



MAESTEG SCHOOL

Newsletter

Autumn/Winter 2018

Headteacher's Message

As we ring in the end of another term and say goodbye to 2018, it is worth taking time to reflect on what we have achieved as a school community this term. After celebrating the school's best ever set of GCSE results, we began the term in earnest, preparing our new year 11 cohort for their GCSE Numeracy exams in October. They now nervously await the results in January! We have also worked hard to support our pupils and parents through their educational journeys with Careers and GCSE Success Fayres, a Yr 6 open evening and KS4/5 Options events. Pupils continue to play a significant role in decision-making at Maesteg School and are responsible for the ban on the sale of plastic water bottles to encourage our school community to become plastic free. They have also set up an 'Anti-bullying' group in response to concerns raised about bullying issues that affect all schools where our children will support one another in their peer-to-peer work in this area. 2018 will end with our annual Christmas Carol Concert, a wonderfully festive event that showcases the range of musical talent that has been produced by our Creative Arts Faculty and is an event that I look forward to each year. Please try to support our school community by purchasing tickets for our annual school musical which will be held in February this year, tickets are on sale now. In the meantime, from all of us at Maesteg School, 'Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!'

Standing up for one another!

This term saw the launch of our anti-bullying committee, where representatives from every year group have joined forces to make Maesteg School a bully-free environment. The committee settled on the name A.B.C. and year 7 pupil Lillie-Grace Delahay designed the logo, which will be used around school to help raise awareness.

The committee meet regularly to discuss strategies, ideas and update each other on progress of the A.B.C. vision. In early 2019, a dedicated room will be set up as a base for our team and as a 'safe place.'

The long-term plan for the A.B.C. pupils is that they will be trained to spot the signs of bullying and related problems that could arise, such as poor mental

health, self-harming, anxiety and depression. Bullying should never be accepted as a part of school life and A.B.C. will spread the message that together we will make a stand against bullying. Look out for future updates from the committee in 2019.



Anti Bullying Week

On November 16th, staff and pupils proudly wore odd socks to school in support of the *Anti Bullying Alliance* and their #ChooseRespect campaign. The shared vision was clear: stop bullying and create safer environments in which our young people can live, grow, play and learn! Pupils enjoyed a cake sale along with activities and assemblies throughout the week.



A Drama unfolds...

In October, *Creative Arts* pupils were treated to workshops from the *Welsh National Opera* where they explored the story and style of music. Pupils thoroughly enjoyed and developed an insight into how professionals work towards the finished product. Following on from the workshops, the *Drama and Music* departments took 90 pupils to the *Wales Millenium Centre* to experience the *Welsh National Opera's 'Cenerentola'*. For many, this was their first experience of Opera and a real cultural delight. The pupils were brilliantly behaved and a real asset to the school.



In November, *Maesteg School* pupils teamed up with the *Shakespeare Schools Foundation* to perform *Macbeth* at *Neath's* famous *Gwyn Hall*. A thick, swirling mist shrouded the scorched, battle-scarred ground. A huddle of figures, clad entirely in black, slowly emerge from the gloom... The stage was set, the audience was ready and 24 Maesteg pupils proved once again how talented they are! Throughout the day, students showed true resilience and team work, pulling together to create something that was truly magical. From an engaging portrayal of *Lady Macbeth* by *Katie Pritchard* to *Callum Oatley's* stand out performance as *Macbeth*, the pupils were exemplary and a joy to be around (if a little noisy!)

...A reminder: This February, there are two nights of frightful fun, when *Maesteg School* presents *The Addams Family*.

Wednesday 20th & Thursday 21st February at 7pm. Join us for a *spooktacular* time!



Tickets on sale now! **The Addams Family** A NEW MUSICAL COMEDY

Bon Voyage!

