

Cultural Learning Alliance Report Card 2024



Contents

About the Cultural Learning Alliance

CLA harnesses the power of its alliance to champion a right to Arts and culture for every child. It uses evidence 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's work is made possible by:

Esmée Fairbairn Foundation
Paul Hamlyn Foundation

About this Report Card

This is CLA's first annual Report Card and has been developed to extend CLA's evidence work through a clear set of annual indicators, based – as far as possible – on national time-series data drawn from government data sets.

About the author

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www.culturallearningalliance.org.uk

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Foreword from the CLA Co-Chairs

CLA has regularly gathered data on Arts GCSE and A-Level take up, and on Arts teaching hours, but this is the first time that key Arts education data (2010-2023) has been comprehensively gathered together in one place.

We are expanding our reporting across five new key indicators

We are expanding our reporting across five new key indicators to provide a detailed survey of children's and young people's access to the Arts through their schooling in England.

We hope that this annual state-of-the-nation overview will be of use to all those working in education delivery and policy, and in the cultural sector. Our findings will be valuable for those building a case to support their Arts education work. Importantly, they will enable policy-makers to be clear-sighted in understanding the landscape as they address Arts education policy issues over the next year.

We now have a very clear view of what has been happening to Expressive Arts education in state schools over the past 14 years – since the introduction of the EBacc – and it is a stark picture of erosion and inequality. The decline has been driven primarily by a government focus on a narrow range of subject areas and therefore a systemic downgrading or exclusion of Arts subjects and experiences. Despite all that is known about the value of Arts subjects for children and young

people, there has been a lack of value ascribed to the Arts within the state education system in England.¹

The introduction of the EBacc represented a huge sea change in our education system in 2010, as did the programme of school academisation, introduced in the same year. By 2011/12 the government had stopped funding a range of national Arts education initiatives, including Sing Up and Creative Partnerships. For Key Stage 4 qualifications, course work was reduced and a focus on assessment through end-of-course examinations was re-established. A hierarchy of subjects was introduced through the EBacc and has remained with us.



We now have a very clear view of what has been happening to Expressive Arts education in state schools

There is a lack of value ascribed to the Arts

Foreword from the CLA CO-Chairs



The Expressive Arts can be a powerful way to address the social and emotional health of students

When the EBacc was first proposed there was an immediate and significant impact on what children studied at secondary school – an early Ipsos Mori poll revealed that 27% of schools cut courses as a direct result of its implementation. Analysis from CLA in 2013 revealed that this disproportionately affected Arts courses – in particular for pupils in disadvantaged areas. The impact of the EBacc was reinforced by the introduction of the Progress 8 accountability measure in 2016.

During this period, other nations, such as Wales, have charted a different course, and have prioritised the Expressive Arts within the development of new and clearly defined purposes for schooling, recognising the value of these

subjects for their young people.² It is too early to consider the impact of the changes in Wales, but we value their national consultation work and considered approach to the creation of six equal curriculum areas, including the Expressive Arts. There is a curriculum that is future-facing and puts the needs of the learner first.

CLA has analysed, for the first time, the difference in Arts access between state and independent schools. In addition to showing the attainment gap, we present evidence of an ‘enrichment gap,’ with young people from wealthier backgrounds having far greater participation in the Arts – in and out of school – compared to their peers from lower-income backgrounds. It is worth recording that no future

policy changes will benefit the children who have already lost out on their Arts education and experiences over the past 14 years.

Sutton Trust analysis makes clear that A-Level results in 2023 reveal a worsening attainment gap and widening regional inequalities.³ We know that children who are living in the least deprived areas in the country are twice as likely to engage in Performing Arts outside of (state) school, compared to peers living in the *most* deprived. However by contrast, likelihood of engagement with Performing Arts *in school* is largely the same across all young people (in the state sector), whatever their socio-economic background.⁴ CLA has always asserted that access to Expressive Arts education is a social justice issue, and our report makes this clearer than ever: these findings highlight the need for *all* schools to be resourced to ensure access to high-quality Arts and cultural enrichment as a universal entitlement.

All of this information has to be set in the context of a cost of living crisis, post-pandemic recovery, a child mental health crisis, a teacher recruitment and retention crisis, and declining school attendance. It is estimated that 4.3 million

children and young people in the UK are growing up in poverty; almost one in four children is now eligible for free school meals; and there has been a significant increase in children living in destitution. The Expressive Arts can be a powerful way to address the social and emotional health of students.⁵

We present evidence of an ‘enrichment gap’

Foreword from the CLA CO-Chairs



4.3m

Children and young people are growing up in poverty

In parallel to this Report Card we are publishing our **GE2024 Manifesto Asks**, which set out a clear strategy for the next government to reverse the decline in high-quality Arts provision for all. We present four changes which will make a fundamental difference, starting with the Expressive Arts as a curriculum area – equal in status to all other curriculum areas – mapped onto new purposes for education. Our recommendations are informed by our other research and canvassing of the education and cultural sectors. None of this will be a quick fix – it will take at least two parliaments to deliver – but our education system requires a significant course correction if we are to establish high-quality Arts provision for all children, and we will require practical and ambitious timelines for successful implementation.

One of the principles underpinning our Manifesto Asks is a call for a focus on representation, breadth and relevance across the Arts curriculum, resources and practice. This principle is echoed by the recommendations of the recent Freeland's Foundation and Runnymede Trust report on race and inclusion in secondary Art & Design

Education, which also calls for improvements in the data landscape around Art across the education ecosystem.⁶

CLA focuses on three types of evidence: data-driven evidence of access and engagement, largely – but not entirely – through schools; regular insights into the wider policy and practice landscape through our monthly newsletter; and data-informed evidence of the value of an Arts-rich education. This Report Card focuses on the first type of evidence. Since October 2023 a CLA Evidence and Value Narrative Working Group, chaired by Jacqui O'Hanlon MBE, has been addressing the third type of evidence, and we

look forward to sharing our findings later this year. The Group is also working to uncover much more information about Expressive Arts subjects in primary education.

The Arts are important for the individual, for schools and for society. Expressive Arts subjects have an important, evidenced and unique role in contributing to improving outcomes for children and young people, providing them with positive, memorable experiences, and with skills for life and skills for work. They make a powerful contribution to children's and young people's personal, social and creative wellbeing, and have an important role to play in contributing to the relevance and



Expressive Arts subjects have an important, evidenced and unique role in contributing to improving outcomes for children and young people

Foreword from the CLA CO-Chairs

inclusiveness of the school culture and joy of learning, preparing young people to thrive as active citizens. School should be a place where aptitudes and interests can be discovered, developed and encouraged. A rich Arts education, as an integral part of a broad and balanced schooling experience, supports the development of many desirable skills and capacities which are valued by young people – and by employers. However, it is important to state that the case for Arts learning in schools is more easily made if its value can be gauged in relation to delivering against an agreed set of purposes for education, as in Wales.

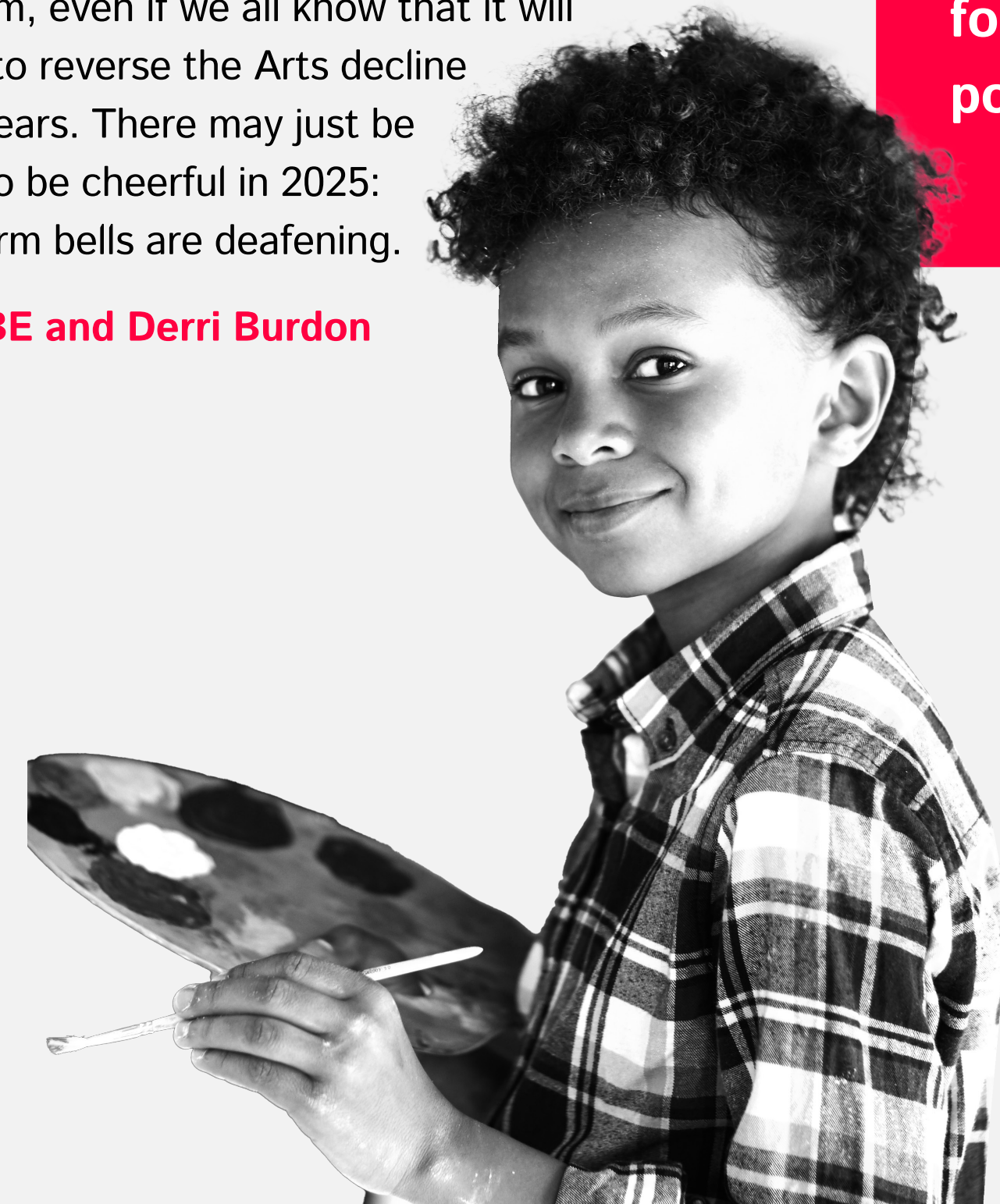
If children in primary schools have opportunities to explore the widest range of Arts activities, it is possible for them as young people to explore and benefit from the Arts subjects for which they have developed an affinity, and which can enable them to flourish and thrive. To engage with the Arts in such a meaningful way, secondary schools need the full complement of Arts specialists, and primary schools need Arts-confident teachers.

They also require the full range of Arts practices to be available at GCSE and A-Level and/or across vocational qualifications.

There is one additional point that we feel is important to make: despite all of the accountability drivers now mitigating against Arts subjects, some schools continue to value and prioritise the Arts as an essential component of a broad and balanced curriculum. Few schools believe that the Arts have no contribution to make, or little impact. It is possible for primary and secondary schools to offer a broad and balanced Arts education, and we have seen and heard of examples of good and excellent practice throughout England. Arts-confident schools can become Arts-rich schools, often high-achieving across the board. Arts-rich schools offer a strong Arts curriculum because their governors and leadership – headteacher or multi-academy trust (MAT) – believe in the contribution the Arts make to a high-functioning school and its students, and are confident in their decision-making.

This Report Card makes the case for action to policy makers. It sets down a marker against which all future education policy drivers will be scrutinised. We look forward to reporting again in a year's time, and hope that there might then be early signals of some fundamental changes in our schooling system, even if we all know that it will take far longer to reverse the Arts decline of the past 14 years. There may just be some reasons to be cheerful in 2025: for now, the alarm bells are deafening.

Sally Bacon OBE and Derri Burdon
CLA Co-Chairs



**This Report Card
makes the case
for action to
policy makers**

Executive summary

This first CLA Annual Report Card covers data between 2010 and 2023 in relation to five key indicators on Arts education in schools in:

1

GCSE entries for Arts subjects

2

A-Level entries for Arts subjects and progression to Higher Education for Creative, Arts and Design subjects

3

Number of Arts teachers and hours of Arts subjects taught

4

Arts teacher recruitment and retention

5

The 'enrichment gap'

Executive Summary



The data summarised here is drawn from Department for Education statistics databases unless stated otherwise

Key education policy changes happened in 2010

Introduction and methodology

- We have selected the 2010-2023 time span due to key education policy changes that happened in 2010 – in particular the introduction of the English Baccalaureate (EBacc). It also marks the beginning of the move towards mass-academisation of schools in England.
- The data summarised here is drawn from Department for Education (DfE) statistics databases unless stated otherwise. There is no single, publicly available dataset that covers socio-economic disparities in young people's Arts participation, so the data for Indicator 5, the 'enrichment gap,' has been drawn from a range of sources.

