



Denby Grange School

Curriculum Policy



Please read this document in conjunction with any specific localised procedures as directed by the head teacher.

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Supporting Documents

This policy must be read in conjunction with:

- Safeguarding Policy
- RHSE Policy
- Alternative Provision Policy
- SEND Policy
- SEND Code of Practice
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Independent School Standards (parts 1 and 2 – Quality of Education and SMSC development of pupils)
- Education Inspection Framework (EIF)
- Appendix A – Curriculum Offer

1. Introduction and Aims

This policy outlines the principles, structure, and expectations for delivering a broad, balanced, and ambitious curriculum across our independent special schools. It ensures full compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (as amended 2019) and aligns with the National Curriculum in

England, while being tailored to meet the complex and diverse needs of pupils with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs.

Our curriculum is designed to:

- Ensure every pupil has access to the knowledge, skills, and cultural capital needed to thrive in modern Britain.
- Place emotional development, wellbeing, and resilience at the heart of learning.
- Support academic progress while nurturing personal growth and independence.
- Provide flexibility and adaptation to meet the wide-ranging needs of our learners, including those with EHCPs and additional vulnerabilities.

This policy also reflects the expectations of the Non-Association Independent School Inspection Handbook, particularly in relation to how curriculum intent, implementation, and impact are evaluated. It evidences our commitment to meeting the educational needs of pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and supports inspection readiness across all judgement areas of the Education Inspection Framework (EIF).

We recognise that many of our pupils arrive having faced significant barriers to learning, including disrupted education, placement breakdowns, and adverse life experiences. As a result, they often present with gaps in learning and are working below age-related expectations. Our curriculum is therefore designed to be responsive, relational, and aspirational, ensuring that every pupil is supported to make meaningful progress from their individual starting point.

At our school, the curriculum encompasses every planned learning experience, both formal and informal, throughout the school day. This includes lessons, enrichment activities, therapeutic interventions, and social learning opportunities. All staff are responsible for planning and structuring these experiences to maximise their impact on attainment, progress, and personal development.

Our E.P.I.C. values—Excellence, Passion, Integrity, and Care—are embedded throughout the curriculum. We set aspirational end points for each pupil, informed by their baseline assessments, EHCP outcomes, and individual needs. Each subject is planned with explicit, sequential building blocks of knowledge, ensuring that pupils

can build towards meaningful qualifications, independence, and successful transitions into adulthood.

2. Curriculum Content

Our curriculum is designed to be broad, balanced, and ambitious, fully compliant with the Independent School Standards and aligned with statutory expectations, including the National Curriculum in England. It is carefully adapted to meet the diverse needs of pupils with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs and those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

Curriculum Content

We ensure structured and meaningful learning across the following domains:

- **Linguistic** – English, communication, literacy, and where appropriate, modern foreign languages.
- **Mathematical** – Mathematics, numeracy, and problem-solving.
- **Scientific** – Science and technology.
- **Technological** – Food Technology and/or design and technology.
- **Human and Social** – History, geography, religious education and/or social studies.
- **Physical** – Physical Development, movement, health, fitness and Forest Schools.
- **Aesthetic and Creative** – Art, music, drama, and/or design.

In addition, our curriculum:

- Delivers core knowledge and skills aligned with the National Curriculum, with appropriate adaptation for pupils with SEND.
- Provides Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE), including Relationships and Sex Education (RSE).
- Promotes Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) development and British Values—democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect, and tolerance.

- Embeds a strong focus on independence, life skills, and personal development, placing emotional wellbeing and SEMH growth at the centre.
- Prepares pupils for further education, training, employment, and confident participation in adult and community life.

Where appropriate, and with the approval of the Director of Education/ Regional Director, the school may adopt nationally recognised curriculum designs and frameworks to support consistency, quality, and statutory alignment. Examples include the use of White Rose Maths for mathematics, Jigsaw for PSHE and RSHE, and other accredited schemes that support progression, adaptation, and inspection readiness. These resources are selected to ensure accessibility for pupils with SEND and SEMH needs, and to support staff in delivering sequenced, ambitious learning across settings.

Curriculum Implementation

Our curriculum is delivered through:

- Small class sizes, or in some cases on a 1:1 basis, with appropriately qualified and trained staff.
- Balanced weekly timetables that ensure depth in core subjects while allowing time for SEMH enrichment and therapeutic input.
- Trauma-informed and relational pedagogy, tailored to SEMH needs.
- Individualised pathways based on EHCP outcomes, baseline assessments, and ongoing review.
- Access to external accreditation at appropriate levels, including GCSEs, BTEC, Entry Level, Functional Skills, AQA Awards, Arts Award and vocational qualifications.
- A consistent emphasis on inclusion, safeguarding, and wellbeing across all subjects and settings.

