



Newsletter

April 2024



Teaching and Learning

Welcome back, we hope that everyone enjoyed a relaxing Easter break. We are delighted to welcome new children this half term and are sure that you will make everyone feel welcomed. The weekly planning is available on the website www.hirstwoodnsc.co.uk and on the noticeboard outside. This will explain to you what activities we are doing and how this supports your child's learning. We would also love to see what you have been enjoying at home so please upload photographs and information via EYLog that we can share with the children. Don't forget that children can change their library books every day – just bring your book back and swap it for another. Please return all books as our stock is running low. Research shows that involvement with reading activities at home has significant positive influences not only on reading achievement, language comprehension and expressive language skills, but also on children's interest in reading, attitudes towards reading and attentiveness BUT above all, it is enjoyable! We have the adult's lending library too ... take a book to enjoy yourself.

By now you will have received your child's Primary School allocation for September. We are starting to work with the Schools who will be welcoming your children in September. We encourage them to come and visit your child and talk to the teaching teams so that they can share all the amazing information about your child. The receiving schools will also be provided with a copy of your child's leavers report and their final assessment data. All these documents will, of course, be shared with you towards the end of next term. For those children who are leaving us, please see the link below about what we feel are important in terms of school readiness. This is formed on a whole child approach and covers predominantly the personal, social and emotional skills that will support children as they move to a new setting. Some children suffer from increased anxiety when there is lots of talk about transitions, it may be worth considering how soon you start to talk to your child about moving school. [PowerPoint Presentation \(pacey.org.uk\)](http://pacey.org.uk)

Our curriculum approaches

The implementation of our curriculum is based on a clear pedagogy which recognises the following key principles:

- Every child is unique, one who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.
- Children learn and develop in enabling environments with teaching in partnership with interested adults who respond to their individual interests.
- Children learn and develop at different rates and we celebrate all achievements equally.

We are proud to be able to offer an additional wide range of extra curricular experiences to your children such as Gardening Club, Music & Movement, All Aboard, Dough Disco, Forest School, Music & Movement and Story Tellers. These groups are an added enrichment to our curriculum offer and each child will have access to an additional club that we feel best suits their interests and learning styles.

Some learning is hierarchical, you need to learn things in a certain order and you need to be secure in the earlier steps before you move onto new content, but some learning isn't like this. For example, as children learn more vocabulary, they will learn lots of different words. We don't have a list of the order of learning. We need to know your children, spend time with them, working with and alongside, observing what they do, how, what and who with. We constantly ask ourselves, do we know enough about children and their

learning? Are they making progress in our curriculum? Are they engaged and motivated? We use three main techniques to ensure that our teaching and learning ensures children are engaged and adding to their skills, knowledge and understanding - scaffolding, feedback and metacognition. Scaffolding means that we give a child just enough help to do something which they couldn't do independently. We gradually reduce the help until the child is independent. It's a powerful technique for all children. Feedback means that we give children precise information about how well they are achieving something. That means that we need to talk with children first, or during their activity, about what their intention is.



Figure 5: Scaffolding techniques in the early years

Feedback is sensitive, and it avoids general praise. It focuses on process and effort, as well as the final result. It helps children to improve their learning. We can usefully encourage children to seek feedback from each other.

Metacognition is about children's ability to plan ahead, monitor how well they are doing, make adaptations as they go, and review the final result of what they have been doing. That means providing challenging activities for children, to encourage them to think ahead and adapt as they go. It means we need to talk to children about their thinking, planning, and end result. We do this through our displays that celebrate children's learning, and also Eylog. We can usefully model metacognition, and talk about thinking and planning with children so that they view themselves as confident, successful learners, which of course, they are.

Our approach to assessment

We feel a responsibility to develop a model an effective, principled but meaningful assessment of our children's learning. By effective, we mean a method of assessment that ensures that all children are supported in reaching significant progress. By meaningful, we mean that the observations made inform our everyday practice and curriculum. By gaining an insight into children's thinking, feeling and needs we can plan our environment and actions to provide future possibilities for learning. By principled, we mean that our focus is on observing to understand children. We will not test children or seek unnecessary knowledge. Children are recognised as individuals, not as a percentage in a data analysis exercise.

We will not spend unnecessary amounts of time writing observations or gathering evidence of children's learning. We believe that if we are capturing the moment, we cannot be part of the moment, instead we have structures in place that enable us to regularly discuss each child and their learning progress as a team and how best to support and extend this.

Healthy Living Week



This half term we have some more exciting experiences planned for children

Week commencing 6th May is our “We are healthy” week and will be exploring how our body works and how we can look after it.



We have the Life Caravan visiting Wednesday 8th May where children can learn about all the different senses we have, the bones and organs in our body and how to look after ourselves. They also get to meet Harold, the giraffe, (the mascot of Life Education Centre).



We have balance bikes in the car park Tuesday 14th and Thursday 16th - all children will have the opportunity to participate (we will send home a copy of our risk assessment so that you can agree to your child taking part).

The Fluoride varnish team are here Wednesday 15th May – don't forget if you would like your child to participate, please complete and return the signed forms. It is important to promote effective oral health habits from the earliest age.

Tempest Photography are here on Wednesday 22nd May. If you would like your child to have a photograph with their sibling(s), please let us know in advance and we will plan for this to happen before School and will have a waiting area ready.

Health & Safety

During the summer months it may be necessary that children need sun protection to be applied (hopefully!). We will provide sun cream for each classroom unless your child has specific skin sensitivities that would necessitate the use of their own specific cream. If this is the case, please bring in the sun protection clearly labelled with your child's name. If you could apply sun-cream to your child before they come to School and we will reapply it later in the day.



Please note that School meals will increase to £2.10 per day from 1st April 2024.

Dates to remember:

We are closed Monday 6th May for a Bank Holiday, reopen Tuesday 7th
We have a training day on Friday 24th May so close to children on Thursday 23rd May
Re-open Monday 3rd June