

# news

January 2017



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# HAPPY NEW YEAR

**Happy New Year everyone and welcome back! It seems a very long time ago now! I'm sure it wasn't restful but I really hope you all had a marvellous holiday.**

**The term has begun for the children with a range of 'stunning starts' across the school. We aim to start each topic with an inspirational hook for the children and here is just a taste of some of the experiences!**

I hope your child came home and shared some of the magic with you.

As always the teachers and teaching assistants have worked hard to make the environments inviting for the children. Every term we push ourselves to see just how creative and imaginative we can all be. It is getting quite competitive now and just part of what makes our school so special! You are very welcome to come in and take a look for yourselves!

**Read  
more  
inside**

# YEAR 1 STUNNING START

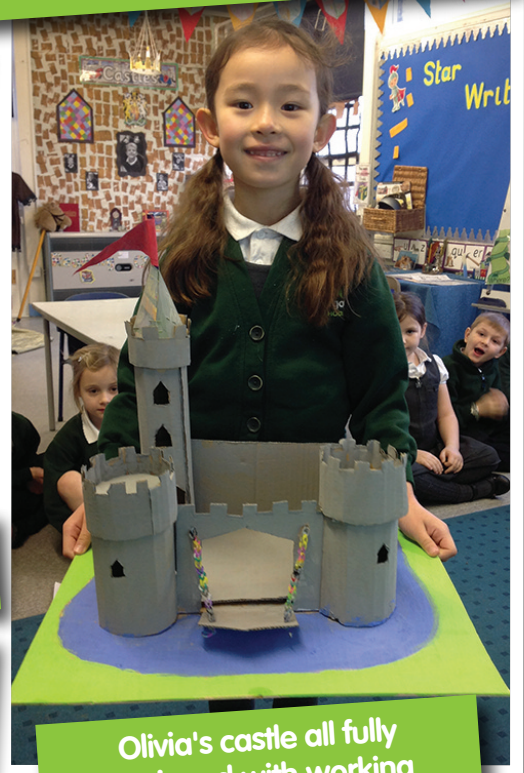
**On year 1's first day back at school they found a peculiar egg in the tree!**

For 3 nights and 3 days they kept it in the warmth of their classrooms when suddenly it started to rumble! Something had hatched!

It was a dragon! Now year 1 are on a mission to teach their dragon dragony ways!



**Michael made magical biscuits fit for a king or queen- and 1A too!**



**Olivia's castle all fully equipped with working drawbridge and a moat!**



## A Christmas wedding!

**Mrs Perkins returns to school as Mrs Burke following her wedding over the Christmas holiday. Big congratulations to Mr and Mrs Burke and we all wish them lots of happiness!**



## SCHOOL PANTOMIME



**Well, the Devonshire Park Theatre had some competition this year! We also performed Snow White on the last day of term to a very excited audience!**



# SCHOOL CROSSING PATROL

We were due to have a new 'lollipop lady' start however since then this application has been withdrawn.

**Does this position interest you?**

It is so important to us that we have somebody to help the children cross the road safely near school. Our last lollipop lady is really missed!



## URGENTLY REQUIRED

**We are urgently seeking to recruit a School Crossing Patrol for Oakleaf Drive.**

We are looking for candidates over 18 years of age, either a single applicant or 2 applicants on a job-share basis. Training and equipment will be provided by East Sussex County Council, in order for you to help local children cross the road safely. Working hours are from 08:30 to 09:00 in the mornings and from 15:10 to 15:40 in the afternoons from Monday to Friday during term-time. The pay is £7.58 per hour.

There must be someone in the local community that is able to help with this very important task, parents, grandparents, other family members or friends etc.



## CAN YOU HELP?

If you are interested, or know of anyone who would be suitable for this position, please contact Gillian Todd (Area Supervisor) on 07803 899215, or Darren Dowd (Senior Supervisor) on 01273 482293.

## LOVELY EMAIL

In the final week of term I received an email full of praise for one of our teachers. I would like to share the comments with you without naming the teacher concerned (she wouldn't thank me for embarrassing her!).

"I just wanted to send a quick email to say how impressed and grateful we are for the support our child's class teacher has given her. The extra time, effort and commitment that went into this and to supporting our daughter to do well is brilliant. It is lovely to see how much each child (in particular ours this time), means and the desire from staff for them to achieve well.

Such a fantastic first two terms in her new class! She loves school and being part of her class."

I know how committed all staff are at Polegate, they really do 'go the extra mile' but I can't tell you how much this means to staff when a parent takes the time to write.

# A WILD START FOR YEAR 5

Last week Y5's stunning start involved all kinds of creatures.



