

Penyrheol Self Evaluation – Academic Year 2025/26

Progress against 25/26 Priorities

Vision and Leadership

We have made strong progress in a relatively short period of time on ensuring whole school and departmental quality assurance has a positive impact on learner outcomes. Whilst we are in the early stages of this new model, there is clear evidence that we have successfully weaved together our golden threads of QA, self-evaluation, improvement planning, professional learning and performance development review.

We have been able to use QA to measure the impact of Professional Learning and Wider Teacher Development and have seen improvements in the following areas:

- Whole school participation strategies like effective whiteboard use for checking for understanding (Many teachers circulate the room well and use mini whiteboards with effect. Modelling is used well – Estyn)
- Priorities such as High Expectations, Extended Writing, Oracy
- Classroom Management (Many pupils engage well in their learning, respond well and show perseverance and focus – Estyn)
- Strengthen Explanation and Modelling including Use of I do -> we do -> you do

QA has also been used to drive bespoke professional learning sessions in 2026 in response to emerging issues in the following areas:

- Use of DIRT Feedback (In many lessons there are appropriate DIRT tasks- Estyn)
- Increasing reading opportunities in the classroom (There is effective reading and this is developed across the curriculum – Estyn)
- Effective mixed attainment teaching (In many lessons, pace is appropriate and matches pupils' abilities – Estyn)

Estyn commented that

- Leaders consider the impact of strategies on pupil progress.
- Staff targets are appropriate and supported by professional learning and review process.
- Recently the School has refined its self-evaluation processes, which include a broad range of quality assurance activities. There are structured prompts that help senior leaders and make middle leaders in terms of consistency, and this is helping to improve their understanding for areas of improvement.
- Improvement planning is generally coherent.
- Departmental improvement plans are appropriate and monitored.

We have made strong progress in developing a coherent and evidence-informed strategy to reduce the impact of disadvantage on learner outcomes. Over the past year, we have strengthened the alignment between teaching and learning, data analysis, intervention, wellbeing support and self-evaluation to ensure that disadvantaged learners are identified early and supported effectively.

We have successfully embedded a number of key approaches that are having a positive impact on engagement and progression for disadvantaged learners, including:

- The implementation of the EXPERT pedagogical framework and Pedagogy on a Page guidance, ensuring greater consistency in high-quality teaching.
- Increased use of retrieval practice, explicit modelling, structured questioning and mini-whiteboards to maximise participation and check understanding.
- More robust tracking of disadvantaged learners through SMID, quintile analysis and intervention reviews.
- Targeted mentoring programmes and literacy/numeracy interventions informed by assessment and wellbeing data.
- Improved collaboration between curriculum, wellbeing and pastoral teams through the use of Provision Map and PAWB referrals.

Provision Map data indicates that the majority of pupils accessing targeted intervention are making expected progress, with a significant proportion exceeding expected progress against intervention outcomes. The school's investment in wellbeing, attendance and curriculum support through PDG funding has strengthened our ability to remove barriers to learning and provide timely support for vulnerable learners.

Estyn's findings provide external validation of this work:

- Many teachers circulate the room well and use mini whiteboards with effect.
- Teaching is well planned.
- Pupils make notable progress.

In May 2026, Estyn commented that leaders have taken steps to reduce the impact of poverty however eFSM generally perform less well than their counterparts in other areas of Wales. This evaluation will be updated when GCSE results

are published in August 2026. The next stage of this work is to ensure that the improvements we are seeing in teaching, engagement and intervention translate into sustained improvements in attainment and a further narrowing of the attainment gap.

We have made strong progress in strengthening both the opportunities for, and impact of, pupil leadership across the school. Pupil voice is now embedded more strategically within school improvement processes and pupils play an increasingly important role in evaluating provision, shaping priorities and contributing to decision-making at all levels of the organisation.

We have successfully expanded leadership opportunities through:

- Penyrheol Parliament and the development of pupil-led school improvement priorities.
- The work of Pupil Governors, who contribute directly to governing body discussions and self-evaluation activities.
- Reading Buddies, Core Value Ambassadors and pupil-led enrichment activities.
- Pupil involvement in quality assurance activities, including teaching and learning reviews and learner voice exercises.
- The introduction of regular "You Said, We Did" communication, increasing transparency and accountability.

There is clear evidence that pupil voice is leading to tangible improvements across the school. Feedback from Penyrheol Parliament has directly influenced developments relating to toilet supervision, canteen organisation, school uniform, anti-racism work, rewards systems and environmental improvements. Pupils are increasingly able to articulate school priorities and understand how their contributions influence change.

