



**DOWNSEND
SCHOOL**
Inspiring Young Minds

A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

2021-2022



WHY NOW?

Downsend has long been a school with a different outlook on life. For us, boundaries are there to be pushed and new possibilities there to be explored.

Having watched the landscape for our children change so significantly over the last 18 months throughout the pandemic, we saw an opportunity to re-evaluate our aims and approach, embracing the changes and engaging with the very best educational and industry research to help us look to the future.

Our fundamental mission, underpinning our new vision is to provide Downsend's children, from Nursery to GCSE, the very best, most relevant, innovative, in-depth and holistic education possible.

Our responsibility, which we commit to wholeheartedly, is to equip the next generation with the skills they need to thrive and to embrace everything the future has to offer.

This brochure sets out what inspired our new vision and what it means for your child this year.



OUR RESEARCH SOURCES



HARVARD
UNIVERSITY



University of Phoenix®

GLOBAL UNIVERSITIES

Starting with academic research, we consulted papers written by leading researchers at global universities specifically focusing on the future of humans, the future skills challenges and how the world of work will change in the years to come.

WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM

Fundamental to our thinking, the WEF Report: Schools of the Future shaped our views on the academic basics, and the core 'soft skills' our young people will need to thrive.



CONSULTING FIRMS AND BIG BUSINESS

It was important to us to consult a wide range of sources from a variety of sectors including banking, consultancy, accounting, tech, big brands and the creative industries.

McKinsey
& Company



EDUCATORS

We're always looking to those who are embracing the future skills agenda and have taken the best from those we are inspired by.



education



THINK TANKS

Some of the best research comes from collaboration across sectors, and particularly if it's led by the Innovation Foundation.



THE RECURRING THEMES FROM THE RESEARCH

“
Today’s school children will work in new job types that do not yet exist. Most of which are likely to have an increased premium on both digital and social-emotional skills.

World Economic Forum”

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There is an urgent need to update education systems to equip children with the skills to navigate the future of work and the future of societies.

World Economic Forum”

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Social, emotional and technological skills are becoming more crucial as intelligent machines take over more physical, repetitive and basic cognitive tasks.

McKinsey Global Institute”

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The Fourth Industrial Revolution will compel humans to learn in areas that cannot be easily automated. In addition to technical skills, human learning will increasingly focus on flexibility, creativity, innovation and inter-personal skills.

UBS, LSE, UCL, Harvard”



“
We need to tell our children – to stay ahead you need to focus on your ability to continuously adapt, engage with others, and retain your core sense of identity and values. It’s not just about acquiring knowledge but how to learn. PWC, Said Business School

“
The world is changing at an unprecedented rate and so too are the skills that young people will need to thrive. From robots to globalisation, population ageing, urbanisation and the rise of the green economy, the jobs of the future will be different to today.

NESTA, The Innovation Fdn”

After extensive analysis, discussion and consultation, we are proud to share the new Downsend Future Skills Vision, made up of four interlinked aims:

OUR VISION

To inspire a generation to embrace the future, shaping incredible people who will make change in our world.



Inspiring a global perspective

We inspire a global perspective, encouraging an awareness and an understanding of the world around us, and our responsibility to make change.



We shape incredible people with the emotional intelligence to build relationships, lead teams and adapt to a changing world.

Shaping incredible people

Stimulating creativity



We find the creativity within us all. We develop the curious, the critical-thinkers, the artists and the innovators.



Building digital mastery

We aspire to digital mastery by equipping ourselves with the ability and the mindset to tackle the technology of the future.

THE VISION IN PRACTICE

What does the vision exist to do and what impact will it have?

We will not compromise on brilliant basics, academic excellence and personalised learning. These core principles remain central to our ethos.

The four aims guide our decision-making across the school. We'll refer to the aims to help us prioritise investment, to focus resources and to continue to provide the best opportunities to pupils.

We are inspected by the Independent Schools Inspectorate against our four aims. We are expected to provide evidence of embedded practice throughout the school.

Our annual School Improvement Plan, upon which we report to our Governors (Cognita Schools), is based around the four aims.



OUR CORE PRINCIPLES

The new vision is designed to complement our core principles. These are central to what we do, and will never be compromised:

Brilliant Basics

We will never compromise on brilliant basics. At Little Downsend and in the Junior School we work hard to instil a foundation of excellence in reading, writing and numeracy to ensure children have the bedrock for building their learning as they progress to the Senior School.

