



Ysgol Penglais School

March
Newsletter
2024

Headteacher's Message

This has been a very short and intense half term with so much packed into five weeks. We started the half term with the amazing production of We Will Rock You. What a fantastic display of the talent within the school with students acting, singing, dancing, playing in the band, directing, working on the sound and video production, lighting, and helping with the make-up and costume. We had four sell-out performances of 200 tickets per evening and the feedback has been amazing, with schools as far as Pembrokeshire commenting on the high quality of the production. Congratulations to all students and staff who were involved. We look forward to the next production!

Throughout the term, the various sporting teams have been progressing in different tournaments with success in the football and basketball again this year. Do read the pages within the newsletter for further details.

Of course, this term is an intensive time for exam years with coursework to be completed and practical exams to prepare for. Our students have been working hard on these with their teachers, whilst also finding time in the 6th form to take part in various supra-curricular activities and competitions to support and enhance their learning. Again, there's more information within the newsletter.

Another highlight of the half term has been Careers' Week, which was a national week from the 11th to 15th of March. Ms Hill worked with Careers Wales and other businesses and organisations to ensure that students in every year group had the opportunity to start thinking about their future and explore different options. There's plenty of information about this in the newsletter for you to read.

All of the activities means that we are arriving at the Easter holidays quite exhausted! I hope that you and your families have the opportunity to relax, rest and recuperate, ready for the Summer term. We look forward to seeing students return on Tuesday 9th April.

Key Dates

- Monday 8th April - INSET day - **no students in school**
- Tuesday 9th April - all students return to school (**Week 1**)
- 15th to 19th April - Year 10 Mock Science & English exams
- 22nd & 23rd April - Year 11 Unit 2 Welsh Oral exams
- April 2024 - Progress report 3 for Year 12
- April 2024 - Progress report 2 for Year 7 & 8
- April 2024 - Progress report 2 & Full report for Year 10
- April 2024 - Progress report 3 for Year 11
- April 2024 - Progress report 3 for Year 12
- 6th May - Bank Holiday
- 7th May - Year 12 study leave starts
- 9th May - GCSE external exams start
- 13th May - GCE exams start
- May 2024 - Progress report 3 for Year 9
- May 2024 - Progress report 4 for Year 11
- 27th to 31st May - Summer half-term
- Monday 3rd June - Students return to school - (**Week 2**)



Sports News

Football - U14 and 15s

Unfortunately, both Penglais under 14's and 15's suffered heart-breaking defeats in the last 16 round of the Welsh cup. The under 15's side faced a very resilient side from Greenhill school and led the game 3-1 thanks to a brace from Iestyn and a goal from Joshua. Though, it was not meant to be as Greenhill scored a last-minute penalty to win the game 4-3 and advance to the next round.

Our under 14's side also fought bravely but came across a very competent side and last year's runners up in Strade school down in Llanelli. It was a very close game with the only goal coming 10 minutes from time to give them the victory.

However, both sides deserve a huge amount of credit for being Ceredigion champions for the year 2023/24 school year, da iawn pawb!

Lily - Year 11

Congratulations to Lily who was selected to represent Welsh Schools U16's following trials in Cardiff over February half term. Lily was selected to play against Gloucestershire County FA and played a significant role scoring the opener in the 2-1 victory. Lily was subsequently selected for the reduced squad who played against England schools FA earlier this month.

Junior NBA:

Penglais reached the Welsh Final 8 again as the Year 7/8 team representing Oklahoma City Thunder and coached by Alex H (Year 12), won 3 games, lost 1 and went through as the best 2nd place team to the finals day in Aberystwyth in June. Special mention to Stefan J who was named one of the four Most Valuable Players on the day.



EAL News

A day in the life of a 12 year old from Hong Kong by Tivon in Year 11

The alarm clock rings at 7am. I get up, put on my school uniform and am ready for breakfast. This morning I have noodles with tinned tuna and some vegetables.

