



King's Colours

1502

Spring 2021

The termly newsletter of the King's School in Macclesfield



Josh's Oxford offer

Talented mathematician and cricketer, Josh Rajendran, has received an offer to read Economics with Management at Hertford College, Oxford University.

The Year 13 student needs an A* and two A grades in the summer and is studying A Levels in Maths, Further Maths, Economics and German.

Josh, who plays cricket for both King's and Macclesfield Cricket Club as a stylish middle order batsman, has been fascinated by Economics from an early age and ultimately wants to work in the City. "I hope that experience gained in one of the world's great financial hubs will offer many other opportunities both at home and overseas in the future."

King's Head of Economics, Mr MacGregor, said: "After just a few weeks of Economics lessons we could tell that Josh was something of a natural. Over the course of the two years he has developed into an insightful economist."



HEAD'S UPDATE

I HAVE come to expect (but not take for granted) in my short time at King's that the School responds positively to challenge and change and this term has been no different. Just as we were getting used to the 'new normal' and the control measures of bubbles, social distancing and a never-ending stream of wipes...lockdown returned! Plans, such as those to give all sports teams a competitive fixture before Easter, were abandoned as attentions switched to implementing a first class remote learning provision. Plans for mass testing of all pupils were also shelved, and we had 12 hours' notice at the start of the term to get remote learning across all Divisions in place. Infant and Junior pupils were lured into a false sense of optimism with just one full day back at school after Christmas before they were also told to stay at home.

For this latest lockdown, we set out our two main aims: to provide structure and stability for our pupils, and to continue their educational development. Through a partnership of pupils, staff, and parents, I believe that we've done a pretty good job in meeting those aims. Certainly I don't think it would have been possible without hard work and determination from all those involved. Building on what was achieved in the first lockdown, last Spring, we dived straight into providing a full and live timetable for all pupils. Our pastoral programme also moved 'online' and imagination was employed to maintain extra-curricular opportunity. We've needed the resilience and humility to keep going when it felt tough, but I believe that our sense of community and togetherness has improved as a result.

Of course, we long for the return of pupils onto the school site for the second half of the Spring term. We all look forward to seeing each other once again to share stories, experiences and laughter 'face to face' rather than across a screen. We look forward too, to a time when we can welcome parents, alumni and members of our broader community on to the new campus to share all that has been achieved over the last year. In the meantime, thank you for all of your support of the school and positive encouragement during what have been challenging times for everyone.

Jason Slack
Head of Foundation

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Our REMOTE LEARNING Challenge

THE lockdown and remote learning in January and February brought its challenges for pupils, staff and parents, but as the saying goes, 'necessity is the mother of invention'. The previous lockdown last summer saw a huge amount of progress and development as we all moved to a virtual learning world; in this latest lockdown we have delivered our full curriculum, sport, pastoral and extra-curricular programme entirely online and through live 'Teams' lessons. There is no doubt this can never replace the in-school experience, but both pupils and parents have been hugely grateful and supportive, with an avalanche of praise and support for our remote provision.



The Online Curriculum – Digital Innovation

As a Microsoft School, we are very well placed for online learning. Not only do we have the Office 365 suite available via SharePoint as our Virtual Learning Environment, including Teams and One Note, but we also use SatchelOne as a means of setting and collecting work for our classes in Years 7–11. We felt that, after the previous lockdown, both pupils and teachers across all divisions were comfortable enough with online learning to move our entire curriculum provision online.

Pupils throughout the school have followed a standard school day, with registration in the morning as chance to 'check in' with their form teachers and friends before starting lessons. All lessons have at least started on Teams and many have continued on it, although teachers have also set work to be completed away from a screen where possible as we are aware of the impact of too much screen-time on wellbeing. Pupils have also followed the homework timetable, although we actually reduced the homework burden for Years 7–9 in the light of parent feedback and to support pupils' wellbeing. Similarly, Infant and Junior pupils have been supported

sensitively with homework with the inclusion of lighter tasks and project-based activities to offer respite and balance. Some homework has been highly creative, including lots of making, outdoor work and baking!

Teachers in all divisions have been able to innovate even in a virtual learning environment, with the use of YouTube clips, narrated PowerPoints, Kahoot and Seneca quizzes. Our learning habits have even continued in a virtual environment. Resilience can be taken for granted in a virtual world, but teachers have also made use of One Note and breakout rooms in Teams for collaboration, and Microsoft Forms to encourage pupil reflection in the Teams chatbox. It is fair to say that teachers have encountered more professional development and skills development in the last year than they are ever likely to, as they have risen to the challenges creatively and whole-heartedly.

Sport and Extra-curricular activity

Clearly, it is hugely important for wellbeing that young people continue to exercise and engage in things which interest them, and we have continued a programme of Games, fitness videos and training drills that would make Joe



Wicks proud, as well as a 'Lockdown Olympics'. King's Elite Athlete Programme (KEAP) has continued, with students recording themselves doing a variety of sports activities, often from their front rooms. Extra-curricular sport has continued with Rugby, Hockey, Cricket and Netball afterschool training drills. Infant and Junior pupils have thoroughly embraced 'Wake Up Shake Up' sessions, 'Yoga for Littlies' and Mindfulness, alongside a whole range of sporting challenges as pupils have tried to 'Beat Mr Barker!'

