Pearson

Creative classrooms today



As schools across the country prepare for changes to curriculum and assessment, we explore what's standing out to secondary creative teachers in the classroom today.

In the Pearson School & College Report 2026, more than 400 secondary creative teachers in England shared their thoughts...

A system under strain

Creative subject teachers, like many secondary educators, feel like the education system is struggling to adapt to the needs of today's learners.

More than 1 in 2 say today's education system...

is **not inclusive enough (55%)**

is **not accessible enough (57%)**

33% of secondary teachers think today's education system effectively supports achievement and aspiration for girls and **29%** say the same for boys.

Yet teachers of creative subjects report this less. **Fewer than 1 in 4** believe it effectively supports **boys** (23%) or **girls** (24%).

68%

More than two thirds (68%) believe that the current education system **does not set pupils up with the skills needed to thrive**.

→ **14 pp** higher than the secondary teacher average **(54%)**.

The behaviour balance

Whilst still a significant proportion, creative subject teachers report **lower levels of concern** when it comes to student behaviour compared to their peers across other secondary subjects.

1 in 2

Say they have become **increasingly concerned about behaviour** in the last year **49%**

See **behaviour as a barrier to pupil learning** in the next six months **51%**

43%

of creative subject teachers say their school has **focused on behaviour schemes to improve student learning** in the past year.

The highest among all secondary subject teachers.

Spotlight on skills

Teachers of creative subjects feel the most equipped among all disciplines to foster specific skills in their students, including :

- Resilience **85%**
- Imagination **79%**
  - → More than double the secondary average (38%)
- Experimentation **67%**
- Originality **64%**

Despite high confidence in creative and interpersonal skills, they report the lowest confidence of any subject group in fostering **critical thinking** (**54%**), compared to the secondary teacher average of **68%**.

Readying for the future

They also take a distinct view of what their responsibilities are when building students 'future readiness' – emphasising practical life skills and personal fulfilment alongside attainment.

78%

While **78%** see **academic achievement** as a teacher's responsibility to develop, they view this as one part of a broader, more holistic approach to students' future readiness:

61%

say life skills are a core responsibility

57%

say self-awareness

*Including teachers of Art & Design, Design & Technology, and Performing Arts (Music, Dance, Drama).

Want to know more?

Explore secondary creative teachers' views on the classroom tomorrow and find out more about how we're helping schools and colleges navigate curriculum and assessment reform with confidence.

Discover what 50,000+ educators, students and sector representatives think about education today and its future in the Pearson School & College Report.

About the research

Surveys of primary and secondary classroom teachers, middle leaders, school leaders and headteachers working in schools in England were conducted by Teacher Tapp between 9 January 2026 and 28 January 2026. Depending on the question, there were between 1,538 and 9,611 respondents. Results were weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics.