

Friday 1st March 2024

Parent Bulletin

Dear families,

There are still tickets available for the school production Lord of the Flies. The time and effort that both students and staff have put into this event has been inspiring. If you're coming to watch the performance, I look forward to seeing you there.

In school performances are a fantastic opportunity to go beyond the core curriculum and learn so much more, not just about the subject, but about being involved in a project, working collaboratively and moving outside ones comfort zone. Students also get these opportunities when they go on school trips, such as Year 10 visiting the Vertex Pharmaceuticals laboratories before half term.

I'll hand over to Scarlet to tell you more...

Science trip to Vertex Pharmaceuticals

We, as a part of Year 10, set one science were lucky enough to be invited to take part in a school trip to the Vertex Pharmaceuticals in Didcot on February 7th. The purpose of the trip was to consolidate learning around our current biology topic of medicine, encompassing toxicity and dosage of medicine and subsequently its therapeutic effect on a living organism.

Upon arrival, we were greeted by one of the scientists who initially explained how we would be able to experiment on certain model organisms and how this would lead us to know the efficacy of a medicine with the objectives of the task to practice microscopy, data collection and learn how to conduct an experiment using model organisms.

After a safety talk, the distribution of lab coats and protective eyewear, we were able to first look at sickle cell slides under a microscope and compare them to slides of normal red blood cells.

We were also able to view Daphnia (water fleas) under microscope and measure their heart rate according to temperature, with results showing a clear increase in heart rate the hotter the water was.

Following on from this, we then were able to explore dosage by carrying out an experiment on how the given compound (potential medicine/drug) affected the heart rate of the Daphnia. We were provided with two compounds (medicines/drugs) with three levels of concentration each (low, medium and high) and measured the heart rate of the Daphnia after each administration of the compound. For accuracy, each administration of the compound and measuring of the heart rate had to be completed three times and data recorded. We, of course, had to use a new Daphnia for each new test.

We collected and recorded our data illustrating the impact the said compounds had on the Daphnia's heart rate, completing a mean calculation of each level of concentration. Our findings showed that there were varying effects on heart rate as a result, some increasing and some decreasing the heart rate.

It was hugely insightful to be able to see how medicines are tested and how and in what environment medicines are tested for safety and efficacy. As a result, my peers and I were able to visualise what we had been learning about in class and were given the opportunity to have discussions with scientists at the end of the laboratory session which allowed us to gain further insight into pharmaceuticals.

An enjoyable, highly educational and useful trip!

Written account by Scarlet, Year 10

Thank you, Scarlet, for sharing your experience with us.

Teaching in Kharkiv, Ukraine: *Online and Under Fire*

Abingdon library will be hosting the above-mentioned online talk by a Kharkiv secondary school teacher Inna Larchenkova. No need to pre book, just drop in.

Saturday 02 March 2024

11.00 – 11.45

At Abingdon Library

Futures Fair

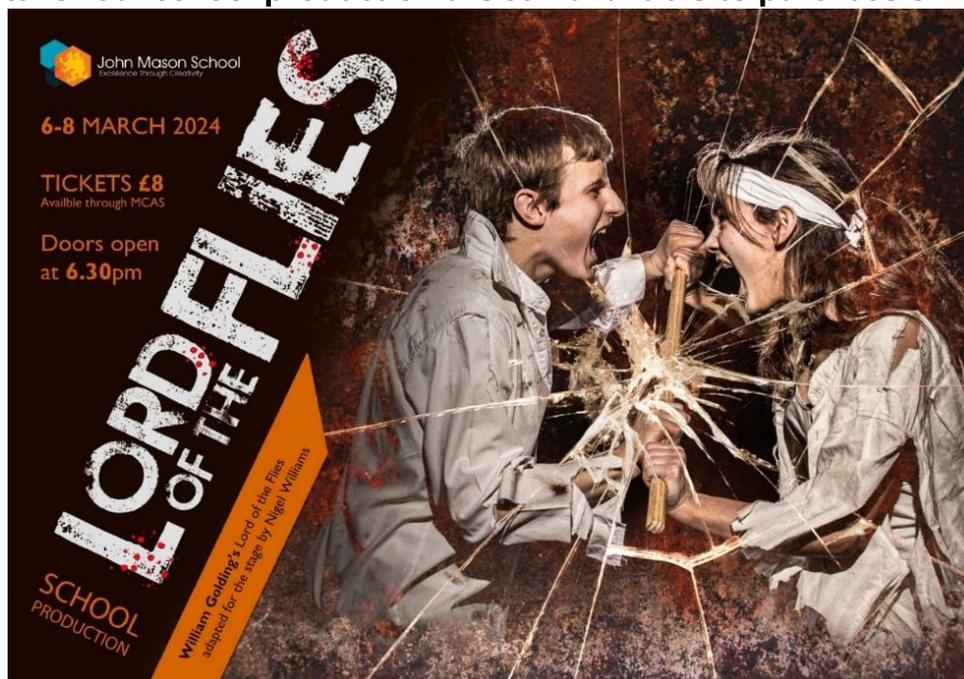


The OX14 Learning Partnership are looking forward to welcoming students to the upcoming Futures Fair on April 23rd. It is a great opportunity for current year 12s and year 11 and 13 students and parents to meet representatives from a range of universities. More information and booking is via the website [linked here](#).

Trust Governance Vacancy

The Abingdon Learning Trust has a vacancy for a Trust Governance Professional. For more information and to apply click this link: [Trust governance vacancy](#)

Tickets for our school production are still available to purchase on MCAS.



Important Dates

6-8th March

School Production – Lord of the Flies

14th March

Year 7 Parents' Evening

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Al West." The signature is written in a cursive style with a period at the end.

Alastair West
Headteacher
John Mason School