

AccessArt Primary Art Curriculum FAQ

Here, you will find frequently asked questions relating to the [AccessArt Primary Art Curriculum](#).

If your question is not answered below please [email the team here](#).

Getting Started...

- What makes AccessArt special?

To summarise our offering and AccessArt's USP:

- All AccessArt resources promote open-ended creative learning. We place great value on the creative journey – understanding that outcomes are generally excellent when each pupil is enabled to explore their own creativity. Our aim is to ensure that by the time they leave school, all pupils understand what it means to enjoy exploring their creativity through the visual arts. Find [information about our Curriculum here](#). If you're ready to start introducing AccessArt to your school [see our Step by Step Start up Guide here](#).

We want to nurture aspiration amongst teachers and pupils. Our aim is to help build your understanding of what it means to teach art, so that you can offer your pupils a rich and broad visual arts education. All our resources are created by experts and often in collaboration with other experts in the field. We draw down experience from other settings including art schools, adapting it to show you how to structure activities in inspirational yet effective ways.

- Although we encourage you to aspire high, it's important to us that ALL teachers feel able to use our resources. Videos and CPD help support our pathways so that as a teacher you can build your skills (understanding WHY as well as HOW) as pupils build theirs. Members can access [free CPD](#) each term and we also [record many events which you can watch in your own time](#).
- Many schools use us as a [scheme](#), whilst other schools use our [1500+ resources](#) to [supplement and extend](#) their own planning or external scheme. If you use us as a scheme it's important to note it's a completely flexible scheme which can be tailored and developed to
-

suit your school.

- AccessArt has the UK's collection of visual arts ed resources. Visual arts education is all we do – you will find no other organisation which works the way we do.
- We are a small team and very responsive and can give email or telephone advice to member schools.
- Lastly, we are a UK charity and Subject Association. we are not doing this to make a profit. We care deeply about arts education. We have over 24,000 members and keep [membership fees](#) as low as possible – making us a very cost effective solution.

Watch the [videos on this page](#) to help build your understanding of the what AccessArt curriculum has to offer and how to introduce it to your school.

- I am wondering where to start. I would love to see the videos and attend training.

The following are useful starting points:

[Starting Out With AccessArt](#)

[EYFS](#)

[Primary Art Curriculum](#)

Primary Art Curriculum Supporting Documents

Zoom CPD

Pedagogy

- Do you have a list of learning outcomes which we can use for tracking students' progress as they move through the curriculum?

You can either take the learning outcomes from the [sequencing documents](#) or via individual pathway [Medium Term Plans](#). The Medium Term Plans are also linked on each pathway in 'Teaching Notes'.

It is important to note that the "I Can" statements found on each pathway are deliberately holistic and go beyond technical skills as we believe this is how art is best taught. You might also like to read posts about [how to assess creativity](#), [what success looks like](#) and [why we need to allow art to be a unique subject](#).

- Do you have a bank of vocab used for each Pathway?

You can find a vocabulary document which covers the vocab in each pathway [here](#).

- Do you provide Knowledge Organisers?

We don't have knowledge organisers although we have written an article suggesting alternate ways to think about 'organising' knowledge in art.

www.accessart.org.uk/knowledge-organisers-for-art-in-primary-schools/.

- Where can I find supporting documents for the curriculum?

You can find the supporting documents tailored for each [curriculum version](#) linked on the curriculum page you choose. You can also see all of the documents we offer across all versions [here](#).

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The AccessArt Curriculum and Ofsted

- We need to be clear why we are using your scheme, if Ofsted asks. Can you help?

It's vital that you choose a scheme which suits your school and that the intent behind our scheme supports/matches your own intent behind teaching art as a school. [See our article here](#).

Please take a look at the videos below to understand more about the intent/ethos behind AccessArt. If your school does not already have an intent statement, you can use the

messages in these videos to inform the creation of one for your school.

