



# Newsletter



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Issue 01

Friday 24th October 2025

## A message from Vickie

Welcome to the First Edition of Chestnut Hill's Half-Termly Newsletter

As we reach the end of our first autumn half term, I'd like to take a moment to celebrate all the wonderful things happening across our school. It's been a busy and joyful few weeks, full of learning, creativity, and new beginnings! We're delighted to welcome ten new pupils and several new members of staff who have already made a fantastic impact. Andrew, our British Sign Language instructor, has introduced pupils to some brilliant new signs. Sally brings calm and confidence through yoga, Katie has inspired stunning artwork, Hannah has filled our lunchtimes with song, and Sarah has led wonderful outdoor learning adventures. This half term has been filled with special events that have brought our community together. Our Open Day was a great success, and we proudly celebrated Owain Glyndŵr Day through art, storytelling, and song. The Macmillan Coffee Morning was another highlight, raising money for a great cause while enjoying delicious cakes baked by staff, parents, and pupils. To mark World Mental Health Day, we held a colourful and uplifting Colour Run — a joyful reminder of the importance of wellbeing, fun, and friendship. As we look ahead to the next half term, we're excited to build on this positivity with even more learning adventures to come. Thank you for your continued support and encouragement. We wish you all a restful and happy half-term break!

### Highlight of the Term



Pupils took part in a Colour Run for World Mental Health Day. 

### Clinical Update

It has been a busy couple of months for the Clinical Team at Chestnut Hill! The first half term is a great opportunity to get stuck into classroom support. This allows us to get to know the children, their staff members and commence our initial observations and dynamic assessment. Our clinicians have started to collate information into young people's AAD (ask, accept, develop) profiles. These include communication and sensory profiles – and for those receiving psychotherapeutic support, the 'Understanding Me' profile. The education staff have also received communication and sensory training from the clinical team this term, with lots of great ideas and discussions to support their practice.

Also based in the Clinical Office is one of Chestnut Hill's school dogs - Loki. She has provided fantastic opportunities for new pupils to access low pressure introductions to our clinicians, to build the foundation of trusting, therapeutic relationships. To quote one of our young people: "I hope you're doing OK? I thought I would ask this instead of asking about Loki, so you know we don't just like you because of your dog!"

Here's to another fantastic half term at Chestnut Hill. Well done everybody 😊

### Reminders



If you intend to take your child out of school during term, including medical appointments or holidays, please complete the [Absence Request Form](#).



As the weather is changing with the seasons, please remember to send your child into school with a coat, and extra layers including appropriate footwear on their Outdoor Education days.



If your child is unable to attend school, please notify us directly before 7.45am. Please do not pass messages through the taxi drivers or escorts.



# Food Technology

What a great start to the school year is has been in food technology, I am delighted to share with you the remarkable progress and achievements made by our students in Food Technology over the recent half-term. The dedication, enthusiasm, and creativity demonstrated by our pupils have been truly inspiring. Throughout the term, students have participated in a variety of practical and theoretical activities. It has been wonderful to witness their growing confidence and skill in the kitchen. Some highlights from this half-term include the hard work that all students put in to create some beautiful bakes for the Macmillan Cake Sale, exploring using fresh herbs and beginning to investigate different food categories and the importance each has for your bodies to grow. I am looking forward to watching all our students grow in the kitchen while we celebrate the run up to Christmas where all our students will create a lovely Christmas dinner for the whole class to sit and enjoy together. I hope you have a great half term. Kelly



# Enrichment

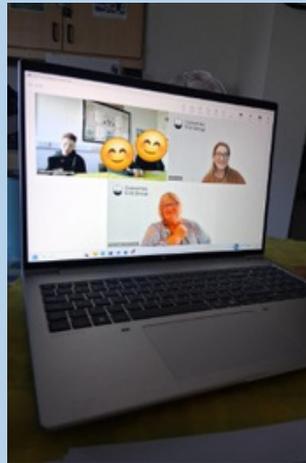


# Outdoor Education

The pupils have really embraced starting Outdoor Education this year. During sessions we celebrated things such as Dydd Owain Glyndwr, Harvest and Autumn. As the weeks go by, they appear more relaxed, focused, and confident. We have spent this term getting to know The Garden and just experiencing the different parts of Outdoor Learning such as fire, identifying things in nature, ropework and of course campfire cooking. Next term we're ready to officially start the Wild Passport which aims to support their holistic wellbeing as well as help them develop vital life skills through hands-on, meaningful outdoor experiences. Overall, this term has been lots of fun while working hard on key life-skills like teamwork, communication and connection with nature, fostering pride in our environment.

# School Council

This term our Eco-Council had their first meeting with the OFG Head of Sustainability, Astrid, and the Head of Science, Dr Kate, via teams. The pupils were able to share their brilliant ideas for improving sustainability in our school and why they think these ideas would help our planet. They asked some excellent questions including "how can we stay informed about current sustainability issues and "can pupils really make a difference?". Both Astrid and Dr Kate were exceptionally impressed with our pupils' drive and enthusiasm and the key message from the meeting was "Small Steps, Big Impact".



