



## Your Child, Your School, Your Voice

### Heads Up!

Dear Parents and Carers

Thank you so much for your attendance at our 'PIEs' – Parent Information Evenings – this week. I have been overwhelmed with the many positive comments from parents about the great start to the year ahead. If you haven't already done so this academic year, please take five minutes to complete the Parent view questionnaire on the link attached.

<https://parentview.ofsted.gov.uk/>



We have also this week held our KS4 and 5 Celebration Evening which was a wonderful affair. We invited along Richard Buck, Olympic 4 x 400m athlete and silver world indoor medallist, to present the awards and talk about the rise and fall of professional sport. I hope you will forgive me for cheating a little with this week's Heads Up and including my speech from last night – it says what I want to this week:

'Tonight, students past and present, I stand here representing all of your teachers - English, maths, science, technology, PE, languages, music, drama, IT, art, philosophy, psychology– many are sat with you – but it would have been a rather crowded stage if we let them all get up – I have a message from them for you; they wanted to say, 'Thank you' 'Well done' 'You did it' 'I told you so' 'I believed in you' 'We are so proud of what you have achieved.' Tonight we celebrate you and your part in our school's history.



I have often said that it is a privilege to be a Headteacher, I thought tonight I would explain why – but I might start with a question for you all:

What would the child you once were think of the adult you have become?

I was never a quiet child, always singing my mum tells me, always active. I loved to cook with my Grandma, who always smelt of cinnamon – even now the smell evokes warm memories of being in her kitchen. I have two brothers and we fought like Tom and Jerry, cartoon style with exaggerated gestures and childish cruelty. Calling out for parental assistance, 'Mum, he hit me...Mum she took the wheels off my skateboard...you get the picture. I was a tomboy, up a tree, playing football to the point where my next door neighbours, an elderly couple who were a little hard of hearing, thought I was a boy called Trevor.

As the only girl I learnt very quickly that my gender had absolutely no bearing on how I should be treated in life; as far as my brothers were concerned, sibling rivalry was sibling rivalry and a scrap was a scrap, boys or girls. When I look back at pictures of myself, what clues are there to the adult I would become, to the person I am? I liked books, I was quite confident, loved sport – maybe more than I first thought!

So much of our childhood is shaped by the people around us and our aspirations are too, perhaps also our heroes – mine was Daley Thompson, – but, as a white teenage girl, my chances of becoming a black, male Olympic Decathlete were slim to say the least. I knew I wanted to be a great cook as my Mum, a chef, always fed us so well; I knew I wanted to be a parent and I knew I wanted to work with people as they seemed so much more fun than a desk. My initial career aim was to be a police officer, sometimes not so far removed from Headteacher perhaps, but what kind of human being did I want to be?

By the time I was sat where you are now between 16 – 18, I was roughly shaped, I had been moulded by the many experiences of childhood, not completely, but substantially, even if I didn't realise it at the time. School, for better or for worse, influences the adult you will become. Indeed, your school achievements – the reason we are here today, are part of your make up; they open doors, they show you can be writers, artists, scientists, coaches... But the other parts of you, the character we learn along the way - the essential skills of resilience, good humour, kindness to others, to be patient, to be tolerant of others, to choose love over hate – the qualities young people like Luke leaves as his legacy - these are the things that make us who we are, these are the things that people see in you.

As I stand and look at you now, I see you – and I am so proud of all that you have achieved and become. That is the privilege of being a Headteacher. I see you when you arrive at 11 with enormous rucksacks and trepidation and I see you leave at 16 or 18 shaped by all that you have achieved and experienced.

Students of John Mason School, we are all so proud of you. Tonight we recognise those skills, talents and abilities that have been nurtured and developed throughout your time with us, with the family, friends and teachers who supported you. Never believe anyone that says, 'you are not good enough', you have already shown us, you are.'

