



Art: It's Time to See the Bigger Picture

Oriel High School's art department has recently faced various challenges, including a slashed budget and a decline in the number of students taking GCSE and A level courses.

The Centre for Education Research and Practice (CERP) commented on the subject of removing art from education after the budget cuts around the UK:

"Art education for children has come under political and curriculum pressure in recent years. Even though the subject of art and design is on the national curriculum, the focus of successive governments on literacy, maths and science has marginalised its teaching in primary schools."

Today I consulted art teacher Mrs Faulkner and bursar Ms Cook about the problems the department is facing and the possible solutions to these issues.

Mrs Faulkner informed me that the art department doesn't have much money left in the budget for this year and that it's affecting the quality of resources available to students. The department requires more funding than most, due to the higher cost of the materials used. Reduced facilities also makes it harder to attract potential A-Level students to the course, which in turn, results in less funding.

Ms Cook explained that the shortage of money is down to a reduction of government funding across the country, so we are not the only school suffering. The only other source of funding is the community (i.e- the school would need to organise some fundraising) or specific art grants which we could potentially apply for.

This comes as bad news for students who find it much easier to express themselves in art than in maths or science. Pictures encourage us to think about and understand the world visually, instead of restricting learning and the acquisition of knowledge to words and numbers alone. Moreover, art also teaches the children how to focus and persevere through an extended project that requires attention to detail. The ability to focus is imperative for studying and learning in class as well as in the workplace later in life.

Many would argue that the arts are what make us human. They cannot be learned through occasional or random exposure any more than math or science can and so we need a curriculum that reflects the importance of art.



By Emily.