During the half-term break, our *Languages department* took a large group of students to Paris for a long weekend. *Day 1* was spent on a tour around the sights of Paris, where pupils had the chance to visit a local market. The teachers and locals were very impressed when the pupils ordered their food in French! After sampling the many delicious foods on offer, the group went on a guided tour of the mightily impressive *Stade de France*. Everyone learnt the many secrets about what really goes on behind the scenes at the stadium! On *Day 2* pupils and staff enjoyed themselves at *Park Asterix*, especially the *Halloween* displays and spooky shows.

Everyone had such a fantastic time; it was certainly a weekend to remember!



The Language Championships

This term, year 11 *French* students competed in the *RAF Business Languages Championship* competition in Nantgarw. Pupils were taught how to decode a Russian spy message, navigate their way through clues (in French and Spanish!) in order to release Mrs Goode who had been kidnapped by the enemy!



Pupils continued to work on saving their teacher by using their language skills to purchase items in French. The items helped to create a parachute, for the perfect escape plan of course! Pupils delivered a presentation in French to everyone present, to round off what had been a wonderful day. The students really enjoyed meeting pupils from other schools and realising how much French they knew and could use.

We Will Remember Them

With 2018 being the centenary of the end of the First World War, Remembrance services would take on an extra significance in remembering the sacrifice of the 800,000 soldiers who died whilst serving our country.



Maesteg Town Council and *Maesteg & District Royal British Legion* organised a moving service at *St Michael's Church* and the *Cenotaph* on 11th November. *Maesteg School* were represented by pupils who serve in the *Police* and *Army*

Cadets. Ethan Seymour (year 9) is in the *Bridgend Police Cadets* and Thomas Waite (year 9) is in the *Maesteg Cadets*. Ethan has been in the *Police Cadets* for just over a year and Thomas has been a Cadet since he was 12. Both boys are taught how to 'parade march' every month and as a part of their service to their regiments, were on hand to assist in the Remembrance service.

"It was a great honour to lay the wreath at the Cenotaph," said Ethan. "To stand alongside the ex-servicemen and women who had fought for our freedom as my family watched on, filled me with pride."

"Later in the service, myself and another cadet stood by the Cenotaph as the last post was played on the bugle," added Thomas. "It was a very moving service."

Both boys are regularly volunteering with their regiments in community engagement projects throughout Bridgend and Maesteg.

Year 7 pupil Brooke Johnson won the GP90 poetry competition with her *Untitled* Remembrance Day poem. Brooke attended *Maesteg Town Hall* on Saturday 10th November to read her winning entry where she was presented with a plaque by Stuart Bevan, the Chairman of *Maesteg RBL* and his wife.

"I was excited to read my poem at the town hall," said Brooke. "I was surprised when I received the plaque from Mr Bevan, I didn't realise it would be so big. I feel very proud that my poem is enclosed within the wreath that paraded through *Ypres* in *Belgium* and will



Brooke's winning poem for the GP90 competition:

To this day we remember

The ones who sadly died.

To this day we remember

The family members who cried.

To this day we remember

The ones who risked their lives.

To this day we remember

And remember with PRIDE.

Congratulations to Brooke for her beautiful poem, we are extremely proud of her contribution to *Remembrance Day* this year along with Ethan and Thomas, who impressed us immensely as they represented Maesteg School.

Year 7 Careers Week



This November saw the start of year 7's *Careers Week*. This is the first time an event like this has run for our new-starters and their response was

excellent. In the build up to the event, year 7 completed an online quiz with *Careers Wales*, expressing what careers the pupils were interested in pursuing. The week itself saw pupils involved in talks, activities and workshops run by various professionals.

Pupils were enthused by talks by; Lindsay Harvey, Director of Education and Family Support for Bridgend; Councillor Patel; Dr. Croft from Aberystwyth University; Astro-Cymru;

RAF; the Fire service; Michael Hughes, a Geologist working on an oil rig; the DVLA; Santander Financial Services; an Emergency services Nurse; Jessica Brocklebank, a past pupil, now at University in Cardiff; Bloodhound Ambassadors from Swansea University; and our very own Rugby Star Lloyd Evans.

