

Friday 26th September 2025

Parent Bulletin

Dear families,

School uniform has looked fantastic again this week, with students arriving looking smart and ready for their day at school. I'd like to thank you for everything you do to send your children off to school in the correct uniform, with good winter jackets and not hoodies, and fully equipped for their day in school. It is this preparation that is setting students up for such high levels of success in their lessons. Seeing the students take pride in their appearance before having their school photos taken is a great reminder of how much they care about presenting their best selves.

I've had the privilege of spending time visiting lots of students in their classrooms and seeing them hard at work. Following staff training at the start of term, staff have been focusing on how they start their lessons, using Do Now Activities, and building routines. It is clear to see that this is paying dividends, and with students having learnt their timetables, and new teachers, those routines are paying off with high levels of engagement and students consistently showing great determination to produce work of the best possible standard.

Last week we sent you a letter about our Parents Teacher Association, the JMA. In your relationship with John Mason School, you are already a member of this incredible group of people, who have done an incredible job over the last 50 years in enhancing the experience of all JMS students. The support for trips and clubs has been relentless, and the JMA has close ties and a long history with the very special Welsh Farm.

I am incredibly grateful for the work that they do for the young people in our community and I would urge you that if there is any skill or amount of time that you might be able to offer in becoming a more active member of the JMA we would love to hear from you. There is no offer that is too small – and the larger number of active members we have, the greater impact we can have on the lives of all JMS students. Please take 2 minutes to complete the [JMA questionnaire](#).

Finally, we end the week by wishing our Year 8 students “Gute Reise!” with 86 of the year group heading off to Köln tomorrow evening. Having heard all about the experiences from previous years, I am sure they will have a fantastic time.

Best wishes.



Alastair West
Headteacher



YEAR 9 -Author Talk @ Larkmead

meet

Moira Buffini

Winner of the Abingdon Young Adult Book Prize

Monday 22nd September

SONGLIGHT
THEY ARE HUNTING
THOSE WHO SHINE



MOIRA BUFFINI

TORCHFIRE
ONE SPARK CAN
START A BLAZE



MOIRA BUFFINI

On Monday 22nd September, 28 students from John Mason joined other year 9s at Larkmead School for the first Abingdon Schools Author Talk of the year. This opportunity to meet Moira Buffini, author of Songlight was a great inspiration for budding writers and book lovers. They listened to Moira Buffini explaining how she built up the fictional, dystopian world in her Torch Trilogy. She provided insight into how the characters interact; choices that she had to make regarding their futures; and her interest in telepathy and relationships. Buffini introduced her new book, Torchfire book 2 of the trilogy, and Students had the opportunity to have their books signed by the award-winning author.

Our thanks go to Larkmead School and  for hosting this event.



Whole School News

STEM club

This week STEM club were investigating the level of vitamin C in different fruits and fruit juices, as it is malnutrition awareness week.

This consisted of adding drops of fruit juice to an iodine and starch mix, to see how many drops it took to turn the black colour to pale yellow/clear. Iodine is used to detect starch and turns from orange to black in the presence of starch. Vitamin C is a powerful antioxidant, turns iodine pale yellow/clear because it acts as a reducing agent in a redox reaction, donating electrons to the iodine molecules. The less drops needed to turn the mix pale yellow/clear the more vitamin C present.

Here are our results

Substance	Number of drops
Vitamin C	4
Pineapple	42
Mango Juice	40
Orange juice	43
Passion juice	23
Strawberry	90
Lemon	35
Lime	40



MCAS App Update – Action Required

We are aware that some parents have recently experienced issues accessing letters and forms via the MCAS (MyChildAtSchool) app. Thank you for your patience as we work with the app provider to resolve this.

We've been informed by the MCAS team that a new version of the app (Version 6.47) is now available on the iOS App Store as of 12:00pm on 24th September 2025. However, it may take up to 24 hours to appear for all users.

Once we are confident that the update is available to everyone, all users will be required to update to the latest version.

What parents need to do:

Please check the App Store for the latest version (6.47) of the MCAS app.

This update must be installed manually – the app will not update automatically.

If the update is not yet visible, please try again later.

Installing the latest version should resolve the access issues.

Thank you for your continued support and understanding.

