

Expressive arts and design

The development of children's artistic and cultural awareness supports their imagination and creativity. It is important that children have regular opportunities to engage with the arts, enabling them to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials. The quality and variety of what children see, hear and participate in is crucial for developing their understanding, self-expression, vocabulary and ability to communicate through the arts. The frequency, repetition and depth of their experiences are fundamental to their progress in interpreting and appreciating what they hear, respond to and observe.

Nursery 1 (Early Explorers)	No Active Cohort Present: Continuous rolling intakes for Nursery 1 begin in Spring 1 (January) and Summer 1 (April). Baseline Mapping: Upon entry in January/ April, practitioners will utilise the Spring/Summer development milestones to establish immediate, child-focused baseline parameters.	Exploring and Using Media and Materials: - Explores a variety of primary colour mediums on different surfaces, learning to name basic colours (red, blue, yellow). - Explores the properties of malleable materials (clay, dough, cornflour) through basic sensory and tactile actions: poking, pulling, squeezing, and patting. - Explores loose parts and natural objects by simply lining up, sorting, or stacking them. Being Imaginative and Expressive: - Listens carefully to everyday sounds in the room or outside and talks about what they can hear. - Copies simple sounds using their own voice, clapping, or tapping basic instruments.	Exploring and Using Media and Materials: - Begins to use mark-making tools to represent simple forms and movement, discovering that lines and circles can make shapes. - Explores pasting, gluing, and assembling paper cut-outs onto a surface using simple glue sticks. - Learns to use basic tools to affect change on materials (e.g., crumpling, tearing, or snipping paper). Being Imaginative and Expressive: - Taps or marches along to the steady beat of a song. - Recognizes music that is fast or slow and moves their body to match the speed. - Listens to musical stories, enjoying how different instrument sounds
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		- Experiments with making sounds loud and quiet using instruments or their voice. - Joins in with familiar songs sung for birthdays, celebrations, or daily routines. - Matches simple actions to the words in a song (e.g., clapping along or hiding their face). - Notices and responds when a sound stops or starts.	represent different animals or characters. - Explores making high and low sounds with their voice (like a squeaky mouse or a low roar).
Nursery 2 (Confident learners)	Exploring and Using Media and Materials: - Exploratory Mark-Making: Explores mark-making freely with large chalks on the ground, paint, or fingers in sand, creating large whole-arm circular and horizontal marks. - Explores and responds to different textures, colours, and patterns through simple, tactile print-making (using blocks, sponges, or fingers). - Uses different senses to explore textures and begins to combine loose parts to build basic 2D patterns. Being Imaginative and Expressive: - Makes up their own sounds to copy things they see in real life (like making noises like a car engine or a train).	Exploring and Using Media and Materials: - Explores a range of painting techniques using a selection of tools (e.g., thick/thin brushes, sticks, sponges, or rollers) on a range of surfaces. - Draws and paints on a larger scale both indoors and out to develop upper-body physical coordination. - Begins to use simple tools to shape, roll, and mould clay or playdough into recognizable 3D shapes (like balls or "sausages"). Being Imaginative and Expressive:	Exploring and Using Media and Materials: - Becomes increasingly selective of colours to achieve a desired effect, using print-making techniques with independence to create distinct patterns. - Manipulates clay with fingers to suggest a subject (e.g., pinching ears onto a clay animal). - Begins to make constructions and models with a clear purpose, deciding and planning what to make before choosing loose parts or resources. - Finds, collects, and sticks materials together independently, exploring how to join different textures.

	- Keeps a steady beat comfortably by clapping or patting their knees while singing a song together. - Changes how they move smoothly when the music changes from fast to slow.	- Notices when different instruments are being played at the same time in a song. - Chooses specific instruments to match a character in a story or a specific feeling (e.g., using a triangle for a happy fairy, or a loud drum for an angry giant). - Sings in a group, trying to match their voice to high and low notes in a familiar tune.	Being Imaginative and Expressive: - Talks about a big group of musicians playing together (like a band or orchestra). - Enjoys singing or playing instruments at the front of the room for their friends or parents to watch. - Puts a few different instrument sounds together to make a short "song" or sound effect for a nursery rhyme.
Reception	Exploring and Using Media and Materials: - Begins to draw with clear intent, deciding what they are going to draw before making marks on paper. Manipulates a variety of mark-makers with control. - Learns and applies precise paintbrush control: executes the 'dip, draw, wash, wipe' technique to keep colours clear. Explores mixing primary colours to deliberately create secondary colours. - Moulds clay/dough using specific techniques (pinching, pulling, rolling, thumb pots) to achieve a desired 3D effect.	Exploring and Using Media and Materials: - Develops drawing within a range of contexts (e.g., telling a story or responding to the way an object moves or feels). - Makes close observational drawings of natural objects and animals using a range of media (pencils, chalk, pastels, charcoal, graphite). - Mixes various shades of primary and secondary colours to create tones (lighter/darker). - Uses loose parts and natural resources to create transient art. - Collaborates to create artwork as a group.	Exploring and Using Media and Materials: - Explores, uses, and refines a variety of artistic effects to express their own ideas and feelings. - Uses advanced colour-mixing techniques to precisely match the colours they see in real life and want to represent. - Chooses specific painting techniques and tools to create independent artwork. - Independently assembles, cuts, and joins different pieces of paper, fabric, or wood to create a complex picture, collage, or 3D structure. - Shares their creations, explaining the processes and techniques they used.

	- Uses a range of recycled materials to construct models for a purpose, joining components using masking tape or glue. Being Imaginative and Expressive: - Explores and identifies how different instruments can be played to alter their volume (dynamics) and speed (tempo). - Internalizes and physically demonstrates a steady pulse through structural movement, clapping, and instrument play. - Listens attentively to live or recorded music, describing how it makes them feel using simple emotional vocabulary.	Being Imaginative and Expressive: - Follows visual or spoken signals from a leader to start, stop, play fast/slow, or play loud/soft. - Mimics and repeats short rhythmic patterns (call-and-response) accurately using voices or unpitched percussion. - Explores how instruments can tell a narrative story, identifying changes in pitch (high/low) and texture.	Being Imaginative and Expressive: - Sings a wide repertoire of songs and nursery rhymes from memory, maintaining accurate pitch and melody within a group. - Combines vocal sounds, body percussion, and instruments intentionally to create original musical textures or soundscapes. - Performs collaborative musical routines or songs for an audience, demonstrating a clear ability to move their bodies in time with the steady pulse of the music.
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