

PARENT NEWSLETTER



June 2023



A NOTE FROM THE HEADTEACHER

Another very, very busy period of time for us in Ysgol Nantgwyn. Our year 11s have just finished their qualification assessments and examinations and will go to their prom this week before starting that period of anticipation in waiting for the results and their next steps. Similarly, pupils across the school have been working industriously to progress their learning in terms of different faculty areas but also against the four purposes. Pupils have a developing understanding of what these are and how they inform our curriculum, teaching, learning and experiences. As a reminder, the four statements set the purpose of the curriculum across Wales and our provision should seek to develop young people who are:

- ambitious, capable learners who are ready to learn throughout their lives
- enterprising, creative contributors who are ready to play a full part in life and work
- ethical, informed citizens who are ready to be citizens of Wales and the world
- healthy, confident individuals who are ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society.

When thinking how to develop pupils in this way, it is important that teachers consider not only what they learn but how they learn it. This may look a little different from class to class and pupil to pupil and this is in recognition that all our pupils' needs are different. In this edition, you will read information from each of our five faculties about what and how pupils learn. I hope that this information is helpful to you.

There is further information on the updated school website in the curriculum section for anyone who wants to read further and, should you have any questions, please get in touch with your child's school using the email addresses at the bottom of this letter.

Our Estyn report will be published on the 29th June. This will be shared with you in full, along with a parent information from Estyn directly. The report will be shared with all pupils as well and we will also be sharing 'snippets' in assemblies and across our social media channels. The report is very positive and recognises how, as a team, we work together as pupils, parents, staff, governors and the community to provide worthwhile and purposeful opportunities for our children.

We have completed our consultation on school uniform with pupils and parents and will be communicating the outcomes shortly. As with all secondary and through schools, uniform is an important part of our school identity. We have further widened options to ensure that pupils can choose which they would feel more comfortable wearing perhaps throughout the year or at different points in the year. We have also ensured that there is no expectation for pupils to wear Ysgol Nantgwyn 'badged' items although they may do so if they wish. Following consultation, from September, we will also be making the site a stationary site during break and lunchtimes; this means that cars will not be permitted onto or off site at these times. Should you need to collect your child or drop something off, we will make arrangements with you to enable this.

With warm wishes,

Ms Laura Morris
Headteacher



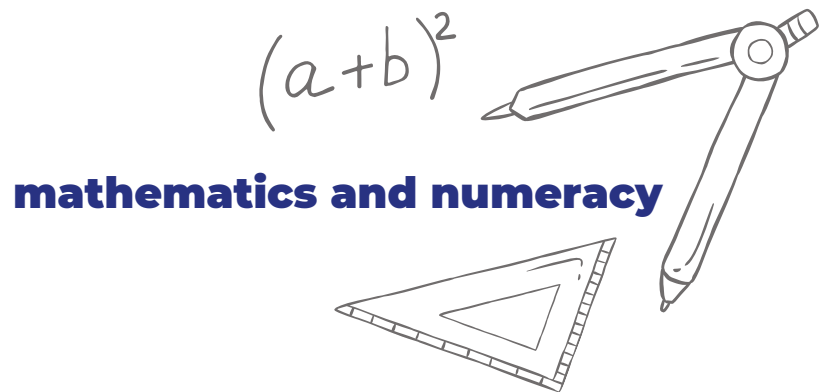
Newsletter focus item:

Faculty edition

Teaching and learning experiences at Ysgol Nantgwyn fall under five faculties. These faculties work together to deliver and evaluate rich experiences for all pupils.

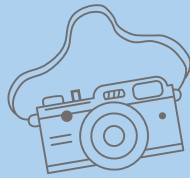
In this newsletter you will see an overview of each of the five faculties, meeting the staff members, finding out what learning looks like in these areas and some useful tips to support your child at home.

