



THE GRIFFIN

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We hope you have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

Dear Alumni

I cannot quite believe that this Griffin brings to a close my first full year of Headship here at Maiden Erlegh School. I am incredibly proud to hold this position and have worked hard to ensure that standards in this wonderful school are not only maintained, but continually improved. I have been amazed day in day out by the superb students we have here. They consistently go above and beyond in all elements of life including their studies, community work, sport, house events and the list could go on and on! And the Alumni network, as it grows, gives me the opportunity to see what the students achieve and where they go once they leave Maiden Erlegh. It is the students who make this job the best in the world and I want to take this opportunity to thank you. We have built a team here and every one of you is part of #TeamMaidenErlegh.

Mr Paul Gibson
Headteacher

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the latest news and
events**

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@MaidenErleghTru**





2019—2019 GCSE and A-Level Exam Results

Maiden Erlegh School is once again delighted with how well our students have performed in this year's GCSE and A Level examinations. Their dedication to their studies has paid off and we are proud of each and every one of them.

All but one subject delivered were A Level qualifications and the attainment this year is very strong. 50% of grades were between B and A*, with 73% being a C or above. Over 20% of A Level grades were A or A* and there has been an increase in the percentage of A*'s gained (7%).

For GCSEs, the results as a whole for the school have at least matched, and in some areas improved on those from last year including a 3 % increase in students achieving 4+ in English and Maths, 1% increase at 5+ in English and Maths and a superb 16% increase in students achieving the English Baccalaureate. Our Progress 8 score has again increased from 0.64 to 0.7. This means that progress made by our students is significantly above the national average. This places us 218 out of 6489 schools nationally.

On average our students this year gained just below a grade 6 across their exams.

There were some outstanding individual successes including: Arjan C who gained 9 grade 9's and 1 grade 8, Temi B gained 8 grade 9's, 2 grade 8's and 1 grade 7, Anna M achieved 8 grade 9's, 2 grade 8's, 1 grade 7, Jake S who gained 7 grade 9's, 3 grade 8's, 1 grade 6 and Naina B with 7 grade 9's, 2 grade 8's, 2 grade 7's.

Maiden Erlegh is in the top 5% of schools in the country according to league tables

According to the official Department for Education performance tables released October 2019, Maiden Erlegh is ranked 218 out of 6489 secondary schools for the progress students make between joining us in Year 7 and leaving us in Year 11. Every school is now measured by a figure known as Progress 8 which shows the value a school adds to students during their time at secondary school and our score of 0.7 (up from 0.64 in 2018) suggests that, on average, students at Maiden Erlegh achieve nearly a grade higher across their subjects than pupils of similar ability across the country.

For the full information on how we place in the league tables please click the link <https://www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk/school/136637/maiden-erlegh-school/secondary>



World Challenge

World Challenge 2019. Borneo: Like A Bolt From The Blue!

World Challenge is an organisation that offers youngsters the opportunity to visit parts of the world off the usual beaten holiday track. To push themselves both physically and mentally, and to provide the opportunity for growth and achievement in a way that is not possible within their normal sphere of experience. For each expedition there is a community or environmental phase, a challenge phase and an R&R phase. On arrival the students are given an allocation of cash from which they organise and pay for their transport, accommodation, activities and food. Here is the story of the 2019 trip to Borneo.

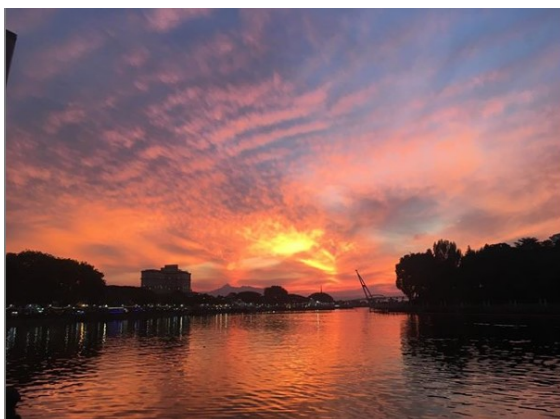


Being an incorrigible dreamer and frustrated nomad, many months ago, I had expressed an interest in taking part in the 2019 World Challenge trip to Borneo and Malaysia. The trip sounded astonishing and my hopes ran high for adventure.

Sadly it was not to be, the two members of staff already in line were sufficient for the number of students going. I was asked (by way of consolation prize I thought) whether I would be first reserve. I accepted, and promptly put it out of my mind.

Roll on eighteen months... And due to another staff member falling ill, I had the fantastic opportunity to join an incredible adventure for myself, Mr Pringle and fifteen fantastic sixth formers.





From the hostel in Kuching we travelled to Kubah National Park. Here we spent a couple of days acclimatising to the Bornean climate. We hiked up steep tracks into the jungle, marvelling at the noise, heat and humidity, the huge buttress roots, waterfalls, giant ants and for some, what grew to become quite enormous leeches!

