



THE ISLE OF SHEPPEY  
ACADEMY

# ASPIRE

Autumn Newsletter 2011



Thank you for reading this newsletter and showing an interest in The Isle of Sheppey Academy. I want to start by thanking parents, students, staff, community groups and governors for their kindness and the support shown to me in this settling in period as your new Principal.

It is an honour to lead a school which is improving, but I am under no illusion about the challenge. We must strive for year on year improvement. The 2011 GCSE results were a record breaker! 73% of students achieved 5 A\*-C GCSE grades and when Maths and English are factored in it was a best ever 35% in line with central government's targets for schools. To complete the good news every Year 13 student, yes all 100% of them, left with a minimum of 2 or more A Levels passes, or their BTEC Advanced Diploma equivalence, with a record number of Grade A scores. Students have progressed to University degree courses. This is good news.

I am delighted to report we are 6th out of 15 similar Kent schools, as measured by the average scores pupils achieve in their primary school SATs, in terms of 5 A\*-C GCSE grades and 7th out of 15 Kent schools when we factor in Maths and English. This is all contributing to rising aspirations.

Ultimately schools are all about people and the values we hold. I want to make raising aspirations and attainment central to my work as Principal. To achieve this I have retained the 'ASPIRE' mantra, but called upon the students to provide our Academy with words to epitomize the beliefs we will hold. I am delighted to say the most popular words chosen by our students were 'Learn, Believe and Achieve'. This is a perfect summary of the essence of an improving school. By focusing upon quality, exciting teaching students will learn better here, with encouragement we will give students self-belief and therefore aspire to achieve their full potential.

As you will have seen the £54 million new build is on schedule with both the East site in Minster and the West site in Sheerness having state of the art buildings. This is the biggest public sector rebuild in the lifetime of this parliament. The east site will have new vocational learning rooms to help us educate students for an economically active life in the Kent economy and on the Sheerness site there will be a state of the art Theatre. As of last week we opened the brand new Tennis and netball courts on our Sheerness site.

I am committed to improving the academic excellence of all our students and I am grateful to the staff who have already taught holiday and Saturday revision sessions for Year 11 in Maths and for the support given by our lead sponsor, Dulwich College, for our potential grade A Mathematicians during the October holiday. We will retain the strengths of our current vocational curriculum alongside striving to ensure every student leaving the academy is fit for life long employment and has developed the correct moral values to become leaders of our community.

Finally I wish to thank students and parents who attended a first class prize giving evening earlier in November. I want us to have an annual tradition of prize giving and celebrate the achievements of the fine young people at the Academy all year round.

I close by wishing everyone continued success as we move into 2012.

David Day



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# SUPPORT FOR LOCAL CHILD'S CANCER APPEAL

3-year-old Sheppey resident Oliver Smith needs expensive surgery to remove malignant tumours. Academy students have rallied to the cause and dedicated time and effort to raise money for the appeal started by Oliver's parents.

Their work has been so successful that West Site Head Alan Klee was able to hand over a cheque for £2,000 to Oliver and his family in August. Oliver's parents sent their heartfelt thanks to all staff and students who supported the appeal.

Further backing came from Academy lead sponsors Dulwich College, where Rob Weaver and his tutor group also raised money for Oliver.

Says Mr Klee: "I was pleased to meet Oliver in August. He has a lovely temperament and despite his difficulties he remains cheerful. I hope we can continue to support him in the coming year, and wish him the very best for the future."



# GENEROUS SUPPORT FOR POPPY APPEAL

Sheerness people showed their respect - and Academy students showed their community spirit - on 9th November.

On that day twenty-three sixth formers worked in shifts to man the British Legion table outside Tesco in the town. Donating their efforts in support of the annual poppy appeal, the students maintained a presence from 10am to 7pm and were impressed by the friendliness and generosity of the people they met.

Besides selling poppies and associated merchandise, the Academy members asked locals to contribute to a large wreath to be laid at the Sheerness Cenotaph during the Service of Remembrance. The Island cadet force completed the wreath the following day.

Shannon Horner, who worked with Claire Webber and Liam Mitchell throughout the evening, said: "We were proud to help a cause that supports servicemen and women and their families, and encourages everyone to reflect on those who have given their lives in conflict."



