



# Cultural Learning Alliance

## Report Card 2026: Detailed Analysis

[culturallearningalliance.org.uk](http://culturallearningalliance.org.uk)

### About the Cultural Learning Alliance

The Cultural Learning Alliance (CLA) harnesses the power of its alliance to champion a right to Arts and to culture for every child. It uses evidence in three ways: to provide annual data-based surveys of children's access to the Arts; to share insights into the policy and practice landscape; and to demonstrate the ways in which an Arts-rich education provides skills for life and skills for work, enabling all children to fulfil their potential. CLA applies a social justice and inclusion lens to its work, supporting, platforming and empowering change.

### About this Report Card

For this third CLA annual Report Card we have split our headline analysis and our detailed analysis into two separate documents. You can see the headline analysis here: [www.culturallearningalliance.org.uk/evidence/#annual](http://www.culturallearningalliance.org.uk/evidence/#annual)

We distil CLA's evidence work and reporting into a clear set of annual indicators, based – as far as is possible – on national time series data drawn from government data sets. Occasionally we broaden the scope of these annual indicators in new editions of the Report Card when new evidence is available – for example, in 2026 we have included data on ethnicity and SEND in relation to Level 2 and Level 3 Arts subjects take-up; Arts apprenticeships data; and new commissioned survey findings on the Arts in primary schools.

### About the author

Written by Baz Ramaiah, CLA Policy and Evidence Associate.

### CLA's work is made possible by

Tina Alexandrou



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## Abbreviations

D&T	Design & Technology
EBacc	English Baccalaureate: an accountability measure in England which measured the proportion of children who secured a grade 5 or above in English, Maths, Science, a humanity and language GCSE; Arts subjects were not included
EA	Expressive Arts subjects: CLA has adopted expressive Arts, or EA, as the collective term for Arts subjects in schools. This abbreviation is used throughout this Report Card
FSM	Free school meals
HE	Higher Education
IMD	Index of Multiple Deprivation (Office of National Statistics)
ITT	Initial Teacher Training
SEND	Special educational needs and disabilities

## Explanatory Notes

### Education ages and stages

<b>Primary</b>		
Key Stage 1	Ages 5-7	Years 1 & 2
Key Stage 2	Ages 7-11	Years 3, 4, 5, 6
<b>Secondary</b>		

Key Stage 3	Ages 11-14	Years 7, 8, 9
Key Stage 4	Ages 14-16	Years 10, 11
Key Stage 5	Ages 16-18	Years 12,13

## Level 2 and Level 3

Level 2 and Level 3 are key stages in England’s educational framework. Level 2 is equivalent to GCSEs and other vocational qualifications typically taken at age 16. Level 3 signifies advanced, specialised study such as A Levels and T Levels typically taken at 18 or above to prepare for Higher Education or skilled employment.

## A focus on England

As with previous Report Cards, the present report is focussed on the education system in England. This reflects the fact that education policy diverged from that of the other United Kingdom nations between 2010 and 2025 in many respects relevant to expressive Arts (EA). These policies include the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) and Progress 8 at GCSE; the introduction of new approaches to exam grading that put increased pressure on schools to demonstrate pupils’ academic progress; and significant falls in per-pupil funding between 2010 and 2019 (Freedman, 2024).

## A note on our numbers

Typically, we report figures to one or two decimal points, dependent on the accuracy required for capturing patterns in year-to-year change. Where there are numbers after decimal points in the data, we have generally rounded numbers up (if they fall in the 0.5-0.9 range) or down (if they fall in the 0.1-0.4 range), unless we occasionally need to indicate changes smaller than 1.0 to indicate year-on-year fluctuation.

## What do we mean by expressive Arts?

The Cultural Learning Alliance (CLA) has adopted expressive Arts (EA) as the collective term for Arts subjects in schools. In Wales, Expressive Arts is one of six equal ‘areas of learner experience’ mapped on to four core purposes of schooling. CLA’s definition, as with the Welsh definition, goes beyond the existing four discrete art forms currently embedded in England’s system (Art & Design, Dance, Drama and Music) to include Film & Digital Media (which spans TV, film, radio and games design). Given the existing structures within the education system in England, this Report Card has a focus on Art & Design, Dance, Drama and Music – with the addition of Media/Film/TV Studies, and Design & Technology, since Design is (confusingly) shared by two subjects within the curriculum.

## **Data gaps**

The government's recording of data on Drama and Dance for our five key indicators has varied from year to year – perhaps in relation to their status as non-foundation subjects (they sit within English and PE respectively). For example, in relation to GCSE entries (Indicator 1) and teacher recruitment (Indicator 4), Dance data is sometimes included as part of Physical Education but also sometimes as part of Drama (e.g., for ITT recruitment data for 2011/12). Drama is sometimes recorded as part of English. Equally, it is important to note that Dance is often not recorded at all for some of our indicators – for example in relation to the teacher workforce and taught hours (covered in Indicator 3) and for teacher recruitment and retention (covered under Indicator 4). It is hoped that ongoing curriculum reforms will also lead to better data collection in relation to both Dance and Drama.

In relation to EA teaching in the primary phase, we note that there is no government recording of key data relevant to Indicators 3 and 4, such as the number of EA taught hours in primary or the number of specialist EA primary teachers. We believe that effective monitoring of EA teaching in primary – in the context of a new Arts entitlement in schools – will require the collection of this data. However, in lieu of such data being available, this year's Report Card includes findings from a Teacher Tapp survey of primary teachers on EA provision in their setting.

## **A note on the vocational and technical (VTQ) qualifications landscape**

GCSEs and A Levels are not the only Arts qualifications available. There is a wide range of broad-based 'Applied Generals' (BTECs and Diplomas) which develop creative skills such as enquiry and problem-solving, as well as introducing a range of media. There are many other qualifications beyond BTECs which are in Arts subjects – and a number of Awarding Organisations. (The government's Post-16 White Paper published in October 2025 outlines a comprehensive reform of England's Further and Higher Education sectors, including new qualifications – V Levels.)

Despite this range of qualification types and awarding bodies, government data aggregates these different qualifications under general subject types such as 'Dance' or 'Music'. This is reflected in our reporting on vocational qualifications data (for Levels 2 and 3).

## Methodology

### Scope

Our analysis focuses on data for the 2024/25 academic year for secondary schools in England, using data mostly drawn from official and publicly available Department for Education (DfE), Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) or Office for National Statistics (ONS) data sets.

Departing from previous Report Cards, the 2026 edition includes data on expressive Arts (EA) teaching in primary schools, using new survey findings from Teacher Tapp. The areas covered in each Indicator are also expanded to offer a more comprehensive understanding of barriers and progress in EA teaching in schools in England.

### Our indicators

As in previous editions of our Report Card, our analysis this year includes data relevant to five key indicators for access to and participation in the expressive Arts for secondary school-aged children and young people in England. Further to these, we have also expanded the indicators this year to include Indicator Primary, focussed on Arts teaching in primary schools. The indicators this year are therefore as follows:

- **Indicator Primary** – Expressive Arts taught hours, Arts staffing and Arts partnerships at the primary phase
- **Indicator 1** – Expressive Arts GCSE and other Level 2 vocational qualification entries
- **Indicator 2** – Level 3 expressive Arts entries, apprenticeships and Creative, Arts & Design subjects in Higher Education
- **Indicator 3** – Number of expressive Arts teachers and hours taught in Arts subjects
- **Indicator 4** – Expressive Arts teacher recruitment and retention
- **Indicator 5** – The Arts ‘entitlement’ and ‘enrichment’ gaps

For each of these indicators, we focus on data for the 2024/25 academic year but also use government data to analyse changes over time from previous academic years. We also include a wide range of new data under each indicator:

- **Indicator Primary:** Original survey findings on primary school teachers’ attitudes and experiences
- **Indicator 1:** New data on GCSE and Level 2 vocational entries at the school level, local authority level and by entrant characteristics
- **Indicator 2:** New data on Level 3 entries by entrant characteristics, changes in Creative, Arts & Design students and staffing by Higher Education provider, as well as more detailed analysis of student numbers for specific Creative, Arts & Design subjects

- **Indicator 3:** New data on teacher qualification levels
- **Indicator 4:** New data on Initial Teacher Training applications and acceptances, including by ethnicity
- **Indicator 5:** New original survey findings on teachers' attitudes and experiences, as well as new research literature from the 2024/25 academic year

## Indicator Primary: Expressive Arts taught hours, Arts staffing and Arts partnerships at the primary phase

### Overview of data sources

In response to a lack of government data, the Cultural Learning Alliance commissioned Teacher Tapp to produce findings on arts teaching in the primary phase. Teacher Tapp is the country's largest daily survey of teachers, with a panel of just under 2,900 primary teachers who responded to our questions.

This panel of teachers were asked questions on:

- **Number of taught hours** – the number of hours of Arts subjects they are timetabled to teach, and the number they actually teach, in a week
- **Changes in the number of taught hours** – whether the number of taught hours in Arts subjects has changed in the last two years
- **Subject leadership in school** – the number and range of Arts subject leads in their school
- **External partnerships** – any external organisations they partner with to deliver their Arts curriculum

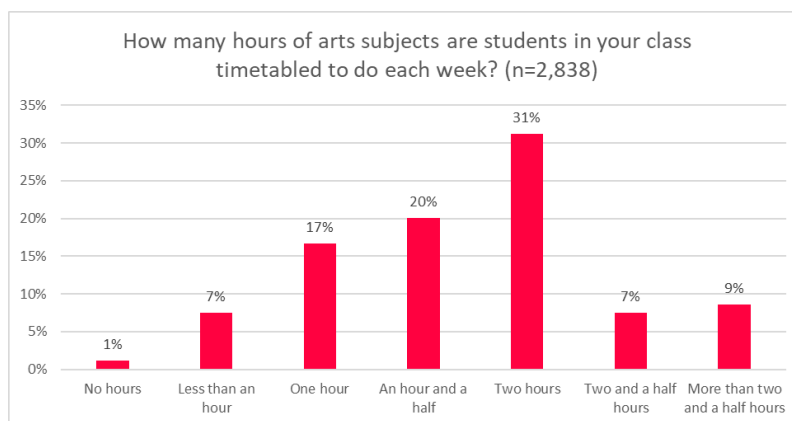
These questions were put to the Teacher Tapp panel in late January 2026.

Response data was reweighted to ensure it is representative of all primary teachers nationally.

### Number of taught hours

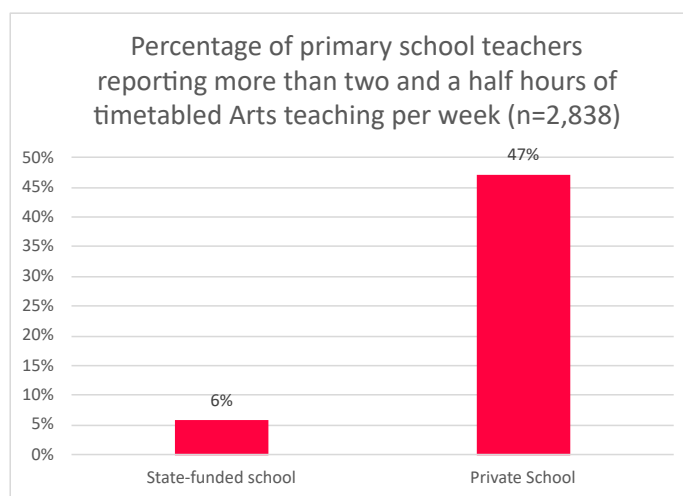
Around one in four primary teachers reported that they have an hour or less of timetabled Arts teaching per week. The most common amount of timetabled Arts teaching per week among primary teachers was two hours, with this being the case for 31% of respondents. Overall, 47% of primary teachers report having two or more hours of timetabled Arts teaching per week, with 9% of these teachers having more than two and a half hours timetabled.

*Figure 1: Primary teachers' timetabled arts teaching hours per week (2024/25)*



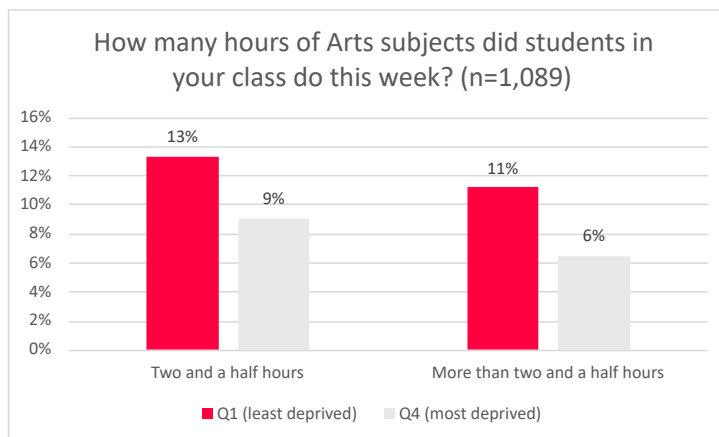
Diving deeper into response data, we can also identify some disparities in the number of timetabled Arts hours in a primary school. Chiefly, there is a considerable disparity between independent and state schools: while only 6% of state primary school teachers report having more than two and a half hours of timetabled Arts teaching in a week, this is the case for 47% of primary teachers in independent schools.

**Figure 2: Percentage of primary school teachers with more than two and a half hours of timetabled Arts teaching per week**



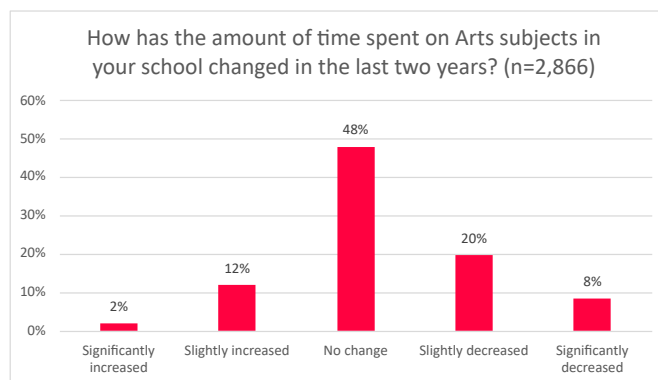
Similarly, we note that that when we polled teachers on the actual number of hours of Arts they had taught that week (independent of whatever they had timetabled), teachers in schools with the lowest proportion of FSM pupils were more likely to have taught two and a half hours or more than teachers in schools with the highest proportion of FSM pupils. However, beyond these disparities, we note that there was very little variation in the number of taught hours between primary schools on the basis of their location in the country, as well as the Key Stage a teacher was working in.

