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Nottingham

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Time to Listen

Evidence from the Tracking Arts Learning and Engagement [TALE] Project



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Section 1 The research

1.1 What we did

Tracking Arts Learning and Engagement (TALE) was a three-year longitudinal research project funded by Arts Council England from 2015-18. The project partners were The Royal Shakespeare Company (Education), Tate (School and Teachers team), and The University of Nottingham. The research investigated four main questions:

- (1) What do teachers learn from deep engagement with cultural organisations?
- (2) How do teachers translate this learning into classroom pedagogies?
- (3) What do students gain from these learning experiences?
- (4) What do the different models of teacher professional development provided by the RSC and Tate offer and achieve?

Tate and RSC have adopted innovative but different approaches to teachers' continuing professional development and learning [CPDL].

- Tate Schools and Teachers team offers individual teachers the opportunity to engage in immersive experiences, either through a network, through single CPDL events or through an intensive Summer School that takes place at the gallery. Through encounters with artists and artist mediated materials teachers are encouraged to experience, as learners, the pedagogical principles of open-ended, critical aesthetic inquiry. They are supported to consider how they might curate learning in which pupils question, explore, challenge, play and interpret. Tate St Ives and Liverpool also focus on individual teachers but within the context of their schools.
- The Royal Shakespeare Company offers school-focused professional development in which key teachers work alongside RSC professionals to embed RSC rehearsal room approaches to Shakespeare's texts across a national network of schools. The RSC offer is rooted in the real-world work of actors and directors in the rehearsal room and explores the interpretive possibilities of the text. Teachers are encouraged, as learners, to get out of their seats and use their bodies, minds and emotions to get to grips with poetic and metaphoric language and the texts. They then take these approaches and use them in the classrooms. They are supported to consider how they can make the teaching of the only compulsory author in the national curriculum more vivid, accessible and enjoyable.

These two different models of teacher development - one focused on the individual teacher and the other on the teacher within their school setting - provided a unique research opportunity for investigating the different affordances and benefits of these models of CPDL, for teachers and for their pupils. At the same time, the research aimed to support the two organisations to learn from each other, strengthen their partnership and provide longitudinal evidence about the impact of committed arts teaching in schools.

The sample of schools and teachers

The research was conducted in thirty secondary schools¹, fifteen nominated by the RSC and fifteen by TATE, because of the long-term professional involvement of either a teacher (TATE) or school (RSC) with the gallery/company. The schools are spread across the regions of England from Northumberland to Cornwall. Three of the schools are special schools.

This was a purposive, not a representative, sample. We took the schools'/teachers' involvement with the RSC or Tate CPDL programmes as an indication of (at least) a reasonable degree of commitment to arts and cultural education, so the sites were chosen for their potential to give empirical and theoretical richness to a critical but appreciative inquiry. In fact, the schools are far from homogeneous; they serve very different communities and were faring differently in terms of Ofsted inspection ratings at the time when the research was conducted².

We aimed to follow 60 teachers over three years, two per school: Teacher X, who had been involved with the professional development offered by the RSC or Tate, and Teacher Y who worked alongside Teacher X. In the event, the final total of teacher participants was higher (80), due to staff turnover, and we did not quite hit our target of 60 teacher interviews each year (see table 2). However, there was a core of 35 teachers who were interviewed in each of the three years of the project.

Year	Teachers interviewed	Notes
1	54	
2	59	Plus 3 additional teachers and 1 art technician
3	54	Plus 2 art technicians

Table 1: Teacher interviews

Because of the nature of the arts organisations involved, most of the teachers in our sample were teachers of art, photography, drama, performing arts or English, though in schools with Creative Arts faculties we sometimes interviewed teachers of design and technology, with textiles or food specialisms.

Each year we visited each of the schools for between one and three days. Research visits in Year One were conducted between November 2015 and July 2016; Year Two visits took place between October 2016 and June 2017; Year Three visits started in September 2017 and were completed by June 2018.

Wherever possible, in the early stages of the project we recorded and transcribed interviews with each school's head or executive head teacher or an appropriate senior leader. We

¹ 29 in year one because of the late withdrawal of one school: 14 nominated by Tate and 15 by the RSC. Due to changes in schools' circumstances, in Year 2 three new schools were recruited to the project.

² Ofsted ratings of schools changed over the course of the research but, broadly, the profile of the sample was: outstanding - 8 schools, good - 13 schools, requires improvement - 7 schools, inadequate - 2 schools.

conducted 24 of these senior leader interviews in total in year 1 and supplemented them with a further six interviews in year 2. In these interviews we asked about strategic and contextual issues and the school leaders' views about the role of arts and cultural education.

We recorded and transcribed interviews with Teachers X and Y each year. We asked the teachers questions about: their own participation in the arts, both recreational and professional; their perception of the benefits of the arts to their students and to themselves; their educational philosophy and their planning, preparation, teaching and assessment of their subject. We followed up different themes in these interviews each year, depending on the issues that were arising from our ongoing analysis, and building on/revisiting issues that had been raised in previous interviews. Broadly, in year 1 we asked about the teachers' personal backgrounds, engagement in the arts and philosophies of teaching; in year 2 we focused on planning and partnership working, and in year 3 we asked about pedagogical practice and arts learning in and out of school. As our aim was to understand the teachers in their various contexts, we used semi-structured interviews that allowed us to follow up interesting individual differences where these occurred. In all of the teacher interviews we enquired about CPDL and any links with the RSC, Tate or any other arts and cultural organisations, and in years 2 and 3 we asked whether the teachers' work or the situation in their school had changed since the previous year. We examined, took photographs and wrote field notes about their classrooms, their teaching programmes and pupil work. Where possible, we watched them teach.

Student data

We also tracked students across the three years of the project in each of the 30 schools. Each year we recorded interviews with students in years 10-13 (ages 14-18) who were studying the arts. We talked to focus groups of students from the same year group, in each of the schools. The size of focus groups ranged from one-on-one, to seven students. Most were comprised of four students. We aimed for two groups per teacher per year group and to interview 24 students per school, each year. For logistical and other reasons it was not always possible to speak to the same students year on year, but in many cases we managed to do that. We spoke to students who had actively consented to be involved in the research, without teachers present. All interviews were recorded, coded and thematised after the visit, and key exchanges and quotations were transcribed. Through these focus groups, we spoke to almost 1500 students in years 10-13. (See table 2).

Year	No of focus groups	No of students interviewed
1	124	569
2	120	484
3	96	439
Total	340	1492

Table 2. Student interviews.

In 2016-7, year 2 of the project, we also conducted a survey of Key Stage 4 and 5 students in the sample schools to find out about students' engagement with arts and cultural activities

in and out of school. The survey is designed to replicate some items from the annual DCMS/Arts Council *Taking Part* survey so that we can compare students in the TALE schools against a representative national sample. We also added questions about subject choice in school and career intentions. We began with an online survey and, when we found that some schools were having difficulties in organising students' online access, we conducted a second wave of data collection in the autumn of 2017 using paper and pencil surveys. In the end, 4,477 questionnaires were completed with just over half (2,310) completed on paper. Females are over-represented in the survey respondents (see table 3) so a matched subsample of 14/15 year olds was created to draw comparisons with the *Taking Part* data.³

Male	35.7%
Female	59.9%
Non-binary	2.5%
Prefer not to answer	1.9%
Total	100.0%

Table 3. Survey responses by gender.

Confidential school level reports of the survey findings were created for and shared with each of the schools that made a statistically significant return. The full survey design and detailed reports can be seen on <http://researchtale.net/publications>. Key findings, including the executive summary of the survey, are discussed later in this report.

