



# **BRYN CELYNNOG**

Comprehensive School

## *Nurturing Success*



Transition Booklet for Parents

Dear Year 6 Parent / Carer

This booklet will provide you with information about aspects of our school that you or your child may be worried about, whether it's the curriculum, homework, school meals, home-school transport arrangements or friendship groups.

We take transition very seriously. To that end, the Headteachers of Bryn Celynnog's associate primary schools work with us closely to ensure that your child's transfer to secondary school is as smooth as possible. In Year 6, your child will visit Bryn Celynnog on a number of occasions in order to meet staff and to engage in a variety of learning activities, including taster lessons in a number of subjects and sporting events. Our aim will be to ensure that children settle well and are happy in their new school.

We will make sure that important information about your child is successfully transferred to us before their arrival. Also, Bryn Celynnog's Additional Learning Needs Coordinator (ALNCo) will contact your child's class teacher to ensure that we know about any learning needs that we will need to address, and the Year 7 Head of Year will ask for information regarding friendship groups so that your child will be sure to have someone in their registration class that they know well.

Early in September, we hope to be able to invite you to an individual meeting with a senior member of staff to check that your child is settling in well. This will give you the opportunity to ask us any questions that you might have about your child's secondary education.

I do hope that this information is useful to you and that it helps to reassure you that we will do our very best to support your child throughout the process of transferring from primary to secondary school.

## **Transition from Year 6 to Year 7**

We have written this booklet with you in mind. We know how stressful the move from primary to secondary education can be for parents. Most parents want to help reassure their children, prepare them for the changes, and support them in developing the skills they need, but feel they lack the information and expertise to do so - for many parents, their own experience of secondary school is all they have to go on.

Moving from primary school to secondary school is an exciting and significant event in the life of your child. It is an important milestone which, for many parents and teachers, marks a change in expectations regarding crucial life-skills such as independent working and self-organisation.

When a child starts at secondary school, they are expected to cope with a variety of new experiences and changes, many of which demand skills and abilities that they have not had to use before.

### **Children's top 10 worries about starting secondary school are:**

- Being bullied
- Not making friends
- Getting lost
- Homework
- Not being able to do the work
- Getting to school and back
- Not having the right books and equipment
- Not knowing what to do if there's a problem
- Not getting on with the teachers
- Getting into trouble

The top two worries that Year 6 children express are social concerns. Although common, most children report that they are no longer worried about these after just one or two weeks at school!

The remaining worries are nearly all to do with the new organisational demands that they know will be placed upon them. Luckily, these are the areas in which parents can help the most.

The aim of this booklet is to provide you with the information you need to help your child to achieve independence, while supporting them in getting there. To achieve the balance of doing too much or too little for your child is hard; a useful rule of thumb is:

**‘never do anything regularly for your child that they are capable of doing themselves’. (Julie Casey, Educational Psychologist)**

Time spent early on in establishing habits of work and independence is an investment that will save endless time, battles and heartache in the long run. The habits and routines that children develop in Year 7 are those that will stay with them throughout their secondary schooling and often throughout their working lives - it's worth the effort of getting it right to start with. If you can help your child to do this, you really will be making a difference.

Our aim is to make sure that your child is happy and successful during his/her time at Bryn Celynnog. We want you to be very much a part of your child's journey from primary through to secondary education and beyond, and we look forward to a long and productive partnership with you.

## **Section1: So what's different about secondary school?**

- Children often have to travel further, sometimes by bus
- Some may be wearing a full school uniform for the first time
- Children will have a whole list of new rules and regulations to remember
- Instead of one teacher, they will be taught by many and have to get to know a whole range of adults in different roles within the school
- The site will be much bigger and children will have to find their way around, moving from classroom to classroom between lessons, often carrying their belongings with them
- They will have to use and interpret a complex timetable - a two-weekly one in our case
- For the first time, children may be fully responsible for ensuring that they have the correct books and equipment for five lessons, PE equipment, etc
- Children will be given full responsibility for recording homework, completing it by the correct day and giving it in on time
- There will be new lessons (e.g. Spanish) and new variations on familiar ones (e.g. Science in a laboratory)
- Teaching and learning styles may be very different. Children may be expected to write more frequently and for longer
- Break-time and lunch-time will be organised differently, with children having a lot more independence in terms of getting back to lessons on time, buying snacks and lunch, etc.

In general, children are expected to be more independent, self-reliant and self-organised - a welcome development for many, but a challenge for so many more.

## Chapter 2: Getting there and back

### Before your child starts

- Time the journey to school
- Be sure your child is clear about what time they are expected to be home and what to do if they are delayed for any reason
- Make sure they have your contact numbers
- Agree a routine for mornings and after school. Will they shower/bath in the morning or evening? When will they get their school bag ready?
- Agree a bed-time for schooldays to ensure they get enough sleep.

### When they start

- If possible, be around for the first few weeks and 'supervise'. Praise and encourage independence, but be ready to offer a helping hand
- Go through the routine regularly with your child, and, if necessary, provide a check-list to help them
- Remember the rule of thumb ....

***'never do anything regularly for your child that they are capable of doing for themselves'.***

## **Chapter 3: Uniform Matters**

### **Before your child starts**

- Check the uniform requirements including rules regarding make-up and jewellery
- Ring the school if you may be entitled to financial support for buying school uniforms
- Name everything, even shoes! A marker pen is as good as labels
- Have spares of essentials at home, if possible - it prevents panic when things get mislaid at 8.30am.

### **When they start**

- Encourage your child to put everything out (including shoes, socks or tights, and underwear) the night before
- Encourage your child to hang up their uniform straight away after school
- If you have a timetable displayed for your child (always a good idea), colour the days when your child has PE so they can see at a glance when they need to take their PE kit.

## **Section 4: Organising books and equipment**

### **Before your child starts**

- Help your child organise their living space so that they have a place for everything to do with school. Try to make sure they have access to a desk, good light and storage space for their school books.
- Equip them with the 'tools' they will need at home - if possible, two sets of everything, one for school and one for home, so that losing a pen at school doesn't stop them from doing their homework.

A useful home kit would include:

- pencils, pens, rubber, sharpener, coloured pencils, ruler
- maths equipment (protractor, compasses, set-square, calculator)
- glue stick, paper (lined and plain) and plastic wallets.

### **When they start**

- Teach a routine for emptying the school-bag and organising their homework timetable
- Encourage your child to use their Homework Planner properly and to check it for any reminders or notes each night
- Encourage your child to glue any worksheets or odd bits of paper into the correct exercise book each night, otherwise the sheer volume of bits of paper becomes impossible
- When homework is completed, supervise the packing of the bag. This is best done the night before.

## **Section 5: The new timetable - being in the right place at the right time**

### **Before your child starts**

- Reassure your child that they will quickly get to know their way around - most children master it within a couple of weeks - and that they will move around as a group to start with. Teachers are very understanding about children getting lost to begin with and help is always at hand if it is needed.
- Study the sample timetable provided - these can look very complicated. Break it down and talk about how it works in terms of the room numbers, teacher initials, etc. Talk about the timing of lessons (one hour in length) and free time at break and lunch.

### **When your child starts**

- Get a copy of your child's actual timetable, which will be written in their Homework Planner on the first day of the new term. Keep this on display so that you and your child can refer to it.
- Encourage your child to learn what lessons they have on which days so that they can become independent.
- Make sure your child knows what to do if they get lost, which is to knock on the nearest classroom door and explain the situation to the teacher.
- Get your child a watch.

## **Section 6: Homework**

### **Before your child starts**

- Agree a routine for homework with your child. A good time for homework is after a short break when your child returns home from school. Getting it out of the way early leaves the rest of the evening free.
- Agree with your child that TV, phone-calls etc will only be possible after homework is done
- Many children will say that listening to music helps them concentrate and do their work. Agree whether this is allowed, and stick to it
- Make sure your child has a comfortable place to work with as few distractions as possible.

### **When they start**

- Stick to the agreed routine whenever possible
- Try to ensure that homework is done on the night it is set to prevent build-up
- Encourage your child to unpack their bag in an organised way, placing homework to be done in an 'in-tray'. Check the Homework Planner with your child for what homework needs to be done, and by when. Check that they have everything they need to complete the tasks
- Recognise how hard it is for many children to work unsupervised. Try to be available to check on their progress at set intervals - have they completed the task in the set time? Otherwise, leave them to it. Don't establish a pattern of always doing homework with them - it's unsustainable, and they won't learn to work independently
- Point out the rewards of working in this way - homework doesn't drag on all night, it feels good to have completed tasks, etc
- If your child is stuck, offer support but don't do it for them
- Encourage your child to check in the lesson if they haven't understood what the task means - it's too late when they get home!
- Encourage your child to write down exactly what the teacher says (not 'finish stuff in book', for example.) If you and your child really cannot work out what has to be done, try ringing a friend in the same teaching group, or, as a

last resort, write a note to the teacher asking for clarification and explaining that the homework will be done as soon as possible.

- Take an interest in the marks and comments on the homework your child gets back. Celebrate success and give the clear message that homework is valuable and important.
- Be very wary of excuses your child may give for not doing homework! Try to ensure that, if an excuse is given, you check it out and your child still does the homework as soon as the problem is sorted out. If you do this the first few times, the excuses will lessen; however, if they are successful in getting out of homework in this way to start with, they will carry on, and it then becomes very hard to re-establish good patterns later on when homework becomes crucial to examination grades.

#### **Excuses for not being able to do homework ...**

- We didn't get any
- I don't need to do that, we did it in class
- We had a supply teacher
- It doesn't have to be in for ages
- I left it in school
- My teacher's got my book - she took them in
- My friend's borrowing my book tonight
- I did it on the computer but it wouldn't print out / I forgot to save it
- I'm going to do it on the bus / at break
- I've lost my Homework Planner.

