

# AccessArt to Help Shape the Refreshed National Curriculum for Art & Design

*"We're excited by the task ahead and committed to delivering a curriculum teachers enjoy and one that gives every child the chance to thrive creatively."*

AccessArt is pleased to announce that our CEO and Creative Director, Paula Briggs, has been contracted by the Department for Education (DfE) to help draft the new National Curriculum programmes of study for art and design.

Paula Briggs and Dr Will Grant (University of the West of England) will be working on Key Stage 3 and transitions between Key Stages under a contract between the Department for Education and AccessArt. They will work very closely with Kaytie Holdstock (University of Worcester), who is working on Key Stages 1 and 2, and Michele Gregson (NSEAD), the lead drafter, who is working on GCSE.

Drafters were appointed by the DfE following the release of *Building a World-Class Curriculum For All*[\[1\]](#), the Curriculum and Assessment Review Final Report published in November 2025. They were selected for their extensive subject expertise and

their ability to collaborate with other stakeholders to help deliver the government's recommendations [\[21\]](#), which include a commitment to "revitalise arts education as part of the reformed national curriculum and through high-quality support for teachers of these subjects."



Paula has been advocating for the importance of arts education for all for over 30 years. Both a practitioner and a thought leader, she co-founded AccessArt, a registered charity with the sole aim of advancing visual arts education, and has guided the organisation's growth with passion and expertise. AccessArt is now one of two subject associations for art, representing over 24,000 members who use its resources in schools and communities.

*"We're looking forward to working closely together to ensure all pupils benefit from a rich, inclusive and relevant arts education. We know that schools need a curriculum that is engaging for pupils and rewarding to teach. That means greater diversity and representation; clearer support for non-specialist teachers, alongside flexibility for specialists; and stronger progression from key stage to key stage and through to GCSE. We're excited by the task ahead and committed to delivering a curriculum teachers enjoy and one that gives every child the chance to thrive creatively."* Paula Briggs, CEO AccessArt

*"This appointment recognises the depth of expertise within the art education sector and AccessArt's longstanding contribution to inclusive, high-quality creative and progressive curriculum thinking. Paula's and Will's voices will be crucial in this work."* Susan Coles, Trustee AccessArt

## Notes

Please contact [paula@accessart.org.uk](mailto:paula@accessart.org.uk)

[\[1\]](#)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/curriculum-and-assessment-review-final-report>

[\[2\]](#)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/curriculum-and-assessment-review-final-report-government-response>

[What Is AccessArt](#)

[What Makes AccessArt Special](#)

[Paula Briggs, CEO AccessArt](#)

---

# AccessArt Response to the Curriculum & Assessment Review and to the Government Response to that Review

On November 5<sup>th</sup> 2025, the Curriculum and Assessment Review Team, headed by Professor Becky Francis CBE, published

their final report, [Building a World Class Curriculum for All](#).

The government published [their response](#) to this review.

As a Subject Association for Art, and a Visual Arts Education Charity, this post shares AccessArt's initial response from an art, craft and design subject perspective.

**Key Successes *Within the Curriculum and Assessment Review (CaAR)*:**

- The EBacc has been removed. Introduced in 2010 by the Coalition Government to measure school performance based on a student's GCSE results in the core subjects. The Review has listened and recognised that the EBacc results in fewer pupils taking arts subjects.
- Progress 8 will be reformed to include equal weighting for arts, languages, and humanities. Progress 8 is a school performance measure that shows how much progress pupils have made from the end of primary school (Key Stage 2) to the end of secondary school (GCSEs).

During the CaAR process, the review team remained

certain that Art, Craft and Design as a subject was doing well – a viewpoint contended by many subject experts. The CaAR therefore makes the following recommendations:

*“We recommend that the Government:*

- Makes limited revisions to the Key Stage 1 to 3 Art and Design Programmes of Study to clarify and exemplify the knowledge and skills pupils should develop, including through their own creative practice, reflection and critical engagement.*
- Works with Ofqual and awarding organisations to clarify the volume and range of coursework students are expected to produce for GCSE Art and Design.” (pp 55 & 56 [CaAR](#))*

Encouragingly, the [government's response](#) to the CaAR goes much further, and AccessArt is grateful for the explicit messaging within their response. In particular, we celebrate:

- “Improve arts education – we will revitalise arts education as part of the reformed national curriculum and through high-quality support for teachers of these subjects.” (p9, second bullet point of the Executive Summary)*
- “The curriculum should be enriching in every single subject, including the arts subjects which are a fundamental part of the rich and*

*broad education. The arts subjects are an entitlement rather than an optional extra and are disciplines in their own right, with unique pedagogies that the best schools teach with expertise and rigour. For example, the study of creative subjects can allow pupils to harness the process of creative endeavour, generating original works, fluency of communication and teamwork. Under this government, access to a high-quality arts education will not be the preserve of the 15 privileged few, but the entitlement of every child. That , is why we are committing to revitalise arts education as part of the reformed national curriculum and through high-quality support for teachers of these subjects.” (p14)*

It is a huge win that the language the government uses around the arts indicates that, at long last, they are beginning to understand the arts as unique subjects, with unique demands and which bring very particular and powerful values to society.

Additionally:

- “*The response commits to ensuring that the new programmes of study have the right level of specificity to support effective sequencing, including for foundation subjects.”*
- *That “Arts & Culture” are one of five core*

*enrichment areas. (p40)*

## **Opportunities yet to be Developed**

There are several additional areas that AccessArt views as opportunities; however, these either currently lack the necessary detail to provide reassurance that they will have the intended impact or have been omitted from the documents altogether.

### ***The Purpose of Art, Craft and Design Education***

Whilst the government's response does acknowledge the need for a rich curriculum with the arts at its centre, it would have been positive to see a statement in the CaAR or the government response that explicitly recognises the value a rich arts education brings to the whole child – and the benefits to individuals and to future society of learning *through* the arts as well as *about* the arts.

PE receives rightful acknowledgment of the personal and social benefits of the subjects:

*"Redrafts the purpose of study for PE, retaining the importance of competitive sports, but clarifying the significance of providing all pupils with opportunities to learn in a physical environment and emphasising its physical, social, cognitive and emotional benefits that complement and enhance overall academic performance and*

*general wellbeing.”*

The [CLA Capabilities Framework](#) makes it clear the benefits of a rich expressive arts education for all, and the DfE are keen to encourage Curriculum Coherence across subjects, developing skills like oracy. A single sentence recognising the ways art, craft and design as a subject contribute to a holistic education would be welcomed. Whilst this is recognised within Enrichment Entitlement, it is also important that these qualities, values and capabilities are recognised within the curriculum subject itself.

### *Enrichment Entitlement*

AccessArt, of course, welcomes the inclusion of art and culture within the Enrichment Entitlement for all pupils; however, we await further details on how this will be implemented. In particular, we caution against the loss of any statutory entitlement within the subject area itself. We are also interested in seeing what mechanisms will be put in place to ensure that *all* pupils receive the same high-quality enrichment offer.

### *National Centre for Arts and Music Education*

The proposed National Centre for Arts and Music Education was announced earlier this year. As there appeared to be no consultation before its announcement, the [CLA undertook their own consultation which can be found here](#). There is still no real detail on what the centre is to be,

or how it is to be funded. Whilst we welcome the Centre in principle, we await the detail before we comment.

## *Progress 8*

We welcome the idea that the creative subjects are to be placed on equal footing with languages and humanities, and we understand that further consultation is underway to inform the exact format of the “buckets”. However, we are concerned that schools will carry forward the legacy attitude that the arts are not to be valued as much as other subjects, and we look to the government for messaging to counteract this. We are also concerned that if there is an uptake in Art GCSE, we will not have the specialist teachers to meet the need in many schools due to previous declines (see below).

## *Art as a Unique Subject: Assessment*

Whilst Ofsted and the government response to the Review both recognise that art is a unique subject with unique qualities and requirements, neither the government response nor the CaAR itself makes it clear what these unique qualities are. In turn, many SLTs do not understand these either, and we see many teachers struggle being asked to apply similar metrics and processes to art as are applied to other subjects. We believe there is a very real danger that with increased and continued testing at Primary and KS3, SLT and teachers will

fail to understand that a) they do not need to apply the same metrics and processes to art as other subjects, and b) that any kind of assessment in art can have the unintentional impact of stifling creativity and exploration.

Instead, AccessArt would like to see it stated explicitly that it may not be in the pupils (or schools) best interests to attempt to assess art in similar ways to other subjects. Such a statement would in effect give schools permission to educate themselves on more appropriate ways to assess art, and therefore avoid a situation created through misunderstanding of the subject area which risks damaging pupils' relationship with their own creativity.

### *Art as a Unique Subject: Knowledge and Sequencing*

Likewise, it is important that schools are clear on the unique forms of knowledge within art, craft and design, and crucially, how pupils accumulate, embody and demonstrate this knowledge. CLA have written an article on the [types of knowledge in art here](#).

And again, whilst the reviews talk about Curriculum Coherence, it is worth adding here that coherence and sequencing might look very different in expressive arts subjects to other subjects, and that those differences are profound. An example of this would be where purposeful “dissonance” could play a vital part in enabling creativity in art

lessons, as a counterbalance to “coherence”.

Clear messaging from government would show it understands and is ready to promote these differences of approach, to the benefit of the subject.

### *Curriculum Change*

If we are to see effective curriculum change as a result of the CaAR, even with the modest changes the CaAR recommends to art, craft and design, we do need to acknowledge:

- *Initial Teacher training and CPD* – In 2024/25, the government funded 680 Initial Teacher Training (ITT) bursaries awarded for Art and Design. Future bursaries have now been withdrawn. There is already a shortage in specialist art teachers. We have yet to hear how CPD will be funded (and how it will be provided) for teachers to enable them to reskill.
- *Budgets for Materials and Resources* – Earlier this year, we surveyed school budgets for art materials. Without budgets being addressed, schools will continue to find it hard or even impossible to resource a curriculum.
- *Oak* – Frequent mention of Oak National Curriculum resources is made in both the CaAR and in the government’s response to the review:

*“Bodies such as Oak National Academy may be able to support teachers in this area by providing teachers with resources, progression scaffolds and exemplification of good practice.”* (p53 CaAR)

*“In addition, we note that this ambition could be supported in a number of additional ways, such as exemplification resources (such as those produced by Oak National Academy) and encouraging publishers and exam boards to continue to offer a wide selection of texts and accompanying materials.”* (p78 [CaAR](#))

*“Such practice might be bolstered through exemplification resources, such as those published by Oak National Academy.”* (p86 [CaAR](#))

It is clear that the government considers Oak has a role to play in delivering any redeveloped curriculum. As an organisation that turned down the opportunity to create resources for Oak, AccessArt raises the following points:

- Although Oak is branded as an “arm’s length body” AccessArt feels it is perhaps too easy for the government to reach for Oak resources as a solution to the curriculum. We would argue that this risks negating the vast and extensive expertise outside Oak, provided by Subject Associations such as AccessArt.
- Oak has yet to deliver on its original intention of signposting external content providers, thereby acting as a barrier to a

fair and open playing field amongst suppliers. This point is supported by BESA. The Judicial Review proceedings brought by co-claimants the British Educational Suppliers Association, the Publishers Association, and the Society of Authors relating to the Department for Education's operating model for the arm's length body Oak National Academy will resume from today [30 September 2025].

