

# news

November 2014



## Orienteering

A group of our year 6 children braved the weather to attend an orienteering event at Gildredge Park. We are currently awaiting the results but the organisers said how well they did.

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# Welcome back to term 2!

**Welcome back to term 2! I can't believe it is only term 2, we have been so busy.**

I can honestly say I am so proud of your children. We have just held our 'Pupil Progress' meetings where teachers meet with the senior leadership team to discuss the progress their classes are making and the children are just going from strength to strength.

Once again Year 6 teachers are anticipating their best results ever!

Across the school the children are achieving amazing results. As always there have been lovely comments from our visitors: Jessie, our Bike It officer commented that she had visited 6 local schools and our children were by far the best behaved in assemblies.

The number of children visiting the office with work they are proud of is constantly increasing; keep an eye out on Twitter for your child.

I was virtually dragged to 4B the other day to see some amazing artwork - see the photos inside.

When you come in for your parent consultation please take a moment to have a look around the school, there are some stunning displays and examples of children's work.

# MATHS UPDATE

**Society is becoming increasingly mathematical, and it is now critical for young people to be comfortable with maths in order to function well and to be attractive to employers in the future.**

We want to ensure that pupils at Polegate are able to succeed and excel in Maths. We are investing heavily in maths and are currently introducing a wide range of strategies to improve mathematical understanding in children across the school.

Every teacher in the school has been working alongside Andrew Jeffery, a specialist maths consultant over the last term on the following areas:

- Discovering what is at the heart of all learning in maths, and how to ensure that all children get the chance to understand it.
- Concrete ideas for teaching key concepts.
- How best to get children doing problem-solving.
- How to support their less able and extend their most able

We are also introducing the 'Maths Passport' this term. Each child in the school is receiving their own passport in which they are challenged to travel around the world by completing a range of targets all based on key mathematical concepts which are crucial to success in maths. As they achieve the targets in one part of the world they gain a certificate and move on! When the certificate comes home you will see their next targets are printed on the back to allow you to support at home. They are given time each week to work on their Maths Passports. You will be receiving a letter explaining the 'Maths Passport' in more detail.

In classes from reception right up to year 6 we are now using far more practical resources to help pupils understand concepts in maths. These are vital for pupils of all ability levels to really gain a secure knowledge of quite abstract mathematical concepts and we are already seeing the impact of this.

## Prefects

### A huge thank you to our Prefects

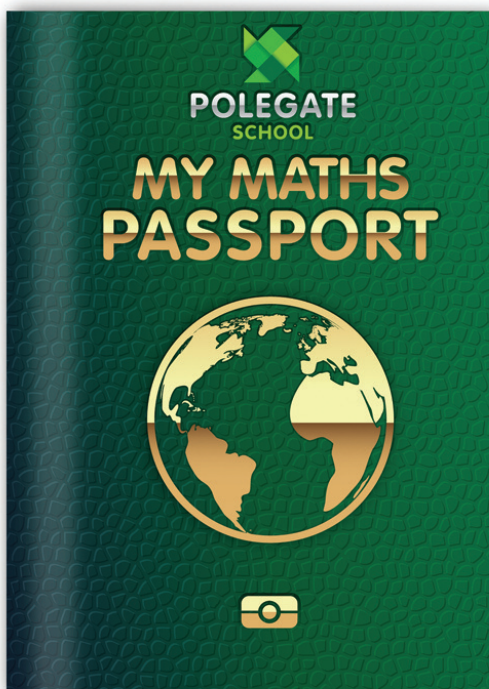
They have done a superb job showing around potential new parents last week. The parents were very impressed with their confidence and knowledge of the school.

Another thank you came from one of our midday supervisors who said how brilliant the prefects are at helping in the dinner hall. She shared with me how proud she is of you and very grateful.

