

ABERTILLERY 3-16 LEARNING COMMUNITY GOVERNORS' ANNUAL REPORT TO PARENTS 2020

A Message from our Chair of Governors

Dear Parents and Carers,

The Education Act (No.2) 1986 requires all Governing Bodies to prepare an Annual Report on their work. Due to the relaxation of school Reporting Requirements (Wales) (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020 that came into force on 7 August 2020 this Annual Governors Report to Parents will not contain:

- Information on school performance for 2020/21
- Information on school attendance and unauthorised and authorised absences for 2020/21

The attached report is a summary of the significant improvements and notable achievements of the Abertillery Learning Community during the academic year 2020 / 21.

The school has worked hard at maintaining a focus on continuous improvement throughout 2020/21, despite the continued challenges of the pandemic. The Head teacher and the senior leaders have been working with staff across the learning community to ensure robust target setting processes are in place for all learners. The targets are quality assured, reviewed and challenged, by teaching/middle leadership and senior leadership staff. This ensures the learning community can drive improvements in teaching and learning.

The governing body would like to thank all staff for the significant amount of work they have put in this year, working with parents and pupils, to ensure each child had the necessary evidence to support the centre assessed grade required by WJEC.

I am disappointed to report despite significant improvement in standards, governance and teaching and learning across the learning community we were unable to demonstrate this to Estyn, due to the pandemic, as they were unable to visit the school. We hope to be able to do this during the next academic year and move out of the category of "significant Improvement".

However, some positives have come out of the pandemic. The school has effectively used parent mail and social media to strengthen its communications with parents, guardians, and those in the local community. The work undertaken to date, has created a strong community spirit, and engagement. We will continue to build on this with greater partnership working with local businesses, the local authority, students, and their families to ensure the school is able to inspire all students to become responsible citizens of the future and put the learning community at the centre of the local community.

The governing body has been cognisant of ensuring that both staff and pupil wellbeing has been at the heart of all discussions and decisions. We have made several key appointments to ensure we can deliver the new curriculum, as well as changes to how our ALN children are identified and supported across 3-16 years. We have strengthened our pastoral team to ensure support for our students and their families as they navigate their way through this challenging time. The team will continue to change and develop to respond to the needs of our staff and students.

Finally, we as governors', would like to thank those governors who have completed their term of office and would like to welcome several new governors to the governing body. An up to date list of governors is published on the website. We would also like to thank you as parents, local businesses and the various community groups for continuing to support the Learning Community, and our students for showing such strength of character and good behaviour during another challenging year.

Again, we can assure you that there will be no let up in the staff and governors' determination to provide the highest quality teaching and learning for all learners at Abertillery Learning Community and take all the positives from this year to ensure sustained improvement across the whole Learning Community.

Under the Schools Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 the Governing Body is no longer required to hold a meeting for the purpose of using the attached positive report. However, if 5% of parents wish to request a meeting in writing then one can be convened.

Our experience from previous years indicates that parents / carers contact members of the Governing Body freely during the course of the year and this more informal approach works well.

The Governing Body, Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher share responsibility for the strategic management of the school, acting within the framework set by national legislation and by Headteacher have separate and particular responsibilities for the selection and management of staff. The internal management of the school is the responsibility of the Headteacher. The full Governing Body meets at least once a term. In future, there will be additional meetings and regular meetings of sub-committees to discuss specific issues. The minutes of Governing Body meetings are available from the clerk to governors. The Governing Body for our school for the forthcoming year will be:

Governor Role	Governor Name
Community Gov apptd by GB/Cymunedol, penodwyd gan BLI	Mrs Alyson Hoskins Mrs Sharon Weeks Ms Rebecca Jarrett Ms Suzanne Williams (Chair)
Headteacher/Pennaeth	Mrs Meryl Echeverry
LA Appointed/Penodwyd gan yr ALI	Cllr Nigel Daniels Mr Richard Bevan (Vice Chair) Cllr Martin Cook Cllr Julie Holt Darryl Tovey Jack Newton
Observer/Arsylwr	Mrs Keri Jones Mrs Katherine Olsen Mrs Claire Price
Parent Representative/Cynrychiolydd Rhiant	Ms Lian Daniels Ms Sarah Jayne Price Ian Probert Sarah Jones Lucy Fryatt Helen Evans
Staff Representative/Cynrychiolydd Staff	Mrs Kim Evans
Teacher Representative/Cynrychiolydd Athrawon	Patrick Devine Jemma Welch

School Links with the Community, Business, PTA and Industry

The school maintains a register of gifts and interests and their usage. We use our gifts as prizes for raffles/events etc. so please send in any unwanted gifts to help us raise much needed funds!

