

FROM THE HEADTEACHER...a few thoughts on SATs

My congratulations to Year 6 on the way they tackled their End of Key Stage Two tests this month. I was very proud of their persistence and their determination: truly they demonstrated all our Brunel Values.



The tests this year have proved controversial not helped by papers being leaked and members of the government either avoiding answering test questions or getting them wrong. My own view remains the same: these tests are here to stay and it is right that the school is held to account for the progress children make here and the taxpayers' money we spend. That said, the current set up is wrong.

For a start, the very first thing an inspector does is look at the school results even before they come in. At that moment, they cannot help but form a view of the school and sometimes that view is hard to shift. I think the results should be used as a measure but to me, it feels like they have become the only outcome used to judge a school. Tests help teachers understand children's progress but they should be part of a range of assessments not the only one. Inspectors should look at a range of data – not just the test results.



Secondly, they need to be delivered in a different way. We are told what day to do which test; if a child is away then their score is zero; the papers have to be kept sealed in a locked cupboard inside a locked room. This adds unnecessary pressure to the staff and to the children which cannot be good. How many people do you know failed their driving test not because they couldn't drive but because of the pressure?

Thirdly, the style of the tests is wrong. The questions are too complicated and seem designed to catch children out. Keep them challenging but simple so the children do not have to solve puzzles every time.



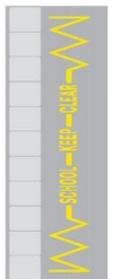
There is another way and we already use it in school. Writing is judged based on the teacher's view of a range of pieces of work. These judgements are checked by other schools and the local authority to make sure they are sound. Yes we have "test conditions" for some pieces of writing but it is not the high stakes regime of the reading, maths and SPAG papers.

Surely that's a better way and puts the child, not the test first.

Iain C. Gilmore

PARKING AND DROPPING OFF CHILDREN

Thank you to everyone who has supported our parking campaign with our school parking tickets. We will keep on issuing them when we can. In the meantime, thank you to everyone who understands why we are doing what we are doing especially those drivers who park a few street away and walk. On a related note, I am still waiting to hear from the city council when the one-way system will be installed and will publicise that date via our website and FaceBook page.



BUILDING WORK

The new carpets on the stairs are due to be fitted this weekend and we look forward to this project being finished. The Academy Trust have accepted a quote to make-over the reception area and this work should be carried out over the summer. This will create a purpose built reception area which will not be a thoroughfare for children and which will add another layer of security to the school. Finally we should be getting some windows on the north side of the building replaced with double glazing.



LAST DAY OF THE SCHOOL YEAR

To remind you all that, as for the past ten years, we do not finish early on the last day of the year. The afternoon consists of the Year 6 Leavers' Assembly and it is important that all children play a part in this important milestone for our oldest children. School finishes at the usual time of 3:20pm.



DIARY DATES

Tuesday 24 May	Fire and Rescue Service working with Year 6
Monday 6 June	School closed – final INSET of the year
Tuesday 7 June	School reopens
Monday 13 June	Year 4 visit to North End Library
Wednesday 15 June	Year 6 Portsmouth University Trip
Monday 20 June	Year 6 Residential - remaining Year 6 to Purbrook Activity Centre
Thursday 23 June	Polling Day for European Referendum – school remains open
Friday 24 June	Non-uniform day in aid of the Summer Fayre
Thursday 30 June	Year 6 Leavers' Concert 7pm Reports Home
Friday 1 July	Sports' Day @ Mayfield (weather permitting)
Monday 4 July	Year 7 transition starts: <i>All secondary schools two days except: MiltonCross & PAGS – 1 week; Mayfield – 2 Weeks</i>
Monday 4 July	Parents' Evenings this week
5 and 6	Thursday 7 July Author Ellen Caldecott visiting Years
Saturday 9 July	Summer Fair
Monday 11 July	Year 4 visits to North End Library New Year 3 Parents' Evening – 6:30pm Pop-up Uniform shop in school – see attached flier
Thursday 14 July	Year 6 Leavers' Disco
Friday 15 July	M&M Theatre – Charlotte's Web
Tuesday 19 July	Year 3, 4, 5 Prize Giving – 1:30pm
Wednesday 20 July	Year 6 Leavers' Assembly – 1:30pm <i>School finishes at usual time of 3:20pm</i>

2016-17 DATES

Autumn Term 2016 - Monday 5 September - Friday 16 December - Half Term: Monday 24 - Friday 28 October

Spring Term 2017 - Tuesday 3 January - Friday 7 April - Half Term: Monday 20 - Friday 24 February

Summer Term 2017 - Monday 24 April - Tuesday 25 July - Half Term: Monday 29 May - Friday 2 June

INSET days: 5 September, 31 October, 3 January, 27 February, 5 June