



The Western Learning Federation MAGAZINE

Winter Edition

Edition 6.



**HIGHLIGHTS FROM
ACROSS OUR SCHOOLS**

Read more on
pages 4, 6 & 8



**FAIRWATER COMMUNITY
CAMPUS UPDATE**

Read more on
page 10



GUEST EDITOR

**Warda at
Riverbank
School**



School Development *Plans*

Catch up on all the latest news with the school developments, use the link or scan the QR codes below.



Ty Gwyn
SCHOOL
Learning to achieve

SCAN HERE TO VIEW OUR SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND OUR PUPIL DEVELOPMENT GRANT SUMMARY!



www.tygwynschool.com

Ty Gwyn
SCHOOL
Learning to achieve



Woodlands
SCHOOL
Learning for Living

VIEW OUR SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Scan the QR Code to View



Woodlands 'LEARNING FOR LIVING' Western Learning Federation



Riverbank
SCHOOL
Learning together to be the best we can

RIVERBANK SPECIAL SCHOOL

School Development Plan

SCAN ME!



SCAN THE QR CODE TO READ



Welcome



Wayne Murphy -
Western Learning Federation,
Executive Headteacher



Dear Parents and carers,

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

I hope this message finds you well.

I'm thrilled to share the festive edition of the Western Learning Federation magazine with you. This truly is a special time of year, filled with wonderful moments and cherished memories.

I'm incredibly proud of everyone's hard work and dedication throughout this term. Witnessing our pupils' achievements each day has been inspiring. It's been a pleasure catching up with so many of you at our Christmas events—thank you for attending and for your continued support of everything we do across our schools. A special thank you goes to all our staff across the Federation for their tireless efforts in making these events such a success. Your commitment and teamwork have been outstanding.

I'd also like to extend a warm welcome to our new pupils, who have settled into their schools and classes so well. It's fantastic to hear such positive feedback from our leaders and staff, with many achievements already being celebrated—well done to everyone!

We have published a number of key documents on our websites, please see below the links

School Development Plans- [School Development Plans. Cynllun Gweithredu Ysgol | Western Learning Federation](#)

Pupil Development Grant Summary- [Pupil Development Grant \(PDG\). Y Grant Datblygu Disgyblion | Western Learning Federation](#)

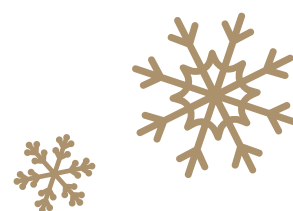
Annual Report to Parents- [Annual Report to Parents. Adroddiad Blynnyddol Rhieni | Western Learning Federation](#)

Woodlands School Session Times Consultation - We are carrying out a consultation on a change to the school day for the academic year 2026-2027. Please send any views to westernlearningfederation@cardiff.gov.uk by Friday 23rd January 2026 10am.

[executive-headteacher-letter-parents-and-carers-session-times-woodlands-school-consultation.pdf](#)

I would like to say a special thank you to our guest editor Warda one of our learners at Riverbank, who has helped edit this edition of the magazine.

Mr Wayne Murphy,
Executive Headteacher,
Western Learning Federation



My Favourite Things in This Term.

In October, our year 4-6 children has been selected for bowling and we got medals and I do enjoy reading. I enjoyed performing in the Christmas concert, all of riverbank cant wait to get in their new school.

Thank you.

Warda



Highlights of *Woodlands*



Matt Thomas
Woodlands,
Deputy Head of School

This term, Woodlands High School has continued to strengthen its culture of learning for living and developing essential skills for life. Pupils have enjoyed an ever-expanding range of opportunities designed to enrich their education and personal development.

More pupils than ever are engaging in sporting activities through our internal curriculum and competitive fixtures with schools across Wales. A particular highlight has been the formation of our first-ever girls' football team, which is going from strength to strength as they build their skills and confidence. Beyond football, pupils have embraced exciting experiences such as boxing sessions at Trelai Community Boxing Gym, table cricket, and swimming lessons for all. These activities not only promote physical health but also teamwork and resilience.

Through the Urdd provision, pupils have accessed extra-curricular opportunities that allow them to refine their Welsh language skills—both understanding and expressive—while enjoying meaningful cultural experiences.

Our blended learning approach continues to thrive, combining classroom learning with authentic, real-world activities and educational visits. This ensures pupils develop in line with the four key purposes of the curriculum.

We are proud to celebrate two classrooms who have achieved Pyramid Certification this term. Meanwhile, literacy and numeracy remain central to our curriculum, equipping pupils with the skills they need to make sustained progress.

