

Upham Primary School

Church of England (Aided)

Upham Street, Upham, Southampton, Hampshire SO32 1JD
Telephone: (01489) 860355

E-mail: adminoffice@upham.hants.sch.uk
Headteacher: Mr David Woolley, B.Ed. (Hons)



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Dear Parents of Year 6 Children,

As you are probably aware, Year 6 children are required to take statutory assessment tasks (known commonly as SATs) in May. This year, these are timetabled from Monday 11th May to Thursday 14th May. Across Years 5 and 6, the planned English and Maths curriculums have been and are being delivered. The time is now right for the next step which is for the children to take this learning and be able to demonstrate their understanding as 'exam ready'. This letter is intended to give you an outline as to how we will achieve this. At the TEAMS meeting on Thursday 8th January 6pm (as previously communicated), we will explain everything further.

Revision Club

In previous years, one of the key ways in which we have ensured children in Year 6 are prepared and confident for their statutory tests in May, is a 'revision club' after school. This time, outside of the school day, is additional to the learning in-class but also has a different feel because it is after school. We are planning a weekly session on every Wednesday after school from 3.30pm to 4.30pm which we strongly encourage all children to come to. There is a strong correlation in previous years that those who attended achieved higher results, not simply because they didn't miss anything, but because of the confidence and awareness these small group sessions instilled. Last year of the children who just missed the required standard, so had a 'below standard result', were children who had not attended. Different weeks will have an English focus, others Maths. These will start from Wednesday 14th January.

Our aim in these sessions is not to teach to the test; the day-to-day learning the children have done and will continue to do, will help them understand the desired content. However, the tests in May will be their first real experience of formal exams and we want to ensure they approach them with confidence, taking them in their stride. To do this, the revision club will help them explore how to manage an exam and the time; to make choices about which questions to do, plan how to tackle something they initially do not have an idea about and how to know what is required. Essentially this is about raising confidence and awareness so that when the tests come, they are entirely predictable and something the children easily take in their stride.

Miss Leech and myself will be teaching the sessions which will enable highly targeted, tiny group teaching, something most schools could not offer. We both have extensive specialism regarding teaching Year 6 but have also attended many Local Authority and DfE trainings regarding the national curriculum expectations and the content of the tests. Mrs Bird will also join us for the Maths session so that her considerable Maths expertise can benefit the children and enable even smaller groupings.

Additional Tasks

Children will also have some past papers to complete as homework during the week. Miss Leech will then go through the papers with just Year 6, in a session during the day (Year 5 working elsewhere for this) so it is important to complete the paper and bring it in by the specified date to benefit from this learning. This is also good training of the skill of learning how to manage home tasks, which will really set them up for when they start secondary school and will have to manage their homework.

Completing past papers will help revise key areas but also help the children get a sense of how they are in control of their learning – as they work, they will see their scores improve and their confidence should grow as they see themselves progress. They have already completed a few as part of normal lessons so have some familiarity. When they start to do them ‘cold’ with no preparation, these initial results might be low (so don’t panic about this!) but as children learn to better manage time and make better choices they will do better and they will feel their own learning progressing through the scores. This is part of the powerful mindset for learning we want to instil; that exams are simply a part of life and that with sensible preparation, they are straightforward and nothing to worry about. This also subtly shifts children’s sense towards understanding that they are in control of their own achievement - they will get out what they put in, which is a mindset that will help them hugely at secondary school, that’s why those who have attended Revision Club tend to get better results! Please note that the homework grid requirements for Year 6 are reduced from the normal amount accordingly.

Before School Sessions

Miss Leech will also offer short before-school, morning revision sessions on Tuesdays and Fridays from 08:15. These will revisit some of the content from the Reading, grammar and Maths curriculum which they will be tested on so that they feel confident in their knowledge. The first of these will start on Tuesday 27th January. Look out for a letter Miss Leech will send shortly with further details, including a timetable with subject areas so you can see what will be covered.

Practice Week

Part of the experience of a formal exam is that it feels different to normal class learning. Children are required to take the tests as formal exams, by themselves on isolated tables set out in the hall. Children need to feel comfortable with these arrangements before the tests so Miss Leech will plan a ‘mock exam week’ during the Spring Term. Children will experience each of the tests in the same exam conditions as will be used during the real week. Throughout they will also discuss how this feels, and why it is the case. We will also run a before- school fun-dance session, for those who would like to, to help the children understand that some calming time and exercise is a good preparation for something that potentially might make you nervous. Many children will be aware of how Year 6s used this last year (positively), so will already be familiar. Details will be explained nearer the time.

Yours sincerely,



Mr David Woolley
Headteacher