



Issue 4

# The Griffin

Ysgol Uwchradd Darland - Darland High School



October 2024

## *A message from the Headteacher*

Dear Parents, Carers, and Members of the Darland Community,

As we reach the end of the first half-term of this academic year, I am excited to share with you some of the key highlights from the past few weeks. It's been a dynamic start to the school year, with our students excelling in their academic pursuits, contributing to the local community, and engaging in a range of extracurricular activities. Our newsletter reflects the incredible achievements and spirit of our school, as well as updates on important initiatives.

Looking ahead, as we move into the second half of the autumn term, there is much to look forward to at Darland High School. From academic progress to community involvement, we are committed to providing our students with a well-rounded education that fosters both personal and academic growth.

Please keep an eye on our website and Class Charts for updates on upcoming events, including parent-teacher consultations, our Whole-School Menstruation Education Day, and various extracurricular activities.

Thank you for your continued support. Together, we will ensure that Darland High School remains a place where every student can thrive.

Yours sincerely,

Joanne Lee  
Headteacher



### Dates for the diary

- 4th November - School Starts
- 21st November - Year 10 Parents Evening
- 2nd - 12th December - Year 11 Examinations
- 12th December - Year 9 Parents Evening
- 16th December - Year 11 Group Photo
- 17th December – Dazzling December Show @ 5.30 p.m.
- 18th December - Christmas Lunch
- 19th December – Christmas Fayre / Christmas Jumper Day
- School closes for Christmas





## *Darland High School's Languages Department Hosts Successful Cake Competition at The Golden Lion, Rossett*

The Darland High School Languages Department recently hosted a cake competition, inviting pupils to showcase not only their baking skills but also their creativity through cake design. The event brought together students and the local community for a fun and delicious celebration. Cakes were crafted by the talented pupils, displayed at our very successful Open Evening on 25<sup>th</sup> September and later judged by a panel of community members at the Golden Lion in Rossett.

The competition highlighted the students' fantastic designs and unique recipes, making it an unforgettable event. Several standout creations emerged as winners in different categories.

### **Best Tasting Cake Winner: Malwina Bylina**

Malwina's cake stole the show with its delicate texture and flavour. Our expert judges could hardly believe how light her cake was! Baked from a traditional Polish recipe, the cake featured layers of sponge and cream that made it a crowd favourite. It was clear to all that Malwina's creation was a true winner.

### **Special Mention: Senay Fakhraddin**

Senay's Trilece earned a special mention, impressing everyone with its rich and indulgent flavour. The staff at the Golden Lion were particularly enamoured with the cake, commenting that it was almost too delicious to part with! Senay's take on the classic Balkan dessert was a highlight of the competition.





## Best Decorated Cake – Open Evening: Sophie Church

Sophie Church wowed both the judges and visitors at Darland’s Open Evening with her impressive Wales Flag cake. Scoring an impressive 46 votes, Sophie’s patriotic design showcased her artistic flair and passion for her country. The bright colours and intricate details made her cake a standout in the competition, easily earning her first place in this category.



## Best Decorated Cake – Rossett Community Group: Lexi Shaw

Lexi Shaw took the concept of cake design to a new level with her astonishing illusion cake. Her creation, which resembled a bowl of spaghetti complete with a hovering fork, left the judges speechless. The attention to detail and creativity behind her design were nothing short of incredible, securing her a well-deserved first place.

The competition was a wonderful success, celebrating not only the students’ baking talents but also their connection to their cultural heritage through recipes. The participation of the local community as judges added a special touch to the event, fostering a sense of togetherness.

Madame Wood, Head of Languages said “Congratulations to all the winners and participants! The Languages Department looks forward to making this an annual tradition.”







## *Darland School supports Chester Marathon*

In a remarkable display of community spirit, students from Darland High School once again supported the Chester Marathon on Sunday, 6<sup>th</sup> October, playing a vital role in ensuring thousands of runners stayed hydrated throughout the race. This year marked the school's 10th consecutive year of involvement, making it a beloved tradition for both students and the local community.

Over 30 enthusiastic students and staff, led by Mrs. Gardner Elias, Head of the PE Department, stationed themselves at the Darland Lane water station, where they handed out water to marathon participants. Although a simple task, their contribution was critical to the well-being of the runners during the gruelling 26.2-mile race.

Mrs. Gardner Elias expressed her pride in the students, stating, "It's wonderful to see our students so actively engaged in community service. The Chester Marathon is a major event in our region, and being part of it gives our students a chance to experience the positive impact of helping others."

