



Issue 7 & 8

The Griffin

Ysgol Uwchradd Darland - Darland High School



December 2025

A message from the Headteacher

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we come to the close of another full and rewarding term, I would like to extend my sincere thanks for the ongoing support you give to our school community. This term has been packed with activity, commitment, and success, and it has been wonderful to see our students rise to every challenge with such positivity and determination.

Throughout the term, pupils across all year groups have engaged enthusiastically in a broad range of experiences beyond the classroom. In October, our students wowed audiences with their performance of *Wonderland*, a fantastic showcase of talent in both music and drama. The creativity and dedication shown by our students were truly inspiring, and the performance highlighted the incredible skills within our school community.

We also took time this term to reflect and remember. Our Prefects represented the school with great maturity and pride at Remembrance Services in both Wrexham and Rossett, and we were equally proud of the respectful way in which students came together for our own School Act of Remembrance. These moments are an important part of who we are as a community and demonstrate the values of respect and responsibility that we seek to promote.

Year 11 have approached their mock examinations with focus and resilience, demonstrating a strong work ethic as they prepare for the next stage of their education. Across the school, learning has continued to flourish in all subject areas, with students showing enthusiasm, creativity and determination in their work. The term concluded on a real high with our end-of-term Music Concert, where students from different year groups came together to share their musical talents. The concert was a celebration of both individual achievement and the sense of pride we take in working as a team.

I am pleased to share with you the latest edition of *The Griffin*, our school publication, which captures many of these moments and celebrates the achievements of our students. I hope you enjoy reading it and joining us in recognising their hard work.

Looking ahead, we are pleased to continue building on our successful partnership with Wrexham AFC. This ongoing collaboration has already begun to provide valuable opportunities for our students, and we are excited to see how it continues to develop, supporting aspiration, engagement, and pathways both within and beyond sport.

As we approach the end of term, we also send our very best wishes to two valued members of staff. We thank Mrs Shiel for her contribution to the school over the past two years and Mrs Owens-Jones for her dedicated service to Darland over the last twelve years. We wish them both every success and happiness in their next chapters.

Finally, I would like to wish you and your families a peaceful and enjoyable Christmas break and a happy New Year. Thank you once again for your continued support - it plays a vital role in the success of our students and our school.

Kind regards,

Joanne Lee
Headteacher

Merry Christmas





Darland High School Students Show Kindness and Respect in Support of Wrexham Foodbank

Back in April (11th), the values of Respect and Kindness - central to life at Darland High School - were proudly brought to life as students came together to support Wrexham Foodbank. In an inspiring display of community spirit, hundreds of food items were donated by students as part of a non-uniform day, highlighting the growing need for foodbank services in Wrexham and reinforcing Darland's commitment to community support.

The school's main hall was filled with energy and goodwill as students arrived, their bags heavy with thoughtful donations. Guided by information from Wrexham Foodbank on urgently needed items, the students carefully unloaded their contributions onto long rows of tables. The assortment of food - from tins and pasta to rice and cereal - was a powerful visual representation of solidarity and empathy.





Darland High School Students Show Kindness and Respect in Support of Wrexham Foodbank

Former Senior prefects, Molly Lundy, Libby Shelmerdine, and Ronya Camlibel, alongside Headteacher Mrs. Joanne Lee, accepted the donations on behalf of the school before the items were delivered to the foodbank. “I am incredibly proud of the generosity our students have shown,” said Mrs. Lee. “In living our values of Respect and Kindness, they have demonstrated a deep understanding of what it means to support our community. Their actions today will make a meaningful difference in the lives of local families.”

This collaboration with Wrexham Foodbank not only supports those in immediate need but also offers an important educational opportunity. Students have been encouraged to reflect on why foodbanks are becoming an increasingly necessary part of life for many families in Wrexham. Rising living costs, reduced access to social support, and economic challenges have left many households facing food insecurity. Understanding these realities fosters empathy and encourages a proactive approach to helping others.

As the final boxes were packed and prepared for delivery, the spirit of the day remained strong: a shared belief that small actions can have a big impact. Thanks to the generosity of Darland’s students, local families facing hardship will receive much-needed food parcels in the weeks ahead.



The event stands as a powerful reminder of the strength and compassion of young people when given the opportunity to lead and give. It also reinforces Darland High School’s unwavering dedication to nurturing not just academic success, but kind, respectful and community-minded individuals.

Well done to everyone involved for making such a meaningful difference.



