



The Curriculum and Assessment Review

Deadline November 22 2024

Access at [Curriculum and Assessment Review](#)

National Drama Support for Members

The government's Curriculum and Assessment Review represents a unique opportunity for all National Drama members to voice their opinions and views about the current status of Drama in schools. The ND Executive has prepared the following Table (below) in order to support members in completing the 'hearteningly comprehensive' but necessarily lengthy questionnaire from the DfE.

The Curriculum and Assessment Review asks for

- Your ideas for potential improvements to the curriculum and assessment system.
- What works well with the current system.
- Details of anything that doesn't work.

Further to this the DfE offer this guidance:

In your response to this call for evidence, please provide evidence to support your answers, specific examples, and, where possible, solutions that consider feasibility. Please also bear in mind the scope of the Review in your answers.

The review is accessible at [Curriculum and Assessment Review](#).

To facilitate members' responses to the review National Drama has prepared a table below.

The text in the table is for you to use as you think see fit.

Column 1 contains key statements to copy and paste.

Column 2 provides the source of evidence to copy and paste.

Column 3 is what, ND suspect, the DfE really want to hear about; your personal school circumstances and what you think works or doesn't work in the classroom. Our questions in this column are intended to help you to decide what to include.

The nine Sections below are taken from the online questionnaire and we have included relevant question numbers. However, this is quite clear when you log-in.

National Drama’s Support Table for Members

Section 1: is about personal details. You need to complete to access the questionnaire.

Section 2: General views on curriculum, assessment and qualification pathways

Questions 10-11

Statements	Evidence	Personal Experience
<p><u>SECONDARY LEARNERS</u></p> <p>The current curriculum is too narrow; the original National Curriculum aim of a ‘broad and balanced curriculum that is suitable for all has been lost.</p> <p>ND also envisage a curriculum that is coherent, as well as ‘Broad and Balanced’.</p> <p>The current curriculum is largely the result of an over emphasis on so-called ‘academic’ subjects, and the implementation of data-collection and accountability measures such as EBacc and progress 8, which have had a distorting effect on curriculum and assessment.</p> <p>The current education provision in England is based upon a narrow view of employability, creating disproportionate emphasis on exam results and</p>	<p><u>ASSESSMENT</u></p> <p>“Improvements could be made by increasing the use of coursework or other forms of non-exam based assessment, including project-based assessments.”</p> <p>Requires improvement: Education for 11–16 Year Olds (2023) (Summary) House of Lords</p> <p>“The study of drama, dance, music, and the visual arts helps students explore realities, relationships, and ideas that cannot be conveyed simply in words or numbers. The ability to perform and create in the fine arts engenders innovative problem-solving skills that students can apply to other academic disciplines and provides experiences working as a team. Equally important, arts instruction supports success in other subjects.”</p>	<p><u>WORKS WELL OR NOT IN MY SCHOOL</u></p> <p>[Your personal answers could begin with:</p> <p>I believe this because ...</p> <p>I advocate for this because ...</p> <p>In my experience ...</p> <p>What is the status and understanding about drama in your school?</p> <p>Do the SLT support learning through and about drama?</p> <p>Does drama have a sufficient time allocation and are all year groups taught?</p> <p>Are examination option groups viable and sustainable?</p> <p>Has your KS3 been reduced recently?</p> <p>How has EBacc affected drama in your school?</p>

<p>endowing 'STEM' subjects with greater status than others. This reinforces a hierarchy of subjects and denies opportunities for young people.</p> <p>ND believe that creating a confident, creative, literate, democratic, compassionate and hard-working society can only be achieved when students can access a well-resourced, balanced and coherent education.</p> <p><u>EARLY YEARS' LEARNERS</u></p> <p>There should be provision of creative And imaginative play spaces, involvement and engagement with parents and the community, opportunities for story-making, telling and hearing.</p> <p>Drama is inherently part of human development. Children play naturally and, when they play, they adopt roles that enable them to imagine, explore, investigate, re-enact personal experience and, most significantly, learn about their world. Role is as integral to child development as touch, moving, walking and making sound.</p>	<p>(Henley, 2012, p20)</p> <p><i>White Paper Cultural Education in England</i> (2012)</p> <p>ND Position Paper on Primary Education</p>	<p>Have you needed to introduce written work at KS3?</p> <p>Do you have time for drama in the Primary Curriculum?</p> <p>Do you have time for story in the school day?</p>
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PRIMARY LEARNERS

ND is committed to a primary curriculum in which Drama has its rightful place alongside Music, Dance and Art.

