# Maiden Erlegh Chiltern Edge

# MECEmatters

#### Issue 19 • October 2023



Reades Lane, Sonning Common, Reading, RG4 9LN Tel: 0118 9721500

# **MESSAGE FROM THE HEADTEACHER**

#### Happy half-term everyone!

It has been such a positive half-term in so many ways. The school population has increased by 18% from July to September and this growth seems sure to be maintained, based upon the stellar numbers of families we have seen visiting the school during our open events over the last 2 terms with well in excess of 300 families coming through the doors. It has been a joy to see our Year 7s settling into school, making friends and finding their MECE feet, they are a lovely, friendly cohort who have fully embraced everything MECE has to offer. One of my favourite tasks is standing before our students each day to check their uniform, their equipment and make sure they are ready for the day which I am pleased to say they absolutely are. Another pleasure of mine is to be out and about during break and lunchtimes and to spend time catching up with our students; there are huaelv gifted and talented some individuals in this school; from football to science, from art to mathematics and English, it is wonderful to see our students excel in a range of different disciplines.

It has also been a pleasure to welcome a number of new staff into the MECE team and they have brought a breath of fresh air to our community. Whilst the old staff are missed, it is always good to have an influx of fresh talent and enthusiasm and our newcomers are certainly doing that! Having said that, staffing continues to challenge us and if you know of anyone who might like to come and work at our wonderful school please

do point them towards our vacancies page where we have a range of opportunities to join our wonderful MECE family:

#### Vacancies at MECE

Equally, this has been quite the half-term for different reasons due to the cyberattack. I know for many teachers the cyber-attack was one of the most challenging things that has happened in their careers. In weeks one and two we had no computers or laptops that could connect to the internet and in addition there was no printing available until towards the end of week three. By week 5 most staff had been able to recover their old files from the back up server but it took us a long time to get back up to speed and some of the normal checks that are so easy to perform using IT were made much more complex by these issues.

Lastly, by reading through this newsletter I hope you can see the vibrancy and passion the staff at the school have for their jobs and the young people they work with. There is always such a range of events and opportunities and as I write



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30 Oct	First day of Term 2
02 Nov	Early close for students—1:30pm finish
03 Nov	Year 7 Trip to Reading Museum
W/C 06 Nov	Bebras Computing Challenge Fortnight
06 Nov	South Oxon Cross Country
07 Nov	Online Apprenticeship Information Evening 6- 9pm
08 Nov	Parent Forum
09 Nov	Year 11 at Henley College

this a number of Year 11 are on a careers visit to Piggott school in addition to a lecture from Microsoft on apprenticeship opportunities with them.

I hope students are all able to use the ten day break to recharge and be ready for the second half term which commences on Monday 30 October at 8.40am.

Andy Hartley

For more information please visit: www.maidenerleghchilternedge.co.uk Twitter: @MEChilternEdge

# YEAR GROUPS — HEAD OF YEAR ROUND UP

# **YEAR 7**

What a fantastic first term for Year 7! After a hugely successful first day in September the year group have continued to go from strength to strength. There have been lots of exciting things happening, but I would like to highlight a few in particular.

Firstly, it was wonderful to see so many students put themselves forward as School Council Representatives and House Ambassadors, it is so important to play an active part in the school community. I received such lovely feedback from teachers and prospective parents following the Open Evening last month which many Year 7 students volunteered to act as guides and helpers, representing the school impeccably.

Tutor time is always a calm and focused start to the day. The groups are working their way through their tutor reading book. It has been wonderful to see all of Year 7 engaging so well with older students during tutor time House Mentoring on a Friday morning! Well done to 7C for winning 'Best Tutor Board' and all receiving a golden ticket for their contribution.

It was fabulous to welcome author Jess Butterworth to school, for a whole year group workshop – special congratulations to the winners of the 'Running on the Roof of the World' competition, who enjoyed a lunch with Jess!

I have thoroughly enjoyed following the journey of our Year 7 boys rugby team this season and taking students on their first ever MECE fixtures. It has also been great to see so many Year 7s at girl's football club at lunchtime and afterschool. I'm looking forward to their fixtures starting next term! Attendance at extracurricular events has been great, with this being a focus for Year 7 this term. A special well done to Vini for presenting in History Club on life in pre-unification Brazil, an informative and confident speech. Finally, it was so great to listen to the students present their brilliant work at the Science Fair, congratulations to the winners.

