

THE HILL WEST HERALD


HILL WEST
Primary
FOUR OAKS



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ACE; Ambitious, Curious, and Ever-respectful



Message from the Head Teacher

By Dr Beth Clarke

As you will know, we underwent our most recent Ofsted Inspection on 9th and 10th March this year. Many of you submitted honest feedback on what we do well and what you feel we need to work on in order to be even better. This feedback was incredibly useful for inspectors as well as school leaders. Thank you to all parents who responded to the questionnaire and to those who have met with me subsequently. I am not yet able to share the outcome of the inspection with you, as the report has to go through several stages of quality assurance with Ofsted before it is released. **In the meantime, I wanted to send a heartfelt thank you to all of you and to our amazing staff.** Nothing brings into sharper focus the dedication and commitment of our incredible staff team than an Ofsted Inspection.



If there is one thing I am in no doubt about, it is that we have an incredible teachers and support staff at Hill West. J. Richard Hackman, in more than 40 years of research, uncovered a groundbreaking insight: What matters most to team collaboration is not the personalities, attitudes, or behavioral styles of team members. Instead, what teams need to thrive are certain “enabling conditions.” Has and Mortensen (2016) argue that three of Hackman’s conditions—a **compelling direction, a strong structure, and a supportive context**—continue to be particularly critical to team success. In fact, today, in the midst of a pandemic, those three requirements demand more attention than ever.

We also know that the best teachers have a set of desirable traits. They are able to spark connections with students on a personal level. They are warm, caring, and open individuals, who help students, feel comfortable in the classroom and happy to share their ideas in a supportive learning environment, creating a true sense of belonging for EVERY child. Great teachers communicate effectively and in a timely manner with parents. If there are problems during the day, a great teacher will reach out to the parents by phone or email to discuss the issues. Great teachers have a collaborative spirit, working effectively with colleagues and taking on suggestion or criticism. We know also that great teachers have excellent knowledge of subject matter, all 11 subjects in the primary phase. Great teachers not only work with their existing knowledge, but also strive to stay on top of the latest research in their field. This helps them make the subject come alive for pupils. Effective teaching involves a great deal of planning and organisation. The very best teachers put in the effort to prepare their lessons thoroughly.

A great teacher sets high expectations in the classrooms to help students reach their full potential. They set standards of mutual respect, so that pupils know that when our ACE values are not upheld it will be noticed and responded to. Great teachers believe that every student has the ability to learn, and are willing to push them to do their best. Great teachers are highly adaptable. No two days are the same in teaching, and students can be unpredictable. If a lesson isn’t working, or there is some disruption to the learning, a good teacher is able to shift gears when necessary, demonstrating great flexibility. Our teachers and our support staff demonstrate these skills and attributes in all of their work and are committed to refining and developing still further their practice for the benefit of our pupils.

Thank you so much, teachers, teaching assistants and support staff for all of your tremendous efforts so far this year and especially during our inspection.



I have come to believe
that a great teacher
is a great artist
and that teaching might even be
the greatest of the arts
since the medium
is the human mind and spirit.

—John Steinbeck

Arthur Terry Learning Partnership News; ATLP Ukrainian Appeal

By Dr Beth Clarke

To have war return in such a way to the edges of Europe is very distressing for many of us, especially as we empathise with the Ukrainian people and the growing humanitarian crisis. We know that millions of people have no safe place to call home. More than 3 million have already left Ukraine, while countless more are still trapped underground, taking cover from the shelling, and desperate for a safe escape.



Hundreds of thousands of people still have no food, no water, no medical care, and no heat or electricity. A number of charities, including UNICEF and the British Red Cross have been working around the clock to get critical care to those who need it most, both in Ukraine and its bordering countries. But with recent freezing temperatures, and ongoing violence, this has been particularly problematic.

More than half of Ukraine's 7.5 million children have now been forced to flee the ongoing violence. Homes, schools, water supplies and hospitals have been damaged or destroyed. Children have been separated from their families, and hundreds of thousands of people have been left without clean water, food or electricity. Explosives are a daily threat to children's lives. Unicef have been working tirelessly to keep children safe and are determined to reach the most vulnerable children and families. In particular Unicef are;

- helping to provide families with access to clean water
- providing life-saving supplies to support families who have been forced to flee
- delivering vital medical supplies to 49 hospitals across Ukraine, improving access to healthcare for 400,000 mothers, babies and other children
- increasing the number of mobile child protection teams to ensure that children have access to care and support

Last month, the ATLP launched our united Ukrainian Appeal; families, and staff from across our partnership of schools showed "overwhelming generosity of spirit" by donating much-needed items to Ukrainian refugees. Our ATLP schools appealed for essential goods like nappies, formula milk, shoes, and pet food, to send to those most in need. The amount donated was simply staggering.

Anna Balson, ATLP's Director of Education (Primary), said the response from the learning community was "incredible." She said, "I'm overwhelmed by the generosity of spirit, and incredibly proud to be part of such a compassionate and caring partnership of schools. Thanks to everybody for their donations – this will make such a difference."

