



# Hill West Primary School



## Pedagogical Newsletter – March 2025

Issue 38  
March 2025

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### Reminders:

School closes for the  
Easter break on Friday  
11<sup>th</sup> April. School  
reopens on TUESDAY  
29<sup>th</sup> April for all.



### Phonics Screening Check

The Phonics Screening Check is a short, statutory assessment that all Year 1 children take in June to assess their ability to decode words using phonics skills. Set by the Department for Education (DfE), the check consists of 40 words - some real and some pseudo (nonsense) words - designed to ensure children can apply their phonics knowledge effectively. The pass mark in previous years has been 32 out of 40, though this is confirmed annually by the DfE. The purpose is to identify those who may need extra support in their reading journey. At Hill West Primary School, we use this as an opportunity to celebrate progress and tailor further support where needed, ensuring every child develops confidence and fluency in reading. We will share your child's score with you in their end of year, annual, report.

### Multiplication Check

The Year 4 Multiplication Tables Check (MTC) is a statutory assessment that takes place in June to assess children's fluency in recalling multiplication facts up to  $12 \times 12$ . The purpose, as set by the Department for Education (DfE), is to ensure children have a strong foundation in multiplication, which underpins many aspects of maths learning. The check consists of 25 randomly generated questions, with children given six seconds to answer each one. There is no pass mark; instead, the results help identify where additional support may be needed. Parents can support their child at home by regularly practising times tables

through quick-fire questions and songs.

Parents may want to consider fun and engaging ways to support their child at home, including practising with Times Tables Rock Stars (TTRS). This engaging online platform helps children build speed and accuracy through fun challenges and competitions and also encourages an understanding of the reciprocal nature of division and multiplication.

At Hill West Primary School, we encourage regular practise to help children approach the check with confidence and develop essential maths skills for life.

### Year 6 SATs

At the end of Key Stage 2, all Year 6 pupils take the Statutory Assessment Tests (SATs) in May. These national tests, set by the Department for Education (DfE), assess children's attainment in reading, mathematics, and grammar, punctuation & spelling (GPS). Writing is assessed through teacher judgment, based on work completed over time.

The tests provide a snapshot of attainment and help to inform a child's transition to secondary school. While results are important, they are just one measure of a child's learning, and at Hill West Primary School, we ensure children approach them with confidence rather than pressure. We strive to balance preparation with a broad and engaging curriculum, ensuring children feel ready for their next steps while still enjoying their final year of primary school.

All children deserve the care and support they need to have the best start in life. Children learn and develop at a faster rate from birth to five years old than at any other time in their lives, so their experiences in early years have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe, and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high-quality early learning provide the foundation children need to fulfil their potential. (EYFS 2024). We know that the rate of children's development depends on the interactions they have with adults.

- Every second counts – every moment is a learning moment to utilise.
- All adults must know key outcomes, model vocabulary intentionally and act deliberately to achieve learning outcomes.
- Avoid overloading working memory – complex tasks, overstimulation or excessive instructions can hinder learning.
- Minimise distractions, noise and unnecessary visual clutter.
- Cognitive and social development must be equally valued.
- Continuous assessment through play-based interactions must be prioritised and adaptations made in the moment to enhance learning experiences.
- Repeated exposure and personal relevance enhance retention.

Curriculum: children in EYFS are novices in all areas, so the curriculum must focus on building mastery using both the EYFS Statutory Framework and Development Matters to develop a carefully crafted curriculum.

- Thoughtful curriculum design ensures children receive meaningful knowledge and experiences that extends their cultural capital considering starting points and diversity (windows and mirrors analogy).
- The curriculum prioritises communication to facilitate and capture learning.
- Learning builds on prior knowledge; connections strengthen understanding and more complex skills.
- Art and Design support regulation, expression and resilience linking to PSED and effective learning through quality interactions.
- Themes foster curiosity, using key questions and key vocabulary that the children will know and apply in their daily talk. (Keep it simple and plan for misconceptions).
- Parents know and contribute to the learning journey; they are partners and add value.
- Different subject areas require different sequencing: foundational skills come first.

At the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), children in Reception are assessed against the Early Learning Goals (ELGs), which cover key areas of development, including communication and language, personal, social and emotional development, physical development, literacy, and maths. Teachers make these assessments through ongoing observations and interactions, building a picture of each child's strengths and next steps. The aim is to ensure children are ready for Year 1, with a strong foundation in early learning. There is no formal test; instead, teachers use their professional judgment to determine whether a child has met the expected standard in each area. These outcomes are shared with parents in the end-of-year report.



## Class Charts

Now that class charts has been running for a little over one week, we thought you may like some insights.

### Positive Behaviour Points awarded between 24.03.25 and 31.03.25

890 for Ever Respectful  
515 for Effort  
413 for Excellence  
254 for Pride  
232 for Ambitious  
151 for Kindness  
132 Curious

### Negative Behaviour Points awarded between 24.03.25 and 31.03.25

Discourteous 176  
Inattentive 113  
Other 106

We are delighted to be able to shine a light on our pupils' positive behaviours in real time so you can celebrate these at home.

It is likely too of course, that you are finding out more about the low level negative behaviours that the teacher probably wouldn't have had capacity to mention to you in the past. We believe in time, these will decrease.

