

2022

THE HERON

Together We Can



Sustainability • Well-being • Independence • Opportunity

Celebrations and Announcements

We would like to wish

Rosa Walsh, Pat Williams, Angela Hill, Chris Smith, Rob Boucher, Liz Davies, Gaynor Smith, Maria Thomas, Sharron Wainwright and of course our wonderful school caretaker Julian a long and happy retirement. Thank you all for your dedication and commitment to school over the years.

Diolch yn Fawr a Pob Lwc!

Good Luck

We would also like to wish all staff who moved on in the past 2 years and staff moving on this year 'Good Luck'. Thank you for all your hard work and dedication, we wish you all the best in your new adventures!!



Wedding Bells

Congratulations to staff on their wedding days, wishing you love and happiness...

Laura and Andrew,
Carlos and Andre,
Chris and Claire,
Nicola and Sarah,
Chloe and Scott,
Matthew and Micaela,
Stacey and Simon.



New Additions

Congratulations to staff who have welcomed new additions to their families

Rhian + Terry Daughter Erin
Sarah + Paul Daughter Peggy
Kirsty + Owen Son Theo
Jade + Leon Daughter River Leigh
Rebecca + Jonathan Son Ioan
Carys + Richard Son Gruffydd
Teri + Phil Daughter Hayden
Nicolle + Tom Son Finley

Eve + Steff Daughter Eira
Rebecca Mc + Alec Son Zachery
Claire + Chris Daughter Bronwen
Steph + Gareth Son Zachary
Danielle + Tom Daughter Mia
Abby + Craig Son Harry
Sam + Simon Daughter Millie
Stuart + Kirsty Daughter Lowri

A fond farewell and welcome to new staff



Julian

Julian has been a fixture at Heronsbridge for as long as people can remember. Julian had many tales to tell about the changes he had seen over the years, including the mysterious noises that would emanate from the school building as he did his nightly checks!

From helping out at the school fete, to fixing anything that was broken, Julian always approached everything with a 'can do' attitude. It is right that after 40 years, Julian hangs up his keys and enjoys his retirement with his family and of course grandchildren. We had a wonderful send off for Julian and thanks to his family for organising such a memorable retirement party!

Andrew had been a member of staff at Heronsbridge for many years. Those who were fortunate enough to work with him will remember his very dry sense of humour and ability to convince staff at the end of each year that they were moving classes! Mostly though, Andrew will be remembered for his devotion to the children he worked with. Andrew would always gravitate towards the hard to reach pupils and be their strongest advocate. Pupils adored Andrew and you could see how proud he was of them. Although Andrew might try and deny it, he loved Heronsbridge, and will always be part of the school. We miss him, but remember him with smiles and laughter.

Andrew



Leon

And a warm Heronsbridge welcome to our operations manager Leon, if you see him around school please say 'hello'.



Out of the mouths of babes...

It is very important to know what our pupils think and believe.

Who is Mr Evans?

"Mr Evans runs the school takes charge makes the rules and is the principal" Secondary



"Mr Evans does assemblies and he is in charge of the BBQ food at the summer fete" Secondary

"A boy, he has got short hair with something on his face. He makes me happy" Primary

"He runs assemblies and he is polite and being funny!" Leavers

Who is Mrs Harries?

"She does Mrs Smith's jobs when she is ill. She is nice and kind and looks after the bunny" Secondary



"Mrs Harries is cute and small. She is a model at school and she is happy" Secondary

"She is an office worker, check out Heronsbridgeschoolbridgend.com. She also helps people when they are in trouble" Leavers

"Mrs Harries is one of the assistant Head teachers, she brings in the rabbit and she has a happy personality" Leavers

"She is a teacher and her job role is being smart" Secondary

"Who is Mrs Smith?"

Mrs Smith is a hairdresser. She looks happy and works in my school" Primary



"She's a bit smaller than Mr Evans. She helps Mr Evans. I think she does something on the computer?" Primary

"She takes charge of the school when Mr Evans isn't here" Leavers

"She is a chef, she cooks food" Primary

Who is Dr Fowler?

"Dr Fowler is a paediatrician" Leavers



"She runs as the head nurse" Secondary

"She specialises in well-being" Leavers

Only children tell the whole truth, you know. That's what makes them children.

Stephen King



The Heron has landed!



Welcome to the 2022 edition of 'The Heron' magazine or rather, welcome back, following a period which will always be known as the Covid lockdown years. I hope that you will find it an enjoyable and informative read this year as always, it is inspiring to see our pupils' achievements and experiences in one publication. I am pleased to report that it has been another year of continued success for pupils and staff and I cannot believe how quickly the time has flown by. Despite the global pandemic, the Heronsbridge team have continued to provide incredible experiences and opportunities with lots of creative activities and thinking 'outside of the box'. We have been so happy to return to a sense of normality, as we gradually re-introduced many of our whole school activities, celebrations and festivities. Some things that have stood out for me were the amazing efforts made our pupils in sports day and sensory sports, the return of Mencap football tournaments, and our exciting 'Big Wows' as we launched new topics with our Curriculum for Wales developments.

Héronsbridge continues to grow, evolve and adapt with our learners, this year sees the addition of a new teaching block for our Centre for Autism. As demand for places grows, Bridgend County Borough Council has acquired the recently vacated Block R from Bridgend College, creating a fantastic bespoke new facility to accommodate us. We have also been upgrading our toilet facilities throughout the school.

The bigger, long-term aim is for Bridgend council to build a new Heronsbridge, and plans are firmly underway to deliver this project by January 2026. Island Farm has been identified as the location of the new school site and we will be involved in the process every step of the way - ensuring that our children get the school they deserve.

During the pandemic, we achieved some remarkable accolades. We were thrilled to be awarded the UNCRRC Rights Respecting Schools Gold accreditation, the continuation of our eco-schools platinum award and our continued recognition in the Welsh Network of Healthy Schools. We also gained the Investors in

Families Diamond accreditation and 'Lockdown Award'. These awards reflect our school values, help our pupils to become ethical, informed citizens and demonstrate the commitment and effort of everyone working at Heronsbridge: past and present. In addition to this, we continued our twenty-five-year Investors in People journey, gaining the highest platinum award and being invited to their national awards evening as one of the highest performing organisations in our sector! The year also sees us wish a fond farewell to some of our most experienced and long-serving members of staff, and as they head off into retirement and exciting new posts they can be rightly proud of the monumental contributions they have made to the successes of Heronsbridge and our pupils. They have left huge shoes to fill and have set an example for all of us to follow. They take with them our eternal gratitude and good luck wishes. As one door closes another opens and we are looking forward to welcoming new staff to continue the great work.

I would like to pay a particular tribute to our friend and colleague Andrew Stephenson, who sadly passed away this year. Andrew had nearly 30 years service across many departments and he is greatly missed by us all.

We also wished Julian Harwood a happy retirement, as he decided to hang up his caretaker coat for the last time. Julian was assistant caretaker in Bridgend College from 1980 and he became caretaker for what was The School for the Blind in 1987. Julian has been a loyal servant, giving fantastic support to staff, pupils and students for more than 40 years.

The Heron magazine is just a snapshot of some of the experiences and achievements of our pupils and I would like to personally congratulate & thank everyone, not only associated with the production, but also highlighted in the content.

