

English, as Gordon Ramsay reminded me the other day, is a bit like cooking. Those weren't his exact words, but you get the idea. I think I know what he meant

It all starts with the ingredients. Those are the words. English is an incredibly rich and varied language, with a wealth of words for all tastes and occasions. In the English Department, we encourage our pupils to keep adding to their vocabularies and to make the fullest possible use of the words they already know – just as we're all supposed to stick to healthy, balanced diets. Five fruit and veg a day? Why not also five multi-syllabic verbs? Five extended metaphors?

Once you have the ingredients, you need a recipe. This might be the plan for a story, the structure of a sonnet or the instructions on how to complete an essay. Words are fun on their own, but they don't really start to work for us until we put them together in sentences and paragraphs, shaping them to meet our purposes. Again, our pupils are urged to take this on board, and to think carefully about what they are trying to achieve when they sit down to write or – just as important – open their mouths to speak. Some chefs can do

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magic by just throwing things together; the rest of us need to know where we're going.

The combination of the best ingredients and an intelligent recipe leads to fine, nourishing food. And knowing how to use the right words in the right way makes for exciting stories, thrilling conversations, inspirational poems and, of course, the accurate, informed and fluent essays that gain top exam grades.

As a department, I think we're seeing more and more work of this high quality – we feel quite well fed. But we are greedy readers – as we would have our pupils be – and we're always looking for richer dishes, more satisfying meals. It's for our pupils to meet this appetite.

So, this year we've been mostly eating at home, focussing on what we do in the classroom to foster the essential skills discussed above. We've added to our equipment, with teachers making daily use of desktop computers, projectors and Sharepoint software, and we've continued our investment in new textbooks and class readers – all with the aim of broadening the pupils' diet and making ours a more efficient kitchen. We think we're getting there. I trust Gordon would agree.

Mr Rory Drummond, Head of English

Bill Gates described education as "the best investment" and this captures the spirit of our view of Information Technology (IT) in teaching and learning at Framlingham College. In the last year, through our IT Strategy Committee which tackles all IT related issues, planning and expenditure, we have made great strides in identifying key IT objectives to place Framlingham College at the forefront of education.

As part of our long term planning at the College, all teaching rooms now have a teacher work station, and we are continuing to install projectors to accompany them.

This project will be completed by summer 2007. The network has also been steadily upgraded throughout this year under the guidance of Matt Hart, the senior IT technician, and Ben Payne, with improved fault tolerance, data protection and security systems now in place.

Projects completed for the start of September 2006 include the introduction of computers into boarding houses, to give students greater flexibility in accessing the school network and the internet. We also have a substantial programme of hardware replacement and further network improvements being undertaken over the summer holidays.

On the software side, we are continuing to plan and deploy the use of Microsoft Share Point Portal as the main platform for the College's MLE (Managed Learning Environment). This represents a very exciting time for the College in its development as it throws open huge possibilities in the coming years for parents, students and teachers to access resources remotely. In our enthusiasm for this venture we demonstrated SharePoint 2007 at the recent East Anglia IT Area Meeting for Independent Schools, which was hosted at the College. Delegates were most impressed with our progress, and it was clear that we are well ahead of the game – so watch this space!

There have also been exciting developments in the IT curriculum. A new IT GCSE short course was introduced in September 2006 for all students in Years 9 and 10. This marks a major step forward, as it will ensure that all those who leave the College have a core set of IT skills to prepare them for the wider world. We have also changed our IT A-Level provision, and now offer a course which enables students to develop their skills in a wide range of applications at an advanced level. This is already proving to be a more attractive option for a number of our students.

Mr Chris Rimmer, Head of IT

...FOR PARENTS, STUDENTS AND TEACHERS TO ACCESS RESOURCES REMOTELY.