Mapping Contemporary Visual Art and Design Education in Scotland

Caitlin McKinnon, Anthony Schrag & Rachel Blanche
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Engage champions children and young people’s access to art and design education and supports the visual arts sector to deliver this. ‘Mapping Contemporary Visual Art and Design Education in Scotland’ highlights innovative teaching and learning supported by artists and visual arts organisations through three case studies; describes the challenges that schools face in teaching art and design; and suggests ways for the visual arts and education sectors to partner to better support young people’s learning and access to careers in the creative sector.

The focus on literacy and numeracy as a consequence of Covid-19 has led to real concerns across the UK that art and design education will be further marginalised. This research describes the benefits that children and young people gain from art and design education, such as improved wellbeing and confidence. These benefits are even more important given current concerns about children and young people’s mental health. The research demonstrates the potential for training, education, and employment in the creative sector, which is critical as we look to the cultural and education sectors to jointly address social inequalities.

Engage and Engage Scotland are grateful to the Scottish Government, Creative Scotland and Queen Margaret University for commissioning, supporting and undertaking the research.

Jane Sillis
Director of Engage

The creative industries and cultural sector play a key role in creating economic benefits and social value in the UK (and beyond). Prior to the pandemic, this was the fastest-growing sector in the UK economy, with the cultural sector worth £13.5bn and the creative industries over £100bn (around 5.5%). A recent report predicted that the creative industries will generate 300,000 more jobs and an additional £28bn in gross value added across the UK by 2025. Though the creative industries and cultural sector are recognised as key drivers of employment and innovation, more research is needed on the impact of art and design in addressing social inequalities, health and wellbeing; as well as on educational attainment and advocacy for career prospects founded in art and design subjects. This research is critically important in that it identifies factors that inhibit and facilitate engagement with contemporary visual art and design in the Scottish secondary school curriculum, and gives a better understanding of teachers’ confidence in engaging with and delivering contemporary visual art and design education. It also identifies where and how schools are engaging effectively with galleries, artists, designers, and visual arts organisations.

The findings make a persuasive case for working together to raise awareness of the benefits of art and design education in schools and on educational attainment. They set an agenda with an appreciation of creativity as a key competency, and form a compelling rationale for the effective preparation of Scottish children and young people for a range of inspiring, sustainable, and fulfilling careers in the vibrant cultural and creative industries.

Professor Anita Taylor
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1.0 Report summary

This summary presents the highlights and significant findings of the research. The report that follows goes into more comprehensive detail, allowing readers to explore the extensive data collected. Here we outline the scope of the research and the methodological approach undertaken, before laying out key findings from each section of the report. The summary ends with an overview of actions that could be taken to strengthen art and design education in Scotland.

Brief and methodology

The authors were tasked with three main areas of focus:

- Identifying factors and strategies that inhibit and facilitate engagement with contemporary visual art and design in the 12–18 curriculum, including the role of primary transition and any impact of current provision in primary years art and design teaching.
- Gaining a better understanding of teacher confidence in engaging with and delivering contemporary visual art and design education.
- Understanding where schools are engaging effectively with galleries, artists and visual arts organisations, and how that impacts on attainment.

To do this, we undertook research including a survey for teachers and those delivering learning programmes in the visual arts and galleries sector; a survey for young people; a focus group with young people who had recently graduated; interviews with teachers, and a creative workshop with two secondary school classes. The full report also contains three case studies of innovative or exceptional work where schools and organisations from the wider visual arts sector are working together to support engagement with art and design.

Comments on the data

As the majority of the respondents identified themselves as either a teacher of art and design, or a non-specialist teacher and/or headteacher, we can assume that for most young people, their interaction with visual art and design education in formal settings is primarily (and in some cases exclusively)
The report begins with a baseline perspective
of the impact of art and
design education

The report begins with a baseline perspective from teachers, professional artists and those working in visual arts organisations and galleries, which reflects on the broader impacts of studying contemporary visual art and design in Scottish schools. We also present a parallel analysis of young people’s perceptions. From this baseline we sought to understand the benefits of studying contemporary visual art and design in school, according to educators; as well as what young people thought about studying contemporary visual art and design in school.

Key findings
Educators are capable and confident in their skills, and are able to pass these on to students competently. Young people recognise the importance of these skills, but also value the experience of the art and design classroom itself as a unique space for personal development and support. There appears to be a concern that there is still a misconception by schools and parents about career options for those studying art and design, and the ways in which studying the subject can contribute to potential for employment within the creative industries and beyond.

Perceptions of the art and design curriculum
The report moves on to explore how both educators and young people perceive the current curriculum. This includes a general reflection on the curriculum, but also how Scottish qualification structures impact teaching. In highlighting emerging areas of concern as well as areas identified as doing well, it is hoped that this section of our report will help to frame and shape a new educational landscape.

Key findings
The curriculum is perceived to be restrictive and to problematically emphasise technical skills over conceptual skills or creativity. This leads to a sense that wider governing bodies do not understand the economic and cultural potential of the subject, or value its social contributions.

Support for teaching art and design
This chapter builds on the previous reflections and seeks to present the perspectives of teachers on the support available to them – this includes access to training and career-long professional development courses as well as resources. It begins by looking at how support for art and design educators is perceived, and moves on to provide insight into the training and resources available within art and design education. The section highlights perceived gaps in support and how they impact teachers’ confidence to deliver their educational activities.

Key findings
The data suggests there is a desire from both the visual arts sector and schools to work more closely together for mutual benefit. For artists and gallery educators, good communication is essential to a productive partnership, and a significant proportion of organisations found this lacking. From schools, barriers include the limitations of the curriculum as well as a lack of support from management to allow for such engagement with external partners.

Barriers to young people’s engagement with art and design in school and beyond
This section of the report seeks to highlight the main areas of concern from both educators and young people in terms of students’ ability to engage with the subject of art and design in school and beyond.

Key findings
The findings in this section indicate that there is a general sense of feeling unequipped with resources outside of basic art supplies. The individual pressures faced by teachers that were reported in this research can be individually addressed, however, it is important to view them as aggregated, building pressures that can have significant impacts on the day-to-day lives of educators, and their ability to deliver their work effectively.

Engagement with the visual arts sector
This section explores the visual arts sector’s perspectives on engaging with young people as well as teachers’ perspectives on engagement with organisations outside of formal education structures. It includes an analysis of the factors that can inhibit collaboration between schools and the visual arts sector as well as some strategies for facilitating better engagement. The three case studies in the full report present some key insights into this topic.

Engagement with the visual arts sector
This section seeks to highlight the main mechanisms to initiate and build collaborative and supportive relationships between cultural organisations and schools in a way that supports and aids both, and adds value to art and design education. Much of this innovation, however, is dependent upon...
good communication between both parties, as well as managerial support from schools.

**Actions to strengthen contemporary art and design education**

The full report provides a more comprehensive list of suggested actions (section 10.2) that have emerged from this research which could be taken to strengthen contemporary art and design education in Scotland.

These actions include a call for teachers to participate in network building as a way to share learning, and personal and professional support; it also calls on teachers to explore collaborative working with the visual arts sector.

The actions for schools proposed here include supporting this collaborative partnership work by streamlining administrative processes. Most importantly, schools can advocate for the value of art and design education to parents by highlighting its wider benefits and the variety of career options available within the cultural industries.

Local authorities can help by creating, supporting and encouraging more partnership and networking opportunities between schools and cultural organisations. Such cultural organisations can work to collaborate with schools, supporting teachers with packs and toolkits, while also debunking the notion that there are ‘no jobs’ within the cultural sector.

Support bodies like Creative Scotland, Education Scotland and others can make a better case for the contribution that studying art and design makes to wider society, including its economic and social value to wider audiences. They can promote a broader range of potential career opportunities so that a career in the arts and creative industries can be seen as a valid and fulfilling option.

Lastly, these support bodies can call on government and other organisations to support a targeted research project that explores the barriers to arts education for marginalised communities, including ethnic minority groups and working-class people, to ensure their voices are heard in national discussions on education, curriculum development and content.

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**2.0 Introducing this study**

This report, prepared by researchers at Queen Margaret University, was commissioned by Engage Scotland and supported by Sectoral Development funding from Creative Scotland and further funding from the Scottish Government. Our study seeks to identify best practices and barriers that can aid in the development of new approaches to support schools, teachers and pupils to engage more confidently with contemporary visual art and design.

**2.1 The brief**

Creative Scotland and Engage Scotland sought to carry out research which would provide evidence for ongoing analysis and development. The study aims to inform future work to support schools, pupils and, in particular, teachers, to engage more confidently with contemporary visual art and design, and with the visual arts and gallery sector in Scotland. To achieve this, Creative Scotland and Engage Scotland identified a need to understand:

- The factors and strategies that inhibit and facilitate engagement with contemporary visual art and design.
- Teachers’ confidence in engaging with and delivering contemporary visual art and design education.
- Where schools are engaging effectively with galleries, artists and visual arts organisations, and how that impacts on attainment.
Along with a narrative report that details the research undertaken, key findings, key data gaps, conclusions, and recommendations, we were asked to provide the following:

- Mapping research that included data on location, type of organisation, type of provision, evaluation processes.
- A set of associated case studies that shared innovative approaches to contemporary visual art and design education.

2.2 The researchers

This research was undertaken by researchers at Queen Margaret University (QMU). QMU is a leading provider of cultural management training within the UK and internationally, and is also recognised as a centre of expertise on cultural policy and international arts management. QMU has dedicated research clusters that focus on the cultural sector, attracting high-calibre researchers and staff to our vibrant and well-facilitated research environment and community.

The research team consisted of Senior Lecturers Rachel Blanche and Dr Anthony Schrag, as well as MA Arts Festivals and Cultural Management graduate Caitlin McKinnon.

Rachel Blanche is QMU’s specialist tutor in cultural policy, having contributed directly to cultural policy formation in Scotland through independent consultancy work with the Scottish Government, Creative Scotland and many organisations across the arts and cultural sectors over the past 20 years. She leads the teaching of cultural policy and arts funding, conducting academic research on this topic as well as presenting and publishing her findings via international conferences and networks. Rachel's previous projects relevant to this research include a nationwide review of the visual arts sector in 2015,² as well as a similar mapping study for the traditional music sector in Scotland undertaken in 2019. Rachel also investigated the implications of the Curriculum for Excellence on the professional dance sector in Scotland in 2007.

Dr Anthony Schrag is a visual artist whose expertise lies in participatory arts. Before joining QMU in 2016, he was a freelance artist and researcher with over 15 years’ experience working within the sector on international and national projects. His work explores the possibilities of engagement with multiple stakeholders within specific communities, specifically relating to cultural democracy. His PhD expanded this practice and examined the role of policy in framing and supporting socially engaged practices, often via the lens of ‘productive conflict’. Anthony’s role as a researcher and programme leader of both the MA Arts Festivals and Cultural Management and MA Applied Arts and Social Practice programmes provides an excellent base from which to explore the issues of how non-arts professionals engage with the contemporary visual art and design sector.

The majority of the research and mapping was undertaken by Caitlin McKinnon. Caitlin has worked on several research projects in arts organisations in Canada and Scotland, including community research for a signature national film project in celebration of Canada’s 150th year and market research for Out of the Blue Arts & Education Trust, Edinburgh. Caitlin currently works as a research assistant for Grant MacEwan University’s Artful Conversations podcast, as well as writing a literature review for The Stove Network in Dumfries about creative placemaking. Caitlin’s pending PhD – ‘Exploring Arts Management Education: Discursive Structures, Isomorphic Pressures and the Standardisation of Arts Management’ – stems from her personal experiences of arts education in Scotland and Canada. This PhD under proposition is a partnership project with QMU, Creative Scotland and Stirling University.

Our collective experience and interest in participatory arts, policy and education guided our approach to this research.

2.3 About Engage

Engage is the lead advocacy and training network for gallery education, representing arts educators, organisations, freelancers and artists from across the UK and over 20 countries worldwide. Engage Scotland offers a programme of events, initiatives and research supporting those working in learning and engagement in visual arts venues and the wider visual arts sector in Scotland.

This mapping research is part Engage Scotland’s work to advocate for the benefits of learning through contemporary visual art and design, in both formal and informal settings. This commitment is reflected in Engage Scotland’s joint Visual Arts Sector Manifesto pledge, made along with fellow visual arts sector organisations Scottish Contemporary Art Network (SCAN) and Scottish Artists Union (SAU) in 2017:

‘We insist that the potential of learning through the arts is seen as crucial in helping to change and shape children and young people’s lives’³
This research has been guided by a steering group:

**Patricia Brown**
Faculty Head of Art and Design and Technical Education at South Lanarkshire Council; Vice President and Council representative for NSEAD (National Society for Education in Art and Design).

**Liz Conacher**
Schools Learning Coordinator, National Galleries of Scotland.

**Louise Fraser**
Artist Educator and Teacher of Art and Design at Drummond High School, Edinburgh.

**Diarmuid McAuliffe**
Programme Leader: MEd Artist Teacher at School of Education and Social Sciences, University of the West of Scotland.

**Jonathan McClean**
Creative Learning Officer at Creative Scotland.

**Holly Rumble**
Artist Educator, PhD student at University of Dundee; member of the Engage Scotland Development Group.

**Lada Wilson**
Lecturer/module leader, Contemporary Art Practice, BA (Hons) Art and Contemporary Practices at University of the Highlands and Islands, Perth College.

**Sarah Yearsley**
Engage Scotland Coordinator.

### 2.4 The methods

The Scottish Government’s Culture Strategy for Scotland highlights that collaboration is needed to ‘realise the transformational power of culture in achieving a broad range of policy outcomes’. With this in mind, we approached our study with the belief that creative knowledge can also be used to provide insight into creativity. As such our approach to the study used a combination of traditional methods for data generation and collection as well as the creative methods discussed below.

#### 2.4.1 The survey

Our primary form of data collection consisted of a survey designed and created by the researcher (McKinnon) and managed via QMU’s online survey provider, JISC. The survey consisted of 44 questions, that collected data on visual art and design programming in Scottish schools and beyond, including programming led by local authorities and the visual arts sector, including freelance artists, arts organisations and galleries. These questions were designed in consultation with the steering group.

The survey aimed to take a thorough look at the experiences of teachers, professional artists and those working in visual arts organisations and galleries. This included the availability of and access to professional development opportunities for teachers and school resources as well as opportunities to engage with the visual arts sector outside of the school environment. Further questions explored the perception of curriculum content, as well as barriers to access for young people engaging with contemporary visual art and design. A full list of the survey questions may be viewed in Appendix I.

The survey opened on 27 May 2021 and closed on 30 June 2021. Along with being shared with professional networks of the researchers and the steering group, the link to the survey was also disseminated via the following organisations:

- Engage Scotland
- Creative Learning Networks
- Creative Scotland Visual Arts and Creative Learning Departments
- Creative Scotland Opportunities
- Education Scotland
- Intercultural Youth Scotland
- Network of Art Teachers Across Scotland
- National Society for Education in Art and Design
- National Youth Arts Advisory Group
- Arts in Education Recovery Group
- Scottish Contemporary Art Network
- Scottish Artists Union
- Museums Galleries Scotland
2.4.2 The creative workshops

Along with the survey, **creative workshops were utilised to gather evidence on the experiences of young people participating in visual art and design education** in Scottish schools. Using the metaphor of ‘mapping’, the workshops asked young people to think imaginatively about their future, and how their art and design education had or had not equipped them to navigate it. It began with a framing presentation by the researcher (Schrag) and introduced the materials, Victorian A0-sized maps of Perthshire. These maps were donated to the researcher, and while not of the exact location, did replicate the rural and agrarian similarities of the locality (Huntly, Aberdeenshire).

Young people were then invited to discuss with others what their own metaphorical ‘future map’ might contain. For example, might it include the steep cliffs of family? A long road of artmaking? A deep ocean of money? A lake of taxes? Rivers of creativity? A swamp of a career? Students were encouraged to be creative and to draw onto an individual map, sketching out this future, adding or subtracting any elements they felt necessary. Once students had completed their imaginative maps, they were then encouraged to consider adding a legend that would be comprised of tools derived from their art and design education such as creative thinking, craft skills or technical skills. They were also asked to consider what skills they might be lacking.

The creative workshops took place at the Gordon School in Huntly on 21 June 2021, and a total of two workshops were held. A full write-up of the creative workshops can be found in Appendix II.

