

Society of London Theatre & UK Theatre Response to the Curriculum and Assessment Review, Department for Education, November 2024

November 2024

Society of London Theatre (SOLT) and UK Theatre represent 500 of the UK's leading theatre producers, venue owners and managers and performing arts centres.

SOLT & UK Theatre appreciate the Government's ambition to move swiftly in driving economic growth. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss the points raised in this consultation further.

Key Points for Consideration:

- **Sub-sector Identification:** Growth sectors should be selected based on their potential to deliver widespread economic benefits and social value, supporting the Government's missions 1 and 4 concurrently.
- **Theatre's Unique Role:**
 - Theatre contributes significantly to place-making in towns, cities, and rural areas, with its buildings serving as cultural hubs.
 - Beyond performances, theatres deliver impactful outreach programmes and generate substantial local economic benefits – for every £1 spent on a ticket, £1.40 is generated in the local economy.
- **Barriers to Growth:** The theatre sector faces critical challenges, including:
 - Insufficient relief to stimulate research and development activities.
 - Limited access to finance.
 - Skills gaps and workforce shortages.

- Aging infrastructure requiring investment, with no sustainable funding mechanisms currently in place.
- **Strategic Alignment:** To maximise the impact of reforms, the Industrial Strategy, Skills Strategy, and Curriculum Review must be aligned.

Learn More:

For additional insights into the theatre ecosystem and how to create the conditions for its growth, please refer to our briefing for MPs. Further information about our advocacy efforts is available on our websites, [SOLT](#) and [UK Theatre](#).

For inquiries, contact us at publicaffairs@soltukt.co.uk or follow us on social media: @SOLTnews | @uk_theatre | #TheatreForEveryChild | #ThrivingTheatres

Section 2: General views on curriculum, assessment, and qualifications pathways

10. What aspects of the current a) curriculum, b) assessment system and c) qualification pathways are working well to support and recognise educational progress for children and young people?

SOLT & UK Theatre welcomes this Curriculum and Assessment Review and the opportunity to share evidence of what is and is not working in terms of the performing arts sectors' ability to engage with schools to deliver the National Curriculum. We believe that the arts are for all and systemic change is required to ensure that all young people across England, at every stage of education from primary school onwards, can access and benefit from high quality arts experiences in school.

Our members report that funding cuts and the marginalization of the arts in schools means that no aspect of the current system across works well in supporting high-quality and equitable access to arts education. Our members do see pockets of good, high-quality practice driven by teachers and school leaders committed to an arts-rich education for their students. However, this is delivered by individual educators in spite of a system which mitigates against it.

We call on the UK Government to recognise how the holistic benefits of arts subjects enhance learning and attainment across all subjects.

As detailed in the Local Government Association's report on culture-led regeneration, national cultural bodies, such as theatres can act as crucial local partners. Several of the case studies in their report demonstrate the benefits gained by councils that engage closely with nationally significant arts organisations, drawing on their skills, expertise and resources to enhance local cultural project delivery. Source:

<https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/culture-led-regeneration-achieving-inclusive-and-sustainable-growth>

Our members tell us that theatre, which incorporates a range of art forms including music, dance, opera, visual arts, and film, has the potential to strengthen community bonds, fostering a sense of belonging. Our members provide more than entertainment venues, they are cultural anchors for communities, playing a central role in bringing people together to share experiences and connect.

N.B: SOLT & UK Theatre use the term arts and expressive arts in our submission. By expressive arts we mean all art forms that contribute to the development and production of the performing arts. These are art and design, dance, drama, music – and film and digital media. We would argue for the inclusion of film and digital media within this curriculum area, as in Wales, due to its growing importance in technical aspects of theatre making such as moving image projection and automation.

It is also crucial to note that our members are reliant on schools teaching a good balance of arts and STEM subjects.

Summary

- We welcome this historic review as an opportunity to broaden participation in the arts and diversify our future workforce.
- Our members (both commercial venues and publicly subsidised theatres) offer excellent participation programmes however their ability to do so has been affected by the marginalisation of the arts in schools and funding cuts.

- We look forward to working with Skills England and responding to the Industrial Strategy to ensure that the curriculum and assessment system is sufficiently joined up to meet our members' workforce needs.

From Edinburgh to Exeter, UK theatres, both subsidised and non-subsidised, offer a vast range of opportunities for children and young people to participate in enriching cultural education from storytelling workshops to after school theatre clubs covering technical disciplines such as sound and lighting. Theatres and performing arts venues institutions offer resources supporting schools to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum, however funding challenges across the country means that this provision is patchy.

Cultural education plays an evidenced role in improving the life chances of children with research demonstrating that it fosters creativity, and problem-solving skills, as well as improving children's capacity for empathy and resilience. It provides young people with skills for life and work and a vital creative outlet which can help in supporting their social, personal and creative well-being at a time one in five children has a mental health problem.

The Office for National Statistics' qualitative analysis of UK children's perspectives on what makes a happy life found that children and young people say that engaging in cultural and creative activities, such as drama and music, helps them to "relax and de-stress". Whilst 93% of 16 - 18-year-olds say studying an arts subject, which encourages self-expression and empathy, had positively influenced their well-being.

We believe that every child has the right to go to the theatre, to experience the joy and opportunity that it can bring. In October 2023 we launched a new national advocacy campaign, As a first step towards ensuring realizing the vision of all children having rich cultural experiences both inside and outside of school, SOLT & UK Theatre have launched the [Theatre for Every Child](#). In order to sustain our world-class reputation for theatre, we need to invest in our future audiences and workforce by ensuring every child has the chance to go to the theatre by the time they leave secondary school. Once we achieve political support for this campaign, we will work in partnership with schools and theatres to ensure that our aim is delivered, especially in schools and communities where theatre trips are currently not possible.

We would like to draw the panel’s attention to the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama’s written evidence on the value of the arts. Source:

<https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/88529/html/>

Far from being a ‘nice to have’ participation in the arts has been proven to help young people to build resilience, collaborate and develop empathy. These are all skills that are and will be essential in taking on the major challenges of our times including climate change, the youth mental health crisis as well as ongoing conflicts at home and abroad.

Since 2004 there have been numerous reports that have evaluated the effectiveness of arts projects as educational or developmental tools when working with young adults and vulnerable youth. These include those that assert the arts are useful in aiding desistance from crime (Farrall and Caverly 2006, McNeil 2006, Anderson et al 2012, Bilby et al 2013), in the development of transferable or soft skills (Digard 2007¹, Miles and Strauss 2008², Houston 2009³, Maruna 2010^{4,5}, and Harkins 2010), and, in the development of self-esteem and self-confidence (Silber 2005, Cohen et al 2009, Anderson et al 2011). Much of the literature identifies the Arts as having the ability to engender a sense of hope (Bottoms et

¹ Digard, L. and Liebling, A. (2007). “All Together Now: The therapeutic potential of a prison-based music programme.” *Prison Service Journal*, Issue 170 3-14.

