

Dear Parents

We've done it!

We have arrived at the end of another year - in one piece, a little tired, but with some smashing memories of the last eleven months.

For me, the highlights were the productions. Both the Nativity and the Pirates of the Curry Bean underlined what well rounded individuals we are producing. Yes, our children can read well, add up and write a decent letter but they can also hold an audience, encourage each other and work together and take great pride in what they do. I'm sure like me, when you look at photos of them performing you are filled with pride and admiration.

In our drive to continually improve provision at Balcombe School, we had four main areas of focus this year - writing (editing and redrafting skills), reasoning in maths, practical science and SMSC development (spiritual, moral, social & cultural).

We spent the year focussing on and promoting use of skills that the children need to improve their own work (rather than wait for an adult to do it for them) and now not only are our children able to significantly improve spelling, punctuation, grammar, vocabulary choices in their first draft work, they are also much more willing to do so.

In maths, our children not only have been getting better at "number crunching" but are now better equipped to puzzle, explain and predict, spotting patterns and using their understanding of how number works to solve mathematical problems.

Our effort to make Science more practical has certainly been popular with the children. In every class, almost every week, children have been taking part in investigative activities, planning, hypothesising, predicting, describing, explaining and generally having great fun. In addition to class science, we have organised whole school science afternoons, where children in mixed age groups have explored and experimented to solve various challenges, for example with bubbles and just yesterday, making a variety of marble runs. These activities have certainly fired their imaginations and we now have a few more budding scientists in our midst.

The main changes resulting from the last area of focus are in terms of how we now run our school council (every child is a member and gets a chance to share their ideas) and with the introduction of "Open the book" assemblies. The children love these and in addition to being a great way to share stories from the Bible with members of our community, it is another vehicle by which children can showcase their drama talents!

Finally, a special mention to our children in year 6, for working so hard and performing so well in the SATS. We know life is about more than one week

of tests, but it's always nice to see the children get the recognition they deserve for their academic progress. Where one or two children missed the expected level in certain areas, I can assure you it wasn't for the want of trying – I commend every member of Mill class for working as hard as they could to achieve the challenging standards set for them. Mill – you should all be really proud of yourselves.

Below is the data for our year 6 this year compared to national figures last year, with the percentage of children achieving the expected level at the end of KS2.

| | National | Balcombe |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|
| Reading | 71% | 76% |
| Maths | 75% | 79% |
| Grammar, punctuation and spelling | 77% | 76% |
| Writing (teacher assessed and moderated by county) | 76% | 79% |
| Reading, Writing and Maths | 61% | 69% |

Thank you to all our parents, grandparents and friends, for your help and support this year and thank you to the 144 pupils who made it such a good one! Enjoy a restful and sunny (hopefully) summer and I'll see you on the other side!

Wendy Millbanks

IMPORTANT DATES for September

(Club [schedule](#) is available on our website along with all relevant school information available on our [calendar](#));

- 04 Sept – INSET DAY
- 05 Sept – **Back to School**
- 06 Sept – Meet the Teacher – Mill & Lake Class
- 07 Sept – Meet the Teacher – Coombe Class
- 08 Sept – Meet the Teacher – Spring Class
- 11 Sept – Clubs start (some)
- 13 Sept – Bowles Residential Trip / Meet the Teacher – Forest Class
- 14 Sept – Swimming starts
- 18 Sept – Clubs – All running from this date
- 27 Sept – Photos – Individual