

PARENT NEWSLETTER



March 2024



A NOTE FROM THE HEADTEACHER

What a busy but productive term we have had! Although this term has been one of the shorter terms of the year, it has been packed full of opportunities for learning and opportunities for new experiences for our pupils.

This month has seen a very heartening day across the school celebrating our collective love of reading on World Book Day. Both staff and pupils of all ages jumped at the opportunity to dress up at their favourite book characters as they discovered 'reading their own way.' Events like this really do make a difference in pupils' perceptions of reading and our role in ensuring that they remain positive about reading across the full thirteen year continuum, and of course, the power of pupils being encouraged to read as much of anything as possible cannot be underestimated!

You also may have seen a lovely feature on ITV about our Ysgol Nantgwyn partnership working with Ballet Cymru - well worth a little look if you haven't seen us already - our pupils spoke superbly.

The 'mad' world of science has been very evident throughout the school during STEM week. I've come out into the corridors expecting to find all sorts of things due to the noise only to find that it is our pupil testing parachutes that they have made! This has been a great experience for pupils.

We proudly celebrated our Welsh culture and heritage in our Eisteddfod's in both Nant and Gwyn building, with a fantastic array of talent on display from our pupils. From singing and dancing to reciting poems, demonstrating their acting skills and off-stage competitions, there certainly was something for everyone. At the same time 74 pupils visited Disneyland Paris for the St David's day celebration.

Finally, a big thank you for your support at our first Nantgwyn spring festival! The Easter bonnets were incredible works of art, the scavenger hunt posed challenges and lots of pupils and parents got to meet snakes, spiders, rabbits and a bearded dragon. Thanks to our PTA for providing the refreshments.

I wish you a restful Easter break and look forward to pupils returning on Monday 8th April. A calendar of school events for the final term will be sent via ClassCharts when we return.

With warm wishes,

Ms Laura Morris
Headteacher



Newsletter focus item:

Diversity

At Ysgol Nantgwyn we celebrate all people regardless of race, age or background, we aim through our teaching and our work to be respectful citizens, understanding and accepting of each other, cultures and differences. It is our aim to teach our pupils to become understanding global citizens, ethically aware of the world in which they live. We embed this through our work as a rights respecting school, through the culture of the school and through our curriculum itself. It is fundamental for the community to feel that they are represented, they have a voice and that they are understood as an individual. We aim to work with pupils, staff and the wider community to collate a diversity policy to ensure that all stakeholders are aware and understand how we celebrate and support diversity amongst the community and school population.



Diversity across the curriculum

Diversity is a core part of the curriculum at Ysgol Nantgwyn to support pupils in becoming ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world as part of the curriculum for Wales. Pupils are exposed to diverse themes, role models and texts across all year groups.

Some examples of how pupils learn about diversity can be found below:

lower school	Pupils start to learn about stereotypes, things that make us the same and different, different cultures, equality, justice, rights and racism. They learn about key figures such as Frieda Kahlo, Aei Wi Wi, Nelson Mandela and Rosa Parks.
middle school	Pupils explore rights and equality in more detail. They enjoy texts such as The Boy at the Back of the Class, A Kind of Spark, Wonder and the Girl Who Stole an Elephant. Year 8 pupils study units of a diversity qualification.
upper school	Pupils explore themes such as racism, transgender, LBGQT, equality and different cultures throughout their studies. All pupils study the Agored Cymru- exploring world views qualification throughout year 10 and 11.

Our recent Estyn report positively highlighted the diversity within the Ysgol Nantgwyn curriculum.

"Many pupils are developing well as ethical, informed citizens, who show empathy and compassion for others and recognise the importance of their rights, and the rights of others. They talk knowledgeably about the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and enjoy opportunities to discuss conflict and diversity during religion, values and ethics lessons, reflection activities and 'Caru Dysgu' lessons."

Estyn, 2023

"Provision for pupils' moral and spiritual development is suitable. Whole-school assemblies, form time sessions and work in well-being lessons enable pupils to have opportunities to consider and reflect on a range of moral values such as diversity, respect, and equity for all."

Estyn, 2023

Anti-bullying policy

At Ysgol Nantgwyn we pride ourselves on being an inclusive, supportive school where all pupils can flourish and feel safe. We are a rights respecting school, where all adults and pupils within the school have the right to feel safe, to feel secure, and to be treated fairly and equally regardless of age, race, background; all pupils have the right to an education. Bullying is treated seriously and all parties are supported in recognising the wrongdoing and working towards repairing relationships in order to diminish repeat offences, using restorative approaches. Challenging bullying by addressing unacceptable behaviour and creating an inclusive learning environment for all pupils is vital.

Definition of bullying

There is no legal definition of bullying in Wales or the UK. The RCT definition of bullying is: bullying behaviour involves an imbalance of power where a person or group of people repeatedly and intentionally cause emotional or physical harm to another person or group of people.

Isolated instances of hurtful behaviour, teasing or arguments between individuals of equal power should not be seen as bullying. Bullying is deliberate with the intention to cause harm – someone or a group is hurt physically or emotionally.

What should you do if you experience bullying or see bullying taking place at Ysgol Nantgwyn?

Any incidents of bullying should be reported to a member of staff.

