

Our Art Curriculum

Why this?

"If you want to master a habit, the key is to start with repetition, not perfection."

We designed and created a curriculum that ensures each child is given a good diet of Art in all its disciplines. We aim to deliver a curriculum that allows children to practice skills over and over again, not just over the year, but also over their Early Years and KS1 education. We highlight to children the need to practise a skill a number of times in order to improve and perfect. With each revisit to these skills, we aim to move that child forward. For example, in Year R, children are encouraged to colour mix and experiment with what new colours they can make. In Year One, they are taught to mix colours to make a given secondary colour, tint or shade; they are mixing for a purpose. In Year Two, they are asked to mix colours to make a spectrum of colour, thinking of warm and cool colours to achieve a desired outcome.

Our curriculum lends itself to make links with other areas by giving the child a brief that involves some level of problem-solving (for example self-portraits are taught with science and maths in mind, asking children to study their faces to see where they should position their eyes, nose, and mouth, and to look at shape and size). We encourage discussion, questioning, and utilises P4C skills in terms of reflecting on works by famous artists.

Above all, however, we have designed our curriculum to be fun, practical and engaging, ensuring that children are enthusiastic when it comes to developing their creativity. We put emphasis on the process and the experiences the children are given.

Why here?

"Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow." — Albert Einstein

We have designed our curriculum based in the needs of the children coming into our school by looking at what is and what is not on offer in the local area. We live in an area of natural beauty, and with the forest on our doorstep. We try to encourage the love of the outdoors by including links to animals, plants and natural materials. Forest School also helps to show children how Art can be created outside of a studio by providing an 'outside classroom', something that is fostered from the moment they step inside of Stoke Park when they begin Year R. We have engaged with projects that try to

teach children about the importance of preserving the environment, specifically their environment. We also know the area is lacking in places, such as Art galleries and sculpture,

so try to bring these experiences into the classroom, ensuring children are being introduced to famous artists and their work.

Our curriculum also aims to work on the general needs of the children coming into our school. We know we need to focus on gross and fine motor skills as previous data has shown core stability and the ability to hold a pencil in tripod grip is something our children find challenging. Therefore, we pay special attention to drawing, painting with a paintbrush, manipulating malleable materials, to try and build strength into their hands. We also know that some of our children find focus and attention difficult so we aim to deliver a curriculum that has the children doing and exploring, while building on their stamina to listen with visual prompts over their infant school education. Personal and social skills have been especially important over the last few years as the children coming in have had gaps in their pre-school and Early Year's education. We therefore deliver a curriculum that adopts the P4C pedagogy to encourage speaking, listening, sharing, understanding, and acceptance of different viewpoints. We try to include art projects that are collaborative, particularly when working in the outdoor environment. We also know some of our children need subjects like art to reduce cognitive load and encourage mindfulness, particularly since COVID and the price of living crisis, which can have effect on home life and mental health.

Why Now?

"Continuous improvement is better than delayed perfection." – Mark Twain

Our curriculum is delivered with the intent to build on what has been taught before. We know children will be at different starting points when we begin a new unit of work, however we want every child included and to be the best that they can be. We plan based on what a child hasn't yet achieved so learning is progressive. This means delivering a curriculum that seeks to give every child the same opportunities but also tailors to children's individual needs.

We also want to maintain their love and enthusiasm for creativity and art, which means making our curriculum fun, engaging and practical. We question children when they are doing, 'in the moment' to gauge their understanding and to encourage them to think more deeply. We also keep Art journals so they are able to look back at their successes and recall the skills they have already learnt. The Early Years particularly enjoy getting out their learning journals to look over what they have already done, which is encouraged by their adults.

Teams discuss their units of work with each other as well as with the subject manager to ensure every child is receiving a curriculum that is progressive and covers all disciplines of Art (not just drawing and painting). Teachers are also adaptive; if something arises (such as the queen's jubilee), art will be used as a tool to experience these events, even if it means changing the original planning.