



DOWNSEND
SCHOOL

Inspiring Young Minds

Developing for the Future

An Innovative independent school for boys and girls aged 2-16



Welcome

At Downsend School, we inspire young minds. Encouraging creativity and bravery, we celebrate innovation, and we create opportunities for our pupils that will enable them to achieve their ambitions.

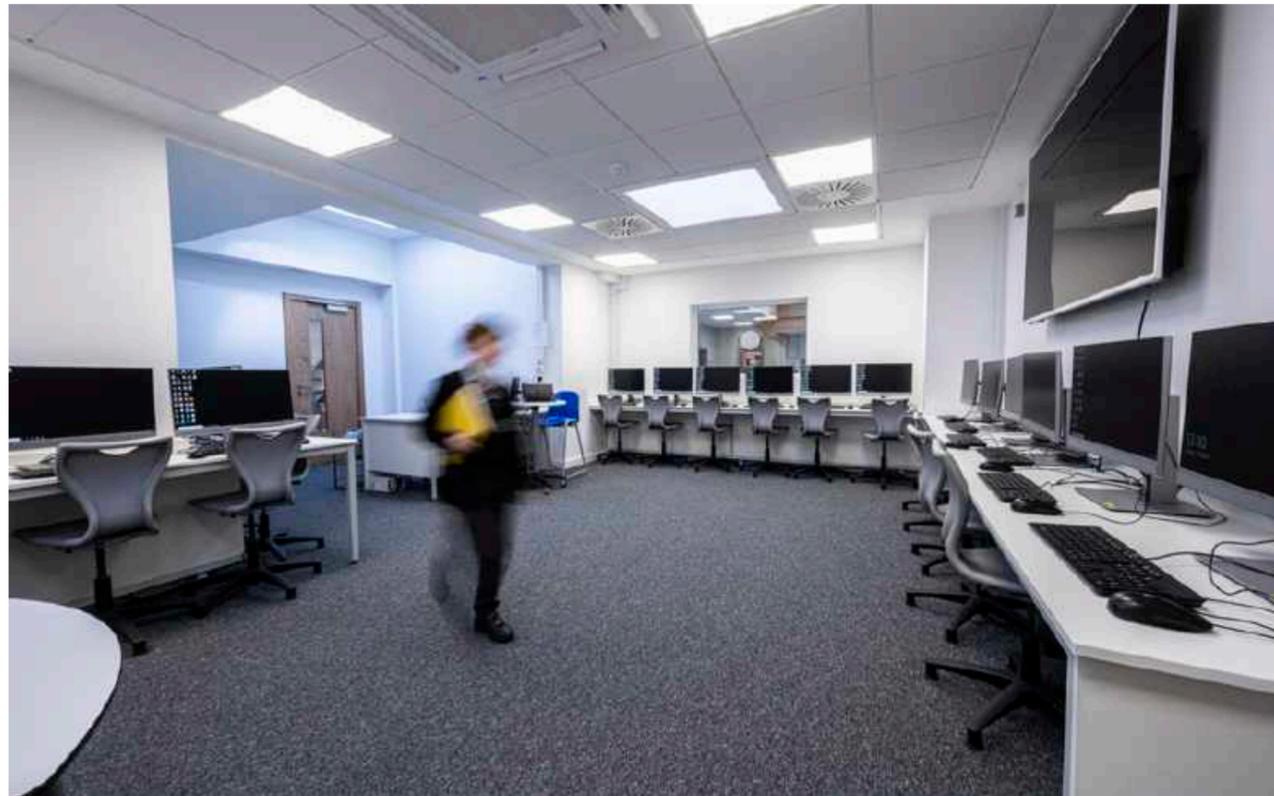
This has never been truer than now, as we begin our expansion from a preparatory school to a through-school, with the development of an exceptional 3-year GCSE programme from September 2020. Opening our doors to older children for the first time, we will provide our pupils with the chance to remain in the most uniquely supportive and inspirational environment while they attain their GCSEs. And with such an important evolution in our history, has come the exciting prospect of re-imagining and expanding our existing facilities to accommodate this decision.

Responding to demand from parents, we are building on our strengths, using this opportunity to creatively explore how best we can support the development of our pupils' future skills. Having shaped a portfolio of bold concepts, we are confident that the ongoing development will enhance school life exponentially – and put our pupils on the path to even brighter futures.

