

ISLWYN NEWS

Our Cynefin

(Melyn) 1428 points, Tim Eirth (Gwyrdd) 1327 points, and Tîm Bleiddiaid (Glas) 1186 points.

Cynefin is a Welsh word meaning a deep sense of place, belonging, and connection to one's environment, and that's exactly what pupils have felt with this year's Eisteddfod and other activities involving the Welsh language and culture.

Islwyn pupils celebrated St David's Day in style with an Eisteddfod worthy of our Saint David himself. The whole of Key Stage 3 took part in competitions across the areas of learning in what was a strongly contested inter house competition. There are four houses at Islwyn; Dreigiau (Dragons), Llewod (Lions), Eirth (Bears), and Bleiddiad (Wolves).

Our Eisteddfod was a huge success, fel arfer, (as usual), and we were delighted to host members from Criw Cymraeg from the primary schools to join us. For the very first time, we hosted 16 Year 6 pupils and they opened our Eisteddfod by reciting a poem, entitled, "Hoffi'r ysgol? Ydw ...ond....." They were amazing and so confident. We can't wait to have them join us in Criw Cymraeg next year. The day was filled with music, songs and celebrations and points were awarded for winners of stage performances and off-stage entries in Welsh, English, Technology, Humanities, Drama, Maths, Art and Design and many more!



The finale was the Chairing of the Bard" ceremony, won by the very talented writer in Year 9, Lucy Devine.

The overall winners of our Eisteddfod 2026 were:

Tim Dreigiau (Coch) with 1569 points. Followed by- Tim Llewod

Another special mention goes to all the pupils who put on wonderful performances during the day. The crowd were treated to recitals, singing and piano pieces as a celebration of our patron saint.



We would like to say a huge "Diolch" to Mrs Jo Poole, one of our governors, for adjudicating and to Ms Day and Mrs Hughes for compering and hosting, alongside us.

We sold "Pice ar y Maen" (Welsh Cakes) too and a great time was had by all. We need to do a big shout out to our Criw Cymraeg member, Amber Rose Card in 7JHM for creating a beautiful bouquet of knitted daffodils. This was auctioned to staff and the highest bidder was Mrs Barry for £20. Llongyfarchiadau!



By Criw Cymraeg

Islwyn Celebrates World Book Day

World Book Day at Islwyn High was nothing short of spectacular this year, and if you spotted a member of staff striding down the corridor as Winnie the Pooh, channelling Lady Macbeth, or giving serious Goldilocks energy, you'll know exactly why!

Staff threw themselves into the spirit of the day with brilliant costumes that had pupils talking (and laughing) all day long. From beloved childhood classics to curriculum favourites, creativity was very much on display!



The fun didn't stop there. Form time quizzes got brains buzzing first thing in the morning, while a Wanted Poster treasure hunt had pupils hunting down infamous book characters across the school. The lunchtime quiz rounded off a day packed with activities that put books and reading firmly in the spotlight, exactly where they belong.



In addition to the exciting activities, pupils also had the chance to recommend their favourite books to friends and staff, sharing stories that had inspired them or made them laugh. It was a wonderful way to spark new reading adventures and remind everyone that there's a perfect book out there for everyone, no matter your age or taste.



What better moment to celebrate than halfway through what has already been a record-breaking year of reading at Islwyn High? Pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 have collectively devoured an incredible 147,822,299 words, and we now have 34 proud Word Millionaires in our midst. That's nothing short of record-breaking! Each of our fantastic word millionaires were awarded a certificate and a book of their choice to celebrate this marvellous milestone.



Here's to the next half of the year; keep those pages turning, Islwyn!

SPORTING SUCCESS

This Spring term has brought some fantastic sporting success for Islwyn pupils.

There have been some exciting and memorable performances for the school's girls' football teams.

The Under-13 girls delivered an outstanding performance in their final, securing the title of Caerphilly Cup Champions for the 2025/26 season. They faced Newbridge in the final and produced a dominant display to win 3–0. Evie Jones led the scoring with two well-taken goals, while Tyra Motsi added a third to seal the victory. Tyra's all-round performance earned her the well-deserved Player of the Match award.

The Under-15 girls also reached the Caerphilly Schools Cup Final, rounding off what has been another strong season for the squad. In the final, they faced a tough challenge against Idris Davies and, despite their best efforts, were defeated 4–1. Grace Andrews scored the team's goal in what was a hard-fought match. Myah Newell was named Player of the Match for her standout performance.

