

The King's Eye

Annual Report 2015/16



THE KING'S SCHOOL
CHESTER

“This new chapter in the history of our School has already been a successful one.”

Joanne Clague, Chair of Governors



From the Chair of Governors

I AM DELIGHTED TO INTRODUCE THIS ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE KING'S SCHOOL, my first as Chair of Governors. It is a privilege to lead the Board, which this year has been strengthened once again by new members. Kevin Hassett, nominee of Chester Municipal Charities, left us after serving his term of office this year, and has been replaced by Nick Wood OKS who will attend his first meeting in June. The Board also elected Janet Carr, Ruth Ashford and Richard Arnold OKS this year to become Governors. Janet is a Chartered Accountant and specialises in acting for charities. She is a member of the Charity & Voluntary Sector Group of The Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, the Association of Charity Independent Examiners and the Association of Church Accountants and Treasurers. Janet brings experience as a parent, one of four governors to have children in the School, and also sits on the Diocese of Chester

Finance and Central Services Committee as a professional adviser. Ruth is Executive Dean of the Faculty of Business and Management at the University of Chester and was previously the Chief Examiner of the Chartered Institute of Marketing. Ruth's father attended The King's School in the 1940s. Richard was educated at King's and, through his role as Group Managing Director of Manchester United FC, brings a wealth of business experience as well as his experience as a parent. A number of Governors will be stepping down from the Board at the end of this year and I would like to take this opportunity to offer them our sincere thanks for the major contribution they have each made to the life of the School. There will be opportunities later in the year to thank them personally.

We were delighted to welcome His Grace the Duke of Westminster, our Patron, to open Willow Lodge

in September: this new chapter in the history of the School has already been a successful one, and we are proud to have recruited so strongly in tough economic times. Indeed, our success as a school in what is a challenging market has been a hallmark of the year once again, and one we are determined to continue.

Sadly, the year also saw the death of one of the pillars of the King's community: former Chairman and OKS Keith James, whose memorial service in February was so well attended by King's men and women of many generations, and whose memory will live long for all of us.

This will also be the last term for Simon Malone, who retires as Head of the Junior School. He has seen the Junior School through expansion, co-education and much success in his time as Deputy Head and Head: generations of Junior School children and parents have much reason

to thank him, remember him fondly and above all wish him a long and happy retirement.

As the academic year draws to a close, we are also bringing together the strands of our next five to ten year strategy, a process which has been led by Governor James Timpson, and in which more members of the community than ever before have played their part. I am sure you will find it a stimulating vision, which you will both recognise and be excited by: we do not stand still, and we do stand by our values as a place of achievement, of thought and care, and of unpretentious excellence.

I wish all parents, students, staff and alumni a wonderful summer, and for our leavers in particular, I wish every success in August's results.

**Joanne Clague,
Chair of Governors**



From the Headmaster

AT THE TOP OF THE SCHOOL, our Upper Sixth achieved some of the best Oxbridge and top university results of recent years, detailed by the Head of Sixth Form later in this publication. Students have directed plays, excelled in external competitions and – in one of our boldest developments – our Third Year pupils have proved they can work through, present and publish original research.

Although the two major physical developments, which occupied last summer, were perhaps less exciting – a refurbishment of the dining hall and a reworking of the car park – their effect too has been considerable. 1541 now offers superb and stylish dining space, and the car park improvements have eased what has long been a frustrating experience for parents and visitors.

These underpin what has been a major theme for us this year: getting King's out into the community more. We have hosted three business breakfasts for visitors from the arts, from finance and commerce and from leisure and sports, and on these occasions the students have been hosts and beneficiaries. Once again we have welcomed three Professionals in Residence. And our music, drama and science days for local primary school children have become well known, gained a wider reach and enriched us as much as, we hope, they have inspired youngsters in Chester and beyond.

I very much hope you enjoy reading about these and other events and achievements. You will not be surprised to hear that we are already planning exciting developments for next year and beyond!

Chris Ramsey,
Headmaster



“Our Upper Sixth achieved some of the best Oxbridge and top university results of recent years.”

Chris Ramsey, Headmaster

Hellos and goodbyes

In a big and busy school, many staff work brilliantly behind the scenes. In this formal report, we highlight permanent teaching staff and senior management changes.



Peter Bowen-Walker



Adam Dewbery



Anna Leake



Laura McCutcheon



Clare Rule



Jonathan Melville



Siobhan Ley



Jan Callaghan



Katy Johnson



Alison Stevenson



Kirsty Williams



Emma Davidson



Andrea Millard

Welcome to King's...