Young Mathematicians Thrive Through Collaboration in the Darland Learning Community

Earlier in the year, Darland High School became a hub of energy and enthusiasm as it welcomed Year 5 students from its primary cluster for the much-anticipated 'Maths Stars' event. This vibrant initiative brought together pupils from the Darland Learning Community, which includes Darland High School and its five partner primaries: All Saints', Gresford; Holt CP, Holt; Llay Park, Llay; The Rofft, Marford; and Saint Peter's, Rossett.

Strength in Collaboration

The 'Maths Stars' event was a shining example of what can be achieved when schools work collaboratively. It offered an enriching platform for young learners to come together across institutions, cultivating a sense of unity, shared learning, and progression from primary to secondary education. Spearheaded by Miss B. Young, and supported by Mr. A. Jones alongside student Maths Champions, the event seamlessly merged expertise, peer leadership, and community spirit.

This collaboration plays a key role in strengthening the transition between the primary and secondary phases of education. Events like these are designed to support a smooth and positive progression for pupils, ensuring they feel confident and excited about the next steps in their academic journey. It also provides teachers with valuable insight into the talents and potential of future Darland students. The shared mission across the six schools is clear: to identify and nurture individual strengths from an early age, preparing students for a confident and capable future.

Fun and Games: A Winning Formula for Learning

The 'Maths Stars' event wasn't your average classroom lesson. Through imaginative challenges, such as shape discovery and a lively trading game, students explored maths in ways that felt more like play than study. Laughter, teamwork, and problem-solving echoed throughout the school, proving that mathematics doesn't have to be intimidating - it can be thrilling.

This playful approach is more than just fun; it's educationally sound. Research shows that children retain knowledge better when learning is active and engaging. The trading game in particular, which asked students to think strategically and negotiate in teams, demonstrated how maths can be applied in real-life scenarios, boosting both confidence and critical thinking skills.

"I didn't know maths could be this fun!" said one enthusiastic pupil, capturing the spirit of the day. It's moments like these that can reshape a student's attitude toward learning, sparking curiosity and building resilience.



Young Mathematicians Thrive Through Collaboration in the Darland Learning Community

Early Encouragement Leads to Long-Term Success

The Darland Learning Community recognises the importance of identifying and cultivating mathematical potential early on. Fostering strengths in primary school can set the stage for continued success through to GCSEs, A-levels, and beyond.

Current data reflects a growing appreciation for mathematics across the UK. According to the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ), over 90,000 students chose A-level Mathematics in 2024, making it the most popular A-level subject. Moreover, mathematics-related degrees have consistently remained among the top choices for university applicants, with thousands of students pursuing courses in maths, statistics, data science, engineering, and finance.

By planting the seeds of mathematical confidence early, events like 'Maths Stars' can play a vital role in guiding students toward these high-demand, rewarding career paths.

Looking Ahead

The success of the Maths Stars event stands as a powerful reminder of what can be achieved through united efforts. The Darland Learning Community's commitment to working together ensures that each child - whether from All Saints', Holt CP, Llay Park, The Rofft, or Saint Peter's - receives the support, inspiration, and opportunity to flourish.

Darland High School is already looking forward to future collaborative events, further strengthening the transition between primary and secondary education while nurturing the next generation of confident, capable learners.

A heartfelt congratulations goes out to all the young mathematicians who took part. You are truly the stars of the future.





ALP Department - Visit to Xplore

On Monday, 9th June 2025, a group of ALP students from Year 7, 8 and 9, accompanied by members of staff, had the opportunity to visit Xplore Science in Wrexham. There, the students had the chance to explore different scientific experiments, which also allowed them the opportunity to experience different sensory elements such as the Dark Room and the Voltage Wheel, as well as take part in two fun activities.

This included building and code a robot out of Lego, to which each pair managed to do and then code. Students could add sound and movements to the finished robots, creating their own animated toy.

The second activity involved splitting the DNA of strawberries, which everyone found very interesting, and they got to see actual DNA strands.

The whole day was a success, and everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves. The students in attendance were praised by the colleagues at Xplore, saying how well behaved and polite they all were.

Each student should be very proud of themselves, as they were perfect examples of Darland students, and did both themselves as well as the school proud.

Well done to everyone and thank you for all your continued hard work.





ALP Department - Visit to Xplore



The Griffin

7th & 8th Edition



Humanities Department - Geography

In May we took a group of Year 9 students on the Anfield Stadium tour that would be an unforgettable experience for them all. From the moment we stepped inside, there was a buzz of excitement and anticipation amongst the students. One of the most surprising moments came on Level Six of the Main Stand, where we paused to admire the panoramic view of the River Mersey and the Liverpool skyline. The students were stunned by how far they could see – the height offered a whole new appreciation of the city.

