



Education for 11-16 Year Olds Committee

Corrected oral evidence: Education for 11-16 Year Olds

Thursday 11 May 2023

11.05 am

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Members present: Lord Johnson of Marylebone (The Chair); Lord Aberdare; Lord Baker of Dorking; Baroness Blower; Baroness Evans of Bowes Park; Baroness Garden of Frognal; Lord Knight of Weymouth; Lord Lexden; Lord Mair; Lord Storey; Lord Watson of Invergowrie.

Evidence Session No. 4

Heard in Public

Questions 41 - 45

Witnesses

I: Deborah Annetts, Chief Executive, Independent Society of Musicians; Dr Geoffrey Readman, Chair, National Drama; Tony Ryan MIET FRSA, Chief Executive, Design and Technology Association.

Examination of witnesses

Deborah Annetts, Dr Geoffrey Readman and Tony Ryan.

Q41 The Chair: Welcome to the committee. By way of process, a transcript is being taken and you will have an opportunity to correct it at the end. Would you briefly introduce yourselves, and say what you do in your organisation and the core purpose of your organisation—in a couple of sentences, if possible?

Tony Ryan: Good morning. I am chief executive of the Design and Technology Association, an ex-secondary head teacher, and ex-teacher of design and technology if you go back long enough. Our purpose is to give every student in the UK who wants to study design and technology the opportunity to do so.

Dr Geoffrey Readman: Good morning. I am chair of National Drama, the only drama association representing primary, secondary, SEND and higher drama education. I have previously been a visiting professor of drama, a primary school teacher, a special educational needs teacher and an actor in schools—over a long time.



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Deborah Annetts: I am chief executive of the Independent Society of Musicians. We were set up in 1882 to do two things: support the music profession and advocate for music. We have more than 11,000 members from across the whole music sector, including primary and secondary schoolteachers, peripatetics and those working in higher education, as well as professional musicians across all the orchestras, major ensembles and the music industry. We are multifaceted as well as being the subject association for music. We see music education in the round, in the context of industry.

Q42 **The Chair:** Thank you. To kick off I will ask a simple question. Do the 11-16 curriculum and the qualifications available in that phase sufficiently value your subject and effectively balance knowledge acquisition and practical application?

Tony Ryan: That is a great question. The short answer is no, but I will give you a slightly longer answer to try to qualify it.

Design and technology education has been misunderstood and neglected for many years. The subject has been hit by something of a perfect storm, since 2010 specifically. I believe you will come later to teacher numbers, but I will give you a dramatic statistic now. In 2009, we had 14,886 trained design and technology teachers in the field. At the moment, we have fewer than 6,500. Year by year, we have underrecruited. The result is that the subject is increasingly taught by non-specialists, by teachers doing their very best but who are not in their trained subject area. At best, they are just two or three weeks ahead of students.

The EBacc has hit us. I would not say that is the reason why we are where we are, but it has hit us. There is a ranking in schools of the importance of subjects, and we are way down that ranking. Progress 8 has hit us even harder. As an ex-head teacher, I know that there is pressure from your governing body and everybody else to perform on Progress 8, and there is only one area where you can perform. As you come down through the EBacc subjects, the creatives all go in one pot at the end and count only once. If a student is really good at art and is also good at design and technology, there is no mileage in the school pushing them to do both. If your focus is the school and not the student, you push them where they are strongest and that will get you the greatest number of points and make your school look good.

The result of that, along with no longer having enough teachers, is that the association I represent receives phone calls every week from head teachers saying, "I value the subject, my parents value the subject and I want it in my school, but I have advertised three or four times for a subject leader and I cannot find one. If I cannot find a leader, I cannot teach the subject". As an ex-head, I understand that. You need strong leadership. That is where the subject is struggling.

I am sure we will touch on assessment later. Our subject involves head, hand and heart, but 50% of our assessment at the moment is a written



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exam paper that tests what students know. It is important to test what students know but, in our subject, there are other, and better, ways of testing than a written exam. The short answer to your question is no; the long answer is that we have been neglected for far too long.

