



# The PHS NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER  
2016



# NO PENS DAY!

By Mrs Thomas (Literacy Coordinator)

**Earlier this month, we held a No Pens Day. This meant that for one day, pupils in Year 7, 8 and 9 were not asked to produce extended writing in their lessons, but concentrated on developing their speaking and listening skills.**

In Maths, pupils put down their pens and picked up their language by holding a Maths speed dating activity and a

pokemon hunt. Pupils loved trawling the lower block while solving mathematical problems in their quest to 'catch them all.' In other Maths classes, pupils solved puzzles by talking instead of using pens and worked in teams to investigate key concepts, including 'getting a boat to float.'

In Science, the emphasis was on team experiments involving kinaesthetic learning to investigate *(Continue on page 2)*

# NO PENS DAY

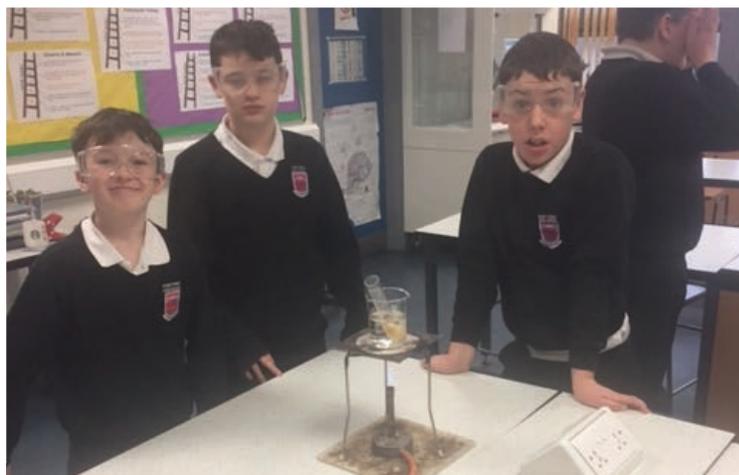
(From page 1) reaction times, particle theory and chemical versus physical change. Teacher, Shelley Hopkins, reported that pupil engagement was significantly improved during the lessons on the day.

In English, pupils put down their pens to investigate the murder of Santa – complete with a crime scene chalk outline! Many students commented that this was the highlight of their day as they enjoyed interviewing each other and discussing clues.

Innovative and engaging lessons were taught across the curriculum, including human grid references, presentations and debates, reading loops and blindfolded listening activities. In their Culture and Religion lessons, pupils learnt about Malala Yousafzai and how she had first used the radio to encourage girls to stand up for their education.

Now that we have given pupils an explicit and whole school opportunity to think about and communicate their ideas, we hope that it has given them an enjoyable way to find their voices so that they now want to pick up their pens and put their thoughts into writing. Just like Malala.

Many pupils took the opportunity to air their views in our 'Diary Room' and filled out feedback forms. As 93% of pupils stated that they would like to participate in such a day again, another No Pen Day looks likely! ■



## GOTTA CATCH 'EM ALL!



**By Mrs Finney (Maths Teacher)**

The Maths Department enjoyed celebrating 'No Pens Day' on Tuesday 6th December when the exchanged their pens, pencils and exercise books for ipads, tablets and Smart phones.

The pupils worked with a variety of different applications during lessons such as Nearpod, QR code reader and Kahoot and submitted their work electronically.

Many Year 9 pupils spent their mathematics lesson in the search of 'Pokemon's' in a treasure hunt style around the school. When they found a pokemon it had to be scanned using the ipads applications and this resulted in a maths problem for the pupils to solve.

The pupils thoroughly enjoyed their day solving maths problems using digital technology. ■

# AROUND THE SCHOOL

By Miss Moses (Assistant Headteacher)

**On Wednesday 14th December 2016, 26 Year 8 pupils were lucky enough to attend a tour of the Houses of Parliament and take part in the Peoples Parliament- Tour and workshop.**

The pupils are part of the More Able and Talented group and spent part of the day exploring Central London before heading to Parliament for a guided tour and workshop. The pupils spent the morning in Trafalgar Square and visited numerous iconic sites such as: 10 Downing Street, Nelson's Column, Covent Garden and Buckingham Palace.

