

Ysgol Y Grango Academic Newsletter

Excellence for All
Excellence from All

Issue 2
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Ysgol Y Grango is chosen as the only school in Wrexham to deliver the Key Stage 4 Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification

The **Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification** is a very highly regarded qualification which has been piloted in a small number of schools across Wales, and is now being 'rolled out' further.

The qualification combines experiences and projects that help students to develop as an individual and will equip students for their next steps—work, university and for life.

The Welsh Bac has a strong focus on building the strengths of students and encourages independent thinking and study.

Rather than adding to the workload of students, students involved in the pilot have reported that the Core activity improves their understanding and performance in their chosen GCSE subjects. Teachers are also taking the view that the Welsh Bac work helps students to achieve at GCSE.

Why has Grango School decided to introduce the Welsh Bac?

Following the school's examination success in the summer of 2008, we felt it was an appropriate time for the school to take on the next major development in our Key Stage 4 curriculum.

The range of courses on offer to our students has proven to be very popular and our students respond very positively to their subject choices.

We applied to deliver the Welsh Bac because we believe that it will provide for our students an extra qualification which is highly regarded by employers and also by higher and further educational establishments.

The majority of students will be entered for the Intermediate diploma ie; students who are expected to gain mainly A*-C grades at GCSE. Other students will be entered at Foundation Level.

Students at Grango already take advantage of a wide range of activities which will support the Welsh Bac eg, Duke of Edinburgh, Choir and Band, trips to Glan Llyn, Llangranog and Cardiff, trips to the castles of North Wales etc



Students learn about Wales and its Culture at Llangranog



Diary dates for students and parents

Staff Training Day
5th January 2009

Year 11 reports
Week beginning
9 February 2009

Year 11 parents evening
31st March 2009

Half Term
Monday 16 February to
Friday 20 February 2009

Year 9 reports
Week of 23 February 2009

Year 9 Parents evening
26 February 09

**Tracking reports for
ears 7, 8 and 10**
20 March 2009

**Year 11
Mock examinations start**
Monday 23rd February 2009

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 Corbally

Year 10+11— Mr P Phillips

What students will be covering on the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification course :-

Key Skills - Success in a range of Key skills is already part of the school's portfolio of qualifications.

Wales, Europe and the World - This includes Welsh 2nd language GCSE which all our students study. Other elements of this are covered in PSE lessons

Work Related Education - All our students engage in a 2 weeks work experience during Year 10

Team Enterprise - Students at Grango take part in Enterprise Challenge every year, organized through Careers Wales. In addition the school works on the Dynamo Project which involves local entrepreneurs sharing their experiences of working in business.

Individual Investigation - This element of Welsh Bac will be new for students at Grango. They will be required to produce a study about a subject they are interested in, usually this will be linked to one of their examination courses. This element will be certificated by the exam board for successful candidates.

Curriculum Cymreig

Curriculum Cymreig is a 'cross curricular' theme which is a requirement of the Welsh Assembly Government. At Grango all staff build aspects of Curriculum Cymreig into their daily teaching, often by introducing the work of Welsh artists, performers, writers etc and also by simply including Welsh language into display and lessons.

The Common Requirements of the School Curriculum in Wales provide that:

'Pupils should be given the opportunities to develop and apply knowledge and understanding of the cultural, economic, environmental, historical and linguistic characteristics of Wales.' and at Ysgol y Grango, we are developing these requirements within our educational provision to our students.

Many of these opportunities are integrated. The Welsh department organises a range of activities throughout each year which links the Welsh language students study with cultural and historical references. Students have the opportunity in Year 7 to spend a residential experience at Glanllyn, Bala, Year 8 / 9 spend four days at Llangrannog, in South West Wales and Year 10 / 11 visit Cardiff and its environs for a weekend in November.

In addition to these, the Welsh department organises a Jambori for the primary schools while students from Year 7 to 11 take part in the school Eisteddfod each March. We also have more students competing in the Urdd Eisteddfod locally and nationally than any other English medium school in the

Wrexham area and probably the whole of North East Wales.

While the Welsh department clearly plays a leading part in developing the curriculum cymreig within Ysgol y Grango, other departments are developing their curriculum cymreig contribution within the content of their schemes of work, with extra curricular activities and with an increasing use of the Welsh language in their lessons and within the school environment.

Each teacher has a booklet and audio recording of key Welsh phrases to use in various school situations. For example, staff can greet students on the corridor in Welsh and give simple but important instructions to the classes in the language. For example, phrases such as "Dewch i mewn" (Come in) and "Eisteddwch yn ddistaw" (Sit quietly) are phrases which all staff are mastering. If you would like a copy of this booklet, contact Mr. Lovell via the school and he will be more than willing to forward a booklet on to you

What can you do to support your child in Maths?

Some parents are fearful of subjects that they might not have done well in when they were in school. Mathematics may be one of those subjects. Research has shown that children are more likely to be successful in mathematics and other academic subjects when parents actively support their learning. To ensure that children are on track for success in school, college, and the workforce, parents must become involved early and stay involved throughout their children's school years. This involvement can help reinforce children's skills and positive attitude toward mathematics. One of the most valuable things you can do with your child is talk to them about mathematics. If you think about it, you are probably already doing a lot of mathematics at home without realising it. By involving your child, you will help them learn. Remember, maths at home is meant to be fun. You should enjoy it and so should your child.

Parents can do many things in everyday situations that can help their children learn to solve problems and develop reasoning abilities, which are fundamental skills for learning mathematics. Simple routines with children such those below can become learning experiences:

- Talk about any maths work that they bring home from school
- Ask them to help you when you are doing things with money, or measuring or weighing
- Tell the time
- Use magazines to find out when a TV programme is on and set the video recorder
- Look at the price of things in catalogues and work out if you can afford them
- Weigh ingredients when you are cooking
- Measure floors for carpets, walls for wallpaper and paint

You can help your child learn mathematics by offering insights into how to approach the subject. Your child will develop more confidence in his or her abilities by understanding the following points:

Problems can be solved in different ways. Although most mathematics problems have only one answer, there may be many ways to get that answer.

Wrong answers sometimes can be useful. Analyzing wrong answers can help your child understand the concepts underlying a problem and learn to apply reasoning skills to arrive at the correct answer.

Being able to do mathematics in your head is important. Mathematics is not restricted to pencil and paper activities. Doing mathematics in your head ("mental math") is a valuable skill that comes in handy when making quick calculations in stores, restaurants, or gas stations. Let your child know that by using mental math, his or her mathematics skills will become stronger.

It is sometimes okay to use a calculator to solve mathematics problems. Let your child know that to use calculators correctly and most efficiently, he or she will need a strong foundation in mathematics.

Helping children to appreciate and master mathematics is more important today than ever before. An increasingly technological world demands strong mathematical skills for the workforce and everyday life, and these demands will increase in the future.

Some internet sites which may be able to help you or your child improve their numeracy skills are :

www.counton.org

www.funbrain.com

www.bbc.co.uk/schools/websites/11_16/site/maths.shtml

http://nrich.maths.org/public/viewer.php?obj_id=6317