



GETS News!

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The Final Lower Basic School Class

It's good to see the school nearly full again at the start of a new term. This means that we have brought in 30 children aged about 3 years to our Nursery Class 1 and also set up a new Skills Training Class 1 of 39 young people, aged 15 to 25 years. The other classes are largely filled with children and young people who have been promoted from their previous Sunrise classes. We have of course now got a new top Lower Basic Class (LB 6) out of last year's grade 5 children, now teenagers! This class is using the last of our LB rooms and effectively completes our primary school.



LB6



We have had to recruit Mr Beola S Williams (pictured left) to help with the extra class. Mr Williams is a Christian and was born in Sierra Leone. He has joined us from the other school that Helen helps to administer in London Corner, Serekunda, supported by a Scottish Charity (St Augustine's, Dumbarton)

We have known Mr Williams for some time now and he is a great addition to the team but his old school will miss him, I'm sure. Mr Williams will be using his experience as a ECD qualified teacher to help our LB1 class next year.

We have had to move a number of teachers within LB to get a good match between skills and class needs, including covering teachers' maternity.

AGM goes North (to Driffield)

We had a great turn-out at our AGM in early September. Thanks go to Angela Ndow (former Longoni-Sarr) for organising the whole event and making us feel so welcome. Lots of discussion and formal bits too, including the election of a new Trustee. An introduction to Pat Taylor follows

The photo shows the whole group, including inserts of 3 people who were unable to stay for the compulsory photo at the end.



A new face on the Trustee team – Pat Taylor



Pat Taylor – in pink!

The charity needs new ideas and it is great to have someone like Pat come forward and offer to help us run GETS.

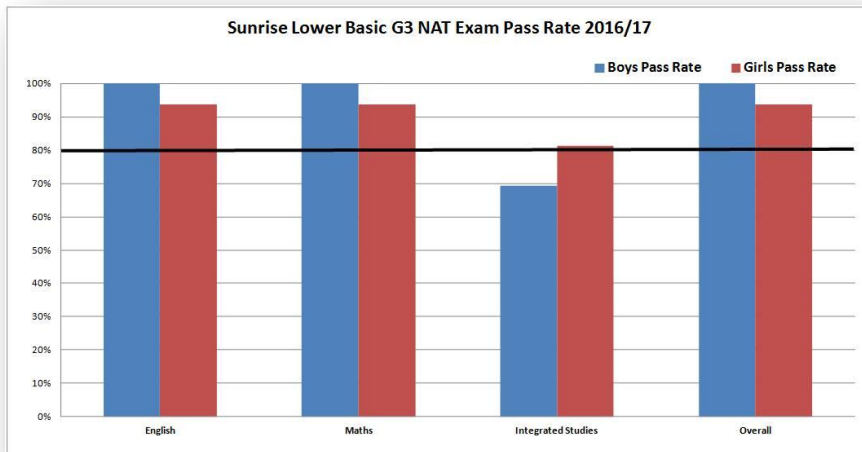
In her own words, Pat describes her background:-

I have a background in finance, governance and risk management having worked for over 30 years in the NHS, retiring from my post of Director of Finance in March 2013. Since retiring I have continued to work part-time as a Non-Executive Director, as well as running a successful consultancy business, working mainly in the public sector. I am a qualified accountant and a fellow of the Chartered Association of Certified Accountants. I have also served as a Director of a multi-school academy in Darlington.

I am married to Geoff and we have two grown-up daughters and a son-in-law, and all five of us holiday in the Gambia each year. Our first holiday to the Gambia was in 2007, and our first visit to Sunrise was in 2013, and we have been coming back ever since. As a family we sponsor two girls in the lower school and have supported Skills students as well. We have been amazed at the work that is done at Sunrise and I am now able to offer further support through my skills and knowledge to the Trustees. I'm very much look forward to helping in the continued development of the students, staff and the facilities of the GETS charity.

The photo shows Pat and some of her family at Sunrise with one of the children (Jankey Secka) that they support. We welcome Pat to our team and hope that she can help us with many of our challenges.

What a result – Didn't they do well?



This year we had to put Mr Beyai's LB3 children through the National Assessment Tests (NAT), as part of a Gambia wide examination.

The Sunrise Target pass rate is 80%.

We were delighted that the children were able to largely achieve this level of result.

