



Ysgol Hendrefelin Autumn Newsletter January 2025

Dear All,

With Christmas approaching, can I take this opportunity to thank you all for your continued support of the school and our wonderful pupils. Could everyone support us in our drive to improve attendance at school at all levels! Children are encouraged at school to attend regularly. As you will have heard on the news, attendance throughout the country remains lower than pre-Covid figures. At Ysgol Hendrefelin, we are seeing steady improvement (see below) but it still needs to improve further.

As a school, we are doing as much as we can to promote good attendance in order to help all of our pupils reach their full potential. We know that consistent and regular attendance will help to improve the life chances of all our pupils.

Please take note: Attendance Barometer for one academic year (38 weeks)

100% attendance	Not missing any lessons
95% attendance	Missing about 2 weeks of school
90% attendance	Missing about 3 weeks of school
80% attendance	Missing at least 8 weeks of school
75% attendance	Missing about 10 weeks of school

Progress in Attendance Update - December 2024

YHF is continuing to strive for improved attendance across all three sites this academic year. The number of pupils with 100% attendance has risen as well as the number of pupils attending above 90% compared to the last two years.

We have seen 66% of individual pupils improve, remain above 90% or maintain their attendance this term.

To help support families to encourage their child to attend school, we recently worked with CAMHS, to successfully offer a series of Parent Workshops which focused on building resilience, dealing with anxiety and anger.

We have monthly or termly attendance figures on display along with our winning posters from our poster competition so our pupils can keep a check on their attendance.

The school council is currently nominating their own Attendance Officers who will be able to share attendance information with their key stage.

In the coming few weeks left of this term, there will be attendance certificates and rewards for those pupils who have achieved excellent or substantially improved attendance this term.



If your child is struggling to attend school, please contact us to discuss how we can support you. Please remember to call school if your child is not able to attend.

Please take some time to read the reports below which highlight many aspects of the hard work which is taking place across our provisions. We are providing learning activities through an engaging curriculum which has a real mix between academic work, trips, outdoor learning, exciting activities and vocational opportunities.

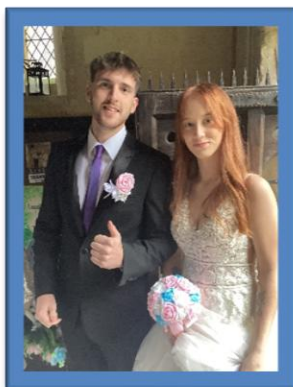
Bryncoch MLD KS3 Autumn Term 2024 Update:

Curriculum

This term has been rich in engaging, thoughtful, and fun-filled learning experiences for our pupils in the Moderate Learning Difficulties Unit at Key Stage 3 (KS3). With the overarching concept of 'freedom' and the Big Question, 'Are the best things in life free?', we have explored various facets of history, culture, and personal development. Our journey began with an examination of recount writing, where pupils stepped into the shoes of historical figures such as King Henry VIII and the monks from Neath Abbey during medieval times. This immersive approach allowed our learners to investigate the abbey and the dissolution of the Catholic Church, delving into its significance and impact on our local area, particularly Neath Abbey Monastery. To enhance their understanding, we organised a trip to the historic ruins of Neath Abbey, guided by Harriet Eaton, our local heritage education officer. This visit proved instrumental in contextualising the discussions and deepening the pupils' appreciation of their community's heritage.



Additionally, we broadened our cultural horizons by studying diverse relationships and marriage ceremonies from around the world. Our pupils revelled in the opportunity to partake in a mock wedding ceremony at St. Matthews Church, where the sheer joy was evident as they donned the roles of bridesmaids and participants. The beauty of the church added to the experience, creating cherished memories, complemented by a celebratory wedding cake and disco to cap off the occasion.



