

PARENT NEWSLETTER



January 2024



A NOTE FROM THE HEADTEACHER

It has been a lovely and settled return to school after the two-week break and, already, there has been a huge amount of learning across the school. Our pupils in nursery through to year 8 have started a new theme in their caru dysgu lessons: community, cynefin, catastrophe and equality and diversity to name a few. You can find more information about our curriculum themes on our website here:

<https://www.ysgolnantgwyn.co.uk/curriculum-and-learning/our-curriculum-themes> You can also access information about what your child is learning across the full curriculum on our 'what are we learning' sheets. These are sent out on Class Charts to parents at the start of each term and are also accessible on our website here:

<https://www.ysgolnantgwyn.co.uk/curriculum-and-learning/what-are-we-learning> To support learning in school, we would ask that your child completes their allocated independent learning at home. The tasks are based on their learning in school and are to get them into the good habit of doing a proportionate amount of additional learning at home to strengthen the progress that they make in their learning. We do report on the amount of independent learning completed in each of our interim reports and the full written report as well. If you have any questions about independent learning, please get in touch with the school team on lowerschool@ysgolnantgwyn.co.uk, middleschool@ysgolnantgwyn.co.uk or upperschool@ysgolnantgwyn.co.uk. Independent learning tasks come out via ClassCharts towards the start of each half term and are also accessible on the website here:

<https://www.ysgolnantgwyn.co.uk/curriculum-and-learning/independent-learning>

A small group of year 11 pupils received GCSE results in mathematics and/or English in January – they were rightly very pleased with their results and their efforts in sitting a full qualification a little early. Congratulations to all of them. Year 9 and 10 pupils also received their assessment week results and were supported to reflect on whether they were happy with their outcomes and whether they felt it reflected what they can actually do.

Our assessment weeks are held for all year groups in Nant building and are important in enabling learning about what pupils need to do to prepare for assessments, how they need to work through the assessment and also reflect on how they could further improve their outcomes. While those in years 7-10 are typically in classrooms, we do use the full examination regulations in terms of conduct so that by the time pupils sit 'real' examinations, their exam behaviours have become habit. Year 10 also have at least one internal assessment in the examination hall so that they are aware of all procedures in readiness for external examinations – there is a lot to learn, for example, finding their seat, making sure that the paper is correct, filling in the front page as well as rules about types of pencilcases, phones and watches...and that's all before they even answer a question.

This half term and the next are both five weeks long with an early Easter break. We do not have any INSET days in this term. We do however have one INSET day towards the end of May and three at the end of the school year in July which may help you get away a little earlier if you have something planned or are thinking of planning something. Dates are on the school website under news and events. Attendance across the school is still significantly lower than the Welsh Government expectation of 95%. We see the impact of absence in childrens' learning as gaps from days that they have missed; catching up is not necessarily easy to do so please can we ask for your support in ensuring that your child comes to school and aims for attendance of over 95%. If there is anything we can do to help at all, please do get in touch with your school team.

Thank you to all year 8 parents that attended the recent parents' evening. We hope that the discussions were helpful and informative. Our events calendar for the spring term will be shared with you shortly so that you are aware of upcoming dates. We really hope that you can join us across the year.

This edition focuses on careers across the school. This learning starts in nursery and continues through to year 11 with different approaches. I hope you enjoy reading about it.

With warm wishes,

Ms Laura Morris
Headteacher



Newsletter focus item:

Careers

Our commitment to pupils:

High quality careers education and guidance in school or college is critical to young people's futures. It helps to prepare them for the workplace by providing a clear understanding of the world of work including the routes to jobs and careers that they might find engaging and rewarding. It helps them to acquire the self-development and career management skills they need to achieve positive employment destinations. This helps pupils to choose their pathways, improve their life opportunities and contribute to a productive and successful economy.

We have a responsibility to set pupils on the path that will secure the best outcome which will enable them to progress in education and work and give employers the highly skilled people they need. At Ysgol Nantgwyn, we act impartially, in line with our statutory duty, and do not show bias towards any route, be that academic or technical.

