



Ysgol Hendrefelin

Newsletter

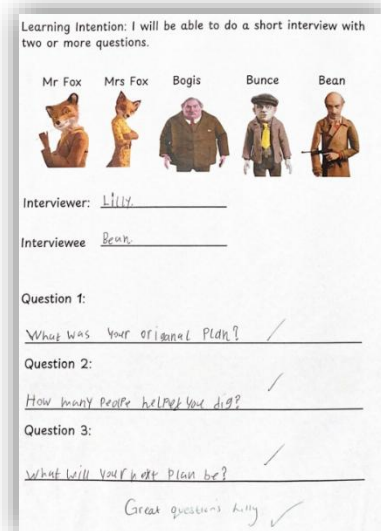
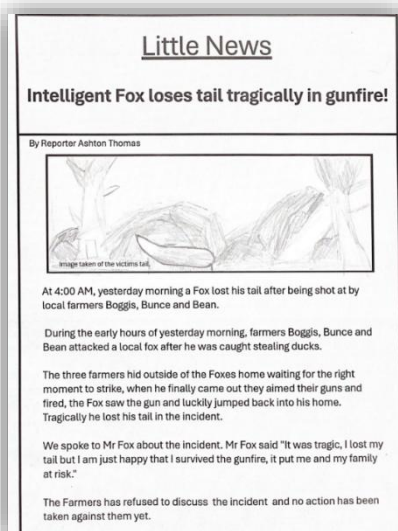
Spring Term 2026

Ysgol Hendrefelin has enjoyed a positive and productive Spring Term. We appreciate your continued support and hope you enjoy reading the updates from each of our units. These summaries highlight the learning, activities, visits and community work that have taken place across the school. On behalf of all staff, we wish you and your families a restful and enjoyable break.

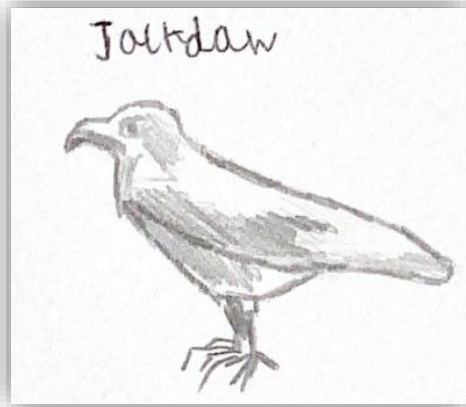
Key Stage 3 – Moderate Learning Difficulties Unit (Bryncoch)

This term, the Key Stage 3 MLD Unit has offered a broad and balanced curriculum that places emphasis on communication, independence and practical learning. Pupils have engaged well with classroom activities, creative projects and community experiences, showing steady progress in relation to their personal learning objectives and the Curriculum for Wales outcomes. Our whole school focus this term has been the theme of Respect, which the unit has explored through the big question, “How should we treat animals?”

In English, pupils have been developing skills in report writing and journalism, learning how to present information clearly and accurately. They have also explored poetry, including acrostic, list and shape poems, to build expressive language. Learners studied the key features of newspaper articles and applied this knowledge in their own work. Classes 5 and 6 used Roald Dahl’s Fantastic Mr Fox to inspire their news reports and successfully demonstrated their understanding of journalistic conventions.



Outdoor learning and data-handling skills were developed through bird-watching sessions inspired by the RSPB. Pupils practised observing carefully, recording tallies and creating simple graphs. These activities supported their scientific enquiry skills and helped strengthen their understanding of accurate data collection.



Creative work has centred around birds and three-dimensional design. Pupils explored the styles of Charley Harper, Paul Klee and Jackie Morris, then used photographs of local birds as a basis for observational sketches. These sketches were developed into clay bird models where pupils used techniques such as conditioning, scoring and adding texture and colour.

Pupils also created plasticine models of Lord Ganesha as part of learning about Ganesh Chaturthi, supporting both cultural awareness and fine motor development.



In science, pupils studied the skeleton and movement, as well as the causes and impact of deforestation. They explored how deforestation affects wildlife, indigenous communities and the climate, and learned practical ways to reduce harm, such as recycling paper and planting trees. A visit from Size of Wales enhanced this work by giving pupils the opportunity to learn about biodiversity, climate links and global environmental issues.

Humanities lessons focused on the needs of animals and the ethics of zoos. Pupils discussed what animals require to thrive and explored both sides of the debate around keeping animals in zoos. Cultural learning included Chinese New Year,

where classes learned about the zodiac story, traditional decorations, foods and the themes of luck and new beginnings.

