

Hillshott Infant School and Nursery



Welcome to our school

Hillshott Infant School and Nursery is a two form entry school. This means each year group has two classes of 30 children in addition to the 52 places offered in Nursery. We also have a Speech and Language unit for up to 10 children with primary communication needs

Our unique 100 year old building is located on the edge of Letchworth Garden City town centre. The character of the building is used effectively to create a welcoming place for children to learn and play.

There are large outside spaces on either side of the school which are used for safe learning and play. Being in the heart of the Garden City Heritage Area our school site has many mature trees and a wildlife area with our own allotment and pond.

The School Values

We aim to ensure that every child thrives during their time at Hillshott and our school values underpin these aims:

Hillshott Stars are



We strongly believe that all children deserve a good start to their education and take great care to support the development of the whole child. A positive ethos towards learning is encouraged by praising and rewarding children for attempting new or challenging activities and we support children in the process of becoming independent learners.

A strong and coherent assessment and monitoring process begins from the moment a child starts at our school. Social, emotional and physical developmental needs are given a high priority in creating a strong base for effective learning.

We believe a happy and secure child makes better progress. We use a wide range of strategies to support each child to allow them to settle, make friends and thrive with their learning.

Our highly skilled team of staff work together to meet each child's needs and to plan our exciting and motivating curriculum. The children also play an active role in deciding what happens at the school and each class has representatives on the School Council.

The Early Years Foundation Stage

Throughout the EYFS, families are encouraged to become involved with their child's learning. Children's progress is tracked using our electronic learning journals which are shared with parents and carers regularly.

We aim to support the whole child and ensure that social and emotional skills are promoted alongside academic learning to produce rounded, confident children who love their time at school.

Nursery (3-4 years)

Many of our children begin their school life in our nursery setting. Our nursery offers reflect the needs of the local community with;

- 15 hour sessions (morning and afternoon)
- 30 hours sessions for eligible families.

Our nursery unit has a dedicated classroom with separate cloakroom and toileting facilities. This nurturing and stimulating environment allows children to settle well, promoting the best possible start to their early education.

Children are encouraged to spend much of their time in our well-resourced outdoor learning space. A garden area and play equipment provides many opportunities for being active learners. A large covered area allows children to spend time outside during the winter months. Nursery admissions are managed by the school with one intake each September. Places are offered to children who turn 4 years old in the academic year. More information about Nursery admissions can be found on the 'Admissions' page of the school website.

Reception (4-5 years)

All children are supported in developing their independent learning skills and emphasis is placed on learning through play. Adult led activities teach key skills such as phonics, maths and writing when the children are ready. Careful planning allows for interesting and stimulating displays that link to topics and the children's own interests. Reception

children also have their own outdoor space where all of the children in the year group learn to socialise and play together. The large covered area ensures children have plenty of room to develop their physical skills whatever the weather. We also have large climbing and balancing equipment and our own outside stage complete with musical instruments.

Key Stage 1 - Year groups 1 & 2 (5-7 years)

We have 2 classes in each year group. Each class has their own class teacher and a dedicated teaching assistant. They are further supported by the school's pastoral team and additional SEN support where required.

Every classroom has its own cloakroom area and easy access to toilets. Classrooms are bright, welcoming and well organised to enable children to be independent learners.

Children follow the objectives of the National Curriculum, with carefully tailored teaching to ensure they make good progress in all areas of their learning. The curriculum is based on themes or topics that interest and engage the children. Role play, displays and written work are produced on this theme and trips both local and further afield may be planned to inspire the children and deepen their learning.

Regular assessment meetings take place to monitor progress and support programs are put in place as needed to extend, consolidate and develop learning. Where we identify that children need additional support within a particular area of learning, they are offered interventions to help them make accelerated progress.

Here are the answers to some common questions asked by parents and carers.

Will my child have a reading book, and when do they use the school library?

In Nursery children share books with the staff and also take them home to share and read with their families.

In Reception children begin to bring home a weekly book to read and talk about with their parents. One of the 'Parents in Partnership' sessions will explain how to support your child with home reading and regular morning drop-ins are held for further discussion.

In Years 1 and 2 children change their own reading books from a carefully selected range of schemes to interest all children. Parents are encouraged to read with children at home and add comments to the reading record.

All children regularly use the school library, and are encouraged to choose a different book to take home each week.

What clubs do you offer?

The school offers a range of clubs during the year such as football, tennis, gym, cooking club and others appropriate to the children's interests. Clubs are offered to all children from Reception to Year 2 and may take place before school, at lunchtime or after school.

Will my child take part in cooking lessons?

We are very lucky in having a purpose built kitchen for use by the children. The type of food produced varies widely to encourage healthy eating.

Will my child go on trips and visits?

Careful use is made of the local area to extend learning. This may include walking to the park, buying healthy produce from the shops and looking at the local environment and buildings. We also take children on trips further afield and these trips are usually linked to the topics they are studying including farms, zoos and castles.

Are parents encouraged to help at school?

We welcome help from parents, carers and relatives to support the children with reading, changing library books, cooking and other activities.

My child has specific needs, how will you address these?

The school is fully committed to offering equal opportunities to all children regardless of their background and any specific needs. Planning and discussion meetings will be held as needed to ensure that specific needs are catered for within the curriculum, and additional support given as appropriate. We have good links with a range of professionals and will ask for advice and support as needed.

Will my child get homework?

From the early years children will get a weekly or fortnightly task to do at home which is linked to their topic work. From reception onwards children may get phonics homework (learning their letters and sounds) or spelling homework. Some children may get additional work in order to support and extend their learning.

What is the school council?

We have a school council of elected members who are encouraged to share their ideas and report on the children's needs and interests. Regular meetings and assemblies are held and some recent actions have included:

- Deciding what trips to go on
- Changing the lunch menu and the activities on the playground
- Fundraising activities

What does my child wear to school?

All children wear the school uniform which consists of dark bottom, a white t-shirt and a green jumper or cardigan. We also require children to have a book bag and a PE kit with them at all times.

Uniform with the school logo can be purchased from the school or Uniform Monkeys and additional uniform can be purchased at local supermarkets. Alternatively high quality pre-owned uniform is available from the Uniform Bank.

Clothing and personal items should be clearly labelled with the child's name. This allows us to reunite lost items with the rightful owner.

Please visit the school website for more information about the school uniform and for details of how to order via the school office.

What are Lunches like?

Infant aged children receive a free school meal paid for by Infant Free School Meal funding.

Our school meals are provided by Dolce and pre-ordered in advance by parents / carers using the School Grid. Children are offered a daily choice of hot and cold meals and all dietary requirements are catered for.

Children can bring a home packed lunch if they prefer. This should be in a small clearly labelled lunch box and contain a healthy mix of food so no sweets, fizzy drinks or chocolate. Please note we are a nut free school.

To find out more about our school, please visit our website