We are committed to providing relevant and appropriate careers and work-related experiences for all our pupils, from nursery through to year 11, that enrich their classroom-based learning and raise their aspirations. We seek to open their eyes to a world where they are masters of their own destiny and where no career path is out of reach. This is our passion, our promise and our duty.



Partnership Working

At Ysgol Nantgwyn, we work with a variety of different partners in order to provide the very best information, guidance and experiences for our pupils, whatever their age or ability. We want to ensure pupils have bespoke experiences that are of interest to them.

We work with partners such as Big Ideas Wales, Mullany Fund, local colleges and sixth form providers, MPCT, Cynon Valley Organic Adventures to name but a few. We also take part in the RCT employability programme and work closely with the RCT Education, Employment and Training team in order to provide additional support such as the Green Light Project and application workshops in readiness for employment, college interviews or apprenticeships.



Gyrfa Cymru Careers Wales

We have our very own allocated Careers Wales advisor based on site. Lorna Mackintosh works with pupils from year 7-11 in a variety of different ways as noted in the table below. We also liaise with our other links from Careers Wales; Rhian Thomas is our employer engagement officer, and she works closely with staff across the school to arrange bringing in a wide range of employers to promote careers and raise aspirations for our pupils. Rhys Davies is our curriculum consultant who works with staff as educational professionals, to develop and deliver a robust and effective careers programme in line with the new curriculum for Wales, as CWRE is one of the cross-cutting themes in line with literacy, numeracy and digital competency.

Here's how Careers Wales can support you and your child:

Flexible appointments: Careers Wales are happy to offer appointments during lunch breaks, after school hours, and even during holidays. Just let them know what works best for you and your child.

Online resources: The Careers Wales website provides lots of information, with resources to help young people find out about a range of career ideas and make informed decisions. Please explore the website with your child. There are also web pages dedicated to parents, with information and tools to help you support your child to plan their future.

Appointment with a Careers adviser: They can offer a one-on-one session with their expert careers advisers. They are there to answer any questions, address concerns, and provide the guidance your child needs to plan their move from school to the world of work or further education.

To arrange, or ask for an appointment with our adviser please feel free to contact them at:

lorna.mackintosh@careerswales.gov.wales

Some useful careers links can be found below:

Lower school:

[Engineering Fairytales](#)

<https://careerswales.gov.wales/parents/your-child-in-primary-school>

Middle school:

<https://careerswales.gov.wales>

<https://careerswales.gov.wales/career-match-quiz>

<https://careerswales.gov.wales/job-information>

<https://barclayslifeskills.com/>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/teach/careers-collection/zbvrt39>

Upper school:

<https://careerswales.gov.wales/>

<https://careerswales.gov.wales/career-match-quiz>

<https://careerswales.gov.wales/job-information>

[Career insights youtube channel](#)

<https://barclayslifeskills.com/>

<https://careerswales.gov.wales/getting-a-job/build-a-cv>

<https://careerswales.gov.wales/getting-a-job/interview-techniques>

Please see an overview below of what each child can expect throughout their time at Ysgol Nantgwyn.