ALC's Business Team and Community Engagement

Our Business Team and SLT members have been working hard to continue to build partnerships with the community and wider. Below is a snapshot of the work that is taking place:

- Staff wellbeing events being held on each campus supporting local businesses (weekly car wash on site)
- Local business of the week is ongoing connecting the school with the local community
- Successful bid for a Chillax upcycling project with funding for a market stall in the town centre to sell items and create a sustainable model providing essential skills for learners and their families
- Parent and Toddler sessions are continuing currently at Tillery St. This will move around campuses during the academic year.
- Submission of a bid to GAVO for a forest school area at Six Bells - awaiting an outcome
- Successful allocation of Chillax Children in Need funding and the re-opening of Chillax in line with Covid guidance
- Final sign off of the THALES collaboration agreement and the final stages of the development of the cyber club room
- ALC has achieved the CyberFirst schools silver award supported by a 3-16 action plan
- The Parent, Teacher and Friends association is being reviewed and we will be looking for members of the wider community to play a more active role in working with the learning community

Primary Phase 2020-2021

The Primary Phase continues to operate in phases across all campuses. We are beginning to see the benefits of this cross campus phase approach in terms of consistency and delivery of curriculum offer.

All Primary staff have continued to receive wellbeing, DCF and self-evaluation training from external providers and all Primary Phase Leads have completed Thrive training for SLT and 3 HLTAs are currently undertaking the Lead License Practitioner training. This will enable us to support our learners' social and emotional development, particularly in light of the pandemic.

All Primary staff have completed MyConcern and Edukey training to ensure a consistent approach to safeguarding procedures across all campuses.

We continue to work closely with our cluster schools to develop a shared approach to Curriculum for Wales. For example, all schools within the cluster have shared their approach to the New Curriculum. As a cluster, we have taken on the Thrive initiative which allows us to support staff as they adopt this approach. Learners' transition from KS2 to KS3 is also discussed in all cluster meetings to ensure smooth transitions for all learners.

Over the last 12 months we have maintained strong links with our Community. Each campus had local Ministers deliver virtual assemblies for events including Harvest festivals and Remembrance Day. All campuses made contributions to the local Food Bank at Harvest time. Children in Need was celebrated on each campus with a Crazy hair and Odd sock fundraiser. Our annual Christmas Fayre was abandoned, however KS2 children participated in an enterprise project to raise money for local charities.

When schools closed early in December 2020, we were in a strong position to revert to the Blended Learning approach we adopted previously. Immediately, learners were provided with a robust home learning diet which was continually refined. A daily timetable was implemented to support curriculum delivery:

- Foundation phase, learners had two recorded sessions a day along with follow up activities that were supplemented with a paper pack and received two live sessions a week.
- KS2, learners received two live sessions per day which included a literacy and maths session. These were followed up with a supplementary pack. Learners also had a non-digital task set for each afternoon.

- Every week all learners enjoyed a screen-free wellbeing day.
- Levels of engagement continued to be tracked with the addition of capturing learners' progress. During this period, there was a comprehensive plan for TAs to support learning through: supporting live sessions, engagement phone calls and providing small group support e.g. ELSA, Nessy, RAPs. Vulnerable learners were contacted regularly and all safeguarding procedures were adhered to.

Foundation Phase learners returned to school in February and KS2 in March, all learners underwent baseline assessments to ascertain lost learning and implement a recovery curriculum to address the lost learning identified. We have capitalised on the improved ICT skills of staff and learners and have continued to prioritise digital competency.

Staffing

Throughout the academic year, there have been several staff changes. A Primary Phase Lead returned to her position at 60% following maternity leave and a new position of Primary Deputy Phase lead was included. We have made new appointments due to staff promotion and retirement: two Interim TLRs were appointed to substantive positions; two new external TLRs were appointed and three new teachers.

Secondary Phase

The pupils in the Secondary Phase have continued to experience many changes to their school day and the way they learn. Blended learning, changes in the school day, and examination/qualification changes have been made learners time in school difficult. We are very proud of how they have risen to these challenges and are delighted to be able to share positive updates.

Once again our students have achieved great success and produce another solid set of results; the most successful results in recent school history in all performance indicators. Over 46% of students achieved L2+ which is a C Grade or higher in Maths, English and three other subjects. Results in English and maths respectively were also strong with over 50% of learners achieving a C or better.

