

Ysgol Y Grango receives national recognition for Curriculum Development

Staff and students from Ysgol Y Grango were delighted to be invited to a Welsh Secondary School Association presentation ceremony in Swansea Civic Centre on Wednesday 18 March 09. The Association presents awards to schools who show standards of excellence in various spheres of school development.

Miss Beryl Price, Deputy Headteacher, was presented with a Certificate of Commendation in Curriculum Development for the work undertaken at the school to support students through their choice of subjects for their Key Stage 4 courses. Miss Price said that "the new approach adopted by the school has had a posi-

tive impact on attendance, school inclusion and student engagement as well as on external examination results. The school was delighted with the 71% of students in year 11 who achieved the Level 2 threshold, prompting the LEA to state that Grango was the most improved school in the authority in 2008. We believe that the 'shopping basket' approach to option choices has contributed to that improvement".

Most schools offer students in year 9 a limited choice of subjects which are presented as options lists. Students are then made to choose one subject from each of the options lists. In 2005 in Grango it was

decided to give students an open choice. All students are encouraged to choose one vocational subject. In addition to this they choose two GCSE subjects. In order to ensure that students make choices which suit their individual aspirations, the school places a great emphasis on a rigorous programme of support that includes one-to-one interviews with students as necessary, meetings with parents and support from Careers Wales. Students consider their choices carefully, especially the subjects they enjoy most as well as subjects they perform well in. Then students analyse what learning pathway will best suit their chosen career path.

Diary dates for students and parents

Staff Training Days

Monday 20th April 09
Friday 26th June 09

Common Transfer Day

Thursday 9th July 09

Monday 4th May 09
Bank Holiday

Year 10 Examinations
begin Friday 5th May 09

GCSE Exams begin
Tuesday 12 May 09

Friday 22nd May 09
Progress File Ceremony

Half Term
Monday 25 May to
Friday 29th May

Tuesday 9th June 09
Year 10 reports issued

Thursday 11th June 09
Year 10 Parents Evening

Tuesday 16th June 09
Yr8 Reports Issued

Thursday 18th June 09
Year 8 Parents Evening

Tuesday 23rd June 09
Yr 7 Reports issued

Thursday 25th June 09
Year 7 Parents Evening



Receiving the WSSA commendation on behalf of the school

From left to right
Ms Beryl Price, Deputy Headteacher
Emily Parry, Head girl
George Smith, Head Boy
Mrs Corbally Year 9 Progress Leader

Science in the Home


Helping Your Child to Develop an Understanding of Science.

Children naturally have an inquisitive nature, exploring new places, observing things happen, questioning why? These are the fundamental principles of science which underpin the foundations of our human nature, to achieve the best we can. The science curriculum contains many current developments focusing on areas of Sustainability, the Human Impact on the Environment and new novel materials, using theories and more importantly key words, new to many parents and careers, but becoming frequently used by the modern media.

Supporting our young people with the new contemporary science curriculum can take many forms; initially a positive attitude and acceptance of the progress of science since many parents were at school would be a step towards our goal of improved attainment in science, but it can be shown in other ways.

- ◆ While listening to the TV news, highlight science issues, ask if they understand the words use, discuss items raised. Many news stories have images on display behind the newsreader, discuss what they represent. DNA strands or viruses are commonplace when the report involves genetics or the emergence of a new disease. These are pictures which should or will become familiar to our young people.
- ◆ Newspapers are full of headline grabbing articles related to recent scientific discoveries or innovations, the latest advice or explanations regarding health issues, all science! Again talk about them, it is all about making pupils aware of the importance of science and the need of society to understand what is going on.



- ◆ When cooking, encourage accurate use of measuring equipment, masses, volumes, times, using units appropriately, grams, cm³, minutes. Essential skills for any scientist in order to observe and record their findings.
- ◆ Read the ingredients of household chemicals, bleach, shampoo, Calpol, ask if there are any familiar names or words, it is only with exposure to these terms that there is a base for understanding them. Linked with this, look for hazard warning labels on the containers, identify the different types of hazard present and the chemical compounds that cause it.
- ◆ At night look at the stars! Even if it's just to talk about how far away they are. 
- ◆ While watching 'The Match' talk about the speed of the ball, m/s, and the force it must hit the goalie with, N. Sport can be linked to many areas of science. Moto racing—lap times, fuel economy, design of the car, all areas for discussion. Even swimming lends itself to a chat regarding their swimsuits—streamlining, performance enhancing drugs, the material that is used, all science related topics.
- ◆ The internet is a huge resource of information and perfect for pupils and their parents to research science, or use a new concept, books!

Overall we all need to strive to encourage and enthuse the enquiring mind of our young people to want to find things out and understand science doesn't just happen in school laboratories, and try to ensure the future scientists are nurtured and allowed to develop the enquiring skills and open mindedness needed to succeed.

Ysgol Y Grango is committed to working with parents to ensure that students have all the support they need to make good academic progress.

If you wish to discuss your child's progress please make an appointment to speak with their Year Progress Leader.

Year 7 Mrs A Harris

Year 8 & 9 Mrs C Corbally

Year 10&11 Mr P Phillips

From September 09 this will change to:

Year 7 & 8 Mrs A Harris

Year 9,10 & 11 Mrs C Corbally

OPEN MINDS WORKSHOP

Preparing Year 9 for Key Stage 4 Courses

Year 11 have enjoyed the one-day workshop, presented by 'Open Minds' that we have arranged for them over the last four years.

We are now extending this provision to include year 9. On Friday 5th June Year 9 will spend the day with Tom Barwood from the Open Minds Consultancy. The theme of the day is to support students in tackling larger pieces of coursework.

One of the most daunting aspects of courses in Key Stage 4 is the completion of coursework. These extended

pieces of work require careful planning and organization of data as well as effective research skills. Students often don't know where to start on such large tasks.

It reminds us of the riddle:
Question: How do you eat an elephant?

Answer: In small mouthfuls!

This workshop will encourage students to be positive and creative when approaching such work across all of their courses in Key Stage 4.

An important aspect of the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualifica-

tion is the Project Task. All students in the year group will be required to complete a 2000 word project which is supported by an oral presentation.

Successful completion of the Project can lead to an extra qualification which can be used as evidence for the WBQ. Throughout the key stage students will be supported by staff in the completion of the project which will be linked to aspects of coursework. Parents can help by supporting their children throughout the task.