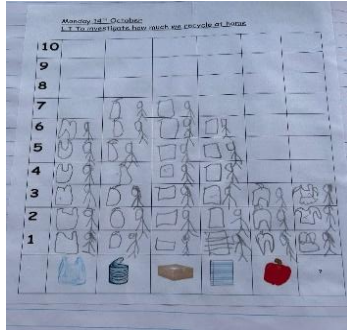
In Mathematics, we have tackled essential concepts such as place value, addition and subtraction and time. Language, Literacy, and Communication has been equally engaging, with learners particularly excelling in their recount writing and writing from the perspective of a monk and Henry VIII during history lessons. Meanwhile, our Information and Communication Technology (ICT) lessons focused on developing coding skills. Pupils honed their programming abilities and employed logical reasoning to create simple games, reinforcing their understanding of computational thinking.

Beyond these academic pursuits, our Health and Well-Being lessons fostered a strong sense of self-awareness and

community responsibility. Pupils learnt what it truly means to be 'me in my world', understanding classroom rules, safety protocols, and the importance of making a positive impact on those around them.



Saving Food Miles



Recycling Week Pictogram



Recycling Week Poster



Activities/Trips

Several exciting extracurricular activities complemented our learning this term.

Key Stage 3 pupils celebrated their triumph in a competition to grow the tallest sunflower, earning an enriching trip to Plantasia. There, they explored various animals, their habitats, and discussed the environmental ramifications of pollution.



Furthermore, students anticipate a forthcoming Lego Robotics workshop, facilitated by Swansea University, which will help them expand their coding expertise.

We must express our gratitude to Reverend Bodycombe for graciously hosting our mock wedding at St. Matthews Church and bringing the learning to life.



Our Year 8 and 9 pupils are enthusiastic about their collaboration with Swansea City Football Club, which aims to enhance their football skills while promoting their overall well-being.

Moreover, pupils were delighted by the peri-music roadshow, allowing them to experience a full orchestra live, along with participating in a ukulele workshop.



KS4 MLD Report

Curriculum

Staff and pupils alike have been working hard towards our new WJEC qualification offerings. These qualifications will allow us to be more flexible still in offering a range of qualifications at a level appropriate to all our different learners.



We also continue to offer a broad range of experiences outside the school to keep pupils engaged and prepare them for the world of work and life after school. Our mechanics and hairdressing courses, run in collaboration with Neath college continue to be a success and close working with Careers Wales, the Youth Service and organisations such as Working Options in Education have allowed us to arrange many valuable opportunities for our pupils in the Autumn term. These include individual careers advice, a transition event informing parents and carers of options that may be open to them, college transition visits, Industry Insight sessions and an Employer Visit to the LC in Swansea.



Our Unit project in targeting pupils with very low reading ages is also well underway and initial feedback is that it is already having a positive effect on this group of learners. Additionally we have also purchased headphones with speakers to allow this group to use assistive technology to support them in reading and writing and thereby allow them to be more independent learners.

Activities/Trips



Pupils continue to benefit from a range of other activities provided by the school, including Down to Earth, surfing,

Into Film trips, volunteering in a local woodland area as part of a government funded project, a bike maintenance course and last, but by no means last, our Taith funded residential trip to Spain.



KS4 SEBD Velindre Update

Curriculum

This term our Big Question has been, "How can we live without rules?". We have been studying People and Protest as part of our Humanities qualification. We have looked at different types of protest and how effective they are. We have been studying some very famous Protests and Protesters and looking at how we can use what we have learned to make change in our own lives and communities. All our pupils are working towards Entry Level and GCSE Qualifications and are currently completing coursework in English, Math's and Science in preparation for their summer exams.

Our Year 10 pupils have been reading the book Stone Cold this term and they have been learning about homelessness. We have had visits from the Homelessness team from NPTCBC to help them learn about this subject. They have been learning about where a young person can go for help and what they could do if they or anyone they know becomes homeless. We have also been learning skills for the future with visits from the DVLA, they have been putting the pupils through mock interviews in preparation for college and work next year. We have learned lots of new skills and gained confidence for the future.



