

OXFORD CULTURE

STRATEGY 2012-15



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1 Introduction

Welcome to Oxford City Council's Culture strategy for 2012–15

This strategy, developed with the support and engagement of the cultural sector and community groups in our city, explicitly links the City Council's vision for culture and the arts to the needs of the city's communities. There are significant levels of disadvantage in the city and the City Council believes that access to high quality cultural experiences – creating more quality cultural experiences for more people, more often - can play a vital role in enriching and energising the lives of individuals and regenerating communities.



This strategy:

- Provides demographic and other contextual information about Oxford and the role that culture and the arts play in the city
- Outlines the City Council’s priorities for culture and the arts over the next three years
- Sets out objectives for each of the priorities and information about how progress will be monitored.

The City Council has three key priorities for culture:

- I. Lead a partnership-based approach to sustaining, developing and improving the cultural life of the city.
- II. Improve opportunities for young people to access and actively participate in high quality cultural activities.
- III. Improve opportunities for the diverse range of communities in the city actively to participate in high quality cultural activities that reflect their own identities and can be shared with the whole community.

The strategy’s time-span reflects national funding arrangements. The funding for most of Arts Council England’s National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs) and Catalyst organisations ends in March 2015 and their delivery programmes and 3-year targets also run to this timetable. As this will mark a time of change for cultural funding at a national level, we will update Oxford’s Culture Strategy in 2015.





2

Our Vision for Culture and the Arts

Oxford City Council's ambition – developed with our partners, including business, community organisations, the health and education sectors, and Oxfordshire County Council – is to make Oxford a world-class city for everyone.

Oxford City Council and its partners believe that culture – whether it takes the form of the architecture that surrounds us, the museums that reflect our past and present, or the literature and performing and visual arts through which we celebrate our experiences – plays a profound role in shaping people's experiences and attitudes. We believe that access to high quality cultural experiences is the right of all our citizens.

Our shared vision for culture is:

- To work in partnership with Oxford's key stakeholders and cultural partners to offer affordable, excellent experiences.
- To develop and promote cultural activities and events that enhance and leave a legacy in the lives of individuals and communities.
- To encourage attainment amongst young people and promote cultural ambition.



3 The Arts and Culture in Oxford

Oxford has a long history of cultural innovation. The country's first Botanic Garden, the world's first public museum (the Ashmolean in 1682) and the world's first music room (Holywell) are part of the city's cultural heritage.

Oxford's contemporary cultural sector is also innovative, rich and diverse. It includes national museums and world-famous heritage sites, a commercial creative sector, a myriad of voluntary arts organisations, literary, folk and dance festivals, and vibrant community events such as Christmas Light Night, May Morning and the Cowley Road Carnival. It has a world-class and highly innovative music scene and thriving contemporary art and theatre produced through nationally-recognised organisations such as Oxford Playhouse, Modern Art Oxford, Oxford Contemporary Music, and Oxford Philomusica. It is also has a strong reputation as the source of innovative rock music.

The combination of prestigious, world-famous institutions alongside a more informal, but still high quality network of smaller venues and organisations is key to Oxford's cultural identity and strength.

Annex 1 details some of the organisations that contribute to the city's vibrant cultural scene.





4 Creating a World-class Culture for Everyone

Oxford is one of the most photographed, filmed, and written about cities in the world. The enduring images are of historic Oxford, where much of the city's heritage environment and many of its cultural attractions directly reflect the University of Oxford's influence on the development of the city. These images are central to our flourishing tourist industry because it is the historic heart of Oxford that over nine million tourists visit every year.



Historic Oxford is, however, only one part of our city's story. Contemporary Oxford is a densely packed urban space, with a population of around 150,000 living in an area of only 17.6 square miles. There are very high levels of housing density. There are severe pressures on housing stock, with large concentrations of homes in multiple occupation and significant numbers of homeless and other vulnerable groups.

There are major inequalities in life chances and life expectancy in our city. Relative to the rest of Oxfordshire, Oxford has high levels of deprivation. The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2010 ranks Oxford 131 out of 354, placing it in the top half of the most deprived local authority areas in England. Of 85 areas in Oxford, 12 are among the 20% most deprived areas in England, with one area in Northfield Brook ward among the 10% most deprived. Around 23% of Oxford's under-16s live in low-income households, and child poverty is a key concern in eight neighbourhoods which feature among the 10% worst affected in England. In some areas, half of all adults have no qualifications and this is linked to lower incomes, poor health and child poverty. Oxford has over 10,000 working-age residents claiming benefits – the highest percentage in the county. Life expectancy in the most deprived areas is up to ten years less than in the wealthiest areas.

