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Photograph: GREGG BROWN

Kasia shows drive to succeed in the world of rallying



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She may only just be old enough to officially start her driving lessons, but Kasia Nicklin is fast making a name for herself in the high-octane world of rallying.

The 17-year-old, who attends King Edward VI School in Bury St Edmunds, could well be one to watch in the future of the sport.

In 2010 she became the youngest ever driver to enter a British stage rally aged just 14 years and eight days old.

Now competing in the seniors, with the help of co-driver Emma Morrison, she has had a successful 2013 – she was winner of the Association of Eastern Motor Clubs Championship (AEMC) in the 1.4class and was also a finalist for the Motor Sports Association (MSA) Young Driver of the Year award.

As the sport is typically associated with men, the teenager wants to encourage more girls and young women to get involved.

She said: "I'm also part of the British Women Racing Drivers Club and that really supports and empowers women in motor sport.

"The club does a lot with trying to promote women. I would definitely promote women as an ambassador for them almost.

"It's not just a male sport. Some people say women are not as good as men. If you have the skills and talent anyone can do it."

But Kasia, from Fornham All

“It's not just a male sport. If you have the skills and the talent anyone can do it

Kasia Nicklin



■ Kasia Nicklin, top; right, in rally gear; above, with co-driver Emma Morrison; and left, in the Nissan Micra she drives in rallies.

Photographs:
CONTRIBUTED



Saints, near Bury, did admit it was quite "unique" to be a female driver in the sport.

"I think quite a lot of people go into it at quite a young age and people see it as male thing to get involved with, and if a woman doesn't get the opportunity when she's quite young it might not be something they would consider," she said.

Kasia was lucky enough to get the chance to try karting at the age of eight, which was the beginning of her love affair with motor sport.

At the age of 14 while doing a test for circuit racing she had a crash in which she suffered no physical injuries, but was left shocked, so she enlisted in a rally school to improve her car con-

trol and "it went from there". Kasia, who works with Major Motorsport and competes in a Nissan Micra, said currently rally driving was just a hobby, but she wanted to take it as far as she could.

"I just want to consistently move forward. This year I'm not going to do the same things I did last year. I think you need that progression in motor sport," she said.

Kasia said King Edward VI School had been incredibly supportive, allowing her time off to compete in her sport.

As well as working towards A-levels in geography, English language and media studies, she is in an elite sports programme

which will lead to her achieving the equivalent of an A-level in motorsport. She is also going to be mentoring a King Edward VI karting team, made up of three male students.

Rob Walden, assistant headteacher at the school, said: "We're really proud of Kasia. She's excelled in her sport, but has also contributed to the life of the school through her leadership work. She also has a way of remaining confident but humble, despite being so successful. Above all, she's a great role model for other girls to follow."

Anyone interested in sponsoring Kasia's rally driving should contact her father, Chris Nicklin, on 0777 5705749.