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Headteacher – Mrs H Wadsworth

May 2026

Annwyl Parents, Carers and Friends,

Over the past two terms we have been working hard on developing our outdoor learning provision and we are really starting to see this flourish now. You might have noticed the greenhouses and planting areas outside Year 2 and Year 3 and in the plaza garden. These are all full of seedlings which the children have planted and are carefully tending. We will soon have crops of radishes, cucumbers, carrots, potatoes and tomatoes to enjoy. Our plaza children have even built a wormery to help keep our soil healthy. A big thank you to Ms Amanda Davies who has been driving this planting and growing work, finding donations and ensuring things get planted on time and to many members of our school team who have been popping in on weekends and in holidays to make sure our plants stay watered. If you would like to support us, either in volunteering your time to work with pupils to plant and grow, or to donate compost / plants/seeds, please speak to Ms Davies or to me.



Another important highlight has been seeing our STAR (standing together against racism) pupil group lead our school in growing their understanding of racism and of the experiences of different groups of people. They invited Sean from No Boundaries to lead an assembly about the Windrush which the whole school really enjoyed. Next term this group will be meeting with pupils from other schools across the cluster to

share their experiences and ideas. They really are STARS in every way.



It would be very remiss of me to not mention Mr Vincent who retires this week. Mr Vincent could not have cared more for our school, our buildings, our staff and most importantly our children. I am hugely grateful to him and know that our whole school community will miss his daily presence greatly.

We have some exciting trips planned for next half term. Many thanks to the Friends of Castle Park who have made a significant contribution to these trips to ensure the cost stays as low as possible.

**Plaza (Y1 and Y2)- Bristol Zoo Project**

**Y2 and Y3 - Be Curious in Bristol**

**Y4 and Y5 - Monmouth Leisure Centre (soft play and swimming pool)**

**Y6 - a fun day out in Bristol**

Cofion Cynnes,

Mrs Wadsworth

### **Reception Cherry Class update:**

What a wonderful half term we have had, being inquisitive and finding out 'how does our garden grow?' We have been busy planting and growing a variety of flowers, fruits and vegetables in our new planters and green house. We did an experiment to see what plants need to be able to grow. We found that they need water, light, space and soil. In art we were inspired by Monet's garden and the water lily paintings. We worked together to create our own water lily painting and built bridges to go across. In the garden we have been engineers building gutter runs to help water our carrots. We read Jack and the Beanstalk in literacy and planted different types of beans, predicting which one would grow the fastest... It was the runner bean!

This last week we have been learning about bees and celebrating them as part of 'World Bee Day'. We loved taking part in a waggle dance and collecting nectar from the flowers. This leads us on to the next part of our garden topic after half term - Minibeasts.

Finally we have been extremely lucky this year to have had two students, Miss Willilams (TA student) and Miss Blackborough (first year teaching student). Both have been a fabulous support to the children and both have successfully completed their placements and finished with us this term. We wish them all the best for their future.



### **Year 1 Willow Class update:**

Year 1 started the half term with a walk to the castle with Reception to launch our topic 'In the garden'. We looked for signs of spring and identified different plants and mini beasts. We carried out a bird watch and a minibeast hunt to identify which birds and mini beasts we have in our school field and plaza garden. We have created a bug hotel and made bird feeders which we have hung from the trees with the hope of encouraging more wildlife to the school. We have been reading the story 'superworm' and have learnt all about earth worms and produced a fact file about them which has led to us creating a wormery in our garden.

We have been identifying the different parts of different plants, flowers and trees and what the different parts do. We have also been sorting minibeasts into different categories while discussing their similarities and differences.

We have been very busy planting in our garden and are getting very excited for next half term when we will be able to dig up our potatoes, carrots, radishes and strawberries and enjoy tasting them.



### Year 2 update:

Year 2 have been very busy in their outdoor learning sessions this term. We have been planting bulbs donated by Fostering Wales to celebrate fostering fortnight. We have been learning about plants and vegetables and what they need to grow. We collected various natural materials and used these to produce some fantastic symmetrical artwork. In RVE we have been studying special places and we put our design skills to the test and built mosques using lego, wooden blocks and k'nex. In class we have been enjoying our new topic 'Into the Unknown - Explorers and Inventors'. We thoroughly enjoyed having parents in to help us launch our topic creating new imaginary lands in our map making event, the pupils then followed up the rest of the day inventing our own animals, tools and photographs they could have taken round their island. Inspired by the explorers who travelled to new lands we looked at Artemis II and their exploration of the far side of the moon. We really enjoyed learning about the crew and creating a moon vehicle using Lego Spike. We looked at what we can see of the moon from Earth, and used jaffa cakes (inspired by the old advert for those who remember) to show different moon phases. This week we have been learning about the Montgolfier brothers who invented the first flying machine 'The Hot Air Balloon' then called an 'Aerostat' and started practising our sewing skills as part of preparing to make our own hot air balloon.



