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# Artsmark's Arts Education Survey Report

Final Report



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## Introduction

The survey was commissioned by Artsmark to explore young people's perspectives regarding arts education in England. Artsmark is an Arts Council England programme that "supports education settings to bring learning to life through arts, culture and creativity." The programme supports educators so that they can help achieve Artsmark's vision which outlines that "every young person should have the opportunity to be creative, and to experience and participate in arts and culture".

The aim of this survey research was to engage with young people's and gain insight into:

- Young people's satisfaction regarding the current arts education curriculum
- Young people's opinions regarding what they wanted added to their curriculum
- Young people's perspectives on key issues such as diversity, accessibility, mental health, activism and the decolonisation of the curriculum
- Young people's opinions about both how their teachers should be trained and how their these teachers can better support their arts education

The survey was intended to collect the recommendations put forward by young people regarding the reshaping of the school curriculum.

## Research Design

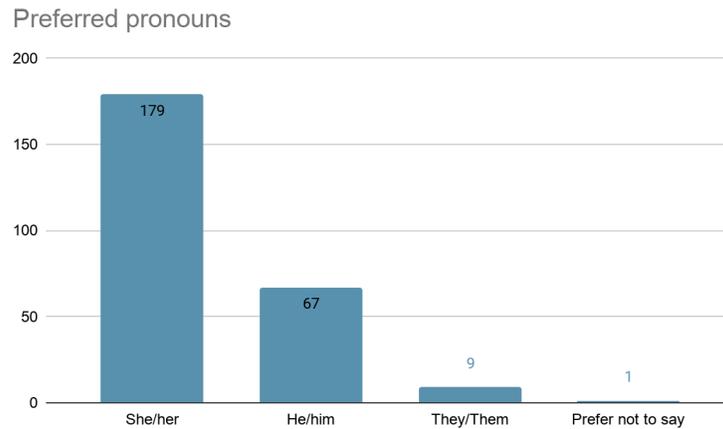
The survey was distributed to two hundred and fifty-six (256) young people, aged 16 to 18, across England. Of these 256 respondents, fifty-eight (58) attended institutions which have Artsmark awards or are currently on their Artsmark journey. The survey was distributed online and consisted of only fourteen (14) core questions and eight (8) demographic questions, so that it was not too lengthy so as to dissuade young people from responding. The survey primarily consisted of multiple choice questions, but it also included a few open-ended questions, so as to allow the respondents to offer their thoughts and suggestions in their own words. The questions were carefully scripted for ease of understanding and included definitions of any key terms that needed additional clarification. Additionally, a pilot survey was distributed prior to the release of the online survey, so that feedback from the target audience could be received and incorporated into the design of the final survey. The results of the survey are presented in the Survey Results section of this report.



## Demographic Data

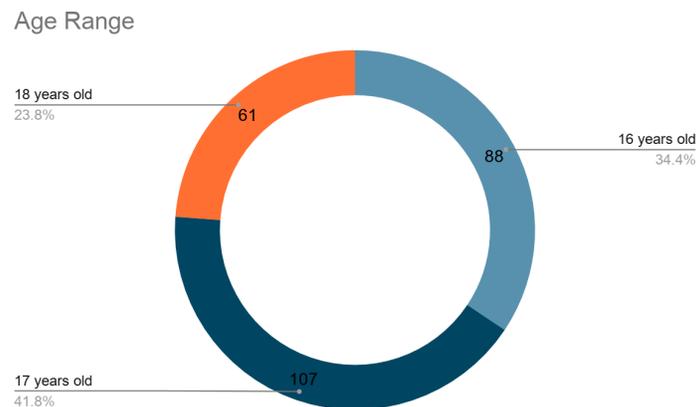
### Gender

Of the 256 young people who answered the survey, 69.9%(179 persons) identified themselves as women 26.2% (67persons) identified themselves as men; 3.5% (9 persons) identified themselves as 'them/them' and 1 individual (0.4%) selected 'prefer not to say'.



### Age Range Data

Of the 256 young people surveyed, eighty-eight (88) were 16 years old, one hundred and seven (107) were 17 years old and sixty-one (61) were 18 years old.





## Ethnicity Data

The ethnicities of the survey respondents are outlined in the table below. For the purposes of analysis in this report, one hundred and sixty-one (161) persons (62.9%) will be classified as white and ninety-five (95) persons (37.1%) will be classified as people of colour<sup>1</sup>.

