

Summer 2021

# the MARY IMMACULATE NEWSLETTER



**Miss Carey , with her Pearson Silver  
Teaching Award**



## SILVER AWARD

Last year, one of our staff, Miss Carey, won the "Teacher of the Year in a secondary school" award for Wales, having been nominated by one of her pupils .

(Continued inside)



## MESSAGE FROM THE HEADTEACHER

Since the last time I wrote in some ways we have found a new normal for our school and its young people. On return from lockdown, just before Easter, we were able to bring young people back to begin acclimatising to school again -

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# MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD TEACHER

- Continued from front cover

these days were also effective in helping us identify what extra support our pupils needed – this wellbeing support has been a huge strength of the school for many years and it has really helped us support our youngsters and wider school family in the midst of the pandemic.

It is a credit to the young people and to you as our parents that pupils were well prepared on their return and have worked with us in these difficult circumstances. Their behaviour has been excellent - I thank you for your support for our school and our teachers.

Talking of our teachers, I can confirm that Miss Carey, our Head of English has been confirmed as a silver award winner for the UK National Teacher of the Year – Miss Carey is already the best secondary school teacher in Wales – we hope she may now become the best teacher in the UK by the end of the year!

Excellent teaching is at the heart of what we do in all areas – from September we are a lead school for PE across most of region. We were also published nationally as a model of how to lead learning across Wales. We are also a lead school for the new Open University teacher training course and we are also a lead school for the Cardiff Metropolitan University teacher training route for next year.

All of this is no doubt why we were once again very oversubscribed for 2021 with over 250 applications. From September, we are taking pupils from 24 different primary schools across the region – we have been pleased to offer on-site transition to help youngsters this year and we will continue to offer our Summer School this year, with a specific focus on those from our non-feeder schools. Helping our family of pupils to feel happy about coming to secondary school is a priority for us. We will support our parents with a new webcast and our new year 7 parents handbook.

success and I thank their teachers on their behalf who have worked so hard to ensure young people achieve the best they can. The pupils were part of a report on Walesonline on the day they received their results.

I am pleased to say that pupils in year 11 have once again gained some fantastic results. Unusually, these results are already out at a pupil level – whole school figures are once again strong and demonstrate excellent progress – they should be proud of their success and I thank their teachers on their behalf who have worked so hard to ensure young people achieve the best they can. The pupils were part of a report on Walesonline on the day they received their results.



We have been able to once again update our school facilities – you will see our new school multi-gym in these pages which pupils have already been using. Our hall has also been revamped and now looks a much more inviting and warm space. I hope you like it - we look forward to welcoming parents to it in the future.

We have a few staff leaving us this term. First of all, Mr Peachey who has been a Science teacher here for many, many years is retiring. There will be young (and maybe not so young!) people all over Cardiff who will remember the support and guidance he gave them and value his time as their teacher. We wish him the best for a well earned retirement. We also say farewell to Miss Allen our ex-Head of Maths who is also retiring and to Mr English and Miss Foote who are also moving on to new challenges.

In September, we welcome a new Head of Design Technology in Miss Louise Frost. Two new maths teachers join us – Miss Roberts and Ms Parry and Mr Duffield joins us in the Science department.

Finally, a thank you to all our parents – on behalf of all our staff and Governors. These last 18 months have been the most challenging I can remember for not just the school but the entire community around us. The road ahead of us is still uncertain – but I know one thing – with the staff, the young people and you as our parents we can only succeed!

Huw Powell

Headteacher

# MISS CAREY CONFIRMED FOR SILVER AWARD !

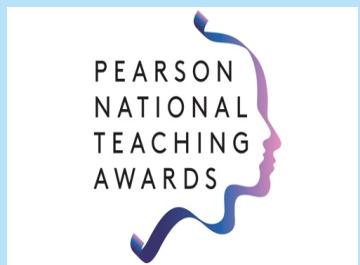
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The Professional Teaching Awards Cymru gave this award to Miss Carey in recognition of the hard work and effort that she puts into her role as a teacher, and for the way the pupils respond to Miss Carey's passion for teaching.