The City Council and its partners believe that access to excellent cultural experiences can be a significant driver of regeneration, with the potential to build community cohesion by encouraging different community groups to enjoy and share their different traditions. Our aim - working with our partners in the cultural sector - is to increase access for all our communities to good quality cultural opportunities and events, at affordable prices, in a range of venues and locations.





Many of the city's cultural organisations already offer strong outreach services. For example:

- the four University Museums offer free access to 2 million visitors each year and have worked directly with every primary and secondary state school in Oxford in the last year
- the Museum of Oxford – the only museum dedicated to telling the city's story - runs an extensive and popular outreach service linked to the curriculum
- Oxford University Press has partnered with the National Literacy Trust to develop innovative schools programmes aimed at raising boys' literacy levels and improving behaviour and engagement
- Modern Art Oxford continues to take contemporary art to estates such as Rose Hill through its strong outreach programme
- 15,000 people engage with the Oxford Playhouse outreach programme each year, with a particular focus on schools, disadvantaged communities, children and young people. In 2012, the Playhouse Tent toured to Oxford locations including East Oxford and Blackbird Leys, with free performances and activity aimed at families with little or no cultural engagement
- Kate Clanchy, Oxford's first City Poet is working with schools across the city and establishing partnerships and projects with community groups.

Oxford City Council will work with its cultural partners to co-ordinate and strengthen the cultural provision, working particularly with the more deprived communities of the city.



The Old Fire Station (OFS) which opened in November 2011 is a flagship project for the City Council. One of the most innovative projects in the country, it brings together a new Crisis Skylight Centre and Arts at The Old Fire Station. Arts at the Old Fire Station is a new organisation, created by the City Council. It offers a unique model of social inclusion by bringing artists, homeless people and the public into the same space. The facility combines a range of flexible spaces and facilities, a gallery and shop selling local artists' work, as well as providing training and support for employment in the creative and hospitality industries.

Pegasus Theatre, Oxford's youth theatre in East Oxford – consolidated by a £4m rebuild - goes from strength to strength. In 2011, Pegasus initiated Mesh, Oxford's first International Youth Arts Festival. Mesh was co-planned, run and hosted by and for young people from Oxford, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Croatia, Palestine and Russia. This project complemented the work done through the City Council's own international links programme which offers opportunities for exchange projects involving young people from our twin cities.





5

Culture and Community Benefit

Culture has the potential to bring people together from all areas of life, break down barriers, and build strong communities. It also increases our sense of local identity and belonging. The Olympic events that took place in Oxford in 2012 strongly illustrated the value that can be gained when opportunities are provided for people to come together and form bonds through community events and festivals.

The cultural sector also contributes significantly to building a vibrant and sustainable local economy. The UK's cultural and creative industries are the most successful in Europe. They now make up 7.3% of the UK economy and are growing at 5% per year—almost twice the rate of the rest of the economy.

Oxford's dazzling architectural heritage, and the rich offerings of the Ashmolean and other museums, means that tourism plays a key part in the local economy. Over nine million tourists visit the city each year, spending £602million and supporting around 13,000 jobs. We would like visitors to stay longer in the city and to explore areas beyond the city as well.



In order to facilitate this we have worked with partners to set up Experience Oxfordshire, an organisation working to improve the management and marketing of tourism in Oxford and throughout Oxfordshire.

Oxford led the way in formalising the link between culture and tourism, acknowledging that culture is an attraction for visitors and that tourism can be an audience development tool for the cultural community.

We are working with Experience Oxfordshire and partners in the cultural sector to maximise the role that culture can play in Oxford's tourism offer. Currently, cultural tourism tends to focus on historic Oxford. While Oxford's heritage will always be the primary attraction, Oxford also has a thriving contemporary arts and music scene which is currently under-represented in the tourist offer. This has the potential to bring further benefit to the local economy.





6 Funding

Despite the current context of reduced national subsidy for culture, Oxford City Council remains committed to funding arts and cultural organisations in Oxford, as well as supporting them to diversify their income streams and enhance their sustainability. Subsidy helps to encourage innovation and new initiatives at the grass-roots level and to ensure that engagement with and participation in cultural activities is available to everyone, not just the wealthy.

Oxford City Council core-funded 9 organisations in 09/10 and 10/11 at a total cost of £326,430 each year. As a result, these organisations have attracted leverage of £3.4m (09/10) and £3.6m (10/11) from external Trusts, national funding bodies and other regional funds. 2011/12 results are currently being collated.

