



The Western Learning Federation MAGAZINE

Edition 1.



**Meet some of our
wonderful staff and pupils**

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**Schools
highlights**

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FEATURE

**Introduction to the
first Western Learning
Federation magazine**

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welcome

Dear all. I'm Wayne Murphy, the Executive Headteacher of the Western Learning Federation. I am delighted to share with you our first Federation magazine which will provide you with an overview of some of the brilliant activities and important updates across each of the schools.

I'd like to thank you for your continued support over the last two years as we have managed the pandemic together; your patience, kindness and support to each school in the Federation hasn't gone unnoticed.

I joined the Federation in September 2019 and together with the Governing Body, we set our three-year vision. As we come to the end of our three-year plan, we begin our new journey setting new targets and aspirations as one learning organisation leading each of the three schools.

Our vision is to continue the outstanding education offer for our pupils as we embed the new Curriculum for Wales and the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Reform. In order to achieve these aspirations and new reform we continue with our Federation Professional Learning Offer which will enable opportunities for staff to develop new skills to provide the best outcomes for our pupils.

You'll see throughout the magazine some of the incredible achievements our schools have achieved and I am very proud to share some of these with you now. We are very proud to congratulate Riverbank and Ty Gwyn Schools on their UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools accreditation awards.

The Rights Respecting Schools Award puts children's rights at the heart of schools in the UK. These Awards mean that our schools have successfully demonstrated that they embed children's rights and the values attached to them in daily school life thereby giving our children the best chance to lead happy, healthy lives and to be responsible, active citizens.

I would also like to congratulate Woodlands School in achieving the Careers Wales Mark. By achieving accreditation of this award the school has demonstrated our commitment to providing our learners with high quality, meaningful careers education.

During this year we have really invested in our workforce in all areas of the Federation, welcoming new members of staff into the Estates and Admin teams, as well as developing and growing our workforce and recruiting

Teaching Assistants and Teachers of the highest calibre. I am also delighted to welcome Rachel Faulkner who will take up post as Deputy Executive Headteacher in September who joins us from Greenfield School. I am pleased to be able to share with you our Federation Leadership structure following our successful recruitment campaigns.

I'd like to congratulate Aime Lucas, Jamie Brotherton, Tammy Lloyd, Tess Combstock and Lucy Board on their new leadership positions across the Federation who all take up their new posts in September.

I'd like to wish Diane Stones, all the very best as she retires from, Head of School for Ty Gwyn at the end of this school year after 13 years of dedication and commitment to our Ty Gwyn pupils, families and staff past and present. Diane will be greatly missed by all and we wish her well in her retirement.

I'd also like to wish Aaron Ellis all the best as he leaves the Federation at the end of the summer term. A huge thank you for your contribution across the Federation during your time here and we wish you luck in your new role.

I'd like to thank our incredible workforce for their hard work, dedication and commitment over the last academic year. You truly inspire us all with your care and support for our pupils.

I hope you have a great summer break, we wish all our school leavers the very best, and we look forward to welcoming our pupils back in September.

Best wishes

Mr Wayne Murphy

Executive Headteacher,
Western Learning Federation



Wayne Murphy -
Western Learning Federation,
Executive Headteacher



Rachel Faulkner - Western
Learning Federation, Deputy
Executive Headteacher

Leadership Structure from September 2022



Siân Thomas -
Woodlands,
Head of School



Simon Wilson -
Woodlands,
Deputy Head of School



Lucy Board -
Woodlands, Assistant
Head of School

Woodlands
SCHOOL
Learning for Living



Deborah Herald -
Riverbank,
Head of School



Aime Lucas -
Riverbank,
Deputy Head of School

Riverbank
SCHOOL
Learning together to be the best we can



Jamie Brotherton -
Ty Gwyn,
Head of School



Tammy Lloyd -
Ty Gwyn, Deputy
Head of School



Matt Thomas -
Ty Gwyn, Assistant
Head of School

Ty Gwyn
SCHOOL
Learning to achieve



Tess Combstock -
Ty Gwyn, Assistant
Head of School

All about the *Western Learning Federation*

Riverbank School, Ty Gwyn School and Woodlands School are part of the Western Learning Federation; this federation is unique as it is the only special school federation in Wales.

