

OAK FIELD SCHOOL & SPECIALIST SPORTS



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COLLEGE

POLICY FOR ART

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Policy for Art

Philosophy

Art at Oak Field School consists of the following disciplines: drawing, painting, printmaking, textiles, work in 3 Dimensions and art history. All pupils should be given the opportunity to experience all these disciplines within a curriculum which encourages development and ensures a methodology appropriate to their age. Essentially, art is the development of creativity and through this an individual voice.

Art comes to be perceived traditionally as a craft based or making activity. It appertains to beauty, perfection and manual skill and more often than not is recognised as the very pinnacle of human achievement. More recently the definitions what art is and what art can be have been challenged. Modern art and new technologies have opened up a debate about what art is. It has questioned modes of representation, manipulated the aesthetics of other periods and cultures. The definition of art has moved away from only representing a thing of beauty and skill, towards one that poses the possibility that art can be made by anyone who has something to say. This is because art is principally concerned with communication and expression of ideas and emotions, an act that confirms both individuality and humanity.

Art at the Oak Field School

The school recognizes that art can be more than decorative or skilful; it can inspire or move one to feel emotions, which are essential when working with children and young adults with severe learning difficulties. This may mean that art is their only independent method of communication and expression. Art offers the possibility of a language we can understand and feel, a language based on emotion and sensation with no hierarchies, boundaries or privileges.

Clearly one of the roles of a teacher is to enable a capacity and potential for expression and communication. This we can do by introducing processes, techniques and different media, teaching the skills to use them effectively. The broader this range is, the more opportunity there is present for students to express independent choices and preferences. Which may engage, inspire and challenge individuals with a comprehensive knowledge of both art and the world around them.

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Aims

All students should be given the opportunity to: -

- Work creatively, to express themselves and communicate their thoughts and emotions through the media available in art at Oak Field School.
- Develop the skills required to work creatively (fine-motor skills, visual and tactile awareness, specific techniques related to materials, etc).
- Produce their own unaided or directed creative work as an honest representation of themselves and what they can do.
- Learn about the work of artists (architects, designers, historical, contemporary and cultural), relating this work to their own artwork.
- Make relationships between their creative work and the real world.
- Explore issues relevant to individuals with due regard to age, gender, culture, learning difficulty, etc.
- Use art as a cross-curricular activity (many subjects can be taught through art) However, it is important not to lose sight of art as a discipline in its own right).
- See their creative work displayed throughout the school (and where possible outside) to i) encourage individuals confidence and self-esteem by affording them due respect and attention ii) provide a student centred environment iii) to illustrate progression and age appropriateness.
- Explore the range of facilities provided by the Arts Support Service through workshops, artists-in-residence etc.
- Visits galleries, exhibitions and work with other artists when appropriate.

Strategies for putting policy into practice

The planning of schemes of work and individual lessons need to refer to i) the National Curriculum and ii) the art curriculum in Oak Field School. In this way they should ensure development and progression. Though this obviously requires forward planning and preparation, it should not be at cross-purposes with the students' tendency to respond creatively and imaginatively to the stimulus.

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The premise for planning creativity is to produce a framework or opportunity for the capability of an individual to be realised. The practice of this may mean being less prescriptive about methodology and outcome.

The art curriculum at Oak Field School should be i) a response to the National Curriculum and ii) an effective acknowledgement of the learning difficulties of individuals and iii) a response to those areas highlighted in the philosophy of the policy.

Such a curriculum should ensure progression and development and at the same time cater for a more expressive and creative individual series of methodologies. The value of art in the lives of children and young adults with learning difficulties should not be sacrificed for the sake of a slick framework for learning and assessment which does not in real life affect individuals or respect the actual relevancy of what is being achieved.

Roles and Responsibilities

All staff require adequate training in areas associated with the teaching of art. It is the role of such training and support to i) understand the philosophy of policy and the use of often difficult terminology used in art practice ii) become familiar with creative processes to enable effective schemes of work and lessons to be planned and delivered iii) to become familiar and confident with a wide range of materials and techniques.

It is the role of the art specialist to ensure sufficient training through inset and 'twilight' sessions. Moreover, such training and support should be made available on an informal basis when required by staff.

Staff should be encouraged to attend courses outside of school.

Currently art as a subject in its own right is administered and principally delivered by an art specialist based within the art room. It is the responsibility of the art specialist to collate policy, curriculum materials and other related areas (though the input from class teachers is essential through meetings, working parties etc.)

Students have their art education through a timetable which allows them access to the art room and specialist teaching once a week for a period of time appropriate to their age and ability. In no way should this mean that an individual's experience of art is confined to the environment of the art room under the eye of the specialist teacher. On the other hand, this specialist input should inform the practice of art in individual classes.

Assessment and Recording

Any form of recording and assessment needs to be clear and relevant. It is essential that as teachers we are clear about i) what is being assessed and ii) why we are assessing it. This should ensure an honest record of an individual's experience and ability. Clearly assessment in art should reflect the individual's creative capability, response to stimulus

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and their ability to handle materials and techniques. Such assessment should ensure the documentation of development progression.

Monitoring, Review & Evaluation

It is proposed that the policy should be under constant evaluation. To ensure this, a working party needs to meet regularly to discuss the policy and its role in the school and propose any modifications. Similarly, the working party needs to evaluate the art curriculum and methods of planning and assessment. Any modifications need to be collated by the art specialist. Any modifications should be relevant and constructive.

The National Curriculum for art makes provision for the evaluation by students of their own work in terms of method and outcome. Evaluation needs to happen at all stages of the creative process. Such evaluation procedures need to be considered when planning schemes of work and used constructively to aid clarity.

Written by Andrea McKenzie (September 2015)

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