



Hulme Hall Grammar School

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SENIOR SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

21ST MAY 2021

Dear Parents, Carers, Pupils and Friends,

Over the last few weeks, our Year 11 pupils and teachers have been gathering evidence for the submission of Teacher Assessed Grades, which have replaced the traditional GCSE examinations this summer. In the process, Ms Greenhalgh's English group enjoyed a lively debate concerning the situation Year 11 pupils have found themselves in this year. Some of their comments are included in this newsletter. I think you will find them interesting.

We also feature another captivating alumni story where former Hulme Hall pupil Chris Bowe shares some recollections of his life at school and beyond. On a similar alumni theme, our congratulations to former pupil and current Leicester City goalkeeper Kasper Schmeichel, who played a starring role as his team triumphed in the FA Cup Final at Wembley Stadium last weekend. Well done Kasper and the team on their achievement.

Year 10 academic reports are due to be sent out to parents today following the recent internal examinations and I would like to remind our Years 7, 8 and 9 pupils and parents that internal examinations for those year groups are scheduled to commence immediately after half-term on Monday 7th June.

Finally, on behalf of all the pupils and staff at Hulme Hall, I would like to extend our very best wishes to peripatetic music teacher, Mr Gair Carson, who is retiring at the end of this half term after many years of service to the school. I wish Mr Carson every happiness in his retirement and I hope he enjoys the well deserved rest.

Dean Grierson

Alumnus Lifting the FA Cup!

We couldn't let the news that Kasper Schmeichel had lifted the FA Cup trophy last weekend pass us by without mentioning. Leicester City played an outstanding game, with Kasper making two world-class saves to help them on their way to win the title.

Kasper is our first alumni to lift that particular trophy and we're hoping he will not be the last.



Alumnus—Chris Bowe

Chris Bowe attended Hulme Hall for 5 years and left after completing his GCSEs. He has gone on to have a varied career, first working for the NHS, then re-training and successfully completing his time in the Royal Navy. He is now a train driver for ScotRail.

What do you remember most about your time at Hulme Hall?

I remember the school being quite relaxed and in a lovely leafy setting. The class sizes were small so it meant the teachers knew you personally and could afford more time with each pupil and get to know them better. We had a great set of teachers. I remember it being a positive environment to learn in and help was always there when needed. Teachers were skilled at picking up on those who needed it, too.

How did Hulme Hall prepare you for your career?

I always wanted to be a pilot when I was at school and, to be fair, none of my teachers ever discouraged me, probably knowing there was a slim chance it would work out for me. The teachers knew what I was good at and helped me with my decisions, and were fully supportive of my choices post Hulme Hall.

Describe your career journey post Hulme Hall.

I spent 2 years at Oldham Sixth Form College completing my A Levels, which was a complete contrast to the nurtured environment at Hulme Hall. I changed my path when I did not pass the RAF's officer's selection. After working in the NHS, I applied to the Royal Navy as a Warfare Specialist Sonar Operator, and got in! After a 36 week rigorous training plan, I passed the 4 hour oral exam and 3 walkarounds of the submarine, engine room and missile compartment.

The job involved analysing all threats and contacts to the submarine via our various sonar systems and advising command. This involved knowledge of oceanography and knowledge about other nations fleets, restricted to 'Top Secret UK Eyes Only', such was our security clearance on submarines. Although the job was hard, it was rewarding and interesting. There were some points where I thought I'd never see daylight again, but your training takes over and you respond to the emergency.

After 6 years travelling around the North Atlantic an opportunity came up at ScotRail driving trains. I love the responsibility and following the rules and procedures and I'm proud of what I do.

What is your best piece of advice to a senior pupil now, that you wish you had known when you left Hulme Hall?

We've all learnt recently to have a back up plan as things don't always turn out how you expect them to. Don't overlook a career in the armed forces. Always believe that you can do whatever you set your mind to, and always challenge yourself.



Recommendations

Everybody loves learning. The snippets people drop into conversations that spark an interest are usually followed up and investigated and our lives are enriched for the better. We share the recommendations from staff, parents and friends weekly in the hope it inspires you and our pupils to read more and investigate learning. **Let us know if you have something to share!**



Book Review

The Boy, The Mole, The Fox and The Horse



Podcast

About Race by Reni Eddo-Lodge



TV Programme

Mare of Easttown



Goodbye and Good Luck Mr Carson!

Sadly, we have to say goodbye to Mr Garson who is officially retiring next week. Over many years of teaching woodwind and guitar at Hulme Hall, he has helped create a thriving music department, arranging music and conducting the school band at wonderful school concerts and competitions. Christmas will not be the same without Gair surprising us all with his rendition of Auld Lang Syne on his bagpipes!

He has taught the pupils with great enthusiasm and patience.

Teachers like Mr Carson are very few and far between. I started playing in Year 8 and have now finished my grade 4 saxophone and I will never forget the endless number of times he asks, "Did you even take a breath before starting?" or when he taps his foot to the rhythm, almost shaking the whole building while I attempt to stay on the beat.

Imogen



Year 11 Debate the Cancellation of Exams

The cancellation of the usual Year 11 GCSE exams this year due to the pandemic is a hotly debated topic across the country, no more so than amongst our Year 11 pupils. Ms Greenhalgh decided to channel the debate in English into an essay question. The pupils spent a lesson debating the following:

The COVID pandemic has meant the cancellation of GCSEs and A Levels for a whole cohort of pupils across the United Kingdom. Replaced by a series of assessments, this has created more pressure, inequality and mental health issues amongst young people than ever before.

We were blown away and equally fascinated by their interesting and articulate arguments and their level of empathy for peers and the struggles COVID had brought to their lives. We wanted to share excerpts with you from four different pupils' essays:

'Have you ever worked tirelessly everyday since you could walk and talk, for one piece of paper? One single A4 piece of paper that seemed to dictate who you are and who you will become. I did. I worked relentlessly for 14 years to prepare myself for what I believed was the most important thing in my life.'

'Some households had the stress of a multi occupying household and maybe children had to share a room and take care of grandparents, instead of school work. Let's not forget all the physical and mental abuse some suffered all through lockdown, stuck in households they thought they would never get out of. Can you imagine this?'

'The National Health Service reported a rise in phone calls coming into children's charities reporting suicidal behaviours and self harm. This can be traced to the younger generations, specifically the years between 16-20. This was further traced to the education system not accounting for the stress that the COVID pandemic has put on those children in these circumstances as not all the students had access to the internet and not all students had access to the resources to help them through this difficult time. That, along with their parents' stress, made this a very difficult time for children.'

'Though I have conflicting views on many of the advantages and disadvantages of the use of teacher assessed grades in this years GCSEs overall, I think they are the best alternative the government could have come up with in the short time they had to prepare it. I believe that using teacher assessed grades for this year's GCSE results will result in most students being relatively fairly assessed despite the problems associated with this method of assessing students. Especially now the controversial algorithm has been removed, which was used last year. Many students and parents felt this system was unfair and didn't account for the unprecedented year 2020 was for the British education system.'