

# The King's Eye

Annual Report 2014/15



THE KING'S SCHOOL  
CHESTER





# From the Chair of Governors

**T**HIS SUMMER, THE KING'S SCHOOL is on the threshold of a new era, as Willow Lodge prepares to open its doors to eighty new young pupils. This fulfils a dream long held by the Governing Body, and in particular promoted by John Shanklin, a former Governor, parent and friend of the School. He and many other former parents and Governors will be warmly welcomed when the formal opening of Willow Lodge takes place in the autumn.

We are also bringing to conclusion some exciting plans to transform our programme of Bursaries, and to continue the development of our Wrexham Road site: we are not anxious to stand still. In our

strategic thinking, we have as ever been helped by new additions to the Board: James Timpson, OBE, Chief Executive of the well-known firm which bears his family name, joined us this year, as did David Monk, Director of Surgery at the Countess of Chester Hospital, and Steven Docking, Head of Delamere Academy. All joined the Board in time to take part in a major strategy day with our senior leadership team, which will in due course lead to a refreshed strategy for the coming decade.

I was personally delighted that Schola Cantorum sang the Evensong Service at Chester Cathedral, at which the City marked the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of D-Day, and that members of our Fourth Year led all the readings and music: it is so good to see

the school play its part in the community. That too is a key aim for us as we move forward into the coming decade.

I was delighted that the School received such an excellent Inspection report this Spring, and that the many achievements of the last few years have been recognised. On a personal note, as I come towards the end of my tenure as Chairman, I would like to thank all those parents, Governors, former pupils, staff and above all pupils who continue to make this the wonderful School that it is. I wish you all a wonderful summer and every success for results in August!

**Councillor Eleanor Johnson, Chair of Governors**



“The King’s School is on the threshold of a new era.”

Councillor Eleanor Johnson,  
Chair of Governors



“It has been not so much a busy, as a momentous year for King's.”

Mr Chris Ramsey, Headmaster



## From the Headmaster

**IT HAS BEEN NOT SO MUCH A BUSY**, as a momentous year for King's. The opening of our superb Junior School Learning Centre, the completion of Willow Lodge, work on a new strategic plan and not least an Inspection have all been features of the last twelve months.

The Inspection was as rigorous and thorough as you would expect, and it was good to recognise the school immediately from the words used to describe it when the report was finally published. The inspectors described 'well-planned, often inspirational teaching' and 'notably self-assured and poised' students who are 'confident, well-informed and socially aware individuals, well-

prepared for the challenges of adult life'. I hope you too recognise those descriptions.

There are some other aspects of the year, less widely advertised, which have given us great pride. Our wonderful Professionals in Residence – Stewart Pain in Engineering, Carmella de Lucia in Journalism, Jon Mayhew our Patron of Reading and Clive McWilliam in poetry – have enhanced the learning in their areas, and our growing programme of professional work in the Vanbrugh Theatre has made us an increasingly visible part of Chester's Arts scene. Meanwhile, the Junior School's initiative of IT Captains has seen pupils take the lead in technology training. Next autumn

we will be running the second in our series of evenings for aspiring high-fliers in the area, this time aimed at those interested in law. We believe we are the leading school of the region, and it's good to share some of what we think we can do to help young people, both ours and those in other local schools.

So, looking outwards, beyond exams and beyond school, is our big theme for this period of growth. I am grateful to all my excellent colleagues, who have continued to work with students of all ages to push the boundaries of learning: putting on drama productions (three musicals, two student-directed pieces, and a total of eight

major pieces of drama in the theatre this year); making music; playing sports fixtures; exhibiting art; inspiring our students. Their independence of mind and thoughtfulness of analysis are nowhere better displayed than by Kate Robson, whose inspirational but humble piece on India provides this year's Endpiece.

I wish you all a wonderful summer.

**Mr Chris Ramsey, Headmaster**



# Hello and goodbyes



Margaret Ainsworth



Jo Beer



Joshua Carter



Jason Day



Amy Richards



Pietro Dello Stritto



Claire Irvine



Amanda Tedford

## Welcome to King's...

**MARGARET AINSWORTH** is the founding Head of Willow Lodge and was appointed this year to lead the final planning stages of the Infant 'division'. She taught at The Queen's School, originally as Head of English, having previously taught in local primary schools after changing careers from the Law to teaching. Latterly she was Deputy Head of the Lower School and in charge of pastoral care, safeguarding and curriculum development.

