



Issue 6

The Griffin

Ysgol Uwchradd Darland - Darland High School



April 2025

A message from the Headteacher

As we come to the end of what has been a very full and successful Spring term at Darland High School, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your continued support and engagement with school life. It has been another busy and inspiring term, with so many achievements and events that have showcased the commitment, creativity, and determination of our students and staff.

Across all year groups, our students have participated in a wide variety of activities-both inside and outside the classroom. From sports fixtures and drama and music ensembles to creative projects and academic competitions. The energy and enthusiasm within the school has been infectious. Many of these accomplishments have been shared with the wider community through our regular features in the *Wrexham Leader's* weekly School Report and many are highlighted within this edition of our newsletter. We are incredibly proud to see the efforts and successes of our young people being celebrated so publicly.

A particular highlight this term has been the hard work and focus of our Year 11 students as they prepare for their forthcoming exams. Their attitude and maturity have been impressive, and many will be attending Easter School sessions during the break to ensure they stay on track. We're confident their efforts now will pay dividends in the summer, and we will continue to support them at every step of the way.

One of the most exciting developments this term has been the launch of the Wrexham AFC Academy, which is now based on our school site. This new partnership is set to bring enriching opportunities to our students through sport and education, and we're looking forward to unveiling more details about the curriculum links and collaborative projects that will be introduced over the next 12 months.

As we head into the Easter holidays, we celebrate with our non-uniform day in support of Wrexham Foodbank. Thank you for your kind donations that will go on to support families in our local community.

Finally, it is with mixed emotions that we say farewell to Mr Owens-Jones, who leaves us this term to take up the role of Assistant Headteacher at South Wirral High School. Mr Owens-Jones has contributed so much to the life of Darland High School over the years. His dedication to student welfare, tireless enthusiasm in the classroom, and passionate involvement in countless school events have left a lasting impact on our community. While we are incredibly proud of his well-deserved promotion, he will be greatly missed by both colleagues and students alike. We wish him every success in the next chapter of his career.

With the weather looking more hopeful, I do hope you and your families enjoy a restful and well-deserved Easter break. We look forward to welcoming all students back on Monday 28th April, refreshed and ready for a summer term full of learning, opportunity, and achievement.

Kind regards,

Joanne Lee
Headteacher





Science Department

The Power of STEM in Schools: Darland High Students Shine at IET Faraday Challenge

STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) education is transforming the way students engage with learning, equipping them with essential skills for the future. Through hands-on experience, problem-solving tasks, and teamwork, STEM fosters creativity, resilience, and real-world application - qualities that will define tomorrow's workforce. Now more than ever, schools are embracing STEM initiatives to inspire young minds and open doors to exciting career pathways.

A recent event saw Darland High School become a hub of innovation and enthusiasm as 36 eager Year 8 students participated in the prestigious IET Faraday Challenge Day. This dynamic event, hosted by See Science representative Katy Johnson, provided students with a unique opportunity to apply STEM concepts in a practical and competitive environment.

For many students, this was their first experience working on a structured engineering project, and the excitement was palpable. Working in small teams, they tackled the challenge of designing and building a prototype to meet a real-world need. From an educational toy for young children to an assistive device for sports participants, each concept had to incorporate circuits, a battery, and at least one additional electrical component.





Science Department

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One of the participants, shared his enthusiasm: “It was so exciting to take an idea from just a thought to an actual prototype. I never imagined we could create something like this in just one day!” Another student highlighted the importance of teamwork: “We had to really listen to each other and work together to manage our budget. It was challenging but so rewarding.”

Beyond engineering and design, the event placed a strong emphasis on financial planning and collaboration. Each group meticulously documented their progress in their logs, ensuring that every step of their development process was recorded - just as crucial to the judges as the final product. Managing their budgets with the Faraday currency system, students had to carefully plan their expenses, mirroring real-world financial constraints that engineers face.

The challenge was intense, but the students rose to the occasion. Their creativity, problem-solving abilities, and teamwork were evident in the quality of their designs and presentations. Each team showcased their prototypes with impressive oracy skills, articulating their design rationale and answering questions from both judges and peers. The thoughtful, probing questions posed by fellow students reflected their engagement and understanding of the engineering process.