I hope Year 7 enjoy a well-deserved break. It has been a term full of success and I've no doubt this positive momentum will continue.

> Miss Cheeseman Head of Year 7

# TUTOR BOARD







# YEAR 8

We have had a wonderful start to the year!

Year 8 students were asked to produce a display on their favourite scientific invention and then held a science fair in which these were displayed, and the favourite was picked by the students. There were many examples of excellence by the Year 8 students including a display on the Lateral flow Covid tests, the F1 halo and the Hawk-eye tennis system.

Several Year 8 students are living our school values by being mentors Year 7 for various students. These Year 8s are showing compassion, inclusivity and a great respect for community at MECE by helping smooth the transition into secondary school life for those they are mentoring.

Year 8 Boys have also had the chance to represent the school at a local rugby tournament. Although the tournament ended in heartbreak for the students, it was a wonderful experience to see our students play and represent the school in the wider community.

So far it has been a pleasure to see Year 8 through their first term and I cannot wait to see what the rest of the year holds for this cohort.

> Mr Mount Head of Year 8

# YEAR GROUPS — HEAD OF YEAR ROUND UP

# YEAR 9

I can't believe how quickly this term has gone, and how much has been going on!

I am so pleased to report that Year 9 have made a very positive start to the year and I continue my daily rounds of visiting each tutor group in the morning. It is great to see how calm and focused the tutor groups are, engaged in the relevant activity according to the weekly rota. Tutor reading is a particular highlight, we know from research that students of all ages enjoy being read to and this is evident in these sessions.

lessons, focus In and concentration are key. It is a pleasure to visit lessons where students are clearly working hard and enjoying their learning - from seeing some fascinating science experiments, being drawn in by amazing smells from the food tech room, and seeing them hard at work in their humanities lessons. clearly engaged and contributing to every lesson. For the majority of our students, the school value of aiming high is evident in their lessons.

We strongly encourage all students to take part in an extracurricular activity, so if they haven't already done so, do please continue to encourage your son/ daughter to think about what they would like to do. I would also like to remind you that Homework Club runs every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, and is staffed by teachers who are more than willing to help!

A special mention must go to all the 9 student volunteers who helped out at our very wellattended open evening and mornings. The feedback from visitors was incredibly positive and we are very proud of them all, they are great ambassadors for the school.

> Ms Biddiss Head of Year 8 and 9

# YEAR 10 & 11

Both Year 10 & 11 have made a great start to the new school year, coping admirably with the IT issues that blighted us for the first few weeks of term. It is lovely to see the new Year 10s engaging with their option subjects and embracing the mindset that this is the beginning of their GCSEs and putting the effort in. We welcome Mr Sheridan and Mr Caldwell to the Year 10 tutor team, and Mrs Smith, formerly known as Miss Sheppard, returns to look after 10C. Year 11 continue to be ably supported by Mr Perry, Mrs Sarpong and Mrs Gopal.

Year 11 have been encouraged to attend open events at colleges and sixth forms and to apply before Christmas to the post-16 provider of their choice, which lots of students have done. We visited Maiden Erlegh School for a Careers Fair, will be attending a Taster Day at Henley College and have speakers coming in to speak about apprenticeships. Year 11 also have the opportunity to meet with our Careers Advisor, Mrs Finlayson to get further support and advice about next steps.



With the all-important PPE exams looming – good to bear in mind that many colleges and sixth forms use these grades to make conditional offers for places - the vast majority of students have been attending the after-school revision sessions.

Year 11 are also planning some fundraisers to go towards their Prom expenses. We are provisionally looking at Thursday 27 June at Badgemore Park Golf Club, Henley, but this will be confirmed later in the school year.

Our focus this term is on homework, and we are monitoring students that are struggling to meet their homework deadlines. Please encourage your child to attend Homework Club that runs after school on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays in the library. There, students have access to computers and a member of staff is available to assist if needed. A quiet space to work and routine can be very beneficial so if your child is struggling with homework we will be contacting home to recommend attendance.

