Estyn

Best practice in the creative arts at key stages 3 and 4

July 2016

PHOTO REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES

The purpose of Estyn is to inspect quality and standards in education and training in Wales. Estyn is responsible for inspecting:

- ⅃ nursery schools and settings that are maintained by, or receive funding from, local authorities
- ⅃ primary schools
- ⅃ secondary schools
- ⅃ all-age schools
- ⅃ special schools
- ⅃ pupil referral units
- ⅃ independent schools
- ⅃ further education
- ⅃ independent specialist colleges
- ⅃ adult community learning
- ⅃ local authority education services for children and young people
- ⅃ teacher education and training
- ⅃ Welsh for adults
- ⅃ work-based learning
- ⅃ learning in the justice sector

Estyn also:

- ⅃ provides advice on quality and standards in education and training in Wales to the National Assembly for Wales and others
- ⅃ makes public good practice based on inspection evidence

Contents	Page

Introduction

This report is written in response to a request for advice from the Welsh Government in the Minister's annual remit letter to Estyn for 2014-2015. The report examines standards, provision and leadership for the creative arts at key stages 3 and 4 in schools where good practice has been identified.

The report is intended for the Welsh Government, headteachers and staff in schools, local authorities and regional consortia. It may also be of interest to those working with faith schools through diocesan authorities, teacher trainers and those working in arts and cultural heritage organisations.

The report includes a summary of national outcomes in art and design, drama and music at key stage 3 and key stage 4. All other sections of the report are based on findings in the best practice schools, and do not present a national picture because the sample of schools visited for the survey is of schools with stronger arts departments.

The findings of the survey are based on an analysis of findings from visits to 30 secondary schools where pupils achieve well in art and design, music or drama. During the visits to schools, inspectors observed lessons at key stages 3 and 4, held discussions with senior and middle leaders, interviewed pupils and scrutinised pupils' work and departmental documents. These findings provide an evaluation of standards, provision and leadership in the most effective art departments across Wales.

The report includes case studies of best practice for other schools to consider. These are intended to stimulate discussions within and between schools to promote best practice in teaching and learning across Wales.

For the purposes of this report, the terms 'creative arts' and 'arts', covers art and design, music and drama.

Background

Art and design and music are compulsory foundation subjects in the National Curriculum at key stage 3. Drama is a component of the core curriculum for English and Welsh at key stage 3, but in many schools it is taught as a discrete subject. Art and design, drama and music are optional subjects at key stage 4. In addition, schools are required under the Education Act 2002 to provide a balanced and broadly based curriculum that promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils, (Great Britain, 2002).

Schools' provision for the creative arts sits within the broader educational context in Wales, which includes the Welsh Government's priorities for:

- improving standards of literacy and numeracy
- reducing the impact of poverty on educational attainment
- implementing a plan for arts and creative learning in Wales

Professor Dai Smith (2013) produced a report for the Welsh Government on 'Arts in Education in the Schools of Wales'. Key findings from the report are given below:

- In Wales, there is some undeniably excellent, but patchy, arts education happening in our schools
- This work often stems from exceptional leadership
- The work should be championed, understood and shared
- At secondary level, there are too often constraints on creative, arts-orientated work across the curriculum, which are not so evident in primary schools

Professor Smith argues that all students should be presented with 'a plethora of arts experiences… in order to make every school in Wales an arts-rich school in either achievement or ambition, (p.11)'.

The report makes 12 recommendations in order better to integrate the arts and creativity into education, all of which were accepted by the Welsh Government in March 2014. These include recommendations for the Welsh Government to:

- formally state the central role for arts education in schools by making a commitment to provide high quality arts education and access to the arts
- promote the use of the arts in helping to improve numeracy and literacy and reducing the attainment gap
- include creativity as a core theme across all subjects in both primary and secondary education
- work with the Arts Council of Wales and experienced education practitioners to develop a new framework for arts-related professional development
- support schools 'arts champions' within the new national plan for creative learning and Welsh Arts Awards for individual teachers
- require Estyn to carry out regular audits of Welsh schools to assess the levels of creative learning.

In response to the 12 recommendations in Professor Smith's report, the Welsh Government launched an action plan, Creative learning through the arts – an action plan for Wales 2015-2020 (Arts Council for Wales and Welsh Government, 2015) that will be carried out in collaboration with The Arts Council for Wales. The plan is intended to support the delivery of a number of Welsh Government policies and strategic initiatives. In particular, the action plan is designed to support Qualified for Life: an education improvement plan for 3 to 19-year-olds in Wales (Welsh Government, 2014), setting out actions to improve educational attainment, and to build an education system that will directly contribute to a stronger economy, greater innovation, greater creativity, and the cultural capital of the nation. The plan seeks to 'put the arts at the core of our education system (p.5)', and includes three main strands:

- Improve attainment through creativity
- Increase and improve arts experiences and opportunities for learners
- Support our teachers and arts practitioners to develop their skills

In March 2014, the Welsh Government asked Professor Graham Donaldson to conduct a fundamental Review of Curriculum and Assessment Arrangements in Wales from Foundation Phase to Key Stage 4. In February 2015, the Welsh Government published 'Successful Futures'. The report identifies four purposes for the curriculum. It recommends that the entirety of the school curriculum should be designed to help all children and young people to become:

- ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives
- enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work
- ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world, ready to be citizens of Wales and the world
- healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society

Donaldson recommended that the structure of the curriculum should be based on six Areas of Learning and Experience as organisers for the entire age range from three to sixteen. The proposed Areas of Learning and Experience are:

- expressive arts
- health and wellbeing
- humanities
- languages, literacy and communication
- mathematics and numeracy
- science and technology

The Review proposes that literacy, numeracy and digital competence should be the responsibility of all teachers. In June 2015, the Welsh Government accepted all 68 recommendations of Successful Futures.

In May 2015, Estyn published Best practice in teaching and learning in the creative arts at key stage 2. The report focused on schools with good practice in the arts, and found that:

- standards are generally better than expected in one or two of the arts subjects in each school
- outcomes relied heavily on the expertise and confidence of a particular member of staff
- the quality of the curriculum for the creative arts at key stage 2 depends too much on chance rather than on secure curriculum planning
- pupils' achievement in, and experience of, the arts is more likely to be of a high standard where senior leaders share a passion and vision for the creative arts

Main findings

Outcomes in the creative arts in the most effective schools

Art and design

1   In art and design at key stage 3, many pupils explore a good range of two-dimensional processes. They practise their skills independently to achieve effective results in paint, pastels and pencils and, in a minority of schools, in printmaking. However, even where there is good practice, pupils do not explore a wide enough range of three-dimensional media and only a minority use information and communication technology (ICT) software to create digital images.

2   Many pupils at key stage 3 gain a good understanding of why artists work as they do, and the intentions behind their work. They use their analysis of the work of other artists imaginatively to improve their own work.

3   At key stage 4, most pupils gain increasing mastery of techniques and processes so that they are able to communicate their ideas effectively. Their sketchbooks are personal and lively explorations of ideas and processes. Through investigation and experimentation, most pupils' work becomes increasingly more original. They improve their drawing skills through responding imaginatively to innovative drawing tasks and by exploring techniques independently. Most pupils refine their ideas by researching thoroughly, and integrate their studies of the work of other artists in imaginative ways that show a high level of understanding.

Drama

4   At key stage 3, nearly all pupils show a good understanding of ideas in performing and the conventions of a variety of dramatic forms. Most pupils collaborate effectively to devise simple pieces, improvised performances and tableaux. They structure their performances to express a broad range of concepts. Most pupils investigate the use of movement, gesture, facial expression, eye contact and voice with enthusiasm and increasing skill to develop characters. They work well, individually and in groups to refine their skills. A majority of pupils develop their vocal and physical skills effectively. Most pupils practise and perform scripted pieces of drama with commitment. However, a minority of pupils in Welsh-medium schools use English too frequently to discuss their ideas when working in groups.

5   By the end of key stage 3, many pupils also demonstrate a good understanding of the skills of directors and technicians, and a minority experiment imaginatively with sound, voice and lighting to create atmosphere.

6   At key stage 4, many pupils identify important stylistic features in the work of set practitioners. Most pupils use their bodies and voices creatively and with control, and explore abstract movement and proxemics to create devised pieces that communicate ideas effectively. Those pupils working with the technical aspects of theatre develop their skills well. They work closely with their peers following the acting route to enhance their performances.

Music

7   At key stage 3, many pupils make strong progress from their individual starting points, although pupils arrive in Year 7 with a range of experiences that are broader in music than they are in art and design or drama. Most pupils develop their performance skills well by mastering an increasingly demanding repertoire. With practice, most pupils sing and play competently in parts. Most pupils explore the musical elements, analyse a range of musical styles and employ music technology effectively to compose short pieces.

8   At key stage 4, a majority of pupils perform with expression and precision. They demonstrate a sound grasp of the conventions of a wide variety of musical styles. They are self-disciplined and well-motivated to rehearse, both independently to ensure technical mastery, and collaboratively to develop a sense of ensemble and performance. Many pupils appraise critically a variety of increasing complex musical forms and styles. They listen intelligently to compare and contrast different performances of the same piece, using well-reasoned responses. However, in a few schools where pupils achieve well, pupils' literacy skills let them down in appraisal activities.

9   Many pupils at key stage 4 compose pieces with a high degree of originality that draw on their own strengths as performers. In many successful schools, pupils use technology very effectively to devise compositions.

> **The contribution of effective teaching and learning in the creative arts to pupils' wellbeing**

10   Pupils improve their wellbeing through well-structured experiences in the arts. The arts help pupils to increase their confidence and self-esteem, improve their social skills and develop their understanding of the views of others. Through learning in the arts, many pupils gain important life skills of independent learning, planning, and problem-solving.

11   Many pupils value the opportunities that the creative arts give them to express their own ideas. Pupils find that practice in presenting their personal responses gives them greater confidence in other areas of school life and work. Furthermore, pupils say that celebrating their arts skills in public through exhibition and performance has had a significantly positive impact on how they view themselves and their future.

> **Standards in the creative arts across Wales**

12   At key stage 3, across Wales, most pupils achieve the expected level 5 or above in art and design and in music. Pupils' achievement in the arts is a little higher than in the core subjects of English, Welsh or mathematics.

13   At key stage 4, art and design is the most popular of the arts subjects, with around 25% of pupils entering GCSE. Each year around 9% of pupils take GCSE drama. Music is the least popular of the arts subjects at GCSE, with around 8% of pupils taking this option. In those schools where provision is of a high quality, take up is often higher than these averages.

14   Many pupils in Wales who opt for art and design, music or drama at GCSE achieve an A*-C grade. Pupils' achievement in music is better than in art and design and in drama. Pupils' achievement in the arts subjects at key stage 4 is much higher than their achievement in English and mathematics and slightly higher than their performance in Welsh.

15   In a very few schools, pupils achieve well in all three arts subjects at keys stage 4. It is more usual that pupils' outcomes are higher in one of the arts subjects. This is because the success of these departments is the result of strong subject leadership and consistently good teaching. In addition, there is little correlation between schools where pupils perform well in the arts and those in which pupils perform highly in the core subjects.

16   At key stage 4, girls' performance is better than that of boys in all of the arts subjects. Of the three subjects, a higher proportion of boys opt for music and their achievement is better than boys' achievement in art and design or in drama.

17   Pupils eligible for free school meals (eFSM) perform better in the arts than in many other subject areas. Of the three arts subjects, a greater proportion of eFSM pupils choose to take GCSE art and design than opt for GCSE drama or music, and their achievement is better. The gap in performance between eFSM pupils and non-eFSM pupils is smaller in art and design than it is in drama or music, and much smaller for each than the gap in English, in Welsh first language, and in mathematics.

Learning experiences in the creative arts in the most effective schools

18   In the most effective departments, pupils develop their knowledge skills and understanding very well at key stage 3, which provides them with a solid foundation for success at key stage 4. These good practice departments also make valuable links with their feeder primary schools that help to bridge the transition in learning between key stage 2 and 3.

19   In many good arts departments, provision is made for more able and talented pupils that helps them to make the most of their abilities. The most effective provision is through extra-curricular work linked to arts agencies and practitioners. However, in lessons, a minority of teachers do not extend the progress of more able pupils well enough.

20   In schools where there is good practice in the arts, teachers plan well to develop pupils' literacy. This has a positive impact on pupils' standards, especially in writing and in oracy. However, many departments do not pay good enough attention to the development of pupils' numeracy skills.

21   Many good arts departments plan well to develop pupils' digital skills. However, even where there is good practice, in a minority of schools, in art and design and in drama there are not enough opportunities for pupils to produce creative work using digital media.

22   In schools where pupils achieve well in the creative arts, there is a wide range of art-related extra-curricular activities that are of particular benefit to disadvantaged

pupils who may not have the home benefits of their more advantaged peers. Many schools provide opportunities for pupils to use specialist spaces and equipment outside lessons, for example.

23   In nearly all schools where pupils achieve well in the arts, teachers have excellent subject knowledge, and many are active practitioners and participants in the arts. They use their expertise to explain and model techniques proficiently, and maintain a serious approach to the rigour and discipline essential to good outcomes in the arts.

24   In most schools where pupils achieve well in the creative arts, teachers focus successfully on developing pupils' critical thinking skills. This helps pupils to develop the skills needed to evaluate their own work and to make good progress. They plan well for pupils to study the work of creative practitioners, and to experience creative work at first hand.

