

Friday 6th February 2026

Parent Bulletin

Dear families,

It was wonderful to see our Year 9 students making the most of the learning opportunities provided by our visitors from Thames Water and Debate Mate this week. Students engaged thoughtfully with a complex and globally significant issue, one that even experts and policymakers continue to debate. Because the topic is so closely connected to our local community and water supply, it felt particularly relevant, and students rose to the challenge brilliantly. They explored a range of possible solutions with maturity and curiosity, even when they didn't all agree on the same answer!

Year 11 have also shown exceptional ambition as they began their final set of Pre-Public Exams. I continue to be so impressed by their preparation, which reflects real maturity, focus, and determination. The commitment they have shown to their independent study serves as a fantastic example to younger students and highlights just how ready they are for the final stage of their GCSE journey.

We ended the week with our Race for Life event. The weather may not have been on our side, but our students certainly were. As the rain poured, they demonstrated resilience, positivity, and a wonderful sense of community. Thank you to every student who took part and to everyone who supported or sponsored them. Your encouragement made a real difference.

I hope you have a fantastic weekend.



Alastair West
Headteacher

Curriculum News

Thames Water Visit

All of Year 9 were visited by Thames Water and a company called Debate Mate on Wednesday 4th February. Year 9 were off timetable for the day in their tutor groups and took part in a range of engaging and exciting activities.



The visitors informed students about global issues such as water security and the consequences of not having access to water locally. Debate Mate also worked with students to develop their debating skills. The topic debated was whether or not the reservoir near Abingdon should be built.

Following this, GARD (Group Against the Development) visited JMS and presented their side of the argument, ensuring that students gained a balanced and holistic view of the issue.

Mr Conroy and the Geography team then explored the arguments for and against the reservoir development in subsequent Geography lessons.



Calling Year 9 artists!

The formal deadline for entries for this year's Art Bytes is Thursday 12th February!

Please make sure you are working on your jungle artworks at home this week (parents please encourage students to do this) to complete the illustrations.

We can make 30 entries maximum, so it may be the 30 students most organised with effort who will make it over the finish line.

Studios are open Mon-Thu for students to be working on their designs if they need access to equipment or guidance.

These are examples from previous years to help motivate!



Parents, please give permission for your child's artwork to be entered in the competition by completing this google form:

[Art Bytes Competition - Y9 Permission to enter 2026 - Google Forms](#)

Thank you
Ms Pennington

STEM Club

For World Cancer Awareness Day STEM Club were lucky to receive a visit from Enara Bio who work in cancer immunotherapy.

They explained the current research the company is doing in cancer immunotherapy and the equipment they use. The students carried out three investigations, DNA extraction, molecule structure identification and cancer tumour classification. They used different techniques and equipment such as microscopes.

The club really enjoyed meeting the scientists and were really inspired.

They want to say a big thank you to the team for the amazing investigations and gifts from the company.



OX14 Learning Partnership Weekly Update

Please find the [weekly OX14 LP update](#) for circulation. Please also find event details on the website [here](#).

Upcoming Important Dates:	
Tuesday 5 th - Friday 13 th February	Year 11 Pre-public exams
Thursday 12 th February	Deadline for Y9 Art Bytes entries
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
Week 16 th – 20 th March	Year 10 Work Experience Week
Thursday 19 th March	Year 7 parents Evening

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](#)