



Ysgol Hendrefelin

Newsletter

Autumn Term 2025

Dear All,

We would like to thank you all again for your continued support of the school. We have had a lovely start to this academic year.

Please take some time to read the snapshot reports from each of our Units highlighting aspects of the curriculum, trips, activities, fundraising and links to community activities that have taken place across our school over the Autumn Term. Christmas is approaching fast. On behalf of all the staff at Ysgol Hendrefelin, can I take this opportunity to wish you all a very happy Christmas.

Key Stage 3 - MLD Provision (Bryncoch Site)

Curriculum and Learning Update

Autumn Term is always an exciting time, and we have thoroughly enjoyed welcoming our new Year 7 pupils, who are all an amazing addition to our school family. This term, we are exploring the concept of **'Identity'** with a particular focus on the **Big**

Question: 'Can I think myself happy?'

Our learners have really engaged with the subject of **'wellness'** and have been exploring various ways to support and promote mental health. They have identified and practised basic watercolour techniques, analysed how colours represent emotions, applied these techniques in creating original watercolour paintings, and expressed personal happiness through their artwork.

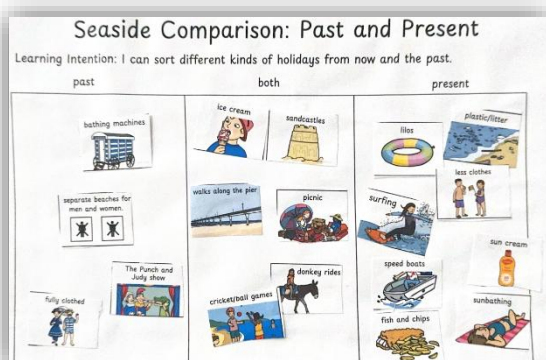


As part of their Health & Well-being development, learners have participated in the **Celebrating Difference** programme of learning.

Key activities have included:

- Discussing responses to bullying and identifying harmful words.
- Exploring who is special to them and ways to calm down.
- Practising the **'solve it together'** technique and discussing how to support those being bullied.
- Reflecting on the impact of their word choices and learning to give and receive compliments effectively.
- Examining assumptions, their influences, and the effects of witnessing bullying, while celebrating their own uniqueness and special qualities.

The humanities curriculum has enabled learners to explore various types of holidays, both past and present. They have compared modern holidays with those from long ago and reflected on how holidays contribute to well-being and health. A key focus has been investigating how beach holidays in Wales have changed over time.



They particularly enjoyed visiting Trecco Bay Holiday Park, especially exploring a caravan.



Learners have engaged in asking questions and learned about Buddhist beliefs regarding calmness and happiness. They have tried meditation and reflected on its effects, while also comparing holidays with Buddhist retreats to identify similarities and differences.

In their studies on **Harmful Things in My Environment**, learners have identified common toxins found in household items and understood the effects of air pollution. They have examined the causes and effects of water pollution, investigated the impacts of drugs on the human body, and discussed methods to reduce environmental risks.

On **World Mental Health Day**, we raised awareness of young people's mental health through the **Hello Yellow** charity, reinforcing the importance of mental wellness in our school community. We organised a fantastic event where everyone dressed in yellow—symbolising hope and positivity.



We look forward to continuing this journey of exploration and learning throughout the term!