An exceptional local guide took us on a night walk to a pond halfway up the mountain, here we saw dozens of tropical frogs and some pretty impressive spiders! The volume of noise from the frogs and nocturnal insects was incredible. Returning briefly to Kuching, we then moved on to the environmental part of the trip.

Tanjung Datu is a turtle sanctuary on the northwest tip of Borneo, we reached it via minibus and aluminium launches, an exciting fifteen minute ride up the coast from the closest village. It was like dropping into paradise, golden sands, blue skies and warm clear seas. The students had been set a task of enlarging the turtle nursery area as the environmental part of their challenge. The reserve had had its most successful year to date, and the hatching nursery was already overflowing with clutches of previously collected turtle eggs. This really inspired the students as they could see an immediate need for the task they had been asked to do. Brilliant teamwork and dedication saw them complete the nursery extension in a couple of days.



When off duty from nursery building, we had guided day and night walks through jungle with our guide, Afshin. He kept us on tenterhooks with stories of jungle spirits, ghosts and the folklore of the area. We also took turns patrolling with the wardens throughout the night looking for signs of female turtles coming in to lay eggs and had the privilege of helping to release new hatchling turtles. We also collected rubbish from the beach to take back to Kuching for disposal. Oh, and we may have done a little swimming in warm crystal waters too...!





We then moved on to the challenge part of the trip, a four day, three night trek through the jungle. For this we took a short flight to Malaysia and following a couple of days on the road and in hostels, met up with our jungle guide Abdul. The jungle trek was an extraordinary experience, and the phrase 'can't see the wood for the trees' was particularly apt. It was hot, and challenging but rewarding nonetheless. We saw signs of elephants, heard monkeys, saw spiders, turtles and snakes, visited caves full of roosting bats and swam in jungle rivers. And became further acquainted with the ubiquitous leeches!

The final night of our jungle trek was to be a stay in a cave. In actuality, this turned out to be a huge overhang at the bottom of a cliff. The cliff appeared from nowhere, and soared away over our heads and out of sight into the trees. My best guess is that it was 20-30m high. Most of the students took the chance to ditch their tents and sleep in their mosquito nets with just the roof for the overhang as shelter.

For the final R&R part of the trip we travelled to Kuala Lumpur via Penang, and spent some relaxed time soaking up the culture, food and sites of these fantastic cities. We had arrived in Penang during the Chinese festival of 'The Hungry Ghost' and experienced the glorious mix of the old and the new in Penang's vibrant Chinese community. Traditional dragon dancers and drummers performing alongside sparkly pop singers - incongruous but fascinating.



As a member of staff it was fantastic to see the students grow in confidence and independence through the course of the trip. Whether it was food shopping in Bornean supermarkets to feed eighteen people, purchasing train tickets or booking coaches they worked brilliantly as a team, and in other situations overcame personal fears or phobias to succeed at each step of the way. It was an absolute privilege to share their adventure with them, they did themselves proud!



**Follow this year's World
Challengers on Instagram
@meswc**





Maiden Erlegh News and Awards

We are delighted to announce that we have been recognised as a Stonewall School Champion for our commitment to celebrating and accepting everyone despite their differences. [@stonewall](https://twitter.com/stonewall)
[@stonewalluk](https://twitter.com/stonewall)



Careers Hubs

Transforming careers
education for young people

THE CAREERS &
ENTERPRISE
COMPANY

We are proud to announce that Maiden Erlegh School has been selected to become a Careers Hub School.

We are delighted to be one of 20 schools involved in the Thames Valley Berkshire Careers Hub. The Hub, managed by Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership, aims to improve careers education and increase employer engagement, allowing young people to make more informed choices about their future careers.

This half term also saw us take part in a non-uniform day to support World Mental Health Day and many students wore yellow as part of the Young Minds #HelloYellow initiative to raise money for this worthy cause. Collectively we have raised £1,651.01 which is to be split between a donation to Young Minds and the rest will be used to provide additional counselling services in school for any students with mental health concerns.





Student Profiles

Kate Duffy (2010) & Juliet Styles (2010)

When we started at Maiden Erlegh in 2004 we had already been best friends in primary school. We made our way through secondary school together, outliving bad haircuts, questionable fashion choices and Nokia 3310s. Kate worked hard but was notoriously late so relied on Juliet to chivvy her along in the mornings.

Kate has a razor sharp memory and is regularly called upon by Juliet to remember specific details of our childhoods – many of them from Maiden Erlegh. We remember canoeing together on trips to Tirabad, working with Mr Richards on a community drama murder-mystery project for local primary schools and failing on the netball court (PE was not our strong subject).



