

ST GEORGE'S SCHOOL MEDIA RELEASE

MONDAY 20TH SEPTEMBER 2010

PARENTS WARNED OF LEAN YEARS AHEAD

SCHOOLS WILL HAVE TO RELY ON MORE FUND
RAISING IF STANDARDS ARE TO BE MAINTAINED

*'Don't expect resources and facilities to continue to improve even if
schools continue to expand'*

Head tells pack audience at Annual Prize Giving'

*Anxiety about Government spending levels already causing
nervousness*

“ Referring to the Biblical Joseph’s power to interpret dreams Headmaster Norman Hoare said “we have had seven fat years and now we will have seven lean ones”. Addressing an audience of parents, prize winners and invited guests at St George’s Senior Prize Giving he warned of the need for realism over the next few years.

Even before the Government’s spending review is announced in October, schools have been girding their loins for cuts. “St George’s has benefited from expansion over the last seven years and the extra money for extra pupils plus long delayed building programmes which materialised on the back of this growth have provided a vital buffer. Over the last twelve months however we have seen income streams drying up: there is no money for important capital projects and like all schools we are closely examining our curriculum and wondering where, if the cuts are savage, we can save.”

“If parents want the best they will find themselves putting more into schools. We have had to ask them already – our summer Gifting campaign was necessary to expand our sixth form facilities. We have had no central help for this – there was a distinct attitude of “we don’t want to know” even though government policies have encouraged everyone’s sixth form to grow and the employment situation is forcing some to stay on”.

Parents have given £73,000 to provide new space and resources for the Sixth Form and a new Music Centre has emerged after frantic work over the summer holidays.

The School's work for charity was applauded when the Headmaster announced the £3000 raised for the **Soldiers Charity** in April – making St George's the top school nationally for raising money through a Big Curry Day. By half term 10 teachers and support staff will have sky dived over Wiltshire to increase the money.

Over 60 students in the senior years received prizes and awards, many for their outstanding examinations results which were the best in the school's history. The school's analysis had clearly shown that partially selective schools had wrongly dominated the summer league tables, and St George's should have been at the top of the Telegraph's GCSE table as a school which does not select on academic ability. The important thing stressed by the Headmaster was the effort which every one had put in at all levels and awards were made to those who had achieved a smaller handful of qualifications but for who represented the biggest increase in a value added education at the 1300 strong Sun Lane secondary.

Two new prizes were presented this year: **The Olive Day McAusland Prize** for Singing, a £600 Bursary donated by a former pupil who enjoyed an opera career and was friends with Benjamin Britten and **The Evans Jarosz Prize for Architecture** was introduced to celebrate the achievements of former governor *Antony Evans of Harpenden* and Architect George Jarosz who had worked on every building programme since 1988. Chairman of Governors Kevin Parsons said that the school owed Anthony and George an incredible debt. The School campus was one the Governors were proud of and their sensitive and realistic design had produced superb learning areas and a nationally acclaimed design of the Sports Hall.

Guest of Honour was James Townsend who since graduating from Oxford has played a leading teaching and management role in the Government's *Teach First* programme. James has been responsible for managing a multi million pound budget to get the brightest graduates into the country's toughest urban schools. He explained that he wanted to share the privilege he had enjoyed with those less fortunate and to take the qualities that made St George's an exciting and successful school into areas of social and economic deprivation. *"This school made me and I have a mission to help others strive for quality and believe in themselves. This was a gift I received from my time here."* James was presented with a painting of the school by Head of Art Rory Browne by this year's current Head Boy a post James had held only ten years ago. **He told the audience, that life provides opportunities and they must be taken – ten years ago I sat in this Chapel and got a prize. The prize I really took away was my time of St George's and all it taught me."**

The school is very pleased to include the photograph of three teachers (out of 6) who **received an award from Cambridge University** for their research into teaching and learning at the Sun Lane School. They are left to right Nicki Hooker (Head of PSHCEE) Tracey Ashwell (Science) and Sabrina Shaffer (Head of German). [*It would be really nice if you could find space to include their picture – the real heroes in schools !*]