Both teams should be incredibly proud of their achievements this season. Well done!



Also, a massive congratulations to the Year 7 boys' football team on reaching the Caerphilly Cup final after a hard-fought 4–2 semi-final win against Blackwood. Despite difficult weather and a strong first-half performance from their opponents, the boys showed resilience and determina-

tion, scoring two late goals to secure victory. Their teamwork and effort were outstanding throughout, well done boys!



A huge congratulations to the Year 9 Rugby Team! They won the Caerphilly Bowl Final against Risca in a spectacular display of skill and teamwork. It was easily their best performance of the season, as they dominated every aspect of the game and ran riot, securing an impressive 53–0 victory. Their commitment, energy, and determination on the field were truly outstanding.

The Year 7 boys rugby team were crowned Caerphilly Cup Champions after an impressive 45–12 victory against Gellihaf. Well done for all your hard work and commitment boys!

Year 7 girls took part in an exciting touch rugby competition at Cwmcarn School. The players were split into two teams, Pool A and Pool B. Overall, the girls had an impressive day, finishing with five wins, two losses, and two draws, showing great teamwork, skill, and determination throughout the competition.



Finally, the Year 9 boys basketball team were crowned Caerphilly Schools Champions for 2026. Their skill, speed, and teamwork carried them to victory and impressed everyone watching. It's another proud moment for Islwyn High and a well-deserved celebration for the team.

By Macey Davies, Eva Morris, Georgia Morgan and Lexie Mai-Peckham.

Numeracy Ninjas! Where Am I?

On Tuesday 17th March, several Year 6 pupils from a variety of local schools—including our main cluster schools Penllwyn, Pontllanfraith, and Rhiw Syr Dafydd—visited Islwyn High School to take part in the exciting 'Game 24' challenge.

'Game 24' is a fast-paced maths competition where pupils aim to make a total of 24 using a selection of numbers from 1 to 9. They can use addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division to reach their



answers, putting their problem-solving skills and quick thinking to the test. The competition was made up of five rounds, with pupils rotating each time, giving everyone a chance to tackle a variety of challenges and demonstrate their mathematical abilities.

Among the participating schools, Rhiw Syr Dafydd stood out as one of the top performers, achieving an impressive total score of 36. The event was a fantastic opportunity for Year 6 pupils to apply their maths skills in a fun and competitive environment, while also meeting other pupils from across the cluster schools and enjoying a lively day of teamwork.

Also in the world of numeracy, pupils took part in an exciting Times Tables Rock Stars (TTRS) competition, which ran from January to February. The event brought together pupils from Years 7, 8 and 9, all aiming to improve their maths skills while having fun and representing the school on a national level.

The competition was organised and led by Mrs Collins, followed by support from Mr Davies and Mrs Waters. Students worked hard throughout the event, showing determination and teamwork. In addition to TTRS, students also enjoyed a Pi Day competition.

Since Pi Day falls on 14th March, which was a Saturday this year, the competition was held in school on 13th March. The quiz tested students' knowledge of π (pi), with questions such as recalling the first eight digits. Mr Morris's form group won the Pi competition and were rewarded with sweets and prizes for their achievement.

Students really enjoyed taking part and challenging themselves in a fun and engaging way.

By Freya Morgan, Ella-Rose Price and Ruben Grandon

Do you recognise this section of photograph?

If you know where this is found in the school, see Mr Thomas (Geography), the first to do so wins a prize.



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: She was often seen with a lamp.



Sudoku

8			4		6			7
						4		
	1					6	5	
5		9		3		7	8	
				7				
	4	8		2		1		3
	5	2					9	
		1						
3			9		2			5

Criw Cymraeg

Criw Cymraeg has been very busy this term, meeting with Mrs Price every Dydd Mercher (Wednesday) and Dydd Gwener (Friday) to plan fun and creative activities for the school. The pupils have been encouraging staff and pupils to use their Welsh language skills throughout the school day and have been awarding 'Tocyn Iaith' to any pupils who have displayed good use of incidental Welsh in the classroom.

Criw Cymraeg have also been working hard to raise awareness of Welsh culture across the school by organising themed days, competitions and displays. They have created posters with useful Welsh phrases to help everyone feel more confident using the language. Their efforts have made learning Welsh more enjoyable and accessible for all pupils. The group continues to inspire others to take pride in the Welsh language and use it as much as possible.

