

FROM PRIMARY
TO SECONDARY

Gareth James Ysgol Gyfun Ystalyfera



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Born and bred in the rural village of Llangennech near Llanelli, Gareth James is now a design and technology teacher at Ysgol Gyfun Ystalyfera. He had wanted to become a teacher ever since he was a student at college in Carmarthen, but originally entered the primary sector and remained there for almost twenty years.

“During my time at university I was fortunate enough to gain many experiences of visiting schools and I was fairly sure that I wanted a career in education as I had not only thoroughly enjoyed those experiences, but I was also eager to make a difference to young people’s lives.”

The original decision to teach in the primary sector was a natural progression, as that was the path offered by his course at Trinity College.

“I was very happy in the primary sector and grateful for the various opportunities that came my way, but I always had a desire to try secondary teaching. So when I saw the transition course being advertised, I had to go for it.”

One of the main things that has struck Gareth is the opportunity to influence young people in a different way.

“Moving from primary to secondary, the potential influence you can have on young people changes. I continue to prepare them

from an academic perspective, but there is also an emphasis on preparing them for the world of work, and securing life skills for the future. The maturity of young people is developing, and the focus in terms of their future is growing.”

Gareth also feels strongly about being able to deliver his subject through the medium of Welsh.

“I grew up in a bilingual household and that gift of receiving two languages has enabled me to take advantage of so many experiences. Through the world of the Young Farmers and various Eisteddfodau, the Welsh language is extremely important to me, and the language and culture have had a huge influence on what I have done and achieved in my life.”

Gareth admits that the change has been a major step, but one that has given him tremendous pleasure.

“On a personal level, it’s been an extremely positive experience, and I’ve really enjoyed it, and if there’s someone out there reading this and considering what to do, I’d encourage you to go for it, you won’t regret it.”

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