



Radley CE Primary School & Foundation Stage Unit

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Dear Year 6 parents,

I wanted to write to you to let you know the plans for the continued illness of Mrs Sparks. This has extended for far longer than we originally anticipated and therefore I have been considering how to ensure minimal disruption and the best teaching and learning in her absence, especially in the run up to SATs. I appreciate that this has come at the worst possible time for your children, who have already had the disruption in other years of their school lives and for that I am deeply sorry that I have not been able to rectify this in a satisfactory way for all concerned. I am in the process of planning for members of our existing staff to teach in Thames Class, and I will update you once this has been confirmed.

Due to the nature of Mrs Spark's illness, we are having to forward plan in two week blocks, and although I have tried, we have been unable to secure a single regular teacher for this period. Therefore, we have so far relied on the quality supply teachers that we know and that know us. All of the planning and resources in Thames is provided by us, with regular opportunities for SATs preparation for our Y6 children. Please be reassured there is no 'babysitting' by supply teachers here at Radley Primary School.

Year 6 will sit their End of Key Stage 2 Statutory Assessment tests (SATs) during the week of 9th May. As you know, these are a method of measuring the achievement of school. In small schools like ours with children joining after and leaving before the end it is less accurate comparison than in a larger school with an average cohort. Each child is also a far greater percentage of the cohort in a small school, and therefore any results can vary by a considerable amount each year.

It is my ethos as a school leader not to make a big fuss of the SATs, but of course we want our children to do well and feel confident as they leave us to go on to secondary school so therefore we prepare them so they know what's coming. I firmly believe that our children's experiences of Year 6, or indeed any other part of the school, should not be led by the prioritisation for these assessments as opposed to an excellent curriculum as this can lead to stress and anxiety for all concerned. It is clear that some of the children are feeling considerably worried and upset by the present situation. I will ensure that the children are using PSHE time to develop strategies to help.

If your child is feeling anxious, here are some places to find useful information and tips:

[Supporting A Child With Anxiety | Tips & Advice | YoungMinds](#)

[Anxiety in children - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

[Coping with anxiety | The Children's Society \(childrenssociety.org.uk\)](http://childrenssociety.org.uk)

Jesus said, "I come to give life - life in all its fullness," John 10:10

The secondary schools generally use their own assessments at the beginning of Year 7, along with our teacher assessments and reports from the end of Year 6, to put the children into sets or streams they don't usually use the SATs results they are given.

Please reassure your child that although these tests feel extremely important, they are just a snapshot of what each child is able to do on a particular day and their learning continues up until the end of the year. Unlike their teacher, the tests do not take into account how well a child has slept, how anxious or upset they are, if they have argued with their best friend over the weekend, what their experience of lockdown was, or anything else that may be on their mind at that particular time. All these aspects may affect a child's performance in any test situation. There is also no test of how kind, funny, considerate or artistic your child is, or what they are able to achieve in the future, apart from their conduct and attitude at school each day. Please also reassure your child that you, their teachers and the adults that work with them know that they will do their very best, and that is all we ask of them.

I will send out some revision for your child to work through with you if you think it may be beneficial. I will also highlight particular areas that your child may need to focus on to plug some gaps or develop confidence. It is entirely optional, as it complements what the children are doing at school. It can also be dipped in and out of as needed.

We will continue to support and monitor the children, and hope that I can give further details about how we will staff Thames Class in the next day or two.

Thank you for bearing with us at this challenging time, please do not hesitate to get in touch with me if you have further queries or need more information.

Yours sincerely,

Claire Thomas

Headteacher