

# Spring Newsletter 2026

*The River centre 3-16 Learning community*



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[www.trc3-16.co.uk](http://www.trc3-16.co.uk)



@Rivercentre316



In this Newsletter:

What has each campus been doing this term



## Primary Campus

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Tredegar NP22 4PY

## Secondary/Ty Afon

River Centre 3-16 Learning Community  
Pontygof  
Ebbw Vale  
NP23 5AZ

# Message from the Head Teacher

## Message from the Headteacher – Spring Term

Dear Parents/Guardians and Students,

As we reach the end of a busy and productive spring term, I wanted to take a moment to specifically celebrate the incredible hard work our students have put in over the last few weeks.

From the focus shown in their learning spaces to the energy brought to our outdoor learning offer, the progress made across all year groups have been wonderful to see. I am particularly proud of the resilience and determination shown by our students as they have tackled new challenges, sat assessments, and supported one another. It is their dedication that makes the River Centre such a vibrant learning community.

Whether they have been mastering difficult concepts, representing the school in sport, or simply showing up every day with a positive attitude, their efforts have not gone unnoticed.

I would also like to extend my sincere thanks to parents/guardians, we truly value the partnership we have with you in supporting your child's growth and wellbeing.

I hope you all have a wonderful easter break and look forward to seeing everyone return refreshed and ready for the summer term,

Take care,

Kieran.



To help cut costs Mr Dash starts work on a new classroom himself!!



Primary Help Mr Dash with his PPE

# Dosbarth Coch

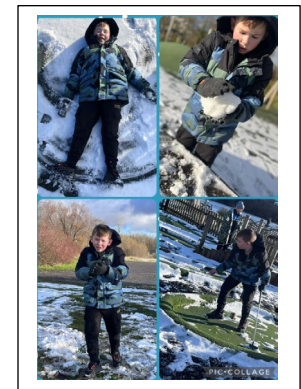
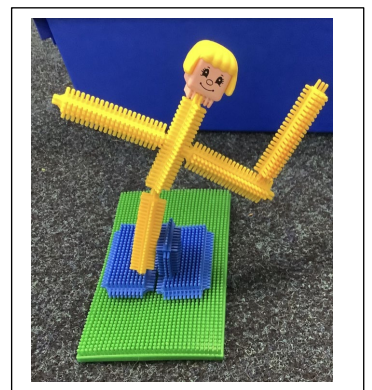
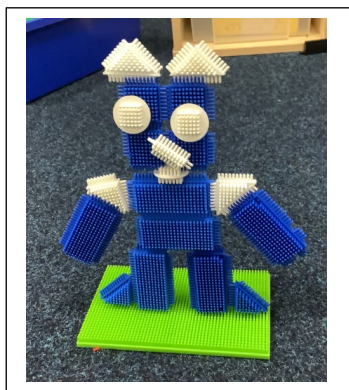
This term, the children in Dosbarth Coch have loved exploring our Frozen topic. We were lucky to experience real snow, which meant the children could build mini snowmen, make snow angels and enjoy winter walks around school. These real experiences helped us talk about the weather, seasons and how our environment changes in winter.

We enjoyed cookery sessions where the children made cream cheese snowmen, ice pops and edible icebergs. These activities supported their independence and early science skills as they learned about melting, freezing and different textures.

In class, we read winter stories such as Jack Frost and Dear Snowman, which inspired lots of lovely discussion and creative work. The children also explored sensory materials like snow dough and fluffy paint to create winter art. We learned about the four seasons and investigated Arctic animals and icy habitats through hands-on experiments.

A highlight of the term was our exciting visit from Wild Science. The children were able to meet and even hold animals including a corn snake, guinea pig, quail and a whiptail scorpion. They showed great confidence and curiosity throughout.

We also continued our weekly sessions with Bryn Bach Outdoor Pursuits, where the children lit small fires, toasted marshmallows, helped put up a tent and had a go at archery. These outdoor adventures have been brilliant for building confidence and teamwork.



# Dosbarth Glas

This term we have been to Llangorse climbing centre, climbing, on the high ropes and abseiling.

At Bryn Bach Park we have enjoyed activities including; bushcraft, go-karting, mountain biking and golf at the driving range.

For our topic 'Frozen Kingdom' we have been learning about states of matter and made our own ice lollies and went on a class trip to Subzero which was lots of fun!

We made our own boats out of tin foil to replicate the Titanic and carried out an experiment to test if they would float or sink with and without a hole in the boat.

