

PARENT NEWSLETTER



February 2024



A NOTE FROM THE HEADTEACHER

We have had a very positive and productive start to the fourth half term of the year with pupils across the school approaching their learning well and motivated to make good progress. As we move into what should be the warmer times of spring, we hope for a little less rain so that all pupils can benefit from some fresh air and exercise at break and lunchtimes. So far, the Welsh weather has not been with us in that plan!

We have made some changes this academic year to hopefully enable you to see a bit more of your child's learning. Having previously kept all books in school, it is now the expectation that exercise books come home with your Nant aged child unless they are being marked. This will hopefully give you the opportunity to have a little look at how well your child is doing. Our 'what are we learning sheets' sent out every term will support this. In Gwyn, we have started to send books home at specific points in the year with an accompanying sheet for parents to fill in which get stuck into books. We have since had a pupil voice activity with pupils in Gwyn about their learning and so many children were keen to show us the message that their family had written to them about their learning in their books which was really lovely.

We have also started to send home a piece of work with the full written reports that we send out during the year. Depending on the age of the child, this might be the piece of work that they have selected as their favourite and taken a picture of or it might be one that their teacher has selected. We will keep these on file with a view to sharing collections of pieces of work with pupils when they leave at the end of year 11.

Our pupil leaders have been very busy engaging with pupils across the school and asking questions about how we can improve attendance and also what they would like to do to fundraise. It has been really pleasing to see these leaders of all ages take a step forward and represent the views of their peers. Watch this space...!

This edition of the newsletter focuses on curriculum and experiences. This is something that we continually develop at Ysgol Nantgwyn as no child and no year group is the same and our planning needs to reflect that. We aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum that excites our pupils and pushes some of their boundaries while making progress in their literacy and numeracy at all times. There is lots of up to date information on our website about the curriculum which I would encourage you to read and our 'what are we learning sheets' give further updates when they are sent out termly too.

With warm wishes,

Ms Laura Morris
Headteacher



Newsletter focus item:

Curriculum and experiences



YSGOL NANTGWYN: OUR CURRICULUM

VISION

At Ysgol Nantgwyn, our curriculum vision is based around our school statement; 'when we are ready, respectful and responsible, everything is possible'. It takes into account our school population and their needs and helps them to be ready to respond to the demands of our world and be responsible and respectful in doing so. To support this, it is informed by our local, regional, national and global context. The Ysgol Nantgwyn curriculum ensures that all pupils gain good knowledge and skills through a range of learning experiences so that they make good progress from nursery to year 11 and are ready to be successful in their chosen pathway when they leave school.

OUR CURRICULUM

The Ysgol Nantgwyn curriculum is designed to take account of the needs of all pupils and offers a broad and balanced range of experiences for all pupils. We recognise that pupils are individuals and therefore the way in which they experience the curriculum may differ. Our curriculum is iterative in its development and provides opportunities for pupils to inform and lead their learning. It provides opportunities for pupils to have meaningful learning experiences, to consider themselves and others and the part they can play in their local community as well as the wider world. The Ysgol Nantgwyn curriculum presents pupils with a range of big questions, gives them the opportunity to ask questions and enables their development of knowledge and skills in the exploration of possible answers through a variety of learning experiences. Our staff will carefully listen to our pupils and ensure that their thoughts, views and needs inform their learning.

Through consultation with pupils, parents, staff and governors, we have agreed that our curriculum will place increased emphasis on the following identified needs:

- Understanding their responsibilities and rights
- Respecting the rights and needs of others
- Thinking creatively to solve problems
- Sharing ideas and emotions in a variety of ways
- Setting goals
- Speaking and listening to others effectively
- Building up and applying knowledge
- Forming good relationships based on trust and mutual respect
- Building mental and emotional well-being

AREAS OF LEARNING AND EXPERIENCE

Our curriculum will provide learning which encompasses six areas of learning and experience. These are:

- Language, literacy and communication
- Mathematics and numeracy
- Expressive arts
- Humanities
- Health and well-being
- Science and technology

Each area of learning and experience has a set of 'what matters' statements. Staff use these statements and the concepts within them to design and plan the learning for pupils. These statements support pupils to make good progress by developing the skills and knowledge gained from their learning experiences from nursery through to year 11.

Our curriculum ensures that pupils learn about diversity, human rights and the rights of the child, relationships and sexuality education (RSE), Welsh and religion, values and ethics (RVE).

