

March Newsletter



I find it difficult to comprehend that whilst writing the last newsletter, I had no idea what was around the corner in March. The last 2 weeks have been the most uncertain and challenging of my career so far and I am sure that most of you will echo that feeling with regards to your jobs and family lives. However, it is important to stay positive! This month's newsletter will contain lots of information regarding the Coronavirus. However, I will also be sharing some positivity with you as well because it is important, no matter how difficult this gets, to stay as positive as we can.

I would like to begin with some positive news and remind you all of the successes we had at the beginning of the month.



At the beginning of the month, pupils from Dosbarth Mr Richards and Dosbarth Mrs Turner took part in a Skype call to Elle Alexander, an **architect in London**. The pupils took part in a Q & A with Elle before they were set a Minecraft Building Challenge to build a sustainable building. With the break we've had we were not able to complete this challenge but we currently thinking of ways the pupils could do it at home and send us in their designs so that Elle can pick a winner.

Dosbarth Mrs Tuner and Dosbarth Mr Richards enjoyed taking part in a performance with Symphonia Cymru and other schools based on Beethoven's opera, Fidelio at **Theatr Hafren**. It was great to see years 5 and 6's artwork being used as part of the set. Thanks to Mid Wales Music Trust and Hilary and Graham for organising everything. Also, thank you to Arts Council Wales for providing a grant to pay for the bus.



Once again, we had a great deal of fun on **World Book Day**. Pupils and Staff dressed up to celebrate the day as their favourite character or author.



On Friday 6th March, many pupils and parents enjoyed a trip to Wrexham FC's Racecourse Stadium to watch **Wales Women v Estonia Women**. It was a very enjoyable evening made even better by a 2-0 Wales win.

On 10th March, we held our annual **School Eisteddfod**. We had a lovely day and it was great to see all pupils taking part in various competitions. Every year we present the house cup to the team with the most points. For the 8th year in a row, the cup went to Rhaeadr and the year 6 captains were presented the cup by our judges for the day, Mrs Rona Morris and Mrs Linda Thomas. We are very grateful to them for coming in on the day to adjudicate the competitions. We also presented individual awards too. These went to Osian T and Gethin J for effort and Millie HC won the award for most individual points on the day.



Whilst we were enjoying the Eisteddfod, Miss Watkins was representing the school at a **Digital HWB event** in Llandudno, North Wales. As result of her excellent work using ICT, especially Minecraft, Miss Watkins was asked to present the work she has done with pupils to other teachers at the event in North Wales. Miss Watkins had an enjoyable day presenting but also picking up more ideas to use in our school.

At the **WASPS swimming gala** in Welshpool, we had some positive results. Lowri Suckley-Jones came 3rd in the backstroke, Jack Klages 2nd in breaststroke and 3rd in freestyle, Seren Davies 3rd in breaststroke and the years 5 and 5 boys relay came 3rd (Jack, Aled, Osian, Ellis).



On Friday 13th it was **Sport Relief**, so the Sports Council organised an afternoon of physical activities for the pupils to take part in which included dancing, kick rounders and dodge ball. The pupils also came to school in 'sporty' clothing and helped raise £60 towards BBC Sport Relief. Thank you for your support.

Also, on Friday 13th, the **Urdd Arts and Crafts** event still took place despite the Urdd Eisteddfod being cancelled. We had a number of brilliant entries this year and received lots of prizes as a result. See our Facebook group or website to see the winners.

PC Gayle came in during the last week to speak to year 6 about child exploitation. The pupils listened well and enjoyed the hour-long workshop, learning important lessons in the process.

Towards the end of term, **Dosbarth Mr Richards** and **Dosbarth Mrs Turner** were studying the book Kensuke's Kingdom by Michael Morpurgo. They were carrying out various writing tasks that followed the book and began to plan a story which some have continued as part of their home learning. In Science, both classes have been studying forces and have been investigating friction.

Dosbarth Miss Watkins have been continuing their work on Islands by using the role play area to learn more about pirates. They have also been learning about volcanoes, using Merge Cube to see inside a volcano before re-creating their own designs using Minecraft.



Dosbarth Mrs Evans have been learning about a famous Welsh pirate, Barti Ddu, designing posters and a profile. They have also been learning about Sri Lanka, drawing on Mrs Owen's experiences having lived there, and tasting various foods. They have also been using J2E to design and draw their own islands.

COVID-19

Since having to close on Friday 20th March, there have been many developments in education but also in day-to-day life as well. This has created many challenges for us all but it is important to stay positive and try to create some form of normality for ourselves and the pupils during this difficult time.

It has been really pleasing to see so many pupils taking part in **home learning** in so many different ways. We have enjoyed seeing the work pupils have been doing. We provided an online platform via **Microsoft Teams** where tasks have been set since closing on Friday 20th. Many have used this tool but as long as pupils are doing something, we do not mind how. What Microsoft Teams does provide though is a place for pupils to not only see tasks but a place for pupils to **interact with their friends and teachers**. If you haven't been on it yet, I strongly recommend that you provide your child the opportunity to do so if possible.

On Friday 3rd April, we would have originally been breaking up for **Easter** until Tuesday 21st April. In terms of education, this period will still be viewed as a 'holiday' for both pupils and staff. Therefore, during this period, staff will not be providing regular tasks for the pupils to complete. There are plenty of activities which families can do together, so I suggest you make the most out what you can whilst staying safe and following NHS and Government guidelines.

At the moment, there is no date for **returning to school**. What is clear though is that we will not be returning after Easter. Therefore, from Tuesday 21st April, staff will be stepping up education provision to make sure that all pupils are carrying out some form of education. Again, as

mentioned, the easiest way to do this is via Microsoft Teams. However, I understand this isn't always possible due to ICT equipment issues etc so we may be contacting parents to check if there is any support they need in order to carry out learning from home. You can email us any work completed which you would like us to see to office@llanrhaeadr.powys.sch.uk. There will be more details about this by the time the Easter holiday is completed.

I would like to draw your attention to an important document released for you as parents by **Powys County Council**. It contains many ways to support yourselves and your child during these uncertain times. Please take a look, it will be attached to the ParentMail email that comes with this newsletter.

We are also here to **provide support** during these uncertain times. I have already had conversations on the phone with some parents and via email, supporting them with issues that have arisen during the past 2 weeks. You can contact us using office@llanrhaeadr.powys.sch.uk at any time and no question is a silly question. Get in touch!

Also, I'd like to remind you of the **Emergency Child Care HUB** which has been set up in Llanfyllin for 4-16 year olds and in Llanymynech for 0-4 year olds. This HUB is providing childcare for those who have no other option whilst they are working to provide key services during the COVID-19 outbreak. It is also available to vulnerable learners. Meals are provided free of charge and transport can be arranged to pick up and take pupils home. The form for parents is released every Tuesday and must be filled in by Wednesday at 3pm. If you have any issues with this or questions, please ask.

I will continue to update parents as we go along. It will most likely be a weekly update unless there is anything important to share immediately.

In the meantime, please stay safe and stay at home. It is an uncertain time for us all but important that we all play our part where we can. It will be a difficult few months, but I know that we will bounce back at the end of it.

Thank you to those who have sent myself and staff kind comments. They are very much appreciated.

I will leave you with an extract from a poem I recently read;

***"It all feels a little strange today, not just for you, but for me,
It won't be like this forever, my love, just you wait and see"***

Regards,



Mr Jonathan Richards