We had a visit from animal encounters and we enjoyed holding all the different animals and creatures and finding out all about them.

For our new topic 'Fantastic Festivals' we made our own pancakes to celebrate pancake day and the start of Lent.

We took part in a STEM activity with a visitor from LemmieOut and we made steamboats. They used lots of tools and really enjoyed it.

We also took part in a science session from Hidden Universe which was very interesting.

We enjoyed dressing up as a class and school to celebrate World Book Day. We created our own book covers for our World Book Day characters.



# Dosbarth Melyn

In Melyn we have:

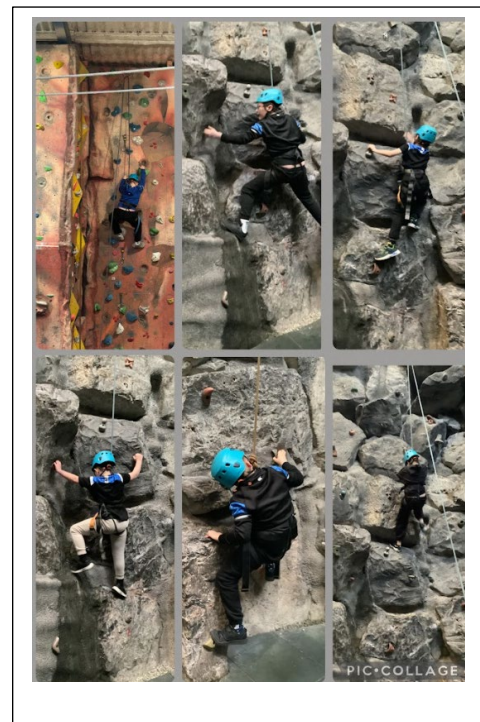
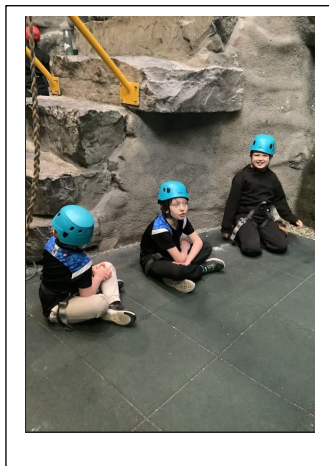
Visited Llangorse Lake Climbing Centre where numerous class members faced their fears. They have walked high wires, been through caves and climbed high walls.

At Bryn Bach Park our learners have been in the artificial cave, mountain biking, climbing, wood craft, kayaking and golf driving range. They have been in all weathers and gave 100% each time.

We were visited by a Specialist Science Teacher who taught us about circuits and electricity.

On world book day we had fun dressing up as our favourite characters and we were joined by The South Wales Ghostbusters and their Ecto 1 Car.

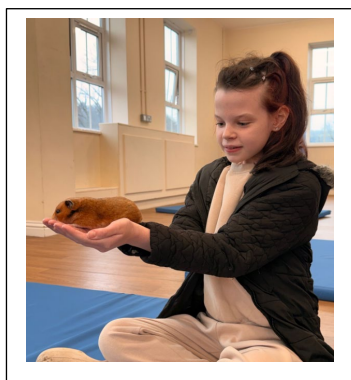
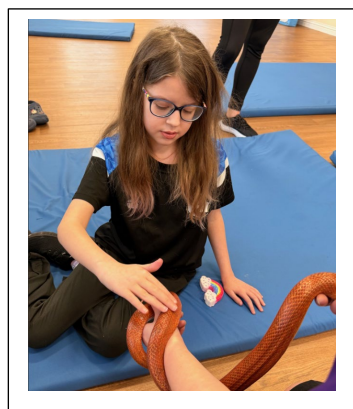
We also had a chance to take part in visiting workshops where we used thermal imaging cameras, touched meteorites, built steam boats and meet animals during our animal encounters sessions.



