



The
PHS

NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER
2019



THE SEREN NETWORK

By Miss Stickler

The annual Seren Network conference was once again held in Newtown this year. The Seren Network was established to support Wales' brightest students throughout their A Levels. Four of our Seren students attended on the first day.

Prior to the conference, students were given a choice of lectures, seminars and workshops to select. This year they chose to attend a variety ranging from 'how to stand out in the crowd', 'applying to study in America' and specific subject workshops relating to what they would like to study at university.

Minister for Education, Kirsty Williams was once again the guest speaker and announced a number of exciting projects that our students will hopefully apply for over the next few month, including a residential at Yale University.

Jodie Matthews

"I attended the Seren conference in Newtown and found it very helpful. I attended sessions relevant to the careers I would like to pursue in the future, such as one which focused on how to apply to medical professions. I also attended sessions on how to stand out from the crowd which was very interesting. My favourite session was one about life and medical sciences which gave me an insight into what I want to study in the future. The conference also had many university stands which allowed me to talk to university representatives about different courses and university life."

Nia Davies

This session that was the most beneficial for me was 'applying for a medical career'. The university representatives thoroughly explained what I need to do in order to get the necessary requirements needed for each university. I liked that veterinary courses were included as

part of the medical careers as this often isn't available, so valuable information was given to students who wish to go into veterinary. I learned a lot about the requirements I need in order to go into a medical career, which really benefits me and wouldn't have been as easily accessible without the Seren Conference.

Overall I found this conference extremely beneficial. I now fully understand what is expected from me to achieve the career I wish and what a variety of universities expect from students who wish to complete a medical degree. I know this conference offered a chance to speak to universities and understand the requirements; a chance that wouldn't be available elsewhere." ■



HEADTEACHER MESSAGE

By Mr Cripps

September seems like a distant memory and it has been a long and busy Autumn Term. It also seems to have been a wet and often very windy time in school for all of us!

We returned to School on the back of another very successful set of examination results. These have enabled many to return from Year 11 into our Sixth Form and for those who were in Year 13 to begin new challenges at university, college and in employment. The Awards ceremony in September is always a great event and this year was no exception. It gave all of us the chance to celebrate achievements and students such as Mia Thorne and Seren Hopkins have already proved themselves to be outstanding achievers this term, both academically and in their service to the wider community.

In the weeks that have passed I am pleased that our students continue to respond positively to the expectations we have of them. The Christmas break will be an opportunity for many to reflect on a year where they have worked with resilience, good humour and a commitment to doing their best. As I write this message we have a number of students attending interviews for university places in 2020, four of them at Oxford and Cambridge. We wish them all well and I know they will do themselves and our School proud.

This term has been packed with different learning experiences provided through classroom activities, visitors into school, educational visits, sporting fixtures and artistic performances. Our YEPs provision through Amy Bolderson continues to provide excellent additional opportunities for many children beyond the normal school day. Year 11 students have prepared for, and sat some of their final GCSE examinations. They have worked extremely hard with their teachers and

their preparation has been thorough. There is very little break in the exam cycle and I can assure everyone that we have the very best advice and support available to everyone in the new year. I am sure we shall be celebrating the very best results next August.

Our Year 7 students have made a very encouraging start to their time at Pontypridd High following a very successful transition programme. This improvement in their academic progress and as important with their confidence and self-esteem reflects the work of our all our staff, in particular those who provide the pastoral care and additional learning support. We know it is crucially important to get this transition right and we appreciate the support of parents and all our primary colleagues in helping to make this work so well.

Our Head Girl Billie Mai-Cox and Head Boy Lewis Hooper along with their leadership team have influenced change in a positive way. Working with the Student Council and Mrs Davies they have improved school policies and worked restoratively with different students to help and support them in times of need. Parents and carers have contacted me to say how impressed they have been with the positivity of these students and the maturity they show in dealing with very sensitive issues.

