



Dear Parents/Carers,

It is hard to believe that we are rapidly approaching the end of another term here at school! It has disappeared so quickly and has certainly been a busy time! I would like to take this opportunity to publicly thank our incredible staff team.

This term we have seen the children work extremely hard and make excellent progress in their learning. It was fantastic to welcome so many of you to our Open Morning last month to share the children's learning and work – and again at the recent Parent Meeting afternoons. Thank you for your ongoing support for your children, regularly reading with them and supporting them with securing basic facts such as spellings and times tables – it really does make a huge difference to their ability to remember and apply their knowledge!

We have welcomed a number of external visitors to our school this term, including Mr Gary Margerison, who was Acting Headteacher prior to my joining the school. Mr Margerison continued to be very impressed by the work our children demonstrated, as well as their great manners and the excellent behaviour he observed in every year group. As always, I am extremely proud of them all.

School Council – Our elected School Councillors have been really pro-active this term. They have introduced the role of Playground Monitors, working with Mr Cunningham to help encourage play and ensure that we all look after the resources. We are delighted by their work and it is really helping our younger pupils. The School Council have also been sharing their classes views about how best to spend the incredible funds raised at Christmas time during our Jolly Holly Fayre. Sadly, the children have realised that we will need to raise more money to be able to buy another large piece of equipment, like our fort, for the playground but they are committed to continue with their efforts and in the meantime, have purchased new equipment for the school using the funds raised, which we are all looking forward to seeing in use once the (rather large) delivery of toys and equipment arrives.

Safety – Please can I urge parents to remind children of the importance of stopping, looking and listening before crossing a road. We have received reports of children simply stepping out onto road crossings without checking – and are fearful that a child could be injured. This is true of both younger children accompanied by adults, and older children travelling independently.

Again, whilst on duty yesterday morning, we were made aware of two very young children stepping onto the crossing in the car park at the back of the school ahead of the supervising adult, causing a car to stop suddenly. Thankfully the oncoming car driver was alert to the danger and stopped but this cannot be guaranteed and we need to help our children to recognise the risk.

Bikes on the School Site – Cycling and scooting to school is a great way for children living in the local area to travel to and from school (providing they are wearing a helmet). I have recently reminded our children that once they arrive at the school gates, it is important that they dismount from their bike and push it into (and out of school). This is because the school paths are often very congested and we also have quite a number of blind corners, which make it difficult to know if the pathway is clear. We would be very appreciative if parents could support us with this to help make arriving and leaving our school as safe as possible! We ask that children follow this rule, even if the paths are quiet, to prevent any confusion.

World Book Day – We were so impressed by the wonderful array of costumes worn on World Book Day! The children looked fabulous – thank you all!

World Book Day celebrates reading and we enjoyed many events here at school to promote reading with the children, including adults from across our community sharing their favourite books for a story time! I would like to thank Mrs Russell for organising this day, and all of the volunteers who supported it – it was a great success and was enjoyed by all.

New Starters – I would like to warmly welcome our new families to Hornbill School. Following the holiday, we will have new children joining our FS1 classes and it has been wonderful to welcome them, and their families, over the last week during their Welcome Meeting and Stay and Play session. I would also like to take this opportunity to wish those who are sadly leaving us every success and happiness for their next step and ask them to keep in touch with us here at school!

Alice In Wonderland – What a fantastic production! The children performed with every inch of their bodies, entertaining us from start to finish. They worked incredibly hard to prepare, learning their lines and supporting each other. Throughout the performances, they looked and sounded fantastic. Thank you to staff, friends and family for their support in preparing for the performances and to the children for sharing their talents and entertaining us throughout – it was quite brilliant!

Design Technology – A big thank you to our Year 3 parents who have been attending school to support our cookery! Yesterday, their hard work culminated in a fantastic afternoon tea party which I know the children thoroughly enjoyed. Thank you again for your support. Our Year 4 children will be attending the Cookhouse this week to make momos – I'm hoping they'll all be able to share cookery tips with me!

Parent Voice – A sincere thank you to everyone for their responses to our Parent Questionnaire. It has been really useful. The table below shares the results for our school:

Term Dates: To enable our school community to celebrate Kalaratri, part of the Dashain celebrations properly, we have amended our school calendar for academic year 2024/25. The non-pupil day that was scheduled to be held on Monday 7th April 2025, following the Easter holiday, has been moved to Friday 11th October 2024. This means that school will be closed to pupils on the 11th of October 2024 but will be open on the 7th of April 2025. The amended academic year dates are attached to this newsletter for your information.

