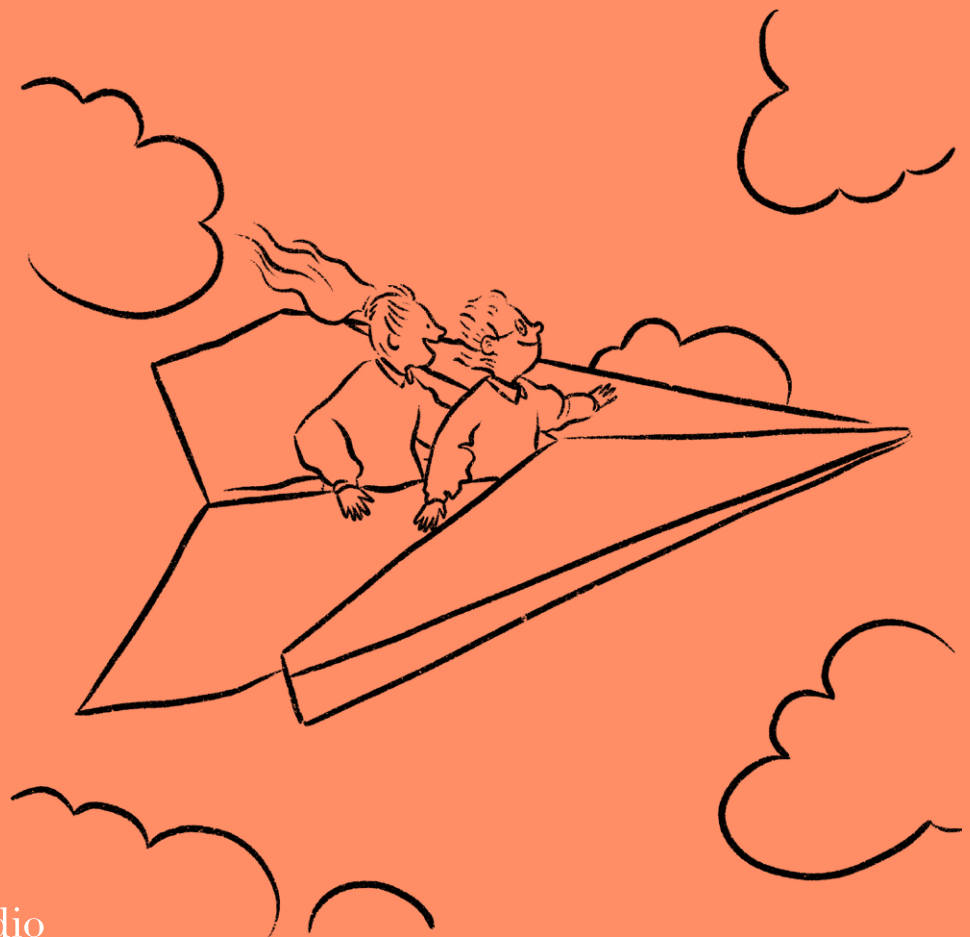


Ambition to Reality

The Case for
Creative Education

A Summary of the Evidence

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Heatherwick studio

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The purpose of this short document is to help you champion creative education.

It summarises the available evidence on the current state of creative education in English schools, why it matters for young people, and what needs to be done to give every young person – wherever they live and whatever their background – access to creative education up to the age of 16.

What makes a creative education?

All subjects can be taught in a creative way in that they can spark new ideas or patterns of thinking in both teachers and students.

Some teaching pedagogies have suggested that a ‘creative’ approach should be taken across all disciplines.¹ However, for the purpose of this briefing we identify a group of ‘creative subjects’ which we believe particularly require students to come up with **new ideas and interpretations**, rather than encourage them to reach a specific answer or to get as close as possible to a pre-approved set of criteria.

These subjects include **art and design, creative writing, dance, design and technology (D&T), drama, graphic design, media/film/TV studies, music, performing/expressive arts and textiles.**

The focus of this briefing is on English students aged from 10 to 14, and so much of the data we use is from secondary schools.

What is the state of creative education?

Creative education in England is in crisis. This is despite the fact that it’s often the only way young people come into contact with the arts. **More than 40% of English 11–15 year olds from 2013/14–2019/20 only engaged with arts activities whilst at school.**²

1 Cremin, T and Chappell, K. ‘Creative Pedagogies: A Systematic Review’. University of Exeter, 10 October 2019. <http://hdl.handle.net/10871/39152>

2 Analysis of Official Statistics (DCMS ‘Taking Part 2019/20: annual child release’). Ashton, Dr Heidi, David Brownlee, Jack Gamble, and Dr Melanie Stavrou. ‘The State of the Arts’. Campaign for the Arts and The University of Warwick, July 2024. <https://www.campaignforthearts.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/The-State-of-the-Arts.pdf>

