



Headteacher's Message

Welcome to the first of our termly Newsletters! I hope these regular updates will provide our school and our community with a summary of what has been achieved each term and to celebrate the successes of our staff and pupils.

It has been a very busy term at *Maesteg School* for staff and pupils alike. Year 11 have been busy preparing for their Numeracy GCSE which they sat in November; we welcomed Year 5 and 6 pupils and parents to our school to experience a taste of Maesteg school life; we auditioned for our annual school show, *'We Will Rock You'* and rehearsals have been taking place in earnest this term; Year 9 and Year 11 have been considering their GCSE and A level options respectively after sampling a range of opportunities at the Careers and Options events held in November; our Rugby teams continue to develop in strength and stamina and are enjoying a very successful season under the leadership of Mr Davies; in partnership with Maesteg's Trampoline Club, our pupils continue to go from strength to strength and have returned home from the European competition with a clutch of medals; our School Choir and Orchestra have grown in size again this year with a significant number of Year 7 pupils eager to become part of the musical culture of the school; we participated in the Schools' 2017 Shakespeare Festival and managed to make an entire audience laugh out loud at our brilliant interpretation of *'A Midsummer Night's Dream'*; our young Public Speaking Teams were recently announced as area winners for stirring debates on abortion and social media. Our roving *BBC School Report* Journalist Team continue to interrogate the issues that affect our students and lives of young people.

As Headteacher of *Maesteg School*, I continue to be impressed by the range of talent that we have here and I am in awe of the commitment demonstrated by our young people and our staff when they are able to juggle busy school lives with these extra-curricular commitments. Our school motto, *'Motivated to Strive'* is reflected in everything that we do; it means that we aim to work

hard because anything is possible if we believe in ourselves and give of our very best. We listened to our School Parliament who wanted pupils' hard work acknowledged and to this end, we have introduced 'Strive Boards' which honour the effort and commitment demonstrated by our Learners. We have introduced one simple rule - RESPECT that governs the entire school community and we are proud of the commitment that our pupils are showing to developing our community ethos.

We will, no doubt, have a very busy year ahead of us and welcome the Christmas holiday where we should spend time with those we love, reflect on lessons learned and make new resolutions that we will no doubt break in the New Year! From all at Maesteg, have a wonderful Christmas and a successful and happy 2018!

Anti-Bullying Week

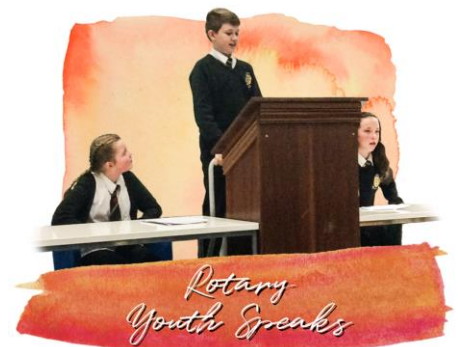


This term our *Anti-Bullying* campaign included a busy *Anti-Bullying Week* where pupils took part in various activities. Pupils came together midweek for our *Anti-Bullying Event* that included an *Instabooth* and a *Compliment Wall* where pupils could post messages of encouragement to each other. As well as competitions taking place, pupils could visit stalls that included an *Idea Tree*, where pupils were encouraged to share their ideas on how to combat bullying. At the end of our event,

pupils completed an online questionnaire that illustrated the difference between bullying and banter. The *Anti-Bullying Week* is an important event in our calendar that promotes difference and equality in our school, with the tag-line 'All Different, All Equal' the key message for us all.

Youth Speaks

A very well done to both the Intermediate and Senior Rotary Youth Speak Teams who competed against Ysgol Llangynwyd last week. The Intermediate team gave an impressive speech entitled 'Is Social Media Killing Conversation?' The Senior Team provided us with a very thought provoking speech entitled 'Abort Abortion!' The Senior Team consisting of Year 10 student – Abbie Grant as *Main Speaker*, Shana Jones as *Chairperson* and Taylor Mordecai as *Vote of Thanks*, beat off fierce competition from a Year 12 team.