## SEVERE WEATHER

As many of you already know we will always try our hardest to stay open as a school.

The last time we were forced to close was over 8 years ago! We will always update you on Twitter and you can register for future alerts by clicking the link below

[www.eastsussex.gov.uk/educationandlearning/schools/schoolclosurealerts/](http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/educationandlearning/schools/schoolclosurealerts/)

## WILLINGDON SCHOOL VACANCY

### Senior Midday Supervisor Assistants

**Required for 1.0 hours a day – 5.0 hours per week; term-time only**

### Single Status grade 2

We are looking to recruit a bank of enthusiastic and flexible staff to join our lunchtime team. The successful candidates will work during the lunchtime period as detailed in the job description and person specification,

and the role involves the supervision of our students around the school site. We need individuals who are flexible, patient, able to work on their own initiative and able to communicate well but most of all, enjoy working with young people.

For further information please see the school's website

[www.willingdonschool.org.uk](http://www.willingdonschool.org.uk)  
or contact Laura Goring on  
[lgoring@willingdonschool.org.uk](mailto:lgoring@willingdonschool.org.uk)

## TALENTED MUSICIANS

**Gethin is continuing his passion for music and recently sat his grade 3 piano exam. He received a distinction (138 out of 150) which is amazing and he is quite rightly happy.**

He also achieved excellent results in his grade 2 music theory (85 out of 100 - a merit) and grade 2 trumpet (127 out of 150 - a merit).

We also enjoyed our recently formed orchestra perform during our last star

of the week assembly. As a group they have not been practising for all that long but did a tremendous job under the guidance of Mrs Budden! Looking forward to hearing you again very soon!



# CHLOE WINS NATIONAL COMPETITION!

**We were all thrilled to discover that Chloe Jones (Year 5) was awarded first place in the English Speaking board's writing competition!**

This was a creative writing competition held in the lead up to Christmas. Schools and centres across the UK and from around the world took part! Entrants were asked to capture the essence of winter in their short stories, poems or play scripts.

The judges felt Chloe did an especially good job of capturing the essence of the winter season in her poem. Very impressive Chloe especially considering you were up against secondary aged children as well.

Chloe will be awarded with a £100 online book voucher in the New Year!

I'm so proud of all the children that took part in this competition and our winning entry reflects the quality of writing that the children in school produce.



**Chloe Jones - Year 5**

## **My Winter Season by Chloe Jones - Year 5**

One morning I awoke only to see  
A white blanket of snow glaring at me  
As I shot downstairs I was eager to play  
Out in the winter wonderland I wanted to stay  
The sunshine shimmered down on the snow  
It glistened, it sparkled, it twinkled, it glowed  
The cold air biting at my cheeks making them sting  
You could see my breath in the air like smoke of a dragon breathing  
After making a snowman and having a snowball fight  
We decided it was time to come out from the freezing cold and settle for the night  
Teeth chattering, rosy cheeks as we sat by the roaring, warming fire  
And watched the jagged icicles drip and melt outside on the wire  
Melting marshmallows on the crackling fire embers  
Drinking hot chocolate with my family members  
What a wonderful day we all had  
The snow is now dissolving and defrosting  
Goodbye winter wonderland, how very very sad!

## **Here is Chloe's winning poem**

Here are some of our other entries for you to read:

#### Winter by Poppy Gent - Year 4

Wind moans and groans as the sun snores fast asleep in the moonlight

Inside the pillows of snow, the children lay, refusing to ever go away

No-one gets to sleep, nor close their eyes, dreaming of sitting on santa's thighs

Think this Christmas of children that can't celebrate the joy and fun, so make sure you include everyone

Ever-lasting laughter and games, now smile, cheer, Christmas Eve is here

Reindeer flying in the sky, sitting beside the chimney waiting for santa to collect the mince pie

#### A Winter Poem by Liam Harris - Year 5

Leaves falling everywhere  
Rain falling on the frosty grass  
Trees falling on the snowy floors  
Cloud filling the night sky  
Christmas is coming, beware

Falling on ice isn't nice  
Come in from the ice rink  
and get a nice hot drink  
Cars will slide  
And my sledge will glide  
When the snow is fluffy  
And my nose gets all stuffy

Don't be late  
We're going to skate  
My face might freeze  
In this winter breeze  
Snow will blow  
And drifts will glow  
When the world is all white  
Mr Jack Frost will bite

#### Winter Poem by Jasmin Jose - Year 5

A white blanket covered the lands  
Icicles hung like crooked hands  
Snowflakes danced in the yard  
Wind howling very hard  
Christmas trees  
Towering me  
Santa with his gift  
Came in swift  
Lanterns light  
Snow a very bright sight  
In the dark blue sky  
Twinkling stars lie  
The wait was over  
Christmas gates flung open  
Merry Christmas!