In the home changing room, the excitement shifted to awe as each student took turns sitting in Mo Salah's spot. For many, it was surreal to be in the same space as their footballing hero thinking about the feelings of anticipation that must fill that room on match day.

We walked through the players' tunnel and each student reached up to touch the iconic "This is Anfield" sign. That moment, steeped in tradition, gave everyone goosebumps.

Finally, we sat in the dugout, just like Arne Slot and the substitutes do on match day.

Looking out at the empty pitch, the students imagined the roar of 50,000 fans – a powerful moment of connection with the beautiful game. It was a trip they'll never forget.





STEM Club

Over this year, our keen STEM Club scientists have had fun developing their STEM skills designing air rockets, exploding party poppers, growing crystals and designing egg parachutes!

Since January, students (past and present) have been working on their own investigations towards achieving a Bronze CREST Award, and we are thrilled to announce that twelve students have achieved their Bronze awards in July, with a few more to be awarded this academic year.

Lexi Shaw - Which disinfectant spray is the best?

Isobelle Glover - Which crisps are the crispiest?

Beau Leavesley - Which crisps are the crispiest?

Zoe Broadhurst - Designing a natural, soap free powder shampoo

Jessica Fuge - Designing a natural, soap free powder shampoo

Eve Maguire - Designing a natural, soap free powder shampoo

Charlie Roberts - Designing a natural, soap free powder shampoo

Margaret Vaughan - Designing a natural, soap free powder shampoo

Finnley Dillon - Designing a natural solid deodorant

Elias Jones - Designing a natural solid deodorant

Elijah Jones - Designing a natural solid deodorant

Beau Leavesley - Designing a natural solid deodorant

Fionn McCabe - Designing a natural solid deodorant

Dr Moore has been very impressed with the creativity, continued effort and resilience shown by all students on their projects.

Well done all of you!





Darland Triumphs in STEM Challenge with Award-Winning Recycling Innovation

Darland High School celebrated a fantastic achievement after winning a prestigious STEM competition hosted by Plastipak, a leading local plastic bottle manufacturer. Two teams of eight Year 9 (current Year 10) students represented the school at the event, held at the Ramada Hotel, where they competed against other schools in a challenge focused on sustainability and innovation.

The aim of the competition was to design a system to encourage more people to recycle plastic bottles. Each team had to work collaboratively to create a compelling brand, design suitable packaging, and plan an engaging marketing campaign to promote their concept. Students were assigned specific roles within their teams - ranging from project management to branding, marketing, and design - mirroring the kind of teamwork and specialist collaboration found in real-world industries.

Throughout the day, students worked intensively to develop their ideas, supported by mentors and industry professionals. The event concluded with a series of formal presentations to a panel of judges, or "dragons," in a format inspired by the popular television show *Dragons' Den*. Teams were judged not only on the creativity of their solution, but also on the clarity of their pitch, teamwork, branding, and marketability.

Darland's winning team presented an innovative concept called *Rebirth*, a recycling system that captured the attention of the judges with its original approach and professional delivery. Led by Heidi Jones, the team demonstrated exceptional planning and attention to detail eye-catching, and their marketing strategy showed a clear understanding of how to influence consumer behaviour in favour of recycling.





Darland Triumphs in STEM Challenge with Award-Winning Recycling Innovation

The judges were particularly impressed with the quality of the team's presentation, noting how confidently and clearly each member communicated their ideas. The panel praised their cohesive vision, well-thought-out design, and their ability to answer challenging questions with poise and insight.

As a result of their success, the *Rebirth* team was awarded first place, receiving a trophy that is now proudly displayed in the Darland Technology Department. In addition to the overall win, the experience gave all students involved a valuable insight into STEM careers, teamwork under pressure, and the kind of creative thinking required to tackle global environmental issues.

Mr. Jones, Head of Product Design, praised all the students who took part. "This was an outstanding opportunity for our students to apply their classroom learning to a real-world challenge. Both teams performed brilliantly, showing maturity, creativity, and collaboration throughout the day. We are incredibly proud of the *Rebirth* team for bringing the trophy home."

Heidi Jones, team leader of the winning group, said: "We worked really hard on making our idea stand out and making sure everything was well thought through. I'm so proud of what we achieved together - it was an amazing experience."

The competition not only celebrated innovation and sustainability but also helped to nurture vital skills such as communication, leadership, and problem-solving. Darland's success at the event is a testament to the talent and potential of its students - and a strong reminder of how Darland's young designers can lead the way in building a more sustainable future.



The Griffin

7th & 8th Edition



Languages Department

In June, the Language Ambassadors launched a new competition: the Landmarks and Monuments Competition. They were asking students to take part in a creative competition this time, making a model or a piece of art based on a landmark (such as Yr Wyddfa) or a monument (such as Big Ben).

