Nativity of Jesus in Art - Colour

Key Vocabulary

Shade – When a colour is made darker by adding black, e.g. a shade of blue (dark blue).

Tint – When a shade is made lighter by adding white, e.g. a tint of blue (light blue).

Warm/cool colours – Yellow, orange and red are warm colours. These colours create a warm mood. Blue, green and grey are cool colours. These colours create a cold mood.

Method – A way of doing something, for example the steps for painting a picture.

Sketch – A rough drawing or painting, possibly used to complete a finished drawing or painting.
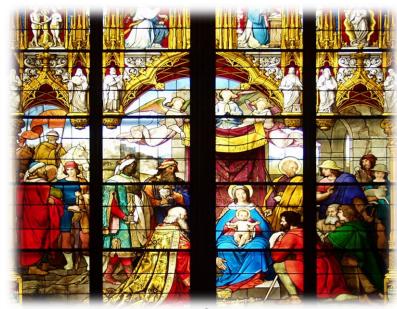
Religious work of art – Shares a religious message. It might portray a sacred story or express an artist's faith.

Style – Some paintings seem to show exactly what an artist saw, while others focus on exploring shapes or expressing feelings.

Technique – The way in which an artist creates their own.

The Nativity
Federico Barrocci, 1597

The Adoration of the Shepherds and the Magi
Cologne Cathedral, late 19th-century

This term children will be focusing on the use of colour in art and developing the following skills…

- Fragment study (a small part of the example artwork).
- Light and shade
- Light sources
- Shadows created by various light sources
- Perspective
- Experimenting with colour
- Evaluating art

A Brief History

The Nativity of Jesus has been a major subject of Christian art since the 4th century. The artistic depictions of the Nativity, celebrated at Christmas, are based on the narratives in the bible and in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. Christian art includes many representations of the Virgin Mary and the Christ Child.

The Nativity has been depicted in many different media, both pictorial and sculptural. Pictorial forms include murals, panel paintings, manuscript illuminations, stained glass windows and oil paintings. Sculptural representations of the Nativity include free-standing sculptures which may be grouped together into a Nativity scene within or outside a church, home, public place or natural setting.