- [The Philosophy and Approach behind AccessArt Resources for Primary Schools](#)
- [Support Videos for the Primary art Curriculum](#)
- The progression document mentions substantive knowledge vs implicit knowledge. How does this relate to Ofsted's practical, theoretical and disciplinary knowledge?

In the [review](#) Ofsted are very clear that they don't expect every school to use their terms of practical, theoretical and disciplinary knowledge. There are lots of models of knowledge and even experts disagree about terminology and approach. I think all Ofsted are implying by those terms is that there is a hierarchy of knowledge, which when put together make for a rich and memorable experience for children. By hierarchy I mean it includes very tangible, finite and practical knowledge, and also more embracing, overarching knowledge, which is harder to define, but which is vital to the subject, (for example getting children to think about the purpose of art). The AccessArt Curriculum includes all those types of knowledge, with different names.

- How can I highlight I have identified points in the curriculum where it is clear whether

pupils are working towards convergent or divergent goals?

Think of things like drawing exercises being seen as convergent – the whole class is being asked to make a drawing in a certain way (ie continuous line), thinking about certain aspects of looking and mark making, and using a certain drawing tool.

Think of things like projects where children create their own artwork (ie most of the projects in our curriculum) as being divergent – children are given choices and use their experience to make creative decisions, each of which added up helps their work be unique to them. Sketchbooks are often a mixture of divergent and convergent thinking and action.

- How can I show that curriculum content enables pupils to understand the journey of art throughout history and culture (theoretical knowledge)?

This is embedded within the pathways. Please note we do not show the “journey of art through history and culture” – that’s a massive thing to do and often results in a reductionist approach. Instead we focus on elements which we think are relevant, engaging and exciting for pupils to know today.

- Is it okay that units do not necessarily include what may be considered the more

‘great’ artists like Van Gogh, Warhol, Monet, and Lowry?

Within the curriculum, our main aim is to ensure children see the relevance of the artists they are studying: a) to their own lives and b) to the projects. So all artists we link to in our Talking Points are chosen on those grounds.

The National Curriculum as you know states “know about great artists, craft makers and designers” and there is general agreement amongst experts that this is very outdated. For too long there has been a focus on “dead white male” artists, almost always judging “great” from a Western perspective. We now understand that looking at art from a colonial perspective is not appropriate. So we really need to go beyond this now, and look at all kinds of artists, from all kinds of backgrounds, countries and perspectives. Doing this makes art as accessible and inclusive to as many pupils as possible.

Our understanding is that as long as you can explain why you have chosen the artists you have, Ofsted will be happy. If as a school you decide you do want to supplement (not replace) the existing artists with more “traditionally great” artists then you can do so – but do bear in mind that if you do this too much you will end up by default with male dead artists.

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Adapting the Curriculum

- Can the pathways be taught in different terms and with different year groups? Can I adapt the pathways to fit with topic links?

Yes the pathways can be taken out of order, both within the school year and between adjacent years (or even wider apart years) to fit into your plans better. Children will work at all pathways, whenever presented them, at their own level.

- Can I adapt the pathways easily to incorporate curriculum links?

Take a look at [Curriculum Adaptations](#) to find listed curriculum areas and how we think the pathways might be linked to topics.

The pathways are designed (and our bigger aim) so that schools can adapt and personalise them – that's really important to us and to the children. So yes use your imagination and adapt as much as you like.

You can find teacher adaptations of AccessArt resources [here](#) and watch a [past CPD recording](#) where teachers share their adaptations with us.

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Mixed and Split Curriculum

- My school is organised differently to the norm and I need some advice on the best way to plan progression and which pathways to include.

Find videos to help you adapt and tailer your curriculum [here](#).

- Choose pathways from the years which make up your rolling years – so for instance if you have a mixed class yrs 3 and 4, choose pathways from those years.
- Choose pathways you think your pupils will like/respond to and which the teachers will enjoy teaching. Once you have chosen pathways, look back over your selection to ensure you are happy with your balanced curriculum.
- Don't worry if they do a year 4 pathway before a year 3 pathway. The reality is that progression in art is never strictly linear and so you can pick and choose the pathways you like the sound of and its ok to introduce them to children in a slightly different order. Think of it more as layering opportunities. Many key concepts such as line, colour, shape, form etc are revisited in different disciplines/pathways so there will still be progression.

