Supporting children with SEND in Art

Cognition & Learning		Communication & Interaction	
Barrier	**Steps to Support**	**Barrier**	**Steps to Support**
Difficulty understanding instructions or remembering the steps involved in a task.	• Pre-teach key knowledge, skills and vocabulary. • Break learning into small, manageable steps using a visual task ladder. • Model each stage clearly under the visualiser. • Use visual instructions, photographs and examples of finished work. • Seat children close to the teacher during demonstrations. • Regularly recap previous learning using sketchbooks.	Difficulty communicating ideas, preferences or explaining artistic choices.	• Use visual prompts, photographs and examples to stimulate discussion. • Provide dual-coded word banks and sentence stems. • Model how to describe artwork using key vocabulary. • Offer choices through pointing, selecting images or demonstrating ideas practically. • Allow additional thinking and processing time.
Difficulty understanding or remembering art vocabulary.	• Explicitly teach and revisit key vocabulary. • Introduce equipment by name and demonstrate how it is used. • Provide dual-coded word banks (words and pictures). • Use sentence stems to support discussion and evaluation. • Encourage pupils to explain their process and choices to a partner.	Difficulty understanding or following verbal instructions.	• Use short, clear instructions alongside visual demonstrations. • Check understanding before pupils begin independent tasks. • Repeat and rephrase instructions where necessary. • Use visual task boards and Now and Next prompts. • Demonstrate rather than relying solely on verbal explanations.

Physical & Sensory		Social, Emotional & Mental Health	
Barrier	**Steps to Support**	**Barrier**	**Steps to Support**
Fine motor difficulties affecting drawing, painting, cutting or manipulating materials.	• Provide chunky and easy-grip art resources. • Offer paintbrushes with triangular grips. • Use table-top easels to support positioning and posture. • Secure paper and materials using masking tape or non-slip mats. • Provide adapted scissors and tools where needed. • Allow additional time to complete practical activities.	Lack of confidence or fear of making mistakes when creating artwork.	• Create a positive environment where experimentation and mistakes are part of learning. • Celebrate effort, creativity and individual progress rather than just finished outcomes. • Provide examples of different approaches and outcomes. • Offer opportunities to practise techniques before completing a final piece. • Give specific, positive feedback to build confidence.
Sensory sensitivities relating to textures, smells, sounds or different materials.	• Provide opportunities to explore tactile resources at a comfortable pace. • Introduce real objects and materials to touch, feel and smell where appropriate. • Offer alternative materials or tools if particular textures are uncomfortable. • Allow access to sensory breaks or quieter working spaces. • Explain and introduce unfamiliar materials before use.	Becoming overwhelmed by busy, stimulating art activities or environments.	• Maintain clear routines and predictable lesson structures. • Introduce unfamiliar equipment and materials gradually. • Provide access to a quieter working space where needed. • Keep activities short and varied to support concentration. • Allow pupils to work at their own pace and take sensory breaks.