



Important Dates

20th Jul	Last day of term
1st Sep	INSET
2nd Sep	INSET
5th Sep	First day of term
12th Oct	Yr 6 Open Evening
30th Nov	ARD 1
7th Dec	Awards Evening
3rd Jan '17	INSET
27th Feb '17	INSET
29th March '17	ARD 2
3rd July '17	INSET

Abertillery 3-16 Learning Community

From September 1st Abertillery Comprehensive will become part of the Abertillery 3-16 Learning Community. Since taking up my post in April it has been a privilege to be based on the comprehensive site. There is a real buzz in the school and very strong relationships between staff and pupils. Abertillery Comprehensive is a school that has been on a very rapid improvement journey. The staff and pupils have worked incredibly well together and their success should be celebrated. As we go into September and the new era of the Learning Community we will build on the existing good practice in the comprehensive school and the primary schools.

On Friday the 24th of June we held our first joint INSET day in which staff from the comprehensive school and the four primary schools worked together to share ideas on how best we can make the Learning Community work. Staff saw the main benefits of working as a Community as:

- Improved experiences for pupils
- Staff and pupils learning from each other and sharing their expertise
- Sharing resources, information and planning
- Consistent approaches and policies

The leadership team will be arranging parent/carer forum groups and drop in sessions from September and I hope that you will come and talk to us about your ideas. This is an exciting time for education in Abertillery and we want all staff, pupils, parents, carers and the wider community of Abertillery to work with us.

We want our Learning Community to be united so that we provide the best possible care and education.

We will work with you to make sure that all our children and young people have the confidence and desire to reach their full potential.

ABERTILLERY LEARNING COMMUNITY – TOGETHER, STRONGER





Head teacher's Message



Dear All – Annwyl Pawb

It gives me great pleasure to write to you all at the end of what has been another fantastic year at Abertillery Comprehensive School. It has been a year of significant change for all of us at the school and looking back at our achievements over the year when writing this has been a real pleasure.

At the beginning of the year we celebrated our best GCSE results for many years. An improvement of over 12 percentage points on the previous year making us one of the most improved school in Wales. We hosted the Minister of Education Huw Lewis, who opened our fantastic Community Learning Zone and held our annual Awards Evening where we celebrated the success of so many of our learners in a huge range of fields.

We have planned, taken part in and attended an incredible range of events and occasions over the year and celebrated some memorable successes by our learners both in school and in activities

they engage in outside of school. I have attempted to list just a few below and they really do highlight what a fantastic school and community we are part of.

Events, occasions and successes 2015/16

Year 6 More Able and Talented days in core subjects

Peer mentors recruited and trained

Anti Bullying Pledge signed by hundreds of school community

Language Ambassadors representing the school at numerous national events

Literacy Ambassadors getting their work published

Learners representing the school at community events

Raising money for charities

Sporting success both as individuals and teams

Countless trips and visits

Year 11 Leavers Prom

A week long Art exhibition at the Kickplate Gallery

2nd Annual Eisteddfod

Easter revision conference

Lego Education visits

Learners and staff speaking at National conferences

Autism Awareness week

Careers pathways events

And the launch of the Abertillery App!

When you add to this the refurbishment of the ICT rooms, refitting of a brand new catering facility, upgrading of ICT equipment in Music,

Learning support and Engage and the establishment of our new allotment and sensory garden, it is absolutely clear what an amazing year we have had.

Despite all of that however the best is still to come. As always staff and learners have worked incredibly hard to ensure that every moment in school was taken advantage of and that every learner has had the best possible opportunity to be successful. When we come in on results day 25th August we are expecting to once again exceed all previous records and have the best results in the school's history. Not only will this be exactly what all of the learners deserve, but will also be a measure of how far the school has come on our journey of improvement. It will mean that we start life in Abertillery Learning Community as an equal partner and can share our experiences with colleagues across Abertillery further developing all of our schools and improving life chances for children across the whole community.

Have a fun, restful and safe summer and I look forward to working with you all in September.

Best Wishes

Nathan Jenkins



Careers Pathway event a great success

The Abertillery school careers event was a great success providing a unique opportunity for our pupils to think carefully and ask questions about their future career choices. For the first time the event was organised during the school day and pupils from year 9 upwards were invited to attend during their lessons and given the opportunity to speak with a range of employers and further education providers. The event was attended by 44 companies from within the Blaenau Gwent area and beyond, who helped to make it such a success. The Cardiff University stand was very popular and their representative was extremely knowledgeable about the courses on offer and the qualifications needed to gain access to each course. A lot of pupils expressed an interest in the Computer Science degree programme and the advice and information they received encouraged them in their current studies as well as for the future. Representatives from top accountancy and law firms in Cardiff were also present and were very encouraging in their conversations with our pupils. Our heartfelt thanks go out to these companies who gave up their time willingly to assist our young people in thinking about and exploring different options for their futures.

Launch of new ACS App: have you downloaded it yet?