Uniform remain an issue for a small minority and I would like to remind all parents / carers that nose studs are not permitted. Earrings are a single stud or small hoop per ear. False eyelashes are also not allowed at school.

I wish Year 11 all the best with their PPE revision over the half term break and I hope to see them refreshed and well prepared after the holiday.

Mrs Ashley Head of Year 10 & 11

# ENGLISH

#### Year 7

Our year 7s this year have studied 'A monster calls', a novel about a young boy with a mother suffering a terminal illness where the boy is helped through his grief journey by an imaginative monster living in his yew tree.

We were thrilled by how many Year 7s volunteered as helpers for our recent open evening. They were all amazing, helping out with tours and supporting the English department a great effort! The new year 7 pupils were given a gift of the novel 'Running on the roof of the world' to read over the holiday

and Jess Butterworth, came to school for a visit with the whole year group, which was great! Congratulations to the winners of our competition to design a new book cover! Evelyn in 7A, Isabella



and Emily in 7B and Alexandria in 7D had lunch with author, Jess, as a special treat for their brilliant entries.

#### Year 8

The year 8s this year had a great start to their term and have studied 'Anita and me', a contemporary piece about an Asian girl growing up in a predominantly white-British village. She has to struggle with the pressures of trying to fit into the white society she lives in. This is a great book for the younger pupils as it teaches them that we should introduce a lot more diversity into our lives.

This year group continue to be regular attendees at Debate Society and Literature Film Club, both led by Mr Groves. These are both great for developing students wider public speaking skills, a great addition to CVs and college applications.

#### Year 9

We have had an excellent start to the term and there has been a big improvement of engagement amongst the Year 9 pupils this year. The Year 9s are currently studying Gothic Literature in English with extracts from novels such as 'Dracula', 'Frankenstein' and 'The Red Room'. The annotation of the Gothic extracts is aiding the students' preparation for their GCSEs at the end of their MECE journey.



#### Year 10

The Year 10s have finished their study of power and conflict poetry, consisting their developed of annotations various and comparison paragraphs between the different poems. In their poetry anthologies, there is a wide selection of different writers from cultures different and eras, including William Blake of 'London' and John Agard of 'Checking Out Me History'. The tutor time focus for the Year 10s is on language GCSE reading of 'The Tell Tale Heart' anthology which is filled with a variety of short stories to help students access a wide range of unseen texts. A lot of reciprocal reading strategies are used to enhance the pupils' comprehension.

The Year 10s are currently starting their first novel study of 'A Christmas Carol' where they have developed their understanding of the context surrounding Dickens' novel set in the 19th century. The novel is all about a miserly old man, Ebenezer Scrooge, who wants nothing to do with Christmas as he sees the holiday as a wasted day on which he cannot make money. He is visited by four spirits, which warn him to become a better man. His character develops into a much cheerier Scrooge.

O @meceenglish

#### Year 11

The Year 11s have been reading non-fiction texts in tutor to aid their language GCSE, with a key focus on exam-style questions and activities as well as retrieval of the past texts they have studied.

There was a lot of work done finishing their study of 'An Inspector Calls', including a detailed end of topic essay question which was marked and handed back to students who then engaged in dedicated improvement and reflection time (DIRT). These DIRT tasks are a great way to prepare students for their upcoming exams. The majority of students did well on this essay and there is now a massive drive in English for Year 11 exam study.

We have now started Macbeth, a gripping play with key themes of the supernatural, ambition, regicide, tyranny, gender roles, murder and treason.

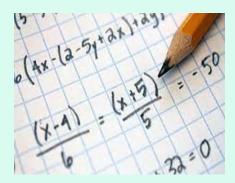
> Mrs Hussain Head of English

# **TUTOR READING**

We have had a big push in whole-class reading during tutor time. The whole tutor group will have a book read as a class at least twice a week.



# MATHS

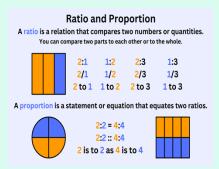


Mathematics forms an essential part of the curriculum, providing students with the skills and knowledge to solve problems, think critically, and analyse data. The maths department has been busier than ever welcoming our new year 7s as well as continuing to provide structure, stretch, challenge and support our existing pupils.