As runners approached the Darland water station, they were greeted by the friendly and smiling faces of the student volunteers. With encouraging words and bottles of water, the students not only provided physical support but also boosted the morale of the marathoners, helping them push through one of the toughest sections of the race.





# The Griffin

4<sup>th</sup> Edition

Beyond the immediate benefits of their support at the marathon, the experience of community work offers long-term rewards for the students. Engaging in charity work allows young people to develop a sense of responsibility and empathy. It teaches them the importance of giving back, not just to their local community, but also to society at large.

For the students of Darland High School, participating in the Chester Marathon is an opportunity to build critical life skills. Teamwork, time management, and communication are all vital in coordinating efforts to ensure the water station operates smoothly. Moreover, students gain first-hand experience in problem-solving and leadership, as they manage a fast-paced environment with high stakes for the runners.

Involvement in community service also fosters emotional growth. Seeing the tangible impact of their actions can boost self-esteem and provide a sense of accomplishment. Additionally, it helps students develop a strong work ethic, preparing them for future academic and professional challenges.

The Chester Marathon, one of the region's most popular races, continues to thrive due in part to the contributions of local schools like Darland High. The students' participation highlights the power of community involvement and its role in shaping compassionate, engaged citizens. Through this tradition, Darland High School reinforces its commitment to nurturing well-rounded individuals who value teamwork, leadership, and service. The school's contribution to the marathon serves as a shining example of how education extends beyond the classroom, offering real-world lessons in personal development and community engagement.



*Courage, Honesty, Resilience, Respect, Kindness*

*Dewrder, Gonestrwydd, Dyfalbarhad, Parch, Caredigwydd*



## *Promoting Education and Breaking Barriers*

### **Darland High School's Free Sanitary Products Initiative.**

In 2023, Darland High School launched a groundbreaking initiative that has since become a cornerstone of its commitment to student well-being. The school began distributing free sanitary products to students, a bold move aimed at addressing a critical yet often overlooked need. The program has steadily grown in popularity, and its positive impact on the school community is clear. By offering free sanitary products, the school has taken a strong stand on an important issue: access to essential hygiene products should never be a barrier to a student's education or confidence.

The initiative started small but has gained momentum, as both students and staff have seen its value in promoting inclusivity and equality. Assistant Headteacher Mrs Easton emphasises the importance of this effort, stating, "We believe sanitary products should be free, and every girl should have access to what she needs without feeling embarrassed or anxious." This view is shared widely by educators and health professionals, as it aligns with the growing movement across the UK and beyond to ensure that period poverty does not negatively affect students' attendance, performance, or self-esteem.

Beyond just providing these essential products, the school has been using this opportunity to open up conversations about menstruation and break down the barriers that often make the topic taboo. By normalising discussions around periods, Darland High is fostering an environment where students can learn about their bodies without fear or shame.

A significant step in this journey was the event held on Thursday, October 10th, during the Year 7 Settling-In evening. This small-scale gathering marked the first time the initiative was promoted in conjunction with a Parents' evening. Parents and students alike were introduced to the free sanitary products. The event was warmly received, and students expressed gratitude for the school's proactive approach in addressing such a personal and often uncomfortable topic.





# The Griffin

4<sup>th</sup> Edition

On Friday, October 25th, the school will host a whole-school event dedicated to menstruation education, which is expected to be the most popular yet. This upcoming event will focus on making sanitary products available to all but will also feature an educational session led by the school nurse.

By integrating education and practical support, Darland High is helping to break the silence around periods and ensure that students feel empowered to talk about their health. This initiative is not just about products; it is about promoting well-being, respect, and understanding for all students.

In the years to come, the school hopes to continue expanding the initiative and build on its success. We are optimistic that this effort will inspire other schools to follow suit. Darland High School's commitment to breaking down barriers around menstruation, combined with its progressive stance on providing free sanitary products, ensures that the school remains at the forefront of fostering a supportive and inclusive learning environment for all students.



*Courage, Honesty, Resilience, Respect, Kindness*

*Dewrder, Gonestrwydd, Dyfalbarhad, Parch, Caredigwydd*



## *Darland High School Bucks National Trend in Modern Foreign Language Uptake*

Across the UK, schools have been grappling with a sharp decline in students opting for Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) at GCSE level. However, Darland is standing out as a success story, with an increasing number of pupils choosing French for their GCSEs, defying national trends that have seen significant drops in MFL entries.

