The impact of Covid-19 on the English education teaching and learning environment and how this relates to sustaining and developing creativity, creative thinking and teaching for creativity

– A literature review

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Background

The following literature review has been produced to inform and contribute to Arts Council England's (ACE) interim report on the progress of the implementation of the recommendations made in the Durham Commission on Creativity and Education report.

The review seeks to answer three research questions:

Research Question 1: In what ways has Covid-19 impacted on the education environment and schooling context for children and young people between the age of 4 and 18 in England?

Research Question 2: What does current research tell us about the educational priorities of education leaders (including policy makers and school leaders) since March 2020?

Research Question 3: How have these changes impacted on factors which are important for fostering creativity and creative thinking, and on schools' and other organisations' ability to "teach for creativity"?

Methodology

The purpose of this review is to determine what can be learned from existing data, surveys and reports on the impact of Covid-19 on education, young people (including mental health), educators, families and employers.

The review has been conducted based on a set of inclusion criteria to identify research and reports which meet the following criteria:

- Date – research conducted since March 2020
- Geographic location - England
- Language – English
- Participants – related to the education system for children aged 4 – 18
- Reported outcomes – robust qualitative or quantitative findings
- Setting – English education system for children aged 4 – 18, including private, state, mainstream, alternative provision, home schooling, special education
- Type of publication – Peer reviewed articles and grey literature such as reports, journal articles, conference papers.

Research Question 1: In what ways has Covid-19 impacted on the education environment and schooling context for children and young people between the age of 4 and 18 in England?

Since March 2020, the education system in England has faced significant challenges. On 18th March 2020, the UK government announced that from 20th March, schools in England were to close except for children of key workers and vulnerable children. A phased reopening to children in Reception, Year 1, 6, 10 and 12 was initiated in June 2020, however, many schools were not able to accommodate the return of students across these years. Schools reopened fully in September 2020. Teachers, senior leaders, businesses, families and students have faced difficult circumstances and many constraints including limited IT access (for both staff and students), reduction in teaching capacity due to staff self-isolation or illness, logistical challenges from social distancing requirements and the need for additional cleaning (Nelson & Sharp, 2020).

The findings within this review are from the period from March to November 2020, however it should be noted that due to the timescales for publishing findings, there is a greater prevalence of research available for the earlier part of this period. There is a recognition in the literature that there will be a long-term disadvantage that the crisis has caused to children's education (Children's Commissioner, 2020). Caution was advised by Ofsted in September 2020 that it is still early in the process for identifying the specific gaps in pupils' learning or for having a detailed picture of the impact of Covid-19 on children's education (HM Ofsted, 2020-1)

Remote Learning/technology

Variation in provision

Studies monitoring the impact of school closures between March and July 2020 indicated that provision of remote learning was variable but that almost all pupils did receive some remote learning tasks from their teachers (Bridge England Network, 2020; Eivers at al., 2020). However, this was variable by school and year groups and almost half of exam-year students in years 11 and 13 did not receive any work from their school (Eivers at al., 2020). Provision from schools was often responsive rather than proactive due to the changing circumstances and government guidance (Bridge England Network, 2020).

The study by Eivers et al. (2020) from July 2020, reported that the majority of students spent less than three hours per day on remote learning activities. Although teachers were in regular contact with on average 60% of their students, in May 2020 teachers considered that less than half of students (42%) returned the last piece of work that had been set (Lucas et al., 2020). The report by Cullinane & Montacute (2020) published in April 2020, found that 45% of students reported that they had communicated with their teachers in the week prior to the study data collection. Ninety percent of teachers considered that their students were doing much less work than they would usually expect at that point in the year (May) (Lucas et al., 2020).

Remote teaching methods

The report by Cullinane & Montacute (2020), found that 23% of students reported taking part in live and recorded lessons online every day. In their report, Eivers at al., (2020) found that just over half of

all students taught remotely did not usually have live or real time lessons online. The use of offline provision (e.g. worksheets or recorded video) was much more common than live lessons with secondary and post-secondary students more likely than primary age to have online lessons. During visits to schools in September 2020, Ofsted found that remote teaching was taking place via a variety of methods including: recorded online lessons, individual study modules, and live online lessons (HM Ofsted, 2020-1). Some schools were managing some alignment with the curriculum for their online learning whilst other schools had not yet managed alignment (HM Ofsted, 2020-1)

Different approaches to home learning activities were reported to engage students in different ways. Teachers reported that the incorporation of authentic learning experiences, student centred approaches and student choices were effective in engaging students (Bridge England Network, 2020). Other studies reported that that the use of online conversations had a 5% higher level of student engagement (Lucas at al., 2020). Despite the pre-existing evidence on the importance of interactive learning, by July 2020 there was no evidence of an increase in the provision of interactive teaching and learning being used by teachers (Sharp et al., 2020-1; Nelson & Sharp, 2020). The use of a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) to inform students about learning activities also showed an increase in student engagement (8% increase) (Lucas et al., 2020). Whether schools already had an online platform in place to receive work was varied, with 60% of private schools and 37% of state schools in the most affluent areas already having and online platform in place, compared to 23% of the most deprived schools (Cullinane & Montacute, 2020).

Provision of creativity remotely

The restrictions imposed as a response to Covid-19 meant that many face-to-face activities had to stop when schools closed in March 2020. However, several reports detailed the successful use of remote sessions for continuing creative provision. These included: live online sessions which were considered to have been successful for customised partnerships e.g. one school working with one artist; webinars which provided ease of access through recorded sessions; activity boxes delivered to students containing materials required to complete different projects; and the provision of tablet computers to support students in accessing remote activities (e.g. a photography project and visual art project) (Ward et.al., 2020; Bridge England Network, 2020).

