

# PARENT NEWSLETTER



January 2025



# A NOTE FROM THE HEADTEACHER

It has been really pleasing to see all pupils return to school after a two week break and really lovely to hear how they'd really enjoyed spending time with friends and family...lots of stories to tell! Already the daylight hours are getting longer and the eagerly anticipated end of January is in sight.

Pupils in nursery through to year 8 have started new themes for their learning this term. All themes can be seen on the website through the link below but as a few highlights we have equality and diversity, disaster and travel.

<https://www.ysgolnantgwyn.co.uk/curriculum-and-learning/our-curriculum-themes> We see in Gwyn building that with a change in theme comes a change in some of the features in a classroom. The role play areas change, displays change, there are new and intriguing 'items' that noone has seen before and it is lovely seeing children engage in the same space but in a different way.

Always, there is a focus on developing pupils' literacy, numeracy and digital literacy skills. These are held centrally in the Welsh Government Curriculum for Wales and they are progressively threads through our school curriculum. We feel very strongly that these skills will support our pupils throughout their lives and therefore invest significantly in them. Pupils have opportunities across the full range of the curriculum to use and develop in these skills to support their understanding of other subject areas too. In Nant building, this is a key aspect of development for us and can be seen in our school improvement plan and teachers have been collaborating to create purposeful learning within their planned teaching.

There is a hive of activity going on in school around the pupil leadership group at the moment with lead pupils and form leaders being secured in all year groups across the school. Over the coming months they will be allocated to lead in our school improvement areas: learning, learning organisation and well-being. They will provide a really important function of ensuring that every pupil has a voice in helping to evaluate our school and make suggestions about how we can improve. Our next newsletter will focus on the pupil leadership team with an update on what they have said so far in terms of evaluation and what they have decided to focus on as an area of improvement.

This month, you should also receive/have received our 'what are we learning' sheets, pupils' independent learning for the half term and important dates for your diaries for the term. You will have received these via ClassCharts. If you are not on ClassCharts yet, please do get in touch with the school team to set it up so that you receive all notifications and information.

With warm wishes,

Ms Laura Morris  
Headteacher





## Newsletter focus item:

### Skills

#### Skills across the curriculum

Literacy, numeracy and digital competence are all mandatory aspects of the curriculum.

They are important skills for our pupils to develop and they underpin learning across all six areas of learning and experience.

We use the literacy and numeracy framework (LNF) and digital competence framework (DCF) as guidance. You can access these via the links.

<https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/cross-curricular-skills-frameworks/literacy-and-numeracy-framework>

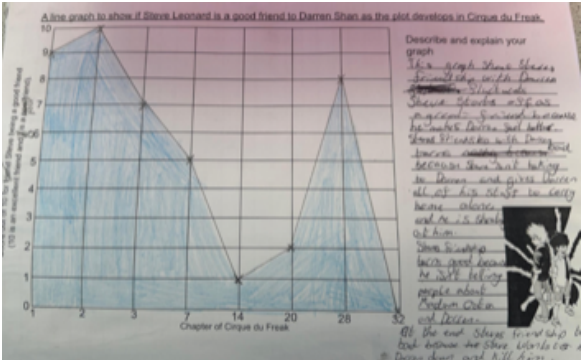
<https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/cross-curricular-skills-frameworks/digital-competence-framework/>



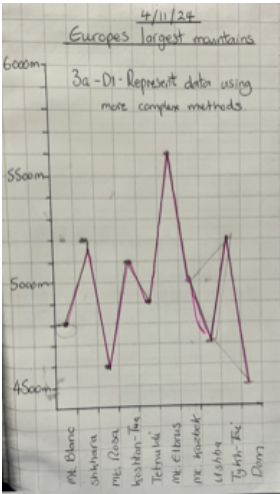
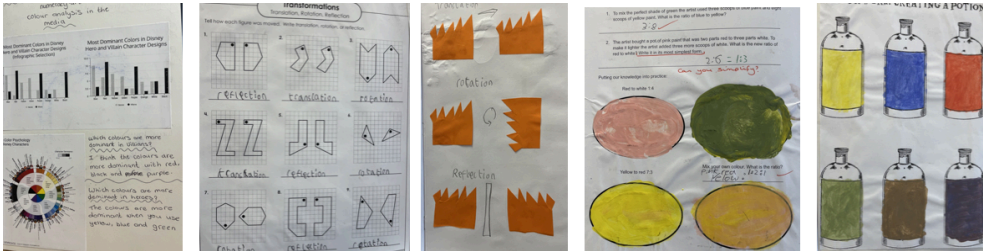
Numeracy across the curriculum

Numeracy is being integrated really creatively across subjects at our school. Using a variety of approaches—like infographics, geometry in art, and even comparing mountains to Frankenstein’s story have helped students connect math with real-world contexts and other areas of learning.