One of their favourite projects has been creating monthly "Raffl Heulog" hampers. These hampers are designed to spread a little sunshine around the school and encourage staff and pupils to "Siarad Cymraeg" (speak Welsh) in a fun way.

The most recent hamper, made especially for St David's Day, was filled with delicious Welsh goodies and was won by Mr D Price, Head of Year 10. The raffle has been a great success, creating excitement across the school and helping everyone feel more involved in celebrating Welsh language and culture. The Criw Cymraeg team are already planning their next hamper and can't wait to keep spreading positivity and promoting Welsh throughout the school.

By Criw Cymraeg



Medicine Through Time

This term Year 10 and 11 history students were given the opportunity to attend a theatre production in Bristol to assist their GCSE studies of Medicine Through Time.

The Doctors Show is a light-hearted play which tells the story of Health and Medicine in Britain since the Middle Ages. Using a TV show format, key events and developments in medieval Britain, the Renaissance, the Industrial period, and Modern Britain were brought to life. Students were asked to identify the factors of change involved in these developments, and to assess their impact.

The play was in four parts and each part led into a workshop session that looked at how the events of the play relate to the GCSE course and students were offered advice on how to improve their performance in their final exam. Students marked sample examination answers, as if they were assistant examiners in a moderation session so that they could get an idea of what examiners were looking for.

Students had a brilliant time on their trip, found it very useful in further understanding their studies and represented Islwyn proudly.



Criw Caredig Super Science!

Our Crew Caredig have been busy around the school this term, helping to create a safe and caring environment for the pupils of Islwyn. Many pupils recently took part in a Criw Caredig presentation at the Rolling Jack, where they shared both their training and their personal experiences. The event gave them the opportunity not only to speak in front of an audience, but also to talk directly with teachers and other adults, hearing their thoughts and feedback.

During the presentation, pupils discussed how the program has helped them to grow personally and how it has supported the school as a whole, strengthening the community. The pupils agreed that the Criw Caredig program is an invaluable part of the school experience, helping pupils build confidence, independence, and emotional maturity—skills that will benefit them well beyond school.

Pupils also explored the idea of introducing Criw Caredig to primary schools, so younger pupils can start learning these important skills early. While at the event, they explained how peer mediators can support both students and teachers, and they answered questions from the audience, which sparked great discussion and engagement. Overall, the presentation was a rewarding experience and showed just how much Criw Caredig can positively impact a school community.

By Nina Forrest, Millie Ridge, Joseph Brodrick and Kitty-Rose Beal

Recently in science lessons, Year 8 pupils had the exciting opportunity to dissect and handle a pig's lung! This hands-on activity allowed students to see up close how lungs work, giving them a real insight into the human respiratory system.

The science teachers demonstrated how the lungs function by inserting a syringe and pressing it down, which made the lungs inflate just like ours do when we breathe. Pupils were fascinated by the process and eagerly took part, carefully observing how the different parts of the lung work together. Many said it was both fun and educational, and it gave them a chance to experience science in a way that goes beyond textbooks.

The pig's lung was brought in as a representative model of the human lung, allowing students to explore anatomy safely while understanding how our own bodies function. The activity sparked lots of questions and discussion, and it was clear that everyone loved the chance to get hands-on with science. This kind of practical learning not only helps pupils understand the theory behind the human body, but also makes science lessons memorable and exciting!

By Lloyd Shippley

Our New MUGA

Recently, construction was completed on Islwyn High School's exciting new MUGA, or Multi-Use Games Area, and it has quickly become a fantastic addition to the school grounds. The area is not just for sports—it also includes a small pond and a planting trough where pupils can grow flowers, fruit, and vegetables, creating a lovely space for learning and relaxation.

The large pitch is designed to be used for football, tennis, basketball, and badminton, making it a perfect spot for a wide range of activities. Pupils cannot wait to make use of this space in the future! It's a brilliant example of how the school is promoting healthy lifestyles and opportunities for pupils.

By James Bower



Clash of the Centuries Digital Detox

Year 7 pupils have been bringing history to life in an unforgettable way this term, creating swords and shields at home and taking part in lunchtime sessions at Islwyn High to re-enact the famous Battle of Hastings. These hands-on activities are part of their Humanities course, giving students a chance to explore the major strategies, key turning points, and the impact the battle had on the balance of power in the UK.