FOUR PURPOSES

Our curriculum will be designed, developed and delivered with the four purposes at the centre to ensure that pupils become:

- Ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives.
- Enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work.
- Ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world.
- Healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society.

CROSS CURRICULAR

Our pupils will develop skills and knowledge relating to literacy (oracy, reading and writing), numeracy (including reasoning) and digital competence across the full breadth of the curriculum.

DESIGN

Our curriculum design has been informed by our pupils, parents, governors and community members and staff as well as our cluster schools and external partners. Our design has centred around ensuring an inclusive, progressive curriculum that meets the needs of our pupils to ensure that they have the very best experience at school and are ready to succeed in the opportunities and challenges that will present throughout their life.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment will continue to be part of our daily teaching and learning as pupils and teachers use information from time spent with pupils to plan the next steps in each individual pupils' learning. As part of this process, pupils will engage with feedback from teachers about their learning so that they know how well they are doing and what they can do to improve and progress. Ysgol Nantgwyn will review the progress of each individual pupil regularly across the year and use this information to plan for individuals and groups to ensure that all make at least good progress and are well supported in doing so. We will report to pupils and parents about progress and approach to learning at regular points in the year.

REVIEW

The Ysgol Nantgwyn curriculum will go through a process of iterative evaluation and development to ensure that all pupils are experiencing the very quality of provision that we can provide. We will work with a range of people to gather a range of information from many different activities that include pupils, parents and teachers to inform our evaluations and planning for development. These evaluations will sit as part of our robust monitoring and evaluation work.

Our curriculum is iteratively designed; this means that we re-design the curriculum each year based on the needs of the pupils, their targets and their aspirations.

In lower school (nursery through to year 3), pupils follow a 'Caru Dysgu' curriculum which encompasses learning statements from the following curriculum areas:

- mathematics and numeracy
- English, literacy and communication
- humanities
- well-being
- science and technology
- languages
- expressive arts

These are taught using a blended approach by the pupils' Caru Dysgu teacher.

In middle school (year 4 through to year 8), pupils follow a mixed curriculum model which encompasses the following:

- caru dysgu (English, literacy and communication, humanities, well-being and expressive arts)
- mathematics and numeracy
- science and technology
- languages

Mathematics and numeracy, science and technology and languages are taught by faculty teachers.

In year 9, pupils start to explore more discrete subject disciplines and their curriculum encompasses the following:

- mathematics and numeracy
- enterprise and financial education
- English literature
- English language
- humanities (including, but not limited to, geography, history, health and social care)
- Well-being
- biology, chemistry and physics
- information technology
- design technology
- Welsh
- Spanish
- expressive arts (including, but not limited to, art, drama and music)
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Pupils take their options in year 9 in order to start their qualification courses at the start of year 10.

All year 10 and year 11 pupils will study the following curriculum areas/qualifications:

- mathematics
- mathematics – numeracy
- English language
- English literature
- skills challenge certificate
- enterprise
- financial education
- well-being
- biology, chemistry and physics
- Pupils will also study three options. Please note that options change year to year, depending on the choices of the pupils.

Curriculum for Wales- four purposes

The Curriculum for Wales guidance is a clear statement of what is important in delivering a broad and balanced education. The **four purposes** are the shared vision and aspiration for every child and young person. In fulfilling these, we set high expectations for all, promote individual and national well-being, tackle ignorance and misinformation, and encourage critical and civic engagement.

A school's curriculum is everything a learner experiences in pursuit of the four purposes. It is not simply what we teach, but how we teach and crucially, why we teach it.

This is taken from <https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/introduction>

The aim of a school's curriculum is set out in four purposes - to support its learners to become:

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

All our children and young people will be supported to develop as:

ambitious, capable learners who:

- set themselves high standards and seek and enjoy challenge
- are building up a body of knowledge and have the skills to connect and apply that knowledge in different contexts
- are questioning and enjoy solving problems
- can communicate effectively in different forms and settings, using both Welsh and English
- can explain the ideas and concepts they are learning about
- can use number effectively in different contexts
- understand how to interpret data and apply mathematical concepts
- use digital technologies creatively to communicate, find and analyse information
- undertake research and evaluate critically what they find

and are ready to learn throughout their lives

enterprising, creative contributors who:

- connect and apply their knowledge and skills to create ideas and products
- think creatively to reframe and solve problems
- identify and grasp opportunities
- take measured risks
- lead and play different roles in teams effectively and responsibly
- express ideas and emotions through different media
- give of their energy and skills so that other people will benefit

and are ready to play a full part in life and work

ethical, informed citizens who:

