



Newsletter

11th July 2016

Reports

Dear Parents,

Your child's report has come out with them today. And I am sure that you will read it very carefully and be exceptionally proud of what your child has achieved over this past year. There is not a child in the school that has not done exceptionally well and all of the children have made great progress.

The one issue with the reports I have is the limited language we have in Year 1 and 2 to tell you how well your child has done. We have three main phrases we are able to use, a child can either be 'working towards the expected standard', 'working at the expected standard' or 'working at greater depth in the expected standard'. Basically it is either a pass or a fail. I spoke to many Year 2 parents about assessment a couple of months ago and I would now like to just go over a few points.

As far as we are concerned no child ever fails. Every child has made progress from where they started. No two children start at exactly the same place so to set one national standard for children based on achieving a few specific points does not show how well your child has done. The only way a child in Year 2 can be given the 'working at the expected standard' is if they achieve every single objective. If they are missing just one they are 'working towards the expected standard'. I hope by showing you how the children did for each statement you can see exactly how they have done. Please do not pay too much attention to the overall grade.

Nationally at Year 6 only 53% of the children achieved the new expected standard. In previous years 80% of children nationally achieved the expected standard. The government wanted to significantly raise the bar to standards that have not previously been achieved by many children in years gone by. I do not envy the Year 6 teachers across the country telling 47% of their classes that after seven years at primary school they have failed.

Why have the assessments changed this year?

The government decided to remove the level based system for day to day assessment as it believed that it was confusing for parents and resulted in teachers not being able to identify clearly what children needed to learn and to focus their teaching on those matters. A positive outcome from that shift is seen in our children's books and in lessons. This evidence shows that teaching has become more focused on finding out what children really need and teaching them accordingly. The work in the children's books is just amazing.

How well were teachers and children able to prepare for the tests and assessments?

The Government's arrangements for informing teachers of the changes have frequently been delayed, revised, unclear and, at times, surprising to professionals who had been teaching the curriculum over the past two years. In fact, the Government has yet to confirm the national standard but has, instead, experimented this year with "interim" standards. However, despite this uncertainty and in the face of considerable levels of professional concerns, it has chosen to press on regardless. It insists that this assessment information is shared in the public domain but has indicated that it should be used with great care by Ofsted during inspections due to its volatility. So parents must have it but inspectors should ignore it.

Some of the disruption during the last year includes:

- Mistakes widely reported in the press such as the abandonment of the Key Stage 1 Spelling and Grammar test when it was leaked online. The use of one of the Key Stage 2 Reading tests with similar questions in a revision guide for SATs published two years ago and the accidental early publication of the Key Stage 2 Spelling test to markers in the week before the test.
- The new descriptors used for statutory Teacher Assessment at Key Stage 1 and in Writing at Key Stage 2 were gradually made available to schools around Christmas, with some supporting examples not available until just weeks before the tests and assessments.
- Several of the documents used to train teachers and moderators have also needed to be withdrawn, re-written and re-published because they were unclear or mistaken.
- There is a range of new judgements this year, some of which apply to some of the assessments but not others such as, Working below the standard (BLW), Working at Pre Key Stage (PKF, PKE, PFG), Working towards the standard (WTS), Has not met the standard (HNM), Working at the standard (EXS) and Working at greater depth within the standard (GDS). There are also new “scaled scores” in the tests but they are only interim for this year and may change again next year.

Your child’s class teachers have done an amazing job this year, adapting and changing to the different directives and information as they have come out. The biggest success that the staff have had is in ensuring all of this change has not impacted on the children at all. I would be very surprised if any parents or children had even been aware of half of what has been going on.

I would really like you to focus on the comments the teachers have made and the effort score the children have in each area. This will show you a much better picture of what your child has done this year. The three statements we have to use are a very blunt way of looking at things and I do not believe they are an accurate reflection of what children are capable of.

We still do not know what assessment will look like next year or how we will have to report your child’s progress to you. Once we do know we will come and talk to you as will the Junior School.

If you are at all worried or concerned about anything in the report please do come and talk to us. Your children have done amazingly well this year. I am very proud of each and every one and I hope after reading their report you are just as proud.

Thank you



Matt Greenhalgh



Stars of the Week

7th July

Zillah Radrodro
Sophia Handley
Grace Abley
Darcy Churcher
Joel Wilson
Grace Holden
Dominik
Newland
Ella Trapnell



Upcoming Events

12 July

Year R Watercress Line Trip

13 July

9am Year R and 1 Parents in to watch Maths lesson

14 July

9.10am Last Celebration Assembly

15 July

Year 1 WOW Day

9.10am Year 2 Leavers Assembly

3.15pm Summer Celebrations

18 July

9.10am Year R Assembly

19 July

5.30-7pm Year 2 Leavers Disco

20 July

End of Term – School finishes at 3.15pm