

# Enhancing Creative Education



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**Creative Industries**  
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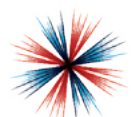
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# Enhancing Creative Education

<b>Executive summary</b>	<b>4</b>
Context	6
Creative and cultural education	7
Responses and learning from the pandemic	8
Key Findings	10
<b>1 Introduction and approach</b>	<b>14</b>
1.1 About the research	14
1.2 Understanding the research context	16
<b>2 Creative and cultural education</b>	<b>20</b>
2.1 Curriculum and teaching	21
2.2 Social impacts of creative education	22
2.3 Employability, skills and the labour market	24
<b>3 Responses and learning from the pandemic</b>	<b>29</b>
3.1 Schools' approaches to delivering creative education	30
3.2 Impacts of the pandemic on students	32
3.3 Social and community impacts of creative education during the pandemic	33
3.4 Employability, skills and the labour market	34
3.5 Actions taken and lessons learned from the pandemic experience	35
<b>4 Findings and next steps</b>	<b>36</b>
4.1 Key findings	36
<b>Appendix</b>	<b>41</b>
Case studies	41
Acknowledgements	64
Disclaimer	64
References	64
Endnotes	67

# Executive summary

This paper aims to understand how creative education in secondary schools is seeking to meet the skills requirements of creative industries and the impact of the pandemic on such endeavours. It draws together findings from the existing literature, with primary research from case study interviews and teacher surveys.

This report presents the final findings of the research project commissioned by the Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre (PEC, a research consortium led by Nesta and funded from the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund) and the Arts Council England (ACE). The work originates from the Creative Industries Council (CIC) skills and education working group (in particular the schools' task and finish group). This task and finish group was set up to develop and support specific, evidence-based proposals for action which promote and improve creative education in schools.

**Key Words: Education, schools, employability, skills, pandemic, projects**

As the UK manages and begins to build back from the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important to focus on how school-based creative education can support and add value to the Government's economic and social policies by better preparing young people to progress in future at work and/or further study. In particular a key concern has been to understand how recent challenges (including those brought about by the pandemic) have been overcome to bring lasting benefits.

**The research has three main aims:**

1. Understanding how creative education is changing to meet the future skills requirements of the creative industries and local communities. Creative education covers the following subjects delivered in school as part of the curriculum: art and design, design and technology, dance, drama, media, film and TV studies, music, and performance and expressive arts. But it also extends to a commitment to wider teaching for creativity across the curriculum as seen through local creative activities and projects;
2. Exploring the responses to and learning from the pandemic for creative education;
3. Supporting improvements to creative education in future through identifying good practice.

To answer these aims, the research team devised an approach to collect and review research evidence, develop good practice case studies and gather data from a broad sample of teachers across the country concerning their opinions of the value of a creative education and how it is delivered in schools – through the creative subject curriculum and also wider cross curricula activities. By using the Teacher Tapp panel of over 8,000 teachers,<sup>1</sup>

pertinent and timely questions were asked of a cross-section of teachers to get a unique insight into how the pandemic has affected teaching more widely. In particular, the research was able to assess recent challenges from the pandemic, exploring for example perceptions of whether students have fallen behind and how teachers have changed how they have worked with employers and local partners within the community.

The case studies aimed to provide up-to-date examples of creative education in practice. The detailed investigation focused in particular on local creative education projects in secondary schools, or delivered as extra-curricular activity. The case studies were selected to reflect a range of creative subjects and help understand broader approaches to the teaching of creative education and teaching for creativity resulting in young people developing their creative thinking and creative capabilities. Their aim was to document local creative activities and to use this practice to inform teaching approaches which advance the future employability of young people. There was also an opportunity to reflect on such developments in the context of COVID-19; not least in terms of understanding its effects on delivery challenges, access to creative subjects and an appreciation of the wider role of creativity in areas such as mental health and wellbeing.

### Case studies investigated

Project/School name	Description
<b>Highdown School and Sixth Form Centre – Discover! Creative Careers Programme</b>	Offers a full suite of resources to enable schools to deliver their careers programme and meet the Gatsby benchmarks – work experience, speakers for schools, working with enterprise advisers.
<b>Marden High School, The Duchess's Community High School and This is Creative Enterprise (TICE)</b>	A local creative enterprise programme conducting a range of creative projects, connecting students with industry professionals.
<b>Bottisham Village College and the Virtual Worlds Conference in Collaboration with STEM Champion</b>	A local initiative which connects the tech industry with schools in Cambridge.
<b>Camden STEAM Hub – the Drummond Street Project</b>	A project which connects employers with teachers working at secondary schools across the London Borough of Camden, with a focus on science, technology, engineering, arts and maths (STEAM).
<b>Greater Brighton Metropolitan College and the Art &amp; Design Saturday Club</b>	A branch of the national Saturday Club programme focussed on Art and Design for disadvantaged young people, operating as part of widening participation activities.
<b>Video Games Ambassadors</b>	A UK wide network of games industry staff that provide careers talks, masterclasses, and game jams to inspire students into a career in the games industry.

## Context

The creative industries play a key role in the UK economy, and in the health as well as the wealth of the nation.<sup>2</sup> However, given megatrends such as automation and related innovations in ways of working, there is a need to better understand how the skills needs of the sector may change in the future. The creative industries already have significant experience in responding and adapting to change such as atypical and flexible work modes, more project-based and freelance working, digitisation and experimentation with new technologies and associated innovations in business models and operating environments.

This research, by reviewing creative education curriculum, pedagogy and practice, considers teaching for creativity but also the value of a creative curriculum in preparing for such changes. The research provides a focus on what approaches are deployed to deal with ongoing challenges (including those brought about by the pandemic), not least to: establish where practice works well and lessons can be learned for broader applicability; identify and extend innovations and overcome barriers; and understand how creative education can be strengthened to support and add significant benefits to the Government's economic and social policies, especially by enhancing young people's creative skills and employability.

The focus of this research is on secondary schools, which are central to the skills systems equipping individuals through their education with the habits of learning, personal resources and skills they need to progress throughout their lives. The secondary school curriculum in particular can play a key role in providing students' access to a range of creative subjects, enhancing their appreciation of future creative careers whilst simultaneously developing the skills that are increasingly demanded in a future economy such as creative and critical thinking. This is alongside broader functional skills and capability as is seen in the STEM curriculum for instance.

While the research demonstrates the value of a creative education it also shows it is under pressure, and so seeks to establish ways in which it can be protected and enhanced in future. The take up of creative subjects has been changing. For the past decade there has been a reduction in the number of arts teachers and number of hours that the arts were taught, for example, and a decrease in the percentage of pupils taking GCSE and A level arts subjects (outside of Art and Design) – this is at a time when the number of children in secondary schools went up. It is of interest to explore the effects on teaching creative education and preparing young people for their future careers, especially but not exclusively in creative areas such as the arts.

In addition, the research for this report has exposed ongoing inequality. A rich creative education is not universally available, a situation highlighted and exacerbated by the pandemic. A key question for the future has therefore become important – how can such pressures be resolved?



## Creative and cultural education

This research has shown a creative education and teaching for creativity pedagogies provide significant benefits for young people by supporting the growth of technical skills for working in creative industries, general employability and transversal capabilities for wider employment sectors.

Our research has indicated young people tend to be happy with their school's creative education curriculum and want to see more cross-curricula activities. But challenges to this and to supporting the broader teaching for creativity across the curriculum come in various forms which include: the amount of dedicated time for creative subjects in the National Curriculum; increasing prevalence of academy schools that can follow their own curriculum which may not prioritise a creative curriculum and cross-curricula activities; and the shift towards the EBacc which has no creative subject within its subject set.

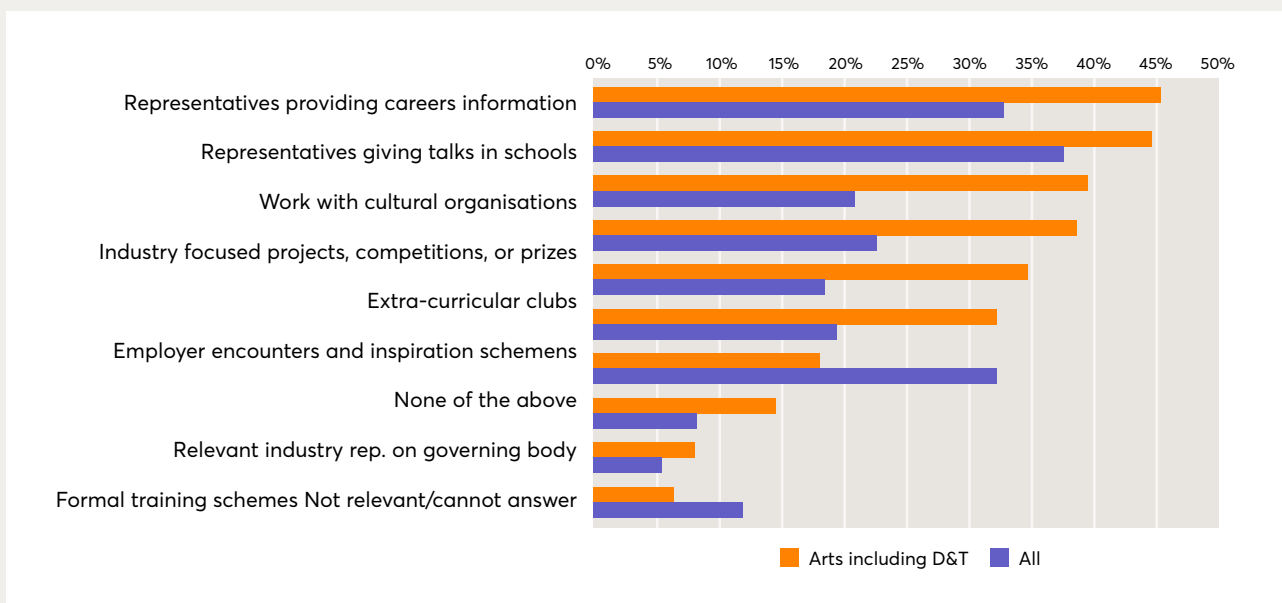
In addition to the role of creative education to specific creative skills for employment in the creative sector, the research shows the importance of teaching for creativity across the curriculum, and the benefits in wider areas such as to individual wellbeing. That studying creative subjects, and being creative, can underpin good mental health and personal wellbeing was agreed across the literature as well as being confirmed in this research. Furthermore, strong and collaborative relationships with local communities and cultural institutions can enable high quality teaching for creativity in schools, bringing creative opportunities and experience to life.

The research case studies also confirmed the wider evidence in highlighting the increasing importance of local place-based partnerships to delivering a broader creative education; both for young people and for teachers. For young people they provide a way for them to see the opportunities for creative employment in their area and pathways to work in the creative sector for people like themselves. This will also help to address the lack of diversity in the creative industries. For teachers, it is an opportunity to develop a curriculum and offer experience to their students which is responsive to employers' needs.

The research has additionally demonstrated the importance of employer engagement to creative education and enhancing industry enrichment and creative employability. Local projects are a common way to work with employers, bringing multiple benefits to young people, teachers, schools and employers. Young people gain skills, capabilities and knowledge from being involved in projects with industry professionals as well as developing individual social capital. Schools can use the employer projects to support attainment and evidence towards meeting the Gatsby Benchmarks for their careers work. Teachers gain valuable up-to-date knowledge of diverse employment opportunities for their students.

But there are wider forms of employer engagement beyond projects, where employers and industry professionals can contribute to the development of the future talent pipeline and employability of young people. The survey with teachers conducted in the research has highlighted the variety of ways schools engage with employers. Indeed, creative subject teachers were found to lead the way, engaging with employers in more ways than other subjects.

Figure 1: Teacher Tapp survey: work with employers or businesses



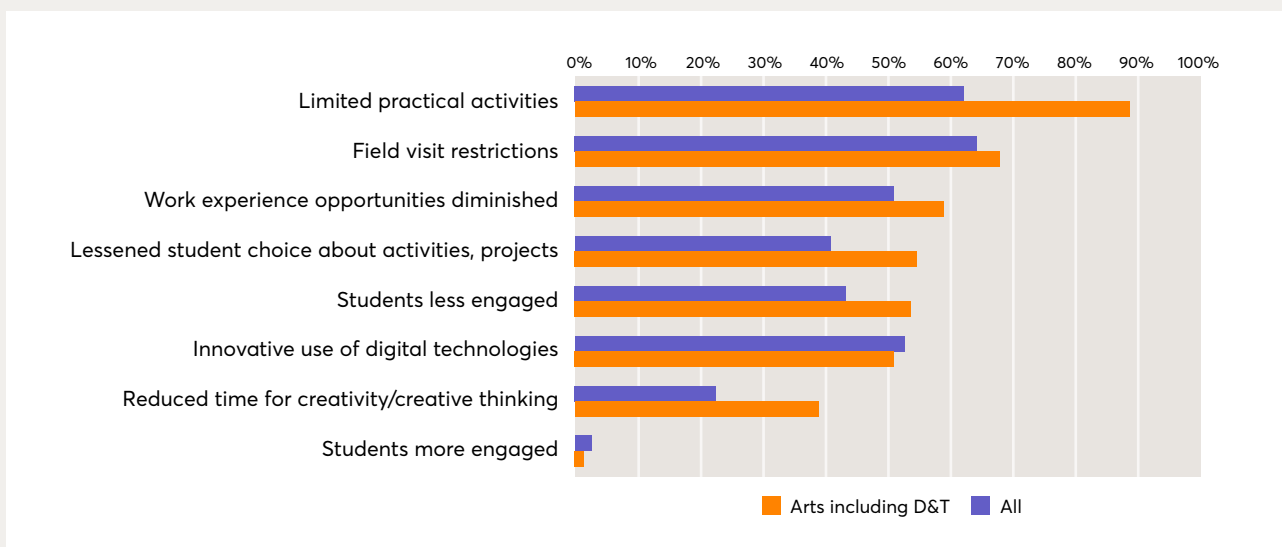
Source: IES analysis of Teacher Tapp survey, July 2021.

## Responses and learning from the pandemic

Creative subjects were adversely affected by the pandemic as with other practical subjects. During lockdowns and the closure of school, for many, there were issues with a lack of access to physical and digital resources – highlighting existing disparities. With a return to school, bubbles and restrictions on moving around school continued the challenge of access to resources. When surveyed, 95 per cent of teachers reported that their teaching had been affected in some way by the pandemic. This figure was higher for creative subject teachers who reported 99 per cent disruption to their teaching. There was also a concern that the pandemic was enhancing inequities and growing divisions for those already disadvantaged.



Figure 2: Teacher Tapp survey: pandemic effects on teaching



Source: IES analysis of Teacher Tapp survey, July 2021.

That said, the pandemic has also been a time of innovation. Indeed, teachers also demonstrated resilience and creativity in redeploying resources and moved quickly to the adoption of digital technologies to maintain levels of teaching and learning made necessary through social distancing and a virtual school environment. Employers and project organisers generally reacted swiftly in adapting their delivery to the restrictions caused by the pandemic.

While cautious about equality of access for digital delivery, interviewees hoped that the best parts of hybrid delivery will continue to tackle inequities in the offer. This will require: further investment and training for teachers; quality assurance to raise and maintain standards; and a commitment to universal access to a creative education.

The importance of creativity during the pandemic was evident across the research findings. Creative projects were a lifeline to many students and the positive impacts on mental health and wellbeing were reported consistently. Maintaining this focus on creativity generally, as well as the teaching of creative subjects, must play a central role as schools emerge from the pandemic.

The pandemic has also shown the precariousness of the situation for creative subjects within the curriculum and the teaching of creative education including enhancing future creative employability. This is seen with: restricted creative education pathways; competing funding pressures, pitting external projects with the creative sector against other subjects and extra-curricular activities; an over-reliance on local factors which may be susceptible to change such as the resilience and commitment of senior leadership support, individual teaching staff and local creative partners; and external pressures in the sector (such as shutdowns, megatrends and broader economic challenges) impeding employer engagement, industry-led enrichment and employability activities.

## Key findings

The research has set out some of the key principles and conditions to support the wider take up of good practice in creative education and to help address variations in the delivery of creative education in future. It has drawn lessons from case studies of local initiatives and examples of good practice. A core goal therefore has been to encourage the broader development and adoption of a universal offer across schools in different parts of the country and as such to support overall enhancements in creative education in schools in future.

