

Dear parents/carers

Re: Headteacher Update April 2024: The Power of Positivity!

At the start of this Spring term I felt it was important for us to celebrate all that is positive and successful about our wonderful school! This sits nicely with the fact that our Communications Officer has finished our prospectus, which can now be found on our website. Please do have a look at this if you get chance.

Study Support Hub and Parent Forum Resources

On our website in the *learning* section, you can find all the resources we shared at our recent parent forum for Y11 students and their families, alongside our 'study support hub', which is a resource we have created to help students and their families with how to revise. Please do take some time to look at this important resource, especially if you're the parent/carer of a child undertaking public examinations this summer. The resource has been shared with students during assemblies

Welcome to the parents/carers of Y6

I have made the decision to share my monthly updates in the summer term with our new parents/carers, of students who will be joining us in Year 7 in September 2024. You will be receiving this newsletter in April, May, June and July and I hope it will give you a flavour of the school your child is about to join. We can't wait to welcome them in September!

Our School – a few positive facts!

Below are some positive facts about our school that we are proud to share with you.

- Did you know how successful our school sports teams are and the number of sports we compete in as a school? We have sports teams running in 11 sports areas and we regularly achieve significant success with our teams! Last week, for example, our Y7/8 girls got through to the Welsh school's football final which will be held in Oswestry in May. This is the second year in a row this team has got through to the final (and last year, we won!).
- Every year, the Business Studies department organises a Dragon's Den-style innovation event with our Y12 students and we invite extremely senior executives from lots of big public and private sector businesses (Amazon, Admiral, Confused, Welsh Assembly Government, etc) to come in and be the "dragons". The dragons are ALWAYS hugely impressed by the calibre and quality of our students.
- We have a strong music tradition at Caerleon Comprehensive. We currently run many extra-curricular music groups, including choir, string ensemble, wind band, and jazz group.

- Did you know that our extra-curricular ensembles regularly participate in the Music for Youth Festival, being invited to perform in some of the UK's best performance venues including Symphony Hall, Birmingham?
- In addition, many of our senior pupils have successfully auditioned and represented the school at a national level in the National Youth Orchestra of Wales, National Youth Brass Band of Wales and National Youth Choir of Wales.
- As part of the Rotary Young Musician Competition, our Sixth Form students have been awarded first prize in their local instrumental / vocal category and have been invited to represent the school at the regional level.
- Did you know that our visiting instrumental / vocal tutors teach a wide variety of instruments including violin, piano, drum kit / percussion, woodwind, brass and voice? The cost of tuition from Gwent Music is reduced by 50% if you are entitled to Free School Meals and instruments are available to rent.
- We have a strong tradition of successful school productions, with *Bugsy Malone* and *Wizard of Oz* being put on in the past two years. Our cast regularly features over 60 pupils and they are involved in all aspects of the show, from singing, dancing, helping backstage, sound / lighting, and performing in the band.
- Did you know that we regularly have the lowest levels of serious behaviour incidents and exclusions in our city? We pride ourselves on our strong policies and procedures and our caring staff who support students to make the right choices. We are grateful to our families who work closely with us to ensure their child makes the right choices in school.
- We undertake the PASS survey every year which looks at student happiness in school. Did you know that the last set of results show that students in Caerleon are happier in and with their school, on average, than students in other secondary schools nationally?
- In our school we regularly run trips and visits connect to STEM subjects and in March, two teams of students took part in the Faraday Challenge Day run by the Institution of Engineering and Technology. One of the teams were highly commended on the day and the other team won the entire competition!
- A number of our A level chemistry students have entered and excelled in the 2024 Royal Society of Chemistry Olympiad! Despite most being in Year 12 (the competition is aimed at Year 13 students), many earned bronze and silver certificates. Their impressive performance sets the stage for further success as they return for the 2025 competition as Year 13 students. Congratulations on this remarkable achievement!
- Did you know that our results at AS and A2 level are significantly above Wales averages? In 2023, 99% of students achieved the Level 3 threshold, surpassing two A-Levels at grade E or higher. Here's how our students excelled in comparison to the national outcomes: 5% of our students earned A* grades in

three subjects (national average: 4%), 28% achieved A*-A (national average: 18%), 47% secured A*-B (national average: 39%), 66% scored A*-C (national average: 63%), 85% achieved A*-D (national average: 81%), and 96% attained grades A*-E across three subjects (national average: 91%). More information on results can be found in our prospectus and on the 'my local school' website. (<https://www.gov.wales/my-local-school-guide>)

- Did you know that, in 2023, 86% of Y13 students were offered a place in their first-choice university?
- Did you know that our GCSE results are outstanding? We are 46.9 points above the national average and 46.7 points ahead of the Newport average in the capped nine score, placing us second in the local authority for 2023! Have a look at our prospectus or the 'my local school' website if you would like to find out more about our results. (<https://www.gov.wales/my-local-school-guide>)
- Did you know that we regularly have the highest numbers of students undertaking the Duke of Edinburgh award in our city? This award is run by staff in the evenings and on weekends and relies entirely on staff volunteers, who do this in their own time to support our students.
- Did you know that in 2022/2023 we ran over 80 trips and visits? Make sure you are signed up to our school Instagram and Twitter pages, where we post pictures of our students enjoying the many trips and experiences we run.
- Did you know that we are one of the few schools in Wales with strong class numbers at GCSE French and German and that in September we will have AS and A level classes running in all three languages (French, German and Welsh). This is testament to the strong teaching and relationships built in these departments and bucks the trends in the UK now (where numbers of students opting for languages has declined massively). At Caerleon we celebrate languages and truly believe that languages connect people.
- Did you know that our staff regularly give up their own time at lunchtime, after school and in the holidays to support students with revision? And the best thing about this is that so many of our students attend!

These are just **a few** of the **many** positive facts I had to hand for this newsletter. Every week I run a Headteacher's briefing for our staff, focused around our vision of Maximising Potential but also thanking staff for all the work of the previous week. There are always so many positive things to thank people for each week, with trips, visits, extra activities and special events going on all the time.

This isn't the usual format for my newsletters, but I wanted to highlight some of these positive facts to you in this Spring newsletter to start the new term off celebrating some of the successes at our school.

I hope this Spring is a time of positivity for you and your families and we look forward to working with all our families during this summer term. I will write to you again in May with further updates about our school. A reminder that the school will be closed on the 6th May for the Bank Holiday.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs L Purcell

Headteacher