We have also been learning Life Skills such as cooking, budgeting and shopping skills. Some of our pupils are about to start travel training in preparation for going to college next September. Our Yr 11 pupils are currently working towards their CSCS card and are completing First Aid and Ground works qualifications as part of the course.

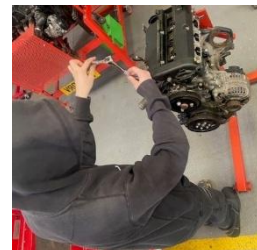


Our pupils have been busy preparing for the Christmas Fayre, they have learned how to make Jam and Chutney and have been learning wool crafts in order to make things to sell. Here are some of the items that our pupils have made.



Activities/ trips

This term our pupils have had the opportunity to go surfing, to attend the BMX track and swimming. There have been vocational activities such as Construction, Mechanics and our Year 11 pupils have started Ground Maintenance and the CSCS card courses. We have started our transition work and are having regular sessions with careers Wales, Justin from the Legacy Team and have had our first visit to one of the training providers that could be an option for next year.



KS2 LSC Update:

Curriculum

Pupils at the Primary LSC have had opportunities to study the history of the steel industry in Port Talbot. Pupils have researched the origins of the industry in Port Talbot. Pupils have had opportunities to study important industrial figures throughout the many years the steel industry has been present in Port Talbot.

Pupils have been given opportunities to use their cross-curricular skills on this topic. In Mathematics the pupils were encouraged to work out how many people worked at the steel works in 1970 and compare that to the amount of employees in 2024.

In humanities pupils were encouraged to study the landscape in Margam prior to British Steel coming to Port Talbot and compare that to the landscape now. Pupils learned why the location of the Steel works was chosen and where in the world the steel had been exported to. Pupils had opportunities to learn about the economic impact the steel industry has had in the local and surrounding areas.

In expressive Arts and design Pupils had opportunities to produce scratch paintings portraying the industrial landscape of Port Talbot. Pupils studied the 'Banksy' mural that was painted in Margam.

The pupils at the Primary LSC have benefited from lots of physical activity and sport throughout the academic year.



Court has been used for football coaching sessions, Basketball sessions, Tag rugby and Athletics.

Activities

have benefited from regular Mountain biking treks at the Afan Forest Park, completing the 9.4-mile Afan riding on from the ride the Pupils visit the Afan Lodge Hotel for a drink and a meal.

at the LSC went on a school trip to the Museum of Welsh Life at St. Fagan's. During the trip the pupils were set activities centered around our industrial past.

The pupils visited Port Eynon and Rhossili over the last year and have had opportunities to look at the impact of tourism in the Gower.

The pupils have enjoyed weekly swimming lessons at the Afan Valley Swimming Pool. Pupils have earned badges and certificates for distances up to 400m.

Aspire Update:

Curriculum

As a team, we have continued to work collaboratively to design an ambitious KS3 curriculum that promotes individual well-being and fosters a sense of community. We have tackled the topic "Freedom" and explored empathy and misinformation in our lessons. By working collaboratively, we're ensuring that we continue to make full use of staff expertise.

We have covered a wide variety of areas across the curriculum. For Languages, Literacy and Communication, pupils are focusing on freedom in the animal kingdom. The book of choice is *The Dancing Bear* by Michael Morpurgo.

Exploring this is allowing the pupils to develop their reading and comprehension skills while focusing on our end of unit assessment of persuasive writing. Pupils are also exploring the conversational language in Welsh to be able to discuss what pets they have, improving their Welsh speaking skills and social skills. Humanities is covering the idea of slavery, with pupils researching Roman slavery and the gladiators, the abolishment of slavery, and the story of Moses in Christianity. This is connected to our Expressive Arts work of Roman art and mosaics which has given pupils the opportunity to design and create their own mosaic designs. From a music perspective, we have studied songs of civil rights, freedom and hope in the Blues genre. Our new pupils in Aspire 2 have particularly enjoyed their Science studies so far this term, learning about lab safety, planning investigations and experiments, and plant biology. Health and Wellbeing is at the forefront of our curriculum to ensure we are supporting the pupils to become healthy, confident individuals and ethical, informed citizens. We are learning rights, respect of responsibility through various interventions such as *Being Frank*, which support the pupils in learning how to express their opinions and thoughts, without harming others. Our weekly interventions include SCERTS, Zones of Regulation, and Six Minute Conversations and Talkabout.