The Intermediate team saw Ellie as the *Main Speaker*, Dylan as the *Vote of Thanks* and standing in at the last moment Lowri, all from Year 8. Mrs Clarke & Mr Beaverstock were very impressed with both teams, who will now represent the *Llynfi Valley* in the regional competition in February – Pob lwc siaradwyr!

Welcome Year 6

It was wonderful to welcome over 300 pupils and parents to our second *Year 6 Open Evening*, this Autumn term. The evening started with a welcome presentation by Headteacher, Mrs Helen Jones, followed by four of our top *BBC*

School News reporters recounting their experiences of Year 7.

Lauren, Evie, Saskia and Lola spoke clearly, concisely and passionately about their first year at *Maesteg School*.

Our Year 6 students and parents then received a guided tour around all the Faculties at *Maesteg School*. It was a fun-packed tour where pupils could join in many of the activities they will experience when they start Year 7 next year. Students visited every area of the school with our teachers and Key Stage 5 Ambassadors, who were on hand to answer any questions about school life.

The evening was hugely successful, with one parent wanting to come back and study again!

Strive Awards 2017

Headteacher Helen Jones introduced the *Maesteg School 2017 Strive Awards* and welcomed former pupil and *BBC Head of Drama Development* Kelsey Richards, to the stage. Kelsey gave a wonderful presentation to us, encouraging pupils to "Put the work in now..." to be 'set up' for the future. Kelsey told us of her studies and work experience that led her to her current role at the *BBC*, working on scripts for *Holby City*, *Casualty*, *Radio One* & *Radio Four*. We loved Kelsey's message, that if you work hard and are kind to people, "...amazing things will happen!"



After a wonderful opening to the ceremony, Mrs. Clarke continued the celebration, calling out the winners of our *Strive Awards* to rapturous applause. In between pupils collecting their awards, we were treated to musical performances from Eryn Rees, Evie Boydell, Abbie Grant and Sophie Thomas.

As the evening came to a close, Mrs. Jones announced Mollie Stolzenburg as the winner of the *Headteacher's Strive Award for 2017*, before our Head Boy and Head Girl gave a vote of thanks.

Congratulations to everyone who received an award; we are extremely proud of your efforts and your motivation to strive!

Community Care



Following on from form time discussions based on 'bringing light into the world this Christmas,' Form LL3/NJN decided to take action and supporting the *Helping Hands Christmas Appeal*. This year's appeal is focusing on *The Huggard Centre* who help the homeless with food and shelter 365 days of the year. Pupils brought donations to school; which are much needed supplies during the cold winter months. We're extremely proud of our pupils, who are a huge credit to *Llynfi House* and *Maesteg School*.

SEREN Conference

Nine Year 12 students attended the *SEREN Network National Conference* last Thursday in Mid Wales. Students attended seminars and lectures on a range of topics geared to preparing them for University and their future. Mr Brooks stated that, "They were a pleasure to be with and certainly motivated for the year ahead."



Oh Night Divine!



Maesteg School's Annual Christmas concert is never an event to forget. This year opened with '*Gaudete*' where the Orchestra and Choir joined together to wonderful effect. Throughout the evening we heard readings about the Christmas story, as well as pieces from soloists, who all performed with confidence and poise. The vocal soloists included Evie Boydell, Ethan Nicholas, Sophie Thomas, Thomas Mines and Eryn Rees. Abbie Grant and Cameron Loveday played piano solos and Shannon Roache and Tegan McNamara represented the wind section. The Wind Band played the forever-catchy '*Happy*' by *Pharell*, whilst the String Orchestra gave a gorgeous rendition of *Coldplay's* '*Viva La Vida*'.

Many past pupils returned to the school for the evening to play with the orchestra, which was a real treat for everyone, especially when they played the fabulous '*Latin Christmas*'.

Our evening finished with a Benediction from Reverend Geraldine Blyth, who gave a beautiful Christmas blessing before we headed home. The evening was hugely enjoyable and everyone was supportive of our Music Department. Well done to all who participated, we are all feeling very festive now!



