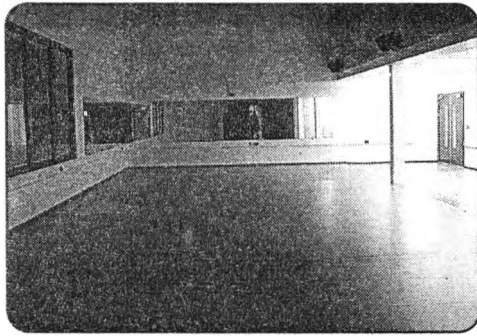
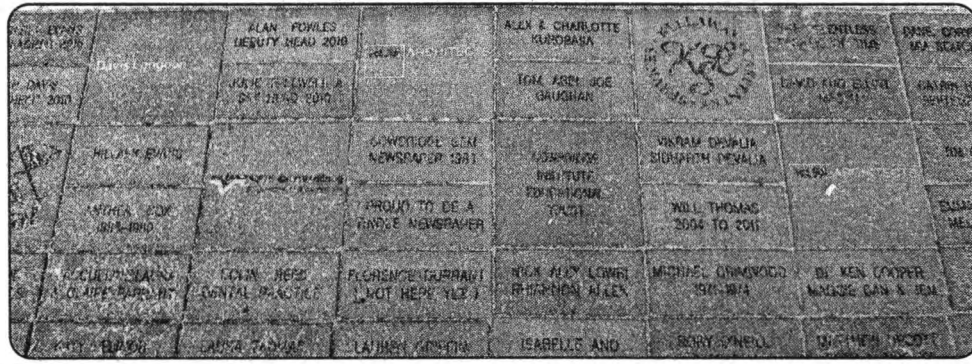


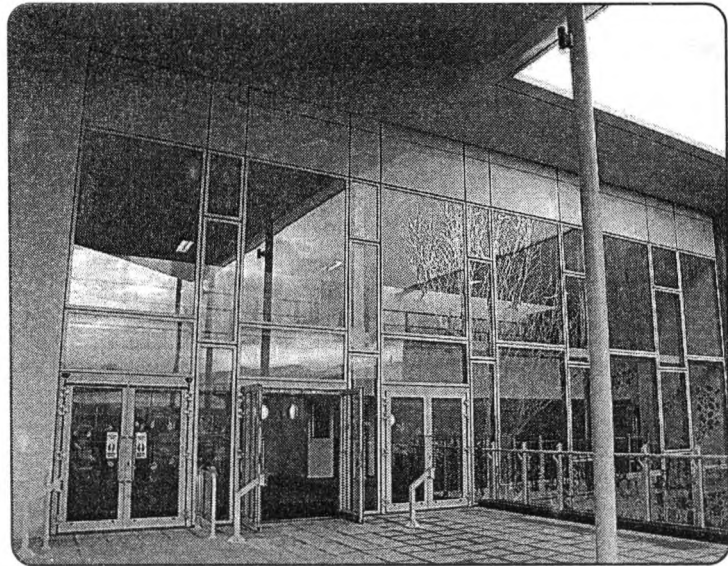
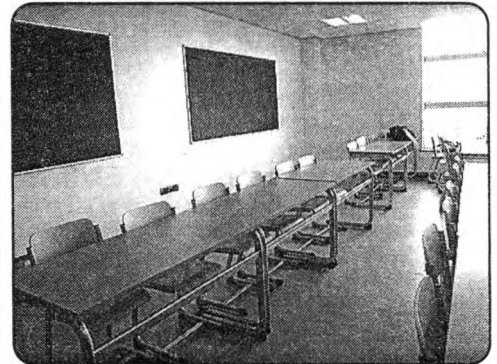
# 21st Century school is a sight to behold!



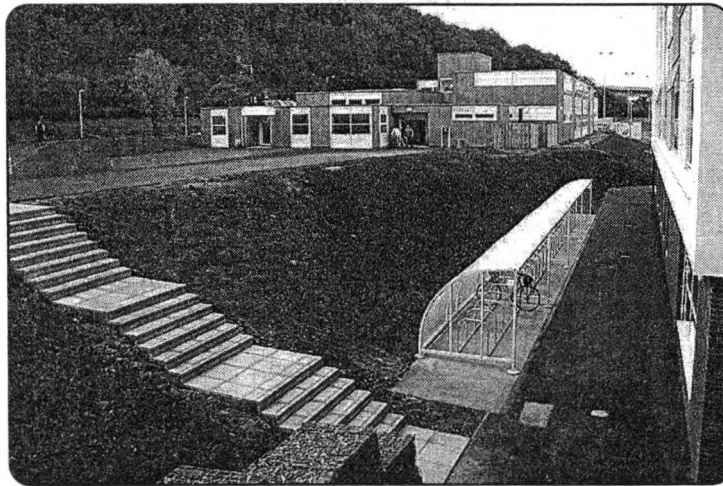
ABOVE: The dance studio.