PETER BOWEN-WALKER joined us this year to teach Biology, having been Head of Science at Manchester Grammar School, before a change of career to the Law. That is still his ultimate destination, but we have been grateful for his wisdom, experience and expertise in both teaching and tutoring.

ADAM DEWBERRY is our new Head of Mathematics. He read Mathematics at Cambridge before teaching in two Taunton schools: first his old school, King's College, then Taunton School, where he was Assistant Head of Mathematics and timetabler. His interest in codes and puzzles has already spawned new activities, and has been a Removes Tutor this year.

ANNA LEAKE taught English at St Dunstan's College, South London, having graduated from Lancaster in English Literature and completed an Independent Schools Academic Management Qualification. She

joined us this September as Deputy Head of English and has been a Tutor in the Shells.

LAURA MCCUTCHEON became Head of Spanish in September, joining us from Bromsgrove School, where she taught Modern Languages. A Cambridge graduate, who has already made a great impression, she will from September 2016 be assuming responsibility as Head of Modern Languages.

CLARE RULE is an Old King's Scholar, graduating from Liverpool and now rejoins us teaching in the Economics and Business Studies Department. She taught at Bolton School and has already been fully involved in the activities of the department and school.

JONATHAN MELVILLE joined us as Junior School English Co-ordinator. He has great experience

locally and moved to King's from Horn's Mill Primary School where he was Deputy Head.

SIOBHAN LEY joins us from Merchant Taylors' School as a J1 teacher. She has already made a significant impact in both girls' sport and pastoral care. She represented NW England at volleyball, plays football and coaches our U11B football team.

JAN CALLAGHAN joined us as Deputy Head of Willow Lodge, which has welcomed almost a complete staff team this year. She was previously Head of Key Stage One at Queen's Lower School for nine years and has also been an Art Advisor for Cheshire.

KATY JOHNSON is a graduate of Nottingham and was Head of Key Stage One at Nottingham Girls' High School. She teaches our Infant 2 class and is our Transition Co-ordinator for Junior School entry.

ALISON STEVENSON joins us from Shocklach Oviatt Primary School and specialises in Early Years education. She teaches in Reception with Jan Callaghan.

KIRSTY WILLIAMS, a graduate of Chester University, joins us from Abbeygate Aldford to teach in our Infant 1 class. She is a drama specialist.

New to the Senior Management Team are also **Emma Davidson** and **Andrea Millard**, sharing the job of Director of Human Resources. They have 'job shared' before, for MBNA; Emma has also worked in the HR department of the University of Liverpool. Both are also members of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development.



Samantha Curless



John King



Helen Lydon



Paul Shannon

Farewell and all the best...

SAMANTHA CURLESS joined us from Devon as Samantha Butler two years ago: in that time she has made a huge impression as an innovative and inspiring teacher, great Tutor and leader of community initiatives. That she chose to rejoin her partner in the South West was sad, if reasonable, and we congratulate her on her well-deserved appointment to be a Head of History in Torquay.

JOHN KING retired in December 2015 after 20 years as Head of the Geography Department. His leadership of Geography was highly respected, and he was a much-loved teacher and Tutor, especially expert in physical Geography and meteorology. A wise, kind and generous professional, he left us with our very best wishes for a long and happy retirement.

HELEN LYDON also retires this year. She joined as a temporary teacher, then became full-time, and latterly, part-time. She has been one of the most respected professionals in the English department, a thoughtful, caring teacher of high standards; she has also been the key force behind the growth of creative writing at King's. Poets in residence, publications and poetry recitals have all blossomed under her leadership: we are most grateful.

PAUL SHANNON leaves us this year after more than 20 years as Head of Modern Languages. A distinguished linguist, examiner, thorough and professional teacher, he has led the department through changes in curriculum and provision, with great sense of purpose and always the broad picture in mind. He hands over to Laura McCutcheon at the end of the year, and we thank him for all he has done and wish him well.



Simon Malone

The end of an era was announced this summer, as Simon Malone decided to take early retirement after 23 years of outstanding service to The King's School, including the last 15 years as Head of the Junior School.

Simon's term of office has seen the Junior School grow in size resulting in three major building extensions, including the most recent addition of the Learning Centre, the introduction of co-education, the establishment of Willow Lodge and three hugely successful inspection reports.

Simon's commitment, loyalty and passion will be missed by all members of the King's community, and he will be fondly remembered by many generations of boys and girls!

From Willow Lodge



THE INAUGURAL YEAR OF WILLOW LODGE has been filled with fun, opportunity and success.

