

A NOTE FOR PARENTS AT THE END OF YEAR 4

This note has three main purposes:

1. to give some context to the assessment scores that appear on some of your sons' end of Summer term subject reports that you will be given access to very soon;
2. to give a brief explanation of how the boys have been grouped for the next academic year; and
3. to provide some guidance on how the boys can maintain their academic skills across the holidays.

REPORTS AND ASSESSMENT SCORES

Formal, summative assessments are taken by the Year 4 boys in Maths and English. Therefore, they are the only subject reports on which a score appears. Of course, in all other subjects, plenty of informal and formative assessment took place on a daily basis in order for us to monitor and support progress.

Maths

As part of the school's Key Stage 2 (Years 3 to 6) Collins Connect Busy Ants Maths scheme, the boys take a test at the end of every third week on the areas that they were focusing on in the previous three weeks as part of that unit. Performances in Units 7, 8 and 10 (Unit 9 was skipped out as it consisted entirely of unnecessary revision), taken since the Spring term report marks were calculated, have all contributed to the mark that appears on the Summer term reports, in the form of an overall percentage. Marked test papers were sent home shortly after these tests were taken for you to have a look at.

English

Since the Spring term report marks were calculated, Year 4 boys have taken further year-group specific tests for punctuation and grammar, creative writing and reading comprehension (in the form of the half termly computerised Accelerated Reader tests). The English report score reflects performances on all of these, with weighting being one third to each of punctuation and grammar, creative writing and reading comprehension.

Please note the following general points with regards to reports and assessments:

- No reporting system is perfect, but it is probably best as parents to place greater emphasis on the written words in reports than on numerical marks as words can paint a fuller picture;
- Scores on formal assessments of children at this age should always be taken with a pinch of salt. There are often cases where factors such as ability to read questions carefully, to express oneself verbally, anxiety, mood and other things linked to general maturity and “exam technique” can limit a young boy’s ability to reveal his true knowledge and understanding on a one-off formal “test” no matter what the test subject, leading to a lower than deserved score;
- A score of, say, 75% for one assessment or subject does not necessarily match up to a score of 75% on all other assessments and subjects. Levels of difficulty, subject, year group and all manner of other factors limit the validity of such comparisons.

GROUPING OF BOYS FOR THE NEXT ACADEMIC YEAR

Year 5 consists of four forms of boys. These are made up of two parallel higher ability groups (Mr Roberts’ and Mrs Rossington’s tutor groups next year) and two parallel mixed ability groups (Miss Brown’s and Mrs Aldridge’s tutor groups).

In order to allocate boys to these groups, we referred to data from underlying ability tests and attainment tests from across the year and of course also called upon the judgement of the professional teachers who have worked with the boys, day-in, day-out, throughout the year. We also took into account any pertinent pastoral issues when grouping the boys.

Hopefully you found the recent transition presentation for parents of boys moving up to Year 5 delivered by Mr Affleck (Head of Year 5) to be helpful. In addition to information about how the boys have been grouped, this included information about how the boys will be supported with settling into the new and slightly different routines and challenges of Year 5. Please do contact Mr Affleck or Mrs Christian (Head of Academic Improvement) for further information and clarification in relation to any of this.

MAINTAINING ACADEMIC SKILLS DURING THE HOLIDAYS

The coming weeks are a holiday that follow a rigorous academic year. It is important that the boys relax, recharge and play. Therefore, we do not prescribe booklets or worksheets. However, it is important that certain skills are maintained.

Reading

Boys should be encouraged to read a variety of texts for pleasure. If boys can find authors and/or genres that appeal to them, then they will improve their comprehension and vocabulary (to pick out just two of the many benefits of reading) while actually enjoying themselves! You should refer to your son's most recent Accelerated Reader Reading Range (formally known as the "ATOS Book Level range") and use the www.arbookfind.co.uk website to find appropriate books.

Writing

Boys should be encouraged to write creatively and expressively on subjects of their choice. This could be in the form of postcards, holiday diaries, mini-projects or stories.

Mental maths

Boys should continue to practise times tables and number bonds (i.e. pairs of numbers that add up to 10/20/100 etc.) to improve speed and accuracy of recall. There are loads of apps available for this and it is good for boys to find ones for themselves that really engage them. Good old fashioned times table games over the dinner table as a family are also excellent. Failure to keep these skills fresh will lead to them deteriorating over the Summer break and not hitting the ground running with Maths in Year 5.

Maths in general

If you do wish to go over the content of what has been learned this year, please refer to the newsletters for each Busy Ants unit. These are available within the Mathematics section of the Firefly VLE (Virtual Learning Environment) in the Parents portal of the school website.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Briefly, please note that any of the boys' exercise books from this year that are not sent home at the end of this term will be available for the boys to collect at the start of next term.

Thank you for your support this year and congratulations to your sons for everything that they have all achieved in Year 4.

Have a lovely Summer!