The Chair: Thank you. I will invite members to come in when all three of you have had the chance to answer the initial question.

Dr Geoffrey Readman: "Drama and theatre opens windows onto other worlds. It holds a mirror up to life and allows us to see ourselves reflected in it. From this we can learn about ourselves and the world we live in. It is a platform for free speech and makes people think, explore, communicate, challenge and even change things for the better". Those are not my words, and they are not the words of a great drama educationalist. They are the words of a young boy of 15, called Noah. He came to the House of Lords and spoke to one of your APPGs with Baroness Floella Benjamin.

It seems to me that Noah indicated an understanding of how drama transcends the functional skills that we overemphasise in the secondary curriculum. He understands the insights that drama brings. There can be few subjects that have been so consistently undervalued as drama. Since 2010, drama has been consistently marginalised by government policy. Examples of that include the establishment of the EBacc; that drama has not been a foundation subject since 1988, which brings a lack of status; the advent of STEM; and the 2016 changes to the GCSE, which introduced written work as the primary, dominant assessment strategy: 70% written against 30% practical. That hardly constitutes an effective balance.

In the drama field, any discussion concerning knowledge acquisition and practical application cannot be separated from the nature of the learning experience that the process offers the subject. National Drama is deeply concerned that the secondary curriculum is assessment-driven at the expense of high-quality process and pedagogy. It is too functional, with a dominant focus on skills and the acquisition of knowledge, without appropriate context and without sufficient resources. The domination of an unfair subject hierarchy has been established, even within the arts. All those factors have had disastrous consequences. From 2010 to 2020, the number of drama teachers reduced by 18% and the number of hours taught reduced by 12% across the nation. Examination entries in art subjects generally have been reduced by 42%, and 36% in drama.

The unique identity of drama as a practical arts subject has been changed and sacrificed for the sake of summative assessment and targeting goals. You asked whether sufficient value is given to drama as a subject. Misunderstanding, stereotyping and negativity about drama and theatre pervade educational discourse. ND has evidence of SLTs actively discouraging pupils from taking drama at GCSE: "Drama is for the less academic"; "Drama is for youngsters who want to act"; "Drama will not help you get into university". All these things are untrue, yet those are



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words from different teachers in SLTs across the country. Drama is so undervalued that Ofsted rarely reports on it. There is no evidence of any forthcoming research from Ofsted to further the understanding of drama.

Schools are driven by achieving targets. The result is that key stage 3 is inappropriately structured and often taught by non-specialists. That all contributes to drama and theatre becoming more exclusive. Children and young people in less privileged contexts are being excluded. Theatre trips, extracurricular productions and theatre companies performing in schools are becoming impossible for many schools in the country. Drama and theatre are becoming the prerogative of the wealthy. None of the negativity I describe this morning is evident in our public schools, where the subject is highly valued for some reason, and opportunities are made for good practical application and the development of purposeful and productive skills.

Deborah Annetts: Many of the points made by my colleagues also apply to music. Music is slightly different in relation to the structure of the GCSE, in that 60% is practical. That came as the result of extremely hard lobbying of the DfE by the ISM. We were very concerned that if we did not put forward cogent arguments we would lose that practical element of music. You cannot just do it on paper. You have to pick up an instrument or sing, and listen; all those things are fundamental to being a musician. Likewise, the national curriculum is quite brief in what it says for key stage 3, allowing plenty of flexibility. That is not where the issue lies.

I am afraid that the problem is the accountability measures, which I know we will talk about later. The impact of the EBacc and Progress 8 has marginalised arts subjects, which do not count towards the Progress 8 buckets. I do not intend to go through the various buckets, because they are very complicated, but we would be happy to brief you on them. If your subject is not in a Progress 8 bucket, you fall to the bottom of the list. Even the results of the DfE consultation on the refreshed national plan for music education found music teachers saying that children cannot get access to music in their secondary schools because of the impact of the accountability measures. Ofsted has found that, instead of key stage 3 taking the full three years, it often takes just two years, so that schools can focus three years on key stage 4 to ensure that somehow they get to the top of the league tables. Basically, schools have heard the call from the DfE as to what matters and they are rejigging their timetables to deliver on the EBacc subjects.

