

SKETCHBOOK AS AN ARTIST

Exploring Process, Practice and Play

A sketchbook project for KS2

Duration: 4 or 6 weeks



Project Overview



This project can last 4 or 6 weeks and introduces pupils to the sketchbook as an artist's working tool rather than a place for finished outcomes. Pupils are encouraged to explore, experiment, take risks, and reflect on their learning.

Through drawing, mark-making, collage, and mixed media, children learn that mistakes are part of the creative process and that ideas develop over time. The project builds confidence, creativity, and independence while supporting progression in drawing skills and visual literacy.

When the focus shifts from producing a "perfect" artwork to engaging meaningfully in the creative process, every child can experience success. There is no single correct outcome, and this allows students to work at their own level and in their own way.

Aims of the Project

- To develop pupils' understanding of the sketchbook as a safe place for exploration and thinking through ideas
- To build confidence in drawing, mark making, and mixed media.
- To encourage to pupils to reflect on and learn from mistakes.
- To support pupils to develop ideas over time.
- To promote creativity, independence and enjoyment in art-making.



A strong, process-led visual arts programme benefits teachers just as much as it benefits children. When art and design move away from rigid outcomes and “copying the teacher,” many teachers find their confidence in teaching art grows significantly. There is far less pressure to have all the answers or to be an expert artist.





National Curriculum Links

This project directly supports the National Curriculum aims for Art & Design by enabling pupils to:

1. Develop Techniques

"Improve their mastery of art and design techniques, including drawing, painting and sculpture, with a range of materials."

- ✓ Pupils use a wide range of media (pencil, pastel, paint, collage, mixed materials)
- ✓ Skills are revisited and developed over several weeks
- ✓ Pupils experiment with expressive and observational approaches

2. Increase Knowledge of Artists

"Learn about great artists, architects and designers in history."

- ✓ Pupils explore how real artists use sketchbooks
- ✓ The workshop artist models authentic sketchbook practice
- ✓ Emphasis is placed on process, experimentation, and unfinished work

3. Create Sketchbooks to Record Ideas

"Create sketchbooks to record their observations and use them to review and revisit ideas."

- ✓ Sketchbooks are used weekly and between sessions
- ✓ Pupils record observations, ideas, and reflections
- ✓ Children revisit pages, add layers, and develop ideas over time

4. Use Drawing to Develop Ideas

"Use drawing to develop and share their ideas, experiences and imagination."

- ✓ Drawing is used as a thinking tool
- ✓ Pupils explore observation, imagination, and personal response
- ✓ Pupils annotate and reflect on their work

Sketchbook as an Artist supports a strong Art & Design curriculum by clearly linking curriculum intent to high-quality implementation in the classroom.

Pupils develop skills, knowledge, and vocabulary through structured, process-led exploration, using sketchbooks to revisit ideas, reflect, and make progress over time.

The project demonstrates clear impact, with confident, engaged learners and sketchbooks that show progression, independence, and creative thinking.





Sample Project Structure

4 Week Project
Sessions last around 1.5 hours

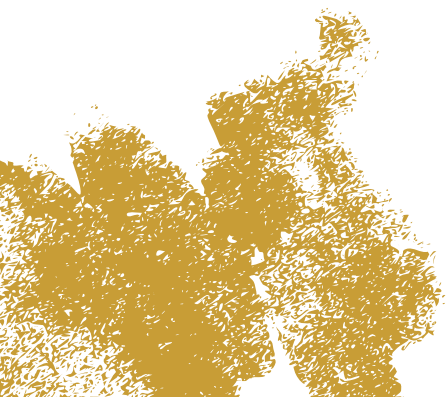
Session 1 - What is a Sketchbook?

Focus: Exploration, play, and understanding artistic process

- Discuss differences between sketchbooks and exercise books
- Explore how artists use sketchbooks
- Add pages, folds, pockets and textures
- Mark-making and drawing experiments using a range of media
- Observational drawing exercises and introduce layering, annotation, and different paper types
- Share work from the day
- Introduce project theme

Between Sessions:

Pupils collect clippings, tickets, papers, and found materials to add to the 'places and spaces' made in their sketchbooks, and continue experimenting in their sketchbooks.



