



# Hill West Primary School

## Pedagogical Newsletter – February 2019

### Safer Internet Day 2019

Safer Internet Day was celebrated globally on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> February 2019 with the slogan “Together for a better internet”. Although at Hill West we integrate the teaching of internet safety across the curriculum, the day provides a fantastic opportunity to engage with our children about their digital lives. Discussing on-line safety with your children at home is important too. Every time our children go on-line there are lots of choices they have to make. For example, which game they should play, which message they should reply to, which button they should click. Our children need to be reminded that their choices need to be kind, respectful and safe and that if they are unsure they should always check with an adult. Our children also need to be reminded to keep their personal information safe, by not sharing it with others. If someone asks for their personal information they should tell an adult immediately.



### Teaching for Mastery in Maths

The National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics (NCETM) is working with maths experts across the country to develop a consistent understanding of the key principles behind maths mastery. At its core, a mastery approach rejects the idea that some children can't do maths. It recognises that by nurturing positive attitudes and building confidence in mathematics, all children can achieve. Concepts are built in small, logical steps and are explored through clear mathematical structures and representations. Children are taught together as a whole class and the focus is on depth – not acceleration – so that all children have a chance to embed learning. A mathematical concept of skill has been mastered when a pupil can represent it in multiple ways, has the mathematical language to communicate related ideas, and can independently apply the concept to new problems in unfamiliar situations. Mastery is a journey and long-term goal, achieved through exploration, clarification, practice and application over time. This is not just about being able to memorise key facts and

procedures, which tends to lead to superficial understanding that can easily be forgotten. Pupils should be able to select which mathematical approach is most effective in different scenarios. It is important that teachers allow children to deepen their understanding before accelerating content coverage. All pupils benefit from deepening their conceptual understanding of mathematics, regardless of whether they've previously struggled or excelled. Pupils must be given time to fully understand, explore and apply ideas, rather than accelerate through new topics. This approach enables pupils to truly grasp a concept, and the challenge comes from investigating it in new, alternative and more complex ways. At Hill West we focus on securing the fundamentals. A large proportion of time is spent reinforcing number to build competency and fluency. Number is at the heart of our primary mastery scheme of learning, with more time devoted to this than other areas of mathematics. It is important that pupils secure these key foundations of maths before being introduced to more difficult concepts. At Hill West the maths mastery approach has been developed and integrated into our practice over the last three years.

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Reminders:

School closes for half term on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> February and reopens on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> February. I hope you all have a lovely half term holiday.





## The Curriculum at Hill West

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### Glossary of Terms



**Mastery** – comprehensive knowledge or skills in a particular subject or activity

**Curriculum** – the subjects comprising a course of study in a school

**Sensory Processing Difficulties (SPD)** – a condition where the brain has trouble receiving and responding to information

**Proprioceptive** – relating to stimuli that are produced and perceived, especially those connected with the position and movement of the body

**Malachi** – trained therapeutic support for parents

The curriculum at Hill West has been designed, developed and refined over many years. It has been a key focus for staff continued professional development (CPD) whereby the national curriculum has been aligned with a localised curriculum that meets the needs of all our learners and is challenging and aspirational (preparing them for later life). Progressive learning journeys have been devised by the staff for each subject that outline what should be taught/achieved. These can be found, either in the front of children’s books or on display in the classroom. Our curriculum is then delivered through thematic key questions designed to engage and inspire learning, as you know these are issued to parents each week so that you can share in the learning that is taking place in school. Investment in staff CPD continues to ensure that breadth, balance and challenge is effectively planned for; our curriculum is highly responsive. Teachers and teaching assistants think carefully about the learning experiences they provide their children and plan to deliver these in a way that captures children’s interests and enthusiasm for learning not just in the moment but beyond the classroom. The curriculum is underpinned by our Personal Development and Well-being curriculum that places significant value on spiritual, moral, social and cultural education (SMSC), personal, health, social and economic education (PHSE), relationships and sex education (RSE) including British Values and identity. As such a number of enrichment activities / experiences contribute to this e.g. our work towards achieving the Rights Respecting School Award (RRSA).

All children make excellent progress across all subjects and this is robustly monitored through pupil progress discussions with Assistant Head Teachers and members of the wider leadership team. Our curriculum develops key skills across a range of subjects to enable the highest possible outcomes in core and non-core subjects. As a result of our curriculum our children leave Hill West prepared to contribute fully not only to life in secondary school but to the wider community too. At Hill West we work to support the curriculum statement that over-arches all of Birmingham’s schools. At school all children will have opportunities to explore their talents and abilities through:

- Developing an appreciation of the arts;
- Taking part in a wide range of physical activities, sports and games;
- Developing a sense of self in a non-judgemental, mutually supportive environment;
- Experience music and its intrinsic values for enjoyment and self-expression through performing, singing and the playing of instruments;
- Experience social, moral, spiritual and cultural education which broadens children’s awareness and understanding of the world and their place within it.

