



Ysgol Gyfun

PENYRHEOL
Comprehensive School

Teaching and Learning Policy

Governor Subcommittee Responsible: Curriculum, Teaching & Learning

BELONG
PARCHU

THRIVE
DYHEU

ASPIRE
FFYNNU

RESPECT
PERTHYN

Teaching and Learning at Penyrheol – From Novice to Expert.

At Penyrheol, we work together to support our pupils to become the very best that they can be. In each subject discipline, we provide the means for our pupils to know more, organise and integrate their knowledge more effectively, have better strategies for accessing knowledge and using it, and self-regulate and have different motivations.

Our approach is rooted in both educational research and the specific needs of our school community, with a focus on structured, deliberate teaching practices that enhance learning at every stage.

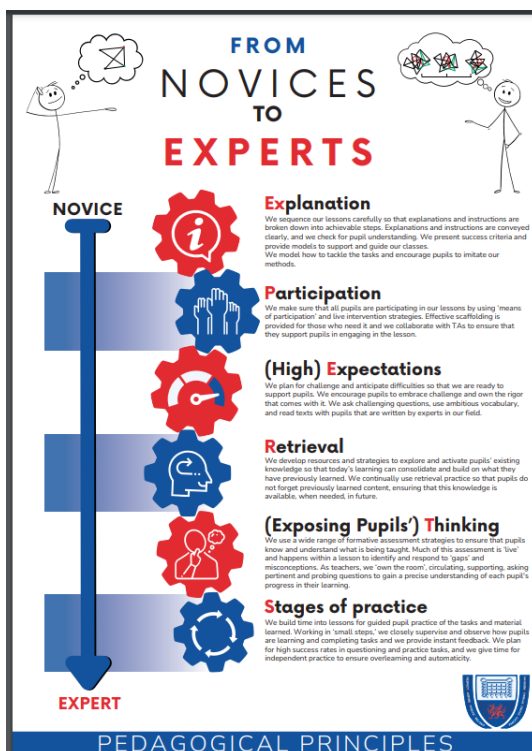
Our teaching and learning model is shaped by cognitive science and evidence-based teaching strategies. Research on cognitive load theory (e.g. Kirschner et al, 2018), the importance of retrieval practice, and the benefit of explicit instruction influences our practice.

It is in this way that we support our pupils in moving from **novice** to **expert**.

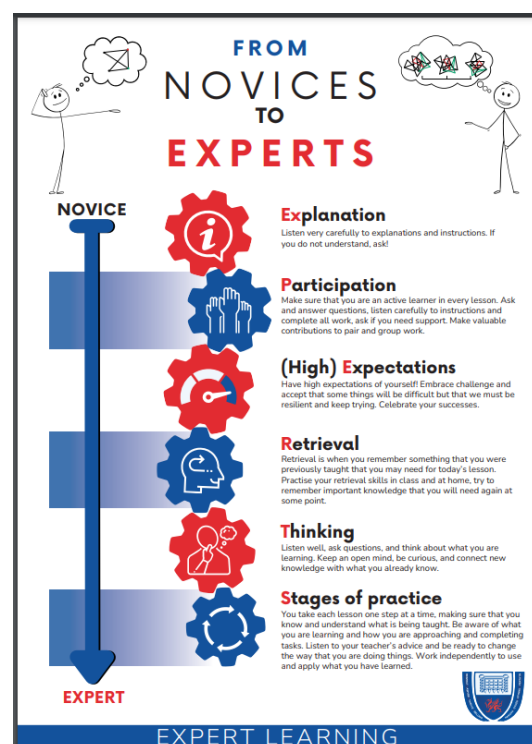
Our teaching serves six important, meaningful and analytically distinct principles. Each principle contributes to the overall process of teaching in a lesson or series of lessons and is our shared vision of effective teaching and learning. The teaching strategies and techniques that serve these principles will differ according to what is being taught and will always be specific to the subject area and relevant to that particular lesson.