As you will all be aware over the past year we have been continually striving to improve the ways in which we communicate with parents and the local community. Being able to share the exciting and innovative ways in which we are working with learners as well as keeping parents informed on progress and celebrating the success of our learners is very important to us. We are always looking to add to the ways in which we can further improve communication with all our partners and to this end we are now thrilled to have launched the Abertillery Comprehensive School "App". The app, which can be downloaded to tablets, iPads and smart phones, links directly to our website but also allows us to push notifications directly to users informing them of events at the school or notifications if issues exist around weather or transport for

instance. The app also allows us to share the good news stories that we regularly post on the website, the school calendar highlighting all the key dates and events that we are running, as well as allowing us to post all the letters that we send home electronically, meaning that we don't have to rely solely on learners giving them to their parents. We hope that all members of the Abertillery Comprehensive Community download the app and are able to join us in celebrating all that is great about our school. The app can be downloaded from the Apple App Store, or for android devices from the Google Play Store. There are also links to the "App" on the website www.abertillerycomp.co.uk. We sincerely hope that you do take a few minutes to download the "App" and we look forward to your feedback.



3 Day Easter Revision Conference

More than 50 learners gave up their time during the Easter holidays to attend our Easter revision conference. The programme started with a guest speaker from an external company called 'Major Motivator' who provided our year 11 learners with some key strategies to help them revise and get through the examination period. Learners thoroughly enjoyed the 1 hour presentation and picked up some good tips. Each day focussed on one of the core subjects of Maths, Science and English and after some heavy revision sessions, learners were keen to enjoy a well-deserved lunch of their choice of pizza. It was then back to further revision each afternoon followed by some special guest speakers who were ex-pupils of the school. Scott Williams, now a Wing Commander with responsibility for 200 staff in the RAF, joined us to share his wonderful stories and pictures of him flying his jets. Scott was the youngest man to fly a fighter jet into Afghanistan and did two tours of duty for his country. Learners were also inspired by Leanne Baker who now holds a Senior Manager position within Welsh Government. Leanne intrigued us with her stories of how she has succeeded across the years. A tiring yet inspirational few days for our year 11 learners! Well done year 11!



Team 7 projects impress

At this time of year it is always a delight to see what the Team 7 classes can come up with for their final project. This year was no exception and certainly didn't disappoint as the standard was extremely high with incredible amounts of effort going into each piece. Well done all!



Year 11 Additional Science London Trip

On the 12th of February a group of over 50 learners from year 11 travelled to London to explore the Natural History museum. These learners were all studying Additional Science and over 10% of them will be continuing with Science at A Level next year. The trip was accompanied by Mr Cooper, Miss Morris and Miss Nabialek and was completely paid for by the school; all learners had to do was turn up and enjoy! This was an amazing opportunity to discover areas of Science not familiar to the pupils like Geology, and get hands on with a wealth of exhibits and interactive exhibitions. The pupils spent most of their time in the mammal house and exploring the rocks and earth science areas. Pupils were particularly excited by an 'earthquake kitchen' exhibit which simulated an earthquake in a domestic setting. For many it was a first trip to London or even a first trip over the Severn Bridge! The feedback from learners was overwhelmingly positive and staff were full of praise for the excellent behaviour, punctuality and maturity shown by learners throughout the day.

Abertillery Year Seven Debate Team great ambassadors for the school

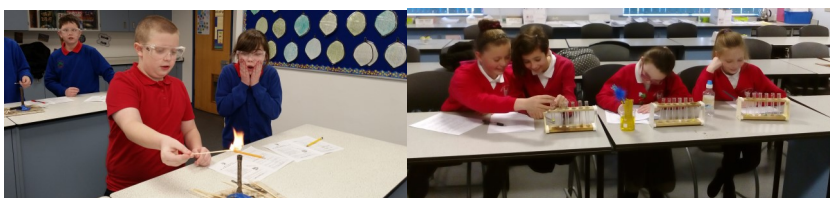
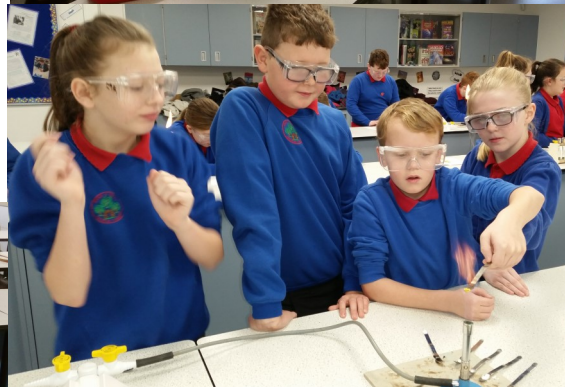
Well done to the members of our Youth Speaks team who took part in the Rotary Intermediate Youth Speaks District Area Final last week, held at King Henry VIII School, Abergavenny. It was a closely fought competition, with the five finalist teams all doing extremely well, debating subjects such as; 'This House believes that teenagers are being stereotyped'; 'This House believes that it doesn't have to be Heinz!'; 'This House believes that modern society is ruining our childhood'; and 'This House proposes that schools should help to keep the Welsh language alive'. Abertillery was the

youngest team in the final and the three team members certainly held their own against their competitors. They enjoyed the exhilaration of taking part and are looking forward already to participating in next year's competition! Pictured are the Abertillery Comprehensive School team members - Harry Bayton (Chair); Ffion Jones and Ciaran Keirle-Singer - who presented commendably on 'Is school uniform necessary?' Well done to everyone involved, we look forward to hearing you speak more as you move through the school.



