High Ercall Primary School



Art Policy

Date of Policy Creation	Summer 2016	**Named Responsibility**	Kate Caton
Date of review completion	September 2026	**Named Responsibility**	Leanne Carvell-Shepherd
Inception of new Policy	1st September 2026	**Named Responsibility**	Gemma Lingham
Date of Policy Adoption by Governing Body			

1. Intent and subject definition

Art, craft and design enable pupils to observe, interpret, imagine, communicate and make. At High Ercall Primary School, we value Art and Design as an intellectually, practically and creatively demanding subject. Our curriculum is ambitious for all pupils and is designed so that children progressively build the knowledge needed to make, understand and discuss art with increasing confidence and independence.

Our curriculum reflects the National Curriculum purpose and aims: pupils should create and record ideas, become proficient in drawing, painting, sculpture and other techniques, evaluate and analyse creative work using subject language, and learn about artists, craft makers and designers and the historical and cultural development of art forms.

We organise progression through three interconnected forms of subject knowledge: practical knowledge (materials, methods, techniques and processes); theoretical knowledge (artists, makers, designers, artworks, contexts and traditions); and disciplinary knowledge (how artists and viewers interpret, value, question and discuss art). These domains are taught together rather than as isolated strands.

2. Aims

- provide a broad, balanced, ambitious and inclusive Art and Design curriculum for every pupil;
- develop increasing control, confidence and proficiency in drawing, painting, sculpture and a purposeful range of other art, craft and design practices;
- teach pupils how materials, tools, techniques, formal elements and processes can be selected and combined to communicate ideas and intentions;
- build secure knowledge of a diverse range of traditional, modern and contemporary artists, craft makers, designers and architects, including work from Britain and the wider world;
- develop pupils' ability to look closely, notice, compare, interpret, question, discuss, evaluate and make reasoned artistic choices;
- use sketchbooks as working spaces for observation, experimentation, rehearsal, annotation, reflection, revisiting and development rather than as presentation books;
- develop accurate and increasingly ambitious art vocabulary;
- enable pupils to make connections between prior learning, artists, techniques, media, contexts and their own creative decisions;
- provide meaningful encounters with galleries, artists, makers and creative careers, including opportunities in Shrewsbury, Telford and the surrounding area;
- promote the school's 5Rs: resilience, responsibility, reflection, respect and resourcefulness.

3. Statutory curriculum expectations

Key Stage 1

- use a range of materials creatively to design and make products;
- use drawing, painting and sculpture to develop and share ideas, experiences and imagination;
- develop techniques using colour, pattern, texture, line, shape, form and space;

- learn about a range of artists, craft makers and designers, comparing practices and making links to their own work.

Key Stage 2

- develop techniques, control and use of materials through creativity and experimentation;
- use sketchbooks to record observations and review and revisit ideas;
- improve mastery of techniques, including drawing, painting and sculpture, with a range of materials;
- learn about great artists, architects and designers in history.

4. Curriculum organisation and progression

Art is taught through the school's two-year rolling programme for mixed-age classes, using the AccessArt Primary Art Curriculum as the principal planning structure. Long-term planning is mapped against National Curriculum expectations and the school's progression, vocabulary, book and enhancement documents. Pathways are selected and sequenced so that pupils encounter and re-encounter important knowledge in connected contexts and have sufficient time to practise techniques before applying them with increasing independence.

- Drawing, painting and sculpture remain central, alongside purposeful experiences of printmaking, collage, textiles, craft, architecture, installation, digital/lens-based media and other relevant forms.
- Artists and artworks are chosen to illuminate the practical learning, widen pupils' cultural knowledge and represent a broad range of traditions, places, periods, identities and practices.
- Progression is not judged by increasingly polished final pieces alone. It is seen in what pupils know, remember and can increasingly do, explain, select, adapt and apply.
- Teachers make explicit links to previously learned techniques, formal elements, artists and vocabulary.

