



### **Design Technology in the Early Years – Expressive Arts and Design**

Expressive arts and design involves supporting children to explore, develop and express their ideas, creativity and problem-solving through a range of materials, tools and techniques. In the Early Years, design and technology provides opportunities for children to make sense of the world by designing, building and creating with purpose. Through exploring materials, constructing models and investigating how things work, children begin to develop an understanding of design, function and the process of making.

The frequency and range of children's experiences with construction, modelling, crafting and joining materials support the development of fine motor skills and precision. These experiences strengthen hand-eye coordination and control, which are essential for later writing and more complex design tasks. Opportunities to plan, test and adapt their creations also encourage resilience, critical thinking and independence.

Engaging in a wide variety of creative and practical activities supports children's communication and language development, as they talk about their ideas, explain their choices and evaluate their work. These experiences also build essential vocabulary linked to materials, tools and processes, underpinning learning across the curriculum. Enriching children's vocabulary at this stage is crucial in supporting later understanding and knowledge acquisition.

At Sunnyside Primary Academy, we recognise that pupils' design and technological understanding begins well before formal subject teaching in Year 1. Our Reception curriculum provides a strong foundation for design, making and evaluative skills, fully aligned with Development Matters and the Early Learning Goals within the Expressive Arts and Design area of learning.

Through our carefully sequenced, topic-based EYFS curriculum, children explore designing and making through a wide range of contexts, including construction, role play and creative projects. These early experiences are deliberately designed to feed directly into the Primary Knowledge Curriculum (PKC) Design Technology sequence from Year 1 to Year 6, ensuring a coherent and continuous progression of design, making and evaluation skills across the school.

| Development Matters                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Statutory Framework: Early Learning Goals                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
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| <p>Children in Reception will be learning to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore, use and refine a variety of artistic effects to express their ideas and feelings.</li> <li>• Return to and build on their previous learning, refining ideas and developing their ability to represent them.</li> <li>• Create collaboratively, sharing ideas, resources and skills.</li> <li>• Develop their small motor skills so that they can use a range of tools competently, safely and confidently. Suggested tools: pencils for drawing and writing, paintbrushes, scissors, knives, forks and spoons.</li> </ul> | <p><u>Creating with Materials</u></p> <p>By the end of the EYFS, children at the expected level of development will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safely use and explore a variety of materials, tools and techniques, experimenting with colour, design, texture, form and function.</li> <li>• Share their creations, explaining the process they have used.</li> <li>• Make use of props and materials when role playing characters in narratives and stories.</li> </ul> |

### Transition from Reception to Year 1

| Early Learning Goals                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | KS1 National Curriculum Objectives                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
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| <p><u>Creating with Materials</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safely use and explore a variety of materials, tools and techniques, experimenting with colour, design, texture, form and function.</li> <li>• Share their creations, explaining the process they have used.</li> <li>• Make use of props and materials when role playing characters in narratives and stories.</li> </ul> | <p>Pupils should be taught:</p> <p>Design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design purposeful, functional, appealing products for themselves and other users based on design criteria.</li> <li>• Generate, develop, model and communicate their ideas through talking, drawing, templates, mock-ups and, where appropriate, information.</li> </ul> <p>Make</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Select from and use a range of tools and equipment to perform practical tasks (for example, cutting, shaping, joining and finishing).</li> <li>• Select from and use a wide variety of materials and components, including construction materials, textiles and ingredients, according to their characteristics.</li> </ul> <p>Evaluate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore and evaluate a range of existing products.</li> <li>• Evaluate their ideas and products against design criteria.</li> </ul> <p>Technical Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build structures, exploring how they can be made stronger, stiffer and more stable.</li> </ul> |