Since 2002, the UK has witnessed a worrying reduction in the number of students taking MFL exams. In particular, French GCSE entries have seen a dramatic decline, dropping by nearly two-thirds from 315,000 to just 123,000. German has also suffered a similar fate, further compounding the overall decrease. The rise in Spanish GCSE entries, while encouraging, has not been enough to offset the steep decline in French and German.

In Wales, the situation mirrors that of England. Since 2002, total entries to MFL subjects in Wales have dropped by nearly two-thirds. Again, this is largely attributed to the sharp fall in French GCSE entries. The overall picture presents a challenge for schools trying to maintain a robust MFL offering.

Despite these national trends, Darland High School has managed to sustain strong interest in French. The school has seen high numbers of students selecting French for GCSE, setting it apart from many others that have experienced dwindling MFL uptake. This success is a testament to the school's commitment to language education, the quality of its teaching, and the enthusiasm it fosters in pupils for learning new languages.

Mrs Less expressed pride in the school's achievement:

"In a time when many schools are seeing a significant reduction in MFL entries, it's fantastic to see our students continuing to engage enthusiastically with French. We've worked hard to make language learning both enjoyable and relevant, and I believe that's played a key role in our students' decision to pursue French at GCSE. We are delighted with the continuing success of this subject at GCSE, this summer students achieved 89% A\*-C, we are proud of their success, which is testament to the support and dedication shown by our staff team".





# The Griffin

4<sup>th</sup> Edition

Mrs Wood, Head of Languages at Darland is passionate about students learning many languages. "Studying languages offers a wealth of benefits, both academically and personally. Learning a new language sharpens cognitive abilities, improves memory, and enhances problem-solving skills, all of which support students across their entire academic journey. Additionally, language study fosters cultural awareness, giving students a deeper understanding of global perspectives, customs, and traditions. These skills not only open up opportunities for travel and international connections but also make individuals more adaptable and empathetic in diverse environments.

Choosing French for GCSE adds a distinct advantage, as French remains one of the most widely spoken languages in the world. Mastering French provides access to a wide range of opportunities in higher education, careers, and international affairs. Whether students aspire to work in business, law, tourism, or diplomacy, French opens doors to multinational companies and organisations. Moreover, France is home to many global cultural institutions and scientific research centres, making French a valuable asset for those pursuing careers in the arts, science, or technology."

As the national conversation continues around the importance of language learning in a globalised world, Darland High School remains a beacon of hope, proving that with the right approach, MFL can thrive despite the challenges seen elsewhere.





## *Darland High School Celebrates Outstanding Science GCSE Results: 20% Above National Average*

Darland High School is proud to celebrate its exceptional science GCSE results, which stand an impressive 20% above the national average. This remarkable achievement is a testament to the hard work and dedication of the students, staff, and science leadership at Darland, setting the school apart as a beacon of academic excellence in the field of science education.

The school's science department, led by Head of Science Miss Green and supported by second in science Mr D. Roberts, has seen consistent year-on-year improvement in results. Both Miss Green and Mr Roberts are thrilled with the outcome, attributing the success to the collaborative and supportive ethos of the science team and superb students.

Miss Green expressed her delight, saying, "It's incredibly rewarding to see our students achieve so highly in a subject that is both challenging and essential for their futures. We've been working hard to ensure our science curriculum is engaging, innovative, rigorous and inspiring. These results show that our efforts are paying off and I would like to thank the science teachers and technicians for all their support and hard work." Mr Roberts echoed these sentiments, noting, "Each year, our students continue to raise the bar, and it's a privilege to see them thrive and succeed in science."

One of the key drivers of this success is the school's separate science offer, which is available to the most talented students. This specialised pathway allows students with a passion and aptitude for science to study biology, chemistry, and physics as separate GCSE subjects, giving them a more in-depth understanding and preparation for further scientific studies. This program not only challenges students but also prepares them for higher education and careers in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) fields. The opportunity to delve deeper into science subjects has proven highly beneficial, with seren students consistently excelling in their exams and contributing significantly to the school's overall results.



# The Griffin

4<sup>th</sup> Edition

The governors of Darland High School are equally delighted with the science department's continued success. They commend the leadership and teaching staff for their dedication to fostering a learning environment where students are encouraged to push their boundaries and achieve their best. The governors have also highlighted how these results are setting Darland apart from other schools, further solidifying its reputation as a top-tier institution for science education.

