

Autumn 2023

# the MARY IMMACULATE NEWSLETTER



Cover Photo: New block rises from the ground - see inside page 12



### MESSAGE FROM THE HEADTEACHER

As I write this introduction, I know that our most recent Estyn report has been published. A team of seven inspectors were here for a week in October –

Continued on page 2



Operation Christmas Child 2023  
page 3





# MESSAGE FROM THE HEADTEACHER

Continued from front page -

they saw lessons, spoke to staff, pupils, parents and governors and were thorough and fair in their approach. I am very pleased to say the report was a great success – they picked out many, many areas of strength – including (but not limited to) pastoral care and support, safeguarding, support for ALN, leadership at all levels, professional learning and the heartfelt drive of the school for pupils to do well, often in spite of what they face. We had two case studies of outstanding practice, something not many schools have. I want to pay tribute to the pupils, staff, parents and Governors for all their hard work in realising such a strong outcome for the school.

Casting our mind back a few months, it was so pleasing to see last year's Year 11 gain such successful results in their GCSEs. Once again, pupils did themselves, their parents and our community proud with huge progress, especially around A\*-A grades. This data puts us as one of the highest achieving institutions in our family of schools. Our attendance figures for example put us over 3% higher than the highest in our quartile. This gives our current year 11 a great example to follow this year.

Our admissions round finished a few weeks back. This is the first time we have been part of the combined admissions with the local authority. Early indications is that we have received a record number of applications – even though we are still maintaining a temporary increase of pupils to 190. The Local Authority said this was an incredibly strong performance – this is not surprising given what I have said above about the school - although our Estyn report was not published by the time of the deadline! As usual parents appreciate the support, challenge and guidance we provide, we take the responsibility of supporting our pupils very seriously. Thank you to our parents for putting your trust in us!

There have been many events taking place throughout this term. Mary Immaculate Day was a

great success again – there is an article on this inside... We have also seen wellbeing visits to St Fagan's, trips to drive pupils' aspirations for both boys and girls (one to London), visits by our MP, experiences days and a retreat for year 7s, tree planting and supporting the work of our St Vincent's Centre in Ely, Theatre visits, Science visits and of course our Christmas Cinema trip!

All of this is of course in addition to the many sporting fixtures and celebrations...more of those inside!



This term we have some staff who are leaving us. In Maths, Mrs Daniels moves to another school along with Mrs Pring (who promises to come back to help with the theatre make up course she started!) and Mr Davies our senior assistant head has begun a secondment as Deputy Headteacher at Cyfarthfa. We do, however, welcome some new staff. We are joined by a new receptionist at the front desk – Marysia Gayle and Sarah Eldridge in the canteen. Mrs Lawrence and Miss Prosser also take on new roles in Mr Davies' absence.

I would like to wish all our parents and families a happy and holy Christmas, with a quote that I feel sums up this special season:

*"We desire to be able to welcome Jesus at Christmas-time, not in a cold manger of our heart, but in a heart full of love and humility, in a heart so pure, so immaculate, so warm with love for one another."*

*BL Teresa of Calcutta*

Every blessing to you and your families.

School reopens Monday 8th January 2024 (week 2)

H.J. Powell  
Headteacher



# OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD 2023



The students and teachers at Mary Immaculate High School have once again shown their generosity by supporting the Operation Christmas child appeal this year. It is a fantastic charity that not only gives the gift of a shoebox to thousands of children every year, but it also spreads the Word of God and shows children that they are loved especially during the festive period. Mrs Dyer set a target of 100 boxes and our final total was 149. Our boxes will now be delivered to children in the Ukraine and Angola.

These boxes will make such a difference to children during Christmas time. The boxes themselves contain not just toys but also items such as ;

- School supplies: Pens, pencils & sharpeners, crayons or felt pens, stamps & ink pad sets, writing pads or notebooks, solar calculators, colouring & picture books, etc.
- Hygiene items: Toothbrushes, bars of wrapped soap, combs or hairbrushes, flannels, etc
- Other items: Hats, gloves, scarf, sunglasses, cap, socks, T-shirt, flip-flops, hair accessories, jewellery set, watch, wind-up torch, etc

Mrs Dyer would like to express her thanks to everyone who helped make this year such a success and we look forward to repeating this great effort next year.