- We express concern about the Oak AI tool which teachers are encouraged to use. Whilst the content it delivers may look worthy, it takes an educated or knowledgeable human (a trained teacher) to decide if it is appropriate and correct. Teacher training and CPD has a vital role to play, and AI should not be seen as a cheap alternative.

## AccessArt Summary

We recognise this is just the beginning of the proposed changes, and we are ready to share our passion and expertise:

- We will continue to develop the work of AccessArt, as Subject Association for Art, helping thousands of schools develop their aspirational visual arts education offer.
- We will continue offering our expertise to Government.

We will continue presenting our ideas at the All Party Parliamentary Group for Art, Craft and Design Education.

- We will continue to share our expertise and support others via:
  - NEU Arts & Minds Campaign
  - Museum and Gallery Task Force (CaAR)
  - CLA, Save our Subjects Campaign and beyond

**Paula Briggs, CEO & Creative Director, AccessArt**  
November 2025

---

## **Art Budgets in Schools – Spend per Pupil**

In 2025 we invited schools to tell us how much you had to spend on art resources each year. Here is a summary of what you told us:

<https://vimeo.com/1110012970?share=copy#t=0>

•

---

# AccessArt Becomes a Member of the British Educational Suppliers Association (BESA)



## British Educational Suppliers Association

AccessArt is proud to announce that we have become a member of the [British Educational Suppliers Association](#) (BESA).

BESA is the UK's trade association for educational suppliers, championing companies that deliver high-quality products and services to schools. Their Code of Practice ensures trust and excellence, giving educators confidence in their choices. Through research, insights, industry events, and policy advocacy, they help members navigate the evolving education landscape.

With over 90 years of experience, BESA is committed to advancing the sector and driving best practice, shaping the future of learning in the UK and globally.

As a member, AccessArt commits to the [BESA Code of Practice](#).

We hope this membership demonstrates to our audience our continued commitment to providing the very highest service in helping to provide educational materials to schools and other learning environments, both in the UK and overseas.

[Find out more about AccessArt](#)

---

## **AccessArt Wins The InSEA Advocacy Award for Organisations 2025**

AccessArt is thrilled to announce that we were awarded the InSEA Advocacy Award for Organisations 2025 at the 38th InSEA World Congress held in Olomouc, Czech Republic.

InSEA (International Society for Education through Art) is the official UNESCO organisation for

global visual art education.

The award is presented to organisations that support the mission of InSEA— “*the encouragement and advancement of creative education through art and crafts in all countries and the promotion of research and praxis about art education to foster international understanding*”.

This award recognises the contributions of InSEA member organisations that have actively worked to further these goals. The InSEA Advocacy Award also serves as an incentive for cross-organisational collaboration, spotlighting contributions that align with InSEA’s mission.

AccessArt is a proud member of [InSEA](#). Thank you to Susan Coles for accepting the award on our behalf.



**INSEA**  
THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY  
FOR EDUCATION THROUGH ART

2025 Advocacy Award for  
Organizations is presented to  
**AccessArt**

July 2025

*[Signature]*

Indrajeet Kaur, Public Sector Units, with the President and Board of Directors



Susan M Coles

The Project of India

United Kingdom

# AccessArt Birds

At AccessArt, creativity is at the heart of everything we do. So, when it came to refreshing our team page, we wanted to reflect the imaginative, playful spirit that connects us all.

The AccessArt bird has been part of our logo since 1999. It was inspired by a wire bird created by a child during one of our early workshops. Therefore, instead of using traditional photographs, we decided to introduce ourselves through images of birds. Each bird was carefully chosen by a team member to represent a personal connection, a memory, or a specific personality trait.

Beautifully illustrated by [Tobi Meuwissen](#), this joyful and diverse flock reflects not only who we are as individuals but also the collaborative spirit that defines AccessArt.

Once we'd each chosen our bird, it was over to Tobi to turn our ideas into beautiful, characterful illustrations. Using a blend of traditional drawing instincts and digital tools, Tobi captured the spirit of each bird and each team member. Below, she explains how the process unfolded.



As a trained illustrator, I love it when projects where I can use my skillset come up, and this was no different – spending hours drawing away on my iPad brought me lots of joy. Usually, I would begin all of my illustrations on paper in [my sketchbook](#), but I felt that with so many birds to do, Procreate would be my friend.

[Procreate](#) is a creative app that acts as a digital sketchbook; with many different pens, colours and textures to choose from, it makes the drawing and editing process quick and polished (although it doesn't compare to the joy and discovery of working with real materials).

We began by inviting each team member to choose which bird they would like to represent them, and then I started one-by-one with the drawings.

Starting a project can feel a bit like trial and error; going in without a plan and seeing what

happens can be enabling to get over the fear of the blank page. I didn't follow the same formula for every bird; some started with bold and loose outlines, and others were tighter and more controlled.



The ease of Procreate is that it works with different layers, so you can see below how I built up the different marks and colours to create texture and tone.



Altogether, we have 15 different birds representing all team members, founders and trustees, ranging from the quirky, such as the Silver Polish Rooster, to the bright and brilliant Puffin and the familiar-feeling birds that frequent our gardens daily, such as the Sparrow and Blackbird.

As well as sharing the type of bird we wanted to be represented by, we thought it would be nice to share the reasons why that particular bird resonated with us...

### AccessArt Co-Founders



*“I love watching Sparrows – always on the move and happily chirping together in hedgerows. As CEO of AccessArt, I thought hard about how I wanted the bird I chose to represent the qualities I think I can help engender in the team. I do see us as a*

*flock – and I like that Sparrows symbolise joy, happiness, resilience, adaptability, freedom, and protection – all words I think can be applied to AccessArt as an organisation.” – [Paula](#) (Current CEO and Creative Director)*

*“We’ve put Swift boxes up this year and enjoyed watching them all summer. That’s my favourite bird at the moment.” – [Sheila](#) (Retired 2020)*

## AccessArt Team



*“I’ve always loved living near the sea, and the Oyster Catcher has been a constant sentry to my life as a consequence, especially when in the wilder, more northern places. It’s insistent, shrill call is oddly comforting, and its stylish orange beak makes me smile.” – [Alison](#)*

*“When I’m out walking and hear the Thrush, perched high in the sycamore trees, its song always lifts my heart and brings a small moment of joy.”* – [Andrea](#)

*“I love the way Indian Runner Ducks move and interact with each other with lots of energy and curiosity, their oddities make me smile.”* – [Tobi](#)

*“My bird choice is a Robin, as my daughter and nieces have always said it’s their Grandad’s spirit coming back to visit them! I love the constancy of Robins, with their singing and presence felt even in the coldest and darkest times of the year.”* – [Rachel](#)

*“I chose to be represented by a Tawny Owl as I’m always looking all around.”* – [Joe](#)

*“I have unruly grey-streaked brown curly hair, so my son chose the Silver Polish Rooster for me, as it was ‘hairy-headed’”* – [Mo](#)

*“I’ve always loved the Blackbird’s song – it’s a reminder to stay grounded, observant and find joy in small, everyday things.”* – [Lou](#)

*“Flamingos are tall (like me), pink (my favourite colour) and spend a lot of time standing on one leg (I do a lot of yoga!)”* – [Louise](#)

Trustees



*“I chose the colourful Greenfinch because it always makes me think of the joy it brings my parents to see the ‘charm’ of finches that would enjoy the feast they left for them in their garden.”* – Kate

*“Blackcap – Small, not a snazzy dresser, often seen in woodland, and never stops chirping at the top of its voice. A creature after my own heart...”*  
– Chris

*“Their loyalty, unique beaks, and expressive faces make them both adorable and fascinating to watch. I love Puffins.”* – Susan

*“Watching the beautiful Blue Tits zoom and dive in the hedgerows uplifts me and gives me a feeling that all is well in the world.”* – Anne

[<< Find Out More About The AccessArt Team](#)

---

# Three Lenses

A recording of the presentation given by Paula Briggs, CEO & Creative Director AccessArt, at the July 2025 All Party Parliamentary Group for Art, Craft and Design Education.

In this presentation, Paula shares three lenses which inform our current thinking about what art education needs from us right now.

---

## Narrative & Messaging

A recording of the presentation given by Paula Briggs, CEO & Creative Director AccessArt, at the April 2025 All Party Parliamentary Group for Art, Craft and Design Education. In this presentation, Paula explores the importance of keeping core values in mind when working towards high-quality visual arts education for all, if we are to avoid the contraction of the further subject area. Paula also shares AccessArt's response to the Interim Curriculum & Assessment Review, and shares some key information about current funding for arts in schools.



**Open Letter to Government: Why Art Education Needs to Change: Inclusion, Wellbeing, Employment & Creative Industries**

It is time for us to create a rigorous, fit-for-purpose, value-led arts education for all pupils. It is time for the government to connect education back to heads, hands and hearts, and value the arts alongside all other subjects, ensuring high quality arts education is a mandatory part of all regular curriculum entitlement for ALL pupils.

As a Subject Association for Art, and as a Registered Arts Education Charity, AccessArt invites you to [sign our open letter](#) to Keir Starmer Prime Minister, Bridget Phillipson Secretary State for Education, Lisa Nandy Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport.

[Sign Now!](#)

---

## **AccessArt response after reading the Curriculum & Assessment Review Interim Report**

Whilst AccessArt welcomes many findings in the report, our intention here is not

to summarise the [Interim Report](#) – or even comment on the particular findings – but instead, as a Subject Association for Art, to take the opportunity to remain true to AccessArt's charitable aim, ethos and beliefs, and to state (again) the issues we believe we need to address to ensure a high-quality art education for all.

From the offset, it was made clear that there are many areas which sit beyond the scope of the Review. These include an exploration of pedagogy, teacher training and CPDL, and pupil wellbeing / engagement. Whilst AccessArt accepts that the Review has been tasked with a narrow remit, we wholeheartedly believe that without being willing to explore the interconnectedness of these areas, and other issues, it will be hard to pin down excellence in Curriculum & Assessment. Only a holistic, expansive and collaborative approach can achieve the required level of excellence.

