

Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2026

## Parent Bulletin

Dear families,

With one week to go before the Easter Holidays we have been blessed with warm weather this week and we've been able to open up the school field earlier than scheduled. It was great to see students out and enjoying playing together at lunchtime today and also to see them taking responsibility for making sure all litter made it to the bins! I would be grateful if you are able to make sure your child comes to school with a water bottle so that they can keep themselves hydrated. Not everyone can use the water fountains at the same time and having a water bottle means that children can avoid having to queue at the end of lunchtime.

Following up on the wonderful Arabian Nights performance, we have had a fantastic response to our appeal to fund new lights for our stage in the Main Hall. Thank you to the anonymous donation of £300 and another of £100 to our GoFundMe page. This has got us off to a fantastic start and also a huge thank you to everyone else who has already donated. Every penny helps and no matter how small, your contribution will be greatly appreciated.

It was wonderful to see so many Year 7 families in school yesterday evening. For many of you it was your first opportunity to hear from subject teachers in detail, and it was lovely to hear you talk so proudly of your children at the end of the evening. You should be proud. Year 7 have had a fantastic start to their time at JMS and they have settled into the community perfectly. It was great to hear comments like "He's just really happy" and "She has found a really nice mixture of primary school, and new friends".

In PE we are incredibly proud of students who have represented their school and county in recent weeks. The list of students who have represented the school is growing week after week and over the last two weeks we have been able to celebrate fantastic performances by Kyla and Jasmine at the English Schools Cross Country championships in Liverpool while students from across Year 9 have won on both the Basketball court and the Football pitch. Well done to everyone for taking up these fantastic opportunities and becoming fantastic ambassadors for our school.

I am delighted to share that our Senior Prefect Team will be hosting a Culture Day, celebrating the rich diversity of our school community. This is a student-led initiative. On the day, students are invited to wear clothing that reflects their culture, and there will be a range of activities during tutor time, alongside a cultural performance on the main stage at lunchtime. Having used Personal Development lessons and assemblies to reflect on concerning stories from around the world it could not be a better time for this positive, inclusive and joyful celebration, led with care and maturity by our students.

Have a great weekend. Best wishes,

Alastair West  
Headteacher



## Curriculum News

### Business Studies:

The owners of Westgate Oxford, Landsec, are running their national 'Made in...' challenge again, an annual enterprise project that brings local schools together to imagine how the city's retail spaces could evolve. It gives pupils a chance to think creatively about community needs, sustainability, and the future of the high street while developing teamwork and presentation skills.



### The challenge involves:

Pupils from three Oxfordshire schools work in teams to design a new community space for the city, centred on the theme of reimagining local retail. Teams then pitch their ideas in a Dragons' Den-style presentation, encouraging confidence, communication, and entrepreneurial thinking.

### There is a focus on impact and sustainability:

Students are encouraged to consider how retail spaces affect the wider community and environment, helping them think beyond design to social value and sustainability. Recent winning teams have created products linked to local heritage and sustainability, for example, engraved reusable water bottles that raised £500 for charity.

### The impact for pupils:

Builds real-world skills: creativity, problem-solving, teamwork, and public speaking. Connects learning to the local community and encourages pupils to see themselves as active contributors to Oxford's future.

Offers a fun, hands-on way to explore careers in design, business, and urban planning.

What our JMS students have been doing so far:

Attended various workshops to develop understanding of market research, sustainability and creative placemaking.

Had a tour of Westgate, gaining insights into how they consider the customer journey and what they do to keep the space sustainable and environmentally friendly.

Landsec staff came to school to deliver a bootcamp and help prepare students for their presentation.

Next steps: Thursday 26th March, students will deliver their presentations to judges at the Curzon Cinema.

The winning pitch will go onto the semi-finals, with the finals being held at the Landsec head office in London, in June.

