



## THE PORTSMOUTH GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Headmaster: James Priory MA

*ljw/dck*

24 May 2011

All Senior School Parents

Dear Parent

### **PGS Extend**

I am writing to inform you about the opportunity for pupils to take part in PGS Extend and to ask you to encourage your son/daughter to get involved.

PGS Extend is a highly successful and enjoyable programme of independent study which aims to foster interest in learning for its own sake, encourage further academic collaboration between staff and pupils, allow pupils to combine disciplines and to go beyond their taught syllabuses. All pupils are encouraged to do PGS Extend but entries are required in Year 12 due to its value in the university application process and preparation for Higher Education study. IB pupils may submit their Extended Essay. Pupils write about their PGS Extend/IB Extended Essays in their UCAS applications and are often asked about them at interview. Pupils often submit their work for external competitions too. At our recent Higher Education Information Evening, speakers from top universities identified evidence of passion for the subject as a key factor in offering places.

At this year's celebration of the best PGS Extend submissions in April, we were treated to a great variety of presentations: from Matthew Allen's wildlife photography, which has been shortlisted for the international Veolia Young Wildlife Photographer of the Year award to Jerome Luchesa Smith's commentary on his Wikipedia entry on the American Historian William H Prescott. We were entertained with music performed by James Smith and Tim Lewis and James Lacey's recital of Constantine Cavafy's poem *Ithaka*. We were challenged to consider to what extent the furniture designs of Zaha Hadid are influenced by the theory of dynamism and were shown that the highest concentrations of tanning salons in Portsmouth are found in the poorest areas. The evening culminated in the award of the Ithaka Trophy to Isabel Wilkinson for her project on the *Characterisation and investigation of salt efflorescences produced at Fishbourne Roman Palace*. Isabel is part of our first IB cohort and has an offer to read Natural Sciences at Cambridge.

I hope that you and your son/daughter have read some of the essays that have been published in *Portsmouth Point* and that these will inspire a similarly impressive array of entries this year, from all year groups.

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Email [info@pgs.org.uk](mailto:info@pgs.org.uk) Website [www.pgs.org.uk](http://www.pgs.org.uk)

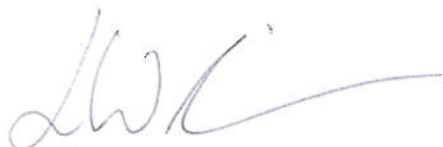
*Founded by William Smith MD, 1732*

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Studies could be in any discipline but must involve independent research from a variety of attributed sources as well as analysis. Submissions can be essays or something of a more creative or practical nature. Pupils identify their area of interest in early June and then discuss the title and research requirements with their chosen supervisor. A marker is identified by the supervisor by the end of the summer term and the completed study is handed in to the marker for assessment in the first full week of the autumn term. A report and grade is sent home before Christmas and the best PGS Extend and IB Extended Essays are shortlisted for the Ithaka prize which will be awarded at the PGS Extend Celebration Evening next spring.

I do hope that your son/daughter is inspired to carry out a PGS Extend and I look forward to reading more fascinating submissions in due course.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'LJW', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mrs L J Wilson  
Deputy Head (Academic)  
The Portsmouth Grammar School