Year 7 pupils have integrated into the Aspire 2 class and have made great progress mapped against this curriculum and have enjoyed the variety and range of topics covered within the project. We were lucky enough to participate in an online national assembly for Black History Month in October while pupils across the unit support our Show Racism the Red Card day by wearing red to school and wearing the stickers. We also supported World Mental Health Day by wearing something yellow to school.

In our Aspire 1 class, we've made significant adaptations focusing on pupil-centred approaches. Incorporating sensory tasks and tools has transformed our daily practices, ensuring all students benefit from hands-on activities suited to their individual needs. Pupils benefit from activities that would usually be attached to pupils of a much younger age such as sand and water activities.

Numerous pupils in the Year 7 class have limited speech and have significant difficulties communicating and expressing their emotions. However, these pupils have made enormous progress and are now able to follow a timetable with a range of activities and learning opportunities every day.

At KS4 pupils continue to make good progress in their learning. We are again, particularly proud of our students accessing the BTEC Mechanics course through college. This reflects amazing progress, especially for one pupil who

previously struggled to attend school and was originally on a reduced timetable only attending school for a couple of hours in the mornings. This pupil has made remarkable progress in their ability to manage different social situations, academic demands as well as regulate their anxiety and low mood. This achievement reflects many similar journeys that our pupils are making during their time in Aspire.



We have thoroughly enjoyed introducing the Jigsaw PSHE programme across all our classes. The moments of reflection and the resources provided have proven effective in fostering daily discussions and mindfulness. We have also made some adaptations to our school day, incorporating wellbeing and interventions at both the start and end of each day. As staff expertise continues to develop, these sessions are evolving positively. We look forward to being able to see real progress in our pupils' social and emotional skills through our tracking of pupil wellbeing and life skills at the end of term.



Activities/ trips

Students at KS3 have benefitted from a range of enriching trips and activities that have augmented their social and emotional learning experiences. These outings have provided hands-on learning opportunities and fostered a deeper connection with the curriculum.

Pumpkin picking in the Gower



Surfing at Caswell and Swimming at Cymer



Visiting the library and shopping



Key Stage 4



Pupils at KS4 have been very fortunate to have regular visits from Hannah our PCSO, Aimee the school nurse, Sarah Kelly the Youth Worker and Melanie Jones from Career Wales. All agencies have formed excellent relationships with our pupils.

KS3 SEBD Update:

Curriculum and Activities

We have enhanced the curriculum with Skateboarding, Down to Earth, surfing, forest schools, bike maintenance, outdoor pursuits, survival skills, cookery, DT, Gym and swimming. The curriculum is varied and delivered in a trauma informed way, using PACE. Here are some examples of the activities on offer at Theodore Road;

Down to Earth Project



Down to Earth 'believe relationship-centered and meaningful, outdoor experiences have the potential to change people's lives... through innovative and inclusive approaches such as creating remarkable buildings with natural materials, sustainable land management and award-winning well-being/education programmes from hand-built centres on Gower'. Our pupils benefit from weekly visits to the centre.



Cookery Lessons

Our pupils benefit from cooking sessions throughout the week. They learn all the techniques they need to produce healthy well-balanced meals. Pupils can cater for our celebrations such as Christmas, Easter, Halloween party and Harvest festival. They thoroughly enjoy preparing and testing the food! Staff have secured funding to enable these activities through the Kellogg's Grant and the Wellbeing Team Funds.