The school's focus on science is not limited to the classroom. Darland's thriving STEM after-school club, led by Dr Moore, has become incredibly popular, offering students a chance to explore scientific topics in a fun, hands-on environment. The club, which covers a range of activities, gives students the opportunity to develop an area of interest in STEM and gain a CREST Award. The success of this club has helped cultivate a genuine enthusiasm for STEM subjects among students, contributing to the exceptional GCSE results seen this year.

The school's leadership, staff, and governors are committed to maintaining and building upon this success. Mrs Lee commented, "These science results are a reflection of the incredible dedication of both students and staff. I am immensely proud of the work being done at Darland, and I'm excited to see how we continue to evolve and improve in the years to come."

With its stellar science GCSE results, innovative programs like separate science for the most able students, and a flourishing STEM club, Darland High School is undoubtedly leading the way in science education. The school's commitment to academic excellence and fostering a love of science in its students is sure to inspire many future scientists, engineers, and innovators.



*Courage, Honesty, Resilience, Respect, Kindness*

*Dewrder, Gonestrwydd, Dyfalbarhad, Parch, Caredigwydd*





## *Additional Learning Needs Provision*

We are proud to announce that our Additional Learning Needs Coordinator (ALNCo), Mrs. Baugh-Hughes, has secured a secondment with the local authority, starting in November. While we will miss her expertise at Darland High, this new role will allow her to share her skills and experience across the region, helping more students access the support they need.



In light of her secondment, we are delighted to welcome Ms. Abel as the interim ALNCo. Ms. Abel has worked closely with Mrs. Baugh-Hughes for many years and brings a wealth of knowledge to the role. We are confident that the transition will be seamless, and that Ms. Abel will continue to provide the excellent support our students with additional learning needs require.

## *Accelerated Maths Programme Success*

Our Accelerated Maths programme for talented Year 10 students continues to be a shining example of academic excellence at Darland High School. This programme offers students the opportunity to take their GCSE Maths exams early, allowing them to challenge themselves and develop their mathematical skills ahead of schedule.

This year's cohort is performing exceptionally well, and we are proud of their commitment and enthusiasm for learning. We are excited to see their continued success as they work towards their early GCSE exams, and we look forward to celebrating their achievements later in the year.

## *Humanities Department - History*

We are extremely excited that 35 year 10 and 11 pupils will be travelling over to Munich next July on the Humanities Trip. It is promising to be a memorable experience with the itinerary focussing on the Nazi Germany component of the History GCSE course. We will visit sites that are important in the story of Nazism from the Ober Saltzburg, Hitler's Eagle's Nest, to Dachau Concentration Camp. Also, to bring us back to the modern world, we will visit Bayern Munich's home, the Allianz Stadium. Watch this space for photos and a 'match report' next summer!



## *Humanities Department - History*

On 22nd September 1934, a devastating explosion ripped through the Dennis Section of the Gresford Colliery. Tragically, there were more men working that shift as many had swapped, or doubled up, so that they could go and watch their beloved Wrexham AFC against Tranmere Rovers the following day. Nobody knows exactly what happened, and many of the reports that may have helped the investigation were destroyed by the mine owners in the days and weeks that followed the disaster. In total, 266 men lost their lives. 263 men who were down in the darkness, and 3 men of the rescue brigade. Only 11 bodies were ever recovered, leaving 255 men entombed forever a mile beneath the paths we walk between Gresford and Borras Head.

On Sunday 22nd September 2024, our senior prefects, Mr Jones, History, and our Head, Mrs Lee, were honoured to attend the 90th Anniversary commemoration service at the pit head wheel memorial, at Gresford Colliery Club. Our senior prefects played a key role in the service by delivering mine workers equipment to the alter as part of the commemorative tribute. On a wet, rainy, and sombre morning, they were fantastic ambassadors for the school. They represented their peers in paying their respects on behalf of our whole school community. The organisers of the event and the Mayor made a point of thanking our pupils for taking part and were grateful that the torch of remembrance was being passed on to the next generation.







## *A fond farewell....*



I am also writing to inform you of the forthcoming retirement of Janice Barnes, our esteemed Business Manager, who will be leaving Darland High School on the 31st of December this year. After 15 years of dedicated service, Janice has decided to step down, and it is with mixed emotions that we prepare to say farewell to such a valued member of our team.

