



February 2026

SCHOOL NEWS

<http://www.sibford-gower.oxon.sch.uk/>

Dear Parents & Carers,

What a weather-filled beginning to 2026 it has been! Although the children are really 'hardy' and are generally happy to be outside and active whatever the weather, sometimes it is just too challenging! We have had the highest number of wet playtimes this half-term than I have known in any half-term over the last twelve years. On the plus side though, this has meant that all the classes have had opportunities to do indoor activities tucked in together, which they really love. Our older children are so nurturing of the younger ones, and all of the children get something positive out of being together.

Lots of super learning has been going on in the classrooms and we have had some whole school themes shaping activities too, including the Big Garden Birdwatch, Children's Mental Health Week and Energy Saving Week. The children are doing an excellent job of turning off lights when they are not needed, closing doors to keep in the warmth and using the correct bins for rubbish and recycling. Their commitment to doing their bit for the environment is impressive.

As always, it was lovely to welcome you into classrooms to share books with your children during Reading Week. 2026 is the National Year of Reading which has a particular focus on reading for pleasure. We have signed up to the National Literacy trust's latest campaign and will be using their resources to involve the children in all sorts of reading focused activities during the coming months.

You will all be aware of the staff changes in the office. Although we are all sad to say goodbye to Charlotte, I am delighted to be able to let you know that we have appointed Mrs Lynne Westwood as her replacement. Mrs Westwood will not be starting with us until March 16th so I will need to ask for your patience as Mrs Mannix and I cover office duties in the interim.

I wish you all a relaxing half-term break, hopefully with lots of reading.

With warmest wishes,

Jane O'Sullivan, Headteacher



Farewell to Ms Cavaghan

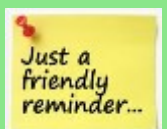
It is with real sadness that we say goodbye to Charlotte Cavaghan. Charlotte has worked as our Administration and Finance Officer since 2019 and has been such a positive force at the heart of our school. While we really will miss her on a daily basis, we are delighted that she will be continuing to support our lovely school as a trustee appointed governor. I am sure that you will all join with the school staff in wishing Charlotte every success as she returns to a career in publishing.

Best Class Attendance this half term

Beech 98.8%



Children return to school on
Monday 23rd February



ACORN CLASS NEWS

This term our topic is 'Where are they?'. Over the past few weeks we have been exploring the changes we see in Winter and the affects these changes have on animals native to the UK. We have found out lots of interesting facts about birds as part of the RSPB's Garden Birdwatch initiative. Read on to find out more!

Marvellous Maths

We have been exploring lots of maths concepts this term including investigating 6, 7 and 8, finding 1 more and 1 less, doubling numbers and combining numbers.

We have also been looking at length, height and time and have had lots of practical fun exploring these concepts and developing our mathematical understanding, reasoning and language.



Ladybird doubles

Carefully counting the ladybird's spots



Working together is an important skill in maths as it develops reasoning and problem solving language.



Winter Wax-Resist Art

In art we have been creating our very own winter night time scenes with collage and wax-resist techniques. First, we used the end of wax candles to make swirling patterns all over the paper. It was interesting as, although we could not see the marks we had made, we could feel the difference between the wax and the smooth paper. After we had made our patterns we used a watercolour paint in blue to paint a 'wash' all over our paper. It was like magic seeing the white marks and shapes appearing on the paper as the blue wash was painted over! Finally, when these were dry, we added coloured paper shapes to make houses and buildings in our scene. The orange and yellow windows and doors created the effect of houses with lights on in the otherwise cold, winter night.



First we painted our background with wax resist techniques and a watercolour wash.



Then we added our collage shapes to create interesting buildings.



Wow! It's Winter!

We have been thinking a lot about Winter and the changes we see each day in the world around us. In particular we have been thinking about the effect these changes have on the animals in our environment. Inspired by the RSPB's Garden Birdwatch, we have been really interested in how birds live in winter and have enjoyed thinking about some of them who go off on their holidays (migrate) to catch a bit of sun when it's grey, wet and dreary here. However, we have also been thinking about those birds who stay in England over the winter months and how we can care for them. We very much enjoyed making bird feeders for them although we weren't sure we would like to eat them ourselves!



