Colour wavelengths

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It is important that colours are used in the right way to create balance between long and short wavelength colours.

Long wavelength colours – referring to the different wavelengths of light that are interpreted by the human eyes as colour – are brighter, bolder colours – like red, yellow and orange.

These are actually seen before other colours; in fact, sports cars often use red because the colour approaches at a faster speed, making the car appear to be driving faster.

They can be great for gaining attention for a short period, but overuse can have the reverse effect. For example, if you have a red wall at the front of your classroom, children may be more attentive and focused for the first 10-15 minutes of your lesson.

However, exposure for a prolonged period can result in overstimulation, causing children to lose focus and become agitated.

Shorter wavelength colours – like purple, blue and green – have much more calming effects. They have been shown to reduce anxiety and aggression, as well as lower heart rate and blood pressure.

Green is at the centre of the wavelength spectrum, which means that we can visually process it more easily and therefore see more shades. It is believed to be a great stress reliever, and is linked to enhanced creative thinking.