
Archbishop McGrath Catholic High School

Ysgol Uwchradd Gatholig Archesgob McGrath



Newsletter Spring Term 2019

Ambitious capable Learners

As I write this newsletter, I can hear the strains of the A level music practicals taking place in the main hall. It is a particularly busy time for staff and students as practical examinations are completed and we build up to the final written examinations in May. I am proud to say that most of Year 11 already have 5 GCSEs in the bag and are on target to get their final 10. Congratulations on the great results they have achieved so far.

Offers from universities are coming in thick and fast for year 13 and I am delighted to hear that they have all received offers from first choice universities. Well done Alice Ghoda for gaining a scholarship to study languages in Bangor, Hannah Williams for her scholarship at Durham University to study Psychology and Clarizza Ranola for her offer to study medicine in Cardiff.

Year 12's preparation for life after school is well underway and they will be attending the UCAS exhibition in Cardiff Met on April 10th. Pupils are getting a huge amount out of the Seren network events and I had very positive feedback on the talk given by Jonathan Padleigh from Cambridge University held in St Joseph's Catholic Comprehensive School in Port Talbot. We have a really good field of applicants applying to the Sutton Trust Summer Schools this year and for the first time we have a student, Isabella Carter, who has gained a place on the Harvard Summer School. Isabella was our highest achiever at GCSE in 2018, gaining 15A* grades. I know that she will have a fantastic time in Harvard during the Summer holidays.

As a result of the continued hard work of staff and students the school has once again been categorised as a Green school and recognised by Alps as being in the top 5% of 2580 schools nationally for our A level results in 2018.

Enterprising Creative contributors

I have been really impressed by the efforts of our year 12 Young Enterprise Group 'Archways': Emma Attwood, Sinead McKenna, Lauren Rogers, Tom Lewis, Isaac Watkins and Maisy Willows. They are doing a roaring trade in their revision cards scented with essential oils. The group have been working closely with business advisors from SSE who have praised their team working, business acumen and rapid improvement journey. I would like to express my gratitude to Kevin Stephens and Craig Summers who have been so generous with time and expertise.



The 'Archways' Young Enterprise Team.

Over 30 of our students participated in the Abertawe Festival for Young Musicians and played in competitive classes and non-competitive workshops as soloists, duos and small ensembles for internationally renowned adjudicators. 25 medals were won in total, all at gold or silver. A number of students went on to play in the final event of the festival, a concert for the most outstanding competitors. At the end of the concert, some of our students received trophies for the following achievements: Sam Finch (year 11) most outstanding wind player, Lucy Rathkey (year12) the Rebecca Goldsmith Trophy for her playing and services to the festival, Sage Taylor (Year7) Lord Mayor's Trophy for up and coming young performer. Also, they have all been invited to the Lord Mayor's Mansion House for afternoon tea! Many thanks to Mrs Turbervil from our Music Department who helped our students to this success and also guided year 6 students in Archdeacon John Lewis, a member of our family of schools to a gold medal winning performance in their Festival debut.

The school's production of 'Mary Poppins Junior' was an absolute triumph! I was really inspired by the talent and professionalism of this very young cast who were joined by year 5 pupils from our cluster schools. Thank you to all involved for the hard work, dedication and commitment in making every evening such a success.



The cast of Mary Poppins Junior

This year we had more students than ever taking part in the Eisteddfod yr Urdd. They enjoyed competing in the Welsh second language poetry recital as well as various Musical items. Archbishop McGrath pupils made a real impression and all who entered were placed in their respective competitions. Many congratulations to Sam Finch, Karol Niklas, and the saxophone quartet for taking first place in their musical competitions. A special mention for Karol who was praised for his pronunciation and intonation by adjudicators when he was awarded first place in the poetry recitation despite Welsh being his third language after Polish and English.



