

Western Learning Federation

Together we learn, grow and achieve



Riverbank SCHOOL



Tŷ Gwyn SCHOOL



Woodlands SCHOOL



# The Western Learning Federation MAGAZINE

Spring Edition



Edition 4.



**HIGHLIGHTS FROM  
ACROSS OUR SCHOOLS**

Read more on  
pages 4, 6 & 8



**MEET OUR NEW  
GOVERNORS**

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**FEATURE**

**Delighted to  
share our school  
Development  
Plan Summary**

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page 2



# Welcome

Dear Parents and carers,

Welcome to the latest edition of the Western Learning Federation magazine.

I'm delighted to introduce the latest edition of the magazine.

## School Development Plans

During this term, each school has worked hard at embedding our School Development Plans and the impact is being demonstrated through our self-evaluation exercises. I'm really pleased to see the progress that we're making as we continue to provide a fantastic and bespoke curriculum to pupils across the Federation.

To access these School Development Plans, please visit the Federation website, with the link provided <https://www.westernlearningfederation.co.uk/school-development-plans/>

## Recruitment

It's again been a busy term where we've appointed Teachers, Senior Teaching Assistants and Teaching Assistants across the Federation. The quality and the number of applications we received were outstanding and I'd like to thank our dedicated governors and leaders who have supported our recruitment over the last few weeks. A huge congratulations to those staff who have been appointed.

## Ty Gwyn Extension Building Project

As you know, Ty Gwyn School will be having an extension added to the rear of the school to provide 3 additional classroom spaces and work is progressing well since we returned from the Christmas break.

As the completion of this project comes closer, we'll be holding a question and answer session for families online and in person to ask any questions you may have. Once handover has been completed to the Federation from the Council, I'd be delighted to welcome you to visit the new provision as part of planned tours, with further information to be provided in due course, with further information to be provided.



Please see term dates for 2023-2024 below:

### Spring Term 2024

Starts: Monday 19th February 2024  
Ends: Friday 22 March 2024  
Half Term: 25th March 2024- 5th April 2024

### Summer Term 2024

Starts: Monday 8 April 2024  
Half term: Monday 27 May 2024 to Friday 31 May 2024  
Ends: Monday 22 July 2024

Please see below the remaining Inset Days for the 2023-2024 academic year

Riverbank	Ty Gwyn	Woodlands
8th April 2024	24th May 2024	28th June 2024
22nd July 2024	22nd July 2024	22nd July 2024

I'd like to wish you a happy and enjoyable half term break and we'll see you in the new term.

Yours sincerely,

*Mr Wayne Murphy*  
**Executive Headteacher,**  
Western Learning Federation



# Estyn Best Practice Case Studies

I'm incredibly proud to share with you that Estyn have now uploaded our 6 Estyn Best Practice Case Studies across the Western Learning Federation, on the back of our Estyn inspection.

Cardiff Council have also shared our wonderful news as part of a wider press release- please see below the link to view the article:

<https://www.cardiffnewsroom.co.uk/releases/c25/32482.html>

It's a good news story for us across the Western Learning Federation and the three schools Riverbank, Ty Gwyn and Woodlands.

## Western Learning Federation Riverbank Estyn Best Practice Case Studies

Supporting families through the cost of living crisis - <https://www.estyn.gov.wales/effective-practice/supporting-families-through-cost-living-crisis>

The schools use of outdoor learning to meet the complex and sensory needs of pupils - <https://www.estyn.gov.wales/effective-practice/schools-use-outdoor-learning-meet-complex-and-sensory-needs-pupils>

## Western Learning Federation Ty Gwyn Estyn Best Practice Case Studies

Support for families - <https://www.estyn.gov.wales/effective-practice/support-families>

Drama and Health Intervention Project- <https://www.estyn.gov.wales/effective-practice/drama-and-health-intervention-project>

## Western Learning Federation Woodlands Estyn Best Practice Case Studies

Supporting pupils' attitudes to learning and the sharing of curriculum and learning experiences through dissemination events - <https://www.estyn.gov.wales/effective-practice/supporting-pupils-attitudes-learning-and-sharing-curriculum-and-learning>

Developing a culture that supports staff well-being - <https://www.estyn.gov.wales/effective-practice/developing-culture-supports-staff-well-being>

## Access to our Estyn Reports

For our new Governors who have joined the Federation in September 2023, I've also provided links to the Estyn Reports for information, please visit the Federation website with links provided:

Riverbank School- <https://www.westernlearningfederation.co.uk/estyn-inspection-reports/>

