

SPOTLIGHT



Issue 4

Autumn Term 2010

Parents' Information Newsletter

Dear Parent/Carer

SETTING TARGETS ALL WEEK

All this week we have had pupils, their parents and form tutors setting learning targets for the year ahead. In each case this has been a process of negotiation, based on the progress secured in previous years and looking carefully at maximising potential in the year ahead. This approach always works best as a three-way conversation, so I would like to thank all those parents who took time out of their normal routines to join us for this important part of the year. If you were unable to attend, you may wish to have a careful conversation with your son / daughter to be clear about which targets they have chosen to focus on.

I am hopeful that most pupils will have set themselves challenging targets that, when achieved, will take them further towards fulfilling their hopes and dreams for later in life. Just outside the Main Hall, where this week's appointments have been taking place, is a poster carrying a photograph of Poltair pupils fully engaged in school life. It carries the following message:

- To go further than I thought
- To run faster than I hoped
- To reach higher than I dreamed
- To become the person I need to be.

It clearly makes reference to the Olympic ideal whereby we strive to ensure that all pupils' strengths are developed. We are always looking for each and every one of us to set a new **personal best**.

Stephen Tong

Stephen Tong
Headteacher

IMPORTANT DATES:-

Friday 15 October

On site training (no pupils in school)
*Year 10 Diploma pupils should attend
College courses as usual*

Wednesday 20 October

Year 7 Parents' Evening (details to follow) 3.30 – 6.30 pm

Monday 25 to Friday 29 October (Half Term)

SCHOOL UNIFORM/LOST PROPERTY

Please ensure your child's school uniform and equipment is clearly labelled with their name. This helps to return items to the appropriate child if and when they go astray.

'WORD OF THE WEEK'
Chosen by Mrs Golding

As part of our focus on
Literacy in the
MFL Department

du fromage



Student of the Week**Year 7****Kaitlin**

For good work in
Geography using ICT.

Student of the Week**Year 8****Casey**

For good work in Maths.

Student of the Week**Year 9****Paige**

For being kind, supportive
and helpful to others.

Homework Projects deadline for Years 7, 8 and 9

A reminder that the deadline for homework projects (as per homework timetable sent home on Issue 1 Spotlight) is this week.

Weeks 1 – 3 Subjects listed below should now be completed:

Year 7 DT Project (food/textiles)
Performing Arts Project

Year 8 Art Project
Humanities Project (RE)

Year 9 French Project
Humanities Project (Geography/History)

Weeks 4 – 6 Subjects listed below will be setting new projects which should be completed by October Half Term:

Year 7 Art Project
Humanities Project (Geography/History)

Year 8 DT Project (food/textiles)
Performing Arts Project

Year 9 DT Project (food/textiles)
Performing Arts Project

Photo orders

All pupils should now have received individual photo samples.

Years 7, 8, 9 and 10 should have returned orders by Monday 27 September, but due to pupil/staff absence, **the deadline has been extended to Monday 4th October**.

Year 11 can order individual and year group photos on the same order form – **orders back by Friday 8 October please**.

All orders can be returned to Mrs Northcott in the Admin Office - sealed envelopes containing the correct money please.

Orders will be sent to Tempest Photographers as soon as possible after the above deadlines - late orders will need to be sent direct to Tempest as per order form instructions.

The Year 11 Prefect photo can be ordered from Mrs Russell during 1st Break in the Admin Office - a sample of this photo and the Year group photo can be found in the reception display cabinet.

St Austell Running Club - Run/Walk Group

Monday evenings at St Austell Rugby Club from 6.30 pm

Interested in getting into running but don't think you can?

The St Austell Running Club has formed a run/walk group, everyone 18 and over is welcome.

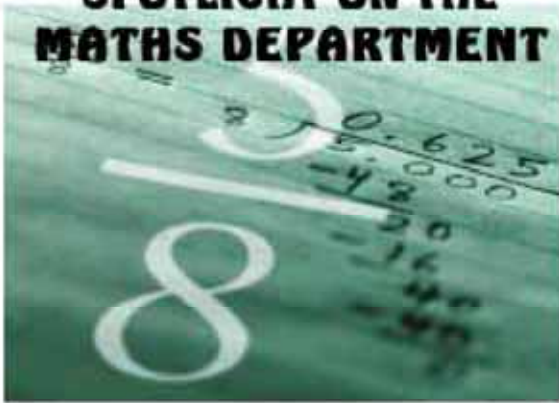
If you would like more details please contact Katie Bullock

Tel: 01726 61462

Email: katieb17@btinternet.com www.staustellrunningclub.co.uk



SPOTLIGHT ON THE MATHS DEPARTMENT



The Maths Department has settled well into its new location on the upper floor of Smith Block. We're looking forward to another busy and dynamic year providing an enjoyable and rewarding learning experience. We started off this year by welcoming Year 7s with Induction Day activities. This was a fun learning experience that had an emphasis on team-working and puzzle-solving. Maths is not just about calculations or applying learnt techniques but also about finding different ways to solve tasks and engendering a "can do" attitude when finding solutions to problems. The pupils really impressed us with their enthusiasm and often creative solutions to some tough challenges. They came up with answers that were innovative and rewarding. Their excitement and enjoyment was palpable.