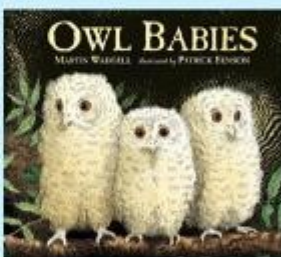
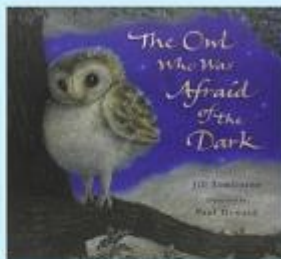
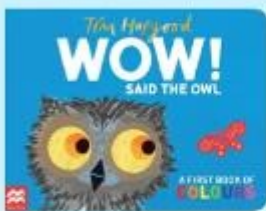
Mixing the dry ingredients first before Mrs Benjamin added the melted lard to the cups.



The winter weather helped us cool them down so they went hard - perfect for us to take home!



It wasn't just snacks for the birds though, we get peckish too! We had a great time making our own 'Owl Bread' for snack. Can you see what we've used for each part of the owl's body and head?



We have also created some beautiful owl artwork, inspired by some books we have been reading in class. We created our owls by carefully using our pincer grip to hold a pom pom on a clothes peg which we dipped in paint. We then carefully dabbed the pom pom on the paper to create the effect of fluffy owl feathers. Once dry, we added eyes, a beak and feet to our owls. They all have very different personalities - just like us!



Beech Class

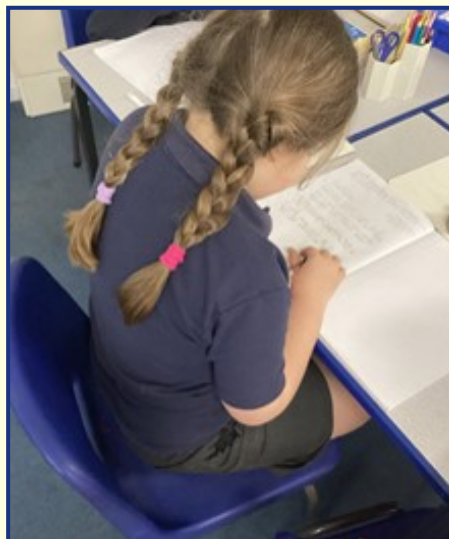
In KS1 Art, children have been busy experimenting with colour! They explored primary and secondary colours by mixing and layering paint, using a variety of made and found tools to create exciting marks and textures. Rather than aiming for perfection, pupils were encouraged to play, explore and respond to what was already on the page. They then selected favourite sections of their work to develop in their sketchbooks, helping them reflect on their ideas and prepare for future artwork.



Mixing colours and creating



Bringing it all together:



Writing: We are so proud of our KS1 children and their writing this term. They have been working really hard, showing great focus, creativity, and confidence. It has been wonderful to see their ideas grow and their independence develop.



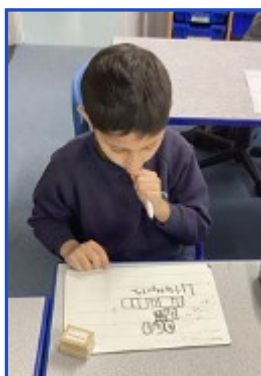
Computing: In this computing unit, children became budding coders using the 2Go program. They learned how to control a screen turtle by giving it instructions, including direction and distance. Pupils practised building simple algorithms and then combined steps to create longer routes, developing their problem-solving and logical thinking skills along the way.



The Power of Play: This special moment was captured by the children themselves as they worked together to design and build an animal sanctuary. The project was entirely child-led, driven by their curiosity, creativity and collaboration.
A wonderful example of learning through play – and pure joy in action!



Maths: At Sibford Gower, maths is all about making connections. We believe maths is accessible for all. The children in Beech have been linking what they know about the additive structure to develop an understanding of multiplicative relationships. Just look at all of their representations to show equal groups. This is a result of their own independent thinking, connecting prior knowledge to new learning and reasoning about the choices they have made.





Willow Class Newsletter



What a wonderful yet busy term we have had in Willow Class. We have fully immersed ourselves in our theme 'The Romans'. Top highlights: the children have created the most amazing pieces of writing, explored different mathematical methods and overcome fears of swimming.

Well done, Willows

We have really enjoyed our literacy this term.

We have created a Roman poem and a persuasive speech to JOIN Boudicca's army!