In our view, the DfE does not really understand what our children need in an ever-changing economy where we have threats, or opportunities, such as AI, and where the creative industries are worth £116 billion per year. We have heard the Chancellor say that he sees the creative industries as an engine for growth. We have put to DCMS that it is all very well for government departments to say, "You are the engine for growth", but we are being cut off at the knees by the DfE, so we cannot play our part in growing the economy. The talent pipeline is simply not there.



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In my view, the DfE has a great desire for control that is not always appropriate. We see this in all kinds of ways. It invested £43 million in the Oak National Academy, which is a quango developing teaching by PowerPoint. The poor old teacher gets PowerPoint slides and there is a kind of quiz at the end. This is for all the key stages. It is the view of the ISM, as a subject association, that this is not the way to teach. It is deeply demotivating and deskilling for the teaching profession. It all comes back to the DfE wanting control. We need a total overhaul of education policy within the DfE, and we need it urgently.

The Chair: Thank you for those great answers.

Lord Knight of Weymouth: My first career was in theatre, my daughter is an opera director and I spend most of my working life on technology, so if I had enough feet I would have one in every camp.

Why do we not have the right level of political cut-through to the Department for Education? We hear from employers that we need more creative, communicative and technologically literate people entering the workforce, yet we have heard from the three of you how undervalued your subjects appear to be in the curriculum and in the way the school system works. We are not short of examples. We had the outcry over BBC orchestras and all the noise about the likes of Eddie Redmayne and Benedict Cumberbatch being privately educated. Jony Ive, who designed the coronation emblem and changed the world by designing the iPhone, is the son of a D&T inspector. We have models and champions, yet it is not happening. Why not?

Deborah Annetts: It is really difficult to get the message across to the DfE, and we have been trying ever since the inauguration of the EBacc in 2010. We simply cannot get it to recognise that the creative industries are a massive engine for growth in our economy. They are worth the same as construction or the finance sector. In terms of GVA, it makes no logical sense to marginalise the route into these industries.

Lord Knight of Weymouth: Is it because the department is essentially obsessed, or rather governed—obsessed is a pejorative term—and driven by university entrance, and its perception of what drives university entrance is what drives behaviour?

Deborah Annetts: I do not believe so. The Russell Group dropped the notion of facilitating subjects back in 2019. This is purely ideology from the DfE, and I do not understand what that ideology is.

Lord Knight of Weymouth: Quite right.

Tony Ryan: I back that completely. It is ideologically led. When we talked outside, there was a slight difference of opinion about how we got to where we are. I do not think that the DfE at any stage thought, “The arts and creative subjects aren’t important”. It is almost as an offshoot of what it thinks is important that we have been left; we have been ignored as a result.



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To give you some figures, engineering is £645 billion GVA, with 26% of all UK workers. There are more than 8 million workers in engineering, yet we have a massive shortfall of engineers. Manufacturing is £203.7 billion GVA, with 2.5 million workers, yet one thing stopping growth in manufacturing is that they cannot find the right skill sets to come in and help. Design is £97.4 billion GVA, with 1.97 million workers, and expanding far faster than any other sector in this country. In total, £946 billion is contributed to the economy by those three sectors, yet in education we say, "Ignore them. Study these other subjects. When you're 16, you can start thinking about vocational subjects". That is how design and technology is labelled.

Until 16, everyone gets the same diet. It does not matter where you come from, what your background is or where you want to go. That is wrong. From a very early age, students do not necessarily decide where they want to go, but they do decide where they do not want to go. We have girls of eight, nine or 10 who decide they do not want to be engineers because they have a fixed idea about what an engineer is. We need to show them otherwise. As an association, we try to show the wide plethora of jobs that are so exciting but that students never hear about.