Quite simply, we believe in educating the whole child, encouraging pupils to think beyond the classroom. As such, we continue to embrace the STEAM approach (focussing on Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) – culminating in better STAR spaces for improved collaboration, innovation and adaptability, plus our flagship £5million Creative Arts Centre.

We hope you share our enthusiasm for these developments, and we look forward to answering any questions you have about this exciting point in Downsend's growth.





Designed to stimulate learning opportunities, the new facilities within the Junior School have the scope to elevate every child's school experience.



Summer 2019 Works Junior school

At the crux of the redesign was the simple fact that some areas were not being used to their full advantage. One such example was a cloakroom space within the lower school building which was used for bag storage and changing, which has been transformed to create a visionary library and resource space, alongside a well-equipped purpose-designed SEN classroom. A new 'break out' space has also been created, with the dual function of providing pupils with a comfortable place in which to relax and learn. Decorated with outdoor wall graphics, the resulting calming and refreshing ambience allows students to engage with their creativity.



The underused swimming pool viewing gallery, and large open space on the upper floor of the Sports block was also not meeting its full potential. After close consultation with our staff, a new modern STAR (Science, Technology and Art) space has been crafted, featuring a state of the art teaching wall, science benching with gas taps, and contemporary triangular tables which can be grouped together to create infinite configurations for the most effective group learning. Other impressive pupil-friendly touches include a lowered area of benching with a reduced height sink for our smallest pupils.

With creative learning underpinning our Lower School ethos, all furniture selected for our Junior School library and breakout areas allow for maximum flexibility in how lessons are delivered. As such, space-saving cloud-shaped tables are being utilised for small group activities, while pupils are also benefitting from cosy beanbags and chairs that enable movement – proven to aid pupils' comfort, engagement and concentration.



Over the summer of 2019, we implemented extensive measures to create a visionary learning space that is equipped to meet the needs of our growing Senior School.

Summer 2019 Works Senior school

Incorporating specialist facilities that will support teaching, learning and socialising opportunities, these extensive internal refurbishments are aiding the development of every pupil's academic and extra-curricular interests.

This creative redevelopment has primarily focussed around enlarging and bettering our outstanding library. Within this important space, we have a 'genius bar' with power and data sources, while versatile furniture settings such as high-backed soft seating provides the perfect backdrop to defined group activity zones. Here, pupils can find the information and support they need to excel in their studies, as well as being able to enjoy the benefits of more informal breakout areas for creative brainstorming and group discussions.

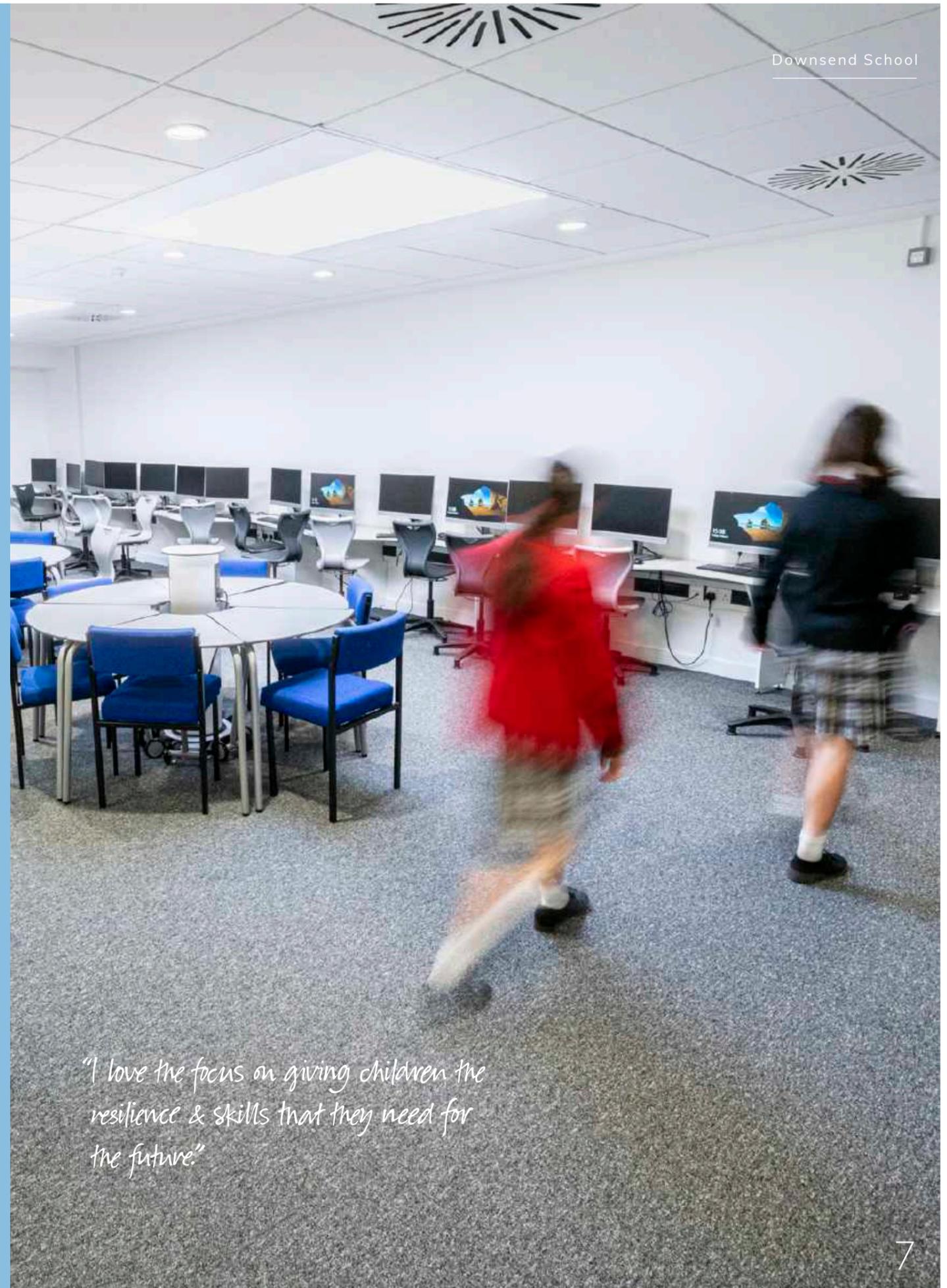
This remodelled 'Learning Resource Centre' also incorporates industry-leading facilities such as an island of PCs where lessons are delivered, and a technically advanced teaching wall.