Art projects and activities funded through Oxford City Council's open bidding, small grants and area committees in 2009/10 totalled £12,900. In 2010/11 the total was £36,858. Oxford City Council also allocated £10,000 to arts projects in 2009/10 and £5,000 in 10/11 aimed at supporting emerging talent and individual artists.



The City Council will work with the Cultural Action Group and Arts Council England to share best practice in developing philanthropy with arts and cultural organisations. This should not be considered as a substitute for public funding, which remains essential for the arts and culture to be world-class and available to all.

The City Council's support for cultural organisations in the city has been responsible for the fact that, between 2012 and 2015, Arts Council England will invest £5.3m in its Oxford NPOs and a further £4.5m in the Oxford ASPIRE museum consortium. This investment will make a significant contribution to Oxford's economy and has been brought in with the City Council's support for many of these organisations. Indeed, Arts Council England explicitly state that they will not enter a position where they become the sole public funder in a local authority area. It is positive to see City Council funding enabling Oxford's cultural organisations to leverage in such significant investment, providing jobs as well as high quality cultural activity for our residents and visitors.

In Oxford, three members of the Cultural Action Group have been awarded a total of £548,793 through Arts Council England's Catalyst capacity building and match funding strand; Pegasus Theatre, Oxford Playhouse and Modern Art Oxford. This will support fundraising towards extended artistic outcomes and improved resilience for these organisations from 2012 to 2015. City Council support enabled these organisations to leverage in this additional funding, which will in turn contribute to their future sustainability.





7 Our Priorities for Culture and the Arts

The City Council has three key priorities for culture:

- I. Lead a partnership-based approach to sustaining, developing and improving the cultural life of the city.
- II. Improve opportunities for young people to access and actively participate in high quality cultural activities.
- III. Improve opportunities for the diverse range of communities in the city actively to participate in high quality cultural activities that reflect their own identities and can be shared with the whole community.

Underpinning each of these priorities is a commitment to explore the barriers to participation in cultural activities confronted by different sectors of the community and find ways of removing them.



I. Working in partnership

In the past two years, the Government – while acknowledging the ability of the cultural sector to deliver economic and social benefits and the ability of artists to engage and inspire - has cut funding to the sector.

As a replacement for public subsidy, the Government is promoting philanthropy on the American model, through the introduction of schemes such as the Arts Council England’s Catalyst endowments, fundraising and capacity building fund.

Some major London institutions are enjoying a revival of philanthropic interest as a result of blockbuster exhibitions such as Da Vinci and David Hockney. However, the amount of private giving for less high-profile activity has significantly reduced in the past 12 months. Continuing reductions to local government funding are also impacting on the ability to fund culture (and other services). Cultural organisations find themselves competing locally and externally for ever-decreasing pots of money.

In the current climate, it is becoming increasingly important for the cultural sector to identify efficient delivery models that encompass different partners, investors and agencies and that encourage organisations to work together rather than in competition.

Oxford City Council directly delivers a small number of cultural services, for example the Museum of Oxford, the Town Hall, and events. We also help develop and sustain the city’s cultural sector through the provision of £250,000 in grant support and by supporting cultural partnerships. Partnership and collaboration are essential if we are to reap the full benefit from the cultural opportunities offered by the city and the City Council is





committed to retaining a partnership model for delivery of culture and the arts. Working together increases opportunities, reduces duplication, and maximises funding potential. Oxford City Council is negotiating with other funders to identify ways of strengthening cultural partnerships across the city in future years.

The City Council plays an important role in supporting cultural partnerships by its sponsorship of the Cultural Action Group. This group comprises the various Oxford-based organisations funded by Arts Council England (ACE) and the City Council. Current members are: Oxford Playhouse, Pegasus Theatre, Modern Art Oxford, Oxford Contemporary Music, Oxford Inspires, and the University Museums. Other organisations – including Arts at the Old Fire Station, the Story Museum, and Arts Council England will be invited to join the group. The Cultural Action Group and the larger funded organisations will fulfil a key strategic leadership role. We work closely with key national agencies such as Arts Council England and we support their strategic aims of Achieving Great Art for Everyone.

In addition to working with the Cultural Action Group, the City Council's Culture Team will develop new Cultural Forums to which individual artists and other cultural organisations across the city will be invited to contribute. These forums will be responsive to the needs of the wider cultural sector and enable the City Council to provide support through training and development as well as funding. In order to ensure that individual artists and grassroots cultural organisations in particular have access to City Council funding, a new Culture Fund will be piloted in 2012/13 to provide modest leverage grants.



