



Lode Heath School

High Performing Academy
www.lodeheath.org.uk

1 July 2014

Dear Parent/ Guardians

RE: CHANGE IN GCSE EXAMINATIONS RESULTS ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES

As you are probably aware education is undergoing considerable change, particularly more recently, in the secondary sector. There have been significant changes to exam formats, grade boundaries and accountability measures. The challenges of this affect the Governing body, staff, parents and more importantly, the student's themselves. It is because of this that we wanted to write to you as our stakeholders, to make you aware of some of the changes.

We initially want to make you aware of the impact of the recent changes in the school's accountability measures; these are essentially the results published locally by ourselves and also nationally in league tables.

Schools are judged on "headline measurements"; these are largely focused on the number of students that achieve 5 A*- C grades and within that the percentage of students who achieve **5 A*- C grades including English and Mathematics**. As you are aware Lode Heath achieves very high standards academically. In 2013 99% of students gained 5 A*- C and 74% of Lode Heath students gained 5 A*-C including English and Maths.

Our current years 11 have worked extremely hard, as have our staff in ensuring that these high standards are sustained. We are confident that this year results will maintain that trend of extremely high outcomes for our students. For a long time we have believed that the days of 99% 5A*- C are gone. The reasons for this however, are what we want to clarify, so that the anticipated excellent results this year can be celebrated in context, without fear that there has been a decline in results. With ever constantly changing external influences in the examination process the practice of comparing year on year results against each other will be nigh on impossible.

In 2014 and 2015, schools will still be measured by the percentage of student who achieve 5 GCSE's at A*- C grades, including English and Maths. However, there are three significant changes that have been introduced for 2014 that will significantly impact the way that the results are recorded in schools nationally.

- [i] Only 2 equivalent qualifications [BTEC & OCR Cambridge] are allowed to be counted as part of the 5 qualifications. Prior to 2014 there was no limit on the number of BTEC or equivalent qualifications that a school could use as part of their figures.
- [ii] All equivalent qualifications [BTEC & OCR Cambridge] are counted as 1 qualification in accountability measures. Prior to 2014 a BTEC Diploma was counted as being equivalent to up to 4 GCSE grades and a certificate equivalent to 2 GCSE grades.
- [iii] Schools will be measured on a student's first attempt at a qualification. So for example, if a student sat English Language in November 2013 and did not achieve a grade C or above, but then successfully achieves the C grade or above in June 2014, this improved grade will not be reported in our national headline figures. There is however, no impact on the student.

/...

Lode Heath School, Lode Lane, Solihull, B91 2HW
Tel: 0121 704 1421 Fax: 0121 711 2663
Email: office@lodeheath.org.uk



A charitable company limited by guarantee.
Registered in England with Company No. 07687663





Lode Heath School

High Performing Academy
www.lodeheath.org.uk

-2-

A vast proportion of schools in the country will be affected by these changes and in ongoing years all schools will be affected. This will lead to a significant drop in percentages achieved by schools and in national figures. This is going to have a major impact for many schools, particularly where a high proportion of students follow BTEC or equivalent programmes. If these measures had been in place in 2013 our results at Lode Heath would have been lower than those presented in last year's performance tables.

	2013 results as advertised	2013 results that would have registered under the new accountability measures.
% of students achieving 5 A* - C grades	99%	80%
% of students achieving 5 A* - C grades including English and Maths	74%	72%

It is therefore very difficult to predict what the summer results will be since we are still facing the outcome of changing grade boundaries, increased numbers of linear examinations [exams taken at the end of the 2 year course] and less modular opportunities.

I do know my colleagues have investigated the ever changing examination and curriculum matrix in order to ensure the best possible outcomes for our students.

Our core aim remains, as always, to provide the best possible chances that all Lode Heath students leave with the qualifications required to enable them to successfully access the next phase of their life, whether that is through a further education or work based pathway.

This year, similar to the majority of schools in Solihull, we will release two sets of results. One set will be a government figure based on the new measures outlined above and the second will be a school set that we hope will give clarity on the number of students who this year leave Lode Heath with 5 A* - C grade qualifications, regardless of when they sat the examination and whether they are GCSE or BTEC equivalent qualifications.

We are informing you in the context of a year of changing educational landscape and we will communicate with you again keeping you abreast of the next wave of changes and how we are ensuring our students are prepared in the best way possible for their future.

Yours sincerely

Mark Wilson
Headteacher

Lode Heath School, Lode Lane, Solihull, B91 2HW
Tel: 0121 704 1421 Fax: 0121 711 2663
Email: office@lodeheath.org.uk



A charitable company limited by guarantee.
Registered in England with Company No. 07687663