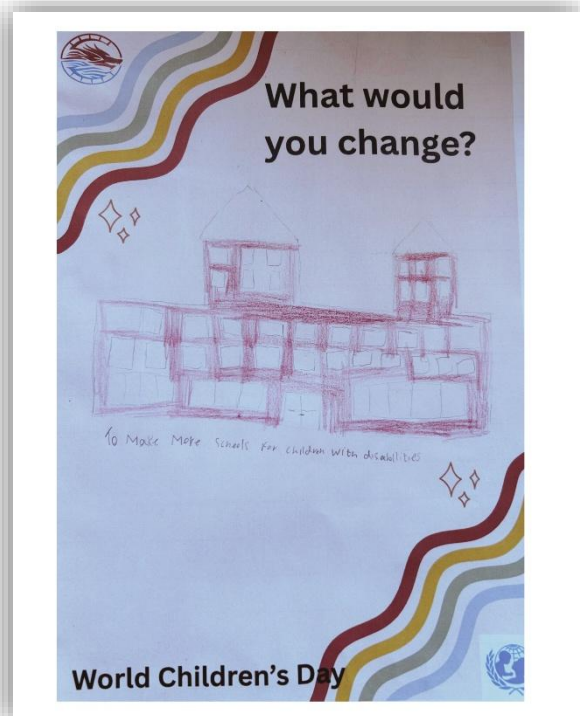
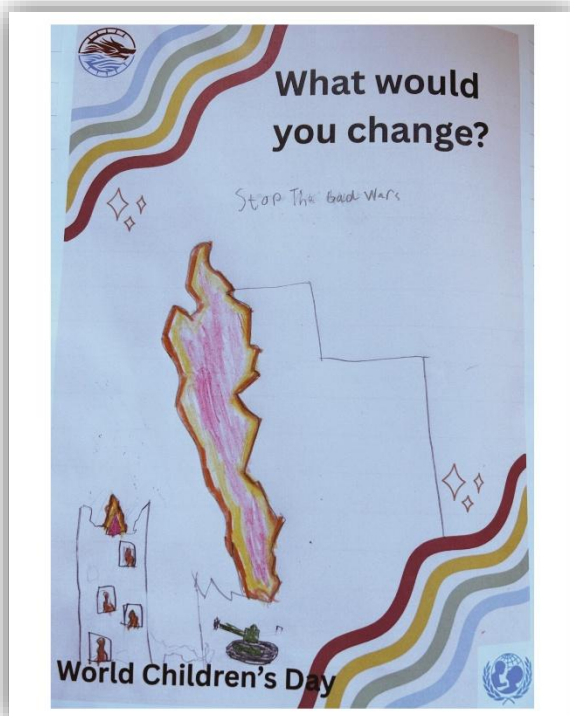
Additional Curricular Experiences, Enriching Visits and Activities

This term, our learners have enjoyed a variety of additional curricular experiences that have enriched their educational journey. A highlight was our yearly visit to **Neath Fair**, where they have a fun time as always.



Celebrating World Children's Day

To mark **World Children's Day**, we participated in a series of thoughtful and engaging activities designed to deepen our understanding of the **Rights of the Child**. Learners explored what these rights mean in everyday life and discussed the positive changes they would like to see for children across the globe. Everyone contributed brilliant ideas, which we captured in colourful posters. Some of the most heartfelt suggestions included ending poverty, ensuring all children have enough food, and creating more schools that fully support children with disabilities. It was an inspiring day that encouraged empathy, creativity, and a stronger sense of global responsibility.



Year 9 pupils had a wonderful taster session at Down to Earth, where they were warmly welcomed with hot drinks and biscuits. They participated in interactive games that encouraged teamwork and problem-solving, sharing feedback to help shape future activities.

A highlight was learning crochet skills, where everyone, guided patiently, discovered a new creative outlet. Overall, it was a memorable experience filled with fun and creativity, and we look forward to returning!

Everyone enjoyed the Halloween activities, which provided a fantastic opportunity for spooky story writing and practising money skills by buying pumpkins at a shop. Additionally, some classes went straight to the source and picked their own pumpkins at local farms.



Y Seiren?

Aylo is a 14 year old girl who lives in Porthcawl with her mother and sister. One day she went to Coney beach to swim and play in the sand. Aylo loves the beach, it's her favourite thing in the whole world. There was a Welsh flag swaying in the wind and Aylo listened to the waves crash on the rocks. As Aylo was putting down her beach mat the sky darkened and big black clouds covered the sun and the sky grumbled.

Aylo trembled, a chill ran down her spine making her whole body cold and shiver. Aylo noticed a shadow in the sea that left goosebumps on her cold pale skin, so she backed away slowly "what is that?" she said to herself. She looked around and saw that everyone was making their way off the beach because they thought it was about to rain. She stood on the beach by the crashing waves and was all alone and scared.

The shadow in the sea bubbled and moved closer and a figure emerged from the black shimmering water. It had scales all over its body and what looked like claws sharper than any knife. Its eyes were a pale light blue that seemed to glow. Aylo trembled, she had read of creatures like this in fairy tales, but she didn't believe that they could be real.