- find, evaluate and use evidence in forming views
- engage with contemporary issues based upon their knowledge and values
- understand and exercise their human and democratic responsibilities and rights
- understand and consider the impact of their actions when making choices and acting
- are knowledgeable about their culture, community, society and the world, now and in the past
- respect the needs and rights of others, as a member of a diverse society
- show their commitment to the sustainability of the planet

and are ready to be citizens of Wales and the world

healthy, confident individuals who:

- have secure values and are establishing their spiritual and ethical beliefs
- are building their mental and emotional well-being by developing confidence, resilience and empathy
- apply knowledge about the impact of diet and exercise on physical and mental health in their daily lives
- know how to find the information and support to keep safe and well
- take part in physical activity
- take measured decisions about lifestyle and manage risk
- have the confidence to participate in performance
- form positive relationships based upon trust and mutual respect
- face and overcome challenge
- have the skills and knowledge to manage everyday life as independently as they can

and are ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society.



Our curriculum themes

year group	term 1	term 2	term 3
nursery	Me	Community	Dens
reception	Independence	Travel	Creatures
year 1/2	Team	World	Justice
year 4	Disease	Discovery	Systems
year 5	Rights	Competition	Conflict
year 6	Identity	Change	Enterprise
year 7	Contribution	Catastrophe	British
year 8	Crime and punishment	Cynefin	Diversity
year 9	Enterprise and finance	Enterprise and finance	Enterprise and finance

Detailed information about what your child is learning in each subject, in each year group can be found on our webpages as follows:

<https://www.ysgolnangwyn.co.uk/curriculum-and-learning/what-are-we-learning>

Pupil learning

The following piece of learning is from a year 5 caru dysgu lesson based on the theme of competition. Pupils sorted arguments for and against competition in response to the question, 'Is competition healthy?' Pupils took part in a debate and then completed a written balanced argument.

The work exemplifies the following non-negotiables:

Humanities 5c: understand that not everyone shares the same experience, beliefs and viewpoints

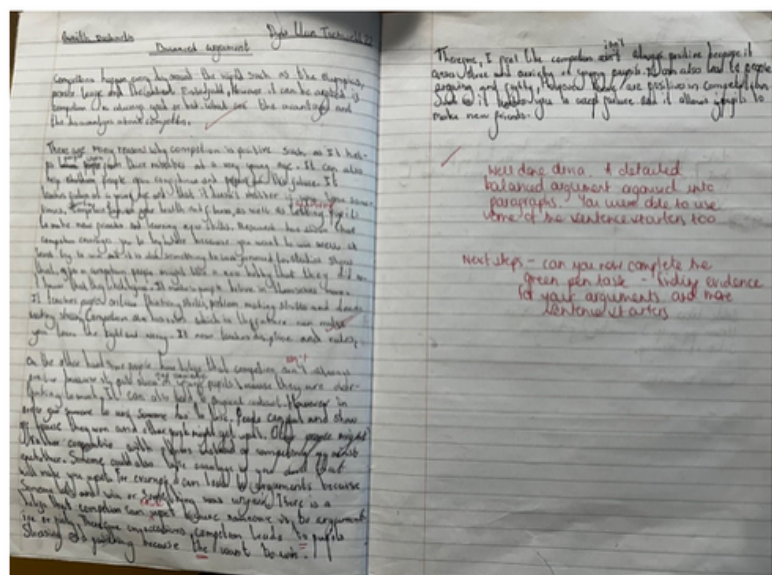
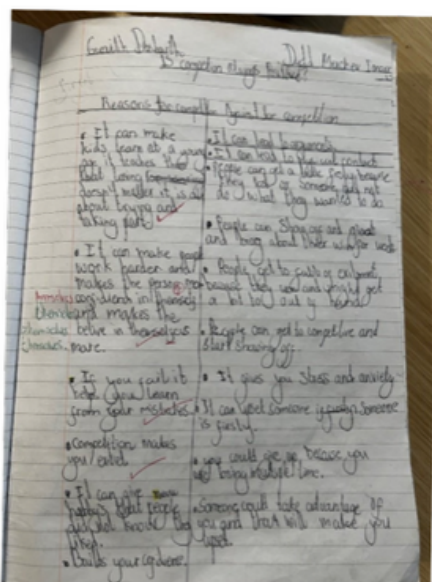
Humanities 5a: express my opinion, after reviewing evidence and considering the views of others.

