



IN THE LEAD

CYFARTHFA HIGH SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

MAY 2021

No. 5

STUDENTS FUELLED WITH SUCCESS!



Cyfarthfa High School students attended a university graduation ceremony after completing a hydrogen fuel project with flying colours.

Six of our Year 9 pupils graduated from the Scholar's Programme. They have worked with a PhD tutor over the last few months on a project relating to hydrogen fuel and completed their final assignment with excellent results.

They recently took part in an online graduation ceremony from Warwick University.

High Sheriff's Gratitude to School

The High Sheriff of Mid Glamorgan has recognised the incredible commitment by teachers of Cyfarthfa High School during the Covid lockdown.

Jeff Edwards, the Aberfan-born High Sheriff sent a Special Recognition Award to the School.

It reads: "This Award was made by the High Sheriff of Mid Glamorgan to Cyfarthfa High School for providing excellent teaching provision during exception circumstances.

"The certification recognises the appreciation of the people of Mid Glamorgan for the services to teaching and support to our pupils during the Covid-19 pandemic."

FROM THE HEAD'S DESK

As Covid-19 restrictions continue to ease across the country, it has been a pleasure to see the return of students to school for a full term. Although we're still doing things differently, our commitment to providing the very highest standard of education to our students remains unwavering.

We realise there's still a long way to go before normality resumes, but this term has illustrated what staff and students can achieve by working together.

One of our biggest concerns this term has been that of attendance. With the return to school measures implemented after disjointed periods of lockdown, it is essential that we tackle truancy and punctuality.

Your child's attendance will affect the number of GCSEs they will pass at grade C or above. Children with over 90% attendance to school are more likely to gain 5 or more A to C GCSEs or equivalent qualifications.*

Arriving 15 minutes late every day is the same as being absent for 2 weeks a year. While 90% attendance through school life is equal to a whole year of school being missed!

**Rod Francis
Headteacher**

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Parent Parking

Parents are being politely reminded to take care when parking in the vicinity of the school and upon entering and exiting the school grounds at the end of the day. It's important that we maintain a safe environment for all of our students.

Inset Day

Please remember that the school will be closed on Friday June 25 as it's a scheduled Inset Day.

Care Book

Student Samuel from Year 9 is one of the talented co-authors of a new book being released by



Merthyr Tydfil Barnardo's Young Carers.

The team also produced some film to promote the launch of the book called "Scarers and Carers". The book is available to purchase at Dowlais Community Centre at £5 per book and a package of the book and 6 cupcakes will be available to order.

Careers Craft

Careers Wales has launched a new education resource online. It allows students in Wales to discover a range of careers, explore the world of work and visit Welsh landmarks from the comfort of their own home. Visit the website for more: www.careerswales.gov.wales

STUDENTS GET THEIR VOTING VOICES HEARD



Students at Cyfarthfa High School helped to make sure their voices were heard in the Welsh Parliament elections after gaining the right to vote.

For the first time teenagers in Wales aged 16 and 17 voted in the May elections.

Year 11 students were ahead of the game by running a series of specialist tutorials and online resources to raise awareness of this significant change in voting rights.

Headteacher Rod Francis said: "This is a real step forward for young people across Wales as they will have a say over critical issues that affect their future, such as health, education and the economy."

"We want to make our students aware that their voice matters in Welsh politics which is why we've highlighted the issue through focused workshops, online and classroom resources."

Following a campaign by ERS Cymru and a coalition of youth and civil society campaigners, the Senedd and Election Act was passed in 2020, granting 16- and 17-year olds the right to vote in the Senedd Elections.

Since then the Welsh Government has launched the Vote 16 to combat the problem of young people not taking enough of an interest in politics to have an informed vote.

Recently 18 and 19 year olds had the lowest turn-out in the 2019 general election.

At Cyfarthfa High School students are learning how the Senedd works and its everyday impact on Welsh life from making laws to setting taxes to help them make an informed decision.

