

Autumn 2020

the MARY IMMACULATE NEWSLETTER



MARY IMMACULATE
HIGH SCHOOL



TEACHER OF THE YEAR 2020

This Year, one of our staff, Miss Carey has won the "Teacher of the Year in a secondary school" award

(Continued inside)

MESSAGE FROM THE HEADTEACHER

As this term draws to a close, I am aware that we are living in very unusual times and many challenges exist in our school and our wider community. These are definitely unprecedented times

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MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD TEACHER

Continued from front cover

where else would we have to send pupils to work from home or where would concerns about relatives and wider health concerns be so much in our minds?

Our Christmas celebrations may be changed by restrictions this year but Christ's love is always with us and helps bind us to those we may not be able to see or meet as well, as enjoying the many traditions that make Christmas special for all of us. Let us pray for those who cannot gather together and be thankful for when we can.

I am glad to say that the last two weeks aside, the impact of COVID has been manageable. Lessons have continued as usual and home learning has been effective. We were pleased to be able to give out numerous laptops to support learning – over 300 to date with more to follow as required. I know that lockdown put a lot of pressure on families – I want to thank you for your ongoing support in spite of the pressures we have all faced; I hope we have been able to support you and your children in the face of these difficulties.

I also want to thank our young people and families for the support regarding facemasks and safety around the site. Six months ago it would have been inconceivable to be using masks on site or ensuring year groups are kept separate. It is to their credit that pupils have worked with us all the way and adapted to this new way of working and being on site. The way pupils have also spoken on TV or radio shows about lockdown or exams shows what an incredible group they are – appearing on BBC Breakfast in the Summer and since then on the National (UK) TV news, numerous times on radio and of course many times in the press and online. They speak with such confidence and skill to make all of us proud.

To some extent this term, some normality has returned to school life. We were hugely pleased to see that Victoria Carey, our Head of English won the Secondary School Teacher of the Year. This is a great honour for her, her team and the school as a whole. The way pupils and staff spoke about how she supports and helps all those around her was wonderful to hear

– she received her award online from the Education Minister, Kirsty Williams. Well done Mrs Carey!

Equally, we were able to run a changed but nonetheless successful Mary Immaculate Day recently – celebrating Mary the Mother of Jesus at the heart of our school but also celebrating everything that makes our school great – seeing the pupils in our Show of Talent in the afternoon was awe inspiring – that they would have such confidence and talent to present on camera, live streamed throughout the school.

We have a few staff changes this term. Mrs Winn, Mrs Evans and Mrs Lewis leave us for other schools, while we have a new Head of Welsh in Mrs Jones and new Maths teachers in Mrs Prosser and Mr Doonan.

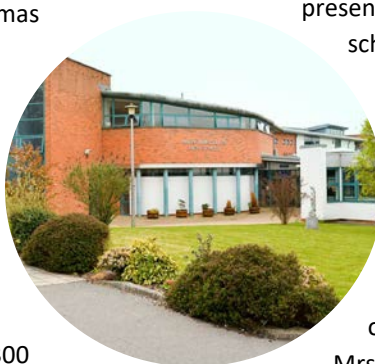
It is also my sad duty to report that a member of our teaching staff passed away this term – Mrs Wilson was our Head of Design Technology for the last year; she was a well-loved member of staff – her presence is sorely missed in our community. I would ask you keep her family in your prayers as all members of our community who have lost loved ones this year.

May I wish you and all your families a happy and holy Christmas. In this time, please take especial care of each other. School re-opens January 4th, which is week 1.

**O holy Child of Bethlehem!
Descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin and enter in,
Be born in us to-day.
We hear the Christmas angels
The great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us,
Our Lord Emmanuel!**

Huw Powell

Headteacher



OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD 2020

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 once again run by Mrs Dyer, with help from Mrs Weare and Mr Troote.

Students and staff were very generous donating money this year due to the restrictions, and Samaritan's Purse collected a total of 80 boxes. These will make their way this year to children in Romania.

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.