Enjoy the read

Jeremy Evans



Curriculum For Wales

Realising The Four Purposes and Our Values

Our curriculum will be implemented in a way that enables each learner to develop in the ways described in the four purposes, to be the best that they can be. Our Heron Squad enable our learners to become ambitious capable learners, ethical informed citizens, enterprising creative contributors and healthy confident individuals. The student council worked together with staff to find out what the Four Purposes and our values mean to us. This is what they came up with:

Mathematics & Numeracy

Languages, Literacy & Communication

Humanities

Independence

- I want to do well
- I can celebrate my own and other achievements
- I will always try my best
- I will never give up
- I will always be ready to learn
- I will work on my own whenever I can
- I can ask questions to get information
- I can talk about my learning
- I can take responsibility for my learning
- I can find out about things and say what I think



Ambitious, capable learners

Sustainability

- I can share my thoughts and opinions
- I can talk about my interests and listen to others
- I know my rights
- I will always be kind to others
- I will always respect others beliefs
- I will always display my best behaviour
- I am aware of my own and others emotions
- I am aware of things important to me - people, places, etc
- I will do my best to look after the world around me
- I will use what I know to make decisions
- I will always Reuse, Reduce, Recycle



Ethical, informed citizens

Cross Cutting Themes

Cross Cutting Frameworks

Well-being

- I know the difference between right and wrong/good and bad
- I know how to behave with different people
- I will always try my best
- I can work on my own
- I will try again and never give up
- I will be a good friend to others
- I will always try to do things on my own
- I will always look after myself as well as I can
- I will get help from others when I need it
- I know about how to live a healthy lifestyle (diet & exercise)
- I will try to keep myself safe



Healthy, confident individuals

Opportunity

- I can use my ideas to make and do
- I can think for myself
- I can solve problems
- I can work with others as part as a team or group
- I will try new things and experiences
- I can talk about my ideas and feelings
- I can help my friends



Enterprising, creative contributors

Health & Well-Being

Science & Technology

Expressive Arts

Rights Respecting School (RRS)

GOLD
RIGHTS RESPECTING



We have been on our Rights journey since 2017 and we were so very pleased to achieve our Gold Award from UNICEF in 2021 to celebrate the fact we are now a fully fledged Rights Respecting School. It is an award that we are very proud of.

The Rights Respecting School Award isn't just another initiative; it provides, instead, an overarching set of values that leads to improved relationships and climate for learning, whilst providing a framework to enhance child well-being. It also helps children and staff to develop an understanding of religion, cultures, beliefs and abilities different to their own and a wider and deeper understanding of the world in which they live.

For instance, Heronsbridge pupils share information with a number of schools in Botswana and Tanzania and this collaboration helps pupils to understand how children's rights impact within their learning environment and culture in Africa.

Every year in November, to coincide with World Children's Day, we hold a Rights Respecting week with lots of fun and learning activities to promote various Articles. There's lots of discussions and competitions and our 'Rights Governor,' Mr David Carr joins us as a judge and to enjoy the Show and Tell at the end of the week. The school council also plays an important part in helping to arrange the events of the week.

One of our competitions was to design a well-being post box for staff and pupils to place ideas and suggestions into the box or to ask for support. All letters are shared with our Health and Well-being group so we can constantly develop the well-being of all in the school.

Pupils were also encouraged to tell us what makes them happy in school and these provided a lovely decoration through our main corridor. The photos illustrate some of the wonderful things we do during our RRS week.



Apprenticeship Scheme

Level 3 S.T.L.S.

(Support teaching and learning in schools)

The apprenticeship scheme which was introduced at Heronsbridge in September 2017 has proved to be very successful. On completion of their training all past apprentices have secured full time positions within the school.

This year we have a new cohort of apprentices who will have the opportunity to experience placements across all the departments, providing opportunities to gain, first hand, knowledge and experience regarding the diverse approach to the delivery of the New Curriculum enabling the children and young people to achieve their individual goals and targets.

The apprentices will have mandatory training as well as specialist training for the individual needs of the children and young people at Heronsbridge. In addition to the practical element the apprentices also receive weekly tuition with the R.Q.F trainer within the school who delivers and supports the Level 3 City & Guilds S.T.L.S. qualification, alongside promoting the high standards expected at Heronsbridge.

As a training school all the staff are involved with the day to day support, sharing their knowledge and expertise necessary to equip the apprentices to fulfil their roles within the classroom, ensuring the children and young people's individual needs are met.

It is hoped that in future the apprentice scheme will continue to supply excellent, well trained, fulltime staff who will uphold the high standards at Heronsbridge.

R.Q.F. Team

Professional Learning at Heronsbridge



Deputy Head

Professional learning for teachers and support staff in Heronsbridge school is essential for improving teaching and learning and providing a range of new learning experiences for our pupils. There is a constant programme of medical, safeguarding and skills based training provided.

Not only do staff undertake mandatory training, many have specific interests which they have the opportunity to develop further, such as, speech and language, rebound and hydro practitioners as well as a comprehensive package of training to support our sensory learners. All staff evaluate their practice against professional standards to identify areas they would like to improve, skills they may need for new pupils in their class or new innovative ideas they would like to explore to benefit the pupils within the school. Additionally, staff undertake training to provide training in-house for parents through the NAS.

This year digital skills and mental well-being to support covid recovery have been key focus areas. Staff have undertaken a comprehensive package of learning to develop the skills and knowledge to support our learners with their well-being and academic recovery. The list below is a brief summary of what we did:

- Move Awareness Training,
- Supporting children with PMLD outdoors,
- Mental health first aid,
- Relationship based play,
- Dog Mentor Programme,
- Anxiety & Trauma,
- Virtual Reality in the Classroom
- Relationship and sexuality education



Pupil Support Team

Article 12
I have the right to be
listened to, and taken
seriously



The Pupil Support Team was established in 2014 to provide additional support for pupils who are having specific or general difficulties at home or school. The team is led by the Assistant head for Pupil Well-being, who is also a PROACT-SCIPr-UK® Instructor and consists of a Senior Special Support officer for Well-being, 2 part-time counsellors, a family engagement officer as well as members of staff trained in ELSA, Trauma-Informed Schools, DIR/Floortime and reflexology. The team is also joined by two 3rd year psychology students each year.

A pupil may be referred to the team by the class teacher, parents, social worker or anyone who feels a pupil needs more targeted support. Referrals are discussed at weekly team meetings where the group decide on which provision they feel will be of most benefit for the pupil. This may take the form of Counselling, Drawing and Talking, DIR/ Floortime, Relationship based play, Emotional Literacy (ELSA), or psychological support. Covering difficulties such as relationships, bereavement, self-esteem, bullying and difficulties with coping with feelings of anger. Counselling is also available to parents and families. Progress is monitored and discussed by the team to ensure pupils receive the support they need.

Emotions

Social skills

Anxiety

Self-esteem

Friendship

Bereavement

Growing up

Impulsivity



Family Matters

FAMILY DROP IN

Following our Virtual Drop Ins due to covid restrictions, we are now up and running with our face to face Family Drop Ins, held every Thursday in Heron Hall. If you enjoy reading we hold a Book Swap each week, bring along a book and choose another. We have had visits from NAS Bridgend and Bridgend Carers and hope to invite many more organisations in the Autumn Term. Pop along for a coffee and cake.

BRING & BUY

Look out for information about our popular Bring and Buy sale which will be held again in **NOVEMBER 2022**...

Great to meet the parents of our new starters during a **MEET & GREET** event held in Heron Hall, look forward to seeing you at any of our events.

Calling all DADS, GRANDDADS, UNCLES, BROTHERS - Our DADS ALOUD group has started again, we are hoping to build this very important support network, encouraging new ideas and activities. Keep an eye out for dates in September.

PARENT COURSES

If you are interested in accessing any courses, Signalong, ASD, PECS please email me and I will endeavour to help.

Don't forget, if you need to speak with CITIZENS ADVICE, please give me a call or email and I will arrange an appointment.

HOME SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

We encourage all parents and carers to communicate regularly with the school via Home School Books, Text messaging service, Telephone, Letters, Newsletters, Emails, Website, Family Matters events, Parent Drop In.

ATTENDANCE It is vital that children attend school regularly to gain the greatest benefit from their education, allowing all students to access the widest possible range of opportunities when they leave school. We have an electronic system for registration enabling us to monitor attendance on a daily basis. Rewards are given to the classes achieving the best attendance. **PUPILS WHO ATTEND THE MOST ACHIEVE THE MOST!**



Friends of Heronsbridge

Marge Nash retiring as Chair of the Friends

We had the opportunity, at our AGM in October, to say 'thank you and goodbye' to Marjorie Nash who is retiring as Chair of the Friends. Marjorie had been involved with the Friends since it was founded in 1994 and has served as Chair since 2008. She was an inspirational leader who had worked tirelessly for Heronsbridge pupils, helping to raise thousands of pounds to support their education and well-being. Marjorie will always be a 'friend' to the school and is continuing to serve as one of our governors. We will always be grateful to Marjorie for her many years of service and wish her well in her retirement from the Friends.

Marjorie will be a hard act to follow but her legacy has laid the foundation for our new Chair, Samantha Lambert-Worgan, to continue the work. Seven months into the role, Sam is already demonstrating that she is a worthy successor and recently won the Bridgend County Unsung hero award for her voluntary work. Congratulations Sam!



