



Thomas Mills
High School & Sixth Form

The Thomas Mills High School & Sixth Form: Art curriculum aims to give pupils a broad and meaningful understanding of visual art, covering the three OFSTED curriculum strands:

Knowledge and Critical Context Pupils expand their understanding of the formal elements through portraiture, abstraction, and mixed media. They study key movements such as **Cubism** and **Expressionism**, and explore concepts of identity, symbolism, and viewpoint through contextual artist study.

Ways of Knowing and Skills

Pupils engage with different ways of creating and interpreting art—observing, distorting, analysing, layering, and assembling. They examine how artists reflect the world and personal experience, and use sketchbooks to research, plan, and reflect.

Personal Response

Pupils reflect on how their own experiences, perspectives, and identity can shape their artwork. They are encouraged to express mood, emotion and narrative, and to take creative risks. Discussions around subjectivity in art are integral.

The Year 8 Art curriculum builds on foundational skills from Year 7 while introducing pupils to more complex ideas of expression, abstraction, and personal meaning in art. It explores artistic intention, historical context, and individual creativity through a diverse range of media and artists

Teaching and Learning Ethos in Year 8 Art focuses on developing creative independence, conceptual understanding, and technical refinement. Pupils are challenged to explore deeper meanings and emotions in their work and to reflect critically on how artists—and they themselves—communicate identity and perception through art.



Year 8 Art Curriculum for Thomas Mills High School,

Year 8			
Term	Topic	Knowledge and Skills	Useful Links
1	Name of topic Portraiture – Expression and Distortion	Knowledge: Pupils refine their understanding of facial proportions and portrait structure. They study traditional and experimental portraiture through artists like Chuck Close (grids and realism), Francis Bacon (expression and distortion), Jean-Michel Basquiat (symbolism and text), and Picasso (lino prints and abstracted forms). The term introduces printmaking techniques and expressive media Skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Proportions of the face and structure• Tonal shading and observational drawing• Expressive colour and mark-making• Introduction to lino printing techniques• Emotional content and narrative in portraiture	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tate – Chuck Close• Tate Kids – Expression in Portraits• MOMA – Basquiat• Francis Bacon Studio – Education
Assessments			



		<p>Autumn 1: Observational and expressive portrait studies in sketchbook</p> <p>Autumn 2: Final lino print portrait or mixed media expressive face inspired by Basquiat or Bacon</p>	
2	Objects and Viewpoints – Exploring Cubism	<p>Knowledge: Pupils study Cubism, focusing on the difference between analytical and synthetic approaches. Key artists include Pablo Picasso, Georges Braque, and Juan Gris. Pupils learn how Cubism deconstructs form and space and how perspective is altered. The term also includes an observational test based on Jim Dine’s tool drawings, encouraging accuracy and attention to detail</p> <p>Skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Still life drawing and perspective• Collage and layering techniques• Grayscale and muted colour schemes• Fragmentation and reassembly of form• Observational test lesson using graphite and charcoal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Websites here• Tate Kids – Cubism• Centre Pompidou – Juan Gris• Jim Dine – Tool Series
Assessments			



		<p>Spring 1: Analytical Cubist still life drawing with Cubist breakdowns in sketchbook</p> <p>Spring 2: Synthetic Cubist collage or layered painting + Jim Dine-style test drawing of a tool or object</p>
3	Identity and Self – Mixed Media Assemblage	<p>Knowledge: Pupils explore the theme of identity through mixed media, sculpture, textiles, and relief. They study artists like Joseph Cornell (assemblage and symbolism), Henry Moore (wax resist and sketching), and Peter Randel-Page (narrative and decorative mixed media). Pupils use personal symbols, textures, and found materials to create meaningful compositions.</p> <p>Skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mixed media layering and texture• Wax resist techniques• Use of textiles and collage• Symbolism and visual storytelling• Developing an artistic ‘voice’ through personal selection <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Art Institute – Joseph Cornell• Henry Moore Foundation• Peter Randel-Page Artist Info
Assessment		<p>Summer 1: Sketchbook development of personal identity symbols and materials</p> <p>Summer 2: Final identity-based mixed media artwork with written artist statement</p>