5. Pedagogy: how Art and Design is taught

Teaching is responsive to the type of knowledge being learned. Practical knowledge requires clear modelling, guided practice, repetition and timely feedback; theoretical knowledge requires carefully selected images, explanation, comparison, stories and contextual knowledge; disciplinary knowledge develops through discussion, interpretation, comparison, justification and reflection.

- Teachers identify the precise learning focus before choosing an activity or outcome.
- New techniques are broken into manageable components and modelled clearly. Pupils rehearse important component skills before more open-ended application.
- Worked examples, demonstrations, visualisers, exemplars and carefully chosen artist images are used to direct attention to important features.
- Choice may initially be constrained when pupils are novices so that attention remains on the intended technique; choice and independence increase as expertise grows.
- Pupils receive frequent, concise, in-the-moment feedback while making, with opportunities to respond, refine and improve.

- Teachers deliberately revisit prior knowledge and vocabulary and make connections between practical, theoretical and disciplinary learning.
- Discussion is integral: pupils are taught to describe what they notice, explain choices, compare works, consider intention and justify interpretations.
- Creativity is supported by growing subject knowledge and technical fluency; pupils are not expected to discover techniques without appropriate instruction.

6. Sketchbooks

Sketchbooks are central working documents from Key Stage 1 onwards. They may contain observation, experimentation, colour and material tests, technique practice, notes about artists, vocabulary, photographs, annotations, questions, ideas, evaluations and revisions. They should show thinking and development and are not expected to be uniformly neat or to contain a finished outcome for every lesson. Three-dimensional, collaborative or large-scale outcomes may be evidenced appropriately through photographs or other records where useful.

7. Assessment, retrieval and responsive teaching

Assessment in Art and Design is primarily formative and subject-specific. Its purpose is to identify what pupils know and can do, reveal misconceptions, inform teaching and help pupils improve. The school does not assess artistic 'talent', personal taste or the visual attractiveness of a final piece. Teachers assess the curriculum that has been taught: practical, theoretical and disciplinary knowledge.

Unit mind maps and retrieval wall

At the beginning of each unit, the class teacher creates a shared mind map. This is organised around three consistent branches:

- Skills, techniques and processes – what pupils remember about materials, tools, formal elements and ways of making;
- Artists, makers, designers and artworks – names, works, contexts, influences and meaningful connections to prior study;
- Vocabulary – the precise subject-specific words pupils need to recognise, understand and use.

The mind map remains a working document. As learning develops, key knowledge is added collaboratively. Teachers identify a small number of carefully chosen retrieval questions from this learning. These questions form a cumulative Art Retrieval Wall and are revisited through brief, low-stakes oral or written quizzing during the unit and at spaced points later in the year. Retrieval is used particularly for knowledge that can validly be recalled, such as vocabulary, artist knowledge, formal elements, materials, processes and sequences of technique.

Retrieval quizzes do not replace practical assessment or rich discussion. Complex disciplinary ideas—such as interpretation, aesthetic judgement, purpose and meaning—are assessed more appropriately through dialogue, comparison, explanation and pupils' ability to justify artistic decisions.

Evidence used by teachers

- observation of pupils practising and applying techniques;
- timely dialogue, questioning and feedback during making;
- sketchbook evidence, including trials, annotations, revisions and explanations;
- pupils' use and understanding of art vocabulary;
- responses to previously studied artworks and artists;
- mind maps and responses to retrieval questions;
- pupil explanations of choices, intentions, processes and evaluations;
- final or resolved pieces, where these provide valid evidence of taught knowledge being applied;
- pupil voice and, where appropriate, photographic/portfolio evidence of work that cannot be retained in a sketchbook.

Teachers draw on a range of this evidence rather than relying on a single final outcome. Summative judgements are made judiciously at appropriate intervals against the taught curriculum and progression expectations. Assessment information is used to adapt subsequent teaching, revisit insecure knowledge and inform subject leadership; it is not intended to generate unnecessary data or marking workload.

8. Early Years Foundation Stage

In EYFS, foundations for Art and Design are developed principally through Expressive Arts and Design and Physical Development. Children have regular access to purposeful mark-making, drawing, paint, collage, textiles, print, clay and three-dimensional materials through continuous provision and adult-guided experiences. Adults model vocabulary, techniques and safe tool use while protecting time for exploration, imagination and child-initiated making. High-quality books, images, objects and encounters with artists support early cultural and visual knowledge.

