



Hillstone News



Welcome Back

I hope you all had a good summer. I must say a huge thank you to the wonderful Jo Hulme and her team of helpers who ran a two week holiday club. If you look at the pictures on twitter it was a marvellous offer with delicious lunches, sports and arts activities daily.

It is so lovely to see all the children back, looking very smart in new uniform and school shoes. Attendance has been good this week with very little illness, punctuality though has not been. I know it's hard to get back into a routine especially after the year we have had, but it does have an impact on your child. If they are late they miss out on learning and children do feel embarrassed walking into the class late. For their sake try to get them into school on time.

Parent Workshops

Many of you know Miss Ijaz by now. She joined us last year and teaches in year 1. Miss Ijaz will be supporting Jo Hulme on the PTA to ensure our events continue to be successful, she will also be focussing on providing workshops and learning events for parents. These could be skills to help parents to return to work such as computing classes or workshops to help you support your child's learning or general family learning together such as sew n grow, fit families or cooking. Do contact us if there is a course you would find useful.



Community Events

One of the things we are most excited about in our return to normality, is being able to hold the fantastic events that our PTA organise in order to raise funds for Hillstone School and to bring the community together in social events. Jo and Danielle are brimming with ideas for a spooky ball, bonfire night, Mothers Day, Secret Room, Christmas Fair and Bingo Night. There are so few members of PTA now though, that they are desperate for your help and more volunteers. Please come along and share your ideas or offer your time to help before an event or on the day.

Sports at Hillstone

At the end of the summer term we were delighted to discover that we had been successful in our application to manage the creation of an FA school girls football league in this area. Coach will be managing this one day a week.

Congratulations to Zacchaeus Thomas-Preece, Maryam Hadi, Summer Davis O'Neil and Summer Brown who have all been selected for district football teams.

Breakfast Club

After over 20 years of providing a free breakfast club, I have regretfully had to allocate a charge for this. The breakfast club costs the school over £24,000 a year. I was committed to it as it was just such a lovely way to start the day for pupils, having a quiet calm chat with their friends along with a breakfast. It also enabled parents to go to work (I know how much childcare can be) and encourages punctuality. It is still only 40p a day which is very good value, so I hope the charge won't put you off using the club.

School Improvement 2021

The work that we do at Hillstone is underpinned by 5 pillars - see the diagram below. This diagram shows that our values are to inspire, care and educate our children to the highest possible standards. We teach the national curriculum subjects such as English, maths, science etc. It illustrates how we believe that Hillstone life skills, often referred to as PSHE (personal, social moral and health education) are a crucial foundation for our children to be good citizens and live a happy, healthy and safe life. The 5 pillars illustrate 5 broad aspects which we believe are so important and run through everything we do: The arts, sports, outdoor education, food education and international education. In addition every year we draw up school improvement plans. Each subject leader identifies how their subject will improve over the year and there are also targets for the whole school.

The targets for the school for 2021-2 will focus on catching up lost learning through providing high quality teaching and behaviour. We know that children have fallen behind during the pandemic particularly in the core areas of reading, writing and maths. You can help by ensuring your child is heard reading their book 3 times a week, logs on to times tables rock stars and practices multiplication tables each week. All children are expected, in the national standards, to know off by heart their multiplication tables up to 12 x 12 by the end of year 4. To encourage this homework the Mathemagician and Reading Fairy will be visiting classes and selecting children at random. If they can show they have been on times tables rock stars or have had their reading diary signed off three times, they will receive a prize.

I have mentioned on several occasions that one of the biggest consequences of the pandemic that I have noticed is the way children interact with each other. They are much more likely to be unkind, exclude pupils, give dirty looks, play too roughly. Please support us in our target to improve behaviour. Do not tell your children "if someone says or does something to you hit them back" - children frequently use this as an excuse to do something pre-emptively. Do not approach other people's children or argue with other parents on the playground. This embarrasses your children and does not set a good example of how to handle a situation and behave in an appropriate manner. Please talk to the teacher about any concerns you may have in a calm and respectful manner and we will endeavour to rectify the situation.





