



Hill West Primary School

Pedagogical Newsletter – February 2021

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In this issue:

Covid-19

National Curriculum
Assessments

Reading

Home and Blended
Learning

Self-Care

Good or better
progress

Safeguarding – Live
Lessons

Parental Engagement



Reminders:

School closes for half term
on Thursday 11th
February.

School reopens on
Monday 22nd February
for those in attendance
before half term.

Covid-19

Covid-19 has obviously had a major impact on the lives of us all and in many ways continues to do so. I want to thank you all for your patience, understanding and support at this very difficult time. Keeping the staff, our children and of course all of you as safe as possible remains my number one consideration. Our pupils have shown incredible resilience in the face of adversity whether learning from home or coming into school. We understand that this third National Lockdown feels much tougher than those that have come before. Inevitably, this virus is persistent and virulent and I would ask that you continue to take all the necessary precautions to keep yourself and your family safe. That may be keeping your child at home, it may be wearing a face covering to school when dropping off or collecting and it will most certainly involve keeping your distance from others. If you need to talk, please just let us know. We are here to help. Please just do what you can and what is right for your family at this time.



Cancellation of 2021 National Curriculum Assessments

In 2021, the early years foundation stage (EYFS) profile, for children in Reception, will not be mandatory but the Standards and Testing Agency will require schools to use their best endeavours to complete it and provide the information to year 1 teachers and parents, if at all possible. This will be a judgement for schools and practitioners to make depending on their individual circumstances.

At Hill West we recognise that the EYFS profile is a valued and crucial tool, which supports children's development and their transition from reception into year 1. As such we intend to assess our Reception children against the Early Learning Goals at the end of this year.

The following assessments, scheduled between April and July 2021, have been cancelled

- KS1 teacher assessments
- KS2 tests and teacher assessment

- Phonics screening check for Year 1 (Yr 2 resits)
- All statutory trialling

We will of course continue to use assessment to inform teaching, to enable us to give information to you on your child's attainment in their statutory annual report and to support transition of KS2 pupils to secondary school. We are being strongly encouraged to continue to use past test papers in our assessment of pupils and of course those children in Year 6 have on-line access through Monster SATs to SAT style tests. We would encourage you to work through these at home with your Year 6 child.

These arrangements will apply for summer 2021 only, as the DfE are planning for a full programme of primary assessments to take place in the 2021/22 academic year. This will include the introduction of the statutory reception baseline assessment and multiplication tables check, as previously announced.



Reading

Evidence suggests that children who read for enjoyment every day not only perform better in reading tests than those who don't, but also develop a broader vocabulary, increased general knowledge and a better understanding of other cultures (Pearson). In fact, reading for pleasure is more likely to determine whether a child does well at school than their social or economic background. Learning to read is about listening and understanding as well as working out what's printed on the page. Through hearing stories, children are exposed to a wide range of words. This helps them build up their own vocabulary. During this lockdown Read aloud to your child.

Read yourself. Surround your child with books (actual books or texts found on-line).

"Reading for pleasure is the single biggest factor in success later in life, outside of an education. Study after study has shown that those children who read for pleasure are the ones who are most likely to fulfil their ambitions. If your child reads, they will succeed – it's that simple." Bali Rai

Home and Blended Learning

In the autumn term we worked hard to review how effective our remote learning offer had been during the first national lockdown and developed a rationale for how we would approach home and blended learning should it be necessary again during the pandemic. This has led to our remote offer that you will be experiencing if your child is learning from home.

The remote curriculum: what is taught to pupils at home?

- We teach the same curriculum remotely as we do in school wherever possible and appropriate.
- Our remote learning provision is coherent and carefully sequenced and mirrors the curriculum which would have been taught in school at any given point in the year.
- We have needed to make some adaptations in some subjects, for example P.E. We would encourage families to take daily exercise in line with the Government restrictions as well as following the suggestions in our remote learning resources.

Reading

Reading remains a key focus in our home and blended learning approach. This will support access to the rest of the curriculum. We encourage pupils to read aloud in a range of situations, read daily for pleasure, assess daily phonic/spelling/grammar lessons and be read to by an adult (parent / teacher / TA).

How long can I expect work set by the school to take my child each day?

The Department for Education recommends that schools set work that is of equivalent length to the core teaching pupils would receive in school. This includes both remote teaching and independent work.

- In **Reception, Year 1 and Year 2**, this is equivalent to **3 hours a day**, on average, across the school cohort. This means that children in year 2 may expect work set by the school to take more time than children in reception.
- In **Year 3, 4, 5 and 6**, this is equivalent to **4 hours a day**.
- In addition to engaging with remote teaching and independent tasks each day, it's important to encourage your child to engage in social interaction and age appropriate activities as well as regular exercise (mentioned above).

How will you assess my child's work and progress?