KNOW YOUR LEMONS

At Mary Immaculate, we are raising money in the memory of Mrs Wilson and to continue her fantastic work

As a school, so far, we have raised **£760.91** and we are aiming for **£1500** to donate to the foundation by the end of the school year. For more information of Dawns hard work visit the website below.

[**www.knowyourlemons.com/dawn**](http://www.knowyourlemons.com/dawn)

After Mrs Dawn Wilson was diagnosed with breast cancer, she discovered that there are actually 12 symptoms of breast cancer. She then realised she had not one but three symptoms. This was information she needed sooner, and she took it on as her mission for every woman in Wales to not miss this information. Her passion, charisma, and unwillingness not to take “no” for an answer has lead to an incredible amount of people being educated in Wales and beyond.

Astoundingly, Dawn taught nearly 5,000 people in person. Through working with schools, and government organisations, she used her unique talents to engage, educate, and inspire people to do more. She also introduced us to local charity Tenovus, to find a way to distribute our Know Your Lemons 12 symptoms posters to EVERY GP surgery in Wales. Before we could do that however, we had to get the NHS’ endorsement for our campaign. So she did! She banged down the doors of the NHS to get them to endorse our campaign, and stood on the footsteps of the Welsh Assembly to launch our campaign across Wales in 2018.

She shared her life and passion for early detection not only with me, or her students, or family and friends, but on ITV with hundreds of thousands of members of the public as she candidly opened up about her diagnosis and struggles and wish to prevent it from happening to someone else. She was determined to take these lemons and make serious lemon-aid. And she did. We will never truly know how many women have discovered—or will discover—their breast cancer early because of Dawn.

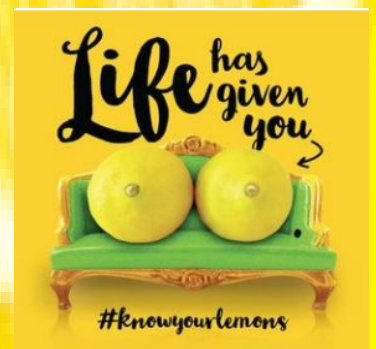


With Dawn’s permission, we have established a specific fund in her name to continue her work in Wales. To kick off the fund, we are designating £1,500 in her name. It will fund more educators and our campaign efforts to carry out what she has started in schools and with the public. There is still much work left to do and we won’t stop until early detection can become a reality for many more.

With gratitude,

Corrine Ellsworth-Beaumont

Founder and Friend of Dawn



**£ 760.91 of £1500 target
raised so far**

THE CHAPLAIN'S CORNER



Well, COVID has really affected our school life. We have been unable to have many of our liturgies and celebrations because of the restrictions on mixing. However, this has not stopped us; we are nothing if not resilient. One of our major celebrations before Christmas has been Mary Immaculate day. This year our celebration will be reaching a wider audience than usual as it will now be shown in individual classrooms and posted on the web. Do have a look and enjoy it. See if you can spot the pupils in it. They all perform well!

Unfortunately, we will not be able to have our usual Advent Celebration in the school but, again, we have it on camera. It will be on the web and hopefully you will look it up. Again, enjoy the talent we have here at the school.

Our Christmas Parcel project, has continued but in a different format and I am sure that you will read about this in more detail elsewhere in the newsletter. Added to that we have had a tremendous drive on the Charity 'Know your lemons' This effort was inspired by a well-loved member of staff Dawn Wilson who recently died due to Cancer. Again, I hope you read more about this tremendous venture elsewhere.

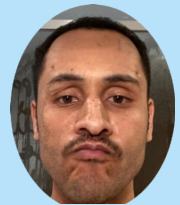
We have no OAP party this year, but this hasn't stopped us. We have been in contact with the local Catholic churches and have arranged for parcels to be sent to needy families in our catchment area. Fortunately, this year, because of a grant received by the Archbishop and the assistance of Spiro's Catering, we have been able to expand to distribute parcels not only to OAPs but also to other families.

