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Welcome to the latest issue of *Inform For Education*, which once again brings you news from schools across Wales.

Every month teachers contact us with the latest stories from their schools.

So remember, if there is something you would like to see on these pages, please get in touch.

Inform For Education is sponsored by education IT specialists Lisol so that schools can celebrate their successes. Email us at news@inform4education.co.uk or call the telephone number on page 4.

We look forward to hearing from you. Until then, happy reading!

CLYWCH GUIDANCE

Teachers are being asked for their views on the draft version of a Welsh Assembly Government document drawn up following the *Clywch Report*.

The 'Consultation document on Teaching Drama: Guidance on Safeguarding Children and Child Protection for Managers and Drama Teachers' was written following the Children's Commissioner Peter Clarke's inquiry into allegations of sexual abuse against a drama teacher.

The draft guidance for staff teaching and examining drama can be accessed at www.learning.wales.gov.uk. The consultation will close on April 7, 2006.

Responses should be sent to Jill Hancock, Standards and Performance Division 1,

Welsh Assembly Government, Cathays Park, Cardiff CF10 3NQ or emailed to clywch.drama.responses@wales.gsi.gov.uk

INform FOR EDUCATION

DRAGONS FIRE IMAGINATION OF YOUNG MUSICIANS

Welsh schoolchildren have been inspired by the national anthem to compose music celebrating their own thoughts on Wales.

The teenagers used *Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau* as a starting point for writing their own songs.

And the anthem, which was written exactly 150 years ago, spurred them to think about their country and communities as they are today.

The pupils also developed their own musical themes around the heritage and culture of the land of their fathers.

Musician and composer Gill Edwards has been leading music workshops with members of the BBC National Orchestra of Wales (NOW) and students from the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama.

In the workshops, the secondary school pupils have developed music based on themes ranging from coal mining and the Merthyr riots to sheep and dragons.

Aberdare Boys School has created a 'stomp'-type rhythmic piece inspired by rugby and using only the pupils' voices and rugby balls.

Mountain Ash Comprehensive pupils created a musical journey based around their feelings about where they live. The arrangement starts in the mountains and travels through the valleys before reaching the seaside and the fairground.

And Aberdare Girls School composed a Celtic piece with the help of players from BBC NOW including harpist Valerie Aldrich Smith.

The composition portrays the emotion of 'hiraeth' - the longing for Wales - by symbolically relating the notion of Castell Coch welcoming people to the valleys.

The music, composed for a concert at Aberdare Coliseum, is part of a BBC Wales Here For You project being developed with educational initiative First Campus, which aims to raise aspirations of pre-GCSE students and to demystify Higher Education (HE).

First Campus project co-ordinator, Annie Davies, said: "This project will expose career opportunities

available in the music industry.

"Skills such as decision making and working as part of a team are paramount in the process and will help and encourage students to make informed and confident decisions about HE in the future."

First Campus is administered in south east Wales through University of Wales Institute, Cardiff (UWIC), University of Glamorgan and University of Wales, Newport.



Pupils from Aberdare Boys School with composer Gill Edwards and BBC National Orchestra of Wales musicians, Nick Whiting, John Cooper and Ian Fisher.

AROUND WALES

RHONDDA CYNON TAF

A new beauty salon is proving a cut above the rest at Ysgol Gyfun Llanhari in Llanhari, Pontyclun.

Teacher Liz Griffiths says the school is seeing rising demand for vocational courses, including the hair and beauty skills taught at the salon.

CEREDIGION

Every secondary school is taking part in a competition to design the best poster to promote the council's new smoke-free workplace policy.

CARMARTHENSHIRE

More than 40 youngsters took part in the county's third Disability Sport Wales Swimming Gala at Llanelli Leisure Centre.

Pupils from Ysgol Gyfun Emlyn in Newcastle Emlyn, the Garreg Lwyd Unit at Ysgol Y Gwendraeth, Drefach, the SEN Unit at Ysgol Gyfun Pantycelyn, Llandovery, and Queen Elizabeth High School in Carmarthen were among the competitors.

CARDIFF

Mary Immaculate High, until recently the only secondary school in the city to engage private catering contractors, has signed up to Cardiff Council's Catering Direct Services Unit (DSU) from April.

Headteacher Philip Gilpin said the school had heard about Cardiff Catering's "high quality service". He added: "The governors are very enthusiastic about this new, local partnership."

POWYS

A team from Brecon High School has taken the Powys Young Consumers title for a fourth successive year.