Enrichment opportunities this term included a Creative Careers Workshop for Year 9 on inclusive screenwriting, introducing pupils to film story structure and accessible approaches to storytelling. World Book Day was celebrated through costume activities, book sharing and a visit to the local library, where pupils showed excellent behaviour and a strong interest in reading.



For Internet Safety Day 2026, pupils engaged in a programme of activities and live online sessions delivered by the BBC and Adobe Live. They explored privacy, online bullying, evaluating information and managing screen time. Practical tasks included creating secure passwords and adjusting privacy settings. Staff also shared guidance for families through the school website to support continued discussions at home.

The unit also participated in the Rotary Welsh Schools Disability Gymnastics Championships. Pupils competed in Floor, Vault and Beam at various levels and demonstrated increased control, confidence and perseverance. Their positive behaviour and teamwork throughout the day were particularly impressive.



Health and Wellbeing learning has focused on Dreams and Goals and Healthy Me. Pupils explored how to set achievable goals, manage setbacks and recognise the emotions linked to ambition and progress. They also learned about safety, hygiene, balanced nutrition, sleep, physical activity and recognising risky situations.



Behaviour and wellbeing across the unit remain positive. Pupils are engaging well with routines, creative activities and outdoor learning. Staff provide continued support for attendance and follow school policy for any safeguarding or welfare concerns.

Staff have taken part in professional development to build confidence in teaching coding through Minecraft Education and Micro:bit MakeCode. Training focused on creating accessible lessons, linking coding to other curriculum areas and using block-based programming to support a range of learning needs. Staff are now working collaboratively to develop lessons and enrichment sessions that build pupils' foundational coding skills.

Overall, it has been a productive and engaging term for the Key Stage 3 MLD Unit. Pupils have enjoyed a wide variety of practical and community-based learning, and staff look forward to building on this progress in the summer term.

Key Stage 3 – Moderate Learning Difficulties Unit (Bryncoch)

This term, the focus across the Key Stage 4 MLD provision has been on consolidating learning, completing coursework and preparing for assessments. Staff have been working closely with pupils to maintain motivation, build confidence and ensure that everyone is as well prepared as possible for the upcoming exam period.

Coursework and exam preparation have been a central part of learning. Pupils have been supported through revision activities, including working with past papers to help them become familiar with exam formats and question styles. Staff continue to provide personalised guidance to help pupils manage their workload and maintain steady progress.



Assistive technology continues to play an important role in supporting access to learning. Pupils are regularly using NVDA to help them work through past papers and written coursework tasks. This tool promotes independence and helps pupils engage more confidently with exam-style materials.

Reading assessments carried out this term have shown strong progress in both accuracy and comprehension. These improvements reflect the combined effort of pupils, teachers and support staff, as well as the consistent focus on developing literacy skills across the curriculum.

Preparations are underway for the upcoming Art Exhibition, where pupils will have the opportunity to showcase their work and celebrate their creativity. This event offers families and the wider school community an opportunity to see the impressive standard of artwork produced this year.

Pupils also took part in a Work Skills Day in partnership with Careers Wales. The day included workshops delivered by Neuro Kind Careers, mock interviews with visiting employers, and sessions designed to strengthen literacy, numeracy and problem-solving skills linked to the world of work. These experiences helped pupils build confidence, practise communication and deepen their understanding of future pathways.



The CWRE Level 1 qualification has now been fully submitted. This is an important milestone for the cohort, supporting their development in independence, employability and future planning.



We are pleased that work experience will be reintroduced for all Year 11 pupils in early June. After several years without this opportunity, arrangements have now been confirmed to allow learners to access meaningful placements. This development supports independence, confidence and practical experience as pupils prepare for post-16 transition.

The Legacy Team has continued to contribute positively within classes. Their support has helped enrich learning experiences and strengthen relationships, including delivering enjoyable seasonal activities that encouraged teamwork and engagement.



Throughout the year, pupils have been offered meaningful enrichment activities. These have included the Duke of Edinburgh Awards Presentation, where we celebrated pupils who completed their Bronze Award, and recognised a former pupil who achieved Silver. Pupils demonstrated resilience, determination and teamwork across all elements of the programme.

College visits have continued to support pupils with their post-16 planning by giving them first-hand experience of further education environments. Additional opportunities such as Industry Insight Sessions in Hospitality and Construction, attendance at the ALN Careers Fair, cycling activities and golf sessions have provided valuable practical experiences. These activities help pupils develop independence, confidence and a clearer understanding of their future options.



Overall, this has been a productive and rewarding term for the KS4 MLD provision. Pupils have demonstrated resilience, commitment and maturity as they work towards completing their qualifications. Staff look forward to continuing this positive momentum into the summer term.

