



Quality Mark

EARLY YEARS VISIT FEEDBACK REPORT

School/Setting name	Hillcross Primary School	Visit date	18-3-2020
Headteacher	Lisa Francis	NOR	530
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A brief context of the School/Setting

Hillcross is a large community primary school in the London Borough of Merton. It was inspected in February 2018 and was judged to be Good. The Early Years provision was also graded as Good. The school is an Exeter University-accredited 'Thinking School'. It has a large nursery with a mix of full time and part time pupils. There are two reception classes who share three classrooms and a very well-resourced outside learning area. The school already has the Primary Quality Mark.

Visit Type	Initial Visit (IAV)
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The Assessor spoke to the following people:

Headteacher and/or Senior Leaders YES	Communication / Language Subject Leader NO	Mathematics Subject Leader NO	Assessment Manager NO
SENCo NO	Child representative(s) YES	Governors/Trustees NO	Parent representative(s) YES

<p>Does the School/Setting meet the requirements of the Quality Mark? YES</p>	<p>'Learning Walk' completed? YES</p>
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<p>The previous development points have been implemented. These were agreed in November 2019 are being implemented-please see below.</p>	<p>List any noteworthy evidence. The very well-resourced classrooms and extensive outside learning area.</p>
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<p>List of development points from the previous visit report and the resulting actions taken, if appropriate:</p> <p><i>1. To further develop the EYFS section on the school website so that children and parents can easily access all relevant information related to writing as well as good quality resources that will support high quality home learning. (Elements: 1,2,3,8,9)</i></p> <p>Progress: The school has made good progress here since the pre-assessment visit in November 2019. There is now guidance on writing on website, particularly for nursery parents/carers.</p> <p><i>2. To give Mathematics greater emphasis in the learning environment which will help to develop children's learning in number, shape and space and measures. (Elements: 6,7,8)</i></p> <p>Progress: Mathematics has been given a higher profile in the classroom environment since the pre-assessment visit, with working walls in the Nursery and reception classes and good quality information on the school website. Mathematics is also more prominent in comments in the communication books with parents/carers.</p>
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<p>Suggested areas for development in preparation for the next visit based upon the 10 Elements of the Quality Mark, with clear indication to which element(s) the development is referring.</p> <p><i>1. To further develop the EYFS section on the school website so that parents/carers can easily access all relevant information related to writing as well as good quality resources that will support high quality home learning. (Elements: 1,2,3,8,9)</i></p> <p><i>2. To maintain the greater emphasis on Mathematics in the learning environment in order to develop children's learning in number, shape and space and measures. (Elements: 6,7,8)</i></p>

<p>Summary of 'Good practice' identified in relation to the 10 Elements of the Quality Mark:</p> <p>Early Years Quality Mark Elements</p>

1. A whole setting strategy and planning to improve young children's abilities and achievements

There is a specific EYFS development plan in which raising achievement further in writing and Mathematics are key priorities. The plan has clear targets, actions, success criteria and realistic timescales. The EYFS has a clear progress and attainment cycle to allow practitioners time to observe, assess and evaluate pupils. The outcomes are shared with all EYFS staff, the SLT and Governors. CPD, led by outside professionals and by school-based staff, develops awareness of new research and practice as well as consolidating the existing practice in the EYFS. Staff plan from a thorough long-term planning document, which is linked to Development Matters, but provides far more detailed guidance for practitioners. Before a new topic is introduced pupils are asked what they already know and what they want to know. Their responses are recorded on a circle map, assisting planning and assessment.

2. An analysis of the assessment of young children's abilities and achievements

There is a very clear assessment procedure and timescale with a helpful overview for staff in the EYFS. To ensure assessments are based on a wide range of evidence a careful balance of adult directed and child-initiated learning opportunities are observed and recorded. Practitioners use observations, photos, videos and pupils' work as the basis for their formative assessments. Parents are encouraged to contribute to assessments through videos of their children learning at home. They are kept informed of their children's progress and attainment via termly parent meetings, half termly progress celebration evenings and half termly published online learning journeys. Alongside these reception children also have a communication book in which staff share weekly reading and Mathematics learning, and suggested activities for home learning are set. Early in the Autumn term baseline assessments are undertaken and progress is formally measured three times a year, with the outcomes reported to senior leaders and governors. The EExAT electronic system, with its point scores, enables staff to carefully track and analyse the progress of cohorts, groups and individual pupils. Teacher assessments are moderated across the EYFS and this includes local authority moderation. The school leads innovative termly cross borough moderation of judgements on the progress and attainment of nursery pupils.

