

CYFARTHFA HIGH SCHOOL

Governors' Annual Report to Parents / Carers

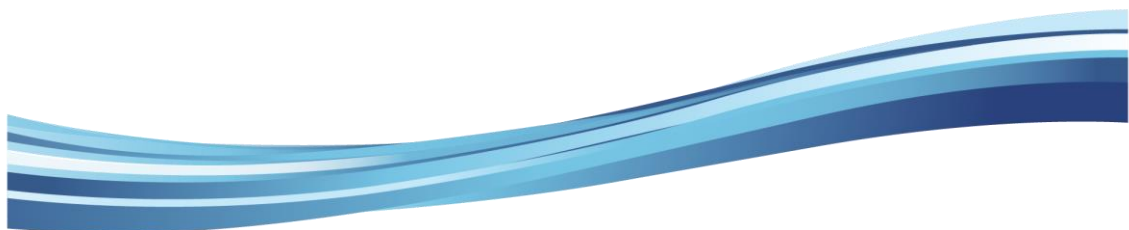


2020 - 2021

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Letter from the Chair of the Governing Body

Dear Parent / Carer

It gives me great pleasure to present Cyfarthfa High School Governor's Report to Parents / Carers for 2020-2021. Without doubt, this has been the most challenging year in living memory as we have faced unprecedented circumstances that have affected every aspect of our lives. The arrival of the Covid-19 pandemic to our shores and the subsequent government lockdown in March 2020 caused so much upheaval, upset and tragedy to the lives of countless thousands of people in the UK alone.

We've all had to make changes in our everyday lives and as the vaccination programme continues to make progress across Wales and the rest of the country, there is finally hope on the horizon that some form of normality will resume. I know we all look forward to the day when social distancing, face masks and all restrictions are nothing more than a dim memory.

The education sector has faced more challenges than most. Periods of uncertainty, school closures, restricted numbers, social distancing, teaching bubbles and home learning have all had a dramatic effect on staff, students and indeed parents / carers alike. Children of key workers and vulnerable children came to school and our dedicated staff provided widespread support and encouragement.

As more students gradually returned, so inevitably we were faced with outbreaks of Covid-19 and at one point our community was regarded as one of the worst in Wales with rising hospitalisation and death figures becoming a reality. There is no doubt that overcoming all of these struggles and challenges has been both demanding, frustrating and indeed exhausting – both physically and mentally - for all concerned.

The Governing Body are extremely proud of the staff and students of Cyfarthfa High School. Equally we are grateful for the enormous support of the parents and carers. Collectively they have navigated us all through a distressing year and succeeded in ensuring that the highest standard of education was maintained despite the adversity.

The Governing Body salute you for your determination, courage, commitment, care, flexibility and patience. Together you will – and indeed have – survived and flourished an ordeal unlike any other and words fail to express our gratitude to each and every one of you. Wishing you all a happy summer holiday and we look forward to entering a new and hopefully brighter academic year ahead.

Yours, on behalf of the governing body

Chair of Governors
Governing Body

Gareth Morgan
Chair of Governors/Community Governor

Anthony Hughes
Vice Chair of Governors/Parent Governor

Rod Francis
Headteacher

Glynis Estebanez
LA Governor

Gary Williams
Community Governor

Tracy Wilkes
Parent Governor

Donna Williams
LA Governor

Lynne Thomas
Community Governor

Sarah Price
Parent Governor

Cllr Clive Jones
LA Governor

Marie Evans
Parent Governor

Rachel Shelton
Teacher Governor

Emma Strand
LA Governor

Beth Pearce
Parent Governor

Nicholas Johns
Staff Governor

Emma France
Community Governor

Emma Liverick
Parent Governor

Daniel McAlear
Student Governor /
Head Boy

Samantha Bayliss
Student Governor /
Head Girl

Our School

Cyfarthfa High School is a comprehensive school which caters for students in the 11-16 category and is based in the post-industrial town of Merthyr Tydfil.

There are 1033 students on roll. 21.1% of our students are eligible for free school meals.

Most of our students speak English as their first language and most come from a white British background. Very few of our students speak Welsh as their first language.

Our school's intake includes the full range of abilities. The percentage of our students with additional learning needs is 20.8%. 1.93%% of our students have a statement of educational needs.

The school population is strong and we welcome applications for places from students outside the usual catchment area.

At Cyfarthfa High School our aim is to provide every student with the opportunity to develop academically, personally, socially, physically and intellectually to their full potential and according to their own abilities and aspirations.

We also strive to develop an ethos within the school that values everyone, encourages respect for individuals and property, and creates an expectation that everyone will work to their capacity in order to achieve their full potential.

We are committed to tackling underachievement. The school also promotes the virtues of tolerance, personal pride and confidence amongst students; to enhance their self-esteem and to invest in their futures. In so doing the school will help them celebrate their achievement and success.

We hope to extend the range of curricular and extracurricular experiences for students and to enrich their minds and increase their skills, knowledge and understanding in order that they may take an active place in society upon leaving school.

We want to place the school at the heart of the community; to extend and improve links with homes, external agencies and others who contribute to the success of the school.

It is also an important aspect of Cyfarthfa High School to provide an excellent quality of education, to set high but realistic targets for all students in all areas of endeavour and to strive for ever improved standards of achievement throughout the school.

Transition

Transition processes have been extensive throughout the summer term with the collation of SIMS, transfer of information, verifying of medical information and an evaluation of the transition questionnaire taking place.

The History Department taught a hugely successful lesson to all Year 5 and 6 students in the five partner primary schools. The “Trial of Dic Penderyn” was an interactive court room experience – with excellent feedback received from our primary school colleagues. All Year 6 students received their Cyfarthfa “Welcome Packs”. The “Cyfarthfa Calls” information booklet was issued to all Year 5 students.

Virtual meetings with Cyfarthfa High School staff and primary school heads and colleagues are routinely calendared. The new curriculum and transition processes has been the main discussion points. Additionally, all Year 5 and 6 students started their Transition Themed Project “Perceptions of Growing Up in Merthyr Tydfil” – which transferred to Cyfarthfa with them.

In preparation for our first parent / carer virtual meeting, Year 6 formed a new ‘TEAM’ – through which Cyfarthfa High School can communicate important information. Year 6 will also benefit from a ClassCharts login before the end of

term. Transition now has a designated Cyfarthfa High School email address for parent / carer's to have direct contact.

Covid restrictions allowed Cyfarthfa High School to conduct only two successful "Transition Days for All" in June. In total 113 students attended and were treated to a mixture of Science, Music, Drama, Technology, Maths, Physical Education and Art. Journalist Hannah Thomas of ITV Wales also joined the students to research a news article on the subject of transition to high school for students post Covid-19.

Our transition team have visited all primary schools to discuss academic and pastoral information with head teachers and Year 6 staff. This open and honest exchange of information is very much valued and greatly strengthens our partnership working.

Two SLT virtual meetings with parents / carers and students were well-received by engaging and informing families on a number of important issues. We constructed four mixed ability classes, taking friendship recommendations, ALNCo information and academic balance into full consideration.

Student Leadership Team

Cyfarthfa High School is launching a new Student Leadership Team. It will consist of a Head Boy, Head Girl, Deputy Head Boy and Deputy Head Girl. There will be six subcommittees containing students from all form groups.

Students will need to express an interest and receive nominations. There will also be a senior prefect team from Year 11 which will be given a unique prefect role description.

Student Leadership Team Subcommittees:

- Strategic Lead
- Wellbeing
- Prefects
- Teaching and Learning
- Standards and Skills
- Eco Group
- Student Community Council (This will form the main body and lead of the whole Student Leadership Team)

Each subcommittee will be led by a teacher and the Deputy Head Boy and Girl who will meet with the Head Boy and Head Girl to feedback to the Student Leadership Team.