² Miles, A. & Strauss, P. (2008) *‘The academy: a report on outcomes for participants’ (June 2006 – June 2008)* ESRC Centre for Research on Socio-cultural Change. University of Manchester.

³ Houston, S. (2009) “The touch ‘taboo’ and the art of contact: an exploration of Contact Improvisation for prisoners.” *Research in Dance Education*, 10:2, 97–113.

⁴ Maruna, S. (2001) *Making Good: How Ex-Convicts Reform and Rebuild Their Lives*. American Psychological Association. Washington, D.C.

⁵ Maruna, S. (2010) *Understanding desistance from crime*. NOMS, London.

al 2004, Farrell and Caverly 2006, McNeil 2006, Houston 2009, Harkins 2010, and Maruna 2010).

We are therefore asking the UK Government to contribute £1.5 million to pilot the campaign in three areas of cultural deprivation to enable an improved understanding of the barriers to theatre attendance, enabling the Government to meet its commitment to increasing children's access to culture and delivering on its mission to break down the barriers to opportunity.

We support the view of the Cultural Learning Alliance (CLA) and Creative UK that the full range of expressive arts subjects should be available to all pupils as a key domain of learning at primary and secondary level; including performing arts - drama, dance and music - alongside art and design, and film and digital media. The breadth of expressive arts subjects reflects the multi-disciplinary and innovative nature of the professional cultural and creative industries, which are reliant on schools and higher education colleges for our future workforce. This largely self-employed workforce provides our members with a rich mix of creative, digital, technical, craft, entrepreneurial, interpersonal and academic skills and knowledge.

SOLT & UK Theatre would like to take this opportunity to draw attention to the vast array of technical skills developed in backstage roles and emphasise that our members, as employers, are reliant on a mix of STEM and arts subjects being taught effectively in schools.

In our view the current curriculum, assessment system and qualification pathways do not support equitable access to high quality arts education. While there are schools across the country with outstanding arts-rich curricula, excellent classroom practice and specialist arts subject leadership, our observation is that this is in spite of the current curriculum, assessment and accountability system, rather than enabled or supported by it.

SOLT & UK Theatre's members require a broad mix of skills. We therefore endorse the view of the Creative Industries Council (CIC) that from a creative industries perspective, creative education and the opportunity to study expressive arts, should be delivered in partnership with, and not opposition to, STEM subjects. As the [Lords' Communications and Digital](#)

[Committee 2023 report, At risk: our creative future, stated](#) ‘Employers are increasingly calling for a blend of creative and digital skills. This interdisciplinary approach needs to be encouraged at school. Yet there are too few incentives for students to study a combination of creative and STEM subjects.’

SOLT and UK Theatre members regularly engage with schools through workshops, school visits, holiday programmes and tailored ‘schools’ performances.

As the Durham Commission on Creativity and Education highlighted in its 2019 report, *“Creativity is the driver of economic growth and innovation. Especially in the last 10 years, our national economy has been boosted by the success of the creative industries. Such success will only continue so long as we can ensure that young people are given the opportunity to experience and develop the skills in art, drama, music, design, craft and digital awareness that are the foundation of the creative industries.”*⁶

High-quality and equitable access to expressive arts education is essential for the health of our performing arts sector and theatre industry. Many of our members have dedicated in-house creative learning functions employing education practitioners with expertise in ensuring that children and young people have a meaningful experience of theatre. These outreach/learning/participation teams work as part of the school/teacher/ further and higher education/ cultural organisation ecology which supports young people to be cultural citizens – active cultural producers and critical appreciative audiences in the present – as well preparing them for an active cultural future (Thomson & Hall, 2023).

Many UK theatres, such as Unicorn Theatre, are registered as Artsmark Partners, meaning they are recognised for their role in supporting schools to deliver arts education and achieve Artsmark status.

Our members also initiate their own programmes to support children and young people to get most out of the National Curriculum. For example, the [Birmingham Hippodrome's](#)

⁶ Durham_Commission_on_Creativity_04112019_1.pdf

[Education Network](#) (HEN) made up of 44 of the most economically and culturally deprived schools in the region reaches upwards of 20,000 young people each year. The programme brings the curriculum to life through the arts, supports literacy and oracy, provides opportunities for young people to see and participate in performances, inspires young people to pursue careers in the creative and cultural industries.

“Being part of the HEN Network is a key driving force in providing an enriching and vibrant curriculum for all our children. Most of our children have never experienced going to see live theatre - many don’t ever leave the local area - and the opportunities we have been able to provide have been absolutely first class - the impact on them is tangible”.

Teacher, Birmingham

Other interventions include ‘Story-Led Resilience’ approaches such as the one adopted by Blackpool Grand’s Tales Retold project, which sees children critically analyse theatre, to learn from the characters’ own resilient traits. This two-year arts holiday programme strengthens belonging, resilience & well-being offering opportunities for young people to tell their stories whilst building skills with artists. They worked on the Grand’s stage, learning about lights & sound, creating dance, poems, banners and lanterns for Blackpool Illuminations. They used a ‘Story-Led Resilient Practice’ approach based on the [UK Government’s Resilience Framework](#), building the capacity of young people feeling isolated and stigmatised. Reporting on the experience, children from St. John Vianney RC School, one of the participating primary schools, said: “During Tales Retold, I’ve learned to be confident and express my feelings, and just experiment,” another commented on the link between friendship and resilience, saying: “Resilience can help when you’re making friends because you can’t make friends if you don’t speak to them.” A third child simply said: “I felt like loud and proud of myself.” Source: <https://www.thegoldsmiths.co.uk/charity-news/the-tales-retold-project-blackpool-grand>

Evidence across Expressive Arts subjects:

