

OLCHFA SCHOOL—YSGOL YR OLCHFA

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DECEMBER
2008

AUTUMN TERM NEWSLETTER

Dear Parents

We are nearing the end of another busy and successful term. Pupils have been involved in a huge range of activities and their achievements across a range of subjects, sports and extra-curricular activities have been notable. Even in the last day, Ellie Simmonds, our Paralympic double gold medallist, has just picked up the BBC Young Sports Personality of the Year award in a national ceremony in Liverpool. This completes a truly magical few months for her and will make 2008 a most memorable year to look back on.

I am pleased to be able to inform you that a new prospectus is being compiled for the school – glossier, more up-to-date and with a CD Rom included as part of the package. This prospectus will be used as part of next year's recruitment round.

Olchfa continues to be a very popular school, bucking local population trends. Our Sixth Form, in particular, is very buoyant, with nearly 500 students. Although we are constantly looking for ways to improve, we do feel that our continuing popularity when it comes to the hard

choices of where to educate children shows us that we must be doing something right as a school. I am excited to be able to report that we are planning further curriculum changes in 2009 which will continue to strengthen and broaden the offer we make to all pupils, particularly in terms of the additional things that they can get involved in outside the formal curriculum.

I do hope that you have a restful and enjoyable Christmas break and hope that 2009 brings you success and happiness.

Hugh Davies, Headteacher

**INSET
FOR 2009
6th January
13th February
6th March**

PLEASE NOTE
THAT THERE IS AN
ADDITIONAL
INSET DAY ON
THE 13TH
FEBRUARY WHICH
HAS NOT BEEN
PREVIOUSLY
PUBLISHED

For Information

All vacancies, teaching and non-teaching, are routinely advertised on

www.eteach.com



SCHOOL MUSICAL—PETER PAN

This year's school musical, Peter Pan, proved to be as popular as ever with a sell out on all four nights. There was a fantastic opportunity for over one hundred performers to recreate J.M. Barrie's classic about the boy who chose not to grow up. Mr Head said that it was impossible to single out individual performances in a production which required a double casting of the main characters to provide opportunities for so many youngsters to show their talents. The production team, with Mr Lucas as Musical Director, were delighted with the wonderful sense of ensemble that our pupils brought to a highly energetic and comic rendition. Each night the audiences witnessed a really exciting celebration of the dramatic and musical skills which have become such a feature of the school's annual calendar. Well done to all.

Last Day of Term –19th December—Arrangements

The last day of term is Friday 19th December. As has been our custom over the last few years, the last day will be largely activity based, with pupils given the chance to watch a film, participate in disco/karaoke and attend the staff pantomime, which seems rapidly to have become something of an Olchfa tradition! There will be three morning performances and lunch will be served at 1pm until 1.45pm. Registration will take place at 1.45pm and pupils will be dismissed at 2pm.

Pupils return to school on the 7th January 2009—Week A.

UNIFORM SHOP

THE SCHOOL UNIFORM SHOP WILL BE OPEN DURING THE CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS ON FRIDAY 2ND JANUARY FROM 10AM TO 1PM. OPENING HOURS DURING TERM TIME ARE MONDAY LUNCHTIME 1.05PM TO 2PM AND WEDNESDAY 3PM TO 6PM.

WOULD PARENTS PLEASE CLEARLY LABEL ALL SCHOOL UNIFORM ITEMS. THIS WILL HELP GREATLY WITH DEALING WITH LOST PROPERTY AND RETURNING ITEMS TO PUPILS

SCHOOL CHRISTMAS DINNER

Christmas dinner will be served to pupils on the **17th December** in the Main Hall. The cost will be £1.85 which includes pudding. There will also be a limited choice of other lunches.

Routine Vacancies

If you are interested in becoming a Dining Room Assistant, please contact Mrs Baglow on 534304 for further details.

If you are interested in becoming an exam invigilator please contact Mrs Morris, Exams Officer on 534309. Training will be provided.

Staffing News

There have been some internal appointments/changes to our staffing structure during the Autumn Term. Mrs Nicci Morris has been appointed as the Examinations Officer / Data Manager and Mrs Tracy Hancock as her assistant. Mr Mike Hamer, reprographics technician moved on to pastures new last month and Mr Will Parry has been appointed as his replacement and starts with us in January. Mrs Yvette James has been appointed as Telephonist/Clerical Assistant/Relief Receptionist.

Mrs Mary Owens, Sixth Form Manager retires at the end of the year after 16 years at Olchfa. She has undertaken many roles during her time here, all of which have been carried out with unflinching enthusiasm and professionalism. She shall be missed, and we wish her a happy and healthy retirement. Mr Rob Griffiths, Science Technician also leaves us at the end of the year and we wish him well in his new post.

CALLING HOME

We would remind parents and pupils that the use of mobile phones to call or text home during the school day is not permitted. Parents and pupils are reminded that mobile phones should be out of sight whilst in school and will be confiscated if they are seen. Pupils who are unwell should report to the Pupil Welfare Officer, who will then call home if necessary. For any other messages pupils can use a phone in the Key Stage Offices.