To support us with our learning, we have had some really engaging drama lessons. This helped us get into character. 'Becoming Boudicca' allowed us to show emotion and help with our spoken language.

The children really impressed us with their expression, 'freeze' frames and acting confidence.

Join Boudicca's Army!

Are you ready to unite with the powerful legend of Boudicca?

Join her fearless army of strong women and brave warriors! Boudicca, the incredible Queen of the Iceni tribe, needs YOU to fight for our freedom!



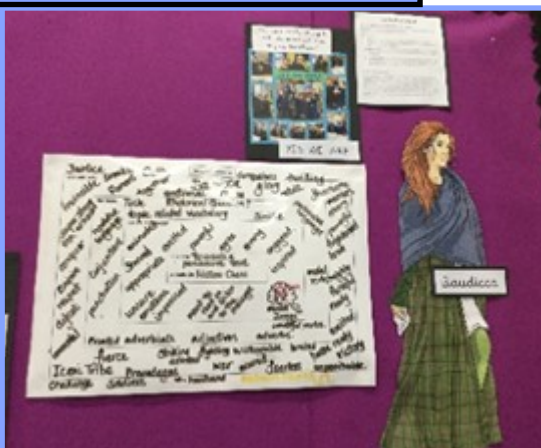
Imagine fighting for justice and showing the Romans that we will not be treated unfairly! When we combine our strength, we can change our future for the better.

Together, we can build a mighty force! If we all stand together, we will be unstoppable! By joining Boudicca's army, you're becoming part of something important and exciting.



To be a true warrior, you must be brave, loyal, and determined. If you are ready to tackle challenges and show your strength,

Generating ideas for writing



Children's Mental Health Week

One of the mental health week activities we did in Willow Class was to create a map of things that are important to us. This e.g. includes "The Island of Joy where I play with my friends, the mountains where I hike with mummy and daddy "...and lots more.





Big Garden Birdwatch 23.01.26



Willow Class took part in the
'Big Garden Bird Watch'.

The rain didn't stop us...

We had a wonderful (and wet!)
afternoon identifying birds and
other animals around our
school grounds.

We then designed and created
our very own bird houses.
Don't they look fabulous!



Super Science

Willow Class LOVE science, a firm favourite!

This term, we have learning about 'states of matter'. The only way to learn about the three states and their particles, is to become the particles!

Great fun was had by all with plenty of hands-on experience to secure the learning!



SOLID: The particles are close together.



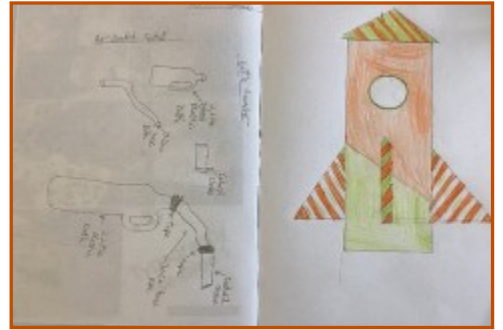
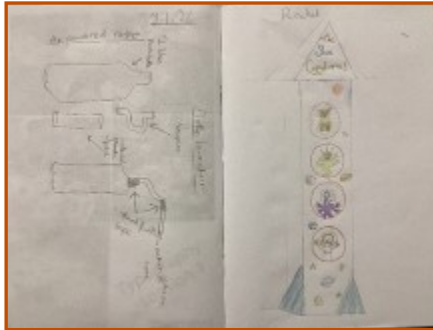
Liquid: The particles are farther apart.



Gas: The particles are much more dispersed.

Oak Class

In Design & Technology this term, we designed and made air powered rockets, then we tested them to see how far they would fly when launched. The children used some plastic pipe to make the launcher and for rolling the rocket shape onto. They had to make sure that their construction was airtight to get the maximum power from their rocket. The final test was to stamp hard on the bottle and watch how far their rocket flew. We were really impressed with how high the launch trajectories were.



A big thank you to all those parents and carers who were able to come and join us for the Oak Class Assembly. It is always lovely to welcome you into school to share some of the things your children have been doing.



TERRIFIC TIGERS

While Year 6 were out at Junior Citizen, Mrs O'Sullivan had the opportunity to do an art workshop with Year 5. As part of this, the children created this splendid tiger images using a range of media—paint, ink and dry pastel, and a range of techniques—painting drawing, blending, printing and cutting.

