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## Judges select finalists from a record 167 entries for the KM Kent Cooks school cookery competition

14 November 2014  
by Liz Nicholls  
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Records were smashed for this year's KM Kent Cooks competition with 167 entries sent in by youngsters across Kent.



Kent Cooks judges being put through their paces. From left: Amy Woods (Three R's Teacher Recruitment), Sarah Leipnik (Golding Homes), Matthew McPhail (DFDS Seaways), Jim Ratchford (Licensing Consultancy Services), Matt Parkinson (Voo Servers) and Daniel Kennedy (Kent Cookery School).

Last week the contest's judges had the hard task of selecting the 13 finalists who will take part in a live cook-off on Thursday, November 27 at East Kent College.

Members of the judging panel were delighted at the quality of the recipes sent in by hopeful contestants. "This is my second year shortlisting the finalists for the Kent Cooks competition and again I have not been disappointed!" said Sarah-Jane Leipnik of Golding Homes.

"Every year the standard of the entries gets better and better - it is so difficult to choose our finalists," added Beverley Thompson of Southern Water.

Matthew Mcphail of DFDS Seaways agreed with them. "Judging has been really tough this year as we received some fantastic entries," he said.

The judging process was also "an exciting yet difficult" one for Matt Parkinson of VooServers Limited who said he enjoyed "a mouth-watering morning looking through the entries."

The finalists can now practice their signature dishes so they're ready for the Masterchef-style final at the end of the month.

The winners for each category will receive a goody bag from sponsors, a Masterchef cook book as well as a cheque. The winning primary school pupil will receive £50, £100 will be awarded to the family winner, the secondary student winner will receive £150 and the Kent Cooks overall champion will receive £200.

Daniel Kennedy of Kent Cookery School offered his congratulations to everyone who entered this year. "It's inspiring to see so many talented young cooks," he said.

Alex Bardsley of Countrystyle Recycling praised the successful entrants and said: "I am looking forward to the final and being able to sample the exciting meals."

The judges were also impressed by contest's aims which are to develop the confidence and abilities of young people in the kitchen, including cooking to a budget and increasing awareness of healthy options.

"It is fantastic to see young people creating tasty, healthy meals that don't cost a lot of money to make," said Sarah Butler of Orbit South.

"To see so many becoming more and more enthusiastic about eating is fantastic and this can only raise the expectations and demands of what people want to eat," said Roger Phillips of East Kent College.

Zoe Gill of Brakes emphasised the importance of encouraging "our children to have an understanding of food and how cooking is a key life skill."

The competition, which is staged by the KM Charity Team, is also supported by Mini Babybel, Three R's Teacher Recruitment, Carefree Communications and Licensing Consultancy Services.

Simon Dolby of KM Kent Cooks said: "All of the judges did a fantastic job and I would like to thank them for all their support in making this event such a success."

For more details, visit [www.kentcooks.co.uk](http://www.kentcooks.co.uk).

- Businesses that would like to support the 2015 event can come to this year's final as a guest. Contact Simon Dolby at [sdolby@thekmggroup.co.uk](mailto:sdolby@thekmggroup.co.uk) or call 07989 164 752 to register your place.

### The KM Kent Cooks Finalists for 2014

#### Family category finalists

- Luke Gowers, 8, from Swalecliffe Community Primary School in Whitstable
- Evelyn Lee, 4, from Ash, Cartwright and Kelsey C of E Primary in Canterbury
- Daniel Beesley, 8, from Woodlands Junior School in Tonbridge

#### Primary School category finalists

- Isobella McAuley, 8, from St Joseph's Catholic Primary School in Broadstairs
- Hannah Stanley, 9, from Herne Bay Juniors
- Evie Goodearl, 7, from Culverstone Green Primary School in Meopham



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