### **Health and Social Care:**

In Health and social Year 10 and Year 11 students have been working very hard over the past few weeks to complete their coursework tasks in preparation for submission to the exam board. As part of their work, students have been exploring life stages and life events, developing their understanding of how people grow, develop and experience changes throughout their lives. They have shown great commitment in researching, planning and producing their coursework, and many have made excellent progress. We are very proud of the effort they have put in as they prepare to submit their work.

### **Psychology:**

Students have been exploring how psychologists explain the way we learn, and this half-term they've taken a particularly close look at major theories of learning. Most recently, students have turned their attention to Carol Dweck's mindset theory, which proposes that people tend to hold either a fixed mindset (believing abilities are set) or a growth mindset (believing abilities can develop through effort and strategies). They discussed how mindset can influence resilience, motivation, and achievement—especially in school settings.

To deepen their understanding, students designed and carried out their own small-scale research projects. These included:

Creating questionnaires to measure peers' mindsets

Forming hypotheses and testing them with real data

Reflecting on the strengths and limitations of their methods

This hands-on experience helped them see how psychological theories are investigated in practice and how evidence is gathered to support or challenge ideas.

Miss Tilley

## Whole School News



Over the last week, an [esteemed panel of judges](#) have been busy shortlisting their top 3 artworks from our 30 Year 9 entries. The Art Bytes website will be updated shortly to indicate which three artworks have been chosen to go through to the next stage - the public vote!

### **Public Vote**

From Friday 20th March – Sunday 19th April 2026 you will be able to VOTE for your favourite artwork and it is the public vote which determines each school's winner.

Winners then go forward into the next round of judging to be in with a chance of becoming a regional - or even national winner! To raise the profile of the Year 9 artists in our community, please encourage everyone to vote - students, teachers and parents/family members can all get involved.

To vote, simply go to the ArtBytes website; go to 'Browse Schools' and locate John Mason, or click the link [here](#).

Under the top 3 artworks will be a 'vote now' button. Each person may cast one vote.

Thank you  
Ms Pennington

## Culture Day

On Thursday 26 March, our Senior Prefect Team will be hosting a Culture Day to celebrate the rich diversity of our school community. Students are welcome to wear clothing that reflects their culture on this day. There will be activities during tutor time and a cultural performance on stage at lunchtime.

We are looking forward to a positive and inclusive celebration led by our students.

Thank you

Mr Ben Gilkes

Assistant Head Teacher



## OX14 Learning Partnership Weekly Update

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

Please also find details of an upcoming AI webinar for students Y11-13

### **Workplace Skills in an AI-enabled World, Wednesday, 29 April 2026, 7:00–8:00 pm – webinar on Zoom**

What skills are needed to be effective in a workplace enabled by AI? Hear from professionals who have seen AI integration from the inside: its successes, its failures, and what it really demands of the people working alongside AI. Learn what technical and non-technical skills make a difference in organisations embracing AI adoption and how to start building those skills, whether you're still at school, at university, or just starting out in your career. Panellist presentations will be followed by a live Q&A. Webinar is open to Year 11–13 students and parents from Abingdon School and our OX14 partner schools, as well as to recent Abingdon School leavers (OAs) who are either at university or in employment. Webinar registration required [here](#).



# Workplace Skills in an AI-enabled World

*What skills will you need to be effective in a workplace enabled by AI?*

Wed, 29 April 2026, 7:00–8:00 pm – on Zoom



*Hear from professionals who have seen AI adoption from the inside. Learn what skills make a difference in organisations embracing AI. Get ideas on how to start building these skills. Live Q&A follows panel talks.*

Hosted by:



Open to:

Year 11, 12, and 13 students and parents from Abingdon School and OX14 schools.