## Section 7: Who to contact

When your child arrives in school, s/he will be placed in a registration group with other Year 7 students. The students in each tutor group will come from a variety of primary schools and will be of mixed ability.

The **Form Tutor** has responsibility for your child's overall well-being and will probably be the member of staff who knows your child best.

The **Year 7 Head of Year** oversees the academic and social progress of all the tutor groups within the year group.

Members of the **Wellbeing & Attendance Team** provide emotional support for all students in the school.

The **Additional Learning Needs Coordinator** (ALNCO) manages all aspects of education for children in the school who have learning difficulties.

Generally, the staff you will have most contact with will be your child's **Form Tutor** and **Head of Year**.

## When to contact

We understand how difficult it can be to achieve the balance between becoming the over-anxious parent (on the phone every time your child falls out with a friend) and letting things go on too long because you don't want to interfere.

However, you know your child best, and if any aspect of school life is persistently distressing him/her, then it's probably best to err on the side of caution and intervene early. If you've talked to your child, offered reassurance, helped them to come up with ways of solving the problems themselves and things still haven't changed after a couple of weeks, then please don't hesitate to contact us at school.

## **Chapter 8: Helping your child to learn**

Research shows that there are many external influences on why and how a child learns. You may like to consider some of the following research findings as your child prepares to take this next important step on their educational journey....

### **a) Does what my child eats affect their learning?**

Proper nutrition can boost thinking and learning, therefore parents can play an important role by encouraging their children to have a healthy diet.

### **b) Why is your child's self-esteem important?**

How children feel about themselves will affect the way they behave. If they have a good image of themselves as a learner, they will be more willing to take risks, to persevere, and to take pleasure from succeeding.

As a parent, you can do a great deal to boost your child's self-esteem:

1. Praise your child as much as possible. Try the 4:1 rule - four positive comments for any negative one.
2. Avoid comparing your child to other children, including brothers and sisters. Stress their individuality and the importance of improving on their personal best.
3. Help your child to understand that making mistakes is part of learning.
4. Break down tasks into smaller chunks that can be tackled one bit at a time.
5. Celebrate their successes!
6. Help your child to think positively about their learning. Teach your child to turn 'I can't' thoughts into 'I can' thoughts.

### **c) How much sleep does my child need?**

Depending on age, they need between 8 - 12 hours' sleep. Sleep helps your brain to be ready for learning new things and to sort out information that has come in during the day. Even losing an hour's sleep a day can affect your child's readiness to learn.

#### **d) How can I help my child be a better reader?**

At Bryn Celynnog we are committed to improving reading. Reading is important in all walks of life. Reading also improves spelling. Please make sure that your child brings a reading book with them every day to school, as we will create opportunities for reading every day. You can also support your child's reading in the following ways:

- Encourage your child to read whatever they can, not just story books, for at least 20 minutes three times a week
- Listen to your child reading as often as possible.
- Talk to your child about the books they are reading. You can help your child to develop their reading and response skills by asking them questions about what they have read
- Subscribe to a magazine of your child's interest or hobby
- Buy a newspaper; talk about the contents
- Use the internet - this interactive approach to reading is very effective.

## **Appendices**

|                |                                                            |
|----------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Page 16</b> | <b>Our Philosophy</b>                                      |
| <b>Page 18</b> | <b>Our Values</b>                                          |
| <b>Page 19</b> | <b>Code of Conduct for students</b>                        |
| <b>Page 20</b> | <b>Rewards &amp; sanctions</b>                             |
| <b>Page 21</b> | <b>My Child at School App</b>                              |
| <b>Page 22</b> | <b>Behaviour Management: Discipline for Learning (D4L)</b> |
| <b>Page 23</b> | <b>Anti-Bullying Policy: summary for students</b>          |
| <b>Page 24</b> | <b>Skills development at Bryn Celynnog</b>                 |
| <b>Page 25</b> | <b>Literacy and Numeracy support</b>                       |
| <b>Page 27</b> | <b>Curriculum for Wales and well-being</b>                 |
| <b>Page 31</b> | <b>Sample student timetable</b>                            |
| <b>Page 32</b> | <b>Home to School Transport</b>                            |

## **Our Philosophy**

Bryn Celynnog is a true comprehensive school that welcomes children of all abilities and from all backgrounds. We are proud of our caring ethos, quality of inclusion and warm relationships that together create a harmonious learning environment for staff and students alike. We are proud to be a school that serves, and engages with, the local community.

We believe that strong discipline and an insistence on the highest of standards are the necessary foundations of a successful school. We challenge every instance of unacceptable behaviour and actively engage the support of parents in the restorative process if a child is in breach of the school's code of conduct. We adopt a zero-tolerance stance towards any form of bullying.

We believe that every child has the right to learn in peace and in safety and we take firm action if anyone tries to spoil the learning of others. We reward effort and encourage our children to work hard to achieve their potential. We seek to instil a positive work ethic throughout the school, promote an intrinsic enjoyment of learning and equip our children with the skills to become independent and lifelong learners.