Aylo rushed to grab her phone and immediately turned on the flashlight. She pointed her flashlight at the creature. The beast screamed a high pitch cry and covered its eyes with its razor-sharp claws.

The creature took its hands from its eyes; the old pale blue changed to a fearsome red "I'll come back to kill you" it hissed and dived vanishing back into the black inky sea.

Suddenly, the sky cleared and the sun shined like nothing had happened. Aylo was relieved but shaken by what had occurred. Aylo stood staring at the sea, "Did I imagine that or was that Y Seiren?"

By Lilly

Commitment to Climate Change

In our recent science lessons, we have been exploring the impact of environmental toxins, focusing on issues such as water pollution and air pollution. As part of our learning, we have been considering the positive actions we can take—individually and as a community—to help reduce these pollutants and protect our planet.



Learners have engaged in a range of hands-on investigations, including measuring water pollution as part of the **Big River Watch**, where they tested samples and observed the effects of contaminants on river health. Additionally, we took part in a **lichen hunt**, using different types of lichen as natural indicators of air quality.

This outdoor fieldwork helped learners understand how pollution affects living organisms and provided real-world insight into the science behind environmental monitoring. The pupils thoroughly enjoyed these experiments, developing both their scientific skills and their awareness of environmental responsibility.

Many pupils have embraced many extra-curricular opportunities, particularly dance and rugby club, and some of our students proudly represented the school in football tournaments, where they had a great time competing.

Additionally, we were fortunate to attend the Peri-Music Roadshow, where they experienced a full orchestra and singers from the Cerdd NPT music teachers. It was a wonderful opportunity for a first-hand experience and a chance to dance along to popular music.



As we continue through the term, we look forward to more enriching experiences that foster learning, creativity, and a sense of community among our students.

Key Stage 3 – BESN Provision (Theodore Road)

Curriculum

We've had a very busy start to the Autumn term in Theodore Road. The curriculum is exciting and varied with pupils taught in groups according to their presentation rather than age or diagnosis. Pupils have daily literacy and numeracy sessions, science, humanities and expressive arts. Our curriculum is rich in hands on learning. Forest schools, Design technology and cookery sessions allow pupils to explore their own capabilities and gain new skills. In a slight change to the usual recipes, focussed cookery lessons on the sensory needs of pupils. It has been encouraging to see so many of them enjoying new experiences such as making bread and cooking from scratch. Forest schools is a particular favourite this year as can be seen in the photographs. We offer Bulldogs boxing once a week, swimming twice a week and a PE session.

Visits/Trips

To enhance their enjoyment of the curriculum we have offered pupils the following trips this term: Visit Cardiff airport, Swansea Museum, Theatre trip to see Charlie and the Chocolate factory production in the Gwyn Hall, Neath fair and cinema trips as part of the INTO film festival.

Forest Schools



Cookery



Wellbeing



Chess



Key Stage 4 - MLD Provision (Bryncoch Site)

Curriculum

The past academic term has seen pleasing progress across our curriculum, with a continued focus on both academic achievement and the holistic development of our pupils.

- **Exam and Qualification Results:**
We are pleased to report a strong set of exam and qualification outcomes this year, reflecting the hard work of pupils and staff alike.
- **Digital Competence Framework (DCF):**
The DCF has now been successfully mapped across all new qualifications, ensuring digital skills are fully embedded in our curriculum delivery.