The City Council’s Culture Team will also work closely with Oxfordshire County Council to identify collaborative opportunities in areas relating to the Children and Young People’s Plan 2010-2013, Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2012-16, and the Libraries Strategy 2008-2018. We will also co-ordinate with other City Council departments to overcome practical barriers to delivering arts and cultural activity and to embed arts and cultural activity in future Council infrastructure development.

Oxford City Council is committed to working in partnership with the city’s major stakeholders (the two Universities, County Council, Experience Oxfordshire, as well as the Oxford Strategic Partnership and the LEP) to create a collective vision across the sector of Oxford’s cultural offer for its residents, artists, businesses and tourists.

Objectives:

1. Research new funding models for arts and culture in association with our core partners.
2. Explore new avenues to attract partners who offer high profile branding opportunities through philanthropy and sponsorship and strong interaction with the local community.
3. Encourage volunteer schemes, creative apprenticeships and paid bursary/internship schemes for young people and diverse communities.
4. Work to sustain and grow the creative economy and encourage creative industries to develop or move to the city, building on the recommendations in the Economic Impact of the Cultural and Creative Industries in Oxfordshire report.





5. Explore ways to increase the amount of cultural activity that is available to audiences digitally, working with partners including NPOs in the city and Oxford ASPIRE to achieve this.
6. Identify and develop collaborative opportunities for arts and cultural organisations to deliver against City Council and County Council strategies, particularly in regards to education and libraries, health and social care, and strong and active communities.
7. Work with Experience Oxfordshire and the County Council to maximise the role of culture in the city's and county's tourism offer and support collaborative projects which enhance awareness of the diversity of Oxford's cultural tourism offer.
8. Share best practice and collaborative working opportunities for arts and cultural organisations, the thriving amateur sector, student companies, and individual artists on specific topics of shared interest, (for example, models of philanthropy for small scale arts organisations, marketing, audience development, enhancing digital skills and engagement).
9. Identify locally-focused projects which academic departments at the two universities can support and work collaboratively to deliver them.
10. Work with the City Council Planning department to embed cultural infrastructure and activity in physical regeneration schemes.



II. Improving opportunities for young people

As part of its commitment to building a world class city for everyone, Oxford City Council aims to reduce the extent of inequality and to improve the lives of the most vulnerable members of our society. We particularly want to improve outcomes for young people.

This is particularly important for our young people in Oxford, where there are major inequalities in life opportunities. Attainment levels of pupils in Oxford's state schools have been significantly lower than the national average. In 2009/10 only 67% of Oxford pupils gained five or more A* to C grade GCSEs, compared to a 76% national average. This was the fifteenth worst result of any local authority area in England. Pupils living in deprived areas have particularly poor results. In the same year 46% of Oxford children achieved the benchmark of five or more A* to C grades at GCSE. This was below the national average of 55%. Improving educational attainment and access to cultural education and experiences are integrally related and are key priorities for the City Council.

Engagement with culture from an early age can develop technical skills, discipline, and the confidence necessary for future success. It can offer opportunities for young people to share their experiences with others, and help to build social cohesion. Exposure to a full range of cultural provision can also expand young people's horizons and generate a sense of ambition. In addition, the cultural and creative industries represent a significant part of the labour market in the UK and can provide employment for talented young people.





The City Council has allocated £350,000 annually over the next four years so that we can play our role in improving educational attainment in the city, particularly in the more deprived neighbourhoods. Access to quality cultural experiences and exposure to the practical skills that the arts require play a key role in high performing educational environments and this will also be the case in Oxford.

Objectives:

1. Working through the new education improvement partnership, we will stimulate the provision and uptake of quality assured cultural programmes by young people of school age.
2. Champion the implementation of recommendations in the Henley Review of Cultural Education in England and work with Arts Council England's regional 'bridge' organisation, Artsworld, to pilot projects which address these recommendations.
3. Work with schools, the widening participation teams at the two universities, Artsworld and the cultural sector to support and commission activities to enhance existing cultural provision for young people and improve skills and attainment
4. Work with Artsworld and Arts Council England NPOs to encourage the take-up of Arts Award (both primary and secondary) by young people in the city and support schools wishing to become Artsmark accredited.
5. Provide opportunities for young people to engage in cultural planning and programme delivery.