I feel lucky that I only have to walk for 10 to 15 minutes to get to school because when I was younger, I used to have to catch a bus and an MTR train. I arrive just 3 minutes before the bell rings. I'm not a punctual student, and it's always depressing to think of having to be in school because there is so much pressure on me at school.

My school is a Band 1 school, which is the highest band in the secondary school ranking system in Hong Kong. It also means that pupils need to work really hard to keep up with their learning. It's a Christian school which focuses on English education; some of the subjects are taught in English.

The subjects I have as a Form 1 student (the same as Year 7 here) are Cantonese, English, Maths, Science, History of China, Geography and Personal Finance, Art, Music, Putonghua (Mandarin Chinese), IT, Home Economics, DT and Bible Studies.

The first lesson of the day is Science. Usually, we have our lessons in our form room but today I take my seat in the science lab, open my science textbook, and follow as the teacher teaches from the textbook. We spend around 3,000 Hong Kong Dollars (HKD) on learning materials each year, which is equivalent to £300.

At lunchtime, I sometimes leave school for sushi takeaway or to go to a restaurant. Most of the time I get food from the canteen such as instant noodles, sausages, tea, eggs or ham sandwiches. Or we can get hot lunch boxes by filling in a lunch order form every month. We can, of course, bring our own food to school as well.

As usual, we are given lots of homework to complete for the next day. Normally I am not able to finish the homework on time. I prefer going to school at Penglais because I have more independence and we are more encouraged to be creative here. Also, there is much less pressure of work here.



Wong Shiu Chi Secondary School, Hong Kong



Sumy School, Ukraine

A day in the life of a Ukrainian Schoolboy by Misha in Year 7

Year 1: I wake up at 7 o'clock in the morning, I brush my teeth and get dressed for school. My dad drives me to school and the lesson starts at 8.00. Actually, in year 1, I'm a bad student with bad grades. For lunch, for example, we have buckwheat, bread and tea (I never drink any tea). We have a break after each lesson. That was 1 day of school life in year 1.

Year 2: So, it's a day in year 2. I'm a good student in Year 2 because my parents sent me to my grandma in the summer and she taught me to read and write. So, what has changed in school in year 2? Nothing has changed personally, oh yes, here are now 5 lessons a day (we only had 4 lessons a day in Year 1) So, let's go to year 3.

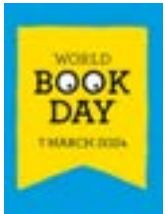
Year 3: In year 3, we have more interesting things. First of all, I go to my first summer camp in year 3. In summer camp we go with our friends to the river, cinema, theatre and boring museums *_* but that was cool. In year 3, we have 6 lessons a day and a new subject - IT - that's an interesting subject. I now go to school without Dad (I live more than 1km from my school). In year 3 we change our timetable (13.30 to 18.00). Now, we can go to year 4....

Year 4: Year 4 is soooo boring because it's Covid (in 2020 we study online; this is an easy year. I think I can't say anything interesting about Year 4. Let's go to Year 5!

Year 5: Yess! We start going to school - that's cool, but not for long. I succeeded in going to summer camp (the same summer camp as in Year 3). In the middle of Year 5, the war starts ... Next Year 6

Year 6: I start Year 6 in the UK (where I am writing this story). I think I will finish this story. Bye!!!

Library News



World Book Day took place on 7th March 2024.

We had a variety of incredible entries to our World Book Day Bunting Competition. Each bunting triangle represents a book of the students' choice. A big congratulations to our winners:

Mary Year 7- Wolf Road

Olivia Year 8- Rumblestar

Aroush Year 9- The Boy who met a Whale



The Shortlist for the **Waterstones Children's Book Prize 2024** has recently been released.

