



Summer Newsletter - Welcome

As another busy term draws to a close, it's exciting to reflect on some of the amazing achievements of both staff and students at the school.

Of course, uppermost in our minds at this time of the year, are those students who have completed their exams - huge congratulations for the way you have conducted yourselves through such a challenging time. I am sure you have done yourselves justice in your exams, and we look forward to celebrating your success with you when results come out in August. If you are leaving us to go on to pastures new - we wish you success and happiness in your futures.

At the other end of the scale, we really enjoyed welcoming over 200 new Y7 students in our transition week. We look forward to getting to know you better next term and helping you settle in.

Everywhere we look, it is encouraging to see things returned to a post-pandemic normal:

We are excited to be organising trips to Iceland and Paris as well as the ski trip.

Many of you will be enjoying the return of our annual 'rewards' trip.

The annual sponsored walk and sports days are back
and 'Duke of Edinburgh Award' expeditions are back up and running!

We are also hard at work on site to ensure the school continues to move in the right direction:

Staff are preparing the new and exciting 'Curriculum for Wales' for year 7 in September.

We are developing a new photographic and media suite over the summer.

We are doubling our provision for ASD children ready for September
and we are expanding our staffing to ensure we continue providing all things your children need in the new term.

But so many other things have been going on, it is difficult to relay more than a flavour of all our successes in this newsletter - that said, I hope you enjoy reading it through as you relax for the summer! Have a lovely holiday over the next few weeks - and come back refreshed and ready for all the challenges and excitement of a new year in September!

Dates for Your Diary

Last day of term before summer holiday - Tuesday 19th July 2022

A level/ Level 3 BTEC Results - Thursday 18 August

GCSE/ Level 2 BTEC Results - Thursday 25th August

Staff training Days - Thursday 1st and Friday 2nd September 2022

All students return to school - Monday 5 September 2022

Last day of term - Friday 28 October 2022

To keep up to date with term times and staff training days, see the calendar on our website which covers the academic year.



Eco Council Gains Award



Members of the school's Eco Council, from years 7, 8 and 12, have earned the John Muir Award for planting native Rowan trees and for removing invasive species (Rhododendron) from the Snowdonia National Park.

They achieved this during a recent trip and overnight stay at Bod Silin, the school's cottage nestled in the slopes of Western Snowdonia. Following a long walk to the cottage, the students set up camp where they cooked over a fire and learnt how to safely use tools. They then worked together to help maintain the grounds by clearing Rhododendron bushes and planting the sapling Rowan trees.

These students will now help run trips to Bod Silin, so that other students can enjoy spending some time in the countryside and an overnight stay at the cottage whilst earning the award.



Under the Sails

Year 7 students took some time out of the classroom to enjoy the warmer weather. They took their literacy class under our smart new sails in Y Sgwar (The Yard) to shelter from the sun whilst reading.



Swimming in Success

Four students recently attended and competed in the National Swimming Championships held in Swansea. We would like to congratulate Lucas in year 8, Enzo and Martha both in year 7 who performed fantastically, achieving some brilliant personal bests.

Congratulations also to Ewan in year 8 who deserves a special mention as he is now double Welsh champion in the 12-13 age group, having won gold in the 50m butterfly and 1500m front crawl! He also gained a silver in the 800m front crawl and bronze in the 100m butterfly.
Well done everyone!



Qualified to Ride

Congratulations to year 9 student Maddison, who recently gained a Royal International Horse Show Qualification with her pony named Hollyland Lion in Winter.

Maddison has qualified with her pony also known as 'Bertie', in the 143cm Show Hunter Pony section for the prestigious Royal International Horse Show held in Hickstead. Each year 1000's of children and adults compete in a variety of equestrian disciplines to qualify for this show but on average only 20 in each section achieve this!

Maddison and Bertie are trained principally by her parents who are both renowned equestrians. She has competed Nationally across the UK since 2014 and has previously won the Lead Rein Pony of Hunter Type section at the Royal International Horse Show in 2015, when she was only 7 years old! She has gone on to achieve numerous firsts and champions at horse shows across the UK since then.

This is a fantastic achievement not only for Madison but also her pony who is only 5 years old, which is incredibly young to be competing at this level.



A Trip to TAPE



Year 10 Film Studies students and Miss Grimward spent a morning at TAPE Community Music and Film, a charity that offers a broad range of creative opportunities for groups and individuals interested in filmmaking, audio production, music, photography, virtual reality, design, creative writing, podcasting and more.