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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore and use mechanisms (for example, levers, sliders, wheels and axles) in their products.</li> </ul> <p>Cooking and Nutrition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use the basic principles of a healthy and varied diet. • Understand where food comes from</li> </ul> |
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## Our Reception Curriculum

|                                     | Autumn 1                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Autumn 2                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Spring 1                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Spring 2                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Summer 1                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Summer 2                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
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| Topic                               | All About Me                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Space                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Superheroes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Dinosaurs                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Minibeasts                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Fairy Tales                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Art: Creating with Materials</b> | <p>Cooking (Simple Food Preparation)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Explore basic food preparation (mixing, spreading, assembling).</li> <li>- Talk about healthy foods and preferences.</li> <li>- Begin to follow simple instructions/recipes.</li> <li>- Use simple tools safely (spoon, plastic knife).</li> </ul> | <p>Structures and Materials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Build simple structures using construction kits and junk modelling.</li> <li>- Explore materials and their properties (strong, weak, flexible).</li> <li>- Begin to join materials in different ways (tape, glue).</li> <li>- Design and make imaginative models (rockets, space vehicles).</li> </ul> | <p>Textiles / Designing for Purpose</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Explore fabrics and joining materials (gluing, simple stitching).</li> <li>- Design and make simple products (masks, capes).</li> <li>- Talk about users and purpose (Who is it for?).</li> <li>- Begin to follow a design–make–evaluate process.</li> </ul> | <p>Mechanisms and Moving Models</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Explore basic movement (sliders, flaps, simple moving parts).</li> <li>- Create simple moving pictures or models.</li> <li>- Investigate how things work.</li> <li>- Begin to evaluate effectiveness of designs.</li> </ul> | <p>Cooking and Nutrition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Prepare simple foods (cutting soft foods, assembling).</li> <li>- Talk about ingredients and where food comes from.</li> <li>- Begin to use tools with increasing control.</li> <li>- Follow simple sequences in recipes.</li> </ul> | <p>Construction, Structures and Products</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Design and build models (houses, castles, bridges).</li> <li>- Use a range of tools and materials to construct.</li> <li>- Test and improve designs (stability, strength).</li> <li>- Share and evaluate finished products.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Links to PKC</b>                 | <p><b>Year 1:</b> Dips and Vegetables / Jam Tarts – following recipes, cutting, mixing, understanding food types.</p> <p><b>Year 2:</b> Pizza / Gingerbread – preparing food, dough making, measuring and baking.</p>                                                                                                                | <p><b>Year 1:</b> Vehicles – structures, materials (strong, stiff, stable), building models with wheels and axles.</p> <p><b>Year 2:</b> Moving Pictures – structures for stability when creating products.</p> <p><b>Year 4–6:</b> Structural design – increasingly complex builds (playgrounds, water</p>                                                                     | <p><b>Year 1:</b> Animal Sock Puppets – fabric, joining, design criteria (user, purpose, function).</p> <p><b>Year 2:</b> Pencil Cases – sewing, joining materials, creating functional products.</p> <p><b>Year 5–6:</b> Bags / Upcycling Fashion – advanced textiles, sustainability, independent design.</p>                               | <p><b>Year 1:</b> Vehicles – wheels and axles, simple mechanical systems.</p> <p><b>Year 2:</b> Moving Pictures – levers and sliders.</p> <p><b>Year 3–5:</b> Pop-up books, cams, gears – increasingly complex motion systems.</p>                                                                       | <p><b>Year 1:</b> Cooking units – understanding ingredients, healthy foods and preparation.</p> <p><b>Year 2–4:</b> Cooking progression – nutrition, seasonality, cultural foods and techniques.</p> <p><b>Year 6:</b> Advanced cooking – preparing</p>                                                    | <p><b>Year 1:</b> Vehicles – constructing products with purpose, selecting materials.</p> <p><b>Year 3–4:</b> Structural design – building products with strength and stability.</p> <p><b>Year 6:</b> Water Walls – large-scale construction,</p>                                                                           |

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|  | <b>Year 3–6:</b> Cooking units – increasing complexity (weighing, nutrition, cultural dishes, healthy diets). | walls, engineered products). |  |  | balanced meals safely and independently. | engineering thinking and real users. |
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