She added:

"Our children have been at the heart of this appeal. They can see other children and families in need of support, and they want to help in whatever way they can. The huge number of boxes and bags filling our schools shows that even during the worst of times we are seeing the best of our schools and communities once again."

Pictured right are pupils from Hill West with the great mountain of donations. Thank you.



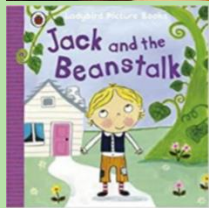
Easter Activities at Hill West

By Mrs Lisa Pardo and Miss Sophie Beardmore

Can you believe it's Easter already, because we can't!! Throughout the last few weeks, Reception have been learning all about Spring; signs of Spring, what animals will be born in Spring and completing lots of different Spring craft, including recreating Van Gogh's Sunflower painting, using different painting techniques to create different effects. The children have also been excelling in their writing about spring using their Grapheme Phoneme Correspondences and tricky word knowledge to write full sentences, using a: capital letter, fingers spaces and full stops.



The children also had the pleasure of experiencing their very first festival school dinner, with our Easter Lunch, on Monday 4th April.



With Spring, comes Easter and we all know how much the children love Easter and the celebration this festival brings!

We have shared the Easter story with the children and talked about what chicks and chocolate eggs represent, as well as introducing them to the key vocabulary; sprout, hatch, lifecycle, celebration and Jesus.

The celebration of Easter has provided many exciting opportunities for learning across the curriculum.



What a wonderful way to start our Easter celebrations!

On Wednesday, our Reception children could not wait to show off their fantastic homemade Easter bonnets! Leading up to the event, there was a lot of excited discussion within Robins and Wrens about how the bonnets had been made at home. The children chatted with animation about baby chicks, fresh flowers, ribbon, mini – eggs and cream eggs. The Early Years team were intrigued and could not wait to see their final creations!

The day of the parade arrived. Both classes were so eager to show off their bonnets, and no wonder! The bonnets were fantastic! So much time and effort has been invested to make them as fabulous as possible. They were a true reflection of the children’s individual creativity.

On behalf of all of the Reception team, we would like to thank the children and their parents again, for taking the time and effort to make such super bonnets and would like to wish you all a fantastic Easter break!



Science Week at Hill West

By Mrs Linsie Burton

What a truly fantastic celebration of science we have had this half term, during National Science Week. It started on Monday 14th March and the theme this year was 'farming'. All year groups had the opportunity to plan a great week of science-based activities, all of which lead towards the creation of some very yummy treats. There was so much to celebrate from all the creative and investigative that took place across school, but here are some highlights from each year group!



In Reception, the children spent the week looking at their key text, 'The Queen's Hat'. As part of science week, looking at growth, they baked the Queen some cakes and discussed how the cakes grow (raise) in the oven. The children all remembered this from when they baked bread.



In Year 1, the children were designing and making their own British themed yoghurt. They looked at how fruits are grown and selected their own fruits to decorate their yoghurts.

In Year 2, children designed and made their own healthy pizza. They considered the distances that foods can travel and made their pizzas using ingredients grown here in the UK. They looked delicious!



Year 3 spent their week taste testing different varieties of vegetable soup and then had a go at making their very own, which the children said was the tastiest they had ever had!



Year 4 started their week by making their own healthy smoothie using different varieties of fruit. They then moved on to making their own butter from cream. This was a very tough process as they did this all by hand and spent a long time whipping the cream: they must have been exhausted!

In Year 5, the children designed and made their own healthy smoothie. They focused on the design process and created their own branding and product name for their new product. Once planned, they manufactured their smoothie before evaluating the end-product against the original design brief. They looked delicious!



Finally, up in Year 6, the children ended their week by making some very healthy wraps, using a variety of different fillings. Again, the children were thinking about where these products had been grown and how the farming industry grows products en-masse.



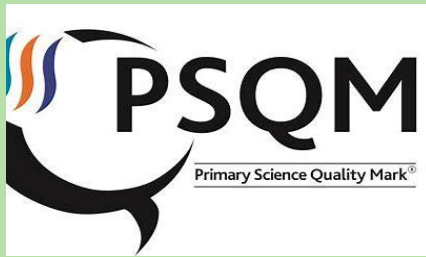
One of the highlights of Science Week was the arrival of a

brand new tractor on the KS2 playground on Tuesday. All the children had the opportunity to visit and ask questions about how such vehicles are used by farmers, and their impact on food production in our country!



Our Science Curriculum and the Primary Science Quality Mark at Hill West

By Ms Kerry Lynch



At Hill West, we currently hold the Primary Science Quality Mark Gold Award. This award enables Science Subject Leaders to develop and articulate a clear **intent** and aspirational vision for science. The process of achieving a PSQM raises the profile and quality of science across the whole school. The award supports subject leaders to effectively **implement** a curriculum for science that is informed by research evidence and best practice data. This year our award is due for renewal. Therefore, we are working with an expert hub leader to evaluate current provision for science

at Hill West and put in place a development cycle that will continue to sustain progress in science across the school. This award ensures strong and positive **impact**, as the children make good progress, building and consolidating their knowledge and skills and developing positive attitudes about science and its value to their lives and to the lives of people globally. Teachers and children enjoy their science lessons at Hill West, and we plan to extend this enjoyment into the wider community, by getting local experts in science involved with giving our children more opportunity to learn about science.

