



Next steps for creative education in England - creative subjects in schools, FE and HEIs, progression, and career development

Morning, Tuesday, 24th June 2025

Westminster Education Forum, Westminster Higher Education Forum, and Westminster Media Forum policy conference **taking place online** - [see also on-demand viewing option below](#)

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Confirmed speakers so far:

Dr Vanessa Ogden, CEO, Mulberry Schools Trust; and Member, Curriculum and Assessment Review Group

Jill Cowley, Pro Vice-Chancellor Skills and Training and Dean, Faculty of Arts, Design and Humanities, De Montfort University

Stuart Worden, Principal, The BRIT School

John Yarham, Interim Chief Executive, Careers & Enterprise Company

and

Heather Carey, *Work Advance*; **Kate Fellows**, *Leeds Museums and Galleries*; **Dana Gamble**, *GuildHE*; **Richard Harris**, *Raynes Park High School*; **Lucy Kennedy**, *National Saturday Club*; **Sophie Leach**, *National Society for Education in Art and Design*; **James Murray-Walsh**, *Global Academy*; **Jacqui O'Hanlon**, *Royal Shakespeare Company*; **Janine Streuli**, *Royal Academy of Dance*; **Professor Fintan Walsh**, *Birkbeck, University of London*

This conference will examine priorities and next steps for creative education in England's schools, colleges and HEIs, looking at the curriculum, training and career development in the creative industries.

It takes place with the importance of creative subjects being highlighted in the Department for Education's major *Curriculum and Assessment Review*, in advance of its final report due in Autumn.

[New approaches to creative education](#)

With the Review calling for new approaches to teaching and learning in creative education, key stakeholders and policymakers will discuss implications and priorities for schools and the creative industries - and how suggestions could be taken forward for improving access to art, drama and music, including the introduction of interactive teaching practices outside the classroom and utilising external expertise.

Following plans announced by the Government for a National Centre for Arts and Music Education, delegates will assess strategies for promoting arts education, supporting teachers, and encouraging children's creative interests. They will look at how best to address declining participation in creative subjects, as well as at the impact on disadvantaged children and how extra-curricular opportunities can be widened.

The teaching workforce

The agenda looks at how to improve teacher retention and recruitment in the creative subjects, particularly in music, art and design. Support for early career teachers and overall professional development will be discussed, alongside addressing workload challenges.

Timetabling, assessment, inspection and funding

Discussion will also consider the impact of the EBacc performance measure on arts subjects, including access to and time allocated by schools, which was highlighted by the *Curriculum and Assessment Review*.

Sessions will also explore ways to recognise creative pursuits under the upcoming Ofsted report card system. Delegates will examine the suitability of existing assessment methods for creative subjects in schools, avenues for adaptation, and priorities for adjusting the balance of content and assessment in both creative and core subjects.

The conference will also examine levels of arts funding within schools to improve teaching and facilities, and priorities for utilising the £3m in funding to expand the *Creative Careers Programme*, announced in the *2024 Autumn Budget*.

Higher education

Further discussion will assess progression to HE, assessing the state of current careers guidance and priorities for improving access to high-quality careers advice, particularly for disadvantaged and underrepresented learners. Delegates will discuss next steps for raising awareness of vocational routes into the creative sector and for widening participation in creative HE courses, as well as the impact of outreach programmes on student recruitment.

The sustainability of creative HE will also be considered, examining challenges such as funding concerns, rising costs, student recruitment pressures, looking at priorities for adapting funding models to support creative arts programmes.

Skills, career pathways and accessibility

The agenda will also bring out latest thinking on strategies for addressing skills shortages in the creative industries as outlined in Skills England's initial report published in September, which identified arts,

entertainment and recreation as an industry with elevated job demands. Discussion is expected on opportunities for career development and upskilling of the workforce, considering whether current education and training structures are adequately preparing workers for careers in the creative industries.

Those attending will consider approaches to diversifying the talent pipeline for creative careers and implications of tax reliefs for the creative industries. Discussion will consider priorities for improving access to extra-curricular activities for disadvantaged and underrepresented learners, and strategies for improving partnerships between external cultural providers and education institutions. We also expect wider discussion on improving diversity within the creative arts, with the Creative PEC finding high socio-economic inequality in the current workforce.