We had some fantastic entries but in the end our judging panel decided on the following three winners:

1st place: Mount Fuji, Japan by Eva Roberts

2nd place: Great Wall of China by Grace McNee

3rd place: a card model of the Colosseum by Jessica Fuge and Oliwia Szczerba

Eva Roberts has won a trip to the bowling alley for her and 6 friends! Bravo, Eva and well done to all our incredible artists!



Courage, Honesty, Resilience, Respect, Kindness

Dewrder, Gonestrwydd, Dyfalbarhad, Parch, Caredigwydd



P.E. Department - Sports news from the last academic year

Cricket

We have had a successful term in the outdoor Cricket tournaments this summer, Year 8's have improved tremendously from their indoor competitions, placing third in North Wales when they played at Ruthin Cricket Club back in May - well done to the girls for all their hard work!

Both Year 9 and Year 10 girls also played in the U15 North East Wales Competition at Hawarden Cricket Club at the end of May, Year 10 were triumphant, placing first and Year 9 placed second. We were so impressed with their performance and attitude on the day, a well-deserved victory for the girls.

The Year 10 Girls as previously mentioned have also overachieved once again, becoming North Wales and North West England U15's Girls Hardball Cricket Champions! A talented bunch of girls who continue to strive for excellence within the game! We could not be more proud of them!

Athletics

We had the second round of the U14 and U16 individual Athletics event at Deeside back in May, a number of our Year 9 and Year 10 Athletes competed against other competitors in North East Wales. Mateo Calzon finished 3rd, jumping 4.69m, Isaac Jones finished an impressive 2nd in the 800m, Tyler Cooper threw a whopping 9.90m in the Shot put, placing 3rd, Elsa Williams placed 6th in the 800m, Amelie Hewitt placed 3rd in the High Jump and Zac Campbell ran a superb 3000m race, placing first in North East Wales.

Our Year 8 and Year 10 teams competed in the Wrexham County Athletics Championships before half term, we had a number of outstanding performances, Daisy Jones (Year 10) placing first in the High Jump, Bethan Vye (Year 10) placed first in the long jump, Abi Perrins (Year 8) first in both the triple jump and high jump. Toby Owens (Year 8) first in the 200m, Harry Davies (Year 8) first in the 300m and Zac Campbell (Year 10) first in the 1500m.

Both Year 8 girls and boys finished second in Wrexham and therefore entered the North East Wales event which took place at Deeside at the end of June, we had some excellent individual performances once again, which shows the talent we have amongst our Year 8 students - well done to all of them.



P.E. Department - Sports news from the last academic year

Zac Campbell

Zac Campbell one of our talented Year 10 students, has over the last few months been competing at a number of Athletics events across Wales. Recently, he competed at Deeside on behalf of Wrexham Schools at the U14's and U16's North East Wales Championships, where he outraced everyone on the track, placing first in the 3000m. This meant that Zac now had a place in the North East Wales team. The Welsh Athletics Championships took place in Aberdare on the 5th July, where Zac was up against some fierce opposition across all districts in Wales. Unsurprisingly, Zac outperformed on the day, becoming the 3000m Welsh Champion, running the race in 9 minutes 11 seconds. Zac's personal best in this event is an incredible 8 minutes 58 seconds. Huge congratulations to Zac on this outstanding achievement, we are very proud of him and wish him all the luck in the British Championships.



Rounders

In June, we took part in the annual Wrexham schools rounders competition. Both days were very successful, made even better by the sun coming out and the ice cream van making an appearance. Our Year 7's placed 5th and Year 8's finished in 1st place - a superb performance by the team. The following week it was the Year 9 and 10's turn at their Wrexham Area Competition, it was an extremely competitive competition, with both teams victorious, placing first out of 9 schools, a brilliant achievement by both teams. Darland annually organise the Year 7 and 8 Rounders competition; the day would not have been as successful without the help of our fantastic Sports Captains Bryony, Libby and Sasha, who ran the scoring table, set-up pitches, became timekeepers and were runners for each pitch. Thank you to them for their brilliant support and commitment.



P.E. Department - Sports news from the last academic year

Sports Day

Darland had a new venue for sports day this year and was held at the prestigious Queensway stadium in Wrexham.

The weather was ideal for the competitors and allowed them to produce some outstanding individual performances, breaking a few old school records in the process.

The event was well attended and really good to see lots of participation with plenty of enthusiasm from the crowd, supporting their forms, either through constant cheering, posters or via the use of 'war paint' with the forms inked on their faces (did some spend as much time applying paint and glitter as preparing for the actual event itself?).