Session 2 – Observing & Reflecting

Focus: Develop drawing skills through observation exercises and self-reflection

- Share sketchbook work from the week
- Begin drawing work linked to chosen theme
- Observational drawing from objects, mirrors, or reference images
- Self-reflection exercises to encourage constructive criticism
- No rubbing out! Look, Question, Improve exercise
- Share work from the day

Between Sessions:

Pupils are encouraged to continue drawing and adding to their sketchbooks over the coming week. Focus on developing their drawings using Look, Question, Improve exercise.

Session 3 – Collage & Mixed Media

Focus: Experimentation, layering, and risk taking

- Introduce collage and mixed media techniques
- Combine drawing with found materials and textures
- Challenge to work over previous work
- Time to experiment and develop pages
- Share work and reflections from the day

Between Sessions:

In preparation for the final session, pupils will continue to practice techniques taught and choose one idea or technique to develop further.

Session 4 – Developing Ideas & Reflecting

Focus: Progression & Confidence

- Share work and ideas from previous week
- Input on working out composition and making decisions about final piece of work
- Time to work on their chosen piece
- Pupils complete a critical reflection
- Share work and reflections
- Sketchbooks and final pieces are photographed for display

**Final outcomes may take more time – there is no expectation that all pupils will have a polished, final piece at the end of the 4th session. Process and learning are the focus of the project not the final product.*

Assessment Opportunities

This project supports formative assessment through:

- Observation of engagement and risk-taking
- Pupils participation in class and peer discussions when sharing work and ideas
- Sketchbook evidence showing experimentation and progression
- Pupil annotations

Inclusion & Adaptability

- Activities are open-ended and adaptable
- Pupils work at their own pace and level
- Choice of media supports different learning styles
- Verbal, visual, and drawn reflection options are encouraged.

Outcomes for Pupils

By the end of the project, pupils will:

- Feel more confident using a sketchbook independently
- Understand that artists learn through experimentation and making mistakes
- Be able to reflect constructively on and improve their work
- Show progression in drawing and creative thinking
- View mistakes as a positive part of learning

Benefits for Teachers and Schools

- **Curriculum-aligned provision**

Supports National Curriculum outcomes in Art and Design, with clear progression and evidence of learning through sketchbooks

- **Reduced work-load**

Fully planned and resourced projects remove the pressure of sourcing materials and planning complex art lessons

- **High-quality sketchbook practice**

Pupils learn how to use sketchbooks as working tools for thinking, experimenting, and reflecting.

- **Clear evidence for Ofsted**

Sketchbooks show progression, independence, and impact, supporting discussions around intent, implementation, and impact.

- **Increased pupil confidence and engagement**

Process-led learning encourages risk-taking, resilience, and enjoyment, particularly for pupils who may lack confidence.

- **Flexible Delivery**

Projects can be tailored to class topics, themes, or whole-school priorities and delivered over 4 or 6 weeks. Sessions can be for a whole class or delivered to smaller groups.

- **Boost teacher confidence**

Teachers gain practical ideas and confidence that can be carried forward into future Art and Design teaching.

Pricing



Project	No of classes	What's Included?	Cost
Pilot 4 Week Project – limited availability	1	4 sessions over a half term, all materials, media and sketchbooks	£875
4 Week Project – standard fee	1		£925
4 Week Project – Standard fee	2	4 sessions over a half term, all materials, media and sketchbooks	£1700
6 Week Project – standard fee	1	6 sessions over a half term, all materials, media and sketchbooks	£1250
6 Week Project – standard fee	2		£2275

Discounts are available for multiple bookings or returning schools. Enquire for details

What's Included?

Standard

- 4 or 6 weekly artist led sessions
- Fully planned, curriculum- aligned project
- Delivered by qualified teacher and artist
- A high quality A4 sketchbook for each pupil
- All drawing, painting, collage, and mixed-media resources
- Structured progression across weeks

Optional Extra

Creative Showcase of Pupil Work

When 2 classes take part I offer an opportunity to celebrate and share their work with parents and the school community by setting up a mini exhibition event.

This incurs an additional fee. Details on request.

Interested?

Interested in booking or finding out more?

If you'd like to discuss how The Teaching Artist Project could work in your school, please get in touch via email or visit our website for full project details and availability.



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