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Dear Parents

I am writing to make you aware of the many changes that are taking place in education. In September 2014, the Government introduced a new curriculum for Years 1, 3, 4 and 5. From this September 2015, Years 2 and 6 are also following the new curriculum. Teachers have been working hard to ensure that these topics are exciting for children to learn and also interesting to teach. Details of the curriculum can be found for every year group on our school website: www.plympton-st-maurice-primary.org.uk

In many ways the new curriculum is not vastly different from the old one. However, there are aspects that are considerably more challenging. For example, many of the new math's concepts for Yr 6 are usually not introduced until Year 8. Similarly many of the objectives Year 3 have to achieve, were previously taught at Yr5. So the objectives the children are expected to learn are far more demanding.

The Office of Standards in Education (Ofsted), provide schools with clear guidelines of what schools will be expected to achieve. This year there is a great emphasis placed upon teaching spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) aspects to learning and promoting British Values. As you may know we began our new school year with each class focusing on an aspect of 'Life in Britain' with classes learning, for example, about iconic buildings, famous British people and food and farming. The thread of SMSC and promoting British values will now run throughout every lesson, including times of Collective worship.

Schools are expected to hold collective worship every day. We do this both in class and as a whole school at the end of the day on Mondays and Fridays. As we are not a church school, we do not insist on children praying, but respect individual views by offering children the choice to 'think or pray.' As part of British Values, we have introduced children to The Lord's Prayer and, during the next few months, we will be introducing some of the more traditional hymns, which will complement the traditional carols sung at Christmas.

Assessment procedures have also changed, and this year sees the first time in schools when assessment without levels takes place. Whilst the government have removed the way we previously assessed learning using the national curriculum levels, there has been fragmented guidance on how schools should now assess and track children's progress.



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We have worked hard to review our Assessment and Reporting Policy, and I hope to share a draft copy with parents at our forthcoming parent council meeting on Thursday 15th October, to ensure we capture everyone's views.

Quite simply, children are now tracked against the **learning expected for their age**. If a child is achieving what they should, they will be awarded a judgement of low at the end of the autumn, a middle at the end of the spring term and a high at the end of the academic year. We cannot award a judgement of a high, even for an able child earlier than the end of the academic year as they would not have been taught all the objectives. In many ways using national curriculum levels could often be confusing. Now your child will be working at objectives as expected for their year group.

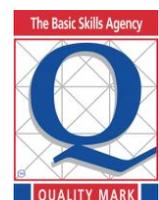
However, if a child is currently finding the new curriculum for their age too challenging, this will be noted as working below the age expectation. On the other hand, more able children will now be awarded a judgement of 'mastery'. The emphasis of the new curriculum is about deep learning and making sure children really understand what they've been taught, and can apply their learning, before moving onto the next thing.

We are very proud of our results in previous years that show many of our pupils leave Year 6 working at a level associated with children in Years 7 and 8 and sometimes at Year 9 (level 6). However, the new curriculum and assessment procedures place great emphasis upon children learning and applying their knowledge.

Teachers will be very happy to discuss your child's learning and progress at the learning review meetings held after half term. Please be assured that despite all of the changes currently taking place, we will continue to endeavour outstanding teaching and learning experiences for your child.

Many thanks for your continued support.

Mrs Sarahjane Tustain
Headteacher



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