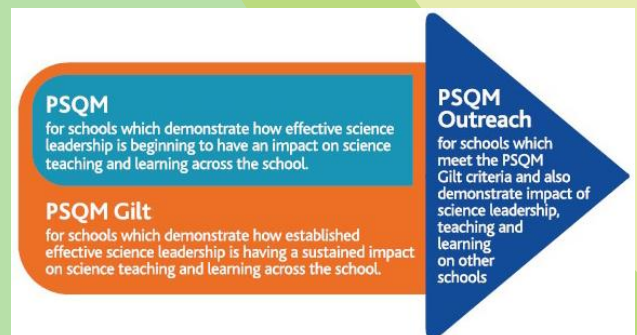
Currently, there are three different Primary Science Quality Marks to ensure that all schools can achieve accreditation. Primary Science Quality Marks are intended to be school appropriate and provide a framework for improvement and development in leadership and provision, whatever the starting point.

The PSQM self-evaluation and development framework consists of 4 aims (5 for PSQM Outreach), identifying goals for:

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- **science subject leadership**
- **science teaching**
- **science learning**
- **wider opportunities**

At Hill West, science is established, taught and lead to a high standard. For us to renew our Primary Science Quality Mark award, we need to submit evidence of the impact of a range of activities required to meet one of three sets of PSQM criteria:

PSQM, PSQM Gilt, or PSQM Outreach (see diagram). The criteria are differentiated for each Primary Science Quality Mark, to ensure that there is appropriate challenge and development for all schools. As Science leadership is already embedded at Hill West, we are aiming to achieve the highest award, which is the Outreach Award.



Curriculum and Quality First Teaching

At Hill West, we are committed to ensuring that all children develop a lifelong love of science: we want them to be inquisitive, explorative and question the world around them. Advancements in science have changed our lives and science has been identified by governments/world organisations as a vital area of study and development, if the world is to prosper in the future. At Hill West, we work hard to provide a rich and varied curriculum to challenge and meet the needs of our children, through practical hands-on investigations to explore and embed knowledge. Our curriculum is unique to our school and our needs. We monitor our schools progress in science regularly, in line with our science policy. Building on relevant educational research, our science curriculum has been responsive to the concepts of retrieval practice, interleaving learning and spaced retrieval. We understand that children need regular opportunities to revisit previous learning in order to commit scientific understanding to their long-term memory. We use Hamilton Trust to support lesson planning and ensure that children have regular opportunities to revisit and recall prior learning, alongside acquiring new knowledge and working scientifically skills, through exploration and investigation.

The Geography Curriculum at Hill West

By Ms Kelly Bailey

This year, I have the privilege of leading Geography at Hill West. Our evolving geography curriculum aims to prepare our children to be active and knowledgeable, responsible citizens of the world. Our curriculum is a solid foundation they can build upon during their KS3 learning, and is intended to continually develop inquisitive minds. Our current Progressive Learning Journeys, underpinned by the National Curriculum, have three main areas, which build the children's geographical knowledge and skills progressively, from EYFS to Year 6. The geography curriculum is currently split into: geographical enquiry and skills, developing knowledge and understanding of places and developing knowledge and understanding of patterns and processes. Our pupils 'journey around the world' as they mature through school, learning about the inhabitants and landmass in locations such as: India, France, Tanzania and Australia.

Progressive Learning Journey for Geography

	Geographical Enquiry and Skills	Knowledge and Understanding of Places	Knowledge and Understanding of Patterns and Processes
Y	I am able to use maps, atlases and digital computer mapping to follow the journey of a river and record the place names it passes through.	I can name and locate some counties in the U.K.	I can describe and understand key aspects of physical and human geography for India.
e	I can sketch a map of a river and begin to notice features along the way.	I can describe how physical/human topography of the U.K. changes through time.	I know how a river forms on high ground and how it changes as it journeys to the sea.
a	I can use four figure grid references (OS Maps).	I can investigate the relationship between rivers and settlements in Britain by finding the mapped area of towns and cities along the course of 5 different rivers.	I can demonstrate an understanding of wider environmental issues.
r	I am beginning to use digital technologies in fieldwork, including google maps, photographs and bar and pie charts.	I can begin to understand the key features of rivers, the geographical vocabulary and definitions.	I can demonstrate a knowledge of how earthquakes occur.
4	I can interpret, evaluate and use secondary sources to support fieldwork, including aerial photographs, maps, first-hand accounts.	I can compare a small area of the U.K. to an Indian village, including pie charts to compare land use and types of settlement.	I am beginning to understand global economic and trade links, and the distribution of natural resources including energy, food, minerals and water.
		I can identify the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn.	
		I know, can name and can locate countries most affected by earthquakes.	