Gardeners' World

At the end of term, we were asked by our chair of governors if we could make smile stones which would be put in a gardening display at the NEC for Gardeners World Live. The display was in aid of the charity Seeability. Children in years 2, 3 and 4 got a nice little production line going on the last day of term and we managed to make over 100 stones which were used in the display.

The display won a gold award - well done Mrs McCabe! Many thanks to the Gri-mason family who have donated lots of seeds for us to plant, grow and harvest.

If you shop at Morrison's, please collect the vouchers as we can exchange them for free gardening equipment.



Nature Friendly

You will see from one of our 5 pillars, how much we value outdoor education. We have known for many years that this provides positive mental health and physical health benefits. At Hillstone you can see it in many aspects including residential trips. We are extremely lucky at Hillstone in having such extensive grounds—many schools only have a small tarmacked area.

Nature Friendly Schools is a research project that examines the link between children's well being and an emphasis on outdoor learning. They are supporting us by working with year 3 pupils, providing professional development for teachers and some resources to improve the grounds.

KIVA

As mentioned previously one of our school improvement targets is regarding improving behaviour. Since the pandemic, the way children interact with each other has deteriorated. This can take many forms, all of which involve not being very kind to each other. Occasionally this unkind behaviour descends into bullying. KiVa is an anti-bullying programme which was founded in Finland. Our school is one of a few schools in England trialling this approach in our juniors. Pupils will take part in KiVa lessons (10 lessons across the year). These lessons include discussions, group work, short films about bullying and role play. The lesson content will cover general topics such as the importance of respect in human relationships to the mechanism and consequences of bullying. Many lessons concentrate on the role a group can have in maintaining or stopping bullying; pupils think about different ways to resist bullying. Every day each class will choose a KiVa lookout to spot children in their class being kind to each other.



Kiva Team

The Kiva taskforce in our schools consists of Ms Kinsman, Ms Gibbon and Mrs Hodgkinson. Together with the class teacher they will tackle acute bullying cases. If you suspect your child is being bullied or you have reason to believe that s/he is bullying others, please contact the school so that the matter can be dealt with as efficiently and as soon as possible. See the Kiva parents guide which will be sent out to you for more details.

Car Free Streets

We are very pleased with how people have complied with car free streets at the start of this new term.

The purpose of this was primarily to make the street a safer place for your child during the busiest times.

Ideally it will encourage less people to use their car, which can only be good for the environment. However, we appreciate some of you still need to drive; either you are on your way to work or you live too far away to walk. The car free streets whilst largely successful is encouraging more parking in neighbouring roads. It would be beneficial for the community, if you have to drive, to park just a little further away. The Norman Chamberlain playing fields car park would be an ideal place. You may need to leave an additional 5 minutes early to allow time but it will be safer, healthier and more environmentally friendly.

Please don't hang around and wait till it gets to 8:45am to drive down Hillstone Road, as this will make your child late for school. This results in your child missing learning and feeling embarrassed and upset at the start of the day.

If you are a resident or hold a blue badge, please ensure you show your pass—I cannot always guarantee that Mr Morton will be on duty. If police attend it is a ticketable offence.

I would love this to be something that we all tackle together so if any of you are prepared to be on duty even for just one day a term we'd really appreciate it.

Finally, if you do park in Hillstone Road at any time, please be considerate of neighbours and residents and do not block anybody's drive or disabled access.



Hillstone Stars

Each week, the class teacher will choose a Hillstone Star: A child who has produced a very high quality piece of work or who has made an exceptional effort that week. They will be invited to an afternoon tea with Ms Sparrow and Mr King where we will celebrate and talk about their work. Congratulations to last weeks Hillstone Stars.

Penelope Smith

Suleiman Gadir

Kayden Evans

Zachary Grimason

Tyler McBride

Jessica Burns

Samuel Butler

Mohammed Dawud

Isla McGovern

Reeko Dawkins

Eliana Grimason

