

**The National Art Curriculum  
in the Primary Education of Cyprus**

Since 1960 there has been an established curriculum in Cyprus. This curriculum was discussed through a series of Educational Reforms, which led to the adoption of a broad and balanced curriculum aiming to help children to develop their full potential. The Cypriot Art Curriculum was revised in 1999. According to the revised Art Curriculum, pupils are divided in three levels according to their age:

- Level One which includes pupils aged six to eight years old
- Level Two which includes pupils aged 9 to 11 years old
- Level Three which includes pupils aged 12 to 15.

For each level there is a very brief and general Programme of Study and End of Key Stage Descriptions which specify the standard of performance expected by the majority of pupils at the end of each level and provide descriptive criteria for measuring children's achievement in these levels. Art is regarded as a foundation subject, indispensable to basic schooling thus it should be taught consistently and systematically in all classes.<sup>1</sup> The philosophy underlying this concept is that art is a way for pupils to give meaning to their experiences, thoughts and feelings and at the same time it can contribute to their personal and social development. Thus, the general purpose of art education is to help children practice art, learn about art and learn through art. This purpose is analysed in more specific aims, which are mainly focused on:

- a) The development of pupils' creativity and the development of their ability to handle and experiment with a variety of art materials and techniques.
- b) The development of pupils' visual perception and literacy and the adequate use of visual language.
- c) The development of pupils' ability to reflect and communicate ideas, opinions and feelings about their work and the work of others.
- d) The development of pupils' ability to value, respond and aesthetic appreciate works of art.
- e) The aesthetic cultivation of pupils and the formation of personal views concerning art and civilization.

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<sup>1</sup> All six years in primary education and the three first years of secondary education for eighty minutes on a certain day and time, once a week.

In order to provide more detailed guidance the Art Curriculum (1999) states

“An art lesson should be seen as a multidimensional unit, which will include investigation, practical work, experimentation, critical studies, related cultural subjects and terminology. Single dimensional approaches should be avoided in order to provide a global and balanced art teaching and give pupils opportunities to express themselves in a creative way.” (p.18).

It also emphasises strongly that critical studies are indispensable part of each art lesson. Introducing pupils to art works is seen as one of the best ways to develop an understanding of the work of artists and at the same time develop their appreciation of theirs and others peoples' cultural heritage. According to the Art Curriculum (1999) critical studies should include:

- a) The study of different works of art and techniques in relation to pupils' own work.
- b) The teaching of different approaches for aesthetic appreciation of artworks in order for pupils to develop a personal view.
- c) The exchange of ideas and thoughts about art and culture through discussion, visits to museums, galleries and artists' residences.

(Translation by Emilia Appiou)