Estyn recognised the strength of leadership and the positive contribution pupils make to school life noting that there is a strong culture of pupil leadership and this influences the life and the strategic direction of the school.

The development of pupil leadership has also supported wider priorities around belonging, wellbeing and engagement by ensuring that pupils feel listened to and valued within the school community. Moving forward, we will strengthen our evaluation of impact further by gathering more systematic evidence on the contribution pupil leadership makes to attendance, wellbeing, belonging and learner engagement.

	Progress has been made towards developing a reading culture across the school. Reading has been given a significantly higher profile through a range of whole-school initiatives, including increased opportunities for disciplinary reading across the curriculum, the continued development of the library provision, Reading Buddies, literacy interventions and the implementation of the Penyrheol Reading Project. The Reading Project has been particularly successful, with Year 7 pupils making an average of 5–10 months progress in reading age over a 12-week period. Pupil voice showed that 98% of learners enjoyed the programme and 68% reported increased confidence when approaching challenging texts. As a result of this work, attitudes towards reading have improved, with pupil surveys indicating that the proportion of pupils reporting that they enjoy reading increased from 54% in September to 71% in May. Reading is now a visible feature of learning across the curriculum, supported by transition work with cluster primary schools to strengthen phonics, reading fluency and literacy progression from Year 6 into Year 7. Quality assurance activities demonstrate strong evidence of regular reading opportunities across subjects, with many learners engaging successfully with increasingly challenging texts and disciplinary reading activities. This reflects Estyn's finding that reading is developed effectively across the curriculum and that many pupils demonstrate appropriate reading skills. The school has successfully implemented the actions identified within the SIP and there is evidence that reading is becoming a more visible and valued aspect of school life.
Wellbeing, Equity & Inclusion (Behaviour, Attendance and Safeguarding)	Improving our whole school attendance has remained a challenge in this academic year. Despite implementing numerous strategies to improve whole school attendance, the strategies have not yet been fully embedded across the whole school and the impact of these strategies has unfortunately not improved whole school attendance. The following strategies have been implemented: Virtual School, CFLOW, PSO working with EBSA pupils, regular meetings between PWLs and EWO which has involved tracking of every pupil's attendance by Attendance PSO. Unfortunately, our whole school attendance has decreased from 87.4% to 86.5% over the academic year 25/26. This is still a 1% increase from academic year 23/24 where attendance was 85.6%. We have 12 learners who attend the Virtual School and there has been a positive impact of the attendance and wellbeing of all pupils who have attended the Virtual School. Attendance initiatives such as 1% Better have had a small but positive impact on attendance and 317 pupils improved their attendance by 1% over the three-week period. Our EBSA pupils have also had improvements in their individual attendance, for example six EBSA pupils have increased their attendance by 10% (Pupil A 63% -> 75%, Pupil B 37% -> 50%). Our CFLOW worker continues to work with pupils and families where attendance is between 50% and 60%. The attendance of FSM learners has been tracked and compared to non-FSM learners. We have a robust reward scheme for attendance and vouchers are given to FSM learners with improved attendance. At a year group level, we also have form breakfasts for the form with the best attendance in the Year group. Estyn have given a recommendation of improving attendance but it would have been a key priority for 2026/27 even without Estyn's visit.

	The Thrive provision has been successfully set up and the vision and culture of the provision is being developed, Thrive has had a positive impact on behaviour in school, with the number of exclusions in academic year 25/26 being reduced by 15%. Pupils are also referred to Thrive following a post-exclusion meeting for restorative work linked to the behaviour that led to an exclusion. The Thrive provision has helped us in our journey to becoming an anti-racist school as intervention and empathy work has been undertaken for any discriminatory behaviour or attitudes shown by our learners. This includes racism, homophobia and misogyny. PWL's refer pupils into Thrive to complete a series of empathy tasks that address these issues. Over the last academic year there have been 13 referrals for racist/homophobic comments. The journey to becoming an Anti-racist school has also been supported by all staff receiving training in September 2025 from Show Racism the Red Card, this has enabled all staff to become more confident when dealing and reporting any racial incidents. PWL's are able to refer pupils into the Thrive room and pupils' complete intervention work linked to their behaviour. Over the last academic year there have been nearly 200 referrals from PWLs. All resources and tasks are linked to the Promoting Positive Behaviour policy and are accessed through the Thrive Google Classroom area. There have been 32 pupils who are Red and Amber on the BRAYG list that have received bespoke behaviour mentoring and 40% of these pupils are FSM. This mentoring has had a positive effect on pupils with the most challenging behaviour.
Wellbeing, Equity & Inclusion (Care, Support & Guidance)	The school has made strong progress in embedding its revised pastoral structure and developing a highly visible, accessible and responsive wellbeing system. Significant investment through the Pupil Development Grant has supported the development of PAWB and enhanced pastoral support, ensuring that pupils can access intervention quickly when concerns arise. Central to this success has been the introduction of the Progress and Wellbeing Leaders (PWLs) and Progress and Wellbeing Coaches (PWCs), which has strengthened relationships between pupils and staff and improved the school's ability to identify and respond to wellbeing concerns at an early stage. The revised structure has created clearer lines of communication between pupils, families and pastoral teams, ensuring that support is coordinated effectively and tailored to individual needs. Evidence demonstrates substantial engagement with the new model in PAWB, with 133 pupils receiving ongoing mentoring, 175 pupils accessing support through the wellbeing referral system within 72 hours and 274 pupils participating in interventions and wellbeing activities. PWLs and PWCs have also played a key role in delivering mentoring, monitoring attendance and wellbeing, supporting referrals and ensuring pupils access appropriate interventions through the Provision Map and wider pastoral services. Provision Map data indicates that the vast majority of pupils receiving targeted wellbeing interventions are making positive progress, with approximately 82% demonstrating expected progress against intervention outcomes and a further 38% exceeding expected progress following six-week intervention cycles. Internal wellbeing measures also show improvements in confidence, engagement and readiness to learn for many pupils accessing support. The introduction of regular wellbeing monitoring, mentoring programmes and targeted intervention has strengthened the school's proactive

