

news

September 2016



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WELCOME BACK!

Welcome back everyone. I hope you all had a tremendous holiday and for once we had some sun! We would like to give our new reception parents and pupils an especially warm welcome as they join the school.

The school takes pride in all of its achievements and last year was another remarkable year.

Pupils in year 2 and year 6 were the first to sit the new more rigorous tests which are still causing controversy in the news! The great news is that

Polegate School again achieved higher than the East Sussex and national average. This was a testament to staff's hard work, to the loyalty and continued support of all our families, and mostly to our pupils' enthusiasm and passion for learning.

Not only did year 6 take the SATs but they also undertook an official examination in debating!

Read
more
about this
inside

SCHOOL CHANGES!

With the extra class we have had a shuffle around of some classes. Year 1 have now moved to the old year 2 classes. 2M is in the new classroom next to the junior trim trail behind the swimming pool on the field. 2B is now in the year 1 classroom. Reception remains the same but with an extra class in year 1's old classroom.



HOME/SCHOOL JOURNALS

These were a massive hit last year and so we have invested in these once again but in response to feedback we have made some changes. They should be even better!

Please remind your child to look after these as we can only fund one per child as they cost £5 each. We will only have a limited number of spare copies as well and will need to charge for replacements. The children did brilliantly last year, hardly any were lost which is quite miraculous!



We continue with the reading raffle and have stocked up on exciting books for the children to choose if they win! We do expect all children to read every day and if they do and you have signed each day they are awarded with a raffle ticket from their class teacher. We draw the raffle each Friday in assembly.

WELCOME

A popular misconception is that teachers have 6 weeks off school!

I know that none of you are under this belief and I can certainly say this year that really is not the case! They have worked so hard making their classrooms look better than ever!

Just take a look at the long corridor as an example of just how busy they have been. Of course because of our extra class every teacher in the Infants also had to move classrooms! They have embraced this and really taken the opportunity to improve areas around the school and look at it with fresh eyes.

I think the school looks better than ever and I would like to thank them for the many hours they put in.

On Saturday, I attended the Research Educational Conference in London. I attended presentations by Nick Gibb (Minister of State for the Department of

Education) and Amanda Spielman (Chief Ofsted Inspector). It is increasingly important to keep abreast of the educational changes which we are currently facing and ensure we do our very best to prepare our staff, pupils and parents in order to sustain the high standards of achievement we have reached over the past few years.



Our first day with Mrs Hadley!

SUCCESS IN DEBATING FOR OUR YEAR 6!

Through the English Speaking Board our pupils were assessed by external examiners and were incredibly successful especially as we only introduced debating across the school last year!

English Speaking Board (ESB) is a national awarding organisation offering qualifications focused on communication skills at school, in college and throughout life. Their qualifications are recognised by OFQUAL, SQA and Qualifications Wales and are mapped to the relevant National Curriculum.

'ESB Level 1 Award in Debating gives pupils an opportunity to endorse their talent for debating and improve their skills. Debating is an essential life skill and an aid to develop soft skills such as critical thinking, teamwork and

leadership. All of ESB's schools qualifications are mapped to the UK National Curriculum and are proven to increase attainment and confidence in speaking and listening.'

Our year 6 pupils have left with an official qualification they can use on application forms, CVs and throughout life!

**80% achieved a merit
100% passed**

Not bad when you consider this is a qualification often taken at secondary level!

We will be offering the same opportunity to our current year 6 pupils!

FAREWELL TO YEAR 6!

Year 6 enjoyed a wonderful 'Festival Leavers' evening' at the DGH swimming pool. A wonderful end to their time at Polegate School. I would like to thank the PFA for organising this terrific event.



THANK YOU!

Thank you for the lovely gifts and cards we received at the end of the year.

We received some very special cards from parents and pupils- thank you it means so much to all of the staff.

A comment that brought tears to our eyes!