### Ensure sufficient funding and resources

- The research has highlighted the importance of recognising and maintaining sufficient investment in creative education over time, in a way that provides the resources to ensure a more universal offer across schools. That is not only to support access to a diverse range of creative subjects within schools but also to wider cross-curricula creative activities. The future funding of education needs to allow flexibility to tailor resources to creative needs and hence prioritise and target investments and actions to where they are needed most. As such a key priority will be reinvigorating creative 'cold spots' and tackling inequities between schools across the country.
- Sustainable funding is also important for building local capacity and capability, and the highly valued partnerships on which creative education thrives. The case studies show how trusted relationships with creative practitioners can grow over time where prolonged funding supports this, nurturing partnerships outside as well as within schools.
- More stable long-term funding builds the confidence of schools to invest wisely, where they are paying for activities themselves. Continuity in funding, and hence activities over time, enables schools to reinvest in partnerships that work where they see outcomes delivered that they know are benefitting their students.

### Supporting a consistent, universal delivery

- The research has highlighted the local institutional ingredients which are crucial to promoting and improving creative education and the broader teaching for creativity in schools. In particular, this has brought to focus the importance and active involvement of sound school governance and leadership, highly skilled and capable teaching staff and local creative partners.
- Senior leaders play a crucial role in understanding and communicating the value of creative education by developing a high-quality creative education offer, seeking out and efficiently managing resources, including encouraging teacher training and CPD, and ensuring creative education is consistently promoted, improved and delivered. Rather than placing subjects in competition, effective school leaders also recognise the gains for all subjects from cross-curricula teaching for creativity and support the conditions for this to flourish.

- High quality creative education can engage the expertise of a range of creative practitioners who support on-going creative innovation and effective delivery at a grassroots level. This will include: teachers, governors, employers, cultural partners as well as young people themselves, who can act as ambassadors, mentors, and role models. Crucially, creative education will draw broadly across the local education ecosystem and community and not just from teachers alone.
- A key partner can be employers. Appropriate employer engagement in creative education can be core to growing creative and employability skills, an interest in creative enterprise and careers and hence the development of the future talent pipeline. Effective employer engagement has multiple dimensions involving a range of activities. These include: input to school governance; curriculum design; mentoring; project work; and/or careers and work inspiration activities. The case studies revealed that the most effective employer partnerships exist where employers are able to see and experience the tangible benefits to themselves of engaging with schools. Again, this points to the importance of building and nurturing relationships over time, so that industry partners receive feedback from participants and can review how activities are adding value to their talent pipeline in the longer term as well as the wider sector community. This can be done directly and/or through industry bodies as intermediaries (see below).
- But, the strength of the local institutional delivery structure for creative education will also depend on the strength of wider local networks, and allowing the time and space for teaching staff and wider creative practitioners to work together. The case studies have shown that connections to the wider community are essential to pass on new ideas and ways of working and to develop and share creative education approaches that can build on and enhance existing and established models. One such example that networks facilitated, identified by the research, concerned the take up and use of technology during the pandemic. As local institutional infrastructures are strengthened and rebuilt through the Government's Plan for Growth, and place-based strategies and programmes are repurposed, this will provide an opportunity to enhance industry engagement and better co-ordinate partnerships across networks.

## **Tackle disadvantage and grow opportunities for all**

- The research has also stressed the importance of tackling inequities and moving towards a universal offer that provides good quality creative education for all, no matter where a young person is located in the country and/or their background. The case studies from the research by focusing on good practice, have highlighted the power of a strong approach to creative education in reaching those that need most support. That is, those who are experiencing societal disadvantage by: their economic backgrounds; their postcode; and/or because of individual circumstances such as additional educational needs.
- The research has revealed that, by involving local creative practitioners in creative education, this enables young people to recognise themselves in the workforce and supports them to springboard to a range of work opportunities in future.

- Delivering projects and working with schools means employers can work with a diverse cohort of young people and under-represented groups that will experience and may go on to work in the creative industries bringing their diverse perspectives and experiences. The wider value of creative education needs to be communicated to these diverse groups to secure their engagement such as greater personal expression, building confidence and encouraging an interest in learning.
- It is important that young people can 'see themselves' in (young) role models from their local area, busting the London-centric myth of creative industries.
- With sustainable funding supporting and growing such activities more universally across the country, these kinds of developments can encourage greater diversification of the workforce and contribute to the Government's Levelling Up agenda.

In thinking about how good practices can be scaled up and more widely adopted in future, in the context of a post COVID-19 recovery, it is important to consider how to optimise future opportunities and overcome the challenges and threats. With the impacts of the recent pandemic, exacerbating long-running economic uncertainties due the effects of megatrends, the 2008 financial crisis and Brexit, there have been considerable financial pressures and capacity constraints in the education and skills system. Future success will depend on sustained and collaborative efforts of a range of partners, including national and local government, educators, industry and sector bodies and employers, pooling their expertise and resources to customise local creative education solutions to local needs. By working together different partners can create a greater sum of parts to tackle current inequities in delivery and to establish the conditions for a more universal creative education offer, where the fuller benefits are acknowledged, protected and realised for all. The report concludes by considering the different roles that varying partners might play.

The Government generally, and the **Department for Education** more specifically, should recognise the value of creative subjects and teaching for creativity in enhancing young people's future employability and the applicability to the wider skills agenda. This research has specifically focussed on secondary schools, but the work is applicable to apprenticeships, higher education, adult skills and lifelong upskilling. Future policy developments should consider investment to grow creative education throughout the education and skills system. Alongside this should be a commitment to support a strong local institutional infrastructure to deliver a creative education. Crucially, this must start with getting the conditions right in schools.

In the context of further moves to devolution and a greater emphasis on place-based strategies and programmes including Levelling Up, the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Education and Skills Funds, it will be important to ensure the right balance of investment is achieved overall to support this long-term creative education goal, and to strengthen local creative activities, partnerships and projects. The case studies for this research have shown that there is room for much local innovation and improvement. Despite unexpected disruptions such as the pandemic, new thinking and ways of operating have been ignited and these should be built upon and practice shared. Indeed, with the likely extensions in the devolution of powers and funding to cities and counties, there are significant future opportunities to strengthen local partnerships and activities to reinvigorate creative sector 'cold spot' areas and to mitigate the impact of societal disadvantage.

**Heads and teaching associations** nationally should advocate for a creative education including teaching for creativity recognising the ways in which a creative education can enhance the whole curriculum and support learning across subjects. A core focus must include blending teaching and learning methods, and bringing to life subjects, especially through projects that include multi-disciplinary solutions such as Arts in STEM activities (STEAM). These cross-curricular activities and the promotion of STEAM will provide benefits for employability mirroring the increasing fusion of technology and skills in the labour market. Taking creative subjects and supporting the conditions for the wider teaching for creativity develops specific technical skills and a wide range of employability skills as well as motivating learners to continue in education – creative or not. The teaching community has a key role to convey such messages and support improvements in local action.

**Professional creative sector bodies and associations** in different sub-sectors of the creative industries from screen, to publishing, and craft have a vital role to support improvements in access to and the quality of the creative education offer. This could include support for partnerships between sector organisations and schools and networking, especially with regard to industry and employer engagement. In the context of a post-pandemic recovery they can play an ever more vital role supporting schools to ensure that their resources are high quality, usable and are meeting the needs of young people in Key Stages 3 and 4. Industry bodies can act as further vital brokers encouraging their members by making it easy, attractive and beneficial to be involved with schools and creative education.

Specific creative industry bodies can pool resources in local areas where creative industries are a sector priority and work with Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs). This may involve economic and skills planning to make the case for local engagement between schools and employers, to publicise projects for other less networked schools and employers. It may be helpful to use the findings and case studies from this report, alongside wider research, to champion the creative industries in local areas and the excellent employment opportunities they offer for young people having studied creative subjects at school.

As the Government continues to progress its reforms of the education and skills system it will be important to keep such developments under review. This will help to support local creative enterprises to make use of new skills and employment schemes and programmes as they are developed and come on board such as Kickstart and Bootcamps and wider initiatives for critical skills in technical areas at levels 3 to 5. Such developments will be vital to provide young people with broader pathways to jobs in the creative sector.

**The careers guidance sector** including The Careers & Enterprise Company and its national network of schools should work to include creative sector representatives as cornerstone employers and enterprise advisers. Professional careers adviser bodies such as the Career Development Institute (CDI), need to highlight the value of creative industries and the myriad of job opportunities in the creative sector. The Careers & Enterprise Company should continue to expand on the work they are doing with the creative sector such as the Creative Careers Programme.

**The Arts Council England Bridge Network and Creativity Collaboratives** networks should continue to act as catalysts and convenors working with schools looking to develop creative capabilities for all children and young people.<sup>3</sup> They should amplify the good practice that is already in place. This will be important to increase schools' creative and cultural networks and access high quality industry expertise, practitioners and resources. Schools can be supported to be able to identify high quality programmes and networks.

## 1

# Introduction and approach

This report presents the final findings of the research project commissioned by the Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre (PEC, a research consortium led by Nesta and funded from the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund) and the Arts Council England (ACE). The work originates from the Creative Industries Council (CIC) skills and education working group (in particular the schools' task and finish group. This task and finish group was set up to develop and support specific, evidence-based proposals for action which promote and improve creative education in schools.

## 1.1 About the research

Creative industries and creativity are of vital importance to the health and the wealth of the UK. Creative skills are a foundation stone for the post-pandemic economic recovery, and schools play a key role in nurturing creative thinking, developing creative and employability skills and highlighting pathways to creative industries.

It is timely, as the UK works to recover and rebuild from the COVID-19 pandemic, to focus on school-based creative education – teaching for creativity but also the teaching of creative subjects including art and design, design and technology, dance, drama, media, film and TV studies, music, and performance and expressive arts. In particular, there is a need to consider: how teaching challenges (including those brought about by the pandemic) have been overcome; where practice works well; where lessons can be learned for broader applicability; and crucially how creative education can support and add value to the Government's economic and social policies, especially by enhancing young people's creative skills and employability.

**The research specifically focuses on:**

- Understanding how creative education is changing to meet the future skills requirements of the creative industries.
- Responses and learning from the pandemic for creative education.
- Supporting improvements to creative education in future through good practice.

This research brings together existing literature and research evidence with new insights into good practice in teaching for creativity to understand the importance of, and strengthen the effectiveness of, creative education offered to young people. This triangulated method unlocks the value of creative education for careers for the future. It looks at the current context, and considers ways to protect and improve creative education moving forward as the UK responds to the challenges emerging from the global COVID-19 pandemic.

By using the Teacher Tapp<sup>4</sup> panel of over 7,000 teachers, pertinent and timely questions were asked of a broad cross-section of teachers to get a unique insight into how the pandemic has affected teaching. In particular, the research was able to assess recent challenges from the pandemic, exploring, for example, perceptions of whether students have fallen behind and how teachers have changed how they work with employers and local partners within the community.

The case studies provided up-to-date examples of creative education in practice, building on the existing evidence base. The detailed investigation of targeted case studies focused in particular on local creative education projects in secondary schools, or delivered for secondary school pupils if the projects were external to a school. The case studies were selected to reflect a range of creative subjects and understand broader approaches to the teaching of creative education and the means to instil creative thinking and capabilities. Their aim was to enable a more thorough investigation of the nature of creative activities locally, and to understand their role in inspiring teaching for creativity and creative subjects to advance the future employability of young people and their interest in creative careers whilst at school. There was also an opportunity to reflect on such developments in the context of COVID-19; not least in terms of understanding its effects on delivery challenges, access to creative subjects and an appreciation of the wider role of creativity in areas such as mental health and wellbeing.

### Details of the case study projects

Project/School name	Description
<b>Highdown School and Sixth Form Centre – Discover! Creative Careers Programme</b>	Offers a full suite of resources to enable schools to deliver their careers programme and meet the Gatsby benchmarks – work experience, speakers for schools, working with enterprise advisers
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<b>Video Games Ambassadors</b>	A UK wide network of games industry staff that provide careers talks, masterclasses, and game jams to inspire students into a career in the games industry.



## 1.2 Understanding the research context

### 1.2.1 The importance of the creative industries and creativity to the economy and recovery

The creative industries<sup>5</sup> are acknowledged as a priority in the Government's 12-month Plan for Growth (HM Treasury, 2021) and key to the UK's productivity and global success (Bazalgette, 2017). As a priority they are also important to Government's policy objectives: Levelling Up and tackling geographic disparities, giving individuals the skills to succeed, pursue lifelong learning, and innovate.

The creative industries are indeed substantial and growing and the digital and creative industries are deemed amongst the country's strongest sectors and a 'major success story for the UK'. They are the largest in Europe and, national statistics from the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS, 2021) have highlighted their significance to the UK economy. Indeed, the creative industries contributed £115.9 billion to the UK economy, prior to the global pandemic, which was greater than the automotive, aerospace, life sciences and oil and gas industries combined. They employed over two million people and they exported £36 billion in services across the world. Furthermore, according to the Creative Industries Federation (CIF 2021,<sup>6</sup> see also Jain and Standen-Jewell, 2021) this has amounted to one in eight creative businesses. Creative industries have been one of the fastest-growing parts of the UK economy, with employment growing more than three times faster than the rate for the UK economy as a whole. With creative occupations being highly resistant to automation, it is predicted that these jobs will continue to grow and the industry will employ a further 1m people within the next ten years (CIF,2021).

The creative industries and those in creative occupations have a broad reach and they are important enablers to a much wider range of sectors. Indeed, creativity is recognised as a key driver of innovation, growth and greater productivity through developing ideas and technologies. The Independent Review of the Creative Industries (Bazalgette, 2017) reports:

**'The skills and business models of this sector and of the wider creative economy are those which many experts judge to be of increasing importance: blended technical and creative skills, collaborative interdisciplinary working, entrepreneurialism and enterprise' (p4).**

The Government's Innovation Strategy (BEIS, 2021a) also highlights how the digital and creative sectors are 'instrumental elements of the innovation system' and that the UK has world-leading innovators in the creative industries.

The skills and business models the creative industries and creative professionals can bring will be increasingly important to the future world of work as the UK economy responds to the on-going societal influences of globalisation, climate change and the need for clean growth, an aging society, and technological change including Artificial Intelligence, 'big data' analytics and digitalisation of production (BEIS, 2021b). They will also be critical in responding to more recent disruptors – to the UK's exit from the European Union and effects of the global COVID-19 pandemic. These have affected economic buoyancy (with falling economic activity and a sharp rise in unemployment particularly among young people) and placed restrictions on labour mobility.

These disruptors and trends are impacting on skills requirements across and within occupations and the availability of skills in the labour market: requiring upskilling and (continual) reskilling, impacting on individual behaviours and expectations, and organisational ways of working. They are leading to: increasing flexibility in work modes and work-places with many individuals working virtually/remotely and offices used as hubs for collaboration, innovation and creativity (WEF, 2020); growing demands for soft skills, such as creativity and critical thinking and skills that machines cannot yet replicate (Deloitte, 2019; WEF, 2020<sup>7</sup>); an expansion in the digitisation of work processes (WEF, 2020) and increasing use of digital tools and experimentation with new technologies; and rising demands for more meaningful careers, especially from young workers who seek opportunities for learning, personal and professional growth, and a sense of purpose (Benson et al, 2018; Achor et al, 2018). These are aspects where the creative industries already have significant experience and often lead the way. Indeed, the Independent Review (Bazalgette, 2017) notes how the high levels of self-employment and micro-businesses in the creative industries leads to an individual-centric, project-based working pattern that is an important feature of the modern workforce.

The industry and its key stakeholders including the PEC, the ACE and the CIC are working closely with Government to help shape the policy agenda and to exploit opportunities for customising policies to meet sector needs. This is evident in a range of policy developments such as the new sector visions for priority sectors that the Government is working on with partners. More specifically, in such a context, there is an important opportunity to optimise reforms within education and skills to ensure they better meet the needs of the creative industries in future as one of these priority sectors.

### **1.2.2 Importance of creative education in schools**

Schools are one vital part of the education and training system that equips individuals early in their lives with the learning habits and baseline skills they require to lead fulfilling lives, and succeed in an increasingly dynamic future labour market. Schools in particular play a key role in exposing young people to creative subjects, to creative pedagogy, and to creative employers and initiatives. Indeed, research suggests schools have a key contribution to make developing the creative and entrepreneurial skills that are important to creative workers, future innovators and also resilient workers for the future workplace (DCMS, 2006). Schools and teachers can help inform and excite young people and their parents about careers in the creative industries, and thus are important to broaden and deepen the talent pipeline (Bazalgette, 2017). However, schools can go further. The Roberts Review (2006) noted the importance of giving young people creative experience to develop personal identity, develop confidence and understand and prepare for the 21st Century (Roberts, 2006).