2.4.3 The focus group

Though a secondary survey focused on young people had been designed and released, there was minimal uptake from young people of this method. As an alternative, a small group of young people was brought together to take part in a 45-minute online focus group with the researchers (McKinnon and Schrag). **The session focused on gaining insight into the young people’s experiences of visual art and design education in Scotland.** The session was presented as an opportunity to share positive experiences and reflect on where things had not worked well, including exploring any barriers felt by young people.

The session took place on 19 August 2021, on the video conferencing platform, Zoom, and a total of two young people were able to join the session. A full list of the focus group questions can be found in Appendix III.

2.4.4 The case studies

The creative workshop data and focus group data complemented the initial dataset obtained in the primary survey. **This evidence informed the selection of the three accompanying case studies.** The case study interviews were used to clarify the rationale for existing curriculum design. **We sought to highlight success and innovation, while also encouraging the interviewees to share where things were not working as well as they could be.**

Data collected for the case studies took place via a combination of online and in-person interviews conducted by the researcher (McKinnon) as well as correspondence via email throughout June and July 2021. Full write-ups of each case study, highlighting innovative approaches to sector engagement, can be read in section 8.

2.5 Limitations

Every effort was taken to ensure a wide sample of the Scottish population was reached and the authors are confident that they have had significant responses – especially from the survey – that can provide some important insights.

However, it should be noted that our samples for this research do contain limitations which should be taken into consideration. It is also worth noting that ongoing Covid-19 pandemic restrictions were in place during the research period with the attendant impact upon how schools and visual arts organisations were operating and the ease with which teachers, young people, artists and gallery educators could be reached by the research team.

Firstly, in regard to the young people, our creative workshops engaged a combined participant number of 25 pupils from a single school, and two individuals participated in the online focus group: therefore, the young people who participated in our study cannot be considered comprehensively representative of this demographic in Scotland. Every effort was made to invite young people to contribute, including publishing the survey in schools, sending it to teachers to share, inviting the children of friends and colleagues, and targeting specific educational charities. The lack of responses to the survey from young people is a gap in our study and insight. Targeted work in this area needs to be done to add to the insight from teachers and arts professionals available in this study.

Secondly, our survey methodology was adopted because we wished to understand broad outlines, overarching themes and issues faced
by teachers and arts professionals within contemporary art and design education across Scotland. However, this methodological choice meant that we were unable to go into depth about the specific educational activities, resources or equipment available in individual schools. Some of this detail does emerge through our case studies, but was not gathered via the overarching survey, which sought to understand broader, national narratives.

Lastly, while respondents to the survey were working within a range of diverse contexts, including areas which feature in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD), and provide a good range of insight from teachers about a range of experiences, we did not receive specific insight from young people from marginalised communities. None of the young people participating in our research identified as from an ethnic minority background or as having specific inclusion or access needs. As such, the findings from young people need to be contextualised as being limited to a fairly narrow demographic context, and personal experiences. The lack of these voices is backed up by other contemporary research, which clearly indicates a significant and serious lack of diversity in the culture workforce, including teachers and arts education professionals. Consequently, while our study does provide good insights from a wide cross-section of contexts from around the country, further work is needed to examine the specific barriers that young people from ethnic minority backgrounds and other marginalised groups face in studying art and design in schools.

**Headlines**

**How our research methods benefitted the study**

The holistic nature of the data that has been gathered reflects the variety of data collection methods. Using several methods has allowed us to gain both breadth and depth of insight into this topic by bringing together views of contemporary visual art and design education in Scotland. Ultimately, it has provided an opportunity to map:

- The perspectives of young people on how equipped they feel to follow further pathways into visual art and design careers and further education.
- The requirements and experiences of schools in delivering visual arts and design education.
- The roles and experience of visual arts and design sector practitioners.

**3.0 Setting the scene**

Before reporting our key findings from the survey, creative workshops and focus group, it is useful to acknowledge the context in which this study took place, what developments led to it and why it is deemed necessary at this time.

**3.1 The context of this study**

This study provides an opportune moment of reflection upon the current level and extent of contemporary visual art and design education in Scotland. The recent *Independent Review of the Curriculum for Excellence*, produced by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), has provided insight into the general perception of the curriculum and exam system relevant to our study, as well as a general feeling of dissatisfaction towards the curriculum’s governance. The Scottish Government’s subsequent decision to replace the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) with a new body to award and accredit qualifications (The Education Institute of Scotland, 2021) highlights the shifting landscape of the future of education in Scotland and the uncertainty around how it may impact art and design education. As such, the findings of our study below can therefore be useful in helping frame and shape new educational landscape.

This study seeks to reflect upon the state of visual art and design education and to explore how curricular expectations and current levels of support, including access to additional training and resources, have impacted teacher and student confidence in engaging with contemporary visual art and design. Creative Scotland’s 2016 *Visual Arts Sector Review* illustrates the involvement and interest of professional artists and those working in the visual art sector in Scotland. Key observations recognised through the review include:
Setting the scene

Mapping Contemporary Visual Art and Design Education in Scotland

- That ‘the Curriculum for Excellence’ (CfE) is understood to present a significant opportunity for the sector but there are concerns about its implementation, noting that schools often take quite a different approach to this, making it hard for artists and arts organisations to develop consistent methods of working.6
- That the numbers of students studying art and design in further and higher education are reducing in Scotland, and that ‘the teaching of art and design within schools may not be fully aligned to the requirements of further and higher education’.7

The 2019 New Philanthropy Capital report entitled How Can We Engage More Young People in Arts and Culture?8 provides key observations into youth engagement with arts and culture. While this study reports from an English perspective and highlights mostly English organisations, the findings relating to the barriers young people face in engaging with the arts are likely to be fundamentally similar to the barriers that Scotland’s young people face. In particular, the categorisation of barriers into three distinct types – attitudinal, functional and practical – provided an important framework for our own research.

The evidence from the present study is intended to inform the ways in which support could be enhanced in order for schools, pupils and teachers in particular, to engage more confidently with the visual arts sector in Scotland. At this time, there are also a number of similar studies taking place across the cultural sector more broadly. These include:

- MAKE Learn, a project looking at best practice for craft education.9
- Research by Anna Robb into the value of art and design education, particularly in primary schools.10
- Research by Jamie Mackay and Lio Moscardini (Royal Conservatoire of Scotland) into music provision in school and in initial teacher education.
- Imaginate, mapping research around schools’ engagement with theatre and dance.
- National Partnership for Culture steering group discussion on culture and education, including skills.
- Evaluation of Arts Alive, which enables schools across Scotland to book part-funded visits from artists, delivered by Scottish Book Trust, in collaboration with Scotland’s National Performing Companies.11
- NSEAD statistics on Art and Design exam outcomes analysis.12
- The University of Edinburgh’s Mapping Film Education in Scotland, that is analysing survey data exploring the reach and breadth of film education in Scotland.
- Engage Scotland Youth Arts in the Visual Arts Report.13

3.1.1 The significance of the arts in Scotland

The creative industries in Scotland contribute more than £5 billion to the Scottish economy every year, with the Edinburgh Festivals alone generating £280m for the national economy per year.14

The Scottish Government’s A Culture Strategy for Scotland notes that the creative industries are one of Scotland’s growth sectors, which are sectors that have a distinct competitive advantage and the potential to be internationally successful.15 Within that, culture is identified as the fastest-growing sector in Scotland after the energy sector.

Internationally, Scotland is already perceived as a highly cultural nation, ranking 16th out of 50 on cultural reputation in the Anholt-Ipsos Nation Brands IndexSM, and ranking second for culture in terms of the Portland Soft Power Index.16

Beyond this, it is projected that the creative industries in Scotland will generate new employment of around 2% per annum over the next 10 years. This will result in around 13,000 new jobs over the period (1,300 new jobs per annum) across Scotland.17 This indicates the importance of the cultural and economic value art and design education can have in Scotland.

3.2 Survey respondents

Our survey was targeted specifically at people teaching contemporary visual art and design to young people in Scotland as part of their professional work. The front page of the survey made it clear that we wished to hear from teachers who deliver visual art and design education in school, non-specialist teachers and headteachers, professional artists who work with young people or schools and those working in an arts organisation or gallery that works with young people or schools. The first qualifying question in the survey asked respondents to confirm their work included visual art, craft, sculpture or graphic design.

A total of 65 people engaged with the survey. Of the 65 respondents, the majority of the respondents (n49) identified themselves as either a teacher of art and design, or a non-specialist teacher and/
or headteacher. Of the overall respondents, 10 were responding from organisations including:

- Bernat Klein Foundation
- Fruitmarket Gallery
- School of Art and Design, Edinburgh College
- Historic Environment Scotland
- Light Bulb Arts Ltd.
- The National Galleries of Scotland
- Paisley Museum
- Renfrewshire Leisure

Additionally, six participants identified as a professional artist who works with young people/schools. This might suggest that for most young people, their interaction with formal visual art and design education is primarily – and in some cases exclusively – led by their teachers.

3.3.1 Respondents’ locations

Figure 2 shows the location of respondents in the survey. The locational information consisted of over 60 data points, and as such is impossible to provide that level of detail on a map of this size, however, it does give insight into the general spread of respondents. Figure 2 also identifies the specific roles of the respondents.

3.3.2 Where the respondents are working

All 65 respondents were asked which local authorities their work took place in over the last two years and among the 65 respondents, 31 of the 32 Local Authorities were selected at least once. The most popular selections were Edinburgh (n=14) and Glasgow (n=8). This is followed by Fife (n=6) and West Lothian (n=6) and Angus (n=5), Dundee (n=5), and Renfrewshire (n=5). The only local authority not selected at least once was North Lanarkshire. The following bar chart illustrates the local authorities where participants worked in the last two years, showing solid coverage of our survey across the country.

3.3.3 Who the respondents are working with

The respondents were asked which age groups of pupils they had worked with within the last two years. Collectively, all the options were selected at least once, showing that work is taking place in settings educating diverse age groups from age three (nursery) to adult learners (vocational settings, universities, etc.). As the bar chart below illustrates, the most common selections from all respondents were ‘Secondary 1–3’ (n=54) and ‘Secondary 4–6’ (n=54). This was followed by ‘Primary 5–7’ (n=23) and ‘Primary 1–4’ (n=18).
The respondents who identified as professional artists or those working in an art organisation or gallery all selected more than one group. Of the 16 respondents representing the wider visual arts sector, 87.5% selected having worked with at least one of the primary pupil ranges and 75% selected having worked with at least one of the secondary pupil ranges. The visual arts sector represented the majority of those who selected young adult learning groups such as college, university postgraduate, university undergraduate and vocational courses. This shows that those working within the visual arts and gallery sector tend to work with a range of ages.

Of those who selected the primary pupil groups, only four did not also select having worked with secondary pupil groups as well, and these respondents all identified as either a teacher who delivers art and design education, or a non-specialist teacher and/or headteacher. The secondary pupil ranges were also more commonly selected by those who identified as a teacher who delivers art and design education or a non-specialist teacher and/or headteacher, with 91.84% having worked with secondary pupil groups. This suggests that the majority of those who responded to the survey predominantly work with pupils at secondary level, with young people aged approximately 11–17.

The respondents who identified themselves as either a teacher of art and design or a non-specialist teacher and/or headteacher, we can assume that for most young people, their interaction with formal visual art and design education is primarily (and in some cases exclusively) led, framed and guided by their teachers within secondary school.

The majority of the respondents working within the visual arts sector indicated that they work with students at secondary level, with young people aged approximately 11–17, however, it is clear that the visual arts sector in general tends to work with a range of ages.
4.0 Awareness of the impact of visual art and design education

Our report seeks to capture baseline perspectives from teachers, professional artists and those working at arts organisations or galleries on the impacts of studying contemporary visual art and design in Scottish schools. A parallel analysis of young people’s perception and awareness of the impacts is also presented.

4.1 What are the benefits of studying contemporary visual art and design in school, according to educators?

All survey respondents were asked what they believe the benefits of studying contemporary visual art and design at school level are. There was no discernible difference between teachers, professional artists or those working in arts organisations or galleries, but their collective responses did reveal not only a consistent and substantial awareness of the broader benefits but also the desire to have this impact shared with wider audiences.

While developing hard art skills (‘drawing’) was mentioned a couple of times, the survey responses seemed to focus on ‘transferable skills’ that could be developed or gained through visual art and design education. Additionally, many of the responses that did mention hard art skills often linked the benefit back to broader skills not necessarily linked to visual art and design, for example:
It lays down the foundation of skills essential in various other career paths, which are not necessarily associated with art and design. For example, pupils build personal resilience and inventiveness when problem solving, as well as developing fine motor skills through drawing and observational studies.

Art and Design Teacher, Shetland

Some of the other skills mentioned include ‘critical and creative thinking’, ‘communication skills’ and ‘motor skills’, with ‘problem solving’ being one of the most commonly mentioned skills of all.

The following word cloud has been created to represent the variety of skills and benefits the participants of the survey described in their responses. The largest words represent the most common responses throughout the data. A full list of responses can be viewed in Appendix IV.

Figure 5
Coded responses to the question ‘what do you believe are the benefits of studying contemporary visual art and design at the school level?’

‘It’s also a brilliant way of tying together cross-curricular subjects into one project – i.e., history and modern studies or health and wellbeing as background to specific works.’
Teacher of Art and Design, Aberdeenshire

Several respondents also mentioned the possibility of developing an awareness of future career options in the visual art and design sector as a key benefit (with students developing their beliefs ‘that art and design, and visual thinking is all around’ and ‘creative industries are a valid career path’ (Art and Design Teacher, West Lothian), learning ‘how art and design impacts us every day’ (Class Teacher, Dundee) and becoming aware of ‘creative job opportunities’ (Teacher of Art and Design, South Lanarkshire)).

4.2 What do young people see as the outcomes of studying contemporary visual art and design in school?

The conversations with young people via the creative workshops in Huntly, and the online focus group, revealed similar conceptions of the impact of studying contemporary visual art and design in school, though the focus seemed to be on the experience rather than the takeaway skills or benefits.

Those in the creative workshop were asked to develop a legend to accompany their maps that highlighted the skills, tools and insights they might need to reach their imaginary futures. The participants of the online focus group, both of whom were currently attending higher education institutions, were asked to discuss their views on the benefits of studying visual art and design at school level.

While it can be expected that only a very small percentage of young people in the creative workshops would also go on to be artists, their maps did include a recognition – albeit implicitly – that the types of skills that they were learning were transferable to other creative sectors. These included the media and video games industries (‘video games’); heritage (a ‘craft shop’ on a farm) or even fashion (‘cosplay’; ‘costume design studio’). It was also clear that many recognised that these skills can be applied within other (‘non-creative’) sectors – for example one young person in the creative workshop presented a creative thinking response to climate change and the offshore oil industry (see Appendix II) (with the ambition to build their ‘interconnection thinking’ or ‘have a bigger imagination’). Two pupils in the creative workshops did identify that they would probably like to go on to study art and/or design specifically within higher education, and...
recognised that the hard skills learnt within art and design education (‘knowledge of art’ and ‘drawing skills’) were important.

The focus group participants also mentioned some of the practical learning opportunities, such as the creation of a portfolio in Advanced Higher Art and Design, that aided in their ability to apply to art school, however, one participant did note ‘that’s as far as it kind of went’ and that they felt like they had to do other things outwith class to ‘build up that experience’. They added that this was made difficult as their schools ‘didn’t have facilities in [the] art department because [the school] didn’t really get much funding’ (Former Student 1, focus group). Beyond the specific content of art and design lessons, a significant portion of young people in the creative workshop identified their art and design classes as a place to develop personal skills. Within the legends of their maps, young people recognised that their art and design education classes were a ‘place where I can just be me’; where they ‘let emotions out in drawing’, and had the opportunity to express themselves.

As a calm and fun environment that nurtured friendships, the art and design education classroom itself was identified as a significantly important place to the young people as a space for development. This suggests that the very creative atmosphere of the art classes themselves – as well as the content – could also be providing significant development opportunities for young people. Similarly, both focus group participants seemed keen to describe the actual experience of the art department and the art classroom space. As one participant described: ‘It’s more about the art department itself… there is this kind of shared sense [that]… in that department, you’re supported’, adding that even if you are not the greatest at some practical aspects like drawing, ‘you’re still supported in other ways to cater to what you do like, [and] you wouldn’t find that [in] other subjects’ (Former Student 2, focus group).

