

Good morning

Welcome

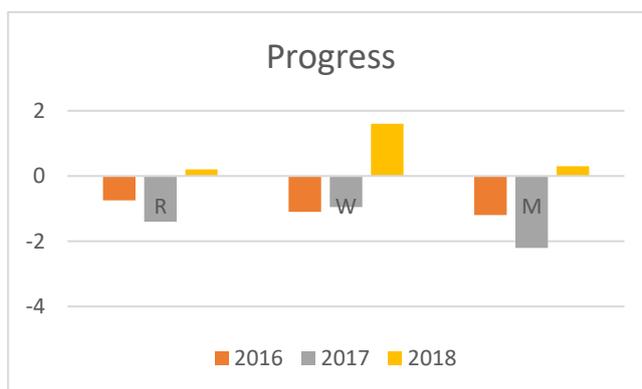
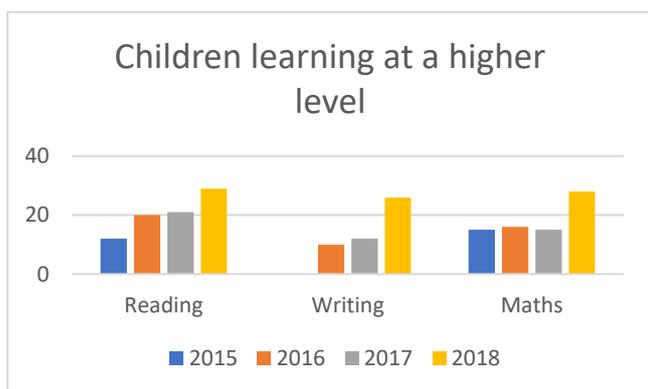
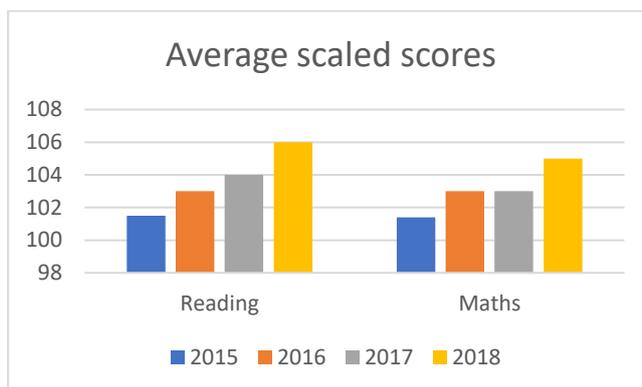
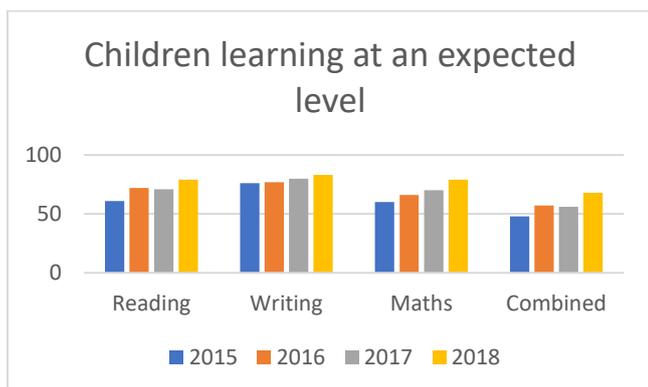
Welcome to everyone who is joining us anew this year and welcome back to everyone else. It's been a lovely calm and focused first week in school. Our new pupils are settling well into Foundation Stage, as are children in classes throughout the school. We have been very excited to welcome Miss Truett into Year R, Miss Lambert into Year 1, Miss Willis into Year 2, Miss Armstrong and Mrs Townend into Year 3, Miss Dunn, Miss Rowland and Miss Goodwin into Year 4, Miss Boniface into Year 5 and Mrs Easto into Year 6. It is true that there is a national recruitment challenge in education, but we somewhat bucked that trend and attracted some 60 teaching applicants to our positions. Each of our new colleagues was recruited for the unique knowledge, skills and experience they will bring to Paddock Wood.

Curriculum

It has long been our view here that schools - our school - should teach children what they need to know to succeed in life; that children themselves should be at the heart of what we do, not arbitrary checklists. In our school we agree with Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools that we should work out what children here in Paddock Wood need to learn, and teach that well. If we really do teach it well then by virtue of that our practice will be endorsed as good or better by Ofsted and our pupils will naturally achieve well in SATs. They will do this because they will have developed knowledge and skills for the right reasons - not just to pass tests.

Learning Outcomes

Working to this philosophy, I am really pleased to share the improvements our school has made over the past four years. To date, all of our outcomes this year exceed national figures.



School Improvement

We always strive - year-on-year - to improve the way we do things; the breadth, depth and quality of education we can offer. We are excited to be able to reintroduce Numbers Count and Reading Recovery specialist provision, alongside specialist music and French teaching, and outdoor education. This year, for the first time we are taking a tentative step towards bilingual school status as pupils continue to learn French as a discrete subject but also learn another subject in French. We are introducing forest-type skills and outdoor initiative exercises into Year 3, mountain biking to Year 4, road-cycling to Year 5 and skiing to Year 6, as well as our Year 5 outdoor education and Year 6 Paris residential. These are exciting times.

Community

We are keen to maintain constructive and supportive relationships with our neighbours who live along the streets that surround the school. To this end, can I make a timely plea for parents and drivers to continue to park considerately when dropping-off or picking-up at the start and end of the school day. More than anything this is in the interest of safety for all of our (your) children.

Fitness, Fundraising and Grounds Maintenance

It's been a couple of years since we held our last hugely successful family running event, which we organised to raise funds for our school. The support we received then mainly helped us to keep costs down on school trips and events. We are planning another event on Friday 21 September and very much encourage everyone to get involved - mums, dads, grans, granddads, aunts, uncles, friends. We are still keen that every penny we raise directly supports pupils, and nothing else. Mrs Bienz will write more about it in the week ahead.

We are planning to follow this immediately with a family grounds maintenance morning on Saturday 22 September. The PTA has very generously agreed to fund materials for this and again we encourage families to get involved. Miss Gavin will write more about this separately next week.

Diary

Friday 7 September	-	Y6 informal parent/teacher meetings (3.30pm)
Monday 10 September	-	Y1 informal parent/teacher meetings (3.30pm)
Tuesday 11 September	-	Y2 informal parent/teacher meetings (3.30pm)
Wednesday 12 September	-	Y3 informal parent/teacher meetings (3.30pm)
	-	PTA AGM (7.00pm)
Thursday 13 September	-	Y5 informal parent/teacher meetings (3.30pm)
Friday 14 September	-	FLO (Charlotte Gunning) coffee morning for parents
	-	3A trip to Howletts
Monday 17 September	-	3B trip to Howletts
Tuesday 18 September	-	3M trip to Howletts
Wednesday 19 September	-	3S trip to Howletts
Friday 21 September	-	Whole-school sponsored running event
Saturday 22 September	-	(Family) grounds maintenance morning in school
Saturday 29 September	-	PTA quiz night

With best wishes
Scott Opstad
Head Teacher