

Enrichment activities at John Mason School

There are number of clubs and activities that students can take part in weekly: the current schedule of extra-curricular clubs is published on the Students and Parents tab of the website.

In addition to weekly clubs, there is a wide range of enrichment activities that take place throughout the year, in both term time and in holidays. For example in 2015-6, enrichment included 58 trips and visits – skiing, Belgium, Sorrento, France, London, Koln, Rutherford Laboratories, university visits and our Symposium project, professional sporting events, music and theatre trips, museums, our fantastic Welsh Farm adventures, Duke of Edinburgh expeditions, Aberdovey, the Old Bailey and Oxford Law Courts...to name but a few. In addition, we held a full school musical production of The Wizard of Oz, drama performance evenings, musical performances (including Music in the Park), a phenomenal Visual Arts Student Showcase, countless sporting fixtures and supported our local primaries, Carnegie Shadowing, Parents' Forum, Level Up for our most able, homework club, revision clinics and Saturday schools, college visits, Great Big First Aid Lesson Live, Digital Leaders, science club, allotment, leavers' events including two 'proms', Year 7 quiz evening, KS3 celebration 'street party', iDays, and PSHCE workshops on 'keeping safe' and sexual health and relationships.

iDays

There are four iDays a year: days when we suspend the normal timetable to allow students to benefit from a range of activities. Our iDays in summer 2016 focussed mainly on CEIAG (Careers, Information Advice and Guidance), including caring for animals at Common Leys Farm, programming Microbits, working on employability skills with Bright Futures, taking part in an Enterprise day supported by local employers, visiting Abingdon and Witney College to learn about vocational courses and apprenticeships, and taking part in a trip to Oxford University to learn about undergraduate life. In addition though, there was also an opportunity for some students to play folk music with John Spiers from Bellowhead, work out with the army, take part in unusual sports, and run the Race for Life. In addition there was a whole school sponsored walk, and trips to Germany, France and Italy.

In October this academic year, Creation Theatre came in to school to work with both Year 10 and Year 11, taking them through an interactive workshop on 'Macbeth'. Year 10 students also had workshops on revision in the afternoon, learning how to revise and how to cope with exam pressure. Year 9 students spent the day in workshops led by an external company, Cragrats, exploring career options and employability skills. Careers education was also the theme for Year 8: a number of visitors came into school to talk to students about careers, and in the 'Human Library' activity, Year 8 students quizzed our visitors about their jobs, asking questions about what led them into this career pathway, what their job involves, and questions about salary, training and working conditions. Students also engaged in team building exercises to find out about their own skills, and used computer software to research possible careers that might suit their interests, skills and aspirations.

Year 7's iDay was entitled 'Celebrating Difference', and involved a host of activities including: spending time in wheelchairs in order to experience what living with a disability would be like; considering the differences between expectations of men and women, and brainstorming why prejudice surrounding gender exists; artwork emanating out of an assembly delivered by the fabulous 'Exploring Prejudice, Tackling Fear' team; launching Operation Christmas Child; presenting on prejudice linked to faith groups, as well as many other activities. The day was hugely successful and the closing assembly saw a range of students make presentations based on what they had done over the course of the day; it was a proud moment for everyone involved in delivering and supporting sessions. Once again, Year 7 showed that they were determined to be the best they can be, and were fantastic ambassadors for John Mason School.

The sixth form spent time learning about living away from home: they learnt to cook on a budget, iron a shirt, and how to sew on buttons and turn a hem.

iDays continue to provide opportunities for students to take advantage of a different style of learning, and enrichment opportunities that are not always easy to build into the normal school day.

STEM Activities (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths)

As a school, we recognise the importance and the value of equipping our young people with skills and aspirations that link to STEM; in Oxfordshire, we are surrounded by companies looking for young people with the science, technology and engineering skills to join their work force, and the government recognises and promotes the need for schools to develop young people who can make a contribution to the development of STEM in this country. A large number of students from across the age range have been involved in trips and visits, workshops, competitions and enrichment days, some run in liaison with Abingdon School and others developed in liaison with STEM ambassadors from local science, engineering and technology industries.

The Welsh Farm

The school owns a farm in Wales, and every year we take each Year 8 tutor group away to the farm on a residential, to experience working and living together, developing personal and team working skills. Visits to the farm are the highlight of the school year, and are talked about by students for years after they have left school, as many of our parents will testify!

Duke of Edinburgh Scheme: Years 10 and 11

All students in Years 10 and 11 take part in activities linked to the DofE scheme. Not all students take up the offer of expeditions, but a large number do, leading to a high proportion of students achieving bronze and silver awards. All students however follow the DofE programme in tutor time, which includes the requirement to learn a new skill and to complete a number of hours of voluntary service. Most Year 10 students run clubs and societies for younger student to fulfil this part of the award.

Adventure Service Challenge - Years 7, 8 and 9

In Years 7-9, students work on a programme that mirrors and prepares for the DofE award. The Adventure Service Challenge is a nationally recognised award offering a flexible scheme of activities for young people:

- Adventure; to see life as an adventure
- Service: concern for others, opportunities to give help to those in need
- Challenge – progressive training activities.

Students work towards their bronze award in Year 7 and silver in Years 8 and 9

Able, Gifted and Talented Students

Level Up is a program designed for our able and gifted young people, designed to stimulate their love of learning both within and beyond the curriculum. It comprises students on the AGT register and any other student who wishes to be a part of the group. Level Up sessions run every week, designed to give the students a breadth of knowledge beyond the curriculum, but also using and developing their curriculum-related skills; for example, in the past, students have built websites, made gherkins glow, learnt a new alphabet and knitted with their arms as knitting needles! Level Up has strong links with Trinity College at Oxford University. Students who attend Level Up club take part in Project Level Up: a research-based project running over a term. Students choose their topic and are given ideas of how to research; they then share what they have found from research, at an exhibition which is open to parents.

Symposium: Symposium is part of John Mason's *Level-Up* provision. In collaboration between John Mason School and The Oxford Academy, some of the most talented students of English and Literature from Years 7 and 8 take part in a series of workshops focussed on such topics as: ways of reading and literary theory, post-modernism, the evolution of British poetry and a philosophical enquiry into 'what is truth?' It is hoped that future *Symposia* will cover a range of subjects and topics.

The above offers a flavour of the wide range of enrichment activities on offer for our students. We believe strongly that enriching the curriculum in this way supports our aims as a school to provide quality learning experiences which encourage students to become academically successful, happy, confident and enquiring young people, with the potential to make a difference in the world, to be ambitious in their career choices and to understand their place in society.