



# ThePulse

*Aim high, Be inclusive, Work together*

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## FROM THE HEADTEACHER

As we near the end of a busy, eventful and productive first half of the spring term, it's time to reflect on what's been achieved over the past five weeks and what we have to look forward to when we return.

Our students have been their usual magnificent selves, working hard in class and supported so well by our dedicated and committed teachers and support staff. The Trust values of Aiming High, Working Together and Being Inclusive, underpin all that we do at MER, the support and encouragement offered by our staff, to each and every student, is second to none.

One plea that I would ask of our parents and carers is this; working hard in class is, of course, so important, but there are two other vital ingredients to ensuring that all our students aim high and achieve their potential. The first of these is attendance, having the occasional day off school really does have a negative impact on learning and achievement, as does taking holidays within term time. It is so important that we give our students every chance to succeed and being in school, every day, is the first and most important step towards that goal. Our whole school attendance currently stands at 91%, whilst this is an improvement on last academic year, we still have work to do to reach our target of 94% for this year. Secondly, working hard at home, to consolidate the learning done in school, is essential to achieving academic success. Homework is given for that reason; it will help to embed learning in the long-term memory and help to practise and master key skills.

Hard work and commitment really does pay off, our Year 11s have been magnificent this week; focused and motivated to do their very best in the first week of their PPE exams. The enrichment programme continues to provide excellent opportunities for every student to get involved in something different, outside of the

classroom, Ms Zubairy-Moore has been running drama trips, most recently to the Reading Rep' Theatre; Mr Butchers and Ms Zubairy-Moore are working hard with the cast on the much-anticipated school production of Aladdin, while house competitions are underway this week in the PE department. The list of clubs available is extensive, and too long to include here, but from crochet to debating, CCF to chess, there should be something for everyone so if they are not involved in something already, please encourage your children to have a go!

After the half term break we look forward to the Year 10 Progress Evening on 27<sup>th</sup> February and our Year 11 Exams Information Evening on March 6<sup>th</sup>. We also look forward to welcoming back our Ex-Year 11s and their families to celebrate their achievements in their GCSE exams. As a school we were very proud of the progress that the year group made over their five years at MER; with a progress 8 score of 0.21, this was the second year running that our school was the best performing mixed state comprehensive school in Reading!

My highlight every week is 11.15am on a Friday. I get the chance to meet so many amazing young people who have been nominated by their teachers to come and meet me for a hot chocolate and a chat about their achievements. From: excelling in computational thinking; working so hard to improve their English as their second language; being brave enough to compete in the MER's Got Talent contest; to having their short stories published in an anthology, the quality of work and the range of achievements is staggering. I look forward to meeting your child for hot chocolate soon!

Have a wonderful half term break when it arrives (12-16 February).



## CALENDAR

<b>12th to 16th February</b>	<b>Half Term Break</b>
27th February	Year 10 Parents Evening
<b>23rd February</b>	<b>Trust CPD Day School Closed</b>
4th March	Year 8 Assessment Week
5th March	Year 11 NEA2 GCSE Food
14th March	Year 7 Progress Meeting
21st March	Year 9, 10 & 11 UKMT Intermediate Maths Challenge
25th March	Year 11 NEA2 GCSE Food

## NEW UNIFORM SHOP LAUNCHING SOON

WATCH THIS SPACE



### Aladdin Jr Rehearsals

Students are now enjoying the rehearsals which are now fully underway for our production of Aladdin Jr, which will be presented on 8th May at 5.30. Any student that would like to join the production should come and talk to **Ms Zubairy-Moore or Mr Butchers**



## Seasonal Poetry Competition Success!

At the end of last term, the English Department were delighted to run their biannual seasonal poetry competition. It was a privilege to read such high-quality entries from all years and it did make judging incredibly challenging. Congratulations to our three winners, Taulant A (9G2), Akindu G (9P1) and Parth G (9T1). Their outstanding poems can be read below:



### The New Christmas

*In the Christmas month when the snowflakes  
caper with glee,*

*And children stay alert by the glinty tree,  
A transformation occurs in the heart of the  
night,  
Giving families a disappointing fright.*