### Year 3 update:

Year 3 have made a fantastic start to our new topic, 'Into the Unknown - Explorers and Inventors', where we are exploring our big question: *how do curious minds help people discover new places and create new things?* We began the topic with our parent map-making event, which the children thoroughly enjoyed. They showed wonderful imagination and creativity as they designed and created their maps. Since then, the children have been developing their research skills by finding information about the Artemis II space mission and we have also learned about the different phases of the moon. In Art, we have been focusing

on drawing techniques, particularly shading, in preparation for creating detailed drawings of the moon. In Literacy, we have been using our class text *The Great Explorer* to inspire our writing. The children have been learning how to write newspaper reports - they particularly enjoyed writing their own catchy headlines. Year 3 have also started their swimming sessions this term which they are very excited about each week. We are looking forward to continuing with our topic after half term!

#### **Y4/5 Hazel Class update:**

Our topic this term has been Wellness Warriors and the children are embracing their knowledge and understanding of topics about living their best lives. With the Big Question, in which pupils have a say in what they will



be learning, the children have been asking about how nature / reading can make us feel good, should we limit our screen time, what happens when we sleep and other similar questions. Recently, the pupils have been fascinated to find out about hygiene when handling food (bread)...the results have been intriguing, and the mouldy bread in different circumstances have been investigated with much interest. Refer to Holly Class for the images - **Ych a fi**, as they say in Welsh (yuck, basically)!

The term started out with mindfulness in different ways, including making bubble wands, creating mindful music and using breathing techniques as a control measure to calm themselves. The class also used a wristband to measure their steps in 5 days and will follow up on this after the half term (good to see an element of competition with who produced the most steps daily). We completed the daily mile with much more gusto, especially with the class's songlist chosen by the children themselves. "*Don't stop me now*" sounds good when zipping past the start line.

With regards to STEM, the pupils had a careers-inspired show to raise their aspirations, and then looked at the qualities of key everyday scientists currently in their field of expertise. Sue Wilsher, a local author of *Zeeglit's Quest*, visited both year 4/5 classes and set them a challenge to uplevel their creative writing skills. It was a pleasure to see the standard of the children's work.

Forest Schools have continued and the pupils have had a fantastic term connecting with nature and developing new outdoor skills. These include "nature exploration" - the hunt for natural colours and minibeasts, "team building" - communication and cooperation via group challenges, "wilderness crafts" - botanical art via leaf hammering, and "survival skills" - the art of friction and fire lighting with a flint and steel. Please provide your child with the correct clothing they need according to the weather conditions as it is all about supporting them to make responsible decisions and keeping them safe and healthy.

Newport Dragons rugby skills have started with both classes together and the pupils really enjoyed the challenges set, especially the skills of tag rugby wearing belts. Our topic and literacy sessions have been

based on mindfulness and finding out facts about the human body - a trip to our very own local library supported our learning. The Upbeat Music and Arts session was enjoyed by all. Huw played the harp and taught them some Welsh clog dancing. Everyone got involved and had fun.

So what's ahead? We look forward to continuing this topic into the last half term, and includes a focus on a mini-eco project on recycling in some way, as well as a series of art lessons. Our upcoming Year 4/5 trip to Monmouth Leisure Centre is being currently planned. We have a special fitness session with Erica from MonLife and then we will use this for our forthcoming Family and Community Event, the date of which is Wednesday 15th July 2026 at 2pm.



### **Y4/5 Holly Class update:**

This half term we have been thoroughly enjoying our new topic - Wellness Warriors! This topic focuses on making sure we are physically, mentally and socially well! The children have trialled out different mindful techniques to help increase their awareness of their present experiences - what they are thinking, feeling and sensing. We initially didn't enjoy the mindful origami hearts, but soon found it enjoyable when we became familiar with the instructions! We have also worn fitness watches for a week to track our steps. We then plotted our results on a graph and compared our steps to others in the class. Most recently we have been learning about the human body and how it works! We have been learning the anatomical names for bones, what food groups we should be eating, the different parts of the brain, the anatomical names of our muscles and what exercises we can do to maintain/improve them!

Something that has really captured the class's attention this half term has been our hygiene experiment. For the last 4 weeks we have been growing mould at the front of the class... gross! We exposed 5 pieces of bread to different conditions, then sealed them away and just watched. However, things didn't go quite to plan and we think our "soap and hot water" hands must not have been dried properly!



We also had a careers visit from past teacher and author Sue Wilsher. She told us all about her and set us a challenge to create a brand new character and write a description about them. She gave us some descriptive tips and tricks and we even had a go at creating our own made up words, which was surprisingly hard! We can't wait for her to come back next half term and to pick a winner, who will get a free copy of her book!

### **Year 6 Oak Class update:**

Wow what a busy start to this Summer Term. The children started the term by responding to the Big Question, 'How to live your best life?' Throughout this topic the pupils will be focusing on physical and mental well-being and the importance of keeping healthy. Alongside this the pupils have started their mini eco project which is focusing on the local food banks. Look out for the children's letters which they will be writing and bringing home soon!