Leadership of the creative arts in the most effective schools

25   In all the schools where pupils achieve well in the creative arts, senior leaders give high status to the arts. They recognise the importance that the arts play in developing a strong ethos in the school, and their value in promoting a stimulating, creative learning environment for all pupils.

26   In these schools, senior leaders support their departments to enable pupils of all abilities, including those pupils who are at risk of disengagement, to achieve to the best of their abilities. However, even in a few of the good practice schools, the Pupil Deprivation Grant is not used well enough to support pupils eligible for free school meals to achieve more highly in the arts.

27   Senior leaders in these good practice schools recognise their arts departments are often a source of excellent practice in developing pupils' creativity and thinking skills. A few senior leaders share these teaching approaches successfully across the school to improve practice and outcomes. Only in a few schools are senior leaders beginning to investigate in a structured way the development of creative learning across the school as a response to Successful Futures (Donaldson 2015).

28   All the good practice schools benefit from strong subject leadership in the arts. These middle leaders are often good and excellent teachers, with a high level of expertise in their subjects. They lead their teams well, and have a dynamic approach to developing their subject.

29   Most subject leaders analyse the work of their departments well. However, in a few schools, departmental evaluations do not focus sufficiently well on the outcomes of groups of pupils, or on the strengths and weaknesses of teaching in the department. As a result, departmental action plans in a few departments are not sharp enough to identify specific areas for improvement.

30   Subject leaders in many schools where there is good practice in the arts develop their practice through working as examination board moderators, and many teachers in the arts benefit from the subject training days offered by the examination boards. Otherwise, there are not enough structured opportunities for professional learning specifically for teachers in the arts.

Recommendations

Schools should:

R1   Learn from the best practice described in this report

R2   Make sure that there are enough opportunities in lessons for more able pupils to extend their learning

R3   Maximise opportunities for pupils to develop their numeracy skills, when appropriate, in arts lessons

R4   Make sure that arts departments make the best use of opportunities to create art works that develop pupils' digital competences

R5   Evaluate closely pupil performance, and the strengths and areas for development in teaching in the arts to inform departmental planning

R6   Analyse the contribution that arts departments make to pupils' skills, and develop strategies for creative learning across the school

R7   Make better use of their grant funding to support disadvantaged pupils in the creative arts

R8   Develop provision and practice in the arts to take account of the recommendations of Successful Futures

Local authorities and regional consortia should:

R9   Provide more support for schools to develop effective self-evaluation and planning for improvement in the arts

R10   Offer professional learning experiences for teachers and subject leaders in the arts

R11   Support schools in the effective use of grant funding to support disadvantaged pupils and to work with arts agencies and arts practitioners

R12   Help schools to review their curriculum development and design towards meeting the recommendations of Successful Futures

Outcomes in the creative arts

Achievement in the arts in the best practice schools visited for this survey

Art and design

31   At key stage 3, a majority of pupils develop their drawing skills well. In a few schools, many pupils draw confidently and expressively from first-hand experience and to make personal responses. They draw for a range of different purposes and use a wide variety of media.

32   Many pupils use sketchbooks effectively to develop ideas and experiment with various processes, media and techniques, and to plan their work sequentially. They annotate their sketchbooks to explain their processes and ideas thoughtfully, collect information about artists and evaluate their work with care.

33   Many pupils explore a good range of two-dimensional processes on a variety of scales. They practise their skills independently to achieve effective results in paint, pastels and pencils and, in a minority of schools, in printmaking. They gain a good understanding of how to use colour effectively.

34   However, even in schools where there is good practice, pupils do not explore a wide enough range of three-dimensional media, and only in a few schools do pupils work in ceramics. Where they do so, pupils' work is often of a high standard. This is usually the result of the expertise of the teacher.

35   Many pupils discuss the work of a range of artists from different cultures and times, including contemporary examples. They gain a good understanding of why artists work as they do, and the intentions behind their work. They compare and contrast different artists' work thoughtfully. They analyse different styles of art, craft and design, identifying key features, and using subject specific vocabulary accurately.

36   Many pupils use information that they find out about different artists to improve their own work. They begin by copying stylistic features or techniques, but do not make slavish copies of the work of other artists.

37   A majority of pupils develop their digital skills well. They gain a good understanding of how to research effectively, and use digital photography to record their work in progress and to explore source material. However, only a minority of pupils use ICT software to create digital images.

38   A majority of more able pupils work to a very high standard. A few work as 'technical experts' to assist other pupils to achieve well when learning new practical skills. They contribute innovative and perceptive ideas to group and class discussions.

39   At key stage 4, pupils build successfully on the skills, approaches and ideas that they have learnt at key stage 3. They improve their drawing skills through responding imaginatively to innovative drawing tasks and by exploring techniques independently.

40   Most pupils develop their sketchbook work very well so that they become personal and lively explorations of ideas and techniques and, in some cases, visual diaries. They refine their ideas by researching thoroughly, and integrate their studies of the work of other artists in imaginative ways that show a high level of understanding. They annotate their work to show careful planning, reflection and development of processes and concepts.

41   Pupils gain increasing mastery of techniques and processes so that they are able to communicate their ideas effectively. Through investigation and experimentation, their work becomes increasingly more original. They present work in their portfolios with care, and find appropriate visual means to demonstrate the development of their thinking.

42   Many pupils, including those following GCSE options other than photography, use digital photography well to initiate their thinking, and to explore ideas. A few pupils demonstrate good technical skills in using computer software imaginatively to create personal responses.

Drama

43   In schools where pupils achieve successfully in drama, at key stage 3, nearly all pupils take an active part in the lessons and show a good understanding of ideas in performing and the conventions of a variety of dramatic forms.

44   Most pupils respond well to a range of stimuli. They combine their knowledge and skills in drama to devise simple pieces. Many pupils collaborate effectively to create improvised performances and tableaux. They explore and interpret interesting ideas, and structure their performances to communicate a broad range of concepts. Many pupils have very good skills in planning their work and in solving problems to express ideas effectively.

45   Most pupils explore characterisation well. They investigate the use of movement, gesture, facial expression, eye contact and voice to create a character and work well individually and in groups to refine their skills. A majority of pupils develop their vocal and physical skills effectively.

46   Most pupils practise and perform scripted pieces of drama with commitment. Many pupils develop sound acting skills, and use simple props and costumes as symbols to express ideas. By the end of the key stage, many pupils also demonstrate a good understanding of the skills of directors and technicians, and a minority experiment imaginatively with sound, voice and lighting to create atmosphere.

47   Most pupils evaluate their own and others' performance well. They analyse critically to identify skills and refinements to improve performances. Many pupils use a good range of technical terms accurately to evaluate performances. However, a minority of pupils in Welsh-medium schools use English too frequently to discuss their ideas when working in groups.

48   A majority of more able pupils contribute successfully to drama lessons. They take a lead in performances and extend their skills through collaborating with others to write scripts and to devise performances.

49   In their written work, many pupils apply their knowledge of drama conventions and devices to create short scripts. In a few schools, pupils create a wide range of dramatic texts, including radio plays, monologues and narrative voice-overs.

50   A majority of pupils interpret material imaginatively from a variety of sources, including contemporary plays, and key playwrights from the history of theatre such as Shakespeare and Brecht. Most pupils offer good reasons for their dramatic choices. Nearly all older pupils at key stage 3 base their decisions on their growing knowledge of contemporary and historical theatre. They are able to compare and contrast their own work to different styles of drama, for example melodrama or slap-stick comedy.

51   At key stage 4, the standard of group work is high. Nearly all pupils work efficiently and with pace. They share ideas effectively, negotiate roles and approaches, and collaborate productively to create dramatic responses. Nearly all pupils work with energy and commitment. They experiment extensively, and refine and improve their ideas throughout each task. Many pupils evaluate their own and others' performances thoughtfully.

52   Many pupils show a good awareness of audience, space and occasion. A minority explore these elements in an imaginative way, with good reference to practitioners, for example by exploring Artaud's approaches to interaction with the audience to investigate the communication of feeling.

53   Most pupils demonstrate a good understanding of a range of styles in drama. They identify important stylistic features of set practitioners, and explore and interpret these concepts thoughtfully through improvisation and by working through excerpts from key texts.

54   Most pupils enhance their work by using confident and controlled movement and explore the use of voice to express different emotions and effects. Most pupils understand the use of abstract movement and proxemics, and apply their skills effectively when creating devised pieces. A few pupils show a high level of maturity and insight in their performances.

55   Those pupils working with technical aspects of theatre develop their skills well to reflect their chosen style. They work closely with their peers following the acting route to enhance their performances. A few pupils design costume, lighting and sets with a high level of creative vision.

Music

56   In nearly all schools where pupils succeed well in music, pupils sing together regularly in lessons and in other aspects of school life, such as assemblies. There are many opportunities for pupils of all abilities, including beginners, to be involved in good quality extra-curricular provision, and participation in such activities is high.

57   Although pupils' experiences in all the arts at key stage 2 are varied, this variability is most noticeable in music. In schools across Wales, pupils arrive in Year 7 with a wide range of musical experiences, including pupils who have had limited sustained musical study as well as those who have studied an instrument outside school for

some years. Despite this difference, in schools where there is good practice in music, many pupils make strong progress from their individual starting points in developing the musical skills, knowledge and understanding to achieve well by the end of key stage 3.

58   At key stage 3, most pupils sing tunefully and with enthusiasm, good diction and animation. Throughout the key stage, pupils develop their performance skills well by mastering an increasingly demanding repertoire. With practice, most pupils sing and play competently in parts. Towards the end of the key stage, a minority of pupils develop a good degree of stylistic awareness, and a few bring their own interpretation to the pieces they perform.

59   Many pupils develop their performance skills very well. A few more able pupils teach themselves more challenging parts and perform them confidently.

60   Most pupils explore the musical elements and apply this knowledge well to performing and composing. For example, pupils can recognise and interpret different rhythms in musical scores, and can use their knowledge to create a variety of rhythms when constructing a twelve bar blues.

61   Most pupils work together well, often using music technology effectively to compose short pieces. Most can apply their understanding of basic musical structures to their compositions. Many pupils organise materials imaginatively and evaluate and refine their pieces to develop their musical ideas. A minority of individual pupils compose very successfully to gain higher levels.

62   Most pupils listen attentively and respond appropriately. Many pupils have a well-developed musical vocabulary and can use technical terms accurately and appropriately.

63   By the end of key stage 3, most pupils are able to analyse a wide range of musical styles at an appropriate level, including pop, jazz, blues, folk, classical and world music. They begin to compare and contrast different pieces of music, identifying stylistic features accurately.

64   Many pupils become increasingly confident in reading music from manuscript, and can identify note value and rhythm accurately.

65   Most pupils have good digital skills and can apply them well in a broad musical context. For example, in Year 7, most pupils are confident to add appropriate backing tracks and chord patterns to accompany melodies they have composed, using electronic keyboards. By Year 9, most pupils utilise the software programmes in school recording studios and jam pods competently to perform their own versions of popular music, using a range of electronic instruments. They improve their understanding of the need for precision and careful positioning of cues when composing digitally. Where pupils use audio recording most effectively, they use it to listen carefully to their performances and to identify what they need to do to improve it further.

66   In successful schools, at key stage 4, a majority of pupils are confident performers who are used to performing to an audience. They perform with expression and precision and with a sound grasp of the conventions of a wide variety of styles. Pupils perform well in groups. They are self-disciplined and well-motivated to rehearse, both independently to ensure technical mastery, and collaboratively to develop a sense of ensemble and performance.

67   Many pupils appraise critically a variety of increasing complex musical forms and styles. They listen intelligently to compare and contrast different performances of the same piece, using well-reasoned responses. They have a well-developed technical vocabulary. However, even in a few schools where pupils achieve well, pupils' literacy skills let them down in appraisal activities. In a few Welsh-medium schools, a minority of pupils do not use their Welsh vocabulary well enough in classroom discussions. They include some English words in their descriptions, and occasionally turn English verbs into Welsh incorrectly.

68   Many pupils compose pieces with a high degree of originality that draw on their own strengths as performers. In many successful schools, pupils use technology very effectively to devise compositions. They use software to create high quality pieces with various voices, instruments and rhythms that they have created themselves, rather than depending on pre-set chords or accompaniments.

Standards in the arts in Wales – the national picture

Key stage 3

69   At key stage 3, in teacher assessments in 2015 most pupils achieve the expected level 5 or above in art and design and in music (figure 1). There are no teacher assessments for drama at key stage 3. Of the two subjects, a slightly higher proportion of pupils achieve at least a level 5 in art and design than they do in music, (Welsh Government, 2015a).