Q43 **Baroness Garden of Frognal:** I worked for City and Guilds for 20 years, so I am passionate about the practical subjects that you each represent. Thank you for your presentations. You answered the first part of my question on whether current GCSEs are an appropriate way of assessing knowledge and skills: the message we got from all of you is no. Obviously, you can expand on that. If they are not appropriate, what other assessment methods would you recommend? You have all said that written papers for very practical subjects are not appropriate, so how would you wish your subjects to be assessed?

Dr Geoffrey Readman: Some of the written tasks set for drama and theatre development are totally inappropriate for the process. Drama has a pedagogical quality. It is about people. Drama is about groups of people negotiating meaning and making statements about how they see the world. That applies to children in infant classrooms as much as to children working in secondary classrooms. We would want to focus on the inappropriateness of the tasks. The imposition of the examination boards means that we miss an important issue: we do not use technology in assessment. Students cannot use things like a PowerPoint presentation—for all Deborah just said about that—to explore what they have been through in process and experience. They cannot use other digital ware that is accessible to them, such as video diaries.

The system is such a given and is so restrictive that it does not allow our teachers to thrive as they want. It does not allow our children to reach their potential. As I said, that particularly affects children in less privileged contexts. Of course, in those contexts theatres perhaps do not exist. There is no theatre provision, so they cannot work with a learning participation officer in a theatre. Theatre participation officers are all



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advocates of good practice, but it is not possible unless we fund theatres properly and open up the situation.

To go back to your question, of course we have champions in the theatre world. Their anxieties would be, in the main, exactly the same as mine: Cumberbatch and others say that it is a very privileged profession. People now come from a particular background into the drama profession. We will all suffer from that; we will all be the losers. There is no question about that.

Baroness Garden of Frognal: There was a brilliant programme for Shakespeare in schools that particularly focused on deprived schools. I do not know if it is still running. I remember going to that and being knocked senseless by the talents of young people.

Dr Geoffrey Readman: There has been some tremendous work and excellent practice. I am sorry to present such a negative view this morning. The RSC and other companies do excellent work, but it cannot replace the quality of having experience in that art form on a weekly basis. Those are enhancements, and complementary to the child's experience; they cannot replace a high-quality teacher working with a class of children, understanding totally what is required and what their learning needs are.

Deborah Annetts: Music is a little different. It is part of the national curriculum, although the national curriculum is not required to be taught in our academies at secondary school level. Academies now make up 80% of our schools. That means that there is no obligation to deliver music, although most academies do. We know of schools where music has entirely disappeared at secondary stage or is taught as just part of performing arts. That immediately gives rise to difficulties when you get to key stage 4.

The GCSE for music is not too bad, although it does not really make reference to or sit within the context of what the music industry is about. While composition, performance and listening are all good and we do not want to detract from that, anyone thinking about going into music needs to understand technology, which plays more and more of a key role in music. For example, sound engineers working in music are spearheading amazing developments in things like latency, which is the crossover between tech and music, where a lot of potential wealth for this country lies. We have not been able to persuade government of that incredibly important cross-fertilisation. Indeed, when the GCSE was being crafted, intellectual property was dropped from the curriculum. We went back to the Government and said, "Actually, IP is how you protect your rights in the creative industries". It is a fundamental part of understanding how wealth is built, which is particularly important with AI these days. The Government did not take this on board.

My observation is that government looks backwards rather than forwards. We have seen that with the RSL awards, which are based much more in the context of the music industry, at key stage 4. They have just been



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dropped as part of a Progress 8 opportunity. Anything that smacks of modernisation, looking forward, or thinking about tech or industry disappears from our schools. I simply do not understand that. Frankly, it is horrifying.

Tony Ryan: In design and technology, the assessment is split down the middle, with 50% as non-examined assessment—NEA. The way that used to work, prior to 2016, was that the teacher could control the classroom. You had, say, 26 pieces of furniture with a dual function. It was about the making, not really about the designing.

In 2016, with the change in qualification, we became very much about designing. Now the students are given a context, not a brief, such as an ageing population. The students must then find a problem within that context and a user who fits the problem. They must have the empathy to listen to the user and question them to find out what the issue is. Then they have to design prototypes, not necessarily an end, finished product but prototypes towards one, although, depending on what they do, it could well be a finished item.

