

To Whom It May Concern,

Years ago we wrote a post on our website entitled 'A Message For Year Sixes'. It stemmed from our thoughts about SATs. Having prepared children for these tests whilst teaching, it seemed so easy to get caught up with the pressure of it all so that almost for the entire year, SATs were A. B.I.G. T.H.I.N.G.

The following letter is an amalgamation of that post and the sorts of messages teachers up and down the country are telling their Year Sixes all the time. We've had so much support and encouragement, we know lots of schools will empathise with its theme.

Please feel free to use the letter to inspire (and calm?) your Year Sixes. There is a free video on the website to accompany it.

The main thing is that those 10 and 11 year-olds who have to go through this charade have a great sense that SATs are not the be-all-and-end-all.

We've made all sorts of resources to bring a little perspective to what can be a perspective-free time of year (including a free video that reflects everything the letter says).

You can find them here: [www.sparkyteaching.com/sats/](http://www.sparkyteaching.com/sats/)

On behalf of Year Sixes everywhere, thanks for restoring their test/life balance!



PS. If you find this letter is a help, do remember to attribute its source and get in touch.

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PPS. The letter references a moonwalking bear video. It 's here if you want to watch it (you know you want to...)

<http://www.sparkyteaching.com/creative/take-the-awareness-test-with-your-class/>

It would be interesting to see whether your class still miss the bear even when they know it's coming!

To our sparky Year Sixes,

Over the past few weeks – maybe even months – you have put in lots of effort in preparation for your SATs. You will nail them. We know you will.

At the moment, you've been doing lots of English and Maths, but you have lots of other skills. Not every skill is taught in school and even less are tested. You might be a great skateboarder, fantastic at fashion design or have got green fingers... You might be a people-person, a problem-solver or a poet. SATs are never going to show off all these amazing skills.

They don't test whether you're a creative person, can write code, whether you are good at teaching IT skills to your granddad or have a rapport with animals. They don't test your speaking skills or whether you can mend anything put in front of you. They don't measure whether you're arty or sporty, musical or love science. Although subjects like Maths and English are important, never forget you've been given talents in plenty of other areas too.

Please try your best to think of these tests as "something I've got to do, but not the most important thing in the world." The problem is that sometimes we teachers can make them seem really important, without noticing what we're doing. We have school targets we hope to meet and our school has Government targets it hopes to meet. It's like one big chain and there's only one person at the end of it... YOU!

But remember this: When you were born, no one said "What I want most for this child is a Level 5 in Maths when they hit Year Six!" (that would have been slightly weird!) The big things – the most important things – are things like your personality, what you believe and think, your ideas and that spark inside you that makes you **you**.

You are sparky. Your parents know it and, as a school, we've seen it during your time here.

There is a video on the internet that asks you to count the number of passes a basketball team make. The passes come quick and fast and you really have to focus on the ball flying from left to right to count them all. At the end of the video it says, "Well done on counting the passes, but did you notice the moonwalking bear?" You see, you were so busy focusing on watching the basketball, you missed a bear in the background, moonwalking across the screen!

SATs can be like that video challenge. We promise as a school not to be so busy focusing on your SATs that we don't notice the amazing Year Sixes you are.

**Keep moonwalking and stay sparky!**



**"Don't get stressed.  
Just do your best.  
Remember you've been blessed  
With skills SATs don't test."**

*Sparky Teaching*