At the end of a day filled with innovation and excitement, Team 2 emerged victorious, securing the trophy with their outstanding concept and execution. However, every participant left the challenge as a winner, earning the Industrial Cadets Challenger Award - an acknowledgment of their dedication, ingenuity, and teamwork.



Science Department

The Power of STEM in Schools: Darland High Students Shine at IET Faraday Challenge

STEM Ambassadors Phill George and Penny Lancaster, along with See Science host Katy Johnson, praised the students for their impressive efforts, highlighting the potential they demonstrated throughout the challenge. Dr. Debbie Moore, who was present for the event, expressed her pride in the students, emphasising their ability to think critically and work collaboratively under pressure. “It was a pleasure to see how engaged and enthusiastic they all were. The way they supported each other and thought through their designs was fantastic to watch,” she said.

The IET Faraday Challenge Day at Darland High School was more than just a competition - it was a celebration of curiosity, learning, and the boundless opportunities that STEM provides. As students left the challenge inspired and empowered, one thing was clear: the future of STEM is in capable hands.



Winning Team left to right

Jacob Hughes, Gethin Wilshire, Lloyd Shelmadine, Elise Perrin, Lexie Law, Gracie Roberts



Science Department

This term, Darland have teamed up with the UK Space Agency and Space Wales to deliver some engaging sessions with our KS3 Science pupils.

Firstly, all Year 8 pupils took part in the Space Careers show in the hall. For this, a guest speaker explained to pupils the vast amount of Space related careers that are available in Wales and that it isn't just "astronauts" & "scientists". Pupils also got to witness exciting demonstrations such as zero-gravity and rocket propulsion.

We followed this up with a second guest speaker who spoke with our STEM club after school. Here pupils went on a deeper dive on Space related careers with surprising job titles that pupils didn't know existed, such as Space Lawyer. Pupils also got to see a model of a Martian rover.

In the Summer term, we will be bringing Space and careers into the classroom with year 8s by teaching them our new unit, "My Universe".





Science Department

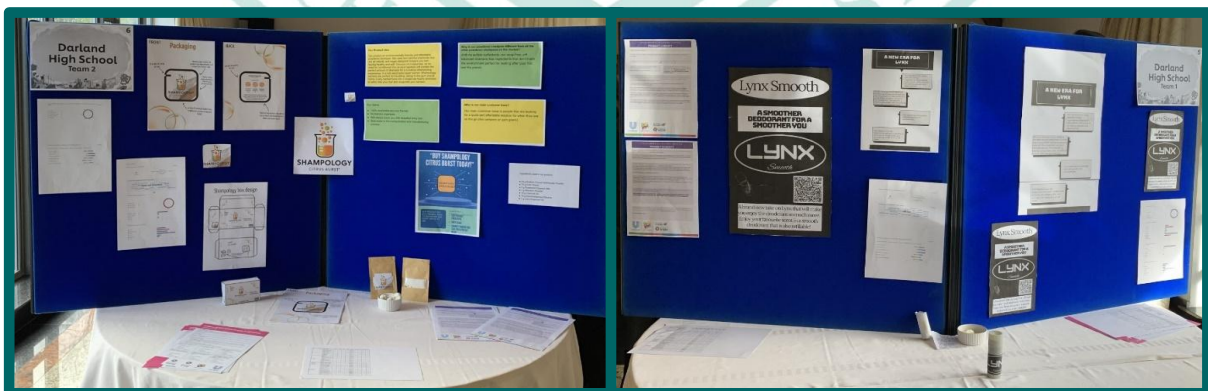
All about STEM and Unilever Bright Future Inspire Competition – Presentation Day 13th March 2025

Back in November, five representatives from our two teams attended a research and development day at Prenton Park, where they learned about the processes that new products go through at Unilever before reaching the market.

On returning to school the two teams, Team Shampology and Team Lynx Smooth, started working on their unique products to pitch to the All about STEM and Unilever representatives in March.

