

COUNCIL: 20 JULY 2023

DEPUTY LEADER & EDUCATION STATEMENT

'What Next'

The Cardiff Commitment team, Youth Service and Into Work Advice Service are working with the Council's Communications team to coordinate 'What's Next' messaging to ensure that young people in Cardiff aged 16-24 years and their families are well-informed of the support, provision and opportunities that are available, in the lead up to, during and after A Level and GCSE results days next month. The Cardiff Commitment team is sending a letter to young people in Years 11, 12 and 13 (approx. 7,000 young people) to provide information about the support that is available via the Into Work Advice Service and Youth Service, as well as signposting to the ['What's Next' website](#) and related information. The Into Work Advice Service will also be distributing marketing materials across the city's Hubs on behalf of the Youth Service and Cardiff Commitment to ensure that young people can be signposted to any support they need. In addition, 'Class of 2023' messages have been collated by Cardiff Commitment partners and they will reinforce to young people that, whatever the outcome on their results days, their futures are bright, and support is available to assist them in whatever pathways they choose to take.

Estyn Inspections

A recent inspection of Adamsdown Primary School found that the school creates a warm and welcoming environment where its diverse school community thrives. Estyn noted that pupils are ambitious, respectful and very happy. They settle into school quickly, love learning and benefit greatly from the school's highly effective approach to language acquisition. With a significant proportion of pupils coming from countries affected by conflict, the school's School of Sanctuary status is firmly at the heart of its work. Teachers, leaders, support staff and governors are committed to providing the support each pupil needs to access the curriculum, beginning with wellbeing and emotional support. The inspection report also stated that the strong partnership with parents and nurturing ethos of the school ensure that all pupils feel safe and develop a strong sense of belonging. The school's effective partnerships with its community also contribute to its success in supporting pupils' wellbeing and providing an engaging curriculum.

Greenhill Special School in Rhiwbina has been recognised by Estyn for its unwavering commitment to fostering a supportive atmosphere that significantly contributes to the wellbeing, personal development and achievements of all learners. During a recent visit, inspectors found that the school takes great pride in offering a diverse array of learning activities, with a strong focus on outdoor education. The thoughtfully designed curriculum aligns with students' interests and aptitudes, ensuring an engaging and personalised educational experience. The report also notes the positive and trusting

relationships formed between the staff, pupils, and their families, and the school's dedication to offering a range of beneficial interventions that cater to students' additional learning needs is also commended.

Estyn has also recently published its inspection report on St Cuthbert's Roman Catholic Primary School in Butetown. The report recognises that the school provides an inclusive, caring and welcoming environment for pupils, with all staff working closely together to celebrate the rich diversity of languages and cultures within the school community. Provision for promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development was found to be strong, with the school having highly effective practices for the integration of newly arrived pupils with no English into the school, which has had a positive impact on their well-being. Overall, the quality of teaching was found to be good; however, Estyn made three recommendations. These relate to ensuring that self-evaluation and improvement planning is focused on strengthening pupil outcomes, and that teachers use pupil progress information effectively to plan for sustained improvement for all pupils. In addition, the effectiveness of the governing body needs to be increased in terms of supporting the school and holding it to account.

Edible Playgrounds

The Council has recently signed the partnering agreement with Trees for Cities for the next six Edible Playground projects in Cardiff schools. The match-funded Edible Playground projects create areas to grow fruit and vegetables, whilst also working with schools to develop bespoke education change plans. The additional projects will take the total number of Edible Playground projects delivered in Cardiff to 32.

Legislative Theatre

The Child Friendly Cardiff team is delivering a programme of work with a focus on gender equity. The team is working with children and young people to explore the topic through an innovative and creative programme that includes using a citizen-centred approach called Legislative Theatre. The work with young people has been taking place throughout June and culminates this month with a final interactive theatre performance where the young people act out situations of inequalities in front of decision-makers in an effort to influence their thinking and address inequality through the development of new policies or procedures.

Rights Respecting Schools Update

I am pleased to report that 87% (111) of Cardiff schools are on their journey to becoming Rights Respecting Schools and have registered for the UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools Award (RRSA) programme. The RRSA programme recognises schools that put child rights into practice, creating a safe and inspiring place to learn, where children are respected, their talents are nurtured, and they are able to thrive. Of these 111 schools, 73% (93) have a RRSA action plan in place having received their Bronze, Silver or Gold awards. The latest schools to achieve the Gold award are St Phillip Evans R.C. Primary School, Mount Stuart Primary School, Gladstone Primary School, St Albans RC Primary School and Danescourt Primary School. Currently, 64% of all pupils from nursery to high school attend a school with Bronze award or above.

Food and Fun

Cardiff's multi-award-winning Food and Fun programme will be delivered in 27 schools this summer. It is our eighth year of delivering the Food and Fun programme. Since being developed by the Cardiff Food and Fun team in 2015, adopted by the Welsh Government in 2016 and rolled out across Wales in 2017, the programme has been used as an example of best practice across the UK. This is something that the Council is very proud of, and Wales is also now recognised as having the most advanced holiday provision in the UK. Partner organisations will provide a range of enrichment activities, with each child being able to enjoy at least one hour of physical activity, a healthy breakfast and lunch, and nutrition and food sessions each day, all delivered in a fun, safe and friendly environment.

Debate Mate Cup 2023 Grand Finals

On 23 June 2023, the debating team from Willows High School travelled to London for the Debate Mate Cup 2023 Grand Finals and I want to thank the Principality Building Society for sponsoring their trip. The team competed against schools from across the UK and debated motions on topics such as university admissions criteria, the acceleration of fast fashion and a pause in the development of Artificial Intelligence. The Cardiff Commitment team is proud of the debating team's achievements and knows that the pupils involved will use this experience to propel them into a bright future. Debating develops key transferable skills and improves a range of higher order thinking skills such as teamwork and leadership, critical and creative thinking and communication and confidence. Other skills include collaboration, listening, and responding appropriately, articulating, and justifying an argument, using evidence and structuring speeches as well as developing style and quality of spoken language. All skills which employers value in the future workforce. In the evaluation from the last two years, all pupils who participated indicated they had improved confidence, better teamwork and leadership skills, and all teachers stated they had seen an improvement in academic performance.

Open Your Eyes Week

Open Your Eyes Week provides a great opportunity for primary school pupils in Cardiff to learn more about the world of work and be inspired to pursue a range of future careers or occupations. This month, 7,260 pupils in Years 5 & 6 from primary schools across the city had their eyes opened to the different opportunities available in the world of work by speakers from 10 employers, which included Goggleminds, Clear Channel, LCB, Wales Millennium Centre, Clayton Hotel, Bengo Media, Space Forge, Virgin Money, Stable and Welsh Water.

Research by the OECD suggests that pupils need to learn about career options early to combat ingrained stereotyping that sets in at primary school age. Open Your Eyes Week helps to challenge gender and class stereotypes and provide 'lightbulb moments' for pupils by bringing a variety of inspiring professionals into the classroom. It also enables pupils to discover their passions, develop their dreams and explore their place in the world of work.

The Cardiff Commitment team has also highlighted to the city's secondary schools that, as a result of their participation in Open Your Eyes Week, pupils in Year 7 may have had up to 40 engagements with employers from the city's growth sectors before even arriving in secondary school. This has the potential to transform the way in which pupils access the world around them, how they view their future selves, and the opportunities and resources they need to support them on their education journey.

The next Open Your Eyes Week will be held in November 2023.

Space Academy Cardiff

Space Academy Cardiff 2023 was a week-long education programme that took place earlier this month to help 13- and 14-year-olds to learn more about global efforts for space travel and the colonisation of Mars. This is a scheme that has been created for children from secondary schools across the city, especially those from under-represented groups, to inspire them to pursue STEM-based careers in the space industry, which is one of the Cardiff Capital Region's growth sectors.

Pupils from six secondary schools in Cardiff worked together to explore the challenges that would be faced during a mission to Mars to develop a new settlement able to sustain human life. They were invited to engage with a series of mission to Mars challenges and team events required pupils to work together to produce proposals for the construction of a base to house a human colony on Mars. The series of challenges also required pupils to work creatively to produce designs for a rocket launch and Lego robotics to explore the terrain and life on Mars using the latest research evidence.

Pupils had opportunities to work with leading researchers from Cardiff University's School of Physics & Astronomy and the School of Engineering, alongside leading local employers from the aerospace sector, including Space Forge and Small Spark Space Systems, and a variety of other external experts. Through engaging in these varied learning experiences, they were able to apply and extend their knowledge of science and technology, as well as other integral skills that form the pillars of the new curriculum. Finally, at the end of the week-long Space Academy Cardiff programme, a special showcase event and celebration of the pupils' achievements was held on 7 July at CultVR, a ground-breaking digital arts centre on Penarth Road in Grangetown. I was pleased to attend this event alongside the Leader of the Council and join him in presenting certificates to this year's participants.

Space Academy Cardiff is helping to raise aspirations and inspire more school children in Cardiff to consider taking up STEM subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) and open their eyes to future career opportunities in space industry. This is an excellent example of partnership working and events like this help to equip young people with the right knowledge and skills they need to succeed. The learners are also provided with experiences, information and advice on the exciting career prospects that Cardiff has to offer, which in turn helps employers to access a generation of young people who are informed, enthusiastic and excited to work in Cardiff.

Councillor Sarah Merry
Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Education
14 July 2023