



Art and Design

Intent

At Mendlesham Primary School, we believe that every child is an artist. Our Art and Design curriculum provides pupils with opportunities to explore, create, experiment and express their ideas whilst developing a secure understanding of artistic knowledge, skills and vocabulary. In line with our school improvement priorities, the curriculum is designed to promote belonging, representation and inclusion so that all pupils can see art as a subject in which they can participate, achieve and develop a positive sense of themselves as artists.

Our curriculum is carefully sequenced to ensure that pupils build knowledge and skills progressively from Early Years to Year 6. Through drawing, painting, sculpture, textiles, printing and collage, pupils develop increasing control, confidence and creativity whilst learning how artists, craftspeople and designers have shaped cultures, communities and history. Where meaningful, art also reinforces mathematical understanding through shape, pattern, symmetry, proportion, scale, measurement, position and spatial awareness.

We aim for all pupils to:

Develop a secure body of artistic knowledge and vocabulary that enables them to discuss, evaluate and create art with confidence.

Build and apply disciplinary skills in drawing, painting, sculpture, textiles, printing and collage through carefully sequenced learning experiences.

Explore, investigate and experiment with a range of materials, techniques and processes.

Produce creative work that reflects their ideas, experiences and observations.

Analyse and evaluate their own work and the work of others using subject-specific language.

Understand how art reflects and influences the diverse cultures, identities, histories and communities of Britain and the wider world.

Develop resilience, independence and confidence through the artistic process of planning, creating, refining and improving their work.

Appreciate the contribution of a deliberately broad and representative range of artists, designers and craftspeople, including people of different cultures, ethnicities, genders, abilities, backgrounds and time periods, as well as both historical and contemporary practitioners.

Our curriculum has been designed to ensure breadth, diversity and meaningful representation. Pupils encounter artists whose lives, identities and experiences reflect the diversity of modern Britain and the wider world, rather than experiencing art history through a narrow or traditional canon. This enables pupils to see themselves reflected within the curriculum, encounter experiences different from their own and understand that art belongs to everyone.

SMSC and Art

Art and Design makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and to their wider personal development. Pupils encounter art from different times, places, cultures and traditions, developing curiosity, appreciation and respect for the ideas and experiences of others.

Through discussion, collaboration and evaluation, pupils learn to listen to different viewpoints, communicate thoughtfully and respond respectfully to the work of their peers. They are encouraged to recognise that artistic development requires practice, perseverance and reflection, helping to build resilience, confidence and independence.

The curriculum supports pupils' understanding of British Values, particularly mutual respect and tolerance of different beliefs and cultures. A deliberately diverse and representative range of artists, designers and craftspeople broadens pupils' cultural knowledge and helps them understand how art can reflect identity, disability, community, history, culture and society. Pupils learn that valuable artistic contributions come from people with many different backgrounds and experiences.

Displays and opportunities to share work celebrate achievement across different ages and abilities, helping pupils value both their own creative contribution and that of others.

Implementation

The Art curriculum is built upon the National Curriculum and supported by a carefully sequenced progression of knowledge, skills and vocabulary. Learning is structured so that pupils revisit and build upon prior learning, enabling them to make connections and deepen their understanding over time. Teachers actively establish what pupils already know and can do so that gaps in prior learning do not become barriers to new learning.

Each unit identifies the substantive knowledge pupils need to know and remember, alongside the disciplinary knowledge required to work as artists. Key vocabulary is explicitly taught, modelled, revisited and applied. Pupils are supported to recognise and understand subject-specific vocabulary and are expected increasingly to use it accurately when discussing artists and artwork, explaining techniques and processes, justifying creative choices and evaluating their own and others' work.

Pupils learn through a cycle of:

Exploring and studying artists, designers and craftspeople.

Developing knowledge of artistic techniques and processes.

Practising and refining skills using a range of media and materials.

Applying knowledge and skills independently within a final outcome.

Evaluating and reflecting upon their own work and the work of others.

Sketchbooks are used as working documents where pupils record observations, experiment with techniques, develop ideas and reflect upon their learning journey. Alongside practical observation and pupil discussion, they help teachers identify what pupils understand, where misconceptions remain and which knowledge or skills require further teaching.

Teachers use adaptive teaching strategies to ensure all pupils can access ambitious learning. Support is provided through clear modelling, visual and practical scaffolds, explicit vocabulary instruction, carefully selected resources, additional practice and flexible ways for pupils to demonstrate understanding, while maintaining high expectations for all learners. Adaptations are designed to remove barriers to artistic learning without unnecessarily reducing the ambition of the curriculum. Within Mulberry, learning is adapted through additional time, structured practice, sensory and communication considerations where appropriate, and smaller learning steps, enabling pupils to work towards the same curriculum goals as their peers.

