

## ... and that's how it started.

The history of our school is strictly connected with the postwar history of the town. After the war when the Polish administration was established in this region, it was decided that a high school would be set up in Mrągowo. As the school's chronicler puts it (on the first page of the extremely carefully handwritten chronicle) "...The town had a grand school building which, however, was in poor condition and was not suitable for immediate use (...) the building of the teacher training high school had to be used".

The founder and the first Head Teacher of the school was Tadeusz Młodkowski. The first meeting of the Teachers' Board took place on 9<sup>th</sup> September, 1946.

On 1<sup>st</sup> September, 1947 Leon Masiulanis took over the position of Head Teacher after Tadeusz Młodkowski had resigned. Shortly afterwards, the Student Government was established and Scouts and Polish Red Cross started their activities. The school began to play a bigger and bigger role in the local community.

**Renovation of the school building in Zwycięstwa Street began in the summer of 1948. Thanks to the fast pace of the work, the high school began the school year 1948/1949 in its building.** The chronicler described the school building as follows: "The building boasts a pretty location as it stands on a hill surrounded by a park on the south-western side and a line of slender spruces on the eastern side. On this side there is also a municipal stadium. You could safely say that the school building is the most beautiful object in the town due to its location and one of the prettiest objects in the province. This is a modern five-storey building equipped with large sunny and comfortable classrooms, a physics lab, a chemistry lab, a biology lab and a large gym and a cinema auditorium as well as a large assembly hall."



Besides the high school, a seven-class primary school existed in the building. Both schools were administered by one head teacher until 1966.

**In the history of our high school, like in other high schools, an important event was the first Matura exam. It took place in May 1951. The protocols of the Teachers' Board say that 17 students sat the exam.**

September 1954 marked another change of the Head Teacher. Leon Masiulanis was replaced by Irena Białokoz.

In 1957 the Teachers' Board had a surprise for the students of our school. The chronicler described it as follows: "According to the resolution of the Teachers' Board, every student must wear a school badge and a

proper cap (girls – a beret). Since then you could meet students with a red badge on their left arms on which there was an inscription "Mrągowo" under number 14. That made controlling students in public places easier.

On 1<sup>st</sup> September 1966 Tadeusz Jędrzejewski was appointed Head Teacher. It was him that proposed that the high school and the primary school should be separated administratively although they functioned in one building for many years later. In the same year, enrolment of students for the first class of the high school was not performed. This resulted from the transition of primary schools to the eight-year education programme. The Matura exam was not organised in 1970.

**The school year 1968/1969 began in a particularly solemn way. On 1<sup>st</sup> September our school was named “The Obrońców Westerplatte High School” and was granted a flag. The originator of the event was Head Teacher Tadeusz Jędrzejewski.**

May 1969 marked another turning point. 11<sup>th</sup> class students sat the last “Old Matura” exam then. The chronicler wrote as follows: “The last “Old Matura” exam. It feels like something is coming to an end”. From 1971 fourth class students took Matura exams. Another change was the introduction of classes with extended curricula in selected subjects and exemptions from Matura exams (in fact, valid up until now). A graduate resigning from Matura exams received a high school graduation certificate.

In the 1970s the school underwent a thorough, as for those times, technical modernisation. It received a modern foreign language lab as well as video recorders and colour television sets. Also, the cultural life developed rapidly. It was indicated by the activity of the school cabaret where the main figure was Wojciech Malajkat, an established actor, director, lecturer.

In the years 1956 - 1986 Piotr Sobczyński, one of the most distinguished teachers throughout its history, worked at the school. He was a great math teacher and a tutor, and also the author of the photographs documenting the school life during this period. On the initiative of his former students, one of the streets adjacent to the school was given his name. On the occasion of this year's Alumni Reunion, a special exhibition of photographs taken by Mr. Sobczyński was prepared.



