Askwith Primary School

Art & Design Rationale 2026–2027

'The study of art enables pupils to understand, appreciate and contribute to a dimension of life that taps into and expresses human innovation, imagination and thought… At its best, the subject is both intellectually challenging and creatively demanding.' (Ofsted Research Review: Art & Design, 2023)

Our Vision

Our vision is for every pupil to develop a love and understanding of a range of art and artforms. Art builds character and resilience; it helps shape who we are and who we can become by inspiring imagination, creativity, and deeper understanding of our culture, history, and others. A strong art curriculum also builds transferable skills that support future opportunities, well-being, and self-confidence. We are committed to ensuring that every pupil develops the practical, theoretical and disciplinary knowledge needed to become a confident, curious and increasingly independent artist.

Curriculum Intent

Our Art & Design curriculum is designed so that all pupils know more, remember more and can do more. It is coherent, inclusive and sequenced from EYFS to Year 6 to build secure foundations and ambitious endpoints for every learner. Pupils develop technical proficiency, knowledge of artists and artistic traditions, and the ability to explore, interpret, evaluate and communicate ideas, preparing them for further study and lifelong engagement with art and design.

Curriculum Principles

The curriculum is informed by the National Curriculum, Ofsted's Art and Design Research Review (2023), cognitive science, vocabulary acquisition research and evidence-informed art pedagogy. Learning is structured to ensure pupils know more, remember more and can do more over time.

Curriculum

The curriculum is built around three complementary forms of knowledge:

- Practical knowledge (substantive) - technical proficiency with media, tools and processes, underpinned by the 7 elements of art (line, shape, form, colour, value/tone, texture, space)
- Theoretical knowledge (substantive) - knowledge of artists, designers, craft traditions and art movements within cultural and historical contexts
- Disciplinary knowledge - how art is discussed, interpreted and evaluated; developing critical, reflective and metacognitive habits

These forms of knowledge are systematically sequenced and revisited so that pupils develop increasing control, confidence, creativity and independence.

Progression and Sequencing

Knowledge, skills and vocabulary are carefully mapped from EYFS to Year 6. Learning progresses from early exploration of tools, materials and visual elements to increasingly controlled, purposeful and independent application, informed by knowledge of artists, designers, craft traditions and cultural contexts.

Implementation

Teachers use explicit modelling of techniques; guided and independent practice; retrieval practice; and structured talk and critique. Vocabulary is taught explicitly and revisited in context. Artist studies are embedded to illuminate techniques and deepen cultural understanding. Misconceptions are identified quickly and used as valuable teaching points. New knowledge is connected to prior learning and revisited frequently. Sketchbooks are personal creative spaces that encourage experimentation, reflection and risk-taking.

Retrieval and Long Term Memory

Regular low-stakes retrieval, cumulative review and deliberate revisiting of techniques, vocabulary, artists, art movements and the elements of art strengthen long-term memory, automaticity and confidence.

Inclusion

The curriculum is ambitious for all learners. Adaptive teaching, scaffolding, visual supports, dual coding, structured rehearsal and flexible outcomes ensure meaningful access without narrowing the curriculum or reducing expectations.

Personal Development and Cultural Capital

Art provides meaningful opportunities for personal expression, resilience and collaboration. Through encounters with artists and artforms across periods, places, genders and cultures, pupils develop empathy, respect, cultural understanding and an appreciation of perspectives beyond their own experience. Arts & Diversity Week and enrichment activities strengthen pupils' sense of identity and cultural literacy.

Assessment

Assessment is proportionate and purposeful. It includes questioning, retrieval activities, quizzes, end-of-unit assessments and curriculum conversations. Findings inform responsive teaching, future planning and curriculum refinement.

Leadership and Quality Assurance

Subject leadership uses lesson visits, work scrutiny, pupil voice, planning reviews and assessment information to evaluate curriculum effectiveness, drive improvement and inform CPD.

Impact

By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils demonstrate secure practical, theoretical and disciplinary knowledge. They use media, tools and processes with increasing accuracy and control and make purposeful creative choices, refine their work with growing independence and confidence, and are well prepared for successful transition to secondary art and design.

Reviewed: September 2026

Next Review: September 2027