Correspondingly, the mental health and pastoral support gained from participating in these classrooms was highly valued by the young people, both within the creative workshop and the online focus group:

‘So, it’s more about what an art department represents, rather than actually, what you literally do in art in school. And that really does come down to relationships with teachers, and positive role models and positive encouragement, this is something worth doing, doesn’t matter what you’re going to do, but it’s worth it.’
Former Student 2, focus group

The responses from young people in both the focus group and the creative workshops seem to suggest that their positive experience of art and design education is intrinsically connected to the space and supportive structure within the art department itself.

4.3 A call to action

Despite the responses to this section of the survey demonstrating a clear understanding of the value of studying contemporary visual art and design, feelings that the subject is undervalued persisted throughout the data (‘Art and design is not valued in our school’ (Art and Design Teacher, Dundee); ‘Visual [art] is so undervalued and sidelined’ (Freelance Educator, Edinburgh)). One participant suggested that ‘a societal undervaluing of the arts … is inherent and inevitably influences the decisions of young people’ (Schools Learning Coordinator, Edinburgh). These feelings of the subject being undervalued were perceived from the school level and home environments of students, to within local and national governments, and in a larger cultural bias against the arts. Several respondents identified a ‘fixation with STEM [science, technology, engineering, and mathematics] subjects’ as a contributing factor to the notion that the arts are not as ‘important/useful for pupils, post-school’. For example:

‘Arts education appears often to be thought of as a lesser subject with its importance and value constantly lowered. STEM being a focus in schools, but not STEAM [science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics], plays further into the idea the arts are not equally important.’
Teacher of Art, Design and Photography, Falkirk

In addition to a view that there is a skewed significance being placed on STEM subjects, many respondents also voiced concerns that the stereotypical low-paid artist idea still persists within parental views and senior management in schools (with respondents stating that there is a ‘false belief that a career in art and design is not looked upon as being a good career path’ (Curriculum Leader of Art, Photography, Fashion and Textiles, Edinburgh), and ‘parental pressure to get a proper job’ (Teacher of Art and Design, Edinburgh)).

Accordingly, this pervasive undervaluing of the subject has seemingly permeated young people’s perceptions of the subject as well. Both focus group participants relayed that they felt art was not ‘the main focus’ in primary school, with one participant noting they did not have a specific visual art teacher in their school for several
years due to the school not being able to afford an art teacher as well as a drama teacher and a music teacher. Additionally, the notion that the arts are not as valuable or useful was seen peripherally within the creative workshop, as some young people demonstrated concerns about taking up a specific career within art and design (one with the words ‘Broke Starving Artist’ crossed out).

A number of participants identified a need for a societal shift in attitude towards the arts and arts education. One participant explicitly suggested ‘there is great urgency for a message from the education minister to explain how essential to children’s education it is to have art and design classes valued’ (Class Teacher, Glasgow). This call to action was echoed by several other participants throughout the survey.

### Headlines

#### The impact of studying visual art and design in school

An analysis of the survey responses reveals that educators are both very capable and very keen to amplify the benefits of studying contemporary visual art and design. Highlights include:

- A general balance between skills and benefits, with most participants mentioning a combination of both within their responses.
- An emphasis on transferable skills that could be developed or gained through visual art and design education.

For young people, the creative atmosphere of the art and design classroom was appreciated. While some mentioned practical learning opportunities, many young people seemed to focus on the experience itself rather than takeaway skills or benefits. Highlights included:

- A significant portion of young people in the creative workshop identified their art and design classes as a place to develop personal skills.
- The mental health and pastoral support gained from the learning environment of the art and design classroom was highly valued by the young people.

Despite the responses to this section of the survey demonstrating a clear understanding of the value of studying contemporary visual art and design, feelings that the subject is undervalued persisted throughout the data. This was demonstrated through:

- Feelings of the subject being undervalued being perceived from the school level and within the home environment to within local and national governments and throughout a larger cultural bias against the arts.
- Concerns that the stereotypical low-paid artist idea still persists within parental views and senior management in schools, and has subsequently permeated young people’s perceptions of the subject as well.

Many respondents identified a call to action to address the major attitudinal barrier felt by educators and students.
Perceptions of the art and design curriculum

This section explores how both educators and young people perceive the current curriculum. In highlighting emerging areas of concern as well as areas identified as doing well, this section of our report should prove useful in helping to frame and shape a new educational landscape.

Participants who identified as teachers of art and design or non-specialist teachers and/or headteachers were asked how well they felt the art and design curriculum at school level aligned with the requirements of visual art and design courses at higher education institutions. On a scale of 1–5, with 1 representing ‘not aligned at all’ and 5 representing ‘perfectly aligned’, 83.67% of the respondents selected 3 or below, with 59.18% selecting 2 or below and only 16.33% selecting 4 and above. This response indicates a very clear narrative that there is a perceived gap between the current curriculum and exam structure, and the expectations of further and higher education. These findings were also reflected in the young people’s focus group and aligns with previous findings from Creative Scotland’s 2016 Visual Art Sector Review, which speculated that ‘schools may not be fully aligned to the requirements of further and higher education’.25

The focus group participants were asked to discuss their experiences of the transition between secondary school and art school and to explain any issues they had with the curriculum itself. Both young people described feelings of being ‘unprepared’, with one participant
highlighting that ‘there was a bit of a sense of plunging into the deep end’ (Former Student 2, focus group). While both participants reflected that the Advanced Higher Art was ‘good to a certain extent’, explaining that they felt it did help create ‘a big chunk of work’ for their portfolios, which ‘does get you in [to art school]’, they both felt that was the extent of it. Both young people agreed that they felt the art and design curriculum in secondary school was ‘old fashioned’ with one participant describing it as like being put on a track that ‘you can’t get off’. They continued:

‘It was like, the curriculum is set, and there’s no way that you can... be creative with it, which is crazy because it’s a creative course.’
Former Student 1, focus group

Both participants added that they felt restricted by the SQA’s expectations, noting that they were often told that certain work would not be ‘liked’ or that if you were not skilled in traditional styles like drawing, it was ‘game over’. When teachers were asked if any issues had presented themselves within the curriculum itself and the exam system that had proven challenging or had affected their ability to teach more challenging and conceptual art practice, a similar narrative came across in the responses. One participant highlighted the ‘strong focus and value’ being placed on ‘creating work that is a traditional and analytically representation’, noting that this leads students ‘who “cannot draw”, [to] think they are not good at art’, adding that this means young people who are ‘creative conceptually’ are not supported or ‘given the opportunity to explore this kind of practice’ (Teacher of Art and Design, Dumfries and Galloway).

While some respondents saw the Broad General Education (BGE) curriculum as ‘more exciting and experimental than the seniors’ (Teacher of Art and Design, Moray) as well as flexible enough to ‘allow for a range of skills and topics to be explored and learnt’ (Curriculum Leader Expressive Arts, Midlothian), others suggested there is ‘less time’ given to art and design education within the BGE curriculum, leading to the focus being placed on ‘teaching to be ready for the senior phase’ (Teacher of Art, Design and Photography, East Dunbartonshire). One respondent added that ‘restricted criteria and expectations of the exam board lead to [the] restricted curriculum for BGE’, adding that the focus is ‘to prepare them for what is essentially a drawing test at National 5 and Higher [levels]’ (Teacher of Art and Design, Aberdeen). The variance in responses indicates an inconsistency in the perception of BGE provision of art and design throughout Scottish schools. This corresponds with comments from some respondents describing the experience of art and design in primary schools as ‘patchy’ (Teacher of Art and Design, Dumfries and Galloway).

At the opposite end of the spectrum, the Advanced Higher courses were highlighted as particularly good by several survey respondents who identified as art and design teachers as well as non-specialist teachers and/or headteachers (‘At Advanced Higher [level] we throw away the rule book and allow pupils more freedom to be creative and experimental’ (Teacher, East Ayrshire), and ‘allow for creativity, self-directed study and experiment’ (Teacher of Art and Design, Dumfries and Galloway)). As noted above, the Advanced Higher courses were deemed useful by both our focus group respondents as well.

5.1 How Scottish qualification structures impact teaching

Concerns about the SQA and its impacts on how art and design can be taught were consistently referenced throughout the responses to the curriculum-related questions, as well as throughout the survey. Evidently, these concerns have been voiced elsewhere. Near the end of our study’s data collection period, on 21 June 2021, it was announced that the SQA was to be replaced by a new body and Education Scotland was to be reformed. While this is likely to be viewed as a positive step by most educators, we feel it is important that the voices of visual art and design educators be heard as a new system is envisioned and implemented. Therefore, the information gathered in this section of our survey will be both useful and relevant during the consultation process on these reforms.

The main concerns identified by teachers in their responses to our survey are in line with the more general findings from the OECD report including that there is a ‘disconnect between the core aims of CfE and Scotland’s qualification system and a disconnect between the BGE and the senior phase’ as well as a ‘massive assessment overload in the senior phase, which squeezes out the time needed for both depth and breadth of learning – two of CfE’s big ambitions’. In terms of how the subject is affected by these issues specifically, our respondents emphasised that the senior phase and exam structure have led to an overall lack of ability to be creative, and a huge focus on teaching to pass exams. This approach is neither appreciated nor desired by staff or students.

In general, the SQA assessment requirements are perceived to be too restrictive (‘rigid and tight’, ‘doesn’t allow for experimentation’ and ‘teaching how to pass exams’ (Teacher, East Ayrshire), ‘National 5 and
Higher is quite prescriptive’ (Teacher of Art and Design, West Lothian), ‘very restrictive’ (Teacher of Art, West Lothian), leading to work that is often in a ‘formulaic format to ensure the marking criteria is met’. Many respondents suggested this ultimately prevents ‘a more fluid and differentiated way of developing ideas and creating pieces’ (Secondary School Teacher, Fife), with several respondents emphasising that the curriculum ‘doesn’t allow for much freedom of expression’ (Art and Design Teacher, Aberdeen).

Concerns over the lack of time available to focus on anything other than preparing for exams and portfolios have driven teachers ‘to be formulaic to get results’ (Teacher of Art and Design, Edinburgh) and have left ‘little or no time for experimentation with new mediums and techniques’ (Curriculum Leader Expressive Arts, Midlothian). As one participant noted, ‘it’s difficult to know how to ensure pupils will achieve at the level they are capable of with a more ‘out there’ project, so it’s safer just to stick to what we know’ (Art and Design Teacher, Edinburgh). These fears in combination with a ‘skills-based curriculum’ (Art Teacher, Glasgow), which focuses on ‘process’ and ‘technical skills’, are perceived to have contributed further to the barrier to being able to work with more conceptual and challenging practices. One participant stated, ‘I feel that the curriculum has no space to offer a challenging art practice’ (Art and Design Teacher, West Lothian). These findings suggest a need to shift the focus, from examination preparation and hard skills development, to a more holistic approach to art and design education that recognises and utilises the larger benefits of studying the subject to its advantage. While the decision to reimagine the qualification system is an important aspect of this, there is an additional need to address negative views of the subject’s value.

Headlines

Perceptions of the visual art and design curriculum

Survey and focus group respondents indicated a clear perception that there is in fact a gap between the current curriculum and exam structure, and the expectations of further and higher education. Other concerns with the curriculum include:

- Inconsistencies in the perception of BGE provision of art and design throughout Scottish schools.
- A concern that the senior phase and exam structure have led to an overall lack of ability to be creative, and a huge focus on teaching to pass exams.
- A general feeling of being restricted by the SQA’s expectations, which ultimately stifles creativity and leads to work that is formulaic.
- A perception that the curriculum focuses on process and technical skills, which is believed to have contributed to the barrier of being able to work with more conceptual and challenging art practices.

It is clear, also, that both students and staff have a general feeling that art and design is undervalued by not only wider society, but by some schools, too. This can lead to a lack of confidence in students about making the choice to continue to study this subject.
6.0 Support for teaching art and design

This section seeks to present the perspectives of teachers on the support available to them. This includes access to training and career-long professional development courses as well as resources. The respondents were also presented with two sets of Likert Scales in order to get a better understanding of where there may be perceived gaps in support and to understand how this impacts their confidence to deliver their educational activities.

6.1 How support for visual art and design educators is perceived

While there are some positive responses in regard to a ‘sharing mindset’ and support from other teachers, we are keen to point out that the challenges explored below are day-to-day, repetitive stresses that can have significant impacts on art and design educators and it is important to view these as aggregating pressures that are experienced on a daily basis, rather than isolated incidents.

Within the realm of visual art and design education, it is clear that there is positivity towards a sharing mindset. Participants who identified as either a teacher of art and design or a non-specialist teacher and/or headteacher were asked if they share practice or resources with other art and design teachers: 91.8% said yes. The same sub-group of participants were also asked to identify where they typically find training and/or resources to support their teaching of art and design. Just under half of the participants (n30) discussed using either their
In the first Likert Scale to appear in the survey, participants were asked to what extent they agreed they are supported to develop and deliver their educational activities. The following stacked bar chart has been created to illustrate the perception of support for each organisation or supporting body based on the respondents’ selections.

**Figure 6**
Responses to the question ‘to what extent do you agree you are supported to develop and deliver your educational activities?’ by organisations or governing bodies

The ethos of internal sharing of resources and ideas was reflected in the perception of support from the respondents’ schools. The respondents’ schools received the most positively skewed of the responses, with 66.67% selecting a positive response of ‘agree’ (n22) or ‘strongly agree’ (n10). The respondents’ schools also received the highest number of ‘strongly agree’ responses (n10), with 20.83%. When prompted to provide more information if they selected ‘strongly agree’ or ‘strongly disagree’, it appeared evident that those feeling supported by their schools were referring to the schools’ support in the form of good communication and mental health and wellbeing support, throughout the pandemic and the transition to online teaching. For example:

> ‘Strong online communication for both staff and students, particularly in regard to online teaching/learning and wellbeing and mental health’
> Graphic Design Lecturer in Visual Communications, Edinburgh

In opposition to this, 58.33% selected a negative response of ‘disagree’ (n17) or ‘strongly disagree’ (n11) in response to the support received by the Scottish Government. The comments that corresponded with these selections included some concerns of the lack of awareness from the Scottish Government, with participants suggesting that the Scottish Government is ‘out of touch with what’s actually happening in schools’ (Teacher of Art and Design, Blackburn), and that teachers are not being listened to. Another participant added:

> ‘The Scottish Government have no idea how the reduction in funding to purchase quality art materials has had a negative impact on the types of creative activities and projects that can be delivered in schools.’
> Teacher of Art, Design and Photography, East Dunbartonshire

Additionally, several comments reflected feelings of the subject not being ‘taken seriously’ (Art and Design Teacher, Aberdeen). Many felt that ‘arts education appears often to be thought of as a lesser subject with its importance and value constantly [being] lowered’ (Teacher of Art and Design and Photography, Falkirk) and the priority appearing to be on ‘the more “academic” classed subjects’ (Teacher of Art and Design, Moray). This connects to the notion that the subject is perceived as being ‘devalued, underfunded and considered non-essential’ (Class Teacher, Glasgow).

Similarly, local authorities were also perceived as less supportive, with 45.83% of the participants selecting a negative response of ‘disagree’ (n12) or ‘strongly disagree’ (n10). It is notable that both positive and negative comments towards support from the local authorities centred around funding for materials and tools for students, with one participant highlighting that ‘councils have cut art and design material budgets year on year’ (Art and Design Teacher, South Lanarkshire), while another praised local and national governments for ‘lending devices for students/staff to access lessons from home’ (Art and Design teacher, North Ayrshire). The variance in responses from different local authorities demonstrates a disparity in terms of access to both resources and materials. This disparity became clearer when the responses were viewed in separate regions. The
stacked bar chart below reveals a clear imbalance in the perception of support received from local authorities in each region.

Figure 7
Responses to the question ‘to what extent do you agree you are supported to develop and deliver your educational activities by your local authority?’ by regions in Scotland

The Creative Learning Networks were perceived more positively, with 44.68% of the respondents selecting ‘agree’ (n18) or ‘strongly agree’ (n3), though it was noted by one respondent that there was no Creative Learning Network or Cultural Coordinator in their local authority of Dumfries and Galloway as the roles had been cut. Another participant added that the ‘Creative Learning Networks [and] galleries are often expensive to be a part of or to take school trips [to]’ (Art and Design Teacher, South Ayrshire).

We can infer that access to support is likely to be consistently imbalanced in other aspects of teacher support in their local authorities as well.

