



ADVOCACY IN ACTION: EDUCATION

As the national support organisation and Subject Association for Dance in schools, we are aware of the challenges many settings are currently facing regarding the cutting of arts in the curriculum, and the detrimental effect this has on the lives of children and young people.

We're here to help. One Dance UK partners with other organisations, collectives and movements to ensure that the current crisis in arts education, does not go unnoticed. We work hard to provide up-to-date and relevant information around the current state of dance education in the UK to all those who need it, ensuring our collective voice is accurate, fair and importantly, powerful.

We invite you to use the following information when talking about dance education! See a great example of it being used in action, via this article in [The Guardian](#) - with thanks to our friends at the [ISTD](#) for helping to raise awareness!

HERE'S WHAT WE KNOW

- There has been a huge and catastrophic decline in dance in education over the last 15 years, owing to a combination of factors including school performance measures (EBacc and Progress 8), shifting educational 'trends' and priorities, reductions in funding, and of course the pandemic.
- There has been a dramatic reduction of young people accessing dance qualifications in school (GCSE and A Level Dance) of around 50%. Data shows that this is due to a lack of availability/choice, rather than a lack of desire.
- We know that when dance is a genuine choice for young people it is a highly popular activity. Girls especially say that they enjoy the non-competitive element - dance can be a safe space for girls to engage in physical activity.
- Dance is a compulsory activity as part of the PE National Curriculum in England, but despite this we know that access to dance education is a 'postcode lottery'. This is evidenced in the 2023 Ofsted PE report '[Levelling the Playing Field](#)' which states that dance is often delivered at a low quality, to some students only, or not at all.
- Dance is both a physical activity and an expressive art form. This makes it unique and powerful, but also means it can often 'fall between the gaps' of the two areas.
- The decline in access to dance education is even more startling and baffling when you consider that, as a nation, we are dealing with twin epidemics amongst our children: an obesity crisis and a mental health crisis. There is a wealth of evidence demonstrating that dance can play a positive role in supporting both physical and mental wellbeing - so why aren't we considering prevention rather than cure?

At One Dance UK we believe that access to high-quality dance education is a birthright for all young people. It should be an entitlement as part of a broad and balanced curriculum - not a 'nice to have' or a luxury. There are three broad 'pillars' underpinning this belief:

- 1. All young people gain from the physical and mental wellbeing benefits.** The joy that dance brings, and the life skills gained - confidence, resilience, creativity to name just a few.
- 2. Dance helps young people develop vital transferable employability skills,** equipping them for the careers of the future (many of which do not exist yet!) - collaboration, creative problem solving, analytical skills, leadership, etc.
- 3. Dance in schools is essential for developing the next generation of dance and creative sector professionals.** The UK's creative industries are growing, but without access to dance in education, young people may never discover a talent or passion for it! Schools provide the foundation for future performers, choreographers, teachers, producers, designers, and audiences while dance education fosters creativity, performance skills, and a deeper appreciation of the art form. Ensuring a strong talent pipeline requires a joined-up approach that nurtures and supports young people's engagement in dance.



MORE RESOURCES

- Save our Subjects Campaign - <https://www.onedanceuk.org/what-we-do/policy-campaigns/save-our-subjects-campaign>
- 'Everything We Loved About Dance Was Taken' The place of dance in UK education- <https://www.onedanceuk.org/resources/everything-we-loved-about-dance-was-taken-the-place-of-dance-in-uk-education>
- Taking it Higher: Dance in HE - <https://www.onedanceuk.org/resources/taking-it-higher-dance-in-he>
- Dance Education, a Guide for Governors and Trustees - <https://www.onedanceuk.org/resources/dance-education-a-guide-for-governors-and-trustees>
- One Dance UK comments on Ofsted's physical education subject report - <https://www.onedanceuk.org/news/one-dance-uk-comments-on-ofsted-s-physical-education-subject-report>
- Why study dance at school or college? - <https://www.onedanceuk.org/resources/why-study-dance-at-school-or-college>
- Why Study Dance - Options Evening Presentation- <https://www.onedanceuk.org/resources/why-study-dance-options-evening-presentation>
- Arts & Minds campaign - <https://theartsandmindscampaign.org.uk/>