Our five faculties are:





languages and culture



Languages and culture is a faculty that celebrates the diversity across language skills and strands of the expressive arts. It gives our pupils a voice, a way to express themselves and communicate with others. We build knowledge and understanding of our own culture and the culture of others, creating informed individuals with a curiosity and empathy for the world around them.

Within faculty pupils engage in lessons across the following areas: Welsh, Spanish, performing arts, drama, music, photography and art.

Who are the staff?

C Pitcock - head of faculty
K Pearce - deputy head of faculty
A Thomas - deputy head of faculty
M. Morse - Spanish teacher
L. Deavall - Welsh teacher
L. Williams - Welsh teacher
J. Mesquita - Spanish teacher
S. Waldie- middle school teacher
P. Baker- lower school teacher

What does learning look like in lower school, middle school and upper school?

In lower school, our pupils thrive on exploration of creativity, pupils learn through a process driven curriculum that validates every part of the process. Mistakes are learning opportunities, and pupils are encouraged to be brave in their decisions, to problem solve and collaborate to discover new ways of working. With a focus on oracy skills, languages are developed through repetition and carefully planned lessons that build the patterns of language in an accessible and effective way. Welsh culture is celebrated and pupils are given opportunities to develop their understanding of national identity.

In middle school pupils are encouraged to refine their work, building on the experiences built in lower school. Pupils follow a curriculum that is, again, process driven. Pupils cover four assessment strands in expressive arts lessons by covering these strands the whole creative process is validated.

In languages pupils begin to develop writing and reading skills as well as a continued focus of oral skills and vocabulary. Pupils follow a curriculum that develops their use of tenses across Welsh and Spanish whilst building on their Welsh culture knowledge and understanding.

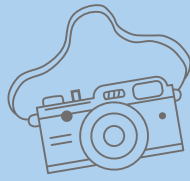
In upper school pupils follow a curriculum that is designed to prepare and support their qualifications. In year 9 pupils start building the skills and knowledge they need to make choices going forward. Spanish, art, photography, performing arts and music are optional subjects at GCSE level and Welsh is a core subject for all pupils.

In year 10 and 11 GCSE specifications are followed to build the skills and knowledge needed to succeed.



languages and culture





What approaches are taken in pupils' learning?

In expressive arts pupils across the curriculum follow a process driven approach, this means that every stage of their creative development is validated and assessed. The strands of this assessment fall under the following headings: explore and experience, create and engage, respond and refine, reflect and evaluate. In language lessons pupils learn through language games, repetition, song, recognising patterns in languages to strengthen their oracy, reading and writing skills.

Qualification specifications and links to past papers

Subject	Qualification specification link	Link to past papers/exemplars
Welsh	https://www.wjec.co.uk/media/h03dhvqm/wjec-gcse-welsh-second-lang-spec-2017-e-15-11-2021.pdf	https://www.wjec.co.uk/qualifications/welsh-second-language-gcse/#tab_pastpapers
Spanish	https://www.wjec.co.uk/media/b53fzubj/wjec-gcse-spanish-spec-from-2016-e-19-11-21.pdf	https://www.wjec.co.uk/qualifications/spanish-gcse/#tab_pastpapers
Art and photography	https://www.wjec.co.uk/media/a1vldbjn/0-gcse-art-and-design-specification-for-teaching-from-2016-wales-only-e.pdf	http://lightboxresource.co.uk/assessment/ao-checklists-at-a-glance/
Performing arts	https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/btec-firsts/performing-arts-2012-nqf.html	

What websites are recommended to support pupils' with their learning at home?

These websites are all helpful for languages learning: [Quizlet](#), [Duolingo](#) and [Linguascope](#).

Welsh GCSE [assessment materials](#) and [resources](#).

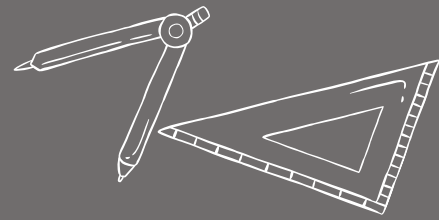
Spanish GCSE [resources](#).