In STEM club, our teams worked on their product, including packaging materials and design, marketing and product formulation. Part of their design process was to create a survey to gain consumer insight around their product and we would like to thank all parents, pupils and staff who participated in these surveys – your responses really helped our teams and were used as part of their product pitches.

Team Shampology made a powder shampoo with a citrus fragrance, packaged in individual use sachets. This innovative shampoo met three sustainability goals set by Unilever Climate (reducing transportation costs as no water is used in its formulation unlike conventional shampoos which are over 80% water), Nature (individual sachets so less waste into water systems and no harmful ingredients) and Plastics (plastic-free, with fully recyclable packaging).





Science Department

All about STEM and Unilever Bright Future Inspire Competition – Presentation Day 13th March 2025

Team Lynx Smooth designed an additive-free, all-natural smooth deodorant to be marketed for teenagers and young adults, using the distinctive Lynx fragrances. This product was designed to have no aluminium or alcohol instead using baking soda to prevent body odour (Nature sustainability goal). The packaging was designed without the need for plastic instead using a refillable aluminium container and refills packaged in recyclable paper (Plastics sustainability goal). The team chose to use no aerosol ingredients so their deodorant could be used without affecting people with asthma or damaging the planet with harmful gases (meeting the Climate sustainability goal).

Both teams presented their ideas to the Unilever team representatives on Presentation Day and, although they did not win any of the prizes, they created and prepared products to be proud of, had a fabulous experience on the day and were a real credit to Darland High School. The teams have also achieved Discovery Crest awards for their effort. Well done to:



Team Shampology

Zoe Broadhurst
Jessica Fuge
Eve Maguire
Charlie Roberts
Margaret Vaughan



Team Lynx Smooth

Finnley Dillon
Elias Jones
Elijah Jones
Beau Leavesley
Fionn McCabe





Empowering Success:

Year 11 Revision Support Evening at Darland High School

As the countdown to GCSE examinations continues, Darland High School recently opened its doors to Year 11 students and their parents for a dynamic and informative Revision Support Evening, held on Tuesday, 12th March. This well-attended event was designed to equip students with a range of effective revision strategies while fostering a collaborative approach between home and school in preparing for the exam season ahead.

The evening was filled with positivity, guidance, and a shared sense of determination. A variety of staff led engaging sessions showcasing practical techniques, encouraging students to take ownership of their learning journey.

Among the key highlights were the demonstrations of flashcard learning using Quizlet, a strategy praised for its ability to promote active recall and boost long-term memory retention. Parents were shown how students can customise flashcard sets around personal target areas, making revision more focused and efficient. The interactive features on platforms like Quizlet also provide game-like modes, keeping revision sessions engaging and less daunting.

Attendees were also introduced to the use of voice recordings as a portable revision method. By recording key facts or summaries in their own voice, students can revisit information during daily routines - whether commuting or relaxing - allowing passive reinforcement of crucial content. This auditory strategy resonated strongly with many, especially for subjects like English Literature and History.



Empowering Success:

Year 11 Revision Support Evening at Darland High School

Another visual technique showcased on the night was the creation of revision clocks - a simple yet powerful method of condensing large topics into twelve segments on a single page. This strategy not only aids in summarising complex material but also supports time management and creativity, appealing particularly to visual learners.

Staff also walked students through the importance of tackling practice exam papers, promoting exam readiness through familiarisation with question types and refining time management skills under timed conditions. Coupled with guidance on crafting a personalised revision timetable, the evening emphasised the value of structured, strategic planning to combat stress and avoid last-minute cramming. Year 11 can find a summary of all of the strategies presented on the evening, in the booklet on Class Charts.

Parents appreciated the hands-on guidance provided, while students left the evening feeling more empowered and confident about how to revise effectively. As one parent noted, "It was incredibly helpful to see exactly what tools our children have access to and how we can support them at home."

As the GCSE season draws nearer, we wish all our Year 11 students the very best. With dedication, structure, and support, success is well within reach.



The Griffin

6th Edition



Key Stage 3 rock world book day.