Analysis, ethics and partnership working

We amassed a large amount of data about the case study schools over the three years of the study. We worked systematically using templates and schedules, cross-visiting schools and meeting frequently to share findings. To ensure that our processes were iterative, we transcribed and began to codify data as we went along, looking for emerging themes or

³ The TALE survey was open to all students in years 10, 11 and 12 in the 30 case study schools. The Taking Part survey is a continuous face-to-face household survey of adults aged 16+ and children aged 5-15 years old in England. It collects data on engagement in arts, museums and galleries, archives, libraries, heritage and sport. For comparison with the TALE survey, we used Taking Part data relating to 14-15 year-olds from the 2010-2016 child datasets. Sample sizes can be seen in the table below.

Constructing the sample. The overall TALE sample consists of 1,693 14-year-olds and 1,477 15-year-olds. In the TALE sample 36% of students are male and 60% are female (3% identify as non-binary and 2% preferred not to answer the question). Nationally there is an equal distribution of males and females in state-funded schools and independent schools. The Taking Part sample reflects the national distribution of males/females (e.g. the 2015/6 sample was 49/51% male/female. To overcome the skewing of the TALE sample, a subsample was drawn, comprising 136 female and 139 male 14-15 year olds. This is the sample used to draw the comparisons.

	2010/11	211/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	TALE- subsample
14 year-olds	224	152	182	157	148	126	152
15 year-olds	213	147	156	157	132	141	123
total	437	437	437	437	437	437	275

issues that we needed to return to in the following year's visit. As patterns emerged, we shared them and discussed them across the university/RSC/Tate partnership team.

The University of Nottingham research team consisted of Pat Thomson and Chris Hall; Becky Parry worked as the researcher for the first year of the project; Lexi Earl was the researcher in years 2 and 3. Corinna Geppert joined the team in year 3 to work particularly on the analysis of the statistical data. The Tate team member was Emily Pringle, with Amy McKelvie deputising for Emily while she was on research leave. RSC Education, led by Jacqui O'Hanlon, was the lead partner in terms of organising and managing the meeting and reporting processes. This was important beyond the obvious need for administrative efficiency and accountability. We had identified from the outset that we wanted to work in a participatory and collaborative research partnership.⁴ We therefore devised a structure for sharing and discussing findings. Regularly timetabled 'working group' meetings brought together the university researchers with the Tate Learning team or the RSC Education team to discuss emerging findings in their 15 nominated schools. These discussions fed into scheduled governance meetings that brought all three partners together with an Arts Council representative. These meetings were a vital part of the process of making sense of the data we were collecting in the case study schools and through the survey.

Ongoing contact with the project schools was maintained through a blog on the project website (www.researchtale.net). After each visit, the researcher wrote an appreciative blog post about an aspect of arts and cultural education she had observed in the school, shared it first with the school staff and then posted it to the research site. This proved a good way of keeping schools and all members of the wider research team in touch with how the project was developing on the ground.



⁴ We found Durham Community Research Team's publication *Community-based Participatory Research: Ethical Challenges* helpful to us in framing this early discussion.

1.2 Theoretical framework: the right to an arts education

We see arts education as a vital part of a young person's broader cultural education. We think arts education is fundamentally about learning to produce and represent meanings, so good arts education involves *doing* (e.g. making or interpreting) and *being* (e.g. taking on the role of artist or performer) as well as *knowing*. A much fuller discussion of the theories that underpin this research is available elsewhere⁵, but some of the key ideas that inform our analysis are:

- I. Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states that 'Everyone has the right to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits'⁶. The right to culture is inseparable from other human rights and vital to the health of democratic societies.
- II. The link between cultural rights and cultural citizenship, which involves participation in the wider community. As UNESCO puts it, 'Accessing and enjoying culture is an important part of being a citizen, a member of a community and, more widely, a member of society.' Cultural rights are important to social sustainability and social justice, for e.g. in relation to minority cultures. Equally important is everyday cultural participation in which people do what they find valuable, enjoyable and meaningful – from singing in church, visiting galleries, performing in community plays, to making you tube videos. Governments have a key role in assuring the rights to cultural citizenship.
- III. Rights arise from and refer to significant human freedoms and so are primarily ethical demands⁷. Because rights are ethical, they depend on reasoned public discussion and advocacy; this may lead to legislation but, equally, may not. The right to culture is one example of an ethical matter that is not subject to specific legislation, although some laws, such as anti-discrimination law, might be relevant to its realisation. The ethical nature of rights brings with it the duty to ensure that rights are enacted in everyday life and in institutions.
- IV. All children have a right to experience arts and cultural education in the years of their compulsory schooling. This right involves access to a curriculum that gives them opportunities to actively participate in the wider communities they live in, and to learn ways of representing their own ideas and meanings. The ethical duty of schools is to prepare engaged future citizens.
- V. Cultural citizenship is developed by doing and being, as well as knowing. Schools educate students to become independent cultural citizens by providing opportunities, choices, new knowledge, explanations and role models. They help by

⁵ Thomson, P., Hall, C., Earl, L., Geppert, C., (2018) 'Towards an Arts Education for Cultural Citizenship' in Riddle, S and Apple M (Eds) in press Re-imagining education for democracy Available to download at www.researchtale.net

⁶<http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>

⁷ Sen, A. (2004). Elements of a theory of human rights. *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 32(4), pp. 315-356.

making connections, removing barriers and respecting students' cultural backgrounds. They enable them to become cultural citizens by allowing them to practise and rehearse citizenship in school, by being citizens.



Section 2. What the evidence tells us

2.1 What the students say

There were six main themes that came from what the students told us about why studying the arts is important to them. These themes are illustrated with quotations that were typical of a range of responses.

- **They have more sense of agency and independence in arts lessons than in other lessons. They feel more free**

“It’s more laid back, free. They let you do your own thing. You’re learning in the way you want to, not a strict way, ‘oh you’ve got to do this or that’. They give you the guidelines of what you have to have completed by a certain point and they let you get on with it, instead of telling you every step of the way” (Y11)

“She gives us the options. Freedom – you can walk around just doing stuff and you don’t have to put your hand up, it’s flexible” (Y11)

“You can learn how you want to learn it. Do your own research.” (Y10)

- **They like the fact that there is no right or wrong in the arts**

“It allows you to be more experimental. In Drama, you have to try different ways of doing something until it works. That is a skill I’ve applied to other subjects, even academic lessons where you don’t often do that, if you take a different approach it might be the right way. In lots of subjects there’s always one right answer you have to strive to get right, but Art is what you do and what you achieve.” (Y10)

“The teacher doesn’t say, ‘oh you’ve done it wrong’” (Y11)

“In tests you get the marks back and you got it wrong, and you think ‘oh I knew that’, but under pressure you got it wrong. Art is not like that. You can always go back” (Y11)

- **Arts lessons help them build self-belief and confidence**

“Before, I was very confined and I used to stop myself from saying any of my ideas even though my head was bursting. Now I’m not so afraid. That’s how I know I’ve progressed.” (Y10)

“The arts build confidence and team building skills. When you go out into the world you are not going to work with your friends. It teaches you to work with others and get along with them no matter what. You get to see the world from other people’s point of view” (Y10)

“I used to be quiet and shy and didn’t like talking at all. But since doing the GCSE, I’ve gained confidence definitely. I’ve joined Youth Speaks, for example” (Y12)

“You have to build yourself up even when you’re not as confident in yourself. I think by choosing Drama, you build yourself to be a better person. You choose to accept yourself” (Y10)

- **The arts produce a sense of well-being; they are a valve for releasing pressure**