**JO BEER** joined us this January as Bursar. She has more than 20 years of business management experience in international organisations and most recently was the European Procurement Director for a global company. An accountant by profession, she has experience in sales and

marketing, facilities management, procurement and leading large investment projects.

**JOSHUA CARTER** took over as Head of Sixth Form this year. A historian, he taught at Trinity School, Croydon, before becoming Head of History at Merchant Taylor's School. He studied at Liverpool, Washington and Cambridge, and is married with three young children.

**JASON DAY** joins the Geography Department after a break from teaching in which he set up his own Outdoor Education business. He has quickly established himself as a leader in that important area, as well as one of the pioneers of archery, a new after school activity and a very popular one indeed!

**AMY RICHARDS** joins the English Department. Her Manchester BA and Warwick MA were followed by an entry into teaching through Teach First, and promotion within two maintained schools. She too has already made her mark as a fine teacher and tutor, and has particularly led on English Language A Level.

### Three colleagues have been with us on one-year contracts:

**PIETRO DELLO STRITTO** has been in the Maths Department this year. A PhD from Leeds goes alongside his bachelor's degree in Maths from Naples, and he has spent this year with us as a newly-qualified teacher. We wish him well as he continues his career, and thank him for all he has done for us at King's.

**CLAIRE IRVINE** has spent the year in the Modern Languages Department, teaching mainly Spanish, and has been greatly appreciated by students of all ages. She has also been a great Tutor in the Shells, and her warm and empathetic approach will be much missed.

**AMANDA TEDFORD** has also spent her 'NQT' year here at King's, within the English Department. She has made a mark as a well-prepared and thoughtful teacher, and we know she will be a great success at Wellington School, where she moves to in September.



Karen Dickson



Marian Griffin



Patricia Housden



Jim Pownall



Liz Tappin

## Farewell and all the best...

**KAREN DICKSON** joined the Junior School in 2006 as English Co-ordinator and she retires this year. Under her astute leadership the subject has flourished and pupils' interest in their studies blossomed. Author visits, the Extreme Reading competition, Readathon and World Book Day are a sample of the activities she introduced that have become integral elements of the pupils' learning.

**MARIAN GRIFFIN** is a highly qualified and hugely experienced Learning Support co-ordinator who joined us in 2008. She retires in July having made a significant impression on the lives of her charges. Her willingness to accept any task has been greatly appreciated by all.

**PATRICIA HOUSDEN** leaves us this year to join her husband in retirement. Since coming to King's in 2004, she has moved from part-time teacher of Biology to full-time teacher and Tutor. Trisha has especially made her mark as a Removes Tutor and organiser of many popular trips, both in Chester and much further afield. Many students have benefitted from her calm, sympathetic approach and her warmth and we wish her the very best of good fortune.

**JIM POWNALL** 'Gentleman' Jim, so called because of his calm unflappable nature and friendly, approachable demeanour - retires after six years at the Junior School. His wit and charm will be missed. As a fine cricketer and footballer, he has shared his experience and knowhow with scores of appreciative pupils.

**LIZ TAPPIN** also leaves us this year. During her years here as a part-time teacher of Business Studies, she has also been a popular and effective Tutor, and an excellent hockey coach. Indeed, as a player and umpire of some distinction, she has made a particular impression with our girls hockey players, and she will be much missed as she moves out of education and into other spheres.





# From the Junior School

**T**HE JUNIOR SCHOOL GOES FROM strength to strength as another highly successful year draws to a close. In February we opened our new £1.5 million, state-of-the-art Learning Centre. The facility, including a Science Laboratory, Design Technology workshop and an Art Studio, is unrivalled in the local area and has proved a great success.

Academically, we remain strong. Our National Young Mathematicians team qualified for the regional final of the 'Explore Learning' competition whilst J4 pupil, Joe Flory, reached the National final of the Primary Maths Challenge. The visit of five authors has helped develop pupils' writing skills.

As winners of the regional Primary Schools' Choir Competition, we had the honour of performing at Chester Cathedral alongside stars of stage and screen for the 'Spirit of Christmas' event. We were described as being the best junior school choir since the event's conception, nineteen years ago!

Although narrowly missing out on first place at the Chester Music Festival, the quality of our performance was highly commended. The Spring Concert displayed the breadth of pupils' talent across the entire range of performing arts. All age groups took part in the Chester Speech and Drama festival, and we won the prestigious Avalon Cup for the sixth consecutive year,

securing six first places, five second places and four third places.