**Figure 3: Number of Arts hours taught by primary teachers by free school meals quartile**



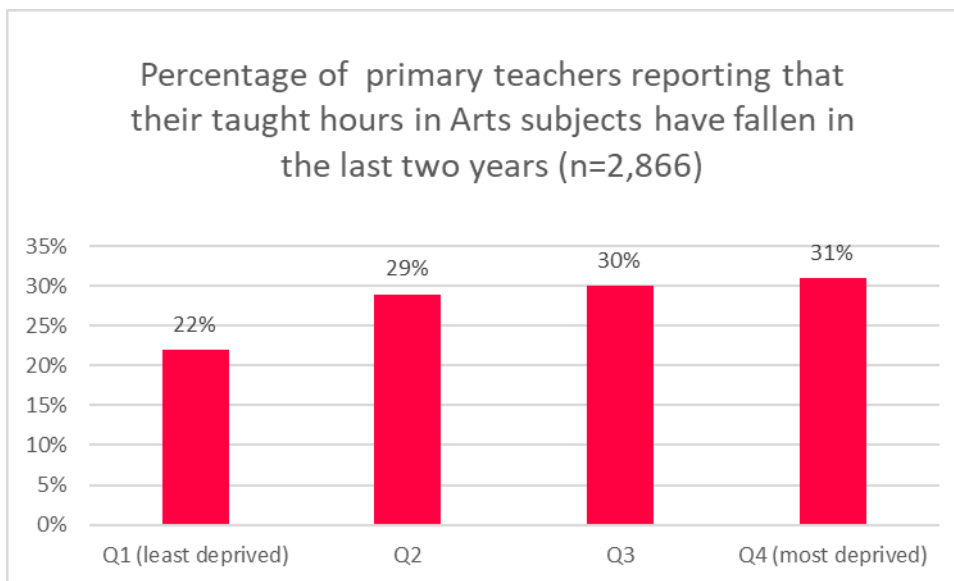
In terms of how these taught hours have changed over time, we also asked primary teachers whether these hours have increased or decreased in the last two years. Nearly half of all respondents told us that the number of Arts taught hours has not changed at all in the last two years. 14% of respondents told us that their Arts taught hours had actually increased over the last two years. However, 28% told us that their number of Arts taught hours had fallen over the previous years, with 8% reporting that these hours have decreased significantly.

**Figure 4: Changes to primary school teachers' taught hours in the Arts in the previous two years (2025/26)**



Underneath this general picture, it is also clear that primary schools serving more disadvantaged areas have been more likely to reduce their taught hours than those serving more affluent areas. While 22% of teachers in primary schools with the lowest proportion of FSM pupils reported a reduction in the number of Arts taught hours in the prior two years, this was the case for 31% of teachers in schools with the highest proportion of FSM pupils.

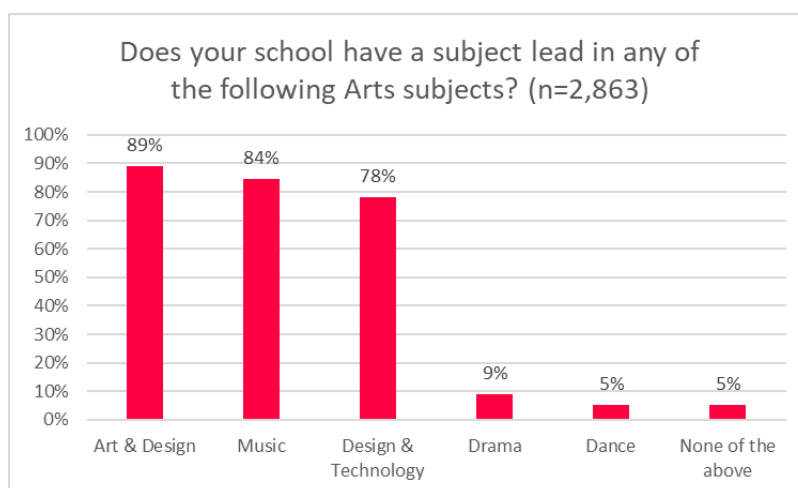
**Figure 5: Percentage of primary teachers reporting that their Arts taught hours have fallen in the prior two years by free school meals quartile (2025/26)**



### Subject leadership in school

The majority of primary schools have subject leads in Art & Design (89%), Music (84%) and Design & Technology (78%). By contrast only around 9% of primary schools have a Drama lead and 5% have a Dance lead. This may reflect the fact that Dance is typically bracketed under the Physical Education curriculum and Drama under the English curriculum in the National Curriculum for primary schools in England.

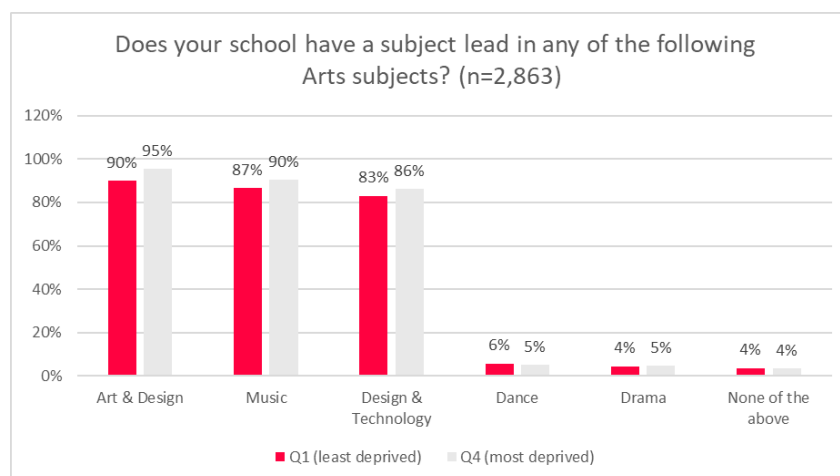
*Figure 6: Percentage of primary teachers reporting an Arts subject lead by subject*



While it does not appear that the region a primary school is in plays any role in whether it has an Arts subject lead, we note that the schools in more deprived areas are very slightly more likely to have subject leads in some Arts subjects. For example, 95% of primary schools with the highest proportion of FSM pupils have an

Art & Design subject lead, compared to 90% of those with the lower proportion of FSM pupils.

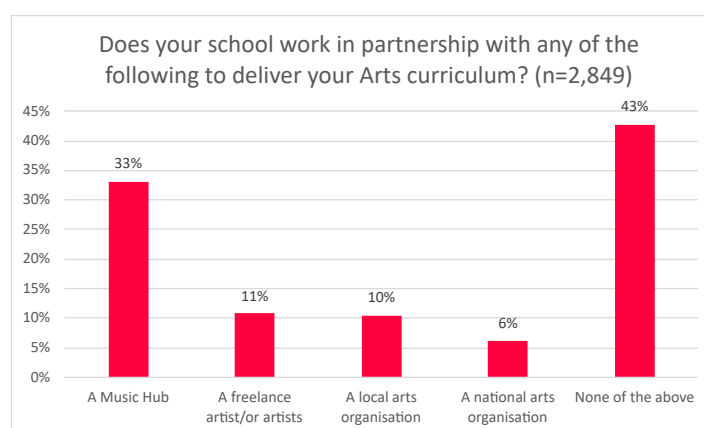
*Figure 7: Percentage of primary teachers reporting an Arts subject lead by free school meals quartile*



### Partnerships with external organisations

Around a third of primary teachers reported that their school works with a Music Hub as part of their delivery of their Arts curriculum. By contrast, only one in ten primary schools work with a freelance artist or a local arts organisation to deliver their Arts curriculum; 43% of primary teachers reported that their school works with no external partners to deliver their Arts curriculum.

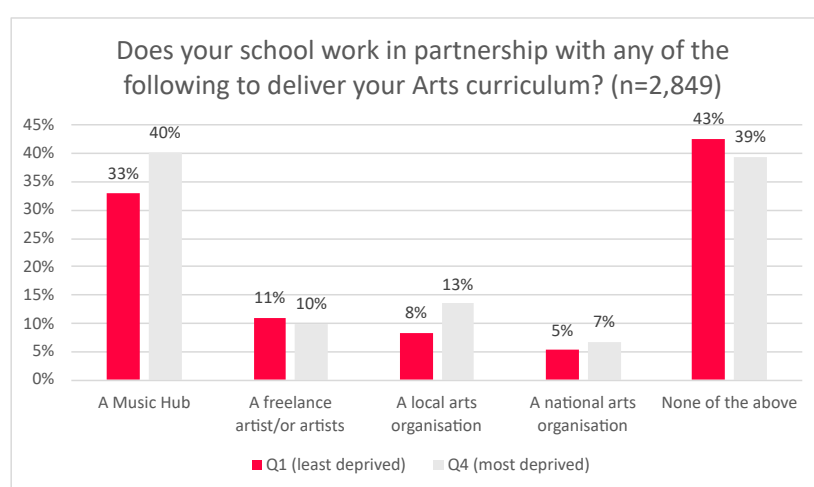
*Figure 8: Percentage of primary teachers reporting Arts curriculum delivery partnerships*



Similar to the pattern for subject leads, we also note that primary schools with a more disadvantaged intake are more likely to work with external partners. For

example, 40% of primary schools with the highest proportion of FSM pupils work with a Music Hub, compared to 33% of primary schools with the lowest proportion of FSM pupils. This is similar for local Arts organisations, with 13% of primary teachers in schools with the highest proportion of FSM pupils working with a cultural partner, compared to 8% of teachers in schools with the lowest proportion of FSM pupils. This may reflect schools in more disadvantaged areas having less internal capacity to deliver their Arts curriculum or potentially having more Pupil Premium funding to spend on external Arts engagement. It may also reflect an imperative within Arts organisations to work in the areas of greatest need and to build relationships with schools with the highest proportion of FSM pupils.

**Figure 9: Percentage of primary teachers reporting Arts curriculum delivery partnerships by free school meals quartile**



## Indicator 1: Expressive Arts GCSE and other Level 2 vocational qualification entries

### Overview of data sources

The primary data source for this section is the government's provisional Key Stage 4 (KS4) performance data for the 2024/25 academic year, published in October 2025. This is the latest available KS4 data at the time of writing, and includes historic data, going back to overall and subject-level entries for the 2009/10 academic year – as well as GCSE and other Level 2 entries by region, local authority, school and pupil characteristics. We draw on all of this data as part of our analysis in this section.

Further to this, we also draw on the Office for National Statistics' Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) data for local authorities in England from 2019. This was the latest available IMD data at the time of writing this report.

## Overall entries

### Changes between 2023/24 and 2024/25

The total number of entries across all GCSE subjects fell by 0.6% between 2023/24 and 2024/25. The number of entries in expressive Arts (EA) subjects had a slightly smaller fall than this overall decrease, declining by 0.3% between 2023/24 and 2024/25. The largest falls in EA entries were in Media/Film/TV studies (of 2.8%), D&T (2.9%), and Drama (1.6%).

However, these small decreases in entries have been offset by some welcome increases in entry numbers – a rise of 8.8% in Dance, 7.7% in Performing/Expressive Arts and 5.7% in Music. The result of these fluctuations in entry numbers means that EA entries made up 6.8% of all GCSE entries in 2023/24 and still make up the same proportion in 2024/25.

*Table 1: Changes in numbers of expressive Arts GCSE entries between years*

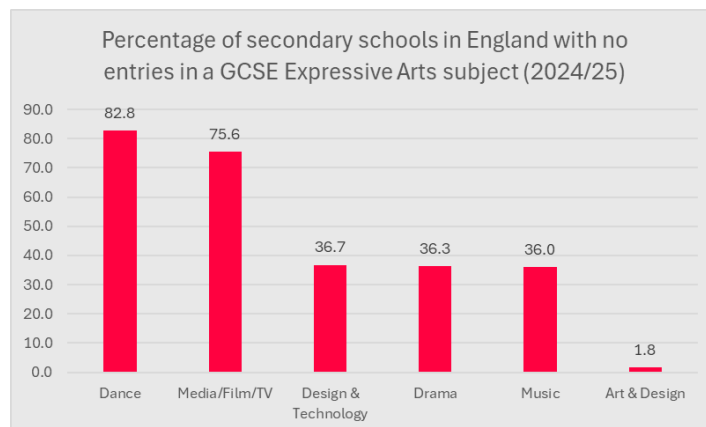
Subject	Percentage change in entry numbers		
	2009/10 to 2024/25	2019/20 to 2024/25	2023/24 to 2024/25
Art & Design	+11.3%	+0.8%	-0.1%
Dance	-55.1%	-21.8%	+8.8%
Drama	-40.6%	-16.2%	-1.6%
Design & Technology	-71.3%	-12.8%	-2.9%
Media/Film/TV Studies	-58.4%	-23.5%	-2.8%
Music	-25.6%	-1.2%	+5.7%
Performing/Expressive Arts	-41.7%	-7.4%	-0.3%
<b>All expressive Arts</b>	-41.7%	-7.4%	-0.3%
<b>All subjects</b>	+16.6%	+9.4%	-0.6%

By contrast to GCSEs, the picture for Level 2 vocational entries in EA subject areas is one of uniform decline. While the number of overall entries into vocational qualifications in 2024/25 increased by a substantial 36% from 2023/24, the number of entries in EA areas fell by 5.1% between years. The largest fall was in Art & Design (6.9%), followed by Speech & Drama (6.2%), Dance (3.9%) and Music (3.7%). There is a possibility that the falls in entries in Dance and Music may be related to the increases in GCSE entries these subjects have experienced.

In addition to understanding patterns in entries across Level 2 subjects, we can also use the government's data to identify patterns where there are no entries from schools in some subject areas. In particular we can use the government's school-level entry data to see the proportion of schools in England who have no entries

whatsoever into specific EA subjects at Level 2, providing strong evidence that these schools do not teach these subjects at Key Stage 4.

**Figure 10: Percentage of secondary schools in England with no entries in GCSE expressive Arts subjects (2024/25)**



Using this data, we can see that nearly 83% of secondary schools in England have no entries in GCSE Dance. The same is true for 76% of secondary schools in relation to Media/Film/TV Studies, 37% of secondary schools for D&T, and 36% for Drama and Music respectively. GCSE Art & Design is exceptional here, with 98% of all secondary schools having at least one entry into the subject, and only 2% of schools having no entries at all.

These figures are largely in line with 2023/24, although the number of schools with no entries in Art & Design has decreased from 3% to 2% between the two academic years, a similar one percentage point fall as for Music (from 37% in 2023/24 to 36% in 2024/25). Design & Technology has moved in the opposite direction, with the percentage of schools not entering for GCSE D&T increasing from 35% to 37% (a 2 percentage points increase) between 2023/24 and 2024/25.

The rate for secondary schools having no entries is higher for Level 2 vocational entries in EA subjects than it is for GCSEs. In 2024/25, 94% of secondary schools had no entries in Level 2 Art & Design vocational qualifications, while 85% had no entries in vocational Dance. 73% of secondary schools have no entries in Speech & Drama and Music vocational qualifications respectively. These high rates of 'null entry' likely reflect the much higher numbers of entries into GCSEs than vocational qualifications, including in EA subject areas.

#### Changes between 2009/10 and 2024/25

Historical data on Level 2 vocational entries is limited, but we can discern a clear pattern of decline in overall entry numbers for GCSE EA subjects. In 2009/10, EA entries made up 13.6% (14%) of all GCSE entries. By 2024/25, this figure has fallen

to 6.8%. Over this same period, the total number of GCSE entries has increased by 16.6%, but the number of EA entries has fallen by 41.7%.

The largest fall in entries over this period has been in D&T (71.3%), followed by Performing/Expressive Arts (69.4%), Media/Film/TV (58.4%), Dance (55%), Drama (40.6%) and Music (25.6%). Art & Design is the exception, with overall entry numbers increasing by 11.3%; as a consequence, Art & Design entries made up 3.3% of all GCSE entries in 2024/25, a figure that has remained largely stable from the 3.5% of all entries in 2009/10. By contrast, Design & Technology entries now make up 1.3% of all GCSE entries, a considerable fall from making up 5.5% of all entries in 2009/10.

While we cannot access school-level GCSE entry data for 2009/10, we can use the earliest available school-level entry data for 2016/17 to compare how the proportion of schools with no entries in EA subjects has changed over time. We note an eight percentage points increase between 2016/17 and 2024/25 in the proportion of schools with no entries in Music (from 28% to 36%), a seven percentage points increase for Drama (from 29% to 36%) and a six percentage points increase for Dance (from 77% to 83%). These between-year comparisons indicate that the number of schools not teaching some EA subjects at GCSE has increased in the last decade.