We believe in the motivating power of success and we take every opportunity to celebrate children's individual achievements, placing equal value on all types of achievement - creative, physical, musical, academic and social.

Although all our students are equally important to us, we do not regard them as being all the same. We believe that comprehensive education requires a curriculum that is tailored to the needs of every individual child; therefore, we strive to avoid a 'one-size-fits-all' curriculum in favour of one that challenges the most able and supports the most vulnerable.

We believe that strong pastoral care underpins the learning experience and that children flourish best in an environment in which they, and their family, are known to us personally. We value partnerships with parents and believe that children achieve most highly when school and home work together to support the learning process.

We recognise the value of having a highly qualified and committed staff - the school's greatest asset. It is therefore important that there are opportunities for continuous professional development to which each individual member of staff has access.

Through the taught curriculum, extra-curricular programme and the range of additional opportunities that the school provides, we aim to:

- foster in our students a love of learning that will sustain them throughout their adult lives;
- create well-adjusted, well-informed, well-skilled young adults who are prepared for the economic and social challenges of a changing world;
- develop lively, enquiring minds, the ability to question and argue rationally, and respect for the views of others;
- encourage innovation, creativity, teamwork and entrepreneurship;
- instil moral values, personal responsibility, and the ability to cooperate and live harmoniously with others.

## **Our Values**

At Bryn Celynnog Comprehensive School we actively promote:

high standards  
a positive work ethic  
strong discipline  
an enjoyment of learning  
and the celebration of success  
in an inclusive, supportive and caring learning environment.

We encourage all our students, regardless of ability or background,  
to achieve their personal best  
and to take a pride in their achievements  
and in their school.

We believe in the education of the 'whole child' and we strive to create  
opportunities for students to develop:

a strong sense of self-worth  
confidence to face new challenges  
respect and compassion for others  
active concern for the local and global environment  
personal responsibility and  
self-discipline.

## **Code of Conduct for Students**

### **Punctuality**

We expect you to:

- arrive at lessons, assembly and registration on time
- complete and hand in work on time.

### **Respect**

- We expect you to:
- treat yourselves, other students, members of staff and guests with respect
- hold the door open for members of staff and guests
- behave sensibly in lessons and around the school
- allow other students to learn in peace and in safety
- bring the correct books and equipment to lessons
- respect the school environment by putting your litter in the bins and by leaving chewing gum at home
- use school property and school buildings respectfully
- wear the correct uniform with pride
- know and follow this code of conduct.

*This Code of Conduct was drawn up in consultation with staff and students of Bryn Celynnog Comprehensive School.*

## **Rewards**

We reward the following:

- effort in lessons
- attendance
- supporting the community
- involvement in fund raising efforts
- taking part in extra-curricular activities
- acts of kindness

You can redeem your reward points for prizes at our Rewards Store.

## Sanctions

We expect the highest standards of behaviour, in lessons, around the school, on school trips and when representing Bryn Celynnog in school teams.

We use Discipline for Learning (D4L) to reinforce our expectations. If you fail to respect our high standards, we will give you negative behaviour points.

If your behaviour, progress or homework becomes a cause for concern, we will arrange a meeting with you and your parents /carers to discuss this.



We have recently changed to a new management information system.

Part of this process involved us migrating to a new communication tool for parents and students, My Child at School (MCAS) app/website. The app/website is free to download and use.

Students and parents have their own log in details. Once logged in you will be able see behaviour and reward points, school timetable, messages and progress information.

We will provide you with more details about My Child at School in due course.

# Behaviour Management

We have an established behaviour management system, whereby members of staff follow clear processes to discourage and manage poor behaviour in lessons. This ensures that effective learning can take place. A range of consequences and sanctions are in place for students who do not uphold our clear and achievable expectations:

- D1** - This is issued to a student when a member of staff has to speak to them regarding their behaviour in lesson. The student is told that they are now on a D1.
- D2** - This is issued when a student has been moved to a new seat due to repeated poor behaviour. This is the second time a teacher has had to speak to a student during the lesson.
- D3** - This is issued when a student demonstrates persistent poor behaviour. This may be issued if a student is consistently disrupting the class/not following instructions. When a D3 is issued the Head of Faculty will remove the student from the lesson, in order to de-escalate the situation and re-focus the student.
- D4** - Students who proceed through sanctions D1 – D3, and fail to respond positively to the Head of Faculty intervention, are issued a D4. Students are placed in detention with senior staff during break and/or lunch times for a set amount of time, up to one week.

**Isolation with a member of senior staff (and possible further sanctions) will be immediate for:-**

- Serious behaviour out of lessons
- Verbal abuse
- Behaviour towards others which is considered dangerous
- Damage to, or theft of, school property or that of others.

## **Anti-Bullying Policy: A Summary for Students**

At Bryn Celynnog, we believe that everyone has the right to learn in a safe environment. We will not tolerate bullying and we work hard to stamp it out.

