

L I F T O F F

INTRODUCING MAKING
WITH MATERIALS

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Making with materials in two and three dimensions develops visual, tactile and spatial awareness. Through the use of different materials and tools children can explore the visual language with the emphasis on shape, form, structure and space and the relationship between two- and three-dimensions. The treatment of surface, pattern and texture, can often be important considerations.

In this Framework children will be introduced to the idea of sculpture, three-dimensional art which exists in space to be looked at in the round. It has height, width and depth.

It is important that children have the opportunity to engage in making using a variety of materials and techniques on a regular basis.

Making with materials involves three distinct techniques; modelling, constructing and assembling. Each offer unique ways of experiencing and working with materials through:

- Using different types of materials, paper, card, fabrics, threads, fibres, found objects, clay or clay like materials and plasticine
- Experiencing different qualities of materials, soft, hard, rigid, flexible, shiny, matt
- Learning different techniques and processes, collage, modelling, weaving, stitching, tie dying, knitting
- Transforming materials from two-to three-dimensions by, folding, joining, shaping, constructing and assembling

HOW DO WE MAKE USING MATERIALS

There are three distinct techniques

- Modelling involves making a form with a plastic material by manipulating, shaping, adding or removing pieces, using materials such as plasticine, clay or clay-like materials, papier mache. Where materials are added this process is called 'additive'. The opposite process is called 'subtractive' as when sculptors carve or cut away from a block of material.
- Constructing involves making a form or structure by joining components or rigid or semi-rigid materials for example paper, card, textiles, fibres, cane.
- Constructional kits are a useful aid to help children try out ideas, understand how different structures can be made and the relationships between forms and space as well as being a medium for the imagination.
- Assembling involves making a form or structure by putting together found materials, natural or made. Collage is a form of assemblage made by gluing materials such as paper, card, fabric or found materials onto a background to make a picture or image. A sculptural version of assemblage is where the artwork is put together using found objects that are not usually shaped by the maker.

In order to participate in this area of work, children will have to learn specific skills, techniques and processes, the careful and correct handling of materials, tools and equipment. Because of the potential opportunity for 'mess and chaos' and, in some cases, the use of materials that may be expensive, work will have to be very carefully planned and structured in advance. When necessary time must be allowed for a demonstration. Learning any craft skill will involve practice, experiment and failure. Speed of skill development will depend on the amount of time given to practice and experiment.

Not all techniques, materials and tools are appropriate to be used in primary school and not all schools will be equipped to handle all the appropriate materials because of lack of facilities, space and appropriately experienced staff. However, children can be introduced to a representative range of crafts and different makers through the Understanding Art Framework.

The key aims of Making with Materials are to enable children:

- To use a range of materials, tools, equipment, techniques and processes to work in both two- and three-dimensions
- To make for a variety of different purposes and functions
- To develop and foster fine motor skills and engage the child in problem solving
- To know about and enjoy a variety of different sculptures and artefacts made by artists, craftspeople and designers from different times and cultures

The emphasis in Making with Materials is on learning craft skills, techniques and processes using a variety of materials, tools and equipment to achieve different outcomes for different purposes

Each material has its own character but there are fundamental ways of working which can apply to more than one, and many materials can be used in combination.

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Every age group will be able to engage in using a variety of materials, media, tool, techniques and processes involved in making at their own level and ability. These making activities provide children with the opportunity to convey their ideas, feelings, observations and to solve problems in two and three-dimensional ways.

They will learn the techniques and processes required in very different crafts such as weaving, sewing, modelling, paper and card construction, using very different materials to get different results. Many of the techniques and processes demand immediate hands-on activity. It also affords an introduction to learning how to use tools safely and correctly and to use the right tool for a particular outcome. The techniques involved will also be varied for example, folding, bending, cutting, slotting, shaping, joining, fitting, interlacing, gluing. Some outcomes will require a combination of different materials and craft skills. The treatment of surface and decoration will also be of important consideration.

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At this stage, children's work takes the form of structured play and the experience of making simple forms and structures. The following are reasonable expectations for what children could experience and which should be continued and built on in the following stages:

- To explore more than one material, each with different qualities
- To explore both plastic and rigid materials
- To be able to carry out simple techniques
- Learn to use tools safely and correctly
- To make models, forms and structures with and without simple tools
- To have worked in both two- and three- dimensions
- To begin to recognise and name techniques and tools and know what they do and how to use them
- To recognise and name three-dimensional forms
- To look at examples of work of artists, designer and craftspeople

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Building on the previous stage, children are becoming more critical of their own abilities and work. It is essential that they are given help in developing their skills, techniques and processes. To have time to practice and to achieve a degree of mastery.

- To explore more than one material and technique and process in greater depth
- To understand through direct experience that the surface of a material can be changed by using tools and techniques which will affect the appearance of that material and the way it might be used
- To become aware of the three-dimensional qualities of their work, considering it from all viewpoints
- To explore the potential of materials for recording observations and the expression of feelings and ideas for different outcomes
- To begin to understand and be able to talk about the potential and limitations of some of the materials they are handling
- To be able to talk about their work, where ideas come from and how to change and develop them
- To look at examples of work of artists, designers and craftspeople



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MAKING WITH MATERIALS



Building on the previous stages, children should be working with greater independence and confidence and be able to engage in an extended process of making. This involves time and careful planning. They should now be capable of developing an idea, gathering information and planning their processes before beginning to make. These could include small drawings, photographs, notes and making test pieces, such as a sample of weaving for pattern and colour, or small three-dimensional models to help visualise the finished piece and foresee problems that might arise. They should now be able to work independently or as part of a team.

- To have confidence and ability in using a range of materials, tools, techniques and processes
- To realise the importance of keeping sketchbooks and collections of reference material as a source of ideas
- To have time to engage in an extended process of making
- To be able to achieve levels of finish that are reasonable and appropriate for the age group
- To be aware of the different qualities of materials and techniques and be able to talk about and evaluate them in relation to their own work
- To become more aware of the way artists, craftspeople and designers have used materials and techniques to achieve particular results for different functions.
- To look at examples of work of artists, designers and craftspeople

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IN LOVING MEMORY OF PROFESSOR KEN BAYNES

Ken and his partner Krysia have worked with the Harley Gallery for many years, developing exhibitions and art activities for children of all ages. Their input has been invaluable and, they have worked tirelessly to help us offer our visitors the highest quality educational experiences, through educational resources for schools and curated exhibitions designed with children in mind. Ken was fun loving and a true inspiration. His belief in the importance of creativity in children's education and development has shaped and determined our Educational Programme.

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Please visit our website www.harleygallery.co.uk to find out more about our education programme and learning resources.

**Dayle Green, Education and Outreach Manager,
Harley Foundation, December 2020**

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THE HARLEY GALLERY

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