

3-16

Ebbw Fawr Learning Community

Newsletter

Dear Parents & Carers,

With Christmas rapidly approaching it's a pleasure to introduce this newsletter and to look back on the work of Ebbw Fawr over the last term.

The euphoria of our examination successes in August seem to be in the distant past, we are now focussing heavily on next year's outcomes with Year 11's having Mock Examinations in January before the final push to the real thing later in the year. Additional support classes are now on offer with free school to home transport available for three nights every week. We have seen an increase in our work with parents this term and articles on the various ways parents can become involved in school life are reported in the newsletter, we are particularly pleased with the Chat@EFLC initiative and will be developing that further next term. Our involvement in the Welsh Government Pathways to Success programme is likely to see a further large investment in resources early in the New Year.

Our students consistently set new standards and are an amazing group of individuals. We have enjoyed drama and music productions both in and outside of school over the previous few weeks, all to full audiences, our sporting success continues, with a little bit of luck we might have become

regional champions in football with Year 7 and Year 8 beaten in close final games. Our gymnastic squad swept the board at the national championships. A large number of students gained 100% Attendance Awards at recent ceremonies and we have seen success in a range of national competitions.

Our students have also shown their generosity and concern for others with the strong likelihood that they will have raised over £5,000 this term alone for good causes.

I am also grateful to the staff who continue to go the extra mile for each of our students many giving freely of their time in evenings and even during weekends and holidays to help students get better outcomes.

Finally my thanks go to the Parents who continue to back us with full support, we have seen large increases in parental attendance at consultation evenings, we have excellent standards of uniform and appearance and our students are a credit to you all.

May I wish you all a Happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

G Harkness

G Harkness
Director

Calendar Dates



INSET DAY

Friday 19th December 2014

CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS

Monday 22nd December 2014 -
Friday 2nd January 2015

START OF TERM

Monday 5th January 2015

YEAR 11 INTERNAL MOCK EXAMS

Monday 12th January 2015 -
Friday 23rd January 2015

YEAR 11 PARENTS EVENING

Thursday 12th February 2015

HALF TERM

Monday 16th February 2015 -
Friday 20th February 2015

EISTEDDFOD

Friday 27th February 2015

YEAR 9 PARENTS EVENING

Thursday 12th March 2015

Jack's Appeal

Ebbw Fawr Learning Community was recently presented with a defibrillator as part of Jack's Appeal, as the campaign's target nears its halfway point after just nine months.

Back at the end of January this year the South Wales Argus teamed up with June and Grant Thomas, the parents of Jack Thomas who died suddenly in February 2012 from an undetected heart problem.

A campaign was launched to provide defibrillators to every secondary school in Gwent and the Rhymney Valley.

Recently Ebbw Fawr Learning Community became the latest school to be presented with a defibrillator, after ASDA Brynmawr raised more than £3,000 following a series of fundraising events.



It means 14 schools have now directly benefitted from Jack's Appeal, while at least five schools have bought their own defibrillator.

Speaking after the presentation on Friday, Graeme Harkness, Director, said: "We are delighted to be part of Jack's Appeal. We hope the defibrillator never gets used but are glad that it will be here if it is needed."

Senior Ambassadors Charlotte Godding and Jamie Scriven from year 11, both attended the event.

If you would like to help fundraise for Jack's Appeal, get involved on the new website, entitled 'Remembering Jack', on www.rememberingjack.co.uk.

100 % Attendance Awards 2013 - 2014

Well done to the following students who recently received an award from Blaenau Gwent for achieving 100% attendance for the academic year 2013 – 2014. This is a fantastic achievement and one they should be really proud of; Madeleine and Rosie Fairburn, Joshua and Ashley Davies, Tomas Biggs, Andrew Lines, Skye Whittle, Hannah Jenkins, Ethan Robinson Lowri Young Taylor Bowen, Hannah James, Chance Barrass, Chloe Morris, Jemma-Mai Roberts, Cai Dampier, Jeswin Jiji, Thomas Beynon, Ffion Morris, Aisha Brown, Chloe Davies, Ben Morgan, Kelsea Higginson, Ben Pinch, Eilys Connor, Rhianne Hillier, Jacob Perry, Amelia Hill, Joshua Davies, Katie Griffiths, Caitlin James, Ffion Witcomb, Tanni Jones-Probert, Morgan Jones, Bethan Lewis, Ewan Williams.



