



# Hill West Primary School

## *Pedagogical Newsletter – October 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.



### *How Strategies for Looked After Children can help all pupils.*

Darren Martindale, virtual school head for looked-after children for the City of Wolverhampton Council spoke to the Times Educational Supplement last week advocating that approaches that support looked after children (LAC) are beneficial for all children. He said that “through the lens of working with LAC, we’ve found that an understanding of the effects of early trauma and neglect can shift the way that teachers approach behaviour management. As we know the quality of the earliest relationship – usually between mother and baby – creates connections in the brain that have a profound effect in later years. If a child has not had that deep experience of love and empathy, because the main carer was unable to give it, that child may not be able to feel those things themselves in the usual way. If they did not have their emotions regulated, or soothed, as an infant, they may not be able to control their own feelings and actions in later life. Such children can come to view themselves as undeserving, adults as untrustworthy and the world as a dangerous place. So they kick off whenever they are challenged, to

protect themselves – a survival mechanism against a perceived threat. Understandably, learning takes a distant back seat in a life that, to the primitive brain, is always a struggle for survival. Darren Martindale goes on to say that the usual supportive strategies for struggling children – modified curriculum, changes to groupings, additional adult support are of little use to dysregulated children. Rewards tend to have limited efficacy and sanctions ultimately fail because there is nothing you can do to that child that can compete with the discomfort that they’re probably already feeling. The good news is that brains are very plastic. They are constantly changing and developing, especially during childhood. So, teachers can do a lot to help children become happier, better adjusted and more resilient, and therefore ready to learn. Primarily though, Martindale suggests adjusting behaviour strategies. First he suggests teachers need to recognise and validate the children’s feelings, empathising with these. Then is the setting of appropriate boundaries before problem solving solutions with the child about what they could do the next time they felt like that.

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### *Reminders:*

*No school for children on  
Friday 20<sup>th</sup> October and  
Monday 30<sup>th</sup> October.*





# Dispelling Educational Myths

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## Glossary of Terms

**Pedagogy** – the craft of teaching

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

**MET Standard** – standard at which children should be achieving at the end of the year

**Early Years Foundation Stage** – sets standards for the learning, development and care of children from birth to 5 years old

**Early Learning Goals** – key areas that each child is assessed against



Professor John Hattie has looked at thousands of studies involving millions of students to analyse a number of myths versus reality in regards to teaching and learning outcomes. I share some of these with you below but if you wanted to read all of his findings please visit <https://npjscilearncommunity.nature.com/users/19748-professor-john-hattie/posts/20734-dispelling-educational-myths>

**Myth:** Teaching at private schools is better than teaching at public schools

**Reality:** Professor Hattie says research suggests this is not true. When it comes down to the quality of teachers, it's very, very hard to find evidence that there is any major difference between public and private schools in terms of the growth and the value that teachers add. In fact it's almost a myth to believe that they're different. You get some of the best teachers in Australia in some of our poorest school areas. What really matters is good leadership within a school, and how teachers are selected and developed, no matter whether it is private or government.

**Myth:** Reducing class size leads to better outcomes for students

**Reality:** Reducing class size can enhance student achievement but generally the effect is only marginal. What really matters is that the teacher is effective and having an impact, no matter what size the class is. Professor Hattie says the preoccupation with class size is an enigma; what's really important is that the teacher learns to be an expert in their own class, no matter what size it is.

**Myth:** We should be happy if our children are 'doing their best'

**Reality:** Not so. Professor Hattie says telling a student to 'do your best' is the worst thing a teacher or parent can do. Some of the most effective learning happens when teachers ask students what they predict their results will be before a test. Upon establishing a student's expectations of their own abilities, a successful teacher will challenge them by saying they can do better. What a student achieved yesterday should never be okay tomorrow.