Further enhanced by glazed walls which provide views throughout the school, this area enables pupils to deliver their best work.

Leading on from the library is a direct link to remodelled ICT suites, once again improved with state-of-the-art teaching walls, and pupils are also benefitting from a further break-out space where they can both relax and study.

Throughout the redevelopment, small but vital touches such as moveable room dividers, stackable furniture and display shelves to showcase pupils' work provide flexible and inspirational learning environments.

Last, but by no means least, our large, bright Food Technology Studio has been completely refurbished, boasting fantastic cooking facilities and equipment alongside contemporary furniture and fittings, providing the ideal setting for developing vital life skills!



"I love the focus on giving children the resilience & skills that they need for the future."

Creative Arts Centre

The new £5million Creative Arts Centre will be the jewel in the crown of Downsend School's exceptional development.

In line with our belief that the creative arts should be integrated into traditional academia to help every child develop their full potential, this centre will become an integral part of school life.

Boasting a bespoke design that will accommodate creative outlets for children and young people of all ages, our multi-purpose performance hall will be complemented by an exceptional array of specialist amenities such as music and drama facilities, and flexible teaching spaces.

We are hoping to have this ambitious construction completed by early 2021, by which time we will be the proud custodians of a multi-purpose performance auditorium with tiered seating for 200. The suite of spaces will also include a 'black box' drama studio, a recording studio and various learning spaces ranging from practice rooms to technically-advanced specialist music facilities.

Whether children want to be on the stage or behind the scenes, we will have the option to cater for every level of stage presence! Alongside the double-height performance hall, pupils will have access to a dressing room, props storage and even a first-floor control room – so budding light technicians can practice their skills on the future stars of the stage.

The Centre – which will be utilised by all four schools in the Downsend group – will provide the perfect setting for pupils to explore their creativity, and develop their social skills and confidence.

We look forward to inviting our valued Downsend family to a performance soon.



The new development that has already taken place at Downsend School and the ambitious works that are yet to be completed are undeniably exciting.

Existing outstanding facilities

We are a school that strives to continue improving. We seek out opportunities to enhance the provisions that we can offer our pupils, and we pride ourselves on remaining at the forefront of both academic excellence and exceptional pastoral care.

Yet while the £8million redevelopment of our school buildings will help us support our pupils in achieving even more, we also benefit from existing exceptional facilities that have provided hundreds of children with a thrilling start to their learning journeys.

