



# Polegate SCHOOL

## INSIDE THIS

GENERAL	1
SPORTS	2
CHRISTMAS SHOWS	3
DIARY DATES	4
STAFF	5
ATTENDANCE FIGURES	6

# HAPPY CHRISTMAS

As this is the final newsletter this year we would like to wish you all a very happy Christmas and New Year.

Another very busy term with a lot of performances, sporting events, parent consultation evenings, engineering challenges and so much more. We can't quite rest yet though....

We are looking forward to our final week which ends with our traditional staff panto! We cannot disclose which one yet, it is always a closely guarded secret. We have the Junior and Infant Christmas party and the Friday will be a mufti day, which if the children want to come dressed in their own (appropriate) clothes they contribute 50p. The money raised contributes towards the water coolers for the children.

## Reading

Whilst we have experienced great results with our reading we are not complacent and in school we continue to attach importance to reading. Please keep doing what you are doing at home, reading with and to your child. Research shows how developing a love of reading is important for children's life chances. According to the OECD, 'Finding ways to engage pupils in reading may be one of the most effective ways to leverage social change.' Analysis showed that students whose parents had the lowest occupational status but were highly engaged in reading obtained higher average reading scores than students whose parents had high or medium occupational status but who were poorly engaged in reading. Children who are read to every day at age three have a vocabulary at age five which is nearly two months more advanced than those who are not. A child taken to the library on a monthly basis from ages three to five is two and a half months ahead of an equivalent child at age five who did not visit the library so regularly. We know poor reading skills correlate heavily with lack of employment, lower wages and fewer opportunities. So the message is keep up that reading at home, it will make all the difference!

The writing journals will be making their way home again for the holidays.

We look forward to reading their wonderful entries in the New Year!



## **Orienteering**

On a cold, damp morning in November, Mr Clayton took 16 children from year 6 to Gildredge Park, Eastbourne for an inter-schools orienteering festival. Polegate were up against teams from Willingdon, Meridian, Hankham, Wallands and Rodmell, following a course set up by Brighton University PE students. Thanks to some great team work and some excellent individual efforts, Polegate emerged triumphant winners – with 3 of our pairs coming in the top three positions. Well done everyone, and especially Alfie Wait and Daniel Rose who came home first in a time of 7 minutes and 55 seconds!

## **Athletics**

24 children from year 5 recently represented Polegate at the Year 5/6 Aviva Indoor Athletics area qualifying competition at Hailsham Community College. Inside HCC's enormous sports hall, competitors took part in track and field events such as relays, paarlauf, soft javelin and long jump. The competition was fierce and although we didn't qualify to go through to the regional event later in the year, we put in a great effort! If the floor hadn't ambushed one of our runners we may even have won the fun relay! Thanks to all the parents who came to support us and particularly to Mrs Desbois who helped the group all afternoon.

## **Cross Country**

At the beginning of December, Year 3/4/5/6 children from our Running Club took part in the annual Area Cross Country Event at Eastbourne Rugby Club. The girls ran first around a course of approx. 1.5km. The going was quite heavy and although we had no finishers in the top ten, they all did Polegate proud. The boys race started at a very fast pace and again, everyone gave it their best efforts. Nathan Jenkins put in a great performance and came in 9<sup>th</sup>, which qualifies him for the Regional Final in Lewes on 11<sup>th</sup> February. Well done Nathan and good luck for the next one!

Thank you to Mrs Wilkinson and parent-helper Mrs Ward, without whom we would have had fewer children running. And a very special thanks to Mrs Jenkins who ran around the course alongside the girls AND the boys!!

# Christmas Shows

We are thrilled at the success of the Christmas Shows. Reception and Year 1 put on a total of 4 shows in school and with every performance they just got better and better! Our last shows were performed at the Hailsham Pavilion and even with the additional seats this venue provided both shows were sold out!

The children as always excelled and put on a brilliant show. The singing was out of this world! We could not be more proud of them. They deserve this success because both the children and the staff worked incredibly hard. We have had a flood of thanks this morning from both parents and grandparents which is lovely and means so much to all staff.

Having said that I would like to acknowledge and respond to some feedback we have received from parents. A total number of five parents have either spoken to me, other staff, or have written letters. They raised a number of concerns which I feel should be shared so that we can seek a wider range of perspectives.

As a school we never set out to deliberately upset or anger parents. We want to offer pupils the best experiences possible and despite the extra work it generates in school, we do try new things in the hope of constantly improving. I know that many of you are extremely grateful for the opportunities we provide and comment on this being a strength of the school. You will appreciate that as parents you do not always agree and so we will never be able to please everyone.

The points raised were:

Not being happy to pay to watch the performance, especially at an expensive time of year. *Unfortunately there is a cost for hiring another venue and the school is subsidising this for parents. We felt that it would be worth it for the opportunity and experience it provided children. We have refunded the cost of the second show for parents who had children in both. It is disappointing to hear that parents had sold their tickets for more than the £5 value.*

Not being happy that it was at a venue out of the Polegate area.

