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Specialist College

PRIDE IN OUR SUCCESS



## Principal's Welcome Message

Welcome to our first Academy newsletter of this academic year. The first year of the Academy was a very exciting one. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the whole Academy community - staff, students, and parents - for all their hard work in ensuring that the students achieved huge success in their exams.

In addition, over the Summer break we received the very good news that the new building project had been given approval by the Secretary of State. Thank you again to all who contributed to petitions and sent emails to politicians. It all helped to make sure that the final decision was in our favour.

We are very proud of what was achieved in

the inaugural year of the Academy and have set ourselves some challenging targets for the coming year so that we maintain the momentum of improvement and transformation. The year has started well with the students focused on their learning and determined to succeed. The support of parents is vital in this and we were delighted to welcome so many parents to target setting meetings with their sons and daughters in September. Working together we will make this an even more successful year for The Skinners' Kent Academy.

*Sim Carr*

**Principal, The Skinners' Kent Academy**

## Exam Success for SKA KS4 Students



KS4 Students Celebrate Exam Success

KS4 Academy students celebrated their GCSE results in August. Highlights were:

- 32% achieved 5+ A\*-C grades, including Maths and English, a n 88% improvement on the previous year.
- 59% achieved A\*-C grades in English
- 37% achieved A\*-C grades in Maths
- 45% achieved A\*-C grades in Science
- 98% achieved 5 A\*-G grades
- 73% achieved 5+ A\*-C grades

## New Building Back on Track

The Skinners' Kent Academy new building programme is back on track thanks to the magnificent support of the students, staff and local community. The Secretary of State approved the funding in full for the new building in early August. Since then further design meetings have been held with the two preferred bidding companies.

Final bids have now been submitted. These will be evaluated in the coming weeks with a final decision being made on the winning bidder by early November. It is then that detailed planning and building work can start in earnest with the aim of starting the build in the Spring. Exciting times indeed for the Academy and for Tunbridge Wells.

## Academy Welcomes New Staff and Governors

At the outset of the academic year we welcome twelve new members of staff to the Academy. New faces involved in the work of the Academy are:



**Matt Tompkins**  
Vice-Principal

**Matt Tompkins** – Vice Principal, Achievement for All  
**Ciara Magee** – Teacher of Integrated Humanities  
**Yasroon Elmi** – Teacher of Science  
**Kimberley Sadler** – Teacher of English  
**Bethany Mead** – Teaching Assistant  
**John Styles** – Teaching Assistant  
**Lindsey Marden** – Community Development Manager  
**Talya Roberson** – Community Development Manager  
**Glynis Smith** – Senior Administrator  
**William Jellis** – Learning Mentor  
**Jake Sayers** – Learning Mentor  
**Hannah Drew** – Learning Mentor  
**Natasha Morling** – Parent Governor

## Open Evening A Great Success

The Academy Open Evening for prospective parents and students, held on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> October, was a great success with around 300 attendees.

Students from all years were superb ambassadors for the Academy, greeting our guests, guiding them around the event and aiding teachers with the interactive teaching sessions that took place. The Academy has received some very positive feedback from visitors so our thanks go to all the staff, students and parents involved in the event.

## Poetic Success for Francesca

Year 8 Academy student Francesca Drewett recently won a fantastic third place in the Tunbridge Wells Girls' Grammar School Poetry Competition with her poem 'Sea Light'.

### SEA LIGHT

The sparkling blue water laps against the sand  
 The sun pours down overhead, covering the sand in light.  
 Water shines like a handful of moist, turquoise sequins  
 Wet porcelain shells glisten in the brightness.  
 Seaweed clamours against a dark rock; shimmering green ribbon.  
 Salt coats the cliffside, the waves gaining energy and life.  
 As the tide goes out, the jumping excited waves subside.  
 A colony of crimson fish swim out to sea, bathing in the moonlight.  
 Great pools of white glitter sprinkled onto the navy ocean.  
 Grey clouds crown around the still moon  
 Forming dancing shadows across the water.  
 Ebony black, the sea turns cold, the sun returns at dawn.

- Francesca Drewett

## Kirkland Rowell Survey Results

A big thank you to everyone who took time to complete the Kirkland Rowell survey sent to students and parents at the end of Term 6.

The results reveal that the Academy has reason to be happy with most of its activities, but should recognise the need for improvements, particularly regarding facilities and choice of subjects. The views of students and parents are very important to us and the feedback provided in the survey will help shape plans for the new building and the development objectives of the Academy.

