

# THE STANDARD

The John Lyon School Newsletter  
and Mini-Prospectus

Winter 2007/08



## SCHOOL REPORT: GOOD PROGRESS AFTER THREE YEARS' HARD WORK

by Kevin Riley,  
Headmaster

As it is now three years since I arrived as Headmaster at The John Lyon School in January 2005, it seems a good time to reflect on all that has happened in that period.

Firstly, I am delighted to say that the School is now in a very good financial position. Generating a healthy surplus is the key to developing the School's facilities: it gives us money to invest. I am excited that phase 1 of our estates strategy - the construction of a three-storey science extension to our main building - has started. We are already working very hard on the next phase, which will involve catering and music.

As I write, I am looking forward to reviewing the School's strategic plan when I meet with our Governors shortly for an 'away day'. I must also pay tribute to Old Lyonian Malcolm Ames, who is stepping down as a Governor after more than 20 years. Malcolm, who is an accountant, is a wonderful example of personal and professional commitment to the School.

Compared with three years ago, the staffroom now has a much better age profile. Achieving that mix is the one time that being a Head is rather like being a football manager, as I try to balance youthful exuberance with the benefits of experience! I am also pleased that there are now more women on the staff and more people from a diversity of backgrounds.

From a personal point of view, it is very encouraging to see how much more successful we are at sport: not only do we

### **Balancing youthful exuberance and experience**

now excel at developing our best young sportsmen to the highest levels, but we are giving opportunities to all our boys, whether or not they are good at sport.

As our Director of Studies, Graham Ryder, explains further in this issue of The Standard, the School is investing heavily in the professional development of staff. I

have been influenced in this respect by the work of leading academics such as the Institute of Education's Professor Dylan Wiliam, one of the UK's foremost 'gurus' on learning. He has highlighted the importance of improving teachers' skills, with research showing that this makes more difference to pupils' academic development even than factors such as class sizes.



Finally, I am pleased to be able to say that, three years on from my appointment, not only is the School performing well academically, but as a whole it is also more relaxed and assured: in short, The John Lyon School is a happy place where boys can achieve their full potential.



## SCALING THE HEIGHTS

Year 12 pupil James Kerley has won a prestigious Junior Exhibition scholarship to the Royal College of Music.

James will spend his Saturdays studying singing, piano and cello at the college opposite the Royal Albert Hall, while continuing with his A level studies at JLS.

Headmaster Kevin Riley said: "This really is quite an honour: the Royal College only awards scholarships to a mere handful of the very best musicians, so we are all delighted at James's achievement."

James, who has a JLS Music Scholarship, is particularly keen to develop his singing: "Eventually, I would like to be a professional opera singer. It's

the most technically complicated form of singing and I enjoy that challenge. Successful opera singers also become famous and I want to be famous - who wouldn't?"

"I do 10 to 12 hours' practice a week outside of School and I have to be at the Royal College of Music from about 8.30am until 5pm on Saturdays, so I take my music pretty seriously. But I like to have a life too, so I'm making sure I keep my social life going!"

His hobbies include playing football. James is also a keen Manchester United supporter.



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## VIEWS FROM THE INSIDE

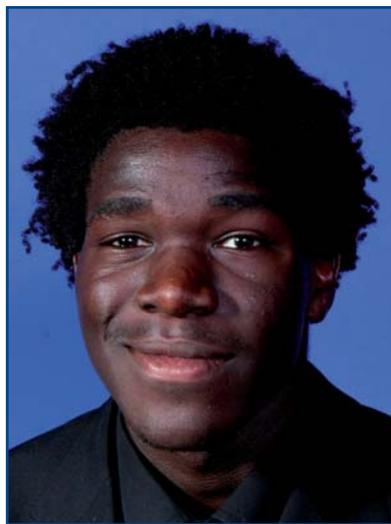
### KWASI YEBOAH (WOODEND JUNIOR SCHOOL)

*Kwasi is 17 and is in the Lower Sixth. He came to JLS in Year 7 when he was 11.*

Looking back, I just remember being impressed at the Open Day and seeing the potential here. I looked at three or four other schools too but felt that there would be more opportunities at JLS.