The federation brings together three schools - **all unique** in their own right, all working together with shared values and a determination to provide outstanding education to pupils with additional learning needs. Whilst Riverbank, Ty Gwyn and Woodlands have their own school visions and identities, there will be a direct link to those of the Western Learning Federation and as such, these school visions must and are considered a part of the vision of the Western Learning Federation.

The Western Learning Federation promotes all schools as **'Schools as Learning Organisations'**. The foundations are built on a shared vision of **'learning together to grow and achieve'**. The federation provides excellence in governance and creates an environment supporting continuous learning for all staff where collaboration is promoted in a nurturing and ambitious way. There is a culture and ethos of enquiry, innovation and exploration, with a focus on the collation and exchanging of learning knowledge. The Western Learning Federation as an organisation is committed to learning with and from the external environment as a person-centred learning organisation. The purpose of the Western Learning Federation and the role that schools play is clear; the organisations support a culture of self-reflection, continuous feedback and drive for growing learning leadership.

The federation is underpinned by a set of values that define the culture of the three federated schools. The Western Learning Federation operates with one Governing Body with a sub-committee structure that governs over all three schools. Whilst schools have their own identity, they are all operated through one Executive Head Teacher and one governing body. This allows the schools to benefit from economies of scale, shared professional learning and shared pupil learning experiences. Whilst Riverbank, Ty Gwyn and Woodlands are three schools, a professional learning offer that is fluent across the three schools and the ability to improve the sharing of resources and avoid duplication of services is in place the organisations support a culture of self-reflection, continuous feedback and drive for growing learning leadership.

- We celebrate our differences
- We have a shared sense of belonging
- We play, laugh, smile and celebrate success
- We have a positive attitude
- We learn from experiences to develop life and independent skills
- We follow our dreams and aspirations
- We care for our environment
- We improve quality of life

Riverbank and Woodlands are preparing for the next steps in moving to the Fairwater Campus as part of the 21st Century Build. In the last two years Ty Gwyn has been involved in a number of building projects working in partnership with Cardiff Council, the Integrated Care Fund to provide additional classrooms as well as intervention spaces. We are proud to also host Ty'r Bont, a social services provision bringing together education and social services.

This Western Learning Federation is about creating something that is unique and complements the excellent pedagogy that exists within each school setting. This vision rightly inspires, but also complements and develops the outstanding innovation and practice currently in place at Riverbank, Ty Gwyn and Woodlands. This Western Learning Federation will deliver the largest special school provision of this nature in Wales; it will be a centre of excellence and its scale will be matched through its ambition for learners.



The journey as *one organisation*

Since the federation was established in 2018 we have been on quite the journey as one organisation.

Our vision is to provide **consistency and modernisation** to the federation and school logos. As part of this process, we have had feedback from staff, pupils, school councils and the federation governing body and we are delighted to present our new logos.

This is the first phase of a **very exciting branding project** and we are currently working with our branding agency to provide videography and

photography in each of our three schools. Over the next few months you will see a number of exciting developments across the federation in terms of our branding and we will continue to share updates with you.

Exciting development across the Federation to come!

Western Learning Federation

Together we learn, grow and achieve



Riverbank
SCHOOL

Learning together to be the best we can

Woodlands
SCHOOL

Learning for Living

Ty Gwyn
SCHOOL

Learning to achieve

Highlights of *Riverbank*



Deborah Herald -
Riverbank,
Head of School

We are delighted to share some highlights of our year with you; we hope you will sense the fun, laughter and joy that our pupils experience on their learning and development journey at Riverbank School.



Hobbit House

As we continue to develop our outdoor learning and play environments we have purchased an outdoor Hobbit House. This will enable our pupils to continue to enjoy excellent outdoor play opportunities as well as provide learning and fun. Our pupils have already had so much joy from this new experience.



Assembly

On June 13th we held our first in-person assembly since before the COVID pandemic hit. We were so pleased to have everyone together as we return to normality.



Jubilee celebrations

On May 26th our Riverbank community came together at school to celebrate the Queen's Jubilee with lots of fun and laughter! It was a real delight to welcome our families back into school.



