



## Teaching & Learning Policy

Date	Review Date	Coordinator	Nominated Governor
Feb 2025	Feb 2026	Mr Martin	Chair

### Introduction

#### 1 Our Vision for Teaching and Learning at Hillcrest

At Hillcrest, we believe that reading is the foundation of all learning. Recognizing its transformative power, we are committed to raising attainment in this area, ensuring that every child has the opportunity to develop a lifelong love of reading. The ability to read unlocks knowledge, expands imagination, and provides access to a world of endless possibilities.

To foster this passion, our **Text-Linked Curriculum** is carefully designed around high-quality texts, chosen to inspire and engage learners. Each learning experience is structured to build meaningful connections between concepts, allowing students to deepen their understanding and reach their full potential.

Our dedicated staff ensure that the curriculum not only meets all statutory requirements but also provides a broad, balanced, and enriching learning experience. Through immersive, literature-led learning, students are transported across time and place, developing critical thinking skills, empathy, and creativity.

A visit to our classrooms may take you back to the Viking era, exploring *How to Train Your Dragon*. You may journey to prehistoric times, discovering that *Dinosaurs Love Underpants*, or walk alongside *Wolf Brother* in an ancient world. Perhaps you will find yourself unraveling mysteries with *Hugo Cabret*, embarking on an adventure with *The Iron Man*, or setting sail for *Kensuke's Kingdom*.

Wherever the journey leads, you will find teachers who are passionate about education and children who are inspired to learn. At Hillcrest, we cultivate a learning environment where curiosity thrives, knowledge grows, and every child has the opportunity to flourish.

#### 2 Aims

**2.1** We believe that people learn best in different ways. At our school we provide a rich and varied learning environment that allows all children the equal opportunity to develop their skills and abilities to their full potential. Our aim is to provide each child with a challenging, rewarding and enjoyable school experience. Across the school the expectation is that all pupils are provided with high quality learning experiences that lead to consistently high levels of pupil achievement.

**2.2** Through our teaching we aim to:

- enable children to become confident, resourceful, resilient, enquiring and independent learners (5Cs);
- foster children's self-esteem, and help them to build positive relationships with other people;



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- develop children's self-respect, encourage them to understand the ideas, attitudes and values of others, and teach them to respect other people's feelings;
- show respect for a diverse range of cultures and different groups and, in so doing, to promote positive attitudes towards other people;
- cover all issues of equality particularly with regard to tackling prejudice and promoting community cohesion and mutual understanding;
- ensure activities across the curriculum promote pupils spiritual, moral, social and cultural development;
- identify and support the needs of specific groups of children, such as children with EAL or SEN, with special provision for certain groups as appropriate;
- enable children to understand their own cultural background and the communities to which they belong, and help them feel valued as part of them;
- help children grow into reliable, independent and positive citizens of the United Kingdom.

### 3 Effective learning

- 3.1** Research within or beyond the classroom informs our teaching practice, e.g. delivering teaching using different pedagogical approaches. It tells us a lot about how to maximise learning. We take into account the different forms of learning (for example, mathematical/logical, visual/spatial, interpersonal and/or musical) when planning our teaching. Teacher instruction is planned with awareness of demands on students' cognitive load, by presenting new material in small steps. Teachers ensure that learning is secure, by checking for understanding. All teachers confidently and accurately use teaching techniques to gather a secure overview about whether the key learning has actually been learnt. If learning is not yet secure for pupils, the lesson will be adapted and support given, where possible, through interventions and guided group teaching. Teachers ask a large number of questions skilfully, as questioning is our main tool to probe, check and extend pupil understanding. Teachers ask a range of questions to a range of pupils, and then use what they learn from this process to adapt and reshape teaching within and between lessons. Teachers will use a variety of questioning approaches including cold-calling and targeted questioning, which are used to support and challenge.
- 3.2** We ensure the best possible environment for learning by developing and encouraging a positive atmosphere. We aim to ensure pupils feel safe and included. We want children to enjoy being challenged, to enjoy learning, and to know they can succeed.
- 3.3** We recognise the vital role of talk and oracy skills in deepening understanding and fostering meaningful learning experiences. Through structured discussion, debate, and collaborative activities, we empower children to articulate their ideas with confidence, engage critically with different perspectives and develop the communication skills.
- 3.4** Concerning the structure of a lesson we endeavour:
- to connect the learning with previous work;
  - to give learners the end goal of the whole lesson and unit;
  - to explain the learning objectives, and why the lesson is important;
  - to identify steps to success to achieve the learning objective;
  - to model using a range of platforms (visualiser, flip chart, whiteboard);