'We would like to say a massive thank you for making our son's year at Polegate such a successful and happy one. We took a huge gamble moving him for his final year. He has been so lucky and privileged to spend his last year at primary experiencing Polegate School life and ethos.'

After his first term at Polegate he said, 'I believe in myself at this school.' I think that says it all.

We feel so lucky that we have experienced, if only for one year, what a truly excellent school looks and feels like.'

WINNING HOUSE FOR 2015-2016

The winning house for last year was:

ORION
with 4811 house points!
Congratulations Orion!

.....
2nd place
Phoenix with 4535 points
.....

3rd place
Pegasus with 4231 points
.....

4th place
Hercules with 3545 points



Brilliant homework Olivia.
So many facts about Victorian Eastbourne!

INCLUSION QUALITY MARK

'Polegate School continues to go from strength to strength'

We never like to rest on our laurels and so once again put ourselves through the rigorous external assessment that is IQM!

This year we wanted to further build upon our success by being awarded the Inclusion Quality Mark award, Centre of Excellence for the third time!

We underwent a stringent audit from the Inclusion Quality Mark to once again achieve the Centre of Excellence status in July 2016.

The Centre of Excellence is awarded to a school which is:

- Committed to sustaining the Inclusion Quality Mark ethos through collaborative activities.
- Has a plan to sustain and develop inclusive internal practice.
- Has a good mechanism to share good practice between schools.
- Able to develop the capacity to share good inclusion practice across a broader cluster of schools.
- Willing to engage in classroom level research activity that explores inclusive practice.
- Able to contribute to the overall development aims of Inclusion Quality Mark, supporting the need for expertise or trialling practice.

The inspector noted that, 'Polegate School continues to go from strength to strength, as it continues its highly effective improvement journey. The staff are dedicated, hardworking, caring and professional. They are led by, the much respected, Headteacher and SLT who have inclusive principles at the heart of their vision for the

school. There is an upward trend in relation to results, and the school was in the top 1% nationally in 2015, for pupil progress.'

There were many strengths noted in the report,

'The Headteacher's vision for the school continues to provide an inspiration for the whole school community. She firmly believes that all children deserve the best, and that barriers can and should be broken down. The staff speak very highly of her commitment and that of the senior team, who all share the same determination. This in turn has ensured that all members of the team are motivated, and the school has an extremely professional, vibrant and industrious atmosphere. Inclusion therefore, continues to be a firmly held belief, from which all action research and planning takes place.'

The inspector also noted that,
'Inclusive teaching takes place within a culture where making mistakes and learning from them is an essential part of the culture. The children accept that sometimes they will find learning hard but are willing to persist, showing resilience. Teachers and support staff are always willing to respond to the children's misconceptions and encourage them to "have a go". This ethos is modelled and reinforced by the staff.'

Please do have a read of the report in full on our home page of Polegate School's website.

STARS OF THE YEAR

A very big well done to our Stars of the Year for 2015-2016.

They did not get a mention in the final newsletter of last year but they certainly deserve one now. I would like to congratulate them on their hard work. This is such a special achievement and as always I loved listening to the reasons why each child was selected by their teachers especially as the reasons were so varied. They were not the children who were necessarily the most confident or the most academic but they were the children who perhaps quietly 'got on', who behaved all the time and were exemplary role models for others. I was delighted to see their beaming smiles as they were announced!

During the assembly the most special thing for me, which says so much about our wonderful pupils, was that each and every child was so genuinely pleased for the 'Star'. You could feel their support and how proud they were of each other.



BEHAVIOUR IN POLEGATE SCHOOL

September is always a good time to revisit some of our policies, not only for our new parents but also a reminder for existing parents.

As a school we pride ourselves on the behaviour of our pupils and have very clear policies in place to encourage good behaviour. To view the policy in full have a look on our website at <http://polegateschool.co.uk/about-us/school-policies/> and click on our code of conduct policy.

