

## **HISTORY OF LA SAINTE UNION**

Father Jean Baptiste Debrabant 1801-1880 founded a congregation of religious sisters in northern France to address the needs arising from the revolution. He named this congregation La Sainte Union. Father Debrabant believed that only a Christian based education offered a sure hope "*for the future of religion and society.*"

The work of the sisters of La Sainte Union spread rapidly in France and Belgium. Through their association with the Benedictine monks in Douai, the sisters came to England where they opened their first school in Bath in 1858. Three years later, at the invitation of Cardinal Wiseman in the Diocese of Westminster, a La Sainte Union School opened in London.

For the greatest part of its history, this School in Highgate Road was an independent boarding school which attracted many pupils from overseas. In a period of reorganisation thirty years ago, plans were drawn up to build a grammar school on the La Sainte Union site. When the building was complete however, it facilitated the amalgamation of Our Lady of Sion School, (Eden Grove) with La Sainte Union which then became a voluntary-aided comprehensive school. The school has continued to admit Roman Catholic girls from 11-18. Boys have been accepted into the Sixth Form since September 1995.

In the 1980's La Sainte Union became a member of a local consortium of schools, having as its partner schools Acland Burghley, Parliament Hill and William Ellis. It was for a time a school of the Inner London Education Authority and later one of Camden's Secondary schools. In September 1993 it received approval from the Secretary of State to become a Grant Maintained School and remained so until September 1997 when it returned to Voluntary Aided status. In January 2000, it was awarded Beacon Status and in July 2004 it was awarded Specialist School Status and was designated a Science College. Redesignation as a Science College has been confirmed from September 2008. In July 2008, La Sainte Union was awarded '*High Performing Specialist Status*' (HPSS).

As La Sainte Union is a Voluntary Aided school, staff hold their contracts of employment with the Governors and not with the LEA. For staff who wish to contact Governors on any matter, a list of names and addresses is available on request from the Headteacher's P.A. Requests for Governors' details/information coming from any other source should be submitted in writing to the Clerk to the Governors at the School's address.