Ethnicity	No. of respondents	% of respondents
White British	143	55.9%
South Asian	28	10.9%
Other group	16	6.3%
West African	13	5.1%
British/Irish Traveller	9	3.5%
White European	8	3.1%
Any other asian	7	2.7%
Caribbean	7	2.7%
Any other black group	5	1.9%
East Asian	5	1.9%
Arab	3	1.2%
Central Asian	1	0.4%
East African	3	1.2%
Southern African	3	1.2%
Latina/o/x	2	0.8%
North African	2	0.8%
Other White group	1	0.4%

## Disability Data

Of the 256 young people surveyed, twenty-seven (27) persons (10.5%) considered themselves to be living with a disability or health condition, while 229 persons (89.5%) did not.

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<sup>1</sup> The term 'people of colour' refers to "someone who does not consider themselves to be white" (Cambridge Dictionary, 2021).

## Geographical Data

As the map below demonstrates, the survey respondents came from all across England, with the high concentrations in both the north and south. The highest concentrations of respondents were from major cities such as Birmingham with thirty-nine respondents (15.2%), London with thirty-three respondents (12.9%) and Sheffield with nine respondents (3.5%). However the majority of respondents were spread across a wide range of cities including Leeds and Truro with six respondents each, as well as Oxford, Manchester and Surrey with five respondents each.





## Survey Results

**Q1:** Are you satisfied with your school's arts education curriculum?

As demonstrated below, the responses indicated that only 47.7% of students were satisfied with the current arts education curriculum, while 36.7% indicated that they were not.

Yes I am satisfied with my school's arts education curriculum	122 responses	47.7%
No, I am not satisfied with my school's art education curriculum	94 responses	36.7%
I am not sure	40 responses	15.6%

Interestingly, of the 58 students who attended Artsmark affiliated institutions, 51.7% (30 persons) said they were satisfied with their current arts education curriculum. 36.2% (21 persons) said they were not satisfied with their arts curriculums, while 12.1% (7) persons said that they were not sure.



**Q2:** Which of the following KS3 and KS4 compulsory subjects would you consider to be part of the 'arts education' curriculum? Please select all that apply.

The aim of this question was to determine which subject young people defined as 'arts'. Their responses are outlined below:

Art and Design	236 responses	92.2%
Music	210 responses	82%
Design and Technology	200 responses	78.1%
English	66 responses	25.8%
Modern Foreign Languages	31 responses	12.1%
Humanities	24 responses	9.4%
Computing	22 responses	8.6%
Physical Education	21 responses	8.2%
Science	21 responses	8.2%
History	20 responses	7.8%
Mathematics	20 responses	7.8%
Geography	12 responses	4.7%
Citizenship	10 responses	3.9%



**Q3:** Which of these courses would you like to see added to your school's arts education curriculum?

Young people were given the opportunity to The responses of the survey respondents are outlined below:

Fashion Design	144 responses	56.3%
Media (digital, publishing, tv, radio, video & film)	140 responses	54.7%
Photography	134 responses	52.3%
Graphic design	125 responses	48.8
Interior design	119 responses	46.5%
Videography	105 responses	41%
Software design	96 responses	37.5%
Performing Arts	93 responses	36.3%
Visual arts	91 responses	35.5%
Crafts	80 responses	31.3%
Gaming	72 responses	28.1%
Other	4 responses	1.6%

As evidenced above, the most popular selections were fashion design, media and photography and the least popular choices were visual arts, crafts and gaming<sup>2</sup>. Additionally, there were four (4) responses in the category labelled 'other'. These included suggestions to add dance, digital arts and Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) to the arts education curriculum.

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<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that some of these choices may be somewhat affected by the fact that the 69.9% of survey respondents identified as women and that there are gender disparities in some fields.



**Q4:** Would you like to see more digital projects and assignments included in the arts education curriculum? E.g. gaming, design etc.

As evidenced below, the vast majority of respondents, 81.6%, indicated that they would like to have more digital projects included in their curriculum and move away from traditional methods.

Yes I would	209 responses	81.6%
No, I would not	18 responses	7%
I am not sure	29 responses	11.3%

**Q5:** Would you like to see art incorporated into traditionally non-art subjects?

As shown below, 69.1% of respondents would like to see art incorporated into other subjects.

