



# Hill West Primary School

## Pedagogical Newsletter – February 2017

### Reading Eggs and Reading Eggspress

Our children love the Reading Eggs / Eggspress programs and benefit from using them at home as well as in school. More than 99% of Reading Eggs/press parents would recommend the site to their friends. In Reading Eggs (for KS1 children), there are 12 maps with 120 lessons and each lesson has between 6 to 10 parts. In Reading Eggspress (for KS2 children) there are 220 core comprehension lessons as well as a range of other resources including more than 200 spelling lessons and competitions where pupils can compete in real time against pupils from around the world, a library of levelled texts in excess of 2000 and quizzes and games galore. You may want to consider supporting your child to access these resources at least once a week at home.



Issue 19,  
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### Playing with Fire

Playing with fire was the title of a recent article I read in Academy Magazine, Spring 2017. It started with this bold quote, “More than fears of what HSE will do or what Ofsted might say, the biggest barrier to children having magnificent experiences is the low expectation teachers and parents have of the children in their care”. The author, Mike Fairclough said that in his junior school he teaches his children shooting, fishing and beekeeping. His Key Stage 2 children light fires and make hot cups of tea in the pouring down rain on fires they have built themselves. “After three hours of hard work in the rain and while completely wet and muddy, my Year 4 children were still smiling... The long walk through the marshes back to school still lay ahead of them, but those children all had an aura of achievement and power about them. They had adopted attributes, which, if encouraged, will serve them well throughout their lives in a world full of change and uncertainty”. This got me thinking and reflecting on the reactions of our teachers and parents if I

suggested our pupils should spend hours in the rain building fires and making tea. I suspect I'd be deluged with letters of complaint but this may be a little unfair of me. Mike Fairclough went on to say, we place limitations on our children all the time and it is his belief that there is currently a trend for some parents and educators to interpret the effects of life's challenges on children and label them with some sort of problem. This is in contrast with a culture where adults expect children to overcome their fears, build resilience and exceed expectations. He went on to point out that this attitude to life was prolific in years gone by, especially during the war years and he asks the question “I wonder how the younger generations would fair in face of such adversity” not that he was advocating this real lived experience for any of our children today. Carefully managed exposure to risk and danger will enable children to have new experiences and to move beyond their comfort zones. Running and playing in the rain, jumping in puddles and taking risks should be something we encourage, of this I am sure. Of late, I have certainly been reflecting, as a Mum and as a Head Teacher on the limitations, we inadvertently set.



### Reminders:

We break up for half term  
on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> February  
and return from half term  
on Monday 27<sup>th</sup>  
February.





# Attachment

## Glossary of Terms

**Pedagogy** – the craft of teaching

**Reading Eggs and Reading Eggspress** – On-line reading lessons

**HSE** – health and safety executive

**Ofsted** – Office for Standards in Education

**Neuronal** – any of the impulse-conducting cells that constitute the brain

**Attuned** – to be aware and responsive

**Prior Attainment Group** – children that have achieved similar outcomes at KS1 nationally



By building a child’s social and emotional capabilities we enable children to be happily engaged with others and with society, and to learn, to develop fully, to attain and to achieve. In essence, it delivers school ready, life ready and child ready members of society” (The Allen Report 2011). The vast majority of children enjoy life and are successful in school and in relationships. This lasts into adult life. But a significant minority struggle from an early stage and especially in adolescence. These children can present in school and at home as unfocussed, disruptive, controlling, withdrawn and or destructive. As a result, they can often underachieve in school and some are even excluded, significantly limiting their life chances. Research shows that a child’s ability to form relationships and to learn is shaped by the child’s early experiences. Therefore, if we can better understand **Why** and **How** some children behave the way they do, we can then find ways to help them enjoy and succeed in their education.

The theory of attachment was first proposed by John Bowlby who described it as a ‘lasting psychological connectedness between human beings’ (1988). He considered that children needed to develop a secure attachment with their main caregiver in the early years. This theory has been revised to acknowledge that multiple attachments can occur with other adults throughout the lifespan, although early experiences may continue to have an impact throughout our lives. Secure attachments support mental processes that enable the child to regulate emotions, reduce fear, attune to others, have self-understanding and insight, empathy for others and appropriate moral reasoning (Bowlby called these mental representations the internal working model). Insecure attachments, on the other hand, can have unfortunate consequences. If a child cannot rely on an adult to respond to their needs in times of stress, they are unable to learn how to soothe themselves, manage their emotions and engage in reciprocal relationships. A child’s initial dependence on others for protection provides the experiences and skills to help a child cope with frustrations, develop self-confidence and pro-social relationships - all qualities necessary to promote positive engagement with learning. Research has inextricably linked attachment to school readiness and school success (Commodari, 2013; Geddes 2006).

