

School News

OPEN UNIVERSITY YASS SHORT COURSES

Congratulations to thirteen of our Sixth Form Gifted and Talented students for passing an Open University short course. The Young Applicants in Schools Scheme (YASS) provides an opportunity for students to work independently and broaden their knowledge of their chosen subject. The students have worked hard on these science related courses which ran over the summer holiday. The course titles included: Molecules, Medicine and Drugs, How the Universe Works, Forensic Science, Human Genetics and Health Issues and Empire of the Microbes.

The students are:

- Michael Barker
- Emily Barry
- Sophie Beverley
- Bethany Broadbent
- Miles Brown
- Grace Cole
- Jake Gledhill
- Tom Howson
- Lindsay Lewins
- Fasil Mahmood
- Wasim Mahmood
- Georges Moss
- Michael Yorke

Well done!

NKW

Could you be a potential Karren Brady or Nick Hewer that could help us find the next Alan Sugar at NHGS?

Would you like to share your business knowledge and experience?

Can you be an entrepreneurial inspiration to our students?

In order to give our students some of the necessary skills required for modern business the school holds two annual vocational training opportunities. In order to make the 2010 experience a success, we are inviting parental input to help run these events. Your invaluable commercial input and relevant business expertise might make you a perfect advisor for our students.

The 2011 Challenge of Management Conference will be held over 2 days on Thursday 16th and Friday 17th June. At this event 187

The North Halifax
Grammar School



NHGS News

NEWSLETTER 5 JANUARY 2011

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Lower Sixth Form students will be working intensively in small groups through a management related programme, with the assistance of an advisor.

The 2011 Enterprise in Action Day will be held on Wednesday 13th July for 159 Year 10 students, who will also be working in groups with an advisor. The day will address Enterprise Education through a business simulation based on food retailing. There will be a series of decision and negotiation exercises and a product promotion in the form of a TV advert.

Full training, resources and refreshments will be provided for both of these events.

If you are willing to offer your support as an advisor, for one or hopefully both of our events, please contact Louise Manley on 01422 231421 or via email at L.Manley@nhgs.co.uk. Alternatively, if you are unable to help this year but you know of someone whom you feel would enjoy and benefit from the experience, then please let us know.

We welcome the professional input of established and new advisors who would like to participate in a rewarding experience with students at NHGS.



NH

End of Term Concert 2010

Students and Staff combined to produce a vibrant concert on the last day of the Autumn Term. It is always a privilege to be involved with such talented people and this year was no exception. There are too many names to mention individually so please don't be offended if you have been missed out.

Dance was well represented this year with three very different dance items. Our Cheerleading group performed a dance routine and a stunt routine. These drew gasps from the audience as cheerleaders were thrown around in an amazing way yet kept smiling throughout.. Their routines have developed since last year and I am in awe of their talent and bravery. The BTec Dance Group performed a more sedate and very fluid dance to "Walking in the Air". Their controlled movement was a joy to watch. Finally, Aysha Matloob and friends choreographed their own routine in Bollywood style. Their professionalism and attention to detail provided us with a thoroughly enjoyable performance which was very well received.

Our Soul Band played a driving set. 'Pick Up The Pieces' as an opener featuring a blistering Sax solo by Beth Attwood ,followed by 'Rescue Me' with Lizzie Hoyle on lead vocal and a kicking new arrangement of 'Proud Mary' with the sublime vocal talents of Beth Brown, Niamh Hendy and Siarlot Lloyd over a tight rhythm section featuring Ewan Nelson's dynamic drumming.

Self-penned songs were in evidence this year. All of them stood up well in the company of professionally written songs and we look forward to more songwriting in the future. Matthew Court's 'Not the One' was a rock-tinged pop anthem with an infectious hook line which lodged in my ear for days after hearing it. 'Wasting Time' was more firmly in the rock camp and featured a well structured guitar solo by Sam McCarthy.

Anna Seccombe's thoughtful and reflective songs were very well received. Anna sang 'Remember' to Lizzie Hoyle's delicate accompaniment. Anna provided a sensitive accompaniment to Connie Rout's poignant rendering of 'You Said'. Both these songs suggest that Anna could be a songwriter of note in the future.

Some of the current Y13 demonstrated why they will be missed in future. Lucy Robinson's soaring vocals on 'Superstition' and Cee Lo Green's 'Forget You' were beautiful as always. Max Norman's tasteful guitar playing made me wonder why it has taken him so long to perform in this concert.

Chris Sage swapped from bass guitar to guitar for a light-hearted 'Fairytale of New York'. This featured Roxanne Bottomley and Freddie Vinehill-Cliffe on vocals. Freddie also featured with the Frontier Psychiatrists who brought their own brand of post-punk, tongue-in-cheek, ironic anarchy to A-ha's 'Take on Me' and to their own song 'Equine Speech'.

