

Thu16/01/2025 08:30

Dear Colleagues,

I'm writing from the Staff Conference at Margam, fresh from the assault course, where it's been wonderful for us to put faces to names and spend quality time with colleagues we often only interact with via email or Zoom. I had the privilege of presenting and launching our new five-year strategy. Many of you were, of course, instrumental in its development, and I'll be uploading my presentation shortly. I would like to extend my gratitude to Siân Lane and her team for their warm welcome and hospitality. A special thanks to Mike Etherington for his efforts in bringing this event to fruition and to all those who have contributed to its success. Congratulations to the victorious 'red' team for their triumph in the team activities.

End of Year Audit

The Finance Team wish to give advance warning that the Auditors (WR Partners) will be at Head Office for two weeks commencing 24th March 2025. The team pre-empts as much of the evidence gathering as possible and deal with many of the ad hoc queries themselves but there will be times when the auditors will need to contact other departments directly, the most common being Human Resources and Payroll. If anyone has been contacted in the past for evidence, expect to be contacted again.

Climate Literacy Amongst School Leavers

[This report](#) came out just before Christmas. It's very long so I recommend this useful short digest in a [School's Week article](#) instead. The research was done with school leavers regardless of their choice of GCSEs. It would have been interesting to know if Geography students fared any better. In defence of school leavers, some of the questions require a fair amount of technical knowledge. I don't know many adults who could accurately describe the roles of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the United Nations Framework Convention in Climate Change (UNFCCC) in global climate policy.

In short, there is a lot still to do. The results may be depressing but this research can only add to the growing calls to teach more about climate change and embed it more firmly across the curriculum. It's a theme that has already emerged in the responses to the current Curriculum Review in England. One bright spot in the report is that when it comes to trusted sources of information about climate change, science teachers top the list and social media comes near the bottom.

Northern Ireland Curriculum Review

Talking of Climate Change, we have put in a response to Northern Ireland's current review of their curriculum. Whilst there are some positive things to be said about the NI Curriculum, the lack of content around climate change really stands out. Our response covered this, the importance and cross curricular benefits of nature connection and ways to make science practical's a bit more exciting. We also flagged up the increased risk of disadvantaged learners missing out on fieldwork and residential unless the experiences are a firmly embedded part of the curriculum for all.

Field Studies Council in the Media

School's Week featured our urban Geography day courses in Birmingham which you can [see here](#) and our Signs of Spring survey seems to have hit the right note with news outlets and I'll report on the coverage in the next catch up.

Welcome to Field Studies Council

There are no new starters this week but Pippa Cowley has been promoted to Senior Tutor Team Leader at Blencathra.

Previous catch ups can be found on the staff news website [here](#).

Best regards

Mark