Well done to all of our students for your considerable achievements last year. That's all from me,

Have a good weekend,

**Sarah Brinkley**

Follow me on Twitter: @HeadteacherJMS



## Focus On

### Teaching and Learning

What a pleasure it has been, this week as always, to walk into lessons this week and to see our students fully engaged in their learning! Students in all year groups have settled in very well to the new school year, and whatever the challenge, whether it is starting Year 7 with all the changes and uncertainty this may have brought, or beginning new option subjects or A level courses, students have embraced it with enthusiasm and resilience.

I hope that parents feel equally positive about the start to the year, and for those who attended the Parents' Information Evenings this week; I hope that you also feel well informed about the year ahead and able to support your children's learning over the coming months. There are two more Parents Information Evenings to come: Year 12 on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> September and Year 11 on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup>. Please do come along to hear about the year ahead, and information on assessment, independent study and enrichment opportunities. For those of you who are parents of students in Years 7, 8, 9 or 10: thank you for coming this week. The presentations for these year groups are now on the school website, under the Students/Parents section.

### Student Planners

Please take a moment to look through the new Student Planners: there is a new version for both sixth form and for students in Years 7-11. These have been designed by students themselves, and are now even more useful than before as an organisation and communication tool. Planners in Years 7-11 are now in House colours, with new pages to help support learning.

### Planners in Key Stage 3 and 4

The weekly homework page is clearly set out and easy to use. Even though we now set homework on Show My Homework, it is important that students record their weekly tasks here so that they can see them all at a glance -and

more importantly, they can see and be reminded of the deadline. Only a brief title is needed (e.g. "Maths homework on fractions") as the more detailed outline of the homework will be on *Show My Homework*.

Please note that there have been some issues with *Show My Homework* this week, and we hope that this has not caused too much confusion or uncertainty.

Every week there is a page for students to record particular achievements for the week, and any targets or challenges for the week ahead. This is something that can be discussed at home, perhaps at the weekend, when looking forward to the week ahead or reflecting on the last few days. Tutors will also allow time in tutor period for some reflection every week. Recognising achievements, however small, helps boost self-esteem and motivation, so this page is important. Parents can also see on this page the reading that has been completed during the week in afternoon DEAR time (Drop Everything and Read).

On page 29 you will see "My Learning Profile": a page for students to record, for their teachers, ways they would prefer to be supported in the classroom or in homework, and any information about barriers to learning. Once again this is a page that can usefully be discussed at home. It is also worth looking together at the JMS Mission statement (page 2): this is a space for students to record their ambitions and aspirations: it is always useful for us to know these so that we can support them towards realising their aims.

Another new addition is the Attendance Kite Mark (page 12). Students will receive stickers from their tutor every term so that they can track their attendance. Those who achieve an attendance figure of 95% and above will be invited to recognition events.

For students in Years 8 and 9 the 'Passport' (pages 20-22) remains a useful way to recognise achievements against our school values, supporting the development of the 'soft' skills that are so very useful for employability and for adult life. (Year 7 students will be engaged on a different programme called *PixL Edge*, which Mr. Davies, Assistant Head, will lead; Years 10 and 11 have the Duke of Edinburgh scheme to work towards which develops these same skills.)

Finally, there are helpful subject specific pages at the back of The Planner which can be used to support learning: it's worth checking these regularly to these to see what might be useful.

## Equipment

We have been talking to students and parents this week about the importance of being well equipped for the school day. Here once again is the equipment list for students in Years 7-11:

- Black biro or black handwriting pen (spare pens are recommended). Blue pens are also acceptable.
- Pencils
- Pencil sharpener
- Eraser
- Ruler
- Green biro (or green fibre tip, fine line pen) - for self-assessment
- Purple biro (or purple fine line fibre tip pen)- for response to teacher feedback
- Protractor
- Scientific calculator (our recommended model is the Casio fx-83GT or the Casio fx-85GT)
- Small glue stick
- Headphones

If parents could check please check that students have the above in their bags every day it would help students to engage fully and promptly in learning. Stationery can be bought from the LRC (school library) at break and lunchtime any day, for very reasonable prices.

