

Art, craft & design: a guide for governing boards

Providing high quality art, craft
and design education in schools



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Acknowledgements

This guide has been developed through collaboration between the National Governance Association, Arts Council England and the National Society for Education in Art and Design (NSEAD).

Arts Council England

We are the national development agency for creativity and culture. We have set out our strategic vision in Let's Create that by 2030 we want England to be a country in which the creativity of each of us is valued and given the chance to flourish and where everyone has access to a remarkable range of high quality cultural experiences. We invest public money from Government and The National Lottery to help support the sector and to deliver this vision.

National Governance Association

The National Governance Association (NGA) is the membership organisation for governors, trustees and clerks of state schools in England.

We are an independent, not-for-profit charity that aims to improve the educational standards and wellbeing of young people by increasing the effectiveness of governing boards and promoting high standards. We are expert leaders in school and trust governance, providing information, advice and guidance, professional development and e-learning.

We represent the views of governors, trustees and clerks at a national level and work closely with, and lobby, UK government and educational bodies.

NSEAD

National Society of Education in Art and Design (NSEAD) is the subject association and Learned Society for art, craft and design education in the UK, supporting art educators and learners to influence all areas of art, craft and design education.

We are the voice of art, craft and design education, finding and promoting outstanding classroom and studio practice, creating learning materials, generating knowledge and debate.

Foreword

Those of us who govern champion the right of children and young people to a high quality and wide-ranging education, ensuring their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The value of creative education in the lives of our young people – and the important role that subjects such as art and design, dance, drama and music have to play alongside English, maths and science – has never been more apparent as we begin to recover from the educational, social and health impacts of Covid-19.

Throughout lockdown, pupils faced huge upheavals in their day to day lives. But we also saw the positive power of creativity in supporting their learning, mental health and resilience. Now, as we begin to consider post-pandemic life, we need to ensure that high quality cultural education opportunities are available to every child, no matter what their background. These opportunities should be both formal and informal, in the classroom as part of a broad and balanced curriculum, and outside the classroom too. This is a matter of fairness and opportunity for all children.

As school governors and trustees, we have the chance to advocate for the right of all young people to benefit from high quality cultural education and to be creative through their study of subjects such as art and design, dance, drama and music. We know that this isn't always the case and it's why we encourage governors and trustees to champion cultural education in their schools, so that we can do

our best to ensure quality arts education for all. Literacy, numeracy and creativity are the three pillars of a strong educational offer.

These cultural education subjects encourage pupils to express themselves, to build confidence and to develop creative thinking skills, unlocking young people's potential and preparing them to succeed in life. Schools remain the single most important place where children can access great cultural experiences, which is why we've worked in collaboration with the NGA and subject specialists to refresh our guides for school governors. We hope these resources will inspire you to develop your understanding of how cultural education subjects can change the lives of children and young people and that they will support you in your role.

Dr Darren Henley OBE

Chief Executive, Arts Council England

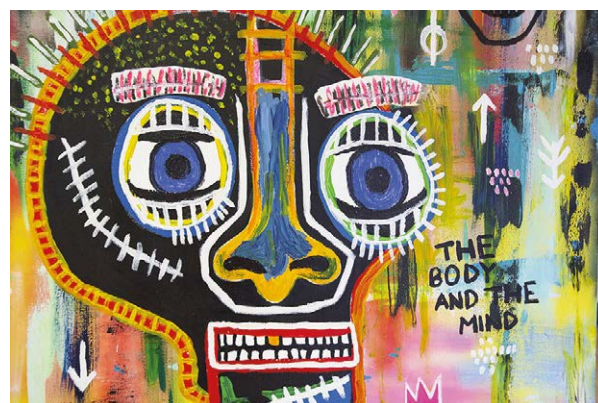


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This guide is part of a collection developed to support governing boards. The collection covers art and design, music and dance and includes an introductory guide to arts, culture and creativity.

The collection is available via the [National Governance Association](#) and [Arts Council England](#) websites.

Introduction

Art and design is part of the national curriculum. Alongside art and design the subject embraces craft. It provides unique opportunities for personal expression and creativity for all young people, at all stages of their education. Pupils learn through studying the work of other artists, makers and designers, and by making their own art.

All children and young people can and should engage with this subject, regardless of starting point, background, ability, or disability. Art, craft and design education should be coherent, purposeful, and progressive, allowing pupils to explore their own interests, experiences, and cultural reference points.

Art and design is part of the national curriculum for maintained schools and should be taught from the early years foundation stage through key stage 1 and 2 and up to key stage 3. It is an entitlement at key stage 4, requiring that all children who wish to opt for art and design may do so. Governing boards and senior leaders have a vital role in championing and advocating for high quality art, craft and design education in their school or trust and ensuring it flourishes and is valued within the curriculum across all phases.



Photo © Xavier Fiddes / Northway Primary School

The benefits of art, craft, and design education

1. Personal expression and visual literacy

Young children learn to interpret images long before becoming fluent in the written word – this 'visual literacy' enables us to communicate and comprehend in an increasingly image-saturated world.