'You Got the Love' is a modern classic and the delightful Charlotte Gross did it justice with her

controlled and assured performance. Beth Pattinson's sparse piano accompaniment provided a gentle start until the feel and tempo changed when Oliver McHugh's perfectly timed and executed drum break took us into a stomping middle section.

The staff have to participate of course and Messrs Bastow and Wilson' 'Say It Ain't So' was a bit of old-school rock with an arrogant guitar solo from Mr Wilson. Miss Morgan delivered, in my opinion, her best performance to date with 'Fireflies'. Alfie Finan provided the ethereal keyboards with Angus McGregor on drums. The well-rehearsed staff dance group proved that 'You Can't Stop The Beat' at breakneck speed. The magnificent Matthew McGregor was on Piano, and were vocals once again by the outstanding Beth, Siarlot and Niamh. Mrs Woodward choreographed the group. This is no easy task and I would like to thank her for her dedication.

Brad Marshall, Oliver McHugh and Adam Trevisani provided a high energy backing for Rosie Payne's vocal on 'Kiss With A Fist'. This anthem to domestic disharmony was followed by '500 Miles'. I would like to thank the band for inviting me to join them on this song. I hope it wasn't too traumatic for the audience. We certainly had fun.

The audience play an important part in this concert. Their enthusiastic and encouraging response does so much to bring the best out of the performers. I'd like to thank them for their contribution.

This year's highlight for me was only witnessed by three people. One of the dancers (she knows who she is) was standing in the wings very, very nervously. She was saying "I can't do it, I can't do it, I can't do it," but took a deep breath and went on stage and performed well. Well done to that young lady. It made my day and reminded me why it's important to give our students opportunities like this.

OJC

The Year 10 French Club

In October, Marie Duprez, a French Language Assistant from Paris who is working at NHGS until May, set up the Year 10 French Club. Every Monday lunchtime, we meet and learn about France and French culture. So far, we have covered the topics of protest, holidays and most recently, the cuisine of France. On January 10th, we celebrated the French festival *La Chandeleur* by cooking *crêpes* in the Food Tech room. (Thanks to Mrs Hunt for giving up her lunchtime to help us.) It was a very fun lunchtime and as we followed the recipe in French, we were learning

throughout! Later on this term, we are hoping to study French music, films and hope to do more cookery. Thanks to Marie for giving up her lunchtimes to help us improve our French; we are all enjoying the club and are finding it very interesting and helpful!

Lucy Spink 10(1)

NHGS DEBATING SOCIETY

The debate society has continued to meet every Thursday lunchtime as well as preparing for national competitions.

Mr Fisher and Jacob Hayes proposed that we needed to be sceptical in the debate about climate change against David Greenwood and Mark Holmes. This was the motion that Mark and David had to oppose in the Debating Matters competition which the school hosted at the end of October. Despite a strong performance from the team, the judging found in favour of the opposition from Barnsley claiming that although we were better prepared, had done more thorough research and argued well, they stuck more tenaciously to the narrow line of their argument. ("We was robbed...") All was not lost, however, as Mark Holmes won the prize for best individual speaker on the day.

Just after half term, Lucy Hird and Collette Pilsworth argued against Rhiannon Barrow and Vanessa White that we should randomly test school children for drugs. Mr Maslen accompanied Lucy, Collette and Lucy Robinson and Sarah Payne to the Cambridge University competition where they had to argue whether or not to ban music that glorified crime. The teams argued well but did not proceed to the second round. Thanks to Mr Maslen for accompanying the students.

It has been great to see more new debaters putting on strong performances. Luke Rigg and Patrick Costello successfully opposed the motion that the police should be armed, against some stiff opposition from Emma Finnerty and Rebecca Crossfield. They also defeated John Mount and Oscar Cunnington who proposed that gay marriages should be banned.

Our Christmas debate saw Mr Fisher and Miss Kent successfully carry the motion that Santa Claus existed against opposition from John Mount and Oscar Cunnington – who found that it was actually quite hard to prove the non-existence of something, especially in the face of evidence such as fedex parcels addressed to Santa Claus, his Canadian passport and the fact that he has a large number of friends on Facebook.

This term we have focussed on training for the forthcoming competitions. Over the next three weeks we are taking part in the Schools Mace, the Oxford Union Competition, the Manchester Union Competition and the Public Speaking Competition. A busy time lies ahead...

ALK

WALTON SHIELD RESULTS 2010

The annual Walton Shield competition was held on Wednesday December 15th and was again organised by Mrs Gibbons. We are very grateful for her work in setting the questions, organising the quiz and collating all the responses. The top scores in each year group are listed below. The houses are Akroyd (A), Lister (L) and Waterhouse (W).

