



Headteacher: **Mr J Grant**
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Dear Parent/Carer

I am delighted and honoured to be introducing myself to you as the new Headteacher of Sackville School. Since being appointed to the post in March, I have been fortunate enough to visit on several occasions and get to know just what a dynamic learning community it really is. People speak of Sackville with great affection and I can certainly see why. On a personal level, many years ago I used to rehearse occasionally with a local orchestra in Sackville Hall – little did I know that I would be standing there doing my first assembly as Headteacher in years ahead! I have taught in both the north east of England (after I graduated from Durham University) and in the South East, with my most recent years at Thomas Bennett Community College in Crawley which underwent quite a transformation into the school it is now. I have two teenage children and therefore experience both the parental as well as the teacher perspectives (and challenges!) of secondary school life as it is today.

Sackville is a large school with a strong sense of community and, as we start the new year, we are fully staffed with a determination, as ever, to do the best for each and every student. This summer's exam results saw an impressive increase of 15% in headline figures to comfortably above national averages, which is testament to the hard work and dedication of students, staff and parents last year and which gives us a strong platform to build on in 2013/14. Indeed, our results compare very well with other schools in the north of the County – and our Sixth Formers gaining places at Oxford University was the icing on the cake!

Following the Ofsted inspection in April, the school was asked primarily to review and build further on the consistency of the classroom teaching and learning experience, on student feedback, and on attendance. This was in the context of very positive student behaviour, strong mutual respect, an excellent provision of activities and challenges beyond the classroom and fine preparation for the 'world beyond' in the Sixth Form years. Parents will, I am sure, have been aware that a scheduled Ofsted monitoring visit took place in early July and the school was praised for the swift focus already taken to impact positively in the identified areas for development. This, together, with the evidence of our latest examination results, reflects well the determined spirit and character of the school – its sense of honesty, openness and commitment to be the best it can possibly be. Furthermore, it shows the strength of resolve that has always been such a feature of Sackville, underlying its sustained, well justified popularity and success.

Accordingly, there is much to do yet much to look forward to this year. We will continue to work closely with Stephen Long, who led our monitoring visit in July, and other colleagues – this way we know that the quality of the Sackville experience is continually, fairly and objectively assessed. The school has adopted a new marking policy, is working on a refined online homework system and now has task groups developing key areas of learning such as questioning, literacy and the monitoring of individual progress. Our loyal and enthusiastic Governors have also chosen to review their work as our 'critical friends', ensuring that we are able to get optimum value from their wealth of experience. Parents of Year 11 students will already be aware that, following an effective programme of support and preparation, the whole year group will be entered for English Language GCSE this term in November as an additional opportunity to maximise the grade they can achieve in such a key subject. All of this hopefully gives a just a small flavour of our ambitious plans for the year.

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Over the summer, the school has carried out major internal and external building works which have been completed to an extremely high standard. Internally, the ground floor in B Block was demolished and its five classrooms have been completely rebuilt. Eleven upper floor classrooms in both B and C blocks have been refurbished to give the rooms a fresh new appearance. Externally, we have installed new gates, a new visitor pathway allowing wheelchair access to Reception, new fencing to keep pupils and cars separated, new entrance doors for Reception and perimeter fencing along our northern boundary.

This term we welcome the following new staff:

Teaching Staff:

Mr Brasted	Teacher of Drama & English
Mrs Carrick	Teacher of English (<i>maternity cover</i>)
Mr Clarke	Teacher of Business Studies
Miss Garrison	Teacher of History
Mr McMillan	Teacher of ICT
Mrs Nibloe	Inclusion Manager (<i>a new role</i>)
Mr Scarfe	Leader of Media
Ms Stuckey	Teacher of Beliefs & Values

Support Staff:

Mr Adkin	Study Supervisor
Miss Armstrong	Science Technician
Mr Brownlie	Study Supervisor
Mr Storrie	Study Supervisor
Mrs Woolley	Receptionist

We are also pleased to welcome back the following members of staff who have taught at Sackville previously:

Mr Aaronovitch	Teacher of English (<i>maternity cover</i>)
Mrs Ferguson	Teacher of Maths (<i>née Miss Wdowczyk</i>)
Mr Hedley	Teacher of Maths
Mrs Tingley	Teacher of Science
Mrs Walker	Teacher of English (<i>maternity cover</i>)

Your role as parents is, of course, key and I look forward to meeting you all and working with you closely. We will keep you informed about our journey forward and will always welcome your feedback and input. The most important support any parent can give is to ensure that your son/daughter's attendance is excellent and we already have tightened systems in place for this year, led by Mr Street (Assistant Headteacher) and Mrs Carter (our Education Welfare Officer), to ensure that this is very strong school-wide.

Above all, I am looking forward to leading, working with and listening to the most important people of all – your sons and daughters, who I must say have been exceptionally welcoming. All that we strive to do as a community is about securing the best possible future for them as high achieving, confident, caring and well-rounded young adults.

I am sure you will be pleased to know that my predecessor, Maggie Robson, is moving up to Cumbria this week for what I am sure will be a well deserved and happy retirement of relaxation and travelling. In the meantime, I wish everyone here a successful school year.





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Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'J. M. Grant' with a horizontal line underneath.

Julian Grant
Headteacher

