

Julie Hazeldine (nee Prole)

Julie attended Flixton Girls School between September 1973 and June 1978 (transferring from Highfield Primary School in Urmston) and transferred to Urmston Grammar School for Girls from September 1978 to June 1980. She attended Manchester Metropolitan University (Polytechnic) to study on the one year Art Foundation Course followed by a degree in Fashion & Textiles. Julie went on to complete a one year, teacher training PGCE course at Liverpool John Moores (Liverpool Polytechnic) from 1984-85 and after 22 years in teaching, returned to Flixton as the Headteacher in September 2007.

As a pupil at Flixton Julie gained a full set of O Levels and also a full set of top grade CSEs completing 24 exam papers, as the top set students in those days had to do CSEs and double up with O Levels on top. She remembers her most inspirational teacher, Mrs Lakeland, who taught her for both Health Education CSE and A/O Level Human Biology, concurrently. Mrs Lakeland was a brilliant teacher with the vision and passion to take the group through an A/O level advanced course with the vast majority not only passing but gaining top grades, Julie feels that the A grade she gained in Human Biology gave her the scientific knowledge and understanding that was so vital in dealing with the COVID19 Pandemic in 2020.

Julie and 2 other students did an extra 'O' Level in Music crammed in between other lessons thanks to the dedication and inspiration of her music teacher, Mrs Ezzard who later became Mrs Fox. She had to forego a careers lesson and her PE lessons in order to do Music, but with sport every lunch-time and after school it seemed worth it.

At Flixton Julie thrived on the extra-curricular activities in art, drama (taught by Mrs Batty in the old Metal work room – now the staff room and later by Mrs Wharton who gave Julie a leading role in a production of the Snow Queen and helped her to overcome some serious panic attacks that she has had to manage throughout her life), music and sport: she was on the netball & hockey teams and the athletics squad for 5 years; she was also in the choir for 5 years and delivered several solo performances including the solo of Once in Royal David's City at the traditional, annual Carol Service in St Clements Urmston in December 1977. As the Headteacher at FGS many years later, Julie reinstated the annual carol service which had been abandoned several years earlier, initially taking place at St Michael's church from 2007 to 2009 and then moving to St Clements to accommodate the expanding congregation.

At FGS Julie especially enjoyed being part of the Folk Group with Miss Wilkinson who was an English teacher, and Miss Felicity Wren who also taught her and inspired her in Art & Design, herself going on to train as an Art teacher (remember the Art room under the stairs?!). Through this she learned the guitar and 3 part harmony and the group performed over 5 years and as an Art teacher in her first job at Westlands High School in Congleton, she recreated a similar group and also ran the year 7 netball team.

Throughout her time as a student at Flixton, Julie was inspired by Miss Lonegan in PE and Miss McDiarmid who took the netball teams on a netball touring holiday to Norfolk staying with the families of the Dereham Secondary School. Julie spent every lunch-time either training for the sports teams or practising with the choir or folk group and she says that this experience gave her an incredibly rewarding and enjoyable school experience and enabled many friendships to flourish. These vital, formative years prepared her for her work as a teacher and ultimately as Headteacher as she has always striven to deliver experiences for students beyond the classroom in the belief that such opportunities have a huge developmental and enriching impact on children and young people.

Julie's first teaching job in 1985 was as teacher of Art at Westlands High School in Congleton. This was in the days before the National Curriculum had been invented and even before the introduction of a single level of qualification with the then new GCSEs! She had worked there for just two and a half years before being promoted to the position of Head of Art, remaining there for seven years and saw the successful expansion of the department and consequently the building of a state of the art new Art Department in 1991. Julie was appointed by Dave Lloyd who she had the greatest of respect for but who sadly passed away after a battle with cancer towards the end of his teaching career at Queens Park High in Chester). Dave was Julie's Head of Department and mentor for the first three years and he connected her to the Cheshire Art Teachers network led by Cheshire Senior Art Advisor, David Firmstone. Many weekends were spent at the Menai Centre on Anglesey on staff Art Residential weekends and pupil art courses. The remaining legacy of those years is the generation of young artists inspired by that work and those visits including the Cheshire Schools' Sixth Form Art visit to Tuscany which Julie helped to set up and it still takes place every two or three years.