9. Adaptive teaching, SEND and inclusion

We maintain high expectations and an ambitious entitlement for pupils with SEND. Adaptations are made to remove barriers to the same curriculum wherever possible, rather than routinely replacing the intended learning with a different or less ambitious task.

- pre-teaching and revisiting essential vocabulary;
- explicit modelling, worked examples and techniques broken into smaller steps;
- additional guided practice and repetition of important components;
- visual prompts, WIDGET symbols, word banks and sentence stems where appropriate;
- adapted tools, grips, surfaces, easels, seating or materials to support physical or sensory access;
- alternative ways to record thinking, including oral explanation, photography, film or assistive technology where these do not distract from the art learning;
- additional processing time and chunked instructions;
- carefully planned adult scaffolding that is reduced as independence grows;
- appropriate environmental adjustments, including quieter working spaces where needed.

All pupils should encounter positive and diverse artistic role models and have equitable access to visits, visitors, resources and the full breadth of the curriculum.

10. Enrichment and cultural capital

First-hand encounters make art meaningful when pupils have enough prior knowledge to interpret what they see. The school therefore uses its enhancement plan to connect learning with galleries, museums, practising artists, makers, designers and creative careers in Shrewsbury, Telford and the surrounding area. Visits and visitors are selected because they deepen planned curriculum knowledge, not simply as stand-alone experiences.

11. Health and safety

Teachers follow the school's Health and Safety Policy and relevant risk assessments. Safe routines are explicitly taught for materials, clay, adhesives, cutting tools, wire, hot glue equipment and any other specialist processes. Educational visits follow the school's visits procedures and risk-assessment requirements.

12. Equality and representation

The curriculum is planned so that all pupils can see art as a human practice that exists across cultures, communities, periods and places. Selection of artists, craft makers, designers and architects avoids presenting a narrow canon and includes Western and non-Western traditions, historic and contemporary practice, and artists from diverse communities. Teachers contextualise work accurately and respectfully and avoid tokenistic or decontextualised activities.

13. Resources and professional development

Resources are maintained so that pupils can practise with suitable, good-quality materials and tools. The subject leader supports staff subject knowledge through AccessArt professional development, school coaching and relevant external training. Professional development prioritises confidence in techniques, knowledge of artists and traditions, subject vocabulary, assessment and inclusive practice.

14. Monitoring, impact and leadership

- lesson visits and professional dialogue;
- sketchbook and portfolio scrutiny focused on curriculum learning rather than presentation;
- review of class mind maps and retrieval walls;
- pupil voice, including pupils' ability to recall artists, vocabulary and techniques and explain their artistic choices;
- review of planning, progression and curriculum coverage;
- monitoring access and outcomes for pupils with SEND, disadvantaged pupils and other groups who may face barriers;
- staff feedback and professional development needs;
- governor monitoring and subject action planning.

Monitoring is proportionate and used to improve curriculum quality. In line with Ofsted's published inspection information, the school does not create additional paperwork or tracking solely for inspection; leaders focus on the quality and impact of curriculum decisions on pupils.

15. Policy review

This policy will be reviewed every three years, or earlier where changes to statutory requirements, school curriculum design or relevant evidence make this appropriate.

References and evidence base

- Department for Education (2013, current statutory programme): National curriculum in England – Art and Design programmes of study.
- Ofsted (2023): Research review series – Art and Design.
- Ofsted (2026): State-funded school inspection toolkit / inspection information for use from September 2026.
- Education Endowment Foundation (2021–2026): Cognitive science approaches in the classroom; evidence-informed approaches to explicit instruction, scaffolding, metacognition and adaptive teaching.
- High Ercall Primary School: Art Policy (2023), Curriculum Statement for Art, History Policy (2026), and Curriculum Statement for History (2026).
- AccessArt Primary Art Curriculum and associated pathways used by the school.