#### The Winter Poem by Ben Board - Year 5

Sitting by the crackling fire  
I see snowflakes falling like stars  
The cold winter sunlight trickling  
through the immense dark clouds  
Through the window I see children  
playing in the snow  
Building snowmen tall and short  
While I am drinking hot tea.

#### Christmas by Lucas Perkins - Year 4

Cold snow crunches underfoot  
Howling wind blows the trees fearsomely  
Rudolph's bells jingle on the square rooftop  
Inside the family bake cookies for Santa  
Stockings placed next to the chimney for Santa to fill  
Tinsel on the Christmas tree glitters  
Mrs Claus says Merry Christmas as Santa jingles away  
A sleigh filled with presents for everyone on Christmas day  
Santa's famous words, ho, ho, ho

#### Winter by Alyssa Hatch - Year 5

The icicles hung like jagged teeth whilst the holly wreath gleamed in the sunlight. It was Christmas Day. Everyone was happy and joyful. Under the Christmas tree sat loads of presents waiting for young Peter to rip off the wrapping paper to see the surprise inside. Peter loved Christmas. He loved presents, the Christmas dinner, the crackers, the joy and the fun.

But this Christmas was different. It was the first one he'd spent with his grandparents. When he got to his grandparent's house he gasped in amazement. The Christmas decorations were amazing! Peter liked all the snowflake lights and the fairy lights, but best of all there was a big Santa holding a present emblazoned with the words

"Peter's Present". He couldn't believe it! His mum didn't do that at Christmas! Would this be his best Christmas?

Peter went in. His grandparents were waiting for him. They welcomed him with a big hug. Oh boy, they'd had a lot of preparing to do!

Before long, Peter was opening the presents. Once he had opened the little presents, he moved onto the big present. What could it be? He thought, puzzled. He ripped it open...

It was a wooden sledge! It was made by his grandpa, he was very skilled! Fortunately, Peter's grandparents lived by a hill so he could sledge down the hill. Plus, he'd never used a sledge before - how exciting!

Yes, Peter was really looking forward to next year's Christmas!

# ACTIVE KIDS IS BACK!

Get ready for action...

## Active Kids launches on 25 January

We're back again, with another chance to help the kids at your school get active with some new cooking and sports equipment, and experiences. With your support collecting Active Kids vouchers we'll bring a smile to thousands of kids and help them to eat well, move well and live well.

### How to make a stir with your voucher collection

Get involved. The pack includes everything you need to start collecting, like banners, posters, a voucher collection box and the action-packed Active Kids 2017 catalogue. You can also head to [activekids.sainsburys.co.uk](http://activekids.sainsburys.co.uk) where you'll find a handy Digital Toolkit filled with ideas to help drum up as much support as possible – like e-newsletters, emails and social media tips.

The main aim is to get as many people as possible collecting vouchers for you from Sainsbury's from 25 January 2017. And to do this they'll need to understand the benefits of Active Kids and know how they can collect vouchers.

### 3 ways to collect...



#### Sainsbury's Local

In Sainsbury's Local stores you'll get one voucher for every £5 you spend.

#### Sainsbury's Supermarkets

Every time you shop in store you'll be given one voucher for every £10 you spend at the till.

#### Online at [sainsburys.co.uk](http://sainsburys.co.uk)

You'll still receive the equivalent of one voucher for every £10 you spend. But they'll all be printed on one piece of paper up to a maximum value of 50 vouchers – so make sure you keep it safe.

(continued overleaf...)



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**Active Kids 2017**  
Eat well • Move well • Live well



**Sainsbury's**

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# PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE SUMMARY

**It is our strong belief that working closely with parents is vital to the success of our school. We need you and your thoughts and opinions matter to us!**

We engage with parents in the widest possible variety of ways including: the Think Tank, parents' evenings, workshops, PFA, home/school folders, to name but a few. As Polegate has a commitment to continuous self review and improvement we also send out a questionnaire. Whilst we encourage you to complete the Ofsted Parentview survey we also want to seek more detailed and specific responses from you.

## **The purposes of this questionnaire were:**

- To find out what you think of Polegate school now.
- To find out if we can improve things further for the benefit of all pupils and parents at Polegate.

I was really reassured by the responses overall. I would really urge any parent that has any concerns to come in and have a chat with us. We really are open to suggestions and will always listen. We may not always agree but we need to have conversations about the issues that you feel strongly about. I was worried that some parents mentioned very specific matters relating to their child individually and may not have approached the school.