There appears to be a lack of knowledge about the support available from external organisations. Respondents were asked if they were aware of Career-long Professional Learning (CLPL) opportunities offered by local arts organisations and galleries. 39.6% responded ‘yes’ to being aware of CLPL opportunities offered by local arts organisations, with well over half responding ‘no’ at 60.4%. Of the 39.6% who did respond ‘yes’, several respondents cited not being able to attend recently, or at all, due to time constraints and lack of availability in their local area. Those that did attend highlighted organisations such as Glasgow Museums, Dundee Contemporary Arts, V&A Dundee, the Scottish National and Portrait Galleries, as well as many sites in Edinburgh such as Stills Gallery. Notably, all these organisations are located within the Central Belt of Scotland.

6.2 Insights into the training and resources available within art and design education

When asked what (if anything) is lacking in the training and/or resources currently available, respondents produced a varied list of issues and concerns. As expected, a ‘lack of funding’ for both training opportunities and classroom resources was most commonly discussed throughout the responses, with a couple of participants identifying that they often had to utilise their own personal finances to participate in training or provide materials in the classroom for student use. Following this, a ‘lack of time’ was also consistently identified as an issue. This included a lack of time to partake in training opportunities as well as a lack of time to research and identify possible training options (‘there is just never enough time’ (Class Teacher, Angus)). In terms of the training that respondents were aware of, they highlighted several gaps in the provision available. For example:

‘There is nothing with regard to supporting digital art and training teachers who perhaps have more of a fine art experience to feel confident in delivering design in this way.’
Art and Design Teacher, West Lothian

Specific practical training in media, materials and techniques was highly sought after. This included a desire to gain skills in areas such as digital art and craft skills. One respondent suggested that because each individual teacher has their own personal built expertise from university, the lack of training in ‘different media/materials/techniques’ (Art and Design Teacher, Edinburgh) could lead to gaps in knowledge.
In addition to training opportunities, respondents identified that there is a lack of in-person networking opportunities, highlighting that the networks across the local authorities are inconsistent. This inconsistency was also reflected in the provision of resources and materials and was notably also evident to respondents from better-equipped areas. For example:

‘I am fortunate to currently be in a school where there are good levels of artistic resources available, however, I have seen lots of schools where this is not the case because art and design is not prioritised when budgets are allocated. This needs to change, and money needs to be protected for visual arts teaching, as the basic materials required are essential for pupils to be able to in any way connect with the subject.’

Art and Design Teacher, Edinburgh

The survey asked respondents to indicate to what extent do they agree they were adequately equipped with certain resources. The Likert Scale used to collect this data provided a list of several broad categories of resource types. In all but one category (art and design materials for student use) over 50% of participants selected negative responses of ‘disagree’ and ‘strongly disagree’ in terms of feeling adequately equipped. This indicates that there is a general sense of feeling ill equipped with most kinds of resources outside of basic art supplies.

The following set of stacked bar charts illustrates how respondents located in separate regions feel about the adequacy of the resources available to them.

In terms of resources, respondents identified a lack of readymade ‘accessible’ or ‘digital’ resources as well as course materials and textbooks. Many participants highlighted that though they had access to some basic art supplies, the quality was poor because of the money for resources being ‘ring-fenced by iProc [procurement system] and council contracts meaning we can’t get the best supplies at the best prices’ (Teacher of Art and Design, South Lanarkshire). Another participant added that limited funds for materials meant they were ‘limited to what [they] can teach’ (Curriculum Leader of Art, Photography, Fashion and Textiles, Edinburgh).
In terms of barriers to training and resources, the main issues identified are:

- A lack of funding for both training opportunities and classroom resources.
- A lack of time to partake in training opportunities as well as to research and identify possible training options.

Specific practical training in media, materials and techniques was highly sought after. This included a desire to gain skills in areas such as digital art and craft skills.

While there seemed to be an internal ethos of sharing resources and ideas with other teachers within their own schools as well as online, leading to a generally positive perception towards the support offered by schools, this seemed to be quite isolated, with many teachers highlighting feeling unsupported by a number of other organisations and support bodies. This included:

- Feelings that there was a lack of awareness from the Scottish Government of the resources that teachers and schools actually need.
- A major variance in perception of support from different local authorities, demonstrating a disparity in terms of access to both resources and materials.
- There are inconsistent levels of satisfaction in regard to the support provided by the Creative Learning Networks.
- A clear disparity in resource provision and teacher support, dependent upon the local authority in which the teacher is based.

This indicates that there is a general sense of feeling poorly equipped with most kinds of resources outside of basic art supplies.

The discrete pressures faced by teachers – lack of resources, lack of support, feelings of being ‘devalued, underfunded and considered non-essential’ (Class Teacher, Glasgow), a lack of clear career development support, etc. – can be individually addressed, however, it is important to view them as aggregated, building pressures that can have significant impacts on the day-to-day lives of educators, and their ability to deliver their work effectively.
This section explores the perspectives of the visual arts sector and teachers on engagement. Through an investigation of the factors that inhibit and the strategies that facilitate engagement, this section of the report should prove useful in development of new approaches to support schools, teachers and the visual arts sector in growing their relationships.

7.1 Sector perspectives on engagement

All of the respondents who identified as either a professional artist or someone working at an arts organisation or gallery selected ‘neutral’ or above when asked to what extent they agreed they are confident and equipped to engage with schools with the current support available, with 80% of the respondents selecting either ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’. This suggests that there are very high levels of confidence from the visual arts sector in terms of their educational activities.

When asked how (if at all) Scotland’s curriculum (formerly known as the Curriculum for Excellence) affected their approach to planning educational activities, most professional artists identified that this was ‘something that is always at the back of [their] mind’ (Professional Artist, Angus), and that they do ‘aim to link [the] workshops to the curriculum’ (Professional Artist, Edinburgh). Two professional artists also highlighted that Scotland’s curriculum made them ‘feel more confident that creativity is valued in the education system’ (Professional Artist, Scottish Borders). A similar narrative came across when looking at the responses from those working at arts organisations or galleries.
Most respondents stated that they were ‘aware’ of Scotland’s curriculum but the responses were mixed in terms of actively using its specified ‘experiences and outcomes’ in their planning. While some were keen to highlight its use in their planning (‘we use the outcomes in our planning’ (Cultural Practitioner, Dundee); ‘activities have to cover outcomes of [Scotland’s curriculum]’ (Learning Officer, Stirling)); ‘[we] try to ensure that experiences and outcomes are clearly detailed in the information for each workshop’ (Creative Learning Worker, Renfrewshire), others described a more tacit inclusion (‘I am very much aware of [Scotland’s curriculum] but do not aim to address [experiences and outcomes]. Rather we aim to connect pupils and teachers to the visual arts in a gallery context, focusing on supporting children and young people to think for themselves’ (Schools Learning Coordinator, Edinburgh); ‘I take it into account – however, the main approach is linking into collections while working with self-directed work with the young people and facilitators’ (Arts and Events Officer, East Dunbartonshire)). Another participant added: ‘The original document was quite inspiring. In practice, it has become much more complicated and prescriptive.’ (Freelance Educator, Edinburgh).

When asked to address the challenges or impediments that have affected visual arts sector respondents in terms of their ability to arrange partnerships with schools, 13 professional artists and respondents representing an arts organisation or gallery responded. Of those 13 respondents, three mentioned ‘lack of funding’, with one participant highlighting travel costs as a particular issue. Just over 30% highlighted communication with schools as an issue, including two responses referencing challenges posed by teacher and school timetabling issues. Another 23% made comments referencing the lack of long-term engagement opportunities. For example:

‘I tend to find that funding is only provided on a very short term, [for] a couple of months and often the project or collaboration is just hitting its peak when the funding is ending, and it can be really difficult to continue and build upon the work when there is no funding available…’

Creative Learning Worker, Renfrewshire

Within the context of the pandemic, another 30% identified Covid-19 restrictions as a barrier, with risk assessment and other administrative barriers becoming increasingly challenging.

7.2 Factors inhibiting engagement

As expected, when respondents who identified as teachers of art and design, non-specialist teachers and/or headteachers were asked if there had been any difficulties in providing educational activities within the context of the pandemic, many respondents noted the effects of galleries being closed to in-person visits as well as schools not allowing visitors on site. The development of online events and activities as a result of Covid-induced lockdowns and restrictions was recognised by some as an ‘opportunity’, as there are ‘no restrictions on numbers for online events’ (Teaching Fellow, Art and Design, Scottish Borders), and they were able to address some issues such as lack of funds or time for travel (‘there [have] been opportunities to see exhibitions digitally which would not have been possible before due to travelling distance’ (Student Art and Design Teacher, Glasgow)). Several participants noted that online events and activities are a far-from-perfect alternative. As one respondent stated ‘virtual exhibitions, whilst welcomed, are not an alternative for the experience of seeing real art with own eyes, the smells, details, size, lighting, colour, media handling, etc.’ (Teacher of Art and Design, Moray). In addition to this, another participant emphasised the ‘many difficulties, especially those tied to requiring the internet when accessing resources and online lessons.’ (Art and Design Teacher, Shetland). Further difficulties within the context of the pandemic that were recognised by respondents included concerns over the lack of easily accessible information and a lack of time to research opportunities (‘Just not enough info out there or time or energy to seek it out’ (Art and Design Teacher, North Ayrshire).

The survey also asked respondents to identify to what extent certain barriers affected their ability to engage with the sector outwith the pandemic. The following stacked bar chart illustrates where respondents feel most inhibited when it comes to having a class visit to an arts organisation or gallery, or having an artist or someone from a gallery or arts organisation visit their classroom.

A lack of interest from the visual arts sector is perceived as generally not an issue, with only 14.75% of respondents selecting ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ for lack of interest from professional artists, arts organisations or galleries. Comparatively, ‘agree’ and ‘strongly agree’ were selected over 80% of the time for both ‘lack of resources to pay for travel’ and ‘lack of time within the school timetable or your work schedule’. Both of these issues were identified again when the survey prompted respondents to reflect on the challenges or impediments affecting arrangements and future partnerships.
Further issues identified by the respondents included lack of time to research and plan for and attend opportunities (‘feeling swamped [with] workload’ (Teacher of Art and Design, Perth and Kinross)), lack of staff cover, and a lack of opportunities that were relevant to the current curriculum and exam schedule (‘being told it’s not curricular related’ (Teacher of Art, Design and Photography, East Dunbartonshire), ‘being able to fit in these experiences into the timetable’ (Curriculum Leader of Art, Photography, Fashion and Textiles, Edinburgh)). One participant suggested that ‘organisations often have no idea how schools work, and offer opportunities at the wrong times to the wrong age groups – e.g., clashing with exams, folio preparation etc.’ (Teacher of Art and Design, Dumfries and Galloway). This indicates a potential gap between the educational activities currently provided by the visual arts sector and what teachers need in terms of their ability to include sector visits into their curriculum planning.

Concurrently, a number of administrative blockers or ‘red tape’ were also identified, including issues of lack of buy-in from senior school management and a lot of ‘form-filling to get pupils out’ (Teacher of Art and Design, Perth and Kinross). One participant suggested ‘departments either set up partnerships and are outward-looking or they do not, there is rarely a middle ground. It would be difficult for an inexperienced teacher to set something up – even if they wanted to – if they are in a department with no established partnerships’

(Figures 15)

Responses to ‘to what extent do you agree the following are barriers to having a class visit to an arts organisation/gallery or to having an artist/someone from a gallery or arts organisation visit a classroom?’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lack of knowledge about visit options</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of interest from professional artists and/or art organisations/galleries</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of interest from teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of interest from students/pupils</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of clear points of contact</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of resources to pay for travel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of time within the school timetable or your work schedule</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of support from senior staff in your organisation or school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finally, several respondents emphasised concerns over the lack of opportunities available to schools and young people located in rural areas of Scotland, with statements like: ‘we often need to travel 35 miles to get to a sufficient gallery’ (Primary Teacher, Scottish Borders), ‘[there is] not a huge amount of choice locally for art things to engage with’ and ‘because the Borders [are] so rural the travel required is more to go anywhere. There are lots of small rural schools too, who have further to travel’ (Professional Artist, Scottish Borders), and ‘rural placement means it takes time generally to get to galleries – there and back’ (Teacher of Art and Design, Perth and Kinross).

7.3 Strategies for facilitating engagement

When asked what has worked well in previous arrangements and partnerships between schools and the visual arts sector, respondents in all stakeholder roles (teachers, professional artists and those working in an arts organisation or gallery) identified similar approaches and desires.

Both teachers and those working in the visual arts sector highlighted the success of ‘when pupils have been able to work alongside artists and learn from them’ (Visiting Teacher Art and Design, Angus), with several teachers noting this as an opportunity for students to learn about future career options. One professional artist described that the students could see ‘the application of their education … in real-life scenarios rather than remaining theoretical or being relevant only in an academic context’ (Lecturer, Fife). Additionally, a teacher added, ‘pupils engage well when given direction from professionals who are not part of their regular teaching staff’ (Teacher of Art and Design and Photography, Falkirk). This was echoed by a respondent from the visual arts sector, as well as being echoed in the case studies below, in which galleries and arts organisations are perceived as positive alternative spaces for learning. Evidently, opportunities for students to be exposed to artists and designers in the ‘real world’ are considered highly valuable.

Working collaboratively was identified as a well-liked strategy by those in the visual arts sector (‘I have often found that partnerships and collaborative projects are the most successful/productive and
creative’ (Creative Learning Worker, Renfrewshire); ‘Partnership working and using a co-production methodology is key to the success of many of [our] engagement projects’ (Community Engagement Manager, Edinburgh)). This method was thought to have numerous benefits for those involved in planning, including ‘combining resources’, opportunities to ‘help get projects funded’ and to be inspired by and learn from one another. Respondents also highlighted the benefits to participants, for example:

‘Every partner brings their own unique expertise and skills, and it can generate some really exciting and innovative projects. Especially when participants – pupils, children, families, community groups – have also had an equal part in the development of the project and co-create and develop the project with partners. The participants feel a sense of ownership and I believe co-created projects can really build confidence, sense of pride and place, and teamwork skills, as well as developing visual arts skills.’
Creative Learning Worker, Renfrewshire

Complementary to this, both teachers and professional artists noted that the arrangements and partnerships that worked the best were often ‘bespoke’ and tailored to the individuals involved (‘working with teachers, making sure the project is not one size fits all’ (Art and Design Teacher and Freelance Teaching Artist, Edinburgh); ‘Opportunity to plan bespoke event[s]’ and ‘individual engagement’ (Visiting Art Specialist, Angus)).

The final factor recognised as necessary to implement these strategies was ‘communication’. Notably, this was identified as both a factor that inhibits engagement and one that facilitates it. In positive communication scenarios, respondents who identified as working in an arts organisation or gallery emphasised the importance of ‘good clear communication’ with ‘agreed-upon outcomes’ for all involved.

Headlines
Engagement with the visual arts sector

It is evident that galleries and arts organisations are perceived as positive, alternative spaces for learning, and opportunities for young people to be exposed to artists and designers in the ‘real world’ are considered highly valuable. There are also very high levels of confidence from the visual arts sector in terms of their ability to offer educational activities. Key insights from their perspectives include:

- Most respondents from the visual arts sector are aware of Scotland’s curriculum, but while some were keen to highlight its use in their planning, others described a more tacit inclusion.
- Just over 30% highlighted communication with schools as a factor inhibiting their ability to engage with schools.

From the teachers’ perspective, some of the factors blocking their ability to connect the visual arts sector with students with include:

- The ongoing effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, with notes of galleries being closed to in-person visits, as well as schools not allowing visitors on site.
- A potential gap in what the visual arts sector is currently providing in terms of educational activities and what teachers need in order to include sector visits into their curriculum planning.
- Issues related to the lack of buy-in from senior management in schools, including a number of administrative barriers.

Respondents in all stakeholder roles (teachers, professional artists and those working in an arts organisation or gallery) identified similar routes to successful engagement. These included:

- Working collaboratively to create individualised events and activities.
- Maintaining good communication to ensure all project partners understand the desired expectations and outcomes.
8.0
Barriers to young people’s engagement with visual art and design in school and beyond

This section of the report seeks to highlight the main areas of concern from both educators and young people in terms of students’ ability to engage with the subject of visual art and design in school and beyond.
The survey respondents were asked to fill out a Likert scale in order to gain insight into the barriers felt by young people in their ability to study visual art and design at school (and beyond). The following stacked bar chart illustrates the responses.

