

3-16

# Ebbw Fawr Learning Community

## Newsletter

### Dear Parents & Carers

As the end of term approaches we can look back with pride on the progress at Ebbw Fawr this year. It's been fantastic to see the new secondary phase building coming to life with students actively engaged in their learning. We have further improvements planned for the summer break including a full repaint of the main street area and corridor spaces and alterations to the bistro area to enlarge our dining facilities.

We have had many team and individual successes this year and we await with anticipation our second GCSE results in August. We fully expect to have improved on last year's performance. We have already seen increases in performance at Key Stage 2 and 3 and while we have much to do we believe we are on track and making strong progress.

Our students consistently set high standards in terms of appearance and behaviour and I remain grateful to parents for continuing to support our drive to maintain these high standards. Our attendance rate is improving and is now close to the

Wales average, we will however continue to set even higher standards and use all means open to us to hold parents to account for any non-attendance. We are also grateful to parents who have supported our consultation evenings, parent forums, PTFA meetings, MAT evenings, drama or music productions and sports events.

At this time of year we also say farewell to a small number of staff who are moving on in their careers, we wish them well and thank them for their work at Ebbw Fawr. We also say farewell to Mrs Barrett who is retiring after 33 years service.

Finally can I thank all the staff team and Governors for their tremendous work rate this year, their commitment to driving up standards is second to none and I feel privileged to be leading such a talented team.

Hopefully all our students will enjoy their summer break and will return safe to school on the 2<sup>nd</sup> September.

With best wishes

Graeme Harkness  
Director

### Calendar Dates



#### INSET DAY

Monday 1st September 2014

#### SCHOOL STARTS

Tuesday 2nd September 2014

#### INSET DAY

Friday 24th October 2014

#### HALF TERM

Monday 27th October 2014 -  
Friday 31st October 2014

#### INSET DAY

Friday 19th December 2014

#### CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS

Monday 22nd December 2014 -  
Friday 2nd January 2015

## Sponsored Sky Dive



On September 20th 2014, Year 10 Student, Corum Stratton will be giving something back to the Community. Corum's dad Graham is Wales' longest surviving recipient of a liver transplant which

was carried out at The Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham. In order to raise money for such a good cause Corum and Graham have agreed to do a sponsored tandem sky dive to raise money for the Hospital and would really appreciate any donation you can spare. Donating is easy, just follow the JustGiving page link below and click Donate:-

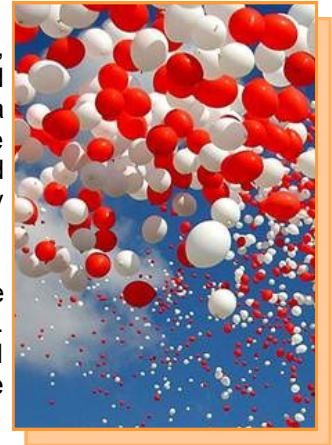
<http://www.justgiving.com/owner-email/pleasesponsor/graham-stratton>

JustGiving sends your donation straight to Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham Charity so it's a quick and safe way to donate. Good Luck Corum and Graham....dig deep if you can!!!

## Liam Gardner

On the 1<sup>st</sup> May Liam Gardner, Year 4, tragically died. Liam was a sweet natured and fun loving little boy with an infectious smile, a real sense of adventure and a fantastic sense of humour. Liam was popular with staff and students alike and he will always be missed by all of us at Ebbw Fawr.

We held a memorial service for Liam and the students had a balloon release in his memory. Our deepest sympathy and thoughts were and continue to be with Liam's family and close friends.



## Safe Cycling



On Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> 2014, half of class 11 went out to do safe cycling. The course was run by Steve and James from Bryn Bach Park in Tredegar. First of all we did the safety check. We had to check our bodies but most importantly we made sure our helmets were fitted well. We were then ready for the cycling course. Our bikes were

set to go. It was called **ABC**. A stands for **Air**, B stands for **Brakes** and C stands for **Chain**. Then we were taught to stand on the left side of the bike because, if a car comes, we would be on the pavement so we won't get hit. We then decided to push our bikes up to the football pen. James told us we were going to have a fun game to play. We played going in and out of the cones. Next we had to park our bikes in a certain way so that we could fit all the bikes in a small space. We all did it wrong at the start but then Steve showed us how to do it right. We are looking forward to our next session and to receiving a certificate for the National Standards Cycle Training Level 1 and 2 Awards.

