



Expressive Art and Design (EAD)

Area Overview

At our setting, we believe every child is creative and deserves opportunities to express themselves through art, music, movement, storytelling, role play and imaginative exploration. Expressive Arts and Design enables children to communicate their thoughts, ideas and emotions in a variety of ways while developing confidence, curiosity and imagination. Our curriculum provides rich opportunities for children to explore colour, texture, shape, sound, movement and role play through open-ended experiences. Children are encouraged to investigate materials, experiment with techniques, perform, create and express their own ideas rather than simply producing identical outcomes.

Progression begins in Nursery 1 through sensory exploration, imaginative play and experimentation with a range of materials. During Nursery 2, children begin to use their experiences and observations to represent ideas with increasing purpose and control. By the end of Reception, children confidently create, perform and communicate their ideas using a wide range of artistic and imaginative experiences.

Why this area matters?

Expressive Arts and Design helps children to:

- Develop creativity and imagination.
- Express thoughts, feelings and ideas.
- Build confidence through performance and self-expression.
- Develop fine motor control through creative experiences.
- Appreciate music, art and different forms of expression.
- Explore materials and techniques independently.
- Develop language through storytelling and role play.
- Build resilience by experimenting, adapting and improving their creations.

Supporting Expressive Art and Design at home:

Provide a range of art materials - offer crayons, paint, paper, chalk, collage materials, dough. Encourage free drawing and painting - let children create pictures without worrying about making them perfect.

Join in with music and singing - sing nursery rhymes, favourite songs and action songs.

Use junk modelling - collect boxes, tubes, lids and packaging for children to build and design with.

Make time for role play - use dressing-up clothes, props, dolls, toy food, household items.

Dance and move to music - encourage children to copy actions, move freely and respond to rhythm.

Talk about what they have made - ask children to explain their picture, model or creation.

Visit creative places - explore museums, galleries, performances or community events.

Explore different textures and materials - play with sand, water, fabric, clay and other sensory materials.

Vocabulary Progression

Nursery Year 1		Nursery Year 2		Reception	
paint	quiet	artist	perform	technique	rhythm
draw	fast	create	audience	sculpture	tempo
colour	slow	design	instrument	shade	audience
mix	pretend	texture	rhythm	tone	narrative
cut	story	pattern	beat	texture	character
stick	build	model	character	composition	illustration
song	make	join	imagine	performance	design
music	play	collage	decorate	expression	evaluate
dance	loud	change	different	adapt	improve



Creating with Material		
Nursery Year 1	Nursery Year 2	Reception Early Learning Goals
• Explores a wide range of materials using their senses. • Enjoys painting, drawing, modelling and constructing without a focus on the finished product.	• Selects and combines materials for a purpose. • Talks about what they are creating and begins to adapt techniques and resources to achieve an intended outcome.	• 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 and narratives.
Being Imaginative and Expressive		
Nursery Year 1	Nursery Year 2	Reception Early Learning Goals
• Joins in with songs, rhymes, movement and simple pretend play. Uses imagination during play with familiar experiences.	• Creates storylines during play, performs familiar songs, explores rhythm and movement and develops imaginative narratives with others.	• Invent, adapt and recount narratives and stories with peers and teachers. • Sing a range of well-known nursery rhymes and songs. • Perform songs, rhymes, poems and stories with others, and move in time with music.