

ISLWYN NEWS

Sporting Success

Islwyn High School has celebrated some great sporting success over the spring term. Our Year 7 Netball team took part in a challenging tournament, playing 7 hard matches and winning the majority. The team played extremely well and had an excellent time at Croesyceiliog. Well done, girls!



In other news, the under 13s girls football team won the cup final against Cwm Rhymni with an amazing score of 4-1. Starting line-up was Summer Burton (gk), Darcy Lemin ©(cb), Grace Andrews (VC)(s), Olivia Jones (RW), Maisie Richards (LW), Ella Chard (cb), Grace Hopkins (lb), Miley Davies (cm), Kaydee Cuthbertson (lcm), Mia Farina Bray (rcm), Brooke Morris (rb).

The girls worked hard to get to every first ball and didn't give Cwm Rhymni a chance to get into the game. The first half saw two goals by Grace Andrews with assists from Olivia Jones for both. Islwyn had many more chances but narrowly missed the back of the net, leaving the first half 2-0 up. The second half again went well with Maisie Richards scoring a fantastic goal to take Islwyn 3-0 up. Cwm Rhymni scored a penalty to put them on the score board but Islwyn came back stronger with another amazing goal from Maisie. The final whistle left the score as 4-1 to Islwyn. It was a fantastic team effort and each team member received a medal and the team brought home the trophy. Well done, girls!



The Year 9 boys football team have yet again put in some brilliant performances. It was another year in the Caerphilly Cup Final for our boys, but this time around it wasn't to be. It was a highly contested game with both teams putting in some brilliant attack and defence. Well done to Newbridge who won on sudden death penalties! 2-2 at full time. Another fantastic year of football for this group. Keep up the good work!



Finally, on the 27th March, twelve pupils left Islwyn SRB and travelled to Sofia Gardens, Cardiff to represent the school in the Cricket Wales finals. After a very tough competition against the best teams in South Wales, the team came away as champions, and brought the shield back to Islwyn! Well done!



Articles by: Chiara Gibb, Ella-Rose Price, Grace Andrews and Olivia Jones.

Digital Detox Leaving Litter

The student council have been discussing the use of smart phones and screens and how they can negatively impact both the mental and physical health of pupils. We want to raise awareness of this and are planning to host a Digital Detox Day in the upcoming school term, where pupils and staff will be given the choice to give up their phones for one school day. This means that pupils can either leave their phones at home on the specific day or hand it in to their form tutors during registration (and collect them once the school day has ended).

The aim of this is to give pupils and staff (if they wish) a break from the screen, reducing distractions while working, and helping them experience the overall benefit of not being constantly reliant on their phones to the point where they are being overused.

We don't believe a blanket ban would work, so we aim to give the day a competitive edge with personal and year group competitions. Following the day, each year group and individual who successfully completed the digital detox day will be given the opportunity to win a prize.

We are eagerly looking forward to the Digital Detox Day and would love to see as many of you as possible participating!

- Sejal Chauhan



Leaving Litter

As a school council, we have discussed the issue of litter around the school and the impact it has on our environment, particularly with plastic bottles. In this school we have a 'No littering' rule that applies to everyone but we've been seeing far too much litter on the yards after break and lunch time. We have discussed actions that we will be putting in place as a student council. For example, we are aiming to have more recycling bins made available around the school yards so pupils don't have to walk so far to get rid of their rubbish. One of the strategies we are going to use is to raise awareness. We completed an EQI of Islwyn High School and those of us that completed it after break or lunch found that litter was the biggest problem. It is all of our responsibility to make our school a nice, clean environment.

So please could you help us to make the environment at Islwyn even better and bin your rubbish, because this seriously and needlessly damages the environment. Thank you for your help everyone!

- Millie Ridge



The Brilliant Club

Earlier this term, pupils from the Brilliant Club's Scholar's Programme were taken on a trip to Bath University in order to receive their graduation honours from the programme. They were accompanied by Mr Hillier and Mr Morris who both commented on the exemplary example the pupils set for Islwyn High School. It was brilliant to see the pupils rewarded for their hard work and to get a real flavour of university life.



The day began with a reflection session that gave pupils the opportunity to reflect on the process and present some of their findings from their assigned area of academic study. This was followed by a tour of the historic campus which gave pupils the opportunity to take a glimpse of both the academic and social sides of university life, as well as the incredible facilities they would be able to use if they attended Bath university.