We are thrilled to announce the return of our Christmas Concert, where we will welcome parents and the wider school community to share in the festive spirit. As the new year approaches, preparations for the transition to our new school building are well underway, with recent visits sparking excitement among staff and pupils alike.

From all of us at Woodlands High School, we wish the federation and our wider community a peaceful Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

Glamorgan Cricket

What an amazing experience at Glamorgan Cricket Club. Our learners were thrilled to take part in the Guard of Honour, memories made and smiles all round!



Pyramid Certification

Congratulations to two of our classes at Woodlands who have achieved Pyramid Certification. This prestigious milestone recognises the successful implementation of the Pyramid approach to Education a structured, evidence-based model designed to promote effective learning, communication and independence in all learners.



Football Teams

Our boys and girls football teams continue to go from strength to strength. We are so proud of their teamwork, sportsmanship and determination. Da iawn pawb!



Learner/ Parent Classes

Our Learning Legends hosted by Cardiff and Vale College have been packed with fun, creativity and special moments with families. We can't wait to see what our learners and parents get up to in the next few sessions.



Asda

This term some of our learners had a fantastic opportunity to learn about the different types of jobs in Asda from stacking shelves to scanning items on the till, such a fun hands-on experience.

Lights, Camera, Christmas!

Woodlands High School dazzled audiences with this year's festive production, Lights, Camera, Christmas. The concert was a joyful celebration of inclusion, with every learner playing a part in bringing the magic of Christmas to life.

Audiences were taken on a cinematic journey through all the classic Christmas films, filled with music, laughter, and heartwarming performances.

It was a wonderful way to showcase the creativity and talent of our pupils while spreading festive cheer across the school community.



Woodlands

SCHOOL

Learning for Living

Highlights of

Ty Gwyn



Jamie Brotherton
Ty Gwyn,
Head of School

It has been fantastic to welcome back pupils after the summer as well as to meet many new pupils who have joined us. We noted from parent and carer feedback how important you feel the range of activities available to pupils is for their wellbeing and learning. I hope this magazine gives a flavour of some of the activities that pupils have been involved in this term.

We have a very talented and dedicated staff team who have been increasing the variety of activities offered to pupils as they progress through the school. Some of activities are available to all pupils across the school and others are part

of particular stages of education for example our post 16 learners or for pupils with specific needs. To achieve this we have linked with organisations including the Urdd and Storey Arms as well as applying for specialist grants to increase the range of activities we are able to offer. We also have to thank the Friends of Ty Gwyn in helping us continue to increase the range of activities we can offer our pupils. They have successfully secured grant funding throughout the year for external specialists to deliver creative sessions through music and expression including the successful return of beatboxing to the school!

Upgrades to some of the playgrounds and internal spaces over the holiday periods have increased spaces across the school which can be used for some of these activities. A few of the events and activities are featured below as well as some of the Christmas events. Thank you for your continued support for the support and I hope you enjoy reading the latest issue of the magazine.

Visit from Fire Service

Thank you to Ely and Trelai Fire Service who came to visit us for our 'People who help us' week! We had lots of fun exploring the fire engine and the kit they use. We even got to spray some water from the Fire Engine hose.





Storey Arms

Some of our learners from the 14-19 department visited the Storey Arms Outdoor Education Centre! They took part in exciting activities designed to build confidence, encourage teamwork, and develop independence. From exploring the beautiful Brecon Beacons to overcoming challenges together (mainly the weather), this experience has created unforgettable memories for many of our learners and we all look forward to the next visit. The report from the latest trip is below:

Our adventure began with a short walk up Pen y Fan where we had the opportunity to stretch our legs. Some more than most, as some pupils thought it was a good time to practice hill sprints, leaving staff in their wake up the slopes. We regrouped and headed into the Dark, dank forest. Once inside we followed a rope trail that took us between the trees, over roots and through ravines. The uneven and slippery terrain was a brilliant challenge for our learners and a great chance to practice our outdoor skills. Many wet feet and a few muddy bums later we made it back to Storey Arms just in time for lunch and a well-earned sit down!

Children in Need

We had an amazing day filled with yellow sensory garden activities, a lively danceathon and a Pudsey hunt around the school. We raised an impressive £253.60 for Children in Need. Thank you to everyone that donated or took part!



Paralympian

We were lucky enough to have a visit from Paralympian medallist swimmer Kate Ager. We had a show and tell with her incredible medals and swimming cap and a question and answer session which inspired us all. Kate even joined us for our pedal power event with adapted bicycles. What an amazing experience Diolch!

Christmas Concert

The Christmas Concert and Christmas Showcase (14-19 Learners) were really special events. Pupils showed resilience and also their performance skills in many areas. It was very unfortunate that the second performances were affected by road closures.