Indicators of this crisis include

- ➔ The **number of hours** spent teaching art and design, D&T, drama, media studies and music (the most commonly taught creative subjects) in English state-funded secondary schools **fell by 23% between 2011 and 2024**, from 501k to 387k.³
- ➔ Official statistics also show that the **number of teachers** in the most commonly taught creative subjects in English state-funded secondary schools **fell by 27% between 2011 and 2024**, from 55k to 40k.⁴
- ➔ In addition we have seen a **37% decline in these creative subjects' GCSE entries** from 2010 to 2020 in the UK and a **30% decline in A Level entries** in art and design, dance, D&T, drama, media/film/TV studies, music and performing/expressive arts from 2010 to 2020.⁵
- ➔ England's national curriculum requires schools to teach art and design, D&T and music from ages 5-14, and to offer at least one arts subject and at least one D&T subject from ages 14-16. However, 81.9% of secondary schools in England are academies or free schools, which do not currently have to follow the curriculum (although the Labour Party pledged to change this in their manifesto).⁶
- ➔ In addition, school accountability measures are seen to have deprioritised creative subjects. In particular, criticism has been levelled at the 'EBacc' which is used as a measure of school performance in England based on attainment and qualifications in English, mathematics, history or geography, two sciences and a language (so does not include any creative subjects). Progress 8 is another school accountability measure, and currently weights the EBacc subjects as more important, increasing its impact.⁷

The number of hours spent teaching art and design, D&T, drama, media studies and music fell by 23% between 2011 and 2024

3 Analysis by Campaign for the Arts of Official Statistics (DfE 'School workforce in England', various years). Excludes independent schools, non-maintained special schools, sixth-form colleges and further education establishments. Ashton, Dr Heidi, David Brownlee, Jack Gamble, and Dr Melanie Stavrou. 'The State of the Arts'. Campaign for the Arts and The University of Warwick, July 2024. <https://www.campaignforthearts.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/The-State-of-the-Arts.pdf>

4 Analysis of Official Statistics (DfE 'School workforce in England', various years). Excludes independent schools, non-maintained special schools, sixth-form colleges and further education establishments Ashton, Dr Heidi, David Brownlee, Jack Gamble, and Dr Melanie Stavrou. 'The State of the Arts'. Campaign for the Arts and The University of Warwick, July 2024. <https://www.campaignforthearts.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/The-State-of-the-Arts.pdf>

5 Evennett, Heather. 'Arts Education in Secondary Schools', 2 June 2021. <https://lordslibrary.parliament.uk/arts-education-in-secondary-schools/>

6 GOV.UK. 'Schools, Pupils and Their Characteristics, Academic Year 2023/24', 6 June 2024. <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-pupils-and-their-characteristics;> 'Change: Labour Party Manifesto 2024'. The Labour Party, 13 June 2024. <https://labour.org.uk/change/>

7 'Creativity, Vocational Skills and Progress B'. Accessed 6 August 2024. <https://www.aqi.org.uk/blogs/creativity-vocational-skills-and-progress-8/>



The number of teachers in the most commonly taught creative subjects at secondary school fell by 27% between 2011 and 2024, from 55k to 40k.

Why creative education matters

Jobs and the economy

Why it matters:

- ➔ The UK is facing a skills shortage and a productivity problem. The UK has one of the highest skill mismatches in the G7 – **around 90% of the UK's workforce will need to add to their skills by 2030.**⁸
- ➔ **Over 70% of parents say the education system puts too little emphasis on preparing young people for work** and 84% that it does not focus enough on life skills.

Evidence to support the importance of a creative education:

- ➔ Studies on the future of work find that employers will increasingly demand creative thinking and creative skills (including skills relating directly to creative subjects, like graphic design) and in particular research suggests that there may be a growing demand for skill sets which combine creative with digital skills.⁹
- ➔ Creative subjects at school support students to go into jobs in the creative industries, which are a British success story **growing at more than 1.5 times the rate of the wider economy over the past decade.**¹⁰ Whilst we don't know to what level the workforce of the creative industries studied creative subjects at school, research has shown that **almost half of graduates working in the creative industries studied creative subjects at university** (these include subjects which aren't part of the school curriculum, such as architecture and computer games).¹¹
- ➔ 10.5% of creative industries businesses have at least one skills gap in their workforce and **a third of all vacancies in the creative industries are attributed to skills shortages.**¹²

70% of parents say the education system puts too little emphasis on preparing young people for work

8 CBI. 'Delivering a High-Productivity, High-Skill Workforce'. Accessed 6 August 2024. <https://www.cbi.org.uk/our-campaigns/delivering-a-high-productivity-high-skill-workforce/>

9 Bakhshi, Hasan, Jyldyz Djumalieva, and Eliza Easton. 'The Creative Digital Skills Revolution'. Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre, 24 October 2019. <https://pec.ac.uk/research-reports/the-creative-digital-skills-revolution>

10 GOV.UK. 'Ambitious Plans to Grow the Economy and Boost Creative Industries'. Accessed 5 August 2024. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ambitious-plans-to-grow-the-economy-and-boost-creative-industries>

11 Bloom, Martha. 'For Love or Money: Graduate Motivations and the Economic Returns of Creative Higher Education inside and Outside the Creative Industries', 21 August 2020. https://pec.ac.uk/research_report_entr/for-love-or-money/