Sport has featured strongly in our lives. J4 footballers took part in a pre-season football training exercise which included coaching sessions from both Chelsea FC and Fulham FC. The Under 11 Football Team graced the turf of Goodison Park and won the final of the Everton FC, North West Schools' competition. Both football and netball teams won King's (Chester) Invitational tournaments. The Under 11 footballers also won the King's Macclesfield tournament. U9 footballers won the Prestfelde competition. The Under 11 boys' cross country team won the AJIS event. The boys' Under 11

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Mr Simon Malone, Head of Junior School





hockey team were crowned champions of North West England. The mixed gender basketball team reached the final of the Chester Schools' Competition, losing in a penalty shoot-out. We recorded our best ever performance at the AJIS Indoor Athletics Championships, winning eighteen events! Our Under 11 boys qualified for the North of England finals.

The generosity of our community is wonderful. During the last calendar year, over £4500 was raised for charities. In short, The Junior School continues to thrive. We work hard and enjoy what we do; long may it continue!

**Mr Simon Malone, Head of Junior School**





# From the Senior School



**IT IS A PLEASURE TO REPORT** on some of the highlights of this academic year. Musically pupils have given a range of outstanding performances: a less formal open Mic Night revealed a good deal of talent and we have also had immensely moving classical performances, such as those at the Spring Concert at St Mary's, Handbridge, where the programme included *Fauré's Requiem*. We look forward to listening to the recording made in March by the Big Band.

Some thought-provoking speakers have visited the School. We welcomed Professor David Bellos, Professor of French and Italian and Comparative Literature at Princeton University, USA, who spoke passionately to students about language and translation. He addressed a full house on a Friday afternoon, at the end of Lower Sixth examinations, which speaks volumes about the intellectual

curiosity of our students. We welcomed Dan Snow, who spoke about commemoration and confidently fielded searching questions from our audience. Members of the School have also been entertained and impressed by witty and perceptive performance poet, Luke Wright. The cultural life of school has been further enhanced by visits of authors Matt Dickinson, Paul Dowswell and Cathy Cassidy. Pupils and visitors from local schools enjoyed these and also Maths lectures by Rob Eastaway, Ben Sparks, and James Grime. Mr P Neal welcomed Jia Ding, who gave a fascinating, first-hand account of how different her life and experiences of China were from contemporary experiences in the UK.

This year we have added an exciting Chinese dimension to school life. In October, Cai Ge Xin of the Wuhan International Education

Exchange Office visited to discuss establishing a partnership with a Chinese school. We are delighted to have formed a partnership subsequently between King's and the Changchun Jie Primary and Middle Schools in Wuhan. This should lead to exchange visits and we look forward to welcoming Chinese teachers to observe life here at King's.

It seems fitting, in the context of the recently established link with China, that 'ScoffStix', the creation of Atharva Salvi (4EH), Ryan Kingsley (4PN), Ally Bibby (4MP), Annie Powell (4EH) and Saffron Townsend (4JM), should have had such success in the Design Ventura awards. The product, a combination of chopsticks and fork, won through to the final stages of the competition. There was further success in the Design Technology department as pupils James McDonagh (L6HF), Josh Roberts (L6SB) and

“It is a pleasure to report on some of the academic highlights.”

Dr Jane Byrne, Deputy Head





Sam Wild (L6JR) performed extremely well in the 'F1 for schools' competition, which involved designing, racing and promoting their cars.

The Combined Cadet Force is flourishing at King's. Colonel Myszka Guzkowska fed back glowing inspection praise to Major Lee and our cadets have been outstanding. Amongst CCF successes, Livvy Samson (4RC) and Isabel Beardwood (4MP) will take part in the prestigious Canada Exchange in 2015 and, in the demanding Cadet Cambrian Patrol this spring, the Juniors, led by Henry Greaves (5CG), were awarded a silver medal. The senior team, led by Thomas Larken (L6DB), was awarded a bronze medal and has ended the year by being awarded a Lord Lieutenant's certificate for Meritorious Cadet Service. In addition,

Nicola Temple (U6CC) has been awarded the Sir Geoffrey de Havilland Medal, which recognises the exceptional achievements and contributions of some of the finest young people in the country.

The School's debating teams have been active in local debates and the Cambridge Debating competition. The Model United Nations team from King's, Arjun Rao (L6PX), Alexander Tan (L6SW), Andreas Jekov (L6SW), Niamh Massey (L6SW), Jack Watson (L6AM) and Barnaby Rule (5JR) won accolades at the MUN conference at George Watson's College in Edinburgh.