*"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."*

As a result of earning this prestigious award, Miss Carey has now also been recognised with a silver Pearson National Teaching Award and will now be shortlisted to win one of 15 gold awards.

The Pearson National Teaching Awards are the 'Oscars' of the teaching profession and take place annually. Silver winners are announced on 'Thank a Teacher' day in June and the Gold winners are announced at the awards ceremony that takes place in October. The Awards are televised by the BBC and last year, were shown on BBC One's 'The One Show' on the 23rd-27th November in a week-long celebration of teaching for our 2020 Pearson National Teaching Award Gold Winners.



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 High School's headteacher, Huw Powell, is "delighted" that Miss Carey has won silver and been shortlisted for gold.

Mr Powell said: "I am delighted for Victoria to receive this award having contributed greatly to the school's success over a number of years.

"Victoria's hard work and determination deserves to be recognised with the Teacher of the Year award.".



**Pob Lwc Victoria!**

# THE CHAPLAIN'S CORNER



Well, what a year that was! It is fair to say that none of us could have imagined the last year happening. Maybe you, like me, thought that we were living in modern times and anything like a plague would not happen here - but happen it did. Covid has certainly affected the work of the chaplaincy. Outside visits were not possible, our weekly mass in the chapel had to be cancelled, there were no Christmas or Easter liturgies.

However, we have risen to the challenge and tried to work and think in a different way. If we could not have an event, then we put one online. So, our Christmas and Easter celebrations were online. These were not easy to carry out. It meant that the pupils had to practise and go through scripts many times. Mr. Capel and Mr. Gibbs spent many hours behind cameras and editing footage to come up with a finished product.

These experiences led us to admire the way that we watch television today when every programme needs the timing, the lighting and the sound to be perfect. It led us to appreciate all the demanding work required to achieve this.

The same goes for our pupils during this time. They have had to alter much about their life in school, but they have responded to the challenge and worked hard. The same can be said about the teaching staff and the support staff, all have shown real resilience and changed many things to ensure that our school has carried on with its mission to help our pupils to achieve their best.

The Covid crisis has enabled the school to show its Christ like spirit in the way that people have supported each other, supported those in need, walked with those who were suffering and always tried to show love to each other.

There are no pictures for this article but you can see the videos we have created on the school website. Just watch them and admire the love and effort that went into producing them and the talent that we have in the school. Let us pray that next year we can begin to have a normal school life.

**Tony Mills**

## FOREVER FLOWERS



As a school community, we would like to remember loved ones we have lost, not just in the last year but over the years. We especially remember pupils and staff of Mary Immaculate who have died. This year we lost our Head of DT, Mrs Dawn Wilson, and one of the flowers we have purchased will be a lasting memorial to her. In addition, many of our pupils, staff and governors have lost loved ones this year and we want the chance to create a lasting memorial to them at the school.

We have already purchased our flowers that will form part of the large display that will be installed at Cardiff Castle during the summer months. 24<sup>th</sup> July until the 8<sup>th</sup> August 2021

We ask parents, past pupils and friends of Mary Immaculate to support us in this fundraising campaign by donating whatever you can to City Hospice, either through our JUSTGIVING page listed below,

**[www.justgiving.com/fundraising/maryimmaculate2021](https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/maryimmaculate2021)**



Or by going to the City Hospice page and donating directly there. **<https://www.cityhospice.org.uk/>**

City Hospice is at the heart of Cardiff, providing medical, nursing and end of life care to patients, and support to their families. Please help us to support them. **Thank you !! Diolch !!**



Support City Hospice's Forever Flowers

# THE BRIDGE AND THE BAXTER PROJECT

As part of responsibly caring for the pupils in our care , we have a facility called "The Bridge" . The Bridge is a manned facility situated in a quieter area of the school, adjacent to the chapel. Its layout reflects both domestic and academic environments, giving a sense of stability and continuity for pupils with chaotic lives. A kitchen area is used to prepare and share meals and create a mutually supportive atmosphere for pupils.