Below : Miss Egbetola , Mrs Weare , Olivia Wonnacott, Jinghan Zheng, Geraint Losmagos, Elyssa Johnson, Khloe Lewis, Nevaeh Green, Emmanuel Osinaike, Chrisbee Fernandes





# SCHOOL PARLIAMENT

On the 17th November, our school parliament had a meeting with our local Welsh Labour MP, Mr Kevin Brennan MP. Kevin visited the school and talked to our pupils about what it means to be an MP. Pupils had the chance to ask Kevin a number of questions they had devised themselves. Questions ranged from: "How did you get into politics?" to "What's up with the current affairs?", "Do you love music?" and "How would you like to run an efficient school parliament?" Thank you Kevin for visiting, our pupils really enjoyed the meeting.

Below : Our student parliament and Mr Kevin Brennan MP



## Head Boy and Head Girl



Hello, my name is Terrance Bennett, and I am in 11 Badano. I am extremely proud to have been elected head boy by my peers, and I am committed to doing my utmost to represent them well. My election agenda aimed to bring about some

changes to the school uniform policy, advocating for the allowance of cooler clothing like shorts and polo shirts during the summer months.

Hello, my name is Tinodiwanashe (Tino) Tandi, and I am in 11th John Paul. I ran for Head Girl because I believe it is crucial for us to have representation as a

student body. I am truly honored to have been elected, and alongside Terrance, I am advocating for some changes to the school uniform, particularly during the summer months. The allowance of shorts and polo shirts would be a fantastic allowance for both girls and boys here at Mary Immaculate High School.



# ROYAL WELSH WINTER FAIR

On Tuesday the 28th of November, 60 students from Mary Immaculate attended the Royal Welsh winter fair in Builth Wells. The event attracts thousands of visitors each year and we were lucky enough to attend the show thanks to the generosity of one of our families and the Royal Welsh Society. Even though the weather was cold, it thankfully remained dry, so students and staff could explore the showground. There were a number of food and drink stalls selling products such as cheesecakes, cheese, doughnuts, macarons, cured meats of all kinds, pies etc that were all Welsh produced. The varieties were endless and everyone really enjoyed browsing and trying what was on offer. There were also a number of animals on show including cattle, sheep (of course), pigs and horses and the students really enjoyed watching the animals being shown in the main showground area. Everyone returned home happy and tired looking forward to hopefully another trip next year.



Above : Students arrive in Builth Wells

Above right : The main showground with livestock on parade

Right : One of the many stalls selling Welsh products

[www.rwas.wales](http://www.rwas.wales)

# FFAIR AEAF FRENHINOL CYMRU



# SUPERBLOOM SCHOOLS 2023

This year many exciting things are happening at Mary Immaculate, one of which is Superbloom Schools 2024.

Historic Royal Palaces (HRP) is an independent, self-funded charity that looks after the Tower of London, Hampton Court Palace, Banqueting House Whitehall, Kensington Palace, Kew Palace and Hillsborough Castle and Gardens in Northern Ireland.



In 2022, to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, the Tower Moat hosted a breath-taking 'Superbloom', which transformed the space into a joyful, flower-filled landscape. Next summer, the flowers in the Moat will return; once again providing valuable food for local pollinators. We are one of the 25 schools across England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales chosen to join the Tower of London and create our own Superbloom gardens to support wildlife across the whole of the UK.

Mrs Sanger travelled to the Tower of London for the training of this project and got to meet the coordinators across Britain. At Mary Immaculate, we are currently in the process of designing our garden and planting early flowering plants: muscari, bluebell and crocus so that we, as a school, can support wildlife such as bees. Mrs Sanger's ASDAN class, pupils who use the Bridge and the ECO club will all be working together on this very exciting project.

In Summer 2024, I will bring a group of pupils who have assisted in this project to the Tower for an expenses-paid visit as the Tower's very special guests and see the flowers in the Moat. The project's aim is to boost students' wellbeing, behaviour and academic achievement in the unique ways that only gardening and spending time with nature can bring.

By Mrs Jo Sanger (ASDAN)

## Bee the change and Superbloom



SUPERBLOOM has come to Mary Immaculate.

In November, Mary Immaculate joined SUPERBLOOM and the BumbleBee conservation Trust. Mr Doonan and Mr Birch's Gardening enrichment class, along with Mrs Sanger planted early spring flowering bulbs in the school memorial garden.