I am sure that students, parents and carers would like to join with me in thanking all of the staff at Pontypridd High for their continued hard work and commitment to the students of the school. Likewise, we the staff, governors and students would like to thank all parents, carers and those who we work in partnership with for your support. At this time I would also like to thank Miss Pullen for her work at Pontypridd High and wish her well in her new post. On behalf of everyone I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a very happy Christmas and together we send our best wishes for a healthy and successful 2020. ■

EPILEPSY ACTION AWARD

By Miss Pritchard

This term, Epilepsy Action were in school to honour Pontypridd High with the 'UK Secondary School of the Year Award'. We are absolutely delighted to be recognised for the second consecutive year as the winners of this award.

The Epilepsy Action Awards celebrate the UK's epilepsy heroes. They recognise and celebrate those who have made a real difference to those with epilepsy in the UK. A total of 11 awards have been presented across the country in recent months. They honour the work and commitment of volunteers, fundraisers, schools, employers and healthcare professionals.

This award is in acknowledgement of the support provided to Kira-Lea Crockett in Year 8. We would like to sincerely thank Kira's family for the nomination and recognition of all the care and support that we put in place for Kira, and the other 4 pupils in school that have epilepsy.

As a school, it is incredibly important that we are able to provide for all pupils, including those with medical conditions. It is with this ethos, that we strive to provide tailored lessons and work packages for pupils who have missed school due hospital visits. Kira was very grateful for the work sent home from her teachers last year, when she missed some school as a result of her epilepsy. Another part of school life that has been adapted for Kira is walking from lesson to lesson. Kira is allowed to leave all lessons early to avoid crowds and she is accompanied by a friend who has been educated in what to do if she has a seizure. In a recent interview with Wales Online, Kira explains "leaving lessons early makes me feel safer in school and more confident". As a school, we have also arranged for different classroom furniture to be implemented into Kira's Science lessons for her safety.

Even though Kira has only been with us for just over a year, we are already so impressed with her maturity. The fact that she has never used her health as an excuse to get out of work, just demonstrates her excellent attitude towards learning. Kira is a humble and determined young person who is certainly a role model for other pupils in the school. She has many opportunities ahead of her and also some challenges, but we know as a school that she will not let anything hold her back. ■





UPCYCLE PROJECT

By Mrs Finney

Four Year 8 pupils Gethin Holvey, Cody Jenkins, Mason Rowley and Lloyd Owen have been involved in an exciting learning opportunity this term - UpCycle.

The UpCycle project works in conjunction with the Ynysybwl Regeneration Partnership and it has offered our pupils the opportunity to work towards a Level 1, 2 and 3 qualification in Bicycle Maintenance. The pupils

have been learning bike maintenance skills weekly in school and have already learnt how to adjust and maintain brakes, change the tyres, repair punctures and fully maintain the 'M' frame. As part of the course the pupils have been learning how to build and service bikes that can then be sold to members of the public.

This month the pupils spent the day in Cardiff at Cycle Training Wales and successfully completed their Level 1 Agored Bicycle Maintenance. Well done all! ■

PETS AS THERAPY

By Miss Finney

This week we sadly said goodbye to our 'Pets as Therapy' dog Ianto and his owner Melanie. Ianto and Melanie have been visiting our school weekly this term to help a focus group of pupils improve their reading ability with the Read2Dogs programme.

Ianto and Melanie are part of the charity Pets As Therapy who encourage pupils to improve their self-esteem and emotional wellbeing along with raising academic abilities.

