



Ysgol Uwchradd **Whitmore** High School

Port Road West, Y Barri/Barry, Bro Morgannwg/Vale of Glamorgan CF62 8ZJ
Ffôn/Telephone: (01446) 411411 E-bost/Email: WhitmoreHigh@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

Dear Parents/Carers,

As we approach the end of the first term of Whitmore High School, I wanted to write to you to share some of the numerous successes we have enjoyed as a school community. I was privileged to be appointed as the Head of School in October 2017, and have greatly enjoyed seeing the school develop since our opening in September 2018. It has been a really fantastic start to what is a brand-new school.

I have been particularly impressed this year with both the range of extra-curricular opportunities our staff have provided for pupils, and the enthusiasm and commitment with which so many pupils have engaged with these. Whether it is – to pick just a small selection - the Drama club, Mandarin club, Art Academy, public speaking, or one of the many numerous musical groups and sporting activities, the school seems a hive of activity at all hours of the day. It is this richness of pupil development that we are striving for here at Whitmore – to offer opportunities the children cannot access outside of school and which help to shape them into responsible, mature and successful young adults. I have also been impressed with the maturity and dedication all the students have shown in opening the new school as a co-ed (mixed) school; the girls who transferred from Bryn Hafren have settled in superbly well, and the boys should be equally congratulated for their mature start to the new school.

Year 11 students have been working particularly hard this term in GCSE mock examinations across many subjects. We are keen for them to produce the best results they can this summer, enabling them to progress to their chosen post-16 pathway – ideally our Sixth Form. Many boys sat GCSE Numeracy exams in November, and we eagerly await those results in the new year. Ensuring our pupils are always learning, and do as well as they can at their final examinations, is a basic expectation at Whitmore High School, and we appreciate the support families show the school and the pupils in this – whether helping them to make notes and revise independently in the evenings, or ensuring they attend our numerous examination preparation sessions (including in the October half term holiday).

We have many successes to celebrate: great performances and a winning team in the regional English Speaking Union's Public Speaking Competition; Cardiff and Vale Schools 5-a-side Football Champions for both Year 7 boys and Year 9/10 girls; multiple victories in rugby, including two resounding wins away at Millfield School in Somerset (u15s and u16s) and a hard-fought victory in the inaugural Year 7 Barry derby against Pencoedtre High; Sixth Former Morgan's appearance on BBC radio and website discussing resilience in the face of challenge; school pantomime 'The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe' which showcased the huge talent across the school; an outstanding night of music from 'Year 7 and Friends'; Year 9's Bradley securing further international gold medals and his black belt in karate; Year 7's Troy winning the regional schools' cross-country championship; Year 11's Jack continuing

his exceptional musical performances; as well as multiple successes for boys and girls – individually and as teams – across the many sporting disciplines. Whilst it is always very difficult to capture every individual success in a round-up like this, a real highlight for me has been seeing the growth in confidence and maturity of the pupils who attend our 'nurture' group in the mornings as they settle into high school.

Our new School Parliament has also been very active, raising key issues for the school community and pushing forward a new vision of charity for the school. Just this week we have seen deliveries of food hampers to local elderly residents, presents for poorly children through the LATCH charity, and the continuation of our Sixth Form links to impoverished communities through our HelpLanka appeals and school trip – all organised by the pupils with invaluable assistance from staff. Earlier this year, Mrs Price and Mrs Ellis ensured that the school raised hundreds of pounds for Children In Need. School trips and visits have also continued to supplement the curriculum, including local visits to Porthkerry park (DT), Vale of Glamorgan archives (History), the Gower Coast (Geography), a day encouraging pupils' development of International Languages at Cardiff City, and our very active Duke Of Edinburgh team.

In January we will say goodbye to Ms DeMott (Science), who is relocating to Australia; she will be replaced by Mrs Osman, a highly-qualified Chemistry teacher. We will also see Ms Palmizi (English) return to the school from maternity leave, alongside Mrs Sian Ford, an experienced English practitioner. We are really pleased about these additions to our teaching team, and will continue to ensure that teaching and learning at Whitmore High School is of the highest quality in order to prepare our children well for their successful futures.

As we look towards the new year, with a new school building being planned for September 2021, I would like remind all parents about the importance of smart uniform (especially single, plain-stud earrings, if worn; and blazers) for all pupils; we will be checking uniform closely in January to ensure all pupils are proud ambassadors for the school. I would also like to thank our governing body, especially our new parent governors, for giving up their time so selflessly to help the school to continue to improve.

Key dates for next term include Year 10 Parents Evening (Thurs 10th Jan), Year 11 Sixth Form Options Evening (Thurs 17th Jan at Pencoedtre), Years 12&13 Parents Evening (Thurs 24th Jan at Pencoedtre), Year 9 Parents Evening (Thurs 31st Jan) and Year 9 Options Evening (Thurs 7th Feb). School starts back at 8.30am on Mon 7th Jan. Please ensure you follow the school on Twitter for key updates @WhitmoreHigh.

I wish you and your family a Merry Christmas and a very peaceful New Year.


Mr A Thompson