



Dear Parents / Guardians,

The school inspection was recently successfully completed and the school will be receiving a good report: it will be published early in the summer term and all parents will receive a copy.

In the last newsletter I promised that I would provide more detail on this year's budget and our response to the County Language Policy.

BUDGET 2008-9

As you will be aware from press reports the financial situation for the education service in Ceredigion is bleak. A rise in council tax this year did secure an additional £300,000 for secondary school budgets. Although this was a very welcome addition, it did not deal with the cumulative underfunding of secondary education in the last three or four years. It is acknowledged that this underfunding now exceeds £1,000,000 in the sector and I am aware that many secondary schools are in deficit. I am also aware that the chances of the cumulative underfunding being addressed are remote.

We already know that next year's settlement is likely to be below 2% and we also know that pay awards, already announced, will exceed that amount. So, despite the fact that the school's pupil population is not going to fall, it is obvious that current levels of expenditure cannot be sustained this year, or indeed in years to come. Unless action is taken now the school will go into deficit.

As the largest element of the budget is staffing any cuts will largely fall in this area. Reluctantly I shall have to remove the equivalent of 4.5 teaching posts from the school in 2008-9. This will be achieved through a combination of retirements, non-replacement of resignations and voluntary redundancy. The practical effect will be:

- a reduction in curriculum units from 52 to 50 in every key stage
- a reduction in the number of lessons for sixth form subjects from 9 to 8 per cycle
- a reduction of one teaching group in one year group.

There will be also some minor adjustments to support staff levels. In addition I have reduced expenditure on several budget headings including repairs and maintenance, furniture, books and equipment. Careful monitoring of expenditure and efficiency savings have taken place across the board.

As a result of all these measures the school will be financially viable for several years to come with modest surpluses expected in each of the next three years. It is, of course, regrettable that decisions of this nature have to be taken but given the continuing underfunding of secondary education in Ceredigion over a number of years, it is not surprising. It is noteworthy that the concluding sentence of the recent inspection report reads: "The school provides outstanding value for money".

COUNTY LANGUAGE POLICY

Parents will be aware that the County Council has approved a County Language Policy for schools, the details of which were published recently in the Cambrian News. Penglais is already committed to improving pupils' bilingualism and the Welsh ethos of the school. The school is implementing the following policies this year:

- generous staffing for Welsh first language groups
- more incidental use of Welsh in the school
- the new Year 7, and subsequent years, will be taught Physical Education bilingually. Some aspects of Music will also be taught bilingually.
- Welsh medium registration groups will have their Learning Core lessons delivered in Welsh.
- Signage and official publications will be bilingual.

The school is currently designated as an English medium secondary school and it will remain a predominantly English medium school. Examination courses in Years 10-13 will, with the exception of Welsh, be conducted through the medium of English. There are no plans to change the appointments policy of the school. The governing body will, after consultation with the education department, parents and pupils and staff, provide a full response to the County policy but the plans outlined above were already prepared last autumn and had been described to parents of pupils joining next September at the Open Evening in January.

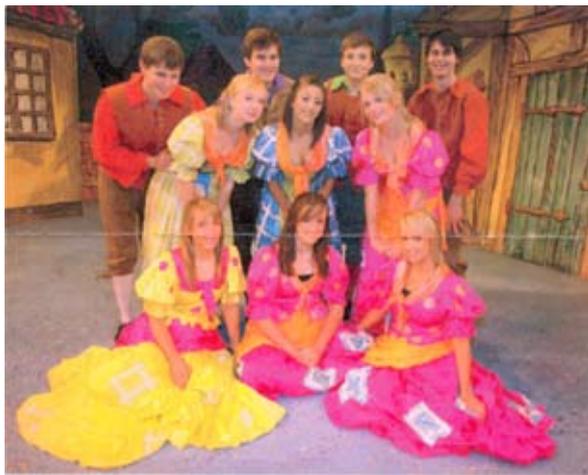
CURRY AND QUIZ NIGHT

Another highly successful PTA Curry and Quiz Night was held on Friday 7th March. Despite the collapse of the sound system, Mr. Jones and Mr. Clissold made themselves heard and, once again, provided taxing questions for the teams. Mr. Jones (PE)'s team swept the board with one of the sixth form teams coming a very creditable second. The school is very grateful to the Shilam restaurant for its sponsorship: the food provided was superb. This was a most enjoyable evening which raised £1,000 for PTA funds.



MOTHER GOOSE

During January some of the school's senior pupils performed in the Pantomime 'Mother Goose' at Aberystwyth Arts Centre. They sang and danced their way through over the two and a half weeks of sell-out performances. Pictured here from Penglais are: Megan West, Eirian Stovell and Ben Williams (Sixth Form students), Gabriel Jones and Aled Jones (Year 11) and Rebecca Thomas (Year 10)



WELSH DEPARTMENT

Seventy four Year 8 pupils went on a Welsh trip to Chester Zoo recently. All pupils, teachers and carers had a very interesting day and we were all amazed by the animals and the rare species that we saw at the zoo.

Aeth saithdeg pedwar disgybl blwyddyn with ar daith i sw̄ Caer yn ddiweddar. Cafodd y disgyblion, y cynorthwywyr ac aelodau'r adran Gymraeg ddiwrnod arbennig iawn ac roeddenn ni wedi rhyfeddu at yr anifeiliaid yno.

SUCCESS AT THE COUNTY ROUND OF THE URDD EISTEDDFOD UWCHRADD

The coming round of the Urdd Eisteddfod for secondary pupils was held in Penglais School on Friday 14th March 2008. We are delighted that a number of Penglais pupils were successful in their competitions.