- Dance: 100% of teachers from English National Ballet’s Choreo-Exchange Day fed back that they had seen their students’ aspiration raised. Teacher data from Northern Ballet’s Rise project suggests an increase in 92% of pupils’ communication levels and 100% increase in their resilience. Rambert embedded contemporary dance into PE KS3 resulting in a student successfully auditioning for Trinity Laban. Sadler’s Wells highlighted 94% of young people developed their creative skills.
- Drama: The Donmar’s Henry V school’s tour was described by a teacher as incredibly valuable and life changing. Kiln Theatre highlighted that 92% of students commented that their project had helped with attainment in school. Royal Shakespeare Company found teachers witnessed substantial improvements in pupil writing – in terms of breadth, depth, complexity and emotional literacy – alongside enhanced speaking and listening skills. Young Vic found arts and creative approaches to learning were vehicles for change. INNOVATE, in which teachers and artists collaborated to use arts-based teaching across the curriculum, was seen as a vehicle for changing students’ attitudes to learning. Teachers noticed that the programme enhanced student voice and student personal growth.
- Music: Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra has increased the take up of instruments, raised the level of music making and given a generation of children more choice to creative subjects. Bristol Beacon noted the sustained engagement necessary to create lasting change with Earthsong... Promoting musical skills but also addressing broader issues of equity and access. City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra has established the UKs first state school partnership which has seen an increase in the number of students studying A Level music by 400%. English National Opera’s project has encouraged students to dream bigger and consider

areas of the arts that may have been relatively unknown to them before. English Touring Opera’s school project led to a student achieving a grade of merit for her exam and studying music performance at college. Garsington Opera successfully captured student’s attention and boosted their creativity and confidence. London Symphony Orchestra reported that 100% of students demonstrated increased confidence, self-esteem, happiness and were more able to express themselves. The Glasshouse ICM saw a steady improvement in pupil attainment and Ofsted position in 2 primary schools taking part in their programme. Wigmore Hall reported that their project opened the door to more fun and exciting learning through working alongside excellent musicians.

- **Technical Skills:** We would like to take this opportunity to emphasise our members reliance on a highly skilled technical workforce. SOLT & UK Theatre’s latest research on workforce shortages in this area will be published by the end of 2024. Our members have further details in their social impact reports that demonstrate the advantages of opportunities for technical and backstage access.

Note on Art, Craft, Digital, Film and Design

- Design and craft are essential for our industry because theatres rely on artists, technicians and craft workers for scenic design work, carpentry, metal work to name just a few aspects of theatre making. Our members are facing skills shortages and gaps in technical, operational and production teams covering essential theatre

making areas such as lighting, sound, rigging, automation, costume, wigs, hair and make-up, among others.⁷

- Digital and film skills are also key for our sector as our members increasingly embrace the use of projection techniques, online streaming, and automation to push the boundaries of the live performance experience and attract wider audiences.

We share the view of the Cultural Learning Alliance (CLA) that the [expressive arts are integral to a broad and balanced curriculum](#) and the view of the Creative Industries Council that They teach children and young people to work, alone and together with others, to investigate, develop, interpret and communicate their ideas and understandings and provide a pathway which can lead to further education and work. Arts learning has a range of additional benefits which include self-belief, voice and agency, self-discipline, belonging, wellbeing, collaboration and teamwork.

Large-scale studies point strongly to the arts, and arts subjects, supporting active civic engagement. Read more about this in the CLA's [2017 Key Research Findings](#).

The arts pathway is integral to creating a more expansive, inclusive and equitable school system, in that all children with interests and talents in the arts can pursue them through to graduation. This pathway requires an expanded qualification framework.

⁷ SOLT & UK Theatre's latest research on technical skills shortages and gaps will be published by the end of 2024.

Our members report that arts BTECs are important, particularly for disadvantaged young people and these qualifications help them to maintain or to acquire life options.

Access to a wide range of arts subjects and ‘cross over’ subjects such as design, digital and film and STEM subjects is particularly important for the theatre industry which uses cutting-edge technologies.

11. What aspects of the current a) curriculum, b) assessment system and c) qualification pathways should be targeted for improvements to better support and recognize educational progress for children and young people

Patchy provision

Our members programmes, some of which are detailed above, are not able to cover the whole of the country and are reliant on being invited in by schools rather than being an embedded part of school life. There is great potential to upscale this work to support the progress and achievement of all children.

Our members, both those which are publicly subsidised (such as Royal Shakespeare Company) and those that are commercial operations (such as ATG), report that when teachers and schools are well resourced and supported to embrace expressive arts subjects, these can provide a pathway through school to further education and employment for young people. Unfortunately, most members state that the current system is not working well. Excellent practice is patchy, variable and unsupported by current accountability structures.

The RSC’s [Time To Act](#) research results uncover a new understanding about the impact of RSC teaching approaches on young people. The measurement tools used show how and why this work makes a difference to teachers and children. The arts and cultural sector needs more tools and more research studies like Time to Act to help us better understand and evaluate the contribution the sector’s work makes to the social, emotional and

academic development of children and young people. Our members need support to access funding to commission further studies of this kind to better articulate the value of an arts rich education for society and employers.

Detrimental impact of EBacc: SOLT & UK Theatre members report concerns with all three areas of the current system listed above. Areas of good practice exist when driven by highly motivated teachers and school leaders committed to an arts-rich education for their students. However, members report that this excellent practice is patchy and, often, is delivered in spite of the current system. As detailed in the CLA's Report Card, when the EBacc was first proposed there was an immediate and significant impact on what children studied at secondary school – an early Ipsos Mori poll revealed that 27% of schools cut courses as a direct result of its implementation. SOLT & UK Theatre members report that the EBacc school performance measure has had a detrimental impact on their ability to work with schools. Since 2010, accountability measures have focused on a narrow range of subject areas, which has led to a downgrading or exclusion of Expressive Arts subjects and experiences.⁸

Independent schools value arts: The Expressive Arts are highly valued in independent schools, but have low status in the current English curriculum and accountability

⁸ The percentage of GCSEs taken in Arts subjects has halved since 2010; there are schools which no longer offer some Arts subjects at all at GCSE (42% and 41% of schools in the case of Music and Drama respectively). Today's curriculum is overly knowledge-centred and focused on what can be easily measured. We ask that this review consider Expressive Arts as a core and equal curriculum area. The Expressive Arts are highly valued in independent schools, but have low status in the current English curriculum and accountability framework, so access to the Arts is not equitable: this two-tier system is a social justice issue that urgently needs to be addressed.

framework, so access to the arts is not equitable: this two-tier system is a social justice issue that urgently needs to be addressed.

Evidence and sources

The recently published [DCMS Youth Survey Pilot](#) report shows that young people from the most deprived quintile are half as likely to participate in arts courses, groups or clubs: 14% compared to 28% in the least deprived quintile. The same study shows that young people who received free school meals or were in the most deprived quintile were substantially less likely to go to the theatre – 36% as compared to 60% (FSM) and 39% compared to 61%.

Further details on the aspects of the system that should be targeted for improvement are set out in the [Blueprint](#) provided by the Cultural Learning Alliance and include: having equal curriculum areas, including expressive arts, mapped onto new, clear purposes for schooling; ensuring a minimum arts entitlement within the school week to the end of KS3 which is scaffolded and delivered through all phases; reform of the school accountability system; changes to assessment in line with [Rethinking Assessment](#); and an entitlement to high-quality arts teacher training and development, with a minimum level of arts training for primary teachers to ensure subject knowledge.

Section 3: Social justice and inclusion

12. In the current curriculum, assessment system and qualification pathways, are there any barriers to improving attainment, progress, access or participation (class ceilings) for learners experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage?