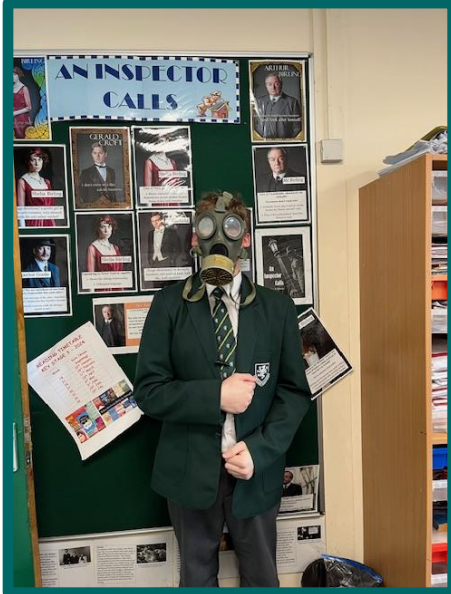
On World Book Day, following an appeal on national radio, I did two assemblies for Years 7 and 8 about a charity I had never heard of. The National Book Project collect donated books and redistribute them to children in deprived areas, specifically for children who have no access to books in their own homes. I told the students an anecdote about a friend who had worked for the mobile library service who once saw a four-year-old sneaking a book under her coat in a desperate bid to take it home. Needless to say, my friend turned a blind eye, as this little girl didn't even know how to open the book an hour earlier!

A world without books is a depressing thought and the Year 7s and 8s agreed. Two weeks later, over 900 books had been donated (thanks to some older students too) and then it all went horribly wrong! The charity doesn't collect from schools.....or any address in Wrexham! Then Asda came to the rescue. Mr Owen Jones drove the minibus, along with four volunteers from Year 8, and we went to the Asda store in Wrexham to donate the books. As you can see, we had filled 4 trolleys and brought literature to numerous children in the U.K. So all that remains for me to say is a massive thank you to all of the students who donated, you really have made some children very happy indeed, especially if the children like David Walliams. Well done Darland students, you are truly inspirational. - Mrs C. Booth





ALP Department



Noah Griffiths-Edwards Year 11
Wearing a German Army Gas
Mask WW2 Vintage.



Epilepsy Awareness Day

Tommy Plant 11E was invited to Epilepsy Awareness Day with
Wrexham AFC at Colliers Park, Gresford.



ALP Department - Autism Awareness Week



On Friday, 4th April, we held our ALP Autism Awareness Fair to raise money for charity, which this year our chosen charity is Dynamic.

There were a number of activities available to all staff and students including, Pin the tail on the Donkey, 100 Square Raffle, Guess the name of the Rabbit, Guess how many sweets in a jar, to name but a few. Although the grand total has yet to be finalised, we estimate around £250.00 has been raised.

Well done to all of our ALP students who helped with the event, a good time was had by all.





Languages Department - Welsh

Darland High School Hosts a Successful Eisteddfod Celebrating Welsh Culture and Talent

Darland High School recently held a spectacular Eisteddfod, a celebration of Welsh culture, music, poetry, and performance, bringing together students, staff, and primary school pupils from across the local area. The event was a vibrant showcase of talent, and for Darland High, it marked another significant chapter in the school's rich connection to Welsh heritage.

A Day of Talent and Competition

The morning session of the Eisteddfod saw Darland High pupils take part in a variety of competitions. From on-stage performances to individual tasks, students showcased their incredible skills in music, poetry, dance, and drama. One class in particular, 7R, stood out, winning a number of both on-stage and off-stage competitions, ultimately earning the title of *Eisteddfod Champions* for the year. The hardworking pupils of 7R certainly demonstrated both dedication and exceptional talent, which secured their victory and cemented their place as champions.

The atmosphere throughout the morning was electric, as each student poured their heart into their performances. The success of 7R reflects the commitment of Darland High's teaching staff, who have worked tirelessly to support and nurture the talents of their students. Lacey Threlfall 7T was crowned our Bard of the Eisteddfod with a wonderful poem about her Welsh Heritage.





