

Friday 10th October 2025

Parent Bulletin

Dear families,

It's been a very busy week in Abingdon, and John Mason School has seen be open all hours.

It was lovely to see so many families in school for the Berlin Trip Parents Information Evening on Tuesday and then for the Year 8 Parents Information Evening on Wednesday evening. We value these opportunities to share the fantastic experiences we have with your children in watching them learn and to share the plans for upcoming events.

On Thursday it was the turn of our future families for our annual Open Evening. I was overwhelmed by the number of students who joined staff to welcome Year 6 and 5 students and their families into our school. Tim, Zara, Jasper, Charlie and Lois all spoke articulately and passionately during my 'Headteachers welcome' and the hundreds of Tour Guides and Faculty Helpers were incredible ambassadors for our community. It means a huge amount to see so many students demonstrating such pride in the work that they were showcasing. It is much more meaningful to showcase what our school is truly like when students speak with such eloquence, expressiveness, and enthusiasm.

Whether it was the enthusiasm for learning, the deep commitment to individual subjects, or the pride in our pastoral and house systems, every aspect of school life shone through. It was heartwarming to see our guests leave with broad smiles and a clear sense of what their journey at John Mason School will look like. Full of opportunity, respect, and determination.

Thank you to everyone who made the evening such a great success, staff, students, the John Mason Association, parents and every one of you who dropped off or picked up your child so that they could be part of what was a celebration of everything JMS. I am very grateful.

Best wishes.



Alastair West
Headteacher

Curriculum News

Physical Education Curriculum Update:

Students have made a fantastic start in their PE lessons this academic year. We have also been blown away by the amount of students participating in our extensive extra-curricular offer. Just this week we had over 100 students playing sport on Wednesday after school as well as fixtures on Tuesday and clubs running at lunch times.



We have also started our Sports Leaders programme for this academic year. Students will be supporting and leading the Primary cross country event next week and we have a packed programme for the remainder of the academic year. We will soon be launching our application process to be part of this programme and students will find out more via their daily slide in Term 2.

We have implemented a new process at the start of lessons which aims to increase activity time in class. '3-5-2' refers to students arriving in PE within 3 minutes, changing in 5 and being registered in 2. This then gives students maximum learning and activity time and we have really enjoyed seeing the benefits of this already.

We have also introduced a new curriculum, ensuring students rotate around many different activity areas and in Key Stage 4 offer a 'competitive' and 'participation' pathway that students can self-elect.

In Key Stage 3, we have introduced a strong emphasis on learning skills in the different activity areas. As part of our 'ME in PE' initiative, lessons and schemes of work focus on 5 developmental areas: Physical, Leading, Creative, Healthy and Thinking. Students are assessed in each of these areas and also self-assess against these areas.

Our curriculum has been mapped out for the year to cover a wide range of activities but also include House sport opportunities including our famous Country Dancing in December!

Each sport now has progressive skills mapped so that students can understand what level they are performing at based on the skills they can perform and how these increase in difficulty through from Year 7 to 9.

In GCSE PE (for Years 10 and 11), we have introduced a new marking and feedback process that gives specific targeted feedback to students that requires students to respond in order to improve their understanding and answers.

We will be holding our first ever sports awards evening later in the spring/ summer and look forward to celebrating many of the success stories of our clubs, teams and students at this event.

Thank you for your support as always.

Mr M Davies
Director of PE



Pastoral News

Welcome to Year 11, a pivotal year for your child, filled with important milestones and opportunities. As we begin, I want to highlight some key dates and the support available to help every student succeed. Over the coming months, students will take part in revision days, pre-public exams and of course their GCSEs. Events such as the Sixth Form Open Evening and Leavers' Day are designed to guide students through their next steps and celebrate their achievements.

Some key dates for your diary include: our dedicated revision morning on 14th October, and the start of pre-public exams on 10th November and again on 5th February. The Sixth Form Open Evening will be held on 27th November, with Parents' Evening following on 18th December. GCSE exams begin in April/May, and we look forward to celebrating at Leavers' Day and Prom on 26th June. Results Day is scheduled for 20th August.

Supporting your child's learning is a team effort. We encourage regular use of revision resources, including the John Mason School revision website, Seneca and Physics & Maths Tutor. Teachers will provide feedback, exam technique guidance and extra help where needed. At home, your support is invaluable, providing encouragement, a quiet space to study and emotional reassurance can make a real difference.

Wellbeing is just as important as academic progress. Our pastoral team, personal development sessions and assemblies are all in place to support students' mental health. Attendance is also crucial; students who attend regularly are far more likely to achieve their goals. Careers advice, apprenticeship workshops, and enrichment activities will be available throughout the year to help your child plan for life after Year 11.

Let's work together to make this a successful and memorable year for all our JMS family. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to get in touch we are here to support you and your child every step of the way.