This term we introduced our *Strive Statistics* boards. Pupils have achieved Bronze, Silver, Gold & Platinum status for having excellent attendance, excellent mind-set for learning, excellent homework, excellent behaviour and readiness to learn. Teachers at *Maesteg School* will produce a pupil profile every term. Remember to check your 'Strive Stat' status on the display boards in the main hall. With hard work, there are no limits to what you can achieve!

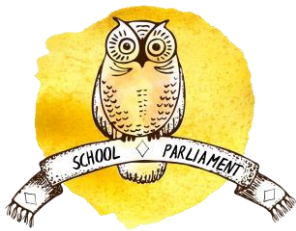


BBC

SCHOOL
REPORT

Newsletter

Maesteg School has many things to celebrate and one of them is the fantastic *BBC School Report* team, led by Miss Jenkins. Our young reporters get to the heart of every story around the school and this term has been no exception. Their report starts with a news story that is the talk of school right now, the formation of the *Maesteg School Parliament*...



Never mind *Brexit*, the most important election this year has been that of our new School Parliament! Maesteg pupils have a new way of expressing their opinions and making sure that all views are heard.

Parliament interviews started at the beginning of the Summer Term. The interviewees had to come up with a professional speech to perform in front of the class explaining their strengths to identify the strongest, most confident and interested candidates. In an interview with the Head Boy, Parliament was described as "a wider variety and diverse range of opinions." Parliament is split into different groups that address different aspects of school life: *Health and Wellbeing; Teaching and Learning; Community; Student Support; School Environment* and *Social Events*.

Once a year, usually at the beginning of the school year, Parliament members invite teachers and pupils to speak with them about their rules, roles and decision-making processes within the school, to gain a better and pupil-friendlier understanding of how our school runs. This meeting would only last about 10 to 15 minutes after which, the pupils report back to Parliament about their findings.

Throughout the year, your *BBC School Reporters* will be bringing you all the latest news and findings from Parliament, so watch this space!

Shakespeare Festival

As part of the 2017 Shakespeare festival, Maesteg School pupils put together a performance of 'A Midsummer Night's Dream.' Despite their busy rehearsal schedule, our *BBC School Reporters* managed to interview the cast and ask them about their experience. The performance took place at *Gwyn Hall* in Neath on the 15th November.

The talented cast worked extremely hard, along with Miss Hillier and Miss Hodge, to produce a humorous performance of the renowned play. While practising for the performance, Miss Hillier said: "I am enjoying rehearsals so far and I think it is a fantastic opportunity for our students because they are all very talented."

For those of you who have never seen the play, the story follows several interconnecting plots involving rebellious daughters, fairy realms and love at first sight. Mia, who plays Queen Hippolyta, summarises the plot for our reporters: "The play, 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' involves four Dukes and Queens falling in love, and there is a king and a queen and some love potion which makes many characters wake up in love with the wrong person." It sounds very complex!



When we spoke to Tyler, who plays one of the young lovers caught up in the magical love potion plot, he said, "My character has to choose between two girls, and I like my character because it's challenging to act like you're in love with someone."

Evan took on a comical role playing one of the Mechanicals. The Mechanicals plan to put on a play for the wedding celebrations of the Duke and the Queen and it seems that when our BBC reporters interviewed Evan, he was enjoying getting into character. "I love that my character is a funny character because I get to express myself."

Natisha was also part of the Mechanical's plot line and she said, "If I could explain my character in one word it would be overconfident because my character believes that he is better than anyone else."

Not only did our pupils have to develop their characterisation skills, but they also had to learn their lines in time for opening night. Harly, who plays Lysander, told us: "I am mostly off script and I read the plot every night so that I can get the feeling of my lines. Even though the language is fairly challenging, I am making progress."

Some of our reporters were involved in the production and on opening night. They said the cast were excited and ready to perform. Staff and parents from Maesteg attended the show to support our aspiring actors and actresses, and they certainly did themselves proud. Congratulations to our dedicated students and staff who were involved.

Geography Rocks!

This term, our BBC reporters attended a meeting with Maesteg School's Geography Ambassadors. The meeting took place at lunchtime led by Mrs Chown who discussed the group aim, to promote Geography around the school. Around 20 pupils attended the meeting including representatives from every year group.

