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Dear parents,

Summer has arrived and, as you know, the 11 plus exam is being taken in September of this year. The children have worked very hard this year, not just in their verbal reasoning lessons, but in all areas of the curriculum.

A few parents have asked me about the specifics of the upcoming Grammar School entrance examinations and their content. It is important to emphasise that the nature of CEM Exams is unpredictable. While CEM have indicated what sort of questions might be included, they can amend these at any time. It is also true that the difficulty of CEM tests can vary around the country.

I thought it might be useful to write to you with a few thoughts for the summer. Having spoken to many of you, I know that you are well aware of the importance of maintaining focus whilst allowing children to rest and recuperate.

As a guide, my suggestions for the summer are (WKGS and CGGS)

1. Continue with the vocabulary practice, going over the new and unusual words on the sheet I have given you.
2. Consider the spellings of some of the vocabulary words and ask children to try and spell them as you read them.
3. Continue with section A, B then C of the semi completed mental arithmetic book before moving on to the next book.
4. Use the CEM papers I have sent home via email to "dip in" section by section. I would guard against doing whole papers as we cannot accurately predict the length of each section and 50 minute papers can be mentally exhausting.

For Upton Hall and St Anselm's preparation

1. Continue with the vocabulary practice, going over the new and unusual words on the sheet I have given you.
2. Consider the spellings of some of the vocabulary words and asking children to try and spell them as you read them.
3. Continue with section A, B then C of the semi completed mental arithmetic book before moving on to the next book.
4. Complete both IPS 10 minute test books and other VR papers which I have made available to you.

### **ANTONYMS / SYNONYMS GAME**

We have played this game in class but you can be as flexible as you like with the rules. Flick through the vocab book or vocab sheet and choose a word. Check the meaning together and then decide if you are going ANTONYMS or SYNONYMS. You then have 1 – 2 minutes to each write down as many words as you can according to the version that you have chosen. After the time is up, if you have a "shared" word, each player gets 5 points. If it is a "unique" word, then this is worth 10. Words that do not work (a good discussion point) don't score. I introduced a bonus 10 points for amazing words

- **Times tables.** Regular, quick fire practice of these is essential, including corresponding divisions. We have done lots of work on these but he will need to keep these up over the summer.
- **Doubling and halving of numbers below 100.** Again, regular, quick fire practice of these is essential.

### How often?

The frequency of practice papers is going to be a parental choice. You need to be careful to strike the balance between focus and rest. The last thing we want is for children to be burnt out and demotivated at the beginning of the summer. You obviously know your children best and will need to manage their motivation levels by mixing things up. I have listed a variety of activities; from 5 minute quick fire questions to full papers. Not forgetting mental maths skills and the antonyms and synonyms game.

I would also suggest mixing up types of activity. Work under test conditions; this means that children should be given specific timing and that they are half way through and with 1 minute to go. It is a good idea to mark the paper with children and then go through it with them afterwards, discussing why they put a certain answer if it was wrong and suggesting how he might have looked at it differently.

### IPad and Android apps (Upton and St Anselm's)

There are a number of apps that were available for the IPad / Android.  
The good ones I have come across are:

<http://www.elevenplusexams.co.uk/11plus-vocabulary-app/>  
<http://www.11plusapps.co.uk/>

From the latter website, there are a number of apps that offer "full" papers. The Apps are useful and will be an interesting "brain break" for the children. My personal opinion is that they are good for practice of different question types but, of course, the format means that they are not a substitute for the printed papers. If the children are working on them, they should have jotting paper with them and do their calculations in the normal way. The apps are not really suitable for the code questions but are useful for vocab and the maths ones.

### Pass mark

Parents have often asked me what the pass mark is. The answer is it is difficult to tell. "236" is the stated pass mark for Wirral but as we do not have any access to their raw to standardised score conversion tables, it is impossible to know.

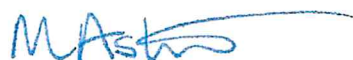
### Returning to school

There will be 3 "refresher" mornings on **Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> August, Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> August and Friday 1<sup>st</sup> September, starting at 9am prompt and finishing at 12.00pm.** These will be held in the current Y5 classroom. Children will not need their uniform but should bring their pencil cases. In the first few weeks, we will operate an adjusted timetable to allow children additional practice in curriculum time. Furthermore, I will be continuing the early morning sessions on Mondays and Fridays, the first one being **Monday 11<sup>th</sup> September at 8.15 prompt.**

I know that it is a daunting experience for both children and parents but it is important that everyone enjoys the summer and returns focused and motivated to do their very best.

If, as ever, you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Regards,



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