"It's a form of relaxation for me. It's so cool that there are subjects like this that bridge the gap with real life." (Y12)

"Now we are coming up to our exams and it's all writing, and all the fun stuff is gone because they've got to get you ready for your GCSEs. So Art is something you can relax in. Don't get me wrong, you've still got a lot of work to get done, it's just a different type of work. It's more enjoyable" (Y11)

"Art is my relaxing subject because the other subjects I chose are quite challenging and I liked Art from when I was younger. It is very therapeutic. It's not just bookwork or where you have to constantly keep up to speed. You can go at your own pace. You are doing what you want to do, so it relaxes you more" (Y11)

- **They think that studying the arts is demanding and they have to work hard**

"You get people who say 'oh I wish I did drama' especially when they see how good we are and how much effort the whole department puts in. It's not just us, it's the teachers as well. They [other students and staff] were very surprised at how much we can do on our own and at what drama as a subject can do. Yeah, we **do** actually do work!" (Y12)

"It quite angers me when people go 'oh that's not hard'... I did maths last year and compared to art, I found art harder than maths because it was so much more work. I wanted to go into it, so I wanted to get good grades." (Y13)

"I think people don't realise art is a mixture of written and creative. You have to analyse your work, you have to do artist research, you have to do a lot of things. People think you draw stuff. That's the stereotype." (Y13)

"I feel like it does demand a lot more work. We've had to stay after school a lot more than any other subject, probably combined. We've had to do lots of weekend and after school on Tuesdays and Thursdays. It's taken a lot more time. Definitely." (Y 11)

"People, especially last year, in our year they just didn't value art as a hard subject and I was like 'well, you try and do three art subjects which is all coursework and we have an exam as well', so it's double the amount most people do. Because it's creative, you have to produce something on a large scale that's good. You can't produce something quite crappy." (Y13)

- **They think arts teachers are a bit different**

“Teachers in other subjects rely heavily on technology, on PowerPoints. The Drama teachers are talking to you from personal experience. It’s better like that, it feels like they’re talking to you from their own experience and addressing you personally.” (Y10)

“The teachers are quite laid back. They allow us to be independent. If we have an idea, they help us make it happen. For the next couple of weeks or so they let us get on with it. We catch up every two weeks or so” (Y12)

“We’re independent but the teachers help shape our visions” (Y12)

“They’re less of a teacher, more someone you can go to when you need help, someone to advise you.” (Y10)

Overwhelmingly, students who are studying arts subjects talk about: how they developed their knowledge and critical thinking skills, enjoyment and wellbeing; and the way the arts relate to who they are, how they want to be and the things they might do ‘in future’. Some intend to try to pursue the arts further through formal education and/or careers but many emphasise the fact that

- they see the arts as being connected to the ways they want to live their lives
- they see their arts practice as something they plan to keep going alongside paid work.



2.2 What the TALE survey tells us

The survey offers insights into some of the benefits to students of attending an arts and culture rich school. The survey was open to all students in the relevant year groups in the sample schools, (not just those who had chosen arts subjects).

The survey shows **young people's generally high levels of cultural engagement**. The main findings in this area show that:

1. **Students' interests in the arts range across a variety of forms.** Nearly all of those surveyed (91%) listen to music daily; about three-quarters of them (74%) sometimes paint or draw; over half (53%) read books or comics outside school at least once a month.
2. **Students are enthusiastic audience members.** 79% of those surveyed had attended a live music performance in the previous year. Almost all students are interested in films: 43% visit cinemas at least once a month and 60% watch a film at least once a week. 36% of students had attended a dance performance and more than half (52%) had visited an art museum in the previous year.
3. **Students are creative in their spare time.** 40% had created stories, plays or poems on their own at least once or twice in the past year; 31% are involved in producing, writing or creating music. 34% had created computer games. A third of students engage in photography, drawing or painting at least once a week. Over a third (35%) make models or sculptures once a year or more often. Over a quarter of the students (27%) regularly work with textiles or engage in craft work such as jewellery making, wood or metal work (26%). 13% of students create their own films at least once a month. 28% had created new dance routines in the previous year.
4. **Students are interested in arts learning out of school.** Many join arts groups and enjoy performing. Nearly one third (32%) of students take part in out of school music lessons or projects and 60% play a musical instrument or device. 29% sing as part of a band or choir. About a quarter (23%) belong to drama or theatre groups out of school. 28% are in dance clubs and 25% take dance lessons. 13% had performed poetry in the previous year and 12% are part of a book group or club.
5. **Students use ICT to explore, share and discuss their interests in the arts.** Half of the students (51%) use websites to research the arts; more than a quarter (26%) use them to share and discuss arts. 16% of students have created their own arts related blog, website or podcast.
6. **For a significant minority of students, engagement in out of school arts activities is a daily event.** 20% read, 11% paint or draw and 16% take photographs every day. 26% of students play a musical instrument very regularly.

7. **Engagement in the arts promotes a sense of personal wellbeing.** Nearly half (45%) say that engagement in the arts helps them relax and reduces stress. This is particularly the case for females (53%) and for sixth form students (49%). Only 22% of students actively disagree with the idea that engagement with the arts has a positive effect on wellbeing.

However, it is also clear that there is not a level playing field: some students experience more **barriers to cultural engagement**.

8. If we divide the students into three groups – highly involved, averagely involved and not very involved – we find that:
- **Students who are highly engaged in one arts activity are more likely to participate in other forms of arts activity as well**
 - The highly involved group particularly engage with music, drama and dance
 - Students who are least involved with arts are most likely to be involved with film, music, visual art or craft
 - There are slightly more females (6%) than males (4%) in the highly involved group. 28% of the 112 students who identify as non-binary are in this group
 - **Males make up 78% of the least involved group**
 - White British (66%), Asian British Bangladeshi (77%) and Asian British Pakistani (64%) are the least involved ethnic groups
 - Almost a quarter (23%) of students with a physical disability and 14% of students with learning difficulties (compared to 5% of those without physical disabilities or learning difficulties) are in the highly involved group.

The survey also shows the importance to young people of **support and encouragement** for their engagement with the arts:

9. **School has a significant impact on students' engagement with the arts.** Overall, 45% of students think that their school supports their interest in the arts. Females are more likely than males to think this (51% v 34%). 22% of students generally, and a quarter of students with disabilities, say that school started off their interest in the arts.
10. **Families are also important in encouraging young people's engagement in the arts.** Overall, 38% of students think their family supports their interest in the arts. **However, about a quarter of the students (26%) do not receive encouragement from their families**, and a further 15% are not sure about family support. Females (45%) are more likely than males (26%) to be encouraged to participate in the arts.

