

# Meopham School

A Member of Swale Academies Trust

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All parents/carers

Dear Parents,

As we approach the end of term, I thought that it would be timely to update you with some key developments in school.

## **Achievements of the students**

GCSE and A level examinations

The GCSE and A Level exam season is progressing well, and students are reporting that they feel confident about their performances in these all-important public examinations. We look forward to celebrating the final outcomes with the students during our results days in the summer.

## **Literacy**

The school has been busy expanding links with Istead Rise Primary School, currently being supported by our Trust. The English Department has been regularly meeting with teachers from Istead Rise to help develop mutual understanding of how to improve students' performance in English at KS2. Teachers from Meopham have been directly teaching Istead Rise students in Year 6 in the run up to their SATS exams. In the next term our students will be helping to organise and run the Istead Rise Sports Day. We will also be working with a range of other classes to improve their literacy and numeracy. We are really excited about this opportunity for professional collaboration with Primary colleagues which will, I am sure, further improve outcomes at both our schools.

Our Literacy Focus this term has been on the use of apostrophes. We have been ensuring that students use apostrophes to show possession and to indicate contractions. Each term we have one focus for literacy across the school that helps to embed the message for our students. This year so far, we have focussed on the use of topic sentences, discourse markers, structuring sentences and using a range of punctuation marks.

## **School Radio**

Our Sixth Forms DJs continue to broadcast daily shows on the radio station at 8.30 am and 12.30pm. Recently, they hosted debates on the General Election and the implications of the new parliament.

## **Scholastic Excellence Society**

Meopham School has founded a new society which aims to promote the very best academic achievement among the pupil body. Pupils are invited to join based on their academic achievement throughout the year. For Years 7 to 11 the top ten pupils are invited to join, and for Sixth Form the top five from each year group. Pupils are awarded a gold badge in the form of the society's emblem: a stag's head backed by the Meopham logo. Pupils are rewarded for their hard work with a small number of privileges throughout the year including a non-school uniform day, and trips for students who belong to this society during academy week.

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ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE IN A RURAL SETTING

### **Stretch and Challenge**

In addition to our focus on Metacognition we have introduced a new focus to teaching and learning, entitled Stretch and Challenge. This aims to challenge all levels of ability across all year groups in new ways. Some exemplar work has taken place in Maths and DT where Year 7 have been set GCSE questions as homework, with very positive results. Our mission is to set an early precedent as to the level of challenge that they will experience as they move through the school.

### **House Point and Achievement Postcards**

At Meopham, we are always seeking to find new ways to celebrate every kind of success. The Scholastic Excellence Society is a new initiative to celebrate the very highest academic attainment. However, I feel that it is equally important to reward academic *progress*, as this is something that students of all abilities should be seeking to maximise. As a token of recognition, the top ten students who have made the most progress towards achieving their target grades will each receive a postcard from me at the end of term. I will also be sending out postcards, as I did just before Christmas, to the ten highest performing students in terms of House Points from each year group. House Points are given as a reward for academic success, effort, community service, good conduct, and performance in each of the Metacognition Muscles. They are, therefore, a clear measure of all-round performance.

### **Attendance**

I am delighted to report that attendance has improved significantly this year. I am particularly pleased to inform you that, as of last week, we have now met the ambitious attendance target of 96% which I set for the year. A huge amount of effort is required to make even a 0.1% improvement in attendance figures across a whole school. I would like to take the opportunity to thank you all in supporting me so that we have achieved this fantastic milestone. Put simply, the attendance at Meopham School has never been so good! I know, as a parent myself, that a lot is done at home in the mornings to encourage students to attend school, particularly on the days when they are not feeling their best. This really is so important, and establishes a work ethic that is crucial for success in the workplace. Thank you for your continued efforts, and let's continue to work together on this to ensure that attendance improves even further.

### **Futures event – organised by the Sixth Form Business Studies Students**

In April, our Sixth Formers ran a careers event for Year 10 and 11 students. Their aim was to inform and inspire students with their choices for the future and to understand the link between learning in school and the world of work. Sixth Formers were hugely successful in planning and arranging the morning, which involved over 200 students and 28 professionals from industry, including colleges, apprenticeships and the combined services. Following the event, there was a tangible buzz in the canteen and in form rooms. Thank you to both to Sixth Formers and volunteers who gave their time willingly. We hope to further motivate and improve students' academic performance with future events such as these.

### **United Kingdom Maths Trust – Junior Challenge**

On Thursday 30th April 2015 the best Maths students in Years 7 and 8 took part in a National Junior Maths Challenge. To receive a certificate, students had to be placed in the top 40% nationally. It is, therefore, very pleasing to report that our students achieved one Gold, one Silver and eight Bronze certificates. In addition Nam (Year 8) achieved a score of 108 which means he has qualified for the Junior Maths Olympiad. This is only open to the top 1200 students across the nation. All of the students who took part deserve great credit as this competition involves a very high level of Mathematics and is quite a daunting prospect for students taking it for the first time.

### **Academy Week – 27<sup>th</sup> June – 30<sup>th</sup> June**

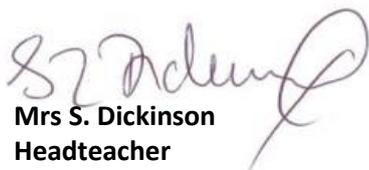
We have a range of trips planned for Academy Week as follows:

### **Uniform**

As we move into the warmer summer months, I thought it would be useful to remind you of our expectations in terms of uniform. On the whole, students at Meopham School wear their uniform with pride. The boys are smartly dressed with shirts firmly buttoned to the top, ties tied correctly with the logo just below the knot, and shirts tucked in. Formal shoes (not trainers) are worn by all. For girls, skirts are worn to the knee (or just above) with open neck fitted school blouses which are designed to be worn untucked. Jumpers, if worn, should not be tucked into skirts. The students do not need to wear their blazers in the summer term (term 6). However, if they are not worn, they should be carried over the arm. Please can I remind parents that Meopham School branded uniform should only be purchased from The Sewing Shop (Echo Square, Gravesend) or Longfield Wools (located in the St George's Centre, Gravesend). Please be warned that there are a number of other outlets in Gravesend who also claim to stock our official uniform. These stockists are not official suppliers of our uniform. There have been a number of issues with the quality of clothing purchased here. Please can I urge you to only buy Meopham branded uniform from The Sewing Shop or Longfield Wools.

I would finally like to wish all students, staff, parents and carers best wishes for a restful half term break.

Yours faithfully



**Mrs S. Dickinson**  
**Headteacher**