[Expressive arts support](#).

[WJEC GCSE art resources](#).



$$(a+b)^2$$



The faculty of mathematics and numeracy consists of mathematics, numeracy, financial education, enterprise and business studies.

The study of mathematics is essential to all aspects of life. As well as being an important tool that informs the numeracy skills required for day to day living, it also strengthens important problem solving skills that can be applied to all situations. As such, good mathematics skills will support a pupil's learning and progress across the curriculum. We also aim to inspire a curiosity in mathematics as a subject, so that pupils can enjoy studying it and feel a sense of accomplishment with their success. Mathematics and numeracy is taught as a series of topics based around the strands of number, algebra, shape and data handling as well as through a thematic approach.

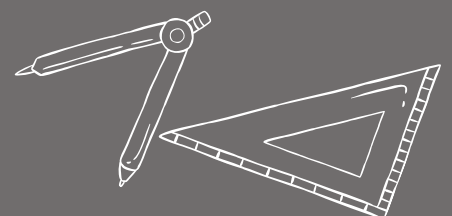
Who are the staff?

- S. Legg- head of faculty
- L. Lawyer- deputy head of faculty
- M. Bamber- deputy head of faculty
- I. Moore- mathematics teacher
- T. Parry- mathematics teacher
- D. Stanton- middle school teacher
- J. Griffiths- lower school teacher
- R. Dowling- lower school teacher
- L. Goodwin- progress coach

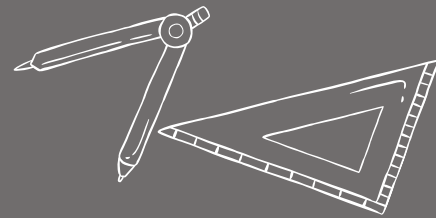
What does learning look like in lower school, middle school and upper school?

Mathematics and numeracy is taught in lower school so that pupils can investigate and develop their early understanding of number, place value, measures, shape and movement through practical experiences. They sort, match, sequence and compare objects and events as well as explore and create simple patterns and relationships. Throughout their learning, pupils present their work in a variety of ways. In middle school (yrs 4-6) pupils are taught both by mathematical specialists and by their class teacher. In their lessons with mathematical specialists, pupils develop their skills and methods in number, measure, algebra, shape, data handling and movement in a way that is supporting them to be successful as they transition into year 7 and beyond. These mathematical skills are then reinforced through a thematic approach with their class teacher. In upper school, pupils study for two distinct GCSE qualifications: mathematics and mathematics-numeracy.

$$(a+b)^2$$



$$(a+b)^2$$



Financial education aims to equip young people with the knowledge, skills and confidence to manage their money well. Through real life scenarios, it ensures that learners grow to understand their attitudes to risk and become aware of their own behaviour and emotions when making financial decisions. Financial education begins in nursery, where pupils learn about what money is, and continues through to year 11 where pupils discuss payslips, financial risks and compound interest.

Enterprise is taught in years 9 and 10 to provide opportunities for young people to develop essential skills and develop the mindset to make the most of everyday opportunities and challenges. Being enterprising is something that can be applied to all aspects of life and work.

Business studies is taught in years 10 and 11 as a vocational qualification giving pupils the opportunity to develop their understanding of key aspects of the business world including branding, promotion and business planning. These skills are then extended with pupils having the opportunity to analyse local businesses and explore their own business ideas.

Subject	Qualification specification link
Mathematics and mathematics numeracy	https://www.wjec.co.uk/qualifications/mathematics-gcse/#tab_keydocuments
Business studies	https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/btec-firsts/business-2012-nqf.html
Enterprise	https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/myskills/btec-enterprise-skills/enterprise-skills.html
Financial education	https://www.libf.ac.uk/

What websites are recommended to support pupils' with their learning at home?