When that was first introduced, teachers panicked. From having 26 kids in a class where they could control what was going on in front of them, all of a sudden they had students with 26 completely different problems, all wanting attention at the same time. Teachers said, “We can’t do it”; “I don’t think we can do this”; “It’s the end of the subject”. But what do you know? Teachers are incredibly resourceful characters and they did it. The NEA now needs very little change. Teachers and students are used to it. We have got used to the fact that students at the bottom end may struggle to understand the context and will need a ladder to help them. Once they get that and understand it, they are really designing. They use a design process to design something for a real user. That part needs very little fixing.

The other side, however, is the 50% where we throw kids into a classroom and give them a mountain of knowledge to learn. There is more content in the design and technology GCSE than in the A-level, which is madness—absolute madness. They have to learn that wide body of content, and they are examined on it in an hour and a half. It is a memory test; that is all it is. It does not test their real understanding but whether they can remember things.

How could we do that better? Let us give the students a task in an examination. Let us give them pictures of an item, or a few items from different angles, and ask them to evaluate the design, find faults in it, find ways that it could be made better or finished better, and suggest different ways in which it could be manufactured. They need the same level of understanding to answer such a question, but they can explain that understanding more deeply.

We are testing something with teachers, because it will ask even more of them. When we get into public, private and grammar schools, we see a different experience, as has already been described. Every student needs



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to be able to do what I am doing now and convey something they are passionate about to an unfamiliar audience. In private education, that is a given; it is part of what you go to private education for. In state education, you do not always get it. The EPQ in my school provided that. Students had to go away, research something that they were passionate about, write about that item under test conditions and then stand up in front of an unfamiliar audience and present it for 10 or 15 minutes. They could use slides but they had to present it to that audience.

This is another way of assessing students that really tests whether they understand what they have studied. It also gives students ownership. We do not do that enough. If a student is passionate about the environment, sea pollution and plastics, we should let them study that. We should let them go deeply into it, and then talk about it to an unfamiliar audience. There are ways of doing this other than putting 240 students in a hall with a test paper in front of them. That is lazy.

Dr Geoffrey Readman: Following that inspirational input, could we have more formative and less summative assessment, with more supportive assessment of the young person? Could we have more choices to meet the social, cultural and academic identities of our young people? A little more teacher choice is the way forward in meeting issues, particularly those faced by children of colour.

Lord Mair: Tony, you outlined earlier the reasons for the significant decline in students taking design and technology, partly because of the shortage of teachers. Do you think they are put off by current assessment methods? Is what you just talked about also a disincentive for young people?

Tony Ryan: I know they are. As I just said, teachers are resourceful. They will find ways to make the system work. In 3D art and design, there is 100% coursework. I am not quite sure how that happened. There is no examination in that subject. We have a number of design and technology teachers now teaching art and design, taking that qualification and calling it design and technology, so that they can bypass all that content because there is too much of it. If we narrowed down the content and changed the assessment, we would get those teachers back. NSEAD, the association for art and design, does not want that either as it waters down its subject. We want our teachers back in design and technology, but the assessment methodology is pushing them elsewhere.

Q44 **Lord Baker of Dorking:** You are all victims of Progress 8 and EBacc. You speak very eloquently, if I may say so, about your disasters. If you had the opportunity, what changes would you make in the current curriculum and assessment to increase the opportunities for young people to develop their creativity and new technology? Please be specific.

Tony Ryan: Lord Baker, if you do not mind, I will start at key stage 3 and then build quickly to that. At key stage 3 we have become conditioned—I use that word advisedly. We have had our time narrowed because we are not seen as important. In some schools, there is now 40



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minutes a week for design and technology. There is a limit to what you can do in 40 minutes. We become fixated on the end product, not on the process. I will be facetious to make a point.

