

ELAN Expressive Arts and Design Curriculum Map for Reception

Educational Programme: Expressive Arts and Design

The development of children's artistic and cultural awareness supports their imagination and creativity. It is important that children have regular opportunities to engage with the arts, enabling them to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials. The quality and variety of what children see, hear and participate in is crucial for developing their understanding, self-expression, vocabulary and ability to communicate through the arts. The frequency, repetition and depth of their experiences are fundamental to their progress in interpreting and appreciating what they hear, respond to and observe.

Early Learning Goal: Creating with Materials

- Safely use and explore a variety of materials, tools and techniques. experimenting with colour, design, texture, form and function.
- Share their creations, explaining the process they have used.
- Make use of props and materials when role playing characters in narratives and stories.

Early Learning Goal: Being Imaginative and Expressive

- Invent, adapt and recount narratives and stories with peers and their teacher.
- Sing a range of well-known nursery rhymes and songs.
- Perform songs, rhymes, poems and stories with others, and - when appropriate - try to move in time with music.

Ofsted (November 2025) 'Education Inspection Framework' and 'State-Funded School Inspection Toolkit'

Teaching in the early years should not be taken to imply a 'top down' or formal way of working. It is a broad term which covers the many different ways in which adults help young children learn. It includes their interactions with children during planned and child-initiated play and activities: communicating and modelling language, showing, explaining, demonstrating, exploring ideas, encouraging, questioning, recalling, and providing a narrative for what they are doing, facilitating and setting challenges. It takes account of the equipment adults provide and the attention to the physical environment, as well as the structure and routines of the day that establish expectations. Integral to teaching is how practitioners assess what children know, understand and can do as well as taking account of their interests and dispositions to learn (characteristics of effective learning), and how practitioners use this information to plan children's next steps in learning and monitor their progress.

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Our Intent at ELAN Academy Trust

We intend that the expressive arts and design curriculum will develop children's artistic and creative skills, knowledge and understanding across the elements of line, tone, colour, pattern, texture, shape, space, form and function. We will implement this through the processes of painting, printing, drawing, 3-dimensional work, textiles and collage.

In addition, we intend to develop children's imaginative skills, knowledge and understanding across the elements of rhythm, texture, dynamics, pitch, form, and timbre. We will implement this through the processes of music, performance and pretend play.

We will consider the depth of each experience so that learning develops and progresses over the reception year. Furthermore, it is fundamental that children's vocabulary and ability to communicate through the arts is threaded throughout the processes so that children will be able to:

- Independently access and select resources that real artists would use.
- Experience using different tools and experiment with different effects.
- Generate ideas and create independently.
- Discuss the choices they make with reasons.
- Create collaboratively, sharing ideas, resources and skills.
- Share and evaluate work with peers and take on board given advice on how it can be improved.
- Return to and build on their previous learning by refining ideas and developing their ability to represent them.
- Express their ideas and feelings on the work of others including real artists.
- Consider the use of digital equipment as an approach across expressive arts and design. For example, using an overhead projector, lightbox, iPad, visualiser or laminator.

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Educators will support children to talk about their creations by considering their questioning and responses carefully. This will also support children responding to the creations of other children too.

Instead of...	Use this...
What is it?	Keep an open mind about what it is that the child has represented. Tell me about your creation, artwork. Can you tell me what is happening here? Ask for children to elaborate about their details instead of assuming that it has to 'be' something.
It's so neat!	Your repeating patterns are effective. What elements of design have you used in your creation? Be specific about the skill. Encourage the children to make further representations of their interests.
That's a good idea!	How did you do that? Engage in a conversation.
Let's display it!	What would you like to do with your artwork? Give children choice and ownership over what to do with their creation.
I love it!	How do you feel about it? Are you a proud artist? Ask children to identify their feelings about their artwork first.

When teaching, adults will ensure they carefully share relevant knowledge and skills with children. For example, when teaching colouring mixing. The knowledge is knowing colour names and what colours are needed to make other colours. With the skills being in ensuring that the paint is of the right consistency and that there is the right amount of paint for the require task.

