



## Your Child, Your School, Your Voice

### Heads Up!

Dear Parents and Carers,

As you may know I am a keen, if amateur, runner. For me running is a simple pleasure; I run with my best friend and we chat about life, in any weather (we have been known to run in the ice and snow with socks over our trainers for grip), and we laugh. A lot. Mr. Webber, cover teacher and neighbour has often remarked that we are the only people he sees running and smiling at the same time, usually with arms wildly gesticulating as we catch up on this and that. But we have also cried and run; when Kerry lost her much loved Dad, when family have been ill or when either of us have just had the need. So is this a Heads Up about exercise or friendship? Well I suppose, unexpectedly for me, it is about both.

The power of exercise and sport is immense; I have seen in recent weeks our students compete in county championships in rounders, athletics, swimming, cricket, aquathlon, tennis, softball – with great success and pride. Our children have broken records and won championships, as well as being recognised by other schools for their sportsmanship. I see determination, resilience, endeavour and grace; the discipline learned from training and practising their sport, as well as the manners and respect for their fellow competitors. I wonder what it is about sport that brings out this in our young people?

Scientifically I am sure you all know about endorphins and how we feel after exercise; for me it is a sense of elation, high energy and feeling alert. I make sharper decisions, I sleep better, I have a sense of well-being. I was that woman that said, 'I can't run,' and then ran 3 marathons (4<sup>th</sup> in October), not with strict regimes and personal trainers, but just by putting one foot in front of the other again...and again...and again.

When our students take part in sport or exercise they learn better – I have always said that students need to burn off energy and emotional baggage before they come into the classroom – it just makes sense. But also they learn about not giving up and goal setting. Years ago I listened to Linford Christie talk about how he prepares himself mentally for his race and he explained future basing. This is the process of imagining himself crossing the finish line and winning gold. He then works back each step of his race, removing mentally each obstacle and envisioning himself as he comes out of the blocks, the way his arms would move, the stride he would need. In doing so he was ready to win; mentally he already had. Here perhaps is what sport gives children in their crucial years – self-belief and mental strength. For a generation that is more aware than ever of their mental health and the impact of conditions such as anxiety on their well-being, I wonder how we can encourage every child to be more active in a time when the lure of social media and gaming has encouraged them to be more sedentary? How can we encourage them to meet their friends in person rather than virtually, and ride a bike, or play a game of football or have a swim?

Maybe that is down to us; I know lots of you are very active – I have seen you pounding the streets in Lycra, or pedalling hard up Lodge Hill, or at the Do-Jo or Leisure Centre. What you are doing is modelling it for your children, showing them that exercise is a great part of life. When they are younger it seemed natural to take them to the park or for a swim, but how do you keep that going in their teenage years? It can be a bit trickier when it is not cool to rock up with your Mum or Dad in middle aged bathers, can't it?

That is where friends come in, what a gift to laugh and let off steam with our friends, as precious as family as we get older. Teenagers need their friends, and they need to exercise in some way; they tell each other things that they would never tell us, and keep each other safe, they reassure each other through the anxieties of being a teen and laugh, boy do they laugh. What a joy that someone loves our child probably as much as we do and will stick by them.

I am sure you have someone like that in your life; a hugger, a belly-laughter, family.

So encourage your teen to be active with their friends this summer if you can – drop them at the pool, get the bike tyres pumped or arrange for them to try something new together – maybe they'll even let you join in.

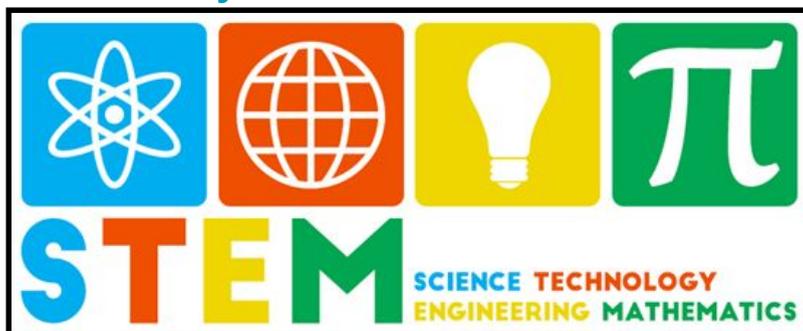
That's all from me, have a good weekend.