Bumblebees do an amazing job pollinating our crops and wildflowers. But as our towns and countryside change, there are fewer flowers to feed on, so bumblebees need a helping hand to survive.

We planted over 200 perennial bulbs including muscari, crocus and bluebells. Why did we do this? There are 275 species of bee in Britain, 74 species of wild bee and we decided that, as a school, we were going to support these bees that are vital pollinators. By planting these three early spring crops, we can help support pollinators over a longer season, providing reliable sources of food.



Left : Mr Birch, showing the crew how it's done



Above : Mr Doonan and his "crew"

# FAIRTRADE FORTNIGHT



This year FAIRTRADE Fortnight was run by us the Y10 ASDAN class and Mrs Sanger. We were looking at what we could do to help our community and our wider community and we chose Fairtrade fortnight, as it highlights the importance of making ethical purchases. We started by brainstorming what we thought FAIRTRADE was and why this was set up. Then we decided we wanted to help our school realise why Fairtrade is important and the work that they do as an organisation. To do this, Mrs Ronan let us complete work during our morning registration. As part of this, we also had a stall selling chocolate, lemonade and toffees to highlight how we can make ethical choices even when we are buying treats! The stall was set up in the hall every break time during Fairtrade fortnight and we ran the stall. We very quickly ran out of our Lemonade and the milk and caramel chocolate bars were very popular. We want to say a big thank you to Mrs Sanger for helping us with this project, Ore who organised the products for us to sell and Mrs Ronan for letting us take over the school's registration for the week. A big thank you to everyone who bought from our stall.



Left to right;  
Jacob Lloyd, Callum Gilbert  
Rafaella Flor, Natalie Brown

## Can Do Club

This September, as well as being a new member of Mary Immaculate, I attended a CAN DO meeting in Trelai Primary School.

CAN DO brings together a community of visually impaired pupils within Cardiff Schools. In this meeting, we completed activities on making music; using interesting and unique instruments, and our voices, to create a musical piece, together; and staying active, where we were very active and partook in star jumps along with other movements!

I enjoyed this session because it meant that I met other pupils across Cardiff who have a sight impairment and we got to make friends over activities and cupcakes.

For those of you who have a sight impairment, and didn't get a chance to go, I would recommend it! The teachers and support staff are very sweet and kind and do all they can to make you feel comfortable and part of a team.

Every Friday there is a CAN DO club 5-7pm in Trelai Primary School, where you can make friends for life. Don't miss out - you CAN DO!

By Lexi Bray 7 Romero

Right: Lexi Bray and Maisie Jones

( 7 Romero )



# MARY IMMACULATE DAY 2023

On Friday, December 8th, we hosted our annual "Mary Immaculate Day." Unfortunately, the day dawned dark, wet, and moody, casting a shadow on the outdoor events that were disrupted by intermittent showers. Despite the inclement weather, the students' spirits remained undampened throughout the day.

The schedule for the day unfolded as follows: In the morning, all pupils gathered in the main hall for a liturgy orchestrated and presented by some of our students, overseen by Mrs Ballantyne. The students executed their readings beautifully, captivating the entire school.

Following the liturgy, students engaged in various morning activities of their choice. Outdoor options ranged from basketball and netball to football, while indoor activities spanned from energetic pursuits like dodgeball, dancing, and circuit training to craft-focused activities such as chocolate bouquet creation, Christmas baking, textile crafts, wreath-making, and mandala creations. Other indoor options included theatre makeup, karaoke, computer gaming, Christmas quizzes, and movie watching. An "escape room" challenge and "super science" activities in the labs added to the diverse offerings, with a quiet room available for those seeking a more subdued atmosphere.

After lunch, all of Year 7 and 8 packed the hall for the main event—the Mary Immaculate Talent Show. Mr. Camilleri our stylishly attired host armed with a collection of "dad jokes," led the proceedings, accompanied by musical contributions and occasional heckling from Mr. Childs. The talent show showcased a variety of acts, predominantly centered around music. The tone was set by the first act, an excellent piano rendition of "The Entertainer" by Antoni Tylek of 7 John Paul. Subsequent acts included an energetic dance performance (Ifeoma Okafor and Pleasant Ikwegbu of year 10), vocal renditions, and some impressive piano solos, including a technically demanding piano piece by Miki Zheng (Sonatina OP.20 No. 1).