[Is Art Thriving?](#)

## A Discussion about Art, Craft & Design as a Unique Subject Area

### A Discussion About Knowledge

### A Discussion about Assessment's impact upon Pedagogy, and Vice Versa

### A Discussion about Extracurricular

### A Discussion about the Connection between Art and Creative, Critical and Higher-Level Thinking Skills

### A Discussion about teacher and pupil wellbeing and engagement.

#### Is Art Thriving?

We can see an example of how looking through a narrow lens will hold us back by exploring how the panel currently perceives the state of art education.

The Review panel considers art and design to be “thriving” due to its numbers showing those taking art at GCSE is broadly stable. This, despite the evidence put before it in the form of the [Art Now](#) report, and other publications, in particular the [Sutton Trust](#) showing the disparities between those accessing high quality creative education and careers, and those missing out on these opportunities.

This is also despite the panels’ own evidence

given in the “Polling of key stage 4 and 16 to 19 learners and parents” document, where the panel share:

“For key stage 4 learners, 45% studied an arts subject and 54% did not. For those who did not choose to study an arts subject, 51% did not do so because they did not enjoy them; 45% because they were not very good at them; 38% because they did not think it would be useful to their future...”

AccessArt would like to see the panel demonstrate an appetite and ability to forensically question and challenge the notion that this is somehow good enough; that we can choose to allow the 54% majority who choose not to take art, to leave school thinking art has no place in their lives. Here we can see how the potential unwillingness to look beyond the scope of the review plays into a blinkered mindset. Despite the panel being tasked with exploring how every child can receive the best education, we have yet to see the rigour and courage needed to ask why 51% of children in KS4 do not think they are good at art. The answer is not only in curriculum, but also in staff training and pedagogy – two areas the panel are not able to consider.

We don’t have to, and shouldn’t, write those children off. In line with Article 31 of UNESCO Convention for the Rights of the Child, “Every child has the right to rest, relax, play and to take part in cultural and creative activities.” We

are able to keep a far greater number of children engaged in art. In the AccessArt survey of schools using the curriculum these figures rise considerably. We can do this by enabling and enthusing staff with greater training, by creating relevant curriculum underpinned by rigorous pedagogy which schools can adapt and which give pupils ownership of their learning.

*During the next stage of the review AccessArt, calls for a more joined up and expansive conversation about the interrelationships around curriculum and assessment, and about how we can use this conversation to do better, for every child.*

### **Instances of words in the Interim Report:**

**Maths:** 61

**English:** 63

**Science:** 23

**Art:** 5

**The Arts:** 10

**Music:** 8

**Drama:** 5

**DT:** 6

**Dance:** 0

### **A Discussion about Art, Craft & Design as a Unique Subject Area**

Whilst the Ofsted Subject Review Art & Design (February 2023) acknowledged that art as a subject

requires a unique approach, and that many systems applied to other subjects do not best serve art, there is little reassurance in the Interim Report that this thinking is embraced. Indeed, at our Curriculum & Assessment meeting it was acknowledged that the same metrics had been used for art as other subjects.

An example of how the language and approach used in other subjects might limit excellence in an art curriculum is the use of the word “mastery.” The Review panel define “mastery” in this context as “the process of ensuring students understand a particular foundational concept before moving to the next one.” Once again, we cannot use words like mastery within a conversation about curriculum without understanding or at least being willing to talk about the pedagogical implications of this word, in the context of art. Making and talking about art is a deeply iterative process. It does not comply with a linear, sequential or tick box progression. Skills do not neatly build in the way the panel hope. All artists understand this. This is not to say we don’t believe we should equip pupils with the skills and knowledge they need to enable them to express themselves, but is it appropriate to talk about mastery for pupils of school age? We would like to see the panel demonstrating an understanding of the value of play and exploration in art, alongside opportunity to visit and revisit. Perhaps then the 54% majority who think art is not for them can

feel welcome to stay in the room. “Mastery” implies endpoint, which pedagogically speaking can shut down artistic exploration. (Unless of course mastery is in the exploration itself, in which case please let’s clarify the language. Semantics are vital if we are to express precise intention).

*During the next stage of the review, AccessArt would like to see a curiosity towards, and understanding of, the fact that the language which works for one subject, may not work for art. We need to use language precisely if we are to enable teachers and pupils.*

**Instances of words in the Interim Report:**

**Mastery: 12**

**Pedagogy: 0**

### **A Discussion About Knowledge**

It is no surprise that the “knowledge-rich” mantra of the past years is retained. Evidence is cited that the recent focus on knowledge is a success reflected in uptake at GCSE and pathways at 16+, although it is recognised that this does not work for all.

The Ofsted Subject Review for Art was useful in its discussion of convergent and divergent knowledge. In addition, AccessArt would suggest a third state: emergent, as being vital to the processes of acquiring knowledge in art. In all stages, it must be understood that where a

proportion of knowledge can be “taught,” the majority of knowledge in art needs to be experienced. Thinking about the curriculum only in terms of taught knowledge is a reductionist approach. Again, by embracing pedagogy, we can better appreciate the importance of creating experiences which ensure that knowledge is personally discovered through exploration and meaningfully understood. Added to this, enabling young people to feel comfortable (and see the value in) being in a space of “not knowing” is vital not only to creative exploration but also to the ways of being in the world.

Pursuing only measurable knowledge, and avoiding immeasurable knowledge (like self-knowledge, or changed ways of being) is allowing the tail to wag the dog, and again results in a reductionist approach.

*During the next stage of the review, AccessArt would like to see a conversation about the types of knowledge in art, and how we enable them.*

**Instances of words in the Interim Report:**

**Knowledge:** 54

**Pedagogy:** 0

**A Discussion about Assessment’s impact upon Pedagogy, and Vice Versa**

**It is outside the remit of our response to comment on the value of assessment generally at various**

stages of education, but in art education, summative assessment in particular can be counterproductive to nurturing a creative curriculum. If we want to enable our learners to feel safe in taking creative risks, and our teachers to feel safe to nurture an exploratory classroom, then we need to be aware that summative assessment can place pressure on these processes.

*During the next stage of the review, AccessArt would like to see a conversation about the impact of assessment on Pedagogy, and vice versa. We cannot ignore the connection.*

**Instances of words in the Interim Report:**

**Assessment:** 154

**Pedagogy:** 0

### **A Discussion about Extracurricular**

“The arts are a good illustration of some of the dilemmas for this Review, in that not all of the issues that have been identified relate to the curriculum or assessment framework. For example, in arts subjects we have heard calls for improvements in equipment, more specialist teachers and better access to extra-curricular activities. These are important issues, and where we received evidence that extends beyond curriculum and assessment, we have passed that on to the Department for Education, who will reflect it in wider work.”

Can we tread carefully here? We need to ensure that we do not shrug off our responsibilities to help teachers deliver an excellent art curriculum to all, by making up for lost opportunities in the classroom via an extracurricular offer. We know that it is the most vulnerable who will least access an after-school offer. We already know that a large percentage of Primary Schools only teach art every other half term, due to curriculum pressures. Our efforts should be in ensuring first that all children have access to engaging art curriculum each week.

*During the next stage of the review, AccessArt would like to be reassured that the new Curriculum does not see an extracurricular offer as a buttress to excuse a part time / carousel type curriculum.*

## A Discussion about the Connection between Art and Creative, Critical and Higher-Level Thinking Skills

The Interim Report does not yet demonstrate an understanding of the link between the arts and creative, critical and higher-level thinking skills. This may be because of the lack of interest in talking about pedagogy. Round and round we go. But we do need to make this connection – and to help teachers, parents and pupils to make this connection, if we are to feed this through to the Curriculum.

*During the next stage of the review, AccessArt would like to see a conversation about how art can help learners cultivate Creative, Critical and Higher-Level Thinking Skills, at all ages.*

Instances of words in the Interim Report:

Creative Thinking: 1

Oracy: 0

Critical Thinking: 1 (With reference to AI)

Creativity 2: (Both with reference to the last review of the curriculum between 2011-2013)

A Discussion about teacher and pupil wellbeing and engagement.

We understand wellbeing and engagement are outside the remit of the Review, and yet, if our pupils do not attend, and our teachers leave, it won't matter how shiny and polished our Curriculum is.

At this point, the Review does not communicate an interest in the love of learning and love of teaching. There is a movement (outside the Review) to acknowledge as a whole that this is where we need to turn our attention. With regard to art education, we do need to help pupils and teachers hold the subject with joy, so that it is a personally meaningful experience. This is not difficult, if again, we truly understand pedagogical mechanisms. By exploring the how and the why, as well as the what, we can embrace everything that art education has to offer, including what we learn through art, as well as

about art, and truly embrace how art education can help shape our next generation.

**Instances of words in the Interim Report:**

**Wellbeing:** 1

**Enjoyment:** 0

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/curriculum-and-assessment-review-interim-report>

**Paula Briggs, CEO & Creative Director AccessArt,**  
**March 2025**



## Open Letter to Government: Why Art Education Needs to Change: Inclusion, Wellbeing, Employment & Creative Industries

It is time for us to create a rigorous, fit-for-

purpose, value-led arts education for all pupils. It is time for the government to connect education back to heads, hands and hearts, and value the arts alongside all other subjects, ensuring high quality arts education is a mandatory part of all regular curriculum entitlement for ALL pupils.

As a Subject Association for Art, and as a Registered Arts Education Charity, AccessArt invites you to [sign our open letter](#) to Keir Starmer Prime Minister, Bridget Phillipson Secretary State for Education, Lisa Nandy Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport.

[Sign Now!](#)

---

## Fair Processing Notice

This Fair Processing notice refers specifically to AccessArt's use of your personal data collected through our [open letter of March 2025](#). We will use your personal data to include your name, organisation and/or interest in the open letter (if you select this option).

We collect four types of information about you:

1. Your name
2. Your Title
3. Your interest in the issue
4. Your email address

## **Your name**

- We ask for your name so we know to whom to address communications.
- We ask you for your name so we can identify who has signed the letter.
- We ask you to specifically opt in for us to share your name, you can choose to remain anonymous.
- We intend to publish this letter on our website and social media accounts.
- We are also seeking publication in the national media.
- The letter may also be reproduced in international media.
- If you opt in for us to share your name you will be identifiable in all these environments as a signatory to this letter.

## **Organisation or job title**

- We ask you to supply information relating to your job title or organisation (if applicable).
- This information may appear alongside your name when the letter is published if you opt in for us to share your name.

## **Interest**

- We ask you to select your role when signing the form (Teacher, Creative or in Industry). You do not have to choose one of these, but it will help our understanding

of who is signing the letter if you choose to do so.

- This information may appear alongside your name and title when the letter is published or will be shared as an alternative to a name or title if you opt to remain anonymous.

