

Meopham School

A Member of Swale Academies Trust

Headteacher: Mr E Roberts BA Hons. PGCE NPQH



Wrotham Road Meopham Kent DA13 0AH

Tel: 01474 814646

Website: www.meophamschool.org.uk

11th October 2024

Dear parents and carers,

I hope you've had a great week.

It's been a big week at Meopham School as we hosted huge numbers of visitors at the school for our Year 6 Open Evening. We had hundreds of Meopham students involved in this event - whether acting as tour guides for families, supporting activities in classrooms as subject experts or even delivering speeches on their time at Meopham to large crowds - and I have to say, the feedback from visitors was excellent. They were incredibly impressed with our students' politeness, professionalism and indeed the confident manner with which they could speak about the school. Your young people were a real credit to the school, and to you all as families. I can confidently say it was my proudest day yet at Meopham. What fantastic young people we have - they were superb.

We now look forward to Open Morning tours over the next couple of weeks where families will get to see the school in full flow. Then, moving forward, it will be the turn of our Year 11 students to come and see the **Sixth Form Open Evening** which takes place on **Wednesday 6th November**. Apologies as the incorrect date was sent out in my letter last week.

It is an exciting time in the development of our Sixth Form, as we are currently reviewing the curriculum and intend to offer a wider range of subjects that will be tailored to our Year 11 students' aspirations. We have already surveyed Year 11 students to discover the sorts of courses they are interested in pursuing Post-16 and as part of our Open Evening we will be showcasing all the new, exciting subjects we can potentially offer to our Year 11 students. We also have an ambitious new mission to significantly increase the number of our Year 13 students progressing to top-third UK universities or higher-level apprenticeships. I look forward to sharing more plans at the Open Evening.

Well Done

A huge well done to our Year 9 boys football team who delivered a thrashing in an 8-0 win against Thamesview. Commiserations to our Year 7 boys team who lost 3-0 to New Line Learning. As a Man Utd fan, I am well-used to set-backs, but I am sure our Year 7 boys will bounce back and see success soon! We are proud of all of them.

Congratulations also to the students who have received Headteacher Commendations this week:

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Will C - English
Charlie G - English
Dylan C - English
Mia C - Maths
Rosie J - Maths

Oscar R - English
Charlie Y - English
Kieran F - English
Fabian O - English
Charlotte G - Music/History
Jess R - History

Lola G - Music
Luke F - Maths
Jack M - Maths
Jack F - Geography
Lucy H - Geography

Parent/Carer Survey - Feedback

As you will know, recently we asked our parents and carers to provide feedback on the school as part of our extensive review of all aspects of the school community, and our process of delivering a new and innovative School Improvement Plan.

We received lots of thoughtful feedback - both positive and in terms of the areas we can improve - and I am very grateful to all those parents and carers who took the time to provide their views. This has been invaluable in ensuring as a leadership team we are aware of what our parents and carers want us to work on as a school, but also what they like about the school and want to ensure is protected.

With a school population of approximately 1000 students, our response rate of 111 parents/carers was a little disappointing, if I am being brutally honest. If you weren't able to provide feedback this time round, I would strongly urge you to get involved when we next send a survey out. We want to work with you all to improve *our* school - but to do that we need your feedback!

I have provided a summary of your feedback, as well as our response to it, below. It is not an exhaustive list of everything that was raised but provides a summary of recurring comments::

Areas of strength, according to our parents and carers

- Teachers are helpful, supportive and know our students well.
- The transition of students from primary school into Year 7.
- The rewards in place for students doing the right thing.
- The facilities and location of the school.
- The strong sense of community within the school.
- The support from the SEND department.
- Recent changes to rules regarding presentation, uniform and behaviour.

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Areas to address, according to parents and carers

Area To Address	Our Response
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Headteacher will send a weekly newsletter.• The school website is currently being reviewed to ensure all information is up-to-date.• Historically, there have been technical issues with our inquiry forms. We are now reviewing each of these to ensure no further technical issues exist. A member of staff will be assigned to each inquiry form daily to check for any communications that come in and ensure a response is provided within 48 hours wherever possible. We will ensure a receipt is provided whenever a parent/carer completes a form.• Key members of staff (e.g. SLT, HOY) will have personalised voicemails added to phones - no more being automatically cut off when they are unavailable. However, leaving a voicemail should be a last resort, as completing the inquiry form will ensure we have a much better record of all communication.• A member of SLT will be assigned to monitor any urgent communication during the summer holidays.
Sixth Form curriculum offer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Survey to all Year 11s to garner their views on the subjects they wish to study at Post-16.• Renewed list of teachers willing to deliver a wider range of Post-16 courses.• Dedicated taster assemblies for Y11 on all of the new subjects we hope to offer.• A subject fayre at the Sixth Form Open Evening to learn more about all of the new subjects on offer.
Supporting equality, diversity and inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Whilst we are confident the school's policies and curriculum promote equality, diversity and inclusion well, we are always keen to hear new ideas about how we can improve our work in this area even further.• Assemblies for every year group on the importance of tackling hate crime, delivered by