#### Year 7

Students have successfully embarked on their mathematical journey and are currently exploring basic number work. Recently, they completed their baseline tests, which will soon be followed by the release of their results. The aim of the mathematics department is to strengthen their foundational skills in mathematics, ensuring that all students have solid а understanding of number operations, place value, and basic arithmetic.

#### Year 8



Students have been focusing on the concept of ratio. They are learning how to compare and relate quantities using ratios and how to solve problems involving proportional relationships. By studying ratio, students develop important skills in proportional reasoning, which will serve as a foundation for more complex mathematical concepts in the future.

#### Year 9

Students are continuina to strengthen their number work and are currently exploring decimals. They are learning how to represent, compare, and perform operations with decimal numbers. This includes understanding place value. addition. subtraction. multiplication, and division with decimals. Developing proficiency in decimal operations is crucial for future mathematical applications, such as working with percentages and measurement.

equation of a straight line, determining its slope and intercept, and interpreting graphs in various contexts. Proficiency in straight line graphs lays the groundwork for more advanced mathematical concepts, such as calculus and analytic geometry.

From strengthening basic number work in Year 7 to preparing for PPE exams and working on straight line graphs in Year 11, each year of study brings new challenges and opportunities for growth for our students at Maiden Erlegh Chiltern Edge. As educators, we wish Year 11 students the very best of luck with their revision and encourage all students to embrace the beauty and utility of mathematics in their academic journey.

#### Year 10

Students are delving into the world of fractions, decimals, and percentages. They are studying the relationships between these numerical forms three and learning how to convert between them. Additionally, they are exploring real-life applications, such as calculating discounts, interest rates, and proportions. Mastering these concepts is vital for a range of disciplines beyond mathematics, including science, economics, and everyday life.

#### Year 11



Students are currently preparing for their PPE (Pre-Public Examination) exams, which are significant milestones in their educational journey. In mathematics, they are focusing on straight line graphs. This topic involves understanding the

#### Mrs Chopra Head of Maths

# MATHS CLUBS

Mon Lunch time	Puzzle Pirates with Mrs Priest in M2
Tues Lunch time	A Level Math Club for KS4 Higher Maths Students, Mrs Gopal, M3
Tues 3:15— 4.15pm	Maths Drop in, Miss Chopra, M1 (All Years)

# SCIENCE

Students have made an excellent start to the term in science. We have been very impressed with their enthusiasm and tenacity in the subject.

#### Year 7

Year 7 spent the first half of the term focusing on science skills and lab technique. Each student learnt how to safely light and use a Bunsen burner and achieved their Bunsen burner licence. They have also started the introduction to chemistry topic, in which they have been looking at elements, compounds and mixtures.

#### Year 8

Year 8 refreshed their science knowledge with an introduction to science recap week. They looked at scientific methods, variables and graphs. Since then, Year 8 have been studying waves and space, in which they have learnt all about reflection and refraction.

#### KS4

Year 9 have completed their first GCSE topic on atoms, elements and the periodic table. They have made an excellent start to the course. It is great to see so many students focused and working hard each lesson.

Year 10 have been working on quantitative chemistry, and Year 11 on Homeostasis.

Mrs Sarpong Head of Science





Stem club has now moved to а Wednesday after school. This is so that students have more time to conduct experiments. Stem club is open to all, and each week students complete investigations and conduct their own experiments. This term, the students have completed а moss safari using microscopes, tested the voltage in fruit, created red cabbage indicators for acid and alkali testing and investigated the properties of slime.

Science drop-in is available all to students every Friday lunch time in S3. This is an opportunity for student any who would like extra support, has а about auestion homework or would like a quiet space to study.

# **SCIENCE FAIR**



As part of the introduction to science topic, students in Year 7 and 8 were tasked with creating a project about a famous scientist or a famous invention. Students presented their projects to the class, and the best ones were entered into the science fair. We were incredibly proud, that so many students had put lots of effort and time into their projects. It was fantastic to see so many students from other year groups and staff come to the science fair and vote for their favourite project. The winners of the science fair were Henry W in Year 7, and Kristy H in Year 8.