Our pedagogical principles are designed to support teachers in delivering high quality teaching while guiding pupils to focus on the learning process and develop effective learning strategies. The principles for pupils are wholly focussed on developing their awareness and knowledge of how they learn, helping them to understand that adopting improved learning techniques directly contributes to their progress and overall success.

Teacher Poster



Pupil Poster



Our principles have been developed in line with the Curriculum for Wales' four purposes, 12 pedagogical principles and principles of progression which underpin our own progression curriculum. It is in this way that we ensure that there is strong progress in learning for our pupils. The most effective principles for Penyrheol, its teachers and pupils, have been decided upon after thorough educational research and in consultation with governors and teaching staff. The principles inform our professional learning offer and improvement planning and are designed to support teachers in developing their pedagogical methods, approaches and routines.

Teachers are responsible for developing the Four Purposes of the Curriculum for Wales for every child.

We support our pupils to become learners to become:

- ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives
- enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work
- ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world
- healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society

By prioritizing literacy, numeracy, and digital competency, forging strong relationships and using our subject knowledge and expertise, we ensure that pupils achieve meaningful progress.

Core Values

Teaching and learning at Penyrheol is underpinned by our core values: Respect, Aspire, Thrive, Belong. The principles have been specifically selected to enable, enhance and develop these.

Novice to Expert – the 6 pedagogical principles.

The acronym 'Experts' conveys the meaning and intention of learning at Penyrheol and is also easy to remember.

	Pedagogical Principles	Differentiation	Professional Learning
E X	Explanation	Rephrasing/Simplifying Choice of models Planning for misconceptions	Clarity of explanations High quality teacher talk Instruction Provision of models Teacher Modelling/Imitation Planning and sequencing lessons
P	Participation	Explicit teaching of vocabulary Worksheets (difficulty model) Teacher support	Participation ratio – means of participation Teaching vocabulary as knowledge Use of worksheets/workbooks High-leverage questioning



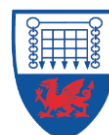
E	(High) Expectations	Planning for challenge and difficulties Choice of reading texts Support with reading texts	Challenge – own the challenge/ rigor Questioning Planning for challenge Disciplinary reading Ambitious Vocabulary
R	Retrieval	Resources exploring existing knowledge Closing gap techniques and resources	Exploration of existing knowledge Retrieval practice Making sense of new ideas – conceptions and confusions
T	(Exposing pupils') Thinking	Identifying and responding to gaps in learning/knowledge and misconceptions Range of questions Time for teacher support	Formative assessment strategies 'Live' assessment Own the room Questioning Time to think/work Summative Assessments
S	Stages of practice	Daily/weekly/monthly review – checking for knowledge retention Present material in small steps Questioning – practice new information and connect new material to prior knowledge Use of models/guided practice/scaffolding Independent practice 'I do', 'We do', 'You do'.	'I do', 'We do', 'You do'. Co-planning Guided practice

Why these principles?

Teaching and learning at Penyrheol is strongly focused on the philosophy that teachers and pupils know explicitly why they are doing what they are doing, and how they can do it more effectively. A wealth of evidence has been employed to develop principles that align with the most effective aspects of cognitive science, metacognition, and self-regulation, which, according to the EEF have “high impact for very low cost, based on extensive evidence” (EEF, 2021). Our ‘expert’ principles support teachers and pupils in planning, monitoring and evaluating their own learning. They also enable teachers to have greater certainty, clarity and confidence in the choices they make in the classroom as well as in how they explain these choices and model their thinking to pupils and colleagues.

Explanation

Teaching is explaining. If we don't explain clearly then we are not teaching – how many times have we given, what we think is a great explanation, only to be met by blank faces? Or worse, we ask ‘Does anyone not understand?’ We receive no response, only to discover, on assessing the next task that they did indeed, not understand. The heart of good teaching is the provision of excellent explanations. As Tom Sherrington says: “On the reputational scale, there is no doubt that teachers who explain things well ... accelerate the learning process for everyone through the clarity of the explanation.” Explaining learning to our pupils is a skill so we make sure that we are explaining clearly and effectively.