**Sarah Brinkley**

Follow me on Twitter: @HeadteacherJMS

## Teaching & Learning:

### Focus on the Science Faculty



This year the science faculty has continued to develop the science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) enrichment programme here at John Mason School.

This has stretched across all year groups and has included competitions, activities run in school, a huge celebration of science week and many trips out.

Below are a few highlights of the events this year:



We have had approximately 30 students achieve either a Discovery or Bronze CREST Awards this year. The upcoming i-Day's will include an opportunity for year 8 students to achieve a Discovery Award as they complete the Squashed Tomato Challenge! 'I really enjoyed the Faraday Challenge, we got to work together as a team and try lots of activities. I am really pleased to have been awarded a Discovery Award.' Hudson Baker Y8

We would like to celebrate the success of students who took part in the Royal Society of Biology challenges.

Congratulations to the students from year 9 and 10 who took part in the Biology Challenge and received awards ranging from Commended to Gold. 40,000 students took part in this event during Science Week - Joseph Pumphrey, Daniel Doran, and Thomas Fry were among the 5.4% of students to achieve a Gold Award. Well done! 'The Biology Challenge was challenging but highly enjoyable. I would recommend it to year 9 and 10 students interested in Biology next year!' Tom Fry Y10.

Congratulations also to the students in year 12 who took part in the Intermediate Biology Olympiad and received awards ranging from Commended to Silver. Over 5600 students took part in the event; Dylan Everett was among the 9.7% of students who achieved a Silver Award – Congratulations Dylan!



**UNIVERSITY OF  
CAMBRIDGE**

Congratulations to the year 12 students who took part in the Cambridge Chemistry Challenge (C3L6) competition run by University of Cambridge Department of Chemistry. It is designed to test student's problem solving ability and apply the science that they have learnt in lessons to unfamiliar topical contexts. The competition was entered by 7000 of the top

Chemistry students from around the country. Tom Hehir, Phoebe Becket and Ieuan Hallas were all awarded a silver certificate placing them in the top 25% of competitors from around the country. Ruth Foulsham, Harry Gledhill and Vanessa Hyde were all awarded a copper certificate, a very worthy achievement. 'The challenge has really helped

me develop my knowledge and understanding of chemistry and physics and has made me even more interested in the subject.' Millie Lyon Y10

Visits to RAL are a fabulous opportunity to see world-leading research facilities that are used by teams from around the world, and to meet with the scientists and engineers using them. We have been lucky enough to send year 7, 8 and 10 students to various events at RAL ranging from Chemistry at work to inspirational days to support women in science. The days have included tours, hands-on activities and fantastic talks.



'My day at RAL was fantastic and I realised how important chemistry is in everyday life. I went on to do my work experience there and saw what a career in chemistry would look like. I would definitely recommend going' Millie Lyon Y10



John Mason took part in the ATOM festival this year and even hosted a guest speaker for sixth form students from across on town.



'During the programme run by Young Engineers we made wind-powered turbines, battery powered cars and researched the best kind of renewable energy for Sweden, California and the UK. Each time we had to come up with the best design or idea and modify and tweak little bits. We also looked at potential energy and energy in food and units like kilojoules and calories. We had a separate challenge for each activity and I enjoyed them all. It was a really fun day and well worth it.' Emma Bispham Year 8.

Y9 and Y11-13 have visited the Museum of Natural History to listen to lectures including 'The Science of the DNA Code' by Professor Jane Mellor Department of Biochemistry and a series on Plant Science.





Y9-Y11 students have been taking part in an Astronomy GCSE at Abingdon School, which has included a Space Science Masterclass where students got a real insight Human Space Exploration and tried out real space suits! Abingdon has also hosted an Electronics taster day and a NSA Chemistry Masterclass based around "Martian Chemistry".

## 06 GALLERY

We would like to say a huge THANKYOU for the wonderful turn out to the ART-BEAT 2017 exhibition to help us celebrate the excellent work and creative achievements of our GCSE and A 'Level Art and Design students. The exhibition was open to the public over five days and received rave reviews from the Abingdon community.