Please check out the shortlists if you are looking for recommendations. Shortlists are available for both younger and older readers:

<https://www.waterstones.com/the-waterstones-childrens-book-prize>

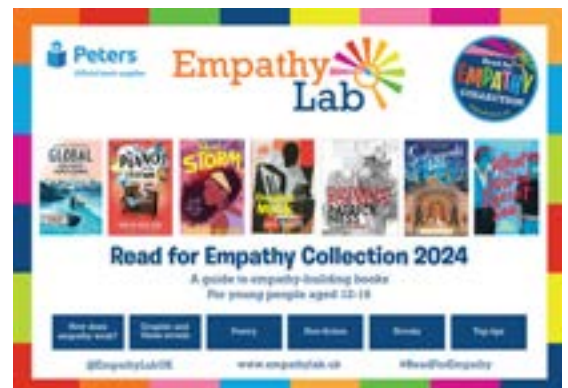
National Empathy Week took place during the week of 26th February -1st March 2024.

Empathy is the ability to experience and understand other people's feelings and points of view.

Scientific research shows that empathy is a learnable skill and that books are a practical, powerful tool to build it. Empathy Lab have released their annual collection of over 65 empathy building books. There are some really great book suggestions and recommendations. For further details please visit

<https://www.empathylab.uk/RFE-2024>

"Reading is an exercise in empathy; an exercise in walking in someone else's shoes for a while." -Malorie Blackman



Penglais Readers Book Group continues to meet every Tuesday lunchtime in the Library. Activities this half term have included:

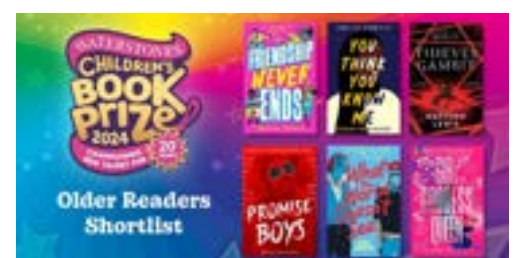
- Dragons Book Den
- Book Nooks (3D miniature dioramas which sit on your bookshelf)
- Lunar New Year Crafts
- Sci-fi books

Plus, a fascinating focus group carried out by the Books Council of Wales who were eager to get students' opinions on all things reading and book related.

Remember you can join Penglais Readers at any time, just pop into the Library and speak to our Librarian, Mrs Kennedy.

Book tokens were distributed to all Penglais students; with a World Book Day book being gifted to all students in Years 7 and 8.

Penglais Readers students also took control of book club and created a highly entertaining Who Am I? game based on literary characters. Thank you Emily, Miriam, Elsa and Clara (you can take over book club more often with your brilliant ideas!



English News

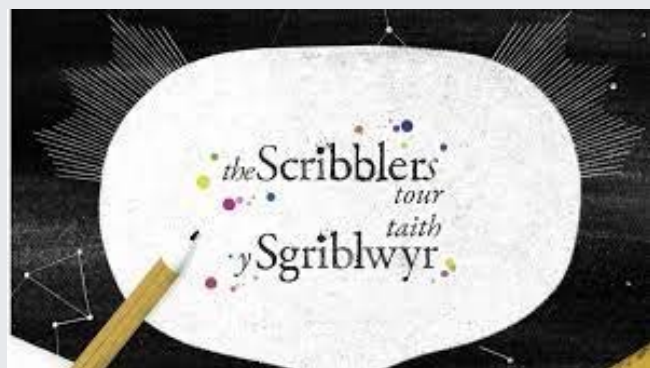
Scribblers Tour 2024

On the 6th of February, we, amongst some of our Year 9 peers, attended the Hay Festival Scribblers Tour 2024, at Aberystwyth Arts Centre. This event's purpose was to provide interactive events which encourage students to express themselves through creative writing. To begin, successful Young Adult (YA) author Jenny Valentine introduced the day's events. Then, Laura Bates, founder of Everyday Sexism, spoke about her work combating gender inequality, before speaking about her newly published books.



Visit to Hay Festival by Lily and Elsa - Year 9 students

After this, author Benjamin Dean talked to us about his life as a celebrity journalist, and how this had been the inspiration behind some of his books. Throughout both these talks we completed activities in 'newspapers' provided, and afterwards were given the opportunity to purchase books from the authors. Finally, a representative from Aberystwyth University spoke to us about how music interacts with literature in the sphere of podcasting. We enjoyed this event, because it combined many aspects of the literary world to encompass all aspects of young people's awareness of creative writing.