# Dates for your Diary

Last Day of Term - Friday 24<sup>th</sup> October 2025

School reopens for pupils - Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2025

Children in Need Day - Information to Follow - Friday 14<sup>th</sup> November 2025

Tempest School Photographers - Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2025

Last Day of Term - Friday 19<sup>th</sup> December 2025

School reopens for pupils - Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2026



# Classroom Moments



## Afon

During our literacy lessons this term, we have been focusing on the book 'We're Going to Find a Monster'. This has brought out the inquisitive nature of our pupils. We began the book with a 'Hook' to the topic, through encouraging pupils to follow a treasure map and locate the book itself. Throughout this topic, we have covered many strands from the National Curriculum including, adjectives to describe a character and a setting, retelling of a story, and retrieval and inference style questions to gain a clearer understanding of the text.

During this first half term, it has become apparent that Food Technology has been one of the pupil's favourite lessons and we have had a lot of fun! In turn, this has helped to develop their overall skills and abilities- which has been great to see! Afon class have made a variety of tasty treats for both themselves and families to enjoy at home. It has also been great to see our children develop their overall confidence independence which has then begun to transfer to other areas of learning. During these lessons, we have practised: preparing ingredients, following instructions, and using equipment safely- well done Afon class! We are very proud of Afon class this term, as there has been a great amount of creativity, and our children have demonstrated a natural flare in this area of learning. Each child has their own favourite resource to use that helps them to create their own masterpieces through the use of: pencils, felts, paints and a wide range of collage resources.

During our maths lessons, we have been working well on our numeracy targets. We have been practising mathematical skills such as counting from a single digit number to a three digit number, ordering of numbers, addition and subtraction.

The pupils in Afon class have taken a great liking to the story 'The Gruffalo', and this has been a solid favourite since the beginning of the term- which has been great to see! This in turn, has been a successful vehicle to help children foster new language. The Gruffalo has also been on adventures with us to different areas of the school such as the: Immersive room, sensory room, quiet area and the Bistro.

Lunchtime clubs, such as Choir and Lego Club have been a lovely addition to their extra- curricular activities- these have been a huge success! They have allowed our pupils to experience new activities and build new skills and abilities that they wouldn't have been able to otherwise.

One of our many proud achievements this half term, have been seeing our children discuss their emotions and consider different regulation strategies from adults in Chestnut Hill. This helps us to be able to feel happy, enjoy school. stay focused, safe and make the optimum levels of progression.

We are also very proud of all pupils in Afon class, as they have been very enthusiastic about participating in their British Sign Language sessions that is ran by our Local British Sign Language resident. It has become evident that these sessions have dramatically helped children with their communication skills as they have been exposed to new signs. It has been incredible to watch the high level of progression that they have made over the last few weeks- well done Afon class- keep up the hard work.



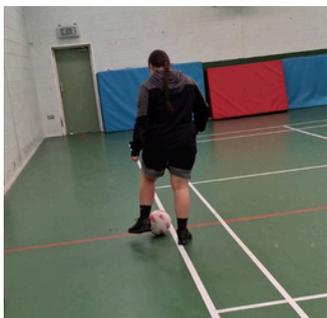
# Classroom Moments



## Afon Continued...



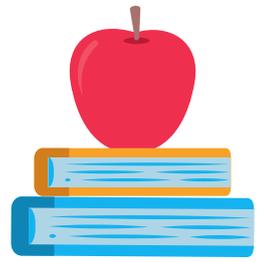
## Copa



We have had an exciting half term in Copa class. Several of our students have been exploring online learning with support from their teaching assistants this has enabled our students to access new subjects and connect with others. Each afternoon has been centred around practical working sessions where students are encouraged to use their use their social, creative, physical and critical thinking skills. Our students have been expressing their emotions through Art and creating wonderful paintings, models and sculptures. This has given the students a medium of expression that has no boundary. The students have been working hard on our class topic about the Vikings and have created some wonderful pieces of work. They are also building on their self-advocacy skills and social skills. They have been interacting with other classes and partaking in several team sports with the favourite being football this has been very successful. As we move forward into the year, we are going to keep building on our self-advocacy skills, independence and connections within the local community. It has been great to see all our students develop and we are looking forward to seeing them grow further throughout this year.



# Classroom Moments



## Tryfan



Dosbarth Tryfan has had a really positive start to the year. We've settled well into our new classroom and adapted to being part of a larger class group. Over the past few weeks, we've spent time getting to know one another, beginning to learn how to play games together, and building new routines and friendships. Everyone has made a great effort to work together and support each other, which has helped us grow as a class.