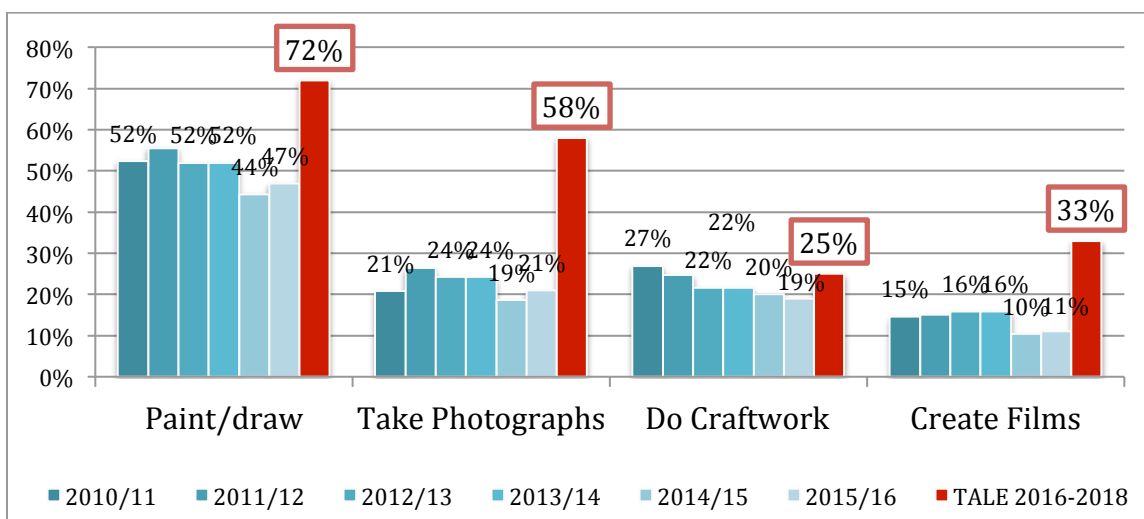
11. **A small but significant proportion (17%) of students think that an arts organisation has helped them develop their interest in the arts.** More females (21%) than males (9%) feel this way, and older students are more likely to think it than younger ones.
12. **For a significant proportion of students (36%), school is where almost all their arts engagement takes place.** This is the case for more females (39%) than males (31%), and for more younger than older students (37% year 10s and 11s, 32% year 12s and 13s).
13. **The arts feature strongly in students' plans for the future.** More than a third (36%) plan to continue to participate in the arts in their own time. Over a quarter of the students (27%) have plans to study an arts subject; another quarter hope to get a job in the arts. There are clear gender differences in these plans: 31% females and 19% males plan to study the arts; 28% female and 20% male plan to get a job in the arts; 43% female and 23% male plan to participate in the arts in their own time.
14. **Many students (43%) would like to do more arts activities.** More than half of the females (52%) and just over quarter of the males (27%) feel this way. 38% of students think that they do not have time to take part in arts activities because of school work. More females (42%) than males (31%) feel this way. 44% of students think they participated in more arts activities when they were younger. However, students with physical disabilities or learning difficulties are less likely to feel that their participation in the arts has declined as they have got older.
15. **Doing paid or voluntary work outside school is not a barrier to arts engagement. In fact, students who work out of school are more involved in arts activities than those who do not.** About a third (32%) of students work part-time outside school and older students are more likely to have part time work than younger ones.
16. If we consider the three types of encouragement to participate in the arts that we asked students about – encouragement from school, their family and from arts organisations – as one variable, we find that:
 - 42% of students do **not** feel encouraged to participate in the arts (by school, family or an arts organisation)
 - 9% receive encouragement only from school
 - 15% receive encouragement only from family
 - 2% receive encouragement only from an arts organisation
 - 16% receive encouragement from school and family
 - 3% receive encouragement from school and an arts organisation
 - 3% receive encouragement from family and an arts organisation
 - 9% of students receive full support (from school, family and an arts organisation).**There is a marked gender bias towards girls in the degree of support and encouragement received.** About a quarter (26%) of females perceive that they are

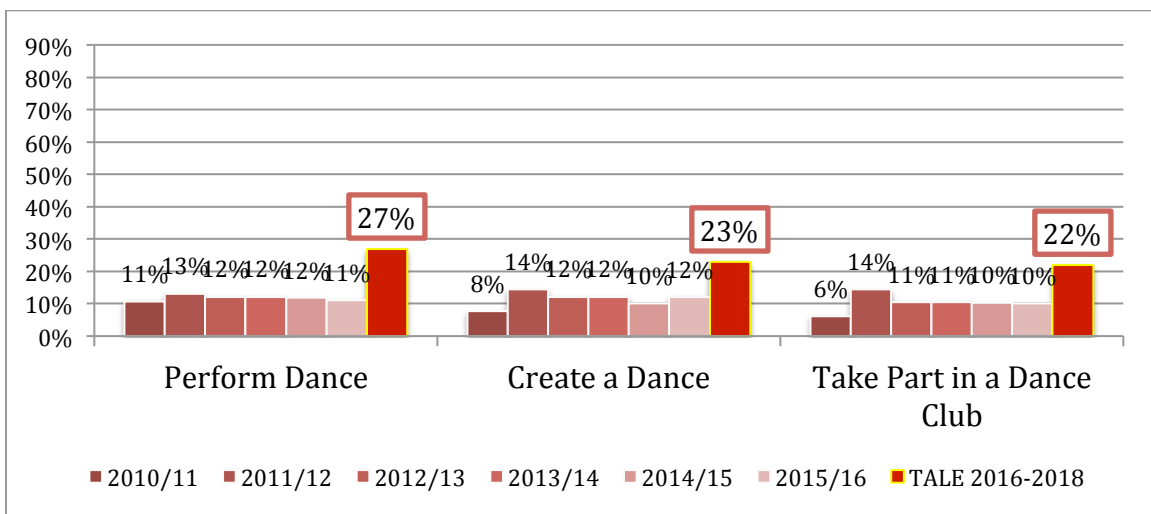
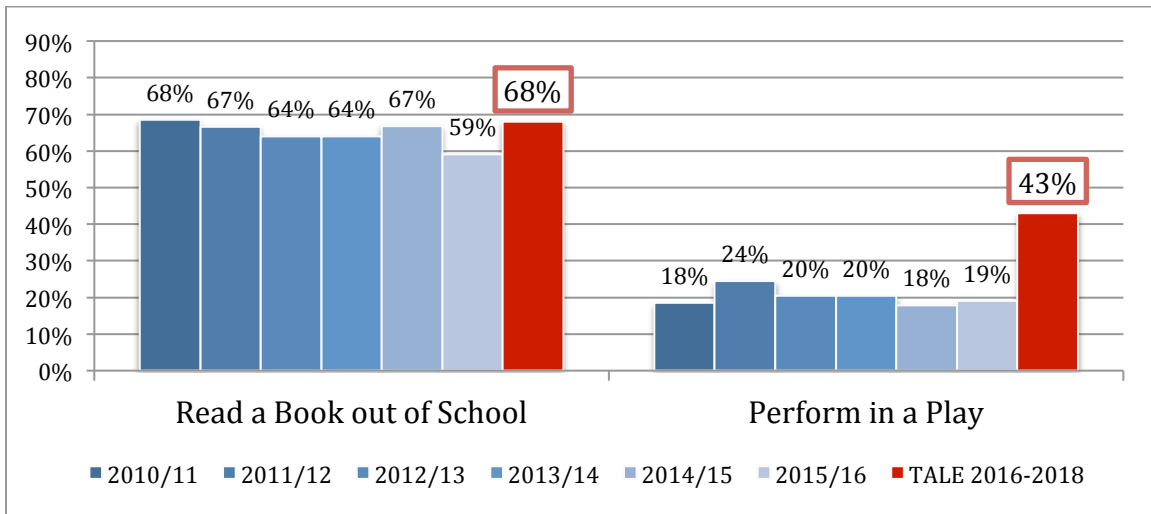
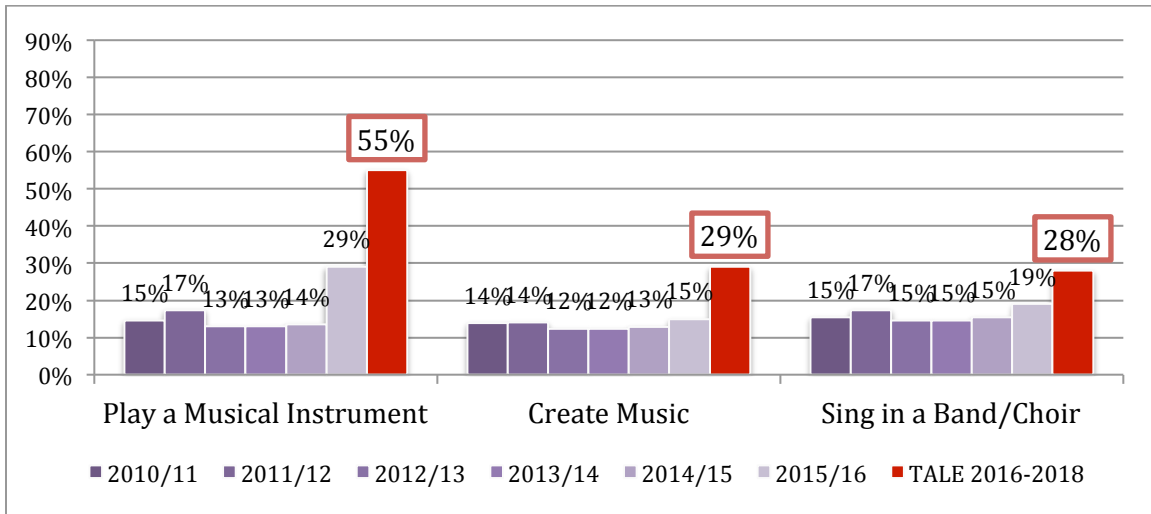
encouraged by two of the three sources of support, while only 15% of males feel this way.

