

## Art and design



### Macmillan Academy

**IL, Subject Leader:** Macmillan Academy is an 11–18 year old school right here in the heart of Middlesbrough in the Tees Valley.

**IL (in class):** Hello, welcome everybody to a cultural and vocational educational experience.

**IL:** One of the projects that we did was regeneration, just an overview about the project. It all came about when the deputy principals and senior management wanted to close the timetable down after the SATs in Year 9 and give departments an opportunity to mix together and create a totally new project and this involved the youngsters comparing two cities, both alike in many many ways, both had recently had a contemporary art gallery placed by a river, Middlesbrough MIMA by the Tees and the Baltic at Gateshead by the Tyne, and it seemed that Middlehaven was very similar to Gateshead Quays in that a lot of regeneration was going on; we wanted the youngsters to see that, and look into the future and try and work out, you know, what their part in it was going to be and feel very positive about it.

**IL:** We feel ... very strongly that our youngsters should not just engage in fine art but that this should be at the centre of everything an architectural design experience. One of the activities we started with was introducing the youngsters to celebrity architects and the buildings that they have produced, some living, some dead, and they had to pair up the face of the architect with the building that had been produced.

*[Background pupils talking...]*

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**IL:** The purpose of the activity was to get the youngsters, to first of all, be able to put names to faces and to be able to see something of the colossal breadth of architecture that's out there in the world both locally and nationally, and the geographical impact was very important because Middlesbrough had been given a very poor press on television and this I felt was a geography, and an art and design and an architecture thing.

**Teacher A** (in class): What do we think about this, is Middlesbrough the worst place in the UK to live? What do you think makes Middlesbrough different to the rest of the UK?

**Pupil:** It has the transporter bridge there so people can come to see that.

**Teacher A** (in class): This is what we call an iconic building isn't it, an iconic design, the bridge very much represents the town. What else is there in Middlesbrough that you think separates it, makes it different to other places?

**Pupil:** The Newport bridge?

**Teacher A:** The Newport bridge, yeh there are only two of those in the country. Later on today we will be taking you to the Middlehaven area, go up onto the transporter bridge so you get a good view of the whole site where the redevelopment is planned and also we will be speaking to a guy that represents the company that is going to regenerate the whole area and do all the building work and put the changes in.

**IL:** We gave the students a real-life context in that they went down to the River Tees and climbed up the iconic transporter bridge so they could get a huge overview of the whole area as it now, as a wasteland.

**LR, Architect** (in class): To be able to communicate through drawing, sketches, little models is really key to being a creative person in the real world as well. Architects have been employed in ... every single building that you've ever been in, that you will ever go in has been designed by an architect.

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**IL:** We brought in Leon Rodway who has just graduated last summer and is now working in a local practice in Stokesley and he was brought in to show the youngsters exactly what his day is like.

**LR** (in class): What we want you to do today in the model-making is design a building to go on Middlehaven, OK? It's all about speed and getting your idea out of the head and straight into a 3D format, you can, you know, rip parts off, cut, manipulate, OK.

**Pupil:** This is my model and I put it in a spiral shape just to make it nice to the eye and then I did it like from hot to cold colours and going all the way round to show that, like, you have your good days and bad days ... and I did the circles and there, these are meant to be windows, like windows that have tints in them, and the colours of the windows, ... contrast colours like orange and green and red.

**Pupil:** I've built this for the kids when their mums and dads go shopping for shoes 'cos kids don't like going shopping for shoes.

**Pupil:** I thought of it as like almost a hotel type building you could almost have like faces... like bits that come out almost, like rooms and things and it's not finished really, I was going to put, like, windows into it and things and have different colours and just make things odd and different.

**Pupil:** I like the way the teachers teach, like they explain it first then you can do whatever you want and then you don't have to do right or wrong answers, just draw what you're thinking.

**Pupil:** You can do anything it's just, it's just, you've got, you're free almost, to choose, let your mind run away with you.

**IL:** We took the students to MIMA which is an iconic building in itself, only open two years ago and it's successfully showing contemporary art and it's putting Middlesbrough on the map, and it's located next to another icon, the Bottle of Notes by Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen.

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**Pupil:** I've picked the view where you can view the town hall because you can see Post-modern, Modernism and Neo-gothic building in one view and it like gives a good perspective of, like, what the previous periods came up with and what work's going up now.

**Pupil:** Well I picked this view because it's got quite a lot of different building types: you've got, you've got the tower there and you can see the clock and that's quite old and it's, I really like the look of it – it's very gothic almost and then you've got this modern tower next to it and it's covered in glass so you can also see the reflection of the first tower in it so I've picked that really for that, but then also you've got another building here which just about squeezes into the picture, so that's why I picked this view.

**Pupil:** I like coming out because you can get a clearer perspective because it's better than looking at just a photo.

**Pupil:** Yeh, well, I really like it because it gets you out of the classroom and often you can think about lessons in like a very two-dimensional shape almost and you've just got a few things you'll always do, whereas ... coming out here gives us an opportunity to do something exciting and more interesting with that.

**IL:** The culmination of the project on the last day they had carte blanche to put an exhibition on, whether it was film, photography, drawings, paintings and models – particularly the models – they found great interest in making because the model-making activity was their vision of what they would like, they were local architects having a say in the place where they live.

**IL:** We want them to feel very positive about the future through the Middlehaven and regeneration projects and we'll know that they've achieved something when they want to come back and they want to, you know, continue to get interested in design and architecture for its own sake, in other words that they will be independent learners.

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