Areas of particular note were Welsh and science where C grades also exceeded 50% and the number of students that achieved 5A*-A grades which rose to 14%. This allowed our learners to access a wide range of post 16 courses of their choice.

The senior and middle leadership team has brought consistency to many areas of teaching and learning and wellbeing. We have seen big changes to our secondary leadership team with a new phase lead and three assistant heads being appointed in the summer term.

Due to increased pupil numbers in Year 7 and in collaboration with the LA we have increased our cohort size from 150 to 163 in order to facilitate all of the students wishing to join ALC, which supports the big strides we are making in our journey towards excellent.

Sporting Aims and Achievements

The sporting provision in our learning community was greatly impacted by the recent pandemic. The major sports and events that are usually such an integral part of our lives were suddenly no longer in place. From not being able to get changed, to not sharing equipment to no extracurricular sport or sports days. Instead, working closely with the local authority, we moved toward a more health and wellbeing focused sports provision. Learners were taking part in walking, running and individual activities rather than the traditional football and netball.

I am glad to say that this is currently behind us and we are now working hard to re-install our full breadth of curriculum and extra-curricular activities. Whilst also reflecting upon the provision and if there is now an opportunity to improve our sports curriculum offer.

ALC Sporting Highlights 2020-21

Primary phase

We have continued to implement a strong emphasis on physical development. Throughout lockdown we utilised the Joe Wicks virtual sessions and provided wellbeing activities with a physical emphasis. We also encouraged participation in virtual Netball and Multi-skills challenges arranged by Blaenau Gwent. When we returned to school, we continued to promote physical wellbeing by taking part in a virtual Multi-skills challenge. Every learner also experienced a sports day which took account of the restrictions and was held in their own class.

Football

Tom Stokes has moved to Newport County to develop his football career whilst Tomos Gibbs has moved to Bristol City Football Academy. Callun Winmill and Morgan Stead are members of the Caerphilly and District Schools U16 football team and Cody Hayward and Tom Gibbs are members of the Caerphilly and District Schools U12 football team. Zak Tidey is part of the Cardiff City academy and Kenzie Carver has moved from Swansea to Newport County academy.

Rugby

Josh Gay, Ben Carpenter, Steven Gwilliam, McKenzie Evans and Robbie Griffiths all represent Blaenau Gwent Schools Rugby.

Our Rugby Development Officer (WRU), Ian Evans, is once again delivering lessons to all primary campuses.



Gymnastics

Maddy Harford has been selected for the Welsh Regional Squad in gymnastics.



Athletics

Ellie Tetley continues to represent Blaenau Gwent Athletics at both U15 & U17 level. Ellie is also part of the Welsh Athletics East Wales endurance junior regional development activity (RDA).

Netball

Ellie Tetley is also a member of the U14 District Netball Squad.



Megan Cottrell is a part of the Celtic Dragon U17 Academy and is also in the U17 seven stars Nova Academy.

MMA

Teah Vowles had her first MMA fight against the World Champion. She achieved 9th Khan in BJJ (British JuJitsu)

The School Prospectus

The School Prospectus and promotional video is available to download from our school website.

<https://www.abertillery3-16.co.uk/prospectus-estyn-report>

Curriculum Organisation and Teaching

We believe that learning should be a rewarding and enjoyable experience for everyone. Through our teaching we aim to give our pupils the skills, knowledge and understanding that they need to be able to make good choices about the important things in their lives.

The school is proud to host two Local Authority Specialist Resource Bases and we make sure that the pupils take a full and active part in all aspects of school life. We have two specialist teachers who work closely together to identify pupils with additional learning needs. They work with support staff and phase leaders to make sure that pupils make good progress in their learning.

DCF

We believe that all of our learners should be digitally competent, as the world is becoming more digital ICT and digital technologies are now at the forefront of our learners' lives. We must ensure that our learners develop and improve their digital skills not only in ICT/ Computer Science lessons but also in all of their lessons.

There are four skills which will be developed:

- Digital Citizenship
- Interacting and Collaborating
- Producing
- Data and Computational Thinking.

In this last term we have excitedly appointed our first cohort of 'Digital Leaders'. Our Digital Leaders will be trained to use 'Google Suite' to be more proficient in using digital skills, and to also share their knowledge with wider learners and staff. They will promote e-safety and become e-ambassadors, trial and evaluate new equipment and share ideas and influence the future of computing here at ALC!

Foundation Phase

The Foundation Phase Framework sets out the curriculum and outcomes for 3 to 7-year-olds in Wales in the foundation phase.