We were really pleased with the results which are proudly displayed in the classroom.

Though they are all the same kind of creature, each one is brilliantly uniquejust like Year 5 !



Year 6 went on a visit to Oxford this term to take part in the **Junior Citizens** programme. Whilst we there the children experience a safety scenario where they were taught a variety of skills and suggested ways to safely deal with a situation which could arise during daily life. The aim of each safety scenario was to allow the children the opportunity of recognising and dealing with danger in a realistic way and one which they will remember, should they need to cope with a similar situation in real life.



I enjoyed that there were so many life-saving skills to use when you are in difficult situations.

It was very interesting and entertaining. The people were very funny and kind.

They were very good life skills for the future.



Junior Citizens was a very positive day (great) and I learned about the scenarios and the safety position. It was pressuring, challenging but balanced and brilliant.

The different scenarios were fun and creative.



PE at Sibford Gower

Bench Ball Club... SUCCESS!

'Bench Ball' has been a real success this term. Not only are the children playing at an extremely high standard, their teamwork and smiles say it all. Sport is about having fun and trying your best. It is fair to say that this group do just that. Here's to next term!

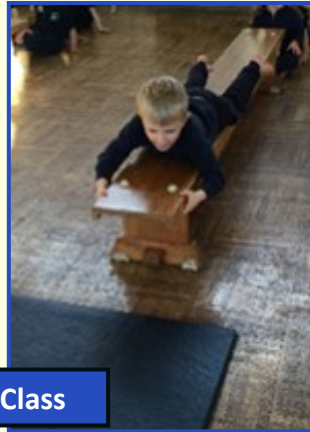


Gymnastics for all this term

We teach a range of sports here at Sibford Gower; it has been lovely to witness each class thrive and progress in 'gymnastics' this term. It is an area of the PE curriculum that is perfect for this time of year as well as teaching the children a range of skills, techniques and balances.



Acorn Class



Beech Class



Willow Class

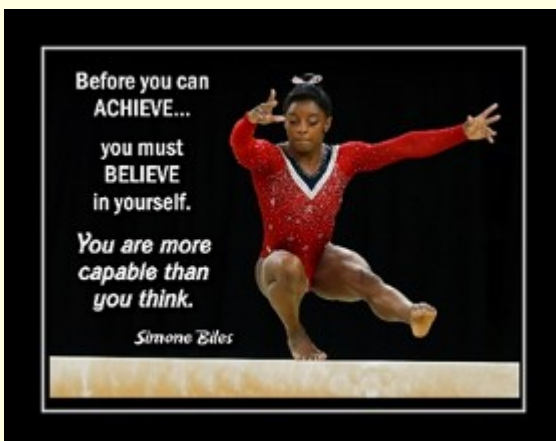


Oak Class

"I have enjoyed working in groups to create different balances"

"I love gymnastics, I do it at school and in my club!"

"I enjoy our warm up stretches- they help my legs!"



Sport and P.E. play an important role in your child's learning and wellbeing. Through regular physical activity, children build strong bodies, develop coordination, and learn healthy habits that can last a lifetime. Just as importantly, sport helps children grow socially and emotionally by teaching teamwork, confidence, resilience, and fair play. Being active at school also supports concentration in the classroom, helping children feel happier, more focused, and ready to learn each day.



GIRLS' FOOTBALL SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

Supported by BARCLAYS

Some of our girls expressed that they were keen to try and play football at break and lunch times but were slightly nervous to play with our more confident players. After some consideration and talks with all KS2 children, we came up with a plan. Girls have 'Thursdays' to play football (alongside weekly Oak football days and Willow football days). **This has been a huge success and is supported by all of the children.**



Oak Class Athletics

Some of our Oak Class children had the opportunity to take part in a wonderful event at The Warriner School - Athletics. This event supported the children in trying a variety of areas of athletics alongside children from a number of other primary schools and included running, throwing and jumping.