- 17. Support and encouragement make a difference to students' engagement in the arts.** 22% of the students who receive full support, (from school, family and an arts association) are highly involved in the arts. Of the students who receive no support or encouragement, only 4% are in the 'highly involved' group and 81% are in the 'least involved' group.

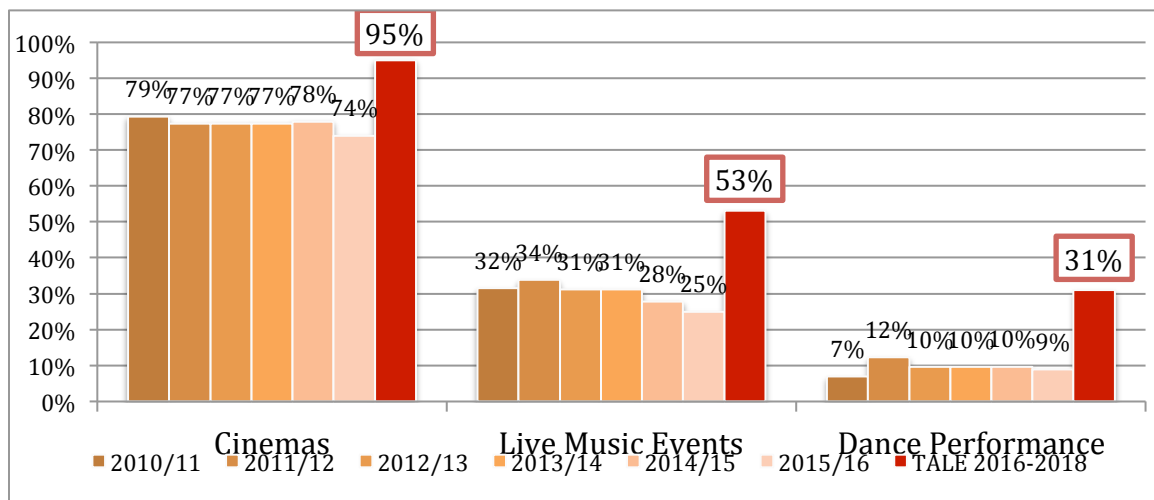
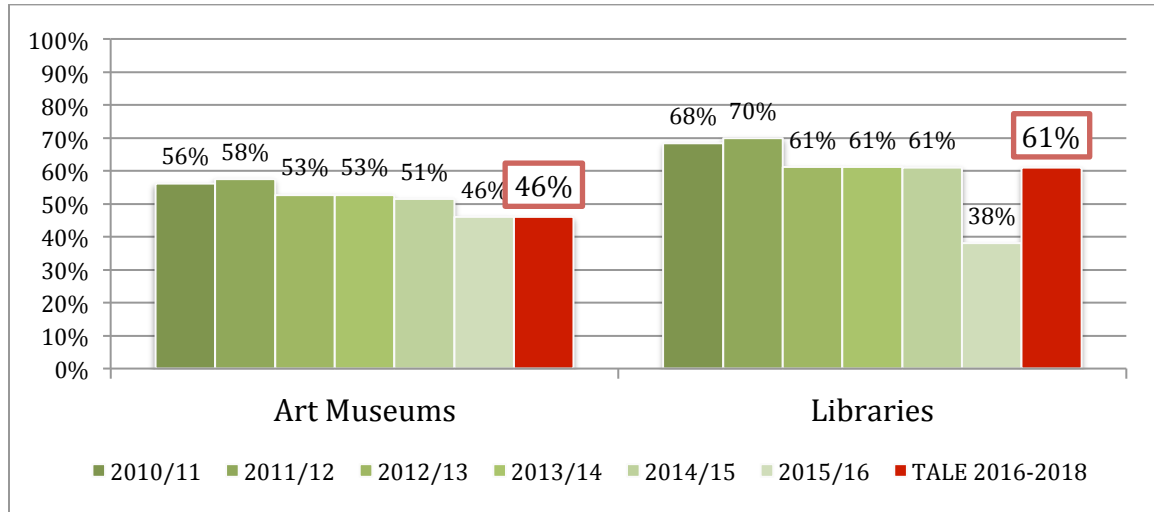
These are the main findings from the survey. The full analysis is available as a separate report at www.researchtale.net. It is important to note, also, that the survey was designed to allow comparisons to be drawn between the cultural engagement of students in the sample schools and a representative national sample who had responded to the DCMS/Arts Council's annual *Taking Part* survey. The following graphs show the comparison between matched samples of 14/15 years olds from the two surveys. The first six columns show the 2010-2016 *Taking Part* findings; the final column shows the TALE findings.

The graphs show that students in the TALE schools are significantly more engaged in everyday creative activities:





These data also point to **school level effects** in relation to attendance at cultural events and performances. The implication of these comparative findings is that **attending an arts and culture rich school brings the wider benefit of supporting all young people to be active cultural citizens**, regardless of whether they choose to continue studying arts subjects.



2.3 What do arts and culture rich schools do?

Analysis of the 30 longitudinal case studies has allowed us to identify some key factors that were common across the schools committed to arts and cultural education. The crucial importance of senior and middle leaders' levels of commitment to arts and cultural learning is clear. Leaders in arts and culture rich schools understand the educational value of supporting students' rights to become cultural citizens. Often in these schools arts and cultural education becomes integral to school identity, through the buildings and displays, promotional materials, calendar of events but also through the values they promote. These values often include working with others in and through cultural activities and programmes, encouraging creativity and critical thought and showcasing the benefits of arts learning to parents and the local community (and sometimes to a wider public).

At the whole school level we can summarise what arts and culture rich schools do in this way:

- The school sees arts and cultural education as a crucial component of the compulsory curriculum
- The school offers a wide range of arts subjects at all key stages
- The school sees the arts and cultural education as integral to its identity
- Arts are integrated into the organisational and management structures
- The school ensures that all students can participate in cultural activities and arts learning
- The school engages in arts and cultural learning more widely.

However, each of these bullet points involves a range of practical considerations, activities and choices. Some of these are set out in the tables below.