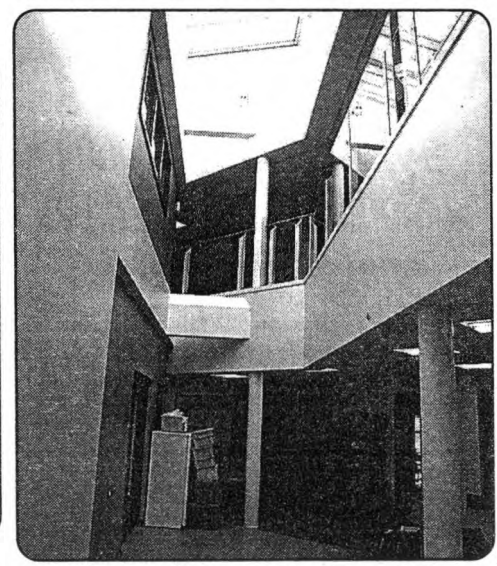
ABOVE: Sponsored bricks laid by well-wishers - as in the Millennium Stadium.



ABOVE: The school's main entrance.



ABOVE: A view from the bridge at the main entrance. The ground has been seeded, so this will soon be green lawns.



ABOVE: A walkway doubles up as a balcony.

## PHOTOGRAPHS by MIKE WILCOCK

THIS week saw the opening of the new and refurbished Cowbridge Comprehensive School - and The GEM had a sneak preview of the new 'school for the 21st Century'.

Staff returning after their summer break were delighted with their new accommodation, which features full ICT capability in all areas, state-of-the-art facilities for all specialist classrooms and drama, music and PE facilities which will be among the best available in a school setting.

The school's headteacher, Mrs Margaret Evans, said: "I am delighted that at last we have school premises which do justice to the efforts and enthusiasm of our students and the commitment and dedication of our staff.

"This is a school of which we can be, justifiably, very proud. I am very grateful to the Vale Council, the Welsh Assembly Government and all the contractors and other supporters for bringing our plans to fruition.

"I am looking forward to seeing the reactions of students to their new surroundings when they return to school later this week".

The opening of the new premises marks the culmination of a very successful year for the school. Just a few weeks ago, year-11 students achieved the best set of key stage four results ever recorded by the school, with 94 per cent of students achieving the equivalent of five or more A\* to C grades, and an overall A\* to G pass rate of 99.5 per cent.

## THE GEM'S TOUR

THE most striking thing about walking around the massive new school building at Cowbridge Comprehensive is just how light and airy it feels.

There are none of the long dark corridors that you see in some public buildings. Walkways are relatively short, and they curve around the buildings, with balconies and windows and plenty of daylight.

The sports hall is massive, and should be popular with sports clubs from around the Vale, while the dance studio, for instance, is a breath-taking facility.

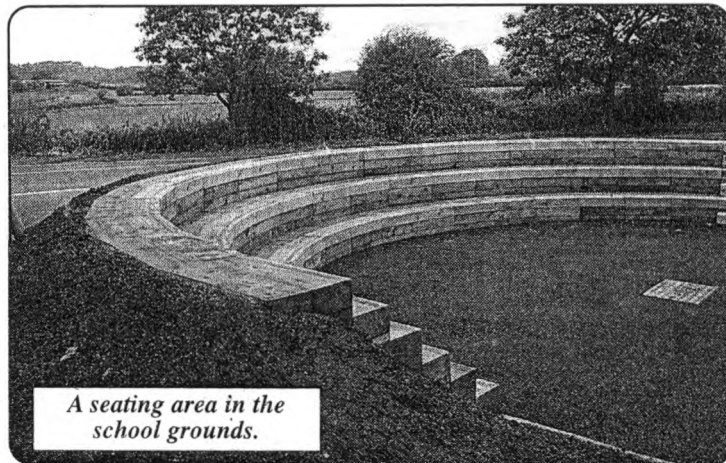
The classrooms again, are bright, light and very hi-tech. Computers are everywhere, and even the school's signing in and dinner money systems are going to be on 'smart cards'.

Visitors will enter the school via a bridge, and the main reception is on the middle floor of three. Stairs and balconies then take pupils around the school to their classrooms.

