

Mosaics come from a venerable tradition dating back to ancient Greece and Rome, yet today have a fresh new appeal. They are a colourful and lasting way to embellish school playgrounds, and can be used on external walls or areas of tarmac or incorporated into special features. The Growing Schools Garden featured three mosaics, two permanent ones set into the ground, and one short-term creation supported over the entrance.

CURRICULUM LINKS

Geography

KS1 – 2abcde, 3b, 4a, 7ab
KS2 – 1bc, 2abcdefg, 3cg
KS3 – 2abcde

Art & Design

KS1 – 1ab, 2abc, 3ab, 4abc, 5abcd
KS2 – 1abc, 2abc, 3ab, 4abc, 5abcd
KS3 – 1abc, 2abc, 3ab, 4abc, 5abcd

Design & Technology

KS1 – 1abcde, 2abcdef, 3ab, 4ab, 5abc
KS2 – 1abcd, 2abcdef, 3abc, 4ab, 5abc
KS3 – 1abcdefgh, 2abcde, 3abc, 4abcd, 7b
KS4 – 1abcdefg, 2abde, 3abcd, 4bde, 6abc

HOW TO MAKE a Mosaic

First decide where you want your mosaic. It could be on a floor or wall, or applied to much smaller objects like metal tables, pottery plant boxes, or a bird bath or drinking fountains. For the show garden, St John's Infant School created a large mosaic compass which also incorporated colours representing the four seasons. Selwood Middle School made a decorative mosaic bowl to catch the drips from the drinking fountain.

Encourage children to create their own designs. Successful designs can be complex or very simple – but they should be your own. However, doing some research before starting your design can be fascinating.

Investigate the Romano-British mosaics on the British Museum's website. Look at the mosaic floors and walls in older buildings in your area like churches and local town halls often incorporating heraldic beasts, medieval motifs and mottos. Even swimming pools are often lined with mosaic.

Once you have created your design, make an accurate scale drawing of it, ready to transfer to the final surface.

Prepare the surface thoroughly. With brickwork, brush down the surface and remove any loose material and dust, then seal with an exterior-grade sealant. Render uneven walls with a water- and frost-resistant cement first.

Alternatively, create the mosaic on a suitable base. St John's Infant School used 18mm thick marine plywood sealed around the edges. Once complete it was embedded in the asphalt play area.

Transfer your design carefully onto your clean, dry, prepared surface using coloured chalk or pencil marks. Group your mosaic pieces according to size, colour or type, so that you can pick them out easily and quickly once the adhesive is applied. You can use ready-made tile pieces or make your own.

If you cut your own pieces out of broken tiles, ensure everyone working on mosaics wears fine latex gloves and eye protection, as ceramic fragments are extremely sharp.

Spread a layer of tile adhesive onto the surface and stick on the pieces of mosaic according to your pattern. Then grout the entire surface of the design, smoothing the grouting material by hand all over it – wear

gloves for protection from sharp edges. Wipe off the excess grouting with a dry cloth and small scrubbing brush. Once it is dry, clean it with a damp cloth to remove any residue of grit, grouting or dirt, and polish it dry.

If you like the mosaic look, but don't want to make a permanent feature, the same effect can be created by glueing paper cut-outs or card squares onto your mosaic design, and then covering the completed design with varnish or clear plastic laminate. Technically this will be an appliqué, but the end product can be very impressive and much less expensive than mosaics made of conventional materials.

Chaddersley Corbett School Primary School, Worcestershire, produced the large sign over the Growing Schools Garden entrance using laminated mosaic appliqué.

Each child drew a flower, a mini-beast or a garden tool. Their drawings were then cut out and laminated individually, arranged on a pre-painted semicircular board and stuck down. The letters spelling out "Welcome to the Growing Schools Garden" were cut out of artificial grass donated by a local greengrocer.

Although such paper or card mosaics are not weatherproof in the long term, they work well indoors or can be created for outdoor use on special occasions such as open days or celebrations.

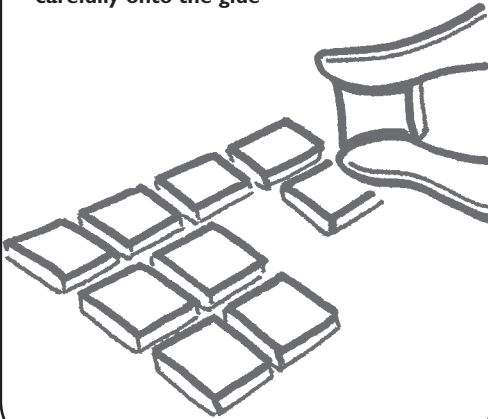
1 Prepare your surface thoroughly



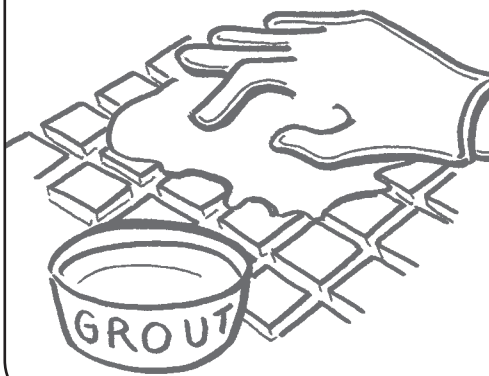
2 Spread the tile adhesive



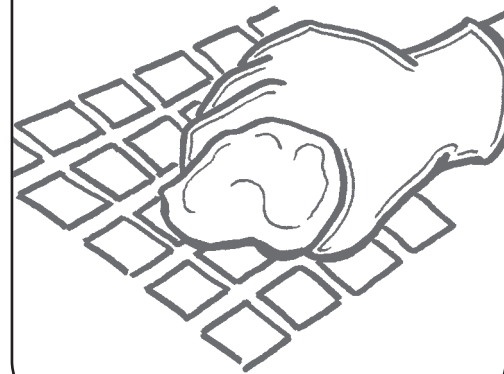
3 Place your mosaic pieces carefully onto the glue



4 Spread the grout all over the finished design



5 Once dry, remove excess grout and polish the mosaic clean



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For more on Romano-British mosaics: WWW.THEBRITISHMUSEUM.AC.UK

For more about making mosaics, and inspirational ideas: **BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO MOSAICS** by Peter Massey & Anne Slater published by Search Press

ISBN 0-85532-889-4 **TEACH YOURSELF MOSAICS** by June Mc Morlarland Hunter with Louise Carpenter published by Hodder & Stoughton ISBN 780-340-8009-11

MOSAIC TECHNIQUES - A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO PROFESSIONAL RESULTS by Emma Biggs published by Ward Lock ISBN 0-7063-7803-2