- **SCERTS Monitoring:**

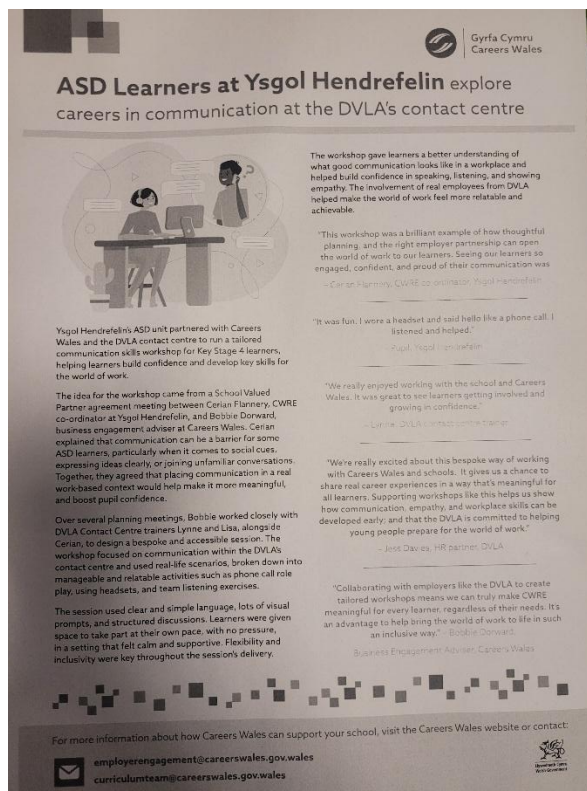
We have introduced the SCERTS framework as part of our ongoing commitment to supporting pupils' communication, emotional regulation, and social interaction.

- **Careers Provision:**

- We have joined the pilot to gain the **Careers Wales Quality Award** accreditation, which will further strengthen our Careers and Work Related Education (CWRE) provision.



- Our work in this area has been recently recognised externally — Careers Wales is using our **Communication Workshop**, developed in collaboration with the DVLA and Careers Wales, as a **case study for good practice**.



- **Assistive Technology:**

We are adopting the use of **NVQA** software to enhance support for our learners both in classroom settings and during examinations, ensuring accessibility and equity for all.

Trips, Visits, and Community Work

We continue to provide meaningful enrichment opportunities that support the development of pupils' personal, social, and employability skills. Highlights this half term include:

- **“What Next” Event** in partnership with **Careers Wales**, supporting transition and post-16 planning.
- **Bike Maintenance Workshops**, encouraging practical skills and independence.



- Engagement with the **Army Cadets**, led by Sgt Jones, promoting teamwork and resilience.



- Collaboration with **Police Community Liaison Officer Rachel Jones**, focusing on safety, citizenship, and community awareness.

Key Stage 4 – BESN Provision (Velindre)

1. Curriculum

This term, we have delivered a broad and engaging curriculum with a strong vocational focus. Pupils have participated in activities such as mechanics, surfing, Bulldogs fitness sessions, and bike maintenance workshops. New courses introduced include welding and hairdressing, which pupils have started this term. Pupils are completing coursework for Entry Level qualifications, and some Year 10 pupils have begun working towards new GCSE qualifications.

2. Trips, Community Work and Visits

We have had an opportunity to work with the Youth Service this term on a wellbeing project this term, they have attended gym sessions and had the chance to work on healthy eating and try a range of healthy foods and drinks.

A new Careers Advisor has joined us, providing guidance and support for pupils' future pathways. Pupils organised and ran a Macmillan Coffee Morning, which involved applying for jobs and completing application forms, attending interviews and interviewing others, and running departments such as Marketing, Procurement, Production, and Finance. This project helped pupils develop real-world skills in teamwork, leadership, and problem-solving, while raising £114 for Macmillan Cancer Support.



Pupils have also been making jam, apple sauce, chutney, and decorations for the school fair. These activities allowed pupils to practice budgeting, cooking, crafting, and problem-solving in real-life contexts.



We have worked closely with Adferiad, who have delivered weekly sessions on substance misuse awareness to both YR 10 and 11 pupils. Our school-based counsellor continues to provide regular support for pupils' emotional wellbeing.

Impact

Pupils have gained valuable vocational and employability skills. Increased engagement and confidence in practical tasks. Strong community links and positive contributions to charitable causes. Staff have enhanced their skills in emotional regulation, literacy assessment, IT, and curriculum planning.

KS3 & 4 ASD Unit - Aspire (Bryncoch)

Over the autumn term, the Aspire Unit has continued to refine and strengthen its curriculum across all four classes, with significant developments in Aspire 1.

Curriculum Developments in Aspire 1

This term, Aspire 1 has been through a significant and positive transition with the introduction of a hands-on, experiential curriculum, designed specifically to meet the developmental, communication, and sensory needs of our pupils. The change represents a shift from more traditional classroom delivery to a structured, highly engaging environment built around purposeful learning zones.