After having a quick bite to eat in Trafalgar Square, we made our way to Parliament and took part in a two hour long tour of the House of Commons, House of Lords and the Great Hall. The tour was incredible and allowed pupils to experience and take in the years of history that surrounded them.

Following this, pupils took part in a Peoples Parliament work-



shop in the Parliament Education Centre. They had the opportunity to take on the roles of the Prime Minister, the Speaker and the Leader of the Opposition.

It was a wonderful day and we look forward to arranging another trip next year.

## HEADTEACHERS CORNER

**Within a School community it is always interesting to reflect on a calendar year as it includes the hopes and dreams of the new year ahead, the emotions brought about by exam results, taking on new challenges beyond Pontypridd High and the excitement of starting Year 7 - looking back we have witnessed all of these things! However we should all be very proud of what we have achieved together in 2016.**

Without doubt it has proved to be one of our most successful years and certainly the best ever if we reflect on examination results and attendance records. When compared with similar schools, we finish the year in the top 25% in Wales and I would like to thank all staff for being there to encourage and support whenever needed.

As staff we recognise the very broad range of talents that our pupils show and this has been evident in our newsletters and in different awards ceremonies through the year. It is hugely impressive to see the commitment that is shown and increasingly we are seeing our pupils work with determination to achieve the very best that they can. Perseverance is a key to success and for me in 2016 this was illustrated by Bruno Sussat who returned to school as our guest speaker in the Awards Ceremony. Bruno has just completed his studies at Cambridge University and spoke

with real heart and passion about the need to be resilient and be determined when things get tough as they surely will. A more recent example is reported on in this newsletter. Jordan Williams who left us earlier this year is a skilled young man and within the construction world he has already made a very positive impression. He has applied himself to this vocation and also used his time and energy to help others. Without doubt they are a credit to themselves and also to our school.

So what will 2017 bring us? We already know that expectations will rise and as new GCSE and A Level courses are examined and others begin. I can assure everyone that no stone will be left unturned in terms of providing the very best provision. The reports in this newsletter show how different experiences allow people to thrive and in 2017 we will continue to do this. We have many more great news stories in the making and I very much look forward to sharing them with you.

Many thanks as always for your support and on behalf of all the staff I wish you a very good Christmas and a happy and healthy new year.

Huw Cripps, Headteacher

# P.E. DEPARTMENT

# SUPER SLAM DUNK

By Mr Thomas (Head of P.E.)

**This month Year 11 played in the RCT stage of the Welsh cup hosted by Pen y Dre High school.**

In a round robin of 3 schools, the mighty PHS boys ruled the court and beat Pen y Dre 26-8. In the final they beat Cymmer 28-16.

The boys now progress to the South Wales finals in March which will be held in Swansea. Big congratulations to the following boys: Dafydd Griffiths, Dylan Richards, Lucus Welch, Morgan Davies, Morgan Llewellyn, Taylor Davies, Kieran James and Declan Davies.

A big thank you to Mali Griffiths who coached the team to this success.



# CPR TRAINING DAY

**This term Sixth Form and staff took part in CPR training (Restart a Heart), in an attempt to break the Guinness World Record and raise money to buy a defibrillator for the school.**

Throughout the day, many different groups took part. We started by watching a video that showed us how to correctly give chest compressions and mouth to mouth. We then had to join in with the video, by performing CPR on our 'Anne' mannequins. We had plenty of help and support from the various services, such as the Police and St John's Ambulance. Despite us learning a vital life skill, everyone had a great time. The positive attitude of staff and pupils really made the experience enjoyable and worthwhile.

