



**Baroness Berridge of the Vale of Catmose**

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the School System  
Sanctuary Buildings Great Smith Street Westminster London SW1P 3BT  
tel: 0370 000 2288 [www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus](http://www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus)

The Earl of Clancarty  
House of Lords  
London  
SW1A 0PW

30 March 2020

Dear Earl of Clancarty,

Thank you for sharing your points about the importance of design within innovation in the OPQ on “Innovation Economy: Skills” that took place on Monday 16 March. You raised a question regarding whether the government would address the decline in the take-up of design subjects.

We believe that design skills should be taught as part of a broad and balanced curriculum. For this reason, design is included within a number of curriculum subjects, including design and technology (D&T) and art and design. Both are compulsory in state maintained schools from key stage 1 to 3, with an entitlement for pupils in maintained schools to study D&T and at least one arts subject at key stage 4. They are also both included in progress 8 and attainment 8, which are headline measures for school accountability.

In D&T, the curriculum and qualifications have recently been reformed to be more rigorous, and include a strong focus on the processes of iterative design which are at the core of contemporary practice. As you highlight, there has been a continued fall in entries to the D&T GCSE since it was made non-compulsory at key stage 4 in 2001. The reformed GCSE, introduced in 2017, had its first exams taken last summer in 2019. It will take time for our to fully embed as the content is significantly different to its predecessor. Despite the decline, D&T continues to be a popular subject, and was one of the most popular non-EBacc subject last year.

The art and design curriculum highlights that a high-quality art and design education should engage, inspire and challenge pupils, equipping them with the knowledge and skills to experiment, invent and create their own works of art, craft and design.

Design skills are also taught more widely. The reformed computer science curriculum places an emphasis on creativity and use of design skills to develop programs and digital content for particular uses and audiences. Furthermore, T Levels are being developed to give 16-19 year olds a high-quality technical option which delivers the skills employers need, and many T Levels will include substantial design content. For example, both the Design and Development T Level within Engineering and Manufacturing (being introduced from September 2022) and Design, Surveying and Planning T Level within Construction (being introduced from September 2020) will cover design skills relevant to those occupations.

I hope this answer has been useful and I will place a copy in the house libraries.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "ER Berridge". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending from the bottom of the word "Berridge".

**ELIZABETH BERRIDGE**

**PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE**