

12 September 2018

Dear Parent/Guardian

Following a very successful week settling our secondary students into Ysgol Rhiwabon it is with great pride and pleasure that I am writing to you as Headteacher of your local secondary school. Many of you will remember me first writing in 2015 and I cannot believe that I have been in post for three years. This time has been exciting and extremely rewarding.

As parents/carers of youngsters in Ysgol Rhiwabon's feeder primary schools I felt it was important to tell you a little about myself and our secondary school and how much it has developed in recent years.

I am already committed to the Ruabon community and its surrounding villages through my strong links to the area. When I was growing up, as many of you know, I was educated in St Mary's School Ruabon and then attended Ysgol Rhiwabon as a student. It is thanks to the schools in the village that I was able to go on to study and teach in Wales, England and abroad, returning to Ruabon to teach in 2004. This makes my task of leading the school very special, with the success of our young people and the local community at the heart of all I do. To strengthen the school even further within the local community it needs to be our 'School of Choice', ensuring numbers continue to grow as they have done in recent years, contributing to its growing reputation as an excellent school.

In recent times our school has improved in so many ways, modernising and responding to the many changes which face our staff every year. I believe though, that Ysgol Rhiwabon is founded on strong traditional foundations, and it is this which will lead to our continued success in the future. I look forward to developing even stronger links in the village and beyond as our young people and staff see opportunities to learn and contribute to the local community. An important part of this will be working with you and our local primary schools. The Staff and Governors have secured significant improvements over the last three years, recently recognised by Estyn as very strong. Recent results at GCSE level have compared well across the North Wales region and the school is now often asked to share areas of good practice in assessment, teaching and learning. Some of our staff now lead on projects across the UK through their work with the Princes' Teaching Institute.

We have lots of things to celebrate in Ysgol Rhiwabon as we begin this new academic year. Our older students left us this year well-prepared to take up their courses at university as well as facing the challenges of college, new jobs and apprenticeships. Our vocational courses continue to thrive with half the passes at Distinction* or Distinction level. We are also delighted to welcome Jumping Jacks, after school provision, to Ysgol Rhiwabon. We have been working with our local primary schools to strengthen links and this club on site will definitely help our youngest members of the local community to see secondary school as part of their experience. In addition, our Year 7 students have all been involved in our SWAN project which is even bigger and better than last year.

All our students have returned to school looking smart and ready for work and we are particularly pleased to welcome our youngest members in Year 7; they have made an excellent start. We have welcomed new staff who will contribute new ideas and enthusiasm to our already caring, hard working staff. There are exciting plans to continue to develop our learning links with our primary schools with all Year 6 and 5 students visiting us for taster days this term. As already mentioned, we continue to be one of few schools in Wales in the Prince's Teaching Institute which involves our students and staff in some exciting opportunities.

This year I want you to know, as parents/guardians in our feeder primary schools, that Ysgol Rhiwabon is an open, caring, family school. We are committed to continuing the high standards set in your child's primary school in Year 7 and beyond. During the last three years we have improved our Year 7 induction and we are piloting new projects which are working really effectively. Year 6 and 7 parents have praised the work and they are really happy with the way we welcome our youngest members to our school.

"Keep on going with your fantastic ideas for making transition from primary school as smooth as possible."

"The school website and App are brilliant. They really do help me know what is going on."

"The transfer to Ysgol Rhiwabon has gone extremely well, with the support and organisation of all the staff."

"My child has enjoyed everything during the induction project SWAN. She has got to know her classmates really well, making lots of new friends. She says the teachers are very kind and helpful. She has been made to feel really welcome."

Ysgol Rhiwabon Open Evening Thursday, September 27 2018 - 6.00 pm – 8.00 pm

Please feel free, whatever the age of your child, to visit our school on its open evening to see for yourself our school in action. Visitors always comment on the calm, happy, family atmosphere and we would like you to see this for yourself. Alternatively, please contact school to arrange a visit during any working day, at any time of the year, so you can witness for yourself how our school works.

I am looking forward to meeting you throughout this year as I plan to visit key events in your child's primary school. Please visit us if you have the time as we would love to meet you.

Yours sincerely

Melanie Ferron-Evans
Headteacher