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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.

This month we feature poetic pupils, students with a gift for argument and a school which is leading the way as a beacon to its community.

We welcome stories from all over Wales - so 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 schools can celebrate their successes.

Email us at [news@inform4education.co.uk](mailto:news@inform4education.co.uk) or call the telephone number on page 4.

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

## FOOTBALL CRAZY

*Wales might not have made it to the World Cup in Germany but a Welsh school still might.*

Pupils are being encouraged to show off their languages for a chance to win a trip to Munich during the tournament.

The Starwatch competition aims to help teenagers discover other European languages and cultures and to appreciate the benefits of regular exercise and healthy eating.

Schools must complete multilingual fitness projects by June 1, 2006. The winners will get to Germany early in July.

For more details, see [www.cilt.org.uk/sport/starwatch.htm](http://www.cilt.org.uk/sport/starwatch.htm) or e-mail [starwatch@cilt.org.uk](mailto:starwatch@cilt.org.uk).

# INform FOR EDUCATION

## DEDICATED FOLLOWERS OF FASHION

*Welsh youngsters have been strutting their stuff and mixing their fashion style with their business sense. More than 100 pupils took part in a catwalk challenge to launch a fashion company just like Merthyr's Julien Macdonald.*

They had to design a marketing strategy for a fictitious business which could take on fashion's biggest names.

Thirty-two teams from schools in Torfaen, Newport, Blaenau Gwent and Monmouthshire took part in the challenge to use their entrepreneurial skills to raise finance for a start-up firm to market designer wear.

One daunting part of the project included a 'Dragon's Den' style presentation to raise financial backing.

Two teams from Croesyceiliog Comprehensive School proved themselves just a cut above the rest by taking first and second prizes, and taking the Business Challenge trophy and more than £350 in vouchers back to the Cwmbran school.

"We can't believe we've won" said 16-year-old Rebekah Wills from the winning team who called their fashion company SEW. "We've really enjoyed taking part in the Business Challenge and it's taught us a lot about what it takes to market a successful business."

Rebekah and her team-mates - GCSE student



*Fashion sense: The team from Nantyglo Comprehensive School - Kirsty Perrett, Katie Bond, Adam Wedgbury and Amy Daniels - who finished fourth with their winter clothing and ski-wear company, Huski. Picture by Phil Mansell*



*Jumping for joy: Rhys Ballam, Verity Treverton-Jones, Rebekah Wills and Hayley Whiting, from Croesyceiliog Comprehensive School, celebrate victory in the Business Challenge Trophy 2006. Picture by Phil Mansell*

Rhys Ballam, and sixth formers Verity Treverton-Jones and Hayley Whiting - were presented with the Business Challenge Trophy and £50 each in vouchers by Geoff Edge, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Regional Development), at the University of Wales, Newport.

Second place went to the AKSK fashion company created by Croesyceiliog's Cally Tinton, Abigail Willis, Sadie Davies, and Kirsty Robathan, who are all from Year 11.

Their teacher, Val Vaughn, said: "All the students have had a wonderful time and it's been a marvellous experience for them coming to the university. They've particularly enjoyed the competitive element of the event, and it's given them an opportunity to use a lot of what they're learning at school."

A team from St Joseph's RC High School came third and Nantyglo Comprehensive finished fourth in the unique event, which is organised by Newport Business School and sponsored by Careers Wales Gwent.

"This is the seventh year we've been holding this competition and the standard is always high, but this has been the best year yet" said Edward Jones, of the business school.

## AROUND WALES

### POWYS

Powys County Council's support for school improvement has been highly praised in an official government inspection report. The report - following an inspection by Wales Audit Office and Estyn officers - highlights the clear vision, aims and strategy for supporting schools to raise standards.

### NEATH PORT TALBOT

Work is beginning on a new canteen and teaching block for Dwr Y Felin Comprehensive School in Neath.

The new £2.5m, two-storey building is to be built on the main upper school site.

### CARMARTHENSHIRE

Amman Valley Comprehensive has linked up with children from two local primary schools to help them prepare for the move to the big school. The younger pupils had a day at Amman Valley learning about design technology. The staff involved included Carmarthenshire County Council advisory teacher for design technology Lisa Hearne and Richard Jones and Liz Atkinson of Amman Valley Comprehensive. The project was supported by Amman Valley headteacher Owen Jones.

### CARDIFF

Michaelston Community College has been praised by Estyn following a week-long inspection. Inspectors recorded that Michaelston, which was opened in September 2002 on the site of the former Glan Ely High School, had achieved much in a short time. They described many aspects of the college's provision as "outstanding". Principal Mary Campbell described the report as "a strong endorsement of the work of the college". Year 12 student Jonathan Davies said: "Having experienced the old Glan Ely and now Michaelston I can clearly see significant improvements. The distinct change in students' attitudes, learning atmosphere and the quality of teaching all add up to why Michaelston had such an excellent inspection."

### NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

The winners of the Welsh Assembly Government's anti-bullying campaign competition were Hayat Mohamed from Fitzalan High School, Cardiff, (secondary school poster competition) and Catherine Jenkins from Maesteg Comprehensive, Bridgend (secondary school classroom charter competition). The competition, which was launched last October as part of Respecting Others Week, attracted 2321 poster entries and 141 classroom charters.

## CITY SCHOOL TAKES ARGUING HONOURS

**A debating team from Wales narrowly missed winning a major prize after a hard day tackling a range of burning world issues.**

The pupils from Howell's School in Cardiff argued about humanitarian intervention, violence in the media and nuclear power in UK's toughest debating championship for sixth formers.

And, after putting up a great fight, the team was only just beaten into the runner-up position.

The Howell's School debaters, who won a local qualifying round in 2005, took on three Bristol schools in the West & South Wales regional final of the Institute of Ideas & Pfizer Debating Matters Competition.

Two team members, Claire Fitter and David Gregory, especially impressed the judges and each received an Honourable Mention.

Another pupil, Helen Frost, said she really caught the spirit of debate during the competition, and added afterwards: "I was always so aware of not being offensive in discussions. Now

arguing it out seems so much more important."

Teacher Helen Davies said she was proud that her students could stand up for themselves and for their arguments. "The competition is incredibly demanding," she said. "It's also very difficult as a teacher not to intervene, to let the students just get on with it."

The team returned from the competition in Bristol with a number of prizes for their school, including a Skype starter pack and £500 worth of books from educational publisher Hodder Gibson.



Putting their view across: the debating team from Howell's School, Cardiff. Picture: Martin Chainey.

## GLOBAL CHALLENGE

**Year 10 pupils from a Pembrokeshire school are spreading an important message about climate change.**

The Greenhill School, Tenby, teenagers scooped first prize in a national poster competition run by Friends of the Earth.

Dionne Stewart, Keely Edwards, John Edwards and Luke Hughes used their design skills to create a message about the problems of global warming.

They used recycled and sustainable materials to decorate the poster.

As winners, the students, accompanied by youth worker Tammy Dibble, were invited on a tour of the Houses of Parliament and received a certificate and digital camera.

Previous going green challenges from Chepstow Comprehensive School and Fairwater High School, Cwmbran, were featured in December's Inform for Education when Friends of the Earth's Shout About Climate Change initiative was launched.

# PREDICTING A RIOT OF MUSIC



Pictured celebrating the launch of an exciting new music project at Fitzalan High School, Cardiff, are (front, left to right) Taz Singh, Huw Jones-Williams (headteacher), John Lenney (Director, Immtech), Lord Mayor Freda Selway, Nicola Hughes (Fitzalan Youth & Community Manger), Joshua Blenman; (back, left to right) Mike Money (Cardiff's Extended Workplace Coordinator), Rick Williams (Cardiff's Principal Youth Officer).

Could tomorrow's Kaiser Chiefs or Arctic Monkeys come from Cardiff? That's the question posed by an innovative new music project in the city.

'Music 4 u' aims to encourage school children to emulate today's top bands and to write big hit records like the Kaiser Chiefs' *I Predict A Riot*.

Under the scheme students get the chance to use state-of-the-art, portable music industry software to make and record their own songs.

They can burn their own CDs at the end of creative sessions and create their own websites to publish their tunes for download to iPods.

They can even develop their own branding and create DVDs with video or animation.

Music 4 u was launched by Lord Mayor Freda Salway at Fitzalan High School. It is a partnership between Cardiff Council, Immtech - a leading provider of music technology - and the school.

It is being piloted at Fitzalan but after 12 weeks will be rolled out across the city. Councillor Salway said: "Education is about firing young people's imaginations and providing them with the skills to live a constructive and rewarding life.

"The creation of music is as old as mankind and today the UK music industry is worth millions of pounds to our economy. I am certain that we can help create the stars of tomorrow."

The school and its Music FitzU mobile music lab, together with Mike Money, Cardiff's Extended Workplace Coordinator, is to trial a series of accredited programmes over the next year, adapted according to aptitude and ability.

Fitzalan is also involved in other projects designed to further its work to become the beacon community school for south Cardiff.

Headteacher Huw Jones-Williams and the Friends of Fitzalan PTA are seeking funding to create a 'Fame'-type academy and the school recently celebrated the opening an eight pitch five-a-side complex. Its new sports hall will open in June.



