

# STILLNESS INFANT SCHOOL

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Frequently Asked Questions

# What is the ethos of the school?

- We are a Values Based School.
- Our three core values of Learning, Respect and Equality branch complimentary values which guide our learning and behaviour.
- The children learn a value a month through modelling by the adults, assemblies, stories and discussion. In this way, their emotional literacy grows and they become able to express their feelings and make positive choices.
- Our values are used as part of a positive behaviour policy. We recognise that children are learning through the mistakes that we all make. Children will tell you that mistakes are ok, because that is how we learn to make the right choices.



# Do we have wrap around care?

In a word, yes! We understand how important wrap around care can be for many families.

There is an Infants breakfast club run by members of the Infant team, meaning the children start the day with familiar faces, in a calm environment that sets them up for the school day. Breakfast Club starts at 7.45AM.

When school finishes there is general after school club run by Topmark, where the children can play, have snacks and generally wind down. There are also a variety of specialist clubs that run for an hour, including a number of different types of art and music clubs, chess, yoga, gymnastics, dance and football. After those clubs finish, children can then join the general after school club if that suits their families' needs. After school care runs until 6PM.

# How is the children's learning organised?

It's organised into topics, one per half term, so each year group will have 6 different topics over the course of the year.

The topics have been designed to be engaging as possible, so we can hook all the children in and they can see how different subjects can dove tail and support each other.

We always try to ground the topics in the children's own experiences and the local area; so earlier on topics might be about the children's families, the local area or the senses they experience the world through. We support these with some trips up to the Post Office to post letters or storytelling at the library, before widening the learning at Blythe Hill and Ladywell Fields and topics that take in more of London, such as the Great Fire London and the Great Exhibition and Crystal Palace. We are always looking at ways to improve our topics and as well as reflection from the teachers, we use feedback from children and parents to help us with this.

# What trips or visitors do you have?

To support each of our topics we have at least one big trip or visitor that helps underpin the topic.

We often open a topic with a trip or visitor to really get the children fired up for the learning. This might be a trip to London Zoo or the Tate Modern or a visit to the school from a travelling planetarium or The Bug Man bringing lots of creepy crawlies for the children to hold, if they dare! As well as being fun, these trips and visits really help the children engage with the topic and are a great stimulus for their learning, as well as a great shared experience for the children and the parents who come along to help.

We also like to wrap up the topic with a theme day, which often involves dressing up, reflecting on what we've learnt during the topic and some special events like parades and specially themed year group discos.

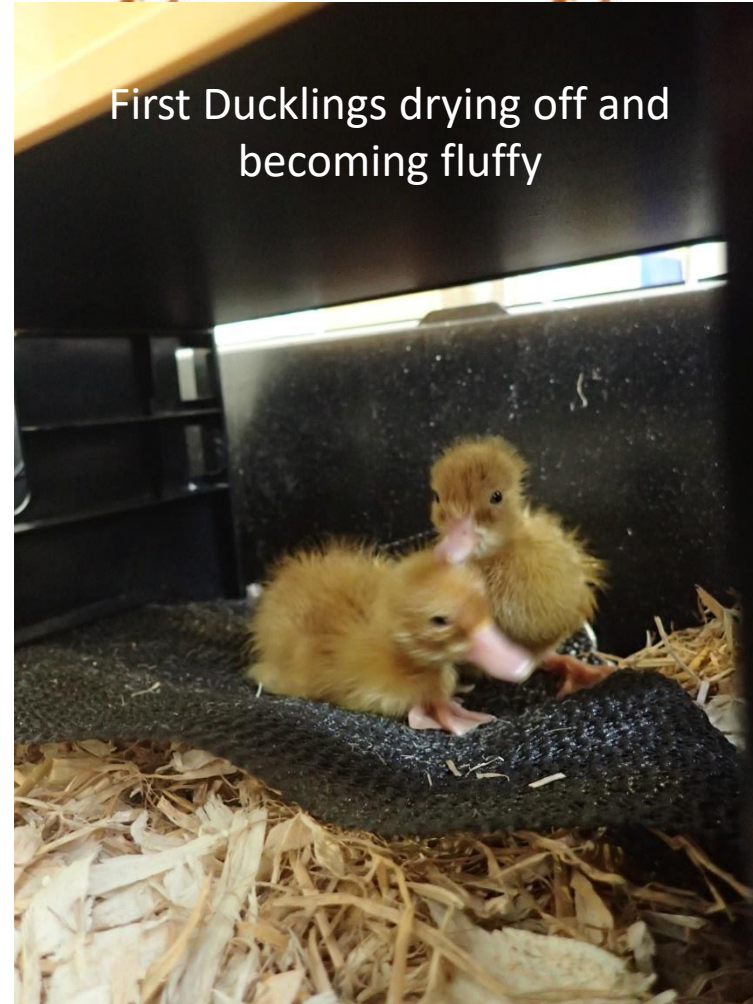
# American Pekin Duck Eggs



Empty egg shells



First Ducklings drying off and becoming fluffy









# Tate Modern 1960's Topic





# How are the children taught to read?

Reading is the key to everything, and, after the children's wellbeing, is our number one priority.

We take a variety of approaches that compliment each other and hope will not only get the children reading, but give them a life long love of books!

We immerse the children in the world of books; with daily (if not more than daily!) story-times, attractive book corners and small world tables with puppets and dressing up clothes for the children to act out the stories they've heard, before starting on the phonics. Don't worry if the world of phonics is a bit of a mystery, we support parents and carers with workshops and videos of what phonics is and how you can support at home. We teach phonics to the whole class, as well as in smaller teacher led groups, as well as making sure every child is read with one-to-one (at least) twice a week, with their class teacher and class teaching assistant, that continues on to the end of Year Two.