Teachers in both primary and secondary settings identified training in creativity across the curriculum to be a key training need (Bridge England Network, 2020).

Teacher remote teaching skills

Teachers are increasingly having to become technologically savvy and discerning about the digital solutions that they are choosing for their schools. Caution is raised by Harris & Jones (2020) at the need to strike a balance between technology and pedagogy within schools. Schools reported that they would welcome support in navigating digital offers and platforms to maximise the effectiveness of remote learning (Bridge England Network, 2020).

Online activity presents additional safeguarding challenges as well as technological challenges (e.g. broadband speed, software choices) and schools reported not having the time or expertise to support online activity (Arts Council England, 2020). Secondary teachers identified training in digital skills to be their top training need (Bridge England Network, 2020). In the study by Lucas et al. (2020), almost all senior leaders reported that they were providing guidance for their staff on remote learning. The

majority of teachers rated their ability to offer remote learning support to students, across most aspects surveyed, as 'good or very good'.

Student digital provision

The report from the Children's Commissioner (2020) presented findings from Ofcom, estimating that between 1.14m and 1.78m children in the UK have no access at home to a laptop, desktop or tablet. In these families there is often a reliance on smartphones to access the internet, which is extremely challenging for completing and submitting schoolwork. Sixty-thousand 11-18 year old children in the UK are estimated to have no home internet access at all. The study by Sharp et al. (2020-1) found that 28% of students had limited access to IT at home.

Schooling/curriculum delivery

During school closures since March 2020, where teachers had given less attention to full coverage of the curriculum, pupil engagement was reported to be 6% lower than for teachers that were covering the curriculum as normal (Lucas at al., 2020). However, where teaching involved activities consolidating previous learning or revising, there was a 5% higher level of student engagement.

Despite the challenges presented by Covid-19, several reports showed that some schools are managing to continue arts provision and creativity in teaching and learning. The report from Bridge England Network (2020) showed some optimism and resourcefulness evidenced within primary schools that were planning to increase arts provision to enhance student engagement, wellbeing and enjoyment in learning. Some schools have reported that they are focussing on their own music curriculum where they have had to remove singing and have maximum group sizes of 15 (Arts Council England, 2020). Daubney & Fautley (2020) argue that the role of music will be vital in rebuilding within schools. Partnerships working with cultural organisations and practitioners alongside curated creative learning resources was considered to be useful support for schools (Bridge England Network, 2020).

Caution was advised over the potential for a cascade effect created by the need for time to review lost learning leading to a reduction in the time available for new classroom instruction. The need for a balance to be struck between reviewing old knowledge then teaching new materials quickly and in-depth whilst also making sure that some students are not left behind was advised in order to ensure that a ripple effect does not prevail into future academic years (Middleton, 2020)

In preparation for the return to school in September 2020, nearly all teachers in the study by Sharp et al. (2020-1) estimated that their pupils were on average three months behind in their curriculum learning with teachers estimating that 44% of their students were in need of intensive catch-up support.

Ofsted reported, based on their pilot visits in September 2020, that they had observed a mixed interpretation of what was meant by a recovery curriculum (HM Ofsted, 2020-1). In some cases schools were focussing on lost learning (particularly reading), special educational needs (SEN) and a stronger focus on personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) and wellbeing. The visits found that some schools had achieved alignment between remote learning and the curriculum, however, others had not achieved alignment yet.

The pilot visits to schools by Ofsted as well as an Arts Council survey of music education hubs, indicated that schools were changing their practice to include a graduation of subject return, re-ordering teaching and removing practical aspects of music and PE (HM Ofsted, 2020-1; Arts Council England, 2020). Concern was raised at the end of the summer term 2020 that the recovery curriculum and a focus on STEM would impact on music, with the potential for it being side-lined within the curriculum along with a risk of reduction in the arts offer within schools, particularly at Key Stage 3 (Daubney & Fautley, 2020; Bridge England Network, 2020). In July 2020, 80% of teachers reported in the study by (Lucas et al., 2020) that all or certain areas of the curriculum were getting less attention than usual, including all core curriculum subjects.

Assessment and exams

GCSE and A Level examinations did not take place in summer 2020, with centre assessment grades submitted by students' schools and colleges used for awarding GCSEs and A Levels (unless that score was lower than their exam board calculated grade, in which case the calculated grade was used). Little robust evidence was available yet on examinations and assessments. The UK Government Education Committee received evidence and considered whether the reliance on final exams was a weakness in the education system but conclusions were not drawn within this session (House of Commons, 2020).

Risk/Health and Safety/Cleaning

The concern which was raised often by school leaders and teachers was in relation to social distancing and movement around schools (Sharp et al., 2020-2). Clear guidance from government was something that schools considered to be very important (Sharp et al., 2020-2). In September 2020, Ofsted reported that extensive changes had taken place within schools in relation to the flow of students around buildings, access restrictions, extension and contraction of lunchtimes, and the use of playground zones (HM Ofsted, 2020-1). Logistics within classrooms, arrangements for bubbles and individual or small group lessons were of concern to schools (Arts Council England, 2020). The study by Sharp et al. (2020-1) in relation to the challenges schools were facing for return to school in September 2020, highlighted that three quarters of teachers did not feel able to teach to their usual standard due to the restrictions on social distancing.