Other vocal performances featured renditions of songs by artists such as Allannah Myles, Taylor Swift, Adele, and Miley Cyrus. The band "Oreo," comprising Saul Flor and Meg Clarke, concluded the show with a fantastic rendition of the Arctic Monkeys' "I Bet You Look Good on the Dance Floor."

After the performances, the judges deliberated, ultimately awarding Miki Zheng first place as a solo piano artist, with Natalia Melendez (solo vocalist) and the dance duo of Ifeoma Okafor and Pleasant Ikwegbu securing second and third places, respectively.

The day concluded with all performers joining Mr. Camilleri on stage to lead the entire hall in singing "Merry Christmas Everyone" by Shakin' Stevens. It was a brilliant finale to the day, and we eagerly anticipate repeating the festivities next year. A heartfelt thank you to all participants, both staff and pupils.

**See you all again next year!**

Theatre makeup



Karaoke



Computer gaming







Left : Lewis Zheng Yr 9

And

Miki Zheng yr 7



Left : Olivia Warnacott Yr 7

Right : Elyssa Johnson Yr 7



Above : Oreo



Above : The crowd enjoying



Above : The finale - Merry Christmas Everyone



Above : Julia Pungaru Yr 7



3rd



2nd



1st

# SCIENCE EVENTS



## Aerochallenge

[www.cardiff-airport.com](http://www.cardiff-airport.com)

In July, Mary Immaculate organized a participation in the Aerochallenge, which took place at Cardiff Airport and was hosted by Cardiff and Vale College. The two teams from Mary Immaculate engaged in a variety of challenging activities, showcasing their skills in different domains. These tasks included programming a drone, crafting a parachute to safeguard a falling egg, simulating a plane landing, creating and engraving a metal dog tag, and employing teamwork to jack up a plane.



Left; Celyn le Maitre , Wei Ni Wu, Rhoslyn Hancock, Soliana Yonas, Alana Kemble, Celyn le Maitre, Teresa Intrigila- Cascon

Above; Joel Dibwe, Kaleb McGuiness Bartlomiej Kwarcianny Ciaran Ellis and Karam Green

Both teams demonstrated exceptional dedication and utilised their scientific expertise to achieve impressive results throughout the challenge. The event was not only a platform for competition but also a source of enjoyment for all

## Swansea University Laboratory

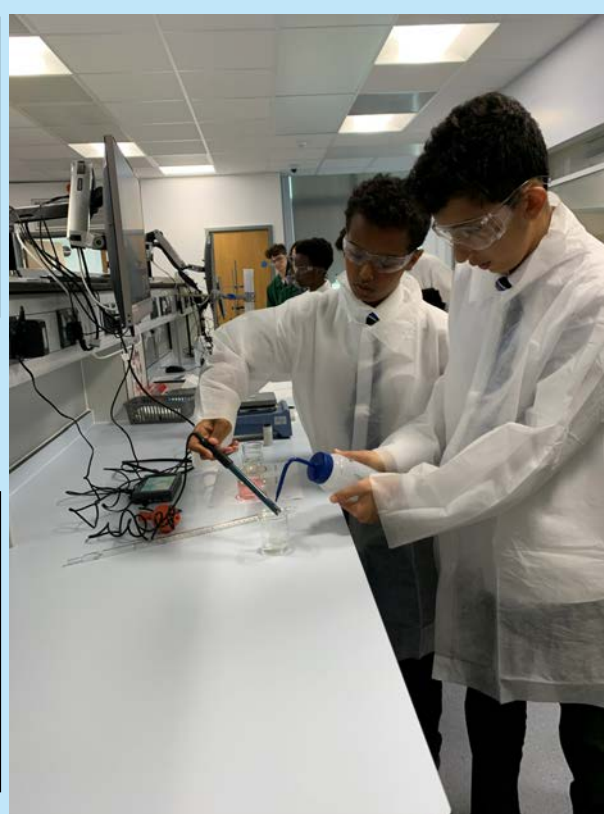


Our pupils spent the morning at Swansea University's state of the Art Sciences Laboratories. Not only did they get the opportunity to wear lab coats and use the equipment, they made Aspirin and carried titration activities using acids and bases. This exercise gave our pupils first hand experience of what working as student in a lab would be like.

