

Autumn 2021

# the MARY IMMACULATE NEWSLETTER



## MESSAGE FROM THE HEADTEACHER

**Welcome to our Christmas Newsletter 2021.** This has been a very interesting term so far. Even though we faced a far higher number of COVID cases last half-term than we did the previous year, the disruption on the school and its pupils has been minimal.

(Continued on page 2)



# MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD TEACHER

Continued from front cover

We have not had to close at any point and learning and the school day has progressed as normal. I thank our teachers who stepped in for absent colleagues in weeks past and kept our education going! As I write we have very few pupil or staff cases – we have kept our masks and some measures of social distancing when others have not – this has helped us maintain the education for our young people, I believe.

The recent deadline for applications to start in 2022 recently closed. We have had over 300 applications for our 160 places – it is again a sign of the confidence our parents and the wider community have in us in supporting and challenging those in our care – something we take very seriously. Meeting many parents at our Open Evening earlier this term was also wonderful – something we haven't been able to do in person for some time! Our staff enjoyed talking to the Year 6 and Year 5 pupils from all over the area and getting to know them prior to any applications.

Even though it has only been one term, there has been much to celebrate. Miss Carey continues her tenure as the best Teacher in Wales and I know we have more nominations for staff from pupils. One of our ex-pupils and previous Head Girl, Ore Egbetola can now be seen leading her own recent segment on the One Show – Ore has been a tireless campaigner for Sickle Cell Disease – her energy and enthusiasm have been wonderful to see for such a good cause. Our enrichment courses have begun this year – one of few schools to offer these – so far we have been able to offer everything from gardening to sign language and sewing – these are all non-examined courses to help support pupil wellbeing as well as allowing them to try something different.

It has been a pleasure to run some more usual events this term. Mary Immaculate Day was a wonderful day to help us appreciate the foundation of our school whilst celebrating the many talented individuals in our school. Our Talent Show winners - Forgive Isay and Gloria Idehenre sang so beautifully and movingly and were a credit to our community. We have also been able to run a pared back version of our usual Awards Evening. Leavers from 2019 were able to join us for a socially distanced celebration and receive awards for their time with us – it was inspiring to see these now young men and women making their way in the world – they are also a credit and to our school, parents and

wider community.

In spite of their challenges this term, our pupils have been actively supporting others in need everywhere. Pupils put together over 90 shoe boxes filled with gifts for the underprivileged overseas. Our recent non-uniform day raised over £1000; monies raised went to a variety of charities including MIND and the City Hospice. Some of these funds also went to the new St Vincent's Centre – it was a pleasure to support the opening of this worthy venue earlier this term and we look forward to long term relationship with this charity.

It is my pleasure to have some new staff and new appointments to let you know of.

Mr Troote became our new head of Science last month; we have Ceri Watts as our new school receptionist and we have welcomed back Mr Peachey for two terms to support us in Science pending further appointments. We also welcome four new Learning Support Assistants to our school - Briony Lanham, Angela Davies, Naomi Crees and Beth Rowley. We welcome them all on your behalf.

This term we have also started our new Alumni Board, celebrating our past pupils. A social media request produced many examples of how so many of you have gone on to great things after leaving Mary Immaculate years ago – including careers in Law, Finance and publishing. As well as displaying these examples to our pupils, some of our Alumni may be invited in to speak to pupils – this helps to build our pupils' aspirations and aim as high as they can in the future. Thank you if you contributed to this!

Finally- I have some very sad news to report – Aaron Tarr a pupil who left us in 2019 passed away recently. This has affected the school greatly as we knew him well as staff – he was well liked – in fact he had been giving back to the community as a football coach in recent years. Our prayers and thoughts are with the family at this time; we hope to commemorate his time with us in due course.

Can I wish all our families a Holy Christmas – school reopens **Wednesday January 5th 2022**, which is a week 1.

**Dear God, let us offer thanks for this time when we can hopefully all be together. We give thanks for this joyful holiday when we can celebrate our Saviour and his love for us. With joy we pray, Amen.**





# OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD 2021

Mary Immaculate High School once again participated in the Operation Christmas Child shoe box appeal.

The students and teachers of Mary Immaculate High School have been busy this term supporting the Operation Christmas Child appeal. The project was run by Mr Hannah, with help from Mrs Weare and Miss Carey.

