

Head Teacher's Newsletter



Irthlingborough Junior School

Date: 7th September 2018

Welcome Back

Welcome back to school after what I hope was a good summer holiday. Thank you for supporting our uniform policy. The children look very smart in their new V-neck jumpers and white shirts.

We have given the year 6 children the opportunity to wear ties this year and over 80 parents have indicated that yes, they would like their child to wear a tie in year 6. Our PTA have kindly stepped forward to cover the cost. It is not too late if you didn't return the reply slip because we have ordered a few extra ties. They are clip on ties so there will be no need to teach children how to tie them!

We also asked you to make sure that your child is coming to school in shoes and not trainers. Thank you all for supporting this as well over the summer.

Summer work

Thank you to Mr Hodson for his work over the summer ensuring that the site was ready for the children returning this week. We had one internal project this year: improving the Year 5 and 6 girls' changing room. Mr Hodson moved lockers, painted the walls and we have had new flooring fitted.

Academic Standards

The good news is that our outcomes at the end of Year 6 have improved on last year. Our maths results improved the most increasing by 10 percentage points and our reading also improved by 3% points. Our Spelling and grammar results remained the same as the previous year. We achieved the highest score in our writing with 71% of children meeting age related expectations in year 6.

We are awaiting appeals in reading and maths. When we have our final figures we will publish them on the school website.

Staffing

I am really pleased to welcome Mr Lynch and Miss Rodwell to our school. Both teachers taught here in the summer term and had the opportunity to get to know their classes.

We have two new roles in school: Learning Mentors. Mrs Foster and Mrs Price will be working as learning mentors and support children in the afternoons with any social, emotional or mental health issues. We are very excited about these roles and their work will be very similar to the work that Mrs Marsh carried out last year. Mrs Foster and Mrs Price will also be running a lunchtime club for children who struggle with outdoor play on the playground. **If you have any board games, Lego or other toys in excellent condition you could donate to our Lunchtime Club, please contact the school office.**

If you have any concerns about your child's mental health, please contact the school office and ask to speak to a member of staff.

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Mrs Johnson is our Special Education Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) and she is responsible for children with an educational need or disability. Mrs Johnson joined us in January but I am pleased to inform you that she will be in school for four days a week, working Monday to Thursday. If you have any concerns about SEN, please contact your child's class teacher or Mrs Johnson.

Mrs Cunningham retired in 2016 but hasn't left us yet! Last year she taught a Year 4 class and this year I am delighted that she has agreed to teach maths and English in Year 6. That means there will be 6 Year 6 classes for maths (Mrs Meekings teaching the sixth class) and 5 classes for English.

Mrs Lickerish has joined us from the Infant school and will be teaching music across the school.

School Development

We are in the process of writing our school development plan and when it is finalised I will share it with you in a parent forum which will give you the opportunity to ask questions about our plans. Last year we focused on the teaching of maths and this will remain a focus. Our results tell us that reading is going to be our main priority with writing a close second.

We have to work to meet the targets set us by Ofsted after their visit last March so improving behaviour in school is also a development priority. (A copy of our Ofsted report can be found here: <http://www.irthlingborough-jun.northants.sch.uk/multi-academy-trust/ofsted-report>).

There were many really positive curriculum developments last year and we are committed to giving your children a broad, rich and balanced curriculum. We want to build on our excellent sport provision (football and netball league champions!) and improve our use of the Sport Premium money.

We are also excited about the introduction of our Forest School provision which will be lead by Mrs Godfrey and will start this term. Mrs Godfrey has been working incredibly hard to obtain her Level 3 Forest School leader qualification. This has been a massive time commitment for her and it will make a huge difference to the well-being of our children.

We were really pleased with how our Humanities and Science curriculum impacted on our writing last year. Miss Thompson (Humanities) and Mrs Drew (Science) developed a collapsed curriculum approach to teaching where days and sometimes a whole week were devoted to the teaching of these subjects. We plan to build on this further this year and continue to make history, geography and science a real strength of our children's learning.

School Governors

We were sad to lose Steve Gordon as a governor at the end of the last academic year. He had stepped in temporarily but made such a difference to the governing body and impacted on school development. We gained two new governors in the summer term last year. Simon Aston is the Local Authority online safety advisor and will be an excellent addition with his knowledge of safeguarding children. We have also been joined by Linda Brooks who was previously head teacher of Raunds Manor.

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Attendance

Mrs Jones is now working in the mornings as our Attendance Officer. She will be monitoring late arrivals and contacting you if there are any concerns about your child's attendance. We will also be using Team EWS to help us maintain good levels of attendance across the school.

We aim for a target of at least 96% attendance at school across the academic year. This allows children approximately 7 days off school for illness. If you need to take your child out of school for any reason, you need to fill in a form which is available at the school office. Term time absences can only be authorised for exceptional circumstances. You can be fined by the Local Authority for taking your child out of school during term time. For guidance on this, please follow the link below:

<https://www3.northamptonshire.gov.uk/councilservices/children-families-education/schools-and-education/Pages/penalty-notice-for-non-school-attendance.aspx>

Year Group News

Year group letters will be reaching you soon with details about their curriculums and any educational visits they are planning. We have made a commitment as part of our development to give you greater opportunities to come into school and see how we work. Please look out for these events and support them where you can.

We are also looking for parent volunteers to come in regularly and listen to readers or support curriculum events. If you would like to volunteer, please talk to the school office and they will take your details. We will not place volunteers in the same year group as their children to avoid any distractions to children.

Up to date information on year groups can be found the year group twitter feeds: @Year6IJS, @Year5IJS, @Year4IJS, @year3IJS. You can also follow me on twitter @mrgarley if you want sporadic school updates and my opinions on Northampton Town!

Please remember that you can communicate with your child's class teacher through the Primary Planners that should be going home with your child every day.

Parent Forum and PTA

Our PTA meets regularly and works tirelessly to raise much needed funds for the school. The next meeting is on **Monday 17th September at 1:30pm** at school. We also have a parent forum which will be meeting on **Tuesday 18th September at 2:00pm** in school.

For further details about the PTA please contact them on ijspta@yahoo.co.uk.

If you would like to be part of our parent forum and have your say on what happens in our school, please contact Mrs Meekings on jo.meekings@ift.org.uk.

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