Top Scores in Year 7

1 st	Katie Nunn	44	7.3	W
2 nd	George Ackroyd	41	7.3	W
3 rd =	Max Frost	40	7.5	W
	Charlie Lyons	40	7.5	L

Top Scores in Year 8

1 st	Alexander Nunn	46	8.4	W
2 nd	Katherine Maguire	44	8.4	W
3 rd =	Jamie Morton	42	8.1	A
	Tiegan Eaton	42	8.4	A
	Aisling Dunn	42	8.5	W

Top Scores in Year 9

1 st =	Angus Macgregor	45	9.1	L
	Nicholas Galvin	45	9.4	W
	Caitlin Hardy	45	9.4	L
	Luis North	45	9.6	L
2 nd =	Alex Maurice	44	9.2	L
	Faye Ilsley	44	9.3	W
	Abigail Tidswell	44	9.3	W
	Matthew Needham	44	9.6	W
3 rd	Danielle Rowley	43	9.4	W

Top Scores in Year 10

1 st =	Luis Bradley	39	10.1	L
	Matthew Court	39	10.2	L
	Thomas Ramsay	39	10.3	L
	Hannah Speed	39	10.4	W
2 nd	Reuben Kaufman	38	10.3	L
3 rd =	Patrick Wild	37	10.1	A
	Jacob Howard	37	10.2	A
	Roisin McCallion	37	10.5	L
	Kristian Coulson	37	10.6	L

Top Scores in Year 11

1 st =	Samuel Rowntree	43	11.3	L
	Elizabeth Lamb	43	11.4	L
	Georgina McArdle	43	11.6	A
2 nd =	Patrick Macgregor	42	11.4	L
	Stuart Macgregor	42	11.4	L
3 rd =	James Chin	40	11.2	W
	Charlotte Coyne	40	11.2	L
	Joshua Casey	40	11.3	L
	Georgina Oddy	40	11.3	W
	Thomas Platt	40	11.3	A
	Rosie Sharp	40	11.3	W
	Danielle Snowball	40	11.3	W
	Daniel Anderton	40	11.6	W
	James Nevison	40	11.6	A

Top Scores in Year 12

1 st	Edward Sunter	46	12.1	W
2 nd	Robert Yates	42	12.5	W
3 rd	Oliver Marshall	41	12.7	L

Top Scores in Year 13

1 st	Alexander Sugden	47	13.7	W
2 nd =	Lewis Firth	46	13.7	A
	Daniel Murgatroyd	46	13.7	L
3 rd	Jessica Horsfield	41	13.3	W

Top Scores in the School

1 st	Alexander Sugden	47	13.7	W
2 nd =	Lewis Firth	46	13.7	A
	Daniel Murgatroyd	46	13.7	L
	Edward Sunter	46	12.1	W
	Alexander Nunn	46	8.4	W
3 rd =	Angus Macgregor	45	9.1	L
	Nicholas Galvin	45	9.4	W
	Caitlin Hardy	45	9.4	L
	Luis North	45	9.6	L

The Walton Shield is a challenging competition for the students so Nicholas Galvin and Luis North are to be congratulated on improving their positions from 2nd in Year 8 last year to top score in Year 9 this year. Similarly Matthew Court improved from 2nd in Year 9 to top score in Year 10. Lister won the house competition by the smallest of margins over Waterhouse.

House positions

Lister	27.9
Waterhouse	27.8
Akroyd	26.1

The overall scores were higher than last year and again the boys achieved a higher overall average score than the girls with an average of 27.9 compared to the girls' 26.6.

All students in Year 7 to 11 in the top 3 positions in their tutor groups will receive a stamp and those in the top three in the year group will receive 5 stamps.

The following students will receive vouchers for achieving the highest scores in Lower School, Upper School and the Sixth Form.

Lower School:

Alexander Nunn (8.4), Katie Nunn (7.3), Katherine Maguire (8.4)

Upper School:

Angus Macgregor (9.1), Nicholas Galvin (9.4), Caitlin Hardy (9.4), Luis North(9.6);

Sixth Form:

Alexander Sugden (13.7), Lewis Firth (13.7) and Daniel Murgatroyd (13.7).

LCG

THE INSPECTORS CALL!

I received a phone call on Monday January 17th informing me that the school was to be inspected on Wednesday (19th) and Thursday (20th). The school was last inspected in December 2007 and although the framework states that schools that are good or outstanding should be inspected at approximately five-year intervals schools may be inspected at any time if they form are part of an annual sample selected to ensure that the Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) reflects evidence from a cross-section of schools of all types, phases and effectiveness.

