

Ysgol Maesteg School

Summer Newsletter / Newyddiadur y Haf 09

Headteacher's letter to parents.....

I am pleased to introduce the final newsletter of the academic year. The last year has been a busy time for us here and I want to congratulate all staff and pupils who have contributed to the success of the excellent year we have had in our new building. I would also like to thank parents, for their continued support of the work of the school and all members of our community who have attended the many events the school has hosted this year. This building has created a new era for education in Maesteg, one that offers new opportunities not just to our pupils and staff, but also to the local community for all to learn and reach their full potential.

I know that all parents and pupils are aware of the importance of road safety. Maesteg School has recently submitted a school travel plan to the Welsh Assembly Government and I would like to thank pupils, parents and staff who have contributed to this. The travel plan is designed to raise awareness of taking care on buses, on the roads and to keep under review safe routes to school. I urge parents who bring their sons/daughters to school by car to be particularly aware of road safety when they are being dropped off or picked up in school car parks. We have had several instances recently of pupils walking in front of cars which are being driven into parking spaces/ drop off points—this is potentially very dangerous. I am also asking parents to heed the no parking areas directly behind and in front of the zebra crossings. Illegal parking here causes a major hazard to pedestrians.

It's important we get off to another good start in September and ask parents to ensure pupils arrive at school with their school bag and equipment.

Wishing you and your family an enjoyable Summer.

A. Carhart



The school was delighted to host the "Cwm Llynfi" Historical Exhibition on Wednesday 3rd June. Community Focused School funding allowed us to prepare banners depicting five aspects of Llynfi Valley life – Education, Mining, Sport, People and Places. The Atrium of the School which contained the exhibition and memorabilia looked very impressive and feedback from the approximate 200 people that attended was very positive indeed. A memorable afternoon and evening.

Inspiring INSET

On 3rd April, 91 teaching and learning support staff were waiting expectantly for the arrival of a speaker for the morning session of our INSET day. Recommended by the Head, Sir John Jones was billed as an "inspirational speaker and leader with a track record of transforming thinking about education, the management of change and leadership". His background is as follows: he has been the Headteacher of three secondary schools over a period of 17 years; a governor of two schools on Merseyside and was a member of the National Focus Group on Truancy and Exclusion and the Excellence in Cities Project at the DfES. Very impressive! And wasn't he!! It's not the easiest job to make 91 staff laugh and cry at the end of a tough term, but he did it with aplomb.

"The best INSET ever!"; "The best speaker in 26 years of teaching" were just 2 of the positive comments made by staff. There is no doubt that he re-affirmed, even for the "more experienced" staff like myself, that the child's future is in our hands to help shape! He certainly lifted our spirits and sent us home remembering why we became teachers in the first place!

Mrs Jarvis

Music Department News....

In March, the Music Department held their first concert in our New School and it was a showcase of the musical talent we have within the school. The items ranged from selected "Queen" pieces and Mission Impossible by Wind band to Abba music from the choir. The orchestra are improving year on year and gave excellent performances of Star Wars and Rock Around the Clock.

The String group were also superb with the smaller senior ensemble playing the atmospheric "Palladio". Individual performances included items from Amy Jones (Yr 12), David Rees (Yr 8) and Sharelle Brain (Yr 10) The Music department would like to congratulate the students for giving up so many of their lunchtimes to rehearse and for producing such excellent standards of performance.

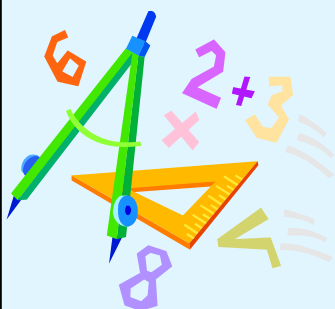
A DVD of the March concert is available on request at the cost of £6.

Mrs S. Brown

DATES FOR THE DIARY

- 3 July – INSET
- 6 July – Yr 7 Production "Big Green Adventure"
- 9 July – Yr 8 Parents Evening
- 26 June – Transition Day
- 8/9 July – Yr 6 Parents' visit
- 17 July – End of Term
- 20 July – A level Results
- 27 July – GCSE Results
- 3 September – School Term begins
- 22 October – End of half-term

Keep up in Maths Class



Since the start of this year, Mrs Jane Grant has been visiting us from our local college to help parents to keep up with their children's Maths work.