Key Stage 3 & 4 – Aspire ASD Unit (Bryncoch)

In Key Stage 3, the Aspire curriculum has centred on the theme of change. Pupils have explored this idea through a range of activities and texts, including work based on The Iron Man and a study of inventions. They have discussed how developments in technology and society have influenced the world, and whether all change is beneficial. These learning experiences have encouraged thoughtful discussion and supported the development of critical thinking skills.

In Key Stage 4, pupils have continued working towards the completion of their coursework and qualifications. Staff have provided structured support to help learners remain engaged with their studies and make consistent progress through the requirements of their courses.

Pupils across the Aspire provision have also taken part in community-based experiences. Visits have included trips to the local food bank and other community settings, allowing pupils to develop an understanding of their local area and the importance of contributing positively to the wider community. These opportunities help pupils connect their learning with real-life contexts and build confidence beyond the classroom.

Staff have also taken part in professional learning focused on assistive technology. This training has increased awareness of tools and strategies that can support pupils' access to learning and promote greater independence. By expanding their

knowledge in this area, staff are better equipped to provide tailored support that meets the individual needs of learners within the provision.

Key Stage 2 – Learning Support Centre (Bryncoch)

Pupils in the Learning Support Centre have taken part in a wide range of activities that encouraged the use of their five senses. They have enjoyed simple cooking tasks and created their own ideas for a healthy meal. As part of this work, pupils learned about food hygiene and explored the nutritional value of different foods. They also sorted foods into groups, identifying which support healthy teeth, provide energy or help us grow, as well as recognising foods that can make us unwell if eaten too often.

Pupils have taken part in discussions about different sports and the equipment needed for each one. They have made very good use of the Cruyff Court this term and have enjoyed basketball, football and rugby activities. Many pupils have also been completing daily exercise on the running track by walking or running ten laps each day.

Learning this term has also included work on the cost of living. Pupils used the internet to compare the prices of everyday items such as bread, newspapers, TV licences and petrol. They then compared these prices with the cost of the same items in 2016 to identify changes over time.

In mathematics, pupils explored the school environment to identify plane and solid shapes. They used vocabulary such as shorter, longer, bigger, smaller, high, low, narrow and wide to describe what they found.

Pupils produced descriptive writing based on the qualities of a good friendship. They discussed the characteristics of a good friend and were supported to create simple but interesting sentences by adding adjectives and similes.

Trips this term have included a visit to the Museum of Welsh Life at St Fagans, where pupils explored the historic buildings and compared rooms, furniture and objects in the Rhyd y car Ironworkers' houses. They also enjoyed a mountain biking session at Afan Forest Park, which included a lesson on the importance of safe riding. Weekly swimming sessions have continued at the Afan Valley pool, where pupils worked towards confidence, distance badges and certificates.

Staff within the provision have also received guidance and support in Sensory Circuits and Zones of Regulation to help strengthen their ability to meet pupils' needs effectively.

Key Stage 3 – BESN Unit (Theodore Road, Port Talbot)

We have had a positive and productive start to the Spring Term at Theodore Road. Our curriculum continues to offer a rich and varied learning experience that supports pupils according to their individual needs. Learners are grouped based on how they learn and present in the classroom rather than by age or diagnosis. This approach allows us to provide targeted support that is both meaningful and effective.

Daily literacy and numeracy remain at the heart of our provision, complemented by science, humanities and expressive arts. Many of our pupils find reading and writing challenging, so hands-on, practical learning plays an important role in helping them build confidence and develop key skills. Activities such as Forest Schools, design technology and cookery offer pupils opportunities to explore their abilities, work collaboratively and experience success in a range of contexts.



This term, pupils have been enjoying bushcraft lessons with Ancient Boar. They have also taken part in surfing and skateboarding sessions provided by Surfability Wales. These experiences help pupils develop resilience, coordination and self-belief while having fun and trying new challenges.



A wide range of physical and wellbeing activities continues to support pupils across the unit. These include weekly Bulldogs Boxing sessions, swimming twice a week and dedicated PE lessons. Each activity promotes physical health, emotional wellbeing and positive routines.

We are fortunate to have valuable support from several professionals who make a significant difference to pupils' development. These include our school-based counsellor, Jodie James, as well as Rhian Williams, PC Dan Garlik and our Cynnydd team members Liam, Kane and Steve. Their combined input helps us meet pupils' social, emotional and wellbeing needs in a consistent and supportive way.

Pupils have enjoyed a number of trips this term. These have included free cinema visits, a trip to Cardiff Airport to explore aeroplanes and a visit to the Big Pit Museum. Learners also took part in a hike on Drummau Mountain and enjoyed rockpooling and a coastal walk in Porthcawl. Each experience helps pupils connect their learning with the wider world and develop confidence beyond the classroom.