The statutory areas of learning in the foundation phase are:

- personal and social development, well-being and cultural diversity
- language, literacy and communication skills
- mathematical development
- Welsh language development
- knowledge and understanding of the world
- physical development
- Creative development.

Stages 2, 3 and 4

The following subjects are statutory at each of the later key stages:

Age	Key Stage 2	Key Stage 3
Year groups	Age: 7-11	Age: 11-14
English	Years 3-6	Years 7-9
Welsh	✓	✓
Mathematics	✓	✓
Science	✓	✓
Design and Technology	✓	✓
Information and Communication Technology	✓	✓
History	✓	✓
Geography	✓	✓
Art and Design	✓	✓
Music	✓	✓
Physical Education	✓	✓
Modern Foreign Language		✓
Religious Education	✓	✓

Key Stage 4

Key Stage 4 learners study a core of subjects in English, Maths, Science, Welsh, the Welsh Baccalaureate Skills Challenge Certificate and 3 optional subjects. Learners can select from a broad range of GCSE and Vocational options and the courses run on a best-fit model, which has secured strong correlation between learners' option choices and the courses that the school delivers. All Key Stage 4 learners also study Personal and Social Education, Physical Education and Religious Studies.

Year 10 Curriculum Statement 2020-21

CORE SUBJECTS	
English	8 lessons per cycle
Mathematics	8 lessons per cycle
Science	9 lessons per cycle
Welsh	4 lessons per cycle
Religious Studies	2 lessons per cycle
PE	2 lessons per cycle
Skills Challenge Certificate	3 lessons per cycle
SWEET	3 lesson per cycle
OPTION PATHWAYS	
Pathway 1 (4 per cycle)	Art, Business Studies, Drama, Enterprise, ICT, Sport BTEC
Pathway 2 (4 per cycle)	Catering, Computer Science, History, ICT, Music, Sport BTEC
Pathway 3 (4 per cycle)	Construction, Health & Social Care, ICT, Media Studies, PE

Year 11 Curriculum Statement 2020-21

CORE SUBJECTS	
English	8 lessons per cycle
Mathematics	8 lessons per cycle
Science	9 lessons per cycle
Welsh	4 lessons per cycle
PE	2 lessons per cycle

PSE	1 lesson per cycle
Skills Challenge Certificate	3 lessons per cycle
OPTION PATHWAYS	
Pathway 1 (5 per cycle)	Catering, ICT, History, Geography, Health & Social Care, Tourism
Pathway 2 (5 per cycle)	Sport BTEC, ICT, Catering, Business Studies, Art
Pathway 3 (5 per cycle)	Computer Science, Construction, Enterprise, History, PE

Personal Social and Health Education including Sex and Relationships Education

Sex and relationships education is delivered as part of the Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE) programme. Our PSHE lessons allow learners to develop the knowledge, skills and attributes they need to manage their lives, now and in the future. These skills and attributes help our learners to stay healthy, safe and prepare them for life and work. The school's sex and relationships education programme provides an understanding that positive, caring situations are essential for the development of a good self-image and that individuals are in charge of, and responsible for, their own bodies. Our aim is to encourage pupils to manage their relationships in a responsible, age appropriate and healthy way.

Parents have the right to withdraw a pupil, wholly or partly from receiving sex education at the school, except when such education is part of the National Curriculum. Any parent who wishes to exercise this right should inform the Headteacher/Phase Lead at the school. If parents have concerns about specific aspects of sex education or need further information before making a decision about withdrawal from lessons, they should discuss their concerns with their class teacher or form tutor.

Work Related Education (WRE)

Career advice is provided by the Local Careers Service and a programme of visiting speakers. Within the WRE Guidance Programme all pupils are taught to examine their strengths and weaknesses, their likes and dislikes, their subject choices and their attainment and achievement. Their examination of self encourages them to develop and build upon an ongoing School Action Plan that aims to prepare them for future career choice as well as for lifetime learning. The school works effectively with Careers Wales to ensure that all learners within KS4 have access to the appropriate advice required to make informed decisions about their future.

All Year 11 pupils are interviewed by careers officers from the local Careers Service who together with the teacher in charge of careers education and guidance, advises them on the job market, on training and on further education. The school also organises visits to local post 16 providers to showcase the courses available to learners.

Welsh Language

We teach Welsh in Abertillery Learning Community to:

1. Develop pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills within an integrated programme of speaking and listening, reading and writing;
2. Create a Welsh ethos within which to promote the teaching of the Welsh language;
3. Create opportunities for children to enjoy the rich heritage of Wales;
4. Celebrate the traditions and culture of Wales;
5. Be bilingual citizens of Wales.