The one weak area was in Integrated Studies where although the Boys had a great overall score, they only got to a 69% pass rate in Integrated Studies.

Interesting that the boys beat the girls this year!

Next year the NATs exams will apply to the children in LB5. We have asked our most experienced teacher (Mr Saidy) to help that class to make sure they do as well as possible in this important test.

Well done Mr Beyai (and the children)

Raising £1,500 - A big challenge for Karl Jackson



Karl Jackson at the half way point

Thanks to Karl for completing the huge sponsored challenge of walking the 177 mile trek along Offa's Dyke, in 15 days, with money going to GETS.

(Offa's Dyke is a great frontier earthwork built by Offa, King of Mercia from 757 to 796 A.D. It gives its name to a long distance footpath, one of Britain's National Trails, which runs from Sedbury, near Chepstow, to Prestatyn)

Amazingly, Karl actually managed to raise more than double the amount of cash that he hoped for from friends and colleagues.

Karl actually raised a total of £4,065 !



Karl did much of the walking with 18 fellow workmates, but some parts he had to complete largely on his own. What an achievement!

Karl did all of this in the name of his late wife, Kare. She sadly passed away unexpectedly at a very young age but out of this tragedy has come a series of fundraising initiatives from family and friends, all to help GETS do more in The Gambia.

The Jackson family raise even more funds for GETS



Kirsty Jackson in full flow!

Karl Jackson's sister was also inspired to help GETS by undertaking a sponsorship challenge –

a 72 hour long dance

Starting on 2/7/2017 Kirsty completed the challenge, again in honour of her sister-in-law Kare.

Targeting a total of raising £500 we are delighted that friends and family have supported Kirsty to do even better.

Kirsty raised a total of £809 !

The Trustees have been overwhelmed by these generous donations from the Jackson family on top of the previous gifts from them and their friends last year. **Thank you!**

However, we've recently heard that another gift from Karl's employer will match the amount of cash raised by Karl on his walk. This recognises the effort to support the huge challenge that Karl undertook along with 18 of his colleagues from the Stanlow complex of Essar Oil.

Thank you to Essar Oil for this additional wonderful gift of £4,065

If you think that you could help us by sponsorship or fundraising go to www.getsuk.org

Keeping Sunrise running

I don't think that anyone thought it would be easy to run a school in Africa but we are often surprised at the challenges that come along. The latest of these is the damage by termites to our brand new classroom, used by Mr Ali Bah to teach English and Maths.

Over the summer holidays, when the classroom was unused, the termites moved into the ceiling area and started consuming the fabric of the false ceiling.

We now need to maintain a system of regular spraying (when no students are in), to keep these voracious insects at bay.



Termites



New solar system

We're mending things again, that are broken either by children, by wear or by the elements. The list is long but we have had to spend money:-

- Upgrading our solar power system whilst Gambia is struggling to renew its power plant that gives us even less electricity in recent times.
- The 4 and 5 year old text books used y LB1 and 2classes are "feeling their age" and have been replaced by those that are available at the moment locally.
- The playground equipment and school gates have suffered more problems, due to stress fractures.

All these repairs are consuming cash so it's great to have extra funds.

Staffing a growing school

We've always looked to our Skills Training students to see if there is any interest in teaching so that we can retain good students as members of staff when an opportunity comes along.

One of our experienced Classroom Assistants, Yassin Jammeh, has been given leave to attend Gambia College for teacher training. This became a 2 year full time course just this year and it is a big challenge to let Yassin attend without replacing her. Dawn discovered that we had a budding Classroom Assistant in the Skills Training graduates who was keen to help; Penda Jallow.

Penda, shown here helping with class work, has been working within Lower Basic to support the gaps in our staff.



We have been short of help from Classroom Assistants, particularly because we've needed yet more maternity cover, this time in Lower Basic whilst our LB2 teacher, Mrs Fatoumatta Darboe has another child. Sulayman Jobe has stepped in to teach the class full time until Mrs Darboe returns.

This is a good opportunity for Sulayman, who is currently attending teacher training at Gambia College but has been able to do this part time. All his classes are in the holiday period. It is great that our Classroom Assistants support us in this way.

A total of 6 staff are undergoing training at present, including our Education Director, Mr Cham. This has big cost implications but it is good for the individuals and for the school, so we are happy to support these initiatives.