One pupil, Dylan Wert said "I feel much more confident. If the situation were to arise, then I wouldn't worry about getting involved to save a life." This proves the valuable experience we all had, as everybody now has knowledge of CPR. Some pupils had never taken part in any CPR training before, therefore it was definitely useful to us all.

We would like to thank 'Restart a Heart' for this experience, as we have gained the knowledge of an invaluable life skill, that we will all remember. Also, thank you to all those who took part.



# BUSY SPORTING TERM

By Miss Grant (P.E. Teacher)

**It's been a really busy past few months in the P.E. department at PHS. So many of our sports teams and students competing at all levels from regional to international.**

**CROSS COUNTRY** - Since the beginning of September, the PE department have entered into two Glamorgan Valleys cross country events. Pupil Elis Pryse of year 12 has been selected to represent South Wales schools, and again Elis Pryse year 12, Gracie Wheeler year 10, and Reagan Fear year 9 have been recently selected for the county team for inter-counties in February.

**CYCLING** - Welsh Cycling delivered a talent ID day with our year 9,10 and 11 pupils on Friday 18th December 2016. A number of pupils were identified as future talent from Pontypridd High School. Welsh Cycling also invited a number of members from our school to travel down to Newport Velodrome to experience the test procedures and tour of the velodrome at a later date, possibly after Christmas.

**FOOTBALL** - The FAW (Football Association Wales) delivered a workshop at Ysgol Gyfun Rhydywaun to 10 pupils from Pontypridd High School, five boys and five girls. The aim of this workshop was to provide our young coaches with some knowledge and experience when delivering sessions suitable for themselves which run during school time. Girls Football—Thursday Dinnertime Boys Football—Friday Dinnertime

**ADVENTURE WALKS** - Pupils took part in adventure walks which took place in Fan Frynych, Pen-Y-Fan and Swyd-Y-Eira. PGCE Students Craig, Dan and Samantha assisted on these walks with different groups of year 7. Some fantastic pictures were taken and pupils had the opportunity to team build during these adventure walks.

**SIXTH FORM PE** - The University of South Wales have invited our year 12 and 13 pupils to attend two days during the last week of term. The first will focus on using the University sport science equipment to give our pupils hand on experience. The second is a revision day giving help and guidance on topic areas related to their summer exams.

**ALUMNI** - Special recognition to some of our past pupils who have recently represented Wales:

Owen Jenkins (Senior 7's Rugby)  
Cory Hill (Senior 15's Rugby)  
Dane Blacker (Under 18's Rugby, Cardiff Blues)  
Garyn Smith (Cardiff Blues)  
Lowri Jenkins ( Under 21's Netball)  
Bethan Moore (Under 21's Netball)



# ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

## SHAKESPEARE SCHOOLS FESTIVAL

**The Shakespeare Schools Festival is a UK wide program. In 2016 over 1000 schools were involved in performances in different theatres and this has become established as the world's largest youth drama festival.**

This is made much more relevant to us this year as it is 400 years since Shakespeare died, yet his work and influence over much of what we do in school remains as strong as ever. The breadth and variety of the events being held across the world this year reflect this appreciation of his work.

This year Pontypridd High pupils participated in the Festival and after months of preparation, twenty pupils from Year 7 performed King Lear in The Muni in Pontypridd. In addition to our pupils, there was also full

participation from all schools in the cluster.

The show was a sell out and despite some very nervous year 7 actors, you would never have known that for most of them it was the very first time they had ever performed on a professional stage. There were lots of laughs and a few tears but everyone thoroughly enjoyed the performance and we are all very proud of what Year 7 achieved.

Thanks to Mrs Williams who led the project, Georgia Salmon as assistant Director and Danielle Stuckey and Thushana Suthakaran who encouraged and supported all the pupils throughout.

Well Done to you all and remember that when you push yourself you can achieve anything you want to!