Languages Department - Welsh

Welcoming Primary Schools to the Eisteddfod

In the afternoon, the celebrations continued as local primary schools from the surrounding cluster were invited to participate in the Eisteddfod. The school hall was filled with vibrant colour, excitement, and energy, as primary school pupils displayed an impressive level of talent. The competition was of an exceptionally high standard, with many students from the local primary schools showcasing their skills. The spirit of community and Welsh pride was truly evident as pupils from different schools came together to celebrate the Welsh language.

The judging panel consisted of Mrs Lee and Governor Mr Ratcliffe. Both judges were impressed by the talent on display and the effort each pupil put into their tasks. Their feedback helped to inspire even more enthusiasm for Welsh culture.

Acknowledging Hard Work and Support

A special mention must go to Mrs Owens-Jones and her team at Darland High School, who worked tirelessly to organise and run the event. The day was a huge success thanks to their meticulous planning and dedication. The teachers at Darland also played a pivotal role, offering support with both homework tasks and on-stage performances, helping students prepare for the Eisteddfod in the weeks leading up to the event.

Equally, the teachers from the primary schools deserve recognition for their hard work. Their support in guiding the younger pupils through their tasks and preparing them for the event ensured that the competition remained at such a high standard. Their efforts played a crucial part in making the day a true celebration of Welsh talent.



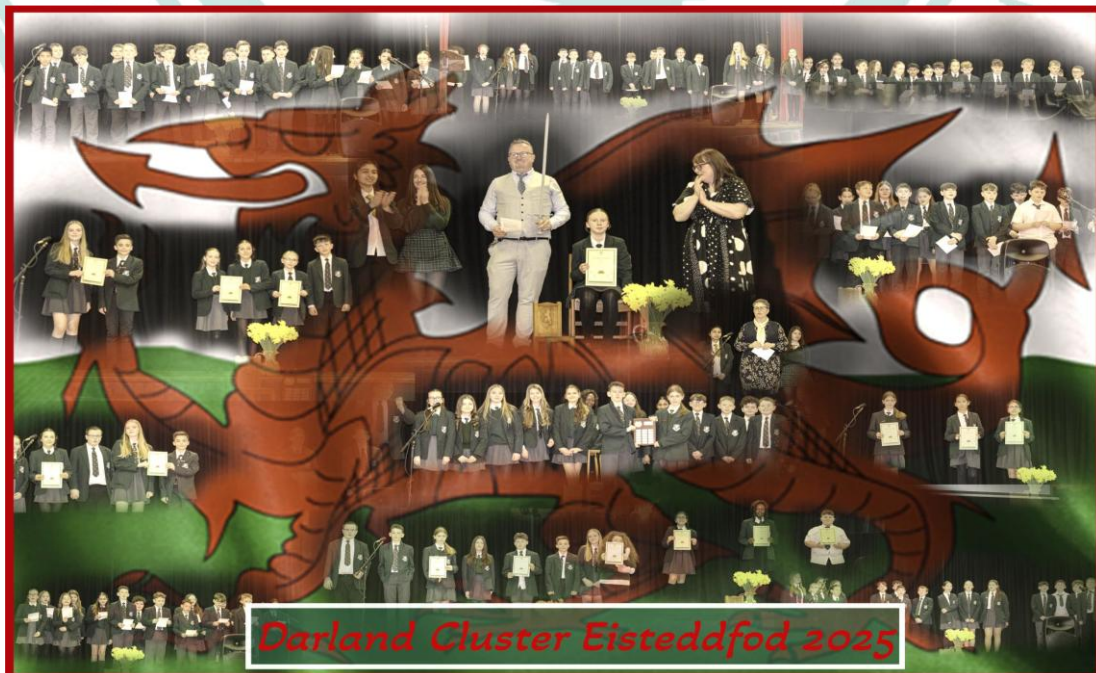
Languages Department - Welsh

Looking Ahead

The success of this year's Eisteddfod is a testament to the strong sense of Welsh identity and pride at Darland High School. It was a day that highlighted the importance of preserving Welsh culture, fostering talent, and celebrating the achievements of young people. With the victory of 7R, the title of *Eisteddfod Champions* for the year will be remembered fondly, and the students will no doubt carry this accomplishment with them for years to come.