**IN OUR CHANGING
WORLD NOTHING
CHANGES MORE
THAN GEOGRAPHY**

I was recently offered the opportunity to work with the Birmingham Education Partnership (BEP) and Geography Leaders from other school to further develop the Geography curriculum offer in schools across Sutton Coldfield. Together we will be working to support and enhance the fantastic curriculums within our schools. To begin the process, the team spent a day at Hill West to see Geography lessons across the whole school. We were thrilled to see the depth of teachers knowledge and their passion for Geography evident within their lessons. Pupils were hard working and engaged in their tasks, asking many questions within their lessons, truly embodying the 'Curiosity' element of our Hill West 'ACE' values.

As we always endeavour to provide the best curriculum offer for our pupils at Hill West, our curriculum is under continual review, and I will be supporting our teachers to ensure they have the best possible resources available for our pupils to learn from. I will ensure that our curriculum continues to create a sense of awe and wonder, as our pupils learn about our world, both locally and globally. Remember to keep your eyes peeled for our 'Next Week at Hill West' email, and take a look at what your child is learning about in Geography next week. If you can question your child and encourage them to recall their learning they can make links with their real life experiences... which will further strengthen their geographical knowledge and understanding and will support them to understand our world and give them the skills to navigate it and will help your child to prepare for their future learning in KS3 and beyond.



The study of geography is about more than just memorizing places on a map. It's about understanding the complexity of our world, appreciating the diversity of cultures that exists across continents. And in the end, it's about using all that knowledge to help bridge divides and bring people together.

— Barack Obama —

AZ QUOTES

Times Tables at Hill West

By Mr Steve George

At Hill West Primary School, we subscribe to Times Tables Rock Stars (TTRS). This is a system aimed at **Years 2 – 6**, that the children use to practice the instant recall of their multiplication and division facts. Times Table Rockstars is primarily a home learning tool, which should be accessed (with a teacher provided login) alongside other Maths homework set by the class teacher.

We know that when it comes to times tables, speed and accuracy are important – the more facts a child remembers, the easier it is for them to complete harder calculations.

Research shows that daily practise is the best strategy for children to learn these important facts. Short bursts of daily practice are much more effective than spending hours once a week; that is why we expect children to access Times Table Rockstars for at least 25 minutes over the course of a week, preferably divided into 5 minutes per day.



WHAT CHILDREN SHOULD KNOW

IN YEAR 2	The recall and use of multiplication and division facts for the 2, 5 and 10 multiplication tables, including recognising odd and even numbers.
IN YEAR 3	The recall and use of multiplication and division facts for the 3, 4 and 8 multiplication tables.
IN YEAR 4	The recall and use of multiplication and division facts for multiplication tables up to 12 x 12.
IN YEAR 5	Revision of all multiplication and division facts up to 12 x 12.
IN YEAR 6	Revision of all multiplication and division facts up to 12 x 12.

Message to Parents

World famous rock musicians are the best at what they do because they have spent hours practicing guitar chords, writing music or playing on the drums. It is just the same with times tables – all Times Table Rock Stars need to practice and practice and practice. It is essential that your child does a little bit of times-table practice, every night. In our experience, short bursts of daily practice are more effective than spending hours once a week.

Above all, it is essential that children access Times Table Rockstars for at least **5 minutes per day** particularly in years 2,3 and 4 but also in years 5 and 6 if children are not secure up to 12 X 12.

And this is where you come in! For your child to be fully motivated and for them to get the best out of the practice, they need your help. Without your praise and your reminders, without you sitting down next to them or checking their work, practicing times tables will not feel important to your child.

My recommendation is that you are there to help them every evening during the first two weeks. This will help to establish a routine. After that, we recommend that you help your child get started for the first few minutes and then check on them at the end. Over the course of the next few weeks and months, your child WILL get faster and more accurate with the times tables. All your hard work, and theirs, WILL make them a Times Table Rock Star!

An overview of TTRS game modes

Single player

- Garage – best for getting quicker at a few facts.
- Studio – the questions in Studio can be anything from 1x1 up to 12x12 and answering these will improve your rock status.

Multi player

- Rock Arena – Compete against other members of your band (friends in class).
- Festival – Compete against TT Rock Stars from around the world.

The Music Curriculum at Hill West (including Choir, Peripatetic Music and Recorders)

By Mr Ryan Horne

It has been the season for music during this term at Hill West, with a variety of music lessons and performances happening across the school.

Mr Horne and Mrs Marshall have been leading the choir as they prepare for an upcoming performance at the Resort World Arena in May, as part of the Young Voices choir performance. The choir have been hard at work since January; rehearsing eight songs including medleys from 'The Lion King' and 'The Muppets' as well as amazing songs such as 'Power in Me' and 'Sing from your Heart'. As this is the first time the choir has prepared for a performance like this, each member is very excited and dedicated. The choir is practising singing, not only in unison but also in different parts. They need to hear themselves as well as each other in order to understand how different parts can be sing together in one performance. Mr Horne and Mrs Marshall have been very impressed with their spirit and dedication so far.