House System

The House System has been re-launched this year despite the limitations of Covid-19 impacting on our usual high profile events of eisteddfod and sports day.

The House System PowerPoint – detailing the background, historical significance and linkage to Cyfarthfa Castle - was successfully shared across the school and with our Year 6 students. This did much to ignite new interest and instil a competitive spirit in all students.

We have had completions involving our Year 6 intake, Hallowe'en short story competition, Christmas card design, virtual eisteddfod in each subject area, Red Nose Day cooking contest and T shirt design competitions. There is also a 'House Point' tab on ClassCharts so staff are able to award points to specifically reward within the House System and therefore raise the profile even further.

Every student in Years 7 and 8 are encouraged to wear their House badges on their blazer lapels and win House points at every opportunity. Termly House point totals are celebrated across the school and posted on all media platforms.

It is hoped that when Covid-19 restrictions are relaxed there will be more opportunities for a variety of established and new House activities.

Destination of School Leavers

Draft as of 9.2.21	Year 11 Blwyddyn 11			
	Female Benyw	Male Gwryw	Totals Cyfansy	%
Cyfarthfa High School				
Continuing in full-time education - School Parhau mewn addysg amser llawn - Ysgol	4	1	5	2.439%
Continuing in full-time education - College Parhau mewn addysg amser llawn - Coleg	82	97	179	87.317%
Entering employment outside WBTYP Dechrau cyflogaeth tu allan i Hyfforddiant Seiliedig ar Waith i Bobl Ifanc	0	4	4	1.951%
Entering WBTYP (employed status) Dechrau Hyfforddiant Seiliedig ar Waith i Bobl Ifanc (statws cyflogedig)	0	3	3	1.463%
Entering WBTYP - (without employed status) Dechrau Hyfforddiant Seiliedig ar Waith i Bobl Ifanc (heb statws cyflogedig)	5	3	8	3.902%
Unable OR NOT READY to enter Emp, Ed or WBTYP (e.g. due to illness, custodial sentence) Methu NEU DDIM YN BAROD i gael mynediad at Gyflogaeth, Addysg neu WBTYP (e.e. salwch, dedfryd o gaethiwed)	3	2	5	2.439%
Known to have left the area Yn hysbys iddynt adael yr ardal	0	1	1	0.488%
Total number of 2020 statutory school leavers Cyfanswm y gadawyr ysgol statudol yn 2020	94	111	205	

Financial Report

Available on request

Community Funding

Over the last academic year, Cyfarthfa High School has been successful in securing external funding to support students, staff and the community of Cyfarthfa. The funding in total has amounted to £16,385.00 from various external agencies.

£5,000.00 was secured through Moondance to support our vision to become a mindfulness and wellbeing hub in Merthyr Tydfil. Twelve members of staff in varying roles undertook a succession of mindfulness courses to become an accredited mindful member of staff. Mindfulness is embedded throughout PERMA lessons for all students in Key Stage 3 and we aim to move forward for a whole school approach for mindfulness over the next two years, fully embedding mindfulness in tutorials and through the Health and Wellbeing curriculum.

£4,185.00 was secured through the All Wales Play Grant to provide more opportunities for our students to be active and social during recreational time. Three concrete table tennis tables were purchased which engage students in physical activity at break and lunch times. These facilities also offer additional options to the Health and Wellbeing Faculty.

£4,200.00 was secured through Voluntary Active Merthyr Tydfil (VAMT) to support our student leadership team undertaking wellbeing roles as well as some mindfulness resources for PSE, PERMA and Health and Wellbeing lessons.

£3,000 was secured through CSC to allow the school to become part of a learning Design Pilot to support future on line learning and how this can be supported through our everyday practice as we move forward and explore further opportunities to extend learning and teaching practice and opportunities. As we approach the end of 2021, we are working extremely closely with our current PTA to handover to a newly formed PTA in 2021/2022. This marks the end of a very important era which has been highly valued at Cyfarthfa High School and we would like to take this opportunity to thank all members of the Cyfarthfa PTA for your dedication, commitment and passion towards our school and community.

New members of the PTA are being welcomed to establish a new vision and aims to support all students, staff, parents/carers and the community of Cyfarthfa High School. We aim to become a registered charity to help us achieve our vision and explore new avenues for the Cyfarthfa community.

Attendance

Cyfarthfa High School are work extremely hard to ensure all students value their education, enjoy attending school every day. Every year we work very closely with parents/carers, students and external agencies to encourage good attendance. However, as anticipated, it has been a challenging year all round which has had significant impact on attendance to school. We continue to work

closely with families to provide the best support, care and guidance to ensure students attend school every day.

The attendance team are working efficiently and effectively to engage with students and families with patterns of persistent absences and low levels of attendance. Our robust graduated response for attendance is improving attendance, truancy and punctuality every day. The schools rewards associated to attendance and initiatives is also significantly contributing towards raising levels of attendance and punctuality.

Attendance levels illustrate that many students enjoy school, although a few (11.2%) students display unsatisfactory levels of attendance and are having difficulties in returning after recent lockdowns. Since the most recent lockdown, attendance is however, on an upward trend indicating that most students enjoy attending school (90.24%).

There is a very small variation of 0.4% between boys and girls attendance, with many girls attending school more than boys. Many eFSM students attend school regularly, showing a variation in comparison to non eFSM students which must be narrowed.

Few students having patterns of persistence unauthorised absences and authorised absences. Contributing factors towards this are reduced timetables and anxieties/mental associated with the pandemic. Persistence absenteeism is a clear focus for the school and needs to be reduced.

**Cyfarthfa High School
Attendance Update June
2021**

		Attendance by NCY				
Date	Whole School	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
September - June	89%	91.34%	87.75%	88.59%	88.17%	89.74%
March - June	90.36%	92.07%	89.54%	89.84%	89.85%	91.07%
September - December	87.45%	90.59%	85.56%	87.28%	86.43%	88.12%
Attendance by group (Sept - June)	Whole School	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
FSM	80.4%	83.7%	77.6%	80.3%	80.5%	81%
Boys	88.3%	91.1%	86.8%	90.0%	87.3%	89.6%
Girls	89.3%	91.6%	88.8%	86.5%	89.6%	89.9%

Our new graduated response implemented in May 2021 is making excellent headway in tackling internal truancy and lateness. There was a 27% decrease in students truanting lessons in 6 weeks due to the new consequence system with very few students internally truanting lessons. Most students are punctual to school and lessons and display that they are ready to learn on entry into the classrooms.

Very few students are late to lessons (1.7%) within the school day. This indicates a marked improvement in addressing lateness to lessons (11.8%

decrease) since the new graduated response was implemented. Very few students have been issued with an FPN for persistent lateness (4.4%) and unauthorised absence (1.5%). As a result very few students are now late to school, indicating a marked improvement of 54%.

Attendance data is scrutinised on a daily, weekly, monthly basis to identify trends and patterns. Individuals and groups are identified for bespoke support and interventions. Raising attendance is a major priority for the school and a calendar of raising profile events, 'hot spot' initiatives and challenges are implemented throughout the year.

Attendance continues to be challenged and supported and needs to improve to meet our school target of 95% during the next academic year.