# MOVING MOMENTS IN REMEMBRANCE

Academy students and staff were much in evidence at the annual Remembrance Day service at the Sheerness Cenotaph. Students from all five schools and many year groups were present, with Shannon Eastoe representing the sixth form and Mr Day and Mr Barritt leading the staff turnout. In addition to those representing the Academy, an encouraging number of students appeared as members of other groups

The Sunday ceremony followed moving scenes at the Academy on the Friday, with both sites observing the two minutes' silence and even on-site workers joining the paying of respects. Themed assemblies were very effective and linked with productive lessons, which resulted in creative and thought-provoking displays designed by students.



# AN INTENSIVE DAY

Concentration was the order of the day for forty-five Year 11s on 28th October. They attended an intensive revision workshop at Aylesford Sports College, and found themselves plunged into a series of short, demanding bursts of study mixed with focused activities designed to assess their progress. The verdict was positive from all sides: the students said they enjoyed the day immensely while staff described the intensive revisers as 'polite, attentive and enthusiastic'. The day was part of Year 11 preparations for early-entry mock exams on the 10th and 14th November.

# COFFEE SHOP A HOT FAVOURITE

The West Site coffee shop opened on Monday 14th November, serving tea, coffee, hot chocolate and muffins.

The shop is open from 8 – 8.30 am and for both morning breaks. Brian Reddington, Head of Catering and Events said that the shop had been a fantastic success and was doing even better than anticipated. "I think we set it up at the right time," he says.

"The mornings have been colder and the students really appreciate a warm drink when they get to school."

# THE BREAKFAST CLUB

The refectory will be running a breakfast service from 7.45am till 8.15am every morning.



Running late? No time for breakfast? Now there is time and the service available.

Come and see for yourself

We will be offering a range of cereals, toast, croissants and pastries with hot chocolate available too!

## DIANA AWARD PROVES SHEPPEY'S GOT TALENT



Once again the Academy has triumphed in the Princess Diana Awards scheme.

Only three members are invited from each winning establishment, so Victoria Boorman (Year 11), Abigail Silk and Lauren Thompson (both from last year's Year 11) were the lucky visitors to Barclays Bank's Canary Wharf headquarters for the presentation ceremony on 26th September 2011.

On behalf of the hard-working project group they collected a national prize in the Active Campaigner category. The award recognises the group's efforts in improving their community over the past twenty months. Achievements include designing a new children's play park, planting flowers and shrubs throughout the town and running two local clean-ups, as well as helping charities and community initiatives in the area. The award acknowledged the valuable benefits the group has brought to the town and its residents.

Victoria, Abigail and Lauren had a crowded day. As well as collecting the award they fitted in a trip to 10 Downing Street and a rendezvous with Twist and Pulse from Britain's Got Talent - a fitting occasion for students who were proving that Sheppey's got talent, too.

## TALES OF THE RIVERBANK: A USEFUL STORY FOR GEOGRAPHY STUDENTS

Three days of messing about on the river have given some Year 11 students new insights into how waterways develop.

The trip was part of a GCSE Geography Unit 4 Controlled Assessment, and the group carried out its study at Juniper Hall in Surrey. The set topic was Rivers, so students collected data from several stretches of water. They will use the information to test the hypothesis that sections of a river change according to their surrounding land forms and processes.

The students learned a lot but also had "a great time", and finished the project with a vote of thanks to Mrs Dimmock and Mr Peters for organising the trip.



## A GOLF COURSE OF LEARNING

The Oast Golf Centre in Sittingbourne played host to eight Year 12s recently as they honed their skills as part of the Level 3 Sport and Exercise Science course.

Luke Phillips used the visit as an assignment involving the performance of an individual sport and awareness of technique and tactics.

Says Luke: "The students had a session on the driving range, and then played 9 holes of pitch and putt on the course. They had a lot of fun - and they've come to appreciate nuances of the game that they would never have learnt through a textbook or from the internet. It was an enjoyable visit, but, more important, a valuable learning experience."

