



The Hillcrest News

Spring 2022 Edition

Head Teacher's Update:

I would like to start with expressing my sincere gratitude for all of the support you have given Hillcrest this term. Once again we have had to close some class groups to ensure we could staff the rest of the school safely. I assure you this is always the last resort. Whilst we will still have cases of Covid, I do hope that the summer term brings less winter illnesses so that I do not have to close further groups.

It is a privilege working with our wonderful cohort of young people and their families at Hillcrest. I asked the staff team a few weeks ago what their 'Magic Moment' of the year was so far. I would like to share some of these with you as I think they highlight how much we all love the job we do because of the rewards we get when a child is successful and happy. I have attached these to the newsletter along with a message from our Chair of Governors.

The newsletter items from each class team gives you further information about the great work we have been doing this term.

I hope you all enjoy the Easter break. We look forward to welcoming all of our young people back on 25th April 2022.

Andrea Mead



KS3- Class SF

Ancient Greece

Class SF have had an amazing term, where we have learned so much! This half term we have been studying Ancient Greece. We have used our artistry skills to create Greek vases, clay tiles, Minotaur mazes, Trojan horses and created chalk temple columns.

We have enjoyed outdoor learning in Maths, as part of forest school and for our Thrive. We have started bird watching and we were amazed to see a Pied Wagtail in our garden! Our garden is getting more use in the improved weather and we can't wait to start planting after Easter.

We have just completed a class news report, where we recorded the news as if we were in Ancient Greece. We have some budding actors in the class, everyone embraced their role in the performance and the team work was phenomenal.

We can't wait for the summer term, to continue our learning journey and to continue to be successful each day.



KS3- Class MS

Red Nose Day Fun!

On Friday 18th March 2022, we celebrated Red Nose Day in school. As part of the day, Harry came up with the idea of a fun run and along with the help of the rest of the class organised the start and finish signs, medals and certificates for each class. We also created a Design a

red nose competition for each class to take part in. There was lots of organisation needed and it was a busy few days making sure that each class had everything they needed. We took part in the fun run and the aim was to have the silliest way of moving around the course. Our winner was Maddeline who did cartwheels around the course!



Trip to Discovery Museum

On Friday 25th March 2022, we finally got to visit the Discovery Museum after having to postpone it on two previous occasions. Our class was very excited to go as it was our first trip using the school mini bus. We arrived at the museum and we explored the different exhibits. We particularly enjoyed the Science Zone, finding out how to connect circuits, playing air hockey and using the shadow wall to imprint our shadows! We visited an exhibit called 'South of the Tyne' which looked at the history of ship building in the North East and we practiced moving cargo from one ship to another using pulley systems. At the end of the day, we got a goody bag from the museum and got our photo taken outside the museum.



KS3- Class SM

Pirates and Crime & Punishment

In Class SM this term, we have been learning about Pirates and Crime & Punishment. We absolutely loved researching the gruesome punishments that some people used to receive years ago. Did you know that if a student was to swear at home or in school, they would be given several lashings with a belt.



It was very interesting to learn that some punishments didn't fit the bill! We have visited many places around the world where pirates would have looked for treasure. Not all pirates were bad, in fact, some pirates wanted to do good, giving to the poor and collecting fish for their town. We are really looking forward to some school trips next half term and working towards being as independent as possible.

KS3- Class HS

Forest School

Forest School was an amazing success with Class HS during the first half of the spring term. The students worked together to build dens and sculptures using a variety of materials. Their friendships developed and teamwork skills shone through as they suggested improvements to one another's sculptures and discussed how they could adapt the Forest School area for future use. The class are already planning their next sessions which will be in the second half of the summer term.



In our Extreme Earth topic, we researched volcanoes and found the

most amount of volcanoes can be found in 'The Ring of Fire', which we located in an atlas. We used play dough to show the different layers which make up the earth and then enjoyed eating a model jelly volcano.



We moved onto earthquakes and the students learnt what to do if we ever had one. They all know now that they need to get under their desks and they have enjoyed practising the drill throughout this term.

KS4 – Class JB

Preparation for Success!