Figure 1: The percentage of pupils achieving levels 5, 6 and 7+ in maintained schools in Wales in art and design and music, based on teacher assessments, at the end of key stage 3, 2012-2015
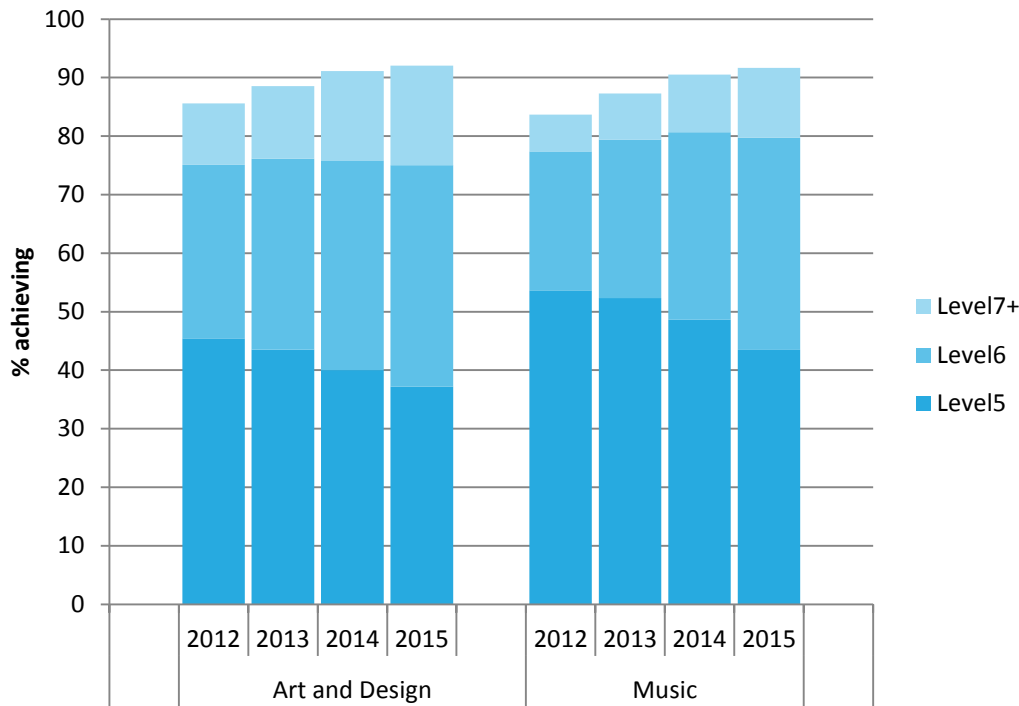
Source: Welsh Government (2015a)

70   In art and design at key stage 3, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected level 5 or above in teacher assessments has increased over the last four years from nearly 86% in 2012 to nearly 92% in 2015. The proportion of pupils gaining the higher levels has also increased over the same period, and in 2015, over half of pupils achieved level 6 or above and around one-sixth of pupils achieved a level 7 or above (figure 1), (Welsh Government, 2015a).

71   In music at key stage 3, the proportion of pupils gaining a level 5 or above in teacher assessments has increased over the last four years from nearly 84% in 2012 to just over 90% in 2015. The number of pupils achieving the higher levels has also increased over the same period, and in 2015 just under half of pupils achieved level 6 or above, and just under one-eighth of pupils achieved a level 7 or above (figure 1), (Welsh Government, 2015a).

72   In the last two years, pupils' outcomes in art and design and in music at key stage 3 are a little higher than in the core subjects of English or Welsh and mathematics (figure 2).

Figure 2: The percentage of pupils achieving at least the expected level (level 5 or above) in key stage 3 teacher assessments in the arts in comparison with that of the core subject indicator (CSI), English, Welsh and mathematics in maintained schools in Wales, 2012-2015

	2012	2013	2014	2015
CSI	73%	77%	81%	84%
English	80%	83%	86%	88%
Welsh	84%	88%	90%	91%
Mathematics	81%	84%	87%	89%
Art and design	86%	89%	91%	92%
Music	84%	87%	91%	92%

Source: Welsh Government (2015a, 2015b)

Key stage 4

73   Many pupils in Wales who opt for the arts at key stage 4 take a GCSE course. A few schools offer BTEC courses. At GCSE, in all arts subjects, many pupils achieve an A*-C grade. Of the three arts subjects, pupils' performance is higher in music than in art and design (which is different to outcomes at key stage 3) and in drama (figure 3).

Figure 3: Percentages of pupils achieving at different grades at GCSE art and design, drama and music, 2012-2015 in maintained schools in Wales
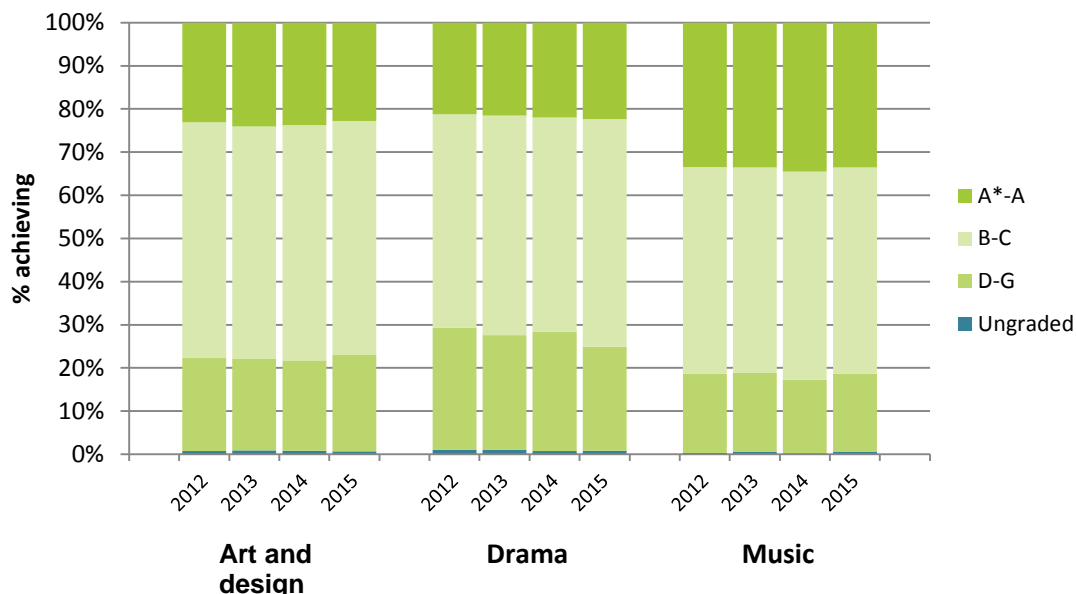
Source: Welsh Government, 2015c

74   The numbers of 15-year-old pupils entering a BTEC qualification in the arts, although much lower than those gaining a GCSE in the arts subjects, has increased notably since 2010. More pupils enter a BTEC in art and design than in performing arts or music (figure 4).

Figure 4: The number of 15-year-olds entering a BTEC in art and design, music and performing arts, in maintained schools, 2010-2015

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Number of 15-year-olds						
BTEC art and design	337	601	998	1,403	1,494	1,259
BTEC music	79	265	435	498	593	507
BTEC performing arts	388	567	896	1,081	1,043	895

Source: Welsh Government (2015d)

75   In the schools where pupils achieve very well in art and design or in music, there is a strong link between high achievement at the end of key stage 3 and pupils' performance at key stage 4.

76   In a very few schools, pupils' performance is high in all three arts subjects. In schools where pupils achieve well in art and design, drama or music, this is because these subjects have effective subject leaders, and teaching in the subject is consistently good or better.

77   Across all schools, there is little correlation between pupils' performance in the arts and their performance in the core subjects.

78   Pupils' outcomes in GCSE art and design, drama and music are much higher than in English and mathematics level 2 measures and slightly higher than pupils' performance in Welsh first language (figure 5).

Figure 5: The percentage of arts GCSE entries that achieve an A*-C grade[1], in comparison with the percentage of entries in other subjects in maintained schools in Wales, 2012-2015

	2012		2013		2014		2015	
	Entries	A*-C	Entries	A*-C	Entries	A*-C	Entries	A*-C
English language	32,553	62%	33,776	62%	32,743	64%	31,724	66%
Mathematics	35,352	61%	37,027	63%	35,399	64%	34,119	67%
Welsh first language	5,200	72%	5,580	72%	5,539	73%	5,444	74%
Art and design	9,197	78%	9,370	78%	8,894	78%	8,690	77%
Drama	3,287	71%	3,025	72%	2,847	72%	2,802	75%
Music	2,841	81%	2,732	81%	2,681	83%	2,691	81%
All subjects	265,319	67%	264,929	68%	252,611	70%	245,891	72%

[1] Percentage of GCSE entries by 15-year-olds resulting in a grade C or above; discounted entries are not included

Source: Welsh Government (2015c, 2015e)

79 At key stage 4, art and design is the most popular of the arts subjects with around a quarter of pupils entering GCSE art and design each year. Outcomes have remained static over the last three years with just over three-quarters of pupils achieving a grade of A*-C and around a quarter attaining the highest grades of A*-A (figure 6).

Figure 6: The numbers of GCSE art and design entries and the percentage of those entries that gained an A*-A or B-C grade, by gender, in maintained schools in Wales, 2013 to 2015.

GCSE art and design
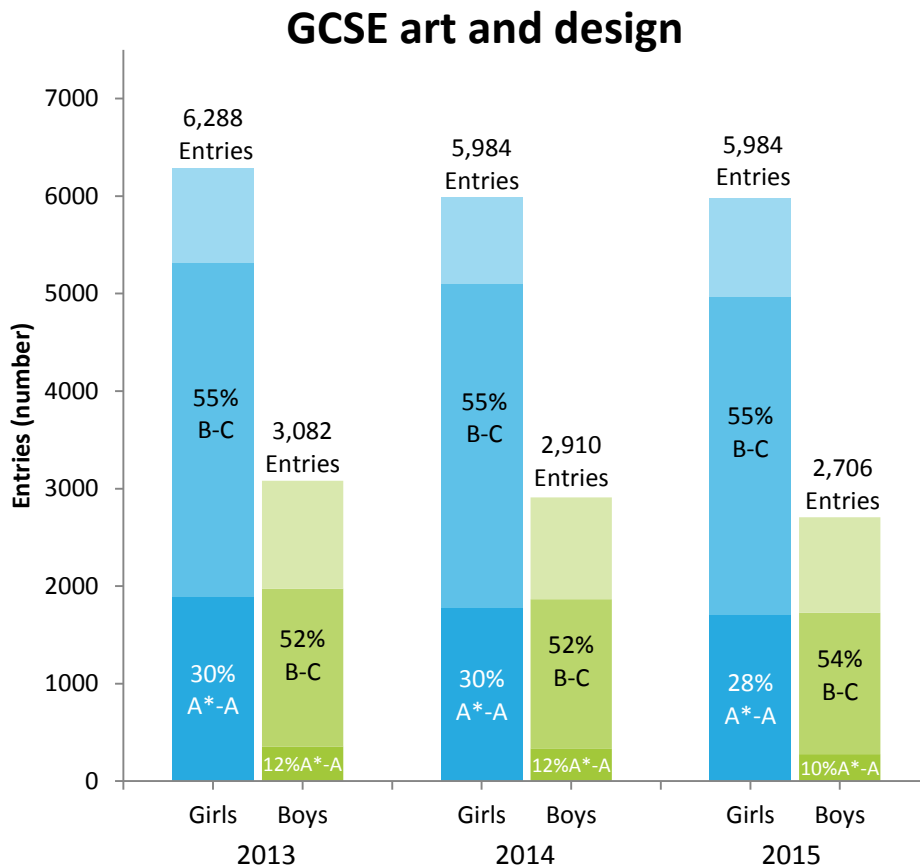
Source: Welsh Government (2015d)

80 Each year, around 9% of 15-year-olds take drama GCSE. Around three-quarters achieve an A*-C grade with just under a quarter attaining an A*-A grade. Pupils' performance in GCSE drama is lower than that of pupils' performance in GCSE music and a little lower than pupils' performance in art and design in both these measures (figure 7).

Figure 7: The numbers of GCSE drama entries and the percentage of those entries that gained an A*-A or B-C grade, by gender, in maintained schools in Wales, 2013 to 2015[1]

GCSE drama

[1] Entries by 15-year-olds; discounted entries are not included

Source: Welsh Government (2015d)