Drama has the transformational potential to enable children and young people, as well as their teachers, to reach new understandings of their world.

All learners are entitled to a truly broad curriculum, with an entitlement to experience mathematical, scientific, technical, historical, geographical, linguistic, literary, artistic, spiritual, kinaesthetic and enactive areas of experience, taught by qualified teachers with access to a wide pedagogic repertoire appropriate to the particular subject domain.

SEND LEARNERS

Learners in specialist settings frequently learn through a play-based pedagogy which includes stories. As learners progress through the education system, their capacity to learn through 'pretending' is key to their making sense of themselves and the world around them.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 29:

<p>This path may be extremely challenging for a range of cognitive and sensory reasons.</p> <p>There are currently only a few specialist Drama teachers in this sector thus limiting attainment, progress, access, and participation.</p> <p>Lack of imaginary play, for a SEND child, is a barrier to learning.</p> <p>The lack of such pedagogy is a contravention of The United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child. (Article right to play).</p>	<p>Education must develop every child’s personality, talents, and abilities to the full.</p>	
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Section 3: Social Justice and inclusion

Questions 12-15

Statements	Evidence	Personal Experience
<p>The lack of recognition and importance given to practical, skill-based and creative subjects, has had a negative effect on the development of and has lessened the opportunities available - and life chances - for a large cohort of children and young people whose needs are not being met within the current curriculum.</p> <p>There is little Initial Teacher</p>	<p>The need for Reform</p> <p>“Skills such as collaboration, creativity and problem solving are also expected to become increasingly important. Opportunities to develop these skills have been squeezed out of the 11-16 phase”</p>	<p>Do some your Schemes of Work explore contentious issues?</p> <p>Do you and the children you teach have classroom</p>

<p>Training to support SEND, nor is there much CPD offered by training providers. Thus, teachers who use Drama within their classrooms can often feel isolated and lacking in clear guidelines.</p>	<p>Requires improvement: Education for 11–16 Year Olds (2023) (Summary) House of Lords</p>	<p>support for SEND?</p>
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Section 4: Ensuring excellence in maths and English

Questions 16-17

Statements	Evidence	Personal Experience
<p>Although the Oracy Education Commission strongly advocates for cross-curricular use of Oracy as a tool for learning, Speaking and Listening currently sits within the English and ND believes drama pedagogy should receive more profile.</p> <p>The importance of the TA or LSA working alongside the SEND learner is irrefutable.</p> <p>Access to ‘the imaginary’, for children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder, for example, requires specialist training for teachers. Drama can sensitively extend the motivation for both receptive and expressive communication to explore people and places beyond the lived experience of the learner.</p> <p>Investment needs to be made in training and recruitment.</p>	<p>We Need to talk (2024) Oracy Commission Report</p>	<p>Are NC English guidelines embedded in the curriculum?</p> <p>Is there a literacy policy which includes and connects with drama within English?</p> <p>Are there policies on inclusion within drama in relation to pupil premium and SEND students</p>

Section 5: Curriculum and qualification content

Questions 22-27

Statements	Evidence	Personal Experience
<p>Learning through and about Drama is not dependent on a child’s written or reading skills. Drama is a practical subject that relates to the children’s age, learning needs and cultural identity.</p> <p>Formal written examinations are inappropriate.</p> <p><u>PRIMARY LEARNERS</u></p> <p>Early years providers should have training in creative play and drama.</p> <p>For KS1 and Early Years, when children engage in imaginative play they co-create a fictional context which enables them to make relationships, explore reality and understand cultural and societal phenomena. They enact situations that they have experienced; they enact situations that they are about to experience.</p> <p>Unfortunately many children in UK schools do not have access to regular Drama lessons which are taught by well trained teachers. There is little curriculum Drama taking place in UK’s schools and an ever-increasing number of primary teachers who have no knowledge of the</p>	<p>Since 2010, Drama has been consistently marginalised by government policies. Examples are a) the establishment of EBacc, b) the fact that Drama is still not a Foundation Subject, c) STEM, and d) the changes to Drama GCSE which introduced written work as the dominant assessment strategy. 70% written compared to 30% practical for a subject that is essentially a practical and social art form.</p> <p>Any discussion concerning “knowledge acquisition” and “practical application” cannot be separated from the nature of the learning process.</p> <p>ND is deeply concerned that the secondary curriculum has become:</p> <p>Assessment-driven at the expense of high quality process and pedagogy;</p> <p>Too functional with a dominant focus on skills and the acquisition of knowledge without appropriate context or sufficient resources;</p> <p>The domination of an unfair subject hierarchy; even within the arts;</p> <p>Requires improvement: Education for 11–16 Year Olds (2023) (ND’s Evidence) House of Lords</p>	<p>Are drama staff qualified to teach drama in terms of qualification and subject knowledge?</p> <p>Do plays and stimulus materials represent diversity and inclusion?</p> <p>Have drama staff undertaken recent subject CPD?</p> <p>Is there a clear management structure within the drama department?</p>