## Dogs outside the school

**I have once again had several concerned parents approach me about the number of dogs tied up immediately outside the school gate.** It does cause anxiety amongst children that are scared of dogs. Please could I ask that dogs are tied up well away from the entrances to the school.

**Maths Challenge**  
The challenge winner from our last newsletter was  
**Oliver Jones in 6T**





# READING

**We continue to promote a love of reading in school and it remains a high priority.**

Don't forget that if your child reads or is read to by an adult they gain a raffle ticket. The raffle is drawn weekly and the winning child can then select a book from a wide range of books in my office.



## GALLERY

Some of the great artwork being produced in the school



## Top tips for hearing your child read:

**1. Choose a quiet time** - Set aside a quiet time with no distractions. Ten to fifteen minutes is usually long enough.

**2. Make reading enjoyable** - Make reading an enjoyable experience. Sit with your child. Try not to pressurise if he or she is reluctant. If your child loses interest then do something else.

**3. Maintain the flow** - If your child mispronounces a word do not interrupt immediately. Instead allow opportunity for self-correction. It is better to tell a child some unknown words to maintain the flow rather than insisting on trying to build them all up from the sounds of the letters. If your child does try to 'sound out' words, encourage the use of letter sounds rather than 'alphabet names'.

Do not be tempted to point to the words as your child is reading because this stops them from becoming an independent reader and slows the flow and fluency.

**4. Be positive** - If your child says something nearly right to start with that is fine. Don't say 'No. That's wrong,' but 'Let's read it together' and point to the words as you say them. Boost your child's confidence with constant praise for even the smallest achievement.

**5. Success is the key** - Parents anxious for a child to progress can mistakenly give a child a book that is too difficult. This can have the opposite effect to the one they are wanting. Remember 'Nothing succeeds like

success'. Until your child has built up his or her confidence, it is better to keep to easier books. Struggling with a book with many unknown words is pointless. Flow is lost, text cannot be understood and children can easily become reluctant readers.

**6. Visit the Library** - Encourage your child to use the public library regularly.

**7. Regular practice** - Try to read with your child every day. 'Little and often' is best.

**8. Communicate** - Every child has a reading diary from school. Try to communicate regularly with positive comments and any concerns. Your child will then know that you are interested in their progress and that you value reading.

**9. Talk about the books** - There is more to being a good reader than just being able to read the words accurately. Just as important is being able to understand what has been read. Always talk to your child about the book; about the pictures, the characters, how they think the story will end, their favourite part. You will then be able to see how well they have understood and you will help them to develop good comprehension skills.

**10. Variety is important** - Remember children need to experience a variety of reading materials eg. picture books, hard backs, comics, magazines, poems, and information books.

# Latest News

## Ability Grouping Children

**We are currently questioning whether assigning a pupil to an ability group in class can create a self-fulfilling prophecy.**

All research indicates that ability grouping children has a negative impact on achievement and progress. This is true for all abilities. 'Studies have shown that ability grouping tends to entrench differences between pupils – being placed in a particular group can affect children's self-perceptions and behaviour, and possibly how their teachers interact with them. Group placement can also limit pupils'

academic opportunities.' Institute of education, 2013

We have ability grouped children across the school in various subjects at times but we do not want to limit any child's academic potential and so classes are exploring other approaches. We are excited about the outcomes already. We want to give pupils the opportunity to surprise us and themselves by what they are capable of. We do not want to put a ceiling on their potential just because they happen to be in a certain group in class.

**I will share more on this in the next newsletter.**

## Parent Consultation evening

**I hope that you have all signed up for Parent Consultation evenings.**

We will be trialling a new approach with class 5B in which every pupil in the class will be involved in leading their own consultation. Each child has prepared a short presentation on their learning and the progress they have made. They will talk about this to their parents, teacher and me! After this there will be a discussion about next steps.

The aim is that they become even more accountable for their own learning and more importantly can also recognise and celebrate their successes. This is another important life skill they will need in the future.