Pupils in years 7 and 10 have been producing infographics in English and drawing line graphs that illustrate the evolution of two characters' friendship in the book "Cirque du Freak."

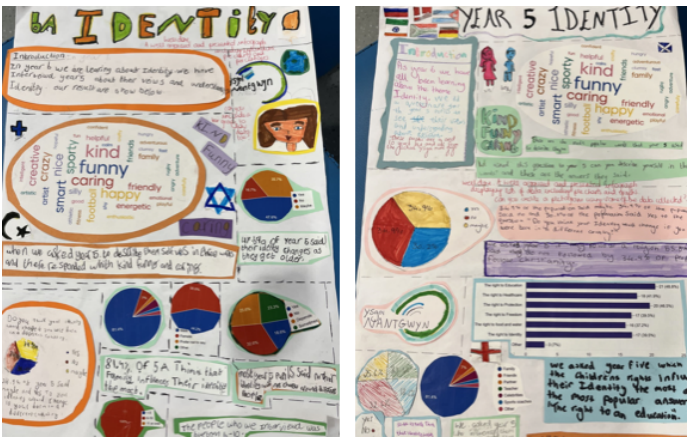


Pupils throughout the school have been consistently improving their numeracy abilities including their art classes where year 9 pupils have been showcasing their geometric abilities by performing transformations and year 8 have been employing ratio to produce artwork with perfect colors and even comparing and analysing the different colours in Disney characters.



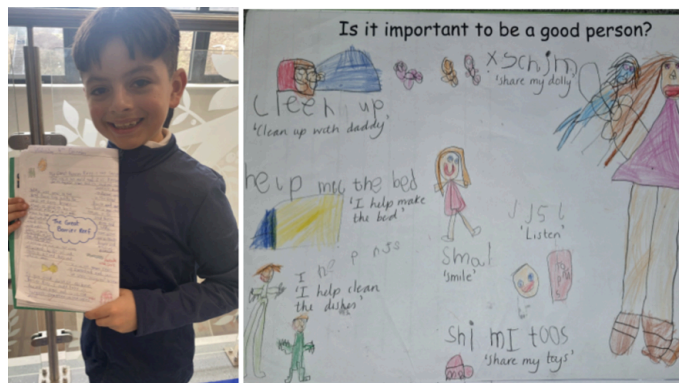
Using their work on the Frankenstein myth, year 4 pupils have connected Mount Blanc to other high mountains worldwide and have been busy creating budgets for households.

After interviewing year 5 pupils and asking them personal questions, year 6 pupils had to analyse the data and use their creativity to present their findings in an infographic.

