



Hilltop First School and Foundation Stage

Teaching and Learning policy 2023

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Hilltop Mission Statement: To create and maintain a school that gives its children the best possible outcomes.

Our **vision and values** are at the core of everything we do. They underpin our teaching and learning, and provide an environment which prepares our pupils as confident, happy citizens.

Our **vision** is to cultivate curiosity, kindness, reflection and confidence in all our pupils so that every child will experience success.

Hilltop's **Ethos**: It is *all* about the children. The children are at the centre of everything we do.

Hilltop is an inclusive school and we strive to make all learning experiences meaningful and accessible to all pupils. Our priority is to develop resilient learners who will continue to learn beyond the classroom and into later life. We aim to achieve this by providing opportunities for all pupils to reflect on their learning and develop the skills and confidence needed to solve problems and build on previous experiences.

At Hilltop First School, we will foster the following characteristics of effective learning in all pupils:

- Engagement with the environment through exploration and/or play
- Decision making and an understanding of consequence
- Questioning and critical thinking
- Originality and Creativity
- Determination and 'trying again'
- Dialogue and cooperation
- Active involvement and concentration
- Enjoyment and fun

Language of Learning

Metacognition, the awareness and understanding of one's own thought and learning processes, is recognised by the Education Endowment Foundation as a highly effective way of improving pupils' outcomes. At Hilltop First School we will support pupils in reflecting on their learning through the use of our Learning Friends which represent strategies or skills pupils may use in their learning:

- **Bee**: collaborative learning and teamwork
- **Butterfly**: Attention to detail and accuracy
- **Cat**: Curiosity and asking questioning
- **Elephant**: Remembering and using facts and information
- **Pegasus**: Imagination and Creativity
- **Spider**: linking new concepts to prior learning
- **Tortoise**: Perseverance, practise and resilience

These characters help to provide pupils with the vocabulary to talk about their learning and are displayed in all classrooms. 'Well done' certificates are linked to Learning Friends. The analogy of the Learning Pit (James Nottingham) is also used to support pupils in developing resilience through engaging with, and learning from, challenging problems.

Teachers create opportunities within all subject areas for pupils to reflect verbally on their learning either as a class or in groups/pairs. All pupils engage weekly in written reflection in their Learning Journals. Pupils may choose to share their journal with the adults in the classroom but these books are not marked by the adults.

Questioning

Effective questioning provides opportunities for pupils to verbalise their ideas or strategies and, when used well, serves to identify misconceptions or gaps in learning. Teachers are encouraged to plan questions ahead of lessons. Time should be given for pupils to process a question and mentally frame answers. For this reason immediate responses are not always sought and staff will not encourage a quick 'hands up' response.

Initial answers from pupils will often be challenged by adults asking for more detail or depth. Pupils are taught that this is not a measure of the quality of their initial answer and are given time to explore their ideas or strategies more fully. This may involve other pupils making contributions or providing alternative ideas.

Dialogue in the classroom

At Hilltop we recognise the importance of oracy in learning. Pupils are encouraged to talk about their learning, ask questions and discuss ideas. Talk partners are used as a strategy across the school to facilitate learning conversations.

Planning, Preparation and Assessment (PPA) Time

All teachers are entitled to **PPA** time: time away from their classroom for planning, preparation and assessment. Hilltop governors and leaders recognise the value of collaborative working at all levels. The staff of each Key Stage are released for a full morning each week as a team. Staff are expected to use this time collaboratively for:

- Reflection
- Planning of lessons
- Preparation of resources
- Moderation
- Reviewing pupil progress
- Sharing good practice
- Mutual support and Team building

Where possible, support staff are released for at least part of the PPA time so that they can also participate in team conversations around learning and planning.

During PPA, specialist teachers cover the classes on a rotation basis. PPA cover staff are expected to prepare their own lessons including provision of resources and any follow up marking.

Planning

Planning is shared within Key Stage teams to maintain consistency and cater for our mixed year group classes. Collaborative planning allows staff to share out subject areas; drawing on their collective experience and expertise to maintaining high quality consistent learning experiences across all classes. A rolling two-year topic map for each Key Stage ensures effective coverage of the statutory curriculum within the broader creative Hilltop curriculum. Support staff contribute to plans as appropriate.

All planning should take into account staff reflections on previous lessons. Planning should evolve to suit the needs of individual cohorts of children rather than being lifted from previous years. Lessons should be adapted to meet the learning needs of all pupils. It is not appropriate to only differentiate learning by the level of adult support available to targeted children.

There is no single short term planning format at Hilltop. Each team has the freedom to determine a format which includes the following considerations:

- Clear learning focus for group of pupils
- Subject specific skills
- Differentiation which reflects the learning needs of identified pupils
- Essential prior knowledge / key vocabulary
- Progression from previous learning
- Key Questions
- Opportunities for assessment

Marking and Feedback

All marking at Hilltop First School should be “meaningful, manageable and motivating. Any ‘marks’ made on pupils’ learning should always be made with the pupil in mind. These should be easy for the child to interpret and act upon. In some cases teachers may engage in ‘live marking’ which happens during the lesson allowing

adults to quickly identify any misconceptions or gaps in understanding and provide clarification of further explanation or modelling.