- We acknowledge limitations to the data presented in two important areas:
 - a focus on GCSEs and A-Levels without other Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3 qualifications, such as (but not exclusive to) BTECs (see note on page 14);
 - It is particularly difficult to track coverage of Arts teaching in primary schools as they don't have the qualifications data that is available for the secondary sector.

CLA will consider how to include these areas in future Report Cards as both will provide important insights. BTEC data will provide a fuller picture of the take-up and value of non-GCSE and non-A-Level alternatives to studying Expressive Arts subjects.

Rapid Evidence Reviews of Expressive Arts subjects have already been commissioned through CLA's Evidence and Value Narrative Working Group and will provide more information for us on the primary (as well as secondary) picture. It would be helpful if DfE were to collect data on the number of Arts specialists in primary schools, and how many hours are spent on each national curriculum area (they already collect this data for each secondary subject area).



Numbers in a nutshell

GCSEs

There has been an overall decline of **42%** in the number of Arts GCSE entries since 2010.

In 2009/10, **14%** of all GCSE entries were in Arts subjects; by 2022/23 the figure had halved (**7%**).

There are schools which no longer offer some Arts subjects at all at GCSE level: **42%** of schools no longer enter any pupils for Music GCSE; **41%** of schools no longer enter any pupils for Drama GCSE; and **84%** enter no pupils for Dance GCSE.

* Excluding Dance, for which data is unavailable

A-Levels and progression to HE

There has been an overall **21%** decrease in Arts entries at A-Level since 2010.

Falls in A-Level Arts take up are especially steep in Dance (**56%**), Music (**43%**) and Design & Technology (**42%**).

The number of students studying for an undergraduate degree in Creative Arts and Design subjects has decreased by **6%** since 2010.

Arts teaching hours and Arts teachers

Between 2011/12 and 2022/23, the fall in teaching hours for Arts subjects* was **21%**.

There are **14%** fewer Arts teachers than in 2010.

Between 2010/11 and 2022/23, the vacancy rate for Art & Design teachers has more than **tripled**; the rate for Music has increased by a **multiple of six**, and Drama has increased by a **multiple of five**. Teacher recruitment in Music has fallen by **56%**.

There is no available data on the number of Arts specialists in primary schools, or how many hours are spent on each national curriculum area, so the primary Arts picture is unclear.

How many pupils taking Performing Arts qualifications would fit inside Wembley stadium (capacity 90,000)?

The combined number of Dance, Drama and Music GCSE entrants in 2023 would fit into Wembley Stadium with room to spare. In 2010, the total of GCSE entrants for these three subjects would have filled the stadium with **53,521** students unable to find seats. In comparison, the number of students taking Maths would fit inside Wembley Stadium nine times over.

Executive Summary

Indicator 1: GCSE entries for Arts subjects

- Between the 2009/10 and 2022/23 academic years, there has been an overall decline of 42% in the number of entries to Arts GCSE subjects. Drop-offs have been especially steep in Design & Technology (a fall of 71%), Dance (48%) and Media/Film/TV Studies (48%).
- In the same time period, the percentage of all GCSE entries in Arts subjects has halved from 14% in 2009/10, to 7% in 2022/23.
- Analysis shows that between 2010 and 2016 there was an increase in Free School Meals (and therefore likely lower attaining) pupils being directed towards Arts subjects.
- 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. These figures capture the increasing number of schools where some Arts subjects are not offered at all at a GCSE level.

- We conclude that the decline in Arts participation is a direct consequence of education policies such as the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) and Progress 8 measure of school performance.

Indicator 2: A-Level entries and Higher Education progression

- Between the 2010/11 and 2022/23 academic years, there has been a 21% decrease in Arts entries at A-Levels. The steepest falls in entries are in Dance (a decrease of 56%), Music (43%) and Design & Technology (42%).
- While the total number of undergraduate degrees being studied in the UK has increased by 3.7% between 2011/12 and 2021/22, the number of students studying for an undergraduate degree in Creative Arts and Design subjects has decreased by 6%.
- In 2011/12, 8.5% of all undergraduate students were studying a Creative, Art and Design subject. By 2021/22, this had fallen to 7.6%.



There has been an overall decline of 42% in the number of Arts GCSE entries since 2010



Executive Summary

Indicator 3: Number of Arts teachers and hours of Arts subjects taught

- In total, there are 14% fewer full or part-time teachers of Arts subjects in English secondary schools in 2022/23 compared to 2011/12. The biggest fall in staffing has been in Drama, where there are 22% fewer teachers. By comparison, there are 9% more History teachers (an EBacc subject) and 4% more Maths teachers (a core subject at GCSE).
- Between 2011/12 and 2022/23, the fall in teaching hours for Arts subjects (excluding Dance) was 21%.
- There have been dramatic falls in the number of hours of Arts taught at Key Stage 4 and 5. These falls very likely reflect the reduced entries to Arts subjects at GCSE and A-Levels, as well as the increase in the percentage of schools submitting no entries for Arts subjects at GCSE.

- The pattern is more complex at Key Stage 3, where taught hours in Arts subjects typically fell between 2011/12 and 2018/19, however has subsequently increased and in some cases, such as Drama, has exceeded levels from the start of the decade.



Indicator 4: Arts teacher recruitment and retention

- Overall figures of recruits in 2023 remain well below where they were in 2010 – the number of Initial Teacher Training (ITT) recruits for Art & Design has fallen by 19% while the number for Music has fallen by a staggering 56%. By contrast, ITT recruitment to Drama has actually improved from 2010 to 2023, with an overall increase of 22%.
- While there were modest improvements in Arts teacher recruitment over the pandemic, the latest data shows a fall between 2021/22 and 2022/23 academic years of 47% fewer Art & Design ITT trainees and 37% fewer Music trainees.

- The government has failed to meet its own targets for recruitment of ITT trainees into Arts subjects in several years, for example falling short of this target for Music trainees by 36% in 2022/23. The picture is more optimistic in Drama where the government has typically exceeded recruitment targets since the pandemic. However, analysis of the government's targets shows that these can be very low and subject to fluctuation, meaning that years when the government exceeds its recruitment targets for Arts teachers do not necessarily undermine the scale of the teacher supply challenge in the Arts.
- Calculating teacher retention in Arts subjects is more challenging, however vacancy rate data suggests that retention has worsened in Art & Design and Music between 2010/11 and 2022/23. The vacancy rate for Art & Design has more than tripled in that time period and increased sixfold for Music; this gives Music one of the highest vacancy rates out of any subject.

Executive Summary

Indicator 5: The 'enrichment gap'

- In parallel to the 'attainment gap' there appears to be evidence of an 'enrichment gap,' with young people from wealthier backgrounds having much greater participation in the Arts compared to their peers from lower-income backgrounds. We examine three ways of tracking this enrichment gap:
 - differences in Arts provision between independent and state schools;
 - surveys of young people's Arts participation;
 - and surveys of family poverty and its impact on Arts participation.
- Research highlights that independent schools often have much better Arts facilities and staffing than their peers in the state sector; this allows independent schools to offer specialist provision such as photography, sculpture and digital media. The CVs of Arts teachers in independent schools also show strong industry backgrounds and networks that can be used to support pupils from these schools into professions in the Arts.

- Children living in the least deprived areas in the country are twice as likely to engage in Performing Arts *outside* of (state) school compared to peers living in the most deprived, but likelihood of engagement with Performing Arts *in-school* is largely the same across all young people, whatever their socio-economic background.
- Parents in higher socio-economic groups are 15% more likely than those in lower groups to spend money sending their child to participate in any kind of enrichment activity (the Sutton Trust, 2014). Similarly, young people growing up in the South East of England are twice as likely to play music outside of school, compared to young people in the North East, which is the region of England with the highest level of child poverty (Fraser & Hawksbee, 2022). Young people growing up in the most deprived neighbourhoods were 15% more likely to have stopped all enrichment activities during the pandemic.
- A 2016 survey of teachers and headteachers found that 71% of respondents stated that they funded their before- and after-school extra-curricular activities (including Arts provision) through parental funding, suggesting that schools serving areas of high deprivation may have a more limited Arts enrichment offer than those serving more affluent areas. Parents with 'extreme money concerns' were 20% more likely to have to spend money on Arts and crafts materials for remote learning during the Covid-19 lockdowns than parents without such concerns. These findings from the lockdown period highlight that families in poverty are more dependent on support from schools for accessing the arts than those living outside of poverty.



Explanatory notes

A focus on England

This Report Card has a focus on the education system in England due to its specific accountability measures which exclude the Arts. We have not included data for total entries across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, as other nations do not have the EBacc in place, and have their own very different policy drivers.

A note on our numbers

Where there are numbers after decimal points in the data we have generally rounded numbers up (0.5-0.9) or down (0.1-0.4).

What do we mean by Expressive Arts subjects?

CLA has adopted Expressive Arts 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 Wales definition, goes beyond the existing four discrete art forms currently embedded in England's system (Art & Design, Dance, Drama and Music) to include Film and Digital Media.

However, 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 Design & Technology since Design is shared by two subjects within the curriculum (although in Wales this sits within Science and Technology).

Film and Digital Media are not formal requirements in the National Curriculum, and Film continues to be under-recognised within Arts teaching and learning in many schools – which is regrettable given the significant role it plays in young people's lives. CLA would advocate for their inclusion, in line with the new Welsh curriculum, which includes Film and Digital Media alongside Art & Design, Music, Dance and Drama (including, but not limited to, TV, film, radio and games design).



This Report Card has
a focus on England

A note on foundation subjects⁷

In addition to the hierarchy of subjects imposed by the EBacc (see page 20), there is a hierarchy of Arts subjects imposed by the list of National Curriculum foundation subjects excluding some art forms. In 1988 the new secondary National Curriculum specified Art & Design and Music as foundation subjects, with Dance and Drama relegated to sitting within PE and English respectively, and this remains the case today. The Dance content in the PE curriculum is very limited. Dance and Drama are not always available in all schools if there is a school-level decision not to teach them. Art & Design and Music have subject leads at Ofsted; Dance and Drama do not, so there is not parity at inspection level. (It is important to note that the National Curriculum is not compulsory in Academies and Free Schools.)

The government's recording of data on Drama and Dance for our five key indicators varies from year to year – perhaps in relation to their status as non-foundation subjects. For example, in relation to GCSE entries (Indicator 1) and teacher recruitment (Indicator 4), Dance data is sometimes included as part of PE but also sometimes as part of Drama (e.g. for ITT recruitment data for 2011/12). Drama is sometimes recorded as part of English. Dance is sometimes not recorded at all – for example, in relation to the size of the overall teacher workforce and taught hours (Indicator 3), or teacher recruitment (Indicator 4). The consequence is that Dance is excluded from our coverage of Indicators 3 and 4, reflecting the government's own lack of data reporting for the subject.

Explanatory Notes

A note on Art & Design and Design & Technology (supplied by the National Society for Education in Art & Design)

Art & Design GCSE and A-Level is offered as a broad-based Art, Craft and Design specification, and also as five specialist options (known as endorsements): Fine Art; Graphic Communication; Textile Design; Three-dimensional design; and Photography. All GCSE Art and Design options are assessed using the same assessment objectives, but the content varies according to the specialism. Since the introduction of a new GCSE specification for Design & Technology in 2019, there has been a marked increase in entries for GCSE endorsements in Graphic Communication, Textile Design and Three-dimensional Design – and a fall in entries for Fine Art and the general specification. At the same time there has been a significant fall in entries for

Design & Technology GCSE and A-Level. Given the increasing number of schools that have merged the two subject areas due to shortage of staff and reduced budgets, it is likely that these Art & Design endorsements are being offered as an alternative to Design & Technology. This raises concerns about student choice – these subjects are very different in both pedagogy and progression pathways. It is likely that the adoption of Art & Design titles for study within KS4 Design & Technology options conceals a reduction in students being taught Art & Design specifications by Art & Design specialists.

A note on the technical and vocational qualifications landscape

It is important to note that GCSEs and A-Levels are not the only Arts qualifications available. There is a wide range of broad-based vocational qualifications which develop creative skills such as enquiry and problem-solving, as well as introducing a range of media and a number of Awarding Organisations who offer them. Pearson's BTECs, OCR's Cambridge Nationals and UAL's Diplomas are some examples.⁸

Entry data for vocational qualifications is not published in the same way as for A-Levels and GCSEs, because entries are not made in the same way and courses are much more flexible. This flexibility does not make identifying definitive numbers easy. For 2025 we intend to contact individual exam boards and Awarding Organisations (such as Pearson) directly, and to examine final certification numbers rather than the number of entries.