Measuring Curriculum Impact

We evaluate the effectiveness of our curriculum through:

- Academic progress tracked against personalised and nationally recognised benchmarks, reviewed by school and organisational leadership, including governors.
- Social, emotional, and behavioural development, using validated tools and frameworks.
- Achievement of external qualifications, evidencing readiness for next steps.
- Preparation for adulthood, including employment, further study, and independent living, tracked against EHCP targets and aspirations.
- Attendance, engagement, and participation data, analysed to inform interventions and support.
- Feedback from pupils, parents, carers, and professionals, ensuring the curriculum remains responsive and relevant.
- External quality assurance, including Ofsted inspections, local authority reviews, and commissioner feedback.

Ultimate Measure of Success

Pupils leave our schools with:

- Improved life chances through successful progression to the next stage of their education and/or chosen vocation.
- Greater self-confidence, independence, and resilience.
- The skills, knowledge, and qualifications to progress successfully into adulthood.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

Delivering a high-quality curriculum is a collective responsibility. Every member of staff plays a role in ensuring that pupils access learning that is ambitious, broad, balanced, and responsive to their SEMH needs. Responsibilities are defined at each level of leadership and practice:

The Director of Education and Regional Directors will hold strategic oversight for curriculum quality across schools. They will:

- Ensure that the curriculum policy aligns with the Independent School Standards and wider statutory requirements.
- Provide strategic direction for curriculum design, ensuring breadth, balance, and SEMH relevance across all phases.
- Monitor curriculum intent, implementation, and impact across schools through reports, data reviews, audits, and visits.
- Support schools in preparing for external scrutiny (Ofsted, commissioning reviews).

Headteachers are responsible for implementing this policy within their school and ensuring the curriculum meets the needs of all pupils. They will:

- Lead on curriculum vision, ensuring alignment with the school's ethos, SEMH principles, and company policy.
- Ensure that the timetable provides statutory coverage, as well as appropriate time spent on subjects and therapeutic provision which reflects the needs of the cohort.
- Oversee and quality-assure teaching, learning, and curriculum planning and delivery through delegated learning walks, observations, and reviews which are planned throughout the year through a monitoring timeline.
- Ensure assessment systems track both academic progress and social/emotional development, linked to EHCP outcomes.
- Deploy resources (staffing, environment, budgets) to enable effective curriculum delivery.
- Ensure staff receive induction, training, and supervision to deliver the curriculum effectively, with SEMH needs in mind.
- Report termly to governing board on curriculum standards and pupil progress.

Curriculum and subject leaders are responsible for the quality and consistency of curriculum provision in their areas. They will:

- Develop and maintain schemes of work and progression maps that reflect both National Curriculum expectations and SEMH adaptations.
- Ensure subject content is accessible, engaging, and relevant to pupils' needs and aspirations.
- Provide colleagues with subject expertise, advice, and resources to support teaching.
- Monitor teaching quality, pupil work, and outcomes within their subject through moderation and data analysis which feeds into the school's monitoring timeline and school development plan.
- Ensure that subject delivery contributes to pupils' SMSC development, British Values, and equality objectives.
- Liaise with SENCOs, specialist advisors, clinical team, and pastoral staff to ensure subject content is personalised for pupils with EHCPs. This may include liaising with other agencies.

Teaching Staff are central to curriculum delivery. They will:

- Plan and deliver lessons that are ambitious, engaging, and tailored to pupils' SEMH and learning needs.
- Use trauma-informed, relational, and adaptive pedagogy to ensure pupils feel safe, valued, and motivated.
- Set clear learning objectives linked to EHCP outcomes, National Curriculum content, and wider SEMH development.
- Adapt resources and approaches to ensure accessibility for all pupils, including those with additional needs.
- Monitor and record pupil progress in both academic and personal development areas using company platforms to ensure effective oversight.
- Foster positive relationships and role-model respectful behaviour, embedding British Values and SMSC through everyday practice.
- Work collaboratively with therapists, pastoral teams, and parents to ensure consistent approaches to SEMH support.