These websites are recommended for lower school:

[Top marks](#)

[ICT games](#)

These websites are recommended for middle school:

[Practice for times tables](#)

[Top marks](#)

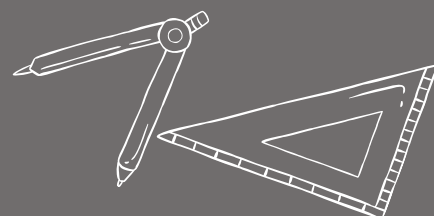
These websites are recommended for upper school:

[YN youtube channel](#)

[Lots of past papers and examination style questions](#)

[Videos, questions and solutions](#)

$$(a+b)^2$$





science and technology



Within the science and technology a wide range of subjects are taught, these include: biology, chemistry, physics, science, engineering, food and nutrition, design technology, information technology, digital competence.

Science and technology underpin all aspects of everyday life. From the moment a pupil enters our school they will experience the highest standards in science and technology. We want them to do the very best they can, to meet and excel their targets. It is our aim for them to achieve this through their journey with us.

This link is to the BBC bitesize homepage and from here you can access information for a range of subjects.

This website provides lots of information for science and technology.

This website is all about coding for pupils in lower and middle school.

Resources for GCSE biology

Resources for GCSE chemistry.

Resources for GCSE physics.

Resources for GCSE food and nutrition.

Resources for GCSE digital competence.

This website allows pupils to build their own past paper using GCSE questions.

Who are the staff?

A. Daley - head of faculty
N. Richings - deputy head of faculty
A. Evans - biology and science teacher
K. O'Reilly - biology and science teacher
H. Vaughan - progress coach
S. Baker - science and technology technician
T. Rooke - science and technology technician
M. Francis - middle school teacher
C. Garley - lower school teacher
M. Price - lower school teacher

What does learning look like in lower school, middle school and upper school?

In lower school they develop the WHY? – exploring their own questions within our faculty, testing their theories and developing their scientific nature. This is taught through a STEM approach using the lower school themes.

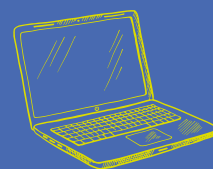
In middle school they develop the HOW? – exploring the foundations of science and technology through investigations and hands-on experiences to test their theories. This is taught through a STEM approach, integrating key themes across all disciplines.

In upper school it is all about APPLICATION of KNOWLEDGE – pupils have the skills, knowledge and confidence to apply all their science and technology skills to the wider world and their examinations to enable them to truly become an “EACH” learner. Within science pupils study the three subjects: biology, chemistry and physics at GCSE level. Some pupils follow a bespoke curriculum into year 10 and year 11 following two or one of the sciences. In year 9 pupils are given the opportunity to gain a qualification in information and communication technology (ICT) within lessons. Pupils have the opportunities to experience a wide range of design technology (DT) subjects across the year to allow them to make informed decisions about their option choices. Pupils can opt for both DT and ICT based subjects and gain qualifications in these after two years.



science and technology





What approaches are taken in pupils' learning?

Within the faculty the five major approaches to learning are developed, these are:

1. Constructivist - this is where pupils create their own understanding of the World around them.
2. Collaborative - here pupils work together to gain a greater understanding of the information within science and technology.
3. Integrative - within science and technology this approach allows pupils to with an make connections between the current topic they're learning and other topics they'll come across at different stages of the curriculum
4. Reflective - pupils reflect upon their learning and using teacher feedback develop it further.
5. Inquiry based learning - pupils are encouraged to engage in exploration, investigation, research and study. It begins with presenting questions, scenarios or problems that require critical thinking to solve.