By analysing school-level data between the 2016/17 academic year and 2022/23, we can see an increase in the number of schools not entering any pupils for some Arts GCSEs. In 2016/17, 77% of secondary schools did not enter any pupils for Dance GCSE; by 2022/23, this figure had increased by 7% to 84%. Between 2016/17 and 2022/23, the percentage of schools with no entries for Music increased by 14% (from 28% to 42%). Similarly, 29% of schools in 2016/17 had no entries for Drama GCSE; this figure had increased to 41% by 2022/23.

### **Entries by geographic area**

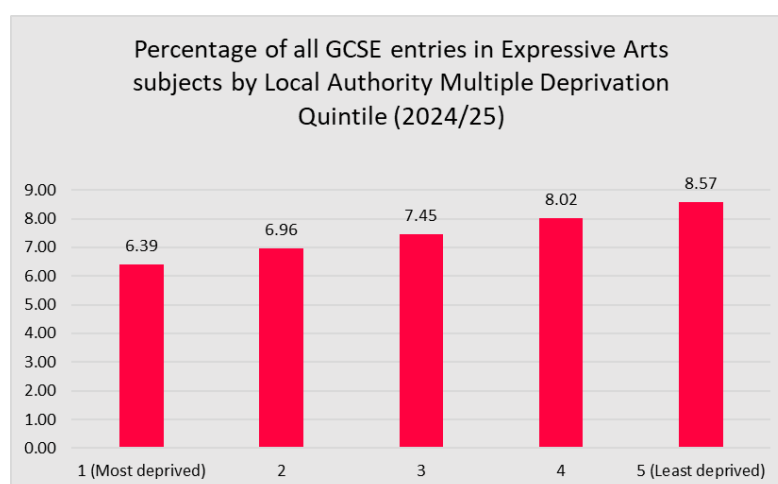
Analysing the government's data on 2024/25 EA GCSE entries at the regional level, we see a pattern that is almost identical to 2023/24. As a result of this pattern remaining relatively stable, the West Midlands and North East – the regions with the highest percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM) – have the lowest proportion of GCSE entries in EA subjects. Similarly, the East of England, South East and South West – the three regions with the lowest percentages of FSM-eligible pupils – have the highest proportions of EA subjects in GCSE entries. This pattern means there remains a clear association between the level of FSM-eligibility in a region and the proportion of GCSE entries in EA subjects in that region.

**Table 2: Percentage of GCSE entries in expressive Arts by region of England**

Region	Percentage of all GCSE entries in expressive Arts (2024/25)	Percentage of all pupils eligible for FSM (2024/25)
South West	8.57%	21%
South East	8.25%	20.6%
East of England	8.14%	20.7%
East Midlands	7.61%	25.3%
North West	7.26%	28.9%
London	6.95%	27.9%
Yorkshire and The Humber	6.87%	27.8%
North East	6.85%	32.3%
West Midlands	6.79%	30.9%

This relationship between the poverty in an area and entries in GCSE EA subjects is also clear at the local authority level. Using the latest Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) figures from the Office of National Statistics for local authorities in England, alongside the government's data on local authority-level GCSE entry rates, we can see a relationship between the level of deprivation in a local authority and the proportion of GCSE entries from that area in EA subjects. EA entries make up 6.4% of all GCSE entries in the most deprived fifth of local authorities compared to 8.6% of all entries in the least deprived fifth of local authorities.

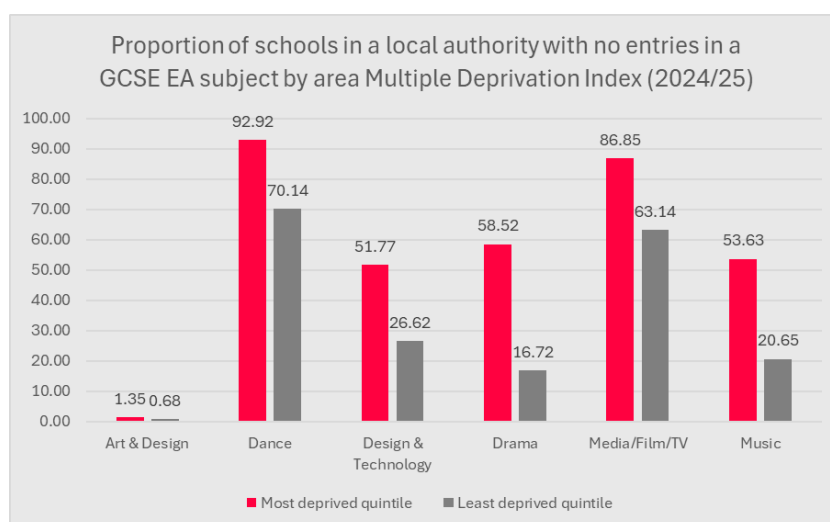
**Figure 11: Percentage of all GCSE entries in expressive Arts subjects by Local Authority Multiple Deprivation quintile**



There is a further association between the deprivation level of a local authority and the proportion of schools in that area that have no entries in EA GCSE or vocational subjects. For example, in the government's 2024/25 data, while 92% of schools in the most deprived fifth of local authorities have no entries in Dance, this is true of only 70% of schools in the least deprived fifth of local authorities. Differences are similarly stark for Music, with 54% of schools in the most deprived

fifth of local authorities having no entries compared to 21% of schools in the least deprived fifth of local authorities. This disparity extends to Drama, where 59% of schools in the most deprived quintile of local authorities have no entries compared to just 17% of schools in the least deprived local authorities. Figures are similar for Design & Technology, with 52% of schools in the most deprived local authorities having no entries compared to 27% in the least deprived.

**Figure 12: Proportion of schools in a Local Authority with no entries in GCSE expressive Arts subjects by area Multiple Deprivation**



Our analysis highlights that this overall pattern of disparity is reversed for Level 2 vocational entries in the government's 2024/25 data. While 66% of schools in the most deprived fifth of local authorities have no entries in Speech & Drama Level 2 vocational qualifications in 2024/25, this figure is higher at 85% for the least deprived quintile of local authorities. This pattern extends to vocational Music, with 66% of schools in the most deprived quintile of local authorities having no entries compared to 78% in the least deprived quintile – and Dance, where 79% of schools in the most deprived quintile of local authorities have no entries, compared to 88% in the least deprived. The disparity is smallest for Art & Design entries, with 92% of schools in the most deprived quintile having no entries compared to 95% in the least deprived. This emphasises a pattern further developed in the next subsection on the relationship between the disadvantage experienced by pupils and their entry into either GCSE or vocational pathways at Level 2.

### Entries by demographic group

Our analysis of the government's data on Level 2 entries by pupil demographic groups reveals a clear relationship between a pupil's FSM status, SEND status, or ethnicity and their participation in EA subjects at Level 2.

In the government's 2024/25 data, 26.6% of all Year 11 pupils nationally were FSM-eligible. If there were no disparities in participation in EA GCSE subjects based on FSM status, we would therefore see that roughly 26.6% of all entries would be from FSM-eligible pupils. However, we see that the participation rate for FSM-eligible pupils is lower than this benchmark in all EA GCSE subjects.

In the 2024/25 data, the lowest participation rate is for Dance, with only 15.5% of entries in the subject from FSM-eligible Year 11 pupils, followed by Music (18%) and Design & Technology (21.3%). The highest participation rate is for Art & Design, with 26.3% of all entries being from FSM-eligible pupils. These figures mean that FSM-eligible pupils are under-represented in all GCSE EA subject entries, with the lowest rate of under-representation in Art & Design. This pattern of under-representation is a continuation from 2023/24, though we note that participation has improved slightly in Art & Design and Design & Technology by just under two percentage points.

**Table 3: Percentage of total GCSE entries in expressive Arts from pupils eligible for free school meals (2024/25)**

<b>Subject (GCSE)</b>	<b>Percentage of entries from FSM-eligible pupils (2024/25)</b>
Art & Design	26.3%
Dance	15.5%
Design & Technology	21.3%
Drama	20.8%
Music	18.0%
All subjects	25.5%

Diverging from this pattern for GCSE entries, FSM-eligible pupils are over-represented in every EA subject area of Level 2 vocational entries, with the participation rate exceeding 26.6%. The highest participation rate is for Music, with 32.6% of all entries being from FSM-eligible pupils, followed by Speech & Drama (31%) and Art & Design (29%). The participation rate is lowest for Dance (26.8%). This pattern is in line with the overall over-representation of FSM-eligible pupils on Level 2 vocational entries in general (with 29.5% of all entries from FSM-eligible pupils). It is also a continuation of 2024/24's data, but with a two percentage points increase in the proportion of pupils studying Music who are FSM-eligible.

In relation to SEND, 17.1% of all Year 11 pupils had an identified SEND in 2024/25. Using this figure as a benchmark, we observe that SEND pupils are typically under-represented in EA subjects at GCSE. Representation is lowest in Dance, with 13.5% of pupils entered at GCSE having an identified SEND. Representation is also low for Music (15.3%) and Media/Film/TV Studies (15.4%), but higher in Art & Design (18.7%) and Drama (18.1%), where SEND pupils are very slightly over-represented.

**Table 4: Percentage of total GCSE expressive Arts entries from pupils with SEND (2024/25)**

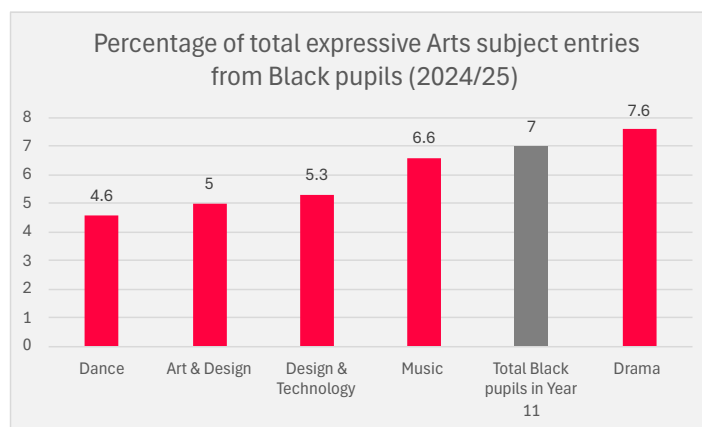
<b>Subject (GCSE)</b>	<b>Percentage of entries with any identified SEND (2024/25)</b>
Art & Design	18.7%
Dance	13.5%
Design & Technology	16.4%
Drama	18.1%
Media/Film/TV Studies	15.4%
Music	15.3%
All subjects	16.9%

Despite this mixed picture, we note that SEND participation has improved across all GCSE EA subject areas between 2023/24 and 2024/25. The largest increases in participation have been in Drama, with a 1.9 percentage points increase in the percentage of entrants with SEND, followed by Dance (1.6 percentage points), Music (1.4 percentage points) Media/Film/TV Studies (a 0.8 percentage points increase). These increases likely reflect the increasing number of pupils in Year 11 with an identified SEND.

SEND participation for Level 2 vocational EA entries is more consistently positive than for GCSEs. Representation is strongest for Music, with 22.2% of all entries coming from pupils with SEND, followed by Speech & Drama (21.6%) and Art & Design (21.2%). Dance is the only subject area where pupils with SEND are under-represented, with 14.2% of all entrants having a SEND. These highest participation rates are in line with the slightly higher entry of pupils with SEND into any Level 2 vocational course. We also note that the participation rate has increased across all subject areas between 2023/24 and 2024/25, with a 2.5 percentage points increase in the proportion of entrants to Art & Design with SEND, and a two percentage points increase in the proportion of entries from pupils with SEND for Speech & Drama. Music has had a slightly more modest increase of 1.5 percentage points in SEND participation.

Turning to ethnicity, we examine entry rates for both Black and Asian pupils. While 7% of all Year 11 pupils in 2024/25 were Black, pupils from this ethnic background made up only 4.6% of all Dance entries, 5% of Art & Design entries and 5.3% of Design & Technology entries. Representation was more positive in Music, with 6.5% of all entries from Black pupils, while Black pupils are slightly over-represented in Drama where they make up 7.6% of all entries. These figures are largely in line with 2023/24, with no changes exceeding 0.2 percentage points except for Dance, where the percentage of Black students entering the GCSE has increased by 0.7 percentage points between 2023/24 and 2024/25. This may reflect the overall increase in Dance GCSE entries.

**Figure 13: Percentage of GCSE expressive Arts entries from Black pupils (2024/25)**



The picture on representation for Black pupils in Level 2 vocational entries is slightly less straightforward, with Black pupils being slightly over-represented in vocational Music (making up 7.7% of all entries) and Speech & Drama (7.2%). Nevertheless, they are under-represented in Dance (making up 5.8% of all entries) and Art & Design (4.8%). These figures are mostly in line with 2023/24, though there has been a 0.7 percentage points increase in the proportion of entries from Black pupils in Music.

Analysing the entry data for Asian pupils, who made up 12.7% of all Year 11 pupils in 2024/25, we can see that this group are under-represented in all EA subjects at GCSE except for Design & Technology (where they made up 13% of all entries). The lowest participation rate is in Dance, where Asian pupils make up just under 3% of all entries, while participation is still notably low in Drama (at just under 7%). Representation is stronger in Music, where 9.5% of all entries were from Asian pupils in 2024/25, as well as for Art & Design (10.7% of all entries).

Under-representation for Asian pupils is the norm across nearly all vocational EA entries, with pupils from this group making up 3.4% of all Dance entries, 5.1% of all Speech & Drama entries and 5.7% of all Music entries. Art & Design breaks with this pattern, with 12.6% of all entries from Asian pupils, nearly aligning with the 12.7% of all Year 11 pupils who are Asian. Across both GCSE and vocational entries, these 2024/25 figures are largely in line with 2023/24, with a notable 0.4 percentage points increase in the proportion of entries from Asian pupils in Design & Technology GCSE, but a similarly noteworthy 0.5 percentage points fall in the proportion of GCSE Dance entries from Asian pupils between the two academic years.

## Indicator 2: Level 3 expressive Arts entries, apprenticeships and Creative, Arts & Design subjects in Higher Education

### Overview of data sources

Our findings on Level 3 entries are drawn from the government's provisional 'A Level and other 16-18 results' for the 2024/25 academic year, published in November 2025. This data includes overall entries for A Levels and Level 3 vocational subjects at the national, regional and local authority level, as well as entries by different entrant characteristics. Our analysis of apprenticeships uses the government's apprenticeships data for the 2024/25 academic year.

Our analysis of Higher Education draws on a wider range of sources. For applications and acceptances, we use UCAS' 2025 end of cycle data, as well as the Higher Education Statistics Agency's (HESA) annual data collections on the number of students studying in different subject areas at the national level between 2010/11 and 2024/25. We also analysed the number of students per subject area and per provider between 2014/15 and 2023/24, as well as staffing numbers over this same period.

### A Level and Level 3 vocational entries

#### Overall entries

##### Changes between 2023/24 to 2024/25

The overall number of A Level entries across all subjects increased by 1.7% between 2023/24 and 2024/25. Over this same period, the number of A Level entries in EA subjects fell by a concerning 9.8%. The largest decreases were in Media/Film/TV Studies, with a fall of 33.7%, followed by Drama (6.2%), Dance (3.2%), Music (2.9%) and Art & Design (1.2%). By contrast, Design & Technology experienced a very slight 0.2% increase in the number of entries between 2023/24 and 2024/25. As a result of the falls in entries, EA subject entries made up 9.5% of all A Level entries in 2024/25, a decline from 10.7% in 2023/24.