Increased cleaning, introduction of pupil hygiene regimes and use of equipment (including instruments) has also been high on the priority for schools since the start of the pandemic (HM Ofsted, 2020-1; Arts Council England, 2020). The need for additional cleaning resources and protective equipment was highlighted by schools as being necessary/essential for safety in opening schools. (Sharp et al., 2020-1; Sharp et al., 2020-2). In the study by Sharp et al. (2020-2), 96% of senior leaders reported that frequent cleaning and regular handwashing/sanitising (94%) were necessary/essential for opening their schools for more students. Due the cleaning procedures that would be required, the use of school settings for out of school music centres/ensembles was considered to be less feasible at the present time (Arts Council England, 2020).

Disadvantaged students/inequality

Disadvantage was a theme which was present in many of the sources reviewed. Within the theme of disadvantage, five sub-themes emerged relating to: access to technology, engagement with remote learning, attendance at school, quality of work, and learning gap.

Access to technology

Students from disadvantaged backgrounds were widely found to have difficulties with access to IT equipment including WiFi and suitable electronic devices. In schools in the most deprived areas, 15% of teachers reported that more than one third of their students would not have adequate access to an electronic device for home learning (Cullinane & Montacute, 2020). This compared to 2% from teachers in the most affluent state schools. In the same report, 12% of teachers in the most deprived schools also reported that they considered that a third of their students would not have adequate internet access. A report from Sharp etc al (2020-1) reported that 28% of pupils had limited access to IT at home, with this being a particular issue for schools in the most deprived areas. Reports conducted early on in the period of school closures, highlighted the importance of research being conducted into the effectiveness of IT supported learning during lockdown and for finding innovative ways to supplement traditional teaching (Wilson, 2020).

The government laptop scheme was announced in April 2020, with 200,000 devices and 50,000 routers made available to children with social workers, care leavers and disadvantaged year 10 students. However, it was estimated that there are 540,000 children in these eligible groups (Children's Commissioner, 2020). Data accessed by the Children's Commissioner indicated in their report published in September 2020, that one third of multi academy trusts (MATS) had received fewer than 10 laptops for all of their year 10 students, with 27 MATs receiving only one device. Concern was also raised that disadvantaged children in year groups other than year 10 had also lost out completely. The government scheme has been extended into the 2020/21 academic year with a further 150,000 devices being made available for schools that have to close for children to self-isolate. However, concern was again raised that the numbers are not sufficient to cope with the demand (Children's Commissioner, 2020).

As well as IT provision in the home, there was also a significant difference observed between preexisting technology available within schools to support home learning. The report by Cullinane & Montacute (2020) indicated that at the beginning of school closures in March 2020, 60% of private schools and 37% of states schools in affluent areas already had provision set up within the school for an online platform to receive work. This compared to just 23% in the most deprived schools.

The impact of the inequality of access to IT provision at home was highlighted in the report by Daubney & Fautley (2020), who warned that engagement with activities such as music and music education would likely be affected least for affluent students during lockdown with the students from the poorest households being affected most.

Engagement linked to disadvantage

Engagement with remote learning varied greatly. The report by Cullinane & Montacute (2020) estimated that 45% of students overall had communicated with their teachers in the previous week. However, this figure was significantly higher in independent schools at 62% in primary schools and 81% for secondary schools. Lucas et al. (2020) reported a 13% lower level of pupil engagement for

pupils with the highest level of deprivation, compared to those in the middle quintile. Pupils in the most deprived schools reported that 30% of their students returned their last piece of work, compared to 49% of students in the least deprived schools. In private schools, 50% of teachers reported receiving more than 75% of work back, compared to 27% in the most advantaged state schools and 8% in the least advantaged state schools (Cullinane & Montacute, 2020). The report by Nelson & Sharp (2020) highlighted the need to target support to the most deprived schools, given the finding that schools with the highest proportions of disadvantage showed the lowest levels of pupil engagement (Nelson & Sharp, 2020).

Students from middle class homes reported being much more likely to take part in live and recorded lessons online each day than working class pupils (30% vs 16%, respectively) (Cullinane & Montacute, 2020). The same report also found that students at private schools reported being more than twice as likely as their state school counterparts to have accessed online lessons every day (51% of students in private primary schools and 57% of students in private secondary schools). A greater percentage of students from middle class families also reported spending more than 4 hours per day learning than students from working class families (44% of students from middle class families compared to 33% of students from working class families).

Lucas et al. (2020) reported the percentage of disadvantaged students within their study that were less engaged in remote learning than their classmates: 81% of disadvantaged students with limited access to IT and/or study space were less engaged; 62% of vulnerable students, 58% of students with special educational needs and disabilities; 52% of students eligible for Pupil Premium funding; and 48% of young carers.

Engagement was also found to be dependent upon the style of teaching and activities set. Where activities involved consolidating previous learning or revising, students showed a 5% higher level of engagement, with disadvantaged students showing a 6% increase in those who were highly engaged (Lucas et al., 2020). The use of online conversations to deliver learning content as part of a wider range of measures showed a 5% increase in student engagement, increasing the number of highly engaged disadvantaged students by 8%. The use of a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) to inform pupils about learning activities showed an 8% higher level of student engagement than schools not using a VLE. Disadvantaged students showed a 13% increase in those who were highly engaged from the use of a VLE. Where less attention was given to all areas of the curriculum, student engagement was 6% lower than where the teachers covered the curriculum as normal. The report by Lucas at al. (2020) found that the most deprived schools struggled the most to be able to cover the curriculum.

Learning gap between advantaged and disadvantaged students

The report by Sharp et al. (2020-1) found that over half of teachers estimated that the learning gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers had widened. In the same report, teachers based in the most deprived schools were also over three times more likely to report their pupils were four or more months behind in their curriculum learning than teachers in the least deprived schools. In schools serving the highest proportion of pupils from Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds and in the most deprived schools, teachers estimated a much higher percentage of their students would need intensive catch up support.