Support Staff play a vital role in enabling access to the curriculum and providing targeted SEMH interventions. They will:

- Support individual and small-group learning, using strategies which are appropriately research-led and agreed with teachers and the wider team around the child.
- Provide emotional and behavioural support, helping pupils regulate and re-engage in learning.
- Reinforce and model positive learning behaviours and social interaction.
- Record observations of pupil progress and SEMH development, feeding back to teachers and leaders.
- Deliver specific interventions as needed in line with pupil need and provide evidence to allow for the quality assurance and impact of these interventions.
- Act as trusted adults, ensuring pupils feel safe, understood, and supported in accessing the curriculum.

The Governance Board and Proprietor Body hold schools accountable for the quality and impact of the curriculum. They will:

- Ensure that the curriculum complies with the Independent School Standards, the Education Inspection Framework, and other regulatory statutory requirements.
- Monitor the implementation and impact of the curriculum through reports, visits, and scrutiny of evidence.
- Provide challenge and support to school leaders to ensure continuous improvement.
- Review progress against strategic objectives, including pupil outcomes, curriculum breadth, and equality of opportunity.
- Ensure that the curriculum reflects the ethos of the organisation and serves the best interests of pupils.

4. Equality and Inclusion

We are committed to ensuring that all pupils, regardless of background, need or ability, have equal access to a broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum. Our approach to inclusion and equality is underpinned by the principles of the **Independent School Standards**, the **Equality Act 2010**, and the **SEND Code of Practice (2015)**.

Our curriculum ensures that:

- **Access for all:** Every pupil is entitled to a curriculum that meets their individual needs, abilities, and aspirations, including those with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs).
- **Differentiation and adaptation:** Teachers adapt planning, resources, and teaching strategies to enable access for pupils with a wide range of SEMH, cognitive, sensory, or physical needs.
- **High expectations:** We maintain ambitious expectations for all pupils, regardless of background or prior attainment, ensuring they can make progress from their individual starting points.
- **Equality of opportunity:** No pupil is denied access to any area of learning on the grounds of gender, ethnicity, disability, religion, sexual orientation, or socio-economic status.
- **Closing gaps:** The curriculum is regularly reviewed to address barriers to learning and to close achievement gaps between disadvantaged pupils and their peers.
- **Representation:** Curriculum content reflects diversity in culture, race, gender, family structures, ability and belief, promoting respect and inclusion.
- **Reasonable adjustments:** Physical environment, teaching approaches, and assessment methods are adapted to remove barriers and enable full participation.
- **Language development:** Specific provision is made for pupils with communication difficulties, including input from specialist clinical staff where appropriate.

- **Trauma-informed practice:** Staff use trauma-aware approaches to create psychologically safe learning environments where pupils feel valued and understood.
- **Pupil voice:** Pupils are encouraged to contribute to the development of their curriculum pathways and are supported to make informed choices about options and careers.
- **Preparation for adulthood:** The curriculum supports all pupils, particularly those with additional needs, to develop independence, resilience, and the skills required for life beyond school.
- **Monitoring and accountability:** Leaders monitor curriculum access and outcomes for different groups of pupils, reporting regularly to governors and acting swiftly to address inequities

5. Assessment

Staff will assess pupils' subject knowledge and skills as soon as is practical following entry to the school to inform planning and teaching, using a range of well-researched strategies to meet individual needs. Information should always be requested from other former education providers to create the clearest overview possible.

In every lesson, teachers assess how well pupils are learning and how well they have retained previous learning and adapt approaches and activities appropriately. Each lesson should then be formulated around this information to inform same day interventions. Same day interventions take different forms including pre and post-teaching and 1:1 support. Each pupil receives the intervention dependent on their individual needs.

6. Teaching Staff Expertise and Development

Headteachers, alongside curriculum leads, are responsible for ensuring that all teaching and support staff receive a comprehensive and continuous programme of professional development to ensure they remain experts in their field and have the knowledge and skills to support pupils in making good and better progress.

For teaching staff teaching outside their first area of expertise, a structured programme of support and professional development exists to ensure an appropriate level of knowledge and understanding.

Governors are expected to appropriately quality assure the curriculum, including staff expertise and teaching at regular intervals (including on-site visits) and to examine data linked to progress. This will contribute to the development of school and staff specific CPD focus and school development.

7. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The effectiveness of the curriculum will be monitored systematically to ensure that it remains broad, balanced, ambitious, and appropriate for pupils with SEMH needs. Monitoring and evaluation will provide evidence of both academic progress and personal development, demonstrating compliance with the Independent School Standards and alignment with the Education Inspection Framework and our school ethos. Monitoring and review are robust, cyclical, and evidence-rich to ensure meaningful school development and improvement.

