



Hill West Primary School

Pedagogical Newsletter – February 2023

Issue 34
February 2023

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Reminders:

*School closes for half
term on Friday 17th
February. School
reopens on
TUESDAY 28th
February for all.*

Children's Mental Health Week

Last week marked Children's mental health week. We know that children's minds are being constantly shaped by their environment and the connections they make. As the Princess of Wales has highlighted in her Shaping Us Campaign, during early childhood, from pregnancy to the age of five, our brains develop at an amazing rate – faster than at any other time in our lives. Our experiences, relationships, and surroundings at that very young age, shape the rest of our lives. This is when we start to understand the world in which we live. How to manage our emotions, build relationships with the people around us, believe in ourselves, develop resilience against adversity and have trust in others. Providing strong support for children and parents during these most preventative years is essential and can have a life-changing impact. Because if we can build a supportive, nurturing world around children and those caring for them, we can make a huge difference to the physical and mental health and happiness of generations to come.



Navigating Life On-line

On Tuesday 7th February we joined schools across the UK to celebrate Safer Internet Day 2023. Celebration and learning was based around the theme '**Want to talk about it? Making space for conversations about life online**'.

While we recognise the internet is an important and enjoyable part of everyday life and learning, we are also aware that some of our children have difficulty navigating this on-line world. We must be assertive and proactive in keeping children safe in an increasingly connected world.

We would be delighted if you could join us in celebrating our work by continuing the conversation at home. To help with this you may be interested in accessing the Safer Internet Day advice for parent's page:

www.saferinternet.org.uk/safer-internet-day/safer-internet-day-2023/parents-and-carers. This

website offers practical tips for starting a conversation about life online and advice about how to talk about some of the more challenging things that may happen online. There is also a short film for you to watch with your child.



School Priorities 2023

Developing Great Teachers and Leaders

All staff benefit from high quality professional learning at all stages of their career so leadership and teaching improves and remains reflective, evidence informed and impactful.

Developing Great Learners

All children benefit from excellent teaching developing their love for learning and passion for individual subject disciplines. Our excellent teaching is underpinned by our ambitious curriculum which is mapped out for EVERY subject. Our pupils achieve academic success and go on to become life-long learners.

Enhancing Community

The community benefits from our school's promotion of positive relationships and a culture of high expectations

Our WALKTHRU's Journey this Academic Year

This academic year we have adopted WALKTHRU's as a core set of materials to support our teachers' and leaders' professional development. At the heart of WALKTHRU's is a selection of evidence-informed teaching strategies curated in six series.

- **Behaviour and Relationships:** Establishing classroom conditions essential for effective learning.
- **Curriculum Planning.** Creating a coherent, well-sequenced knowledge-rich curriculum
- **Explaining and Modelling:** Making sense of complex ideas to support students in building secure schema
- **Questioning and Feedback:** Using responsive teaching methods to check students' understanding and move them forward.
- **Practice and Retrieval:** Building secure long-term memory and fluency
- **Mode B Teaching:** Delivering a range of learning experiences to deepen and extend learning.

The power of the materials comes from the creation and sustained reinforcement of a common understanding of the key practices and concepts amongst colleagues; the team of professionals working at Hill West, all implementing content in the same way. This reduces the problems of professional amnesia (where good ideas are forgotten over time) and lethal mutation (where ideas are passed on, continually deviating from their origins, losing meaning and effectiveness). WALKTHRU's are deliberately designed to be context free so that the same ideas can be translated into a number of settings.

We have started our journey with **Behaviour and Relationships** and have thus far focused on the five core principles below.

1. **Establish your expectations.** Through this strand we have determined exactly what our expectations are for every aspect of running our lessons and indeed the school day.
2. **Signal, Pause, Insist.** This is a routine teachers will use several times in a lesson. The signal, pause, insist routine allows teachers to move from one lesson or phase to another calmly and efficiently. At Hill West we use 1, 2, 3.
3. **Positive Framing.** A technique for establishing and maintaining high expectations through the use of positive reinforcement, encouragement and affirmative language.
4. **Transition between Activities.** Often activities and teacher-pupil interactions need to change during a lesson so that ideas and experiences are explored in the most appropriate manner. Once transition routines are established, it allows responsive teaching to flourish, adding variety, increasing depth and challenge as required.
5. **Keeping on Task.** To sustain effort and attention, pupils need to know what they are supposed to be doing. After explaining the task our teachers **check for understanding**, sampling a few pupils, to ensure they know what is expected from them.

SAFEGUARDING – Our Mental Health By Rayyah Deyn-Kaan (Year 5)

Making connections

It is important to make connections with friends and family because if we don't make connections this will really affect our mental health which would conclude in sadness, loneliness and even maybe depression.

Without friends life would feel like it has no meaning. It is important to surround yourself with people who make you laugh and who you can confide in. Although some friendships are destined to last for a lifetime, others can come and go.

Making connections with family members is important as well. Even though your siblings might annoy you to death you will have those moments when you might be feeling bored and ask your brother/sister to play a game with you or play a game of football outside instead of having a wrestling match over the remote.

We know that our most important connections are made when we are very young with our parents and caregivers.

State of the Nation 2022

This [DfE Research Report](#) brings together a range of published information from government, academic, voluntary, and private sector organisations to provide a clear narrative for all those interested in the wellbeing of children and young people in England. Key findings:

- Children and young people's subjective wellbeing, measured annually, appears to have dipped in 2020 and recovered close to pre-pandemic levels by 2021, remaining at similar levels in 2022. During the 2021/22 academic year, while wellbeing on most measures remained consistent, **anxiousness among both primary and secondary-age pupils appears to have increased and is higher than in 2020/21.**
- The percentage of children and young people reporting **low happiness** with their health appears to have **increased** in recent years. Rates of probable **mental disorders and eating problems remain at elevated** levels compared to before the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Children in year 6 have consistently been more likely to be **obese** than those of reception age. Rates of obesity among year 6 children remain higher than before the pandemic
- **Sleep problems** were more prevalent in older children and young people, specifically young women.
- In June 2022, most secondary-age children and young people reported being motivated to learn, were managing to concentrate in class, **felt safe at school**, enjoyed being at school, and felt that they belonged at school.
- While children and young people's happiness with school has remained at a similar level to previous years on average, the percentage of those reporting **low happiness with school appears to have increased.**

These findings obviously represent a serious picture of our children's mental health and wellbeing nationally. We know too, that services have insufficient capacity to meet demand and for some children the wait for a clinical diagnosis is simply too long. If your child is struggling with any of the above, please come and talk to us.



Reading

Supporting our children to develop a real love of reading is probably one of the most important things we can do. Research has demonstrated that children's attitude towards reading is one of the strongest predictors of their later academic and life success (OECD, 2002). Here are a few ways to make reading a fun part of your everyday life. Develop family reading routines and rituals. Find a regular time of day to dedicate as story time. Making story time a cozy routine makes reading an essential and pleasant activity. Read what interests your child. Find an author that they enjoy and read the series. Try books that reflect your daily experiences or the experiences of your child. Let your child select books and remember to re-read your child's favourites. It's common for younger children to request the same book again and again. Re-reading familiar stories offers children a chance to absorb information over time and lets them master the whole story.

SAFER SCHOOLS APP Benefits for Parents

Keep up to date with the current digital trends, threats, and risks to pupils online and offline. Learn about topics that are relevant to our children – from the social media apps to the issues they face in a hybrid online/offline world. Get digital safeguarding alerts and news sent directly to your devices.

Search 'Safer Schools' and download the App. Use the numeric code 7440 for our school.