During these lessons, pupils were able to step into the roles of Anglo-Saxons and Normans, learning how leaders planned their attacks, defended their positions, and adapted to unexpected events on the battlefield. Creating their own weapons and armour at home adds an extra level of engagement, helping students better understand the challenges and tactics faced by armies nearly 1,000 years ago.

The activity isn't just about waving swords around—it encourages teamwork, strategy, and critical thinking, as pupils debate the best ways to gain the upper hand and reflect on how the outcome of the battle changed the course of British history. The project makes history interactive and memorable, showing that learning about the past can be just as exciting as a real-life adventure.

With swords polished and shields ready, Year 7 have turned lessons into a battlefield of learning, proving that history isn't just something you read about—it's something you can experience firsthand!

By Eva Morris and Mya Perry

This year, Year 7 pupils at Islwyn High have been taking part in a new system where phones are locked in individual pouches every morning before form class. Each student places their phone in their pouch before the first bell, and form teachers carry out regular phone checks to make sure everyone is following the rules.

The change has had a huge positive impact on the year group. Pupils have noticed an improvement in focus, concentration, and attitude towards learning. Many are now more engaged in lessons and less distracted by screens. As Mya Perry from 7MHM explained, "The good thing about the phone pouches is that when you are doing something important in class, you can't cheat and your head is not stuck in your phone."

It's not just academics that have benefited. Pupils have been socialising more at break and lunchtime, enjoying face-to-face conversations instead of staring at their screens. Zach Jones from 7RHT said, "The phone pouches are pretty good for keeping pupils focused and it allows them to socialise more instead of staring at their screens!"

The impact of the pouches has been so positive that the BBC even interviewed Year 7 pupils about the system. It's clear that this small change has made a big difference, helping students stay focused, connect with friends, and enjoy learning more than ever before.

By Amber Rose Card



MAT Transition Day

Year 6 MAT Pupils Visit Islwyn High School

Islwyn High School recently welcomed some fantastic Year 6 MAT pupils from our local primary schools. They spent the day taking part in exciting activities alongside some of our brilliant Year 7 MAT pupils.

The pupils arrived early in the morning, ready for a day full of surprises. Their activities included:

- A fun-filled morning of maths with Mrs Waters, Mrs Collins and Mr Davies
- A mystery treasure hunt with Miss Richards to discover who stole Mr Hick's sweets.
- A guided tour of the school to help them feel comfortable ahead of September.

We are incredibly proud of their excellent behaviour, and we are sure they have already made some new friends for when they join us later this year.

During their maths session, the Year 6 pupils played a game you may already know—24! This game uses cards with four different numbers. The aim is to make the number 24 using all four numbers, with addition, subtraction, multiplication, or division. For example, with the numbers 1, 2, 2 and 6, you could do: $2 + 2 = 4$, then $4 \times 6 \times 1 = 24$. The pupils really enjoyed the challenge and had lots of fun solving the puzzles.



Another session was led by our Head of Maths, Mrs Collins, who taught the pupils two impressive maths tricks that anyone can learn—even you! One trick involved guessing a number someone is

thinking of between 1 and 60. Using six special cards, the person guessing can work out the number perfectly every time, as long as the instructions are followed carefully. It works because of how the numbers are arranged on each card, making it 100% accurate!

To finish the day, pupils headed to the top floor for a mystery challenge in Miss Richards' art classroom. They became super sleuths, working together to solve the question: Who stole Mr Hicks's sweets? With help from the Year 7 pupils, they followed clues around the school, visiting locations such as the library to crack the case.

After this exciting adventure, the pupils were given a final tour of the school before heading home. It's safe to say they all had an amazing time!



We hope this experience has helped the Year 6 pupils feel excited and confident about starting at Islwyn High School. We are really looking forward to welcoming them back in September and seeing them continue to grow, learn and succeed as part of our school community.

By Zach Jones

Pupil Voice Spanish Superstars!

This term, a group of our pupils were given the exciting opportunity to attend a Cabinet meeting at the Caerphilly Council Offices in Tredomen. This special invitation recognised the hard work and dedication they had shown during the school's Youth Conference, which they organised and led at the end of the Christmas term. The team was comprised of Head Girls, Lily Clarke and Skye Grandon, Head Boy—Oliver Morris and Student Council member Freya Reasons.

During the visit, the pupils confidently presented their findings from the conference to members of the Cabinet. Their presentation highlighted key ideas, opinions, and suggestions gathered from young people, demonstrating their commitment to making a positive difference in their community. The experience gave them a valuable chance to share their voices in a real decision-making environment.