Schools have been the focus for creative education investment and policy. During the early part of the millennium schools saw significant funding from DfE and DCMS for creative provision and creative learning resulting from the Roberts Review (2006). This funding sought to nurture creative talent, embed creativity and provide access to creative experience for all young people, and was grounded in the belief in the importance of creativity. For example, the Creative Partnerships Scheme introduced in 2002, running to 2011,<sup>8</sup> funded creative professionals to go into schools and work with teachers and students, and provided guidance on creativity in relation to wider school improvement.

The Roberts Review (2006) had identified a rich array of creativity work in schools but found that it was not sufficiently recognised and supported by official creative programmes, projects and agencies. As a result, the Review called for the establishment of a coherent creativity offer, stronger connections between creativity work and education and further development of creativity in its own right. This was seen as crucial to support economic growth and better outcomes for young people in terms of their skills, knowledge and employment.

**Further policies, initiatives and reports developed, including:**

- Get It, the power of Cultural Learning in 2009.
- The setting up of the Cultural Learning Alliance, Cultural Education in England in 2012.
- 2011 the Arts Council England Bridge network to link schools and cultural organisations in support of the cultural lives of young people.
- The Warwick Commission: Enriching Britain: Culture, Creativity and Growth in 2015.
- Local cultural education partnerships established by Arts Council England in 2015 as place- based partnerships in support of better outcomes for children and young people.
- The Durham Commission on Creativity and Education (2017 to present).

However, the Cultural Learning Alliance (CLA, 2019) notes how after 2010, with the change in Government, investment in creative education reduced.

Participation in creative subjects in schools has been declining, as have the number of arts teachers and the number of hours the creative arts are taught. At the same time the numbers of children in English secondary schools have increased. Also, beyond school, cuts in local authority budgets have impacted upon informal programmes for young people (CLA, 2020a, 2020b; CLA, 2017; CIF, 2015). Analysis by the CLA (2020b) points to a 37 per cent reduction in the number of arts GCSE entries 2010 to 2020, and numbers levelling out to a 'new normal' from 2020, where 'fewer arts GCSEs are studied in English schools than a decade ago' (CLA, 2020b).

Further analysis of teaching shows the past six years have seen a fall, and then a recovery, in the teacher headcounts, and hours taught for Years 7 to 13 in England in creative subjects – although not yet reaching levels found in 2015/16 (the data and narrative for participation is included in the accompanying Technical Report). The analysis also shows that aggregate figures hide variation within creative subjects. Whilst the number of hours taught and teacher headcounts in Design and Technology and Media Studies have continued to fall over this period, the numbers of Drama and Music teachers are recovering and the numbers of Art and Design teachers are now higher than found in 2015/16. Although the CLA report that the rise in Art and Design teaching (numbers and hours) could suggest that these teachers are increasingly being asked to deliver Design and Technology courses. This was also reported by National Society for Education in Art and Design (NSEAD), noting how some schools had attempted to merge art and design with Design and Technology (NSEAD,2019).

Analysis of attainment in creative subjects also shows how Design and Technology does not fare well, with much lower proportions of entrants achieving a good pass (at least Grade 4) than found for all other creative subjects and when compared to the total across all subjects.

## 2

# Creative and cultural education

This chapter draws from the review of literature, case study findings and teachers' views to provide an understanding of how secondary schools are providing young people with the capabilities for the creative economy and developing skills for creative industries and beyond. It also shows how they are adjusting to meet the changing needs and skills requirements of the creative industries.

## 2.1 Curriculum and teaching

In the 2000's there appeared to be shared recognition of the importance of creative and cultural provision in education, and schools saw investment and policy focus on creative subjects in and outside of schools as well as broader cross-curricular creative activities. However, in recent years, there have been changes to education policy and school budgets which have affected curriculum and teaching.

Creative subjects are those which provide technical skills and capabilities for working in the creative industries, but also provide valuable skills for other sectors. The National Curriculum in England sets out the programmes of study for all local authority-maintained schools, and indicates what subjects should be taught. As described by NASUWT (2017), while the National Curriculum states that it will help young people engender an appreciation of human creativity, it does not specify how this should be done.

The National Curriculum has a particular perspective on creative subjects. Indeed, the NSEAD refer to 'the slimmed down art and design national curriculum' (NSEAD, 2019). The National Curriculum sets out that in Key Stages 1-3 the core subjects of English, Maths and Science are supplemented with foundation subjects which include some creative subjects: art and design, design and technology (D&T) and music. Further, the curriculum guidance for art and design programmes notes that:

'A high-quality art and design education should engage, inspire and challenge pupils, equipping them with the knowledge and skills to experiment, invent and create their own works of art, craft and design. As pupils progress, they should be able to think critically and develop a more rigorous understanding of art and design. They should also know how art and design both reflect and shape our history, and contribute to the culture, creativity and wealth of our nation.'<sup>9</sup>

At Key Stage 4, alongside core and foundation subjects, young people are also able to take at least one subject from creative areas – which is a slightly broader set including art and design, music, drama, dance, and media arts – as well as D&T, humanities or modern foreign languages. The research undertaken by BeatFreeks (2021) suggests that beyond Key Stage 4, 16-18 year olds would like opportunities to study a wider range of creative subjects, and that their school's curriculum could be expanded.

The limited coverage of creative areas in some schools was reflected in interviews with teachers. Teachers in the case studies described how at Key Stage 3 students have one hour a week for Art/design rotating different subject areas across the year – for example Drama and Dance. If students' progress to GCSE, the hours per week or fortnight increase.

In addition to creative subjects in the curriculum, some schools offer extra-curricular creative clubs. Extra-curricular clubs either arranged by schools or as external projects such as the Saturday Clubs, can be a valuable addition to the standard curriculum and offer access to young people who may otherwise have limited access. However, the teachers and creative professionals interviewed reported how within school creative subjects are often viewed to be 'in competition' with the core or mandatory subjects, and outside of school they are competing with other after-school activities such as sports.

Government education policy allows for academisation, and academies do not have to follow the National Curriculum. They are required to teach a broad and balanced curriculum which must include English, Maths, Science and Religious Education, but there is no specification about creative subjects. Alongside this there is a shift in emphasis to the English Baccalaureate (EBacc<sup>10</sup>) at Key Stage 4 and the Government ambition that by 2025 90 per cent of young people will study the Ebacc set of subjects. This does not currently feature creative subjects. In a survey of their members conducted in 2014, NSEAD found the majority reported the numbers of students opting to study GCSE art, craft and design at their school/college had decreased, as had the total number of teaching hours or staffing in their department. They attribute this to the impact of the EBacc policy (NSEAD, 2014). The emphasis in policy and funding across education focused on Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects and does not fully recognise the wider value of creativity and cultural activities. There are therefore concerns that creative subjects and creativity in education are no longer prioritised and have been devalued (Carey, Florisson & Giles, 2019; Cramman et al, 2021).

There also appears to be patchy access to creative education provision both in and out of school across the country driven by unequal and short-term funding. The Cultural Learning Alliance (CLA) has discussed ways in which creative education is delivered, reporting on the prevalence of 'hubs' as a local delivery system for cultural learning (2019). They report that the evaluations of all these initiatives make clear that

**'This local delivery approach can work, but that they are difficult to sustain without long-term financial investment and clear policy or delivery structures to support them.'** (CLA, 2019).

Addressing this landscape of patchy provision, through stronger policy commitments to a universal core offer for young people and targeting investment and actions in 'cold spots', are ways in which the CLA believes the local delivery system could be improved in future (CLA, 2019).

It is important to note that creative education can apply to a much wider range of subjects than creative subjects alone. Indeed, schools can use creativity<sup>11</sup> in the teaching of all subjects, can work to develop creativity across disciplines, and can explicitly weave the teaching for creativity into many other subjects. A recent study of young people (BeatFreaks, 2021) found a strong desire for cross-curricula activities and for creativity to be incorporated into wider subjects, with suggestions on how this can be done. Suggestions included, focusing on art history in history, making visual interpretations of books, poems or plays in English, and including scientific art and photography in science. The young people also suggested training teachers to teach for creativity. The importance of teachers is echoed in the work of the Durham Commission which was convened to look at the role of creativity and creative thinking in the education system. The Commission concluded that creativity can be developed with the application of teaching for creativity pedagogy, and that developing creativity not only benefits individual wellbeing but also supports adaptability to the changing demands of work and lives (Durham Commission, 2019, 2020 and 2021).

## 2.2 Social impacts of creative education

Creative education has a number of positive impacts in addition to acquiring creative skills and qualifications or certificates, and studying creative subjects offers development to every student, whatever their particular interest or future choice of career (CLA, 2017).

The CLA reports that participation in creative subjects can: 'improve young people's cognitive abilities by between 16 per cent and 19 per cent'; raise attainment across all subject areas; and develop numeracy and literacy skills (CLA, 2017). The NSEAD, in their advocacy work, highlight how art, craft and design helps with personal expression and visual literacy, inclusion and diversity, and building confidence, promoting enjoyment and engagement at school.<sup>12</sup> Further research asserts that through engaging with creative subjects young people gain resilience and work ethics, can become more engaged in school (O'Hanlon et al, 2020), and can learn to see different viewpoints and to debate ideas (The University of Nottingham, 2018).

Given the impacts described above, the wider value of creative education needs to be disseminated to young people and their parents. Schools in the case studies talked to the importance of communicating about creative education to parents and their local communities, and described how they approached this. This could be publicising opportunities and events on school social media or celebrating the outcomes of creative endeavours. For some of the case study projects like TICE and the Saturday Club, this could include a final showcase event at the school or in the local community, where families, local employers and professionals can be invited.



'It's not only trying to get students to see what opportunities are out there for them that perhaps they don't see in their area, but also parental engagement as well and see that actually the Arts and creativity are a really valuable thing to invest in too'

Schools and teachers also gain from creative education. They can develop strong and productive relationships with local communities and cultural institutions which in turn can enable high quality teaching for creativity in schools. Teachers undertaking continuing professional development (CPD) with industry professionals gain different perspectives, engage in theory and practice for themselves (Thompson, 2019). Interviewees from the sector often articulate their role in educating teachers.

Teachers taking part in cross-curricula projects can learn from colleagues in other subjects. In the Camden STEAM case study, art teachers worked alongside local employers, student interns as well as maths and science teachers to co-design modules and share resources. This collaboration across school departments continued after the project to the benefit of teachers and students.

The social impacts of creative education are discussed across the research evidence, often looking at the positive impact on mental health and wellbeing. The BeatFreaks report of their Artsmark Arts Education Survey (2021) shows that almost all of the 16-18 year old respondents thought that a creative education including arts subjects had a positive impact on mental health and wellbeing (92.9 per cent). Similarly, case studies from school projects involving the Royal Shakespeare Company, Tate, and The University of Nottingham showed that students talked about the benefits of creative education to their wellbeing. Nearly half (45 per cent) of secondary students surveyed for the research reported that engagement in creative subjects helps them relax and reduces stress (The University of Nottingham, 2018). The MARCH mental health network provided evidence of the benefits of participating in creative areas more broadly – with active engagement in creative activities being associated with reduced rates of depression in older adults, art boxes improving confidence and wellbeing, and the potential for promoting mental health awareness on social media through artists using mental health art hashtags (Crafts Council, 2021).

## 2.3 Employability, skills and the labour market

### 2.3.1 Skills development through project work

Creative subjects have high levels of engagement with the world of work; and the literature and case studies provide many examples of employer/professional engagement with schools. This takes place through a range of activities, but one significant mechanism is through a range of project work. These can often be cross-curricular.

**Examples include:**

- Work with museums and galleries such as the Ashmolean Museum.
- Resources for film and media made available by Careers in Film.
- Local Music, Dance and Performance projects often in conjunction with theatres and theatre companies, including the Royal Shakespeare Company.
- Collaborations such as residencies with local artists.
- The Royal Society for Biology has an annual art competition for specimen drawing, highlighting the link between art and science.
- The National Saturday Clubs offering opportunities for 13-16 year olds to learn new skills and discover talents in Art & Design, Fashion & Business, Film & Media, Science & Engineering and Writing & Talking.

Project work was felt to be particularly beneficial. Interviewees in the case studies reported that young people taking part in external projects with industry professionals were found to develop stronger technical and communication skills from being given professional briefs. Additionally, as external projects can be more responsive to changing trends, employer needs and skills requirements, and far more quickly than the national curriculum can, this means young people can be provided with up-to-date knowledge and skills.

*'We try and stay away from the school curriculum completely and be industry specific. Universities see portfolios that are all the same, so the [TICE] material stands out and is different every year.'*

Founder, TICE

Creative education projects can also support careers work in schools. External projects can show the scope of the creative industries and the variety of ways to be creative or to work in the sector. Innovative projects coupled with modern curricula can also show young people the link with other sectors and the importance of the concept of 'STEAM' rather than STEM. Projects such as Camden STEAM show young people the connections between scientific and creative subjects in school and in creative and technology industries. The fusing of disciplines is able to replicate and learn from and respond to the fusion of skillsets, knowledge and technological applications in the workplace.

A view to the labour market is of increasing importance to schools since the implementation of the Gatsby Benchmarks.<sup>13</sup> These set out expectations for schools to meet in order to provide good career guidance, and three of these benchmarks relate to employment pathways:

- Linking curriculum learning to careers.
- Encounters with employers and employees and
- Experiences of workplaces.<sup>14</sup>

The teachers interviewed for this research were generally well-engaged with their schools' careers work and in particular welcomed the projects with industry professionals as a way of increasing their own knowledge about the creative industries sector, labour market and jobs. There was little sense that outside of these local initiatives they are able to keep up with labour market developments and career changes across the creative sector more generally, although there were some examples of staff who could speak to the links between industry and the curriculum.

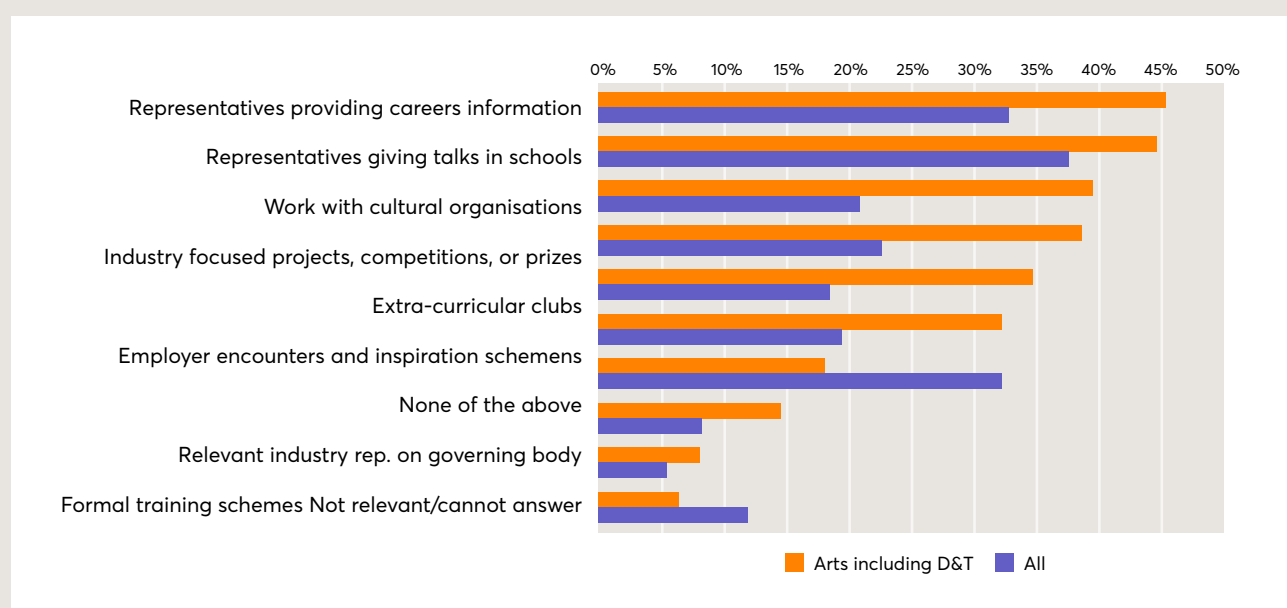
The Creative Careers Programme (CCP) is a collaborative initiative delivered by the CIF working with sector bodies such as Creative & Cultural Skills and ScreenSkills. The initiative also has the support from Speakers 4 Schools and the Careers & Enterprise Company. The programme aims to 'inform and inspire' young people about careers in the creative industries and the skills and qualifications needed for entry and success, so that careers in the creative economy become more accessible to all. These may be careers that young people have never heard of. The programme provides practical activities and resources such as Discover! Creative Careers, Speakers in Schools, work experience weeks, employer-led immersive events, and development of sector specific apprenticeship standards for creative occupations. It involves industry professionals, employers, sector bodies, teachers, parents and guardians, and careers professionals. It was launched in 2019 with funding and support from the DCMS and the CIC, and is also supported by creative industry employers. By October last year (2020) it enabled more than 113,000 young people to engage directly with employers in the creative industries, supported more than 1,500 state schools to meet Gatsby Benchmarks in providing high quality careers information, advice and guidance to their students, and received input (time, resource, expertise) from more than 1,000 creative sector employers.<sup>15</sup>

The good practice examples identified in this research highlight how creative education projects with industry professionals can show the education and career paths available to those taking creative subjects by including speakers from further and higher education. New creative work that is produced through projects can contribute to portfolios which are then used for entry into higher level creative courses or for employment, directly linking their work with future career opportunities. Projects provide live encounters with employers and employees who provide information about their industry or set project briefs. They can also include workshops and visits to studios and workplaces.