Students and staff were very generous donating money and gifts this year and Samaritan's Purse collected a total of 90 boxes. These will make their way this year to children in Romania and Zimbabwe.

A special thank you to all staff and students who donated so we could create so many fantastic boxes that will make such a difference to so many children at Christmas.





# Chaplain's Corner



Since September we are gradually getting back to normal, whatever that was. We began the year with a series of retreats for years 7, 8 and 9. These were enjoyable experiences where the pupils gained insights into what it is to be in a Catholic school and how this should inspire us to care for our brothers and sisters.

Each Tutor group has selected a charity that they are going to support; more about this in the next newsletter. The Christmas parcel scheme has gone ahead this year and over 90 parcels have been made up for distribution to poorer children. This is a significant effort as the usual person who led this is on parental leave and the person appointed to take over had to call off because of promotion and Mr. Hannah

stepped into the breach and did a great job, as did all the pupils who made contributions for the parcels.

Mr. Aldridge is once again, with other members of staff, growing moustaches over November to raise money for cancer research.

Due to the unavailability of Fr. David to say our Thursday mass, we have been lucky enough to have the help of Fr. Michael from St. Patrick's in Grangetown. We have now had two Thursday masses and he will be in school to celebrate mass for our Mary Immaculate feast day.

On Monday 2 November, the St. Vincent's Centre in Mill Road was opened. The school was invited to provide some music for the celebration. Mr. Childs and some girls from the school duly did so. In front of several dignitaries including the Archbishop of Cardiff and the First Minister, Mr. Drakeford, the choir performed superbly, and all there congratulated them for bringing such joy to the evening. Well done girls.

Unfortunately there will not be an Advent Celebration taking place in school, but we will be putting a video on the website. Please take a look, I am sure you will enjoy it!

Also we are not able to hold a Christmas lunch for our senior citizens, but they will not be neglected as we are putting together parcels to be distributed. That is all from me. Have a very happy and peaceful Christmas; may the light and the smile of the new born child be in your hearts and homes.

## MI Music Perform at the Official Opening of the St. Vincent's Centre



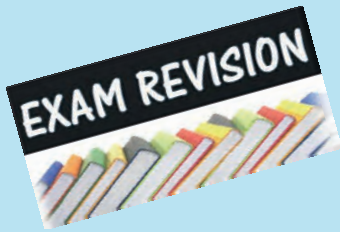
The music department were delighted to be asked to perform at the official opening of the new St. Vincent Centre at Ely Bridge on the 22nd of November. Due to COVID restrictions, this would prove to be our first public performance in more than two years, although the quality of the girls' singing wouldn't lead you to think that!

Iustina Chirila, Forgive Isay, Ire Egbetola, Samuella Mabengo and Beatriz Silva performed a selection of three songs superbly and were greeted with applause and a great deal of praise from an audience which included First Minister, Mark Drakeford and the Archbishop.

As always, the girls were outstanding, with solo performances from Iustina, Forgive and Samuella, representing the school superbly within the community. We look forward to visiting the centre and supporting them again soon.

**Martin Childs (Head of PA)**

# English 'Shout out'



The English Dept would like to take the opportunity to praise and celebrate the Year 9 & 10 students who have attended after school revision. Well done for constantly making the effort to support your learning and revision for the upcoming exams in January 2022. Your hard work will 'pay off' when you gain the grades you hope for in March 2022. Well done, and don't forget to keep up the hard work by including some revision into your Christmas break.



## MI Library: A Spectacular Success!

This Academic year has seen a spectacular launch of our newly refurbished Mary Immaculate Library. With thousands of new books and wonderful comfy seats, the library has become a hive of activity, particularly for our years 7 and 8 pupils.

This term, pupils in years 7 and 8 have been working hard on the intensive reading programme, Accelerated Reader. For half an hour, every day, pupils have been getting comfortable all over their English classrooms with pillows, blankets and cuddly toys and venturing into unexplored worlds; getting to know new and interesting characters; and experiencing events that would be limited in our world. Basically, they have been enjoying the exhilaration and excitement of reading!

One year 8 pupil stated, "It's really peaceful and calming when we read. I really enjoyed the Diary of a Wimpy Kid because it's very funny and exactly the kind of book I like to read because I chose it myself."

Another pupil in year 8 remarked, "The books are pretty good. I was reading about impressive world records. Now, I'm reading a book about a time machine, and I'm really enjoying it!"

The rejuvenation of our Library has been a great success so far, and it's easy to see that it will continue to be a wonderful addition to our school.

