

THE STANDARD

The John Lyon School Newsletter

Spring 2006



Record breakers! All of these boys are Oxford or Cambridge-bound - see page 2.

Photo: G. J. Ryder

Stop ducking the real issue *by Kevin Riley, Headmaster*

The new Education and Inspection Bill will fail to deliver the promised improvements in education for one simple reason - it ducks the real issue, which is selection.

The Government's aim is clearly to win back middle-class parents, particularly in London, where there are so many poorly performing maintained schools and consequently so many children in independent schools. Nine years after Labour came to power, it is sobering to realise that only 45% of pupils achieve five good GCSE grades including Mathematics and English.

In pursuit of its aim, the Government keeps changing the structures of schools, even though back in 1997, Labour declared that the focus would be on 'standards not structures'.

The Bill envisages the creation of yet another structure: what are to be called 'trust' or 'independent state schools'. That use of 'independent' is fascinating, although of course these schools will be

nothing of the kind.

Schools, such as JLS on the other hand, are truly independent because we are free to chart our own path. We can decide what aspects of the National Curriculum to bring into our lessons without being obliged to impose the SAT tests, for example.

Crucially, we can also decide our own admissions policy. In our case, that means being an academically selective school. And JLS is living proof that 'academic' need not mean 'narrow' or 'restrictive'.

In trying to raise standards without facing up to the need for selection, the Government is ignoring the elephant in the room! When challenged, it harks back to the unfairness of the old 11+ system, but nobody is suggesting we simply return to a system introduced in the 1940s. I recently met Heads from across the world at a conference in Iceland - can we not learn from their experiences? Germany, for example, has

a successful, modern, selective school system. As a nation, we have dramatically improved assessment of pupils, so why shouldn't we take that expertise to its logical conclusion by selecting children on the basis of educational ability?

What is perhaps most iniquitous about the Government's refusal to face up to this issue is that, with so much complexity in secondary education (including specialist schools, community schools, faith schools, City Academies and trust schools), there is already a de facto form of selection in state education. It's just that it is a highly imperfect form, and one that relies far more on the ability of parents to 'play the system' than on the academic ability of their children. How can that be fair?

With this Bill following its rejection last year of the Tomlinson report on vocational education, we have a Government that promised so much, but has signally failed to deliver.

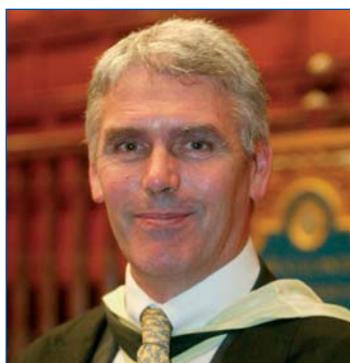
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Oxbridge successes



The John Lyon School has recently discovered that this year's Upper Sixth has won what is thought to be a record number of places at Oxford and Cambridge, with eight boys offered the opportunity to go to the top universities in Autumn 2006.

"This is the highest number of successful Oxbridge candidates from the School that anyone here can remember," said the Headmaster, "so all these boys deserve tremendous credit for their hard work. When I arrived at The John Lyon School, I said we

needed to 'aim for excellence' to build on our existing achievements. These Oxbridge successes provide clear evidence that this approach is now starting to bear fruit."

The eight successful 'Oxbridge' candidates are:
Daniel Artus to read Theology /

Philosophy at Regent's Park College, Oxford; Michael Berryman to read Law with Law Studies in Europe at Wadham College, Oxford; James Matthams to read Medicine at Clare College, Cambridge; Jack Hobbs to read Physics at Balliol College, Oxford; Sunny Hindocha to read Economics at Trinity College, Cambridge; Stefan Hargreaves to read Music at St Peter's College, Oxford; Paul Burke to read Music at Worcester College, Oxford and Narin Hengrung to read Natural Sciences at Clare College, Cambridge.

