

Design Technology at Our Lady of the Assumption

Design Technology Curriculum Rationale 2025/26

At Our Lady of the Assumption we are designers and technologists! We want our children to love design technology. We want them to have no limits to what their ambitions are and grow up wanting to be architects, graphic designers, chefs or carpenters. We want them to embody our core values. We all believe that: "If you can believe you can achieve it and succeed". The design technology curriculum has been carefully crafted so that our children develop their design and technology capital. We want our children to remember their DT lessons in our school, to cherish these memories and embrace the DT opportunities they are presented with! Recently, children in Year 5 were set a challenge of designing and building their own 3D lunar buggy models as part of a cross-curricular DT and science project. Bringing design technology alive is important at Our Lady of the Assumption Primary School.

Curriculum Intent

The design technology curriculum promotes curiosity and a love and thirst for learning. It is ambitious and empowers our children to become independent and resilient – like all curriculum areas.

We want to equip them with not only the minimum statutory requirements of the design technology National Curriculum but to prepare them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life. For example, we have an 'Enterprise Week' when children design and create their own Christmas gifts, which include baking and cooking treats, decorating them and designing suitable packaging. The gifts are sold as part of enterprise initiatives.

We want our children to use the vibrancy of our great city to learn from other cultures, respect diversity, co-operate with one another and appreciate what they have. We achieve this by providing a strong PSHCE curriculum, with British Values and our core values placed at the heart of everything we do. This often feeds into the design technology curriculum.

We enrich their time in our school with memorable, unforgettable experiences and provide opportunities which are normally out of reach – this piques their interests and passions. For example, earlier this year some of our pupils visited Crosby Hall and took part in a challenge to build dens with materials they could collect outside. We firmly believe that it is not just about what happens in the classroom, it is about the added value we offer to really inspire our children.

Curriculum Implementation

In September 2019, a complete audit of the design technology curriculum was conducted. On the back of the findings from this audit, the design technology curriculum has been carefully built and the learning opportunities and assessment milestones for each year group crafted to ensure progression and repetition in terms of embedding key learning, knowledge and skills. For example, the way design technology is taught at our school has been revamped and now follows a consistent structure. Initially, pupils take inspiration from design throughout history to help generate ideas for designs. They explore and practice the practical skills involved in the topic and then design, make, evaluate and refine their final products. This approach is taken for every design technology topic. Pupils work in DT is presented using class floor books instead of individual exercise books.

Design technology subject specific characteristics, which we expect the children to demonstrate, have been developed and shared with all stakeholders. These characteristics underpin all work in DT and form a focal point for display areas and provide a common subject specific vocabulary for staff and pupils. These characteristics are:

- Significant levels of originality and the willingness to take creative risks to produce innovative ideas and prototypes.
- An excellent attitude to learning and independent working and passion for the subject and knowledge of, up-to-date technological innovations in materials, products and systems.
- The ability to use time efficiently and work constructively and productively with others.
- The ability to carry out thorough research, show initiative and ask questions to develop an exceptionally detailed knowledge of users' needs.
- The ability to act as responsible designers and makers, working ethically, using finite materials carefully and working safely.
- A thorough knowledge of which tools, equipment and materials to use to make their products.
- The ability to apply mathematical knowledge.
- The ability to manage risks exceptionally well to manufacture products safely and hygienically.

We empower our staff to organise their own year group curriculums under the guidance of our subject leaders. Teachers are best placed to make these judgements. Staff develop year group specific long-term curriculum maps which identify when the different subjects and topics will be taught across the academic year. The vast majority of subjects are taught discretely but staff make meaningful links across subjects. They link prior knowledge to new learning to deepen children's learning. For example, in Year 6 when the children explore 'Electrical Systems – Simple Circuits and Switches' they also tackle electricity in science and 'The Victorians' in history where they look at the emerging popularity of electricity. Our children are taught the right, connected knowledge. Our children are taught the right, connected knowledge and necessary vocabulary, using 'Making Words Work' by Liverpool School Improvement Team.

Our short-term plans are produced on a weekly and daily basis. We use these to set out the learning objectives for each lesson, identifying engaging activities and resources which will be used to achieve them.

In design technology we encourage staff to teach a weekly lesson, however some topics lend themselves to two deep-dive design technology days. This helps to ensure that the children see the whole process from start to finish – from existing products through to their finished product. We believe that by crafting our curriculum this way, we improve the potential for our children to retain what they have been taught, to alter their long-term memory and thus improve the rates of progress they make.

Curriculum Impact

We use both formative and summative assessment information in every design technology lesson. Staff use this information to inform their short-term planning and short-term interventions. This helps us provide the best possible support for all of our pupils, including the more able. The assessment milestones for each phase have been carefully mapped out and further broken down for each year group. This means that skills in design technology are progressive and build year on year.

Our staff use design technology formative assessment grids to systematically assess what the children know as the topic progresses and inform their future planning. These formative assessment grids then inform summative assessment judgements for each topic.

Assessment information is collected frequently and analysed as part of our monitoring cycle. This process provides an accurate and comprehensive understanding of the quality of education in design technology. A comprehensive monitoring cycle is developed at the beginning of each academic year. This identifies when monitoring is undertaken. Monitoring in design technology includes: book scrutinies, lesson observations and/or learning walks, pupil/parent and/or staff voice.

All of this information is gathered and reviewed. It is used to inform further curriculum developments and provision is adapted accordingly.

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