Flag Bearer



Well done to Isaac Grist (Year 7) who recently won a competition to be a mascot at the recent Wales v Fiji rugby match. It was a great honour and privilege for Isaac and his family and a day they will never forget. As part of the day Isaac received a WRU flag and hoodie signed by the players.

Festival of Remembrance

A huge well done to Year 9 pupils Chloe Price, Katherine Jones and Jasmine Morgan for taking part in the Festival of Remembrance on Friday 7th November. The girls performed a contemporary dance which was thoroughly enjoyed by all. Thank you to the girls for putting in the effort and time to choreograph and practice the performance. Da iawn!



Science Week in the Primary Phase



The week before October half term the Primary Phase enjoyed a Science week. A lot of varied activities took place, from a test to determine whether the heights of shadows change in Year 6 to looking at the body in Year 4. In the nursery there were exciting activities such as finding out how magnets work and in Reception and Years 1 and 2 observing changes by making bread and butter, where they certainly enjoyed the tasting afterwards!

Romania Appeal



Well done to students in 9DW who were very generous in their Romania appeal, they brought in enough items to fill 3 boxes.

Welsh Schools' Trampoline Championship



On Sunday 23rd November Ebbw Fawr took part in the Welsh Schools Trampoline Championship. More than 500 competitors took part from 80 Welsh schools. Ebbw Fawr enjoyed a highly successful day with the following notable performances:

U14 girls
Team 1st and 2nd

U14 girls beginners category
Individual 3rd Rosie Wilkshire
Team 2nd.

U14 girls disability
1st Millie (Amelia) Elliot

U14 boys Beginners
1st Dylan Steadman

U19 girls Beginners category
1st Tegan Oliver
3rd Holly Dobbs
Team 1st



Message from a parent...

"I would just like to take this opportunity to thank you for yesterday and your guided tour of such a fabulous school, both my husband and myself were very impressed. It was lovely to meet you and your team at Ebbw Fawr and we look forward to our son starting with you in September."

A Parent from a local school after the Open Evening event.

Debating Club

EFLC has recently started a Debating Club for year 9-11 students. They will engage in formal debates on a range of topics. Their first debate will be "This house would make Britain a non-military zone." They also hope to support the school's application for the third Green Flag Award by holding a debate on an environmental issue such as fracking before the end of the Autumn Term.

Miss A. Morgan and Mrs C. Hart, who run the club, are hoping that the skills learned will help them in presenting themselves well in their chosen careers. The club hopes to compete in national events and have question and answer sessions with experienced debaters who now have careers in professions such as law.



U19 girls:
1st Chloe Hayward
3rd Zoe Young
Jt. 4th Amelia Page and Rebecca Birch.
6th Shannon Thomas
7th Ellys Connor
8th Kelsey Adams
10th Shannon Walsh
Team 1st, 2nd and 3rd.
(There were 40 competitors in this category)

U19 boys elite
1st Corum Stratton.



Many congratulations to all on tremendous success and reward for all the hours of hard work. All our students were fantastic ambassadors, a credit to the school, themselves and the many parents that turned up to support them. Special thanks to Holly Padfield and Carl Davies for a long 12 hour shift also thanks to Mr & Mrs Stratton of Roofs-R-Us for their support for the trampoline team.

Community Engagement Activities

It has been a busy term at Ebbw Fawr Learning Community. A wide range of activities have taken place recently involving many of our pupils and parents/carers. We have been looking at ways of improving links with the local community, supporting with home learning and providing guidance for pupils with aspirations for university.