MAT days with primaries

This year we have taken every opportunity to work with our local primary schools and special efforts have been made to create opportunities for some of the more able and talented learners within these schools. MAT pupils have been invited to Abertillery Comprehensive to take part in extra lessons within the English, Maths and Science departments. These dedicated sessions have given them access to facilities and resources they can't normally use; in particular exciting bits of science kit like Bunsen burners and chemicals! The primary pupils have worked really hard and enjoyed their time with us. At the start of June, 60 year 5/6 pupils from Coed y Garn primary school came to take part in a flame test practical experiment which linked to their Harry Potter potions and spells topic this term. They used secondary school science kit and had a fantastic time.



Autism Awareness Week

This year was the first Schools Autism Awareness Week. It ran between the 14th and 18th of March. In support of this staff wore a pink or purple top to school on the Wednesday. It really meant a lot to some of our autistic learners to see that they had support. All money received was given to Nicola Williams, the chief officer of the NAS Blaenau Gwent. Nicola has a lot of involvement with learners in our school and is always grateful for our backing. A total of £75.60 was raised from donations and the sale of decorated gingerbread men in their own onesie designs. In learning coach groups learners completed specialised Autism word searches and also decorated onesie and T shirt design sheets, with a prize awarded for the best one. Our daily act of collective worship in learning coach time was also related to Autism and many thoughtful questions were asked and answered proving for good discussion points. Nadine Lewis, who organised the event and works closely with our autistic learners, is keen to develop Autism Awareness throughout the school in the coming years.



We asked young people with autism "What would make school better?"



58% chose "if teachers understood autism"



46% chose "if people were less noisy in class"



33% chose "if other school staff understood autism"



Leah Nichols Sings at Principality Stadium for Autism Fundraiser

On April 2nd, Leah Nichols, a year 10 pupil, was invited to sing at a black tie gala evening in the Principality Stadium, Cardiff. The event was called Holly's Ball and was to raise awareness of autism. Leah sang four songs, including Warwick Avenue, as solos to entertain an audience of over 100 guests. Leah has been singing for five years, since year 6, and is a member of FADAMS amateur dramatic society in Fleur de Lis who will be putting on a performance of Snow White in February 2017. Leah is currently studying drama GCSE and has chosen Music GCSE next year. When she leaves Abertillery she hopes to study music and drama at college and apply to drama schools. It is her dream to perform in the West End and her favourite style of music is musical theatre. It is wonderful to see Leah using her incredible talents to help support a good cause and we look forward to seeing what she does next!

Work continues on the new sensory garden

Work is currently underway on the development of our very own Allotment and Sensory garden here at Abertillery Comprehensive School. Learners and staff have been hard at work designing and planning for the exciting outside learning spaces and work got underway this term as the weather finally gave us a break. The garden, that is sponsored by Tai Calon and the Woodlands Trust, will include raised beds, a poly tunnel, bog garden, barked pathways, flower garden, herb garden and small orchard. An outside covered classroom is also planned for the future. It is hoped that by the start of the Autumn term these spaces will be fully developed and will offer opportunities for all learners to engage in a range of exciting activities. Plans are also

underway for the development of a community group who will support the school in maintaining the site during holidays and perhaps in working with our learners to share their knowledge and experience. Thanks must also go to Morris of Usk for their fantastic support in the development of this project and to Mrs Williams for her tireless efforts in getting this amazing project off the ground. All learners who have so far been involved have loved the chance to spend some time outdoors, get their hands dirty and learn something new about their environment. Those who have not yet had the chance to get out there have enjoyed watching the garden take shape; there is a great view from some of the Maths and English classroom windows!





Eisteddfod

Eisteddfod is a special part of school life and something that pupils remember for years to come. This year for the first time, the whole school came together to celebrate Eisteddfod. Learners took part in their houses in a range of activities celebrating everything that makes them proud to be Welsh. Learners from all year groups sang, danced, read, played musical instruments, baked cakes, wrote poems and designed art work. All the participants and spectators showed great enthusiasm towards the event whether taking part or supporting their friends. Elise Martin was named as our Bard for her fantastic poetry writing and the winning House on the day was Llewelyn. Congratulations to everyone who took part. We are already looking forward to next year!

Whole school comes together to support Wales in Euro football match

On Thursday 16th of June at 2pm Wales played England in the European Championships. As all football fans will know, this was an important fixture in the Welsh sporting calendar not only due to its Championship significance, but also due to the fact it was Wales' first Major Championship for 58 years and their first competitive fixture with England for some time.

Some schools across Wales made arrangements for their staff and students to be able to watch the game and ours was one of them. Lucky ACS learners were able to watch the first half of the game during lesson 5 and many chose to stay on after the bell and watch the rest of the match. Learners were encouraged to wear a Wales shirt (or something red) on the day to show their support for our national team. Participants in the non-uniform day made a 50p donation to charity meaning we didn't just enjoy a football match; we did some good too!

The majority of pupils were able to fit into the school theatre to watch the game while others were in the sports hall and canteen. The atmosphere in each of these locations was amazing and there was a true feeling of solidarity and togetherness.