*Table 5: Changes in A Level expressive Arts entry numbers between years*

Subject*	Percentage change in entry numbers		
	2010/11 to 2024/25	2019/20 to 2024/25	2023/24 to 2024/25
Art & Design	-5.8%	+3.2%	-1.2%
Drama	-49.5%	-14.9%	-6.2%
Media/Film/TV Studies	-41.8%	-27.8%	-33.7%

Music	-44.7%	-4.3%	-2.9%
<b>All EA subjects</b>	<b>-25.1%</b>	<b>-6.0%</b>	<b>-9.8%</b>
<b>All subjects</b>	+2.9%	+11.7%	+1.7%

*\* Design & Technology and Dance are excluded from this table due to the most recently available entry data being after 2010/11*

Analysing entries for Level 3 vocational qualifications, we can see a similar pattern, with overall entries declining by 1.3% between 2023/24 and 2024/25. This is slightly less than the overall decrease of 3.9% across all Level 3 vocational entries. The decline in EA entries is almost entirely accounted for by an 11.7% decrease in the number of entries in Performing Arts vocational entries – slightly counterbalanced by the 3.2% increase in the number of Media & Communications Entries and a 0.2% increase in Crafts, Creative Arts & Design entries.

### Changes between 2011/12 and 2024/25

Historic data on Level 3 vocational qualifications is very limited. However, A Level data is more complete, with the earliest year of available data covering all EA subjects (excluding Dance) being 2011/12. The earliest complete A Level data is available from 2011/12. Using this as a comparison year, we can see that EA subjects made up 13% of all A Level entries in that year but by 2024/25 had fallen to 9.5% of all entries. Relatedly, the total number of A Level EA entries has fallen by 25% between 2011/12 and 2024/25. The largest falls over this period have been in Drama, where entries have halved between 2011/12 and 2024/25 (49.5%), 44.7% in Music, 41.8% in Media/Film/TV Studies, 34.9% in Design & Technology and 5.8% in Art & Design. By contrast, over this same period, the total number of A Level entries has increased by 2.9%.

### **Entries by geography**

Analysing the government's data on A Level entries by region, 2024/25 figures are largely in line with 2023/24. London remains the region where EA entries make up the smallest proportion of all A Level entries (4%), though this is a 0.5 percentage points increase on 2023/24. Proportions are then lowest in West Midlands (4.1%) and the North East (4.7%), the two regions with the highest rates of FSM-eligible pupils in England. Entries are highest as a proportion in the South East (5.8%) and the East of England (6%), the two regions with the lowest rates of FSM-eligible pupils. As in 2023/24, this highlights a general pattern of association between rates of FSM eligibility in a region and the proportion of A Level entries in EA subjects in that region.

**Table 6: Percentage of A Level entries in expressive Arts subjects by region of England (2024/25)**

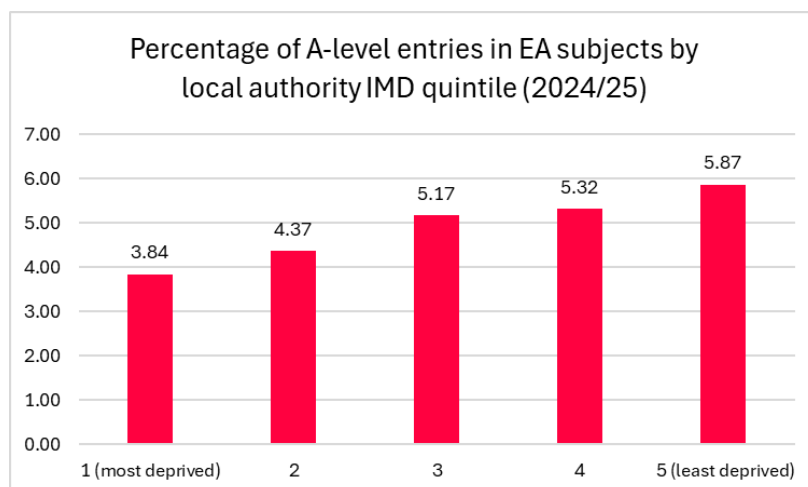
Region	Percentage of all A Level entries in EA subjects (2024/25)	Percentage of all pupils who are FSM-eligible (2024/25)
London	4.0%	27.9%
West Midlands	4.1%	30.9%
North East	4.7%	32.3%
Yorkshire and The Humber	4.8%	27.8%
North West	5.0%	28.9%
South West	5.5%	21.0%
East Midlands	5.5%	25.3%
South East	5.8%	20.6%
East of England	6.0%	20.7%

*London as an outlier in regional data*

For both GCSE and A Level entry data, London seems to challenge the pattern of a relationship between free school meals eligibility and expressive Arts entries. For example, London has the lowest percentage of A Level entries in Arts subjects (4.0%) but has a relatively lower proportion of pupils on free school meals compared to other regions. This exception to the pattern may be explained by the fact that London has the highest percentage of A Level entries in STEM subjects (40%, compared to 35% at the national level), suggesting there might be specific demographic and structural reasons separate from poverty that lead to pupils in London pursuing STEM subjects over expressive Arts subjects. Although it is difficult to present a general picture across London, as there is such a diverse and moving picture between boroughs, London is the region in England with the highest proportion of young people from an ethnically diverse background, and there is evidence that these young people are more likely to study STEM subjects at A Level (FFT Datalab, 2023).

As with GCSEs, our analysis also highlights an association between the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) score of a local authority and the proportion of A Level entries in EA subjects in that local authority. While entries in EA subjects make up 3.8% of all entries in the most deprived fifth of local authorities, they make up 5.9% of entries in the least deprived fifth of local authorities.

**Figure 14: Percentage of A Level entries in expressive Arts subjects by local authority IMD quintile (2024/25)**



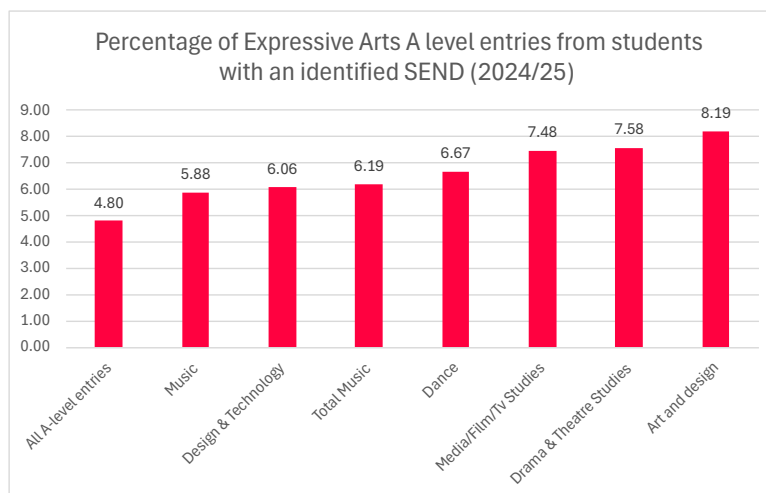
### Entries by demographics

Changes in the demographic characteristics of A Level students taking EA subjects have remained relatively stable between 2023/24 and 2024/25, while the picture has been slightly more complicated for vocational entries. This leaves student participation with a mixed picture at Level 3 in 2024/25.

While 9.3% of all A Level students are FSM-eligible in 2024/25, this was the case for only 3.8% of A Level Music students, 5.9% of Dance students, 6.5% of Design & Technology students and 7.1% of Drama students. This means that FSM-eligible students are under-represented in all these EA subjects. By contrast, 10.3% of Art & Design students are FSM-eligible and 10.1% of Media/Film/TV students, meaning that FSM-eligible students are very slightly over-represented in these subjects.

The proportion of FSM-eligible students undertaking any Level 3 vocational qualification increased by just over one percentage point between 2023/24 and 2024/25, from 17.3% to 18.4%. This rate is almost double that for A Levels, where 9.3% of entries are from FSM-eligible students. Between 2023/24 and 2024/25, the proportion of Crafts, Creative Arts & Design students who are FSM-eligible increased by just over 2 percentage points, from 15.9% to 18%. Participation of FSM pupils has increased more slightly in Media & Communications, rising from 14.4% to 15.2%, but fallen very slightly in Performing Arts from 13.1% to 12.5% between 2023/24 and 2024/25. Given these participation rates, FSM-eligible students are under-represented in all EA vocational entries at Level 3, with the smallest degree of under-representation in Crafts, Creative Arts & Design.

**Figure 15: Percentage of expressive Arts A Level entries from students with an identified SEND (2024/25)**



For SEND, our analysis shows a skew towards over-representation in EA subjects in 2024/25: 4.8% of all A Level students had an identified SEND in 2024/25, compared to 8.2% of Art & Design students. This is similar for Drama (7.6%), Media/Film/TV Studies (7.5%), Dance (6.7%), Design & Technology (6%) and Music (5.9%). This over-representation extends to Level 3 vocational qualifications, where SEND students represented 10.1% of Performing Arts students, 10.7% of Media & Communications students and 13.7% of Crafts, Creative Arts & Design students in 2024/25.

For ethnicity, Asian students made up 15% of all A Level entries in 2024/25, while comprising 7.2% of Art & Design students, 2% of Drama students, 7.2 % of Media/Film/TV Studies students and 5% of Music students. Asian students were best represented in Design & Technology in 2024/25, where they made up 9.2% of students. As a result, Asian students were under-represented in every EA A Level subject.

Black students were similarly under-represented across all EA A Level subjects in 2024/25, although by slightly smaller margins than their Asian peers. While Black students made up 5.8% of A Level students in 2024/25, only 4.2% of Art & Design students were Black, 3.7% of Design & Technology students, 2.4% of Drama students, 1.9% of Music students and 1.4% of Dance students. Representation is strongest for Black students in A Level EA subjects in Media/Film/TV Studies, where 5.4% of all entrants were Black in 2024/25.

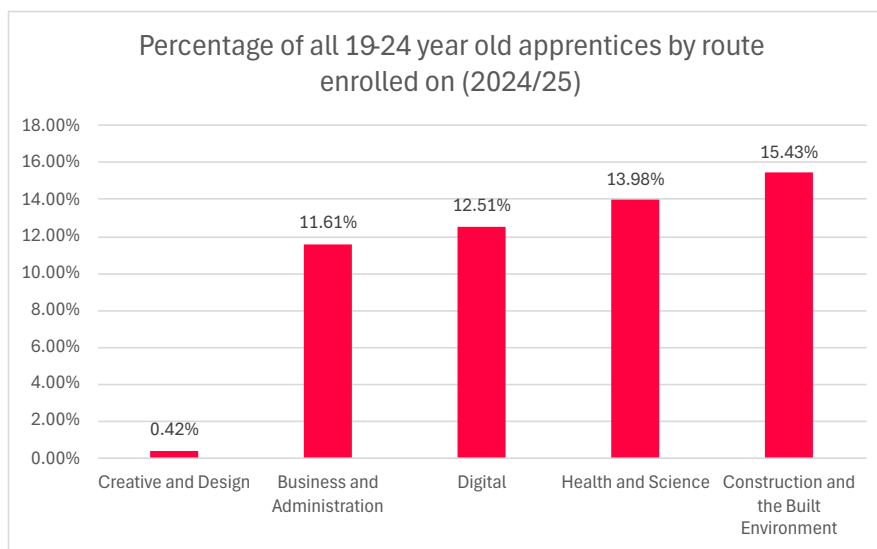
Under-representation by ethnicity extends to Level 3 vocational qualifications, with 11.4% of all Level 3 vocational entries being from Black or Asian students in 2024/25, while only 2.6% of Performing Arts students, 5% of Crafts, Creative Arts & Design students and 8.5% of Media & Communications students fall into these ethnic groups.

## Apprenticeships

### 2023/24 to 2024/25

For this year's Report Card, we have also analysed the government's data on apprenticeship entry, participation and completion for routes related to expressive Arts. This is to further develop our picture of participation in the Arts during the post-16 phase as well as progression to EA training following the post-16 phase.

**Figure 16: Percentage of all 19 to 24-year-old apprentices by route enrolled on (2024/25)**



In general, the total number of apprenticeship starts across all routes and all levels for 19-24-year-olds fell by 17% between 2023/24 and 2024/25. The number of those currently enrolled in an apprenticeship also fell by 7.6% over the same period, with a 30% drop in the number completing an apprenticeship. The figures for apprenticeships across all levels in the Creative & Design route for 19-24-year-olds follows a similar pattern, with a 26.8% fall in starts between 2023/24 and 2024/25, an 11% fall in enrolments and a 14.5% fall in achievements.

It is also worth noting that Creative & Design apprentices are the second smallest group of 19-24-year-old apprentices (after Agriculture, Environment & Animal Care), making up 0.4% of all apprentices in that age group. Figure 16 highlights how this compares to much more popular apprenticeship routes such as Business & Administration, Health, and Construction. It is unclear whether the relatively small number of apprentices at this level is reflective of a lack of supply of opportunities or lack of engagement with the available opportunities.

In parallel to this shrinking of 19-24-year-old Creative & Design apprenticeships, there has been a 35% fall between 2023/24 and 2024/25 in the number of starts for Level 3 apprenticeships on this route among those under the age of 19, accompanied by a 13.3% fall in the number enrolled in an apprenticeship and a 9.3% fall in the number completing one. This leaves the total number studying

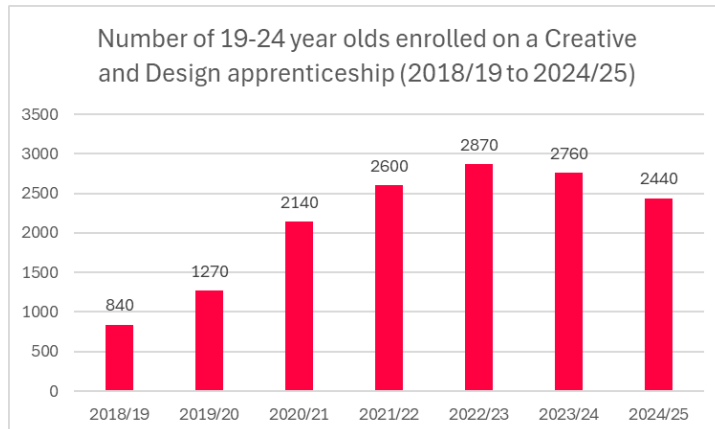
for a Level 3 Creative & Design apprenticeship at only 970 in 2024/25, making up less than 1% of the total number of Level 3 apprentices across all routes.

For Level 4, 5 and 6 apprenticeships (the equivalent to a foundation year degree, the first year of an undergraduate degree, and an undergraduate degree respectively), starts for 19-24-year-olds have fallen by 22% between 2023/24 and 2024/25, while completions have fallen by 18.8% over the same period. With these falls, Level 4, 5 and 6 Creative & Design apprenticeships made up 1.1% of all starts and 1.4% of all completions at that level.

### 2018/19 to 2024/25

These changes in apprenticeship figures take place against a wider historical background where overall Creative & Design apprenticeship participation has improved in recent years. The number of starts by 19-24-year-olds in Levels 4, 5 and 6 of Creative & Design apprenticeships is nine times higher in 2024/5 than it was in 2018/19 (having increased from 20 starts to 210). These increases are similar for Level 3 apprenticeships in Creative & Design, with starts increasing by 44% between 2018/19 and 2024/25, with the number completing their apprenticeship more than doubling over that period.

**Figure 17: Number of 19 to 24-year-olds enrolled on a Creative & Design apprenticeship (2018/19 to 2024/25)**



## Higher Education

### Progression into Higher Education

#### Changes between 2023/24 and 2024/25

We have analysed UCAS end-of-cycle data for the 2025 application cycle, covering the number of Higher Education (HE) undergraduate applications and acceptances for the 2023/24 and 2024/25 academic years. This also includes acceptances onto HE undergraduate courses made during the August and September of clearing in each year.