## 2011/ 2012 TERM DATES

### TERM 2

TERM STARTS  
Monday 31 October 2011

TERM FINISHES  
Friday 16 December 2011

STAFF TRAINING DAY  
Monday 28 November 2011

### TERM 3

TERM STARTS  
Wednesday 4 January 2012

TERM FINISHES  
Friday 10 February 2012

STAFF TRAINING DAY  
Monday 16 January 2012

### TERM 4

TERM STARTS  
Monday 20 February 2012

TERM FINISHES  
Friday 30 March 2012

### TERM 5

TERM STARTS  
Monday 16 April 2012

TERM FINISHES  
Friday 1 June 2012

STAFF TRAINING DAY  
Monday 16 April 2012

### TERM 6

TERM STARTS  
Monday 11 June 2012

TERM FINISHES  
Friday 20th July 2012



THE ISLE OF SHEPPEY  
ACADEMY



## CHRISTMAS FAIR

SATURDAY 10TH DECEMBER,  
EAST SITE AUDITORIUM

Please come and support us at The Isle of Sheppey  
Academy Christmas Fair,  
in the East Site Auditorium 10am -2pm

Santa's Grotto

Stalls - Cakes - Games - refreshments

This Fair has been organised by Year 9 students and is  
the practical assessment for their Enterprise qualification.

25% of all Proceeds donated to Harmony Trust

Free Shuttle Bus every 30 mins from West Site.



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# STUDENTS CELEBRATE A YEAR OF ACHIEVEMENTS



The first Academy Achievement Evening turned into a night of celebration as 96 students received recognition for their outstanding efforts.

The theme of the inaugural event, on 3rd November, was 'Aspire to be the best' – and prizewinners proved equal to the challenge time after time, collecting awards for academic success, sports skills, community work, leadership and personal battles against adversity.

Academy pastoral managers and sports and subject leaders made the nominations, while Head and Deputy Head Students of all Academy schools picked up awards for their own leadership achievements.

Key speakers David Day, the Academy's new Principal, and Ralph Mainard, from lead sponsors Dulwich College, paid tribute to students' impressive accomplishments, and Mr Day made special mention of two sports personalities of the year who were unable to attend on the evening. Year 13 footballer Michael Cannon captained the Academy's 2010 Kent Cup-winning side and has represented Kent at Under-18 level. He is currently working hard to gain a place at Southampton Solent University. Year 9 rugby player Alisha Jeffrey plays outside-half for Kent Under 15s and is aiming for the ultimate goal of international selection.

Said Mr Day: "They both demonstrate first-class dedication, ambition and modesty about their talents. We are proud of their success, and they are role models for all our sporting students".

David Day was interviewed by Daniel Nash of BRFM radio 95.6, and you can now listen to the live interview by going to the links below.

A link of the interview will also shortly be added to the Academy website.

Direct link to You Tube: <http://youtu.be/luYIS4WNSIk> Daniel Nash's blog as a podcast: <http://dpm.me.uk/danielmn/>

iTunes URL:

<http://itunes.apple.com/gb/podcast/daniel-monday-night-community/id455569332>

## FOLLOWING THE LEADERS



### County Hall speakers

Kent Youth County Council candidates Keiran Edwards, Jasmin Sheppard and John Smith took part in a lively question and

answer session at County Hall in Maidstone on 10 November 2011. They discussed transport, youth centres and social activities for young people, debating with other young people from Kent as well as Cabinet members Mike Whiting, Rosina St James and Mike Hill. Jasmin raised particular interest with a question about the problem of young people Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEETs) in the Swale area.

Academy Head and Deputy Head boys and girls visited County Hall on 21st November 2011 to gain valuable experience of speaking in a political arena.

### Campaigners fight against bullying

Anti-bullying Ambassadors Vicky Boorman (Brabazon), Maddie Springett (Abbey), Sam Davies (Sheerness), Jade Clare (Shurland) and Sophie Parker (Harty) put in great efforts during assemblies leading up to the week devoted to their cause, which ran from 14th to 18th November 2011.

The five campaigners encouraged all students to join the drive to make everyone feel safe and secure at school. This year's campaign competition is a wristband design. The winner, chosen by Mr Day, will be manufactured and go on sale in support of the lunchtime club's facilities.