Ysgol Maesydderwen was runner up in the knockout quiz on a wide range of consumer issues. Brecon High School will now represent Powys at a Welsh Regional Final.

NEATH PORT TALBOT

More than 1,500 secondary school pupils recently watched an emotional play about a girl who kills her sister in a drink drive accident. The Ape Theatre Company performed 'Too Much Punch For Judy' at Cefn Saeson Comprehensive, Cwmtawe Comprehensive, Cwrt Sart Comprehensive, Cymer Afan Comprehensive, Duffryn Comprehensive, Glanafan Comprehensive, Sandfields Comprehensive, and Ysgol Gyfun Ystalyfera.

SPORTING PROSPECTS BOOSTED BY £1.3m INVESTMENT



Carmarthenshire County Council Leader, Councillor Meryl Gravell, is pictured at the official opening of Ysgol Dyffryn Taf Sports Hall, Whitland, with some of the school's successful athletes: (left to right) Florence Bowen-Rees, aged 12; Rachel Davies, aged 15; Nick Jones, aged 16; Councillor Gravell; Head Boy Paul Buckland, aged 17; Emily Mitchell, aged 15; Deputy Head Girl Rachel Phillips, aged 17.

A west Wales secondary school is celebrating the opening of a state-of-the-art £1.3m sports hall.

The building at Ysgol Dyffryn Taf, Whitland, is the size of four badminton courts and will be used by children from more than a dozen schools as well as by local residents.

It was built with money from the Big Lottery Fund and was designed by Carmarthenshire County Council.

Dyffryn Taf headteacher, Robert Newsome, said: "It offers the students the opportunity to engage in a vast variety of sports, rather than the limited number of sports we have currently, and to find their niche and perhaps excel at them. These facilities open new doors for them."

The hall also links the school to the community, he said. "The cricket club wants to use it, and the rugby and football clubs have shown an interest," he added.

"I think it is a phenomenal facility and I am very grateful to all the partners who have contributed to it."

Head of PE Graham Evans said: "It is going to open up a lot more opportunities for the pupils. We are now probably one of the best equipped schools in Carmarthenshire."

Chairman of Governors Paul Spiers said: "I am very proud of the hard work put in to achieve this. It is an excellent facility."

Lower sixth former and Welsh International runner Nick Jones, aged 16, of Narberth, said: "It is amazing and will increase the number of sports we can play. It is a great prospect for future sportspeople."

Upper sixth former Rachel Phillips, aged 17, of Whitland, said: "This new sports hall is so diverse, you can play just about anything in here."

Carmarthenshire council leader, Meryl Gravell, said: "What better than to have a facility like this in the area to ensure that people's health will be much better. I hope it will be used daily from morning to night."

And the county's director of education, Vernon Morgan, said: "This is exactly what the pupils and Whitland deserve."

PUPILS PUT POLITICIANS ON THE SPOT

Pupils put local democracy under the microscope by challenging senior councillors and officers on a range of hot topics.

The budding David Dimblebys put the people who run Neath Port Talbot Council on the spot at a question and answer session.

Senior prefects quizzed the mayor Councillor Keith Davies, the leader Derek Vaughan, Cabinet Member for Education John Rogers, Chief Executive Ken Sawyers and other councillors.

The decision-makers were asked about improvements in local

communities, how decisions are made as to where money is spent, school crossing patrols and arts development.

Pupils from Sandfields Comprehensive School, Port Talbot, asked about a footbridge over a new road to make access to their school easier.

Questions also tackled free swimming, and whether the initiative could be extended to other sporting activities, playgrounds, off-road motor biking and anti-social behaviour.



County Borough Mayor, Keith Davies, talks to senior pupils from St. Joseph's Comprehensive School in Port Talbot at his Mayoral Citizenship conference: (left to right) Matthew Cuss, Josh Lewis and Rhian Lewis.



Pupils debate the future with councillors and senior local authority officers.

Pupils from Cymer Afan comprehensive, Cymmer, were concerned about the need for alternative forms of energy but worried about the impact the proposal for a wind farm would have in the Afan Valley.

The debate took place as part of the annual Mayoral Citizenship conference held at the Princess Royal Theatre in Port Talbot.

The mayor said he was

delighted to see so many young people taking part and that he was impressed with the level of debate.

The day was organised by the local authority with the help of the Council for Voluntary Service who talked about why people volunteer, what qualities are needed and what kind of volunteering opportunities exist for young people.

The CVS is following up the conference by visiting schools to talk about volunteering.

