy) would be extremely welcome and that they could "fill the spaces over twice tomorrow". In light of this gap, the strong focus of the programme on improving life chances for children, and the partnerships that are currently being developed in North Ayrshire, we envision continual growth in our pool of art therapists, enabling us to reach even more children and families.

We are proud to have representatives from North Ayrshire on Impact Arts' Youth Steering Group, who are regularly consulted on the structure of new and existing projects, and on the strategic direction of our organisation. Their input – and that of the children and young people we engage with in North Ayrshire – is invaluable to how the project will continue to develop.

Looking to the future

The Art Therapy Programme has become one of Impact Arts' flagship programmes. We are undergoing a process of review and redesign that will inform future iterations of the programme, supported by our co-design, Youth Steering Group, and Listening Project initiatives. Furthermore, we are in discussions with partners and funders across multiple geographical areas about the potential to bring this intervention model to more children and families across Scotland.

Danielle Devin is an art therapist for Impact Arts in North Ayrshire and Alison Peebles is an art therapist and coordinator in Glasgow

> Impact Arts won the Scottish Government's award for Improving Quality: Measuring and Demonstrating Impact at the Advancing Healthcare Awards 2018.

> The North Ayrshire Art Therapy Programme is funded by the Rayne Foundation, Scottish Children's Lottery, The Robertson Trust, The Volant Trust and Bank of Scotland Foundation - Mental Health Fund.

> The Glasgow Art Therapy Programme is funded by the Corra Foundation and the Scottish Whisky Action Fund.

> Find out more about Impact Arts' projects at impactarts.co.uk