- In your DT half terms, try to keep some drawing going – even if it is just a fifteen minute transition exercise (eg after lunch) once or twice a week. This can take place in their sketchbooks and can be standalone activities (ie not linked to a topic). This will help keep drawing skills developing and means when pupils return to an art “half-term” they ease easily into it. [See this post which shares lots of drawing exercises](#) you can try in your non-art half terms.
- Does AccessArt cover DT?

We don't aim to cover the D&T curriculum. The resources we share do help build skills in many other areas of the DT curriculum, especially when it comes to construction, using tools, understanding structures, intention, review/reflection etc.

In many cases it is a subtle change in language – DT requires you to talk about iterative processes, prototypes, intention in relation to a design brief, function, and product.

When we use the making skills we talk about them from a visual arts perspective – where the role is often not to create something with a functional purpose in response to a brief, but instead is to make a personal creative response to a stimulus. These are important differences. Explore the [Projects on a Page](#) created by the Design and

Technology Association.

There are resources on AccessArt though, which straddle the line a little bit – and which you could introduce into your curriculum to help meet some curriculum aims:

- [Tool Box Resources for Supporting D&T](#)
 - [The ABC's of Tools PDF](#)
 - [Tool Tips](#)
 - [Redesigning Food Packaging](#)
 - [Wave Bowls](#)
 - [D&T resources](#)
- I need to create an overview of the artists each class will follow. However, I am not sure which ones to suggest to staff to teach alongside your planning.

The artists featured in the [Talking Points](#) area of the AccessArt website refer to the artists used in the pathways in our Primary Art Curriculum. So which artists you and your colleagues want to explore will probably depend on which pathways in the Curriculum you are using or thinking about might use.

As a teacher/school, you are free to pick whichever artists, designers, craftspeople

etc that you think will help expand the children's experience of what art is. Of course as well as trying to include a diverse range of contemporary artists, the most important thing is that you choose artists who help your pupils build their understanding of a particular topic or discipline. So in this sense, the topic/discipline comes first, and then you find an artist to fit.

If you haven't seen them yet, have a look at our section on [pedagogy](#) articles and in particular [which artists should we look at in primary school](#).

- Which documents should I be looking at for 'skills progression' to support with delivery of the Split Curriculum?

Take a look at our video [here](#) to help you edit the progression plan.

- We have to follow a four-year cycle in KS2, and I was wondering how easy it would be to adapt the planning and teaching to all four year groups at the same time?

Because our pathways don't follow a strict linear progression, adapting the pathways and teaching they way you described should work well. If it helps, most of the activities which are now being used in schools in specific year groups started out as activities first tested in community groups which always contained a mix of ages spanning

4 or 5 years.

Each activity can be adapted and children will enter the activity with their existing knowledge and develop what's right for them at the time that they do it. We feel its more about layering opportunities (whenever they happen and in whatever order).

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Assessment

- How do I challenge the more able children using your curriculum?

The beauty of the AccessArt approach/pathways is that each child will meet each activity at their own level. Because there is plenty of

freedom in each activity and the emphasis is on exploration there is plenty of space for more able children to stretch themselves.

Ensure you are always encouraging (all) children to push at the edges of what they do... prompt curiosity by asking them (and get them to ask themselves) “what would happen if...” “what might that materials enable me to do...” “what if I...”. “Pushing at the edges” can happen through use of materials, exploration of an idea, scale, ambition, function etc.

The resources have been used with all abilities including high attaining children – they will fly as long as you don’t hold them back with restricted access to materials, or by having preconceived ideas as to what they might make. Give them the space/permission to take up their own space, and to show to you what they discover.

- Does AccessArt have any facilities or resources for assessment in primary art?

Watch videos to help you think about [how to assess creativity](#). You can find all AccessArt advice on assessment and progression [here](#).