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD SHOEBOX APPEAL

This year the Welsh Bacallaureate Group in Year 12 organised the Operation Christmas Child Shoebox Appeal. They spoke in assemblies and visited form groups. The response was tremendous. Many form groups worked together and some pupils prepared shoeboxes with their families. One hundred and twenty shoeboxes were sent to the collection point in November. A huge thank you to pupils, parents and staff for all contributions made. A particular thank you to 7DH who made up 18 shoeboxes. Many very poor children around the world will benefit from such generosity.

Textiles Club

Miss Evans D&T will be starting an after-school Textiles Club for years 7 and 8 in Room T10 on Tuesday, from 3 to 4pm. The emphasis will be on recycling, so pupils can bring along old clothes to revamp and customise or use old fabrics to make new clothes and accessories. Interested pupils are asked to see Miss Evans in T10.



Literacy News

Year 7 are continuing their involvement with the national Read a Million Words campaign. This scheme is designed to promote reading as a fun activity, with a particular focus this year on encouraging reluctant readers and boys to become engaged with books. So far this term, Year 7 pupils have represented the school at several events. Ten pupils attended a book reading event at Borders Bookshop in Swansea, where they also purchased books for the school library. In November, 15 pupils attended a Read a Million Words celebration event at the Grand Theatre, hosted by Kevin Johns. The pupils performed a series of poetry and drama by Welsh authors to a full house and watched performances by other schools from across Swansea. A large number of pupils in Year 7 are also benefiting from a range of literacy interventions this year, with specialist teachers or in teacher-led reading groups. In October we ran our "Read to Succeed" evening to give parents some suggestions of strategies to improve reading and spelling at home. We are grateful for the huge amount of positive feedback received after this event. During the Spring Term we are planning a range of fun events to encourage reading. If you would like any information about literacy initiatives at Olchfa, please contact Mr R Williams (Literacy Co-ordinator) at the school, or by email: rjw@olchfa.org.uk



OLCHFA SWIMMING POOL

We are delighted to announce that the school's swimming pool is now open to the community on Tuesday and Thursday between 2pm and 4pm. There is a lifeguard on duty during this time and visitors are asked to sign in at reception for security / health and safety reasons.

Entry fees are as follows:

Adult standard	£2.40
Conc. Adult	£1.70
Junior	£1.70
*PTL Adult	£1.20
*PTL Junior	£1.20
Family standard	£6.30
Family Conc.	£4.50
*PTL Family	£3.00
Olchfa staff/pupils	£1.00
Reg. over 60's	Free
Under 4	Free

(*PTL = Passport to Leisure)

School Council 2008-2009

We are pleased to report that School Council members for this academic year are:

Hannah Davies, Head Girl, Mathew Simon, Head Boy, Katie Fletcher (Secretary), Joseph Kim, Rachel Glick, Fiona Shuttleworth, Megan Graves, Sammy Kasto, Ria Henwood, Syinthu Kugathanan, Will Evans, Evie Francis, Tim Axemann, Catherine Thomas, and Beth Ridgewell. We wish them well during their term of office!

Representatives of the School Council are involved in all school recruitment interviews. Training is provided and it is a positive and interesting experience for the pupils. Other matters that the Council have been addressing are Eco issues, teaching and learning matters and facilities in the gym changing rooms ie. mirrors and hair-dryers.

It is still early days, and there will be much more to report on in due course.

Reports from the Welsh Department on two trips for Year 9 pupils

Dyma adroddiad o'r Adran Cymraeg ar dau taith ar gyfer disgyblion Blwyddyn 9

Mon 20th – Wed 22nd October, Urdd Camp at Glanllyn, Y Bala

Llun 20fed – Mercher 22ain, Hydref Gwersyll yr Urdd Glanllyn Yr Bala

Friday 24th – Sun 26th October, Urdd Camp at Llangrannog

Gwener 24ain – Sul 26ain Hydref—Gwersyll yr Urdd Llangrannog

Glanllyn, Y Bala

24 pupils, Miss Allin and Miss James met early on a wet Monday morning. Unfortunately, nearly all dual-carriageways and straight roads finish with the M4, therefore all roads leading through Mid-Wales towards North Wales can lead to the odd pupil or more being ill on the way! The party eventually arrived at the Gwersyll at 12:30. Mr Davies met them for the afternoon.

After quickly unpacking, lunch and a welcome presentation, it was off to the first activity. Olchfa pupils were split into two groups, with Miss Allin's group doing raft building while Miss James' group undertook the new high ropes course. In the evening they were able to relax and watch a DVD in the new purpose-built theatre venue on site.

During the three days both groups also got the chance to go on the lake for three hours canoeing (!), wall-climbing, ten pin bowling, games and team-building in the Sports hall, and swimming. They also enjoyed a disco on the second night with both teachers acting as DJs and leading the Mr Urdd Dance (!) All pupils were given a small booklet of useful Welsh words and phrases that they could use with the staff at Glanllyn.

