



ISSUE 1: Summer 2010

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WELCOME



As we make the final preparations before opening our doors as the brand-new Knole Academy on 3 September, this is an incredibly exciting time for students and staff.

I was delighted to take up the role of Principal Designate back in January, responsible for ensuring a smooth transition to the new academy. Though challenging, it has been a real privilege to be leading a project that represents a transformational opportunity for the local community.

We have consulted existing students and staff in the planning of almost every aspect of the new school. The staffing structure, curriculum offer and ethos of Knole Academy are now fully shaped and in place. I hope this newsletter will give you a better understanding of what life at Knole Academy will be like from September but, for more information, please visit the academy's website at www.knoleacademy.org.

Creativity is the key to developing enquiring minds and independent

learning. We will use the expertise of our experienced and committed staff to build on the considerable strengths of both predecessor schools. Striving towards excellence in our learning, teaching and resources, we will work in partnership with parents and the wider community to give our students the very best opportunities.

Your children are both our finest resource and our greatest responsibility. Along with Knole Academy's sponsors and staff, I thank you for the trust that you have placed in us and we look forward to working with you to deliver high quality education for the young people of Sevenoaks.

Mary Boyle
Principal Designate

A NOTE FROM OUR LEAD SPONSOR

As Chairman of the Glen Care Group, I have been providing care and rehabilitation services for vulnerable people – including children and young people – for 24 years. It is my experience in this work that informs my belief that all young people have potential and that they respond best in a safe, well-ordered and disciplined environment.

With this in mind, I am delighted with the appointment of Mary Boyle as Principal of Knole Academy from 1 September. Mary not only has cast-iron educational experience and managerial skills, she has also demonstrated a clarity of vision that has helped drive the new academy to fruition.

We were delighted with the results of our wide-ranging consultation process, which canvassed the views of students, staff, parents, local primary schools, Sevenoaks and the wider community. We wanted to work with local people to make this a community-focused academy that everyone could play a part in shaping. A clear majority (62%) was in favour of the overall arrangements, with 66% supporting the vision and 74% supporting our chosen specialisms. 65% recognised the benefits the academy could bring to the local area and 70% felt the admissions arrangements were fair. We listened to public opinion and decided to change the proposed name of the school to Knole Academy – a fitting title that links the academy with the town.

Gordon Phillips
Lead Sponsor, Knole Academy

The academy's Co-Sponsors are Sevenoaks School and Kent County Council.



CREATING A CULTURE OF CARE

At Knole Academy, our focus will be to enable every student to fulfil their potential, equipping them with the confidence, education and skills needed for a happy and secure future. The academy's ethos will play a key role in achieving this objective.

We want learning to be purposeful, innovative and fun, but we also believe in the traditional values of respect and courtesy. Individuality is important and personalised learning programmes will be key. Students will have learning targets for all subjects, based on prediction and challenge. Continuous assessment will enable them to improve their standards across the curriculum and in enrichment activities, allowing them to grow in self-confidence and engendering a positive attitude to learning.

Experience shows that – although there must be mechanisms in place for discipline – rewards are more effective than sanctions. We will therefore have a strong rewards culture in the academy, with success celebrated at all levels of achievement.

Pastoral care will have a high priority. All Knole students will be in a tutor group and House. There will be sixth form tutor groups for post-16 students.

The academy will promote a healthy lifestyle by encouraging sensible eating and exercise. The food we will provide will be freshly prepared on the premises and will be low in fat and sugar.

We also want students to develop a sense of global citizenship, understanding that they are privileged and encouraging them to be proactive in helping those less fortunate. We will therefore be working to create charity fundraising and voluntary service opportunities for our young people.

KEY DATES FOR YOUR CALENDAR

TUE 6 JULY: Induction day 1 for sixth formers
9.00am – 3.25pm, Knole West (Bradbourne)

WED 7 JULY: Induction day 2 for sixth formers
9.00am – 3.25pm, Knole East (Wilderness)

THUR 8 JULY: Induction day for year 7s
10am – 3pm, Knole West (Bradbourne)

FRI 3 SEPT : First day of term

Year 7s: 8.45am – 2.00pm Knole West	Years 8 to 11: 8.45am – 3.00pm at their existing school sites	Sixth form: Enrolment 9.00am – 1.00pm Knole West
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OPEN EVENING

30th September 2010
6.00pm – 9.00pm
Knole West, Bradbourne Vale Road

OPEN MORNINGS

4th & 5th October 2010
9.30am – 12.30pm
Knole West, Bradbourne Vale Road

KNOLE ACADEMY GEARS UP FOR OPENING



Since the funding agreement for our new academy was signed by Ed Balls – former Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families – back in January, it's been 'full steam ahead' for Knole Academy.