Mr Ben Gilkes

Assistant Head Teacher
Progress Lead Y11

Whole School News

John Mason School Local Academy Committee: October update

Reflecting on my first year as Chair of Governors at John Mason I would like to thank everyone for making me so welcome and particularly to thank Governor colleagues for all their support and work through a busy year during which the Local Academy Committee:



- Considered school leaders' plans to progress our agreed improvement goals focusing on improving learning and teaching, celebrating positive attitudes for behaviour and attendance and refining the school's systems to secure continual improvement and success for all students;
- Used data, reports and stakeholder feedback to question leaders on the progress of their action plans;
- Reviewed proposals to develop the curriculum to ensure that students can access a wide range of subjects for GCSE while also building strong foundations in Maths and English;
- Received reports from Abingdon Learning Trust and school leaders on the school's work to support vulnerable learners, raise standards and promote good attendance;
- Visited the school to see the school's teaching and learning strategies in practice and learn more about how teachers adapt approaches to meet differing needs;
- Approved policies to ensure that statutory responsibilities are met, expectations are high and processes for support and follow up are clear;
- Heard the views of students and staff about how the school works to keep everyone safe and considered how the school uses feedback received through student, parent and staff surveys to inform improvement plans;
- Developed the Local Academy Committee by recruiting new Governors and completing training to help us support and challenge the work of school leaders.

At the first meeting this year it was a pleasure to reflect on the impact of this work and congratulate last year's exam year groups and staff for their successes on results day. Alongside the academic achievements Governors were also delighted to hear of the school's success in recruiting new staff to join our learning community.

September's meeting also saw us looking to the future; reviewing the school's vision, to confirm high ambitions for all students and to celebrate the school's diversity, history and potential. We also considered and agreed school leaders' priorities for the new year to continue the improvement journey and tackle the challenges that John Mason School, and so many schools nationally, face including irregular patterns of student attendance and some students finding it hard to meet expectations for behaviour.

Supported by Abingdon Learning Trust's central team and professional partnerships with other schools a lot of work is in progress to move improvement plans forward and to learn from and address problems encountered along the way with determination as we maintain our focus on encouraging and supporting every student to succeed.

You can find more information about Local Academy Committee Governors on the governance page of the school's [website](#) which also provides information about our role and work as part of [Abingdon Learning Trust](#).

We are always looking to expand our team and with a full complement of two parent governors now on the committee we would be delighted to welcome applications from the local business community. If you know of work or community colleagues who might be interested in a Governor role at John Mason School do please encourage them to get in touch.

*Lynn Fathers, Chair of Governors
October 2025*



Family Learning Online Workshops Nov-Dec 2025

Workshops are held online using Teams.

These workshops aim to help you feel empowered at managing those tricky situations knowing you are doing the best for your child and yourself. You will gain insight into how to strengthen your family's self-esteem and resilience; and practise strategies to encourage positive behaviour.

CODE	COURSE TITLE	START DATE	TIME
P07906	Emotional Regulation	Mon, 10/11/25	12:00 - 13:30
P07910	Positive Discipline	Mon, 17/11/25	12:00 - 13:30
P07916	Implementing Effective Routines	Mon, 24/11/25	12:00 - 13:30
P07918	Developing Resilience	Mon, 1/12/25	12:00 - 13:30

Mystified by maths? Homework a nightmare? These workshops explain the current teaching methods used to help you feel more confident in supporting your child.

P07908	Year 5 and 6 Maths - Column Addition and Subtraction	Mon, 10/11/25	19:00 - 20:30
P07912	Year 5 and 6 Maths - Multiples and Factors	Mon, 17/11/25	19:00 - 20:30
P07914	Year 5 and 6 Maths Long Multiplication	Mon, 24/11/25	19:00 - 20:30
P07920	Year 5 and 6 Maths Long Division	Mon, 1/12/25	19:00 - 20:30
P07922	Year 5 and 6 Maths - Division with remainders as a fraction or a decimal	Mon, 18/12/25	19:00 - 20:30

To enroll, contact Oxfordshire Adult Learning by phone.



01235 216 278

Visit the website and search 'Family Learning'
www.abingdon-witney.ac.uk

OX14 Learning Partnership Weekly Update

Please find the weekly update for the OX14 LP linked [here](#) for circulation and the website link here: <https://www.ox14lp.org.uk/events/>

Upcoming Important Dates:

Wednesday 15 th to Tuesday 21 st October	Open Mornings
Monday 27 th to Friday 31 st October	Half Term
Thursday 27 th November	JMF6 Open Evening at Fitzharrys 5-7pm

For a complete list of upcoming events please view the school calendar on our website here:
[Calendar - John Mason School](#)

Term dates for the academic year are on our website here:
[Term Dates - John Mason School](#)