Commemorative trip to Auschwitz

Eighteen-year-old Daniel Brett represented JLS on a study trip to Auschwitz-Birkenau in November. Daniel is studying Religious Studies, History and Economics at A Level.

"The trip was organised by the Holocaust Educational Trust, mainly for educational and preventative reasons. After the day-trip it was noteworthy that on the way back hardly anyone had anything to say.

It's incredibly difficult to convey the effect of the visit - my overall sense was one of emptiness.

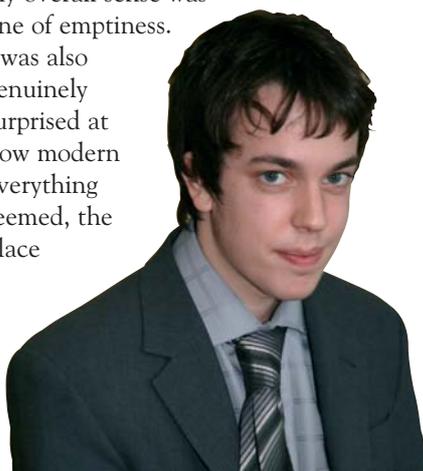
I was also genuinely surprised at how modern everything seemed, the place

confounded my expectations.

"Auschwitz 1 is now a museum, a series of small barracks that were used to house inmates. Nazi photographs of prisoners line several walls. Men and women blur into one, they are all shaven headed, without an individual identity. Mountains of shoes sit behind a glass panel in one huge room. The shoes are shockingly modern. Women's shoes draw the eye with bright reds and oranges. The men's shoes look melancholy, the feet inside had lost the desire to live and so have the shoes. The leather longs for its dead owner. A sea of women's hair, lifeless.

"It surprises me how modern everything is. The bricks do not look old; after all they have only been standing for about sixty years. The stairs are worn but look modern. I ask myself, did the boots of an SS man walk here? Of course they did. It scares me."

- To mark this year's Holocaust Memorial Day, members of the Fifth Form Religious Studies Group visited a local synagogue in the spring term.



Grease

It's the one that they want!



The John Lyon School transformed Harrow School's magnificent Ryan Theatre into a slice of 1950s America for this year's spring musical spectacular, Grease.

All 1,100 tickets for the rock'n'roll tale of high-school love sold out weeks before the show, which featured a cast of 50 JLS students and guest female actors, as well as a further 30 boys as crew, lighting and front-of-house.

The Director of Drama, Miss Deborah Gibbs, chose Grease in response to popular demand from sixth-formers who had taken smaller parts in previous musicals and were now looking forward to taking centre stage. Grease offers several large acting parts besides the lead roles of Danny (played by Atif Siddiqui) and Sandy (Annella Rowland).

"I am really pleased with the performances - it was a most energetic, colourful production," said Miss Gibbs. "Grease can be quite a tricky show to stage successfully: there are some big numbers to choreograph, and most of the audience will have preconceptions from having seen the film. But everyone here has worked very hard, especially on the pace and delivery of the dialogue to ensure that the show is larger-than-life and has got the necessary energy, without falling into the opposite danger of going over the top.

"Before I came to JLS, someone told me 'you will never get boys to do musicals' - but I can now categorically state that that's crazy!"

In fact, JLS musicals now have such a good reputation that there is increasing competition among local girls' schools to take part. This year's show featured pupils from the Royal Masonic School for Girls, Heathfield School, Northwood



College and St Dominic's Sixth Form College.

Miss Gibbs paid particular tribute to sixth-former Benjamin Sehovic, who spent several days programming all the lighting. "It was a task of incredible complexity, but he mastered it so effectively that by the end he was explaining to the Ryan Theatre's own technicians what he had done."



Meet a Teacher - Mrs Lynne Plummer

Lynne Plummer enjoys every aspect of teaching Religious Studies at The John Lyon School and she is especially proud of the School's SPACE programme.

"SPACE stands for Social, Personal and Citizenship Education," explains Mrs Plummer, "and it covers the things that help the boys become well-rounded, emotionally mature individuals. Things such as self-esteem, self-confidence, personal safety, travelling on London transport, being street-wise.