As part of our learning of music at Hill West, two of our Year groups have the opportunity to learn specific instruments in their own classrooms. In Year 3, we have been learning to play the recorder, which takes up most of our music lessons. These lessons include how to hold the recorder (finger placement and the mouthpiece), as well as where different notes are positioned. As the term has progressed, Year 3 have taken what they have

learned and applied it to a piece of music. They have learnt the song 'Let Your Spirit Fly' and have been learning about music from different traditions and comparing these. They will be learning 'Bringing us Together' next term, as well as looking at the expressionist composer, Schoenberg.

In Year 4, children have had the benefit of Peripatetic music lessons from the Birmingham Music Service and have been learning the clarinet in Moles, and the Tenor horn in Squirrels. Both lessons begin with showing the children how to properly hold the instrument, as well as the function of the keys and valves. Children begin by learning 2-3 notes and then apply these to a simple piece of music. Moles are learning how to play the notes E and D and are applying them to a charming piece called 'Edie's Blues'. Squirrels have learned 'Ode to Joy' and are currently learning 'Mu Nu Ma Nu'. It has been noted that some pupils are even choosing to pick up the clarinet as their instrument of choice in music lessons!



In Year 5, children have been learning all about Tchaikovsky and Mozart this term. While learning about Tchaikovsky, children discovered where he was born, as well as several notable pieces that Tchaikovsky had written. They explored the 1812 Overture, as well as the various instruments in that orchestra piece. They had the opportunity to hear what different instruments sound like and then listen for them in a wider orchestra. This half term, Mozart was the focused composer. Children had a chance to listen to 'Eine Kleine Nachtmusik'; a piece of chamber music, and explored the instruments in a string quartet. At the end of term, children listened to the first four bars of the piece and replicated it using the keyboard function on the GarageBand app. Children reviewed a basic diagram of a keyboard and assigned numbers to the different keys. Then they listened to a slowed down version of the piece of music and copied the notes as they saw them displayed. Many had a great time show casing what they had learned. We have discovered a number of developing musicians in Year 5!

The Physical Education Curriculum at Hill West

By Mr Joel Holmes

Over the course of the year, I have been developing a new Physical Education curriculum for the children of Hill West. This has allowed me to initiate positive change across school and improve the health, fitness and happiness of our pupils. The PE offer at Hill West continues to incorporate a varied selection of sports, to fulfil a range of skill sets and interests across the school.

We have been able to maintain our strong links with local sports clubs to offer expert coaching to all children across school. We have been delighted to invite Rugby Dan, Chance to Shine Cricket, Tennis Dan and others back into our school. I have also created new partnerships with Hayley from Sutton Town Netball Club who has worked with our Year 3 children and delivered high-quality after-school provision. I have also been amazed by Catherine, from 'Positive PE', who has brought with her a wealth of gymnastics and early childhood development knowledge to support the children in Year 1.



Throughout this year, we have been able to offer more sporting competitions than ever before, taking part in Cross-Country, Dodgeball, Rugby, Athletics and Ten-Pin Bowling, to name but a few.



This has enabled children across the school to be inspired by sporting competition and to feel the rush of excitement which comes from testing the very limit of their bodies. Most recently, children across Year 3 and 4 took part in 'Megafest', which saw them participating in a number of Rugby-related challenges as a team. The children loved developing new skills and showed off their ability to problem-solve as a collective.

The final event of a grueling Cross-Country Championship took place last week, which saw most of our athletes clocking personal best finishes. One individual finished 5th overall for the boys, in a race of over 120 and another individual had a strong finish of 16th, in a girl's field of over 100.

There was a fantastic end to the Spring term too, with our Year 6 boys team winning the Wylde Green Rotary Club 6-a-side tournament. They have brought back an incredible trophy and memories that will stay with them for a long time to come.

Swimming has been taking place in Year 6 for the last term. I have witnessed excellent progress, with a number of individuals now able to swim 25m. I am hopeful that all of our Year 6 pupils will be able to swim this distance before the end of the year.



Looking towards Summer Term, I am planning to invite back into school Sam Stuart, from Walmley Golf Club. In addition, we will hopefully be participating in a number of athletics competitions to celebrate the sporting talent across school. Our Panathlon team have successfully qualified for the Birmingham finals, which will take place in May, so watch out for news on this! It has been an exciting year of sport at Hill West, and I am hopeful that there is a whole host of success to come!

The Maths Curriculum at Hill West

By Dr Rhian Warrack

Vision and Intent

At Hill West, we are committed to ensuring that all children are mathematically proficient and confident in the use of maths in their everyday lives. As such, we teach for maths mastery, designed to ensure all children develop a deep and sustainable understanding of age-appropriate mathematical concepts, which can be built on in the future.

Building on relevant educational research, our maths curriculum has been responsive to the concepts of retrieval practice, interleaving learning and spaced retrieval. We understand that children need regular opportunities to revisit previous learning in order to commit mathematical understanding to the long-term memory. As a result, at Hill West, we follow the progressive short blocks devised by Hamilton Trust, to ensure that children have regular opportunities to

revisit and recall prior learning, alongside acquiring new mathematical skills and knowledge through fluency, reasoning and problem solving.