Class JB returned after a successful Autumn Term to focus on our AQA Accreditations. We have worked hard to complete our Maths and English assessments and our students are starting to make some great progress. We also continue to work hard on our ASDAN and Duke of Edinburgh courses. Some students were finally able to put in practice their newly developed golf skills with a joint trip to the Centurion Driving Range with The Bridge.



Independent Living Skills

We continue to enjoy hot drinks and snacks prepared by our very capable students and this term we have been able to enjoy these outdoors! Class JB have participated in several outdoor skills sessions, including den building, fire lighting and outdoor cookery. Who knew you could prepare such delicious toast, without a toaster?!

We have also been able to get out and about into our local community. Visits have included the local church for our ASDAN projects and shopping for budgeting and life skills.

Celebrations & Themed Days

We were very proud to see one of our students elected to the School Council and we look forward to seeing the ideas they have to develop our school. In the spirit of us all being world citizens we have enjoyed a Japan themed day. We looked at cultures, customs and foods of this beautiful country. We hope everyone enjoyed the super spicy noodles and sushi - a first for some of us!



We hope you have a restful Easter break and we look forward to welcoming everyone back for the Summer.

KS4/5- The Bridge- Class LF

Ukraine

This term students in The Bridge have been showing their support for the people of Ukraine by collecting donations. Students have been collecting, organising and taking the donations to local donation centres.

We would like to thank all of the families that have been kind enough to make a donation, your support is very much appreciated.

Students have done some amazing work towards their Entry Level qualifications and made good progress with their assessments.



They have also worked hard on their ASDAN qualifications whilst developing their communication skills by interviewing staff members to find out more about their job roles. They particularly enjoyed interviewing Mrs Mead!



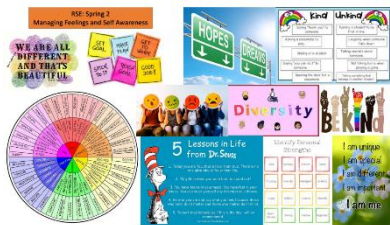
RSE and PSHE

In RSE and PSHE this term, we have covered:

- self-awareness
- managing feelings
- the world I live in
- self-care, support and safety.

Pupils access two lessons per week and additional learning linked to key focus days, weeks or months. This term we have also covered LGBTQ+ week, use of language, children's mental health week and e-safety day. Pupils in KS4 also had a speaker in for diversity role models, which they really enjoyed.

We have recently started a monthly assembly in KS3, where the first one covered International Women's Day. We discussed women's rights over time, celebrated key women from the past and discussed gender equality.



If you would like any further information to support your child on key areas in RSE/PSHE this term or any support, please speak to you class team. Here are some links to support:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbbc/curations/international-womens-day>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/60294779>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbbc/search?q=lgbtq&page=1>

KS4- Class DK

ASDAN & DoJE



In our Duke of Edinburgh lessons we have planted around 100 trees, made birdhouses and have prepared a wild meadow that we

should see bloom next term. The class have had some of the best football matches I have ever seen. We have also enjoyed many Thrive sessions.

Class DK have produced some excellent work this Spring term. We have been improving our speaking and listening skills in English and have been learning about the British Empire and Monarchs in ASDAN.

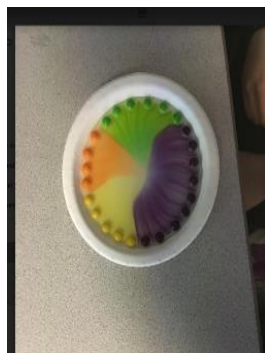
We hope you all enjoy your deserved rest and we look forward to seeing you all back in a couple of weeks.

KS4- Class FW

Flying High!

This term Class FW have been working hard towards our qualifications.

In Science, we have learned about atoms, elements and the periodic table. We have done lots of experiments, including extracting the iron from cornflakes and separating the dyes from skittles and felt tips pens using chromatography.



In Maths we have enjoyed learning about fractions and ratio, with the help of cookies, and using our measurement skills to design and make our own mocktails. We have also completed our assessments in both of these areas.

We have been enjoying our class reader "Kes" and learning about the themes and characters. We have created our own set of instructions on how to take care of animals and have created word searches on the book to challenge each other.

