



Art and Design subject policy

Last updated by subject leader

September 2021

**Last reviewed by Principal and
Headteacher**

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Next review due

September 2022

Overview of the subject

Art and design is taught at St. John's Preparatory School between the early years foundation stage through to KS2. At KS1 and KS2, the subject is taught weekly and their duration is between fifty (single) and one hundred minutes (double). At the Senior School, art and design is taught between KS3 to KS5. Each KS3 lesson lasts one hundred minutes (one double), at KS4 this rises to one hundred and fifty minutes (one double and one single lesson) and at KS5 it rises again to two hundred and fifty minutes (two doubles and one single lesson).

At the Preparatory School, art and design is led and taught by Mrs Lesley Newnham who is qualified in Fine Art. At the Senior School, art is led by Mrs Martine Taylor who holds a BA (Hons) design degree and a Master's degree in education. Miss Sarah Newton holds a BA (Hons) degree in art practices and technical skills. All teachers are highly-skilled practitioners with an extensive range of knowledge acquired through teaching and their previous professional careers.

At KS4 and KS5, the art and design department offers a GCSE and A level in art, craft, and design and follow the Edexcel specifications. Each qualification offers pupils the opportunity to explore a broad range of mediums and techniques enabling them to find avenues that suit their interests or learning styles.

The Preparatory and Senior School teachers meet each half term to ensure that our knowledge and skill progression plans are rigorous and complement a whole school approach to teaching art and design. We use this time to plan, share and implement a progressive curriculum built on knowledge and skills.

Schemes of work at the Preparatory and Senior Schools have been recently updated to include a more detailed focus on knowledge and skills progression and the strategies we use to implement these. We have spent the 2020–21 year planning, teaching, and embedding new strategies across the art and design department to support this.

The teaching and implementation of the art and design curriculum at St. John's Preparatory School is based on the National Curriculum and linked to topics to ensure a well-sequenced approach to this creative subject.

Schemes of work used at St. John's Preparatory School are developed from a variety of curriculum sources to ensure a broad spectrum of ideas, skills, and techniques are used. Sources drawn upon include Cornerstones, Kapow and LCP.

Pupils are taught art as a dedicated subject, however, teachers are encouraged to develop creative skills within their classrooms and topic work which links to individual subjects, enhancing and developing creativity throughout the school. Areas covered include drawing, painting, printing, collage, textile design, malleable and 3D sculpture such as pottery and sculpture, ICT and photography. Photography is used to create images of pupils' work that can then be modified or embellished. ICT is taught separately and encompasses design which is linked to the art curriculum. Emphasis is placed on art history and the work of famous local, national and international artists are explored to enhance pupils' learning. Pupils' learning and

cultural capital are further enhanced with trips to galleries and participation in workshops.

At St. John's Senior School, the teaching of art and design at KS3 is based on the National Curriculum aims and programme of study. At KS4, teaching is planned to cover the assessment objectives as specified in the Edexcel art, craft and design specification. At each key stage, units of work are carefully sequenced to ensure that pupils become confident and creative practitioners who are given the freedom to explore and solve problems independently. Pupils are encouraged to explore and discover the different qualities and properties of materials including pen, pencil, ink, paint, collage, print, clay, photography and digital design, mixed-media and 3D design.

The curriculum is planned to cover several areas within art, craft, and design, encouraging pupils to engage with materials, processes and tools that help to embed skills, engage with various design contexts and develop a more confident approach as new creative challenges are overcome.

Sketchbooks are used to record ideas, evaluate, reflect, develop and refine skills as they progress. The analysis of artists is an important aspect of each unit of work, helping pupils to connect their learning with a broader understanding of the world they live in as well as identify historical contexts. Sources of inspiration include contemporary and historical artists, art movements, designers, photographers, architects and craftspeople from a diverse selection of cultures and backgrounds.

Pupils are supported to express their opinions through regularly planned class discussions and peer on peer activities, they are encouraged to work as 'experts' to help share and embed their knowledge and skills further. We aim to provide an environment where pupils are happy to take risks and respond positively to staff and their peers.