Cullinane & Montacute (2020) reported that schools had already begun work to lessen the impact of school closures on the inequality gap through initiatives such as contacting specific parents to offer

advice about supervised learning (34%) or providing students with laptops or other devices (21%). However there was a significant difference between schools' provision of laptops and devices between primary and secondary schools (31% secondary vs 11% primary schools) and also between the most advantaged state schools (28%) and the most deprived schools 15%). When asked for their preferred strategy to prevent some students from falling behind during school closures, over half of secondary school teachers suggested the provision of tech devices. The provision of stationery and curriculum resource packs for less well-off families was also cited as a popular option to help alleviate the divide in digital access. Summer 'catch up' classes and a staggered return to school for disadvantaged students were also supported by over half of teachers to enable disadvantaged students to restart school on an equal footing.

Attendance
The differential impact of Covid-19 appears to have begun before the Government closure of schools. Prior to schools closing in March 2020, 73% of schools with the highest proportion of Free School Meal (FSM) students reported a significant drop in student attendance compared to 57% of those with the lowest proportion of FSM students (Sharp et al., 2020-2). Senior leaders from schools with the highest proportion of FSM students also anticipated that more families would keep children at home when schools reopened (50%) compared with 42% from schools with the lowest proportion of FSM students. There was concern that this would therefore increase the disparity between students.

Quality of work
Teachers in deprived schools were more than twice as likely than those in more advantaged schools to report that student work submitted during school closures, was of lower quality than normal (15% in disadvantaged schools compared to 6% in advantaged schools) (Cullinane & Montacute, 2020).

Geographic area
The impact of Covid-19 on schools was found to be present even before schools closed on 20th March and. Student attendance and staff availability was shown to have been impacted, the extent of which was dependent upon geographic area. Eighty-four percent of school leaders in the West Midlands reported an impact, 82% in London, 79% in the North West and 61% in the East Midlands (Sharp et al., 2020-2).

Mental Health
Multiple reports presented findings about the impact of school closures and lockdown on the mental health of students (Children's Commissioner, 2020; HM Ofsted, 2020-1; Wilson, 2020; CircusWorks, 2020). Areas of mental health impacted included: a decrease in students' resilience (e.g. poor concentration span and fatigue), an increase in anxiety, missing friends, loneliness caused by social distancing and separation, boredom, hyperactivity, isolation, stress, and frustration. There was also concern expressed by some youth groups that children would suffer from a loss of their sense of belonging as well as having lost a creative outlet, due to not being able to attend sessions (CircusWorks, 2020). The study by Millard & McIntosh (2020) also suggested that the importance of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) to help build students' resilience and to help young people and teachers process personal experiences was going to increase in importance in the recovery from the impact of the virus.

Physical health

In addition to impacting on mental health, concern was also expressed that children's physical health and fitness would also suffer due to the closure of youth activities and students not taking part in physical exercise in school (HM Ofsted, 2020-1; CircusWorks, 2020). In addition, there would be a gradual depletion of skills that they had been developing through such activities (e.g. circus skills).

Wellbeing

The need for the government to ensure that all families have the basic resources that they need to provide care for their children and to ensure that struggling families have access to help and support within their community was highlighted by the Children's Commissioner (Children's Commissioner, 2020).

The importance of taking part in extra curricula activities, sport and working with professional musicians on the well-being of students was highlighted in several reports. The impact of the loss of such activities on the long-term wellbeing of students was raised as a concern alongside the loss of teaching (Centre for Macroeconomics, 2020). Senior leaders stated that their top priorities for the return to school in September 2020 were to: provide for students' emotional and mental health and wellbeing (81%), re-engage students with learning (61%) and to settle students back into school (63%) (Sharp et al., 2020-1). An additional concern was raised around the loss of a lifeline for students with the closure of youth activities leading to increased concern over the safety of children, provision of food, issues at home, lack of support and advice and positive social interactions (CircusWorks, 2020).

Vulnerable Students

Concern over the impact of Covid-19 on vulnerable students was raised across multiple reports. Teachers were particularly concerned about a lack of support from other agencies in addition to the education and welfare of their vulnerable students (Nelson & Sharp, 2020). The wider role of schools beyond teaching and learning was highlighted. Schools provide a safe space for vulnerable children, provide positive role models and encourage secure relationships. The importance of strengthening home school relationships with vulnerable families at this time was encouraged (Wilson, 2020). The same report also called on local authorities and third sector organisations to consider how they could work with schools to develop strong working partnerships to ensure the needs of all children and young people and that the needs of vulnerable children are also met. However, youth organisations highlighted that the most vulnerable young people have been the hardest to keep engaged and to gauge their wellbeing, especially when seeing them in person has not been possible (CircusWorks, 2020).

The importance of identifying newly vulnerable students and families during the pandemic due to family separation, changed financial circumstances, food poverty, those experiencing bereavement, unemployment and poor mental health was highlighted by several studies (HM Ofsted, 2020-1; Wilson, 2020).

Support for Students

A lack of special educational needs (SEN) support for students during school closures, including physiotherapy and speech and language therapy leading to a regression in communication skills was highlighted by Ofsted (HM Ofsted, 2020-1).

The need to focus on pastoral care for students along with accelerated implementation of the government's green paper on mental health was recommended by the Children's Commissioner to support recovery from school closures (Children's Commissioner, 2020). Stronger links with parents and community groups to support families, young people and children was highlighted as being a necessity to deal with the issues created by Covid-19, particularly for vulnerable, marginalised and isolated young people (Harris & Jones, 2020).