In sport, our pupils have continued to excel. Highlights of the girls' year included netball victories in two district (U13 and U15) and one county tournament (U15) and the U16s represented Cheshire in the second round of the National Schools' Netball tournament. The girls' hockey U19 team are District and County champions. The boys' U18 hockey players are North of England Champions and the U16 team are Cheshire champions. The U16s also won through to the Indoor National finals. We have continued to excel in football and particular congratulations go to our U13s who won a thrilling final to be crowned English Schools' Football Association Under 13 Champions.

**Dr Jane Byrne, Deputy Head**







# From the Sixth Form

**T**RYING TO SUM UP THE MANY achievements of the Sixth Form in a few words is no mean feat and as one looks back over the last three terms, the task of exclusion and inclusion is a very difficult one.

The Michaelmas term began with a superb student-led production of *Frankenstein*, directed by former student, Cameron Szerdy. This theme of Sixth Formers taking the lead was continued by Marissa Landy's (U6ML) outstanding production of *Amadeus* as part of her Extended Project – 25 other students also completed the EP this year – where she was supported by a cast of her peers. Members of the Sixth Form also dominated the cast list of *The Producers*, certainly one of the highlights of the year for the many people who were in the audience. Thomas Cuffin-Munday (L6ER) and Deputy Head of School Laurence Ankers (U6NH) both shone in their central roles.

The first term of the year was dominated by 2015 university applications and once again there was a high level of success. There were seven Oxbridge offers, eight Veterinary offers and 13 offers for Medicine – the competition for these places does not need emphasising, but it gets fiercer every year. Most impressive, however, was the achievement of the whole of the Upper Sixth who gained, on average, 4.5 offers per student, with over 90% receiving at least one offer from a Russell Group university. The School was placed sixth in the country by the Sunday Times for progressing into Higher Education in 2014.

In sport, the vast majority of the Sixth Form are involved in competitive fixtures, from Football and Hockey to Basketball and Badminton. Indeed, it is the breadth and depth of Sixth Form involvement in sport which continues to impress. At the very highest end of achievement, Alex Slater (U6CC) deserves mention for his

involvement in GB Rowing and William Dodd-Moore (L6JR), for his place in the North of England Hockey team.

As with sport, the Sixth Form involvement in Music has been broad and of a very high quality. The number of concerts and recitals that the pupils are involved in is huge, and there have been individual accomplishments to partner the collective achievement: Ellie Kearney-Mitchell (U6JK) gained Grade 8 'cello and Katie Pownall (U6JC), Grace Roberts (U6KS) and Isla Dunn (U6ML) all achieved Grade 8 Singing.

The Head Prefect body have completed their duties with diligence, good humour and responsibility. They have been very ably led by Ben Paxton (U6CC) as Head of School and his two Deputies, Megan Pode (U6HJ) and Laurence Ankers (U6NH).

**Mr Joshua Carter, Head of Sixth Form**







“ The School was placed sixth in the country by the Sunday Times for progressing into Higher Education.”

Mr Joshua Carter, Head of Sixth Form



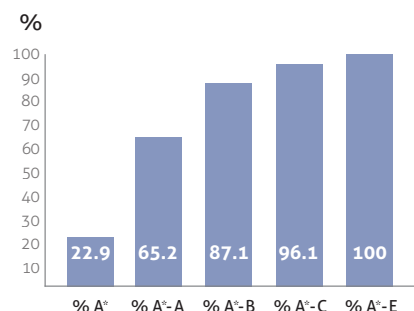


# Academic Results

## A Level results, 2014/15

Subject	A*	A	B	C
Art	2	1	1	1
Biology	10	11	4	4
Business Studies	1	4	3	5
Chemistry	5	20	6	1
Computing				1
Classical Civilisation		1	1	
Design Technology	1	1	3	
Economics	5	10	5	1
English Language		9	3	1
English Literature	4	2		
French		7	1	
Geography	2	3	3	2
German		1		
Government & Politics	2	6	2	1
History	5	10	6	
History of Art		2	1	
Latin		1		
Maths		1		
Further Maths	6	2	1	
Music	1			
Philosophy	1	2	2	
Physical Education	1	3		
Physics	14	8	4	4
Religious Studies	1		2	2
Spanish		1	3	