Qualification specifications and links to past papers

Subject	Qualification specification link	Link to past papers
Biology	https://www.wjec.co.uk/qualifications/biology-gcse/#tab_keydocuments	https://www.wjec.co.uk/qualification/s/biology-gcse/#tab_pastpapers
Chemistry	https://www.wjec.co.uk/qualifications/chemistry-gcse/#tab_keydocuments	https://www.wjec.co.uk/qualification/s/chemistry-gcse/#tab_pastpapers
Physics	https://www.wjec.co.uk/qualifications/physics-gcse/#tab_keydocuments	https://www.wjec.co.uk/qualification/s/physics-gcse/#tab_pastpapers
Digital competence	https://www.wjec.co.uk/qualifications/digital-technology-gcse/#tab_keydocuments	No past papers yet as new subject for examination in 2023.
Food and nutrition	https://www.wjec.co.uk/qualifications/food-and-nutrition-gcse/#tab_keydocuments	https://www.wjec.co.uk/qualification/s/food-and-nutrition-gcse/#tab_pastpapers
Engineering	https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/btec-firsts/engineering-2012-nqf.html	https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/btec-firsts/engineering-2012-nqf.coursematerials.html#%2FfilterQuery=category:Pearson-UK:Category%2FExternal-assessments&filterQuery=category:Pearson-UK:Document-Type%2FQuestion-paper





English, literacy and communication



Within the English faculty, we aim to engage and challenge our pupils with a curriculum that is shaped to explore and develop our reading, writing and oracy skills at every possible opportunity. This is to ensure that when our pupils leave us, they are able to read, write and speak in an effective and meaningful way that supports them to achieve the best possible results and therefore, becoming successful individuals when they leave us. At KS4, we also teach creative media production as a vocational qualification.

Who are the staff?

K. James - head of faculty
C. Davies - deputy head of faculty
J. Thomas-Hartley - English teacher
L. Davies - English teacher
M. Hinton - English teacher
A. Jones - lower school teacher
A. Basini-James - lower school teacher
K. Jones - progress coach

What does learning look like in lower school, middle school and upper school?

In lower school, our pupils focus on developing the first stages of reading, writing and oracy. We also follow a phonics programme that has a sensory focus to ensure that our pupils are learning and using their new sounds. Our curriculum has been refined to ensure that our pupils have the opportunity to explore the world and ask questions about it, whilst focusing on the progression of their reading, writing and oracy skills.

In middle school, we continue to develop our skills from lower. Our curriculum explores a range of topics that continue to focus on raising the standards of reading, writing and oracy. We have built key speaking and listening assessment tasks into our curriculum in order to develop confidence ahead of upper school.

In upper school, our pupils have an enriched curriculum that focuses on developing literature and language skills to ensure that they are fully prepared for their GCSEs. In year 9, for example, we look at the topic graffiti and we explore a range of artists including a local artist from the Rhondda! In year 10, we focus on the development of our pupils' literature skills through studying key texts such as Macbeth and An Inspector Calls. Once pupils are in year 11, again, they have the opportunity to learn about current events and topics, whilst still ensuring they are fully prepared for their GCSEs. An example of this is our topic on 'Women in Sport' where we focused on the recent Lionesses' win! In our creative media production lessons, we explore how media texts highlight representations of key groups and create a practical product based on a task set by the examination board.



English, literacy and communication





What approaches are taken in pupils' learning?

In the English faculty, we consider all pupil needs to ensure that engagement and challenge in lessons are high. We do this through careful consideration of topics and our lessons. We consider individual pupil needs in our lessons and through this, we adapt our lessons to ensure that all pupils are able to access the work, whilst still having a high level of challenge. Oracy is a key part of our learning where we encourage pupils to discuss the work or topic prior to the reading and/or writing tasks. We pride ourselves on our positive relationships with pupils and we regularly assess to monitor where our pupils are and where they need to be by the end of the year.

Qualification specifications and links to past papers

Subject	Qualification specification link	Link to past papers
English literature	WJEC GCSE English Literature Specification Wales 2015 (24-10-14).	GCSE English literature
English language	WJEC GCSE English Language Specification 2015 (24-10-14) - Branded	GCSE English language
Creative media production	Specification - Pearson BTEC Level 1/Level 2 Tech Award in Creative Media Production 2022	BTEC Tech Awards Creative Media Production (2022).

What websites are recommended to support pupils' with their learning at home?

