



Science and
Engineering
Specialist College

Pride in Our Success



HM Inspectors Praise Academy's Progress

Students, staff and governors are extremely proud following the recent publication of the Ofsted Inspection report.

A team of inspectors visited the Academy at the end of January and spent two days assessing all aspects of the Academy's work. We are delighted to announce that the overall judgment was that the Academy has made good progress towards raising standards since opening in September 2009.

The report concludes that *'students are making at least good progress and an increasing number are making outstanding progress.'* It recognises that while some performance indicators for attainment remain below the national average, *'the gaps are being closed ... and that students are on track to achieve challenging targets in 2011.'* The document also notes the increasing confidence of Academy students noting that *'aspirations are rising and attitudes have been transformed.'*

Regarding the Academy's teaching staff, the report states that practitioners *'have high*

expectations that require students to think for themselves and take responsibility for their learning. These teachers use their good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in students' learning to plan and deliver lessons that challenge and engage them.'

The report also praises the leadership of the Academy - *'the strong direction provided by the Principal has resulted in a shared vision and commitment to making things better for students and being a positive force within the wider community.'*

Principal Sian Carr, said of the report: *'We are all delighted that Ofsted has recognised the significant progress made by the Academy since it opened 18 months ago. It is a fitting testament to the dedication and commitment of our students, staff, parents and governors. The whole Academy works extremely hard to achieve the very best for all our students. We will continue to aim high for our students to ensure they have the brightest of futures.'*

Academy Learning Days a Success

Over 400 Year 5 school pupils have had a taste of secondary school education at The Skinners' Kent Academy Learning Days which were held across six days in February.

An exciting programme of events was designed to reflect the breadth of the Academy curriculum. The aim was to give primary school students the opportunity to try new subjects and learn new skills with specialist subject teachers.

Community Development Manger Lindsey Marden said: *'We wanted to give the primary students an academic experience, but also provide familiarity with the way secondary schools work. We've made sure there's been time to walk around the Academy, see the plans for our new building, meet Academy students and, of course, have fun.'*



A team of Academy students were chosen to be Student Mentors with a range of responsibilities including guiding the primary students around the site, helping in class and answering questions. Year 8 student mentor Jacob Court said *'I've really learnt how to work with younger pupils.'*

The days have been a great success and feedback from the primary school teachers and students has been extremely positive.

New Building Update

Since submitting the Planning Application in December 2010, we have been listening very carefully to initial feedback on the proposals and have revised a number of plans relating to transport and traffic, the boiler room and the floodlighting arrangements for the Academy's outdoor sporting facilities. These plans were presented to the local community at a public exhibition on 31st January 2011, and will be subject to a further 21 day statutory consultation period. The secondary consultation period, which will supplement responses received during the initial consultation, will take place from 9th February – 2nd March 2011.

We also held an invaluable INSET day with all Academy staff on 5th January 2011 to get their feedback on the proposals and their ideas for ensuring that the new facilities not only match, but exceed, the Academy's vision for transforming education and learning. This was a very productive session which resulted in some innovative and challenging ideas.

Local parents and residents may also have noticed workers carrying out a number of surveys in the grounds. These are necessary pre-construction surveys undertaken to ensure that all site issues are clearly identified in advance of construction start.

Academy New Build Milestones

- **17th November 2010** Public exhibition of new build proposals
- **20th December 2010 – 28th January 2011** 21-day statutory consultation on planning application
- **31st January 2011** Public exhibition of revised proposals
- **9th February – 2nd March 2011** Second 21-day statutory consultation period to consider revisions
- **15th March 2011** Planning Committee Hearing

Subject to planning approval, we hope to reach financial close and contract award for the scheme in April, with construction starting immediately thereafter.

Academy Students Take On Mentoring Roles

Nine Academy students have been chosen to work alongside Tonbridge Grammar School pupils delivering mathematics classes to gifted primary school pupils.

The aim of the programme is to give mathematically able 9-11 year olds a chance to become immersed in the subject and, at the same time, give secondary school students the opportunity to develop their mentoring skills. The classes are designed to extend mathematical thinking and problem solving skills with Year 5 and 6 pupils working at Year 7 and 8 levels. The sessions are both fun and challenging. By becoming mathematics mentors on this scheme Skinners' Kent Academy students have the opportunity to develop and extend their mentoring skills, meet other mathematically able secondary school pupils and get experience of different teaching styles and environments.

Skinners' School Masterclasses

Academy students have been taking part in Saturday morning masterclasses at The Skinners' School. Students were invited to attend the classes based on their academic ability and as a reward for their hard work and commitment throughout the year. Academy Vice Principal Matt Topliss said: *'This is fantastic enrichment for our students. They have the opportunity to study new subjects at an advanced level and work side by side other gifted and talented secondary students from the area.'*

There was a diverse selection of classes for the students to choose from including: structural engineering, advanced photography, ballistic missile making, earth science and cookery. The cookery course proved to be very popular and gave students the chance to work with chefs from Wagamamas, The Tunbridge Wells Bar and Grill and Hotel du Vin.