The idea has been to run classes for parents that keep parallel to the Year 7 scheme of work and address any problems with classwork or

homework being set for the pupils.

There have been good reviews from parents who have attended the class as they feel more confidence when helping their child through work at home. This extra support has also improved the confidence of many pupils.

Any parents that are interested in getting more familiar with Year 7 Maths work can bring concerns and problematic questions to the classes each Friday between 9.00a.m and 11.00 a.m.

The lessons are completely free and although a full overview of Year 7 Maths can be gained by attending a series of the lessons, parents can fit in an isolated lesson or part of a session as their child's Maths work dictates.

J Carruthers

Drama Visit to Primary Schools



After a successful audition we have our final cast for the Shakespeare Schools Festival performance of A Midsummer Nights Dream. Students from Yr 7-10 are involved and it will be performed at the Taliesin Theatre on 7th October.

We took a group of Yr 8 students out on a Theatre in Education tour, where they were able to experience the life of a travelling theatre company. They performed PSE based plays to Yr 2 & 3 students at Plasnewydd, Cwmfelin and Garth primary schools.

They then worked with the Yr 3 class for a drama workshop where they helped the younger students create their own piece of PSE based drama. A good day was had by all and I think we have some budding teachers in the making!

Annual Presentation Evening—May 2009



Chloe Williams being presented by Major Rees of the British Army with her award for Courage & Perseverance

On 7th. May 2009, Maesteg School held its Annual Presentation evening, for the first time, in the new building. The Guest Speaker was Nicola Smith, Education Correspondent for the BBC, who spoke of her own path in life and inspired and encouraged the pupils to be whatever they wanted to be in their future lives. She had visited the school earlier in the year, to help the pupils plan and prepare a news bulletin that was then broadcast nationally and internationally. During the evening, a clip of these preparations, involving the pupils being interviewed by Nicola, was shown.

It was an exciting evening with many local dignitaries, governors, teachers, parents and pupils filling the hall. A wide variety of awards was

covered and it is due to the generosity of the evening's many sponsors that such a large number of recipients could be included in the programme. Once again, everyone who attended that evening felt it a privilege to do so and a pride in the achievements of so many young people of Maesteg School.



Nicola Smith, BBC Education Correspondent with the Senior

Mrs Jarvis

Internet Safety

Personal safety online has formed an important part of the School PSE program for some time now. Recently, we have been very fortunate to complement our in house program with training for Yr 7 pupils from the Wisekids organisation. As well as watching videos on Cyberbullying and how online friends may not be who you think they are, the emphasis in the training was very much on how to use the Internet, including social networking sites, safely and what to do if something online causes concern. Further information on Wisekids, Internet safety and security for your PC can be found at <http://www.wisekids.org.uk/bridgendschools/> or by contacting Chris Cronin (the school network manager). We are also very pleased that a number of pupils has also volunteered to take part in a training DVD for use in other schools in the future – thank you.

Mrs J Winkler, Curriculum Co-ordinator / Chris Cronin, Network Manager



Need a new school uniform?

Gwyn Richards Sport are offering 10% discount off all uniform during the month of July.

Bridgend College Pupils receiving their awards from Susan Cheesborough, former British Gymnast.



Year 10 Asdan group interviewing former pupils Gareth Owen and Michael Collins—Osprey players.



Asdan Activities

Yr 10 Asdan Group visit the Fire Station



Yr 10 Asdan pupils working on their Fire Service project—creating graffiti pictures highlighting the dangers of fire



Prince's Trust News



Prince's Trust Annual celebration day in the Millennium Centre—pupils shown after a special effects make-up workshop

Prince's Trust Group receiving their Bronze award certificates from Miss Gerry O'Sullivan



Community Focus News

There has been significant development of the School's focus on community engagement and involvement. £17,500 has been secured by applications to BCBC for WAG funding to develop projects this year.

