Arts and Cultural Education at School in Europe

Netherlands

2007/08
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(Reference year 2007/08)

1. Responsibility and purpose

The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science is responsible for setting the aims for cultural and creative dimensions of formal education. Decisions related to the implementation of arts curriculum are made at school level.

With regard to the ISCED level 1, the cultural and creative aims of the whole curriculum are defined as follows:

'Primary education aims to broadly educate children. The education addresses their emotional and intellectual development, the development of their creativity, and their acquisition of social, cultural and physical skills...' (1)

For more detailed description concerning the aims and objectives of arts at the ISCED levels 1 and 2 see section 2.2.

2. Organisation and aims of arts education

2.1 Organisation of arts curriculum

The arts curriculum is organised as a combination of integrated and separate subjects. Arts education is compulsory for all pupils of primary school age (6-12 years), and for all lower secondary pupils (age 13-14).

With regard to integrated subjects, arts and cultural education appear as:

- Kunstzinnige oriëntatie – Artistic Orientation (ISCED 1);
- Kunst en cultuur – Arts and Culture (ISCED 2).

At both ISCED levels (ISCED 1 and 2), schools are free to choose either of the following subjects: visual arts, music, drama, dance, media arts, crafts. They appear as compulsory subjects.

Schools are free, within the framework set by the government, to decide how much time is spent on the various subjects and areas of the curriculum, and when. The only restrictions relate to the minimum number of teaching periods per year and the maximum length of the school day, which are laid down by law. Consequently schools are free to determine how much time is devoted to arts education (on the basis of a ministerial advice). In other words: there is no regulation.

(1) See http://www.minocw.nl/documenten/core%20objectives%20primary%20education.pdf (Preamble)
The average time devoted to arts can be summarised as follows (2):

**ISCED 1**

7,000 primary schools in the Netherlands spend on average 12% of their school timetable on Artistic Orientation. Most of time is spent on the visual arts and music. Within a primary school the quantity attention to the art subjects differs by group. In the first two years teachers spend relatively much time on the art subjects (average almost 10 hours per week); as from group 4 the number of hours strongly decline (an average 5.5 hour per week).

**ISCED 2:**

At least 1,425 hours in the first two school years of secondary education (ISCED 2) must be looked after on the basis of all core objectives (including art and culture).

It is important to note that the interpretation of art education at ISCED level 2 varies: some schools opt for separate art subjects while others incorporate arts in various thematic topics or subject areas.

### 2.2 Aims of arts curriculum

**Artistic Orientation (ISCED 1)**

**General objectives**

Art education helps children become acquainted with the artistic and cultural aspects of their world. This domain is especially concerned with those aspects of cultural heritage that people have used during the course of time to give form and meaning to their existence. Another thing art education is concerned with is the acquisition of some knowledge of the present-day artistic and cultural diversity. This takes place both in school and via regular interaction with the outside world. Through art education, children learn to open their minds: they observe paintings and sculptures, they listen to music, they enjoy language and movement. Art education also encourages them to appreciate cultural and artistic works of expression in the world around them. Furthermore, they learn to express themselves, using the means linked to the artistic domain: They learn to investigate the expressive possibilities of various materials by means of aspects such as colour, form, space, texture and composition; they make drawings and three-dimensional works; they learn songs and use rhythmic instruments to support their singing; they play and move. Wherever possible, subjects are used that are linked to those in other learning areas. This way, education becomes more cohesive and therefore more meaningful for pupils. But above all, the authentic contribution made by art education is to stimulate children in their development.

**Core objectives**

The pupils learn to use images, language, music, games and movement to express their feelings and experiences and to communicate with.

- The pupils learn to reflect upon their own work and the work of others.
- The pupils acquire knowledge about and learn to appreciate aspects of cultural heritage.

**Arts and Culture (ISCED 2)**

**General objectives**

The five core objectives for the part of art and culture emphasise the similarities among the different artistic disciplines. The purpose is to broadly orientate on art and culture. These core objectives also

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(2) Information provided by the Cultuurnetwerk Nederland, [http://www.cultuurnetwerk.nl/](http://www.cultuurnetwerk.nl/)
Country description Netherlands

indicate a variation in activities: making and presenting own work, experiencing and placing the work of others, reporting activities, and reflecting own and other people’s work.

Core objectives

- By using elementary skills, the pupil learns to research and apply the power of expression of different artistic disciplines, in order to express his own feelings, record experiences, shape his imagination, and realise communication.
- The pupil learns to present his own artistic work, individually or as a part of a group, to third parties.
- On the basis of some background knowledge, the pupil learns to look at the visual arts, listen to music, and watch and listen to theatre, dance and film performances.
- Using visual and auditory means, the pupil learns to report about his participation in artistic activities, as a spectator or participant.
- The pupil learns to reflect upon his own work and the work of others, including artists, orally or in writing.

2.3 Cross-curricular links between arts and other subjects

There are no official regulations regarding cross-curricular links between arts and other subjects in the Netherlands.