In addition, please see the “I Can” statements on each [pathway](#) (and also written on each [MTP](#) for each pathway).

Please keep an eye on our [events page](#) as we do put on CPD on assessment from time to time.

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Sketchbooks

- We have recently introduced the use of sketchbooks. What sort of things do you think I should be teaching / looking for in sketchbooks?

In terms of sketchbooks, look out for:

- Evidence of experimentation of materials
- Evidence of regular drawing practice – this does not always have to be tied to the project (for instance you might do ten minute sketchbook drawing exercises in DT half terms as a transition activity after lunch)
- Evidence that when children look at an artists' work, they demonstrate close looking and thinking in their sketchbooks via techniques such as [Show Me What You See](#) and [Making Visual Notes](#)
- Evidence that children are given permission to make notes in their books, including annotations, but that spelling/good handwriting is not a criteria for success
- Evidence of reflection – “how do i feel about...”
- Evidence of risk taking – “what happens

if.." type thinking

- Beyond the sketchbooks, ensure teachers are also making time to talk to pupils alone or in small groups about their sketchbooks. Remember sketchbooks should be used not just for personal exploration but also as a focus for conversation about intention as well as outcome.
- Sketchbooks are by nature places of open ended, exploratory investigation. Don't look for linear progression, instead look for rich, layered thinking and encourage children and teachers to revisit old pages to remember, reflect, and bring ideas forward...

Keep an eye on the [events page](#) to see if we have any CPD on sketchbooks coming up. Take a look at [CPD recordings related to sketchbooks](#).

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SEND

- We are a special school 3-19 mostly working at KS2 and below. Could you please provide me with some further information about how you could support us?

We have lots of schools working with SEND as part of the AccessArt community – the resources lend themselves to being used by a wide range of ages and abilities.

We have a selection of [activities for SEND and EYFS](#). You can find additional support and resources for SEND on AccessArt [here](#).

However, most SEND schools find they can adapt the majority of the resources on the site.

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EYFS

- How do I map out progression across Nursery and Reception using the EYFS curriculum?

We feel the aim of this phase in terms of art, in deliberately simple terms, is to:

- Build dexterity skills
- Explore materials and mark making in a playful way
- Use bodies and imaginations to inspire making
- Explore how they can reflect and share their views about what they have seen or made
- Explore how art enriches our lives

We don't outline where each child should be by the end of a certain year – there is no need to measure children in this way, instead we believe the onus is on the school to provide a layering of rich opportunities which will impact the children's experience and understanding of the list above. Make choices that suit your school and balance 2D work with 3D. Once you have chosen which areas you would like to explore, go into the [Resources and Skills editable document](#) and see which areas are being progressed. See our [EYFS resources](#) here.

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Feedback & Share

- How can I share work made as a result of the AccessArt resources?

Please see how you can feedback to us and

share your work [here](#).

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Joining AccessArt

- I am the only teacher teaching and leading art, do I still need to buy a multiuser account?

If you are the only teacher teaching art you won't need a multi-user membership, however we do believe it is good practice that not one person (no matter how skilled) should be responsible for art in a school – it is far better to build expertise across staff – in which case you will need a [multi-user membership](#) so that all staff can access resources.

- Where can I find information about memberships?

Explore all membership [benefits](#) and [costs](#).

- Which schools use AccessArt?

See a [map of schools using AccessArt here](#).

- Can we use AccessArt as a scheme if we live outside England?

We have many schools internationally that use our resources to support their teaching. We

believe our resources and pathways can be adapted to many schools in many countries. Please see the [table on this page](#) to help you understand age/year group equivalents.

- Where can I network with other teachers using AccessArt?

Join our [Facebook group](#). Attend [CPD events](#).

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See a [map of schools using AccessArt here](#).

We have many schools internationally that use our resources to support their teaching. We believe our resources and pathways can be adapted to many schools in many countries. Please see the [table on this page](#) to help you understand age/year group equivalents.

Join our [Facebook group](#). Attend [CPD events](#).