## TIME TO BE CREATIVE

By Mrs Marvelley (Development of Pupil and Parent Voice)

**Companies like Google and Facebook encourage their employees to spend about 20 percent of their time experimenting with their own ideas, claiming that "this empowers them to be more creative and innovative." Many significant products have developed this way, including Gmail, LinkedIn and Google News.**

The English Department decided to pilot a similar model with their students. Throughout the Autumn Term 9T have piloted '15% Time' – control of 15% of their weekly English curriculum time has been handed over to the students to work on an English-related passion project of their own creation. They began by pitching their project ideas and agreed that along the way they would share their journey, findings and outcomes through regular online or in person reflection.

Across the course of the term 15% Time sessions became a hub of activity and creativity as students spiralled in different directions with their various projects. One team of students created their own imaginary literary world while another student used the time to work on his own novel. One group of students analysed song lyrics while another prepared a presentation on bullying. One student wrote her own song while another created a globe of international authors. There were also murder mysteries, comic books and presentations on rarely used words. The final showcasing was as varied and engaging as the projects themselves.

The students and class teacher are overwhelmingly positive about the pilot. If you would like to read the students' reflections on the project please visit their blog [9tenglish.wordpress.com](http://9tenglish.wordpress.com) ■

# AROUND THE SCHOOL

# CHRISTMAS SPIRIT



By Miss Churchill (Head of Transition and Year 7 & 8)

**It has been great to see Year 5 and 6 pupils from our cluster of primary schools visit us at the end of this Autumn term to enjoy a Christmas concert.**

This is always a wonderful opportunity for our pupils to showcase their musical talents with the support of Mr Capel and Mrs Evans-Jones in our Music department. Performances were of the highest standard and the Christmas cheer spread to all pupils and staff who finished the concert with a hearty rendition of 'O Come All Ye Faithful'.

It is clear from the different transition work that goes on in our cluster that we have many very talented pupils and great performers. It is these occasions which help to inspire young people to take part in future performances when they join us over the coming years. Our thanks to all cluster schools for their support through 2016.

I am looking forward to continuing my visits to all the primary schools in the Spring term. This will be the chance for me to get to know the pupils even more and answer all the burning questions they will have for me. In the meantime, have a wonderful Christmas and I am sure 2017 will prove be a very happy and positive time for us to work together. ■

**For a number of years we have operated our bike recycling scheme called 'Rhys Cycle' from the old caretakers house. Hundreds of bikes in this time have been taken apart, reused, recycled and put back together to give someone the chance to make more use of them again.**

This is a great facility for us to have in School and in recent weeks we have very much welcomed the opportunity to further develop our partnership with the RCT Road Safety team. Leading up to this Christmas, Mr Matt Penny has been working with groups of Year 7 and 8 pupils who have volunteered to help return old and broken bikes back into modern 'mean machines', ready to start a new life this Christmas. This has meant learning new skills, test rides and passing quality assurance from the 'Bike Doctor', Mr Jamie Rowland.

The advice and support of Matt and Gayle Sullivan from the Road Safety Team is much appreciated and the photograph shows a total of over 30 bikes being presented to Children's Services in RCT and Women's Aid. The bikes will now be distributed to a number of very pleased young people who will be able to develop their riding skills over Christmas and into the new year. A great project and one which may well be repeated in the future. ■

# AROUND THE SCHOOL

## SAFEGUARDING AND ANTI-BULLYING

By Miss Bolderson (YEP Officer)

As part of National Safeguarding and Anti-bullying week, the youth engagement and participation service at Pontypridd High School organised a variety of engaging activities to enhance the young people's knowledge and understanding of the issue based topics. The activities took place during health club, (5-7pm) on Tuesday November 22nd.

24 young people voluntary participated in the activity that included watching a DVD about mental health, get to know each other game and activity focussing on celebrities and disabilities.

The feedback from young people was fantastic; one young person said "it was great to see young people speak about



mental health problems as usually it is related to older people" whilst another young person expressed via social media how fun it was to get to know the YEPS workers and other young people.