Marjorie Nash

Friends/NAS Ball

The Friends of Heronsbridge joined forces with the Bridgend Branch of the National Autistic Society for a Summer Ball, which was held at the Heronston Hotel & Spa on Saturday 18 June. It was an immensely successful event, which included, music, an auction and in which nearly £7000 was raised, which will be split between the two charities. The Friends would like to thank our sponsors who helped make this event possible: Ash Construction, Charlie Hills barbers, Paperwork People, Rotary Club.

Table decorations were made by pupils at the school.



We're On Facebook!

We launched our Facebook group in October and now have more than 350 members.

To keep up to date with news of all our events, check whether you've won the lottery etc, join the group or visit our page.





Fête

This was our first fête for 3 years and although the weather wasn't the best, it remained mostly dry and it was wonderful to see familiar faces returning as well as new ones. The football tournament was a success and this year was won by Heron Heroes after a nail biting final.

£5,234.84 was raised!



Money raised by the Friends goes towards buying equipment for pupils and classes, presents from Santa and contributing towards the costs of events such as the Mad Hatters Tea Party and the ice cream van at the Friendship Festival



Friends
together





We are Digital Champions!

We have learnt lots of new digital skills this year. We love building topic related models out of Lego and Duplo by following visual instructions. We can take photos of our work and have even started creating our own e-books using the photos.

We have worked on our computational thinking skills using bee bots and code-a-pillars. We can follow instructions and make them move in different directions.

We have even had a go at 3D printing! We each designed an 'Alice in Wonderland' themed chess piece using Purple Mash tools. We saw the 3D printer printing out our designs and put them all together to make a chess set!





Podcast

This year our Leavers department has launched our first ever podcast called 'Together We Chat'. The podcast has been set up to inform, entertain and explore Heronsbridge School and the people that help our students.

The Leavers students have been developing their skills in researching a podcast, recording interviews with members of staff and editing/producing the show for the enjoyment of the entire school.

They have loved the experience and hopefully the 'Together We Chat' podcast will continue for many years to come!





Friendship Festival

Love is like a tree, it never stops growing

12

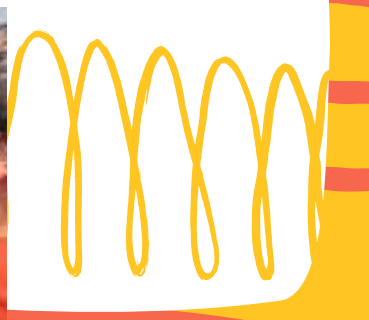
On 1st July we held our second Friendship Day celebration. It was fantastic for the whole school to come together after so long apart.

It was a laid back day with lots of craft activities, storytelling and music - it just wouldn't have been a festival without an abundance of music and an ice-cream van!!!

The school was like a sea of colour, with everyone wearing their brightest, colourful clothes - fitting with the festival vibe. We would like to say a big thank you to our local community, friends and families who got involved by kindly donating knitted, crocheted squares and blankets which were sewn together and wrapped around our friendship celebration trees.

It was such a fitting way to remember our friends who are no longer with us.





DYB - Shine

Article 31
I have a right to relax and play



We have enjoyed taking part in the new Shine session working on our health and well-being. The Shine programme allows us to check in with our emotions. We have learnt a new calming strategy body tapping and we have explored body awareness through music, movement and relaxation.





Eco-Schools



This year our school has once again retained its platinum status as an eco-school. For our latest project we are helping to support the habitat of one of Britain's rarest butterflies, the high brown fritillary. Following an assembly by Dot Williams of Butterfly Conservation we learnt that the only Welsh colony of this butterfly is found in the nearby Alun Valley and we can help by growing their favourite food - dog violets. Once we have an established patch in school we hope to be able to help this plant spread in the Alun Valley and feed more of the hungry caterpillars!



Sustainable Sam



Tanio Cymru

Sustainable Sam



Opportunity Ollie

We are Opportunity Ollies because we are having a fantastic time exploring and investigating our local geographical environment.

We are Sustainable Sams because we are doing our best to take care of our school grounds.

Tanio have delivered outdoor learning opportunities to the pupils in class 4 at Heronsbridge school since September 2021.

The activities have generally been artist led, with school staff supporting the pupils to access the workshop learning experiences. Sessions were initially delivered inside the familiar classroom in order to build trusting relationships with the artists. Generally workshops are delivered and experienced in the school Orchard where the pupils have benefited from being encouraged to work as individuals, pairs and small groups.

Although Covid has impacted on the delivery of the project the following well-being benefits for the pupils are evident and noted.

- Working in an outdoor environment
- Freedom of artistic expression
- Opportunity to make informed choices
- Opportunity to make mistakes, persevere and achieve
- Explore friendships
- Develop self esteem
- Physical well-being e.g. developing fine and gross motor skills
- Confronted fears of new situations with the encouragement of the artists



Residential

Exley House and Hewitt House

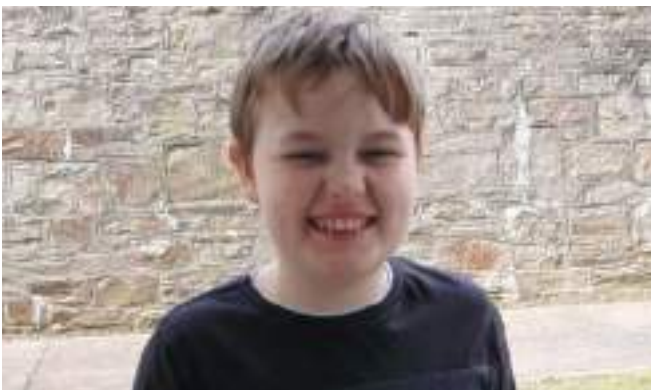
We enjoy our evenings at Exley House and Hewitt House immensely. We get to spend time with the best people and we enjoy ourselves every day.

Our evenings are filled with activities ranging from Hydrotherapy, to Rebound, Swimming to Bus rides. We get to use the Orchard, and enjoy our beautiful grounds.

We all like chill time, cooking, pamper sessions and a huge amount of fun.

Exley House

Gethyn and Cody love their Tuesday swimming sessions. Cody likes to spend time out in the garden and relaxing, watching TV after school. Gethyn loves his end of the week treat, a chill out session in the hydro pool followed by his favourite takeaway and a DVD.





Hewitt House

This year we welcomed Eleri to Hewitt House. She enjoys spending time running around the garden, cooking and playing with her toys.

Molly enjoys being with the girls, having a sing song and colouring. Molly loves nothing more than having a cup of tea and a chat. After over three years in residential we say farewell to Molly.

We will miss your beautiful smile, your singing and your sense of humour.

We wish you all the best !!



Attention Autism Programme

Attention Autism Programme develops natural and spontaneous communication through the use of visually based and highly motivating activities.

Primary and Centre for Autism have had weekly sessions which are fun and offer an irresistible invitation to learn and shared good practice.



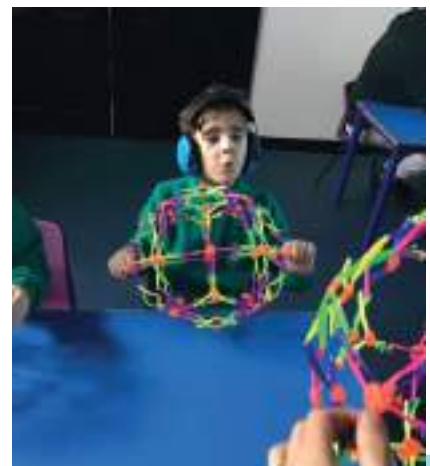
Article 28
I have the right to an
education.



In A1 this year, we have all been working very hard during our mindfulness sessions. We have enjoyed Dragon's Breath and Moon Walking exercises. We have had individual packs with lots of exciting resources: breathing balls, sensory toys and noisy toys!!

A1

Health and well-being



In A2 this year, we have all been working very hard across all areas of learning.

We have enjoyed a variety of fun lessons and activities.

