

Tring School Art Department

Art is a major strength at Tring School and the standard is very high across all the Key Stages. Our traditional course enables students to access a wide range of art, artistic movements and genres, and allows them to become outstanding, creative individuals. We have high expectations of our staff and students, and we aspire for our students to become self-confident individuals with a passion for and knowledge and understanding of Art.

Staffing

We currently have 3 full time teachers. We also have 20 hours of technician time spread across the week.

Teaching

The department offers three hours of teaching a fortnight for Year 7, and two hours in Years 8 and 9. We have a programme of study which develops understanding of the formal elements and in which drawing plays a vital part. Students learn how to use clay, develop lino prints, work with mixed media, as well as essential skills such as colour theory, tone and form, and composition. Artist investigations inform the work and students are encouraged to develop an understanding of art history that goes beyond merely looking at the work. Artists such as Vincent van Gogh, Picasso, Kathe Kolwitz, David Hockney, Henry Moore and Julian Opie are among those studied throughout Key Stage 3. In Year 9, a project led course is introduced; students follow schemes of work similar to the GCSE model allowing greater independence and more individual outcomes.

We have a cohort of approximately 60 GCSE students each year. Due to the grounding in the formal elements during Key Stage 3, the standard at entry level is good. Target grades and expectations are high. In order to facilitate the high standard of work, teachers are expected and encouraged to personalise their teaching by developing their own schemes of learning. In Year 10, we take students to either the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge or the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, allowing them to draw from the collections. In Year 11, we visit Tate Britain; the focus for this trip is to gather information, resources and inspiration for their exam project which we begin in February.

A Level Art and Design is a popular subject. We have two classes each in Year 12 and Year 13. The new two year A Level course has allowed us to encourage our students to explore and experiment in greater depth and to work on new techniques and ideas. Year 12 is a time for pushing their abilities, for challenging themselves to work in different ways so that in Year 13 students are working at the top of their game. Teaching staff support this process by working with students in lessons and throughout the day; at lunchtimes, during study lessons, and after school. We have an open door policy for our Sixth Form and encourage them to discuss ideas with us whenever they can. A good proportion of our students go on to Art and Architecture degree courses all over the country.

We have been teaching Photography at A Level for 10 years. Photography requires students to be self-motivated and self-disciplined and we help them to become more adventurous, confident and mature practitioners and students. We encourage the taking of great photographs rather than spending time editing poor ones. As well as teaching the use of digital photography, there is a growing interest in the traditional techniques and our well-equipped dark room is very popular. This is an increasingly popular course and we have had large classes in Year 12 and in Year 13 over the last few years.

Facilities

The school is new; staff and students moved in in December 2021. We now have four big, fully equipped teaching rooms; a Pottery (with two kilns and a potters' wheel) that we also use as a regular teaching space, with a connecting dark room; a print room; and two general art rooms. All rooms have excellent storage and are bright, airy and spacious teaching areas.

Extracurricular

In the Sixth Form, students are offered the opportunity to go to Paris and Suffolk in alternate years. We sometimes swap Paris for Rome. Members of the team who teach Sixth Form and Photography would be expected to support these study trips. Although hard work, they are some of the most enjoyable parts of a very rewarding teaching experience.

Art clubs and extracurricular opportunities for students across all Key stages are well attended and we would like to be able to offer a wider range of these sessions, enabling students to extend their knowledge outside lessons.

Students have been invited to work with the Natural History Museum in Tring to photograph exhibits not usually available to members of the public. Afterwards, they have had their work displayed there. Several students have had their work shown in major exhibitions in London.

Tring School Art Department works closely with all the primary schools in the area. We undertake an Outreach programme in the Summer Term, and we are currently working on an exhibition; 'Spring! Reception to Year 13 Art' that will take place at Tring School in September 2026. A willingness and enthusiasm for working on projects like this is essential.

Moving forward

Tring School Art Department is a creative, happy and vibrant department that aims to create an enjoyable, inspirational and engaging environment. We are constantly improving our own practice in order to support the students we teach and to contribute to the wider school environment. As a department, we aspire to deliver a curriculum that not only fosters our students' artistic and intellectual curiosity, but also provides every child with the opportunity to become a creative member of society.

We continually develop provision, creating more opportunities for celebrating our students' artistic talents, and encouraging more students to take part in an artistic dialogue. We welcome colleagues who share our passion for Art, who are team players, have energy, enthusiasm and intellectual curiosity about all the arts, and who can bring new ideas and inspiration to the department and to our students.