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	<p>external speakers, are taking place next week as it is the national Hate Crime Awareness Week 2024.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The school has committed to working towards the Equalities Bronze Award, which provides a framework and guidance for schools to effectively promote equality, diversity and inclusion, and which allows schools to showcase their commitment to equality. This will form part of the School Improvement Plan.
Mobile phone use during the school day	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mobile phones will be banned during the school day from January.• Students will be able to bring phones to use to and from school, but during the day, phones will need to be turned off and put away.• Any students using phones during the school day will have these confiscated.• We will be phasing in this ban over Term 2 to ensure students and parents/carers can acclimatise to the new rules.
Length of skirts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will be outlining our new rules regarding skirts to students and parents/carers during Term 2.• Students with inappropriate skirts will be asked to ensure they are rolled down. If they are unable to do so, they will be provided with appropriate school uniform to borrow.• Any students who refuse to wear appropriate uniform will not be in normal circulation.
Disruption in class from some students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A wide-ranging review of all aspects of behaviour for learning within the school is currently underway.• We have already increased the number of staff monitoring behaviour for learning around the school from one staff per period to three.• Dedicated staff members are now allocated at key areas of the school during transition between lessons.• A reformed approach to sanctions is being put in place to ensure sanctions are purposeful, help modify students' behaviour moving forward, but are also delivered swiftly and

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	<p>consistently.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff training on strategies to support behaviour for learning in class - including de-escalation - will be provided in January. This will include a range of school-wide approaches to behaviour across various aspects of school life, to ensure consistency.• At the start of Term 3, all students will be instructed in the new school-wide approaches to behaviour, so that they too understand the consistent approach we will take moving forward.
Home learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Curriculum Leaders have been instructed to ensure all teachers set home learning on a regular basis in every subject.• Curriculum Leaders are also setting up rigorous monitoring systems in each subject to ensure engagement.• Consequences will be put in place for students who do not complete home learning.• Curriculum Leaders are ensuring there is feedback in some form - whether teacher-assessed, peer-assessed or self-assessed, for all home learning moving forward.• A wider review of our home learning provision is currently being conducted by members of SLT; they will share further plans later in the year.
Behaviour on school buses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The names of students using buses each day will be recorded so staff know which students have been on which buses.• Staff will meet with all students to outline expectations.• All students using the buses will be provided with the school's safe text phone number, which they can contact with any concerns.• The school's safe text number will also be displayed on buses, if companies allow.

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Car Park

From Monday morning the main turning-circle area at the front of the school will be coned off to clearly delineate the areas where the school buses have priority.

We have taken this action because many cars are using this road at the end of the school day, and we do not feel it is safe for our students to walk through two lanes of traffic and past parked buses.

Parents/carers should continue to use the designated drop off areas in the new parking areas, and not use the turning- circle area to drop off students. We hope you understand that the safety of our students has to be our highest priority.

Moving Forward

Last night, I had the privilege of listening to five of our Meopham students as they delivered speeches at our Open Evening. Sam in Year 11, who delivered an impassioned speech on how Meopham has helped shape him. Theo, in Year 10, who talked about the support he receives from the school. Olivia and Poppy, our Head Students in Year 13, who outlined the support they put in place to support the life of the school, particularly with the younger students. Most impressively, Isla, our Year 7 student who described her experience of Meopham so far, and encouraged Year 6 to avoid worrying about secondary school and just enjoy the experience.

Each and every one of them demonstrated exactly what this amazing school is about. They have taken the opportunities they've been provided at Meopham and, with a positive attitude, a hard-working mentality and a commitment to kindness and helping others, they have all - at various points on their journey - began to develop into truly impressive young people. Our school community should be so proud of the students it produces. It has nothing to do with me (I've only been here a month!). It is down to all of you - our staff, our parents, our carers and our young people - who all help each other to develop, grow and inspire.

I'm well aware that there are many more students at Meopham School like the five above I've just described. I finish this week a very proud Headteacher to get to work alongside them all.

Have a great weekend,

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Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'E Roberts', written over a horizontal line.

Mr Roberts
Headteacher