"Health education includes drugs, smoking and alcohol, and we don't shy away from sex education - contraception, sexually transmitted diseases, date rape and testicular cancer.

"It's basically about preparation for university and discovering how things work in the outside world.

"Citizenship also covers charity: about 20 of the boys have been planning to do the World Vision 24-hour fast, raising funds for Sierra Leone."

A recent development at the School is Peer Support. "We have been working with ten boys over six months," reveals Mrs Plummer, "and, with the help of

Mr Haines, Head of Psychology and a trained counsellor, we are training them to become Peer Supporters.

"We have been amazed by the boys' commitment, giving up time at weekends and holidays, to take part."

As a committed Christian, Mrs Plummer has been impressed by the boys' interest in the Religious Studies and Philosophy course. "The boys are one of our best resources," she says. "They are from diverse backgrounds with differing race, creed and beliefs. They are thoughtful, curious and intelligent, and often contribute by clarifying things.

"It has developed everyone's tolerance and respect, and this has become a successful academic subject leading some to university to study theology."

In addition to teaching, Mrs Plummer is also Chair of the Senior Common Room. This involves her in organising social events and representing staff needs when necessary.

Mrs Plummer did not begin her own university education until her third daughter started school. She joined JLS some nine or ten years ago on a part-time



basis. "The School is a nice size, and knowing every pupil by name helps generate a genuine community atmosphere," she says. "I enjoy the company of young people and it is a very satisfying job to do."

● Mrs Plummer lives in St Albans, and has been "married to Trevor for ever!" She is an active member of her church, and enjoys seeing her now grown-up daughters. She also loves socialising and cooking.

Views from the Inside



My name is **Ollie Marsh** (the one on the left!), I'm 12 and I am in Form 1R. I'm older than my twin brother, Ben, by 28 minutes. We are in different forms. The School gave us the option and it was our decision - if I was in the same class as Ben, we would probably fight!

My favourite subject is Maths with Mr Andon, because he involves the whole class. He has an interactive white board, so if you don't understand, he can save it and go through it again later. I play table tennis in the Monday Club and for my House, Butler. I enjoy cricket and football. At break-times we play cricket even in winter, because there's not enough room for football where our year plays. I would like to become a professional cricketer, but if I can't do that, then maybe an investment banker,

which is what my mum does. The other thing I do is play the trombone - I only started this term, but I am enjoying it so far.

I'm **Ben Marsh**, Ollie's brother, and I'm in 1Q. You can tell us apart, because I have a deeper voice and I am more mature! I would like to be a sportsman too. Here at JLS, I play as a defender in the U12s for football and I am also in the A squad for cricket. Sports here are really good: it really helps that we have the indoor facilities, like the cricket nets. At my last school, everyone had to go into the pavilion and just watch a video if it was wet.

My favourite teachers would be my sports teachers, Mr Leach and Mr Garwood. I enjoy English and I am quite good at music - I play the trumpet in the concert band.

Hello. My name is **Johan Adjei-Dawkins**, I'm 13 and in Year 8 in Form 2R. I came here at the start of Year 8, which is quite unusual. I was at Stanburn Middle School in Stanmore and we did Beauty and the Beast. One of the governors' wives saw me in it and suggested I should come to JLS. So I sat a test, where they found out I was good

at drama. I also got a scholarship for sport. I am the captain of the U13 football A team. My favourite subject is RS [Religious Studies] with Mr Westlake, because there are loads of class discussions and I find it interesting to learn about other cultures. My mum, who works in mental health, was born in Ghana and came here as a child. My dad was born here and works in a warehouse. Like Ollie, one thing I don't like is at break-times we aren't allowed to use the practice pitch. We have to play on a slope and there's not much room there.



Adding value and fulfilling potential

A system developed by leading educationalists which enables teachers to analyse pupils' progress is helping JLS boys reach their full potential.