### 2.3.2 Employer engagement

Working with employers is not unusual (although more challenging during the pandemic, see below) but the research found creative subjects lead the way and engage with employers in more ways than other subjects. When surveyed as part of this research, two-thirds of secondary teachers reported that they work with employers or businesses. The most common way that they did this was via employer/business representatives giving talks in school. However, in almost all categories, Creative subject teachers (defined broadly and includes arts, design and technology) were the most likely to report employer and business engagement. More than a third of Creative subject teachers reported industry representatives providing careers information or giving talks in schools, working with cultural organisations, engaging in industry focused projects, competitions or prizes, involvement in extra-curricular clubs, inspiration schemes and providing employer encounters. Given the importance of project work, it was noticeable that Creative subject teachers were almost twice as likely than all teachers (regardless of subject taught) to offer these. Teachers from English departments were the second highest reporters of working with cultural organisations (this includes experiences and lessons with organisations involved with Theatre, Music, Dance, Literature, or Curation), and other subjects (which included PE) were the second highest reporters of extra-curricular clubs.

Figure 3: Teacher Tapp survey: work with employers or businesses



Source: IES analysis of Teacher Tapp survey, July 2021.

The teachers that took part in the case study research also provided insights into how they worked with employers on projects. Reflecting the findings of the survey, they reported examples of creative projects that are enterprise, commercial or career orientated. These projects aim to build knowledge, develop skills for entrepreneurship, offer industry insights and mentoring, and develop skills for employment through young people responding to briefs as they would in a professional capacity. Additionally, projects give young people the opportunity to start to develop their professional networks and social capital. Project staff and professionals can answer questions about what creative industries look like especially at entry level (using early career professionals as mentors and role models), breaking down any misconceptions about what it can be like to work in a creative job. Young people get a chance to see how skills taught in creative subjects at school connect to a variety of employment opportunities.

Young people often get the chance to showcase their work at the end of such projects. Indeed, by taking part in a final show, with senior school leaders, industry professionals, other employers, family and friends a wide range of stakeholders are able to see and help them reflect on the results of their work, and their learning. By taking on additional project work and by inviting families to such showcases, young people and their families can see how the creative capabilities they have developed can move beyond a hobby, and these skills can be used for jobs.

Furthermore, employers and professionals get a chance to influence the skills development of the future talent pipeline. As one case study employer described, young people learn sophisticated skills that are industry specific but also can be utilised across many different sectors including science.

### **2.3.3 Employability skills**

As noted earlier, the world of work is changing in response to societal movements and disruptions and the skills needed across the labour market are also changing and will continue to change. The Durham Commission Report (2019) highlights that the future of the job market is likely to include fewer 'jobs for life,' with more adaptable skillsets required for future employment as more people adopt more portfolio careers. A recent report for the PEC calls for a greater understanding of the skills needs not only of the creative sector but the wider economy. That while other non-creative roles, especially low-skilled roles, may fall prey to automation, there is a need to understand how future megatrends will drive growing demands for transversal skills including creativity, and potentially increase the need for 'data, digital and "fusion" skills' (Carey, Florisson & Giles, 2019).

The wider literature provides further insights on the shape and form of this future requirement to which creative education needs to respond.

**For instance, CIF report (2015) highlights the development of wider skills:**

- Geometrical understanding and general observational skills from Art and Design.
- Craft skills from drawing and painting.
- Phonological skills and academic performance boosting from Music.
- Strengthened verbal skills, improved writing, oral understanding and understanding of writing, reading and language from Drama.
- Increased cognitive abilities from participation in structured arts activities.

In the broader context of labour market changes, the literature highlights the importance of studying creative subjects to developing a variety of skills that are valued in the labour market including transferable skill such as critical, creative and analytical thinking, problem solving and risk taking (NSEAD), and which results in greater employability (CLA, 2011, 'Key Research Findings: The Case for Cultural Learning' cited in Creative Industries Federation, 2015). That said, creative education is more than creative subjects as we have seen. In addition, wider research underlines the importance of more schools working to develop their students' general cultural and creative capabilities, as well as more technical creative knowledge and skills through creative education. This captures their wider employability skills that are not only needed to succeed in a future creative economy but also to respond to the changing skills needs of the broader labour market. This in turn underlines the value of reinforcing, promoting and improving creative education including a broader teaching for creativity.

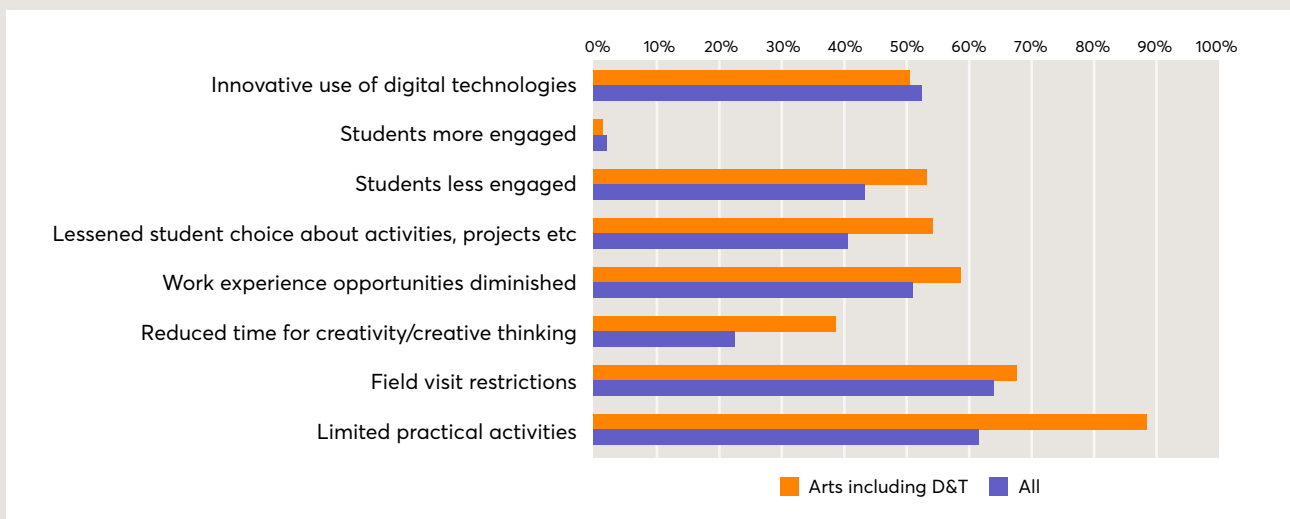
3

# Responses and learning from the pandemic

The pandemic brought huge challenges to teaching, with most teaching moving to remote digital methods as schools were forced to close during lockdowns. Creative subjects like many other subjects were adversely affected by the pandemic, particularly those that required access to physical resources only found in classrooms. Inequalities in access to virtual resources were also present, as they often were for core curriculum subjects (English, Maths, Sciences etc). Despite the challenges that the pandemic had presented, several reports have shown that schools managed to continue providing creative education and creativity in teaching and learning (Cramman, 2021). The Bridge England Network (2020) found in their creative and cultural survey of teachers that creative activities worked best for home learning compared to other subject areas during school lockdowns, with project-based approaches also ranking highly indicating that when it was possible to deliver, creative education operated well throughout the pandemic.

Teacher survey data collected in June 2021 (see the Technical Report for details) found that 95 per cent of teachers in secondary schools felt that their teaching had been affected in some way by the pandemic. This figure was notably higher among creative subject teachers (99 per cent) and lowest among English and Maths teachers (91 per cent and 88 per cent). The most commonly reported impacts among creative subject teachers were limiting practical activities (much higher than found for other subjects), restricting field visits, reducing work experience opportunities, and limiting student choices about activities – reported by more than half of all creative subject teachers.

Figure 4: Teacher Tapp survey: Pandemic effects on teaching



Source: IES analysis of Teacher Tapp survey, June 2021.



Additionally, almost twice as many creative subject teachers felt the pandemic had reduced time for creativity and/or creative thinking than reported across all subjects. The case studies with projects and professionals in creative subjects indicated that days out and trips will still continue to be difficult in the 2021/22 academic year with employers reluctant to open to groups of students or attendance at risk due to sickness absence for staff and students.

### 3.1 Schools' approaches to delivering creative education

Schools had a varied approach to teaching creative subjects during the pandemic but shared the experience of moving teaching to remote online methods during the lockdowns. The case studies highlighted how some teachers and schools found it difficult to adapt especially with staff on furlough.

Generally creative methods and projects were felt to have worked well through the change to online/virtual delivery as many interactive resources were utilised; videos, short challenges, live Q&A sessions, activities boxes and shared resources were often key elements of digital approaches to creative education. Specific subject resources were often used, such as Chrome Music Lab, Band Lab, VIP Music Sessions and Focus on Sound for music delivery, the National Theatre Archive for performing arts, and Pixlr2 and Padlet3 for visual arts (Bridge England Network, 2020). Teachers in interviews also reported how they were able to set different types of project work, that were not based around the classroom – for example creating portraits with food. However, for most teachers once they were back in their own classrooms they continued to work to the curriculum as they had before.

When considering curriculum coverage during the pandemic and school lockdowns, the case studies provided further insights of how some areas of creative education were simply unable to be delivered. In one case study example, workshops for subjects such as Design and Technology were unable to go ahead as these classes required access to materials only available on school campus sites such as metals, polymers and timbers. An inability to access resources also had an impact on some assessment-based work as teaching staff found it challenging to differentiate between grades as many students were restricted to basic materials available at home. This was particularly true for creative subjects utilising multiple mediums such as Art. Lockdown also affected other subjects such as Photography as students had limited access to the physical world to take photos for portfolios and other forms of assessment. Teachers in the case studies reported that they often attempted to set tasks around resources that would be readily available in most homes such as biro drawings, photo-editing on phones and using YouTube to create sharable content. However, despite conscious planning for accessibility these opportunities were not always available for some students.

The literature provided further insights of how the availability of subjects differed depending on the education level and the type of educational setting. Ofsted reported that most secondary schools were teaching all subjects and so were 'many' primary schools (CLA, 2020d). However, with the shift to remote online methods, many new as well as existing challenges were presented for creative subjects. Restrictions were often reported in the literature around full provision for pupils in Key Stage 3, particularly around Design and

Technology and Music. This was also true for the teaching of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provision settings. It was reported by school leaders that they could not use external guest speakers, theatre or dance groups and that residential trips could not be provided to enrich the curriculum (Cultural Learning Alliance, 2020d). This echoes findings from the teacher survey noted above. The survey by the Bridge England Network (2020) in July 2020 found that these off-site visits and visitors into schools were not expected to return to normal until the spring term of 2021 at the earliest, largely due to schools being nervous of having external visitors on site (Arts Council England, 2020 cited in Cramman, 2021).

The teacher survey found some positives for teaching through the pandemic including innovative use of digital technologies across subjects. The research literature has identified examples of successful practice during the pandemic. The table below provides a summary of how education was delivered in person alongside an equivalent when education was delivered remotely.

**Table 1: Features of high quality creative education during the pandemic**

Remote learning and teaching	In person teaching
Live online lessons, with time for cameras off for working and camera on for presenting and sharing work	Access to classrooms and equipment (enough to overcome the barriers to sharing resources between classes)
Extended project work	Enabling off-site visits and in school visits from industry professionals
Quizzes and challenges	Making use of the range of virtual lessons and resources that have been developed during the pandemic
Use of digital tools and virtual learning environments in a way that minimises disadvantage (ie can use smartphone)	Aligning new practices with development in further and higher education, and the creative industries
Provision of activity boxes or physical supplies to students at home as well as digital equipment where possible	Being prepared for the possibility of future lockdowns and also the potential for 'breaking' of 'bubbles'
Activities organised in collaboration with students	Intra-curricula activities that can develop soft skills, confidence and creative thinking instead of relying on extra curricula activities which may not be able to return in the same form
Access to authentic voices and experiences – locally and nationally	Tangible outcomes for partnerships with industry professionals and arts organisations

Summarised from: Cramman et al, 2021, Access Art, 2020, BeatFreaks, 2020, Bridge England Network, 2020, Cultural Learning Alliance, 2020

While teachers expressed concerns around a lack of physical and digital resources for disadvantaged students during the lockdowns, these concerns did not disappear when education delivery returned to the classroom due to classes having to operate in 'bubbles.' This meant resources could often not be shared outside of bubbles or classes due to hygiene concerns as schools attempted to abide by guidelines, including that equipment used in sports, art and science, should be cleaned frequently, meticulously or rotated to be left unused and out of reach for a period of 48 hours (CLA, 2020f). Teachers in the case studies reported that the impact of these guidelines meant schools often did not have sufficient resources to rotate equipment, and this led to many classes not being able to go ahead as planned or arts classes not taking place in art classrooms. The research literature highlighted how concerns around bubbles were principal issues for Key Stage 3 delivery, with staff citing a lack of access to specialist creative spaces and limitations on working materials and the types of activities that could be undertaken (Bridge England Network, 2020).

Alongside the restricted access to physical resources, teachers reported challenges specifically in moving to online education delivery, feeling they lacked information on best practices, on what were suitable (quality) online resources, and general guidance about online delivery, and wanted more support in moving to a digital approach. Online activity also presented additional safeguarding challenges alongside technological challenges for staff and students alike. Schools reported not having enough time or expertise to support online education activities fully (Arts Council England, 2020 in Cramman et al, 2021). The challenges around technology were particularly pertinent among secondary school teachers, as they identified training in digital skills as their top training need (Bridge England Network, 2020).

## 3.2 Impacts of the pandemic on students

The pandemic crisis itself has affected young people and their families, and it has also affected their schooling – with closure of schools, cancellation of exams and disrupting transitions and normal social interactions (Cramman et al, 2021, BeatFreeks, 2020). Creative subject teachers in the case studies noted how each student reacted differently to the pandemic and changes to education delivery and how they as teachers still felt like they were 'picking up the pieces'.

The teacher survey noted above found that more than 40 per cent of secondary school teachers across all subjects felt their students were less engaged as result of the pandemic, and this increased to over 50 per cent of creative subject teachers. An earlier survey of teachers (from a prior Teacher Tapp survey) in all phases and subjects undertaken in March 2021 (see the Technical Report) explored teachers' perceptions on the proportion of students that have fallen behind due to missed learning over the last year (during lockdowns). Across all responding teachers (more than 9,000), 98 per cent reported that at least some of their students had fallen behind due to missed learning over the past year. Close to half (46 per cent) reported that at least half of their students had fallen behind with five per cent reporting that all their students had fallen behind. The proportions were marginally higher among creative subject teachers, alongside Languages, with 48 per cent of both of these groups of teachers reporting that half of their students had fallen behind due to missed learning.