To ensure consistency and rigour, the following evidence sources will be used in evaluation:

- Pupil progress data (academic and social emotional, alongside EHCP outcomes).
- Attendance and behaviour records.
- Individual pupil case studies (including EHCP outcomes).
- Lesson observation records and feedback.
- Work scrutiny reports.
- Pupil and parent/carers surveys.
- Staff professional development logs.
- Careers and destinations data (post-16/19 pathways).
- Accreditation results.

Review Cycle

- **Ongoing** – continuous monitoring through lesson observations, pastoral tracking, and data collection via Arbor.

- **Termly** – formal review of curriculum outcomes at senior leadership and governor level.
- **Annually** – comprehensive curriculum audit, including stakeholder feedback, leading to updates in curriculum planning and provision.
- **Annually** – formal policy review by the Director of Education, or sooner if statutory guidance or ISS requirements change.

Reporting and Improvement

Findings from monitoring are shared with staff through briefings, CPD, and performance management discussions. Identified areas for development feed into the School Development Plan and Staff Development Plan.

Best practice is shared across schools across the company to ensure consistency and continuous improvement.

Appendix 1 – Example Planning Documents



Long Term Plan ART and DESIGN



Art and Design Intent

The Art curriculum is designed to enable pupils to explore their ideas by experimenting, inventing, and creating their own varied works of art using a range of materials.

We believe we provide an arts curriculum that engages, inspires, and challenges pupils, equipping them with the knowledge and skills to experiment, invent and create their own works of art. As pupils progress through the arts, they should be able to think critically and develop a more rigorous understanding of art and design.

As a school, we believe that art is a vital and integral part of pupils' education. It provides them with opportunities to develop a range of ways in which they can share and express their individual creativity, whilst learning about and making links with a wide spectrum of different types of art in our society. Art contributes to pupils' personal development in creativity, independence, judgement, and self-reflection.

		Autumn 1 (Sketching)	Autumn 2 (Digital Art)	Spring 1 (Sculpture)	Spring 2 (Printing)	Summer 1 (Painting)	Summer 2 (Texture)
Key Stage 1		Explore tools, surfaces and texture.	Visual documents	Observing shape and form	Printing patterns	Naming colours (primary and secondary)	Sorting and combing textiles
	Cycle 1	Observe and draw	Searching for images online	Modelling: Simple joins	Impressed images	Applying colour Darkening colour	Weaving and collage - overlapping
	Cycle 2	Light and dark	Combining image and text	Natural and manmade form	Different forms of printing <i>Relief printing / rubbings</i>	Mixing colours Tones of a colour	Simple and running stitches
Lower Key Stage		Experiment with pencil types	Basic editing—crop, resize, rotate	Shape, form, model and construct	Observe pattern and texture	Colour theory (wheels and mixing)	Observe and compare fabrics
	Cycle 1	Explore scale and proportion	Layering images	Modelling: Adhesives and methods of construction	Mono prints	Brush types and techniques	Fabrics to create mood, feeling and movement