Ty Gwyn School- <https://www.westernlearningfederation.co.uk/estyn-inspection-reports/>

Woodlands School- <https://www.westernlearningfederation.co.uk/estyn-inspection-reports/>



# Highlights of *Riverbank*



**Amie Lucas** -  
Riverbank,  
Head of School

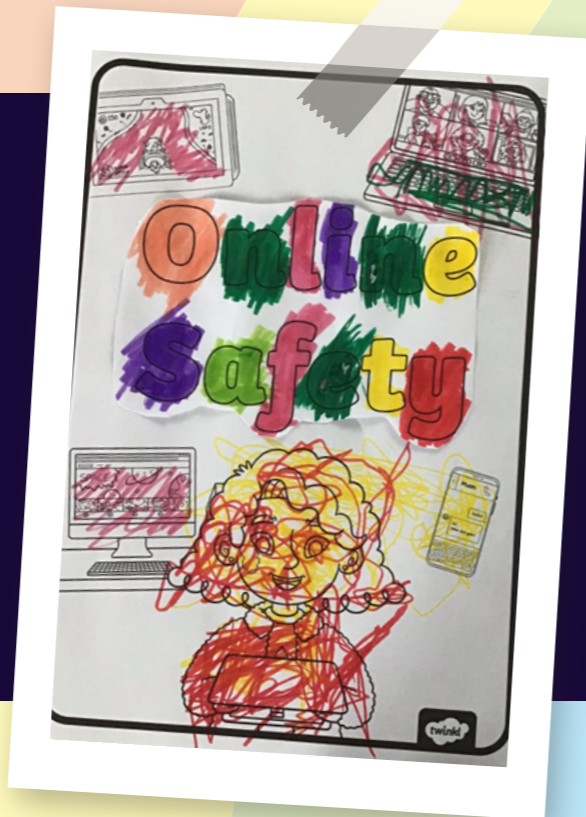
We have had a jam-packed Autumn term with lots of fun and exciting activities for our pupils. It was a pleasure welcoming the pupils back after the summer holidays and seeing their wonderful smiles again settling into their new classrooms with our fabulous staff teams. Our first topic was 'Here I am' and our pupils had lots of fun learning all about themselves, their families, emotions and their likes and dislikes.

Our next topic was 'celebrations' and linked wonderfully with fireworks, remembrance, Diwali and Christmas. Some particular highlights for these terms have been extending our provision activities which has included a visit from our

Community PC, Welsh National Opera sessions, swimming, visiting various places in the community on our minibus, Rise sessions, visiting the sensory room in Cardiff City stadium and our Christmas fayre. It is so important that our pupils are offered a holistic curriculum which enables them to access a range of exciting and fun activities which engages them in learning. We can't wait to see what the rest of the year has in store!

## Safer Internet Day

We are delighted to share one of our creative posters that was made by one of our pupils from Dosbarth Aur. The poster will be on display around the school, showing what device's we use at home to access the internet.



## Rainbow Reading

Over the last academic year we have been developing our rainbow reading strategy across the school. I am really pleased to share how well our pupils have developed their reading skills and we continue to enjoy our story time.



## Six Nations

In prep for the Six Nations, staff and pupils from across the school have shared good luck messages for Wales! During the tournament we look forward to cheering on the team over the next few weeks.



## Christmas Concert

We are really proud to share, as part of our Christmas concert every pupil had an opportunity to shine on stage. A huge congratulations and well done to all our super star pupils.

## Swimming Lessons

Last term all pupils had the opportunity to attend swimming lessons at Western Leisure Centre. Pupils thoroughly enjoyed and had lots of fun. Huge thank you to staff and parents who supported these sessions.



Learning together to be the best we can



# Highlights of *Ty Gwyn*



**Jamie Brotherton** -  
Ty Gwyn,  
Head of School

This term we warmly welcomed a number of new pupils to the school as well as new and returning staff. Throughout the term it has been a real pleasure to see the atmosphere and engagement in the many activities and events which have taken place across the school. Some of these you can see in more detail in this edition.

The 14-19 department have adapted and increased their work experience options to include a weekly fruit market and regular car wash sessions where parents & carers are welcome to bring your cars along. Pupils across the school held elections to a number of school

council positions, in one of their first meetings they voted on the theme for the naming of the classes in our extension. The extension of the schools building for give greater provision for pupils with a physical disability is progressing well and we will share more news in the new year. The pupils chose the theme of beaches for the new classrooms and so once completed our new classes will be named Ogmor, Rhosilli & Porthcawl. I hope you enjoy reading about some of the many activities which have been occurring during the Autumn term.