These findings echo those of a year ago. Sharp et al. found that in July 2020, nearly all teachers (98 per cent) estimated that their pupils were further behind than in normal circumstances with an average of three months learning to catch up on. Eivers et al (2020, cited in Cramman 2021) reported that almost half of exam-year students in years 11 and 13 did not receive remote learning tasks from their schools between March-July 2020. It was therefore expected that Key Stage 3 pupils would need to have gaps in English and Mathematics addressed, and Key Stage 4 pupils would need far more intensive catch-up support (Sharp et al, 2020; Eivers et al, 2020 cited in Cramman, 2021), with Sharp et al (2020) going as far as to suggest that Year 11 students may need to discontinue certain subjects to give more time to other subjects.

However, the interviews with teachers in the case studies revealed that creative work became a lifeline for some students during lockdown, largely due to academic pressures in core academic subjects. Creative work offered a change of pace and scenery. Teachers also agreed on the importance of creative education for all students, whilst one creative approach does not fit everyone, the range of forms that creativity can be expressed in make it incredibly valuable across the curriculum.

### 3.3 Social and community impacts of creative education during the pandemic

The pandemic has revealed the importance of creative education both for individual and societal wellbeing and for positive mental health. It has been recommended that creative subjects and activities remain an essential part of the education of all students, with young people having been adversely affected by the loss of arts and cultural events (Durham University, Arts Council England, 2021). The power of creativity had also been highlighted during the pandemic, as many people found new ways to engage with creative areas, the arts and culture, and have found solace in mindful creative activities (Access Art, 2020). It is argued that teaching for creativity and learning is beneficial to mental health and wellbeing (Cramman et al, 2021; BeatFreaks, 2020; Bridge England Network, 2020; CLA, 2020c; NSEAD). At a time where young people's mental wellbeing has been deeply affected (Durham University, Arts Council England, 2021), it is important to consider how education can help to aid in recovery of wellbeing. Education settings have begun to address the importance of these subjects through a 'recovery curriculum', as they focus on the wellbeing and happiness of young people post-lockdown (Durham University, Arts Council England, 2021).

The pandemic has also highlighted and exacerbated disparities arising from socio-economic divides in education, with some parents able to spend additional money on their children's learning during school closures whilst others could not. Research indicates that 14 per cent of parents had spent more than £100 on their children during the first week of school closures in March 2020 (Cullinane & Montacute, 2020 cited in Cramman, 2021). Parents in the case studies reported how fortunate they felt that their children had creative and art resources at home and noted the struggle they had to buy extra paints and paper at the beginning of the first lockdown. Geographic variations were also present, with both the Durham Commission (2019) and Cramman et al. (2020) finding that there was a significant variation in access to creative opportunities due to the pandemic prior to school closures in March 2020.

### 3.4 Employability, skills and the labour market

The impact of reduced opportunities for creative education in and outside of school during the pandemic has possible cascading effects into HE, which could in turn restrict the pipeline of industry professionals in the future. Daubney and Fautley (2020) highlight this particularly for music teachers and musicians, in part due to the halt in extra-curricular provision within and outside of the school environment. The Durham Commission (2019) also report that reduced extra-curricular activities in creative subjects may have had a larger impact than anticipated, as prior to the pandemic, teachers depended on these activities to provide, students with soft skills, confidence and creative thinking.

The pandemic has created challenges but also opportunities. The move to digital delivery of both lessons and also students' submission of work, is mirroring activity in the industry and the skills needed now and moving forward. It is felt that having an education system that is able to reflect the current working environment will enable young people to have knowledge of what their future may hold (Access Art, 2020).

The case studies show the variety of ways to be creative or work in the sector and how this could be delivered during the pandemic. Employers and project organisers generally reacted swiftly in adapting their delivery to the demands of the pandemic.

For example, TICE quickly re-imagined their programme for online delivery, with web pages created to host interviews with speakers. Both TICE and Discover! Creative Careers were able to involve a wider range of industry professionals as interview recordings were made available online. This meant that professionals could involve themselves in the project at times convenient to them which is a challenge commonly faced by in-person delivery. In both examples, the projects provided web pages with labour market information, facts, and myth-busters for commonly held misconceptions.

In the TICE project, students were given more responsibility to watch the videos in their own time before undertaking practical work with support from their teacher. This reflects the move to independent working in the workplace. The success of delivering the project in this way has opened the door to a continuation of the hybrid model in the future.

The Discover! Creative Careers Week project was adapted for online delivery and in doing so the project was able to reach a wider audience: increasing from 11,000 young people during in-person delivery to 119,000 during the pandemic. However, a project lead reported that the impact on students was more challenging to measure because of the change in delivery. These views were also echoed by the STEM Champion project leads for the Virtual Worlds project who considered moving to an online based delivery but ultimately decided against this as they felt their project was more impactful in a workplace environment with a conference format.

### 3.5 Actions taken and lessons learned from the pandemic experience

It is argued in the literature that the pandemic has shown that creativity and cultural experiences are fundamental to the way young people navigate and live their lives, alongside how they experience their education and so, measures should be put in place to ensure that creative education is an essential part in any return to in-school education (Durham University, Arts Council England 2021). This recovery curriculum would look to use creative, cultural and physical activities to celebrate the creativity of young people with the aim to bring life and happiness back to schools (Durham University, Arts Council England, 2021). Some primary schools have, for example, pivoted towards a more creative-based provision to enhance student engagement, wellbeing and enjoyment in learning (Bridge England Network, 2020).

Thinking towards the future, a series of lessons have been learned from school responses to creative education delivery during the pandemic. Whilst there seems to be a consensus that online creative education is by no means a substitute for physical creative delivery, the fusion of virtual/distance and in-person education helps to create a framework that is more resilient to future challenges that may require the implementation of distance learning (Ali and Chang, 2020). The summary table (in section 3.1) outlining how education can be delivered in person and remotely operates as a demonstration of how these two types of learning can work in conjunction for a more hybridised style of delivery.

Technology is likely to be an increasing part of life, work and learning, and equality of access to digital resources will need to be ensured so as not to exacerbate the challenges experienced by students in the physical learning space (Durham University, Arts Council England, 2021). Not all households have the same opportunity to access resources such as musical instruments or digital technologies, and whilst this has always been true in the context of education, the pandemic has brought this inequality more into focus (Daubney and Fautley, 2020). A report from the Children's Commissioner (2020, cited in Cramman, 2021) estimated between 1.14 – 1.78 million children in the UK have no access at home to a laptop, desktop, or tablet with a reliance on smartphones to access internet resources, making it extremely challenging to complete schoolwork. It was also estimated that sixty-thousand 11-18 year olds have no access to the internet at all (Cramman, 2021).

Sharp et al. (2020) report that the curriculum gap between pupils experiencing societal disadvantage and their peers had increased by 46 per cent between July 2019 and 2020 indicating that those experiencing inequality during in-person education also experienced this in virtual delivery. This is further supported on an organisational level as schools with high levels of disadvantage reported being further behind than more affluent schools.

The shift to remote working and learning has reshaped society and the economy on a larger scale and as a consequence digital literacy and creative use of technology have become essential, therefore it is argued that these competencies should be taught and provided for young people (Durham University, Arts Council England, 2021).

## 4

## Findings and next steps

This research, drawing together existing evidence, with new primary research from case study interviews and teacher surveys has shown the importance of creative education pre and post-pandemic, in developing young peoples' skills for the future world of work. Recent developments have brought both opportunities and threats and the research has aimed to bring evidence-based insights to propose a way forward and understand how to mitigate the risks and threats, unlock the opportunities and by so doing to improve the creative education path in schools in future.

The pandemic coming on the back of broader long running megatrends and economic changes has brought with it a number of challenges for creative education including: constraints from the pandemic and repeated cycles of lockdowns which have challenged teaching and what can be delivered locally; competing funding pressures locally as well as nationally which pit external projects with the creative sector against other subjects and extra-curricular activities; and broader education policy reforms which are restricting creative education pathways and funds. With such developments the delivery of creative education is increasingly reliant on local factors to protect what is offered – that is senior leadership support, a highly committed and capable teaching workforce and local community creative practitioners, including creative employers.

But, despite growing pressures there are many examples of creative good practice and it is from this that the research has sought to learn. Indeed, the research has provided concrete examples of how schools, employers and joint projects have been able to adapt to the challenges of the pandemic by shifting to new models of delivery. In a context where dynamism and change may become the new normal it has been important to understand how the lessons learnt can be used in the future to strengthen creative education practices and communities and to enhance young people's creative skills and employability so that they might be better prepared for the future workplace.

### Key findings

The research has set out some of the key principles and conditions to support the wider take up of good practice in creative education and to help address variations in the delivery of creative education in future. It has drawn lessons from case studies of local initiatives and examples of good practice. A core goal therefore has been to encourage the broader development and adoption of a universal offer across schools in different parts of the country and as such to support overall enhancements in creative education in schools in future.



## Ensure sufficient funding and resources

- The research has highlighted the importance of recognising and maintaining sufficient investment in creative education over time, in a way that provides the resources to ensure a more universal offer across schools. That is not only to support access to a diverse range of creative subjects within schools but also to wider cross-curricula creative activities. The future funding of education needs to allow flexibility to tailor resources to creative needs and hence prioritise and target investments and actions to where they are needed most. As such a key priority will be reinvigorating creative 'cold spots' and tackling inequities between schools across the country.
- Sustainable funding is also important for building local capacity and capability, and the highly valued partnerships on which creative education thrives. The case studies show how trusted relationships with creative practitioners can grow over time where prolonged funding supports this, nurturing partnerships outside as well as within schools.
- More stable long-term funding builds the confidence of schools to invest wisely, where they are paying for activities themselves. Continuity in funding, and hence activities over time, enables schools to reinvest in partnerships that work where they see outcomes delivered that they know are benefitting their students.

## Supporting a consistent, universal delivery

- The research has highlighted the local institutional ingredients which are crucial to promoting and improving creative education and the broader teaching for creativity in schools. In particular, this has brought to focus the importance and active involvement of sound school governance and leadership, highly skilled and capable teaching staff and local creative partners.
- Senior leaders play a crucial role in understanding and communicating the value of creative education by developing a high-quality creative education offer, seeking out and efficiently managing resources, including encouraging teacher training and CPD, and ensuring creative education is consistently promoted, improved and delivered. Rather than placing subjects in competition, effective school leaders also recognise the gains for all subjects from cross-curricula teaching for creativity and supports the conditions for this to flourish.
- High quality creative education can engage the expertise of a range of creative practitioners who support on-going creative innovation and effective delivery at a grassroots level. This will include: teachers, governors, employers, cultural partners as well as young people themselves, who can act as ambassadors, mentors, and role models. Crucially, creative education will draw broadly across the local education ecosystem and community and not just from teachers alone.

- A key partner can be employers. Appropriate employer engagement in creative education can be core to growing creative and employability skills, an interest in creative enterprise and careers and hence the development of the future talent pipeline. Effective employer engagement has multiple dimensions involving a range of activities. These include: input to school governance; curriculum design; mentoring; project work; and/or careers and work inspiration activities. The case studies revealed that the most effective employer partnerships exist where employers are able to see and experience the tangible benefits to themselves of engaging with schools. Again, this points to the importance of building and nurturing relationships over time, so that industry partners receive feedback from participants and can review how activities are adding value to their talent pipeline in the longer term as well as the wider sector community. This can be done directly and/or through industry bodies as intermediaries (see below).
- But, the strength of the local institutional delivery structure for creative education will also depend on the strength of wider local networks, and allowing the time and space for teaching staff and wider creative practitioners to work together. The case studies have shown that connections to the broader community are essential to pass on new ideas and ways of working and to develop and share creative education approaches that can build on and enhance existing and established models. One such example that networks facilitated, identified by the research, concerned the take up and use of technology during the pandemic. As local institutional infrastructures are strengthened and rebuilt through the Government's Plan for Growth, and place-based strategies and programmes are repurposed, this will provide an opportunity to enhance industry engagement and better co-ordinate partnerships across networks.

## Tackle disadvantage and grow opportunities for all

- The research has also stressed the importance of tackling inequities and moving towards a universal offer that provides good quality creative education for all, no matter where a young person is located in the country and/or their background. The case studies from the research by focusing on good practice, have highlighted the power of a strong approach to creative education in reaching those that need most support. That is, those who are experiencing societal disadvantage by: their economic backgrounds; their postcode; and/or because of individual circumstances such as additional educational needs.
- The research has revealed that, by involving local creative practitioners in creative education, this enables young people to recognise themselves in the workforce and supports them to springboard to a range of work opportunities in future.
- Delivering projects and working with schools means employers can work with a diverse cohort of young people and under-represented groups that will experience and may go on to work in the creative industries bringing their diverse perspectives and . The wider value of creative education needs to be communicated to these diverse groups to secure their engagement such as strong technical and communication skills, greater personal expression, building confidence and encouraging an interest in learning.
- It is important that young people can 'see themselves' in (young) role models from their local area, busting the London-centric myth of creative industries.
- With sustainable funding supporting and growing such activities more universally across the country, these kinds of developments can encourage greater diversification of the workforce and contribute to the Government's Levelling Up agenda.

In thinking about how good practices can be scaled up and more widely adopted in future, in the context of a post COVID-19 recovery, it is important to consider how to optimise future opportunities and overcome the challenges and threats. With the impacts of the recent pandemic, exacerbating long-running economic uncertainties due the effects of megatrends, the 2008 financial crisis and Brexit, there have been considerable financial pressures and capacity constraints in the education and skills system. Future success must depend on sustained and collaborative efforts of a range of partners, including national and local government, educators, industry and sector bodies and employers, pooling their expertise and resources to customise local creative education solutions to local needs. By working together different partners can create a greater sum of parts to tackle current inequities in delivery and to establish the conditions for a more universal creative education offer, where the fuller benefits are acknowledged, protected and realised for all. The report concludes by considering the different roles that varying partners might play.

The Government generally, and the **Department for Education** more specifically, should recognise the value of creative subjects and teaching for creativity in enhancing young people's future employability and the wider skills agenda. This research has specifically focussed on secondary schools, but the work is applicable to apprenticeships, higher education, adult skills and lifelong upskilling. Future policy developments should consider investment to grow creative education throughout the education and skills system. Alongside this should be a commitment to support a strong local institutional infrastructure to support and deliver a creative education. Crucially, this must start with getting the conditions right in schools.

In the context of further moves to devolution and a greater emphasis on place-based strategies and programmes including Levelling Up, the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Education and Skills Funds, it will be important to ensure the right balance of investment is achieved overall to support this long-term creative education goal, and to strengthen local creative activities, partnerships and projects. The case studies for this research have shown that there is room for much local innovation and improvement. Despite unexpected disruptions such as the pandemic, i new thinking and ways of operating have been ignited and these should be be built upon and practice shared. Indeed, with the likely extensions in the devolution of powers and funding to cities and counties, there are significant future opportunities to strengthen local partnerships and activities to reinvigorate creative sector 'cold spot' areas and to mitigate the impact of societal disadvantage.

**Heads and teaching associations** nationally should advocate for a creative education including teaching for creativity recognising the ways in which a creative education can enhance the whole curriculum and support learning across subjects. A core focus must include blending teaching and learning methods, and bringing to life subjects, especially through projects that include multi-disciplinary solutions such as Arts in STEM activities (STEAM). These cross-curricular activities and the promotion of STEAM will provide benefits for employability mirroring the increasing fusion of technology and skills in the labour market. Taking creative subjects and supporting the conditions for the wider teaching for creativity develops specific technical skills and a wide range of employability skills as well as motivating learners to continue in education – creative or not. The teaching community has a key role to convey such messages and support improvements in local action.

**Professional creative sector bodies and associations** in different sub-sectors of the creative industries from screen, to publishing, and craft have a vital role to support improvements in access to and the quality of the creative education offer. This could include support for partnerships between sector organisations and schools and networking, especially with regard to industry and employer engagement. In the context of a post-pandemic recovery they can play an ever more vital role supporting schools to ensure that their resources are high quality, usable and are meeting the needs of young people in Key Stages 3 and 4. Industry bodies can act as further vital brokers encouraging their members by making it easy, attractive and beneficial to be involved with schools and creative education.

Specific creative industry bodies can pool resources in local areas where creative industries are a sector priority and work with Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs). This may involve economic and skills planning to make the case for local engagement between schools and employers, to publicise projects for other less networked schools and employers. It may be helpful to use the findings and case studies from this report, alongside wider research, to champion the creative industries in local areas and the excellent employment opportunities they offer for young people having studied creative subjects at school.