Establishing the Learning Areas

Additional financial resources have allowed us to fully establish each learning area so that they are consistent, visually clear, and accessible. The following zones are now embedded and used daily:

- Reading Zone
- Writing Zone
- Maths Zone
- Construction Zone
- Small World Zone
- Creative Zone
- Outdoor Zone



- Calm Zone
- Energise Zone



Each area has been equipped thoughtfully with resources, visual supports, and structured activities that promote independence, curiosity, and communication. This structure mirrors highly effective early-years classrooms and ensures pupils know what to expect and how to engage.

How the Learning Areas Are Being Used

Pupils now move between zones through a balance of self-directed learning and adult-supported tasks. This allows:

- opportunities for pupils to follow their own interests while still developing key skills
- targeted adult interaction to model communication, social interaction, and problem-solving
- naturally occurring opportunities for pupils to practise sharing, turn-taking, co-regulation, and flexibility
- increased engagement, as pupils are learning actively rather than sitting passively

Staff use consistent language, visual prompts, and SCERTS-informed strategies to scaffold pupils' participation. The zones provide a natural structure for communication, joint attention, and regulation—all essential developmental priorities for pupils in Aspire 1.

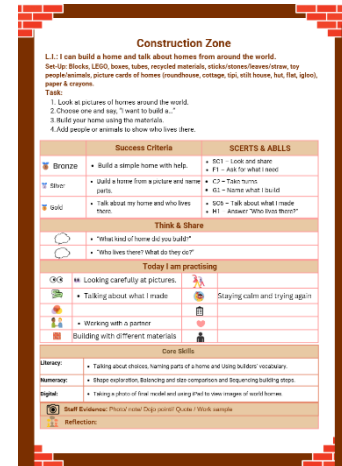
Use of Activity Cards to Build Skills Systematically

A key feature of the transition has been the introduction of high-quality Activity Cards for every learning area. These cards:

- set out the Learning Intention in simple, pupil-friendly language
- give clear prompts to staff on how to model, support, and extend communication
- include SCERTS links (e.g., joint attention, emotional regulation, social communication)

- include ABLLS codes that show exactly which functional skills are being developed
- provide consistent “Today I am practising...” icons so that pupils can understand what skills they are working on

This system ensures that every interaction becomes a learning opportunity, and every activity is purposeful and connected to wider pupil outcomes.



Tracking, Evidence, and Progress

The Activity Cards feed directly into our tracking systems:

- Staff explicitly record progress against SCERTS goals (Social Communication, Emotional Regulation, Transactional Support).
- Staff record functional skill development through ABLLS.
- Evidence is uploaded in real time to ClassDojo, ensuring that progress is visible, consistent, and easy to share with parents and leaders.

This means the curriculum is not only engaging and appropriate but also measurably effective, with clear evidence of development across communication, independence, regulation, and functional skills.

Community Engagement and Trips

Aspire pupils have also taken part in swimming and surfing sessions this term. These experiences have had a significant positive impact on:

- confidence
- social skills
- resilience
- engagement in learning

Pupils showed enormous pride and improved interaction as a result of these activities.

Aspire 4 – Duke of Edinburgh Award

Aspire 4 pupils have continued their work towards the Duke of Edinburgh Award, taking part in weekly sessions at the local community garden. Pupils have contributed to

planting, maintaining garden spaces, and supporting community partners. Their behaviour, teamwork, and engagement have been consistently praised.

Transition Activities – AFAN College

Aspire 4 pupils have also completed a series of successful transition visits to AFAN College. During these visits, pupils explored college environments, met staff, and gained valuable experience in post-16 pathways. Their conduct and engagement were excellent, and the visits provided meaningful preparation for their next steps.

Key Stage 2 - LSC Unit (Bryncoch)

Curriculum

We are excited to share with you the wonderful learning experiences our pupils at the Primary LSC have been engaging in this term, centred around the big question: **‘Where does my happiness come from?’** This theme has inspired a range of activities across various subjects, allowing our children to explore their emotions and express themselves creatively.