Rights Respecting Schools

We were delighted to announce earlier this year that following an accreditation process with UNICEF we are officially at Silver on our Rights Respecting Schools journey. The Silver Award is granted to schools that are making good progress towards embedding the principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child into their ethos and curriculum. Well done to all involved!



Ready for Reading Programme

We are really pleased to share exciting news about our Ready for Reading Programme which we are currently piloting. We recently hosted a parent coffee morning where our programme lead shared help and advice with parents and carers to help with developing early reading skills at home. This brilliant new pilot will continue to support developments across the school and federation.



Transition Day

On 13th June our pupils recently underwent a brilliant transition day at Woodlands School. There were some familiar faces helping our school leavers with their transition ready for September and Dosbarth Seren are very excited to join them!



Learning together to be the best we can

Highlights of *Ty Gwyn*



Diane Stones -
Ty Gwyn,
Head of School

We have so much to celebrate this year with so many achievements of staff and pupils. It has been an absolute joy to have worked within Ty Gwyn School for the past 16 years, and in more recent years, as the Headteacher and Head of School. It is with a heavy heart that I have decided to retire at the end of this academic year to spend more time with another source of joy for me, my two young Granddaughters! I wish Ty Gwyn School and the Federation every success for the future, and send my heartfelt thanks to the pupils and the wonderful parents who have been such a huge support for the school, and to me personally in my role as Head of School.

Investors in People and Rights Respecting Schools Awards

Ty Gwyn School has always been recognised for its positive, inclusive and welcoming ethos which has been recognised by Investors in People who has awarded us the highest achieving Platinum Award. In their report, Investors in People noted that "...There is an unparalleled positive culture within the school which comes across in every interaction" and we believe that this culture is achieved by placing the pupils at the centre of everything we do. We are also proud to share with you that we have been awarded the Gold Award for Rights Respecting Schools. This is a fantastic achievement that is the highest level of the Award that can be achieved. The Gold Award is granted to schools that have fully embedded the principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child into their ethos and curriculum.



Sports day

As always, our staff put on a show stopping sports day this term as Ty Gwyn's first sports day for 2 years took place. It was a fantastic day with pupils, staff and parents and carers having the freedom to move around the school as we used as much of the building and outside space as we could. We held PMLD sensory and dress up races, together with an ASD obstacle course that took place in the car park. In the main hall we had Calzaghe's Mini Dragons boxing, Kinball and Boccia competition and a swimming gala. Thankfully, the weather was on our side! Parents were able to come and watch these events and we had a great turnout from all the classes and the pupils had a great time



Jubilee Celebrations

The pupils of Ty Gwyn celebrated the Queen's Jubilee with a street party and Royal Wedding with vicars Davies and Curate visiting to conduct a Royal wedding with pupils in the PMLD Junior Department. It was a wonderful experience for all involved!



Coffee Shop

Coffee shop has re-opened for parents to attend. This provides great work experience for pupils who shop for the cakes, handle money and serve parents and staff. Coffee shop also helps parents have a supportive network amongst themselves. All profits made from the coffee shop go towards the enterprise initiative which help funds the leavers ball and other events. We have been delighted to welcome parents back into school for coffee shop.



Innowalk Pro

We are delighted that we have been able to purchase, with a substantial contribution from the Friends of Ty Gwyn, two Innwalk Pros which will promote the wellbeing and quality of life for our pupils. The Innwalk Pro is a 3-in-1 motorised device that enables movement in sitting and standing.



Duke of Edinburgh

On 30th June, post-16 students embarked on their Bronze Award expedition to Margam Park. We completed a walk around the park and engaged in archery sessions. We explored the castle and its grounds and gardens. The pupils played farmyard bingo and ended the trip with campfire activities. Everyone had a great time and enjoyed being somewhere different for a few days.



Sensory Experiences

We are really pleased to showcase our new sensory room. This innovative offer will enable play, learning and enjoyment for our pupils with this fantastic new facility. All pupils have really enjoyed from musical experiences this term. As well as our long standing links with specialist musician, Andy Pidcock, there have been music performances from Live Music Now, Music in Hospitals & Care and the Relaxed Concert at Penarth Pavilion.