The masterclasses, now in their third year, are designed and run by The Skinners' School as part of a government scheme to raise attainment and aspiration in maths, science and modern foreign languages.

Pathways to Independence



Jasmine Gower was the winner of the Year 9 Pathways to Science project with an excellent model of Einstein's head. Other award winners in the science P2I project were:

Outstanding Achievement

Jasmine Gower; Holly Freeman; Amelia Everett; Katie Gough; Henrique Fonseca; Ben Woodgate

Outstanding Effort

Charlie Brooker; Nicky Hopp'e; Jessie Gifford; Francesca Drewett; Tyler Parker; Ashlea Shears

Work for the Humanities P2I has just been submitted and the names of award winners will be published in next term's newsletter.

Teachers continue to be impressed by the outstanding effort and quality of the work being produced for these projects. Coming up Drama in March, PE in April, MFL in May and Design and Technology in June. Keep up the good work!

Academy Trip to France



In the final week of Term 2, thirty Academy students travelled to France for a three day trip full of great food, fun and some memorable experiences. Jake Sayers, Learning Mentor and Academy *bon vivant*, describes the excursion.

After arrival at Calais we travelled to Flanders in order to visit World War One cemeteries and the remnants of trenches constructed by German and Allied forces. We visited three cemeteries in total and history students gained an insight into the trench warfare which characterised conflict on the Western Front almost a century ago. 11,954 soldiers are buried at the enormous cemetery at Tyne Cot, the largest Commonwealth War Graves Commission cemetery in the world. The row upon row of white grave stones was a haunting image and a stark contrast to the German Langemark-North cemetery - a mass grave for 25,000 German soldiers. The rows of nameless black marble Prussian crosses at Langemarck left many of us feeling very pensive.

The second day of the trip brought activities of an altogether more light-hearted nature. We, like 15 million other people this year, visited Disneyland Paris. Despite the bitter December cold it was an enjoyable day out where the students could really flex their French with questions like '*Ou est Space Mountain?*'. On the way back to our hostel in the picturesque town of Albert, we had a coach tour of Paris. As our obliging coach driver took us past a beautifully illuminated Eiffel Tower Mrs Daniells took coach microphone in hand to regale us with a selection of Edith Piaf's greatest hits; our experience à *Paris* was complete.

On the final day of the trip we visited a small organic chocolate factory. With the strong and irresistible smell of cocoa beans filling each room and a stream of steaming liquid chocolate running through the factory shop floor, we feared that one of our party would become a real-live Augustus Gloop. Fortunately, all resisted the temptation to leap into the Chocolate River.

After a final stop at a *hypermarche* we returned to Calais to board the ferry back to England and reflect on a very memorable trip.



Friends of the Academy Reception

A reception to mark the first anniversary of the Friends of the Academy was held at the end of January. The informal event was attended by approximately 30 guests who were given an update on the successes of the last year. It was also an opportunity to meet senior leaders from the Academy and the new Chair of the Friends, former Tonbridge School Headmaster, Christopher Everett. The event concluded with a round table discussion about the role and contribution of the Friends in the coming years. This was very fruitful with offers of work experience, expert advice and commitment to become active participants in the future of the Academy.

The Friends of The Skinners' Kent Academy is an informal networking group established to provide support to the Academy in the crucial early years of its establishment. Current members have interests in areas as far afield as education, business, art, science and religion. Working as Academy Advocates, Friends are a link between the Academy and the community. They help to spread the word about the Academy's achievements and aspirations and forge ties with local people and organisations.

Extra-Curricular Programme Takes Off

The extended extra-curricular programme is going from strength to strength. This term students had a choice of 57 different lunch time and after school activities ranging from sugar craft to darts. The students are really enjoying the opportunity to learn new skills, meet new people and have some fun. As the following testimonies demonstrate, students are getting a lot from the extra-curricular experience:

Sugar Craft

My name is Ashlee Chantler and I am a member of the sugar craft club. In sugar craft we learn about how to design and create cake decorations. The club has given me a chance to develop new skills and gain an understanding of sugar craft. It's both fun and useful.

Horse Riding

My name is Fruzanne Weller and I am really enjoying going horse riding. I couldn't ride before I started this club, but now most of us are off the lead rein and are able to do rising trot and many of us have already passed our exam at level 1. Some of our group ride with students from other schools who have learning needs and it is great to see these children really enjoying themselves. I have also benefited from the opportunity to mix with a wide range of Academy students and meet new people.

This exciting programme of clubs and courses continues in Term 4.

Holiday GCSE Revision Classes

Revision classes for GCSE Maths and English candidates will be held throughout the forthcoming holiday week.

The programme of revision classes is as follows:

English Revision – GCSE for Year 11

Monday 21st February 10-2:00

Tuesday 22nd February 10-12:30

Maths Revision –GCSE Module 2 for Year 10

Friday 25th February 10.00-12.00

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