Mary Immaculate school has not been idle, has not stood back and said we cannot do anything, but we have been resilient and found new ways to do what we always do. Thanks to all the Staff and Pupils who have done so much work to make this happen.

Have a Christmas full of peace and love.



MOVEMBER 2020



This year, once again, a group of 10 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, £445.00 pounds 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



<https://uk.movember.com/mospace/14102569>



£445.00



Mary Immaculate Day

"Hopefully you can all see and hear me ok in your classrooms, but to test this can all the Michaels please stand up. Go on, all the Michaels, stand up. You're all standing? Good, that's the mike (mic) test done then"

With these words, this year's Mary Immaculate Day was launched via the power of the internet, and the tone of the day was set.

This year, due to Covid, we had to look at a new way of still delivering the Day to our audience of staff and pupils, while observing social distancing within the school year groups. To do this we streamed the day live from the hall to the classrooms. Some acts were prerecorded on camera, these acts were then compiled into video by our Host for the Day and compere supreme - Mr Ross Capel.

Sound and Music was provided by Mr Childs of the Music Dept.

Mr Capel kept the show flowing, delivering a stream of banter which had the audience both laughing and groaning simultaneously. Even a Fire Alarm, giving the show an unexpected intermission, (this was a false alarm by the way- thank you to the science dept!) could not knock him off his stride.

However, as expected, the stars of the show were the pupils and they really delivered once again.

The acts were many and varied, ranging from high quality Taekwondo displays from both Megan Peebles and Gabrielle McCarthy from Year 7. We were also treated to two fantastic displays of high level gymnastics from both Ruby Christopherson and Gabriella Dzejyte.

There were numerous piano players which included Jose and Felipe Orbezo and Cindy Dong in Year 7, tinkling the ivories to great aplomb and effect. The singing was also brilliant with many excellent renditions of well know songs delivered with gusto.

Our young Beatboxer, Marcel Carter, also caught everyone's attention with his original composition of sound. The unexpected surprise was the Seagull with the lightsaber who wandered in and showed his skills to us all (Charlie Defiglio).

All and all a good day was had, with many laughs and a fine display of the talent that our fearless young people possess.

The eventual and worthy winner was Natalia Mendez, who gave us a powerful rendition of Adele's hit - Someone like you.

Second place went to Chrissy Ackland, Justine Chirila, Emily Allan and Mya Bosley with their two part harmony rendition of Elvis Presley's song, 'Can't Help Falling in Love with You'.

Third place went to Megan Kemble in Year 11, for her beautifully sung version of Sam Smith's 'Writing on the Wall'.

Thanks to all involved , and a huge mention for Mr Capel, Mr Childs, Our chaplain Mr Mills and all the canteen staff for going above and beyond. And of course a special thanks to all those pupils who took part.

See you all next year and mind those Seagulls!





TEACHER OF THE YEAR WALES

"Local Secondary School, Mary Immaculate celebrates, Teacher of the Year awarded by Welsh Government"

The Professional Teaching Awards Cymru honour the achievements of teachers across the country who are championing success in education while demonstrating the utmost dedication and commitment in the process.

This year, there were 9 awards, all of which are nominated for by the public. All finalists in each of the 9 categories are selected by a national panel of judges who are representatives from the Professional Teaching Awards Cymru. Their role is to judge and score entries according to a specific criterion of an exceptional standard. This is also the second time a teacher at Mary Immaculate has been shortlisted for the award.

Victoria Carey, teacher at Mary Immaculate High School, Cardiff is winner for the 'Teacher of the Year in a Secondary School' category. Along with the award announcement, the Professional Teaching Awards Cymru stated that "Victoria leads with warmth, care and challenge and is always focused on achieving the best outcomes for the young people in her care".

"Her passion and dedication to her subject are infectious, and she has created a love of English with pupils, unlocking their potential and raising pupil aspirations".

On their website, The Welsh Government Education rewards those who display "the qualities of an exceptional secondary school teacher", showing "evidence of being an excellent role model for the younger generation and relentless in getting higher standards".