Chat@EFLC

Ebbw Fawr Learning Community has taken its outreach work with parents to a new level by opening a town centre office on a weekly basis. The Chat@EFLC initiative is part of the school's work to engage with parents to help their child's learning needs. Staff from the school are available every Friday afternoon in the town centre on a drop in basis and can answer questions from the full age range of the school. One of the first visitors was Nick Smith MP who has given his wholehearted support to the idea.

Mr Smith said "I know how hard the school is trying to develop its links with parents; this is a smashing idea and places the school at the heart of its local community"



Ebbw Fawr's Assistant Director Anthony Ager said "There are times when parents find it hard to get into school to talk to us so we thought we would go to them – it's a simple idea but surprisingly one that we have not seen happen elsewhere".

'University Taster Days' MAT Evening



Recently, our Key Stage 4 more able and talented students have been working with a company called 'University Taster Days'. They have been looking at the process of applying to university, the financial aspects and what to expect when they start university and what life is like for a university undergraduate. The sessions also included a presentation in the evening for parents, giving advice and guidance on

the processes involved when your child applies for university. The event is part of our commitment to raising aspirations of our pupils, giving them support from a very early stage in the processes involved in going to university. In the months to come, there will be more workshops, presentations and a visit in the New Year to Oxford University, where pupils will be given the chance to talk with university tutors and students and also get to sample life as a student in Oxford.

Year 7 Skills Evening

We recently hosted a 'Skills Evening' where parents and pupils took part in workshops looking at English, Maths, Science and using ICT to support learning. Together, parents and pupils followed a sample timetable, going to lessons where parents were able to experience the types of activities that their children undertake daily. The purpose of the evening was to raise awareness of the skills needed by pupils in school, but also to provide support for parents who would like to improve their own basic skills. A large number of parents attended the evening and thoroughly enjoyed the experience of being 'back in the classroom'. We will be hosting the 'Skills Evenings' every term and all parents are welcome to attend. More information about the next event will be sent to parents in due course.

Primary 'Class Assemblies & PACT Sessions'

Over the last term many classes have participated in class assemblies and PACT sessions. Parents have been invited to watch the assemblies and to take part in activities with their children following each assembly. These sessions have been well attended and enjoyed by all.

Primary 'Read Write Inc Parent Sessions'

Over the past five weeks parents of pupils in the Foundation Phase have been invited to join their children in weekly Read Write Inc sessions. In these sessions parents have been learning about different strategies taught within class. This has allowed them to support their children more effectively at home in reading and writing.

Blood and Bones and Gory Bits

Since October half term Year 3 and 4 have been learning about the human body. Year 3 have been focussing on teeth, the skeleton and the importance of a balanced diet (including the 5 main food groups). Children have enjoyed learning about the body and about historical figures relating to medicine, in particular Florence Nightingale. Year 4 have

been focussing on internal body parts and systems as well as the skeleton. Their studies have been more in depth and have included many more scientific terms for each body part. Children particularly enjoyed looking at the effects of cola, milk and water on bones. Class 8 did a superb class assembly based on the topic, whereby parents and pupils alike learnt many facts both in English and in Welsh!

Project - Connect to Africa



Before the summer break, the PE department collected together 6 bags of old incomplete kits (that had definitely seen better days), a few old balls and badminton nets. The bags were taken to a local man, Mark Davies, who is currently working for an organisation called 'Connect to Africa'.

Harvest Festival

Pupils at the Primary Phase were very proud to present a large amount of items that had been collected for the Harvest Festival Service to Mr Gareth Jones who would be donating them on our behalf to children in Romania. The picture shows just a small amount of the total collected that would be making its way to needy children via mini bus with Mr Jones' son Nathan and other members of the local community.