### **Your email address**

- We ask you to supply your email address so we can stay in touch with you about this campaign by electronic means.
- When you give us your email address, you are giving us your consent in accordance with data protection legislation to receive electronic communications from us about this campaign.
- We will not share your email address with any other party (except for data backup purposes with our appointed contractor).

### **Retention**

We will retain your information for as long as this campaign is active. We will delete securely any personal data we hold once we decide to close this campaign.

If at any time you wish to unsubscribe from our emails, please let us know. Please contact [info@accessart.org.uk](mailto:info@accessart.org.uk) or use the 'unsubscribe' option in the emails that we send you. If you have any questions or concerns about this issue or AccessArt's approach to data protection, you can read the [AccessArt's Privacy Policy](#).

## **Data controller details**

AccessArt is a company limited by guarantee, incorporated in England and Wales under company number 36882 is a data controller. Our registered office 6 West Street, Comberton, Cambridge, CB23 7DS. Please contact our Business Manager via [alison@accessart.org.uk](mailto:alison@accessart.org.uk) if you have any queries.

---

# **Open Letter to Government: Why Art Education Needs to Change: Inclusion, Wellbeing, Employment & Creative Industries**

**As a Subject Association for Art, and as a Registered Arts Education Charity, AccessArt invites you to sign the open letter below. We currently have over 1300 signatures and will be sending our letter to the press very soon. Please do sign now – our combined voice will carry greater weight.**

**Please do share this page within your**

**networks and on social media, thank you.**

**Please find our Fair Processing Policy here.**

Please note if you leave a comment on this page below, that is not the same as signing the letter (pls use the form to sign).

---

**Open Letter to Keir Starmer Prime Minister, Bridget Phillipson Secretary State for Education, Lisa Nandy Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport**

**Dear Members of Parliament,**

**With the Interim Report of the Curriculum and Assessment Review imminent, experts and advocates of arts education understand the significance of this opportunity. Will the government demonstrate that they have listened to the powerful, combined voices of experts in the field, and understood the unified message: that the current Curriculum approach – the “knowledge-rich” mantra, the unnecessarily stringent approaches to testing, and the unfair bias placed on schools by the EBacc and Progress 8 – is failing to provide all pupils with a fit-for-purpose arts education.**

We are deeply concerned that if the Review decides the arts in schools are “good enough” then a once in a lifetime opportunity will be missed and the Government will fail to meet its own commitments.

We need to hold Keir Starmer, Bridget Phillipson and Lisa Nandy to account, and remind them; we are looking to them to demonstrate the curiosity, courage and creative thinking we so badly need to nurture in our children to responsibly prepare them for their futures.

We remind the government of their verbal commitments:

## Inclusion

*“... A review of the curriculum to put arts, sports and music back at the heart of our schools and communities where it belongs.”* <sup>[i]</sup>

*“The arts, creativity, drama, music – they must be available to every child, to us all. Excellence is for everyone, and background must be no barrier to opportunity.”* <sup>[ii]</sup>

*‘I will help working-class pupils defy the odds to succeed – just as I did’* <sup>[iii]</sup>

## Wellbeing

*“That’s why thriving and belonging will feature so prominently in our work in the opportunity mission, hand in hand with attainment... Healthy, happy children coming to school ready to learn –*

*if we get this right, those children will achieve time and again... The best schools understand this. They also understand that it's not easy, it's not soft.”* <sup>[iv]</sup>

## Employment

*Alongside CEO's of AI companies, the government's own website says that in preparing for the workforce of the future, “creativity, critical thinking, and emotional intelligence are still absolutely vital.”* <sup>[v]</sup>

## Creative Industries

*“Labour will deliver a broader curriculum, to tap into the unbelievable creative talent of all our young people.”* <sup>[vi]</sup>

*“Every young person must have access to music, art, design and drama. That is our mission. Because we know that for our creative industries to flourish, every child needs to be given a chance.”* <sup>[vii]</sup>

It is time for us to create a rigorous, fit-for-purpose, value-led arts education for all pupils. It is time for the government to connect education back to heads, hands and hearts, and value the arts alongside all other subjects, ensuring high quality arts education is a mandatory part of all regular curriculum entitlement for ALL pupils.

*Where people are feeling fear, art can help*

*people process and express.*

*Where people are feeling fragmented, art can help people connect.*

*Where people are feeling despair, art can create optimism.*

*Where people are feeling disempowered and unheard, art can empower.*

***Paula Briggs, Co-Founder, CEO and Creative Director AccessArt***

---

[i] Lisa Nandy, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, September 2024

[ii] Bridget Phillipson, Secretary of State for Education, X, 14th August, 2023

[iii] Bridget Phillipson, Secretary of State for Education, The Guardian, 20 July 2024

[iv] Bridget Phillipson, Secretary of State for Education, Confederation of School Trusts' Conference, November 2024

[v] <https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2025/01/what-ai-means-for-jobs-and-how-were-preparing-the-workforce/>

[vi] Bridget Phillipson, Secretary of State for Education, The Rest is Politics, June 2024

[vii] Keir Starmer, March 2024

---

## **The AccessArt Lab Areas of Focus and Core Values**

[\*\*<< Back to AccessArt Lab\*\*](#)

The AccessArt Lab provides AccessArt with the opportunity to focus on practical and pedagogical exploration of key areas of interest which have emerged over the last few years. The work in the AccessArt Lab will be guided by the areas of focus and core values described below.

[Find out about the in-person sessions](#) we will be running at the Lab to help facilitate these areas of focus.

## Areas of Focus

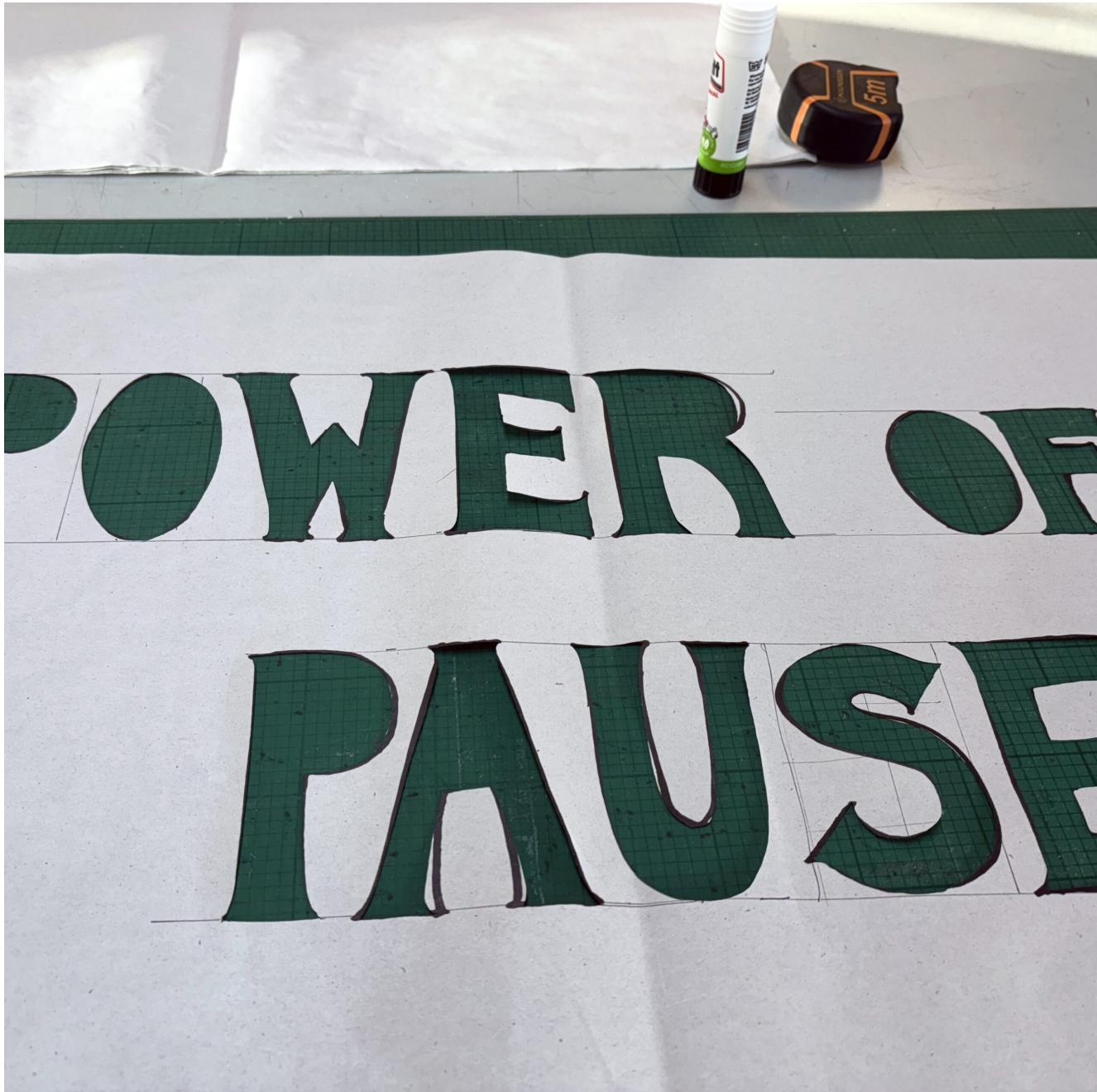


The AccessArt Lab will be exploring the following areas of focus. New areas will be allowed to evolve over time.

- **Exploration of Inhabiting “Spaces of Not-Knowing”** – What does it feel like to be in spaces of not-knowing? What are the risks and benefits? What might be the outcomes? How can we enable these spaces?

- **Exploration of Social Models of Learning – How can we embrace shared experiences and outcomes to discover more open, inclusive and diverse ways of thinking and acting?**
- **Re-Connection to Physical Senses, Body-Based Activities and Exploration of Resistant Forces – Whilst not turning out back on digital, how can we better protect and appreciate time spent in the physical world? How can we build tolerance of what resistance feels like (in interaction with materials and ideas, and in communication between people), and how can we more positively manage our relationship to resistance?**
- **Teenage Enquiry-Based Learning – How can we devise a rich, diverse and adaptable curriculum to engage all teenagers?**

## Core Values



**The work undertaken in the Lab will be guided by the following principles:**

- Awareness of the programming and messaging of our everyday lives and how this impacts upon our thought, action and wellbeing. Alongside this, an exploration of how we can explore a gentler, yet more physical way of thinking and acting, and the benefits this might

bring.

- Permission for “Pause” – in all forms – space to think, space to act without outcome, space to play...
- Appreciation of “question” over “answer” – Where do we put the emphasis and how does it change our experience?
- An understanding that exploration of all areas of focus within the lab ultimate benefit others (people, communities and society) through accessible sharing of practice and ideas.

