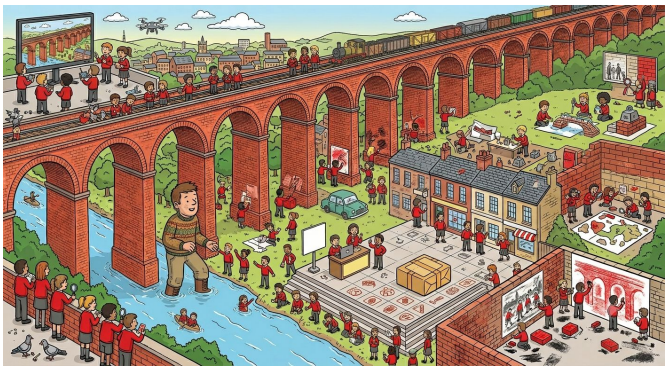
What does ‘Design & Technology’ look like at Adswood Primary?

Curriculum mapping

At Adswood Primary School, our **Design & Technology (D&T)** curriculum forms an essential strand of our overarching **Silk & Stone Curriculum**. Named to honour Stockport’s dual heritage—the red sandstone foundations of our town and the pioneering silk mills that connected our community to global trade—our curriculum equips pupils to become the **"Architects of the Future"** who can design sustainable, equitable solutions for tomorrow's world.



We do not view D&T as disconnected craft activities; our scholars are apprenticed into **Specialist Roles.** In every unit, children tackle real-world design briefs as *Junior Architects*, *Kinetic Engineers*, *Textiles Engineers*, *Artisan Chemists*, and *Eco Designers.*
Our projects are anchored in our local heritage and landscape—from Bramall Hall and Quarry Bank Mill to the Stockport Viaduct and local artisan bakeries—giving pupils tangible, meaningful contexts for technological problem-solving. Across all year groups, **sustainability and environmental stewardship** are central responsibilities rather than standalone topics: pupils continually evaluate how material selection, repair, and circular design can regenerate our local and global environments.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, Design and Technology forms part of the learning children acquire under the ‘Knowledge and Understanding of the World’ branch of the Foundation Stage curriculum, which also covers geography, history, ICT, and science.

Adaptive teaching

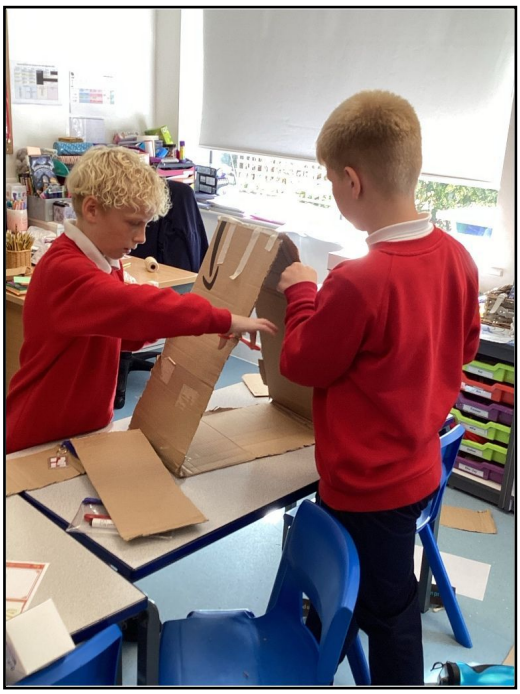
The creative, tactile, and kinaesthetic nature of Design & Technology provides a powerful entry point for all learners to engage with the design, make, and evaluate process. At Adswood, the development of practical skills and the purposeful handling of physical materials promote deep engagement, grounding learning in practical, real-world contexts. For children who find traditionally text-heavy subjects more challenging, Design & Technology removes barriers to high-level thinking, unlocking aspirations for the future as children take genuine pride in their tangible achievements. Under the **Silk & Stone Curriculum**, inclusion is underpinned by our commitment to **Experience Equity** and Quality First Teaching.