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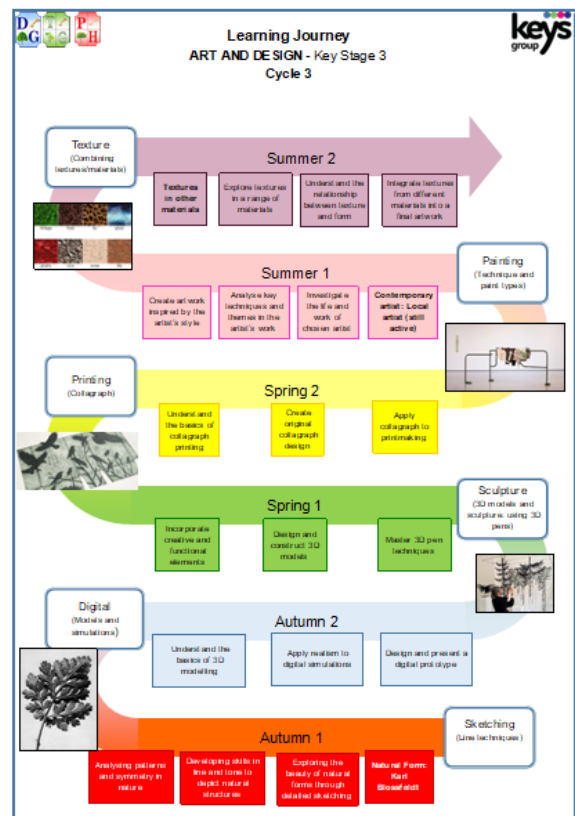
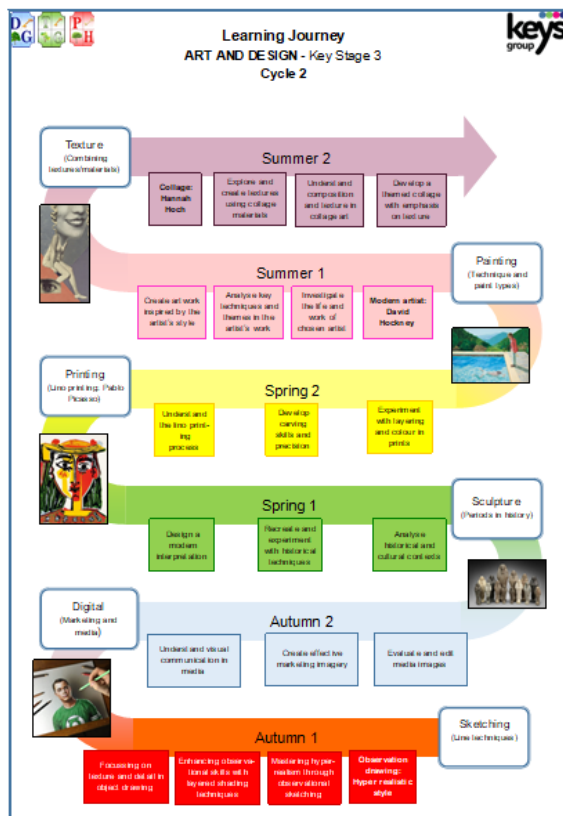
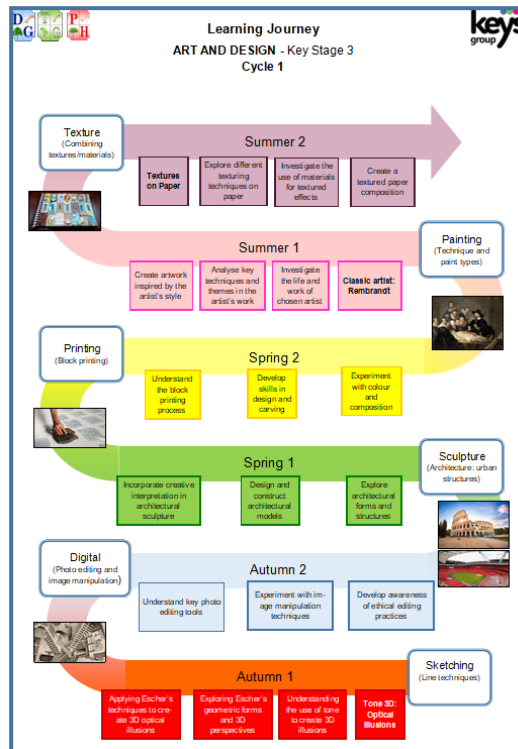


Long Term Plan ART and DESIGN



	Cycle 2	Represent texture	Combining image and text to fit a purpose	Replicating pattern and texture in 3D	Develop relief and impressed printing skills	Tint, tone and shade	Fabric dyes
Upper Key Stage 2		Perspective	Editing digital images using apps and software—recolor, effects, selective colouring and transparency tools.	Shape, form, model and join.	Building prints through drawing	Hue, tint, tone, shades and mood of colour	Finer thread and stitch types
	Cycle 1	Size, angle, and proportion	Creating using a digital canvas	Adhesives and methods of construction	Screen printing	Colour to express	Selecting and using materials
	Cycle 2	Depth	Creating visuals for a purpose	Aesthetic awareness	Design print (e.g. lino, Styrofoam or string)	Colour for purpose	Fabric making (batik, paints, tie dye)
Key Stage 3		Line Techniques				Techniques and Paint Types	Combing texture and materials
	Cycle 1	Tone: 3D	Photo Editing and Image Manipulation	3D Models and Sculpture	Blocking Printing	Art Movements and Periods in History: Artist Study	Textures in paper
	Cycle 2	Observational Drawings	Marketing and Media	Architecture	Lino Printing	Art Movements and Periods in History: Artist Study	Collage
	Cycle 3	Natural Form	Models and Simulations	Periods in History	Calligraphy Printing	Art Movements and Periods in History: Artist Study	Textures in other materials
Key Stage		Bronze / Silver Art Award: Student led projects across the 6 art forms					
		Sketching	Digital Art	Sculpture	Printing	Painting	Texture