Within days of opening our doors for the first time, we held our Official Opening by His Grace the Duke of Westminster. Very quickly, the new pupils made Willow Lodge their own, adorning blank walls and empty spaces with work of exceptional quality. Walking into each classroom, it is evident that they love learning and are revelling in the stimulating environments we have created together. The children are justifiably proud of what they have achieved and confidence has blossomed, as they show their work with pride at our frequent open-door sessions for parents. Our lunchtime and after

school extra-curricular clubs are full of children having fun. From Mad Scientists Club to Art, Story Club to Mini-Environmentalists, we have ensured that our youngest pupils have as many different experiences as possible to extend their learning.

Academically, the progress made by the pupils has been excellent, with our Infant 2 children entering the Junior School riding high on excellent scores from our termly assessments in English and Mathematics.

Forest Schools sessions develop communication and problem-solving skills for all our classes. The children have learnt about the fire circle, looking for spring bulbs flowering, have made clay hedgehogs and cooked marshmallows over

the fire. This term has also seen Infant 1 and 2 children take part in Explore Learning Maths workshops. These workshops developed the children's thinking skills through higher order questions and activities.

As part of our links with the Junior School, during National Storytelling Week, each class performed poetry or a story to a Junior School class, who also entertained us with their performances. Book fever continued during World Book Day with an array of book characters going on bear hunts through our forest. Our children also entered the Young Writers' *My First Story* Ocean Adventures competition and a large selection of those stories were selected for publication based on imagination, expression and creative use of writing.





“The children are justifiably proud of what they have achieved and confidence has blossomed.”

Margaret Ainsworth, Head of Willow Lodge

These stories will appear in *Ocean Adventures – The North West*, a copy of which will be in libraries across the UK.

Our curriculum has been enhanced by educational visits this year. Robins and Wrens visited the zoo, exploring the new Islands of Wonder, and chatting to the keepers about how they care for the exotic creatures. Woodpeckers visited a working farm. Kingfishers also represented the School in the Big Sing workshop and joined several local schools to create a huge choir who entertained parents with the songs they had been learning in their Music lessons. The children sang with such enthusiasm and a clear love of music. We welcomed Beth Tweddle MBE and Olympic medallist in to School to talk about her career and how sport can instil a healthy body and an energetic mind.

Our success this year is due to the commitment of a wonderful staff, the energy and enthusiasm of our youngest pupils in the School, and the support of our parents.

Margaret Ainsworth,
Head of Willow Lodge





From the Junior School

IT HAS BEEN A GREAT PLEASURE FOR US to see Willow Lodge join the King's family, and we have enjoyed various shared events, the most memorable being our inaugural Carol Service at Chester Cathedral.

Making the most of our pupils' academic ability is of course central to what we do. We should congratulate Emily Coopman (J4H), Aria Praveen (J4S), Jake Roberts (J4H) and Tom Rofe (J4S), who reached the regional final of the Explore Learning Mathematics Competition. We are proud of Bram Lucas who ranked third in the 'Monster Poetry' competition. 53,000 entries were received from 1,400 schools!

Outside the classroom, those of us who witnessed the J4 production of *Oliver* will know how much talent our pupils possess. Many of the performances were worthy of the West End; Ben Robinson (J4S) actually did grace the West End playing the part of Michael in *Billy Elliot* this year.

Fourteen children won first prizes with over 30 securing top three places at the Chester Festival, and we secured the Avalon Cup for the seventh time. Our choir reached the final of the Primary Schools' Competition.

Through joining Chester Schools' Sports Association Partnership, we have extended and

enhanced our links with local schools whilst increasing representative opportunities in sport. We have always felt that sport is a strength of ours but how does one measure success? Is it on the number of trophies won, the number of pupils involved or by how much enjoyment and self-worth is gained from simply 'having a go'? Arguably all three are significant elements.

Our girls are Chester Schools' Netball Champions, County finalists and winners of the King's Invitational event. The mixed gender Quicksticks hockey team are County Champions whilst the mixed gender basketball team are Chester Schools' runners-up.

“Making the most of our pupils' academic ability is of course central to what we do.”

Simon Malone, Head of Junior School





14 footballers took part in a pre-season training exercise including coaching sessions at Stoke City FC and Fulham FC. We won the King's Chester and the King's Macclesfield competitions but were runners up in the Chester Schools', Cheshire Schools' and ISFA (NW) competitions. The U8/U9 team reached the Cheshire Schools' finals.

So, it has been a typically busy year and another successful one. We are as ever grateful for all the support of parents and staff, and above all for the enthusiasm of our pupils.

