

# THE SKINNERS' FAMILY NEWSLETTER

*Highlights from across the family of Skinners' schools*

**Winter Edition: January 2024**



**Happy new year!** And welcome to the winter edition of this newsletter for the Skinners' family of schools. I hope you've had chance for a truly relaxing Christmas break and are looking forward to challenges and opportunities of the new year.

In some ways last term was a momentous one for the family with the launch of the Skinners' Academies Trust in September, bringing together five of our schools into a new collaborative partnership. Our first major piece of work has been the launch of a new Professional Development offer for all our Trust staff – including membership of the Chartered College of Teaching, a new middle leadership programme, a range of subject leadership groups and a new pedagogical research community.

As ever we're grateful to all our schools for their openness and willingness to support each other through visits, advice and resource sharing. We also now have five leaders giving their time as governors of other schools in the group – exemplifying our commitment to help each other keep getting better.

We're looking forward to expanding our collaborative work this term. Just one example – in February, we launch the "Skinners Links" initiative, connecting members of the Company to our schools' careers departments to broaden opportunities for our students when they leave school. We will also be looking to build closer links between our new Skinners' Charities Foundation and the communities around our schools. It will be an exciting 2024!

**Ian Anderson**

**Director of Education, The Skinners' Company**



## THE MARSH ACADEMY

During the first week of term, the Marsh Academy Languages department took a group of 36 French language students on a residential trip to Paris, spending four days exploring the city. The visit started with a cruise along the River Seine at dusk, seeing the sights of Paris at night time – including a very sparkly Eiffel Tower. The following days were spent at Parc Asterix and enjoying a day in Paris visiting the Eiffel Tower, l'Arc de Triomphe, Le Moulin Rouge and Le Musee du Louvre, where we were lucky enough to see the Mona Lisa. On our final day we visited Stade de France, including the chance to experience running out from the tunnel into the stadium. Our students had a great time and thoroughly enjoyed the experience – including our journey home on a ferry during Storm Ciaran!

Their behaviour was superb throughout the four days and they were an absolute credit to our school. A big well done to all and we look forward to offering a similar trip next year...

## THE SKINNERS' SCHOOL

On Tuesday 7th November the Skinners' School joint choir with Tunbridge Wells Girls' Grammar School made its second annual trip to Cambridge, to sing an evensong service jointly with the choir of Selwyn College under the inspiring leadership of their and Ely Cathedral's Director of Music, Sarah MacDonald. Around rehearsals, they managed to take in a lunch-time concert at the music faculty and have a brief sing in the chapel of Trinity Hall college, too.

The students rose to the formidable challenge of performing difficult repertoire at a very high standard and were excellent ambassadors for the schools. We'd like to thank all the staff who accompanied us for their time, energy and humour throughout a long day.



The Evensong service was livestreamed and remains available via this link. It is well worth a click:

<https://www.youtube.com/live/sfdD9fDhT7M?si=kLTy-3qgsDqdXqNp>

# THE SKINNERS' FAMILY OF SCHOOLS



## SKINNERS' KENT PRIMARY SCHOOL



At Skinners' Kent Primary School we aim to enrich our curriculum with a variety of trips, visitors and learning experiences. During Term 2 our Year 5 and 6 visited the London National History Museum and Isabelle in Year 6 has shared her recount below.

### Our Trip to The National History Museum - By Isabelle (Y6)

After our exciting train ride, we walked to the main entrancing gate to the National History Museum. We were all in awe of how huge the building was and looked forward to our day ahead. Everyone gathered in the basement floor where visiting schools would eat their lunch and meet with the other classmates. We got into groups, and off we went to explore the museum.

Two important parts of the museum was the dinosaur's section and the future of planet Earth's section. These link with our science work in school as they both had biome sections dedicated to the biomes dinosaurs lived in, and also the biome of future Earth. My favourite section was the

future of the Earth because it was interesting to see how our world might look like in the future. After our lunch, we headed to an organised workshop named 'A Mission to Mars'. The workshop linked to our DT and Geography learning, so we could apply our knowledge about space and building things to this learning activity.

All of us were given a 'Mars Rover' Lego template to follow, and then we were instructed to add our own ideas to it, such as solar panels, satellite dishes, etc. After this stage we tested our rovers on some plastic Mars terrain. We then held a competition to see which rover could get the furthest with coding. The coding was a challenge to use but one we all persevered with and thoroughly enjoyed the activity. We all had a fantastic trip and looked forward to continuing our learning in school.