Estyn identified The Bridge in 2015 as an Area of Sector Leading Practice. The Bridge was described by Estyn in its recent case study following a thematic review in 2020, as an;

*"overreaching intermediary between home and school. It provides a safe and structured environment situated in a quiet area where staff deliver a range of creative activities, tailored to meet pupils' needs".*



To further enhance this facility we have now arranged for a weekly visit from Trixie and her handler. Trixie is a therapy dog from The Baxter Project , whose aim is to provide "A targeted therapeutic early intervention working with the young people in schools who need it most" . The pupils then have a period of time where they interact with Trixie with in the Bridge.This interaction is proven to relieve tension and stress the pupils may be experiencing and is greatly beneficial to them. For more information Google " the Baxter Project"



[https://twitter.com/Baxter\\_Project](https://twitter.com/Baxter_Project)



Above "Trixie"



Right " The Bridge "

## The Bridge To Success

*"Removing the barriers to learning."*

**A path that helps you to get over a difficulty which is preventing you from being successful in the classroom**

# SCHOOL IMPROVEMENTS

Due to the ongoing COVID 19 pandemic, the school quickly decided to launch a major scheme of improvement works to take advantage of the absence of pupils on the school site.

## THE SCHOOL HALL

The first area improved was the school hall, which is the hub of the school and is in constant use. Normally, any maintenance in the hall area would have to be undertaken and completed within the six-week summer break. With pupils absent, the hall could have a much more involved refit and this was started promptly. The first target was the ceiling and lights, both the ceiling tiles and the old light fittings were removed and replaced, the light fittings were replaced with new energy efficient long life LED panels. These panels not only give a brighter light but are cheaper to run and over time will save the school money at the same time as reducing our carbon footprint. New ceiling tiles were fitted to replace the old ones .



After the completion of the ceiling, the team then moved to repainting the entire hall from top to bottom. Heating pipes were boxed in and new custom-made covers were constructed for all of the hall heaters. All of this work was completed by our own staff, assisted by our regular electrician.

An external company then came in and fitted a new floor throughout, using an ingenious system of interlocking heavy-duty floor tiles. This system eliminates the need for glue, or indeed any adhesives, making it relatively easy and fast to fit.

New blackout thermal curtains were then installed throughout and a new podium was ordered. The hall sound system was then also upgraded to put the final touches to the project.

The end result of all this hard work is a brighter,fresher and new-looking hall ready for returning staff and pupils, which is fit for purpose effective for the next 20 years of service.

A Big thank to our caretaking staff who worked very hard, at very great heights for the duration of this project.



## THE FITNESS SUITE

The next area to come under scrutiny was the school's fitness suite. The majority of the equipment in this room was coming to the end of its working life, or had been superseded by more modern easy and safer to use equipment. Once again, the caretaking staff sprang into action, removing all the old equipment from the room. The PE staff then joined the project and repainted the room in brilliant white. A new specialised gym floor was professionally fitted throughout; this special floor is a very thick rubber type of material designed to last under the intensive use it will receive. It is capable of absorbing the force of dropped weights with no damage being caused. The new exercise machines that had been selected by the PE staff, were then delivered and fitted. These included rowing machines, stationary fitness bikes, new safe and secure weight machines and racks, and a cross country ski machine.



A new modern set of dumb bells, catering for all levels of abilities has also been purchased and fitted.

A Bluetooth sound system and a 65 inch TV with casting ability was wall mounted – this will most likely be used by those Joe Wicks fans! A timer for use in circuit type training has also been installed.