Simon Malone,
Head of Junior School



The boys' hockey team are North West runners-up and qualified for the North of England finals. Our swimmers were regional runners-up and have qualified for the National finals. Our best ever performance at the AJIS Indoor Athletics event was recorded, and, in a new venture for King's, we put out our first ever water polo team this year.

From the Senior School



WE RETURNED TO SCHOOL in September to find our dining hall transformed into 1541, a stylish and welcoming room where students can enjoy a fabulous selection of lunches. During the year we have been pleased to host some themed breakfast events in 1541. We look forward to welcoming more visitors as we explore other areas.

The Vanbrugh Theatre continues to host a wide variety of performances. Drama productions have included a breathtaking production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* to commemorate 400 years since Shakespeare's death. This featured two casts playing on alternate nights in a theatre transformed from its usual layout. Visiting performances have included *That's Amore*, a lively, physical theatre performance by Tmesis; *Bookends*, a Simon and Garfunkel tribute performance and *Parlour Tricks*, a hilarious magic show by Morgan and West.

Our very vibrant music department has this year led a Chamber Music Evening, a Jazz Night, Evensong at the Cathedral, an Open Mic Night, and an Evening of Song, along with regular enjoyable lunchtime recitals to which visitors are cordially invited.

In March, we were very proud to welcome parents and Governors to School to see the magnificent exhibition of Independent Learning Projects completed by our Third Year pupils. Students, had spent time researching and designing presentations on a huge range of topics of their own choosing. The results were shared with us as art works, performances, written projects, recordings and models. Visitors praised the quality of the projects and the confident presentations they saw.

Two of our Sixth Formers have been successful in very prestigious essay writing competitions: Megan Kendall came third in the Cambridge University, Newnham College Engineering Prize for her essay on Solar Energy and Patrick Hudson won the

Robson History Essay Prize from Trinity College Cambridge. Success in writing continues as poetry thrives at King's. We have been delighted to welcome our poet in residence, Luke Wright, to work with students and to perform his very funny and moving work, *What I Learned From Johnny Bevan*. Such events have inspired students to draw together a second anthology of their work, soon to be available for download on Kindle. The quality of the poetry is extraordinary.

After a great deal of work designing a car, preparing presentations and winning sponsorship, Sixth Degree, our F1 in Schools team, competed in the National finals at Silverstone in April. The event caused much excitement in School and we were thrilled when our team, James McDonagh (U6HF), Amelia Standing (5LM), Edward Everett (U6ER), Anna Lloyd (5LM), Olivia Samson (5RC) and Joshua Roberts (U6SB), won Best Engineered Car and won through to the World Finals in Austin, Texas, to be held in October 2016.

“We have seen much success in sport this year, both at home and away.”

Jane Byrne, Deputy Head



The CCF biennial inspection in October confirmed that we do indeed have a very strong contingent here. Three of our cadets, Chloe Cowan (L6ML), Henry Greaves (L6ML) and Amelia Jones (4VL) have been called forward for selection for the Canada exchange. It is rare for a contingent even to have one person called forward.

We have seen much success in sport this year both at home, where our grounds staff were awarded Cheshire FA Pitch of the Year, and away. Our U12 and U16 netball teams were District winners and County runners up and the U14s were District winners. Our girls' U19 hockey players are District Indoor and Outdoor Champions as well as North-West winners and North finalists. The U16 hockey team won the County indoor hockey and the U14s were runners up. The U13 girls are Indoor Athletics Champions and Shell and Remove girls also recently won the Cheshire round of the English Schools' Athletics

competition. The girls' team also won the District athletics competition. Our U15 girls have just won the District rounders tournament. In boys' sport, the U18 hockey team reached national finals in both indoor and outdoor competitions and the U18 football team reached the finals stage in all their competitions. On the river, more of our athletes competed at the National Schools' Regatta than from any other school in the UK, demonstrating the strength of our Rowing Club.

Jane Byrne,
Deputy Head





From the Sixth Form

AS EVER WITH END OF YEAR SUMMATIONS, the task of exclusion is substantially more difficult than inclusion, especially in a school as busy as King's and in a Sixth Form where so many pupils are engaged in a variety of activities at such a high level. What follows represents the tip of the iceberg in terms of achievement this past year.

The Sixth Form have been well represented in all three of the major Drama productions this past year with the superb tradition of student-directed plays being continued. Harriet Fisher (U6PW) directed a thoughtful and powerful version of *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time* and Edward Ramsey's (L6HJ) interpretation of Tom Stoppard's *The Real Inspector Hound* was frenetic and hugely entertaining.