Both Miss Allin and Miss James complimented the pupils on their responsible behaviour and their positive attitude towards Welsh while on their visit. The pupils did try to speak a little Welsh while they were there, which we are very pleased about.

Llangrannog, West Wales

One sunny Friday afternoon a group of 24 Year 9 pupils and three staff (myself, Miss Allin and Miss James) headed off to West Wales. Luckily this time it was a shorter journey with no sick-bags required (!). Olchfa pupils were the only secondary school pupils at the camp on this particular weekend, but there were around 100 primary school pupils from Cardigan-shire schools there too.

After unpacking and the welcome reception, we decided to take advantage of the sunny weather by walking on the coastal path from the Urdd camp down to Llangrannog village itself. We stayed on the beach for a while before heading back to camp for supper. The group then played football on the all-weather pitch, learned the Mr Urdd dance and played bingo.

On Saturday the pupils participated in : swimming, horse-riding, team games, trampoline and archery. We also organised a Welsh hour with a quick quiz, 'Countdown' and 'Blind Date' game. In the evening they enjoyed a roller disco.

Everyone was looking forward to Sunday as the pupils were able to go skiing on the dry-ski slope, tobogganing and go-karting. This was followed by a tasty Sunday lunch before we all went on the bus and headed back down to Swansea.

I must say again how well Olchfa pupils behaved – they were extremely polite and responsible. I also must congratulate all pupils on their pro-active approach towards Welsh on the trip. We heard the pupils trying to speak Welsh, and using the little Welsh booklets we had given them, on numerous occasions.

As a team, we feel that both trips were very successful in showing the pupils that Welsh is a language that is used. One of the aims of the trip was to introduce Welsh outside the classroom walls and give the pupils an opportunity to experience Welsh in an informal, fun environment.

I would like to thank Miss Allin and Miss James who attended both trips (with only one recovery day in between) — they must have felt very tired by the end of the weekend!

I would also like to thank Mr Davies and the Governing Body, who have supported this project. Diolch yn fawr iawn.

Mrs E Madoc-Jones, Penaeth y'r Adran Cymraeg

Pupil Achievements

We are aware that many of our pupils have various hobbies and interests outside school and compete at various levels. The Headteacher asks to be informed of these pupils' successes as a routine.

Congratulations to the Chemistry Olympiad Team of Sarthak, Phyllida, Minshi and Oliver who finished third overall in a nail-biting final at the Taliesin Theatre. Both key matches were decided on the final question. A great result to finish third out of the 32 top Welsh schools who entered.

Once again some of our pupils did extremely well in the Urdd Swimming Competition. Competitors were Laura Hatcher, Chloe Preece, Joe Tucker, Rachel Hatcher, Oliver Tennant, Sarah Falconer, Hannah Potter and Sara Gwynne. The following competitors made it to the finals which take place in Cardiff in January Laura Hatcher, Joe Tucker, Oliver Tennant and Sarah Falconer. Congratulations to you all.

Once again we congratulate Kris Jones who returned from Solothurn with a GOLD for Great Britain in the final orienteering race in October. A huge achievement of which the school is very proud of.

Congratulations to pupils who took part in the engineering team challenge competition and in particular to Rebecca Thomas for the winning in the Swansea competition, but who also won the overall competition, winning £200 for the schools' Design and Technology Department. Photos relating to this can be seen on www.engineering-team-challenge.co.uk

EVENING CLASSES AT OLCHEFA. Courses are for 10 weeks. Enrolment on first evening of each class.

Monday—starts 12 Jan 09	Men's Keep Fit Art	7 pm - 9 pm	New Gym S13
Tuesday—starts 13 Jan 09	Art	7 pm - 9 pm	S13
Wednesday—starts 7 Jan 09	Yoga	7 pm - 9 pm	Main Hall
Thursday—starts 8 Jan 09	Line Dancing Beginners Line Dancing Intermediates	7 pm - 8 pm 8 pm—9.30 pm	Main Hall Main Hall

SCHOOL TERMS AND HOLIDAY DATES 2008—2009

SCHOOL TERMS AND HOLIDAYS			MidTerm Holidays		2008-2009	
Term	Term Begins	Term ends	Begins	Ends	Term begins	Term ends
Autumn 2008	Tuesday 2 September	Friday 24 October	Monday 27 October	Friday 31 October	Monday 3 November	Friday 19 December
Spring 2009	Tuesday 6 January	Friday 13 February	Monday 16 February	Friday 20 February	Monday 23 February	Friday 3 April
Summer 2009	Monday 20 April	Friday 22 May	Monday 25 May	Friday 29 May	Monday 1 June	Wednesday 22 July
BANK HOLIDAYS	10th April — Good Friday / 13th April —Easter Monday / 4th May—May Day / 25th May 2009—Spring Bank Holiday					
INSET DAYS	2nd and 3rd September / 24th October / 6th January 2009 / 13th February 2009/ 6th March 2					