KS3- Class DM

Stone Age to Iron Age

In Class DM, we covered two topics during this term – Extreme Earth and Stone Age to Iron Age. We made some amazing 3D sculptures of volcanoes and then took them outside and erupted them! We also enjoyed learning all about what life was like during the Stone Age era.



Throughout the term, we have also been working on developing team work and lasting friendships within the classroom. We have done some amazing Thrive activities like making bridges and testing them, having whole class challenges and making biscuits. We also loved getting outside more this term! We have had some amazing sessions down in Forest School and we are so excited to do some more of this next term.



KS3- Class MW

Wild Imaginations

Class MW have had a fantastic term. The pupils have been amazing despite having to adapt to changes and the staff team are so proud of them for how they have coped with this! It has been lovely to see the pupils being so supportive of one another and it is a joy to see them so happy on a daily basis.

This half-term, we have been learning about Crime and Punishment throughout history as part of our topic. We have looked at everything from being exiled in Ancient Rome to hard labour in

Victorian prisons - even trying out the shot drill for ourselves! The pupils have also taken part in mature discussions around the achievement of justice for different types of crime.

We have also unleashed their wild imaginations on occasions too. The class have produced some outstanding pieces of work including Penny Dreadful narratives and witness statements.

We can't wait to see what the Summer Term holds!



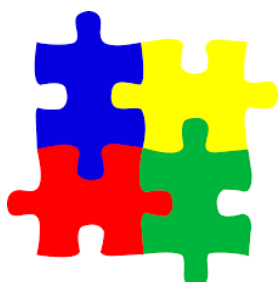
KS3- Class SK

Poisoned makeup

This term in Class SK we have been learning about the book *Holes* by Louis Sachar. We have really enjoyed thinking up our own poisoned makeup, creating a character shield and learning about the poisonous Yellow Spotted Lizards!

In RE we have been thinking about the 5 Pillars of Islam, and we even got to make the towers out of clay which we absolutely loved.

As a class we have really enjoyed completing an amazing 500 piece jigsaw, playing lots of fun games like Zombie Tag in PE and even playing Wink Murder in the forest school field. We are really looking forward to all of the exciting things we have planned for after the half term! Happy Easter!



KS3- Class RB

Pompeii

The group thoroughly enjoyed learning about Pompeii and created news reports about the event. We have some budding TV reporters in the making!

Class RB have also worked really hard on ELSA this term looking at self-esteem, resilience and self-care. It has been lovely to see all the students using and enjoying the forest school area to make clay faces, nature maps, complete scavenger hunts and mindfulness activities using their senses.



Staff Updates

During this Spring Term, we welcomed three new staff members including Ms Tyler, Miss Potts and Miss Stobbart.

In the new term, we will be welcoming Miss Porley and Miss Sutherland will be returning from maternity leave.

Queen's Jubilee

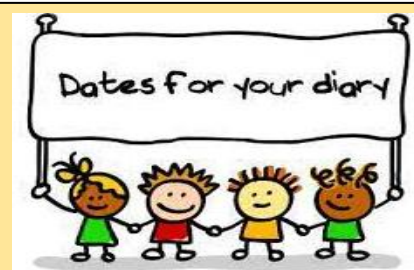
School's have been asked to allocate an additional Bank Holiday for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee as it falls in our Whitsun half-term holiday. We have allocated **Monday 27th June 2022**.

School Improvements

This summer term we are hoping to install a new path from the top of our field to our MUGA. This should make a huge difference for students and staff as our field can be very slippery!

Happy Easter

All students have been given an Easter Egg from school to enjoy over the holidays.



- 08/03/22 – School Closes (Easter)
- 25/03/22 – School Returns
- 02/05/22 – May Day
- 27/05/22 – School Closes (Half Term)
- 06/06/22 – School Returns
- 27/06/22 – School Closed for Queens Jubilee Day (in lieu of Bank Holiday)
- 22/07/22 – School Closes (Summer)
- 06/09/22 -- School Returns
- 21/10/22 – School Closes (Half Term)
- 31/10/22 – School Returns
- 23/12/22 – School Closes (Christmas)



Please remember to update us here at school if you move house, change telephone/mobile phone number or email address so we can contact you.



