



Barnfields Primary School: Art Subject Rationale

Art Subject Quest at Barnfields:

To express imagination and communicate ideas by creating own works of art, craft and design, alongside developing an understanding of how the subject has shaped our history and contributed to culture, creativity and wealth.

Knowledge Types in Art

Practical



Theoretical



Disciplinary



Art Intention

At Barnfields, Art is a key component of our curriculum, introduced in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, building upon the foundations laid in Early Years Expressive Arts and Design. Our approach encourages creativity, imagination, and self-expression, helping children develop essential skills in drawing, painting, and sculpture. These skills are applied in the design, creation, and evaluation of personal works of art.

The curriculum is designed to progressively deepen children's understanding of artistic techniques and the visual elements of art. By studying a range of artists and exploring diverse artistic styles, children learn how art reflects and interprets the world. Additionally, our curriculum fosters critical thinking, allowing children to express opinions, thoughts, and feelings about artworks, and engage with a variety of artists, designers, and cultural perspectives, both past and present.

Provision, Planning and Delivery

Provision

We bring our vision for Art to life by:

- Prioritising Art as a dedicated subject within the school timetable.
- Implementing a spiral curriculum that allows learners to progressively build upon key artistic techniques and formal elements.
- Providing ample time for children to experiment with a variety of materials, tools, and techniques.
- Connecting hands-on activities with expert examples by exploring the work of renowned artists, craft makers and designers.
- Encouraging collaborative discussions in pairs and small groups, fostering respectful and positive communication of thoughts, feelings, and ideas.
- Reinforcing key artistic concepts such as line, tone, and colour to deepen understanding.
- Promoting the use of artistic vocabulary when analysing both professional artwork and children's own creations.
- Designing learning units that allow for personal expression and thoughtful reflection.
- Giving children the freedom to choose their own materials for compositions, fostering independence and creativity.
- Supporting children in articulating their observations and ideas, helping to refine and expand their thinking.
- Encouraging self-evaluation and constructive feedback on their own and others' work, emphasising growth and continuous improvement.
- Exploring a diverse range of artists, both historical and contemporary, to develop a deeper understanding of artistic and cultural evolution over time.



- Knowledge Organisers are used within every unit of learning. These documents contain essential, fundamental knowledge that children must know in order to be successful and progress in their learning. These are presented in a visual way which still allows interpretation and individual responses. They are used to support children in being able to recap, revisit and revise what they have learnt in lessons, enabling them to move the knowledge from their short-term memory to their long-term memory.

Planning

Adhering to the Art Subject Road Map, the children at Barnfields access a balanced and ambitious art curriculum that builds year on year. In every year group from Yr1 onwards, the children explore the three key areas of making: painting, drawing and sculpture. These are supported and enhanced by other areas, such as collage and print making.



Teachers use the Barnfields Knowledge Progression Grid (which outline the knowledge content to be taught) to create a Medium-Term Plan (MTP) for each unit of learning. Teachers consider the key concepts to be taught, the mediums used (e.g. clay) and the artist studied.

Delivery

The Art curriculum in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is delivered every term during discrete Art lessons. To enable the children to be immersed in their study, lessons are organised into half-termly blocks with one lesson per week, with a minimum of six hours per term dedicated to study in this specific curriculum area.

Progression

At Barnfields, we ensure progression in art education by having designed a curriculum that builds children's knowledge systematically over time. We understand that progression means children 'knowing more, remembering more', and being able to do more with their knowledge. To achieve this, we carefully sequence learning so that children develop practical, theoretical, and disciplinary knowledge in a structured way. Our goal is not necessarily to create expert artists, but to ensure that all children become proficient in different areas of making, as outlined in the National Curriculum.