Access to cultural experiences

As detailed in Creative UK's response to this call for evidence "The disproportionate impact that a lack of access to arts and culture has on young people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, is borne from more than just access issues. Practical and cost-related barriers, alongside perceptions of creative subjects, compound the challenges that must be addressed if creative curricula is to improve".

A [2023 study from the Sutton Trust states](#) that 2022 “reports of cuts to trips and outings more than doubled, now standing at 50%, up from 21% – a proportion that is even higher in schools with the most disadvantaged intakes, at 68%, compared to 44% in the least deprived schools” . Source: <https://www.suttontrust.com/news-opinion/all-news-opinion/cost-of-living-crisis-hits-school-spending/>

Studying or teaching a creative subject is often considered more expensive, largely due to some of the resources they require. Drama students with limited opportunities to access live performance are at a disadvantage compared to students whose caregivers can provide opportunities to visit the theatre. For this reason, SOLT & UK Theatre are calling for funding to ensure that all children have the chance to go to the theatre.

The Cultural Learning Alliance’s 2024 Annual Report Card revealed 42% of schools no longer enter any pupils for Music GCSE; 41% no longer enter any pupils for Drama GCSE; and 84% enter no pupils for Dance GSCE. Source: <https://www.culturallearningalliance.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/CLA-2024-Annual-Report-Card.pdf>

Perceptions about careers in the creative industries

This is compounded by caregivers’ perceptions of creative subjects. In September 2024, Netflix and the National Youth Theatre published new research which found that 89% of working-class parents, guardians and careers say they wouldn’t want their child to pursue a creative career path. Instead, these caregivers favour ‘traditional’ careers in law, finance, medicine and technology for their children because they perceive them to offer good career progression (60%), good pay (58%) and a stable career path (56%). Source: Netflix & NYT Research finds majority of working class parents don’t want their child to pursue a creative career [Online]. Available from: <https://www.nyt.org.uk/news/netflix-and-nytresearch-finds-majority-of-working-class-parents-dont-want-their-child-to-pursue-a-creative-career/>.

Bias towards middle-class and heteronormative assumptions

The RSC's Time to Act study tested several existing validated measures in use in schools to assess children's language development. Their researchers observed a "concerning disconnect between some of the language, imagery and narratives employed in widely-used literacy tests and the lived experience of pupils". The researchers noticed a "bias towards middle-class and heteronormative assumptions". In their response to this call for evidence, the RSC observe that these findings align with current research being undertaken by Dr Ian Cushing at Manchester Metropolitan University, on language oppression and the way in which "inequality in the UK can be perpetuated by education policy and entrenched concepts of linguistic correctness".

Private and state provision

A report from the Centre for Culture and Media Studies described divergence between the levels of provision for arts subjects in the English curriculum from that provided by our European neighbours ([Ashton and Ashton 2022](#)). It found that while private schools have increased investment in the arts curriculum as part of a 'co-curriculum' model that supports students to develop holistically, the role of the arts has been progressively marginalized in public sector education. This has resulted in a 'two tier' system that reflects broader picture of cultural inequality. Source:

<https://wrap.warwick.ac.uk/id/eprint/165031/1/WRAP-Creativity-curriculum-educational-apartheid-21st-England-2022.pdf>

In a recent SOLT & UK Theatre roundtable the APPG for Apprenticeships, MPs met with theatre apprentices; none of them had been encouraged to go into the theatre industry by their schools or colleges.⁹ (This roundtable took place at the National Theatre on 21st October 2024).

⁹ This roundtable took place at the National Theatre on 21st October 2024.

As detailed in Section 2, the recently published [DCMS Youth Survey Pilot](#) report shows that young people from the most deprived quintile are half as likely to participate in arts courses, groups or clubs: 14% compared to 28% in the least deprived quintile. The same study shows that young people who received free school meals or were in the most deprived quintile were substantially less likely to go to the theatre – 36% as compared to 60% (FSM) and 39% compared to 61%. Source:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/672b4bcdfbd69e1861921bff/DCMS_Pilot_Youth_Participation_Survey_Findings_Report_final_accessible.pdf

A New Direction whose [2013 survey](#) of 1,664 young people aged 11-25 showed that schools are important gateways to cultural experiences for young people, and with this first access through school particularly important for young people from less privileged backgrounds. Without those early experiences, there is a risk that children and young people will have no access to the arts before they leave school, particularly those from the most disadvantaged backgrounds. Source: <https://www.anewdirection.org.uk/cultural-engagement-by-young-londoners>

13. In the current curriculum, assessment system and qualification pathways are there any barriers to improving attainment, progress, access or participation which may disproportionately impact pupils based on other characteristics (e.g. disability, sexual orientation, gender, race, religion or belief etc.)

Unequal access to cultural experiences

Several SOLT & UK Theatre members have underlined the fact that school is a universal provision in the UK. If arts experiences and subjects aren't offered in school, some children will not experience them. Many members have pointed out that access to culture is a right enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

There is a growing cultural enrichment gap: we know that children who are living in the least deprived areas in the country are twice as likely to engage in performing arts outside

of (state) school, compared to peers living in the *most* deprived. Sutton Trust analysis (presented in the CLA [Report Card](#)) makes clear that A-Level results in 2023 reveal a worsening attainment gap and widening regional inequalities. Source: <https://www.culturallearningalliance.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/CLA-2024-Annual-Report-Card.pdf>

Extra-curricular arts activities and experiences across art and design, dance, drama and music are not affordable for many families struggling in the current economic climate, so arts subjects must be made accessible to all children and young people through their schooling.

[Evidence](#) from FFT Education Datalab tells us that one in five disadvantaged pupils are suspended, the majority in Years 8, 9 and 10. We, alongside many others in the cultural and creative industries, believe that expressive arts opportunities and experiences might offer ways of to make school a better experience for some of these children. Source: <https://ffteducationdatalab.org.uk/2024/11/exclusions-and-suspensions-in-2023-24/>

As detailed in previous in our response to the previous question, in September 2024, Netflix and the National Youth Theatre [published new research](#) (IGNITE Your Creativity) which found that 89% of working-class parents, guardians and careers say they wouldn't want their child to pursue a creative career path. Instead, these caregivers favour 'traditional' careers in law, finance, medicine and technology for their children because they perceive them to offer good career progression (60%), good pay (58%) and a stable career path (56%). Source: <https://about.netflix.com/en/news/netflix-and-nyt-launch-second-year-of-ignite>

Protected characteristics

We would like to draw attention to the RSC's response to question 13 in relation to deaf learners in which they state that they believe that "Deaf students are disadvantaged in areas of study due to limited BSL resources. As the University of Birmingham notes in its Signing Shakespeare programme, there are approximately 52,000 deaf children in the UK. Many of these young people are disadvantaged in the classroom". Source: RSC's response to Call for Evidence for the DfE Curriculum and Assessment Review, November 2024.