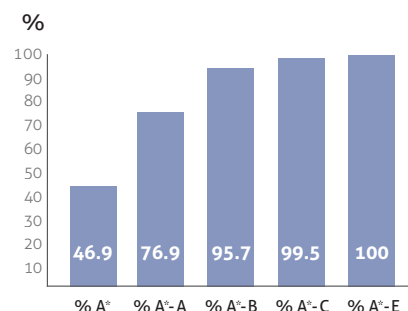
### A Level result totals in %



## GCSE results, 2014/15

Subject	A*	A	B	C
Art	11	5	2	
Biology	59	18	10	1
Business Studies & Economics	10	9	12	4
Chemistry	57	23	10	3
Classical Civilisation		2	5	4
Design Technology	6	6		
English Language	37	46	18	3
English Literature	25	38	36	5
French	12	13	9	4
Geography	12	20	20	3
German	6	8	6	2
History	25	10	6	
Information Technology	1	5	1	
Latin	2	2	1	
Mathematics	67	28	8	1
Further Mathematics	15			
Music	8	3	1	
Physical Education	3	3	3	
Physics	57	19	10	2
Psychology	2	4	3	
Religious Studies	18	14	9	
Spanish	17	12	11	4

### GCSE result totals in %



### A Level

- The fantastic 2014 A Level results saw King's as the top performing school in the Chester area and one of the best in the region, improving on last year's number of A\*/A grades.
- 23% of students achieved all four A\* grades.
- An impressive 89% of girls achieved grades A\*-B.
- 83.9% of students achieved A\*-B grade in Physics. We were recognised as 'outstanding' by the Institute of Physics for the progression of girls studying A level Physics.

### GCSE

- The results for 2014 were the best GCSE results ever for King's
- 52% of girls achieved A\* grades and 72% achieved A\*/A grades.
- 58% of IGCSE grades were A\* which shows an increase compared to last year's figure.
- All 15 students, who sat the IGCSE Further Mathematics exam, gained an A\*.

### Offers 2015

- The Times Parent Power University Destinations League Table placed King's sixth, nationwide, amongst independent schools for the quality of higher education destinations.
- The 2014 results led to 90% of students being offered places in at least one Russell Group University.
- Over two thirds of our students gained the top performing criteria of AAB for entry to many of the top universities' most competitive courses.
- Six students were offered places at Oxbridge universities in 2014 and two students were offered places at Ivy League universities.
- Ten students went on to study Medicine, with two more studying at Veterinary Colleges.



# University Destinations of Leavers

University	Subject
ABERDEEN	Neuroscience with Psychology with Industrial Placement 2014
ABERYSTWYTH	Human Geography 2014
<b>BATH</b>	Economics (with placement) 2014
<b>BATH</b>	Economics (with placement) 2014
<b>BATH</b>	Economics (with placement) 2014
<b>BIRMINGHAM</b>	Sport and Exercise Sciences 2014
<b>BIRMINGHAM</b>	Physics (International Study) 2014
<b>BIRMINGHAM</b>	Biological Sciences 2015
<b>BIRMINGHAM</b>	Chemistry with Business Management 2014
<b>BIRMINGHAM</b>	Modern Languages with Business Management 2014
<b>BIRMINGHAM</b>	Business Management (Year in Industry) (4 years) 2014
<b>BRISTOL</b>	Economics and Econometrics 2014
<b>BRISTOL</b>	Geography with Study in Continental Europe 2014
<b>BRISTOL</b>	History 2015
<b>BRISTOL</b>	Biochemistry 2014
<b>BRISTOL</b>	Biochemistry 2014
<b>BRISTOL</b>	Politics and German (4 years) 2014
<b>BRISTOL</b>	Electrical and Electronic Engineering 2014
<b>BRISTOL</b>	Geography 2014
<b>BRISTOL</b>	Chemistry 2014
<b>BRISTOL</b>	Mechanical Engineering 2014
<b>BRISTOL</b>	French and Russian (4 years) 2014
<b>BRISTOL</b>	Mathematics 2014
<b>CAMBRIDGE</b>	Engineering (4 years) 2014
<b>CAMBRIDGE</b>	History 2014
<b>CAMBRIDGE</b>	Natural Sciences 2014
<b>CAMBRIDGE</b>	Engineering (4 years) 2014
<b>CAMBRIDGE</b>	Economics 2014
<b>CARDIFF</b>	Medicine 2015
CARDIFF METROPOLITAN	Biomedical Science 2014
DUNDEE	Physics 2014
<b>DURHAM</b>	Law 2014
<b>DURHAM</b>	General Engineering 2014
<b>DURHAM</b>	Ancient History and Archaeology 2014
<b>DURHAM</b>	Business and Management 2014
<b>EDINBURGH</b>	Geography 2014
<b>EDINBURGH</b>	Medicine 2014

