

HMS Newsletter

Term: Autumn 2

Message from Head Teacher



Dear Parents and Carers

The Autumn Term at Hillingdon Manor School has been a busy one, filled with events and celebrations nearly every week! The pupils have worked tremendously hard and have shown real dedication and commitment to our wider school community events. These have included fundraising for charity days, helping to strengthen our practising of British Values through Pupil Voice election processes and a ceremony, completing 2-day hikes, to celebrating Black History Month and Diwali. That is just to name a few. It has been remarkable to see how pupils have engaged with the personal development events with such confidence.

I would also like to take a moment to reflect on the Behaviour and Attitudes area of our school from this term. I regularly monitor this area with the Senior Leadership Team, and I am pleased to say that despite this being what some consider to be the hardest term, due to the length of it and winter gifting us shorter periods of daylight, we have seen positive improvements across the school. Pupils are showing understanding around what is expected of them and are responding to staff holding them to account for their choices. I recognise the crucial part that parents and carers have played in this area. Without the home-school working link, we would not be seeing this significant improvement. This tells me that communication is strong, and our agreed approaches implemented back in January around regular home-school communications are now embedded. As we draw 2024 to a close, I think it is important we show reflective thoughts to the areas we have all worked together to drive improvement. On that note, I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to all parents and carers for the part they have played in this.

Finally, I want to take the opportunity to wish you all a restful break over the festive period. For those of you that are celebrating the festival, I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. For those of you that are going to take some downtime with the family, I hope you can get some well-deserved rest. Don't forget, our pupils are sensitive to loud noises, visual over-stimulation (*flashing Christmas lights*) and changes to their routines. All of which are natural factors of Christmas celebrations. Please consider planning in some regulation breaks for your child and if you are celebrating in the family home, consider making a designated quieter area for your child to use for their safe space. Recognising that this might be their way of relaxing can often defuse any moments of dysregulation. You know what is best for them!

I am really looking to continuing to work with you all in the New Year and as always, please do not hesitate to reach out to me if you need any support.

Best wishes

Grace



Events at HMS this term



Pupil voice election



Following an exhilarating period of campaigning and the highly anticipated Hillingdon Manor School's Polling Station Day, we were delighted to organise the Pupil Voice Election Ceremony. The event was graced by the presence of our local MP, Danny Beales, who not only attended but also played an integral role in hosting the ceremony.

Students were thrilled to meet him and displayed commendable respect throughout the proceedings. Danny's speech emphasised the value of tolerance and democracy, leaving an indelible mark on all attendees. We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who played a part in making this wonderful event a success! Congratulations to our newly elected Pupil Voice Committee - we eagerly await the positive impact you will have on the school in the coming year!

#BritishValues



Winter warmer



On the final day of term before the Christmas break, Hillingdon Manor School will organise its first-ever Winter Warmer Event. Students will celebrate the festive season with great enthusiasm, dancing their way into the holidays at our Christmas-themed disco. For those who prefer a more low-key activity, pupils will enjoy games within their form groups, fostering social communication and personal development skills. After the lively disco, students will meet in the school café to warm up with a cup of hot chocolate and indulge in a festive cookie. The day's festivities will conclude with a return to their form groups for a holiday-themed movie.



Guy Fawkes



Upon returning from half term, our school marked the occasion of Guy Fawkes Day with a memorable celebration.

Students gathered at forest school to engage in various activities, including cooking burgers over a campfire and learning about the historical events surrounding Guy Fawkes. In a symbolic gesture, they wrote down a personal wish and cast it into the fire.

All students had an enjoyable time partaking in the celebration, making it a truly special way to remember Guy Fawkes Day.



Children in Need



To support Children in Need this year, students participated by wearing their pyjamas and contributing a £1.00 donation. Moreover, we organised a cake sale which greatly added to our efforts, resulting in a total of £146.30 raised. We would like to extend our deepest gratitude to all parents who kindly provided cakes and made donations. Your contributions played a crucial role in making this a success.