I started playing football when I came to JLS; a friend got me into a team outside school and I was also picked as centre-forward for the school team. I also enjoy athletics, cross country, swimming and basketball.

I play trombone and am part of the School's Concert Band, the Big Band and the Rhythm and Blues Orchestra. I'm also in a band outside School. We're called 'The Beautiful Struggle' and I play bass and am the vocalist. I'm also on the School Council.



To be honest there's not much we need to change, but at least we know our views are taken seriously.

I find all the staff both inspiring and encouraging. Mr Clark, my Maths teacher last year, is particularly inspirational. I think it's made a difference having Mr Riley here - just seeing him around the place and setting the tone.

It was a big step up from GCSE to AS Level but I feel I've coped pretty well, it certainly helps that we are being treated more as adults; the School is preparing us for the outside world.

I'm taking five A Levels - Maths, Further Maths, Economics, Drama and English Literature, and hopefully will go on to Warwick University to read English Literature.

### CONOR TAYLOR (SALUSBURY PRIMARY SCHOOL)

*Eleven-year-old Conor is in Year 7 and has just completed his first term at JLS.*

I chose The John Lyon School because everyone was welcoming at the Open Day and I thought the facilities were impressive.

I was interested in the Sudbury playing fields because I play football quite a lot. I'm the U12 captain for Magix FC and play right mid-field. At School I play for both the Year 7 and Year 8 teams. We're still getting used to playing together in the Year 7 team. Several of the schools we've played are preps so they've been playing together for years which gives them an advantage, but we're adjusting well and will be a good team. I'm also in the cross-country team.

I play trumpet. I'm preparing for Grade II and I've joined the Wednesday Wind Band at School.

From my first day here I just fitted in. I've made friends very easily and I like all the teachers, especially Mr Malik who teaches English. I was very pleasantly surprised by the food, I used to take a packed lunch to my old school; at JLS I have School lunch every day and the food is really nice.

I don't really know yet what I'll do when I leave school. I might follow in my dad's footsteps - he's a scientist at Imperial College. My mum's a teacher but I have to say I wouldn't fancy teaching!



## DEMANDING DRAMA

JLS took on the challenging and intellectually demanding Brecht play, *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*. The play is consciously a highly satirical allegory of Adolf Hitler in Nazi Germany.

Director of Drama Deborah Gibbs said: "I chose the play as it demands a large male cast and I wanted to give substantial roles to as many students as possible. The cast achieved wonderful energy and also conveyed the comedy of the piece, showing that humour can be a powerful vehicle for communicating serious issues. Year 12 pupil Ashwanth Ravindrarajah took on the huge title role, very successfully portraying Ui's transformation from petulant, childlike third-rate gangster to a terrifying tyrant."



Picture: G J Ryder

The other dramatic highlight of the Autumn Term was Harold Pinter's very intense play, *One for the Road*, directed

by Dameon Garnett, which also dealt with an oppressive regime, turning the spotlight on the issue of torture.



Darren Bell, who arrived at JLS in September 2007, is the Head of Art and Joint Head of the Expressive Arts Faculty.

## MEET A TEACHER: DARREN BELL

Having grown up on a farm in County Antrim, Mr Bell took his first degree, in Fine Art, in Belfast, before taking his PGCE teaching qualification at Goldsmiths. Mr Bell, who lives in Chiswick, has stayed in the capital ever since. Before coming to JLS, he taught at Trinity School, Croydon, for 17 years.

"I moved to JLS for career reasons and I've found it lively and busy. The boys are quite hard-working and focused, and it's a very strong department." Mr Bell is committed to continuing his department's record of innovation, with measures such as making photography available to all years and improving IT facilities in the Art rooms.

