

Design in Primary Schools

Find resources to enable an exploration of design in primary school below.

You may also like to explore the Design Pathways in the new [AccessArt Primary Art Curriculum](#).

AccessArt advocates:

- **Design through Making.** Many schools teach children to work on paper to “design” a building, a textile, a model etc, without children having any kind of understanding of the properties and abilities of the materials they might use, or experience of manipulating these materials. This results in a kind of “fictitious” design, which reflects little understanding of the design process. Instead we advocate Design through Making – a simple process much more akin to the way creative adults work, in which children work with materials and techniques from the outset to create a design. Pupils directly experience how a material stands, how materials can be fastened, how they look, all of which inform the design process. All the resource below promote a Design through Making approach. [Read more about Design through Making here.](#)
- **Sketchbooks as a Creative Tool.** Instead of designing on paper, schools should consider how they can embed sketchbooks in all creative processes. The sketchbooks should be

owned by the pupils, and should be at the centre of the pupils' creativity. Sketchbooks can be used to gather, collect, experiment and reflect. Teachers should not be afraid if sketchbooks seem chaotic – adult sketchbooks are often chaotic – they are a place to put unresolved ideas into the world, which can be assimilated later. Sketchbooks are rarely linear. [See all our Sketchbooks resources here.](#)

- Schools should work to provide access to adequate tools and materials. In our experience many pupils would benefit from time invested in practising using tools, including scissors, glue guns, pliers, saws, hammers etc. See also [Using Tools](#) resources.
- That schools make links with design organisations such as:

[The Design Museum](#)

[The Design Council](#)

[The V&A](#)

Local museums and galleries.