Ty Gwyn
SCHOOL
Learning to achieve

Highlights of *Riverbank*



Amie Lucas
Riverbank,
Head of School

As the autumn leaves fall, we reflect on what has been an incredible start to the school year. After the summer break, it has been wonderful to welcome all our new pupils and a host of lovely new teachers to Riverbank School. The energy and enthusiasm across the classrooms have been inspiring, and we are thrilled to see everyone settling in so well.

This term has been packed with memorable moments and achievements. One of the highlights has been watching pupils get out and about in the community - whether exploring the local park, visiting the supermarket, or engaging in other real-world experiences. These opportunities are invaluable for building confidence and independence.

We were also delighted to celebrate a fantastic achievement in sports: a group of our pupils proudly secured third place in the bowling competition! Their teamwork and determination were truly commendable.

Another milestone worth celebrating is one of our classrooms earning Pyramid Certification, a significant step in supporting pupil communication across the school. This achievement reflects our ongoing commitment to creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment for every child.

And let's not forget the incredible generosity shown during our Children in Need bake sale, where we raised a whopping £130! Thank you to everyone who baked, bought, and contributed - your efforts make a real difference.

As we look ahead to the next term, we are excited to continue building on these successes and creating even more opportunities for our pupils to shine. Here's to a fantastic year ahead.

Enhancing Our Provision at Riverbank School

We have been working hard to develop our provision through engaging sessions and our involvement with the Urdd, promoting not only learning but also health and wellbeing for all learners.

As part of this journey, we are embedding the Welsh language into everyday activities, helping learners to build confidence and celebrate our culture. These opportunities support physical, emotional, and social development while fostering a sense of identity and belonging.

Diolch yn fawr to everyone involved - together, we're creating a vibrant, inclusive learning environment!



Congratulations to Dosbarth Porffor!

Dosbarth Porffor are now a Pyramid Certified Class! This reflects their dedication to creating an inclusive, supportive environment.

Well done - we're so proud of you!



Dosbarth Gwyrdd on the Move!

Learners are building functional skills in the community - from communication and money-handling to navigating environments.

We're proud of their enthusiasm and commitment to learning beyond the classroom!



Amazing Bowling Team!

Our team has reached the finals in their first-ever competition - what an achievement! Your hard work and teamwork have paid off.

We're proud of you for representing Riverbank School so well. Best of luck in the finals - we're all cheering you on!



Reading Journey Update

All learners have been assessed, and we've launched our Rapid Phonics programme to boost reading skills.

We're focusing on non-verbal learners too, using tailored strategies to make reading accessible and enjoyable for everyone.

Excited to see the progress ahead!



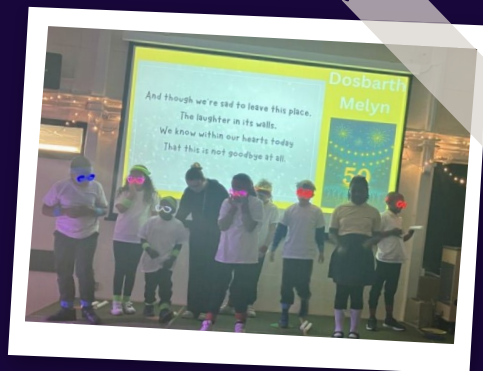
A Riverbank Christmas Journey - Celebrating 50 Golden Years

This year's Christmas concert was a magical celebration of Riverbank School's 50th anniversary, brought to life through the theme "A Riverbank Christmas Journey." Each class represented a unique "stop" along the journey, creating a sensory experience filled with sound, light, movement, and festive joy.

The concert opened with "The Golden Gate," shimmering with gold ribbons and balloons, setting the tone for an evening of wonder. From the gentle rustle of "The Whispering Woods" to the cool, snowy textures of "The Snowy Path," the audience was transported through enchanting scenes. Laughter and jingles filled the air at "The Jingle Bridge," while "Santa's Workshop on the Riverbank" buzzed with playful energy as children acted as busy elves.

As the journey continued, "The Starlit Shore" offered a moment of calm under glowing stars, followed by the rhythmic swaying of "The Golden Boat Journey." The grand finale, "The Celebration - 50 Years of Joy," united all classes in a dazzling display of music, movement, and golden confetti, ending with the uplifting message: "Here's to 50 golden years at Riverbank!"

This year's concert was not just a festive performance - it was a heartfelt tribute to the school's rich history and the bright future ahead.