Leadership

School leadership practices have significantly changed due to Covid-19 and Harris & Jones (2020) suggests that it is possible that they may not return to their pre-Covid arrangements. At present, self-care and consideration are the main priority and primary concern for school leaders. Staff absence, managing testing and isolation, exam preparation, relationships and communications with parents and the lack of clarity on government guidance are presenting significant challenges for school leadership (HM Ofsted, 2020-1). School leadership must now be collaborative, creative and responsive (Harris & Jones, 2020). The importance of leaders in the current situation was highlighted by a positive association between teachers that felt well-supported by senior leaders and pupil engagement (Lucas et al., 2020). The challenges that are facing schools and school leaders in the near future are unlikely to be well-aligned with pre-Covid leadership preparation and training programs (Harris & Jones, 2020).

Headteachers and senior leaders are experiencing a lack of capacity to engage with hubs on areas such as music provision. Priority has had to be on focussing on making their schools Covid-safe (Arts Council England, 2020).

Job satisfaction, teacher training and retention

Teachers and leaders reported that their work satisfaction was related to their sense of control (Nelson & Sharp, 2020).

Many school reported supplying IT equipment to their staff, however, over one third of teachers reported that they were supplying their own laptop or computer and three fifths were supplying their own camera or video equipment or had no access to this at all (Sharp et al., 2020-1). Limited IT access for teachers as well as pupils has been a constraint to supporting students during school closures (Nelson & Sharp, 2020).

Reduced teaching capacity was also reported as a constraint to schools' ability to support students (Nelson & Sharp, 2020). School leaders reported that they had fewer teaching staff available at a time when they needed more. In May 2020, schools reported they were operating at 75% of normal teaching capacity with 29% of teachers only available to work from home (Sharp et al., 2020-2). Additional staff were needed in order to support students on site, provide distance learning and to cover for absent staff.

In September 2020, the percentage of teachers and senior leaders intending to leave the profession had reduced by more than half compared to previous estimates (Sharp et al., 2020-1). However, panel members of the Centre for Macroeconomics survey (2020) highlighted the need for further research on the attrition of the teaching workforce and recruitment into teaching.

In respect to initial teacher training (ITT), schools reported that they plan to reduce their ITT placements in 2020/21. Sharp et al. (2020-1) highlights the concern over this given the large increase in applications for ITT in 2020.

Parental spending

In addition to school spending, parents have been spending money on their children's learning during school closures. Most parents had spent less than £50, but 14% had spent more than £100 in the first week after schools closed in March 2020 (19% in middle class homes compared to 8% in working class homes) (Cullinane & Montacute, 2020). Private tuition, for students that had previously received it, had reduced when schools closed, with two thirds of students who had previously received private tuition, no longer getting such support. The other third continued to access it through online services.

Family/ parents

The study by (Eivers at al., 2020) found that most students spent less than three hours per day on remote learning activities. Particularly at secondary level, students from higher income households with parents that showed higher levels of engagement in home learning, spent the most time on school work at home. However, parents from the lowest-income families spent the most time supporting their child with their school work; parental education was largely unrelated to the time parents spent helping their children with school work. Parental engagement was higher among parents with primary age children (56%) compared to those with secondary age children (48%) and parents with primary age children spent more time than those with secondary age children helping with work (Lucas et al., 2020; Eivers at al., 2020). Parents with secondary age children were more likely to consider that their children were able to manage their own learning (Lucas et al., 2020).

In considering confidence to support home learning, more than 75% of parents with a postgraduate degree, and just over 60% of those with an undergraduate degree considered themselves confident directing their child's learning (Cullinane & Montacute, 2020). However, this reduced to less than half of parents with A level or GCSE level as their highest level qualifications. In a panel study in November 2020, it was noted that the burden of home schooling and housework has fallen in a disproportionate way on women (Centre for Macroeconomics, 2020).

Parents were generally positive about schools during the March to July closures, with 61% of parents with children at home indicating they were satisfied, and 65% of those with children in school (keyworker children) (Cullinane & Montacute, 2020).

Millard & McIntosh (2020) state that education has always been a community based enterprise, including the learner's home situation with siblings, carers and extended family members. Lockdown has since increased family engagement in their children's learning and the distinction between home and education environments has become more fundamentally linked, particularly for primary aged children (Bridge England Network, 2020; Millard & McIntosh, 2020). The arts (predominantly visual

arts and crafts) were noted as being particularly popular for home learning. Building stronger links with parents and community groups to support families, young people and children is highlighted as a necessity by Harris & Jones (2020) for dealing with the issues created by Covid-19. The inclusion of families within social and emotional learning programmes as well as teachers is advocated by Millard & McIntosh (2020). Due to parental anxieties over Covid-19, an increase in elected home schooling has been observed at the start of the academic year in September 2020 (HM Ofsted, 2020-1).

Enrichment activities (within and outside school)

Music education

When schools closed in March 2020, traditional models of music learning were stopped due to school closures or had to be significantly adapted (Daubney & Fautley, 2020). This dramatic change has implications for economic hardship for self-employed music teachers along with a risk that long-term economic pressures may prevent a return to full employment for music teachers based on the old delivery model. Many schools reported delaying committing to music provision within their school until the start of the 2020/21 academic year, with others waiting until January or the spring to commit (Arts Council England, 2020). Communication from schools with music hubs has been varied with some in regular contact, whilst others have had no contact at all.

Off-site visits and visitors in schools

The survey by Bridge England Network (2020) in July 2020 found that off site visits and visitors into schools was not expected to start returning to normal until the spring term at the earliest. Schools have reported being nervous of having external visitors on site, including peripatetic teachers (Arts Council England, 2020).

Decreased numbers participating

When participation in out of school activities can recommence, there was an expectation of decreased numbers of participants due to public caution over engaging in social activities whilst Covid-19 is still a danger (CircusWorks, 2020). Due to the need to accommodate social distancing requirements, there was also an expectation that class sizes would need to be smaller and therefore, concern expressed over the financial viability of reopening.

