



THE PORTSMOUTH GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Prizegiving 2024: Speech by Juliette F, Head Prefect

Good afternoon, everyone.

It's an honour to stand here today, and I'd like to start by thanking our guest speaker, Mr Evans, for joining us and sharing his story. As a former student of our school, his words are inspiring, and hearing about the courage, commitment and collaboration that shaped his path gives us a lot to think about. Mr Evans, thank you for reminding us what these values can mean, and the impact of them on all aspects of life.

Mr Evans' journey has demonstrated the critical need for resilience in life. It was inspiring to hear how you and the others you spoke about overcame challenges. Seeing an Old Portsmouthian using the values and education that the school gave him is something we can all relate to, as well as the story of his journey, involving ups and downs that we will all face in the future. Your words on the resilience of the people living in Ukraine made me think of another of our core values, compassion, which we can show for these people, knowing how difficult their lives are at the moment.

Reflecting on my own time here at PGS, it's clear that our core values aren't just words we hear in assemblies and here at prizegiving, but actions we see all around us. Our school's core values are things we all experience in different ways, and they've shaped who we are as people, and as a school.

Following on from Mr Evans' speech, I'd like to talk about some of our core values, starting with collaboration. Collaboration is something I've experienced in many aspects of school life. Playing various team sports for PGS has always demonstrated this to me. I've learned how teamwork and trust help you push through challenges together. Every player has a different role, yet everyone is still working towards a shared goal. Last year, the first PGS Girls rugby team was started, and being a part of that is one of my favourite memories. Our first ever 15s match against UTC involved 24 sixth form girls working together on an extremely muddy pitch, all of varying abilities, but without a doubt, everyone was supporting each other and diving into every second. By the end of it, we were brought closer as a team, and also covered head to toe in mud.

Being a part of the school musicals for the past five years was similar in many ways. It takes so much behind-the-scenes effort from everyone involved, performers, crew, and teachers, to create something that everyone enjoys. Despite the achingly long rehearsals and even longer sessions of receiving notes, by the end of show week, it all feels worth it, and you can't wait to do it again next year. Performing these

musicals is an incredible feat, and it's only possible due to the work that is put in from every single person involved. I'll never forget Mr Doyle's face in the front row of Chicago, absolutely loving it. These experiences taught me how much we achieve when we rely on each other and bring our strengths together.

Compassion, too, is a core part of life at PGS. It's something you see and feel in the way everyone treats each other, from students to teachers and staff. Whether it's sixth formers helping a new teary eyed year 7 who can't find his classroom, or teachers spending hours making sure you understand electrolysis, that kindness and understanding are what make this place so special.

At PGS we are encouraged to love learning in a way that goes beyond exams or grades. Curiosity is a crucial value that encourages a love of learning new things, which will carry you through the entirety of life. Our lessons are designed to make us ask questions, explore new ideas, and dive deeper into subjects we're passionate about. For me, this has been especially true in my A-levels, which have sparked a real passion in me and a desire to continue studying them at university. I've come to see learning as something ongoing, not just a phase that ends with school. This school has given us all a foundation for lifelong curiosity, which I think will keep driving us to learn and grow wherever we go in the future.

This afternoon is about celebrating all of our achievements, but it's also a reminder of everyone who's supported us along the way. Behind every success, every prize, there's a network of family, friends, and teachers who helped us get here, and I want to say thank you to each of them.

As we look ahead, I know these values I have spoken of will guide us wherever we go. Thank you once again, Mr Evans, for being here tonight and for sharing the impact that courage and commitment have had in your life. I really appreciate the very fun delivery of a very important message. Thank you to everyone here for listening.