As we've always stated, the more people taking part results in a more successful sports day, so great to see so many students engaging in friendly competition to earn points for their form.

Special mention must go to the following students who produced superb displays to break school athletics records across various events, a few of which were nearly 30 years old. They now have their names etched into the Darland record books - at least until next year!

Year 7

Gracie Parry (High Jump)
Jake Dickens (100m)

Year 9

Eva Lennon (High Jump)

Year 8

Abi Perrins (High Jump)
Max S. (High Jump)
Toby Owens (200m)

Year 10

Lexi Weaver (100m)
Zac Campbell (1500m)

However, it is important to remember that the day would not have run as smoothly without the support and assistance of the staff and Year 10 and 11 volunteers who helped to supervise areas and run various track and field events.

A massive thank you from the PE Department to everyone involved who gave up their time to help.



P.E. Department - Sports news from the last academic year

Badminton

For the past few months, the annual badminton tournaments have been held during lunchtimes for various year groups. From the initial group stages based on a Champions League format, the top 2 players from each group have met in the knockout phase, which has culminated in declaring overall Year winners.

The following students reached the semi-final stage, with close matches leading to the following positions;

Year 8

1st - Jack Sharley

2nd - Beau Leavesley

3rd - Bronze medal match between Max Davies & Jakub Prior (TBC)

Year 9

1st - Mateo Calzon-Vazquez

2nd - Harry Parker

3rd - Rhys O'Malley

4th - Nethum Weligama

Year 10

1st - Rhys Halliwell

2nd - Leo Brooks

3rd - Harry Davies

4th - Ebi Razavi

Year 11

1st - Aidan Roberts

2nd - Stan Edwards

3rd - Jack Sutcliffe

4th - James Ganci



Very pleased to see so much commitment from everyone who took part for the duration of these tournaments, giving up their free time to participate and hopefully enjoy themselves as they develop their skills.

We look forward to seeing if the overall winners can retain their crown next academic year.



P.E. Department - Sports news from the last academic year

Five a Side Football

Staying on the extracurricular theme, Year 10 recently competed in the annual inter form 5 a side tournament which had been running for several weeks in the sports hall.

Based on the formula of 3 points for a win and 1 point for a draw, the final league positions are below. The top 2 forms met in the final which was held on Monday, 14th July at lunchtime.

10E 10L 10T 10R 10A

Drum role and the winning team were 10L who won on penalties v 10E after a 1-1 draw!

Well done to 10L!

Clay Pigeon Shooting

A huge congratulations to James Ward who continues to perform at the highest level, representing Wales in clay pigeon shooting, despite being several years younger than other members of the team. As well as being the current Welsh U21 champion, James also won the UK championships at U21 level despite still being 15 years old. He should be very proud of this achievement, and we wish him the very best for the future, as he competes in Somerset over the weekend.





P.E. Department - Sports news from the last academic year

The Girls Year 10 Cricket team had booked another trip to the regional cricket finals at Sale Cricket Club. Having won the competition in Year 8 and narrowly missing out on the trophy last year, the pressure was on to regain the prestigious honours: *North-West England and North Wales Regional Champions!*

The trip almost ended before it had started (no transport available!). However, Mrs Garratt heroically released the bus in the hope of glory for the Year 10 girls. A huge thanks to her - she would not be disappointed!

The girls began the tournament in fine form by comfortably seeing off 'Our Lady's' School. In their second game, they came up against a very capable Sale Grammar School - who proved to be the acid test for every team on the day. Although they produced a strong bowling performance, the Darland girls came up short and would need to win their final group match against Unity College to qualify for the final. They did not disappoint and produced their best performance of the group stage with an excellent all-round game. High quality bowling backed up with masterful fielding forged the victory; a fielding performance that was highly commended by the onlooking Lancashire Cricket Club visitors. A shot at glory awaited!





P.E. Department - Sports news from the last academic year

The final would also be a chance for redemption as they came up against the side that had defeated them earlier in the day - Sale Grammar. Darland would field first and again produced an excellent bowling performance, with the standout performers being Millie Morris, Maisie Henshaw and Imogen Powell, all taking wickets and few runs conceded. The unsung heroine of the day would go to Eva Dixon who let nothing past her behind the stumps and preventing countless boundaries being scored. However, a very deep batting lineup gave Sale a 71-run total. The largest target set by any team that the Darland girls had faced that day. Everest awaited!

