

ESSEX ACADEMIES NEWSLETTER

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And the winners are... Witham and Hockley

Witham and Hockley schools gained an outstanding double success at the 2008 Regional Teaching Awards for the East of England in Norwich. Among eleven regional winners were four from Essex and no less than two from secondary schools poised to become new Academies in September.

Principal Designate for The John Bramston School, Witham, Mike O'Sullivan has won The Royal Air Force Award for Headteacher of the Year in a Secondary School. Mike has been Interim Principal for the Witham comprehensive since April 2007.

The tribute to him at the annual ceremony for the regional teachers' Oscars read, *'In just one year this dynamic school leader has transformed what was a struggling institution into an energetic, forward-looking community.'*

'The changes Mike has brought in are legion. He has focussed on good teaching and behaviour and, by establishing a 'no blame' culture of change, has got everyone behind his new vision for the school.'

'Attendance has improved, teachers stay longer at the school, and students feel valued and listened to. Mike is an inspirational leader', it concludes, 'committed to social justice and determined to be a great role model.'

Mr O'Sullivan said,

'It was a great day in a fantastic setting and very professionally done. For Witham it proves that achievement can happen. It demonstrates that if you can set yourself a vision and set yourself an aim you can achieve success providing that the people and the systems are there to make it happen.'



Mike O'Sullivan

continued overleaf



Angela Gibbons

Mrs Angela Gibbons of Greensward College has achieved The Guardian Award for Teacher of the Year in a Secondary School in East of England.

The judges concluded, *'In Angela Gibbons' French and Spanish lessons students are constantly given the confidence and encouragement to make good progress. One student said, 'She has time for you, she is approachable, she relates to the world and is always smiling.'*

'Angela is active in training student teachers who say she supports their development, is great at encouraging new practice and always well organised and diplomatic.'

'As well as her classroom duties she organises sailing trips, supports gifted and talented students and teaches dance. She even had the judges dancing to the theme tune of a Spanish television show! It is not surprising that her Head, Mrs Debbie Stokes, describes her as a star from beginning to end.'

'I had a lovely day at the awards ceremony, said Angela, and feel very special. I was overwhelmed to actually win an award for a job which I love. Greensward College has given me the opportunities and the support to become a good teacher so my thanks go to my colleagues, friends and of course, the students. I now have the national final in London to look forward to which is very exciting.'

We all wish Mike and Angela good luck and every success in the event at a famous London landmark on Sunday 19th October.

Essex Book Awards

The Rickstones School took part in the recent 'Essex Book Awards' whereby students had to read six books short listed by the Schools' Library Service, write book reviews and award each book points out of ten. Sixteen Essex schools took part and they were invited to the official presentation held at the Schools' Library Service office in Chelmsford. Tim Lott spoke about his life as an author and then answered questions fielded to him by the students. They then were given the opportunity of meeting Tim and having their books signed by him.



Teachers and students succeed

Congratulations to **Steve Lavender** (science) and **Tom Garrard** (physical education) at The John Bramston School who have just passed their Advanced Skills Teacher Assessment. Congratulations also to The John Bramston School's Netball team who won the area schools' competition winning 26 - 12 against Honywood School in the final. The all year 10 team featured **Ellie Besford, Ashleigh Jones, Hayley Greenhalgh, Chloe Martin-Smith, Bethany Vale, Gemma Gorrie** and **Hannah Whybrew**. They will now move on to the regional final taking on teams from across Essex and surrounding areas.

It was a 'double whammy' for **Ellie Besford** who won the pole vault in the Essex Athletics Tournament in Chelmsford with a height well above the national standard. Year 9 student **Andrew Harrison** achieved third place in the pole vault.

Introducing...

We continue to feature key people with the Academies Enterprise Trust, and this week we go behind the scenes to discover who is taking charge in the key areas of property and finance.

Andrew Redmond

Director of Facilities, Andrew Redmond, is committed to providing all students and staff at the three proposed academies with outstanding services. Trained as an engineer in north London he has worked in education for 26 years. He became Facilities Manager at Greensward College in 1995, and during the past year he has been working alongside Mike O'Sullivan to support The John Bramston School.

Andrew is currently very busy working on two major areas of expenditure, both Government funded; around £500,000 to improve buildings and £665,000 to upgrade information technology in time for the opening of the proposed three new academies in September. So where will the money be spent?

One of the main targets for expenditure in all three sites is one that is used by all, although very reluctantly, toilets! Existing facilities are less than satisfactory and new services would have the twofold benefit of raising morale and improving hygiene.

The New Rickstones Academy will also have a new student entrance as part of a student service centre with a medical room and student reception. There will be improved signage, security and safety arrangements.

Greensward Academy will benefit from a substantial redecoration programme, new floors, ceilings and lighting.

The Maltings Academy will receive new carpeting, redecoration and the possibility of a new office suite next to reception.

Andrew has been working closely with BECTA, the Government organisation for the implementation of Information and Communications Technology in Schools. Although the two thirds of a million pounds spending package will

include more computers it is principally aimed at providing new computer systems and good and robust communication networks.

Andrew said, 'We are working hard to make a difference to the environment at all three sites from day one. Students will leave their schools in July and re-enter the new Academies in September, which will have a new and improved look about them.'

Beverley Dowsett

Director of Finance for the Academies Enterprise Trust, Beverley Dowsett, was born in Maldon and lives in Witham. She began her career in 1977 as a Finance Assistant at what is now the Anglia Ruskin University, before moving to County Hall to work in community education and the youth service.

After a seven year career break to raise her two children Beverley was appointed Senior Administrative Officer for the youth service in the Braintree area, before moving on to Financial Services to provide budgetary support for 22 schools in the area, including South View School in Witham.

Both her daughters were students at The John Bramston School and are now on degree courses, where Beverley next moved on to as Finance Manager, and is now a Bursar with responsibilities for personnel, premises and catering.

As well as acquiring for herself a certificate in school business management, she is a qualified counsellor specialising in support for children and parents with heart conditions.

Beverley said, 'Getting value for money for the three academies is vital, and with a combined spending power of £20 million a year the AET will have real buying power and enjoy better discounts from suppliers and better options.'



Andrew Redmond



Beverley Dowsett

Young writers

Nearly fifty Key Stage 3 students from Greensward College's Writing Club have had their short stories published by Young Writers in the book Mini Sagas. This is a selection of stories of no more than fifty words which encompass a beginning, a middle and an end, which is an exciting challenge for budding young authors.



The World of Work

Greensward College hosted their annual Year 10 Industry Day which is a curtain raiser to their three week Work Experience which begins at the end of June.

Visitors from all areas of the world of work come in to provide an idea of what a career would be like with them. This year it was supported by The Fire Service, The RAF, The Army, Royal Bank of Scotland, amongst others. The day was a huge success and an excellent lunch was provided by Mrs Ellis, Miss Callan and students.

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