

Friday 10^h January 2025

Parent Bulletin

Dear families,

Welcome to the first Parent Bulletin of 2025. I hope you have all had a peaceful and enjoyable holiday. This week, staff returned from their holidays 1 day earlier than students for our INSET day. INSET days are an invaluable opportunity for staff training and on Monday we had a busy schedule with training sessions on 'questioning in the classroom', 'helping students to respond to feedback', 'adjusting lessons to meet the specific needs of individuals in the classroom' and 'improving attendance'.

As well as these training sessions for larger groups, the day was interspersed with staff working in teams focusing both on areas of the curriculum and our pastoral support. Overwhelmingly, staff at John Mason School share a hunger for continuous improvement and this energy was palpable throughout the day.

On Tuesday we returned to a full school and welcomed students back to the classrooms. Our focus this term is on wellbeing and attention. We have used assemblies to share the concerns raised by research into the damage that mobile phones can do to mental health and our skill at holding attention both in young people and adults. We have shared strategies with students to help them monitor and take control of their 'attention diet', in much the same way as they might talk about their 'nutrition diet'. These skills included how to identify nutritious information on the internet, social media and mobile phones. Cutting out "junk" information, and being deliberate about their use of technology, by setting themselves rules and limits.

We know that technology, and the access to knowledge that it provides them has huge potential to benefit our young people throughout their lives and we hope that by giving them the skills to manage their attention will help them to reap the benefits whilst still avoiding damage to their mental health in the longer term.

The John Mason School community extends far beyond the staff and the students. We value the huge input that you, and many others, have to the running of the school. I am pleased to be able to share with you a message from Lynn Fathers, Chair of Governors who I have had the privilege of working closely with since September and brings with her a wealth of experience and expertise to supporting the school.

Have a good weekend.

Best wishes.



Alastair West
Headteacher

Message from the Chair of Governors

Having first come into contact with John Mason School in the late 1990s as a parent I felt very privileged to be appointed as Chair of governors in September 2024. My first school term in post has flown by filled with visits into school meeting students and staff and learning more about the journey the school is on to secure success for all.

Two governor meetings were held last term and it was a pleasure to welcome our new Governance Professional and three new governors to the team and to meet the existing group of volunteers who so generously share their time and experience to support the school and discharge our core function of holding school leaders to account for performance as we work together to 'improve the life chances of all the learners we serve'.

Meeting actions last term included reviewing and approving the school's improvement plans, ensuring that these have ambitious goals, are built on a secure understanding of past performance and are informed by the experience and feedback of students, parents and staff. If you were able to complete the pupil or parent surveys last term, thank you for taking the time to do that. The results of surveys are carefully considered and provide governors and school leaders with clear indications of where improvement plans are working as well as focusing attention on areas where work is still to be done.

Governors have also approved updates to policies supporting the school's work tackling the challenges (national as well as for John Mason School) to improve attendance and behaviour. Our aim is to enable all students to benefit from the many opportunities that John Mason has to offer in and out of the classroom and because good attendance and respectful, positive attitudes are key to this we receive regular reports on progress.

Outside of meetings governors have visited the school to see the work that is being done to implement plans such as establishing The Lodge to provide additional support for students. We also see the hard work and dedication of staff working to help students achieve their goals and or overcome challenges. Visits give us the chance to say 'thank you' in person but I'd like to repeat those thanks here. Learning and improvement doesn't just happen; it takes determination, focus and time, so a huge thank you to all the staff for all their hard work and expertise.

It is also inspiring to see the commitment and enthusiasm of students, many of whom are actively contributing to projects such as the anti-bullying strategy to improve the school community. These efforts too do not go unrecognised, and it is nice to be able to thank and congratulate students in person as we tour the school.

After a busy first term, governors now look forward to a new year working in partnership with you all, with school leaders and with colleagues in Abingdon Learning Trust to help the school continue on its improvement journey. I hope to be able share an update with you later in the year but ahead of that if you would like to know more about governance at [John Mason School](#) or in [Abingdon Learning Trust](#) do please visit the websites.