*No longer bound by the old tradition's spell,  
Reindeer and elves begin to rebel.  
Santa no longer makes the carriage with pride,  
Programmed robots now command the night's  
flight.*

*The chiming of the bells take a digital tune,  
As messages fly underneath the glowing moon.  
Gifts aren't wrapped with paper and bow,  
But virtual tokens, a digital show.*

*Santa's workshop gets traded for ones and  
zeroes,  
A high-tech haven with algorithms as heroes.  
No longer reindeer hooves on the roof,  
But drones delivering joy, a modern day spoof.*

*The feast is no longer carved from a bird,  
But bits and bytes of a saver's word.  
Gone are the days of tinsel and snow,  
Replaced by the virtual warmth that continues  
to grow.*

*Yet the spirit endures, a flame burning strong,  
In the hearts of people, where it truly belongs.  
For Christmas is more than the wrapping and  
the tree,  
It is the love shared, no matter the decree.*

*In this revolutionised world of circuits and  
codes,  
The essence of Christmas, the timeless ode.  
A celebration of joy and grace,  
No matter the form, the season embraces.*

*In the heart of innovation, let love still play,  
Merry Christmas in the modern day!*

**Parth G, 9T1**

### Lights in the Night Sky

*In the quiet of night, when  
darkness looms,  
Christmas lights aglow,  
dispelling gloom,  
They dance in the sky, a  
shimmering sight,  
A canvas of magic, a celestial  
delight.*

*Stars twinkle brightly, like  
ornaments hung,  
In galaxies adorned, where  
dreams are strung,  
Each constellation, a story to  
be told,  
In the tapestry of heavens,  
ancient and bold.*

*Yet below, on earth, a  
spectacle unfolds,  
Lights bedecking homes, in  
glittering holds,*

*Twinkling and glowing, in  
festive array,  
A symphony of colours, in a  
grand ballet.*

*Strings of brilliance, adorning  
each street,  
Guiding hearts home, where  
loved ones meet,  
They paint the night with hues  
so bright,  
An ode to joy, in the stillness  
of night*

*Christmas lights in the sky,  
above and below,  
A timeless spectacle, a  
radiant glow,  
They whisper of hope, in their  
gentle spree,  
Bridging our world with  
celestial glee.*

**Taulant A 9G2**

### Winter

*In Winter's hush, a world  
stands still,  
Silent solitude on a frozen hill.  
In the isolation, a lone figure  
stands  
Covered in frost, icy hands.*

*A quiet soul in a world so loud,  
Unnoticed through festive  
crowds.*

*Winter is here!*

*The buzz of "Santa's coming to  
town!"*

*The sound of snow as it settles  
down.*

*Trees bare - ice-cube cold,  
By the fire a story unfolds.*

*Children playing amongst the  
snow,  
Hot cocoa and frostbitten  
toes,  
Sledding down hills, a thrilling  
ride,  
Giggles and laughter, side by  
side.*

*A cloak of snow, a silent  
shroud,  
Our winter loner, head  
unbowed.*

*He grips the world in his icy  
vice,  
Blanketing the world in care  
and ice.*

**Akindu G 9P1**

## Year 7

WOW! What a great and fast start to 2024 we've had in year 7! I cannot believe that we are already halfway through the school year. In year 7 this term, we've been working on having a positive attitude and focussing on The MER Way. I have been so impressed with the number of students showing off their great attitudes and behaviours both inside and outside of the classroom. We've got students in the school production, a strong group of students representing the school at



sporting events, students joining clubs out of their comfort zone, and students showcasing the MER way every day. I continue to be amazed by how many positives we have been achieving since the start of the year and I am looking forward to celebrating all of our achievements at the end of term. I am really enjoying seeing the growth and development of all of our Year 7's and am excited to see what the future holds for Team Year 7.

