



Hillcroft Primary School

Friday 24th November 2023

Nurturing children to achieve their personal best

Nurture Inspire Strive

Dear Parents & Carers,

We have again had another exciting few weeks at Hillcroft with lots of fabulous learning taking place.

- Nursery have been continuing to think about how light is used in celebrations.
- Reception have been focusing on nocturnal and diurnal animals.
- Y1 are starting to think about successful structures and how they can build strong and stable structures.
- Y2 are starting to think about effective joins for materials and considering their initial designs for their buildings based on either London in 1666 or modern-day London.
- Y3 have been turning their focus to structures in prehistoric Britain.
- Y4 are continuing to consider how the Romans impacted Britain, particularly focusing on what Britain gained and lost from the Romans. They will then start to think about Roman structures.
- Y5 are focusing on all things levers and introducing the idea of a shaduf.
- Y6 are thinking about the different types of shelters that were available during WWII, before progressing on to thinking about joining two pieces of material together.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our children and families who raised money for our Royal Marsden sponsored walk the other week. At the last count we have raised just over £4,000. A fantastic achievement for a fantastic cause. I am sure this money will go a long way to support the charity.

Thank you also for those families who donated to Children in Need last week- we raised £390. And thank you to all of the families who donated a gift to the Salvation Army Christmas Toy appeal this week. Your donations will go a long way in helping families in need this Christmas.

A reminder that next Friday 1st is a mufti day in return for a donation of a new gift for our Secret Santa event, later on in the term. Our Secret Santa event is a hugely popular event where the children have the opportunity to choose and buy up to 2 gifts for loved ones at home. The donation can be any new gift, male or female, but no alcohol please.

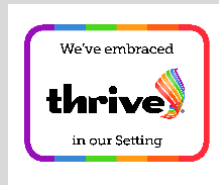
I hope many of you will be joining us at our Christmas Fair on Sunday and I look forward to seeing you on the gate on Monday.

Miss Summers

Key Dates:

Please see link to whole school Key Dates calendar:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/18bNyLzggw2qdmfvcFkypQe-ZxIRc6hJTGnHXv9cLGrM/edit>



A message from Mrs Pearson.

It is that time of year when the children are getting too excited, and you just want them to enjoy themselves. Mindfulness and Meditation are both great things to do with your children. We do some of these through our whole class Thrive at least once every half term.

Mindfulness / Meditation for children helps them to create a peaceful, safe space within their minds where they can feel happy, relaxed and content. It is a great skill for kids to learn as it helps them face daily challenges. The idea is that when they pay attention to breathing out and breathing in, they start to feel calm inside. This helps them to learn to notice their different feelings, even upsetting ones.

What are the benefits of mindfulness and meditation for children?

- *Increased focus, attention, self – control, classroom participation and compassion
- *Improved academic performance, ability to resolve conflict and overall well-being
- *Decreased levels of stress, anxiety and disruptive behaviour

Why is mindfulness important for children?

Practising mindfulness can help children notice their emotions and shift to more neutral thinking, like how their breath feels as they inhale and exhale. Being mindful can help children manage their emotions and tackle challenges.

What are the benefits of Mindfulness and Meditation?

Among its theorised benefits are self-control, affect tolerance, enhanced flexibility, improved concentration, mental clarity, emotional intelligence and the ability to relate to others and one's self with kindness, acceptance and compassion.

Why is mindfulness so important?

Studies suggest that mindfulness helps people manage stress, cope better with serious illness and reduce anxiety. Many people's mindfulness reports an increased ability to relax, a greater enthusiasm for life and improved self-esteem.

Here are a few mindfulness/meditation videos to show your children.

Helping Kids Focus | Headspace Breathers <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=olmbjjd-rug>

Yes, You Can! | Zen Den Mindful Meditation <https://cosmickids.com/video/yes-you-can/>

Three Minutes Body Scan Meditation – https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ihwcw_ofuME

Thought Bubbles! Mindfulness for Children <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=70j3xyu7OGw>

Next coffee afternoon is Friday 8th December at 2pm. Pop along for a chat, tea/coffee and mince pies. Please come through the car park.