University	Subject
<b>EDINBURGH</b>	Veterinary Medicine 2014
<b>EDINBURGH</b>	Philosophy 2014
EDINBURGH NAPIER	Engineering with Management 2014
<b>EXETER</b>	Anthropology with Study Abroad (4 Years) 2014
HERTS	Law/Psychology (Joint Honours) 2014
HULL	Biology 2014
KEELE	International Relations 2014
<b>KING'S COLLEGE, LONDON</b>	Business Management 2014
<b>KING'S COLLEGE, LONDON</b>	Medicine (5 years) 2014
<b>KING'S COLLEGE, LONDON</b>	Physics with Theoretical Physics 2014
<b>KING'S COLLEGE, LONDON</b>	English Language and Literature 2014
<b>LANCASTER</b>	Accounting and Finance 2014
<b>LEEDS</b>	Medicine 2014
<b>LEEDS</b>	History 2014
<b>LEEDS</b>	Medicine 2014
<b>LEEDS</b>	History 2014
<b>LEEDS</b>	Fashion Marketing 2014
<b>LEEDS</b>	Zoology 2014
<b>LOUGHBOROUGH</b>	Economics 2014
<b>LOUGHBOROUGH</b>	Mechanical Engineering 2014
<b>MANCHESTER</b>	Law with Politics 2014
<b>MANCHESTER</b>	Law with Criminology 2014
<b>MANCHESTER</b>	Ancient History 2014
<b>MANCHESTER</b>	Chemical Engineering with Industrial Experience 2014
MANCHESTER METROPOLITAN	Art (Foundation) 2014
<b>NEWCASTLE</b>	Mechanical Engineering 2014
<b>NEWCASTLE</b>	Marketing and Management 2014
<b>NEWCASTLE</b>	Medicine (stage 1 entry) 2014
<b>NEWCASTLE</b>	Marketing and Management 2014
<b>NEWCASTLE</b>	Philosophical Studies: Knowledge and Human Interests 2014
<b>NOTTINGHAM</b>	Mechanical Engineering 2014
<b>NOTTINGHAM</b>	Chemical Engineering with a Year in Industry 2014
<b>NOTTINGHAM</b>	Chemical Engineering with a Year in Industry 2014
<b>NOTTINGHAM</b>	Chemical Engineering with a Year in Industry 2014
NOTTINGHAM TRENT	Quantity Surveying and 2014
	Construction Commercial Management
NOTTINGHAM TRENT	Spanish and Linguistics (4 years) 2014

University	Subject
<b>OXFORD</b>	Music 2014
<b>OXFORD</b>	Law 2014
<b>OXFORD</b>	Chemistry 2014
PRINCETON, USA	Operations Research and Financial Engineering 2015 w/certificate in Finance
QUEEN MARY'S LONDON	English and Drama 2014
READING	Business and Management 2014
ROYAL VET. COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON	Veterinary Medicine 2014
SALE SHARKS RUGBY CLUB	Professional Rugby contract 2014
SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL AND AFRICAN STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON	Social Anthropology and Law 2015
<b>SHEFFIELD</b>	Chemistry (4 years) 2014
<b>SHEFFIELD</b>	Urban Studies 2014
SHEFFIELD HALLAM	Construction Project Management 2014
<b>ST ANDREW'S</b>	Medicine 2014
<b>ST ANDREW'S</b>	Classics 2014
<b>ST ANDREW'S</b>	Medicine 2014
ST. GEORGE'S, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON	Medicine 2014
ST. GEORGE'S, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON	Medicine 2014
<b>UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, LONDON</b>	Physics 2014
<b>UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, LONDON</b>	Architecture 2014
<b>UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, LONDON</b>	Linguistics 2014 (International Programme) (4 years)
<b>WARWICK</b>	Philosophy 2014
<b>WARWICK</b>	Politics with International Studies 2014
YALE, USA	Languages (French & Russian) and Economics 2015
<b>YORK</b>	Chemistry (with a year in industry) 2014
<b>YORK</b>	Applied Social Science - Crime and Criminal Justice 2015

<b>The Times Top 30</b>
<b>81%</b>
<b>The Times Top 20</b>
<b>55%</b>
<b>The Times Top 10</b>
<b>25%</b>
<b>Russell Group</b>
<b>67%</b>

Bold text represents *The Times Top 30 Universities 2014*



# Equality by education

## A view on women's equality in India



**T**HE ISSUE OF WOMEN'S EQUALITY has been one of increasing importance over the last century, especially in the Western world, and one which has always interested me. Even now it remains a contentious and unresolved dilemma, spreading beyond the interests of the First World. Indian society in particular maintains one of the most fundamentally oppressive attitudes towards women's equality, thus making it an issue that lies at the very heart of this rapidly developing country.