The School began testing younger pupils under the MidYIS project run by the University of Durham's Curriculum, Evaluation and Management Centre (CEM) as long ago as 1998, later



introducing the CEM's ALIS Sixth Form tests. Now this work has been given fresh impetus with the appointment of Mr Graham Ryder (see left) as Director of Studies last

September. Mr Ryder has introduced the CEM's YELLIS tests for Year 10 boys and is stepping up staff professional development to make sure teachers know how to make the best use of the data provided by all the CEM projects. He has also ensured that the data is accessible to staff through the School's internal IT network.

"Simply collecting data is not enough; it has to be used in a meaningful way," Mr Ryder explains. "Developing ways of

doing that cannot be accomplished overnight, but I think we are now making good progress. Our aim is for teachers to combine the data with their professional judgment to set realistic short- and long-term targets. Ultimately, we want to use it to help improve both teaching and learning at the School."

Boys at The John Lyon School are given tests under the various CEM projects in Years 7, 9, 10 and 12. In Years 7 and 9, these tests cover four areas: mathematical, linguistic, 3D perceptual and non-verbal reasoning (such as matching words and shapes).



"The tests give us the information we need to establish a baseline of the boys' academic skills - their 'cognitive development' in educational parlance," Mr Ryder adds. "The data gathered is measured against the large number of other independent schools that now take the tests. A standardised score of 100 is then produced for the 'average' independent school student. None of our boys comes in much below this average score, and a significant number are well above it."

The CEM tests enable the School to establish predicted grades at GCSE, which are arrived at by comparing JLS test results with data on past GCSE

performance at other independent schools. (For statistical reasons, these specific predictions are considered valid only for a class as a whole, not for individual pupils.)

Mr Ryder says: "Experience has shown that, in fact, at JLS we do a lot better at GCSE than our predicted grades would suggest, which is why our value-added score under the CEM system is so high."

At sixth-form level the GCSE results are the primary source of information for ALIS. This helps staff to advise pupils when they are making their subject choices and to monitor their progress.

By making full use of the data from all the CEM tests, the School can not only chart boys' overall progress, but also provide detailed feedback to staff on performance in subject areas. This information can then be used to help set realistic academic targets for our students.

After the GCSE and A level examination results are published, the CEM data can highlight the relative strengths of

individual departments. This is the 'value added'.

This in turn feeds into staff professional development. Further enhancement of specific teaching skills can be targeted by appropriate courses.

Another way in which the data is being used is in helping staff decide which boys should belong to the emerging gifted and talented group at the School (as explained in the previous issue of *The Standard*).

As mentioned before, all the data is merely one tool available to teachers. "Professional judgment and experience will always be the best guide," concludes Mr Ryder.

Jargon buster

Value-added - if a school is increasing its pupils' achievement levels more than other schools, its pupils gain an advantage. This relative advantage has come to be called 'value-added'.

CEM - the Curriculum, Evaluation and Management Centre at the University of Durham, which runs a group of value-added monitoring systems (including MidYIS, ALIS and YELLIS) widely used in UK schools.

MidYIS - the Middle Years Information System provides tests for Years 7, 8 and 9. It gives predictions and value-added measures applicable to the majority of GCSE subjects.

YELLIS - Year 11 Information System for students aged 14-16. Despite its name, YELLIS baseline tests can be taken either in term 1 of Year 10 (as at JLS) or in term 2 of Year 11. GCSE results form the YELLIS end measure by which progress is determined.

ALIS - the Advanced Level Information System, which provides performance indicators for post-16 students and includes analysis of A and AS levels. For a baseline, ALIS uses GCSE results or the new Test of Developed Ability (TDA).

The John Lyon School heads value-added league tables

Latest Government league tables confirm that JLS is one of the most successful schools in London at raising children's levels of achievement.

JLS outstripped almost every school across northwest London in 'adding value' to pupils' education from 11 to 16. (The only exception was the Sikh school in Hillingdon.) With a value-added score of 1055.7, JLS comfortably beat other schools in Harrow, where the average score was 1,008.1. Any school scoring above 1,000 is considered to be adding value to its pupils.