At Penyrheol, we reflect upon whether we are maximising the effectiveness of our explanations and essentially, we spend time planning the fundamental act of communicating our disciplines.

Participation

“Learning happens when people have to think hard” Prof. Rob Coe

Pupil participation in a lesson is fundamental to learning and progress in learning. Participation has been selected as a pedagogical principle in Penyrheol because we need to move away from the assumption that pupils are learning because they are engaged, quiet and seem to be listening. These are poor proxies for learning. Pupils may be busy and completing work but are they fully understanding and learning that work? They are engaged and motivated but are they understanding – are they getting things right? They are all well-behaved but how many are fully taking on board and retaining what is being taught? And even good answers might be based on cues given by the teacher or mimicry of other pupils. So these observable actions lead us to believe that learning is happening but actually, it might not be, and, in lots of cases, it isn't. When we are planning our lessons, we can't just assume participation.

Gauging pupils' participation is achieved through a variety of strategies, including effective questioning techniques, ensuring responses from all pupils through tools such as whiteboards or digital platforms, facilitating structured discussions/talk, designing structured, individual writing tasks, using interactive activities such as quizzes or polls, monitoring group work dynamics, and observing non-verbal cues like body language and engagement levels.

At Penyrheol, we plan for how many of our pupils will be participating in the lesson and how often and, we consider carefully how hard pupils are thinking when they *are* participating. We plan for the depth of thinking that pupils are doing. Our tasks and activities demand high thinking and participation ratio.

(High) Expectations

Teacher expectations have a direct impact on pupils' expectations of themselves and pupil engagement and achievement (*The Pygmalion Effect*). We need to take stock of our own thoughts/be aware of our expectations and how they are reached. E.g. expectations of a pupil we know to have behaviour problems, eFSM pupils, pupils who don't mix well, don't speak out in class, those who are easily distracted. **Carter G Woodson** an historian and author stated that 'real education means to inspire people to live more abundantly to learn to live with life as they find it and make it better'. It is our job to meet pupils where they are, not to decide what their ultimate destination is based on where they started. Teachers who have high expectations and think that their pupils are capable of learning and doing lots will set more challenging work and this leads to progress.

Teachers at Penyrheol project high expectations of all pupils. We plan lessons that challenge all pupils and our discourse with pupils engenders the belief that goals can be achieved. We know that teacher feedback is among the most powerful influences on achievement, and we adhere to John Hattie's research findings which show that feedback



needs to be 'purposeful, meaningful and compatible with prior knowledge' as well as relating to 'specific and clear goals' (Hattie, 2009, p.178).

Retrieval

In her book *'How to Create Retrieval Practice Activities for Elementary Students'* Megan Sumeracki outlines the evidence which shows that retrieval practice is one of the most effective evidence-based learning strategies. When we try to retrieve memories, we focus on reconstructing the pathway to the stored information, and we go over the sequence of neural activities that is required in order to bring a piece of information to mind. In re-studying we are focusing on the information, practically ignoring the pathway leading to it. When we use retrieval practice, we rehearse the entire pathway, not just the end goal. Much like navigation, knowing the way is as important as knowing the destination. Retrieval practice is the strategy to rehearse already learned information by trying to retrieve it from memory.

In Penyrheol, our curriculum and teaching and learning model is designed to meet the diverse needs of pupils. We recognise that every child brings a different background of knowledge and skills to the classroom. Therefore, the model begins by linking new learning to prior knowledge, allowing us to build on what pupils already know (Willingham, 2009) teachers develop resources and strategies to explore and activate pupils' existing knowledge so that today's learning can consolidate and build on what they have already learned. We continuously use retrieval practice so that pupils do not forget previously learned content, ensuring that this knowledge is available, when needed, in future.