As ever, the first term of the year was dominated by university applications for the Upper Sixth and there was a high level of success. There were 12 Oxbridge offers, three Veterinary Science offers and 16 for Medicine – the competition for these

places once again shows no signs of abating. More impressive was the achievement of the whole of the Upper Sixth who gained 4.6 offers per student with over 90% receiving at least one offer from a Russell Group university, largely the result of the hugely impressive manner in which the year group approached all aspects of the UCAS process.

The majority of the Sixth Form are involved in competitive sporting fixtures, from the larger sports of football and hockey to the smaller sports such as basketball and badminton. The Sixth Form has notable international recognition from individuals in a number of sports including sailing, rowing and hockey.

Although the Music Department is the furthest area of the Senior School away from the Sixth Form in terms of distance, the number of pupils who regularly troop between the two is impressive. Sixth-Formers take a leading role in Schola, Concert Bands, Jazz Groups, Madrigal Choir and regularly give lunchtime concerts and recitals.

The Head Prefect body have completed their duties with a real sense of duty, good humour and responsibility. They have been led by Head of School, Niamh Massey (U6SW) and her two Deputies, Stanley Parker (U6ER) and Thomas Cuffin-Munday (U6ER). All three coupled a sensitivity to the Sixth Form's needs with critical reflection.

The Lower Sixth have settled into a new pattern of working well and are coming to terms with a new A Level set-up which has meant that they, along with all others in the country, have been something of a 'guinea-pig' year. They have approached this with fortitude and a real sense of purpose. We look forward to seeing what they can go on to achieve next year.

**Joshua Carter,
Head of Sixth Form**



“ So many pupils are engaged in a variety of activities at such a high level.”

Joshua Carter, Head of Sixth Form



From the Bursar

Financial Performance

I am delighted to report that following a robust financial performance, the School continues to be in an excellent position to meet its current educational and operational aims and to plan for the future. The surplus generated will, as always, be fully invested in the School's facilities and resources.

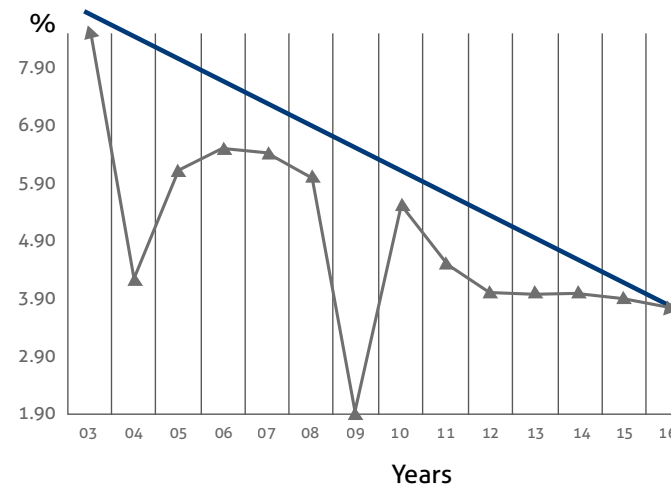
In setting our fees, we are always striving to ensure that King's continues to offer excellent value for money and remains affordable for the parents who invest in a King's education for their children. With salaries by far the most important expense within our cost base, it is always a challenge to balance the additional costs which arise when new legislation is introduced, as has been the case in recent times, (for example: pensions, National Insurance, increasing the compliance and safeguarding requirements).

All of these may not be obvious from an external perspective but they all add up to a significant additional cost burden for the School. We have been working to mitigate some of these on-costs and our commercial team have been busy building a procurement strategy which will deliver savings on non-salary costs, rationalise the supply base and ensure that every penny that parents invest in King's achieves maximum value for money.

With these activities and a sharp focus on value for money from every member of the King's team, we are proud that we have been able to keep fee increases to the minimum and well within the sector median. The long term trend that we have achieved in this area is encouraging and we will continue to give this the focus it deserves in the coming years.



**King's fee increase trend over time
2003 - 2016**





“We are always striving to ensure that King's continues to offer excellent value for money.”

Jo Beer, Bursar



Investing in the School's facilities

2015 saw the completion of the building work on our £2.9m investment in the Willow Lodge Infant School. This was the culmination of several years' planning, building and finishing and we are delighted to report that the finished results have exceeded expectations. As we saw the first intake join us last September, a great looking building has been transformed into a remarkable educational space where 4-7 year olds begin their learning journey!

The year also saw a £400,000 investment in improving the dining environment for our pupils. The name, *1541*, was chosen by a pupil vote and refers to the year of our foundation by Henry VIII. *1541* is also regularly used by parents and the wider community and has fulfilled our ambitions to be at the heart of our school community.