Literacy- writing: write with an ability to introduce and conclude a topic and present processes, event or reports in a clear sequence

Literacy- writing: start sentences in a variety of ways and use adjectives and adverbs to expand ideas

Literacy- oracy: use language appropriate to more formal situations, including standard English.

Wellbeing 5c: with limited support, focus attention on my perceptions, thoughts and feelings in order to further develop my self-awareness



Assessment and pathway point system

PP 0	PP 1	PP 2	PP 3	PP 4	PP 5	PP 6	PP 7	PP 8	PP 9	PP 10
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We use our 0 to 10 pathway points as an assessment system at Ysgol Nantgwyn so that we know where our pupils are and where they could be.

Our pathway points are used for all pupils from nursery to year 11.

Each pathway point has a set of skills and knowledge that characterise it. These are our non-negotiables...things that pupils need to know, things that they need to be able to do and learning opportunities that they need to experience.

Each pathway point is split into three smaller steps. Pupils progress from c to b to a. An example is shown below.

0a	1a	2a
0b	1b	2b
0c	1c	2c

When we write reports, we will tell you what pathway point your child is working towards achieving at the end of the school year. We will also give information about national expectations and where your child's learning is in relation to them.

Feedback for pupils

Throughout learning experiences your child will be given feedback. This may be in the form of a verbal comment from the teacher, written feedback, peer feedback or self-feedback. The most important part of the feedback process is the time for pupils to act on what they have been told or found out about their learning. Pupils will have the opportunity to respond to feedback in lessons during whole class feedback sessions and at summative assessment points throughout the year. At home, you can ask your child about their progress and how they are engaging with the feedback they have been given. You will also receive interim reports and an annual full report, during these times you can talk with your child about their progress and, importantly, how they will tackle their next steps.

Independent learning reminder

We call our homework independent learning, and it is our expectation that all pupils complete this in line with the deadline. Independent learning tasks support and strengthen the learning that has taken place in class and, on occasions, is essential for helping to understand future learning. Pupils and parents are sent home our independent learning tasks each half term so that they are aware of what needs to be complete. Pupils receive positive points for all tasks that they complete. The completion of independent tasks will also be commented on in your child's report. Please could you encourage your child to complete these tasks.

Copies of the independent learning tasks can be found on our website as follows:
<https://www.ysgolnantgwyn.co.uk/curriculum-and-learning/independent-learning>

Expressive arts focus – what we learn, how we learn and why

In expressive arts we strive to celebrate all parts of making art, music, drama and dance. We are focused on process driven arts as opposed to product driven. This means that we look for success throughout the whole process, encouraging independence, creativity and problem solving. It is important to us that every pupil has the creative opportunity to create work that is personal to them, does not look like any others and is a true representation of where they are as expressive artists

Expressive arts week

At the beginning of February, we were lucky enough to have Ballet Cymru working with us to develop the dancing experience with our pupils in Gwyn. During the week we enhanced the experience by creating an immersive project that included art and drama sessions. Pupils were inspired by the theme of transformation and created some amazing work across all disciplines. We would like to thank Ballet Cymru for the fantastic experience, where we learnt that ballet is so much more than we first thought! We are looking forward to future projects and opportunities for our pupils!



Lead pupils

Our lead pupils have been busy conducting meetings in both Nant and Gwyn canvassing opinions on a range of subjects. The main focus has been to decide upon charities that pupils would like to support in the coming weeks. Lead pupils met with form leads who are now returning to their classes to canvass opinions from pupils. They will also shortly be embarking on the second 'Feel Good Friday' and following on from discussion amongst the lead pupils, this term we will also create form notices to give to classes as a whole. The year 11 lead pupils supported Ms Morris on Friday with the Gwyn assemblies where they did a superb job handing our certificates of achievement.



Rights respecting schools- article of the month

Children's Mental Health Week 2024 is taking place from 5-11 February this year, with the theme 'My Voice Matters'.

The event is run and organised by the children's mental health charity Place2Be, and the theme this year is about encouraging children and young people to feel confident that they can express themselves.

The charity says that allowing young people to speak up has a positive impact on wellbeing and that children who feel that their voices are heard are more connected to their communities which can raise their self-esteem.

Our mental health clearly links to Article 24 of the CRC but, if you think about it, many of the other rights that children and young people are entitled to, also contribute to good mental health.

Read the following news article and watch and discuss the clip with your child for more information on this topic.

Children's Mental Health Week 2024: What's it all about? - BBC Newsround

