

Statement of Curriculum Intent: Art

The Dorothy Stringer Art Department aims to promote a happy, calm and productive atmosphere. We strive to provide a curriculum that all students will find engaging and fun.

In our department we enjoy sharing our ideas and skills and take satisfaction from working together to develop happy and fulfilling experiences for our students. As practising artists, we recognise the value of learning new skills, self-expression and curiosity; qualities which we hope to encourage in our art lessons. The classroom doors in the Art block are always open in order to inspire an inclusive atmosphere of sharing, community and appreciation between different year groups.

When students join our school, they will have had varied experiences of art. Within our lessons we often discuss skills and knowledge gained at KS2, but our work schemes are designed to make every child comfortable even if their own experience of art both at home and school has been limited. Therefore, we start from basics with differentiation and extension tasks ensuring that all students make progress.

We deliver lessons that build up skills in a whole variety of materials and techniques. Every student will have the opportunity to work in two and three dimensions, in clay, paint, wire, print, fabric, recycled materials as well as drawing using a range of tools. We encourage an ethos of experimentation and perseverance. We measure progress through the work students produce in lessons and for home learning. This may be presented in or out of sketchbooks; three-dimensional or very large work is photographed and added.

KS3 groups work in A3 Sketchbooks. These larger books enable students to learn how to present work carefully, creatively and sensitively. It also allows for larger expressive pieces of work to be completed. Students use the same sketchbook from year 7 through to year 9 which provides an excellent record of achievement. KS4 work in a range of sketchbooks allowing for individual preference. Photography students may choose to present a digital sketchbook.

We develop work schemes that build on continuity and progression with skill level increasing and independence becoming more important as students get older. Literacy is valued highly both in terms of being able to write and discuss their own and other artists' work. The confidence to analyse is developed through use of key words, help sheets and modelled responses. The belief that everyone's opinion is valid is crucial. As with feedback, we value the skill of talking about work even more highly than being able to write about it. This skill is built up slowly and consistently from the very first art lessons in our school. Numeracy is also an integral part of our curriculum and is embedded in art, taught through patterns, symmetry, perspective, proportion and spatial awareness.

Students understand where they have been successful and where they could develop further by the constant dialogue in the classroom. Students give each other both written and verbal feedback. Teachers circulate, encouraging and giving advice for improvements or alternatives. The department uses a colour coding system for KS3 to highlight areas for development which students and staff find efficient and useful.

Our work schemes are designed to reflect our own and our students' interests. The natural world is a great source of inspiration for us and in Key Stage 3 we base a lot of work on animal imagery. We also investigate and respond to our local environment and engage with social and political issues in the wider world. We explore the art work of a diverse range of artists, designers and craftspeople in order to inspire students' work. We organise trips to art galleries and have regular visits from artists and designers in order to prepare students for working in the creative industries.

By the end of key stage 3 we hope that all students feel they have experienced success. If they are progressing to study Fine Art, Photography, Graphics or Textiles at GCSE they will know how to explore, experiment, analyse and present. But most of all they will understand that to be creative you do not have to be the 'best' artist in the class.

At GCSE we offer a range of specialisms, but all have the same objectives - self-sufficiency and ownership of class time. Students have structured, skills-based lessons but ultimately, they direct their own projects. They follow personal interests and experiment in a wide range of media, exploring ideas and refining skills before creating an individual final outcome. Feedback is on a one to one basis and very much tailored to each particular student's needs. This is important for their transition to Key Stage 5. We know that our visual arts students quickly adapt to sixth form and further education due to the independence and resilience that they have developed with us. They are always proud to report this back to us.

We have many opportunities for extra-curricular activities. Art club is very popular at key stage 3 and leads into the magnificent Children's parade. Students are welcome to work in the department on most days of the week both at lunchtime and afterschool. This facility is used extensively by our GCSE students where after school often appears as if we still are in the middle of the school day. We take part in Brighton's annual arts festival and exhibit students' artwork alongside the other Artist Open Houses. Many students apply to be prefects and to help with department evenings and activities. The department embraces many other opportunities including visiting artists and external workshops.

We view Art as a vehicle for developing transferable skills such as creativity, organisation, independence, self-motivation and most of all the confidence to be curious, take risks and enjoy the process. We are proud of the varied outcomes our students create. We display work from all: not just the best.

Essentially, we want students to love art as much as we do whether or not they pursue it formally in the future or just feel proud of the art that they achieved at Dorothy Stringer School.