year group	outline	links/reference/additional details
nursery	Specific lessons taught in line with the new curriculum. One experience per half term, mapped out in all schemes of learning.	Pupils look at the jobs they would like to do in the future and what family members and other relatives do for work.
reception		Pupils explore careers linked to their theme of 'travel'.
year 1/2		Within Year 1 and 2 pupils learn about 'teams' with careers linked to emergency service teams and how they work together to help those in need.
year 3		As part of the theme of 'disaster' Pupils have been looking at how the various services work to help rescue and support people in need e.g. specialised search and rescue workers in earthquakes, RNLI and how volcanologists help to predict volcanic eruptions and evacuate areas at risk.
year 4		Through the theme 'disease', pupils have learned about some of the jobs involved in health care and medicine. During the theme 'discovery' pupils find out about careers linked to making discoveries. Pupils learn about astronauts and jobs within NASA.
year 5		During the theme of 'rights' pupils learn about the many careers involved within our justice system. As part of the theme of 'conflict' pupils explore careers in the military. As part of this they use the Careers Wales website to find out the skills and qualities needed to be a soldier in the army and from this information they will write a letter of application explaining how they demonstrate these qualities and why they would make a good soldier.
year 6		Pupils discuss ambitions linked to careers. They research expected wages, qualifications, skills and qualities required and career paths needed. During their 'enterprise' theme pupils learn about businesses and entrepreneurs. They learn about the skills and qualities required to be successful entrepreneurs. They carry out a small enterprise project where they design, create and sell a product. They learn about the roles involved in business teams and carry out the Buzz Quiz on the Careers Wales website to discover what roles are best for them within their teams based on their personalities and attributes.

year group	outline	links/reference/additional details
years 7 and 8	At least one real-life experience of the world of work for each pupil per year group. By the end of year 11. Pupils will have undertaken a minimum of 3 different experiences.	Year 7 – experience of working as a pupil receptionist. Year 8 – school-based experience working with younger pupils in Gwyn building.
year 9	Inspire me week Options process and support (see below) Careers experiences and talks prior to option selection.	External speakers – raising aspirations. Year 9 – 1 week's external work experience. Subject specific careers talks – within lessons.
years 10 and 11	Individual interviews with a level 6 trained Careers adviser, looking at pathways, destinations and future planning. Green light project (selected pupils) Mock interviews	Careers Wales dedicated careers adviser RCT EET team. Mock interview process with real application and interview practice. Real employers from the local community attend school and interview pupils.



Year 9 options information

As parents will no doubt be aware, we have now started the careers focus fortnight and options process in earnest. In order to keep you informed of the most up to date information, we are sharing information with you via this newsletter.

Please see a timeline below that clearly sets out the next few weeks and how the process will unfold;

Date	What?	Details
Week 8th January Week 15th January	Careers fortnight	Pupils have a series of assemblies, workshops and information giving events with videos, activities and external speakers.
Week 22nd January	Straw poll for pupils- this is where pupils pick their ideal subjects from a list of 30 subjects in order to generate the final options blocks	Pupils will complete the straw poll during registration sessions, attendance is vital.
February	Options booklet sent home	An options booklet is sent home to parents providing information on all subjects available for pupils to choose from.
Week 26th February	Year 9 'Inspire me' employers and careers week	Pupils will take part in workshops which focus around careers and the world of work within their school day at Ysgol Nantgwyn.
Tuesday 27th February	Parents' evening and options event	In addition to the traditional parents evening, there will be the opportunity to discuss pre-16 pathways with a representative from careers Wales. Information to book appointments will be sent out via Classcharts.
February	Option blocks finalised	Option blocks will be finalised and released to pupils and parents.
Week 4th March	Option meetings in registration	During registration over the two week period commencing on 27th March, pupils will need to finalise their option choices with form tutors.

Options process frequently asked questions

What are option blocks?

Pupils will choose three subjects in total. One from each option group, or block as per the example below**

Option A	Option B	Option C
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• art and photography• media• DT food• Spanish	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• performing arts• GCSE PE• history• BTEC sport	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• business studies• ICT• engineering• German

This is an example and does not in any way represent how the option blocks will appear this year. This has yet to be decided

What is a straw poll and why is it so important?

This is where pupils are given a vast array of subjects to choose from and they pick their top 5. It is important that pupils complete this and give it careful thought as this is used to inform the final option blocks. So, for example, if 45 pupils want to do engineering but 25 of those also want to do art, we would ensure that art and engineering do not appear in the same option block. The straw poll helps to inform the option blocks (as above) and allows us to ensure we give as many pupils the opportunity to study the subjects that they most want to do.

What about core subjects?