A Sixth Form tutor, he has helped out with a sponsored JLS Sixth Form 'gym & swim'. He has previously led a programme working with disadvantaged and disabled people - experience which he hopes to use at JLS. Mr Bell also heads the JLS Photographic Society. He is pictured here during the joint JLS/Northwood College Year 11 & 12 Art Trip to Florence and Siena.

Mr Bell enjoys travelling during his holidays: recent trips have included a tour of southern Africa.

He concludes: "For a very academic School where we are competing with departments producing medics and economists, for example, Art here really does very well."

## JLS COURTS SUCCESS

The School's U13 basketball squad enjoyed great local success, beating state schools with established reputations in the sport.

"JLS has not traditionally been known for its strength as a basketball school, so it was encouraging to see this young squad do so well: it certainly augurs well for the future," said their coach, Arthur Brammer. In the Harrow Borough competition, the team secured a 30-18 victory over Rooks Heath to win a place in the final rounds. JLS lost narrowly in the final to Nower Hill.

Other Autumn Term sporting successes included the U14 badminton squad retaining the borough title and therefore qualifying for the national competition.

- All-rounder Kabir Toor, aged 17, [pictured] has won a special two-year professional contract from Middlesex County Cricket Club that will enable him to complete his A Levels at JLS in 2008. "I always wanted to be a professional cricketer, but I decided to finish my A Levels so I have something to fall back on," he said. "I generally play mid-week matches for the School, but they have

always released me from weekend games so I can play at a higher standard in the local league."



# A PROFESSIONAL APPROACH TO

For a school to achieve sustained success, it is not only the pupils who need to be stimulated and stretched, but also the staff. Thus, one of the essential elements in The John Lyon School's rising academic performance has been a greater focus on the continuous professional development (CPD) of its staff.

Director of Studies Graham Ryder says: "Over the last six years, we've moved from fairly *ad hoc* CPD arrangements to a position where the provision is quite extensive."

All teachers now have an annual entitlement to at least one external course each year, while the Bursar assesses requirements and allocates training for other staff. (Recent non-academic staff training has ranged from chainsaw training for ground staff to an ICT course for the new technician, Adam Johnson.)

"In many cases, teachers bring their needs to us, which may be teaching-based or more widely career-based," says Mr Ryder. The School also identifies training needs through its regular cycle of staff professional reviews.

"The courses our staff go on may be about ways of making delivery of their subject more interesting, about developing new skills, such as how to use interactive white boards effectively, or about something more esoteric, such as personalised learning," Mr Ryder explains.

"A lot of the external courses are expensive so we usually only send one person at a time, relying on those individuals to cascade the information down to their colleagues. That can work well for certain topics, such as 'how do we mark coursework?', but we are also now bringing in people from the examination boards to do faculty-wide training, which is very

cost-effective. In Science, for example, an external teacher facilitated the implementation of coursework for the new 21st Century Science courses."



JLS makes use of its own teachers' specialist knowledge in peer training sessions. So far, these have included Deputy Headmaster Stuart Miles on personalised learning, Grendon

Haines on psychological aspects of education and Lyndon Budd on specific learning difficulties. Some have been held in conjunction with Northwood College, JLS's partner school.

One major recent development was the launch last winter of in-house management development programmes with consultant Jill Freinberg. These courses are for groups of up to ten teachers. Each lasts two full days, with about two weeks between them to give participants time to reflect. The first course, for teachers with specific management responsibilities, looked at how to deal effectively not only with pupils, but also with colleagues and parents. "These are cross-faculty courses and are very dynamic, taking account of best practice here and elsewhere," said Mr Ryder. Similar courses have been held for heads of faculty and for the JLS Leadership Group, which comprises the Headmaster, the two Deputy Headmasters, the Bursar, the Director of Studies and the Head of Oldfield. A new course began at the start of the Spring Term [pictured above].



All prospective JLS pupils go through an admissions process. For the last five months this important part of School life has been managed by Registrar Terri Hicks [pictured above on holiday]. Her tasks include organising the annual Open Day [pictured right].

