Welcome to
Hilltop Infant
School &
Nursery

Prospectus 2023-24







# Welcome to Hilltop Infant School & Nursery

We would like to extend a warm welcome to you and hope that you find our school prospectus useful and informative. Situated in Wickford, Essex, we are an outstanding school based at the heart of our local community, catering for children aged 2 to 7 (Nursery to Year 2). We foster positive relationships with all families and pupils achieve well because of our ongoing partnership with parents and carers.

We are proud members of HEARTS Academy Trust, having joined in 2017, and all staff, children and families in our school uphold our HEARTS values each and every day. Our school has beautiful grounds and so much to offer, from our magnificent outdoor learning spaces to large, open classrooms.

Our curriculum is ambitious, engaging and aims to inspire all pupils. We have high aspirations for all learners and deliver our curriculum in an inclusive environment: we believe in giving all children a full, varied learning experience that equips them for success in later life. At Hilltop Infant School & Nursery, we have a strong and passionate team of staff who are dedicated in ensuring that each and every child achieves their full potential.

We would love to have you visit our school, to meet our amazing staff and wonderful pupils - please contact the school office to arrange a viewing. We would thoroughly enjoy showing you around our school and sharing just how special Hilltop Infant School & Nursery is.

Mr. D Wry
Executive Head

#### Vision

#### **HEARTS Academy Trust Vision**

Hilltop Infant School & Nursery is a member of the HEARTS Academy Trust. Formed in 2011, the Trust has since grown into a multi-academy comprised of six schools and an enhanced provision for social and emotional health (additional information can be found <a href="https://example.com/hearts/hearts/hearts/">hearts/he

The Trust places students at the centre of everything it does, with a focus on creating a culture of success, achievement, happiness, hope, confidence, respect and responsibility, reflection and service to others. We create positive climates for learning, increase pupil attainment/achievement and provide highly effective social and emotional development opportunities. This includes enhanced provision and 2 and 3-year-old nursery settings.

The Trust has developed an ethos in which decisions are made on the values set out above and our commitment to the service of our pupils and their families. Pupils are at the heart of all that we do. It is an absolute priority that every pupil, irrespective of their starting point, succeeds and achieves. In order to do this, a high-quality educational experience will be an entitlement for every student, with students, staff, parents and carers, and the wider community working together to achieve these goals for young people.

Leadership development, succession planning, and capacity building are also major priorities for the Trust and the Trust has an entitlement CPD programme for all staff.



**HEARTS** ACADEMY TRUST



#### Our Ethos

At Hilltop Infant School our ethos and vision is centred around the holistic education of each and every child. As a fully inclusive school, our aim is that every pupil, regardless of their individual starting points, will achieve and succeed. We recognise the uniqueness of each child and we know that the curriculum is more than simply academia; we fundamentally understand and value the importance of providing rich and memorable learning experiences, ones that encourage cultural capital, celebrate diversity and enhance every child's wellbeing.

Our HEARTS curriculum is well-delivered, rigorous, ambitious and high quality, with knowledge acquisition at its core. Knowledge is sequenced and mapped specifically and coherently, allowing our children to build upon and review their understanding, making relevant connections. Knowledge is taught to be remembered, not just encountered.

Our HEARTS Values shape our ethos: we promote the values of happiness, esteem, achievement, respect & responsibility, truth and service & spirituality.



#### **HEARTS** Values

HEARTS Academy Trust and Hilltop Infant School are committed to providing a happy, caring and safe learning environment for all within a values led context, where everyone feels valued and grows in confidence and independence.

We promote HAPPINESS through a creative, exciting and practical curriculum, which generates a love of, and interest in, learning and a resilience and hope which supports us through challenging times.

Great value is placed on pupils' self **ESTEEM** which is developed through a positive and motivated attitude to learning, a healthy lifestyle, good social skills, self-discipline and a positive self-image.

We promote the highest standards of **ACHIEVEMENT** in all areas of the curriculum and help all pupils to fulfil their potential regardless of gender, race or ability.

We foster **RESPECT and RESPONSIBILITY** for all by establishing good relations between the school, home and community. Pupils are taught respect for themselves, others and the environment. They are also taught to take full responsibility for their own choices and responsibility for themselves and their community.