Core is made up of;

- English literature
- English language
- mathematics
- mathematics - numeracy
- Welsh
- science - biology, chemistry and physics
- well-being
- religious studies
- skills challenge certificate

This could give pupils the equivalent of up to 10 GCSEs. They will also study a complementary curriculum which includes;

- finance education
- information technology skills
- enterprise skills

This curriculum could give pupils the equivalent of a further 5 GCSEs.

Iceland visit- Taith

Earlier this year Ysgol Nantgwyn were lucky enough to secure funding to take 30 year 7 pupils to Iceland! This was part of a prestigious project run by Taith Wales. Taith is an international learning exchange programme established to create life-changing opportunities for people in Wales to learn, study and volunteer all over the world.



On 18th January excited pupils and staff left Bristol airport to fly to Keflavik, for many of our pupils this was their first experience of flying. During the visit pupils visited our partner Áslandsskóli school to experience a day in the life of an icelandic pupil, attending lessons, eating tradition icelandic school dinners and making new friends. Whilst at the school pupils also undertook an enquiry into the Icelandic curriculum, in order to be able to make recommendations for the Curriculum for Wales.



During the stay the group also had the chance to visit the capital city of Reykjavik and see once in a lifetime landscape as part of a golden circle tour at -16 degrees. All pupils however agreed that the highlight of the trip was throwing snowballs at Mr Evans!



Over the next few months, pupils will create a digital story about their experience, their findings and their recommendations for the curriculum at Ysgol Nantgwyn and the curriculum across Wales; they will present this to advisers in education in Wales. This will include representatives from the local authority, regional consortia, universities and Welsh Government. What an exciting opportunity!

Pupils were a credit to parents and Ysgol Nantgwyn with their impeccable manners and behaviour. We are very proud of them!

Pupil leadership team

During the first term the PLT were busy establishing themselves and meeting with pupils across the school to set out areas for improvement. They all worked as their form groups and in the larger pupil leadership team. One of the achievements for the first term was setting up and the delivery of feedback Friday notes of appreciation that they collected and delivered to all staff from teachers, to caretakers around the school thanking them all for their hard work and effort. In the final week of term, we held our first community event, 'carols around the tree' where some of our lead pupils delivered 'Twas the Night Before Christmas'; this was a superb achievement and marks their growing confidence as leaders. They also sat in a school governor's meeting where they outlined their work and the pupil leadership team's structure. Look out for our lead pupils at school events wearing their new hoodies, which they chose themselves.

Attendance #Behere!

Every day in school makes a difference to your child's future. When pupils are not in school, the number of days missed will impact on the learning that takes place. It is also important to stress the non-academic advantages of being in school too where friendships, socialising and wellbeing support all play a significant part in the development of our pupils. Any pupil with attendance below 95% is below target. Pupils should already be aware of their attendance percentage. If you are unsure, please contact the lower/middle/upper school team or use the class charts parent app to monitor your child's attendance.

Punctuality

Punctuality is also as important as attendance. Not only is punctuality an important life skill, but further, learning starts promptly each day and pupils who arrive late are missing vital sessions of the day including literacy sessions and parts of the day where important information is given. As a reminder school starts for middle and upper school pupils at 8.40 and lower school pupils at 8.55. Pupils should be in their classrooms for this time.

Rights Respecting School

How do children get to enjoy their rights in the UK? What does the Government do to make this happen?

Under the convention on the rights of the child (CRC), children are rights holders; governments and adults are duty bearers who are responsible for making sure children's rights are met.

- Every child must be registered with a name at birth.
- There are parks and play areas provided.
- Children are entitled to education and healthcare systems.
- There are specific job sectors and roles dedicated to protecting children.
- The school curriculum in Wales includes learning about the CRC.
- Many schools are UNICEF UK Rights Respecting Schools and children learn about their rights.
- Most schools have ways of listening to children's views and opinions.
- Children are given protection when they need it.
- There are Children's Commissioners whose job it is to make sure children are listened to.
- Social care services and the police work to keep all children protected.
- There are laws which include some rights from the CRC, such as equalities legislation and the Children Act.