At primary, we have massive growth. That is driven by Ofsted. Primary school students now design things on screen and make them using 3D printing. They are doing amazing work at primary level. If we are not careful, those students will arrive at secondary school and they will make a pencil case, then a clock and then a cushion. They will be rotated through a curriculum. That is not a slight on any of my colleagues working out there. They are working in a broken system and doing their best. We are trying to get from industry the real problems that it is working on now, and to scale those down so that an 11 to 14 year-old can say, "That company is working on that. It's a real problem. I can work on it, too". That then builds to GCSE.

What could we do? Progress 8 must be rethought. For the whole purpose of education, I go back to Professor Guy Claxton, who provides my mantra on this. The purpose of education is to help students to step confidently into a fast-paced world and look at themselves in the mirror and like what they see reflected back. At the moment, our curriculum does not help with that. It sets up situations where students fail on a daily basis. They are not allowed to succeed at what they are good at. Progress 8 has to be rethought. Creativity in schools—

Lord Baker of Dorking: Reformed or abolished?

Tony Ryan: I understand that there has to be some way of measuring one school against another, which is what Progress 8 is all about, if we are honest, but we have to find a way of doing it that does not harm the individual student. Progress 8 is harming individual students.

Lord Baker of Dorking: Would they be less harmed if you had Progress 5, with five basic foundation subjects—English, maths, two sciences and, say, data skills? That would give the opportunity to add subjects in your areas. Is that the way to move?

Tony Ryan: Lord Baker, I will not sit here and tell you that maths, science, English, et cetera are not important. They are, but drama, music, and design and technology are also important. We want to turn out rounded and very curious learners, with a perpetual sense of curiosity: "Why is it that way? Why is it made that way? Could it not be made better? I don't like that". I have always said that if a student finishes with design and technology at 13, the very least we want from them is to be the pickiest consumer you will ever see. At 16 or 18, they will probably go on to a career somewhere in manufacturing, technology and engineering. At 13, we need to empower students to be part of the solution to the world's problems and not part of the problem. We are not doing that now.

Lord Baker of Dorking: You are the first witness we have heard who has said that there is a huge gap, and that primary has moved ahead in



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such a way that, when children leave at 11, they go to secondary schools that cannot accommodate their interests.

Tony Ryan: Absolutely.

Dr Geoffrey Readman: I have a very different answer. The provision for drama is so patchy that there are schools where there is no drama whatever and other schools where it thrives and there are two or three members of staff in the department. My answer is about establishing drama as a subject of equal status to art and design, and to music. That will demand policy. Somebody will have to say, "Yes, these are the arts and they are of equal status, and they will get the same resources".

Some strange things are happening at key stage 3. There is more functionalism; schools prepare for GCSE instead of giving a key stage 3 curriculum that has integrity, is stand-alone and has a sense of all-round education. Not all children will go on to do drama and theatre at GCSE and A-level, but drama and theatre experiences should be an entitlement for all children. I am sure we have children of our own and have seen them play, taking on roles from an early age. Drama is an integral dimension of how human beings grow and learn. I do not know whether the committee is aware that even as early as year 8 young people are making options, which is quite worrying. What kind of rounded education entitlement do we offer children who make choices and select subjects—where they can make a selection—at that age?

On policy, teacher education would have to come into my answer. To deliver drama at equal status to music and art and design, we will need more teachers who have a specialist qualification in drama teaching. That must be recognised as a key priority.

Deborah Annetts: Thank you for the question, Lord Baker. I am not even sure that GCSEs are quite right as a qualification. I would start by looking at that. We need to look at where we are in the 21st century. I was at a presentation yesterday by Dan Guthrie, the director-general of the Alliance for Intellectual Property. He spent an hour and a half telling us all about AI. It was utterly terrifying.

Youngsters in my organisation ask me, "Will I have a job in five years' time or will AI have taken it?" I do not think that the DfE understands what the workplace of the future could look like and, therefore, has not given adequate thought to the content of A-levels and GCSEs, let alone the accountability measures. Personally, I would start again with new qualifications that provide a broad and balanced curriculum, with some kind of accountability measure that has enough flexibility to cater for the child and the teacher—we certainly do not have that now—and which looks to the future.