Academic Performance / Examination Results

Cyfarthfa High School KS4 Results 2021

	Summer 2018	Summer 2019	Summer 2020	Summer 2021	Improvement	Difference from 2019-2020
L1	99%	98.5%	99.5%	100%	Y	+0.5%
L2	65.2%	54%	71.1%	73.9%	Y	+2.8%
L2+	45.1%	44.3%	55.9%	57.8%	Y	+1.9%
Capped 9	338.3	340.6	382	400	Y	+18
APS English		38.8	39.5	39.8	Y	+0.3
APS Maths		35	40.2	42.8	Y	+2.6
APS Science		35.2	36.8	39.0	Y	+2.2
Welsh Bacc		35.9%	40.4%	51.7%	Y	+11.3%

Website & Social Media

Website – www.cyfarthfahighschool.co.uk

The school website is updated regularly and you will find lots of useful information such as:

- Term dates
- Admission Information
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Lunchtime Order
- School Menu
- Prospectus

- Uniform
- Calendar of events.

You will find the latest examination data as well as the full version of this report.

The website offers easy access for students to our 'Home Learning' site, where students and parents/carers can access details of homework set, along with homework help and support. This has been particularly beneficial during the periods of lockdown due to Covid-19.

Any relevant information such as school closures will be posted on the website along with interesting news items and articles relating to student success.

Social Media

Cyfarthfa High School benefits from extensive Facebook, Twitter and Youtube accounts.

The Facebook page is updated with news and images. The fact that these can be uploaded instantly results and sporting events, regular updates will appear as the event develops.

Follow us on Facebook at Cyfarthfa High School

The Twitter account has proved very successful with the opportunity to interact with key people and organisations in the community.

Follow us on Twitter at @CyfarthfaHigh

The Youtube account includes a wide library of films taken in the school relating to a range of activities and events.

Follow us on Youtube at Cyfarthfa High School

School Prospectus

Cyfarthfa High School's new Prospectus is available on the website. The prospectus includes all relevant information and details promoting the school's developments and achievements.

Staff

The Teaching Staff

Sian Bernard-Henderson	Teacher
Charlotte Blatchford	Teacher
Nicola Bowden	Assistant Head
Helen Canney	Assistant Head
Victoria Clements	Teacher

Kelly-Anne Crane	Teacher
Caylee Davies	Teacher
Jonathan Davies	Teacher
Lisa Davis	Teacher
Mark Dorricott	Teacher
Damian Dwyer	Teacher
James Edwards	Teacher
Rod Francis	Headteacher
Claire Fry	Teacher
Rhian George	Teacher
Catrin Griffin	Teacher
Traceyu Griffin	Assistant Head
:Lewis Gwyn	Teacher
Sheryl Haines	Teacher
Kevin Hamer	Teacher
Joanne James	Teacher
Richard James	Teacher
Rebecca John	Teacher
Nicholas Johns	Teacher
Keri Lewis	Teacher
Claire Lewis	Teacher
Sheryl Linder	Teacher
Samantha Maggs	Teacher
Luisa Martin-Thomas	Deputy Headteacher
Matthew McCarthy	Teacher
Leeane McCarthy	Teacher
Luke Morgan	Teacher
Nicola Morgan	Teacher
Louise Morgan	Teacher
Rochelle Parker	Teacher
Rebecca Parry	Teacher
Tomos Phillips	Teacher
Jenny Phillips	Teacher
Abigail Richards	Teacher
Lucy Richards	Teacher
Jemma Richards	Teacher
Kerry Richards	Teacher
Rachel Shelton	Teacher
Michael Smith	Teacher
Jack Smyth	Teacher
Rhian Stokes-Thomas	Teacher
Lucy Thomas	Teacher
Melanie Tippings	Teacher
Alan Townsin	Teacher
Hannah Webb	Teacher
Rebecca West	Teacher
Alexandra Williams	Teacher
Garhard Williams	Teacher

The Support Staff

Julie Atkins	Business Manager
Wendy Atkinson	Learning Support Assistant
Kierion Bunce	Site Maintenance / Repair Maintenance
Christine Burr	Admin Assistant]
Gerwyn Cooksey	Caretaker
David Davies	Lab Technician
Sian Davies	Learning Support Assistant
Helen Davis	Nursery Nurse - Foundation
Samantha Edwards	Student Support Worker Welfare
Michelle Evans	Learning Support Assistant
Rebecca Evans	Learning Support Assistant
Sian Evans	Admin
Emily Gait	Learning Support Assistant
Michael Hocking	Network Manager
Susan Jones	Admin
Victoria Maddocks	Learning Support Assistant
Diane Marshall	Learning Support Assistant
Sharon McKean	Admin
Camella Monk	Learning Support Assistant
Barry Price	Lab Technician
Amanda Swain-Davies	Admin
Catherine Williams	Admin
Huw Williams	Student Support Worker

Curriculum

The curriculum across the school is well organised and balanced to meet the needs and interests of our students. Year 10 curriculum has been considerably reviewed and adapted to suit student demand. The curriculum in Year 10 and 11 reflects the choices of the students and has therefore expanded to include additional construction and engineering classes. Staff teaching these areas have been, and will continue to be, given appropriate support to facilitate their subject knowledge and approaches to teaching.

For the very few students requiring alternative curriculum pathways, this has been implemented. For example, alternative curriculum package for Year 10 students where options were not suitable or where students needed a more bespoke route. These include courses such as SWEET, Outdoor Ed and the Jamie Oliver course. For all students, additional qualifications have been embedded into our curriculum to maximise outcomes at Key Stage 4. These include Finance and Enterprise.

Curriculum allocation reflects the needs of different faculties, teachers and students. Heavier weighting for some subjects is evident in areas where standards have been impacted in previous years, where cohorts have demonstrated significant development needs/deficits in learning or where there has been a significant change to qualification specifications

Curriculum for Wales

The school has designed its own structure and curriculum proposal for implementation of the Curriculum for Wales in 2022 which embraces evidence from a wide range of sources including local, regional, national and international practices. In doing so, it has set out a multidimensional and interdimensional approach to integrate the curriculum where appropriate and to allow some AOLE's to be delivered through a Disciplinary approach.

The curriculum model seeks to embed the principles set out in Successful Futures, supported by a Teaching, Learning and Experiences approach that is scaffolded by the Professional Teaching Standards (PTS). Faculties are starting to embrace the proposals of the Cyfarthfa curriculum, although further support and guidance will be required to support newly formed faculties and to embrace the proposed curriculum design.

We are making good progress in readiness for the new curriculum and will trial some Multidisciplinary and Interdisciplinary thematic projects in 2021/2022 for all AOLE's now the new structure has been confirmed. Professional learning needs will be reflected in response to the School as a Learning Organisation report and a strategic professional learning cycle will be finalised to underpin outcomes of the report and the needs of our staff and community.

Following extensive consultation with parents / carers, students, staff and external stakeholders, we will refine our whole school vision to ensure it represents the Curriculum for Wales and our aims. Also, as we move into a new faculty structure, faculties will define their AOLE vision, underpinning the school's vision and establish a clear route forward.

At Cyfarthfa High School we are committed to the success and wellbeing of every learner, regardless of their background and circumstances to ensure equity and excellence go hand in hand and we achieve the national mission for Wales.

Departmental News and Achievements

ENGLISH

Overview of Academic Year 2020-21

The past year has seen the department continue to grow and change. The department ran a range of extra-curricular opportunities for students including various poetry and narrative writing competitions.

They also enjoyed many in-house events with a range of activities planned for our students. Extra-curricular 'Have Your Say' sessions have run after school for KS3, getting them to explore and offer their opinions on current issues. Reading clubs have also been introduced to KS3 as well as support sessions for KS4. World Book Day was celebrated virtually and included a book drop to Year 7 students, a 'Shelfies' competition and book recommendations.

The CDGs brought new challenges to the department, but a robust framework was put in place to allow students to reach their potential and to ensure the fair awarding of grades.