Following this, pupils were able to ask questions of the university ambassadors in a helpful and insightful Q&A session.



The day culminated in a graduation ceremony where pupils were called upon to receive their completion certificates through the manner and customs of a traditional graduation ceremony.

Well done to all the pupils who took part. You've done Islwyn and yourselves proud!

Lloyd Shippley, one of our Year 7 pupils, also wrote a piece about his experience of the Brilliant Club so far. This is what he had to say:

You are given a certain topic which is not taught in schools, and you learn about it for 4-5 weeks, an hour a week, before writing your essay. My topic was Politics: Inside number 10. You have a tutor who helps you through the whole journey and by the end you will have extra knowledge and skills. The essays are 1500+ words. It can be very challenging, but you will find it fun and beneficial. You are assigned weekly homework, and all you have to do is set aside 20-45 minutes for it! I have loved the experience so far.

The Wonder of Words

Islwyn High School celebrated World Book Day this term. It was a fantastic day organised by members of the English department and included a number of different celebrations across the school.

There was a real buzz about literacy around the school, with the love of reading at the forefront of the day. Mrs William's asked members of staff for their favourite recent read and displayed posters of them on classrooms throughout the school. This was furthered by a fun form time quiz in which form classes were encouraged to work together to discuss literature and see which forms could get the most questions correct. Members of staff were videoed reading the questions and this was played during from time.

Everyone was given the opportunity to share in the wonder of words, with the beginning of all lessons being dedicated to a reading from Suzanne Collins' The Hunger Games. Pupils were eager to hear the next part of the story as they moved from lesson to lesson and staff enjoyed sharing their readings with pupils.

Staff couldn't resist the opportunity to dress up as some of their favourite Literary characters on the day. The English department put on a wonderful display as characters from

Alice in Wonderland.

Overall, it was a fantastic, fun filled day which went a long way to celebrate the school's love for reading. Well done all!

Also in the English Department

The NRTs

Recently, Year 7 pupils completed their NRT reading tests. This was a challenging experience for pupils and allowed us to see the progress we had made in lessons.

Our Year Seven Reading

At Islwyn High School, we value our reading very highly. We are given the opportunity to use the library and start some of our lessons by reading our books. In year 7, our reading is probably one of the most enjoyable things in English lessons. We complete a test online to show we have read our books before we change them and this counts the number of words we have read. Year 7 is the year group with the most words read this term and we hope to keep this going.

Give or take, Its A Good Idea

What do you do with your old books? For most of us, we simply leave them on the shelf. We would like to give everyone the chance to read something new, so we are trying to set up a give one take one bookshelf in the library, where you can hand in an old books and take and take a new one. This is in a bid to save the environment and to get even more people reading.

- James Bower



A glimpse into Lessons

Dig for Victory

In History lessons, we have been learning about the impact of WW2 on the people of Britain. As part of this, we looked at rationing. During WW2, there was a threat that the enemy would cut off Britain's food supply. In case this did happen and to ensure everybody would still have food, the government introduced rationing. This was a process which involved the fair distribution of food for every citizen in Britain, regulated by Ration Books. Ration books were handed out to each civilian in Britain, man woman or child. They held the name of the individual and all of their suppliers, such as the butcher etc. They contained coupons which were exchanged for the goods they needed, which ensured everybody got their allocated amount of goods per month. I was able to bring in genuine rationing books to show the class. These are pictured below.



William Hall - Adult



Lilian Hall - Adult



Robert Hall - Child

As well as rationing, the government encouraged the 'Dig for Britain' campaign, which encouraged people to turn gardens into allotments and grow what vegetables they could. The growing of vegetables was encouraged by government produced characters such as 'Potato Pete' and 'Doctor Carrot'.

With the restrictions that rationing implemented, especially on sweet treats, people turned to alternative recipes they could make. One sweet treat made from carrots is carrot cookies. As part of the Depression War and Recovery GCSE history topic, Mr Morris hand bakes a batch of these carrot cookies for his classes. As someone who has tried these cookies, I can report they're not as bad as they seem. They don't taste at all like carrots, you can just see the orange of the shredded carrots within. And while they are quite dry, I imagine during war time they would have been a delicious treat.