Christmas events

A reminder of our Christmas events:

1st December	All Day	Muffin day- in return for a new gift for the Secret Santa PTA event- adult male or female (no alcohol please)
4th December	PM	Year 2 Christmas Assembly 1pm - Sycamore 2pm - Chestnut (2 people max per child)
5th December	2pm	Year 1 Christmas Assembly - Willow Class (2 people max per child)
6th December	10:30 - 11:30am & 2:00- 3.00pm	Nursery Festive Fun (2 people max per child)
6th December	2pm	Year 1 Christmas Assembly - Beech Class (2 people max per child)
7th December	PM	Reception Festive Fun 1pm - Elm 2pm - Ash (2 people max per child)
8th December	PM	Year 3 Christmas Assembly 1.45pm - Rowan 2.30pm - Maple (2 people max per child)
11th December	9- 9:30am	KS1 Prizegiving - Main Hall (by invitation only)
11th December	PM	Year 4 Christmas Assembly 1.45pm - Cedar 2.30pm - Birch (2 people max per child)
12th December	9- 9:30am	Year 3 & 4 Prize Giving - Main Hall (by invitation only)
12th December	PM	Year 5 Christmas Assembly 1.45pm - Larch 2.30pm - Aspen (2 people max per child)
12th December	ALL DAY	Year 1 Pantomime- separate information sent to parents
13th December	9- 9:30am	Year 5 & 6 Prize Giving - Main Hall (by invitation only)
13th December	All Day	Christmas Jumper day - please bring in a donation for Save the Children

Christmas events

A reminder of our Christmas events continued:

13th December	All Day	Christmas Dinner day
13th December	After school	PTA school disco- more info to follow
14th December	All Day	PTA Secret Santa event.
14th December	PM	Year 6 Christmas Assembly 1.45pm - Acer 2.30pm - Oak (2 people max per child)
18th December- 3rd January	N/A	HALF TERM

Entry to all of the Christmas assemblies is via the car park- entry into the main hall.
Entry to the Nursery festive fun is via the Nursery entrance on the front playground.

Christmas Lights- Sunday 3rd December

The Hillcroft Choir has been invited to sing at the Memory Tree switch on outside the library. Please do join us if you can to take part in the festive celebrations.

Christingle- Saturday 9th December

Our choir are also singing at the St Mary's Church Christingle service on Saturday 9th December at 4pm. Please do feel free to join us for this service.

Hillcroft Christmas post box

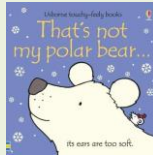
Our Hillcroft post box will be open again this year from Monday 4th December- Thursday 14th December, outside the office, for the children to post their Christmas cards to friends and teachers. **Please ensure that all cards have names AND classes clearly written on them so we can safely deliver them!**



A Reading Community

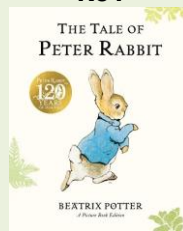
This week, Mrs Dunn, our Nursery teacher, shares her recommendations:

EYFS



Meet five adorable polar bears in this special edition of *That's not my polar bear...*, complete with shiny silver edges! Babies love the best-selling *That's not my...* books with their bold illustrations, patches to stroke, and a mouse to spot on every page, all designed to develop sensory and language awareness.

KS1



Peter Rabbit loves the yummy vegetables he finds in Mr McGregor's garden, the only problem is: Mr McGregor doesn't want Peter to get his paws on his crops! Since appearing in 1902 in the first of Beatrix Potter's well-loved tales, this mischievous little rabbit has hopped into the heart of generations of book lovers.

LKS2



Meet the Blunders: Bertie, Betsy, their children, Brutus and Bunny, along with their beloved grandma Old Lady Blunder, and their pet ostrich, Cedric. An ostrich is not a sensible pet, but then the Blunders are not sensible people. This family of upper-class twits lives in a crumbling country house named Blunder Hall. When their home comes under threat, they must embark on a series of comic misadventures to save it. Absurd and hilarious, *The Blunders* is David Walliams' funniest book yet. A laugh-out-loud tale of the most blundering and lovable family in history.