Yes I would	177 responses	69.1%
No, I would not	41 responses	16%
I am not sure	38 responses	14.8%



**Q6:** How would you suggest incorporating art into traditionally non-art subjects e.g. in Math or Science?

This open-ended question allowed the respondents to offer their own suggestions about incorporating art into non-art subjects, in their own words. The following is a summary of the suggestions that were offered for incorporating art into specific subject areas:

- **History Lessons**
  - Include Art History in the curriculum
  - Incorporate fine art into history e.g. painting an event
  
- **English Lessons**
  - Incorporate art into English by asking students to write about the emotions different paintings/artistic pieces evoke within them
  - Paint or draw key scenes in books, poems and plays etc.
  - Recreate plays as part of the English curriculum
  
- **Science Lessons**
  - Incorporate art into biology e.g. explain the neurology and psychology behind music and art and how they affect areas of the brain etc.
  - Include scientific photography in the curriculum
  - Incorporate scientific art e.g. drawing anatomical references and plants, creating artwork about animals and evolution, the human body, protons and neutrons etc.
  
- **Mathematics Lessons**
  - Incorporate art into math e.g. using more diagrams; developing artistic representations of mathematical/scientific concepts; using calculations in order to draw something to scale
  - Use different mathematical concepts to create art e.g. Doing lessons on topics such as fractals, Spirographs, tessellations and how the shapes match up to create art.
  - Incorporate Painting into math e.g. paint by numbers and equations
  - Explore the mathematical side of Art e.g. symmetry, proportion, measurement, geometry can be linked to fine art, fashion and architecture
  - Using math websites that provide digital games and quizzes
  
- **Religious Studies Lessons**



- Learning about religious music in Religious studies
  
- Foreign Language Lessons
  - Learning about art and music from other countries as part of language lessons

The following section is a summary of general suggestions that can be applied to any subjects:

- Introduce Art Days
  - Create opportunities for 'art days' where teachers move away from the traditional curriculum and discuss the ways in which art relates to their specific subject
  
- Introduce more creative presentations
  - Use art to present the work in a creative way e.g. Posters and visual displays
  
- Introduce Art competitions
  - Develop art competitions related to non-traditional subjects where students make art to tell stories e.g. art about chemistry or english
  
- Encourage Role Play
  - Incorporate more engaging ways to learn eg. role play and acting out processes
  
- Incorporate Modelling
  - Include modelling e.g. making 3D models of structures of math concepts or structures that hold significance, make atoms as a project
  
- Introduce Architecture into the curriculum
  - Use Architecture to illustrate the practical application of mathematical principles and show architecture as a link between engineering and art and math
  
- Reimagine Revision Materials
  - Allow students to create creative versions of revision guides e.g. posters
  - Make creative mind maps and artistic diagrams to help retain information
  - Write revision songs to help learn key terms and points.
  
- Incorporate Music



- Incorporate music into the curriculum to make lessons more enjoyable and memorable e.g. making videos or songs about non-art topics.
  
- Incorporate textiles
  - Create visual learning resources using different textiles or formats e.g. using puppets to show a scientific theory etc.
  
- Include Performance
  - Have students create performances to demonstrate key concepts
  
- Incorporate Digital Design
  - Use arts based skills to develop projects for non-art subjects eg. using photoshop or adobe to make a poster for a Math or creating a video for a Science
  - Combine art, science and technology through gaming, coding and digital art.
  
- Design Engaging Spaces
  - Designing rooms to match subjects e.g. creating a house of chemistry with rooms designed around key points of a topic
  
- Incorporate Drawing into all subjects
  - Allow students to draw more e.g sketches, geometric drawings etc.
  - Allow students to explain their thoughts, ideas, and feelings through drawing and labelling.
  
- Introduce Videography
  - Allow students to make documentaries or podcast about non-art fields
  - Design more creative assessments, e.g.homework where you make a short video/presentation about the lesson or projects in groups



**Q7:** The UK is a diverse nation and its diversity should be reflected in its schools' curriculums. Do you believe that the current curriculum reflects diversity where the following are concerned?

As shown below, overall, less than 46% of respondents felt that the curriculum reflected diversity in regards to ethnicity and gender, and less than 30% felt that there was diversity regarding disabilities and sexuality.

Yes, there is diversity regarding ethnicity	119 responses	46.5%
Yes, there is diversity regarding gender	118 responses	46.1%
Yes, there is diversity regarding disabilities	76 responses	29.7%
Yes, there is diversity regarding sexuality	75 responses	29.3%
No, there is no diversity regarding any of the above	97 responses	37.9%

When exploring these figures further, the research showed that of the 119 respondents who felt that there was diversity in regards to ethnicity, 63% identified as white, while the remaining 37% were people of colour.