The wider extra-curricular programme has continued online, with a range of clubs such as Art Club, Chess, Debating and Fantasy Gaming in the Senior Division, as well as Mr Ward's brilliant Tae-kwon-do lessons from his conservatory! Pupils have also continued with their Duke of Edinburgh award as far as possible. The creativity has also flowed for our younger learners with Infant and Junior pupils embracing Mr Wyatt's Cartoon Club, French Club and King's Compass Club. The House system has

continued unabated with 'Under House Arrest', including such challenges as the 'Domino Fall Challenge' and 'Garden Bird Watch'. Infant and Junior pupils have entered the annual House Photography Competition, with outstanding results once again.

Pastoral Support and Wellbeing

At King's, we pride ourselves on the quality of our pastoral support and we knew that it was more important than ever during this period of lockdown. We therefore made sure that we continued with our pastoral programme. Form tutors met with their forms once per day for a 'check-in' and a chance to speak to other members of the form, as well as to complete quizzes and watch interesting clips and presentations. In the Infant and Junior Division, one-to-one pastoral check-in times have provided a beneficial time for staff and pupils to share, offering additional support if needed. Assemblies have continued, with weekly assemblies from Mr Slack and Mrs Cookson, as well as 'guest assemblies' from Miss Hughes

for Holocaust Memorial Week and Dr Williams for LGBT+ Month in the Senior Division. Pastoral staff made wellbeing calls home, and we also sent home postcards to celebrate good work, with 'lockdown champions' even receiving an unexpected phone call from Mr Slack! Our Pupil Managers provided a weekly 'Wellbeing Bulletin' with tips on such things as being organised and gaming, as well as offering wellbeing challenges and inspirational quotations.

In the Infant and Junior Division, the Amazing Me pastoral bulletin has been brilliantly received by pupils, as activities and challenges have been taken up by our youngest pupils. 'Dress-up Friday' has become a theme for many forms in the Infant and Junior Division, providing great excitement for everyone involved! Charities work has also continued, with the Charities and Merit First committees setting up a pen-pal exchange with Beaufort Care Home, showing that King's pupils are still thinking of others, even during lockdown!

Orchard is the apple of our eye!



Last term, King's planted the first apple trees for what is hoped will eventually become one of the largest orchards of unique varieties in the county.

Reception pupils helped to plant the first 40 apple trees at the West entrance of the new campus. Over the next ten years the collection will expand to some 300 trees planted by future generations of pupils, to establish a Legacy Orchard containing the more recognised culinary and dessert apple varieties, but also many centuries-old Cheshire apple varieties no longer produced commercially.

The orchard is being established with the help of King's parents Sarah (*pictured*) and Rob Simpson, who own and run The Random Apple Company in Swanscoe, and former King's pupil Billy Gittins (*pictured*), the Managing Director of Tennants Fine Chemicals in Leek, who has sponsored the orchard as a way to off-set his company's carbon footprint.

Alongside this main orchard, the School has also re-established a small 'Heritage Orchard' in front of Fallibroome Farmhouse, with Cheshire heritage apple varieties alongside plums, damsons, pears and gages that would have traditionally been found in the grounds of a property of this era.

Director of External Relations Caroline Johnson said: "The orchards provide King's with a wonderful opportunity to develop a superb outdoor classroom for all our pupils to learn about history, science and horticulture. Later this year we hope to establish bee hives in the orchard, for both educational purposes and to help with pollination."

Room naming honour for Barry

Our current President of the Former Pupils' & Staff Association, Barry Jones, has been a generous and lifelong supporter of the school, particularly the Bursary Fund.

Although we remain unable to welcome visitors on-site, our Development Office has shared with Barry some photos of the room that has been named after him.



Barry's son, Julian Jones, said: "We are truly honoured as a family by this, but especially Dad. His first association with the school started in 1944 as a first year pupil and has continued ever since as a pupil, Maxonian old boy cricketer, parent, business supporter, sponsor and Former Pupil Association committee member; many of which as President of the committee. His support of the

school has always given him much pleasure and it has certainly given me, as a former pupil, many, many fantastic opportunities to which I will always be thankful."

Barry commented "I am thrilled with this kind gesture from the school and believe it to be a great honour. I shall treasure it forever. Thank you The King's School."

To all our pupils, for keeping going and showing resilience during this latest period of lockdown. We are proud of you!

Harriet Bright, who passed her Grade 4 Clarinet exam with Merit.

Annabelle and Jemima Jordon and Cicely Homer, who completed the Cheshire Three Peaks challenge to raise an impressive £6,288.98 for Visyon.

Georgina Bloomfield, who has been awarded a prestigious scholarship to the Royal Northern College of Music next year.



PHOTO: Craig Watson

Former pupil **Cameron Redpath** (2017), who made an exhilarating debut for Scotland's Rugby team on 7 February, helping his team beat England to lift the Calcutta Cup at Twickenham.

Former pupil **Naomi Gildert**, was chosen as the Christmas Presenter for the BBC Radio 1 Chart Show on New Year's Day.

Harry Hardcastle in Year 6, who completed a duathlon challenge in January. He undertook 40km on the bike, a 10km run and a 5km run.

Annabel Wong, who is currently ranked number 4 in the UK in her age group for tennis, and had some great results at the tennis tournaments before Lockdown, including: Winner of Cheshire Champion; 3rd place at the Winter National Tour; Runner-up at Winter Regional Tour and Winner at County Tour.

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