Delegates will assess next steps for ensuring that the UK industry remains an attractive destination for international talent, with regard to aims outlined in the Government's *Invest 2035: the UK's modern industrial strategy* Green Paper. There will also be discussion on the future of Music Education Hubs and delivery of the *National Plan for Music Education* amidst concerns surrounding funding and costs.

[\[jump to relevant developments\]](#)

All delegates will be able to contribute to the output of the conference, which will be shared with parliamentary, ministerial, departmental and regulatory offices, and more widely. This includes the full proceedings and additional articles submitted by delegates. As well as key stakeholders, those due to attend include parliamentary pass-holders from the House of Commons, the House of Lords, and officials from IPO and DfE, NI.

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The agenda:

Draft subject to change

8.30 Registration

9.00 **Chair's opening remarks**

Senior Parliamentarian

9.05 **Assessing the current creative education landscape in England**

Jill Cowley, Pro Vice-Chancellor Skills and Training and Dean, Faculty of Arts, Design and Humanities,
De Montfort University

Questions and comments from the floor

9.25 **Creative education in schools moving forward**

priorities for improving access to art, drama and music | key findings from the Curriculum and Assessment Review interim report | plans for addressing falling participation | funding and support requirements in schools | assessing the suitability of existing assessment methods | creativity under the new Ofsted inspection framework and recognising creative pursuits in the Ofsted reports | reframing the value of arts in education

Jacqui O'Hanlon, Director, Creative Learning and Engagement, Royal Shakespeare Company

Kate Fellows, Head of Learning and Access, Leeds Museums and Galleries

Sophie Leach, Deputy General Secretary, National Society for Education in Art and Design

Richard Harris, Head, Art and Design, Raynes Park High School

Senior representative, awarding body

Questions and comments from the floor

10.15 **Priorities for widening access to creative education, and key findings from the Curriculum and Assessment Review interim report**

Dr Vanessa Ogden, CEO, Mulberry Schools Trust; and Member, Curriculum and Assessment Review Group

Questions and comments from the floor

10.40 **Chair's closing remarks**

Senior Parliamentarian

10.45 Break

10.55 **Chair's opening remarks**

Senior Parliamentarian

11.00 **Developing effective talent pipelines for the creative industries**

Stuart Worden, Principal, The BRIT School

Questions and comments from the floor

11.20 **Pathways into higher education and the future of creative subjects in university**

raising awareness of vocational routes into employment | providing access to high quality careers guidance | priorities for the Creative Careers programme | strategies for fulfilling the needs of creative HE providers | financial sustainability of HEIs in the creative sector | outreach and widening participation

Lucy Kennedy, Chief Executive, National Saturday Club

Professor Fintan Walsh, Head, School of Creative Arts, Culture and Communication, Birkbeck, University of London

James Murray-Walsh, Principal, Global Academy

Janine Streuli, Dean, Royal Academy of Dance

Senior representative, employer

11.45 **Raising awareness of vocational routes into employment and priorities for providing access to high quality careers guidance**

John Yarham, Interim Chief Executive, Careers & Enterprise Company

11.55 Questions and comments from the floor

12.15 **Assessing current talent pipelines and improving pathways into industry**

examining the Government's Invest 2035 aims | tackling the skills gap in the creative sector | meeting the needs of industry | strategies for career development and upskilling | maintaining the UK's attractiveness for international talent | priorities for Skills England

Dana Gamble, Policy Manger, Skills, Innovation and International, GuildHE

Heather Carey, Director, Work Advance

Senior representative, employer

Questions and comments from the floor

12.55 **Chair's and Westminster Forum Projects closing remarks**

Senior Parliamentarian

Sean Cudmore, Westminster Forum Projects

Additional senior participants are being approached, but if you or a colleague would like to be considered as a speaker at this seminar, please contact us at speakeroffers@forumsupport.co.uk specifying the event and session where you would like to speak and we'll get back to you as soon as possible. If you are offering to speak yourself please don't fill in the booking form, as this will be taken as an order and you will be charged for a place subject to our T&Cs.

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