

Siobhan Verrall, Head of Art and Design, 3 May presentation, APPG for Art, Craft and Design in Education

I would like to introduce myself and build on what Sarah (Sarah Holmes Carne, Principal) has discussed. My name is Siobhan Verrall and I am the Head of Art and Design at Kenton School from Newcastle Upon Tyne. I feel very proud and extremely lucky to be in the position I am to present and share our news regarding curriculum growth and Art and Design becoming a core subject in Kenton School's, key stage 4, curriculum offer.

Before I talk about curriculum developments, I would like to give you some insight into the Art department at Kenton School. The Art department has always had a high profile in the school, the community and Art and Design teacher training education.

When I started working at Kenton School 4 years ago, the school had a specialist Art and Technology status and had been awarded the Gold Arts Mark. As an artist who specialises in sculpture, the array of sculptures in the school grounds and the celebration of student's artwork throughout the building was refreshing, particularly in a "Building Schools for the Future" - new build. The colour and vibrancy inside and out confirmed Kenton School was the place to develop and build my art career. I could see a future here and four years later, I am now head of the Art and Design Department, eight months into my new role. I have taken over the mantle from Glyn Thomas who developed the School's reputation for Art, Craft and Design over 30 years. I have a lot to live up to and a reputation to uphold. Glyn's parting words to me were 'look after the department, build and take Art forward.' These words really struck a chord and I promised Glyn to do my very best to exceed his ambition.

Art and design education and creativity in the curriculum has been discredited with exclusion from the Ebacc, STEM dominance and more and more testing, accountability and measures imposed on schools. Despite the government's initiatives and the apparent side-lining of Art and Design, I am proud my school has looked inwards and focused on our student's needs, their abilities and successes and remembered testing, measuring and accountability is not what makes a child's education.

Art and design has been one of the top performing subjects at KS4 for many years, with last year being one of our most successful. As a department we achieved a year 11 combined GCSE Art and Design Pass Rate of 89% with 67% of students achieving 4LOP and 46% 5LOP. All endorsements have performed above the National average. We perform in the top 5% of all schools at A-level for Ceramics and top 10% for our Art and Design A-level, with excellent value added. We have managed to retain a steady cohort of around 150 students taking a range of Art and Design disciplines at KS4, despite the effects of the Ebacc introduction.

We have also managed to retain boys opting for Art and Design at GCSE. Last year we had 40 boys select Art and Design in comparison to 55 girls; equal numbers of boys and girls in Ceramics and a larger boy to girl ratio in Applied Art and Design. This is a huge achievement in itself, with national figures of male uptake of art and design endorsements down.

We are extremely proud to share the success of our Pupil Premium cohort across all Art and Design disciplines. In particular, I would like to highlight Ceramics, where Pupil Premium students perform equally to non-Pupil Premium students with 100% gaining 4LOP and 86% 5 LOP. Our pupil premium cohort in Applied Art outperformed our non-Pupil premium students last year. Our Pupil Premium boys also outperformed our PP girls achieving 43% 4LOP and 29% gaining 5 LOP. Similar successes are true for EAL and ethnic minority students.

It is really important to highlight the success of Art and Design in a wider school context. Average point score residuals are useful for drawing comparisons of student progress between classes and subjects. The average Art class APS is 12.1. This is the equivalent of students performing two GCSE grades higher in Art than in their other subjects. Five GCSE Art classes out of the eight GCSE groups last year scored between 14.1 and 18.3 APS. 18.3 Average Point Score is equivalent of students achieving 3 GCSE grades higher in Art than elsewhere in the school.

The value Art and Design adds to Kenton School is huge, I knew this already without the data to back it up. As Art professionals we know what Art and creativity bring to a student's development. The non-quantifiables such as: character, determination, grit, communication, resilience, critical awareness, curiosity, discovery, independence, risk taking, diversity, problem solving, challenge... the list is endless.

It is data, accountability measures and targets that "talk the talk" in our education system at present. These do not always go hand in hand with Art and data analysis is not always a natural and preferred endeavour for Art teachers. However, with results like ours, it was important for me to get a grasp of data and share it with governors, senior leaders, parents and students alike. Every possibility was utilised to share the value we add. This was imperative at a time where Art and Design in our School could have (and in many school has), been significantly reduced: uptake limited and the value seen in the subject diminished. My rationale was: If I could highlight the value the Art department adds then maybe we would not fall prey to the imposed Ebacc measure and with it, the limited options students are subjected to.

As a new head of department with a new team, it was very important to develop a shared purpose and a vision to build the department around. The slide behind me shows our shared departmental vision which underpins our moral purpose, our aspiration and our future. I shared this slide with the data previously discussed at every possible meeting. It is framed and present in every classroom and was shared at a Middle Leaders external teach meet and with the Teaching Leaders network I am currently part of. I wanted people to know who we are and what we are about. I am sure Sarah will vouch for my persistence in my endeavour to ensure Art would not fall prey to budget cuts and staff reductions and keeps its rightful place on the timetable.

I have shared my worries about Art in the shadow of the Ebacc with Sarah and the senior leadership team. We have discussed our concerns if Art was part of a larger options block with all non-Ebacc subjects. If so our uptake would be significantly reduced. If numbers were reduced, the value added would also be reduced. Sarah shared her vision with me in our first data meeting at the start of the year. She boldly stated she wanted every student to study Art. If I'm truly honest, I thought that's great! Me too but can that really happen? I went away from our data meeting wondering if this was possible when the national picture looks so bleak. When Sarah mentioned it again the significance of this proposal became apparent. The vision was in motion, curriculum planning and development meetings were in progress, school governors were now involved on voting for the change. The vision was about to become a reality.

From September 2016 we can proudly announce Art at Kenton School at KS4 will become a core subject, with all students in the school at year 9 having a creative 'Art' option. This will consist of Art and Design, Art - Graphic Communication, Ceramics, Photography and Art Textiles. As a result, the department will expand from 150 year 9 students currently studying Art, endorsements, to over 300 students entering year 9 to start KS4 in September 2016. The Art department will continue to grow at KS4 over the next three years to accommodate the increased cohort size, with the expectation that around 1000 students will be studying a GCSE Art endorsement by 2018.

I am proud to say I am the Curriculum Leader for Art and Design at Kenton School and work in a forward thinking school with leaders who think outside the conventional parameters. Leaders who lead, driven by the strengths and passion of their students. A school that supports creativity and ensures all pupils experience a broad and balanced curriculum. A school that supports the Warwick Commission Report which 'insists arts education should be an entitlement for all children'. I am proud that Kenton is challenging the current status quo and giving all students' access to the arts, a cultural education and the opportunity to live a creative life. This is a decision which really encapsulates our School motto 'All different, All equal.'

3 May 2016