The league tables also reveal that, at 99%, JLS was in first place in Harrow - jointly with North London Collegiate School - for pupils achieving five or more A*-C GCSEs in 2005.

The Headmaster, Mr Riley, says: "JLS has a good reputation for stretching able boys and 'adding value' to their education. The important work that Graham Ryder is doing with monitoring academic progress and setting targets will help us strengthen this reputation still further."

Building sporting success



Sixth-form archers won a shield in the British Schools Indoor Archery Tournament.

“The range and quality of sports provision at JLS has significantly improved this year,” says Mr Spencer Leach, the Director of Sport.

“Three additional sports staff - two of whom joined us last September, together with a full-time gap-year student this year, have made a major difference.”

Looking back on his first year, having joined JLS in January 2005 from his post as Head of Education at Fulham Football Club’s Youth Academy, Mr Leach feels valuable progress has been made.

As if to substantiate this, JLS has won three out of three football matches played this term against Harrow School, the first time in many years. The 1st XI won 3-2, thanks to Theo Ohene, who scrambled the winning goal with three minutes to go. The U14s triumphed 1-0 and the U15s beat their opposing team 4-3 with Kwasi Yeboah scoring a hat-trick.

In other matches, the 1st XI has had a much better season and the U14s in particular have enjoyed great success.

Traditionally, rugby has not been a main sport at JLS, but it has recently become a popular option. It is excellent news that the School will soon have its own rugby coach, as Mr James Cure, the new History and Politics teacher, is currently undergoing rugby coaching training.

Another highlight came when sixth-form archers took second place in the British Schools Indoor Archery Tournament. Mr Kevin Riley,



the Headmaster, said, “Although JLS has a tradition of archery, apparently we have not been represented at this Tournament for the last 20 years, so to win a shield at the first attempt is a tremendous achievement.”

The JLS team comprised James Matthams, Ahmed Al-Naher, Gareth Corfield and Nasri El-Sayegh, each of whom won a silver medal. James scored an excellent 547 out of a possible 600, and won a gold medal for highest score in his class. Mr Riley continued, “We were beaten by The Deanes School, a designated sports college, with a score of 2,125 to our 1,905, but we beat the team that came third by 200 points too. Our squad also included Narbeh Kraskian and Ben Sehovic.”

The John Lyon School’s reputation for

cricket was enhanced earlier this year when fifteen-year-old Kabir Toor helped save the day for the England U16 cricket team on its winter tour of South Africa. Kabir’s rapid 79 not out off 75 balls turned a looming defeat into victory by just 13 runs in the match against a Western Province Invitation XI. The following day, he followed up this sparkling innings with a score of 31 against a Boland U17 side, making him the third-highest scoring batsman in the England U16 squad.

While Kabir, whose ambition is to be a professional cricketer, is waiting to hear if he will secure a place in the England U17 side this summer, the School sent

another team to South Africa during the Easter holidays. A total of 32 boys and four staff, comprising an U14 and U15 team, were certainly kept busy.

Each team was expected to play in six matches, three for each, in Cape Town (versus Western Province), Bellville and Durbanville, as well as visiting Cape Point, Cape of Good Hope, Boulders Beach, Clifton, Simonstown, Table Mountain, Newlands, and the South African Institute of Sport, Seal Island.

The teams also spent some time at the beautiful Cape Town waterfront.

The party then headed up the coast to Kynsa, playing one game there, and then on to Port Elizabeth for the final two matches. At the end of the tour there was time to relax when they spent two days at the Kariega game reserve and

Building sporting success continued

Addo elephant park.

Racquet games are of course strongly represented at JLS. An U16 team recently won the Borough Badminton Tournament in a closely-contested finals. "Having convincingly won the two provisional rounds," reported PE teacher Mr Ian Parker, "the best four teams in the borough played each other in a round robin.