The AccessArt Lab will begin in January 2025. Please join the [AccessArt Network Facebook](#) group and register at [AccessArt](#) for free to be kept in touch.

[Stapleford Granary](#) is an Arts Centre whose aim is to foster cultural understanding through education.

The venue offers music, art, education & conversation in a beautiful 19th century farm complex, situated at the foot of the Gog Magog Downs, just 5 miles from the centre of Cambridge.

---

*Please note the [AccessArt registered office and](#)*

***all contact details remain as detailed here.***



**You May Also Like...**

**How tiny Art Schools grow**



---

# **“When We Hold Art Education In Our Hands”**

**Recording of a presentation delivered by Paula Briggs, CEO and Creative Director of AccessArt, at the All Party Parliamentary Group for Art, Craft & Design Education on 17th December 2024.**

---

# The AccessArt Lab at Stapleford Granary

[<< Back to AccessArt Lab](#)



AccessArt has always advocated for the role artists can play in creating dynamic, engaging and relevant art education experiences for the whole community. We have seen through the [AccessArt Primary Art Curriculum](#) how activities that were devised, trialled and tested in community settings, led by artists working with small groups, have then been very successfully transferred into more formal education settings. Artists bring to education an opening of what is possible, together with a depth of understanding and clarity of purpose. Artists help educators ask important and often challenging questions: What is the purpose of art education, and how can we best inspire and enable?

AccessArt has been at the forefront of this approach for 25 years, and we have helped

thousands of schools, organisations and individual artist educators transform their practice. Our recently launched [Tiny Art School Movement](#) is helping to encourage artists to reflect upon their potential as educators and to work with local communities.

We opened the first ever AccessArt Lab as part of our continuing commitment to push the boundaries of what is possible when artists and educators from all settings work together. Led by [Paula Briggs](#), Creative Director of AccessArt and the AccessArt Lab, the studio at Stapleford Granary, Cambridge, provided a space for an ongoing creative (and practical) conversation between AccessArt and our audience.

*“We are very excited about the potential of the AccessArt Lab. We’ll be using the space to devise and test new content, especially around the creation of resources for teenagers, and around how we nurture creative thinking for all. But over and above these key areas, we’ll be exploring (and celebrating) what it is like for learners to enjoy being in a space of “not knowing.” Too often, education focuses on the accumulation of precise and nameable knowledge, and then on measuring knowledge retention. Art provides a valuable alternative to this kind of thinking, providing opportunities to acknowledge there are other types of intelligence, and that there is real value in helping learners and*

*teachers experience the benefits of operating in a space of play, feeling safe but inspired in the space of “not knowing... yet,” and empowered by personal discovery.*

*As a predominantly digital organisation with a national and international reach, the AccessArt Lab will provide an opportunity for us to engage with audiences in new ways, and of course everything we learn and create in the Lab will be shared with all our audiences via the AccessArt website. We are excited to see how this develops into what we hope will be a vibrant and meaningful creative conversation, helping our combined voice and expertise to be heard across all settings, and to help affect change.”*

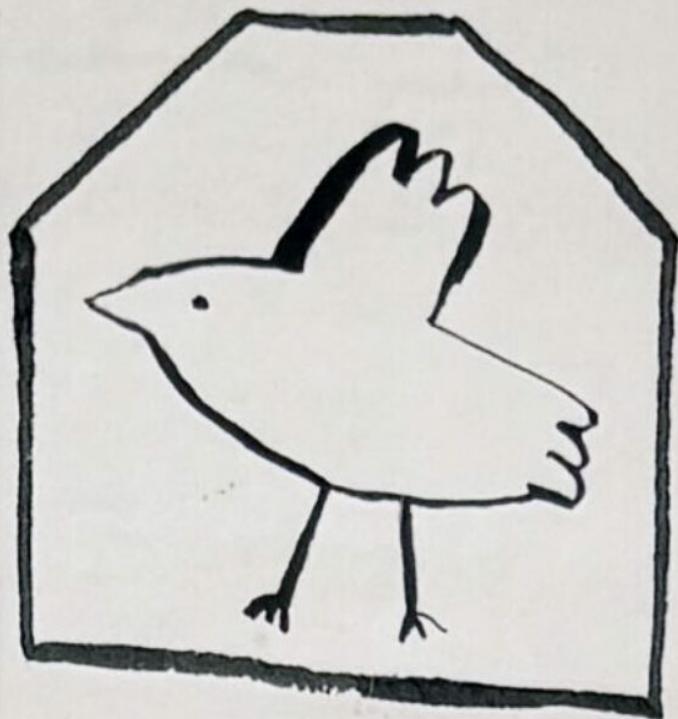
Hands  
Making:

*What Opens  
in the  
Body and  
the Mind?*

SPACE of UNKNOWING

*Staying in a space*

ACCESSART



TINY ART SCHOOLS



[\*\*Stapleford Granary\*\*](#) is an Arts Centre whose aim is to foster cultural understanding through education.

The venue offers music, art, education & conversation in a beautiful 19th century farm complex, situated at the foot of the Gog Magog Downs, just 5 miles from the centre of Cambridge.

---

*Please note the [AccessArt registered office and all contact details remain as detailed here.](#)*

## You May Also Like...

[\*\*AccessArt Lab Areas of Focus & Core Values\*\*](#)



---

**Arts Education In Crisis: We Have The Evidence – Now We**

# Need The Solution

A collection of evidence-based reports which help map the changes to the art education (and wider arts) landscape over the past few years, and a collection of articles to help share solutions to the issues raised.

If you would like us to add a link to a report or relevant article please email [paula@accessart.org.uk](mailto:paula@accessart.org.uk).