# **RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY**

Religion and Philosophy has started with a bang this year with lots of learning happening around different religions and philosophical ideas. Year 7 have enjoyed asking their 'big questions' of life. We had everything from 'what happens when you die?' to 'how do we know we are not dreaming?' to 'what came first, the colour orange or the fruit?' We are building up our abilities to question the big things in life and we are excited to see the students' progress as critical thinkers.

Mrs Smith Head of History and Religeon and Philosophy

# **HUMANITIES**

# GEOGRAPHY

Year 7 have made a fantastic start to geography at MECE! They have been developing their knowledge of the world around us, as well as the physical and human geography of Europe and the UK. The Year group were particularly eager when given the task to research and present the geographies of a country of their choice. You can see below two amazing examples from Sofia P (7C) and Oskar L (7C).



Year 8 have been working hard developing their understanding of natural hazards and the generation of risk posed to people and the environment. In recent weeks the year group have been studying the causes and impacts of tectonic hazards, namely the Tohoku Earthquake/Tsunami that hit Japan in 2011. This is a challenging topic that Year 8 have been eager to get stuck into!

Year 9 have been developing their human geography knowledge by studying the ever-changing and challenging process of 'Globalisation', studying aspects from environmental issues associated with the textile industry to socio-economic implications of technology manufacturing. Group discussions of the opportunities and challenges posed by the actions of Transnational Corporations has been a highlight.

Year 10 have made a strong and focused start to their GCSE course. They have been studying topics for Paper 1: Living with the Physical Environment (AQA), exploring ecosystems, tropical rainforests, causes and impacts of deforestation, and moving onto opportunities and challenges in hot deserts. They have been gaining practice in GCSE style exam questions and have received their first round of feedback on their written performance.

Year 11 have hit the ground running with their studies towards the geography GCSE qualification. The Year 11 groups have been studying the living world—as have Year 10—and have continued their practice of examination questioning. The focus has now shifted to the PPEs, with students equipped with revision lists, sources for online revision and plenty of quality notes in their books. Good luck to them all!

Geography Club has starting up this term, each Thursday lunchtime in HUM4, 13:30-13:50. All year groups welcome. The club will involve quizzes, geographical trivia and fun with flags! I look forward to seeing many keen geographers attending! Mr Sheridan

> Mr Sheridan Head of Geography

# **HISTORY**

This half term in history we have been celebrating Black History Month 2023. October is Black History Month in the UK and this year the focus is on 'Before Windrush'. The idea for this year is to stare through the 'Before Windrush' lens to examine the lives of Black Britons. We have looked at 19th century composer Samuel Coleridge-Taylor and Ivor Cummings, the forgotten mentor of the Windrush Generation, both of whom were living in the UK before the arrival of the Empire Windrush in 1948. This has primarily been explored through Mrs Smith's assembly as well as discussing this further during tutor time. Within history lessons, students have also been trying to look through this 'pre Windrush' lens with Year 7 learning about the North Africans who helped build and guard Hadrian's wall under the Romans. Year 8 have been studying black Tudors as part of their topic on the Tudor monarchs. Year 9 are spending the whole term studying slavery and how Reading should recognise its connection to slavery.



We are hoping that introducing a range of stories throughout history will equip students with a more diverse and honest view of the people who came before us.

History Club has also kicked off again and Mrs Smith has been amazed at the amount of students attending this club. It has also been fantastic to see new students volunteering to present on different subjects, from the history of Brazil before independence to the Vietnam War. It is amazing to see students take ownership of their learning and share their passions for history with others. If you would like to join History Club then come to HUMS1 every Friday lunchtime. to make it all possible!

> Mrs Smith Head of History and Religeon and Philosophy

# FOOD & DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

# 🗩 @MECEADTI

# FOOD

We have been busy in the kitchen and now have an additional classroom with a demo kitchen students so can complete theory lessons in a more productive environment. Mr Bullen joins the Food Department teaching some of the KS3 classes and brings a wealth of experience

So far this term, KS3's recent practicals have been making savoury scones, enchiladas and seasonal products.

and knowledge.

Year 10 are working through the food commodities and have produced some fantastic dishes showing creativity whilst demonstrating a range of new skills.

