

Head's Up!

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope you and your families are well and I hope you have had the opportunity to enjoy some of the good weather of late. Many thanks again for your continued support with remote learning. Since I last wrote we have seen the steady expansion of our priority groups and we have welcomed back our year 10 and 12 students. It has been fantastic to see them and the overwhelming feeling from staff and students has been very positive. We now look forward to seeing more year 10 this week for the second stage of their return to school.

It must be a strange and unsettling time for year 11 and 13 students. They are constantly in our thoughts. Mr Duckham has been in communication with students about sixth form taster sessions for year 11 and end of year plans for year 13. For year 11 we are planning a virtual leavers' assembly. Mrs Prior will be in touch in due course with further details.

Our focus is also directed to the start of the next academic year in September. We are following government and union guidance carefully. Further details are expected later this week and I have no doubt guidance will change numerous times in the coming weeks. At present there is far too much uncertainty for secondary schools to plan with any precision and to share any detailed plans at this stage. When things become clearer and we are in a position to do so I will communicate with you again.

New website...

We now have our long awaited new website. We are really thrilled with it and it is a huge improvement on the previous one. Please do take a look: <https://www.johnmason.oxon.sch.uk/>

Sports Day...

Any Twitter users or sports enthusiasts will know that we launched our first ever Virtual Sports Day. As it was also National Sports Week we decided to join the two events together.

A message from Mr Dhiman:

Virtual Sports Day was an opportunity for students, parents/carers and staff to take on a series of physical activity challenges and compete against other tutor groups for fun, and with House points being earned to go towards the ultimate Prize; The Bainbridge House School Cup.

Sports Day at John Mason School has always allowed students to show the school values of determination, inspiring others, valuing ourselves and each other, creativity and passionate about learning when they compete and take part in some shape or form on the day, this is fundamentally the backbone of sport, and in particular the Olympics.

The PE Faculty wanted to get as many people involved as possible during this challenge week, so parents/carers and staff were also encouraged to enter and submit their results. The number of students, parents/carers and staff taking part across all three Houses was superb, showing a great school community spirit.

Results will be published soon.

Learning Resource Centre

There is still plenty to celebrate in the LRC this year, and I'd like to concentrate on two events that have suffered the most from the Lockdown, but have still managed to produce some outstanding work. The first is the Carnegie Shadowing that a number of Year 7 students have been involved with. The six secondary schools in Abingdon run a variety of events supporting the Carnegie Book Awards, and this year was going to be extra special as it was our 20th

birthday. Unfortunately all our events were cancelled, but this didn't stop our students who have continued to read the shortlisted books and post their reviews on the Carnegie web page. Here are three of my favourites:

The book, 'Boy Girl Sea', is a story about a boy and a girl, who get lost at sea and have to fight for survival. When I first started the book I didn't know what to expect, but when I started reading I really started to enjoy it. The story begins with a freak storm and our main character (Bill) gets lost at sea. He is then on his own for a few days trying to survive when he finds a barrel. He then reels it in, and finds a girl inside. Her name is Aya. They then try to survive for a few days in their boat, as Aya tells stories; of demons, monsters, gods and kings and you can really start to feel the chemistry and the emotion between the two start to strengthen. I really liked the story of the book and the style of writing is very creative and I think the author made an amazing book. I really liked this book because the characters were very down to earth and relatable (for me, Bill). I would recommend this book because it really captured me in and I'm sure it can do the same for others.

By Thomas Smaldon 7OLJB

'The Black Flamingo' is a powerful moving story with many messages. The characters are amazing and the fact of how many of them change over time, coming out about what gender you like and being more mature, is amazing as it keeps the story moving. Some of the characters I didn't like because of how they acted towards Michael. I especially didn't like Jack because of how he had a relationship with Mike and he then says that he should be embarrassed for what he was wearing, but that was what made Mike say to him one of the most important and moving points in the story. The poems about being gay and coming out were very good and the last poem is so moving and true. It is about choosing what you want to be. The last best thing about the story is how people treat Michael for being gay. I think it is really important because it shows people what it is like. There is nothing wrong with it. This is one of the best books in Carnegie so far.

By Annabel Brown 7OLJB

'On the Come Up' gripped me from the first line- "I might have to kill someone tonight." This book tells the tale of the very realistic life of Brianna or Bri. All she wants to do is rap but feels under pressure to make it to the top to support her family. They have no heating and with her Mum losing her job, times are getting desperate. The only income coming in is her brother's work at the local pizza shop. Angie Thomas wrote the character of Bri well and I like her courageous spirit even if sometimes she could get a bit hot headed like her Father. I liked how this book also includes a moral at heart: Don't be racist. This is very important message which should be shared with the world. I loved this book and I think it was very insightful of what it is like to be poor. I would recommend this book for all readers and I think everyone can find something in it that they can relate to.

By Hebe Sanders 7SSHJ

At the end of every school year we count up the number of words all our students have read and use these totals for a variety of awards. I am so pleased that students have been reading and quizzing during the past few weeks, and when we come back in September, 7OLJB, 8TAJS and 9OGAF will be receiving the traditional box of chocs each for the highest word count in their year.

This year's individual winner is Rosiemay Thornhill 7TJRS with a staggering total of 6.65 million words read. Well done Rosiemay. I will present her with the trophy when we come back. Who can catch her next school year?

Finally, the House Word Count Trophy this year goes to the runaway winners – OCK, with a combined total of 51.5 million words read. Again, trophy presented in September.

Mr. Holme

Message from Mrs Prior, Director of Key Stage 4...

Year 11 are looking forward to their next chapter and with the support of dedicated JMS staff and parents, have secured various positions at JMF6, colleges and apprenticeships, but we will ensure we give them the send-off they deserve!

Please do visit our Year 10 & 11 Challenges and Achievements webpage (link below). Staff and students have been encouraged to take part in the weekly challenges and send their score to Mr Gilkes to try and get to the top of the leader board! If you need cheering up, have a look at the student & staff videos of us completing the 5,5,5 challenge!

[Year 10 and 11 challenges](#)

We are acutely aware that not all achievements are academic and would like to celebrate these with our students. We would love to receive photos, videos and written pieces, which demonstrate your child's achievements. These could be sporting achievements, completing a DIY project with a family member, baking a cake, completing a piece of art work, helping or volunteering in the local community - No achievement too big or small – don't be shy! Achievements can be sent to Mr Gilkes who will be happy to upload them to the website:

bgil7989@johnmason.oxon.sch.uk

Take care

Mrs Prior

And finally...

We are fully staffed going into next year. We recently appointed Mr Hornby as Subject Leader of Music and we are delighted to welcome him to TeamJMS. I am also delighted to announce that Miss Godfrey has been appointed as Deputy Director of Key Stage 3.

Best wishes and stay safe

Adrian Rees
Head of School