Mr Carpenter

## NEWS FROM THE LIBRARY!

Our Librarians and Reading Ambassadors have been working very hard this term and we are delighted that the number of books issued have trebled since the school library has moved online. It seems that students at MER enjoy reading Fantasy books above all other genres. In honour of this, Mina K (9T2) has produced some art for display in the library. This striking work will go alongside the fabulous mural produced by our students at the end of the summer term. The art has inspired our new competition, to design a fantasy book cover.



## Christmas Concert

Just before the Christmas holidays, the Music Department presented the annual Christmas concert. There was a huge variety of acts, many of which had a festive theme, including solos and small groups. Of course, the choir and school bands played as well and members of the audience commented on how the evening set them up in a festive mood before the holidays began.

All of the groups have now restarted this term with new music. All students are welcome to attend choir on a Thursday after school and if they play an instrument, are welcome to attend band on a Tuesday.



Mr Butchers



## Year 8

As we look forward to the second half of the Spring term, we can reflect on a positive start to 2024.

We have Year 8s involved in the school production, drama activities, school football teams and many more.

Let's keep up the hard work as Year 7 are hot on our heels with overall DREAM points!!

Miss Ryan

## Year 9

Year 9 have had a great half term, reaching the 50000 mark for dream points since September.

Looking forward to next half term and doubling the success we have had in the current.

Mr Sparks





## MAIDEN ERLEGH TRUST

If you are interested in any of these roles, please email Vicky Boatman, Clerk to the Board of Trustees via [governors@maidenerleghtrust.org](mailto:governors@maidenerleghtrust.org)

THERE ARE  
TYPICALLY FIVE  
LAB MEETINGS PER  
YEAR PLUS THREE  
TRAINING  
SESSIONS TO  
SUPPORT  
DEVELOPMENT.

# BE PART OF OUR GOVERNANCE TEAM OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE

## OUR LOCAL ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

Local Advisory Boards (LABs) are crucial elements of our work with schools and communities.

LAB members (Governors) are key partners to both the school and the Trust and help secure the best possible education for all learners, and best possible working environment for staff, in line with our Vision and Ethos.

The role description and person specification for Local Advisory Board Members can be found [HERE](#)

## HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED IN A ROLE?

We have a variety of Local Advisory Board Member openings available across our schools. There are also Chair of the Local Advisory Board opportunities available, to provide effective leadership to the LAB.

We would like to hear from anyone who is interested in these roles. Experience of school governance or related fields would be helpful but is NOT essential as we would provide training.

## CHAIR OF THE LOCAL ADVISORY BOARD

The Chair of the Local Advisory Board provides leadership to the LAB and ensures that LAB members fulfil their functions for the proper governance and ethical leadership of the school.

The Chair facilitates the Local Advisory Board, working as a team to challenge, support and contribute to the effective leadership of the school.

The role description and person specification for the Chair of the Local Advisory Board can be found [HERE](#)



Maiden Erlegh Trust is committed to safeguarding, the principles of equality and the celebration of diversity and would want all new LAB members to share these commitments.



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## Year 9 Drama Lighting and Sound Workshop



On the 17th January a group of students were lucky enough to have a workshop with a professional actor. A fantastic morning with one of the leading actors who starred in 'It's a wonderful life'. She gave them inside secrets on how actors prepare for roles and gave intricate information on lighting techniques and stage management.

Charlie also passed on her knowledge of acting techniques used in her prestigious Drama school in London. She answered lots of questions and was really pleased with the students' enthusiasm. She also commented on their fantastic behaviour and their ability to stay on task all morning. I think we have some future Hollywood stars amongst the MER students!

The session supported section B of the Eduqas GCSE drama exam. All students

have to write about acting techniques, lighting, directing, props and scenery. The students got a complete breakdown whilst sitting in a real theatre, where the workshop was held.

Despite it being a dreary grey day in January it was a fun and exciting time; it brightened up everyone's morning and was the inspiration for lots of discussions on the way back to school.

**Mrs Zubairy-Moore**



## Trust recruitment event

MER hosted the Trust recruitment event on Wednesday 24 January. This was a great success and very well attended allowing us the opportunity to showcase our school and meet potential candidates.