Year 11 have taken part in an upskilling task and are now embarking on their first piece of GCSE coursework, the food science investigation, part of their final grade.

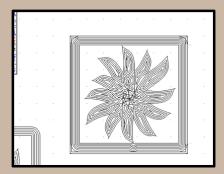
> Mrs Ashley Food Teacher



# **DESIGN & TECHNOLOGY**

It has been a busy start to the year with a range of project work getting well underway.

Year 7 have been introduced to the workshop environment and have enjoyed working on Computer Aided



#### Design tasks.

Year 8 have started their metalwork project with some groups having poured metal while Year 9 are all developing clock designs onto the computer ready to laser cut.

In Year 10 students have been developing their understanding of GCSE Design and Technology by adding depth to their theory and design work, while beginning their speaker unit projects.



Year 11 have been hard at work with their NEA work and revision for their upcoming PPE paper.

**Mr Reskalla** Head of Art, Design and Technology



# PERFORMING ARTS

# **@MECE\_PA**

# DRAMA

## Year 7

Year 7 have been working on duologues and performing them in front of the class in pairs. Mr Harte has been impressed with the great characterisation and confidence shown in these first performances for Year 7 at MECE!

# Year 8

We have been focusing on challenging social issues that affect a character called Joe. In this unit, students are encouraged to consider how to help people who are struggling with a range of social issues. The level of maturity and sensitivity from the students when talking about these difficult issues has been great to see.

#### Year 9

term We have this spent considering the more subtle performance aspects of by developing their understanding of how to create dramatic tension through use of pauses, dim lighting and thoughtful movement.

#### Year 10

Year 10 are off to a great start in their GCSE Drama course, having studied several techniques and the theories of the father of Naturalism, Stanislavski. They have also been using extracts from Anne Frank's diary to help develop thoughtful pieces of Verbatim theatre.

#### Year 11

Year 11 are readying themselves for their written exam at the end of the year by continuing their study of Willy Russell's musical Blood Brothers. Also, they have begun their next assessed unit which will see them perform two extracts of the stage adaptation of Neil Gaiman's The Ocean at the End of the Lane.

> Mr Harte Head of Performing Arts



# **PA CLUBS**

Monday Lunchtime	Music Club with Mrs Brown in the Music Room
Tuesday Lunchtime	Chorus Rehearsal for Mary Poppins, Mrs Brown, Music Room
Tuesday Afterschool— 4:15pm	School Show Dance Rehearsal—all cast members
Wednesday Lunchtime	Soloist Rehearsals for Mary Poppins with Mrs Brown in Music Room
Wednesday Afterschool— 5:30pm	Mary Poppins Rehearsal with Mr Harte in Main Hall

# MUSIC

in music.

#### Year 7

Students have made a strong start to their musical Music Club on Monday learning by developing their lunchtimes skills on the keyboard and students opportunities the ukulele, in addition to come and practice or try out some body percussion and new instruments. Tuesday vocal work.

#### Year 8

Year 8 have been refining after their playing technique on Wednesdays. the keyboard focusing on soon be a competition to basslines learning learning the notes of the programmes for the show! bass clef.

#### Year 9

Students have been developing their ensemble skills and have embarked on their 'Battle of the Bands' competition. Each class will

It has been a busy half term have their own 'final' next month followed by a year group final to crown the winners!

> gives the to and Wednesday lunchtimes Mary are for Poppins rehearsals, which continue school on There will and design tickets, posters and

> > **Becki Brown** Music Teacher



## Issue 19 • October 2023

# Term Dates 2023/2024

MAIDEN ERLEGH

TRUST

SAVE THE DATE

RECRUITMENT EVENT

11

Month

5:00pm until 6:30pm

Venue: Oak Tree School

Woodward Close, Winnersh, RG415LP

www.maidenerleghtrust.org

Click on the ParentPay logo to login and

23

Year

#### Autumn Term

30 October - 20 December 2023

#### Spring Term

08 January – 09 February 2024

#### 19 February – 28 March 2024

## Summer Term

15 April – 24 May 2023

03 June - 24 July 2024

#### **Professional Development Days**

(school closed to students)

Friday 1 December 2023

Friday 23 February 2024

Wednesday 03 July 2024

08

Date

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