12 GOV.UK. 'DCMS Sector Skills Shortages and Skills Gaps: 2022, UK'. Accessed 5 August 2024. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/dcms-sector-skills-shortages-and-skills-gaps-2022-uk>

School performance and attendance

Why it matters:

- ➔ **19.4% of English pupils were persistently absent in the Autumn 2023/24 (i.e. missed 10% or more half-days).**¹³
- ➔ **The pandemic had a significant impact on educational attainment: as in other countries around the world, the knowledge of 15 year olds in mathematics and reading in England has declined significantly since 2018.**¹⁴

Evidence to support the importance of a creative education:

- ➔ **International studies have suggested that childhood engagement in arts activities can predict academic performance across the school years, finding that the earlier the intervention starts, the larger the effect.**¹⁵
- ➔ **Studies have found participation in creative education can improve school attendance.**¹⁶

Health and wellbeing

Why it matters:

- ➔ **There is a mental health crisis for British young people. 20.3% of eight to 16-year-olds in England had a probable mental disorder in 2023. Among 17 to 19-year-olds, the proportion was 23.3%.**¹⁷
- ➔ **More than half of parents say schools pay too little attention to looking after young people's mental health.**¹⁸

Evidence to support the importance of a creative education:

- ➔ **93% of 16-18 year olds say studying a creative subject impacts positively on their mental health and wellbeing.**¹⁹
- ➔ **Evidence suggests that music and visual arts activities, of various kinds, can reduce depression and anxiety and increase confidence and self-esteem.**²⁰

13 'Pupil Absence in Schools in England, Autumn Term 2023/24'. Accessed 2 August 2024. <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/pupil-absence-in-schools-in-england>

14 Jenni Ingram, Jamie Stiff, Stuart Cadwallader, Gabriel Lee, and Heather Kayton. 'PISA 2022: National Report for England Research Report'. Government Social Research, December 2023. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/656dc3321104cf0013fa742f/PISA_2022_England_National_Report.pdf.

15 Fancourt, Daisy, and Saoirse Finn. What Is the Evidence on the Role of the Arts in Improving Health and Well-Being? A Scoping Review. WHO Health Evidence Network Synthesis Reports. Copenhagen: WHO Regional Office for Europe, 2019. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK553773/>

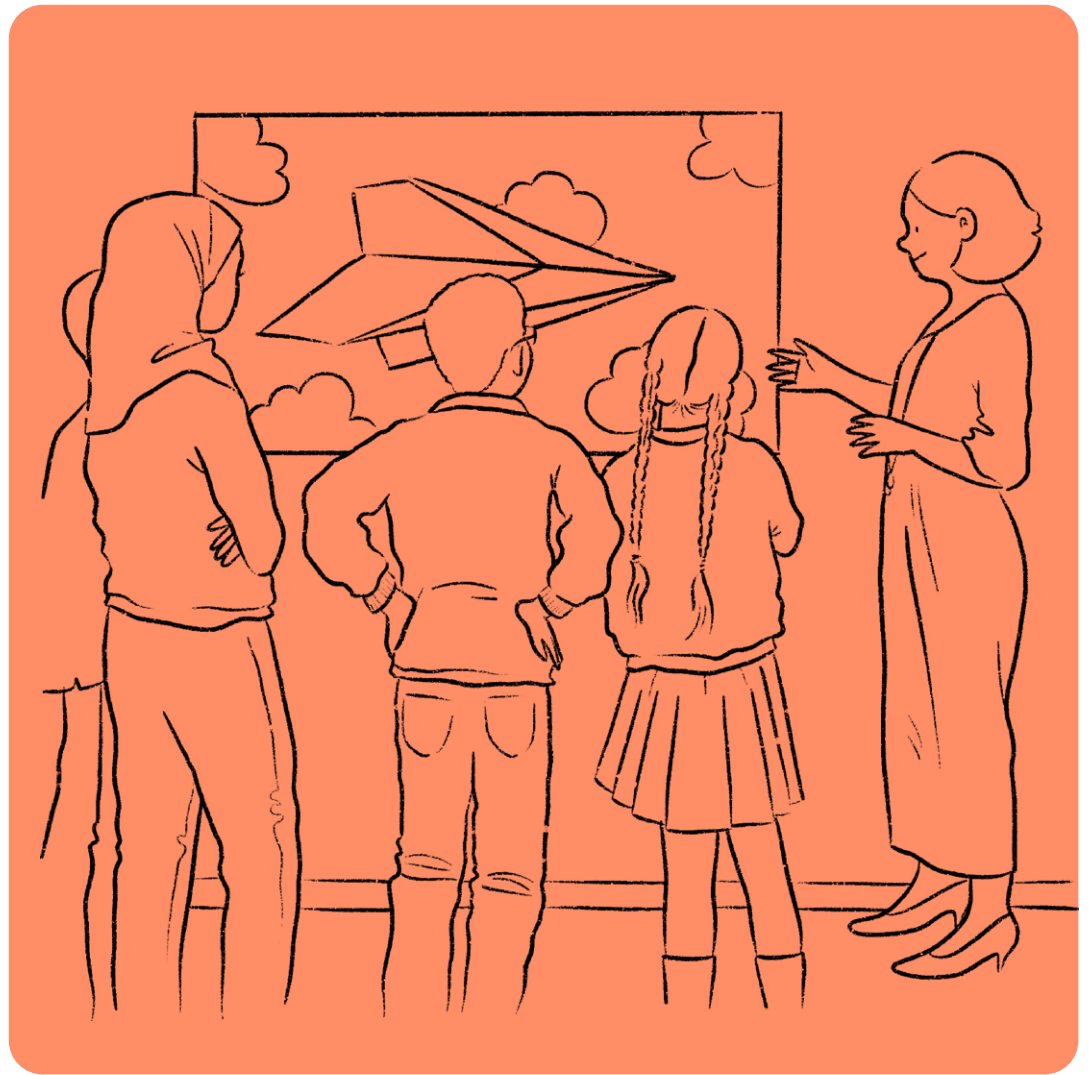
16 Cain, Melissa, Ali Lakhani, and Lauren Istvandy. 'Short and Long Term Outcomes for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) and at-Risk Communities in Participatory Music Programs: A Systematic Review'. Arts & Health 8 (8 May 2015): 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17533015.2015.1027934> 'New Research Finds Evidence Arts Education Increases School Engagement, Attendance among Boston Students | Arts, Humanities, & Civic Engagement Lab'. Accessed 6 August 2024. <https://artslab.tamu.edu/new-research-finds-evidence-arts-education-increases-school-engagement-attendance-among-boston-students/>