It is important to note that GCSEs and A-Levels are not the only Arts qualifications available

A note on equalities data

Ofqual collects in-depth information from Awarding Bodies on pupil demographics and monitors a range of equalities variables, such as ethnicity, gender, Free School Meals status, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities status, first language, and region. We know, for example, that there is substantial variation in pupil attainment by pupils' ethnic group.⁹ While Ofqual collects this demographic entry data for specific subjects, this data is not routinely reported publicly. It is therefore beyond the scope of the present Report Card to cover equalities data in detail for entries into arts subjects in Indicators 1 and 2. Where we do draw on reported equalities findings, these are from research conducted by organisations which have access to the National Pupil Database and Ofqual's databases (such as the Education Policy Institute and FFT Datalab).

Introduction

We present data on five key indicators of Arts education in English secondary schools and how performance on those indicators has changed between 2010 and 2023. We have selected these indicators in consultation with researchers and practitioners in the Arts education space to reflect the key conditions that need to be in place to support a high-quality and accessible arts education for all young people.



We have taken 2010 as the starting point for our data time series due to a number of significant educational policy changes in the 2010/11 academic year that we believe have bearing on the Arts in schools in England. In particular, the introduction of the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) in 2010. The EBacc measure encourages schools to enter a package of GCSE subjects that excludes the Arts, and holds them accountable for their performance in these EBacc subjects. Relatedly, government funding for a range of national arts initiatives, including Sing Up and Creative Partnerships, was concluded in 2011/12. Government incentives and efforts for all schools in England to restructure as ‘academies’ and to join multi-academy trusts (MATs) also began in 2010. As such, we believe 2010 represents an important baseline for tracking performance against our five indicators.

The indicators are:

1. GCSE entries for Arts subjects
2. A-Level entries for Arts subjects and progression to Higher Education for Creative, Arts and Design subjects
3. Number of Arts teachers and hours of Arts subjects taught
4. Arts teacher recruitment and retention
5. The ‘enrichment gap’

All data, unless otherwise specified, is drawn from the Department for Education’s data tables accessed through the government’s Explore Education Statistics portal and database. There is no single, publicly available dataset that covers socio-economic disparities in young people’s Arts participation, so the data for Indicator 5 – the ‘enrichment gap’ – has been drawn from a range of sources, including the Department for Culture, Media and Sport’s Taking Part surveys.¹⁰ We list all data sources drawn on in this research as References.

**We have
taken 2010 as
our baseline**

Introduction

It would be helpful if DfE could begin to collect data on the number of Arts specialists in primary schools, and how many hours are spent on each national curriculum area in primary



We also preface this section by acknowledging the limits of the data we have captured in this Report Card. This report does not cover entry data for other Level 2 and Level 3 qualifications such as BTECs. As BTECs are flexible courses, their entry data is recorded in ways that make it difficult to produce accurate time-series data on changes in uptake. Students do not have to decide precisely what size of BTEC they will complete when they begin their course – they can increase or decrease it during their programme. It is much more flexible than GCSEs or A-Levels. However, these flexibilities make it harder for those gathering data to publish definitive numbers. Work has been done to understand this better (and earlier in the exam cycle) in recent years, but Ofqual is still not at the point of being able to publish entry data in quite the same way as is available for GCSEs and A-Levels.

Similarly, we also note that our data contains very little on the state of Arts education in primary schools; this is largely due to limits on how much data is available on indicators for Arts education in primary. Working with our Evidence and Value Narrative Working Group, our aim is to consider how to overcome these limitations in future Report Cards. Rapid Evidence Reviews of Expressive Arts subjects in primary have been commissioned and will provide more information for us on the picture in primary (as well as secondary). It would be helpful if DfE could begin to collect data on the number of Arts specialists in primary schools, and how many hours are spent on each national curriculum area in primary (it already collects this data for each secondary subject area).

Indicator 1: GCSE entries

In the five years prior to 2010, the number of young people who had been entered onto at least one Arts GCSE was gradually increasing year-on-year (EPI, 2017).



However, our analysis shows that since 2010 there have been 14 years of mostly gradual decrease in the number of entries for Arts GCSEs. In 2009/10, 14% of all GCSE entries were in Arts subjects; by 2022/23 the figure had halved (7%).

While the decline has been gradual, the stark consequence is that in the 2022/23 exam year, there were 42% fewer entries to Arts GCSE subjects than there were in 2009/10. Drop-offs have been especially steep in some subjects. In particular, Design & Technology has experienced a staggering decline of 71% in GCSE entries between 2009/10 and 2022/23. Dance and Media/Film/TV Studies have both suffered from 48% falls in GCSE entry over the same time period. Drama and Music have had their entry levels fall respectively by 39% and 34% since 2010.

As the number of pupils studying GCSEs varies from year to year, the total number of entries into all GCSE subjects varies from year to year. As such, it is possible that decreasing Arts entries

may be in line with decreases in the total number of entries in all subjects. To test this, we calculated the percentage of total GCSE entries that are made up of Arts subjects in all years between 2009/10 and 2022/23. This analysis shows a clear pattern in decreasing percentage, with Dance falling from making up 0.26% of all GCSE entries to 0.14% between 2009/10 and 2022/23. Drama as a total number of GCSE entries moves from 1.5% in 2009/10 to 0.8% in 2022/23. Most notable is Design & Technology, which made up 4.6% of all GCSE entries in 2009/10, falling to 1.4% in 2022/23. As such, the falls in absolute numbers of entries do not merely reflect falling numbers of GCSE entries. Similarly, while the falls in the percentage of total entries may look small, the absolute figures on entries are very high (averaging 5.2 million). As such, even decreases of less than 1% can reflect falls in entries numbered in the tens of thousands.

The Arts as a percentage of all GCSE entries has halved

Indicator 1: GCSE entries

Figure 1
Total Arts subjects GCSE entries in England (2009/10 to 2022/23)

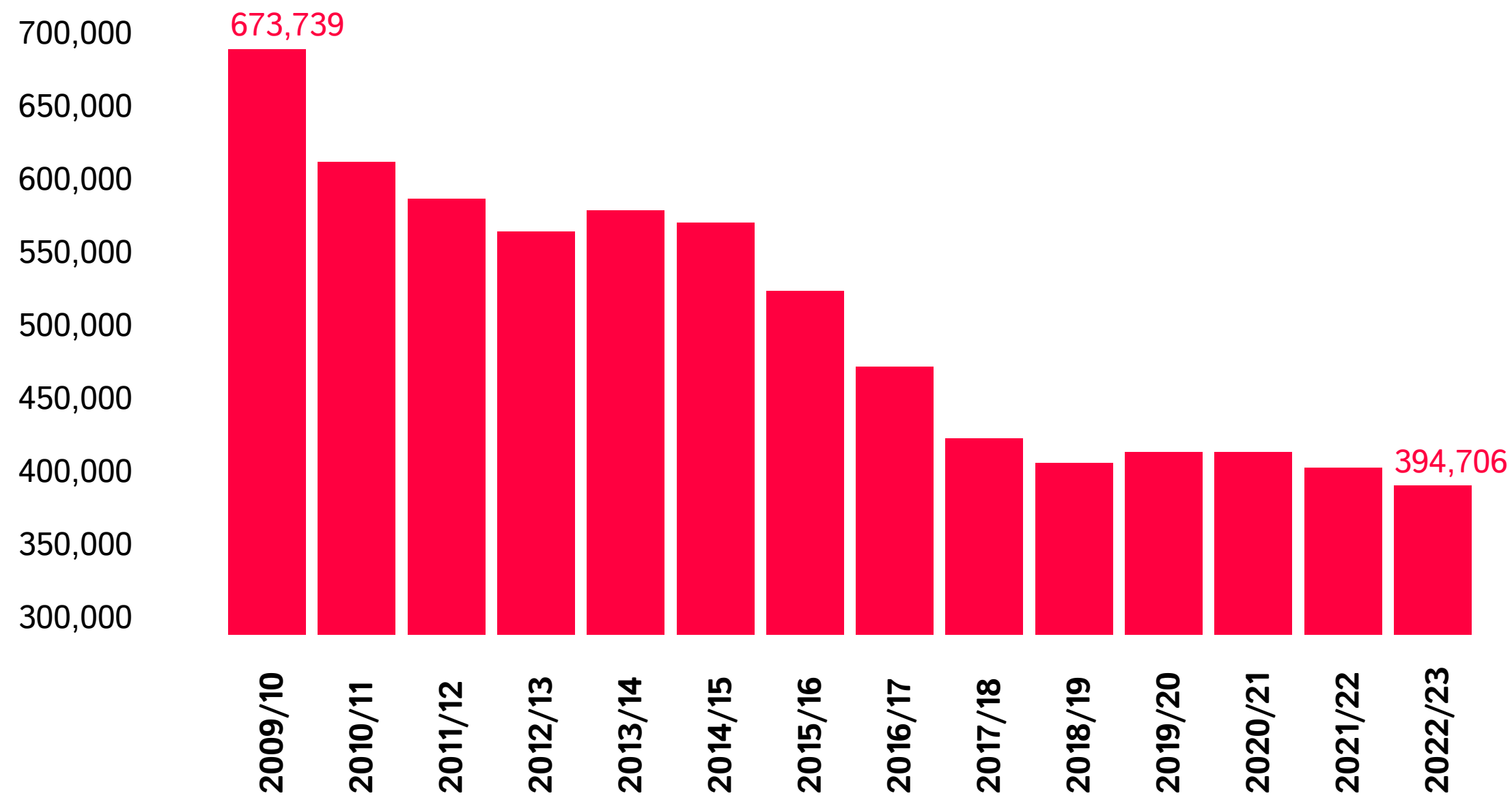
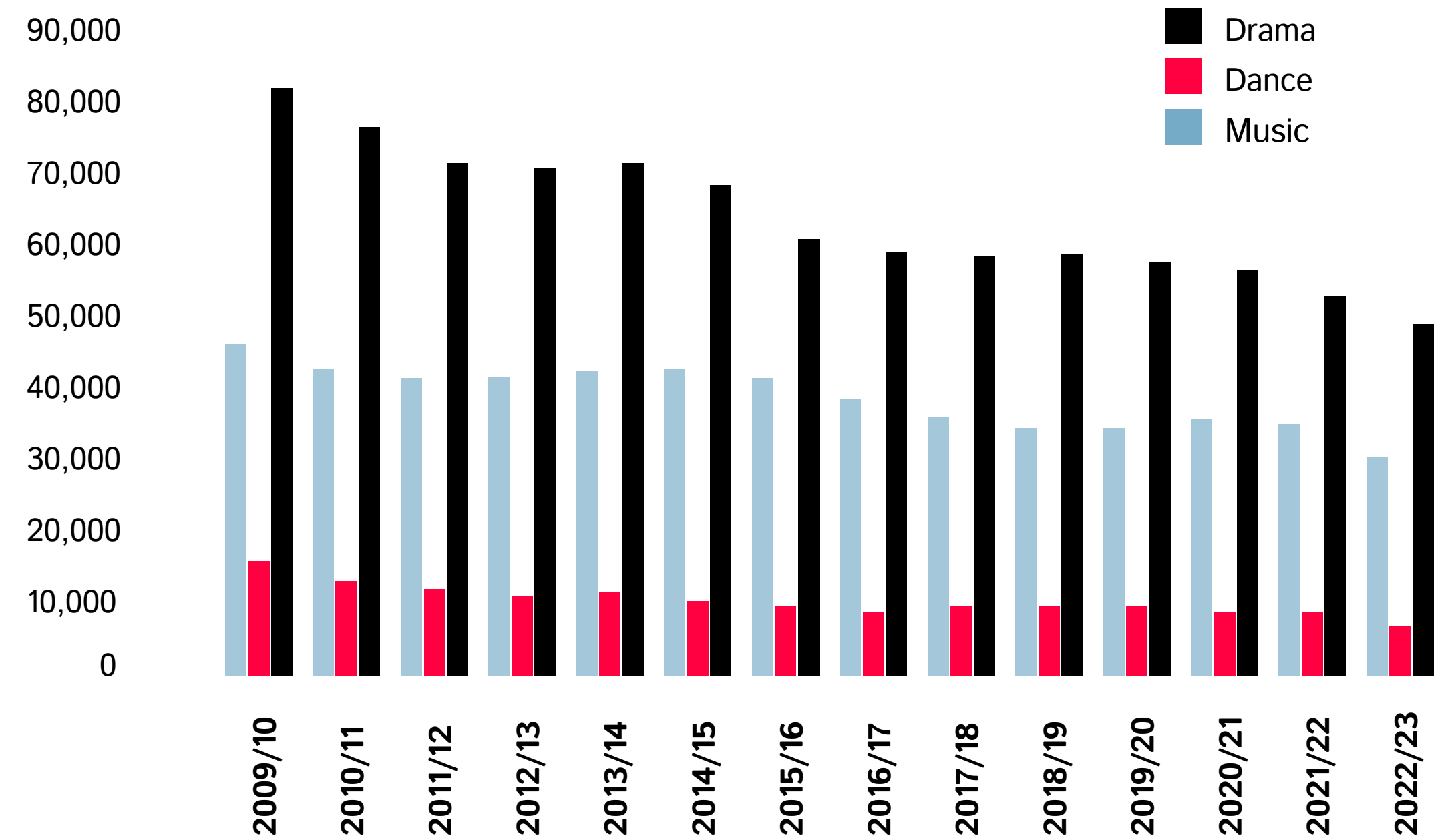


Figure 2
Arts GCSE entries by 3 subjects in England (2009/10 to 2022/23)



Indicator 1: GCSE entries

In addition to looking at total entries for GCSEs, it is worth considering the number of schools that do not enter any students for specific Arts GCSEs. 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. These figures capture the increasing number of schools where some Arts subjects are simply not offered at all at GCSE level.

