

Dear Parents and Carers

Here we are in the final couple of days of our first term as Abertillery Learning Community. The first term of any year is always a very busy one, with lots going on and Christmas fast approaching. This term however has been particularly busy and full of lots of significant changes to all of our campuses.

It gives me great pleasure to be able to write to you as the Interim Principal and to be able to share with you some of the events, activities and opportunities we have offered and been involved in over the past few months.

Firstly, we welcomed a number of new staff to the community in September. These included several members of the new leadership team, Mrs Olsen our Vice Principal and Head of Tillery St Campus, Mrs Hickinbottom Head of Roseheyworth Campus and Mrs Lewis Head of Campus on Bryngwyn & Queen St. We also welcomed Mrs Tudge as Deputy Head on Bryngwyn & Queen St and we recently welcomed back Mrs Rudman as Deputy Head of Tillery St. In addition to that, I would also like to congratulate Mrs Cairns who will be Interim Head on the Secondary Campus whilst I am Interim Principal. All of them have brought experience, dedication and commitment to the learning community and partnered with our existing and equally committed staff have helped to get the Learning Community off to an excellent start.

During the term, we have learnt an enormous amount about each other's schools and have begun to work together on a vast array of projects. Learners have benefitted from collaborative projects and a sharing of resources, spaces and expertise. Most of the primary learners have visited the secondary campus for sport, drama, art, music and cookery sessions. Even this week all of our foundation phase learners visited the Secondary Campus theatre to watch a film as a Christmas treat.

The student leaders have been elected and the Student Grand Council have already met to discuss their priorities and suggestions for how we can work together in the coming terms.

Staff have met on several occasions and have started to work together developing shared practices and common approaches to teaching and learning. Colleagues from primary and secondary phases have visited each other's schools to observe and even deliver lessons, sharing their experience with colleagues and learners. We have invested in and are about to introduce a new reading scheme across the whole community and in the new year will begin some really exciting work on developing a new curriculum, a curriculum that will ensure that all the young people of Abertillery

have an educational experience that is consistent, relevant and appropriate for life when they leave school.

We have also held our first combined events. The Learning Community Choir, consisting of learners from every campus, started the ball rolling when they performed at the remembrance concert in St Michaels Church earlier this term. This was shortly followed by the Winterfest parade which included over a hundred of our learners creating and showcasing their art work and their musical ability to the whole town. The choir will also be performing our first combined Carol Concert on Thursday this week and based on rehearsals, it's going to be a great show. Plans to develop combined sports teams and subject groups are also on the table for the new year and I'm sure you will join me in looking forward to seeing how these progress.

Whilst combined working is developing at a real pace, we also can't forget the incredible work that is going on each individual campus. This was one of the key areas that the student council were keen to secure as we began our journey in September. Each campus has retained its own individual identity, whilst still being part of the larger Learning Community and based on the fantastic work I have seen in the past few weeks, in classrooms, on corridors, in Christmas concerts, school fetes and on the sports fields this is certainly being achieved.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their support over the last few weeks since I took up post. During the time I have visited every campus several times and met as many staff, learners and parents as possible. I have been completely overwhelmed by both how welcoming and supportive everyone has been and also by the passion everyone has for making this exciting venture a success. Without exception, everyone I have met is fully committed to our vision of making Abertillery Learning Community the very best place for the young people of our town, a place where they are nurtured, supported, encouraged and challenged to improve. A place that will allow them to be the best that they can be and achieve the goals in life that they both aspire to and deserve.

It has been a very successful start to the first academic year of Abertillery Learning Community and we are seeing our learners and staff going from strength to strength. What makes Abertillery so special is that staff, students, parents and governors all embrace our vision and respond so positively to the opportunities offered.

I wish you all a very happy and enjoyable Christmas break and look forward to seeing all on the learners again on 4th Jan.

Nathan Jenkins

Interim Principal