

Art and Design



Implications of the new art and design programme of study; planning; and taking first steps

What's changed and why?

The new programme of study for art and design is more flexible and less prescriptive than the previous one. Nevertheless, it incorporates the best of previous practice and art and design teachers will continue to recognise the essential aspects of the subject. It presents a revised subject framework which, although reordered and simplified, sustains the core values, processes and practices of art and design education. The new programme of study is strengthened by the identification of four key concepts that underpin the subject. As a consequence it is more effective in illuminating opportunities to develop creativity and cultural and critical understanding, as well as reaffirming the practical nature of the subject.

The new programme of study is not a radical departure from the previous one, but it does provide new opportunities to take stock, reshape and update the curriculum. At the heart of the new programme of study is the opportunity for teachers to build an art and design curriculum which is tailored to the particular needs of their own pupils and to the local context of the school.

In the **Importance statement** the new programme of study re-affirms the traditional values and practices of art and design education in communicating ideas and meanings and forming judgements. It also indicates how the subject contributes to broader curriculum aims. For instance, by learning to *'recognise, appreciate and understand images, ideas and values from different times and cultures'* young people are supported in becoming reflective and responsible citizens. The statement also shows how the study of art and design contributes to pupils' preparation for adult life by developing their critical faculties in the broadest sense as well as imagination, creativity, and ability to think and act as artists, craftspeople and designers.

The **Curriculum opportunities** section of the new programme of study endorses the good practice that is a feature of much current art and design education. It describes what opportunities should be provided during this key stage. These have been extended to allow and encourage teachers to connect work in art and design with the wider curriculum of the school. They include opportunities for pupils to: respond directly to the school's location and local cultural influences; engage in interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary practice; make links with other subjects; and explore areas that are new to them. These opportunities encourage teachers to engage in whole school curriculum innovation tailored to the particular needs of their pupils and school context. The opportunity to build a locally distinctive whole-school design, free of the constraints imposed by traditionally defined subject boundaries, is one of the most important and significant aspects of the new curriculum.

The new programme of study introduces the **four key concepts** of **Creativity, Competence, Cultural understanding** and **Critical understanding**. These underpin pupils' learning in art and design. The four distinct but interrelated concepts provide a clearer framework for planning, teaching and assessing the subject. The new level statements, for instance, are constructed from these four key concepts. The explicit references to creativity, imagination and risk taking are new to the programme of study, but not to the subject.

The simplified framework of the new programme of study identifies two **Key processes** which define the essential skills and processes that pupils need to learn. These two processes are to **Explore and create** and to **Understand and evaluate**. They incorporate the features of the previous framework and should be seen as interrelated in practice. 'Explore and create' refers to the broad practical and



experiential process of art and design making, and is enriched particularly by the concepts of creativity and competence. 'Understand and evaluate' refers to the more intellectual and evaluative processes, which are particularly enriched by the concepts of cultural and critical understanding.

The **Range and content** section of the new programme of study helps teachers to identify the content and breadth of their own curriculum by describing in broad terms what the study of art and design should include. It adds to the traditional range of experiences by indicating that the study of art and design under the new programme of study should include work in both applied and fine art practices and should also include the exploration of new media.

Planning for 2011

The new secondary curriculum is more than just revised programmes of study for different subjects. It is intended to provide opportunities for a new and more flexible whole-school approach to curriculum planning and design. A clear understanding of the distinctive characteristics of the school, the pupils and the local community will be at the centre of this approach. The new programmes of study for Key Stage 3 contribute to the broader vision of the secondary curriculum, preparing pupils for progression to Key Stage 4 and for the new GCSEs and the new 14–19 Diplomas.

Individual departments are not expected to implement the revised programmes of study in isolation from one another. Art and design teachers should share their knowledge, skills and aspirations with teachers of other subjects in order to construct a better curriculum experience for all pupils. Nevertheless, art and design departments and individual art and design teachers can use the new programme of study as an important benchmark against which to evaluate their current curriculum provision and to identify how it could be improved.

There are three key questions which art and design teachers should consider, whether they are engaged in a whole-school curriculum debate or planning the art and design curriculum specifically. The first of these is ***What are we trying to achieve?***

Teachers will need to consider the following questions in order to come to a better understanding of the needs of their own context and community.

