

## Children's Mental Health Week 2024

This year, our focus for Children's Mental Health Week was empowering every child to understand that *their thoughts, feelings, and experiences are important and deserve to be heard*. Across the school, children explored the theme "My Voice Matters" through assemblies, class lessons, expressive activities and mindful movement.



Central to our work was engaging with Charlie Mackesy's beautiful book **The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse**, which provided a relatable narrative for discussing courage, empathy, belonging and the importance of speaking honestly about emotions. Through the characters' reflections and conversations, pupils explored different ways we can use our voices to support ourselves and others.

We are also deeply grateful to Mrs Jones, who delivered calming and uplifting Qi Gong workshops to every class. These sessions supported children in understanding how movement, breath and stillness can help regulate emotions and strengthen wellbeing.

### Class-by-Class Overview of Activities

#### Hedgehog Class (EYFS) – "Finding Our Special Voices"

Young learners explored the idea that everyone has a unique voice and that what they say and feel matters.

Activities included:

- Story-based emotion work using key scenes from the book
- Circle-time discussions about "What makes me special?"
- Feelings painting, where children expressed emotions through colour and shape
- A gentle Qi Gong session that helped them connect movement with feelings

These activities encouraged children to recognise their own emotions, share their ideas confidently, and celebrate their individuality.

#### Squirrel Class (Year 1/2 – KS1) – "Celebrating Differences"

In Key Stage 1, the focus was on understanding and valuing differences, and how this helps everyone feel seen and heard.

Children took part in:

- Exploring the characters from Mackesy's book and discussing how they support one another
- "What makes me special?" self-portraits, where pupils wrote positive statements about themselves
- Compliment circles, celebrating what makes their friends amazing
- Emotion sorting using images from the story to link characters with different feelings
- Their own Qi Gong workshop, connecting movement and calmness

This work supported pupils in building empathy, self-esteem and a secure sense of belonging.

#### Fox Class (Year 3/4 – Lower KS2) – "Understanding and Expressing Emotions"

Fox Class used the text to reflect more deeply on emotional expression and the importance of talking to trusted people.

Activities included:

- Character emotion maps, exploring how each character expresses and manages feelings
- Role-play scenarios based on lines from the book, practising how to talk about a worry or ask for help
- Group discussions on why communication supports mental wellbeing
- Collaborative art, where pupils illustrated positive messages inspired by the book

The Qi Gong workshop reinforced strategies for calming the body and mind, helping pupils develop tools for emotional regulation.

#### Owl Class (Year 5/6 – Upper KS2) – "Using Our Voices Wisely"

Older pupils explored how emotions can be complex and how speaking up can take courage but is essential for wellbeing.

They engaged in:

- Reflective journaling linked to quotes from the book
- Exploration of emotional vocabulary, identifying subtle differences between similar feelings
- Discussion of barriers to sharing emotions and strategies for overcoming them
- Small-group debates on themes such as kindness, bravery and vulnerability
- A mindful Qi Gong session that encouraged focus, grounding and self-awareness

This allowed pupils to deepen their understanding of mental health, empathy and the power of communication.

**GRATITUDE RESILIENCE OUTREACH WONDER TRUST HARMONY**

*'Let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him.'* Colossians 2:7

## Impact Across the School

### Children's Mental Health Week 2024:

- Strengthened pupils' emotional literacy, helping them identify and articulate their feelings
- Fostered a culture where every child feels heard, valued and respected
- Built connections across year groups through shared texts and shared language around feelings
- Encouraged children to recognise when they need support and how to seek it
- Introduced practical strategies - such as Qi Gong - to support calmness and regulation
- Provided a safe space for exploring big ideas such as kindness, courage, difference and belonging

The children engaged with thoughtfulness, honesty and enthusiasm, demonstrating a growing understanding of how their voices contribute to their wellbeing and the wellbeing of others.



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