They are also raising awareness of the importance of voting and how they can have a positive impact on their community by making their mark on Election Day.

Congratulations to the entire team for their enthusiasm and determination to make their voices heard!

SCHOLARS ACHIEVE SUCCESS

Students at Cyfarthfa High School have excelled in the Scholar's Programme since it was launched last year.



Maria Naguib in Year 10 has completed the Exeter Scholar's Programme. She has also been taking part in online tutorials with pupils from other schools in the evenings. Arwel Jones (Year 9), Maria Naguib and Natalia Nawara (Year 10) have been completing online masterclasses in mathematics run by the Royal Institute at Swansea University.

The pupils have been taking part in challenging activities every Saturday morning for the last month. Arwel Jones

was one of a few pupils who won a competition during the programme.

Five students in Year 8 have been working alongside other Merthyr schools with Oxford University on a programme called 'Challenge for All- Raising Aspirations'. The programme runs over a period of a few months, and they will take part in a series of activities and challenges that promote creativity and deeper thinking.

TRANSITION CLASS DEBATE MARTYR'S GUILT



Primary school students were challenged to a debate over the guilt of Merthyr's most famous 'wronged' criminal.

As part of the transition process to Cyfarthfa High School teachers Mr Gwyn and Mr Dorricott are visiting the feeder primary schools.

They are giving students the task of becoming jurors and offering arguments for and against the conviction of Dic Penderyn for his role in the Merthyr Rising in 1831.

School Attendance Procedure

Attendance at school is mandatory, however students should self-isolate if they:

- Have coronavirus symptoms or have tested positive
- Live with someone who has symptoms or have tested positive
- Are a close contact of someone who has tested positive

If your child is unable to attend school you must inform us, giving the reason for any absences. From Monday 12th April, our parent/carer class charts app will have a new function for you to message us directly to inform us of any absences.

Messages will be picked up every morning and logged on our system. All absences need to be reported by 8.30am each day of the absence. Please visit the school website for more information.

If you are unable to notify us of an absence please call 01685 725222.



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Computational Thinkers

Computational thinking is a structured and proven method designed to identify problems regardless of age or computer literacy level. It is made up of four parts.

Decomposition – breaking down a complex problem or system into smaller, more manageable parts.

Pattern recognition – looking for similarities among and within problems.

Abstraction – focusing on the important information only, ignoring irrelevant detail.

Algorithms – developing a step-by-step solution to the problem, or the rules to follow to solve the problem.

Students in Year 8 and 9 have been developing their computational thinking skills.

Year 8 have been using the Python programming language. They have been focusing on the Print and Input commands along with complex conditional statements. Students are aiming to program a “ChatBot”.

Year 9 have been using the Java programming language within the Greenfoot environment.

They have been focusing on creating computer games.

Companies such as Microsoft, Google and Apple actively recruit and train staff in computational thinking as an essential skill and competitive advantage in their marketplace.

STAR SCHOLAR NIKA PRAISED FOR UNIVERSITY CHALLENGE



Nika Poplawska was selected to attend an online languages event, hosted by Oxford University.

It was run by the Seren Languages Foundation and held in Jesus College, Oxford.

Due to the lockdown restrictions, Nika had to attend the event virtually, online.

This is Nika's account of the two-day event: *"I was lucky enough to be in a group of students who had the incredible opportunity to take part in the 'Seren Foundation Virtual Modern Languages Event'.*

"This two-day online project allowed me to see what doors languages will open in my future, have a virtual tour of Jesus College, interact with bilingual students studying abroad, and encouraged me to keep learning. Languages are very hard to learn and a topic I find challenging however, this Seren event has motivated me to keep going.

"They reassured me that trying your best and learning even a few new words at a time is amazing and something I should be very proud of.

"I felt privileged being able to join such a project and hope I will have a chance to do something similar in the future."

Nika won a runners-up prize as a result of her hard work over the two days.

We are very proud of her achievements – congratulations!