

Art and Design Technology

At Thames Valley School, we aim to develop critical thinking across a variety of disciplines, which is represented at the core of our Art and Design curriculum. As young artists, we support our pupils to gain confidence in their artistic abilities, analytical approaches, communication skills and creative problem solving. Additionally, Art and Design as a subject, offers many therapeutic incentives, creating opportunities for our autistic learners to express their emotions, experience their sensory response to a range of materials and refine motor skills. We explore a range of themes that can be linked and explored through individual interests, current political topics and major artistic movements, to provide an engaging curriculum offer. Combining all of these qualities, Art and Design prepares pupils to join the professional world in a creative sector, or alternatively support any further career path through transferable skills pupils gained at Thames Valley School.

Pupils build from Art and Design lessons once weekly in KS2 and KS3 to three weekly lessons in KS4. To ensure a strong foundation of learning, pupils start with understanding the key principles of formal elements and how to apply this to a range of media. This progresses to researching and analysing the work of other artists, using this inspiration to further develop their practical work. Independent curation and recording of progress are built upon from KS3 as pupils into studying for formal qualifications, where our artists create portfolios linked to a range of set themes.

In order to provide the best possible opportunities for our autistic learners, the Art and Design department offers a range of qualifications, starting with Arts Award in year 9, which can be progressed from Bronze Level to Silver Level in year 10. Additionally, options offered include an OCR Entry Level Qualification and an AQA GCSE Art and Design Qualification.

In our Design Technology workshop, we aim to offer a curriculum that takes our young designers beyond the classroom. Considering the context and problems of real-life investigations, sector specific research and environmental consideration, our learners develop critical thinking skills to develop problem solving strategies in their design work. Understanding the design process, pupils design, make and evaluate products with purpose and functionality in mind. At Thames Valley School, we aim to inspire our learners to expand on their interests and give them the skillset to communicate and reflect on ideas on a variety of current topics. Exploring the work of famous designers, learning about current themes such as sustainability and applying this to the development of craftsmanship, our learners gain the confidence to express, create and problem solve inside and outside the workshop.

To provide pupils with a strong foundation of key skills, they are introduced to the iterative design process and practice this with a range of materials, including textiles, woodwork and sculpting. Learners build their confidence in conducting research into the work of other designers and inventors. Curating research and

practical reflections are introduced in KS3, building confidence in applying these skills to their portfolio work in their qualification levels.

To ensure further progression for our learners, the Design Technology department offers a choice of qualifications with a focus on three- dimensional design, including OCR Entry Level Art and Design as well as AQA GCSE Art and Design. This ensures our pupils are given the best possible chance to succeed with a qualification that leaves room to cater towards their individual strengths and needs, preparing them for their next journey ahead.