Parent Information

There has recently been a significant increase in the number of calls and answerphone messages we receive from parents/guardians asking us to pass messages on to their children during the school day. This is problematic because it causes disruption to the teaching and learning in the classroom; it takes time from our administration staff and we cannot always guarantee that messages will get through to students. Can we please ask that parents/guardians make arrangements for after school with their children directly prior to the start of the school day. We will not be able to pass messages on to children during the day.

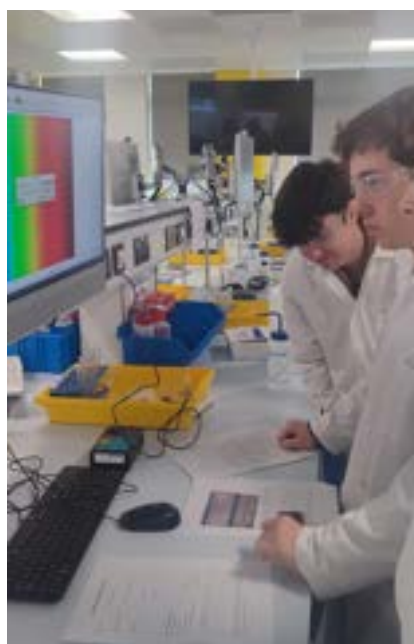
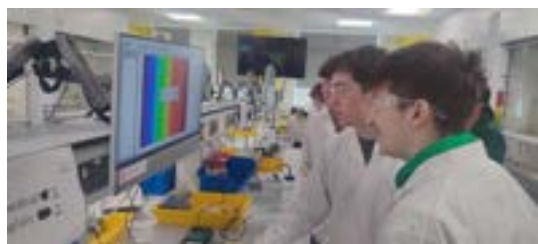
Can we also remind all parents to ensure that your child's ParentPay account is kept topped up to allow them to purchase food from our canteen as we are a cashless school.

Science News

Visit to Swansea Analyst competition

On the 24th of January, the Year 12 chemists visited the chemistry labs at Swansea university to attend the Swansea Analyst competition with the help of SEREN funding. The students spent the whole day in the excellently equipped labs at Swansea working in groups of three to perform two analytical practicals. The first of these involved students using familiar techniques that we have developed in Year 12 to analyse a water sample for hardness, by preparing a standard solution and titration. In the afternoon, pupils used a new technique known as colorimetry to determine the purity of aspirin in a sample.

As always, the students worked methodically, precisely and with resilience in a long and challenging set of tasks, not only impressing myself but also Professor Simon Bott, the lead chemist at Swansea, who commented on how well our students had worked. From the sixty groups that took part, a team from Penglais comprising of Mary H, Thomas B and Elarosa B came second place, narrowly missing out on first place! In addition 11 students were awarded gold status awards for their participation, with 3 silver and 7 bronzes also awarded.



Testimonial by Thomas B

I really enjoyed the Swansea analyst day, the experiments were fascinating and informative and it was a great opportunity to use new and high quality equipment such as spectrometers. It was an opportunity to see a real chemistry lab and observe its inner workings. I was really interested and felt excited by the facilities and the procedures in the lab. It did make me consider careers closer to the subject of chemistry.

Sixth Form News

Welsh Blood Service talk

On 13th March, the Welsh Blood Service spoke to Year 12 about the selfless act of giving blood, including how to sign up, how to prepare for donation, and what to expect on the day. What many students found most inspiring was the knowledge that their donation could potentially save three lives!

Use of CPR and an AED

On the same day, Mr Barnes also gave an insightful talk on the importance of being informed on certain topics, like CPR and how to use an AED (Automatic External Defibrillator). During the talk, he gave a demonstration of what to look for and what to do if you find someone having a medical emergency, as well as how to properly perform CPR when that person is completely unresponsive. Along with this, Year 12 were taught to not panic during an emergency, and if an AED is available, you should never be scared of doing any harm with it, as the machine can run you through the process step-by-step and will not administer a shock if one is not needed. Thank you, Mr Barnes!