Our academic achievement versus Surrey and National averages are tracked and benchmarked annually, with a high percentage exceeding both significantly. Our focus this year is on refinements in particular areas using the data we have on attainment. In Little Downsend, we'll be working on Writing, and in the Junior School, fluency of number facts and diversity of literature. In the Senior School, we'll focus on ownership, by teaching pupils metacognitive techniques to take ownership of their attainment.



Academic Excellence

We will continue to aim high for every single child. Our results are excellent, with a significant percentage of pupils exceeding expectations. We'll continue to meticulously track your child's progress ensuring they have the best possible chance to be successful.



Personalised learning

Every child at Downsend is an individual, and we work with them and you to put a plan in place for their learning that allows them to fulfil their full potential. We identify their strengths and areas for improvement with ongoing reviews of progress. We'll continue to stretch those who need an additional challenge, and we'll support those who need it.



1. To inspire a global perspective

IN ALL DOWNSEND SCHOOLS



We are proud participants in the Queen's Green Canopy Project, encouraging pupils to 'plant a tree for the jubilee'. The initiative focuses on enhancing our environment, the importance of sustainable planting and creating a legacy to benefit future generations.



Our commitment to both global and local charities is unwavering. Chosen in consultation across each section of the school, by pupils and staff, we commit our time to fundraising for global causes and local charities that mean something to us as a community.



Working with our sister schools within the Cognita network in Spain, Chile, Asia and Switzerland, we will aim to create partnerships that give our pupils unrivalled global insight, through cultural and language exchanges, sporting challenges and expos. This year we hope to welcome pupils from our sister school in Chile.

LITTLE DOWNSEND

In recognition of our little people's commitment to sustainability and their innate love for the natural environment, we will implement challenges at each school to gain the Level 5 RHS School Garden Award and the Woodland Trust Green Tree School Award.

JUNIOR SCHOOL

We are proud to have been awarded the highest accolade by Eco-Schools and we proudly fly the Green Flag in our Wellbeing Garden in recognition of the hard work our Eco-Committee. We will continue to embed sustainability and a collective mindset throughout the Junior School, ensuring that we stay true to the principles of our Green Flag.

SENIOR SCHOOL

To give our Senior School pupils greater 'cultural capital', our Key Stage 3 and 4 curriculum will be reviewed to bring even greater breadth and depth, ensuring that all pupils are culturally, socially and globally aware.





2. To shape incredible people

IN ALL DOWNSEND SCHOOLS

In every age group, we seek the opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively on real-life problems, teaching them the importance of teamwork, active listening, engaging communication, negotiation and resilience. Every lesson plan seeks to ensure these opportunities exist and are practiced day after day, year after year.

Our Pastoral Structure and initiatives such as Global Be Well Day and the pastoral tracking system, AS Steer, ensure we focus heavily on the support, the nurture and the guidance that is required to ensure each child's wellbeing is top of the agenda. We will always believe that happy children learn well.

Our research showed that the ability to speak confidently in public is one of the most valuable skills a young person can possess. In every area of the school, pupils are given a voice to express their opinions as well as the opportunities to practice public speaking through internal and external competitions.

To continue to inspire our young people, we will continue to seek every opportunity to invite in aspirational speakers from a wide range of backgrounds. The 'Downsend meets...' series will return!



LITTLE DOWNSEND

Even from their earliest days, encouraging our little people to have a voice is key to our approach. We'll continue with our values-based assemblies focusing on topics of diversity, equality, multiculturalism, leadership and by learning about inspirational figures. We'll champion children's ability to have an opinion on a subject, to debate it sensitively and to speak confidently to a wide range of people.

JUNIOR SCHOOL

Part of being incredible is having the ability to challenge yourself, to try new things and push yourself out of your comfort zone. Our programme of trips and residential allows pupils to do just that. Working with our partners at Active Learning Group, our pupils benefit from the character building opportunity to work as a team, undertake calculated risks, try new things in the outdoors and experience independence.

SENIOR SCHOOL

We want to instil an entrepreneurial spirit in our Seniors, the ability to try, test, fail and move on, seeking solutions, being resilient and adaptable. Initiatives such as Dragon's Den in Y8 will remain, and will be supplemented by Young Enterprise, the Duke of Edinburgh Award and a re-imagined approach to Careers and Future Life advice, by working with our parent body from a wide-range of industry backgrounds to create opportunities for mentorship and internship.



3. To stimulate creativity

IN ALL DOWNSEND SCHOOLS



In 2021 we were awarded the Primary Science Quality Mark by the University of Hertfordshire, showing our commitment to STEAM throughout the school. We'll continue to ensure we uphold the high standards of the award by continuing to invest in state of the art Science Quality Labs and exceptional teachers.



