

5 Park Road, Richmond, Surrey TW10 6NS

2.12.17

Dear Gavin Toms,

Thank you for sending me letters from your pupils.

I first received such groups of letters - some sent separately, some in a bundle - several years ago. I was charmed, as indeed I still am, that the children concerned should have written to me (even though they had clearly been encouraged to do so by their teacher). So I did my best to answer them all individually.

As time passed, however, the numbers of schools writing to me increased. Perhaps word had got around among primary schools that I would answer such letters. At any rate, I had to abandon giving individual answers and instead give collective ones.

Since then, the number of such packages has increased still further. Recently, I received four such bundles in one week, each containing several dozen letters, one of which asked thirty questions. Several, of course ask the same questions but even allowing for that, between them a week's batch of letters can ask me some two or three hundred separate questions. Assuming each could be answered in about a minute, that amount to five or six hours spent on that part of my correspondence alone.

Clearly I cannot deal properly with them all if I am also to continue making programmes. May I therefore request that you thank the children for their interest and explain that although I cannot reply to every letter individually, I am delighted to know that they find my programmes interesting.

I return their letters with this.

Best wishes
David Attenborough

from David Attenborough