There are many forms of bullying. The main types are:

- **physical:** hitting, taking belongings, sexual harassment;
- **verbal:** name-calling, insulting, making cruel remarks;
- **indirect:** spreading nasty stories or rumours, excluding someone from a friendship group;
- **cyber:** sending nasty text-messages on mobile phones, using social media to insult or ridicule someone.

If you are being bullied or you know someone who is being bullied, tell a member of staff immediately. We will always take your concerns seriously. We will investigate the problem and then decide how to help you. We will work with you and your parents to make sure that you are safe and happy in school.

If you are being bullied on the school bus or on the way to or from school, please tell a member of staff. We can use the local police and the transport companies to help us put a stop to the bullying.

We also work very hard with the bullies to make them understand how their actions are hurting others. We always inform their parents. The bully might be put 'on report' so that we can check their behaviour every day. We might also put the bully into a different class. Sometimes, if bullies won't change their behaviour, we have to use punishments such as exclusion. We might even have to inform the police or the Local Authority.

At Bryn Celynnog we try to educate everyone about the dangers of bullying through PSE lessons, discussions and assemblies. We have an Anti-Bullying Week every year. At break and lunchtimes each year group has its own supervised social area. All members of staff know about the school's Anti-Bullying Policy.

**We want Bryn Celynnog to be a safe and happy school.**

**ALWAYS tell a member of staff if you are being bullied or if you know someone who is being bullied.**

## Anti-Racism

We are an anti-racist school. We recognise that it is not enough to be 'not racist'; that rather we need to take a proactive approach to fighting racism, in all its forms. Anti-racist education helps children to understand and exercise their rights. It also helps them respect the rights of others within the school, the wider community and globally.

We have established a new way of recording, reporting and addressing racist incidents that has been recognised by the Education Psychologist Service and held up as a model of good practice across the region.

We are currently working towards Leeds Beckett University's 'Anti-Racism Award', an accreditation which demonstrates our commitment to:

- Ensuring every child feels valued as an individual in a learning environment that is safe and inclusive.
- Helping every child develop the skills and confidence to stand up to racism together.
- Improving relationships between children and young people.
- Creating learning opportunities that balance British and European perspectives with global perspectives. Learning opportunities should challenge outdated and harmful stereotypes in the curriculum.
- Reducing prejudice and biases.
- Increasing empathy and a sense of shared humanity.
- Proactively prevent and address racism experienced by children and young people, staff, parents and carers and wider community members

As part of our Student Council we have established an arm called the International Council, which is a forum dedicated to ensuring that our Black, Asian and minority ethnic students have their voices heard, and have opportunities to share their lived experiences and ideas for improving equity within our school and wider community.

## Skills Development at Bryn Celynnog

We are committed to providing every student with the tools they need to thrive, not just in school but in 21<sup>st</sup> century society. It is important that students are presented with real life, problem solving situations in order for them to develop their literacy, numeracy, reasoning and ICT skills in ways that are relevant to their lives.

These crucial, transferable skills form the basis for learning across our curriculum. Over the past ten years we have done extensive work in the area of skills development, providing students with the tools needed to thrive in the classroom and beyond.

This work has been considerably successful, as evidenced in our strong results at all Key Stages. Our approaches to skills development have been recognised for their effectiveness and, as a result, we have been asked to share them with schools across the region on several occasions.

Every school has its own unique context and, with that in mind, every one of our skills initiatives has been created specifically for our students. The following link can be used to access our Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Toolkits, which will enable you to use our strategies to support your child's skills development at home: <https://bryncelynnog.org.uk/transition/>

You can also help to nurture your child's skills development by involving your child in everyday tasks such as:

- planning a journey
- budgeting for a food shop
- following a recipe
- scheduling family activities

There are also several websites that will help you support your child's skills development at home. Some of these are:

<https://corbettmaths.com/contents/> - students can practise applying their numeracy skills.

<https://scratch.mit.edu> - visit and experiment with programming software; there are many help guides available on the web page.

<http://www.literacytrust.org.uk> - lots of resources and activities aimed at developing and extending your child's literacy skills.

<https://www.nationalnumeracy.org.uk> - free and engaging numeracy activities.

Another great example is the [Everyday Life Project](#) which uses interactive, situation-based activities that provides learners with the opportunity to test their understanding of the world around them. The following example helps children to plan a journey using a subway map:

<https://www.gcflearnfree.org/aroundtown/subway-map/1/>

## Literacy and Numeracy Support

We closely monitor students' progress in literacy and numeracy, through the Wales Personalised Assessments, teacher assessments in Maths and English and through regular, in-house diagnostic testing using GL assessments.

This data enables us to provide students with appropriate support and challenge. Students who require additional support in literacy and/or numeracy are quickly identified and a bespoke support programme is put in place.