## First Impressions

### From Students.....

Year 7 students have been asked to write about their experiences of life at The Skinners' Kent Academy during Term 1. Here is a collection of their views:

*'I think The Skinners' Kent Academy is a big school and when I came here I felt really small, but now I have been here for a couple of weeks I feel I have grown bigger, smarter and older. I love being at The Skinners' Kent Academy. I have made lots of new friends and they are very nice.'* - **Daisy-Grace Fordham**

*'Feelings? At the start you'll feel scared but once you've made one or two friends, you'll love it. You may think that school life is impossible, but it's not, it is fun! Uniform: the uniform is a blazer, a pair of black trousers, a tie and polo shirt. Every time you walk to school or the bus stop people look at you in amazement. School size: the size of this school is giant compared to your primary and is getting bigger in 2012 when they will finish constructing the new Skinners' Kent Academy. I'm sure it's going to be amazing!'* - **Harry Parkman**

*'When I arrived at the Academy I felt really excited and I couldn't wait to learn new things and make new friends. I like to do art because it's great, science because we do lots of work with Bunsen burners and Integrated Humanities because we learn lots of new things.'* - **Josie-Marie Stevens**

### From Parents...

*'I just wanted to say how pleased we are with how our daughter Lauren is settling in at The Skinners' Kent Academy! It's fantastic how friendly all the kids and staff are. Lauren has felt so welcome and she told us that she feels like she has been at the Academy forever. We are very impressed and would like to pass on our thanks and support for what you are doing. We as parents will pass on to the non-believers that are stuck in the negative Sandown Court way of thinking that the Academy is now a very positive, caring and friendly school with staff that want to give kids a happy and safe environment to grow and learn. Keep up the good work, many thanks'* - **Jane and Stuart Collins**

## Senior Citizens' Christmas Party

Following on from the success of last year's Senior Citizens' Christmas Party, the Academy will again be inviting another group of senior citizens' from in and around the Tunbridge Wells area to a Christmas lunch on December 14th. Guests will be entertained by the Academy choir and will hopefully be provided with hampers of fresh fruit, vegetables and Christmas goodies. Students will participate in a range of fund raising activities in support of this event throughout Term 2.

## KS4 Academy Students Attend Skillsfest in Tonbridge

In preparation for post-16 options, KS4 Academy students joined thousands of other secondary school students at the Skillsfest in the Angel Centre, Tonbridge at the end of September. With over 80 companies attending the event, students gained a real insight into career opportunities as they browsed a range of interactive stalls and displays. Students were also able to see various demonstrations of courses offered at West Kent College – a lead sponsor of The Skinners' Kent Academy. As luck would have it, one of the many activities on offer was hairdressing, so the girls were able to relax and have their hair styled while the boys, who were not brave enough to try a restyle, turned their hands to soldering copper in a construction stall.

This event was part funded by the West Kent Learning Federation and other generous sponsors. Expertise and vision was added by Anne McNulty and her team from EBP Kent who planned the event in collaboration with a steering group chaired by Lyn Bayliss from Mascalls School. The Academy's IAG co-ordinator, Sherilee Leighton, was part of this group. Working together, the two bodies produced a successful event which helped Academy students gain the careers information they need to take them into the future.

## Academy Hosts Primary Sports Tournament



BTEC Sports students support the primary tournament

Academy BTEC Sports students and sports ambassadors helped to organise The Skinners' Kent Academy Primary Sports Tournament at the end of September. The tournament saw over 200 pupils from local primary schools compete for the netball and football trophies. After a series of hard-fought and extremely close matches in both the netball and football, Paddock Wood emerged as worthy winners of the football competition while Horsmonden claimed the netball competition.

Paddock Wood Year 5 teacher Simon Cole stated: *'The level of competitiveness has been great. Everyone has really tried their best and the main thing is the kids have really enjoyed it.'* Academy Vice-Principal Matt Tompkins said *'I've been really impressed by the standard of both the organisation and of the football itself.'*

## Year 11 Visit Downe Activity Centre

At the beginning of October, 33 Year 11 students faced their fears and challenged themselves to extend their horizons as they set off for a weekend of adventure at Downe Activity Centre. Throughout the weekend students participated in a variety of activities including abseiling, rock climbing, zip wire, go-carting, a high wire course, grass sledging and a crate challenge.

Mr Low was chef for the weekend and on the Saturday night he cooked up a great chilli which was much enjoyed by everyone. The weekend was enjoyed by staff and students alike: *'This is great I feel like a child again'* exclaimed one student as she ran through a puddle in her wellington boots! A big thank you to all the students and staff that came along on the weekend. All of us who took part in the trip are looking forward to next year!



Year 11 students at the Downe Activity Centre

The Skinners' Kent Academy Newsletter welcomes contributions from students, parents and carers. Articles may be submitted electronically to:

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Alternately, articles may be submitted in writing to:

The Newsletter, The Skinners' Kent Academy, Blackhurst Lane, Tunbridge Wells, TN2 4PY