When we plan our lessons and sequences of lessons, we structure the learning so that all pupils work through new content together as a whole group. Although we do not differentiate the learning task by reducing the level of difficulty for certain groups, the questioning and scaffolding that individual children receive in class will differ. Tasks of similar difficulty are set for all children, as the expectation is that, “the majority of pupils will move through the programmes of study at broadly the same pace” (National

Curriculum, 2014). Teachers allow time for children to fully understand, explore and apply ideas, rather than accelerate through new topics. Pupils’ difficulties and misconceptions are identified, through immediate formative assessment, and are addressed with rapid intervention. This approach enables all pupils to truly ‘grasp’ a concept. All children are supported in lessons by having the opportunity to make use of a range of resources, ensuring concrete, pictorial and abstract methods are accessible to all.

Quality First Teaching

At Hill West, we use Hamilton Trust as our Maths scheme. Sometimes staff draw on materials from NCETM and NRICH to support with concrete, pictorial and abstract subject-specific planning. Our long-term Scheme of Work/Progressive Learning Journey for maths outlines the subject content to be delivered for each year group. It is expected that each year group will teach all appropriate areas of the maths curriculum, revisiting these throughout the year, under the following headings:



My Maths Learning Journey



	Numbers to 100	+ and -	x and ÷	Fractions	Measurement	Geometry	Statistics
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Using the long-term scheme of work, alongside the progressive teaching sequences (short blocks) from Hamilton Trust, teachers develop medium term plans for maths. Teacher’s short term plans (weekly) ensure maths is planned in sufficient depth so that children learn the skills and knowledge necessary to meet year group expectations and excel as independent, fluent mathematicians who are able to apply this to problem solve and reason.

The English Curriculum at Hill West

By Mrs Jaimey Thomas

Reading into Writing

At Hill West, all KS1 and KS2 pupils are taught English in line with the requirements of the English National Curriculum. Our daily English lessons are taught through a high-quality key-text and are based upon a 'Reading into Writing' approach, whereby the key-text is explored through reading and writing. We strongly believe that reading is the focal point of good writing – it encourages curious writers, who use a range of ambitious vocabulary and written techniques to create purposeful outcomes.

Key-Texts

Our key-text units of work are carefully mapped out to show progression across school with each unit centering on an engaging, vocabulary-rich texts which often link to our wider-curriculum. This allows the children to have a purpose for their writing and develops not only their written skills but strengthens their knowledge and understanding of key learning concepts in other subjects.

We have developed our own evidence informed literature spine, with a balance between fiction texts, poetry and non-fiction texts. The texts have been carefully chosen for their richness in vocabulary, cultural capital and concepts. The texts were selected to enhance our knowledge-based curriculum, whilst also helping us to drive the global elements of our curriculum such as personal development and wellbeing, diversity, equality and inclusion. They also represent our commitment to the UNCRC as a rights embedded school. In addition, many of our key texts and class novels fit within the five plagues of reading (as recommended by Doug Lemov in his book 'Reading Reconsidered') with texts ranging between the categories of archaic, non-linear time sequences, narratively complex, figurative/symbolic and resistant. These texts are complex beyond a lexical level and demand more from the reader than other types of books, ensuring that our children are confident, well-rounded readers by the time they finish Year 6.

Purpose

At Hill West we have a 'purpose for writing' approach. We know that it is important that pupils are given a reason to write – and someone to write for (EEF, 2021). When planning a unit of work for a specific text, we are very clear on the RAFT of the writing (Reason, Audience, Features, Tone) as we know that children will be more successful if they understand the purpose of their writing. This helps us to ensure that by the end of Year 6, children will not only leave our school being able to write for a variety of purposes, but will also be able to write in a real life situation, which is essential for the next step in their education. There are four types of writing that children will be exposed to through our English curriculum: narrative - writing to entertain; and non-fiction - writing to inform, writing to persuade and writing to discuss (see Figure 1). Children will also cover a variety of poetry forms, building up a repertoire.

Figure 1: The four purposes for writing

Writing to entertain	Writing to inform
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Narrative (including retellings)• Descriptions• Poetry• Characters/settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recount• Fact file• Letter• Instructions• Non-chronological report• Explanation (ks2)• Biography (ks2)• Newspaper article (ks2)• Essay
Writing to persuade (KS2)	Writing to discuss (UKS2)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advertising• Letter• Speech• Campaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Balanced argument• Newspaper article• Review

ACE Champion Celebration Breakfast

By Dr Beth Clarke

It was a real pleasure to invite our Hill West ACE champions to a celebration breakfast on Tuesday 5th April. This was in honour of their dedication and commitment to our school. It was also an opportunity for me to celebrate their work to embed our ACE values across school (ambitious, curious and ever respectful) over the last 8 months.

As an ACE Champion, our pupils aspire to be good listeners. They are able to celebrate others successes. They aim high for themselves and for others and set realistic but ambitious goals for personal achievement.