Formed by the merger of The Bradbourne School and The Wildernesse School, the academy is being established for the benefit of all Sevenoaks students and the local community.

Knole Academy will be a state-funded, independent school for up to 1550 students aged 11 to 18, with all places provided free of charge. It will be co-educational, while exploring the provision of single sex teaching in core subjects within a mixed environment. We will cater for all abilities, from Gifted and Talented students to those with additional educational needs.

The academy will offer 240 places in each year group for boys and girls – organised as 8 forms of admission – and will have up to 350 post-16 places.

There will be two specialisms: Languages (with an emphasis on communication and core literacy skills) and Expressive Arts.

The distinctive characteristics of the education to be provided by Knole Academy have been defined as:

- A clear focus on self-discipline and independent learning
- Complementary co-educational and single sex learning
- Individual learning plans for all students to enable them to progress at a pace that meets their needs
- Review and assessment of student progress linked to a strong tradition of mentoring and tutoring to improve achievement
- A focus on developing young people's all-round intellectual, emotional, creative, cultural, physical and social wellbeing
- Placing a high priority on securing admission to top universities, and all aspects of further and higher education

Opening in September 2010, Knole Academy will initially be accommodated in the existing premises of The Bradbourne School and The Wildernesse School – to be known as Knole West and Knole East respectively – but plans are in hand for brand-new buildings on the Knole East site, which will open in 2012/13.



AN INSPIRATIONAL CURRICULUM

Throughout years 7 to 11, the academy will provide full coverage of the core subjects of the National Curriculum (English, Science and Maths). Learning will be developed with the extensive use of ICT and problem solving.

Students will follow the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme. This provides a framework of academic challenge and creative cross-curricular learning that develops critical and reflective thinkers. It involves a themed approach to the curriculum and can be taught through traditional subjects. The themes are:

- Approaches to Learning
- Community and Service
- Human Ingenuity
- Environments
- Health and Social Education

We will group students according to ability, as this enables the challenge, pace and support of their learning to be suited to their needs. The groupings are not fixed, however, and students will move in or out of groups according to their progress. In some subjects, we will operate a 'stage not age' philosophy, allowing students to enter early for exams in year 9 or 10.

There will also be a wide range of extra-curricular sports and activities, with opportunities to compete against and perform with other schools. As well as the traditional sports, students will be able to participate in more unusual pursuits, such as mountain biking, roller boarding and yoga. The academy will encourage all students to join at least one club, as this helps to build new friendships and develop new skills.

Knole Academy is also committed to arranging many and diverse school visits, both in the UK and abroad.



ADMISSIONS UPDATE

Boys and girls of all abilities from the local area will be able to apply for entry to Knole Academy. Our published admissions number will normally be 240, although we are oversubscribed for September 2010 and have offered a total of 266 places – 150 to girls and 116 to boys. Knole Academy will offer 10% of its places to students who have taken the Expressive Arts test and have demonstrated artistic aptitude.

We are looking forward to welcoming our new year 7 students in September, when they will join the Knole West site, in mixed classes. Before that, they will take part in an induction day at the academy on Thursday 8 July. Parents of year 7 students are invited to attend a presentation in the main hall from 2pm to 3pm on that day, when they will be given useful information and the chance to meet senior staff, who will be pleased to answer any queries.



EXCITING NEW SPECIALISMS

We are delighted that the academy will have two specialisms – Languages (with an emphasis on communication and core literacy skills) and Expressive Arts.

The Languages specialism is a new development for both predecessor schools. Working together with our Co-Sponsor, Sevenoaks School – which offers some 15 different languages – we will build on and improve our languages offer, developing the global awareness and communication skills of our students.

The high quality of teaching in the arts in both The Bradbourne School and The Wildernesse School has been clear to see. We will use those strengths in drama, dance, music and media studies to develop the creativity, confidence and success of our students across the curriculum.

The academy will also provide as many opportunities as possible for students to participate in professional standard performances that will engender pride in their abilities.

BRAND-NEW BUILDINGS

As we begin life as Knole Academy, we are very fortunate to have two thriving sites with good facilities, surrounded by beautiful grounds. Although we will plan meticulously the use of the two sites to achieve maximum potential from our curriculum and enrichment programme, we recognise that having two sites is not ideal.

Plans are underway to construct brand-new, state-of-the-art buildings on the Knole East site, which will open in 2012 or 2013. Students and staff will participate in the planning of these new facilities, which will also be available for use by the wider community. We will bring you more news about this exciting project as it unfolds.

EXPANDING OUR SIXTH FORM



Our post-16 provision will be growing – in more ways than one! As well as increasing the number of sixth form students to up to 350, we'll be expanding the range of courses on offer.

