



YSGOL GYMUNEDOL ABERDÂR ABERDARE COMMUNITY SCHOOL



interim **prospectus**
2015-16

strive | believe | achieve • ymdrechu | credu | cyflawni

Head's Introduction

Dear Parent/Carer,

Thank you for showing an interest in our school. Your child will be joining an elite group of children lucky enough to experience education in one of the best and most innovative new builds in Wales. In Aberdare Community School we are committed to educating the whole child and building an experience tailor made to your own child's needs.

We have already proved ourselves academically by raising the performance of GCSE students by 10% above that of our founder schools. We are also delighted that in our first year we have won a National Award from INet for Innovation.

We pride ourselves on the many opportunities that we provide for pupils both during the school day and outside of school hours. We are one of a few schools to have our own cadet force attached to the school and we are also a licensed Duke of Edinburgh approved centre. We employ our own rugby and football coaches who work with pupils from age 11 to develop their talent. Our sports' academy formed by a partnership with Cardiff Blues and Cardiff City provides talented sportsmen and women the chance to develop their skills within the sixth form. However all children with talents are nurtured through the use of our amazing facilities.



At our school we are building the citizens of the future and all our year groups have prefects elected from within them and all our year groups raise money for a chosen charity. We want to see our children reach for the stars and we aim to strive, believe and achieve with our pupils.

Mrs Susan Davies OBE

School Mission Statement

Work Hard, Dream Big, Reach for the Stars

Senior Staff

Head-teacher

Mrs Susan Davies OBE

Senior Deputy Headteacher

Mr Andrew Owen

Deputy Headteacher

Mrs Michelle Pearce

Assistant Head Access and Inclusion

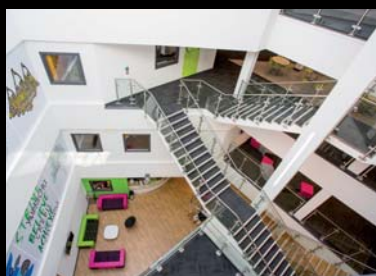
Miss Tara Neale

Assistant Head Data and Curriculum

Mrs Lisa Woodrow

What will your child study in year 7?

Pupils take many subjects that they are familiar with including English, Mathematics, Science, History, Geography, Physical Education, Music, Technology, Welsh, Personal, Social and Health Education and Religious Studies.



In year 7 pupils also take the following additional subjects:



Drama, Spanish and/or French and a new subject called the Certificate of Personal Effectiveness (CoPE). CoPE is taught for the first three years and all pupils will be able to get a General



Certificate of Education (GCSE) by the time they are 14. Throughout years 7-9 pupils in all subjects will undertake digital literacy tasks to develop information technology skills. When your child gets to year 10 they will be able to take a range of options that will include Drama, Media, Film Studies, Dance, Music, Business Studies, Engineering, Graphics, Photography, Biology, Chemistry, Physics as well as all those listed earlier.

Please be assured that information relevant to your child will be passed onto you. All pupils in years 10-13 study for the Welsh Baccalaureate. This is an excellent qualification allowing pupils to further develop a range of skills desirable to employers. The WBQ qualification will be used by the Welsh Government to judge school performance from 2017.

There are a number of extra-curricular opportunities for pupils. We offer the chance to learn a range of musical instruments including guitar and drums. We also seek to encourage those with a good voice to develop it by employing a voice coach. These opportunities are free to all pupils. There are regular sporting fixtures and the school offers a huge range of sporting opportunities outside of the standard options of rugby, hockey, football, netball, basketball and cricket. We make use of the swimming pool and I would hope to see swimming, cycling and martial arts' teams within our school. The school offers a number of out-of-hours classes including Astronomy, Photography, and the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme. Drama and Dance Clubs also take place after school along with many others.

In Year 7, classes are set or taught in mixed ability classes. More information on this will be given in our Open Evening in the Autumn term where you have the opportunity to meet our middle leaders

What if my child has special educational needs or is able and talented?