Glyn - Year 12 student



New College Oxford trip in February by Hannah (Year 12)

The first day there, we were introduced to Oxford itself. We were shown the sights of Oxford – the Tom Tower, the Bodleian Library, which was a reader's dream and the Oxford Botanic Gardens. The historic architecture was amazing. On the second day we got to experience New College Oxford itself. We got to eat breakfast in the dining hall, which was the site of filming for Mama Mia, Here We Go Again. Then we got a tour of the college itself, saw the tree at which a scene from Harry Potter was filmed, the new college chapel, which had some of the most stunning stained-glass windows I had ever seen. After we got a talk from a member of the college staff about finances and the college itself. After lunch, we had a talk from a lecturer about linguistics and the history of language which was very interesting and informative.

It was an amazing experience and I'm very glad that I was able to go.



Sixth Form News

Climate change speech by Professor John Pomeroy

Penglais Sixth Form were lucky enough to listen to Professor John Pomeroy on the Importance of Mountain Water. He showed evidence that we are in a time when we get extreme weather and a changing climate. This is endangering critical mountain water sources like the Canadian Rockies snowpacks and glaciers, with potential for dire implications. Professor Pomeroy stated mountain water sources play a key role in everything from our drinking water, health and wellbeing, agriculture, food production, energy and ecosystem health.

Professor Pomeroy emphasised the importance of the next generation spreading the information that has come from his work. John can be seen on an Attenborough programme educating Greta Thunberg on the effects of the climate and ecological crisis on Jasper National Park.

Sixth form students asked him some searching questions on his work and he enjoyed speaking and interacting with them



Global Mountain Climate & Water Security Challenges



Rising temperatures at high elevations
Drought, wildfire
Impacts on snow, ice, water

Mountain snowcover decline in many regions
Earlier snowmelt

Rapid deglaciation of high mountain regions
Changing water supply
GLOFs
Rising sea levels



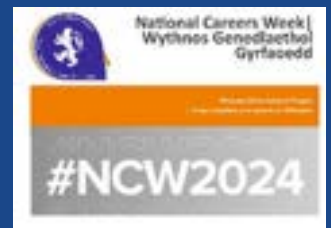
Programming Club

The Sixth Form is launching a Competitive Programming Club for students from Year 10 and up. The Club prepares students for the British Informatics Olympiad (BIO) and other prestigious programming contests. By analysing and solving contest problems, students gain fluency in computational thinking, data structures, and algorithmic analysis.

The BIO is a national competition modelled after international STEM Olympiads in Mathematics, Chemistry, Physics, and Biology. Students compete in a paper-based round held locally in December, with the top scorers progressing to a second round held at Cambridge University in March. From there, four students are chosen to represent the UK against 85 other national teams at the International Olympiad of Informatics (IOI) in August.

The aim is to develop your programming skills and to have fun discussing problems and learning with other students. The club will take place twice a week in the Sixth form Centre at lunch times. Please contact Mr Bowman (Learning Coach SFC) if you would like to join. His email address is : BowmanH13@hwbcymru.net

Careers Week News



The 11th to 15th March was National Careers' Week and we wanted to make sure that all students in the school had the opportunity to explore various careers and start thinking about what might interest them in the future. All students have been exploring different aspects of careers through their Wellbeing lessons and Ms Hill worked hard to ensure that every year group had an opportunity to find out more about various jobs. Every year group had a day allocated to them and at lunch time there were different sessions open to all students.

On Monday 4th March, a group of students from Year 11 went to Coleg Ceredigion to look at the facilities and courses available to them. We also had Andrew Davies from Big Ideas Wales come in to speak to the Year 11 Business classes about how he started his business.

On Tuesday we invited several guest speakers to Year 10 lessons to speak to students. Becky Barratt from Driftwood Designs spoke to a Year 10 group about how to set up and start a business. and Leanne Bird came into a Wellbeing lesson to explain what she does and even got the students to participate in a yoga session. Art also had a guest speaker from Crack Pots who explained how he had started up his business from a hobby.

