



Artwork Guide

SEN 11-16



You don't need to be a professional artist to help children make ambitious, meaningful artwork - Your role is to provide a calm, supportive environment where curiosity, experimentation and individual expression can flourish. Adapt materials, instructions and support to meet individual needs while ensuring every pupil can create artwork they feel proud of.

Materials

Paper – Artwork **must be A4**. Use heavyweight drawing paper where possible, particularly for rubbing-out or wet media. Watercolour paper is best for very wet paint.

Pencils – 2B or 4B pencils are recommended for darker marks that can still be erased.

Colouring materials – Offer a choice of acrylic, watercolour, oil pastels, crayons or ready-mixed paint. Allow pupils to test materials on scrap paper first. Choose bold, vibrant media for exhibition; **avoid felt tips**. Provide opportunities to practise colour mixing, including a range of skin and hair tones.

Mirrors/photos – Small mirrors or printed photographs can support self-portraiture. Follow individual pupils' preferences and provide alternatives where mirrors or photographs may cause discomfort.

Brushes – Use small brushes that provide control and allow pupils to add detail without excessive paint.

Other materials – Rubbers, sharpeners, scrap paper, whiteboards/clipboards, water pots, bibs and painting clothes. Consider adaptive equipment, larger grips or additional physical support where needed.

Supporting SEND Pupils

Prepare and structure

Set up materials before each session to maximise creative time. Give clear, manageable instructions and break tasks into smaller steps where helpful. Use visual examples,

demonstrations, timers or written prompts according to pupils' needs. Allow additional processing time and alternative ways to participate.

Support individual expression

Offer genuine choices without overwhelming pupils. Encourage them to explore materials and develop their own ideas rather than expecting everyone to work in the same way. Avoid assuming what a pupil is drawing or what it means.

Be mindful with symbols

The project aims to build bridges across difference. Encourage pupils to use symbols thoughtfully and **avoid flags or imagery that could exclude or target others**. Help pupils look beyond popular characters, games or trends and explore personal experiences, interests and qualities that make them unique.



Celebrate difference

Encourage pupils to represent themselves and others with care and respect. Support close observation without exaggerating or diminishing physical features. Provide materials representing a wide range of skin tones. Be sensitive when discussing protected characteristics and never place an individual pupil in the spotlight. Address comments about difference calmly and create appropriate opportunities for reflection.

Offer curiosity, not praise

Rather than judging work as “good” or “bad”, ask open questions such as “*What made you choose this colour?*” Discuss both the artwork and the creative process, supporting pupils to communicate their ideas in different ways.

Take time

Encourage pupils to pause, observe and plan before using materials. Model starting lightly with a pencil and gradually building the image in layers. Allow pupils to work at an appropriate pace and provide breaks or sensory adjustments when needed.

Model the process

Create alongside pupils and demonstrate that experimentation and mistakes are part of making art. Share your discoveries and what you might change next time. Showing that you are also learning can help pupils feel safe to experiment and keep trying.

Please refer to the Project Overview for submission guidance