Pupils can expect that they are listened to and taken seriously. They can expect that each reported incident is investigated and acted upon. They can expect that appropriate paperwork will be completed and the incident will be recorded and kept on file. They can expect to have go-to person who will check in on them a week after the initial report is investigated and more so if required.

For every bullying incident reported, there will always be a conversation with the targeted pupils about what happened. There will always be a conversation with the perpetrator, in the first instance to discuss and educate on how behaviour impacts others including a thoughts/feelings exercise.

Rights respecting school

There are many articles from the United Nations Convention on the rights of the child (UNCRC) that relate to anti-bullying, here are a few:

Article 2 (non-discrimination)

The convention applies to every child without discrimination, whatever their ethnicity, gender, religion, language, abilities or any other status, whatever they think or say, whatever their family background.

Article 12 (respect for the views of the child)

Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously. This right applies at all times, for example during immigration proceedings, housing decisions or the child's day-to-day home life.

Article 13 (freedom of expression)

Every child must be free to express their thoughts and opinions and to access all kinds of information, as long as it is within the law.

Article 19 (protection from violence, abuse and neglect)

Governments must do all they can to ensure that children are protected from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and bad treatment by their parents or anyone else who looks after them.



Eisteddfod 2024

This year we held our biggest Eisteddfod yet, a full day in Gwyn and a full day in Nant.

In Gwyn, Glyndwr took home the trophy with fantastic individual performances, especially from years 4,5 and 6. Lower school pupils sang songs and the Ysgol Nantgwyn talent rivalled the best on TV! We chaired our Bard in Gwyn - Olivia in 5B. Her poem was emotive and wise for her years.

In Nant, Llewellyn took home the trophy on the day with powerful drama performances and beautiful singers. We had Zoe, standing up on stage in front of hundreds of pupils for the 1st time and singing her heart out. Mr Stanton and Mr Hinton on the guitars were amazing and pupils enjoyed singing along. Stand out moments were Alfie and Joe on guitar and drums and Josh F on piano, all self-taught musicians in year 10. We also chaired a bard in Nant - Anwen 8A- her poem about Cynefin is beautifully written.



Science and technology week 11th-15th March

During the week in March the science and technology department celebrated a national week of both subjects. Over the departments, there was a wide range of activities including outside speakers, in-class investigations, lunchtime activities with Gwyn students and all staff dressing up across the week on the theme of STEM careers.

Pupils in Nant had two guest speakers into their lessons to discuss their routes into a STEM career. Mr. Matthew Bedding-Tyrrell came into talk about his biomedical and mechanical engineering role. He is developing material and CAD programs that test the bone strength and pressure points to be able to 3D print bones for surgical implantation. At the end pupils were provided with time to ask questions and these included what was the difference in cost of this treatment in comparison to the current treatment. Meagan Hough discussed with pupils her PhD thesis in Quantum Physics. She is writing coding using quantum physics for polarization. She discussed her research; the conferences she attends around the world and the 60,000 thesis that she needs to write by 2025! The pupils asked many questions on how she had decided on this job and what parts of the world she had seen, especially the triceratops bones she had seen in Australia.

In science lessons pupils designed, tested and evaluated the best parachute made of plastic bags. These were tested from the top of the Nant stairs, with pupils in fiery competition to win. Pupils also carried out heart dissections, where they all became surgeons and investigated the four chambers of the heart. Pupils designed and tested the best formula one Lego car, with all groups competing to win the trophy for fastest car.

Within DT lessons pupils had to make a roller coaster using carboard with a set number of turns and height. Once completed the challenge was for the marble to travel the full length of the track without falling off. Gwyn pupils came up during lunchtime to test their skills against Mr. Evans and Miss Buck in retro games. They made rice crispy cakes to take home, and some to eat then and there! Pupils identified the metal ions in fireworks using flame testing and investigated the properties of corn flour in slime.

Teachers across the week dressed up as different STEM careers, these ranged from doctors, marine biologists, arm officers, bionomists to name but a few. A truly exciting and informative week was had by all pupils and staff who contributed. Only a year to go now till the next one!



World book day

On Friday 8th March we celebrated World Book Day at Ysgol Nantgwyn. Our theme for this, as a way of promoting reading, was for pupils to 'read your own way'. This encouraged pupils to find texts that engaged and inspired them and to look at what reading is like for them. This allowed our pupils to break down any barriers they had about reading and to find ways in which reading could be fun for them. Pupils in lower and middle school were able to dress in their pyjamas or as a character from their favourite book and pupils in Nant were able to dress as their favourite characters. It was so lovely to see everyone's efforts across the entire school – staff included! We even had our very own Willy Wonka (shout out to Mrs Legg!) who had hidden five golden tickets around the school for prizes!

During the lead up to World Book Day, the English faculty presented assemblies for all year groups where we discussed the importance of reading and the skills that reading can develop. There was also a video from numerous staff and pupils talking about reading and how we can encourage everyone to read their own way.

During the day, pupils could take part in many activities promoting reading, from designing a new book voucher for World Book Day to completing quizzes on reading. There were book readings available in the Nant building where pupils could 'drop in' to teachers reading a chapter from a book and there was also a scavenger hunt for all pupils where they needed to find teachers dressed as characters from certain books. This proved to be extremely popular with our pupils, with one pupil in year 10 bringing back their sheet in record time!

Overall, the day was a huge success, and pupils gained a new perspective on reading their way! We certainly can't wait for next year to do it all again!