As the Government continues to progress its reforms of the education and skills system it will be important to keep such developments under review. This will help to support local creative enterprises to make use of new skills and employment schemes and programmes as they are developed and come on board such as Kickstart and Bootcamps and wider initiatives for critical skills in technical areas at levels 3 to 5. Such developments will be vital to provide young people with broader pathways to jobs in the creative sector.

**The careers guidance sector** including The Careers & Enterprise Company and its national network of schools should work to include creative sector representatives as cornerstone employers and enterprise advisers. Professional careers adviser bodies such as the Career Development Institute (CDI), need to highlight the value of creative industries and the myriad of job opportunities in the creative sector. The Careers & Enterprise Company should continue to expand on the work they are doing with the creative sector such as the Creative Careers Programme.

**The Arts Council England Bridge Network and Creativity Collaboratives** networks should be enabled to continue to act as catalysts and convenors working with schools looking to develop creative capabilities for all children and young people.<sup>16</sup> They should amplify the good practice that is already in place. This will be important to increase schools' creative and cultural networks and access high quality industry expertise, practitioners and resources. Schools can be supported to be able to identify high quality programmes and networks

# Appendix

## Case studies

Case Studies were selected from desk research to identify creative projects where Key Stage 3 and 4 developed creative and employability skills through contact with external industry professionals.

Project/School name	Description
<b>Highdown School and Sixth Form Centre – Discover! Creative Careers Programme</b>	Offers a full suite of resources to enable schools to deliver their careers programme and meet the Gatsby benchmarks – work experience, speakers for schools, working with enterprise advisers
<b>Marden High School, The Duchess's Community High School and This is Creative Enterprise (TICE)</b>	A local creative enterprise programme conducting a range of creative projects, connecting students with industry professionals.
<b>Bottisham Village College and the Virtual Worlds Conference in Collaboration with STEM Champion</b>	An initiative to connect and the tech industry with schools in Cambridge.
<b>Camden STEAM Hub – the Drummond Street Project</b>	A project that connects employers with teachers working at secondary schools across the London Borough of Camden, with a focus on science, technology, engineering, arts and maths (STEAM).
<b>Greater Brighton Metropolitan College and the Art &amp; Design Saturday Club</b>	A branch of the national Saturday Club programme focussed on Art and Design for disadvantaged young people, operating as part of widening participation activities.
<b>Video Games Ambassadors</b>	A UK wide network of games industry staff that provide careers talks, masterclasses, and game jams to inspire students into a career in the games industry.

## Highdown School and Sixth Form Centre – Discover! Creative Careers Programme

### Key lessons

- The gaming and digital arts videos were useful for students as they are not exposed to related subjects at school.
- The Q&A sessions were helpful for Drama, so much so that students and teachers would like them to be longer in length. For all subjects they would like more information about progression into and with the roles
- Multiple perspectives from within the industry allowed students to gain insights into roles they may have otherwise not been exposed to.
- Teacher resources should be received further ahead of the project start date to allow teachers time to go over them and find ways to incorporate them into their teaching style and wider curriculum.
- Engagement with some demographics has been challenging. Content has been provided for SEND learners, but reaching this groups, along with young students has been more challenging.
- Difficulty in deciphering how meaningful engagement was for young people when the project was delivered virtually, despite reaching over ten times the number of young people than the physical rendition of the project.
- Teacher pressures around delivering the Careers Week were present, particularly in having to offer the experience virtually.

### About the school

The school covers Years 7-13 and has around 1,260 students, with capacity for approximately 1,600 students. They are an academy school, being awarded academy status in 2010, and are in a single-academy trust. They were recently judged to be a good school by Ofsted in 2015 and had this confirmed further in a short inspection in 2018. Their aims include making students active, independent, and resilient learners.

Year 7 students generally receive one hour of art education per week, Year 8 have three lessons

over two weeks. Year 9 have one lesson a week. At GCSE level, students can choose between art, photography, and graphics. They are only able to pick one of these options and can choose an art focused subject alongside a drama based one. They also offer design and technology at GCSE level. At A-level, they offer Art and Photography but do not provide a Graphics qualification. There are after school clubs available for a range of subjects including drama, music and art.

### Project aims

The Discover! Creative Careers Week was created in part as a response to the creative industries sector deal.<sup>76</sup> The project is an initiative designed to help school children aged 11+ and their teachers learn about the available jobs that exist across the creative industries, specifically with information provided from the people that work in these roles. It was created to make it easier

for education institutions to have meaningful encounters with the industry across the entirety of the sector. It is designed to be industry led and involves collaboration with a range of partners to make it possible. Informing young people about careers is ultimately, at the heart of what they do. It is also supported by a dedicated online platform called Discover Creative Careers finder

which hosts some of the online content for the digital Discover week and has job profiles written by individuals within the industry so young people can learn about a wide range of careers.

In March 2021 the project was delivered virtually due to COVID-19. The core aims of the project were maintained, however, were adapted to fit these virtual spaces. Content included 'talking heads' films where specialists from the industry in occupations that young people typically would not learn about discuss their experiences and careers. Also shown were a series of workplace tours and fact films about job subsections. Welcome films were also used, these were delivered using well-known individuals in the industry and would involve talking about the importance of their respective industries. Daily

Q&As were available, where schools could dial in and hold an open Q&A with a specialist or professional within the industry. These included an arts panel and a gaming panel. Online sessions were also provided for SEND learners during the digital week. Teacher resources meant for classroom use were also provided which included tasks in them to help teachers make use of some of the films.

The project is currently delivered nationally, solely in England, with a small pilot rolled out in Wales with a view to making it UK wide. This is to meet their aim of busting the myth that the creative industries are predominantly based in London and the Southeast of England when in reality 75 per cent of the sector is located outside of these areas.

## Project impacts

When the project was initially piloted in 2019 and delivered in a physical format, around 400 employers in England opened their doors for around 11,000 young people to attend. Since delivering it virtually, these figures have increased as more students can engage from a distance across the country. This has resulted in 119,000 students engaging via the digital format, with a total of 130,000 young people impacted across both the physical and virtual projects.

Evaluative findings have shown that young people have gained insights and encounters into the industry through Discover week. There has also been a movement in the number of young people who would consider a career in a creative industry before they participated in the skills week.

From an organisational perspective, impacts include the knowledge that organisations need

to reach pre-16 young people earlier in their educational journey. The project itself has also become increasingly autonomous as more employers look to use the Discover! Creative Careers brand in their own sector and with this provide more services to the project such as through the open-door employment experiences in the physical edition of the project.

In a survey undertaken by the school after the career week, 200 students were asked the question 'would you consider a creative career?' 45 per cent (90) responded 'Yes,' and 43 per cent (86) responded 'Maybe.' In contrast, just 12 per cent of young people (24 students) responded with 'No'. This highlighted the impact on young people the project can potentially have as 88 per cent of students were open to considering a creative career, or the possibility of exploring one more.

*"I really thought the jobs and careers in Music were very useful to use with both KS4 and KS5. I think the sixth formers really got a lot out of the resource."*

**Teacher**



*"I found the spotlight bit about the music therapist very interesting because I've been wondering what was involved in that for a while. I also really enjoyed reading about the Viol player who performed early music. I really don't know what kind of career stuff would be useful as I have no idea what I would like to do, so I'm interested in reading about loads of things."*

**Student**

*"These videos have been really helpful as it's shown that you don't have to follow everyone else such as having to go to university, you can choose your own path as long as you are determined."*

**Student**

*"I did enjoy the careers lesson as you provided different resources while introducing different kinds of careers that are related to art. Just like videos and interviews. Furthermore, I have gained some extra knowledge as well. It was a great lesson!"*

**Student**

### **Reflections on the pandemic**

Reflecting on the pandemic, teaching staff reported that the project had been impacted by the restrictions in time for planning around the Creative Careers week, however, noted that the use of videos helped when delivering education virtually.

Education delivery was badly affected more generally, particularly in Art based subjects as access to physical resources was limited and these resources could not be shared between students. When delivering education virtually, opportunity of access to physical resources such as arts materials differed between students alongside access to technology to attend these virtual classes.

Teaching staff in art found it challenging to assess work as differentiating between pieces created in the same limited formats proved difficult.

Similarly, photography students when restricted to home environments could not produce as diverse a portfolio of work as previous years. Drawing positives from the pandemic was also challenging, however, having a robust framework for digital education delivery in case of hurdles to in-person teaching was cited as a beneficial impact.

The industry partner when reflecting on the pandemic, said that large parts of the sector had been closed and unable to operate, these impacts were reported as being 'catastrophic.' Whilst the pandemic did enable the virtual Creative Careers week to reach a vastly larger number of students than the physical rendition, the impact it had on these students is difficult to assess. In the open-doors event, engagement can be viewed, and is often more meaningful due to relationships being forged between employers and potential future employees.

## Marden High School, The Duchess's Community High School and This is Creative Enterprise (TICE)

### Key lessons

- Using early career professionals and even people who had previously taken part in TICE and are now in the industry really shows the direct link between the project and work in the creative sector.
- Schools sometimes have practical consideration about who can take part – how many can fit on a minibus, how many they can afford to fund, but it works well when there are a mix of students with different backgrounds, skill levels and attainment.
- Working to tight deadlines was a challenge for the students and teachers in the project delivered in 2020-21, however this added to the sense that they were working on professional briefs and the student feedback reflected how they appreciated this new skill.
- Interviewees hope that there will be lasting benefits of the hybrid model they have developed to reach wider audiences across the country.

### About the school

Marden High is an Ofsted rated Good secondary school (Years 7-11) in North Tyneside with a Gold Artsmark award with a thriving Arts department. They are proud of their work with This is Creative Enterprise (TICE) and have taken part in the projects for 8-9 years.

The Duchess's Community High School is a secondary school (Years 7-13) in rural

Northumberland. They have recently achieved a Platinum Artsmark award and has a strong Arts department which has recently been given an opportunity to develop their own Key Stage 3 curriculum. They took part in TICE for the first time in 2020-21.

### Project aims

TICE started in 2008 as a small project funded by the local council in response to increasing requests to the founder from schools who wanted to find out more about jobs in creative design. The programme has developed organically since then into a structured programme where 300-400 students each year can choose projects and workshops in several different areas, funded by the schools that purchase the programme.

There are eight creative areas offered each year: fashion; photography; music industry; graphic design; animation; illustration; creative writing; and textiles and craft. Within each of these areas are different opportunities to learn about the

commercial world, develop professional skills and gain confidence. For example, fashion projects could encompass skills for roles such as stylists, content creators, ecommerce, fashion historian and more. While the broad creative areas are the same each year, the projects change and are carefully planned to reflect industry trends – to be current for young people and provide up-to-date knowledge for moving on to employment or in to further and higher education over the next few years.

The two case study schools focussed on different themes in their most recent projects: illustration with a brief from a local toy shop to illustrate

a fairy tale, and photography with a brief from a bakery and letterbox cake company to style, photograph and caption the cake for social media.

The TICE project encourages schools to open the opportunity to all students in the chosen year group and offer initial workshops that can be used to then select students. The schools reported that they sometimes approach individuals to take part where they can see that they would benefit from involvement.

Prior to the pandemic the TICE programme was delivered over three stages: insight, explore and create. 'Insight' involved mentors delivering workshops that provided an introduction to the creative industry and what careers paths could be open to them, as well as fun and practical tasks. 'Explore' involved guest speaks from outside school, including further education and higher education representatives, and skills development

sessions. 'Create' focussed on the project briefs co-written by industry professionals, employers and TICE, young people had three days to complete their projects and the programme ended with a showcase of their work.

The activities undertaken and outputs that the young people create from the projects are representative of what would be expected with that industry and can often be used in portfolios for applications to Art Foundation or degree courses.

The TICE projects can be undertaken by young people from Year 9 onwards as a way of supporting decision making, in Years 10 and 11 the project outputs can be considered as part of GCSE coursework. Marden High most recently used the project with Year 9 students specifically to increase their awareness of the creative sector and the opportunities that would be open to them locally if they chose to pursue this path.

*"It is a chance to meet professionals face to face, a chance to see people like them, enjoying and making money."*

**Teacher, Marden High**

*"It made her more curious as it was during her options year. She has been looking into creative jobs and looking at college courses for her next step."*

**Parent, Marden High**

The Duchess's Community High School used the project with Year 10 students as a way to bring forward industry encounters before work

experience which only happens in Year 12. They also chose a project where the work could be used for their GCSE coursework submissions.

*"We were very keen to get priority students engaged with industry...have a step up into the world of work and get that greater sense of independence... TICE was the perfect vehicle for that."*

**Teacher, The Duchess's**

Schools have to fund the project themselves and so a challenge each year is to secure senior leadership sign-off.

An employer that has been involved with TICE first as speaker and subsequently setting briefs and hosting workshops, got involved to show

young people the possible paths to creative careers. Trend Bible is a trend forecasting company, based in the North East and as such they wanted to let young people know about diverse local opportunities in the creative sector such as theirs.

*"When we have these interactions with TICE we can say to those students, this is the background that I came from, this is the route that I took...just help them see the path to a future career that they might like."*

**CEO, Trend Bible**

### **Project impacts**

A key impact of the project is the increased awareness of creative industries and new creative skills. Teachers reported increased skills in the illustration and photography projects that

were chosen. An employer found that some of the work is sophisticated and of degree-level quality. The students who took part reported:

*"I learnt more about the art/illustration industry and all about different peoples' styles of illustration."*

**Student**

*"I have learnt new art techniques that I know will be useful for my future in Art."*

**Student**

*"I learnt to use my creativity and ideas independently and how to do a professional shoot with a professional setup and learnt what information you need to build up to the shoot."*

**Student**

Students also talked about employability skills such as time management, being organised and planning their work, communicating with others, and meeting deadlines. Teachers enjoyed seeing the students receive feedback from people outside of their school, providing professional-style feedback on their work. Young people

make connections with industry professionals that they often then maintain during and after further studies and teachers recognised the entrepreneurial skills that they were developing. An employer noted the research skills that young people develop as part of responding to the briefs.

Young people learn more about creative industries and jobs in their local area and can use this information and the additional skills they learn to help make decisions about their future options – GCSEs, Art Foundation courses etc. Young people get to create work for their

portfolios that sets them apart from other FE and HE applicants. One teacher described how the students had become energised and motivated to do well in their GCSEs as a result of taking part in TICE.

*"It was lovely to see some of them engage in a way that we've really not seen before, and get excited about the project. From doing the TICE project, some of them are now just completely different characters, who have been able to gain confidence in themselves and really thrive on that. They now see what they themselves can do and what can be achieved through hard work, dedication and encouragement and they really want to push themselves to get the best GCSE grades they can get."*

**Teacher, The Duchess's**

The project works well for students who may not have decided their career path, young people in receipt of free school meals and gifted and talented young people. Operating through schools means that young people from

disadvantaged families can participate at no cost to themselves.

The students also reported how enjoyable the projects were.



As a project with direct employer engagement TICE is a careers and enterprise programme that can help schools meet their Gatsby Benchmarks.<sup>18</sup>

The TICE project offers good professional development opportunities for teachers who get

to work in a different way with their students and experience professional briefs. They also get to make professional contacts and learn new approaches to extending learning and skills for their own creative practice and to pass on to students.

Employers and industry professionals get to contribute to increasing the skills of the future talent pipeline. Both project staff and an employer reported examples of young people going on to do work experience and internships

with professionals that students met as part of TICE and also examples of people gaining employment within the organisations that had worked with on TICE.

*"It proves it really works when you see TICE on their CV."*

**CEO, Trend Bible**

In addition, young people that took part in the project in previous years and have gone on to work in industry now support the project by

being mentors and giving interviews about what their profession is like.

### Reflections on the pandemic

Instead of the usual three-stage 'Insight, Explore, Create' approach, TICE quickly re-imagined the programme to online delivery. They created web pages to put up interviews with speakers, created mini skill sessions that were also put online with challenges for young people to complete. Web pages were also created for schools with labour market information, fun facts and myth-busters. TICE was still able to offer 28 different projects across the eight creative areas. The 'Create' portion was conducted online over ten weeks rather than three days, however not all schools could facilitate this during the pandemic. Some parents reports that their children would have preferred even longer for the project to explore their projects in more depth.

