



Dear Parents/Carers,

Welcome to the first newsletter of 2024 and a very belated 'Happy New Year!' It has been great to see all the children starting the term so positively - it has been a super start to the term.

Please do look at the diary dates section. I have updated them for the months ahead and will continue to do so in the newsletter as dates arise.

I would like to begin this newsletter by celebrating some of the many events that were held in school at the end of the last term. It was certainly an incredible term with so many exciting events!

Crown Prince of Brunei visits our school

A clear highlight of last term has to be the exciting visit by His Royal Highness, **The Crown Prince of Brunei!** HRH met initially with all of our children from Treetops Setting up to Year 3, taking time to speak to them and ask questions about our school before participating in a traditional Nepali welcome ceremony, led by five of our Year 6 pupils – who were photographed and featured in the Borneo Bulletin.

Following this, HRH sat down and was treated to two fantastic dances performed by four pupils in Years 5 and 6, who danced to Dada Garhe Saili and Dubo Phulyo. He then moved into our school hall and met pupils from Years 4 to 6, who sang 'A Million Dreams' beautifully to him. HRH moved forward and was photographed with the singers, before moving off to his next appointment. More photos from this event will be shared in our next edition of the Hornbill Gazette. I was so proud of all of our children, who conducted themselves with humility and graciousness. I hope that the visit will provide them with exciting memories for the future!

End of Term Performances

We were also been treated to some amazing performances by all of our Year Groups at the end of the term. Firstly, we had **Humph!** A super play about one of the camels who was present for the Nativity. The children in KS1 performed with confidence and clearly enjoyed sharing the tale of **Humphrey** with us!

Our older pupils, from Years 3 to 6, then shared their production of **The Nutcracker**. It was super, with each year group taking responsibility for performing different sections of the story. I really enjoyed watching their incredible performances.

Finally, I was treated to watching our FS2 pupils share the **Christmas Story** in film. They re-enacted the whole tale, with each child taking on multiple roles with confidence and great humour – I thoroughly enjoyed watching them rehearse for their film – and the finished 'movie' was an absolute delight to watch!

Jolly Holly Fair

In addition to this, we were all helped to feel festive with the incredible Hornbill Helping Hands' **Jolly Holly Fair**. This was held on the penultimate Friday of the term and was such a fun afternoon, with the opportunity for present shopping and entertainment provided by our Year Group stalls. I would like to share a huge thank you to the amazing team of volunteers from Hornbill Helping Hands who supported this event. Their selflessness and hard work was incredible and I am so grateful to each and every one of them. I would particularly like to thank Mrs Morford for leading us, as a team of volunteers, to make this event so successful. The Jolly Holly Fair raised an amazing \$2905 BND which our school council are using to improve our playground space. They are currently surveying their classes to see if children would like to spend the \$2905 BND immediately on a small piece of playground equipment, or whether they would like to save it and put it towards a large item.

In the meantime, we are looking to develop playground markings to make the environment more appealing and active. Over the summer, a number of items of playground equipment were removed as the condition of the items was not suitable (always a challenge in this climate). Our school councillors have also been identifying how existing equipment, such as table tennis tables and badminton sets, could be used to help to make our playtimes more active.