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18 Fancourt, Daisy, and Saoirse Finn. What Is the Evidence on the Role of the Arts in Improving Health and Well-Being? A Scoping Review. WHO Health Evidence Network Synthesis Reports. Copenhagen: WHO Regional Office for Europe, 2019. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK553773/>.

19 'Artsmark's Arts Education Survey Report: Final Report'. Beatfreeks, 2021. <https://www.artsmark.org.uk/sites/default/files/Artsmark%20-%20Beatfreeks%20report%20-%20FINAL.pdf>.

20 Alan Tomlinson, Jack Lane, Guy Julier, Lily Grigsby Duffy, Annette Payne, Louise Mansfield, Tess Kay, et al. 'Visual Art and Mental Health'. What Works Centre for Wellbeing, January 2018. https://whatworkswellbeing.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Full-report-art-mental-health-wellbeing-Jan2018_0146725200.pdf. Fancourt, Daisy, and Saoirse Finn. What Is the Evidence on the Role of the Arts in Improving Health and Well-Being? A Scoping Review. WHO Health Evidence Network Synthesis Reports. Copenhagen: WHO Regional Office for Europe, 2019. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK553773/>.



Childhood engagement in arts activities can predict academic performance, and participation in creative education can improve school attendance.

What can we do?

Ahead of the 2024 general election, the Labour Party published a plan for arts, culture and creative industries which foregrounded a commitment to providing young people with access to a “high quality creative education”. This made three specific commitments:

- ➔ To commission a full, expert-led review of curriculum and assessment (this commitment was reinforced in their Party Manifesto),
- ➔ To ensure that one of the non-EBacc subjects mandated in Progress 8 should be creative or vocational,
- ➔ To introduce a National Music Education Network.²¹

In addition, in their Party Manifesto the Labour Party pledged to recruit 6,500 new teachers, incentivising them to sign up through the adjustment of teaching bursaries.²²

In order to fund these initiatives, Labour plans to apply VAT to private school fees. This could raise c£1.5bn, but it will not be introduced until September 2025 at the earliest.²³ Therefore, these initiatives are unlikely to reverse the decline in creative education in the short term, as constraints still exist in three areas: **funding, teachers, and provision.**

Funding

- ➔ School spending has been squeezed since 2010, with spend per pupil declining by about 9% in real terms between 2009/10 and 2019/20.²⁴
- ➔ As spend per pupil has been eroded, schools have looked to Government schemes to support creative provision. However, these are not adequate to make up the funding shortfall. In 2021, it was estimated that **just £9.40 per student was allocated by the Government for a year of music, arts, and cultural programmes.**²⁵
- ➔ There is limited national data to show the true impact of the funding crisis across creative subjects, but interviews with art and design teachers reveal the extent to which funding cuts have impacted their work. One teacher at a mainstream secondary school in England told a reporter that towards the end of the academic year: **“we didn’t have any art books – there weren’t even any pencils”.**²⁶

21 ‘Creating Growth: Labour’s Plan for the Arts, Culture and Creative Industries’. The Labour Party, 14 March 2024. <https://labour.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Labours-Arts-Culture-Creative-Industries-Sector-Plan.pdf>

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23 Google Docs. ‘AMBITION TO REALITY: Making Creative Education Available to Every Young Person’. Accessed 19 August 2024. https://docs.google.com/document/u/2/d/1StbMCDQhEGwVofx_rQ5tbiKjHqjSdsZpy5lwiAz_H84/edit?usp=drive_web&ouid=110905233934666600851&usp=embed_facebook.