Celebrations and Success

This year the department was selected to be part of a trial of a new form of assessment called 'Comparative Judgement' run by 'No More Marking'. This project, organised by Central South Consortium, has been very successful and showed clear progress made by the Year 7 learners. There has been a decrease of those writing below their chronological age by 22% points, which is significant. Likewise, there has been an increase of those writing above 13 years of age by 17% points.

As part of the trial, a student was also asked to partake in a podcast with CSC explaining how Comparative Judgement works and the impact it is had at the school. Next year, students will be undertaking Comparative Judgement with all of KS3.

Response to Covid-19

Covid 19 continued to bring many challenges this year, both with periods of year group isolation in the autumn term and a further national lockdown in the spring term. The department developed their approach to blended learning during this time with hybrid lessons during class lockdowns, so students at home were taught synchronously with students in class.

During the national lockdown they moved to blended learning videos on TEAMS and used graphic tablets to allow for live annotation of texts in live lessons. They have adapted and trialled various blended learning options for our students when they are required to isolate. Student Voice has been very positive on the department's response to home-learning.

Future Events / Initiatives / Updates

Year 10 will be sitting GCSE Literature in a year, allowing them to focus on GCSE English language in year 11. The department will be looking to further develop its use of the Voice 21 strategies next year as a new AOLE and also looks to begin action research into Doug Lemov's 'Reading Reconsidered'.

They are continuing to run a range of extra-curricular competitions, including 'Young Writers' short story competitions and poetry competitions. They will also look to continue running extra-curricular activities to inspire and motivate students. Providing the climate allows, staff will also look to participate in events and visits, including the Merthyr Tydfil Literacy Festival with Stephens and George.

INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGES

Overview of Academic Year 2020-2021

In what has continued to be another very challenging year, the department has managed to rise to the demands and has still had many opportunities to celebrate success.

Celebrations and Success

- All Year 11 students were able to have Centre Assessed grades which were carefully moderated, marked and DMRs recorded by all staff in the department.
- A Year 8 student represented the school in a SEREN network event for languages for more able and talented students. This was hosted by Oxford University and was carried out with the live lessons online.
- A “Language Ambassadors” programme is now running for MAT students in Year 8 during the after school enrichment programme. This is proving very popular and will continue to run with the same students next year.

Response to Covid-19

The department adapted very well to the challenges facing them as a result of the Covid-19 restrictions. Staff learned very quickly how to provide engaging, challenging and motivating lessons on line, whilst learning how to use the new technologies themselves. They have trialled various strategies, websites and apps to increase engagement. Websites used for blended learning are: Class Charts, Microsoft TEAMS, Microsoft FORMS, Microsoft STREAM, KAHOOT, WJEC, You Tube and BBC Bitesize.

In January 2021, the department moved to live online teaching. This involved lessons taught “live” by a teacher which could be accessed via TEAMS for the students at home. Student engagement in the live lessons was much higher than online work which had been set asynchronously.

In school, the Head of Department ensures that the school’s Health and Safety policies are followed carefully in the classroom. They have also had to adapt the organisation of some lessons. Such as, ensuring that students are wearing masks when conducting speaking work in pairs, and unfortunately, students cannot sing in class, an activity that was very enjoyable with younger children.

Future Events / Initiatives / Updates

With procedures and timetables still unsure for September, due to ongoing restrictions, it is difficult to make definite plans for the next academic year. However, with the move to “Faculties” instead of departments next year, the AOLE will be playing a large role in raising standards of literacy, in particular reading, across the school.

Spanish will now be introduced a year earlier, to Year 7. Years 7 and 8 will now have two lessons of French a fortnight and one of Spanish.

Spanish will not be taught in Year 9 but students will be given the option to choose GCSE French or Spanish in Year 10. Global Business will now be taught (one module) in Year 9.

WELSH

Overview of Academic Year 2020-21

The beginning of this academic year was a huge learning curve as staff adjusted to online lessons and live lessons but as always students completed all of their Welsh work to the highest of standards. It was wonderful to see how students continued with their Welsh lessons and regularly received positive points on ClassCharts for their efforts. Many students are also achieving a "Hot Chocolate Friday" nomination which was fantastic to see.

In October the school celebrated 'Diwrnod Shwmae' with lots of in class activities and a photo booth in the main foyer. Students tried really hard to start every conversation with 'Shwmae' and their efforts were noticed around the school.

After Christmas the second lockdown caused further disruption. Live lessons became the norm and the turn out to the Welsh live lesson was extraordinary with around 130 students logging on for each lesson. Students conducted themselves extremely well and the interaction was excellent. Students regularly turned in their Welsh assignments and it is clear that everyone was making progress despite the difficult circumstances.

In February they celebrated 'Dydd Miwsig Cymru' with some Welsh music quizzes and Welsh lessons that were centred around Welsh artists. This was a huge success which the younger students thoroughly enjoyed. In March they held their first 'Eisteddford Digidol' which was, again, a huge success. Students competed in a wide variety of categories from their homes and the efforts were outstanding.

On returning to school in April, Year 11 were faced with the GCSE assessments which, showed them at their best. Years 7, 8, 9 and 10 also showed how resilient they are when they returned to school and easily got back into the swing of face to face Welsh lessons. All students have completed their assessments for the term and they have shown that the flare for the Welsh language is very much alive.

INFORMATION & COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Overview of Academic Year 2020-21

- The GCSE ICT results have been strong and higher than the national average for the last six years. The number of A*/A grades have also been higher than the national average over the same period of time. Mean residuals have also been significantly positive.
- The GCSE Computer Science results have been strong and higher than the national average since we have run the course. The number of A*/A grades have also been higher than the national average over the same period of time.
- The ICT Short Course qualification was sat by the ALN class. All ALN students achieved a pass grade in this qualification. 3 students achieved a C grade. The standards of achievement in the GCSE ICT Short Course are excellent.

- The BTEC ITQ qualification was also sat by the ALN class. Nearly all ALN students also achieved a pass grade in this qualification. The standards of achievement in the BTEC ITQ qualification are excellent.
- All students entered for the WJEC Computer Science achieved an A*-C grade.
- There is a good uptake in the amount of students selecting an ICT qualification at Key Stage 4.

Celebrations and Success

- 73 students were entered for the WJEC GCSE Computer Science qualification at Key Stage 4. The departments A*/A pass rate was 46.6%, the A*-C pass rate was 93.2% and the A*-G pass rate was 100%. The standards of achievement in GCSE ICT are excellent.
- 14 students were entered for the WJEC GCSE Computer Science qualification at Key Stage 4. The departments A*/A pass rate was 42.9%, the A*-C pass rate was 85.7% and the A*-G pass rate was 100%. The standards of achievement in GCSE Computer Science are excellent.
- The residuals for both FSM and non-FSM for the GCSE ICT Full Course qualification are a strong positive.
- All ALN students achieved a grade in Full Course ICT.
- There was a strong residual for ALN students.

Response to Covid-19

The ICT department got on board with the use of Microsoft Teams since the launch back in 2017. The department has used Microsoft Teams to evidence student work since then. Since March we have continued to use Microsoft Teams for our synchronous and asynchronous learning. Students have been set a variety of work using not only Microsoft Teams but other Microsoft Office 365 applications including Microsoft Excel. As a department we are constantly looking at the updates in this learning platform to make learning accessible for all of our students.

Future Events / Initiatives / Updates

The department is aiming to maintain the high standards set by the department at GCSE. They have continued to teach the amended specification set by the WJEC for both GCSE ICT and Computer Science. They are introducing for the first time the Pearson BTEC Level 2 Certificate for IT Users (ITQ) for our Year 11 ALN students.