We have two full time Literacy Coaches and two full time Numeracy Coaches, all committed to providing each student with the support they need to succeed. If your child is selected to receive additional support, you will be notified and given regular updates on their progress.

## Reading - Information for Parents

It has never been more important to foster robust and transferable reading skills in our students. On a daily basis, students are required to make sense of, and respond to, a range of different texts. Texts can contain any mixture of words, pictures, photographs, statistics, graphs, tables and other ways of communicating meaning. They all require students to employ reading skills successfully and independently in order to understand them fully.

*Your child should be reading for **at least** 20 minutes, three times a week. You can help your child to develop their reading and response skills by asking them questions about what they have read.*

At Bryn Celynnog, we have established a whole school reading culture where reading is promoted, celebrated and championed as crucial to an individual's success, in school and beyond. Here are some of the activities that help to maintain that culture:

### Radical Reading

This initiative ensures that every child is reading regularly, in a way that develops crucial literacy skills. During registration time, students sit in groups to read and discuss a range of engaging non-fiction texts before responding to questions that check understanding. Texts are tailored to suit students' reading ages and get progressively more difficult so that students' skills are developed, challenged and stretched.

### Bryn's Six Reading Keys

This is a consistent approach used in every classroom to respond successfully to texts across the entire curriculum. Designed around current GCSE and Wales Personalised Assessment requirements, the six keys can be applied to respond successfully to any type of text, from maps and charts to poems and articles.

## **The Library**

Our librarian, Dr Katharine Barden, ensures that our library (on the ground floor of the English block) is well stocked with a wealth of engaging reading materials, covering a huge variety of interests. Materials available to borrow include books, graphic novels, magazines and audio books. Each Year 7 class is given a library induction showing them how they can borrow from the library and at which times the library becomes a Year 7 only zone. Dr Barden is also one of our literacy coaches and she is a specialised dyslexia teacher, providing support sessions and helpful strategies for any students struggling with dyslexic tendencies. The library is also home to our daily after school club (Monday-Friday 2:55 - 3:55pm), where students can complete their homework in a safe and quiet environment.

## **Online Reading Homework Tasks**

Regular tasks, which complement the unit of work being studied in English lessons, are uploaded to the school website for students to complete. Most tasks require students to read an extended text and then answer questions which test crucial reading skills. Other tasks include questions which test students' editing and general literacy skills. Facilities are available for students to complete these tasks during homework club or at lunch times should they need to. Students are given immediate feedback on how they have done and teachers gain valuable information about the strengths and weakness of their students' reading, so teaching can be adapted accordingly.

## **Individualised Literacy Support**

As part of our whole school reading strategy, we have established a comprehensive programme of support aimed at enriching students' experiences of, and attitudes towards, reading. Additional reading sessions focus on encouraging reading for pleasure while helping students of **all** abilities to reach their full potential. The diagnostic reading tests we use to measure students' reading ages enable us to pinpoint students who would benefit from support in specific areas. Therefore, the entire range of abilities is catered for by this programme. The development of students' reading skills is monitored closely so that support can be adapted, increased or withdrawn as and when appropriate. It is our aim that every pupil has access to the support they need in order to achieve the independence required for success. If your child is selected to attend additional reading sessions, you will be notified by letter. Sessions are tailored to your child's needs, provide the opportunity for valuable, small group tuition (in most cases one to one) and are timetabled so that your child's learning across the curriculum is unaffected.

## **Enrichment Activities**

Throughout the school year, numerous activities and clubs take place aimed at enhancing and stretching students' literacy experiences and skills. For example, the Scholastic Book Fair visits regularly, members of the Drama and Debate clubs meet weekly, and a number of literacy challenges and competitions take place throughout the year. Students interested in fiction can meet to shadow the Carnegie Award shortlisting process and every year the school celebrates World Book Day, when the library is transformed into a fictional wonderland.

## Curriculum for Wales

Curriculum for Wales guidance was published in January 2020 and was launched with Year 7 at Bryn Celynnog in September 2022. In short, the aim is for each school to develop its own curriculum, enabling their learners to develop towards the Four Purposes; the starting point and aspiration for every child and young person in Wales.

### **Our Curriculum for Wales Mission Statement:**

***Nurturing Success: At Bryn Celynnog we endeavour to meet each and every student's evolving academic, social and emotional needs, while cultivating their individual talents, in order to equip them to succeed and thrive in school and as valued members of society.***

We have designed a rich and varied curriculum which will provide our students with experiences, skills, knowledge and understanding aimed at igniting passions, inspiring a lifelong love of learning and equipping them to flourish in school and beyond. It is our intent to nurture our learners to succeed in becoming:

- ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives
- enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work
- ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world
- healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society

Our curriculum covers the six areas of learning set out in Curriculum for Wales:

- Languages, Literacy and Communication
- Maths and Numeracy
- Science and Technology
- Expressive Arts
- Health and Well-being
- Humanities

### **Cross Curricular Priorities**

The Areas of Learning are underpinned by the cross curricular priorities: Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Competence. We have long been committed to prioritising skills development in order to provide every pupil with the tools they need to succeed in 21<sup>st</sup> century society. We feel it is important that pupils are presented with real life, problem solving situations in order for them to develop their literacy, numeracy, reasoning and ICT skills in ways that are relevant to their lives. Over the past ten years we have done extensive and successful work in the area of skills development and our approaches have been highlighted as effective practice and as such we have been asked to share them with schools across the region.