Pupils in limited numbers ( due to the limited size of the room ) have already made use of the new facilities and the response from them has been excellent. This refitted fitness suite is a great new asset to the school and will greatly benefit all of our pupils going forward.

## OUTDOOR SPORTS COURT AREA

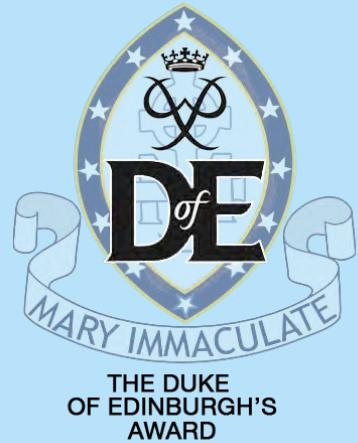
The last area to be fitted was the outdoor sports court area. The existing fencing surrounding this area was very old and was often having to be repaired due to wear and tear caused by normal sporting activities. The old fence was removed, the old posts dug up and new posts were securely concreted in. New heavy-duty fence panels were attached to the new posts and new gates installed. The new fencing is designed to take full on blows from footballs and is certainly more robust than the preceding fence and so it should be standing strong for many years to come. Re-lining of the sports court surface will be completed in the Summer break.



# DUKE OF EDINBURGH

## DofE vs COVID19

Like all aspects of school life, the Duke of Edinburgh Award has been severely disrupted by COVID. The first lockdown started the week of the first expeditions in 2020, which unfortunately meant that last year's year 11s were unable to complete their Silver Award. The DofE award has blossomed at MIHS since its set up in 2016, and I have been determined that COVID was not going to stop the award progressing or other pupils enjoying the experience. Our current year 10s were enrolled in June 2020 whilst we were still in lockdown. The use of Microsoft Teams provided an invaluable form of communication between leaders and participants. The Duke of Edinburgh Award itself introduced changes to make the Award more accessible in lockdown to all across the country and coined the hashtag #dofewithadifference. This has enabled countless participants to continue the award, completing many of the sections from the safety of their own home. As COVID continued to plague our lives, I tried to think of new ways to continue the award. As second lockdown began so did online expedition training- to varying success. Participants found it quite amusing watching myself demonstrate CPR on resus Annie via Teams. Now back in school, and with lockdown easing, DofE has been able to get (nearly) back to normal. Despite several participants from both years 10 and 11 decided the challenge of DofE in lockdown was too much we have not only held a successful bronze expedition (see below), begun training the remaining year 10s ready for expedition (hopefully) in September but have also enrolled 39 new participants from year 9 onto the bronze award and 18 participants from year 10 on the silver award! It is safe to say the Duke of Edinburgh Award is still thriving at MIHS and I can't wait to see what the next cohort of participants can achieve! Miss Browning .



## Year 11's Bronze Expedition

In March 2020 our year 11 pupils (then in year 10), were happily planning their bronze walk ready to go on an expedition in April. As we know our lives were then turned upside down and we went into lockdown. It became impossible to run any sort of expedition. However, ten year 11 pupils have waited patiently for the chance to complete their expedition and finally the opportunity arose. After several intense training sessions to prepare and plan the walk the year 11s spent the night of Friday 11th June packing their giant rucksacks, blissfully unaware of the aches and bruises they would return with on Sunday night. Saturday dawned bright and sunny; it was clear it was going to be a hot weekend! One group set out from Barry Golf Course and one from St Fagans; both heading back to school. School became their campsite for the night as, unfortunately, current COVID restrictions meant that a campsite could not be used and pupils even had to sleep individually in their tents! Both groups' navigation was tested on day one; as frustration and tiredness set in both groups found themselves lost and behind their arrival times. After an unplanned rendezvous, they all found themselves back on course but still miles from school. Finally, following an embarrassing trek up Caerau lane, with Miss Browning following slowly behind in her fiat 500 to ensure no one was bowled down by a crazy driver, and much aggressive beeping from other cars, there was a deep sigh of relief and even the odd comment of 'I've never been so glad to see school in my life.'