Year 10 Rugby

The talented Ebbw Fawr Year 10 rugby team today entertained St Columbus College from Dublin, Ireland. St Columbus College are an independent school that are currently touring throughout Wales and England. Our students represented the school and area superbly putting on a fantastic display of running rugby, scoring 8 tries in the process and winning 50-5 against a very physical Irish team. It would be unfair to single out any individual players

in what was once again a fantastic team effort.

Following this game Ebbw Vale College rugby team featuring many of our past students then played St Columbus at under 18 level, producing another high standard game which resulted in a respectable 8-8 draw. Special thanks to EVRFC for providing the food and refreshments for all of the players and staff involved today.



Inclement Weather

With weather warnings starting to appear could you please take note of the school's procedures regarding inclement weather. We have a new texting service called **Call Parent** which will send a text message to the mobile phone numbers we have on your child's records. It is therefore vital that the school has up-to-date contact numbers. Please let us know if you have recently changed your number. Official statements will also be issued on the school website (www.ebbwfawr.co.uk) and Blaenau Gwent websites. Please note, we do not have an official Facebook page and no statements will be authorised on social media websites.

The decision to close is made very early by Senior Management after a visit to both sites to assess Health and Safety issues. The secondary site is on a main bus route and should therefore be cleared by the local council. As always, the safety of our students and staff is of paramount importance. Please do not ring reception asking for news and use the Call Parent option or the websites named above.

Ebbw Fawr Students go the extra mile...



Twenty eight pupils from Ebbw Fawr Learning Community took part in a sponsored walk on November 13th 2014 to raise money for the British Dyslexia Association. The students walked a ten mile distance in heavy wind and rain to raise funds and awareness about Dyslexia.

Faith Holbrook (A student at Ebbw Fawr Learning Community) said, "Not many people understand what dyslexia is and many students with dyslexia feel disadvantaged due to their disability. This means they can fall behind academically and/or become a behaviour problem inside and outside of school. We need to raise awareness so that people with dyslexia can be understood and be helped to succeed!"



Despite dreadful weather conditions the students, some parents and five members of staff went ahead with the walk and raised over £1000 for the worthy cause. Mr Harkness said, "We are incredibly proud of the students and staff involved in raising such a fantastic amount to help the very positive work undertaken by the BDA."

In addition to undertaking the sponsored walk many of our students entered the BDA national writers, inventors and artists competitions. Students are awaiting the results of these competitions but the feedback from Emma Abdulaal at the BDA was extremely positive and all students who entered the competition will be issued with certificates of achievement by the BDA.

Miss Astley said, "The students came up with the idea to undertake the sponsored walk and I was really grateful to have the support of parents and senior leadership when I put the idea to them. Students have completed PSE lessons and assemblies on dyslexia awareness, they have entered national and school based dyslexia awareness competitions and have also raised a huge amount of funds for the BDA. Words cannot express how proud I am of the students with SpLD/Dyslexia at Ebbw Fawr Learning Community. They are positive, enthusiastic and brave and should be applauded for their continuing achievements."

Swimming

A big 'llongyfarchiadau' congratulations to the following pupils on their fantastic performances at the county Urdd swimming gala in Pontypool on Thursday 20th November 2014:

Fletcher Beynon

Rhydd (Front Crawl) 3rd
Pili Pala (Butterfly) 3rd

Kian O'Connell

Broga (Breast Stroke) 1st
Pili Pala (Butterfly) 1st

Mackenzie Morgan

Pili Pala (Butterfly) 1st
Cymysg Unigol (IM) 1st

Amy Richards

Rhydd (Front Crawl) 1st
Pili Pala (Butterfly) 1st

Gianluca Joseph

Rhydd (Front Crawl) 3rd
Cefn (Back) 2nd

Tom Beynon

Broga (Breast Stroke) 3rd



Kian, Mackenzie and Amy finished first in their races - successfully qualifying for the nationals in January. We congratulate them on their efforts today, in particular their attempts to speak Welsh to many of their heads of the valley swimming club team mates who attend Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw and Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymini.