**Figure 16**
Responses to ‘to what extent do you agree the following are barriers for young people to study visual art and design at school (and beyond)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barriers</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of information on options to study visual art and design beyond school level available in school or the home environment</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of support or encouragement within the school for the pursuit of visual art and design careers</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of interest/support from parent(s), guardian(s) or within the home environment</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of personal/family resources to pay for art or design-based extracurricular activities and/or resources in the home environment</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of time within the school timetable</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of representation in artistic examples available in school leading to a lowered interest or feelings of exclusion (i.e., examples from a range of cultures, backgrounds, abilities and styles)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of quality resources in schools</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, findings from our survey aligned with those of the New Philanthropy Capital (2019) *Arts Engagement Report* and suggest that young people face a combination of attitudinal, functional and practical barriers. The most common practical barrier was financial: ‘I work in a very deprived area with almost 50% of pupils living within SIMD 1–3,’ putting on quality extracurricular activities that require costs instantly seems impossible to some pupils’ (Secondary School Teacher, Fife). Similarly, these financial concerns are tied to practical barriers: ‘poor financial situation means some pupils can’t experiment with the types of art that they would engage with at home’ (Art and Design Teacher, Edinburgh).

There are also attitudinal barriers that hinder further engagement: ‘Artist examples used are on the whole irrelevant and old. They bear no relation to the children’s lives’ (Professional Artist, East Lothian). This pertains to an issue of representation and a perceived lack of young people seeing themselves represented in the curriculum. This can be linked to issues of representation for marginalised groups, too. As mentioned in section 2 of this report, the data gathered in the research did not highlight any specific lack of representation of marginalised communities, including people from ethnic minority backgrounds and working-class people, as a barrier to engagement with art and design. However, this does not mean that representation is not an issue, but rather that the respondents to the survey did not draw attention to it. The evidence from the 2020 study *Culture is Bad for You,* finds that many marginalised communities are excluded from the cultural sector at an early age, including from within education. Put simply: if a person does not see themselves reflected in the cultural products, there is little impetus to continue engaging with that culture. Relatedly, not being shown successful examples of such artists or art underpins the notion that a career in such a field is not possible for these groups: ‘Parents frequently actively discourage interested pupils from art as they feel it will not give their child good career opportunities.’ (Art and Design Teacher, Edinburgh). As such, materials utilised by teachers play a significant role, and therefore financial barriers can contribute to a lack of representational parity. Anecdotally, it is clear that both the curriculum and the materials that teachers are exposed to – or are using – in their classrooms are insufficient in speaking to all constituent parts of Scottish society, especially people from ethnic minority backgrounds or working-class young people. Such lack of representation would present barriers to a young person’s engagement with the subject and therefore impact any future career plans. These representational issues, therefore, are of wider concern than to art and design education alone, and the authors strongly call for a specific study to research the representation of marginalised communities within Scotland’s curriculum and education system.

Other common functional barriers included a lack of time in student timetables and curriculum pressures (‘curricular model has pushed out niche subjects like art’ (Principal Teacher of Art and Design, Highlands)) and a lack of department resources and opportunities (‘basic department, minimal tech support and very restrictive budget allowance’ (Teacher of Art and Design, Perth and Kinross)).

The attitudinal barriers identified included a societal undervaluing of art, leading to a perception that art is not relevant or useful (‘Art and design can be misunderstood, undervalued at home and in school’ (Teacher of Art and Design, Fife)); compounded by a lack of familial support and understanding (‘A lot of parents are unaware of art-based careers’ (Teacher, East Ayrshire); ‘[There is] still a belief that you can’t
Barriers to young people’s engagement with visual art and design in school and beyond

have a worthwhile career if you study art and design’ (Art and Design Teacher, Glasgow); ‘Many parents/carers still do not see art and design as a valid career path for their children’ (Art and Design Teacher, West Lothian). Similarly, teachers find that there is little understanding from careers advisors about the options for fulfilling careers within the creative industries (‘Careers service in schools is not well informed when it comes to arts and creative industries’ (Teacher, Scottish Borders)).

When asked if there was something not listed in the Likert chart that respondents believed was inhibiting, stopping or blocking young people from engaging with visual art and design in higher education, it was clear that attitudinal barriers underpinned the majority of their concerns. These concerns included a lack of focus on the potential of the STEAM approach to learning, a lack of awareness from adults (both in the home and school environments) that there are careers in the arts, which ultimately feeds into the ongoing belief in the image of the low-paid artist in students.

Our conversation with young people highlighted very similar feelings. While the students we spoke to did not personally identify financial issues as a barrier, there was an awareness of the effects this could have on other students. The main issue the young people revealed was that they felt divided and almost ‘segregated from the rest of the school’ and suggested that this was something the teachers were feeling too – that ‘they’re not [or] shouldn’t be taken seriously’, adding that: ‘you could tell, by the way, like staff, other staff treated the art department staff that they weren’t taken as seriously and that their job wasn’t as important as maybe teaching science...’(Former Student 1, focus group). In addition to this, both students emphasised that they felt art as a subject was not given the same level of respect as other subjects and highlighted where this was felt in terms of access to funding and resources. For example:

‘I think funding, I think because they don’t take art as a serious subject, you’re not given as much funding like I don’t know, if you’re doing sports, you have this huge sports auditorium in the school and it’s like, you go here’s like 100,000 pounds for like a new sports field, but are you’re like, rummaging around drawers trying to find this one pencil you’re like, help like, like, why is like this class not as important as science maybe or maths and English’

Former Student 1, focus group

And:

‘I think that’s what it comes down to, really, I think if there’s anything to be heard, it will be that ... it’s from above – it’s [that] they’re doing as much as they can, in most cases, and certainly in our experiences, but they just don’t physically have enough to work with. And they could offer more if they just had the space, the resources and materials’

Former Student 2, focus group

As one of the young people suggested, ‘it was like they already put these sort of blockers on everyone even before [they had] even begun. Because there wasn’t anything there’. The other participant echoed this, noting that the departments seemed to be stretching their resources to the maximum, adding that it is obvious ‘they do genuinely care about their students. But it is the lack of resources and the lack of facilities that they have to work with’ that lead to feelings of the subject being less valued (Former Student 2, focus group).
9.0 Highlighting innovative approaches to facilitating engagement with art and design

In this series of case studies, teachers and cultural practitioners from visual arts organisations and schools share the stories of their educational activities and reflect on their outcomes so that others can learn from and build on their experiences.

The 49 teachers, 10 organisations and six professional artists who responded to the survey were asked to identify examples of brilliant, creative or innovative visual art and design education practice in a) the school system in Scotland b) partnership with external providers and c) education elsewhere in the world.

Two of these examples were selected to investigate further to form individual case studies. A third case study was developed to explore engagement with art and design at the school in which the creative workshops took place.

Headlines
Barriers to young people’s engagement with visual art and design in school

The main barriers reported aligned with the NPC’s 2019 Arts Engagement Report, including financial, practical and attitudinal:

- Financial barriers included a lack of resources for anything but basic art materials.
- Practical barriers included a lack of time in student timetables, as well as other curriculum pressures.

Attitudinal barriers were more widely reported, including:

- A societal undervaluing of the arts, leading to a perception that art is not relevant or useful.
- Lack of focus on the potential of the STEAM approach to learning.
- Lack of awareness that there are careers in the arts.
- An ongoing belief that a career in the cultural sector results in becoming a low-paid artist.
- Young people not seeing themselves represented in the curriculum.

While this study did not specifically report a lack of representation of people from ethnic minority backgrounds and working-class backgrounds within primary and secondary education, other recent studies do suggest this to be an issue, and more research that is specifically focused on this area needs to be undertaken in Scotland.

The focus group respondents mainly identified that they felt the subject was:

- Not funded at the same level as other subjects.
- Not given the same level of respect as other subjects.
9.1 Case study 1
The Gordon Schools, Huntly, Aberdeenshire

Interview with an Art and Design Teacher, Huntly, Aberdeenshire, 21 June 2021

In this case study, an art and design teacher at The Gordon Schools shares the school’s ethos around creative partnerships. We also hear from staff at Deveron Projects, with their take on one of their more recent success stories.

9.1.1 The Gordon Schools

The Gordon Schools is a comprehensive secondary school that provides education for pupils aged 11 to 18 years old. The school boasts an ‘established educational tradition’, stretching back over 175 years to its origins, where the Duchess of Gordon founded the school.\(^{31}\) Drawing from an area of up to sixteen miles around the town of Huntly, the school roll currently stands at around 660 pupils. The school has ‘very strong links with the local community’ and sees itself as playing ‘a key and distinctive role in Huntly and the surrounding area’.\(^{32}\) Collaboration with local groups, businesses and organisations is strongly encouraged in order to ‘provide a rich educational tapestry’ for the young people who attend the school.\(^{33}\)

9.1.2 The school ethos

‘There’s an openness to ideas and projects and collaborations at The Gordon Schools’, especially at bringing contemporary art and design into the classroom. There are reciprocal relationships, too, with students often inputting into external projects with local arts organisations or projects developed by a local community organisation, Huntly Development Trust. It was suggested that the headteacher was ‘particularly keen on integrating [the partnerships] into any subject, any programme or even making interdisciplinary learning projects’ (Teacher of Art and Design, The Gordon Schools). The partnerships most relevant to art and design include collaborations with the Scottish Sculpture Workshop and Deveron Projects.

The teacher acknowledged that growing up in a small town like Huntly ‘isn’t exactly Glasgow. So, you are not going to be exposed to [certain] things unless they’re actively brought in’, noting that ‘having an organisation like Deveron Projects or the Scottish Sculpture Workshop that can bring in people for their own reasons is advantageous to both the schools and the organisations’. It was noted that a lack of funds was being felt within the school, particularly within the last couple of years. As the school has a diverse student profile and they teach in an inclusive environment, partnering with the likes of Scottish Sculpture Workshop is advantageous for arts organisations, who can also list a local school on their funding applications.

‘We’ve got to be aware of [arts organisations’ priorities, but having them on hand in an environment where there’s just not much funding is invaluable’ (Teacher of Art and Design, The Gordon Schools).

Though the partnerships were certainly at the forefront of the conversation, the teacher was keen to note that ‘the team of staff and the school’s ethos plays a big role in the success of the school’. They noted that they felt one of the greatest successes recently has been ‘just doing the best that we can to get [the students] through the pandemic’ (Teacher of Art and Design, The Gordon Schools). Like many schools throughout Scotland, the Gordon Schools were functioning entirely in person pre-pandemic and they were then required to switch to a blended style of learning with ‘limited resources due to the varying home circumstances of pupils’ (Teacher of Art and Design, The Gordon Schools).

9.1.3 The art room as a restful and exciting place

The teacher observed that ‘pupils often look forward to art lessons because the practical subject breaks up academic ones on their schedule’, adding that ‘in art, self-expression and creativity are often key, which [is] exciting’ (Teacher of Art and Design, The Gordon Schools) to students.

‘Art is classed as an “expressive art” in schools and there is an element of performance to it. In trying new skills beside their peers, pupils have moments of performance where they could succeed or fail. This can be exciting, intimidating, frustrating but ultimately rewarding’ (Teacher of Art and Design, The Gordon Schools).

9.1.4 Transitioning to secondary school

For learners with Additional Support Needs (ASN), the Gordon Schools described themselves in their role as essentially a ‘bridge into school life’. An example of this was a group of students who were struggling to transition to secondary school. The teacher noted that ‘establishing a good relationship based on unconditional positive regard’ is a key factor in gaining student trust and encouraging the students to form relationships with other members of staff. Outdoor learning is also a primary aspect of transitioning to secondary school at The Gordon Schools; both Deveron Projects and the teacher at The Gordon Schools emphasised the success of one of their recent collaborations, where a group of learners were able to participate in a wax-pouring workshop with the artist, Caroline Wendling, at Deveron Projects with equipment lent by the Scottish Sculpture Workshop.

‘They loved it. [They talked about it] for weeks after. And they [continue to visit] Deveron Projects’ garden at lunch and say hi to them’ (Teacher of Art and Design, The Gordon Schools).

The teacher highlighted that the fine motor skills involved in art allow students to practice failure as a means of learning. This was identified as something that can present a barrier ‘when integrating back into school amongst peers who are ahead of them in their learning’ (Teacher of Art and Design, The Gordon Schools). The students’ ongoing connection has allowed them to practice...
several other skills including communication, social skills and respect.

The staff at Deveron Projects highlighted that one of the amazing aspects to come out of this project was how comfortable the students became spending time in the space at Deveron Projects. They described the experience, noting that the students felt they could decide what they wanted to do, and ‘felt like they could come and go’ (Staff, Deveron Projects). The staff at Deveron Projects pointed out that, unusually, the learners had the confidence to then ask for coffee while there, and one student even asked for a job.

They added that they felt the experience was as much about the skills as it was about becoming independent and feeling like they could have some autonomy.

As the teacher we spoke to described, there was also an especially strong supportive ethos within the art department itself. This was manifested in a space that was perceived to be both restful and exciting to students. The importance of this was recognised and the teacher went as far as suggesting that creating a space for students to explore is part of the teacher’s responsibility to their students.

The ‘safe space’ concept continued into the experience of learners at Deveron Projects. As the staff members at Deveron Projects revealed, the benefits of this project went far beyond the technical art skills learned. The students were able to practice necessary communication skills within an environment in which they felt independent and autonomous in their decisions and actions.
9.2 Case study 2
Bernat Klein Foundation, Hawick

Interview with a Trustee of the Bernat Klein Foundation, 7 July 2021

In this case study, one of the trustees of the Bernat Klein Foundation describes the establishment of their organisation and how they made the changes necessary to excel throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. We hear about the work they have done with an online offer and their contingency plans for the future.

‘Our principal asset is the legacy of Bernat Klein himself.’
Trustee, Bernat Klein Foundation

9.2.1 Bernat Klein

Bernat Klein was a Serbian artist, colourist and textile designer known for his distinctive mohair and tweed textiles inspired by the landscapes of Scotland. Having studied at Leeds University following World War II, Bernat Klein made his way to Scotland where he founded his business in the Scottish Borders in the early 1950s.

9.2.2 The foundation

Following Bernat Klein’s death in 2014, there was an interest in forming a foundation to celebrate Klein’s legacy and ultimately to give him the ‘recognition that he deserved’ (Trustee, Bernat Klein Foundation). As the trustee described, ‘nothing had ever been done in the Borders to recognise and celebrate the work and the scale of work’ (Trustee, Bernat Klein Foundation) that Bernat Klein had created throughout his lifetime. With funding provided by the William Grant Foundation (WGF) they gained charitable status in December 2018. Though their main headquarters are based in Glasgow, the organisation works across Scotland and internationally including current partners such as Live Borders, Borders Textile Towerhouse, Heriot-Watt University’s School of Textiles and Design, Borders College, Glasgow School of Art, the National Museum of Scotland as well as Trinity Primary School and Burnfoot Community School in the town of Hawick. The foundation has used Bernat Klein’s legacy as a catalyst to promote, advance and further the foundation’s charitable aims that hopes to ‘increase public engagement and understanding of not only Bernat Klein’s work but also to foster and inspire future generations’ creativity across Scotland’.34

9.2.3 Programming a funded project: ‘The Creative and Cultural Legacy of Bernat Klein’

‘[We have] achieved more than we thought we were going to actually achieve initially. When you write a funding application, you think, right, we’ll go do A, B, and C. And that’s no problem. And we’ll write the timetable. And that will be that … But actually, I think we’ve done a lot more. Because of Covid.’
Trustee, Bernat Klein Foundation

In early 2019, pre-Covid, the foundation began designing the project and were going to deliver workshops and talks to Heriot-Watt University students, the general public, as well as workshops with Border College students and primary school children at two schools in the Scottish Borders town of Hawick. The trustee described the town as ‘traditionally textile-dominated in the past’ and noted that there had been ‘fantastic reception from the teachers’ for these workshops. In the initial development, they had engaged two local artists to develop the resources and the briefs for the school workshops. Unfortunately, their opening event at the Border Textile Towerhouse and the workshops with the primary schools were planned to take place the week following the government’s decision to enter lockdown due to Covid-19 and were therefore cancelled.

At the time, the foundation had a sense of optimism and was keen to make new plans so that they could come through the initial lockdown to deliver their plans face-to-face. However, due to extended Covid situation, they began to explore digital delivery, and in conversation with funders (WGF and the National Lottery Heritage Fund) they were able to shift towards online workshops and website development. The funders also gave them an extension for the colleges and schools programme which took place in person, in September and October 2021.