To support your learning at home, you could visit the following websites:

[This website](#) can support learning across any year group

[Here](#), you will find key information linked to English language

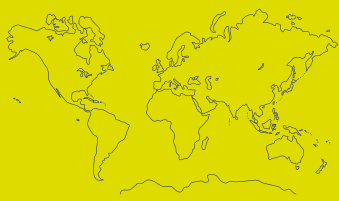
[Here](#), you will find key information linked to English literature

[This website](#) supports learning across English literature and language for upper school pupils

[These videos](#) support our upper school pupils who are studying literature

[This website](#) offers support and information linked to the BTEC qualification, Creative Media Production





life



The Faculty of Life covers the humanities and well-being areas of learning. The faculty works together collaboratively to develop caring and ethical young individuals who make positive life choices which will lead to healthy lifestyles. We strongly believe that healthy lifestyles lead to healthy minds and bodies. Collectively, staff with the faculty of life strive to produce pupils that are curious about the world around them and to bring about an understanding of past events in history. Together this enables our pupils to make informed choices about their futures. We strive for our pupils to develop a caring nature and we ensure that they are able to listen carefully to the views and opinions of others both within their immediate communities and also those for others in the wider world.

The faculty of life team encourages our pupils to become active citizens and to be able to work effectively with others and to communicate their ideas effectively and express themselves articulately and with confidence. Above all, we support our pupils to become informed, healthy, ethical and caring individuals who can support others and will be able to make positive choices throughout their lives.

[This link](#) is to the BBC bitesize homepage and from here you can access information for a range of subjects.

[Information](#) for middle school.

[Resources](#) for GCSE health and social care.

[Resources](#) for GCSE health and social care.

[Resources](#) for GCSE Geography.

[Resources](#) for GCSE Geography.

[Resources](#) for GCSE history.

[Information](#) for GCSE history.

[Resources](#) for GCSE PE.

[Resources](#) for GCSE PE.

[Resources](#) for GCSE PE.

Who are the staff?

- J. Carey - head of faculty
- K. Velasco - deputy head of faculty
- R. Maharg - deputy head of faculty
- A. Williams-Cross -humanities teacher
- J. Owen - well-being teacher
- H. Higgs - humanities teacher
- C. Waithaka - humanities teacher
- J. Davies - well-being teacher
- B. Holmes - middle school teacher
- J. Smith - middle school teacher
- J. Griffiths - lower school teacher

What does learning look like in lower school, middle school and upper school?

In lower school pupils engage in our Canu Dysgu programme of study. This is a pupil led enquiry approach to learning where we encourage our pupils to learn through investigation and discovery. The humanities and well-being areas of learning are actively developed through a blended learning approach where we aim to develop their curiosity of the world around them. This is done through a variety of themes which run throughout a term. Examples that pupils engage with include independence, travel and creatures during reception, people, universe and environment in year 1 and in years 2 and 3 themes such as culture, disaster and the world are explored.

In middle school pupils engage in our Caru Dysgu programme of study. This is a similar approach to Canu Dysgu where we build upon the skills developed and progress made in lower school. The humanities and well-being areas of learning are actively developed through a blended learning approach where we encourage our pupils to lead their studies while learning through research, investigation, enquiry and discovery. This is achieved through a variety of themes which run throughout each term and examples include disease, discovery, conflict, exploration, identity, change and enterprise.

In upper school pupils engage in well-being, humanities, religion, values and ethics (RVE), skills and a range of option choices. During well-being pupils experience a mixture of physical activity and personal and social education. RVE lessons run as discrete lessons between years 9 and 11 where pupils work to gain a qualification through the study of a range of contemporary issues. During year 9 pupils engage in humanities lessons and in years 10 and 11 pupils can opt to follow a range of humanities subjects such as history, geography, health and social care, GCSE PE and sport. Additionally in years 10 and 11, all pupils follow the skills challenge certificate which develops a range of skills needed for further study and/or the workplace. These skills include creativity and innovation, critical thinking and problem solving, personal effectiveness, planning and organisation and of course literacy, numeracy and digital literacy and are developed via engagement in 'challenges' such as global citizenship and sustainability, enterprise and employability, community and an individual project.



life





What approaches are taken in pupils' learning?