Julie's passion was organising fashion shows that involved hundreds of children on stage dressed in fantastical costumes and performing on the catwalk. She was well respected by the children and some keep in touch with her to this day. She is especially proud of the high number of young people she taught who went on to become successful teachers and Art teachers in their own right. Some notable students from Westlands included Lucy Rowland who went on to teach art at Knutsford High and continued the tradition of fashion show at KHS every year too! Also Rachel Lucas (nee Ellis), who is now a Headteacher in Bolton, Kiera Bennett a senior lecturer in Fine Art in London, Sarah Forster a Head of Art in Staffordshire, Kirsty Rae (from Hartford High) Art Teacher at Sir John Deane's 6th Form College, Vicky Lambert Head of Art at Padgate.

Anna Thwaite was taught by Julie from 1985 and subsequently appointed to become the SENDCo, now Director of Inclusion, Anna Hulse at FGS. Even closer to home are the girls who attended Flixton during Julie's time as Headteacher, and whom she had been delighted to appoint onto the staff at the school including Zarka Anwar and Bnan Gelidhi, also ex-pupils who have returned as specialist mentors and coaches such as Alyiah Harriet 1st Class Honours Graduate in Business from MMU now running her own dance company and brought back to FGS by Julie in 2019 to coach the dancers and also Natasha Sweeney who has been supporting girls at FGS over the last 5 years through Dance and Sport, herself a national kick-boxing elite and huge activist for community support and especially women.

Julie's next job was at Hartford High School in mid Cheshire from September 1992 to December 2000. Inspired by the leadership style of the school's head teacher Peter Llewellyn she turned the Art department around after years of underperformance. Whilst there, she was also appointed to Head of Design Technology so was responsible for both Art and DT and worked with the Cheshire technology adviser to develop a robust approach to risk assessment and Health & Safety in Cheshire schools. The development and expansion of the Faculty led to the construction of a brand new Art & Design facility which opened in 2002. During her time at Hartford in the early 90s she experienced those typical mid-career pressure years: getting married, moving house, having children. In one year alone, she moved house, wrote her MSc dissertation and gave birth to daughter Lizzie (who is herself currently training to become an Art teacher with a keen interest in children with SEN). Her son Joe, born in 1998 was a regular attendee at the after school art club as a baby and toddler, doted on by the students! In fact she regularly took both children away on residential art courses and the Tattenhall Centre and the Menai Centre combining family and work!

Julie's third school was Knutsford High School where she was Deputy Head from January 2001 to 2004 responsible for Community and Personnel. It was here where she learned the skills of managing the impact of a Global pandemic on schools! This was 2003 and the SARS crisis. At its peak and in the midst of Foreign Office advice NOT to travel to China, Knutsford HS had a party of 21 students and 4 staff (including the Head teacher) travelling towards Beijing. Julie dealt with the PR fallout from this and had to pacify both parents and the wider community, worried about a global pandemic taking root here, a public meeting with Cheshire Public Health and managing the return of the party with Granada and BBC TV! Her comments to the press can still be found online:

Deputy head teacher Julie Hazeldine commented: "Everybody is fit and well and nobody is panicking. There is a meeting with county advisors and medical representatives to decide what to do when the pupils return."

On returning to the UK the party was placed in home isolation for two weeks before returning to school with home-learning envelopes posted through letter boxes! Sound familiar?

From September 2004 Julie was Deputy Head at Great Sankey High School and Engineering College in her hometown, latterly Warrington. She took enormous inspiration from the Headteacher, Alan Yates who put great faith in her abilities and allowed her to really flourish as a senior school leader and preparing her so well for her future role as a Headteacher herself. At Great Sankey she remembers appointing an incredible Languages Teacher who delivered one of the best Newly Qualified Teacher lessons she had ever observed. The young teacher was meticulous in his planning with endless enthusiasm and top skills for teaching. Julie was delighted to see an application from him for the job of Head of Languages at Flixton back in 2015 and Paul Eager is now a Deputy Headteacher at FGS!

