

Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw

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www.gwynllyw.org

Important Information

Dear Parent, Guardian,

School Development

A very happy new year to you all. We are pleased to note that the majority of the building work is now finished, following two difficult years with a lack of facilities. We are now settled into our new or refurbished buildings and look forward to a new chapter in the life of the school. We are very pleased with the new buildings and facilities as they significantly enhance the teaching and learning opportunities for both pupils and staff. Our current thoughts are to name the new facility the 'Llanover Building', recognising the significant contribution of the Llanover family in the local area. We have consulted with both pupils and staff and the Governing Body and they are happy with the decision. We will obviously consult with the four Local Authorities that contributed financially to this project in order to ensure their agreement.

The new facilities will ensure enough capacity for all the pupils in the primary Welsh Medium schools in Torfaen, Newport, Monmouth and Blaenau Gwent until August 2017. The four authorities of Gwent are currently in discussions with Welsh Government concerning the establishment of a second Welsh medium secondary school in this particular region by September 2016. When a plan is formulated by that group a process of consultation will begin with all stakeholders and you will be involved in that process.

Performance, School Website – www.gwynllyw.org

Nationally, there continues to be a focus on raising standards of achievement of our pupils and this is a priority for the school, for the Local Authority and for Welsh Government. It is important for both present and future parents to have an opportunity to study all the schools' examination data in Key Stage 3, 4 and 5. Therefore, in this year and for all future years, we will develop an academic results site that will include all the achievement data for Key Stage 3, 4 and 5. The information will present the results over a three year period, showing the difference between the results of the boys and girls. The data will show comparisons with the Local Authority Average, comparisons with the all Wales average and comparisons with our family of schools. The family of schools are eleven other schools, similar in terms of population, age distribution and the percentage of children receiving free school meals. The purpose of this grouping of our family of schools is to allow comparisons between similar types of school and give these schools an opportunity to work together and to learn from best practice in the process of raising standards. The school data therefore includes a measure at each Key Stage of 'position within the family' as an indication if the school is doing well or not in a particular subject. The school data will be updated annually in the month of January, in order to enable us to include all comparative data for all key stages.

Cerddwn Ymlaen



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Banding

The Governing Body has met on many occasions over the last five months, as they do annually, to discuss school achievement and to discuss reports from senior members of staff, Heads of Department and staff. This process is detailed, offers both support and challenge to the school and is thorough in its analysis of current strengths and weaknesses. Through this analysis, decisions are made to progress school improvement and development. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the Governing Body for their investment of time and support for the benefit of the school.

In your analysis of the academic achievement of the school in 2012, you will notice a great deal of success, but also some areas that need improvement. In Key Stage 3, the three year result sequence shows that most of the subjects have improved and made progress, which is very pleasing. In Key Stage 4, it is pleasing to note the improvements in Welsh Language and Science, which were areas of improvement targeted in 2011/12. However, the Mathematics results have declined over three years from a high of 70% A* to C in 2010 to 59% A* to C in 2012. This means that the main measure of achievement, Threshold Level 2 including Mathematics and Welsh or English has also declined over the last three years. The banding arrangements for Wales is largely based on trends of results over three years, which means that if one of the core subjects in Key Stage 4 (Welsh, or English and Mathematics) declines over three years then the banding categorization for the school also declines over the three years. The main focus for the banding categorization is Key Stage 4 with great emphasis on the Threshold 2 including Welsh or English and Mathematics as a key measure. It also takes into consideration a number of other factors including success in GCSE A* to C or the vocational equivalent, improving or declining attendance etc. Unfortunately the decline in results in specific areas since 2010 has meant that the categorization in terms of banding for the school has changed from Band 1 in 2010 to Band 3 in 2011 to Band 4 in 2012.

The whole school in terms of the Head Teacher, Teachers and Governors are disappointed that the school has been categorised in Band 4, which does not, in our view, exemplify appropriately the strengths in terms of academic achievement of this school. However, we accept the categorization from the Welsh Government and are determined to improve the situation for 2013. At this point, I would like to take the opportunity to underline the many successes of the Mathematics Department in this school over recent years. An examination of the results in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 5 in 2012 exemplify a department gaining very good results, significantly above the average at Local Authority level and the all Wales average. At Key Stage 4 in 2012, the Mathematics results continue to be above the average for the Local Authority, family of schools and the Welsh average. However, as the trend in terms of



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results is a downward trend over three years, the banding score has also declined over the three years to its current position.

Publication of Results

Our aim therefore is to present all school results annually on the schools' website in order to ensure that parents are given the full picture as to the academic achievement of the school in all key stages and in all subjects. The Head Teacher and Governors also wish to extend an invitation to all parents to meet with the Head Teacher and Governors to discuss any element of concern with the development of the school. We ask respectfully that this opportunity is used to raise and discuss whole school issues, our current position and developments for the future. If you have any issues or concerns about an individual pupil, we would be grateful if you could contact the appropriate Head of Year or with Miss Helen Rogers, who is a member of the Senior Management Team with responsibility for the development of all pupils, Year 7 to Year 13.

Meeting with Parents

We propose to organise the meeting for **Thursday, March 21st 2013 at 5.00pm** in the new canteen facilities. Light refreshments will be available from 4.00pm and will include an opportunity for a tour around the new buildings, accompanied by the students of the school. Members of the Governing Body will be present at 5.00pm to discuss issues with you. The main focus of the discussions will be the academic achievement of the school in 2012 but will also include other discussions on a variety of issues, which you may wish to raise.

Some dates for your diary for the Spring Term 2013:

1. Half Term dates, February 11th to February 15th
2. Inset training day for staff, Monday, February 18th
3. Year 8 Parents evening, Thursday, February 21st
4. Year 10 Parents evening, Wednesday, March 13th.

Yours sincerely,

H Ellis Griffiths
Head Teacher

Brian Hancock
Chair of Governors

