



“Design is not just what it looks like and feels like. Design is how it works.” – Steve Jobs

Design and Technology is the process of creating a product for a specific purpose, developed in response to a clear brief, while encouraging children to think critically, solve problems creatively and understand how ideas become real, functional outcomes. At Woodhall, we believe all children are designers, engineers and inventors in the making. Through Design and Technology, they learn to research, plan, make and evaluate with purpose, developing technical knowledge alongside imagination and curiosity.

Design and Technology gives children the opportunity to explore how things work and why they are made in certain ways. They learn to make decisions, test ideas and refine their thinking — skills that are essential not only for future designers but for confident learners in every curriculum area. Children make meaningful connections with other subjects: applying scientific knowledge when exploring forces, structures or materials, using mathematics when measuring and constructing, drawing on Art and Design when considering form and aesthetics, and applying elements of computing when designing or modelling ideas.

INTENT

South Oxhey is an area of significant socio-economic disadvantage, and many of our children have limited experiences of design, making and technology beyond the classroom. At Woodhall, we aim to broaden their horizons, providing opportunities to explore real-world products, develop practical skills, and engage in creative problem-solving. Our Design and Technology curriculum is carefully tailored to meet the needs of our community, ensuring that every child, regardless of background, can succeed, develop confidence, and experience the satisfaction of creating purposeful, meaningful products.

Our vision is to nurture creative, independent thinkers who can design and make products that solve real and relevant problems. We explicitly teach children the differences between Design and Technology and Art, highlighting the merits of DT in its own right: while Art focuses on personal expression and aesthetics, DT emphasises functionality, problem-solving and the creation of a product for a specific purpose. Children explore real-life products, considering their functions, strengths and limitations, and learn about the work of important designers and innovators, developing an understanding of how ideas are applied in the world around them. Throughout all projects, children are taught the importance of the design process, particularly researching, planning, evaluating and amending their work. This iterative approach encourages reflection, resilience and adaptability — skills that are transferable across the curriculum and beyond the classroom.

Our curriculum is carefully structured from EYFS to Year 6 to ensure a secure progression of skills in all key aspects of Design and Technology. In the Early Years, children explore materials, construction and simple joining techniques through play and exploration, forming the foundations for more structured designing and making in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. As they move through the school, children deepen their understanding of mechanisms, structures, textiles, electrical systems and food technology, developing both technical knowledge and creative problem-solving skills.

We aim to:

- Develop the innovators of tomorrow, who feel confident to investigate, plan, experiment, adapt and evaluate, and who understand that thoughtful design involves trial, error and improvement.
- Build strong technical skills and subject knowledge, enabling children to design and make products that fulfil a purpose, demonstrating creativity alongside accuracy and precision.

- Promote Design and Technology as an inclusive subject for all, ensuring that every child — regardless of age, ability, SEND or background — can access, succeed and feel represented within the curriculum.
- Ensure children use tools, materials and equipment safely and responsibly, understanding how to work sustainably and with care.

IMPLEMENTATION

Design and Technology is taught in purposeful blocks across the year so children can immerse themselves fully in the design process. Projects include the key stages of research, planning, designing, making and evaluating, allowing children to apply and refine their skills in meaningful contexts.

Due to the nature of our mixed-age classes, the school operates flexibly to ensure all children access relevant and appropriately challenging Design and Technology learning. Lessons are carefully planned to allow children to explore age-related skills while working on projects that can be adapted across year groups. In some cases, elements of a project may be taught out of the usual year sequence to meet the needs and interests of the learners.

Teachers differentiate activities by providing additional support, adapted tools (such as spring scissors), or alternative resources, ensuring that every child can participate fully and achieve success. This approach allows children to collaborate, share ideas and learn from one another, while maintaining progression in the key skills of designing, making, evaluating and amending products.

Where appropriate, learning may be focused on the development a particular technical skill. Technical skills are taught explicitly — such as cutting, joining, strengthening structures or sewing — and pupils then apply these skills within their projects. In younger classes, these skills are also practised regularly across the curriculum, for example through cutting and constructing in Art, or exploring materials in Science.

Design and Technology projects are linked to wider curriculum themes to strengthen learning across subjects. For example, children might sew Tudor purses to complement their history learning or sandwiches for a Mad Hatter's Tea Party to enrich their English topic. These connections make learning richer, more coherent and more relevant to children's understanding of the world.

Cooking at Woodhall is a practical and engaging part of the Design and Technology curriculum. In our well-equipped children's kitchen, pupils learn to prepare a variety of savoury dishes, developing essential practical skills such as chopping, measuring, mixing and cooking safely. These activities are closely linked to geography, as children explore seasonality, local and global ingredients, and where food comes from, helping them understand the wider world and the impact of their choices. Cooking also reinforces scientific knowledge, as children observe changes in states of matter, explore chemical reactions such as rising dough or melting chocolate, and learn how nutrition affects the body. Through PSHE, children are encouraged to make healthy choices, understand balanced diets and develop confidence and independence in preparing food for themselves and others.

Cooking also plays an important role in ROWAN nurture support, providing targeted, small-group opportunities for children to develop social skills, confidence, patience and resilience. Within these sessions, pupils engage in practical, hands-on cooking activities that promote cooperation, turn-taking and personal responsibility, while offering a safe and structured environment to explore and succeed. These sessions complement the wider curriculum, reinforcing life skills and emotional development alongside practical learning.

We also raise the profile of Design and Technology through whole-school creative experiences, such as our large-scale Easter Bonnet project, where every child designs, makes and parades their own creation. Events like these celebrate imagination, individuality and the joy of making.

Classrooms are equipped with a range of age-appropriate tools and materials, and additional resources are stored centrally so teachers can deliver high-quality, practical lessons.

IMPACT

Children's learning in Design and Technology is carefully observed and monitored throughout the year. Teachers assess how well children are developing their skills, knowledge and understanding, noting progress, effort and engagement during projects. Observations about each child and assess their knowledge and understanding against the learning objectives. Children are summatively assessed as working significantly below age-related expectations (ARE), working towards ARE, working at ARE or exceeding ARE. Progress, effort and attainment is reported to parents as part of the child's End of Year Report.

The development of vulnerable groups, including SEND, PPG and EAL pupils, is considered carefully to ensure all children can access lessons, succeed and make progress alongside their peers. Where necessary, adaptations to tools, resources or support are provided to help every learner achieve their potential. For some pupils, specific skills such as cutting, joining, sewing or pencil grip are tracked through Individual Education Plans (IEPs) to ensure targeted support is in place and progress can be closely monitored.

Monitoring of teaching and learning takes place through lesson observations, learning walks, work scrutiny and discussions with pupils. This ensures that Design and Technology is taught consistently across the school, that children are challenged appropriately, and that their learning builds progressively from year to year. Feedback from these activities is used to refine planning and strengthen the curriculum so that projects remain inspiring, engaging and relevant.

Through this careful monitoring and reflective practice, we ensure that Design and Technology continues to develop children's creativity, technical skills and problem-solving abilities, empowering them to design and make products with confidence, purpose and pride.