



## **PRESS RELEASE**

**10th March 2006**

**Cultural entitlements are a welcome and important initiative for children in rural areas, a conference organised by Children in Scotland has heard.**

*Arts for All? Meeting the needs of the whole child in rural Scotland*, held at Carnoustie Hotel on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> March, discussed the importance of making culture accessible to children in rural areas.

The conference concluded that:

- Mainstream funding from a variety of sources is needed to support arts programmes in rural areas to improve children's learning, life experiences and the local economy
- Self-employed artists in rural communities must be valued and prioritised if cultural activities for children in these areas are to be effective
- Community active schools should be looked at as a model for delivering a better learning experience for children in rural areas and a more positive attitude to local culture

- The significance of place-based learning should be addressed in the current review of the Scottish education curriculum

Shonaig Macpherson, chairman of the National Trust for Scotland and chair of the conference, said: “Cultural entitlements tend to be interpreted as meaning access to the arts in the big cities. However, we must also make sure that local communities are involved and support what’s done locally as well as nationally. That will involve being creative and not being constrained in our definition of culture and cultural rights. Participation is vital – we must ensure that children can take part in their own local culture.”

Wenche Ronning, of the Nordland Research Institute, Norway, who spoke at the conference, highlighted the importance of place-based learning in rural communities.

She said: “In Norway we moved towards a focus on equity through equality but then, because of the detrimental effects this had on indigenous communities and children in rural areas, it was changed to equity through diversity, where the importance of basing the curriculum in the local environment for the local children was properly recognised. Perhaps this is a change that Scotland could also look at.”

### **Children’s art competition – winner announced at conference**

The winner of ‘A View from my Window’, the special art competition for nursery children run by Angus Council and Children in Scotland, was four-year-old James Stirling from Inverkeilor pre-school class. Shonaig Macpherson, who presented the award, said: “James’ winning entry is a great painting of a tractor. It was a very apt picture as James lives on a farm and reflects rural Scotland.”

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*Notes for editors*

- The publication *A sense of time, a sense of place: meeting the needs of the whole child in small communities* is available from Children in Scotland. Tel 0131 222 2410 to order your copy. £8 for members of Children in Scotland and £12 for non-members.
- Children in Scotland is the national agency for voluntary, statutory and professional organisations and individuals working with children and their families in Scotland. It exists to identify and promote the interests of children and their families and to ensure that relevant policies, services and provisions are of the best possible quality and able to meet the needs of a diverse society.