Further research is required to determine the cause of this loss of GCSE offer in some arts subjects, with potential factors including the EBacc, a shift to vocational qualifications, challenges over funding and staffing, and a lack of pupil demand. However, research by FFT Datalab finds that there is a relationship between the level of deprivation of the community a school serves, and individual entries to Arts subjects. FFT analysis finds that between 2015 and 2023, the difference in entry rates to what FFT define as the ‘Performing Arts’ (including Dance, Drama and Performing/Expressive Arts) between schools serving the most disadvantaged pupils and those serving the least disadvantaged pupils has more than doubled (from 1.4% to 3.2%). Similarly, In 2023, 9% of schools with the lowest levels of deprivation had no entries for GCSE music, compared with 70% of schools with the highest levels of deprivation. For ‘Performing Arts’, the equivalent figures were 16% and 54% (FFT Datalab, 2024).

The government does not commission equalities analysis of its GCSE data for Arts subjects and does not publish publicly available datasets on pupil demographics – such as ethnicity, Free School Meals (FSM) status, SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) status and similar – and entry into specific subjects. We therefore cannot directly see how entry into Arts subjects has changed for specific groups across all of the last 14 years. However, a 2017 analysis by the Education Policy Institute (EPI) provides some suggestions of trends.

EPI’s analysis shows that, up until 2016, pupils who are eligible for Free School Meals were more likely to be entered into at least one Arts subject GCSE, compared to their peers who are not eligible for FSM. As FSM is strongly associated with prior attainment, EPI argues that this suggests that pupils who are ‘high achievers’ (and more likely to not be on FSM) are directed towards traditionally academic subjects, while pupils who have lower achievement (and are likely to be on FSM) are directed towards Arts subjects. This is also theorised to explain why pupils with SEND began to have higher entry into Arts subjects at GCSE compared to their peers without SEND (EPI, 2017).

Table 1
Arts GCSE entries in 2009/10 and 2022/23

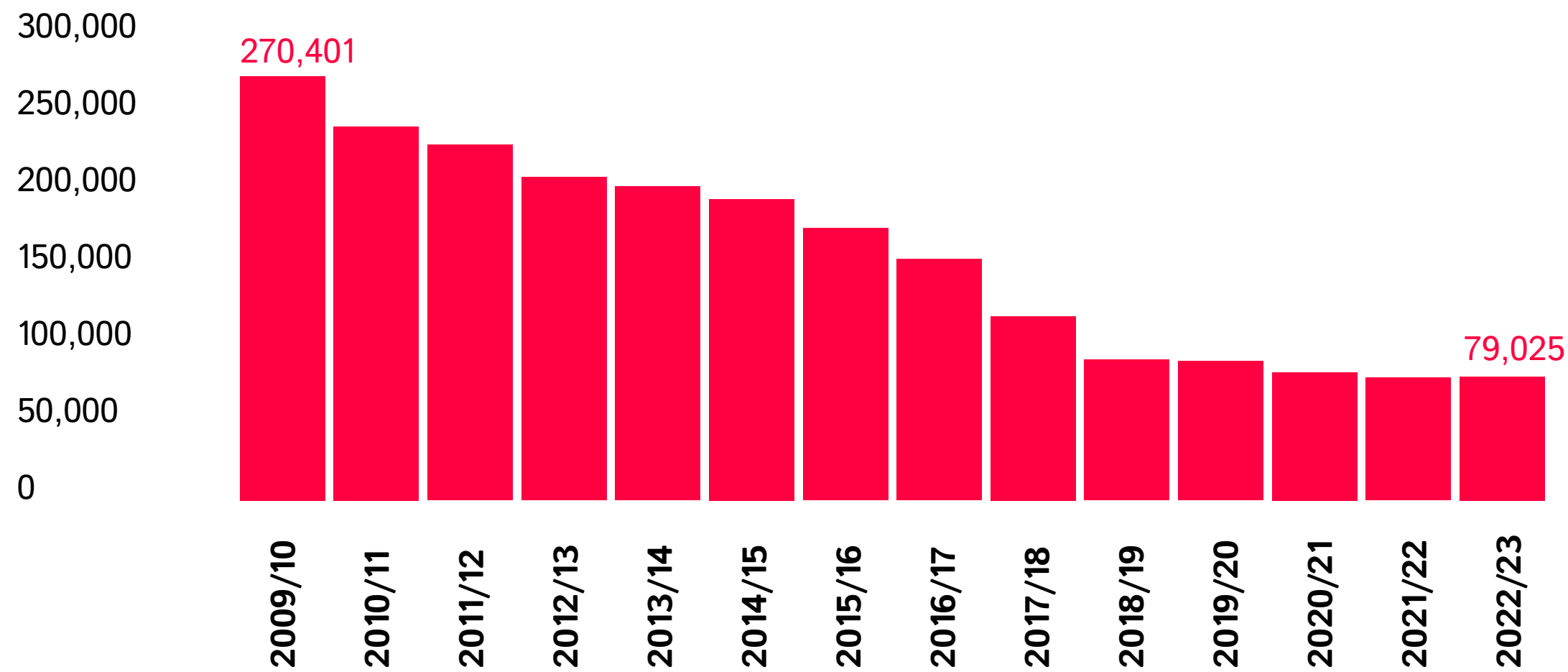
Subject	Entries in 2009/10	Entries in 2022/23	% difference between 2010 and 2023
Art & Design subjects	172,504	187,710	+9%
Dance	15,884	6,926	-56%
Design & Technology	270,401	79,025	-71%
Drama	81,592	49,825	-39%
Media/Film/TV Studies	63,808	32,905	-48%
Music	46,045	30,115	-34%
Performing/Expressive Arts	23,505	6,890	-70%
Total	673,739	393,396	-42%

Indicator 1: GCSE entries



It is notable that the EBacc excludes Arts subjects – but includes Latin and Ancient Greek

Figure 3
Design & Technology GCSE entries in England (2009/10 to 2022/23)



What are the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) and Progress 8?

The English Baccalaureate (EBacc) is an accountability measure introduced by the Department for Education in 2010 for secondary schools in England. The measure sets out a package of five types of subjects at GCSE, with schools measured on how many of their pupils take these subjects and the grades those pupils secure in those subjects.

The five subject types included in the EBacc are English (language and literature), maths, sciences, selected humanities and a modern or ancient foreign language. The government states that these subjects have been selected on the basis of research showing that studying these subjects improves pupil social mobility later on in life. It is notable that the EBacc excludes Arts subjects – but includes Latin and Ancient Greek.

Further to the EBacc, since 2016 the government has also used Progress 8 as a key performance measure for secondary schools. Progress 8 measures the academic progress that pupils make over the course of their secondary education, by comparing their Key

Stage 2 SATs (Standard Assessment Tests) taken in Year 6 and eight of their GCSE results. The eight subjects are heavily weighted towards EBacc subjects. Pupils' Progress 8 scores are combined to calculate a school's overall progress score, which is used as the basis for school league tables.

The EBacc and Progress 8 have played a role in reducing GCSE entries in Arts subjects in England. The evidence we present in this Indicator 1 section suggests a strong association between these changes in government policy and Arts subject uptake.



Indicator 2: A-Level entries and Higher Education progression

In total, the number of Arts entries at A-Level has decreased by 21% between the 2010/11 and 2022/23 academic years. As highlighted in the table below, falls are especially steep in Dance (56%), Music (43%) and Design & Technology (42%).

While these falls are stark, it is worth noting that the total number of A-Level entries varies from year to year. For example, the total number of A-Level entries fell by 5% between 2014/15 and 2019/20. It is therefore important to examine how the percentage of the total number of A-Level entries made up of Arts subjects varies from year to year.

In 2011/12, Art & Design entries made up 5.5% of all A-Level entries. By 2022/23, this had decreased to 5.1%. Music has fallen from 1.05% of all A-Level entries to 0.6% between 2011/12 to 2022/23. Entries in Drama have similarly fallen, from 1.8% in 2011/12 to 1% in 2022/23. Design & Technology entries have decreased by 0.6% as a total of all A-Level entries between 2011/12 and 2022/23. These decreases in the percentage of total Arts entries emphasises that falls in Arts entries are not just a consequence of falling A-Level entries and reflect a deeper pattern in falling Key Stage 5 participation in the Arts.

For progression to Higher Education, we draw on the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) historic data on the number of students studying Creative Arts and Design subjects at undergraduate level in the UK. We focus on data on students from the UK, excluding students from and domiciled outside the UK. 'Creative Arts and Design' is a general subject code used by HESA to cover data on students studying Fine Art, Drama, Music and other Arts subjects.

There is a deep pattern of falling Key Stage 5 participation in the Arts

Indicator 2: A-Level entries and Higher Education progression

While the total number of undergraduate degrees being studied in the UK has increased by 3.7% between 2011/12 and 2021/22, the number of students studying for an undergraduate degree in Creative Arts and Design subjects has decreased by 6%. Overall, the largest fall in undergraduate study in the last 14 years has been between 2011/12 and 2015/16, with the number of undergraduates studying Creative Arts and Design subjects falling by 10%. However, this fall was mostly in line with the total number of undergraduate students in any subject which fell

by 11%. Entries for Creative, Arts and Design subjects have subsequently increased year-on-year until 2021/22 in line with increases in the total number of undergraduates studying any subject.

Despite the increase in total numbers, the percentage of undergraduate students enrolled in a Creative Arts and Design subject has decreased between 2011/12 and 2021/22. In 2011/12, 8.5% of all undergraduate students were studying a Creative, Arts and Design subject. By 2021/22, this had fallen to 7.6%. This 0.9% fall may sound

small, but reflects that there are thousands fewer students studying Creative, Arts and Design subjects in Higher Education, and that these subjects have a diminished presence in undergraduate Higher Education in the UK.

This fall in the proportion of Arts undergraduate students takes place against a background of a 50% cut to subsidies that support universities to teach Creative Arts and Design subjects in 2021, together with promises from the current government that they will cut back support for ‘low value’ Arts degrees.¹¹ This has already had an impact on some HE institutions where Arts courses are being axed.