## As a school we will:

- Safeguard all of our children following the statutory framework set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education.
- Set the highest standards for behaviour, conduct and academic success both on and off line, embedding our ACE values through all of our work.
- Provide a safe and secure environment in which children can be happy and successful; safe from bullying, prejudice and discrimination.
- Embrace diversity; reducing barriers so as to lead to successful outcomes for all.
- Ensure that our curriculum is carefully planned, progressive and delivered by expert teachers leading to excellent rates of progress for all children.
- Encourage pupils to further their understanding of the curriculum being taught, in school, by issuing relevant and regular homework.
- Provide extended and extra-curricular opportunities to enrich the pupils' knowledge, learning, experience and personal development.
- Celebrate and congratulate all children on their achievements.
- Inform parents about their child's progress and next steps for learning at regular Parents' Consultations and by means of an annual report.
- Contact parents if there are any concerns which affect their child's success in school including signposting parents to relevant policies or resources.
- Work cohesively with pupils and parents to ensure they understand, support and help deliver our high expectations.

## As a Parent/Carer I/We will:

- Uphold the school's ethos and values, communicating respectfully and collaboratively with school staff at all times.
- Read the school's policies and guidelines and support these at all times. These can be found on the school's website.
- Read all correspondence issued from school and reply or confirm within the required timeframes.
- Ensure my child attends school regularly and on time; ready to learn.
- Ensure school uniform purchased complies with the school uniform policy.
- Know that the school's curriculum is underpinned by the National Curriculum and familiarise myself with the curriculum plans which can be found on the school's website.
- Support my child with the regular completion of their homework, providing a quiet place for study.
- Read to my child daily.
- Attend school meetings and Parents' Consultations to discuss my child's learning and progress and, where I can, support the school's Parent, Teacher and Friends Association (PTFA).
- Refrain for discussing children and staff on any forms of social media.
- Bring or share any concerns I have directly with the school.
- Keep school informed about any medical (IHCP), physical or emotional difficulties my child may be experiencing.
- Send my child to school with healthy food/snacks ensuring all items are NUT free.
- Be considerate of the local community by parking safely.

## Homework

At Hill West Primary School, we recognise that homework plays an important role in supporting children's learning, helping them develop independence, responsibility, and good study habits. However, we also understand that pupils have valuable opportunities and experiences outside of school, so we aim to ensure that homework is well-balanced, meaningful, and purposeful. Each week, homework is set on a Friday and should be completed by the following Friday. Expectations increase as children progress through school. For example, Reception children have around 45 minutes of homework per week, while those in Years 5 and 6 complete approximately 2 hours. In addition, we encourage daily reading for at least 15 minutes and, for pupils in Year 2 to Year 6, five minutes of Times Tables Rock Stars (TTRS) practice each weekday. Parents can support by checking homework tasks through Next Week at Hill West, engaging in discussions about learning, and helping children to manage their time effectively. While all pupils are expected to complete their homework, teachers are available to provide guidance, and personalised support and can, of course, make reasonable adjustments.

## Let's Celebrate Our School

- ONE:** This term, our children have told us...
- ✓ I enjoyed my week at school **93%**
  - ✓ I had fun playing or learning with someone this week **97%**
  - ✓ My teacher helps me to feel happy and safe in our classroom **98%**
  - ✓ Someone made me feel good about myself this week **94%**
  - ✓ I had the chance to make someone else feel happy or included this week **92%**
  - ✓ I am treated respectfully and equally by your teachers **97%**

**TWO:** With your support and generosity we took 295 children to the Birmingham Hippodrome to watch their annual pantomime; Peter Pan. ***From the start it has been the theatre's business to entertain people. It needs no other passport than fun (Bertolt Brecht).***

- THREE:** On a parent survey you told us
- ✓ *Your child enjoys coming to school and is happy* **95%**
  - ✓ *Your child had made good friendships at school and feels supported by their peers and teachers* **96%**

**FOUR:** We have been overwhelmed with your generosity this year and want to thank you sincerely for donations you have made. (Calm Corners; Big Bird Watch; Daffodils; School Fund; Junk Modelling; Design And Technology Days)

**FIVE:** Following a Times Tables Rock Stars tournament this term, we were placed 41<sup>st</sup> out of a possible 3,623 schools. That saw us placed in the top 2% of all schools who entered! Hill West was featured on the main leader board and entered a total of 155,580 answers correctly!

**SIX:** This term we hosted 362 meetings with parents during our spring teacher / parent consultations. Thanks go to all those parents who joined us to discuss the learning and progress of your children.

**SEVEN:** We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to our wonderful PTFA for funding the visit from the Junior Einstein Science Club, to mark Science Week! This incredible experience would not have been possible without the generous support of our PTFA and all our parents who contribute to fundraising events throughout the year. Your kindness and generosity make a real difference.

**EIGHT:** In March we had an external review of the quality of Maths teaching across school. The report congratulated our strong practice and saw that we are providing our children with a deep and connected understanding of mathematics. Learning behaviours were exemplary and levels of engagement were high. We would like to congratulate all of our pupils on their hard work.

**NINE:** This term we have launched Class Charts to support communication between home and school. We were delighted to say that in the first week of implementation our teaching staff awarded 1,757 positive behaviour points. We would like to congratulate our children on their super behaviour and conduct.