Lynn Fathers, Chair of Governors

January 2025

School News

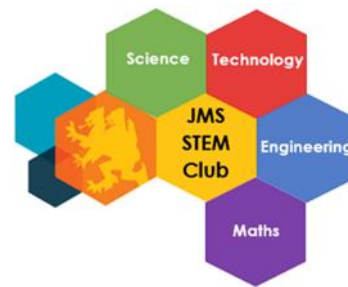
STEM



Happy New Year!

To celebrate the new year STEM club carried out an experiment to see the mass needed to pop a party popper. This involved clamping a party popper in a clamp stand and attaching a mass hoop. They slowly added more mass until the party popper popped. The lowest mass needed to pop a party popper was 550g and the highest 2200g.

We look forward to next week for some engineering.



JMA

During the week beginning 1st February, there will be a Welsh Farm display in the Community space in the Precinct in Abingdon Town Centre to raise awareness of the Welsh farm and the fundraising we do. This is a great opportunity for the local community to come and have a look at the display, share stories and reminisce about past trips over the years. On display will be some Welsh Farm history and video testimonies.

At this event, we would like to sell unwanted gifts and kindly ask you to donate unwanted Christmas gifts - toys, games, bric-a-brac and toiletries. These can be dropped at school reception between 8am and 4pm. If you are attending the Year 8 Parents Evening on 16th January we can also accept donations then.

As always, we would love some more parents to get involved in our events, even if it is just for an hour. We all lead such busy lives, but our children really benefit from the JMA and the JMA needs you.

Message from the Oxfordshire School Aged Immunisation Team

Dear Parents/Carers

FLU VACCINATIONS CONTINUE TO BE AVAILABLE

Has your child received their free Flu vaccination? It is not too late to vaccinate your child against Flu and the Flu season is just getting started. Remember that by vaccinating your child, you are not just helping to protect them, but you are also helping to protect your friends and family, too, some of whom could be at a greater risk from flu. If your child is vaccinated it will reduce the chance of others "catching" flu from them.

If your child hasn't been vaccinated and you would like to arrange an appointment, please see below how you can do this.

If you have already completed a vaccination Consent Form but your child has not yet had their vaccination please go to the `Parent and Carers` area of our [website](#), to arrange a Clinic booking. To

be able to book an appointment you will need the unique booking reference that you received via email when you submitted the Consent Form. This email will be from school.immunisations@nhs.net and may have gone direct to your junk folder.

If you have not completed a Consent Form please go to the `Parent and Carers` area of our [website](#), where you will be able to access both the Consent Form and the school code you will need to complete the Form. Once you have submitted the Consent Form, you will receive an email from school.immunisations@nhs.net which will include your unique booking reference and a link for you to book the clinic appointment.

You may also have received previous reminders from us, to submit a Consent Form and/or book a clinic appointment, either via email, text message or both! These messages will also contain the links you need to get your child vaccinated. If you have not been able to find a convenient clinic appointment, please keep looking as we will be continuing to add more dates and locations throughout January.

If you require an interpreter to help you get your child vaccinated, please email the following information to immunisationteam@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk and we will then call you with an interpreter.

- Childs Name,
- Parents Name,
- Language spoken
- Telephone number

If you have any queries please email us at immunisationteam@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk and include your Childs name, DOB and the school they attend.

Oxfordshire School Aged Immunisation Team

Website address- <https://www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/imms>

CHANCE TO SHINE STREET

IT'S FREE!

- TAPE BALL CRICKET
- FREE COACHING
- NO EQUIPMENT NEEDED
- WEAR WHAT YOU WANT
- ALL WELCOME

GIRLS ONLY STREET CRICKET SESSIONS
AGE 8 - 14 | EVERY MONDAY | 18:00 - 19:00
OUR LADY'S ABINGDON SPORTS HALL

OXFORDSHIRE CRICKET

TO FIND OUT MORE CONTACT NICK HOLROYD -
NHOLROYD@OXONCB.COM

Important Dates:

Thursday 16th January 2025 – Year 8 Parents' Evening

Other important dates can be found on our website calendar:

<https://www.johnmason.oxon.sch.uk/events/calendar/>

Term dates for the new academic year are on our website:

<https://www.johnmason.oxon.sch.uk/events/term-dates/>