

[First Minister's Christmas card competition winner announced](#)

Nearly 800 entries were received for this year's competition, from Year 3 and 4 pupils across Wales.

Luca Tahanha, a pupil at Llanyrafon Primary, won the competition with his hand-drawn design featuring Father Christmas flying over the Senedd in Cardiff Bay, home of the National Assembly for Wales.

The winning design was chosen by the First Minister and will be used as his official Christmas card for 2017. The card will be sent to people across Wales and around the world.

During his visit to the school, the First Minister presented Luca with a signed, framed copy of his winning design. The First Minister was also treated to a special Christmas assembly and presentation.

The First Minister said:

"I was thoroughly impressed with the hundreds of entries received and the high quality of the designs for this year's competition. Luca's design particularly stood out for me as it features Father Christmas soaring through the sky above the Senedd. With The Senedd's recognisable features, I'm sure it will stand out to all those who see it this Christmas.

"I would like to thank all those who entered this year's competition and wish them all a very Merry Christmas."

Llanyrafon Primary Head Teacher, Mr Wayne Jones said:

"I was ecstatic to find out Luca had won the Christmas card competition and I know all our pupils had great fun taking part. We were honoured to welcome the First Minister to our school."

[Finance Secretary will share his views on Brexit and new tax-raising powers](#)

at the CBI Wales annual dinner

He will outline his priorities for maintaining a strong Welsh economy when the UK leaves Europe, including continued access to the Single Market; the replacement for EU funding to support businesses, communities, research and investment and the need to maintain international relationships.

Professor Drakeford will say:

“From the beginning of the Brexit process, we have consistently argued that the needs of the economy should be the core consideration in the UK’s approach to the challenge of leaving the EU.

“In particular we have argued for continued full access to the EU Single Market, robust transitional arrangements, retention of the European social model and continuation of our participation in a range of EU programmes post-Brexit, such as Horizon 2020 and Erasmus+.”

The Finance Secretary will highlight the forthcoming introduction of the first Welsh taxes for almost 800 years – land transaction tax and landfill disposals tax, which replace stamp duty land tax and landfill tax, respectively, in April.

He will say,

“These new taxes include the highest starting threshold for residential rates in the UK, and the lowest starting rate of tax for the purchase of business premises in the UK – helping lower-income households and smaller businesses,”

And he will highlight the importance of developing Wales’ infrastructure,

“The Welsh Government continues to prioritise investment in infrastructure and our business-friendly policies create the right conditions to support the economy and attract new investments to Wales.

“Over the last year we supported 85 new inward investment projects in Wales with the potential to create or safeguard more than 11,000 jobs. Wales secured 11% of the total jobs associated with inward investment projects across the UK.

“Wales is going through a period of major economic change and I am pleased that the Welsh Government can support businesses through

these changing times.”

43% of Wales' electricity through renewables in 2016

The [Energy Generation in Wales 2016 report](#) provides an estimate of the sources of energy generation in Wales, the number of projects and installed capacity to the end of 2016. The report shows:

- There are more than 67,000 renewable projects, up 23% since 2014;
- Renewable energy capacity increased by 47% since 2014, making up 18% of all electricity generation.;
- A 97% increase in renewable heat capacity;
- There are 62,420 projects of renewable energy projects in local ownership, generating 575MW;
- Solar PV is the most common renewable technology, accounting for 81% of renewable projects; and
- Onshore wind has the largest installed capacity of renewable technology, with a 54% increase in capacity since 2014.

In September, the Cabinet Secretary for Energy, Planning and Rural Affairs Lesley Griffiths announced she wanted Wales to generate 70 per cent of its electricity consumption from renewable energy by 2030. The Cabinet Secretary also set targets for renewable energy projects to have at least an element of local ownership by 2020 and for at least one Gigawatt of renewable electricity capacity to be locally owned by 2030.

Cabinet Secretary said:

“We are committed to accelerating the transition of our energy system in Wales, particularly through the increased use of renewable energy. Our priorities are to increase energy efficiency, reduce our reliance on energy generated from fossil fuels and to actively manage the transition to a low carbon economy.

“That is why I commissioned the Energy Generation in Wales study to provide a complete picture of energy in Wales and for us to see the progress that has been achieved.

“In September, I set ambitious new targets to deliver a low carbon energy system and secure benefits for Wales. Today's report shows we are already making very encouraging progress on renewable energy.

“2016 was quite a year for energy here. We generated enough renewable energy to provide 43 per cent of the electricity we used. Flintshire already hosts the biggest solar project in the UK and now we have Pen y Cymoedd, the largest wind project in England and Wales.

“By using our abundant natural resources in a sustainable way, we can ensure energy continues its important role in achieving our energy and decarbonisation targets. By doing so, we will deliver a prosperous and low carbon Wales.”

[Drive to improve science and technology in schools begins](#)

The network for excellence will target the improvement of teachers' skills in science and technology and improve pupils' experience of the subjects while they are at school.

More than £4 million is being invested through the network which will play a key role in the Welsh Government's national mission to raise standards in schools through education reform.

The network involves schools, colleges, universities and the four regional education consortia working together to improve the teaching and learning of science and technology in Wales.

The new network will:

- draw together cutting edge knowledge for teaching practice in science and technology for 3 to 18 year olds.
- co-ordinate the development and delivery of recognised science and technology professional development for teachers, based on global and local evidence of what works.
- improve pupils' experiences of science and technology in schools across Wales.
- enable schools to work together to develop courses, teaching resources and class-based research.

Kirsty Williams said:

“The new science and technology network will play a crucial role in our national mission to raise standards, reduce the attainment gap and deliver an education system that is a source of national pride and confidence.

“The PISA results were clear that we must improve the teaching of science in our schools. With new qualifications and the shift away from Science BTEC, we are confident that the new network will play a key role in driving up standards in the classroom.

“This new network will bring together higher education, colleges, regional education consortia and lead schools, capturing the best knowledge, expertise and experience for the benefit of our young people.”

Chair of the national network, Prof Tom Crick, said:

“I am delighted to Chair the science and technology network for excellence. It provides the framework for universities and other key stakeholders to work with regional consortia and practitioners to ensure we embrace and adopt research informed and evidence-based practice from across Wales and internationally in support of Wales’ exciting education reforms.”

[You’re not too old to go for gold: ‘OlympAGE Games’ helps keep older people healthy and active](#)

The Minister for Social Care, Huw Irranca-Davies, will attend the launch of the games, saying that it’s vital older people keep healthy and active as part of efforts to help maintain their independence and reduce social isolation.

The ‘OlympAGE Games’ which will see older people and disabled people competing in Rio-inspired team-based competitive activities.

Older people and disabled people are less likely to meet the recommended levels of physical activity than the general population.

There is a clear link between physical activity and improved mental health and well-being; increasing levels of physical activity can improve both quality and length of life.

Speaking ahead of the games, Social Care Minister, Huw Irranca-Davies said:

“It’s great to see events like the OlympAGE games taking place. It’s a fun way of encouraging older and disabled people to stay

active.

“As well as fostering better physical health, this initiative helps improve the mental well-being of those involved by supporting them to be more socially active. It’s also great to see students from Bridgend College helping those taking part in the games, bringing the generations together.

“So my message to older people across Wales is – take part in physical activities that you like and are interested in, and show people you’re not too old to go for gold!”