The expressive arts evaluation framework
Delivering an expansive and inspiring curriculum for all

This evaluation framework has been developed by the Chartered College of Teaching as part of the Rethinking Curriculum project, funded by the Helen Hamlyn Trust. It is one of a series of evaluation frameworks that have been shared as part of our Rethinking Curriculum toolkits.

The framework captures some of the key ideas explored in the Rethinking Curriculum **expressive arts** toolkit and offers some key ideas for you to evaluate your school's curriculum practice on this theme. These ideas are drawn from research and evidence and from our work with schools, and include input from leading experts.

The ideas explored are not intended to provide a definitive approach to curriculum development on this theme. There may be gaps or omissions and this should be viewed as a work in progress, which we will aim to develop further as the evidence base continues to evolve. You are encouraged to consider this framework alongside the expressive arts toolkit, and to undertake your own reading and research to build your understanding of the key ideas discussed prior to implementing changes in your context.

This evaluation framework has been developed in collaboration with Art UK, Royal Ballet and Opera and Jenna Crittenden, Teacher Advocacy Lead at the Chartered College of Teaching.

Chartered College of Teaching

Part 1a: Building a culture of The expressive arts

Evaluation
Reflect on where your school is in your journey and allocate a number against each of the statements below to evaluate the extent to which it reflects current practice in your context (1–2 = low; 3–4 = medium; 5–6 = high).

Key ideas from research, theory and evidence	Your evaluation (1–6)

✔ A shared terminology and scope is adopted by the school and has been developed collaboratively, discussed and shared with staff at all levels. The definition recognises the breadth of subjects and places emphasis on creative expression, curiosity and empathy rather than technical mastery alone. This could include decisions around:
    ○ Expectations of the expressive arts coverage across the curriculum
    ○ Expectations and role of the class teacher and other adults in leading and developing the expressive arts
    ○ Inclusivity of opportunities for all around the expressive arts
 	
 ✔ The participation of The expressive arts is seen as an entitlement for all pupils and used to promote a sense of identity, culture and belonging across the school. This inclusive culture celebrates diverse responses, risk-taking, performance and practical demonstrations of learning.
 	
 ✔ School systems and policies support the expressive arts across the school and are regularly reviewed to ensure that barriers are negated. This includes access to appropriate resources, facilities and specialist staff support as required.
 	
 ✔ Staff at all levels are supported to build their expertise and understanding in relation to the role of the expressive arts across the school curriculum. The school provides sustained, high-quality CPD to develop teacher pedagogical approaches and confidence to teach expressive forms.
 	
 ✔ Although they may be guided by the whole-school principles and approaches, teachers have a degree of agency over pedagogical choices and may adopt their approach to suit particular pupil needs, subject areas or events. This is celebrated and supported by school leadership.	

Questions for reflection and discussion

1. How do we define the expressive arts in our context and how consistently is this definition used?

2. Do pupils experience the expressive arts as an entitlement and a meaningful part of their learning?

3. How confident are staff in delivering expressive disciplines and what CPD is needed?

4. Who in the school champions the expressive arts and how is that role supported and resourced?

5. How equitable is access to expressive arts opportunities across pupil groups, phases and locations?

Part 1b: Building a curriculum with The Arts

Evaluation
Reflect on where your school is in your journey and allocate a number against each of the statements below to evaluate the extent to which it reflects current practice in your context (1–2 = low; 3–4 = medium; 5–6 = high).

Key ideas from research, theory and evidence	Your evaluation (1–6)
✔ **Extra-curricular and partnership provision**: Provide sustained extra-curricular activities and embed partnerships with arts and cultural organisations into the curriculum. ✔ **Transferable skills**: Design learning so expressive practice explicitly develops communication, problem-solving, collaboration and employability skills. ✔ The pedagogical rationale and vision behind the use of expressive arts has been developed collaboratively and is shared across the school. This includes how the expressive arts is integrated into the formal curriculum offer e.g. schemes of work. ✔ Provide a wide range of expressive disciplines across phases and ensure that pupils encounter multiple art forms throughout their school journey. ✔ Staff at all levels are (or will be) provided with high-quality CPD and training around the planning and delivery of the expressive arts, and this is regularly revisited and led by the identified needs of the team. ✔ The process of the work is captured (e.g. portfolios, reflective journals), as well as the outcome (product) to inform assessment.	

Questions for reflection and discussion

1. How is the expressive arts sequenced across phases and how does it connect to other subjects?

2. Which expressive disciplines are offered and how accessible are they to all pupils?

3. How do we assess and document expressive learning in ways that respect the creative process?

4. How are extra-curricular activities and partnerships integrated within the wider curriculum and are these equitable?

5. What evidence do we collect to demonstrate impact on attainment, wellbeing and inclusion?

Common barriers
What might impede improvement?

The timetable is overcrowded, and accountability pressures limit time for meaningful, sustained engagement with the expressive arts.

Lack of specialist teachers and limited CPD reduces the quality and continuity.

Inadequate resources available and can constrain class use e.g instruments, studios, rehearsal spaces or materials.

Difficulty in producing standardised evidence of impact leads to under-investment.

The curriculum is not consistently mapped to build on pupils' previous experiences. Instead, pupils repeat a limited range of expressive art experiences. This is often due to one teacher driving the initiative across the school.

Part 2: Key considerations for successful implementation

Evaluation
Reflect on where your school is in your journey and allocate a number against each of the statements below to evaluate the extent to which it reflects current practice in your context (1–2 = low; 3–4 = medium; 5–6 = high).

Key ideas from research, theory and evidence	Your evaluation (1–6)
✔ Leaders clearly articulate the vision and values for the expressive arts and they communicate its value across the school and community.	
✔ Leaders ensure that sufficient time, resources and supporting structures are in place to enable staff to deliver and develop an expressive arts curriculum effectively.	
✔ Leaders build and sustain relationships with arts and cultural partners to provide expertise, resources and authentic learning opportunities.	
✔ Implementation is developed as an iterative process, with collaborative cycles of planning, trialling, evaluating and refining. This is carefully aligned with other initiatives and staff capacity.	
✔ Teachers are supported to build their expertise so that they develop strong subject content knowledge, have a deep understanding of effective pedagogical approaches and are able to combine these with knowledge of the school curriculum, pupils' needs and the wider context, in order to plan and implement the curriculum effectively. High-quality CPD is planned as a sequence rather than a one-off event.	
✔ There is an appointed lead or champion for the expressive arts who drives staff development, impact evaluation and partnerships.	

Questions for reflection and discussion

1. Is your school ready to implement a curriculum development activity in this area? Have you already evaluated existing practice using the full Rethinking Curriculum evaluation framework to ensure a strong foundation for this work?
2. Do you have a clear implementation plan? How will you involve staff in this process?
3. Is there existing capacity and/or how will you create capacity for this work? Is there anything that you will need to de-implement to enable this to happen?

Common barriers
What might impede improvement?

Leaders and/or staff find it difficult to articulate vision/goals/values.

Implementation may be rushed or insufficiently planned.

There is a lack of resources/time to support development of curriculum.

Curriculum changes are implemented wholesale, without sufficient consideration of context, school needs and/or capacity.

School leaders do not systematically seek staff input into curriculum development and, as a result, there may be a disconnect between the intended and enacted curriculum.

Curriculum changes are seen as a 'quick fix', with new ideas introduced with limited development or impact evaluation.

Teachers implement new approaches too quickly, without a clear rationale or understanding of how they align with the school context, ultimately resulting in a lack of impact on pupil learning.