School	Leaders' Practice
School sees arts and cultural education as a crucial component of the curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School philosophy statement makes explicit reference to the importance of cultural capabilities • Senior leadership are strongly supportive of arts and cultural learning
School sees arts and cultural education as integral to its identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arts are central to the story school tells about itself – foyer and corridor displays, promotional materials (webpages, blogs & newsletters), assemblies, calendar of activities • Governor, teacher, parents and pupil see the arts as a vital part of the school
Arts are integrated into the organisational and management structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least one middle leader is in charge of arts provision • Arts teachers are encouraged to take whole school leadership responsibilities • Arts teachers are supported in both discipline-specific and more general professional development • Arts teachers are encouraged to collaborate with teachers in other subject areas • The extra-curricular activities of arts teachers are recognised and valued through provision of time and esteem • There is adequate budget, time and space allocated to arts and cultural learning in and out of class. • Risk management for excursions and employment of artists is not a disincentive.
School ensures that all students can participate in cultural activities and arts learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnerships are established with local and national arts and cultural organisations • There a subsidy where necessary for students to support regular cultural excursions, visiting artists and performances: • A range of additional cultural activities are provided through clubs, lunchtime and after school activities, elective programmes: all students are actively supported to participate • Teachers are supported to work as 'arts brokers'. • A range of arts practices are available in both formal and extra curricula programmes, including contemporary, local and cross-cultural arts. • Everyday cultural practices, genres and media are equally valued with dominant art forms.
School offers a wide range of arts subjects at all key stages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are actively encouraged to take arts subjects • Timetable supports choices • Qualified and experienced arts teachers are employed • Arts facilities are well maintained and equipped • Budget allocations recognise the actual costs of arts activities • Career advice incorporates arts careers
School engages in arts and cultural learning more widely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School supports neighbourhood cultural activities • School employs local artists • School engages with diverse range of heritages languages, religious traditions

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arts teachers are supported to participate in ‘outside-school’ subject specific and arts projects • Senior and middle leaders showcase the benefits of arts learning to wider publics and policymakers
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Table 4: School level practice

School	Arts Faculty Practice
School sees arts and cultural education as a crucial component of holistic development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty advocates for arts by explaining and evidencing cultural capabilities produced through arts education • Faculty philosophy situates arts as key to cultural capabilities and integral to a holistic education
School sees arts and cultural education as integral to its identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty ensures that students’ and teachers’ work is represented in the story the school tells about itself – foyer and corridor displays, promotional materials (webpages, blogs & newsletters), assemblies, calendar of activities • Faculty provides ongoing information about arts to governors, teachers and parents
Arts are integrated into the organisational and management structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty has oversight of arts provision • Faculty encourages arts teachers to take whole school leadership responsibilities • Faculty ensures that arts teachers are supported in both discipline-specific and more general professional development • Faculty articulates the creative and cultural expertise of arts teachers and supports arts teachers to collaborate with teachers in other subject areas • Faculty advocates for recognition of the extra-curricular activities of arts teachers through provision of time and esteem
School ensures that all students can participate in cultural activities and arts learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty initiates partnerships with local arts and cultural organisations • Faculty advocates for adequate budget for cultural excursions, visiting artists and performances • Faculty uses ACE quality indicators to ensure excursions, activities and performances are of high quality. • Faculty advocates for and supports additional cultural activities are provided through clubs, lunchtime and after school activities, elective programmes: all students are actively supported to participate • Teachers are supported to work as ‘arts brokers’. • Faculty actively promotes a wide range of cultural practices, genres and media not simply dominant art forms • Faculty maintains updated information on arts, including contemporary, local and cross-cultural arts and ensures that this is incorporated into school planning
School offers a wide range of arts subjects at all key stages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty advocates for arts subject choices • Faculty promotes arts careers to students and parents • Faculty works on timetable to ensure choices

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty selects qualified and experienced arts teachers • Arts facilities are well maintained and equipped • Faculty ensures that budgets are used in line with actual costs of arts activities
School engages in arts and cultural learning more widely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty explores neighbourhood cultural activities and communicates this information to school • Faculty finds and selects local artists for work • Faculty promotes diverse range of heritage languages, religious traditions • Faculty supports arts teachers to participate in 'outside-school' subject specific and arts projects • Faculty provides senior leaders with materials and evidence about the benefits of arts learning

Table 5: Faculty level practice

School	Teacher Practice
School sees arts and cultural education as a crucial component of holistic development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to the formulation of Faculty and School philosophical discussions about the importance of arts and cultural capabilities.
School sees arts and cultural education as integral to its identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select student work to be shown in foyer and corridor displays, promotional materials (webpages, blogs & newsletters), assemblies, calendar of activities • Provide information for Faculty to give to governors, teachers, parents
Arts are integrated into the organisational and management structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arts teachers take whole school leadership responsibilities • Arts teachers undertake regular discipline-specific and more general professional development, including practitioner research • Arts teachers collaborate with teachers in other subject areas to share their expertise in creative pedagogies • Support and run extra-curricular activities which are recognised and valued through provision of time and esteem
School ensures that all students can participate in cultural activities and arts learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish partnerships with local arts and cultural organisations • Advocates for all students to participate in the range of additional cultural activities through clubs, lunchtime and after school activities • Work as a 'arts brokers' connecting students and the school to the wider cultural ecosystem. • Offer a curriculum which <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ uses individual and collaborative approaches ○ promotes open ended, imaginative exploration and play ○ requires rigorous, critical thinking and reasoning, develops aesthetic judgment ○ promotes the systematic development of creative

	<p>habits of mind, including a commitment to practice and 'stickability'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ integrates cultural excursions, visiting artists and performances into the curriculum ○ ensures students engage with dominant cultural forms and contemporary, local and cross-cultural arts ○ uses and values everyday cultural practices, genres and media ○ offers a range of media and genres for assessment
School offers a wide range of arts subjects at all key stages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage students to take arts subjects • Advocate for well maintained and equipped facilities • Work to ensure that career advice incorporates arts careers
School engages in arts and cultural learning more widely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be a well-informed participant in neighbourhood cultural activities • Support the employment of local artists • Promote a diverse range of heritage languages, religious traditions • Participate in 'outside-school' subject specific and arts projects with school support • Provide evidence for senior leaders about the benefits of arts learning to wider publics and policymakers

Table 6: Teacher level practice





2.4 How can arts and cultural organisations work effectively with teachers?

The research investigated teachers' views about how arts and cultural organisations can promote cultural education and citizenship with schools. The project also investigated the impact of two different models of professional development for teachers offered by the Royal Shakespeare Company and Tate. Of course, teachers are interested in the people and programmes, artefacts and spaces that can be made available to their students in and out of school. But the evidence also shows:

- The power of arts and cultural institutions **to inspire** teachers. The evidence for this is overwhelming.
- Teachers particularly value the chance to have access to new **professional and disciplinary knowledge and skills**.
- Teachers value the opportunity to develop their relationships with organisations, and their own learning and skills, **over time**.
- Teachers value partnerships that are **sustainable, reliable and alert to the rhythms and time constraints** of school life.
- Teachers value partnerships that help them **build local engagement** in arts and culture.

- Collaborative partnerships work best when **time is invested** in planning, preparing and evaluating work with students.
- Collaboration works best when the **distinctions between teachers' and creative practitioners' roles, professional knowledge and skills** are acknowledged and used in complementary ways.