We have established a Welsh Drive team to raise the profile of Welsh life and language across the learning community. Bilingualism is one of key 8 ALC Teaching and Learning principles across the 3-16.

Journey towards Curriculum for Wales 2022

Despite the challenges of responding to the impact of Covid-19 on learners, Abertillery Learning Community continued to work towards the implementation of Curriculum for Wales. From Nursery to

Year 8, Phases and Faculties have explored a range of pilot projects during the ‘engagement’ phase of 2020-2021, exploring the many aspects of the reform process.

Primary Learners have had the opportunity to experience ‘authentic learning’ during their thematic topics, ensuring the 4 Curriculum Purposes are at the heart of all learning. E.g. Learners at KS2 worked towards becoming ‘enterprising, creative contributors during the Dragon’s Den project. Foundation Phase set up a successful uniform swap shop, supporting community needs and becoming ‘ethical, informed citizens’.

In the Summer Term, Year 7 and 8 learners participated in a Thematic Pilot Project ‘My Wales, My Future’, encompassing all faculties across the secondary campus. Links were made between subjects in order to deepen understanding and develop knowledge and skills.

Important information was gathered for each stage of the pilot work to move forward our curriculum design. Governors attended Curriculum for Wales’s workshops to ensure curriculum design is aligned to national expectations.

Feedback will be sought from all stakeholders to ensure the curriculum will be a direct response to the needs of the learners at ALC.

Term dates

The school term dates are established in line with Welsh Government requirements and consultation with Councils and schools. For INSET days please refer to the school’s webpage.

Please see below the term dates for the academic years 2021/22 & 2022/23:

Date	Start	Half Term Starts	Half Term Ends	Term Ends
Autumn	02/09/2021	25/10/2021	29/10/2021	17/12/2021
Spring	04/01/2022	21/02/2022	25/02/2022	08/04/2022
Summer	25/04/2022	30/05/2022	03/06/2022	22/07/2022

Date	Start	Half Term Starts	Half Term Ends	Term Ends
Autumn	02/09/2022	31/10/2022	04/11/2022	23/12/2022
Spring	09/01/2023	20/02/2023	24/02/2023	31/03/2023
Summer	17/04/2023	29/05/2023	02/06/2023	21/07/2023

Provision of Toilet Facilities

The school provides sufficient toilets for the number of pupils on roll. These toilets are cleaned on a daily basis.

Pupils

There are 1717 pupils on roll with 1632.5 full time equivalent pupils (PLASC 2021). The school numbers per year group are as follows:-

National Curriculum Year Group	Full time pupils	Part time pupils
N1		70
N2		99
R	103	
Y1	100	
Y2	136	
Y3	123	
Y4	122	
Y5	125	
Y6	132	
Y7	161	
Y8	151	
Y9	126	
Y10	144	
Y11	125	
TOTAL	1548	169

ESTYN RECOMMENDATIONS-2017

- R1 Improve standards, in particular outcomes at the end of key stage 4
- R2 Improve standards of behaviour in the secondary phase
- R3 Improve the quality of teaching
- R4 Improve planning for progression of skills, including the Welsh language, and the breadth of the secondary phase curriculum
- R5 Improve the quality and impact of leadership at all levels, including in self-evaluation and planning for improvement
- R6 Provide robust financial management to address the deficit budget

Financial Report for Parents 2020/21

	2020/21 Fixed Budget £	2020/21 Year End Actual £
Employees	7,107,802	6,552,211
Other Employee Costs	163,976	349,921
Utilities	184,379	139,407
Capitation	335,000	196,454
Premises	279,706	270,930
Communications	29,512	17,150
Transport	15,909	3,728
Central Services	800,193	776,013
Total Expenditure	8,916,477	8,305,811

	2019/20 Fixed Budget £	Year End Actual £
Income	25,000	220,599
Net Expenditure Expenditure-Income	8,891,477	8,085,212

Attendance has been, and continues to be, an issue for the school. 2020-21 was a very challenging year for school attendance amid the COVID pandemic with authorised and unauthorised absence increasing across ALC. Whilst attendance is not being reported on in the normal way for 2020-21, our targets for this year were set as:

94.5% Primary

93.3% Secondary



**School success starts
with attendance**

Regular attendance at school is very important. We cannot authorise parents to take children on holiday during term time for this has an adverse effect on their progress at school. We work with pupils of all ages to make sure that they understand the importance of coming to school regularly. We know that our most successful pupils are those who attend school every day. If we have concerns about a child’s poor attendance, we arrange home visits to support families.