Table 2
A-Level Arts entries in 2010/11 and 2022/23

Subject	Entries in 2010/11	Entries in 2022/23	% difference between 2010 and 2023
Art and Design subjects	42,633	40,930	-4%
Dance	2,261	995	-56%
Design & Technology	16,519	9,000	-45%
Drama	14,597	8,385	-42%
Media/Film/TV Studies	24,226	21,530	-11%
Music	8,709	4,945	-43%
Total	108,945	85,785	-21%

Indicator 2: A-Level entries and Higher Education progression

Figure 4
Number of Music, Drama and Media/Film/TV Studies entries at A-Level in England (2010/11 to 2022/23)

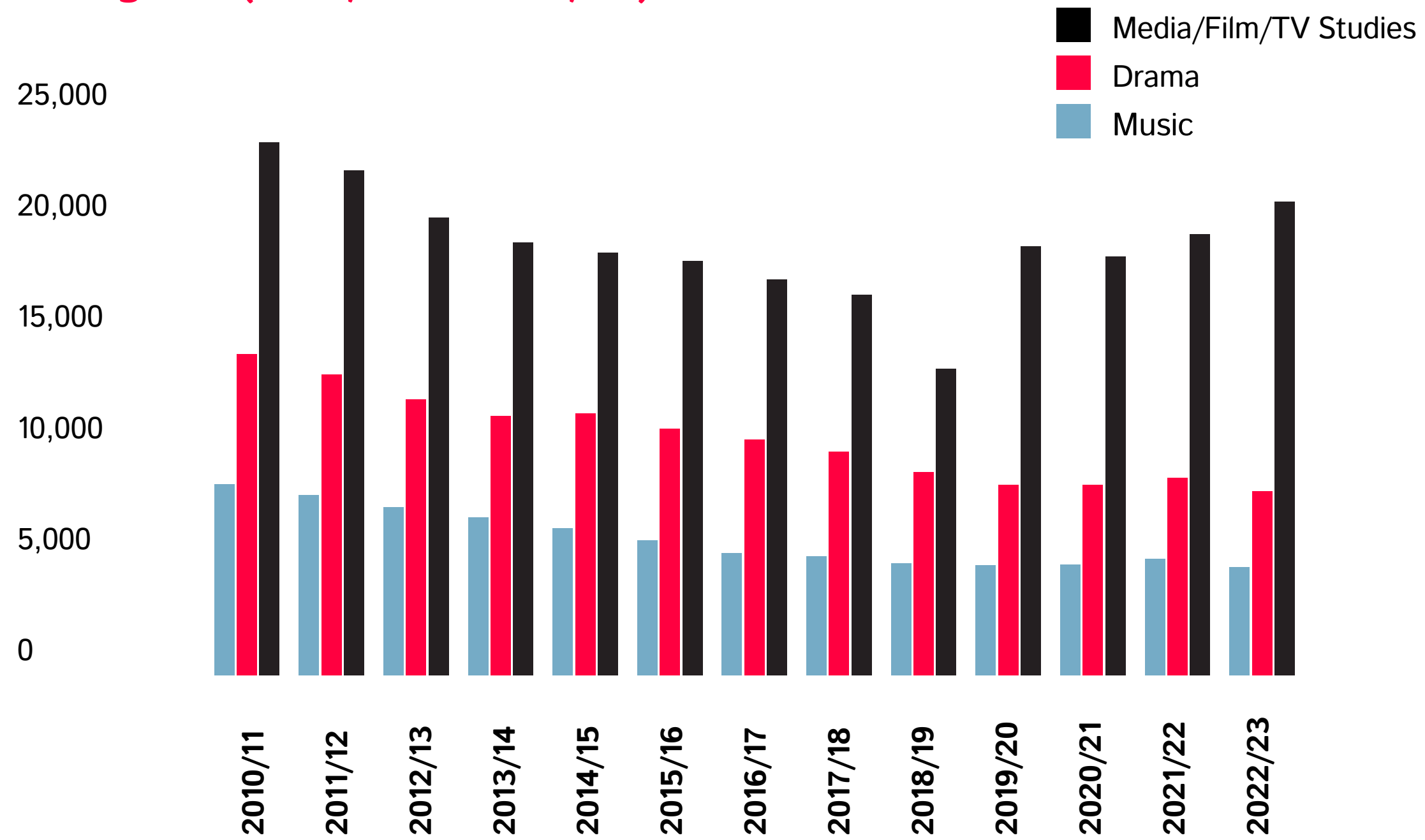
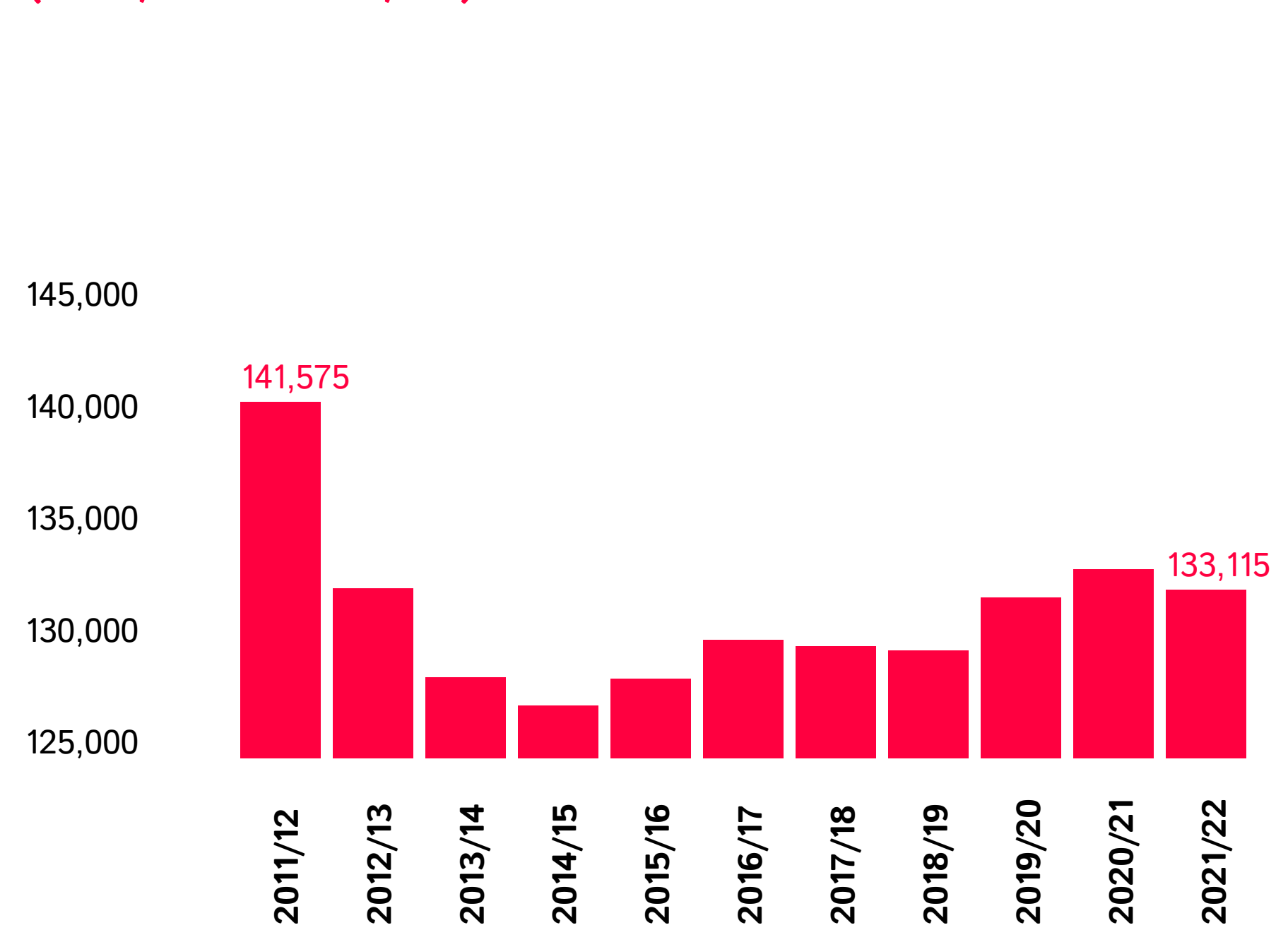


Figure 5
Number of Creative Arts and Design undergraduate students in the UK (2011/12 to 2021/22)



Indicator 3: Number of Arts teachers and hours of Arts subjects taught

The government publishes annual data estimating the total number of teachers in the country in a particular subject, and the total number of hours of that subject that are taught in English secondary schools in a given year. These estimates are based on submissions from schools made as part of the annual School Workforce Census.

Our analysis of this data highlights that, as an overall pattern, the number of Arts teachers has fallen by 21% between 2011/12 and 2022/23 (this figure excludes Dance, for which data was unavailable). In total, there are 15,030 fewer full or part-time teachers of Arts subjects in English schools in 2022/23 compared to 2011/12. The greatest fall has been for Design & Technology, which has 7,657 fewer teachers in the most recent year compared to 2011/12.

Of this overall decrease in Arts teacher numbers, it is noticeable that the largest between-year decreases typically happened between 2011/12 and 2012/13. Between these two years, the number of teachers fell by 9% in Drama, by 8% in Art & Design, and by 7% in Music. These dramatic falls are part of a wider pattern, with the total number of teachers falling between 2011/12 and 2012/13; this includes for core and EBacc subjects.

For example, the number of Maths teachers fell by 7% and the number of History teachers similarly fell by 5%. However, it is worth noting that the overall number of teachers in Maths and History has recovered to, and exceeded, its 2011/12 level since this fall. There are now 9% more History teachers than there were in 2011/12 and 4% more for Maths.

Related to the total number of teachers is the total number of hours taught in an Arts subject. The data overall reflects a mixed pattern, with the number of Arts hours taught at Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 generally falling. For Key Stage 4, where pupils study GCSEs, the total number of taught hours of Music fell by 12% between the 2011/12 and 2018/19 academic year. For Drama, the number of taught hours for the same year groups fell by a stark 30% between 2011/12 and 2022/23. Falls in Art & Design for the same time period amount to 19% fewer taught hours at Key Stage 4.

The number of Arts teachers has fallen by 21% between 2011/12 and 2022/23

Indicator 3: Number of Arts teachers and hours of Arts subjects taught

For Key Stage 5, falls in the number of taught hours have been similarly dramatic. The number of hours of Music taught at Key Stage 5 fell by a remarkable 36% between 2011/12 and 2022/23. Figures are similar for Drama, where the number of taught hours has fallen by 37%. The data for Art & Design indicates a 27% fall in taught hours at Key Stage 5.

By contrast, falls in the number of taught hours at Key Stage 3 between 2011/12 and 2022/23 have been more slight. The total number of taught Music hours at Key Stage 3 fell by 11% between 2011/12 and 2018/19. However, the number of taught Music hours has gradually increased between 2018/19 and 2022/23 to a level that is almost identical to the figure for 2011/12. In Art & Design, the number of taught hours at Key Stage 3 similarly fell by 9% between 2011/12 and 2018/19, before increasing year-on-year until 2022/23. The consequence is that the total fall in taught hours between 2011/12 and 2022/23 for Art & Design at Key Stage 3 is 3%.

Drama represents an interesting pattern: while the total number of taught hours fell between 2011/12 and 2014/15, the figure has subsequently increased year-on-year such that there has been a 6% increase in the number of Drama hours taught at Key Stage 3 between 2011/12 and 2022/23.

As a point of comparison, we can see that the total number of taught hours for core and EBacc subjects has increased. For example, the number of taught hours for Maths at Key Stage 3 has increased by 14% between 2011/12 and 2022/23 and by 15% at Key Stage 4. The pattern in History is even more striking, with the number of taught hours at Key Stage 3 increasing by 35% between 2011/12 and 2022/23, while the number of taught hours has increased by 44% over that time period for Key Stage 4.

Overall, these patterns suggest two things. Firstly, that the fall in the number of Arts teachers between 2011/12 and 202/23 has potentially reduced the ability of secondary schools to offer as many taught hours of Arts subjects as they could prior to the 2011/12 academic year. This also relates to the increased number of schools likely not offering Arts subjects at GCSE between 2016/17 and 2022/23 (based on the increasing percentage of schools not putting forward any GCSE entries in some Arts subjects). Secondly, it seems that the fall in the number of entries into Arts subjects at GCSE and A-Level (discussed within Indicator 1 and Indicator 2 above) has resulted in fewer taught hours of Arts subjects to Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5. Given that the number of taught hours for a subject such as History – included in the EBacc – has increased by such a large figure at Key Stage 4, this strongly suggests that the EBacc has reduced young people's exposure to the Arts through the formal education curriculum in England.