**Please do book an appointment with either the class teacher or myself.**

## **When asked what the 3 special features of Polegate the general themes were:**

- Exciting curriculum topics/learning
- Lots of extra curricula activities and opportunities
- Swimming pool
- Quality of teaching and fantastic staff
- Variety of teaching resources
- Teaching children to respect diversity
- Strong management
- Puts the children at the heart of everything it does.
- positive attitude; children come first; widens children's horizons
- friendly, safe, not too big
- The learning ladders system. Learning without limits vision.
- The emphasis placed on reading and learning at home.
- feels like home - a real family
- safe and happy children
- Challenges bright children and keeps them motivated
- Varied and imaginative activities and opportunities for the children both in and out of school (Forest School, basketball / after school clubs)
- Excellent after school club until 6pm to suit working parents
- Bright children are challenged and encouraged to push themselves which keeps them well motivated.
- Excellent activities opportunities both in and out of school (drama, art club, choir, badminton, netball,

orienteeing, French market, Hindleap Warren, school trips etc).

- Muga, swimming pool and use of technology.
- I feel the staff and especially the head and deputy head are very approachable, they regularly make the effort to be available in the playground in the mornings for parents to talk to. They are also very well known to the children. I feel this is very important and I myself have been impressed with their commitment to listening to parents concerns and being very open to constructive feedback.
- The dedication of the staff.
- The amazing and exciting way you bring learning to life, with experiences like the John Young workshop.
- Congress show
- encouraged to read for fun and learning
- understanding staff members and helpful with any needs
- Excellent communication between teachers & parents





# Parent Questionnaire 2016

# Results

## Q1 - My child is happy at school

strongly agree	75
agree	21.5
disagree	1.4
strongly disagree	0.7
don't know	1.4

## Q2 - The school keeps my child safe

strongly agree	76.8
agree	22.5
disagree	0.7
strongly disagree	0
don't know	0

## Q3 - My child likes the curriculum

strongly agree	63.4
agree	32.4
disagree	0.7
strongly disagree	0
don't know	3.5

## Q4 - The school provides opportunities beyond the National Curriculum ie Congress, Debate, Speakers...

strongly agree	64.5
agree	24.8
disagree	0.7
strongly disagree	0
don't know	9.9

## Q5 - The school has an exciting and engaging environment

strongly agree	81.6
agree	18.4
disagree	0
strongly disagree	0
don't know	0

## Q6 - My child is making good progress

strongly agree	68.8
agree	27.7
disagree	2.8
strongly disagree	0.7
don't know	0

## Q7 - Pupils are encouraged to have high standards of behaviour

strongly agree	78
agree	19.9
disagree	0.7
strongly disagree	0
don't know	1.4

## Q8 - Teaching is good

strongly agree	80.1
agree	19.9
disagree	0
strongly disagree	0
don't know	0

## Q9 - I am kept informed of my child's progress

strongly agree	63.8
agree	32.6
disagree	3.5
strongly disagree	0
don't know	0

## Q10 - I feel comfortable approaching the school with questions or problems

strongly agree	72.3
agree	24.8
disagree	2.8
strongly disagree	0
don't know	0

## Q11 The school helps my child become mature and take on responsibility

strongly agree	70.2
agree	25.5
disagree	1.4
strongly disagree	0
don't know	2.8

## Q12 - My child enjoys reading and reads for pleasure

strongly agree	66.7
agree	28.4
disagree	3.5
strongly disagree	1.4
don't know	0

## Q13 - There is a good range of books on offer

strongly agree	50.4
agree	31.9
disagree	9.9
strongly disagree	1.4
don't know	6.4

## Q14 - A range of sporting activities are provided

strongly agree	57.4
agree	34
disagree	2.8
strongly disagree	0
don't know	5.7

## Q15 - Pupils have understanding of values such as: Democracy, respect for different faiths

strongly agree	58.2
agree	30.5
disagree	6
strongly disagree	0
don't know	11.3

## Q16 - The school give information to allow us to help our child with their learning

strongly agree	68.1
agree	24.8
disagree	5
strongly disagree	0
don't know	2.1

## Q17 - Pupils are encouraged to strive for excellence

strongly agree	80.1
agree	14.2
disagree	0
strongly disagree	0.7
don't know	5

## Q18 - The swimming pool is an important part of the school and I value the opportunities this provides

strongly agree	83.7
agree	9.2
disagree	2.1
strongly disagree	0
don't know	5

## We also asked parents to tell us what we could do better:

**There was a feeling expressed from a couple of parents that we send too many reminders out and communicate in too many different formats.**

.....

