

19<sup>th</sup> July 2023

Dear parents/carers,

**Re: End of year updates**

As we close the academic year, I thought it was a good time to update you on a few key things and take a little time to recognise and celebrate some of the many things that have been happening at John O'Gaunt.

**Thank you**

First and foremost, I would like to thank everyone in the school community, including of course all our parents and carers. Parents have to place a great deal of faith and trust in a school, and it is always a team effort to provide the best education and care that we can. Without parental support, children simply do not thrive. Fortunately, JOG is blessed with an overwhelmingly supportive parent community and on behalf of everyone at the school, I would like to thank you for all your support, patience, trust and encouragement over the academic year. It is always gratefully accepted and very much needed.

I hope that it goes without saying that I am also extremely proud of our students and grateful for their fortitude too. Like all schools, JOG continues to face some challenges as we emerge from the pandemic, but we are fortunate to have a brilliant cohort of young people who brighten even the toughest of days.

Finally, I must acknowledge my dedicated staff body. Education can be a tough profession that is often unforgiving and thankless. However, regardless of the challenges they face, staff at John O'Gaunt work exceptionally hard for the students in their care; I would argue harder than any other school I have worked in. Every day, they show ambition for our students, provide first-class care for them and demonstrate the courage and determination needed to ensure that our students only get the very best provision. Our community is fortunate to have them, and I am sure you will join me in thanking them here.

**Staffing**

As ever, we will be bidding farewell to a few members of staff at the end of this term. Miss Lamb and Miss Lawson-Sanchez will be leaving our team of TAs and both of them will undertake their PGCE qualifications in September. Mr Hiller-Culley and Mr McShane are both moving to new schools out of the area, whilst Mr Milton has taken that a step further and will return to his passion for travelling and teaching abroad. Mrs Tovey-Cooke is moving to a school far closer to her home, whilst Mr Harper will be pursuing the further growth of his business. We are also bidding farewell to two long-serving members of staff, with Mrs Walker stepping out of education and Mrs Arden-Hunt entering into well-earned retirement. As is always the case, we send them on their way with heavy hearts but our best wishes and sincere thanks.

As you would expect, we have been busy trying to recruit to vacant posts with a great deal of success and some brilliant appointments in what is a challenging recruitment market. I will update you fully in my first letter of next academic year.

**Start of Term 1**

The new academic year for students starts on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> September 2023. This is a normal school day and all students are asked to report to school for the usual start time of 8.45am. Staff will be available to greet students as they arrive. All students will spend a short time with their Tutor to receive important information and they will be in normal lessons from Period 2 onwards. The school day will end at the usual time of 3.10pm. For those who use it, school transport will run as normal.

I know that Mr Smith has written to you separately about, among other things, uniform and conduct. However, please can I use this platform to urge you to ensure that your child is fully equipped with the correct uniform and tools for learning that they will need, ready for the first day of the school year. Thank you.

Prior to that, over the summer holidays we have a lot of work going on in school to maintain and improve the school site. This means that there will be staff on site, but the school reception, switchboard and emails are not manned on a daily basis. Emails to the [jogoffice@excalibur.org.uk](mailto:jogoffice@excalibur.org.uk) address will be checked occasionally.

Not least of the summer projects, is the ongoing work on the new 3G Pitch, which we hope will be completed by early October, but there are lots of other projects that the team are managing. Taken together, the investment from the school, Excalibur Academies Trust and the external partners involved in the 3G Pitch, the school has seen well in excess of a million pounds of investment in the past couple of years. Furthermore, we have recently learned that our bid to be part of the government's 'School Rebuilding Programme' was successful and will lead to further investment in our facilities. We won't know the exact nature of this for a while, but I think it's great news for the school and our community and we'll keep you updated when the time comes.

#### **A few highlights**

I am always amazed at how much happens at JOG, which is after all a relatively small school. There have been so many things to celebrate and I asked staff to give me just a few of the highlights, which I've included at the end of this letter. I hope that you enjoy reading them and if we've missed something your child has been involved in, please be assured that it isn't intentional, there's just too much to include all of it!

Finally, it just remains for me to wish you and your family a restful, enjoyable and safe summer holiday. We look forward to seeing you and your children when we return.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Hawthorne". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'H'.

**Mr R Hawthorne**  
**Principal**

# HIGHLIGHTS

## Art:

We have been so inspired by the creativity of our art students. Whether it be Year 7, who have been investigating the beauty of our Oceans and some of the issues facing them, or Year 9 who have been exploring The Portrait, looking at the features and how to distort the face through Op Art patterns or Picasso inspired abstraction. Year 8 have really got to grips with architecture, learning how to draw buildings in one point perspective and creating their own city skylines in felt pen wash. The results are fantastic. And year 10...amazing. Their ceramic work last term, based on food, were inspirational and they are now working on their own projects, having created some amazing etchings and monoprints in their mock exams. Can't wait to see what is created next school year. Well done all.