Most adults are apprehensive about speaking in public. It is very daunting. Young people are no different. Research shows that young people can become nervous and stressed when reading to others in a group. However, when a Pets As Therapy (PAT) dog enters the group, the pupils often become less stressed, less self-conscious and more confident as the dogs are non-judgemental. Before long the pupils are starting to look forward to the reading experience as they are going to read to their new friend, the PAT Dog. PAT Dogs provide comfort, encourage positive social behaviours, enhance self-esteem, motivate speech and inspire





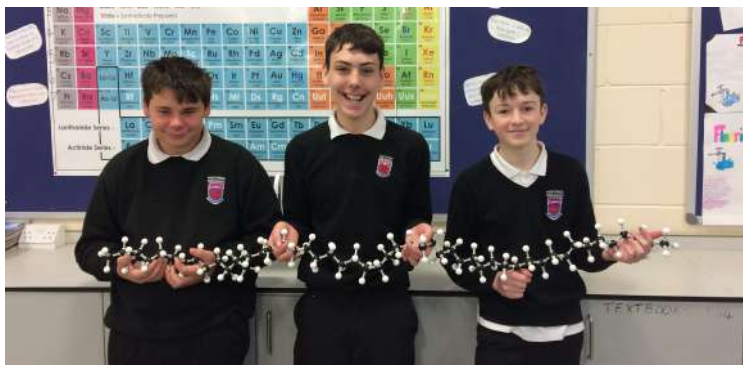
young people to have fun.

Nine pupils were part of the focus group who spend weekly sessions reading to Ianto and Melanie and the outcome from their time together has been successful in many different ways. The pupils have all become more confident to read aloud amongst their peers and every pupil has also progressed in their reading performance. Well done all.

Once again we would all like to thank Melanie and Ianto for their valuable time in helping to make a real difference to the pupils. ■



STEM CHALLENGES

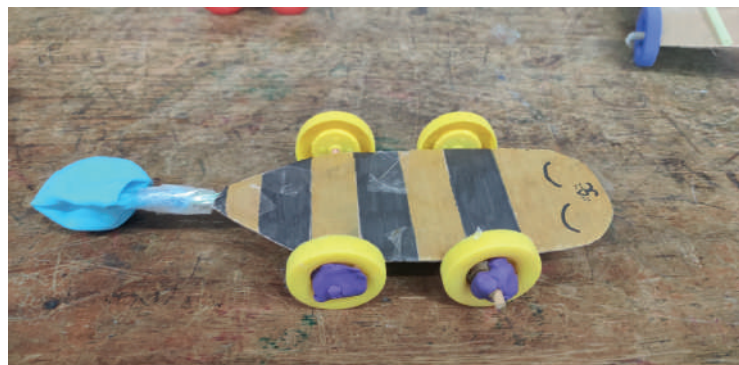


By Miss Davies

This term the Science Faculty carried out a series of STEM based lessons for Years 7 & 8. The lessons were delivered to all students and involved 'Challenges' that covered many aspects of Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths.

Students were challenged to work in teams and individually to solve several real-life problems that were linked to relevant topics such as climate change, alternative energy, material science and space exploration. The tasks involved the creation of balloon powered cars, rockets, aeroplanes, parachutes and even marshmallow and spaghetti towers.

The week ended in a themed school STEM day on the Friday. In Science, the students took samples of bacteria from their hands in the 'How clean are your Hands' event



run by Mr Clear at break time. Then at lunchtime, a series of 'WOW' Chemistry experiments were carried out by the Science team in the laboratory.

In ICT, Mr Eldridge ran a Minecraft activity which allowed participants to build their own world and look at renewable energy sources to power it and survive.

It was a hugely positive day with lots of student participation and fun. It enabled both the Science and Technology Faculties to show the scope for research and careers in these subject areas along with Maths and Engineering is vast, engaging and exciting.

STEM Science club is held every Thursday lunchtime in 308 with Miss Davies. Come along if you'd like to learn more, enter competitions and experiment with your ideas – all welcome! ■



CYBER CONFERENCE

By Mr Eldridge

Students from Pontypridd High and YG Garth Olwg were privileged to attend a pilot cyber-conference in November (at PHS) giving them insight into ethical hacking and prevention of Cybercrime. The conference aimed to educate those who have a particular interest/talent in maths, IT and cyber skills sets.