They began with a tour of the facilities which included their studios, animation centre and the editing and recording suite where they were able to chat to industry professionals. They then watched Swedish film 'Let the Right One In', which is part of the 'Global Film' syllabus in the GCSE Film Studies course, at a private screening in their cinema space.

Miss Grimward said, "The students were really inspired by what they saw and are really looking forward to returning to TAPE for their film festival in July, so watch this space!"



The Sense

We were delighted to welcome 'The Sense' from BYFC into school in June.

They delivered assemblies to year 7 and 8 as well as Religious Education, PSHE and Performing Arts lessons, which the students really enjoyed.

The sessions were thought provoking and gave students the opportunity to reflect on a variety of issues including their own faith and their response to situations in school, locally and nationally.

We are really grateful to the team who gave an energised and engaging performance and who dealt with some complex issues with sensitivity and skill.



Design and Technology Cross the Bridge

Congratulations to the staff in the Design and Technology Department, who were recently presented with their Part 1 of Crossing the Bridge to Bronze Welsh language award, joining the Library and Welsh department in achieving this milestone.



Cable Street Connections

Some of our performing arts students took a trip to Aberystwyth University to perform the National Theatre production of 'Cable Street' at the Connections festival.

Cast members were given a tour of the university campus, took part in Drama workshops and technical rehearsals throughout the day and had the chance to mingle with students from Powys and Aberystwyth who were also performing in the festival.

Miss Grimward said, "I think we all enjoyed meeting members of the other groups but we felt particularly honoured to be chaperoned by previous Aberconwy student and member of our Connections cast, Mia Cannon, who has now completed her degree at the university and was taking part in an internship".

During the evening of the festival our students put on a fantastic performance of 'Cable Street' in the Arts Centre and had the opportunity to watch students from Powys and Aberystwyth perform their productions too.

Poppy, a year 13 student and cast member said, "The entire experience was really fun. The Aberystwyth team were so accommodating and both the other groups were amazing. We enjoyed the chance to socialise with the other groups at lunch and after the shows."



Wicked in the West End

Performing Arts students in years 10 to 13 recently spent a weekend in London where they had the opportunity to watch the musical 'Wicked' and then to meet with some of the cast. They also visited the Victoria & Albert museum, took in a lot of the sights and enjoyed some of the Royal Jubilee displays.

The aim of the trip was to give the students the chance to watch some live theatre in heart of theatre land and to show our aspiring young performers what they can aim for. Following the performance of 'Wicked' our students met with some of the cast and had the chance to act out a scene between Elphiba and Glinda during a drama workshop, followed by a thirty-minute Q&A with an actor from the current show.

It also gave our students the opportunity to visit the Capital on one of the most eventful weekends of the year, to take in the sights and sounds of some of the Royal Jubilee celebrations including the flypast!

Mrs Wilson, Head of Performing Arts at Ysgol Aberconwy said, "I'm really grateful that after a long stint away from live theatre due to Covid, we are now able to organise and go on events which help enrich students' experiences of their curriculum. Working with some of the professional companies of Wicked was really insightful. The students behaved brilliantly in and around London, and were a real pleasure to take away."



Translating Success!

This year Ysgol Aberconwy entered the Anthea Bell Prize for Young Translators competition run by the Queen's College, at Oxford University. The competition took place in April where students were given a poem to translate from German or French into English.

All linguists in key stage three took part, however schools had a limit to the number of entries they could submit so our Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) department had to first judge the submissions to find the twenty entries they thought best.

A team of undergraduates and professional translators then judged all the entries to the competition. The judges said that they were very impressed by the standard of entries and that they had received over 3,200 submissions from more than 260 schools from across the UK! Given the stiff competition, we are absolutely delighted to announce that we have a winning entry for Wales including two commendations!

Congratulations to Samuel and Charlie in year 9 whose joint effort saw them win the Level 2 Area prize for Wales for their translation of the German poem 'das Trauermel'. As area winners their entry will now be put through to the national competition!

Congratulations also to Ruby in year 7 and Tia in year 9 who were both awarded commendations for their French translations. Ruby was awarded a Level 1 Commendation for Wales for her translation of French poem 'Le Crapaud' and Tia was awarded a Level 2 Commendation for Wales for translating the French poem 'L'Arbre Bleu'.