# Working in the Garden



# Dosbarth Enfys



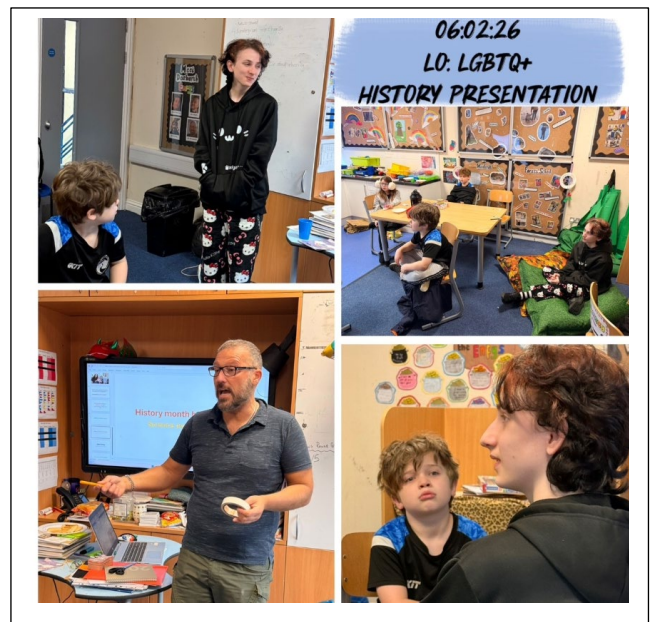
During this term, Dosbarth Enfys have been enjoying learning about cost, value for money and budgeting. We have been on shopping trips to purchase ingredients to make cakes, and of course, we then had to taste them!

We have had the pleasure of taking part in several workshops with visitors to our school. One of our favourites was an animal interactive workshop and showed real bravery in holding all of the animals and insects.

Another great session helped us learn about heat and we got to make our own steam boats. It was fun filling a small pool and watching how the heat boiled the water in the pipes and caused steam which made our boats travel through the water.

We have been learning all about two special days, one in January and the other in February. Santes Dwynwen and St Valentine. We learned that there are lots of similarities between the two festivals but there are also some differences. We also got to practise saying Welsh words and names, which were a bit tricky and sometimes sounded quite funny. We made clay hearts which we are planning on selling in our class Enterprise.

In addition to all of these exciting things, we have continued our sessions at Brynbach Park and enjoyed nature walks, orienteering, climbing, karting and especially Bush craft, where we end each session toasting marshmallows around the camp fire.



# World Book day



# The Cwtch

This term in the Cwtch has been very busy!

We have had lots of focus on Well-Being, from nature walks, visits to Bryn Bach park, Animal and sand therapy, off site trips, dancing, singing and much more!

During sessions of Sensology we have been lucky to try some delicious snacks such as sweets and crisps however we also tried Cranberries and lemon juice which were not so nice! Bucket sessions have been very popular amongst the pupils who have really enjoyed taking part and getting messy.

Miss Silverthorne has carried out lots of Lego Therapy with the children on a one to one and group basis which has been lots of fun! Da Iawn to everyone who took part and created amazing Lego builds!

Lots of Literacy and Numeracy intervention has taken place with Miss Middleton this term focusing on individual targets for each pupil. We have had a huge success with the results from our Reading tests this term.

We have lots more planned and cannot wait to get started next term 😊

The Cwtch was set up to cover aspects of wellbeing and intervention here at the Primary Campus. We provide a safe, calm space for pupils to come and have some key wellbeing time to assist with their learning and development. In our room we have access to a range of wellbeing and emotion activities. We thrive on developing our pupils through the medium of therapeutic approaches to teaching. This include therapeutic stories, role play, Lego therapy and sensory stimulation.