The revised framework for school inspection in England was introduced in September 2009 under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection of a school provides an independent external evaluation of its effectiveness and a diagnosis of what it should do to improve, based upon a range of evidence including that from first-hand observation. Ofsted's school inspection reports present a written commentary on the outcomes achieved and the quality of a school's provision (especially the quality of teaching and its impact on learning), the effectiveness of leadership and management and the school's capacity to improve. Ofsted's inspections of schools perform three essential functions. They:

- provide parents with information; this informs their choices and preferences about the effectiveness of the schools their children attend or may attend in the future
- keep the Secretary of State (and parliament) informed about the work of schools. This provides assurance that minimum standards

are being met; provides confidence in the use of public money; and assists accountability

- promote the improvement of individual schools, and the education system as a whole.

The inspection of a school promotes improvement by:

- setting expectations: the criteria and descriptors set out in the inspection framework and guidance illustrate the standards of performance and effectiveness expected of schools
- increasing the school's confidence by endorsing its own view of its effectiveness when that is accurate, and offering a sharp challenge (and the impetus to act) where improvement is needed
- recommending priorities for future action by the school and, when appropriate, checking subsequent progress
- fostering constructive dialogue between inspectors and the senior leaders and staff of the school
- complementing the school's self-evaluation and promoting its rigour, thereby enhancing the school's capacity to improve.

Under the revised school inspection arrangements from September 2009 inspectors give particular priority to:

- promoting improvement: inspectors make specific recommendations based on their diagnosis of the school's strengths and weaknesses
- evaluating the achievement and wider well-being of pupils as a whole and of different groups of pupils, and assessing the extent to which schools ensure that all pupils, including those most at risk, succeed
- evaluating learning and teaching: inspectors spend a high proportion of their on-site inspection time in the classroom
- assessing how well schools promote equality of opportunity, and how effectively they tackle discrimination
- checking schools' procedures for safeguarding – keeping children and young people from harm
- fostering the engagement of headteachers, schools' staff and governors in the process of inspection so that they understand the judgements made
- gathering, analysing and taking into account the views of parents and pupils
- assessing how effectively schools work in partnership with other providers in order to promote better outcomes for pupils.

Under section 5 of the Education Act 200 inspectors must report on:

- the quality of the education provided in the school
- how far the education meets the needs of the range of pupils at the school
- the educational standards achieved in the school
- the quality of the leadership in and management of the school, including whether the financial resources made available to the school are managed effectively
- the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils at the school
- the contribution made by the school to the well-being of those pupils
- the contribution made by the school to community cohesion.

In addition, the Education and Inspections Act 2006 requires Ofsted to carry out its work in ways which encourage the services it inspects and regulates to:

- improve
- be user-focused
- be efficient and effective in the use of resources.

The inspection at NHGS went very well. The Inspection Team reported back to Governors on Thursday at 4.30. Unfortunately until the school receives a finalised copy of the report we are not allowed to disclose the findings of the inspection. We should receive the final copy for distribution by Thursday February 10th 2011. We will distribute copies of the report to all parents/guardians and we will make it available on the school's website. It will also be posted on the OFSTED website.

I would like to thank all those parents who returned their questionnaires. I was delighted that so many made it home and were returned via the 'pupil express'. A full breakdown of the returned questionnaires will be included in the report. Further news in the next edition of the PN.

GPM

ROYAL WEDDING 29TH April 2011

Parents will no doubt be aware that there is a certain wedding planned for 29th April. In order to allow the royal festivities to be enjoyed fully by students and staff, the Department for Education is in the process of bringing in legislation to make this day a school holiday across the country. As it happens, this day falls on the last Friday of the Easter holiday for students at NHGS. The legislation makes allowance for this and gives schools in this situation the freedom to select an alternative date to take as a holiday in lieu of the 29th April.

Having consulted with staff and looked for a date likely to cause the least disruption to learning and other events already scheduled in school, it has been decided to take the day on Tuesday July 19th 2011. This will mean that school will end for the summer holidays one day earlier than previously published, at 3pm on Monday 18th July. I trust that this will not cause any problems for parents. If you have any queries, please contact me at the school.

PEB

THE BEST SCHOOL IN YORKSHIRE AND THE BEST VALUE

The publication of the Achievement and Attainment Tables for the 2010 cohort on January 12th gave NHGS an occasion to celebrate. For the first time the secondary school tables included a value for what the Secretary of State for Education has called the English Baccalaureate. 82% of students in last year's Year 11 achieved the English Bac which was the best performance of any secondary school, included in the Tables, in Yorkshire. The English Baccalaureate was the topic of a Blog I posted last term. Students are awarded the English Bac if they achieve an A*-C grade in English, mathematics, either science or additional science and two of the three separate sciences, a modern or ancient foreign language and a humanity which this year only includes history and geography. Nationally 15.6% of students achieved the English Bac. I e-mailed the DfE about the non-inclusion of RE as a humanity, which was an issue that I wrote about in that Blog. I received an e-mail back on January 7th in which Alison Owen, of the Publications Unit said,

'We recognise, as many schools do, the benefits that RE can bring to pupils. This is why the teaching of RE remains compulsory throughout a pupil's schooling. Success in all subjects studied at GCSE will continue to be recognised by other performance table measures, as it has in the past. We have not included RE as fulfilling the humanity requirement of the English Baccalaureate because it is already a compulsory subject. One of the intentions of the English Baccalaureate is to encourage wider take up of geography and history in addition to, rather than instead of, compulsory RE.'