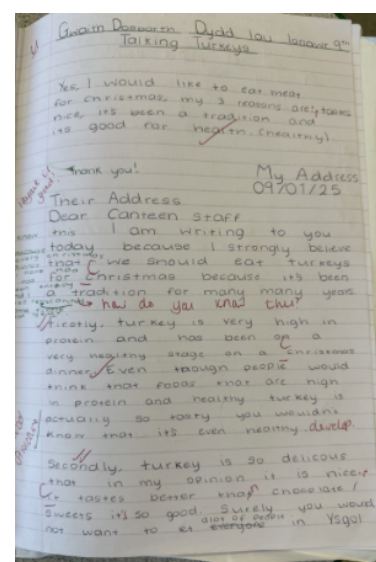
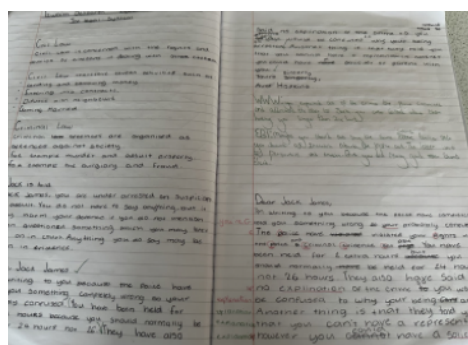
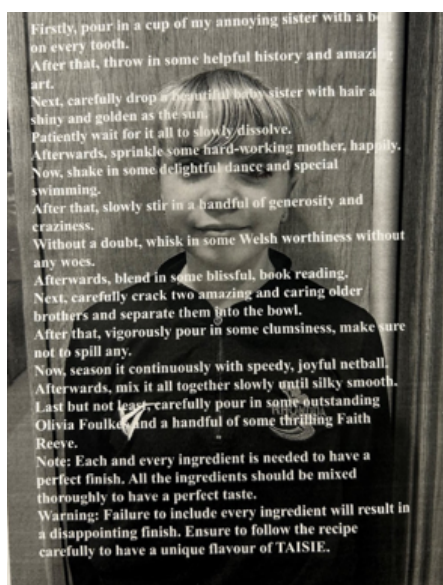




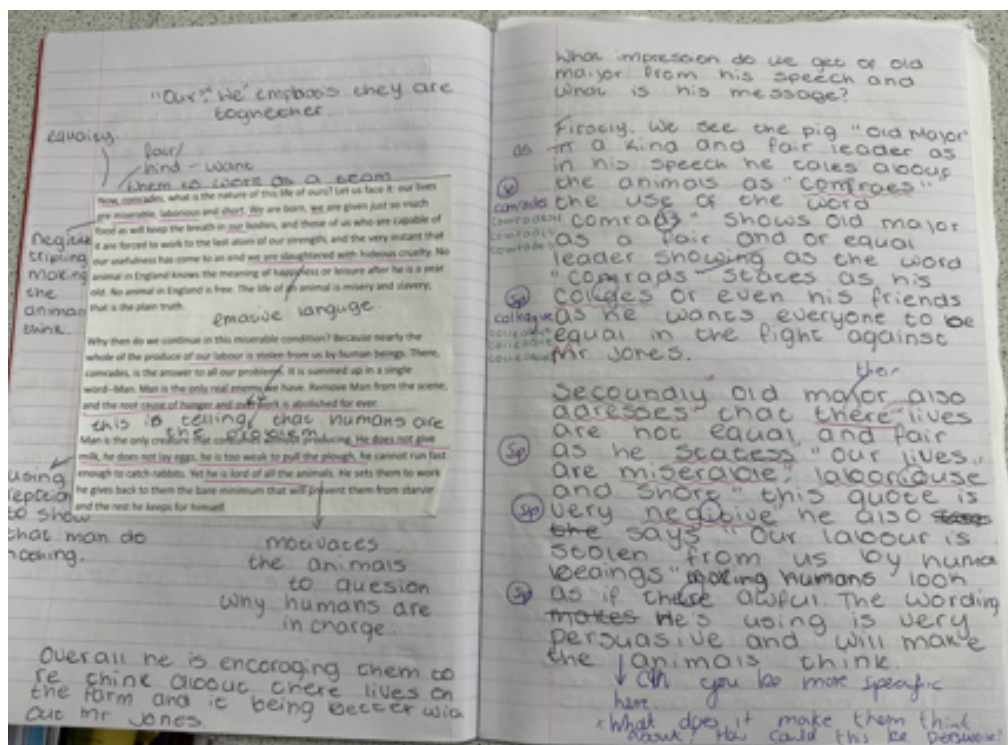
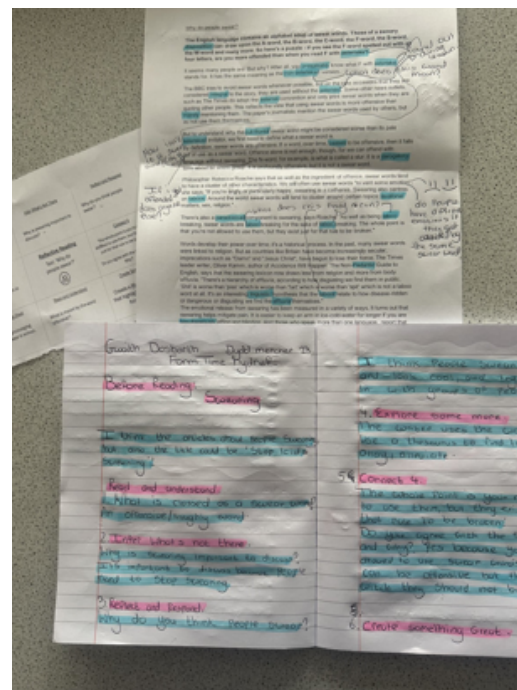
Literacy is embedded across all areas of the curriculum and across all years. In lower school, pupils have developed their reading, writing and oracy skills in enriched and purposeful lessons. For example, in year 1, pupils have created a piece of writing linked to being a good person in a recent wellbeing session. In years 2 and 3, they have been studying 'The Great Barrier Reef', where they have discussed the impact of this and created a piece of writing about what they have discovered about this.