In sport, we know that our outdoor facilities are second to none and this was externally recognised in 2015 when we were awarded Education Sector Pitch of the Year by Cheshire FA.

Looking ahead, 2016/2017 will be the year that a long term capital master plan and timetable will be articulated for further improvements to our School facilities.

These investments will no doubt have a beneficial effect on those who attend the School. We are also looking for ways in which these new facilities might be used in a variety of ways to enrich the life of our local community.

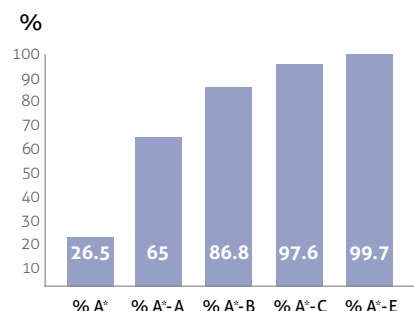
Jo Beer,
Bursar

Academic Results

A Level results, 2014/15

Subject	A*	A	B	C
Art	2	2	2	
Biology	12	16	6	
Business Studies		4	4	4
Chemistry	10	18	7	4
Classical Civilisation		1		
Computing		1	1	1
Design Technology	3	1	3	
Drama	1	1		
Economics	9	7	5	1
English Language		4	4	1
English Literature	3	5	2	3
French	1	3	4	1
Further Maths	3	3	3	
Geography	1	7	2	4
German			1	1
Government & Politics	2	13	5	1
History	8	5	3	1
History of Art			1	
Maths	11	22	10	8
Music	1		1	
PE		1	2	1
Philosophy		5	2	1
Physics	18	6	3	5
Religious Studies	5	2	1	
Spanish		4	2	

A Level result totals in %

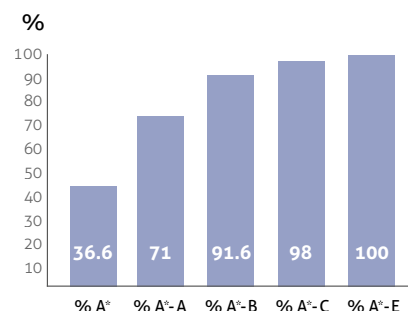


GCSE results, 2014/15

Subject	A*	A	B	C
Art	8	7	6	
Biology	42	23	16	8
Business	5	16	13	1
Chemistry	43	25	12	5
Classical Civilisation		5	2	3
Design	9	7	9	1
Drama	3	3		
English Language	49	33	18	4
English Literature	23	52	20	8
French	10	8	12	2
Further Maths*	18	17	8	4
Geography	15	20	8	4
German	1		6	1
History	18	16	5	
IT	2	4	4	1
Latin	4	2		
Maths	41	37	22	4
Music	2	5	3	
PE	2	5	8	2
Physics	45	25	14	5
Psychology	1	1	5	
Religious Studies	8	9		
Spanish	16	22	14	11

*Further Maths total includes 4 A*s with Distinction.

GCSE result totals in %



A Level

- 26.5% of all grades achieved were A*
- Girls achieved: 28.5% A* grades and 76% A*/A grades

GCSE

- 71% of all grades were at A*/A

University Destinations 2015

The Times Top 30

77%

The Times Top 20

50%

The Times Top 10

25%

Russell Group

79%

University Destinations of Leavers 2015

University	Subject
BANGOR	Psychology 2015
BATH	Biochemistry 2015
BATH	Automotive Engineering 2015
BIRMINGHAM	English Language and Literature 2015
BIRMINGHAM	International Relations 2015
BIRMINGHAM	Modern Languages 2015
BIRMINGHAM and KPMG	Accounting and Finance 2015
BRISTOL	Neuroscience 2015
BRISTOL	Biochemistry 2015
BRISTOL	Biology 2015
BRISTOL	Economics 2015
BRISTOL	Psychology 2015
BRISTOL	*Neuroscience 2015
BRISTOL	Veterinary Science 2015
CAMBRIDGE	Theology and Religious Studies 2015
CAMBRIDGE	English Literature 2015
CAMBRIDGE	Medicine 2015
CAMBRIDGE	Medicine 2015
CARDIFF	Medicine 2015
CARDIFF	Architecture 2015
CARDIFF	Medicine 2015
CHESTER	Chemical Engineering 2015
CENTRAL LANCASHIRE	3D Visual Effects 2015
CENTRAL LANCASHIRE	Journalism 2015
CITY UNIVERSITY, LONDON	Computer Science 2015
DURHAM	Engineering 2015
DURHAM	Chemistry 2015
DURHAM	Geography 2015
DURHAM	Philosophy 2015
DURHAM	Politics 2015
DURHAM	International Relations 2015
DURHAM	History and Politics 2015
DURHAM	Physics 2015
EDINBURGH	Medicine 2015
EDINBURGH	English and Scottish Literature 2015
EDINBURGH	Medicine 2015
EDINBURGH	Veterinary Medicine 2015
EDINBURGH	Economics* 2015

