

Llanrhidian Primary School - Our Pioneering Journey So Far.

Llanrhidian Primary School serves a large area of North West Gower, comprising the villages of Llanrhidian, Llangennith and Llanmadoc and the hamlets of Old Walls, Burry Green, Landimore, Cilibion and Llethryd. The school is within a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and close to the Heritage Coastline. Most of the children arrive by bus from the Llangennith/Llanmadoc area. We have 153 children on role including our part time Nursery.

We are a Curriculum Pioneer School along with Waunarwydd Primary, (our two schools applied to be a pioneer school a shared bid). Llanrhidian has been part of the “Enrichment and Experiences” strand which has focused on pupil engagement. Originally this group was known as “Pupil Offer” but was re-named by the group members as we felt that this did not best describe the work we were undertaking.

In line with our group’s focus, the staff at Llanrhidian have been working on developing children’s enrichment and experiences. This involved us looking at our current pedagogical approach, planning and curriculum organisation. A staff audit, identified that staff needed more training in the Expressive Arts to enable us to offer our children more creative/artistic experiences.

Analysis of pupil and parent questionnaires indicated that school trips formed part of the children’s most memorable school experiences, so we decided to make this a greater focus and to ensure a consistent approach across all classes.

New strategies implemented:

- Re-organised our termly planning under the new AoLEs.
- Integrated the four core purposes into our planning and assessment procedures.
- Organised AoLE leads to review key policies and bring in line with Donaldson review.
- Introduced whole school termly immersion projects.
- Introduced EPIC (everybody planning in class) boards into each class as a tool for pupil-led learning.
- Introduced a whole school “mystery trip” to ignite children’s enthusiasm for learning and to introduce the new termly topic. These have been planned ahead and are organised for the first week of each term.
- Introduced an immersion week planned around the new AoLEs. This was in response to the whole staff training we received at Ynystawe school regarding the “Leonardo effect” approach to teaching and learning.

- We have made a pledge to our children “100 things you will do before you leave Llanrhidian”. These have been made into posters and displayed around the school and outline 100 enriching experiences all our children will have during their time in Llanrhidian. Things on the list include “learning to surf” and “buying an ice-cream from an ice-cream van”! See Twitter #Llan100 and #LlanFun
- Improved Expressive Arts experiences.
- Staff have been trained in different artistic techniques. We have applied for grants from the Arts Council for Wales and deployed a member of staff, with strength in artistic techniques, to work alongside classroom adults. See Twitter #LlanExp

Successes so far:

- Staff are aware of the four core purposes and use them as a basis for all their planning and for developing rich learning experiences
- We have had positive responses from children through specific “listening to learner” sessions.
- Teachers have noted increased enthusiasm in children’s learning and general engagement in school life.
- Positive feedback from parents who have commented on the children’s excitement – especially regarding the whole school mystery trips.
- We have a clear plan of direction through the school’s development plan for improving the delivery, range and quality of teaching through new pedagogical approaches.
- Improved teaching through feedback from peer observation sessions.
- We have developed a model for an enrichment week which enables all pupils opportunities to develop higher order thinking, through carefully planned rich tasks covering all 6 AoLEs.
- Sharing our journey with others at national conferences.

Next Steps:

- Liaise closely with Waunarlwydd (our partner school). Meetings have been planned to plan next steps and to share good practise. See Twitter #LlanS2S
- Network with other schools who have focused on reorganising the areas of learning and skills progression (Parkland) *
- To finalise the new AoLE policies.

- Further art workshops for staff and children to develop skills.

Key lessons learned which could be shared with other schools:

- To ensure all staff have an in depth understanding of philosophy underpinning Donaldson review through training, support and networks.
- To fully inform GB of the aims and progress against the school development plan.
- To gain confidence of parents so they understand that new approaches will have a positive effect on standards of attainment and well-being, through newsletters and parent meetings.
- To network with other schools, to share good practice and ask for support when needed.
- To share progress with the cluster through headteacher meetings and classteacher networks.
- Plan your journey ambitiously but take the time to reflect. Be prepared to learn from the mistakes made.