Ultimately hoping to utilise some of their initial plans, the foundation produced some digital workshops targeted at university students as well as the general public. The workshops that they presented were described as not ‘purely about a passive engagement, someone sitting at one side presenting’ (Trustee, Bernat Klein Foundation). They encouraged participants to sign up in small groups and had everyone do preparatory work. A resource pack was also made accessible prior to the workshop.

Participants were asked to pick a garment that meant something to them, photograph it and upload onto a shared online platform before commencing the workshop. During the workshop, participants were asked to speak about their garment, and through the ‘mechanism of them talking about … [and] showing that garment or accessory, the workshop deliverers were able to then speak about the work of Bernat Klein, which included themes running through his work such as colour, individuality, memory and materiality’ (Trustee, Bernat Klein Foundation).

It was noted that this method of delivery for the online workshops that took place through Zoom ‘worked really well’. This sort of innovative approach to online learning occurred across the world during 2020 and is highlighted here to illustrate the potential that is offered by digital engagement, even for practical topics such as fashion design.

While the foundation was keen to provide in-person workshops at the two designated primary schools in Hawick in September and October 2021, the trustee noted that they had been working with the artists they have commissioned as well as with the schools on a contingency plan. This plan followed a similar method to the previously successful online workshops. Should they have needed to remain in an online format, the foundation, and the artists they work with would provide worksheets and support materials for the teachers to deliver to their pupils. The trustee noted that they would set up a meeting with the teachers beforehand to discuss how the day would work. Workshop delivery would start in the morning with the artists introducing the pupils to the work of Bernat Klein, followed by morning and afternoon sessions with the teachers using the worksheets to guide the children through activities. These would only be used if the artists were unable to gain access to the schools because of Covid restrictions.

‘From our perspective, I think it’s forced us to use our imagination a bit more and especially when we designed the funding application for … the digital project’
Trustee, Bernat Klein Foundation

The foundation was awarded money from Creative Scotland in February 2021 to develop their digital offer. While this digital project has just started taking shape, the foundation is...
working with partners like the Border Textile House Museum, the National Museum of Scotland, and Heriot-Watt University. All three of these organisations hold archives of Bernat Klein’s work and through the project the foundation will look at uploading newly created digital content as well as archived items to be accessed digitally to support the workshops planned. They are also working to develop their website to be more user and learner friendly. This eagerness to partner with schools and the general public indicates the potential of ways that learning programmes can continue to be supported, despite external pressures.

9.2.4 Future development ideas

The trustee also mentioned that they are keen to connect with and go into communities that may have not heard of Bernat Klein and potentially don’t have access to galleries and museums locally. When asked about the kind of support needed to achieve this kind of work, the trustee highlighted a theme that has been consistent throughout this report: funding is always needed. They specifically noted that they would be keen to see a funding stream that would allow them to bring their workshops and events across Scotland into different community settings through a roadshow of some kind. Despite the success of their online work thus far, it was evident that face-to-face work was valued, with the trustee noting: ‘I think we do still need to do real, live face-to-face activities.’

9.2.5 Headlines

Bernat Klein Foundation case study

The learning opportunity presented by the case of the Bernat Klein Foundation is linked to the resilience of the organisation and the adaptability of its supporters.

Although their adaptability was galvanised by the limitations of Covid-19, the organisation’s good management, partnership working and excellent communication with their funding body provide good examples of ways that learning programmes can continue to be supported, despite external pressures.

The organisation’s resilience proved highly beneficial in its jump to online programming and its innovative approach to online delivery is one that could be useful to other organisations or schools to replicate. The combination of providing physical items like a resource pack, or encouraging participants to bring their own props to the virtual workshop, stood out.

In addition to this, the organisation’s ongoing conversations with the two primary schools in Hawick provided another example of the benefits of good communication. The organisation’s plans to provide a pre-workshop seminar for teachers, should they be required to deliver the workshop online, is an excellent method to use.

9.3 Case study 3

The Edinburgh Sculpture Workshop, Edinburgh

Interview with the Curator of Learning, Edinburgh Sculpture Workshop, 15 July 2021

In this case study, the Curator of Learning at the Edinburgh Sculpture Workshop discusses their schools programme. We hear about the approaches they took as they established the programme and how the programme is doing 10 years down the line.

9.3.1 The Edinburgh Sculpture Workshop

Located in the community of Newhaven in Edinburgh, Edinburgh Sculpture Workshop describes itself as “open to anyone interested in learning about or making sculpture”.35 The organisation resides in its own purpose-built space meant to provide a working environment for artists and a resource for the local community.

Edinburgh Sculpture Workshop aims to ‘support artists in many different ways, providing subsidised studios, open access to affordable workspaces and specialist facilities as well as training and professional development’.36 It provides a unique environment for organisations and community groups who want to make use of the facilities for their own programmes. Its learning programme includes courses, tailored workshops and skills training as well as free public programming consisting of talks, exhibitions and tours.

As an organisation, they see partnerships as very important. They currently have agreements in place with the University of Edinburgh and Edinburgh College. They also work regularly with arts, community and education organisations.

9.3.2 The schools programme

‘The children become artists as they learn totally new ways to see things and think about art. The outcomes are amazing’

Professional Artist, Scottish Borders, on the Edinburgh Sculpture Workshop

Edinburgh Sculpture Workshop’s schools programme started in 2012, the same year that they opened their new building. The organisation highlights that all its programmes are ‘artist-led’ and are ‘designed to encourage experimentation and shape new ways of learning whilst promoting the value of engagement with the arts’.37 Their approach is based on building ‘long-term relationships with groups and individuals which reflects the way in which artists’ practice and meaningful public participation develops’.38 The Curator of Learning at Edinburgh Sculpture Workshop discussed the establishment of the schools programme, noting that from the outset, they were keen to make contacts locally and to build partnerships and relationships so that the facility could be a space for everyone within the community to use.

They currently work with two local primary schools, Victoria Primary School and Trinity Primary School. Both schools are within walking distance of the Edinburgh Sculpture Workshop’s facilities. Upon having conversations with the teachers in the area, Edinburgh Sculpture Workshop agreed that Primary 5 would be a good age group for this because the students are still inquisitive and open and because there is more flexibility in school timetabling before the busier later years.
The original model was loosely based on an education programme at Cubitt, where students were brought in for an hour a week for a whole school year. The whole philosophy was about having that ‘long-term engagement, as opposed to just coming in and doing one thing then going again’. Through these local partnerships, the Edinburgh Sculpture Workshop now works with 100+ pupils each year. As the organisation’s website describes, the pupils are considered ‘residents of the sculpture workshop for the year’ and are given a sustained and in-depth introduction to the visual arts.

In the first term, the students are given the chance to build ‘a strong foundation’. They are introduced to ‘various art movements, terminologies and ideas’. They are also encouraged to develop their conceptual, creative and practical skills. In second and third terms, the students meet a faculty of visiting artists who ‘work with them on a series of projects that run for a number of weeks’ (Curator of Learning, Edinburgh Sculpture Workshop).

9.3.3 Successes

When asked about their greatest success in the schools programme, the Curator of Learning detailed the experience of one student in particular. This student had previously struggled in the classroom setting and it was observed that the student was responding well to the studio environment.

‘They kind of [came] into this environment, a studio environment where they’re able to make their own decisions and experiment and try things on. And there’s no fear of failure.’

Curator of Learning, Edinburgh Sculpture Workshop

The Curator of Learning noted that this experience is often a time for the teachers to see their pupils in a different way, suggesting that there is an opportunity to ‘bring out the best in people’ and understand that ‘we don’t all fit into a [specific] model’. In general, at the Edinburgh Sculpture workshop, they actively encourage this as ‘the teachers are very much a part of the process as well’, highlighting that they ‘insist on [teachers] participating in all the workshops’. In this case, the teacher was really perceptive and could see that [the student] was really responding. Fortunately, this teacher stayed with this student for two years after Primary 5 and was ‘really able to … put in mechanisms in the way that they taught that would help this young person in a different way’.

The example given by the Curator of Learning involved the student undertaking an artistic project, then using that creative work as an opportunity to either write or discuss it. For this student, this method provided the basis for using art as a tool to explore other topics, ultimately allowing them to tap ‘into that imaginative space and finding other ways of bringing other things out’. The Curator of Learning revealed that the student had revisited the Edinburgh Sculpture Workshop just before going to high school and the organisation learned that the student had since set up a garden in their school along with a couple of other different positive actions. The closing of this story illustrated the growth this student was able to achieve. The Curator of Learning described the student as ‘flourishing … in a different way’.

9.3.4 The importance of communication and teacher ‘buy-in’

The Curator of Learning suggested that they had ‘been really lucky’ at the Edinburgh Sculpture Workshop as the teachers had been ‘extremely supportive of what [they] do’. They were also keen to note that the success of the programme truly depended on ‘building relationships … and trust with the schools, the teachers and the headteachers’. They noted that ‘the teachers see it as professional development as well because they’re getting to see so many different artists’ practices and ways of making and doing’.

Edinburgh Sculpture Workshop try to show a combination of more specific methods that require the use of a studio and others that are easily transferrable to the classroom or can be easily adapted. They quantified this, noting that because of the nature of the programme (specifically its length), they are able to get to know the teachers (and students) well, which helps in their ability to provide this kind of engagement for both students and teachers.

‘If we could show the buy-in from the schools, that really helps with the application’

Curator of Learning, Edinburgh Sculpture Workshop

It was mentioned that funding was often difficult to obtain because this is an existing programme. The Curator of Learning suggested teacher buy-in was beneficial to the organisation long term. Initially, through funding provided by Creative Scotland and then later the Robertson Trust, the organisation was able to run the programme free of charge for the first five years. They recalled having to go to the schools in the fifth year of the programme to ask them for a small contribution, highlighting that while it was ‘minimal in terms of how much it costs to run the programme’, it was important to show interest from the schools.
Beyond this, some teachers have since asked to bring their classes back to the studio space for their own projects, with one school asking the organisation to run a ‘morning nurture programme’ for them. This kind of investment is important to the organisation in the long term as it illustrates ‘how much they value it and how important it is to them’ (Curator of Learning, Edinburgh Sculpture Workshop).

9.3.5 Headlines

Edinburgh Sculpture Workshop case study

There were many reasons the schools programme at the Edinburgh Sculpture Workshop worked well. As the Curator of Learning suggested, they were incredibly lucky to have two local primary schools within walking distance, but there are other aspects that have ultimately led to the success of the programme and may therefore be useful and replicable to other organisations or schools.

To start, the organisation seemed to approach the idea of collaboration with open arms, emphasising that its space is meant to be a resource to the local community. Within that, the choice to approach the programme with a philosophy of year-long engagement at its core has led to engagement that has incredible depth for students as well as teachers. Encouraging teachers to participate and use the time in the workshop as part of their professional development addressed the issue of lack of time in a unique way, that also established all-around respect for and interest in what the experience could ultimately provide.

The ability to have such long engagement depended on a number of other factors including funding (which we know is a consistent issue within the sector) as well as establishing a strong dialogue with the local schools. In terms of communication, as the Curator of Learning described, the Edinburgh Sculpture Workshop worked with teachers prior to the start of the programme to establish which groups of pupils the programme would best benefit. This communication remained strong throughout the 10 years of the programme’s running. Agreeing on the approach and expectations of the programme beforehand was crucial to having all participants feeling satisfied.

The programme itself also had features which were considered highly beneficial by both students and educators, including the creation of a space and a pocket of time that allowed students to explore their own creativity, as well as allowing the students to be treated as ‘residents’ of the sculpture workshop. These assets ultimately gave students a sense of authority and ownership over their experience.
10.0 Drawing conclusions

Our study sought to explore the landscape of contemporary visual art and design education in Scotland, specifically seeking to identify best practice and barriers that can aid in the development of new approaches to support schools, teachers and pupils to engage more confidently with contemporary visual art and design and the visual arts sector. The findings of our study add to a growing body of research investigating areas related to expressive arts education in Scotland. Beyond this, the evidence and insights generated by this study give us a much more detailed understanding of the experiences of a wide variety of educators, allowing us to reflect upon the current provision and to suggest ways the support could be enhanced in order to encourage more confident engagement between schools, teachers and pupils and the visual arts sector in Scotland. This section summarises our key findings and offers recommended actions to support contemporary visual art and design education.
10.1 Reflecting on the key findings of this study

10.1.1 What’s happening in schools

Visual arts educators in schools and beyond know the impact and benefits of studying art and design. Our survey respondents discussed a wide variety of skills and benefits derived from studying this subject and their responses indicated a good balance between skills and benefits, with most highlighting a combination of both in their responses. Of the skills identified, educators tended to highlight a variety of transferable skills.

For students, the creative atmosphere of the art classes themselves and the pastoral support received in that space were what was appreciated. The issue that remained related to not having those understandings shared by wider audiences. The respondents to our survey and the young people in our focus group were extremely aware of the effect of a persistent social bias against pursuing a career in the arts or creative industries.

The inconsistency identified at the BGE level and the strong focus on teaching for examinations in the senior phase emphasised the general feeling of being restricted by the curriculum and the exam system as it stands. There were major concerns that the focus on technical skills not only stifles creativity and the ability to explore more challenging conceptual art practices, but also leads to work that is formulaic and discourages student work which is not based upon traditional skills or is more experimental. Within this, teachers reiterated feelings of the subject being undervalued, especially in comparison to other subjects, particularly those in STEM.

These feelings of being undervalued were compounded by feelings of being under-resourced and under-supported as well. There was a general sense of being ill equipped with most kinds of resources. In terms of access to training, lack of funding, lack of time and lack of specific practical media, material and technical training were highlighted.

The feeling that there was a lack of awareness from the Scottish Government in terms of what teachers and schools actually require to deliver success in this subject was combined with a major variance in perception of support from different support bodies as well as local authorities and Creative Learning Networks. Arts organisations (e.g., galleries) also demonstrated a disparity in terms of access to training, resources and materials.

These individual pressures faced by teachers – lack of resources, lack of support, feelings of being ‘devalued, underfunded and considered non-essential’ (Class Teacher, Glasgow), a lack of clear career development support, etc. – can be individually addressed, however, it is important to view them as aggregated, building pressures that can have significant impacts on the day-to-day lives of educators, and their ability to deliver their work effectively.

10.1.2 Engagement with the visual arts sector

The visual arts sector is perceived to be confident in its ability to deliver educational activities. Almost all respondents from the visual arts sector were aware of Scotland’s curriculum but only some explicitly used the outlined ‘experiences and outcomes’ in their planning. Those working in the visual arts sector highlighted communication with schools as the main factor inhibiting their engagement with schools.

Teachers identified a number of factors inhibiting their ability to engage students with the visual arts sector and aspects of more challenging contemporary visual art and design. These factors included the ongoing effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, a lack of curriculum-aligned activities provided by visual arts organisations and galleries, as well as issues related to administrative barriers including a lack of buy-in from senior management in schools.

All respondents identified similar approaches and desires towards working in partnership and engagement. Galleries (and other arts organisations) are perceived as positive, alternative spaces for learning; and opportunities for young people to be exposed to artists and designers in the ‘real world’ are considered highly valuable. Most respondents highlighted that working collaboratively to create individualised events and activities would be desirable. In addition, good communication was considered highly beneficial to all involved. Evidently, the visual arts sector, educators and pupils are keen to work together to achieve great things in the realm of art and design education.

10.1.3 Studying art and design

When looking at the barriers to students choosing to study Art and Design at exam level, the most common issues identified included a combination of practical, functional and attitudinal barriers. These included financial barriers, lack of time in student timetables and curriculum pressures as well as a societal undervaluing of the art leading to a perception that art is not relevant or useful. Attitudinal barriers were perceived to underpin a number of other concerns,
including the lack of focus on the potential of the STEAM approach to learning and a lower level of respect for the subject compared to STEM subjects, the lack of awareness that there are careers in the arts and a prevailing belief in the low-paid artist. These attitudinal barriers also relate to issues of representation, especially for people from ethnic minority backgrounds and other marginalised communities.

10.2 Actions to strengthen contemporary art and design education in Scotland

A number of actions that could be taken by teachers, schools and local authorities have emerged through the findings of our report. The evidence also suggests a range of supportive approaches that could be taken by arts organisations or galleries and professional artists, as well as bodies such as Engage Scotland, Creative Scotland and Education Scotland.