81   At key stage 4, music is the least popular of the arts subjects at GCSE, with around 8% of pupils taking this option. However, pupils' performance in music GCSE is better than that of pupils taking GCSEs in art and design or drama. Over four-fifths of pupils achieve an A*-C grade, a similar proportion to that of the last three years. Over one third of pupils achieve an A*-A grade, which is much higher than pupils' achievement in GCSE art and design and drama (figure 8).
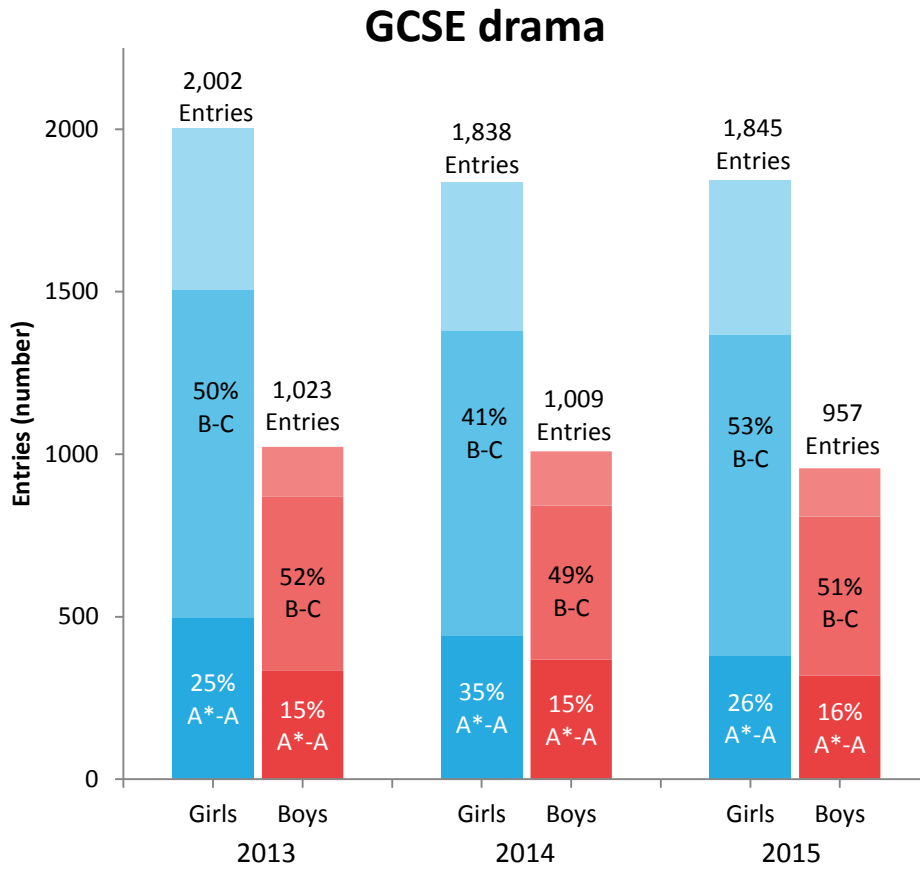
Figure 8: The numbers of GCSE music entries and the percentage of those entries that gained an A*-A or B-C grade, by gender, in maintained schools in Wales, 2013 to 2015[1]
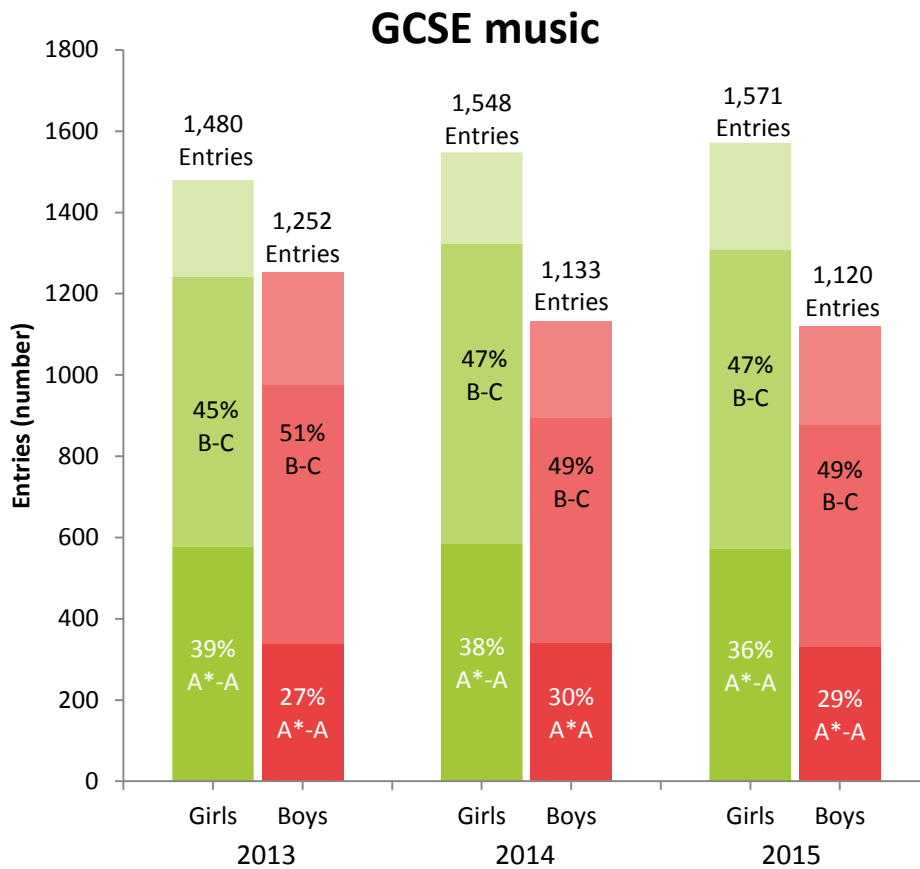
GCSE music

[1] Entries by 15-year-olds; discounted entries are not included

Source: Welsh Government (2015d)

The achievement of boys and girls in the arts

82   More girls than boys enter each of the arts subjects. Around twice as many girls as boys opt for GCSE art and design, and for GCSE drama. The proportions of pupils opting for GCSE music are much more evenly divided between boys and girls, with girls making up around 58% of pupils choosing to study GCSE music.

83   Girls' performance is better than that of boys in all of the arts subjects. Of the three subjects, boys' achievement in music is better than boys' achievement in art and design or in drama (figures 6, 7 and 8).

84   In art and design, around five out of six girls achieve an A*-C, compared with about four out of six boys. Around 30% of girls achieve an A*-A grade compared with just over 10% of boys (figure 6). This gap in performance is greater than in drama or music (figures 7 and 8).

85   In drama, the proportion of girls achieving A*-C has increased slightly over the last

three years. In 2015, 79% of girls achieved an A*-C grade compared to 67% of boys. The proportion of girls achieving an A*-A grade has fluctuated over the last three years with the percentage ranging from 25% to 35%. The proportion of boys achieving A*-A has been much lower, at around 15% over the same period (figure 7).

86   In music, boys achieve better results than boys who choose to take GCSE art and design or drama, with just under four-fifths achieving an A*-C grade. At the highest grades of A*-A, girls and boys achieve better in music than in the other two arts subjects, with around 36% of girls and just under 30% of boys gaining A*-A grades (figure 8). When compared to boys' results in all GCSE subjects, boys' performance in music is better than the average performance for boys in all subjects (figure 9).

Figure 9: The percentage of GCSE entries[1] achieving an A*-C grade by subject and gender, in maintained schools in Wales, 2013-2015

	2013		2014		2015	
	boys	**girls**	**boys**	**girls**	**boys**	**girls**
English language	54%	70%	55%	73%	57%	74%
Mathematics	63%	62%	64%	64%	67%	66%
Welsh first language	63%	81%	64%	82%	66%	83%
Art and design	64%	85%	64%	85%	64%	83%
Drama	67%	75%	64%	76%	67%	79%
Music	78%	84%	79%	85%	78%	83%
All subjects [2]	63%	73%	66%	75%	67%	76%

[1] Percentage of GCSE entries by 15-year-olds resulting in a grade C or above; discounted entries are not included

[2] Includes all GCSE entries collected; not only the subjects shown in this table.

Source: Welsh Government (2015c)

87   One reason for this may be that technology is a key component of most schemes of work in music. Estyn has reported (2008, 2014) that the interactive nature of ICT helps to create learning situations where boys can learn by doing, receiving immediate feedback and continually building new knowledge. This approach contributes to raising the achievement of boys.

The achievement of pupils eligible for free school meals in the arts

88   Pupils eligible for free school meals (eFSM) perform better in the arts than in many other subject areas.

89   Of the pupils who entered an art and design GCSE, the proportion of those eligible for free school meals (eFSM), was just a little under the proportion of all 15-year-olds who are eFSM. Although eFSM pupils do not achieve as well as their more advantaged peers in any subject, in art and design the gap in performance between eFSM and non-eFSM pupils is smaller than that of the other arts subjects, and their achievement is better, with 63% of eFSM pupils achieving an A*-C (figures 10 and 11).

Figure 10: Percentages of pupils achieving A*-A or B-C in creative arts GCSEs, by FSM eligibility in 2015 [1]
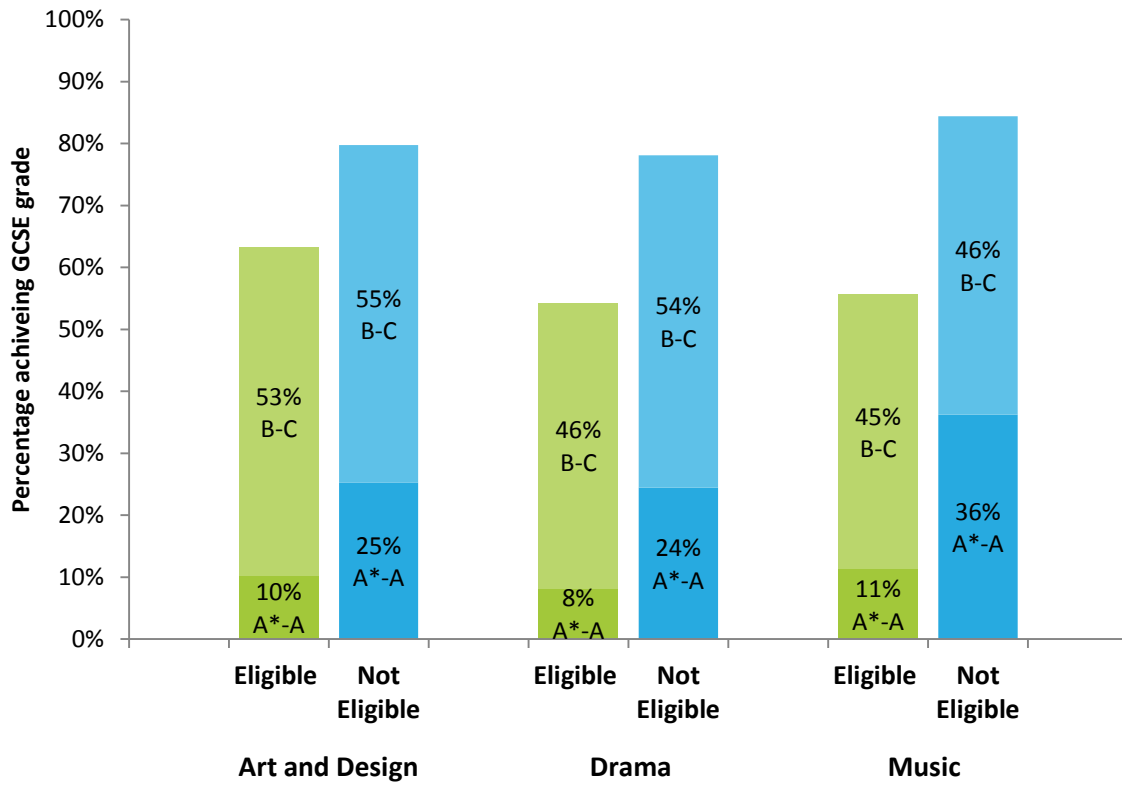
[1] Only includes 15-year-old pupils who have been matched between the Welsh Examinations Database and the Pupil Level Annual School Census. Entire bar shows percentage achieving A*-C.

Source: Welsh Government (2015d, 2015f)

90   The proportion of GCSE drama entrants who were eFSM, at 13% in 2015, is slightly less than the proportion in the whole cohort, which in 2015 is 17% (figure 10). Just over a half of eFSM pupils achieve a grade of A*-C in drama, which is less than the proportion who achieve the same results in art and design and in music (figure 10). The gap in performance between eFSM pupils and non-eFSM drama pupils is greater than that of art and design and slightly less than music (figure 11)

91   In comparison with art and design and drama GCSE, the proportion of GCSE music entrants who are eFSM is much smaller at around 10%. Just over half of eFSM pupils who take music GCSE achieve an A*-C grade (figure 10). The gap between eFSM and non-eFSM pupils achieving A*-C in music GCSE is the largest of the subjects shown at 29 percentage points in 2015 (figure 11).

92   The gap in performance between eFSM pupils and non-eFSM pupils in art and in drama is smaller than in English and in mathematics (figure 11).

Figure 11: The percentage of GCSE entries that achieve an A*-C grade[1], by the entrants' free-school-meal eligibility (eFSM)[2], 2013-2015

	2013			2014			2015		
	eFSM	non-eFSM	gap	eFSM	non-eFSM	gap	eFSM	non-eFSM	gap
English language	37%	67%	-30	38%	69%	-30	42%	70%	-28
Mathematics	37%	67%	-30	37%	68%	-31	42%	71%	-29
Welsh first language	53%	74%	-21	48%	75%	-27	51%	76%	-25
Art and Design	63%	80%	-18	64%	81%	-16	63%	80%	-17
Music	58%	84%	-26	56%	85%	-29	56%	84%	-29
Drama	55%	75%	-20	49%	75%	-26	54%	78%	-24

[1] Percentage of GCSE entries by 15-year-olds resulting in a grade C or above
[2] Only includes pupils who have been matched between the Welsh Examinations Database and the Pupil Level Annual School Census; gap based on unrounded percentages

Source: Welsh Government (2015c, 2015e)

93   Estyn's report on Effective practice in tackling poverty and disadvantage (2012) outlines the approaches that effective schools take to raise the achievement of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. Teaching and learning in the arts provide many of these opportunities to support pupils who are disadvantaged by poverty to achieve well. Learning in the arts helps to develop pupils' social and emotional skills well, in particular their self-esteem and confidence. Teachers in the arts have flexibility to tailor the curriculum to the specific needs and interests of their pupils. Frequent feedback on pupils' progress and dialogue between teachers and pupils are regular features of the best arts lessons, and this helps pupils to build their self-assurance and to make good progress. The arts in schools also provide many opportunities for pupils to engage in extra-curricular activities that enrich their learning experiences. Art clubs and access to well-equipped spaces at lunchtime and after school give pupils a safe and creative environment in which to work. All of these aspects help eFSM pupils to achieve well.

The contribution of effective teaching and learning in the creative arts to pupils' wellbeing

94   Many pupils enjoy their experiences in the creative arts at key stage 3 and 4. They look forward to their classes, value working with others and recognise that the arts contribute significantly to their ability to work productively in teams.

95   Many pupils have good working relationships with the teachers. They speak highly of the skills of their teachers as practitioners in the arts. They believe that their teachers support them actively to achieve well. Many more able pupils value the opportunities that their teachers provide for them, for example to develop their skills by working with arts practitioners outside of school.

