



Western
Learning
Federation

Together we learn, grow and achieve



The Western Learning Federation

MAGAZINE

Edition 2.



OUR BRANDING JOURNEY

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HIGHLIGHTS OF OUR FEDERATED SCHOOLS

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Introducing our Governors

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Welcome

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope that you are well at this festive time of year. Following the huge success of our first edition of the Western Learning Federation Magazine, I am delighted to share with you our second edition. I was thrilled to hear and read your feedback around our first magazine, your comments have been greatly received.

As you will be aware, our Federation of three schools were inspected by Estyn at the beginning of November. We will receive the official report towards the end of January 2023 and I will share this update with you in the new year. I'd like to thank you as parents and carers for your support and input, and for giving up your time to complete surveys and attend parent engagement sessions with the inspectors.

We continue to work closely with the Council project team and wider partners in relation to stage three of the Fairwater Campus Building Project. Stage three involves looking at the internal and external areas for both schools. There are currently a number of key discussion points for the project looking at parking and drop off, safeguarding and security, interior design strategy, community strategy and multi-agency strategy. Both Riverbank School and Woodlands School have held a number of parent/carer engagement sessions to provide updates and opportunities for input into the design and wider project. There have also been staff engagement sessions to ensure their input in the process.

In edition one of the Western Learning Federation Magazine, we introduced you to our branding journey. Since then, we have completed phase one of our project and as a result you will gradually begin to see our new branding on our communications. We will move onto phase two of our journey which will include the re-branding of our social media platforms and our Federation campus.

Some of you may be aware that our Chair of Governors, David Saunders, has been taken ill and is currently on palliative care. As a result of this news our acting Chair of Governors is Binki Rees, and our acting Vice Chair of Governors is Doug Corp. As you will all know, David has been a fantastic servant to the Western Learning Federation and the schools within it. He often speaks with such pride at the fantastic work staff undertake to support our

amazing pupils which has a significant impact on our children's learning experiences, resulting in them being happy and full of smiles. Our thoughts are with David's family at this difficult time.

As many of you will be aware Deborah Herald, Head of School of Riverbank, has been successful at gaining her first permanent Headship in Blaenau Gwent. We wish Deb the very best and congratulate her on her achievement. In the interim we are pleased to announce Amie Lucas as acting Head of School.

Amie brings a wealth of experience and knowledge that will support Riverbank moving forward. Riverbank will be supported by the wider Federation leadership team by myself and Rachel Faulkner, Deputy Executive Headteacher.

Lastly, we have enjoyed a number of events through the autumn term, including celebrating Harvest Festival, Children in Need and in recent weeks and days, Christmas celebrations. It has been a joy to see the children right across the Federation sparkle and shine in their Christmas jumpers and outfits, smiling and laughing at their Christmas lunches and parties, and see their excitement throughout their Christmas nativity plays and carol services.

From the Governing Body and the staff at the Western Learning Federation, we wish you a very merry Christmas, and look forward to welcoming the children back.

Mr Wayne Murphy

Executive Headteacher,
Western Learning Federation



Wayne Murphy -
Western Learning Federation,
Executive Headteacher



Rachel Faulkner - Western
Learning Federation, Deputy
Executive Headteacher

Our Branding

Journey



Highlights of Riverbank



Deborah Herald -
Riverbank,
Head of School

Since arriving in Riverbank in February 2015, I have worked with some amazing staff and very supportive families.

There have been some stand out moments that will always make me smile (as well as bring a tear to my eye).

Watching our children perform Shakespeare at The Sherman Theatre, receiving a standing ovation in St. David's Hall having danced and signed to This is Me, our visit from a Special Olympian who encouraged our children to run a lap of the playground with the Olympic Torch, our enactment of the Royal Wedding that was broadcast on the national news....The list goes on but the everyday triumphs

of our children have brought me pleasure day after day after day. It has been inspiring to watch children take their first steps, learn to communicate, try new foods and make real friendships. These are the 'little things' that make working in a school like ours so wonderful.