## Computer Science:

It's been a bumper term for Computer Science! A particular highlight has been the Year 8, 9, and 10 trips to the Sky Academy Studios in which Computing and Media students got hands on with professional-level equipment at Sky. From political thrillers to sports-history, students wrote, filmed, and edited trailers for films they would like to see; under the guidance from people who actually work at sky. In addition to that, in class, students have been designing their own graphics, developing their own websites, undertaking research projects, creating their own stop motion animations, and more! It's been a hub of activity and students have been generating some fantastically creative work which has been great to see.

## Design Technology:

In Design Technology this year, students from years 7 - 9 have design and created litter pickers, picture frames, mood lights, tunnel books and laser cut clocks. The clocks, worked on this term, have seen students investigating different art and design movements to inspire their designs. Some amazing work based on Art Nouveau and Art Deco for example, was then created on 2D design, laser cut on wood and then painted, stained or coloured. The results have been so effective and students have been rightly proud of their work.

Year 10 have continued to develop their design skills in and outside of the workshop. Fabulous skate boards, T Shirts and lidded boxes have been produced. They are now working on their set task for their GCSE coursework and have made a great start. Well done.

## Drama:

Students have excelled in Drama this year, exploring practical and theory work with imagination, creativity and flair. Year 7 and 8 have been exploring devised performances with a focus on 'change'. Year 9 have been exploring the case of Derek Bentley and Christopher Craig in the play 'Let him have it!'. I have been so impressed with all of the students' performances and attitudes to collaborative work. We are also really happy to announce that from next year we will have a strong cohort of GCSE students in year 10! I am really looking forward to starting to work with them in September.

## English:

Thursday 29th June was an important date for a group of our Year 8 students, as they cast their vote for the Hampshire Book Awards. They worked hard to read the six short-listed books and met regularly at lunchtimes to discuss the merits of each book. The voting morning took place at The Vyne School Basingstoke with Year 8s from several schools. The winner was 'When The World Was Ours' by Liz Kessler; which was definitely the JOG favourite.

## French:

French has had some exciting things happening this year.

In February, Year 10 had been studying the topic of celebrations and food so as an end of term treat, they had a small picnic during their last lesson with each student bringing in French food that they either made themselves or found in local supermarkets.

Year 8 this half term have been studying France and the Francophonie. They spent a couple of lessons creating a PowerPoint of both a chosen region in France and a chosen country of the Francophonie in which they researched information. Year 8 have finished the year studying the French Revolution which will help their understanding of the topic when they study it in Year 9 history as well as helping them understand the significance of Bastille Day (14th July)

### Maths:

Congratulations to Harry in Year 8, for achieving a Distinction in the Junior Mathematical Olympiad 2023. Harry took part in the Olympiad on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> June, where he sat a two-hour challenge consisting of sixteen problems.

This places Harry in the top 25% of participants nationally. Harry is already looking ahead to next year and considering which challenges he would like to take next.

The following Year 10 students achieved a Grade 5 in their end of year mock examinations, which were held during the summer term: Molly, Ethan, Marley, Amy, Callum. Well done to all of you!

### Media:

The Media students have been working on their coursework, which is worth 30% of their exam. They have a real-life scenario to create a front page and inside two page spread on the theme of an Upmarket Lifestyle magazine, and they have the choice on the content. Students have chosen furniture, fashion, makeup and house décor, and have worked really hard and produced some very professional projects.

They have also studied two films, a range of advertising from the 60's print adverts, through to a video on 'becoming a blood donor', music artists and video promotions, comparisons of newspapers – The Times and The Daily Mirror, as well as looking at the first ever episode of Dr Who in black and white, and Black Widow.

There are further exciting close study products to study in Year 11 and include social media and video games!

### Music:

What a fantastic term we have had in music. Year 7 have continued to work hard and have been composing their own pieces of music in Rondo Form. Year 8 have taken a Musical World Tour exploring the music of India, Indonesia, Hawaii and Brazilian Samba; they have become quite accomplished on the Samba drums and Ukulele. Year 9 have been exploring New Directions in music such as Minimalism and Chance music. Year 10 have been working hard on their composing coursework.

One of the biggest highlights of the year was the Summer Music and Drama Showcase. Students from years 7, 8 and 9 performed a variety of music and drama pieces learnt in classes or after school clubs. Students performed monologues and duologues from Harry Potter and the Cursed Child, Blood Brothers and other plays and genres. JOG Chamber choir performed 'Let it Be' and 'Mamma Mia' with great flair. The Ukulele group performed 'Someone to Lava'. There were some fantastic solo performances on keyboard, drums, cornet and great singing performances.