Education and work pipeline

The study by Daubney & Fautley (2020) highlighted the potential for a cascade impact into Higher Education, leading to potential for damage to the pipeline of potential musicians and music teachers in the future. The lack of training spaces, equipment and opportunities to audition was also a concern for Youth Circus and the long-term impact on the career pipeline was highlighted (CircusWorks, 2020).

Research Question 2: What does current research tell us about the educational priorities of education leaders (including policy makers and school leaders) since March 2020?

School Priorities/planning/government guidance

Since the start of school closures, schools reported having faced difficulties with differing interpretations of government guidance, delays in guidance being issued, conflicting messages and changing guidance and prohibitions (Bridge England Network, 2020; Arts Council England, 2020). Planning for the future was being undertaken with caveats on the potential for a changing landscape and the need to plan for potential new waves of remote learning. Schools reported that they would be able to draw and build proactively upon their knowledge gained during school closures between March and July 2020 (Lucas et al., 2020).

Following the prolonged school closures between March and July 2020, the government proposals for a catch-up curriculum from September 2020 stated that schools should "teach an ambitious and broad curriculum in all subjects from the start of the autumn term, but make use of existing flexibilities to create time to cover the most important missed content" and that they should prioritise "the most important components for progression" (Department for Education, 2020). When surveyed, school leaders' top priorities for September 2020 were to provide support for students' emotional and mental health and wellbeing (81%), re-engaging students with learning (64%) and settling students back into school (63%) (Sharp et al., 2020-1).

Daubney & Fautley (2020) recommend that for schools to be able to work best for their learners, there is a need for them to be relived of the pressure of Assessment and Inspection so that they can spend their time rebuilding.

School spending/funding/Catch up

Given the pressures that schools were facing, there was a call for the government, local authorities and trusts to ensure that new directives are sensitive to the pressures facing schools and that schools have sufficient resources (Nelson & Sharp, 2020).

A key area which has incurred additional costs for schools is teaching staff. With schools operating at reduced teaching capacity, senior leaders were advising that additional staffing was required to cover for absent staff or to cover the additional workload from remote and face to face learning taking place at the same time. Additional funding was needed to pay for this (Sharp et al., 2020-2). Senior leaders also indicated that they anticipated that academic catch-up activities would most likely take the form of small-group or one-to-one sessions, also requiring additional funding (Sharp et al., 2020-1).

The recommendation from the Children's Commissioner was that schools should target their portion of the £1 billion catch-up fund on vulnerable and disadvantaged children that have lost out the most and should not be forced to spend it on Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) or adaptions to school buildings (Children's Commissioner, 2020).

Research Question 3: How have these changes impacted on factors which are important for fostering creativity and creative thinking, and on schools' and other organisations' ability to "teach for creativity"?

The Durham Commission for Creativity and Education Report recommended multiple factors for the successful implementation for teaching for creativity in schools. The following section discusses how the changes to the education environment and schooling context for young people due to Covid-19 has impacted on these key areas. In addition, challenges for the implementation of the recommendations from the Durham Commission Report identified immediate prior to school closures in March 2020 are also highlighted. Considering these together may indicate areas in which schools will face additional post-Covid barriers to fostering creativity and creative thinking, and on schools' and other organisations' ability to "teach for creativity".

Student skills development

The Durham Commission (2019) Report highlighted that creativity and creative thinking flourish in environments where critical thinking is encouraged and that in order for the confidence building resilience of creative learning, students must have space for 'safe failure', critical reflection and trying again. However, the literature review has indicated that many students will have missed out on lessons with such opportunities during the period of school closures (e.g. the study by Sharp et al. (2020-1) found only 12% of teachers reported interactive sessions between students and teachers).

The Durham Commission (2019) Report highlights that the future of the jobs market is likely to include fewer jobs for life, with businesses expecting young people needing to be able to adapt and show resilience, enthusiasm and creativity in their recruitment criteria. However, there is concern that there is potential for long-term damage to the career pipeline both into Higher Education and the world of work, due to the halt of extra-curricula provision within and outside school (Daubney & Fautley, 2020). In addition, schools have suggested they may potentially need to offer fewer Initial Teacher Training placements in the 2020/21 academic year (Sharp et al., 2020-1).

Physical environment

Opportunities for free play, exploration of the outdoor environment and interaction with other children and adults are key to encouraging creativity (Durham Commission, 2019). However, the findings of the literature review highlight that these are areas which have been significantly impacted by Covid-19. Logistics within schools aim to reduce the contact and sharing of materials between staff and older students, and three quarters of teachers reported not feeling able to teach to their usual standard due to the restrictions on social distancing (Sharp et al., 2020-1). In addition, the study by Sharp et al. (2020-1) found that only 5% of teachers reported using remote lessons which involved students collaborating together. Concerns over visitors on site, off site visits and cleaning requirements for the use of school settings for out of school provision (e.g. music ensembles) also mean that key opportunities for students to explore diverse experiences, key to developing creativity, have been limited since March 2020 (Arts Council England, 2020; Bridge England Network, 2020).