Thank you to those of you who have given me the honour of playing a part in the lives of your children. It has truly been a privilege.



Mental Health Wales Awards

It was an honour to be finalists in two categories of the Welsh Mental Health Awards: Outstanding Support in the Education Sector and Best Mental Health Support during the Pandemic. The awards ceremony which took place in October was an inspirational event which we were proud to be part of.



Family Liaison

We were delighted to be asked to present at FCE's "Sharing Excellence in Community Engagement" conference in Treorchy. Staff from schools had the opportunity to collaborate, learn together and develop a strategy to plan for the future.



World Cup Football Enrichment Day

Our Festivals and Celebrations theme has been taken over this half term by World Cup fever! We spent a day with Matt from RISE learning football skills and holding an opening ceremony. Children went to the airport to wave off the Welsh team on the way to Qatar, and watched games together when possible developing a real sense of belonging. It was fun while it lasted!



School Council

The school council completed a learning walk in September and developed their own School Development Plan for the year. As you can imagine they were very clear on their priorities for improvement! We have already taken steps to address some of the issues raised and will be working on meeting other targets throughout the year. We will ensure that our children then evaluate how well we have done at the end of the academic year to feed into our self-evaluation process to ensure further school improvement.

The School Development Plan is available to view on our website.



Christmas

We are very much looking forward to sharing our Christmas together as a whole school this year. We didn't realise how much we had missed having our families together for the concerts, all being in the hall together to actually interact with Santa and sharing our Christmas dinner. Nadolig llawen Pawb.



Harvest Festival

This year the donations we collected as part of our Harvest festival were donated to Your Local Pantry at The Dusty Forge. It was lovely for the children to be able to take the collection to somewhere local to help and support people in our school's community.



Learning together to be the best we can

Highlights of *Ty Gwyn*



Jamie Brotherton -
Ty Gwyn,
Head of School

It has been a real privilege to take on the role of Head of School since September. This term has seen the school continue to move into a period of recovery from the COVID pandemic, the best example of this is perhaps the school Christmas Concert being back in the main hall. We continue to build on the excellent practice that exists within the school and I am pleased to share with you some of the highlights from the term.



Transition Event

Post-19 transition is a time of change for pupils. The school holds regular transition coffee mornings for parents and carers throughout the year. These are opportunities to discuss transition with other families as well as with professionals from Careers Wales and social services. This autumn we held a large-scale post-19 transition event in our main hall. A wide variety of Post-19 providers were present enabling direct access for parents and carers to assist with these key decisions for the future.



Healthy Schools

In 2008 we began our journey with the network Healthy Schools. Over the next decade we completed all of the six phases of Healthy Schools awards. We then felt equipped to work toward the Healthy Schools National Quality Award (the highest award) and were delighted to receive our accreditation at the end of October 2022. The award comprises seven areas:

- Food and fitness (nutrition and physical activity)
- Mental and emotional health and wellbeing, including staff wellbeing
- Personal development and relationships, including sex and relationships education
- Substance use and misuse, including alcohol, smoking, and drugs (legal, illegal, and prescription).
- Environment, including eco-initiatives and improving the school and wider environment
- Safety, including a variety of topics such as child protection, sun safety, internet safety, and first aid
- Hygiene including across school and non-school setting

School Council Elections

This term the school held a large-scale pupil vote across the school in order to elect members to the School Council. The elections gave our pupils the opportunity to experience aspects of politics in a meaningful way. The school Eco Council and newer Criw Cymraeg (Welsh Crew) also link closely with the School Council which in turn links to the Federation Parliament.



Visit from the High Sheriff of South Glamorgan

We were delighted to welcome the High Sheriff, Rosie Moriarty-Simmonds OBE, back to Ty Gwyn school. Having previously been a member of the Governing Bodies for Ty Gwyn and the Western Learning Federation, Rosie returned to present a High Sheriff Award Certificate to the school in recognition of the immense work and support for children with severe and complex conditions together with the challenges which presented the school during the pandemic.