There are significant barriers for young people from global majority backgrounds and those with other protected characteristics. Teachers have told our members that they lack confidence, resources and experience in teaching new texts drawn from outside a Eurocentric canon. As detailed in the Lit In Colour research "There is systematic underrepresentation of writers of colour in our curriculum, relative to both to their place in contemporary British literary excellence and compared to the demographics of the English school population. Some children will never study a text by a writer of colour apart from a handful of poems as part of their GCSE English Literature. Young people themselves value a diverse literary diet. School libraries play a central role in providing a wide range of extra-curricular reading. In the 2019 GCSE English Literature assessments not one student answered a question about a play by a Global Majority writer. This means that children and young people of the global majority do not see themselves or their cultural experience reflected in the texts that they are taught throughout their school life. This narrow and restrictive curriculum impedes children and people's ability to meaningfully connect with the subject matter"¹⁰. As an employer body, SOLT & UK Theatre are concerned that this have negative knock-on consequences for the diversity of our future workforce. Source: Lit in Colour was created in 2020 by Penguin Books UK and race equality think tank, The Runnymede Trust, <https://www.runnymedetrust.org/publications/lit-in-colour>

¹⁰ Lit in Colour was created in 2020 by Penguin Books UK and race equality think tank, [The Runnymede Trust](https://www.runnymedetrust.org).

Some members have noted that the 2014 curriculum reforms to GCSEs increased the written component of assessment at the expense of performance elements. These changes have downgraded creative, embodied and relational aspects of Drama, and have been disadvantageous to those students who benefit from and have potential to excel in these central aspects of the subject.

Our members observe that the expressive arts can be a powerful way to address the [social and emotional health](https://www.culturallearningalliance.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Arts-Health-and-Wellbeing-Briefing.pdf) of students. Source: <https://www.culturallearningalliance.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Arts-Health-and-Wellbeing-Briefing.pdf>

The CLA [Report Card](https://www.culturallearningalliance.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/CLA-2024-Annual-Report-Card.pdf) highlights the need for *all* schools to be resourced to ensure access to high-quality Arts and cultural enrichment as a universal entitlement. Source: <https://www.culturallearningalliance.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/CLA-2024-Annual-Report-Card.pdf>

For children who enter foster or residential care during their school years, educational pathways are severely disrupted, and potential unfulfilled. For care-experienced young people, the arts can provide otherwise marginalised learners with a flexible and meaningful mode of creative expression and routes to professional careers

14. In the current curriculum, assessment system and qualification pathways, are there any barriers in continuing to improve attainment, progress, access or participation for learners with SEND?

SEND Barriers

We echo the RSC’s response to this question which states “We believe there are a number of barriers to access, progress, participation and attainment for SEND learners”. The RSC’s

submission to this call for evidence observes that “While the National Curriculum and the 2014 SEND Code of Practice make provision for a diverse pupil population, barriers to attainment and participation for SEND students remain”.

We would also like to reiterate the RSC’s point that the “social model of disability requires schools to adapt their educational strategies and environments for learners with SEND. Given that the most common needs for pupils with SEND support without an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan are speech, language and communication needs, mainstream schools have much to learn from the way in which special schools support SEND learners and adapt traditional methods of teaching and assessment, in particular their employment of multi-sensory pedagogical approaches and non-verbal and non-written assessments”.

RSC’s Time to Act research in collaboration with the company’s network of SEND schools suggests that “expressive arts education has particular benefits for learners with SEND - increasing participation, progress and social and emotional development”.

SOLT & UK Theatre Members Activity to support learners with SEND

SOLT & UK Theatre would also like to take this opportunity to make the panel aware of commercial and subsidised theatre and performance venues’ range of relaxed or adapted performances and ‘school theatre days’ which seek to meet the needs of a wide range of children and young people to engage with culture in a way that is meaningful and relevant to them. With the support of private, philanthropic and public funding, organisations such as Capital Theatres provide adapted and relaxed performances as part of their programme and support other venues to offer similar opportunities. Such activities are under threat due to reductions in public funding streams. SOLT & UK Theatre is developing proposals for a variety of mechanisms to support our members to continuing providing these opportunities.

15. In the current curriculum, assessment system and qualification pathways, are there any enablers that support attainment, progress, access or participation for the groups listed above?

Teachers with access to programmes and resources provided by our members help to enable attainment and progress. SOLT & UK Theatre are working with the CLA's [Evidence and Value Narrative Working Group](#) to develop a Capabilities Framework to help articulate why embedding expressive arts education in England's schooling (across curriculum, assessment, qualifications pathways and accountability measures, at all phases) is important. We will share further details on this work with the panel by the end of December 2024.

Section 4: Ensuring an excellent foundation in maths and English

Q. 16: Our members' work with school teachers and students indicates that the primary English curriculum does not currently enable all pupils to gain an excellent foundation in English. In its response to this review the National Theatre (NT) states "the current curriculum favours high- achieving children and disadvantages those with SEND and those who speak English as an additional language. The current programmes of study do not prioritise the development of speaking and listening skills and agree with the Oracy Commission recommendation to recognise the essential role of oracy as a building block for reading, writing and students' progression through school".

The NT have recently commissioned research into the impact and value of a play-based pedagogy in facilitating progress on literacy and oracy skills, and the early feedback from teachers is that this approach is yielding very strong results. Teachers taking part in the research project (Power of Play) have recorded significant improvements in literacy outcomes particularly for reluctant writers, those with SEND or those who speak English as an additional language. They have also seen an improvement in children's vocabulary and in their speaking and listening skills. Teachers also noted that students had more enthusiasm for their literacy work and were more interested in stories and reading as a result. More widely, our observation of current KS2 assessment frameworks is that it gives KS2 teachers and pupils very little space to engage in anything beyond the core subjects, thereby narrowing not only the curriculum, but pupils' world view.

Source: Power of Play evaluation report to be published in 2025. Interim report available from the National Theatre.

Q.17 To what extent does the content of the a) English and b) maths national curriculum at secondary level (key stages 3 and 4) equip pupils with the knowledge and skills they need for life and further study? Are there ways in which the content could change to better support this aim?

We support the calls for reform to the assessment system and for a reformed qualification in English and maths, in particular:

- The call in the Oracy Commission’s report, *We Need To Talk*, for a core oracy entitlement in school from KS1 onwards, with assessment at KS3 (as proposed by the Oracy Commission in the form of a functional skills ‘passport’) or at KS4 as part of a reformed English Language GCSE
- The House of Lords Education 11-16 Committee recommendation that alternative, high-quality level 2 literacy and numeracy qualifications focusing on functional, practiced-based literacy, numeracy and oracy skills which can provide the foundation for further learning, training and employment and as citizens. Such qualifications should focus on the application of essential skills including in employment contexts.
- Attainment in these should be recognised in school performance measures.