## Parliament Visit - March 2014

Young learners got the chance to walk the corridors of power in a bid to bring politics into the classroom. Year 10 and 11 groups visited the Houses of Parliament as part of their Welsh Baccalaureate studies. Alongside learning about the ins and outs of how Westminster works - including making their own parties and debating policies - the group got to grill Blaenau Gwent MP Nick Smith on everything from tuition fees to alcohol prices. Mr Smith said: "It was fantastic to see so many young people from Blaenau Gwent not only interested in the wider world, but also having real opinions on the things that matter. These future voters are just some of the talented and able students our borough produces, and I was only too happy to help out. No matter their age, every constituent deserves the right to hold me to account and have their voice heard equally".



John Hillier, Welsh Baccalaureate Coordinator said: "We are trying to make politics interesting for the students, and it's been a real opportunity for them to come to the Houses of Parliament".

The remainder of our trip continued with a visit to the 4D cinema experience then onto our flight on the London Eye. By now everyone was famished and deserved their dinner with the Theatre to follow the life of a miner's son in "Billy Elliot". Day 2 was never going to start off lightly, after a good hearty breakfast we packed our bags and headed back to the city centre and to the London Dungeons.



Our final journey of the day took us over to Madame Tussauds, this time to meet the stars of yesterday and today. The students expressed their gratitude to what was, in their opinion, one of the best trips they have attended and they had wished that their time in London could have been extended.

# Pwry Drwy Stori

This term the Primary Phase has seen the launch of the Summer term Booktime Pori Drwy Stori, which has been running all through the last year.

These sessions were introduced to all parents, who have been invited into Reception classrooms, listening to 'Lola and Charlie - Excuse me But That's MY Book' with great enthusiasm! Teachers have been demonstrating effective reading strategies, concepts about print, but more importantly, demonstrating how to bring the *enjoyment* back into reading! Children have been encouraged to work with parents during the sessions to investigate speech marks, captions and funny voices!! Parents have taken home 'homework' to complete by the next session, book reviews, designing book covers - and have done so with great enjoyment!

We have a Welsh book to start this week - with great anticipation. The sessions have been a wonderful opportunity for parents to see first hand how their children are encouraged to not only learn *how* to read, but how to make it all an *enjoyable experience*, instilling hopefully, a lifelong interest in books.

## Primary Phase Library



The news from the primary phase library is very exciting. After it was agreed to re-launch the library and to promote the importance of reading we have been working really hard to create the best library we can. KS2 students were given the opportunity to apply for the position of student librarian and all the children were asked to complete a questionnaire about what they wanted from the library. Foundation phase children completed these in small groups. The response was amazing and we now have seventeen dedicated children working towards their librarian badges, giving up their lunchtimes to catalogue and label all the books and to help develop the library; in the future they will be ready to help run the library. We are also extremely grateful to a generous donation from the PTFA which has meant we have been able to order hundreds of new fiction books. The students had an input in choosing the books that they wanted and hopefully this will encourage all the children to pick up a book and enter the amazing worlds that lie between the pages.

## Art News...



Congratulations to Megan Johnson, Year 8, who designed and had cast a commemorative plaque to mark the very special occasion of the Commonwealth Games Queen's Baton Relay passing through Ebbw Vale on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2014.



GCSE Art and Design Moderation took place on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2014. A sample of work was seen from across the entries and as usual the quality and standard of the work produced by GCSE Art and Design students was outstanding. Well done to all involved! See school website for more images.



## Healthy Eating Week



The Primary Phase has completed a very successful Healthy Eating week. It kicked off with a Walk to School Week, where each class kept a record of how many children walked to school each day, with a certificate awarded to Class 7 who had a total of 35 children walking to school over the week.

During the week, activities ranged from making healthy wraps using lovely fresh salad, vegetables and fruit, cutting and dicing to make fresh fruit salads and fruit kebabs and following their own recipes to make fresh fruit juice cocktails.

