

Friday 9th October 2026

Parent Bulletin

Dear Families,

This week, we were delighted to welcome many prospective families to John Mason School for our Open Mornings. Following the success of our Open Evening, these events provided another opportunity for visitors to see our school in action and experience the warm, welcoming atmosphere that makes JMS so special.

As always, our student tour guides were exceptional ambassadors for our school. They spoke confidently and proudly about their experiences, answered questions with maturity and honesty, and demonstrated the values that sit at the heart of our community. In fact, it is often the case that by the time families return to Reception there are very few questions left for staff to answer. We are incredibly proud of them and grateful for the positive impression they leave with so many families.

Looking ahead, we now enter the final two weeks of what we know is a long autumn term. There is something hugely positive about this stage of the term. Students are now fully settled into routines. Morning expectations, high standards of uniform, phone hand-in procedures, punctuality and organisation have become habits rather than new expectations. Students have experienced their full timetable several times, are increasingly confident navigating their day, and are making effective use of their planners to manage homework deadlines and stay on top of their learning.

The key message for the next fortnight is simple: keep building on this positive momentum. Success at school is rarely about dramatic change. More often, it comes from consistently getting the small things right, day after day. We want every student to finish this half term strongly and carry these excellent habits forward into the months ahead.

In assemblies next week, we will be focusing on mental wellbeing and the importance of taking positive steps to look after our own mental health. Students will reflect on the NHS's Five Steps to Mental Wellbeing:

- Connect with other people
- Be physically active
- Learn new skills
- Give to others
- Pay attention to the present moment

The encouraging thing is that these are not things we ask students to do occasionally; they are already woven into the fabric of daily life at JMS. Whether through learning in lessons, participating in sport and enrichment activities, supporting friends, contributing to the wider community, or simply spending time with others, these five principles are part and parcel of the school day.

When we talk about physical health, we often discuss both the things that can make us unwell and the positive actions we can take to stay healthy, such as eating well and exercising regularly. We believe mental health should be viewed in the same way. Every person has mental health, just as every person has physical health, and we should not wait until someone is facing challenges before talking about how to look after it.

Our ambition is that these five simple steps become lifelong habits for every young person. By helping students to connect, stay active, learn, contribute and be mindful, we hope to equip them with practical strategies that support happier, calmer and more fulfilling lives, both in school and beyond.

Have a great weekend,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Al West'.

Alastair West
Headteacher

STEM Club

As part of our Black History Month celebrations, STEM Club students learned about Malithi (Milly) Hennayake, a British-Sri Lankan Chartered Civil Engineer who specialises in flood risk management, sustainable drainage systems and water engineering.

Students explored how engineers help communities prepare for and protect against flooding, before taking on their own engineering challenge set by our Senior Technician Miss Breitsprecher. Working in teams, they were tasked with designing and building flood defences to protect a model house. They had to consider how effectively their designs would prevent water from reaching the house while also thinking creatively about the materials and structures they used.

The challenge encouraged students to develop their teamwork, problem-solving and engineering skills. It was fantastic to see students testing, adapting and improving their designs as they worked towards creating the most effective flood defence.



Join the JMS Orchestra!

Do you play an instrument? Would you like to make music with others? Our JMS Orchestra is open to students of all year groups and skill levels and meets every Monday lunchtime in the Elgar Room.

Whether you're an experienced musician or just keen to get involved, we'd love to see you there!

A big thank you to our prefects for designing this fantastic poster, the first of many promoting the clubs and opportunities available across the school.



JMS Orchestra ✨

Every Monday lunchtime in Elgar Room

Run by Mr Spacksman and Mrs David

All year groups and
skill levels welcome



Invitation to the First JMA Meeting of the Academic Year

We would like to invite you to the first John Mason Association (JMA) meeting of this academic year.

This will be a great opportunity to meet our current JMA members, along with Alastair West, Headteacher. We are keen to bring together existing and prospective members to share ideas, discuss how the JMA can develop, and explore ways it can continue to support the school community.

The JMA has already made a wonderful contribution this year by funding some striking wall art for our Maths and English corridors, which you can see in the image below.



Date: Monday 12 October Time: 6.00pm to 7.00pm

Location: John Mason School

I hope you will be able to join us. We would be delighted to welcome you and hear your thoughts on the future of the JMA. If you are unable to attend in person but would still like to attend via zoom link, the details are below:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://prospect-org-uk.zoom.us/j/82582132857?pwd=yfbHKAQtDBHq0tQlkbDhjVkk5r7aS.1>

Meeting ID: 825 8213 2857

Passcode: 302987



🇪🇸 **Fluent Spanish Speakers Wanted!** 🇪🇸

Could you help inspire the next generation of linguists?

Our MFL Department is looking for fluent Spanish speakers to support GCSE and A Level students with developing their speaking skills. This is a fantastic opportunity to share your language skills, build students' confidence, and make a real difference to their learning.

Whether you're a native speaker, bilingual, or simply fluent in Spanish, we'd love to hear from you. You may even know a friend, family member, or colleague who would be interested in volunteering.

To find out more or express an interest, please contact ABalaguer@johnmason.school.

Community News

School holidays just got more exciting!

Fresh air, freedom and adventure!



Ready for a school holiday full of excitement?

Active Adventures at Youlbury is the ultimate outdoor adventure club for children aged 8-16. Packed with thrilling challenges, nature connection activities, and epic team games, each day offers a new adventure to inspire a love for the great outdoors!

www.scoutadventures.org.uk/events

Give your child an unforgettable school holiday filled with fresh air, freedom and adventure!

Set within 42 acres of stunning woodland in rural Oxfordshire at Youlbury, Boars Hill, children aged 8-16 will take part in a daily programme of non-stop outdoor action. With expert instructors leading the way, creating a safe and supportive environment where children run, climb, explore, and build confidence while unplugging from screens and having a blast with friends in the great outdoors!

What's on offer:

- High-energy adventures such as archery, ziplining, and climbing.
- Fun team building games and problem-solving challenges.
- Survival skills such as shelter building, backwoods cooking and fire lighting.
- Connect with the natural world with mindful activities, outdoors arts and crafts, wildlife spotting, and nature walks.



When is it:

- Running throughout February, Easter, May, Summer and October school holidays (see website for dates).
- 8.30am - 5.30pm daily (activities run 9am - 5pm)
- Participants can attend individual days, or the entire week.

Pricing:

£35 per day, per child. Save 10% on a 5-day block and each additional child.

Book now and join the adventure!

www.scoutadventures.org.uk/events

✉ activeadventures@scoutadventures.org.uk

📍 Scout Adventures Youlbury,
Boars Hill, Oxford OX1 5HD



Scout Adventures is owned and operated by The Scout Association.
Reg. Charity number 306101 (England and Wales). Registered address:
The Scout Association, Gilwell Park, Chingford, London, England E4 7QW

OX14 LP

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

October

[Business Language Challenge](#)

October 13 @ 9:00 am - 3:30 pm Abingdon School

Y10/11 Linguists, ask your language teacher about taking part

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:	
Wednesday 7 th October - Tuesday 13 th October	Open Mornings, Booking required by email
Monday 12 th October	JMA Meeting, all welcome
Monday 26 th - Friday 30 th October	Half term
Monday 2 nd November	Start of term 2

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](#)