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25 Weale, Sally. ‘“Creativity Crisis” Looms for English Schools Due to Arts Cuts, Says Labour’. The Guardian, 15 July 2021, sec. Education. <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2021/jul/15/creativity-crisis-looms-for-english-schools-due-to-arts-cuts-says-labour>.

26 Creative Lives in Progress. ‘How Will Art Funding Cuts in Schools Affect Creativity?’ Accessed 19 August 2024. <https://www.creativelivesinprogress.com/article/how-will-art-funding-cuts-in-schools-affect-creativity>

Teachers

- ➔ There is a crisis in teacher training. **Secondary school Initial Teacher Training (ITT) recruitment in 2023/24 reached only half of its target** while leaving rates have returned to pre-pandemic levels.²⁷
- ➔ In 2023/24 ITT recruitment was **well below the target in all recorded creative subjects**.²⁸ The shortfall was particularly significant in music and D&T- only physics and business studies performed worse.²⁹
- ➔ **A 2022 survey showed that levels of dissatisfaction amongst art teachers were higher than those reported by the profession as a whole**.³⁰

Provision

We are now seeing some secondary schools cut creative subject provision entirely:

- ➔ **In more than half of state-funded secondary schools, music was not taught throughout key stage three (11-14 years old),** including in some schools still under local authority control where it should be a statutory requirement.³¹
- ➔ A report from the Design Council and Design & Technology Association found that **about 20% of secondary schools in England and Wales do not teach Design & Technology**.³²

Given these constraints, it is vital that businesses and organisations in the creative sector itself intervene directly to support young people.

To take one example, there are some 6,000 architecture practices in the UK. They vary enormously in size and capacity. But if every one of them ran just one workshop each term with a class from their local school, that would reach 180,000 young people.

Making creative education available to every young person has to be a shared endeavour.

27 McLean, Dawson, Jack Worth, and Andrew Smith. 'Teacher Labour Market in England Annual Report 2024'. NFER, 2024. <https://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/teacher-labour-market-in-england-annual-report-2024/>

28 McLean, Dawson, Jack Worth, and Andrew Smith. 'Teacher Labour Market in England Annual Report 2024'. NFER, 2024. <https://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/teacher-labour-market-in-england-annual-report-2024/>

29 *ibid.*

30 NSEAD, A. recruitment and retention crisis in Art and Design |. 'A Recruitment and Retention Crisis in Art and Design | NSEAD'. Accessed 19 August 2024. <https://www.nsead.org/news/newsroom/a-recruitment-and-retention-crisis-in-art-and-design/>

31 Haves, Emily. 'Access to Music Education in Schools', 5 October 2023. <https://lordslibrary.parliament.uk/access-to-music-education-in-schools/>

32 Association, D&T. 'In the Press'. Accessed 19 August 2024. <https://www.designtechnology.org.uk/news/in-the-press/>

Understanding the Evidence

To help build a shared understanding of the evidence, we have compiled a series of six key resources for you to read, five charts that summarise the headline data, and a detailed bibliography where most of the essential source material can be found.

Resources

On the state of creative education

➔ Ashton, Dr Heidi, David Brownlee, Jack Gamble, and Dr Melanie Stavrou. 'The State of the Arts'. Campaign for the Arts and The University of Warwick, July 2024.

🔗 www.campaignforthearts.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/The-State-of-the-Arts.pdf

On the campaign for creative education

➔ CLA. 'Cultural Learning Alliance – The Cultural Learning Alliance Champions a Right to Art and Culture for Every Child'. Cultural Learning Alliance, 22 July 2024.

🔗 www.culturallearningalliance.org.uk

➔ Equity. "'Arts Apocalypse' Campaign', 14 May 2024.

🔗 www.equity.org.uk/news/2024/equity-joins-arts-apocalypse-campaign

On the benefits of creative education

➔ Fancourt, Daisy, and Saoirse Finn. What Is the Evidence on the Role of the Arts in Improving Health and Well-Being? A Scoping Review. WHO Health Evidence Network Synthesis Reports. Copenhagen: WHO Regional Office for Europe, 2019.

🔗 www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK553773/

➔ Tate. 'Why Study Art?' Tate. Accessed 8 August 2024.

🔗 www.tate.org.uk/art/talking-point/why-study-art

➔ Bakhshi, Hasan, Jyldyz Djumaliev, and Eliza Easton. 'The Creative Digital Skills Revolution'. Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre, 24 October 2019.