Highlights of Woodlands



Siân Thomas –
Woodlands,
Head of School

We are delighted to share some highlights of our year with you; we hope you will sense the fun, laughter and joy that our pupils experience on their learning and development journey at Woodlands School. I'd like to congratulate Arif Ahmed who won Volunteer of the Year award that was hosted by the Children's Commissioner.



Careers Visit

Our pupils visited the Royal Mail sorting office for a very interesting careers tour of the Cardiff Delivery Office and Mail Centre. The different job roles were clearly explained and the pupils found it an excellent visit.

Pupils also visited Cardiff Bus where they thoroughly enjoyed learning about employment opportunities and even got the chance to go through the bus wash on the new electric bus!



Careers Fair

Woodlands held a careers fair with employers, colleges and support agencies joining and holding workshops. It was fantastic to see both pupils and parents engaging so well.



Sensory Room

We are so pleased with the Alexa enabled sensory room. This enables us to be at the edge of cutting technology to provide an innovative and interactive learning experience.



Project search

Project Search is a fantastic opportunity for our pupils to gain valuable work experience with the real potential to secure employment on leaving school. We currently have three pupils on our Project Search Programme who are based at Cardiff and Vale Health Board and who have secured employment opportunities.

Our Project Search 2022-23 interns were invited to Ysgol Y Deri to meet others who would be joining the scheme next year.



School visits

Since COVID restrictions have relaxed it has been fantastic to see our pupils back out in the community and on school visits. Our pupils have been on shopping trips, visited the Amelia Trust Farm and Roath Park amongst others!



Parent Café

We have been delighted to resume Parent café after two years of restrictions! It was a pleasure to welcome back our parents and to engage with them. If you would like to come to parents café, join us every Monday 9.30-11 in the conference room.



Jubilee Celebrations

There was a big party atmosphere at Woodlands school before we broke up for the spring half term, with our Jubilee celebrations! We celebrated with music and dancing, Jubilee decorations and a big Union Jack cake!



Eid and Holi Celebrations

The Woodlands school community showed their artistic flair earlier this year, when we celebrated Eid and Holi! On 18th March our pupils created some beautifully coloured tie dye canvases and tote bags to mark the Holi festival. On 4th May our pupils celebrated the festival of Eid with face painting, music, dancing and a game of big Jenga! These were fantastic celebrations for our pupils and staff who shared fun and laughter all round!



Woodlands

SCHOOL

Learning for Living

Building updates

We continue to work with Cardiff Council on the Fairwater Campus Project.

“The new school building will provide exciting learning and teaching opportunities for our pupils and staff, building on the excellent practice we have already developed. In addition it will provide a valuable resource for our local community to enjoy.”

Leaders from across the Federation are working with the council to provide the outstanding facilities for our pupils. This is a very exciting project and we will continue to share regular updates with you. In September there will be a number of opportunities for parents to be invited in to the schools to listen to council officers present updates and listen to your feedback about the plans.



Professional Learning Offer

Over the last year we have really driven forward on the Federation Professional Learning Offer for staff.

We have put in place clear learning routes/pathways for all layers of staff from Teaching Assistant to senior leadership. This has been a **crucial and exciting journey** for our Federation and has enabled us in developing a workforce who are experts in areas of Positive Behaviour Support and Pedagogy.

Being able to provide such a **unique Professional Learning Offer** is enabling us to attract **motivated, enthusiastic and dynamic** practitioners who are passionate about developing their practice to meet the needs of our learners.