OUR GOLDEN RULES IN THE CLASSROOM

These apply to our whole school: adults and children.

We strive to be the best we can be

We are gentle and keep everyone safe

We are friendly, kind and helpful

We respect property

We listen to people

We are honest

We wear our uniform with pride

We are polite. We say please and thank you and hold doors open.

We walk sensibly inside the school.

We treat people the way we want to be treated: with respect.

Set a good example

LEARNING

We promote good learning through our 'Learning without limits' bookmarks. On these the children need to collect 10 stickers to move up each rung of the ladder.

Once they reach the top they are rewarded with a 'Learning without Limits' certificate in assembly. The stickers are awarded for 'Good Learning'. After collecting 6 Learning without Limits certificates they achieve, bronze, then silver then gold progressively.

We have yet to have a pupil achieve a silver or gold! That is the challenge for the pupils this year!

We think it is vital that children can enjoy uninterrupted learning free from any distractions. At Polegate School we expect pupils to come to school to learn and teachers to come to school to teach. Both should be able to do so to the best of their ability. To support this we will follow a 'good to be green' system. Every child in the class has a named card which is green on one side and amber on the reverse which is kept in a pocket on display in class.

- After an incident of poor behaviour all teachers will follow these steps initially with a verbal warning no consequence for this. Clear explanation for child to ensure they understand.
- If behaviour continues the child is expected to turn their card to amber. This will result in the child being unable to achieve Star of the Week; in KS1 kept in for 5 minutes; in KS2 kept in for 10 minutes. The incident is recorded.
- If continued the child is expected to place a red consequence card in their pocket. At this point they are referred to a member of SLT to complete work, discuss behaviour...

- If it continues they will place a Time Out card in their pocket.
- If your child is sent to Time Out you will receive a letter home informing you why. If your child is repeatedly receiving warnings you will be notified by the class teacher so that together we can work together to prevent poor behaviour escalating.

Our policy is based on rewards and we have a number of systems in place to encourage children with learning and behaviour. Learning without limits certificates awarded for achievements in learning, House points which are awarded for good behaviour. Praise Postcards- for extra special work your child may come home with a postcard and then of course there is Star of the Week.

Star of the Week is awarded to children who consistently try their best and who behave in a kind and thoughtful manner, following all school rules and who stand out for a particular reason that week. Teachers nominate a child each week. They then take home a certificate after a special assembly and have their name recorded in the 'Star of the Week' book which is on display.

We involved children in deciding the criteria for Star of the Week and so through school council they decided that a child should show and maintain good behaviour for a term, attend school regularly and they were very clear that it should not be an award that all children in a class automatically get. The children love this award and value it highly!

FREE SCHOOL MEALS

As you are probably aware all Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils are entitled to a free school meal.

If you are also in receipt of benefits you will still need to complete an application form as this will support the funding the school receives. For every child that is entitled to free school meals the school receives £1300. This allows us to invest in a wide range of initiatives that the school budget, on its own, just wouldn't support. You can view the Pupil Premium report on our website which explains how

we have spent this money. Obviously with every Infant now automatically getting a free meal the incentive may not be there to register on an application form. I hope that parents would still take the time to register knowing that the school receives extra funding. For every new application form processed we are offering a free school uniform set to the value of £31.50).

MONEY!

I know only too well the pain that is felt when we ask you for money as a school! The amount I have paid for my children in their time at Polegate seems small in comparison to secondary.

My daughter is just starting secondary school and before she has even started we have been asked for a voluntary contribution of £65! No explanation of what this is for. I only mention this because I know that some of you find it difficult when we make requests but every time we do I want you to be fully informed and we do break down the costs in full and explain in detail why and what for. In this current climate, with budget cuts, all schools need support from families.

It is highly unlikely that we will be able to maintain the pool over the coming years if the support from parents does not increase. Our swimming pool is a luxury.