In this way we equip our children and young people to be happy, talented, confident and ambitious citizens of Birmingham and the wider world.



## SAFEGUARDING – CSE

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is a form of sexual abuse where children (under 18) and their naivety are exploited. The exploitation can often involve young people being tricked or coerced into thinking they're special. Child sexual exploitation is often a hidden crime. Young people often trust their abuser and don't understand that they are being abused. They may depend on their abuser or be too scared to tell anyone what is happening. It can involve violent, humiliating and degrading sexual assaults. Child sexual exploitation doesn't always involve physical contact and can happen online. When sexual exploitation happens online, young people may be persuaded, or forced, to

- Send or post sexually explicit images of themselves
- Take part in sexual activities via webcam or smartphone
- Have sexual conversations by text or online.

Abusers may threaten to send images, videos or copies of conversations to the young person's friends and family unless they take part in other sexual activity. Images and videos may continue to be shared long after the sexual abuse has stopped. Sexual exploitation is also used in gangs to exert power and control over members, sometimes as an initiation act or in exchange for status or protection. Girls and young women are frequently forced into sexual activity by gang members. Over 2,400 children were victims of sexual exploitation in gangs and groups from August 2010 to October 2011. To prevent CSE and keep children safe it is vital that we raise public awareness of the signs of CSE and teach our children about healthy relationships, making sure they know how to report any concerns they may have.

## \* Sensory Difficulties \*

In recent years there has been an increase in the number of children being identified as having sensory needs, or difficulties processing sensory information. Some children express their difficulties with the sensory world through behaviour. Others experience sensory difficulties as barriers to accessing learning. Sensory processing disorder is a physical disability, but one within the brain so we can't see it, which makes it harder for those who live with it to have their needs recognised. Imagine that all our senses have volume controls that allow us to tune into and tune out of particular sensory experiences. Being able to focus our senses like this is absolutely fundamental to being able to access education in a classroom environment. To learn one may need to tune into the visual experience and tune out of the sounds of others in the classroom. However, in children with SPD the controls are broken; sometimes permanently set too high or too low, sometimes difficult to adjust or irregular in the way they go up and down. If your controls are broken, focusing attention is going to be extraordinarily difficult. These difficulties can lead to a range of sensory behaviours. For example, you could expect to see children who struggle with processing tactile or proprioceptive information having difficulty tolerating a messy play activity, or being fussy about their eating, or wriggling on the carpet when they should be sitting still. Considering sensory triggers for behaviour in schools helps us to think deeply about what might be underlying the behaviour – what is the root cause. Behaviour is expressive, if we want it to stop we need to solve the need to express in that way or give our children an alternative form of expression. Punishing the expression rarely works (as can be seen by our over-flowing prison system and the repeat offenders in detention at secondary schools). Behaviour triggered by sensory experiences can be grouped broadly into two categories. The big explosive behaviours, the dramatic and seemingly irrational, head-butting, biting, throwing chairs, caused by a perceived sensory threat. Or the low-level niggly behaviour, caused by on-going irritants in the sensory world – imagine how you would feel if you had a really itchy toe all day, it's that level of irritant. There are simple things we can do at home and in school to remove these sensory irritants but the first step is to acknowledge that for some children SPD is very real.



### Malachi

"We are not concerned with the fact that the child has thrown a chair across the classroom we are concerned with WHY he has thrown it; what has brought the child to that point." Laura Evans, CEO Malachi

Hill West is currently offering our families one-to-one therapeutic family support through an intensive programme which builds bridges to overcome the most troubling difficulties. A trained professional is available each week to meet, confidentially with parents and children. If you think you could benefit from this then please let us know.

"I was in a mist. Then there was Malachi". Parent Birmingham

The Home Learning Environment (HLE) and why it matters; HM Government and the National Literacy Trust

A child's language development begins long before formal schooling, when the child first begins to distinguish sounds heard within the mother's womb. Language skills are then shaped and nurtured by the child's 'home learning environment' which includes the physical characteristics of the home, but also the quality of the implicit and explicit learning support they receive from the caregivers. The quality of the HLE is a key predictor of a child's early language ability and future success; positive experiences can have lasting and life changing impacts. Early language ability is consistently linked to later outcomes, including school attainment and job prospects. Children residing in middle and upper-income homes are more likely to experience a language-rich environment. By contrast, children from low-income homes are more likely to arrive at school with below-average language skills, leaving them at a disadvantage from the beginning. But this is not inevitable. All parents have the power to change outcomes for their children, no matter what their background. The amount and style of language that caregivers use when talking with their child is one of the strongest predictors of children's early language development. In particular, back and forth conversations between parent and child that are age-appropriate and reflect the child's personal interests can make all the difference.