<p>learning that drama can facilitate.</p> <p>ND advocates that the quality of Initial Teacher Training and CPD should be reviewed as a matter of urgency, receive investment and be re-designed by drama specialists.</p> <p>SECONDARY LEARNERS</p> <p>ND believes that all young people should have access to the subject of drama - taught by specialist teachers in KS3, with equal status to music and art. The fact that this opportunity is currently denied to many British state school children is unjustifiable and, in our view, has deprived many young people of their educational entitlement and creative fulfillment.</p> <p>In a KS3 Drama class, learners can be active as explorers, story-makers and scholars. There is an ever growing and changing canon of skills and knowledge about Drama and Theatre practices with opportunities to improve and re-think process. A rich KS3 strategy will benefit learners culturally, economically, emotionally, personally, socially, physically, and educationally, if taught within an appropriately</p>	<p>In recent years, a number of publications have pointed to the value of sustained cultural engagement. <i>Imagination: The Value of Cultural Learning</i> (2018), <i>Durham Commission on Creativity and Education</i> (2020) and <i>The Arts in Schools: Foundations for the Future</i> (2023) have indicated that, those with access to the arts – and drama – do better, in terms of social mobility, employability and transferable skills, educational and academic progress and success, wealth, health, social engagement, and opportunities for emotional stability and happiness.</p>	<p>Is there a staff development plan?</p> <p>Are staff affiliated to drama subject associations?</p>
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progressive context.		
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Section 6: A broad and balanced curriculum

Questions 28-32

Statements	Evidence	Personal Experience
<p>The learning potential of Drama is Internationally recognised for its contribution to the development of a healthy, humane, empathetic, creative and democratic society. It is a statutory requirement in many Countries, including Scotland and Wales (2022, 2023).</p> <p>The currently fashionable emphasis on 'direct instruction' pedagogy is having a negative impact on subjects which value practical skills and place less value on the memorisation of propositional knowledge. The arts, in particular have suffered as a result, with examination entries in drama, for example, falling by</p>	<p>The Australian Curriculum Version 9 (2023). Available at: https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/</p> <p>Welsh Government (2020) Curriculum for Wales. Available at: https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales</p> <p>Scottish Government (2017/2023) https://education.gov.scot/curriculum-for-excellence/curriculum-areas/expressive-arts/</p> <p><u>KEY RESEARCH EVIDENCE</u></p> <p>Drama Improves Key Competences in Education (2015): The DICE has been cast (P.96);</p> <p>This two-year cross-cultural research study ... found that students who regularly participate in educational Drama and theatre activities: are assessed more highly by their teachers; feel more confident in reading, communication and understanding tasks; are more likely to feel that they are creative; enjoy school activities; are better at problem solving and coping with stress; are more active</p>	<p>Does the taught curriculum offer a balance of knowledge, skills, concepts and attitudes?</p> <p>Do teachers offer a wide teaching repertoire and variety of T&L approaches in lessons?</p> <p>Is creativity encouraged via open-ended/ problem-solving approaches?</p> <p>When taught, are performance skills contextualised and meaningful to students?</p> <p>Are there opportunities for cross-curricular learning?</p>

49% since 2010.	citizens ... are more empathetic; are more able to change their perspective; are more innovative and entrepreneurial ...	
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Section 7: Assessment and accountability

