John Mason School
OPPORTUNITY | RESPECT | DETERMINATION

Friday 16th October 2026

Parent Bulletin

Dear Families,

This week has been another busy and rewarding one at John Mason School, with students embracing opportunities both inside and outside the classroom.

Year 11 Team Building Day
Today marked our first Year 11 Team Building Day at Hill End Outdoor Education Centre near Oxford. Throughout the day, students worked collaboratively to tackle a range of challenges, including orienteering activities, shelter building and team games designed to stretch them beyond their comfort zones.

Activities were carefully chosen to develop the skills that will be crucial in the months ahead: communication, leadership, teamwork, planning, accountability, resilience and adaptability. It was fantastic to see students supporting one another, solving problems together and demonstrating the maturity and determination that will help them succeed as they approach their GCSE examinations.

With just three weeks remaining until their first set of pre-public examinations, we hope students will be able to draw upon what they have learned today as they face the challenges ahead. A huge thank you to the staff who organised and led such a valuable experience.

Getting Involved Beyond the Classroom
Our Year 11 prefects have been working hard this week to promote the wide range of extra-curricular opportunities available at JMS. They have produced posters and have been encouraging students in Years 7-10 to get involved and make the most of everything our school community has to offer.

Whether it is Badminton, Basketball, Computing Club, the JMS Big Band or one of the many other activities available, there really is something for everyone. Taking part in clubs helps students develop new skills, build friendships, strengthen their sense of belonging and discover new interests.

We strongly encourage every student to try at least one club this year and broaden both their school experience and their learning opportunities. You can view the full programme of activities on offer here.

Learning, Wellbeing and the Value of Struggle
In last week's bulletin, I wrote about mental wellbeing and the importance of helping young people build confidence, resilience and a positive sense of self. This week's assemblies built on that theme by exploring an important idea: one of the most powerful ways we improve our wellbeing is through learning itself.

Students were introduced to the concept of the "Learning Pit", which explains that genuine learning is not always comfortable. When we first encounter something new or challenging, it is normal to feel confused, uncertain or even frustrated. However, it is often by persevering through these moments of productive struggle that we experience the greatest growth.

In a world that increasingly values instant answers and immediate success, it can be tempting for young people to avoid challenge or to see difficulty as failure. We want our students to understand the opposite. Struggle, when appropriately supported, is a natural and essential part of learning. Every time a student grapples with a challenging concept, learns from mistakes, seeks support and persists, they are not only developing knowledge and skills but also strengthening their resilience, confidence and wellbeing.

By helping students to recognise that setbacks and uncertainty are normal parts of learning, we hope they become more willing to take risks, embrace challenge and develop the self-belief that they can overcome obstacles both in school and beyond. If this has sparked your interest, you can find out more about the “Learning Pit” and how we are using this idea to help your child here.

Homework and Productive Struggle
This message also links closely to homework. Early indications suggest that students across all year groups are taking their responsibility for completing homework much more seriously than in previous years. We have seen excellent levels of completion and a real commitment to producing work of a high standard.

We are incredibly proud of our students for their diligence and grateful to families for the support you provide at home. Your encouragement makes a genuine difference. Our ambition is for homework to be more than a simple tick-box exercise. We want it to provide meaningful opportunities for students to apply, practise and deepen their learning. That may sometimes mean encountering elements that are challenging and require perseverance.

At the same time, we recognise that learning at home can sometimes feel more difficult without a teacher immediately available to help. If your child is consistently experiencing barriers to learning or finding the level of challenge overwhelming, please do let us know. A note in the student planner or communication with tutors and subject teachers can help us identify problems early and provide the right support.

By working together, we can ensure that challenge remains productive, confidence continues to grow and every student is able to experience success through effort, perseverance and learning.

Thank you for all your continued support and have a great weekend,



Alastair West
Headteacher

Business Language Challenge Day

Ten of our Year 11 linguists attended a Business Language Challenge Day where they learned about the importance of foreign language and cultural knowledge in international business.

