



25<sup>th</sup> January 2018

Dear Parent / Carer,

I hope you are well and have had a good start to 2018. I wanted to write to you personally today to update you on our application to the Department for Education (DfE) for Holcombe Grammar School (HGS) to go co-educational and admit girls as well as boys, and regarding the decision that we have now received from the DfE.

We applied for the school to become co-educational because we have always believed that it should benefit all students in the local area, and that a mixed school would be in their best interests. We are pleased that the DfE recognised the merit and potential of our application – in particular, the enhanced choice that would be created for selective students in Medway and the greater collaboration between our trust schools that would result. It also noted the widespread support the proposal earned, including from parents and also the wider public. Nonetheless, the DfE has decided the school should remain open to boys only at this time.

Although this is not the decision we had hoped for, HGS remains in a very strong position and we are excited about the bright future ahead – HGS is a successful school achieving excellent results and is extremely popular. As you know, last summer we celebrated exceptional exam results, with nearly a fifth of our A Level students achieving A\* or A grades, and many students securing places at some of the best universities in the world. At GCSE level, 96% of our students achieved grades A\*-C, and the publication of the MAT-wide Key Stage 4 tables next week will further demonstrate the Trust's success in enabling our students to thrive and realise their potential.

I would also like to personally thank everyone who supported us in the process of the application –overall, our consultation on the change received almost 450 responses, of which 95% were in favour. We are incredibly proud of the support we received, and are continually looking for ways to add capacity to our schools, so that more young people can take advantage of the high-quality education the trust is proud to offer to all of its students.

We are very excited about continuing on our journey of academic success over the coming years, and seeing all our students flourish and go on to great things. Parents play an integral role in supporting students, in addition to the work our dedicated teaching staff do to foster their growth and development. I would once again like to thank you for your ongoing support, and say how much we are looking forward to sharing our progress with you as HGS and 'The Thinking Schools Academy Trust' go from strength to strength.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "S. Gardner".

*Stuart Gardner*  
*Chief Executive*  
*The Thinking Schools Academy Trust*

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