Questions 35-46

Statements	Evidence	Personal Experience
<p>In the last review of post-16 qualifications, assessment weightings for most practical and creative subjects were skewed in favour of pencil and paper examinations. This has had a distorting effect on subjects like drama, where students' capacity to acquire practical skills and have them accredited has been severely curtailed. For many students, what made subjects like drama attractive was the possibility that abilities other than their capacity to retain knowledge might be acknowledged and accredited.</p> <p>Inexplicably, GCSE Art and Design retained 100% course-work assessment. It is not coincidental that Art and Design, alone amongst arts GCSEs, has not suffered the decrease in numbers of examination entries common to other arts and creative subjects.</p>	<p>National Drama Position Paper KS5</p> <p>DfE Guide to the post-16 qualifications landscape at level 3 and below for 2025 and beyond April 2024</p>	<p>Are there appropriate drama spaces and facilities for teaching an active subject?</p> <p>Is Theatre Technology - lighting/ sound/staging - available in teaching spaces?</p>

<p>When it comes to studying the subject at KS5, we believe that government policy has had a detrimental effect ... Young people who attend schools where drama is not part of school culture, or where it is present but marginalised, are unlikely to have positive view of drama as a potential examination subject. ND believes that young people ... often encounter misinformation, negativity, and poor advice.</p>		
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Section 8: Qualification pathways

Questions 22-27

Statements	Evidence	Personal Experience
<p>ND advocates that all children and young people are entitled to professional theatre experiences. There are considerable benefits through engagement with professional theatre practitioners at KS4 & KS5.</p> <p>Excellent industry connections and partnerships between Drama Departments and local theatres exist. However, equity of access and provision sadly remains depends on location, resources and, often, the status of drama within the school.</p> <p>Nd believes that there is need for debate between</p>		<p>What extra-curricular activities are offered - drama clubs, school performances, theatre visits, visiting companies, etc.?</p> <p>Are there partnerships with local theatres?</p> <p>Is there an inclusive approach to performance work?</p>

politicians, creative industries and schools concerning careers in the theatre.		
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Section 9 Other Issues on which we would welcome news

Questions 52-54

Statements	Evidence	Personal Experience
<p><u>TEACHER TRAINING</u></p> <p>ND is very concerned about training for drama teachers both at Secondary and at Primary level:</p> <p>... teaching is more than a technical operation. Alongside classroom experience it demands deep reflection and underpinning with relevant theory and research. ND believes that the role of ITE is to produce skilful, autonomous professionals capable of critical thinking and reflection on their own practice and on the systems and structures within which they work.</p> <p><u>ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY</u></p> <p>ND believes that learning through and about drama is achieved through meaningful contexts. To this end, we would like to see environmental dilemmas being explored as a matter of urgency across the curriculum.</p>	<p>The CLA and DfE both produce figures which show that since 2010:</p> <p>the number of drama teachers has been reduced by 18 per cent;</p> <p>the number of hours taught reduced by 12 per cent;</p> <p>examination entries in arts subjects reduced by 49 per cent;</p> <p>(DfE, 2020)</p>	<p>ND Members will want to add their own priorities in this section. However, in order to be helpful:</p> <p>As a school-based teacher, what are your experiences of working with ECTs?</p>

<p><u>RECOMMENDATIONS FROM HTs</u></p> <p>ND would like to remind the DfE of some recommendations from the Secondary Heads Association in 1998:</p> <p>Drama requires specialist teachers;</p> <p>Provision of well-equipped accommodation should have a high priority;</p> <p>In light of Drama’s positive impact on literacy through oracy it would be counter-productive to reduce curriculum time for drama;</p> <p>The valuable contribution that school productions make to the ethos of the school mean it is important that the whole process is well-managed in terms of time, strain and stress on staff;</p> <p>The success of extra-curricular drama should not submerge the crucial contribution that educational drama makes to pupil development;</p> <p>... drama’s omission from the National Curriculum is universally held responsible for any decrease, failure to increase, lack of priority and most difficulties ...[in drama];</p> <p>“A school without drama is a school without a soul!”</p>	<p>Drama sets you Free (1998)</p> <p>A survey of Drama in the curriculum of secondary schools by the Secondary Heads Association</p> <p>(P.42-43)</p>	<p>Are you a non-specialist drama teacher?</p> <p>How much relevant CPD Training you have attended in the last 5 years.</p> <p>Is educational Technology available in teaching spaces?</p> <p>Is there a good range of drama / theatre textbooks, play scripts , etc., available to both staff and students?</p> <p>Do play texts used represent a variety of forms, genres and historical periods?</p> <p>Are play texts and practitioners taught age-appropriate?</p>
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<i>Drama sets you free</i> (Secondary Heads Association P.43).		
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