In total, just over 251,000 prospective students applied for Creative, Arts & Design undergraduate degrees in the 2025 application cycle. This is a 3% fall on the 259,120 applicants in 2024, and a 7.6% fall on the late pandemic 2022 peak in applicants. This decrease in applicants is contrasted against an overall 1.5% increase in the total number of undergraduate applicants between 2024 and 2025 cycles. In fact, Creative, Arts & Design undergraduate applicants made up 8.8% of all undergraduate applicants in 2024 and 8.4% of all applicants in 2025.

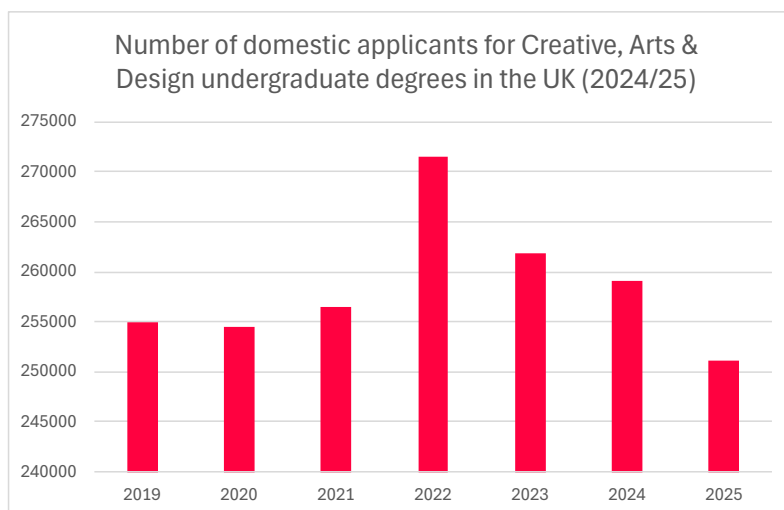
While UCAS does not publish the number of offers made in a subject grouping, the 2025 cycle data shows that 42,220 prospective students were accepted onto Creative, Arts & Design courses on Level 3 results day in August 2025. Over the course of clearing, this figure increased by 9.6% to 46,000. The number of acceptances on Level 3 results day 2025 is a 0.6% fall on the number of acceptances on the same day in 2024. Similarly, the total number of acceptances by the end of clearing is 1.1% lower in 2025 than it was in 2024.

The increase in acceptances over the course of clearing is also smaller than the 10.2% increase in 2024, and the number of acceptances over the course of clearing is 6.5% lower in 2025 than it was in 2024. Given these overall figures, the acceptance rate onto Creative, Arts & Design undergraduate courses in 2025 was 16.7%, a slight increase on the 16.4% rate for 2024. This acceptance rate is largely in line with, though slightly below, the acceptance rate of 17.1% across all undergraduate degrees in 2025.

#### Changes between 2018/19 and 2024/25

The total number of applications for Creative, Arts & Design subjects has fallen by 7.5% between the 2019 and 2025 application cycle. Over this same period, the number of acceptances has fallen by 1.1%. This reflects a decline in the acceptance rate of 0.5 percentage points from 17.2% in 2019 to 16.7% in 2025 – largely in line with the one percentage point decrease in the acceptance rate for all undergraduate courses at HE between 2019 and 2025. As a result of these falls, Creative, Arts & Design applications made up 9.3% of all undergraduate applications in 2019, a figure which has fallen to 8.4% in 2025.

***Figure 18: Number of domestic applicants for Creative Arts & Design undergraduate degrees in the UK (2024/25)***



We also note that the increase in acceptances onto undergraduate Creative, Arts & Design degrees over the course of clearing (between August Level 3 results days and late September) has fallen over time. In 2019, the number of acceptances onto Creative, Arts & Design undergraduate degrees increased by 13% over clearing, while this measure increased by only 9.6% in 2025.

## Total numbers of HE Creative, Arts & Design students

### Changes between 2023/24 and 2024/25

Examining the Higher Education Statistics Agency's (HESA) data for the 2024/25 academic year, we note that while the total number of domestic students at providers in the UK has increased by 0.6% between 2023/24 and 2024/25, the number of Creative, Arts & Design students has decreased by 0.5% over the same period. This leaves the number of Creative undergraduates in 2024/25 at 128,300. As a result of these changes in undergraduate figures, the percentage of all domestic undergraduates studying in the UK who are Creative Arts & Design students has decreased from 7.3% in 2023/24 to 7.2% in 2024/25.

*Table 7: Percentage change in domestic undergraduate numbers by Creative, Arts & Design subjects (2023/24 to 2024/25)*

Subject area	% change in domestic undergraduate student numbers (2023/24 to 2024/25)
Art	-1.5%
Cinematics & Photography	-1.4%
Creative Arts & Design (non-specific)	-2.9%
Dance	-0.7%
Design Studies	-1.1%
Drama	+1.6%

Music	+1.1%
Others in Creative Arts & design	-15.4%
Performing Arts (non-specific)	-2.9%

Using HESA's subject-specific codes, we can analyse the number of undergraduates studying specific subjects that are grouped under the Creative, Arts & Design category. We can therefore see that in 2024/25, Design Studies students made up 35% of Creative Arts & Design students, followed by Music students at 20% and Cinematics & Photography students at 18%. Of the remaining Creative undergraduates, 11% are Drama students, 9% are Art students and 3% are Dance students.

Between 2023/24 and 2024/25, 'Other Creative Arts & Design' subjects have experienced the largest fall in domestic undergraduate students (a fall of 15.4%), followed by Creative Arts & Design (non-specific) and Performing Arts (non-specific), where each subject has experienced a fall of 2.9%. By contrast the number of domestic undergraduate Drama students has increased by 1.6% between 2023/24 and 2024/25, reversing a pattern of the number of Drama undergraduates falling by 9.5% between 2019/20 and 2023/24. Similarly, the 0.7% fall in Dance domestic undergraduate students reverses a pattern of a 9.5% increase in student numbers in the subject between 2019/20 and 2023/24.

#### Changes between 2011/12 and 2024/25

The number of domestic undergraduates at UK universities has increased from 2011/12 (the earliest year where HESA data is publicly available) to 2024/25 by 5.8%. However, in the same period, the number of domestic Creative, Arts & Design undergraduates has fallen by 9.4%. Put another way, in 2011/12, 8.5% of all domestic undergraduates at UK universities were studying Creative, Arts & Design subjects – by 2024/25, this figure had fallen to 7.2%. Data on specific Creative, Arts & Design subjects prior to 2020 is not publicly available.

### **HE provider characteristics**

#### Changes between 2023/24 and 2024/25

Using HESA's provider-level data, we are also able to analyse which providers in the UK play the largest role in educating Creative, Arts & Design students. Excluding small specialist providers (such as conservatoires, drama schools, art colleges and similar), the provider with the largest number of Creative, Arts & Design undergraduates in 2024/25 is Nottingham Trent University (with 4,960 students). This is followed by Manchester Metropolitan University (4,720 students), the University of Salford (3,280 students), Birmingham City University (2,965) and Kingston University (2,900).

*Table 8: Percentage change in number of Creative, Arts & Design undergraduate students by provider (2020/21 to 2024/25)*

<b>Provider name</b>	<b>Percentage fall in number of Creative, Arts &amp; Design undergraduate students (2020/21 to 2024/25)</b>
University College Birmingham	-84.8%
University of Wolverhampton	-57.8%
St Mary's University	-51.1%
University of Suffolk	-50.8%
Solent University	-50.5%
Middlesex University	-49.7%
University of Cumbria	-46.4%
Edge Hill University	-44.0%
University of Hertfordshire	-37.5%
Brunel University London	-36.4%

In terms of the proportion of all their undergraduates who are studying Creative, Arts & Design degrees, the University of Chichester has the highest (27.5%), followed by Goldsmiths College (28.3%), the University of Chichester (21%), Kingston University (15.4%) and Abertay University (14.3%).

While it is welcome to see a range of providers across the UK with a focus on Creative, Arts & Design subjects, we also note that there are some who have experienced considerable decreases in their number of Creative Arts & Design undergraduates. In particular, University College Birmingham has experienced an 84% decrease in the number of its Creative Arts & Design undergraduates between 2020/21 and 2024/25, Wolverhampton has experienced a 58% fall, and St Mary's, the University of Suffolk and Solent University have each experienced 51% decreases.

It is noteworthy that nine of the ten universities with the largest falls in Creative Arts & Design domestic undergraduates are modern universities (also known as post-92 universities). Modern universities play an outsized role in the UK in educating students from lower participation backgrounds, with 67% of all HE students in the country from low participation neighbourhoods studying at modern universities (MillionPlus, 2025); 65% of all Black university students also study at modern universities (MillionPlus, 2025). As a result, losses in student numbers (and accompanying losses in funding and capacity) in modern universities likely entail losses in access to Creative Arts & Design courses for individuals from lower participation and more disadvantaged backgrounds.

#### Changes between 2014/15 and 2023/24

In addition to changes in the number of students, there have also been changes to the number of Creative, Arts & Design academic staff in UK universities. In 2014/15 (the earliest year where HESA staffing data is publicly available), there were 18,890

Creative, Arts & Design academic staff in the UK, making up 5.8% of all academic staff in the UK. In 2023/24, the number of Creative, Arts & Design staff across the UK had increased by 22.9% to 24,485. This is largely in line with overall increases in the total number of academic staff in UK providers, which rose by 21.5% between 2014/15 and 2023/24. As a result of this increase, Creative, Arts & Design academic staff made up 6.2% of all academic staff in the UK in 2023/24.

In line with this national picture, some individual providers have experienced considerable increases in their number of Creative, Arts & Design academic staff. For example, both the University of Aberdeen and University of Greenwich have respectively tripled their number of Creative, Arts & Design academic staff between 2014/15 and 2023/24. The University of Greater Manchester, Bournemouth University and the City University of London have doubled their Creative Arts & Design academic staff over that same period.

However, these increases mask the large number of providers who have experienced decreases in Creative, Arts & Design academic staff between 2014/15 and 2023/24. Over this period, 28.3% of providers with Creative, Arts & Design academic staff have experienced reductions in their number. Some providers have experienced particularly large falls in academic staff numbers, with Roehampton University, the University of Kent and the University of Cumbria respectively losing 66.7% of their Creative Arts & Design academic staff between 2014/15 and 2023/24. The University of Wolverhampton, Keele University and Canterbury Christ Church University have all also each experienced a 50% decrease between 2014/15 and 2023/24.

## **Indicator 3: Number of expressive Arts teachers and hours taught in Arts subjects**

### **Overview of data sources**

The data for this section is all drawn from the government's Schools Workforce Census for the 2024/25 academic year. The full data set also includes census data going back to 2010/11, which we have also analysed. This includes data on teacher qualification levels and taught hours by subject.

We note that the government's recording and reporting of teacher headcounts and taught hours excludes Dance. As such, it is not possible for us to cover figures for Dance in this section. As in previous Report Cards, we continue to urge the government to remedy this omission of Dance from its annual workforce census.

### **Overall headcount**

### Changes between 2023/24 and 2024/25

Drawing on the government's School Workforce Census (2024/25), we can see that the overall EA workforce in secondary schools in England has grown by 1.5% (from 46,912 EA teachers to 47,604). The largest increases in EA workforce size have been for Music, which grew by 2.6% between 2023/24 and 2024/25 and 2% for Design & Technology. The number of Drama teachers has increased by 1.3% over the same period. The Art & Design workforce has increased by a lower rate of 0.7%, but it is worth noting that there were 70% more Art & Design teachers than Music teachers in 2023/24 and 39% more than Drama, potentially reducing the headroom for the Art & Design workforce to grow at the same rate as other EA subjects.

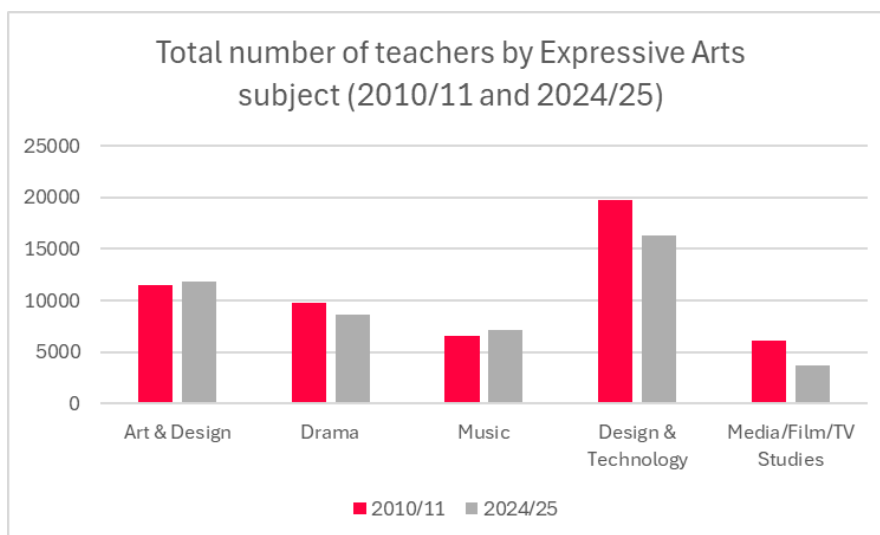
These figures put the increase in EA teacher numbers in line with teachers of English Baccalaureate (EBacc) subjects, where the workforce has similarly grown by 1.5%. The growth in the number of EA teachers has also exceeded the aggregate increase across all secondary teachers, which sits at 1.1%.

This is a promising development over a single year, but it is equally worth noting that these small increases take place against a background of major decreases in the size of the EA teacher workforce over the last 15 years.

### Changes between 2010/11 and 2024/25

Taking a wider historical perspective, we have examined the earliest publicly available School Workforce Census data from 2010/11. Our analysis shows a concerning pattern in the overall size of the EA teacher workforce in England. While the overall number of secondary teachers has increased by 4% between 2010/11 and 2023/24, the number of expressive Arts teachers has fallen by more than 6,000 during that same period.

*Figure 19: Total number of teachers by expressive Arts subject (2010/11 and 2024/25)*



The largest fall has been in Media Studies, where there are 40% fewer teachers in 2023/24 than there were in 2010/11, followed by a 17% decrease in the number of Design & Technology teachers and a 12% decrease in the number of Drama teachers over that same period. All of this should be contrasted with a 22% increase in the number of teachers of EBacc subjects between 2010/11 and 2023/24.

The story is somewhat different for Music, with the number of Music teachers increasing by 9% between 2010/11 and 2023/24 – although we should note that most of this increase has taken place since the 2020/21 mid-pandemic surge in teacher recruitment. The pattern is similar for Art & Design, where the workforce has grown by 3% from 2010/11 to 2023/24.

### Headcount by qualification level

#### Changes between 2023/24 and 2024/25

The School Workforce Census also captures data on the qualification levels of subject teachers. Using this data, we can see an increase in the number of expressive Arts teachers without Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). This number increased by 15% between 2023/24 and 2024/25, taking the overall proportion of expressive Arts teachers who are non-qualified from 4% to 4.5%.

**Table 9: Percentage changes and proportions related to number of non-qualified expressive Arts teachers**

Subject	Percentage change in number of non-qualified teachers (2010/11 to 2024/25)	Percentage change in number of non-qualified teachers (2023/24 to 2024/25)	Proportion of subject workforce who are non-qualified (2024/25)
Art & Design	+36.5%	+22.8%	3.8%
Drama	-28.4%	+17.2%	3.7%

Music	+45.2%	+6.8%	5.1%
Design & Technology	+18.1%	+13.1%	5.4%
Media/Film/TV Studies	-49.0%	+8.7%	2.7%
<b>All expressive Arts*</b>	<b>+8.9%</b>	<b>+14.2%</b>	<b>4.5%</b>
All subjects	+8.9%	+14.9%	3.2%

\* Data on Dance teachers unavailable so is excluded from figures

The largest increase in non-qualified teachers within the EA subjects has been for Art & Design, where there are 23% more teachers without QTS in 2024/25 than in 2023/24, followed by Drama, where this figure has increased by 17%, and Design & Technology, where it has increased by 13%. This leaves Design & Technology with the highest proportion of non-qualified teachers out of any EA subject at 5.4%, followed by Music at 5.1% and Art & Design at 3.8%.