Thank You

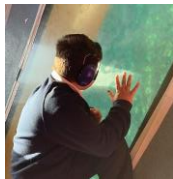


Out and about and more events

Thames valley adventure playground



- This half term, students across all key stages had the opportunity to visit Thames Valley Adventure Playground, where they experienced a variety of fun and engaging activities that promoted adventure, therapy, and education through play.
- Activities included outdoor play on various equipment, exploring the sensory room, enjoying the indoor soft play area, riding go-karts, and participating in games together.
- The students had an enjoyable and enriching experience.



Elf on the shelf



Since the start of December, classrooms across the school have been participating in the Elf on the Shelf challenge. Teachers and students have been capturing daily photographs of their elves' adventures throughout the classrooms and incorporating these into writing assignments and group discussions to enhance social communication skills.

The excitement has been enjoyable as students eagerly anticipate discovering the mischief their class elves have been up to each day. This creative and engaging activity has proven to be a delightful experience, fostering both educational growth and holiday cheer.



EVENTS

OFG Christmas card competition

- Outcome First Group recently organised a Christmas Card Competition, inviting students from various schools to design a card.
- The response was overwhelming, with 339 entries submitted from talented students across the group.
- We are proud to announce that one of our very own students had their design selected as one of the top 10 finalists! Following the selection of the top 10 designs, staff members from Outcome First Group were given the opportunity to vote for their favourites.
- Our student's design has won 2nd place in the competition!



Christmas Market day

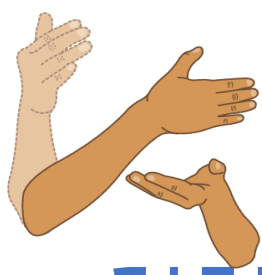


As the term drew to an end, students in all key stages eagerly participated in our first market day of the School year. Students exhibited all their strengths, through the production of many different items. Students demonstrated their Math, English and ICT skills to produce posters to advertise their items. The day was a great success with lots of yummy treats, singing and dancing and music supplied by Barrington.

As with all of these events, the success is also partly due to all of you who attend on the day. A huge Thank you, for your constant support and we look forward to seeing you at the next Market Day.



Thank You



Continuing on ...



Dates for the Diary



January 2025

- Monday 6th - Return to school
- Monday 27th - Focus week - Creative arts week
- Wednesday 29th - Chinese New Year

February 2025

- Monday 3rd - Focus Children's Mental Health Week
- Friday 7th - Pupil Progress day
- Tuesday 11th - Safer internet day
- Friday 14th - Valentine's day
- Monday 17th - Friday 21st February - Half Term

Have a magical Christmas



Tips for a Sensory-Friendly Holiday

1 Keep decorations limited and secured



Shiny, glittery decorations might be enticing to grab, shake, and sometimes eat. Twinkling lights and smells might also create an overload. Be mindful of what and where you add the "holiday spirit."

2 Keep to only unwrapping one gift at a time



The sound of gifts being unwrapped can become quite loud. So when many gifts are being ripped out and paper strewn all around, this can cause some anxiety. Keeping the unwrapping to one person at a time will help alleviate the frustrations and meltdowns.

3 Provide Social Cues for Receiving Gifts



Talk in advance to your child about reactions to gifts. Suggest a polite or fun way to respond so as not to offend or embarrass the giver. Practice saying "Thank you" when getting any gift. It's always a safe response.

4 Factor in Sensory Breaks



All this change in his/her routine can become overwhelming. Encourage sensory breaks before your child becomes frustrated. Be ok if your child would rather spend time in his/her safe place over hanging out with the large group in your home.

5 Outings can be Intense



Big displays, loud music, and large crowds all add up to a very overwhelming outing. Prepare your child before that shopping trip by explaining what might be different. Create a shopping list or scavenger hunt for them to stay focused. And don't expect to stay out too long!

6 Keep a Favorite Food Available



Make sure to have a favorite food on the menu during family gatherings and parties. Trying to force new foods or textures during a busy time might cause a regression in eating. Let them eat what and where they are comfortable eating, even if it's not at the table with family.



Happy New Year!



6 Ways to Have a Sensory-Friendly Firework

Show



Have your child develop expectations



Bring sensory tools



Select a quiet spot to watch



Entertain your child



Find sensory-friendly firework events



Change your expectations
Sensory Friendly Solutions