Learning environment

At Adswood Primary School, Design & Technology is not isolated into one-off 'project days' or treated as a disconnected craft activity. Instead, D&T is seamlessly integrated into our termly **Silk & Stone thematic units**, anchoring every practical task in rich local history, geographical inquiry, and scientific understanding. This cross-curricular integration transforms our classrooms into ongoing **Disciplinary Studios and Engineering Workshops**, where pupils work over time as Junior Architects, Kinetic Engineers, Textiles Technologists, and Artisan Chemists.

Opportunities to celebrate Design Technology.

At Adswood, the culmination of the design and make process is a moment of celebration, shared pride, and authentic evaluation across our entire school community. Rather than finished prototypes being tucked away, our shared spaces and corridors feature **curated, process-driven displays** that celebrate the complete engineering journey—showcasing initial technical blueprints, iterative testing notes, and finished 3D artefacts alongside the specialist roles our children embody, from Junior Architects to Eco Designers.



The pinnacle of this celebration is the **Stockport Soapbox**, our signature presentation forum where classrooms transform into lively exhibition arenas. Using the **Oracy Arches**, scholars stand tall to pitch, demonstrate, and defend their working prototypes before an authentic audience, explaining their material choices and structural adaptations with technical precision.

Crucially, we invite **parents, carers, and community members into school** to attend these showcase events and view our exhibitions. Welcoming families to witness their children demonstrate working circuits, moving mechanisms, or reinforced structures provides an inspiring platform where pupils take genuine pride in their craftsmanship, articulate their learning with confidence, and step forward as the Architects of the Future

Learning beyond the classroom

On top of the incredible outdoor provision for our EYFS children in our Willow Garden, we offer plenty of opportunities for children to engage with Design and Technology beyond timetabled curriculum lessons.

Links and visits to local restaurants such as 'where the light gets in' gives pupils an opportunity to see food technology in practice whilst also learning about seasonality and food sources.

Through our Life skills curriculum/EBA awards children in EYFS, KS1 and KS2 have the opportunity to receive awards which extend their curriculum through home learning and extra curricular activities such as Cook 4 Life.

Cross-curricular Links

In the **Silk & Stone Curriculum**, Design & Technology is never treated as a decorative afterthought or an isolated craft session. Instead, D&T serves as the **applied testing ground of the curriculum**—the practical activities where pupils' historical, geographical, scientific, and mathematical knowledge is developed to engineer solutions to real-world design briefs.
Our thematic spirals weave rich connections across subjects. When pupils enter a D&T sequence, they do not complete generic "topic crafts"; they step into authentic **Specialist Roles**—such as Structural Engineers, Kinetic Engineers, Textiles Technologists, or Artisan Chemists—using industry-standard tools, technical vocabulary, and rigorous iterative design processes.

Assessment

At Adswood Primary School, assessment in Design & Technology prioritises **authentic formative assessment** and practical demonstration. As every Silk & Stone unit is driven by a real-world **Big Question** and rooted in disciplinary apprenticeship, we do not assess D&T through tick-box worksheets or passive recall. Instead, we assess **"Mastery in Motion"**—evaluating how effectively scholars apply technical knowledge, handle tools with precision, iterate through structural failure, and articulate their design rationale with authority.

Evaluation in D&T goes far beyond a written worksheet. At the end of every unit, children present, test, and defend their functional prototypes during our **Stockport Soapbox** events. Presenting before authentic audiences—such as school governors, visiting engineers, and community panels—pupils deploy our **Oracy Arches** (Physical stance, Linguistic technical vocabulary, Cognitive justification, and Social engagement) to prove their products are robust, fit for purpose, and structurally sound.

Staff CPD

Staff Continuing Professional Development (CPD) in Design and Technology (D&T) is supported through a combination of in-house and external opportunities. Termly drop-in sessions are available for all staff, offering a chance to check in, share good practice, and receive targeted support. Additionally, the subject leader has attended external training courses to stay up to date with current developments and best practice in D&T. The knowledge and strategies gained from this training have been cascaded to the wider team, ensuring consistent professional growth across the department.