Mr Gordon tweeted a brilliant video of the pupils reacting to Gareth Bale's goal. Have you seen it? We wonder if the Welsh team have seen it....!

Launch of Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award Scheme

The Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme (D of E) is a rigorous and highly prestigious programme run in our school by Mike Flynn, who has just launched a new bronze award for year 9 and above. The D of E is the world's leading youth achievement award, giving millions of 14 to 24-year-olds the opportunity to be the very best they can be. For the hundreds of thousands of young people who take part each year, the benefits of achieving a D of E Award at any level are endless. It's great fun and helps your people to grow in confidence through pushing themselves to do new things developing useful skills. Furthermore, having a D of E Award can give young people the edge when applying for college, university or a job. Put simply, the D of E is about helping teenagers along the path to a productive and prosperous future. In Abertillery, sixteen enthusiastic and adventurous learners have just enrolled onto the Bronze award programme. They will be undertaking their practice walk on the 18th and 19th of July with their actual expedition on the 22nd and 23rd July. We also have nine intrepid year 11s who have enrolled on the Silver award programme which will be tracked by the D of E coordinator through college.

Abertillery exceeds attendance targets

As a school, we have worked to improve attendance this year and exceed our target. There have been lots of new initiatives, competitions and challenges, and they have made a big difference.

We know that good school attendance is a crucial part of achieving success both in and beyond school, and that poor attendance leads to lower GCSE results, fewer opportunities and lower earnings. We want the very best for learners in our school community and will continue to work with them, their families and other agencies to improve attendance.

It is clear that even a small dip in attendance means a significant amount of learning is lost. A fantastic number of learners will finish the year in the green category, reaching the challenging target of 97%, missing less than a week of school

across the year. Congratulations to those, and special congratulations to the learners who have maintained 100% attendance for the whole year – you can expect a reward on the last day of term!

Attendance data for schools is calculated before the end of the academic year, so we already know our overall attendance figure for 2015/16. I'm pleased to be able to tell you that with 92.6%, we exceeded our target for the year and made an increase of an impressive 0.8% from last year.

For some learners though, attendance could be significantly better, and after offering support and working with families, we have been forced in a small number of cases to pursue fixed penalty notices or court proceedings. This is regretful, and not something that we do lightly. We would much pre-

fer to have learners here regularly so that we can focus on their education rather than use this kind of sanction.

We are working hard this term to spread the 'attendance matters' message; running a learning coach attendance competition, 100% attendance iPad competition and praising those in the green attendance category. I urge parents to get their child into school as much as possible, and to ensure any absence is reported to Mrs Greaves, our attendance officer. I am sure we will see lots more learners in the green attendance category and I will have to think of some new ways to reward the fantastic attendance in our school!

Mrs Vaughan – Assistant Headteacher, Inclusion.



Easter draw iPad winners, from left to right:
Gemma Tovey
Curtis Eversfield
Leon Gilgrass



Girls into Computer Science Trip to Cardiff Uni

On Thursday 16th June a group of 30 year 7 and 8 girls visited Cardiff University School of Computer Science and Informatics as part of a STEM enrichment activity. The girls were fantastic and really made the most of the day; they were excellent ambassadors for our school. We took part in a number of activities: a team work exercise, Lego Mindstorm Robot dance competition and using the Python Programming Language to run and investigate an electronic circuit. It was a challenging day and it was great to see genuine fun, excitement and effort for all the tasks. Da iawn merched!



Engage Race for Life- May 2016



Back in March 2016 the Engage group decided to support a worthy charity and chose Cancer Research UK. To raise money we entered Schools Race for Life which entailed us running 5km around the 3G pitch at our school. As a group we have all worked really hard fund raising by asking family and friends to sponsor us, doing cake sales and a 'guess the bear's' name. Together we sat down and discussed the subject of cancer and talked about how it may have personally affected our lives. Doing some research on the subject and listening to other people's stories raised our awareness of cancer and made us realise how important it was for donations to be made to Cancer Research UK, in order to support people living with cancer and to do further research to develop potential cures. The race took place on a warm, sunny Thursday afternoon on the 26th May and we ran, jogged and walked the 5km which was the equivalent of 14 laps around the school astro turf. All the pupils took part in this event by completing laps, monitoring the laps each person completed and by generally encouraging each other to keep going to reach their 5km goal. We completed the course within 45 minutes and were all still smiling as we crossed the finishing line. The pupils in Engage put in a great effort overall and after collecting in the donations made to us we are pleased to announce that £300 was raised to support this worthy charity.

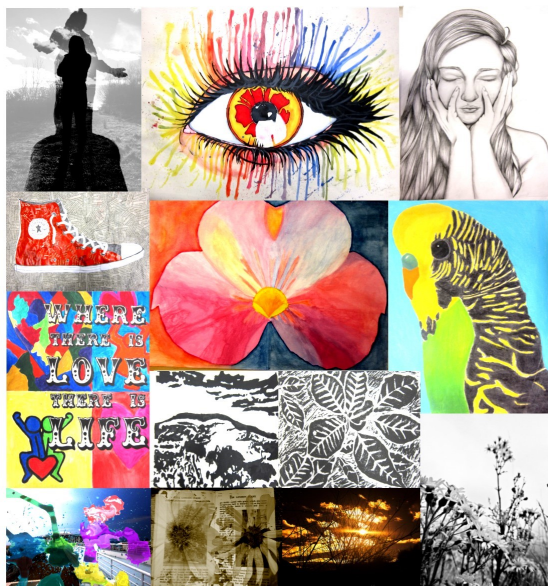


Back at school, year 7 and 8 pupils enjoyed 5 hours of Microbit programming and coding sessions in our new 60 computer ICT suite.



