

Subject Curriculum Intent: Art, Craft and Design

Definition of Subject

Art, Craft and Design, as a combination of disciplines, defines and promotes visual literacy. As young children we learn to interpret images long before we become fluent in the written word. Visual literacy enables us to communicate and comprehend successfully and meaningfully in an increasingly image-saturated world. In the words of artist and art critic John Berger, “Seeing comes before words. The child looks and recognises before it can speak. But there is also another sense in which seeing comes before words. It is seeing which establishes our place in the surrounding world.”¹ Art, Craft and Design is about visual literacy and communication and is an understanding of visual culture and practice. For Ark Blake Academy pupils, it provides a channel of communication beyond text and the ability to ‘seize their greatness’ without words.

Nature of Subject

Lesley Cunliffe suggests that knowledge in Art, Craft and Design engages with two forms of knowing. These are ‘knowing how’ and ‘knowing that’.² At Ark Blake Academy, pupils ‘knowing that,’ is centred on substantive knowledge of skills, techniques and processes, as well as knowledge about art, craft and design practitioners, practices and their cultural context. ‘Knowing how’ is based on disciplinary knowledge of how to make art through skills of designing and developing ideas, skills making art, craft and design and skills of judgement and evaluation.

Mastering ‘knowing that’ pupils will use the Rod Taylor critical studies approach to art, consisting of ‘four fundamental areas’, which are content, form, process and mood. These areas focus on examining meanings and concepts in visual imagery as mediums for communication. This approach used alongside substantive contextual knowledge allows pupils to examine and debate the world and their place in it. The ‘vocabulary’³ used to communicate our human visual and tactile experiences with the world consist of the formal elements of art (line, tone, texture, shape, form and colour). In using the formal elements of art, pupils reinterpret and/or restructure compositions in a variety of mediums including drawing, painting and sculpture.

Throughout the Art, Craft and Design curriculum, pupils will encounter threshold concepts that will promote discussion and experimentation. Threshold concepts will help pupils develop a deeper understanding of Art, Craft and Design. They are not meant to be instantly understood. Once opened, they introduce students to ‘troublesome knowledge’⁴ and a new way of seeing Art, Craft and Design. These threshold concepts will include:

- Artist make marks, drawing our attention⁵
- Artists use and abuse traditions
- Art is not fixed in meaning, context is everything
- Art has its own vocabulary, shaped across time and space

¹ John Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, London; New York: British Broadcasting house and Penguin Books, 1972

² Leslie Cunliffe, *Forms of Knowledge in Art Education and the Corollary of Authenticity in the Teaching and Assessment of Such Forms of Knowledge*, iJADE, volume 24, Issue 2, May 2005

³ Lois Fichner-Rathus, *Understanding Art*, Cengage Learning, 2012

⁴ Jan Meyer and Ray Land, *Threshold Concepts and Troublesome Knowledge: Linkages to Ways of Thinking and Practising within the Disciplines*, ETL Project, Occasional Report 4, May 2003

⁵ Chris Francis, *Threshold Concepts*, available at <https://www.artpedagogy.com/>

Purpose of Subject

The importance of human creativity is widely recognised. The National Curriculum states that, “art, craft and design embody some of the highest forms of human creativity.”⁶ Creativity is a catalyst for innovation, adaptability and survival in an increasingly unpredictable and rapidly changing world.

Art, craft and design makes use of critical thinking, imagination and expression. Creating and making develops attributes in pupils, such as the confidence to take risks, the ability to solve problems, self-belief, autonomy of thought and sense of identity. Art, Craft and Design is about visual literacy that communicates to us all. It explores and celebrates similarities and differences between people and cultures, and thrives on diversity and inclusivity, making it a subject that serves and enhances the Ark Blake community.

The active participation in Art, Craft and Design will enable pupils to ‘seize their greatness’ and contribute as confident citizens and future professionals to the culture, creativity, economic success, leisure, material and emotional wellbeing of our society within both national and global contexts.

Design of Subject

The Art, Craft and Design curriculum is ambitious, challenging and inspiring. The curriculum is mapped backwards from university study, Key Stage 5 and Key Stage 4 so all pupils are empowered to unlock their ability to ‘seize their greatness.’