‘Our minds are complex systems constrained in their activity by neuronal connections, which are determined by both constitution and experience (Siegel 2012). Secure, nurturing environments and stimulating, engaging experiences support the development of neuronal networks; they help to build brains. Empathetic, supportive attachments and relationships are essential to optimise brain development as ‘the attunement of emotional states is essential for the developing brain to acquire the capacity to organise itself more autonomously as the child matures” (Siegel, 2012). The extent to which stressful events have lasting adverse effects is determined by the duration, intensity, timing and context of the stressful experience. Constant activation of the body’s stress response systems due to chronic or traumatic experiences in the absence of caring, stable relationships with adults, especially during sensitive periods of early development can be toxic to brain architecture and other developing organ systems. Connections in the brain are reduced and lost through this toxic stress. Fewer connections means it is more difficult to utilise the brain capacity and learn effectively. The Allen Report (2011) and the Marmot Review (2010) advocate that parents and key professionals such as teachers need to have the understanding and knowledge of how to build social and emotional capability within children and therefore empower individuals to break inter-generational cycles of dysfunction and underachievement. More research is needed however to demonstrate how Attachment Aware Schools can help to close the attainment gap for children with insecure attachments.



## Media Use

A 2016 report into children's and parents' media use and attitudes reveals some interesting findings.

Children are watching a wide range of content with the TV set becoming an increasingly important focus for family time with children using portable devices for more focused, solitary viewing. YouTube is particularly important with 37% of 3-4s, 54% of 5-7s, 73% of 8-11s and 87% of 12-15s using the YouTube website or app.

Social media use is growing with 23% of 8-11s and 72% of 12-15s having a profile, with the number of profiles doubling between the age of 10 and 11. Research reveals that children are messaging throughout the day (and in some cases throughout the night).

There has been a significant increase in the numbers of children using portable devices. Tablets are the only device, other than TV sets that are used by the majority of children in each age group 55% of 3-4s, 67% of 5-7s and 80% of 8-11s and the number of 5-15s with their own tablet has increased since 2015, to 44% (with 16% of 3-4s also having their own tablet).

The mobile phone is the second most popular device used to access the internet (after tablets), overtaking laptops which were the second most popular device in 2015. 5-15s are now more likely to own a mobile phone – 41% now have their own smartphone. The preference for mobile phones over other devices begins at age 11.

# Progress

In the past, the level framework provided schools and parents a means by which the progress of children could be tracked e.g. a child moving from a level 2b in KS1 to a 4a in KS2 would have made better than expected progress. As levels no longer exist schools are now responsible for determining how progress is measured term by term and year by year.

The system of national accountability, introduced in 2016, is based on measuring progress from the end of KS1 to the end of KS2. Taking a combined score of KS1 teacher-assessed reading, writing and mathematics, pupils are sub-divided into groups of similarly attaining pupils (there are 21 prior attainment groups). When their KS2 data is available, the performance of each group of pupils is then compared with other pupils in the same KS1 prior attaining group. If a pupil has performed better than the average score of the same group, they are said to have performed better than expected and will receive a positive score. If they achieve an average score, they will be given a zero score. A score of zero means that the pupil has made the average level of progress for their prior attainment group. A negative score does not mean that a pupil did not make any progress between KS1 and KS2. It simply means that they made less progress than other pupils nationally with similar prior attainment. All the pupils in each school will have their score calculated and the schools average performance will be used in the accountability measure.

Schools however have been challenged to set up a means of showing progress for all their pupils, not just for the progress of pupils between the end of KS1 and KS2. At Hill West we have developed a system that demonstrates that pupils understand discrete areas of the curriculum. This is tracked by recording parts of the curriculum that children have achieved through our progressive learning journeys and child friendly learning journeys. This monitoring is also supported with termly testing in the core subjects and on-going evaluation of pupils' work in books. A triangulation of this evidence is used to assess progress of individuals across our school. Over time this builds up a record of progress term by term against the curriculum and allows for on-going reflection of teaching practices and interventions.



## Hill West Senior Leadership Team

**Dr Clarke** - Head Teacher  
**Mrs Leeson** - Deputy Head Teacher  
**Mrs Cook** - Deputy Head Teacher  
**Mrs Pardo / Mrs George** - Assistant Head Teacher for Reception and Year 1  
**Miss Bolton** - Assistant Head Teacher for Years 2, 3 & 4  
**Mr Lackenby** - Assistant Head Teacher for Years 5 & 6

## Lines of Communication

We understand that there will be times during the school term that you may wish to meet with a member of staff to discuss a number of school related issues. We would ask kindly that the approach below be followed.

Arrange to meet the Class Teacher



If not completely satisfied arrange to meet the Assistant Head Teacher



If not completely satisfied consider following the complaints procedure and meeting with the Deputy Head Teacher as part of Stage 2 of that procedure.

There are obviously exceptions to this, if, for example, you wish to report a Safeguarding issue or share some personal information in an emergency that relates directly to you or your family. In this instance, please report to the Main Office and request an immediate appointment with, either the Designated Senior Lead for Child Protection, or the Head/Deputy Head Teacher/s.