In closing, I would like to thank all of our parents for their considerable support. Mrs. Brinkley said to Year 7 parents this week that students were a 'real credit' to them: enthusiastic, well behaved, keen to learn, smartly dressed.....This is true for the vast majority of our school community. The positive ethos that characterises John Mason School has been very much in evidence this week, and we could not sustain this without your support.

I look forward to meeting more of you at the Parent Information evenings next week, but do not hesitate to get in touch with me if there are issues relating to teaching and learning- or the curriculum –in the coming months.

*Valerie Munro, Deputy Headteacher*



2017 arts & crafts  
prize for schools

Ardington School of Crafts  
The school of excellence for students of the 21st century

 Ardington  
School of Crafts  
Traditional and Contemporary

## POSITIVELY BRILLIANT!

We are so proud that so many JMS Visual Arts students have been selected as Finalists in the 2017 Arts and Crafts Prize for Schools, co-ordinated by Ardington School of Crafts. This year's competition theme was 'Positivity' and allowed students to explain the concepts behind their artworks that reflected a response to the theme.

Ten Year 11, 12 & 13 Art and design students made it through to the final selection of 20 artworks. Their work is currently on public display at Ardington School, alongside the other finalists from across the county, throughout September.

We were thrilled to find out this week that First Prize of £250 has been awarded to Lottie Harper (Year 13) for her 'Brain box' graphic design piece depicting mental health conditions. 3rd Prize was awarded to another Year 13 JMS student – Sophie Barker, for a textile art piece communicating the bravery of the fight against cancer.

The exhibition is open Wednesday - Sunday 9:30am-4:30pm if you would like to visit and see some of the amazing artworks. Ardington School of Crafts offers a wealth of art and design courses through the year accessible to all ages and abilities – details are on their website. Visitors to the exhibition may vote for a 'People's Choice' Award, giving all the students an additional chance to win a prize.

Congratulations to all the students who entered and to the successful finalists.

Below is Lottie's winning entry:

### Brain Box

I created my Brain Box in order to raise awareness for mental health conditions. I researched different ways that mental health had been presented in the media and presented to society as a whole. I felt that the way it was portrayed in the media was quite dark. I think this portrayal contributes to the struggle, discouraging sufferers to talk about it or seek help, as it is viewed in a negative way and fear surrounds it. My aim through this piece is to remove the stigma surrounding mental health conditions. I chose to present it using bright colours to encourage a positive outlook, so it's not viewed as a taboo subject. The physical textures and forms of the brains are designed to help others understand how each illness feels through the physical representation of the emotion. I wanted something that stimulated the senses – physically, mentally and visually - to grab attention, provoke conversation and encourage those suffering to ask for help and understand there is non-judgmental support available. I have already seen impact from the piece being on display in my school gallery - many people have stopped, talked and asked questions, and I've even had requests from psychology professionals to be able to use it! This has given me a great sense of pride and achievement. I hope others continue to learn from it.



### Learning to Lead

This year, we are launching an exciting project in regard to student leadership opportunities.

Students will be receiving an assembly during the week of 18<sup>th</sup> September from our newly appointed Head Boy and Girl (Ben Holt and Olivia Hancock). The assembly will provide details on how students can be part of this project.

Students will have the opportunity to apply to become either a Year Ambassador or Faculty Ambassador. Students wanting to apply can do so in writing explaining why they would like to take on such a role. Applications should go directly to the Head of Year or Director of Faculty by Friday 29<sup>th</sup> September.

We will then hold our Student Leadership Conference where student teams will be trained and write their plans for change for the year.

We look forward to updating you in due course.

Mat Davies  
Assistant Head

## Great opportunity for girls in year 11-13!

Are you female and considering a technical apprenticeship within the manufacturing industry to commence in September 2018? If so, this programme is for you. Experience the day to day challenges encountered by our engineers and technical apprentices in our fascinating world class factories through this exciting and unique opportunity.

Girls Go Technical is for young ladies between the ages of 15 and 24 (minimum year 11 in September 2017). There are a limited number of places available on the programme which will run during the October half term holiday, week commencing 23rd October 2017.