"its incredible to see what young people are capable of creating"

"We live next door and love to see the Art here. We will be back next year too"

"The work is astounding, there is so much variety"

We would like to congratulate all our students for their hard work over the course of their creative Exams for an inspiring body of work. Congratulations and the 2017 award for greatest improvement shown as a result of personal Endeavour in Art and Graphics and Textiles go to Jessie Gibbard, Megan Underwood and Sophie Barker respectively.

## End of Term Activities: iDays

As last year, we are dedicating the last few days of term to iDays (Inquiry Days). This allows us to schedule activities and opportunities which support and enrich the curriculum, and provide a positive and enjoyable end to the year. Here you will find an overview of the activities for each year group.

### Year 7

**Friday 14<sup>th</sup> July: Enterprise Day:** Students will spend the day in school, designing, marketing and pitching a new mobile phone app. We welcome Steve Travis from Vodafone, who will give students an insight into the world of business and industry, and assist them in their consideration of design, marketing and finance. At the end of the day, students will pitch their design, *Dragon's Den* style!

**Monday 17<sup>th</sup> July: Leadership Day:** Students will spend the day at Abingdon School, just a short walk round the corner. The day will focus on developing leadership skills and confidence, as students work on projects in teams. (If you have ever watched *The Apprentice*, you will get the idea). Andrew Langdale, CEO of TMA (*The Management Academy*) will lead the day. We are encouraging students to wear 'business dress' for the day- smart trousers or skirt, a shirt or smart top/blouse and smart shoes- so that they can imagine themselves in the workplace.

Both of our visitors on Monday and Tuesday are keen to work with our young people to help us develop what employers refer to as 'soft skills': leadership, teamwork, communication, resilience and initiative. All of these skills are highly valued by employers, and they also make for successful learners, so we are really pleased that students have this opportunity to learn and develop these valuable, transferable skills.

**Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> July: Trip to Cotswold Wildlife Park:** This trip gives students a chance to develop the Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural aspect of their education here at John Mason by taking part in educational talks and participating in some of the activities that the park has to offer.

**Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> July: Team Games day:** On the school field: an active and fun way to end the year and win some house points too.

### Year 8

**Friday 14<sup>th</sup> July: Leadership Day:** (see above, as for Year 7). The day will be based at Abingdon School and we are asking students to come in smart 'business dress' to reflect the way they might work in business or industry.

**Monday 17<sup>th</sup> July: Wellbeing Day:** The day will focus on physical and mental health, with students learning about nutrition, fitness, and mindfulness.

**Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> July and Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> July:** On each of these two days, the year group will take part in two activities, one on the Tuesday and the other on the Wednesday. Each day, half the year group will visit a Hindu Temple (to support their learning in RS) and the other half of the year group will stay in school, participating in a science activity led by Science Oxford. The day will lead to all students who take part receiving a CREST award ( See: <http://www.crestawards.org/>).

### Year 9

All Year 9 iDays are dedicated to learning about new GCSE option subjects. Each day, students will have an introduction to their chosen subjects with specialist teachers, to get them ready and enthused for their new courses studies in September. Most days are in school, and parents will have received information about any trips that are running on these days.

**Friday 14<sup>th</sup> July: Option Box B:** French, Spanish, German, Art, Business, Sociology, Preparation for Working Life

**Monday 17<sup>th</sup> July: Option Box C:** Music, Geography, Media, Business, PE, Separate Sciences, Psychology

**Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> July: Option Box A:** Separate Sciences, Geography, Performing Arts, Art, Media, History (trip to London); Creative IT.

**Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> July: Option Box D:** Textiles, Food, Graphics, 3D Design, Computer Science, History (trip to London) , Art, Separate Sciences.

### Year 10

We have a range of activities planned for the end of the year which aim to provide the opportunity for Year 10 students to develop personal skills and core subject improvement, as well as keeping one eye on their futures with information, advice and guidance about career options. It is a broad and varied programme, which is aimed at all students.

**Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> July: Visit to "Destinations Expo" in Swindon:** This is a trip during the school day, for all students, to a careers fair in Swindon. Students will have the opportunity to discuss their career aspirations with representatives from a wide range of businesses, universities, colleges and training providers, and talk to over 60 employers about jobs, apprenticeships and careers. The day promises to be interactive and informative. Students will need to wear school uniform and bring a packed lunch.