6. Improve information for young people about where and how to access culture, including through digital engagement.

III. Encouraging diversity and inclusion

The City Council is committed to supporting cultural representation and engagement opportunities for all of Oxford's communities. Celebrating diversity, social inclusion and community cohesion are key goals for the City Council.

In marked contrast to other parts of the county, Oxford is ethnically and culturally diverse, with the third highest minority ethnic population in the south east. In 2009, 19.6% of the population were from black and minority ethnic backgrounds, compared with an England average of 12.5%. The largest non-white ethnic groups represented are Indian, Pakistani and Black African. In Oxford nearly half of births (47%) in 2010 were to non UK-born mothers, compared to a national and county average of 26%.

Oxford's population is constantly changing. People come to Oxford to live, to study and to work, coming from both within the UK and from other countries. There are over 30,000 students studying full-time at the two universities, and there is significant annual turnover in their number. Around 6,000 people arrive from overseas to live in Oxford each year, about half of these being students and a quarter migrant workers. A consequence of this is that one in five of our residents were born outside the UK – the most common countries of birth being Ireland, USA, Germany, Pakistan and India. Around 4,000 international migrants living in Oxford apply for national insurance numbers every year. These migrant workers most commonly originate from the USA, Poland, India and Italy.





Objectives:

1. Work to explore and remove barriers to participation and enable access to quality arts provision for those communities and groups who are currently excluded.
2. Work in partnership with the cultural sector to identify gaps in arts provision and support activity which addresses these gaps.
3. Work with NPOs and Oxford ASPIRE to develop a detailed understanding of current audiences in order to better identify gaps in engagement and take a joint approach to audience development.
4. Support activities, events and audience development schemes aimed at reaching, engaging and celebrating Oxford's diverse communities.
5. Support and develop collaborative initiatives to improve creative skills, and provide mentoring and professional development opportunities for all sections of the community, including elderly or disabled groups.
6. Support arts and cultural organisations to embed diversity into their work and management, for example through building on the recommendations of Arts Council England's report, The Role of Diversity in Building Adaptive Resilience.



Monitoring and Evaluation

The Delivery Framework includes milestones and performance indicators to measure success, linked to the objectives of City Council staff and the Service Level Agreements of commissioned organisations. Delivery will be monitored quarterly by the Cultural Action Group and by the City Executive Board on a six-monthly basis. The Cultural Development Manager will undertake an Annual Review of activity to evaluate performance against Culture Strategy priorities.

Conclusion

Oxford City Council and its partners believe that culture and the arts play a profound role in shaping people's experiences and attitudes. We believe that access to high quality cultural experiences across a wide range of forms is the right of all our citizens. We believe that the proposals in this strategy will contribute to ensuring that these opportunities are open to all our citizens and not just the few.





ANNEX 1 Cultural organisations in Oxford

City Council outdoor events

Large scale outdoor and site specific events play an important role in building cohesion and celebrating life in our city. Around 20,000 people attended this year's successful May Morning celebration, organised for the first time by the City Council. Christmas Light Night – where the City Council, Oxford Inspires and other cultural organisations from across the city work together to organise a celebration of the festive season - has become so popular that last year's main outdoor celebrations were relocated from Broad Street to St. Giles. Around 29,000 people attended events across the city. The Olympic Torch relay and Tree of Light event, which took place on July 9th 2012, gave people across the city the opportunity to savour the Olympic spirit. The 2012 Jubilee celebrations provided an excellent opportunity for people to organise street parties and other neighbourhood events. The Lord Mayor hosted a Jubilee street party

involving representatives from the city's different faith and ethnic communities to celebrate his inauguration.

Dancin' Oxford

Our successful annual festival Dancin' Oxford continues to receive enthusiastic support from the citizens of Oxford and has just received over £45k in grant support from Arts Council England. Get Moving! – a dance project for the over-50's in Oxford has proved to be very popular.

Museum of Oxford

We have also completed the first stage of upgrading the Museum of Oxford with support from the Heritage Lottery Fund. Our plans for the Museum attracted over £80k in grant support from external funders, and the Museum reopened in June 2012. The City Council is working with the University of Oxford and the County Council to secure funding to improve public access to Oxfordshire's museums and to train museum staff.

Modern Art Oxford

Modern Art Oxford continues to stage exhibitions of international standing. It combines the pursuit of excellence and radicalism with a strong commitment to the local community, for example by taking contemporary art to estates such as Rose Hill through its strong outreach programme.