**Literacy Coordinator Ms Link**



# Mock Interviews



During July, our Year 10 pupils took part in the annual Careers and Mock Interview day. This involved all pupils in the year group attending Goldfish Bowl activities, CV writing workshops followed by producing a CV and cover letter and completing an application form before being interviewed by employers from a number of different sectors. This year employers included Admiral, ACT training, Cardiff and Vale College, Cardiff Museum,

DEFRA, DWP, First Campus, Principality, NHS, ONS and Renishaw . All pupils dressed in business wear and were extremely smart and professional throughout. The feedback from employers at the end of the day was superb and included;

"A great day with the students. Mary Immaculate staff had clearly worked hard to get them prepared for the day and the students did themselves and the school proud" Samantha Bevan, Admiral

"I have really enjoyed being part of the mock interviews today. The day ran smoothly and I've been very impressed with the pupils confidence, interpersonal skills and talents" Chloe Mundell, ACT Training



"I had the chance to talk to a lot of bright young people with different experiences and expectations for the future" Alexandra Nita, First Campus

"I've been really impressed with the standard of students today. Every single person I've seen has been very smart and presentable. I've had some really insightful conversations with the young people and it has been great to hear about their future aspirations, education and careers. Pupils have been confident, well-rounded and they should be very proud of themselves" Linda Budden, DWP



"All the pupils I met were polite and 100% engaged with the activity. I look forward to visiting again in the new term" Jo Tanner, CAVC

"Thank you to the staff at Mary Immaculate for providing this opportunity. I had a fantastic time and it was such a good experience listening to students about their aspirations" Michael Joannette, DEFRA

**Well done to all pupils involved!**



## Alumni

This year we have decided that it is really important to connect with our former pupils. As a result we have decided to launch the 'Mary Immaculate School Alumni'.

We have recently posted on social media asking if any of our former pupils would want to be part of our alumni. This would be made up of former pupils who are happy to tell their stories and help inspire our pupils in school.

We have been overwhelmed with the response with over 50 former pupils getting in touch keen to help support us. This includes some very famous faces such as Noel Sullivan in the band Hear'Say and also former pupils who have gone on to some amazing careers. These include pupils who are now a Doctor (Eamon Madi), a Dentist (Mayes Madi), Teachers & Headteachers (Justin O'Sullivan, Caitlin Cook, Jodie Lane & Rebecca Sweeney), Healthcare workers (Beatice Brown, Hayley Thomas & Joanne Morgan), poets and even financial traders in New York (Kate Poole)!

# ALUMNI



# Cardiff

For pupils who are pursuing full-time employment, Mary Immaculate pupils visited Cardiff Job Fair on Friday 12th November. The fair provided an excellent opportunity for our pupils, which was run by Cardiff Council, with over 100 jobs from leading employers across many sectors. The day included workshops from the Into Work Advice Service, providing support to all pupils in areas such as interview technique, job applications and cover letters, work placements and work-skills training. Additionally, pupils received further advice and guidance on employment and training that is on offer from leading partnership organisations including *JobCentrePlus*, *The Cardiff Commitment*, *Kickstart Scheme*, *Capital Ambition* and *Cardiff Council*. Afterwards, pupils commented on how they feel more confident about applying for jobs and are looking forward to developing links with colleges and apprenticeship opportunities. Brandon Simpson shared his thoughts: *"The Job Fair was very beneficial as it helped me understand what skills I need to be successful in an interview, but more importantly, how I can become an electrician and what will make me stand out when I apply for an apprenticeship."*

## Jobs Fair



[www.maryimmaculate.org.uk](http://www.maryimmaculate.org.uk)



# Meet our New School Parliament



Pupils from all across the school have once again been casting their votes for our School Parliament for 2021 -2022 led by our Head Boy (Blessing Kilonda) and Head Girl (Georgie Avery). In total this year we had over 750 votes for our year group representatives. Our school parliament is made up of Tej Narbad & Kienna Iruagha in Year 7, Hope Kilonda & Leona Atabong in Year 8, Jack David & Maysie Evans in Year 9 and Anthony Szkarlat & Chantelle Thomas-Iti in Year 10. Our parliament is also supported by our Year 11 Leadership Team who consist of David Jula, Adrian Jastzebski, Brooke Alger-Keegan, Ben Wilcox, Ciaran-Jay March and Rosie Wright.