Children's Mental Health Week

At our primary school, Children's Mental Health Week is always a very special and important time. We believe that supporting children's emotional wellbeing is just as vital as supporting their academic learning, and this week gives us a valuable opportunity to shine a spotlight on kindness, resilience, self-expression and talking about our feelings. Throughout the week, the children have taken part in a range of activities designed to help them understand their emotions and build positive coping strategies, including circle time discussions, wellbeing workshops and online, creative art projects, mindfulness sessions and themed assemblies. It has been wonderful to see pupils sharing their thoughts so thoughtfully, supporting one another and celebrating what makes each of them unique. By working together as a school community, we hope to continue nurturing confident, happy learners who know that their feelings matter and that support is always available.



Acorn's Circle of Friends: The children in Acorn Class drew lines to their friends, showing the network of caring relationships that exists between our youngest children.



The children in Beech Class explored ways in which they had faced their fears. They then shared ideas about how we can take care of our mental health.



Willow Class created 'My Place' maps, Mrs Benjamin led yoga sessions and we finished off the week with a special Well-Being Assembly on 'Wear your Scarf to School Day' led by Mrs Oliveira and Mrs Blake during which the children learned about the calming effect of bee Breathing



Oak Class Mosaic

The children created this vibrant art work by creating individual collages to represent *not* 'what I like' but 'What I AM like'. They were then able to talk, sometimes very movingly, about what aspects of their abstract collages represent. This was a lovely activity and it was great to see the confident and trusting relationships between the children and staff.

SEN Newsletter

Another successful SEN coffee afternoon this term. Meeting with our families to discuss positives, progress and challenges in a supportive way, is beneficial for all.



SEN activities and events during this half term



JUMP THE AIRHOP Bicester Activities Parties Groups

SEN SESSIONS

NO MUSIC | REDUCED LIGHTING

SEN Sessions

Inclusive sessions for a happier bounce!
Ticket includes one free carer

Every Monday 6 - 7 PM



WATCH THEM THRIVE WHILE THEY DRIVE!

www.rideontimehire.com



YOUTH ACTIVATORS HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES

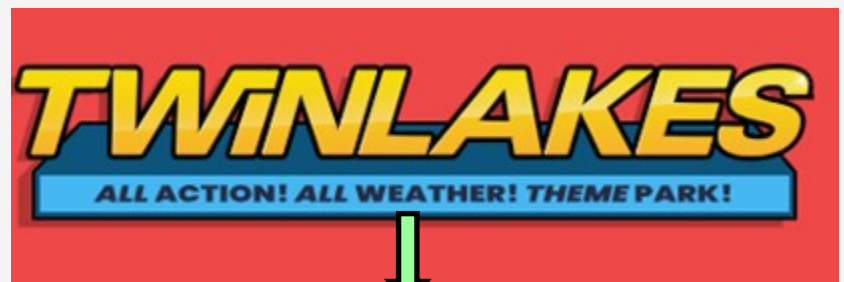
The February half term is coming to life in a venue near you! Join our team for free sports, games, food and nature activities.

The sessions are inclusive and suitable for children aged five and over with 2 hours of fun for all the family. Please use the QR code below to book for your preferred venue.

WHERE YOU'LL FIND THE FUN

BANBURY	Friday 20th February 2pm-4pm	The Hill, Dover Ave, Banbury, OX15 6JZ
BICESTER	Thursday 18th February 1pm - 3pm	Bicester Methodist Church, Bell Lane, Bicester, OX26 6JQ
KIDLINGTON	Thursday 18th February 10am - 12 Midday	Exeter Hill, Oxford Rd, Kidlington OX5 1LB

FREE!



TWINLAKES

ALL ACTION! ALL WEATHER! THEME PARK!

[Buy Day Ticket Admission - Save 25% Online Tickets online - Twinlakes Family Theme Park](#)

HAVE YOU GOT YOUR ACCESS CARD?

[Access Card: Making access](#)

Huge thanks to Mrs Davies, SENCO, for collating this page, with live links.

WHAT IS THE ACCESS CARD?

The physical card acts as a photo ID that can be used to easily communicate your access requirements to events and venues, so that the venues can provide accessibility to the needs of their visitors.

It also works online with other platforms like ticketing systems, to unlock the access facilities you need.

The card shows a photo ID and translates a person's disability or impairment into symbols, effectively highlighting the barriers they face and the reasonable adjustments they might need.