Year 7 participants in the Urdd Eisteddfod

Ethical informed citizens

A big thank you is owed to members of our sixth form who have acted as peer mentors and maths tutors for year 11 students. Thanks also to the two groups of year 12 students who are working hard to make an impact in the local community as part of the Dementia friendly Brackla initiative. One group is working on developing Archbishop McGrath as a Dementia Friendly school and the other is working with stakeholders from the community to raise awareness about the condition and provide advice and guidance. I am very proud of the commitment the students have shown and it is wonderful for them to have had the opportunity to deliver presentations to community groups and work with organisations such as the Alzheimer society and social services.

As part of the school's Lenten preparation for Easter pupils have worked tirelessly to support charitable causes such as CAFOD where pupils are running weekly events such as jewellery stalls, bake sales and staff versus pupil dodgeball- as a member of the CAFOD organisation said on Twitter, 'they've put the fun into fundraising'. The Chaplaincy team were thrilled with the pupils' response to the Emmaus appeal for the homeless as the children donated dozens of bags of high quality items.

I am thrilled to announce that one of our young carers, Charlie Evans, has been elected a member of the Welsh Young Carers Council and had the opportunity to visit the Senedd last month. It was an incredibly enriching experience and I am very proud to have a member of the council amongst our school community.

Healthy confident individuals

On the first weekend of the spring half term, Years 7 and 8 boys made the trip to Dublin for the third Archbishop McGrath Rugby Tour. The boys were supported by our Sport Ambassadors from the 6th Form, who did a fantastic job in helping to organise the teams and look after the younger pupils over the weekend. Both teams played entertaining running rugby and coaches were impressed by the team spirit and sportsmanship. The boys followed up those matches by cheering on the Welsh team to victory against England with the locals. The boys toured the magnificent Aviva Stadium and they even got to sit in changing rooms of the home side giving them an insight into the life of elite level sports stars on match days! The boys were a credit to the school and their families, flying the flag for Sport at Archbishop McGrath. Well done!



Dublin tour Spring Term 2019

I am looking forward to writing about two Olympians from our school community in the future. Ffion Higginson, a year 12 student, is an outstanding athlete and she has just started on a programme with Loughborough University training with elite sportsmen and women.

Darcey-Jane Williams in year 7 is the only under 16 snowboarding international in Wales. She has made tremendous progress in the sport in the short time she has been participating and is working hard to find sponsors in order for her to pursue her Olympic dream. Darcy Jane will be spending 4 weeks in an intensive training camp in Austria during the month of April. She has an incredible work ethic and I am sure she will return to school clutching a new set of medals.



Darcey-Jane Williams



**From the Governors, Staff and Students at Archbishop McGrath
We wish you a Happy and Holy Easter**

Attendance

Archbishop McGrath Catholic High School recognises, values and respects each student's individuality. We believe that every student is entitled to the highest possible quality of education. To this end, the school is committed to giving the highest priority to attendance. Full and/or improved attendance will be actively promoted and encouraged for all our students. Irregular attendance undermines the student, school and the community as a whole, impairs the students' academic progress and may place him/her at risk of involvement in anti-social and/or criminal behaviour.

Attendance and punctuality needs to be a collaboration between home and school. We encourage parents to enable their children to take full advantage of their educational opportunities. Through regular and punctual attendance at school, we aim for each pupil to fulfil their God given talents.

Notices – Parent App

Reminder: All parents should have received an email with the link to parent app. This will give you access to vital information on your child's homework and academic progress. Please sign up to get the latest updates. If you have changed your email address or have not received the email, please contact Miss Helen Gordon at the school to update your details and get your login:

Helen.gordon@bridgend.gov.uk

Key Dates	
May Bank Holiday	06/05/19
Revision Classes take place daily during lunch and after school (3.30-4.30 p.m.). Refer to parent app for further information	
GCSE Examinations	Commence 07/05/19 (refer to parent app for dates)
A/AS Levels	Commence 13/05/19 (refer to parent app for dates)
Half term	27/05/19 to 31/05/19
Visit of Kirsty Williams, Education Minister	10/06/19
INSET Day	28/06/19
Year 6 Transition Days	01/07/19 to 02/07/19
Year 6 Welcome Mass	03/07/19 at 6 p.m.
Lourdes Trip	07/07/19 to 14/07/19
Year 13 Prom	19/07/19
INSET Day	22/07/19