The design of the Art, Craft and Design curriculum is built out of several design principles alongside the wider Design Principles of Ark Blake Academy. These provide focus for learning experiences as well as the breadth and depth of skills, knowledge and understanding. The art curriculum design principles include:

- Deep and well-rehearsed use of the formal elements provide the foundation for pupils to access powerful knowledge.
- Knowledge of art, craft and design from acknowledged masters are given equal value as non-western, female and contemporary artists. This provides breadth of art history.
- Mastery in drawing, painting and sculpture crafted from depth in procedural knowledge.
- Drawing and mark-making skills are learned and assimilated so they become second nature.
- Knowledge and skills build cumulatively across the curriculum in a meaningful order.

In Key Stage 3, the Art, Craft and Design curriculum is designed to firm the foundations achieved at Key Stage 2. Pupils are led through three thematic investigations a year, such as ‘The Built Environment,’ ‘Identity’ and ‘The Natural World.’ As pupils progress in their mastery of knowledge and skill, they learn more about processes and terminology of different arts and become familiar with an ever-wider range of artists, crafts people and designers. In Year 7, pupils study the formal elements of art, the importance of drawing and mark-making, and how to use a sketchbook. Pupils learn the foundation vocabulary to describe, evaluate and express an opinion on works of Art, Craft and Design. In Year 8, pupils explore the codes and conventions of portraiture, still life and cityscapes. Pupils build on their foundation vocabulary, as they compare and analyse visual concepts they study in context to culture and time. In Year 9, pupils use their understanding of codes, conventions, genres, styles and traditions to inform their own judgments and strengthen their artwork. Pupils explore the power

⁶ Department for Education (2013) *National Curriculum in England: Art and Design Programmes of Study*, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-art-and-design-programmes-of-study>

of visual imagery and how artists have constructed, manipulated and deconstructed imagery for both good and bad.

At Key Stage 4, the curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to develop their own ideas to create an individual and self-initiated body of work. The emphasis is on developing individual themes that build on independent practices, connecting their work to that of other artists, craftspeople and designers in both contemporary, cultural and historical context. Pupils build on these studio practices at Key Stage 5 through in-depth experimentation, development, refinement and analysis by following a personal investigation using contextual research. Pupils research more conceptual and contemporary artworks such as installation and time-based media.

Extension of Subject

To compliment the art curriculum, enrichment opportunities give unique experiences and opportunities to be taken forward into careers within creative, cultural, heritage and digital media industries.

The structure of the school day supports a wide range of Art, Craft and Design enrichment opportunities, which are planned to complement the art curriculum. The enrichment programme is constantly evolving to represent the interests of current pupils, recent exhibitions and trends within artist practices as well as experimentation with advanced materials. Pupils visit both local and national art galleries to participate in workshops and exhibitions. Weekly art challenges and house competitions will challenge and inspire pupils' creativity and yearly exhibitions to showcase pupils' creative greatness.

By forging links with arts organisations, creative practitioners and companies in addition to visits and workshops, Ark Blake Academy provides inspiring opportunities to see what it's like to work in the creative industries and hear how artists, crafts people and designers achieved their career aspirations.

Creative art, craft and design courses include:

- Architecture
- Art History
- Digital Media
- Fine Art
- Game Design
- Illustration
- Interior design
- Visual effects for film and television

The field has a strong vocational link and many courses are designed to provide a route to a related career.

Studying Art, Craft and Design comes with a unique portfolio of skills and attributes: practical, skills based and expressive, and problem solving, critical and analytical. These are transferable creative thinking skills that open the door to a range of careers both inside the creative industries and beyond. The creative industries are the fastest growing sector of the UK economy. In 2017, the number of jobs in the UK's creative industries rose by 5 per cent, compared to a 1.2 per cent increase in the wider UK workforce, contributing £91.8bn to the economy.⁷

The following represents related career sectors, which pupils could pursue, and some of their associated roles and work contexts:

- Fine Art (professional artist, visual arts educator, illustrator)
- Advertising (art director, copywriter and photographer)
- Design (graphic, textile, fashion, landscape, interior, product, jewellery and stage design)

⁷ Department for Digital, Cultural, Media and Sport (January 2017) *Creative industries economic estimates*, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/creative-industries-economic-estimates>

- Architecture and the built environment (architect, town planner and landscape designer)
- Curator and conservation (curator, exhibition designer, conservator in a gallery or museum)
- Film and video (director, stills photographer, set builder, set designer, cinematographer and cameraperson)