The evening saw some fantastic team work, with both groups cooking and setting up all ten tents together. Culinary skills peaked, with pasta and chicken chow mein being cooked and devoured with chop sticks! Sunday saw an early wake up call from Mr Hannah, followed by Pepper (Miss Browning's dog and DofE mascot) rudely making her way into the tents of those lazier participants. Everyone woke feeling a little worse for wear; both feet and backs were sore, and the prospect of another day hiking in the sun resulted in a lot of grumbling and bitterness towards Miss Browning and her 'stupid award'. With early departures planned in an attempt to beat the heat, leaving came to a halt when one group realised they hadn't packed breakfast! Sunday proved to be a much more successful day. Despite the blistering heat, neither team got lost and both reached their final destination on time and in one piece. Although both teams were sore footed, sweaty and exhausted they completed their expeditions with a sense of jubilation and achievement!!!

**\*\* One of the DofE teams vlogged their expedition. The video can be watched on the school website, Facebook page and Instagram @MIHSDofE. \*\***

## An update from year 10...

We signed up for DofE in April of last year, when Miss Browning helped us choose 3 activities to complete, we had to ensure they were Covid safe but fulfilled the options within our DofE bronze award. We chose to do DofE as it gave us an extracurricular option that was fun but also allowed us to take on new skills and opportunities. We chose to do litter picking for our volunteering section, we did walks for our physical section and cooking for our skills section, all of these were done during lockdown, and we had Miss Browning to support us with any problems we faced. We then began virtually training in February 2021 while in yet again another lockdown, we did virtual training sessions and were given activities at the end of each section to confirm our knowledge and show to Miss we understood, we especially enjoyed watching Miss Browning showing us how to carry out CPR on Annie! Returning to school, we have now begun regular weekly training sessions that are going to help us complete the expedition section of our award, we hope to have our expedition for Bronze done by October of this year and are very excited to do so. DofE has been hard to carry out through this tough year, but we have managed to do so with excitement and eagerness, and we are having so much fun and looking forward to what is next with expeditions and a Storey Arms trip around the corner! We would recommend DofE to everyone as so far we have had a great experience and cannot wait to carry on with our Silver Award and continue to learn skills that will benefit us in the future. Miss Browning has worked super hard the last year to keep the award going through the hard times and we are incredibly happy to have her support all the way through!



**Georgie Avery, Ruby David and Teigun , Year 10**

## Year 9 waiting in anticipation...

I have chosen to participate in the bronze Duke of Edinburgh award and I am really looking forward to improving my confidence and gaining new skills. I chose to enrol in the award because it is going to be a lot of fun whilst also being a challenge; as well as it being an extra skill to put onto my CV to make me stand out when applying for jobs etc. There are three sections to be completed: volunteering, skills and physical. There are many activities which you can choose from to complete these sections. Personally I have decided to volunteer at a charity shop, roller skate as my physical activity and am learning first aid as my skill. Overall, I am very excited for what's ahead while completing the award and the camping trip at the end of it is another aspect I am eagerly awaiting!

