

ISLWYN NEWS

Welcome to Islwyn!

We were delighted to welcome our new Year 6 pupils to Islwyn High School for their Transition Day – a fantastic opportunity for them to experience life at their new school and officially become part of the Islwyn family.

The day was filled with smiles, energy, and excitement as pupils spent time with their form tutors, getting to know one another and beginning to build the friendships that will carry them through their secondary school journey. Through a variety of fun and engaging activities, pupils learned more about their new classmates, their teachers, and the support systems in place to help them thrive.

As well as relationship-building activities, pupils had the chance to take part in real lessons, including a science session, where they learned how to safely use a Bunsen burner, and a hands-on technology class, where some pupils baked delicious cakes to take home.



Throughout the day, our new pupils were an absolute pleasure to host. They approached every task with maturity and enthusiasm, and were a true credit to their primary schools.

Feedback from the pupils was overwhelmingly positive: 96% of pupils said they enjoyed the day and the activities, 70% felt they had already made new friends using the restorative approaches we use to build and maintain strong relationships, 92.5% reported feeling less anxious about starting in September.

We're thrilled to be welcoming a full cohort of 306 pupils into Year 7 this September, including 20 pupils joining us from outside the catchment area.

A key part of our transition programme this year was the introduction of a new initiative 'Coping with Comp' designed to support pupils and their families through the move to secondary school. This programme was delivered by Sam Edwards, our dedicated Family Liaison Officer, and focused on managing worries and fears, understanding a school timetable, and practical advice about the day-to-day aspects of secondary life. Parents also benefited from a session led by Mrs J Poole, one of our Parent Governors, who offered helpful support and reassurance from a parent's perspective. We're proud that this initiative has already helped many families feel more confident and prepared for the road ahead.

We're now looking forward to our cluster residential weekend on Friday 11th July, where pupils will head to Manor Adventure at Abernant Lakes. Mrs Bowden, Mrs McGurr, Mrs Underwood, Mr Morris, Mrs Radford and Mrs Strachan are all excited to get to know the pupils even more and take part in some fantastic team-building and outdoor adventure activities.

And finally – as if that wasn't exciting enough, we'll be welcoming all Year 6 pupils back on the morning of Wednesday 16th July for a special visit to Newbridge Memo to watch our school production; Wizard Of Oz. We don't want to spoil the surprise, but trust us they're in for a treat. Bring your popcorn, guys!

We're so proud of how well our Year 6 pupils are settling in, and we can't wait to see all that they will achieve as part of the Islwyn High community.



Skiing Trip

Early in the morning on Saturday 12th April, 61 students gathered at the school car park ready to head to Les Menuires in the French Alps for a week of unforgettable skiing. Mrs Pardoe led the trip which gave many pupils the chance to learn a new skill and others the chance to hone their skiing skills.

Les Menuires is a popular ski resort located in the heart of the Three Valleys, the world's largest ski area, offering a vast network of slopes for all levels. The pupils had a fantastic time, here are some of their thoughts.

I really enjoyed the ski trip. I obviously found the skiing really enjoyable and an overall great experience. All of the ski instructors were nice and fun and skiing down from the tops of the mountains was an unforgettable experience. I did also really enjoyed the time spent not skiing. There was a big common room where we could all hangout and interact with one another as well as having lots of activities organised for us such as a movie night and pancakes. I think the ski trip was a really worthwhile experience that allowed both staff and students to build better relationships.—**Lily Clarke**

School skiing trips with friends are an unforgettable experience full of excitement, laughter, and bonding. Hitting the slopes together brings a special kind of thrill, whether you're racing each other down the mountain or helping someone up after a tumble. It's a chance to learn new skills in a fun, relaxed setting and share plenty of memorable moments from snowball fights to being fast asleep in your room. Being with friends makes every part of the trip more enjoyable, turning even the coldest days into warm memories. You should DEFINITELY go skiing

with the school.—**Max Baldwin**

I really enjoyed the ski trip. As someone who entered this trip with no past skiing experience, it was very helpful as I developed skills which I did not have in the past. I spoke to people that I usually wouldn't and became closer with other people in my year group. The ski instructors were optimistic and positive and encouraged many as well as myself to improve. Not only was the skiing amazing back in the hotel, it was a great experience as people had snowball fights and games around the hotel, some including staff such as movie night and other games. Overall it was a great experience and since then I have booked another skiing holiday..—**Skye Grandon**

School skiing was an unforgettable experience that blended adventure, learning, and fun in the best possible way. There was something special about waking up early with your friends, bundling into layers, and heading out to the slopes together. Whether it was your first time on skis or you were already carving turns, everyone shared the same excitement and sense of challenge. The instructors were encouraging, the views were breath-taking, and the thrill of improving each day made it all feel rewarding. Even the laughs during tumbles and the warm drinks after a long day made the whole trip feel like a perfect mix of friendship and freedom. In the nights being able to explore and laugh together in the rooms was an unforgettable experience. It wasn't just about skiing, it was about the memories made along the way with both friends and teachers..—**Oliver Morris**



Inspiration From Cardiff City Star

On 4th July 2025, we were delighted to welcome back a former Islwyn pupil, Lucy Malin, who is now making her mark in professional football. Lucy, who is signed by Cardiff City Football Club, visited to speak with girls from Years 7, 8, and 9 about her journey and experiences in the sport.