## TONBRIDGE SCHOOL

There was a distinctively Gallic theme to Tonbridge's Symphony Orchestra Concert in November. Featuring pieces from composers Saint-Saëns, Ravel, Messiaen and Bizet, the concert, staged in the Chapel of St Augustine, formed part of a themed Autumn Concert Series, *Pièces de Résistance*.

More than 60 boys, from across all year groups, treated the audience to an hour of French repertoire, conducted by Mark Forkgen, Director of Music. "What's most impressive is that the orchestra expressed the mood of each piece," he said. "The boys captured the exuberance of the Carmen Suite and the sensitivity needed for Ravel, while grasping the complexity of Messiaen's work and conveying the colourful, evocative nature of *Danse Macabre*. Our concert also gave section leaders a chance to shine, with solos for violin, horn, flute, and oboe."



The Autumn Concert series concluded with a Piano and Chamber Concert in early December.

## SKINNERS' ACADEMY



On 16 November, Skinners' Academy held our annual Prizegiving ceremony, celebrating the fantastic achievements of our pupils during the 2022-2023 academic year.

This year we saw the return of one of our alumni, Joyce Amisi, who is currently studying Social Work at Middlesex University. Joyce delivered an inspirational speech, expressing her gratitude for all the opportunities she was given during her time at Skinners' Academy including her involvement in both our successful Steel Band and our Netball team.

Throughout the evening we were treated to musical performances from the school choir, steel band, and a violin solo. Prizes were presented by the Master of The Skinners' Company, Mr Timothy Haynes, and were awarded to pupils for progress in subject areas, overall academic achievement and services to the Academy. This year's Skinners' Way prize was awarded to Jasmine Joseph for holding the Academy's core values in high regard and demonstrating them consistently and to the highest standard.



# THE SKINNERS' FAMILY OF SCHOOLS



## THE NEW BEACON



This term saw us hold the inaugural New Beacon "parent or grand-parent and son" maths competition; oversubscribed within 36 hours of advertising, we knew it would be an exciting and competitive event!

Boys from Years 3-8 competed against each other answering questions from First Maths Challenge level (Years 3-4) right up to Junior Maths Challenge (Year 8) level and there was a buzz of excitement throughout the room as boys raced to their markers to have answers checked and decided whether to play or pass as the time ran down.

It was a close finish with 8 different teams in joint 4th place and lots of questions answered, even by our youngest team members. We were delighted that so many boys wanted to take part and grateful to all those adults who were prepared to pit themselves against some of the school's finest mathematicians.

The Maths Department were thrilled to have hosted such a 'cool' event and are already looking to a larger venue with spectator seating for 2024!

## THE SKINNERS' KENT ACADEMY

We are thrilled to share the news that The Skinners' Kent Academy has been selected by the Department for Education to oversee one of its Language Hubs. Working in partnership with Dartford Grammar School, the Academy is one of only 19 schools in England to have been chosen.

Under the Language Hub initiative, the Academy will take the lead in promoting language studies among students, spanning Primary school to GCSEs. We will also be aiming to enhance language offerings within schools and ensure that all students aged 14-18 have the opportunity to pursue language studies through to Key Stage 5. An important part of our work will be our collaboration with the other schools in the Skinners' Academies Trust, where we are leading a subject collaboration group for all language heads of department across the Trust.

Plans for the next three years are currently being finalised and we are excited to share these with you once agreed. If you wish to find out any further information about our Language Hub and how you can get involved, please email [khle@skinnerkent.org.uk](mailto:khle@skinnerkent.org.uk).



## THE JUDD SCHOOL

We enjoyed an exciting term of rugby, culminating in an enthralling Kent County Schools cup U14 rugby final, in which The Judd School beat Langley park 44-21. This was followed a week later by a gripping U15 Kent County Schools cup final where our U15A drew 15-15 against last year's U14 Champions – both teams were declared joint Kent Cup U15 champions for the season. The Kent U18 cup is still underway with two Skinners' family schools in the running; should The Judd School make it to the final we will be attempting our third title in a row and hopefully bringing us the coveted treble with our younger victors! An integral member of our 1st XV is the school's first international player since the switch to the RGU Academy pathway. Angus is involved in both the U18 and U20 England squads - a tremendous achievement.