



2021

National Drama COVID Impact Study

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A study
exploring the
impact of the
COVID-19
pandemic on
secondary
Drama
teaching

National Drama

Registered Charity no. 1173215

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Outcome of National Drama's Covid Impact Study 2021 – full report

Study undertaken and report written by Carolyn Bradley.

Context of the study

In July 2021, National Drama conducted a national survey for secondary Drama teachers, to gauge the impact the Covid Pandemic has had on secondary Drama teaching. As the UK's foremost professional body for Drama educators, we felt it was our duty to find out what has really been happening in our schools, and to provide our members with support and recommendations for educational recovery post-Covid. At the time of writing (October 2021), we are still in the grip of the pandemic with cases high and teaching affected by absences, local restrictions, and risk assessments preventing extracurricular activities. Whilst I hope that we will soon be in a better position, I imagine there will still be a way to go before education returns to some sort of normal.

As an organisation we have also been concerned with the lack of Governmental support for the arts during the pandemic and during the period of 'educational recovery.' As Drama educators, we know the huge values and benefits Drama offers all children and young people, from creativity and confidence, to peer relationships and positive mental wellbeing – and this is of no greater importance than now, when the pandemic has had such a detrimental effect on young people's wellbeing and prevented opportunities for socio-emotional learning in group settings. It has therefore been disappointing that the funding package awarded of £1.4 billion for schools was significantly lower compared to the £15 billion Sir Kevan Collins, the government's former education recovery commissioner, suggested was needed, prompting his resignation and leaving very little hope that any funding can be spent on Drama education. Furthermore, in July 2021, the DfE released a document entitled *Teaching a broad and balanced curriculum for education recovery* giving recommendations for teaching from September 2021, and again Drama was notably absent from this 36 page report, despite the strong body of evidence suggesting how Drama can be beneficial for children and young people's social, academic and emotional development. This is in addition to the Arts Premium of £90 million being withdrawn, which was promised in the 2020 Budget. We therefore think it vitally important that we at National Drama provide evidence of how Drama has been impacted in recent months through this study, so that our Drama teachers can feel supported in raising this with their leadership teams.

Who responded?

The study was hosted on Microsoft Forms and marketed via email and social media to National Drama members and followers, and also generously promoted by our colleagues at Open Drama UK and Drama & Theatre. 119 teachers responded, which represents roughly 1.3% of Drama teachers in England, based on the 2020 School Workforce statistics which gives a figure of 8963 Drama teachers as of 2019. Although this is a small number of respondents and therefore makes this a minor study, it still is relevant in generating a picture of what has been happening in schools. A version of the study was also made for

teaching colleagues in Scotland, although unfortunately no responses were received. Out of the 119 respondents: 71 were heads of department or faculty; 33 were classroom teachers; 7 were senior leaders; and 8 identified their role as Other. The vast majority of respondents were from maintained state schools (82/119); with the remainder being divided as follows: 7 from faith schools; 4 from grammar schools; 12 from independent schools; 3 from international schools; and 5 from sixth form colleges. This gave a pleasing breadth of responses from different settings. The majority of respondents taught either key stage 3 or 4 (or both) with a smaller number of respondents teaching key stage 5 (65/119).

"84% of respondents believe the pandemic has had a significant impact on Drama education overall"

The findings

The purpose of the study was to gauge impact – either positive or negative – of the Covid-19 pandemic on drama education, and respondents were asked to consider a series of questions relating to the different periods of the pandemic – for example, during remote learning and during periods of face-to-face learning. Responses were recorded using the Likert scale, and there was space for free text so teachers could expand on their answers. These free text responses were most illuminating, and we are grateful that respondents spent so much time telling us about their experiences.