We encourage **TRUTH** and honesty in all aspects of school life – relationships, work and the curriculum and learn to trust and accept others' individuality and uniqueness.

We develop **SPIRITUALITY** and **SERVICE** so that calm, quiet, reflective times which support deep thought are part of school life and beauty is appreciated. We promote a service culture that reflects our duty to support and show compassion to all members of the community and not just ourselves.

#### Curriculum

#### **Our Intent**

Hilltop Infant School & Nursery offers a broad and balanced, vocabulary rich curriculum that helps all children to gain an understanding and appreciation of the beauty and diversity of the world. Our curriculum is based on the values in our mission statement. We have very high aspirations for all our children in our school and the curriculum is specifically designed to overcome significant barriers to learning within our community.

We employ a mastery approach to help children to become fluent and confident in the skills and knowledge they need. Our values-led curriculum is fundamentally concerned with the kind of adults we want our children to become and how we want them to contribute to society. Our school curriculum is written in coordination with all HEARTS schools.

Further information regarding the HEARTS curriculum be found <a href="https://www.hearts-hilltopinf.uk/curriculum-and-phonics">https://www.hearts-hilltopinf.uk/curriculum-and-phonics</a>





#### A Love of Reading

At Hilltop Infant School we promote a love of reading and encourage children and adults to read for pleasure; we know full well the significant impact that reading can and does have on children's progress and development.

Every classroom has a welcoming, comfortable and inviting reading area with a wide range of high-quality books. Story time takes place in every classroom, every school day and this is a vital part of our timetable. These sessions provide excellent opportunities for the children to hear a wide range of texts by a variety of authors, carefully selected by our teachers.

Author visits and visits from storytellers take place throughout the year, and we also celebrate other literary events of significance, from *Roald Dahl Day* in September, to *World Book Day* in March.

#### **Every Child, Every Day:**

We expect our parents to read to their children once-a-day and to record this in their child's reading record. We know that, working together with our parents and community, that placing such a substantial emphasis on reading pays dividends in later life.

## The **HEARTS**Promise

At HEARTS Academy Trust, we place significant importance on academic progress and ensuring all children receive a world-class education. However, we know that full primary schooling should include a variety of life enhancing and memorable experiences – ones that our children will know and remember for years to come.

Our curriculum is supplemented with the HEARTS Promise: a programme of activities and initiatives in which every child participates that broadens horizons, builds key skills and inspires learners. It is driven not only by what we know our pupils need, but also by challenges and endeavours that we know will inspire and peak pupils' interests. It is centred, as is our entire curriculum, around our core HEARTS values. The 'promises' that all pupils will accomplish and achieve are varied, ranging from attempts to break world records, to performing on stage, to educational visits abroad.

We deliver our HEARTS Promise so that every child's time at school with us is exceptional, giving all pupils wonderful, bespoke memories that they will cherish for a lifetime. Each child will also be able to collect 12 badges as they work towards achieving each of the components that make up the HEARTS Promise, and at the time of leaving our schools, a symbolic, photographic record will be presented to each pupil, poignantly showcasing all of the amazing feats and adventures that your child has had in our time with us.





#### Hilltots Pre-School

Hilltots Pre-School is our provision for children aged 2 to 4, set within the grounds of Hilltop Infant School. It is a very popular and well resourced setting, including both indoor and outdoor spaces, with a curriculum that is carefully planned and led by qualified, experienced staff.

Children can join us at Hilltots after their second birthday, and attend for five sessions per week. We provide:

- Funded spaces (30 hours funding for full time children, 15 hours for part time)
- Small class sizes, ensuring every child is catered for as an individual
- Approachable, high-quality staff overseen by a fully qualified teacher
- A newly built, beautiful and bespoke building with high quality play resources for all

Most of our children move from our Hilltots Nursery into our Early Years Foundation Stage (Reception). This provides excellent continuity and familiarity of provision and staff, ensuring a very successful start for your child as they transition through to full-time schooling.

Additional information, including how to apply for a place at Hilltots, can be found on our website (<u>click here</u>). Alternatively, please call or email our school office and we would be happy to help.