CAREERS NEWS

We are pleased to announce that our Year 10 Work Experience will take place between Monday 16th March - Friday 20th March 2026.

This week allows our students hands-on learning in a work environment. As well as providing opportunities for students to explore career paths. We know that the students will use the time effectively to help improve their self-confidence in their own ability and skills, by understanding the strengths they have.

Within both assemblies and Personal Development lessons, students will be provided with the training to make their week as successful as possible. This will include how to use our online platform Unifrog to record their placement details and there will be more details to follow for Parents / Carers.

For this to be successful we do rely on companies, businesses and individuals offering our students placements. If you feel you would be able to do this please email workexperience@johnmason.school , as well as if you have any questions.

CAREERS OPPORTUNITIES

Does a legal career within an international organisation sound like something you'd be interested in? Join us for an exclusive virtual event with Clifford Chance, one of the world's leading law firms, to gain valuable insights into the profession and explore the opportunities available to kickstart your career.

Event Details:

- Event: Insight to Clifford Chance
- Date: Thursday, 2nd of October

- Time: 5:00pm - 6:30pm
- Location: Virtual
- Who Can Attend? Year 11, 12, 13 students
- Register Here:
- https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CChance_Insight



Tue 14 October, 9:30 - 10:30am

CREATIVE CRAFT Careers in Innovation and Sustainability

Discover creative craft careers that mix tradition with science, sustainability, and new tech! In this interactive event, students will explore how makers use eco-materials and innovation to shape the future.

Best linked to: Art & Design, Design & Technology, History, Geography, Science, and Maths.

[Register for Creative Craft Careers in Innovation and Sustainability](#)



Wed 15 October, 11-12pm

Flight Check: Exploring Medical Roles in AVIATION

Students will meet real aviation medical professionals. They'll discover the range of careers that combine medicine and aviation, and learn how science, health, and teamwork all play a vital role in keeping our skies safe.

Best linked to: Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Health & Social Care, PE, and Geography. [Register for Medical Roles in AVIATION](#)



FIRST STEP - Student year groups 7-9 England & Wales, S1-S3 Scotland, 8-10 Northern Ireland
Wednesday 1st October at 4.30 pm (virtual session hosted on Zoom)

[“Pitch for a Purpose: Plan the Ultimate Charity Event with HSBC”](#)

- A 45-minute briefing with the HSBC team
- Complete the career challenge at their own pace
- Certification awarded on completion
- [Register now!](#) (students)

NEXT STEP - Student year groups 10-13 England & Wales, S4-S6 Scotland, 11-14 Northern Ireland

Thursday 2nd October at 5pm (virtual session hosted on Zoom)

["HSBC and The Nature Trust UK - Nature Projects That Make a Difference"](#)

- A 45-minute virtual briefing with the HSBC team

- Complete the career challenge at their own pace
- Certification awarded on completion
- [Register now!](#) (students)

OX14 Learning Partnership Weekly Update

Your school is part of the OX14 Learning Partnership, a group of schools in the Abingdon area working to raise educational aspirations and increase collaboration by providing a range of opportunities for students and teachers to work together.

This update provides a look at upcoming events and activities. Please note that some events are for specific year groups or invited students only. We will continue to add new events to the calendar, so please check the [website](https://www.ox14lp.org.uk/events/) for further details. <https://www.ox14lp.org.uk/events/>

September 30 @ 4:00 pm - 5:00 pm

[Peer Support Lead Training](#)

Abingdon School

Existing PSLs are invited to a training session on 'Managing [...]

October 2 @ 5:30 pm - 6:30 pm

[Lecture: Professor Philomen Probert 'Why languages are similar'](#)

Amey Theatre Abingdon School

October 16 @ 9:30 am - 3:00 pm

[Business Language Challenge](#) - Teacher Sign up now open

Abingdon School

An exciting opportunity for Y10/11 linguists to take part in

Upcoming Important Dates:

Saturday 27 th September	Koln Trip (Year 8)
Wednesday 1 st October	Year 11 PIE
Tuesday 7 th October	Berlin PIE
Wednesday 8 th October	Year 8 PIE & Welsh Farm
Thursday 9 th October	Open Evening and School closes at 1.05pm Opens again at 5-8pm
Friday 10 th October	Inset Day

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](#)