



Taking care of each other
Always trying our best
Everyone learning together

Horndon-on-the-Hill C. of E. Primary School

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Dear Parents,

When you receive your child's report this year, the attainment of your child at the end of this academic year, may look very different from the past. As was explained at the numerous Curriculum Evenings and Termly Learning Conferences, having spent years getting your head around levels and sub-levels, I'm afraid, in years 1,3,4 and 5 they are no more and next year the whole school will use the new system.

It comes at a time when, as you know, so much else has changed in our schools. The teachers at Horndon have been doing our utmost to provide the smoothest and most effective transition for your child as we move from one national curriculum to another.

Children who were comfortably on track for their age will suddenly and unexpectedly appear to be falling behind. Those who were flying high may seem no longer to be. The reality is that the goalposts have moved so significantly that it has been difficult to keep on track. Your child may well have made excellent progress this year, and yet still be showing as not yet attaining the required standard.

Let me illustrate with an example. In the past, KS2 children who were achieving well in maths might have explored the notion of probability, allocating fractions to likelihoods of events and working out the chance of things occurring. All of that work is now ignored: the new curriculum does not include it, and so the attainment scores will not recognise it. That your child may well have excellent knowledge and skills in this area but this is no longer graded.

Those same children, especially year five, are now expected quickly to fit in three years' worth of fractions work that never previously existed. Content that was previously covered in Years 7 and 8, is suddenly now expected of our 10-year-olds. The issue is repeated for aspects across the subjects, and age ranges.

As a school, we are doing our utmost to fill those gaps, to adjust the curriculum, to provide the extra direction and support pupils need, but a four-year Programme of Study cannot be covered in one year.

In time, all of our children will work through the national curriculum at the expected rate, and numbers of children working at the expected standard will rise. This will be as a result of teachers adjusting what they teach to meet the new requirements.

So please accept our apologies. We recognise that it's confusing, indeed worrying in cases. Doubtless, your teacher will have been able to reassure you of the progress they have made this year, and explain how they've set out to change things to meet the new requirements.

But this year more than ever, I'd urge you not to panic when you see the score, or tick-box, or highlighted grade. Take time to read the paragraphs in the report that highlight what your child has achieved and where they need to go next.

There is no need to presume that anyone has failed your child. The teachers will continue to provide the best possible education within the parameters set by the government. If you have worries, then of course, ask. As a profession we don't yet have all the answers, but the teachers who work with your child know much more about them than any grade, score or tick-box will ever tell you.

When you have read the report, take note of the assessments, but most importantly, think back to how your child has grown this year, what they now know and can do that is new to them and you. Share your pride with them of what they have achieved as a whole child as well as any academic achievements.

Yours sincerely,

Mr. Martinson
Headteacher