The Old Fire Station

Old Fire Station (OFS) opened in November 2011, bringing together a new Crisis Skylight Centre and Arts at The Old Fire Station. Arts at the Old Fire Station is a new organisation, created by the City Council to support the development of the creative industries and help to regenerate the west end of the city. The OFS offers a unique model of social inclusion by bringing artists, homeless people and the public into the same space. The facility combines a range of flexible spaces and facilities, a gallery and shop selling local artists' work, as well as providing training and support for employment in the creative and hospitality industries.



Oxford ASPIRE Museums

Oxford ASPIRE, the University/County/City museums partnership has received £4.5m subsidy from Arts Council England through Renaissance funding and we are committed to working with them as a major partner in both heritage and culture through our support for Arts Council England's Achieving Great Art for Everyone and Culture, Knowledge and Understanding strategic frameworks.

Oxford Contemporary Music

OCM develop and present innovative new music and sound-based live events to engage diverse local and national audiences and deepen understanding and appreciation of musical cultures. They present over 30 concerts each year and have an education and outreach programme which takes musicians into schools, community centres, day centres and Oxford's two universities.

Oxford Playhouse

Oxford Playhouse's world class programme is seen by over 140,000

people each year, with free and subsidised tickets available to those least able to afford it. 15,000 people engage with the Oxford Playhouse outreach programme each year, with a particular focus on schools, disadvantaged communities, children and young people. In 2012, Oxford Playhouse launched a digital poetry walk, which is enjoying great success amongst locals and visitors, and The Four Minute Mile, a participatory piece of theatre on the running track in East Oxford, which played to 1,000 people. Playhouse Plays Out continued to provide off-site events across the county while the Playhouse Tent toured to Oxford locations including East Oxford and Blackbird Leys, with free performances and activity aimed at families with little or no cultural engagement.

Oxford Town Hall

Oxford's Town Hall continues to make its own contribution to the city's cultural offer. This iconic Victorian Grade II* listed building is being successfully remarketed and is now a popular venue for concerts from a diverse range of performers, and

events, including the annual Beer Festival. Oxford Philomusica's regular concerts for children have become sell-out events. In 2011, the Town Hall was the main site for Oxford's internationally acclaimed Jazz Festival. Exciting improvements to the Town Hall are planned over the next twelve months: the City Council is investing in improvements to the Town Hall infrastructure, including an upgrade to the acoustics in the Main Hall. We are planning to enhance the role of the Town Hall as a primary community facility for the city and also to provide facilities for the conference and concert markets. The Town Hall's high quality gift shop, focusing on products related to the Museum and Town Hall collection, opened in early November 2011.

Oxford's Universities

The University of Oxford has continued to make a strong contribution to the cultural life of the city and the region, working in collaboration with cultural organisations in the city including Pegasus Theatre and Modern Art Oxford. The Bodleian and University libraries receive over 100,000 visitors



annually and take part in events such as World Book Day. The four designated University Museums offer free access to 2 million visitors each year and have worked directly with every primary and secondary state school in Oxford in the last year. As part of Oxford ASPIRE they will actively reach into schools and communities across Oxfordshire, raising aspirations and supporting educational attainment across the curriculum and across all ages. Oxford University Press has partnered with the National Literacy Trust to develop innovative schools programmes aimed at raising boys' literacy levels and improving behaviour and engagement.

The city also benefits from a range of educational outreach activities in the city, organised through the widening participation teams at The University of Oxford and Oxford Brookes University. In partnership with the Poetry Centre at Oxford Brookes University, the City Council has appointed Oxford's first City Poet, Kate Clanchy. Kate is aiming to visit all schools across the city and to establish partnerships and projects with community groups.

Pegasus Theatre

Pegasus Theatre, Oxford's youth theatre in East Oxford – consolidated by a £4m rebuild - goes from strength to strength. In 2011, Pegasus initiated Mesh, Oxford's first International Youth Arts Festival. Mesh was co-planned, run and hosted by and for young people from Oxford, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Croatia, Palestine and Russia. This project complemented the work done through the City Council's own international links programme which offers opportunities for exchange projects involving young people from our twin cities.

currently focused on developing children's language skills through oral storytelling. Their family programme includes creative activities with authors, storytellers, actors, illustrators and other artists in a range of venues, from theatres, museums and libraries to family centres, parks and shopping malls.

The Story Museum

Celebrating children's stories and sharing enjoyable ways for young people to learn through stories as they grow, The Story Museum takes story performances, exhibitions, activities and ideas into schools and communities. The museum's schools programme includes touring performances and exhibitions, teacher training and learning resources and is





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