3. Setting appropriately high expectations for young children's development

Practitioners have high expectations of their pupils, including of their behaviour and attitude to learning, with appropriate rewards for achievement. The six Hillcross values underpin the curriculum and learning in the EYFS and these include, collaboration, responsibility, challenge, respect and aspirations. Children have their own targets set by themselves in Reception, and there are general group targets in Nursery, so pupils they are aware of the next steps in learning. They are encouraged to undertake "Challenges" to develop their skills in language, communication and Mathematics. For example, there is a well-resourced "Challenge" area in the Reception corridor in addition to "Challenges" in each classroom. Hillcross's Thinking School status allows practitioners to embed the Higher Order Questioning Thinkers hats and maps to support and challenging thinking. Characteristics of effective learning, which are linked to animals, are used to ensure children understand the learning behaviours needed to complete each task or focus.

4. Planning 'next steps' in learning for young children's development

Practitioners' planning is based on the EYFS Development Matters document with the skills and objectives carefully spread across the academic year to secure coverage and progression. Half termly planning is underpinned by the skills from the long-term planning grid and takes account of the children's ideas as they choose and vote for each topic theme. Staff ensure all the necessary skills are taught and any gaps in learning are closed. Weekly planning enables the skills and the knowledge content of each topic to be taught through whole class sessions and adult led groups. Annotated

plans, notes and observations allow staff to discuss the day and then adapt their planning where necessary for the following day. Differentiated daily planning builds on pupils' previous achievement and identifies groups and specific children for practitioners to focus on during the day. The daily class-based phonics sessions are differentiated and have a clear link to writing. Interventions for children who have gaps in their learning are focusing initially on the Prime areas and these include Dough Gym, Finger Gym, ECAT groups, Attention Bucket, Big Art, Wake up Shake up and transition into writing. More able pupils are extended through differentiated learning tasks and appropriate "Challenges". There are before school booster classes with a phonics focus this year. Speech and Language support is provided by external specialists as is occupational therapy.

5. Regular review of progress made by all children

The progress of children is formally reviewed three times a year using the EExAT system. In addition, practitioners check the progress of children in communication, language and literacy and Mathematics each day. Daily observations are carefully planned, recorded and moderated. Evidence in the form of photographs, videos and written observations are collected on all pupils in child-initiated activities, adult-directed learning, outside learning sessions, inside play experiences and group sessions. The evidence collected is organised into two separate 'Learning Journeys': one, a paper-based scrap book, showing their paper-based work, and the other an online scrap book which collects the videos and photographic evidence. There are observation grids in the classrooms which record when pupils have been observed by practitioners. Practitioners analyse the EExAT data across the classes evaluating the attainment and progress made by each child. Key groups are highlighted from baseline to track across the year and these include, Pupil Premium, SEND, EAL, and Summer born pupils. English and Mathematics interventions are time-constrained, and pupils are carefully assessed to check the impact of the additional support. The school has excellent arrangements to ensure a smooth transition to Year 1, including consistency in the classroom environment, which is based on EYFS practice in Year 1, with access to a well-resourced outside learning area.

6. A commitment to improving the skills of all practitioners

All staff attend whole school CPD sessions as well as weekly EYFS training. Recent training sessions have included aspects of Mathematics, progression in phonics, thinking skills and moderation. Every member of the EYFS team is appraised and has a writing target, which is a whole school focus. Staff attend external training courses and cascade the training back in school. Lesson study, on Nurturing Positive Attachment for example, is used to further improve practice, and this includes videoing staff inter-acting with children and team teaching where appropriate. As a result of Nurturing Positive Attachment training, there is Bounce Back Zone in the Reception corridor and in the nursery where children can control their feelings. There is a culture of peer observation to further develop EYFS practice.