I still think the DfE is wrong. Encouraging the take-up of geography and history, which I do not find problematic, in itself, will inevitably have a knock-on effect on the rest of the KS4 curriculum. More students taking geography and history means fewer students will study other subjects such as a second MFL or the creative subjects such as Art, D & T and Music, unless you extend the range of subjects on offer at KS4 or require students to study more subjects. Given the very tight funding that schools will experience over the next three years expansion of

the curriculum is unlikely. Students at NHGS are already studying English Language, English Literature, Mathematics, a MFL, Science & Additional Science or three separate sciences, ICT and RE to full GCSEs together with three options which means that students are studying 11 GCSEs which is enough. The DfE is correct in that RE is compulsory but it does not have to be studied to a full GCSE. All students at NHGS have studied RE for 0.5 GCSE and in 2011 all students will sit a full GCSE in the subject. If RE were included as qualifying for the humanity' element of the English Baccalaureate it would not impact on the rest of the curriculum and would maximize the choice of options for students at NHGS. There is gathering support for the inclusion of RE in the English Bac, The chairman of the Church of England's education board, the Bishop of Oxford, the Right Rev John Pritchard, was reported in the Observer on Sunday January 23rd as saying

"The Church of England is pretty astonished at the omission of RE. I want to fire a warning salvo that there will be huge objection from the church and many other parts of society if it is not part of the core curriculum."

Another value included in the performance tables is the contextual value-added score for KS2 to KS4. Although this measure purports to provide a more accurate statistical measure of the progress students make from Year 7 to Year 11 it is a flawed calculation. The calculation includes adjustments for prior attainment, gender, free school meals (FSM), special educational needs (SEN), first language not being English, mobility, ethnicity, age, looked after children (LAC) and home address in a poor socio-economic area. However it does not include one crucial variable and it makes at least one flawed assumption. The crucial variable it misses out is funding. All the adjustments included in the calculation are alleged to impact on students' achievement and so allowances are made for all these variables. However secondary schools receive additional funding for students with below average prior attainment, SEN, FSM, ethnic minorities, LAC and for students living in socio-economically deprived areas. But that additional funding is clearly not considered adequate to compensate for all these issues because schools are given allowances in the calculation of CVA. Schools thus receive a double benefit; additional funding and allowance in the calculation of CVA. Also the CVA analyses progress between KS2 when average performance in Maths & English in the KS2 tests is compared to students' best eight GCSEs taken at the end of KS4. This is where the second major weakness is evident because the calculation assumes an equivalence in both the curricula studied by students from Year 7 to Year 11 in all schools and that all the subjects studied by students are equivalent in terms of

difficulty. The curriculum studied by students at NHGS includes Latin and a second MFL which rightly introduces a degree of challenge for all students in their studies which clearly all schools do not follow. There is evidence of differences in the relative difficulty of subjects at KS4, for example that separate sciences and modern foreign languages are more difficult than other subjects. In a study by Dr Robert Coe of Durham University published in 2007 which analysed the results of 650,000 students from 2004 he found that subjects including Latin, German, Spanish, French, Statistics, Chemistry and Physics were up to a grade more difficult than other subjects. These factors undermine the validity of the CVA calculation.

Now, at long last, the English Baccalaureate, acknowledges and rewards those young people who achieve higher GCSE grades in a range of demanding, core, academic subjects. That 82% of students at NHGS achieved the English Bac was a very creditable achievement but that this was the best performance of any secondary school in Yorkshire, including all the independent schools, is even more significant. The other Yorkshire state grammar schools achieved less well against this indicator and the performance of NHGS was also better than leading independent schools in Yorkshire; Bradford Grammar School (81%), Bradford Girls' Grammar School (74%), Ampleforth College (71%), Sheffield High School (75%), Wakefield Girls High School (80%). Some educational leaders and commentators have alleged that the English Bac misrepresents schools' performance because it has only been introduced this year and schools did not know they would be measured against this performance indicator which somehow invalidates the measure. I challenge this assertion because it suggests that schools would force students to study subjects which qualify for the English Bac in order to improve their performance in league tables. NHGS has always encouraged students to study a wide range of subjects up to the age of 16 because we believe that able students should study and be challenged by such a breadth of study. I became headteacher of NHGS in 1996 and then students were required to study English Language, English Literature, Mathematics, Double or Triple Science, French and D & T – such a curriculum of 7 compulsory GCSEs was atypical then and yet we have maintained that commitment to a broad curriculum to the present day. In the past the school has been penalised for this approach by the calculation of performance indicators such as the CVA but now the English Bac more accurately reflects the performance of students at NHGS.