The sixth form is a great opportunity for students to extend their learning through vocational and academic courses, enterprise activities and work experience. This allows them to gain the necessary skills and qualifications to progress their education at college or university, or seek employment.

Both predecessor schools are justifiably proud of their sixth form, with over 170 young people studying A Level, AS Level and BTEC courses. The Knole Academy sixth form will be fully co-educational. There will be something for every level of ability in our post-16 curriculum; for example, recently introduced courses include hairdressing and a certificate in financial services. Please ask to see our sixth form prospectus for more details.

We aim to improve our sixth form offer as the academy develops by providing an even greater choice of courses, with a focus on delivering programmes in the academy's areas of specialism. Close collaboration with other West Kent Learning Federation partners will provide access to a wide variety of academic, vocational and applied qualifications. In addition – with the support of our Co-Sponsor, Sevenoaks School – we will be exploring the introduction of the International Baccalaureate.

We look forward to welcoming our new sixth form students when they take part in two days of induction on 6 and 7 July, including team-building activities and subject taster sessions.

BACK TO NATURE TO FIND HOUSE NAMES

Introducing a house structure within a school brings a number of benefits. It can be used to form the backbone of pastoral care, it helps to develop friendships outside of the year group and it bestows a sense of belonging for students, as well as some healthy competition!

Knole Academy will have four houses and these are represented by the four antler shapes in our logo. The houses are the forces of nature and each one has a corresponding colour in the logo design – Air (pink), Water (blue), Fire (orange) and Earth (green).

STUDENTS SHAPE OUR NEW IDENTITY

Students have been involved in the design of the academy's brand-new and distinctive logo, spending time at the studios of our professional design agency, Cleverbox, in Bromley.

Rob Kemp, Managing Director of Cleverbox explains, "The students were very excited about being involved in this project and they had some great ideas. A brainstorming session resulted in some student sketches of antlers – representing the famous deer at Knole Park – and an exploration of the patterns they can create."

These patterns were simplified into abstract shapes, four of which were arranged into a dynamic symbol, representing the four houses of the academy. The antler shapes are looking out – towards the community and the wider world – with the different, bold colours indicating diversity and creativity.



Student sketch



Simplified antlers



Formation of antlers



Final logo

ALL CHANGE PLEASE!

Change is exciting but sometimes difficult to deal with. We've been working hard to ensure that the transition to academy life will be stress-free for students, parents and staff.

As Knole Academy recognises that parents and carers may have been influenced in their preference for the predecessor schools by their single sex status, students in years 8 to 11 will continue to be taught in single sex groupings, initially in their existing accommodation (that is, girls on Knole West and boys on Knole East). Students in years 9 to 11 will be grouped by ability in the core subjects. Sixth form provision will continue to be co-educational.

These arrangements will provide a sense of security and continuity for existing students and we will, of course, take extra care to ensure that our year 7s feel welcome and happy in their new school.



LISTENING TO STUDENTS

Students at the predecessor schools have had many opportunities to air their views and this is something that will continue to be embraced – and developed further – in Knole Academy. Listening to students' comments and dealing with their issues is at the heart of the culture of mutual respect that we wish to create for our new school.

Students will play a major role in the recruitment of staff – they have already been involved in the interview process for the posts of Principal Designate and Vice Principal – and they will also have an input into some of the academy's policies.

There will be an elected Student Council, which will hold regular meetings, and a Student Leadership Team that will include the Head Students and their Deputies, as well as House Captains. In addition, students will take responsibility for others as Subject and Year Prefects and Peer Mentors.

DRESS TO IMPRESS

Students have also played a part in the design of the academy's new-look uniforms. Styled in shades of grey with green trims, the uniforms are both attractive and practical.

First impressions are important and Knole Academy expects its students to take pride in wearing the correct uniform in the right way. It's a key part of the commitment and positive attitude that forms the ethos of our new school.

Price and Buckland, suppliers of the new uniform, have already visited both predecessor schools to measure students for their new attire. All students currently in years 7-10 will be supplied with a uniform kit for Knole Academy, free of charge, ready for September. The pack will consist of a pair of charcoal grey trousers for boys or a charcoal grey box-pleated skirt for girls, a grey blazer with embroidered logo, either a long-sleeved or a sleeveless sweater and a clip-on tie (boys only). These will be worn with students' existing white shirts or blouses. The new PE kit – which consists of both indoor and outdoor wear – is optional for current students, who can continue to wear their existing PE kit or choose to purchase the new kit at any time.

Sixth formers will not wear the academy uniform but will have their own, smart dress code. This will allow them to express some personal choice within a framework that upholds professional standards of dress.



SPECIALISING IN EXPRESSIVE ARTS & LANGUAGES

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