Last summer I was lucky enough to visit India and took the opportunity to research the issue for my Extended Project, which aimed to address the causes and implications of gender inequality in this part of the world. In recent years this controversial issue has gradually reached the forefront of politics, in the main due to the shocking breaches of women's basic freedoms within the country that have recently come to light. Women's equality in India is an

issue of substantial importance, not only for those women who deserve empowerment and recognition within the country, but for spectators in Western nations. The contrast between our society's attitude towards women's equality and the attitude I was exposed to while visiting Bangalore, is substantial. However, it is only by exploring the contrast between our own lives and the lives of women and girls within India that we can learn to recognise the imperative significance of continuing the fight for full gender equality in our own country as well as underdeveloped societies such as India.

After spending time in India and witnessing the suppression of women's empowerment, I have come to appreciate the opportunity and breadth of experience that has been offered to me at King's, and throughout our developed society. My decision to go to university was not hindered by the fact that I am female. Indeed, today more women enter university in the UK than men and

out-perform their male counterparts in terms of educational attainment. Nor will I be prevented from striving for a job of authority, simply due to my gender. This is not the case for so many women throughout India, who are prevented from obtaining the opportunities I have been given due to Indian society's backward stance on women's equality. Furthermore, the barrier to education is a pivotal hurdle in the fight for equality, as female empowerment can only be achieved through the provision of adequate education.

As the philosopher Epictetus stated, "Only the educated are free", and education hands women the power to know their rights, make their own decisions, and gain economic recognition, a point that was eloquently summed up by a female politics professor I spoke to at a local school in Bangalore. Mrs. Manjunathatah suggested that the lack of an education removes the basic decision-making power of women, as they remain ignorant to the rights and liberties that they deserve. Today,

only around 48% of Indian women are literate, meaning that over half the female population are restrained from enjoying the independence and freedom that education provides.

The custom of son-preference is also a key factor limiting progress towards women's equality. In most of India, being born a girl is considered equivalent to being born a burden and liability on the family. While daughters are wanted, sons are overwhelmingly preferred and favoured within the household. This custom has become so entrenched that there are substantially fewer women than men in the country due to gender-based abortions. Once again, this is a practice that Western societies are generally free from. It is fair to say that girls born in the UK are not made to feel inadequate based on their gender. Moreover, this contrast is very clear to me after being educated in a school with more boys than girls for the last seven years, where I have never felt less



important or favoured than the average male student. The difference in India is the system of patriarchy remains rife while progressive Western societies have suppressed this tradition. The patriarchal framework vests all power and authority with the male population, allowing men to maintain complete control over the day-to-day lives of women throughout India.

My most striking experience, in which I became acutely aware of the patriarchal system, took place within a home in a shanty town in east Jalahalli where I was invited to have dinner with a local Indian family. It soon struck me that the women were anxious about leaving the kitchen to sit with me, instead preparing the food and then standing submissively in the corner without speaking. When I asked them to come and join me for a photograph, they barely sat down for a minute before retreating again to the kitchen. This aura of submission which envelopes so many women across India is an issue that penetrates the foundations of society, and thus one that will be substantially difficult to reverse. However, once again education is critical to this change, as having an awareness of the progression of gender equality across the globe may empower Indian women to question their situation.