Key Stage 3 students have attempted the Inspiring Digital Enterprise Award, known as iDEA. This an international programme that helps students to develop their digital, enterprise and employability skills. Students have been set a series of online challenges and as a result earned career-enhancing badges and unlocked new opportunities. Some students have gained an industry-recognised Award that help them stand out from the crowd.

A recent Microsoft Teams update allows teachers to set Assignments using the Class Notebook. Previously Assignments and Class Notebook have been two separate tools in Microsoft Teams. The ICT Department has trialled this new initiative and it has proved to be successful with a greater number of

students accessing the work. They are providing staff training on this new feature throughout the whole of the school.

MATHEMATICS

Overview of Academic Year 2020-21

Despite the many challenges of the last year and internal changes in the school, the department has continued to overcome any obstacles to provide a first-class education.

Celebrations and Success

We were extremely pleased by the level of dedication to GCSE examinations as shown by the students. Their collective determination to succeed so an over all increase of 2.2% in the summer holiday results

Response to Covid-19

The Mathematics Department reacted very quickly to remote learning when the country went into lockdown. The team worked collaboratively to implement a model that would ensure students continued to learn and be catered for whilst home schooling.

Units of work were planned collaboratively and distributed on a weekly basis to all students. They made their very own 'Cyfarthfa High School's Maths Department' YouTube channel. There are video clips of staff teaching key topics that we then use for remote teaching.

Future Events / Initiatives / Updates

Planning for the new 2022 maths curriculum is taking place. We are currently attending events with Central South Consortium and will continue to do so until the launch of the 2022 curriculum.

The priorities for the mathematics department this academic year are to strive to continue to improve the quality and consistency of teaching and learning in mathematics through 'differentiation', good questioning and not teaching directly off a script (teachers being sensitive to the needs of the students and influencing the direction of the lesson as they see fit).

The consistency of AFL strategies – use of mini whiteboards, feedback on classwork and assessments is a priority along with ensuring a consistent diet of 'reasoning activities' for all learners.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Overview of Academic Year 2020-2021

The new qualification introduced last year at KS4 in the compulsory RE lesson has proved to be very successful, with 211 of Year 11 students achieving the Certificate in Equality and Diversity. This qualification is worth 90 points which is equivalent to two B grades at GCSE. The department has also achieved DCS (Direct Claim Status) for the qualification for the second year running.

The RE department has also secured a full course Religious Studies GCSE class for the next academic year. This is was part of our Department Improvement Plan.

Celebrations and Success

The new qualification, Certificate in Equality and Diversity proved very successful for our Year 11 students this year. 211 students were entered for the Certificate in Equality and Diversity with 100% A* - C pass rate.

Response to Covid-19

The department has adapted well to the challenges that Covid-19 has brought. Blended learning has been set on Teams for students to work from home when they are self-isolating.

The department has also engaged fully with live lessons during the lockdown period from December to April. This proved successful too, with 100's of students joining and contributing to the live lessons.

Future Events / Initiatives / Updates

The department will continue to adopt blended learning strategies. As from September the RE department will be part of the Humanities faculty. As of the next academic year the RE will be known as Religion, Values and Ethics.

HISTORY

Overview of Academic Year 2020-21

This year has seen the department continue in the strengths of previous years with a further Key Stage 4 uptake of 85 students choosing History as one of their GCSE options alongside 100 students progressing into Year 11. Both cohorts will be taught in three classes in each year group. The incoming Year 11 students have faced the challenges that 2020-21 has brought in an impressive way and support continues to be provided for all those who need additional guidance.

Our outgoing Year 11 have worked hard to ensure that they achieve in what has been a challenging year and have been careful to mitigate for the difficulties and differences that our students have had to face in the way that they have been required to learn and be assessed.

Key Stage 3 provision has continued to be just one lesson per week. However, Year 7 have settled well into their History lessons and are receiving positive experiences within the department classrooms. This continues to be mirrored in Years 8 and 9 also. The difficulties that we have faced this year continue to prove challenging, particularly with the reduction of provision in this Foundation subject. However, on-line provision has continued to be very successful and the quality of provision is always good/excellent. The History Department pioneered 'live' lessons (on-line live provision) in the early stages of the pandemic and the Head of Department delivered training and reflections on this to all staff which encouraged and enabled them to follow suit. The department saw very high numbers in on-line lesson attendance

which speaks volumes about the quality of provision.

The department also contributed to the transition process during this academic year, providing lessons for Year 5 and 6 classes in each of our five cluster schools. Since those visits, we have seen Year 6 students who had previously elected to apply for other high schools change their minds and apply to Cyfarthfa High School. The department visits were a contributing factor to these decisions.

Celebrations and Success

There are many examples of students that have excelled including:

- Again, very high numbers of students have opted for GCSE History. This continues to prove how valued the subject is to our students and parents.
- Very pleasing progress being made at Key Stage 4.
- Very pleasing engagement from Year 7 as they have faced a very different start to their time in high school.
- Valuable contributions made by the department to whole school needs.

Response to Covid-19

The History Department has been active in embracing the on-line learning platform, Microsoft Teams. New resources have been produced and the in-class lessons now largely use the resources directly from the Teams platform. 'Live' lessons have also continued to be pioneered by the department and members of the department team have been available to all staff to consult on best practice.

Essential learning of skills and knowledge has been identified and prioritised in order to maximise progress over a shorter period of face to face contact.

Future Events / Initiatives / Updates

The department continues to plan the annual London trip for Key Stage 4 which focuses on the Crime and Punishment unit and the Non-Examined Assessment.

They are also preparing for a local tour of key places that students are studying for our combined Faculty of Humanities project. Extra-curricular opportunities will re-start when conditions allow.

More focus is being given to ensuring question techniques are mastered as our incoming Year 11 approach their examinations next year

SCIENCE

Overview of the year 2020-2021

The use of CDGs for GCSE pupil assessments this academic year brought their own challenges. Through the use of splitting papers to smaller chunks, online and class revision as well as intense skill development sessions, we

successfully brought all year 11 pupils through to the end of the assessment period with sufficient evidence to award their grades.

Celebrations & Successes

The science department kicked off the transition sessions with our feeder primary schools this year via live virtual sessions in their own classrooms. Pupils were able to participate in decision-making activities and experience some hands-on science using equipment delivered to them. As well as observing some fun and awe-inspiring experiments demonstrated from the Cyfarthfa science labs.

Despite the fact that Science Week occurred during lock-down, we didn't let this get in the way of our pupils experiencing the joy of science. Our pupils were able to participate in experiments from their own homes. This was an enrichment activity enjoyed by KS3 and KS4 pupils alike, involving experiments such as 'King Kong's hand' and self-inflating balloons. It was also another great opportunity for us to bring the feeder primary schools on board for transition activities. Three live virtual science week sessions saw more than 100 primary pupils and teachers logging into each session and taking part in the experiments from their kitchens.

This year we have been involved with Welsh Valleys Engineering Project (WVEP) and has worked with Newport Wafer Fab and 60 year 8 children in a STEM project. The £2000 secured from WVEP has been used to purchase forensic kits, genetic finger-printing kits and smart materials for use in the next academic year in some exciting new projects. Through work with WVEP several of our Year 11 pupils have been able to secure a bursary to assist them in their future STEM courses at college with £2000 and a laptop for each successful pupil.

We have also worked hard with outside agencies to secure an additional £3500 funding for enrichment activities next year. This funding comes from EESW (Engineering Education Scheme Wales), Science Capital and Clwb STEM.

