

Date **15 March 2002, 10.00 to 13.00pm**
Venue **The Miners Welfare Hall, Ammanford**
Title **Paper submitted by pupils of Amman Valley School**

Sarah Phillips

I recently attending for interview at the Welsh National School of Medicine in Cardiff. The fact that I was given the offer of a bilingual interview is testimony to two important factors. Firstly the welcome change in attitude towards the role of Welsh in the Welsh National School of Medicine of late, and secondly the fact that my School has a fully effective bilingual policy which allows all pupils the opportunity of a fully bilingual education.

Amman Valley School is not a designated Bilingual School. We pride ourselves however on being a naturally bilingual school where both parents and pupils are given a variety of choices with regard to bilingual Education. On entering the School, there are three choices. Firstly pupils can opt to study all subjects, with the exceptions of Science and Mathematics through the medium of Welsh, and even where the written part of the curriculum is in English, the communication in the classroom is bilingual. Finally, the remained of pupils study Welsh normally within the National Curriculum and spend 12% of their timetable studying Welsh as a first or second language.

At Key stage 4, Pupils can study History, Geography, RE, Music and Drama through the medium of Welsh to external examination level, and there is a high success rate amongst the pupils who opt for these subjects. These subjects are also offered at AS and Advanced Levels.

The success of a School cannot be measured only in terms of its academic success and curricular structures. The School is a living, breathing organism, and it is on the social and cultural aspects of the bilingualism of Amman Valley School that Rhys will now touch upon.

Rhys Jones

Adam Price MP, Roy Noble, Professor Derrick Llwyd Morgan, Glynnog Davies, Dafydd Hywel, Nia Dafydd, Ron Jones, Dai Davies. Where would S4C be was it not for these former Amman Valley Pupils. This year's Presentation Evening saw one of our most distinguished ex-pupils Mr Dafydd Iwan as Guest Speaker. The School rejoices in its Welshness not only from the curricular point of view, as illustrated by Sarah, but also in its social and extra-curricular life. The School Production plays a vital part in the lives of any pupil passing through the School. They are given the opportunity of participating in a Welsh and English production at least once during their school careers. Recen Welsh productions include 'Elfis', 'Afon Amser' ' Crythor ar y To', and 'Olifar'. The annual School Eisteddfod is a key event in the school calendar and members of Year 12 hone their leadership and organisational skills in preparing

younger pupils for the stage and other competitions.

Assemblies in the three areas of the School are fully bilingual, and very few of the Lower School pupils will ever forget the series of highly amusing but effective stories on cats improvised by Mrs Einir Jones a crowned bard! Visits to Llangrannog and Glanllyn are organised every year and are very popular with a large number of pupils. Pupils in the Sixth Form, particularly those studying Welsh or subjects through the medium of Welsh have the opportunity of acting as officials and forging good relationships with the younger pupils. The School has a reputation throughout Wales for the quality of its folk dancing teams, and these groups, together with Amman Valley clogg-dancers have toured Europe and been victorious in National and International Competitions. Another area where the School has had success is its public speaking teams both in Welsh and English, and here credit must be given to the Rotary organisation who have done so much good work in encouraging Public Speaking and Young Musician Competitions.

To conclude, we are proud of our history and heritage in the Amman Valley, and we are fully aware of the role played by the School in the past, and the challenges facing it in the future in protecting the historical, cultural and linguistic inheritance which we all want to preserve.