# River Centre Salon

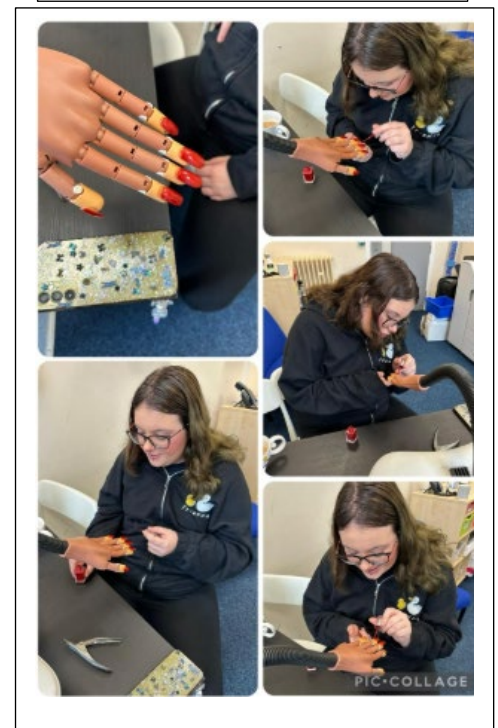
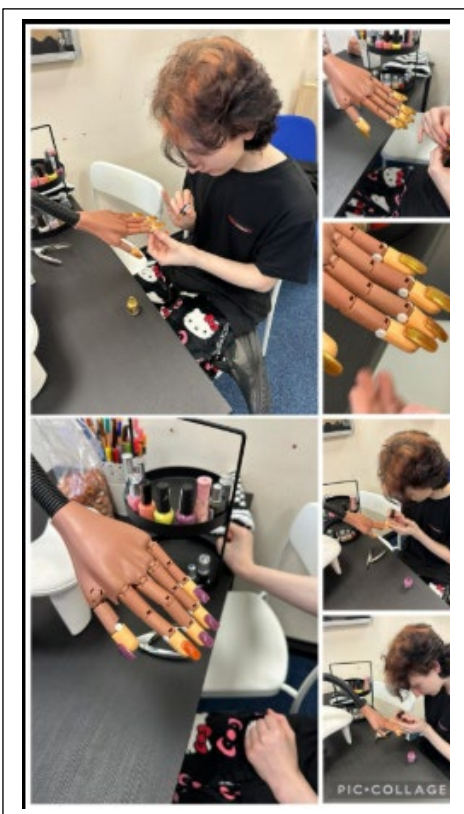
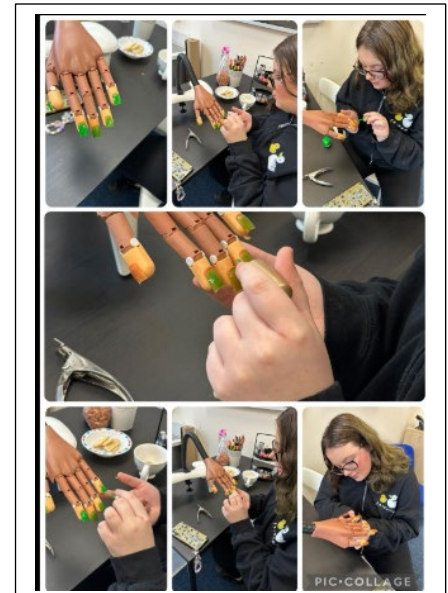
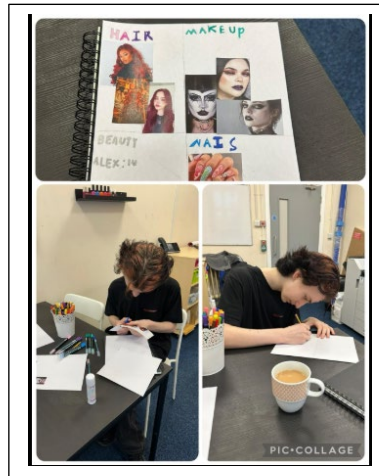
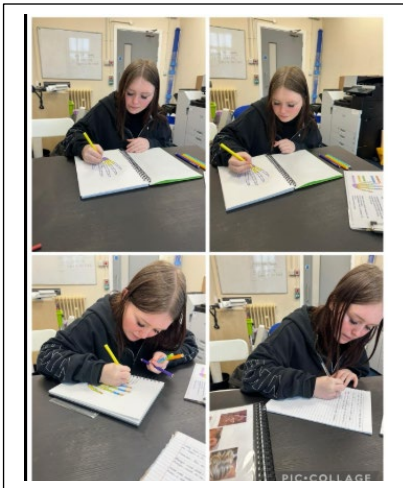
The River Centre Salon is a new addition to our school, taught by Miss Dash.

During this term at the River Centre Salon, students have begun working towards their BTEC Level 1 qualification in Hair and Beauty. So far, the course has included a balanced mixture of both practical activities and theory-based learning, helping students to develop their knowledge as well as their hands-on skills within a salon environment.

Students have taken part in creative tasks such as designing leaflets and advertisements to invite people to an upcoming pamper day, allowing them to practise promoting salon services and thinking about how to attract clients. They have also had the opportunity to take part in a visit to a warehouse to purchase their course tunic, helping them prepare for working professionally in the salon.

Alongside these experiences, students have begun learning about health and safety within the salon, including identifying potential risks and hazards and understanding how to work safely when providing treatments.

Overall, students have made a positive start to their qualifications, building confidence, developing new skills, and beginning to understand the expectations of working in a professional salon environment.



