

Art and Design

Art and design: Frequently asked questions

1. What is the significance of the change in the attainment targets (level statements) in art and design, and has the way they should be used changed?

The level statements have been developed and clarified. They are now easier to understand and use to make an assessment of student performance. Their use has not changed however. Their purpose, as before, and as advised by QCA, is to make a broad statement of an individual student's performance at the end of the key stage. They are not appropriate for use in assessing individual pieces of work, nor should they be broken down into discrete strands for this purpose. For detailed advice on the appropriate use of the levels see 'The Uses and Abuses of Levelling' elsewhere on this site at www.nsead.org/cpd/nsc_papers.aspx.

2. How significant are the changes to the PoS and how should I proceed to change the scheme of work?

It might at first seem that the changes in the PoS are not too radical, but they are important. Changing your scheme of work should not be problematic as it is clear where the changes have been made. The new emphasis on flexibility, the importance of creativity and risk taking, and the development of a localised curriculum are at least as important as the structural changes. Many observers have noted that current practice is too narrow, often being concentrated on limited fine art practice and not reflecting either the culture or interests of the learner or aspects of contemporary art, craft and design practice. Therefore the statement about 'Range and content' is particularly important – after all, the subject is Art and Design. The new features of the new secondary curriculum provide an opportunity to broaden your approach, individualise learning, and produce more diverse and genuinely creative outcomes. For more detailed information see 'What's changed and why?' in 'Implications of the new art and design programme of study...'

3. Is there a danger that the subject will disappear from the curriculum?

The art and design programme of study (see [QCA website](#)) is statutory and its requirements must be delivered in Key Stage 3. How delivery is organised depends on the school's approach to the curriculum and its structure. This may well change as the school leadership takes the opportunity to develop a more localised approach. Given that students do not naturally learn in discrete subject 'boxes', such changes will benefit learners. Art and design teachers should work with school management and across other traditional disciplines to participate in alternative approaches, whilst ensuring that the processes, concepts and key skills in the PoS are covered as well as incorporated into new, enriched activities.

Furthermore in February 2008 the Department of Culture, Media and Sport and Department of Children, Schools and Families jointly announced that young people are to get five hours of culture a week and that there will be additional funding to facilitate this. In part this is to allow children and young people in schools to work with creative professionals such as artists, writers and actors. The moves are part of the Government's drive to unlock the creative talent of all young people. It is recognised that participating in cultural activities can have a huge impact on a child's development, in terms of developing their skills and appreciation, and helping them to learn. The Government is clear that it wants every child to have the chance to develop their artistic and creative skills more than in the past.



4. When does the new curriculum need implementing and what year group should I start with?

The revised PoS should be in place for Year 7 students in September 2007 and in place for all Key Stage 3 students by 2011. Given that the art and design PoS changes are not too radical, this should not be a challenge, although instituting the changes that are described elsewhere, related to encouraging students' creativity, risk taking and individualised approaches to learning, are likely to require more significant changes to practice that will take rather longer to reach fruition. Working across traditional subject boundaries can be implemented by individual initiatives to some extent. However this will only take place effectively and completely when school management provides leadership and participates in establishing a change in the way the school is organised to facilitate effective interdisciplinary activity. For more detailed guidance see 'Implications of the new art and design programme of study; planning; and taking first steps.'

5. What support will be available for my department in making these changes?

Many local authorities are working with the National Subject Leads in art and design to provide training that supplements the national briefing days that took place in the first four months of 2008. A team of Regional Subject Advisers has been appointed. They have already been introduced to delegates at the briefings and are available to provide a range of support in the future. Given the limited amount of time at their disposal their activities will concentrate on working with groups of teachers and local networks. Individual teachers who have suggestions about their deployment to provide local support should contact the national subject leads: John Bowden, johnbowden@btinternet.com and John Steers, johnsteers@nsead.org. NSEAD has established a new art and design secondary section of the website <http://www.nsead.org/home/index.aspx>, which provides comprehensive information on the new curriculum, further case studies and links to art and design materials on other relevant sites, including QCA.

6. In our school we treat each subject area as a separate department. Can we continue to do this?

There is no one timetable or organisational structure advocated by QCA. Indeed there are several various models presented for consideration on the QCA website as the new secondary curriculum is intended to be a localised one.

If it is decided by the school leadership that the most appropriate model for a particular school will retain separate subject divisions that will be acceptable. However it is anticipated that some schools will wish to introduce alternative models that will encourage a more flexible approach to teaching and learning and may break down subject boundaries, but this does not mean that the subjects will necessarily be totally integrated in every chosen model and not everything can or should be taught in a cross-curricular way. Rather it is a question of considering how the curriculum can be enriched by working more collaboratively. For a more detailed discussion of this issue see 'Art and design and the cross-curriculum dimensions.'

7. How will Ofsted judge an art and design department that has re-modelled the art and design curriculum in response to the new secondary curriculum?

It is now more likely that the Ofsted team will be looking at whole curriculum approaches given the new framework. In this case a judgement will be made about the suitability of the curriculum to the needs of the students in that particular local context and how it meets the overall aims of the new secondary curriculum. However if some of the inspection focus is on the art and design department you can expect that Ofsted will ask about the ways in which the department has responded to the new PoS and moved towards more flexible and personalised teaching and learning methods. Undoubtedly relevant and well thought through changes will be commended.



8. My headteacher has not attended the briefings that were provided in the Autumn 2007 term, neither have many other subject leaders from my school attended their respective subject briefings. How can I make progress and introduce change in this situation?