The opening pair of Millie Morris and Maisie Henshaw got the innings off to a very strong start, tracking in line with the run rate required for victory. Steady and sensible batting was the order of the day from the openers! A barrage of fast bowling began and would prove very tricky for the batters. However, they showed resolve and courage to see off some of Sale's best bowlers. Captain Powell came into bat third and led from the front, a complete batting wheel with shots played all over the field. The standout shot being a huge pull shot onto the pavilion balcony! She was forced to retire due to the individual run limit being met but had put Darland in a commanding position. The remaining batters continued where Powell left off. A complete team batting performance propelled them to the summit - *North-West England and North Wales Regional Champions!* (AGAIN!)

An inspiring group of sportswomen, with an outstanding togetherness. A team for Darland history books.





Humanities Department - History (Munich July 2025)

Munchen ist Wunderbar!

Aah Munich! What a fantastic city. After a long journey, we arrived at the hostel late on the Monday, so didn't see much of the city. However, up early on Tuesday we headed out to the Allianz Arena, home of Bayern Munich. The clouds were ominous but the tour was fantastic. Funny and entertaining guides ensured that our minds were taken off the torrential rain outside and the thought of going on a walking tour of the city in a storm!

We went into Munich city centre that afternoon to do a walking tour that would take us to some of the key sites of Nazi Munich, complete with oompah bands and clanking steins! It did start hail stoning at one point but, we managed to avoid that.

The second full day in Germany began with another early start and a long bus ride to Berchtesgaden and Hitler's Eagles Nest. The Alpine scenery was beautiful and the peaceful mountain town of Berchtesgaden was stark contrast to what we knew had gone on, and who had visited that area. The views from the summit into Austria and Italy were phenomenal.





Humanities Department - History (Munich July 2025)

Wednesday saw us head to Dachau Concentration Camp. A sombre and thought-provoking morning being guided around the memorial site by the most knowledgeable guides was an experience that will live long in the memory. Fantastic questions were asked, and the level of respect and consideration shown by the students, made us proud.

All in all a hugely successful trip. The behaviour of the students made us proud to say, 'We are Darland'! Thanks to all those involved in planning and preparation, and special thanks to Miss Andone, Mr Mackie and Miss Roberts for helping everything run smoothly during the trip. Auf Wiedersehen!



The Griffin

7th & 8th Edition



Year 11 Prom - Rossett Hall Hotel

On Thursday, 3rd July, our former Year 11 students enjoyed a memorable evening at their prom at Rossett Hall Hotel, following the end of their GCSE studies and to celebrate the end of their time at Darland High School, before moving on to pastures new.

On a very warm evening, the Year 11 students arrived in style, with many parents and family members in attendance to help make their evening extra special.

Following a red-carpet arrival, students were welcomed with a sparkling mocktail followed by an outstanding 2-course buffet, carefully selected by the students themselves. The room was decorated with a black & gold theme, with a trio of balloons on every table. The photo booth was a huge success, and many photos were taken before dancing the night away.

The awards presentation was hosted and presented by Mr Arron Jones (Head of Year), with awards ranging from Most likely to be a Millionaire to Most likely to be Prime Minister!

Good Luck for the future Class of 2025!



2025
Class Of

Courage, Honesty, Resilience, Respect, Kindness

Dewrder, Gonestrwydd, Dyfalbarhad, Parch, Caredigwydd



Congratulations to Leo Brooks and Lennon Jones



Year 11 students Leo and Lennon on receiving the Wrexham County School Boys u16s Welsh National Finalists 2025 cap.

Great achievement, Well Done boys!



Maths Department - Numeracy Christmas Challenge

Beth is making gingerbread men. She uses 2 raisins for eyes and 3 raisins for buttons for each gingerbread man. She buys 4 boxes of raisins, each with 120 raisins in it. How many dozens of gingerbread men can she make?



During form time some of our students completed the **Numeracy Christmas Challenge**. Thank you to all that submitted an answer!

Answer: 8 dozen



Languages Department - Languages Bake Off Rises to the Occasion

The scent of freshly baked cakes filled the corridors of Darland High School, as students showcased their culinary flair and linguistic creativity in the annual Languages Bake Off competition. This eagerly anticipated event, organised by Mrs Faith Wood, Head of the Languages Faculty, has become one of the highlights of the school calendar, blending cultural appreciation with a fun and competitive spirit.

Now in its latest year, the competition drew in a record number of entries, with pupils baking everything from delicate pastries to towering showstoppers, all inspired by the rich diversity of European cultures. Judged by members of the Rossett Community Council, the contest brought together students, staff, and the wider community in a true celebration of both languages and creativity.

