

Meopham School

A MEMBER OF SWALE ACADEMIES TRUST

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SDI

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Dear Parents/Carers,

As you may be aware, the 2014 School Performance Tables will be published tomorrow (Thursday 29th January 2015). I just wanted to take this opportunity to remind you of a strategic decision made by the Swale Academies Trust back in October 2013 which will affect how our performance appears in this year's Performance Tables.

At the end of September 2013 we, along with other schools across the country, were dismayed to find out that the then Education Secretary, Michael Gove, had decided that the 2014 Performance Tables would only reflect students' "first" entry result, rather than their "best" (i.e. final) result. The motivation for making this decision was, he said, that some schools were using early entry to "game" the system.

Along with many other schools, we had a large number of students due to sit their English and Maths examinations in November 2013 (as an early entry attempt). All students would be given the opportunity to sit both of these exams again in the summer. Early entry is a proven strategy used by schools across the country to maximise the achievement of pupils. At Meopham School it has been used in recent years to give students the best possible chance to succeed, rather than unfairly relying on pupils' performance on a single day. Such an approach leads to huge amounts of examination stress and may not lead to results which fairly reflect at pupil's ability. However, following Mr Gove's announcements, many schools decided that they could not continue with the early entry approach as this would give a poor indication of the school's performance in the 2014 Performance Tables.

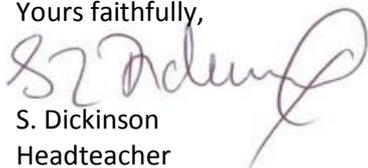
The Trust's decision back in September 2013 was to continue with early entry for the 2013-14 Year 11 cohort, despite the negative impact this would have in terms of the Performance Table position. We decided to put the needs of our students first. What we had decided was the best strategy to secure the examination success of our pupils *before* Mr Gove's announcement, still remained the best decision for our pupils *after* the political announcement.

As a consequence of this decision, we were able to secure the best results that any year group had ever achieved at Meopham School. I was delighted to be able to share these with you back in the summer. Ofsted, in their recent inspection of the school commented on our sensible approach to early entry and the report confirms that, **"nationally published performance data for 2014 will only report the results from first entry, so will not reflect how well students had achieved by the end of the Key Stage 4"**.

We are delighted with how our students performed in the summer of 2014, and are looking forward to a further increase in results this summer.

We look forward to the 2015 Performance Tables which will be, we hope, a true reflection of our pupils' significant achievements.

Yours faithfully,



S. Dickinson
Headteacher

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