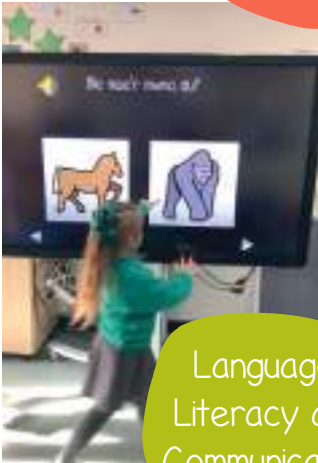
A2



Maths and Numeracy



Science and Technology



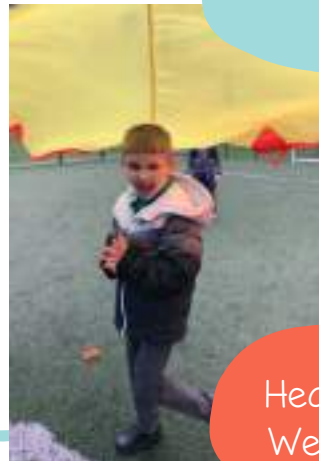
Language, Literacy and Communication



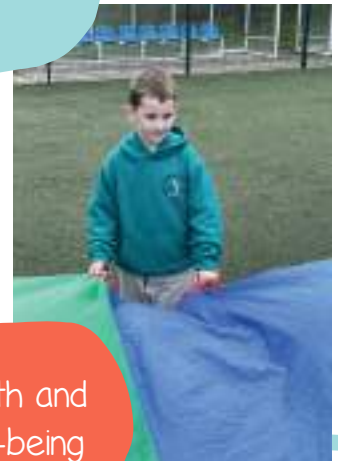
Humanities



Expressive Arts



Health and Well-being



A3

Extra curriculum activities

Rebound - a variety of moves are performed on a small trampoline used with PECs to aid communication and core stability. We follow the Winstrada study where the children complete a routine prior to receiving a certificate.

Sensory Circuits - aids core stability and attention skills using exercise balls, the parachute and equipment such as belly and wobble boards.

Attention autism - using the bucket method, pupils are encouraged to sit in a group, make eye contact with toys shown and take turns to complete a task. By using noisy or light up toys, it peaks the children's interests to encourage and expand their attention.

Floortime - 1:1 child led play sessions to develop their interaction, eye contact, two way communication and self regulation all at their level.

Curiosity programme - to develop their interaction skills on a 1:1 basis using objects of interest.

Swimming - our children have been working towards their level one swimming award, learning to blow bubbles, put water on their face and begin to float on their back and kick their legs.

Relationship based play - 1:1 or group based focus of play relationship between child, adult and peers. It is playful and interactive.

DYB Shine session - this is a group session that focuses on health & well-being to improve emotional regulation and shared attention.



Swimming



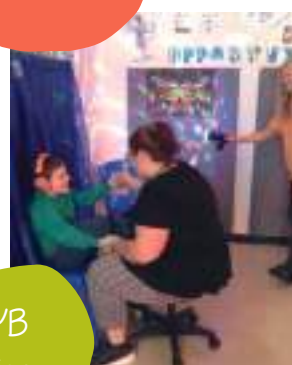
Rebound



Sensory Circuits



Relationship Based Play



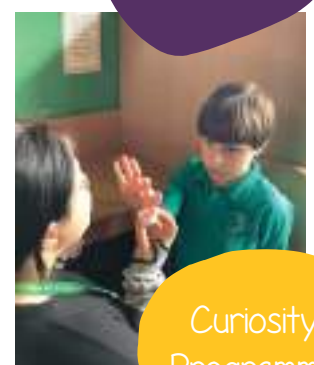
DYB Shine



Floortime



Attention Autism



Curiosity Programme

A4

We have been participating in outdoor Floortime sessions as part of our morning routine. This has helped our readiness to learn and helps us start our day in a positive way.

We have access to activities to support our fine and gross motor skills.

We have enjoyed sand and water play, use of the bikes and scooters, bubbles, trampolines and much more. We use this time to help build positive relationships with staff and friends.



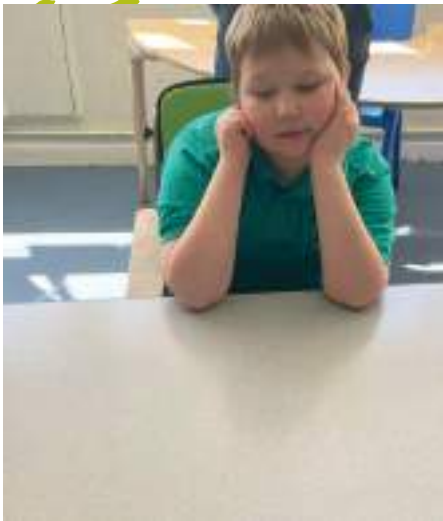
A5

We have been busy learning about materials and their properties and forces in our sensory science sessions this year.

We enjoy seeing the results of our actions on different materials and objects and have explored things that melt, freeze, dissolve and erupt!

We have experienced volcanoes, dinosaur ice eggs, potions, balloon races, skittle rainbows, crawling caterpillar colours and the Mad Hatter's sugar lumps.

We can follow simple sequences and patterns in our sensory science sessions.



This year in A6 we have been focusing on our health and well-being. As part of the dog mentor programme, we have been taking Beau for a well-being walk.

We have continued to participate in our class Rebound, Swimming and O.T. sessions and we have also begun to introduce both Attention Autism and Mindfulness sessions into our class routine.

A6



A7

A7 have been busy learning all about planting. We have planted our own seeds and experienced all the things they need to grow to make our own flower garden like in Alice in Wonderland.

We enjoyed playing with the soil especially when we had watered and the soil was messy fun! We then experienced 'being a seed'. We were planted in planters with soil and watered. We stood in the sun and grew nice and tall turning into a beautiful daffodil!



A8

This year in A8 we have been Sustainable Sams! We have been looking after our school grounds and our local environment. We have used litter pickers to keep our grounds tidy and planted flowers in our school gardens.

We have also explored our local environment, visiting parks and beaches and have had lots of fun with our friends!



Music Time!



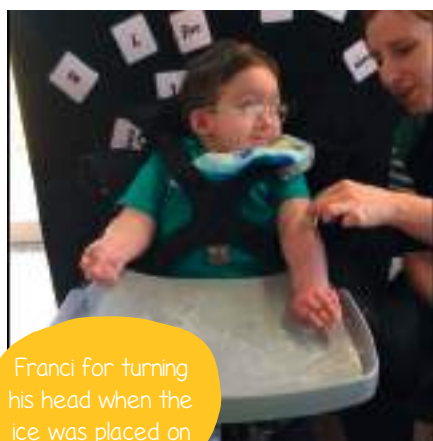
It has been a pleasure to work with our talented pupils at Heronsbridge over the last year (and through Zoom/TEAMS sessions on line during the dreaded pandemic). The enthusiasm the pupils have for music makes my job very easy and a joy to deliver throughout the week. We have covered a wide range of topics looking at rhythms, participating in groups, music history as well as exploring a wide range of instruments to make sounds with. We clearly have some emerging talented musicians which has been really pleasing to see. The pupils have thoroughly enjoyed themselves and have done well to put up with my 'Singing' for the last year so I thank them for that too! Here is a small selection of photographs of some of the pupils enjoying their musical journey.



"WOW" moments in Early Years

Early Years have had many moments to celebrate and make us shout out "WOW" this year, from the very small things to the very big things. Each and every learner has made us so proud and what may seem small to some are truly incredible personal achievements.

We have our WOW door, with a pre-recorded fanfare switch that is pressed to celebrate each Wow moment so that we can all join in and cheer on our friends. We love to say WOW together. It truly gives a great feel good atmosphere and positive well-being is promoted.