The faculty of life perpetually strives to develop positive relationships and mutual respect between teaching staff and pupils as we believe that good relationships lead to positive and successful learning outcomes. We ensure that we know our pupils well which allows us to differentiate lessons according to pupil needs. We employ effective questioning techniques into each of our lessons and use this technique alongside a mixture of summative and formative assessments to identify gaps in learning. This allows us to develop a personalised learning programme for each pupil who is then able to identify their 'next steps'. Collaborative learning is practised across the faculty to great effect and a skills based approach is integral to all lessons. Finally we encourage all pupils to understand the benefits of a growth mindset and how to develop one.

Qualification specifications and links to past papers

Subject	Qualification specification link	Link to past papers
Skills Challenge certificate	https://www.wjec.co.uk/qualifications/welsh-baccalaureate-national-foundation/#tab_keydocuments	N/A as the course is continuous assessment with no examinations.
GCSE history	https://www.wjec.co.uk/media/gzsn4pg5/wjec-gcse-history-spec-from-2017-e.pdf	https://www.wjec.co.uk/qualifications/history-gcse/#tab_pastpapers
GCSE PE	https://www.wjec.co.uk/media/0p0o3nqu/wjec-gcse-physical-education-spec-from-2016-e.pdf	https://www.wjec.co.uk/qualifications/physical-education-gcse/#tab_pastpapers
GCSE health and social care	https://www.healthandcarelearning.wales/media/1067/wjec-gcse-hsccspec-e-061118.pdf	https://www.healthandcarelearning.wales/qualifications/gcse-health-and-social-care-and-childcare-single-and-double-award/
GCSE geography	https://www.wjec.co.uk/media/mlyl2jr/wjec-gcse-geography-spec-from-2016-e.pdf	https://www.wjec.co.uk/qualifications/geography-gcse/#tab_pastpapers
BTEC sport	https://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/BTEC-Firsts/Sport/2010/Specification/BF021866_Firsts_in_Sport.pdf	N/A as the course is continuous assessment with only one online examination.
Agored Cymru Religion, Values and Ethics	https://www.agored.cymru/Units-and-Qualifications/Learning-Core/Exploring-Worldviews	N/A as the course is continuous assessment with no examinations.



Dates for your diary

Lower school

Moving up transition afternoon in Gwyn:	Monday 10th July, 2023
Nursery, reception, year 1, 2 & 3 pupil reports:	Week beginning 3rd July, 2023
Nursery, reception, year 1, 2 & 3 parents' evening:	
Tuesday 11th & Wednesday 12th July, 2023	
Sports day	Tuesday 4th July, 2023

Middle school

Year 4,5 and 6 pupil reports:	Week beginning 26th June, 2023
Year 6 transition day - Subject taster day:	Thursday 29th June 2023
Cluster football event @YN:	Friday 30th June 2023
Year 4 and 5 parents' evening:	Week beginning 3rd July, 2023
Year 5 and 6 Llangrannog trip:	Monday 3rd July 2023
Sports day	Tuesday 4th July, 2023
Year 6 transition day:	Thursday 6th July 2023
Year 6 into year 7 parent information evening:	Thursday 6th July, 2023
Moving up transition afternoon in Gwyn:	Monday 10th July, 2023
Year 6 parents' evening:	Week beginning 10th July, 2023
Year 6 Moving on up celebration :	Wednesday 12th July 2023

Upper school

Year 9 A band work experience	Tuesday 4th July
Year 9 B band work experience	Tuesday 11th July
Year 11 prom	Friday 30th June

Contact details

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middleschool@ysgolnantgwyn.co.uk
upperschool@ysgolnantgwyn.co.uk