**Myth:** Teachers should be experts on their subject and do most of the talking

**Reality:** Most teachers talk between 80 and 90% of the time during a lesson. The research has shown that students are more engaged and learn more when teachers talk around 50% of the time, or even less. Evidence shows that children can learn very effectively from their peers; when another student explains concepts to them. The best teachers encourage their students to be active and engaged in the classroom, exploring ideas and not just passively listening.

**Myth:** TV has a negative effect on a child's learning progress

**Reality:** Not directly. Professor Hattie says the problem with a child watching too much television is that it stops them from spending that time learning in more productive ways, such as by reading or developing their communication and relationship skills.

**Myth:** A child's birth date can have a negative impact on learning

**Reality:** Professor Hattie has found that the date which a child's birthday falls in the school year has an effect on the progress initially, as there is a big difference in the ability of a child who is 5 years 1 month and one who is 5 years and 11 months. However, no difference is found after two to three years of schooling. What has a more dramatic effect on a child's academic achievements is whether a child makes a friend in the first month at school.

**Myth:** Ability Grouping is effective

**Reality:** Professor Hattie says many educators believe grouping students by ability allows teachers to customise learning to students' learning pace. However the opposite is true – it has little impact on achievement. The greatest negative effect is that students from minorities are more likely to be in the lower ability groups and such equity issues should raise major concerns.



**SAFEGUARDING**

Keeping children safe in education, statutory guidance for schools and colleges underpins our approach to safeguarding children.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play in safeguarding children. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all professionals should make sure their approach is child-centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child.

Staff working with children are advised to maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned. If staff members have any concerns about a child (as opposed to a child being in immediate danger), they will need to decide what action to take. In the first instance, this leads them to have a conversation with one of our designated safeguarding leads to agree a course of action, although any staff member can make a referral to children's social care. The designated safeguarding lead at Hill West is Dr Clarke and all Deputy Head Teachers and Assistant Head Teachers are Deputy Safeguarding Leads.

It is important for children to receive the right help at the right time to address risks and prevent issues escalating. Research and Serious Case Reviews have repeatedly shown the dangers of failing to take effective action. Poor practice includes: failing to listen to the views of the child; failing to re-assess concerns when situations do not improve; sharing information too slowly; and a lack of challenge to those who appear not to be taking action.

## Pupil Outcomes

The attainment and achievement of our pupils is the singular most important aspect of our work. Leaders and Governors have an uncompromising focus on the attainment and progress of all groups of learners across school. Throughout each year group and across the curriculum our pupils make substantial and sustained progress. Excellent assessment for learning informs teaching and ensures lessons are challenging and move learning on quickly so that children make good progress. High levels of involvement mean that 'learning is fun' and children enjoy coming to school. Children tell us that they know their own strengths and weaknesses and value their child friendly learning journeys.

Personal Development has an excellent foundation in the Early Years Foundation Stage, with 97% of pupils achieving Expected or better against the Personal, Social, Emotional Development strand of the Early Learning Goals (self-confidence and self-awareness, managing feelings and behaviour and making relationships).

The proportions of pupils achieving the MET standard in the core subjects is significantly higher than national at all key phases.

Phonics is taught highly effectively with 100% passing the check in Year 1 Summer 2016 and 95% at summer 2017.

Standardised test scores for Reading across school show a significant proportion of pupils exceeding scores of 110 (54%),

Our Year of Maths (2016-2017) led to highly effective maths teaching and assessment which saw attainment outcomes at the end of Yr 6 Summer 2017 at 13% above national at MET and progress measures at 2.3 compared to 0 nationally.

Our focus on developing children's Writing saw the greatest gains with outcomes at the end of Yr 6 Summer 2017 at 88% at the Met Standard and 20% at the Greater Depth Standard. The overall progress score for Hill West in Writing was 1.3 which is 0.85% higher than the outstanding school average.



### Hill West Senior Leadership Team

Dr Clarke - Head Teacher

Mrs Leeson and Mrs Cook - Deputy Head Teachers and phase leaders for Years 2, 3 & 4

Mrs George and Miss Bolton - Assistant Head Teachers for Reception and Year 1

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 Phase Leader



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.