At lunchtime the main hall offered the students from all year groups the opportunity to speak to a fire fighter and a dog handler with a Police Officer on hand to answer questions about the profession. Charlie Taylor brought along his operational fire kit, a breathing apparatus set and some search and rescue gear. He also spoke about his experiences of being an operational firefighter and carrying out search and rescue operations abroad. The students got to try on his kit and apparatus to see what it would be like as a firefighter. The students also got to meet Max a police dog and his handler. They were able to ask questions about training and how to get into the role as a handler and other areas of the Police service.

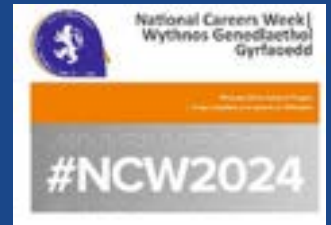
On Wednesday students from Years 9 and 10 attended the 'Your Future, Your Choice' interactive careers and skills event at Aberystwyth University. The Choose Your Future Careers Festival was organised by Careers Wales in conjunction with Aberystwyth University and supported by the Welsh Government.

The aim of the festival was to increase and enhance student awareness of the different opportunities and vocational career routes available to them. They had the opportunity to gather information on employment, apprenticeships, volunteering and education opportunities from over one hundred exhibitors.

Higher Education All Welsh Universities were at the event discussing their courses; Engineering QinetiQ, Openreach and Aber Instruments are just a few employers from this sector; Further Education Local colleges and Training Providers talked about their courses and subjects; Ceredigion County Council promoted their apprenticeships and careers; Health and Social Care Hywel Dda University Health Board and We Care Wales; Public Services -Police, Fire and Ambulance Service; Construction LEB Construction and Wynne Construction; Armed Forces Army, RAF and Navy.



Careers Week News



Thursday was the turn of Year 8. Mr Ward's Biology class were fortunate to have Emma Anscombe Skirrow, a lecturer for Vet Nursing. She brought in lots of animal body parts including a horse heart and stomach. The students heard about her stories even taking blood from a lion! In the afternoon Year 8 got to attend a forum for Welsh with Osian Pryce and Andrew Edwards. Osian Pryce won Rali Ceredigion 2023 in his Volkswagen Polo GTI R5 and has travelled the world rallying representing Wales. Andrew Edwards has been rallying since early 2000s with famous drivers such as Elfyn Evans who is a WRC Driver. He has travelled all over the world including America with his rallying career and is most recently known for all his work he does in our local area as Route Coordinator for Rali Ceredigion.

The 2023 event was a huge success attracting tens of thousands of rally fans and generating over £3 million of economic benefits to the local hospitality and tourism sectors across Aberystwyth and Ceredigion. Both were explaining how being able to speak the Welsh language has opened doors and given them opportunities they wouldn't have had if they couldn't speak Welsh. They were interviewed by Miss Hill who is a presenter on Road Rally Radio with Andrew Edwards for Cymru.fm. Both work as builders in their day-to-day job but get to take part in the international rallying world and have both presented on Radio S4C. At the end of the question-and-answer session the students were given autographs from the two Welsh rally stars.

On Friday Year 7 had an afternoon with Tally Roberts from Aberystwyth University, an Associate Lecturer from the Science Outreach Faculty of Business and Physical Sciences to discuss Science Fiction to Science Fact talk (A tour of how science fiction writers have influenced the science and technology of today and the future).

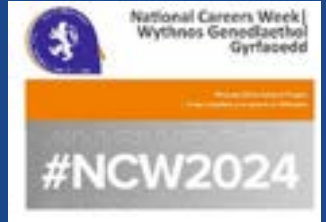
Thank you to all the business owners and professionals who gave up their time to come in to Penglais and to Rebecca from Careers Wales to make the week an exciting and successful one.