In **Expressive Arts**, the pupils have been discussing the colours that bring them joy. Through art, they have created beautiful collages that represent what makes them happy. This hands-on approach not only fosters creativity but also encourages them to reflect on their feelings and preferences. Additionally, our discussions about music have been equally engaging. The children have listened to various genres, sharing their thoughts on how different songs resonate with them and why certain melodies lift their spirits.

Physical fitness has also been a significant focus this term. Our pupils have participated in a variety of fitness activities, learning about the **six components of fitness**. They have enjoyed playing football, athletics, basketball, and tag rugby on the ‘Cruyff Court’. These activities not only promote physical health but also teamwork and cooperation among peers.

In our lessons on citizenship, the pupils have been exploring what it means to be a good citizen. They have discussed their rights and responsibilities, reflecting on how their actions impact others. This has led to meaningful conversations about fairness and the importance of making thoughtful decisions in our community.

Understanding diversity has been another key area of focus. The pupils have designed **Anti-Bullying posters**, sharing their ideas on how to respect and appreciate different cultures. This initiative has encouraged them to think critically about kindness and acceptance in their interactions with others.

Literacy has flourished through our reading of **‘The Hodgeheg’** by Dick King-Smith. The pupils have created newspaper reports and diary entries based on the story, allowing them to engage with the text creatively. They even designed, built, and evaluated a hedgehog house, and produced fact sheets about hedgehogs using the

Internet, which they presented to the class. This project integrated research skills with hands-on learning, making it both educational and enjoyable.

In **Science**, the pupils have been investigating forces such as friction, air resistance, water resistance, and gravity. They planned and conducted simple experiments, fostering their curiosity and understanding of the world around them. Furthermore, in our studies of the **Solar System**, they explored the movements of the sun, moon, and planets, discussing concepts like day and night, as well as the impact of global warming on our planet.

Mathematics has involved learning about **Place Value, Addition and Subtraction, Measurement, and Multiplication and Division**. These foundational skills are crucial as they prepare for more complex mathematical concepts in the future.

Lastly, in **Humanities**, the pupils have reflected on their identities, discussing what makes them unique and special. They have also considered how their community plays a role in their happiness and well-being.

We are proud of the progress our pupils have made this term and look forward to continuing this journey of exploration and learning together.

Trips and Visits

We are thrilled to share that our pupils at the Primary LSC have been having a fantastic time with their weekly swimming sessions at the Afan Valley Swimming Pool. Many have proudly achieved their 10m, 25m, 50m, 100m, and even 200m Swimming Certificates!

In addition to swimming, our students have enjoyed exciting mountain biking adventures at Afan Forest Park and Margam Park. They have also learned valuable skills in bike maintenance, ensuring they can care for their bikes properly.

Residential Unit



The Autumn term has been a fun-packed and purposeful one for the residence staff and pupils.

We welcomed six new pupils into the unit, all of whom have settled in extremely well. One of these pupils attend on an activity only basis at present.

We have carried out many activities, including skills nights, where the pupils have learnt various skills that are essential to everyday living. The pupils and staff travelled to Swansea by train, which improved their confidence and understanding of using various modes of public transport. This is an activity we plan to repeat in the future.

Alongside Dean Draper, our teaching lead for the unit, we have begun using a new life skills program of assessment. This allows us to find a baseline for each pupil, highlight areas for improvement and set targets to add to their individual 'target passports'. This new initiative has been planned in association with educational occupational therapist, James Marshman, who has provided us with a lot of beneficial information and has offered support going forward with the program.

This week, we held our annual Christmas fete, which was once again a huge success. We welcomed members of the public, pupils' family members, stall holders and Childcare Offer Outreach Workers from the childcare offer for Wales initiative.

Taking into account the initial outlay for the cakes, prizes and Christmas merchandise, the total profit made was £442.09. We are extremely thrilled with this and would like to thank everyone who made the afternoon possible.

It has been decided that this year's fete profit will be added to that made by the PTA for their Christmas hamper raffle and shared between the residential unit and PTA funds.

These funds go towards end of term gifts for our pupils, additional spends for refurbishments and money towards Special activities. We also use this money to pay for items for pupils who find themselves without snack money, clothing and toiletries for their stay at the unit.