



The Federation of The Downs & Northbourne Church of England Primary Schools



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Dear Year 5 Parents,

Re: Secondary School Placements

This letter contains information about the process for choosing a secondary school which I hope you will find useful.

This year you need to firstly decide if you want your child to sit the test(s) for a grammar school. Leaflets explaining this in more detail will be coming home shortly. If you decide you wish your child to sit the Kent Test (PESE) you need to register on the website www.kent.gov.uk/ola between Monday 2nd June and Tuesday 1st July 2014.

Both the Dover Grammar schools for Boys/Girls have their own school test which they administer in September. You will need to register with the schools directly to do this by 1st July 2014.

If you do not wish your child to sit the Kent Test there are no forms to complete until September.

Our bi-annual reports give grades which are based on national norms, rather than class averages which can vary hugely from year to year and, of course be affected by the size of school. Therefore if your child has a grade 1 for attainment, then this means that they are working within the "above average" band for all schools nationally. As grammar schools take approximately the "brightest" 25% of children, then this is the grade that your child will need to be achieving in the core subjects (English and Maths)

Between now and October 2014 many of the secondary schools will be holding open days. You need to look at each school carefully. We always urge parents to view all schools – selective and non-selective. We will guide you through the process but we also believe that **you** need to make your own decision.

Some head teachers will give a recommendation for a school which may not live up to those expectations. Parents then feel that they were pushed into making a particular choice, which could have a negative outcome for the child. All local schools will be in contact with you soon to advertise their open days/evenings. Check each school website for details of when they are organising theirs.



These are the sorts of questions that you need to consider regardless of your choice of selective or non-selective. You will need to decide if the school will provide

- sufficient challenge?
- or will they put too much pressure on your child?

- Do they have the kinds of facilities that you feel are important?
- Do they have opportunities for experiences beyond the classroom?
- How do you feel about the travel arrangements to school?
- Will you be confident about your child using public transport?

Some parents have already made appointments to see one of the team. We have always encouraged parents with queries to contact us, regardless of the subject matter. We will help you as much as we can, "guiding" you, rather than "steering" you in your decision making process. Please remember, that choosing a school is based on personal preference and several of our secondary schools have recently had new head teachers. This could change the direction or the philosophy of each school.

In September, the children who are registered to sit the Kent Test will take them and results are sent to parents within three weeks. There are some changes to the format this year in that the test will only take place on one day with two papers and a writing task. One paper will test English and Maths, the other reasoning skills of different types. We will give everyone the results (actual marks) from the Kent Test when they arrive in school. This will enable you to make your choices for the next stage of the process.

All parents, irrespective of whether your child sits the Kent Test or not, will be required to select their first, second and third choices of secondary school and complete the Secondary Common Application Form (SCAF) online at www.kent.gov.uk/ola by Friday 31st October 2014.

Parents will be informed of their school offer at the beginning of March and details will be included on how to accept places or appeal. If you do decide to appeal against the school allocated to you, please do not hesitate to seek our advice. We can support you in this process if requested.

Finally, and this may be a surprise to you, but we do not know who has chosen which schools until very late in the process (because it is mainly completed on line). We also never know who has made an appeal unless the parents tell us. Furthermore, we never know which appeals have been successful until near the end of the Summer Term; when the children are at the end of Year 6. Therefore, please pass on this information to us too!

Any questions please do not hesitate to ask.

The Northbourne Team

