

Chalice Arts UK Limited



Using Sketch Books in Primary Schools

by
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Aim

- To provide an overview of good practice in using sketch books in primary schools

Objectives

By the end of the session participants will be able to:

- Explain the rationale for why sketch books are important and included in the National Curriculum
- Understand how sketch books should be used

The National Curriculum for Art

Key stage 2

Pupils should be taught to develop their techniques, including their control and their use of materials, with creativity, experimentation and an increasing awareness of different kinds of art, craft and design.

Pupils should be taught:

- *to create sketch books to record their observations and use them to review and revisit ideas*
- *to improve their mastery of art and design techniques, including drawing, painting and sculpture with a range of materials [for example, pencil, charcoal, paint, clay]*
- *about great artists, architects and designers in history.*

National Curriculum for Art

There is very little prescribed in the National Curriculum for Art. This gives a lot of flexibility to schools to devise a scheme of work matching the needs and interests of the children at the school.

The use of sketch books is prescribed at Key Stage 2 and therefore needs to be carefully incorporated into your scheme of work and to become part of your school culture of making and learning about art.

The use of sketch books in the National Curriculum at Key Stage 2 is nothing new. Many schools have been using sketch books since the National Curriculum was first introduced and many prior to that.

Many schools have been using them with primary age children from the early years onwards.

There is no reason why Key Stage 1 children cannot be using sketch books as part of a whole school policy.

Why are sketch books important?

- They can provide a really interesting and informative record of a child's artistic journey from early mark making to sophisticated representational drawing.
- Good art teaching often requires more than launching straight into creating a finished piece of work. Sketch books provide a space to undertake preliminary work, investigations and other thinking about art.
- Using Sketch books for home learning can help form a link between the artwork produced at home and school.



- Sketch books can provide somewhere to record information about artists, architects and designers
- A sketch book provides somewhere to record and store research and ideas.
- Sketch books offer a tool for assessment purposes.
- Sketch books can help children to become more independent and confident artists.
- Good sketch book behaviour also supports the artistic learning that will take place in the next phase of education as children transfer to the secondary curriculum.

Uses of Sketch Books - Task:

Work in groups and be prepared to feed back to the whole group. Write on large sheets of paper for display.

- Brain storm some of the different uses of a sketch book. (what would you expect to find inside the best sketch book)

Be mindful of different age groups

Approximately 10 minutes to complete the written task. Each group to feedback.

Complete this task before showing the next slide



A Variety of Uses of Sketch Books

- Drawings and mark making activities
- Use at school and at home – home learning
- Investigating the properties of different materials e.g. pastel, paint, charcoal
- Investigating different techniques such as shading, colour mixing strips, tonal strips and notes on how to make different colours.
- Investigating the artistic elements such as line, shape, colour etc.
- Making notes about different processes or techniques
- Making notes or drawings about artists, architects and designers
- Making notes and collecting images to show different artistic genre



A Variety of Uses of Sketch Books Continued

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- Collecting visual information e.g. ideas, photographs, postcards, magazine cut outs, textile samples
- Collecting memories
- Keeping photographs of pieces of their own art for reference
- Writing evaluations and reflecting on their artistic learning
- Providing writing opportunities e.g. recounts of visits to exhibitions, writing instructions, lists, writing reviews, creative writing/ poetry
- A place for teachers to provide written feedback
- Extension activities
- Private work initiated by the child
- Evidence of differentiation, support for gifted and talented pupils or those with additional needs.

Choosing a Sketch book

A4 spiral bound sketch books are recommended but any hard back book with plain paper (preferably cartridge paper) would be sufficient. It is worthwhile investing in hard back books.

The covers can be personalised and will withstand being used frequently and perhaps for more than one academic year depending how many pages are in each book.

Example Sketch Books

A4 hard covers
spiral bound





Frequency of Use

There is no prescribed frequency of use. An expectation would be that they are used every couple of weeks for some art related learning or thinking. There will be periods during the term when they will be used more frequently during an art unit of work and other times when they won't be used.

Home learning using the sketch books should also be considered from time to time.

Occasionally sketch books will be used for cross-curricular work where drawing or writing about artefacts etc. is appropriate.



Promoting Sketch Books

It is useful for a sample of sketch books to be put on display in the classroom so that they are a constant reminder of their importance.

Table top displays of sketch books and wall displays using photocopied pages from sketch books. Ensure good display labelling that poses challenging questions and well as captions giving explanations etc.

Promote sketch books through class assemblies.

Show sketch books to other classes, Head teacher etc.

Invite people who use a sketch book to talk about their own sketch books with the class/ Key Stage etc

Marking Sketch Books

In groups brain storm.

- What do you think are the reasons/ benefits for marking sketch books?
- What kind of marking would you undertake?

5 minutes discussion and then feedback

Show the next slide after the feedback



Marking and Feedback

- Through marking teachers are sending a very strong message that sketch books and the work carried out in them is important.
- You are able to gain valuable information about a pupil's progress, their skills, their thinking, attitudes and understanding through marking.
- Very importantly you are able to give children valuable and supportive feedback, to affirm/ acknowledge their efforts, to prompt further work/ investigation through your comments and questions. Through marking you can set expectations about the standard of work.
- It also gives an opportunity to extend and challenge more able pupils.



New Sketch books

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As children change year groups it is a good idea to pass their sketch book up to the next year group and to continue using it. It is reasonable that a sketch book last for two year groups e.g. Y1 and Y2, Y3 and Y4, Y5 and Y6.

Sketch books are not cheap to purchase and obviously the number of pages will determine how frequently they are changed.

On educational grounds it is desirable to continue with the same book until it is full or has been used for two years. This will ensure continuity and progression over time. Replace the books with a new one as and when required but it is valuable to keep using a partially filled sketch book as the children move through the school.

Monitoring of Sketch Books

To ensure consistency in the use of sketch books across the school it is important for the Art subject leader to carry out periodic monitoring to assess how they are being used and to provide guidance and feedback to colleagues.