# Football



Over several weeks The DofE group spent time working alongside the dedicated ground staff at Bryn Bach Parc to help restore and remake a well-used path winding through the park. Armed with tools, teamwork, and plenty of determination, the young participants cleared overgrown sections, levelled uneven ground, and laid fresh material to create a safer and more accessible route for visitors. The collaboration not only improved the local environment but also gave the group valuable hands-on experience, a sense of pride in their community, and a deeper appreciation of the effort that goes into maintaining such a beautiful public space.



# Btec Cookery



# Stem-Ex

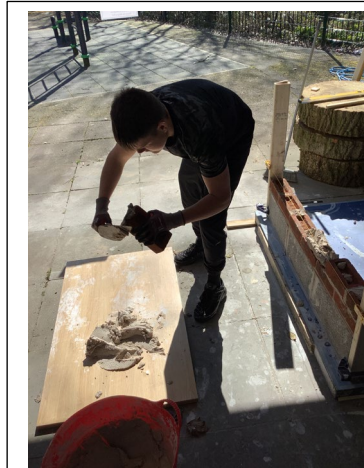
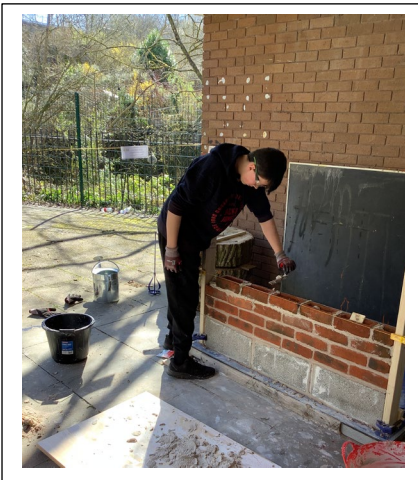
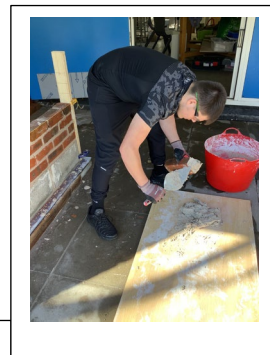
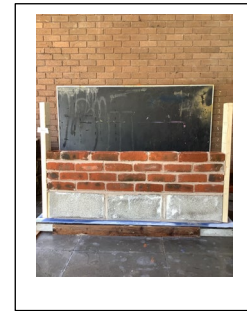
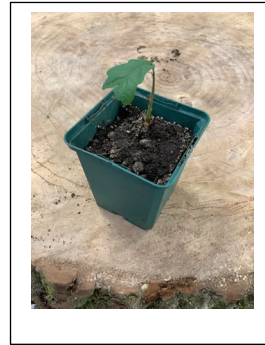
## A Royal Visit and Building Our Future!

What a truly memorable start to the season we have had at the **River Centre**! We are bursting with pride following our recent trip to the **Senedd in Cardiff**, where our pupils had the incredible honour of meeting the **Duke of Edinburgh**. To mark the occasion, His Royal Highness planted an oak seed, which our children have affectionately named "**The Royal Oak**." We are thrilled to share that we now have our very own royal tree growing right here on our grounds—a lasting legacy of a very special day.

Our commitment to the environment continues to flourish; as a certified **bee-friendly eco-school**, the children have been Busy Bees themselves, caring for our local wildlife and watching our green spaces thrive.

In the classroom—and on the building site—progress is "flowing lovely!" Our **GCSE Construction** students are making fantastic strides, and even some of our staff couldn't resist getting stuck in. A huge well done to our **Headteacher** and **Cookery Teacher**, who both rolled up their sleeves to try their hand at bricklaying!

As we head into this beautiful spring, we want to say how incredibly proud we are of every pupil's hard work and progress. There is a wonderful energy around the school, and we can't wait to see what



Teegan has used narrative and direct speech to create a draft comic strip of the shared the, "The Clocktower at Bletchmere". She then edited and used Microsoft copilot to create a second draft.

Alex wrote a diary entry from the point of view of the monster, from Frankenstein.

Corey chose his favourite football team to create an advert for Real Madrid Chocolate.

Brookie used rhyming slang to create a similar advert.

Blake won the St. Davids Day Competition, describing Wales using WordArt



Dear Diary,

The second I opened my eye to the glaring lights, my eyes stung and a pounding filled my head. Soon my vision cleared and I saw someone... the man I was named after my creator, Victor Frankenstein.