Response to COVID 19

Due to periods of pupil self-isolation and national lock-down, we have adapted quickly in response to the changing situation to ensure that pupils' science education is not detrimentally affected. The science department have spent a large part of the year developing some fantastic on-line learning resources both for live lessons and blended learning lessons on TEAMS. The resources include knowledge pages, assignments, stream videos, quizzes and interactive animations for experiments and investigations. Going hand in hand with this is the development of effective on-line feedback to pupils.

The knowledge and experienced gained from digital learning forms part of our plan for the future, where homework and revision resources for pupils will be on-line via TEAMS allowing pupils to access these resources at any time when away from school.

120 Engineering packs from WVEP were awarded to pupils who showed resilience and excellent effort during at-home science learning in lock-down.

Future Events / Initiatives / Updates

In September we look forward to opening our newly refurbished chemistry laboratory in Room 8. The modern design will enable pupils to view both digital materials and experimental demonstrations with ease.

In the next academic year we will work closely with the newly appointed maths and science learning coach to carry out intervention activities with Key identified individuals at both KS4 and KS3. We will see the return of the practical examination for Year 11 pupils in GCSE science. We welcome this as it has historically been a successful module for our pupils in terms of raising overall grades. We will ensure that pupils focus on the practical skills required in the run-up to these examinations. During the assessment period pupils will sit both sections A and B of the exam on the same day with a skills booster session between the two parts of the assessment.

We plan to enhance our enrichment activities, with not only the KS3 after-school clubs, but also a variety of projects to take place throughout the academic year.

As part of our 5-Year project with WVEP, next year we will work on a project with Panasonic for a whole term, we are hoping to deliver this to the whole of year 8. We aim to run a forensics cross curricular day for year 7 using the 'Murder at the Manor' kits purchased with the WVEP funding. On top of this we should have a further £2000 funding to help in our project with Panasonic and a further £200 for science club.

We will be running a cross-faculty project with Technology using the funding from Engineering Education Scheme Wales. Working with Clwb STEM we will be taking part in a Hack-a-thon culminating in a science fair where primaries will also be invited to showcase their projects also.

GEOGRAPHY

Overview of Academic Year 2020-21

2020-21 has brought many challenges and the incoming Year 11 students have had to adapt to significant changes in their teaching and learning at GCSE level. They have faced these challenges head on and staff will continue to support them fully as we prepare them for their final GCSE provision.

Key Stage 3 provision has continued at just one lesson per week this year. This has resulted in ongoing progression challenges for the department. This issue alongside the ongoing pandemic has reinforced this issue. Face to face teaching has enabled more equality for our students in Geography, with all students having the same opportunities to learn and grow in the subject. KS3

have made a positive effort and have settled back in to the classroom well, showing a positive attitude to their learning and they have had many positive experiences within lessons. The reduction of lessons at KS3 in our Foundation subjects, along with external challenges linked to the pandemic continue to be with us as we come to the end of this academic year.

Online provision was successful within the Geography Department obtaining high numbers of students engaging in live lessons.

Celebrations and Success

There are many examples where students have excelled including:

- Relatively high numbers of students engaging in on-line learning particularly in Year 11 and live lessons.
- TEAMS has been successful in enabling students to complete more relevant and engaging homework, particularly at KS3.
- Students are engaging in external Geographical competitions such as those run by COP26, the Climate Change Conference.

Response to Covid-19

The Geography Department has been active in embracing the on-line learning platform: Microsoft Teams. New resources continue to be produced and the in-class lessons now largely use the resources directly from the Teams platform. Synchronous or 'hybrid' lessons have been successfully deployed for Year 10 students now entering Year 11. They have the opportunity to access blended learning approaches and relevant examination materials. Booklets have been created to support our GCSE learners as they approach the final stretch in Year 11 next academic Year.

Future Events / Initiatives / Updates

The Geography Department continues to develop its on-line practices which could be used if the pandemic deteriorates. These can also be used to support face to face teaching and for homework.

Students at all stages will be actively encouraged to engage in external competitions and events linked to their Geographical education. This is to raise awareness of their local community and the wider World.

GCSE Fieldwork will run in the next academic year for Year 11 but with an adaptive approach. Further details will be available once the WJEC release further guidance in the summer.

The department will continue to look at running a Year 9 trip if guidance allows. This is to reinforce the Jeans and Beans topic studied and gives a direct path into the topics covered at GCSE.

More emphasis has been placed upon exam techniques paying particular attention to interpretation of command words which has been an identified weakness at GCSE.

DRAMA

Overview of Academic Year 2020-21

The past year has seen the department achieve another successful year of results with all learners achieving a pass at GCSE Drama. It was the first year for Media Studies and all learners achieved a pass grade at GCSE.

Schemes of learning were adapted to accommodate WJEC examination guidelines. The CDG process proved successful with all students having the opportunity to explore many aspects of the course. The students have demonstrated outstanding resilience throughout the past year and have immersed themselves within the nature of the subjects, displaying excellent teamwork and leadership skills.

During the year students have explored a variety of theatre styles and practical techniques which they have used to build on their Drama experiences.

Celebrations and Success

The Drama department had the opportunity to work alongside outside agencies to develop a short film using Drama students exploring the issues that surround adverse childhood experiences (ACES). The video was shared within the wider community and as a pioneer project for future developments.

Response to Covid-19

Drama practical has been adapted with the use of masks in the classroom and some Schemes of learning has been delivered through blended learning. Some excellent resources have been developed which will be used in future projects. A decision was made to cancel the School production of 'School of Rock' due to the pandemic and not being able to mix bubbles.

Future Events / Initiatives / Updates

Plans are already in motion for the next School production of 'Legally Blonde' to be performed June 2022. This will allow the school to showcase the expressive arts in all year groups whilst bringing together the community.

The Drama Department next year will once again be working with UHW in Cardiff taking part in the annual medical exams undertaking various role plays assisting the examining of the medical students. A selection of theatre trips will be organised as this is an essential part of the GCSE course – allowing our learners to experience magic of live theatre when restrictions are lifted.

MUSIC

Overview of Academic Year 2020-2021

The past year has continued to see students continue to embrace the new Schemes of Work at Key Stage 3 where the department continue to deliver 'Thematic' topics/units. All students from Year 7 – 11 have continued to enjoy Performing, Composing and Appraising over the year and our 'Super Challenge Award' has, once again, seen students strive to improve their

musical skills further.

Instrumental lessons continue to be enjoyed by a number of students, when in school with some students receiving their lessons virtually during lockdown. We pride ourselves on offering specialist tuition on Woodwind, Strings, Brass, Guitar and Percussion.

The Music department facilitated Year 5 and 6 Transition visits, during the year, where a cohort of 180 Year 5 and 120 Year 6 students enjoyed practical keyboard sessions on 'The Blues.'

Extra/extended-curricular activities were unable to take place due to restrictions this year. However, the Head boy and Deputy Head Girl did participate in the MTCBC Welsh Carol Service, which took place virtually last December. They performed a Woodwind Duet of a medley of Welsh Carols.

The department also participated in the virtual School Eisteddfod as well as contributing to the school's virtual Wellbeing day.

Currently, the Music and Drama departments have started preparations for our School Show, 'Legally Blonde', with enrichment-taster sessions taking place in bubbles after school as part of the Enrichment timetable.

Celebrations and Success

There are many examples of students that have achieved well in Music this academic year with grades currently ranging from A* – E.

- GCSE: 1A*, 1A, 3Bs, 5Cs and 2E grades were achieved by our students this year. 17% A*/A and 83% A* - C

- GCSE students did benefit from laptops and Sibelius software for composition at home during isolation due to Covid-19. This proved to be a valuable resource during this difficult time.

- The department are always looking to bolster numbers at KS4 and we are very disappointed that Music is not running in Year 10 and 11 currently.