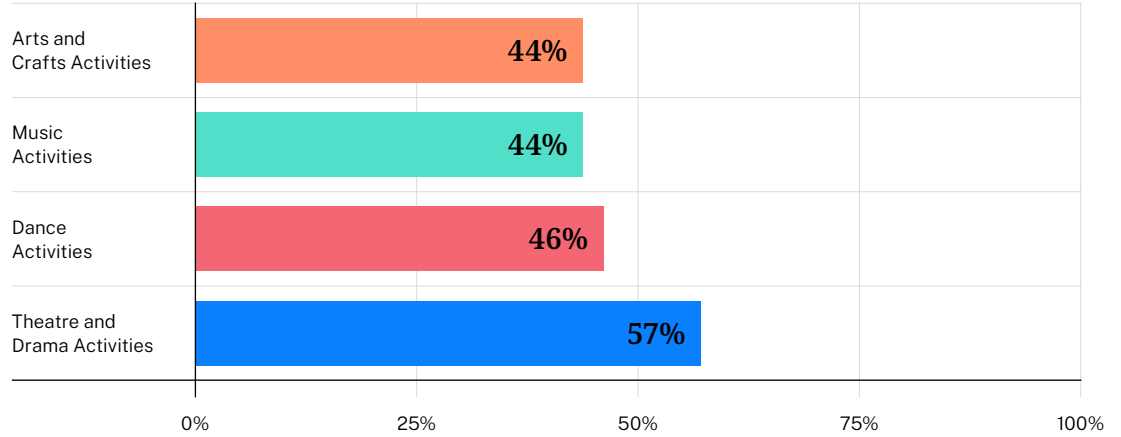
🔗 www.pec.ac.uk/research-reports/the-creative-digital-skills-revolution



Charts

1. The proportion of arts engagements in school only, 11–15 year olds in England, 2013–14 to 2019–20 (average)

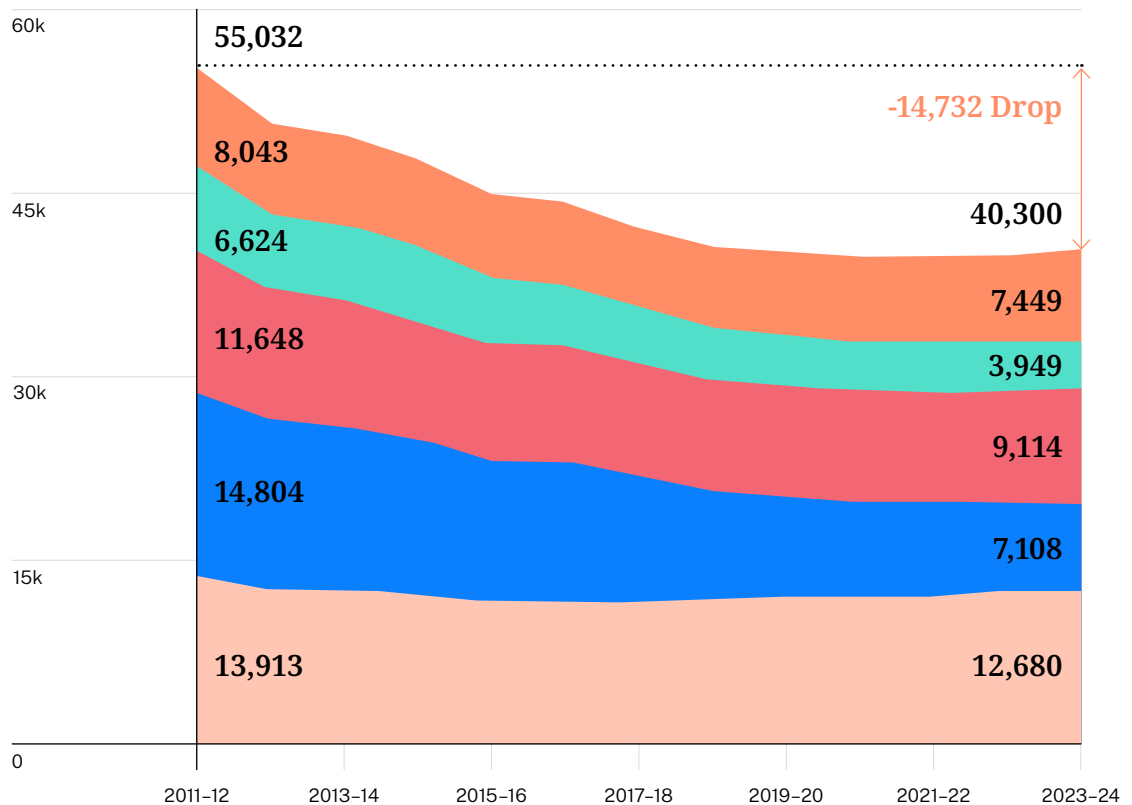
Dr Heidi Ashton, David Brownlee, Jack Gamble, and Dr Melanie Stavrou. 'The State of the Arts'. Campaign for the Arts and The University of Warwick, July 2024.



2. The number of teachers in arts subjects in English state-funded secondary schools, all years, 2011–12 to 2023–24

Dr Heidi Ashton, David Brownlee, Jack Gamble, and Dr Melanie Stavrou. 'The State of the Arts'. Campaign for the Arts and The University of Warwick, July 2024.