I know that it does not make sense to many parents that we have to legally ask for 'voluntary contributions' when actually we are expecting every parent to pay! It does seem bizarre I know! The law requires all schools to only ask for voluntary contributions, this is true for all trips and expenses. We are allowed however to cancel trips if we receive insufficient funds.

Following a discussion with a parent at the end of the term it was suggested that we break down the costs for the year in September. She felt this may make it easier for parents to see that over a year we are not asking for huge amounts and also allow parents the chance to budget for expenses. I am more than happy to try anything if it makes things better/easier for you!

Each year group is going to try to total all the costs for trips, swimming, mufti etc. in their newsletters this term.

Please give me feedback on this suggestion!

There is a disclaimer to this:

There may be occasions when we have the opportunity to take part in something special which cannot be planned for and I would hate for the children to miss out so it may be some expenses will still occur.

Contributions to the pool will be maintained at £10 per pupil. If you cannot afford this then as always we are grateful for any amount. It helps me to demonstrate to the governors that you value the pool and want to keep it going. We really do need the majority of parents to show their support!

You can pay this now, in instalments or during the summer term.

Contributions for Swimming in summary 280 children out of 432 paid for swimming.

GOVERNOR CORNER

Welcome back all parents and carers and a very warm welcome to all of you that are new to Polegate School. In this section of the newsletter we, as Governors, hope to keep you updated with relevant information and news from us.

A very well done to Polegate school for the great success of last year's year 6s who achieved amazing results and now place us in the top 25% of schools nationally. Their progress by far exceeded that of other children in the country. As governors we would like to thank the staff for their hard work and thank you as parents for supporting them.

In this first newsletter we want to introduce ourselves and explain the role we carry out in school.

Governing Bodies represent all parts of the community: Parents, Teachers and Support Staff, Community Governors who represent local organisations and businesses, and

some are appointed by the Children's Services Department. We are all volunteers, but it is very satisfying to know that we are doing something worthwhile for the children.

The Governing Body at Polegate is committed to doing all that it can to ensure that children here get the very best. Governors are often referred to as "critical friends", and our role is to support and question on all aspects of school life. We are involved in recruiting staff when the need arises.

We also keep an eye on the school budget, the state of the building, and attendance & welfare as well as, most importantly, the curriculum.

If you want to talk to one of us and if you are unable to see us in the playground, please contact Kerry in the office who will pass on to us any questions or suggestions you may have.

Who we are:

Miranda Thorpe (Chair)	Parent
Suzy Donovan	parent
Jan Gough	Local Authority
James Martin	Parent
Sue Heather	Teaching Asst
Nicole Franklyn	Parent
Angela Snell	Local community
Martin Falkner	Local community

PARENT CONSULTATION EVENINGS

Please note that the new headteacher of Willingdon Secondary School, Miss Beer, is going to be in school during our parent consultation evenings.

Please do take the opportunity to say hello to her in the hall. The governors and PFA will also be providing refreshments in the hall and if you could fill in Parent view, the Ofsted questionnaire online, while you are drinking your coffee then even better!

We will be holding a draw for a prize for every survey completed over these two evenings.



BUILDING WORK

Forever the optimist, I had hoped that when everyone arrived back at school in September the building work that county commissioned would have all been finished! I should have known better!

Despite numerous meetings during the summer period the Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) was not approved until the final week of the holidays. Sports Council England and local planning could not reach agreement but I am delighted to say it has now been approved and work has started. It should be finished by the end of the month and the children will have a wonderful sports area to use.

The canopy over reception is to be finished at the weekend and as a result of the new position of the year 2 mobile I have managed to secure a new path, kindly funded by county, from the mobile to the gate by the Iron Age Hut.

2M love their new classroom! This is great news and I already have teachers fighting over who will be in there next.

I hope everything has settled regarding where Infant children enter school and leave school at the end of the day. It feels as if it has to me and I have made a point of being there at the start and end of the day.

