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End of Year letter

Dear parents, carers and pupils,

And just like that, the 2024-2025 academic year draws to a close. It's been an amazing year and an historic one in the life of the school as we completed, handed over and moved into our multi-million-pound extension. It's been a wonderful experience to see pupils and staff respond so well. I have been amazed by the resilience shown by the school community as there have been many compromises along the way. I am exceptionally proud of our pupils for the way they have dealt with the obvious upheaval and change...to all of you, thank you!!

As I write this letter, we have just finished the Going for Gold celebration assemblies and the leavers assembly. These were once again wonderful occasions where we celebrate the achievement and progress of all learners. To our leavers, thank you for enriching our lives. Thank you for your brilliant support for the school and thank you for making each and every day fun! We all wish you well for your future endeavors and we will always be here if you need anything in the future. The prom was a fitting celebration of some remarkable young people.

We also have a few staff retiring or moving to pastures new. To all of you, thank you for your contribution to the school. As with pupils, we will always be here if you need anything at all in the future.

This term has been exceptionally busy (just like the entire year). We love it that way (most of the time). There are so many highlights and so many brilliant examples of the progress pupils (and staff) make every day. I thought you would like to hear some examples:

- Live Music Now – it was wonderful to experience Chestnut and Cedar classes' fantastic music performance recently. I was so impressed with the musicality of all the pupils
- Reports – it was my pleasure to read the pupils' annual reports which I thought were really person centred and celebrated the progress pupils make
- Accreditation – most of our oldest learners have completed a variety of accredited courses which will give them qualifications for their future.
- Student Councils – have met regularly and members have attended governors' meetings to share their thoughts. The school council have finalised our new rules and reward system and our Eco-Committee were successful in their platinum Eco Schools re-accreditation
- Our Football team won the Inaugural South Wales Cup with a 4:1 victory in Bridgend
- Our e-sports team attended the Principality Stadium in the South Wales Cup and came 2nd
- Our college class entered an amazingly colourful wheelbarrow into the local competition and now have their wheelbarrow proudly placed in Ystrad Mynach
- Most classes have been to the new allotment and helped produce our first harvest of cucumbers and potatoes
- Beech Class went to the Senedd to see their art work take pride of place
- We have developed a new literacy strategy which we've begun to implement and look forward to sharing with parents ASAP in the new academic year
- Nearly all pupils have converted their statement of SEN over to an IDP as part of ALN reform.



- We've completed year 1 of our new curriculum and fully evaluated it. We've held a Dr Who Enrichment Day which was great fun and focused on Maths and Movement.
- We've developed our new aquarium sensory room and will look to complete this resource over the summer
- We've redecorated a large number of classrooms and refurbished 6 toilet blocks

As I explained in my June letter, the summer term is a time for reflection and continuous improvement planning. Leaders across the school have worked hard to evaluate a lot of information and to judge what is working well and what needs to further improve next year. Pupil, parent and staff questionnaires are a vital part of this evaluation. Thank you for completing them. We have listened to all comments and have put plans in place to improve the very few areas identified. I am delighted to inform you that our school improvement targets for next year are:

World Class Teaching and Learning – pushing boundaries and creating life changing moments

- Fully implement year 2 of the school's new curriculum by adding further content and coherence to the context booklets
- Further improve the provision and progress pupils make with their functional numeracy skills by implementing a numeracy strategy
- Further improve the provision and progress pupils make with their reading, writing & communication skills through consistent implementation of the literacy strategy
- Improve curriculum, work experience and accreditation arrangements for pupils in the Researchers and Aspire Phase (14-19 years old)
- Further develop pupils' digital competence experiences, skills and knowledge relating to ICT and assistive technology

Wellbeing, Equity and Inclusion – promoting multi-agency working to enrich quality of life

- Further engage with the local community to promote authentic learning experiences through increased educational visits with specific emphasis on our most complex pupils to ensure equity
- Further develop the role of N-GAGE in supporting the school's universal and targeted curriculum offers. Increase the specific focus on sensory processing, total communication and family links.
- Further embed Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) including Trauma Informed Schools (TIS) methodology across the school.
- Further develop training for staff which results in improved provision and outcomes in play development
- Continue to improve attendance across the school
- Introduce Lego Therapy as an important tool to improve engagement and wellbeing

Leadership That Inspires All

- Train all members of the leadership team in robust leadership models including situational leadership and The Colour Works
- Continue to refine a robust professional learning offer by utilising professional learning days, podcasts and creative ways to improve time management
- Achieve full compliance with Schools as Learning Organisations (SLO) leading to first publication of the 'Trinity Learning Journal' which will be a quality assured suite of enquiry case studies
- Further develop the staff AOLE workstream structures to improve distributed leadership
- Begin to engage with the international community via the Taith programme

Quality Assurance which promotes excellence for all

- Embed and further develop the rigour and robustness of the Monitoring, Evaluation and Review (MER) cycle to ensure consistency and equal weighting on accountability, development and collaboration.
- Further embed and improve the consistency and relevance of target setting by further embedding the new whole school approach which uses a range of specialist frameworks and guidance and links well to IDPs
- Formally review the Health and Wellbeing and Science and Technology AOLEs across all phases
- Enhance the use of performance data to add further rigour to the school's evaluative procedures

Learning Environment – delivering outstanding and capable environments for pupils to thrive

- Ensure the move into the new extension is systematic and child centred which reduces as much anxiety as possible
- Achieve full refurbishment of the existing school site by March 2026
- Improve the external learning environments at Heolddu and Pontllanfraith Satellite classes.
- Replace old playground equipment on the main site with purpose built equipment which meets the needs of learners
- Further develop horticulture and forest school provisions which creates additional vocational learning opportunities for all pupils

Continued Building Works – Roof Replacement

Thank you to everyone for your patience, perseverance, resilience and kindness as we continue to navigate once in a generation developments. The last 2 years have been dominated by building work and it's important to keep a clear focus on the wonderful benefits of such an extensive programme.

Works continue into next year as contractors turn their attention to phase 2 and 3 (of 5 phases) relating to the roof replacement. This is one of the reasons why we are having 3 INSET days in September.

- When we return in September, we will enter phase 3 which will affect the current Sunflower, Elm, Willow and Larch classrooms.
- Maple and Hazel will return to their old locations
- We are hopeful that these moves will take place before the children come back so they are not unnecessarily disrupted.
- At the end of phase 2 (in September), we will have a lot of playground space returned.
- Phase 3 will complete on 10th November and phase 4 will be completed on 19th January. Phases 3 and 4 affect our school hall which will be out of action from 8th September until 19th January. Don't worry...we're already making plans for Christmas festivities!!
- The hydrotherapy pool will hopefully be back in operation on 19th January
- The 5th and final stage will be completed on 9th March will all contractors off site by 16th March 2026

2025-2026 INSET Days

- Monday 1st September
- Tuesday 2nd September
- Wednesday 3rd September
- Monday 5th January
- Monday 13th June
- Monday 20th July

The whole school calendar of events will be coming out to families ASAP .



Closing Comments

Once again, I would like to thank you for your continued support, encouragement, kindness and understanding as we navigate logistically difficult but incredibly exciting circumstances. The building work is so important for the future of the school to ensure pupils have the very best learning environment. Your children are a credit to you and it's my pleasure to work with them and our amazing staff on a daily basis.

With best wishes as always.

Dave Jenkins



Executive Headteacher

Learning together in a changing world, creating success for all