Pupils looked at many of the choices they would face in later life including the cost of housing, bills, loans, training requirements and earnings of different careers. Year 7 took part in a number of workshops about growth mind-set, creative thinking habits, team building strategies and future aspirations. We had a thoroughly enjoyable week, with pupils gaining invaluable insight and inspiration from their experiences. A huge thank you to everyone who contributed to the week, your time was greatly appreciated.

Californian Wildfires



Maesteg School's BBC School Report team have been busy this term gathering information for our Humanities department to bring you a report on the wildfires that have hit California this year...

On October 8th 2018, one of the world's worst wildfires hit *California*. The fire destroyed 10,321 structures and quickly became the deadliest and most destructive wildfire in Californian history.

The fire spread at an expeditious rate, driven by the wind to the west at a record pace of 35 mph. The fire burnt more than 1,890,438 acres of land causing heartbreak to the 38,000 people who were evacuated by the *Shasta County*. It affected many well-known celebrities such as Miley Cyrus, The Kardashians, Kanye West and more. Kim Kardashian and Kanye West even hired private fire fighters to destroy the fire that set their house ablaze.

Fire officials provided details as to what caused the fire, as *Los Angeles, County Fire Chief Daryl Osby* blamed climate change for the record-breaking fires witnessed.

Chief Osby spoke in disbelief as he explained that *California* would usually have had "significant rainfall or even snow" at this time of year.

We researched online and found an interview with a heroic fire fighter named Michael Williams who risked his life to put out fires at his own and others homes on his street. "It was difficult to control the fire," said Michael. "The team did an amazing job in such circumstances." He carried on explaining how the fire was very dangerous and how thankful he is that it is now over.

Our thoughts go out to the people of California and we wish them well as they begin to rebuild what was lost.

A huge thank you to Chloe Rees and Cerys Grey from our BBC School Report team for all their hard work in bringing us this report.

London Calling

This term, students of *Art, Photography* and *Textiles* embarked on a memorable trip to *London*. Pupils had the opportunity to further their creative studies and gain a good dose of inspiration from two of *London's* finest venues.

The first stop was in *Richmond, west London* at the *Royal Botanic Gardens, KEW*. *KEW* is *London's* largest *UNESCO World Heritage* site offering unique landscapes and iconic architecture from every stage of the Gardens history. The collection of living plants on show is the largest and most diverse in the world, growing out in the Gardens and inside the several glasshouses.



That afternoon, pupils explored the incredible *TATE Modern*, world famous gallery on the banks of the *River Thames*. In between taking notes and sketches for their research, students enjoyed the main *TATE* collection, boasting works from the greats such as *Pablo Picasso, Tracey Emin, Damien Hirst, Henri Matisse*

and *Salvador Dali*. Immersed in creations old and new, pupils were inspired by the sight of artworks up close and personal. The reaction to *Marcel Duchamp's* infamous *Fountain* was as animated as the audiences who saw it first in 1917, with students and staff asking themselves the age-old questions of: Is It Art? Is It Good? And Who Says So?



With inspiration aplenty, questions to ponder and no doubt tired feet, pupils and staff made their way back to *Wales* having enjoyed the sights and sounds of *KEW* gardens and the *TATE Modern*.

Hip Hop, you don't stop!



Year 11 pupil Taylor Mordecai is a dedicated member of *Swansea* based *Synergy*, training every Saturday at *LC2* for the past year. Taylor is one of the dancers who recently performed at *The Broadway* in *Essex* and won the prestigious *UK Dance School of the Year 2018*.

Synergy is made up of twenty dancers, including Taylor, who come from across *South Wales* and specialise in *Hip-Hop* and *Street Dance* style. Taylor trains for 6 hours with her troupe every week and loves to compete.

"We performed in the *UDO World Championship* in *Glasgow* this August and came 4th overall which was an incredible achievement," said Taylor.

