



HEADS OF SCHOOL

ABINGDON SCHOOL

**Jonathan Ochero, 18
&
Khadim Sagna, 17**

When Jonathan Ochero and Khadim Sagna stand up in front of the whole of Abingdon School to speak at assembly – one of their duties as joint Heads of School – they know they face a tough crowd. ‘We have a script,’ says Jonathan, ‘letting the school know about what’s on, for example. But there’s a tradition of Heads of School adding their own jokes, puns in particular.’ He and Khadim laugh – it may have taken time to ease into the position, but both clearly now relish their chance to play a leadership role.

‘We act as a bridge,’ explains Khadim, ‘between the boys and the teachers. We both think that’s a really important role. It gives us the chance to tell staff about changes students would like to see, as well as helping newer pupils to see that the head isn’t some scary figure.’

Jonathan has been at the school since year nine, boarding away from his home in Switzerland, and has been making the most of his time. He plays oboe and drums, is a member of the Model United Nations as well as playing rugby. Currently studying for A-levels in English, French, German and Geography, he is hoping for a career in international development after he graduates from university.

‘The school has really pushed me out of my comfort zone,’ Jonathan says. ‘It has taught me to be self-motivating and to get the best out of any opportunity whether academic or “Other Half”.’ The school uses the term ‘Other Half’ to describe its 150-plus co-curricular activities, because it believes that what a pupil does in the classroom is only half of the reason they’re at the school and only half of what is going to be important to them as they mature.

Khadim, whose rugby kit shows off Abingdon’s famous and very identifiable pink stripe, is a day pupil, studying French, Economics and Maths. He is not sure what his future looks like yet, though he’s interested in potentially looking at a career similar to that of his sister, who works at the Bank of England.

When he’s not representing his school as part of the First XV, Khadim also plays trumpet in several bands and the school orchestra. He’s a writer too, for the school’s magazines *Polyglot* and *Griffinomics*. He’s proud of the school’s many activities and clubs – its Other Half – which make it easy for friendships to form across year groups.

Jonathan notes that the teachers are approachable too – ‘they are so reliable and helpful. I will miss them when I leave.’

Khadim agrees. He will miss the variety of school life, how a day moves from an Economics class to a rugby match to orchestra practice.

Portrait by Hester Marriott