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Caersws Primary School
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‘Nurturing Hearts, Growing Minds, Opening Eyes, Imagining Futures’

Friday 16th February/Dydd Gwener 16eg Chwefror

Dear Parents/Carers,

Welcome back to our new half term. It is a short half term with only 5 weeks until the Easter break, but we have lots going on and happening. The whole school topic for this half-term is ‘I Wonder Why...’. Each class will interpret this topic slightly differently, but most will focus on why technology is important, what ‘coding’ is and how it is used. This fits in well with the school development priority, ‘Develop pupils’ digital skills with a focus on coding’.

School Development Plan

The school identified three main priorities for the current year. These were:

Priority 1- Develop pupils’ digital skills with a focus on coding.

Priority 2- Review our marking policy in line with the principles of progression.

Priority 3- Further develop our curriculum design with a focus on assessment and progression.

The school is making good progress on each of these priorities.

For priority 1, there has been a focus on professional learning. The school’s digital lead has attended several meetings with the cluster and has worked alongside the headteacher to discuss the current provision in school and identify our developmental needs. All teachers attended a twilight training event introducing staff to the ‘Rugged Robots’ and ‘Lego Explore’ equipment. Staff have collectively looked at the equipment available in school and are beginning to explore its capability and uses, and the coding club has been re-established with older pupils being able to attend the DVLA Coding event. These actions have led to staff and pupils having an increased understanding of coding, more confidence in using digital equipment and improved teaching and learning opportunities involving ICT planned.

For priority 2, staff have had opportunities to discuss and reflect on their teaching approaches and have explored new ideas and strategies e.g., introducing pre- and post- assessments into units of work and experimenting with pit stops to allow pupils to reflect during lessons on their learning intention and success criteria, making relevant and necessary improvements to their work during the task. The staff have looked closely at the Gareth Coombs training materials and have subsequently provided more opportunities for feedback, self and peer assessment, and the use of WAGOLL’s and success criteria, including in the form of ‘Bump it Up’ walls, to be included regularly as a part of lessons. Staff and pupils have started looking at our current marking policy and have identified features that they like and would like to change.

For priority 3, discussions have been held at a cluster and school level to ensure there is a good understanding of progression amongst teaching staff. In addition, the headteacher has represented the school on a curriculum working party and all teaching staff have attended AoLE network meetings. Staff have adapted their mid-term and short-term planning formats to make them more consistent across the school, with a link to the longer-term progression maps created at a cluster level. The school has also strengthened its baseline processes and has developed its use of quadrants to analyse attainment and progress. Termly progress meetings are undertaken to discuss the progress made by individual pupils and a tracking document has been introduced.

Strategic Equality Plan

The school has recently reviewed and re-written its strategic equality plan. We have chosen three equality objectives to work on over the next 4 years.

These are:

Objective 1- To improve the quality and breadth of our curriculum provision to support pupils' understanding of other countries and cultures and World events, including conflicts.

Objective 2- To review, improve and enhance our approach to our anti-bullying culture.

Objective 3- To raise awareness of the needs of pupils with hidden disabilities, including, but not limited to neuro diverse conditions like ASD and ADHD.

The school has identified specific actions to meet these objectives e.g., The school will be welcoming the Peaceful School's Project later this year to work with Class two on objective 1, the school staff will be using its Safe Cymru 360 tool to review its online safety for objective 2, and Class three will be taking part in the Leans project during the spring and summer term to meet the requirements of objective 3. This document in full will be added to the school's website in due course and these objectives will be reviewed annually.

Student teacher-

Class 1 has been joined by a new student teacher, Mr Colliston. He will be working alongside Mrs Davies for the remainder of the spring term and the start of the summer term. We welcome him to the Caersws team and hope he enjoys his placement with us.

Dates for the diary:

Monday 19 th February	ICT 'Preparerobo' workshop- Years 4, 5 and 6.
Tuesday 20 th February	Opera workshop- Years 4, 5 and 6.
Tuesday 20 th February	Visit to YDT (Wheelchair Rugby and Yard Games)- Years 4, 5 and 6.
Tuesday 20 th February	Art Club. This is running for 5 consecutive weeks, 3.30pm – 4.30pm. This club is for pupils in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 to complete additional competition entries for the Urdd Eisteddfod. The club will be run by Mrs Julie Evans and Mrs Vicky Turner, with other staff supporting where able.
Wednesday 21 st February	Parent's Evening. All parents should have received an appointment slot for either Wednesday or Thursday. Please let us know if you haven't received one or should you need this time to be changed.
Thursday 22 nd February	Parent's Evening.
Tuesday 27 th February	Art Club.
Tuesday 27 th February	FOS Meeting 7.30pm (On Teams). All parents are welcome to join this meeting and share their ideas and thoughts. Let a staff member know if you'd like to join.
Friday 1 st March	School Eisteddfod 2pm. Parents are welcome to attend to celebrate our St David's Day celebration with us.
Tuesday 5 th March	Art Club.
Wednesday 6 th March	Honeypot House Meeting for Parents- Year 5 Only. The team from Honeypot House will be visiting Year 5 in school ahead of their residential trip. They will meet with Year 5 parents immediately after school at 3.30pm to discuss the visit and answer any questions.
Thursday 7 th March	World Book Day. Children are invited to dress as their favourite book character for the day. They will be working with their 'School buddies' during the day to complete some book related activities. In addition, we would like to challenge pupils, parents, and staff to achieve a 'Screen free day'.
Friday 8 th March	Mother's Day shop. This will be open in the morning as in previous years for pupils to visit, purchase and wrap a gift for their mums. Further details to follow.
Friday 8 th March	Mother's Day Event 2.30pm. All mums, nans, and aunts will be invited to join us for a 'Tea-riffic Mum's Tea', where they can enjoy a cup of tea and cake whilst listening to the children sing.
Monday 11 th March	Big Walk & Wheel. Following the success of last year, we will be encouraging all that can, to walk, wheel and scoot to school this week.
Monday 11 th March	Honeypot House Trip- Year 5. All Year 5 pupils should have received an envelope on the last day of term. This contains details of the trip and the link to follow and complete for registration.
Tuesday 12 th March	Art Club.
Friday 15 th March	Comic Relief. Details to follow.

Tuesday 19 th March	Art Club.
Friday 22 nd March	Open the Book Team visit.

Residential Trip-

We have now booked a residential trip for all pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 to visit Cardiff from Monday 22nd April to Wednesday 24th April. All parents should have received a letter with a payment plan for this trip. All payments are made through ParentPay. We will share additional information, including the itinerary, meal plan, and packing list in due course.

Swimming-

As previously communicated, we had to cancel our spring swimming sessions due to a change in our transport arrangements which would have led to a substantial increase in the cost per week passed on to parents. We have now been able to reorganise swimming sessions for the summer term, which will allow class 2 and 3 to swim together. Mrs Canning will share details to parents prior to the summer term.

Attendance-

We try hard to update parents on individual and class attendance figures. We welcome your support in helping us to raise all attendance figures, as good attendance provides pupils with the best chance of educational success.

Safeguarding-

Safeguarding is the action we take to promote the welfare of children in our care and to protect them from harm. Keeping children safe is the responsibility of the whole school community and we all have a duty of care towards the welfare and safety of the children who attend our school and live in our communities. If you would like to raise an issue or concern around the welfare of a child or young person, please contact the Designated Safeguarding officer in school, Sarah Corbett or contact Powys Front Door directly on 01597 827 666.

'Safeguarding is Everyone's Responsibility'

This safeguarding responsibility encompasses all aspects of school life including the times when pupils are being dropped off and collected from school. With this in mind, can we please remind all parents to please watch their speed when entering and exiting school grounds by vehicle and remind them of the one-way system that has been introduced by the local authority. It is important that the one-way system is kept clear, so we kindly ask that no vehicles are parked on the curve to the front of the school as this can block the one-way system and cause congestion. There is ample parking available on the main playground at the rear of the school.

Reminders-

A polite reminder to ensure you book children into breakfast club in advance. It is essential that staff know which children to expect on any given day. It is also important as the spring weather begins to ensure that all children have a PE kit and water bottle in school. Your support in this is appreciated.

Thanks-

In recent months the school has received some very kind gifts from the community. Kind gifts include:

- Wooden sleeper benches organised and donated by Mr David Cooper.
- Stepping stones purchased by the Maesmawr Group.
- A mobile smartboard screen and friendship bench purchased by the Baptist Church.
- Tree surgery works paid for in full by Caersws Community Council.
- New noticeboards put up throughout school by Mr Steve Hards.

The school is so grateful for these donations of time and resources.

In addition, the 'Friends of the School' have continued to plan, run, and fund a range of lovely events and activities. We are always thankful for their support. Currently they are raising money through the Co-op local community fund, so remember if you are a Co-op member you can choose Caersws school as your charity to support. Money raised is going towards bringing the community together (we are hoping to develop a community garden) and growing our own produce (which we hope to share with the community through special events).

Finally-

Our biggest thanks go to our amazing Criw Cymraeg members. With the support from our very enthusiastic Welsh coordinator, Mrs Davies, they have worked extremely hard over the past 18 months, to promote Welsh in all aspects of school life. They have taken their role seriously and under their leadership, Cymraeg Campus has become an integral part of the school ethos and consequently, Welsh is securely embedded at Ysgol Gynradd Caersŵs and the school has met the standard to be awarded the Silver Charter Award. We are so proud of our Criw Cymraeg and super proud of all pupils and staff who have worked so tirelessly to improve and achieve. We are determined to now continue this great practice!



With kindest regards,

S M Corbett

Sarah Corbett- Headteacher