There is something I have only just learned. I am sure the committee is well aware of PISA, which is one of the reasons why we ended up with these accountability measures in the first place. Apparently, in 2022, PISA held its creative thinking assessment and the DfE refused to take



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part, although Scotland did, along with 66 other countries. It is as if we have entirely shut off our minds to the creative and critical thinking, problem-solving, et cetera, that lie at the heart of what a workforce needs to do in the future. I see that as an employer. Youngsters who come through to the ISM often do not have the skills the ISM needs, so I have to spend quite a lot of time developing their resilience, problem-solving and critical thinking. I am just a small employer, and I am sure this happens up and down the land. I would start afresh.

Baroness Blower: There has been mention of the primary phase. Having done both primary and secondary teaching, I know that primary is much more difficult but that it has many more opportunities. To what extent should we think much more not about transition but about continuity? My sense is that, often, year 6 kids are deskilled by going into year 7. That is not at all the fault of teachers; it is the fault of the way the system works. Notwithstanding SATs and all the terrible things that go on in primary, there are more opportunities. Very good primary practice is something we could afford to look at in the secondary phase.

Deborah Annetts: May I pick that up? Possibly we are different. Music has virtually disappeared in primary schools because of a lack of music specialists. Where will you get those teachers from? They may be peripatetic, which is an additional cost to the school that it cannot afford. Then there are the instruments, which the school cannot afford either. From our most recent research, music is not happening in primary schools.

Baroness Blower: I agree absolutely that there is a serious problem with instrumental tuition at primary and in secondary.

Dr Geoffrey Readman: We would like to see research into and an articulation of some kind of 3-18 curriculum and the entire provision for drama. In primary, a nativity play and a school production after year 6 SATs have come to an end is pretty much the sum total of drama. Drama is embedded in the curriculum of very few schools. That is worrying.

Given the pandemic, when will we ever learn that relationships and interaction matter? Children exploring how they feel about the world matters. The evidence of that was clear in the mental health and well-being of our young people after the pandemic. In primary, the situation is worrying. As Baroness Blower so insightfully said, when they go to secondary they are deskilled. One hears that they come to drama with no experience or skills in it. They start again. That is not good. We need progression, development and an understanding of the developmental stages. The development of the child is often ignored now.

Tony Ryan: We are in what sounds like a unique position. At primary, we have huge growth. A couple of years ago, we had 3,500 primary members of the association. We now have 29,000 members. The majority of those are co-ordinators of design and technology at primary schools. Let us not kid ourselves: the reason they are doing design and



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technology again is that Ofsted is forcing it. It wants a broad, rich curriculum that includes design and technology, so schools have to do it.

From our research, the average co-ordinator is 28 years old and has no STEM background, other than that they perhaps did GCSE at school. What they have is bags of enthusiasm. They realise that they can teach maths and tricky physics through design and technology. Student engagement carries them through some difficult stuff that they learn without realising that they are learning it. They cover it within the subject. Once teachers realise that, they want more and more. They think it is too difficult: "I can't do CAD in my school". Then they find that Tinkercad is easy to use, intuitive and students can do it—and love doing it. We should do more of that.

We have huge growth and we have to build on that. You are right about continuity. The worst thing that could happen is that students go to year 7 and hear, "Okay, you all come from different primary schools and I'm not quite sure where you are, so we'll start again. This is what we're going to do". We need continuity but it is difficult to do. I had about 60 feeders in my school. When you have students coming from 60 primary schools, you get a real mix. Schools need to find out what happened before to build what happens next, and I know they are doing that.

Q45 Lord Lexden: The last area on which we would like your views is, unsurprisingly, the teaching profession, on which a number of comments have already been made. It is a huge subject. To what extent is your subject affected by the problems and difficulties of teacher recruitment and retention? What should be done to address those issues?