- What are the particular characteristics of our school and what does this mean for the art and design department? What are the key features and strengths of the current school curriculum? How can the art and design department contribute to the ethos or specialism that makes this school different and unique? For instance, a media arts college in Oxfordshire will have different characteristics to those of a school in Hackney with a specialism in modern foreign languages.
- What are the characteristics of our pupils? What knowledge, skills and understanding do they bring with them when they arrive in the department? Do we know enough about the prior learning of our pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2? What are the particular circumstances and individual needs of those groups of pupils most at risk of failing to meet their full potential?
- What are the distinctive characteristics of the locality and the community served by our school? What are the aspirations and expectations of parents? What do we know about the communities from which pupils come and the expectations and attitudes they have as a consequence? How can we respond to the local cultural context and the opportunities for artists, craftspeople and designers and employment and training more generally?
- What are the particular characteristics of art and design education in our department? What are the strengths of teaching and learning? What experience and expertise is invested in our teachers? Do our pupils enjoy learning in art and design, and do they have high expectations? These questions draw upon the department's regular self-evaluation programme which is clearly an integral part of this process of curriculum review.
- What are the implications of the new programme of study? The aims of the new curriculum incorporate the five outcomes of Every Child Matters and emphasise the importance of the personal development of all learners. This will ensure that they leave school with the knowledge, skills and



attitudes to cope successfully with life and work in the 21st century. In reviewing the implications of the new programme of study, art and design teachers should take account of the broad curriculum aims as well as the subject-specific aspects of the new curriculum.

The second key question for art and design teachers is ***How can we organise learning to achieve our aims?*** The new curriculum should be seen as the entire planned learning experience of pupils. It includes not only lessons but also the learning environment and routines of the school and the events, visits and activities that take place out of school.

The most significant debate about organising learning will be conducted on a whole-school basis. It will lead to new strategies, structures and learning experiences designed to meet the individual needs of pupils in the school. Art and design teachers will draw on their understanding of the new programme of study for the subject in order to contribute to this discussion. For instance, they will be able to work in partnership with their colleagues to promote learning related to the key concepts. They will recognise that the key concepts of Creativity, Cultural understanding and Critical understanding are not unique to art and design. This means there will be many opportunities to develop innovative teaching approaches in partnership with other subjects, which extend and deepen pupils' learning and understanding of these concepts.

Art and design teachers should take account of the curriculum opportunities identified in the programme of study when considering how to organise learning. These encourage new approaches and partnerships which make links with the wider curriculum. They describe further opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively and explore areas that are new to them. Most teachers will be fully aware of the value of first-hand experience of art and design and will welcome the chance to extend pupils' experience in this area. These opportunities will often be enhanced and enriched through partnerships with other subject areas and with agencies and organisations outside the school.

Departments in many schools are increasingly making significant use of new technologies both for teaching and for learning: this includes the use of virtual learning environments (VLEs) to extend learning opportunities. The new programme of study will sustain this momentum. If pupils are to engage with contemporary practice in art and design, as well as in the creative and cultural industries, then they will need to use new technologies to support their learning.

The new programme of study applies to the curriculum for pupils in Year 7 from September 2008. However, schools are not required to have fully implemented changes until 2011. The incremental staging of the new programme of study will enable teachers to develop and review strategies to organise learning over three years. The process does not have to be complete by September 2008. However, teachers will need to use their professional judgement, and a degree of pragmatism, to decide whether to bring forward some changes; for instance, by establishing a consistent pattern of assessment for the art and design department throughout Key Stage 3.

Within a planned lesson timetable there may be limited scope for art and design teachers to make significant change in the organisation of learning and there is no reason to depart from established good practice. Effective departmental self-evaluation and planning should ensure that pupils' learning is always at the forefront of debate and that the department is able to take the new programme of study in its stride. This will be particularly true of those departments where there is a culture of self-improvement and professional enquiry.

The third question for art and design teachers is ***How well are we achieving our aims?*** This requires the consideration of assessment practice and particularly of assessment for learning. Regular, perceptive assessment of pupils' learning and progress will be essential in deciding whether the new curriculum is successful.