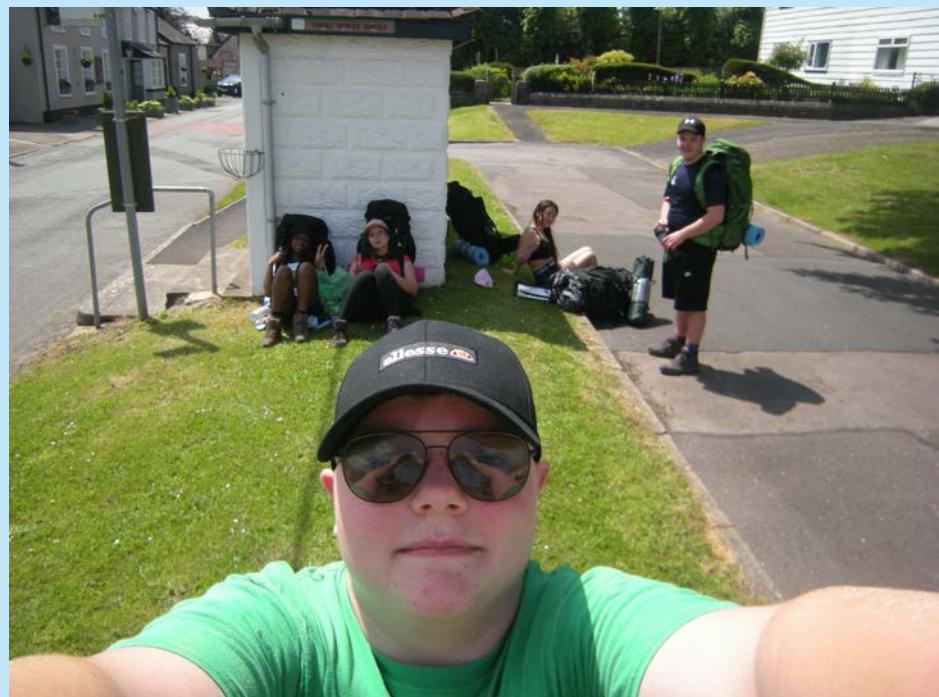
**Jenna, Year 9**

## Year 11 DoE feeling the heat during their bronze expedition

Pictured Right;

**Sebi ( front )**

**Elisangela, Wiktoria ,  
Weina, Blyddwyn. (Back )**



# MARY IMMACULATE BECOMES A LEAD PARTNERSHIP SCHOOL

Mary Immaculate has just become a lead partnership school in conjunction with the Cardiff Metropolitan University . The criteria to become a Lead partnership school are strenuous and include ;

-Track record of commitment to initial Teacher Education and high quality provision;

-Proven record of high quality support for student teachers;

-Appropriate current school categorisation and Estyn outcomes;\*

-A commitment to contribute to school-based research;



The fact we have achieved this is testament to the way we manage our staff and what this means for us as a school is that over the academic year we will take 30 student teachers from the University system and train them in teaching using our well proven methods. These methods have been developed by Mary Immaculate and refined over many years. During their time with us the student teachers will be primarily monitored by Mr Ryan Crimmins, and other members of our staff. Eventually those student teachers will then take and use those methods to teach in other schools upon becoming fully qualified teachers .

## LEAD PRACTICE IN PE

Mary Immaculate is also pleased to announce that we have been selected as a "Lead Practice school" in the teaching area of Physical Education ( PE ) . We were selected to do this by the South Wales Consortium, which is a centrally based school improvement service that operates over 5 counties in the South Wales area. The reason Mary Immaculate was selected for this role is a direct recognition of the consistently high GCSE PE results that we have achieved over many years. These results have been obtained due to our excellent teaching practices and high standards.

As a result members of our PE department will now advise other schools in the South Wales area, with the result that our practices and standards will then be adopted in those schools to the benefit of both teachers and their pupils alike.

A Big well done to the PE staff of Mary Immaculate for being recognised for their excellence!

**Da iawn!**

## Transition and Summer school

We have recently had many year six pupils from our feeder primary schools visit us on our "transition Day" programme. The pupils were shown around the school site and introduced to staff as the day proceeded. They then had lunch with us before returning home . While here the pupils were expertly guided by Mr Butcher and Mrs Howell who look forward to greeting them again in the Autumn when the new school year starts .

We also offer a Summer school for those pupils who come from outside of our main feeder schools. This year the dates for summer school are Wednesday 21st and Thursday 22nd July.