Federation Parliament

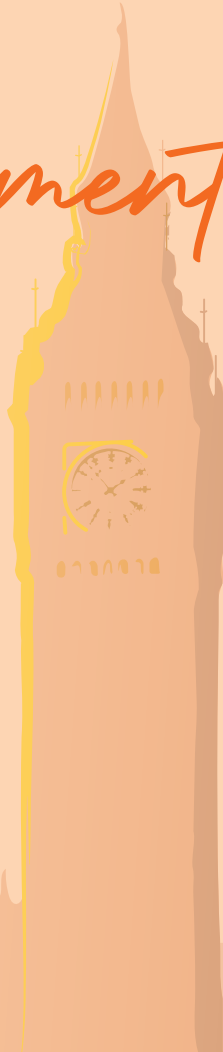
Our Federation parliament came together on 13th July to celebrate a joint Commonwealth Day. There was the opportunity for the school council members from each school to meet at Ty Gwyn to share part of their day

We are also having a joint Commonwealth Day on Wednesday 13th July and there are plans for the school council members from each school to get together at Ty Gwyn to share part of their day.

From September 2023 pupils from the elected school council will become **Federation Parliament leaders** and will form the parliament and will be able to meet half termly.

“From September 2023 pupils from the elected school council will become Federation Parliament leader.”

We hope to share **good practice** from each school, for example, the Rights Respecting Schools.



Federation Governors

Governor Name	Governor Status
David Saunders, Chair of Governors	Local Authority
Binki Rees, Vice Chair of Governors	Local Authority
Cllr. Peter Bradbury	Community
Doug Corp	Community
Ann Cocchiara	Community
Amanda Coffey	Community
Karen Webb	Parent
Sean Ward	Parent
Nigel Hooper	Parent
Glyn Taylor	Parent
Zoe Oram-Jones	Parent
Tiffany Roberts	Teaching Staff
Sara Rovea-Franco	Teaching Staff
Laura Duncombe	Non-teaching Staff

Introducing *our* Governors

David Saunders, our Chair of Governors, was appointed chair of Woodlands School by the Welsh Government and Director of Education and Life Long Learning in April 20216 and soon after was appointed onto the board of governors for Riverbank in June of that year. In 2018, David was responsible for leading the team that federated the three schools, Riverbank, Ty Gwyn and Woodlands.



Binki Rees, our Vice Chair of governors, is an enthusiastic and creative person. Binki is passionate about young people of all backgrounds and abilities being able to access appropriate, diverse and creative learning opportunities.



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We will be sharing with you the interests and experiences of more governors in our next edition of the Western Learning Federation

If you would like to learn more about our governors, you can access their profiles by visiting

<https://www.westernlearningfederation.co.uk/western-learning-federation-governing-body-membe-1/>

Term Dates



Autumn Term 1

5th September – 28 October 2022

Half term

31st October – 4th November 2022

Autumn Term 2

7th November – 23rd December 2022

Christmas Break

26th December – 6th January 2023

Spring Term 1

9th January – 17th February 2023

Half Term

20th February – 24th February 2023

Spring Term 2

27th February – 31st March 2023

Easter Break

3rd April – 14th April 2023

Summer Term 1

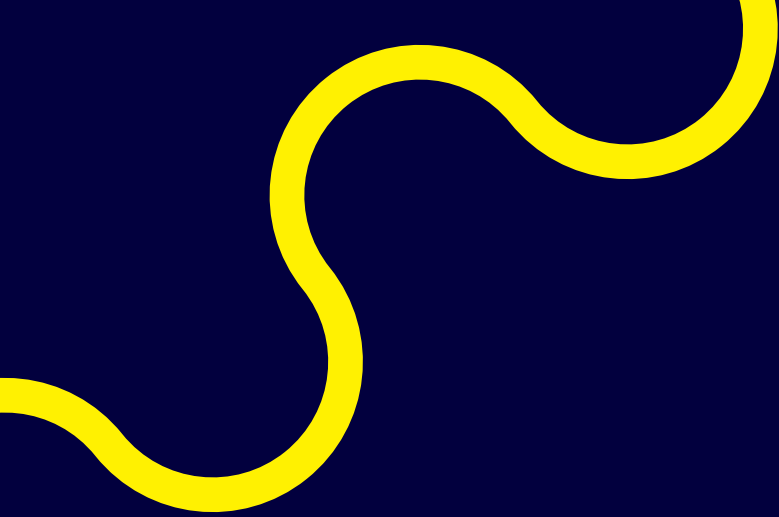
17th April – 26th May 2023

Half Term

29th May – 2nd June 2023

Summer Term 2

5th June – 21st July 2023



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Woodlands School
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