The competition was fierce, with every student determined to impress. Félicitations to our winners of this year's European Day of Languages Bake Off! Charlie Roberts wowed the judges with his stunning Black Forest Gateau, a cake that combined traditional flavours with flawless presentation. The judges praised both its taste and craftsmanship, declaring it a worthy winner. Meanwhile, Jack Wilkinson stole the hearts of the public at Darland's Open Evening. His imaginative Loch Ness Monster creation, complete with intricate detailing and playful charm, received the highest number of votes by far in the best-decorated category. Both Charlie and Jack were presented with Amazon vouchers by Headteacher Mrs Joanne Lee in recognition of their outstanding efforts.



Left – Jack
Wilkinson – Loch
Ness Monster cake.

Staff – Mrs Faith
Wood (left)

Headteacher
Joanne Lee (right)



Languages Department - Languages Bake Off Rises to the Occasion

Beyond the delicious cakes and friendly rivalry, the Bake Off reflects Darland High School's wider ethos: that learning is most effective when it is fun, engaging, and meaningful. "This competition is about so much more than cakes," explained Mrs Wood. "It's about giving students the chance to connect with languages and cultures in ways that inspire curiosity and creativity. When young people enjoy what they're doing, they are far more likely to achieve."

The results speak for themselves. Darland High School consistently outperforms most schools in the region in modern foreign languages at GCSE level. Staff believe the secret to this success lies in nurturing a love of languages from the earliest stages of education. Events such as the Bake Off are carefully designed to make learning memorable and enjoyable, proving that classroom lessons can extend well beyond textbooks.

The benefits of creative competitions like this are far-reaching. Students not only develop practical skills such as teamwork, problem-solving, and presentation, but also gain a deeper appreciation of the cultures behind the languages they study. Engaging with the European Day of Languages through baking helps pupils make real-world connections, sparking enthusiasm that carries into their academic performance.

Mrs Lee, Headteacher, commented: "At Darland, we are committed to finding imaginative ways to inspire our learners. Our Languages Faculty, led by Mrs Wood, demonstrates year after year that creativity and academic success go hand in hand. We are incredibly proud of the effort our students put into this competition and the way it showcases their passion for learning."

As the last crumbs were cleared away, the smiles on students' faces told the real story: that at Darland High School, learning languages is not just about grammar and vocabulary, but about joy, connection, and shared celebration.



Charlie Roberts,
with his winning entry



Darland School Community - Remembrance

Darland School Community came together on the 11th November in an act of remembrance. Mrs Hughes had the Year 7 Choir very well drilled for the beautiful rendition of 'Abide With Me', which started off the proceedings. Mr Jones, History then called everyone together for a moment of stillness in our busy schedule's and called on everyone to remember the people who have sacrificed, regardless of their role in conflict.

The Senior Prefects offered a prayer of remembrance as Mrs Lee laid a wreath on behalf of the school. At this point, the always haunting lamentful notes of the Last Post rang clearly throughout the school to signify the beginning of our moment of silence. After more than 2 minutes of perfectly observed, and deeply respectful silence, Reveille brought us back to the present and the Prefects completed our collective act of remembrance with the Kohima Epitaph, the traditional ending to a remembrance service. We will remember them!



Amber Smith & Maddie Dillon - Year 10



We will remember

Not the battles
Not the medals
Not the dates written in books
But the people
The ones who once sat in our chairs
The ones who once looked out of our windows
Who laughed, loved, hoped and dreamed here
Their uniform wasn't just fabric
It carried a life
A voice
A future.
The poppy is placed not to glorify war,
But to honour the love, the youth, the humanity
That was lost to it.
At 11am, we pause,
Not out of habit,
But out of gratitude
For every life cut short
For every story that ended too soon
For every silence where a voice could have been
We will remember them, always.



The Griffin

7th & 8th Edition



Music Department - Wonderland



In October, Mrs Hughes was proud to present the first school production for many years at Darland; Wonderland! This show was based on the original story of Alice in Wonderland, but was adapted and written by Mrs Hughes and the pupils in the Drama club. The play was created in a surreal, physical style and was inspired by theatre companies such as Gecko, Frantic Assembly, and Forced Entertainment. The play utilised a dual world concept of 'Reality' in a psychiatric hospital and 'Wonderland' which represented the imagination and delusions of Alice.



Mia Shoob, starred in the show as Alice, and performed the character's unease and tension brilliantly. All of the cast and crew were brilliant and both Mrs Hughes and the Headteacher Mrs Lee said how proud they were of the pupils creating such an exciting and creative performance.



Music Department - Wonderland

Each of the three performances were introduced by solo musical acts, with Saul Golden playing piano and Abi Perrins playing guitar; both were very well received.

The hard work wasn't just on the stage, the lighting technicians Lloyd Shelmerdine and Max MacCrimble, and the sound technician Toby Roberts, worked flawlessly to design and operate their tech. They even performed in the final dance number!