The new programme of study will require some changes to the vocabulary and criteria for assessment because it presents a reordered conceptual framework. However, the statements sustain the expectations at each level and should not be taken to represent a change in standards.



The new level descriptions take account of the key processes and the four key concepts. For the first time this includes the concept of creativity, as well as more explicit references to both cultural and critical understanding. Teachers may find it helpful to present the level statements in a table to show how each key concept can be tracked separately across the different levels. This will support assessment for learning by helping to identify clear criteria for assessment and in developing a vocabulary that will help teachers and pupils to recognise and discuss progress.

However, as with the previous level descriptions, these are broad statements which are intended to provide the basis for making judgements about pupils' performance at the end of a key stage. They do not, in themselves, provide sufficiently detailed assessment criteria with which to distinguish slight differences in achievement between pupils or between individual pieces of work.

Level descriptions can certainly provide the starting point for assessment for learning by opening out the four key concepts for discussion and reflection. However, teachers will need to build on the individual statements and use their professional judgement and expertise to develop a far more subtle and sensitive vocabulary in order to recognise and share with pupils the particular characteristics of their performance.

It is usually unhelpful to use levels as simplistic 'labels' for pupils, or for marking individual pieces of work. This can bypass and undermine the process of judgement and discussion about different qualities which is at the heart of assessment for learning.

Using concepts for planning sequences means that assessment can be focused effectively. Teachers and students can measure their progress against the levelled statements of attainment in the programme of study. Teachers and students will also contribute ideas for the success of their work, including those related to attitudes and behaviour.

Judgements can be made on evident differences in students' performance in terms of *knowledge, understanding and skills*, and on how well students reflect and evaluate their own contribution to the tasks they have undertaken.

Teachers and students can together evaluate the impact of the learning on students' *attitudes and behaviour*. Have students, for example, been willing to learn from others, even when others' views might be different from their own? Have they become more sensitive to the impact of their ideas and behaviour on other people? Observations of such changes can be recorded through peer and teacher records.

Next steps

Teachers will approach the new programme of study in one of three ways: as part of a whole school initiative; in a departmental discussion; or as an individual teacher. For art and design teachers there are certain key things to remember whatever the approach. The new programme of study embraces existing good practice in art and design education and does not impose radical change or new curriculum content. It does provide teachers with new opportunities for curriculum innovation by reducing prescription and encouraging them to work with others. This will enable art teachers to develop a curriculum which is more directly aligned with the needs, characteristics and aspirations of their own pupils and school.

The training materials, this website and the NSEAD website (www.nsead.org) include case studies and videos which show how some schools are already making changes to the curriculum. For instance, one case study describes how art teachers worked with the science department and visited a local hospital to look at and learn about cells. Pupils used art as one way of embedding and re-presenting ideas about this experience; see **case studies**. Another case study describes how art teachers worked with the English department to explore Chinese artefacts when visiting a local museum. This enriched learning through first-hand experience and the use of words and pictures to present ideas and information. See **case studies**. A third case study describes how a department has remodelled the

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Key Stage 3 art and design curriculum in order to draw down experience of working from a vocational perspective, an approach similar to current Young Enterprise scheme collaborations at post-16. This emphasises local distinctiveness by reflecting the school's ethos as a business and enterprise college. It also enhances learning by supporting transition into Key Stage 4 (<http://tinyurl.com/yw6nbnx>). A fourth case study describes how an art and design department has worked on ideas of pattern and rhythm to create digital projections in partnership with dance and music teachers. This invigorates learning for pupils by exploring areas that are new to them and uses new technologies to create links between subjects. (<http://tinyurl.com/2zp9yz>)

Each of these case studies shows how individual art and design departments have begun to exploit the opportunities presented by the new programme of study in line with their own circumstances. These training materials do not, and should not, present or describe curriculum content: that is for schools to develop. The first step for all teachers is to recognise that they should be the authors of their own curriculum as they are best placed to recognise the needs of their own pupils and context. The second step is to begin to develop a clearer view about the unique characteristics of the school and their pupils. The third step is to begin to work with colleagues across the school both to recognise and preserve the existing strengths of the art and design curriculum and to exploit the opportunities provided in the new programme of study to enhance, extend, diversify and enrich their pupils' learning.



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National
Curriculum

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