Our WOMBAT School Council continues to meet monthly to represent the children in their class in talking with the headteacher. The WOMBATS also serve as our Eco Council with much of the discussion focussing on ways in which we can support sustainability and promote care for the environment. It was the WOMBATS who agreed that information should be shared with families about the recent Big Garden Birdwatch. They had now been tasked with working within their classes to explore the possible products for their 'sustainability' stalls at the summer term's planned Tree Party on the big Field. Go you WOMBATS!

This term we have had a re-launch of Total Recall. This is an initiative to encourage the children to develop quick recall of number facts. Being able to do this is hugely helpful to them in their wider learning in maths as well as supporting the children prepare for the national multiplication test that all children take in Year 4. We have found this initiative to be really motivating for them. The children are awarded different colour button badges when they reach certain milestones:

Numbers

Yellow: one more and one less to 20 (e.g. one more than 15, one less than 12)

Orange: number bonds to 10 (e.g. 9+1, 3+7)

Green: number bonds to 20 (e.g. 18+2, 5+15)

Pink: number bonds to 100 (e.g. 54+46, 33+67)

Tables

Bronze: 2,5,10 times tables (up to 12x)

Silver: 3,6,4,8 times tables (up to 12x)

Gold: 7,9,11 times tables (up to 12x)

Black: 12 times table and inverse operations and **TOTAL RECALL** of all previous tables and number bonds.

The expectation in the National curriculum is that all children should know their 2x, 5x and 10x tables by the end of Year 2 and all tables up to 12x12 by the end of Year 4. To get their tables badges, the children need to be able to answer multiplication questions asked at random, not just in order.

They need to practise these at home and it can be great fun. They can practise in the car, on a walk, even in the bath. Once they feel ready they will be quizzed by their class teacher for each badge to check their fingertip quick number facts for speed and accuracy before a badge is awarded.

TOTAL RECALL

FINGERTIP QUICK NUMBER FACTS AT SIBFORD GOWER PRIMARY SCHOOL

Yellow - one more, one less	Silver - recall of 3, 6, 4, 8 times tables
Orange - number bonds to 10	Gold - recall of 7, 9, 11 times tables
Green - number bonds to 20	Black - 12 times table plus TOTAL RECALL OF ALL TIMES TABLES AND NUMBER BONDS TO 100
Pink - number bonds to 100	
Bronze - recall of 2, 5, 10 times tables	

Attendance Matters

Good attendance means Being in school at least 96% of the time or 180 to 190 days

175 days not in school for holidays, appointments, exercise

190 days to make the difference

Attendance Level	Days	Lessons Missed	Risk Level
100%	180 days	0 lessons missed	Best chance of success
96%	182 days	8 lessons missed	Target for all students
95%	180 days	10 lessons missed	At high risk of underachievement
90% and lower = Persistent Absence	175 days	25 lessons missed	At severe risk of underachievement

Attend school regularly, attend school punctually, attend school prepared!

Being in school every day, on time, helps children feel settled, confident and ready to learn from the very start of their Reception year.

Even small amounts of missed learning add up. Regular absences or frequent lateness can make it harder for children to keep up with new skills, stay connected with classroom routines, and maintain strong friendships. **Arriving late can also leave children feeling rushed or unsettled, which can affect their well-being throughout the day.**

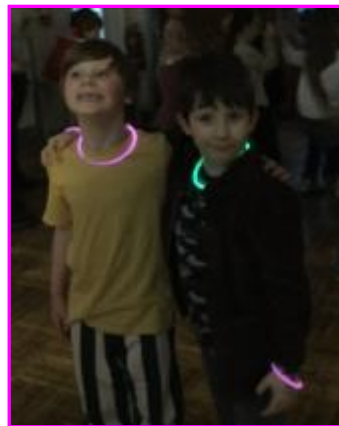
Thank you for working with us to ensure your child is here, on time, every day. Your support makes a big difference to their learning, happiness and success.

THE P.T.A. FANTASTIC FEBRUARY DISCO

It's always great to find an excuse for a party and the P.T.A. disco never disappoints. It was such a pleasure to welcome Tony Cran back into school to run this super event to brighten up the long winter months. Our thanks to those parents and staff who came along to support with this event and to the older children who helped with the 'tattoos'. Great fun!



If you want to book the
**Pulsation Roadshow
Mobile Disco**
you can contact Tony at
01869 934818 (7pm -10pm)
07960 641905 (8am -10pm)
Email pulsation@live.co.uk



THANK YOU P.T.A!

HAPPY HOLIDAY!