The other interesting data released on January 12th was information about the funding of schools and each school's total expenditure per student. As

stated above I have long argued for this information to be placed in the public domain. Hitherto it has been buried in local authority out-turn statements which are not very accessible making comparisons impossible. The DfE states that it, 'wants to encourage parents and the wider public to look at the data and to compare the spending and performance of schools in their local area'. The publication of this data allows comparisons to be made between similar schools. If for example we look at other co-educational grammar schools in the north of England we find that there is a considerable variation in per pupil funding.

Name of the School	Grant Funding per Pupil 2009-10 in £
Heckmondwike Grammar School	6,708
The Blue Coat School	4,816
Stretford Grammar School	4,813
Urmston Grammar School	4,754
Sale Grammar School	4,649
Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School	4,578
Crossley Heath School	4,565
Ripon Grammar School	4,484
Clitheroe Royal Grammar School	4,455
Bacup & Rawtenstall Grammar School	4,418
Loreto Grammar School	4,381
The North Halifax Grammar School	4,199

(<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/adminandfinance/financialmanagement/b0072409/background/secondary-schools>)

This is a league table I would rather we were not at the bottom of – but I have argued for a long time that NHGS is outstanding value for money. OFSTED recognised that when we were inspected in 2007. The report commented that, 'Funding of the school is comparatively low. This limits the extent to which improvements in accommodation can be made and places particular burdens on the capacity of the senior leadership team. . . The school provides excellent value for money'. The implications of this data are clear. If NHGS were funded at the same level as the next best mixed grammar school in the north of England we would receive another £200,000 per year (School roll 1,142). If we received the funding of the best school in the table we would receive another £2.8 million a year. These are all selective schools that admit students based upon performance in admissions tests yet some are being funded at considerably better rates than NHGS. Indeed if you extend the analysis to the whole of England there are only nine grammar schools that

receive less per student funding than NHGS. The Guardian has mapped the spending data so that you can investigate total per student expenditure on an interactive map of England. The figures used in the map are total expenditure which includes self-generated income as well as grant funding through the LA.

(<http://www.guardian.co.uk/news/datablog/interactive/2011/jan/12/school-tables-mapped>)

I am not concerned about the additional monies that support schools in deprived areas or with challenging students; NHGS has long been the least well-funded school in Calderdale, and this data confirms that position. This is about comparing selective schools whose students are all admitted on the basis of admissions tests. How is it possible to compare schools fairly when some like NHGS receive hundreds of thousands of pounds less than other similar schools? Clearly schools in London will receive greater funding because of differential area costs but why such a big difference in funding between schools and local authorities in the north of England? The comparison is even more stark when you compare NHGS with independent schools. The next best performing school in Yorkshire in relation to the English Bac was Bradford Grammar School (with 81%) which charges fees of over £10,500 per annum; over 2.5 times the amount of revenue funding that NHGS receives. This may encourage parents paying this level of fees to question whether they are getting value for money. Making this data available demonstrates that NHGS is not only the best school in Yorkshire academically (measured by the English Bac) but it also provides, arguably, the best value for any school in Yorkshire.

GPM

CONSULTATION ON ACADEMY STATUS

A background information document, 'Consideration of Academy Status for NHGS' was distributed to all parents/guardians on Friday January 14th. If you have not received a copy it is available on the website. Parents are reminded that there will be a meeting for all parents on Wednesday February 2nd at the school in the Drama Room at 6.00 pm . At the meeting the headteacher will give a presentation and there will be an opportunity for parents to ask questions and make any observations about the prospect of converting to an academy. Some parents have already sent e-mails to the school with questions or comments about the issue. Parents should submit any views in writing before the consultation deadline of Friday February 11th 2011. The Governors will meet to take a decision about whether or not to convert to an academy on Tuesday March 1st 2011.

GPM

NHGS Astro-news

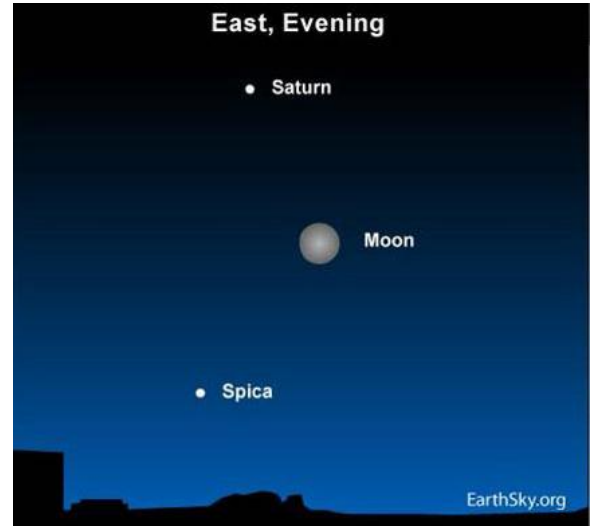
In September we offered GCSE Astronomy for the first time at NHGS. A group of 11 year 10 students have really got stuck in and been very enthusiastic. They have put together this newsletter for students and friends of NHGS who want to explore the night sky. If you do want to explore the night sky, it is often best to use a pair of binoculars. They will reveal a surprising amount of detail. The moon, planets, stars and galaxies can be fascinating if you know where to look.