This approach meant that students had a bit more responsibility to watch the videos in their own time before doing practical work with the support of their teacher, this also meant that some students might not make it all the way through the videos and submissions. One of the key pieces of feedback from students and their parents was that time management was important for getting through the videos and tasks. In most cases young people enjoyed doing the project work at home as well as at school as they were motivated to do well.

Recording interviews with industry professional meant that TICE were able to involve a wider range of industry professionals at times convenient for them, which in-person presentations could limit. Young people could pick up the online sessions when it was convenient for them. Schools were able to timetable the TICE sessions, either as afterschool activities or include them in lessons.

Due to the success of delivering online a hybrid model will continue in the future with online materials being updated and in-person school and external workshops restarting when possible. They are also looking at the possibility of expanding internally through international schools' networks or as a project external to schools for example for young people wanting to diversify portfolios for FE and HE applications or for young people who are home schooled.

During the pandemic, TICE heard about the importance of 'making a difference' from young people, with a desire for careers in healthcare becoming more prevalent, In the future TICE will make clear the positive impact of creative skills and activities for communities and individuals' wellbeing.

## Bottisham Village College and the Virtual Worlds Conference in Collaboration with STEM Champion

### Key lessons

- A majority of students were nervous and older students were a bit more resistant to engaging with the project. STEM Champion addressed this through mixing students from different schools together for the day and making use of icebreakers to introduce them to each other.
- Lots of organisation required to attend the conference, however, this was similar to typical school trips, so staff were familiar with the processes involved.
- The conferences can be targeted towards certain demographics. STEM Champion hosted a previous conference for SEND young people, as well as an all-girls school. This opportunity could be incredibly positive, particularly when aimed towards demographics with low STEM uptake at later educational levels.
- STEM Champion operate with the philosophy of 'for students, by students'. Through delivering STEM education with the involvement of university students and recent graduates, students are more likely to open-up more as they can see themselves in these graduates' positions.
- In the future, STEM Champion would like to extend the event to a possible three-day conference, similar to a retreat, as this would allow young people to become fully immersed in the experience.

### About the school

Bottisham Village College is a secondary school and covers pupils aged 11-16 years (years 7-11). The school is located in Bottisham, Cambridgeshire and has around 1,200-1,300 students, with the aim to increase capacity to 1,500 in the future. The school is part of the Anglian Learning multi-

academy trust, encompassing 14 academies that provide outstanding education and learning for communities in the East Anglia area. The school was most recently judged to be outstanding in all categories from an Ofsted inspection in June 2012.

### Project aims

STEM Champion is a university student-led enterprise aiming to facilitate school children's encounters with science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM). The teach STEM activities utilising creative methods demonstrating the value of creativity across the curriculum. This project was a day-long conference organised by STEM Champion in partnership with a local technology and engineering company. Around 30 students were invited from a range of schools in the local area of Cambridge, with 15 specifically from Bottisham Village College. A variety of creative activities were offered throughout the

day for students to experience, including virtual reality experiences of a "living heart," 3D CAD modelling using creative design skills, and role-play as a General Practitioner incorporating Drama into their activities. STEM Champion also made use of a card game that they created called STEM Streak, developed for use in conferences and in classroom settings. STEM Streak is a competitive card game where students collect cards through answering STEM questions with the aim to deliver knowledge about STEM careers in the form of a fun, educational quiz game.



The project had a range of aims, with a large focus on de-mystifying what STEM, and STEM careers are. The co-founders of STEM Champion are STEM students and did not always know where their careers might lead them. Through working with a technology company, they can directly deliver creative content that makes it clear to young people what they could be working towards in their learning and wider educational

journey. This was further enhanced by hosting the conference in the technology company's office and having their employees aid and interact directly with students, alongside enabling students to access technology resources not traditionally available in a typical educational setting as this allows them to get a wider, clearer picture of what it is to work in the industry.

## Project impacts

The impacts of the project are challenging to measure, STEM Champion describe themselves as a catalyst to igniting young people to start their creative journey to find their STEM identities and therefore are more focused on long-term impacts on future employment prospects.

Companies have corporate social responsibilities (CSRs) and therefore have a desire to reach out to the younger generations to help them learn, the challenge is that many do not know how to do this. Through STEM Champion, the gap between young people and companies is bridged. From this, companies begin to view CSRs as an obligation as opposed to a tick box exercise of throwing money at leaflets to promote awareness of their business. Collaborations such as those with STEM Champion allow them to see a real impact on young people.

In terms of impact to the school staff and pupils, Bottisham Village College targeted students who

may not normally be exposed to these subject areas in order to further develop their perception of these subjects, and the possible careers associated with them. By using creative methods in the activities – 3D design and printing and the virtual reality 'living heart' they inspired young people who enjoy those creative activities to understand how they could be used in the context of STEM.

The learning environment being in a workplace helped to change behaviours in students: whereas a classroom can be considered a more fabricated environment dedicated to learning, the workplace enabled students to access resources that employees were also using. Speaking to young adults working in the industry enabled them to be more open with their questions, more so than if they were in a classroom teaching setting. The card game STEM Streak was also an innovative way to convey information about careers accessibly.

*"In the future, there will be new jobs and we are the future."*

**Student**

*"Such events provide inspiration and develop aspiration, however, for students to continue to see STEM related roles as viable choices, real world options should be made visible in all curriculum areas. The creativity of STEM should also be highlighted through careers provision and in-class activities."*

**School careers staff**

## Reflections on the pandemic

Upon reflecting on the pandemic, the school staff reported that the impact on creative subjects was substantial. Workshops for design and technology could not go ahead as these involved working with metals, polymers and timbers and students did not have access to these resources at home. Some students did not have access to pencils and paper, which made education delivery extremely challenging. Some students were unable to engage with learning due to internet or computing difficulties and teachers struggled to cover missed periods of learning caused by this. Virtual careers delivery was still possible, with the school having a STEM ambassador organise

meetings with individuals in different STEM industries. Presenters would discuss their hobbies in areas such as the creative industry, whilst also talking about their careers in STEM based employment allowing students to see the duality of employees in these workplaces.

For STEM Champion, the pandemic helped to affirm their decision to focus on conferences with the aim of providing high quality content when they can return to this form of delivery. An app was considered but was felt to be an extensive use of resources that could be better focused on delivery post-pandemic.

## Camden STEAM Hub – the Drummond Street Project

### Key lessons

- The siloed nature of school subjects and curriculums can pose a challenge to the delivery of cross subject work such as the STEAM agenda.
- Projects delivered through the Camden STEAM Hub enable learners to make connections

between the creative skills they are taught in school and employment opportunities in their local area.

- Projects bringing teachers and employers together in this way can help overcome perceived barriers to collaboration.

### Schools involved

The Camden STEAM Hub connects employers with staff working at primary schools, secondary schools and FE providers across the London Borough of Camden. The hub and the projects within it are designed to connect young people from across the borough with the

highly successful businesses operating within it. The Drummond Street Regeneration Project highlighted in this case study has been delivered to 12–13-year-old students at a number of schools across the borough.

### Project aims

The Camden STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths) Commission was founded in 2016. Members include employers, school, college and higher education leaders, local government staff, council members and led by Creative Skillset and the Creative Industries

Council. Work under the commission seeks to highlight Camden's significance as a centre for excellence in the creative, digital, and scientific industries, whilst ensuring that the borough's young people have access to opportunities in these areas.

The Camden STEAM Hub is one of several initiatives launched by the commission. Since 2018, the Hub has offered several projects to support creativity in education, including an intensive leadership programme for teachers with a focus on piloting and developing best practices to embedding STEAM approaches both in the curriculum and across a school's provision. The Hub also connects teachers with industry experts and local employers to co-produce innovative syllabuses which are embedded into secondary school curriculums and delivered over a number of weeks.

The Drummond Street regeneration project is one example of such a project. A collaborative approach to curriculum design is taken across the year through a series of online co-design modules and shared creation of resources. Teachers

worked alongside Camden employers and student interns from Central Saint Martins to develop a curriculum to be delivered to secondary school students which focused upon the regeneration of Drummond Street, an area within the borough. The project encourages students to consider how the area to be regenerated could be mapped, the materials required, how to incorporate sustainable design into the regeneration and how art could be used to create a cultural experience for visitors to the area. The project is implemented by maths, science, and creative teachers within their existing lessons. Additional input is given by employers, architects and artists who ran workshops and talks with students regarding the area's regeneration, enabling the programme to help schools reach their Gatsby Benchmarks.

### Project Impacts

Teachers described how the Drummond Street project has helped them to connect with local employers they previously felt to be inaccessible. The collaborative nature of the curriculum design in the project provided teachers with insight into industry needs and demonstrated to teachers the value of considering employers needs and

perspectives when designing classroom-based work in the creative subjects. Teachers feel that the real-world industry focused nature of the project has helped learners to see how skills taught in creative subjects at school connect to employment.

*"It's opening their minds as to how the world of work works and how the subjects that they study in school are going to be applied... being creative, being visually literate is really crucial."*

**Teacher, La Sainte Union Catholic School**

An unexpected impact of the project for creative teachers was a legacy of increased collaboration between school departments once the project had come to an end. This was seen to benefit learners and teachers alike by helping them to make connections between subjects not typically considered to be connected, such as art and maths. However, though the project was successful in improving these relationships –

school departments and curriculums are typically siloed, and teachers reflected that existing siloes and rigidities within the national curriculum pose a challenge to the implementation of cross subject programmes such as the STEAM agenda. Subject teachers in Maths and Geography reported that their curriculum requirements were strict and left little room for adapting to the project. In successful examples of where this

has been overcome – an Art teacher was able to incorporate science and maths into their lesson by discussing the chemical composition of the paint used in the mural. A maths teacher was able to use the example of the mural when discussing calculating dimensions and area.

For learners, teachers reflected that by building the project into the curriculum, impact was

felt across the entire year group, including disadvantaged students who may typically be less likely to interact with extra-curricular artistic activities. The nature of the project in drawing across many subjects was also seen to help learners understand the connections between scientific and creative subjects in schools and the creative and tech industries.

*"What I could see was that this is real, deeper, interconnected knowledge between these different subjects as real creative application of knowledge."*

**Schools Manager, Camden Steam Hub**

Teachers suggested that participating in the project had increased learners' knowledge of the opportunities available to them in the creative

industries, and how creative skills can be useful in many different careers.

## Reflections on the pandemic

The pandemic meant that in person meetings between teachers and employers had to be conducted online. Project managers at Camden Council reflected that this served to accelerate change in a way that has been beneficial for the project. The current existence of a digital space in which teachers and employers can exchange information and collaborate on curriculum design is seen to have made forging these connections easier.

Similarly, limitations placed on employers and industry professionals entering schools has meant that many of them have recorded materials which can be delivered remotely. Whilst teachers reflected this was perhaps less engaging than in-person visits, it has improved the scalability of the project.

However, teachers reflected on the considerable difficulties of delivering creative education during the pandemic. Delivering teaching remotely, often with learners who were unable to have their cameras turned on for security reasons, made visual communication and assessments challenging. This was exacerbated by the challenges in providing materials to

learners outside of the classroom. As a result, remote learning meant that art lessons became predominantly theoretical rather than practical.

Once learners had returned to the classroom, the challenges of delivering creative subjects and the Drummond Street Project changed. Social distancing and hygiene measures meant that learners in art lessons were only allowed to use dry materials, as shared space around sinks were deemed too small to be safe. In some instances, the increased health and safety paperwork around school trips made them effectively unworkable for teachers who are already stretched on time. Teachers reflected that this has been a significant loss to students who are often best engaged by activities and learning outside of the classroom.

Whilst delivering the Drummond Street Project, year group 'bubbles' bursting meant that one trip that had been arranged as part of the project had to be cancelled. Similarly, teachers were unable to deliver some elements of the project because of the sudden closure of schools in July 2021 ahead of the planned end of term.

## Greater Brighton Metropolitan College and the Art & Design Saturday Club

### Key lessons

- The creative approach of the Club, independence from the national curriculum and lack of assessment, with no 'right' or 'wrong' ideas, can be liberating for young people. They enjoy the safe space to create, try new things and develop their creative capabilities.
- Sessions from student ambassadors and industry professionals give students invaluable insights into working in creative industries and the different pathways to get there.
- Funding has been a challenge, they receive some subsidised trips as part of the national programme and most recently were able to draw on UniConnect widening participation funding, but staff time and physical resources are not funded.
- The support of the national club has been welcomed. They provide physical and digital resources. Being part of a national networks gives this local club extra, exciting opportunities.

### About the schools

The project is run by Greater Brighton Metropolitan College and young people attend from a mix of local schools. They young people

are identified via Art and Design teachers as well as careers advisers that are in contact with the project.

### Project aims

The Saturday Club has been running for the past seven years. The project is managed as part of the college's widening participation programme. The college runs degree-level courses and delivers activities to promote participation in those courses for young people who are disadvantaged. These activities are targeted at those who are under-represented in higher education (HE): people from lower socio-economic background, care leavers or looked after children, refugees and asylum seekers and people with disabilities. The widening participation programme includes information, advice and guidance, workshops and tasters including some led by student ambassadors, as well as holiday programmes in half term and summer for older young people (16-25 years old).

As many of the degree-level courses are in the creative arts, much of focus of the widening participation activities is also focussed on creative activities. The Art & Design Saturday Club is part of this suite of activities. It is part of a national programme to support young people to engage in

different art and design principles.<sup>19</sup> They look at different design practices and are taught by tutors from the college as well as student ambassadors and local creative professionals. The student ambassadors are HE students who as well as providing tuition in creative skills are role models to the young people as they are from their local area and sometime mature students who can show the different paths to higher education and how they use creative skills in other work areas.

The aim of the project is to give young people an opportunity to get an experience with creative industries that they would not ordinarily have. Young people get to showcase their talents and personal development.

The project runs for around 12 young people (aged 14+) in each yearly cohort (October to May). It has been a conscious decision to keep the cohort size small to ensure that the staff and young people can get to know each other. It is also a small enough group for the college to facilitate and provide resources for on a limited budget.

The course is not assessed and the Club has freedom to work with young people in different ways and follow their interests around the prescribed theme. The project usually includes a number of trips that link the local Saturday Club with others locally and from around the country. For example, a mass trip to London to meet the other clubs and do a large-scale creative activity which is then displayed. They also undertake trips to museums and art galleries, the tickets for these are funded from the national Club. They also have a masterclass with a professional in their workspace and to undertake another creative activity. In the past this has included a trip to an architect's studio and a chance to take on city design activities. A final showcase takes place

which includes a certificate-giving ceremony and a display of the pieces created. Young people, their families, teachers and Saturday Club tutors are invited to attend and the show then remains open to the public.

The Club also has local connections to community groups for small project work and talks. The creative professionals describe their own, often non-linear, career pathways to working in creative fields. These projects also demonstrate how creative community work can be beneficial to them and their communities in the short and longer term. They encourage young people to maintain connections with the community groups at the end of the Saturday Club project.

## Project impacts

The trips that are undertaken are not only about expanding young people's creative knowledge but they are also developing personal and social skills, particularly important for disadvantaged young people who may never have travelled out of their local area.

The lack of formal assessment of the work created gives young people freedom to create on their own terms and a chance to see that they and other people can have different, valid opinions about the work they produce. This becomes beneficial if they choose to continue with a creative course at university where critiques become part of the way they are taught and assessed.

Young people benefit from the small group size and the mix of students from different schools. They get a chance to work with people that they would not otherwise meet. The work that they produce can be included in their portfolios should they wish to apply for higher level courses.

For the college, the activities form part of their widening participation remit and as such help them attract a more diverse cohort. The Saturday Club can help attract young people to take up their own courses such as Art Foundation or their degree courses. A parent commented:

*"He would like to pursue Arts [after Year 11] and it would be an easy transition for him now as he has taken part in the Saturday Club and gained in confidence and been surrounded by other like-minded people."*

**Schools Manager, Camden Steam Hub**

This parent had also gained from their son taking part in the Saturday Club as meeting the industry professionals had inspired them to undertake their own creative art course and they are now studying for an Arts degree at the college.

Staff at the Saturday Club report the gain in confidence that they see in young people. The Club staff maintain good relationships with teachers and hear how young people become more confident in their own school and classrooms.



## Reflections on the pandemic

During the first national lockdown in March 2020 the programme moved online, toward the end of the project that year – it was due to finish in May. As the project staff were employed in other roles at the college and taking on the Saturday Club project in addition, they did not have time to move the project fully online. The national Saturday Club programme sent out resources and links to online resources that could be passed on to participants, which were well-received.