96   Most pupils acknowledge the range of skills that they develop in the creative arts. They believe that they improve their creativity, and increase their understanding of

different ways of working. For example, they develop their skills in working independently and pursuing excellence. Many pupils say that drama develops their empathy with others, and that art and design and drama in particular help them to explore moral and social issues, including a better understanding of other cultures. In music, many pupils say that they develop the ability to practise and rehearse until they get something right. As a result, they develop strong life skills in planning and managing their time, and developing self-direction and personal satisfaction. Many pupils feel that working in the creative arts gives them greater confidence.

97 Many pupils value the opportunities that the creative arts give them to express their own ideas. They enjoy working on personal themes that help them to explore aspects of their individuality. Practice in presenting personal responses gives them greater confidence in other areas of school life and work. For example, they identify that their work in drama helps them to present their ideas more fluently to their peers and teachers in other subjects. However, a few pupils express anxieties about performing in front of others in drama and in music.

98 Where pupils participate in extra-curricular opportunities in the arts, they increase their self-belief and self-worth. Nearly all pupils value highly the social aspects, and the sense of teamwork and belonging that they achieve in such participation. They say that extra-curricular activities in the arts help them to engage actively with their local community through events such as performing for older people, or working with pupils in primary school.

99 Pupils also improve their self-esteem and develop their social skills well through working together towards a performance or an exhibition. They benefit greatly from working in a team, solving problems together and helping one another to improve their skills. Pupils say that celebrating their arts skills in public has had a significantly positive impact on how they view themselves and their future.

100 Pupils who feel socially isolated find that the arts provide them with a greater sense of self-worth and a chance to engage in an activity that they enjoy alongside like-minded peers and teachers. They value the 'safe-haven' provided by arts departments, for them to join in with arts clubs, and to find a space to work where they feel comfortable.

101 In preparation for examinations and assessments, many pupils take ownership of their own learning and work with commitment. They book specialist spaces and make best use of school resources to ensure that they improve their work.

Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Plasmawr uses learning in drama to foster wellbeing, diversity and citizenship.

Context

Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Plasmawr is a Welsh-medium school that is maintained by Cardiff local authority, for boys and girls aged between 11 and 18 years. There are 1,081 pupils on roll. Just under 6% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is much lower than the national average. Seventeen per cent of pupils are on the school's additional learning needs register, and about 1% have a statement of

special educational needs. These figures are lower than the national averages. Around half of pupils come from Welsh-speaking homes and the remainder come from homes where only English is spoken. All pupils study examination courses through the medium of Welsh.

Strategy

Leaders in Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Plasmawr have established a caring ethos at the school where stereotypes are challenged, and pupils support each other and take pride in the diversity of their community. The drama department contributes well to this ethos.

Action

The drama department has developed schemes of work in drama at key stages 3 and 4, which help pupils to explore feelings and viewpoints through a range of stimulating themes. These themes not only provide the basis for pupils to develop their drama skills, knowledge and understanding, but also help pupils to explore their own feelings and the viewpoints of others though a range of thought-provoking learning experiences.

In Year 7, pupils begin by exploring bullying. They go on to consider feelings of loss and establishing a new way of life through a project called 'The Evacuee'. In 'The Circus', pupils explore status and friendship. In Year 8, a study of Macbeth allows pupils to investigate coercion and responsibility. 'Legends', takes a moral standpoint to examine the characters of Welsh mythology, their choices and mistakes. Year 9 pupils examine vulnerability and the misuse of alcohol and drugs in 'The Crash', followed by a study of Brecht, focusing on perspectives on homelessness.

At key stage 4, pupils continue to explore themes that relate to moral and social issues. For example, pupils studying Boal's 'Theatre of the Oppressed' examine themes of crime, young pregnancy, neglect, and the effects of war on the mind of a soldier, and pupils considering the staging of 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' in a modern context discuss how they might convey the effects of pollution or deforestation.

In addition, pupils promote open-mindedness and diversity through drama in the work of the 'Digon' ('Enough') extra-curricular drama group. The Digon group use drama to tackle homophobic bullying and to eradicate homophobic language. Year 12 drama students are responsible for running workshops with key stage 3 pupils. Pupils raise funds for Stonewall Cymru and have performed at many events, including the Urdd Eisteddfod.

Impact

Wellbeing in the school is excellent. Nearly all pupils feel safe at school and are confident that the school deals effectively with the few rare cases of bullying that arise. Nearly all pupils show respect and courtesy towards each other and to adults. The 'Digon' school drama group promotes and reinforces the school's mission statement of equal opportunities very well.

Pupils' performance in drama GCSE is very good. In the last two years 100% of pupils achieved an A*-C grade and in each of the last four years more than 40% of pupils achieved an A*-A grade.

Provision in the creative arts in the best practice schools visited for this survey

Curriculum planning

Curriculum arrangements

102 In all the schools visited as part of this survey, art and design and music are taught as separate subjects at key stage 3. In most of these schools, drama is taught as a discrete subject at key stage 3. However, in a few schools, drama is no longer offered as a separate subject at key stage 3, and in a very few instances this has had a negative impact on entries and outcomes at key stage 4.

103 All the good practice schools visited provide art and design, music and drama as option choices at key stage 4. A few of these schools also offer pupils the choice of taking a BTEC qualification in the arts. This provides a good opportunity for pupils to follow a vocational route, for example in technical aspects of the performing arts, where this is more suited to their needs.

104 Most of the schools where there is good practice in the arts timetable at least one lesson of between 50-60 minutes a week for each arts subject at key stage 3. A few schools have increased the time given to each arts subject, and provide three or four lessons of 50-60 minutes per fortnight. At key stage 4, all of these good practice schools provide sufficient time for pupils to follow their courses, usually around five hours per fortnight. However, in many of these good practice schools, teachers provide further opportunities for pupils to develop their skills and understanding during lunchtimes and after school. This has a positive impact on pupils' achievement.

105 A few teachers, especially in art and design, report that lessons of less than an hour present particular difficulties, for example in working on large-scale three dimensional pieces, and this limits the scope of schemes of work. However, where arts subjects are taught as 'double lessons' of around two hours, teachers do not always make the best use of the time available, and pupils work too slowly.

106 In most successful arts departments, teachers collaborate effectively to design creative, exciting and engaging schemes of work. Teachers review their schemes of work regularly, evaluating the impact that the content and approaches has on pupils' achievement.

107 In larger departments, teachers draw well on their individual areas of expertise to contribute their specialist knowledge. This ensures that schemes of work contain a rich variety of experiences for pupils.

108 In a few cases, in departments where there are fewer teachers, or in some instances only one member of staff, teachers find valuable ways to supplement their knowledge to construct schemes of work that have breadth and depth. For example, in Swansea local authority, art teachers meet regularly to share resources and ideas.

Teachers add items of interest to the meeting agenda, such as boys' underachievement, and teachers work together, sometimes with practitioners from higher or further education, to find solutions. Many schools that contribute to initial teacher training speak of the important contribution made by trainees, who often have very recent and valuable experience in university or industry, to practical ideas and techniques in their departmental schemes of work.

109 In a few schools, teachers are beginning to work together to consider the implementation of Successful Futures and how arts departments might collaborate to respond to the review of the curriculum. However, even in the best practice schools that have highly successful arts departments, teachers do not have a good enough awareness of the curriculum review and have yet to begin to explore how they might develop their provision and practice.

Meeting the needs of all pupils

110 In schools where pupils achieve well in the creative arts, subject leaders know their pupils well and provide a curriculum that is well-suited to their needs, abilities and aspirations. They focus on designing a curriculum that gives every pupil an opportunity to succeed. They are sensitive to any cultural or financial barriers that pupils may face in the arts. They choose contextual examples that celebrate the art of different places, people and cultures, and they ensure that extra-curricular provision is accessible to all.

> **Fitzalan High School has adapted the provision in music to engage pupils who are new to English.**
>
> **Context**
>
> Fitzalan High School is an 11-19 mixed, community school maintained by Cardiff local authority. The school serves some areas which are economically disadvantaged. There are currently 1,648 pupils on roll. Just over 35% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is well above the national average. Nearly 35% of pupils receive support for special educational needs. Forty-six per cent of pupils speak English as an additional language (EAL), and 82% of pupils come from homes where other languages are spoken. Over 50 languages are spoken within the school community.
>
> **Strategy**
>
> The school has a significant minority of pupils who arrive at the school with very little English. These pupils are taught in mixed-age immersion groups until their English and cultural awareness are sufficient for them to integrate and to access the mainstream curriculum. The school tailors the key stage 3 curriculum for these pupils to include an increased provision in the arts. This allows pupils to improve their oracy in a practical context and to build confidence through enabling pupils to achieve in the arts, and also develops pupils' understanding of western culture. This helps these pupils to integrate more successfully into the school community. The music department specifically targets pupils from Eastern Europe, most of whom come from communities with a strong oral tradition in music. The school's aim is to build on these skills to enable pupils to achieve in other areas of the curriculum.

Action

There are two English as a second language (ESOL) sets at key stage 3 and four sets at key stage 4. When pupils are new to the country and have limited language skills in English, they enter set 1, and as they improve they rise through these sets.

Pupils who have EAL receive more music provision than those following the full curriculum entitlement. This is because many EAL pupils, especially those from Eastern European countries, find it easy to access practical music. All musical activities are linked effectively to literacy and language acquisition, for example by using drumming to rehearse speech patterns and stressing the correct syllables to improve oracy skills.

At key stage 3, these EAL pupils have three lessons of music each fortnight. Pupils achieve well, usually better than in other subject areas, and this gives them the self-belief to succeed at key stage 4.

At key stage 4, EAL pupils may choose to study for a BTEC qualification in music for five lessons a fortnight over the course of one year. Pupils who have very little English study for the same qualification for seven hours a fortnight over two years.

The school ensures that pupils with limited access to cultural experiences outside school learn a musical instrument wherever possible. The school uses funding from its Pupil Deprivation Grant to provide musical tuition for pupils eligible for free school meals. In addition, allowances are made for a small number of pupils, who are below the poverty line but do not qualify for free school meals, to attend peripatetic music lessons.

Impact

In 2014, 19 pupils left with BTEC level 2 extended certificate in music from ESOL 2 and 3.

In 2015, all pupils following the BTEC course achieved the qualification. This included six Eastern European pupils who gained the BTEC level 2 extended certificate in music. By gaining this qualification, they achieved the level 2 threshold, giving them access to further education and training opportunities. In addition, three pupils studying in the ESOL 1 class achieved BTEC level 2 Certificate in music.

111 A majority of successful arts departments have reduced the gap in achievement between boys and girls. They design schemes of work that provide enjoyable activities that engage both boys and girls. Activities are varied, and teachers provide many opportunities for choices in working methods and ideas. Pupils' personal responses are encouraged and celebrated. Many departments have found that increasing the amount of digital and technical work engages boys well. They provide a variety of ways for pupils to research, record and evaluate their findings, including the use of digital media to record oral and visual responses.

Lewis School Pengam has developed its business links in the arts to improve aspiration and achievement.

Context

Lewis School Pengam is an 11-18 community school maintained by Caerphilly local authority. The school serves communities which were former mining villages in the Rhymney Valley. The catchment area is highly dispersed and unemployment is high. All pupils in key stage 3 and key stage 4 are boys. There are 802 pupils on roll. In 2015, 23.6% of pupils were eligible for free school meals, which is above the national average.

Strategy

The headteacher and the senior leadership team promote the arts as an important aspect of the ethos of the school. The honours board on display in the school celebrates not only achievement in sport, but also in the arts. The school has developed its music provision to engage its boys, and to increase their opportunities for employment.

Action

Music rooms and rehearsal rooms provide an outstanding learning environment. The department is well-equipped with technology, including computers, midi compatible keyboards and recording equipment. The department has invested in industry-standard software that prepares pupils well for the world of work. The music department reviews regularly the key stage 3 schemes of work to include a wide range of engaging musical styles and many opportunities for pupils to work practically and with music technology. At key stage 4, the school offers both GCSE and BTEC music technology. Increasingly, pupils are choosing the BTEC option because of the vocational opportunities offered by this provision. The proportion of eFSM pupils who opt for music technology is higher than the proportion choosing any other option at key stage 4.

In addition, the head of music has developed a song-writing programme, supported by Caerphilly Borough Council Arts Development with the Wales-based Grammy award winner singer/song-writer Amy Wadge. This project includes a scholarship scheme, which supports two more able boys each year to write, perform and produce their own music. The department makes very good use of past pupils who work in music and film, to provide an insight into working in the creative industries.

Impact

In the last two years, pupils' performance at key stage 3 has placed the school in the top quarter of similar schools based on free-school-meal eligibility. At key stage 4, the proportion of pupils opting for music is higher than the national average. Results in GCSE music have risen steadily over the last three years. In 2015, nearly 92% of pupils gained an A*-C grade, with 58% of pupils achieving and A*-A grade. In the past three years, 100% of pupils have passed level 2 BTEC Music Technology, with 57% achieving the highest grades of distinction / distinction* in 2015. In 2015, 58% of pupils went on to study a level 3 music course at key stage 5.

112 In many good arts departments, effective provision is made for more able and talented pupils. Special projects, allowing more able pupils to work together, and opportunities for pupils to work as 'experts' all help more able pupils to achieve well. In Cwmtawe School in Neath Port Talbot, the department uses its virtual learning environment to provide online tutorials for more able pupils. This develops their independence and gives these pupils access to structured extension work, for example by suggesting ways in which pupils may develop their use of media, or by providing ideas for research into a wider range of artists.