GCSE Art Exhibition in Kickplate Gallery

Abertillery Comprehensive School
Summer Show 2016



Preview show
Monday 20 June 5pm - 7.30pm
from Monday 20 June
to Saturday 26 June 2016

KICKPLATE GALLERY
26 CHURCH STREET
ABERTILLERY
NP13 1DB



Yet again, GCSE learners from the Art department have celebrated huge success with the week long exhibition of their work at the Kickplate Gallery in Abertillery. The exhibition shows artwork from a range of different themes chosen from both their coursework and the final exam. Learners were encouraged to select materials based on their individual strengths. The feedback from learners, staff and members of the public has been extremely positive, in particular, that of the level of skills used in handling a range of different materials. The response to the exhibition within the community has been complimentary with many taking the time to visit the gallery and marvel at our pupils' talent. This exhibition would not have been possible without the support and dedication of the volunteers who helped to transport and display the learners work. Special thanks go to the Kickplate Gallery, Miss Tidey, Mrs Pope and Miss Bridgeman. Another big thank you goes to the parents who supported the learners throughout their GCSE art journey.





Dark Clouds Couldn't Dampen the Year 11 Prom

On Thursday, 30th June 2016 a whole host of glamorously dressed, well-groomed and elegantly presented year 11 held their prom at The Old Rectory in Crickhowell. They were almost unrecognisable! Year 11 parents past and present will be all too familiar with the marathon like task that is preparing for prom. Outfits will have been selected and purchased months in advance, hair appointments made, spray tans booked and limos sourced. Once ready, most pupils chose to gather at Cwmtillery lakes for the traditional photos in this beautiful local setting. Many of the community turned out to see them off; this is an event that is looked forward to and enjoyed by all. Many younger pupils in our school eagerly anticipate seeing the year 11s dressed up and look forward to the day when it will be their turn. This year's cohort did not disappoint: they turned up the glamour and wowed with an impressive range of styles and colours— no two dresses the same! At The old Rectory staff and pupils enjoyed a seated three course meal followed by speeches and dancing. This year the pupils themselves lead the speeches and head boy and head girl Kyle Rosier and Alicia Schroll spoke at length and from the heart about their experiences at Abertillery and their hopes for the future. The evening was a great success and a good time was had by pupils and staff alike. We would like to thank the pupils for the excellent behaviour; they were a credit to the school, and to the staff who attended and helped make the evening memorable for all. We also wish year 11 all the best and every success for their futures.





Year 7 Trip to Llangrannog

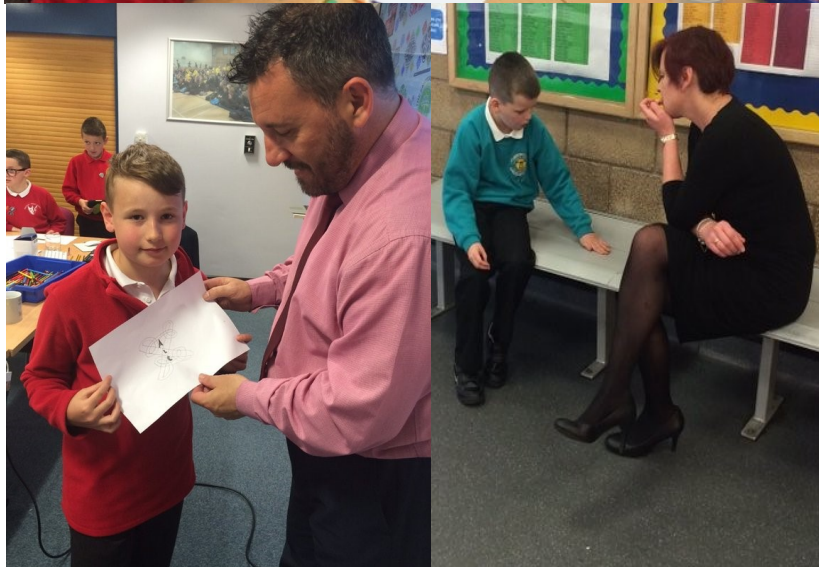
For a second successive year, learners from ACS enjoyed a fun-packed, character-building and rain-free weekend at Gwersyll Yr Urdd Llangrannog! More than 40 intrepid Team 7 pupils spent three days on the stunning Ceredigion coast, trying their hand at a host of outdoor and indoor activities alongside schools from Cardiff and Newport. The weather may have been unseasonably chilly for April, but our hardy bunch (and staff!) braved the elements to try their hand at skiing, tobogganing, 'low-rope' course and trampolining, as well as tearing it up on quad bikes and go-karts. Back indoors, nerves were tested on the climbing wall and 'high-rope' course, before tackling the gentler pursuits of horse riding and archery. Evenings were spent exploring the surrounding countryside, showing off some moves at the disco or just chilling with existing and new-found friends. We're delighted to report that there were no injuries, dramas or squabbles, despite the late nights and early starts! A fantastic time was had by all! 'Diolch yn fawr' to Miss Smith for organising the trip, and to Mrs Evans, Mrs Carter, Miss Lloyd, Mr Kendal-Williams and Mr Flynn for helping make it such a memorable weekend!