As this was their first meeting, there was lots to discuss. Their first action is to introduce a Geography twitter account where our pupils can promote the subject and post interesting articles.

The team are also creating a logo to represent their club and a motivating motto to inspire other people to join. If you are interested in joining the Geography Ambassadors and expanding your knowledge, please see Mrs Chown for more information and meeting times.

A huge thank you to our *BBC School Report team for all their hard work in bringing us the latest news. Well done Isobel, Lucy, Lola, Olivia, Katie, Emily, Lydia, Mia-Beth, Alisha, Ellie, Megan, Carys & Amber, an excellent job!**

*As part of BBC Report guidelines, pupils are printed with first names only.



SPORTS REPORT

Newsletter

Autumn/Winter 2017

We have had another brilliant term of sporting achievement at Maesteg School. Where better to start our report, than with our Year 8 Rugby Team and their recent success.

Recently, our Year 8 boys' Rugby Team played out a thrilling match against Brynteg in the *Ospreys East Championship Final*. Following an intense and focused warm-up, the boys started with a bang from kick-off, determined to

dominate Brynteg in every facet of the game. The sustained pressure culminated in an early try for Maesteg from Year 7 pupil Troy Shearan. The extras were added by Dewi Powell, slotting a fantastic conversion from the touchline before unfortunately having to leave the field of play after picking up a knock following kick off.

Momentum swung back and forth as the game came to a close, when our Maesteg Captain Mason Watkins, took it upon himself in the dying minutes to burrow over from close range, capping a fantastic performance and settling any lingering nerves.

After the final whistle had blown and the trophy was ours, Year 8 Captain Mason Watkins, gave his thoughts on our 24-12 win.

"I felt excited about the final and the boys were in a great mood. We stuck to our game plan and even when they scored their first try, we kept believing and soon took the lead again."

"It was amazing at the final whistle because of what we'd achieved together in our two years at Maesteg School. We've enjoyed celebrating winning The Ospreys East Cup."

Mr Davies was equally pleased with the performance against Brynteg.

"The boys came through a tough semi-final against Bae Baglan which gave them the belief that they could perform well in the final. Our boys fully deserve the success that is coming their way, as they

are undefeated in competitive fixtures for the last two years. There are no Prima-donnas on our team; they see every training session and fixture as an opportunity to learn and embody our school motto

of 'Motivated to Strive.' Well done boys."

Congratulations to our boys for playing a huge part in a fantastic final, promoting everything that is good about school Rugby in Wales right now and especially in the Ospreys East region. Both teams gave every ounce in an enthralling and captivating final between two fantastic teams. Da iawn!



Kayla finished 1st and Freya finished 4th. The success continued in the team competitions where Kayla, Freya and Hannah finished 1st in the *Under 19 Elite* category! In the Under 14 Intermediate competition, Olivia Castle, Lucy Davies, Lucie Daniel and Bronwen Hillier-Raikes came 2nd.



Trampolining Under 19 Elite - 1st

To top off a brilliant season on the trampoline, Kayla and Leah received their feather for International Honours in the *Annual Welsh Gymnastics Awards*. Fantastic news girls. Well done to you all!

Flying High!

Maesteg School is proud to report several pupils that have represented Wales on the trampoline this year. Kayla Smith, Freya Davies and Leah O'Connor travelled to Austria for the *Alpan Cup* representing Wales in the European Championships. Kayla took a bronze individual medal, Freya finished 4th overall (age 13-14 category) and Leah finished 1st to become European Champion age 13-14!



Trampolining Under 14 Elite - 1st

In Schools competition this year, Leah finished 1st in the *Under 14 Elite* category. In the *Under 19 Elite* category,

Cup Victory!



Maesteg School Senior team (above) beat Ysgol Gwyr 3-2 in a well fought match in the *Welsh Schools FA Senior Cup*. The victory means Maesteg are in the hat for the last 16 national draw. Well done boys!

Connect with us...

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#maesteg17 #motivatedtostrive