113 Most departments make useful reference in their schemes of work for the extension of more and talented pupils. However, the most effective support for more able pupils comes from links to other organisations and projects outside school. A few schools make good use of projects provided by the local authority and the Arts Council, for example, 'Criw Celf', a group of professional artists who work with more able pupils in art and design to provide a series of 'master classes'. Many schools with strong music departments actively promote membership of prestigious national youth choirs and orchestras, such as Only Boys Aloud and the National Youth Orchestra of Wales, in order to develop the skills and experiences of their most able performers.

114 A few schools have developed links to other institutions to provide opportunities for more able pupils. For example, in Pentrehafod School in Swansea, the art department has made productive links with the local further education institution to provide workshops for its more able pupils.

Building skills, knowledge and understanding progressively

115 In most schools, at key stage 3, pupils are taught in mixed ability groups. In many schools, teachers report that the skills, knowledge and understanding in the arts of pupils entering the secondary school have declined overall in the past few years. Increasingly, pupils' prior experience and their standards in the arts are much more variable. Estyn's report (2015), found that even in primary schools where there is effective practice, the quality of teaching and learning in the arts relies too much on chance, and whether the teacher has specialist knowledge. In addition, the report notes that in half of the primary schools surveyed the amount of time devoted to the creative arts has declined recently, and that a minority of schools claim that the recently-introduced National Literacy and Numeracy Framework (LNF) has limited the time and resources available for the creative arts. In good schools, at key stage 3, teachers provide learning experiences in Year 7 that take good account of pupils' various needs and previous experiences.

116 In schools where pupils achieve well in the arts, teachers make good links with their feeder primary schools. They make regular visits, share their specialist skills and plan alongside key stage 2 teachers to ensure the progression of skills. For example in Ysgol Dyffryn Conwy, art teachers meet frequently with their primary colleagues. They have run printmaking workshops, and they work together to assess pupils' work. A few schools use pupil booklets that allow pupils to continue with projects and ideas from Year 6 to Year 7.

117 In a few schools, teachers have created innovative projects to develop links in learning between key stage 2 and key stage 3 which have a positive impact on pupils' standards. For example, pupils in Lewis School Pengam and in Ystrad Mynach primary school worked together on a project in partnership with BBC learning to develop personal responses to classical music. The resulting composition and video, 'No-one else tonight' was written, performed and produced by the pupils using the chords of Handel's 'Zadok the priest', and has an anti-bullying message.

118 In schools where pupils achieve well in the arts, teachers design schemes of work at key stage 3 that provide a good foundation that give pupils the skills, knowledge and understanding that enable them to progress successfully to key stage 4. They deliver a broad range of experiences so that pupils can make informed option choices.

119 Teachers in successful departments plan so that pupils develop their skills incrementally. They pay careful attention to how successive projects build skills, knowledge and understanding. They provide learning experiences that allow time for pupils to practice and refine their skills, and to develop their ideas. This is a key element for the development of pupils' confidence in producing artworks or in performing.

The importance of contextual work: using the work of practitioners

120 Teachers in good practice departments create schemes of work that offer pupils a wide range of practical experiences. However, they also recognise that an important component of enabling pupils to be creative is the study of the works of creative practitioners. They design schemes of work that develop pupils' understanding of a wide variety of contexts in which the arts are created, and provide many opportunities for pupils to develop their skills of evaluation and appraisal.

121 In the most effective arts departments, teachers select an engaging range of contextual examples, local and world-wide, contemporary and historical, that challenge pupils' perceptions. They aim to provide a coherent body of knowledge about their area of the arts which enriches pupils' understanding, enables pupils to make choices, and helps them to engage with meaning in the arts.

122 Successful departments provide a good range of opportunities for pupils to watch and listen to live performances and to experience artworks at first-hand. This is particularly important for pupils from deprived backgrounds and for pupils who would not usually have access to these experiences. All of the good arts departments arrange visits for pupils at key stage 4 that enrich their studies.

123 Many good departments make the most of the arts in their local communities. They make extensive use of local galleries and performances by community groups. They also provide opportunities for pupils to perform and exhibit in the community. This enhances pupils' understanding of their community and improves their confidence.

124 However, at key stage 3, a majority of departments do not take pupils to galleries, performances and concerts that are further afield, for example to major collections or works by nationally recognised performers, even though they recognise that this is an

important part of pupils' learning in the arts. They find organising these trips difficult because of timetabling and staffing restrictions. This limits opportunities for pupils, some of whom may not study the arts at key stage 4.

125 Most good arts departments arrange for pupils to work with arts practitioners. This enables pupils to develop skills beyond the expertise of teachers in the department, and gives pupils an experience of 'real world art', including an understanding of careers in the arts. A few departments make very good use of practitioners who have a connection with the school, either as a past pupil or who work in the local area. In a few cases, these practitioners are very well renowned in their field. For example, pupils in Sandfields School have participated in a workshop with the actor Michael Sheen, and pupils in Ysgol Tryfan have benefited from working with the BBC Orchestra of Wales and former pupils who are professional musicians. In Ysgol Gyfun Cymmer Rhondda, Tim Rhys Evans, the musical director of Only Men Aloud, visits the school regularly to inspire boys to take part in choirs. These opportunities have a positive impact on pupils' achievement and aspirations.

Development of literacy and numeracy

126 In schools where pupils achieve well in the arts, teachers plan effectively for the development of pupils' literacy in arts lessons and in schemes of work in line with the Literacy and Numeracy Framework. Planning for literacy is sensitive to the demands of the arts curricula, and teachers integrate learning experiences in literacy in ways that help pupils to make good progress in the subjects, rather than planning discrete 'bolt-on' activities to fulfil a whole-school requirement. In particular, oracy and writing are developed well as skills that support learning in art and design, music and drama.

127 A very few schemes of work plan good opportunities for pupils to use their numeracy skills in practical ways, for example for scale and measurements when designing theatrical sets. However, many schools do not pay good enough attention to the development of pupils' numeracy skills in the arts. A very few heads of department expressed a view that including numeracy in arts lessons was inappropriate.

Bishopston School improves pupils' numeracy through art and design.

Context

Bishopston is an English-medium 11 to 16 mixed comprehensive school situated towards the west of Swansea. There are 1,087 pupils on roll. Around 5% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is much lower than the national average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is 22%, which is lower than the national average of 25%. The percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational needs (4%) is higher than the national average of 3%.

Strategy

The art department at Bishopston School sought to develop the use of numerical skills and the application of number in the context of art and design in the world of work. The staff use their experience as 'working artists' to improve pupils' understanding of such aspects as the pricing of materials, gallery commission, and

---

valued added tax. In line with the numeracy strand of the Literacy and Numeracy Framework, to 'transfer mathematical skills across the curriculum in a variety of contexts and everyday situations', the aim is for pupils to apply arithmetic skill in a 'real world context' and, in doing so, designed a scheme of work that enhances the art and design curriculum.

Action

The department designed a scheme of work looking at how professional artists work. Pupils have the opportunity to work in the manner of professional artists, establishing and building a business with a partner. Business planning, with an emphasis on numerical skills, is a key feature of the scheme of work. Pupils are given the skills and tools to plan and execute a marketing campaign for their own jewellery or accessory designs, including the production of a logo and a scripted advert. The culmination of the scheme of work sees pupils present their business plans, marketing strategies and handcrafted prototypes in a 'Dragons Den-style' pitch. Staff choose a selection of business plans, and pupils work with a teacher in small groups to realise their designs in the medium of precious metal clay (silver and bronze).

Impact

The quality of work produced has enabled excellent key stage 3 results with 31% of pupils gaining a level 7 in art in 2015. The department used pupil voice to evaluate pupils' perceptions of the project, and found that pupils respond very positively to this new unit of work, which is particularly popular with boys. One pupil's feedback captures this engagement:
"It is really fun and engaging, researching logos and brands before we make our own. It is like 'real life' art."

Digital learning

128 Many good arts departments, plan very well to develop pupils' digital competence. They provide a wide range of opportunities for pupils to develop subject-specific skills and generic digital skills, such as effective researching and presentational skills. Many pupils use digital technology well to capture stimuli for their creative products and to record their work in progress for the purposes of self- and peer-evaluation. In music, pupils in key stage 3 often make good use of technologies, for example performing using electronic keyboards and composing using software packages. However, even where there is good practice, in a minority of schools, schemes of work in art and design and drama, subject leaders do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to explore the production of artworks using digital technology.

129 Many of the stronger arts departments have a dedicated technician who looks after the technical aspects of the department's work. These technicians often work as cover supervisors in the subject, and contribute to teaching specialist skills such as music technology or digital photography. These support staff are integral to the success in these departments.

Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig

130 Nearly all departments with good practice contribute significantly to Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig.   Schemes of work use well-chosen examples of Welsh practitioners, both historical and contemporary as starting points for creative work. Pupils are given many good opportunities to learn about the history, landscape, culture and language of Wales.

131 Many of these schools promote the arts well as an integral part of the culture of Wales. They have an annual Eisteddfod which includes competitions for all the arts, and have modern and popular set pieces that are appropriate and engaging for pupils.

132 In a few schools, pupils are particularly proud of their achievements in the National Eisteddfod. Engagement with both school and National Eisteddfodau promotes well not only Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig, but also the value of the arts in these schools.

Option choices

133 In nearly all of the good practice schools, pupils reported that they had good advice and guidance from their teachers about their options choices. Very few pupils felt pressured to opt for subjects other than art subjects because of a perceived lack of academic rigour, or that the arts subjects were not valuable to their future in education or employment.

134 In many of these good practice schools, pupils can choose to take GCSEs in two arts subjects. In a few schools, pupils are able to opt for three arts subjects. However, in a very few schools, pupils are only able to take one arts subject at GCSE. In these schools, pupils found the options choices too restrictive.

135 At key stage 4, successful arts departments design learning experiences that guide pupils skilfully towards their qualifications. Teachers in these departments understand well the examination criteria and communicate this clearly to their pupils. To enable pupils to achieve the highest grades, teachers design learning experiences that ensure that pupils continue to expand and refine their skills, but also enable pupils to create more personal and original pieces.

Bishopston School has improved engagement with parents that helps to improve pupils' achievement.

Strategy

The art and design department aims to improve parental engagement to improve parents' understanding of the requirements and assessment of the GCSE, so that they may better support their children to improve their grades.

Action

In the autumn term, the art department invites parents to the school to view the GCSE art and design portfolios of the previous year's cohort. Art and design

---

teachers explain the assessment of work, revealing how and why pupils gained the marks to achieve different grades. Parents have the opportunity, alongside their child, to assess artwork using the examination board's assessment matrix.

As part of the GCSE parent consultation evenings, the art department also provides parents with a tracking graph that shows each pupil's current performance and if they are on track to achieve their target grade.

To support parents and pupils further, the department has put together a GCSE art and design handbook. The handbook includes photographs of pupils' work, advice about the practical examination, and detailed explanations of the GCSE criteria and marking scheme.

Impact

The school asks parents to evaluate the event. Parents commented that the information has made the GCSE process and success criteria much more transparent. In addition, feedback from parents and pupils has helped the art department to further develop the curriculum and resources.

Pupils' performance has improved over the last four years. In 2015, 98% of pupils gained an A*-C grade in art and design, with just over 62% achieving an A*-A grade.

136 At the beginning of key stage 4 courses, many arts teachers undertake a diagnostic activity that identifies pupils' strengths and weaknesses. This helps teachers to steer pupils through their key stage 4 studies in a way that makes the most of their abilities. In addition, the diagnosis informs teachers of where pupils may find examination technique challenging, for example where pupils' weaker writing skills make it difficult to gain marks in written papers. In this instance, an additional focus on acquiring the correct vocabulary and structuring written answers to take good account of the mark scheme helps to support pupils to achieve their best.

137 In art and design, many successful departments offer a range of GCSE options, including fine art, graphic communication, textiles, three dimensional studies and photography. This allows teachers to direct pupils towards the qualification for which they are most suited, and contributes to improved outcomes. In smaller departments, however, it is more difficult to provide a wide range of options. Many departments have introduced graphic design or photography to engage a greater proportion of boys in the subject, and this has had a positive impact on improving boys' achievement.

138 Drama at key stage 4 often provides options for pupils to act, direct or demonstrate their technical skills. In schools where pupils achieve well in drama, teachers pay good attention to this range of choices, and help pupils to find the most appropriate route through the subject. A few of these schools have designed their key stage 3 schemes of work to take account of these different options at key stage 4, and this has engaged a range of pupils with different skills and aspirations in the subject.

139 In a few schools where there is good ICT provision, pupils can choose to study for a BTEC in music technology. A very few schools offer both music technology and more traditional music qualifications, such as GCSE. Teachers often identify that the music technology qualification is better suited to pupils who have good skills in manipulating technologies, along with a good aural ability, but are not as confident or skilled in appraising, or in instrumental performance. Where schools guide pupils suitably in making their choices, pupils often gain very good results.

Extra-curricular opportunities

140 In schools where pupils achieve well in the creative arts, there are extension opportunities for pupils to engage in a wide range of art-related extra-curricular activities. Nearly all good departments provide a number of clubs for pupils to engage with arts activities at lunchtime or after school. These clubs are well attended and enjoyed by pupils.

141 In some cases, arts clubs provide an opportunity to learn a new skill, for example 'samba club' and 'animation club'. These are well organised and often culminate in opportunities for pupils to perform or exhibit their work.

