

Art Rooms in KS1&2 Schools: Crossley Fields Infant & Junior

As part of AccessArt's campaign to promote the importance of making in schools ([#whatdidmychildmake](#)), AccessArt is keen to identify and share success stories from schools that have created art rooms within their schools. [See all school interviews here](#), and if your school has an art room then please [get in touch](#) to share your story.

Many thanks to Kathryn Argyle from [Crossley Fields Infant and Junior School](#) for sharing their art room story.

Background

Inspired by the art room set up by Natalie Deane at Battyeford Primary School, an underused DT room at Crossley Fields Infant and Junior School was redeveloped and modernised as an Art & DT room as part of ongoing school improvements.

Kathryn Argyle is the Leader of Learning for Art at Crossley Fields Junior and Infant School. In her current role she works three days a week as PPA and Management cover, during which time she teaches art throughout KS2 in the art. Kathryn has always been interested in visual art, first studying Art A level, then completing a four Year B.Ed specialising in art. As a teacher in a previous school she was appointed Art Coordinator and helped them achieve and retain their Artsmark Gold status.



Sarah Branston with year 4 children

Contact Time

The school is a three form entry, Kathryn works with two Year 3 classes, one Year 4 class and the whole of Years 5 and 6. For Year 5 and 6 pupils there is a 3 week rolling programme which means that once every three weeks Kathryn works with a whole class, in the art room, for the entire afternoon. Kathryn leads the art for Years 3 and 4 with more confident teachers taking their own lessons.

The art room is used regularly for the majority of art lessons, with all it offers in terms of space, access to materials and tools, storage and display. The room is also used at lunchtime and afterschool for artclubs led by staff and visiting artists.

Philosophy



After school art club

Of course just having a dedicated art room does not alone have an impact upon art lessons in school. As with all these case studies, it is the quality of the teaching which impacts the most, but having a dedicated space equipped with materials and storage is most probably a great enabler to that teaching.

Kathryn is keen to emphasis teaching which develops pupils confidence to make their own work, informed by their own decision making. When the children look at artists to inspire their own work, it is not a case of flashing images before them and asking them to recreate pastiche. Instead children are expected to develop their articulation and relection skills by discussing the work in front of them, asking increasingly more searching and relevant questions to elicit creative responses. This is followed by sketchbook work using a wide variety of medium and approaches, before letting the pupils own artwork emmerge. There is an emphasis on time (giving the pupils plenty of it) and making sure things get finished. Sketchbooks are also used to help pupils self-assess.

How is the Art Teacher Supported?

Kathryn herself receives support from the Head, Catherine Lockwood, who places great value on the visual arts. In addition Kathryn has attended several courses led by Natalie Deane, specialist Art Teacher at Battyeford Primary, who gave support to the development of art within the school. Kathryn also cites NSEAD as being supportive in terms of like-minded teacher networks.

As a creative individual, Kathryn enjoys the opportunity to think creatively about her sessions with the children. As many of the sessions are repeated (3 classes in each year group), Kathryn feels very able to refine and redevelop sessions in response to previous activities, and enjoys this ongoing challenge. The children perceive Kathryn as an artist in her own right and know that if time permitted she would love to illustrate children's books.

Impact Upon other Staff

Kathryn comments that there are a balance of staff in the school, some for whom art is a subject which they have less interest in, and others who like art, and that she feels her role as PPA support in delivering art lessons works at all levels for all teachers. The less confident teachers feel supported by her presence, and the more artistically confident teachers feel enthused and stretched. Kathryn offers in-school training to teachers too, for example regular pre-lesson guidance before planning is delivered. Also all staff took part in a felt making workshop delivered in a twilight session.

Employing Artists



Helaina Sharpley at Crossley Fields School

Once the school has made the commitment to an art room, and to a teacher dedicated to delivering art lessons throughout the school during PPA time, then it seems a logical next step to build upon these skills by a regular programme of visiting artists, and this is exactly what is happening at Crossley Fields.

Artists are brought into school on a regular basis, sometimes as part of the school day and paid out of schools budget, and sometimes to provide after school clubs (in which case the artist is paid out of pupil contributions). To name a few, Sarah Branston has provided felt making workshops, Helaina Sharpley, a local artist based at the West Yorkshire Print Works in Mirfield, wire-work sessions, Julia Ogden, a local artist, delivered workshops to each of the Year 5 classes, developing their skills of print-making through the use of stencilling. Again these relationships can exist due to their being a specialist teacher who can invest time in developing these relationships, and to there being a dedicated space, fit for purpose, in which activities can take place.

Impact on Children/School

Kathryn is certain that status of art has been developed throughout the school. Having a dedicated art room, and a dedicated art teacher has helped demonstrate to children, parents and staff that art is a valued subject.

The schools rigorous approach to art teaching has resulted in pupils demonstrating greater skills and confidence and a sense of ownership. The sheer amount (and quality) of work produced means that the school is full of artwork for display, and in fact beyond, as Kathryn works hard to forge links beyond the school, for example children's work is framed for display at nearby Ravello's cafe.



Artwork framed ready for display at Ravello's

What factors contribute to all this being possible?

Two single factors which have helped make this possible:

- The Head Teacher (Catherine Lockwood) recognising the valuing of the creative arts and supporting the refurbishment of the room financially.

- Inheriting an underused space (the school was once a Middle School).

Challenges for the Future?

Turning on the kiln (which was also inherited from the Middle School)!

Kathryn Argyle

<http://www.crossleyfieldsschool.co.uk>

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