Observing Saturn

In February look to the east in late evening as this is where Saturn will rise alongside our moon. The easiest date to view Saturn is around February 20th, as the Moon, Saturn and Spica (a very bright star in the constellation of Virgo) will all rise together.

As Saturn goes through its cycle we can see it earlier and earlier in the night sky, this is a regular pattern that it follows. It will rise at about 10 pm in the East early in March and around 20 minutes after sunset by March 31. So it will become easily seen in the late evening in the later dates of the month.

Saturn will reach its full opposition on the 4th April, this means that it can be viewed best as it is on the other side of the Earth from the Sun, completely facing us, so fully illuminated by the Sun.



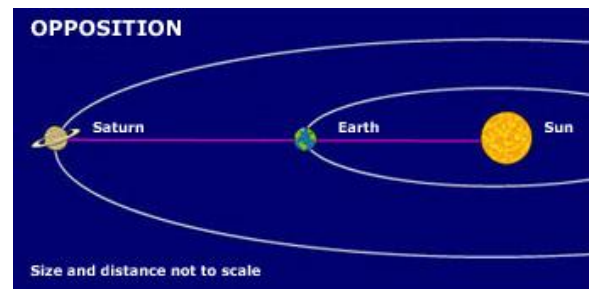
Internet based Telescopes

I took this picture of the Orion nebula (a stellar nursery) using the Bradford Robotic Telescope stationed in Tenerife which is free to the public. The picture was taken with all of the standard settings and standard filters however, if you choose to you can alter all of the settings for the telescope and get some amazing effects.

Anybody can order pictures like this. All you need to do is visit www.telescope.org and sign up for an account. Underneath the login box, click the 'Click Here to Register a New Account' button and fill in the form. Once you have created an account, go to 'Your Menu' and then select 'Submit a Job Request'. Here you can select the object you wish to look at, the exposure time and the filters etc.

The image is delivered to your account on the website.

It's very accessible – why not give it a go and e-mail us your pictures to R.Haworth@nhgs.co.uk



Useful Links:

www.skyatnightmagazine.com

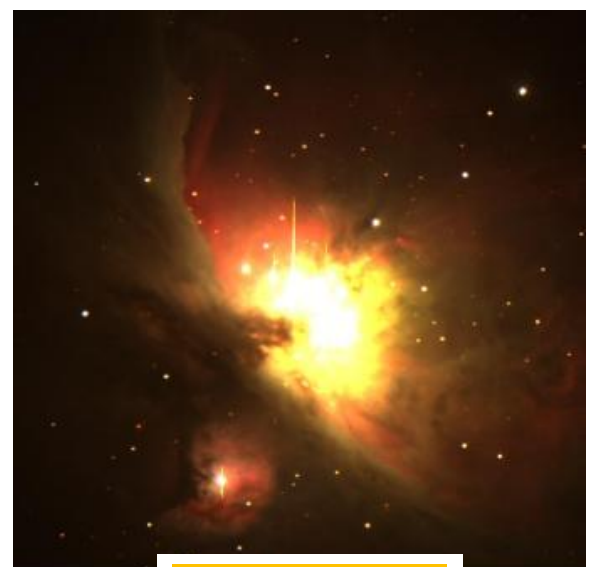
A good section on Astronomy for Beginners from the Sky at Night team

www.Space.com

Space News from NASA.

www.Kidsastronomy.com

Astronomy for youngsters.



Job ID J111398
Taken by
George Waller 10(2)
(Best viewed in colour)

The North Halifax Grammar School

Parents' Association Events & News

Parents' Association Meeting Dates

1st Wednesday of each month:
2nd February (this includes the AGM)
2nd March
6th April

Your support of the PA is imperative for us to continue so please attend if possible.

Contact Sue Kneller for more information at sue@theknellers.net

Note to Parents from the Parents' Association

Tickets for all future PA events will be available to purchase from the School Shop.

The Shop is open 8.00am to 8.20am Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday.

Parents should complete tear off slips at the end of newsletters and students should present this together with either cash, cheque or a ParentPay Authorisation Code in order to obtain tickets.