7. A balanced use of child-initiated and adult guided play-based learning

There is an appropriate 80/20 balance of child-initiated learning and adult led learning in the EYFS at Hillcross. During both visits the assessor saw many examples of children learning through play both indoors and in the well-resourced outdoor learning area. The continuous provision provides children with choice over resources and the ability to add to their play, along with adults scaffolding and challenging them. Staff spend a significant amount of time early in the academic year teaching children social and organisational skills which are essential for them to make good academic progress. Children are consulted about the topics they wish to study which helps to increase engagement and

enthusiasm. They are also involved in evaluating their topic through thinking maps and 'what we knew then' and 'what we know now'. Practitioners consistently use higher order questioning to develop thinking in this designated Exeter University-accredited Thinking School. Cursive handwriting is consistently taught from the beginning of the EYFS, with plenty of examples of the script evident in the setting. There are daily phonics sessions in the reception classes where children practice segmenting and form letters using the cursive script on whiteboards. Good quality team teaching is used across the EYFS during some of the whole class sessions. The assessor observed team teaching in the nursery with two practitioners jointly delivering a lively session on early number recognition. All staff members have ownership of areas of the curriculum and of aspects of the EYFS unit and are developing these, training staff and ensuring their area is developed, used effectively and has a positive impact on attainment and progress.

8. The use of appropriate environments and resources

Interactive whiteboards, which are fixed at an appropriate height for children to access, are used to show video clips, books, games and many of other resources. Visualisers display WAGGOLS for children and celebrate pupils' learning achievements. I pads support children in developing their technology skills such as creating videos and taking photos of their work. QR codes enable pupils and staff to access videos. All adults are constantly reviewing and updating the indoor learning spaces for children. Role play areas are updated/changed half termly, which includes renewing resources, creating video clips to show children how to use the area, buying resources and working in partnership with parents to provide appropriate resources. Across the setting there are well developed working walls, which are used for scaffolding learning. Mathematics Working walls have been developed since the pre-assessment visit and show steps to success with key questions. All classrooms are rich in language. There is free-flow to the extensive outdoor learning area which encompasses all areas of the EYFS curriculum and provides many opportunities for the development of gross and fine motor skills and includes a stage, a popular mud kitchen and a games pitch. All learning resources in the classrooms and outside are clearly labelled and accessible for the children.

9. Partnership working between families, carers, practitioners and professionals in supporting young children's learning and development

There is a very effective transition from home to school, which includes home visits and stay and play sessions and staggered starts. The school provides parents with comprehensive information on how reading, writing and Mathematics are taught. The half-termly newsletters for Nursery and Reception parents, explain the learning and skills the children will be focussing on with tips for how parents can support home learning. The EYFS section on the school website has very useful information for parents on phonics, reading, Mathematics, assessment and home learning. Regular workshops are provided for parents and carers on a variety of areas including phonics and Mathematics. Apart from the termly parent-teacher consultation sessions, parents are invited into their child's class to see learning taking place. Last term during the school's Mathematics week parents were able to watch their children being taught. Each term there is a celebration evening where parents can look at their children's work. Collaboration with parents in assessment evidence enables parents to upload learning and skills that are seen at home onto the EYFS assessment system. Online learning journeys are completed and shared with parents giving them a half termly overview of progress and next steps.

10. An effective procedure for monitoring, planning and assessing improvement in practice and provision

EYFS action plans are shared with governors as is monitoring and pupil attainment and progress data. This means the Governing Body is very well informed about standards in Communication, Language and Literacy and Mathematics in the EYFS. In addition to the school's termly report to Governors, the Early Years Governor visits each term. She monitors the EYFS action plan, talks to children and staff and looks at children's Learning Journeys and undertakes learning walks. She writes a report for the Governing Body. Local authority advisors provide an external view on progress and attainment in the EYFS. All practitioners have an action plan linked to a specific EYFS area and strive to improve provision so there is a positive impact on teaching, attainment and progress. All staff are involved in evaluations of data to track key children, key groups and then to adapt and change provision to ensure key skills are targeted and gaps are closed in learning.

A brief summary of the strengths/ developments since the last visit:

Hillcross has many strengths, which include an extremely well-resourced EYFS environment, supportive parents and above average standards of pupil achievement. Standards in the EYFS at Hillcross have risen, with 81% of children in Reception attaining a Good Level of Development against the Early Years Framework in 2019 compared with 76% in 2018. There is a very strong culture of continuous improvement in the school and the current focus is on raising standards in writing. All practitioners are very committed to providing high quality learning opportunities for all pupils in a stimulating learning environment. They have high expectations of pupils and are reflective practitioners, who share good practice across the school.

Additional Comments or action (if applicable)

N/A