Art is taught as a discrete subject and meaningful links are made across the wider curriculum where these enhance learning, including relevant opportunities to apply mathematical knowledge such as shape, pattern, symmetry, proportion, scale and measurement. Pupils regularly revisit previously taught knowledge, vocabulary and skills to strengthen long-term retention. Retrieval, questioning, pupil discussion, practical observation and review of sketchbooks are used to identify gaps or misconceptions. Where these are found, teachers respond through re-teaching, further modelling, guided practice and planned opportunities to revisit and apply learning before pupils move on.

Subject leaders monitor curriculum implementation through lesson visits, pupil discussions, sketchbook reviews, assessment information and curriculum evaluation. Monitoring considers not only progression in artistic knowledge and skills, but also pupils' use of vocabulary, the accessibility of learning for different groups and the breadth and quality of representation within the artists and practitioners pupils encounter.

Early Years Foundation Stage (Reception)

Expressive Arts and Design

The development of children's artistic and cultural awareness supports their imagination and creativity. It is important that children have regular opportunities to engage with the arts, enabling them to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials. The quality and variety of what children see, hear and participate in is crucial for developing their understanding, self-expression, vocabulary and ability to communicate through the arts. The frequency, repetition and depth of their experiences are fundamental to their progress in interpreting and appreciating what they hear, respond to and observe.

Early learning goals

Expressive Arts and Design

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Safely use and explore a variety of materials, tools and techniques, experimenting with colour, design, texture, form and function
- Share their creations, explaining the process they have used
- Make use of props and materials when role-playing characters in narratives and stories

Fine Motor Skills

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Use the tripod grip in almost all cases
- Use a range of small tools, including scissors and paintbrushes
- Begin to show accuracy and care when drawing

Key Stage 1

Pupils are taught:

- to use a range of materials creatively to design and make products
- to use drawing, painting, and sculpture to develop and share their ideas, experiences and imagination
- to develop a wide range of art and design techniques in using colour, pattern, texture, line, shape, form, and space
- about the work of a range of artists, craft makers and designers, describing the differences and similarities between different practices and disciplines, and making links to their own work

Key Stage 2

Pupils are taught to develop their techniques, including their control and their use of materials, with creativity, experimentation, and an increasing awareness of different kinds of art, craft, and design.

Pupils are taught:

- to improve their mastery of art and design techniques, including drawing, painting, and sculpture with a range of materials [for example, pencil, charcoal, paint, clay]
- about key artists, architects, and designers in history, as well as exploring the work and techniques of artists from other cultures and countries.

Impact

The impact of our Art curriculum is evident in the knowledge pupils retain, the vocabulary they understand and use, the skills they demonstrate, the quality of work they produce and their confidence in seeing themselves as artists. It is also reflected in pupils' understanding that art is created by, and belongs to, people from a wide range of identities, cultures, backgrounds and experiences.

By the time pupils leave Mendlesham Primary School, they will:

Know more, remember more and be able to do more in Art and Design.

Demonstrate progression in artistic knowledge, technical skills and creative decision-making.

Recognise, understand and use subject-specific vocabulary accurately and increasingly independently when discussing, analysing and evaluating artwork and explaining their own artistic choices.

Show confidence when selecting materials, techniques and processes for a particular purpose.

Understand the significance and influence of a diverse and representative range of historical and contemporary artists, designers and craftspeople, and recognise that artists come from many different cultures, identities, backgrounds and experiences.

Produce artwork that demonstrates increasing independence, creativity and technical control.

Teachers assess learning through ongoing formative assessment, retrieval, pupil discussions, observations of practical work and review of sketchbooks. Assessment is used diagnostically to identify gaps in knowledge, vocabulary and practical understanding, as well as misconceptions. This information informs re-teaching, additional modelling and future planning so that pupils are secure in the knowledge and skills expected for their stage of learning before building upon them.

The subject leader evaluates the effectiveness of the curriculum through monitoring activities including pupil voice, sketchbook scrutiny, lesson visits and assessment analysis. Particular attention is given to whether pupils from different groups can access, participate in and succeed within the curriculum; whether pupils can confidently use key artistic vocabulary; whether gaps in understanding are identified and addressed; and whether curriculum representation is broad, meaningful and inclusive. These processes ensure that the curriculum remains ambitious, inclusive and effective for all pupils and contributes to the school's wider improvement priorities.