[www.swansea.ac.uk](http://www.swansea.ac.uk)



Right;  
Ronnie Kapenda  
Ramon Gorol  
Grace Kapesa  
Cadi Sani



Left;  
Paul Yonas  
Peter Yonas  
Grace Kapesa  
Cadi Sani



# Cardiff Space Academy

In July, eight pupils from year 8 attended the Cardiff Space Academy challenge run by Cardiff University.

## Monday:

On the first day pupils attended lectures regarding Geology in Iceland and Mars. They then saw a planetarium in Kings Monkton followed by a scientific trick show, where pupils got to participate.

## Tuesday:

On Tuesday the pupils started a day by meeting and having a lecture by a local Aerospace Engineer who talked through the different parts of a rocket and how they work. The rest of the day was spent making their own rockets using a similar model that the pupils learnt about in the morning.

## Wednesday:

Our Wednesday kicked off at Cardiff Uni Sport Field, where each rocket crafted the day before was launched, providing the pupils with the thrilling sight of their creations soaring into the sky from a safe distance. Following this exciting morning of rocket launching, we returned to the main building for a workshop focusing on turbines and the various forms of energy applicable in space exploration.



Right;  
Mariama Sani  
Faith Hurford



## Thursday:

The focus of Thursday centred on robots and software engineering. Recognising the limitations of sending humans to Mars, the students delved into the world of robotic exploration, learning about the diverse robots deployed on Mars and the intricate mission processes involved in getting them there. The highlight of the day was a coding session, where students programmed their own robots to navigate obstacle courses, engaging in friendly competition with other schools.

## Friday:

The concluding day saw the pupils engaged in the creation of a short film documenting their experiences throughout the week. Armed with real filming equipment and editing software, they explored cutting-edge tools such as infrared cameras and virtual reality headsets. Additionally, they remotely controlled a Mars Rover model based in London. The students had the unique opportunity to converse with scientists about meteorites, ultraviolet light, and even handle authentic dinosaur fossils. Film screenings on moon landings, astronauts, and astronomers added an extra layer of excitement.

The week concluded with the grand screening of their short film in the semi-circular fulldome cinema at CultVR lab, captivating a sizable audience of science professionals. The pupils relished every moment of this enriching and unforgettable trip.

### Below;

Lewis Zheng

Jaidan Biggs



### Left;

Carys James

Matthew Green-Gatbonton



### Right;

Olivia Hoskins

Poppy Richardson



[www.cardiff.ac.uk](http://www.cardiff.ac.uk)

# NURTURE BLOCK CONSTRUCTION UNDERWAY

As the students bid farewell for the summer break, construction crews arrived at Mary Immaculate to embark on the long-anticipated construction of the new nurture block. Once completed, this facility will house the school's Bridge and Isolation Units, along with additional amenities such as a smaller meeting room, counselling rooms, and offices for the attendance team and pastoral staff.

The construction project is a collaborative effort with Cardiff City Council, working in coordination with project managers and contractors from John Weavers. The initial stages involved marking and excavation of foundations, with a substantial volume of soil removed in the early weeks. Fortunately, most of this disruptive work occurred when students were absent to minimise disturbance caused by constant noise and machinery vibrations.

Following the excavation, the construction of a substantial retaining wall using gabions—wire baskets filled with rocks—stabilised the dugout area. Foundations were then meticulously marked, excavated, and filled with concrete. A stable ground area at the top accommodated a large crane, which carefully positioned and bolted together the steel building frame.

Presently, the frame stands fully erected, and the installation of the roof has commenced. Notably, the completed building will feature a "green" roof adorned with grass and wild meadow flowers, a sustainable choice aimed at minimising the environmental impact on local wildlife. The landscaping plan, upon completion, will incorporate designated areas designed to attract and support local wildlife, including bird boxes, bat boxes, hedgehog domes, native plantings, and buried log piles, fostering a richer ecosystem in the vicinity.

Anticipated for completion by Easter 2024, assuming a smooth project timeline, updates and additional photos will be provided in the upcoming spring newsletter edition.