Franci for turning his head when the ice was placed on his arm



Joey for taking his turn in Attention Bucket and making lovely stripes



Seth for rolling the pastry to make a jam tart



Lilly-May for exploring the Curiosity boxes



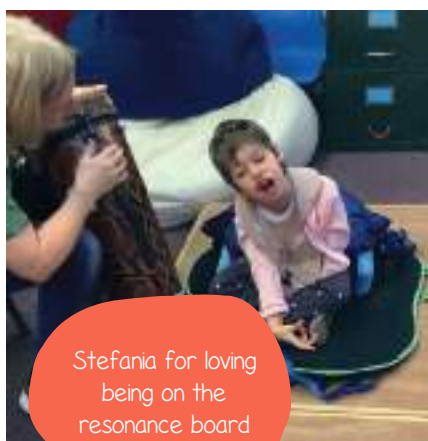
Sam for following objects and pictures of reference



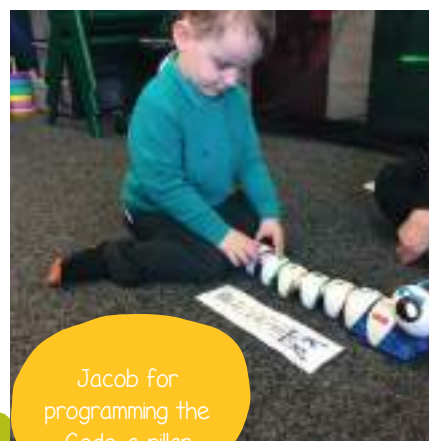
Andrea for amazing standing



Dafydd for reacting to the ice



Stefania for loving being on the resonance board



Jacob for programming the Code-a-pillar

Class 1

We have been very fortunate to have some visitors to our school. Our first was a visit from some very scary and realistic dinosaurs, Dinomania was a great hit with pupils and staff alike. Pupils had the opportunity to touch the small interactive dinosaurs and say hello to the big walking dinosaurs, as well as exploring all the fossils. It was definitely a WOW factor as part of our dinosaur topic. Dinomania were so good they made it to the semi-finals of Britain's Got Talent. Our other visitors were from the local Fire Station. Pupils had fun trying on the Fire Fighters' helmets and exploring inside the fire engine. The best part was using the fire hose and getting everyone wet!

We celebrated St. David's Day as a class this year by learning all about Wales, we made daffodil pictures in Art, and explored the Eisteddfod during our Attention Autism Bucket sessions.



Class 2

Water Play

We absolutely love water play in Class 2! We have incorporated water play into Expressive Art sessions; painting using coloured ice cubes, water sprays and adding water to powder paints, while listening to relaxing water sounds and music.

During the sunny weather we had lots of fun cooling off in the paddling pools. We enjoyed sitting and splashing in the water. We explored a range of water toys and pouring water from watering cans and filling containers. We enjoyed squirting water pistols at each other and at the staff! It was lots of fun! Well done Class 2 for being such amazing Well-being Wynnies!



Class 3

Class 3 have done lots of outdoor learning this year, come rain or shine! Pupils have enjoyed their Welly Wednesday sessions in the Orchard, where they have taken in part in science experiments such as 'The Mad Hatter's Dissolving Tea Party'.

Pupils have also enjoyed their weekly bus trips to Newbridge Fields and Bryngarw Park, where they have used their numeracy skills to complete dinosaur and minibeast hunts, followed by a play in the park of course!

One of Class 3's favourite sessions is Noodle Drumming, where they listen to a variety of funky songs and drum their noodles to the music! Pupils are able to copy the different moves and have learnt different routines to different songs! The louder the better!



Well-being
Winnie



Independent
Izzy

Class 4

We are Well-being Winnies and Independent Izzys because:

- We have built fantastic supportive friendships and we try to do things by ourselves.
- We celebrate our positive achievements together.
- We care and support each other when we are sad.
- We have developed our confidence and play together.



Class 5

Summer Fun

Class 5 have really enjoyed the topic 'Tell me a Story' during the Summer term and have loved exploring the stories 'Alice in Wonderland' and 'Jack and the Beanstalk'. We have particularly enjoyed outdoor learning and making 'drink me' potions and growing our own beans to represent both stories. During the summer we have also enjoyed the Friendship Day Festival where we got to enjoy games and a selfie booth and have fun with our friends, sports day and a trip to Margam Park where we explored the Fairy Tale village and had lots of fun out and about!



Class 6

Values

This year Class 6 have been working hard to embrace the school heron squad and incorporate them into everything we do. The school Heron Squad is made up of our four herons, Independent Izzy, Well-being Winnie, Opportunity Ollie and Sustainable Sam. These herons help us to live by our school values as well as help us to embed the four main principles of the new Curriculum for Wales.

Well-being has been a big focus upon our return to school this year, we have had, mindfulness sessions, yoga sessions, lots of time in the outdoors as well as structured sessions teaching us about our emotions and how we can stay regulated.

We have embraced many different opportunities that have cropped throughout our time in class and made the most of all of them. We particularly loved meeting Ranger Chris and his Dinosaurs.

When we participate in community events such as Children in Need or #helloyellowday, we are being like Sustainable Sam and engaging with wider issues that impact our community.

Being like Independent Izzy helps us to be the best that we can be encouraging us to persevere and to try our best. It has also helped us to prepare for our transition to the senior school.

What a wonderful year we have had, together!

Well-being Winnie



Opportunity Ollie



Sustainable Sam



Independent Izzy





Class TP

Fun Days At Wiggleys Fun Farm!

This year Class TP have been Opportunity Ollies, as we enjoyed 2 amazing visits to Wiggleys Fun Farm! The pupils thoroughly enjoyed feeding and stroking the animals. They had an exciting day exploring the indoor and outdoor activities. Everyone's favourite activity was the rides in the Arcade! After a busy day Class TP were ravenous and really enjoyed eating their chicken nuggets and chips! A fun day was had by all!



Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee Celebrations



The Queen was the first British Monarch to achieve a Platinum Jubilee. The Platinum Jubilee was celebrated in the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth marking the special anniversary of the ascension of Queen Elizabeth II on February 6th 1952.

At Heronsbridge school we helped to celebrate the event. Pupils enjoyed class parties which included eating, drinking, and entertainment. The whole school also celebrated in the Orchard. Classes came along with their picnic blankets and a special order was given to the canteen for dinner. Pupils rocked up to school dressed in their best clothes and took part in some exciting activities. Designing a crown was a hit with most and they wore them with pride. Pupils wore masks of the Queen and arrived at school with a royal wave. We even had a Freddie Mercury mask, (well he was 'in' Queen).

Well done Heronsbridge, a celebration of being proud to be British!



The Dog Mentors



Our Dog Mentors have continued to more than prove their worth this year. The work they do is invaluable with pupils and staff across the school.

We all love the dogs being part of our school community, so much so that the team has now grown! We are pleased to welcome Beau, Bernie, Beti, Oakely & Slinky, who have been taken on to share the load with Fiona - what an amazing crew they make! Each dog brings a different dynamic and energy to the school, from our more laid back & chilled dogs: Fiona, Bernie & Beau to our more energetic friends Beti, Oakley & Slinky we have all bases covered! They have all been super busy this year, between working with pupils they have also met Father Christmas, helped select the winning Snoopy design and had their own stall at the Summer Fete.





The Dog Mentor Affiliated School



Class 7

Say Cheese!

Class 7 like to smile. It's quite a funny thing to see. It wrinkles up our faces every time we do! Smiles are good at hiding but we find its hiding place. Pupils in Class 7 have had a very busy year. We have celebrated various occasions and visited lots of places. Can you guess where we are or what we are doing??

Every smile has a story to tell!

Well-being
Winnie



What a 'WOW' year Class 8 have had; we've had so much fun learning through the topics 'Kaleidoscope', 'When Dinosaurs Walked the Earth' and 'Tell Me a Story'. We've been on exciting trips throughout the year to Porthcawl Snoopy Trail, Harvester, Cardiff Museum, Alice in Wonderland and bowling and we even had a dinosaur visit school! It was 'ROOOOARSOME'. Some of our best memories have been making circuits, going in the Alice in Wonderland drama circle, becoming palaeontologists, partying for the Jubilee and becoming fashion designers.

Class 8

Year of Fun, Laughter and Learning



Opportunity Ollie



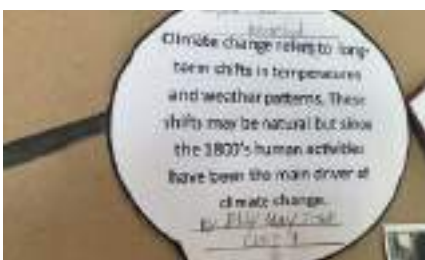
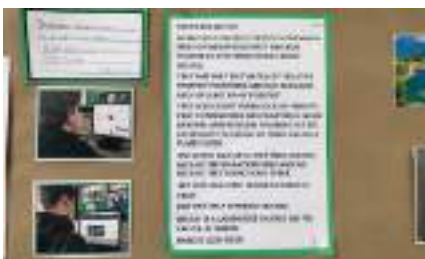
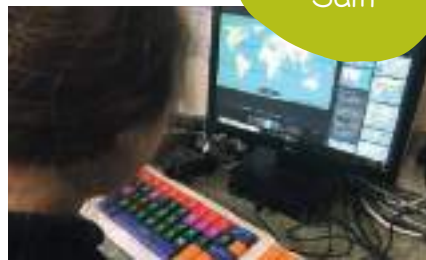
Class 9

2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference

The 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference, more commonly referred to as COP26, was the 26th United Nations Climate Change conference. It was held at the SEC Centre in Glasgow, Scotland from 31 October to 13 November 2021. The president of the conference was UK cabinet minister Alok Sharma.

