

Young People to Benefit from Creative Education Boost

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Young people across the country are set to benefit from a significant investment in arts education, enrichment activities, and digital skills, as part of a new government initiative announced today by Education Secretary Bridget Phillipson. The package is designed to provide greater access to high-quality arts and music education, broaden opportunities for extra-curricular engagement, and equip students with in-demand skills in AI and technology.

This initiative supports the government's wider Plan for Change, which aims to break the link between background and success, ensuring high standards in education so that every child can achieve their potential. Central to this plan is the creation of a National Centre for Arts and Music Education, which will champion artistic and creative opportunities for children through resources like the government's music hubs. Teachers will also gain access to new online training to enhance arts education delivery.

To further expand students' opportunities outside the classroom, an Enrichment Framework will be developed with expert input. This framework will cover a broad spectrum of extra-curricular activities ranging from sport and debating to gardening and volunteering, ensuring every young person has access to enriching

experiences that support personal growth.

Recognising the importance of preparing students for the future, the government will also establish a Digital, AI and Technology Task and Finish Group. Comprised of industry and sector experts, the group will advise on improving digital education and strengthening the AI and tech talent pipeline. Their recommendations, expected by the end of the academic year, will also guide how AI can enhance teaching and learning in schools.

The announcements coincide with the publication of the interim report from the curriculum and assessment review, led by Professor Becky Francis. The review underlines the importance of primary school assessments in building strong foundations in literacy and numeracy. The Education Secretary confirmed that such assessments will remain a core part of the curriculum, noting their critical role in tracking progress and closing the attainment gap between disadvantaged children and their peers.

Commenting on the announcements, Education Secretary Bridget Phillipson said: “I welcome the important progress Becky Francis and her expert review are making to drive forward work to take the curriculum into the modern era and help deliver on the government’s Plan for Change.

High standards must also mean greater opportunities and a curriculum fit for the world of today and tomorrow. Our new National Centre for Arts and Music Education, alongside a renewed focus on giving young people the AI and technical skills they need, are significant steps on the path to making sure every child, wherever they grow up, leaves school truly ready for life and work.”

Culture Secretary Lisa Nandy added: “Arts and music bring people together and are enjoyed by communities across the country. We want every child and young person to have equal opportunities to access high-quality arts and music education, to ensure creativity can be explored by all and not just the privileged few.”

Darren Henley CBE, CEO of Arts Council England, praised the initiative, stating: “This bold innovation will nurture England’s next generation of creators, performers and audiences, levelling the playing field for all young people whatever their background.”

Further support came from education and cultural leaders, including the National Theatre and The Duke of Edinburgh's Award, who highlighted the importance of access to arts and enrichment activities in supporting young people's personal and professional development.

These plans are part of wider measures within the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill, aimed at ensuring every classroom is led by a high-quality teacher, while also revising the curriculum to meet modern needs. Once the revised curriculum is complete, all state schools, including academies, will be required to follow it up to age 16, ensuring consistency and quality across the board.

Through these comprehensive reforms, the government is committed to delivering an education system that offers every child the skills, experiences, and opportunities needed to thrive in a rapidly evolving world.