### Starting School

We understand that starting school is a big step for you and your child. To help children adapt to life in school, we invite children in for 'taster sessions' in the summer term, where the children get a chance to meet their teachers, explore their classrooms, learning spaces and the school site as well as meet their peers. During these sessions, we also hold new intake meetings for parents, where we share further key information about starting school with us.

At the start of each academic year (in September), we exercise a 'settling in' period, where children begin with half-days, leading up to a full school day. During this time, our Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) staff carry out home visits for all of our families as per our induction procedure: these visits help to build a positive foundation and relationship between home and school; they are a wonderful opportunity for families and staff to get to know each other which aides in building children's confidence ahead of their school start.

## Admissions & Transition

We acknowledge that one of the most critical decisions any parent can make is deciding which school their child attends. As such we place a strong emphasis on ensuring our admissions and transition arrangements are positive, effective, and that all parents (and pupils) have a chance to view our setting before they apply. We hold school tours and information sessions for parents throughout the year and maintain an 'opendoor' policy.

We are fully committed to the welfare of each child and we appreciate that transition can be both a challenging and exciting time in a young person's life; we endeavor to provide a seamless transition that aides pupils and parents as they move from one-year group to the next.

Further information regarding admissions and transition can be found via our website (click here). Please note that applications for school places open each academic year in November and close in January.

For mid-year admissions, we encourage all interested parents to contact our school office to arrange a tour with the Head of School or Executive Head – a chance to view our setting, see the children and staff in action and to witness life at Hilltop Infant School & Nursery.



## Forest School & Outdoor Learning

We are very proud to offer Forest School and Outdoor Learning for all our children as a wonderful extension of our school curriculum. Forest School allows children to access the outdoors to learn and develop through play and exploration, providing opportunities for children to participate in wider, practical activities that build independence and confidence outside a normal classroom environment.

All sessions are led by our very experienced and qualified Forest School lead – Mrs. Walters – and they take place throughout the year, rain or shine. Learning happens either on site via our own outdoor classroom called *Robin's Rest* or at Wickford Memorial Park (a very short, five minute walk from our school).



## Extracurricular Opportunities

At Hilltop Infant School we fully recognise the vital contribution that extra-curricular activities play in the wider development of our students and we place a significant focus on ensuring that there is a plethora on offer. We encourage all of our pupils to join a school-based club each term and we offer these throughout the year. These extra-curricular experiences are very popular and exist as an extension of our curriculum. We survey our parents and children termly, to gauge their needs and interests, and our club provision aims to mirror this.

#### Clubs on offer include:

- Gardening
- Ballet & Dance
- Football
- Journalism (newspaper club)
- Choir

To name but a few. An up-to-date list of all clubs, including times, durations and costs (where applicable) can be found on our school website.





## Wellbeing & Mental Health

We educate our children on the importance of maintaining positive mental health and do so by delivering learning experiences that improve every child's wellbeing. We know that positive mental wellbeing is essential if children and young people are to flourish and lead fulfilling lives.

Our values-led curriculum includes opportunities for social and emotional debate and discussion, reflects the ever-changing world around us and teaches about the importance of respecting diversity and difference. Our curriculum is full of opportunities to explore social, emotional and mental health. We deliver this, in part, through carefully chosen texts and/or themed weeks and appreciation days. Our Mental Health First Aid Champions and Responders are also integral to this and work to support pupils and families across our school and wider community.

We also actively seek to remove the stigma around mental health and do so by organising awareness campaigns (for example, National Mental Health Awareness Week and World Mental Health Day) in coordination with our parents, PTA and School Council, and we teach and provide opportunities to exercise mindfulness, both in class and through additional programmes like Special Yoga and Zones of Regulation.

We have our own Trust and school counsellor, Mrs. K Westbrook, who also supports pupils and families, in school, weekly. She draws on a wealth of qualifications, skills and experience to ensure that she offers holistic support that is child-centred.

We are fully committed to supporting the health and wellbeing of all pupils and staff in order to ensure that Hilltop Infant School & Nursery is a place where everyone feels able to thrive and be the best they can be.



