

So begin the final terms of Year 6.

Perhaps the most dominant feature of this first term is the SATs. These will be held in the week beginning 9th May and will be spread across four mornings. The timetable is as follows:

Monday 9th	Reading Test
Tuesday 10th	Spelling and Grammar
Wednesday 11th	Maths (Paper 1 - arithmetic and Paper 2 – reasoning)
Thursday 12th	Maths (Paper 3 reasoning)

The tests will be held in the classroom under closely monitored conditions. There is no need for the pupils to worry about SATs but we are in the middle of a sensible amount of preparation in order to increase confidence. As part of that, you will receive some homework this week which incorporates lots of different maths skills. These are a really good way of sharpening up mental maths and are intended to be used little and often rather than in one big hit. We would also recommend that during the week of the tests, the children get plenty of sleep, are well fed and most importantly arrive at school in plenty of time.

As you know, the Isle of Wight residential trip has had to undergo some dramatic reshaping in light of certain tragic circumstances. I would like to thank everyone for their understanding and support as we have endeavoured to preserve the trip as best we can. You should have received a letter follow confirming the new arrangements.

In spite of the SATs, all subject lessons continue this term as normal.

The English work will initially spend time drawing together our current knowledge of grammar and find ways to analyse it on a deeper more structural level. Meanwhile, the composition writing will take the previous descriptive work and explore new ways to apply it to story writing, especially using shifts in time. Alongside this, we will explore how to improve writing in other subjects such as science or history, to ensure that the quality of their written work is consistent across the curriculum.

Maths will focus initially on basic calculation involving the four functions (+, -, $\times$, $\div$) before moving back into problem solving where these skills are tested and applied to a greater degree. There are some key skills which can be developed at home for those who are brave enough to face a Year 6 child approaching their mathematical peak. Tables remain fundamental to quicker, more efficient math and where there are still weaknesses in the basics (up to $12\times$) these should be rehearsed at every opportunity. Similarly, being able to count is critical so practice counting on and back from any number in numbers up to 12, simple decimals such as 0.5, 0.25 and 0.75. On a similar theme, counting in fractions is an excellent mind expander. Try counting on and back in three quarters for starters.

In science we will now take a look at natural selection and evolution. Although the basic principles are relatively easy to understand, developing a meaningful understanding is quite challenging so we will step slowly and carefully to begin with. It also raises some interesting philosophical debates, especially when comparing scientific and religious views on the matter which is something we will address sensitively and openly.

History will be looking at the Aztecs, especially the construction of their society and how they were influenced by their belief in various gods.

Art gives way to DT in which we will be designing and making moving buggies which is an excellent opportunity to apply maths skills in a really fun and creative way.

ICT will allow us to learn how to blog safely. We will look at setting up templates and how to add to existing journals over time but the key message will remain on-line safety.

PE will develop skills in batting and fielding this term. We will look at different techniques that are applicable to different sports such as rounders and cricket and learn lots of different mini games. Sounds like an excellent cue for two months of debilitating rain...

Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Mr. Andy Silvester