

COUNCIL: 26 OCTOBER 2023

DEPUTY LEADER & EDUCATION STATEMENT

Fitzalan High School

I was delighted to visit the newly completed Fitzalan High School on 22 September 2023, which opened its doors to pupils for the first time last month at the start of the current academic year. It was great to see the state-of-the-art facilities provided that will help pupils achieve their highest potential, and I look forward to the official opening of the new build school, which is expected to take place next month.

The new school building was also visited by Their Royal Highnesses The Prince and Princess of Wales on 3 October 2023 who visited Cardiff as part of UK-wide celebrations to mark the 75th anniversary of the arrival of the HMT Empire Windrush to the UK and the start of Black History Month. During the visit, Their Royal Highnesses heard from pupils about the work they have been doing around Black history and learnt about the vocational courses that the school provides to Sixth Form pupils, as well as the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provision at the school.

Child Friendly City

Work is currently underway to engage with girls and young women through a creative engagement programme to inform the new Child Friendly City priority, which seeks to address issues around gender equity in the city. Social actions grants have been made available throughout the summer and a team of young women travelled to our sister city of Nantes in France to take part in an education and cultural programme. Later this month, 200 girls and young women will also come together to explore their experiences and inform a manifesto for change.

I also look forward to attending Rights Fest event that is being held at Cardiff City Stadium on 27 October 2023. This large-scale festival will promote all things relating to children's rights and will provide a great opportunity to celebrate the city's children and young people and all the work that has been undertaken to date by the Council, in partnership with UNICEF UK, in support of our aim for Cardiff to be officially recognised as a UNICEF Child Friendly City.

Cardiff Commitment

Exploring Digital at Butetown Pavilion

On 21 September 2023, digital and technology companies came together at Butetown Pavilion, during both the Youth Club and Girl's Group, to provide young people with the opportunity to find out more about the 'digital world' by participating in interactive and engaging activities. With over 60 young people attending the event, it was great to see young people engaging in positive activities provided by technology and digital employers who are Cardiff Commitment partners. In future, these events will be held on a termly basis throughout the academic year covering different areas within the digital world to help inspire young people from local communities.

New Business Forum for Bryn Y Deryn Pupil Referral Unit

Over the last few months, the Cardiff Commitment team has been working alongside Bryn Y Deryn Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) to help bring together business partners and young people as part of a new business forum. The first meeting was held this month, which provided an opportunity for business partners to better understand the challenges and barriers that pupils experience and to learn more about how to engage effectively with pupils on meaningful projects. The businesses also shared their own ideas about how they can use their expertise and passion to best support Bryn Y Deryn, whilst working collaboratively with one another across their industries of construction, film & TV and recycling & sustainability. This is an exciting first step for the school and its new partners, such as AECOM, EMR, VIY, Screen Alliance Wales, 4Wood and Bouygues. Actions from the meeting are already in progress to provide pupils with authentic experiences from the world of work and to support teachers with developing industry skills and knowledge transfer.

What's Next Award – Phase 2 Launch

This month has seen the launch of the Cardiff Commitment What's Next Award as part of phase two of our pilot scheme to reintroduce work experience across Sixth Form provision in our Secondary schools. This will provide students with employability skills and enable them to engage with employers and undertake work experience that is relevant to their areas of study. We want to enrich the traditional work experience offer available to students and align the opportunity to undertake work experience with their chosen A-Level subjects, as well as providing a programme of learning to further promote successful transitions into education, employment or training.

Cantonian High School is participating in the second year of the pilot scheme, and both Cardiff West Community High School and Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Glantaf have been added as we look to scale up the approach across the city. The What's Next Award sees Year 12 pupils participating in a variety of careers and work-related experiences culminating in a work experience placement the end of the summer term with an employer that has been matched to their A-Level subject choices. 300 work experience placements will need to be provided by employers and the Cardiff Commitment team is working with our partner network to ensure that every young person involved in the pilot scheme is able to participate.

Social Value Volunteering Form

The Cardiff Commitment Volunteering Form was launched this month for completion by Cardiff schools so that we can better understand and match their needs to what employers are able to offer schools through their volunteering commitments. Completed forms have been returned by 42 schools that, for example, are seeking volunteers to support improvements to their school's physical environment; to share knowledge and expertise; to listen and read to children; to support out of school hours activity, and to provide mentoring and coaching. The Cardiff Commitment team is confident that this approach will ensure that the volunteering needed in our schools for the benefit of our children and young people fits effectively with the type of volunteering that is provided by our partners and that we are utilising the skills and expertise of our employers effectively.

Compass for Life Programme

On 13 October 2023, I attended an awards evening that saw a number of young people receive recognition of their completion of the values-based Compass for Life programme. The event was organised in conjunction with United 2 Change and provided a clear demonstration of what can be achieved when the Council works closely with, and has the support of, a community.

Councillor Sarah Merry
Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Education
20 October 2023