In addition to this trip, we have put together an "iDay" (Inquiry Day) programme for Year 10. Details are as follows:

**Friday 14<sup>th</sup> July – Core Subject Activities Day at Thorpe Park:** All students have been invited to attend this trip, where there will be allocated activities focused on either Maths, Science or English, alongside, of course, the chance to enjoy the rides for which the park is most famous.

We will leave school at approximately 7.30am and travel by coach to the park arriving back at John Mason School by approximately 6pm.

On the trip students will be permitted to go around the park in small groups when they are not taking part in the curricular element that is provided by the park. Students will need to bring a packed lunch and plenty to drink. We recommend they also bring a waterproof coat and or sun protection cream in anticipation of the weather.

Students who are not attending the trip will be working on activities in school which are designed to support their communication, maths and team working skills.

**Monday 17<sup>th</sup> July – Careers Advice Day:** Following the visit to Swindon, students will be involved in a small range of specialised careers based activities. As part of this, those students who are interested in following a particular trade

after leaving Year 11 will be taking part in workshops based on, for example, the construction industry. There will also be an introduction to local further education courses for interested students.

**Tuesday 18th July – Enrichment Day at the Cotswold Wildlife Park:** This trip gives students a chance to develop the Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural aspect of their education here at John Mason by taking part in educational talks and participating in some of the activities that the park has to offer. It also forms part of their extended Social Education, where students have previously studied human and animal rights. Students will leave John Mason at 9.30am and return at approximately 3pm.

Students who are not attending the trip will have the opportunity to join in with some of the Year 9 GCSE induction days in school, where they can provide some support and guidance to younger students as well as developing their own curriculum skills.

**Wednesday 19th July – Leadership and the local environment:** Building on the work that we have been doing this year as part of their Duke of Edinburgh awards, and on the recent leadership and community projects, the whole year will go on an extended walk around Abingdon and the surrounding area, taking part in a number of challenges which will test their teamwork and leadership skills. The day will be non-uniform and as the students will be outside all day, they will need to dress and equip themselves accordingly. There will be a BBQ arranged for lunch, although students might wish to bring snacks and drinks. There will also be an opportunity for students to bring their own dogs, subject to the conditions laid out in the reply slip.

## Year 11 Leavers

It is a defining day in the life of all Year 11 students – Leavers Day.

A morning spent reminiscing over old photos, key events of their time at John Mason, and the inevitable shirt signing ceremony allowed students and teachers to say their goodbyes. And then back home for the lengthy preparation for prom, and a night spent letting their hair down. This current crop managed both of these events in their typically mature, adult and charming way – recognising that things are about to change, but being proud and happy for the part they all played in the memories that have been created.

We are all very proud of these students, and the school will miss them greatly.

*Mr Duckham, Head of Year 11*



## Dates for your Diary:

Thursday 13th July: Argentan trip leaves;  
Friday 14th July: Year 8 Welsh Farm trips end;  
Friday 14th July: i-Day;  
Sunday 16th July: Koln trip leaves;  
Monday 17th July: i-Day;  
Tuesday 18th July: i-Day;  
Wednesday 19th July: i-Day;  
Thursday 20th July: term ends at 1.10pm;

## Community News:

**abingdon camera club**  
**PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION**  
2017

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**1st Prize £50**  
2nd Prize £20 - 3rd Prize £10

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2016 prize winners:

			
<i>The Carousel</i> Pawel Majewski Winner	<i>Sea Swing</i> Chris Deeney Runner-up	<i>Studland Bay</i> Chloe Newman Winner Under 16	<i>The Thinker</i> Stan Majewski Runner-up Under 16

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**Categories: Adults and Under 16**  
ENTRY FREE  
Entry forms and rules available online at:  
[www.abingdoncameraclub.org.uk](http://www.abingdoncameraclub.org.uk)  
or from: Abingdon Library and Abingdon Town Council Offices

**Closing Date: Noon, Sat 2<sup>nd</sup> Sept 2017**

Best print per entrant to be exhibited in September  
alongside the winning photos at Abingdon's Free Space, in  
the Precinct