- Lowri Morgans



Super Science

Science is always an exciting and interesting subject, and right now we are working on CSI. During these lessons, we are solving the murder of Simon Major. This murder mystery has really got us thinking and we need to look for a number of different clues using scientific processes to solve the crime. These lessons are filled with excitement and we get to do a lot of practical work to do with crime scenes. So far we have learnt about fingerprints and how certain chemicals can be used to lift them to prove a certain person committed a crime. Also, in Science Club we are building rockets and we are really excited about seeing them fly.

• Isaac Loughlin



Humanities

We have covered all three of the humanities in our lessons. We have dived deeper into Cynefin which means a place where we feel we belong. It is important as everyone has different backgrounds and live in different local areas and we were looking at internal locations such as Caerphilly Castle, and coal mines as it was not brought here as then external places such as fast food restaurants KFC Mc Donald's etc.

The teachers always make our lessons interactive, some examples are: walking around the school to find our history, turning the class into a coal mine and reenacting the Battle of Hasting's.

- Nina Forrest



An Inspector Calls Valiant Voices

Earlier this term, Year 11 English students attended a performance of J.B. Priestley's "An Inspector Calls" at the Wales Millennium Centre in Cardiff. Stephen Daldry's production was a thought provoking and enriching experience. The set featured a grand Edwardian house elevated above the stage, symbolizing the Birling family's detachment from the realities of the working class. Throughout the play, the house dramatically opened up, reflecting the exposure of the family's secrets. The pupils thoroughly enjoyed the experience and were able to reflect on their own studies whilst watching it. This was a fantastic experience for the pupils and provided them with a deeper understanding of the play's themes of social responsibility and class disparity, enriching their studies and prompting thoughtful classroom discussions



The Year 9 debate team put in a fantastic performance at the Seren Debate Finals in Oxford this term.

The team, led by Miss Mutlow and Miss Sedgwick, proved dominant in the qualifying rounds of the competition. During the first competition of the semi finals, pupils had to debate the argument "This house believes that politicians should not be on social media." They conducted themselves brilliantly and put forward some very convincing opinions. Unfortunately, victory wasn't to be this time but the team did incredibly well in representing their region at the finals and should be so very proud of themselves! Well done, girls! You are a true credit to Islwyn High School.



Imperial War Museum

Year 9 students were given the opportunity to attend a trip to the Imperial War Museum London to engage with the Holocaust Learning Programme.

The visit began with a guided session in the Holocaust Learning Centre, where students explored the history of the Holocaust through personal narratives and authentic artifacts. This interactive approach allowed them to understand the impact of individual experiences during this tragic period.

Following the session, students toured the Holocaust Galleries, following individuals' journeys through this harrowing time in history. The exhibitions included photographs, letters, and personal belongings of victims and survivors. The gallery ends with footage from the liberation of Dachau by allied soldiers, a section of the exhibit which brought our pupils to a stand still. Following the exhibition pupils were welcomed back into the Holocaust Learning Centre for a

debrief and reflection period. It was interesting to hear their opinions and viewpoints during this session.

The pupils conducted themselves brilliantly through an exhibition which demanded respect and reflection. Now, more than ever, it is important for pupils to learn about this tragic event in human history and ensure that something like this can never be allowed to happen again.



Pawsitive Vibes Only

Introducing Trixie – Our School Wellbeing Dog

Trixie has joined us as part of our commitment to supporting the emotional wellbeing and mental health of our pupils. Research has shown that therapy and wellbeing dogs can have a hugely positive impact in schools, helping to reduce stress and anxiety, improve confidence, and even support learning and communication skills.

The Dog Mentor program introduces dogs into schools to provide numerous benefits for both students and staff., including;

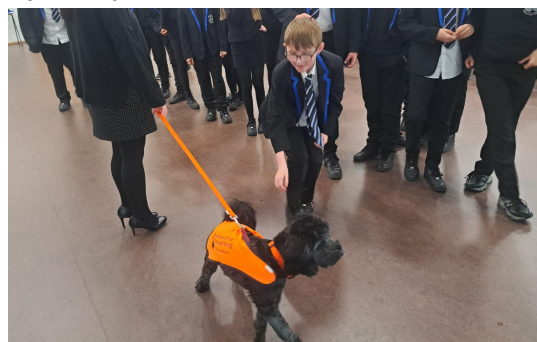
- **Emotional Support:** Dogs have been shown to reduce anxiety and create a calming presence, helping students feel more relaxed and focused. This contributes to a better learning environment.
- **Improved Social Interaction:** By acting as a bridge for communication, dogs help foster better relationships among peers and between students and staff. This is especially beneficial for children who may struggle with social skills.
- **Behavioural and Attention Benefits:** The presence of a Dog Mentor can help improve attention spans and reduce behaviour challenges, making classroom management smoother.