The conference was split into three sessions delivered by PC Underhill from Schoolbeat and Tarian Regional Organised Crime unit and DVLA. Sessions covered 'not crossing the line into cybercrime', 'staying safe online'

and 'ethical hacking'. This really gave the students a huge insight into how vulnerable children/people are online, risks and consequences of cybercrime but most importantly how to use their computer skills for future education and employment where the opportunities are vast in the South Wales area.

They were given a demonstration of how easy it was for one of the experts from the DVLA 'Ethical Hackers' to access and disable someone's computer doing a live (fake set up) hack. The students were fascinated and totally engaged. All of the providers were delighted with the outcome of this pilot session and now intend to run similar events across different regions. ■



ANTI-BULLYING WEEK

By Mrs Enos

Monday, November 11th saw the start of National 'Anti-Bullying' week. This is an important time for everyone to think about how they work together, respect each other and provide the right support when it is needed.

As a School we are always looking to encourage conversations, adopting a collective responsibility to recognise instances when young people are not being treated fairly.

This week was about empowering the school community and sending positive messages. Assemblies each morning and discussion groups in registration classes raised awareness of the issues society faces and in particular the challenges of resolving issues through

the wide range of social media used by young people today. The responses of our students were fantastic and these were reported back to the Student Council who discussed these with staff and governors.

Mrs Enos, Miss Jones, Mr Astley, Miss Amos and Mrs Stockman worked with the students and groups of parents and carers to review school policy documents and to include ideas that can help address any issues should they occur. This work was then presented to School Governors. This has proved to be a very informative process and the week a very successful one. Schools are facing many different challenges and this work is clear assurance that the whole school community is proactive in making the school environment a safe and positive a place in which everybody can make the progress they deserve. ■



MINDFULNESS & YOGA

By Mrs Finney

This term the pupils in The Den have been working on techniques to improve mindfulness in the classroom and have been learning to train their attention to the present moment without dwelling on what has happened in the past or worrying about the future.

Mindfulness techniques promote emotional stability and increase happiness and ability to effectively manage problem situations. One of the most popular approaches to mindfulness that has been tested has

been Yoga. Research over the last few years has shown that Yoga reduces stress and anxieties amongst pupils and enhances coping skills. Yoga can also enhance the pupil's strength, coordination and flexibility, while encouraging body awareness and self-esteem.

The pupils in The Den are aiming to help promote and improve their physical and emotional wellbeing in terms of achieving peace of mind and increased energy levels along with a sense of calmness. Continued practice will hopefully also help to improve their memory and attention span, concentration and academic performance. ■



WHAT'S GOING ON

UPCOMING EVENTS AND DATES

As a school we understand the importance of being regularly 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

How to contact us:

Email: contact@pontypriddhighschool.co.uk

Tweet: @pontypriddhs

Phone: 01443 486133



SCHOOL EVENTS

January

Monday 6th - Return to school

Thursday 23rd - Year 11 Parents Evening

Friday 24th - INSET Day

Thursday 30th - SLT Surgery

February

Tuesday 11th - Year 12 & 13 Parents Evening (USW)

Wednesday 12th - School Show

Thursday 13th - School Show

Friday 14th - End of Half term

Monday 24th - Return to school

March

Thursday 12th - Year 7 Parents Evening

ROOM HIRE

Pontypridd High School regards the school buildings and grounds as a community asset and will make every reasonable effort to enable them to be used as much as possible.

Charges – Lettings September 2019 to August 2020

Hire of School Hall	£25.00/hour
Hire of School Gym	£25.00/hour
Hire of Sports Hall	£25.00/hour
Hire of Drama Studio	£20.00/hour
Hire of Training Room	£20.00/hour
Hire of Classroom	£15.00/hour

Tea/Coffee charges at an extra cost of £2.00/head. Caretaking costs (hourly) will be charged for any lettings outside of school hours. This cost is in addition to any room hire charge.