### Human rights debaters split over chocolate

Students taking part in a human rights experiment found themselves divided into groups according to their hair colour, where they live and whether they were wearing a poppy. Organisers then gave some groups chocolate, but denied others. Heads and Deputy Heads of each school set up the lunchtime event, on the 11th November 2011, as a starting point for discussions about discrimination and equal rights. The experiment gave rise to much heated debate - and not a little chocolate envy.

### Enviro project creates art in the alleys

Thought-provoking artwork has started appearing in the Island's alleyways. Far from graffiti, it's the product of an Artist in Residence working with the Academy's Environment Leaders. The aim is to make people think again about their surroundings and the way they treat them. The project is running in late November and early December 2011. Watch out for the evidence in an alleyway near you.

### Sixth-formers vote, look and learn

Sixth-form students are having a busy time. They are currently holding elections to form a 12-strong council, and many of them are also volunteering to help develop a mature approach to learning and teaching across the Academy.

Already-elected council presidents Laura Webber and Rebecca Kincaid met local MP Gordon Henderson on 15th November 2011 for a question and answer session.

Meanwhile, Learning Leaders are nearing the end of their training after a 5-week intensive course. They are now planning and delivering lessons to Year 7 students. In the next few weeks they will be observing teachers and students across the Academy, and refining a new code of conduct to help all parties work together effectively.

# ATTENDANCE AT THE ACADEMY

Attendance levels at the Academy remained high at the halfway point of Term Two. Overall attendance averaged at 92.95%, over 4.5% higher than at the same stage last year. However, while this is a commendable rise, there is still more work to do to reach the target of 95%.

## Persistent Absence

The Persistent Absence (PA) level has dropped dramatically, but remains above the Government target of 5% or lower.

At the end of Term One 150 students had an attendance Level of 80% or lower. This equates to 8.3% of the Academy's students.

Although the PA rate has halved compared to the same period last year, it still means that 150 students miss an average of a day's schooling each week. For each day's absence they fall further behind with their academic progress.

The aim is to offer all students the opportunity of a good education before they leave in Year 11. By working closely with students and their parents or guardians, the Academy is committed to reducing the PA rate to under 5%.

## Lates

Late arrivals are at a very high level, and it is something the Academy is determined to reduce.

Arriving late doesn't just mean that a student is missing valuable lesson time. It also disrupts the lesson and affects teaching and learning for others.

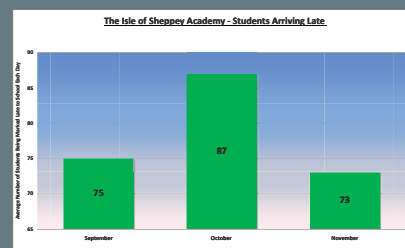
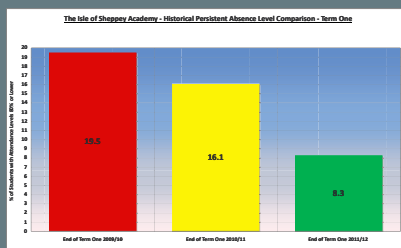
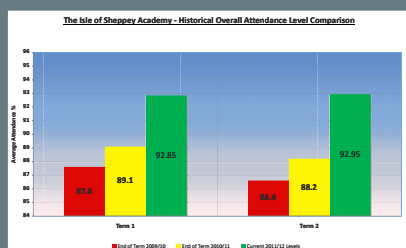
For that reason, students arriving late will face lunchtime detention. Failure to attend will lead to detention after school.

## Attendance Certificates

No fewer than 590 students achieved 100% attendance during Term One. This is over 190 more than at the same stage last year. These students won Bronze Attendance Certificates in recognition of their real commitment to both attendance and attainment.

As the half-way stage of Term Two approached, 500 students still had perfect attendance record since the start of the academic year. At that point 1,157 students had 100% records for Term Two.

With those figures to go on, there is a genuine prospect of many more Bronze and Silver Certificates at the end of this term.



## NAVAL CAREER BECKONS FOR FORMER SHEPPEY PUPIL

An 18-year-old former Minster College pupil is one step closer to a career as a Royal Navy Submariner.

Trainee Communication and Information Systems Specialist Lewis Stock has completed an intensive 10-week initial course at HMS Raleigh in Cornwall. Lewis, who previously worked in a factory, says: "I joined the Royal Navy to better myself, for the sense of achievement and to gain more qualifications, while travelling the world."