- Jeyshri Kalyanasundaram, 8KS, won the solo recitation for learners (Years 7-9) with an outstanding performance of 'Gwersi'.
- Sophie Rudge (7NG) won the Solo Cerdd Dant competition (Years 7-9) singing 'Ar y We'. She was also successful through her entry with the Aelwyd Abercadabra winning the Cerdd Dant Duet (Years 7-9) with Sam Ebenezer from Penweddig School. Sophie was also part of the Abercadabra Parti Deusain that won singing 'With a Little bit of Luck' from 'My Fair Lady'.
- Our two Cerdd Dant Parties (First Language and Second Language groups) were successful have also gone through this round singing 'Y Sled Eira' and 'Nyth y Fronfraith'.
- The school's recitation group (Years 7-9) gave an excellent performance and in strong competition came second.
- Rebecca Thomas, Angela Woodiwiss, Caroline Davies, Caroline Peel and Rachel Varnham were winners in the Years 10-13 Group Disco Dancing competition. Rebecca Thomas was also the winner of the Disco Dancing Singles competition.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Continued Success of Elinor Thorogood - In the February half-term, Elinor was invited by British Triathlon to attend a Talent Confirmation Day at Loughborough University. The day involved a series of lectures, a 200m swim time trial and a 1,500m run time trial. It was run on a points system whereby times were converted into points, and the total after both events indicated positions on the Talent Identification standings. Elinor swam a huge 5 second Personal Best, and then ran an even huger 11 second Personal Best, and as a result she has been invited to join the British Elite Youth Triathlon Squad, based in Loughborough. She has been asked to attend a camp for 5 days during the Easter holidays in Loughborough, and will attend up to 5 of these camps annually. Congratulations once again to this very talented young lady.

URDD national swimming gala results 2008.

Elinor Thorogood won the gold medal in the individual 100m breaststroke, and the Y7 and 8 medley relay team of Luke Roberts, Ollie Thorogood, Mark Howard and Ben Jones won the bronze. Photos attached,



The Urdd National Gala took place on 20th January at the Welsh National Pool.

The Penglais Results were as follows:

Year 9 100m Backstroke James Malkin, 3rd

Year 11 100 m Breastroke Elinor Thorogood, 1st

Year 7 100m Breastroke Ben Jones, 4th

Relays

Years 7/8 Boys Freestyle Relay (Mark Howard, Luke Roberts, Owen Morgan and Ben Jones), 2nd

Years 7/8 Boys Medley Relay (Oliver Thorogood, Ben Jones, Luke Roberts and Mark Howard), 3rd

DESIGN TECHNOLOGY FOOD

Can you please ensure that your child brings a suitable container to take their products home in as we do not have very many spare ones.

If anyone does have items such as ice cream containers or other rigid food containers for our use we would be very grateful.

Thank you.

Mrs. J. Wells, Head of D/T

MATHEMATICS

Over 20,000 schools and more than one million students from 150 countries took part in the world's biggest ever maths event on 5th March.

Over 182 million questions were answered correctly. One student in the United Kingdom answered a staggering 62,273 questions over the 48 hours that the competition ran, taking only a 30 minute break to get some sleep! (If you are wondering why it ran for 48 hours, remember that 5th March starts at different times around the world).

The organisers were rather surprised at the huge interest and probably wish that they had arranged for a larger computer server to be used to cope with the demand as the site struggled at times.

We could only involve a few classes on the day (depending on which groups had Maths and when we could book the computer labs) so it was unfortunate that not every student could take part. However, those that did had a great time as they found themselves in head-to-head competitions against other students across the world. I found it great fun at 10.00pm that evening to be playing against other teachers in India, Australia and Canada.

Prizes are being presented to Bethan Davies and Bryony James in Year 7 who achieved over 1000 correct answers in the practice before the event, with Pramestha KhojuShrestha close behind on 957. On the actual day the highest scoring students were Kenny Chan, Year 9 and Karen Jones, Year 8. They will be receiving certificates.

I can't wait for next year when we will aim to give all students the chance to take part.

Phil Dennis, Head of Maths

SEN DEPARTMENT

Swimming – Two pupils have been invited to take part in the regional swimming finals at Swansea later this month. This follows their success at the gala held recently at Plascrug Leisure centre organised by Disability Sport Wales. The pupils are Emma Standing and Bethany Speake and we wish them every success.

Pupils from Penglais School once again took part in a Swimming Gala organised by Disability Sports on 5th February 2008 at Plas Crug Leisure Centre, Aberystwyth.



All pupils were very successful and thoroughly enjoyed the event.

NVQ CUSTOMER SERVICE

During January the department was visited by the External Verifier who happily passed 35 units from the Year 10 and 11 candidates. Her report praised the department together with the hard work and commitment of our internal verifier, Mrs. Karina Shaw, and also the enthusiasm of the candidates that she interviewed.

The department would like to express their heartfelt thanks to the many businesses of Aberystwyth who have offered work placements to our candidates. It would not be possible to run this course without their guidance and support and we are extremely grateful.

Listed below are the businesses that currently are training our pupils. Many thanks to them all.

Beauty Spot
Burtons
Caesar's Café
Charlies Stores
Columbine
CRAFT
Currys
Dorothy Perkins
Downes the Vet

Halfords
Hendre Stores
Hyfforddiant Ceredigion Training
Morrisons
New Look
Padarn Letting
Penglais School Reception
Plascrug Leisure Centre

Richard Lloyd
Richleys
Snippets
Something for the Weekend
Stormriders
Superdrug
Wishes
@mobile



On Friday 25th January the pupils from the Learning Support Centre enjoyed a trip to the RNLI station in Aberystwyth where they made a donation of £50. The money was raised from the sale of hand-made Christmas cards.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very Happy and restful Easter break. School commences for both staff and pupils on Monday 7th April 2008.

H.J. DAVEY (Headteacher)