

FALMER HIGH SCHOOL

Lewes Road, Brighton, BN1 9PW

Tel: 01273 691191 Fax: 01273 665455
Attendance Line Tel: 01273 665454
email: office@falmer.brighton-hove.sch.uk



May 2008

Dear parent or carer

Re: Recent News Items

A number of parents and students have expressed their concerns over recent articles in the media relating to the Government's announcement about schools not meeting their targets. The reports have given the false impression that Falmer is at risk of closure. Nothing could be further from the truth. In many respects, the Government's position has been misrepresented by the media.

The Government has set all schools in England the target to ensure 30% of students gain at least five GCSE passes at C grade or above, including Maths and English by 2011. Ed Balls, Education Minister, has said that many schools are currently below this target but are making good progress. He has also said that because a school is below this target does not mean it is failing nor does it mean it is not a good school.

If a school does not achieve the target by 2011 a number of options would be available to help them improve. One would be for the school to become an Academy; another would be to federate the school with a more successful school to help raise standards. As a last resort, if all else had failed, the Government would consider school closure. Only if a school had not shown any progress towards the Government target would this be considered.

Falmer High School is in a strong position in many respects. The school has been recognised by two recent OfSTED inspections as making significant improvement over the past five years. They noted how well students behaved and that the quality of teaching and learning has improved. They in particular liked our curriculum, which they classified as good and thought was highly relevant to the needs of our students.

Secondly, we are on track to achieve the Government's target by 2011. Last year we saw an 8% improvement in the number of students achieving 5 or more passes including Maths and English at C grade or above. This was the highest improvement achieved by any secondary school in the City. In 2006 our value added, the difference we made to each student's achievement during their time with us, was the second best in the City. We also anticipate further improvements in our exam results this year. We believe we will reach the Government's target by 2009 (if not this year). In effect, Falmer is a school on the up, with little to fear from Government targets.



A Full Service Extended School

Headteacher: Stuart McLaughlin BA, MBA, FRSA



Finally, the school is already in the feasibility phase to become an Academy. It is ludicrous to think the Government would close the school during such an exciting period of development.

I think the media have been irresponsible in their interpretation of the Government's announcements. Many current and prospective parents/carers have been worried by the way the facts have been portrayed. I can assure you that the staff and students of Falmer are working very hard and standards are going to improve further in the future.

I hope I have explained the situation. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions or queries.

Yours sincerely

Stuart McLaughlin
Headteacher