The impact the Covid pandemic has had on secondary drama education overall from March 2020-July 2021:

Question	No Impact	Minimal Impact	Moderate Impact	Significant Impact
What impact do you think the Covid-19 pandemic has had on secondary Drama education overall ?	0%	1.7%	14.3%	84.0%
When students have been in school doing face to face learning, how has your ability to teach practical Drama been impacted?	1.7%	11.8%	31.1%	55.5%
Thinking specifically about periods of distance learning during the period of March 2020 to now, how would you say this has impacted your students' experience of Drama education?	0%	4.0%	9.2%	86.6%
What impact has the Covid-19 pandemic had on the acquisition of the necessary knowledge and skills in Drama education?	0.8%	6.7%	37.0%	55.5%

**Some percentages exceed 100% due to rounding to one decimal place.*



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It is clear from these statistics that the impact on Drama has been profound. Respondents told us that the most significant impact on Drama was during periods of remote learning, but over half of respondents also thought that the pandemic has had a significant impact on practical drama and knowledge and skill acquisition, even during periods of face to face learning. We know from our study, that even during periods of face to face learning, many students did not engage in practical Drama lessons, and some students were re-roomed into classrooms and sat at desks facing the front for the entire school year of 2020-21. This will have had a hugely detrimental impact on Drama as a practical subject that involved collaboration and peer negotiation. It will have been impossible for students to experience the full potential of Drama if they were not able to engage in practical performance work, group work, or play Drama games, and therefore, skill development will have been hugely impacted. Aside from the opportunity to learn practical skills such as vocal and physical skills, a lack of practical work will also have had an impact on the development of interpersonal skills developed through peer learning in Drama.

Engagement of students during different stages of the pandemic

Thinking about engagement of students during periods of remote learning , how would you rate the engagement of students in Drama/Performing Arts?						
Key Stage	Significantly less engaged	Somewhat less engaged	Engagement stayed the same	Somewhat more engaged	Significantly more engaged	Not Applicable
KS3	56.3%	25.2%	9.2%	2.5%	0.8%	5.9%
KS4	23.5%	52.9%	11.8%	1.7%	0.8%	9.2%
KS5	4.2%	25.2%	21.8%	3.4%	2.5%	42.9%

**Some percentages exceed 100% due to rounding to one decimal place.*

The above figures suggest that younger students may have struggled more with engagement during periods of remote learning. Over half of Key Stage 3 students were significantly less engaged, whilst this was only 23.5% of Key Stage 4 students. This could be attributed to the fact that at KS4 and above, students have actively opted for the subject and so therefore are perhaps more committed to their learning and are more goal-orientated as they are working towards a qualification. This could also be connected to the number of learning hours and the relationship and rapport built up with the teacher over time, which has a positive impact on learning (Fan, 2012). If students have one hour per week or fortnight of Drama at KS3, there could be less incentive to stay engaged, compared to if they have 2-3 hours a week of the subject at KS4 or 5. A recent study from Cardiff University reported that over a quarter of 10-11 year old children reported “elevated or clinically significant emotional difficulties during the

"Over half of Key Stage 3 students were significantly less engaged in Drama during periods of remote learning"

pandemic” (SHRN, 2021), and so it is also a possible factor that the youngest secondary children could still be struggling to adjust to secondary education, having had significant disruption at the end of primary school.

Thinking about the period of the return to face to face learning, from March 2021 to now, have you noticed any change in students' engagement in Drama compared to before the pandemic?						
Key Stage	Significantly less engaged	Somewhat less engaged	Engagement stayed the same	Somewhat more engaged	Significantly more engaged	Not Applicable
KS3	17.6%	26.9%	19.3%	21.8%	6.7%	7.6%
KS4	4.2%	30.3%	26.9%	20.3%	7.6%	10.9%
KS5	0%	13.4%	21.0%	11.8%	8.4%	45.4%

**Some percentages exceed 100% due to rounding to one decimal place.*

Whilst this is more of a mixed picture, it is still disappointing that the majority of KS3 and KS4 students were reported as being less engaged upon their return to face to face learning, compared to before the pandemic. This could be attributed to the rise in anxiety and poor mental wellbeing documented in young people during the pandemic, or to the lack of clarity of whether exams were going to take place or not – this lack of direction could have been demotivating to some students. The oldest students (KS5) were less affected by a lack of engagement – this could be because they had more learning resilience and so were able to pick up where they left off when returning to school more readily than younger students, and perhaps due to the fact that the time spent on remote learning was a smaller percentage of their overall time spent in secondary education than that of the KS3 students. It’s possible that in some schools, Year 8 students may have done no practical work at all from March 2020-July 2021, for the majority of their time in secondary education. This will need to be factored into future planning for these cohorts, as several of our respondents told us.