10.2.1 What teachers can do

We are keen to emphasise that we do not want to add more to the workload of teachers, but we are aware that many teachers don’t feel as well supported as they could be. We therefore encourage teachers to:

- Build their confidence through the development of stronger networks, to share insights and learning with others.
- Aim to work in partnership with arts organisations where possible, both locally and online. We believe that this will ease the load, as many organisations are keen to work with local communities as part of their public funding remits and are often seeking schools to partner with. The case studies demonstrate that this is possible and can enhance learning with very little extra work for the teacher.

10.2.2 What schools can do

- Encourage better relationships with arts organisations – leadership understands that these partnerships can lighten the load for teachers and can often fill gaps in resources or confidence.
- Investigate ways to streamline the administrative process for school trips and class visits, and aim to establish clearer links with arts organisations and a Covid safety procedure for cultural partnerships with schools and school gallery visits.
- Present cases for jobs within the arts sector to parents in the same way that STEM career opportunities are promoted. Understand that this work is valuable and there are valid career choices available beyond being an artist (including but not limited to: design, film, community and participatory work, art therapy, performance, music, cultural management, tourism, heritage, advertising, arts administration and conservation.)
- Most importantly, advocate for the value of art and design, not just STEM subjects.

10.2.3 What local authorities can do

- Advocate for the value of art and design, seeking to highlight how learning through art can contribute to national and local value
- Create, support and encourage more partnership and networking opportunities between schools and cultural organisations.
- Present cases for jobs within the arts sector to the community in the same way that STEM career opportunities are promoted. Understand that this work is valuable and there are valid career choices available beyond being an artist (including but not limited to: design, film, community and participatory work, art therapy, performance, music, cultural management, tourism, heritage, advertising, arts administration and conservation.)

10.2.4 What arts organisations and professional artists can do

- Continue to develop relationships with schools directly, encouraging ongoing communication
- Aim to provide insights and resources that might be lacking for teachers (and impacting on their confidence).
- Consider combining career-long professional development opportunities for teachers with engagement opportunities for young people, maximising their exposure to the arts.
- Support teachers and the visual arts sector to demystify jobs within the arts sector and ultimately tackle the notion that there are ‘no jobs’ in the arts.

10.2.5 What support bodies can do

- Make a better case about the contribution studying art and design can bring, including its value both economically and culturally to wider audiences.
- Expand the definition of employment to include design, film, community and participatory work, art therapy, performance, music, cultural management, tourism, heritage, advertising, arts administration and conservation, so that employment in the arts and creative industries can be seen as a valid career option.
- Investigate the possibility of funding specifically for encouraging
visual arts sector engagement with schools in more rural areas of Scotland.

10.3 Recommendations

In response to this study, Engage Scotland and the authors encourage the visual arts sector, sector support bodies and funders to work together to progress our recommendations:

1. Use the learning from this study to feed into consultation over wider reforms of the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) and Education Scotland:
   - Liaise with the curriculum unit at Scottish Government and key expressive arts contacts at Education Scotland to ensure that this research is seen in the right places.
   - Further collaborative work between the Curriculum Unit at the Scottish Government, Education Scotland, and Creative Scotland should consider the findings of this research alongside those of similar research in other expressive arts subjects. This work should focus on strengthening the value of expressive arts subjects in Scottish schools and recognising their wider importance and impact.

2. Advocate for better resourcing of art and design teaching in schools, specifically:
   - The need for better art materials. Explore a national method of allowing teachers to procure resources through suppliers outside of local authority contract providers.
   - Managerial support to enable teachers and pupils to benefit from learning opportunities offered by the visual arts, including gallery visits and career-long professional learning opportunities for teachers.

3. Advocate for the value of art and design education:
   - Partner with other visual arts sector support bodies such as the Scottish Contemporary Art Network (SCAN) and Scottish Artists Union (SAU) and teacher support bodies such as the National Society for Education in Art and Design (NSEAD), to tackle the undervaluing of art and design education in Scottish schools.
   - Work with sector support bodies and the wider arts education sector to present the case for learning in and through the arts, and STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, mathematics) rather than STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics).

   • Consider advocacy work with high-profile artists working in Scotland.
   • Investigate approaches to bringing professional artists into schools.

4. Commission further targeted research to address data gaps and points for further consideration highlighted here. Priority areas include:
   - The art and design education experiences of young people in Scotland, focusing on people from ethnic minority backgrounds, as well as working-class backgrounds and remote communities, as well as those in the lowest percentile of Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) communities.
   - The experiences of young people of learning through the visual arts and design in informal settings. Our research suggests that there are missed opportunities for young people to find out about informal career pathways such as apprenticeships, out-of-school experiences and other extra-curricular activities. A targeted study could explore informal access routes to art and design careers.
   - Understanding what is behind the emerging trends and fluctuations in the numbers of young people studying Art and Design at exam level and Further and Higher Education level since Creative Scotland’s Visual Arts Sector Review in 2016.
   - Investigating the perceived gap between the current Art and Design curriculum and exam structure, and the expectations of further and higher education.

5. Support communication and partnership working between the visual arts sector and schools:
   - Offer guidance for visual arts organisations and freelance artist educators to support them to better match their learning offers to what schools need.
Appendices

Appendix I: Survey questions
Appendix II: Creative workshop write-up
Appendix III: Focus group questions
Appendix IV: Skills and benefits question – full responses
Appendix I: Survey questions

1. In order to proceed with the survey please confirm the following:
   1.1. I am over 18. I am happy with the above and consent to proceed with the survey.

2. Please confirm that your work includes one of the following:
   2.1. Visual art
   2.2. Craft
   2.3. Sculpture
   2.4. Graphic design

3. Where are you currently based? (City, town or village)

4. Which local authority(ies) has your work been in, in the past two years?

5. What best describes your relationship to visual art and design education in Scotland in the last two years?

6. If you are a teacher or work for an arts organisation/gallery, please tell us your job title and school/organisation/gallery:

7. Do you work in public or private education?
   7.a. If you selected Other, please specify:

8. Which groups of students/pupils have you worked with within the last two years?
   8.a. If you selected Other, please specify:

9. What best describes the context of how you work with young people?

10. What is the format of your work with young people?
    10.a. If you selected Other, please specify:

11. In a normal year, how is your work with young people delivered?

12. To what extent do you agree you are supported to develop and deliver your educational activities by the following:
    12.1. The Scottish Government
    12.2. Education Scotland
    12.3. Engage Scotland
    12.4. Organisations/galleries
    12.5. Your school
    12.6. Creative Learning Networks
    12.7. Local authorities
    12.a. If you selected Strongly agree or Strongly disagree in response to any of these, please provide more detail:

13. To what extent do you agree you are confident to do the following with the current level of support available?
    13.1. Organise a visit to a contemporary art exhibition or arts organisation
    13.2. Invite an artist/someone from an arts organisation to visit your class
    13.3. Promote learning that is anti-racist, anti-classist, anti-sexist, anti-ableist and LGBTQIA+ friendly by developing more representative, inclusive and diverse resources/curricula
    13.4. Provide an overview of career options for students/pupils considering entering the visual art or design sector
    13.5. Use visual art or design as a method to access or understand other aspects of learning
    13.a. If you selected Strongly agree or Strongly disagree in response to any of these, please provide more detail:

14. To what extent do you agree you are adequately equipped with the following resources?
    14.1. Art and design materials for student use (e.g., paints and canvases)
    14.2. Art and design tools for student use (e.g., kiln and computers with design programmes)
    14.3. Printed material or physical examples (e.g., textbooks and prints)
    14.4. Digital tools for teaching online or in a hybrid format
    14.5. Ongoing training/resources to support your teaching of visual art and design
    14.a. If you selected Strongly agree or Strongly disagree in response to any of the above, please provide more detail:

15. If you selected Strongly agree or Strongly disagree in response to any of the above, please provide more detail:

16. Where do you typically find training and/or resources to support your teaching of visual art and design?

17. What (if anything) is lacking in the training and/or resources currently available?

18. Are you aware of career-long professional learning (CLPL) opportunities offered by local arts organisations/galleries?
    18.a. If you selected Yes, have you taken these opportunities? Please provide more detail:

19. Do you share practice/resources with other visual art and design teachers?
    19.a. If you selected Yes, what does this look like at the moment? Please provide more detail:

20. In your experience, have any issues presented themselves within the curriculum itself and the exam system that have proven challenging or have affected your ability to teach more challenging and conceptual art practice?

21. From your perspective, how well do you feel the visual art and design curriculum at school level align with the requirements of visual art and design courses at higher education institutions?
    21.1. Not aligned at all vs perfectly aligned

22. In the last two years, how often has your class visited a contemporary gallery exhibition/visual arts organisation or had a visit (in person or virtual) from a professional artist/someone working in a visual art or design organisation?
    22.a. Please give us details about the artist and venue:

23. Have there been any opportunities and/or difficulties in providing these kinds of educational activities within the context of the pandemic?

24. In a normal year, how often do you work with young people in an educational context?
    24.a. If you selected Other, please specify:

25. If you work for an arts organisation/gallery, who typically delivers your educational activities?
    25.a. If you selected Someone else, please provide more detail:

26. How (if at all) has the Curriculum for Excellence affected your approach to planning your educational activities?

27. To what extent do you agree you are confident and equipped to engage with schools with the current support available?
    27.1. As a professional artist or someone who works for an arts organisation/gallery, I…
    27.a. If you selected Strongly agree or Strongly disagree in response to any of these, please provide more detail:

28. Which art education/outreach partners do you tend to work with?
    28.a. If you selected Other, please specify:
    28.b. If you are a teacher, please give us some detail on how and why you have chosen these education/outreach partners to work with:

29. What (if any) support from the Scottish Government do you rely on to further your journey as a professional artist/teacher?

30. How (if at all) has the Scottish Government supported your work in the past two years?

31. How (if at all) has the Scottish Government helped you to adequately support your students/pupils in the past two years?

32. In what context is the Scottish Government training, and in what subject area?

33. How (if at all) has the Scottish Government helped you to adequately support your students/pupils in the past two years?

34. How (if at all) has the Scottish Government supported your work in the past two years?

35. How (if at all) has the Scottish Government helped you to adequately support your students/pupils in the past two years?

36. How (if at all) has the Scottish Government supported your work in the past two years?

37. How (if at all) has the Scottish Government helped you to adequately support your students/pupils in the past two years?

38. How (if at all) has the Scottish Government supported your work in the past two years?

39. How (if at all) has the Scottish Government helped you to adequately support your students/pupils in the past two years?

40. How (if at all) has the Scottish Government supported your work in the past two years?

41. How (if at all) has the Scottish Government helped you to adequately support your students/pupils in the past two years?

42. How (if at all) has the Scottish Government supported your work in the past two years?

43. How (if at all) has the Scottish Government helped you to adequately support your students/pupils in the past two years?

44. How (if at all) has the Scottish Government supported your work in the past two years?

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47. How (if at all) has the Scottish Government helped you to adequately support your students/pupils in the past two years?

48. How (if at all) has the Scottish Government supported your work in the past two years?

49. How (if at all) has the Scottish Government helped you to adequately support your students/pupils in the past two years?

50. How (if at all) has the Scottish Government supported your work in the past two years?

51. How (if at all) has the Scottish Government helped you to adequately support your students/pupils in the past two years?

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57. How (if at all) has the Scottish Government helped you to adequately support your students/pupils in the past two years?

58. How (if at all) has the Scottish Government supported your work in the past two years?

59. How (if at all) has the Scottish Government helped you to adequately support your students/pupils in the past two years?

60. How (if at all) has the Scottish Government supported your work in the past two years?
29. What has worked well in these arrangements/partnerships?

30. What challenges or impediments (if any) have affected these arrangements/partnerships?

31. What would make it easier for you to arrange/manage and succeed in the delivery of these arrangements/partnerships?

32. Do you have an evaluation process for educational activities in place?
   32.a. If you selected Yes, please briefly describe the steps you take:

33. What kind of support would be the most beneficial to you and how would you like to receive this support?

34. From your perspective, what do you believe are the benefits of studying contemporary visual art and design at school level?

35. How well do you feel that the visual art and design education available in schools prepares individuals to enter the visual art and design sector?
   35.1. Not at all prepared vs Extremely prepared

36. To what extent do you agree the following are barriers for young people to study visual art and design at school (and beyond)?
   36.1. Lack of quality resources in schools
   36.2. Lack of representation in artistic examples available in school leading to a lowered interest or feelings of exclusion (i.e., examples from a range of cultures, backgrounds, abilities and styles)
   36.3. Lack of time within the school timetable
   36.4. Lack of personal/family resources to pay for art or design-based extracurricular activities and/or resources in the home environment
   36.5. Lack of interest/support from parent(s), guardian(s) or within the home environment
   36.6. Lack of support or encouragement within the school for the pursuit of visual art and design careers
   36.7. Lack of information on options to study visual art and design beyond the school level available in school or the home environment
   36.a. If you selected Strongly agree or Strongly disagree in response to any of these, please provide more detail:

37. Is there something not listed above that is inhibiting, stopping or blocking you from engaging effectively with external opportunities to engage with the visual art and design sector? Please provide details.

38. To what extent do you agree the following are barriers for young people to study visual art and design at school (and beyond)?
   38.1. Lack of quality resources in schools
   38.2. Lack of representation in artistic examples available in school leading to a lowered interest or feelings of exclusion (i.e., examples from a range of cultures, backgrounds, abilities and styles)
   38.3. Lack of time within the school timetable
   38.4. Lack of personal/family resources to pay for art or design-based extracurricular activities and/or resources in the home environment
   38.5. Lack of interest/support from parent(s), guardian(s) or within the home environment
   38.6. Lack of support or encouragement within the school for the pursuit of visual art and design careers
   38.7. Lack of information on options to study visual art and design beyond the school level available in school or the home environment
   38.a. If you selected Strongly agree or Strongly disagree in response to any of these, please provide more detail:

39. Is there something not listed above that you believe is inhibiting, stopping or blocking young people from engaging with visual art and design in school and/or continuing visual art and design in higher levels of education? Please provide details.

40. An example from within the school system in Scotland?

41. An example from working in partnership with external providers in Scotland?

42. An example in education elsewhere in the world?

43. Is there anything else you would like to add about issues affecting visual art and design education in Scotland?

44. Can a member of our research team follow up with you by email to discuss your examples or perspectives further, if we decide to research something you’ve mentioned as a case study?
   44.a. Here is the best email to reach me at:
Appendix II: Creative workshop write-up

Students from The Gordon Schools, Huntly, 21 June 2021

Aims
To explore with students their contemporary art and design education via creative workshops, with the hope of exploring different expressions and insights about this education.

Methodology
There are an abundance of texts that contextualise, problematise and explain creative practice research, as well as making a case that arts-based methods are valid methodologies to uncover tacit and affective insights about the world.41 However, it is important to address one of the main accusations made against such research, which is often said to lack ‘rigour and systematic inquiry’42. Whilst rigour and systematisation might be important within empiricist or rationalist frameworks, artistic research and its insights are not couched in such paradigms, and as such are not of epistemological concern. As Sullivan suggests: “To continue to borrow research methods from other fields denies the intellectual maturity of art practice as a plausible basis for raising significant life questions and as a viable site for exploring important cultural and educational ideas.”43 Indeed, artistic work functions best when it is disruptive; when it provides frameworks to ‘think difference’; when it is surprising; when it ‘transforms understanding’.44 As such, the creative workshops undertaken as part of this study did not aim to replicate existing traditional humanities research paradigms but rather intrinsically value the ways in which artistic works can provide affective insights which make ‘new solutions visible’ and emotionally accessible.45 Creative practice research is therefore not useful in the sense of providing universal facts, but rather, in giving insights into the individualised, unique and connected world in which we live. It can reveal and expose nuance and reflective insight, and as such, provides an extra layer to the overarching methodological approach of this mapping research.

Methods
Using the metaphor of ‘mapping’, the workshops asked young people to think imaginatively about not only their future, but also how their art and design education has or has not equipped them to navigate this future. It began with a framing presentation by the researcher (Schrag), and introduced the materials – Victorian A0-sized maps of Perthshire. These maps were donated to the researcher, and while not of the exact location, did replicate the farming and agrarian similarities of the locality (Huntly, Aberdeenshire).
Students were then invited to discuss with others what their ‘future map’ might contain. For example, might it include the steep cliffs of family? A long road of artmaking? A deep ocean of money? A lake of taxes? Rivers of creativity? A swamp of a career? Students were encouraged to be creative and to draw onto an individual map, sketching out this future, adding or subtracting any elements they felt necessary. Once students had completed their imaginative maps, they were then encouraged to consider adding a legend that would be comprised of tools derived from their art and design education. For example, creative thinking, craft skills, technical skills. They were also asked to consider what skills they might be lacking. Images of these maps are below.

