

Parent newsletter:

Lower school

Letter from Mrs Retallick, Headteacher

I have the pleasure in writing to you at the end of a very busy half term. It has been a half term of celebration, hard work and embedding our routines from last year. New routines and high expectations to ensure we make the most of every learning opportunity in each school day. I have enclosed our annual governors report to parents for your reference.

I am delighted to share with you that our Deputy Headteacher Mr Prygodzicz secured his own headship last week and will be leaving us at Christmas to become the new Headteacher at Ferndale Community School and we wish him the very best for the future. I will keep you updated on his replacement.

As you know, we want the very best for all of our children and our rules; be ready, be respectful and be responsible are embedded in all of our routines and actions. In light of pupil feedback, we are launching a refreshed approach to homework after half term and welcome your support with this. Further details on this are available later in the newsletter.

As we move into the months with more challenging weather, I would be grateful if you would encourage your child to attend school every day as we know that attendance has a significant impact on academic achievement. The NHS Wales website is particularly helpful with information about different ailments and illnesses and has a specific box with useful information about whether school attendance is advised with different conditions.

Ready to learn has launched this autumn term with good success to date. Listening to pupils, it is clear that this strategy has had a positive impact on the amount of learning taking place in lessons and has set a clear system that all understand well. We will continue to monitor and evaluate this provision, working alongside pupils to do so. My thanks for your support in this.

Have a wonderful half term break.

Kirsty Retallick

Letter from Mrs Catherine Waithaka, Head of Lower School

I can't believe that we are already at the half term break of the new academic year. It was wonderful to welcome back familiar faces in September and of course many new faces just embarking on their Nantgwyn journey. We have had an amazing start to the new academic year; many pupils have been enjoying the benefits of the specialist provision we have to offer, in particular the cooking rooms. Year 1 have been to make bread and the nursery to make Halloween cookies. Year 1 and Year 2 have been out into the local community exploring the delights of autumn and year 2 also wowed our parents with a harvest ceremony in the local church.

We have had many exciting visitors into Lower School, namely the Fire Service and our local PCSO and local author Mrs. Phelps who brought alive one of the Lower Schools most favourite books, 'Room on the Broom'. New this year we introduced the 'Weekly Wonder' to the Lower School. Every Wednesday all of the Lower School have a celebration assembly and one pupil from each class is awarded as the 'Weekly Wonder' for work, attitude, showing resilience by overcoming challenges. The pride on the pupils' faces when they have been selected, is second to none. If the children achieve a certificate, a commendation or overcome a challenge, we would love to hear about it and share this in our weekly celebration. Please send them in.

As always, we cannot underestimate the importance of reading; reading little and often. All pupils should read every day, including throughout the holiday. Encourage your children to read around them, recognise language, words and numbers in their environment. Every day presents with a new opportunity to learn, to question and to explore. As staff, we are currently working on the dates for all of our school Christmas events and this will be communicate to parents shortly after half term. We wish all our pupils a wonderful, safe and restful half term break and we look forward to seeing you in November.

Best wishes

Catherine Waithaka

Christmas activities

We have a number of Christmas activities planned this year– final dates of these will come out to you shortly after half term.

What are we learning this term?

The table below gives an outline of the areas that pupils are learning about from nursery through to year 8. Each year group explores a question in a number of different ways, through a range of different subjects.

Year group	Theme
Nursery	Mr Men and Little Miss
Reception	Magical me
Year one	Our little human planet
Year two	Mirror, mirror on the wall...there is a leader in us all
Year three	Ripples How do status, roles and role models influence us and how do my actions
Year four	What makes us human?
Year five	Who am I and who is everybody else?
Year six	How does conflict affect us?
Year seven	What is my contribution to making the world a better place?
Year eight	What is my contribution to making the world a better place?

School uniform—lower school

Minimum uniform expectation

- Unbadged royal blue or navy sweatshirt or cardigan
- Unbadged white or royal blue polo shirt
- Grey formal bottoms or dress - trousers, skirt, pinafore or tartan skirt*
- Dark tights
- Black outdoor shoes

Dark colour coat

Optional uniform

All other parts of the school uniform are available for the lower school pupils including badged sweatshirt or cardigan, badged polo shirt, white shirt and school tie, tartan skirt, blazer and badged school bag.

PE

- Black or Navy shorts, jogging bottoms or leggings
- Royal blue or white t-shirt

Trainers

*Summer uniform can include tailored grey shorts, summer gingham navy or blue dress, white badged poloshirt.