The visit was organised by Mrs Price's daughter, Daisy, who is the Player Care Manager for Cardiff City Women's team. Daisy delivered an engaging presentation, explaining her own role at the club, the history and growing popularity of women's football, the benefits of playing sport and the key skills needed to succeed.

Lucy, who captained Cardiff's Under-19s last year and is now part of the Women's First Team, spoke confidently and eloquently about her football journey, answering questions from the pupils and inspiring everyone present.



- How does it benefit you?
- Have you experienced prejudice as a female footballer?
- What is your proudest achievement so far?

Lucy's honest and inspiring answers captivated our girls for over 45 minutes. She also took the time to sign autographs, pose for photographs and chat informally with the pupils afterwards.

One pupil said, "It was nice to see someone from our own school who has gone on to be very successful in football. Meeting Lucy has really inspired me to keep playing and training hard."



It was fantastic to see a former pupil representing both Cardiff City and Islwyn High School so proudly. She truly is a brilliant ambassador for the club and our school.

Some of the thoughtful questions posed by our pupils included:

- Did you always want to play football?
- How did you start playing and end up at Cardiff?
- What does football mean to you?
- Why do you play?

We'd like to extend a huge thank you to Daisy and Lucy for visiting and for providing such an inspirational and memorable experience for our students.

Trixie Update Phone Free

Since joining Islwyn High School, Trixie, our wellbeing dog, has quickly become a much-loved and invaluable member of our school community.

Trixie has been especially busy during the exam season, offering calm and comfort to pupils navigating the pressures of assessments and exams. She has been a quiet presence in wellbeing sessions and even supported pupils during their Year 10 English orals after several students specifically requested her presence to help ease their nerves.

One pupil shared:

"Trixie just helped me to relax. I felt like I was giving my presentation to her. She's so cute, she just lay there listening to me. It helped me calm down and I was really pleased with how it went."

Another pupil said: "I suffer with anxiety about speaking out loud, and Trixie helped me to feel less anxious. I don't think I could have gone into the oral exam without her."

Outside the classroom, Trixie is also a firm favourite at Breakfast Club, particularly with one of our CLA pupils, who looks forward to their morning cwtches every day: "Cwtches with Trixie is the best part of my day. She helps take my worries away. She sits with me every morning, and I think she knows who I am now too, she wags her tail when she sees me around school. She's the best."

It's not just pupils who benefit from Trixie's calming presence, staff have also found time with her to be good for their wellbeing. Some have started taking Trixie for short walks during their lunch break and have said this has had a really positive impact on their own mental health and stress levels.

Trixie has been a truly wonderful addition to the Islwyn family and we look forward to sharing even more Trixie tales in the coming months!

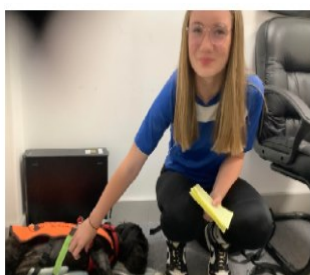
As part of our ongoing commitment to supporting the wellbeing, focus, and independence of our learners, the Governing Body at Islwyn High School has approved the introduction of a pilot project for our incoming Year 7 cohort in September 2025. The pilot will see all Year 7 pupils take part in a 'phone-free' school day as they begin their transition into secondary school life.

Our primary cluster colleagues have shared that most Year 6 pupils currently do not access or use mobile phones during the school day in their primary settings. We hope to build on this positive foundation by helping pupils maintain healthy digital habits as they move into comprehensive education.

If pupils choose to bring a mobile phone to school, they will be asked to place it in a secure, individual phone pod at the start of the school day. These pods are pupil-operated, ensuring privacy and security, and phones will be safely stored until the end of the school day when they can be collected and used for the journey home.

This approach allows us to: reduce potential distractions in class, promote face-to-face interaction and relationship-building, support a calmer, more focused learning environment and continue the positive phone routines already in place at primary level

We understand that mobile phones can play an important role in communication and safety before and after school. This pilot strikes a balance between maintaining access for those purposes while supporting the development of a productive, phone-free school day. We look forward to updating you with how this initiative is going in the Autumn term.