In Class 9 we have learnt lots of information about climate change and how our planet is being damaged. We are trying to promote an awareness of how the temperature of the world can be reduced.

Sustainable Sam



Ranger Chris and Ranger Andy visited from 'Dinomania' giving us a full dinosaur experience. We experienced realistic walking dinosaurs, small interactive puppets, animatronics, fossils and replicas. It was amazing to explore a dinosaur egg and touch baby dinosaurs. We met Al the Allosaurus standing at a staggering 7.3m long and 4m tall! As well as Millie the full sized Triceratops and Ronnie the T-Rex. All of which were able to walk, blink and make realistic dinosaur noises. It was fantastic to see the students so engaged and EGGCITED!!!

Class 10

Dinomania Experience



Independent
Izzy



Class 11

Class 11 went tumbling down the rabbit hole to immerse themselves in the Alice in Wonderland experience at the Riverfront Theatre in Newport. This experience formed part of this term's topic "Tell Me A Story", and was a perfect opportunity for the pupils to take part in an interactive experience that engaged the senses and the mind. Inspiring curiosity and instilling wonder!

To round off the summer term, KS4 put on an Alice in Wonderland tea party for the Secondary department. Everyone dressed up in their best party gear and celebrated as one big family.



Miss Bishop asked every class in Heronsbridge to design a Snoopy sculpture for the South Wales Snoopy Trail. This trail is to raise money for Dog's Trust. Every entry was amazing but our class won the competition and Alfie's design was chosen! We enjoyed our prize which was a class trip to our school's coffee shop for some treats!

We worked hard on painting our Snoopy sculpture following Alfie's design and the finished sculpture looked amazing! We are all very proud of ourselves and enjoyed helping to raise money for such a great charity!

We were very lucky to go on two class trips to follow the South Wales Snoopy Trail, one in Porthcawl and one in Cardiff Bay, where we went to see our very own Snoopy sculpture! We enjoyed both trips and loved seeing all the different Snoopys on the trail! After completing both trails we enjoyed a lovely hot chocolate - our favourite!

Class 12

Snoopy Trail



Opportunity
Ollie



Well-being
Winnie

Class NS/TS

Life Skills

Within NS/TS we have had many opportunities to learn about a variety of life skills. In the classroom, we have learnt how to make toast, fold clothes, wash the dishes and clean up.

We have also been able to use our life skills within the community. Once a week, we go to our local Asda supermarket. On our walk to Asda, we learn about road safety. We have learnt that the green man means go and the red man means stop, we must look and listen in both directions and stay with our class at all times. In Asda, we have a shopping list that we follow that contains items needed for everyday classroom use. This includes butter and bread for snack and flour for cooking lessons. We all get to find our own items, put them in the basket and scan them at the self checkouts. To broaden our numeracy skills, we also learn about money, the differences in prices of items and how much we need to pay for our shopping. Life skills is lots of fun!

Independent
Izzy



Opportunity
Ollie



KS4

Enterprise

KS4 have had a busy time with enterprise this past year. They have been raising money to help go towards their Alice in Wonderland party to celebrate the end of the year. Items that the pupils were making included bath bombs, wooden hearts and tie dye t-shirts. Pupils enjoyed making bath bombs as they were actively involved in all aspects of the process. The pupils firstly researched what ingredients they needed and then shopped online for the best prices to ensure they had a fair profit. They then started the process of making them and doing smell tests to see if people would buy them. Once they were made, pupils sold them in school and made over £50.

Another item that pupils made were wooden hearts for decoration. They experienced using machines and tools to make them such as drills, sanding tools and saws. Pupils then sold these for £3.50 and made a lot of money to help towards the party.

Pupils also made tie dye t-shirts and socks and sold them in the summer fete. They firstly went shopping to Primark in Swansea and bought the items they needed. They then made the clothing and decided on a price. Students then also decided to have a make your own tie dye top at the fete as they thought this would bring in more money. All clothing items were sold and they made over a whopping £300. Well done to everyone involved in Enterprise last year, you were all amazing and worked very hard.



The Show Still Goes On!

The Secondary, Leavers and Centre for Autism Christmas Show 2021 was a virtual production due to covid restrictions.



School Fundraising Projects



Opportunity
Ollie

WOW What an amazing year of fundraising!! Thank you for all your support and well done to staff and students for getting involved and having fun. Here are the charities supported since September 2021: Children in Need, Red Nose Day, Hello Yellow & Young Minds.

Bike Ride: Sarah and Kath Ms Walters and Miss (Sarah) spent a few months cycle training with the Bridgend Rotarians in preparation for a 60 mile fundraising bike ride from Cardiff Bay Cenotaph to Swansea Bay's Mumbles Pier. They were fundraising with The Bridgend Rotarians in order to raise money for schools in Tanzania as part of our Water Aid project commitment. Heronsbridge School is part of BOTAWA. an international collaborative project that sees life education through each other's eyes. Schools from Botswana, Wales and Tanzania all communicate, collaborate and share good practice between the school staff and pupils alike. Our teachers raised £400 between them. They would like to thank all the staff and families that supported them in their training, on the day and with sponsorship. Diolch



Well-being Days

Students from across the school have participated in many Well-being events this year. During the Autumn Term, we celebrated #HelloYellow Day. Students and staff wore yellow and spent time with their friends to highlight the importance of looking after our mental health. Great fun was had by all in classes and it was lovely to see so many smiley faces!

Children's Mental Health Week took place in February and this year the theme was 'Growing Together'. Students had the opportunity to explore their emotions and feelings throughout the week as well as taking part in many activities, including planting sweet peas, designing a 'personal goal star' and decorating an 'emoji biscuit'. At the end of the week, we had a 'Dress to Express' day, where students and staff used colour and clothing to express themselves. Students had great fun at the photo booth which helped to capture the special feel of the day.

'Well-being Wednesday' has also been introduced for all this year. As a thank you to staff, our Coffee Shop baked and decorated cupcakes for staff to enjoy together.



We are Well-being Warriors!!



Well-being Winnie

Well-being Warriors

Pupils in school were selected to be a 'Well-being Warrior' because they had been identified as being a very good friend and enjoyed helping others. The Well-being Warriors got together to help sort the special post in the post box and deliver it to their friends. Well done!

Post box

In the Autumn term every pupil had the opportunity to design a post box which would become our very own Heronsbridge post box. The winning design was chosen by Mr. Evans which was Millie's beautiful blue and pink stripy design. Millie and the 'Creative Crew' got together to paint the design and did a fantastic job! Once this was created all pupils and staff sent each other feel good post including compliments and special thank yous via the post box.



Well-being Wednesday for Staff

An opportunity for staff to support their well-being has been successfully launched over the past year known as 'Well-being Wednesday'. A variety of activities organised by staff has been offered on a weekly basis including yoga, dancing, meditation, music, drumming, crocheting and coffee and cake of course. Staff have thoroughly enjoyed Well-being Wednesdays whilst learning new skills.



Leavers 1

The students in Leavers 1 have relished the opportunity to go out on class trips again. For the "Tell Me a Story" topic the students read the book "A Childhood in a Welsh Mining Valley" by Vivian Jones. They learnt about the history of coal mining in South Wales and how boys as young as 12 would work in the mines. To give the students some insight and first hand experience, they jumped on a minibus with Mr Price at the wheel and headed off to various significant sites of coal mining history. They visited the Keeper of the Collieries miner statue in Maesteg, at the site of the old Coegnant Colliery, and the Parc Slip mining disaster memorial which commemorated the 112 miners who died in the disaster of 1892. Also, they enjoyed a day out at Rhondda Heritage Park where they were given a guided tour by John Evans, a retired miner from the former Lewis Merthyr Colliery which once thrived at that site. The students loved their trips out and have learnt to appreciate how lucky they are not to have spent their youth working in a coal mine.