Learners lead the design process for new school logo

We held our first Abertillery Learning Community event this term when student council members from Abertillery Primary, Roseheyworth Primary, Bryngwyn Primary, Queen Street Primary and Abertillery Comprehensive School all came together to start discussing and designing the new Learning Community logo. Mrs Miles, our new Principal, along with staff and governors from across our community, worked with learners from Years 3-11 who were involved in sharing their ideas and developing a very clear vision of collaboration, equality and togetherness. They were also able to articulate their thoughts about how our logo might look and what it should say about us. All of the learners had a great morning and were able to demonstrate just how important and exciting the development of our new Learning Community is to all its members. Well done to everyone involved and thank you for your open, honest and enthusiastic support.



Learners cook up a storm in new after school cookery club



Key stage three pupils have been enjoying a new after school cooking club. On Wednesdays, Mrs Johns and Mrs Hughes have been letting a group of learners loose in the brand new catering classroom and showing them new recipes and techniques. These photos show a very impressive first attempt from the group at making apple roses. They were inspired by a viral video shared on social media and decided to put their knife skills to the test. These roses were fiddly to make and required a lot of patience and a lot of precision when slicing and layering the apple on finely rolled puff pastry. Despite the difficulty of the task the results were impressive and all learners were greeted with well risen, 'blooming' roses when they opened their ovens. The group have also made jam doughnut muffins and are planning on moving on to savoury treats in their next session with some pizza rolls. All learners are welcome to come along and try their hand at getting creative in the kitchen but spaces are limited so they must make sure they check with Mrs Johns first!



Transition Day

September's new starters experienced a taste of things to come at this year's Transition Day!

Almost 100 Year 6 pupils from our feeder primary schools - Queen Street, Roseheyworth, Bryngwyn and Abertillery - came together to spend a whole day at ACS. We were also delighted to welcome children from St Illtyd's, Sofrydd, Cwm and Willowtown.

After a warm welcome in the theatre, learners were divided into Team 7 groups for next year, providing the first chance to meet their new teachers and classmates. Group photographs were taken for posterity (and to give everyone a laugh when they leave in Year 11!) and summer homework was given - setting expectations for the next five years!

A well-earned break was followed by the opportunity to experience a full, one-hour lesson. Subjects included:



DT (Resistant Materials) - studying and creating structures

Welsh - building 'sport' vocabulary through interactive learning

DT (Food) - preparing and making a delicious fruit salad

Art - producing oil pastel pictures of bugs

An hour spent with the PE department on the 3G pitch helped work off a healthy canteen lunch, before returning to the theatre for a Harry Potter-style 'hat-sorting' ceremony. Sadly, Mr James's hat wasn't able to talk, but learners were allocated houses anyway!

In the evening, it was the turn of parents and carers to visit, with a hugely impressive number - more than 110 - taking the opportunity to meet teachers and staff.

Thanks to everyone for making the day such a success!

We look forward to seeing them all again on September 1st - a first day for all of us at our newly-named Abertillery Learning Community!



Spotlight on: Deri Bull

Deri Bull, a year 10 Abertillery pupil, has just been crowned Welsh boxing Champion for the second year running in the 57kg category. Deri only took up boxing three years ago and has been fighting competitively for just two years. To date he has been novice champion, Welsh schoolboy champion, and Welsh junior champion as well as winning two bronze medals in the British championships. Deri, who has always been keen on combat sports, first started going to a boxing gym for fun with a friend. When he moved house to Ebbw Vale he began training at Heads of the Valleys ABC and within two weeks he had his first fight. Deri has had 15 fights in total and has won 10. He has never been knocked out and when he has lost it has only been on a 'couple of points.' Deri trains 5-6 times a week and is also a keen runner and gym user who takes his diet and fitness very seriously. His family are supportive of his sport and his dad has been at every single one of his matches. Deri, whose boxing idols include Tyson, has set his sights on winning the British Championships and hopes that he could one day be professional.



Girls trip to Celtic Manor

On 29th April 2016, 23 young women from year 7, 8 & 9 attended the Full Circle, Girls into Alternative Careers event at the Celtic Manor. The day began with seminars from very successful women from numerous different industries. Some of these were:

- Jessica Jones, Young Engineer of the Year 2012
- Lydia Lewis, Oxford University & United Nations
- Polly James, Capital FM DJ

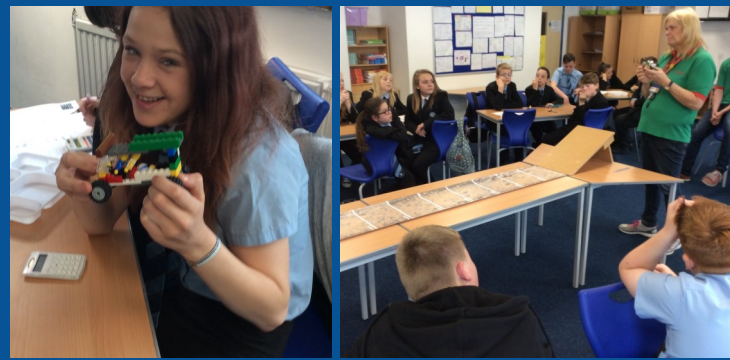
The group were then given the opportunity to attend workshops in the convention centre of the Celtic Manor. These included Civil Engineering, The RAF, The Army, mechanics, construction, sport science, forensics, The Police force and working with ITV Wales and the BBC.