As a tangible representation of our commitment to creativity, we will be delighted to open our £5m flagship development, the Creative Arts Centre, in Spring 2022. The Centre will allow all pupils in the Downsend group to unleash their theatrical, musical and artistic talents in inspiring surroundings.



We will continue the work begun in Little Downsend, building a partnership with Lego Education, ensuring their research, learnings and creative ethos is integrated through curriculum (Little Downsend) and as part of Enrichment (Junior and Senior Schools).

LITTLE DOWNSEND

Delighted to be a finalist in the ISA Awards 2021 for Excellence and Innovation in Early Years, we will continue to push the boundaries of the EYFS and KS1 curriculum, ensuring that Creativity is interwoven throughout every learning experience. Our themed weeks will give structure to the learning, whilst fostering those vital skills for later life.



Our partnership with Lego Education is set to run and run. Following on from a successful pilot project in Reception with First Lego League Discover and the Institution of Engineering and Technology, we'll be introducing more challenges, more kit and more training for staff to give every child access to playful learning through our Little Downsend Lego Strategy.



JUNIOR SCHOOL

Our extensive Junior School Clubs Programme has been redesigned this year with creativity at the heart. Alongside a wide range of music, dance and performance clubs, we also offer: Genie Lab Science, Lego Masters, Young Architects, Musical Theatre and the CREST Superstar, which introduces children to hands-on STEM challenges with the aim of finding creative solutions. Our brand new STAR lab gives children the most inspiring environment in which to test their problem-solving abilities.

SENIOR SCHOOL

Our Senior School Stretch Programme has also been redesigned, to offer more options for creative problem solving. Also working with CREST, Senior pupils are empowered to run their own STEM investigations from start to finish, earning the CREST Bronze award. Rocket Building and Food Science Experiments sit alongside Musical Theatre, catering to every part of the creativity spectrum.



4. To build digital mastery

IN ALL DOWNSEND SCHOOLS

Building on the success of our 1-2-1 device roll out and our use of Ed-Tech platforms to support the curriculum, we will continue to develop a cohesive, innovative and best-in-class Digital Strategy for each area of the school.

We will continue to analyse pupil and staff digital competencies against the Cognita Digital Maturity Framework to guide our focus. Currently at 'embedded' status, we aspire to be 'leading' in the short term.

Ongoing staff development will be implemented in key Ed-Tech techniques including: MS Teams, OneNote, Century Tech and FlipGrid.

LITTLE DOWNSEND

Our Ed-Tech Strategy at Little Downsend focuses on:-

- determining the age-appropriate use of technology in younger children
- expanding our digital champions team and implementing training in all core platforms
- refreshing the curriculum to include: communication and collaboration, programming and robotics, digital literacy and digital citizenship
- working with parents to continue to update you on the latest platforms and their uses



JUNIOR SCHOOL

As the Junior children continue to develop their digital skills using their HP laptops, we'll evaluate our use of apps and platforms to ensure those that we use are best-in-class, providing the most relevant and up to date support to our curriculum. Our Clubs Programme will push the boundaries offering additional opportunities to code through our links with [The Hour of Code](#), use Computer Aided Design software, touch type and learn to programme.



SENIOR SCHOOL

Our Senior pupils use their devices seamlessly in lessons and at home, so we'll continue to build on their growing digital expertise. All pupils will be provided with an enhanced approach to training in the key learning platforms (MS Teams, OneNote and Century Tech) to ensure they are benefitting from everything they have to offer.

New to Year 10 is the option to undertake the IDEA Award. IDEA is an award winning programme that incorporates Digital, Enterprise and Employability Skills through a series of online, career-enhancing challenges that will help pupils stand out in a crowd. With options to take challenges in coding, blockchain, data analysis, e safety, virtual reality, social media and many more, pupils will earn a Record of Achievement giving them real currency in the next stage of their journey.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

With your support, we'll continue to provide your child with the most powerful opportunities to achieve their academic best, but also to gain the skills they will need to be successful in the modern world.

We'll keep evaluating the changes in the landscape, and will remain agile to make sure it's relevant and adding value. Every year, we will horizon scan the global changes that will impact upon our children and will rewrite our short term School Improvement Plan and our longer term strategy to respond to a rapidly changing world.

We'll keep seeking investment for the specialist facilities, technology and people we know we'll need to fulfil our ambitions.

We'll keep inspiring young minds, to create incredible futures.





DOWNSEND SCHOOL

Inspiring Young Minds