

Languages Week: A celebration of the diversity of cultures in the Meriden Community

In Term one, we proudly celebrated Languages Week, one of the highlights of the school calendar. While it is a particularly special time for the Languages Department, it is also an opportunity for the entire school community to come together and celebrate the richness of our diverse cultural backgrounds.

In the lead-up to the week, we launched the annual Year 7 Languages Week poster competition. This year saw a record number of entries, many beautifully hand-drawn, and the exceptional standard made selecting winners a truly challenging task for our judges.

Languages Week officially began with a vibrant assembly that showcased the beauty of languages through music and storytelling. We were treated to stunning performances by Shivali Bangalore (Year 12), who played the veena, one of India's oldest and most revered string instruments, and a talented ensemble of guzheng players: Alexandra Huang (Year 7), Angela Xia (Year 8), Ella Zhang (Year 9), Chloe Du (Year 11), and Fay Dong (Year 12), who also performed on the erhu. These performances not only demonstrated the students' musical skill but also highlighted the rich cultural histories behind these instruments.



During the assembly, Mrs Brown shared a personal reflection on her connection to language: "When I hear German spoken, something in me responds to it; there is a warmth and a familiarity that belongs to my childhood, to my family, to my Dad. I am proud that I can speak it, even if not perfectly." Her words encouraged students to take pride in their heritage and to share their own stories, an idea at the very heart of Languages Week.

The celebration continued during Chapel services, where students and staff participated in readings in a variety of languages, alongside a Latin performance by the Madrigals. These moments beautifully highlighted the

linguistic diversity within our community and the joy of sharing it with others.

Throughout the week, students engaged in a wide range of interactive and cultural activities. A standout favourite was the Passport activity, where students learnt Winter Olympics-themed phrases in different languages and collected stamps as they progressed. This year, both students and staff contributed by sharing languages including Welsh, German, Dutch, Irish, Korean, Tamil, Cantonese, and Fijian.

Other popular events included junior and senior karaoke in different languages, craft workshops, an escape room challenge, Mahjong games, a K-pop dance session, and a lively Kahoot competition.

between students and teachers. A new highlight this year was a collaborative initiative with the Philosophy Captains, a Community of Inquiry discussion exploring how language shapes identity.

To complete the experience, the Blue Bell canteen offered a special international menu, giving students the opportunity to literally taste cultures from around the world.

The success and vibrant atmosphere of Languages Week would not have been possible without the dedication of our outstanding Year 11 Languages Captains, Sarah Hall and Kitty Gai, the enthusiasm and commitment of the Languages teachers, and the support of the Music Department.

Thank you to our entire school community, students, staff, and families, for embracing this celebration and helping to place languages firmly in the spotlight.

Ms Teresa Alonso-Lasheras

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