UKS2



The Breakfast Club Adventures is the first fiction book by England International footballer, child food-poverty campaigner and #1 bestselling author Marcus Rashford MBE, inspired by Marcus's own experiences growing up! Written with Alex Falase-Koya, it is the third title in the Marcus Rashford Book Club and is packed with tons of illustration throughout and is the perfect book for children aged 8-11. There's something fishy going on at school...When twelve-year-old Marcus kicks his favourite football over the school fence, he knows he's never getting it back. Nothing that goes over that wall ever comes back. But the next morning during Breakfast Club Marcus gets a mysterious note inviting him to join the Breakfast Club Investigators, and he is soon pulled into an exciting adventure with his new mates to solve the mystery and get his football back!

Our Children's Talents and Interests



Dolly-Rae, Year 3- has drawn and coloured in this picture.



Laila, Year 4- for her excellent goal keeping skills. Her team won 14-1.



Roman, Year R- he had his grading for taekwondo on Saturday and passed and got his blue stripe belt.



Robyn, Year 5- has moved up in her swimming lessons to stage 4, she is very proud of herself.



Penny, Year 2- braved the high ropes at Go Ape for her birthday treat.



Poppy, Year R- braved the high ropes at Go Ape for Penny's birthday treat.



Toby (yr5) Isla, Emilia and Fraser (yr3) and Will (yr2) in their first Remembrance Day parade with their Badgers unit.



Phoebe, Year 5- made a gift shoebox for a 5–10-year-old for the Samaritan's Purse - Operation Christmas Child that will be sent to another country, to give a child a gift for Christmas.



Violet, Year 1- Visited Skaterham and tried a new ramp, she also went out on her bike.



Autumn, Year 5- did a First Aid Awareness course.



Maddie, Year 3- Inspired by her Stone Age history topic, made Stonehenge out of biscuits at the weekend!

Our Children's Talents and Interests, cont..



Nye, Year 3- He persevered until he could tackle the tallest ramp at Skaterham.



Jamie, Year 1- has been doing really well at his swimming classes on Saturdays and can now swim on his own which he's really proud of.



Henry, Year 4- was so proud to move up to Stage 4 swimming.



Bethany, Year 5- wrote a lovely letter in French introducing herself, using all her knowledge from the French lessons we have done this term.



Louie, Year 2- has been officially sworn into the 1st Caterham St Mary's Beaver troop! He has already completed his Disability awareness and 1st first aid badge!

In other news...

Attendance Notice:

Just to remind parents/carers that if they take their children out of school without authority, they will be liable to receive a penalty notice. Currently the amount payable under a penalty notice is £60.00 per parent/carer per child if paid within 21 days. Thereafter the amount increases to £120.00 if paid between 21 and 28 days. If the penalty notice remains unpaid after 28 days, the Local Authority will consider a prosecution in the Magistrates Court. Please note that penalty notices are issued per parent/carer per child so a family of two parents and two children will receive 4 penalty notices.

Visibility

As Hillcroft is close to a very busy road and the evenings are getting darker and the weather is getting colder. If you are purchasing a new coat, please consider the colour of your child's coat and think about how visible they are when travelling to and from school.

Computing Update

Wellbeing - Young People's Relationships with AI Chatbots

A superb new report from Voicebox takes a look at how AI chatbots affect the mental health of young people and the findings are both positive and negative. Some of the findings are:

- A chatbot admitting to self-harm and initiating extreme role-play.
- Sexual dialogue.
- Lack of empathy and interpersonal skills.
- Unrealistic relationship expectations.

Remember that when you see any report referring to teens and social media you don't bypass it. To be on social media (as we know many young children are), you have to be at least 13 years of age (for most), therefore to that platform any user is at least teen-aged.

You can read the full report [HERE](#).

Volunteers

We are always looking for volunteers in school to head hear children read of support on school trips. If you are able to offer any support, however big or small- please email Mrs Page on a.page@hillcroftschoo.org Your time and support is really appreciated.

Parking in the local community

This is a polite reminder regarding parking in the local area. Please be respectful of other local businesses and do not park on their property / block entrances to their car parks etc. We also ask you not to park on the double yellow lines outside the school. We have had a number of complaints recently about our parents parking in the doctor's surgery and leaving dogs tied up to their railings- please do not do this.

Ideas for Christmas

This can be a tricky time of year for a lot of young people with autism, both in school and at home. We wanted to share some top tips and downloadable resources from our link school Freemantles- <https://www.freeoutreach.org.uk/News/Christmas-Resources-2023/>