2. Inclusion and diversity

Art, craft and design develops personal expression and cultural understanding through exploring and celebrating similarities and differences between peoples, places, and cultures.

3. Physical development

Through the exploration of material and processes, art, craft and design develops fine motor skills and hand to eye co-ordination. It contributes to specific areas of learning in the early years foundation stage framework.

4. Health and wellbeing

Creative thinking and making promotes enjoyment and engagement with the arts, building confidence and self-esteem. Art, craft and design offers nurturing and therapeutic support for the health and wellbeing of everyone.

5. Transferable skills

Art, craft, and design education encourages creative and practical responses, and imaginative risk taking which develops critical, creative, and analytical thinking skills.

6. Career paths

Across the key stages, art and design can signpost to career pathways through higher education into the creative, cultural and heritage industries as well as being of high value as a unique creative subject in its own right.

The characteristics of high quality art, craft and design provision

About the art, craft and design curriculum

The curriculum should include a balance of:

- **Practical** (the knowledge of different media, methods, techniques and disciplines used to make art)
- **Theoretical** (knowledge of art history, its context and significance)
- **Disciplinary knowledge** (the knowledge needed to engage in practice and debate of the subject)

There should be opportunities to learn in the following twelve areas of making, with an emphasis on the process of developing ideas and experimentation.

- Drawing
- Painting
- Sculpture
- Ceramics
- Textiles
- Photography
- Collage
- Craft
- Printing
- Installation/Site Specific
- Digital/New media
- Design/Graphic



Photo © NSEAD

What should pupil's learn?

Pupils should be able to develop historical, cultural and contextual knowledge, learning about a wide range of artists, designers and makers.

Pupils should be able to talk about art, craft and design using the correct terminology and subject-specific vocabulary to enable them to develop their analytical responses and to express their beliefs and opinions articulately.

What does effective teaching and learning look like?

Art, craft and design education should be aspirational – effective teaching and learning takes place when teachers:

- are enthusiastic about art and art teaching
- motivate pupils to want to make art
- see learning experiences in art in relation to the wider curriculum
- are confident in their own handling of art tools and techniques
- have good knowledge of art and artists, including contemporary practices
- use high quality reference and exemplar materials that reflect a diverse and varied range of cultures, people and practice
- provide opportunities for pupils to experience original art works (e.g. gallery visits)
- display pupil's work and reproductions of work by artists
- show and discuss stimulating visual resources
- promote wider opportunities (e.g. clubs, awards and competitions)

Making a clear distinction between art and design and design technology

Art and design and design technology each have a distinct and very different curriculum that point to separate career pathways and pipelines within different industries. The subjects are not interchangeable, and so governing boards should ensure both subjects are given adequate time and resources, particularly at key stage 4. Art and design should be planned and delivered by specialist teachers, with distinct curriculum intentions.

Information about exams

At GCSE and A level, art and design qualifications are teacher assessed. Work is marked and moderated by art and design teachers and then externally moderated before a final grade is awarded. Art and design teachers need dedicated time to mark and internally standardise work within the examination period.

GCSE art and design is presented by the awarding organisations as a suite of courses and specifications to include art and design, graphic communications, three-dimensional design, critical and contextual studies, photography (lens and light-based media) and textile design. Each can be studied as a separate GCSE or A level, or within vocational qualifications.



Photo © Mark Savage / Durham Sixth Form Centre

How to influence art, craft and design education in your school

There are many ways in which governing boards can work strategically to raise the status of art, craft and design education and increase its impact. An effective policy for art and design education (or an arts education policy that includes art and design), developed by school leaders and supported by the governing board, should ensure that all pupils access a high quality art and design education.

Alongside policy development, the following enablers of high quality art and design provision and are intended to prompt discussion at governing board meetings and with senior executive leaders in your school or trust.

Teacher skills, knowledge, and confidence

High quality art, craft and design provision requires specialist teachers and subject co-ordinators, with access to subject-specific professional development on a regular basis. This should include and promote improved teaching and learning, subject depth and breadth, and innovation. Subject-specific support and professional development should extend to technicians, higher level teaching assistants and teaching assistants.

Access to CPD

There is a wealth of training and resources offered by the museum and gallery sector and professional bodies such as [NSEAD](#). The following organisations also provide resources to support schools:

- [Crafts Council](#)
- [Engage](#)
- [Art UK](#)