Additionally, when the issue of diversity with regards to gender is concerned, of the 188 respondents who identified as as 'she/her' or 'they/them', only 42% felt that there was diversity in regards to gender. Conversely, of the 76 respondents who who identified as 'he/him' or 'they/them', 55.3% felt that there was diversity in regards to gender.

Furthermore, where the question of diversity regarding disabilities is concerned, the data showed that only 25.9% of those respondents who identified as having a disability, felt that there was diversity with regards to disabilities.



**Q8:** Do you think your school’s curriculum currently prioritises accessibility in its curriculum? E.g. learning about British Sign Language, using audio descriptions etc.

As demonstrated below, the vast majority of respondents, 72.3% do not believe that their schools prioritise accessibility.

Yes I do	36 responses	14.1%
No, I do not	185 responses	72.3%
I am not sure	35 responses	13.7%

Additionally, of the twenty-seven (27) individuals surveyed who considered themselves to be living with a disability or health condition, when asked if their school prioritises accessibility in its curriculum, 77.8% (21 persons) said no , 11.1% (3 persons) said yes and 11.1% (3 persons) said ‘I’m not sure’.

**Q9:** The term ‘Decolonising the curriculum’ refers to “challenging long-standing biases and omissions that limit how we understand politics and society”. It includes initiatives like reviewing the curriculum to acknowledge the full impact of Britain’s colonial past and including compulsory textbooks from Black, Asian and Ethnic Minorities writers. Would you support initiatives aimed at decolonising the school curriculum?

As seen below, 83.6% of respondents would support the move to decolonise school curriculum. Additionally, 85.3% of people of colour and 81.4% persons who identified as white supported the decolonisation of the curriculum.

Yes I would	214 responses	83.6%
No, I would not	9 responses	3.5%
I am not sure	33 responses	12.9%



**Q10:** Artivism is “the act of using art as a means to protest your discontent for something. It is a combination of the words art and activism”. Do you think artivism should be included in the arts education curriculum?

As demonstrated below, the vast majority of the young people surveyed, 81.3%, would like artivism to be included in the school curriculum.

Yes I do	208 responses	81.3%
No, I do not	21 responses	8.2%
I am not sure	27 responses	10.5%

**Q11:** Do you think arts education has an impact on wellbeing and mental health?

As seen below, an overwhelming majority of 92.9% of respondents believe that arts education has an impact on mental health and wellbeing.

Yes I do	238 responses	92.9%
No, I do not	9 responses	3.5%
I am not sure	9 responses	3.5%



**Q12:** Artsmark is an Arts Council England programme that supports schools in developing and celebrating their commitment to arts and cultural education. How valuable do you think it is for schools to engage with programmes like Artsmark?

As seen below, 66% of all respondents believe Artsmark is a very important programme for England's schools. Additionally, of the 58 young people who attended institutions with links to the Artsmark programme, 63.8% (37 persons) said programmes like Artsmark are 'very important for schools' and 34.5% (20 persons) said they were 'somewhat important for schools'. Only one person (1.7%) said that these types of programmes were 'not at all important for schools'.

I think programmes like Artsmark are <b>very important</b> for schools	171 responses	66.8%
I think programmes like Artsmark are <b>somewhat important</b> for schools	79 responses	30.8%
I think programmes like Artsmark are <b>not at all important</b> for schools	6 responses	2.3%



**Q13:** What do you think your teachers should be trained in, with respect to arts education?

Please select all that apply.

As demonstrated below, the most popular skills that students would like their teacher to be trained in were Arts skills (75.4%), Integrating arts into non-art subjects (60.2%) and Developing partnerships with arts organisations ( 51.6%).

Art Skills e.g. visual arts, performing arts, graphic arts etc.	193 responses	75.4%
Integrating arts into non-art subjects	154 responses	60.2%
Developing partnerships with arts organisations	132 responses	51.6%
Securing arts funding	127 responses	49.6%
Art history	98 responses	38.3%
Developing more rigorous coursework for arts subjects	59 responses	23%
Other	6 responses	2.3%

Additionally, as shown above, there were six responses in the category labelled 'other'. These open-ended suggestions included: "Guiding students to pursue arts subjects past GCSE/A-level"; "Having knowledge for art within different cultures" and "Being able to teach without being extremely arrogant and looking down on students because they painted something that got into an exhibition once". Another young person also shared their experience saying "I found art lessons never actually improved my art skills, it's always just going through the motions. Teaching students shape language, improving technical ability and visual language should become a higher priority".