We recognise that changes to year dates are extremely disruptive and apologise for any inconvenience caused. If you have already booked an event on the 7th of April 2025, please contact the school office before Friday 12th of April 2024 and I will authorise the absence.

Coffee Morning with SLT – We would like to invite parents to join us for a coffee and conversation to help us to understand what is working and what we can develop and improve upon. If you would like to join us to chat about your own experiences at Hornbill School, you are warmly invited to join us on Friday 12th April at 07.45 hrs (to fit around school drop off) to help us explore the responses to our recent Parent Questionnaire and address any questions or concerns.



Parent Questionnaire Results

Date of Survey: December 2023 – January 2024

1 response = 4%

Question	Strongly agree or agree percentage	Don't know/No experience	Strongly disagree/disagree
1. My child is happy at this school.	100%	0%	0%
2. My child feels safe at this school.	100%	0%	0%
3. The school makes sure its pupils are well behaved	92%	0%	8%
4. My child has been bullied and the school dealt with the bullying quickly and effectively.	16%	84%	0%
5. The school makes me aware of what my child will learn during the year.	96%	0%	4%
6. When I have raised concerns with the school they have been dealt with properly.	54%	42%	4%
8. The school has high expectations for my child.	67%	21%	12%
9. My child does well at this school.	83%	13%	4%
10. The school lets me know how my child is doing.	92%	4%	4%
11. There is a good range of subjects available to my child at this school.	76%	16%	8%
12. My child can take part in clubs and activities at this school.	96%	0%	4%
13. The school supports my child's wider personal development.	80%	16%	4%
14. I would recommend this school to another parent.	96%	0%	4%

1 response = 4%

Whilst a small number of parents completed the questionnaire, the response is really helpful and we would like to really focus our attention on addressing the three areas where more respondents feel we could do better (question 3, 8, and 11). To this end, we would like to invite parents to meet with members of the school's leadership team to understand what you feel could address these areas more satisfactorily and so will be holding a Coffee Morning...

With warm regards,



Mrs C. Neal, Headteacher



UPCOMING EVENTS



Last day of Term 2: Friday 22nd March – Finish time 12.00hrs (For pupils in FS2 to Year 6, pupils in FS1 will finish at the usual time of 10.45hrs).

School Closure Period: Monday 25th March until Friday 5th April.

First Day of Term 3: Monday 8th April.

Meet the SLT: Friday 12th April at 07.45 hrs

BJSL Swimming Gala (Yr 4-6): Tuesday 30th April

Year 6 SATs Week: Monday 13th until Thursday 16th May

School Closure Period (INSET Day – Staff Training) – Friday 24th May

School Closure Period (Half Term): Monday 27th until Friday 31st May



Celebrating Our Differences

Information Sheet 3.

This week, we would like to explore how to support your child with understanding that we are all different...

Every person is unique, and differences in children are worth celebrating! Children are observant and often notice differences—in others or in themselves.

Difference is what makes the world a beautiful and rich place. Celebrating this means embracing and valuing the differences that make each person special and unique. It also means acknowledging and appreciating differences between individuals and groups.

Here at Hornbill School, we believe that our differences should be celebrated not only because it is the right thing to do, but also because it has numerous benefits. It promotes inclusiveness, understanding, and tolerance. It helps individuals understand and appreciate different perspectives and cultures, leading to more open-mindedness and a sense of unity.

How do you help children talk about differences, and understand how to interact with others?

1. Model Inclusive Behaviour

Children learn best from observing the role models around them. They're always watching, listening, and learning. It's not always easy, but it's important to be the type of person you hope your child becomes.

Examine your personal beliefs and behaviours and ensure that you're promoting the same values you'd like your child to have.

Celebrate differences, use respectful language when talking about people from all backgrounds, and avoid reinforcing stereotypes. If you treat all people with kindness and respect, your child will too.

2. Build Self-Esteem and Empathy

To raise children who celebrate differences, work on fostering their self-esteem and empathy. Children with high self-esteem are more likely to be accepting of others. Rather than following the crowd, they'll stand up for what they believe is right.

Give your children opportunities to feel capable and competent. Show through both words and actions that they are loved and valued.