# Pathways to Success



Recently the Education and Skills Minister informed us of a new improvement programme called Pathways to Success, forty secondary schools will be part of a multi-million pound improvement programme to increase performance in Welsh schools.

Schools have been chosen using a range of performance data and information that highlights the challenges they face in terms of their circumstances and stage of development. They have been chosen as it is believed they have the potential to deliver swift and positive improvements for learners.

Working with their Schools Challenge Cymru advisor, each Pathways to Success School will be given the opportunity to access proven expertise to deliver a package of support that is individually tailored to meet each school's needs and the needs of their learners. This will be backed by around £20 million of Welsh Government funding. The programme will also provide targeted support to participant schools' cluster primaries in order to address challenges at the earliest opportunity and improve transition between these key stages of education. Making the announcement the Education and Skills Minister Huw Lewis said: *"I've made no secret of my desire for a relentless focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning here in Wales. These schools have been chosen as we believe they have the potential to make swift and lasting improvements which will benefit learners in the short term and long into the future."*

Ebbw Fawr Director Graeme Harkness said: *"Our staff and students are working very hard now to achieve the highest standards possible and this is reflected in our improving results. Anything which gives us added momentum has to be good news."*

# Youngest Female Bowler Selected For County



Lowri Powell, Year 8 is the youngest female bowler from Blaenau Gwent to be selected to play for the county. Lowri Powell has been playing bowls for Ebbw Vale Welfare Bowls Club ladies section since she was nine. She has also played Welsh youth indoor bowls in both the under 16's and 18's teams and she will soon play in the Welsh ladies singles under 25's tournament. Lowri has also qualified for the Welsh under 18's singles semi – final in September – pob lwc Lowri!

# Food Tasting Afternoon



Year 3 thoroughly enjoyed their food tasting afternoon. The children were able to try different foods from different countries around the world including: India, Mexico, USA, France, Italy and Wales. It was decided

by the children that the foods that came from the USA and Italy were the favourites and the French Brie was the least favourite food.

# Queens Commonwealth Baton Relay



On Saturday May 24th, Year 10 student Amy Richards, took part in the Queens Commonwealth Baton Relay here in Ebbw Vale. Amy embodies all the qualities of both an aspiring Commonwealth Games athlete and a member of Ebbw Fawr Learning Community. Her most distinctive attribute being commitment. Amy trains at the Heads of the Valley swimming club 9 sessions each week. Beginning her training sessions at 6:30am before continuing to school and then back to the pool for a final session in the evening.

# Ffion Collins - Spin Class

Ffion, in 8PB, has been delivering Spin classes at Ebbw Vale Sports Centre every Thursday after school to both students and staff, as part of the 5x60 Programme. Mr Mineur, who originally established the after-school session, has been instrumental in mentoring Ffion to a point where she is now delivering sessions by herself on a weekly basis. David Langdon, 5x60 Officer at the school said: *"Ffion has been absolutely brilliant delivering the Spin Classes after school. I*



*was introduced a while back and could not believe the maturity shown to not only deliver the sessions herself, but then promote them around the school, developing her own posters and flyers to help with this."*

# Hilston Park

On Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> June, twenty four keen students from our Primary Phase, along with three equally keen staff, made the long awaited trip to Hilston Park. On arrival in Hilston Park, after a brief talk, it was straight into the first activity which was Team Building. The children worked extremely well together and everyone managed to succeed. As a reward, the children were able to fire pneumatic rockets onto a parachute. Great fun!



angry wrestlers while the other learned forest skills, including building their own fire and eating toasted marshmallows. Everyone met for lunch and then swapped activities. The highlight of many people's day was the walk through the waist high mud followed by a go on the river slide! On our return to Hilston Park and after a hot shower, we ate another delicious dinner and again enjoyed the fantastic grounds.

That evening, after a delicious dinner, most children retired to their rooms to shower and change into their pyjamas. Fast forward to the morning when Mr Vaughan was woken up by an unnamed child knocking his door, wanting to know the time in case he had missed breakfast. The child was politely asked to return to his room as it was three o'clock! After the children had breakfast and made their own packed lunches on day two, it was straight to the minibuses and off canoeing or forest skills. One group canoed on the canal, playing games and generally getting wet when racing like

Friday was our final day and after breakfast we all headed towards the climbing wall for our high ropes activities. The highlight for me was when the staff did the crates challenge supported by the children. It was time for the children to get their own back on staff who'd woken them up early that morning. Some children were more helpful than others, whilst some were a little too helpful!