Well-Being for Staff and Students: Dogs encourage emotional well-being by reducing stress and offering opportunities for mindfulness. They also provide an engaging way to practise empathy and responsibility.

To help the pupils get to know Trixie, we have already held assemblies to introduce her and explain her role. Part of the assembly pupils were taught how to approach Trixie and how it is important that they clear up their rubbish around the school to prevent Trixie eating food she shouldn't have or choking on anything.

Opt-out and allergy letters have been sent to parents and carers, but if you have any concerns or questions, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

We are incredibly excited about the positive impact Trixie will have and look forward to sharing updates on her journey with us.



Welcoming Trixie the school therapy dog!



Trixie is a school therapy dog who provides emotional support and comfort to students, helping them manage stress and feel safe in the school environment. It's important to respect Trixie's role by not interrupting her during therapy sessions or trying to pet her without permission. Always ask a teacher or staff member if you'd like to interact with Trixie, and be gentle and calm if given the chance. Remember, Trixie is there to help others, so treat her with kindness and respect, just like you would with any important support animal.

Things to be cautious about

Try not to drop food around her as she may eat something poisonous leading to dangerous effects on her health.

Try not to crowd around her as she may get overwhelmed



Do's and don'ts when stroking Trixie

Do	Don't
Stroke her from the front	Stroke her from behind
Speak softly	Talk loudly around her
Make her feel comfortable	Overwhelm her
Ask before you stroke her	Stroke her without permission

Hallie Bengier

Year 7 Peer Mediators

We are incredibly proud of our Year 7 Peer Mediators, who have successfully completed their three-day training and passed with flying colours! These dedicated students have shown fantastic commitment, developing the skills needed to support their peers and help create a more positive, inclusive school environment.

Our Peer Mediators play a vital role in ensuring that all students feel safe, supported, and heard. They help by:

Resolving Conflicts – Encouraging respectful discussions to help students work through disagreements.

Providing a Listening Ear – Offering support to students who may feel upset or isolated.

Promoting Kindness & Respect – Setting a great example and fostering a positive school culture.

Calling Out Unkind Behaviour – Use the 'Report It' App

While our Peer Mediators are here to help, we know that some issues need to be addressed in different ways. That's why we encourage all students to use the 'Report It' app, which allows them to safely and anonymously report any unkind behaviour they witness or experience. Every student has the right to feel safe and respected at school, and by speaking up, we can work together to ensure a supportive environment for everyone.

A Huge Well Done!

Congratulations once again to our Peer Mediators for their hard work and dedication. If you ever need support, advice, or just someone to talk to – our Peer Mediators are here for you!

Edited by Joseph Brodrick and Kitty-Rose Beal



GUESS WHO?

Who is this person from history? If you know, head to Mr Morris' classroom (304) because the first person to name this person correctly will win a prize.

A clue: There's only been one of this king!



Red Nose Day

On Red Nose Day there were a number of activities organised around the school to raise money for this fantastic cause. One major event was riding exercise bikes the distance it would take to get to Cardiff. All the pupils did this for ten minutes each to contribute, whilst watching a video of riding to Cardiff. At lunch time, pupils were given the opportunity to pay to watch the teachers and year 11s play netball. Pupils also raised money by selling delicious cupcakes, red nose pin badges, and red noses with a chance to find the special red nose. Pupils also wore odd socks for Comic relief day. It was a really fun day throughout the school with lots of fun activities for pupils to take part in. We would like to thank Mrs Henry for organising the day and raising money for this great cause.

- Lillie Lyons and Katie Watkins



Positive Masculinity Raising Awareness

A group of our Year 10 and 11 boys recently had the fantastic opportunity to attend a Positive Masculinity Workshop at Rodney Parade. This event focused on encouraging young men to develop healthy, respectful, and confident identities, challenging outdated stereotypes, and promoting emotional wellbeing.