These quotations from teachers talking about their experiences of learning with and from arts and cultural organisations are typical of a range of responses:

"It was their training and CPD that changed my career"

"They've reinvigorated me as a practitioner and given me confidence"

"The inspiration our staff get with working with professional actors is a symbiotic relationship almost, because they come and they say they enjoy working with our children and they learn a lot in terms of how to relate to children with special needs"

"It's felt as though it has built up year on year from what we've been learning and so it's felt really smooth. I think the way that it has been planned out ...has been really quite clever because, without realising it, you come to think about how far you've come as a teacher and as a leader"

"At every point they challenged things that I have to do every day"

"We use it all. I think it has revolutionised my teaching and I think about it in a completely different way now"

"Their approach to learning is really interesting. You don't get taught by an educator but by an artist and they won't necessarily teach in the same way that a teacher will teach"

"It's very relaxed and it feels like you're doing things really slowly and then, all of a sudden, they take you to somewhere where you think 'How did we get here? How did they cover this much material?'"

From the TALE evidence base we can distil three principles of practice for arts and cultural organisations:

1. The importance of **investing in teachers** a sustainable source of development and change in schools.
2. The importance of **building strong mutual and inclusive partnerships** that recognise each other's priorities.
3. The importance of **recognising the school's community** and working to enhance cultural citizenship through promoting local resources and interests.

2.5 What's different about arts teachers?



Students told us that their arts teachers teach differently, in ways that – almost invariably - they liked and appreciated. Of course, individual practice varies between teachers and across different arts disciplines and, for a variety of reasons, teachers are not always able to put their pedagogical principles into practice. Nevertheless, very clear and coherent themes emerged from the teacher interviews in response to questions about how they taught and wanted to teach, and these findings were reinforced by what students told us and from our own observations.

Students had told us that their arts subjects allowed them to work independently, to do research, to explore questions that they were interested in, to develop skills and to realise ambitious ideas. The interviews, observations and document analysis that we did showed that in both the performing and visual arts, teachers approached students as 'artists'. When working with Shakespeare, teachers used rehearsal room and ensemble pedagogies. In art rooms teachers worked through whole class workshops, and small group and individual projects to encourage intellectual and disciplinary skills development. Students were supported to take risks, to be responsible for deadlines, to exhibit and perform their work to real audiences. They were expected to engage in critical interpretation of their own and

others' work. This was highly skilled pedagogical work requiring deep knowledge of students, arts disciplines and professional norms and practices.

We came to see what is different about arts teachers as related to the **arts and cultural 'brokerage'** role that the teachers play. We see this as a distinctive educational role within schools, and one that is currently under-valued in training, in CPDL and in the structures and reward systems of schools. Our evidence suggests that arts broker teachers

- **embody what it means to be culturally engaged.** They engage deeply with the arts themselves: they attend events, exhibitions and performances; some direct, act, make and show their own work; some are part of local, regional and national artistic networks. They are committed to continuing to learn about the arts. They share their knowledge and out-of-school experiences with their students, routinely talking about what they have seen and done and read, creating an ongoing classroom conversation.
- **find out about and value students' own cultures and interests.** They recognise students' own arts practices as cultural participation and as learning resources. They take a critical interest in the popular and everyday. They look for opportunities to negotiate the curriculum to reflect students' individual interests.
- **connect students to local artists, events, institutions and organisations.** They organise in-school and out of school visits and see these as integral to their classroom programme, not as optional extras, but as opportunities to extend students' horizons, learn about new places and see their own place from different perspectives. They encourage discussion of community events and concerns and pressing social issues. They appreciate and support the ways in which the arts can help build a sense of place and community.
- **create opportunities for students to exhibit and perform their work for wider audiences.** They encourage students to make work not just for assessment but also for family and wider public audiences. Sometimes joint work with local and national arts organisations allows students to experience arts disciplinary processes and norms in semi-professional contexts.
- **connect students to national institutions and organisations and to arts workplaces.** They build new connections, through work experience and visits, to bring their students into contact with arts and culture institutions and industries so students can build self-confidence and find out what working in the arts is like.
- **set ambitious projects and 'scaffold' the teaching** so that students can develop understanding over time, make and correct mistakes, rehearse ideas, build their confidence. They frequently help students exceed their own expectations of themselves.
- **in their teaching, approach the class as a community of producers** who work together to share, critique and debate ideas in a respectful and appreciative manner.

In these ways, arts broker teachers make arts and cultural media, genres, events, disciplinary norms and professional practices available to students. They also show, through their own everyday arts passions and pastimes, what engaging with the arts can mean. The following quotations from the teacher interviews illustrate some of these points:

“I go to the (theatre) quite a lot and I think (name of area) has an extensive and comprehensive programme and you can see stand-up comedy or the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra or Shakespeare. They get many of the big West End shows coming down here like Warhorse. So I always enjoy going there quite a lot. I love the (contemporary art gallery) because there always seems to be something different there. There is a vibrant music scene down here too and we have many festivals... there is a lot more here than meets the eye.”

“...you might see something on a website but it is a completely different experience when you see it for real. I can still remember the first time I went to New York and saw abstract expressionism and it was completely different to what I thought it was. Plus, the idea that all this stuff is accessible to you and is yours to enjoy and be involved with. The idea that there are all these different experiences in the world, and all these weird things. So actually getting out of your town and seeing something different ... Everything is for everyone and people shouldn't be put off or scared by an art gallery”

“I went off into the (town) cultural scene looking for a storyteller and I went to a very interesting local group in a café where local amateur writers meet and it was there that I found a storyteller. So I've got her in and she's skilled up a group of Year 9 pupils who are now storytellers...”

“... my interest in talking to artists is to find out what they think about themselves as artists and what I can learn from that to bring back into the classroom that might be relevant to my practice as a teacher. So it's a dialogue, even though we each speak a slightly different language. The artists may also teach but they don't teach in schools; they teach in art colleges or universities and they teach Fine Art mostly.”

“...we had four RSC performances and the first matinée was for our Key Stage 3 students and the second one was for ten feeder primary schools and there was an audience of over 350 and, for the evening performances, we just opened it up for the public and we had about 250 people. A lot of parents took younger siblings ... at the end you have this group of professional actors who sit and spend time taking questions and openly say that Shakespeare is hard and they didn't understand it when they first read it... That is an enormously important message and I think it feeds back into their English work. The younger you can get that into kids, it means that the fear factor is taken out. It was accessible in many different ways not least the price, because it was only £4 or £5 for the ticket and that is what I like most about it, because it makes it accessible to people who, in a million years, wouldn't go to the theatre because of cost or travel ... having a play in school makes it more approachable.”

“We worked with a photographic gallery and they hadn't shown students' work before. It was a little bit rocky in the first instance because the original director of the gallery wasn't keen on having students' work on show but there was a change of director and the new one

had a very forward notion of where they should be going and they were incredibly supportive. So we ended up with three days proper exhibition in the gallery. It was a remarkable set-up because students were part of the curatorial team and it was an incredibly fruitful learning opportunity and it demystified the whole process.”

“I always say to my students right at the beginning that when they walk through the doors of my classroom they are walking into a rehearsal studio and they are very much young actors and we will be creating theatre together. I expect them to be evaluative actors who can look back and also comment on other people’s work in a supportive environment.”

“(Famous) studios in X came in to talk to the students about possible work experience opportunities. Three students are going to get paid work experience this summer and they had to do it all properly, from doing a letter and sending in their CV and then they had a day during the Easter holiday at the head office meeting people. ...It gives them real life experience. The thing I did with (tech company) last year started off by talking to the students to see if they were interested and then talking to the head of sixth form to see if that was doable and then pitch it to the students – so it was very personalised.”