It was an absolute pleasure to visit Hilston Park with each and every one of the twenty four children who went. Their behaviour was outstanding and they really were a credit to themselves and Ebbw Fawr.

# Under 16 Rugby Tour



On Friday 20<sup>th</sup> June the Ebbw Fawr under 16 rugby squad set off from Ebbw Vale for a tour of North Yorkshire. For many of the students and staff the 2014 rugby tour was one of the best experiences they have ever had. Some of the most memorable elements of the tour was watching England v Sri

Lanka playing test match cricket at Headingley, Leeds. The group then watched the Wakefield v Wigan Warriors rugby league game as guests of Wakefield Wildcats, meeting players before and after the game. On the rugby pitches of Yorkshire the Ebbw Fawr under 16's team faced a series of challenges from various teams from the North of England in a 7 a side tournament. Our students performed superbly winning the tournament, succeeding in all 6 of their matches against some excellent opposition. To achieve six victories was a fantastic achievement and completed what has been a remarkable year for the students who will leave Ebbw Fawr with some life long memories. We hope to continue our relationship with Saddal Rugby Club who hosted the tournament and have invited us to attend their tournament again next year. As staff we were extremely pleased with the behaviour of our boys, with the hotel staff complimenting them on their excellent conduct. Thanks to all the students for their efforts that ensured this was a positive and fantastic tour.



# Noah's Ark Assembly



The morning nursery children delivered an assembly on the theme of 'Noah's Ark' to an audience of proud parents. The singing was very loud as the children wanted to impress their mams and dads! The assembly was followed by a PACT session. Parents and Grandparents did a brilliant job at making model arks with the children.



## Ebbw Fawr Actors A Huge Success On The Local Stage

Five of our talented actors, who are company members of Blaenau Gwent Youth Theatre, wowed audiences in a recent production of DNA by playwright Dennis Kelly at the Beaufort Theatre. This dark play sees the characters drawn into a world of deception as they battle to find a solution to a secret they are all keeping. The parts were performed with maturity and complete professionalism. I am so proud to see our students trading the boards in the local community with such flair.

A big round of applause to: Jordan Mills, Paris Mcguire, Bethan Rowland, Lana Bennett of Year 10 and Emma Mackenzie Year 9.

## Junior Aspirations

Our first visit with Junior Aspirations was great fun. We played numerous games involving team work. We also wrote down achievements we had experienced, that we were proud of. We then swapped our sheets with our friends and we had to write down on our partner's sheets what talents and skills they had to have to accomplish that achievement.



The second Junior Aspirations lesson was with the store manager of Ebbw Vale Tesco. Firstly we divided into groups and did a quiz. We had to answer questions about Tesco, e.g. 'How many people do you think work for all the Tesco stores in Britain, altogether?'. The winning team won a prize from Tesco! Next, we watched a video on how Tesco first started. We talked about all the different jobs you can get in Tesco and what skills and qualifications you require to have a certain job.

Our most recent Junior Aspirations lesson was about University. We discussed all the different things about university and all the lessons you can take. It was a really helpful lesson because it helped us realise how important university can really be and how much of an impact it can have on your education.

We have really been enjoying Junior Aspirations and learning things that will help us in the future. We are really looking forward to our upcoming trip to Newport University on the 9<sup>th</sup> July!

## TAPAS Mental Maths

The primary phase have introduced TAPAS mental maths to their classrooms. This successful scheme is a fun method to develop numeracy skills throughout the phase. It is a hands on maths scheme which encourages students to recall number quickly. Staff have been busy making resources and display boards to go in classrooms to help support teaching and learning. The results are already showing just a few weeks in! There will be opportunities in the near future for parents to come in and learn about the mental calculations and methods taught to their children to help support them at home.