Thinking (exposing pupils' thinking)

Exposing pupils' thinking refers to the reasoning processes and mental activities that pupils engage in when they are learning and interacting with the academic content that we present them with. This includes how they interpret the information that we give them, how they make sense of concepts that we have explained, the way in which they tackle problems that we have given them to solve, how they form opinions when we ask them for their point of view, and apply their understanding.

Teachers at Penyrheol plan and incorporate ways to evidence what pupils are thinking. We plan what we will do in the classroom to find out what is going through the minds of the pupils in front of us. We consider carefully what we say and how we explain concepts and investigate how our words land in the minds of pupils, what they understand and what they do with these.

Approaching teaching from this conceptual angle - by making pupils' thought processes visible - supports teachers because it:

- **Informs Instructional Strategies:** Helps teachers tailor their teaching methods to address pupils' specific needs and misconceptions.
- **Improves Assessment Accuracy:** Provides insights into pupil understanding, allowing for more accurate and formative assessments.
- **Promotes Reflective Practice:** Encourages us to reflect on our own teaching effectiveness and make informed adjustments to our approaches. Because when we



find that they have not understood and are not thinking about something a way that is helpful, we must do something about it.

- **Supports pupil-centred Learning:** a key principle of the CfW. Shifts the focus from teaching to learning, ensuring that pupil understanding drives instructional decisions.
- **Facilitates Professional Growth:** Enables teachers to develop a deeper understanding of how pupils learn, leading to improved teaching practices and better educational outcomes.

When we focus on exposing what pupils are thinking, we encourage pupils to think about their own thought processes, to self-regulate and develop a growth mindset.

Stages of Practice

Planning stages of practice when introducing a new concept to the class supports all pupils in mastering what they need to learn, suits novice learners (which most pupils are), nurtures self-efficacy and reduces anxiety. Pupils feel less anxious due to the clear modelling and the scaffolded opportunities to practise. These same factors support pupils to experience independent success, which in turn builds their self-efficacy.

In Penyrheol, teachers follow a series of steps, beginning with the teacher leading instruction and ending with pupils working independently:

I do

Teachers explain what pupils need to understand and/or model the process. This may include the teacher speaking their thoughts aloud as they model, sketching on a whiteboard or handling apparatus in a practical lesson to explain things verbally and visually. The process is broken down into manageable steps and demonstrates how each step is arrived at. Difficult points are stressed and differences between similar concepts are made distinct. More than one explanation or modelling process may be used until pupils show a clear understanding of what has been taught.

We do

Guided Practice, also known as the 'we do' component of an explicitly taught lesson, involves the teacher working through problems with students at the same time, step-by-step, while checking that they execute each step correctly. (Hollingsworth & Ybarra, 2017).

Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to work through several examples of the newly taught skill or concept together, as a class. This can be done in the form of faded worked examples where the teacher completes some of the steps and asks pupils to complete the remainder. We aim for a high success rate prior to releasing pupils who are ready to practise skills and tasks independently, to ensure that they will not practice errors. Understanding is continuously checked, and immediate, effective feedback is provided during the guided practice component of the lesson.

You do



When pupils are ready, teachers ask them to complete tasks independently – but only tasks similar to those covered earlier. Moving on to this stage too early can lead pupils to guess and/or struggle which impacts their motivation and self-esteem.

Teaching focuses on what pupils ‘must know’ and, for pupils to be successful, they need to have the knowledge and skills to approach the task unsupported.

This model of learning can take place several times in one lesson, it can be used to structure a lesson or can be employed over a series of lessons with each lesson picking up where the previous lesson finished.

Lesson content and structure

“The greatest impact on learning is the daily lived experiences of students in classrooms, and that is determined much more by how teachers teach than by what they teach.”

— **Dylan Wiliam, Embedded Formative Assessment**

Every subject is different, and every teacher has their own, unique teaching style. Classes will be made up of pupils with different needs and interests. Therefore, lessons will vary in nature, content and structure. However, across a series of lessons, teaching and learning will be driven by Penyrheol’s 6 pedagogical principles, supporting pupils from novice to expert.