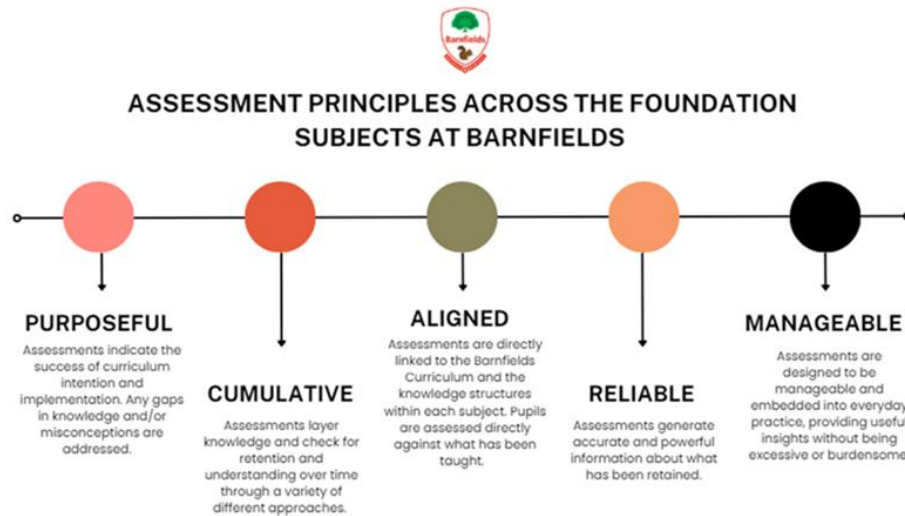
To support this, we plan our curriculum so that each new concept builds on prior learning. We make sure children have a strong foundation by teaching essential knowledge first—such as colour theory, composition, and various artistic techniques—before encouraging them to experiment and apply their knowledge creatively. We balance convergent learning (where children master specific techniques) with divergent learning (where they develop their own artistic style). This allows children to progress from structured skill development to independent, creative expression. Practice is a key part of our approach. We build in regular opportunities for children to revisit and refine skills, ensuring they have time to master techniques before applying them in new and more complex ways. For example, when learning watercolour painting, children first develop control over washes before experimenting with layering, textures, and mixed media. By embedding practice into the curriculum, we help children deepen their understanding and confidence in using artistic techniques.

Assessment, Recording and Reporting



Assessment

Assessment in Art follows the school's five assessment principles for the foundation subjects: *purposeful, cumulative, aligned, reliable and manageable*.



Teachers evaluate each child's proficiency in Art by observing them during lessons and reviewing their work afterward. They assess their final piece for the area of making but also the process and journey the children have been on to get to that stage. These judgements are not solely aesthetic, but instead teachers look at: *the techniques children have learnt and how they apply these, the choices children have made and their reasoning behind them (disciplinary), their knowledge of art specific vocabulary, their knowledge of the artist (theoretical), the work within the sketchbook leading up to the final piece, conversations with children within lessons which show their depth of understanding*. Further assessment strategies include, but are not limited to: learning conversations, questioning, self/peer assessment, marking, retrieval practice. This multi-faceted approach to assessment is then used to inform adjustments to the learning sequence for both individuals and entire classes. Based on continuous assessment, teachers determine whether to revisit, reinforce, or advance units of learning in future sessions.

Recording

Art learning is documented in children's personal sketchbooks, with each entry tailored to the specific learning objective. Evidence produced may include the child's own artwork, written explanations, visual notes, diagrams and/or photographs.

Reporting

Teachers upload pupil attainment data onto Sonar at the end of each term, determining if a child is either below age-related expectation, age-related expectation or exceeding age-related expectation. The aim of this assessment is to provide an evaluation of how much knowledge pupils have learned and remembered. They enable leaders to identify whether specific curricular goals have been achieved. This, therefore, plays an important role in evaluating the impact of the curriculum.

Children's progress in Art is formally communicated to parents annually through end-of-year reports. Additionally, informal updates are provided during any art exhibitions held and parents evening.

Supporting Research:

Ofsted (2022) Research review series: art and design