As the day came to a close the girls were very enthusiastic and keen to discuss and consider non-traditional roles. Some of the young women stated, "women have a larger variation of work choices than we realise", "women can do any job they want", "believing in yourself is important" and "there are many jobs that are important to women, not just to men". We are sure they have been inspired!



Technique Cardiff visit the maths department

Key Stage three learners enjoyed fun, interactive sessions delivered by Technique Cardiff in our school. They took part in themed activities that included making tracks and designing and building their own theme park. To complete the tasks they had to use basic calculation skills, budgeting and team work. Great fun was had by all!





Sports Roundup: Athletics and Rounders

This has been a busy season for sporting activity! In the summer term the PE department have taken teams to five separate athletics tournaments and 9 rounders matches. In Athletics Abertillery Comrehensive has been represented at a year seven and eight tournament, a year nine and ten tournament, a whole school tournament and two county tournaments.



Athletics Stars

Michael Owen 1500m 4.59
 Maisie Perace 1500m 5.42
 Tommy Chislett hurdles 16.60, high jump 1.20m
 Chin Bui long jump 4.21m
 Ieuan Taylor javelin 21.53m
 Jack Thomas hurdles 15.80
 Ryan Meredith
 Mason Sharpe



Rounders Stars

Katie Stokes
 Holly Overfield
 Millie Smith
 Jamie Lee Preece
 Ellie Gough
 Bryoni Gallier Morgan
 Ellie Boulter
 Lowri Greenough
 Masie Glastonbury

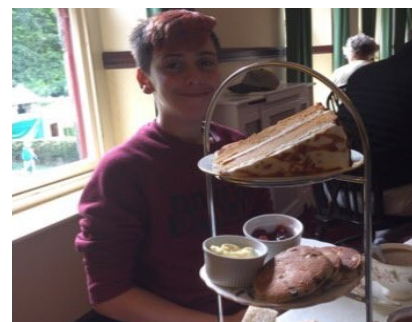
Year 9 and 10 Canoeing Trip

Adventurous year 9 and 10 pupils from Learning Support and Engage enjoyed a day of canoeing down the river Wye with Mr Sims and Mrs Williams. They began at Glasbury on Wye and canoed an impressive six miles to Hay on Wye. The trip was very safe and successful with no major mishaps or capsizing drama—many of the pupils had canoed with the school before and all thoroughly enjoyed it. There was time for swimming in the river as well as canoeing and they were lucky enough to have great weather for the day. All in all, a lovely team building reward trip for a group of pupils who have been working really hard this year. A big thank you to the staff who organised and supported it! Diolch pawb!



Katelyn Harrison runs for a great cause

Katelyn Harrison from year 9 completed the Rainbow Run at Bryn Bach Park in Tredegar on Saturday July 9th. Katelyn ran with her mum to complete the 5k distance in under two hours. She found the event exhausting but is so proud of her well deserved medal. Katelyn and her mum were raising money for Ty Hafan who provide respite care for Katelyn's brother. They managed to raise an astonishing £200. What a wonderful way to spend a weekend: well done Katelyn!



Bradley Hardin and Callum Gilgrass enjoy afternoon tea at St Fagans as part of their Welsh culture module they are studying in Engage with Mr Flynn.





Abertillery pupils wow in AYDMS production of Les Miserables

Abertillery Youth Drama and Musical Society produced a hugely successful, sell out production of Les Miserables, at the Metropole Theatre, March 15th-19th. The cast was made up, predominantly of Abertillery Comprehensive learners, both current and ex learners. The principle cast list consisted of 90% Abertillery Comprehensive current and ex learners; Jordan Jones – Jean Valjean, Jack Green – Javert, Beth Tidey – Fantine, Cain Thomas – Marius, Macy Landon-Jones – Cosette, Blain Hunter – Enjolras, Mikey Fantham – Thenardier, Sophie Davies – Madam Thendardier.

Exceptional feedback was given on opening night, from one of the Gwent Drama League representatives, stating that it was 'the best amateur production he had ever seen of Les Miserables'. He also commented highly of Jordan Jones' rendition of Bring Him Home. The ten nominations that AYDMS has received, for Gwent Drama League Awards, speaks volumes of how successful the production was.

Noda (National Operatic and Dramatic Association) said of the show "This was a first class production. All the principles were very well cast and enhanced their roles. Jordan Jones, gave a very mature performance as Jean Valjean, and his singing and acting were first rate. I was really impressed with Jack Green as Javert, his acting and singing were outstanding and he kept the characterisation all the way through his performance. Cosette (Macy Landon Jones) Fantine (Beth Tidey) show maturity that belied their ages, well done to all."