We advocate strongly for the value of drama texts as an important and unique part of Key Stage 3 English and GCSE English Literature. We recommend that all students study a contemporary drama text in addition to the current compulsory Shakespeare at GCSE.

We know that drama texts are already popular in most schools, with 79% of all GCSE English Literature students answering an exam question on one in 2019 [*Lit in Colour: Spotlight on Plays and Drama*, Bloomsbury Publishing, 2022].

Studying plays as part of a broad study of literature in English offers young people an opportunity to reflect on and understand the world around us, make choices and form opinions. Students can begin to explore and understand ideas of interpretation, impact on

an audience and social and cultural context. This is made even more powerful with a richer and more diverse range of texts included as part of exam specifications.

20. How can we better support learners who do not achieve level 2 in English and maths by 16 to learn what they need to thrive as citizens in work and life? In particular, do we have the right qualifications at level 2 for these 16-19 learners (including the maths and English study requirement)?

Many SOLT & UK Theatre members employ apprentices mainly in technical, production and business aspects of theatre making practice. Through this experience some members have observed that the requirement for Maths and English Functional Skills at L2 to complete a Level 3 apprenticeship has been very challenging.

We know that each year roughly a third of students do not achieve a standard pass at in GCSE maths and English Language. Nor do these qualifications allow the students to gain the skills and knowledge that they need for the workplace or further study. We believe there needs to be a stronger emphasis on oracy including key communication skills for the workplace and for live including presentation, speaking and listening.

Our members report high levels of neurodiverse learners following an apprenticeship or traineeship pathway and note that learners who thrive in an apprenticeship tend to be practical learners, who consistently struggle in exam based, theoretical testing.

Many of our smaller and medium sized theatre companies have expressed interest in taking on more apprentices and look forward to a more flexible Growth and Skills levy to help facilitate this.

Some members have pointed out that poor CVs, written applications and interview skills put applicants for apprenticeships and junior roles at a disadvantage. Presentation skills, speaking and listening could be developed through a more practical, oracy-based curriculum and qualification.

Sources:

The Forgotten Third, Association of School and College Leaders, September 2019
(https://www.ascl.org.uk/ASCL/media/ASCL/Our%20view/Campaigns/The-Forgotten-Third_full-report.pdf)

Requires Improvement: urgent change for 11-16 education, House of Lords Education for 11-16 Committee, December 2023
<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/42484/documents/211201/default/>

Section 5: Curriculum and qualification content

24. To what extent does the current curriculum (including qualification content) support students to positively engage with, be knowledgeable about and respect others? Are there elements that could be improved?

Our members have called for a broader range of texts to ensure that children with protected characteristics are more likely to see themselves represented in the works they study.

Section 6: A broad and balanced curriculum

28. To what extent does the current primary curriculum support pupils to study a broad and balanced curriculum? Should anything change to better support this?

For SOLT & UK Theatre members a broad and balanced curriculum means placing arts and STEM subjects on an equal footing in terms of the curriculum and assessment measures.

Consistent data collection on art teaching is needed. There is a lack of data on arts teaching in primary schools as they do not have the qualifications data that is available for the secondary sector.

In addition to the hierarchy of subjects imposed by the EBacc, there is a hierarchy of arts subjects imposed by the list of National Curriculum foundation subjects excluding some art forms. In 1988 the new secondary National Curriculum specified Art & Design and Music as foundation subjects, with Dance and Drama relegated to sitting within PE and English

respectively, and this remains the case today. The Dance content in the PE curriculum is very limited. Dance and Drama are not always available in all schools if there is a school-level decision not to teach them. Art & Design and Music have subject leads at Ofsted however Dance and Drama do not, so there is not parity at inspection level. The fact that Ofsted do not have a subject lead for Drama means that it simply does not come up as a topic in individual school inspections or in Ofsted overview reports.

The DfE's recording of data on Drama and Dance varies from year to year. For example, in relation to GCSE entries and teacher recruitment, Dance data is sometimes included as part of PE but also sometimes as part of Drama (e.g. for ITT recruitment data for 2011/12). The impact of not having consistent data means that is difficult to answer this question accurately.

Drama is sometimes recorded as part of English. Dance is sometimes not recorded at all – for example, in relation to the size of the overall teacher workforce and taught hours or teacher recruitment.

SOLT & UK Theatre would like to work in partnership with the Department for Education and DCMS to support the sector to devise and commission research to better articulate the value of their creative engagement programmes with schools.

There is evidence to demonstrate that creative education programmes lead to tangible improvements in children's use of language and their ability to understand abstract terms. The RSC's teacher-led action research, [Time to Act](#) found that children who participated in the study produced more expansive descriptions of setting, place and atmosphere, showed greater optimism and resilience when imagining character outcomes and demonstrated better inferencing skills, imagining what might come next. SOLT & UK Theatre is encouraging members to commission further research on this type of intervention. It is important to note that the sector would require substantial funding to commission further research in this area.

The RSC study was funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation. SOLT & UK Theatre is working as part of the CLA's [Evidence and Value Narrative Working Group](#), which was convened in October 2023 and is chaired by Jacqui O'Hanlon MBE, Director of Learning & National

Partnerships at the RSC and is advising on, overseeing and developing and commissioning CLA's evidence gathering and analysis – on the value of an arts-rich education for every child and young person – with a particular focus on social impact.

29. To what extent do the current secondary curriculum and qualifications pathways support pupils to study a broad and balanced curriculum? Should anything change to better support this?

There is significant evidence that the unintended consequence of the Ebacc and progress 8 have narrowed the curriculum and therefore narrowed student choice.

Our members' productions and global success are reliant on a workforce with knowledge and skills drawing on multiple art forms and STEM subjects. Therefore, secondary schools need the full complement of arts specialists and primary schools need arts-confident teachers. These changes would help to ensure that arts teaching would work hand in hand with STEM teaching.

Several SOLT & UK Theatre members have called for texts studied by pupils to be more representative of the British population and for greater diversity in terms of playwrights studied.

Several members observe that Drama GCSE has become an increasingly academic subject and should be rebalanced to include enough performance to allow for practical/ embodied exercises that help to embed academic learning (See RSC's Time to Act research) time. As employers, our members observe that young people who have had the opportunity to perform at school arrive more confident and work-ready.

GCSE Drama requires students to watch and critically analyse a live performance. To ensure a more equitable system, all drama pupils should have access to live performance opportunities. Pupils with limited opportunities to watch live performances are at a disadvantage.

30. To what extent do the current qualifications pathways at 16-19 support learners to study a broad curriculum which gives them the right knowledge and skills to progress? Should anything change to better support this?

Our members emphasise the importance of progression through primary to secondary education. If young people are to take advantage of a secondary arts offer and the theatre careers that this can lead to, they need a firm foundation in the primary years.