At times it may be appropriate for the whole class or groups of children to be given the same feedback. In this instance verbal feedback together with further discussion, explanation or modelling may be used. This is regularly used for extended pieces of writing in English lessons. Teachers will keep a diary of observations from pieces of writing across the week and share feedback during a lesson in which pupils respond and review, edit or extend their own written learning.

Self and Peer Marking

Pupils are capable of reviewing and marking their own and others' written learning and on occasion this will provide the most immediate feedback. In Maths, where pupils are given answer sheets, rapid identification of incorrect answers can prevent repeated errors and prompt pupils to ask for further help. Adults will always review and acknowledge self and peer marking.

Use of Support Staff for Learning

All classes benefit from an additional adult at least 60% of the week. These members of staff play an important role in adding to the pupils' learning experience and should be used in the following ways:

- **Micro teaching**

This is used during input sessions where the teacher is speaking to the whole class. Identified pupils will be seated close to the Teaching Assistant who mirrors what the teacher is modelling. Using a smaller whiteboard, duplicate flash cards, physical resources or replica images, the TA engages with targeted pupils, thus ensuring that potentially vulnerable learners remain engaged and contribute appropriately to the lesson.

- **Small group support**

This will involve working with pupils in a small groups to complete a task within the classroom. It is important that the nature of the group varies. It is not acceptable to the TA to always be assigned to working with the lower attaining pupils!

- **Out of class interventions**

Where a TA has had training or experience in delivering a specific programme or intervention strategy, they may be asked to lead small group or one-to-one sessions with pupils from any class. Decisions relating to which pupils would benefit from such programmes and the review of resulting progress should always rest on the team leader, class teacher or SENCO. Any TA leading such interventions must be given time to prepare resources and plan for these sessions.

- **Individual support**

At times an individual child may need additional emotional, social or academic support. A TA might be asked to provide this under the guidance of the class teacher or SENCO.

Our aim is to develop independence and resilience in all of our pupils. It is important that pupils do not develop an over reliance or dependence on adults to engage in oral, practical or written learning activities. It is the role of each class teacher to maintain a balance between tasks where the child will need some adult support and tasks where the child is able to confidently draw on prior learning, interaction with peers or use of practical resources to engage independently with a high level of success.

Resources

Pupils respond to multisensory experiences and concrete examples. Younger pupils in particular will benefit from hands on resources to build understanding. When acquiring new knowledge or practising new skills, pupils should have access to a range of play based resources as appropriate.

As pupils take ownership of their own learning, they should be encouraged to independently access resources appropriate to their own stage of learning. Use of practical resources supports differentiation.

- Maths

Pupils must have access to a range of practical resources to support mathematical learning. These should be freely accessible to pupils across the school. It is likely that the nature of resources will differ across the key stages.

- Written English

Pupils must have access to phonic sound cards, grapheme sheets, tricky word charts and dictionaries as appropriate. In Key Stage 1, resources that are used in every day written tasks may also be used in assessment tasks.

- Science and Foundation Subjects

The nature of the subject calls for practical hands-on enquiry. Pupils must be taught to use scientific equipment safely and effectively to promote knowledge and understanding through experience and observation.

The availability of practical resources will have budget implications. Each Key Stage team, supported by subject leaders should ensure that resources are well stored and accounted for.

Classroom display boards should be updated so that they promote learning at a level appropriate to the pupils across the year. Each classroom must contain at least one 'working wall' providing pupils with strategies and prompts relevant to the current learning focus. All foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 classrooms must display appropriate phonic graphemes, examples of 'Hilltop Script' and a hundred square.

Curriculum

In order to provide the same learning experiences for all pupils whether they are in the 'pure' classes or 'mixed' classes, all Key Stage staff share their planning. Following a rolling two year topic plan allows the statutory elements of the National Curriculum to be covered. Curriculum details can be seen on the curriculum page of the school website.

Teachers plan English units of study which may broadly link to the term's topic although this is not a school expectation. The National Curriculum is used as guide to ensure all statutory elements of Phonics, Spelling, Grammar and genres of writing are covered.

Phonics at Hilltop is taught through Letterland.

Hilltop uses a range of resources including NCETM and White Rose Maths Curriculum supported by Classroom Secrets resources to cover the National Curriculum for Maths

Science, Geography and History are taught as standalone subject. Topics are covered through 'big questions' which allow pupils to apply both disciplinary and substantive knowledge. Topics are taught across the key stage and covered over two years.

The Computing curriculum is based on Kapow units of study with adaptations made to match digital resources in the school. Computing is taught within individual year groups and is not included in our two year rolling curriculum model. Pupils are taught in groups of 15 at a time.

RE and PSHE are taught in three weekly blocks each half term. Pupils reflections during these lessons are captured in shared class scrap books.

Design Technology and Art are covered during dedicated focus weeks during alternate half terms. These are primarily planned by subject leaders and ensure progression between key stages.