**The Standard:** What does your role at JLS involve?

## MEET THE REGISTRAR - TERRI HICKS

**TH:** It's basically an administrative one. From start to finish I oversee the process by which boys become pupils at the School; I'm the liaison between parents and JLS. Another area of responsibility is the advertising: I have to liaise between the publications and the designer, pull everything together and hit the deadlines.

**The Standard:** What were you doing before you came to JLS?

**TH:** Immediately before JLS I worked at Heathfield, a girls' school in Pinner. Before that I had a career at Nat West with a multi-disciplinary role, interrupted by maternity leave when I had my children! One of my key strengths is an organisational ability, and I've always been drawn to jobs where I can use that strength. It's certainly one of the main requirements of the position here.

**The Standard:** Are you part of a team or do you work on your own?

**TH:** I work very closely with the Headmaster and his PA. One of the aspects of working at JLS that I enjoy is that when the Headmaster has confidence in you, he gives you a free hand and isn't at all heavy-handed.

**The Standard:** Do you have much contact with the pupils?

**TH:** Not as a general rule, although as it's such a small School that there is a real sense of family. The boys are all very courteous, too, when I do bump into them around the School.

- Mrs Hicks is married to Michael, who is a Capacity Planning Manager for BT. They have twin children, 17-year-olds Caitlin and Charles, who are both at St Dominic's Sixth Form College. Away from School, she enjoys swimming and taking long walks with her dog, Dylan.



# DEVELOPING TEACHERS' SKILLS

'Mutual observation' is another aspect of CPD that has proved valuable nationally and has been adopted at JLS. This involves staff looking at other teachers' lessons - not at the teaching, but at the learning that is going on. "In many ways, it's the best form of learning you can do as a teacher. It's the third time we have done it, but we have changed the focus so that this time it's across faculties, with, for example, the PE department looking at biology lessons, because there is some obvious overlap between the two subjects. Each member of staff picks

an aspect they want to follow up and observes for a minimum of two lessons over a three-week period."

"Overall, the School is putting a significant investment into CPD and is now among the leaders in this field in the independent sector," concludes Mr Ryder. "We haven't rushed into anything, but have carefully evaluated our needs, building on the excellent work done by other pioneers, such as George Fussey at Eton College."



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## NEWS IN BRIEF

### CALLING ALL INVENTORS

JLS and its partner school, Northwood College, have jointly launched Invent 2008 - a competition to find creative designers and inventors. Individuals or teams of two have until Thursday 20 March 2008 to prepare their ideas or inventions. Short-listed entrants will pitch to a 'Dragons' Den'-style panel of local business people.

### A TRIO OF CONCERTS

JLS musicians joined forces with Harrow School for the traditional annual Commemoration Concert in honour of Harrow School's founder, John Lyon. There were superb performances by the John Lyon Male Voice Choir and an impressive finale by the Joint Orchestra playing Grieg's *Peer Gynt Suite No 1*, conducted by the new JLS Director of Music, Anna Wilby.

Other musical highlights of the term included the Autumn Concert [pictured],

which featured a good performance from the Year 7 Choir, to which all our new boys belong, and the Christmas Concert.



### JACK AND THE FIRST XI

Upper Sixth-Former Jack Abelson, the First XI captain, was selected to represent the Independent Schools Football Association South U18 team in a match against the ISFA North. He was also invited to an ISFA camp at Lilleshall. "The First XI are developing nicely in the first half of the season," reports Director of Sport Spencer Leach.



## A WELCOME FROM THE HEADMASTER, MR KEVIN RILEY

Welcome to the mini-prospectus of The John Lyon School. I hope it and the newsletter on the preceding pages will give you a useful introduction to JLS and some insights into what makes our School so special.