Tony Ryan: I gave you the shocking numbers: nearly 15,000 down to 6,500. First, teaching is a vocation. That goes for all teaching, not just design and technology. You do not teach to get rich. You do it because you want to make a difference. I did not really want to be a teacher. To be honest, I wanted to jump in, get a degree and jump out again, but the first time I stood in front of 30 students, I realised that it was what I was destined to do. It was the scariest hour of my life but also the most rewarding. We must look at the teaching profession and make it something people want to do again. We have squeezed and squeezed to the point that teachers do not want to be teachers. They want to escape to get other jobs, where they can switch off at 5 pm and go home.

First, we must look at retention. What can we do with workload to make being a teacher attractive? I would do a couple of things with our subject. The first is easy but I have been pushing it for some time and getting no traction, so if you can help I would really appreciate it. The bursaries for physics, maths, chemistry and computer science each stand at £27,000. The bursary for design and technology stands at £20,000. A couple of years ago, it stood at zero; you did not get a bursary at all. What happens now is that people who can teach quite often transfer into education later in their career. They can teach design and technology, but they look at the bursaries and say, "I can't turn down £7,000, so I'll go to this subject instead". In design and technology, we desperately need



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those teachers. Matching that bursary would not make a massive difference, but it would make a difference.

There is a programme called "Engineers teach physics", which started last year to get engineers across into physics. We could have a similar programme in design and technology. I know that you had Hilary from EngineeringUK here last week and she would probably disagree with this because it would compete with physics teachers. There are a whole load of designers out there who would make excellent teachers, but they cannot afford to step down and have that dip in pay. If we could transition that across, it could make a huge difference.

My last suggestion is that we could buffer the salary. Let us say that you are 36 or 37 and working in design. You probably earn between £36,000 and £38,000 a year. If you step into teaching, that will drop by at least £4,000 or £5,000. If we could buffer that for a couple of years, it would give people the incentive to come across and then build themselves in education to where they were before. It would not cost a huge amount of money.

Dr Geoffrey Readman: There are no bursaries for drama specialist teaching, which is a real restriction on development. There has been an 18% reduction in drama teachers over the last 10 years. We are more and more disillusioned. There are wonderful, talented, creative teachers who have been responsive and tried to make policies work, even when they did not agree with them. However, there is a lack of respect for pedagogy. There is a lack of recognition for not just the arts but the art of teaching and how children learn. That is crucial to what I would like to see. It will take time. It will take money.

Teachers need CPD and development in which they engage with practical drama and theatre. For instance, silence is almost unheard of now in a drama lesson. It is frowned upon for a whole class to be silent, but silence is the very essence of theatre and how it works, contrasting with sound in a theatre space. That is the art form. Teacher training and development will help retention considerably.

Briefly, there is a cycle of diminishing development that has grown from the apprenticeship model of teacher training. There is a plethora of courses where we put teachers into a school, and they see only one school's practice, values and procedures in the way the subject is implemented. It is not enough. If teachers are to value pedagogy, they must be free to make choices. If they are not informed about different pedagogies and choices, they will never do that. We are producing teachers who are, in some ways, becoming more compliant in seeing things through, but we are producing a worrying state of affairs in terms of development.

Deborah Annetts: We are similar to drama in that music has no training bursaries whatever. On teacher training targets, the ITT census for 2022-23 showed that only 64% of the target for music trainees was met. The lack of bursaries definitely drives a shortage of teachers, but it is more



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than that. In 2021, there was a 50% cut in funding for arts subjects in higher education. As a result, many music courses in higher education have come under threat and then closed, and a significant number of university courses for PGCE secondary music have closed. That is because the model that the DfE prefers is for teachers to be trained in schools, particularly in academy chains. That means a narrowing of the pedagogical opportunities available.

There is a set of multiple issues, but I know that music education hubs struggle to get peris, which is extraordinary given that we have a refreshed national plan for music education and that so much of the music sector is under threat because of lack of funding in various areas. This is a golden moment to recruit music teachers, but there are so many adverse conditions, largely emanating from the DfE, that we are struggling.

Lord Baker of Dorking: You really have the DfE in your sights. It is wonderful to hear.

The Chair: We thank our three panellists for their great evidence. Thank you all very much. We look forward to working with you in future.