Throughout the session, the students explored topics such as mental resilience, leadership, and breaking down harmful stereotypes. Through discussions and interactive activities, they reflected on how to be positive role models in school and in their wider communities.

The workshop provided a valuable space for open conversations about mental health, peer pressure, and the importance of self-awareness, giving students practical strategies to navigate challenges in a healthy way.

The students who attended have returned with fresh perspectives and are eager to share what they've learned with their peers. This workshop was just the beginning of an ongoing conversation about what it truly means to be a strong, respectful, and compassionate individual in today's society. A big thank you to Rodney Parade and the workshop facilitators for delivering such an insightful and empowering session!



Dangers of Vaping

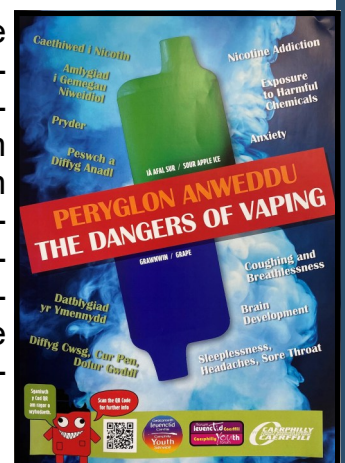
This term, members of the Senior Leadership Team attended the Caerphilly Youth Forum which encouraged them to push the agenda of anti-vaping in their schools. Vaping is a common issue throughout the Caerphilly area and the Youth Forum voted to do something about it. All members of the forum were given posters to put up around their respective schools. The student leadership team here in Islwyn High School successfully placed posters in areas of high traffic such as the toilets, the canteen and corridors which are places that students are most likely to see the poster.

Vaping comes with serious health risks. Many vape products contain nicotine, which is highly addictive and can harm brain development in young people. Additionally, the chemicals in vape liquid can cause lung damage, leading to conditions like popcorn lung and vaping-related respiratory illnesses.

Despite being marketed as a 'cool' or 'harmless' habit, vaping can have lasting consequences. Studies show that young people who vape are more likely to start smoking cigarettes. The best way to stay healthy is to avoid vaping altogether and spread awareness about its dangers.

In order to further raise awareness, school assemblies were organised so every pupil in the school have been given the facts, dangers and reality of vaping. We hope these efforts stop more people picking up this dangerous habit.

- Mia Lane



The Big Easter Quiz

How many can you get right?

Quiz rules: Answer all of the questions below without using the Internet. You can ask your teachers, friends or family or read books. You can use any other means except using the internet. Good luck!

1. What is the official flower of Easter?
2. Where did the Easter bonnet originate from?
3. In the Bible, who betrayed Jesus just before his crucifixion?
4. What popular game is traditionally played at Easter?
5. Where did the world's largest Easter egg hunt take place?
6. In Switzerland, what animal delivers Easter eggs to children?
7. Where was the UK's first Easter egg produced?
8. In what country is dancing banned on Good Friday?
9. What colour were Easter eggs traditionally painted?
10. In what century was the first recorded use of decorated Easter eggs?

TRY THIS AT HOME

Easter Egg Nest Cakes

These easy to make nests will be a welcome treat this easter. Why not give them a go following the instructions below?

Ingredients

- 200g milk chocolate, broken into pieces
- 85g shredded wheat, crushed
- 2 x 100g bags mini chocolate eggs.

Method

STEP 1

Melt the chocolate in a small bowl. Pour the chocolate over the shredded wheat and stir well to combine.

STEP 2

Spoon the chocolate wheat into 12 cupcake cases and press the back of a teaspoon in the centre to create a nest shape. Place 3 mini chocolate eggs on top of each nest. Chill the nests in the fridge for 2 hrs until set.



Brain Teasers

1. You're shown a 3-digit code where: The first digit is three times the third digit. The second digit is the sum of the first and third. The sum of all three digits is 12. What is the code?
2. You walk into a room with three switches. One of them turns on a light bulb in another room. You can flip the switches however you like, but you can only go into the other room once. How do you figure out which switch controls the bulb?
3. What five-letter word becomes shorter when you add two letters to it?
4. You see me once in a minute, twice in a moment, but never in a thousand years. What am I?