## Ty Gwyn Christmas Concert

This year our Christmas Concert theme was 'Christmas Around the World'. Classes did an excellent job of taking us all on Christmas adventures far and wide, from a Christmas in Bethlehem to South Africa in search for hippopotamus and finishing off with a British Christmas with the Kings Speech. Our Makaton Sign along choir closed the shows by signing along beautifully to 'What a wonderful world'. We were fortunate enough to have our Christmas concert filmed this year, which we look forward to being able to share with you shortly. A special thanks to all our fantastic pupils and staff for putting on an excellent show and to parents for all their support.



## Pedal Power

This term we have had the amazing opportunity to work collaboratively with Pedal Power. They have been visiting the school and running sessions for our pupils every Thursday morning so that our pupils can experience all the joys and benefits of riding bikes and trikes. This proved to be a very popular activity with our pupils and Pedal power were kind enough to bring a range of bikes and trikes with them to suit all ages and abilities. We are now awaiting delivery our very own fleet of bikes and trikes so that we will be able to run our own cycling sessions in the new year.



## Celebrations at Ty Gwyn

This term at Ty Gwyn we have been celebrating a number of different festivals and special events within our classes and our school assemblies. These have included; Diwali, Harvest and Remembrance Day. We have enjoyed various activities such as making salt dough poppies, exploring different fruits and vegetables and creating Rangoli patterns with coloured rice.



## Frame Running

This term in Ty Gwyn the physiotherapy team supported by Cardiff Frame Running Dragons Club have set up a frame running club in school. We have 10 of our primary children taking part regularly as part of a group on a weekly basis. Frame running is an adapted sport that allows our children to experience running with the support of a 3-wheel frame. Frame Running is competed at an international level at events such as the World Para Athletic Championships.

To find out more or attend for a session at Cardiff Athletic Stadium please visit Cardiff Frame Running Dragons Club website. <https://www.frdc.org.uk/>



# Highlights of Woodlands



**Siân Thomas -**  
Woodlands,  
Head of School

I'm delighted to share with you an introduction to our Acting Deputy Head of School, Matt Thomas. He says:

Following working for over seven fantastic years at Ty Gwyn the opportunity to work at Woodlands High-School was a wonderful opportunity.

Having worked collaboratively with their SLT on numerous federation priorities including the PBS strategic group. I was aware of the great work that was happening at the school, and had witnessed the excellent working relationships forged between staff and pupils.

I was extremely excited to be part of this.

The first term has been a very exciting one with so many positives. The newly formed middle leadership team are driving standards and building on the excellent foundations. The staff at Woodlands pride themselves on putting the pupils at the centre of all that they do, and this affords pupils some wonderful opportunities.

The exciting new offsite provision has seen pupils access qualifications and engage in some great partnership work, including Calzaghe-Dragons Boxing, the Dallaglio Project and Storey Arms.

I have been extremely impressed with the creative and fun ways in which all staff engage with the schools and federations professional training offer.

I really feel welcome at the school by the existing Senior leadership team, middle leaders, all staff and the wonderful pupils that attend the school.

There are some exciting times ahead as we continue to work hard to grow and develop the school as a learning organisation for all.

## Project Search

We have five students that are currently working with Project Search. They started in September and are coming to the end of their first term. They have done incredibly well and have been so successful in their respective placements. They have had experience in maintenance, portering, radiology portering, delivering and catering.

The feedback we have received from each of their line managers has been overwhelmingly positive. We are so proud of all their achievements to date and look forward to celebrating their next steps as Project Search continues.



## CAVC

In preparation for college next year, learners from Magnolia and Redwood have been attending transitional visits to Cardiff & Vale College where they have been completing lots of exciting activities. Numeracy and literacy sessions have focussed on number recognition, sequencing and phonics using the variety of sensory resources in our classroom. We have been learning to garden using the college's outdoor area and have developed life skills. The learners have shown progress in their independence and are becoming more confident with each visit. Learners will soon be participating in independent travel training to further develop their independence. Keep up the good work!



## Pedal Power

We were delighted to be asked if we would like to receive weekly Peddle Power sessions from the Principality's Community Fund Wales. Oak class have been attending weekly sessions at Peddle Power in Pontcanna. We have been lucky enough to use a range of accessible bikes and cycle around the gorgeous fields in Pontcanna and Llandaff. Pupils in Oak have been an absolute credit to Woodlands School and have thoroughly enjoyed the cycling sessions. Accessible Cycling offers people with disabilities a form of physical exercise, which is also an opportunity to experience mobility, independence, and freedom. As such it has huge mental and physical benefits and wellbeing, as is evident in the experiences of Oak class. It has been great to see Oak classes confidence grow so much in such a short space of time.



