

Why the Appeal?

It is a question I am very often asked and I usually say that I am not the one to answer on behalf of Gwynedd Council or the Wales Assembly. But as the work which has started on the site continues in earnest (yes 2 years behind schedule) it probably is our 'fault' that we need to raise money for new equipment, new furniture and other essential resources in the new Pendalar School.

During initial discussions between Mr Evan Jones, the previous Headteacher, myself and the project's architect Mr Graham Hughes, way back in 2002, it was agreed that we would ensure the best quality building for our children even though we might have to find some money for furnishings and resources. We decided this after visiting four new special schools throughout Britain where we had noticed several cost cutting exercises which had been detrimental to the standard of the school and schooling. We were determined that this would not happen with our new school.

All the staff at the school were then involved in a study where we looked at costings for different types of rooms in the new school. For example we worked out that we would need £50,000 for the IT room; possibly £10,000 for the Music room and similar figures for other specialist teaching rooms. We found that we would need £50,000 for each sensory room before even starting to think about themed gardens, cycle paths, safe play areas outside and special lighting and sound equipment for the hydrotherapy pool etc.

Due to the increasing numbers of children with profound and multiple learning difficulties at the school with many confined to wheelchairs we would be looking at a new minibus where we could fit 4 wheelchairs and room for the staff. Such a minibus would cost £30,000+.

We are enjoying our fund raising activities and we are making new friends all the time but it is hard work. However we believe that our children deserve the very best education and every opportunity to develop as citizens in their own right so the hard work is well worth the effort. It would be nice to receive just a fraction of the £25bn surplus in the Lottery Fund to achieve our aim of £500,000 but we soldier on and continue to depend on the local community and our many celebrity friends in our fund raising efforts.

The £100,000 mark has been passed, the builders are on site with a completion date for February 2007 and we have a full calendar of events for 2006 starting with Bryn Terfel's sell out concert at Galeri on January 14th. Let's hope we can reach our target and secure the financial future of Ysgol Pendalar for many years to come.

Ieuan Roberts
(Headteacher)