Community and Parent Governor

Ebbw Fawr would like to welcome Mrs Louise Crump, Parent Governor and Mr Chris Meredith, Community Governor to our Governing Body. A ballot was held in December, where parents voted for a Parent Governor from two nominations and Mrs Crump was duly elected. Following five nominations for Community Governor, Mr Meredith was also duly elected.

Ebbw Fawr raises £2200 for Children in Need



Staff and students raised a massive £2200 for Children in Need in a fun packed Friday at Ebbw Fawr Learning Community. Year 11 students and staff took the opportunity to dress up as super heroes with several Batman, Superman and Superwoman appearing in the corridors before school. Other year groups wore non uniform and paid handsomely for the privilege of leaving the normal purple at home for the day.

Six Year 8 students played table tennis for six hours raising over £180, whilst in the primary phase generous parents sent in over 1700 slices of cake for the afternoon tea party arranged by staff and the schools PtFA which contributed over £400 to the grand total. Mr Harkness, Director said: "We have had a fantastic day in both phases and raised a terrific amount for an excellent charity; it shows the generosity of our students and their parents, many thanks to all involved"

The Great Ebbw Fawr Christmas BAKE OFF

1HR TO COOK AND DECORATE
A THEMED CUPCAKE

QUALITY CONTROL



Mr Collins and Andrew, the School Chef helping to judge the competition....

THE WINNERS
CONGRATULATIONS!!!

A group of Year 9 food technology pupils were involved in a 'Christmas Cup Cake Bake Off' competition. In 1hr pupils were expected to cook and decorate a themed cake. The competition was strong and the standard was very good.

Winners were;

1st - Callie Rankin

2nd - Emma Pearce

3rd - Elen Johnston

Runner up - Bethan Daniels



Local AM discusses voting rights with Year 11

Senior Ambassadors from Ebbw Fawr Year 11 hosted a meeting with local AM Alun Davies. Mr Davies undertook a year group assembly and spoke to the group about his work and about the potential of voting rights been lowered to 16 year olds. Following a discussion the students voted narrowly in favour of the motion. Students also had the opportunity to provide feedback to Mr Davies. These included the following comments:

16 years olds have a different point of view which changes with age – they experience different things

Yes, because we need to show our contribution to the community

Yes, because it is our future and we should have a say in what happens to us

Yes, if you are old enough to have a job and pay taxes you should be able to vote

Yes, because being an older adult does not define your knowledge of politics

Yes, because it enables everyone to become a part of something and ensure the same rights amongst ourselves

Yes, as it is only fair for us to know what is going on in Wales today and to give our views

No, I think because at 16 some people are still immature and will vote for anything – I think 18 is the right age

No, I don't believe 16 years old are capable of making big decisions

No, not everybody at that age is mature enough

No, because politics is not taught in depth and at 16 – not enough people understand politics

No, because at 16 they can be influenced or misdirected

No, young people are not mature enough and might not understand the significance



New House System 3-16

From January the school will be introducing a new house system. A house system enhances student's sense of identity and belonging and creates a spirit of friendly competition, collaboration and co-operation. This will manifest itself in a wide range of inter-house events. Only a few may represent our school in a team, but the house system will allow every single student the opportunity to represent their house, whether it be academic, sporting or cultural activities. Students are encouraged to develop a sense of pride in their house, working not just for themselves but for others.

The four houses are based on Welsh Legends:

Branwen	-	Miss Abraham (Head of House)
Gelert	-	Mrs Aggett (Head of House)
Glyndwr	-	Miss Boulter (Head of House)
Taliesin	-	Miss Roberts (Head of House)

All students will receive a letter informing them of their house. The first competition will be the swimming gala on 21st January 2015.

Congratulations to India Powell 8KD who won the re naming of the bistro and restaurant competition. The new names are:

The Big Bite Bistro & The Big Bite Restaurant.

India was presented with a £30.00 high street voucher.

Wishing you a very Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year