### **Cross-cutting Themes**

In addition, each student's learning journey will incorporate valuable opportunities to broaden their consideration of local, national and international contexts, and to develop their understanding of relationships, human rights, diversity, and careers and work-related experiences.

## **Our Whole School Approach to Health and Well-being**

Nurturing our students' well-being is the cornerstone of all we do. Students need to feel safe and happy coming to school in order to thrive and reach their full potential. We endeavour to ensure we meet all of our students' various and evolving needs in a way that will equip them to succeed in leading fulfilling lives as valued members of society. We ensure that our learners are offered access to a range of activities and provision aimed at supporting and enhancing their mental health and emotional well-being. These include:

### **Well-being Coordinators**

We have three full time Well-being Coordinators who act as a triage for well-being issues. They work closely with students to identify social and emotional barriers to learning. They provide regular, bespoke support as well as assessing need and making further referrals where appropriate. Students can refer themselves, or teachers can make referrals for initial assessment where they perceive an issue. We also have a full time Well-being Officer dedicated to Year 7, who works with students to overcome issues relating to transition into secondary school.

### **Whole School Well-being Survey**

Annually, we conduct a comprehensive whole school well-being survey. This is aimed at identifying longer term problems that students may be dealing with in school, as well as trends among groups of students. Identified issues are dealt with firstly by our Well-being Coordinators, with further support or referrals being put in place where appropriate.

### **Responsive Provision**

The content of PSE lessons and assemblies is adapted flexibly in response to current issues, directly addressing predominant well-being needs that have been flagged by students or identified by staff.

### **The Baxter Project (dog therapy)**

The Baxter Project has become an incredibly effective part of our wellbeing approach, as well as an integral part of our school community. Our first visitors, Roo and her owner Sam, proved so successful in engaging even some of our most reluctant pupils that we have now taken on a second therapist, Zarreen, and her dog, Jake. We now have a Baxter therapist on site five days a week. The Baxter Project taps into the special bond between animal and child to create important and valuable relationships, and a safe and effective context for therapy. Students look forward eagerly to their sessions and the wider school community enjoy seeing the dogs around the school.

### **Cognitive Behavioural Therapy**

We have engaged Jason Clark, of the Behaviour Therapy Clinic, to work with students experiencing emotional and/or behavioural challenges. Jason is on site two days a week and he helps students to understand why they are thinking, feeling or behaving in certain ways and gives them strategies and tools to apply in order to overcome the challenges they are facing. Student feedback is consistently incredibly positive and we have had a number of self-referrals based on word of mouth among students.

### **Support for Parents and Carers**

We have extended our well-being provision to offer support to parents and carers whose children are experiencing behavioural or mental health challenges. Parents are able to contact Jason Clark directly to discuss their concerns and, if appropriate, arrange a programme of support funded by Bryn Celynnog.

### **The Advocacy Project**

As part of our whole school approach to health and well-being, we have developed a number of volunteer 'advocates' on the staff to build up expertise in areas of emerging or increasing need. These advocates are supported to undertake continuous professional learning to consolidate their own knowledge and understanding of a given area, to become an in-house expert and a source of guidance for staff and governors. They also deliver talks and assemblies to cohorts as part of the Health and Well-being curriculum.

Currently, we have established advocates in the following areas:

- Improving mental health (including self-image/self-esteem, self-harm and suicidal thoughts, stress and anxiety)
- Understanding sexual relationships (including sexual health, consent, media representation, sexual violence)
- Tackling racism in schools
- Human Rights (UNCRC) including promoting disability rights
- Promoting LGBTQ+ equality and how to support transition and gender diversity

Our students are always best served by approaches designed for them by the teachers who know and care about them. Developing in-house expertise in this way is of great value in providing them with the support they need.

### **CAMHS Shine Project**

We work in partnership with a dedicated CAMHS worker to ensure we are supporting our students' mental health and emotional well-being in the most effective way possible. They offer support, training and psycho-education for teachers and parents, as well as offering individual and group interventions for students and signposting to third sectors for further support where appropriate.

### **Additional, regular well-being practices include:**

YEPS, Eye 2 Eye Counselling, ELSA, Lego therapy, Art therapy, Spectacle Theatre workshops

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

We regularly gather student and parental feedback on our well-being provision- through a combination of questionnaires, focus groups and informal dialogue. We may also consult with other stakeholders and outside agencies about a student's well-being progress. The Pastoral Team (Assistant Headteacher, Heads of Year, Well-being Coordinators and the Attendance Team) meet weekly to share information, discuss student progress and review processes and practice.