The Accelerated Reader system is not popular with all parents. 'A.R can take the fun away from reading at home. My children love reading, but feel they have to instead of wanting to.'

.....

'The range of books that my child tells me are available for some Accelerated Reading levels appear to be limited and do not always appeal to my child.'

.....

We always say that AR is just one tool that we use and whilst for some children it works really well we recognise this is not the case for all children. At times they need a break from it and this does no harm at all. The main aim is for children to develop a passion for reading. Please talk to your child's class teacher if reading is becoming a challenge and we will find other strategies and approaches to support them. We will work with you on this because we want the same thing, for your children to love reading!

We have recently invested huge amounts in adding to the range of books in the library last year, in total £3000 but even with this investment there were some comments related to the range and type of books in the school library. We will carry out an audit and liaise with the school council on the type of books they would like. It is a constant challenge for us to maintain the stock in the library because books frequently are lost at home. A total of over £415 are currently missing and this all adds up. Sadly this often happens and then parents will tell us they have never seen the book. Quite often a few months later this is

found at home! When a child takes a book out of the library this is recorded electronically on our system and then this generates the record we use so your child will have certainly taken it out. New books are also often returned to school torn, wet and very badly damaged. Naturally there will be wear and tear over time and these books are taken out of circulation but these are all factors that make it a real challenge for us. On a positive note we are looking to spend £2000 this term and have already placed an order for new AR books.

.....

'Overall, I am really pleased with how my child is getting on at Polegate School, but I do think more can be done to connect to working parents, especially as we really want to be involved, but are restricted with work.'

This related to late notice on trips. Whenever possible we do try to ensure that you know as far as possible in advance however sometimes opportunities arise at very late notice or we are invited to an event at short notice and I would hate for any of our children to miss out and not be offered something so we will always try and say yes when opportunities arise. If you receive information at short notice that is likely to be the reason but always have a chat with me.

I promise you we really do try to meet the needs of our working parents. We run parent information sessions at a variety of times to allow working parents to attend. If you have any suggestions please let us know, we don't always think of everything!

One parent felt that the school was too focused on literacy skills. I would disagree strongly with this. Our outcomes in maths are incredibly strong and progress far exceeds the national average this would not happen without a focus on maths!

Without reading skills children cannot access other curriculum areas, including maths. So yes, the school places an emphasis on reading and the reason we promote this at every opportunity is because a child that can read fluently is advantaged for life and their future life chances depend on this.

.....

**One comment worried me hugely.**

'Although everyone can strive for excellence I don't believe the school has this outlook and more interested in Ofsted tables.'

I feel I need to respond to this comment on behalf of all school staff. I make no apologies at all for wanting the school to be the best it can possibly be but for your children but certainly not for Ofsted. I want us to be and we are aiming to be exceptional - beyond the Ofsted 'outstanding' judgement! Nothing we do is for Ofsted and this has been the whole basis of our school improvement work for the last 6 years. The first question we ask ourselves will always be: is this right for our pupils?

I think as parents you would be worried hugely if we were not aspiring for excellence for your children.



# Attendance Award

**4M achieved the highest attendance for the term in the run up to Christmas. Possibly the hardest term because there are so many germs and bugs around so well done 4M!**

They maintained the school target of 97% and so will enjoy a forest school afternoon with David Horne.

This is a collective reward and depends on each child in the class being in school as often as possible. Each term is a fresh start for every class and so everyone in the school has the opportunity to win!

Sadly, certain groups in our school have very low attendance. Our free school meal pupils and special educational needs. These groups nationally do not achieve as well as other pupils and we are really concerned that this low attendance will hold them back even further. Please make sure your child is in school and arrives on time.

We analyse every child in school in detail and know that children that have low attendance are not doing as well as those children that attend school every day. We are absolutely committed to every child in the school reaching their full potential and this becomes impossible for us if they are not in school.

# Class figures

**Overall school attendance is currently at 96.2%. Our school target this year is 97%.**

**How well is your child's class doing so far this year:**

RJ = 95%

RH = 94%

RP = 98%

1N = 96%

1A = 97%

2M = 96%

2B = 96%

3B = 97%

3W = 95%

4M = 98%

4EM = 96%

5R = 98%

5GK = 96%

6M = 95%

6O = 96%

## Graduation Celebrations!

**Our Year 6 pupils have completed their dissertations and are excitedly waiting to attend their graduation celebration at Sussex University.**

## Diary Dates

**Friday  
10th February  
INSET DAY**

## 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 718 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](http://www.polegateschool.co.uk)**

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