Response to Covid-19

The department has followed all school, L.A. and Welsh Government guidance. Students continue to sanitize their hands before entering and in addition, tables, keyboards and computers are also cleaned before use every lesson. Unfortunately, students have not been able to sing or hold assemblies. Unfortunately all extra/extended curricular activities have been suspended until restrictions are lifted.

Throughout lockdown GCSE and KS3 students were engaged in a variety of online blended learning activities, including theory, practical performance and listening activities. This proved to be a great resource for student Wellbeing with the department receiving a number of commendations and positive comments.

Students continue to avail of the Peripatetic Music Tuition Service, free lessons are offered on Woodwind, Strings, Brass, Guitar and Percussion. Peripatetic/instrumental lessons also continued on line, as before, and currently all lessons have returned to face to face delivery.

The department is working very closely with the instrumental peripatetic teachers in order to promote and provide specialist tuition for our musicians. This will continue to raise standards within our subject area and aid valuable enrichment opportunities for our students, particularly those from more disadvantaged backgrounds.

Future Events / Initiatives / Updates

The department will continue to develop the 'Thematic' approach in preparation for the new curriculum for Key Stage 3 as part of the Expressive Arts Faculty.

They have a Cluster Christmas Carol Service planned for December where items will be provided by our Feeder Primary Schools. The department will continue to develop all extra/extended-curricular activities, workshops, public performances etc. when restrictions allow. Indeed this aspect of our subject has been greatly missed by the students and staff alike. The department will also continue to prepare students for all public performances and practical examinations, it is hoped that our 'Legally Blonde' School show can be staged next year.

The department is looking forward to contributing to all future Transition experiences, particularly for Instrumental and choral groups. A series of 'Meet, greet, perform, repeat' workshops will forge strong working and social cohesion with prospective students.

The department has moved rooms once again, with a new Music Room being located next to Room 48. The department will now be housed in the same block. The department is working hard to raise numbers of students opting for GCSE as for the last two years Music GCSE has not been offered to musicians despite some students opting for it. It is hoped that numbers will increase once more and that for next September, Music will be offered at GCSE once again.

ART

Overview of Academic Year 2020-21

The past year has seen new opportunities to extend and enhance Creativity in Art through blended learning and live lessons, with students excelling in their skills and potential.

Academic progress has seen students working hard to maintain good standards of achievement and commitment, with Year 7 exploring 'Pirates' in our cross-curricular themed project, Year 8 exploring 'Sea Conservation' and Year 9 exploring character drawing in our 'Movies' themed project. At KS4 students have completed an outstanding quality and standard of coursework in a short time-frame, and we are proud of their efforts.

Extra-curricular opportunities have included opportunities to extend students experiences in the Arts with Live Artist workshop sessions on TEAMS, and virtual tours of museums and galleries to support students' studies. There have also been opportunities for enrichment after-school, with various workshops, such as using clay on offer.

Celebrations and Success

There are many examples of students that have excelled this year in art with outstanding examples of home-learning across all Key stage 3 and 4. The department within the Expressive Arts are undertaking a virtual exhibition of student work at the end of term.

The department also celebrates provisional 2021 GCSE Art results this year with a potential 87.2% A* to C pass. They are also delighted with the student success in achieving 28.2% A/A* grades.

GCSE Photography provisional results 2021 are: 84.2% A* to C pass and 31.6% A*/A pass, which celebrates the success of the course in its first year of running. The department hopes that they will have opportunity for this course to return to the option blocks in the future.

The department participated in a community competition to design a logo for the re-branding of The Morlais Castle Inn in Merthyr. They were impressed with the entries and designs were so strong that they chose 3. There was an overall winner, Seren Jones, with one of her designs to be used for their main company design. They also chose another logo for their uniform and a third for merchandise.

Response to Covid-19

The department has continued to adapt blended learning in response to Covid 19. The aim has been to provide a teaching and learning model that contains all the elements of a classroom-based lesson such as modelling, explanation and support materials to ensure all students can succeed.

The department successes have included experimenting with digital drawing, creating digital portfolios and interactive teacher modelling using a visualiser. They have also used Tools available on Teams to feedback to students using audio, stickers and teacher comments and live Chat bar discussions.

They have adapted and developed opportunities to maintain high engagement in the Arts having participated in digital Well-being sessions, and transition events in school. They have also streamed live artist sessions to classrooms in collaboration with the Arts Council and Artes Mundi.

Future Events / Initiatives / Updates

The department is looking towards Networking with CSC partners to plan and prepare for the New Curriculum.

The department has continued to make links with Arts Council and Criw Celf, an Arts organisation that supports the Creative sector in schools. Our ambition is that live workshops and experiences will continue to be streamed into lessons for students to work alongside a Creative practitioner. They are also planning immersion trips and events for KS3 in line with the planning for the New Curriculum, and taking KS4 to a Careers event, where they can view and discuss careers opportunities with employees in the Creative sector and industry.

DESIGN & TECHNOLOGY

Overview of Academic Year 2020-21

The past year has seen the department achieving excellent examination results in Engineering / Food & Nutrition and Construction. Students have achieved higher than previous years and established courses are flourishing in relation to early indicators.

FSM students perform well in these subject areas, particularly in building and construction. High percentages of FSM students included a D&T based subject in their capped 9. In general across all three subjects there is very little difference in the average points gained by boys and girls. Girls in Engineering also have positive residuals and are achieving the highest grades.

The difficulties encountered have obviously centred on lockdown periods and non-face to face teaching. On return in April a small number of students failed to return to school and eight learners continued to operate through our student support system. Through a committed and diligent approach all learners were able to access and complete the NEA tasks as part of their assessment programme. This was particularly pleasing and highly noticeable in Construction where most students performed admirably in their practical activities.

Celebrations and Success

In Engineering, students were awarded grants and bursaries of £2000 to assist and continue with their studies in further education. Students have been involved in career partnerships with the RAF and the department also established excellent links with local business who now come into Cyfarthfa High School to conduct master classes in bricklaying and plastering.

For the fourth year running the department has secured additional funding to develop new STEM based projects. This money is now branching in to the Science Department to develop and invest into extra-curricular activities. This year they have advanced their exiting Year 8 drone programming of study where students are breaking down difficult scenarios and programming the flight of a drone to fulfil the brief.

This has also become an integral part of the transition programme where primary learners gain an insight into this contemporary study. Uptake in GCSE subjects remain particularly strong. Construction numbers have demanded that three teaching groups are now timetabled for 2021-22 (50

students), Engineering also has three (65 students) while Food & Nutrition demands two (41).

Response to Covid-19

The department has embraced blended learning with pleasing engagement and success. Teachers have developed a range of lessons that are video linked and draw upon a wide range of learning skills. Students are making better progress than at first as the system begins to bed in. Every effort has been made to ensure students experience a variety of topics and learning methods. Live lessons in food technology have proven to be a massive hit, with positive feedback from students and parents.

Practical lessons have commenced since the return in September. A comprehensive risk assessment has taken place to ensure all students and staff remain safe in the D&T environment. Sanitising of tools and machinery are conducted on a lesson to lesson basis and students are restricted to immediate working areas. In food technology students are responsible for their own ingredients and they are stored in a safe zone until in use. Cookers and work surfaces are deep cleaned after every practical session.

Future Events / Initiatives / Updates

External initiatives are conducted remotely and visits by local companies to conduct master classes will be reintroduced. The department has recently teamed up with “Inspiring Skills Excellence in Wales” to deliver a programme of activities that will raise awareness of vocational education and training and career pathways that will also impact positively on businesses in Wales. They are doing this by supporting vocational learning through Skills Competitions and the “Have a Go” initiative, to help encourage our young learners at Cyfarthfa to excel in the world of work.