He stood before me a twist of horror and fear flashed across his face as he stumbled back nearly tripping over his own feet. The way he looked at me... the way he looked at his own creation, with so much disgust made a fire in me burn, burn brighter than his hatred for me.

I slowly stood up to confront him but he only shuddered back, further feeling the fire within me that made me want to lash out and put him through the same pain I did. I reached out, not in anger but a slow calm way... the way I wish I was treated him when I first open my eyes... but no, he only pushed me away.

"GET AWAY", he screamed towards me. This broke me! I lunged towards him and slammed him into the wall with a thud that shook the laboratory.

I ran out into the cold alpine night. The harsh snow stabbled like a thousand cuts as I ran out onto the thick ice. I ran through the snowy hills that even escaped out the wide landscape.

Alex R



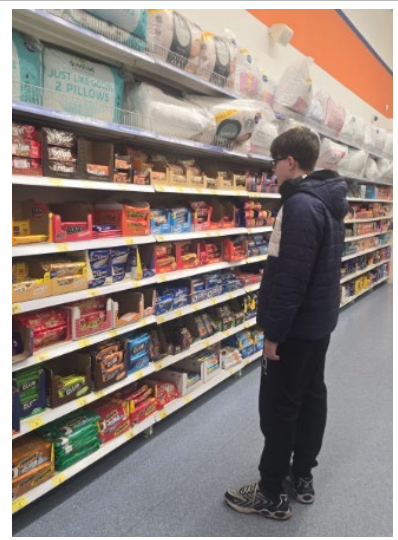
The Welsh Dragon by Blake



# Mathematics

This term, pupils have explored a wide range of mathematical skills, including algebra, angles, fractions, rotations, and transformations.

We also took learning out into the community, using real-life maths while shopping at B&M, Home Bargains, and Ebbw Vale Market for school supplies and ingredients for our cooking sessions. In addition, our KS4 pupils have been working incredibly hard as they prepare for their upcoming GCSE exams, showing great effort and determination throughout the term.



# Humanities

It's been a very busy term in Humanities.

Key Stage 3 started by finishing off their work on Weather and Climate. After playing the role of weather reporters and creating their own forecasts, we looked at tropical storms. We looked at where and how different storms start, and the effects they can have on the communities they hit.

This led nicely onto climate change, and how our actions impact the weather we experience every day. We can now identify substances that harm our environment and ozone layer, and understand the role we can play in not only preventing any further harm, but start to repair the damage that has already been done. They finished off their topic by writing a letter explaining the steps they recommend the school takes to try and achieve 'Net Zero'.

They gave some very interesting and thought-provoking suggestions, which was a credit to them all! Now, we have moved on to the Second World War, starting with the conditions in Germany that led to the war. They have analysed some historical sources and have even attempted a GCSE question on the build up to war in Germany.

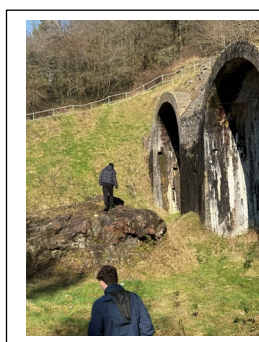
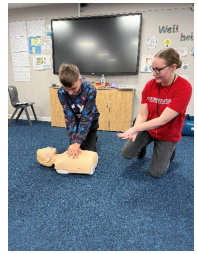
It's getting close to crunch time for our Year 11's now, with exam season just around the corner, and the end of secondary school in sight for them. This means they are all working diligently to get as many qualifications as possible, with the King's Trust the focus in Humanities. It's all about fine tuning for them now, as they comb through their work to make sure everything is up to standard and they are confident they will achieve their qualifications. Meanwhile, Year 10 are also working on their King's Trust booklets, hoping to get their qualifications in the bag before gaining even more next year!

Another wonderful term in Humanities, and the team can't wait to dive into the summer term as everyone continues to grow their skills and gain some qualifications!

# Health and Wellbeing

## Street Doctors

Delivered by Rachel from our local youth service, the Street Doctors programme provided pupils with vital, real-life skills that could make a difference in emergency situations. The sessions focused on the dangers of knife crime, how to respond effectively in a crisis, and essential first aid knowledge. Pupils learned how to perform CPR, check for breathing, and respond calmly and safely in potentially life-threatening situations, equipping them with confidence and practical skills for the future.