By the end of the first week the Year 7s had settled well in Maths and were enthusiastically engaging with the learning in the classroom. This is exactly what we are aiming for: pupils that enjoy coming to Maths lessons, understand that a wrong answer is just a step towards finding the correct solution, and will actively engage with their learning. We are working, with KS3 in particular, to develop process skills and the willingness to "have a go". A lot of lessons don't look or feel like traditional Maths lessons. We have introduced lots of practical and hands-on ways of working and lots of real-life applications of Maths.

We are relying less and less on published Maths textbooks and more on finding ways that Maths can be used for problem-solving and planning.



MyMaths

We would ask that you get involved with your child's Maths. Some parents have expressed an interest in having a go at MyMaths, one of the interactive on-line software packages that we use as a learning tool for our pupils. We would definitely encourage this as a way of supporting us in developing the skills and techniques we are trying to promote. If you would like to have a MyMaths account please do let us know. All students have access to MyMaths at www.mymaths.co.uk and the school login details are *polfair* and *circle*. Each pupil also has their own account details which will record the effort they put in to 'out of school' learning. Please contact Mr Boden, Maths Department.

UKMT Maths Challenge

Last year, the top sets in Years 7 and 8 were encouraged to undertake stretching tasks, one of which was to enter for the National Maths Challenge where pupils can obtain Bronze, Silver or Gold certificates.



Last year's pupils should be congratulated for their successes, especially Gerard Buta who achieved a silver certificate with the highest score in the school. Other Silver certificate winners were:

X ? ✓ - X % ? ✓ - X % ? ✓ - X % ? ✓ - X % ? ✓ - X % ? ✓ - X ? ✓

KS4 News

After school revision: The GCSE years are always busy for our pupils and a variety of support is provided to help them achieve a good result. This year the Maths staff have volunteered to give revision classes on Tuesdays between 3:15 and 4:15 pm. A number of revision days were organised last year immediately prior to the exams and this is likely to be repeated this year.

One-to-one tuition Many pupils will benefit from the government funded 1 to 1 tuition programme and others will benefit from the small group teaching with the HLTAs. Mr King is the Co-ordinator for all '1 – 1' tuition arrangements.

Study Plus: The Study Plus programme is running for selected Year 10 and 11 pupils – this programme of study aims to encourage pupils to tackle interesting problems using some of the Maths skills learnt in the classroom. It can reinforce learning and understanding and is designed to help pupils achieve the C grade at GCSE.

Y10 Maths Enterprise Day: One particular highlight of last year was a Year 10 Enterprise day organised by Miss Fairweather. To encourage problem-solving, pupils are organised into teams to tackle a challenge. Last year's challenge was to design, produce, test and refine a board game. The Year 10 pupils rose magnificently to the challenge and with obvious excitement, enthusiasm, skill, competitiveness, and strong use of maths, produced games of the highest quality. The best are on display (see below) at the top of the Smith Block stairs.



TOP TEN



Mr Boden

1) What exactly do you do at Poltair? I am a Maths teacher and Year 10 Tutor.

2) What is your favourite meal?
Steak, egg and chips followed by Tiramisu.

3) If you were not a Teacher what would you be? A geotechnical engineer specialising in slope stability and underground structures (tunnels and pipes). My first full-time job was underground in the North Sea.

4) Who is your hero?
Barry Sheene, World 500cc Motorcycle Champion in 1976 and 1977. He didn't seem to know the meaning of adversity or setback. He just got on with it with enthusiasm, enjoyment and courage.

5) Who is your favourite singer/band?
Fisherman's Friends from Port Isaac. My six year old daughter knows all the words and has been known to dance on the quayside when they are singing.

6) What is your favourite book?
I have two – 'Winnie the Pooh' and 'House at Pooh Corner' by A. A. Milne. They contain a philosophy for a happy life. "Don't worry about things you can't change and always be true to your friends."

7) Name one thing that perhaps people don't know about you?
I went to the same college as Joseph Heller, author of Catch 22, although quite a few years later.

8) What do you enjoy most about Poltair?
Working with the students, often exciting, sometimes frustrating, never boring and extremely rewarding. Poltair has an all round great bunch of pupils.

9) What do you treasure most? An original pressing of "The Bricklayer's Lament" by Gerard Hoffnung.

10) What one thing would you change in the world? To ensure that everybody has access to education and fair and equal opportunity in life. I would want everyone to grasp this opportunity when offered to them.