Within the department we are working hard to ensure the feedback systems are as effective as possible. To date they have trialled and found positive gains in producing audio recorded files and assessment videos of student evidence particularly of a practical nature.

Currently staff are looking to add to the courses on offer at KS4. Supplementary courses in Construction and Engineering are being sourced to ensure all learners are challenged and enriched by the qualifications they select.

The focus for 2022 is to build partnerships with local construction and engineering companies. The aim is to generate accelerated apprenticeships whereby some of our vulnerable and disaffected students establish personal links with potential employers. Working closely with such partners and parents will develop a curriculum that goes beyond the qualification taught, but brings industrial standards of operation so that students are aligned to expectations of employees.

Report Summary

A summary report is available upon request. Governors are not required to distribute this lengthy document to every parent. It will be available on our website for parents and carers to view.

Until April 2013, the Welsh Government required the Governing Body of a school to hold a meeting for parents every two years or annually if parents requested it. However, new guidance has been issued by the Welsh Government, (section 94 of the School Standard and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013), in relation to meetings between the Governing Body and parents. The new arrangements and associated guidance (Guidance document no: 104/2013) came into force with effect from 4 May 2013.

In essence, the regulations no longer require a school to hold the annual meeting with parents unless such a meeting is requested by the parents of students attending the school. To date we have not received a petition to hold a parents' meeting pursuant to the above act. Further advice and details about how parents may go about requesting a meeting with the Governing Body is available at the school.

Review of Policies

Review of Policies for the academic year 2020-2021

POLICY DATE	LAST REVIEW	NEXT REVIEW
Access to Learning Policy	Sept 2020	Sept 2021
Accessibility Plan	Sept 2020	Sept 2021
Admission	Sept 2020	Sept 2021
ALN Policy	Sept 2020	Sept 2021
Anti-Bullying Policy	Sept 2020	Sept 2021
Attendance Policy	Sept 2020	Sept 2021
Behaviour Policy	Sept 2020	Sept 2021
Charging Policy	Sept 2020	Sept 2021
Curriculum Policy	Sept 2020	Sept 2021
Equality Policy	Sept 2020	Sept 2021
Teacher's Pay Policy	Sept 2020	Sept 2021
Feedback and Marking Policy	Sept 2020	Sept 2021

Freedom of Information	Sept 2020	Sept 2021
GDPR Data Protection & Accessing Records	Sept 2020	Sept 2021
Privacy Notice	Sept 2020	Sept 2021
Guidance on the use of Social Media Policy	Sept 2020	Sept 2021
Site Security Policy	Sept 2020	Sept 2021
Learning and Teaching Policy	Sept 2020	Sept 2021
Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy	Sept 2020	Sept 2021
Sex Education Policy	Sept 2020	Sept 2021
Substance Misuse Policy	Sept 2020	Sept 2021
Staff Data Storage Policy	Sept 2020	Sept 2021
Teaching & Learning Policy	Sept 2020	Sept 2021
Toilet Policy	Sept 2020	Sept 2021
Transition Policy	Sept 2020	Sept 2021
GDPR Privacy Policy	Sept 2020	Sept 2021
Uniform Policy	Sept 2020	Sept 2021
Whistleblowing Policy	Sept 2020	Sept 2021

Healthy lifestyles were supported through high levels of participation in traditional sport and other sport and recreation activities including sport, drama, music and art.

An encouraging number of students have completed the theory aspects of the Duke of Edinburgh Award, effectively promoting healthy living and wellbeing. However, due to Covid-19 restrictions students have been unable to complete the exhibition section of the award.

PERMA Implementation

At Cyfarthfa High School, we always place the wellbeing of students and staff at the heart of our core business. We want the very best for all our students and will make it our absolute priority to ensure all students are happy, safe and flourish. Therefore, there is a strong approach to positive psychology to help all students achieve their potential.

An initial PERMA team of staff was selected and has been working hard to prepare Cyfarthfa High school for the full implementation of the PERMA model from September 2020 to support the wellbeing needs of all students and staff at a whole school level. This is a new proactive approach to assessing, personalising and supporting the needs of all students, not just those students who initially present as requiring more support and intervention.

We are very mindful that wellbeing has to be high on the agenda. Wellbeing is not a fixed concept and will fluctuate for all as the days, weeks and years progress. We recognise that wellbeing is everyone's responsibility to support and improve the wellbeing of others. Therefore, the PERMA approach will become immersed in everyday life at Cyfarthfa and across the community.

We are pleased to announce that we are the first school in Wales to launch PERMA at a whole school level and we aim to be sector leading in this provision over the next one to three years, contributing towards our vision of becoming the best school in Wales.

Students in Year 7 to 9 follow a new curriculum package fully dedicated to their own personal wellbeing for two lessons a fortnight which will have a significant impact on their wellbeing and allow them to achieve their potential. In addition, the PERMA approach will be fully embedded in all lessons, pastoral time and the culture and ethos of the whole school.

We recognise that a good life for one student is not necessarily a good life for another as there are many different routes to a flourishing life. Therefore, by adopting the PERMA approach at a whole school level we will be able to support and enable our students to flourish, make informed choices to live a more fulfilling life which is aligned with their values and interests. This will be interlinked with all other aspects of wellbeing support such as ELSA, Thrive, health and wellbeing support to provide a full package of support to all students. All students will have the option to take a PERMA survey every term which will identify any support required.

The PERMA model represents the five core elements of happiness and wellbeing: Positive emotions, Engagement, Positive relationships, Meaning, Accomplishments.

Community Links

In normal circumstances, the school offers a comprehensive range of activities, both curricular and extra-curricular for all students and cluster students. However, understandably lots of activities have been affected but we are proud to have been able to offer a timetable of wellbeing activities as part of the blended learning timetables. We have strong links with a multitude of organisations who support these activities which include academic institutions, creative industries, and a range of work based organisations.

A number of community organisations including the police and the health service continue to work with the school and provide inputs into Personal and

Social Education, Skills Challenge and the broader school curriculum. The school has also maintained and fully utilised its excellent links with Careers Wales to continue to provide a diverse range of Careers and Education Guidance Services, to students in all Key Stages.

In our bid to raise standards and aspirations of young people, we are recruiting past students or parents/carers to create an Alumni cohort to support our students, share their experiences and stories to success. If you would like to nominate yourself to create the Alumni cohort, please contact H. Canney on 01685 725222.

We are honoured to be working with Martin Gallimore, A465 Community project lead to create some exciting STEM opportunities for all our students.

When we are able to return to normal, we are looking forward to opening the school to parents/carers and community members for community coffee mornings and consultation events and further develop community links in and around Merthyr. We also aim to re-establish and extend our Parent Teacher Association (PTA) / Friends of the School and outline a clear direction with this to create further opportunities for students, parents/carers and the community. If you would like to become involved in the PTA / Friends of the School then please contact D. Lewis on 01685 725222.

Term Times 2021-22

Schools will notify parents and guardians of inset days well in advance. If you Require further details, please contact the school on 01685 725222.

Summer Holidays	21 July – 1 September 2021
First Day of School	2 September 2021
Autumn Term Holidays	25 – 29 October 2021
Winter Holidays	20 December – 3 January 2022
Spring Half Term Holidays	21 – 25 February 2022
Spring Holidays	11 – 22 April 2022
Summer Half Term Holidays	25 July 2022 -

In Conclusion

We hope that our Governor's Annual Report 2020-2021 has allowed you all an insight into the success, achievements and challenges faced by the students, staff and governors at Cyfarthfa High School. We thank you for your support throughout the year and look forward to working with you in the future.