### Today's Learners, Tomorrow's Leaders

We believe in empowering young minds and encouraging leadership, independence and responsibility. Our pupils are given many opportunities to exercise their leadership skills through roles such as:

- School Council & Pupil Parliament
- Lunchtime Heroes

We whole-heartedly value the young voices of our pupil leaders and we use it to shape the teaching, learning and improvement in our school. We actively encourage children to challenge, discuss and debate issues, and we do so successfully across our assemblies and through many of the school groups listed above. We would encourage you to view our School Council minutes, which can be found on our website; they demonstrate a passionate sense of ownership, shared spirit and belonging.

We know that the best schools share a strong culture of leadership, and at Hilltop Infant School we strive to mould today's learners into tomorrow's leaders.

### Community

Integral to Hilltop, and one of our HEARTS values, is the spirit of service. We proudly exist as a pillar of the local Wickford and wider community and we believe it is important to give every child the opportunities to learn with, from and about the world around us.

We work in close partnership with local and international charities. We believe in creating global citizens and champion social responsibility, knowing that all children leave our school having made a difference to the lives of others; we build our wider school curriculum around these principles.

Examples of our work within and across the community include *Enterprise Day* and our work with *Peaceful Ponies*. We also make regular donations to food banks and hold sponsored events alongside nationally recognised initiatives, from Red Nose Day to NSPCC Number Day to Children in Need.

#### Extended Schools Provision

We proudly serve our community and families in need of additional childcare as part of our extended school provision. This takes the form of a breakfast and after school club, available daily. Breakfast club runs from 7:30 to 8:35 and the After School Club operates from 3:15 to 6:00. We offer a variety of extra-curricular activities through this provision to build skills, confidence and to inspire and entertain children of all ages (open for all children, aged Reception to Year 6).

Our club provision is an extension of the school day, with central themes that link to our wider curriculum. We also run a highly successful wrap-around holiday club that serves families from not only Wickford but across the whole of Essex. Further information can be found on our website.

#### Charities We Work Closely With:

























#### Assessment & Outcomes



82% of pupils in Year 2 (KS1 SATs) reached the expected standard in reading last year (2023) and 90% of pupils in Year 1 passed the phonics screening check – both significantly above national averages



76% of pupils in Year 2 (KS1 SATs) met the expected standard in writing; 78% of pupils in early years met GLD (a 'good level of development')



80% of pupils in Year 2 (KS1 SATs) reached the expected standard in maths, with 18% achieving 'greater depth'

At HEARTS and Hilltop Infants we carry out both formative and summative assessment — assessment both for learning and of learning, enabling teachers to deliver a rich, robust curriculum that best suits the needs of all learners. School staff work quickly and effectively to address the learning in all lessons through effective feedback, both verbal and written. We know that a swift response is essential to raising pupil achievement, enabling all children to make rapid progress both within and across lessons. All pupils receive immediate, direct instruction from their teachers as well as any support that is integral to their learning/next steps in their development.

We measure pupils' performance against both internal and national standards. Teachers and practitioners make these judgements throughout the delivery of the curriculum: at the end of a unit of work, at the beginning or end of a term, year or key stage or as a measure of impact against any support or intervention a pupil has received. These shape our understanding of pupil progress and inform future teaching and learning.

Our attainment and results consistently demonstrate highly effective performance, significantly above the national averages year-on-year. For further information regarding our outcomes, see our school website.

#### Inclusion

It is our belief that all children have an equal right to a full and rounded education that enables them to achieve their full potential. We are an inclusive school, and our curriculum and environment is both stimulating and aspirational for pupils with special educational needs. We endeavour for all of our pupils to develop both socially and emotionally, helping them to grow into mature citizens ready for the next stage of their learning.

Our curriculum and school site promotes and encourages equality of opportunity, regardless of age, race, gender, ethnicity, ability or background. We know that all children have a diverse range of individual needs and we aim to meet and reflect those needs throughout our SEND and whole school provision, in a happy and secure environment.