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### Extra-curricular

After Christmas is a notoriously quiet time for fixtures, however the attendance at our sports clubs have been incredible. We have had over 20 boys for Y11 Handball, 30 plus boys for Year 11 Football and over 40 boys for both Year 7 and Year 8/9 Football. A massive congratulations to all the students that have committed time to coming to the PE extra-curricular clubs after the Christmas Break and I am sure it will make an impact on their sports performances in the next half term. Also, a massive shout out to Mrs Roberts who regularly runs a Volleyball club on a Friday and I am sure the students who attend that really appreciate her time and efforts.

Our Y11 Boys were entered into the Handball league and had a tricky start with losses to Maiden Erlegh School and Bohunt School respectively. In a relatively new sport to them they took a few games to get going but once they did, they clicked. With brilliant wins against Prospect School

and Reading Boys and a draw against a very good JMA team, the boys ended the season with 3 games undefeated. Well done to all that took part.

Our other group of fixtures this half term was the second round Basketball fixtures. This was for our Y10 & 11 Boys Basketball team. The boys made a brilliant start with a strong 31 - 24 victory over the Wren where 4 boys from Year 9 played an age group up and made their debuts for MER. The boys then followed that up with an outstanding 65 - 35 victory over Cox Green School. Most impressive was Hamish scoring over 30 points across the two games. Also shout out to Costel who made his long awaited come back from a serious injury that ruled him out for all but the last game of the Basketball season. The boys are still waiting to play their final fixture, which I am confident they will finish off in style and hopefully finish the second half of the season unbeaten.

**Mr Hibbins**

## Year 10

Year 10 have had an excellent half term and have had a positive return after the winter holidays. They are busy preparing for their second RE PPE which will be in the morning on Monday, 5<sup>th</sup> February. I know that they have been working hard on their revision. We are also looking forward to Year 10 Parent's Evening on Tuesday, 27<sup>th</sup> February. Please be sure to book with your student's teachers so we can discuss all the hard work that Year 10 have been putting in this year.

**Mrs Langille**



## Year 11

Year 11 have been busily preparing for their PPE examinations - their last practice papers before their finals in the Summer! Applications for Post 16 are also going out with students applying for apprenticeships, colleges and sixth forms. It's incredibly exciting seeing them prepare for the final chapter of their journey at MER! Wishing them every success in their examinations - we believe in you.

*Mrs Cotton*



### TERM DATES 2024

Spring Term	8th January - 9th February
	19th February - 28 March
Summer Term	15th April - 24th May
	3rd June - 23rd July

### House competitions

In PE we have introduced a 3 week long house sports competition. This is where students compete in their House teams (Griffin, Phoenix and Triton) in lessons to earn points for their team which will help them compete for the House Cup at the end of the year. The students have had a brilliant time and participation has been extremely high. Students have competed

in Volleyball, Capture the Flag and a Cluedo style fitness game. The students have voiced how much they have enjoyed it and it will be a regular inclusion in the PE curriculum moving forwards. With the last week still to go it is anybody's guess as to who will win MER's first Pe house sPorts comPetitions. Can you spot the subtle clue in the final sentence.....?

Click on envelope  
to view recent  
communications



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#### MCAS -

Please contact us at  
[MERoffice@maidenerleghtrust.org](mailto:MERoffice@maidenerleghtrust.org)  
for support.





# ARE YOU LOOKING FOR FACILITIES TO HIRE?

We welcome enquiries about the private use of our facilities. If you would like to come and see what facilities we have to offer, please arrange a visit via Reception or contact us by emailing [merlettings@maidenerlegthrust.org](mailto:merlettings@maidenerlegthrust.org)

A full list of our facilities and hire charges can be found on our website or by contacting our school Business Manager.



SPORTS HALL – NETBALL COURTS – TENNIS COURTS – DANCE STUDIO –  
MUSIC STUDIO – MAIN SCHOOL HALL – DINING AREA – ATRIUM – MULTI USE  
GAMES AREA (MUGA) – CLASSROOMS – MEETING ROOMS

 **81 CRESCENT ROAD, READING, RG1 5SL**

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