Leavers 2

Over the Summer term 2022, as part of our work on citizenship and our roles in society, Year 14 followed an Agored Cymru course called 'Rights and Responsibilities'. We enjoyed finding out more about our rights and some of the people who can support us if we think someone is not respecting our rights. We also found out about people who make decisions on our behalf. Via Teams we met Cllr Freya Bletsoe, who is a local member of Bridgend Council. She explained the important parts of her role and described some of the things that concern people in the local area. Our friend Sarah Murphy came in to school to help us understand a bit more about her role in the Senedd, representing the people of Bridgend. Sarah has been an MS (Member of the Senedd) for over a year now and really enjoys helping people with their problems.

The highlight of the course was our three days in London in July, where we managed to complete our coursework following our visit to the Houses of Parliament to meet the MP for Ogmore, Chris Elmore. It was a very interesting visit to the Palace of Westminster and we watched the business of the day being discussed in both the House of Commons and the House of Lords. Chris and his team helped us understand what his job involves and all of his responsibilities within his party and within the House of Commons.

The visit also gave us plenty of time to explore the main London landmarks and even see lots of them from above on the London Eye. It was an amazing three days with lots of memories to treasure.



Leavers 3



Independent
Izzy



Leavers 3 students have been working on their Life Skills this year to become independent young adults. They have enjoyed having the opportunity to prepare and make snacks and drinks, learn about personal hygiene and first aid skills, and use our voice to communicate to our friends.



The students of Leavers 4 had a great day out visiting the National Museum Wales in Cardiff. Here are some of the things we saw!

Leavers 4

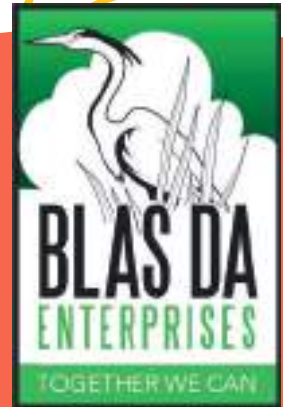


Work Based Learning

Car Valeting and Horticulture



As part of the Leavers Careers and the World of Work the students have a range of work based learning opportunities to choose from. Our year 14 students access one of the projects two days a week as part of their timetable.



Car Valeting - Blas da Enterprise.

During the time the students access the car valeting they gain a wealth of knowledge and skills, and build their confidence and independence preparing them for life and work. They also complete accreditation. They work as part of a car valeting team in which they learn about health and safety, and cleaning the exterior and interior of a car to a showroom standard. Also, they learn about the running of the business and customer service skills.

Market garden - Blas da Enterprise.

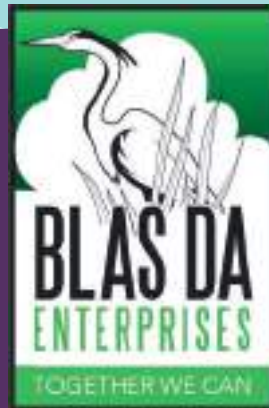
During the time the students access the market garden they gain a wealth of knowledge and skills, and build their confidence and independence preparing them for life and work. They also complete accreditation. They work as part of a horticulture team in which they learn about health and safety, and all aspects of plant propagation including planting seeds and taking cuttings to increase plant stock. They learn how to grow and harvest vegetables and how to get plants ready for sale, and make up attractive planters for different occasions such as Mother's Day. They learn about marketing and gain skills in customer service.



Work Based Learning

Hospitality

As part of the Leavers Careers and the World of Work the students have a range of work based learning opportunities to choose from. Our year 14 students access one of the projects two days a week as part of their timetable.



Hospitality - Blas Da Enterprise

During the time the students access the coffee shop they gain a wealth of knowledge and skills, and build their confidence and independence preparing them for life and work. They also complete accreditation. They work as part of a hospitality team in which they learn about health and safety, food safety, food preparation, cooking, barista skills, cleaning and customer service skills. The coffee shop is open two days a week for our staff to access. The team supply hospitality for the following: interviews, courses, fete, Friendship Day, sports day, retirement celebrations and ROA evening. The coffee shop is a bustling business which is in constant use. Carrie, our work based learning trainer, also delivers ASDAN sensory baking sessions to our PMLD students. They explore tastes, textures, colours and smells of a variety of baking ingredients. They also make some lovely dishes to take home.

Our key stage four students also have the opportunity to access the coffee shop once a week where they cook a range of sweet and savoury goods which they take home. This is a lovely introduction to the coffee shop and a professional kitchen environment for all students.



Work Experience

As part of the Leavers Careers and the World of Work year 13 and 14 students have the opportunity to choose work experience options. We are all breathing a sigh of relief that our students have the opportunity to be back out in the community. We work in collaboration with a number of local businesses and charities to give our students choices and new opportunities. During their time on placement they gain new knowledge and skills, health and safety awareness, food safety awareness and independence, and we see a marked improvement in their confidence. Our students have chosen the following organisations for their placements:

The Zone community hub, Boots, Y Bont nursery, Dunelm coffee shop.

Now that Covid restrictions have lifted more businesses will be working with us, which means more choices for our students.



College Links

We have long enjoyed a strong relationship with the team at Bridgend College and students benefit from a link course in each of the three years they are in the Leavers Department. Year 12 students have been busy all year preparing for their performance of 'The Wizard of Oz' in July. It's all under wraps at the moment, but the sparkly red shoes will soon be making an appearance!

Year 13 have been delighting friends and family with the tasty treats made on their catering course. For a small contribution towards ingredients, they get to cook a different dish each week and then take it home to share. This helps them to develop basic food preparation and cooking skills, which are essential skills for life.

For the Year 14s, it's all about preparing for the transition on from school. Their link course takes them to three different departments of the College and two different campuses. With art then music in the first two terms, the final term sees the group head for the Pencoed campus where they can enjoy being outdoors in the horticulture centre.

Over the three years in the Department, young people develop their social and money skills when using the student canteen and coffee shop, meet up with old friends and develop important life and independence skills. Of course, they also get used to the College routines, meet new people and most of all have fun, which is just as important!



Duke of Edinburgh



Our Leavers students have been busy working towards their Bronze Duke of Edinburgh award. Students have to complete four sections to achieve the award: Skills, Physical, Volunteering and Expedition.

This year, our students have taken part in a physical activity of their choice to improve their strength and fitness. Activities included swimming, yoga, hydrotherapy and cricket. Students also chose a skills activity to work towards and develop. These included photography, gardening, model making and painting.





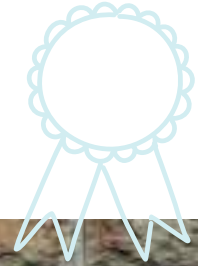
During the Summer Term, students excitedly prepared for their expedition. They spent time learning basic map reading skills, first aid, camp craft and how to cook using a Trangia. During their expedition, students worked with peers to navigate the route and carry all the necessary equipment. Once their walk was complete, they came back to school and set up camp for the night within our school orchard. Students worked together to cook their own meal and prepare their lunch. Great fun was had by all and many longlasting memories created. Our students were extremely proud of themselves and of each other once the expedition was complete!



Article 6
I should be supported to
live and grow



Mostyn Hills Awards



The Mostyn Hills Awards were created in the memory of Mostyn Hills who was the Swimming Instructor in Heronsbridge for many years who taught and inspired hundreds of pupils in his time at Heronsbridge.

Congratulations to:

Kai Callard - Most Improved Swimmer
Tyler Williams - Confidence in the Water
Riley Cocks - Swimmer of the Year



Swimming

Article 31
I have a right to relax and play.



We have had a great time being back in the Swimming Pool and Hydro Pool this year. Lots of pupils have spent time improving their swimming and have achieved distance awards. A pupil in KS3 managed the furthest distance this year in our pool, with an amazing 1000m!

We have also enjoyed a Jubilee Tea Party week where swimmers played Jubilee-themed games in the pool and met the Queen on poolside.

Over in the Hydro Pool, the big WOW for the summer term was the Alice in Wonderland theme and students had a wonderful sensory experience which included music, lighting and dancing.