Welcome to MARY IMMACULATE CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

Our Mission is to be a Catholic School which promotes positive relationships founded on the values of respect, care, compassion and love.

We firmly believe that each individual can discover, develop and achieve their full potential to help them take their place in our ever-changing world.

The core purpose of Mary Immaculate is to achieve the best for all. This philosophy is at the heart of everything we aspire to do for each member of our community.



respect
care
compassion
love



Victoria said *"I feel extremely overwhelmed at winning such an award. This award is not just for me, but all the amazing staff who I have had the pleasure to work with, and who have helped to shape me and my pedagogical practices"*

Mary Immaculate has previously been recognised as a centre of excellence and has supported other schools locally and regionally in teaching, learning and leadership. Their mission is to push their students to do their best and promote achievement through hard work and determination, and staff at the school work hard to ensure that their students have the same opportunities as their counterparts in every school in Wales.

Mary Immaculate are proud to have such a brilliant teacher and role model within their midst, Headteacher, Huw Powell said, *"We are so proud of Vicky – her work in and outside of the classroom has changed the lives of so many for the better"*.



COMMUNITY SPIRIT

In any normal year Mary Immaculate usually opens its doors to the senior citizens in the local community, where people are invited into school for a buffet lunch and entertainment. But sadly, due to COVID restrictions in place, this has not happened this year. But, as a School, we felt we wanted to go above and beyond for our senior citizens in the local community because the impact of isolation on the elderly clearly must have been very difficult. So, this year, Mrs Jeffery, who normally co-ordinates the 'Senior citizens Christmas Party' felt that we needed to honour our commitment to our local residents who had clearly gone through a difficult time since March. The school appealed to a number of local organisations -including Cardiff Local Authority, Tesco, LIDL, eteach and Apollo supply agency - who all give generously to the local appeal. As a result, the School has helped prepare a spectacular 294 Christmas hampers for both the senior citizens and vulnerable in the local community. Mrs Jeffery went on to say, 'I am humbled by the efforts both staff and local businesses have gone to in clearly such a difficult and challenging time. I didn't want our local community to feel that they had been forgotten and felt it was important that during such challenging times we remembered the importance of Christmas and the importance of acts of kindness. Headteacher Huw Powell said,

"I am so pleased that in spite of the challenges we have all faced this year, we have been able to offer some support to the most vulnerable. We hope that these hampers show the love our young people have for the wider community – we thank all who have come on the journey with us – we especially thank St Mary's Parish in Canton, Cardiff and the Archbishop of Cardiff, Most Rev George Stack, for their support of this endeavour."

Willing assistants



www.maryimmaculate.org.uk





Above : the assembly line in full swing

below: Example of a hamper



FIRST ONLINE PARENTS EVENING

In line with meeting social distancing requirements, Mary Immaculate High School has just had its very first online parents' evening. This was for parents of year 11 pupils and took place on the 10th of December, and was a very positive experience for all

To enable this to happen the school subscribed to a system call "schoolcloud". This is a product that was tailor made for schools and while not the same as meeting parents physically, does offer many advantages to both parents and teachers. The system is accessible from any modern Internet connected device with a webcam and microphone. E.g. laptop or smart phone. The advantages are :

- Allows the parents to book the video appointments themselves;
- Saves time for teachers;
- Make sure all students have appointments during the school year;
- No double bookings of teachers;
- No letters home which can get lost in schoolbags;
- Parent no longer relies on their child to make appointments;

Feed back from parents was all positive, highlighting how easy it was to use. They also enjoyed the relative ease when compared to having to travel onto the school grounds for a normal parents' evening. The other big plus was knowing exactly when your appointment would start and finish.

The staff also gave positive feedback and were really very pleased with the parental engagement. Again the pre-booked time slot system meant that teachers could prepare for each pupil and have all relevant information to hand before the appointment began, thus ensuring a quick and to the point meeting with parents was the end result.

With the current COVID situation, there will most likely be more of these online parents' meetings in the future.

Thank you to all pupil parents and we hope to see you all online again in the future.