## Assemblies and Celebrations

To launch our Harvest festival, we were joined by the Minister of Albany Road Baptist Church and his parishioners. It was a joyous occasion with singing, dancing and storytelling. As everyone left the hall we were asked to look into a box because God had put something very special in there. There were some strange looks when children saw a reflection of themselves in a mirror.

To celebrate Diwali we invited Raj from Lighting Up Events to come in and teach us about the celebration. Everyone loved the drumming, and we learnt some new dance moves.

The highlight of each week has been our celebration assemblies. They really are inspirational. Pupils are told why they have been chosen and their hard work is recognised in front of the whole school community.

## Rugby World Cup 2023

Mr Thomas arranged a lucky dip draw and each class came forward to draw out a country who had made it to the Rugby World Cup. Once every class had picked a country they went back and planned a series of lessons to help teach the children about that country. Everyone loved learning about the different countries and about the game of rugby. Over the weeks we saw children performing the Haka, creating flags and artwork, cooking cuisine from that country, singing the national anthems, learning about the players and actually making a life-sized rugby player. We think we have some new lifelong rugby fans.



**Woodlands**

SCHOOL

Learning for Living



# Introducing *our* Governors



*Laura  
Duncombe*

**Type of Governor: Non-Teaching Staff**  
**Organisation: Western Learning Federation**

I'm Laura and I work at Woodlands School with the administration team as an Admin Support Officer. I have worked in the federation for the past 5 years as I started my admin career working at Riverbank and was fortunate to be able to now work at Woodlands. I love my job, supporting parents/carers and the school every way possible. I find it really rewarding to see all our pupils coming into school everyday and them enjoying being at Woodlands. And delighted to be a part of the governing body to ensure our schools are thriving and pupils are achieving.

I hope you had an enjoyable half term break.



*Scott  
Rastaitis*

**Type of Governor: Non-Teaching Staff**  
**Organisation: Western Learning Federation**

Hi I am Scott I have worked in Ty Gwyn since 2017. I work in the pool and gym. Everyday is a chance to put smiles on fantastic children's faces which I love doing! I have worked across the whole school and love what every day brings. I also enjoy the odd practical joke! In my spare time I love spending time with my family and perfecting my golf swing.



# Fairwater Campus Building

# *Project*



## Riverbank and Woodlands Schools, with Cantonian High School

A special ground-breaking ceremony has marked the start of construction of a new pioneering joint education campus, to be located in the Fairwater area of the city. The £110m project is the largest in scale and investment, of Cardiff's education developments delivered under Cardiff Council and Welsh Governments Band B Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme. The development will include the construction of three new build schools for Cantonian High School, Riverbank School and Woodlands High School, all situated on a single site.

The ground was cut at the site by Wales's First Minister Mark Drakeford, Cardiff Council's Leader, Cllr Huw Thomas and Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Education, Cllr Sarah Merry.

They were joined by Head of School at Cantonian High School, Geraint Jones and Chair of Governors Barbara Connell together with Executive Headteacher, Wayne Murphy and Chair of Governors Bianca Rees from the Western Learning Federation, of which Riverbank School and Woodlands High School are both a part of.

Also in attendance were representatives from HLM Architects and ISG the contractors chosen to undertake the detailed design and build for the scheme.

The development will be Net Zero Carbon in line with Welsh Government standards and will set the standard for future Cardiff school projects. Each of the three schools will be highly energy efficient buildings that are powered from renewable energy sources, enabling Cardiff to deliver on its One Planet Strategy, which outlines the city's ambition to mitigate climate change.

The new campus will include:

- Replacing the Cantonian High School buildings with new build accommodation on the same site expanding the school from six forms of entry (6FE) to eight forms of entry (8FE) with sixth form provision for up to 250 pupils.
- Expanding the Specialist Resource Base (SRB) for learners with an Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC), hosted at Cantonian High School to 30 places in purpose built accommodation in the new school buildings.
- Relocating Woodlands High School to the Fairwater Campus site from its current site adjacent to Trelai Park and increasing the capacity to 240 places in new build accommodation.
- Relocating Riverbank School to the Fairwater Campus site from its current site adjacent to Trelai Park and increasing the capacity to 112 places in new build accommodation.

The campus will also offer comprehensive facilities which will be available for public use outside of school hours.

It is anticipated that works on the campus will be completed by Autumn 2026 with works on Cantonian High School completing by the end of 2025.





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