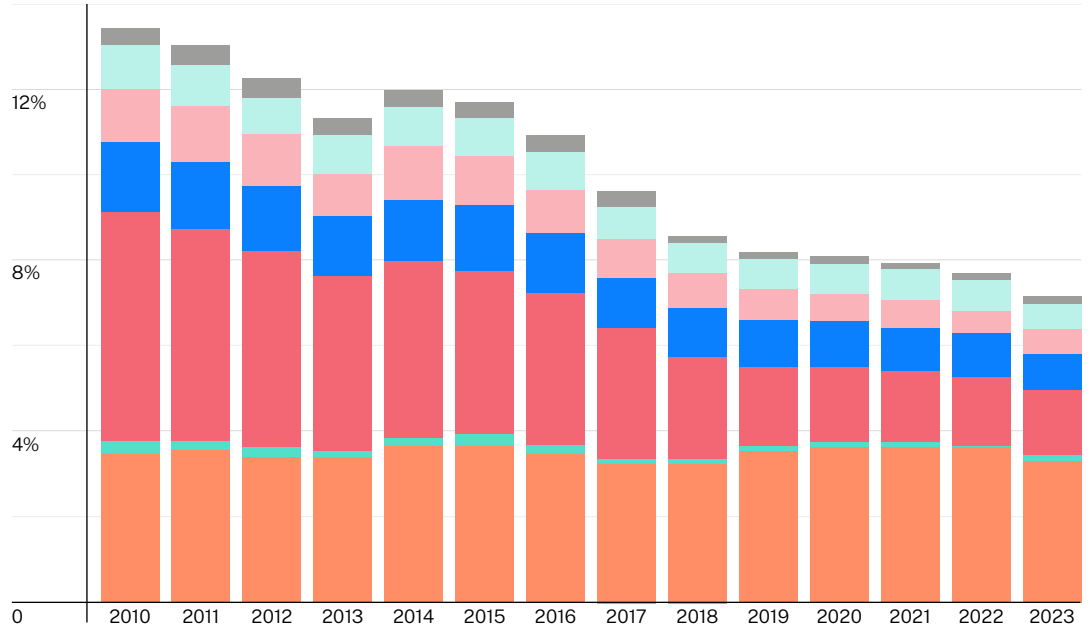
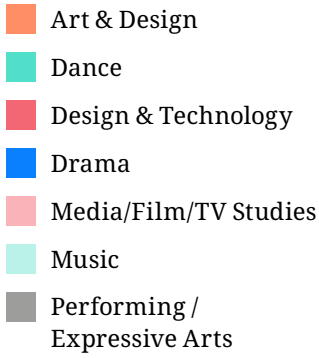
- Music
- Media Studies
- Drama
- Design & Technology
- Art & Design



Charts

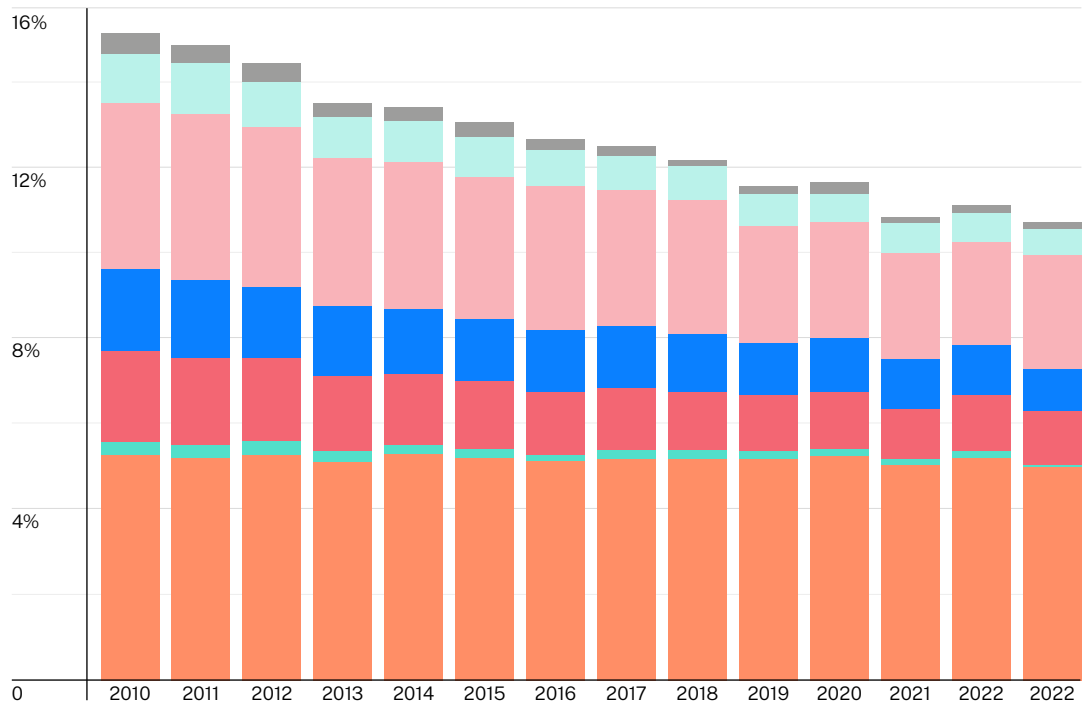
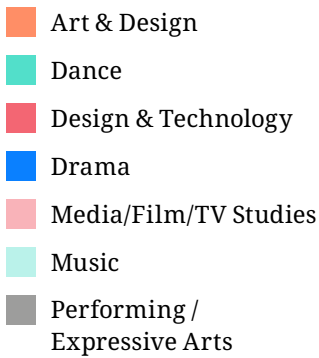
3. Entries for arts GCSEs as a percentage of total GCSE entries in the United Kingdom, 2009–10 to 2022–23

Dr Heidi Ashton, David Brownlee, Jack Gamble, and Dr Melanie Stavrou. 'The State of the Arts'. Campaign for the Arts and The University of Warwick, July 2024.