To contact the school regarding attending please use the information on our school website

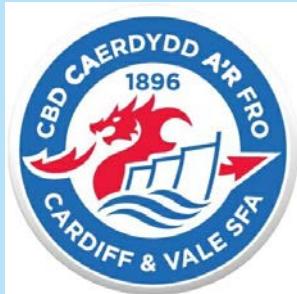
**<https://www.maryimmaculate.org.uk/>**



# SPORTING ACHIEVEMENTS

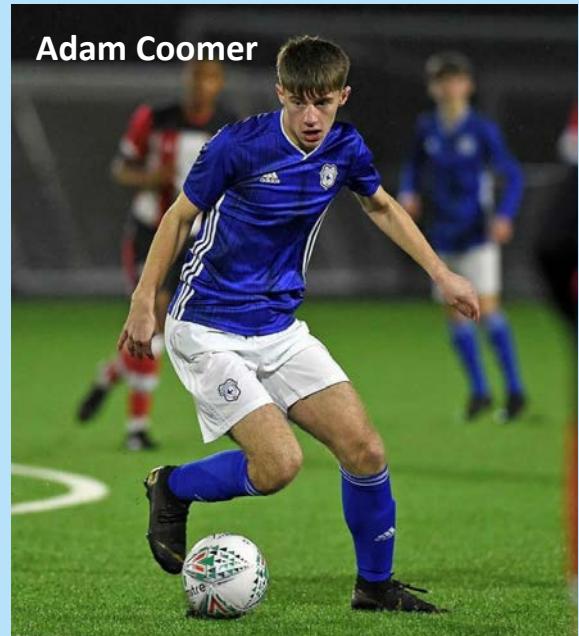
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We would like to wish Good Luck to our current year 10 pupils Archie Lane (10 Bandano), Blessing Kilonda (10 Romero), Adam Skene (10 John Paul ), Mckenzie Dunn (10 John Paul ), Ioniri Conte (10 Kolbe), Harvey Chapman ( 10 Teresa ) and Callum Christopherson (10 Romero) who have all earned trials for Cardiff Schools Rugby. We again wish them all the best and hope to report news on their effort's at a later date.



Nelson Sanca (9 Kolbe ) and Nahele Mendes ( 8 King ) have successfully trialled for Cardiff and Vale Schools Football for their respective age groups. Nelson will represent CVSFA for year 9 and Nahele will represent CVSFA for year 8.

Congratulations also go to our Year 11 pupil Adam Coomer (pictured right ) who has accepted a Cardiff City Football Club Scholarship. We wish him every success in this endeavour. We hope that he will go on to play for the main team in the future.



## PAST PUPILS SPORTING ACHIEVEMENTS

Two of our past pupils have made great strides in their sporting achievements since leaving Mary Immaculate . First to be recognised here is Mackenzie Martin who has gone from strength to strength since signing his academy deal with Cardiff Blues Rugby. Mackenzie has been a key player for the under-18 squad so far, featuring in several games and recently scored an outstanding solo try against the Llanelli Scarlets .



Ryan Kavanagh



Mackenzie Martin

The second ex-pupil to gain mention is Ryan Kavanagh, who has signed a 2-year professional contract with Cardiff City Football Club. Ryan has been at Cardiff City since the age of 7 years old and we look forward to more news of his progression in the professional footballing world.

He is seen here on the left with Cardiff City CEO and Executive Director , Ken Choo.

# the MARY IMMACULATE SPORTSLETTER



*The latest sporting achievements from MARY IMMACULATE HIGH SCHOOL*

## SPORTING ACHIEVEMENTS

Sadly due to Covid19 none of our normal sporting fixtures have been able to take place. This has been most frustrating to all concerned, and hopefully these events will soon be restored. However we do have some news from present and past pupils who are still participating in sport and succeeding.

One of those pupils is Luey Giles from year 10 Teresa ( pictured below in number 4, top left ) who was selected to play for the Wales Under 15 team in June of this year. To be picked to represent your country is an amazing achievement and hopefully this will be the first of many Wales matches for Luey and we wish him every success in the future.

( Continued inside )



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