All of the students performed with true professionalism. It truly was an amazing evening. Thank you to everyone involved.

### PE:

It has been another busy year in PE. We started the year on a high after the success of the Lioness during the summer, this buzz feed directly into our lessons and extra-curricular clubs. The Year 7 and 8 girls football team made it to round 4 of the national cup, beating schools of 1000+ pupils on the way. We were lucky enough to go to Wembley to see the Lioness beat the USA in October as well. Again, we have entered teams in a variety of sports such as, Badminton, Netball, Basketball, Dodgeball, Handball and Table tennis to name a few! The Year 11 boys finished their school football career with a nervy 2-1 win over St Barts, which was a nice way to finish! The summer term saw the start of Cricket and Rounders. It's the first year we have entered a girl's cricket team, but they definitely didn't look out of place. We have also been lucky enough to use Hungerford Cricket Club as our home ground for fixtures and the enthusiasm they have all shown is to be commended. This enthusiasm also led to a trip to watch Hampshire in the T20 blast. Rounders has been very successful this year with every year group! As I'm writing this, we are yet to play the year 7 rounders final, so fingers crossed we may have a winning side by the time this is published!

### Religious Studies:

In Key Stage 3 Religious Studies, students have worked hard on the Foundations of Religion, and then studied Christianity, which includes both Anglican, Catholicism and Free Church. The culmination of the project is a 'Walking, Talking Tour of Hungerford Churches' in which 65 students visited 'Our Lady of Lourdes' Catholic Church where they learnt about the history of Catholicism, about Relics and the history of the church since it came to Hungerford. Students asked a variety of questions to Dr Chris Carlon who oversaw the visit.

We then visited the Methodist Church with Rev Peter Bennett and looked at how the Methodists put their Faith in Action to serve their community and beyond. They were fascinated that the building had an old school attached which was used for lots of community meetings, and learnt about the history of the Methodists in Hungerford.

We stopped for a packed lunch at The Croft, and went to our last visit of the day to St Lawrence's Church where they got to draw the footprint of the church, quiz the vicar, learnt about the 60,000 bees that had invaded the entrance way and the honey had collapsed the roof, and join in a communion service. Students filled in a logbook with sections for each church, and wrote a thank you letter afterwards to the church of their choice.

It was a fitting treat to end the Christianity course, and one lady wrote back from St Lawrence's and said how impeccably behaved the Year 7 students were.

Year 8 students have enjoyed doing Judaism and Hinduism, and Year 9 have covered Ethics and Sikhism.

#### Science:

This year has been a has been a great one for science. We have embedded far more practical work within our curriculum, giving students the opportunity to develop their scientific enquiry skills. Hopefully they have enjoyed it along the way!

We also celebrated science week in March with a series of assemblies and a famous scientist treasure hunt. Lots of prizes were given out to our participants.

The theme of this year's science week was 'Connections'. Very apt I think as research has consistently found that science doesn't really resonate with the public, and in particular our young people. As such, we hope to grow science week every year, to really engage our students in the subject. Science will always play an important role in the future, and we want them to lead the way in paving our future.

#### Year 10:

Our lovely Year 10s have been focusing on their careers and aspirations nearing the end of this term, students had the option to take part in the Morrisby test which measures aptitude and guides them in their career choices. During tutor time our focus has been on celebrating diversity and why it is important in our school and the wider world. Behaviour of all Year 10s has improved as the term has gone on and I do hope this continues into Year 11. I wish them the best of luck next year. *(Mrs Eggbeer)*

#### Year 8:

Year 8 have worked incredibly hard this year across all subjects, and I am pleased to say that the year group overall have managed to gain over 25,000 achievement points between them since September! We have seen some excellent leadership across our student ambassador groups and year 8 have taken on every challenge given to them, including most recently, taking part in our Music and Drama showcase! A BIG WELL DONE to Year 8 for all their hard work and effort, I am incredibly proud to have been your progress leader! *(Mrs White)*

#### Year 9:

Year 9 have had a year focused on careers and options. Year 9 can be a tricky year for some, however we have seen them flourish and start to work really hard towards their transition into Year 10. Year 9 have achieved over 23,000 achievement points between them since September! Work shadowing was an important part of the careers focus and it was so great to see how many students went out on that experience, for students who were unable to, they took part in an Enterprise project and I am pleased to say that a group in Year 9 won! Their project was incredibly creative and they worked so hard throughout the two days. I feel incredibly lucky to have worked with Year 9 this year and I am very proud of everything they have achieved! *(Mrs White)*

#### Year 7:

Year 7 have done brilliantly this year, they have worked hard, shown kindness and many have gone above and beyond for our school and the local community. Some Year 7 students have been heavily involved in our student leadership team, others have worked with staff to host our 'All Aboard' events where we provide lunch and games for our local elderly community. Our Year 7 students have also worked with year 4, 5 and 6 students during our primary project and Year 6 Transition Day, helping younger students in our local community enjoy the fun activities we offer at JOG. *(Miss Harris)*

## SOME OTHER HIGHLIGHTS:

### Careers:

In term 6, Year 8, 9 and 10 students experienced the world of work in some guise. Students had the opportunity to Work Shadow with friends, relatives or local businesses and had a work experience assembly reminding them about Employers Expectations, representing the school and to be proactive in asking questions. They also completed a logbook, from which a winner will be chosen for their content, presentation and use of initiative, and be presented the Work Experience Cup and £10 voucher at Prizegiving.

