

## **Standards-Not-Tiers Press Release**

**28th February 2008**

### **Key Stage 3 Results make it a Hat Trick for Island Schools.**

Key Stage Three results released today by the DCSF show that the Isle of Wight delivered results above the England Average in all three subjects – English, Maths and Science - at this crucial stage in 2007. This is a significant improvement on the 2006 figures and is partly a result of the implementation of the new condensed Key Stage Three regime, in which many pupils took the tests a year early in Year 8 of middle school.

Standards-Not-Tiers research shows that good Key Stage Three results are usually a precursor to good GCSE results. Based on 2006 data the group is able to show that local authorities with similar Key Stage Three results, usually deliver GCSE results at the national average or better.

Whilst we acknowledge that we should aim to beat the average, currently the Isle of Wight is approximately 5% below the national average for five GCSE's A\*-C Including English and Maths and to bring our results up to the average will be a real achievement in such a short space of time. The fact is that raising standards is not an overnight operation but one that takes a number of years to achieve. What we are seeing now is positive proof that the improvements made so far are working. To denigrate them as Cllr Wells did earlier this week is wrong and demonstrates a lack of understanding of the process of improvement.

These excellent Key Stage Three results must be viewed together with the other data that has materialised over the last few days. Standards-Not-Tiers have today learned that for 5 GCSE's A\*-C including Math and English the Isle of Wight is in fact England's 7<sup>th</sup> most improved local Authority (out of 149) over the last three years, not the 9<sup>th</sup> as previously reported. The fact that the county has no high schools delivering below the Government's 30% target is also very significant.

We think that it is very regrettable that Cllr Wells has reacted so negatively to the encouraging results at GCSE. Earlier this week he stated that "we need to be realistic and recognise our results are not good enough". Whilst it is true that our results can and should improve further, Standards-Not-Tiers believes that if the Council was truly being realistic it would acknowledge that it takes time for results to improve and that these signs of serious improvement should not be dismissed, simply because they fly in the face of its current arguments.

The improvements that are being produced here and now, are proof that if well managed and focused, our three tier structure is capable of raising standards to at least the national average and beyond. The Council on the other hand can provide no proof that their planned restructuring will lead to any improvement whatsoever. We demand that they provide the evidence before they put us through the pain of a wholesale reorganisation.

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