## Enterprise Activity Day

Ebbw Fawr Learning Community were fortunate to have had the excellent services from Business Dynamics and Graham Gunstone to deliver the Enterprise activities to all Year 9 pupils. The Team Enterprise activity is aimed at pupils in transition from KS3 to KS4 and will form part of their Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification. The whole of the year group participated in the activity and were split into the 8 classes (4 teams of mixed ability).

Their objective was to come up with a new soft drink product that would be suitable for young sporting enthusiasts to consume, but involved:

- Create and design a new soft drink product
- Create a poster to advertise the soft drink, including a brand, a logo and a slogan
- Designing and building a model point of sale
- Costing of their product
- Presenting their work to the other teams

The activity provided students with an opportunity to learn about enterprise and company management, enabled pupils to set up and run companies in a controlled environment over a short period of time and also encouraged a sense of responsibility.



# Class 11 - Healthy Eating

In the week prior to half term, Class Eleven were given a challenge, to design and make a 'Healthy Snack Bar', which MUST include at least one fruity ingredient. However, they had to work in teams and had to democratically elect a leader to 'be in charge' of the decision making process. Firstly, they started off by tackling the difficult job of tasting a range of commercially available snack bars, in a packaging free task, to decide which were the tastiest on offer. Lots of numeracy activities ensued where the children conducted a survey of the results and calculated the mean, median and mode, before constructing graphs to show their results. Next was to examine the packaging to see how they could attract their target audience, deciding upon which graphics and lettering looked the most appealing, which colours grabbed attention and how much of the packaging should contain words/pictures, etc. Lots of reading and discussion! The next stage involved designing the preferred snack bar, with a choice of bases and flavours on offer. The children had to search supermarket websites and online recipes to help them develop their intended product, producing a detailed shopping list with appropriate quantities and costs so that their teacher could do a quick but enormous supermarket sweep. Eventually the children were allowed to get stuck in, making their snack bars in groups, from the measuring to cooking

stage, taking it in turns to stir, measure, pour, mix and decorate until the cooled and delicious smelling tray bakes could be divided into suitably sized portions. The hardest part was keeping eager mouths away from the scrummy results. Then, once portioned the children had to design and make the packaging, using 3D shape nets, which they increased in scale, before packaging their snack bars for 'consumption'. Here are some of the quotes:

*"It was a 'hands-on' activity. It was really fun how you had to measure and then cook the snack bars. The snack bar my team made had strawberries in it and was very tasty in the end. We called it 'Melt in your mouth strawberry surprise'"* By Tyler Williams

*"It was really fun to do this activity because we don't get to do this kind of thing very often. It was good to be able to work all together in a team and I would definitely do it again."* By Aleece Jones



## Able Radio



We were delighted when First Campus was able to offer eight Year 10 more able and talented (MAT) students the opportunity to work on a media based project called 'Roots'. Working with staff at Able Radio, Pontypool the students are learning about making a radio programme and recorded a 1 hour request show. Able Radio is a non-profitable organisation that aims to give a voice to people with disabilities and students will have a chance to work with and support this ethos. Following on from that, they will be asked to do some research into their personal heritage and record a sound byte.

The project is 2 hours per week for 6 weeks and during this time the students will develop a range of transferrable skills such as team work, communication and self-confidence. Students that have taken part in this programme will use it towards their Welsh BaccaLaureate Qualification, particularly Community Participation and Active Citizenship. During the 4th of 6 sessions each student had the opportunity to visit the radio station in Pontypool to meet the staff and record their session using the fantastic recording studio facilities. The following pupils can be seen enjoying their production at Able Radio:



Charlotte Godding – 10SK  
 Liberty Pennington – 10CH  
 Chelsea Meredith – 10AG  
 Deiniol Shimell – 10DH  
 Zoe Young – 10CH  
 Ewan Williams – 10VW  
 Ryan Wetten – 10AGr

## Year 7 - 9 Gwent Rounders Tournament



This Summer has been another successful rounders season. Ebbw Fawr entered 3 Year 7 teams into the district tournaments finishing 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> and the Year 9 team finished 2<sup>nd</sup>. An excellent effort from all the pupils involved – they really were a credit to the school. They demonstrated fantastic application of skills, techniques and tactics but most importantly brilliant communication and team work. Da iawn ferched!