Photographs from Forest Schools, cookery and other activities show the high levels of engagement and enjoyment across the unit and reflect the supportive environment we continue to build.



Key Stage 4 – BESN Unit (Velindre, Port Talbot)

Our KS4 provision at Velindre has continued to work hard throughout a busy and productive term. Both Year 10 and Year 11 pupils have been preparing for GCSE and Entry Level assessments, and staff have supported them closely to ensure they remain on track with coursework and revision.

Pupils have benefited from a range of specialist external support this term. Adferiad workers have continued delivering sessions focused on substance awareness, personal safety and healthy decision making. These sessions complement our wider safeguarding curriculum and help reinforce protective behaviours. Careers advisers have also worked with pupils to explore future pathways, including college courses,

vocational routes and the development of employability skills. In addition, our ongoing partnership with the Legacy Team has provided pupils with structured activities such as gym sessions, mentoring and wellbeing support. Pupils have responded positively to the consistent guidance and role modelling these sessions offer.

We recently hosted a Violence and Radicalisation Awareness Talk delivered by external specialists. The aim of this session was to support pupils in developing a clear understanding of personal safety, online risks, peer influence and wider community issues. Pupils showed maturity throughout the session, asked thoughtful questions and engaged in meaningful discussion.

Pupils have continued to work towards a range of practical qualifications that support key life skills. These include the Food Hygiene course, which strengthens safe food handling skills, and the First Aid course, which helps pupils build confidence in responding to everyday situations. These qualifications are an important part of preparing pupils for adulthood and future employment.

Two pupils have continued to represent Ysgol Hendrefelin on the County Mental Health Forum for Schools. Their involvement has provided valuable opportunities for leadership, teamwork and communication. This month, they hosted the forum meeting at Velindre, welcoming pupils and staff from across the county. The event was very well received, and both pupils represented the school with confidence and maturity. Visiting schools also had the chance to see our provision in action and gain a deeper understanding of how we support learners at Velindre.

Pupils have continued to access vocational and practical learning opportunities throughout the term. Sessions in welding and hairdressing gave pupils hands-on experience in real-world environments and helped them explore industry-linked skills. These activities also support the development of teamwork, problem solving and communication.

Health and wellbeing has remained a core focus. Through collaborative work with the Legacy Team, pupils have participated in regular gym sessions that support physical fitness, emotional regulation and positive routines. Staff have reported increased engagement and improved relationships as a result of these activities.

We have also begun implementing Wave 1 of the new GCSEs, helping pupils and staff become familiar with updated course structures and assessment expectations in English and mathematics. Staff are adapting planning to reflect these changes and preparing pupils for the transition to the new qualifications. We are now reviewing upcoming Wave 2 and Wave 3 qualifications to ensure the provision remains aligned with learner needs. Ongoing training continues to strengthen our provision. This includes support from James Marshman, our Occupational Therapist, who has delivered ongoing training in the Zones of Regulation. Staff delivering emotional

literacy work are also benefiting from continued ELSA supervision to ensure high-quality practice.

Overall, the KS4 BESN provision at Velindre has enjoyed a purposeful and meaningful term. Pupils have engaged well with their learning, accessed valuable experiences and continued to build the skills they need for life beyond school.

Residential Unit

The Spring Term has been an enjoyable and engaging period for pupils and staff within the Residential Unit. We were pleased to welcome three new members of staff to the team, including a new night sitter. All new colleagues have settled in well and are already building positive relationships with the pupils.

Throughout the term, pupils have taken part in a variety of activities both on and off site. A highlight was a visit to Pentwyn Farm, where pupils had the chance to meet the animals and even hold a baby lamb. This experience was particularly memorable and created a real sense of excitement.

We also celebrated several cultural and seasonal events. For St David's Day, pupils enjoyed tasting traditional Welsh foods and learning more about Welsh heritage. Chinese New Year was marked with a cooking activity where pupils prepared their own Chinese style meal, which was both fun and delicious. For St Dwynwen's Day, pupils took part in creative arts and crafts activities linked to the celebration.

Another memorable outing was a trip to the Swansea Grand Theatre to watch Hop the Hopeful Hare. Pupils thoroughly enjoyed the performance and the opportunity to visit a live theatre setting.

This term, pupils have continued to develop their independence through our life skills programme. They have practised washing and drying dishes, vacuuming their bedrooms, making their beds, packing overnight bags, using the washing machine and making a hot drink. These practical experiences are helping pupils build confidence while developing important skills for daily life.

Overall, it has been a positive and purposeful term for the Residential Unit. Pupils have enjoyed new experiences, celebrated important events and made clear progress in developing their independence and self-confidence.