Just some of the incredible facilities that we have on-site, include:

- 6 acres of external playing fields which incorporate cricket, football, rugby and rounders pitches.
- Unique athletics provisions including a 200m grass athletics track.
- Floodlit all-weather astro-turf hockey pitches and outdoor cricket nets.
- A highly valued 25m indoor swimming pool, complete with a newly refurbished viewing gallery.
- A well-considered sports pavilion that features comfortable spectator areas, a café and additional changing facilities.

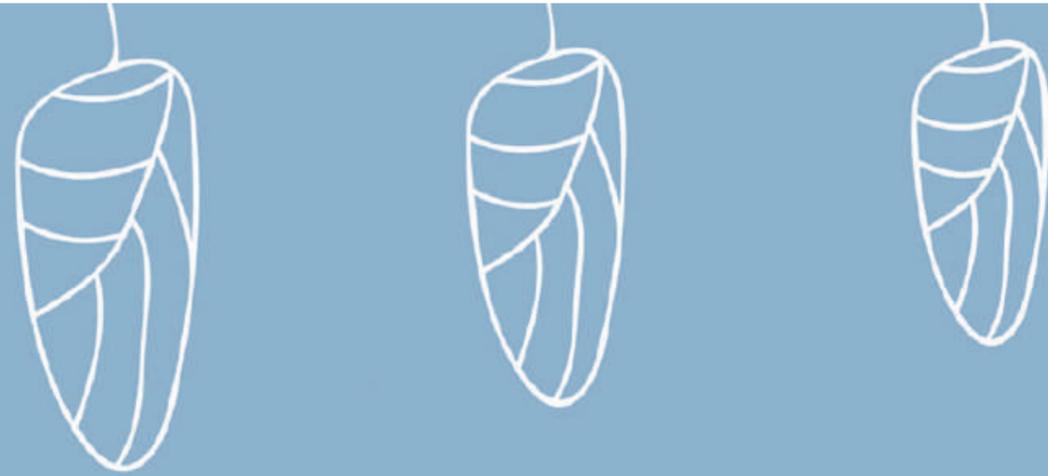
These facilities host a huge variety of sports sessions for children of all ages, while our extra-curricular clubs continue to make the most of our state-of-the-art facilities. However, it is not just our older pupils who enjoy our facilities – younger schoolmates benefit from their own unique spaces too.

From well-equipped science laboratories for creative investigations, through to our 'Little Downsend' schools' hugely popular Forest School and outdoor spaces including soft surfaced areas and zoned play, Downsend pupils of all ages are spoilt for choice.





Wellbeing Garden



Resilience and wellbeing are key focuses at Downsend, and as such, the newly renovated school garden is something that we are very excited to share with our pupils.

Funded by our parent community, it is our intention that the garden will aid and promote the positive mental health of our students. We have therefore combined ideas from the children and the staff to create a relaxing yet dynamic space, resulting in an exceptional outdoor area that can also be used for lessons – a place that will appeal to pupils of all ages.

Different areas have been created for different activities and moods. Children will find plenty of trees and canopies to sit under – providing the perfect opportunity to share a story with a teacher, or carry out practical science work such as investigating the lifecycle of a plant. The children are also developing an understanding of gardening principles and composting, with plans in the making for creating a wormery, while children of all ages in the Eco Committee and Eco Club are enjoying leading the way, and supporting their peers in developing their gardening skills.

A sensory area has been designed, with different herbs, textures and scents, while bird feeders and bug hotels will attract a wide range of insects and wildlife to the garden. We also have a teepee and den area, with spaces for reading or chatting with friends, while a soothing water feature is in one corner of the garden.



Together with fairy lights, chimes and bunting, we are confident that the garden will be a valuable resource and a calming retreat, whatever the weather.





Our Vision for the future

Ian Thorpe, Head Teacher

During these times of rapid change, great schools demonstrate the flexibility and adaptability to ensure that students develop the skills that they will need to be ready to thrive in the future that awaits them.