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Half Term 1	
Topic: Sketching	
Lesson Focus / Knowledge	Vocabulary
Line Techniques 1. Mastery of Line Techniques: Learning Outcome: Pupils will demonstrate the ability to use a variety of line techniques (e.g., hatching, cross-hatching, stippling, contour, and expressive line) to create a range of effects in their sketches. They will confidently apply these techniques to depict texture, depth, and form in both observational and imaginative drawings. 2. Enhanced Observational Skills through Line: Learning Outcome: Pupils will improve their observational drawing skills by using different line techniques to accurately capture the structure and details of real-life subjects. They will be able to use line to show proportions, perspective, and shading in their sketches, enhancing the overall realism and accuracy of their drawings. 3. Development of Personal Style with Line: Learning Outcome: Pupils will develop their own unique style in sketching by experimenting with and refining different line techniques. They will show an understanding of how line can express mood and emotion, and how it can be used creatively to reflect personal expression in their artwork.	
Cycle 1 Tone 3D: Optical Illusions of M C Escher Understanding the Use of Tone to Create 3D Illusions Learning Outcome: Pupils will analyze M.C. Escher's use of tone in his work to create 3D illusions. They will demonstrate the ability to apply tonal shading techniques, such as hatching and cross-hatching, in their own sketches to depict depth and volume, inspired by Escher's use of light and shadow in his architectural and impossible structures. Exploring Escher's Geometric Forms and 3D Perspectives Learning Outcome: Pupils will explore Escher's manipulation of geometric shapes and patterns to create 3D effects on a 2D surface. They will practice sketching geometric structures, focusing on accurate perspective, proportions, and tone, and will create their own designs that incorporate Escher's approach to 3D illusions in a similar style. Applying Escher's Techniques to Create 3D Optical Illusions Learning Outcome: Pupils will use M.C. Escher's techniques of creating optical illusions, such as tessellations and impossible objects, to enhance their sketches. They will experiment with combining tone and line to achieve the effect of 3D depth and movement in their own drawings, learning to create complex and visually captivating 3D compositions inspired by Escher's work.	composition contour detail observational intricate geometric Recap Key Stage 2 vocab: line proportion tone shading texture perspective
Cycle 2 Observation Drawing : Hyper realistic Style Merelle Barenghi Mastering Hyperrealism through Observational Sketching Learning Outcome: Pupils will study Merelle Barenghi's hyperrealistic drawing style, paying particular attention to his use of detailed line work, shading, and texture. They will practice drawing real-life objects with high attention to detail, using similar techniques to Barenghi's, and will be able to demonstrate the ability to create a hyperrealistic observational sketch that emphasizes depth, texture, and accurate proportion. Enhancing Observational Skills with Layered Shading Techniques Learning Outcome: Pupils will experiment with layered shading techniques, such as gradual tone-building and blending, inspired by Barenghi's skillful use of light and shadow. They will apply these techniques to their own observational drawings to create a three-dimensional effect, focusing on accurately capturing how light interacts with objects in their surroundings. Focusing on Texture and Detail in Object Drawing Learning Outcome: Pupils will learn to observe and replicate intricate textures in objects, inspired by Barenghi's highly detailed sketches. They will practice sketching everyday items (such as food, tools, or packaging), focusing on capturing the texture, surface quality, and minute details of the objects. Pupils will be able to demonstrate the ability to convey realism in their observational sketches through careful attention to surface details and tonal variation.	
Cycle 3 Natural Form : Karl Blossfeldt Exploring the Beauty of Natural Forms through Detailed Sketching Learning Outcome: Pupils will study Karl Blossfeldt's close-up photographs of plants and natural forms, focusing on his ability to capture intricate details and patterns in nature. They will create observational sketches of natural objects, such as leaves, flowers, and seeds, with an emphasis on detail, texture, and the unique structural qualities of these forms. Developing Skills in Line and Tone to Depict Natural Structures Learning Outcome: Pupils will experiment with line and tone techniques to capture the intricate structures found in natural forms, inspired by Blossfeldt's photographic approach. They will use varied line weights, hatching, and shading to represent the textures, contours, and depth of natural objects, learning to enhance their observational drawings with accurate tonal variation. Analyzing Patterns and Symmetry in Nature Learning Outcome: Pupils will analyze the patterns and symmetry found in natural forms, as highlighted in Blossfeldt's work, and apply these	