Dependent on parent and pupil feedback this may be something we introduce for the whole of year 5 and year 6. And will be discussing this at the next 'Think tank' meeting.

## The Congress Show 2015!

**Eeeek! Yes it is that time again- too soon! We are underway with our plans for the next Congress Show already.**

We do not have a date for you yet as we cannot book until the new year. As soon as we know we will tell you.

For the benefit of our new reception parents who may not be familiar with this, we hire out the Congress Theatre in Eastbourne for one night and produce a whole school show

involving every child in the school and staff! It is a phenomenal event and the children always surpass our expectations.

As usual, in a 'Congress Year' we do not have Christmas productions. The time devoted to planning, preparing and rehearsing for the Congress is considerable and so the only year group to prepare a performance at Christmas are reception.

## Huge success for Celine

**Celine Kumaradas has been very busy. She has been travelling to London to sit exams for entry to some of the top grammar schools in the country.**

This is an incredibly competitive process and so far Celine has sat 6 exams at different schools. We are very proud of Celine because she has made it through the initial exam for each and every school! For one particular school there were 4,000 entered and Celine has been selected as one of the 300 to make it through to the next round. Poor Celine now has to go back for a second exam. We wish her lots of luck and will keep you all updated.



## Homework Workshop

**On Wednesday 26th November Una Holbrook and myself will be running a parent workshop all about homework and the variety of ways you can approach this with your child.**

We have had 2 responses so far, so there is plenty of space left!

We know homework can be a huge challenge but we would like to explain the different ways you can tackle tasks to either extend the challenge or make them more achievable for your child.

**The workshop will take place at 2pm in the children's Centre.**



# SPORTS NEWS



## Danny Lawrence GB Gymnast

**We are hosting a 'Sports for Schools' event on 19th November in which we welcome Danny Lawrence to the school.**

The event is designed to inspire the children (to do more sport), raise money for PE equipment in schools (over £1m to date), and support GB and Olympic athletes financially.

Your child should have brought home a sponsorship form. On the 19th November they will be involved in a range of exercise circuits in the hall. They are asked to collect sponsorship for completing these tasks.

The school hall becomes alive with energy, noise, smiling happy faces and a sense of achievement as the children work together through each circuit station. They are learning, they are active, they are mentally and physically alert as they enjoy the exercise.' Sports for Schools.

After the activities for children, everyone gathers for an assembly with the celebrity sports star who will talk about their sporting experience, give a spectacular display and hold a 30mins Q & A.

Sponsorship moneys are collected by the school over the following 7 days after the event. We all want this event to be memorable and to say thank you to those who have raised sponsorship money, so any child that:

- Raises over £5 will receive a Sports for Schools wrist band
- Raises over £15 will additionally receive a wrist band autographed by the Athlete
- Raises over £30 will additionally an autographed A4 poster of the Athlete

The school stands to gain a large percentage of all money raised for purchasing new PE Equipment and many young British athletes will receive financial assistance towards their future training expenses and development.

### About Danny Lawrence

Danny led England to the Commonwealth Games silver medal in gymnastics in 2010. His achievements include:

- Competed at 3 European Championships
- Over 40 British international appearances
- 2010 British Champion- Rings
- 2010 Commonwealth Games, Silver Medal and Team England Captain

## Sports Star of the Term

**Starting in term 2 we will be looking for a 'Shining Sports Star' to feature every term on our new sports display board!**

**We would like to hear something about your sport, why you like it, where you do it, if you take part in competitions or a league etc. and some advice on how other people could become involved in it.**

You will also need to bring in an A6 photo to accompany the information about yourself.

At the end of the year, a very special 'Sports Star of the Year' award will be awarded to the person who we believe has made a great contribution towards sports success in school and who demonstrates great sportsmanship to others.