At Hilltop we are proud that we show respect for each other and that we have high expectations for all learners. Our pastoral team deliver a robust and tailored curriculum for pupils with SEND and/or SEMH (social, emotional and mental health) needs and we do so through pupil-tailored interventions as well as quality first teaching. We are committed to meeting the special educational needs of all pupils and ensuring that they make sustained progress and learn exceptionally well through our universal, targeted and specialised offer.

Inclusion at Hilltop is set out in our policies and accessibility plan, which can be found on our website. Please consult our SEND Information Report, our Local Offer and our SEND Information Leaflet.



### Safeguarding

Hilltop Infant School & Nursery is fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all pupils. We believe that:

- All children have the right to be protected from harm
- Children need to be safe and feel safe in school
- Children need support which matches their individual needs, including those who may have experienced abuse
- All children have the right to speak freely and voice their values and beliefs
- All children must be encouraged to respect each other's values and support each other
- All children have the right to be supported to meet their emotional and social needs as well as their educational needs – a happy, healthy and sociable child will achieve better educationally
- Hilltop can and does contribute to the prevention of abuse, victimisation, bullying, exploitation, radicalisation, extreme behaviours, discriminatory views and other risk taking behaviours
- All staff and visitors have an important role to play in safeguarding children and protecting them from abuse, including teaching children about how to stay safe (including online) as important parts of our curriculum

We share a strong culture of safeguarding across our school led by a passionate team of safeguarding leads. Further information, including support from outside agencies, can be found on our website.

We are very proud to say that we hold the prestigious and nationally recognised SAFE CIC award, showcasing our excellent safeguarding culture and provision.



Ms. J Ready
Designated Safeguarding
Lead



Miss C Kennedy
Designated Safeguarding
Lead



Ms. Rainford
Trust Designated
Safeguarding Lead



I have every confidence in the school to keep my children safe. There are excellent systems in place and I know that the school will always contact me if they need to discuss anything. My children are very happy at Hilltop Infant School.

Hilltop Parent

### Local Advisory Board (LAB)

An important part of our governance is our Local Advisory Board (LAB) who monitor, support and challenge our school, helping to ensure our continued development. Compromised of parents, staff and community members, the LAB meet every half term and help to provide constructive challenge for school leaders in the areas of safeguarding, health and safety, curriculum (including teaching, learning, pupil progress and attainment) and the wider life of the school.

The chair of our LAB meets termly with other LAB chairs from across the Trust as well as with the Board of Trustees, providing important links between governing bodies.

Our LAB provide expertise and experience across a range of skills so as to ensure that the school is able to undertake its duty to support the creation of a strong learning environment for all.

Further information about our LAB, including LAB members, can be found via our website (click here).

#### **Annual Report**

Every year our Trust produces an annual report which we would encourage all parents and members of the community to read. It outlines our HEARTS strategic vision, current developments, next steps as well as highlights many of the successes and achievements across all of the HEARTS schools.

You can access the annual report by visiting <a href="https://www.heartsacademytrust.co.uk/">https://www.heartsacademytrust.co.uk/</a> or by <a href="clicking here">clicking here</a>.



### A Day In the Life

Life at Hilltop Infants begins at 7:30 with the opening of our Breakfast Club (located at the Junior school next door), which concludes at 8:35 am. The club is supervised by a team of caring, experienced staff. During these sessions, all children are provided with a healthy, nutritional breakfast and have access to a variety of fun and engaging morning activities.

The school day then begins at 8:35, when classroom doors open. We operate a 'soft start' which finishes at 8:50 am, when registers close.

We hold daily, 15-minute assemblies for all children which are values led and/or celebratory. We have a whole school assembly, discussing the weekly topic, on Mondays; singing assemblies on Tuesdays and our celebration assembly is on Fridays. On Tuesday and Thursday mornings we also hold whole school assemblies around key themes and topics.

The morning break time is split between Reception and Key Stage 1. Reception break is from 10:20 to 10:35 and Key Stage 1 take their break from 10:40 to 10:55.

Lunchtime takes place in our school hall, where we serve delicious and nutritious school dinners, cooked daily on site. Lunch break is from 12:05 to 1:05, for all year groups.

The school day finishes at 3:15. The children are escorted onto the playground by their class teacher and they are collected by their parent or carer.