"JLS beat Harrow High 7-2 in the first match and then narrowly lost to Nower Hill 5-4, a team we had beaten on two previous occasions. With the score at 4-4, we desperately needed to beat Park High in the final match in order to win the tournament - and we did! Lavers and Golding won comfortably 11-8,

which gave our team victory."

Members of the team were Nishil Mapara, Stuart Childs, Imran Keshani, Avinash Murthy, Alex Golding and Louis Lavers. Mr Parker said JLS's most consistent player was Avinash.

"This is a great beginning to the sporting year," says Mr Leach, "and, with additional staff now on board, the upward trend in achievement looks set to continue as we begin a term of summer sports."



Above: Kabir during the match at the University of Cape Town and (right) before his 79 not out.

JLS at the forefront of developments in education



Mr Riley, left, standing next to Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson, President of Iceland, and other delegates at the conference.

The Headmaster represented JLS and other HMC schools at the Easter conference in Iceland of the influential International Confederation of Principals.

"The ICP is the only global school Heads' organisation," says Mr Riley. "It is increasingly being consulted by governments on education issues, and works with organisations including WHO, UNESCO and the OECD. ICP conferences provide an excellent forum for discussing developments in education and the value systems that underpin them. They give

delegates the opportunity to learn about education in the host country."

Founded in 1990 by nine countries including the UK, the ICP now draws delegates from nations as diverse as China, Lesotho, the USA and Germany. HMC (Headmasters' & Headmistresses' Conference), which represents the headteachers of the UK and Ireland's 250 leading independent schools, joined the ICP in 2005.

- The Headmaster is a key player in the recently launched Forum for Independent Day Schools (FIDS). Its aims include raising the profile of academically selective day schools, many of which have historically been in the shadow of their boarding counter-parts, such as JLS's sister school, Harrow School. As a senior member of both HMC and the Association of School and College Leaders, Mr Riley is on the FIDS national committee.

News in Brief

From Head Boy to mathematician Jonathan Murray, JLS Head Boy in 2001, has won an award from the Institute of Mathematics and its Applications. He received a certificate and life-time membership of the Institute for his outstanding Masters degree results from the University of Warwick.

Three into two will go

Three upper sixth-formers have won places at two prestigious art colleges. **Freddie Atkinson** and **Jimmy Irwin** have secured places at Central St. Martin's College of Art, University of London – the second year in which two JLS boys have been accepted by this world-famous college. The third boy, **Luke Archer**, has won a place at Cambridge School of Visual & Performing Arts.



Jimmy Irwin's lightbox artwork.

JLS Online

A range of measures is being introduced to bring greater consistency to JLS's online presence. From now on, the School's intranet will mainly be a means of communication between staff and pupils, with other visitors encouraged to use the main site, www.johnlyon.org. As part of this work, the old Sports Centre and Parents' and Friends' Association intranet sites have been removed from the intranet and will shortly be recreated as new sections within www.johnlyon.org.

World Challenge Expedition

Training, preparation and fund-raising continue apace for the summer trip to Uganda and Western Kenya. The 22 boys who have signed up meet for regular team-building sessions, planning their month-long trip in detail.

Narin is one of Britain's best biologists

Upper sixth-former Narin Hengrung has been picked as one of the best young biologists in the country. He had one of the top 12 scores in the second round of the Olympiad run by the Institute of Biology.

Having already achieved the Institute's Gold Award, Narin was selected to join 11 other finalists at the national finals in Birmingham at Easter, which were held to determine who will represent the country in the international Olympiad being held in Argentina this summer.

"Narin is a truly exceptional young scientist and we are all delighted to hear of his latest success," said Mr Kevin Riley, Headmaster. "We heard the news at the start of National Science



Week – it certainly got the week off to a flying start here!"

The School marked National Science Week (10-19 March) with a visit by 10 boys to the Medical Research Council in Mill Hill, where they listened to a series of lectures about embryological research.

