



GOVERNORS' NEWS

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WELCOME TO 2012/13!

Welcome back to all our Bernards Heath families, and a particularly warm welcome to those of you who are new to the school this September. We look forward to working with you all to make this another exciting, successful and enjoyable year for the children.

There is currently a vacancy on our governing body for one new parent governor. Further information and nomination form will be circulated shortly. If you think you may be interested, Chair of Governors, Mary Liming, is always happy to be contacted via the school office for an informal chat about what the role involves.

EXCELLENT ACHIEVEMENT

In December 2009, Bernards Heath Junior School was graded 'OUTSTANDING' by Ofsted. Since then, the school has not only maintained levels of achievement, but continued to improve year on year. Governors were especially delighted by the excellent set of SATS results from last summer. These are highlighted in the table below, and compared to previous years' results, to the targets set by the school, and also to the average KS2 results from schools across Hertfordshire:

KEY STAGE 2 RESULTS	Result Summer 2010	Result Summer 2011	Result Summer 2012	County Result 2012
English				
Level 4 or above	88.1%	91.7%	92.9%	88.0%
Level 5 or above	40.7%	48.3%	55.4%	43.5%
Maths				
Level 4 or above	89.8%	91.7%	94.6%	86.1%
Level 5 or above	49.2%	58.3%	58.9%	44.8%
English AND Maths				
Level 4 or above	86.4%	90.0%	91.1%	82.2%
Level 5 or above	28.8%	45.0%	44.6%	32.4%

Bernards Heath Junior School is clearly in the category of a high-performing school with a strong three year upward trend. This is not a situation that '*just happens*'; it is the result of sheer hard work, and in particular:

- the consistent high-quality teaching by the class teachers, who are so well supported by the teaching assistants
- the excellent attitudes to learning and participation in school life by the children
- and the supportive involvement of parents.

All of this is underpinned by clearly identified and well-managed whole-school strategies, which are set out in each year's School Improvement Plan. Overleaf are the details of this year's School Priorities, and a brief explanation of how these are decided – this may not be a particularly "exciting read", but governors thought parents might find this information of interest.

SCHOOL PRIORITIES for 2012/13

It is important that our year 6 children do well in their end of year SATS as this is one of the most visible ways a school is judged. More importantly, it demonstrates that their four years at Bernards Heath have provided them with the best education possible. The focus of attention, however, is not just in year 6 but starts on their arrival in year 3 and develops progressively throughout years 4, 5 and 6.

Many strategies are employed to ensure that the most effective approaches to teaching and learning are identified, developed, implemented and assessed for each year group, for specific individuals, and for specific groups of children. The school also values the services of our School Improvement Partner, who provides an external professional perspective during her routine visits to the school.

Throughout the summer term each year, Mrs Kilpatrick, the staff and governors draw together all the different strands of information and data to enable them to identify the key priorities for the coming year. At the governing body meeting in July, the final draft of the School Improvement Plan for 2012/13 was discussed and approved. The school's three main focus areas will be:

Priority 1: National data shows that children eligible for free school meals perform below their peers. To maintain our "Outstanding" status, our school needs to ensure that all groups of children are achieving standards of attainment at least in line with the national averages for all pupils, and where attainment for any group is below that of pupils nationally, that it is working towards closing that gap. The school will, therefore, be taking specific action to improve the progress for this group of children.

Priority 2: The school needs to further develop the overall quality of teaching which was graded 'Good' by OFSTED in Dec 2009. OFSTED found that *"In all classes, pupils make good progress in their learning because of the consistently good quality of teaching provided for them"*. If BHJS is to maintain its overall "Outstanding" status under the new OFSTED criteria, *"consistently good teaching"* needs to become *"outstanding teaching"*.

Priority 3: In the light of the new OFSTED Framework and the new curriculum, which includes a new grammar test in summer 2013 SATS, the school is reviewing its teaching of reading, writing, grammar and spelling. It is also working to close the attainment gap yet further between Level 5 Reading and Writing at the end of year 6. This is not just a school issue, but a national one, whereby Level 5 readers (particularly boys) often find it difficult to achieve a Level 5 also for writing.

When the Inspector calls...

There is a strong possibility that the school can 'look forward to' a visit from Ofsted at some point during this school year. The Ofsted regime has changed considerably over the past three years since our last inspection, with far tougher criteria now being applied to the gradings. With just half a day's notice, the school has to be prepared to show itself in its best light every single day.

With everyone playing their part – the school leadership team, teachers, children, support staff, parents and governors – our collective aim is for the Ofsted Inspectors to be able to see all the positive aspects of the school, whenever it is they decide to call!