Empathy is the ability to notice the feelings of others and imagine how it feels to be in their position or to see from their perspective. It's a cognitive skill that can be taught and developed in children.

3. Be Prepared to Answer Questions

Children are naturally curious, and they want to learn about the world around them. It's common for children to ask questions when they encounter something new.

1. **Talk about it openly.** Don't avoid the questions. Doing so indicates that it's not okay to talk about diversity, which may suggest there is something uncomfortable or bad about being different.
2. **Ask them why they'd like to know** or what made them think of the question.
3. **Provide an honest answer** that is age appropriate.
4. **If you don't know the answer, don't be afraid to say so.** You can say, "I need to think about your question and tell you the answer later." Once you've gathered the information you need, go back to your child and say, "Let's talk about it."

4. Prepare for Various Scenarios

Your child refers to differences as "weird"...

Sometimes, your child's question might be about something they perceive as "weird." For example, your child might say, "Why do some people talk weirdly?"

Explain, "Well, they might be from somewhere else and have an accent. Or they could be speaking in a different language. That doesn't make them weird, just different." **Emphasize to your child that there is no "normal" and "weird" or "us" and "them."**

Your child uses inappropriate terms when discussing differences...

If your child uses inappropriate terms or language that is not socially acceptable in asking these questions, **gently correct them and provide a better alternative.**

Avoid judgement or reprimands. Your child wants to learn and is simply being inquisitive, not coming from a place of prejudice or cruelty.

Your child asks about differences in public...

Sometimes, our children also ask about differences in public. This can be uncomfortable, but children often don't understand social norms and are unaware they're being impolite.

Apologize for your child if necessary. Then **provide a simple and positive response** like, "Yes, the world is a very big place and not everyone looks or behaves like you. Our differences make the world more interesting."

When you're back in the car or at home, provide more in-depth information if needed. You should also **teach your child that asking questions about other people in public can be hurtful.** Say, "If you have a question, you can ask me later and we'll talk about it."

5. Expose Children to Diverse Experiences and People

Exposure to diverse experiences and people normalizes differences for children. It increases understanding and removes the confusion, fear, or "otherness" that often leads to prejudice. Through exposure and education, you can teach your children to celebrate the diversity that enriches our world.

6. Emphasize Similarities

While teaching children about differences, it's also important to emphasize similarities. Explain that although people are different, we all share the experience of being human.

We all want to connect with other people and be loved, we all have hopes and dreams, we all experience mistakes and triumphs, and we all feel the same emotions. As the researcher and storyteller Brené Brown says, “We are all made of strength and struggle.”

In addition, it’s not our backgrounds, appearances, or income that defines us. The way we **treat** others and the choices we make are far more important.

7. Read Books That Celebrate Differences

Sometimes, teaching children about differences is tricky. We aren’t always sure if we’re sending the right message or using the right words. Luckily, there are many children’s books written for this exact purpose. Here are just a few of them:

- *People by Peter Spier*: This children’s classic takes children around the world, learning about the differences that make each country and culture unique and special.
- *Two Is Enough* by Janna Matthies- A brilliant book for young children who live in a single parent family. Positive, sweet and beautiful illustrated.
- *It’s Okay to Be Different* by Todd Parr: In bright colours and silly scenes, this book delivers a message of acceptance, understanding, and self-confidence. “It’s okay to need some help. It’s okay to look different. It’s okay to talk about your feelings.”
- *Perfectly Norman – A Bright Feelings Book* by Tom Percival - An uplifting story about celebrating diversity and embracing what makes you you
- *Wonderfully Wired Brains: An Introduction to the World of Neurodiversity* by Louise Gooding: This is a child friendly non-fiction book which provides information as an inclusive children's guide to neurodiversity for those not in the know and to inspire children who are neurodivergent.

If you’re unsure how to start conversations about diversity or answer your child’s curious questions, these books are an excellent starting point.

Consider invisible differences.

Conditions like ADHD, autism spectrum disorders, asthma and dyslexia are just some examples of the many invisible differences or disabilities children may have. Remind children that not every difference can be seen, but children still may need some extra help.

Talk to a child’s parents.

If you have questions about how to make something accessible for a child, or how to talk to your child about another’s differences, it may be appropriate to talk to the child’s parent. If you are having trouble figuring out how to explain what works best for your child to others, you can look to support groups or a child’s healthcare provider for a way to explain their needs.

Remember: everyone has their own differences, and they are what make us unique!