**Paula Briggs, CEO & Creative Director AccessArt, 2024.**

## Evidence

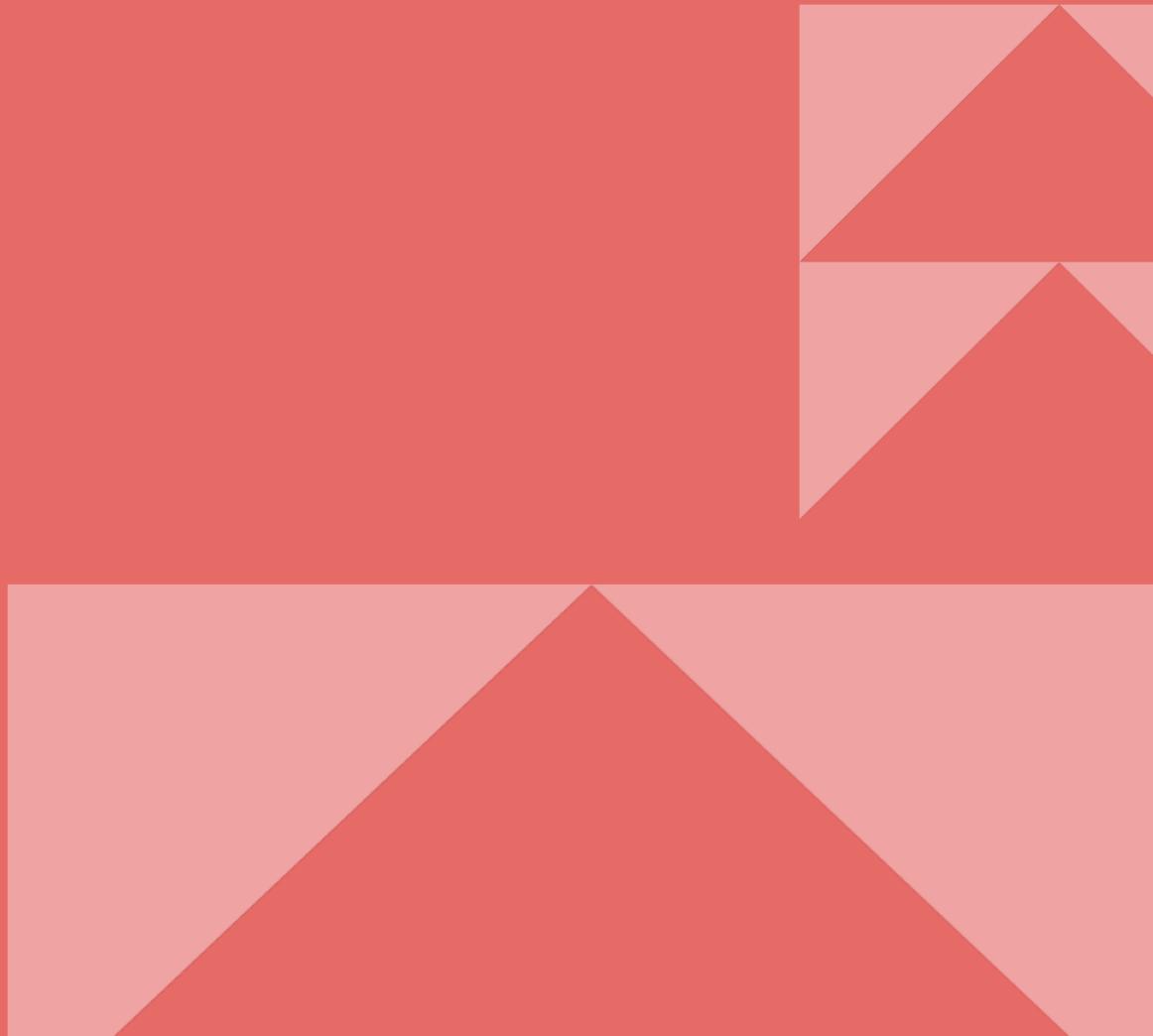
### A Class Act

**Erica Holt-White, Professor Dave  
O'Brien, Dr Orian Brook, Dr Mark Taylor  
November 2024**



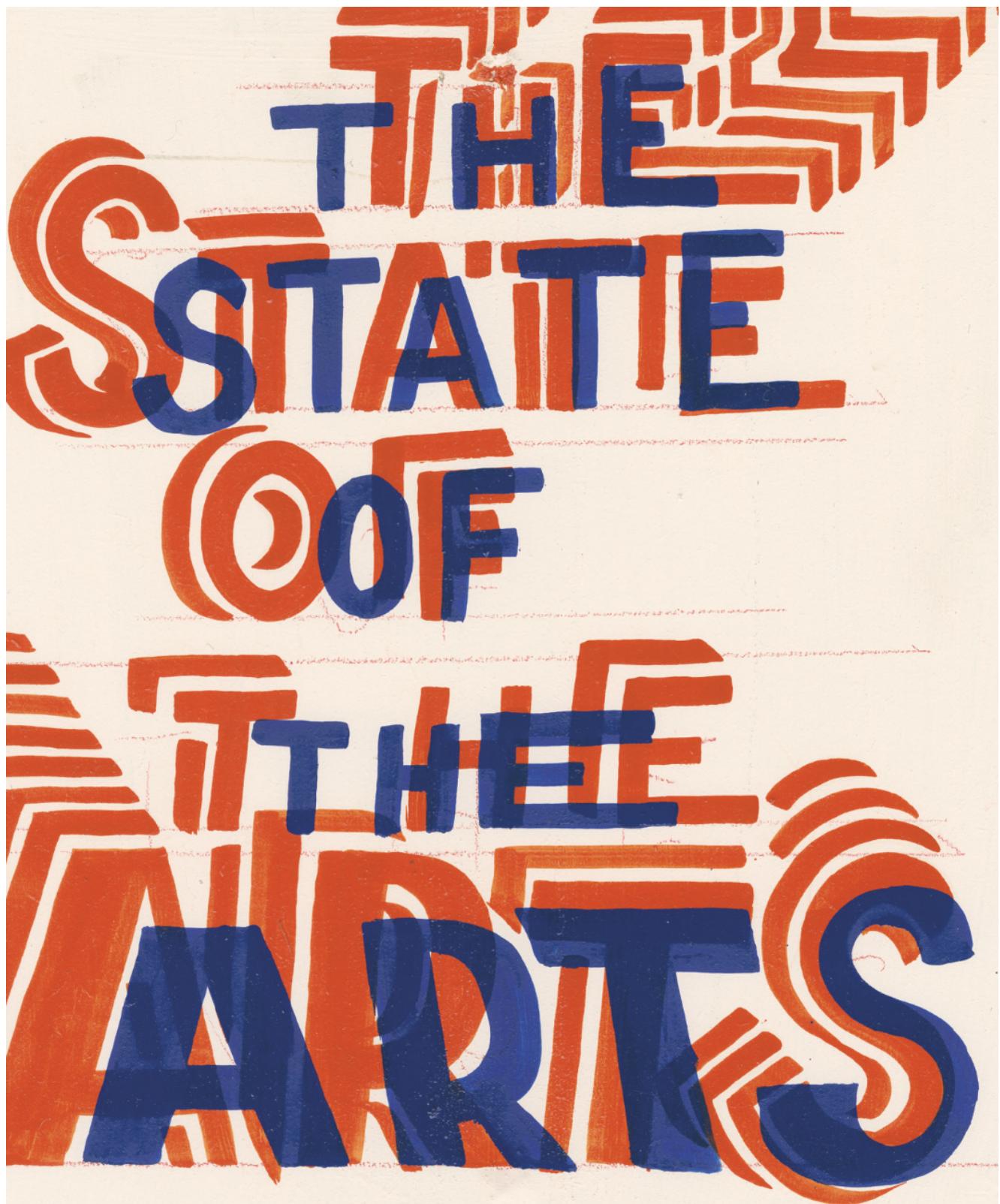
# **A Class Act**

**Social mobility and the creative industries**



# Social Mobility and the Creative Industries, Sutton Trust 2024

## The State of The Arts



# Campaign for the Arts and the University of Warwick, 2024

## **The Art Now Report**

# ART NOW:

AN INQUIRY INTO THE STATE OF  
ART AND DESIGN TEACHING IN EARLY  
YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE, PRIMARY  
AND SECONDARY EDUCATION



The All-Party  
Parliamentary Group  
for Art, Craft and Design  
in Education



**Commissioned by the All-Party**

Parliamentary Group for Art, Craft and Design Education

The Arts in Schools: Foundations for the Future

# **The Arts in Schools: Foundations for the Future (Full Report)**

Published by Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and A New Direction

# Urgent Reform needed in 11-16 Education



## The Education for 11-16 Year Olds Committee, December 2023

**Culture in Crisis: impacts of Covid-19 on the UK cultural sector**

**CENTRE  
FOR  
CULTURAL  
VALUE**

# Culture in Crisis

Impacts of Covid-19 on the UK cultural  
sector and where we go from here

Culture in Crisis shares research  
findings from one of the world's largest  
investigations into the impacts of  
Covid-19 on the cultural industries.

## Solutions

Can Labour Show It Really Understands The  
Power Of The Arts To Transform Lives?



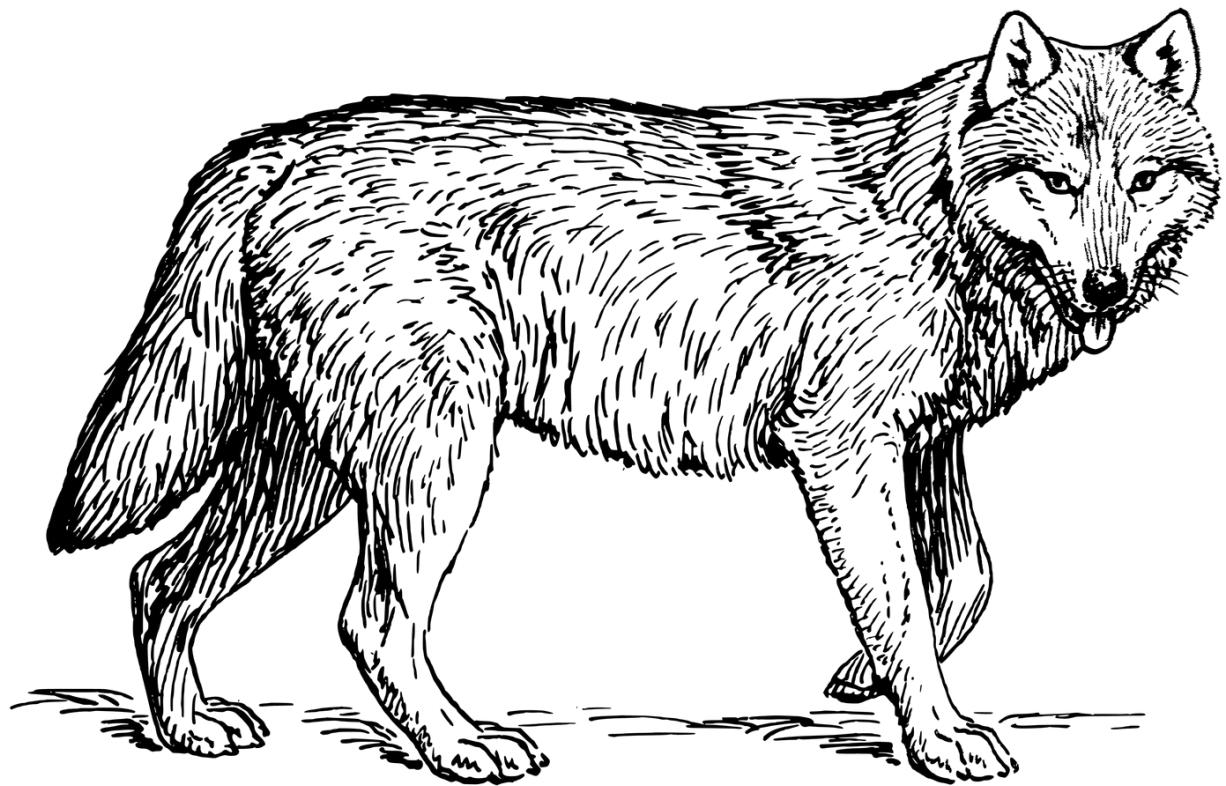
## Why Would We Ignore What The Arts Can Do For Us?

**The Current Education System: Too Much Beta, Not Enough Alpha**



Rethinking the Space in Which We Learn

**Taking Control of the narrative**



## Why We Need To Change The Narrative Around Art Education

Not Just Ideas: Action



**Explore AccessArt's vision and the impact it is having on art education.**

## **AccessArt's Pedagogical Approach**



**Over the past 25 years AccessArt has helped define a rigorous yet highly accessible approach to visual arts education.**

## **Education: The Fundamentals**

# Education: the fundamentals

**Eleven facts about the education system in England**

Produced by Nesta and the Education Policy Institute

Visual Arts Manifesto

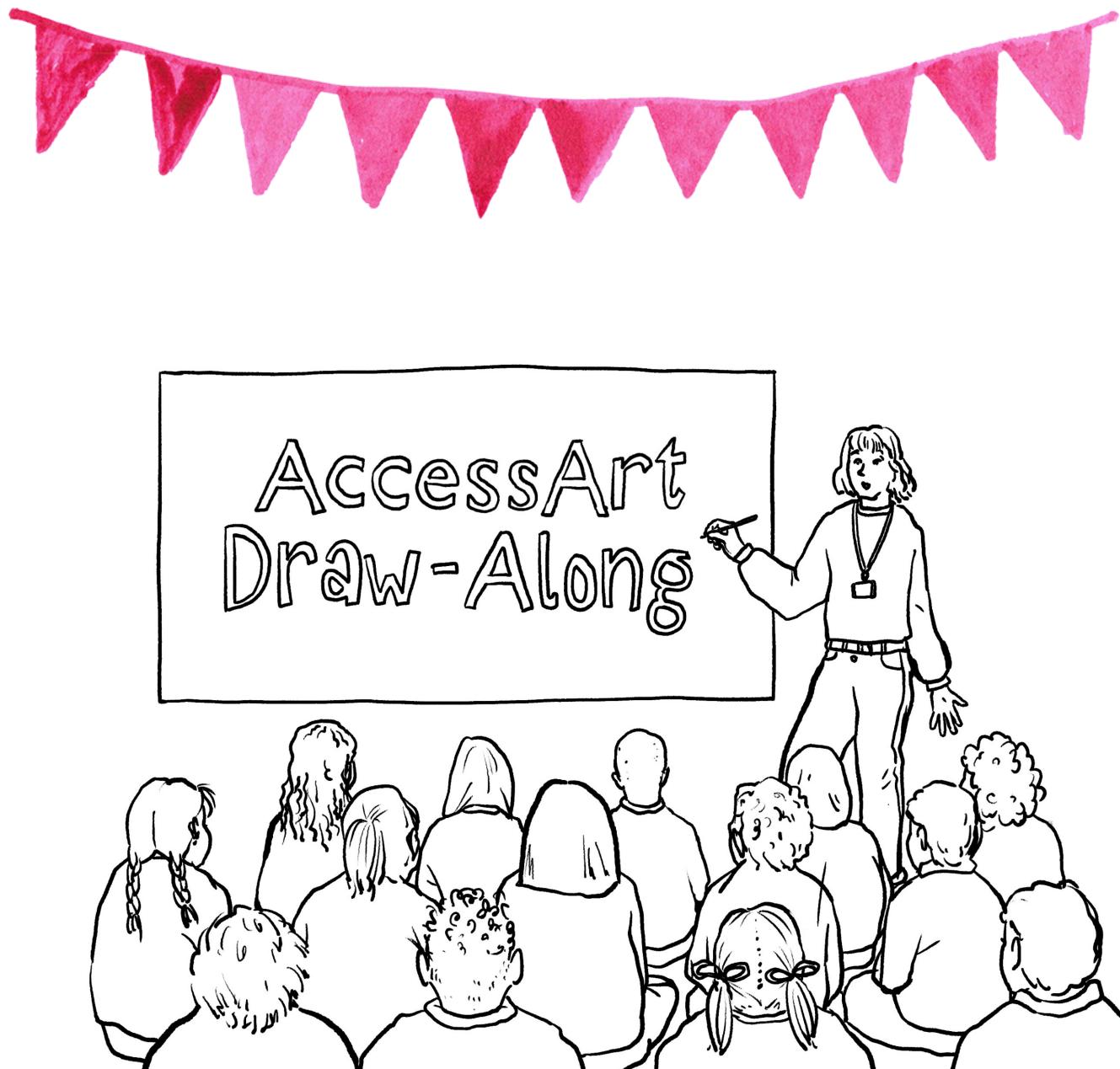
# Visual Arts Organisations Call New Government to Action