142 Many creative arts clubs provide an opportunity for pupils to use specialist spaces and equipment, and to access the teachers' expertise to complete classwork and homework. These opportunities are particularly important for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds who may not have the home benefits enjoyed by their more advantaged peers. For many pupils, these clubs contribute significantly to their achievement in the arts, even where there are few structured activities provided by teachers. Indeed, in many cases, these clubs provide an opportunity for pupils to work independently, for example to follow their own interests in aspects of popular culture.

143 In schools with good practice in the music department, a high proportion of pupils (up to 20%) have additional musical instrument lessons. In many schools, pupils speak positively of the range of musical instrument tuition on offer to them, and the expertise of these teachers. However, the charge for instrumental lessons varies greatly from school to school. Nearly all schools identify a tension between working in partnership with local authority music services, which provide high quality, well managed but nevertheless costly provision, and sourcing cheaper provision, which the school's leaders manage and quality assure.

144 Only a few schools use their Pupil Deprivation Grant (PDG) to support eFSM pupils to learn to play instruments. A minority of schools have their own bequests and bursary funds, which they use to support pupils from families who cannot afford the cost of additional musical instrumental lessons. A minority use funds gained from performances to subsidise the cost of these additional lessons for pupils.

Teaching

145 In nearly all the schools where pupils achieve well in the creative arts, not only do teachers have excellent subject knowledge, but many are active practitioners and participants in the arts. Many use their current knowledge and understanding of the

way that artists work imaginatively in their teaching. They create classrooms that are vibrant and creative 'studio' spaces. Pupils in these classes regard themselves as artists, musicians, actors, directors and technicians. Teachers maintain a serious approach to the rigour and discipline inherent in arts practice and this has a positive impact on pupils' attitudes, confidence and outcomes.

146   Many of the teachers in schools with good practice model skills for pupils proficiently. They demonstrate with confidence, with excellent control over the processes and techniques that they explain, and focus on step-by-step methods where appropriate to ensure that pupils have a good understanding of the techniques that they need to use.

147   These teachers understand well that pupils' outcomes in the arts are 'public', and that pupils often feel that their responses are exposed to all. These teachers create an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect, whereby pupils feel free to experiment and to make mistakes. Teachers provide frequent formative feedback to pupils that focuses on clear success criteria. They share pupils' difficulties and successes, and guide pupils skilfully to help one another to improve.

148   Most importantly, teachers plan to make sure that pupils succeed. That is, the lesson is structured carefully so that pupils develop their skills, knowledge and understanding in a sequential way that provides a framework for success without being overly prescriptive.

149   Many good and excellent teachers in the arts plan their lessons inventively. They use exciting, multi-sensory stimuli, music and lighting, that set the scene for learning and capture pupils' imaginations.

150   In a very few instances, teachers do not pay good enough attention to resources and equipment, and this has a negative impact on the quality of pupils' work. For example, pupils are asked to work at desks when using an open space would be more appropriate, or poor quality or unsuitable materials and equipment are selected for pupils to use.

151   In most schools where pupils achieve well in the creative arts, teachers focus successfully on developing pupils' critical thinking skills. They give pupils suitable frameworks to help them to analyse a well-selected and engaging range of practitioners' work, which, in turn, helps pupils to develop the skills needed to evaluate their own work. They help pupils to understand why practitioners created works in different times and places, and in a variety of contexts. Teachers help pupils to use the artworks of others to explore starting points for their own work, to help them solve problems by examining how others have responded to similar challenges, and to gain an understanding of creative processes.

152   In effective departments, teachers enable pupils to increase their vocabulary, and provide appropriate frameworks that help pupils to produce extended responses both orally and in writing.

Bassaleg School integrates literacy effectively into a Year 9 music lesson.

Context

Bassaleg School is a mixed 11-18 school to the north east of Newport. There are 1,688 pupils on roll. Around 7% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is much lower than the national average. Fewer pupils than the national average have special educational needs.

Strategy

The music department has devised a methodology to develop pupils' listening and appraisal skills through the application of focused literacy skills. All pupils in Year 9 receive two periods of music per fortnight. The school's Literacy and Numeracy Framework co-ordinator is also a member of the music department.

Action

In a mixed-ability Year 9 class, the music lesson focused on improving pupils' appraisal skills, then embedding their understanding of their listening through rehearsal of their individual performance.

The teacher engaged all pupils from the start with a lively recording of the twelve-bar blues piece 'Candy Man'. Pupils used whiteboards to jot down bullet points to appraise the music. The teacher collated their thoughts and stretched their vocabulary to include 'power words', which included technical terms based on the subject specific prompts around the classroom and Italian musical terms for the more able. On the second playing, the pupils turned their bullet points into sentences. The teacher used targeted questioning skilfully to enable all pupils in this mixed-ability class to include connectives and suitable punctuation to structure their sentences appropriately. Many pupils modelled level 7 responses well, supported by well-scaffolded success criteria. Learners read their 'power' sentences aloud and offered feedback to each other. This short lesson starter was well paced, lively and engaged all learners well. It made explicit the positive contribution that all teachers can make to developing, rehearsing and reinforcing pupils' literacy skills purposefully, within the context of their own subject areas.

The lesson continued with pupils rehearsing their own performances of a twelve-bar blues. Many pupils added appropriate chords over a walking bass, working carefully to change chords smoothly using well-rehearsed fingering patterns. More able pupils made good use of the syncopated rhythms they had heard and evaluated during the initial appraisal exercise. A few pupils who already have basic keyboard mastery used their initial listening stimulus to improvise additional embellishments to the structure, and compose a simple introductory flourish. The teacher supported a few less able pupils to perform competently at a basic level using coloured markings and numbered keys to support them. All pupils took good account of the clearly structured success criteria to guide them to make improvements to their work and strive to achieve their aspirational levels.

Impact

Most pupils appraised the music they listened to sensitively and thoughtfully, using well-chosen subject specific vocabulary and linking sentences thoughtfully to mould a carefully structured paragraph. As a result, many pupils' appraisal skills are at level 6 and a few are at level 7. The carefully structured performance success criteria give pupils clear guidance to improve their work on an individual basis, and motivate nearly all pupils to achieve their best. As a result, nearly all pupils make good progress during the lesson.

Pupils in Bassaleg School achieve very well in music. In each of the last four years, around half of pupils achieved a level 6 or higher at key stage 3. At key stage 4, in their GCSE, nearly all pupils achieved an A*-C grade, with around half gaining an A*-A grade.

153   Even in good departments, many teachers miss opportunities for pupils to practise their numeracy skills, especially where pupils might practice using mental arithmetic. Overall, teachers do not have a good enough understanding of whole-school approaches to numeracy skills and the skills that pupils' need to solve problems, for example to calculate shape and space, or to understand how to work out fractions in musical notation.

154   Many teachers in good departments use technology well as a teaching and learning resource. They use a range of applications and software for a wide range of purposes.

Tredegar Comprehensive School uses ICT to enhance learning in art and design.

Context

Tredegar Comprehensive School is an 11-16 school in Blaenau Gwent. Much of the area served by the school is socially and economically disadvantaged and unemployment is extremely high in the area. There are 671 pupils on the school roll. Almost 29% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. This is well above the national average. Around 30% of pupils have special educational needs, which is above the national average.

Strategy

The school has invested heavily in technology to support learning in creative subjects and engage pupils. In art and design, in both key stages, technology is used to support and improve pupils' work and to enhance their use of new media by manipulating their work through the use of ICT. This also supports the development of independent learning, research skills and 'flipped learning' (a learning strategy where pupils first gain knowledge at home, and then class time is used to consolidate and explore this learning, usually through discussion and problem-solving activities).

Action

Art and design teachers use a variety of applications to enable pupils to develop their skills and understanding.

Pupils have access to a wide range of resources and research electronically, and various 'apps' are used to allow pupils to enhance and manipulate their work. The department uses electronic tablets regularly at key stages 3 and 4, to develop and record the work in progress.

Teachers promote and recommend particular areas to pupils via a particular photo-sharing website that allows users to upload, save and sort images and videos. The use of the website has been developed in the faculty for the past three years. It is a free app that can be accessed via a variety of platforms. The website allows users to upload, save, sort, and manage images and videos, known as 'pins' in collections known as 'pin-boards'. Pupils at key stage 3 and 4 create many pin-boards based on a number of different themes that they are studying. At GCSE, pupils create a board for each exam question so that they can pin the images and artists that they would like to research. This allows a broader base for pupils to research and prepare their work on various artists and techniques before and during the lesson, and teachers can recommend other artists, designers or craft workers to explore. The use of the website allows the pupils to access resources at home and for all pupils to explore their own individual lines of enquiry. This allows pupils of all abilities to work independently.

Another app is used by pupils to take a photograph of their work and to add commentary, either by typing or audio recording their intentions. This is used at the start of lessons for pupils to set their own targets for the lesson, or to explain how they plan to continue to develop their work. The app is then used at the end of the lesson to take another image or video so that pupils can record their progress, and show how they have improved their own learning. This allows pupils and the teacher to assess pupils' work in progress more successfully. In addition, pupils develop their literacy skills in describing progress in their work. The technology also provides good opportunities for pupils and teachers to share work, and for teachers to collect an evidence bank and exemplar materials.

Impact

For the last three years, pupils' performance in art and design at key stage 3 has placed the school in the top quarter of similar schools based on free-school-meal benchmarks at the expected level 5 and at the higher levels. At key stage 4, art is the most popular option choice at GCSE, with over half the cohort opting for art and design each year. In 2015, 84% of pupils achieved an A*-C grade, which is above the national average of 77%.

In Tredegar Comprehensive School, music teachers use technology effectively to underpin learning.

Strategy

Across the age and ability ranges, technology in music supports differentiation and modelling of new skills well. It is used creatively to support more able pupils through encouraging creativity and independence. In addition, less able pupils are supported through being able to access modelling 'on-demand'. The music department uses technology widely to promote independent learning and access to resources from home.

Action.

Pupils use QR codes to access wider resources 'on-demand' to support their learning and to make links across the curriculum. The technology helps pupils to compose and to assess, annotate and reference their work. QR codes appear on prompt cards and around the classroom that link YouTube self-help tutorials recorded by the teacher. These include instructions to play a more challenging harmony part, or provide listening activities such as access to a Year 11 past composition or performance.

QR codes are used extensively to aid modelling and to differentiate for individuals through encouraging independent work. Individual pupils or groups of pupils have tablets to scan QR codes and view videos.

The teacher produces musical resource sheets for each unit which outline success criteria and offer tips for improving performances or compositions. QR codes on these resource sheets allow pupils to view videos of performances of each part that have been recorded by subject teachers. These videos allow for differentiation and promote independent learning. Pupils of all abilities are able to practise parts and improve their performance. There is an interactive GCSE display board, which has QR codes that give pupils access to examples of A*, A and B grade work. This allows pupils to read exemplar composition briefs and listen simultaneously to work modelled by previous and current GCSE pupils. This gives pupils a better understanding of the marking criteria for GCSE solo performances.

Impact

For the last three years, pupils' performance in music at key stage 3 has placed the school in the top quarter of similar schools based on free-school-meal benchmarks at the expected level 5 and at the higher levels. At key stage 4, in music, 100% of pupils achieved an A*-C grade, which is above the national average of 82%.

155   In many schools where pupils are successful in the arts, teachers develop high-quality resources to support pupils' learning. In a minority of schools, teachers produce helpful online resources for pupils to support their independent work. A few teachers use sharing websites, or the school intranet to create online resources for pupils. In Cwmtawe School, for example, the head of art uses the school's virtual learning environment to explain clearly the assessment criteria for homework, by using exemplar work to show pupils the expected standards.

156 Nearly all good and excellent teachers in the arts provide frequent verbal feedback to pupils throughout lessons that help them to deepen their understanding and to refine their work in progress. They explain clearly how assessment criteria are applied, and provide activities for pupils that exemplify what they need to do to improve, for example by levelling or grading examples of work themselves. These teachers provide many, well-timed and supportive opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own work and that of their peers.

157 Teachers in departments where there is good practice track pupils work carefully and ensure that pupils know what to do to achieve their best. They use assessment information to modify their lesson planning.

158 A majority of teachers also use assessment information to adjust their lessons to meet the needs of pupils. However, even in good departments, a minority of teachers do not plan for specific activities that will extend the progress of more able pupils.

Leadership and management in the creative arts in the best practice schools visited for this survey

Senior leadership

159 In all the schools where pupils achieve well in the creative arts, senior leaders give high status to the arts. They recognise the importance that the arts play in developing a strong ethos in the school, and their value in promoting a stimulating, creative learning environment for all learners.

160 In these effective schools, senior leaders see strong performance in the arts as part of the identity of the school. This is a particularly strong feature of many Welsh-medium schools, where the arts are valued as integral to the school's culture.

161 These effective schools provide plentiful opportunities to celebrate pupils' achievements in the arts. Senior leaders provide valuable support for teachers of the arts to put on productions and to exhibit pupils' work regularly, both in school and in the community. They ensure that high-quality art, drama and music are a frequent feature of school life, for example in assemblies, and in events for parents.

162 Senior leaders understand well how the arts can help pupils to develop the social and emotional skills that they need to feel safe and confident in school. They express the conviction that the skills pupils acquire through the arts provide a strong foundation from which to succeed in other aspects of their learning.

163 In schools where the arts thrive, senior leaders emphasise the value of art for all pupils. There is good support for arts programmes that help pupils at risk of disengagement, and funding available to assist specific groups of pupils, including the more able and talented, to make the best progress that they can. However, even in a few of the good practice schools, the Pupil Deprivation Grant is not used to best effect to support pupils eligible for free school meals to achieve more highly in the arts. In some cases, this means that there is a barrier for disadvantaged pupils to engage in the arts. For example, in many schools, a very small proportion of eFSM pupils learn a musical instrument compared with their peers.