Intent

At St. John's Preparatory and Senior School, we have developed a curriculum with an emphasis on knowledge and skills as we believe that the ability to recall specific knowledge helps to reinforce the application of skills. Each unit of work has clearly defined areas of knowledge that are re-visited, tested and discussed throughout each unit. When pupils start their art and design learning journey at either the Preparatory or Senior School, a baseline assessment is used to establish a point from which future measurements and predictions can be measured. As pupils progress through each year group or key stage, they extend key skills already established through exploring increasingly challenging concepts. We believe that this carefully scaffolded approach is extremely helpful when used to embed prior learning. As pupils progress through the knowledge and skill requirements of each unit, they receive feedback which builds through each key stage. At KS1, verbal evaluation and verbal peer assessments are the recognised approaches, at KS2, these develop into written comments and at KS3-KS5 we follow the WWW (what went well) and EBI (even better if) formative assessment strategies.

Developing pupils' oratory skills is another approach used to broaden the understanding of key concepts as well as self and peer critique skills. Discussion is

used to develop subject-specific language and build a deeper knowledge of artistic principles and motivations.

At all key stages, pupils are expected to be able to use subject-specific language as it relates to the task or key skill being explored. At key stage 3, these will be introduced at the beginning of each unit when 'key words' are placed in every sketchbook. Pupils are encouraged to incorporate newly taught vocabulary into their tasks and written responses, teachers will address common misspellings during whole class feedback and may test pupils if they feel it is appropriate.

Numeracy has an implicit presence within art and design. Measuring; whether that be assessing and plotting distances and spatial relationships or the balancing, mixing, and weighing up of quantities of materials or elements within any given composition or outcome will apply.

Final outcomes are identified at the beginning of each unit through exemplars and supporting visual resources, the focus of assessment criteria is made explicit and placed into each sketchbook. At KS3, threshold statements explain each area of assessment, at KS4 and KS5 Edexcel assessment objectives are linked to each learning objective.

To ensure that the curriculum remains accessible, explicit, and progresses effectively, teachers work collaboratively across the Preparatory and Senior Schools, sharing a common ethos to implement and improve resources. Departmental time is used to reflect on best practices and finely tune our delivery of a logically progressive curriculum.

Implementation

At the heart of the art and design department is a shared philosophy that collaboration is key.

When planning the whole-school curriculum, we carefully sequence learning so that pupils develop foundation skills that can be built on as they progress through each year group. For example, the first unit during 1st form covers the key skills needed to accurately portray three-dimensional form using both pencil and coloured pencil, colour blending skills and how to identify simple shapes when drawing from observation. Establishing these key skills at an early stage allows us to build more complex concepts into the curriculum like drawing and colouring using perspective which the pupils have progressed to by 3rd form. At each key stage, each lesson has three clearly defined parts i.e. starter, main and plenary as well as a clear learning objective with an explanation as to how this will be achieved.

The starter activity is often used to deliver or re-cap on the knowledge aspects of the curriculum either through discussion, quiz, or short activity. We also use this time to familiarise pupils with the assessment objectives of each unit and discuss the subtle language changes to explain each threshold statement. We often adopt a 'hands down' policy when promoting discussions so that all pupils have an opportunity to respond independently and different questioning strategies including recall-related and higher-order questioning are used.

The main part of the lesson is related to practical outcomes and teachers use exemplar materials, visual aids including knowledge organisers, and demonstrations to convey the knowledge and skills that pupils must acquire. Each of these activities is scaffolded to ensure that pupils actively progress through each learning objective and embed key concepts, they are encouraged to ask questions about particular skills or the materials being demonstrated to help embed their knowledge. Teachers use their knowledge and skills to explain each process clearly and this is also an opportunity to address any practical misunderstandings that they may have witnessed during previous lessons. During a typical lesson, teachers will offer verbal feedback to each pupil on a one-to-one basis, using this time to ascertain how each pupil is progressing through the knowledge and skills of each unit.

The plenary is used as an opportunity to either self or peer assess progress made during the lesson. It is linked to the learning objective and pupils either write or discuss the problems they may have encountered and how they were overcome. This is an opportunity for teachers to praise good practice and promote a 'blame-free' culture in which mistakes are seen as a part of the creative process.

Sketchbooks are marked weekly helping teachers to identify pupils who may need further support or guidance, homework is set after each lesson and is designed to reinforce the knowledge and skills requirements of each unit. At the Preparatory School, three threshold statements are used: Working at greater depth, expected and working towards. This helps teachers to identify those who may need more challenging tasks or those who need further support. At the Senior School, each piece of work is marked formatively following the WWW and EBI assessment strategy as well as a summative mark that corresponds to descriptions on the threshold statement; an effort grade is provided. At GCSE and A level, marking and feedback are given each week. Pupils are made aware of grade boundaries and each sketchbook page has a summative mark that corresponds to these as well as WWW and EBI comments providing clear targets for each pupil. Marks are recorded in each teacher's mark book which are used to inform discussion with parents and end of year reports.