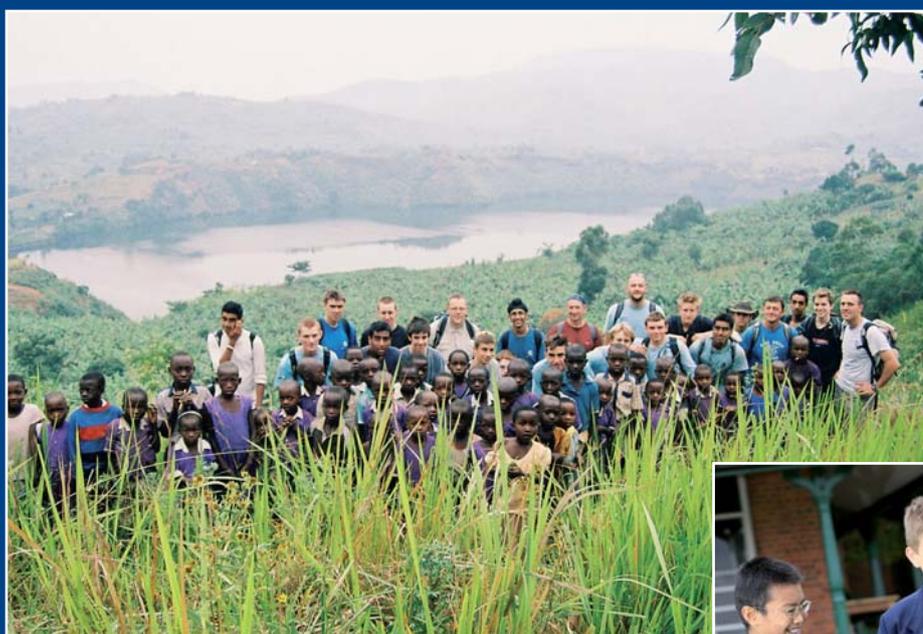
At JLS, which is an HMC School, we are aiming for excellence in all areas, building on our reputation as one of the country's top 20 independent

boys' day schools. In the first three years, we give boys a good grounding in all the major subjects. Building on this platform, our pupils go on to achieve excellent examination results at GCSE, AS and A level.

Alongside our academic success, we have a great reputation for pastoral care. We genuinely treat each child as an individual, with individual talents to be

nurtured and individual challenges to be met. Drama, music, sports and activities also play a very important part in the development of well-rounded students at JLS.

I do hope you will visit JLS or contact us to find out more. Please see our list of contacts on page 2 for details.



## ACTIVITIES

In the first three years, boys take part in our extensive activities programme as part of their Friday afternoon timetable, while boys in all years have the opportunity to take part in clubs and societies before and after School, and at lunchtime.

Almost 100 activities are available each term. There are clubs designed to support boys in their studies, such as the 8am homework club and Medics, for Sixth-Formers planning to go into medicine. Sports are very well catered for, from cricket to badminton. Many clubs cover arts and drama or community service, such as the Motet Choir, funk band or Amnesty International group, while others are for those pursuing hobbies. An increasing number of activities, particularly for older boys, are held jointly with our partner girls' school, Northwood College.

## PASTORAL CARE

We treat every boy as an individual, with his own talents, abilities and needs. We are also proud of the cultural diversity at The John Lyon School. By capping numbers at the School at around 600, we ensure that it remains possible for teachers to get to know every boy in the School. Parents are seen as partners with the School and are positively encouraged to get involved in their son's education at every stage.

The core of our pastoral care arrangements is the tutor system. Form tutors have most day-to-day contact with individual boys. They are overseen by the Heads and Assistant Heads of: Oldfield (Year 7) and the Lower School; the Upper School and the Sixth Form. Ultimately, the Headmaster and Pastoral Deputy Headmaster are responsible. Class sizes of 22-24 in the first three years, around 20 at GCSE level and 12-14 in the Sixth Form help ensure that pupils cannot get 'lost in the crowd'. Teachers are urged to be firm but fair, and to support, rather than punish, boys who are struggling with their studies.