In middle school, year 4 pupils have been learning about plague symptoms, plague doctors and other facts around this topic. They then used this knowledge to write a diary extract about visiting a relative in a nearby plague infected village. In year 5, they have been looking at the topic of 'Competition' where they have been debating the question, 'Is competition always healthy?'. During this topic, pupils were able to strengthen their debating vocabulary and began to develop the skills needed to write a balanced argument. In year 6, as part of the 'Identity' theme, pupils have planned and created poems in the form of a recipe inspired by the poet Benjamin Zephaniah. Pupils then edited and improved their work and used ICT to present their final drafts. During the task, pupils were given the opportunity to develop various writing skills including adapting their writing to the purpose and reader, explaining their ideas fully and choosing words thoughtfully. Pupils were encouraged to vary the order of words to add interest and precision. Pupils also looked at how rights impact a person's identity. Pupils discussed and debated in groups which rights would impact a person's identity the most and why. Pupils were able to develop many oracy skills including contributing to group discussions, helping everyone take part and assist their group to reach an agreement. In year 8 English lessons, pupils looked at the pros and cons of the school canteen selling turkey and Christmas time and wrote a letter to the school canteen, sharing their views. These skills have then been transferred into humanities lessons where pupils have written a letter based on the criminal system.



In upper school, pupils in year 9 English lessons have experienced a range of different reading tasks linked to the topics 'Extreme Sports' and 'Heroes and Villains'. Here, they have had to read a range of texts and select key quotations to support their responses for a variety of GCSE language style questions such as How do the writers compare... or What are the thoughts and feelings of... This mirrors the work completed in year 10 and 11 as part of the literature and language qualification. In art lessons, pupils have looked at Disney characters, exploring colours and using inference to understand the meaning of different colours. Based on this, they have then created their version of 'A Face of Two Halves' and justified the reasons for their decisions in their artwork. Across all year groups, pupils also look at reading strategies in isolated lessons or during form time where they develop a range of different reading skills that will support them as they move across each year group.

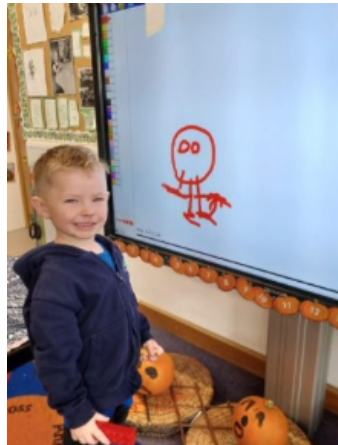




## DCF across the curriculum

Within lower school, we are developing the pupils' DCF skills across the curriculum. The pupils have been developing their digital production skills by using a range of digital tools creatively to add text and images onto a digital platform.

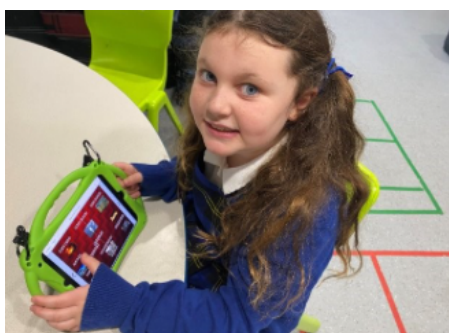
Reception class has been using the paint programme on the interactive whiteboard to draw and write about animals and their habitats.