They completed a marketing challenge that involved designing a trade fair stand, flyer and advertising video, making a phone call and presenting a pitch - all in either German or Spanish.
They were judged on teamwork, meeting deadlines, creativity and consistency of their campaigns. William's team took 2nd place out of 14.

Year 8 Netball

Excellent effort from the year 8 girls at netball. They had their first ever wins against Lord Williams School 3-2 and The Oxford Academy 4-0 plus some other excellent games against local schools. They showed excellent team spirit with smiles on their faces. Their players player of the tournament went to Scout and the coaches player Sophia.

Well done to all the players.



STEM Club

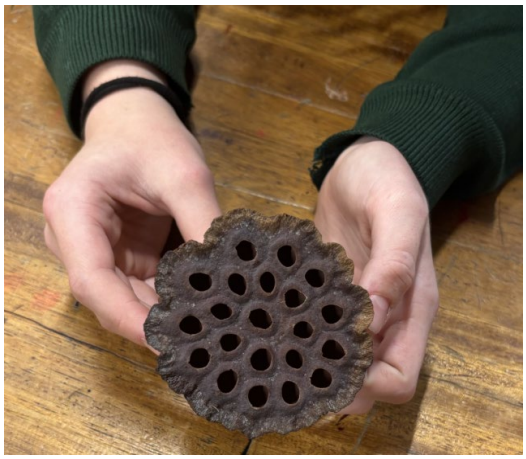
STEM Club welcomed Lauren from Oxford Botanical Gardens this week to learn about types of seed dispersal.

She brought in a variety of seeds for the club to see and hold. She brought a mixture of native and non-native seeds for us to compare.

We were amazed at the different types of seed dispersal, such as water dispersal like coconuts and even fire dispersal like Banksia seeds. We look forward to inviting Lauren back soon.









AFTERSCHOOL FOOTBALL



Year 11 football club:
the football club brings all students together, including everyone and making them feel welcome.
Fixtures across the year, Cup games & Friendlys.
Training is every Wednesday, 3:10-4pm

OUR PROGRAM:

- Feeling welcome
- Fitness
- Making friends
- Having fun

More information:
Please contact
GBorja@johnmason.school

KS3 GIRLS FOOTBALL CLUB

Want to play football with other girls?
Come along to the all girls football club!

When:
Thursdays Afterschool 3:15pm-4:05pm on the school's pitches
Please bring PE kit, football boots and shinpads.
You can sign up via MCAS
Starting after october half term



Everyone welcome!

JMS Computer Science Club

→] ***What Happens?*** Computing club features quite a few activities, usually focussed on programming computers to do things like: make games and explore what AI is capable of. They also build electronics to do things like: make a disco light, drive a small robot arm or drive a remote controlled car. Also they enter robotics competitions such as the Oxfordshire Robocon.

→] ***With Who?*** Mr Murcutt - Computer Science / IT Teacher











→] ***When?*** Club runs 15:10 - 16:30 on aa Tuesday in C13.

JMS Big Band





- Thursdays 3:10-4:15, Elgar Room
- Run by sixth form students and Mr Spacksman
- All year groups welcome
- At least grade 4 / intermediate
- Specifically looking for brass, bass and guitar instruments



JMS Orchestra

Every Monday lunchtime in Elgar Room

Run by Mr Spacksman and Mrs David

All year groups and skill levels welcome





Community News

OX14 LP

Please find the OX14 LP Weekly update.The events calendar link is here: https://www.ox14lp.org.uk/events/

November

Peer Support Lead training November 17 @ 4:00 pm - 5:00 pm Training for existing PSLs

ChallengED Event – Y8

November 18 @ 9:00 am - 1:00 pm

A collaborative team event for students in Y8 with a focus on STEM.

Please could we also draw your attention to the Atom Society Lecture series. These lectures are held locally and include talks from a range of Scientists and experts in their field. Membership is free for under 18s. We are also looking forward to the upcoming Atom festival with a series of interesting and enjoyable events. Find out more here

Upcoming Important Dates:	
Monday 26th - Friday 30th October	Half term
Monday 2nd November	Start of term 2
Monday 9th - Friday 13th November	Year 11 Pre-Public Exams

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

Facebook page link here: Facebook page