Please speak to Mrs Wallis (Reading Recovery Teacher near the year 1 classes) if you would like to be considered for the very first 'Sports Star of the Term'. (term 2)



# Football Tournament

## On Saturday 8th November the boys A football team took part in the Eastbourne Schools 7-a-side Football Tournament.

There were ten schools competing with two groups of 5 teams in each side of the draw. Our first game was against Pevensy & Westham. A tight first half resulted in a score of 1-1 with Billy Knight scoring our goal before a spirited second half (and another goal from Billy knight and Sam Laycock) saw us emerge 3-1 winners.

The second game was against Langney and we again came away winners with a lovely header from Jack Corbett scoring the only goal of the game. Jamie Hamilton played superbly in defence and would not let their players have a shot until right at the end when Luke Jago made a full length save down to his left-hand post, tipping the ball to safety. That would have brought them level but instead we marched on to the next game. We were top of the group with two games to play.

The penultimate game was against Parklands and despite having several good chances we couldn't find a winner and instead ended up giving a penalty away, which they placed past a diving Luke Jago. We lost 1-0 but knew that a victory in our last game would ensure that we went through to the semi-finals.

This game was against Tollgate and is quickly became a game we controlled from midfield with Lee



Connolly pulling the strings and providing several lovely passes and Kia Boniface providing good running on the left wing. A goal by Sam Laycock, followed by another from Billy Knight from the penalty spot after he was fouled dribbling in from the right, pushed us towards victory. We scored another (Billy again) with a few minutes to go and finished 3-0.

### Through to the semi final

We were through to the semi-finals as we had finished first in our group. We were joined by Parklands who would join Ocklynge in the other semi-final.

We had to play Stone Cross who looked a very strong team. The game started with a flash of brilliance from Billy Knight on the wing, who beat a player and drilled the ball into the far corner of the net from an impossible angle. 1-0 up but it was short lived as Stone Cross came racing back into the game from the kick off and pegged the game back to 1-1. It was not long before they scored again and we went in at half time

one down. The second half was all us as we pressed forward for the equaliser. Billy Knight forced three good saves from their goalkeeper before Matthew Roberts hit a lovely half-volley that rattled the Stone Cross bar! However, it was not to be and we ended the game with the same score as half-time, a 2-1 victory to Stone Cross.

The boys did incredibly well and are really well prepared for the forthcoming football season with fixtures against Ocklynge, Bourne and Oakwood all coming soon.

**Team: Luke Jago, Jamie Hamilton, Lee Connolly, Jack Corbett, Matthew Roberts, Kia Boniface, Sam Laycock & Billy Knight.**





# DFE Update

**We have just received an update from the DFE on the progress our pupils make by the time they leave our school:**

- 97% of our pupils reach or exceed expected progress in reading compared to 91% nationally
- 50% make better than expected progress, compared to 35% nationally in reading
- 97% of our pupils reach or exceed expected progress in writing compared to 93% nationally

- 47% make better than expected progress compared to 33% nationally in writing
- 97% of our pupils reach or exceed expected progress in Maths compared to 89% nationally
- 47% make more than expected progress compared to 35%

**I think you will agree this is something we all should be proud of.**

## Parents & Facebook

**It is impossible to please everyone all of the time (we do try very hard though!). We are realistic about this and I am quite sure that there will be a time when you have a reason to complain or simply have a concern about something.**

Please come in and talk to us. This can be done quite informally by catching a member of staff or more formally by making an appointment to talk to a Leader of Learning or a senior leader. If this is not possible then e-mail or write. We will always respond. I like to think that we are quite approachable and whilst we may not always agree we will listen and explain our reasons. Please do not resort to being critical of the school or staff on Facebook.

This is an increasing problem nationally for schools and is very damaging to the relationship schools have with parents which should be based on mutual respect. I do not imagine any parent would consider it acceptable for a school to comment negatively on an individual family or pupil on

Facebook. Needless to say we would not dream of doing this! If a member of staff acted in this way by making a derogatory comment about a child they would, quite rightly, lose their job.