Our ACE Champions take pride in their work and have developed the capacity to persevere when their learning is tricky. They work hard and try their best.

They are committed to caring enough to wonder. They believe that children and people can grow and adapt over time. They know that it is important to ask others how they are feeling and take time to really listen to the reply. They are supportive of one another and have an inbuilt curiosity to learn more.

Our ACE Champions demonstrate excellent manners; they are polite and respectful. They are determined to do good, even when no one is watching! They often try to consider others before themselves and they always stand up for the rights of the child (UNRRS).

At Hill West, we have developed a whole-school commitment to listening to the views, wishes and experiences of our children. We place value on what our children tell us about their experiences in school and we use our ACE champions as a vehicle to delve a little deeper into their insights. Our children offer a unique perspective on what it is like to be a pupil in our school; involving them in decision-making creates meaningful change and better academic outcomes, as well as facilitating a sense of empowerment and inclusion.

Our ACE Champions have been instrumental in crafting out and developing their role in school, designing their own role profile (articulated above) and steering the discussions in our meetings. Thank you ACE Champions – you are truly ACE!



Ambitious

Curious

Ever-respectful

Autism Acceptance

By Mrs Rebecca George

What is Autism Acceptance Week?

Autism Acceptance Week aims to draw attention to the 700,000 people living with autism in the UK both to educate those unaware of the condition, and to help make the world friendlier to those who are affected by it.



Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC) is a lifelong condition that can affect a person's social skills, such as communication and the way they interact with other people. It is estimated that there are around 700,000 Autistic people in the UK. There are about 3 million family members and carers of autistic people in the UK.

Autism can affect people very differently. This means autistic people need different types of help. Some autistic people need little or no help in their everyday lives, others may need help all the time, for example in care homes. Autistic people may need help with different things, like; making friends, coping at school, being at work or getting out and about.

The aim of Autism Acceptance Week (formerly known as Autism Awareness Week) is to help more people understand what autism is, as well as the ways it can affect life for Autistic people. Autism Acceptance Week is also a fantastic opportunity to raise awareness and acceptance of autism both in and outside of school.

When is Autism Acceptance Week?

Autism Acceptance week is a yearly event that is planned around Autism Acceptance Day on the 2nd of April. In 2022, Autism Acceptance Week ran from 29 March - 4 April. April is also Autism Acceptance Month.

When was the first Autism Acceptance Week?

The first ever Autism Acceptance Week (then called Autism Awareness Week) dates back to 2nd April 2007, when the first ever World Autism Acceptance Day happened. The original concept of educating people about Autism Spectrum Condition and celebrating the achievements of Autistic people continues to be the focus of these events today.

What is Autism?

Autism is a lifelong developmental condition. Autism can affect things like communication, mixing with other people, and how a person thinks and feels about things. Autism can also affect how autistic people deal with sights, sounds and changes in their environment. Autism is known as an invisible disability, because you cannot tell just by looking at someone that they have autism. Autism can present itself in different ways in different people and all Autistic people will likely have different experiences of how ASC impacts them. For some Autistic people, routines can be very important to their everyday lives because it relieves the stress of the unknown and make life seem less overwhelming.

Many Autistic children can attend, and thrive at mainstream schools, but others may go to schools that are dedicated to special educational needs (SEN).

Another common experience of some Autistic people is overstimulation of the senses or sensory overload. Lots of loud noises, which some of us may not even notice, can sometimes be experienced in an entirely different way by an Autistic person.

Even though ASC is very common, there are still lots of people who do not fully understand what it is or why some people react or behave in different ways than others. This is why events like Autism Awareness Week are really important for spreading awareness and helping to make the world a more accepting place.

The national strategy for autistic children, young people and adults: 2021 to 2026

A National strategy for autistic children, young people and adults: 2021 to 2026 was published by the Government last year to help improve the lives of Autistic people and their families, by improving the services delivered.

Why we need a new strategy...

The Autism Act is a law that tries to make things more equal for autistic adults in England. This law says that the government has to write a strategy to help autistic adults. The government also has to check this is still working for people every few years. We already had an old strategy called 'Think Autism', which the Government wrote in 2014. The Government looked at this old strategy to check it was still working for people. In 2019, the Government asked autistic people, their families and carers, professionals and organisations what they thought about this. This has been included in the new strategy. The old strategy and The Autism Act were only about adults. The government thinks it is important to notice autism early in a person's life, so they can get the right help when they need it. This new strategy includes children and young people too.

How this strategy will work...

The new strategy is for the next 5 years, 2021 to 2026. The strategy has 6 main areas where the Government want to make things better for autistic people.

The 6 areas are:

1. Helping people to understand autism.
2. Helping autistic children and young people at school.
3. Helping autistic people to find jobs.
4. Making health and care services equal for autistic people.
5. Making sure autistic people get help in their communities.
6. Help for autistic people in the justice system.

Helping autistic children and young people at school...

By 2026, the Government want the special educational needs and disabilities system to help all autistic children and young people to get the right help.