Table 3
Number of Arts teachers in secondary schools in England in 2011/12 and 2022/23

Subject	Number of teachers in 2011/12	Number of teachers in 2022/23	Percentage difference
Art & Design	13,913	12,589	-9%
Design & Technology	14,800	7,143	-52%
Drama	11,648	9,042	-22%
Media Studies	6,624	4,040	-39%
Music	8,043	7,184	-10%
Total Arts subjects	55,028	39,998	-27%

Indicator 3: Number of Arts teachers and hours of Arts subjects taught

Figure 6
Total number of hours of Drama taught in secondary schools in England at Key Stage 4 (2011/12 to 2022/23)

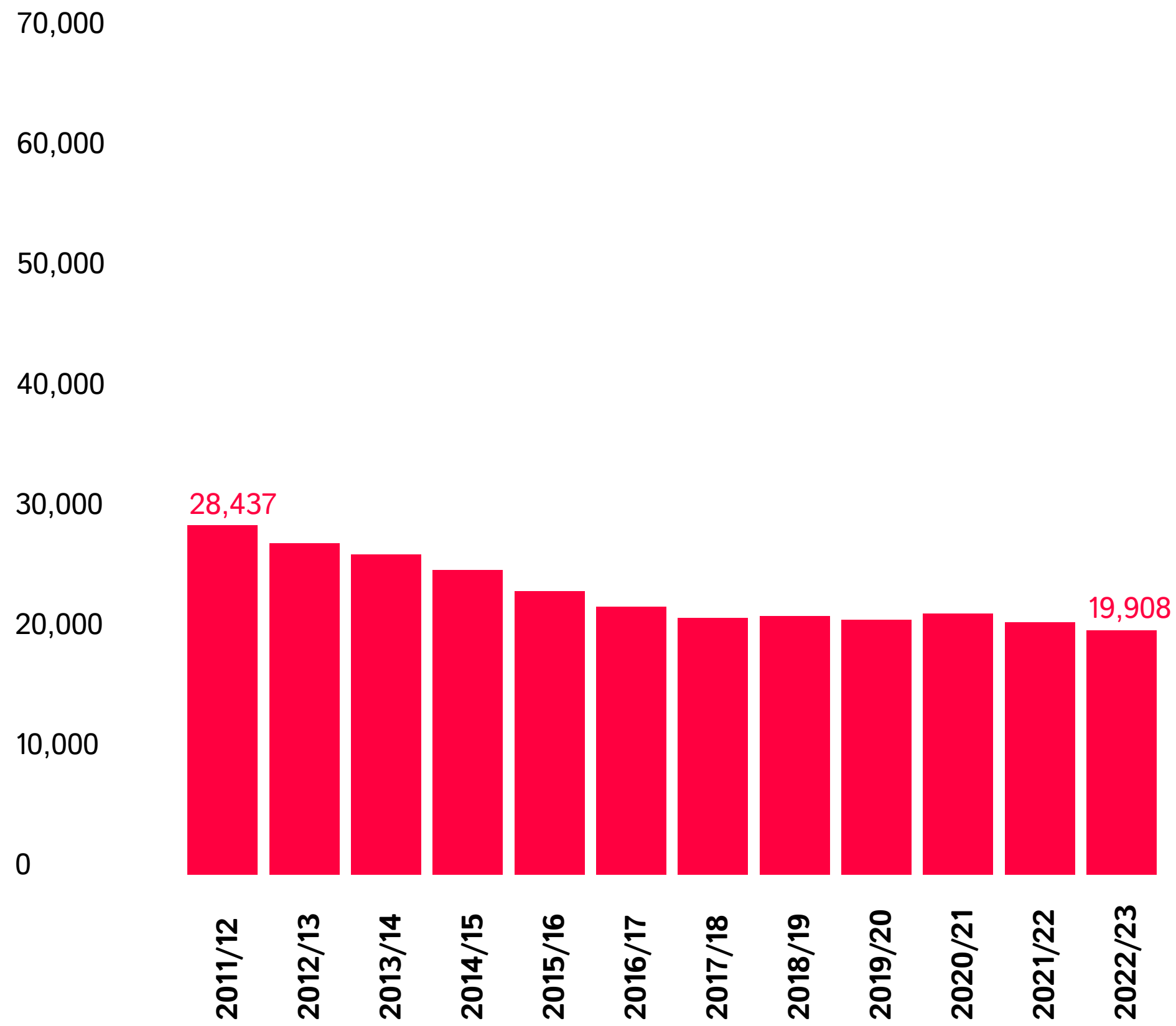
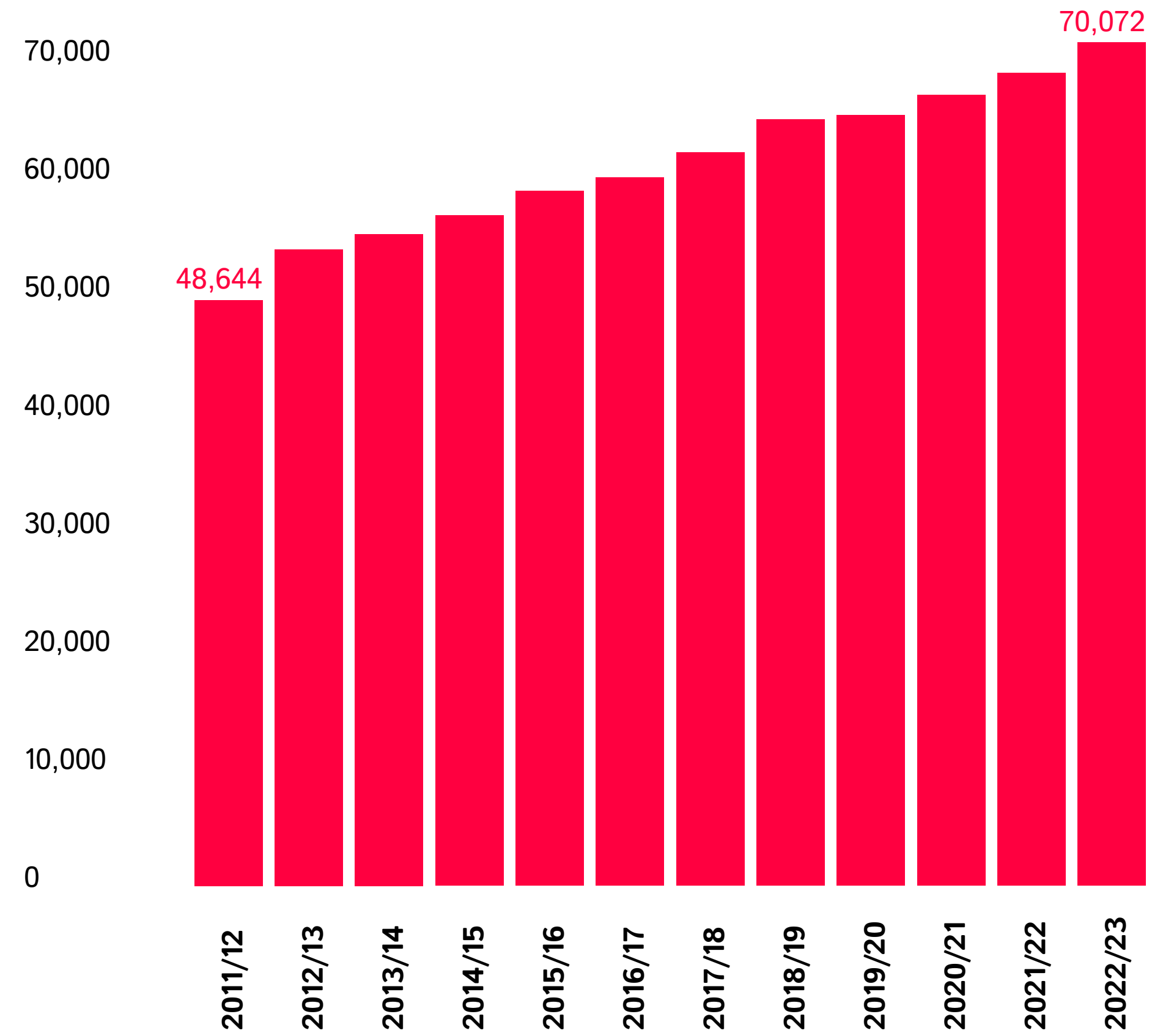


Figure 7
Total number of hours of History taught in secondary schools in England at Key Stage 4 (2011/12 to 2022/23)



Indicator 4: Arts teacher recruitment and retention

As discussed in the previous section, the total number of Arts teachers is lower in the 2022/23 academic year than it was in 2010/11; this is part of a wider issue of recruitment and retention in teaching. Since 2010, the overall number of teachers across all subjects in state-funded schools has generally failed to keep pace with increasing pupil numbers.

As a consequence, the number of pupils per teacher has increased from 17.1 in 2010 to 18 in 2022 (House of Commons, 2023). The teacher vacancy rate has also risen (see page 20). Across all subjects, the most recent year has been especially troubling for teacher recruitment and retention. More teachers have left the profession for reasons other than retirement than since records began. The vacancy rate has also doubled since the pandemic (NFER, 2023).

All of this highlights the fact that there are deep issues with teacher recruitment and retention that extend beyond Arts subjects. However, as our analysis shows, there have been some especially stark challenges in the Arts over the last 14 years.

Recruitment

The government's data on Initial Teacher Training (ITT) recruitment in England is published annually. Out of the Arts subjects, this data has been published consistently for Art & Design and Music (both foundation subjects) since the 2010/11 academic year, while it has been published less consistently for Drama and not at all for Dance over that same time period. The data shows a dramatic fall in the number of ITT recruits across Art & Design and Music subjects between the 2010/11 and 2011/12 academic year. Numbers then increased before a further notable fall between the 2016/17 and 2017/18 academic years. Overall figures of recruits in 2023 remain well below where they were in 2010 – the number of ITT recruits for Art & Design has fallen by 19% and the number for Music has fallen by 56%. However, the largest fall has been for Design & Technology, with ITT enrolment falling by 65% between 2010/11 and 2022/23.

There have been some especially stark challenges over the last 14 years

Indicator 4: Arts teacher recruitment and retention

Figure 8
Number of registered Initial Teacher Trainee enrolments per year for Art & Design and Music in England (2011/12 to 2022/23)

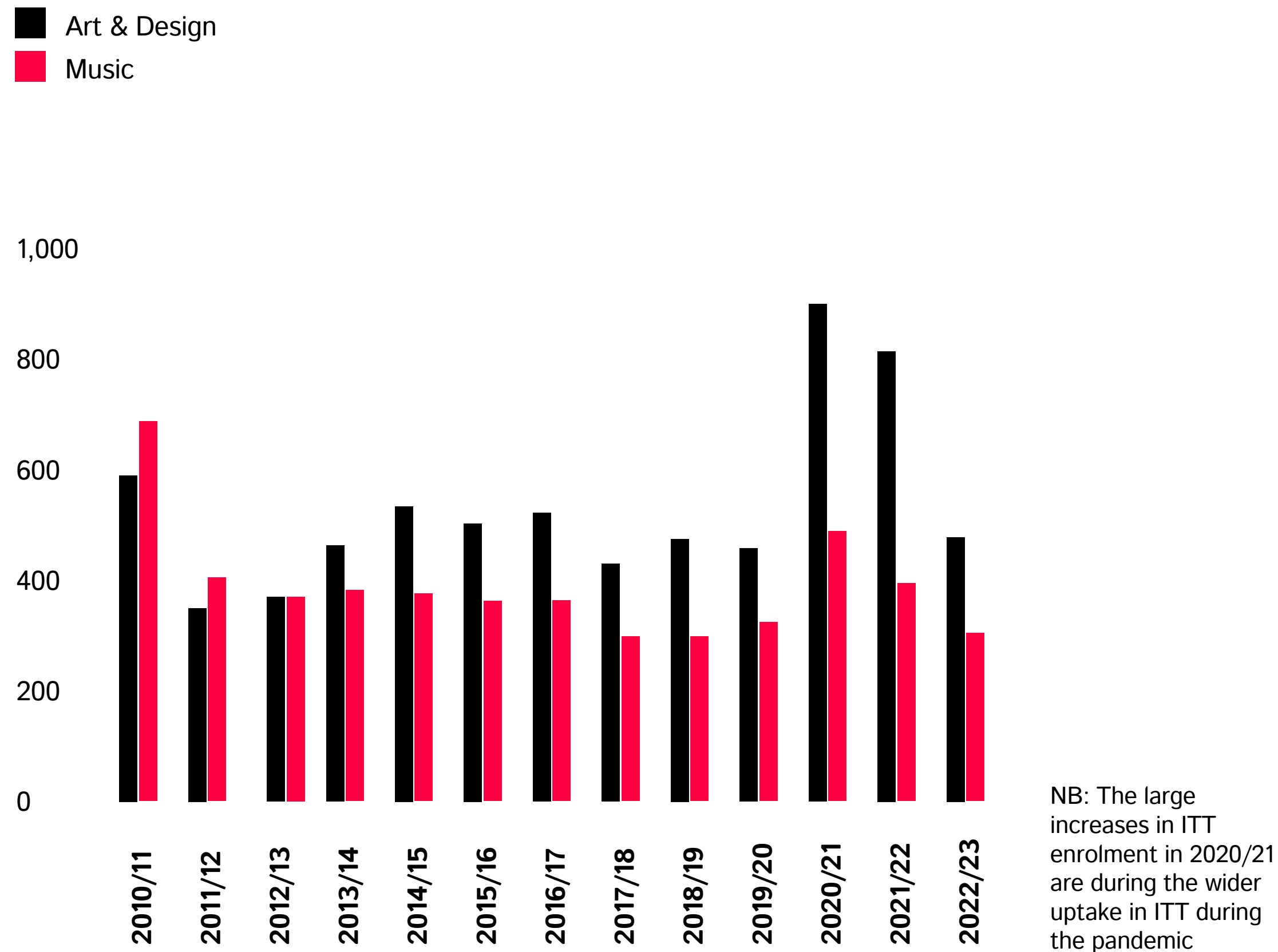
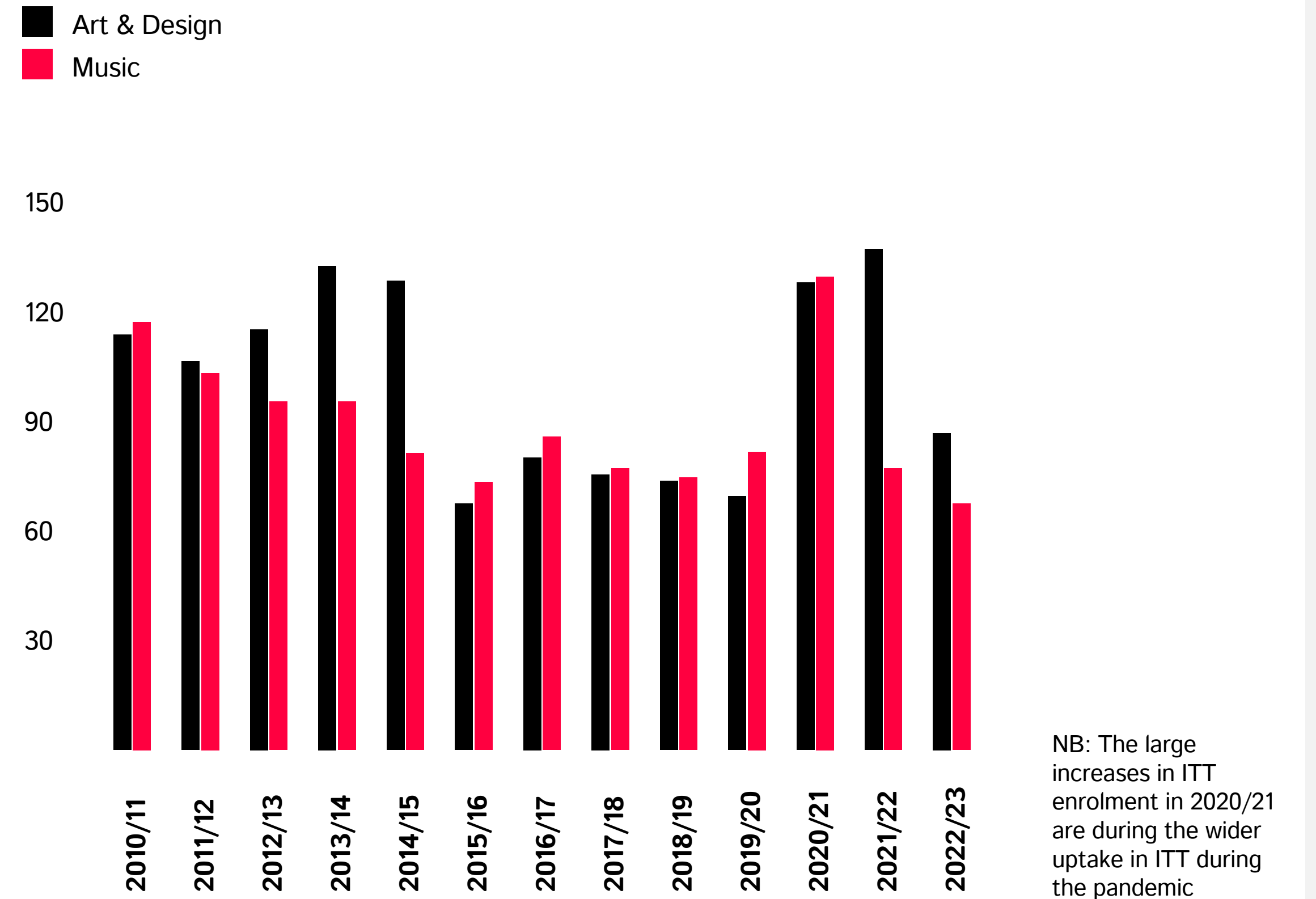