While this may be concerning, it is part of a broader pattern, with the overall number of secondary teachers across all subjects without QTS increasing by 15% between 2023/24 and 2024/25, taking the overall proportion of secondary teachers who are unqualified from 2.9% to 3.2%.

In addition to tracking the number of teachers with QTS, the School Workforce Census also tracks the level of subject-relevant qualification – for example, Art & Design teachers with a bachelor's or master's degree in an Art & Design-related subject.

Examining this data, we see a similar pattern to non-qualification, with the number of EA teachers with no subject-relevant qualification post-A Level increasing by 5.3% between 2023/24 and 2024/25. As with non-qualification, this is part of a wider pattern, with the number of secondary school teachers in general with no relevant post-A Level qualification to the subject they teach increasing by 5%, and this figure increasing by 7% for teachers of EBacc subjects.

As a result of these increases, just under 23% of all expressive Arts teachers have no subject-relevant post-A Level qualification. This is notably much higher than the proportion across all secondary subjects, where 13% of teachers have no relevant post-A Level qualification, and teachers of EBacc subjects where this figure sits at 12.5%

The largest increase in number of teachers with no subject-relevant post-A Level qualification has been in Music, with this figure increasing by 10% between 2023/24 and 2024/25, followed by Art & Design (9%), Design & Technology (6.6%), and Drama (2.5%).

With these increases, Media Studies currently has the highest proportion of teachers with no post-A Level subject-relevant qualification of any EA subject, at 58%. This is followed by Design & Technology at 23%, Drama at 19%, Music at 7.3% and Art & Design at 5.8%. It is worth noting that, in the case of Art & Design and Music, these proportions are much lower than the rate for all secondary subjects (13%).

#### Changes between 2010/11 and 2024/25

The most illuminating way to compare the number of non-qualified EA teachers between 2010/11 and 2024/25 is to examine the proportion of all teachers in each subject that were non-qualified in 2010/11 compared to 2024/25.

The proportion of non-qualified teachers has increased in all EA subjects over this period, except for Drama, where the proportion has decreased by just under one percentage point from 4.6% to 3.7%. The largest increase in the proportion of teachers who are non-qualified has been in Design & Technology, up by 1.6 percentage points between 2010/11 and 2024/25, followed by Music with a 1.3 percentage points increase over the same period. The proportion of non-qualified teachers has in fact decreased for Drama, going from 4.6% in 2010/11 to 3.7% in 2024/25.

**Table 10: Proportion of expressive Arts teachers without Qualified Teacher Status or subject-relevant post-A Level qualifications (2010/11 and 2024/25)**

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Proportion of all teachers who are non-qualified (2010/11)</b>	<b>Proportion of all teachers who are non-qualified (2024/25)</b>	<b>Proportion of teachers with no relevant post-A Level qualification (2010/11)</b>	<b>Proportion of teachers with no relevant post-A Level qualification (2024/25)</b>
Art & Design	2.9%	3.8%	9.1%	5.8%
Drama	4.6%	3.7%	29.7%	18.8%
Music	3.8%	5.1%	9.7%	7.3%
Design & Technology	3.8%	5.4%	27.6%	23.2%
Media/Film/TV studies	3.2%	2.7%	73%	58.1%
All EA subjects	3.7%	4.5%	29.8%	22.6%
EBacc subjects	2.1%	2.9%	20.7%	19.5%
All subjects	3.1%	3.2%	18.7%	13.1%

By comparison, the proportion of EBacc subject teachers who are non-qualified is 2.9%, lower than any EA subject except for Media Studies. However, the proportion of EA teachers who are non-qualified has changed at the same rate as EBacc subjects, with both growing by 0.8 percentage points between 2010/11 and

2024/25. This suggests that the issue of teacher qualification is not exclusive to EA subjects.

In relation to the numbers and proportions of EA teachers with no subject-relevant post-A Level qualification, the picture is more positive. In absolute figures, the number of EA teachers with no subject-relevant post-A Level qualification has fallen by 22% between 2010/11 and 2024/25, which is ahead of the fall across all secondary subjects of 21% and of 14.5% across all EBacc subjects.

As a result, the proportion of expressive Arts teachers with no subject-relevant post-A Level qualification has gone from nearly 30% in 2010/11 to 23% in 2024/25, a fall of 7 percentage points. The largest fall in proportion of teachers who have no relevant post-A Level qualification for a specific EA subject has been for Drama, which has gone from having nearly 30% of all teachers lacking this qualification to 19%, a fall of 11 percentage points.

Despite these falls, it is worth highlighting that Design & Technology still has 23% of its teachers without a post-A Level subject-relevant qualification, a much higher rate than that across all secondary subjects (13%). Drama also has nearly a fifth (19%) of its secondary teachers lacking post-A Level qualification.

## Taught hours

### Changes between 2023/24 and 2024/25

Across the whole of the secondary phase, the number of hours of expressive Arts taught has fallen by 0.1% between 2023/24 and 2024/25. The total number of taught hours has fallen most for Media Studies, decreasing by 0.7%, followed by Art & Design at 0.3% and Drama at 0.2%. By contrast, the total hours taught in Music has increased by 1.4% between 2023/24 and 2024/25 and risen by 0.14% in Design & Technology over the same period. Despite these rises in taught hours for some subjects, the falls referenced above mean that while 13.4% of all taught hours in secondary in 2023/24 were in the expressive Arts, that figure has fallen to 13.3% in 2024/25.

At the Key Stage 3 (KS3) level (years 7-9, ages 11-14), the total number of taught hours in Music increased by 2.2% between 2023/24 and 2024/25, while the number of taught hours for Drama increased by 0.7%. Moving in the opposite direction, the number of KS3 taught hours in Art & Design fell by 0.6%, while Media Studies taught hours decreased by 10%.

*Table 11: Proportion of expressive Arts taught hours at KS3 (2010/11 and 2024/25)*

Subject	Proportion of all KS3 expressive Arts taught hours (2010/11)	Proportion of all KS3 expressive Arts taught hours (2024/25)

Art & Design	22.4%	24.9%
Drama	14.1%	18.0%
Music	17.2%	20.7%
Design & Technology	45.6%	36.0%
Media/Film/TV Studies	0.8%	0.4%

The net outcome of these fluctuations is that 16.3% of all teaching hours in KS3 were in the expressive Arts in 2023/24, and this figure has fallen to 16.1% in 2024/25. In terms of the composition of the EA taught hours at KS3 in 2024/25, 36% of these hours are taught in Design & Technology, 25% in Art & Design, 20% in Music and 18% in Drama. These figures are effectively unchanged from 2023/24.

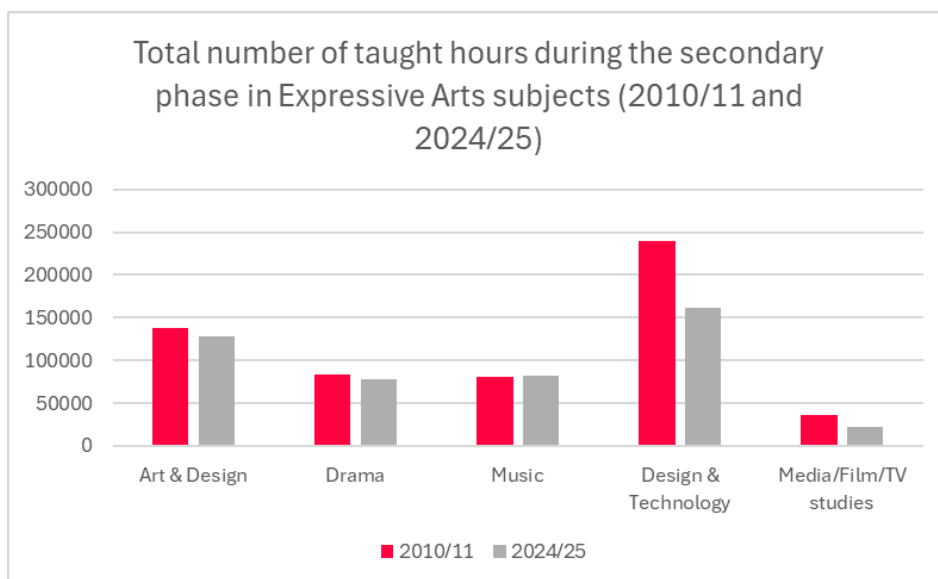
At the Key Stage 4 (KS4) level, taught hours tend to correspond to the number of entries at GCSE in that subject. As such, the very slight decreases in KS4 taught hours in Drama (a fall of 1.1%) and Design & Technology (0.1%) between 2023/24 and 2024/25 seems related to the fall in GCSE entries in those subjects between those same years. The same seems to hold for the 0.5% increase in KS4 taught hours in Art & Design, 0.2% for Music and 0.3% for Media Studies and the increases in entries in these subjects.

For Key Stage 5 (KS5), the overall number of taught hours across all subjects has increased between 2023/24 and 2024/25. Nevertheless, the number of taught hours in EA subjects has fallen by 0.9% over this period, reflecting the declining number of entries in EA subjects at A Level and in Level 3 vocational qualifications. The largest falls in taught hours between the two years have been in Drama (a fall of 3%), Music (2.3%), Art & Design (1.2%) and Media Studies (0.5%). However, taught hours have increased by 1.5% in Design & Technology. This aligns with overall change patterns in entries at A Level and other Level 3 qualifications.

#### Changes between 2010/11 and 2024/25

Looking back to 2010/11, the overall number of hours taught in expressive Arts across the whole secondary phase has fallen by 18% up to 2024/25. At the same time, the total number of secondary taught hours has increased by 23% in EBacc subjects across between 2010/11 and 2024/25.

*Figure 20: Total number of taught hours during the secondary phase in Expressive Arts subjects (2010/11 and 2024/25)*



The largest fall in taught hours of EA subjects across secondary has been in Media Studies, which has experienced a 37% decline, followed by Design & Technology (32%), Art & Design (7.3%) and Drama (7%). However, the total number of taught hours in Music across all years in secondary has increased by 1.5%.

At the KS3 level, the total number of taught hours in all subjects has increased by 8.9% between 2010/11 and 2024/25, while the number of taught hours in expressive Arts at KS3 has fallen by 8.9% over the same period. The largest falls in taught hours have been in Media Studies (a fall of 51%) and Design & Technology (28%). By contrast, there have been noteworthy increases in the number of taught hours in Drama (16.8%), Music (9.5%), and Art & Design (1.3%) between 2010/11 and 2024/25. Relatedly, it is worth highlighting that in 2010/10, 46% of all taught hours in KS3 Arts subjects were in Design & Technology, whereas this was the case for 36% of KS3 taught hours in 2024/25. Music made up 17% of KS3 expressive Arts taught hours in 2010/11, with this increasing to 21% in 2024/25 and Drama increasing from 14% of KS3 EA taught hours in 2010/11 to 18% in 2024/25.

At KS4, while the total number of taught hours in EBacc subjects at KS4 has increased by 30% between 2010/11 and 2024/25, the number of taught hours at the same Key Stage has fallen by 26% in expressive Arts subjects over the same period. The largest falls over this period have been in Design & Technology (37%), Media Studies (36%) and Drama (27%), with an 11% fall in Art & Design. Taught hours at KS4 in Music have very slightly increased by 0.1% between 2010/11 and 2024/25.

For KS5 students, the total number of taught hours across all subjects has fallen by 7% between 2010/11 and 2024/25. This figure is much higher for the expressive Arts, where taught hours have fallen for KS5 by 33% across the same period. The

largest falls have been in Drama (40%), Design & Technology (40%), Media Studies (37%), Music (33%) and Art & Design (22%).

## Indicator 4: Expressive Arts teacher recruitment and retention

### Overview of data sources

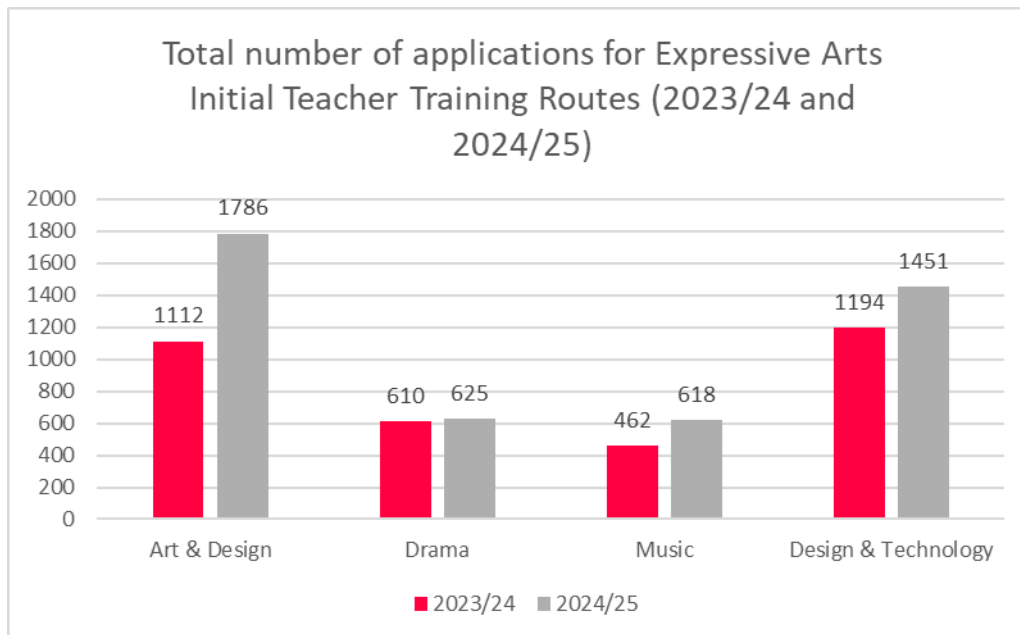
This section primarily draws on data from the government's Initial Teacher Training (ITT) census for 2024/25. The data set includes historical data from 2010/11 onwards and covers the total number of ITT students in any of the academic years included in the data, as well as data on the government's targets for ITT recruitment. We also draw on the government's Initial Teacher Training application data for 2024/25, which covers applications, offers and acceptances (including by ethnicity) for the academic year 2024/25. For our analysis on teacher retention, we use data from the 2024/25 School Workforce Census, including the numbers of vacancies and the vacancy rates by subject going back to 2010/11.

### Applications and acceptances

#### Changes between 2023/24 and 2024/25

In 2024/25, there were a total of 4,480 applicants to EA Initial Teacher Training (ITT) routes. This is an increase of 32.6% on the number of EA applicants in 2023/24, greater than the general 25% rise in the number of applicants for all secondary subjects – suggesting the increases experienced by EA exceed the observed sector-wide pattern. The largest increase in applicant numbers between 2023/24 and 2024/25 has been in Art & Design (60.6%), followed by Music (33.7%), Design & Technology (21.5%) and Drama (2.5%).