We've also made the most of being so close to the Animal Care area. Some of our animal lovers especially enjoy visiting regularly to help feed the guinea pigs and handle the snakes, while also making sure the animals are happy and cared for. This half-term, we've taken part in lots of special activities. For Mental Health Day, we created our own class spa and talked about the importance of looking after ourselves and our wellbeing. We celebrated Diwali, learned how to say hello in different languages for European Languages Day (and made a video to share with the school during our end of week Celebration), and enjoyed literacy lessons in the immersive suite, which made our learning even more engaging.

We're looking forward to returning after the break, ready to delve into exciting new learning opportunities and explore fresh themes together. The next half-term will be another opportunity to continue our growth as individuals and as a class, and we can't wait to see what's ahead!

## Merlin



In our vibrant and unique class of just four pupils, no two days are ever the same! With the support of our visual timetable, we engage in lessons of Maths, English, and reading each day. We are currently exploring the magical world of *The BFG* by Roald Dahl and the thrilling pages of *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley. Our classroom is bursting with creativity, from colourful craft projects to hands-on cooking and horticulture sessions. Each week, we also enjoy expressive British Sign Language lessons, relaxing yoga, and lots of fun, active play to help with regulation and social skills. This term, we celebrated Black History Month, and took part in a joyful Colour Run for World Mental Health Day—spreading colour, smiles, and awareness! Whether we're reading, planting, painting, or stretching, there's always something exciting happening in our little class with big personalities!



# Classroom Moments



## Menai

It has been an incredible first half-term at Chestnut Hill for all Menai pupils. They have settled into the class routines so well, established friendships and have embraced and embodied our school's core values. On a daily basis, Menai class put into practice our core school values of being ready, being respectful and being safe. It is positively surprising how well all of them have settled into our curriculum, class routine and established positive working relationships with their class team.

As a class, movement and regulation breaks are essential in us learning how to express our feelings and emotions. It also helps us with our awareness of team spirit and the importance of mutual-respect and teamwork. Menai pupils are working so well in this, and it is lovely that they can share their feelings and offer their support to one another. Everyone is becoming more confident and independent in informing staff when they require a sensory, regulation or movement break.

We have been delighted in the way Menai class have responded to our 'Pathways to Write' focus book 'Look Up'. Within this, pupils have learned how to extend and enhance their writing skills. They have enjoyed researching space missions and astronaut diets. Our pupils always push themselves in all learning, but particularly in their numeracy. As a class, we love to keep ourselves informed by watching 'BBC Newsround' and looking at 'Picture News' and enjoy expanding our knowledge of the world around us in our 'Science and Humanities' and 'Health and Wellbeing' learning. In our 'Careers' learning, pupils have had the opportunity to interview a variety of professionals about their role and responsibilities. Enrichment has a positive impact on Menai pupils for continuously developing skills in teamwork, independence and life skills.

What a friendly, supportive class Menai is! The class enjoy and thrive in collaborative learning. We enjoy sharing our ideas and thoughts with one another which helps us to inspire and motivate each other. In addition to working collaboratively, the pupils in Menai class are always caring, and seem to enjoy being in the company of one another. If you were to walk down the corridor past Menai classroom, you would frequently hear the sounds of joy and laughter from both Menai pupils and staff.

We are incredibly proud of Menai pupils, and we are looking forward to seeing them continue to thrive and progress in all areas next half term.





# Classroom Moments



## Yr Wyddfa

This half term Yr Wyddfa have been working hard on our schoolwork as well as developing our independence, team working skills, and our health and well-being. We enjoy taking part of the Golden Mile Walk every day. The pupils in Yr Wyddfa have expended their social and emotional skills welcoming two new pupils into the class and a fabulous new member of staff.

Our topics this term for Humanities have been learning all about the different roles in society, focusing on the Egyptians and the Vikings. We have been learning about their daily lives and comparing them to us whilst linking in the UNCRRC rights.

We tied this in with Science and Technology creating two projects, one being the Viking Longboat from recycled materials and the other designing and creating our own Egyptian jewellery for Expressive Arts.

In Language, Literacy and Communication we have been working from our topic book the 'Wonderous Women from Wales'. We have been learning and developing our grammar, extending our vocabulary and encouraging the pupils to check their work against the success criteria. The pupils in Yr Wyddfa have been amazing at working as a team to create multiple PowerPoint Presentations and have presented them to the class to develop confidence.

Each week we attend British Sign Language sessions practicing speaking with our hands and communicating with each other. The pupils are recognising different ways to communicate.

In Numeracy and Mathematics, we have been working very hard on the 'Four Rules', Pupils have been learning the formal layouts of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. By the end of this term Pupils have been working independently at this!

Congratulations to Yr Wyddfa Class, we have pupils that have been appointed as Chairperson and Deputy of the School Council, Animal Care Lead and all the pupils have chosen to be part of the Eco-Council. We are very proud and excited to see our pupils shining in their new roles.

We have had a very productive term in our Careers lessons. Each pupil has had a meeting with our Careers advisor to share their hopes and dreams for the future. We have also been researching different job roles and the qualifications/skills required for the roles. Pupils have practicing creating their very own Curriculum Vitae and Cover Letters for their chosen roles.

