



**Billingshurst Primary School**  
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Dear Parents and Carers

I may say this every year but it is my pleasure to present your child's report for this academic year. I take real joy in reading these each year and I know, having done so, that you will all enjoy reading about your child's achievements and developments this year. Each child is unique to us and this is reflected in their unique achievements reported to you. I am proud of every single child in the school, for the efforts they have put in and for the contribution they have all made to making this school a very special one.

Next week, on Wednesday and Thursday, I invite you to an informal open afternoon to come and have a look at your child's work, with your child or without if they are watching the film, and see the context of the report. I know that the standards achieved by the children are the highest ever and I know that each of our children have achieved the best they can this year.

Last year I set out my view about the current assessment of children in primary schools (see my letter at: [http://www.billingshurstprimary.org.uk/pdfs/letters/general/2015-2016/Tests and Assessments 2016 Letter to Parents with Reports.pdf](http://www.billingshurstprimary.org.uk/pdfs/letters/general/2015-2016/Tests%20and%20Assessments%202016%20Letter%20to%20Parents%20with%20Reports.pdf) ) and I do not want to repeat myself but I do think it is important to set your child's results, whichever year group they are in, in context.

This year the results at Early Years, KS1 and KS2 are significantly higher than last year and that is good for the school. However I still have serious concerns about the way children are judged as having achieved or 'failed' by meeting or not meeting expected age-related standards. I want to reassure parents that each child is unique and develops differently – everyone in education knows this. If your child is judged as currently not meeting age-related standards they are not failing and neither is the school. Read your child's report carefully to see what they have achieved, the progress they have made and what the next steps are. You have our commitment to ensuring that each child is taught well and supported by excellent teaching to make sure they make the best progress possible and, with your support of your child's learning, we can maximise the potential they have to meet these standards.

For those parents of Y2 and Y6 children, you will receive the results of statutory assessments. In KS1 these are teacher assessments, supported by the tests. In KS2 the writing is a teacher assessment and the rest are test results. You will also receive the teachers' assessment of maths and reading to support the test result but these are not published – schools are held to account on the test results only.

Test are useful but only a guide to the child's performance on that day whereas teachers' assessments are over a period of time and a range of contexts. The



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high-stakes testing regime at Y6 in particular is creating a culture similar to GCSEs but at BPS we resist this. I was thrilled to hear children saying they enjoyed taking the test (some of them!) as we will encourage and motivate the children to do their best but will not 'hot-house' them or narrow the curriculum to achieve the required outcomes. I am very pleased that, this year, the school's results have improved significantly however that is irrelevant for each individual child. I said last year that our children are not performing seals and we continue to teach an exciting, broad and creative curriculum that I believe is best placed to set the children up to love learning and start secondary school as active, interested learners.

As a profession we continue to press the DfE for more informative assessments that are supportive of the child's learning. One of the highest performing OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries is Finland and they have no high-stakes testing at all. Tests do not improve learning outcomes – only high quality teaching does that and that is what we will continue to focus on here at BPS.

So come and see your child's work, look at Twitter, the website, the displays in the classroom, the weekly sports reports, music events, trip reports and ask you child about what they have enjoyed and loved this year. I still passionately believe it is our foremost role to develop the talents of every child and help them see they have unique abilities that they can develop and succeed in. For a great many that will be academically. It could also be in music, art, sport, designing, building, performing, creating, caring or dancing but most certainly should be to develop the unique talent that lies in every child.

I always say farewell to our Year 6s with sadness but also with hope for their future and a desire to know, in a few years' time, what exciting things they have done and where their lives are heading. Recently I had a letter from a past pupil from a previous school who is now working in theatre design – how fabulous to be doing something they are passionate about! I have been lucky to do that with my career and it is my ambition for each of our children to have the chance to do the same and to be happy.

Yours sincerely



Helen Williamson  
Headteacher