164 Senior leaders in schools where there is good practice regard the arts as being equal in academic rigour to that of other subjects. This is reflected in the school's approaches to curriculum, target-setting, tracking and assessment.

165 In many schools where pupils achieve well in the arts, senior leaders ensure that there is sufficient curriculum time for pupils to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding. In his report for the Welsh Government, Smith (2013) reported that one of the findings from the consultation was that there is a belief that headteachers prioritised the development of literacy and numeracy at the expense of the arts (p.36). In many schools with good practice in the arts, senior leaders have protected or, in a few cases, increased the time given to the arts at key stage 3. In these schools, senior leaders not only value the arts for their own sake, but also hold the view that studying arts subjects improves pupils' social, educational and economic outcomes.

166 Senior leaders in these good practice schools recognise that their arts departments are often a source of excellent practice in developing pupils' creativity and thinking skills. They identify and share these teaching approaches successfully across the school to improve practice and outcomes. For example, in a few schools, senior leaders have facilitated the use of drama teaching strategies in subject areas such as history and religious education, to enhance pupils' skills in concepts of cause and consequence, or to help them reflect on feelings, attitudes, beliefs, and values. In only a few schools are senior leaders beginning to investigate in a structured way how creative learning is developed across the school.

167 In the good practice schools, arts teachers are well supported and morale is high. Although many schools have seen a reduction in their budgets, in the good practice schools, teachers feel that they have access to enough funding to ensure that pupils have high-quality resources and inspirational experiences. These resources include working with vibrant arts practitioners, and well-chosen visits that supplement the curriculum, particularly at key stage 4. However, even in schools where there is good practice, a majority of arts departments are not supported well enough to provide pupils with experiences beyond their local community. Many arts departments have benefited from timely investments in technology.

168 Teachers in successful arts departments are supported well by senior leaders to improve their practice generally, including the development of their leadership skills. In a minority of schools, arts teachers share good practice in teaching and learning through school-to-school working. This collaborative work helps leaders to consider ways to develop further the work of their department. However, it is too early to see the full impact of this work in improving pupils' standards.

169 In schools where senior leaders value the arts highly, they make well-considered strategic decisions with regard to staffing. They select new members of staff carefully to complement existing staffing in terms of skills and expertise, and provide good opportunities for teachers to make the most their subject knowledge.

170 In a very few successful departments, staffing has been reduced, for example because of changes to the curriculum and a reduction in options choices. This has resulted in a loss of expertise within the department, and has had a negative impact on results.

Middle leadership

171 All the good practice schools benefit from strong subject leadership in the arts. These middle leaders are often good and excellent teachers, with a high level of expertise in their subjects. They lead their teams well, and have a dynamic approach to developing their subject.

172 These middle leaders are energetic in their commitment to their subject departments. They actively seek out funding and activities that benefit pupils, and contribute well to the life and environment of the school through organising regular performances and exhibitions.

173 In most successful schools, subject leaders organise examination preparation to help pupils achieve well. They ensure that pupils have appropriate time and space to fulfil

examination criteria, and that senior leaders have a good understanding of requirements, so that pupils are given the opportunities to perform to their best, for example that, during their ten-hour practical examination, pupils taking art and design do not have to deal with competing demands from other subject areas. In music and drama departments where there is best practice, performance examinations are given a high profile, with suitable technical support for pupils and a supportive audience.

174 Most subject leaders have a good awareness of the quality of standards and teaching in their subjects. They analyse data rigorously, and scrutinise pupils' work regularly and systematically to identify strengths and weaknesses in pupils' progress and outcomes. They share this information with their teams to review and refine schemes of work, in order better to match learning to pupils' needs.

175 Most departmental self-evaluations are thorough and detailed. However, even in a few schools where there is good practice in the arts, subject leaders attempt to evaluate the work of their individual department against the entire Estyn Common Inspection Framework. This often leads to documents that are too lengthy and attempt to cover too many issues. This approach prevents a clear focus on key departmental messages, including those relating to the core business of teaching and learning in the arts.

176 In a few self-evaluation reports, the analysis of data, especially the evaluation of the outcomes of groups of pupils, is not incisive enough to identify clear plans for improvement.

177 In nearly all good subject departments, subject leaders observe members of their department teach. They provide valuable feedback that helps teachers to improve their practice. However, in a majority of subject evaluation reports, information about the strengths and areas for development in teaching is not captured precisely enough to identify clear strategies for improvement. In most good departments, teachers observe one another teach informally. They help each other to extend their subject expertise. In a minority of departments, teachers team teach to support each other in areas of the subject in which they are less proficient.

178 All effective subject departments write detailed action plans for improvement. However, in a majority of cases, these plans are not sharp enough, and do not focus well enough on quantitative targets, or expected outcomes for pupils. As a result, leaders are not able to evaluate whether the plan has been successful in improving pupil outcomes.

179 Many subject leaders in schools where pupils achieve well in the arts feel that there are not enough formal opportunities to develop their skills in their subject. Many value the subject training days offered by the examination boards, but report that there are few opportunities for teachers to develop and extend their practical skills and those of members of their departments. A few subject leaders organise 'in-house' training by arranging for visiting practitioners and trainees in the department to share their skills with teachers. In a few departments, teachers develop new skills, for example in digital image making, outside school, and share this learning with their colleagues.

180 Many subject leaders work as examination board moderators. This means that they have a good insight into assessment criteria. They use this information well to help pupils to avoid common pitfalls and improve the teaching in their subjects. In addition, teachers who work as moderators use this opportunity to identify good practice in other schools, and to improve their own schemes of work.

Appendix 1: Evidence base

Evidence base

The findings and recommendations in this report draw on visits to 30 secondary schools. The schools selected for visits had been identified as having strong practice in the creative arts as a result of Estyn inspections or through an analysis of key stage 3 and GCSE data. The sample takes account of geographical location, socio-economic background, size of school and linguistic contexts. In these visits, inspectors:

- observed creative arts lessons at key stages 3 and 4
- reviewed curriculum plans and documentation
- met representative groups of pupils
- held discussions with middle and senior leaders

List of schools visited

School	Subject
Bassaleg School, Newport	music
Bishop of Llandaff CIW High School, Cardiff	music
Bishopston Comprehensive School, Swansea	art and design
Bryn Hanfren Comprehensive School, Vale of Glamorgan	art and design
Brynteg School, Bridgend	drama
Caereinion High School, Powys	art and design
Cowbridge Comprehensive School, Vale of Glamorgan	art and design
Cwmtawe Community School, Neath Port Talbot	art and design
Dyffryn School, Neath Port Talbot	art and design
Ebbw Fawr Learning Community, Blaenau Gwent	drama
Fitzalan High School, Cardiff	music
Hawarden High School, Flint	drama
Lewis School Pengam, Caerphilly	music
Pentrehafod School, Swansea	art and design

Porthcawl Comprehensive School, Bridgend	drama
Radyr Comprehensive School, Cardiff	music
Sandfields Comprehensive School, Neath Port Talbot	drama
St Joseph's Catholic and Anglican High School, Wrexham	drama
Stanwell School, Vale of Glamorgan	drama
Tredegar Comprehensive School, Blaenau Gwent	art and design / music
Welshpool High School, Powys	drama
Whitchurch High School, Cardiff	art and design
Ysgol Brynrefail, Gwynedd	music
Ysgol Dyffryn Conwy, Conwy	art and design
Ysgol Eirias, Conwy	art and design
Ysgol Gyfun Cymer Rhondda, Rhondda Cynon Taf	music
Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Glantaf, Cardiff	drama
Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Plasmawr, Cardiff	drama
Ysgol Tryfan, Gwynedd	music
Ysgol Y Preseli, Pembrokeshire	drama

Glossary

App	App is short for application. The term 'app' is associated with the software that runs on a smartphone or tablet device.
Eisteddfod	Any of a number of annual festivals in Wales, especially the National Eisteddfod held annually in August, in which competitions are held in music, poetry, drama, and the fine arts. Schools often hold their own Eisteddfod, normally on or around St David's Day.
Literacy and Numeracy Framework (LNF)	This is a skills framework developed by the Welsh Government. It became statutory in schools from September 2013 and includes statutory assessment against the framework from 2014. It is designed to help teachers embed literacy and numeracy into all subjects for learners aged 5 to 14.
Proxemics	The use of the space between actors, or the spatial relationship between actors on stage
QR Codes	Simple, scannable images that are a form of barcode. By scanning a QR code using a mobile device, such as a tablet or mobile phone, a variety of information can be accessed. This can be text, links to web-based materials, bookmarks and email addresses.
Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig	Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig is a part of the curriculum that is unique to Wales. It is designed to reflect the history, geography and culture of Wales and the school's locality. Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig is intended to develop pupils' sense of cultural identity, place and heritage.

References

Arts Council of Wales and Welsh Government, Department for Education and Skills (2015), *Creative learning through the arts – an action plan for Wales 2015-2020.* Cardiff: Arts Council of Wales and Cardiff: Welsh Government. [Online]. Available from: http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/150302-creative-learning-through-the-arts.pdf [Accessed 24 May 2016].

Donaldson, G (2015), *Successful Futures: Independent review of Curriculum and Assessment Arrangements in Wales.* Cardiff: Welsh Government. [Online]. Available from: http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/150317-successful-futures-en.pdf [Accessed 24 May 2016].

Estyn (2008) *Closing the gap between boys' and girls' attainment in schools.* Cardiff: Estyn. [Online]. Available from: https://www.estyn.gov.wales/sites/default/files/documents/Closing%20the%20gap%20between%20boys%27%20and%20girls%27%20attainment%20in%20schools%20-%20March%202008.pdf [Accessed 24 May 2016].

Estyn (2012) *Effective practice in tackling poverty and disadvantage in schools* Cardiff: Estyn. [online]. Available from: https://www.estyn.gov.wales/sites/default/files/documents/Effective%20practice%20in%20tackling%20poverty%20and%20disadvantage%20in%20schools%20-%20November%202012.pdf [Accessed 24 May 2016].

Estyn (2014) *ICT at key stage 3: The impact of ICT on pupils' learning at key stage 3 in secondary schools.* Cardiff: Estyn. [Online]. Available from: https://www.estyn.gov.wales/sites/default/files/documents/ICT%20at%20key%20stage%203%3A%20The%20impact%20of%20ICT%20on%20pupils%C3%A2%E2%82%AC%E2%84%A2%20learning%20at%20key%20stage%203%20in%20secondary%20schools%20-%20July%202014.pdf [Accessed 24 May 2016].

Estyn (2015*), Best practice in teaching and learning in the creative arts at key stage 2.* Cardiff: Estyn [Online]. Available from: https://www.estyn.gov.wales/sites/default/files/documents/Best_practice_in_teaching_and_learning_in_the_creative_arts_at_key_stage_2_-_May_2015.pdf [Accessed 24 May 2016]

Great Britain (2002) *Education Act 2002.* London: The Stationery Office. [Online]. Available from: http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents [Accessed 24 May 2016].

Smith, D (2013), *An independent report for the Welsh Government into Arts in Education in the Schools of Wales.* Cardiff: Welsh Government. [Online]. Available from: http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/130920-arts-in-education-en.pdf [Accessed 24 May 2016].

Welsh Government, Department for Education and Skills (2013), *The Welsh Government response to Professor Dai Smith's Report on: 'Arts in Education in the Schools of Wales'.* Cardiff: Welsh Government. [Online]. Available from: http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/140314-arts-in-education-review-welsh-government-response-en.pdf [Accessed 24 May 2016].

Welsh Government, Department for Education and Skills (2014), *Qualified for life, and education improvement plan for 3-19 year-olds in Wales.* Cardiff: Welsh Government. [Online]. Available from: http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/141001-qualified-for-life-en.pdf [Accessed 24 May 2016].

Welsh Government (2015a) *National teacher assessment data collection: key stage 3 non-core subjects.* Cardiff: Welsh Government. [Online]. https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Education-and-Skills/Schools-and-Teachers/Examinations-and-Assessments/Key-Stage-3-Non-Core-Subjects [Accessed 24 May 2016].

Welsh Government (2015b) *National teacher assessment data collection: key stage 3 core subjects.* Cardiff: Welsh Government. [Online]. Available from: https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Education-and-Skills/Schools-and-Teachers/Examinations-and-Assessments/Key-Stage-3-Core-Subjects [Accessed 24 May 2016].

Welsh Government (2015c) *GCSE entries and results (pupils aged 15 only) by subject group.* Cardiff: Welsh Government. [Online]. Available from: https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Education-and-Skills/Schools-and-Teachers/Examinations-and-Assessments/Key-Stage-4/gcseentriesandresultspupilsaged15only-by-subjectgroup [Accessed 24 May 2016].

Welsh Government (2015d) *Welsh Examinations Database.* Unpublished.

Welsh Government (2015e) *Examination achievements of pupils aged 15 by year.* Cardiff: Welsh Government. [Online]. Available from: https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Education-and-Skills/Schools-and-Teachers/Examinations-and-Assessments/Key-Stage-4/examinationachievementsofpupilsaged15-by-year [Accessed 24 May 2016].

Welsh Government (2015f) *Pupil Level Annual School Census.* Unpublished.

The remit author and survey team

Sarah Lewis	Remit author
Fiona Arnison	Team inspector
Dyfrig Ellis	Team inspector
Delyth Gray	Team inspector
Garry Maher	Peer inspector
Mike Haines	Team inspector