After leaving 6th form we had a brief departure; Juliet went to study Writing, Directing and Performance at the University of York and Kate moved to London to study Drama, Applied Theatre and Education at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama. 3 years was clearly too much time away from each other – so as soon as we finished our degrees Juliet moved to London and we've lived together ever since. Kate began working with the Afghan refugee community in North London and started her Masters degree in Migration and Diaspora Studies at SOAS, and Juliet worked in technical theatre and then theatre education in a school, before joining Frantic Assembly theatre company to run their participation work in schools. We also started our own



theatre company with some friends, Phosphoros Theatre, working with actors who came to the UK as unaccompanied child refugees. The work is political, funny and based on the real lives of the performers and our work has been performed over 60 times all over the UK, including the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. We are recognised as one of the few 'Theatre Companies of Sanctuary' and are the Associate Company at The Unicorn Theatre in London in 2019/20. Whilst we rarely get a day off, we love working together and know how urgent the message is we're sending out.



Now, as well as running our theatre company, Juliet works at Kiln Theatre as a project manager leading their work with newly arrived young people in schools, and Kate is a PhD student and visiting lecturer at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama. So essentially we're both artists and educators. We've had the privilege of learning from many great teachers, including many from our time at Maiden Erlegh. We look back on our time doing Theatre Studies A Level together fondly – Mr Richards and Ms Upton challenging what taking learning seriously meant, bringing laughter into the classroom and building up skills for life. Kate feels grateful for the creative risks she was encouraged to take in Fine Art and Philosophy and Ethics, and Juliet has continued to benefit from the variety of reading encouraged in English Literature, as well as the challenging debates and discussions in class.

We know that it is rather unusual to stay friends for so long (close to 23 years now), but we haven't yet had enough of each other. We have the benefit of a lifetime of



memories that keep us entertained no end, and never know when an anecdote from Maiden Erlegh will pop up to make us laugh. A certain video of Juliet falling and cracking the ice on the frozen university lake whilst trying to assist with Kate's A Level art project turns up every now and again on Facebook – reminding us we didn't always get things right!

To find out more about our theatre company please visit
www.phosphorostheatre.com



On Sunday 28 August 2019, Alumni Oliver Adkins and his business partner Ruth Nicholls went toe to toe with the panel of high profile investors on Dragons' Den, seeking £60,000 investment in their graduation start up Churchill Gowns. They received offers from both Deborah Meaden and Touker Suleyman, ultimately opting to accept Deborah's investment in exchange for 22% of the business.



Churchill Gowns was founded in the UK by Maiden Erlegh Alumni and University of Cambridge graduates Oliver Adkins and Ruth Nicholls after they were shocked to see the high prices charged by traditional gown suppliers and the total lack of choice in the market.

'When it came to our graduation day we were really surprised to find that there was not a lot of choice when it came to hiring our gowns, and the costs seemed really high given you're only wearing a gown for a couple of hours. Today's students have already paid thousands of pounds in tuition fees so, for many, being ripped off on graduation day leaves a really bitter taste in the mouth. We were confident that we could offer a simple online ordering and home delivery service which would be more convenient and save our customers money.'

Having tried on some of the products, the Dragons seemed impressed with Oliver and Ruth's confident pitch and the potential size of the graduation market. The entrepreneurs also found favour for their sustainability credentials, as they explained that every gown they make is manufactured entirely from recycled plastic bottles.

One of their key reasons for accepting Deborah's offer was that she spoke in strong terms about wanting to shake up the industry: 'We could tell from her questioning and reaction to our pitch that Deborah will prove a strong advocate for free competition in the graduation market and the right for students to choose where they spend their money. This, coupled with her passion for ethical and sustainable business, meant she really was the obvious choice for Churchill Gowns and we can't wait to have her on board.'



Deborah agreed that the ethos behind Churchill Gowns is what really motivated her investment, commenting: 'Founded through personal experience by Ollie and Ruth, two very smart Entrepreneurs, Churchill Gowns offers a new, disruptive approach to an established University Gown Market dominated by a huge player. In Churchill gowns University Students now have a better value, more environmentally sustainable and more democratic choice; all elements which are very dear to my heart.'

<https://churchillgowns.com/>
[@ChurchillGowns](https://www.instagram.com/ChurchillGowns)



How would you like to win £25,000 and help the school at the same time?

Maiden Erlegh School Parents' Association (MESPA) is giving you the chance to do just that!

MESPA have launched a new school lottery. There are lots of cash prizes and a weekly jackpot of £25,000. For every ticket you buy for a pound, 40p will go to MESPA, in contrast to the National Lottery, which only gives 28p to good causes.

The money raised by MESPA pays for extra-curricular projects and activities that benefit every child across the school. In recent months it has funded two new minibuses, a water bottle filling station, house badges and awards evenings.

Tickets are sold online—click [here](#) to purchase. The next draw is on the 21 December 2019.