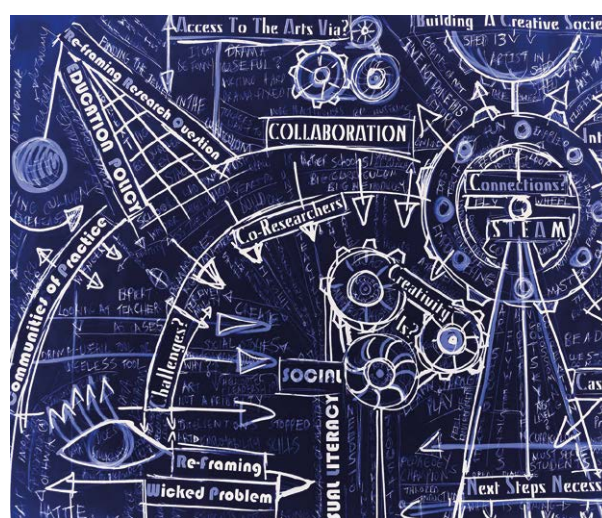


Photo © Lily Elms, NSEAD

Space and resources

Art and design studios or spaces should be large enough and resourced appropriately so that all pupils can benefit from working with a range of tools, materials, equipment, and digital technologies. Space and light can be as important as equipment. Access to outdoor spaces allows for creative interventions in two or three dimensions.

Art and design teachers, coordinators, teaching assistants and technicians need to be suitably trained and resourced to use and maintain equipment (such as kilns, sewing machines and dark-rooms) and keep it in safe and active working order.

In secondary schools, there should be suitable provision for relevant digital equipment, software and learning opportunities to model creative and design industry approaches.

Partnerships

Establishing links with partners can help schools expand their provision and connect learning to professional practice. Providing dedicated time and resources for art and design clubs, arts weeks and festivals utilising the expertise of arts organisations and agencies will enhance and enrich your provision.

Local and national collections and temporary exhibitions in museums and galleries offer expertise and support through their learning teams and programmes. Public spaces such as libraries and arts centres may provide opportunities to exhibit pupils' work. Local businesses and organisations may set 'live briefs' offering real life design challenges for your pupils.

Embedding creativity across the curriculum

Artsmark is the only creative quality standard for schools and education settings, accredited by Arts Council England. Artsmark helps schools develop and celebrate their commitment to arts and cultural education.

Embed creativity across your whole curriculum and address school improvement priorities using Artsmark's flexible framework.

Find out more at artsmark.org.uk



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How to monitor progress, impact and outcomes

Governing boards have a responsibility to ensure that their school provides a high quality, broad and balanced curriculum for all children and young people. They are not expected to have specialist knowledge, but to work with school leaders to identify the impact of their art, craft and design curriculum.

Governors and trustees need to think carefully about what information they need to receive from school leaders to build a comprehensive picture that is relevant to their intended outcomes and strategic objectives. A clear framework for monitoring makes it easier for the board to evaluate the impact of policy.

Sources of information could include:

Source	Description
Headteacher and senior leader reports	An overview of progress covering all or some of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• partnership work with specialist arts organisations and opportunities to extend partnerships• case studies demonstrating the impact of art and design provision on individuals or groups of pupils• analysis of data including take up rates of art and design qualifications• participation in extra-curricular activities, such as arts clubs
Governance monitoring visits	An opportunity for governors and trustees to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• experience the art and craft curriculum being taught• see the environment used for teaching art and design• see the diversity of pupils' work and the resources used• talk to pupils and key staff about their experiences of art and design teaching and learning
Pupil and parent voice	Talking to pupils, parents and using surveys to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• gain a perspective of how pupils and parents feel about the arts education the school or trust provides• find out the extent to which pupils are engaged and enthusiastic about art and art teaching• understand barriers to participation in the curriculum and wider opportunities (such as clubs and awards)

Presentations from subject leads

An opportunity to focus on specific aspects, such as:

- staff CPD priorities and outcomes
- policy proposals
- funding and partnership opportunities
- developments in practice and the curriculum

Questions that governing boards can ask:

The following are examples of the type of questions that governors and trustees might ask about art, craft and design education in their school or trust. Consider how you might use these examples to construct your own questions, specific to your context and the issue you are discussing.

- What value do we place on art and design as a school? Is that value reflected in resources, budgets and its position in our curriculum?
- What are the relative strengths of our art, craft and design curriculum: what are the areas we need to develop?
- Does our school have a dedicated art and design or visual literacy policy?
- Is art and design taught by specialist teachers and subject co-ordinators?
- What facilities do we have to support a safe, high quality art, craft and design experience?
- Are pupils given access to the work of other artists, makers, and designers?
- Do your secondary art and design teachers have dedicated time to mark and internally standardise work within the examination period?
- Do we actively review our curriculum and resources to ensure that they are culturally diverse, inclusive and accessible for all?
- Are there any pupils who do not engage with art, craft and design and if so, what are the barriers?



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Further information and support

National Governance Association

- [Cultural education guides for governing boards](#) including dance, art and music
- Learning Link [Arts and cultural education e-learning module](#)
- [Being Strategic](#): a robust annual cycle for creating, monitoring and reviewing strategy for governing boards and school leaders

NSEAD

- Discover secondary curriculum [case studies](#)
- For model Primary curriculum and lessons, explore the [OAK National Academy](#) written by NSEAD members
- [Creative Careers](#) offers information about art, craft and design career opportunities
- You can find inclusive and diverse [curriculum and resources](#) on our website



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