Year 10 students spent two days on Careers and Work-Related learning project, where they met with over 25 local businesses and employers to improving their CV, understanding Employers Expectations, gaining Interview Skills as well as interviewing business professionals from a wide range of sectors. This culminated in all students have a 20-minute one-to-one interview, where 15 business volunteers talked to them about their skills and reviewing their CV's. As soon as I have seen them for their recommended improvements, students will be able to take back their feedback sheet to show parents, as well as have an up-to-date CV ready for a part time job or volunteering. This is a great example of feedback to the student.

Students who did not go on Work Shadowing were expected to be in school and work on an Enterprise and Careers Related project, to ensure that they still got a work-related experience. This is in accordance with our aim to ensure that all students have an opportunity to engage in the process. They created a company that sold stationary, designed the products to be sold and marketed them to the public! it was a competitive time and the groups worked extremely hard!

Year 7 were not left out, and also participated in an Enterprise Challenge - Get Shirty - and created, marketed and sold a team designed Tee Shirt on the theme of mental health. They learnt how products were marketed and sold, how to make them appeal to the public and how the packaging also sells the product! We had a brilliant set of Tee Shirts, which will be on display later in the year.

### Community:

Students have been really proactive this year and raised £2,149.81 which will be divided between our three chosen charities for the year. The funds have been raised by Tombola's, non-school uniform days, sales and various Christmas and Easter Fayres! The charities chosen by our students to benefit are Cancer Research UK, Save the Children and The Dog's Trust. Well done everyone at JOG!

### PSA:

The JOG Parent School Association end the school year having raised just over £2,000 from the school lottery, staff tuck shop, second-hand uniform sales, event refreshments and the Year 7 and 8 Disco.

We have also successfully applied for over £4,500 from the Greenham Trust to support sports at the school and career guidance.

The PSA have been able to buy ice lollies for both the 1960s Sports Day and our end of term Sports Day as well as provide cream teas for the 60th anniversary event held recently. Many thanks to all the parents, carers, students and staff who supported us this year!

Our next meeting will be the AGM in September, so please feel free to join us then!

### 3G Pitch:

Work has started on a new full-size 3G football turf pitch to replace the current smaller pitch which has reached the end of its 'life'. In partnership with Hungerford Football Club, we have been successful in getting a Football Foundation grant of £539K towards the project costs of £804K. Excalibur Academies Trust have contributed £70K, West Berkshire Council £75K, Greenham Trust £75K, Hungerford Town Council £10K and Hungerford Town Football Club £6,350.

This first-class facility, which we are expecting to be completed at the end of October, will mean so much to the young people in the area, and also to their families and neighbours in the town, its satellite villages and environment.

### Library:

Huge congratulations to our Y8 Hampshire Book Award Judges, who read 6 books in 15 weeks, discussed them weekly, then debated them with other schools to choose the winner, Liz Kessler's *When the World Was Ours*. It was a great privilege, especially as we know previous winners went on to great things and big screens: *The Hunger Games* and *Lockwood and Co* for example!

We launched *Jog Gazette*, our online student newspaper, with Mr McShane and a great team of journalists and technical buffs. We'll continue to develop that next year. This term we also launched our new Online Library: don't forget to download the Sora Overdrive App for your summer holiday audiobooks, magazines, comics and eBooks! And our Student Librarians have been planning new clubs and activities with me for next year too – there's so much to look forward to, but in the meantime, have a lovely summer!

### Student Leaders:

Our student leaders (SLG) have once again served the school and their fellow students brilliantly this term. Alongside working on important school issues with student ambassadors, who focus on important issues such as the school environment, equality and diversity, and career pathways, the SLG have contributed to a significant piece of work, led by Mrs Keeley-Green and alongside the school Senior Leadership Team to redefine our school values. Their work, on this and over the whole school year perfectly encompasses the values of 'Ambition', 'Care' and 'Courage' that they helped formulate. Well done SLG and the Student Ambassadors!

There have been many other news stories over the year. You can find an archive of them [here](#) or follow us on Twitter to stay up to date [@jog\\_school](#)