Figure 9
Percentage of the government's Initial Teacher Training recruitment targets reached for Art & Design and Music in England (2010/11 to 2022/23)



Indicator 4: Arts teacher recruitment and retention



Between 2010/11 and 2022/23, the vacancy rate for Art & Design has more than tripled, the rate for Music has increased by a multiple of six, and for Drama has increased by a multiple of five



The government's data for Drama is less consistent than for Art & Design and Music, with clear ITT recruitment records only beginning in the 2012/13 academic year. The data shows a similar pattern to other Arts subjects, with a notable drop-off in numbers between the 2016/17 and 2017/18 academic years. However, by contrast, ITT recruitment to Drama has actually improved from 2010 to 2023, with an overall increase of 22%.

The fall in enrolment onto Arts ITT courses between 2010/11 and 2012/13 has many potential causes. In part this may be a fall in the number of training places available in Arts subjects due to falls in government targets (discussed below). Changes to the government's approach to funding postgraduate ITT courses after 2011 also meant that candidates with a first degree awarded at a lower second class or below became ineligible to access Department for Education funding for their course. Changes to ITT during these years also led to the creation of new teacher training routes (such as Schools Direct) that may have made the application process more confusing and complicated for prospective Arts teachers, deterring them for applying.¹²

Noticeably, across the four Arts subjects where consistent data is available, there is a large increase in ITT enrolment between the 2019/20 and 2020/21 academic years. This increase corresponds to the overall increase in ITT recruitment across all subjects that occurred over the course of the first year of the pandemic, and is in line with the general observed pattern that teacher ITT improves during periods of economic recession and uncertainty. However, the steep post-pandemic drop-off of 37% in Music, 47% in Art & Design and 36% in Drama, reveals that the typical pattern in ITT recruitment for Arts subjects since 2010 has resumed.

Another illuminating way of tracking ITT recruitment is to examine how much of the government's target for recruitment in specific subjects is met each year. These recruitment targets are derived using models that estimate the number of new teachers needed in a subject based on teachers leaving the profession in that subject; overall teacher retention; the number of pupils estimated to be on roll in coming years and their age; and forecasting based on how specific government policies will affect the need for teachers in particular subjects. If the government fails to meet these targets then there are likely to be shortages of teachers in those subjects in the years following a given year of ITT recruitment.

Indicator 4: Arts teacher recruitment and retention

By examining the government's own targets, we can see that it was exceeding its own recruitment targets in the 2010/2011 academic year in Art & Design and Music by as much as 19%. However, by the year 2015/16 the government was missing these targets by 26% in Music and 37% in Art & Design. This pattern of falling short of targets continued until the pandemic uplift in 2020/21, and has fallen especially starkly for Design & Technology since, with the government most recently missing its target in this subject by 75%. By contrast, the government's recruitment of Drama trainees has exceeded targets since the pandemic (by as much as 57% in the 2021/22 academic year) and continues to sit above targets in the 2022/23 academic year.

However, while the percentage of government targets met can be an illuminating measure, it is also worth examining the targets themselves and how these numbers have changed. Examining these figures can highlight how certain years where the government exceeds its targets offer a less optimistic picture of teacher supply than might initially be indicated.

For example in the year 2011/12 when the government was exceeding its recruitment targets in Art & Design and Music by 9% and 3% respectively, the government had actually substantially reduced its own recruitment targets from the previous year by 41% in Art & Design and 31% in Music. This reduction likely reflects the introduction of the EBacc at GCSE, which excludes Arts subjects, and the consequent anticipated fall in need for Arts teachers in English schools. Either way, it is worth noting that target recruitment figures in Music have been generally much lower than they were in 2010, making the government's failure to meet its recruitment targets in the subject even more worrying. Target figures in Art & Design increased remarkably between 2014/15 and 2015/16 by 96%. This increased target for Art & Design and Music is in line with large targets for recruitment of teachers in most subjects, which may reflect a rise in the total number of teachers retiring.

Figures have decreased since, but typically have remained well above the 2010/11 target. Since 2015/16, target figures for Drama ITT recruits have remained mostly stable, however they have fallen by 16% between the 2019/20 and 2022/23 academic years, likely reflecting improvements in Drama teacher recruitment over the pandemic.

Retention

Compared to ITT recruitment, calculating teacher retention in specific subjects is more challenging. The government publishes annual headline data on the total number of teachers leaving the profession (including for reasons other than retirement) that is based on the School Workforce Census. These overall figures show a trend towards increasing numbers of teachers leaving the profession for reasons other than retirement since 2010 (NFER, 2023).



Indicator 4: Arts teacher recruitment and retention

Finding retention data specific to the Arts is challenging. While the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) has published retention data for secondary subjects between 2015 and 2020, this data does not include Arts subjects with the granularity required to be included in this review. As such, we must draw on data that does not directly tell us about the retention of Arts teachers but instead provides a suggestive proxy of how retention has changed since 2010.

A useful measure for this purpose is the teacher vacancy rate (see page 32). The higher the vacancy rate for a secondary subject, the more advertised but unfilled roles there are to teach that subject. Unfilled vacancies are suggestive of teachers in a particular subject leaving the profession. As a result, we are able to use the vacancy rate as a helpful substitute for more concrete retention data in Arts subjects.

The teacher vacancy rate has undergone sizeable changes over the course of the last 14 years. Between 2010/11 and 2022/23, the vacancy rate for Art & Design has more than tripled, the rate for Music has increased by a multiple of six, and Drama has increased by a multiple of five; this means that the number of unfilled vacancies in these subjects has increased in the last 14 years. The government records vacancy rates for Design & Technology based on sub-disciplines with the subject. As such, we can see that the vacancy rate for Food Technology has risen from 0.3 in 2010/11 to a remarkable 1.9 in 2023, the subject with the highest vacancy rate in England; this possibly reflects that the retention of teachers in some Arts subjects has become much worse over the last 14 years. By contrast, Media Studies has remained stable with a vacancy rate of 0.1 in 2010/11 and 2022/23.

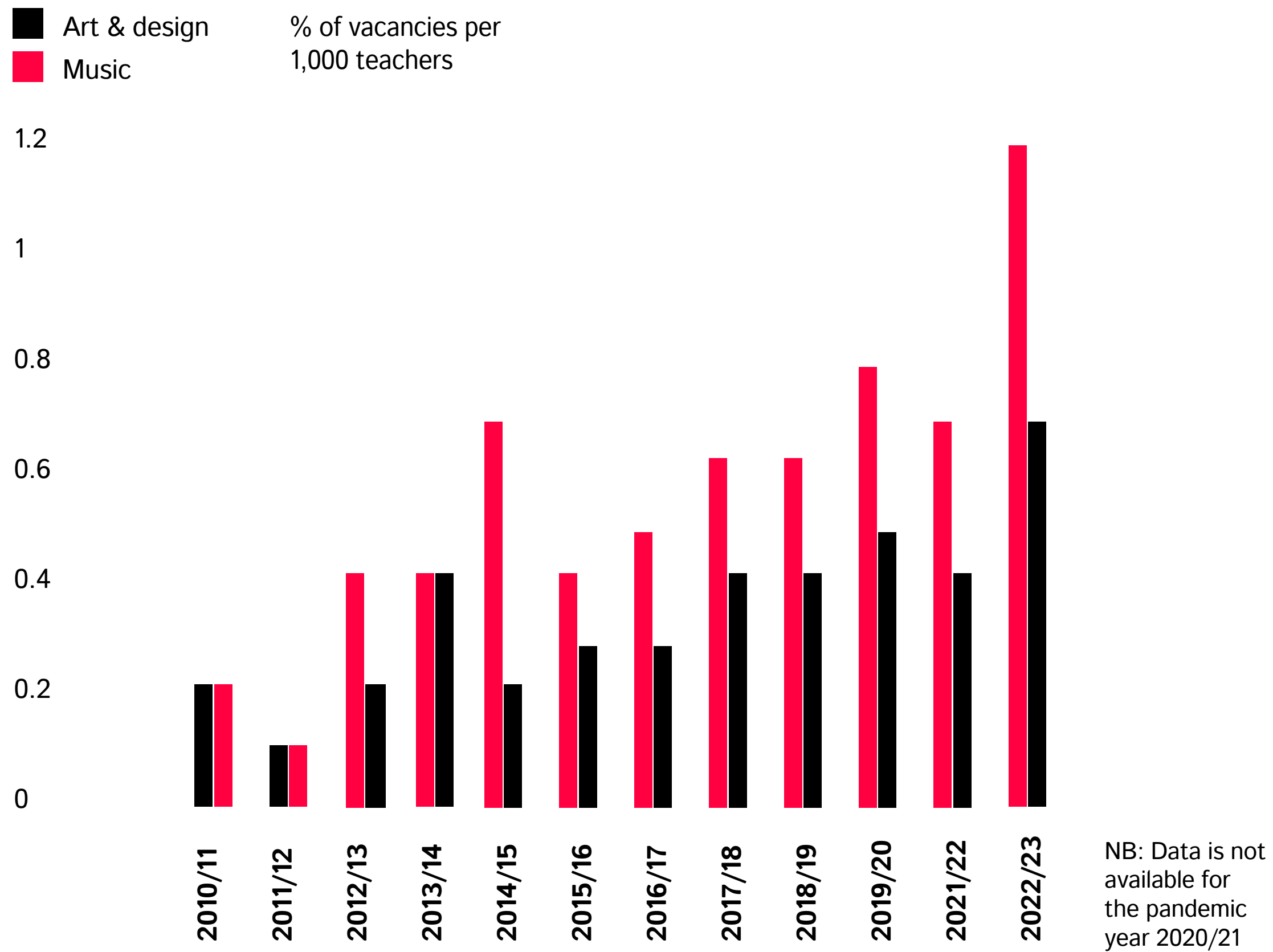


Finding retention data specific to the Arts is challenging



Indicator 4: Arts teacher recruitment and retention

Figure 10
Teacher vacancy rate for Art & Design and Music in secondary schools in England (2010/11 to 2022/23)



An explanation of teacher vacancy rates and the information in the graph

As part of the School Workforce Census, the government collects annual data on the number of teacher vacancies advertised by schools at a given time. A ‘vacancy’ is defined as full or part-time appointment of at least one term’s duration that has been advertised by a school but has not been filled. The government also captures data on how secondary school curriculum hours are split between different subjects (as discussed for Indicator 3).