ACME  
ACTIONSPACE  
A-N  
ART FUND  
ARTQUEST  
CHEAD  
CRAFTS COUNCIL  
CREATIVE LAND TRUST  
CURATOR SPACE  
CONTEMPORARY VISUAL ARTS NETWORK  
CREATIVE WORKSPACE NETWORK  
DACS

[24 Arts Organisations share a vision](#)

# 25 Year Celebration: The AccessArt Draw-Along



On Monday 1st July 2024 we celebrated AccessArt's 25th birthday by hosting the first ever AccessArt Draw-Along!

The AccessArt team led a number of drawing exercises, and Rowan Briggs Smith was our live

**drawing demonstrator.**

**Thousands of participants watched the live event on their whiteboards or devices following along in classrooms, halls, community spaces or homes. You can find images of drawings from the session on this [Padlet](#).**

### **Register Your Interest in the Next Draw-Along**

**Wherever you are, whoever you are, you are invited to our next Draw-Along event (date to be confirmed) to draw alongside us in a participatory event!**

**Keep an eye on the [CPD Zoom Events page](#) to get updates on when the next Draw-Along will be.**

**The event will be open and free of charge to AccessArt members only.**

### **Please Remember:**

- The exercises are suitable for everyone – ages 5 through to adult**
- By showing the event on a whiteboard you can have as large a participatory audience as you like. You only need to book one place per device used to share from.**
- You must not charge participants for the event.**
- The event is free of charge but only open to**

AccessArt members. The Zoom webinar link will be behind the AccessArt membership wall – so please make sure you are a [member of AccessArt](#) and can login!

- These events will NOT be recorded.

---

# Arts Apocalypse: 14 organisations and artists unite to raise the alarm on the decimation of the arts in schools and colleges



EQUITY



AccessArt has joined forces with the National Education Union and a coalition of organisations in the arts and education sectors to spotlight the

eroding of the arts across the curriculum.

The Arts Apocalypse statement offers policy solutions that the signatories believe would help save the arts from catastrophe.

We urge politicians of all parties to consider the statement, take notice of the critical situation and commit to implementing the solutions offered.

[\*\*Please download the full statement and share\*\*](#)

## **Arts Apocalypse: Time For Change in a Failing System**

The crisis in our schools is deep, multi-faceted and worsening. The current state of arts education is one of the clearest signs of what has gone wrong with our whole system.

A commitment to arts education is essential to arrest the decline and to build an education system fit for the 21st century.

We call on politicians of all parties to recognise and respond to the problems on the scale that is necessary. We encourage educators and the wider arts community to push for radical change in their schools and communities.

The arts are essential to human fulfilment; they are meaning-making activities which have a personal, social and economic value. But in education, what is recognised in principle is

often denied in practice. In an underfunded system, we have seen arts education decimated as school leaders are forced to make impossible decisions on an ever-dwindling budget and a damaging focus on a narrow curriculum.

In primary schools, the demands of testing all too often push arts education into a corner of the curriculum. Primary teachers report that they do not feel enabled to be successful arts educators. Initial Teacher Training fails to prepare teachers to deliver arts subjects with confidence. Opportunities for professional development are rare.

In secondary schools, the move towards ever greater accountability rooted in the promotion of the EBacc system has a similar effect: students are actively discouraged from pursuing Arts-based routes. Subjects, like English, which the government sees as important have been stripped of their creative content. Assessment in other arts subjects is overloaded with written tasks. Increasingly, the government steers schools to deliver a prescriptive, often centrally planned curriculum, focused on examinations, in which Arts are sidelined. The impact on behaviour, mental health, school engagement and attendance has been catastrophic.

**We demand systemic change**

**Learning to be a teacher of art or music – indeed**

of any subject – should mean learning about the skills and knowledge associated with that specialism. Reshaped by government, teacher education has come to mean something else – a training in generic skills, a lowering of quality.

The numbers are plunging. As a generation of students who have been through the declining system reach adulthood, recruitment of specialist teachers in the Arts subjects has fallen to dangerous levels. This negative spiral threatens the very existence of quality Arts education in schools. Where good practice does exist, it is in spite of the system, not because of it.

The consequences of not changing course are bleak. We have a system that does not help students reach their potential, that neglects their cultural experiences at home and in the community, that adds to problems of poor mental health, behaviour and attendance.

The relegation of the Arts subjects to third class citizens in our education system threatens the future of the creative industries in this country, but it also hinders our ability to nurture children to fully develop their talents and interests. It obstructs their access to the Arts, rights which are protected in Article 29 and 31 of the UN Convention on the Human Rights of the Child.

We believe that the benefits of a rounded, broad

curriculum with an equal focus on the Arts can bring huge societal, economic, and personal mental health benefits to future generations. We demand systemic change.

We want politicians to pledge the following:

- A significant increase in education spending, with specific funding for Arts education.
- To increase the supply of teachers in the Arts, where ITT recruitment falls well short of targets.
- To conduct a full review of curriculum and assessment from EYFS to Post-16 with the stated aim of broadening and improving Arts education. Practices such as Progress 8, EBacc and SATs that work to sideline Arts education should be ended.
- To no longer use damaging low value language and 'Mickey Mouse' rhetoric to describe arts subjects.
- To rebuild Arts education organisations which support schools.
- To give education and arts trade unions, subject associations, arts educators, arts organisations a seat at the table when the curriculum is reviewed.

The Arts Apocalypse statement is supported by the

following organisations:

[\*\*National Education Union\*\*](#), AccessArt, WGGB – The Writers’ Union, Centre for Literacy in Primary Education, Black Lives in Music, Equity, Musicians’ Union, One Dance UK, Susan M Coles - Arts Creativity Educational Consultant, Artist, UK Literacy Association, Music for Youth, National Drama, London Drama and National Society for Education in Art & Design.

---

## **Art Education: Moving Forwards with Confidence & Vision**

At AccessArt, we are keen to share our insight, experience and vision as to how we might rethink the value and purpose of art education in particular, and education in general.

With a new Labour government and a Curriculum Review promised, we are at a pivotal moment in the UK.

The following articles have been curated to help share our thoughts and start a conversation. [\*\*Please get in touch\*\*](#) if you would like to discuss

further, share your ideas, or lend your support.



**Arts Education In Crisis: We Have The Evidence – Now We Need The Solution**



Let's  
Be  
Bold

## Evidence and Solutions

A collection of current reports into the state of the arts / education, and solutions.

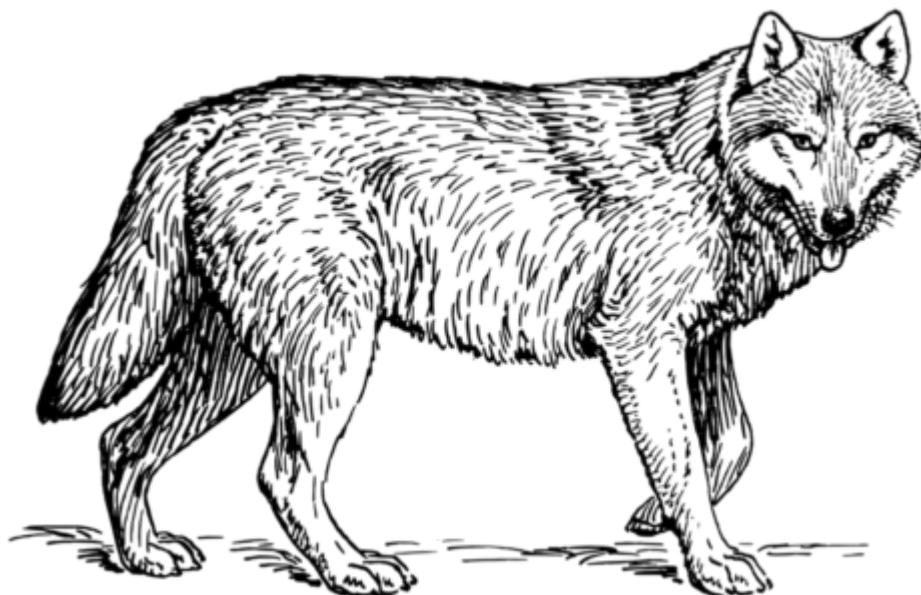
**Can Labour Show It Really Understands The Power Of The Arts To Transform Lives?**



## What can art do for us, and why we shouldn't ignore it...

Read why we need to see that Labour understands the true value of the arts to individuals and to society.

## **Taking Control of the narrative**



**"I realised through conversations with school leavers that they could no longer use words like intuition, entitlement, dreaming, invention, play. These words are unfamiliar to them, and they no longer resonate. These words, and therefore the ways of being they describe, are not available to them right now."**

Read why we need to change the narrative and speak with more courage about the purpose of education...

## **The Current Education System: Too Much Beta, Not Enough Alpha**



## Is our current education system helping to break, not build?

Can awareness of brainstates help us move forward to a more balanced curriculum?

**Why AccessArt Can't support oak national academy**



**“Like many educational publishers, we were concerned at the time about both the nature and quality of the resources created, the ethics of the creation of a curriculum by government, and also the potential impact of a so called “free” curriculum on commercial and charitable educational suppliers...”**

Read why we think Oak is a flawed idea...

**Not just ideas: Action Too**



“One cold, rainy morning in January 1999, I received a phone call from the then DfES. The woman started the call with the words: “What is the best news someone could call you with on such a rainy January day?””