During the academic year 2020/21 they were able to start the delivery of the Club in person, whilst also preparing for the possibility of moving online at some point. They found it easier to navigate the second time. The staff and students had become more accustomed to remote learning. Although one parent commented that her son had been put off lessons via Zoom from their experiences of school and so had not enjoyed this mode of delivery as much as in-person. The students had already formed close relationships with the other Club members and so were happy to have cameras on during online sessions and would chat with each other while working.

Each person was sent a pack of physical resources and the Club were able to make use of resources sent by the national Club when they requested them. The staff also encouraged students to make use of other free or cheap materials at home. The final session of the term was an in-person masterclass for students with the industry professional appearing via video link.

Parents are involved through an information session at the beginning of each cohort. During lockdown parents would get involved in some of the activities. During lockdown, club staff saw that parents were able to see the value on the creative outlet of the Club activities and the mental health benefits. However, staff fear that the negative impact of the pandemic on the creative sector will make parents more fearful of the career prospects of this route.

At a time when schools and colleges are reducing the number of creative qualifications they offer, the Saturday Club is an extra-curricular activity that is valuable to this particular group of disadvantaged young people to open their eyes to the education and professional pathways open to them.

## Video Games Ambassadors

### Key lessons

- It can be difficult to gain insights directly from those working in the video games industry which leads to a lack of understanding among young people of the career options in the video games industry. There is a need for the industry to reach out to show opportunities for a range of skills and interests (writing, drawing, coding and beyond), to roles within but also beyond games development; and thus engage with a range of subjects in schools.
- Schools understand the need to create industry links for young people but the interest in VGA tends to come through IT teachers and careers advisors rather than teachers of creative subjects; and the heavy workload of teachers may prevent them in engaging fully with the VGA offer.
- The VGA programme benefits industry by providing a low cost/resource mechanism for outreach and influencing the talent pool, schools by helping students engage with their lessons/ subjects (particularly during the pandemic) and helping to deliver their careers responsibilities, and young people by expanding their career horizons and making connections between their school work and the labour market.



- The VGA programme continued to operate throughout the pandemic, lockdown and remote working and teaching, and has seen an increase in volunteers and an increase in demand from schools seeking to engage their pupils through the challenging period. It is hoped the increased participation from all stakeholders will be sustained with the move to classroom-based

activity through keeping the valued aspects of virtual engagement (alongside more hands-on participation where appropriate).

- The VGA programme would benefit from more input around ideas for projects for schools and professionals to work on, and more support for industry professionals to take on this 'educator' role and for working with young people.

## About the project

The Video Games Ambassadors is essentially a network of games industry professionals who volunteer their time to support education institutions including (but not limited to) secondary schools across the UK. It is a free service that operates via an online volunteering platform that links schools and professionals. Professionals sign up, can view opportunities via the shared Slack channel, and are emailed opportunities each week. They are encouraged to volunteer for opportunities they feel they can add value to. They do not have to commit to any minimum volunteering time, there is no obligation placed on them. Schools post opportunities such as talks, workshops, lectures, game jams, masterclasses, and portfolio feedback ('any activity that is helping bring about or demystify games careers', 'counter the misconception that if you want to work in the industry you have to write code' and 'view video games as a serious place to work and build a career'). Schools are then connected by email to games industry staff. Industry professionals make the contact with the schools to volunteer their support and expertise.

The VGA programme also provides support to the industry volunteers if they need advice on how best to engage with the students, and provides support to the school if they need help working out how best to set up the activity. This has been more of an issue recently during the pandemic, the programme has found that most of the activities have been run virtually.

VGA began as an off-shoot of the STEM Ambassadors programme when it became clear there was a desire from schools to engage with people who worked in the games industry. However, these professionals were often asked to provide support on aspects unrelated to their experience, discipline or industry, so the project was taken over by Ukie in 2019 to provide a games specific focus. Ukie works with the Careers & Enterprise Company to link into regional bodies and schools' hubs and with career advisers to disseminate information and promote the VGA programme. Ukie also publicise the programme during their national Games Careers Week. There is a desire to extend the awareness and reach of VGA across secondary schools and all subjects.

## Project aims

The VGA aim is to bring the games industry into the classroom, to democratise access to careers information and guidance, and provide access to role models. The programme champions

recognise the difficulties faced in finding out from those working in the industry what the industry is like, what the roles are, and how to get into the industry.

*"We exist to bridge the gap between education and the games industry whilst at the same time trying to make a career in games as accessible and inclusive and rewarding as possible.'...' we have a fervent network of people who are really passionate about doing this stuff because they want to go there [into schools], not just to say, "this is what I do and how cool is it", they actually want to say, "the games industry is bigger than you think, and there's a part of everyone here.""*

#### **Programme Champion, Into Games**

Their focus is particularly on supporting and inspiring under-represented groups, and thus improving diversity in the sector at all levels including senior management. The sector has very low representation of individuals from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, lower than almost all other creative industries (except publishing), and low representation of individuals from ethnic minority backgrounds and women. They feel it is important to inspire young people not just to work in the industry but to start their own companies

and to effect change from the top. Some of their work is also about addressing negative views of the work culture and behaviours in the industry including long (unpaid) working hours around key milestones, and discrimination, and helping sow the seeds for change.

One employer/ambassador noted how she felt it was important to play a more active role in supporting and opening doors for young women coming into the video games industry:

*"I think it's really important that, once you've carved out a little space for yourself and you feel like you've got a foothold, to make sure you're holding that door open for other women to come into the industry. And so that's something I felt particularly passionate about."*

#### **Employer Ambassador, Unity Technologies**

The network is run by Ukie and Into Games. Ukie is the trade body for the creative games and interactive entertainment sector. Ukie have a mission to foster the next generation of games talent and have a number of initiatives aimed at young people. Ukie describe VGA as 'inspiring the

next generation to work in the games industry and helping them to see STEM subjects and careers with a fresh perspective'.<sup>20</sup> Into Games is a not-for-profit careers service for the games industry.

### **Engaging with schools**

Secondary schools typically use the VGA programme to invite industry professionals to provide talks to their students about what it is like to work in the games industry and how to get into the industry, this is often part of a wider careers activity such as Careers Day. However,

involvement can be varied. Other examples include the industry professional being directly involved in a computing lesson eg a module based around making games, which will help the students make the connection between what they are doing in the classroom and what they could

do as a job; being part of a panel presenting and participating in Q&A to a group of schools about pathways into the industry; providing mentor support to a week-long game jam<sup>21</sup> experience to simulate what it is like to work in a professional games environment (see below); and working with the National Literacy Trust to judge stories based on creating narrative for games.

The contacts in schools (the teacher posting the opportunity/request on the platform) are often IT teachers or careers advisors rather than teachers

in creative subjects which Ukie feel is due to the disconnect between creative subjects in education and how they relate to the games industry. They feel they have better traction with creative arts educators in arts-based youth clubs rather than schools. An example of VGA working with a youth club includes running a series of workshops around getting into the games industry run by ambassadors. There is need and desire for the programme to work with a range of subjects to help individuals with different interests and skills to see opportunities for them in the industry:

*"If you're someone who likes writing, you know that you can apply that to the games industry in a few different ways. If you're someone who likes drawing you know you can apply that to the games industry and in numerous ways. If you're someone who likes coding and programming, there is a place for you. And then beyond that, to people who work in marketing and community management, publishing and all of those tertiary roles outside of game development but still creative... it's about demystifying the industry and showing the application of it from loads of different school subjects."*

### **Programme Champion, Into Games**

There is also a need for more support to help design/conceptualise projects for schools and industry professionals to work on together, and for more training and support to help ambassadors with this 'educator' role (engendered by the VGA programme). The programme does some of this work for industry professionals for example around public speaking, confidence building etc but feels more tailored training is needed and support for working with youth people with additional needs.

The case study example is a drama teacher in a small Free school, teaching ages four to 18, based in London in an area of high deprivation,

with a strong focus on creative arts. The teacher engaged with VGA, alongside a range of other projects to critically engage with video games and the industry (including developing an online video games magazine and video recording games reviews). The drama teacher was encouraged by a friend to post an opportunity for an industry professional to talk to his students about careers in the games industry to help broaden their understanding of the career options and pathways, to see the video games industry as a 'serious' option, and for them to see industry professionals from similar backgrounds to their own.

*"Most of them when they think about video games as a career, they only understand two options ... being a video games programmer or being a video games E-Sports Superstar...so it is about actually challenging them to think about and open their minds, and to think about things in different ways... to think about routes that a lot of them weren't even considering...We are keen to get people in from various backgrounds, get a bit more diverse representation so the students can see that."*

**Teacher**

He noted how working with the VGA professional was very helpful because they were understanding of his heavy teaching workload. However, his heavy workload meant he unfortunately left his request on the VGA platform open and was not able to engage with the messages from other professionals in a timely manner, and felt he was not able to take advantage of all the offers.

Another case study example came from an industry professional/ambassador who acted as a mentor during a week-long games jam with GCSE students which worked as a virtual work experience week. The games jam involved young people in a range of roles to support game development including producing; and he answered questions, guided ideas, helped the young people to focus, and provided feedback on the end-product. The professional highlighted how this was important in developing soft

skills like communication and teamwork; and was important in helping the young people to understand the pressures of the work environment, the commitment and maturity required. The latter was particularly challenging for young people, and it was sometimes frustrating that the young people did not necessarily value the opportunity the games jam was affording them. This led to the professional working on a longer project (over six weeks) which enabled him to gain a deeper rapport with the students and better commitment, and enabled the young people to gain a greater sense of accomplishment as they had more time (and had a great sense of expectation) to produce something. He felt a key lesson learned by young people from these projects was to not be afraid of failure which is a key aspect of working in the industry:

*"That it's not going to be perfect, but it's important that you do it anyway so you put the work in for later down the line. To be aware of the fact that you can aim really high, but it's OK if you have to throw away most of it because it's just not going to be used. And it's an OK thing."*

**Employer Ambassador**

He also felt it was particularly important to help young people understand the varied pathways into the industry and to try and counter the out-dated advice which he feels continues to be

given, about the sole entry route being studying programming at university and/or working as a games tester (QA role).

## Project impacts

VGA currently has 466 professionals working as volunteer ambassadors giving approximately 13,000 hours free support; 146 educational institutions taking part; and over 30,000 young people have been reached by the programme. In May this year the VGA1K campaign was launched to recruit 1,000 ambassadors in 2021.

Feedback gathered anecdotally and via the platform is that the project facilitates relationships and connections between education

and the games industry and gives young people access to the industry.

The benefit for the industry is that it helps grow and diversify the talent pool (as the industry is growing and there 'are not enough people to fill the jobs'); and helps with educational outreach, as studios in the UK games industry are unlikely to have dedicated outreach personnel and educational outreach can be resource intensive:

*"Women in technology. You know historically, I think the tech industry has felt like a space that isn't for us. You know, it's a really male dominated space and so that really narrows the field of folks that there are to fill these roles. And so you know, doing whatever we can to broaden out."*

**Employer Ambassador, Unity Technologies**

*"[outreach] is actually quite resource heavy. It involves actually putting quite a lot of money into making that happen, to develop regional educational links, to reply to all the emails from teachers and from students about work experience (hundreds and hundreds of emails). So the Video Games Ambassadors makes it really easy for studios and games organizations to have a place to direct youth organizations to... the platform just acts as a really great middle ground and conduit for building those connections that would take actually quite a lot of time and resource to do on an individual basis."*

**Programme Champion, Into Games**

The impacts VGA have seen for young people are numerous but the most commonly reported benefits from participating are highlighting and expanding career options of young people, helping them to see the vast variety of roles they could do, and seeing the connection between the subjects studied at school their application to the games industry. One industry professional noted how he felt his work mentoring a week-long game jam with GCSE students was less about helping them develop practical/technical skills and was

more about helping them develop their ability to communicate ideas and working as a team.

This was echoed in an example from the case study school where one student chose to study computer science because he wanted to go into the games industry and 'make a change' in terms of its diversity. His teacher noted how 'he was really fired up by the presentation' from the ambassador.

The impacts for schools have been helping them to use games as a tool for learning.

## Reflections on the pandemic

The case study school found delivering creative education during the pandemic and lockdown had been a challenge and creative teachers felt disempowered. After deciding to not deliver online learning during the first lockdown, the school implemented project-based learning and taking into account anxieties from students about recording videos at home, moved to voice-based submission of work for Drama students alongside written work.

It was noted how the pandemic and lockdown with students learning from home had provided the school with the opportunity to engage with VGA. The school suspended the normal timetable for Year nine pupils, and moved to purely project-based learning across most subjects. Many of these projects had been successful and teachers were keen to run these projects again during

live teaching/lessons (with students back in the classroom).

Some interviewees thought that there was something is lost when delivering industry input remotely. That it is easier for young people to ask questions, get feedback, understand more and be inspired when face-to-face and with hands-on delivery. Nevertheless, it was felt that the VGA programme was felt to operate effectively with the move to virtual delivery in schools. VGA representatives noted how there was an increased demand from schools as they looked for more creative means to engage their students, to access interesting ideas for students to do remotely. Also the pandemic driven shift to remote working and remote education has enabled more professionals to volunteer, and to volunteer from a much wider range of locations:

*“Rather than a fully expensed day with travel and all the requirements and all the things that need to be done, it is actually just an hour out of someone’s day. It’s someone’s lunch break to come and deliver a talk or to run a workshop or something like that and so much easier. We’ve seen a massive increase in take-up because of that.”*

### **Programme Champion, Into Games**

This has helped the programme reach a wider range of schools and professionals which they

hope will be sustained and grow further (through word of mouth).



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# Endnotes

1. The online Teacher Tapp Panel is available at: [www.teachertapp.co.uk](http://www.teachertapp.co.uk)
2. For example see Cramman et al, 2021, BeatFreaks, 2020, Bridge England Network, 2020 and CLA, 2020c in the full report.
3. [www.artscouncil.org.uk/search/bridge%20network](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/search/bridge%20network)
4. <https://teachertapp.co.uk>
5. These include Advertising and Marketing, Architecture, Crafts, Design (product, graphic and fashion), Film, TV, Video, Animation, VFX/SFX, Radio and Photography, IT, Video Games, Software and Computer Services ('Creative Tech'), Museums, Galleries, Libraries and Heritage, Music, Performing and Visual Arts, and Publishing.
6. <https://www.creativeindustriesfederation.com/statistics>, accessed 28 September 2021, quoting data from DCMS for 2018 published in 2020.
7. Creativity, originality and initiative was placed as third in the top 15 skills for 2025 in the UK in the WEF Future of Jobs Survey in 2020 (behind active learning and learning strategies, and analytical thinking and innovation).
8. <https://creative-partnerships.com/about-creative-partnerships>
9. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-art-and-design-programmes-of-study/national-curriculum-in-england-art-and-design-programmes-of-study>, accessed 28 September 2021.
10. The EBacc is a set of subjects at GCSE/Key Stage 4 designed to keep young people's options open. The subjects are English language and literature, maths, the sciences, geography or history and a language.
11. Creativity is a concept that covers a range of knowledge, skills and attributes that can be developed and enhanced through teaching and learning: including curiosity, innovation, imagination, and problem-solving.
12. Art, craft and design is for... NSEAD advocacy poster. <https://www.nsead.org/files/a9c2b15af28a8035ae07c5d1ba367cb1.pdf> Accessed 8 October 2021.
13. These provide a framework for good career guidance, and were launched as part of the Careers Strategy in 2017.
14. <https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/careers-leaders/gatsby-benchmarks>
15. <https://www.creativeindustriesfederation.com/publications/creative-careers-programme>
16. [www.artscouncil.org.uk/search/bridge%20network](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/search/bridge%20network)
17. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/creative-industries-sector-deal>
18. The Gatsby Benchmarks are a framework for good career guidance and form part of the Careers Strategy launched in 2017.
19. Other Saturday Clubs include Fashion & Business, Film & Media, Science & Engineering, and Writing & Talking.
20. <https://ukie.org.uk/education>
21. A game jam is a contest where participants make a video game from scratch either working on their own or in teams within a set time period (creating the pressure of a deadline to encourage creativity). It can involve programmers, designers, artists, writers. These jams tend to focus on video games but can involve board games.

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