
June 2022

Dear Parent or carer

I would like to thank you for your support over the last two years in what have been unprecedented times for our children and our schools. We all recognise that the impact of the pandemic and interruptions to learning faced by many over this time have been significant. Our schools have done a phenomenal job in working through this time and have been trying their hardest to mitigate the loss of learning that some children have faced. Achieving this whilst also working to support children emotionally through the pandemic has been a challenge both for schools and yourselves. I recognise that.

This year sees the re-introduction of formal examinations for our 16 and 18 year olds as well as the national Key Stage assessments in Years 2 and 6. I know that our schools and teachers have been working hard to support children and students in preparing for these assessments, but also know that there will be anxieties among both children and yourselves about what the outcomes of these assessments may show. We all aspire for our children to be the best they can be, and to be able to achieve as well as they can. However, we also know that every child or student's experience over the last two years has been different. In some cases, children have had very chequered access to face to face teaching due to covid transmission rates. For some, access to online learning has been challenging, whilst for others, this has been successful and allowed students to be better focused. Coverage of curriculum and examination content has varied as schools have tried to cover different themes and ideas with a much reduced time in school. I know that some of our older students have been anxious about this.

The examinations and national assessments that are being undertaken now will provide each child, and you as a parent, with an understanding of what has been learned, but also what the next learning steps need to be. Due to the significantly different experiences of schools and of children over the last two years, we all recognise that it is not possible to use the outcomes of this year's examinations and assessments to compare school with school, or pupil with pupil. As a local authority, we recognise this, and I do urge you as parents to understand why we feel this way.

I know that our teachers will be working with your child to build on the strengths and learning points arising from the examinations and assessments they have been through. I also know that this year's outcomes could be different to those seen in schools before the pandemic. The journey of recovery does take time, but I can assure you that every one of us is doing what we can to ensure our children learn and continue to do so in order to achieve their ambitions for the future.

Yours sincerely

Paul Wagstaff

Assistant Director: Education & Skills