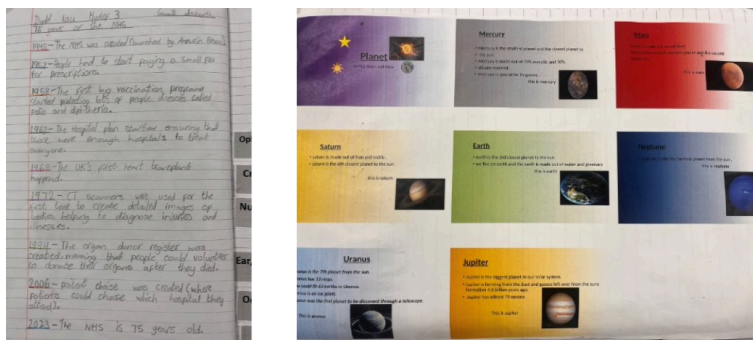
Year one pupils have been using seesaw to add text and images to a page. Pupils have been creating animal houses, taking a photograph, adding a layer of text and then saving their work in their folders.



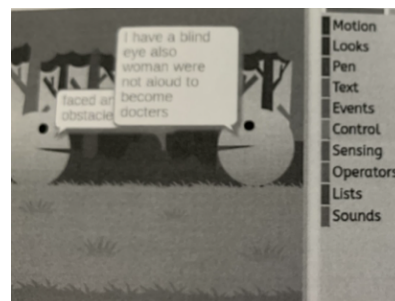
Year 2/3 have been using book creator to create information posters around their themes. Pupils have been very creative adding backgrounds and layers of text and images to their posters.



In year 4, we have had many opportunities to develop DCF skills. This has included producing using digital software in groups to research and create information sources about the solar system. Pupils were able to collaborate and share their work, providing opportunities to give each other feedback and ways forward. As part of the them 'disease' in the autumn term, pupils had to research, sort and order key dates linked to the NHS during which pupils developed their data and computational skills.



In year 5, as part of our rights theme, we used Hwb resource 'J2 visual', a useful coding platform to develop our coding skills. Using our new skills we created and developed our own animations demonstrating the discrimination that female scientists faced in the 19th century.



In year 6, pupils are involved in a project with Screen 4 Schools Wales, in alliance with Welsh film making company 'Wolf Studios'. Pupils are learning the stages of film making through online tutorials including special effects make up, storyboarding, filming and editing. By engaging in a green screen activity, pupils are able to build on various skills across multiple areas of the DCF. This has included 'Producing' skills where pupils create and edit digital content and use different software to add images, sound, music and effects. Pupils are able to develop 'Interacting and Collaboration' skills as they plan their project in a group linked to the theme of 'change' blending digital literacy with cross curricular learning. Pupils have also become more confident in trouble shooting technical issues and thinking critically to develop their problem solving skills. The project also fosters creativity and innovation skills as they experiment with different digital tools, blending technical skills with creativity in an engaging and purposeful way.





## National energy saving week

This week, pupils and staff in Gwyn have been getting involved in National Energy Saving Week, an exciting initiative focused on saving energy. Pupils throughout Gwyn have been fantastic, monitoring classrooms to ensure that lights, interactive whiteboards, and computers are switched off when not in use. It's great to see their enthusiasm for reducing unnecessary electricity use!

During the week, lessons have been adapted, with teachers encouraging creative ways to bring light into our activities, like making the most of natural sunlight. We've been lucky with the weather has been on our side! Pupils have also been learning about why saving energy is so important and how simple things like switching off devices can really benefit the environment.

To help us monitor how successful our energy saving week has been, the caretakers have taken meter readings for us to compare our usage and see how we're doing as a school. Overall, this week has been a great opportunity for everyone to learn and take part in making a positive difference together!



## Uniform

As a reminder, pupils are expected to wear the correct uniform to school. In Nant building hoodies and leggings are not part of school uniform and shoes must all be plain black. A link to the uniform for each year group can be found as follows:

<https://www.ysgolnantgwyn.co.uk/parents-and-pupils/school-uniform>

## Independent learning

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 receive positive points for all tasks that they complete. Please could you encourage your child to complete these tasks - sheets are emailed to pupils and mailed to parents at the same time so that you are aware of the expectations for your child.

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