## Cynefin

As part of our Cynefin work, pupils explored the rich industrial heritage of our local area through engaging field trips to Sirhowy Ironworks and Bedwellty House. They learned why our towns are nestled deep within the valleys and how the iron and coal industries shaped not only Blaenau Gwent, but had a global impact. From producing materials that helped build the railroads of the American Wild West to the bricks that constructed the towering skyscrapers of New York, pupils gained a powerful understanding of how our local history connects to the wider world.

## Army Visit

We were delighted to welcome our local Army Community Officers, who delivered an engaging and informative day for our pupils. They shared valuable insights into life in the Army, including the wide range of career pathways available and the skills required to succeed. Pupils had the opportunity to ask questions and learn about the benefits and experiences that come with a career in the armed forces, making it an inspiring and memorable visit.

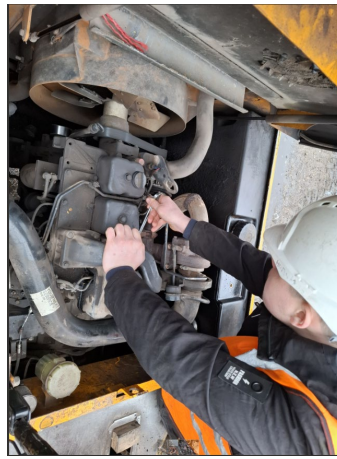


# ARC

Spring cleaning the vehicles after a long wet winter.



Maintenance time for the Dumper truck.



All the Arc pupils have worked well through a particularly wet and challenging winter term, learning new skills and building confidence.



## **Learning, Exploring and Achieving Together**

This term at Ty Afon Campus has been filled with curiosity, creativity and hands-on learning as our students explored the world around them through science, teamwork and thoughtful discussion. Their enthusiasm has been evident in every project, and we are delighted to share some of the highlights.

Our Earth & Space theme began with an exciting investigation into volcanoes. Students explored the structure of volcanoes and the reasons behind their eruptions, learning about the geological forces that shape our planet. To deepen their understanding, they constructed their own model volcanoes and used chemistry to create realistic eruptions. The combination of scientific knowledge and practical experimentation made this a memorable experience for everyone involved.

The theme continued as pupils turned their attention to space exploration. They investigated the challenges of space travel by experimenting with water-propelled bottle rockets, testing how different fuel levels affected lift-off. Through these experiments, students gained insight into the physics of thrust, motion and the delicate balance required for a successful launch. The excitement of each countdown brought the science to life in a way that was both educational and inspiring.

Teamwork also played a central role in our learning this term. Students were challenged to work together to design and build a bridge capable of spanning half a metre and supporting a 1 kg load, using only lollipop sticks. This activity encouraged communication, problem-solving and perseverance as pupils tested their ideas, refined their designs and supported one another throughout the process. The results were impressive and demonstrated just how effectively our learners can collaborate when faced with a challenge.

Students also had the opportunity to attend an on-site careers fair, where they were able to speak directly with college representatives about their post-16 pathways. This face-to-face experience helped them gain a clearer understanding of the courses, apprenticeships and opportunities available to them, supporting them as they begin to make informed decisions about their futures.

We were also delighted to welcome Dotty, our little therapy dog, to the campus. Students had the chance to meet her, spend time with her and learn about the benefits therapy animals can bring to a school environment. Dotty's calm and friendly presence helped students feel more relaxed and supported, and her visit encouraged conversations about wellbeing, emotional regulation and the importance of taking moments to pause. Therapy dogs like Dotty can help reduce stress, boost mood and create a sense of comfort, and her visit was a highlight for many of our learners.

Our GCSE students have also been working exceptionally hard on their English oracy non-examination assessments. They researched and delivered presentations on current issues such as whether cannabis should be legalised in Wales and the topic of immigration. Both students approached their tasks with maturity, ambition and confidence, using well-chosen vocabulary and evidence to support their viewpoints. Following their individual presentations, they took part in a group discussion exploring whether dogs are a key part of our lives. They engaged thoughtfully with one another's ideas, shared data and drew balanced conclusions, presenting themselves with clarity and professionalism throughout.

It has been a fantastic term of growth and discovery at Ty Afon Campus. From erupting volcanoes to launching rockets, from engineering challenges to powerful oracy performances, and from careers exploration to the joy of meeting Dotty, our students have shown curiosity, resilience and a real passion for learning. We are incredibly proud of everything they have achieved and look forward to even more exciting opportunities ahead.

