

YSGOL SYR HUGH OWEN Caernarfon



Newsletter from the Head, JULY 2018

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Here we are at the end of another busy and successful term at Ysgol Syr Hugh Owen. Looking back at the year, I would like to take this opportunity to remind you of all the amazing experiences your child has experienced, of all the successes of individuals, and of all the successes we have celebrated as a school this year. I would also like to note our heartfelt thanks and gratitude to yourselves as parents/guardians for your continued and consistent support of the school which enables us to offer such varied experiences to our pupils and taste these numerous successes. This year, we are proud to announce that we have:

Promoting Health and Wellbeing of Pupils and Staff:

- *continued to lead nationally on the Health and Wellbeing area of the Curriculum for Life by designing a bespoke thematic curriculum for our Year 7 pupils which will be shared nationally;*
- *shown our commitment to the Government's new initiative to create Nurturing Schools that encourage the improvement of the school's environment and systems for the benefit of staff and pupils and ensuring that we listen to the voice of the learner and staff consistently.*
- *introduced the Year 11 Mentoring Scheme, which ensured that all targeted and vulnerable pupils in Year 11 received additional individual attention from a member of the Senior Management Team weekly before their GCSE examinations;*
- *supported a number of sports competitions where pupils have been extremely successful with several individuals / teams going on to represent the School, District and County in the next rounds, including some pupils going on to represent Wales in different British competitions;*
- *organized various extra-curricular activities for pupils of all ages, e.g. fishing expeditions, a harp concert, a Physics tour to Jodrell Bank, celebrating Shw Mae Su' Mae Day, a rugby tour to Cardiff, football trips to Manchester and Everton, the Shrewsbury netball trip, rugby trips to RGC in Colwyn Bay, a ski trip to the United States, a football trip to Madrid, a French and History trip to Normandy, and the Sixth Form trip to our partner school in Sambia;*

Collecting Money for Good Causes:

- *collected money for numerous good causes including the Kaiden Pritchard Alder Hey Fund, our partner school in Sambia, Children in Need, Guide Dogs, and the Tŷ Gobaith fund;*

Celebrating Welsh Culture:

- *experienced a huge success at the Urdd National Eisteddfodau with several individuals and a choir waving the school banner on the National Eisteddfod stage. We would also like to acknowledge the tireless commitment of the many other competitors who received great praise for their performances at the local, County*

and the National Eisteddfod, although they did not succeed in appearing on stage in the National Eisteddfod this year;

- re-instated the School Eisteddfod very successfully and hosted the Eisteddfod Stars Concert in the evening to share the experiences with parents and other members of the community.
- organized Welsh Gigs in the school hall to try and encourage pupils to take pride in their culture;
- established a Language Council to ensure that the voice of the pupil takes a leading role in promoting the Welsh Language Strategy at the school;

Developing Variable Skills:

- provided an opportunity for all Year 11 pupils to gain a Welsh Bacculaureate, Workskills, Teamwork, and E.C.D.L. (European Computer Driving Licence) qualification to try and prepare them better for work or for further studies.
- held several special Skills Days that were full of varied and valuable experiences;
- organized a sponsored walk for year 7-9 pupils to raise money to our partner school in Zambia;

Strengthening Partnerships:

- facilitated arrangements for parents / guardians to liaise with the school by setting up Twitter, Facebook and School Comms accounts;
- welcomed several external visitors including poets, writers, politicians, business people, specialists and singers to the school to enrich pupils' learning and teaching experiences;
- participated in community based activities in order to strengthen the sense of community e.g. school bands performing in the community and pupils singing carols in the Galeri;
- met regularly with our feeder primary schools to try and facilitate transition arrangements for the pupils and their parents. Two very successful transition days were held with our catchment Year 6 pupils, and a fun filled Multi-Sport transition day led by our Year 12 pupils was organised for the Year 5 pupils of the catchment area, both of which received high praise from all;

Sharing Best Practice:

- announced 'Stars of the Week' every Friday to publicly celebrate the achievements of our pupils and our staff weekly;
- encouraged an increasing number of staff to share good practice both internally and externally, by - delivering whole-school in-service training sessions, offering support to other schools at the request of the region's advisory body, on county and regional working groups, and by completing Outstanding Teacher Programme training and national leadership courses;
- **Careers Wales Quality Mark:**
- The school has recently received Careers Wales Quality Mark for all the work that has been done to ensure a variety of vocational experiences, appropriate careers advice, and the design of suitable learning pathways for our pupils. We would particularly like to thank Ms. Hanks for her dedication and all her hard work in the field.
- **Estyn Thematic Reports:**
- Following two highly commended Best Practice visits by Estyn Inspectors, two reports on the best practices recognised at Ysgol Syr Hugh Owen are currently being shared

nationally in two Estyn reports. The Teaching Improvement report (June 2018) states that:

- *'Improving teaching as a top priority in the whole-school improvement plan' and that the school is 'creating an atmosphere that enables the school to push teaching and learning boundaries'.*
- *the acting head teacher, 'strongly believe that every pupil deserves high quality teaching and high levels of help and guidance.'*
- *'Leaders place a strong emphasis on celebrating good practice in teaching and assessment across the school,' and that the 'pupils interviewed as part of this thematic review give great praise to the changes in the quality of teaching. They referred specifically to teachers bringing the learning alive through interesting and entertaining tasks that enabled them to think of things for themselves. '*
- *and 'in a relatively short period of time, the school has succeeded in improving the quality of teaching across the school with teachers having enthusiastically dealt with the school's priority to' push the teaching and learning boundaries'. As a result of this new and ambitious effort to improve, performance in key stage 4 has remained at least good for the third year in a row and welfare standards have improved significantly over the same period. '*

As you can see above, all these activities and achievements are a sound proof of all the very commendable work that goes on to ensure that Ysgol Syr Hugh Owen is an inclusive and community-based school where the ability to self-improve is becoming more and more every day. Everyone improving together!

School Uniform

I would like to thank all the parents who have shown their continued support for the school by ensuring that the pupils attend school daily dressed in their full school uniform. I must stress that we expect the highest standards of uniform from all pupils following the Easter Holidays and we will endeavour to ensure that this rule is adhered to in a fair and consistent manner. Please contact us should you need any assistance in buying school uniform. I thank you in advance for your support.

Pupil Equipment

Following concerns about some pupils' lack of equipment, the school will be purchasing pencil cases containing all essential equipment, apart from calculators, for all Yr.7-11 pupils ready for September. Pencil cases must be brought to all lessons and pupils will be expected to replace lost items.

Important dates for the diary

- **July 20th** – End of term
- **September 3rd** – School re-opens for staff
- **September 5th** - School re-opens for pupils
- **September 6th** – 2017 -2018 Prize Giving Evening
- **September 11th** - Year 7 and 9 Scholl Photographs
- **September 11th** – **Parents Teachers' Meeting- All Welcome!**
- **September 18th** – Year 12 pupils and parents meeting
- **September 25th** –UCAS presentation for Year 13 pupils and parents
- **October 5th** – Gwynedd INSET day – No school for pupils
- **October 8th** – School Eisteddfod

- **October 16th** – Year 11 Parents Evening
- **October 23rd** – Open Evening
- **October 29th -November 2nd** – Half Term Break

Other key dates will be shared with you soon.

Thank you for your continued support. Please follow us on Twitter/Facebook for all the latest news and visit our website for a link to the latest Seren Syr Hugh and the school calendar.

Wishing you all a Happy Summer Break!

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Parry Jones
(Acting Head)