We provide a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum for all pupils, whilst acknowledging that some children may require extra support or help. All pupils have access to the full range of National Curriculum subjects.

The school has introduced a passport system - this is filled in by staff from our school alongside your child's primary school staff. Any child who has a statement or has specific learning needs is identified and their needs met. The passport is intended to provide us with valuable information. If your child is already playing a musical instrument well or has already achieved international success in an event, we want to know this so that we can make sure they continue to get the same support and opportunities they had in their primary school. The passport contains information about your child's academic performance as well as any barriers to learning that we need to overcome with them.

Our school has two communication classes which are called Astra and Sirius. These distinct groups specialise in provision for pupils on the autistic spectrum.

If a child is to succeed in secondary school it is vital that they are able to read and write to a high level. All pupils will be tested on entry and any child who is not at the right level will be given additional learning support with our team of literacy and numeracy specialists.

Supporting the Able & Talented

The school operates a more able and talented programme. This works on a time-tabled basis and teachers work with more able pupils on additional 'fun' projects. Over time able students may be encouraged to enter competitions, take part in extracurricular trips or take GCSEs early as well as being encouraged to attend masterclasses in music and sport for instance.

All pupils follow the Certificate of Personal Effectiveness with a view to them gaining a GCSE at age 14. We are one of the few schools in the UK to offer this opportunity and the second in Wales.



What if your child finds it difficult to move from primary to secondary school?

Though most pupils find moving to a secondary school exciting and rewarding and find the transition easy, we are not all the same. For those who do not find the transition easy, we will be able to support your child through our 'learning house' team.

What is the Learning House and who manages it?

This is an area within the school managed by two learning coaches. Pupils who are having difficulties in school or need a different approach to learning might spend some of their day in this environment. However, it is there to support learning and not replace it. Pupils who have this support will still be expected to make progress and go to time-tabled lessons for most of their school week. Parents and carers of pupils who have this support or indeed any other form of support will be kept fully informed.



Transition: How will we ensure your child feels safe and secure?

It is important that your child has a chance to meet other pupils who will also be with them in year 7 in our new school. It is also important that your child gets to meet with their new teachers and with the team around them who will be there to help them. Our senior team regularly visits our partner primary schools and meets with pupils in Years 5 and 6 and sometimes their parents.

Our transition programme includes:

- An Open Evening in the Autumn term where Year 6 pupils and their parents have the opportunity to meet our teaching staff and find out about our exciting Year 7 curriculum.
- A Year 6 Day in the academic year where Year 6 pupils from all of our partner primary schools get together for the first time and take part in a range of innovative activities focusing on healthy living, Welsh culture and creative arts or Science and Technology.
- In June we have a 2 day programme where your child will meet their form tutor, the progress leader, the pastoral support assistant attached to the year group, and enjoy some taster lessons.
- The Pastoral Support Assistant is not a teacher and is there to act as a link between parents, staff and pupils and is available to all pupils throughout the school day. This is in addition to the normal support you can expect from all teachers.

At the end of the first term in our school we will invite all pupils to come to London with us to visit The Harry Potter Studio Tour rated at 5 * for enjoyment.



Who will look after your child?

Firstly, they will be in a form class with no more than 25 other pupils. Their form tutor will meet with them every morning and in some cases may actually teach them. There is also a Head of Year 7, their official title is 'Progress Leader' Year 7. There are also four Pastoral Support Assistants and they act as the link between parents and the school.

Should you have any concerns you can ring anyone of the contacts mentioned above.

Discipline and Behaviour

In our school we place great emphasis on educating your child for life. We want children to behave well and act as role models for visitors to the school and within our community. The school council has worked with the Governing Body and others to produce a clear code of conduct and a behaviour policy. These documents stress the importance of achievement, attitude and attendance amongst other things.

Buddies and anti-bullying

The school has a zero tolerance towards bullying and pupils in year 7 have a designated play area just for them. Older trained pupils may act as buddies to some new pupils and help make sure that they feel safe and secure.