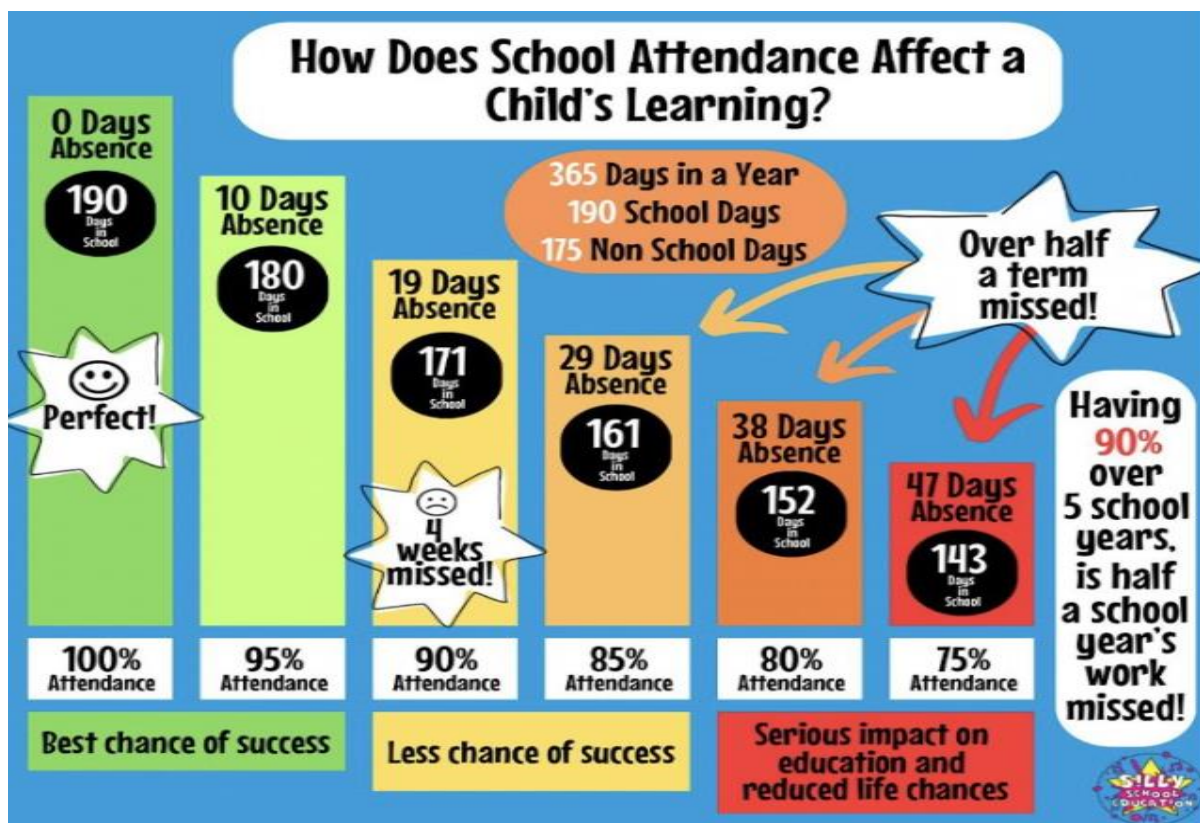
School Calendar

We’ve now confirmed our calendar dates for the next academic year. We have provided this as early as we could this year so that it helps you with any future holiday planning. There is a copy at the end of the newsletter and it is also on our website in the Parent section.

Attendance

Thank you so much to all the families who consistently ensure that their child is in school and on time. Attendance is improving at Hornbill School and it’s great to see our children having the best possible chances as a result. Today, our school attendance is 94.70% which is good—however, it would be great to see it above 95% again super soon! We know that there are coughs and colds around at the moment, but do keep ensuring your child is in school, if they can be. Thank you for your support with ensuring your children are in school and on time.

You can see from this poster how quickly attendance percentages can drop over a year when children are absent from school and how much lost learning occurs as a result. Good attendance is over 95% for the school year and as close to 100% as possible! We all know that some absence cannot be helped due to illness or unforeseen circumstances but we continue to ask that your child is in school every day and that you inform the school office at the earliest point in the morning of any absence. This is essential as we need to know that children are safe when they are absent from school. When school is not informed, the absence is considered to be a safeguarding risk – something could have happened to the child or to their parent, preventing them from reaching school, without anyone being aware. It is for this reason that we ask that the school office is quickly informed about any absence.



Communication

As shared, Defence Children's Services are currently looking at the many software options being used in their schools, including Hornbill, to ensure that data is stored effectively and securely and that software across our schools is aligned to ensure value for money. As a result of this, when our contract with 'Seesaw' ended, we were directed to move across to using a programme called Family to capture children's learning journeys. I am delighted to be able to share that the transition to this piece of software is now almost complete and so we will be sharing it with our Early Years families (in FS 1, FS 2, and Year 1) shortly. It is a very effective piece of software that will enable us to share information and images of your child's learning journey. We are awaiting more information about other programmes that we currently use as further contracts come out for renewal and I will write to all parents separately with information as I receive it.

Parent Evenings

These meetings will be scheduled between 14.15 hrs to 16.45hrs on the 5th and 6th of February for all parents to meet with their child or children's teacher and discuss their progress this term. Appointment letters will be sent home closer to the time.

Open Morning Wednesday 14th February (08.00 hrs until 09.00 hrs)

We would like to again offer all parents of children in our FS2 to Year 6 classes the opportunity to visit their child or children's classroom and share learning. This event will be held on the 14th February and we hope that you will be able to join us!

Parent Voice

Thank you to everyone who has already responded to my request in December for feedback about our school. If you haven't yet shared your thoughts, please can I encourage you to click this link to share your thoughts of Hornbill School to help me to plan ahead and hopefully make improvements: <https://forms.gle/AxtrCDzAMADVpDPX7> We will close the questionnaire on the 2nd February and I will share the results with you shortly after this date.