Apprenticeships and T-levels are currently lacking in flexibility to meet the workforce needs of SOLT & UK Theatre. We therefore welcome the news that the Growth and Skills Levy will be more flexible and look forward to working closely with Skills England to ensure a closer working relationship with industry.

We call on the Department for Education (DfE) to publish its evaluation of the portable apprenticeship pilot and look forward to more availability of the portable or modular approach in future.

Improve Data Collection to inform Industrial Strategy: We ask that the Future Skills Unit improve publicly available data from DBT/DfE/HMRC/ONS on apprenticeship levy contributions from employers in the DCMS definition of the creative industries. The current dataset based on sector subject areas (SSA) does not capture the creative industries use of business and operational apprenticeships.

It is crucial from our perspective that the Industrial Strategy, Skills England and this Curriculum and Assessment Review are joined up. We look forward to working with Skills England and Future Skills unit on this so that the Industrial Strategy draws on the most appropriate datasets available and recognizes the wide range of highly skilled roles in the performing arts industry.

Correlate the employers registered on the DAS against their Companies House declaration of their SIC codes to facilitate better analysis.

We welcome the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education's (IfATE) Creative and Design [Occupational Map](#) illustrating where technical education can lead however not all jobs are included yet so we look forward to working with the Skills England and other key stakeholders to address these gaps.

We ask the panel to review the extent to which generic standards and end-point assessments (EPAs) can be adapted to fit specialist job roles.

Allow for the creation of bespoke apprenticeship standards for specialist jobs or add more options to existing standards.

We ask that the government consider introducing more Level 2 apprenticeships to develop more work-based entry level routes into the theatre industry.

We ask that the DBT provide incentives to smaller, specialist training providers to deliver training that truly meets the needs of our members skills bootcamps and apprenticeships that meet theatre employers' needs.

Members report high levels of neurodiversity within the sector. Some suggest that qualification pathways should be adapted to reflect the needs of neurodiverse learners.

We would like the 16- 19 provision to engage and reflect on the broader skills required to

be successful in the creative industries as a self-employed worker. Teamwork, networking, innovation and problem solving are key skills required. We would be interested in these skills being implemented as core skills within specifications.

We would like to see curriculum reflect engagement with theatre venues and the broader offstage offer. It is important for students to understand the varied business models that exist within the sector and how funding is acquired to make art and theatre.

We would like to see a greater focus on 'Live Briefs' so students are engaging with wider business and working on projects that develop practical work-based skills.

31. To what extent do the current curriculum (at primary and secondary) and qualifications pathways (at secondary and 16-19) ensure that pupils and learners are able to develop creative skills and have access to creative subjects? Our analysis of curriculum subject trends over time (published alongside this document) has shown that while many subject areas are thriving and take-up is growing, take-up of some subjects has declined over time. Of course, this is not necessarily a problem: these changes may reflect policy directions or other social trends, or they may reflect changes in policy and accountability measures over time.

While analysis suggests that uptake in Art and Design have remained relatively stable in the curriculum, this masks the impact of broader policies such as the introduction of the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) by the Coalition Government in 2010.¹¹ The subjects, which are generally referred to as the 5 Pillars of the EBacc, were identified as English, Maths, Science, Modern Foreign Languages and Humanities (History and Geography). This emphasis has had a profound impact on the prioritisation of certain subjects in schools, to the detriment of arts subjects. This has led to the marginalization of arts subjects in schools

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which has had a knock on effect for our members trying to bring programmes into schools that are valued by teachers and help to achieve the aims of the curriculum.

It is our view and that of our members that Government cannot upskill teachers alone. We ask that this panel consider how the Department for Education might work in partnership with the performing arts sector to develop creative confidence amongst practitioners.

We ask the review panel to consider the CLA's [Blueprint for an arts-rich education](#) (or the [extended version of the Blueprint](#)) – summarised below – which seeks four foundational system changes, and three principles to underpin them. Sources: https://www.culturallearningalliance.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/CLA005_One-pager_AW_V3.pdf and <https://www.culturallearningalliance.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/CLA005-2024-Manifesto-AW75.pdf>

What could be changed:

- New, clear purposes for education – with the expressive arts as a core and equal curriculum area mapped onto these new purposes. This needs to include an understanding of the value of the arts for children and young people at the senior leadership level within schools.
- A minimum 4-hour arts entitlement within the school week, enabling high-quality, progressive learning experiences
- Reform of the school accountability system – consider removing the EBacc in secondary, and reforming Progress 8 – and changes to student assessment in line with [Rethinking Assessment](#)
- An entitlement to teacher training and teacher development – ensuring a minimum level of arts training for primary teachers

Essential building blocks to underpin the above changes:

- A new emphasis on a rounded learning experience for the personal development and wellbeing of the ‘whole child’ – for the present as well as for the future.
- A focus on representation, breadth and relevance across the expressive arts curriculum, resources and practice so that children and young people can see themselves reflected in what they are learning.

SOLT & UK Theatre would like to draw the review panel’s attention to Appendix 4 of the submission to this call for evidence from the Royal Ballet and Opera (RBO). RBO hosted a symposium for Headteachers and senior school leaders at the Royal Opera House on 13 November. Appendix 4 of their submission provides an overview of the feedback provided by Headteachers and senior school leaders.

32. Do you have any explanations for the trends outlined in the analysis and/or suggestions to address any that might be of concern?

Members and stakeholders tell us that the former government’s narrative about ‘strategically important’ subjects (i.e. not expressive arts) has dominated policy and practice in schools since the introduction of the EBacc. Subject choices at KS3 into KS4 are often driven – directly or indirectly – by school performance measures and not by a ‘whole child’ approach. This has made it increasingly difficult for our members to embed their programmes and initiatives in school life.

It is important to consider that when teachers have the opportunity to work with our members creative engagement programmes and those of other stakeholders, teachers are often very enthusiastic about what these interventions mean for their pupils. There is evidence to demonstrate that creative education programs lead to see tangible improvements in children's use of language and their ability to understand abstract terms. The RSC's teacher-led action research, [Time to Act](#) found that children who participated in the study produced more expansive descriptions of setting, place and atmosphere, showed greater optimism and resilience when imagining character outcomes and demonstrated better inferencing skills, imagining what might come next. SOLT & UK Theatre is encouraging members to commission further research on this type of intervention.

Observation from a teacher involved in the Time to Act research study: "And suddenly, you've got children who are unwilling to speak who are talking...it's so inclusive..."

Members tell us that pupils are being discouraged from selecting one let alone two expressive arts subjects. This feedback from members is backed up by evidence from the [NFER](#) which indicates that students are increasingly selecting a narrow range of subject options and do not feel free to select across different curriculum areas – too often selecting more than one expressive arts subject is discouraged.

