

Friday 30th January 2026

Parent Bulletin

Dear families,

We have reached the halfway point in our school year and for a huge number of students this means that far more than half of this years learning has been completed. For Year 11 and Year 13, the exam season is growing ever closer and while visiting lessons I have noticed teachers helping their classes to make links between the different topics they have studied and filling in gaps where misconceptions or misunderstandings have crept in.

Across the school, when we look at students work in their exercise books I can see the care and attention that students are putting into their notes, the efforts that they have put into completing their tasks, and the time that they have spent considering the feedback they receive from their teachers before they sculpt their responses.

Beyond lessons, I am incredibly grateful for the dedication and energy shown by our fantastic PE faculties, and the many teachers from other faculties who support them. The number of fixtures both home and away that they provide for students across the year groups, and a range of sports is incredible.

It may sound like a cliché to say “it is not the winning, but the taking part that counts” however it really is true. In talking to our students before and after their fixtures I know that the pride they have in representing their school, the opportunity to spend their time with a group of like-minded teammates working together towards a common goal, and the shared memories, whether in celebration or condolence. Teams and individuals can reflect and plan how they grow and learn from their experiences and these are skills that will be valuable.

I hope you have a wonderful weekend.



Alastair West
Headteacher

Curriculum News

MFL Focus Year 9 & Year 11

As we approach final Year 9 option choices we are seeing the vast majority of pupils engaging well in their learning.

In German, we are working on the topic of school and have been doing a lot of speaking in class. In Spanish we have been working on the topic of holidays and are about to start learning the past tense.

We have advertised the Valencia trip. If you are choosing Spanish for GCSE, please sign up for this opportunity! For the German trip we will be visiting Berlin in October of Year 11. Look out at the start of year 10 for additional information.

Our Year 11 pupils are currently preparing for the final Pre-public exams. They will sit their Listening exams in class during the week beginning Monday 2nd February before sitting their Reading and Writing papers during the scheduled time.

The Speaking exam will take place for all languages on Thursday 26th February and pupils will be given a time slot for that day. It is approximately a half an hour exam with 12-15 minutes of preparation time followed by the exam itself.

Mrs Rowe
Director of MFL



Year 11 Mock Interviews

On Thursday 22nd January, Year 11 students took part in a series of Mock Interviews designed to help them develop confidence and prepare for future applications and employment opportunities. Each student participated in a small group interview, giving them the chance to practise presenting themselves in a professional setting.

During the interviews, students answered questions about themselves, their education, work experience, hobbies and interests, and their future plans. The experience encouraged them to reflect on their skills and achievements, communicate clearly, and listen thoughtfully to others. Students rose to the challenge, showing maturity, enthusiasm and ambition.

The Mock Interviews were a valuable opportunity for students to gain real-world experience, receive constructive feedback and build important life skills that will support them as they move on to further education, training or employment. Each student will shortly receive their individual feedback sheets.

We are proud of the effort and positive attitude shown by all involved.

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank those visitors from South and Vale District Councils, Boardman, Hawkins and Osborne LLP, Built Environment Schools Trust, Balfour Beatty & Tribela. Without the time of these individuals this event would not have been able to take place.

If you are interested in supporting our Careers Programme here at John Mason School please do contact Miss Gibso, lgibson@johnmason.school



World Book Day Vouchers

These will be available to collect during year 7 and 8 LRC lessons and at lunchtimes in the LRC from the 9th February (subject to availability). Trade in for a free £1 book or discount at any participating bookshop between 12th Feb - 15th March 2026.



WORLD BOOK DAY®

The reading for fun charity

5 March 2026








Choose your €1.50 book

for free!

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Books are available in shops from 12 February until 15 March 2026.

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A FACULTY OF ABINGDON & WITNEY COLLEGE



FREE Workshop! Improving Parent/Teen Relationships

Where?
John Mason School

When?
Monday 9th February 1:30 - 3:00pm

Cost?
FREE and open to John Mason parents and carers

Come along and connect with other parents, share experiences, and find support in improving your relationships with your teens.

The session content includes:

- Recognising changes in teen behaviour
- Connecting with your teen - check-ins
- Developing communication techniques
- Considering boundaries as a way to support

 **To book a place click the below link or scan the QR code and complete the Google Form**

 **For more information please contact the course tutor**

Booking Form for Parent/Teen Workshop
Lisa Knight: lisa.knight@abingdon-witney.ac.uk



Free Workshop

If you are finding the navigation of the teenage years difficult, please join our workshop and find some new approaches and strategies to help you and your family. The course is run by Lisa Knight from Abingdon and Witney College and will be a positive opportunity to meet with others, share the challenges and find some solutions. We look forward to seeing you.

Mrs Amos
Head of Inclusion

OX14 Learning Partnership Weekly Update

Please find the OX14 LP [weekly update linked here](#) for circulation and the link to the website calendar [here](#).

‘Applying for Medicine, Veterinary Medicine & Dentistry’ event.

The event is open to students in years 10-12 and will take place at St Helen and St Katharine on Wednesday 4 March from 6pm – 8pm.

The formal element of the evening will begin at 6pm in YPH, starting with a keynote speech from Dr Alice Gore (former SHSK student, qualified in 2025) followed by a talk from Cardiff University on the admissions process for Dentistry and Medicine. Students will then be split into groups for subject-specific talks.

If your students would like to attend, please direct them to complete the electronic response form [here](#).

If you or your students have any questions, please email ddarcy@shsk.org.uk



**Applying for
Medicine,
Veterinary
Medicine &
Dentistry**

**6pm Wednesday 4 March at
St Helen and St Katharine**

- **Keynote speaker Dr Alice Gore**
- **Cardiff University Admissions**
- **Subject-specific talks**
- **Question and answer**

Register via QR



ST HELEN &
ST KATHARINE

The Big Plastic Count



The Big Plastic Count is back for 2026 and you can sign up to take part NOW!

[**Sign up now!**](#)

If you've taken part in The Big Plastic Count before, it is thanks to people like you, we've counted millions of pieces of plastic to help us push for real change.

So what better way to make this year *count* than by joining the UK's biggest people-powered investigation into plastic waste once again?

Please sign up with the link above.

Upcoming Important Dates:	
Tuesday 3 rd February	Ski Trip PIE Evening
Tuesday 5 th - Friday 13 th February	Year 11 Pre-public exams
Thursday 5 th February	Year 9 Parents Evening
Week 16 th – 20 th February	Half Term
Wednesday 4 th March	Year 10 Art Pre-public Exam
Thursday 5 th March	Year 10 3D Pre-public Exam
Friday 6 th March	Year 10 Textiles Pre-public Exam

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](#)