Those attending will be taken on a tour around two of the three manufacturing sites; Plant Oxford where MINI is built. Plant Hams Hall, where engines are assembled and Plant Swindon, the body and pressings plant. You will spend four days at the heart of our operations, two at the site closest to your home region for in-depth work experience, and two at Plant Oxford. Participants based at the Oxford Plant will be offered an optional tour of Plant Swindon.

This is a great opportunity. For more information and details about how to apply go to:  
[https://bmwgroup.jobs/en\\_gb/job?ref=170000Q4](https://bmwgroup.jobs/en_gb/job?ref=170000Q4)

Mr P Scutt  
Lead Practitioner: STEM Ambassador

## SCHOOL SCIENCE PRIZE

Are you in year 9? Why not enter this amazing competition? To enter you need to write a 500 word essay entitled "Why I love science". Everyone gets a certificate and the best 15 are invited to visit the high power lasers at RAL, with the overall winner receiving an iPad mini.

Essays should be sent to [p.scutt@johnmason.oxon.sch.uk](mailto:p.scutt@johnmason.oxon.sch.uk)

Closing date is 19 November

## Dates for your Diary:

We make every effort to keep our calendar on our website up-to-date: click here to view: [JMS website](#).

Girls sports fixtures:

Netball = Yr8,9,10,11 Weds 27<sup>th</sup> Sept vs Fitz

Football = U13 Thurs 28<sup>th</sup> Sept vs The Marlborough, (home)

Mon 2<sup>nd</sup> Oct vs Cherwell (Home)

## SPORTS CLUBS

Clubs to start Monday 18th September

DAY	Lunchtime Sportshall	Afterschool
<b>Monday</b>	Volleyball All years (LG&LS) Table tennis All years (JD)	
<b>Tuesday</b>	YR7&8 NETBALL (LG&LS) YR 9 Football (Gym) (MD)	YR8 Football (AC) Girls football (LG)
<b>Wednesday</b>	KS3 Basketball (JH)	Netball (LG&LS)
<b>Thursday</b>	YR9+ NETBALL (LG&LS)	Volleyball All years (LG&LS) Rugby Yr8 (JD)
<b>Friday</b>	Badminton All Years (CS)	

RED = GIRLS      BLUE = BOYS      PURPLE = MIXED

Please keep an eye open for upcoming fixtures

Any questions please ask the member of staff leading that club

## Community News:



**Abingdon Swimming Club**  
**Volunteering Opportunity**

At OLA Pool, Radley Road, Abingdon  
Thursdays  
6.00 - 7.00 p.m.

**Ideal for anyone doing their  
Duke of Edinburgh Award**

To find our more contact:  
Hayley - 07980 884 223  
or email - reynoldshayley@yahoo.co.uk

## Please get involved with JMA ☺



- Volunteer to help at events  
JMA meeting Mon 18 Sep at 6pm  
[chair@jma.org.uk](mailto:chair@jma.org.uk)
- Donate a raffle prize
- Suggest fundraising ideas
- Bingo Night on Fri 22 Sep
- Join Lucky Numbers  
Speak to Clare today  
Parentmail



## JMA LUCKY NUMBERS Supporting our School



**£15 PER NUMBER  
PER ACADEMIC  
YEAR**

**10 MONTHLY  
DRAWS**

**50% OF PRIZE  
FUNDS TO  
WINNERS, 50% TO  
SUPPORT JMS**

**PLEASE JOIN  
TODAY!**

### 3 WAYS TO PAY YOUR £15

#### VIA PARENTMAIL

£15 via online banking  
a/c: 48328243  
s/c: 542123

Use child's initial,  
surname and tutor  
group as reference  
please

£15 Cheque  
to 'JMA Lucky Numbers  
Club' via the School  
Office.

Child's name and tutor  
group on back of  
cheque please

**FOR MORE DETAILS CONTACT  
[LUCKYNUMBERS@JMA.ORG.UK](mailto:LUCKYNUMBERS@JMA.ORG.UK)**