Changes in teaching and curriculum before, during and after the pandemic

Thinking about the first period of remote learning from March-July 2020 , was there any change in the following areas:				
Area	Reduced	Stayed the same	Increased	Not Applicable
Curriculum time allocated to teaching Drama at KS3	30.3%	63.9%	0%	5.9%
Curriculum time allocated to teaching Drama at KS4	18.5%	71.4%	0.8%	9.2%
Curriculum time allocated to teaching Drama / Performing Arts at KS5	10.1%	47.1%	0%	42.9%

**Some percentages exceed 100% due to rounding to one decimal place.*

Whilst the majority of teaching time stayed the same, it is disappointing that almost third of respondents told us that curriculum time allocated to Drama at KS3 was reduced during the first period of remote learning from March-July 2020. We understand that in many cases, the school day was shortened in the first lockdown to ease pressure on children and families when coping with a new and alien way of working. However, it is unfortunate that these decisions took their toll on practical subjects such as Drama, which have struggled to resume normality even when students have returned to school.

Thinking about the academic year 2020-21 has there been any change in the following areas:				
Area	Reduced	Stayed the same	Increased	Not Applicable
Curriculum time allocated to teaching Drama at KS3	14.3%	79.8%	0.8%	5.9%
Curriculum time allocated to teaching Drama at KS4	9.2%	81.5%	0.8%	8.4%
Curriculum time allocated to teaching Drama / Performing Arts at KS5	5.9%	47.9%	2.5%	43.7%
Numbers of options choices at KS4	31.9%	56.3%	3.4%	8.4%
Numbers of students taking Drama/Performing Arts at KS4	52.9%	30.3%	7.6%	9.2%
Numbers of students taking Drama/Performing Arts at KS5	35.3%	22.7%	3.4%	38.7%
Access to a specialised space for teaching Drama/Performing Arts	53.8%	42.9%	0.8%	2.5%

Thinking about the academic year (2021-22) are there any proposed changes in the following areas:				
Area	Reduced	Stayed the same	Increased	Not Applicable
Curriculum time allocated to teaching Drama at KS3	16.8%	70.6%	7.6%	5.0%
Curriculum time allocated to teaching Drama at KS4	11.8%	74.8%	5.0%	8.4%
Curriculum time allocated to teaching Drama / Performing Arts at KS5	11.8%	43.7%	2.5%	42.0%
Numbers of options choices at KS4	30.3%	52.9%	5.9%	10.9%
Numbers of students taking Drama/Performing Arts at KS4	50.4%	31.9%	7.6%	10.1%
Numbers of students taking Drama/Performing Arts at KS5	28.6%	23.5%	4.2%	43.7%
Access to a specialised space for teaching Drama/Performing Arts	21.0%	63.0%	13.4%	2.5%

**Some percentages exceed 100% due to rounding to one decimal place.*

Over half of respondents reported lack of, or reduced, access to a specialist teaching space in 2020-21, which will have had a profound impact on students' access to a full and enriching Drama curriculum. Whilst this will have been a necessary step to ensure students remained in year group bubbles and social distancing was maintained, we hope that, now

bubbles are no longer in enforcement, teaching has resumed in properly equipped, specialist spaces. It is particularly worrying that almost a third of respondents told us that the number of option choices has been reduced, which naturally will have an impact on students being able to opt for Drama as a GCSE option. One respondent told us this was due to *"the COVID situation"*, with another expanding on this, reporting that *"option choices were reduced from three to two to allow more teaching time for educational recovery in core subjects. As*

50.4%
of respondents said that numbers of students opting for GCSE Drama had reduced

a result my GCSE Drama numbers have dropped from around 35-40 to 14 students." Over half respondents have reported a drop in students taking Drama at KS4 in years 20-21 and 21-22, which after the decade of decline in uptake reported by the CLA (CLA, 2020) is most concerning. As reported below, teachers have attributed this to students not having a full experience of Drama during the pandemic or being more anxious about performing and therefore not wanting to pursue the subject.