Miss McAllister, Head of MFL at Ysgol Aberconwy said, "This is excellent news! It's a fantastic achievement to have three students whose work is prize worthy, particularly when the competition is so strong. Well done to all those who took part, especially our winners, we are very proud of you!"



Karate in Croatia

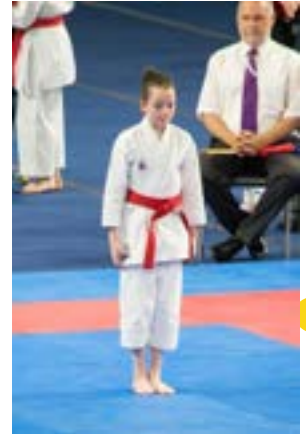
Year 7 student Macie recently travelled to Croatia as part of a small team selected to represent Wales in the Shito Ryu karate championships.

The World Sports Shito Ryu Federation (WSSHRF) was established in 2019 to provide all Shito Ryu Karate style practitioners from around the world with the opportunity to train and present their skills in International competitions, however, due to the outbreak of Covid-19 these championships were postponed so this was their first international championship competition.

Macie put in an exceptional performance and had a great time competing in Croatia, she said she was ridiculously nervous but found the whole experience exhilarating and she learnt lots from others from around the world.

Macie started Karate back in 2018 when she was eight years old and now trains three to four times a week at Hajime Hero in Llandudno. She has been selected to compete in the Welsh squad for the last few years.

Well done Macie, we wish you all the best in any future competitions.



Volunteer of the Year

Congratulations to
Madison in year 10
who has been awarded with the
young persons
'Volunteer of the Year'
award by Colwyn Bay Town Council!



Five Ways Film Festival

Students in the Year 10 GCSE Film Studies class, worked with Steve Swindon from TAPE Community Film to plan and create a film festival, linked to the five ways to wellbeing (as identified by Mind charity). They paired each of the 'five ways' to a film that they feel represents that area of wellbeing, as follows:

Be active: Bend It Like Beckham, **Take notice:** About Time, **Learn:** I, Daniel Blake, **Connect:** Her, **Give:** Pride

The free film festival took place at TAPE studios and cinema over the weekend of 8th to 10th July. Alongside the 5 films shown there were community events that took place including a food bank drive, t-shirt decorating, penalty shootouts with a player from Colwyn Bay FC, and talks from the local food bank and Mind charity. We were extremely fortunate to secure exclusive Q&As for the students with Dave Johns (lead in I, Daniel Blake) and Matthew Warchus (the film Pride), who gave up their time for free to get involved with the event.

Student, Eimear Teasdale said, "Being part of the team to create the Film Festival has been such an amazing experience. From seeing our ideas come to life to recording our own podcast, it has all been such a blast. I've learnt so many different skills from this project and I'm so thankful to be a part of it. I can't wait to see it all come to life!"

This has been a fantastic learning opportunity for all the students who have taken responsibility for every part of the planning process, including writing and recording a radio advert and podcast about the event!



Secondary Schools Language Charter

On Monday, July 4th, the Cyngor iaith (Language Council) students along with Mrs Luned Davies Parry, Bilingualism Co-ordinator, welcomed the Governors to the school to launch the Siarter iaith Uwchradd (Secondary Schools Language Charter). The Cyngor iaith pupils gave a presentation to and asked the Governors for their ideas to promote Welshness at school and asked them for their support.

It's with pleasure that we announce that Ysgol Aberconwy will be trialling the Siarter iaith Uwchradd on behalf of Conwy County schools and we can't wait to start! To begin with let's start with giving you some background information and explain its context.

The Siarter iaith Welsh Language Charter was created in Gwynedd 2011-12 led by Carys Lake who at the time was a Leader at Gwynedd Secondary Welsh Language Centre to increase the use of Welsh in and beyond the classroom. The journey of trialing it began in Gwynedd County in 2014. The Siarter iaith was introduced to Welsh medium primary schools and Cymraeg Campus was introduced to English medium schools. It was a huge success!

The Welsh Government aims to have a million Welsh speakers by 2050. This is a long-term aim, and the education system has a key role to play in achieving it and the Siarter iaith feeds into that.

In order to achieve the aim, it will be necessary to increase the number of learners in Welsh-medium and bilingual education, and to make changes to the curriculum to ensure that all learners in Wales are able to develop their Welsh-language skills for social and work use in the future.