## Sample Student Timetable

This is an example of a Year 7 timetable. The first week of term in September is Week 1, the following is Week 2, then it goes back to Week 1, and so on.

**Week 1 14/09/2025 - 20/09/2025**

|   | Monday                                    | Tuesday                                    | Wednesday                                  | Thursday                                   | Friday                                        |
|---|-------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Spanish<br>7D/Sp<br>L1<br>Miss J Burns    | Maths<br>7D/Ma<br>N2<br>S Staff            | Info Tech<br>7D/It<br>N16<br>Mr D Clifford | Geography<br>7D/Gg<br>H5<br>Mrs S Hann     | P.E.<br>7X/Pe1<br>DEFAULT<br>Ms T Birch-Hurst |
| 2 | Maths<br>7D/Ma<br>N2<br>R Sherif          | Welsh<br>7D/We<br>L7<br>Miss S Morrell     | Technology<br>7D/Te<br>T1<br>Mrs A Bensley | English<br>7D/En<br>E1<br>Miss E Burniston | Rel St<br>7D/Re<br>H7<br>Mr M J Maidment      |
| 3 | Music<br>7D/Mu<br>T6<br>Ms M Davies       | Science<br>7D/Sc<br>S5<br>Mr G Trapnell    | English<br>7D/En<br>E1<br>Miss E Burniston | Science<br>7D/Sc<br>S5<br>Mr G Trapnell    | Art<br>7D/Ar<br>N21<br>Mrs E Burke            |
| 4 | Welsh<br>7D/We<br>L7<br>Miss S Morrell    | English<br>7D/En<br>E1<br>Miss E Burniston | Science<br>7D/Sc<br>S5<br>Mr G Trapnell    | P.E.<br>7X/Pe1<br>DEFAULT<br>Ms C Balfry   | Maths<br>7D/Ma<br>N2<br>M Paul                |
| 5 | P.S.E.<br>7D/Ps<br>L2<br>Ms T Birch-Hurst | Maths<br>7D/Ma<br>N2<br>S Staff            | Drama<br>7D/Dr<br>T6<br>Ms M Davies        | History<br>7D/Hi<br>H10<br>Miss L Atkinson | Technology<br>7D/Te<br>T1<br>S Staff          |

**Week 2 21/09/2025 - 27/09/2025**

|   | Monday                                    | Tuesday                                    | Wednesday                                  | Thursday                                   | Friday                                     |
|---|-------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Spanish<br>7D/Sp<br>L1<br>Miss J Burns    | Maths<br>7D/Ma<br>N2<br>S Staff            | Info Tech<br>7D/It<br>N16<br>Mr D Clifford | Geography<br>7D/Gg<br>H5<br>Mrs S Hann     | P.E.<br>7X/Pe1<br>DEFAULT<br>R Sherif      |
| 2 | Maths<br>7D/Ma<br>N2<br>S Staff           | Welsh<br>7D/We<br>L7<br>S Staff            | Technology<br>7D/Te<br>T1<br>Mrs A Bensley | English<br>7D/En<br>E1<br>Miss E Burniston | Rel St<br>7D/Re<br>H7<br>Mr M J Maidment   |
| 3 | Music<br>7D/Mu<br>T6<br>Ms M Davies       | Science<br>7D/Sc<br>S5<br>Mr G Trapnell    | English<br>7D/En<br>E1<br>Miss E Burniston | Science<br>7D/Sc<br>S5<br>Mr G Trapnell    | Art<br>7D/Ar<br>N21<br>Mrs E Burke         |
| 4 | Welsh<br>7D/We<br>L7<br>Miss S Morrell    | English<br>7D/En<br>E1<br>Miss E Burniston | Science<br>7D/Sc<br>S5<br>S Staff          | P.E.<br>7X/Pe1<br>DEFAULT<br>Ms C Balfry   | Maths<br>7D/Ma<br>N2<br>S Staff            |
| 5 | P.S.E.<br>7D/Ps<br>L2<br>Ms T Birch-Hurst | Maths<br>7D/Ma<br>N2<br>S Staff            | Drama<br>7D/Dr<br>T6<br>Ms M Davies        | History<br>7D/Hi<br>H10<br>Miss L Atkinson | Technology<br>7D/Te<br>T1<br>Mrs A Bensley |

On this timetable, if you look at the first lesson of the week on Monday Week 1:

- 7D is the name of the class
- Sp means that it's a Spanish lesson
- Miss J Burns is the teacher's name
- L1 is the classroom - L stands for Languages, so this Spanish lesson is in room 1 in the Languages Block.

## **Home To School Transport**

The Integrated Transport Unit has assessed the new Year 7's eligibility for transport.

They will be posting bus passes to the home address of the students that are entitled during the last week of the school term.

If you require any further details please contact the ITU via this address:

**Transportation Manager  
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council  
Sardis House  
Sardis Road  
Pontypridd  
CF37 1DU**

**Tel: 01443 425001**