They want to make sure that:

- Teachers and education staff understand how to help autistic children and young people.
- There is no bullying of autistic children and young people at school.
- All autistic young people are helped, as they become adults, so that they can live in their communities, can find work and can get higher education, for example, in university, if they want to.

How they will do it:

- Improve the special educational needs and disabilities system so it works better for autistic children, young people and their families.
- Make sure that autistic children are in schools that give them the right help.
- Give autism training to teachers and education staff to help them understand autism and also to staff who work with very young children, to help them notice if a child has special educational needs.
- Start a campaign to help protect autistic children and young people from being bullied at school.
- Give training to school staff so they can help autistic young people when they grow up.
- Make sure there are more chances for autistic young people to find jobs and get the skills and training they need.
- Continue to help children with special educational needs and disabilities as we move out of COVID-19.

I'm glad I'm Autistic

I want you to know that autism isn't all that bad,
It's actually a superpower that I was born to have.
Although the sensory issues are a pain,
Each day there are super-powers that I gain.
Did you know so many artists, scientists and writers are autistic too?
Have you ever thought about your friends or you?
I was diagnosed Autistic when I was eight years old,
I was confused and scared wondering what was wrong,
What were all these weird feelings I'd been having for so long?
But then I was told;
It means you're
Amazing
Unique
Tremendous
Inspiring
Super
Magnificent
I felt a sense of relief,
Finally, I felt complete.
Everything was starting to make sense,
All my little things that I thought weren't normal had a reason.
I'm glad I'm autistic, I wouldn't change it for the world!

Emily, age 12

Goodbye

By Ms Chloe Davies

As my time at Hill West reaches its end, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the staff, parents, and children at school for supporting me and making my time here the best possible start to my teaching career. I began my career here as a newly qualified teacher, ready to embark on the world of work in 2018 – and what a fantastic first year I had! I must add a specific mention to my amazing Kingfishers (now Hares), who gave me the most wonderful introduction to the world of teaching and made every day special. You are such a lovely group of children and will always hold a special place in my heart for being my first ever class, so thank you. During my teacher training, I completed a placement in a special education school. It was here that I discovered my passion for supporting children with special educational needs and decided that my end goal as a teacher would be to work in a special education school. So when the opportunity to work in a great special school, close to home, came up, it was an offer I could not refuse. I am so excited to be pursuing my passion, but it is bittersweet, as I am heartbroken to leave the school that shaped me as a teacher and especially saddened to leave my beautiful Owls class.

To my lovely Owls, Getting to know each one of you this year has been a pleasure. We have so many fantastic memories, which I will cherish and look back on fondly. Amongst my favourite are: the time we completed the 'wordle' and celebrated like we had won the world cup; when one of the Owls came in with his swimming trunks over his trousers and had us all in stitches; making pizzas and everybody eating so much cheese that they could burst; making bug hotels in the forest area; being pranked by fake spiders on my desk; our lovely library visits; and of course, fiesta Fridays! I have enjoyed every moment of our time together as Owls and I know that you will continue to have a fantastic year with Mrs Terry and Mrs Freer. You are all so lovely, funny, kind and amazing and I will miss each and every one of you (and our daily snuggles) so very much – I'm sure I will be texting Mrs Terry lots to find out how you are all doing! Lots of love, Miss Davies xxxx



I would like to thank everybody at Hill West for helping me to become the teacher I am today and for giving me the most wonderful memories to look back on. I feel extremely lucky to have worked here and to have gotten to know you all.

Goodbye to Hill West

By Mrs Ellie Marshall

Hill West has been a wonderful place to work and I feel lucky to have been able to experience the wonderful culture, staff and children here. Leaving Hill West has been one of the hardest decisions I have had to make but, due to personal reasons and family illness, I have had to make the decision to move back to Derby to be closer to family. Rabbits class has been wonderful for these two terms and I am really going to miss them. I love how cheeky they are. Just last week I was exclaiming how beautiful a child's handwriting was when another child said, "Mrs Marshall, are you exaggerating about hand writing again?" I had to laugh, since it has been common for me to ask the kids to make me exaggerate about their handwriting!

The progress the children have made has made me so proud. I have been able to witness so many of the children become so much more confident, not just in themselves generally, but in their ability to complete tasks they felt were impossible before. In P.E., I had a few students, at the start of the year, who couldn't catch a ball and I was so proud the day one of them, in netball, had the ball thrown to her and she caught it perfectly and passed it on. I have no idea what immediately happened in that game after that, as I was too busy getting excited (and probably exaggerating!) over her not only being able to catch the ball, but also being confident enough to put herself into a good position to receive the ball in the first place.

After Easter, I will be undertaking supply work, as there are very few class teacher jobs available for the summer term. However, I plan to go part time, so that I can take a more active role in my own children's school life and allow them to take up some after school activities, so if I enjoy the supply work, I may continue that into next year.

I would like to thank you, as parents, for trusting me with your children's precious education and for the positive feedback you have given me. I would like to thank Dr Clarke and the team for giving me this opportunity and for being so supportive of me during my time here.