One of the key aims within the 2050 Welsh Strategy is to establish positive practices in the use of the language, as well as formal and informal opportunities to use Welsh socially.

The strategy states that there is a need to plan provision for children and young people that not only give them the opportunity to use or practise Welsh, but who is immersed in positive attitudes in terms of the language, which will mean that they decide to use it, helping them to see that it is not just related to the school, but that there is a rich social and cultural world involved.

The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan sets out the steps that need to develop the Welsh language and Welsh medium provision in the statutory education system, and in particular as part of the new curriculum which will include a single continuum for learning Welsh.

The teaching and learning of Welsh is a priority for the Welsh Government. They want to ensure that our education system makes it possible for more learners to acquire a wider range of language skills in Welsh. There is a need to build children and young people's confidence to use the language not only in lessons but also in activities and outside the classroom. We need to ensure appropriate emphasis is given on the Welsh language and culture.

The new Curriculum for Wales which will commence for our year 7 learners in September 2022, gives sufficient opportunity for learners to develop and use their Welsh language. The New Curriculum embraces a bilingual Wales in an international context.

Secondary Schools Language Charter Continued..

What is Estyn looking for when inspecting schools?

They will be considering pupils' ability to speak and respond to spoken Welsh, taking into account pupils' starting points.

They will be looking at the progress pupils make in developing their communication skills in Welsh through their learning across the curriculum and in more informal contexts.

In addition, the inspectors will evaluate the extent to which school leaders plan purposeful opportunities for pupils to develop their Welsh language skills. They will also be looking at how well Ysgol Aberconwy promotes the advantages of learning Welsh and being multilingual.

The Siarter Iaith's targets and outcomes challenge us at Ysgol Aberconwy to improve the Welsh on show around school and how much Welsh is heard around the school and to increase the opportunities for the pupils to see and hear the language. It challenges us to increase the bilingual provision and to give pupils opportunities to use their Welsh skills in the different subjects. We need to teach pupils about their Welsh identity and about 'belonging' and we at Ysgol Aberconwy want them to know the important, famous and talented Welsh people across the centuries. Above all, we need to promote the importance of the Welsh language in the workplace.

In order to support the three awards of the Siarter Iaith Uwchradd, Ysgol Aberconwy has started a new system in order to challenge and award teachers and departments for using Welsh in the lessons and for encouraging pupils to use their Welsh skills outside their Welsh lessons and we award mentors and administrative staff too. Our system also meets the requirements of Conwy policies: 'Welsh in Education Strategic Plan' and 'A Strategy for Promoting the Welsh Language'.

There are three awards to win over three years. They have been split into three levels to support the needs of the three levels of award which is a part of the Siarter Iaith Uwchradd. We have used local landmarks as a symbol to reaching our goals 'Croesi'r Bont i Wobr Efydd' (Crossing the Bridge to a Bronze Award), 'Esgyn y Grisiau i Wobr Arian' (Ascending the Steps to Silver Award) and 'Dringo'r Mynydd i Wobr Aur' (Climbing the Mountain to a Gold Award) – the bridge, the castle walls and Mynydd y Dref Conwy.



Diversity and Refugee Week



We recently celebrated diversity and raised awareness for the LGBT+ Community and refugees.

Staff and students from the school's LGBT+ community planned a number of events that everyone was invited to participate in, these included cake sales, non-uniform day and an art competition.

To highlight the plight of refugees we read Tom Palmer's 'The Girl in the Lewandowski Top', a new five-part story about a Ukrainian family as they arrive in the UK, to our year 7 and 8 students during their daily 20-minute reading slots.

Students and staff came together to show their support and to spread the message that everybody deserves to be treated equally. Congratulations to the Art competition winners, Mia and Ian in year 7; and also to the runners up, Angharad in year 10 and Aleena and Phoebe in year 7, for their joint entry.

All the money raised will be split equally between the Red Cross and LGBT+ Cymru charity.





Talking Chinese

Three of our students were recently contacted by the Wales Confucius Institute because they had heard about their fantastic achievements learning Mandarin Chinese. Wales China schools Project Manager, Victoria Ucele, and Academic Director, Benlan Ye, recently visited Ysgol Aberconwy's Confucius classroom and interviewed three of our year 13 students, Eleanor, Erin and Lara, for a piece they are writing about them to go in their Confucius Newsletter.