There will be few schools where everyone, from the SMT through to each subject leader, is equally well informed. The subject briefing events are intended only to provide an introduction to the new art and design secondary curriculum and equip subject leaders with some development activities that can be used with other staff in a subject department to stimulate a development debate. If no-one else has attended the briefings it would make sense to offer this material more widely within the school, supported by one of the RSAs in your region. Given that RSA activity is prioritising working with networks and groups of teachers a request for support to the NSL for whole school support would be looked on favourably. Taking a lead in initiatives related to the new secondary curriculum will ensure that the art and design department is at the centre of change but some patience may be needed to allow others to catch up.

9. What impact will the new secondary curriculum have on my excellent GCSE examination results and will the examination boards be changing their approach?

Exciting innovative students' work will always attract good grades at GCSE. With the new art and design secondary curriculum, with its emphasis on encouraging creativity, originality and risk taking, there are opportunities to broaden the range of work taking place. This should help motivate students who do not find the existing somewhat narrow fine art curriculum stimulating or suited to their style of learning. These individuals may now gain greater success.

The Awarding Bodies are introducing new specifications for GCSE in September 2009 and from September 2008 for GCE A Level. These specifications have been designed specifically to build on art and design at Key Stage 3. It is now possible to map assessment criteria for art and design from the beginning of Key Stage 3 all the way to A Level. You can access a chart demonstrating links between assessment objectives and key processes and concepts in art and design (KS3 – 5) at www.nsead.org/downloads/Art_and_Design_levels_GCSE__GCE_AOs_Mapped.pdf

10. What opportunities are there in the new PoS for students to contribute to citizenship and PSHE?

When expected to share and discuss their work pupils often show sensitivity to the highly personal feelings that are often revealed. In some cases the subject is used explicitly to tackle social issues such as bullying, racism and drug abuse by inviting pupils to make persuasive images that show their understanding, discussing issues with vulnerable groups while working together or, for example, working with an artist whose ethnicity is unfamiliar.

11. How can I ensure that learners continue to enjoy their art and design education?

In primary and secondary schools students rate art and design education particularly highly for the enjoyment experienced through unfamiliar opportunities and projects. Visits to art galleries, work with different materials and processes, encounters with art and artists that clearly involve something new, make a strong impact. Within individual projects pupils recognise their progress and this is often connected to feedback from teachers and other pupils, and their awareness of the achievements of others in response to a similar challenge. However, despite continued enthusiasm for the subject, many pupils remain unclear about their achievement across different projects and whether enjoyment is a sufficiently good reason for pursuing the subject to examination level. The proportion of pupils following an examination in the subject remains at about one third and girls continue to outnumber boys, at post-16 by 2:1. Nevertheless, a high proportion of examination pupils continue to enjoy the subject; many through continued, although usually more personally driven, creative discoveries and some through predictable but satisfying experiences that contrast with their other subjects. Girls achieve particularly well, although in schools where challenge is continuous and takes different forms, boys are equally determined to succeed. How and why particular pupils enjoy and achieve in relation to different experiences is a weak aspect of subject self-evaluation and subsequent improvement



planning. The new secondary curriculum focuses on the needs and interests of the learner and therefore provides new opportunities to make the subject relevant and therefore enjoyable.

12. How can the subject contribute to the cross curriculum dimensions?

These provide a key link between subjects and should add greater coherence and relevance to the curriculum. The issues are quite complicated and art and design departments will be keen to ensure that their subject is not reduced to providing simply a 'service' for supporting work in other departments. In practice a balance will sometimes need to be struck between offering support and receiving support from other subject areas. Consider the two video case studies and think about whether the relationship between art and design and science in Video case study 1, and art and design and English in Video case study 2 are satisfactory and mutually supportive. For a more detailed discussion of this question see 'Art and design and the cross-curriculum dimensions'.

13. How can I ensure that learners in art and design make a positive contribution to the community?

'Making for a purpose' is often a motivator in schools where the needs and interests of different learners are addressed, although this is not widely acknowledged. In some schools pupils continue to consider aesthetics without considering the relevance of their work to others. However, there are good examples of projects that have improved the school and local community, and attitudes towards it, through art and design. In these schools, for example, students might show care and consideration for the natural and built environment through their use of recyclable materials, to make images and artefacts for others to enjoy and use such as a mosaic mural in a local hospital or woven willow seat in the grounds of a home for the elderly. Visits to art galleries are used consciously by some schools to teach pupils about acceptable behaviour when working in a public place although in schools where visits are rare teachers often express a lack of confidence to arrange visits that involve students who sometimes display challenging behaviour in school.

14. How can I encourage learners to develop skills that will contribute to their future economic wellbeing?

Student tracking by senior leaders in schools often reveals how well particular students relate to the teacher and each other in art lessons in comparison with their other subjects. Cooperation, initiative, independence, and an ability to sustain concentration are often good in the subject. However, evidence is related to opportunity and this varies; expectations of students in Years 7-9 continue to underestimate the confident, articulate and judicious decision making skills of students before they transfer from primary school where many have developed a sense of responsibility. There is also insufficient focus on the personal qualities that are specifically valued in the creative industries; problem-solving, risk-taking, resilience. Whilst these are often thought to develop in the art and design studios it is rare to find these skills tracked as assessment objectives. In some instances the expectations of talented students are too modest; it is rare to find an additional level of challenge set, for example, by a creative practitioner working with a school. Vocational links remain closely connected to courses aimed at lower ability students in many schools, but the success of applied courses in some and the prospect of the new Creative and Media Diploma in others is changing the status of work-related learning in art and design.

Art and Design



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Qualifications and
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National College for
School Leadership
Secondary National Strategy
Specialist Schools and
Academies Trust
Youth Sport Trust



National
Curriculum

Working in partnership to support
delivery of the new National Curriculum
Part of the 14–19 education and skills programme