The turn of the eighties and nineties is the time of political transformations in the country. They also had an impact on our school. Among other things, the calendar of celebrations and events changed. In 1989, we

celebrated the first anniversary of the independence ceremony. The anniversary of the Constitution of May 3 began to be celebrated, while the May Day parades went down in history.



The head teacher Tadeusz Jędrzejewski retired at the end of the 1990/91 school year. His successor in the years 1991 to 1992 was Kazimiera Bieleń, a longtime Assistant Head Teacher of the school. This position was taken up by Alicja Kowalczyk between 1.09.1992 – 31.03.1993.

On 1 April 1993 Antoni Wróbel was appointed Head Teacher, and ran the school until 31st August 2007. At that time, the difficult economic situation of the country also had its impact on education. Therefore, at the end of the school year 1994-1995 the boarding school in Wolności Street was closed. Mr. Henryk Czerwinski, a longtime manager of the dormitory had the greatest professional experience of all the teachers in our school (42 years!). Despite the difficulties, however, the school grew, and, with parents' support, it was equipped with computers needed to teach a new subject – elements of Computer Science.

In 1996, we organized a celebration of 50th anniversary of our school.

In the years 1978 - 1998 the school functioned as a school complex which also included High School for Working Students, Vocational College and Basic Vocational School. Since 1998 the school has been an independent institution and is called **I Liceum Ogólnokształcące im. Obrońców Westerplatte w Mrągowie**.

The turn of the century is a time of another important change. Since 2000, in connection with the administrative reform and, the body running the school district office was the local government in Mrągowo.

In 2002, the reform of the education system changed us into a three-year high school. Graduates from junior high came to the first class. For the first time there were no entrance exams, but the results of lower high school exams decided about the admission.

2004 is the last year of the "Old Matura" exam. The "New Matura" exams, prepared by the Central Examinations Board, are marked by licensed teachers in special exam-marking centers.

In 2006 we held a solemn celebration of the 60th Anniversary of our high school.

On 1st September 2007 the present Head Teacher, Sławomir Rudnicki was appointed. Like his predecessors, the new manager has had to grapple primarily with economic difficulties. Still, in the years 2009 - 2011 major renovations including replacement of the roof and construction of the parking lot at the school were performed successfully. Moreover, a new fence and gates on the side of Szkolna and Piotra Sobczyńskiego streets were installed. The overhaul of the gym (replacement of flooring and lighting) was carried out. Now we dream of the thermal efficiency improvement of the building.



The financial problems are not the only problem. Recently students of the population decline have graduated from junior high schools. We (the students and the teachers) try to encourage junior high school graduates to study in our school. What gives us an edge over other local schools is a very high Matura exam pass rate (over 90%). It is worth mentioning that 85% of our graduates from the past two school years do full-time courses at state-run universities.

Following another reform of the education system, in 2012 we admitted students who will take another "New Matura" exam in 2015. We handled the reform perfectly, like the previous reforms. The basic curriculum and the form of the oral Polish exam changed.

In October 2011 we signed a partnership agreement with a school from Švenčionys, Lithuania. Every year we visit each other to get to know our regions and countries. In September we will have the pleasure of having teenagers and teachers from Lithuania as guests in our school.



In the years 2013 – 2014 our High School established cooperation with National Defence University in Warsaw and the Provincial Sanitary and Epidemiological Station in Olsztyn. This is why our teachers Agnieszka Masal and Jarosław Kobus prepared in cooperation with the institutions teaching innovations which are unique not only in our province but also in our country.

In May 2016 National Defense University published an innovative course book for the subject of National Safety which will be used by the students of the Engineering and Defence Class.



We have organised Days of the Polish Language Cultivation for three years and for two years our school has been cooperating with the Council of the Polish Language. The cooperation has resulted in linguistic lectures and workshops for students and teachers conducted by famous linguists Katarzyna Kłosińska, PhD and Agata Hącia, PhD and participation of our students in the celebration of the International Mother Language Day organised in the Presidential Palace in Warsaw.

