

City of London Corporation Education Strategy 2013 – 2015 (extract)

Vision

To educate and inspire children and young people to achieve their full potential.

The City Corporation (the City) is committed to providing access to excellent education and learning opportunities within and beyond the Square Mile. The City will ensure that every child resident in the City has access to high quality education that enables them to reach their academic and personal potential. The City schools will provide outstanding education that enriches and inspires students. The City will maximise the educational opportunities that its cultural, heritage and environmental assets offer to City residents, the City schools and children throughout London. The City will also be responsive to the changing education landscape, and will welcome appropriate opportunities to expand its education portfolio.

Strategic objectives

1. To promote and support excellent education and access to higher education
2. To strive for excellence in the City schools
3. To inspire children through an enriched education and outreach opportunities
4. To promote an effective transition from education to employment
5. To explore opportunities to expand the City's education portfolio and influence on education throughout London

Strategic Objective 3: To inspire children through an enriched education and outreach opportunities

The best education incorporates both academic study and exposure to different experiences and learning environments. Children will be given opportunities to explore the world around them, learn new skills, and understand the communities they live in. London is culturally vibrant, historically significant and has a wealth of green spaces to explore. London's children should be able to learn about the community around them and the City can play a part in realising this.

Outreach

Background

The City has responsibilities that go beyond its local authority remit in the areas of culture, the arts, history and the environment. It has a high concentration of arts and cultural organisations, creating an economic cluster recently judged to be worth over £200m to both the Square Mile and the wider London area. It is a steward of historical collections that have been formally designated as being of international significance and manages a significant number of historical and architectural buildings. Across London, the City has responsibility for 11,000 acres of open spaces which include various commons, heath and forest land, parks, gardens and a cemetery. These assets and activities are used and enjoyed by many audiences and as centres of learning and community engagement, they work with schools and young people to educate and inspire over 500,000 people every year.

These activities are well advertised across the London boroughs and various parts of the City have developed distinctive offerings suited to the opportunities they provide. For example, in the cultural sector the London Metropolitan Archives use their collections to bring history and social issues alive for many thousands of school pupils from every London borough each year, which included over 3,000 pupils in 98 onsite sessions in 2012/13. The Barbican Centre and the Guildhall School have formulated effective partnerships with City fringe and East London boroughs to provide outreach for hard to reach and culturally deprived areas. In 2012/13 The Barbican and Guildhall School Creative Learning team worked with 18,500 people as part of the Barbican and Guildhall School's programme.

The Museum of London, jointly sponsored by the GLA and the City Corporation, regards schools as a key audience and expanding the Museum's offer to schools is one of their key strategic priorities, with an aim to engage with every school child across London. It runs curriculum-based programmes that cater for both primary and secondary education, including in archaeology, art, citizenship, classical studies, English, geography and history. The learning section of the Museum's website reaches 1.5million views every year and in 2012/13, approximately 106,000 pupils visited the Museum and the Museum of London Docklands.

Furthermore the City-owned open spaces, such as Epping Forest and Hampstead Heath already have established education programmes, focusing on the environment, recreation and protecting the natural environment. These programmes, funded primarily through charitable grants, are popular with schools and reach out to thousands of children every year. These programmes are interactive and extend across many open space sites. Moreover, the open spaces also host apprenticeship and volunteering opportunities where training is provided on a multitude of areas, including conservation, surveying, and education and visitor services.

The City also plays a pivotal role in ensuring schools throughout London have access to sporting facilities on its open spaces, such as those on Wansted Flats. Providing this infrastructure has a positive effect on both the hundreds of school children that have access to it, and the local communities that are using it to provide opportunities for football, cricket, rugby and other sports. In maintaining these facilities the City is able to provide these opportunities that may not exist if it becomes derelict.

The Economic Development Office brokers volunteering opportunities for City business and City employees within schools in neighbouring boroughs, such as mentoring pupils or providing literacy and numeracy support.

Delivering these programmes is vitally important to retaining and enhancing the quality of the City's outreach offer. In general these activities are funded from the core grant of the service areas and may therefore come under pressure as funding for the service areas is reviewed. Some of the funding for these programmes is additionally delivered through grants. Having an understanding of what funding is available is an integral part of ensuring that the City can maintain this provision.

Vision

The City is committed to using its outstanding cultural, heritage, open and recreational assets to enrich the education of children both in City schools and across London. This includes communicating the offer to every London school, and the City schools in particular, to increase awareness of the programmes on offer. To enhance the offer to schools, the City will open access to joint programmes that bring these different activities together.

Through providing community facilities the City will play a vital role in supporting London boroughs to be able to offer a wide variety of activities. This will strengthen the City's links with local authorities throughout London and offers an opportunity to make an impact to children and young people beyond the classroom.

Recommendations

Improve internal awareness of the educational outreach programmes available to schools across the City

- City departments to collate information on the take-up of their educational offering to City schools, and to schools across London, and provide an annual report to the overarching education body.

Improve the co-ordination of the educational offer across the City's activities

- Review the grant applications being submitted for outreach programmes to identify duplications and opportunities for more collaboration on applications.
- Support the provision of sporting facilities for schools in the City-owned open spaces.
- Use the information on current outreach programmes to identify gaps and duplications in the City's educational outreach activities.
- Establish an officer forum consisting of representatives from the Barbican Centre, Open Spaces and Culture, Heritage and Libraries departments, and the Economic Development Office, to discuss opportunities for school programme collaboration, increase communication to City schools, and to avoid duplication of grant applications.

Increase the effectiveness of educational outreach programmes to the City schools

- The City's cultural institutions and open spaces should specifically target the City's family of schools and those schools attended by a high proportion of children resident in the Square Mile.

Increase the take-up and impact of City educational outreach programmes across London

- Develop a section of the website specifically for teachers and schools that promote City educational outreach programmes, ensuring that London boroughs and other relevant local authorities are made aware of it.