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A picture doesn't always tell the right story.

I have recently received a letter from the Rt Hon David Laws MP – Minister of State for Schools. It concerns information about our school which will be contained in the forthcoming Schools' League Tables based on GCSE results for 2014.

Last year our cohort of pupils performed extremely well and the results for individual students and subject areas were very good – especially as we only enter our pupils for GCSE exams rather than equivalent qualifications. We also steer clear of multiple-entries requiring pupils to re-sit exams over and over again.

Below is a summary of the achievements of our pupils:

69% Achieved 5 or more grades A*-C

53% Achieved 5 or more grades A*-C (Including English & Maths)

Results in Core Subjects:

Science 60% achieved two grades A* to C
English 61% achieved grades A* to C
English Literature 80% achieved grades A* to C
Maths 69% achieved grades A* to C
ICT 100% achieved grades A* to C

Also:

97% achieved A*-C in Biology
97% achieved A*-C in Physics
97% achieved A*-C in Chemistry
65% achieved A*-C in Art
70% achieved A*-C in German
89% achieved A*-C in Drama
89% achieved A*-C in Music
78% achieved A*-C in Sports Studies
79% achieved A*-C in Health & Social Care
72% achieved A* - C in Geography

English results were down on previous years' results, but we were affected in the first instance by the "volatility" of the English results which was so widely publicised in the press over the summer which included the removal of the Speaking and Listening element and adjustments to grade boundaries. However the figure of 61% was still in line with county and national figures.

New rules affecting English Literature and combined English courses meant the results the 30 pupils who took English Literature could not count as part of our 5 A*-C figures due to a slight overlap in the content of the courses.

The DfE also announced that only a pupil's first entry would count in their school's performance tables - a rule introduced in order to stop schools entering pupils KS4 for many re-sits in the same subject in order to boost league table figures. This rule did not appear to affect our pupils as they were all taking their exams for the first time in the summer.

However, the GCSE timetable meant that English Literature exam fell 4 school days before English exam. The effect of this was that they have been judged to have taken their Literature exam first thus wiping their English results out of the school's league table figures. This bureaucratic rule has reduced the reported overall school figure by 12% - which is not a true reflection of what the pupils actually achieved.

Fortunately the pupils' individual results are not affected by this ruling. They are now settled into their respective college courses and starting to make the excellent progress their 5 years with us has equipped them for. However, you as parents may have found yourselves surprised by the false impression created by the data in the league tables, which I hope this summary has gone some way to explain.

We have made the necessary adjustments for the current Year 11 pupils as the DfE have insisted that they will again apply the same rule for the summer of 2015.

Mr S Gould

Head Teacher