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- to allow opportunities for the pupils to build up their own understanding through various activities;
- to review what has been learnt, and so promote recollection and reflection;
- to provide feedback, celebrating success and reviewing learning strategies;
- to outline the next step in the learning before moving on.

**3.5** We offer opportunities for children to learn in different ways. These include:

- investigation and problem-solving;
- research and discovery;
- group work;
- pair work;
- independent work;
- whole-class work;
- asking and answering questions;
- use of ICT including using the internet safely;
- application of knowledge and skills;
- fieldwork and visits to places of educational interest;
- creative activities;
- using media related material;
- discussions, debates, role-plays and oral presentations;
- designing and making things;
- participation in athletic or physical activity.
- Immerse learning in the outdoors

**3.6** We encourage children to take responsibility for their own learning, to be involved as far as possible in reviewing the way they learn, to reflect on how they learn, to know what helps them learn, and what makes it difficult for them to learn. Children are encouraged to identify and develop their own 'next steps' independently in their learning. The school does this by explicitly teaching pupils to develop their 'independence' through the use of the 5Cs (Creative, Curious, Confident, Coordinated and Communicate). Independence is encouraged and modelled throughout the school, developing skills and attitudes that will enable children to become independent learners inside and outside the classroom. From Year 3 onwards, children are coached to identify next steps every half term. In the Summer Term, Year 2 are prepared for their coaching in Year 3.

**4 Effective teaching**

**4.1** When we are teaching, we focus on motivating all the children, and building on their skills, knowledge and understanding within the curriculum. This enables our children to reach the highest level of personal achievement. We use the school Medium Term Plans to inform our teaching and learning. This sets out the details of what is to be taught to each year group and is overseen by the Subject Leader Teams and Management Team.

**4.2** Teachers make ongoing assessments of each child's progress, and they use this to inform lesson planning. This enables them to take into account the abilities of all children, with due regard to information and personal targets. Teachers scaffold teaching and learning as appropriate for children with disabilities/SEN. We value each child as a unique individual, and teachers are familiar with the relevant equal opportunities legislation covering race, gender and disability. We



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will strive to meet the needs of all our children, and to ensure that we meet all statutory requirements related to matters of inclusion.