Refer to Development Matters for any further guidance needed for specific cohort learning and development needs.

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Autumn (consideration will be given to the children's previous experiences with some aspects, potentially, only needing to be revisited)

Painting and Printing	Drawing	3-Dimensional Work
Teach colour mixing using ready mix poster paints or powder paints with paint pallets. Refer to a colour wheel. Demonstrate how to use various paint brushes (thick, thin, long and short). Show how to clean painting equipment. Provide and show children how to use a roller brush and a painting brush for walls. Provide vertical surfaces as this places the wrist in a good position for writing. Explain the purpose of using glue in paint (painting on plastic). Refer to EXTEND Letters and Sound (Step 1) page 22 on opportunities to incorporate Beery's 8 figures of Visual-Motor Integration (VMI).	Model how to use wax crayons, oil pastels, charcoal, graphite, coloured pencils, chalk pastels, chalk, felt tip pens, drawing pencils, pens, erasers and sharpeners. Show child how to colour effectively (you hold the implement differently and move in certain directions). Consider offering implements of various thickness. Provide various types of paper e.g. sugar, tracing, cartridge. Show the orientation of paper for effective drawing (straight and tilt). Demonstrate the meaning of landscape and portrait and an artist's purpose for selecting an orientation for their work. Provide intriguing objects for children to represent. Keep it to a simple form. For example, an orange pepper. Draw from your imaginations. For example, draw what Jack Frost looks like. 3- to 4-Year-Olds should be able to draw themselves representing a face with a circle and including details. Ask children to draw a self-portrait. Provide mirrors.	Model how to make salt dough. Introduce plasticine and putty in term 2. Demonstrate how to use small tools for malleable materials such as, rolling pins, knives, wire. Show how to use safely use equipment such as, staplers, glue sticks, glue guns, PVA glue, cello tape (including the use of dispensers), blue tack, split pins, paper clips, masking tape, double sided tape, string, hole punches, paste, nails, hammers or treasury tags. Provide a range of recyclable materials to construct with and organise by shape. Model how to effectively join recyclable materials using the above equipment and techniques such as, flange, slots and tabs through folding, cutting, and assembling. Refer to spatial reasoning within the mathematics planning. Honegger's Stages of Block Play. Vary scale (large and small) when modelling and building.
Textiles and Collage	Performance	Music
Explain tactile texture (feel, appearance or consistency) through the various materials such as, sand and foam. Demonstrate threading around cardboard shapes. Model weaving on large fence/willow structures with ribbon (temporary art). Provide collage materials. For example, magazines, newspapers, fabric, tissue paper, natural materials, cotton wool, cotton buds, sticks, glitter and gems. Children to create a collaborative collage collated from outdoor environment. Model embellishing.	Watch and talk about performance art (nursery rhymes, rhymes, Christmas play), expressing their feeling and responses. Provide materials for children to make their own costumes and props to incorporate into their pretend play. For Dancing: See Gross Motor Skills Planning.	Refer to the programme: Sing Up. Set up a music area. Have an instrument of the week throughout the autumn term. Invite in a grandparent/parent who is a musician.

