

Dance in Education Policy Briefing

January 2017

The purpose of this paper is to outline the challenges posed by the introduction of the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) to the Arts Sector and the Dance Industry in particular.

About EBacc

The English Baccalaureate (EBacc) is a performance measure for schools, awarded when students secure a grade C or above at GCSE level across a core of five academic subjects – English, mathematics, history or geography, the sciences and a language. It was first applied in the 2010 school performance tables.

The Coalition Government stated that the principal purpose of the new measure was to increase the take-up of 'core' academic qualifications that best equipped a pupil for progression to further study and work.¹

The Department for Education's plans for EBacc exclude creative, artistic and technical subjects. The EBacc will make a minimum of seven GCSEs (and as many as nine) effectively compulsory for most secondary school pupils in England. Given the average number of GCSEs taken by pupils is 8.1 - the EBacc leaves little room, if any, for creative, artistic and technical subjects.²

On 3 November 2015 the Department for Education launched a consultation on their plans to make the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) all-but compulsory in secondary schools, a decision made under former Education Secretary Nicky Morgan and first proposed under Michael Gove. The government has yet to respond to the consultation.

Current challenges for the Arts and Dance

Since its introduction, the new EBacc has had an impact on the uptake of arts subjects, including dance, at GCSE level. We are worried that, in turn, it will reduce the pool of talent that will feed our creative industries and reduce access to the many great benefits art and dance bring to children:

- Between 2010 and 2015 the number of hours the arts were taught in secondary schools and the number of arts teachers fell by 15%
- Since 2010, there has been a 21% decline in uptake of arts subjects
- The number of candidates who took GCSE Dance in 2016 fell by 9% compared to 2015 and by 32% compared to 2010³

¹ House of Commons Library, English Baccalaureate, <http://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/SNO6045>

² Cultural Learning Alliance, Technical Briefing, <http://www.culturallearningalliance.org.uk>

³ Cultural Learning Alliance, Technical Briefing, <http://www.culturallearningalliance.org.uk>

The economic case for strong Arts and Creative Industries

The UK's creative industries are a significant part of the UK economy, a growing sector creating jobs and a valid career choice.

- Creative industries represent 5.2% of Britain's economy
- Creative industries generated £84.1 billion in 2014, comparable to the financial services and construction industries
- Creative industries employ almost two million people, including a 40,000 plus dance workforce
- Creative industries alone are growing at more than twice the wider economy
- All of these sectors have job shortages⁴

Recognisable benefits for young people of a dance curriculum in schools

Dance has numerous physical, psychological, social and emotional benefits for children and young people, as well as meeting government policy and educational aims and values. Dance has been shown to⁵:

- Improve physical and mental wellbeing
- Contribute to individual development
- Improve social and community development
- Help fight obesity
- Support schools to improve pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development.
- Give opportunity for cross-curricular activity increasing appreciation of creativity
- Raise aspiration, achievement, appreciation for learning, and school attainment and standards (aiding students to make their three levels of progress from KS2 to KS4)
- Contribute to social and cultural cohesion by addressing fundamental British values, extremism and radicalisation within schools through the appreciation of diversity in cultures, cultural values and traditions
- Engages girls in PE creating a foundation for life-long participation of physical exercise

*"The arts should be part of every child's education. Arts and culture illuminate our inner lives and enrich our emotional world. This is what we cherish. But they also have a large and measurable impact on our social wellbeing and cohesion, our physical and mental health, our national status and our economy."*⁶

One Dance UK is working with government and members of the #BaccfortheFuture Campaign, to ensure dance and the arts continue remain an essential part of every child's education and to find solutions to the current challenges raised by the introduction of EBacc.

For any questions or to discuss these issues further, please do not hesitate to contact: Andrew Hurst, Chief Executive, One Dance UK, andrew.hurst@onedanceuk.org.

⁴ Government statistics - Creative Industries Economic Estimates - January 2016,

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/creative-industries-economic-estimates-january-2016>

⁵ Evidence gathered by One Dance UK, which will be available in a report to be published during the first quarter of 2017

⁶ Arts Council England, <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/exploring-value-arts-and-culture/value-arts-and-culture-people-and-society>