The implementation of a variety of assessment strategies helps teachers to identify any areas of the curriculum that may need revisiting, if this occurs, we often include further homework tasks that allow pupils to practise specific skills or areas of knowledge that may need further consideration.

At the Preparatory School, ongoing assessments take place throughout the year which are directly linked to the skills progression map. The art specialist uses this information to inform future lessons; ensuring children are supported and challenged appropriately. This data is analysed on a termly basis to inform and address any trends or gaps in attainment. Each child in the Preparatory School has a grid assessment sheet to record objectives achieved termly.

Children in the EYFS are assessed within Expressive Arts and Design and their progress is tracked termly using the age-related expectation levels, these are reported to parents during consultations at the end of the Nursery and Reception years and in their end of year report. An annual report is produced for every pupil and sets out their achievements within the subject.

At the Senior School, we use the mini-test each half term to check that sufficient knowledge and skills have been acquired during each unit. Specific questions that relate to knowledge acquisition and recall are identified and a practical activity determines that pupils can apply their newly found skills.

Impact

Within each key stage, we have seen a clear upturn in knowledge and skill outcomes indicated by an improvement in mini-test results. This highly focused approach helps pupils to identify areas of key skill and knowledge that are needed to be successful and progress. We also believe that a clear assessment strategy that is openly discussed, facilitates pupils to identify how they can progress to higher grades and ultimately create higher quality outcomes. This unambiguous approach to marking, assessment and a knowledge and skills based curriculum at KS3 and indeed at each key stage, prepares pupils for the marking and assessment strategies used at KS4 and KS5.

At GCSE, results between 2019 and 2020 have seen an upward trend in grades 6-9 in comparison to national averages for art and design subjects; our pupils are consistently achieving above their peers. This upward trend at A level is also evident from the last two years' results which have seen pupils gain within the A-B grade ranges.

The implementation of pupil voice suggests that pupils feel that the art and design curriculum is suitably challenging, enjoyable and enables them to progress in the subject within a supported environment. Our pupils are motivated participants and often work in the art rooms outside of lessons to improve their outcomes. At both GCSE and A level, art and design subjects continue to be popular and equip pupils with the knowledge and skills to progress to degree level if desired.

When pupils have been identified to have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) we have a pro-active approach that identifies pupils who may fall into this category. At the Preparatory School, SEND pupils are skilfully guided through a curriculum that focuses on fine motor skills development to help improve co-ordination and confidence. At the Senior School, we liaise with the SENDCo and IEPs (individual education plans) are discussed in order to prepare any necessary adjustments to the curriculum or classroom.

Cultural capital

At St John's Preparatory and Senior schools we are dedicated to enhancing pupils' cultural capital. We are aware that pupils with a rich cultural capital perform better in school and develop into valuable citizens of the world they inhabit.

In the art and design department we provide pupils with a growing understanding of the world they live in and help them to establish a place within it. As pupils explore the work of a growing number of artists and designers, they become more knowledgeable about the variety of backgrounds, genders, ethnicities and beliefs that other individuals may represent. Some of these may challenge their own beliefs or opinions but provides an opportunity to explore and discuss their thoughts, feelings and responses to the world around them. These ideas are explored through

practical activities which deepen their cultural awareness and understanding of art, artefacts and world crafts.

In the Preparatory School an Art Scholars' Programme is established which aims to provide the most able pupils with a range of opportunities to stretch and challenge their art and design skills. Trips to galleries and participation in workshops including a music and arts festival (in which pupils have created their own instruments) are enjoyed by all. The biannual art exhibition continues to be a huge success as does the after-school art club each Friday.

In the Senior School, the well-attended annual art exhibition showcases work from KS3 to KS5. We have also developed an art department magazine which focuses on pupils' achievements at KS3. School trips including visits to art exhibitions continue to provide rewarding experiences, as do trips abroad. The art club which runs during Wednesday and Thursday lunchtimes is regularly attended by KS3 and KS4 pupils. As a department, we are now offering pupils the opportunity to enter several competitions including the R.C.A. Young artists' summer show and this year we entered the Royal Mail stamp competition.

As a department we are also committed to extending the learning opportunities we currently offer and are in the process of developing our photography and digital process facilities. At the heart of our curriculum is a desire to increase the level of challenge to all pupils and produce resilient and creative learners.