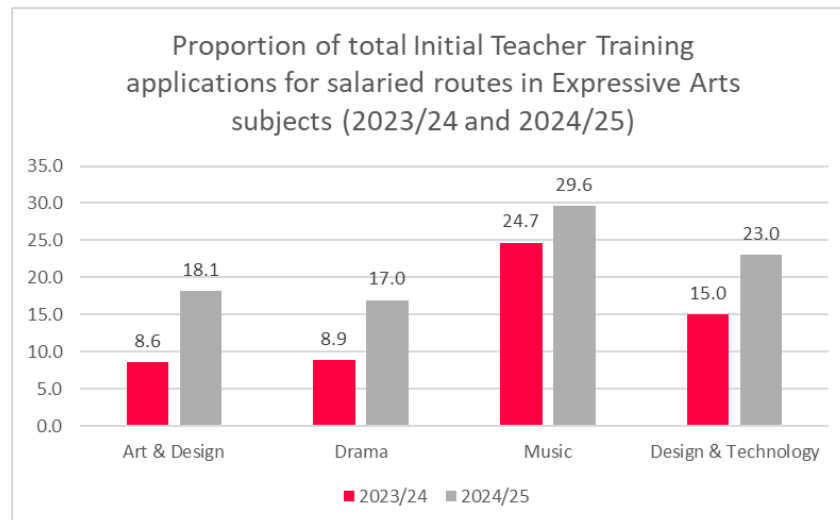
*Figure 21: Total number of applications for expressive Arts Initial Teacher Training routes (2023/24 and 2024/25)*



In addition to general increases in the number of applications, there have also been considerable increases in the number of applications to the salaried teacher training routes (the Schools Direct salaried route and the Postgraduate Teaching Apprenticeship).

As a result of these increases, the proportion of all applicants applying for salaried routes has increased from 8.6% in 2023/24 to 18.1% in 2024/25 in Art & Design; from 8.9% to 17% in Drama; from 15% to 23% in Design & Technology; and from 24.6% to 29.6% in Music. These figures are largely in line with the overall pattern for secondary ITT, where the proportion of all applications that are for salaried routes increased from 18.7% to 30.4%. These changes may reflect the fluctuating availability of EA ITT bursaries, as well as the generally challenging economic circumstances of graduates.

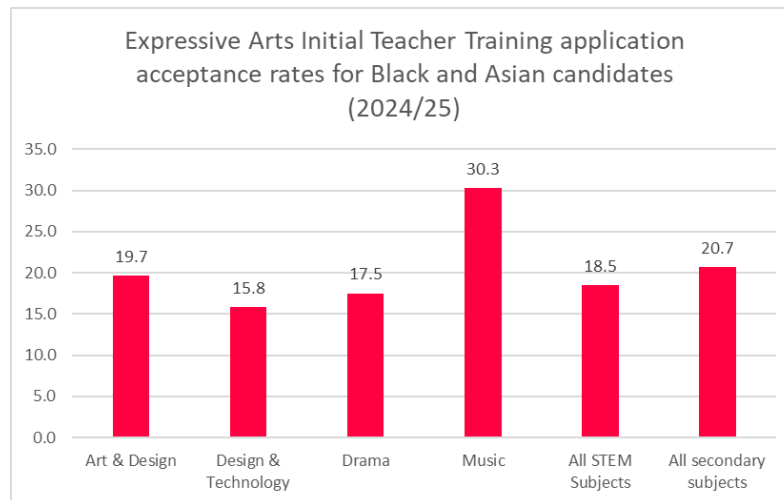
***Figure 22: Proportion of total Initial Teacher Training applications for salaried routes in expressive Arts subjects (2023/24 and 2024/25)***



In response to this increasing number of applications, there has been a mixed pattern for the number of acceptances. The number of accepted applications for Art & Design has increased from 39.2% to 44.2% (a 5 percentage points increase) between 2023/24 and 2024/25, with a similar increase for Music from 44.8% to 51% (a 6 percentage points increase). However, the proportion of accepted applications has decreased from 41.8% to 37.9% for Drama (a fall of 3.9 percentage points) and from 46.6% to 42% in Design & Technology (a 4.6 percentage points decrease).

These decreases are largely in line with an overall fall in the acceptance rate from 43% to 39.8% across secondary ITT in general. As we shall go on to discuss, the increased acceptance rates for Art & Design and Music may play a role in explaining their increases in overall ITT numbers, as well as increases in the proportion of government ITT targets for these subjects that are met. At the same time, the relatively smaller increase in the number of Drama applications between 2023/24 and 2024/25 and the fall in acceptance rate may play a role in explaining the fall in the number of Drama trainees and the fall in the proportion of the government's target that has been met for Drama.

**Figure 23: Acceptance rates for Black and Asian candidates across expressive Arts Initial Teacher Training routes (2024/25)**



In addition to the overall acceptance rate across ITT routes and subjects, we can also analyse the government's data to identify patterns in acceptance for different ethnic groups. We believe this is important, as the research literature highlights a systematic problem around individuals from Black and Asian ethnic groups being less likely to be accepted onto ITT courses than their ethnically White peers (Kotonya et al., 2025).

Analysing the government's data, we see that the acceptance rate for Black and Asian applicants to ITT routes is mostly slightly below the average rate across all secondary subjects. While the secondary average acceptance rate for Black and Asian applicants was 20.7% in 2024/25, the acceptance rate for Design & Technology was 15.8% in the same year, and similarly 17.5% for Drama and 19.7% in Art & Design. However, the story is very different for Music, which had an acceptance rate of 30.3% for Black and Asian ITT applicants in 2024/25. This is well above the average rate for applications to secondary routes and exceeds the rate for acceptances onto STEM routes by an even greater margin.

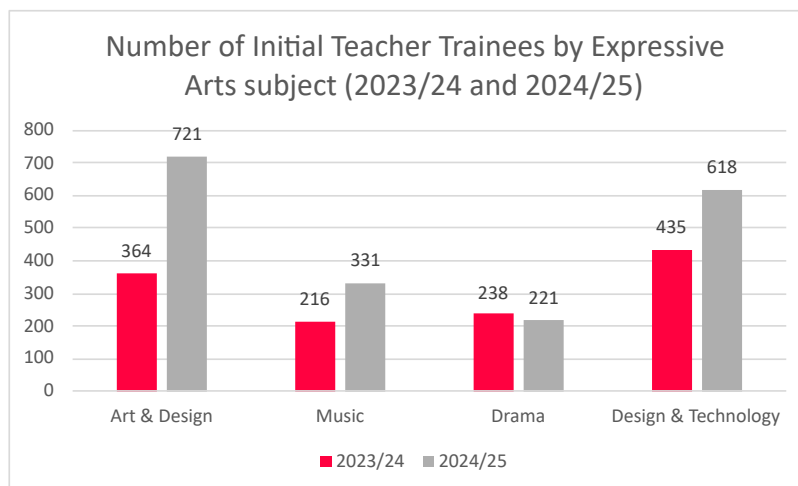
## Overall numbers of Initial Teacher Trainees

### Changes between 2023/24 and 2024/25

Examining the total numbers of ITT trainees, we can see some promising increases between 2023/24 and 2024/25.

Overall, there has been a 51% increase in the number of EA ITT trainees between 2023/24 and 2024/25. The largest increase for a specific EA subject has been for Art & Design, where the number of trainees has almost doubled between 2023/24 and 2024/25 (with a 98% increase). Music has also benefitted from a 53% increase in the number of trainees, and Design & Technology has experienced a 42% increase in the number of trainees.

**Figure 24: Number of Initial Teacher Trainees by expressive Arts subject (2023/24 and 2024/25)**



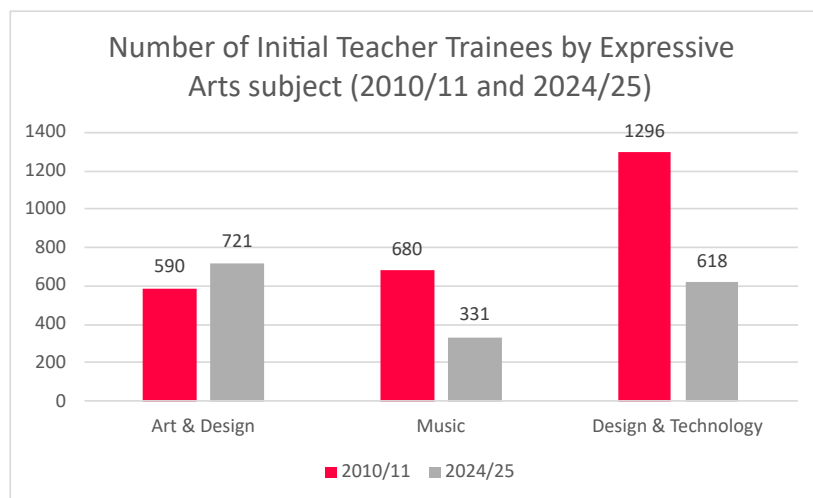
These increases in EA ITT numbers are part of a sector-wide trend in improved ITT numbers since 2024. Overall postgraduate entrants to ITT increased by 8% between 2023/24 and 2024/25. However, the rate at which ITT numbers have increased in EA subjects has been much higher than in many other subjects. For example, the number of ITT students in Maths and Computing – both of which have generous targeted bursary schemes for ITT entrants – increased by 24% and 21% respectively between 2023/24 and 2024/25. This suggests that the improvements in ITT uptake in EA subjects goes beyond the general pattern we observe across the general ITT market.

However, despite the general narrative of improvements, the number of trainees in Drama has unfortunately decreased by 7% between 2023/24 and 2024/25. This follows the number of Drama trainees already falling by 27% between 2022/23 and 2023/24, leaving Drama with more than three times fewer trainees in 2024/25 than Art & Design.

#### Changes between 2010/11 and 2024/25

Charting historical patterns for teacher recruitment from 2010/11 to 2024/25 is undermined by previous governments inconsistently recording ITT data in relation to EA subjects. For example, the government included Drama and Dance ITT figures as part of its figures for English up until the 2013/24 ITT census. Similarly, publicly available data on the number of applications and acceptances in EA subjects is very limited prior to 2020/21.

**Figure 25: Number of Initial Teacher Trainees by expressive Arts subject (2010/11 and 2024/25)**



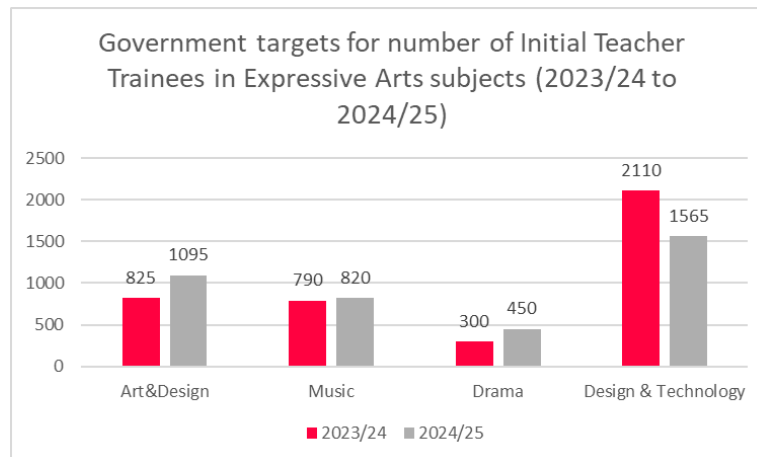
Nevertheless, we can discern some broad patterns in changes in EA teacher recruitment between 2010/11 and 2024/25. Over that period, the number of ITT students in Music and Design & Technology fell by 51.3% and 52.3% respectively. By contrast, the number of ITT entrants in Art & Design increased by 22%. The number of ITT entrants in Drama has fallen by 4% between 2013/14 (the earliest available year for data) and 2024/25. As such, there is arguably a general picture of decline across EA ITT recruitment between 2010/11 and 2024/25.

## Recruitment targets

### Changes between 2023/24 and 2024/25

Every year the government uses the Teacher Workforce Model (TWM) to define a target for the number of ITT trainees needed in a given subject. This model is based on variables such as retention, retirement and vacancy rates within specific subjects. The percentage of these target trainee numbers met by the government is then used as a key performance indicator on the success of the government's ITT recruitment in a given year.

**Figure 26: Government targets for Initial Teacher Trainee recruitment in expressive Arts subjects (2023/24 and 2024/25)**



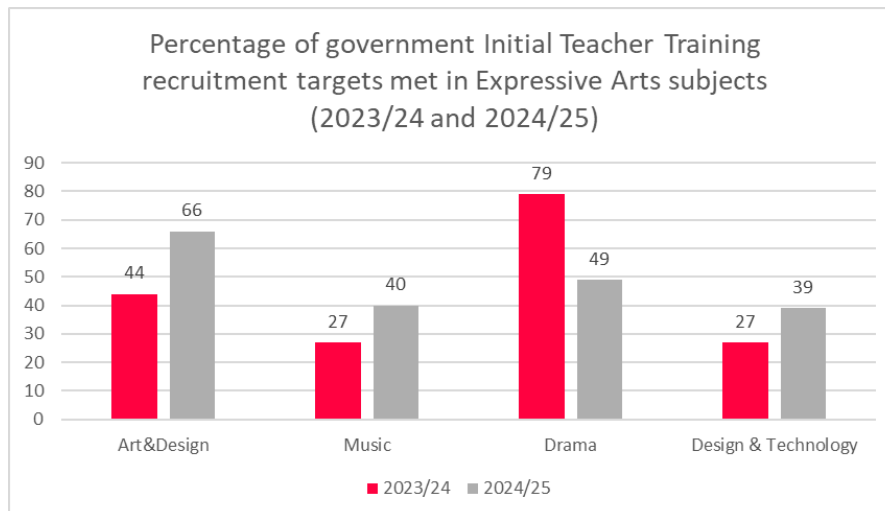
Between 2023/24 and 2024/25, the government's ITT targets for most EA subjects for which it gathers data increased, with increases of 50% in Drama, 33% in Art & Design, and 4% in Music. The target for Design & Technology fell by 26% between 2023/24 and 2024/25.

Given these general increases in target figures, there was a potential risk of the government's ITT recruitment in these subjects falling even further below target than it did in 2023/24 (given that these targets were missed by an average of 56% across EA subjects in 2023/24). However, the increases in EA ITT recruitment between 2023/24 and 2024/25 mean that the government has improved its performance against its EA ITT recruitment targets in 2024/25.

The government met 66% of its recruitment target for Art & Design (a 22 percentage points increase on 2023/24), 40% of its target for Music (a 13 percentage points increase on 2023/24), and 39% in Design & Technology (a 12 percentage points increase on 2023/24) in 2024/25. Drama is an unfortunate outlier to this pattern, where the percentage of the ITT recruitment target met has fallen from 79% in 2023/24 to 49% in 2024/25. This is likely a combination of the 7% fall in ITT Drama students between 2023/24 and 2024/25 and the 50% increase in the Drama ITT recruitment target over the same period.

While this improvement in performance is welcome, it should be taken in context that the government is still falling short of its recruitment targets by an average of 51% across the EA subjects for which it collects data. This puts most EA subjects – particularly Drama, Music, and Design & Technology – in the same field as Physics and Computing (which respectively met 31% and 37% of their ITT recruitment target in 2024/25), and both of which subjects benefit from targeted ITT bursaries and recruitment strategies.

