

## Hornbill School's 6<sup>th</sup> Annual International Conference

19<sup>th</sup> February 2010



It is becoming a well established tradition that schools in Brunei come together each year to focus on a current issue of the day and celebrate the unique cultural experience that living and working in Borneo brings. The conference, organised and arranged by the Headteacher, Kathy Wood and staff from Hornbill School, is held each year and is considered a highly effective way to ensure all staff receive quality professional development and maintain up to date knowledge of the latest developments and thinking in Education on a national level. In recent years the conference has covered a range of challenging themes as diverse as 'Values Education', English as an additional language, and the '21<sup>st</sup> Century Curriculum'; Mike Waters, Jill Catlow, Sue Palmer and Neil Hawkes have over the years all accepted invitations to lead and offer prestigious high quality input to an event promoting true cultural cohesion with plenty of networking opportunities.

This year was no exception; on 19<sup>th</sup> February ninety delegates from twelve different agencies including nine schools from across the region and from Malaysia, working with five different curriculums, enjoyed enlightening sessions on the theme of 'Effective Communication and Effective Leadership'. Peter Batty from the University of Cumbria covered this ground superbly well reflecting on: What we want for our children; the importance of communication; and, why effective communication is relevant to the learners and leaders of tomorrow. This Peter skilfully linked to culture, trust and communication as key leadership characteristics.



Given that over half the audience speak English as a second or even third language the participation levels demonstrated understanding that was quite remarkable. Complex ideas based on current research were related to every day practical situations that all could relate to; Peter has a lovely way of personalising learning for his listeners that truly captivates and inspires. Participants all came at the day from different angles; from very diverse cultural mindsets and with varying previous understanding and perceptions of leadership and communication. The day left us with greater insight into our own and others' communication skills, raising awareness, placing us in control, providing options and encouraging flexibility.



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own and others' communication skills, raising awareness, placing us in control, providing options and encouraging flexibility.

The conference was a great success in meeting the needs and aspirations of all who took part. Networking together was, as always, an underlying theme and many new and already established partnerships and relationships flourished as a result of the day. As His Excellency the British High Commissioner to Brunei, Rob Fenn remarked in opening the conference, "This unique opportunity for those of us who work in Brunei to come together, to share this experience and to learn side by side has created yet another wonderful opportunity to raise cultural awareness and understanding. My thanks, and congratulations to all at Hornbill who have led the way for us all to come together".



Graham Marshall, Link Inspector Advisor