

# gilesacademy

31 January 2018

Dear Parent/Carer,

I wanted to write to you to respond to some of the comments you may have read in the local and national press following the publication of the school league tables last week.

It is disappointing for all staff and governors, who give so much, to see the Giles Academy, as well as other schools in the Boston area, included in the list of Lincolnshire schools falling below the government floor standard. What is vital for me, however, is for parents, students and the wider community to understand what this means in real terms and avoid the temptation to jump to conclusions based on these headlines.

This year the school league tables have provoked a very strong response. The government itself has been clear in stating that there is no direct consequence to being below floor standard and that comparison with results from 2016 is not possible because, yet again, the “goalposts have moved”.

There has been a significant increase in the number of schools classed as “underperforming” this year (a rise from 282 schools nationally in 2016 to 365 schools in 2017). This is largely due to major changes, introduced by the government, to GCSEs and to the points system used to calculate schools performance. This is neatly summed up in a comment from Philip Nye, an analyst with Education Datalab “Secondary schools will have good reason to feel hard done by this year, with the increase in the number judged to be failing stemming from DfE reforms”. I would add that these changes have an exaggerated effect when applied to schools in selective counties like Lincolnshire.

So what should we make of these numbers? Well there remains some confusion within the education community about what significance such measures can have. It is far, far too early to draw firm conclusions and it will take some time for these measures to be properly embedded. There is some way to go before it is able to provide a basis on which to make judgements about the quality of learning taking place in schools.

Fundamentally there remains, in my opinion, a very real problem with using just one number to brand schools as “failing” or “underperforming”. Geoff Barton, General Secretary of ASCL summed this up when he said “The message ... is to avoid leaping to judgment on the basis of these performance tables. They only tell us a limited amount about the true quality of a school”.

All staff and governors at the Giles Academy remain very proud of our work and the success of students, the opportunities and experiences offered to students by attending the school and the success of students as they move on to higher education and careers beyond the school. That is not to say that we are complacent - we are relentless in our drive to find ways of further improving the school and the learning that takes place here.

If you have any concerns regarding this or any other matter, please do not hesitate to contact the school.

Yours faithfully



I Widdows  
Headteacher

---

Old Leake, Boston, Lincolnshire, PE22 9LD Tel: (01205) 870693 Fax: (01205) 871426  
Email: [admin@gilesacademy.co.uk](mailto:admin@gilesacademy.co.uk) [www.gilesacademy.co.uk](http://www.gilesacademy.co.uk)  
Headteacher: Ian Widdows