Surfing



Surfability UK provide our learners with surf lessons in the Summer and Skateboarding in the winter. They combine best practice from special education, health care, surfing and lifeguarding to make surfing as inclusive as possible. They cater to the surfers' additional needs so they can get the most out of surfing while having a safe and really enjoyable experience. Our pupils have weekly sessions throughout the spring and Summer. They gain water confidence and build their self-esteem. Our learners' bond with their peers by taking part in this kind of outdoor pursuit.



Rock Climbing



Port Talbot Urban Adventures provides our pupils with an indoor climbing experience designed to build their confidence and trust in themselves and others. Their experienced instructors make sure that all pupils can access the activity and achieve success. Our pupils enjoy a weekly session in the springtime.



Outdoor Learning and Adventures

We make the most of the outside space available locally. Pupils have regular visits to Margam Park, St Fagan's, Afan Argoed and Aberavon Beach. They participate in fishing, mountain biking, adventurous play parks and orienteering.



Crafts and Sensory Exploration

Our learners are encouraged to express their emotions in a positive way by understanding themselves and how they react to their environment. We use to help pupils work out the best way of helping themselves to regulate. They have daily sensory circuits tailored to their individual needs and ELSA sessions to help them express themselves appropriately.

Pupils have access to sensory equipment and activities throughout the day.



An Update from our School Council:

We started Autumn term with the exciting establishment of our school council, introducing our newly elected members who represent each class. This initiative ensures that every pupil has a voice, as representatives share and receive feedback on ideas from their respective classes during our school council meetings, which take place once a month. In September, we implemented the creation of suggestion boxes in every classroom. This initiative has been well received, and we have thoroughly enjoyed reviewing the innovative ideas put forth by the children. Their enthusiasm and creativity have resulted in a plethora of wonderful suggestions, reflecting the vibrant and engaged spirit of our school community.

The school council has taken great pleasure in organising various charity days, exemplifying our commitment to social responsibility. Notable events have included "Show Racism the Red Card" and "Wear Yellow for Mental Health," which have raised awareness and funds for critical causes. Furthermore, we have successfully coordinated

fundraisers for "Children in Need," demonstrating our ability to work collaboratively towards meaningful objectives that benefit others.

As we look ahead, we are eagerly anticipating several upcoming events, including the much-loved Christmas Fun Day. Preparations are already underway, and enthusiasm is building across the school as we envision a day filled with joy and festive spirit. Additionally, we are beginning to strategise for our Summer Fun Day, which promises to be another highlight of the academic calendar.

Through the efforts of our dedicated school council members and the collective enthusiasm of the pupils, we continue to foster a supportive and inclusive environment where every child's voice is valued. We look forward to making a positive impact throughout the year and engaging the entire school community in these worthwhile initiatives.

Eco News Report

It has been a busy start to the year so far for the Eco 'Green Team'. We have some enthusiastic new year 7 members who have settled in well to the existing team and everyone has been working hard to get things rolling in preparation for our Platinum Award inspection by our head of Eco Schools – Keep Wales Tidy inspector Matthew Bunt.

The Green Team meets regularly each month, and all members show a deep level of commitment to their roles and the opportunity to make a difference to the world around them.

We have conducted an updated School Environmental Survey to measure the progress the school is making towards becoming more environmentally aware. The results have shown improvement in all areas since we conducted the last survey and that all the hard work by students and staff is having a positive impact.

We have identified areas that we could still improve on and have started to act on strategies to help improve this and add them into the whole school plan to show how we are using our data dynamically.

Students have completed a survey for Keep Wales Tidy – Young People and Green Jobs to voice their opinions from a SEN perspective.

Students are currently rehearsing for our upcoming assembly on recycling, where we are working in collaboration with Gemma Sayce and her project with the university.

Eco spies (and their teachers) are conducting energy saving surveys in their classrooms to see where we can make improvements to saving energy in school and the winning class will receive a seasonal prize.

Regular litter picks are organised and run with the help of the KS4 Eco Leaders who are enjoying their chance to demonstrate their leadership and peer mentoring abilities.