Thoroughly Modern Millie

This year the performing arts department put on another outstanding sell out show: Thoroughly Modern Millie, a musical with music by Jeanine Tesori and lyrics by Dick Scanlan. Taking place in New York City in 1922, Thoroughly Modern Millie tells the story of young Millie Dillmount, who has just moved to the city in search of a new life for herself. It's a New York full of intrigue and jazz - a time when women were entering the workforce and the rules of love and social behaviour were changing forever. Filled with frisky flappers, dashing leading men and a dragon-lady of a villainess, it was a perfectly constructed evening of madcap merriment for all who watched it. The lead roles were played by Lauren Barrett (Millie), Sian McLaughlin (Miss Dorothy), Blain Hunter (Jimmy) and Ethan Pascoe (Trevor Gray). The reaction from the audiences was overwhelmingly positive with people being blown away yet again by the amazing talent this is to be found in our school. The confidence and commitment of our pupils was evident as they took to the stage to belt out huge show tunes and show off fancy footwork in complicated dance sequences. Well done to all in-



Year 9 learners enjoy a free trip to the theatre

Learners in year 9 were all given the fantastic opportunity to attend a performance in Cardiff New Theatre, at no cost to themselves. The school footed the bill for transport and tickets leaving the learners free to enjoy a lovely afternoon out and a cultural experience that is unaffordable to many. As a school we feel it is important for learners to be able to enjoy these opportunities and for educational and cultural experiences to be available to all, not according to your postcode or level of household income. The year 9 learners were given a choice of watching *Goodnight Mister Tom*, a play about the life of an evacuee during the Second World War, or *Guys and Dolls*, a musical about gangsters and gambling. Many pupils who are going on to study GCSE drama opted to watch *Goodnight Mister Tom* as it offered a chance to see a range of stagecraft techniques in action. It was fascinating to see how they dealt with the adaptation of a book, that includes live animals and the theme of war, into a play performed on a relatively small stage. Both trips were hugely successful and staff who accompanied were very proud of the pupils' good behaviour throughout the day. Members of the theatre staff and the general public remarked on the exceptional conduct of our pupils and praised them for their manners and obedience.



Holocaust Memorial Evening

This year's annual Holocaust Memorial Day was commemorated with a performance from pupils in year 7, 8 & 9. The learners worked with a Performing Arts Professional to create their own performance about discrimination and stereotyping in the modern day world. The learners performed in front of their families, school staff and members of the local community. The Mayor and Youth Mayor of Blaenau Gwent also attended the performance and congratulated the learners on their hard work.



Past Pupils' Success

Life doesn't end when you finish at ACS and neither, we hope, does your relationship with our school community. We enjoy celebrating the successes of past pupils just as much as we do those of our present pupils. We like to follow the stories and journeys of our pupils as they go out into the world to begin their careers and pursue their dreams.

Chloe Chivers (ACS 10-15)

Ex Abertillery student Chloe Chivers scored a late header to rescue a draw for the Wales Women's football team in their opening Game of the Cyprus Cup against Finland. Chloe, who is still only 17, plays club football for Cwmbran Celtic and last year was studying GCSEs here at Abertillery Comprehensive. Chloe, who started the season with Wales Under 17's, came on as a late substitute to achieve her first full cap. Chloe clearly has an exciting career ahead of her and we look forward to watching her develop at the top of Women's sport in Wales. Well done Chloe we are all extremely proud of you.



Richard Ward (ACS 07-12)

Richard Ward was a prominent member of brass bands and orchestras in our local area while a pupil at ACS but since leaving he has distinguished himself as a highly successful trumpet player. He is just coming to the end of his second year at the prestigious Birmingham Conservatoire where he is studying a four year BMus music course. Richard is currently enjoying time in Canada where he was selected to play as part of an international orchestra. As well as playing 1st trumpet in the orchestra he has the opportunity to explore the Olympic resort, go canoeing and BBQ in the mountains. Richard has also played with the European Youth Brass Band, the National Youth Brass Band of Great Britain, the National Youth Brass Band of Wales, Birmingham Philharmonic Orchestra and the Whistler Institute Orchestra. We don't know how he finds the time but look forward to seeing what he does next!



Lewis Hayes (ACS 10-15)

Lewis Hayes, now 17 years old, has become a champion fighter since leaving school and has recently returned from a title fight in America. He fights at Celtic Pride martial arts gym in Abertillery and with the Pedro Bessa Brazilian Jujitsu team. Lewis started training at the age of 15 under Coach Greg Creel and trains from 5 sessions a week to sometimes twice a day. Lewis fights in the male Juvenile category (-18 years old) and the adult category (18-31 years old) at medium heavy weight. Impressively, a lot of his medals have come from fighting in the adults category while he was still just 16 years old. His sport has taken him around the world already; from fighting in Lisbon, Portugal to California, USA. Over the last year he has gained medals in the following categories: Double Gold in the British Open 2015 and 2016, Gold in the European Championships in Lisbon, Portugal, Silver in the world championships in California, Gold and Silver in the Bristol Open in Hereford and double Gold in the adults divisions BJJ 24/7. This is all while studying full time at college! Congratulations Lewis!





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