	approach to care and support. This aligns closely with Estyn's findings that pupils feel safe and supported, that care, support and guidance are effective and that staff demonstrate a strong commitment to wellbeing and inclusion. While the breadth and quality of provision are significant strengths, the next stage is to further demonstrate the impact of the pastoral structure on measurable outcomes, particularly attendance, engagement and sustained wellbeing improvements, in line with the school's evaluation processes and Estyn's recommendation regarding attendance.
Wellbeing, Equity & Inclusion (ALN and Inclusion)	The ADHD toolkit has been produced and training delivered by Swansea LA staff. CMD has been an active part of this working group. Swansea LA will roll out further training in academic year 26/27 for teachers across Swansea. Differentiation slot drop-ins were not as successful as planned due to time commitments from staff and preparation for ESTYN. Whole school differentiation training completed by ADM – book look show clear use of visuals, modelling and differentiated work where appropriate. All ALN pupil one-page profiles, IDPs up to date. Book looks completed as part of ALN Review Weeks. The ALN book looks show clear improvement in assessment and feedback, with more purposeful tasks, increased pupil engagement, and better evidence of pupils responding to feedback through DIRT and literacy-focused activities. Marking is more up to date, and pupils are increasingly beginning to understand how to improve their work. However, practice remains inconsistent, with gaps in work, incomplete tasks, and variable use of feedback strategies such as outcome sheets, star targets, and verbal feedback recording. To improve further, more consistent expectations are needed with increased pupil accountability for acting on feedback, and clearer, sustained evidence of progress across all books. ESTYN x 2 Spotlights: STF • Leadership is a strength. • Pupils make notable progress. • Staff have high expectations. • Teaching is well planned. • It's an inclusive environment that has engaging resources. ALN • Staff demonstrate a strong commitment to ALN and promote a caring and nurturing environment. • Pupils contribute to the life of the school well. • Pupils are confident. • The ALN team work productively with partner agencies. • Social, emotional and literacy skills are developed well.

	• Leaders monitor the progress of individuals closely and pupils make good progress. • Care, support and guidance are effective in the provision and work well with partners. • The STF pupils participate across the school. • Pupils feel safe and supported.
Curriculum, Teaching & Learning	The actions within the Learning, Teaching and Curriculum strand of the School Improvement Plan have been fully implemented and have led to a marked improvement in the consistency and coherence of provision across the school. Evidence from the school's quality assurance processes—lesson observations, work scrutiny and departmental evaluations—alongside Estyn inspection findings, demonstrate that the school has successfully secured a position where teaching is increasingly consistent, with many lessons leading to suitable progress and most pupils engaging positively in their learning within a well-structured curriculum. A particular strength underpinning this progress is the robustness of the school's quality assurance model. The systematic use of lesson observations, whole-school work scrutiny and departmental QA synthesis has ensured that improvement priorities have been clearly identified and addressed through professional learning. This strong alignment between QA, professional learning and classroom practice is reflected in the increasing consistency now evident across many departments. Estyn also recognised that teaching is generally well planned and that leaders have established effective approaches to improving practice. The priority to 'embed consistently high academic expectations and intellectual challenge in classroom practice' has been successfully implemented and has had a clear impact on the culture for learning across the school. Quality assurance evidence shows that expectations for engagement and participation are now well established, with 97.9% of lessons demonstrating positive attitudes to learning and most pupils sustaining concentration and working purposefully. This is reinforced by inspection findings, which note that many lessons are calm, purposeful and characterised by positive relationships, and that pupils approach learning with focus and perseverance. Teaching is increasingly consistent, with many teachers using clear explanations, structured modelling and appropriate pacing to support learning. As a result, most pupils engage positively in their learning, and many make suitable progress.. The next phase is to build on this secure foundation by ensuring that these expectations are reflected as consistently in the level of academic challenge, supporting pupils to think more deeply and apply their learning in more demanding contexts. The priority to 'further develop high-quality oracy skills to enhance learning across the curriculum' has led to clear improvements in participation and engagement. Quality assurance shows that 72.9% of lessons included a focus on oracy, with most pupils contributing effectively in discussion and collaborative activities. This is supported by Estyn findings that many pupils listen carefully, engage well in 'turn and talk' and use subject-specific vocabulary appropriately. Oracy is now a regular feature of classroom practice and has improved the extent to which pupils are actively involved in learning. Moving forward, there is an opportunity to build on this by developing the quality and