Lessons at Penyrheol are fully inclusive, thoughtfully designed, and meticulously planned to ensure the needs and interests of all pupils are addressed. Our teachers bring their expertise and passion for their disciplines to the classroom, actively engaging and inspiring our pupils. Lessons are made relevant to real-life experiences, so that pupils understand the value of what they are learning. Progression in learning drives our curriculum and fortifies our approach to embedding the Curriculum for Wales, lessons reflect this by building pupils’ knowledge and skills incrementally within and across lessons, and within and across year groups. Each teacher is given an academic planner which is used to plan lessons over time.

The key elements of design that may contribute to the structure and sequence of learning in a lesson will include:

- **Threshold** – teachers greet pupils at the classroom door, establishing a positive tone for the lesson and personalizing their greetings to ensure each pupil feels recognized and valued
- **Do Now** – A short, accessible and engaging task is on the board, that pupils do as soon as they enter the room. This is an ideal opportunity for retrieval of knowledge.
- **Clear explanations** and expectations of learning.
- **Accessing and retrieval of prior knowledge** – use existing knowledge and prior learning as a starting point for next steps in learning.
- **Progression of learning** – breaking down new knowledge into manageable chunks and deepening knowledge, skills and learning experiences.
- **Plenary** – reflect upon and reinforce learning. Mini plenaries should take place throughout the lesson but at the end of the lesson should consolidate learning and enable planning of future lessons.



Differentiation

At Penyrheol, we understand that the way in which we differentiate is important. Sometimes, we simply believe that a child will not be capable of the work we are going to do, or we try to protect pupils from failure. However, creating differentiated worksheets immediately sends out a signal of lower expectations. Assigning low-level or repetitive work for pupils who we perceive as struggling is not the answer.

We understand that there will be barriers that prevent some of our pupils from accessing learning. These barriers may include complexity of vocabulary, information and concepts, time constraints, complexity of instructions and routines and presentation and response modes.

At Penyrheol, it is the responsibility of all teachers to meet the needs of all learners. Supporting our pupils in accessing their learning may include:

- Considering the seating proximity of the pupil to the teacher.
- Writing clear instructions on the board - or repeating instructions for individual pupils.
- Pre-teaching vocabulary and assessing background knowledge prior to teaching
- Providing visual prompts and scaffolds.
- Providing additional modelling and feedback.
- Providing additional time to complete tasks.
- Allowing pupils to demonstrate their learning in a range of ways.
- Adjusting the task to appropriately address identified learning needs.
- Using targeted, differentiated questions for flexible pupil groupings.
- Allowing for a quieter environment to participate in the activity.

Pupils with Additional Learning needs and requirements

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

[Penyrheol Comprehensive School Additional Learning Needs Policy](#)

It is the responsibility of all staff in Penyrheol to meet the learning needs and requirements of all pupils.

The school's ALNCo provides important information on learners with additional learning needs. In the 'Additional Learning Needs' section of the school's R drive, there is a 'pupil needs' list, together with IDPs. In addition, for specific learners, there are 'one-page profiles' compiled in conjunction with parents and pupils which provide an extra insight into the child's support needs.

The ALN department provides support to enable staff to meet the needs of pupils. This includes providing information, guidance on appropriate teaching strategies, and the adaptation and provision of teaching resources.

Teaching assistants are carefully assigned to support teachers in meeting the diverse learning needs of pupils within the classroom. It is the responsibility of the teacher to plan the lesson for all pupils and to provide appropriate guidance for the teaching assistant. There is regular communication between teachers and TAs about how teaching and learning



should be structured to support pupils. Support and guidance for every child by the class teacher should be equal and attentive, regardless of whether a child has a teaching assistant with them.