# Examinations 2014

Congratulations to students in Years 11, 10 and 9 for their excellent behaviour and attitude during the past six weeks. External invigilators have praised our students for their co-operation and support. Attendance and time-keeping was excellent. Well done to all!

Exam results day - Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> August 2014. Year 11 to arrive at 9.00am. Year 10 and Year 9 to arrive at 10.00am.

Students who have taken AS level examinations will have their results posted to them on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> August 2014. If your child is absent for results day and you wish to make alternative arrangements please contact Mrs D Thomas, Examinations Officer.

## Athletics



The following students qualified for the County Athletics Schools finals at Spytty Park:

Elai Roberts 8RB, Dylan Beese 8PB, Rosina Rooke 8DHi, Becci Harper 8JM, Callum, Weaver 7SBo and Chelsea Rymer 7KH.

All students did very well, with Dylan Beese winning the 800 metres in a personal best time of 1 minute 20 seconds. Once again we are extremely proud of Jodi Beynon as she has qualified and will be representing Ebbw Fawr Learning Community and South East Wales in the Welsh Schools Amateur Athletics Championships on Saturday 5th July in the 80m hurdles and long jump. Bendigedig Jodi!

### **Important safety message for the parents and young people of Blaenau Gwent from the Gwent Public Health Team**

Between November 2012 and July 2013 over 1,200 cases of measles were reported across Wales, with those aged 10 to 18 years old most affected. Whilst Public Health Wales is encouraged by the increased MMR uptake in children under two, we remain concerned about older age groups. Vaccination levels in children and young people between 10 and 18 years of age in Gwent are currently too low and there is the risk of a measles outbreak. Measles is a highly infectious disease that can cause serious medical complications.

**The Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccine is the safest and most effective way to protect you against measles, mumps and rubella. It protects against mumps and rubella too.**

Anyone between the ages of 4 and 25 years of age who has not received two doses of MMR should catch up at the earliest opportunity by contacting their GP surgery. MMR vaccination for the under 25 years of age is free. Please take this opportunity to protect yourselves against measles.

## Ambassadors



Throughout the course of this term we have undertaken the application process for selecting the Ambassadors of Ebbw Fawr Learning Community. The process is a structured format open to all Year 10 students in preparation for their role in Year 11. Students have to apply in writing by submitting a letter of application indicating their suitability to the role. Potential candidates are then shortlisted by Senior Leadership Team, Leader of Learning and Leader of Care and Guidance. The shortlist is then approved by all staff. Finally Senior Ambassadors are selected from successful written applications by a 15 minute interview with Senior Leadership Team.

It is my pleasure to announce the following candidates were successful in their application to become Ambassadors of the Community due to their personal conduct and selfless input in events that take place in and out of the school working day : **Charlotte Godding, Libby Jones, Tomos Willis, Jordan Mills, Sam Pritchard, Jamie Scriven, Lucy Griffiths, Deiniol Shinell, Maria Roszkowska, Kainat Mughal, Aisha Brown, Michael Bennett, Lana Bennett, Paris McGuire, Ellys Connor, Bethan Rowland, Sam Munkley, Morgan Angwin, Libby Pennington, Zoe Young, Ewan Williams, Amelia Page, Katie Griffiths, Morgan Reed, Matthew Jarrett Lewis, Sonny Davies.**

To all ambassadors 'thank you for your applications and we look forward to you taking on your new role'. Miss V Roberts – Ambassador Coordinator.

## School Term Dates

### 2014/2015 Academic Year

Term	Start	Half Term Starts	Half Term Ends	Term Ends
Autumn	01/09/14	27/10/14	31/10/14	19/12/14
Spring	05/01/15	16/02/15	20/02/15	27/03/15
Summer	13/04/15	25/05/15	29/05/15	20/07/15

May Day: Monday 4th May 2015

### 2015/2016 Academic Year

Term	Start	Half Term Starts	Half Term Ends	Term Ends
Autumn	01/19/15	26/10/15	30/10/15	18/12/15
Spring	04/01/16	15/02/16	19/02/16	24/03/16
Summer	11/04/16	30/05/16	03/06/16	20/07/16

May Day: Monday 2nd May 2016