The school operates a house system and pupils are put into one of four houses:

Mynydd | Mountain
Coedwig | Forest

Afon | River
Castell | Castle

Each of the houses have events where pupils will be able to work together and make friends.

We also make sure that when we are putting pupils into forms and houses that we take their friendship groups into account whenever possible.

Carrying on the Harry Potter theme each of our houses stands for a characteristic we wish to develop in our pupils:

Mynydd | Aspiration
Coedwig | Collaboration

Castell | Resilience
Afon | Creativity

The School Uniform

Girls' Uniform

School Blazer: Black blazer with school badge, only available in school.

Shirt: White shirt (NOT polo shirt)

Tie: KS3/KS4 School tie, only available from the school.

Jumper: Black V-neck with school badge, only available from the school.

Skirt: Straight black, knee length.

Trousers: Smart black trousers no canvas material.

Socks: Black socks to be worn with trousers.

Tights: Black tights at least 40 denier to be worn with skirts.

Shoes: Black shoes, no boots or daps.

Outer coat: Dark in colour, no hoodies or sweatshirts.

Boys' Uniform

School Blazer: Black blazer with school badge, only available in school.

Shirt: White shirt (NOT polo shirt)

Tie: KS3/KS4 School tie, only available from the school.

Jumper: Black V-neck with school badge, only available from the school.

Trousers: Smart black trousers no canvas material.

Socks: Black

Shoes: Black shoes, no boots or daps.

The School Day



8.45 - 9.05

Start of Day / Registration / Assembly

9.05 - 10.05

LESSON 1

10.05 - 11.05

LESSON 2

11.05 - 11.25

BREAK

11.25 - 12.25

LESSON 3

12.25 - 1.25

LESSON 4

1.25 - 2.10

LUNCH

2.10 - 3.15

LESSON 5

New School Facilities

Eating

Pupils have access to a main restaurant and three cafes. The main restaurant is run by a chef manager and we ensure that pupils have access to great food at a good price. One cafe is designated for sixth form use only and named Caffi Llyfrau. This is on the first floor and just outside the learning resource centre. Sixth form pupils will be able to work in the cafe on laptops and we will have some available for pupils to use in school. The café on Castell floor is a privilege café for KS4 pupils.

Sport

The school has the use of a swimming pool, athletics track, sports hall with screens for using iPad and tablet technology, sports fields for rugby, football, cricket and an all weather outdoor facility as well as access to all leisure facilities situated in the new leisure centre.

Music and Media

The school has a recording studio situated between two of the three music rooms. It also has a number of practice rooms and two Apple computer suites where pupils can compose or edit film as per the requirements of the subject.

Information Technology

The school is fully wireless and there are at least ten computer suites in the school, of which at least 2 are equipped with Apple Macs. All floors will have at least one set of wireless laptops. It is anticipated that the ratio of computers to pupils in our school will be very good.

Dance, Drama and Gymnastics

The school has a dance studio and drama theatre as well as a wonderful main hall complete with tiered seating and surround sound.

Technology and Art

There are eight specialist technology rooms including one for textiles, two for catering and others for engineering, electronics, graphics and resistant materials. The school has three art rooms, a pottery facility and an art gallery where we can display pupils' work.

Science

In addition, to the excellent new science laboratories, we boast two rooms that can be opened up as one giant science lab able to accommodate eighty pupils with two large screens. We also have a science theatre with tiered seating for over a hundred allowing us to deliver university type lectures on a range of topics and subjects.

Learning Resource Centre/ Library/ Sound Booths

Pupils have access to a wealth of reading and research materials but the world is changing and to reflect that change when you visit you are just as likely to see pupils using Kindle technology. We have also put in sound booths allowing pupils to record their work in Welsh, English and Modern Foreign Languages where speaking and listening forms a part of the curriculum.

For more information about our school please get in contact:

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Telephone: 01685 888500

www.aberdarecommunityschool.org.uk