The government then uses both of these measures to calculate a ‘teacher vacancy rate’ for specific secondary subjects; this is done by calculating the total taught curriculum hours in a subject, such as for Music.

The resulting figure is then multiplied by the total number of qualified classroom teachers in service in that subject, plus the number of vacant posts. The result is a measure that reflects the number of vacancies, as a percentage per 1,000 teachers; this means that if the vacancy rate for, say, Music is 0.5, that there are 5 unfilled vacancies for every 1,000 music teachers.



Indicator 5: The ‘enrichment gap’

The ‘attainment gap’ refers to the differences in academic outcomes (such as exam grades) between young people from disadvantaged backgrounds and those from more advantaged backgrounds. The government has stated that closing this gap has been one of the main aims of their education policies since 2010. As at 2022/23, Ofqual reports that ‘students in independent schools had higher outcomes than students in academies.’

In parallel to the ‘attainment gap,’ there appears to be evidence of an ‘enrichment gap,’ with young people from wealthier backgrounds having much greater access to extra-curricular Arts provision and opportunities compared to their peers from lower-income backgrounds.

There is no single, publicly available dataset that covers socio-economic disparities in young people’s Arts participation between 2010 and 2023. As such, we draw on three types of source to discuss the enrichment gap in this section and how it has changed over the past 14 years:

- Gap in provision between independent and state schools
- Survey-based approaches to young people’s Arts participation
- Survey based approaches to family poverty and its impact on Arts participation.

Gap in provision between independent and state schools

For the purpose of this section, we refer to fee-paying schools as independent schools. This descriptor can be used interchangeably with ‘public’ or ‘private’ in the UK, and where we reference sources, they may use these alternative terms.

Evidence over the last decade has clearly highlighted the remarkable level of resourcing for Arts education in England’s independent schools. An investigation in 2017 by *The Sunday Times* found that independent schools in London alone have 59 theatres between them, with many of them being state of the art. By contrast, the West End has just 42 theatres (*The Sunday Times*, 2017).

Independent schools in London alone have 59 theatres between them, with many of them being state of the art. By contrast, the West End has just 42 theatres (*The Sunday Times*, 2017)

Indicator 5: The 'enrichment gap'

This closer relationship to industry gives independent school pupils access to social networks and specialised teaching

A study by the Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre (Carey, O'Brien & Gable, 2021) looked at a sample of 20 independent schools and found that, between them, there were 33 theatre spaces for teaching and performance (CIPEC, 2021). All the studied schools have fine Arts studios, provision for concert performances and 90% have extensive rehearsal space. Partly because of these facilities, all the schools are also able to offer specialist provision, including photography, sculpture, ceramics, textiles, digital media and more.

Furthermore, the CIPEC study found that money, visibility and prestige also allow independent schools to attract support from industry professionals, including programmes such as 'Artist or Film-maker in Residence.' Higher salaries allow these schools to pull in teaching staff (but also theatre managers and technicians) with extensive industry credentials (CIPEC, 2021). The CIPEC study looked at the CVs of Arts staff in independent schools and found the National Theatre and West End among previous employers, with a large volume of film and TV credits. This closer relationship to industry gives independent school pupils access to social networks and specialised teaching that give them a better chance of professional success in the creative industries (CIPEC, 2021).

It is unclear how this kind of resourcing for a strong Arts offer has changed in independent schools over the last 14 years. However, The Financial Times has reported that between the year 2010 and 2019, independent school fees increased annually by an average of 4% (The Financial Times, 2021). There is no suggestion from the FT's investigation that this fee increase has been to cover rising day-to-day delivery costs. As such, it is speculated by The Financial Times that independent schools have increased their capital investment spending, building new facilities such as specialised Arts spaces (The Financial Times, 2019). Similarly, these fee increases are speculated to have been used to hire specialised staff, including Arts teachers with strong industry experience discussed above. Given the other evidence on independent school facilities, these explanations are plausible.



Indicator 5: The ‘enrichment gap’



Cuts to school trips have more than doubled (2022-23), but this figure rises to 68% in schools with the most disadvantaged intakes

It is also worth noting that in the state sector, cuts to school trips have more than doubled to 50% in 2023 compared to 21% in 2022, as school trips are being cut in the face of the cost-of-living crisis; in schools with the most disadvantaged intakes, the 2023 figure represents a reduction of 68%, compared to 44% in the least deprived schools.¹³ As the Sutton Trust observes, “These findings are especially concerning given the importance of school trips in broadening the horizons of young people in low income families, who are less likely to have these experiences outside of those provided by school.”

Survey-based approaches to young people’s Arts participation

A wide range of surveys between 2010 and 2023 have shown evidence of disparities in Arts participation between young people based on economic background. No single annual survey covers the entire time period, meaning we are unable to produce a time-series data set to show with precision how access may have changed over the last 14 years. The Taking Part survey comes close to covering the 2010-2023 period, but public data releases of the survey do not include socio-economic data for young people. As such, we have drawn on the analysis of research teams outside of government who have applied for and received access to the full demographic data tables of the Taking Part survey, and other surveys, to identify wealth-related patterns.

A 2014 briefing by the Sutton Trust used Office for National Statistics (ONS) data to find that 15% of parents pay for their child to participate in an Arts enrichment activity outside of school. However, the same briefing finds that parents in higher socio-economic groups are 15% more likely than those in lower groups to spend money sending their child to participate in any kind of enrichment activity (the Sutton Trust, 2014). As such, it seems likely that a child’s access to Arts enrichment is affected by parental wealth.

A 2022 study published by Onward UK (Fraser & Hawksbee, 2022) uses the Millennium Cohort Study – a research programme that routinely captures data from 12,000 young people born in or near the year 2000 – to identify participation gaps in the Arts. Analysing data captured in 2015 when the Millennium cohort members were mostly aged 14, the analysis finds that young people growing up in the South East of England are twice as likely to play music outside of school, compared to young people in the North East (the region of England with the highest level of child poverty). Young people in the South East are also 40% more likely to participate in dance outside of school compared to their peers in the North East. Similarly, while half of young people in London reported playing a musical instrument, this is true of only a third of young people in the North East (Onward UK, 2022).

Indicator 5: The ‘enrichment gap’

The Taking Part survey was conducted by DCMS between 2005 and 2020. The annual survey of thousands of households asked adults (aged over 16) and young people (aged between 5 and 15) about their participation in Arts and culture in any given year. Questions for young people drew a distinction between Arts that young people engage in at school and outside of it. A 2021 study of Taking Part survey data for 11 to 15-year-olds between 2015 and 2018 found that children whose parents were employed in routine and manual roles, or unemployed, were 40% less likely to participate in Performing Arts activities outside of school compared to children from higher socio-economic status families (Mak & Fancourt, 2021). Similarly, children who were living in the least deprived areas in the country are twice as likely to engage in Performing Arts outside of (state) school compared to peers living in the most deprived. By contrast, the study found that likelihood of engagement with Performing Arts in-school (in the state sector) was largely the same across all young people, whatever their socio-economic background (Mak & Fancourt, 2021). As a consequence, the study concludes by emphasising the needs for all schools to be resourced to ensure access to high-quality Arts enrichment can be universal.

The study also shows that wealthier parents are more likely to personally engage with the Arts, whether through attending Arts events, performances or personally practicing Arts. Relatedly, the study highlights that there is an association between the extent to which parents participate in the Arts and the extent to which their children do (Mak & Fancourt, 2021). As a consequence, if when we look at Arts Council England’s Active Lives survey (conducted between 2015 and 2017) of 291,926 adults, and observe that adults from higher socio-economic status groups are 24% more likely to have attended an Arts event or performance in the year of the survey, we can infer that it is likely that young people in the families of those adults will have also experienced higher Arts participation (Arts Council England, 2018).

A 2019 survey of parents and young people in Oxford found that 27% of young people on Free School Meals, and 14% of students who are otherwise from low-income families, choose not to study Arts or music at school because of the cost of studying the subjects, compared to 8% of young people from better-off families (Dosa, 2019). CPAG’s research into the cost of learning during the pandemic found that parents with ‘extreme money concerns’ were 20% more likely to have to spend money on Arts and crafts materials for remote learning during lockdown than families without such concerns (Child Poverty Action Group, 2020). Interviews from the same study also highlighted how the need to provide materials for Arts enrichment was especially challenging for poorer families. These findings from the lockdown period highlight that families in poverty are more dependent on support from schools for accessing the Arts than those living outside of poverty.

Families in poverty are more dependent on support from schools for accessing the Arts than those living outside of poverty



Solutions: CLA blueprint for an Arts-rich education

Our Manifesto Asks for 2024 summarise the changes needed to set a course correction to halt – and reverse – the decline of Expressive arts teaching and learning highlighted in this report. These Manifesto Asks are presented in the context of widespread calls for education system change, and are about the wider context for schooling as well as the specific issues for Arts education. The foundational education policy changes that CLA is seeking are:

- 1. Setting new purposes for education** – with the Expressive Arts as one of the group of core and equal curriculum areas mapped onto the new purposes; this goes beyond just a ‘curriculum review.’
- 2. A minimum four-hour Arts entitlement within the school week** to the end of Key Stage 3 that enables high-quality, progressive learning experiences, and provision at Key Stages 4 and 5 outside of exam syllabuses.¹⁴ In addition, there should be extra-curricular Expressive Arts opportunities at all stages and phases of schooling.
- 3. Complete reform of the school accountability system** to ensure it no longer adversely impacts Expressive Arts subjects – abandoning the EBacc and reforming Progress 8 – and **changes to student assessment** in line with the recommendations of Rethinking Assessment.¹⁵
- 4. An entitlement to teacher training and teacher development** opportunities for Expressive Arts subjects.

Underpinning these system changes there will need to be:

- An emphasis on a **rounded learning experience** for the personal development and wellbeing of the ‘whole child’ – for the present as well as for the future
- A focus on **representation, breadth and relevance** across the Arts curriculum, resources and practice
- A commitment to ensuring that the **cultural sector** can respond strategically and collaboratively to meet the needs of young people in schools and in their communities, and is resourced specifically to support this work.

Please support and join us as we work to provide young people with an entitlement to a broad, balanced, future-focused and Arts-rich education.

Sign up to join CLA and lend your weight to our work, plus receive all our latest news and comment

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Please contact us if you wish to discuss this report or our Manifesto Asks: info@culturallearningalliance.org.uk

Let us know if you have suggestions for data collection points for our next annual Report Card

www.culturallearningalliance.org.uk

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- 5 See Cultural Learning Alliance Evidence, Health & Wellbeing Briefing: <https://www.culturallearningalliance.org.uk/>
- 6 Begum, S. Wylie, M. Anwari, H. Hood, S (2024) Visualise: Race and inclusion in secondary school art education, Freelands Foundation and Runnymede Trust. [https://assets.website-files.com/61488e50132da098d2dd729b/65e6182ba9a49e6d304e16a8_Visualise-Race and Inclusion in Secondary School Art Education_Master_Digital.pdf](https://assets.website-files.com/61488e50132da098d2dd729b/65e6182ba9a49e6d304e16a8_Visualise-Race%20and%20Inclusion%20in%20Secondary%20School%20Art%20Education_Master_Digital.pdf)
- 7 Foundation Subjects are Art & Design, Citizenship, Computing and IT, Design & Technology, Geography, History, Languages, Music and PE. They differ to the core subjects of English, Maths and Science. There are other subjects which can be compulsory but are not core or foundation subjects, such as religious education, and relationships, sex and health education, which are worth mentioning as they add to the list of subjects schools must allocate time, staff and resources to cover.
- 8 BTECs are Business and Technology Council Education Qualifications
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- 14 We are referring to the optimal full three-year KS3, not the truncated two-year model adopted by some schools.
- 15 Rethinking Assessment. <https://rethinkingassessment.com/>

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