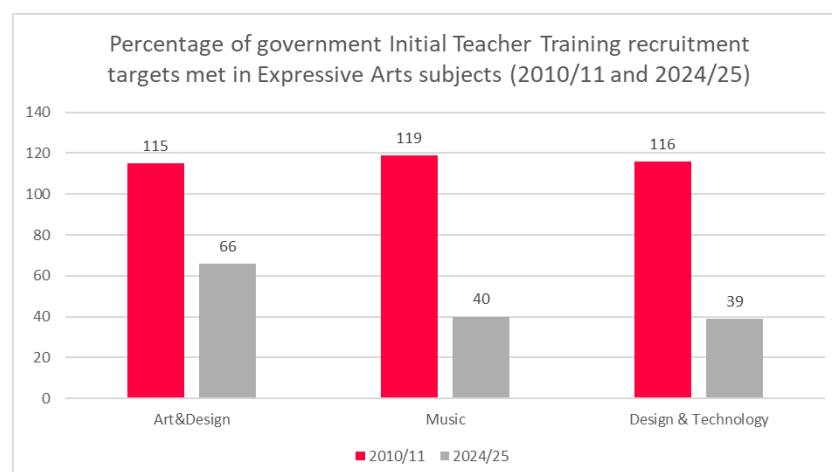
**Figure 27: Percentage of government Initial Teacher Training recruitment targets met in expressive Arts subjects (2023/24 and 2024/25)**



### Changes between 2010/11 and 2024/25

While the number of ITT students in EA subjects has generally decreased between 2010/11 and 2024/25, the government's recruitment targets in these subjects has increased. The government's ITT recruitment target for Art & Design more than doubled (a 102% increase) between 2010/11, while also increasing by 43.8% for Music and 40.3% for Design & Technology. Between 2015/16 – the year from which individualised data is available – and 2024/25, the government's ITT recruitment target for Drama increased by 3.4%. As with the Teacher Workforce Model in general, these increases in targets reflect an increased need for teachers in these EA subjects within schools.

**Figure 28: Percentage of government Initial Teacher Trainee recruitment target met in expressive Arts subjects (2010/11 and 2024/25)**



However, given these increases in targets and the general falls in the numbers of ITT EA students, the government's performance against these targets has broadly declined between 2010/11 and 2024/25. In 2010/11, the government was comfortably exceeding its recruitment targets across EA, going beyond them in Music by 19%, Art & Design by 15% and Design & Technology by 16%. It is

therefore perhaps somewhat shocking to see that in 2024/25, the government is falling short of its recruitment targets by 34% in Art & Design, 51% in Drama, 61% in Design & Technology and 60% in Music.

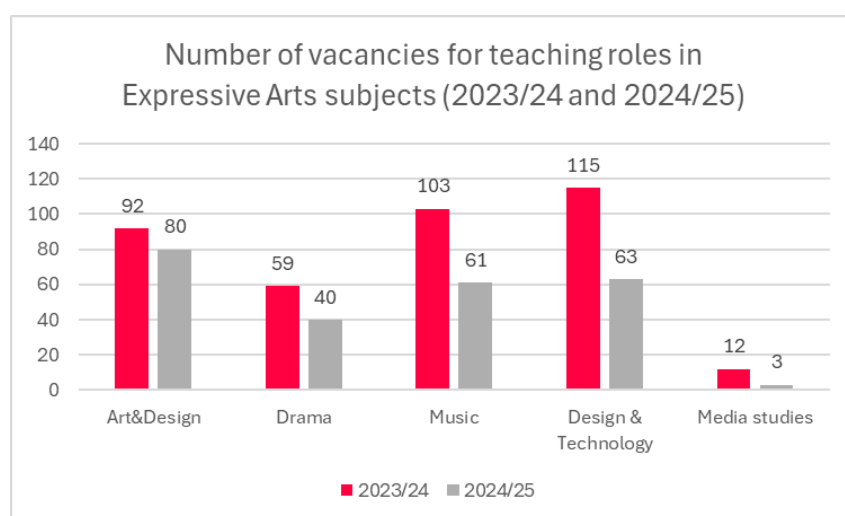
These historical patterns in EA ITT under-recruitment may explain why, as discussed under Indicator 3, there are around 6,000 fewer EA teachers in English secondary schools in 2024/25 than in 2010/11. This highlights the need for a strong ITT recruitment strategy for EA subjects in order to meet the workforce needs of these subjects.

## Teacher retention

### Changes between 2023/24 and 2024/25

The government does not publish available data on retention rates per individual subjects. As such, we use available government data on the number of unfilled vacancies in EA subjects and the overall vacancy rate in each subject as a proxy for commenting on potential retention challenges in each subject. We also note that vacancy data includes Media Studies but not Dance.

**Figure 29: Number of unfilled vacancies for teaching roles in expressive Arts subjects (2023/24 and 2024/25)**

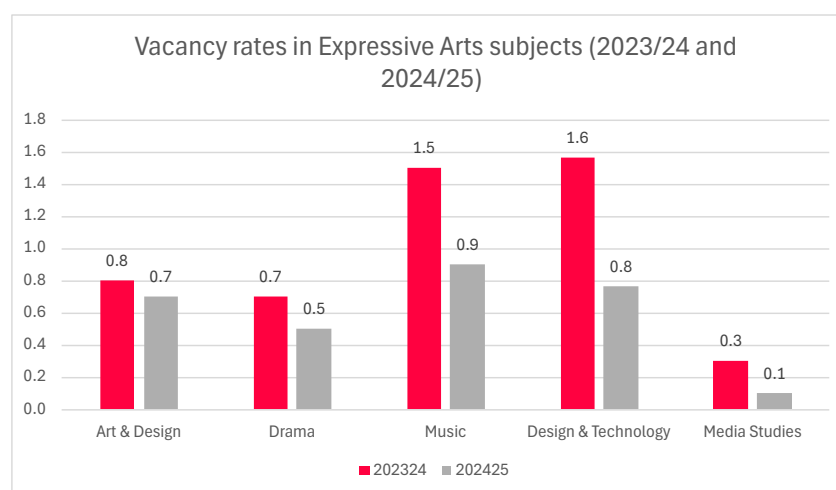


The number of unfilled vacancies across all EA subjects fell by 35% between 2023/24 and 2024/25. This is largely in line with the general fall in the number of teaching vacancies, which declined by 31.8% between 2023/24 and 2024/25. The

largest fall in vacancy numbers was in Media Studies, with 75% fewer vacancies in 2024/25 than in 2023/24 (a fall from 12 unfilled vacancies to three); this may reflect a decrease in the demand for Media Studies teachers, corresponding to declining entry rates in Media Studies at GCSE and A Level, as well as the notable fall in the number of taught hours in Media Studies at KS3. Design & Technology vacancies fell by 45% between 2023/24 and 2024/25 and 40% in Music over this same period. The number of vacancies also fell by 32% in Drama and 13% in Art & Design.

These falls in the number of unfilled vacancies may be a consequence of the 1.5% increase in the EA teacher workforce between 2023/24 and 2024/25 and therefore reflect improved retention of EA teachers. However, the fall in the number of vacancies may also reflect a decrease in mobility of teachers between schools.

**Figure 30: Vacancy rates in expressive Arts subjects (2023/24 and 2024/25)**



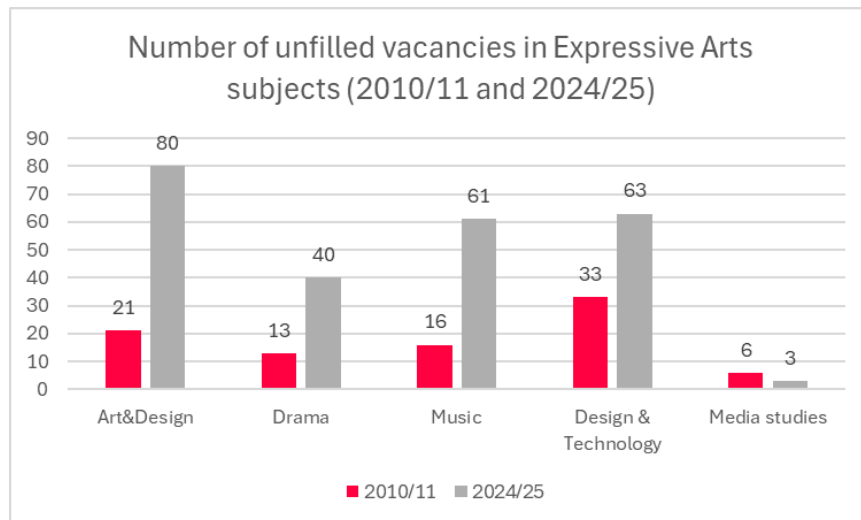
Given the discussed changes to the number of unfilled vacancies, it is perhaps unsurprising that the vacancy rate for EA subjects has also fallen. The vacancy rate is a measure used by the government to calculate how many teaching roles in a subject area are unfilled across the country. For example, a vacancy rate of 0.7 would reflect that 0.7% of vacancies in that subject are unfilled. Our analysis of government data shows that the vacancy rate has fallen by 0.8 percentage points in Design & Technology, 0.7 percentage points in Music, 0.2 percentage points in Drama and Media Studies respectively and 0.1 percentage points in Art & Design. These falls are in line with the 0.3 percentage fall in the vacancy rate across all subjects at the secondary phase.

#### Changes between 2010/11 and 2024/25

Taking a wider historical perspective, we can see that the number of unfilled vacancies in EA subjects has increased considerably between 2010/11 and 2024/25. The number of unfilled vacancies in Art & Design and Music is 3.8 times higher in 2024/25 than it was in 2010/11. The increase has been slightly lower for Drama, where the number of unfilled vacancies is 3.1 times higher in 2024/25 than it was in

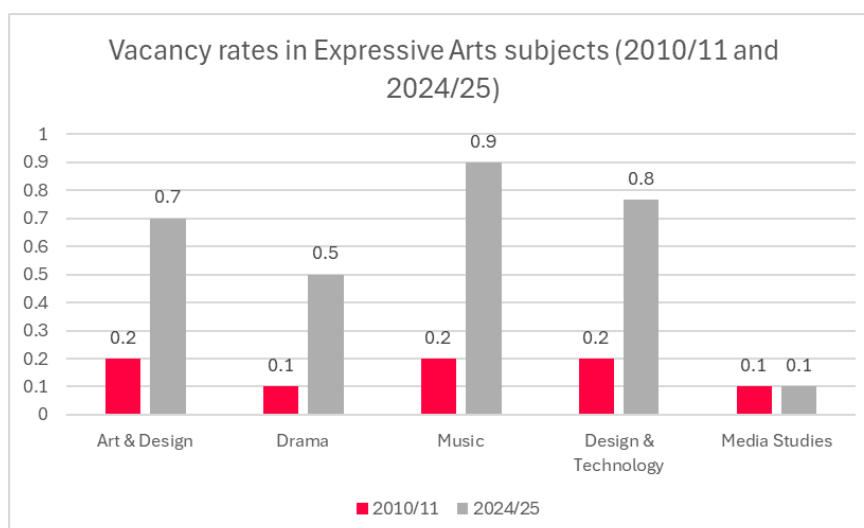
2010/11, while the number of unfilled vacancies has almost doubled over the same period. Media Studies is an exception to this pattern, with the number of unfilled vacancies halving between 2010/11 and 2024/25. This likely reflects the significant decline in exam entries and taught hours in Media/Film/TV studies.

**Figure 31: Number of unfilled vacancies in expressive Arts subjects (2010/11 and 2024/25)**



In addition to these stark increases in unfilled EA vacancies, it is also noteworthy that the rate of increase between 2010/11 and 2024/25 is greater than that across all secondary subjects (where the number of unfilled vacancies has increased by 2.7 times) and for EBacc subjects (where the increase is 2.6 times over).

**Figure 32: Vacancy rates in expressive Arts subjects (2010/11 and 2024/25)**



Aligning with these increases in the number of unfilled vacancies is a rise in vacancy rates between 2010/11 and 2024/25 for EA subjects. The vacancy rate for Music, Design & Technology and Drama has quadrupled, while it has increased 3.5

times over for Art & Design. While striking, these increases are in line with the vacancy rate across all secondary subjects increasing 3.5 times over between 2010/11 and 2024/25.

## Indicator 5: The ‘Arts entitlement gap’ and the ‘Arts enrichment gap’

### Overview of data sources

CLA defines the ‘Arts entitlement gap’ as the difference in participation in the study of EA subjects between children and young people from higher and lower socioeconomic-status backgrounds. We use the term ‘Arts enrichment gap’ to refer to the same socioeconomic disparity, but in relation to young people’s participation in extra-curricular EA activities.

Our data on the ‘Arts entitlement gap’ in this section is drawn from recent surveying of school senior leaders from across England. Our data on the ‘enrichment gap’ is drawn from a range of grey literature published since May 2025, including survey findings and qualitative interviews.

### The ‘Arts entitlement gap’

#### The ‘Arts entitlement gap’ at Level 2 and Level 3

We provide a comprehensive overview of the ‘Arts entitlement gap’ at Level 2 under **Indicator 1** in this report, including geographic disparities in entries, and demographic disparities in entries by FSM eligibility, SEND and ethnicity. We also report on geographic and demographic disparities at Level 3 under **Indicator 2**.

#### New survey data

Using survey responses gathered in late 2025 by the Arts and Minds Campaign with Teacher Tapp, we can see that 11% of school leaders in the independent sector report planning to increase the number of taught hours in EA subjects over the next two years, compared to 7% in the state sector. The survey also revealed that 8% of independent school senior leaders similarly stated plans to increase the number of hours given to extra-curricular EA activities over the next two years, compared to 5% of leaders in the state sector.

The survey data also highlights that while 21% of state school senior leaders cited lack of funding or resources as a barrier to spending more curriculum time on EA subjects, this was the case for only 4% of private school senior leaders.

Similarly, while 16% of state school leaders reported lack of suitable facilities as a barrier to EA delivery, this was the case for only 7% of independent school senior leaders. The net result of these disparities is that 52% of independent school senior leaders believe that they spend enough time teaching EA subjects, compared to only 28% of state school leaders.

### The 'Arts enrichment gap'

Commissioned by the **Sutton Trust**, the **National Foundation for Educational Research** (NFER) conducted a survey of 1,208 English teachers and school leaders (representing 1,044 schools) on the funding challenges their setting is experiencing. The survey results highlighted that 34% of primary school leaders have had to cut back on the extra-curricular activities they offer pupils due to funding challenges (Sutton Trust, 2025). In secondary, 18% of school leaders stated the same need to cut extra-curricular activities. As we covered in our 2024 Report Card (Cultural Learning Alliance, 2024), disadvantaged pupils depend on schools for access to extra-curricular EA activities much more than their more advantaged peers. As a result, any cuts to EA extra-curricular access through schools will likely have greater impact on disadvantaged pupils.

Two other new pieces of survey-based literature highlighted the extension beyond the school gates of disparities in access to EA enrichments. The **National Council for Further Education** (NCFE) surveyed 2,000 parents and children through YouGov and found that 45% of parents reported being unable to afford trips and outings outside of school for their child (National Council for Further Education, 2025). This figure was higher for parents from working class communities, sitting at 57%. A total of 32% of parents also reported needing to cut back on extra-curricular activities for their child due to financial challenges. These cuts were attributed to a range of challenges, with 57% of parents reporting that the cost of enrichment activities was a barrier to their child's participation, while 38% reported that the cost of travel prevented their child's involvement.

These survey findings are further corroborated by a new survey from **Sport England**. The survey of 1,750 schools found that 45% of children and young people from the least affluent families are less likely to be physically active (including through activities such as Dance) (Sport England, 2025).

In addition to survey evidence, there are new qualitative findings related to the Arts enrichment gap. The **Children's Commissioner's Office** conducted 128 interviews with young people aged between six and 18, presenting their findings as cross-cutting themes from these interviews. In relation to enrichment, the research finds that the expense of transport to activities as well as the entry and participation costs act as a barrier to disadvantaged young people's engagement with these activities (Children's Commissioner, 2025). Young people from poorer backgrounds

also stated that the cost of equipment (such as dance shoes and musical instruments) is a common barrier to participating in enrichment activities.

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