Meet the Assistant Caretaker

Assistant Caretaker José Cupertino Philomeno Castro deMello, known to his friends as Joe, has been a familiar face to generations of JLS boys.

The Standard: Where were you born and how did you come to be in Harrow?

JdM: I was born in Goa, a Portuguese colony. After the War of Independence between Goa and India ended, I went to Portugal, then Paris. From there I joined friends in South Harrow and settled here. My wife and I had two sons, Andrew and John, and we used to take them for walks past JLS in their pram.

The Standard: How long have you been Assistant Caretaker, Joe?

JdM: Since 1988.

The Standard: I understand your sons, Andrew and John, came to JLS too?

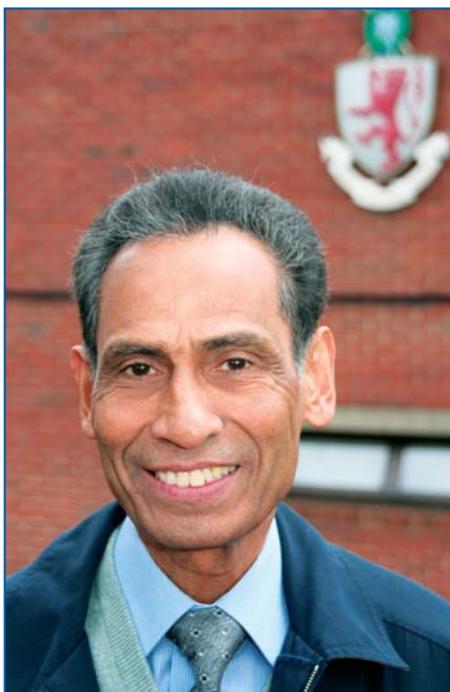
JdM: Yes, when they were old enough. They both had scholarships.

The Standard: You must have seen a lot of changes at the School since your boys were here.

JdM: Yes, the School was much smaller, with fewer buildings, and Art and Music were in different places.

The Standard: Where are your sons today?

JdM: Both boys are at Imperial College London, Andrew as Professor of Chemical Nanosciences, and John



as a Senior Lecturer in Physics. Andrew has two children, aged five and two. He comes back to JLS to talk to the boys about careers and prospects.

The Standard: You must be very proud. No regrets then about sending them to JLS?

JdM: Not at all! This is a happy school, with well-behaved boys. The teachers spend time with them and they are getting a good education. I have really enjoyed my time here.

Joining JLS

The School's annual Open Day this year takes place on Saturday 7 October. There are also regular Parents' Forums where prospective parents can meet the Headmaster and tour the School.

The closing date for applications for 11+ or 13+ admission in September 2007 will be 30 November 2006. This is also the deadline for all Scholarship and Bursary applications.

Boys are admitted at 11, 13 and 16. Typically up to 65 boys at age 11; 30 at age 13; and up to 10 boys at age 16. A very small number of boys can be admitted to other years.

The decision to offer a place at the School is based on reports from present or previous schools, an interview and an entrance examination. We are always interested in a boy's potential in music, creative and performing arts and sport.

At interview each boy is asked to bring along a piece of work of which he is especially proud, and we talk to each candidate about his interests, talents and skills.

Entrance to the Sixth Form is based on GCSE results, and boys' contributions to School life.

● For further information please visit www.johnlyon.org and select Admissions or e-mail the Admissions Office on admissions@johnlyon.org or telephone the School on 020 8872 8400.

Keeping in touch

Over the past few months, the School has made great progress in building up its database of Old Lyonians.

After careful research, the number of OLs for whom contact details are held has almost quadrupled from 1,200 to 4,600, which is estimated to be well over three-quarters of all living Old Lyonians.

The next task is for volunteer 'year representatives' to cleanse the database by contacting their former friends and classmates to check that their database details are correct. This process should also enable the representatives to track down some of the OLs whose whereabouts are still unknown.

The database work is part of a larger project to re-connect the School with its alumni, further details of which will be revealed in the next issue of *The Standard*.