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SPORTING SUCCESS

Year 8 girls have achieved some fantastic success in the sport of cricket this term. The girls team, coached by Mr Brown alongside Glamorgan and South East Wales player Ella Morris, couldn't have asked for a better start to their cricket aspirations.

During their first indoor tournament, the girls won all of their games at Sophia Gardens, the home of the Welsh Glamorgan teams. The girls then proceeded another inside tournament, where they got the final and lost by just 2 runs.

On the 1st July, the U13 and U15 girls attended the Caerphilly Sports Tournament at Blackwood CC. Both teams went undefeated on their way to the finals, beating all schools from Caerphilly that stood in front of them.

The U15's cruised past St Cenydd in their final to top off an incredible three days of cricket for them. The U13's faced a scare from Lewis Girls who fielded well and started well with the bat, however they stayed focussed and kept their heads up and finally got the win they deserved having lost in their last 2 finals.

Well done, girls! What a fantastic achievement.

In the sport of swimming, Macy Davies from (year 8) and Ioan Mills (year 11) attended a swim camp in Majorca this June. It was an intense week of swimming training but also it was a great opportunity to develop their swimming skills even further ready for the Swim Wales Summer Nationals taking place on the 30th of July in the Wales National Pool Swansea. Good luck both!

There have been some exceptional performances in athletics this summer. The under 15 girls athletics team performed superbly across track and field at the SEW team finals, A huge well done to the team for their commitment and drive.



Finally, a huge congratulations to Grace Hawker who was a gold medal winner at the Welsh School's Final representing South East Wales. What a fantastic achievement and a testament to your hard work and dedication. Well done, Grace!



GCSE History Battlefields Trip

Year 10 GCSE History pupils set off to the battlefields of Belgium and France on 10th July for three days of experiences which added to their GCSE studies.

Pupils set off early on Wednesday 10th of July and stayed at the Novotel Lens Noyelles 4* Hotel in France.

On day one, they arrived at Dunkirk and travelled via the route of the WW1 Killing Fields visiting the vast German and French Cemeteries. They then visited the Canadian Memorial Park at Vimy Ridge with its original trench system and the huge monument of a Canadian mother looking down on her fallen sons. Pupils finished the day with an extended visit to Arras, visiting the Memorial to the Welsh Guards who were the last troops to retreat from the City in 1940 and who liberated it in 1944.

Day two began with a buffet breakfast before pupils depart for La Coupole, the V2 Rocket launch site and visit the enormous underground bunker there. This was an interesting experience which gave pupils the opportunity to study many historical artefacts. They then moved on to Wormhout, one of the key towns in the defensive line during the retreat to Dunkirk before departing for Dunkirk itself,

visiting the Execution Barn at Esquelbecq en-route. Later pupils will visit the beautiful town of Ypres where they explored the town's many connections to WW1 and WW2. Pupils finished the day by attending the Ceremony of the Last Post at The Menin Gate, and four of our pupils laid a wreath of remembrance on behalf of Islwyn High School.

On the final day, pupils were given the opportunity to visit the nearby Shopping Mall for a French Shopping experience. They then visited the site of the Xmas truce and Messines Ridge with its Museum, where both Winston Churchill and Adolph Hitler served at the same time in WW1.

The pupils had a fantastic time and certainly took a lot from the journey.



Numeracy Escape Room

Numeracy Day 2025 – Escape Room

For Numeracy Day on the 21st May 2025, an online Escape Room was set up where pupils and staff were challenged to use their numeracy skills to solve a series of puzzles in order to escape from the different classrooms. The competitors had to make their way through a variety of challenging numeracy themed puzzles and the people who did this in the quickest time was declared the winner.

Lloyd Shipley (7JHM) was the first pupil to escape and Miss Rowlands was the first member of staff to complete this Escape Room.

A huge congratulations to our winners and well done to everybody who took part.

See you at the next Escape Room!

Numeracy Day

MISSION COMPLETE!

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Position	Name
1 st	Lloyd Shipley
2 nd	Eli Cannon
3 rd	Kaylum Card
4 th	Ollie Gabriel
5 th	Ava Davies
6 th	Robyn Reed
7 th	Archie Hallett
8 th	Evan Hudson
9 th	Dominic Roberts
10 th	Logan Clayton
11 th	Blynda Chen
12 th	Grace Lawrence
13 th	Lilly Morgan
14 th	Emily Bailey
15 th	Caeson Grinstead

Staff	
Position	Name
1 st	Miss Rowlands

School Band Success

Our Year 10 School Band have secured a place at a National Festival gig!

