

Expressive Arts and Design: Creating with Materials – Reception Curriculum Framework

Educational Purpose

Children learn to explore, choose and use materials, tools and techniques safely and purposefully. Through taught techniques, artistic encounters and repeated opportunities to create, they develop their understanding of colour, design, texture, form and function, represent their own ideas, make choices, adapt their work and explain the process they have used.

Artists, Makers and Designers

Children encounter the work of artists, makers and designers to broaden their repertoire and see how materials, tools, colour, shape, pattern, texture and form can be used in different ways.

Louise Nevelson	Sheila Hicks	El Anatsui	Barbara Hepworth
joining, assembling and arranging	fibre, texture, layering and twisting	transforming and combining materials	shaping materials and creating form

Golden Threads

Explore & Notice	Learn & Practise	Choose & Create	Reflect & Explain
Children explore materials, tools and visual features and notice what they can do.	Children are taught techniques and practise using tools and materials safely and with increasing control.	Children combine knowledge and techniques to represent their own ideas and make purposeful choices.	Children adapt and develop their creations and explain the choices and processes they have used.

Strand	Typical Starting Points	DP1 – Discover End of Autumn	DP2 – Represent End of Spring	DP3 – Communicate Summer	Statutory ELG
KNOWLEDGE	• Explore materials and tools through play. • Experiment with making marks using different tools or materials. • Make simple creations. • Choose colours or materials they like. • Talk about something they have made.	• I know materials can be changed and joined in different ways. • I know different tools help me do different jobs. • I know colour, shape, pattern and texture can be noticed and used in creations. • I know materials can look, feel and behave differently. • I know creations can be made for different purposes, including play and storytelling.	• I know changing and combining materials can help me represent my ideas. • I know different materials and tools can create different effects. • I know colour, shape, pattern and texture can be chosen to create an effect. • I know a material's properties can affect how it can be used. • I know different ways of joining materials can produce different results. • I know artists, makers and designers use materials and techniques in different ways.	• I know different materials, tools and techniques are suitable for different purposes. • I know combining colour, shape, pattern and texture can communicate an idea. • I know creations can be changed or improved as ideas develop. • I know makers can explain the choices they made and the process they used. • I know my choices can affect how well a creation works. • I know structures can be changed to make them stronger or more stable. • I know artists, makers and designers can give me ideas without my creation needing to look the same as theirs.	• Safely use and explore a variety of materials, tools and techniques, experimenting with colour, design, texture, form and function. • Share their creations, explaining the process they have used. • Make use of props and materials when role playing characters in narratives and stories.
TECHNIQUES		• Tear, fold, roll, pinch and flatten. • Join using glue. • Hold and use scissors safely to make simple cuts. • Use brushes and drawing tools to make marks and apply colour. • Print using simple objects and tools. • Stack, balance and connect construction materials.	• Bend, twist, layer and overlap materials. • Join using glue and tape. • Cut with increasing control, including around simple shapes. • Mix colours and apply paint using different brush movements. • Repeat marks, shapes or prints to create simple patterns. • Build, test and strengthen a simple structure.	• Select an appropriate material, tool or technique. • Combine taught techniques within one creation. • Use tools safely and with increasing control. • Refine or adapt a technique to help create an idea. • Adjust a join or connection to improve strength or stability.	
SKILLS		• Change and join materials. • Use familiar tools with support and increasing control. • Explore colour, shape, pattern and texture. • Use materials and marks to begin to represent an idea. • Build, balance, stack and connect construction materials. • Make and use a simple prop during imaginative play. • Talk about what they have made.	• Combine materials to represent their ideas. • Choose familiar tools and use taught techniques with increasing control. • Choose materials for a simple intended purpose. • Use colour, shape, pattern and texture purposefully. • Test and strengthen a simple structure. • Notice a material, technique or visual feature in an artist's or maker's work. • Create and use a prop within storytelling or imaginative play. • Explain how they have made their creation.	• Choose and combine materials, tools and techniques purposefully. • Select materials according to their properties and intended purpose. • Create from their own ideas. • Use an artist's, maker's or designer's work to extend an idea without copying the outcome. • Revisit a creation to add, remove, reconnect or strengthen parts. • Share their creation and explain the choices and process they have used.	
ESSENTIAL VOCABULARY	No formal starting-point vocabulary: vocabulary is explicitly taught through the Reception curriculum.	material – something we can use to make or create tool – something that helps us do a job create – to make something using our own ideas join – to put or fix things together shape – the outline or form of something	combine – to put two or more things together colour – what we see when something is red, blue, yellow and so on pattern – something that repeats texture – how something feels or looks like it might feel layer – to put one thing on top of another	choose – to decide what to use adapt – to change something as we work process – the steps we used to make something design – an idea for something we want to create explain – to tell someone how or why we did something	The ELG is the statutory end point; the progression shows how children build towards it through first-hand creating, taught techniques and increasing independence.

Typical Starting Points describe possible prior experiences, not entry expectations. Technique words such as tear, fold, cut, twist and print are modelled in context but are not all designated as essential vocabulary.

Creating with Materials: Curriculum Entitlement

Across Reception, children should have regular opportunities to:

- Explore and create with a varied range of materials and media, including drawing, painting, printing, modelling and combining materials.
- Learn, practise and revisit taught techniques, with resources available so these can then be applied independently.
- Use an increasing range of simple tools safely and with developing control.
- Build and create using a range of construction materials, including blocks and interlocking resources, returning to and adapting their constructions.
- Make and use props and materials within imaginative play and storytelling.
- Encounter the work of artists, makers and designers, noticing different ways materials, colour, shape, pattern, texture and form can be used.
- Create from their own ideas, making choices about materials, tools and techniques rather than routinely reproducing an adult model.
- Return to creations, changing, developing or adding to them as their ideas develop.
- Share their creations and talk about how they made them.

Assessment

Assessment should arise through observation of children creating, their conversations, their independent use of provision and the creations they make. Practitioners should consider what children can do increasingly independently rather than assessing a prescribed finished outcome.

Practitioners should notice increasing ability to:

- Explore and use a range of materials and tools safely.
- Use taught techniques with increasing control.
- Choose and combine materials, tools and techniques to represent their own ideas.
- Use colour, shape, pattern and texture purposefully.
- Return to, adapt or develop a creation as their idea changes.
- Create and use props or materials within imaginative play.
- Share a creation and explain how they made it.

Assessment principle: Assessment should focus on the child's developing knowledge, choices, techniques, control and ability to communicate their ideas and process. It should not be based on how closely a creation resembles an adult model or on subjective judgements about how good the finished artwork looks.

Continuity into KS1 Art and Design / Design and Technology

Reception provides secure foundations through exploration, taught techniques, increasingly controlled tool use, purposeful choice, construction, adaptation and explanation. In KS1, these foundations become more systematic and subject-specific.

Art and Design	Design and Technology
• Greater systematic use of particular media and techniques. • Exploration of line, shape, pattern and colour becomes more formal. • Printing and layering techniques are developed further. • Sketchbooks and reflection on artwork become more established.	• Designing to clearer purposes and criteria. • Structures, mechanisms, wheels and axles are taught formally. • Sewing and other joining methods are developed. • Children evaluate products and make more explicit decisions about suitability and improvement.