Riverbank
SCHOOL

Learning together to be the best we can



Fairwater Community Campus *update*



Artist Impression of Woodlands

We are excited to share the latest updates on the construction of our new schools for Woodlands High School and Riverbank School - part of the Fairwater Community Campus development that will expand capacity for pupils with Additional Learning Needs (ALN), offering modern learning environments, sports facilities, and community spaces.

This state-of-the-art campus will see Woodlands High School and Riverbank School co-located with Cantonian High School, and is the largest project ever delivered by Cardiff Council and Welsh Government's Sustainable Communities for Learning programme.

What's New?

The structural and roofing works on our new schools are now complete and internal works are well underway. In August 2025, the first milestone in the development was celebrated with the successful handover of the Health and Wellbeing block to Cantonian High School, named Copa, the Welsh word for "summit."

These facilities are already being used by Cantonian High School pupils and once the rest of the project is completed, discussions will take place between the Governing Bodies to explore access opportunities for Western Learning Federation as well as community groups in the evenings, encouraging connections and helping to strengthen Cardiff's community spirit.

Features and benefits for our new schools:

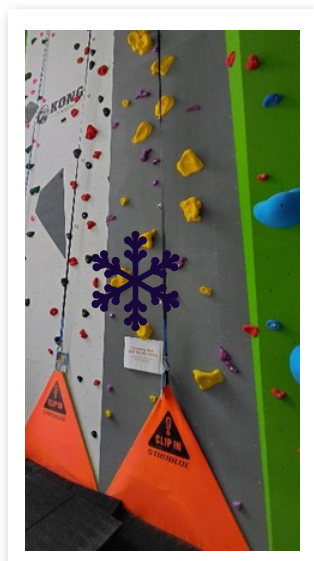
Modern Learning Environments: Both schools will offer outstanding facilities.

For Woodlands facilities will include;

- Gym
- Activity studio
- Learning zone
- Wellbeing zone
- Esports room
- Rebound therapy space
- The loft (sixth form common room)
- Sensory zone
- Movement zone
- Rebound zone
- Music and drama rooms

In Riverbank facilities will include:

- Learning resource centre
- Let's explore - music and touch therapy
- Soft play
- Family room
- Rebound therapy
- Sensory studio
- Music and drama room
- Wellness lounge





Artist Impression of Woodlands



Artist Impression of Woodlands



Artist Impression of Riverbank



Shared Spaces:

Both schools will share some facilities including an immersion room, community café, meeting and family rooms.

Sustainability:

The campus is a Net Zero Carbon and BREEAM Excellent development, with eco-friendly design and growing areas, making it a hands-on learning tool for sustainable living.

Career & Life Skills:

The Pontio vocational enterprise hub will connect our students with Cardiff Commitment partners, bridging education and work skills for a prosperous future.

Health & Education Integration:

A dedicated multi-agency hub will bring health professionals on-site, reducing time away from school for appointments and empowering our young people to thrive.

Western Learning Federation are keen to explore opportunities to extend provision for our families and further updates will be provided over the coming months. We are proud to be part of a project that goes beyond traditional schooling, supporting learning, arts, sports, inclusion, sustainability, and community.

If you have any questions or would like to learn more about the campus, there is a coffee morning hosted by BESL, taking place on site on a Thursday, please let us know if you'd like to attend

More information about the construction and development can be viewed [here](#).

Key dates and activity:

As we prepare for the future, a range of engagement activities are planned including:

Carbon/Construction Ambassadors: Pupils participate in a monthly programme of hands-on activities including site tours, construction games, environmental projects, creative challenges, teamwork-based board games, sensory design tasks, community litter picking, tree care, bug house building, and drone flying, all designed to build confidence, encourage teamwork, develop creativity and problem-solving skills, and promote environmental awareness, with each session adapted to support different needs and encourage engagement.

In September and October two cohorts from Woodlands visited the site. The first group enjoyed an exciting tour of their new school site, exploring the spaces that will soon become their classrooms and activity areas. Their excitement and curiosity brought so much energy to the visit, it was wonderful to see them imagining what each room might become.

A second group visited the site for their first hands-on learning session. Dressed as site managers, they explored what it takes to plan and build, from choosing what kind of project they'd design, to selecting materials and colours, and even spotting real plant machinery on site. They finished the session with some creative colouring, which will soon brighten up our induction cabin - a lovely reminder of their visit.

- 1st December: Time Capsule Burial where pupils will be involved in deciding what legacy items will be buried
- Parent/Carer Sessions:
- Soft landings activity which will be developed after Christmas
- September 2026: Scheduled handover Riverbank and Woodlands Schools

We will keep you regularly updated and thank you for your ongoing support as we build a brighter, greener future for all our pupils.





Western Learning Federation

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Together we learn, grow and achieve

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