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Spring

Painting and Printing	Drawing	3-Dimensional Work
Demonstrate colour shade (adding black to darken) and colour tint (adding white to lighten) using powder paints and paint pallets. Provide a colour dictionary (purple: indigo, violet). Model how to use another kind of paint. For example, water colour paints or oil paints. Provide a variety of printing materials and explain how to print effectively. Add texture to paint.	Children to draw a self-portrait. Provide mirrors. Expose children to an artist who represents animals and plants. For example, Steven Brown Van Gogh. Georgia O'Keefe, Beatrix Potter or Bridget Riley. Teach shade within observational drawing. Provide intriguing objects for children to represent (spider plant). Mark make to a familiar story. Represent the elements. Display work using an overhead projector. Draw a feeling. For example, draw what an argument looks like or draw what happy looks like.	Teach how to use clay, take care of clay and use clay tools. Consider red clay as it is more malleable and easier to take care of. Model how to join using slip: clay glue, score and mould. Show children how to engrave. Enhance the clay area with animals, sticks, big and small balls. Teach how to recycle dry clay. Grate it to make crumb and dust or use a pestle and mortar. Mix with water to use as slip or to paint with. Consider having a woodwork area with a working bench, vice and woodwork tools such as, a Japanese saw, nails, hammers, hooks and goggles. Use basswood. (Learning Through Woodwork by Pete Moorhouse and Play Scotland). If not, consider the use of cardboard kits. Refer to spatial reasoning within the mathematics planning. Honegger's Stages of Block Play.
Textiles and Collage	Performance	Music
Show weaving up and over on cardboard. Provide an opportunity for children to add to a given image using their collage skills. Expose children to textile artists. For example, Anni Albers or Nike Davies Okundaye. Model how to make rubbings.	Watch and talk about performance art (poetry, non-fiction), expressing their feeling and responses. Provide materials for children to make their own costumes and props to incorporate into their pretend play. For Dancing: See Gross Motor Skills Planning.	Refer to the programme: Sing Up. Teach children how to be a conductor (stop, start, play the drum 4 times) as part of their play. Link to mathematical learning in number and pattern

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Summer

Painting and Printing	Drawing	3-Dimensional Work
Choose at least one of the following: - Expose children to painting techniques and/or artists from across the times and cultures. For example, Wassily Kandinsky, Andy Warhol, Faith Ringgold or Freda Collo. Note: this can be through displaying artwork in the classroom. - Invite in a grandparent/parent who is an artist. - Visit an art gallery/museum (in person or virtually). Following this, set up an art gallery/museum for parents to come in and see children's artwork (role play art gallery/museum). Consider the use of demptyspace.com.	Demonstrate observational drawing of various animals, flowers and plants (borrow artefacts from the museum). Show how varying perspectives will mean that observational drawings may look different. Where were we all sat? Children to draw a self-portrait. Provide mirrors.	Choose at least one of the following: - Expose children to a sculptor. For example, Eva Ross Child, Barbara Hepworth, Henry Moore, Richard Long or Andy Goldsworthy. - Invite in a grandparent/parent who is a sculptor. - Visit an art gallery/museum (in person or virtually). Following this, set up an art gallery/museum for parents to come in and see children's sculptures (role play art gallery/museum). Consider having a woodwork area with a working bench, vice and woodwork tools such as, a Japanese saw, nails, hammers, screws and goggles. Introduce joining and staining. (Learning Through Woodwork by Pete Moorhouse and Play Scotland). If not, consider the use of cardboard kits. Refer to spatial reasoning within the mathematics planning. Honegger's Stages of Block Play.
Textiles and Collage	Performance	Music
Show photographs that explain visual textile. Demonstrate how to sew. Show how to use a camera. Children to take their own photographs to enable them to create their own picture collage with purpose and reason.	Watch and talk about performance art (stories), expressing their feeling and responses. Provide materials for children to make their own costumes and props to incorporate into their pretend play. Experience the theatre (by visiting a theatre, having the theatre visit the class or having a virtual performance). For Dancing: See Gross Motor Skills Planning.	Refer to the programme: Sing Up. Teach children what it is to be a composer as part of their play. Link to mathematical learning in number and pattern

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Sensible and Meaningful Assessment

Percentage of children who are ready to progress - End of term 1	Who needs more experience or a different learning experience (list initials)?	How will we do this? Consider context and range of situations.
Percentage of children who are ready to progress - End of term 3	Who needs more experience or a different learning experience (list initials)?	How will we do this? Consider context and range of situations.
Percentage of children who are ready to progress - End of term 5	Who needs more experience or a different learning experience (list initials)?	How will we do this? Consider context and range of situations.

Children who need more experience or a different learning experience are highlighted when progress has been made. Annotations may be added on this sheet (if necessary) or within any other child progress documentation recorded by the school.