During her time at Darland, Janice has been a steadfast pillar of support, working alongside three headteachers and navigating the ever-changing landscape of education and business management with skill and dedication. Her contributions have been instrumental in ensuring the smooth running of the school, and her deep understanding of both the operational and financial aspects of the school has made her an invaluable asset.

Beyond her professional expertise, Janice has touched the lives of so many within our school community. Her selfless dedication to her role has been an inspiration, offering support and guidance to staff and governors alike.

While we will certainly miss her presence, we wish Janice all the very best as she embarks on the next chapter of her life. Please feel free to reach out if you would like to share any personal messages or memories that we can incorporate into the celebration.







## Clubs / Revision Sessions

Club / Revision	Year Group	Days	Time	Location	Teacher
STEM Club – an opportunity to do experiments and investigations and to work towards the CREST award	All Year Groups	Thursday	3.10pm – 4.00pm	G1	Dr Moore
Science Clinic <i>Students attend with specific areas they want tutoring in</i>	All Year Groups	Thursday	3.10pm-3.40pm	G3	Miss Green
School Band	All Year Groups	Thursday	12.15pm – 12.55pm	Music Room	Mrs Hughes
Drama Club	All Year Groups	Wednesday	3.15pm – 4.15pm	Music Room	Mrs Hughes
Singers' Club	All Year Groups	Tuesday	12.15pm – 12.55pm	Music Room	Mrs Hughes
Language Club	Language Ambassadors	Thursday	12.15pm – 12.55pm	Room 23b	Mrs Wood
Digital Technology Coursework Catchup	Year 10 and Year 11	Thursday	3.10pm - 4.10pm	G17	Mr Hayes
Art Club	Year 10 and 11	Tuesday Wednesday Thursday	3.10pm - 4.10pm	Room 8	Mrs Crompton
Photography Club	Year 10 and 11	Tuesday Wednesday Thursday	3.10pm - 4.10pm	T1	Miss Cluff
Warhammer Club	All Years Groups	Wednesday	3.10pm - 4.10pm	T4	Mr Jones
Pride Club	All Years Groups	Friday	12.15pm – 12.55pm	Room 23a	Mrs Knox-Shoosmith
Maths Revision	Year 11 grade B focus	Wednesday	3.00pm – 4.00pm	Room 13	Dr Edwards
	Year 11 C grade focus	Wednesday	3.00pm – 4.00pm	Room 4	Miss Young
	Year 11 A grade focus	Wednesday	3.00pm-3.40pm	Room 2	Mr Coyne
Maths homework and questions or exam help	All years	Every day	10.00am – 10.10am	Room 13	Dr Edwards
Maths help	Open to all years	Monday Wednesday Thursday	12.15pm – 12.55pm	Room 13	Dr Edwards
For the first week after the half term break only:					
Numeracy Revision	Year 11 Monday		3.00pm – 4.00pm	Maths department	Mr Jones Mr Coyne Dr Edwards
Numeracy Revision	Year 11	Tuesday	8.00am – 8.30am	Room 2	Mr Coyne
Numeracy Revision	Year 11	Wednesday	3.00pm – 4.00pm	Maths department	Mr Jones Mr Coyne Dr Edwards



## Humanities Department - Geography Competition

### Year 7 Creative Competition

Choose 1 of the 4 Contour models on Class Charts or design your own unique one!

– See Mrs Garratt or your Geography teacher for a copy if you need a printed one.



Make your model out of whatever you want...e.g.

- Paper mâché,
- Sponge
- Foam
- Clay,
- Cardboard
- Cake!



**Hand in by 15<sup>th</sup> November.**

### Year 8 Geography Creative Competition



**Create a diorama model or picture for an ecosystem of your choice**

Submit before 15th November

Make it out of anything you like...

- Paper mache, clay, cardboard
- Use ICT – Publisher, Adobe, Canva, Minecraft
- Paint, or draw a picture
- Bake a cake!



The Griffin

4<sup>th</sup> Edition

*Music Department*



Deck the Halls at  
**Darland's**  
**Dazzling December show!**

Tuesday 17th December 2024  
5:30pm

Christmas songs  
with Year 7

A Christmas  
Carol

How the Grinch Stole  
Christmas

Refreshments

**TICKETS ARE FREE AVAILABLE HERE:**  
<https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/booking/t-gaojlyz>



Courage, Honesty, Resilience, Respect, Kindness

Dewrder, Gonestrwydd, Dyfalbarhad, Parch, Caredigwydd