

Headteacher's Blog – July 2023

As I approach the end of my first full year as Headteacher of Cyfarthfa High School may I take this opportunity to thank the staff, governors, teachers and students alike for an unforgettable chapter in my career. The welcome and support I have received has been truly incredible from right across the school, council and borough as a whole. A very special thanks to my amazing staff and leadership team.

Looking back on the last term alone, I remain continually impressed with the range of activities where our students don't just participate but also excel. There has been a phenomenal amount of sporting success, particularly where students are involved in extra-curricular activities.



Tabitha Ryan is our newly qualified FAW Level 1 Referee.

Samara-Grace Williams Hamer & Julia Stachowska danced in the British National Dance Championships in Blackpool.

Megan Quirk came first in the 800m event at Aberdare Athletics and Nia Bow won gold and silver medals in the

karate championships in Ireland.

Katie James won the Under15 shot putt at the Inter Squadron Athletics at Leckwith Stadium in Cardiff. Good luck to Brooke Evans and Ella Burgess who will be competing in the dance World Cup this summer in Portugal.

I also have to express my admiration for Safiya Purcell on winning a Rubik's Cube competition by completing the puzzle in 50 seconds. This is an unbelievable achievement – I

never once managed to complete a Rubik's Cube in my lifetime let alone in less than a minute – and believe me, I've tried!

On a snow day when the school was closed, I accompanied the head boy and girl on a trip to Westminster at the invitation of Gerald Jones MP. We received a private guided tour of both the House of Lords and the Commons which was fascinating and



were able to view the Prime Ministers Question Time where Mr Jones actually asked a question of the PM.

Following visits to Oxford and Cambridge Universities in previous terms, members of the more able and talented students in The Brilliant Club graduated through the Seren Network at Cardiff University. I was very impressed by the confidence and knowledge our students displayed when discussing a wide range of heavy-weight topics which they presented to their peer group. The topics ranged from energy costs in the future to whether we should have a universal language. The content, ideas, research and presentation belied their ages and were amongst the most impressive I've seen in my teaching career.



The school production of Matilda was undoubtedly the single best production I have seen in my twenty years of teaching. The cast was superb! Congratulations to Rhian Stokes Thomas and Jo James for producing such an exceptional show that will live long in the memory. I've yet to decide where I can find "Chokey"!



Once again, we're involved in the Peace Mission project and welcomed visitors from Romania and Turkey. They experienced time with the Cyfarthfa students and thoroughly enjoyed the visit to Big Pit in Blaenavon. The bonds of friendship has strengthened still further with our global community of friends.

I'm also delighted to announce that our Student Council has been invited to work with Careers Wales on discussing and shaping the next generation of 14-16 qualifications in Wales. It is really important that our learners get to have their

say on how their successors will benefit from a secondary school education to gain qualifications for the future.

Students enjoyed two successful ski trips to France and they all had a fantastic time. I certainly could not have afforded a ski trip when I was in school so it was wonderful to see so many of our students enjoying themselves. Details are now available for next year's ski trip.



Well done to Year 11 on their hard work through the term as they sat their GCSE examinations. Congratulations to them as their behavior has been exemplary and the way in which they conducted themselves was exceptional. The results will be announced on 24 August and we will be open from 8.30am to meet with students and parents.



I was very proud of those students from the Science Department who enjoyed further visits to Switzerland with a special visit to the CERN Hadron Collider and learned more about the origins of our universe. It was also a delight to learn of the fun had by other students on their trip to France for a few days at Disneyland Paris. Key Stage 3 Welsh Department students also went on the annual pilgrimage to the Urdd campus at Llangrannog which is always a real treat.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank parents and students for their support with our mobile phone ban enforcement. This has improved engagement in lessons and socializing during breaks.

We have invested in a brand new state-of-the-art CCTV system for the entire school.

Collectively both policies are designed to help safeguard our students and ensure their experience in Cyfarthfa High School is an extremely positive one.

Looking towards the future and we will welcome 200 new students to the school in September. We have successfully held a series of Transition Programme Days for primary school students to visit Cyfarthfa High School and learn about how we operate before they in turn become students themselves.

This has been an amazing year and I look forward to the future!