Working together/People coming together/Social engagement/placemaking

The Durham Commission (2019) recommended that to enable high quality teaching for creativity in schools that it is essential to form "strong and productive relationships with other schools, cultural institutions, Local Cultural and Education Partnerships (LCEPS) and employers" as well as "engaging with families and communities through collaborative activities involving creativity". It highlights the "value of creativity in promoting social engagement, community identity and cohesion is strongly associated with the concept of creative placemaking". However, social engagement and the ability to come together to create share public spaces is another key area impacted by the restrictions created by Covid-19. With the expectation that off site visits may not be possible until spring 2021 and that schools are cautious over visitors into schools, alternative approaches have had to be implemented in order for creative projects to be successful during school closures (Ward et.al., 2020; Bridge England Network, 2020). Examples of successful innovation have included: live online sessions for customised partnerships e.g. schools working with an artist; webinars of recorded sessions; activity boxes delivered to students containing materials required to complete different projects; and the provision of tablet computers for photography and visual art projects (Ward et.al., 2020; Bridge England Network, 2020).

One area which has particularly strengthened since March 2020 is increased family engagement in their children's learning and home and education environments have become more fundamentally linked, particularly for primary aged children (Bridge England Network, 2020; Millard & McIntosh, 2020). The arts (predominantly visual arts and crafts) were noted as being particularly popular for home learning. Building on this development may be one way to develop the creative placemaking encouraged by the Durham Commission to encourage social engagement, community identity and cohesion (Durham Commision, 2019).

Health and wellbeing

Senior leaders stated that their top priorities for the return to school in September 2020 included providing for students' emotional and mental health and wellbeing (Sharp et al., 2020-1) as this has been particularly impacted by the social distancing requirements and school closures due to Covid-19. The impact of the loss of creative opportunities for students on their long-term wellbeing has been raised as a concern alongside the loss of teaching (Centre for Macroeconomics, 2020). As highlighted in the Durham Commission (2019) Report, "participation in cultural and creative activities has been shown to improve wellbeing (Conner et al., 2018; Fujiwara et al. 2014; Marsh et al. 2010), and there is mounting evidence that creativity and the arts can make a significant difference to people's health and wellbeing, as well as to how they feel about, and interact with, their neighbours (Ings et al., 2010)". Therefore, developing plans which include teaching for creativity is an approach which could support both curriculum learning and health and wellbeing of students. However, schools have highlighted that support would be useful to do this e.g. through partnerships working with cultural organisations and practitioners alongside curated creative learning resources (Bridge England Network, 2020).

Overlapping curriculum

Prior to Covid-19, schools were already reporting difficulties in embedding creativity within the curriculum due to the curriculum being organised into individual subject disciplines (Durham

Commission, 2019). The pressures placed on schools by school closures, remote learning and the implementation of a recovery curriculum meant that simply delivering the curriculum was often a challenge for teachers, without trying to implement cross-curricula initiatives. Where schools have been able to teach a broad range of the curriculum, student engagement was found to be higher (Lucas at al., 2020). Despite the challenges presented by Covid-19, several reports showed that some schools are managing to continue arts provision and creativity in teaching and learning. The report from Bridge England Network (2020) indicated that there are primary schools with plans to increase arts provision to enhance student engagement, wellbeing and enjoyment in learning.

Forces influencing what happens in schools

The Durham Commission (2019) Report stated "five key forces that influence what happens in all schools:

- the ways the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) measures success;
- the National Curriculum and what it requires schools to teach;
- external tests or examinations and what they specify in their syllabuses;
- the morale, calibre, confidence and professional development of heads and teachers;
- and the amount of funding available".

Ofsted

The findings from the Cramman et al. (2020) study conducted immediately prior to school closures in February and March 2020, showed that in relation to Ofsted there was a perception that the existing inspection framework did not value creativity (and that there was a perceived lack of interest from Ofsted) and that a new framework would be required to help with embedding teaching for creativity. It was also felt that the curriculum was already overloaded and too subject focussed meaning that schools would only change their practice if it was required by Ofsted (Cramman et al., 2020). As a result of Covid-19, routine Ofsted inspections were suspended on 17th March 2020 and remain suspended at the time of writing (HM Ofsted, 2020-2). It is not currently known when routine inspections will begin again. The recommendation of Daubney & Fautley (2020) was that schools should be given the freedom to work best for their learners by relieving them of the pressure of Assessment and Inspection so that they can spend their time rebuilding.

National curriculum and government policy

Respondents in the Cramman et al. (2020) study considered that prior to Covid-19, existing government policy did not support or respect creativity and that there was resistance and disinterest from government to introduce creativity within the curriculum. A lack of clarity and delays in government guidance during school closures from March to July 2020 meant that schools struggled to plan for delivery during this period (Bridge England Network, 2020; Arts Council England, 2020). Government guidelines for the catch-up curriculum from September 2020 state that schools should "teach an ambitious and broad curriculum in all subjects from the start of the autumn term, but make use of existing flexibilities to create time to cover the most important missed content" and that they should prioritise "the most important components for progression" (Department for Education, 2020). However, when surveyed, school leaders' top priorities for September 2020 were to provide support for students' emotional and mental health and wellbeing (81%), re-engaging students with learning

(64%) and settling students back into school (63%) (Sharp et al., 2020-1). It is not yet known whether schools are managing to successfully teach for creativity within such circumstances.

External tests and exams

The Durham Commission (2019) Report recommended a period of stability in the exam system in order to review the existing system. Immediately prior to Covid-19, the Cramman et al. (2020) study found that there were mixed views on whether creativity could be assessed, with some participants considering that assessment of creativity should be across all subjects and others considering that creativity cannot be assessed and that the creative process takes years to evidence itself. Due to the school closures caused by Covid-19, summer examinations for year 11 and 13 students were cancelled in 2020 and the process for assessment in summer 2021 is under review. There was little evidence found through the literature to date as to the impact of the changes to the examination process on teaching for creativity.