Thank you to those parents that contacted me regarding their concerns. As a result we have made some changes. Please bear with us! I have had to make changes that I would not have needed to make if we weren't taking the additional class and we can't always anticipate how things will work when we have the children in so I appreciate your patience and understanding.

Year 1 historically used to be where they are now. I moved them 5 years ago so they would be closer to reception and improve transition. Unfortunately this is a sacrifice we had to make in order to ensure that no children are disadvantaged in their learning. We wanted to keep the year 1 classes together and they have a wonderful shared area now. We felt this outweighed the walk past the swimming pool. Obviously reception needed to be

close to each other. As soon as we are able year 1 will revert back to their old classroom next to reception. I wanted to explain some of our thinking to you as sometimes things are not as easy or simple as they first may seem.



The MUGA is underway

OUR NEW STAFF

With the transfer window closed we have secured four new signings!

All for less than the record £52 million spent by Arsenal on Lucas Perez and Shkodran Mustafi!
Although I am sure they are worth just as much!

Joining team Polegate we have:



Alice Nicholls - Year 1

Since having an amazing time getting to know the lovely children and staff at Polegate, whilst on placement as a student teacher, I know just what a great school it is! I cannot wait to start the exciting and rewarding life of a teacher in September and have my very own Year 1 class for the first time. When I am not teaching I also enjoy travelling, badminton and spending time with my family and friends.



Alice Nicholls - Year 2

I am very excited to be joining the Polegate school team this year, starting my adventure as a teacher! I grew up in Eastbourne and I am just about to finish my last year at University studying Primary Education. When I'm not in school, I love to dance and perform in various shows throughout the year. I also love being outside as much as possible and travelling to new places.



Liz Oram - Year 6

I am so excited to be teaching at Polegate school from September. I qualified as a teacher in 2008 after having a career in law; I can honestly say that I have never looked back! I love teaching and relish every challenge that it brings. Outside of school, I have a passion for Aerial Hoop and have even got involved in a performance or two. When not in the hoop, I enjoy walking my dog, spending time with my family and going to Elvis tribute concerts!



Leanne Walters - Year 3

One more to come!

We have one appointment left to make and so will be advertising this over the next term. If you know of any amazing, enthusiastic teachers please send them our way!

DIARY DATES

Friday 14th October
Firework Night

Tuesday 18th October
'Our Wonderful Work'

Friday 21st October
Last day of term 1

Monday 31st October
Start of term 2

Monday 7th November
Parent Consultations

Wednesday 9th November
Parent Consultations

Wednesday 16th November
10am new parent meeting
Reception 2017

Wednesday 23rd November
5.30pm new parent meeting
Reception 2017

Friday 2nd December
Mufti day

Friday 2nd December
Christmas Fayre

Friday 16th December
'Our Wonderful Work' 3.30pm

Tuesday 20th December
Last day of term 2

Wednesday 21st December
INSET day

OUR NEW PREFECT TEAM

Congratulations to our new Heads and Deputies. Yes you are seeing double. We have two head boys this year!



Introducing our new Prefect team

100% attendance!

A small but very healthy group of children achieved 100% attendance last year.

Good attendance remains vital if your child is going to do their best. We still have gaps between some groups of our children (FSM and SEN) and all

others. It really does disadvantage them if they are not in school.

We will continue to reward those classes with the highest attendance each term and those children who achieve 100% each term.

Whole school attendance for the school year 2015 – 2016 was 96%

FSM 94%

SEN 94%



Diary Dates

**Friday
14th OCTOBER
FIREWORK
NIGHT**

Archive



You can read all the previous newsletters on our website.

twitter

**Be the first to hear the news.
Follow us on twitter.
We now have 665 followers!**



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Feedback

We'd love to hear your feedback and any new ideas you have. Please send us your thoughts via the contact us page on the school website:

www.polegateschool.co.uk

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