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As well as teaching the children phonics, we also practice reading whole words from memory that can't be sounded out (tricky words) and well as shared reading, when a text is displayed large on the class interactive white board, so the class can read the text together and the teacher can highlight not just phonics and tricky words, but punctuation, layout and the style of text (fiction or non-fiction) as well as questions around comprehension.



# What are some of the things we do to help foster a life long love of books?

We've invested heavily in books, making sure that we have high quality texts for both the reading scheme books that the children bring home as well as the 'family' books that they bring home to have read to them.

Each class has a Reading Big Book, that children can have pieces of work responding to the books they're reading in class stuck in and be shared with the rest of the class and parents and carers, either at parental consultations (what used to be called parents evenings) or when parents and carers drop into the class after concerts or special assemblies. This really helps the children show off how emotionally invested in the stories we've been reading they've become and is a great way to look back over their reading journey in each class.

We have an author of the month each month, launched by a special assembly, with the author's books read across the school for the rest of the month.

And, of course, we do lots of dressing up every World Book Day!

Today at Stillness we had a very special visitor

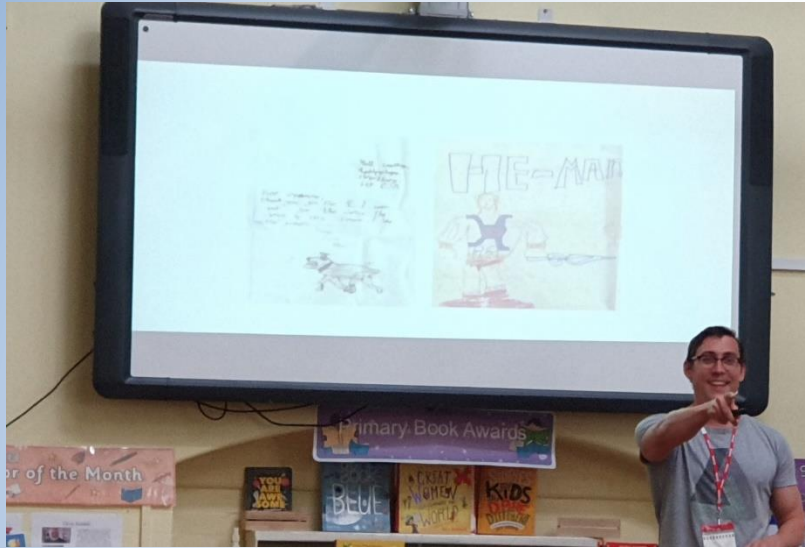
# Vashti Harrison





We were lucky enough to have a visit from author

# Tom Percival



Tom told us that if you want to be good at something, you have to keep practising. Like our school value Perseverance

# Is Art an important part of your curriculum?

Very much so! We really do believe in a broad and balanced curriculum and art is a central part of it.

We have a specialist member of staff who delivers weekly art lessons to each of the Year One and Two Classes as well as helping Reception and Nursery with their larger art projects. The art lessons, as well as supporting the topics that each year group is learning about, build over the course of the year to allow each child to achieve a different level of the Arts Awards – a nationally recognised qualification, (similar to 'Grades' in music) that if they keep up can eventually lead to UCAS points.

As well as weekly art lessons there are large art events in the school that bring all the year groups together and often end with an unveiling of the work or exhibitions that parents and carers can attend. These include large scales pieces linked to Remembrance Day, the transforming of our hall in the build up to Christmas and the National Gallery's Take One Picture program, which sees schools up and down the country respond to the same stimulus in very different ways!



# Mrs Gunstone's Art Room



# What is the Music provision like in the school?

In a word; strong!

Children in Year One and Two have dedicated music lessons each week delivered by a specialist music teacher. This involves being taught the mechanics of singing, so the children really know how to use their voice as well as playing a range of instruments. They also learn about a variety of different musical forms, including classical, jazz, world and pop to help them appreciate just how diverse the world of music is. Children have the opportunity to learn to play the drums, xylophone, and percussion instruments. They enjoy performing at concerts in school at key times in the school year, as well as opportunities for performing as part of a larger choir with other schools.

We have specialist companies that deliver ukulele lessons and our Rocksteady Band.

Often we link music with our art, for example, the BBC Ten Pieces , or learning about the work of Kandinsky. The idea of music appears everywhere in Kandinsky's work.

# How much PE do the children do?

A good amount on top of their daily exercise!

In Year One and Two, the children have two main PE sessions a week, led by specialist coaches. Each half term the focus changes; from athletics, team sports, ball skills, yoga, dance and gymnastics.

We also are believers in the Daily Mile – a national initiative to get kids running more, bringing up fitness levels and getting them ready to learn.



# Sports Day 2019

Everyone's waiting for the races to start



Our adults joined in as well



# What are the school meals like?

Great! Many of the staff choose to eat them too (although they do get bigger portions!)

The meals are balanced and healthy, with several choices of main course and dessert each day, as well as pasta and the salad bar always available. Yogurt and fruit are always on offer.

If a child has a specific dietary need we can put together individual dietary plan with our kitchen team.



# Lunch time in the sun



The children enjoying the lunch time activities in  
the late March sun



## Nellie Our school dog



Nellie has a special area in the office where she is cared for by Mrs Grimes and Mrs Bannister. She enjoys a good old snooze in her bed when she is not working.