Drama Room

A number of staff within the school have linked with a variety of health professionals to use drama to help pupils overcome anxiety in attending appointments. This term this project has moved into a dedicated drama studio resourced with bespoke materials. Pupils learn to overcome barriers in attending a wide range of appointments such as visiting hairdressers and doctors.



Christmas Concert

After 2 years where concerts needed to be virtual events, it was fantastic to welcome families and friends back into school for the Christmas Concert 2022. Pupils demonstrated great determination and resilience to perform in front of an audience, which for some pupils was a particularly big challenge to overcome. Thank you to staff and families for preparing pupils for this with great care. The result was two incredible concerts which we are extremely proud of. The official recording of the concert will be available soon.



Investors in Families

This term the school was assessed by Investors in Families. They reported that this 'was a positive celebration of the quality family and community work that is evident and visible across the School. During the Accreditation process, the work of the school was judged as **Diamond within the previous Framework and Platinum in the New Framework**. Family and Community Engagement is embedded into the school and it is evident that the school is working hard on its journey of excellence'. We are very proud of achieving and maintaining this award, the full report can be accessed through the Ty Gwyn Website.



Ty Gwyn
SCHOOL

Learning to achieve

Highlights of Woodlands



Siân Thomas –
Woodlands,
Head of School

It has been another wonderful term at Woodlands and we have enjoyed Estyn's recent visit to see all of the wonderful work the pupils and staff have completed. We can't wait to read the full report when it is released in January 2023! Have a very merry Christmas from all of us at Woodlands and we look forward to welcoming the pupils back in January.



PS1 Department

We are working hard to develop our sensory curriculum in PS1 – much to the children's delight! We have enjoyed being fully immersed in sensory stories this term, including a special Christmas story we are enjoying currently. Our children have been developing their digital skills, learning to use apps to control the sensory room, changing lighting and music to suit our mood and further develop our skills.



Children in Need

We had a wonderful day raising money for Children in Need. Pupils and staff dressed up in their spotty clothes and pyjamas for a day of Children in Need fun. In total we raised: **£79.84**



Careers

Careers are an important part of life at Woodlands. Pupils have attended the Careers Wales Fayre and local businesses have begun accepting pupils for work experience sessions again. We continue to plan for an onsite cafe and horticulture centre which would remain open even after our move to the new Fairwater Campus!



PS2 Department

This term our pupils have begun taking part in work experience placements at local Primary Schools. As part of this they have been working towards level 2 hygiene certificates. This is helping pupils develop independence and work skills ready for Project Search in future years.



PS3 Department

This term, our theme has been 'Just imagine...' with the focus on developing our oracy skills. The Sherman Theatre visited Woodlands for our opening event in September and as our closing event, we invited parents in to share our progress, learning and skills.



Parc Bryn Bach Visit

Our pupils from Fig class had a great day at Parc Bryn Bach Outdoor Education and Activity Centre, which is set in the beautiful countryside near Tredegar. Our children loved every second of their adventure, becoming healthy, confident citizens.



Woodlands

SCHOOL

Learning for Living

Introducing our Governors

Sean Ward

is an active Parent Governor with two children at Ty Gwyn School. With too many hobbies to list, Sean is a keen cyclist and rugby fanatic!



Doug Corp

one of our Community Governors, is a fan of motor racing and enjoys travelling! Doug comes from a background in senior management and training. He has been involved in volunteering activities for a number of years, including several as a volunteer in Woodlands. Doug also sits as a Lay Representative on one of the Health Boards in Wales.



To read more about Sean and Doug's involvement with the Western Learning Federation Governing Body scan the QR code.



Term Dates

Autumn Term 1	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 June 2023

Provisional Inset Dates

Riverbank School	Ty Gwyn School	Woodlands School
Friday 23rd December 2022	Monday 9th January 2023	Friday 31st March 2023
Friday 31st March 2023	Friday 31st March 2023	Friday 26th May 2023
Monday 24th July 2023	Monday 24th July 2023	Monday 24th July 2023




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