Celebrating Difference

As part of our on-going work to celebrate all of our differences, please see the end of this newsletter for information about Autism, located after the Upcoming Events section.

I would like to thank you all for your ongoing support for your children – they impress us every day with their positive attitudes and hard work. I hope that you all enjoy a wonderful week!

With warm regards,



Mrs C. Neal, Headteacher

UPCOMING EVENTS

January	
Friday 26 th January	Cross-country tournament Y 4 – 6 here
February	
Monday 5 th February	Yr 1 Trip to Rimba Garden Centre
Tuesday 5 th February	Parents Evenings 14.15hrs to 16.45hrs
Wednesday 6 th February	Parents Evenings 14.15hrs to 16.45hrs
Tuesday 6 th February	Safer Internet Day (for Information only)
Friday 9 th February	Random Act of Kindness Day
Monday 12 th February	100 Days of School Chinese New Year Celebration – letter to follow.
Wednesday 14 th February	Open Morning 08.00 hrs until 09.00 hrs
Thursday 15 th February	Indoor Athletics tournament Yr5 here
Thursday 22 nd and Friday 23 rd	Teacher training days – school closed to pupils
Wk Beginning 26 th February	Start of swimming for Years 4, 5 and 6 (FS2 will also continue with their weekly swimming session)
March	
Tuesday 5 th March	BJSL Football tournament Years 4-6 at ISB
Thursday 7 th March	World Book Day – letter to follow.
Monday 11 th – Friday 15 th March	British Science Week
Thursday 14 th March	Alice in Wonderland Performances
Friday 15 th March	Alice in Wonderland Performances
Wednesday 20 th March	12.45 hrs -13.45 hrs Traditional Afternoon Tea for Y3 Parents.
Monday 25 th March – Friday 5 th April	Easter Holiday
April	
All of April	Mathematics Awareness Month
Monday 8 th April	First day of term (staff and pupils)

Tuesday 30 th April	BJSL Swimming Gala Y4-6 at ISB
May	
Wednesday 8 th May	VE Day
Thursday 9 th May	Open Afternoon
Monday 13 th - Thursday 16 th May	Yr 6 SATS
Friday 24 th May	INSET Day
Monday 27 th – Friday 31 st May	Half Term
June	
Tuesday 4 th June	Parents Evenings 14.15hrs to 16.45hrs
Wednesday 5 th June	Parents Evenings 14.15hrs to 16.45hrs
Wk Beg. 10 th June	Phonics Screening Check
Tuesday 11 th June	BJSL Tag Rugby/ Netball Y 4-6
Wk Beg. 17 th June	Glastonbill Festival (Hornbill School 25 Year Anniversary)
Monday 17 th – Friday 21 st June	National Sports Week
Friday 21 st June	World Music Day
July	
Wk beginning Monday 1 st July	New Class/Teacher transition meet
Wednesday 3 rd July	New Teacher/Parent Pop In
Thursday 4 th July	Reports sent home
Monday 8 th to Thurs 11 th July	Leavers Assemblies and Graduation
Friday 12 th July	Last day of term



Celebrating Our Differences

Information Sheet 2.

As shared in the last newsletter, we are keen to support our children by recognising and celebrating our differences. Celebrating our differences can enable us to open our minds to new ideas and experiences. By being interested and open to the differences between us we can discover new ideas and ways of thinking as well as making new friends and experiencing different opportunities. The team here at Hornbill are keen to challenge stereotypes and educate our community to understand that our differences provide us with strength and should be celebrated. To support this, we now share information and hopefully support about a variety of difference subjects, from medical needs to learning needs. If you can think of any particular area that you would like to feature in future newsletters, please let me know!

Autism or ASD (Autistic Spectrum Disorder)

Autism affects the way people communicate and experience the world around them.

What is autism?

Autism usually appears in the early years of a child's life. It is complex and can affect a person's communication, relationships, social skills, and self-regulation.

Autism is a spectrum of developmental conditions. It is known and often referred to as a spectrum because each person's experience will vary a lot. Early intervention, therapies and education will help that person lead a life of choice and opportunity. The definition of autism has changed over the decades (and could change in future years as we understand more).

Every autistic person is different. It can be diagnosed at any age and affects people of all genders. Common symptoms of autism are:

- delayed or absent speech
- difficulty with listening, concentrating and understanding
- frequent repetition of words and phrases
- taking things literally
- difficulty sensing and interpreting people's feelings
- difficulty expressing feelings
- over or under sensitivity to sound, touch, taste, smell, light, pain, temperature, hunger or thirst
- rituals or repetitive behaviours
- disliking changes to routine
- over or under reacting to changes
- difficulty making friends and socialising

As a school, we are fortunate to work with many children who have a diagnosis of autism. Please don't hesitate to speak with us if you have any questions or would like to learn more. The pupils that we work with are fully included in all aspects of life here at Hornbill and this is something we are keen to promote and develop further.