"We're a small group but we pack a punch, especially with our *hip-hop* routines and our strength at freestyling. We're thrilled to be recognised by the judges. It's been a great year!"



SPORTS REPORT

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Trailblazing Yasmin!

Yasmin Daniel (year 10) recently took to the UK's largest trail at *Bikepark Wales* to cycle alongside Andrew McTrailrider, famous mountain biker and Youtuber. Yasmin cycled with her father and Andrew down the infamous 'Sixtapod' trail and enjoyed the downhill adventure as Andrew filmed his latest vlog.

"I had an absolutely amazing time," said Yasmin. "I'm a huge fan of Andrew and it was incredible to cycle alongside him at *Bikepark Wales*."

Yasmin has been single-track riding for 5 years and really enjoys getting outside to cycle with her father. "It's great to take part in an extreme sport. It's important to have fun, stay safe and most importantly, wear your safety equipment!"



"My role at *Maesteg School* is about changing the traditional ways of rugby. The role isn't just about running a senior boys' team - although we didn't even have a senior team a few years ago and now we have boys and girls teams throughout the school - it's about being a role model around the school too and providing all our pupils with a positive experience of rugby and what it can do for them."

rugby for all pupils as we strive to be an all-inclusive school.

To finish off the day, the final session was held with our *MAC* base pupils who have also benefitted significantly as a result of the *Hub* programme. By participating in team sports, pupils are learning new skills, and influenced to be better members of the community. There are a lot of great initiatives underway right now and it is a

great honour to be recognised as the number one *Hub School* in Wales!



Girls' rugby is one of the biggest successes of the scheme, something Headteacher Helen Jones is particularly proud of. "We are building a greater sense of community within the school through rugby. Participation and levels of engagement were the main reasons I was keen to be part of the programme and we are certainly seeing the wide-ranging effects of that".

The first session of the *WRU Hub morning* was to showcase the huge number of girls taking part in rugby at *Maesteg School*. A class of twenty year 7 girls was coached and led by Abigail Steele (year 10) and Emily Steele (year 8.) *Maesteg School* boasts the biggest participation levels of girls' rugby in *Wales*, an example of how influential the hub role is in our school and community.

A huge addition to our program this year was the introduction of rugby to our *SEN* group from the *Oasis* base. Some of the *SEN* pupils hadn't taken part in PE before but Mr Evans believes that including these pupils is fantastic for their physical and mental well-being. We are the leading hub school to take on this role in providing

Fitness Champions

A group of year 7 girls won the first ever *Inaugural Ospreys East Rugby Fit Competition* at *Bridgend College* this month. Working in pairs, the girls took on several rugby drills in competition against other local schools. There were 10 stations, including press ups, passing, running, sit ups, bear crawls and burpees, all with the extra twist of including rugby skills. As if this wasn't enough, the girls finally took on exercise circuits to seal their victory! Another sign of our immense commitment and passion for girls' rugby in *Maesteg School*, as our year 7 pupils come out on top again.

Stay in touch...

Keep up to date with our latest news and look out for upcoming events at *Maesteg School* by checking our website and following our School Twitter community.

maestegschool.co.uk
@maestegschool

#maesteg18 #motivatedtostrive

Rugby for all



This term we celebrated *Maesteg School's* all-inclusive rugby programme alongside our old friend and now *Head of Rugby Participation in Wales*, Ryan Jones, the *Welsh Rugby Union*, *Ospreys*, *WRU TV* and *ITV Wales*. Ryan Jones couldn't wait to see the *Maesteg Hub* in action. "The inclusion and diversity the hub offers has brought more people to the game," said Ryan. "We've spent time upskilling our hub officers - 90-odd around Wales - to engage new audiences in a new way where we try and make our game as inclusive and as diverse as we possibly can."

Maesteg School Hub Officer Lloyd Evans shares in Ryan's passion for driving the growth of the game. "Providing a positive rugby experience for all pupils will go a long way towards engaging them in school and out in our local community," said Lloyd.