Highlights so far include driving rigid inflatable boats, weapons training with the SA80 rifle, making new pals - and, of course, the passing out parade, when Lewis and his fellow recruits marched proudly past their families and friends.

Naval personnel play a vital role in Afghanistan and other land-based operations, so Lewis's training also includes learning basic combat skills and survival in the field, with fitness as a key component.

"Training has been hard and disciplined, but very worthwhile," he says. He was particularly pleased at finishing a mile-and-a-half run in under nine minutes

Lewis will now transfer within HMS Raleigh to the Royal Navy Submarine School, moving on to develop the skills to take charge of all communications aboard a sub.

**Details of career opportunities within the Royal Navy are available online at [www.royalnavy.mod.uk](http://www.royalnavy.mod.uk) or by calling the Recruitment Line on 08456 07 55 55.**

## ACADEMY WINS QUALITY ACCOLADE

The Academy has won a quality award for its excellent work in two fields: helping children from primary schools settle into their new environment, and helping the local community in literacy and numeracy.

The Extended Services Award is part of the Quality Mark for schools scheme. It recognises the success of the Academy's ECM (Every Child Matters) procedure for transfers from primary school, and also for its valuable local educational work carried out beyond the school gates.

The presentation was at Oakwood House, Maidstone on 21st September 2011. Victoria Boorman and Sam Davies added to the occasion by addressing the audience impressively on the work the Academy has done since it opened in 2009. Fiona Trigwell, who leads the Academy's ECM team, accompanied the students.

September's award was for excellence at Emerging level. The Academy is now working towards reaching the next stage, Established level, for extended school provision.

## RUGBY LEAGUE BOYS ENJOY SCHOOL OF HARD KNOCKS



Rugby League is hard and merciless. Despite having had only three training sessions, the dauntless Year 7 Harty boys entered the fray at the Gillingham eight-a-side festival and showed great endeavour, determination, teamwork and promise throughout.

It was a bruising experience. The team played four games during the afternoon against Greenacre, Rainham Mark, Robert Napier and the Howards. Though they lost each time against bigger and better-trained opponents, the scores were respectable - 16-8, 24-4, 18-4 and 24-4 - and the potential for development was clear.

Jevon Young and Perry Haylor deserve special mention for some crunching tackles, and Harry Pagett captained the side with authority and vigour. The boys emerged looking the worse for wear but smiling, having enjoyed the battles and shared an afternoon of tough but valuable learning. Next time, who knows?

## MP GETS A GRILLING



Students quizzed constituency MP Gordon Henderson and other local figures on developments in Sheppey at an Academy-hosted Youth Conference on 15th November 2011.

Judders - aka Matthew Judd of BRFM - introduced the event, and students fired

questions at the panel on topics such as youth amenities, job prospects for school leavers and policing in the Leysdown and Warden Bay areas.

Facing the questions alongside Mr Henderson were County Councillor Mike Whiting, Jo Dillon and Vanessa Henneker (Connexions Kent and Medway), Gess Aird (Kent Youth Service), David Newbury (Peel Ports), Alan Bernstein OBE (Swale Youth Development Fund), Phillip Crow (Amicus Horizon Community Development), Duncan Atkinson (Morrisons Distribution Centre), Ray Featherstone MBE (Sheerness County Youth Centre) and Cllr Ken Pugh (Sheppey Local Engagement Forum and local councillor).

Academy students are set to continue their involvement in public discussions on Island issues, with attendance by sixth formers at the next Sheppey Local Engagement Forum. Chaired by Ken Pugh, the Forum will be on 14th January 2012 at a venue yet to be confirmed.

## LEADERS TAKE A LITTLE LOOK AT GOLF

Academy Sport Leaders have swung into action to bring a mini version of golf to primary schoolchildren.

Tri-Golf is designed for children at infant, primary and junior schools, using special-size equipment and simplified scoring systems. Our ever-willing Leaders had some training in how to run the fun, interactive, golf-based activities at a preliminary coaching session. They then took their new skills into a Sheppey and Sittingbourne Partnership event at the Swallows Leisure Centre on 22nd November. It was the group's first major outing in the community during this academic year, providing the opportunity to build on the success of multi-skills sessions in the May to July period.