**Q14:** How do you think your teachers can better support your arts education? Please select all that apply

As shown below, young people believe that teachers can better support their arts education through Creating more opportunities for students to showcase their artwork (72.7%), organising more cultural field trips (70.3%) and sourcing more art materials and supplies (67.9%).

Creating more opportunities for students to showcase their artwork	186 responses	72.7%
Organising more cultural field trips	180 responses	70.3%
Sourcing more art supplies, materials and instruments	174 responses	67.9%
Taking students to see more performances and showcases	165 responses	64.4%
Creating more dedicated arts spaces in schools	164 responses	64%
Other	7 responses	2.7%

Additionally, there were seven (7) responses in the open-ended section titled 'Other'. These suggestions included: "Giving students the confidence to be proud of their work"; "Educating us on the cultural side of art and not just how to do it"; "Give students an opportunity to make key links with the arts industry through the use of 'meet and greets" and "Education on jobs in the arts field".



## Conclusion

The aim of this survey research was to engage with young people and explore their perspectives regarding the arts education curriculum in England. As previously mentioned, there were 256 respondents, of which fifty-eight (58) attended institutions which have earned Artsmark awards or are on their Artsmark journey. As evidenced in this report, only 47.7% of the young people we surveyed were satisfied with the current arts education curriculum, while a further 36.7% explicitly indicated that they were not satisfied. The figures were slightly different in Artsmark affiliated institutions, where 51.7% of the students were satisfied with their current arts education curriculum, while 36.2% were not. Apart from gauging satisfaction, this research was also able to gain insight into what young people considered arts education, and it showed that students still take a traditional approach with subjects such as 'art and design', music' and 'design and technology' being the most frequently classed as arts subjects. This research also asked young people what subjects they would like added to their art education programmes and the results showed that 'fashion design, media, photography, graphic design, interior design and videography were the most popular selections. Of course, as previously mentioned, these figures may be somewhat impacted by the fact that the majority of respondents (69.9%) identified as women, and women may be more likely to engage with some subjects more than others e.g. fashion design and interior design.

This research also showed that 81.6% of the respondents wanted more digital projects included in their curriculum. It also highlighted the fact that 69.1% of young people wanted to see art incorporated into non-art subjects. The survey also gave young people the opportunity to offer suggestions for doing so and they shared a variety of creative ways for integrating art into their curricula. These included incorporating performance, music, model making, role play, graphic design, architecture and videography into their classwork.

This survey also explored the idea of diversity, showing that less than half of the respondents felt that the curriculum reflected diversity in regards to ethnicity and gender, and less than a third felt that there was diversity regarding disabilities and sexuality. Similarly, the research showed that 72.3% of respondents did not believe that their schools prioritised accessibility. The research also explored additional key contemporary issues and the results showed that 83.6% of the respondents supported the idea of decolonising the curriculum, 81.3% supported the



teaching of activism in schools and 92.9% of respondents believed that arts education has an impact on wellbeing and mental health.

The research also illustrated that 97.6% of those surveyed felt that programmes like Artsmark were either 'very important' or 'somewhat important' for schools. This figure was even higher for those who attended Artsmark affiliated schools where 98.3% of that subsection of respondents indicated that programmes like Artsmark were either 'very important' or 'somewhat important' for schools. The survey also provided direction for future teacher training programmes, as the data showed that young people wanted their teachers to be trained in arts skills, integrating art into non-art subjects and developing fruitful partnerships with arts organisations. The data also showed that young people felt that teachers could support them more by creating more opportunities for students to showcase their work, organising more field trips, sourcing more art materials and taking students to see more performances and showcases.

Ultimately, the survey demonstrates that young people have a lot of opinions about the way their curriculum should be organised and that they are keen to share their ideas. As such, it is the responsibility of institutions to create opportunities for co-creation, collaboration and the exchange of ideas, so that young people can have a real say in their education.

## **Recommendations**

In light of the data collected from this survey, the following recommendations are being offered for moving forward:

- I. Conduct additional survey research to explore young people's opinions on core issues raised in this survey e.g. the decolonisation of the curriculum, the introduction of activism, prioritising accessibility and ensuring the curriculum reflects England's diversity.
- II. Hold focus groups consultations with young people to gain more in depth insight into more complex topics e.g. the relationship between art education and mental health



- III. Conduct a systematic evaluation of the ideas put forward by young people and develop proposals for new teaching practices. A new methodology of practice could also be used to lobby for better education from the government.
- IV. Hold consultations with teachers to discuss the feasibility of implementing the suggestions offered by young people and plan the way forward.