Explore and understand all that AccessArt has achieved and the impact we are making

**Please Get In Touch**

---

# Supporting Schools New To AccessArt – Autumn Term 2025



If you are thinking about joining AccessArt during 2025, you can find lots of information here to help you understand more about how AccessArt can help develop excellent art teaching and learning in your school. Explore below:

- Our offer to schools – learn more about our approach and what makes AccessArt so special.
- Read teacher feedback about AccessArt.
- Find ideas about how you can trial our resources with your pupils and teachers, and how you might transition from existing planning.
- Access a recording of a Zoom introductory session, including Q&A's, access to a Powerpoint to introduce teachers to AccessArt, & art material freebies!

- Ask for help □
- How to Join AccessArt.

"USING ACCESSART HAS IMMEDIATELY RAISED THE STATUS AND PROFILE OF ART IN OUR SCHOOL."

[The AccessArt Primary Art Curriculum](#)

[AccessArt CPD](#)

[AccessArt CPD Recordings](#)

[AccessArt Offer to Primary Schools](#)

[EYFS](#)

[Organisational Core Values](#)

## The AccessArt Offer To Primary Schools

AccessArt is a UK Visual Arts Education Charity and we are also a Subject Association for Art. We have over 22,000 members using our resources in schools and community settings.

What makes us special? We are passionate about what we do. We have just one charitable aim which is to further the advancement of visual arts education, and through our creative vision we are proud to help support the visual arts education of hundreds of thousands of individuals. Our approach is trusted also by many Universities who use our resources within arts teacher training contexts.

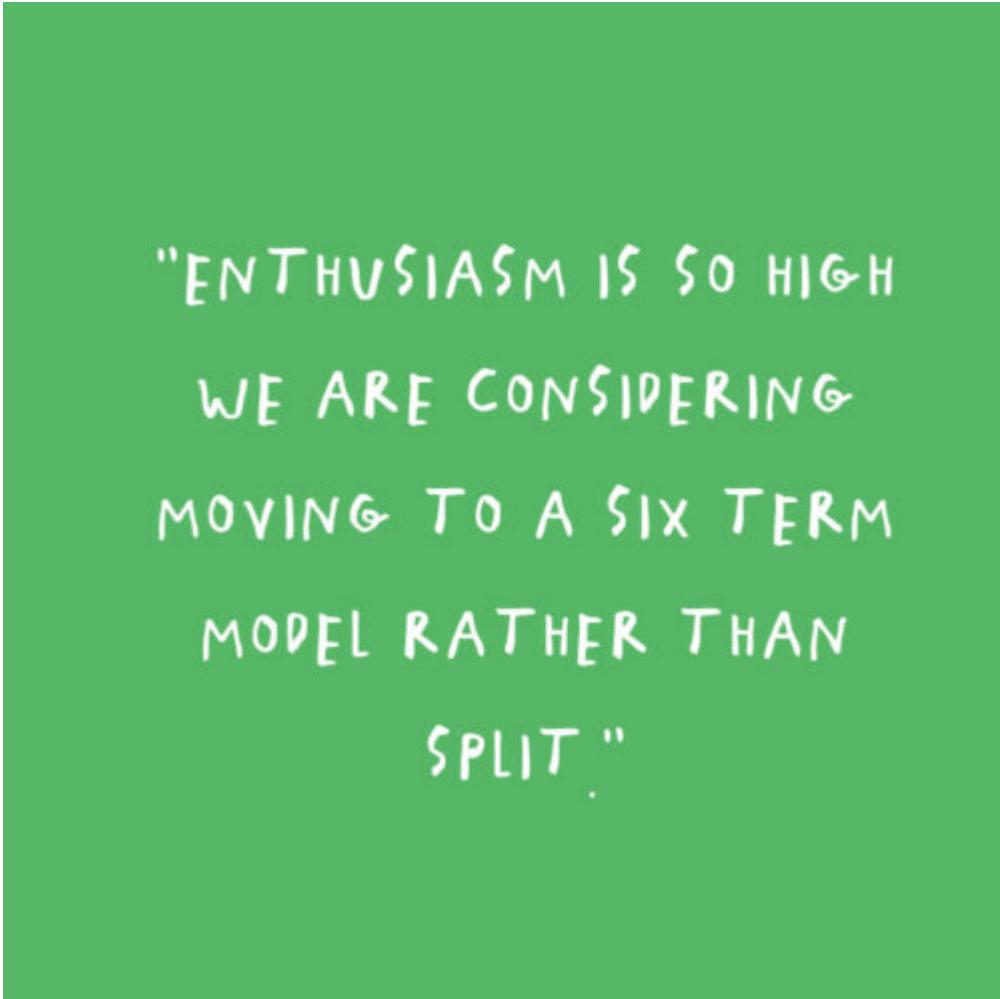
We offer schools access to the [AccessArt Primary Art Curriculum](#), a rich, diverse, engaging and highly flexible curriculum. We also offer [ongoing CPD](#) to build teacher understanding and enjoyment, and you can also use our [resources](#) and approach to expand upon your own planning or scheme.

We are a self-supporting charity and our independence gives us strength of vision and autonomy. We also work with experts in the field who help support the considerable in-house expertise. We do not create resources for anyone else – instead we remain true to our vision, knowledge and experience. Explore our [Core Values](#).

The AccessArt Primary Art Curriculum – Impact & Evidence Autumn 2023

Since the launch of the new AccessArt Primary Art Curriculum in 2022, we have seen a large number of new members sign up to use the resources in schools to help inspire and enable a rich, diverse and flexible visual arts curriculum for all pupils.

In the summer of 2023 we invited users to complete a survey to feedback their experience of using our Primary Arts Curriculum in their school. [See the report here.](#)



"ENTHUSIASM IS SO HIGH  
WE ARE CONSIDERING  
MOVING TO A SIX TERM  
MODEL RATHER THAN  
SPLIT."

[The AccessArt Primary Art Curriculum – Impact & Evidence Autumn 2023](#)

"IT HAS  
TRANSFORMED  
OUR ART  
EDUCATION."

### Ten Minutes, Five Times a Week

Session Recording: Ten Minutes, Five Times a Week  
with AccessArt & DRYAD Education

### Trialling & Transitioning

If you would like a 15 day complimentary membership of AccessArt so that you can explore all our resources, please contact [Andrea](#), our Membership Manager.

If you would like advice about introducing AccessArt to your staff, or to ask questions about how you might transition from your existing

approach to our approach, please see our [“Preparing To Use the AccessArt Primary Art Curriculum”](#) session recording.

A great way to test drive our resources with staff and pupils is to try our [Ten Minutes Five Times a Week](#) exercises.

### [Preparing To Use AccessArt in Your School and Introducing Staff to Us](#)

If you're thinking about using AccessArt as your Primary Art Curriculum provider in Autumn 2025 [watch this session recording](#) where we share the ethos and practice of the AccessArt Primary Art Curriculum.

In this recording we talk through how you might introduce AccessArt to staff, how you can transition from your existing scheme or plan, test driving activities with children and teachers, and how you can prepare the materials and resources you will need to deliver our curriculum.

Organise a staff meeting to introduce staff to the curriculum.

You can find a presentation [here](#), created with an introductory staff meeting in mind.

"UTTER JOY AND  
ENTHUSIASM CAN BE FELT  
IN ALL THE ART LESSONS I  
HAVE ENJOYED OBSERVING  
THIS YEAR."

## Preparing To Use the AccessArt Primary Art Curriculum

### Ask for Help □

We know it can be challenging deciding which scheme to use, or devising your own planning. We are a small team of experts and we love talking about pedagogy and practice. If you have something you would like help with, especially in regard to our Primary Art Curriculum, then please email us with your question.

You might also like to send us a quick video made on your phone, sharing pupil or teacher

experiences and outcomes, and let us know what it is you are struggling with. Send all enquiries to [paula@accessart.org.uk](mailto:paula@accessart.org.uk) and we'll answer as soon as we can.

"I LOVE ACCESSART! IT  
REALLY ENGAGES OUR  
CHILDREN AND SUPPORTS  
SEND LEARNERS."

Send any questions or enquiries to  
[paula@accessart.org.uk](mailto:paula@accessart.org.uk)

"THE OUTCOMES AND PROGRESSION OF SKILLS HAVE BEEN AMAZING, RECOGNISED BY STAFF, PARENTS AND OFSTED."

## [Join AccessArt](#)

### Join AccessArt

Joining AccessArt offers incredible value for money and gives you access to the most innovative yet accessible visual arts teaching resources. Don't forget that when you join AccessArt, you are also joining a Subject Association, so we can help you every step of the way in your art teaching practice.

[See all membership benefits here.](#)

---

# Core Value No 4: Through Small Acts of Understanding We Can Enable Big Thinking

AccessArt Core Value #4 “Through small acts of understanding we can enable big thinking.”

illustrated by Rachel Ng



[Rachel Ng](#) is a young illustrator from Hong Kong, currently studying illustration at Arts University Bournemouth. Her vibrant digital illustrations with bold characters are deeply inspired by fauvism and minimalism. Creating expressive and heart-warming illustrations, with different textures and shapes is one of her main explorations.

We love the story that this illustration by Rachel Ng tells. Building from a simple seed, the days and nights pass providing the nourishment that the seed needed to grow. The little faces and characters put such a smile on our faces and the colours are so joyful, it's hard not to feel excited by what the small acts of understanding can bring us when you see this illustration.

We feel that this illustration really resonates with the AccessArt core value, highlighting that great ideas and growth can take time, and the importance of trusting in the bigger picture and the incremental steps to get there, remaining patient and open to the journey, no matter how long it takes.

## AccessArt Value #4

*Through small acts of understanding we can enable big thinking.*

How can we create small stepping stones of experience which enable us to explore complex

## ideas and experiences?

Comforting as it is to know that “A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step,”\* knowing what that single step might be is not always easy. In reality, growing our understanding so that we can aim to be expansive, visionary thinkers, whilst able to act incrementally to make change, doesn’t just happen; it requires planning, effort and commitment.

At AccessArt we have always been inspired by big thinking, and we have never hesitated to have our heads in a cloud space where ideas swirl around. We have always been interested in the why as well as the how; at our heart we are a philosophical organisation.

But our feet are firmly planted on the ground, and understanding how we create and present a series of smaller experiences which help us move towards an often unknown, but always intriguing, bigger understanding, is one of our strengths.

Keeping clear sight of the bigger picture, whilst being able to distil down key ideas or skills, is vital in enabling individuals or communities to feel like they can trust the logic of the next step, or the next stage, whilst being inspired onwards by the bigger prize. Trusting too that understanding builds even when the process isn’t linear, and that getting lost along the way might make for a richer journey and deeper

**understanding.**

**This way of thinking applies to all creative thought and action – from the teachers and children in Primary School, to decision making in larger organisations. We are proud that as an organisation we can help enable this way of thinking and acting.**

**\*Lao Tzu**

**[See our other Core Values here.](#)**

**Paula, April 2024**