How did teachers expand on this impact in their own words?

When teachers expanded on their answers, this was generally grouped into the following categories:

- **Positive outcomes of remote learning**
- **A lack of confidence in students seen on the return to face to face teaching**
- **Little or no practical drama work from March 2020 – July 2021**
- **A lack of, or reduced, skill development in Drama compared to previous cohorts**
- **No extracurricular drama, workshops, trips or school productions during this time**
- **A drop in uptake to GCSE and A level**
- **Positive outcomes of remote learning**

It was pleasing to hear some of the positive impact this period has had on drama teaching. Many respondents commented on the quality and quantity of digital theatre which was made available during this period – and how theatre companies responded to the pandemic to ensure continued access to theatre productions. Respondents also commented on how teaching remotely 'forced' them to be more creative with how and what they taught and encouraged them to "think outside of the box." There were also several comments on how the increased amount of time spent on drama theory, although this may have been a

necessity and not a choice initially, has deepened students' understanding of subject specific terminology.

"I have continued live online throughout, which has forced me to think outside of the box so that my students (and I) continue to be inspired in very different and surprisingly unexpected ways - some of them very positive."

"[Remote learning] forced us to explore more work on theatre design, lighting, costume, writing. When students have been able to have practical work they have hugely appreciated it."

"The general theatre knowledge (especially technical theatre) is now unparalleled to previous years and students came back to practical work using subject specific language in a way we didn't expect."

"One positive has been the focus on theory that has been developed into lessons."

- **A lack of confidence in students seen on the return to face to face teaching**

It was unsurprising that the majority of respondents gave lack of, or reduced confidence, and increased anxiety in students, as one impact of this period. Respondents commented that students came back to face to face teaching less willing to perform to their peers, which could be as a result of the reduced skill development – so they felt less prepared to perform, or due to the social isolation of the lockdown periods. The Mental Health Foundation reported an increase in anxiety and feelings of loneliness during the pandemic, and this was higher in young people than in other age groups (Mental Health Foundation, 2020).

"A lot of students have come back extremely anxious and have refused to perform or have needed significant intervention and encouragement to get them back on track to where they were before the pandemic."

"Students have become more self-conscious and have real difficulty with group work."

"Student[s] are less willing to perform in front of their peers"

"Mental health, ability to socialise and behaviour are three other strands which are proving difficult at the moment. Students seem less resilient in terms of their ability to compromise, work together, be creative, respect each other and their expectations for what they present back to the class are much lower than usual."

"Aside from the opportunity to learn practical skills such as vocal and physical skills, a lack of practical work will also have had an impact on the development of interpersonal skills developed through peer learning in Drama."



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“Group work, social skills, confidence and creativity have been negatively impacted.”

“Following the long lockdowns it has been a real challenge to build students up to a place where they feel confident enough to engage socially and perform work for others.”

- **Little or no practical drama work from March 2020 – July 2021**

A lot of respondents connected the lack of opportunities for practical work to the lack of confidence seen in students, and also to the reduced numbers of students opting for GCSE and A Level Drama. There was a feeling that students have not experienced ‘real’ or ‘normal’ Drama during this period, which has significantly impacted on engagement and enjoyment of the subject, and therefore uptake. It does seem that many schools did not allow any practical work at all to take place, and students have been moved to classrooms, which has significantly impacted what could be taught. Although there is an appreciation of the necessity of these decisions in order to reduce spread of the virus and to fulfil social distancing requirements, the detrimental impact it has had on the subject cannot be underestimated.