Morale, calibre, confidence and professional development of heads and teachers

The Durham Commission found that teaching for creativity was an area of pedagogy and practice that is lacking in the experiences of many teachers (Durham Commission, 2019). The Report highlighted the need for a programme of professional development from Initial Teacher Training through to teachers, support staff and senior leaders. Immediately prior to Covid-19, responses from schools showed that schools considered that they needed more practical guidance on how to implement teaching for creativity, felt there was a lack of sharing of good practice, a lack of experience/knowledge/understanding of creativity (across all subjects) and a lack of confidence of teachers in implementing teaching for creativity (Cramman et al., 2020). The suggestion had already been made by the Durham Commission Report that a way to address these challenges was to introduce structured collaborative support from schools and teachers already successfully demonstrating teaching for creativity (Durham Commission, 2019). The Bridge England Network (2020) survey has re-emphasised that practical support for implementation is something that schools would value.

Covid-19 meant that training priorities for teachers and senior leaders changed. Secondary teachers identified training in digital skills to be their top training need (Bridge England Network, 2020). However, teachers in both primary and secondary settings also identified training in creativity across the curriculum to be a key training need (Bridge England Network, 2020). Harris & Jones (2020) considered that the new needs for senior leadership training is unlikely to be the same as pre-Covid needs.

For effective implementation of teaching for creativity within schools, the Durham Commission (2019) recognised that senior leadership confident in the value of teaching for creative thinking within a broad, balanced and progressive curriculum was required. However, the findings of the Cramman et al. (2020) study found that schools were already finding that creativity was a low priority with senior leadership, that senior leaders were risk averse and reluctant to change and that stronger evidence was needed to get buy in from senior leadership and governors. The evidence within the literature review has shown that the current priority for senior leadership is in ensuring the wellbeing of staff and students and creating a Covid-safe environment (HM Ofsted, 2020-1; Sharp et al., 2020-1).

Resources and funding

Prior to Covid-19, the Durham Commission (2019) Report highlighted that "teaching for creativity is subordinate to other pressures such as shortage of resources, both human and financial, particularly in schools in less advantaged areas". Data collected immediately prior to schools closing due to Covid-19 found that inadequate funding, teacher capacity and time and access to resources were still barriers to schools implementing teaching for creativity. In addition, funding for out of hours opportunities was difficult as was funding for creative organisations.

Evidence within the literature review has shown that funding for creative organisations has been increasingly stretched by Covid-19, with some organisations reporting that it may not be financial viable for them reopen due to anticipated decreases in the number of participants engaging with these organisations. Numbers are expected to decline because of ongoing concerns from the public over Covid-19 and social distancing requirements. In addition, economic hardship for self-employed music teachers along with a risk that long-term economic pressures may prevent a return to full employment for music teachers based on the old delivery model (Daubney & Fautley, 2020).

Within schools, Covid-19 has meant that funding has had to be focussed on core provision (e.g. staffing, cleaning etc). Covid-19 has led to significant additional costs being incurred for teaching staff in many schools. Recommendations by the Children's Commissioner is that that schools should target their portion of the £1 billion catch-up fund on vulnerable and disadvantaged children that have lost out the most and should not be forced to spend it on Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) or adaptions to school buildings (Children's Commissioner, 2020). There has been a call on the government and local authorities to be sensitive on the pressures facing schools and to make sure that they have sufficient resources (Nelson & Sharp, 2020).

Regional differences

Prior to Covid-19, both the Durham Commission (2019) and study by Cramman et al. (2020) found that there is significant geographic variation in access to creative opportunities. Even from before school closures were announced on 20th March 2020, school leaders were already reporting significant differences due to Covid-19 dependent upon location. This has continued throughout the subsequent period of the pandemic (Sharp et al., 2020-2) and may lead to increased regional divides in the provision of successful teaching for creativity.

External support/working with organisations

Prior to Covid-19, teachers' lack of confidence to implement creativity within the curriculum had led to a growing dependency on extra-curricular activities, especially cultural ones, to supply pupils with soft skills, confidence and the development of creative thinking (Durham Commission, 2019). The Centre for Cities Report (2018) highlighted that 97% of schools indicated extra-curricular activities as their preferred way to develop analytical and interpersonal skills. However, despite the value of extra-curricula music activities there was already an evidence of decline in provision prior to Covid-19 (Durham Commission, 2019).

When schools closed in March 2020, many opportunities for extra-curricula activities were stopped and concern has been expressed that it may not be possible to return to previous models of delivery (Daubney & Fautley, 2020). Making arrangements for the return of extra-curricula activities has not been a priority within schools, with headteachers and senior leaders focussing priority on making their schools Covid-safe. Off site visits and visitors into school are also not expected to be back to normal until the spring term (Bridge England Network, 2020). The loss of extra-curricula support may mean that schools are struggling to include opportunities for creativity within the curriculum.

Technology

Prior to Covid-19, the Durham Commission (2019) had advocated for "an open-minded approach to learning technology combined with awareness of how knowledge encountered in digital domains is also culturally and historically produced". Covid-19 has meant that many teachers have had to rapidly become technologically savvy and to embrace new methods of remote teaching. However, as with the recommendations within the Durham Commission Report, the need to get the balance right between technology and pedagogy within schools is also emphasised by the findings in the literature review (Harris & Jones, 2020). It is also important to remember not all students have access to electronic devices and internet connectivity sufficient for effective remote teaching (Cullinane & Montacute, 2020; Sharp et al., 2020-1; Children's Commissioner, 2020). Schools continue to need support to assist them to make the most of digital tools and online platforms (Bridge England Network, 2020). It is reassuring to see though that despite the challenging and rapidly changing landscape, the majority of senior leaders are providing support to their staff on remote learning and that the majority of teachers are confident in their ability to support students through remote learning (Lucas et al., 2020).

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