sophistication of pupils' responses, ensuring that questioning and discussion are used more consistently to probe understanding, extend thinking and develop more detailed explanations. (ESTYN 2026)

The priority 'to further develop and embed high-quality extended writing opportunities across relevant subject areas' has led to improved consistency in how writing is incorporated into curriculum planning, assessments and classroom practice. This has been supported through whole-school approaches to literacy, CPD and QA focus on extended outcomes in books. Work scrutiny evidence shows that many departments now plan for writing within sequences of learning, and many pupils are able to record their learning appropriately and use relevant subject vocabulary. Inspection evidence also confirms that pupils have appropriate opportunities to write for purpose and audience across the curriculum. While these *approaches* are now established, the next stage is to further embed opportunities for extended, independent writing, ensuring that pupils are consistently required to develop ideas in more depth and across a wider range of subjects.

The priority to further develop pupils' numeracy skills across a range of subject areas has been a sustained focus throughout the year, supported by curriculum mapping, targeted professional learning and an increasing emphasis on cross-curricular application. Inspection evidence confirms that most pupils demonstrate appropriate basic numeracy skills and engage positively with mathematical tasks. QA evidence also shows that numeracy is increasingly visible in classroom practice, particularly within relevant subject areas. The recent Estyn inspection has identified numeracy as a key area for further development, particularly in relation to the depth of pupils' application and reasoning. Inspection evidence indicates that there is a suitable range of opportunities for pupils to develop their numeracy skills across subjects. This reflects the school's own evaluation that, while these opportunities are in place, there remains a need to strengthen how consistently pupils are required to apply their skills in more complex and unfamiliar contexts. As such, the recommendation provides a clear next step to build on the work already undertaken, ensuring that numeracy plays a stronger role in supporting deeper thinking and problem-solving across the curriculum.

The priority to 'further develop & embed DCF skills across the curriculum' has led to increased opportunities for pupils to use digital tools to support their learning, supported by targeted professional learning and the integration of digital platforms such as Teams. QA evidence indicates that digital skills are present in a growing number of lessons, particularly within subjects where their application is most relevant. Estyn similarly recognised that pupils have appropriate opportunities to develop digital skills across a range of subjects, supported by staff training. Building on this secure and improving position, the school is now moving towards a more subject-specific model of digital competence, where departments are identifying and prioritising the digital skills that best enhance learning within their disciplines. This is enabling a shift away from generic coverage towards more meaningful and purposeful application of DCF, aligned with subject content and pedagogy. The development of a digital skills toolkit is supporting departments in this work, providing clarity and shared expectations, while also allowing flexibility for subject-specific

interpretation. The development of digital competency across the curriculum has been recognised through the school's achievement of Silver CyberFirst status.

The next phase of development will focus on refining and deepening this subject-led approach, supporting departments to embed these identified skills consistently and to use digital tools to enhance independent learning, research and higher-order thinking. This represents a progression from establishing opportunities for digital use to ensuring that digital competence is deliberately and effectively integrated to strengthen learning.

Overall, the Learning, Teaching and Curriculum priorities have secured a consistent and coherent approach to teaching and learning across the school. The strength of the QA processes has ensured that improvement work has been well targeted and sustained, resulting in clear improvements in classroom practice. Most pupils now experience structured, purposeful learning and, in many cases, make suitable progress within a well-planned curriculum.

The school is now well placed to move into the next phase of development, focusing on ensuring that this consistency leads to greater depth of learning, higher levels of challenge and increased independence for all pupils.