## BECOMING A JLS BOY

At The John Lyon School, we recognise that when it comes to choosing a school, first and foremost parents want an environment where their child is happy, safe and secure. Only in such an atmosphere can boys develop and thrive.

From Year 7 onwards, we focus on creating an environment where everyone is treated with respect. Visitors to JLS are struck not only by the courtesy boys show towards their teachers and towards adults in general, but by the way form tutors and other staff take each boy's concerns seriously. We nurture an atmosphere of mutual respect among the pupils: where else would you see a Sixth-Former hold a door open for a Year 7 pupil, for example? Indeed, our Sixth Form prefects support the pastoral work of tutors in Year 7 (known as Oldfield), particularly during the early weeks. As

boys adjust from the routines of prep. or primary school to life at JLS, prefects are on hand to help out, perhaps making sure a boy's bag is packed with the correct books, or simply providing a friendly, listening ear.

Boys joining at 11+ come from a very wide range of schools, so all are equally well placed to make new friends. Our Friday afternoon activity sessions give boys ample opportunities to develop friendships in a relaxed environment. For the first term only, membership of the Year 7 Choir is compulsory - we have found the cheerful Wednesday lunchtime practices to be a great way of binding a new year together. We also ensure that the increasing number of boys who join us at 13+ can fit in easily. After the first two years, all our classes are reorganised, which means the new

arrivals are not left isolated and can swiftly make friends.

Right from the outset, we expect boys to work hard and do their best, but at the same time we are careful not to overload them with academic pressure. At 11, a boy receives homework in three subjects each night. However, no more than half-an-hour should be spent on each subject: if their son is unable to complete a task, parents can simply write a note to the teacher. A Year 7 parents' evening held three or four weeks into the Autumn Term gives parents an opportunity to check their child's progress in the core subjects. A similar evening is held towards the end of the Year 7.



## THE CURRICULUM

JLS is unashamedly an academic School, dedicated to helping boys realise their full potential and go on to secure places at good universities, including Oxford and Cambridge. Many opportunities exist to stretch able students by enabling them to study in greater depth. These boys are supported by our Gifted and Talented Co-ordinator.

There is a strong academic core to the curriculum. Up to the end of Year 11, boys are required to study not only English and Mathematics, but also Science and at least one modern language. All boys take at least nine GCSE subjects, although we prefer to focus on the quality of grades achieved rather than merely the number of GCSEs taken.

While in the Sixth Form, JLS offers an extensive range of traditional academic AS and A levels, alongside newer subjects such as Psychology, Music Technology and Critical Thinking. The School stands out for its flexible approach: we try not to let timetable clashes prevent Sixth-Formers from studying their preferred subjects.

## CURRICULUM FOR 2007-08: OVERVIEW

**GCSE - Year 10 and 11** English, Mathematics, English Literature, French, Spanish, German, Science (Biology, Chemistry & Physics or Science & Additional Science), History, Geography, Drama, Music, Art & Design, Religious Studies, PE. Following on from the first three years, all pupils continue with Social, Personal and Citizenship Education (SPACE), and with activities and games. Good linguists can take French GCSE a year early and then study for the Institute of Linguists' Diploma in the Fifth Form. Additional Maths, a course aimed at high-achieving mathematicians, is taken alongside Maths IGCSE at the end of the Fifth Year by those who show a high level of mathematical aptitude.

**AS and/or A (A2) level - Sixth Form** English Literature, English Language & Literature, Maths, Further Maths, French, Spanish, German, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, History, Geography, Economics, Psychology, Critical Thinking, Drama, Music, Music Technology, Art & Design, PE, Religious Studies, Government and Politics. All boys continue with games and follow our General Education programme.

# JLS A LEVEL SUCCESSES OUTPACE OTHER INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

The John Lyon School recorded another excellent set of A Level results, with 19 boys achieving straight As, including three pupils with Oxbridge places.

As this summer's results were announced, new national figures revealed that the gap between independent schools and state comprehensives has widened - and that JLS has outpaced even its fellow independent schools.