Schools do not have a voice and cannot respond when parents are critical online and yet these posts can reach hundreds if not thousands of people.

Sadly, we have, over the years suffered from rare occasions at Polegate School when parents have chosen to do this, even naming staff personally. We do not always choose to respond however we always see the posts and we do then keep them on file. Facebook is not the place to air grievances. It is not private despite the privacy settings that may be in place and they are always brought in to us. Never put anything on a social media site that you would not want anyone or everyone reading!

**Complaints are fine; just bring them in to us so that we can try to resolve them!**



## Think Tank

**I have a tremendous team of parents that meet with me termly, on your behalf, to discuss new initiatives or school developments. The next meeting is on Thursday 29th January.**

We had an even split of responses to the school photograph questionnaire - formal or informal. We received a grand total of 2 responses! Within the Think Tank the preference was for the informal style of photograph.

In response to a very sensible request from a Think Tank parent we have adjusted the days that Mymaths is set for homework, so that not every task is needed by the Wednesday to allow you the chance to stagger the homework tasks over more days.

**Any comments you have please don't forget we have a postbox outside the office. Feel free to drop us a note.**



**A posse of poets arrived at our door today. Impressive 3P animal poems for us to read.**

**Welcome back Mrs Barnard**

**Welcome back to Mrs Barnard who has returned from her maternity leave to teach class 3B.**

# Children's safety on the internet

**Children must be at least 13 to register on most social networking websites. But there's not a lot standing in the way of children joining at a younger age.**

Age limits are there to keep children safe so whilst we know many children are registered on social media sites we would not encourage this.

Children and young people may chat or become 'friends' with people on social networks or online games, even if they don't know them or have never met them in person.

The percentage of online friends that children didn't know outside of being online was:

**12% for 8-11 years olds in 2012**

**29% for 12-15 year olds in 2013**

This makes children vulnerable to bullying, grooming and sharing personal information.

We do spend time in lessons ensuring that children know they should not share any personal information.

Privacy controls can limit who can see your child's details, like their name, age and where they live. But when your child connects to someone as a 'friend', that person will have access to your child's personal information.

Some 'free' games might ask your child to fill out an extensive profile and they use this illegally to rent or sell their data on to others.

Switch off or adjust settings using GPS or location tracking

Lots of apps and social networking sites use software to locate where the user is. Children and young people can also reveal their location by tagging photos, such as in Instagram, or checking in on Facebook or Foursquare.

This means that people can find out where your child lives, socialises, works or studies.

<http://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/online-safety> has a lot of helpful guidance and resources for parents.

# Early Morning Intervention

**As you know we extend the school day for some of our pupils in order to offer tuition.**

We have been doing this for the last 3 years and it has been a huge success. The benefits for the children that take part are immense. It means they do the work when they are alert and it gives them a really positive start to the school day. They are not removed from other learning during the school day.

During our last round of maths intervention one pupil tested on entry as 5 years and 5 months and after 8 weeks made 8 months progress and scored 6 years and 1 month in the exit test. This is typical of the progress pupils make in these interventions if they attend every session.

**Our early morning teaching assistants do a great job - thank you.**

# Staff News

**Huge congratulations to the Keet family on the arrival of Teddy Alexander Keet. He was born on Friday 7th November at Eastbourne DGH at 7.08pm. He weighed 7.15lbs and arrived right on his due date! Keep an eye out on twitter for a picture!**

# Great Writing by George Johnson in year 6

## George Johnson's very descriptive writing about World War 1

Soon I couldn't see anything. Painstakingly, I put my hand, that is badly injured, in front of my battered face.

Relief – comfort

Exhausted – I slowly got to my aching feet

Surprisingly, their murky trenches are deeper than ours, but then I saw Charlie. I couldn't believe my eyes

Feeling consoled, I embraced Charlie for what seemed like a lifetime and suddenly I felt safe again. But sadly that glorious moment didn't last long....