Thank You

Darland High School would like to extend its heartfelt thanks to all those who contributed to making this year's Eisteddfod such a success, from the hardworking staff and students to the primary school teachers who helped to make the event so memorable. Here's to another year of celebrating Welsh talent and tradition!



Darland Cluster Eisteddfod 2025



Languages Department - Welsh

Year 11 Students Enjoy Memorable Trip to London, organised by the Urdd

A group of Year 11 students recently embarked on an exciting trip to London, organised by the Urdd, and it proved to be an unforgettable experience for all involved. The trip not only offered the students a chance to explore the capital city but also to form lasting friendships with fellow students from across North Wales.

One of the highlights of the trip was attending the spectacular musical *Wicked* in the West End. The students, along with others from different schools in North Wales, were captivated by the incredible performances, stunning set design, and unforgettable music. It was a fantastic opportunity for them to enjoy world-class theatre in one of the most renowned entertainment districts in the world.

Alongside the musical, the students explored several iconic London landmarks. They visited Tate Modern, immersing themselves in some of the most innovative and thought-provoking contemporary art. It was a great way to inspire creativity and spark new ideas among the group. They also made time to visit Covent Garden, enjoying the lively atmosphere, street performances, and the charming market stalls.

One of the best aspects of the trip was the opportunity it provided for students to make new friends through their shared connection to the Welsh language. Whether chatting with fellow Welsh speakers on the coach ride or enjoying shared experiences in London, the students formed connections that will last long after the trip ended.

The Urdd trip to London was not only a fun and educational experience, but it also reinforced the importance of the Welsh language and culture, giving students a chance to represent their heritage while making lasting memories with peers from across the region.

It was truly a wonderful opportunity for Year 11 students to broaden their horizons, make new friends, and enjoy the best of London's culture, all while strengthening their connection to the Welsh community.





Design & Technology Department

Darland High School & St Peter's Primary: A Bird Box Building Adventure

At Darland High School, we believe in hands-on learning, collaboration, and community connections. That's why we were thrilled to work with Year 2 students from St Peter's Primary School on a fantastic bird box project!

Year 2 teacher Mrs Harper reached out to our Design Technology department for support in bringing her class's designs to life. The students had been hard at work designing bird boxes as part of their scheme of work on trees, exploring the importance of habitats for garden birds. They needed some expert help to turn their ideas into real, functional bird boxes – and that's where we came in!

The project kicked off with a visit from the Year 2 students to our workshop here at Darland. The excitement was evident as the young learners stepped into our specialist workshop environment for the first time. Our talented technicians, Mr Bellis and Mr Champion, were on hand to introduce them to the tools and materials they'd be using. Mr Bellis gave a fascinating demonstration on how their wood was cut to the correct size, showcasing some of the machinery we use in school. The students were captivated by the process and asked plenty of great questions.





Design & Technology Department

Darland High School & St Peter's Primary: A Bird Box Building Adventure

After watching the demonstration, it was time to get hands-on! The Year 2s worked diligently with sandpaper to smooth the edges of their wood, preparing it for the next stage of construction. It was fantastic to see their enthusiasm and determination – they took great care in their work, showing just how invested they were in the project.

A week later, Mr Jones had the pleasure of visiting St Peter's Primary to complete the next step: assembling the bird boxes! The students were eager to get started, and with a little guidance, they quickly got to grips with using hammers and nails to assemble their boxes. This was a brilliant opportunity for them to develop their fine motor skills and gain confidence in practical problem-solving.

Throughout the session, there was a real sense of teamwork and achievement. The Year 2s supported each other brilliantly, offering encouragement and celebrating each milestone together. By the end of the day, we had a collection of wonderful, hand-built bird boxes, ready to be placed in their school grounds or taken home to welcome some feathered visitors.

This project was a true example of collaborative learning, benefiting both the younger students and our Design Technology team. The Year 2s gained valuable hands-on experience, and we at Darland High School had the opportunity to share our skills while supporting the next generation of creative thinkers.