What causes autism?

There is not one known cause for autism. It is something you are born with rather than something you catch or develop over time. It has been proven by researchers from Statens Serum Institut and the University of

Copenhagen in Denmark, and Stanford University School of Medicine in the US, that vaccines and certain types of foods do not cause autism. Vaccinating your child is important to protect them from other illnesses.



Can autism be cured and can autism go away?

Autism is a lifelong condition; it is something you are born with and is usually identified in early childhood. It cannot be 'cured'; if diagnosed early, education and where appropriate, therapy can help with the child's development and communication, so they can live a life full of freedom and opportunity.

Does autism run in families?

Autism can sometimes affect people in the same family but it is not known if this is coincidental or if autism can be inherited.

What are main characteristics of autism?

There are many different signs and indicators of autism in adults and children, which can often be mistaken for other conditions. It's important that if you suspect you, or someone you love has autism, then seeking a diagnosis could help with getting the support that is available.

Do boys and girls have autism?

Yes, both boys and girls can have autism. It is quite common that the signs of autism often manifest differently, are missed or diagnosed as another condition within girls. Autism in boys is more frequently recognised than autism in girls. This has led to the wide held belief that only boys have autism and not girls, which is in fact not true, and because of this, can sometimes make it harder for girls to receive the help and support they need.

Why are sensory activities important for autistic people?

Sensory activities help stimulate the brain and cognitive skills, develop social skills, and improve coordination and physical development. Some people are sensory seekers and others will avoid situations. Everyone's sensory needs are different. Some sensory activity is also used for relaxation and comfort.

What is masking?

Masking is a very common trait in autistic people, especially girls. Masking is where an autistic person will consciously or unconsciously try to hide certain behaviours. They may stop themselves flapping their hands or making a noise to fit in with societal norms. This can lead to people not getting the support they need. As a society we need to be more inclusive so that people can feel comfortable being themselves.

How can I help my child if I think they might be autistic – some useful suggestions:

Learning all you can about autism and getting involved in treatment will go a long way toward helping your child. Additionally, the following tips will make daily home life easier for both you and your child with ASD: **Be consistent.** Children with ASD have a hard time applying what they've learned in one setting (such as the therapist's office or school) to others, including the home. Creating consistency in your child's environment is the best way to reinforce learning.

It's also important to be consistent in the way you interact with your child and deal with challenging behaviours. Talk to all care givers for your child to ensure that reactions are consistent.

Stick to a shared, visual schedule. Autistic children tend to do best when they have a highly-structured schedule or routine. Again, this goes back to the consistency they both need and crave. Set up a schedule for

your child, with regular times for meals, therapy, school, and bedtime. Try to keep disruptions to this routine to a minimum. If there is an unavoidable schedule change, prepare your child for it in advance.



Reward good behaviour. Positive reinforcement can go a long way for all children, particularly those who may have ASD, so make an effort to “catch them doing something good.” Praise them when they act appropriately or learn a new skill, being very specific about what behaviour they're being praised for. Also look for other ways to reward them for good behaviour, such as giving them a sticker or letting them play with a favourite toy.

Create a home safety zone. Carve out a private space in your home where your child can relax, feel secure, and be safe. This will involve organizing and setting boundaries in ways your child can understand. Visual cues can be helpful (coloured tape marking areas that are off limits, labelling items in the house with pictures). You may also need to safety proof the house, particularly if your child is prone to tantrums or other self-injurious behaviours.

Finally, remember, autism is simply an identified need. No matter what traits of autism an individual may have, they will also have their own unique strengths and abilities. There are many famous people with autism spectrum disorder who have used their strengths and abilities to achieve success, fame, or to accomplish amazing things:

Famous People with Autism

- Leonardo da Vinci – Artist
- Jane Austen – Writer
- Vincent van Gogh – Artist
- Steven Spielberg – Director
- Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart – Musician
- Alfred Hitchcock – Director
- Thomas Edison – Inventor
- Alexander Graham Bell – Inventor
- Henry Ford – Inventor
- Bob Dylan – Musician
- Charles Darwin – Naturalist & Geologist
- Carl Jung – Psychiatrist & Psychotherapist
- Lionel Messi – Football Player
- Samuel Clemens – Writer
- Benjamin Franklin – Inventor
- George Orwell – Writer
- Ludwig van Beethoven – Musician
- Charles M. Schulz – Cartoonist