We have also been running a daily quiz throughout Careers Week that you can take part in. All answers need to be submitted by April 5th. Join in with your child to answer the questions and guess the career from the clues given. Email your answers to hillf38@hwbcymru.net to be in with a chance to win a £10 voucher kindly donated by Morrisons Aberystwyth:

1. Who would use Tethers, handholds, and footholds?
2. Who uses anemometers, hygrometers and barometers?
3. Who uses speed ladders, marker cones and bibs?
4. Who would use dehorner, scanner and an emasculator?
5. Who uses extraoral cameras, saliva ejector and cotton rolls?

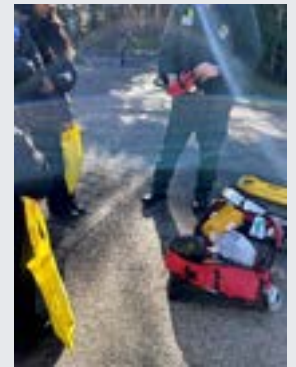


Careers Week News



Penglais Career's Week Pictures

Thank you to all the business owners and professionals who helped to inspire our students, and for making the week an exciting and successful one.



Careers News

Swansea UWTSD Motorsport and Engineering Trip

Students in Years 10, 11 & 12 visited the University of Wales Trinity St David's to experience what it would be like to be a student on one of their Engineering courses. The students were split into groups and got to see what it would be like to attend a CAD lesson in a computer suite drawing a 3D object to scale. They also had a tour of the workshops and facilities. We saw a rolling road with a motorcycle being tested for speed, a wind tunnel, a huge CNC machine and a variety of cars that the students had been working on including their race team car. They even got to race their own car in the race car simulator. It was a great insight into what their future would be like if they chose to go to UWTSD in the future to study Engineering.



Parent Information

We would like to remind parents that the expectation is that staff will return emails and calls from parents within 48 hours, so please allow staff time to return your call or email. If you have been called by a member of staff, they will have left a message for you so please can you listen to the message to allow our Receptionist to be able to put you through to the correct person when you call back.

Business News

Year 13 Business - Raising Aspirations event

The Year 13 Business class planned a "Raising Aspirations" event for Year 8 on Feb. Year 13 students used the event as an opportunity to demonstrate their event planning skills as part of their assessed coursework.

Year 8 students were encouraged to find out more about several career pathways and the options available in the local area. Guests included; Aberystwyth university (Parasitic research department), Dyfan Rees (Sky Magic), Careers Wales, Medchip Solutions, Baravin, HCT Aberystwyth, Ystwyth Care, A&D Tyres, and Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue.

The students from Year 13 and Year 8 were very grateful to all of the visitors for running their stands and sharing their expertise and enthusiasm.



Year 10 BTEC Enterprise

The Year 10 students following the BTEC Enterprise course have been busy preparing for their first assessment which investigates a small-medium enterprise. Students have been researching Bargoed Farm near Aberaeron, and were lucky enough to have the chance to interview Mr Geraint Thomas, the entrepreneur behind the 'Moody Cow' and it's business manager Rhiannon Matthews. The students learnt all about the hard work it takes to run a successful business and the exciting plans that are being developed to grow the business even further.

WE WILL ROCK YOU

SCHOOL EDITION

Between the 22nd and 24th of February, the students and staff of the Drama and Music departments presented the School Edition of the classic Queen musical 'We Will Rock You' in the Main Hall; the first collaboration between the two departments since Sister Act in 2019!

The production involved over 100 students and several staff in various roles both onstage and offstage, working hard over the last 5 months, to create an incredible atmosphere of teamwork and cooperation throughout the production process. The cast and crew entertained over 800 people from across the Ceredigion community, all of whom could be seen tapping their feet to the infectious beat of Queen's music and leaving the hall humming away to their favourite tunes. Lots of fun was had by all who participated and we cannot thank everyone enough for their support, kind comments and positive praise along the way!

What will we be performing next? I'm afraid you'll have to wait and see! Our next musical will be performed in Spring 2025 and we can't wait to get started in the new school year!