According to the Joint Council for Qualifications, 19.4% of A Levels from state comprehensives were awarded A grades this year - up 2.9% from 2002. For independent schools there was a 6.5% increase to 47.8% at A grade in the summer of 2007. However, at JLS, the increase was higher still: 54% of boys achieved an A grade this year, which represents a 15% increase over the figure for 2002.

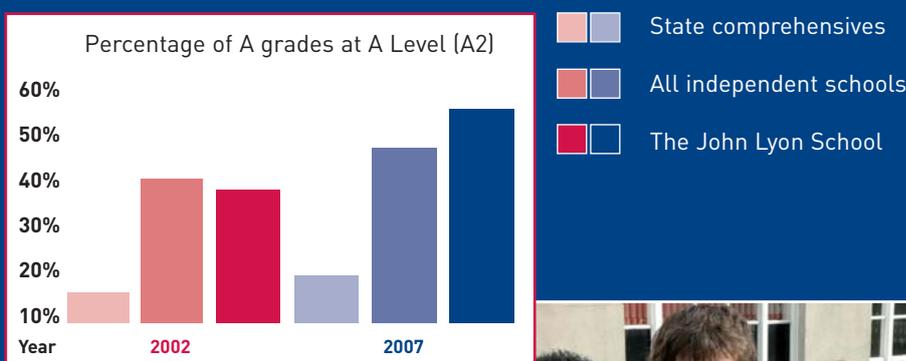
The Headmaster said: "We have seen steady improvements in our results since 2002 and have now reached a consistently

high level of performance at A Level. This is a testament both to the hard work of our boys and to the constant and meticulous attention that our academic staff have paid to improving teaching and learning over the past five years."

Overall, 83% of all A Level grades awarded at JLS were at A or B - a figure bettered in the School's 131-year history only by last year's truly exceptional 89%. There were

confirmed Oxbridge places for Nick Hallam (University College, Oxford), Ben Sehovic (Downing College, Cambridge) and Krishan Patel (Trinity College, Cambridge), who all gained straight As. The trio are pictured below.

GCSE results were also strong, with 62% of all examinations taken at JLS passed at A or A\* and nine boys achieving seven or more A\* grades. 99% of Year 11 pupils gained five or more GCSEs at grades A\*-C.



## ADMISSIONS

The John Lyon School is an academically selective school. In September 2008, we expect to award places to up to 65 boys at 11; up to 30 boys at 13; and up to 10 boys at 16.

We base our decisions on entrance to the School upon reports from the boy's present or previous school, interviews and entrance examinations. We take special note of potential and achievement in music, the creative and performing arts and sport.

At present, 140 boys benefit from financial assistance from the School. John Lyon's Charity funds the equivalent of two free places per year and, in total, some £440,000 is allocated annually to support bursaries and scholarships.

## KEY ADMISSIONS DATES

2008-09 Open Day - no booking required (Forums are held for prospective parents throughout the year)	Saturday 11 October 2008, 10am-3pm
Closing date for 11+ and 13+ applications for admission in September 2009	Sunday 30 November 2008
Deadline for all scholarship and bursary applications for September 2009	Sunday 30 November 2008
11+ and 13+ examinations for entrance in September 2009	January 2009

## CURRICULUM NEWS: STRETCHING OUR SCIENTISTS

JLS has introduced 21st Century Science - a flexible set of GCSE courses developed to give all pupils a worthwhile and inspiring experience of science.

Previously all JLS boys completed double-award science, which gave them two science GCSE grades. Now the top three sets take sciences separately, gaining GCSEs in Biology, Chemistry and Physics. The remaining two sets achieve two GCSEs called Science and Additional Science.

Head of Science Saajan Rana said: "It is important to match the needs of students to the science courses available. Giving boys the opportunity to study separate sciences has increased motivation and allowed the Science Faculty to further develop 'cutting-edge' practical work. Students are academically stretched and challenged to fulfil their potential."