Register for webinar:



[bit.ly/AIWorkplaceSkills](https://bit.ly/AIWorkplaceSkills)

# Wear It Out!



**Abingdon  
Guildhall  
Saturday  
13th June**

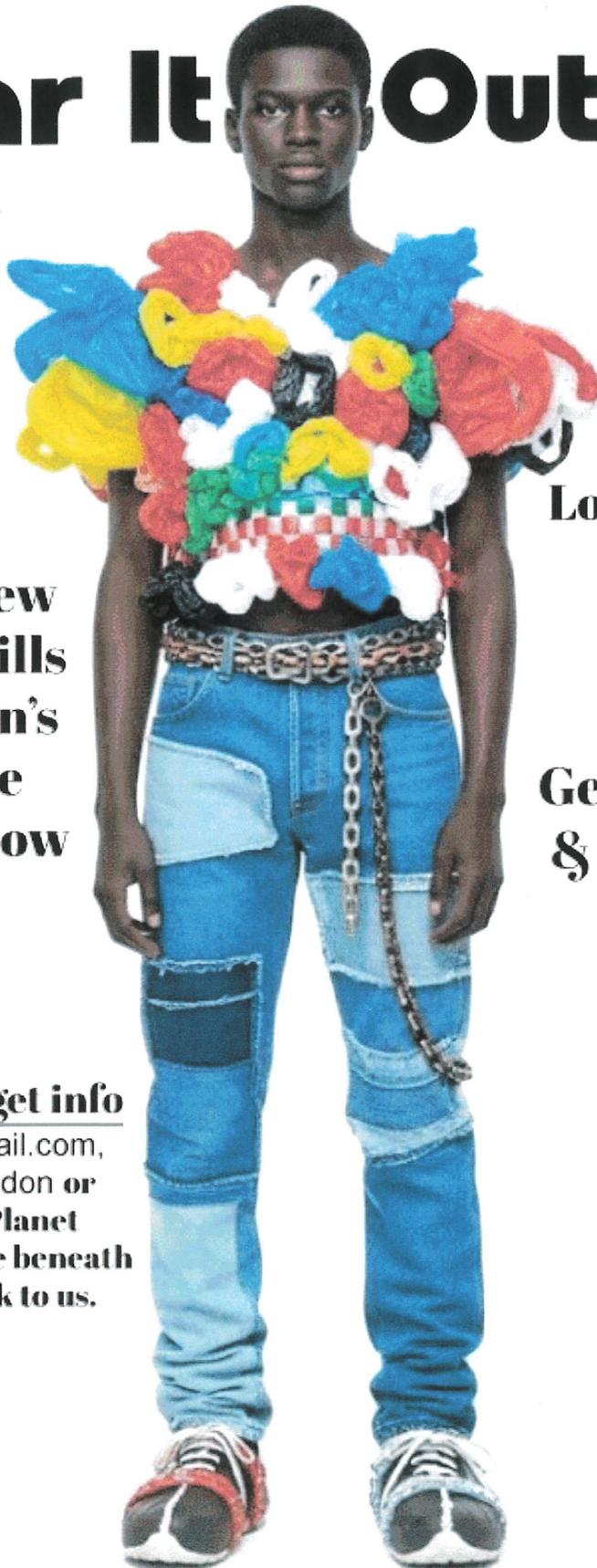
**Upcycling  
Vintage  
Retro  
Repairing  
Local Makers**

**Discover new  
hacks & skills  
at Abingdon's  
Sustainable  
Fashion Show**

**Get Creative  
& Celebrate  
your own  
personal  
style**

**Get involved / get info**  
abingdoncec@gmail.com,  
IG: @1planetabingdon or  
pop into the One Planet  
Abingdon eco-cafe beneath  
the museum & talk to us.

in collaboration with



*Scan me!*



<b>Upcoming Important Dates:</b>	
Friday 27 <sup>th</sup> March	School closes at 1.05pm
Monday 30 <sup>th</sup> March – Friday 10 <sup>th</sup> April	Easter Holidays
Monday 13 <sup>th</sup> April	New Term - All Students Return to School
Monday 20 <sup>th</sup> – Tuesday 21 <sup>st</sup> April	Year 11 Art GCSE
Monday 20 <sup>th</sup> – Friday 24 <sup>th</sup> April	Year 10 Pre-Public Exams
Wednesday 22 <sup>nd</sup> – Thursday 23 <sup>rd</sup> April	Year 11 Graphics and 3D 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](#)