



The Willow Primary School and Broadwaters' Children Centre

Broadwaters Inclusive Learning Community

Adams Road

Tottenham

N17 6HW

Tel: 020 8885 8800

Fax: 020 8885 8809

Email: admin@thewillow.haringey.sch.uk

Headteacher: Dawn Ferdinand / Deputy: Jenny Smith



May 2016

Dear Parents/Carers

Government changes to Education – VERY important updates – please read

As you will probably be aware from media coverage, there are *lots of changes happening in education at the moment*. ***I thought it best to write and let you know how the school is responding, and give the school view on some of these changes.***

The Curriculum (child's learning guidelines)

The Primary school curriculum changed in September 2014. The school developed new schemes of work and planning to take account of these changes. **The curriculum is far more challenging**, for example, **some of what was previously taught in year two will now be taught in year one, and so on up the school**. The standards that children are expected to reach in year 6 are *very high*. There is lots of new knowledge that children need to learn. This is especially the case for grammar - children are expected to know terms such as 'subordinate conjunction', 'modal verb' and 'relative clause' – these are but a few as there are *many many more!* ***Like many other teachers and headteachers, I have to acknowledge I was not taught terms like this, and it is not something I feel that 10/11 year old children need to learn; however, it is compulsory so we will be teaching them.***



SATs (Standard Assessment Test)

Year 6 – children in this group take end of primary school tests called SATs (Standard Assessment Tests). **New attainment expectations have meant that SATs are much harder this year**. The children continue to sit a spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG) paper, as well as maths and reading papers. The maths paper is now divided into an arithmetic paper (which replaces the old mental maths paper), and two maths reasoning papers. The arithmetic paper is quite straightforward, however *the reasoning papers can be very challenging in the way that questions are asked*. The government have taken out the calculator paper and added *compulsory learning of roman numerals* – the logic behind this is unclear! As there are no more levels (*see below*), **children will receive a scaled score at the end of year 6 SATs rather than a level**. The scaled score will let parents know if their child has reached the **national standard** for that subject. **The government are expecting 85% of children to reach 'a good level of attainment' (as opposed to the current 65% - a massive increase)**. They have yet to announce what the national standard will be, therefore, at the moment we have no idea how well our **current year 6** will do – **be assured that they are working extremely hard with excellent teachers, so whatever they achieve, will be their best!**

**SATs
2016**

Reception – all children were given a **baseline test during the first half of the Autumn term**. This was intended to be a measure of progress throughout their school life. **However, the government have subsequently abandoned these tests!** Schools will continue to complete the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) profile this year, but as of next year, are uncertain as to what the requirements will be at the end of reception.

Year 2 - children in this group also take SATs. Although ***the organisation and expectation of delivery is more formal than previously required***, we are working to ensure that children do not feel pressured by the testing. They are often completely unaware of being assessed in this way.

**SATs
2016**



Please turn over

No Levels!



Just as everyone became familiar with levels, these have also been removed by the government. Each school is expected to set their own assessment procedure instead. **At The Willow, we are using a system called Target Tracker to record our assessments.** This separates years groups into **Bands** – ***year 1 is Band 1, year 2 is Band 2***, etc; the bands are then broken down further into ***beginning, working within and secure*** – ie, your child could be Band 3b – which means that they are working at the beginning of Band 3. **We will explain this in more detail before the end of year reports are released.**

Academy Agenda

You will also be aware that the **Government had proposed for all schools** in the country to **convert to academy** status by 2020, or at least have a plan in place. *As of last week, the government withdrew this requirement.*

There is a possibility that at some point in the future we might look at whether the academy route would be beneficial to the school community, but **we have no plans at the present time regarding this matter.**

School funding

Currently **Local Authorities (LA)** receive money for schools and the LA distributes this money based on a formula set by the **School Forum** (*this is a group of heads, governors and local authority officers, for example, **I am on the School Forum***). This allows local control of how the money is distributed according to the need of each area in the LA. **The government is proposing to change the way that schools are funded through the introduction of a National Funding Formula.** This could see a huge cut to budgets for London schools.

Historically, schools in different areas of the country have received very different amounts of funding per pupil. Levels in London have been relatively high in comparison to others. This reflects the *high level of deprivation, complexity of need and higher running costs*. **London schools (in particular Haringey) are now the fastest improving and amongst the best in the country, and children from disadvantaged backgrounds in London make better progress than their counterparts in other areas of the country.**

What will this mean for us as a school? **This could mean a drastic cut in budget which will affect the amount of teachers and support staff employed to teach your child.**

I want to make sure parents/carers are aware of all that is currently happening in education which will affect children's progress, attainment and experience of schooling.

I am opposed to many of these changes as I do not believe they are productive for the life of primary school children.

You can, however, be assured that the school leadership team will respond in the best way to secure the greatest possible primary life experience for each child in the school.

If you wish to find out more about the changes, please look online. **I will also be discussing the changes at my next headteacher's update** which will be held on **Tuesday, 14th June 2016 – 9-9.50am.**

With warm regards

Dawn Ferdinand
Headteacher



Parents

Learn
More



Please turn over