4. Entries for arts A-levels as a percentage of total A-level entries in the United Kingdom, 2009–10 to 2022–23

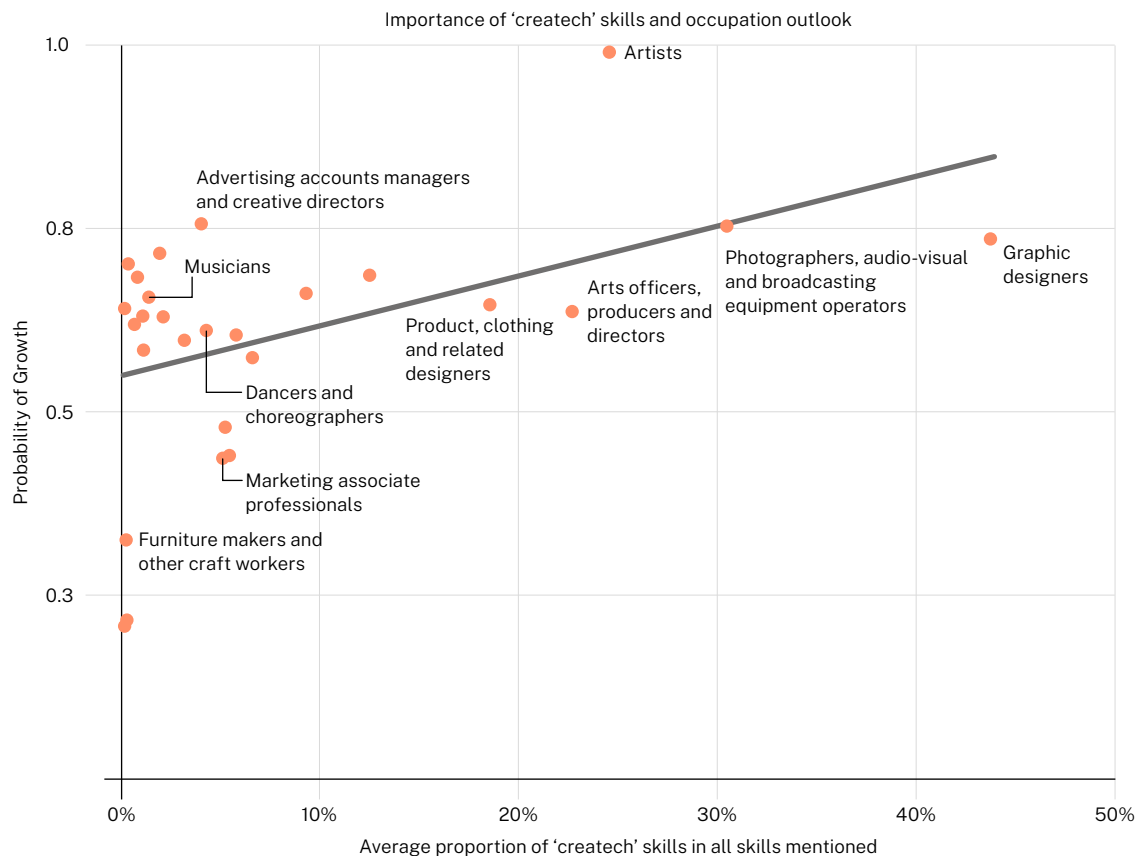
Dr Heidi Ashton, David Brownlee, Jack Gamble, and Dr Melanie Stavrou. 'The State of the Arts'. Campaign for the Arts and The University of Warwick, July 2024.



Charts

5. Illustration of the relationship between the probability of a job growing in the future and the proportion of skills in job adverts for that job which combine creativity and technical know-how (“createch skills”)

Hasan Bakhshi, Jyldyz Djumalieva, and Eliza Easton. ‘The Creative Digital Skills Revolution’. Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre, 24 October 2019. www.pec.ac.uk/research-reports/the-creative-digital-skills-revolution



Evidence suggests that the more 'createch' skills a job currently requires, the more likely demand is to grow for that role in the future. The X axis here indicates what proportion of skills mentioned in job adverts combine creativity and technology (the 'createch' skills). The Y axis shows how likely a job is to grow in the future (a score of 1.0 indicates it is 100% predicted to grow in the future).

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Every young person,
wherever they live
and whatever their
background, should
have access to creative
education up to the
age of 16.