# Willingdon School Xmas Factor Fair

On Saturday 13th December 2014, Willingdon Community School, Broad Road, Willingdon are holding a Xmas Factor Christmas Fair with stalls, music and food from 10am until 1pm. We welcome people to help us raise money for equipment in the drama department and St Wilfrids Hospice. Local craft and art work will be on sale as well as Christmas gifts.

The students will provide entertainment and the friends of Willingdon school will provide refreshments and host a grand raffle. Everyone is welcome.



# Firework Night

**We enjoyed a spectacular firework display and Halloween event. It was a great evening and involved the whole community.**

It was lovely to welcome families from other schools to Polegate and the event had a lovely atmosphere. I would like to thank the PFA for organising this and raising funds for the school. A great deal of work goes on behind the scenes to organise an event like this and involved many parents. On behalf of the PFA I would like to thank the many parents that supported the event by attending and those that donated bags full of Halloween goodies as well as the team involved in the organisation. As always the pumpkins looked amazing!

**They raised an amazing £895!**

## Prefect Jackets

**The PFA have just funded the special tabards for the Prefects and Buddies which have been a big hit! They can't be missed around the school now when they are on duty!**

The PFA are also supporting our new maths passports which every child in the school will receive.

So we are doing a very good job of spending the money that is raised. We are also using the funds to buy resources to support our own Forest School.

The PFA is really well supported at the moment and have lots of other exciting events planned. Everyone is always welcome to attend meetings and they are always very informal, fun and social.

The next meeting is very soon so please keep an eye out for a date.

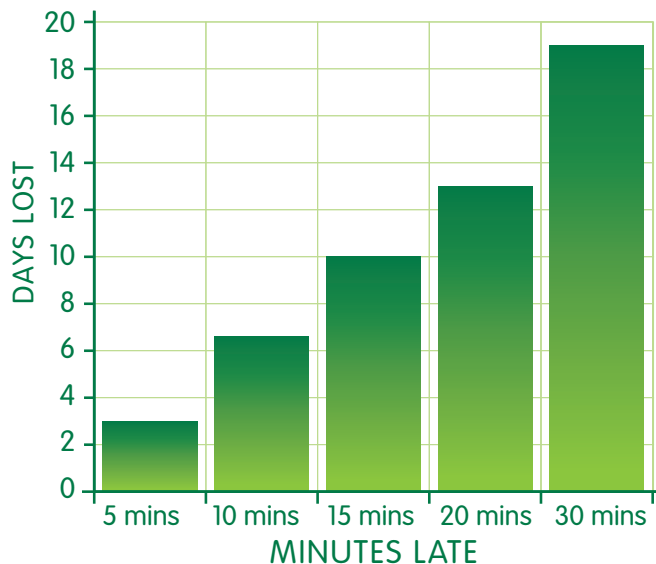
They will be now thinking about the Christmas fair.



# Every School Day Counts

## Being Late adds up to a loss of learning

- If you are 5 minutes late every day that adds up to over 3 days lost each year.
- 15 minutes late is the same as being absent for 2 weeks a year.



- Being late every day can add up to a lot of lost learning time
- Please help your child to be punctual

If you are worried about your child's attendance please talk to us at school about it or speak to: **Education Support Behaviour & Attendance Service** on **01273 481967**

## Class figures

Overall school attendance is currently at **96.8%**. This is so close to our school target this year of **97%**. Keep it up!

RP = 96%	2R = 97%	5B = 98%
RH = 95%	3B = 97%	5C = 98%
1J = 96%	3P = 97%	6T = 96%
1A = 95%	4M = 97%	6M = 96%
2M = 98%	4B = 97%	

## 97% is our target

Overall school attendance is currently at **96.8%**. This is so close to our school target this year of **97%**. Keep it up!

## Diary Dates

The next  
**INSET Day** is  
**Friday 19th  
December**

## 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 **373  
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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