Young people had an opportunity to ask questions and provide suggestions on what other issued based activities they would like to participate in. ■

For more information regarding YEPS at Pontypridd High School get in contact and ring us on 01443 494911.

## THE DIANA AWARD

By Mr Jones (Head of Construction)

Jordan Williams has been presented with the Diana Award for making a difference to his community and inspiring many others. Jordan was a lead member of our Community Construction team.

His overall ability and skill level is of a very high standard and with Jordan's commitment and hard work, we successfully completed a children's memorial garden at St Catherine's Church in Pontypridd. This was a 12 month project with a high specification.

Jordan also led a team to complete three properties for the local authority which house some Syrian refugees. The properties were fully refurbished to a high standard and to stringent deadlines.

The Home Office were very impressed with the outcomes



and will be in touch with us regarding this success and achievements. A large amount of this work was carried out in Jordan's own time, including evenings and weekends. Jordan attended the award ceremony at City Hall in Cardiff on Thursday 8th of December, along with members of his family, school staff and pupils. ■

# PUPIL PARLIAMENT

## YOUR VOICE

By Mrs Marvelley (Development of Pupil and Parent Voice)

**This term the Pupil Parliament members have been busy introducing themselves to the rest of the students and establishing the Parliament as a forum that can represent the views of all students. Parliament Members visited all form classes as well as holding a surgery which pupils could drop in to and have a chat.**

This term, one of the Pupil Parliament Action Teams has been focussed on getting new recycling bins in to every classroom in the school.

After ordering and unpacking the bins the group made signs for each bin and distributed them to classrooms. The broken old cardboard bins have been replaced with sturdier plastic bins that have lids. They look more professional and will refocus people on recycling.

In the Spring Term the group will launch a recycling drive. They also have many other ideas for improving the school environment.

Parliament Members also attended the first RCT Youth Forum event where they were able to share ideas with Pupil Parliaments from other schools and the Welsh Youth Parliament. They also had the opportunity to work with RCT councillors to give their views on how the council spend money on services linked to young people.

The school has also accumulated a huge amount of lost property. This term, one of the Pupil Parliament Action Teams has been focussed on establishing a clear process for collecting lost property and a policy for dealing with the things that aren't collected.

The team have sorted through the existing lost property, creating a register of lost items. If you think your son/daughter may have items in lost property please contact us with a description of the item and we will endeavour to return it to you. You can DM us on Twitter @PHS\_PupilPar or email [jones-g@pontypriddhighschool.co.uk](mailto:jones-g@pontypriddhighschool.co.uk)

In future, Lost Property items will be stored for one term before being made available for re-sale or donation. ■



Pupil Parliament visiting form classes



Unpacking the new recycling bins



Deena and Ffion at the RCT Youth Forum

# MUSIC DEPARTMENT

# SCHOOL MUSICAL

By Mr Capel (Head of Music)

**Pontypridd High School's production of Hairspray is on track to be one of the biggest and best shows in recent history.**

It is taking place February 14th, 15th and 16th 2017 and after a fantastic round of auditions the show has been cast!



**hairspray**  
● THE BROADWAY MUSICAL ●

## The Cast

Tracy Turnblad – **Olivia Davies**  
Edna Turnblad – **Mr A Roach**  
Corny Collins – **Jordan Vbranch**  
Penny Pingleton – **Samantha Rutter**  
Amber von Tussle – **Lauren Harrison**  
Velma von Tussle – **Rachel Lane**  
Link Larkin – **Dafydd Prichard**  
Wilbur Turnblad – **Nathaniel Partington**  
Little Inez – **Leah Stott**  
Seaweed J Stubbs – **Corey Evans**  
Motormouth Maybelle – **Isabelle Lloyd**  
Ms. Dynamite – **Emilie Williams**  
Dynamites – **Bree Evans, Deena Wattley, Leona Gibbs, Anna Jones**  
Mr Pinky – **Cai Hughes**  
Detention Kids – **Abigail Williams, Billie-Mai Cox, Dannielle Stuckey, Thushana Suthakaran, Isabel Jones**  
Brad – **Malachy Jennings**  
Tammy – **Thea Davies**  
Fender – **Cian Jones**  
Brenda – **Delyth James**  
Sketch – **Cai Hughes**  
Shelley – **Kate Baynam**  
IQ – **Bradley Scott**  
Lead Chorus – **Abigail Williams**  
Chorus – **Lauren Robinson, Darci-Brooke Spear, Mia Morgan, Lucia Davies, Lucy Taylor, Aimee Davies, Ella Furmage, Ffion Hooper**