Expressive arts subjects need parity with other curriculum areas and to be embedded throughout curriculum and across all key stages. Only then will all children be supported to develop important capabilities for life and for work such as interpretation, creativity, communication (including self-expression), collaboration, agency, empathy and wellbeing. As employers, our members often reference these skills when recruiting.

The Creative Industries are the fastest growing sector in the UK economy, employing 2.4m people in 2022, yet there are significant skill shortages in the performing arts sector. We will publish our latest data on this by the end of the year. We need schools to think STEAM and not STEM. SOLT & UK Theatre are concerned this trend of a lack of take up of expressive arts subjects will have long-term negative consequences for our industry (and our global reputation as a centre of performing arts excellence) which is already experiencing acute skills shortages.¹²

There is a lack of status attributed to arts subjects and even within arts subjects there is a hierarchy at play. Although all creative arts subjects have suffered in recent years, even within those subjects there is often a hierarchy, with drama and dance located within other subjects (English and PE respectively), which can lead to marginalisation and a misunderstanding of drama and dance as educational subjects in their own right.

We are encouraged to see a growing focus on oracy, a key element of drama and performance, and feel that expressive arts subjects offer many opportunities to develop this skill.

33. To what extent and how do pupils benefit from being able to take vocational or applied qualifications in secondary schools alongside more academically focused GCSEs?

SOLT & UK Theatre is not in a position to comment on how these types of qualification interact however we recently surveyed our members on technical education and skills

¹² We will publish our latest data on skills shortages and gaps in December.

shortages. We will be publishing the results in December and will share them with the Government then.

Hands-on practical or embodied learning, soft skills, information around career pathways and networking opportunities were also seen as important for technical education.

34. To what extent does the current pre-16 vocational offer equip pupils with the necessary knowledge and skills and prepare them for further study options, including 16-19 technical pathways and/or A levels? Could the pre-16 vocational offer be improved?

SOLT & UK Theatre’s latest skills survey found that our members see technical education as a starting point to provide foundational knowledge for students to build on. Once in post, on the job practical experience becomes more important. Source: Unpublished survey to be published by the end of 2024.

- We ask that the pre-16 offer be reviewed, particularly in relation to the opportunities for young people interested in pursuing expressive arts subjects and careers in the creative industries that rely on a mix of STEM and arts knowledge and skill.
- We need better training for schools, colleges and careers guidance professionals and better awareness and understanding of the value of the creative industries and a legitimate career pathway for example, through the Gatsby Benchmarks for Career Guidance.

- Our members need a joined up education and industrial strategy that connects schools to further education, apprenticeship providers and employers. The expressive arts need a clear voice within this.

Full findings will be published in December and we will share the final report with Government then.

35. Is the volume of statutory assessment at key stages 1 and 2 right for the purposes set out above?

We defer to our expert members in this area including but not limited to Royal Ballet and Opera, Royal Shakespeare Company and the National Theatre.

32 Ofqual and DfE have been working closely together on research to build the evidence base on the potential opportunities, risks and implications of using technology to deliver exams.

We defer to our expert members in this area including but not limited to RBO, RSC and NT.

36. Are there any changes that could be made to improve efficacy without having a negative impact on pupils' learning or the wider education system?

We defer to our expert members in this area including but not limited to RBO, RSC and NT.

37. Are there other changes to the statutory assessment system at key stages 1 and 2 that could be made to improve pupils' experience of assessment, without having a negative impact on either pupils' learning or the wider education system? 38. What can we do to ensure the assessment system at key stages 1 and 2 works well for all learners, including learners in need of additional support in their education (for example SEND, disadvantage, EAL)?

We defer to our expert members in this area including but not limited to RBO, RSC and NT.

39. Is the volume of assessment required for GCSEs right for the purposes set out above? Are there any changes that could be made without having a negative impact on either pupils' learning or the wider education system?

We defer to our expert members in this area including but not limited to RBO, RSC and NT.

40. What more can we do to ensure that: a) the assessment requirements for GCSEs capture and support the development of knowledge and skills of every young person; and b) young people's wellbeing is effectively considered when assessments are developed, giving pupils the best chance to show what they can do to support their progression?

We defer to our expert members in this area including but not limited to RBO, RSC and NT.

41. Are there particular GCSE subjects where changes could be made to the qualification content and/or assessment that would be beneficial for pupils' learning?

GCSE Drama requires students to watch and critically analyse a live performance, if this is the first time they have seen a live performance they are at a disadvantage. It is crucial they see live performances before this point.

42. Are there ways in which we could support improvement in pupil progress and outcomes at key stage 3?

We defer to our expert members in this area including but not limited to RBO, RSC and NT.

43. Are there ways in which we could support pupils who do not meet the expected standard at key stage 2

We defer to our expert members in this area including but not limited to RBO, RSC and NT.

44. To what extent, and in what ways, does the accountability system influence curriculum and assessment decisions in schools and colleges?

We defer to our expert members in this area including but not limited to RBO, RSC and NT.

45. How well does the current accountability system support and recognise progress for all pupils and learners? What works well and what could be improved?

We defer to our expert members in this area including but not limited to RBO, RSC and NT.

46. Should there be any changes to the current accountability system in order to better support progress and incentivise inclusion for young people with SEND and/or from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds? If so, what should those changes be?

We defer to our expert members in this area including but not limited to RBO, RSC and NT.

SECTION 8: QUALIFICATION PATHWAYS 16-19

47. To what extent does the range of programmes and qualifications on offer at each level meet the needs and aspirations of learners? a) Level 3 b) Level 2 c) Level 1 and entry level

Within the creative industries, there are not enough training opportunities and/or qualifications for young people. For example, if a young person wants to train to become a lighting technician they would have to enroll onto a broader technical theatre apprenticeship programme with lighting as just one of several component parts.

The process of getting specialised apprenticeship provision standards approved also needs streamlining. For example, the Head of Running Wardrobe at the RSC helped write the original standard for apprenticeships in running wardrobe. Some seven years later, we have only had the standards for a running wardrobe apprentice approved this week (along with four other new Level 3 apprenticeships in Automation; Wigs, Hair and Makeup (WHAM) and Scenic Art). This is great news, but it has taken several years to get to this point and even now, we still need to identify a suitable training provider before we can begin to offer these new apprenticeships to young people.

This is another area for concern because whilst training providers will typically have incredible facilities, they often lack the level of in-house expertise available to teach specialist skills that our industry needs. To make it financially viable they require larger cohort numbers which for the vast majority of theatres/performing arts venues is untenable.

OUR KEY POINTS THEREFORE ARE:

- 1) . Training providers currently do not have the required level of expertise in house to allow us to facilitate a number of specialist apprenticeship and training schemes. Often this means we can not run the course or have to include a specialism within a broader training programme.