Auditions have already been undertaken for the next school production, which will be a musical – watch this space for further info!



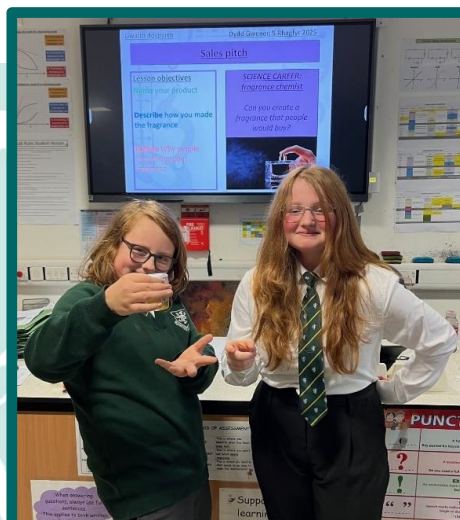


Science Department - Making a Fragrance

In Year 7 Science this term, pupils have been learning about key concepts such as states of matter, forces and acids. They have been experiencing these topics through focusing on Science careers, which included forensic science and engineering.

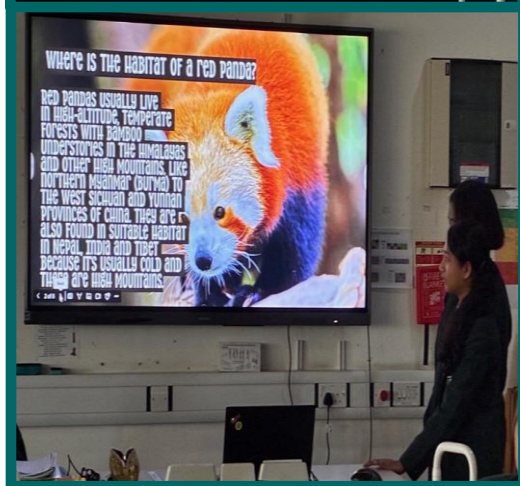
One career that the pupils particularly excelled in was as fragrance chemists. Here pupils had to apply their knowledge of diffusion and filtration to create a fragrance that they presented to the class.

In their presentations to the class, pupils had to explain how they made the fragrance using scientific terms but also market themselves to see which one was the most popular. Some opted for warm, spicy Christmas scents, while others went for fruitier and floral summer aromas; with “Elon’s Musk” standing out as the most unique product name!





Science Department - The Body Project



In Science this term, Year 8 pupils have been working on The Body Project. In class they have been learning about a wide variety of organ systems such as the respiratory and digestive systems.

As well as covering a lot of useful Science content, pupils also learnt about the importance of CPR and how to carry it out. This life saving training took part in the heart lesson, where some classes were able to see a real heart up close.

Once they got familiar with human organ systems, they then worked in groups to design a webpage on a chosen animal, detailing at least two organ systems and explained how they function. They also made a model of a specialised cell from their chosen organ systems and finally presented all of this to the class.

The Griffin

7th & 8th Edition



Music Department - Dazzling December Display



Darland High School
proudly presented their

Dazzling December Display of Music and Drama

*Free
entry!*

Tuesday, 16th
December 2025
Show started at 6pm
Doors opened at 5.45 p.m.

Courage, Honesty, Resilience, Respect, Kindness

Dewrder, Gonestrwydd, Dyfalbarhad, Parch, Caredigwydd



Dates for your Diary

- 5th January 2026 - Staff Inset Day (School closed to students)
- 6th January - School open to students
- 6th January - Crucial Crew - Year 7 (Lessons 1 - 3)
- 7th January - GCSE English Literature (a.m.) - Year 11 students
- 7th January - Crucial Crew - Year 8 (Lessons 1 - 3)
- 13th, 15th & 16th January - Science Controlled Assessments (Year 11)
- 15th January - Year 9 Parents & Options Evening
- 22nd January - Holocaust Survivor Memorial Day Event (Year 10/11)
- 27th January – DTP & Meningitis Vaccinations - Years 9 - 11
- 28th January - History Trip - Years 10 & 11 (GCSE)
- 29th January - Dragons Lair (Year 10)
- 30th January - Science Catch-up Controlled Assessments
- 5th February - Year 11 Parents Evening
- 6th February - Choose Life a.m. (Year 8)
- 9th - 13th February - Mock Exams (Year 10)
- 13th February - Geography Trip to Wrexham AFC (Year 9)
- 13th February - School closes for half term
- 14th - 22nd February - Ski Trip
- 23rd February - School Open to students



School Essentials Grant for FSM pupils, see link:

<https://www.gov.wales/school-essentials-grant-help-school-costs>