We can't wait to see the bird boxes in action and hope this project inspires further Design and Technology collaborations in the future. Who knows what we'll build together next?





P.E. Department

Netball

We have enjoyed a few local county fixtures this half term, with various wins for year 7, 8 and 9 against Ruabon and St Joseph's.

We also participated in the Wrexham County Netball Tournament, Year 7 did a brilliant job in their first ever Tournament for Darland, placing 6th, Year 8's narrowly missed out on 1st place, placing second in Wrexham. Year 9's placed =2nd on goal difference and Year 10 also placed 2nd in Wrexham. All players performed to the best of their ability and we were so proud of the team's efforts.

Badminton

Mr Hamm has been running a Badminton Tournament within each year group at lunch times, there's been some fierce competition amongst the player's and they have all been very committed to playing! This term we saw Aidan Roberts become Champion in year 11 and Rhys Halliwell was victorious in year 10, well done to both competitors. Now it's the turn of year 8 and 9, who will finish on top?





P.E. Department

Cross Country

Outstanding Performances at Welsh Schools Cross Country Championships

February brought a wave of success as four of our talented students represented North East Wales at the Welsh Schools National Cross Country Championships in Brecon.

The day started with the Junior Boys category with Jack Gee and Isaac Jones, who both delivered remarkable performances, completing the demanding 4,500m course in under 16 minutes - an impressive feat showcasing their speed and endurance.

In the Middle Girls race, Year 11 standout Bryony Jones put in a strong and determined effort, crossing the finish line in just 17 minutes. Her resilience and pace stood out among a competitive field.

Finishing off the day, Zac Campbell took on the final race, a tough 5,790m course, finishing in a superb 9th place with a time of 18 minutes and 6 seconds - a fantastic result.

Congratulations to all four athletes for their hard work, dedication, and outstanding performances on the national stage. You've done us proud!

Sports Leaders

Our Year 9 Sports leaders have supported two primary football festivals this half term, one at All Saints and one at Colliers Park. The leaders were required to officiate, oversee the running of the fixtures and support the teams. Both staff at All Saints and Active Wrexham praised the Sports leaders on their work ethic, attitude and behaviour. Well done to our Year 9 Sports Leaders!

11 GCSE

Our Year 11 GCSE pupils took part in their Practical Moderation at the end of March, they participated in a number of sports on the day to be awarded 50% of their GCSE grade, the examiner was very impressed with the standard of play by all students on the day, as well as their fantastic attitude and behaviour. Well done Year 11!

Extra-Curricular

Extra-curricular clubs will start immediately after Easter, please take a look at our new timetable for the Summer Term.



P.E. Department

School Sport Extra-Curricular Timetable for Summer, 2025

Clubs are free to attend
Lunch time clubs are 12:20-12:55pm
Afterschool clubs are 3-4pm

	Lunchtime	After School
Monday	Rounders Sports Hall	Badminton Mr Ray Lewis Fitness Suite - Year 11
Tuesday	Year 8 Badminton Sports Hall - GRH	Athletics GEG/GRH Dance Yr9/ELA Fitness Suite - Year 10
Wednesday	Year 9 Badminton Sports Hall - GRH	Cricket SHU Fitness Suite - Year 11
Thursday	Cricket Sports Hall	Rounders ELA/GEG Tennis SHU Fitness Suite - Year 10
Friday	5aside - Year 9 Sports Hall - GRH	MORE clubs to be added soon!!!



Design & Technology Department - Art



A Fantastic eggort towards our hoppy and lovely Easter Display this year by year 8 and 9 students who produced bunnies and Easter wreaths using recycled materials.

We in the Art and DT Faculty would like to wish everyone a lovely and relaxing Eggster Break!



Dates for your Diary

Monday, 28th April - School open for students
Thursday, 1st May - Year 7 Parents Evening
Monday, 5th May - Bank Holiday - No School
Thursday, 8th May - GCSE Exams start
Thursday, 8th May - Awards Evening (William Aston Hall)
Friday 16th - Sunday 18th - DofE Practice Expedition
Friday, 23rd May - School closes for half term
Monday, 2nd June - School open for students

