



Paul Gauguin, *Where do we come from? What are we? Where are we going?*,

Intent

An Art education helps develop critical thinking and the ability to interpret the rapidly changing world around us. Making and viewing visual art teaches students to observe and reflect upon their environments, apply their imaginations, think creatively, explore ideas and feelings, and develop understandings about their emerging personal, cultural, spiritual and social identities. Importantly, it offers students who may find lexically based communication challenging, a different way to express their ideas and communicate with the world. Furthermore, the immense pleasure and enjoyment gained from artistic creation cannot be ignored.

The rationale outlined above is reflected in the ethos of the department, where our programmes of study and expectations of students are designed to promote confidence, self esteem and resilience; empathy, respect and tolerance; an open-mind and the ability to work independently through the development of practical, creative, critical and organisational skills.

In aiming for all students to be confident to undertake open-ended explorations of artistic and creative problems - which will by their very nature lead to their own more imaginative solutions to those problems, a rigorous grounding in basic skills and understanding of common artistic processes is required.

With the exception of some YR11 GCSE students, at whatever age or level of ability, all students undertake an initial course of guided activities to develop these fundamental technical skills in a variety of media and processes. Armed with these skills, students then have the opportunity to deploy, develop and refine them, and will possess the self-confidence to direct the course of their own work.

While appropriately challenging, the activities enable all students to achieve and

take pride in the results of their thoughts and actions.

Implementation

Years 7 and 8: students follow a programme of two and three-dimensional skills-based activities designed to develop visual literacy, as well as an understanding of - and good practice in - methods, processes and techniques.

Most YR9 and KS4 students work towards achieving a GCSE in Fine Art (Edexcel).

Year 9 Option: some students, usually those aspiring to return to mainstream education, follow a programme of study broadly similar to that of Year 10. However, for other students, a more bespoke programme is appropriate. The strategy adopted is to follow the individual's particular interests as a vehicle/context for delivering core learning objectives.

Year 10 and Yr 11 students starting in the Autumn term: initial 'foundation' course in mark-making using various media. Activities typically begin with open-ended experimentation where a variety of methods are demonstrated and students are encouraged to improvise in an environment of discovery - what can they push the media to do? There is no right or wrong way to proceed: some things work, while others don't. Liberated from the fear of failure, step by step, students will feel confident to tackle more demanding work using their mark-making skills in the development of original outcomes.

The four main assessment objectives for both KS3 and KS4 are:

- developing ideas, linked with exploring the work of other artists,
- exploration of materials, techniques and processes
- recording work in sketchbooks
- producing final outcomes.

At both Key Stages, all students are encouraged to explore and develop their skills in a wide range of media, including drawing, painting, printmaking, sculpture and mixed-media.

Impact

While appropriately challenging, activities enable all students to achieve and take pride in the results of their thoughts and actions.

Learning about and making art provides a rich source of experiences and understandings that cannot be gained in any other way. It allows students to achieve, to make things of which they are proud, which in turn builds self-esteem. Valuing and practising art provides an important and unique outlet for the communication of ideas, feelings and beliefs. Art is a major source of intellectual and emotional development, it stimulates and enhances our understanding of ourselves and our world, and it provides an insight into the interconnectivity of all

things. Simply put, the immeasurable value and importance of the pleasure and enjoyment derived from artistic creation and communication cannot be underestimated.

The skills gained from the Art education outlined above are inherently transferable to other subjects and non-artistic endeavours, and, of course, will provide students who wish to study Art further with the skills and confidence to do so.