Physical Education is taught by both specialist coaches and class teachers. All pupils in Year 1-4 have 2 PE lessons a week. Pupils in reception have one formal PE lesson each week. The curriculum coverage has been planned in consultation with the Windsor Schools Sports Partnership coaching team.

French and Music lessons are taught weekly by specialist teachers. Termly topics are based on the Kapow units of study and adapted to meet the needs of our rolling two year curriculum pattern.

Use of Digital Platforms for Learning

Pupils' pleasure in playing online games can be used to promote learning. These learning games can provide immediate feedback for pupils and tap into their naturally competitiveness. They are used both within the classroom and for setting home learning.

Staff are aware that not all pupils have easy access to digital devices at all times and so alternative paper based learning resources are always offered. Opportunities are also given during the school day for pupils to access digital learning as appropriate.

All individual pupil login details are stuck in their individual home school diaries. Pupils are taught about the importance of not sharing passwords and breaches are addressed swiftly.

Any use of digital resources remains under regular review.

Home Learning

At Hilltop, we recognise that as pupils grow up and move on to future schools, the home learning expectation will increase substantially. With this in mind, believe that the primary purposes of home learning is to develop positive habits for learning outside of school and to give parents/carers some idea of the content and levels of learning in school. All learning tasks which are sent home will focus on consolidating learning which has already taken place in school. Pupils will not be expected to complete unfamiliar tasks. Tasks are set weekly to be completed and returned to school by the following week.

Our home learning expectation is as follows:

Reading: All pupils from Reception upwards are expected to read their school reading materials to a home adult at least 4 times a week. This should be recorded in the home school diary.

Maths: Pupils in Years 1-4 online Numbots & TTR practise

English: Pupils in Years 1-4 are set a piece of written *Prepare and Share* English learning. This piece of learning will become an important resource in a subsequent classroom lesson. It will not be marked by teachers but will be shared and discussed with peers.

Failure to complete home learning will be followed up with conversations with parents/carers and appropriate support strategies and or consequences will be agreed.

Recorded Assessment

Staff continue to work on developing a meaningful manageable system for monitoring pupils' progress. Curriculum related attainment in English and Maths is recorded at the end of each long term. This data is used by senior leaders to review the effectiveness of teaching and learning strategies across cohorts and determine whether any pupils require additional or alternative support.

Following each unit of study in Maths, pupils will complete a quiz. These are marked by the class teacher. Units of learning allow for at least three flexible Maths lessons following a quiz. This time is used by teachers to address continuing misconceptions or errors before moving on to the next topic. Where pupils' quizzes show good understanding of the topic, the time will be used to encourage deeper learning and exploration in the area.

Progress in Phonics and early reading for pupils in Reception and Key Stage 1 is measured using Letterland published tools. Reading attainment in Key Stage 2 is measured through oral reading of known and unfamiliar texts, written comprehension and oral Guided Reading sessions. Pupils complete Double Page spreads capturing what they have learnt in Science and Foundation Subjects during the previous topic or unit. These creative tasks allow pupils to individually reflect on what they have learnt and remembered over course of the term. Teachers are able to use what they learn from these to adapt and improve their teaching in future units.

Moderation

Moderation is carried out within and between key stage teams each half term in Maths and Writing. This helps to ensure that teacher assessment is standardised and that the whole team can use knowledge of pupils' learning to plan future units. Moderation also forms part of the CPD offer. All teachers are encouraged to engage in cross school moderation at least twice over the course of the year.

Subject leaders will carry out 'book looks', visit lessons and speak to pupils once each long term to review pupils learning within their subject area.

Statutory Assessments

Pupils in Reception are assessed on entry using the DfE Baseline Assessment. Teachers ensure this is carried out in a gentle, fun manner so that pupils are not under any stress. Knowledge gained by teachers during these one to one times with pupils helps to form a picture of the cohort as a whole and will inform future planning for learning

In Year 1 pupils' phonic skills are assessed at the end of the year. Pupils are well prepared through daily phonics practise and exposure to applying phonic skills to reading non-words as well as real words. This assessment is carried out individually by the class teacher in as low key a manner as possible.

Year 2 SATS are no longer statutory. We will continue to use DfE published SATS assessments as a useful standardised measure of attainment at the end of Key Stage 1. As with all school assessments, it is not our policy to inform parents/carers ahead of time when this will be. We will not send home practise papers and any past papers completed in school will be more to familiarise pupils with the layout of the quiz than for the purposes of 'prepping' for the test. In some cases we may share Reading past papers with parents/carers so that they have an idea of end of Year 2 expectations and the importance of building Reading stamina and resilience in the children.

In Year 4 pupils Times table knowledge is assessed at the end of the year. This is a digital based assessment. Pupils are well prepared for this assessment through their regular engagement with TimesTable Rockstars. At this age, pupils have more awareness that this is a 'test' but staff still present the process in as low key a manner as possible.

Links with other documents

This Teaching and Learning policy is linked to our

- Staff Handbook
- All Hilltop Curriculum related documents
- 'Why we do what we do' staff document
- RSE policy
- Remote Learning Offer