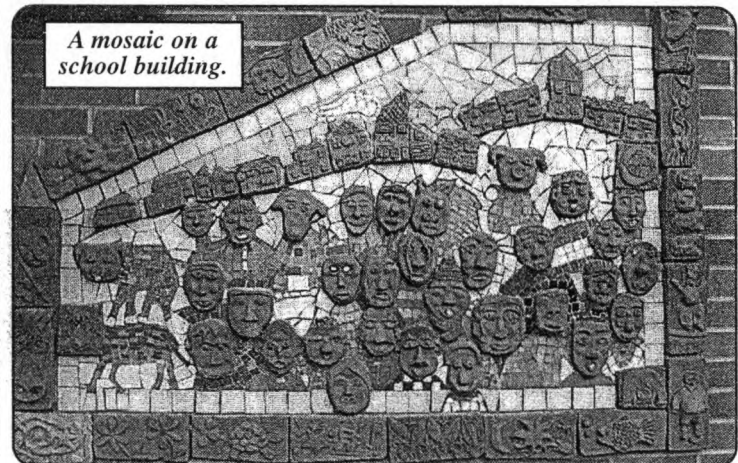
In effect, the sports hall is in the centre of the building, with walkways circling it.

The school is also delighted with its new school hall, with perfect lighting, a stage for school productions, and a hi-tech sound system.

Our tour was just a sneak preview, and even the staff are still finding their way around, but it is blindingly obvious that Cowbridge has been given a stunning school building!



A seating area in the school grounds.



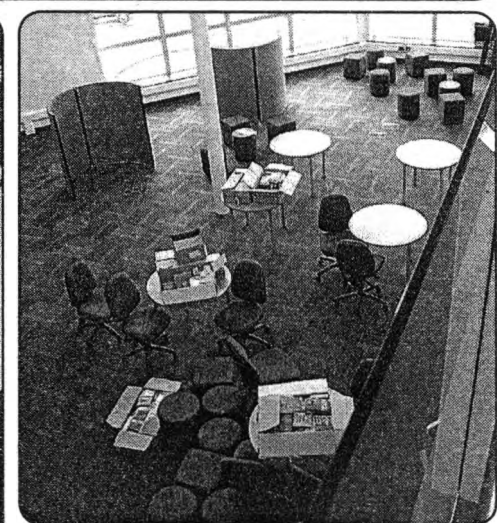
A mosaic on a school building.



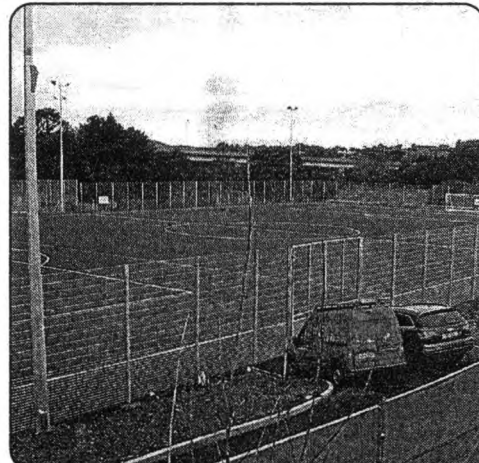
ABOVE: A music studio, waiting for tuneful students!



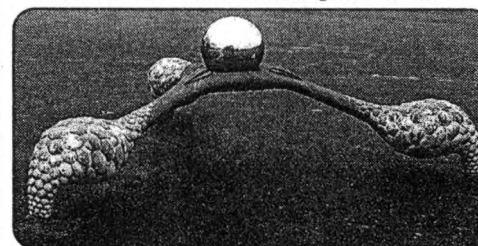
ABOVE: The main reception area.



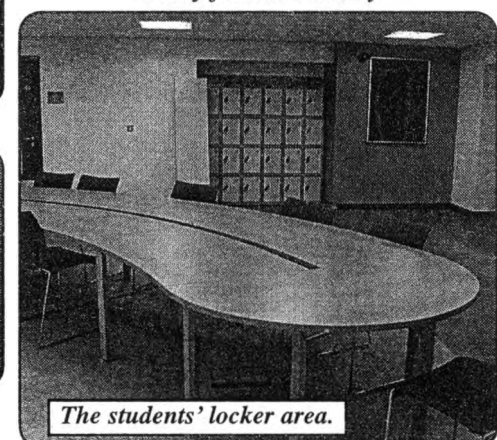
ABOVE: Looking down on the library from a walkway



Looking out over the astroturf pitch.



There are pieces of art work dotted around the school and its grounds.



The students' locker area.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 9TH, 2010

# NEW SCHOOL HAS THE WOW FACTOR



*For this year's Cowbridge In Bloom results and pictures, please turn to page 40.*

*ABOVE: This week, The GEM took a good look at the new Cowbridge Comprehensive School building – and was mightily impressed! Pictured above is the main hall, which will be putting on school shows, exhibitions, conventions and out of school hours community events. For more photographs, see page 15.*