**Above: An aerial view of the site a showing the extensive ground works and the scale and size of the crane used to hoist the steel.**

**Left : Steel framework being assembled by construction team**

**Below : The new block's steel frame work slowly rising from the foundations**

**jw** John Weaver  
CONTRACTORS





# TEEN BOYS `CONFERENCE NOVEMBER IN LONDON

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ING  
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TEENS®**

It was a privilege to take nearly 20 boys for the first time to a conference in London around helping boys' aspirations and wellbeing last month. It was a very early start with some bleary eyed pupils catching our bus at 5am. Even so, everyone was in good spirits – although this was helped by the Burger King breakfast the pupils had en route!

The Conference was part of the celebrations for International Mens Day and was held at the legal firm Linklaters in central London. Pupils heard from social media stars, spoken word poets and motivational speakers around what it means to be male and what the challenges were for young males in today's society.

Following a great lunch, boys took part in a speed meet event where they got to meet

high level professionals in the fields of law, acting etc who shared their journeys and their success in order to inspire the boys to 'think big' about their futures. All of this was trying to inspire boys and equip them with the skills they need to be leaders of the future!

It was a long day but hopefully a rewarding one. Thank you to Mr Butcher who came with us and to the boys for being so well behaved throughout!



[www.rockingurteens.com](http://www.rockingurteens.com)



# YEAR 9 STOREY ARMS TRIP

In September, 37 of our Year 9 pupils headed to the Storey Arms for a residential weekend. Those that attended were current GCSE PE and Sport Coaching pupils in preparation for the practical activities they will experience later in the course- for some, contributing towards their moderation.

Pupils travelled to the centre on the school and Storey Arms minibuses, these were also used to transport pupils between the various activity sites located across the beautiful Brecon Beacons. Whilst at the centre pupils were challenged with many chores including setting out and clearing tables before and after mealtimes, making their own packed lunches as well as cleaning and tidying their dorm rooms.

Mary Immaculate staff including Mr Camilleri, Miss Evans, Miss Barker, Mr Gasson and Ore supervised and participated in all the events that took place. The weather was as wet as the Welsh weather can get over the weekend, yet still allowing pupils to have an amazing time, taking part in rock climbing, caving, gorge walking, canoeing and paddle boarding. Gorge walking was again the most popular activity amongst the majority of pupils as they enjoyed jumping into rivers, crawling through waterfalls and diving off cliffs.

We look forward to our next trip for our current Year 10 in the Summer of 2024. A big thank you to all staff and pupils who were involved in this successful trip, it was a terrific and fun weekend for all.





# the MARY IMMACULATE SPORTSLETTER

The latest sporting achievements from MARY IMMACULATE HIGH SCHOOL



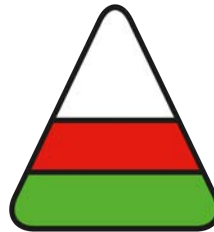
We have been super lucky this year to have Megan Tate in from @cardiffblues\_ @cardiffblueswomen delivering rugby sessions to Year 7 and 8 girls in PE . Megan will be with us until Christmas and even better -

## GIRLS RUGBY CLUB IS EVERY MONDAY



A Big Well done to the year 7 & 8 girls (pictured left) who played in the Urdd 3x3 basketball competition recently. The Girls finished in a very creditable 5th place .

A testament to the girls' hard work and the coaching given by Miss Ore Egbetola .



Urdd

We are pleased to share with you that Eva Ifill (year 11 Romero) recently had her first indoor competition. It was at the Welsh Athletics Regional Championships, in which Eva entered the U17 women's 200m track event, competing for the Cardiff Athletics team. Eva picked up a bronze medal for herself with a great performance.

Well done Eva !



The boys sports teams have been very busy , with mixed results across the various sports . Year 7 rugby has made great progress under the coaching of Mr Gasson and are working really hard . Recently our year 8 & 9 team beat a robust Fitzalan team , displaying some fantastic running rugby in the process of achieving victory.

The year 11 football boys are making excellent progress in the Welsh Schools FA cup having recently beaten a resilient Whitmore team . They had a dominant first half , but had to work hard to keep out a Whitmore resurgence in the 2nd half before finally seeing the game out.

This victory means the team progress into the semi-the cup. We wish them all the best in their hunt for Welsh title .



Above : Year 11 Boys football team



For all the latest sport news follow the PE Dept **MIHSPE**