- 4.3** We set academic targets for the children throughout the year, formally reviewing the progress of each child, at key points, and revising targets accordingly. These targets are shared with parents in Mid-Year Reports (February) and in the End of Year reports (July). Pupils in Year 3 and above, meet with their teacher every half term to set their own academic targets. These targets are found in their Independent Learning Next Step booklet.
- 4.4** We plan our lessons with clear learning objectives. We base these objectives on content contained within the EYFS Development Matters and the National Curriculum. Our planning contains information about the tasks to be set, the resources needed, and identifies the steps to success. We continually assess and evaluate lessons, so that we can modify and improve our future teaching to increase children's attainment.
- 4.5** All staff make a special effort to establish good working relationships with all the children in the school and present themselves as positive role models and follow the school's Staff Code of Conduct. We treat the children with kindness and respect. We recognise that they are all individuals with different needs; we treat them fairly, and give them equal opportunities to take part in class activities. All our staff follow the school policy with regard to safeguarding, behaviour and classroom management. We set and agree with children the class code of conduct, and we expect all children to comply with this to promote the best learning opportunities for all. We praise children for their efforts and, by so doing, we help to build positive attitudes towards school and learning in general. We insist on good behaviour at all times. When appropriate, we follow the guidelines for sanctions as outlined in our policy on behaviour.
- 4.6** We are committed to ensuring that all tasks and activities children engage in are conducted safely and with their well-being as our top priority. When necessary, a thorough risk assessment will be carried out, and all safeguarding procedures will be rigorously followed to provide a secure and supportive learning environment.
- 4.7** We deploy classroom assistants and other adult helpers as effectively as possible. Sometimes they work with individual children, and sometimes they work with small groups. Our adult helpers also assist with the class preparation and administration.
- 4.8** Our classrooms are attractive learning environments. We change displays regularly, so that the classroom reflects the Text Linked Curriculum texts studied by the children. We ensure that all children have the opportunity to display their work at some time during the year. We also use displays as learning prompts/ working walls for the children. We believe that a stimulating environment sets the climate for learning. All classrooms have a range of resources which children are encouraged to use independently.
- 4.9** Teachers reflect on their own strengths and weaknesses via staff appraisal as well as lesson drop ins, pupil voice and book looks. Whole school training and further CPD supports all teachers in developing their skills.
- 4.10** In addition to our monitoring cycle, teachers are now encouraged to drop in on other teachers using our Open Classroom Culture. This enables teachers to upskill themselves by dropping in and seeing other teachers teach. Teachers are also upskilled to support student teachers and ECTs.



4.11 We conduct all our teaching in an atmosphere of trust and respect for all.

## **5 Remote Learning**

5.1 Remote education will be used when in-person learning is disrupted due to exceptional circumstances, such as school closures or situations where attendance is not possible.

5.2 It may also be provided for individual students who are unable to attend school for extended periods due to medical or other significant reasons, ensuring continuity of learning.

## **6 The role of governors**

6.1 Our governors determine, support, monitor and review the school's approach to teaching and learning. In particular they:

- support the use of appropriate teaching strategies by providing adequate resources;
- ensure that the school buildings and premises are used optimally to support teaching and learning;
- ensure that teaching methods comply with health and safety regulations to maintain a safe learning environment.
- seek to ensure that our staff development and our staff appraisal both promote good quality teaching;
- monitor the effectiveness of the school's teaching and learning approaches through the school's self-review processes, which include reports from subject leaders, the termly Headteacher's report to governors, and a review of the in-service training sessions attended by staff.

## **7 The role of parents**

7.1 We believe that parents have a fundamental role to play in helping children to learn. We do all that we can to inform parents about what and how their children are learning:

- inviting them in once a month on a Wednesday morning before school to share learning with their child;
- inviting them to join in with the learning at 'with the parents' sessions in various curriculum areas including Reading Cafés;
- by holding Meet the Teacher evenings to explain our school's approaches within the curriculum;
- by holding Parents' Evenings to provide an opportunity for open dialogue about a pupil's progress;
- by sending information to parents, at the start of each term, which outlines the topics that the children will be studying during that term at school;
- by sending parents mid-year and annual reports in which we explain the progress made by each child, and indicate how the child can improve further;
- explaining to parents how they can support their children at home through regular shared reading, and other projects;
- by informing them about the curriculum and other activities via our website.



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**7.2** We believe that parents have the responsibility to support their children and the school in implementing school policies. We therefore expect parents:

- to ensure that their child has the best attendance record possible;
- to ensure that their child is equipped for school with the correct uniform and PE kit;
- to do their best to keep their child healthy and fit to attend school;
- to inform school if there are matters outside of school that are likely to affect a child's performance or behaviour;
- to promote a positive attitude towards school and learning in general;
- to fulfil the requirements set out in the home-school agreement including reading at home.

**8 Monitoring and review**

**8.1** We are aware of the need to monitor the school's Teaching and Learning policy, and to review it regularly, so that we can take account of new initiatives and research, changes in the curriculum, developments in technology or changes to the physical environment of the school. We will therefore review this policy annually.

<b>Headteacher:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	
<b>Chair of Governing Body:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	