University	Subject
EXETER	Politics 2015
GLASGOW	Psychology 2015
IMPERIAL COLLEGE, LONDON	Chemical Engineering 2015
IMPERIAL COLLEGE, LONDON	Physics 2015
IMPERIAL COLLEGE, LONDON	Biology 2015
IMPERIAL COLLEGE, LONDON	Physics 2015
IMPERIAL COLLEGE, LONDON	Physics 2015
HERIOT- WATT	Business Management 2015
HERIOT- WATT	Business Management 2015
KEELE	Forensic Science 2015
KING'S COLLEGE, LONDON	Philosophy 2015
KING'S COLLEGE, LONDON	Geography 2015
LANCASTER	Marketing 2015
LOUGHBOROUGH	Industrial Design and Technology 2015
LOUGHBOROUGH	Civil Engineering 2015
LOUGHBOROUGH	Engineering Management 2015
LEEDS	Mechanical Engineering 2015
LEEDS	History 2015
LEEDS	Accounting and Finance 2015
LEEDS	Graphic and Communication Design 2015
LEEDS	Politics 2015
LEEDS	Economics 2015
LEEDS	Geography 2015
LIVERPOOL	Maths 2015
LIVERPOOL	International Business 2015
LIVERPOOL	Philosophy and Hispanic Studies 2015
LIVERPOOL	Medicine 2015
LIVERPOOL	Avionic Systems 2015
MANCHESTER	International Management 2015
MANCHESTER	Drama and English Literature 2015
MANCHESTER	Material Science and Engineering 2015
MANCHESTER	Audiology 2015
MANCHESTER	Ancient History 2015
MANCHESTER	Engineering 2015
MANCHESTER METROPOLITAN	Business Management 2015
OXFORD BROOKES	Real Estate Management 2015
NEWCASTLE	Economics and Mathematics 2015
NEWCASTLE	Geography 2015

University	Subject
NEWCASTLE	Politics and History 2015
NEWCASTLE	Medicine 2015
NEWCASTLE	Pharmacology 2015
NEWCASTLE	Economics and Business Management 2015
NOTTINGHAM	Geography 2015
NOTTINGHAM	Veterinary Medicine 2015
PORTSMOUTH	Pharmacology 2015
QUEEN MARY'S, LONDON	Drama 2015
QUEEN MARY'S, LONDON	German 2015
QUEEN MARY'S, LONDON	English Language and Linguistics 2015
ROYAL VETERINARY COLLEGE, LONDON	Bio Veterinary Science 2015
ROYAL VETERINARY COLLEGE, LONDON	Veterinary Medicine 2015
SHEFFIELD	Material Science and Engineering 2015
SHEFFIELD	Biochemistry 2015
SHEFFIELD	Architecture 2015
SHEFFIELD	Politics 2015
SHEFFIELD	Computer Science 2015
SHEFFIELD HALLAM	International Business 2015
SWANSEA	Chemical Engineering 2015
SWANSEA	American Studies and Geography 2015
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, LONDON	Computer Science 2015
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, LONDON	Human Sciences 2016
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, LONDON	Modern Languages 2016
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Patrick Hudson,
Upper Sixth Form student

Satire, from Swift to *Spitting Image*

EVERYBODY THINKS that satire is important, without knowing what it is. The Augustan poets, a Gillray cartoon, and the middle pages of *Private Eye* all have something in common which defies definition – it is an ethereal artistic tradition.

Recognisable English satire began with Jonathan Swift and the English Augustan; their self-conscious references to classical literature provided the link in the chain between the vitriol of Juvenal and the rather self-important satirists of the 1960s. Swift remains a staple of the obituarist's template, with each Grand Old Man of British writing labelled 'the Dean Swift of his day'. The character of Swift, and his contemporary, Alexander Pope, illuminates the

subject somewhat: both were very much of the Establishment which they scorned (Swift, the scourge of the Irish government and Anglican Church, was the Dean of St Patrick's Cathedral; Pope attacked the high society into which he was born), but felt excluded from it, Swift by his radical politics and Pope by his Catholicism and by being a dwarf.