The Community Concert to celebrate Education in the Valley, was held on 7th February. All the Choirs of the Valley provided the entertainment for the evening with staff and pupils delivering a short period drama which provided an insight into a classroom environment in Victorian times. It was chaired by Huw Irranca-Davies, our MP and ably assisted by Megan Heffey and Nathan Lawler (Senior Prefects)

A booklet "Education in the Llynfi Valley" was produced to commemorate the event. All Primary schools including Ysgol Cynwyd Sant and St. Mary's & St. Patricks Primary School, Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg, Llangynwyd and our school contributed a brief history and a selection of pupils' school memories. The booklet made very interesting reading indeed. Funds raised were distributed equally between every school in the Valley. Each receiving £130.

The school wishes to be involved in the Llynfi Valley River Walkway project and will be liaising with the River Care group to ensure a way forward for the year group's ideas. A group of pupils has been invited to The Town Council Chambers to submit a proposal for funding to ensure one of its projects actually materialises.

Other developments in brief, have been the setting up of a Maesteg Youth Club at the school on a Monday evening from 4pm – 6pm. A range of activities is delivered by staff and the sessions are proving to be very popular with our pupils.

Links with the Prince's Trust have been established and the group involved has achieved their Bronze Award, 3 months earlier than anticipated, and the Duke of Edinburgh scheme has been reinstated at the school with over 70 pupils in Yr 10 embarking on the Bronze and Silver Awards.

A very productive and successful year with community engagement being at the heart of our work. After all, the school is the Community's school.

Mrs Sian Davies

URDD Activities

In November a trip will be going to the Urdd activity centre in Glanllyn. All pupils taking Welsh full course GCSE have the opportunity to go, and will have the chance to take part in many new challenges. Sailing, raft building, climbing, bowling, canoeing, swimming and high ropes course are among some of the many activities on offer. Above are some pupils who previously have taken advantage of such an excellent trip.

Places are limited, so anyone interested should see Miss James as soon as possible.



The Welsh department, alongside the Urdd, has taken part in a UK wide initiative called the Millennium Volunteers Programme. It is run to promote and recognise volunteering among young people.



Congratulations to the following Welsh 6th form pupils...Toni Bowen, Carly Hart and Bethan Morgan for achieving their gold award (200 hours), and to Kate Martin, Rachel Lindenburn, Amy Wines, Lexi Paget, Catherine Jenkins, Rebecca Lewis, Charlotte Handley, Rhys Jones and James Washbourne for reaching their 100 hours.

Pupils have helped in local schools, on residential trips to Glanllyn, run Welsh lunchtime clubs and helped with various Urdd events to build their hours.
Da iawn! Miss James.



Spanish Pupils visit Liberty Stadium

It had been snowing in Maesteg but the one time we were praying for it to stop was the day that we were going to the Liberty Stadium.

Our teacher Señorita Lewis, organised a trip for a selection of GCSE Spanish pupils to meet and interview the Spanish

football players. Mr Hill, the biggest supporter ever of Swansea City Football Club drove us there in the school minibus. Luckily, the snow wasn't sticking so we were able to go.

When we arrived we started our tour. First we went to the control room and then to see the hospitality boxes. Then we went to meet the Spanish players. This was the best bit! We met Jordi Gomez, Gorka Pintado, Andrea Orlandi, Guillem Bauza, Federico Bessone, Albert Serrán and Angel Rangel. We interviewed them in Spanish and they answered all our questions. They were all really friendly and helpful. One of the players even had books with him to help him learn English. It was nice to know even they find it difficult learning another language!

We continued our tour around the stadium and went to the away dressing room, walked through the tunnel and even locked our teacher up in a cell! At the end of our tour, we took a short cut through a conference room and Roberto Martinez was there! He said hello to all of us in Spanish, which was amazing! We would like to say 'muchas gracias' to all the players who gave up their time for us. Also a thank you to our tour guide and all the people at the Liberty Stadium who helped our teacher organise such a great day.

Amie Davies (Yr10)

Wales Netball

Cathy Bastian was selected this year to train and play in the Wales U17 netball squad that consisted of 22 players. The training included residential weekends at the Welsh Institute of Sport and a gruelling fitness programme that required a huge amount of commitment.