North Halifax Grammar School
Parents' Association invite you to

The Spring Ball

and Charity Auction
In Aid of the All Weather Pitch

Saturday 14th May 2011
in
The Crystal Ballroom
at Berties Function Rooms, Elland

Three course dinner, entertainment, dancing and complimentary Bucks Fizz reception in the Renee MacIntosh Suite on arrival

Tickets £30

For more information see website
www.nhgs.co.uk/pa
or contact Angie Cowton NHGS PA on
07811 169396
Or angela.cowton@virgin.net

**TICKETS ON SALE NOW - Pay By
Parent Pay or at the School Shop**

This is a Parents Association fund-raising event for the All Weather Pitch. Registered charity no. 1097637

The Big Curry Night

Back by popular demand!

Saturday 12th March
in
The Drama Room
7.30pm



A fun packed Indian themed evening with dancing, quiz, food and more!

Tickets are available from the School Shop
Adults £10

Children under 16 £7.50

Price includes food and first drink

Complete the tear off slip at the end of the newsletter.

For any further details please contact Sue Kneller at sue@theknellers.net

PRIZE DRAWS

November 2010

1 st Prize	5	A&M Moore	Halifax
2 nd Prize	171	R&T Somerville-Jones	Halifax
3 rd Prize	221	Jonathan Raistrick	Queensbury

December 2011

1 st Prize	125	P.N&L.J Finney	Lightcliffe
2 nd Prize	90	DA&FA Ryland	Mankinholes
3 rd Prize	240	Wendy Teague	Stump Cross

Parents' Association

Pig Race Night

Friday 11th February 2011

7.00pm – 9.00pm

in the School Hall

A great night for all the family. All the excitement of a day at the races. Come along at 7.00, "sty" for the evening and enjoy the craic-ling.

6 races with 6 pigs ("trotters") in each race. For just £5.00, be the owner of a pig for a race. Join us in the Owners' Enclosure before the off for a complimentary glass of fizz. Then cheer your pig on to the finish post.

The winning pig's owner wins a beautifully presented bottle of fizz **and** a place in the 7th race, the Grunt Final. The Grunt Final winner wins the star prize.

Or simply place your bets throughout the evening. 50p per bet, open to everyone. The pig you bet on wins, you win. Simple!

£3.50 at ticket.

Refreshments available throughout the evening, including a bar.

To buy a pig, contact George Bingham by email

george.bingham@btconnect.com

or call

01535 646549

NB – the pigs are battery-operated, so no animals will be harmed in bringing this event to you.

This is an NHGS Parents' Association fund-raising event for the All Weather Pitch Registered charity no.1097637

The North Halifax Grammar School

High Performing Specialist Science and Languages School

Headteacher Mr G P Maslen

Phone	01422 244625
Fax	01422 245237
email	pa@nhgs.co.uk
web	www.nhgs.co.uk

Parents' Association

Registered Charity Number 1097637

Dear NHGS Parents/Guardians,

The Parents' Association needs your help!

Parents' Association Auction and Raffle

Can you donate a prize or pledge for this year's PA Auction or raffle?

We are currently raising funds for the All Weather Pitch and still have a way to go!

The Auction will be held during the Spring Ball in May. It has been very successful in raising school funds in previous years, thanks to the generosity of the NHGS parents. We hope to continue the success this year.

To give you an idea of the auction lots we have been able to offer, here are a few of the pledges that have been kindly donated in previous years:

- o Joiner for the day
- o A one-week stay in a holiday apartment in Malta / Portugal
- o Children's cycling party
- o Family portrait session
- o Curry buffet for 20 people delivered to your door
- o Landscape Gardener for the day
- o MacDonalds party for 20 people
- o VIP day with Bradford Bulls
- o Woodturning day
- o Theatre trip including restaurant meal
- o Teeth whitening session with a Dentist
- o Family coaching session
- o Dinner party 3 course meal for 10 people delivered to your door

We will also be running a raffle (again in aid of the All Weather Pitch) so any raffle prizes will also be gratefully received.

If you have any ideas for pledges we would love to hear from you.

Please contact either Angie Cowton angela.cowton@virgin.net or myself cathyharper@blueyonder.co.uk.

Kind regards,

The Parents' Association

The North Halifax Grammar School Parents' Association

The Big Curry Night



**Saturday 12th March 2011
in the Drama Room
7.30pm**

**£10.00 adults, £7.50 students (under 16)
Price includes food and first drink**

Student's name: _____ Form: _____

I would like to purchase _____ Adult ticket(s) _____ Child ticket(s)

I enclose cash/cheque (made payable to NHGS) to the value of £ _____

I confirm that I would like to order _____ Adult ticket(s) and _____ Child ticket(s) and have paid for these on ParentPay

Signed: _____ parent or guardian

Please return to the Parents' Association via the School Shop