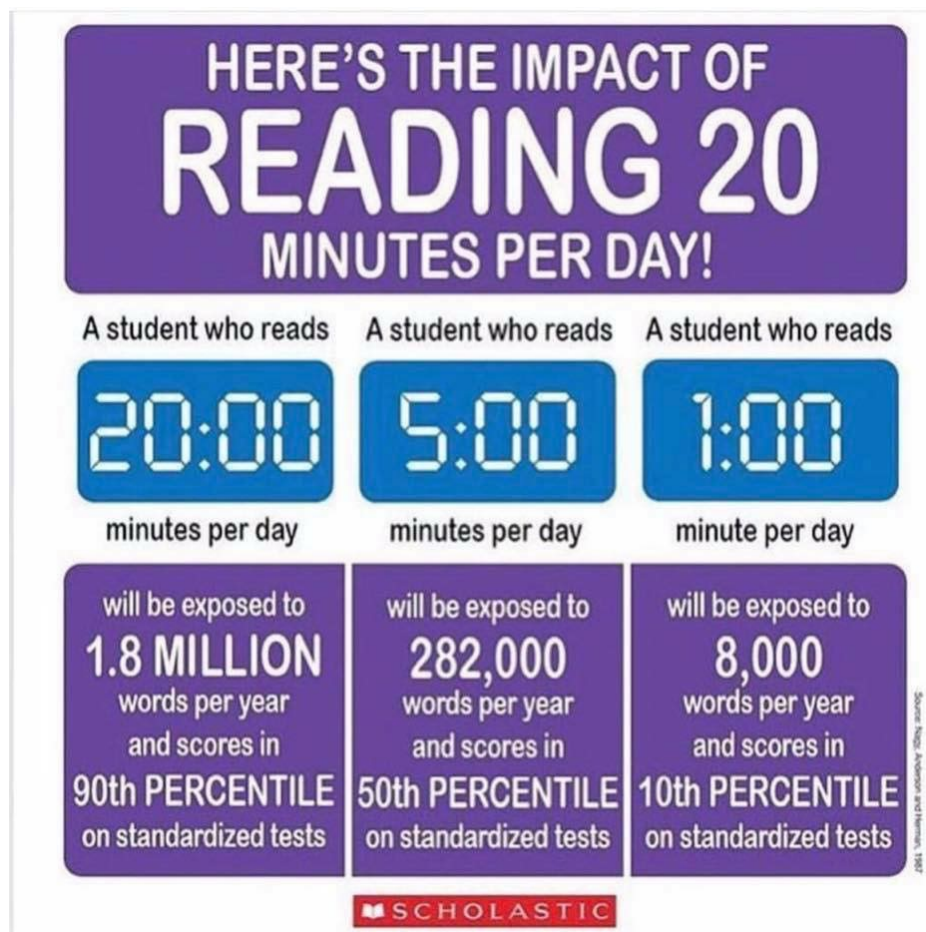
We will continue to be vigilant in ensuring our pupils wear their uniform correctly to engender a feeling of community and sense of belonging. Can I stress that only grey formal bottoms and not black are acceptable.

Thank you for your continued support with this matter.

Reading at Ysgol Nantgwyn

At Ysgol Nantgwyn we are entirely committed to ensuring that, as a minimum expectation, all pupils are able to read at their chronological age. This is a core focus for all staff at the school as we know that when pupils are able to read in line with their chronological age, they are able to access all areas of the school curriculum and thrive in their learning. Over the course of the first year in Ysgol Nantgwyn a wide range of reading methods and interventions were implemented. These have been incredibly successful with many more pupils reading at their chronological age this September compared to September 2018. We have invested in Group Guided Reading for the Lower School so that pupils learn to take ownership for their reading and share the experience with their friends on a daily basis. In Gwyn Middle School we have invested over £1000 in new reading materials and appointed library monitors to create a positive reading culture that will stay with pupils throughout their education. In Nant, we have heavily invested in young adult fiction for the Library Resource Centre which is now opened and manned every lunchtime for pupils. Upper School also now has a supply of reading materials that can be used during registration time, should a pupil not have their own reading book with them. Reading takes place for Upper School pupils every Friday in registration.

This is a fantastic start to developing a reading culture and you are able to support this development at home. This infographic shows what an impact just 20 minutes of reading a day has on academic achievements.



Homework

Ysgol Nantgywn staff have been working to develop a revised homework policy across the school. The new policy is based on literacy, numeracy and the development of essential skills. At Ysgol Nantgywn, homework activities are an important part of our home/school partnership and all pupils are expected to take part in a variety of homework tasks to enhance and support both their work in class and their progress in school. The homework will develop interest and engage pupils, as well as providing them with practise that they need to become secure in their learning and development of everyday skills. We would very much appreciate your support in encouraging your child to complete all homework set.

Lower School

- **Reading** – Each teacher will provide at least one reading book per week for pupils to read. The day provided is based on the reading groups and the class teacher will inform parents of the days. If a pupil finishes the book, then they are encouraged to bring the book back in and obtain a new one. There is no limit to reading!!

- **Spelling/phonics and mathematics** – Every Friday, tasks will provided to all pupils. This should be handed back in the following week.

- **Half termly homework menus** – Each half term pupils will be provided with a homework book/folder and suggested homework tasks to develop everyday skills, such as telling the time. Pupils will be expected to complete at least three of the homework tasks over a half term and record this in their homework books/folders to discuss with their class teacher.