*We were looking for a quality venue with a stage that provided the opportunity to show film with comfortable seating and better views for all.*

Childcare for younger siblings was a problem.

*We attempted to solve this by offering a babysitting service in school, which we have 5 children attending. .*

The shows sold out and they had not bought tickets in time.

*I had requested parents were considerate in purchasing tickets to allow all families to see the show and gave over seven weeks' notice for booking. This was only a problem in the last 3 days for those that had left it until the last moment.*

I think it is important to explain why we tried something new.

After reflecting on our previous Christmas shows we simply cannot continue to offer the same number of shows with the growing number of families. We have attempted to address this whilst maintaining the same opportunities however it is clear that this has still had an impact on you as parents and this is not something we intended. We have listened to the feedback we have received and it will inform future decisions. Obviously we do not get it right for all parents all of the time but it is not for want of trying.

It is unusual for schools to be quite so ambitious and put on so many performances so in the future we will be reducing the performances at Christmas and this will be discussed with the 'Think Tank'- your parent group.

I would like to thank those parents that have taken a different viewpoint on this and also taken the time to write in:

*'I was just having a cup of tea, reading through the newsletter and came across the section about the 'babysitting' service. Although I do not need to use this service I just wanted to say how it touched me seeing this and how amazing it is that you would offer this for parents to enable them to see their other children in their school shows. It really shines through that you care about your pupils and their parents! I definitely couldn't ask for a better school for my daughter. I just wanted to share my thoughts.'*

**Last day of term** Friday 20th December

**6th January** Science week- 'we are scientists.'

**8th January**—PFA and Playscheme meeting at school at 7.30pm. All welcome.

**Last day of term** Thursday 13th February

**Friday 14th February**— INSET day

**Monday 24th February**— INSET day

**Monday 3rd March**— parent consultation

**Wednesday 5th March**— parent consultation

**Friday 21st March**—INSET day

**Last day of term** Friday 4th April

**Friday 9th May**— class photos

## **Test Dates**

**Year 1 Phonic Tests** take place during the week beginning the 16th June.

**Year 6 SATs** take place in the week beginning the 12th May

It is vital children are in school during these weeks.

**Be the first to hear the news.**

**Please follow us on twitter we now have 255 followers!**

## **Hailsham Pavilion— Thursday 12th December**



## STAFF NEWS

We will be welcoming Nikki Hadley back from her maternity leave on 1st February.

Nikki Hadley will be covering Mrs Barnard's maternity . Mrs Hadley has the benefit of knowing the class very well already and as she comes back to us just before Mrs Barnard leaves she will have the opportunity to work with Mrs Barnard for a couple of weeks.

Sarah Flaherty will be resuming her MSA role in January after being on maternity leave.

Mrs Granger one of our Teaching Assistants has now officially left the school. Maxine has been very ill for the last year and underwent back surgery. She has not made the recovery she has hoped and so she was forced to make a very difficult decision and decide that the role of TA would be too demanding.

We are very sorry to lose Maxine who has worked at the school for over 12 years.

If you knew Maxine and would like to pass on your best wishes we can pass this on to her.

Finally and yet again!

Yes, it's another baby on the way! Rebecca Chadwick is expecting a third addition to the family. Congratulations to the Chadwick family.



### School Uniform reminder

With the colder weather we have noticed an increase in the number of pupils wearing boots in school. This is not part of school uniform. They can wear them on the way to school but they should change into school shoes for the start of the school day.

# Attendance

Days off school add up to lost learning

175 NON SCHOOL DAYS A YEAR

175 days to spend on family time, visits, holidays, shopping, household jobs and other appointments

Our average last year was around  
**96%**

96%

97% is our target!

190 <b>SCHOOL DAYS IN EACH YEAR</b>  190 days for your child's education	10 days absence  180 <b>DAYS OF EDUCATION</b>	19 days absence  171 <b>DAYS OF EDUCATION</b>	29 days absence A term missed  161 <b>DAYS OF EDUCATION</b>	38 days absence  152 <b>DAYS OF EDUCATION</b>	47 days absence  143 <b>DAYS OF EDUCATION</b>
<b>100%</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>75%</b>
<b>Good</b> Best chance of success. Gets your child off to a flying start		<b>Worrying</b> Less chance of success. Makes it harder to make progress		<b>Serious Concern</b> Not fair on your child. Court action!	

## Class figures

RJ - 92%

RW - 93%

1A - 97%

1R - 96%

2BW - 96%

2B - 98%

3G - 98%

3K - 98%

4M - 96%

4EM - 98%

5T - 96%

5B - 95%

6T - 96%

6C - 98%

If your child's attendance drops below 85%. You should expect a visit from a member of the school's leadership team with work for your child to complete. We have unfortunately needed to do this quite recently. We have to refer any child with attendance below 85% to the Education Welfare Officer who will then provide support to improve attendance. Please contact the school for support before it gets to this stage.

Please compare your child's attendance to the average and look at the table above.