In April the year 10 band gave a stellar performance at the Regional festival of music for youth. They received excellent feedback from the music mentors who described them as "an exciting ensemble that brought energy to the room".

As a result of their hard work, dedication and talent, the boys have been invited to perform at the Birmingham Symphony Hall at the National Festival of music for youth on July 12th where they will play their favourite numbers: Cantina Band from Star wars, Smooth Criminal by Michael Jackson, Monster from Frozen the musical, and Bonnie Tyler's Holding out for a Hero.

The band are working hard for this performance as the stakes are high - the best groups from the National Festival get invited to perform at the Schools Proms in the Albert Hall in November.

We want the whole of Islwyn to get behind the band this summer and we wish them the very best of luck!

Where Am I?

Do you recognise this section of photograph? See if you can identify where this is in the school.



GUESS WHO?

Who is this person from history? A clue: This person promised to 'Tredegarise' the way we approached healthcare in the UK.



Sudoku

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



We're Off To See The Wizard!

You might have seen posters for our amazing production of the Wizard of Oz, but how would you like a sneak peak behind the Wizard's curtain?

Pupils in Drama and Choir are hard at work getting everything ready for The Wizard of Oz. Everything from practising songs, perfecting dances, making props and memorising scripts to make this play as great as Oz himself. This really is a team effort, and we have one of the biggest casts yet for an Islwyn production. Over 76 students have helped on and off the stage mostly to make the show a sure success.

Some of our main cast members are:

- Dorothy played by Dea and Liberty
- Tin man played by Evan Cheeseman
- Scarecrow played by Martha Carey
- Lion played by Lexi Morgan
- The epic sibling duo of Glinda, played by Ella Lane and Wicked Witch, played by Mia Lane
- Last but not least the great and powerful Wizard of Oz played by Finley Newton

So much hard work and effort is being put into the show to get Dorothy back to Kansas and we'd love as many people as possible to join us on her journey.

All pupils participating in the Wizard of Oz have a busy two weeks ahead with restless rehearsals preparing for the big day. We can't wait to see you there!



S.T.E.M Success!

On Thursday 3rd of July, six students - James Bowler, Kitty-Rose Beal, Bibhavasu Shrestha, Nia Langley, Jannae Nugent, and Neo Bennett, went on a trip to Ebbw Vale Community School for a series of STEM related challenges.

There were many tasks and challenges to complete, such as driving an electric go kart around a track and programming a robot to make a tower from dice using the scratch coding platform. Pupils also programmed a small robot to make its way around a track. They also had to make a bridge from cardboard and other similar materials to be able to support a series of weights.

The Islwyn High students performed brilliantly on the day and smashed the pit stop tyre change in less than 5 minutes - the fastest of the day which was pretty amazing considering they were the youngest group there.

The pupils accumulated points throughout the day depending on their success in the various challenges and we are proud to say that not only did Islwyn win, but they also had the highest points any group had ever scored! What an achievement! Well done, Year 7.

The pupils would like to express their appreciation to Ms Causon, who supported them throughout the day and made all this possible.



The Big School Quiz

Quiz rules: Answer all of the questions below without using the Internet. You can ask your teachers, friends or family or read books .

Good luck!

1. Who wrote *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*?
2. What gas do plants take in from the air for photosynthesis?
3. Who was the queen of England during the Spanish Armada in 1588?
4. Which continent is the Sahara Desert located in?
5. What does "HTML" stand for in computing?
6. In George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, what is the name of the pig who becomes the tyrannical leader?
7. Which treaty officially ended World War I in 1919?
8. What is the pH value of a neutral substance?
9. What is the term for a long speech given by a single character in a play, often revealing their inner thoughts?
10. What is the legal voting age in general elections in the United Kingdom?

TRY THIS AT HOME

These recipes are just what you need to cool you down on a hot summer's day. Our delicious summer drinks are sure to be a hit. Why not try our recipes at home?

Peach Paradise

Ingredients:

Peaches

Ice

Gummy peach rings

Any peach iced tea

1. Add a peach iced tea to a glass.
2. Add gummy rings, ice and sliced up peaches (optional).
3. Add a peach chunk on the glass to serve

Blue lagoon

Ingredients:

Blueberry Fanta

Sprite

Ice squeeze candy—Blue raspberry

Ice

Gummy sharks

Add all the ingredients together then decorate with gummy sharks and enjoy.



Riddle Time

1. I am an odd number but take away a number and I become even what number am I?
2. What has 13 hearts but no organs?
3. What 5 letter word becomes shorter when you add two letters to it?
4. I have lakes with no water, mountains with no stone and cities with no buildings. What am I?