South Wales Special Schools Sport Network Athletics Championships 2022

On 30th June 2022, 12 of our students competed in the Welsh Athletics Championships. The students were fantastic representatives of our school and competed extremely well. We had a number of winners and all students enjoyed a fantastic day out!



Sports Day 2022

Sports Day 2022 marked a return of the event for the first time since 2019 - and it was worth the wait! All of our students competed fantastically with energy and vigour and there were some very competitive races throughout the day. Our Sensory Sports Day 2022 was another successful event with our students experiencing a range of sporting activities as well as getting messy in the process!

Article 29
If I have a disability, I have
the right to special care and
education.



Bridgend Herons Inclusive FC

Following training matches at partner community club Penybont FC, last autumn saw the return of competitive action for those students playing for The Herons, action that took us to Newport and Aberystwyth and to Pembrokeshire on three occasions. And it should go without saying perhaps that everyone associated with the club was delighted to be hosting our own festival at Heronsbridge again in July, the first since 2019!

Meanwhile, back at Penybont, a match in memory of former Heron William Ridout has been staged, we've formed a guard of honour prior to a first team fixture kicking off and players, along with their parents in some cases, have also participated in lots of ground maintenance tasks at the club, an aspect of our the work that has, alongside the football, been developing for the past three years. And at Heronsbridge, we've staged a marathon dribble-a-thon, raising £2,500 for our Friends association and even hosted the Wales Air Ambulance when one of it's helicopters needed to touch down during one of our weekly training sessions at school!



Well-being
Winnie



Yorkshire 2022

Mencap Home Internationals

In Yorkshire in July, Mencap staged a Home Internationals football tournament. We are naturally very proud of students Riley Cocks, Ben Devine, Ryan Evans, Liam McGuire and Richard Pugh who lined up with 6 of our ex-students in a 17-strong Herons squad representing Wales. The Pontefract based event, which marked our 18 year association with Mencap's National Football Team as a school, also included squads representative of England, Northern Ireland and Scotland.



Opportunity
Ollie



Pupil Voice

Our aim is to promote the 'Rights of the Child' for all pupils at Heronsbridge. One of the ways in which we achieve this is through listening to pupils, what they would like their school to look and feel like and what we can do to make this happen. The school council play an important role in finding out the views of their peers, as well as sharing information with them. This year they attended an extremely important meeting via TEAMS with the corporate Director for Education and Family Support- Lindsay Harvey and his team to consult on the proposal of a new school build. Representatives visited classes prior to the meeting to gain an understanding of what pupils would like to know about the school and what questions they would like to ask. The local authority were very impressed with the challenging nature of the questions and gave their answers much thought! The school council produced an important piece of work this year, updating the school charter to highlight The Rights of the Child which they felt were most important to them and the school.

The school council also met with a member of the Health Board who are interested in working with pupils at our school to find out more about how they can support those with additional Learning Needs, not only in school but also in the community. The school council certainly have a busy year ahead of them! Pupils also have opportunities to meet in groups within the school to develop their interests, learn new skills and meet new friends. These groups include the Eco Council, the Well-being Warriors and the Creative Crew. In the Summer term the Creative Crew got together to create an artwork made out of bottle tops which was entered into the National Schools Partnership 'Message in a Bottle Top' competition. A fantastic example of being Sustainable Sams!



Addiena LW



Millie B-R



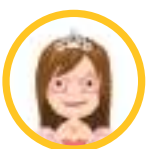
Kian R



Jesse O



James L



Issy D



Riley C



Alfie J



Ris H

RoA Celebration

The end of the year is always very exciting at Heronsbridge with lots of fun things to do and exciting times, with everyone looking forward to what the new year will bring. This means that it's a little bit sad too, as we are all moving on from places and people we know well and, for some, into a new setting with people and friends we don't know yet. This is most marked for people moving on from Heronsbridge; usually our Year 14 students. Thankfully, everyone is really excited for all the new opportunities they will experience whether that is in College or at Day Service. For the first time since 2019, Mr Evans gave us permission for a super night of fun at our RoA night and Leavers Prom.

Following the speeches and the awarding of Records of Achievement to those leaving, it was time for the best party of the year. As usual, the staff had decorated Heron Hall so you could hardly recognise it and with families, governors and special guests in attendance, it was time to party!

We had a wonderful evening and wish all our Leavers the very best for the future!



Curriculum For Wales

Article 29
I have the right to an education which develops my personality, respect for others' rights and the environment.



“Education is changing. The national curriculum was first introduced in 1988 before on-line shopping, Google and the Cloud. Now, the world of work is different, technology is different, society is constantly changing. The world is changing and we need new ideas and creative use of technology. To address these challenges, the Welsh Government wants to make sure that your child has the knowledge, skills and experiences they’ll need to make the most of life. Teachers and education experts from across Wales have been working together to develop the Curriculum for Wales. (‘A New Curriculum in Wales: A Guide For Parents’, 2022) The designing of our curriculum started at Heronsbridge school in 2015 and has been a careful and considered journey, we welcome its roll out this September 2022. Our vision is to secure learning and teaching that offers appropriate progression, which takes into account each learner’s individual needs, to realise the four purposes.

Research, collaboration and co-construction have played a crucial part of that journey and has informed its design at every step. Co-operating with other schools and regions to trial our approaches to the Curriculum Framework given by Welsh Government has enabled us to produce a bespoke curriculum that meets all mandatory requirements and all of our learner’s needs. The curriculum roll out is a process and as such will be reviewed by pupils and staff after each theme. Any amendments will be made at the end of each school year, taking our annual pupil assessment into consideration. As a school, we have worked with one another during enquiry groups, INSET days and regular meetings to draft our curriculum. We have sought feedback from our pupils after each trial to seek opinions and to answer the questions during the transition.

Holding Curriculum Steering workshops with the pupils themselves was insightful and their feedback enabled them to become co-constructors in their own learning. At the parent workshops, families were encouraged to hear of their children influencing their learning and felt confident that the school will deliver a bespoke curriculum to meet their child’s needs. Our committed Governors have worked alongside us by supporting the six Areas of Learning Experience (AOLE) teacher groups and regularly taking part in meetings, lesson observations and learning walks to see the work in action. They supported our decision to roll out to the whole school, thus creating a consistent approach.



Our curriculum has been developed on a 4 year cycle of themes, highlighting the Area of Learning Experience focus and Statements of What Matters to ensure a breadth and depth of coverage. We have redesigned our planning so that there is whole school consistency, which highlights the Progression Steps made within each AOLE, the mandatory Literacy and Numeracy and Digital Competence frameworks along with the cross cutting themes. Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) will be delivered by stage and not age, to ensure the pupils receive the right information at the right time. These lessons will be timetabled as well as cross-curricular. We have taken guidance from the agreed syllabus in the local authority for our Religion, Values and Ethics. We aim to create exciting learning opportunities to encompass all of the remaining cross cutting themes and have highlighted them on our planning.

Well-being
Winnie



Opportunity
Ollie

To ensure learners are being challenged in the most appropriate way we will continue to baseline all new pupils with our existing skills assessment tools, but also add our Assessment In Learning strategy of Brilliant Blue and On the Way Orange, with a support ladder if required. This allows practitioners to assess learning throughout the day to ensure the highest level of progression for each individual learner. During our Person Centred Planning meetings we endeavour to keep our learners at the very heart, developing the young person in a holistic way.



Sustainable
Sam

Learning Journeys, Annual Reports and annual assessment of learning evidence the progress made and informs future learning in a highly bespoke way. We plan for progression using experiences, skills and knowledge. Professional learning is central to everything we do, this enables our staff team to fully meet the needs of our pupils. Creating effective environments plays an important part in creating authentic learning opportunities. Alongside all of our wonderful outdoor learning spaces we also have specialist light and dark rooms, rebound room, hydro pool, sensory rooms and a swimming pool. Specialist themed approaches are developed in each of these areas. As part of the introduction to the theme we create engaging experiences in the form of the "Big Wow", something special, a bit out of the ordinary to create awe, wonder and curiosity, to capture and incite interest in learning. So far the children have met dinosaurs, been immersed in a galaxy and been clowns in the Big Top, to name but a few!



Independent
Izzy



Please visit our school website for full details.