More able and talented pupils are identified via personalised assessments, writing assessments and by heads of department. ASPIRE groups are compiled by the associate assistant headteacher, and this is shared with all staff. There is regular contact between school and home to inform parents and carers of the expectations of the pupils in the ASPIRE groups and activities are planned to meet the needs and interests of these pupils. The ASPIRE group is flexible and pupils, who are identified as MAT at any time during the year, can be added. It is the responsibility of all subject teachers to be aware of the MAT learners in the classroom and to ensure that they are appropriately stretched and challenged. It is also the responsibility of teachers and heads of department to identify pupils who are not in the ASPIRE group but who may, however, be gifted or talented in a particular subject area. These pupils must be supported and challenged to be the best that they can be.

Assessment and feedback

Feedback needs to be 'just in time', 'just for me', 'just where I am in my learning process', and 'just what I need to help me make progress' (Prof. John Hattie)

This should be read in conjunction with Penyrheol's Assessment and Feedback Policy

At Penyrheol, all teachers ensure that feedback is worthwhile. We decide on the purpose of our feedback so that it is useful and has the desired outcomes. Feedback is given:

- **To provide clarity** – we understand that most mistakes are made because pupils are unclear on precisely what they should be doing. We provide feedback that points out misconceptions and provides the clarification that is needed.
- **To motivate pupils to try harder** – by providing individual and specific feedback, we motivate pupils to use our advice and comments to improve further
- **To increase aspiration** – At Penyrheol, we challenge pupils to reach goals and aim high. Once a goal has been met or exceeded, pupils need to aim for something more challenging. We embrace failure and mistakes as opportunities to learn and overcome challenges.

Assessment and Feedback is meaningful and happens during the learning process in which pupils are engaged. Feedback in Penyrheol causes pupils to think harder. It is focused and relates to the learning goals that have been shared with pupils. In order to make feedback constructive and useful, teachers plan for opportunities to act on feedback and this process is carefully planned so that it is harder work for the pupil than the teacher. It is in this way that we engineer environments where our pupils are owners of their own learning.

Assessment may take the form of:

- Effective questioning – to deepen understanding and identify misconceptions
- Low-stakes quizzes
- Well-planned (and guided) self and peer assessment



- Formative assessment strategies e.g. use of mini whiteboards.
- Summative assessments

A combination of verbal and written feedback may take the form of:

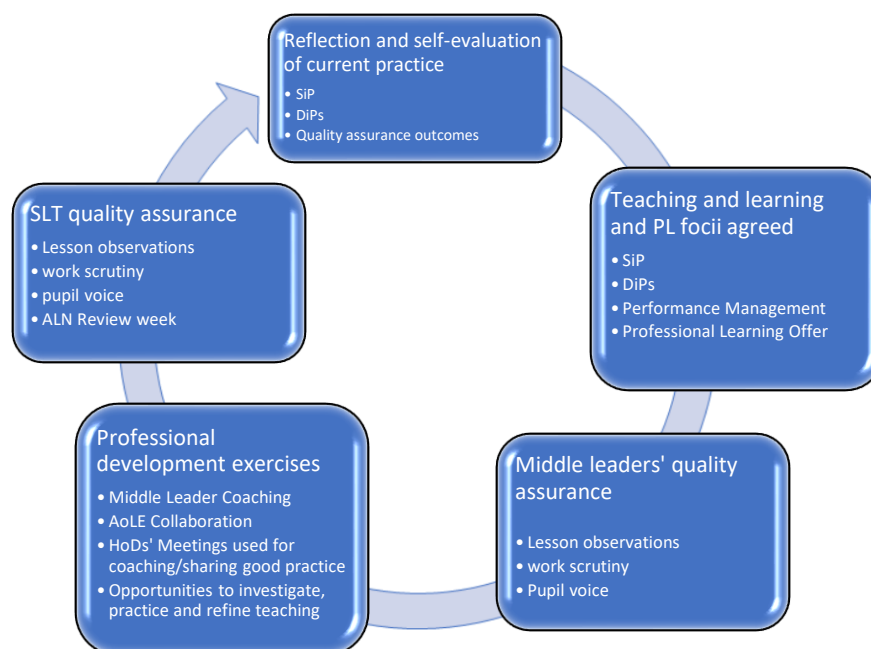
- Live feedback – constructive whole class and individual feedback during a lesson to address immediate and specific learning needs
- Whole class feedback sheets with corresponding DiRT tasks
- DiRT tasks focussing on results of assessments
- Symbol Marking and corresponding DiRT tasks