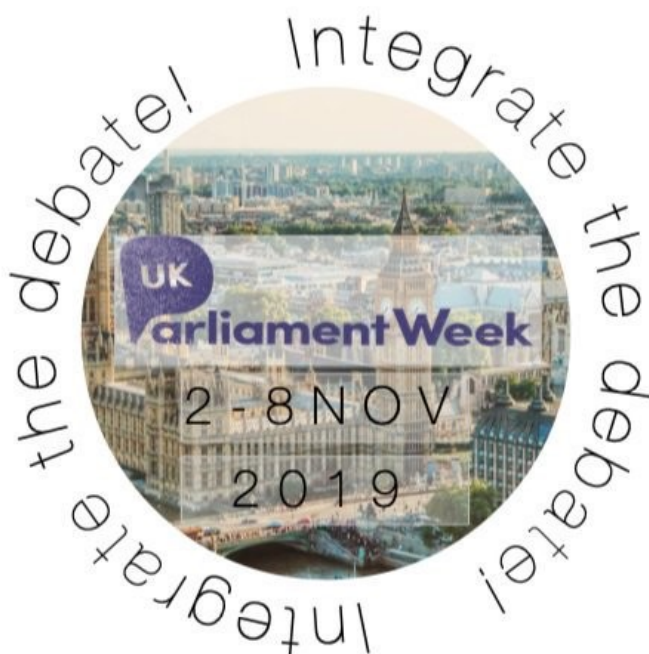
Follow MESPA on Twitter @MespaEarley where there is more information about the lottery and other MESPA activities.



**WE'VE
LAUNCHED
A LOTTERY**

**Buy Your Tickets Today
To Help Our School**

- Maiden Erlegh School, Earley, has launched a lottery!
- Tickets cost just £1 per ticket, per week and 40% of all ticket sales are donated to our school.
- A GUARANTEED cash prize to someone on our supporter list every week.
- A further chance of winning £25,000 in a separate draw EVERY WEEK!



MAIDEN ERLEGH CELEBRATES UK PARLIAMENT WEEK

Between the 2-8 November, Maiden Erlegh School was awash with democracy, debate, and discussion as we celebrated our first ever UK Parliament Week. UK Parliament Week is an annual festival designed to engage people from across the UK with Parliament and democracy, educate people about the functions of Parliament, and empower people to get involved in the democratic process.

Students participated in a range of engaging and interactive activities designed to inspire them to develop their public speaking skills and realise the importance of making their voice heard, both within the school and the wider community. In every lesson, students were given the opportunity to debate matters of importance through our *Integrate the Debate* initiative. This inspired debates on issues as varied as the main reason for the collapse of the Qing Dynasty, whether there is life after death, and whether fossil fuels should be banned, all enabling students to develop their ability to think critically and communicate effectively. A group of Year 9 students developed their understanding of the qualities of a good public speaker and debater, before putting what they had learnt into action in a live debate about whether Maiden Erlegh School should continue to require students to wear school uniform. Those in favour of Maiden Erlegh continuing to have uniform policy were victorious, using precise evidence to support their well-argued case. The Year 12 Platinum Group tackled the motion '*This House believes that the government should introduce statutory laws making the eating of meat a criminal offence*'. Mr Bell and Miss Bateman were extremely impressed with the rich quality of debate, which included arguments made from environmental, moral, ethical, economic, and religious standpoints, all supported by thorough research and reasoning.



In addition to celebrating the power of oracy, students learnt about the history and functions of our UK Parliament. Students in all year groups engaged with a UK Parliament Week Fact of the Day in tutor time and investigated the origins of the word 'democracy' to deepen their understanding of this key term.

Year 9 students received a seminar from Baroness Garden, a prominent member of the House of Lords, on the unique role of the House in policy and decision-making, particularly in our current political climate. Year 9 were praised by the Baroness for their excellent engagement with the seminar and the students thoroughly enjoyed the experience, with Year 9 student commenting that, 'it was really interesting – I learnt so much about how our democracy works'.





MAIDEN ERLEGH
SCHOOL

MAIDEN ERLEGH TRUST CAREERS FAIR

Tuesday 4 February 2020
7.00pm – 9.00pm
Maiden Erlegh School
Silverdale Road, RG6 7HS

Start your future today!

Meet and engage with over 80 representatives from further and higher education and industries such as aeronautics, law, engineering, cyber security, medicine, data analysis and media at our biggest and best Careers Fair ever.



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From all of us at Maiden Erlegh School,
we hope you have a Merry Christmas
and a Happy New Year.



Keep in touch

Website: [click here](#)

Email: alumni@maidenerleghschool.co.uk

We enjoy hearing from all our Alumni and would love to hear from you. Please email with any memories of your time here, or any news of what you are doing now and you could be part of the next issue. **@MaidenErleghSch**



#TeamMaidenErlegh