Students at ysgol aberconwy have the benefit of learning Chinese, if they wish, taught by specialist teacher Jie Chen from the Confucius Institute. Both Erin and Eleanor started studying Chinese in Year 8 and Lara began studying in Year 9. At first Erin was a member of the Chinese after school club, where they played games and learnt about Chinese culture in a relaxed environment, she said, "When I heard about a trip to China with school, I knew I had to start lessons so I would be able to take part in this amazing experience. I passed exams in beginners Chinese (QCF levels 1 and 3 in Mandarin) and in 2019, I was lucky enough to go on the school trip to Xiamen and Shanghai for two weeks! Thanks to my lessons at school, I was able to chat to people in Mandarin, asking how much things were in shops and ordering my own food. If I hadn't started my Chinese lesson in year 8, then I wouldn't have ended up going on this trip of a lifetime."

Eleanor said, "I've thoroughly enjoyed the lessons and I think I've benefited from studying the language in a small class, where Jie is always happy to explain the answers to any questions I have very well. A big part of why I have enjoyed the lessons so much is that Jie is clearly enthusiastic about teaching and happy to help. We have engaged in a range of different activities on various aspects of learning Mandarin, where I've practiced writing characters, speaking and pronunciation, and reading and listening. Jie's lessons have given me a very well-rounded knowledge base in Mandarin for the future."

Both Erin and Eleanor have passed their HSK 1 and HSK 2 Mandarin Chinese examinations in the past two years and hope to continue to advance their Chinese qualifications as they move on to university. Lara has passed two QCF vocational exams and is hoping to go to Bangor University to study Linguistics and Chinese.

Eleanor continued, "I will be studying Mandarin alongside my degree at university for two years. Without having the option to take Mandarin lessons in school, this is something I would never have considered doing, as learning a language like Mandarin can seem like a very intimidating task, but the lessons I have taken have provided me with the option to start Mandarin at an intermediate level at university, an opportunity I am very grateful for."

Talking Chinese Continued...

Erin agreed, she said, "I'm hoping to go to university this September to study Chinese and French. The Chinese lessons at school have opened doors to so many opportunities and showed me my passion which I will go on to study at higher education. After university I would really like to go to China again to work, perhaps even live there!"

Languages teacher Nia Williams, said "I am beyond proud of them and how well they've done! They have coped with all obstacles, embraced every opportunity and shown great determination and hard work to pass their Chinese exams and to get as far as they have."



Fundraising for the Ukraine



Students and staff participated in our annual sponsored walk from the school to Deganwy, raising more money for the people in the Ukraine. It was a wonderful afternoon.

To date, all our fundraising activities have raised a fantastic **£3,571.32** for the UNICEF Ukraine appeal. Well done to everyone!

Young Peacemakers

Members of the Aberconwy Allies took a trip to Llangollen International Eisteddfod to collect their award for Young Peacemakers 2022. They were presented with a beautiful statue of a dove, which will be proudly displayed at school, and a book token.

The Aberconwy Allies received this award due to their continuous efforts to spread messages of equality in the school community. Their mission began during lockdown 2020, and their journey was recorded by filmmaker Lal Davies in her fantastic documentary: Embedding Equality in the Curriculum (click on link to watch the film).

We are extremely proud of this work, and have big plans for the Aberconwy Allies in the new academic year! Many thanks to the students who took part and attended the trip: Alex, Jaiden, Keera, Luiza, Morgan and Joel.



Don't Mind the Weeds

Five students have been working afterschool with local ceramic artist Joanna Duncalf on the theme 'Don't mind the weeds we feed the bees.'

Students, Aleena, Olivia, Erin-Mae, Ivan, and Georgie from year 8, took part in a 10-week wellbeing workshop on a Tuesday evening where they developed their initial ideas and designs before starting their compositions on a 30cm square clay tile.

Students rolled out the clay and transferred their designs on to it, adding depth and intricacy by layering on more clay and scribing into it.

Beautiful as the designs are already, the students plan to add colour to their tiles using coloured glazes. They will then add a layer of clear glaze over the top before the pieces are finally finished and fired in the kiln.

Mrs Karen Griffiths, Head of Art said, "This has been a fantastic opportunity for students to work with a local artist, they have thoroughly enjoyed saving the bees."





Sports Days



Our annual sports days took place on Thursday 14th July and Friday 15th July. The weather was hot and the competition was fierce. Congratulations to all our winners and everyone who took part.