Hillcrest School
Tel: 01670 713632
Email: admin@hillcrest.northumberland.sch.uk





Governors Message:

Dear Parents/Carers

It is an honour to still be a governor at Hillcrest, even through the toughest of times, our families, children and staff have endured and we still have an amazing school with a wide variety of onsite therapies and an enriching curriculum. How do I know this? The governing body has maintained regular scrutiny (virtually) over the past two years and more recently have managed to attend school in person to observe the quality of learning, therapies and interventions and The Bridge provision. We have ensured regular in person Health and Safety and safeguarding visits as well as meeting with and talking to the children and young people. That part of our job is the most rewarding as our children and young people tell us exactly how it is.

We find ourselves having completed a very difficult few months at the end of two years of restrictions with home schooling and managing personal fears and anxieties. Although nationally we are being encouraged to live alongside Covid-19 and regain our normal lives, the school has found it a daily challenge to ensure every class remains open for our young people. Alas at times, especially as the restrictions to our lives have been lifted, we have experienced insufficient staff numbers due to illness to keep every class open. Our Headteacher has ensured that class closure occurred only as a very last resort and always in consultation with governors and other senior staff.

We are so grateful to our families for their understanding and their resilience when given the news that their child would be working from home that day. It really is a pleasure to serve the children, families and staff and I look forward to meeting everyone (those newly linked and long associated friends and families) when we next get the opportunity to celebrate together the efforts, abilities and achievements of our children and open up the school to all friends and families in the future. I very much look forward to that time. I hope you all have a wonderful Easter break, recharge the batteries for the run into what is hoped to be a cracking Summer!

Regards

Joyce Reid
Chair of Governors





Magic Moments ✨

- XX wrote his first sentence with very little support.
- XX's Mum sharing at parents evening that since XX has started at Hillcrest the family 'have the old XX back' and he's happy and relaxed again. She said it was the best decision they've ever made.
- We have helped a child to find a love of learning, where the impact of all the holistic input has had huge benefits at home too. This pupil struggled every single day to attend his previous school but he is getting ready and turning up with a smile every single day.
- We have helped a child to feel safe in school and to have positive relationships with staff. Through creative arts based activities he is happy. He made a canvas for the whole class. Home say he has not been this happy in years.
- Seeing the trust and support that students have with staff at Hillcrest. Students feel safe and supported enough at school to open up about issues, feelings and thoughts they may be having.
- Seeing this pupil take part in play sessions with his peers, where all barriers go down and he is smiling, laughing and happy.
- I feel so lucky to be able to lead forest school sessions in my class this year. The pure joy and excitement on pupils' faces every week is brilliant.
- XX played games alongside other students.
- Seeing XX become more confident on his writing due Read, Write, Inc support.
- Seeing XX in a happy place and become more independent in class.
- When it started snowing and our entire class began to play in the garden together. We witnessed all pupils being inclusive of each other and using so many kind words towards each other which was so lovely to be a part of.
- After spending several lessons trying to get XX to understand how to use fractions and what fractions are and watching XX become very frustrated with the whole concept and almost giving up. Several weeks later XX was able to answer several class questions using his fraction recall.
- Our office staff and caretaker demonstrating unconditional positive regard on a daily basis and going that extra mile to support pupils making them feel valued and cared for.
- Seeing a student build his confidence in Maths so much that he now helps others when they are waiting for a staff member.
- XX will now join in and initiate some conversation. XX always attended Forest School sessions in the past however he never participated but in a recent Forest School session XX led an activity and allowed me to take photos. It was lovely to see him 'in the moment' and I really appreciate him making the effort to ask me questions that I know makes him feel out of his comfort zone.
- I think XX's progression has been amazing, some great moments.
- The huge amount of progress XX has made as a whole.
- Using rebound as a regulation tool has been fantastic. A student in class XX was unsettled through the morning. His usual regulation techniques were not working, studio etc. Taking him on the trampoline for 15 minutes doing some routines and high intensity bouncing worked amazing. The student went back to class and was settled through the rest of the day.

Life is full of magical
Moments!