After school, extra-curricular clubs run throughout the week and across the year, from 3:15 until 4:00. Children are collected from clubs via the front office.

Our After School Club (extended childcare provision) runs daily from 3:15 until 6:00, hosting children from both Hilltop Infants and Hilltop Juniors, and similar to the Breakfast Club, is based out of the Junior school next door. Information about booking your child into any of our extended school provision can be found on our website or by speaking to a member of school admin.





#### Attendance

Positive school attendance is critical to any child's success. It is our expectation that all of our pupils aim for 100% attendance. As a matter of course, authorised leave will not be granted during term time bar exceptional circumstances and only at the direct discretion of the Head of School.

Attendance is monitored rigorously by a dedicated attendance team. Half-termly reports are shared with all parents and reminder letters are sent to families who fail to meet our expectations and where there are concerns.

If a child is unwell and unable to attend school, parents must inform the school office by 9:00 each day otherwise safeguarding arrangements will come into effect and this may result in a home visit.

Further information regarding attendance, our expectations and our procedures can be found by visiting our website <u>click here</u>.

#### Uniform

At Hilltop we have a school uniform that we expect all children and parents to abide by. Our school colours are red, charcoal grey and white. We expect children to arrive at school wearing the appropriate school uniform, which consists of:

- White collared shirt (short or long sleeve)
- Hilltop tie (elasticated) for KS1 pupils (Year 1 & 2)
- Hilltop red V-neck jumper and/or
- Hilltop red cardigan
- Charcoal grey trousers, shorts and/or pleated skirt/pinafore dress
- · Charcoal grey tights or socks
- Black (smart) school shoes

A full PE kit must also be worn on the day your child(ren) take part in their PE lessons. The PE kit consists of:

- White polo shirt (school emblem optional)
- Black cuffed bottoms / shorts
- Plim soles / black trainers
- Red 'Hilltop' jumpers and/or fleeces can be worn in the colder months or
- Plain red zipped hoodie

Please note that we also expect all long hair to be tied up/pulled back accordingly. In addition, no jewelry is to be worn at school which includes earrings. All children will also need a book bag and a water bottle.

Please also ensure that all items of clothing and uniform are clearly labelled with your child's name and class.



#### Awards and Achievements

We are very proud to share that we have been the recipient of many prestigious awards, quality marks and accolades, which all serve to mark our fantastic provision and school curriculum.

Recently we have received:

- The Artsmark Gold: recognising outstanding provision in the field of creative arts (music, drama and art)
- **SENDIA**: a national standard for effective inclusive education for children with special needs and/or disability
- WAS (Wellbeing Award for Schools): creating a culture in which mental health and wellbeing can thrive
- SAFECIC: illustrating a strong and robust culture of safeguarding for all

And we are currently working towards the SMSC (Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural) quality mark, which aims to illustrate how we improve and promote children's personal development and character.





Artsmark
Gold Award
Awarded by Arts
Council England







Wellbeing Award for Schools





## Together in Partnership

At Hilltop we place a tremendous importance on working in partnership with our parents and wider community. We believe in open and honest communication and work to include our parents at every available opportunity.

We hold curriculum open mornings at least once every term as well as parent workshops and assemblies; we write to parents termly to share their child's progress; we hold consultation evenings three times per year and we consult our parents through regular surveys.

We use a variety of platforms to communicate with our parents. Our school newsletter, which is written weekly, is shared with parents every Friday and is the best place to read all about life at Hilltop and to be kept abreast of important upcoming dates, news and announcements. We also have a very informative school website and actively use our X (Twitter) feed (you can follow us at @HilltopInfant). We also use Class Dojo and Tapestry (for Reception families) to broadcast our learning.

All parents can support their child's learning by engaging with their child's homework. As previously stated, we also expect all of our parents to read to their child, for at least 10 minutes every night and record this in their child's reading diary — this is part of our *Every Child, Every Day* reading initiative.

We use Eduspot to manage online bookings for some clubs (where fees are due), order school dinners and make other school-related payments. Further information can be found here <a href="https://eduspot.co.uk/product/schoolmoney/">https://eduspot.co.uk/product/schoolmoney/</a>