3. Special provision with a focus on art education

Specialist provision for the arts includes the following schools:

- ISCED 2: cultuurprofielscholen – Cultural Profile Schools

From the start of the school year 2004/05, a subsidy scheme is in force set up by Culture and School (for more details on Culture and School see section 6). This scheme has enabled certain schools to present themselves as so-called ‘cultural profile schools’ (44 schools developed into ‘cultural profile schools’ since 2004). A cultural profile school’s curriculum, policy plan and activities pay significant attention to heritage and art. Another characteristic of a cultural profile school is its structural cooperation with various cultural partners. Many schools have already spent quite some time developing and expanding projects in this field. To name but a few examples: there are schools with special ‘art and culture classrooms’ that offer extracurricular classes in creative subjects, professional artists are engaged, pupils are given the opportunity to rehearse musical and dramatic performances, not in the school’s gym, but on a real stage. Another example: when studying the history of slavery it can be much more interesting for pupils (and the teachers themselves) to consult the historical records themselves, instead of simply hearing it second-hand during a lesson.

4. Assessment of pupils’ progress and monitoring of standards in the arts

4.1 Pupils’ assessment

At both ISCED levels (ISCED 1 and 2) teachers decide freely on methods of assessment in the arts. The outcome of teacher assessment is recorded to the way the school/competent authority has decided on (in general this will be a school report).

The decision what to do in case of low grades in art subjects is at the school’s discretion. Schools describe in their school prospectuses how they will deal with low grades and what consequences they
have for being promoted to a next year. At the ISCED level 1, pupils hardly ever have to repeat a class.

4.2 Monitoring of standards
Since 2000 monitoring in arts subjects has not been carried out in the Netherlands.

5. Teacher education in the arts

5.1 Initial teacher education
At the ISCED level 1, it is usually a general teacher who teaches all arts subjects. Preparation in arts subjects is a part of the training of teachers for primary education. However, the exact content of training is at the discretion of higher education institutions.

At the ISCED level 2, all arts subjects are taught by specialist teachers who are qualified in arts. Their initial education takes place within one of the School of the Arts bachelor's programmes with professional orientation (hbo-bachelor). These programmes are specifically aimed at a career in the arts education practice. Students should obtain a good level of general and specific knowledge and the supplementary competences needed for independent professional practice. These programmes require 240 ECTS and are generally completed within four academic years.

Professional artists can be recruited for a certain period of time during a school year at both ISCED levels (ISCED 1 and 2). In most cases they need a so-called certificate ‘Artists in the classroom’ (for more details see also part 5.2). In the case of a permanent position they have to meet the requirements for qualification which apply for all specialist arts teachers (a bachelor of arts education).

5.2 Continuing professional development
Continuing professional development (CPD) of art teachers is arranged at school level as part of the collective labour agreement between employers and teacher organisations. It is recommended by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, but it is not specified in terms of hours or training days.

CPD for art teachers can be organised by:

- school (at the initiative of teachers themselves);
- Schools of the Arts;
- universities;
- cultural institutions and centres for the arts.

Two examples of CPD for art teachers:

- ISCED 1: ICC courses – a nationwide course for primary school teachers to become arts and culture coordinators;
- ISCED 2: CKV courses (Cultural Arts Education) – developed by IVLOS/University of Utrecht, ICLON/University of Leiden.

Professional artists can obtain a qualification in teaching through the following CPD:

- ISCED 1: BIK (Beroeps Kunstenaars in de Klas – Professional Artists in the Classroom) – Training consists of two modules, leading to a certificate (see section 5.1 – last paragraph).
- ISCED 2: Bachelor of Education in Music or Visual Art and Design (part-time). This part-time course is intended for people with a bachelor's degree in the arts who wish to teach or who are already teaching, but don’t have official authorisation to teach.
6. Initiatives
The national policy programme 'Culture and School' stimulates the orientation on cultural activities in the school curriculum at the ISCED levels 1 and 2. 'Culture and School' develops various projects to enable schools to incorporate culture in the broadest sense of the word (art, literature, heritage, media, etc) in their curricula. One major pre-condition, however, is that a natural – and preferably also structural – relationship is forged between schools and the cultural institutions in the region. This can help a class to visit a museum, library or theatre in its own neighbourhood. It can also help to engage artists to give a lesson at the school. Through 'Culture and School' heritage becomes a more accessible teaching aid for use during lessons.

Cooperation between schools and other institutions has always been stimulated by the national government. The two main partners at government level are the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science (ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschappen – OCW) and the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport (ministerie van Volksgezondheid, Welzijn en Sport – VWS). Both ministries support the 'Community School Scheme' – the network for children, young people, and their family, with the emphasis on enhancing social (life) skills and youth participation. The ministry of Education, Culture and Science in particular has put emphasis on stimulating cultural participation.

7. Ongoing reforms and proposals
There haven’t been any recent changes to the arts curriculum in the Netherlands.

8. Existing national surveys and reports on practices
With regards to arts education, no national surveys are available. However, there are several small-scale qualitative and quantitative studies concerning arts education at local or regional level (information available at Cultuurnetwerk Nederland (³)).

Unrevised English.
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For detailed information on the educational system and teacher education, please see Eurybase on www.eurydice.org

(³) See http://www.cultuurnetwerk.nl/