“Our KS3 students have not participated in practical drama since March 2020 this has led to them now being anxious to approach performance and we have seen a significant reduction in students opting for GCSE drama”

“The whole curriculum has had to be adapted. Very little practical work. No ensemble work. Almost all written work.”

“Our GCSE numbers are down next year because students missed out on so much practical in Y9. Schemes of learning have had to be rewritten for virtual and for the coming year to fill the gap for practical skills.”

“Due to classes of 30 it has not felt possible to do practical work and students were disengaged during remote learning.”

- **A lack of, or reduced, skill development in Drama compared to previous cohorts**

Understandably, respondents linked the lack of practical work to a lack of skill development during this period. Teachers also commented on how it is the extracurricular opportunities in Drama which increase skill development further, so the absence of this has also been detrimental. Teachers are having to re-think schemes of work to cover basic skills again, so there is also an impact on workload. There was also a concern that students are not opting for the subject because they perhaps don’t feel experienced enough, so lack of skill development has also perhaps impacted on uptake as well. It is important to remember that whereas students may have 4-5 hours of English or Maths a week, they may only have 1 hour of Drama a week (or even a fortnight), so the periods of remote learning will have had a much more profound impact on curriculum time and therefore skill development.



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“All students seem to be at least a year behind in their practical skills compared to normal. Especially KS3. We have been creating new schemes for the younger years to go back over the real basics we would normally expect them to have grasped, such as still images or having focus in performance. Had to scrap more ambitious devising schemes, which will impact next year on GCSE cohort.”

“In year 7 they are really lacking in those basic skills that you would set down in those first couple of terms. Weirdly a lot of the kids don't seem to be using their imagination and creativity with the same amount of freedom.”

“Students are lacking key skills and techniques as they have now had over a year of not being able to apply these skills practically. Lacking social skills and the ability to work as a team.”

“Especially at KS3 the pandemic has had a significant impact on students' experience and also knowledge and skills.....All year groups have been affected in their skill development through missing huge chunks of practical work and also through absences due to isolating, meaning practical work was often not completed. They have not had to prepare for practical or written exams in the same way as other cohorts again affecting their skills and experience.”

- **No extracurricular drama, workshops, trips or school productions during this time**

The bubble system has had a detrimental impact on extracurricular Drama, as many schools would run a club or production with mixed year groups. Respondents also commented on how extracurricular performance improves the quality of work in the curriculum, and so the lack of extracurricular performance opportunities has also compounded the lack of practical skills and confidence. One respondent who was a theatre-in-education specialist, commented on the reduction in cultural capital in students due to not being able to offer visits or workshops.

“For theatre in education work - the impact was we were not able to go into schools for a long time - which meant that students' cultural capital was greatly impacted. We are now going into primary schools but secondary schools are still overwhelmed with work and unable to organize visits “

“No clubs, no vertical learning due to bubble system, minimal opportunity for any practical work, no performances and productions, no theatre trips, no workshops, teacher lead with very little opportunity for freedom and exploration and student lead work.”

“Because students haven't had access to theatre or been able to take part in extracurricular activities, quality of work has reduced.”

- **A drop in uptake to GCSE and A level**

Perhaps most concerning in the study was the number of respondents who told us that Drama would not run as an option choice at GCSE or A Level, or that uptake has significantly dropped. 50.4% of respondents said that uptake had dropped for GCSE Drama for the



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current year, 2021-22. Teachers have attributed this to the lack of practical work, or the lack of a 'normal experience' of Drama – in short, students have not been able to experience the full spectrum of what Drama has to offer, and so have not opted for the subject as their experience during the pandemic has not been as enjoyable. The issue of anxiety and a lack of confidence and skill development has also been connected to numbers dropping. A further concern is the fact that some schools seem to have reduced curriculum time for Drama or reduced the number of options available to students at KS4 or KS5, perhaps to offer more hours to core subjects such as English and Maths for educational recovery. This is particularly troubling as it undermines the position Drama could have in educational recovery itself, building back the confidence of students and providing opportunities for socio-emotional learning.