She wasn't particularly looking for a Headship and would have been happy to have stayed at Sankey, but in 2007, the prospect of being able to work at her childhood school of Flixton was too much of a temptation when she saw the advert for Jennifer Hart's replacement. Barbara Prole, Julie's mum, told us that Julie's mission as head teacher of

Flixton was to create a school that the whole community could be proud of which would become a school of first choice for families in the area. I think we can all agree that it is definitely “mission accomplished” in that regard – with regularly over 400 applications for just 180 spaces, we’ve all learned how difficult it is to have to turn people away. How this school has led the way with the PPE production line demonstrates just how well Julie has built the family feel and ‘service beyond self’ commitment of the whole staff here. FGS beats with a heart and feels like home.

On arrival for interview, Julie was really touched to find her Form Tutor from 5T (year 11) was the Vice Chair of Governors, Rosemary Tyrer. Rosemary had been Head of English and created the wonderful library which opened as a new build extension in 1974 in the Quad and where Julie spent any spare lunch-times was a regular and avid reader. This inspired Julie to ensure the retention of the library space on her appointment as Head, but would take another 5 years to find the resources to re-stock and staff the library as a central learning space at the heart of the school and another 5 to develop some amazing student librarians and assistants such as Sadie Telfor who left in 2020.

Conversations and trips down Memory Lane with Rosemary inspired Julie to reflect on the other fantastic teachers from her school years: Julie had been further inspired by her O Level English teacher Mrs Jo Charles who supported her to achieve top grades and go on to student English Literature A Level and Miss Pierce who taught Julie for Chemistry O Level giving her the confidence to follow it on to A Level at the Grammar School – she was a fierce Deputy Head, to the Head Mr Swain, much loved by her classes but feared by everyone else!

Julie was determined to establish and develop a strong PTA and Alumni for Flixton alongside a pride in our FGS history and achievements where she felt that the school had spent too long being undervalued and undermined by a sometimes unfair and biased system. Julie had been a member of the PTA at each of her schools as a teacher and had always felt this as central to her work and life at each school, developing excellent relationships with parents and the wider community at each of them. This began with a professional celebration of the schools 75th Anniversary in 2008 and it hasn’t looked back. The work of Graham Barrick (originally a parent Governor) who had been the Chair of Governors in 2007 and for many years and prior to that Chair of the PTA, had been pivotal and inspired the subsequent re-establishment of Christmas Fairs, car-boot sales, summer fairs and PTA support for all school events from 2007 onwards. However, the main person who really had collected memorabilia and did the work in pulling all of this together in the first place was Sue Williamson who had been a teacher at the school for many years and without her the archive would not have been possible. Ex-pupil Kay Kitchen (nee Wrigley) has worked at the school for the last 10 years supporting the Business and Community aspects of school and she has been absolutely pivotal in making things happen including all the community and Alumni events and the regular newsletters and communications. Julie says she could not have established the Alumni without the incredible drive and commitment from another fellow Alumni!

Julie took over the successful bid made by the previous Headteacher, Jennifer Hart in 2006 for the school to become a specialist Sports College. This status provided the school with additional funding and secured a long-term partnership with the Youth Sport Trust that would prove to be so important in the raising of standards and the development of such character and resilience amongst the students and staff at FGS over the following years. Baroness Sue Campbell made it her business to get to know every Headteacher and had a major influence on Julie’s ideas for the school. Ali Oliver, the CEO of the YST worked closely Julie as a Headteacher Ambassador for the YST and Ali was secured as a trustee for the Healthy learning Trust in 2017.

Julie worked with the ethos of sport and used this to influence attitudes and facilitate a positive outlook across all areas of the school, especially with a focus on teamwork, coaching and leadership and recognising the many aspects and roles within sport that would provide young people of all abilities, interests and aptitudes with the platform to shine regardless of sporting prowess.

In 2009 Julie was asked to Chair and oversee the introduction of the Greater Manchester School Games. This was a new national competition with only 9 pilot areas across the UK. Julie led this work for 5 years involving over 2000 children and young people from across GM each year as an inclusive event hosted at the Manchester City Stadium and provided the students at FGS with amazing opportunities for sports leadership. It was her School Games work

which led to the Outstanding Community Contribution Award presented by Mayor of GM Andy Burnham at the Youth Sport Trust conference in February 2020.

Jennifer Hart, Headteacher from 1997 to 2007 had also supported a long tradition of involvement with the Outward Bound Trust led by the inspirational and dedicated teacher and Head of PE at the time, Margaret Brown. Margaret's long-standing relationships with OBT and her enthusiasm for learning outside the classroom were absolutely pivotal in the development of a crucial feature of life at FGS, ultimately leading to Julie being asked to sit on the National Education Steering Group for Outward Bound and then to secure Natalie Harling, the UK Education Director at OBT as a trustee for the Healthy Learning Trust.