## Head Boy & Head Girl 2021-2022

We are the Head Girl and Head Boy of Mary Immaculate. This term we were able to get the student parliament up and running and had the pleasure of talking to everyone in assembly and encouraging them to sign up. Next term, we hope to work with our student parliament in order to get ideas flowing and make the changes in school that we need. We are very excited for next term and cannot wait to share all the new things we have coming!

We are so happy to have the younger year on board with us giving us as a school that works together and gets all voices heard and put ideas forward and we know when we leave we have a strong group of pupils to lead the school.

Georgia Avery and Blessing Kilonda



## Our "One Show" Ore

Former pupil and Head Girl Ore Egbetola has taken part in the BBC One Show's nationwide challenge "The Surprise Squad" Linked to BBC Children in Need and appeared on The One Show. Ore is a "young carer" who looks after her younger sister and was also the main carer for her mother who sadly passed away two years ago after many years of illness. Ore is a passionate advocate for families who live with Sickle Cell disorder and want to break down the stigma that can sometimes affect people with the condition and to give people a better understanding of the condition.

We are immensely proud of Ore and her achievements.





# Non Uniform Day



In light of all the excitement surrounding the launch of our brand-new library, several literary characters took over a range of lessons all around Mary Immaculate on our non-school uniform day!

A well-known student of Hogwarts and Tweedle Dum (or Tweedle Dee) were spotted teaching Welsh, we found Wally hiding in English with Gangster Granny, and Sherlock Holmes took over Mr. Powel's office to investigate the mystery of these teacher transformations. Two notable Hogwarts professors, Trelawny and McGonagall were seen arguing over the reliability of Divination in the corridors, while Mrs. Bank's marched for Women's suffrage straight past Princess Belle teaching R.E. Pupils were astonished by the menagerie of magical and mischievous characters suddenly swarming the school and everyone was buzzing with excitement figuring out which characters came from what stories. We can't wait to welcome them all back next year!



# Eco & Memorial Garden



Pupils and staff at Mary Immaculate High School have been working hard to set up their very own Eco & Memorial Garden. The idea was first born over 8 months ago, where it was decided to setup extra opportunities for pupils to learn through an alternative enrichment curriculum.

Huw Powell Headteacher said 'we wanted to create a unique opportunity to give our pupils wider curriculum experience that would enrich their learning experience and would give them first-hand experience of learning new knowledge and skills', such as horticulture, British Sign Language, confectionary, and textiles. The aim behind this new alternative curriculum was to allow pupils to encounter new courses and qualifications that gave them wider experiences in a very practical and hands on way. The Memorial Garden has also been set up by the school to remember those loved ones who have been lost, it is a special place that will be used to help those who are bereaved to remember their loved ones in a quiet, safe space – a place which will be visited and revisited time and time again.

The setup of the Eco & Memorial Garden has been a real community effort, where pupils, staff and the local community have come together. Mrs. Jeffery, who has played a lead in designing, coordinating, and setting up the garden initially, asked pupils in the summer term to come up with their own designs. Over 60 pupils took part, and it was decided that a combination of the best designs would be used. PUPIL A said, 'by picking the best bits from all our designs it meant that we could make sure we could get everything we wanted from our own garden'. Mark Lambert the schools site manager was tasked with landscaping the area, building the pathway and raised beds, he said 'the pupils' design was really clever, it was designed to be wheelchair friendly and had an in-built watering system which will feed and water the plants throughout the year'.

The Eco & Memorial Garden has been designed to allow the school to grow its own produce, which can be used in canteen meals on a daily basis. Mr. Crimmins, who is responsible for running the garden said, 'we wanted to make sure that we were able to grow our own fruit and vegetables in a sustainable way that could be used by our canteen'. Mel Taylor our Head Chef has said 'we are really looking forward to getting the produce so we can add it to our meals. It is really useful for pupils to see that what they grow goes into their meals daily.

Local companies and garden centers including Pugh's Garden Centre in Wenvoe, B&Q Culverhouse cross, Petersens PR & Apollo Teaching agency have all donated generously by either providing herbs and plants or giving a donation. Rob Petersen of Petersens PR said, "We are delighted to support this wonderful initiative by the school as part of its new alternative enrichment curriculum. to provide pupils, staff and the local community with a facility to enjoy, learn from and even eat produce from, is exciting.