“This [has] impacted choices for A level, left students with gaps in knowledge and practical skills and affect[ed] their self-esteem and confidence in the subject.”

“Year 9 have not opted to take Drama for GCSE, due to the severe impact on the provision & content of their lessons. This is the first time in my 23 years teaching I will not be teaching a GCSE or equivalent in Year 10.”

“Our KS4 numbers are lower this year which I think is a result of the pandemic. I think students didn't want to take a subject that they hadn't been able to do and also they have witnessed the decline of the arts industry and don't see a career in it.”

“Not being able to teach KS3 in studios and classrooms only has lead (sic) to substantial decline in those wishing to take GCSE. Some students have still not had the opportunity to watch live theatre.”

“We have much lower numbers choosing it as an option this year because their experience has been so alien to 'normal' drama. There has been lots of sitting writing which although useful at times isn't the usual KS3 experience.”

“My intake at GCSE and A Level has decreased. As a result of the reduced access to 'real' Drama experiences and the effect the pandemic has had on the arts industry, parents are even more reticent to encourage their children to follow this pathway and as a result, pupils in our school have shown more preference for STEM subjects.”

“Due to the Covid situation, the head teacher limited the students' options at GCSE, so drama was marginalised even more than usual. The school had been supportive of the performing arts before, and the school plays were a significant feature, however they were not allowed this year, and when it came for the students to choose their options in year 9, some of the finest students chose not to take drama as an option. Consequently, there will be no year 10 next year [KS4], and those students who chose it, will not be allowed to do it.”



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What do Drama teachers see as the main priorities for the future of Drama education?

As part of this study, we asked “In your opinion, what are the three main issues facing classroom Drama which need to be addressed?” The majority of responses to this question were grouped into the following themes:

- Space, equipment and financial support
- The status of the subject and its position within the curriculum
- Attitudes towards Drama – from students, school leadership and also at Governmental level.

Other responses commented on student confidence, self-esteem and wellbeing as being an issue, as well as the need for a recovery curriculum to gain back time and experience lost through the pandemic.

A sample of responses can be seen below which highlight the strong messages around the need for regular curriculum time, a review of Drama’s position on the national curriculum, more support both in schools and nationally for the subject given its values and benefits to young people, and a review of the focus on the English Baccalaureate and STEM – which teachers feel has been detrimental to Drama.

Sample responses:

- Lack of time in the curriculum at KS3 but same expectations for student progress from SLT.
- Drama is not a national curriculum subject with the same importance placed on it as core, Ebacc or even other arts subjects.
- National push from govt on Ebacc and “academic” subjects, presenting creative subjects as a non-viable career option.
- Devalued by School leaders and the Government
- Publicity on the impact on the sector
- Devalued by parents, pupils and other staff
- We need to have a lesson at ks3 at least once a week.
- We need to teach in a specialist space.
- We need to be valued as much as other subjects.
- Perception of its value from government, other school personnel and parents.
- Mental health issues increase mean more resistance to performance elements.
- Unwillingness to commit to extracurricular so difficult to promote the subject through other means.
- Curriculum time and experience for the students.
- Respect for the teaching space, my theatre is about to return to being an assembly space for the whole school to use regularly, meaning the students don’t really feel in a drama mood when in there.
- Finance, my department has the smallest budget in the school!
- EBACC in state schools.



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- Value by decision makers - Government, Policy Makers, School Leadership Teams - placed on the arts subjects as core to a balanced curriculum rather than an additional/optional extra.
- Impact of cuts to arts and welfare spending moving forward.