This year, thanks to the efforts from our Assistant Head Teacher, Mrs Małgorzata Zielińska, our school was invited as a co-organiser to participate in a project executed by Wojciech Pszoniak's Foundation "Kurtyna w górę".

Our school and the Centre for Culture and Tourism in Mrągowo hosted an event called "Days with Mother Language – {Not} Forgotten Words" from 9th to 11th June, 2016 attended by experts and lover of the Polish language – linguists, writers and artists (including Sylwia Chutnik, Katarzyna Enerlich, Agata Hącia, Katarzyna Kłosińska, Wojciech Malajkat, Marcin Meller, Wojciech Pszoniak, Małgorzata Zielińska). Also many students, teachers and Mrągowo inhabitants took part in this successful event.



On an ongoing basis, we inform about events, meeting and other initiatives and activities organised by our school on our website ([www.lo1.mragowo.pl](http://www.lo1.mragowo.pl)).

This is how our seventy years have passed. We have had over 6,740 graduates who have been taught by 240 teachers. As many as 39 former and present teachers are our school graduates.

In the last ten years students of our high school achieved a range of successes. The following are only a few of them:

- **Patrycja Żegleń** participated in the final of XL Competition of the Polish Language and Literature (2010);
- **Paulina Działalek** participated in the final of XXIV Competition of Ecological Knowledge (2009);
- **Dawid Pilch** participated in the final of the Philosophy Competition (2010);
- **Julia Grzywna** won the fourth place in XXXVII International Elocution Competition in Golub-Dobrzyń (2008);
- **Wojciech Jurek, Dawid Pilch** won the first place in the provincial stage of XXI National Film Knowledge Competition and sixth place in the national final of the competition (2010);
- **Martyna Dąbrowska, Kamil Panuś, Korneliusz Zyśk** won the first place in our province and thirteenth in the country in the National Automotive Competition (2012);
- **Mateusz Musiejuk** – twice, **Joanna Gadomska, Renata Kuriata, Anna Ordyszewska, Milena Szewczyk, Adam Belniak, Michał Łukso, Mateusz Olbryś, Mateusz Tarasewicz, Zachariasz Strus** were laureates of the Chemistry Competition “Wygraj Indeks” organised by Gdansk University of Technology (between 2008 and 2014).
- **Filip Matwiejczuk** participated in the final of VI National Psychology Competition (2014);
- **Adam Belniak, Piotr Werner, Zachariasz Strus** won the first place in XIII Provincial Physics Competition (2013);
- **Adam Belniak, Paweł Sternicki, Zachariasz Strus** won the first place in XIV Provincial Physics Competition (2014);
- **Dominika Brodzik, Klaudia Filipiak, Gaja Parda** won the first and second places in XXIII and XXIV Provincial Astronomy Competition (2015 and 2016, respectively);
- **Anna Kur, Tomasz Chodkowski, Maciej Malajkat, Eliza Bengowska** – twice, **Bartosz Zapert** – twice, **Aleksandra Podgórska, Anna Rossa** – twice, received Scholarship of the Prime Minister (between 2006 and 2016);
- **Michał Morgaś** – received Scholarship of the Minister of National Education twice (2008, 2009) for outstanding sport achievements;
- **The girls’ team** won the fourth place twice in the provincial handball competition (2015, 2016);
- **The boys’ team** won the fourth place twice in the provincial volleyball competition (2010, 2014);
- **Tomasz Morgaś** won the first place twice in the provincial athletics competition (100 metres race and 200 metres race in 2008, 2009);
- **The boys’ team** were the runners-up in the provincial team athletics competition (2009);
- **Martyna Rynkiewicz** won the silver medal in the National Indoor Horse Riding Championships – show jumping (2016) and is a member of the Polish National Team.

*Jarosław Kobus, Sławomir Rudnicki*