At Hill West we know that assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process. Assessment is the means by which we monitor the progress of pupils and evaluate the effectiveness of the quality of learning and teaching. It involves making judgements about a pupil's level of knowledge, understanding and attainment in processes, skills, knowledge and understanding in relation to the Early Learning Goals or the National Curriculum Programmes of Study and then deciding on the most effective teaching strategies to adopt, to formulate the next steps.

During this period of remote learning, your child's teacher will use a variety of methods to assess progress:

- Highly effective **oral feedback** will be provided during live learning.
- **Quizzes and retrieval practice** – children will enjoy completing these which will help them to identify their own strengths and areas for development.
- **Chatroom discussions or the chat function** will be used for children to submit answers so that the teacher can check for understanding.
- **Peer and self-assessed feedback** will be planned for in the live-learning sessions.
- **Show and tell** – children will be encouraged to show and discuss work they have completed and their confidence level in relation to the learning objective and task.
- **Submitting work** – parents can email completed work into school to be forwarded to the relevant teacher.

SAFEGUARDING – Live Lessons

Thank you for discussing the safe participation in our live lessons with your child or children. As you know the behaviour expected of all pupils in our video sessions is the same as it would be in school. It has been pleasing to see that all of our children have been ready for their learning, in front of a suitable device, with a pen and paper before the lessons have commenced. Most children have benefitted from opening the meeting link, with your support. Children have used their own name so they are easily identifiable.

When asked to mute themselves the children have excellently obliged and many of them have used the chat functions with dexterity. Although the children have been excited they have listened carefully to their teacher and waited to take their turn.

Just a friendly reminder that when a webcam is being used, anyone who may appear in the background should be wearing suitable clothing. Similarly, if your child has unmuted the call, remember all attendees will be able to hear the conversations taking place in your home. I would like to thank you all for supporting your child to access their remote learning and ask that if you have any questions about the live sessions you contact school so we can ask the teacher to contact you privately.

I think it is fair to say that we are achieving our goals which were to enable the children to connect with their peers and teacher, to have fun and of course to learn and make progress.



Self-Care



This week heralds the start of Children's Mental Health week yet this the third National Lockdown of this pandemic sees us isolated, again, from friends and family and in many cases balancing the demands of work with full time child care. This is tough – there is no denying it and as such it is more important than ever that we take care of ourselves so that we can in turn, take care of others.

The true definition of self-care is actually very broad. Self-care is any action that you do to improve your health. According to the [National Institute of Mental Illness \(NAMI\)](#), all self-care habits fall under the following six umbrella categories:

- Physical
- Psychological
- Emotional
- Spiritual
- Social
- Professional

Because self-care and mental health are connected, neglecting one can have a negative impact on the other. Sometimes, parental stress or burnout may become severe enough that it becomes necessary to contact the GP. In many cases, a parent might be neglecting their needs because they worry that doing so is selfish or self-absorbed. Here are a few signs that someone may be feeling stressed or overwhelmed and in serious need of self-care:

- Change in sleeping or eating habits
- Headaches, dizziness, or stomach upset
- Feeling unsafe, unhappy, guilty, vulnerable, anxious, or lonely
- Difficulty concentrating
- Withdrawn or irritated, crying or anger outbursts

Actually the very best way to teach your child about self-care is to model it yourself. Self-care can have the same effects in maintaining your child's mental and physical health as it does for you. Often, as parents, we're so busy trying to solve problems that we're stuck in "doing mode"—trying to get more and more done—when switching to "being mode" may be just the break we need.

For some suggestions of self-care activities visit

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/shyness-is-nice/201403/seven-types-self-care-activities-coping-stress>

Defining Good or Better Progress in Learning

Good or better progress at Hill West means that children know more and remember more and this is measured against the objectives set out in their year group curriculum and their starting points. For example, a child who achieves all of the objectives in Year 1 and then again meets all of the objectives in Year 2 has made good progress.

Many pupils at Hill West make accelerated rates of progress (better than good). This means that, against their starting points and curriculum, they have exceeded the expectation. For example, they may achieve all of the objectives in Year 1 and then go on to be working at Greater Depth against the objectives by the end of Year 2.

For children working to a personalised curriculum due to an identified special educational need, good or accelerated progress will be measured against their individual starting points.

Parental Engagement

At Hill West we value the opportunities we get to engage with you as we know and believe that by working together collaboratively we can achieve the very best for your child. Due to the pandemic opportunities for engagement have been limited this year and because of this we have decided to use our Staff in-service training day on Friday 12th February to make consultation phone calls to each of our families.

These phone calls will be to discuss your child and will be an opportunity for us to share information with you and for you to share information with us. We will want to celebrate your child's achievements at this very difficult time, discuss their well-being, learning and progress and if at all possible have a quick one-to-one conversation with your child too.