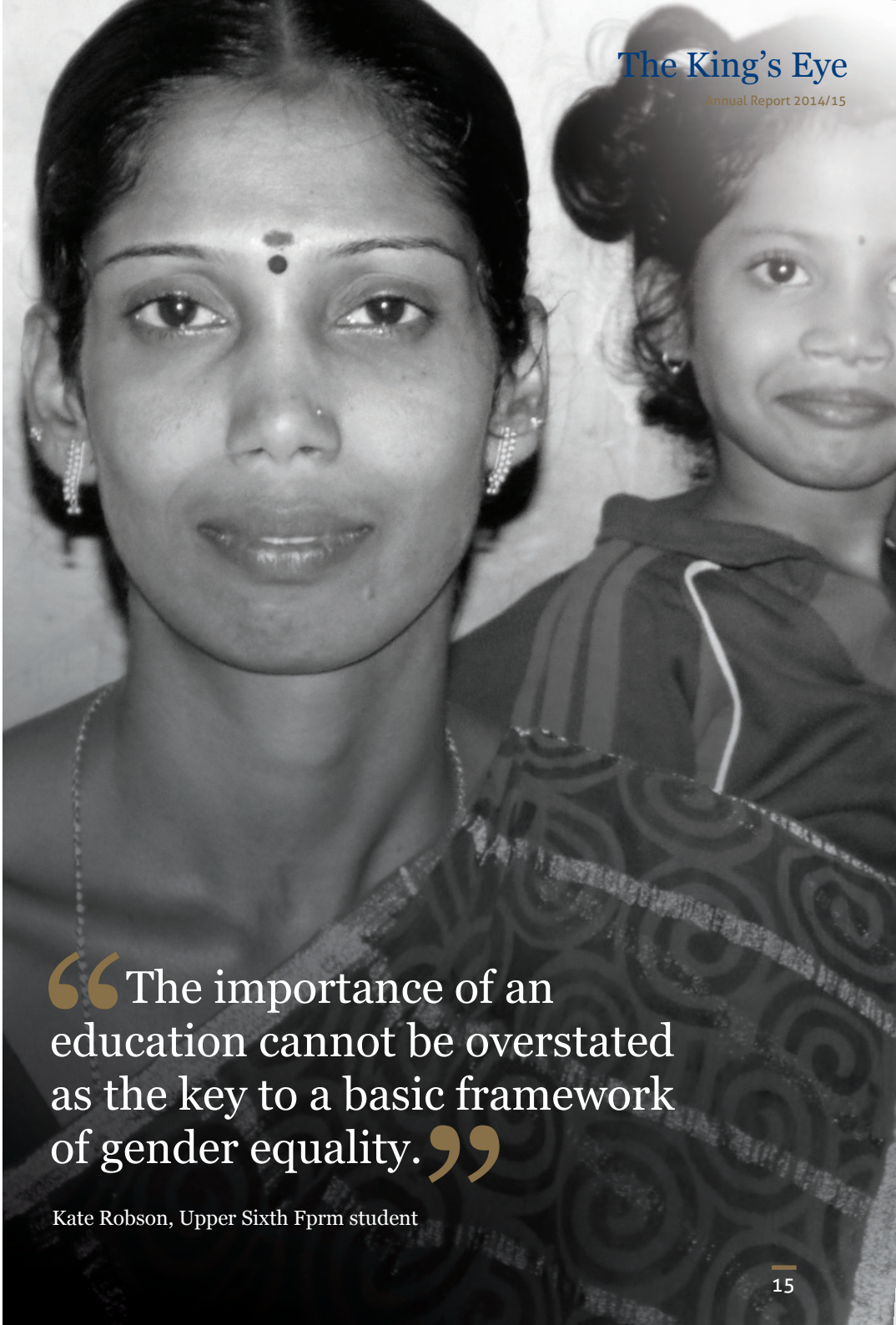
However, it is also important to recognise that the UK is not yet a country that can boast full gender equality. There remains a number of subtle patriarchal elements to our society today, such as the tradition of a wife taking her husband's name. Moreover, the 19% gender pay gap that the UK retains does not suggest full equality. Hence, it is important that we do not dismiss India as a country we are socially superior to and cannot

look to learn from; we certainly have something to learn from India's few but thriving matriarchal societies which can be found in isolated parts of India. Matriarchal states allow women to take the leading role in society, and make all key decisions. It is no wonder that many matriarchal societies retain a significantly lower level of recorded domestic violence and an enhanced level of female education, school attendance, and female participation in the workforce than any other state in India.

Kerala, the most notorious matriarchal society within India, is also the most literate, with over 93% of the population fully literate. This contrasts with the patriarchal state of Bihar, which maintains a literacy rate of 63% - The patriarchy seems to be reversed in Meghalaya, another matriarchal society, which experienced male suffragette campaigners! Although I am not suggesting that women should run the country, these states demonstrate the detrimental nature of the patriarchal system and illustrate the success that is possible when women are presented with full gender equality.

The importance of an education cannot be overstated as the key to a basic framework of gender equality. Addressing this issue will begin to unravel the system of patriarchy that has gripped India for so many years, hence forcing the male-dominated society to listen to the voices of Indian women for the first time. I feel that this issue is one we must not ignore. It should allow us to appreciate the progressive society that we live in and thus encourage us to fight for change in areas where women deserve empowerment.

**Kate Robson, Upper Sixth Form student**



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