Summary and Recommendations

This study finds that the Covid-19 pandemic has had a detrimental impact on secondary Drama education in the UK, largely down to the periods of remote learning preventing practical teaching, but also the wider impact caused by a continued need to socially distance preventing practical work when back in school; the loss of valuable teaching time; the lack of extracurricular opportunities; a lack of skill development and progress; and a lack of confidence and engagement from students. We make the following recommendations to support teachers:

- A focus on team-building, ensemble based games in the Drama classroom will help to build back the confidence of students.
- Use regular low stakes quizzes and retrieval practice to recap basic skills.
- Start every practical lesson with a warm-up focusing on one practical skill, using modelling and scaffolding to demonstrate expectations and good use of skill.
- Use resources such as the EEF Toolkit to support your teaching and learning, using evidence-informed methods such as metacognition and mastery learning to support educational recovery.
- A class contract signed by all the class may be useful to set some ground rules to help students feel confident to perform again – with ‘rules’ such as never talking or laughing during a performance, giving only positive feedback to peer performances, always applauding every performance, everyone commits to performing at least once per half term.
- Once students feel secure, offering plentiful opportunities for low stakes performance in class will be important to keep building confidence. Using peer assessment regularly and providing regular teacher feedback (verbal is fine) can be useful for building up confidence and starting a positive cycle of encouragement.
- Consider re-planning schemes of work if workload is manageable, to ensure recovery of ‘lost’ learning and to cement basic skills. Remember that in the current academic year, exam boards have reduced the minimum duration of performances for exams, so don’t be afraid to use these shorter playing times and focus on quality not quantity for less able students.
- Use Oak National Academy lessons as homework to recap basic skills or cover more content – there are full schemes of work on vocal and physical skills, devising, script work, Shakespeare, design skills and more, which can complement your in-class teaching. Homework is reported to have a positive impact on attainment by the EEF.



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- Being mindful of teacher workload, starting extracurricular clubs again will be a vital part of recovery. These don't have to culminate in a large scale performance but can be just an informal Drama club where students can have fun, express themselves and build up their confidence in a risk free environment.
- Where possible, utilise older students or trainees to support with extracurricular clubs to share the workload. This could form part of a DfE or Arts Award qualification for older students.
- Devise a scheme of work for KS3 students which they can perform to KS2 students at your feeder primary schools, perhaps as a 'mini TIE tour' or on Y6 induction days in the summer. This will give KS3 students a boost of confidence and will also show KS2 how exciting Drama can be, giving them a taste of the subject before they start in Y7.
- Meet with Governors, the PTA or the leadership team to investigate funding opportunities to support extracurricular workshops, trips and visits. An external practitioner can be an exciting opportunity and can help students to re-engage in the subject.
- Arrange a visit to a local theatre for a backstage tour, which could be a low cost trip and can offer students an insight to the career opportunities available in the cultural industries to reignite their passion.
- Invite former students into school who have gone on to study Drama further or work professionally or arrange a Q&A session on Zoom. This can be an exciting way to show your students where Drama can take them and perhaps remotivate them.
- Consider using Pupil Premium funding to support the most vulnerable learners to engage with Drama. A workshop aimed at disadvantaged students to develop oracy, confidence or emotional literacy can be a positive use of PP funding which will also develop cultural capital.
- If you feel unsupported or have lost curriculum time or space, try to meet with line managers and/or curriculum Governors and take evidence with you to support your argument that arts education is vital to young people's development. The Cultural Learning Alliance document, *Key Research Findings from The Case for Cultural Learning* (CLA, 2017) is a brilliant summary of evidence.
- Invite school leaders and Governors along to lessons to observe your good practice and use this to demonstrate if you do not have adequate or suitable space.
- Allow the students to speak for themselves – organise pupil panels to talk to students about how they are feeling about Drama. If there is a reticence to perform, try to understand why and ask the students what they think would help. Equally, try to get the students to explain how Drama helps them with their confidence, peer relationships and self-expression, and take this evidence to school leaders to support your case.



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Resources:

Oak National Academy – <https://classroom.thenational.academy/subjects-by-key-stage/key-stage-3/subjects/drama>

EEF Toolkits – <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit>

CLA Case for Cultural Learning Key Research Findings – <https://culturallearningalliance.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/CLA-key-findings-2017.pdf>

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