

## New year, new horizons

Happy New Year everyone!

School has started back in full swing; hitting the ground running after a good break is always key to ensuring that our students gain all that they can from everything a school has to offer.

Our year 11 GCSE students have had a chance to reflect on their mock examination performance, as their grades were issued to them in the last week of term during a special assembly, designed to mirror the actual experience in August as far as possible. The results were presented to them by their tutors and opened nervously! We also gave each student a special Sackville pen with our "Together we Achieve" logo engraved to wish them well on the next stage of their journey.



Marking key points of an educational journey is very important as it reminds us all of what we have achieved and what we still need to do. Every year group had some form of celebration at the end of last term, with the 400-strong sixth form enjoying a festive dinner at which their GCSE and A level certificates were presented.

On a smaller scale, it is also a great joy to invite students to my office for juice and a cake to talk over their accomplishments and express my genuine admiration for what they have achieved. Recently, this has ranged from sporting success to winning a Scratch computer programming competition with Thales. It was great to find out from one of our sixth formers, James Akehurst, about his design and installation of a webcam for the Town Council at East Court to capture images for prospective tourists. Working with the community in this way is always great as the considerable skills of our young people are well employed and everyone benefits.



Links with communities near and far are very significant in expanding the horizons of our students. At a local level, working closely with our primary schools and with Imberhorne in a genuinely supportive team atmosphere enormous benefits the town enormously. Indeed, we were pleased to host the locality East Grinstead Group of Schools ('EGGS') meeting at Sackville this month. Further afield, university and workplace links are continually strengthening and providing ever-expanding opportunities. As an example, our A level lawyers have recently enjoyed participating in a Bar Mock Trial competition and have also worked with a local magistrate. Next week, I am really looking forward to travelling to Germany with our sixth formers to visit our partner school in Hamburg and vibrant industries such as Airbus. Our students will also be undertaking work experience

placements there. We are delighted that later this year other students will have similar opportunities in Madrid.

I am also pleased to have been asked to join the national Ofsted headteachers' reference group, which advises about school improvement and inspection in England. The insights gained from these links are likely to be very interesting.

One of the real delights of this half term is our annual whole school production, held over three nights in February. It is special for so many reasons, not least because it brings together students of all ages with a real sense of teamwork and camaraderie. A number of our parents support us by playing in the band, serving refreshments or helping backstage. Many more of course come and watch the show, and are treated to an event which just gets better every year.

Best wishes everyone.

Julian Grant