# MOVEMBER 2021



This year, once again, a group of 6 Mary Immaculate staff decided to participate in the Movember charity event. The charity supports cancer research and treatment for cancers that primarily affect men (testicular, prostate etc.) but also provides aid in the fight against male suicide and poor mental health. While the results are quite startling (or possibly even scary to some) you can't help but respect the efforts made by the staff. As it currently stands, £220.00 have been raised for this worthy charity. A big thank you to all who have taken part and to all who have donated.



Diolch yn fawr iawn



## Horizons



### Our new aspirations programme

We all know how important it is to believe in ourselves and to aim for the stars! Starting in the new year will be our Horizon's programme which aims to help engage and help us all aspire for the very best for each of us.

It will cover all of the aspirations provision from Year 7 through to Year 11 and will look to help you build your confidence, self belief, resilience and ensure you have a range of opportunities and experiences that prepare you for your future careers and world of work.

## Pupil's Absence From School

### Please use the following ways to report an absence:

**FIRST DAY** YOUR CHILD IS OFF SCHOOL PLEASE RING- 02920 593465 (OPTION 2). There is an answer machine where you can leave your child's name, registration group and reason for absence and any other information. Voicemail is available 24/7.

**CONTINUED ABSENCES**- Please provide an appointment card or letter for GP, hospital, dentist etc.

**PARENTMAIL**- Messages and reasons for your child's absence can be sent to our App.

**COVID ABSENCES**-Please let us know when your child has had a positive PCR result as soon as possible and the date your child needs to return to school.

### Student Details:

Please can you inform the school of any new student details. This is vitally important in the case of an emergency.



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# the MARY IMMACULATE SPORTSLETTER

*The latest sporting achievements from MARY IMMACULATE HIGH SCHOOL*



It has been great to get back to some sort of normality this term with regular winter fixtures taking place for the first time since 2019. The year started off well with our first few weeks of term made up solely of training across a number of sports with over 150 pupils staying behind after school to participate on some evenings. So far this year the school has fielded teams in netball, football, rugby and basketball with some fantastic progress made over the term.

The Y8 rugby team made a strong start to the year with an outstanding performance against Cardiff West with Hope Kilonda our Player of the Match.



Our Y9 boys football team have been a huge success story this year. They have managed to reach the final regional round of the Welsh Cup where they will play Whitchurch. Along the way they have overcome Bishop of Llandaff 7-3, Eastern High 4-0 and Bro Morgannwg 3-0. There have also been a number of individual successes in that team with Jaden Bahumaid and Elliot Aherne representing Cardiff and Vale Schools and Nahele Mendes signed by Swansea City Academy.



Basketball has once again proven to be one of the most popular sports at Mary Immaculate with high numbers attending training every morning between 7:45-8:30am. This has helped the players and teams prepare for what will be a busy schedule of fixtures between now and



February. Our Y10 boys played away at Cathays winning 34-9 with all other year groups due to play before Christmas and the regional and national tournaments in full flow when we return in January. Huge congratulations to Y11 pupil Luey Giles who over the past few months has represented the Wales U16 football team in international fixtures against France, Scotland, Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. Luey was also part of the Wales team that won the prestigious Victory Shield in Northern Ireland in September. This was only the second time in the past 50 years that Wales have won this tournament, the most recent other time being in 2014 when past pupil Ibby So Sani was part of the team.

Well done to another Y11 pupil Georgia Botwood who has recently won the Welsh Tae Kwon Do Championships. Georgia went on to compete in the British Championship where she finished runner-up. What a fantastic achievement!

Three of our Y11 pupils, Harvey Chapman, Blessing Kilonda and Adam Skene have all been representing Cardiff Schools rugby in the regional championship this term. The boys were selected after a rigorous selection process and have all made major contributions to the squad, helping Cardiff to win the regional tournament in December.

Jack Grant, Cody Eltringham, Ed Hogan Rodd and Mackenzie Martin have all been playing for Cardiff and Vale College rugby academy in the national colleges championship and have helped them to the national final at the Principality Stadium. Mackenzie has also continued to make excellent progress with Cardiff Rugby and in November he made his senior debut for the Cardiff RFC Welsh Premiership at just 17!

Well done also to Ryan Kavanagh who is continuing to develop as part of his professional contract with Cardiff City. Ryan has been playing regularly with the U23 team and recently scored in the win against Watford.



For all the latest sport news follow the PE Dept @MI\_PE\_Dept