Community goals: Cardiff Lord Mayor Freda Salway visits Fitzalan High School's new all-weather pitches. Also pictured are (left to right): Taz Singh, Luke Higginson (front); Rafeeq Kaid, Corey Dwyer, Joshua Benskin (middle); Suresh Kerai, Daniel Matthews, David Bowles, Jerome Wall, Malechi White (back).

# TRACKING SUCCESS

A Swansea Valley school has been praised by independent inspectors for its achievement in school improvement.

Cwmtawe Comprehensive in Pontardawe received a national award in regional improvement from ACCAC (the Welsh qualifications, curriculum and assessment authority), highlighting the school's tracking system which follows students' progress throughout their time in education.

Headteacher Alan Tudor Jones said: "The school is delighted to be recognised as high performing and exhibits strength across the whole subject range, with all departments performing above national standards at GCSE."

He said the school's out of hours learning for GCSE pupils, including school classes, weekend and holiday revision sessions, was particularly successful.

"It is a real collegiate effort from the whole school community supported by the staff, pupils and parents" he added.

# SOMETHING'S COOKING

A new resource to get young people involved in politics has been launched by the Electoral Commission Wales.

The Democracy Cookbook was unveiled at a special workshop with help from young people from Corpus Christi RC High School in Cardiff and St Cenydd Comprehensive School in Caerphilly.

The book contains information about how politics works, what our democratic institutions do and why they matter.

Rhydian Huw Thomas, of the Electoral Commission Wales, explained: "We know from our research that young people are hungry to have their say on the issues that affect their daily lives but only 37 per cent of 18-24 year olds voted in the 2005 general election."

To order a free copy of the Democracy Cookbook, call 020 7271 0592 or email [dopolitics@electoralcommission.org.uk](mailto:dopolitics@electoralcommission.org.uk)

# POETIC PUPILS STORM THE SENEDD

Wales' new National Assembly debating chamber has inspired a group of the nation's youngsters.

Eleven talented young writers from Powys decided the £67m Senedd in Cardiff Bay was simply poetry after becoming some of the first schoolchildren to set foot in the eye-catching building.

Powys Writing Squad first visited the seat of Welsh government in January for poetic inspiration from the environmentally-friendly building.

Gemma Bough, Freya Bronwin, Joe Dunn, Merriel Green, Emily Ham, Serena Howard, Frances Hughes, Alys Hurn, Maisie Jenkins, Owen Jordan and David Saunders all wrote poems following a workshop led by Professor Tony Curtis, one of Wales' leading poets who has more than 25 books to his name.

The pupils, who were from Brecon, Builth Wells, Crickhowell and Gwernyfed high schools then rehearsed the poems ready for the public opening of the building on St David's Day.

Sadly, the weather then let them

down and heavy snow and ice meant that they could not get to Cardiff.

Liz Hinkley, of Powys County Council, explained: "It was disappointing that they couldn't recite their poems to the public on the day because they have put a great deal of thought and effort and have produced a wonderful piece of work.



Inspired: Young poets from Powys work on their verse during a visit to the new Welsh Assembly Government chamber, the Senedd.

"Being at the Senedd inspired these talented writers and it will be an experience they will never forget."

More than 120 children, aged up to 15, enjoy taking part in Powys Writing Squad, which is run by the county council and supported by Academi and local schools.

# COMPETITION TIME

This month's prize is essential for anyone using a computer at school or at home.

The Lightning JDL-512 USB is Lexar's top Jump Drive product, offering the highest speed, a distinctively-designed, stylish stainless steel case and value-added software features.

It is worth £17.99 but we have one to give away, courtesy of Lisol.

And winning it could not be simpler. Just email your name and address to [comps@inform4education.co.uk](mailto:comps@inform4education.co.uk) and we will put you forward into our prize draw.



Last month's winners were Tammy Dibble, of Greenhill School, Tenby and I Hart, of Pembrokeshire. They each win copies of Photoshop Elements Right from the Start and Dreamweaver MX 2004 Right from the Start, courtesy of Payne-Gallway, publisher of high quality ICT textbooks and resources.

## LIGHTS! CAMERA! CLASSROOM!

Young people from five Cardiff secondary schools have been learning the ropes of television production.

The up-and-coming film-makers produced film inserts for the pilot programme of Cardiff TV4schools, a new network created by Media4schools, a media provider for schools and communities across Wales.

The schools covered a variety of topics with their films.

Whitchurch High's production looked at Super Learning Day, Glyn Derw examined issues such as bad behaviour and the work of schools councils and Rumney High produced their own version of the X-Factor.

Llanrumney High focused on transition week while Woodlands High's production tells the story of the Welsh Special Games.

Glyn Derw TV's Chris Robinson, 13, said afterwards: "I love presenting and would like to do it professionally."

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