The Welsh coaches set many targets throughout the year to help their players improve and only the most committed achieved their goals. Cathy impressed the National coaches with her natural flair and dedication which resulted in her being selected in the Squad of twelve to represent her Country in the European Championships in Gibraltar.



The opposition included England, Scotland, Ireland and Malta. The Welsh team battled hard over the weekend, finally finishing 2nd in the tournament, taking the silver medal. Considering that netball is the most popular sport for girls in school, Cathy's achievement is truly remarkable. Cathy is a credit to Maesteg school and we all feel very proud of her achievement. Well Done Cathy!

Miss Matthews (PE)

Street Dance Champions

Maesteg School officially became the 2nd best Dance School in Wales in both Yr 7-9 and Yr 10-11 age categories after competing in the United Dance Organisation High School National Championships.

The achievement by our school is even more remarkable considering the dance routines were co-ordinated by Maesteg students, Bethan Steadman, Natalie Davies and Becci Hurley.

With approximately 2,300 dancers taking part and over 120 teams representing various schools throughout Wales, this achievement by Maesteg School is even more rewarding.

Year 8 pupils Sian Wells and Alex Jenkins both said "We were all really nervous when we got there and saw the number of people watching and taking part but once we got onto stage and started dancing, we all became relaxed and enjoyed performing our routine. We were very shocked at finishing second place but were pleased and happy at the same time. With a bit more hard work, we hope we can come first next year!"

Special thanks and acknowledgements therefore must go out to all the Maesteg students for their achievements in the competition, the school is very proud of them all. *Miss Matthews*



„HALLO?“ This is not a spelling mistake as you may initially think but rather pupils from Maesteg School practising the skills they acquired during a recent German Masterclass as part of the school's initiative to support **More Able and Talented** pupils.



Maesteg School, in partnership with Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) is currently working on a new initiative throughout the borough to raise awareness of More Able and Talented pupils and the access they have to enrichment and extended learning opportunities. The initiative has been in place at the school since January this year as a result of funding from BCBC and has so far proved to be a tremendous success.

The latest session in this initiative was an interactive language session for the school's MA&T linguists in Year 7 and 8 which was provided by CILT (The National Centre of Languages). The pupils learn French and Spanish in school so consequently it was decided that giving the pupils the opportunity to try a new language which they had no knowledge of would be exciting but yet challenging. As is always the case with Maesteg pupils they rose to the challenge!

School co-ordinator for MA&T pupils Stephanie John said: "This interactive session was an outstanding success and the pupils responded superbly. Not only did the pupils enjoy the session and acquire new skills but they had fun whilst doing so."

The school's MA&T initiative has been extremely beneficial to the pupils to date providing them with opportunities to challenge and further the abilities and talents they display which is also personalised to each individual pupil's learning needs.

"The German lesson held in school was an excellent experience. I would like to thank the teacher involved for this wonderful experience. It was very educational and fun to be a part of. I hope she will be able to return to the school again and further our knowledge of the German language." - Jordan Francis, a Year 8 pupil.

The school's headteacher Anne Carhart said: "I attended part of the session and I couldn't believe how quickly the pupils had advanced their use of the German language in such a short space of time. The pupils were thoroughly enjoying the lesson and were so engrossed they didn't even realise I was there!" **Stephanie John**

On 24 May, a More Able and Talented Group of Students delivered a presentation for the Maesteg Town Council and River Care group outlining ideas discussed and developed during Yr 9 Environment and Enhancement lessons (Languages, Art, PE, Science and I.T. subjects)

An account of the day's Masterclass by Ewan Thomas (Yr 7)

I really enjoyed our German lesson today. I learnt how to count to 100, say "I can", "I must", "I want" and "I would like". I also learnt how to say verbs such as "to dance", "to swim" "to play football" and "to buy Pizza". Learning another language is extremely important. As we saw in the video at the end of the lesson, in many jobs today, it is very beneficial to be able to communicate and converse in another language. We also travel extensively around the world for fun and leisure. Developing an understanding of other people's culture, lifestyle and language helps us become more global citizens.