Professional Learning

High quality teaching improves pupil outcomes, and effective professional development offers a crucial tool to develop teaching quality and enhance children's outcomes in the classroom. (EEF)

In line with Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership in Wales (WAG), at Penyrheol, 'the teacher is a professional learner and commits to continuous engagement in career long development, collaboration and innovation'. As such, all members of staff are expected to take ownership of their own professional learning and development, are self-reflective and use deliberate practice to refine their teaching.

Our professional learning offer is tailored to address both individual and collective needs, offering training sessions, professional discussions, collaborative planning and access to educational research. These opportunities are designed to enhance subject knowledge and refine instructional techniques, with a particular focus on Penyrheol's novice to expert model. We prioritise teaching and learning framed around our novice to expert principles and cross-curricular skills – literacy, numeracy and digital competency. This is supported and underpinned by our teaching and learning self-evaluation, quality assurance and coaching cycle.



All members of staff are given the opportunity to visit other classrooms to observe other teachers and discuss and share teaching ideas and strategies. There are also opportunities to visit other schools for cross-school collaboration and sharing of good practice.

Monitoring and Evaluation

At Penyrheol, we continuously seek to develop a highly collaborative culture based on transparency, trust, respect and support and our monitoring and evaluation processes are underpinned by this principle.

Heads of department continually monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in their subject area. This is done on both a formal and informal basis and will take the form of work scrutiny, lesson observations, data analysis, moderation of pupils' work, learning walks and pupil voice.

There are key points in the year when monitoring is undertaken in a formal and structured process. This process is outlined in the school calendar.

Feedback on the quality of teaching and learning is shared verbally and in a written format to individual teachers by heads of department, and to heads of department by the senior leadership team. Identified criterion for lesson observations and work scrutiny are provided and given as an exemplar to staff.

The findings of monitoring and quality assurance processes are used to inform the training needs of individual teachers and to identify whole school training priorities.

The role of the Progress and Wellbeing Coach in teaching and learning

The role of the Progress and Wellbeing Coach in Penyrheol is crucial in supporting pupils' academic success and progress. Progress and Wellbeing Coaches promote pupils' independence and model behaviour that promotes respect, responsibility and resilience. In addition, the Progress and Wellbeing Coaches supports pupils in managing the potential stress of exams and helps them organise their time to meet deadlines and expectations. In doing so, Progress and Wellbeing Coaches play a vital role in supporting pupils in their academic development and progress and the registration period makes a beneficial contribution to the teaching and learning process in the school.

At Penyrheol, the Progress and Wellbeing Coach supports learning and pupil development by:

- Discussing expectations, deadlines and effective organisation;
- Discussing and reflecting upon the themes presented in assemblies;
- Addressing issues, concerns and problems as they arise;
- Supporting pupils with their development in literacy, numeracy and digital competency on the days designated for skills development;
- Discussing and debating PSE topics during extended tutorial time (5 hours every term);



- Liaising with the Progress and Wellbeing Leader to discuss the academic progress and development of pupils.

The school day at Penyrheol

Teaching and learning at Penyrheol are organized around a fortnightly timetable that includes five 60-minute lessons each day, spread over 25-period weeks. This timetable operates for most teachers and pupils however, there are instances when certain groups follow a customised timetable to enhance, support and personalise their learning experience.

Registration	8:40 am
Lesson 1	9:00 am
Lesson 2	10:00 am
Break	11:00 am
Lesson 3	11:20 am
Lesson 4	12:20 pm
Lunch	1:20 pm
Lesson 5	2:00 pm
School day ends	3:00 pm