The pupils were highly praised for their efforts, particularly for the way they articulated their views with clarity and confidence. Their professionalism throughout the presentation stood out, and they responded thoughtfully and maturely to questions from Cabinet members. It was clear that they had prepared thoroughly and took great pride in representing their school.

Staff and officials alike were impressed by the pupils' ability to communicate important issues and engage in meaningful discussion. The opportunity to speak in such a formal setting not only boosted their confidence but also showed how young people can play an active role in shaping the future.



Over the last four weeks, five year 8 pupils participated in an MFL Mentoring workshop every Wednesday and Friday at lunchtime. This was a fantastic experience for the pupils.

"The mentoring has been a very educational experience and was extremely enjoyable. Our mentor Emma was very nice and helpful, always encouraging us to take part. We learnt about how communication is important in today's society and how we can communicate in numerous ways. Emma was open and understanding of our opinions and choices. We took part in a number of activities and learnt how communication will be a part of our future. We had also been educated about not stereotyping others and their cultures and that we should instead learn more about them and their culture. In addition to that, we had been taught about different celebrations in different Countries. Emma showed us how we can put languages in our everyday lives like at work, school, shops or just general conversation." Also in Spanish, some Year 7 and 8 pupils were



chosen to participate in a translation competition run by Oxford College, University of Oxford. The Anthea Bell Prize for Young Translators has been an excellent opportunity for our ambitious and creative learners to put their translations skills to use, and to put Islwyn High School on the map! We will be waiting in anticipation for the results!

By Emmy, Nina, Mil-lie, Thomas & Jessica



The Big Easter Quiz

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 event does Easter celebrate in Christianity?
2. On which day of the week is Easter always celebrated?
3. What is the name of the Friday before Easter Sunday?
4. Which empire was ruling during the time of Jesus's crucifixion?
5. What is the 40-day period leading up to Easter called?
6. Which country is famous for the tradition of decorating elaborate Easter eggs called "pisanki"?
7. Which country is believed to have started the tradition of the Easter Bunny?
8. Where in the world would you find Easter Island?
9. Who provides the voice of the lead character in the animated movie, 'Hop'?
10. Which country typically eats the most Easter eggs every year?

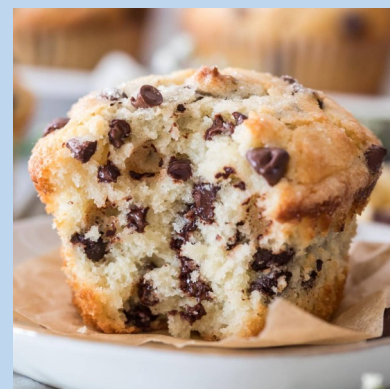
TRY THIS AT HOME

Chocolate Muffins

Year 8 pupils have been baking chocolate muffins in their DT lessons. Why not give this delicious recipe a try at home?

Ingredients:

250g plain flour
2 tsp baking powder
100g caster sugar
100g chocolate chips
2 eggs
200ml milk
100ml vegetable oil (or melted butter)
1 tsp vanilla extract



Method

Heat the oven to 180°C (160°C fan) and line a muffin tin with cases.
Put the flour, baking powder and sugar in a bowl. Stir in the chocolate chips.
In another bowl, mix the eggs, milk, oil and vanilla.
Pour the wet mixture into the dry mixture and stir gently until combined.
Fill cases: Spoon the mixture into the cases (about $\frac{3}{4}$ full).
Bake for 18–20 minutes until golden. Let them cool slightly before eating.

By Freya



Brain Teasers

1. An Easter Bunny must travel through a garden with 4 gates. Each gate doubles the number of eggs it carries, but the bunny starts with 1 egg. After passing all 4 gates, it has 16 eggs. How many eggs did the bunny have after passing the second gate?
2. An Easter Bunny crosses a bridge that can only hold one bunny at a time. Each crossing takes 2 minutes, but every time the bunny crosses, it drops 1 egg, and must return to collect more. It needs to deliver 5 eggs across the bridge, but can only carry 2 eggs at a time. What is the minimum number of crossings needed?
3. I am a tiny, fragile dome, a secret world you call a home. One little crack, I open wide—
A new life waiting deep inside. What am I?

Contributions to this edition of Islwyn News were also made by Elliot and Isaac Loughlin.