As part of their PE sessions the pupils have started to engage in Forest School sessions on a Monday afternoon. They have really enjoyed being outdoors and learning new skills such as tying different knots. This term the pupils attended a water safety event held by Monlife. The class engaged in activities based around how to keep safe around water and ending the event in the pool. A great afternoon had by all!

A highlight of this term has been the Year 6 residential trip to Gilwern. The pupils engaged in a wide range of experiences, including canoeing, wall climbing, archery and caving. They showed courage, determination and for many pupils overcame some difficult challenges and fears. As staff we were extremely proud of every child's achievements and how they came together as a class, showing great team work Da iawn!



This term we have started to build our Goblin Car. We are very grateful for the support and time given by Mr Vincent to share his skills with this build. We will continue with the build over the next half term, allowing all pupils a chance to be involved. They are very excited to get to drive the car at the end of next half term.



We are currently planning an end of Year trip for year 6. We asked the pupils their ideas of where they would like to go. When we have finalised details we will let you know the itinerary for the trip.

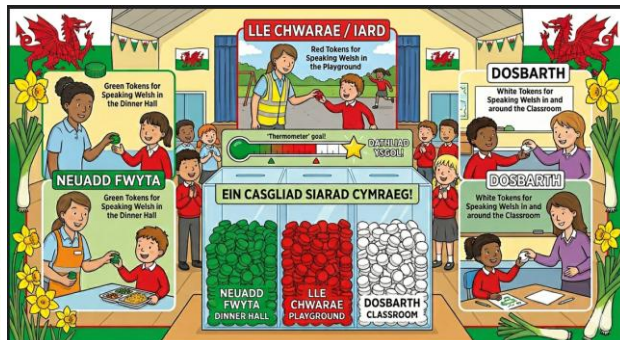
### Apple Tree Class

What a productive and busy end to Summer Term 1 we have had in Apple Tree class! Our learning truly came to life as we dove into the classic tale of *The Gingerbread Man*, which inspired a selection of exciting, hands-on adventures. The children fully immersed themselves in the story through lively role-play, re-enacting the classic chase with enthusiasm. We took the action outdoors, testing our own speed and agility on themed obstacle courses and working beautifully as a team during our parachute games. We explored a variety of delightful sensory activities and made a big splash with water play where we endeavoured to build a bridge to help the Gingerbread man cross the river. The staff are so proud of how hard everyone has worked and the wonderful progress made this half term. Well done, Apple Tree Class!



### Criw Cymraeg

We have been busy preparing our Welsh assemblies, which now happen every fortnight for KS2 and alternate weeks for FP. We have led the way in highlighting key phrases like *Ga i ...?* (May I have...), *Oes anifail anwes 'da ti?* (Do you have a pet?) and *Ble mae...?* (Where is ...?). We have focused on 3 places to visit, notably Caernarfon Castle, Tintern Abbey and Caldicot Castle (of course). Did you know that by the 1800's, Caldicot Castle became neglected, fell into ruin and was part of farmland? Our Welsh rich cultural history has seen us showcase those who played a prominent role in different ways, like Leonard Lawrence, John Ystumllyn and Richard Parks. Lots of things in this upcoming half term - the children have been shown what is on and about in the area to visit, take part in and enjoy. *Cael hanner tymor da!* (have a good half term).



Please send in your milk bottle tops to help us with our Welsh initiative (red, white, green).

**Coming up next term:**

Week beginning 1st June	Personalised Assessments (Y2-Y6) Children's outcomes will be shared with you at parent/teacher meetings
Wednesday 3rd June	Class photos (available to purchase)
Wednesday 3rd June	Y6 Round Robins Football and Netball
Thursday 4th June	New Reception (26-27) welcome meeting at 9.15
Wednesday 17th June and Thursday 18th June	Parent / Teacher meetings (online booking information will be sent via Schoop)
Thursday 25th June (morning)	Selected Y5 pupils to science fair at Caldicot School
Friday 26th June	Sports Day - Parents Welcome Reception, Year 1 and Year 2: <b>9.30 - 11.30am</b> Year 3, Year 4, Year 5, Year 6: <b>12.30 - 3pm</b>
Friday 3rd July	Sports day rain date (just in case!)
Saturday 4th July	Gwyl Plant Festival, Newport (for dancers in year 2 and 3)
Monday 6th July	Transition Day: Y6 to comp, all classes have a day in their new class
Wednesday 8th July	Y6 Leaves Assembly 2pm
Thursday 9th July	Reception cluster picnic at the Castle
Friday 10th July	Colour Run
Tuesday 14th July	Y4 Cluster Olympics

Wednesday 15th July	Y6 leavers trip
Friday 17th July	Last day

**Training Days**

<b>2025-26</b>	<b>2026-27</b>
Friday 1st May	Monday 1st September
Monday 20th July	Tuesday 2nd September
	Friday 5th February
	Thursday 6th May
	Monday 19th July
	Tuesday 20th July