Limitations
The hour-long creative workshops only covered two classes – one group of National 5, and one Year 2 group. While both groups obviously enjoyed the activity, the age groups might indicate that the understanding of what skills or tools one might need for one’s future life might not be as fully developed as in older students. As such, the findings present quite idealised and abstracted notions from the young people. Similarly, there was only a combined participant number of 25 students in a single school – these therefore don’t provide an exceptionally representative sample of the population of Scotland, especially considering that we did not gather data as to whether any of the young people were from ethnic minority backgrounds, working-class or other marginalised groups, or if any of the students had specific access needs. As such, these findings need to contextualised as being both limited to particular ages, demographics and insights; however, they can still be read as useful reflections from this particular subset of students on contemporary art and design education.

Findings and discussion

1. Future self
Almost all the young people were effective in using creative practices to visualise and map out a desired future, indicating aspirations to go on to higher education (‘veterinary school’; ‘college’; ‘university’); career goals (‘work in video games industry’); or other future activities (‘travelling on a gap year after school’). These visual representations highlighted that the young people were able to utilise both imagination and creativity – as well as art and design tools such as drawing and sketching – to express their hopes for their individual futures, even from a young age. It was interesting to note that many young people reflected their local contexts of the agricultural and offshore industries, and this further underpinned the connection between their imaginative expressions and their specific contexts.

There were, of course, fantastical ideas that manifested in wishing to have helipads, mansions, castles or extended commercial empires, however, the vast majority presented realistic and achievable goals, and even the more fanciful expressions were imbued with creative thinking skills taught within art and design education. For example, one participant expressed his desire to own an offshore oil rig empire, but also included in this alternative energy options (‘geothermal heat’) that offered creative and imaginative responses to a problem (climate change), and also demonstrated design thinking (presenting multiple options).

While not related to this study, it is interesting that nearly over half of the students included airports in their maps of their future: this might be a response to the recent lockdown year brought on by Covid, or speak to a wider, global outlook.

2. Creative skills
On top of their creative map, students were asked to develop a legend that highlighted the skills, tools and insights they might need to reach these imaginary futures. Two students identified that they would probably like to go on to study art and/or design specifically within higher education, and recognised the hard skills learnt within art and design education were important (‘knowledge of art’; ‘drawing skills’). While it can be expected that only a very small percentage of young people would go on to to be artists, their maps did include a recognition – albeit implicit – that the types of skills that they were learning were transferable to other creative sectors. These included the media and video games industries (‘Helpful for being able to create character development for video games’); heritage (‘craft shop’ on a farm) or even fashion (‘cosplay’ and ‘costume design studio’).

It was clear there were concerns from some young people about taking up a specific career within art and design (‘Broke Starving Artist’ crossed out) and whether there is potential to make a clearer link between the art and design education and the multiple potentialities of these skills beyond ‘just’ being an artist. It was also clear, however, that many recognised that these skills can be applied within other (‘non-creative’) sectors – for example the young person above who presented a creative thinking response to climate change and the offshore oil industry (‘interconnection thinking’ or ‘have a bigger imagination’). There was an awareness, too, that learning such skills can be hard, but is necessary (‘repeating things is sometimes boring, but helps to see new details’).
It was also not immediately obvious that the skills learned within art and design education were directly being acknowledged: for example, there was a young person who described in great detail a complex post-apocalyptic narrative involving her future career as a forensic scientist in Florida after it had been devastated by nuclear war. While art and design education in Scotland perhaps could not contribute much to surviving such a scenario, it was clear that she very much enjoyed thinking creatively, and the workshop itself (like art classes) was where she got to stretch her imagination. In this way, it was clear that general soft skills such as imagination and creativity were not only being applied but also valued.

3. Personal skills and positive experiences

Beyond content specific to art and design, a significant portion of young people identified their art and design classes as a place to develop personal skills. Within the legends of their maps, young people recognised that their art and design classes were a ‘place where I can just be me’; where they ‘let emotions out in drawing’; and ‘got to express myself.’ The mental health benefits of these spaces are therefore not to be underplayed, especially considering current stresses on young people: ‘Lets you be open and released’; ‘gives distance from the real world’; ‘calming’ and a place to get ‘support.’ Other personal skills not directly related to art and design education – ‘confidence’, ‘never giving up’, ‘connections’ or ‘patience’ – were also identified as skills they developed.

As a calm and fun environment that nurtured friendships, the art and design education classroom itself was identified as a significantly important place to the young people as a space for development. This suggests that the very creative atmosphere of the art classes themselves – as well as the content – could also be providing significant development opportunities for young people.
The creative workshop

For the young people involved in this small, short study, it is clear that:

- Art and design education can teach creative and imaginative problem-solving skills that are useful within the domain of art and design, and there is a (tacit) awareness of the transferable nature of art and design skills to other creative sectors, as well as other ‘non-creative’ fields.
- Young people going on to study art and design in higher education value the hard skills (drawing, sketching etc.) as well as the more conceptual skills taught within these subjects.
- Imagination and creativity are valued intrinsically.
- The ‘space’ of art and design education (both the conceptual space of the subject, but also the physical classrooms) offer a space to develop personal skills beyond those specifically taught as part of the curriculum.
- Similarly, the mental health and pastoral support gained from participating in these classrooms was highly valued by the young people.

Appendix III: Focus group questions

1. When you look back on your experience, what do you think you have taken away from it – what are the benefits to you, long term?
2. Can you think of any particular moments that stand out to you in your school career where you felt like things worked out really well, for example you were able to connect with a gallery or an artist? This could also be a project or lesson that really resonated with you.
3. How have you found the transition from secondary school to further education? Do you feel the curriculum at that level aligned with the requirements of your current degree?
4. Have you ever felt like something was blocking or inhibiting you from participating and/or pursuing visual art and design? Some examples could be:
   - Not having enough or good enough supplies in the home environment or within the school environment
   - School not having artistic examples that made you feel represented or welcome
   - Not having time within your school timetable to take the subject
   - Not feeling supported by your family and/or the school because art is not seen as a viable career choice in society
   - Feeling like there is a lack of information about career options in the arts
   - Anything else you could think of
5. What do you think would have made your experience better?
6. Is there anything else you would like to add?
Appendix IV: Skills and benefits question – full responses

Below are the full responses to Question 34 of the survey: From your perspective, what do you believe are the benefits of studying contemporary visual art and design at school level?

1. It gives children a rounded experience. It is important as a foundation to develop the artists and designers of the future. However, art education develops so many other skills. It teaches people how to problem solve. The world has a lot of problems to solve right now, so we need to be developing these skills. Employers want their staff to be creative thinkers, but I fear that we are not developing those skills in schools.
2. It often engages youngsters who would not necessarily be engaged in academic subjects. It is increasingly involved in mental health recovery. It allows people at all levels to think outside the box, encourages creative thinking, aids motor control. Increases self-esteem.
3. It creates individual thinkers that question and respond to the world around them. All children can access the curriculum through Art. There are no failures or wrong answers. Taught properly, it builds confidence in young people.
4. Problem solving, independent thinking, confidence building, communication skills, resilience, enjoyment.
5. Contemporary art and design are vital in supporting our students to have conversations about contemporary issues, [and] also give them questioning and thinking and creative skills for their future life.
6. Learners can use art to discuss issues and debates in contemporary society. It opens up a world of culture to them and for them to have less of a narrow view of what art can be. They can also see that art and design and visual thinking is all around and that the creative industries are a valid career path.
7. This type of education is wide reaching and impacts on most other areas of study.
8. It opens up opportunities to pupils that they otherwise may not be aware of.
9. Increased creativity and critical awareness.
10. **Creative education is the key to understanding the world** which we love, for all ages. Contemporary art is a challenge and makes students ask questions.
11. I feel the benefits are: pupils are able to be more aware of their surroundings and make meaning from this. Also getting them into the practice of thinking like an artist and the transferable skills within that.
12. It provides children with a broad perspective on differences and similarities across cultures and helps them make more sense of their own. It helps them to develop an open-minded, questioning approach to their world.
13. It lays down the foundation of skills essential in various other career paths, which are not necessarily associated with art and design. For example, pupils build personal resilience and inventiveness when problem solving, as well as developing fine motor skills through drawing and observational studies.
14. Pupils learn about how everything around them has had the input of an artist or designer at some point in the manufacturing.
15. It is one of the only experiences you can have in a school of taking an idea from conception to fruition. It develops high order thinking, such as problem solving, analysing, evaluating. It delivers creativity, independence, critical thinking, persistently considered key skills for industry now and in the future.
16. Our creative industries are expanding and those creative jobs are not going to be filled by children that play Fortnite [video games] for eight hours per day, but by people who have learnt to think creatively.
17. Skills like drawing and observation. Also problem solving and creativity.
18. Learning problem solving and resilience.
19. It helps pupils to become individuals, builds their self-esteem and belief and helps them to communicate their ideas, use their creativity. Builds on their skills and how to work alongside classmates and appreciate the work of others.
20. Too broad to put into words.
22. Critical thinking, problem-solving skills, creativity, imagination, skills linking to wider world of work, individuality.
23. I am committed to providing a breadth of experiences in school as different pupils connect to different media; ideas; artforms etc. Studying contemporary art and design would be one element of my inclusive practice.
24. Problem solving, expressing ideas and emotions, developing new creative approaches.
25. At present there are no benefits to the teacher teaching it or students passing their exam unless they change the curriculum which is the SQA. I can see huge benefits to the way young people think and have championed more contemporary art at school level for years. Most teachers I know haven’t made any of their own art for years and are clueless about contemporary art and what it
means. Changes would have to be made at teacher training level and older teachers retrained.

26. Creativity across the curriculum.

27. Development of creative thinking and problem-solving skills, which is now lacking due to the Scottish push on STEM ... why have we not moved to STEAM like other worldwide education approaches moved to during the mid 2000s? Development of justified opinions about their practice and the practice of others. Developing understanding and appreciation of other cultures, religions and personal views. Allowing young people’s minds to develop outside the logical, linear thought process.

28. Cover a variety of experiences and outcomes through projects.


30. The promotion of creativity and creative thinking, transcending multiple and interdisciplinary activities and promoting transferable skills ... supporting mental health and self-expression, improving discursive and analytical skills, developing workplace skills, developing visual literacy, building and developing problem-solving skills, time and task management skills, presentation skills, communication skills across verbal and non-verbal forums ... links to industry, wider world context ... I could go on and on ...

31. Creativity is key. Students who can think outside the box and who use creativity in problem solving are what employers are looking for. Embedding creative thinking into all elements of school develops successful learners for life.

32. Cultural awareness. Development of personal views. Awareness of traditions and techniques. Ability to converse with peers and share ideas and concepts. Mental health awareness (looking at artists who have health issues). Relate to history, politics and cultural changes and perceptions in society.

33. Opening up critical thinking, problem solving, relevant issues to the youth we teach.

34. Problem solving, team building, thinking creatively, learning new skills, building on skills, fine motor skills, communication.


36. Joy, personal expression, problem solving, creative thinking, respect for skills of others...

37. It allows pupils a chance to be involved in a creative process and produce artwork that inspires them to delve further into a journey of experimentation, creativity and self-expression. Not being afraid to make mistakes and embrace the ‘what ifs’ in life.

38. Prepare them for real-life circumstances, be it art school or thinking creatively.

39. An appreciation of contemporary visual arts allows for pupils to develop a more rounded world view. Contemporary visual art allows students to experience other cultures, ideas, world views and opinions that they may not otherwise be exposed to. Studying contemporary visual arts promotes enquiry skills, creative thinking, analytical skills, research skills and critical reflection, all skills that are vital in our ever-changing labour market. Visual arts education supports students with their health and wellbeing, allowing students to develop their communication skills and interpersonal skills.

40. Many transferable skills in creativity, problem solving etc., which can be used in any career path. Pupil engagement and enjoyment in the course is also a big factor.

41. Concepts of personal expression and identity are relevant to the development of teenagers. Contemporary art and design is filled with examples of this. It’s also a brilliant way of tying together cross-curricular subjects into one project – i.e., history and modern studies, and health and wellbeing as background to specific works.

42. Develop a greater awareness of the world around you – how art and design impacts us everyday; develops a sense of independence, perseverance, problem solving.

43. Useful for building imagination, criticality and confidence.

44. Feel-good factor, visual skill, creative thinking, problem solving, determination, fail and fix, perseverance, style of learning, wellbeing, fun, pleasure, acceptance, alternative approaches.

45. Develops concentration and dexterity skills. Encourages problem solving and creativity. Helps pupils to think outside the box and respond to the world around them.

46. Stimulating, an outlet for expression and personality coming through.

47. We cover a large area of artists and designers but not as much from the more contemporary artists and styles as I would like.

48. Pupils can hone their problem-solving skills and express themselves through art and design practice, as well as gaining a more concrete understanding of visual communication that is part of all facets of life. Making things in a tactile way gives pupils a sense of achievement and improves mental health.

49. Gives pupils an insight into the bigger picture of what art is all about. Gives them the chance to see works of art in real life, that they may only have seen in books. Gives them the chance to travel out of their local area. Gives them the opportunity to look at art and talk about it, when it is right in front of them. Developing the language to speak about art can help in life. Talking about works of art help with confidence.
50. I believe it creates a broader perspective of the creative process, as so many young people only seem to value their own art if it is analytically accurate and representational. Contemporary art also encourages lively discussion and debate among students.

51. It is essential that children learn how to understand and communicate through the visual language that is taught through art and design classes. It is as essential as teaching children to read and write, since contemporary life is vastly mediated by digital devices that employ visual content mainly for consumption. If we fail to provide children with the skills to communicate through visual language, we are conditioning them to be passive consumers with limited agency to reply, contest, argue or convince others.

52. Development of creative thinking and problem solving in all school pupils. We have instigated a new Level 6 qualification in creative thinking, in partnership with Napier University.

53. Self-expression, discovering different career routes, creative skills benefit all areas of the curriculum and careers.

54. Skills development for pupils. Careers element, i.e., meeting artists who are making a living from their practice.

55. A broader knowledge of the arts. Increased relevance to matters that young people can relate to.

56. The skills which are developed by studying contemporary visual art and design at school level I believe provide invaluable benefits far beyond the classroom. There are so many benefits, to name a few: from developing creative, design and problem-solving skills, widening horizons and broadening viewpoints – seeing the world through a new perspective. Health and wellbeing skills – learning skills to express emotions, develop understanding, confidence and a better sense of self, tools to de-stress – improving mental health and wellbeing. Not to mention development of essential core skills – trainee surgeons are now being encouraged to draw and write to develop their ‘hand movement and surgical skills’. I also know myself and many of my colleagues wouldn’t have developed careers in the arts, museums and heritage sector if it hadn’t been for learning and studying art and design at school level.

57. Develops in young people: creativity; problem solving; knowledge of history of art and design; critical thinking – review of artists’/designers’ work; being inspired by the work of others; being an individual in their own approach; use of colour/the science of colour; how to look closely; how to draw; how to paint; how to explore mixed media/use unconventional tools for drawing/mark-making; exploring 3D in producing art outputs; confidence building; exploring ideas/communicating their own ideas in their artworks but also through oral and written presentations; opening up opportunities to visit online galleries and museums to inspire children that may never be able to visit a gallery/museum. Equality of opportunity – creative art practice across all schools in Scotland, etc.

58. Confidence, health and wellbeing, resilience, feeling valued and heard, an outlet for your ideas and views on the world.

59. Depending how it is taught, it can build a sense of identity, support good health and wellbeing, help develop thinking skills and motor skills/manipulation of materials. It can build creative and critical thinking that can be applied in all areas of life.

60. Early access to opportunities for a career in the arts.

61. From my perspective, the impact of creative projects and visual art and design education in schools includes: multidisciplinary approach to thinking; ability to express yourself, promotion and encouragement of thinking and problem-solving; creativity reduces stress and anxiety; it allows you to enter your happy zone and have fun; it can give you a sense of purpose; creativity can lead to feelings of accomplishment and pride; educating children and young people in visual art and design increases creativity, encourages open-mindedness and provides a wealth of opportunities and it can lay down the foundations for an inclusive society that embraces differences. I absolutely believe that school, college and university isn’t for everyone but ‘art is for everyone’.