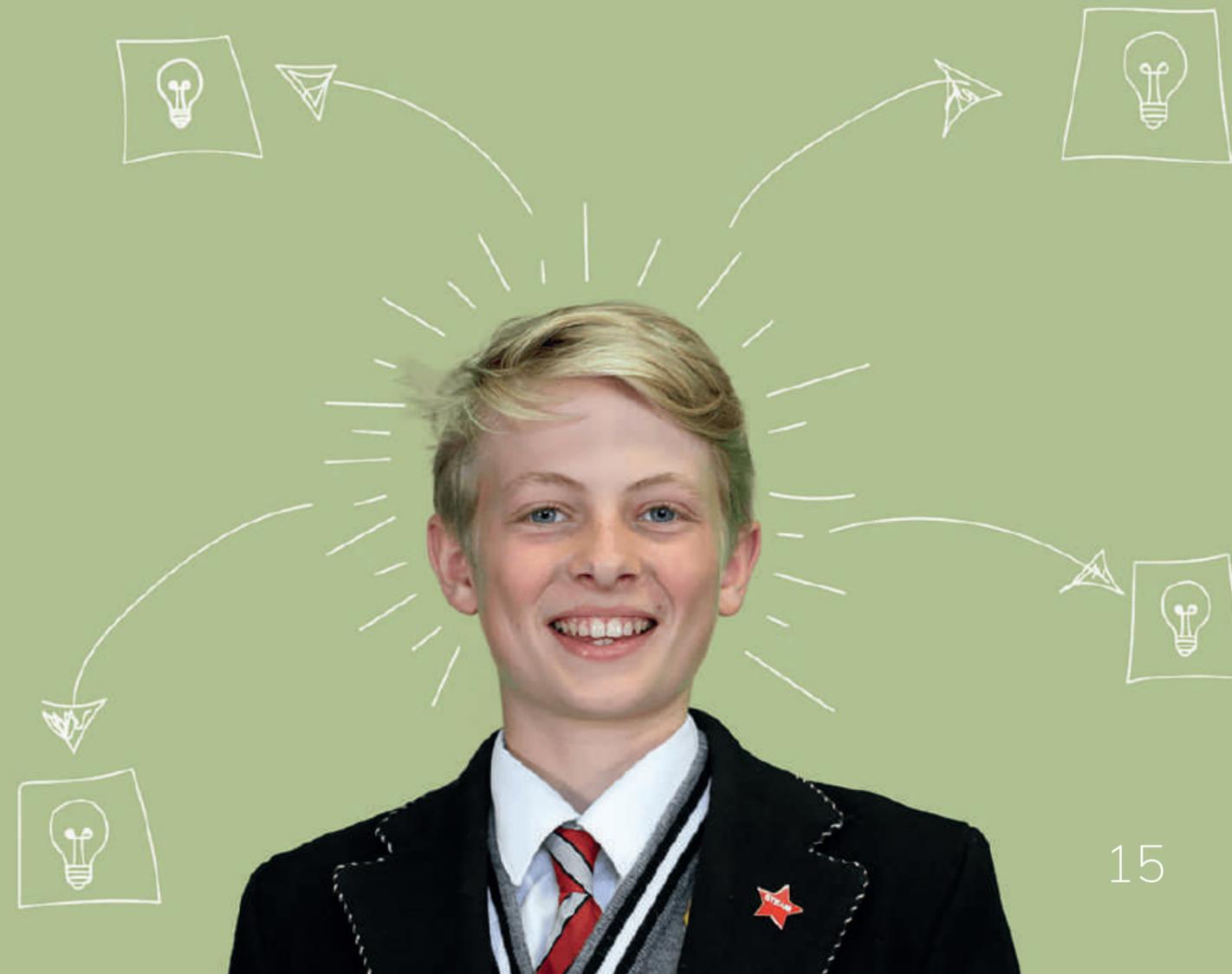
Over the past 5 years, Downsend has retained the very best principles of a nurturing, all-round Prep school education but has reinvented itself to offer its pupils the opportunity to continue their journey at Downsend to GCSE, and preparation for A-level choices.

The physical infrastructure has been transformed to offer state of the art teaching spaces in keeping with our STEAM philosophy and the development of future skills, most notably communication, collaboration, creativity and critical thinking. With our Creative Arts Centre scheduled for completion in early 2021, we will look to the future again for ways in which we can continue to improve and adapt to the changing landscape.

Our next range of plans may be less imposing, but they will be no less impactful on our students and their wellbeing. Ongoing improvements such as the conversion of the Admin Block to the Senior School hub and the refurbishment of our classrooms into bright, flexible, inspiring learning spaces will ensure that pupils in the Junior and Senior Schools are inspired by their brilliant teachers in spaces that are as bright and forward-thinking as they are.

Great schools do not rest on their laurels and certainly do not stand still! We are excited about the future and know that, whatever challenges it may present, our school and our pupils will be ready to face them head on, with confidence.

"Pupils are pushed in different directions to challenge their whole character and there is a good mix of old-fashioned rigour and more modern liberalism."





DOWNSEND SCHOOL

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