“I sit on a board of an arts education network and there are about six of us on the team and I lead the education side because it was about the coming together of the arts practitioners and education. That has led to us applying for different grants and we’ve built up this fantastic link with the regional Arts Council, and we managed to get a lot of funding for projects last year ... we’ve now secured the Arts Council cultural education programme for wellbeing and we’re going to be leading that, which will help to get lots of artists working in schools.”



2.6 What are the barriers to providing high quality arts and cultural education in schools?

Analysis of the case studies clarifies the mix of factors that currently threatens arts and cultural education in schools. These factors are:

1. **The way school performance is measured.** Although the National Curriculum requires every state-funded school to offer a curriculum which is ‘balanced and broadly based’ and so should include arts and cultural education as an entitlement for all, the English Baccalaureate [EBacc]⁸ is currently important as a school audit measure. Subjects that are not in the EBacc – including arts subjects - have tended to be downgraded in the eyes of some schools, parents, teachers and inspectors, and regarded as of lower importance.
2. **Recent changes to the examination system.** GCSEs and A levels were reformed in 2010 to be ‘linear’ rather than modular and to be externally rather than school assessed, preferably by written examination. The number of available qualifications was reduced and some vocational qualifications disappeared.
3. **A legacy of historical divisions between arts and sciences** and subjects related to the ‘head or the hands’. An equation of science subjects with economic value and an under-valuing of the creative economy.
4. **Universities have promoted the idea of ‘facilitating subjects’** that ‘leave open a wide range of options for university study’. The list of facilitating subjects contains no arts subjects except English Literature.⁹
5. **Pressure on time and budgets, and from inspections.** School level indicators that count in inspections are prioritised, especially in schools in more challenging situations. ‘Core’ subjects are timetabled first and often given more formal curriculum time. Option blocks are changed to reflect the curriculum hierarchy and students’ choices are limited. Extra curricular time gives way to ‘intervention’ or revision.

These factors make choosing an arts subject seem to be a risky move for students who want to keep their options open, including for university entrance. TALE evidence shows a clear shift in the way families and students are making subject choices.

Nationally, the profile of students taking the arts is becoming skewed towards those with medium or low prior attainment, with those considered suitable to take the EBacc being less likely to take an arts subject. This establishes a logic, conveyed by parents and teachers and inspectors, that also has an impact on arts and cultural education in the primary sector.

⁸ The EBacc consists of 5 good passes from these subjects: English, maths, two sciences, an ancient or modern language, history or geography.

⁹ The facilitating subjects are: maths, English literature, physics, chemistry, biology, geography, history and modern languages.

These factors have led to a steady decline in the number of students who enroll for arts subjects¹⁰, which in turn leads to loss of specialist teachers in school and in teacher training.

Even in our research schools, deliberately chosen because of their commitment to the arts, the combination of external pressures can play out negatively. Below is a selection of many hundreds of similar comments from teachers:

“It’s been a drip, drip, drip for several years now but EBacc has had a massive impact. Historically we would have had five GCSE (visual art) classes in Year 10 but this year we are down to one with thirteen students. They are getting messages from all over the place that doing arts subjects is wrong and that they need to take EBacc subjects and that is linked to how schools are getting their funding and I think there is a huge push for the arts just to be extracurricular subjects ... It is definitely from subject teachers and certain members of the senior team but also from parents. And it is very common in the media ... there is more pressure on schools and children to achieve results because results means success so there is this real pressure and fear. And the kids think they are making the right choices because they need to pick these facilitating subjects in order to achieve, whereas sometimes you feel that, when they go down that EBacc route, they are not equipped to deal with the interview process for certain universities, or they are highly qualified academically but just haven’t got that ability to socially interact or work in a different way or problem solve. And it’s a shame that that opportunity is being taken away from them as early as Year 9 really. I’m hoping that things do come back round.”

“I am absolutely committed to providing extracurricular opportunities...and I get one night a week to do that. But that then clashes with...intervention – they don’t call it ‘revision’ after school now but ‘intervention’ which suggests that it is compulsory to attend...It seems as if the school day has suddenly been extended and that the expectation is that all students will attend these interventions, but that is to the detriment of other commitments you’ve got.”

“Pupils have to choose something from a set of subjects and there are three pots and we’re in the pot with technology and many BTECs, ICT and PE. So we’re in that and the other ones are the sciences and the first one is your English and Maths.”

“...we are really lucky that the senior management here have decided to do right by the students rather than right by themselves by guaranteeing the creative subjects and getting amazing grades and outcomes.”

“Year 8 will choose their options and start GCSE in Year 9 and that is a change to the curriculum. Things have been a lot harder this year and there has been more pressure because children have been taken out of lessons in Year 11 and we’ve got English boot camps and Maths boot camps.”

¹⁰ Joint Council for Qualifications: fall overall of 8.4% at GCSE level from 2015 to 16 (44,400 students)

“The financial pressures are much more palpable and it is much more of a balancing act to try and keep everything going. We do value the performing arts here and we think that creativity is invaluable for the students’ development but it is really hard to keep that when everything around us, and particularly the politics, is uncreative. It is all about exam results and financial pressure and cutting things and that is not what we want to do but it is really hard to maintain everything.”

“Art is getting squeezed more and more in every school. Textiles has been dropped from the curriculum now which is a real shame and Food is going as well and I can’t understand that.”

“This year pupils’ curriculum choices have been very limited. Art has been very lucky because we are in every option column whereas lots of subjects are only in one column but we are still pushing for pupils to be able to do Art. They are only allowed to do one subject but some schools are not even allowing that. After Ofsted we had our hand slapped so we feel we’ve been forced to do it but we are trying to find creative ways around it.”

“The new senior leadership team has a different view of how the blocking of subjects in the options should be. In the past Art and Textiles had always appeared in more than one column and it was distributed across the four blocks but every single creative subject now appears in one single block so you can’t do two. So for those students who know they want to go on a path to do with the creative world they might have gone for Art and Graphics or Art and Textiles but now they can’t do that.”

“Art has maintained its numbers...Music had been stable but that has dropped and Drama has dropped steadily over the last couple of years and this year the decision was taken that we wouldn’t run it this year as a GCSE option which to me is devastating and I’m worried about the impact that will have on A Level. I think the reason for that is that we’ve had non-specialist teachers in front of Drama classes for our Key Stage 3. And although they’ve had training and they’ve done a good job they don’t have the same drive and passion for it that a real Drama teacher would have.”

And a final comment from a year 12 student:

“where you are assessed practically there is a massive difference there. It’s really difficult to assess how good someone is at Drama by reading an essay. It’s definitely something that you have to do practically. I do History and that’s definitely more text-book oriented, learning something then developing your understanding in a different way.”

Final note

Arts and cultural education needs a secure place in the compulsory school curriculum because it offers **systematic** ways of developing understanding, new knowledge and skills. It **introduces** young people to different forms, genres and technologies. It creates opportunities for **collectively** debating ideas and different points of view. If young people have a **right to culture** and to be educated to become **cultural citizens**, *all* students – not just those who attend elite or privileged schools - need arts and cultural education in school.

This matters particularly because **the playing field is not level for all students and families**.

- More advantaged families often have greater access to the arts and culture through family and social networks
- More advantaged families can afford to buy in what is not available in school or through the family and its networks (through private tuition, for example)
- At school level, because of the family backgrounds of the students, it can seem more 'natural' for advantaged schools to offer a broad and balanced curriculum which fits with students' and their families' expectations.

But if advantaged schools keep the arts while others are strongly steered to drop them, existing inequalities are reproduced, and arts and cultural education in school simply complements and reinforces family and social capital.

All students have the right to the kinds of arts education that we saw offered in our sample schools.