The cast are working incredibly hard every week to make this show a real treat to experience. You can reserve your tickets from at Pupil Services.

If you or anyone you know from the local community would like to support the show through sponsorship or materials/props please get in touch via the usual school contact methods or email Mr Capel at [capela@ponty-high.co.uk](mailto:capela@ponty-high.co.uk). We cannot wait to see you in the audience and welcome you to the 60s! ■

# TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT

## DELICIOUS!

By Mrs Cahill (Teacher of Food & Nutrition)

For the last few months the Hospitality pupils have been organising various events as part of their Hospitality GCSE. They were separated in to 4 different groups and as a team had to plan a fundraising activity of their own choice, putting together menus and ensuring that the event was a success.

The events ranged from a 3 course lunch, which was held in the department restaurant, to cake stalls which we set up in the school hall during break and lunch. The pupils considered presentation and likability and showed off their talent with some fantastic products and from the feedback that was given from both staff and pupils they were all definite successes!

The pupils worked hard to achieve their goal and as a department we are all very proud of them. ■



# SOCIAL MEDIA

**We've been on Twitter for over a year now and you can follow us @PontypriddHS.**

Twitter can be a great way to keep up-to-date with all the latest news from our school. Our tweets celebrate our activities and successes as well as highlighting students' work. We use twitter to update parents about trips or other school news.

Our school account has allowed us to link with parents, the local community and to engage in national and international events. This has directly impacted on the pupils in schools and has created some real 'buzz' moments. Our twitter conversation with the Welsh national Football team during the Euros which was then



featured in the Wales Online was one of many. Our school has received support and sponsorship from local businesses (and then been able to thank them) as well as countless other smaller connections with parents. We've also got our departments onboard too! ■

Who to Follow	Handle
English Department	@PHS_English
Geography Department	@PHS_geogdep
History Department	@PHShistorydept
ICT Department	@PHSICT
Law & Sociology	@pPHSLawSoc
Maths Department	@PHS_md
Performing Arts Dept.	@PHSpad
P.E. Department	@PontyHighPE
Pupil Parliament	@PHS_PupilPar
Science Department	@PHSScienceDept
Technology Department	@PHStd
Welsh Department	@PHS_Cymraeg

## UPCOMING EVENTS AND DATES

**As a school we understand the importance of being regulary informed of any upcoming events and important dates.**

As well as sending out letters, emails and text messages the school website is full of information and current news - [www.pontypriddhighschool.co.uk](http://www.pontypriddhighschool.co.uk)

How to contact us:

**Email:** [contact@pontypriddhighschool.co.uk](mailto:contact@pontypriddhighschool.co.uk)

**Tweet:** @pontypriddhs

**Phone:** 01443 486133



### January

Tuesday 3rd - Return to School

Friday 27th - INSET Day

### February

Tuesday 2nd - Sixth Form Open Evening for Year 11

Tuesday 14th - School Production (Hairspray)

Wednesday 15th - School Production (Hairspray)

Thursday 16th - School Production (Hairspray)

Friday 17th - End of Half Term

Monday 27th - Return to School

### March

Wednesday 1st - Year 9 Parents Evening

Tuesday 7th March - Year 8 Parents Evening