These characteristics, intimate knowledge of and ideological exclusion from their targets, are present in all fine satirists, be they the hedonistic young Waugh mocking the Bright Young Things, or the Old Etonian Communist Orwell, attacking the Empire and the USSR. The founders of *Private Eye* had mostly gone through Shrewsbury School and Oxbridge before they began to laugh at their contemporaries there; those who object to its



schoolboy humour may well have identified the cause of its success.

When serious minded socialists call satire an elitist pursuit, they are thus not wholly unjustified – though they are nonetheless wrong. The three titans of late eighteenth century satire, James Gillray, George Cruikshank and William Cobbett, were of decidedly humble origins, but between them invented the modern cartoon and political satire, not because they were born into the seats of the mighty but because they knew said seats in great detail. It was Cobbett who won the press their place in the Commons, and used it to lampoon MPs. Gillray, and his successor Cruikshank, sold pictures of Pitt the Younger as a dour beanpole from a print-shop on St James's Street, where the clientele included most of his

targets (while the Prince of Wales had his own account – so that he could buy caricatures of himself even as they were printed).

One can, of course, be too familiar with one's subjects. Gillray sold out to the Pitt government during the Napoleonic Wars, producing thinly-veiled (though very funny) propaganda. He did, however, retain some satirical honour: even in government pamphlets he caricatured his humourless skeletal paymaster.

The distinction between satire and propaganda is an uncertain one, but fundamental to any understanding of the former. Gillray's Pittite cartoons, or Mohammed Al Fayed's re-animation of Punch, were both satirical, but hardly of the canon – they were too bound up with a particular

cause. Satire does have its own moralising tradition, originating in Juvenal, and *Private Eye* today is just as much a campaigning organ as a humorous one, but if this is to any defined end it is some imagined Golden Age, it being at heart a conservative pursuit. It does not serve an effective purpose, and it is this which distinguishes it from the likes of propaganda and marketing, which are indisputably potent.

When Ian Hislop was appointed editor of *Private Eye*, Peter Cook, the proprietor, reminded him of the brilliant satirical cabaret of 1920s Berlin – “That really put a stop to Hitler”. A satirist must appreciate that there can be no constructive end to his work; if he does not, in the words of Auberon Waugh, he ought to be locked up with the politicians.

At the risk of elevating cheap jokes and silly cartoons to some sanctified rank, one might call satire an end in itself. Be it a note passed around an office, a grimy school magazine, or a literary work of unmatched craftsmanship, satire is a symptom of a healthy society; cynicism and a lack of deference keeps our betters in their place. Though Recep Tayyip Erdogan’s oppression of government critics and even caprine jokes is appalling, that he finds it necessary does at least demonstrate that Turkey has not wholly succumbed to its depraved aspirant despot; only somewhere populated by fanatics and lackeys is without satire.

Satire’s place in the British Isles owes much to our comparatively quiet history – there was a decided lack of humour at the storming of the Bastille or the Winter Palace. The lack of rampant Jacobinism, or Communism, or any decisive revolutionary event since 1688, has kept most people at a certain remove from politics, and therefore able to raise some sort of jeer. On the two occasions when satire apparently died in

the past 30 years, with Thatcher and Blair, the nature of politics seemed to make wry reserve impossible; in this instance, Spitting Image puppets did not actually save us from societal revolution, but did at least suggest it was unlikely.

It is not terribly edifying to think of our civilisation depending on rude limericks about President Erdogan, but the existence of the *Spectator’s* Offensive Poetry Competition, for example, is at least a mark of our own security. The English Augustans compared their own age to Rome under Augustus because it brought large scale civil war to an end; satire thrived because, for the first time in 100 years, one could write a disobliging article about one’s betters without fearing disappearance. Perversely enough, satire could be a mark of moderate contentment, only possible when we have beaten our swords into ploughshares and pens.

Recent events have led to rather un-satirical descriptions of satirists, as members of a noble profession of national importance. While certainly preferable to the ‘Erdogan position’, this presents satire as a potent force of righteousness, but no government is ever laughed out of office (though there might be sniggering as it departs). We ought not to revere satire, but it should be respected as evidence of the civilisation it ridicules: so long as disquiet can be expressed in cartoons and jokes, things can’t be all that bad.

Patrick Hudson wins the 2016 Westminster Medal and has an offer to read History at University College, Oxford.



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Patrick Hudson, Upper Sixth Form student

The King's School
Wrexham Road
Chester CH4 7QL

Willow Lodge:
[01244 689470](tel:01244689470)

Junior School:
[01244 689520](tel:01244689520)

Senior School:
[01244 689500](tel:01244689500)

Email: admissions@kingschester.co.uk

www.kingschester.co.uk



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