Julie was so convinced of the potential of Outward Bound that she found a way of providing every student in years 7 and 8 with the chance to attend OBT with additional chances in Y10 and has been an advocate for OBT including taking students to speak to benefactors about their experiences. Over the years this has included many such occasions that some of you will remember but notably, included a visit to Buckingham Palace in 2007 with Ashley and Leanne from Y11, a presentation in the Shard in London and a visit to the top floor of the Hilton hosted by the architect Ian Simpson in 2019 accompanied by Jess and Reagan Wallworth and Alysha Bates who left FGS in 2020 to study Architecture at the University of Salford!

Julie also recruited key staff with the ability to establish and develop the Duke of Edinburgh Awards scheme to the highly successful bronze, silver and gold programme at FGS today with regularly over 80 students involved across the programmes. This began with Nicola Ashurst and developed by Hannah Smith (nee Johnston), Rebecca Croniken, Matt Gill and Maggie Holt and supported by Naomi Yule and Sarah Eccleston to name but a few and resulted in a highly memorable visit to Buckingham Palace during the Diamond Jubilee 60th Year of DofE.

During her Headship, Julie became involved with Trafford Safer Communities team in 2009 and this cemented a long-term relationship with the local authority enabling the school to continue to work in close partnership despite the changes from local authority control, ultimately becoming a self-managing academy in 2011 and in 2017 becoming the Healthy Learning Multi-Academy Trust.

It was her work with her work with the Children's Commissioner on tackling child exploitation from 2011 to 2013 resulting in her national "Unsung Hero Award" that led to her being invited to Chair a sub-committee of the Trafford Safeguarding Board and also invited to sit on the advisory group for the Greater Manchester Phoenix strategy from 20013 to 2020 where she worked alongside Damian Dallimore who would later become a trustee of the Healthy Learning Trust. Julie's work under the radar on this very challenging and controversial subject ensured that she and her staff team were exceptionally well-connected, well-trained and well-informed regarding keeping young people safe, even years ago, before the current national awareness and this has really played such an important part in the establishment of a truly robust safeguarding approach at Flixton.

Removing barriers for all young people together with ensuring that each student was given exceptional opportunities for travel, adventure and challenge became Julie's mission at Flixton as the Headteacher, inspired by her own experiences as a young person and her determination to enable each young person to fulfil their potential through developing high aspirations, empowering them through fabulous experiences, great teaching and attaining their personal best in the drive for excellence in the belief that every child deserves the very best start in life.

The development of the Sixth Form at Flixton was a key part of Julie's mission from her initial interview with the Governors. It was clear to Julie that many of the girls who left at the age of 16, would really benefit from being able to remain at FGS for Sixth Form. She and the staff knew the girls well; knew how to teach them and how to get the best out of them and how to provide a safe, caring and high achieving culture. Julie says that setting up the Sixth Form was probably one of the hardest things she did but also one of which she is most proud and feels that this alone has changed the school forever. It was hard because in 2013 there was no money, anywhere! Sixth Forms across the country were closing and securing support from the DfE was impossible. It was a partnership with Trafford College that enabled this vital development to take place and it thrives still today with ever increasing numbers and delivered by the FGS staff thanks to the leadership of Tara O'Halloran Deputy Head and Nyla McKenna, Head of 6th Form.

Julie feels very optimistic and excited for the future of Flixton Girls School as she handed over the baton to Dorothy Trussell as the new Headteacher in September 2020 who came up through the ranks with Julie and helped her to bring about such a significant change to the school from changing the uniform to securing a fabulous reputation in the community through excellent results and an all-round caring and community focus. Dorothy is supported by an incredible staff and especially by some inspirational leaders such as Sonia Schofield Head of School Improvement for the Healthy Learning Trust and Danni Tedford Senior Deputy who started as assistant Head of PE in 2009 and worked her way up – both Sonia and Danni an inspiration through their own personal journeys, and also 3 leaders who started at Flixton as newly qualified teachers including Tara O’Halloran now Deputy Head, Nicki Wilson and Rob Coultas both now Assistant Headteachers.