ATHLETES HONOURED

Championship-winning athletes have been honoured with a town hall reception.

Carmarthenshire County Council chairman Councillor Jim Jones welcomed the teenagers and Hedydd Davies, secretary of Carmarthenshire Schools Athletics, to a celebration at Llanelli.

Dr Davies said: "Forty four of our athletes have represented Wales, won gold medals and Welsh Championships.

I am delighted the chairman held this reception to mark their achievements."

The students came from Llandovery College; Ysgol y Strade, Llanelli; Ysgol y Gwendraeth, Drefach; Queen Elizabeth High School, Carmarthen; St Michael's School, Bryn, Llanelli; Amman Valley Comprehensive, Ammanford; Tregib Comprehensive, Llandeilo; Ysgol Gyfun Bro Myrddin, Carmarthen; Ysgol Dyffryn Taf, Whitland; Maesyryfa Comprehensive, Cefneithin; and Bryngwyn School, Llanelli.

SINGING SENSATIONS

Two pupils from Bryntirion Comprehensive School, Bridgend, were finalists in the Bridgend County Young Singer of the Year Competition.

Year 12 student Carys Phillips was runner up the senior category and Year 9 pupil Samantha Thalayasingham was declared Young Singer of the Year in the 11 to 14 years category.

The school is also celebrating the opening of its new astro turf playing field.

MAKING FRIENDSHIPS THROUGH SCULPTURE

Some say modern art is rubbish - but a group of Welsh youngsters has been turning trash into work fit for a gallery.

The pupils from Cathays High School in Cardiff rose to the challenge of turning rubber gloves, old mobile phone parts and newspapers into sculpture.

The project was organised to kick-start a buddy scheme which links every child who has autism with a friend or buddy in the same year group.

The school set up the scheme to help make life easier for pupils with autism.

These youngsters find social interaction difficult and need to stick to rigid routines and behaviour.

To help the children to get to know each other better they spent a week painting, modelling and designing at the Oriel Washington Gallery in Penarth.

Their artwork, which included a totem pole with hats and hands, then formed part of an exhibition at the gallery.

Teacher Maria Prosser, who organised the trip, said: "The children had a brilliant week. One of them was actually heard to say that it had been the best week of his life.

"This was a very different environment for all the pupils. The idea for the project was to help the youngsters get to know each other better. Almost immediately they worked really well together.



Cathays High School pupils have been turning trash into art."

"The team spirit during the week was incredible.

"They created some fantastic artwork and can all be very proud of their efforts."

The children taking part were all aged between 11 and 13. They were Raja Miah, Cerith Morgan, Simon Bishop, Simon Richards, Desmond Tan, Michael Stanton, Samuel Harrison, Thomas Llewellyn, Daniel Crofts, Owen Virgin and Dominic John (all from Year 7); and Joshua Baurley, Owen Njewka, Matthew Bold, Andrew Morris and Nicky Collins (all from Year 8).

PRAISING TEACHERS

Stories about inspirational teachers and meeting university students who have helped with career ideas were on the agenda when pupils from 13 comprehensive schools met in Nantgarw.

The School Councils Conference was the first of its kind to be held in Rhondda Cynon Taf and concentrated on the theme of 'learning'.

It was attended by pupils from Aberdare

Girls, Blaengwawr, Bryncelynnog, Ferndale, Hawthorn, Porth, St Johns, Tonypandy, Tonyrefail, Treorchy, Llanhari, Rhydywaun and Rhydfelin.

The youngsters also held lively discussions about the ability of extra-curricular activities, like school productions, music and travel, to help improve time management, team working and concentration skills.

COMPETITION TIME

You cannot afford to miss out on this month's big competition.

We have two indispensable computer guides to give away, courtesy of Payne-Galloway, publisher of high quality ICT textbooks and resources.

And what's more, we have two sets of prizes meaning there will be two very lucky winners this month.

Each prize contains a copy of Photoshop Elements Right from the Start and Dreamweaver MX 2004 Right from the Start (worth £10.99 each).

These no-nonsense guides are perfect for anyone who is struggling with Dreamweaver or Photoshop Elements.

Each book is written in a clear, jargon-free way with a variety of screenshots and illustrations that provide a straightforward introduction to the basics.

Entering the competition is easy. Just email your name and address to comps@inform4education.co.uk and we will put you forward into our prize draw.



Last month's winner was Gareth Howell, Head of Sixth-form at Ysgol Syr Hugh Owen. He receives a Dell Personal All-in-One A920.

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