

Penclawdd Primary School

A Partner Enquiry School



National Professional Enquiry Programme

Catherine Percival

'A happy face, a learning place, a growing space'



School context

- ▶ Penclawdd Primary School is located in the village of Penclawdd on the shores of the Loughor Estuary on the Gower Peninsula. Its catchment area also encompasses the nearby villages of Llanmorlais and Crofty. The school comprises of 6 classes – Nursery, Reception/Year 1, Year 2, Year 3/4, Year 4/5 and Year 6. There are 160 children on roll and there is 23% eFSM.



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Research Question

We're all in this together (sang to the tune from High School Musical)

- ▶ To what extent can we improve learners readiness to learn, both at home and in school, by strengthening home:school links?

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Rationale

- ▶ This enquiry had a focus of wanting to improve home:school links following the COVID pandemic in order to improve pupils readiness to learn, both in school and at home. Following a pupil questionnaire on well-being, a number of children did remember to bring in their PE kit, did not arrive at school on time, did not complete home learning regularly and did not have someone to help with learning at home. This was something we wanted to change. We aimed to have learners that arrived in school on time, with all the equipment that they needed and who were ready to learn both in and outside of school with sufficient support. We began our campaign to strengthen school links with the following video created by the children in a whole school assembly - <https://penclawdd-primary-school.primarysite.media/media/pencstrongertogether>

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Enquiry Design and Methodology

- ▶ Following feedback from staff, parents and pupils after two lockdowns, the school identified that a significant number of families were feeling isolated from the school community and following two periods of home learning, were struggling to engage with home learning tasks. This was something that we felt needed addressing and was an area that we included in our School Improvement Plan
- ▶ We knew that research has found that schools who are able to engage with their families and community will be exerting a powerful lever through which to raise standards and improve learner well-being. The research is something that we had previously experienced in school and prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, we had been working with our families to improve communication, increase family involvement in school life and support parents with home learning. So, our aim to re-establish the links that we had previously made and re-introduce the things that were previously loved by parents were a priority moving into the new school year. However, we also aimed to improve on our pre-COVID provision.

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Methodology continued

- ▶ Throughout the COVID pandemic, we introduced a range of innovative strategies to support and improve the levels of family engagement and ensure that parents and families felt valued as partners in supporting their children's education, felt supported and knew we were there to work in partnership. However, despite this work, families were feeling at a distance and some were struggling to engage with home learning.
- ▶ The enquiry was based on our aim to strengthen and rebuild our partnerships and connections with our families and community as we recognised the impact that COVID had on our family and community engagement. As we moved to a more 'normal' engagement with our families, we looked at our whole school approach to family engagement and home learning. We explored the potential barriers that prevented families from engaging with school and aimed to help overcome some of these barriers by creating meaningful engagement opportunities in which communication could be fostered and relationships could be built. We also aimed to target our 'hard to reach' families and how we could involve them further in school life.

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Results – What we found out



We surveyed parents on home learning and found out...



Dear Parents/Carers,

Many thanks for your time and support in completing our parent questionnaire – we had 47 responses. We have carefully analysed the results and below is a summary of the main points and what we intend to do about them,

Kind Regards,

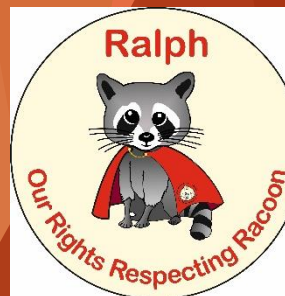
Mrs Reynolds-Milnes

What you said	What we are doing	When	Who
65% of parents said homework was important.	Home learning (homework) will continue to be set weekly in Y3 - 6, alternating between maths and literacy. Children will also be provided with a topic home learning grid to complete in addition to the maths and literacy. Spelling, times tables and reading will also be given weekly. Home learning in R - Y2 will include spelling, phonics, reading and times tables as appropriate and be sent out weekly. Home learning will not be compulsory in order to support working parents and a busy home life. However, we would ask that parents support home learning, where possible, and model and embed good practices in order to support children in their secondary school journey.	Immediately	All teachers
The four most popular homework preferences were - Reading books - Worksheets - Spelling lists - Times tables	Children in Y3 - 6 will continue with a weekly worksheet in addition to reading, spelling and times tables. Children in R - Y2 will receive weekly reading, spelling and tables.	Immediately	All teachers
92% of parents preferred homework in a homework book	Children in Y3 - Y6 will continue to be provided with worksheets and a home learning book to complete their homework.	Ongoing	All teachers
46% of parents felt that nothing should be done if children do not complete homework	Nothing will happen if children do not complete their homework, Mrs Williams will be holding an indoor well-being club every play time called 'Play My Way' and children are welcome to use this time to complete homework.	May 2022	Mrs Williams
Parents requested the return of parent/community events.	Great news – our risk assessment now allows us to welcome parents back into school.	See HT blog for specific dates	All teachers

	Events for this term have included – sports day, school fete, jubilee event, end of topic express, increased after school clubs. We have also welcomed parents to help with our garden areas, to help on school trips and to attend fundraising events.		
Parents requested workshops to demonstrate to parents how children learn at home so they can better support home learning.	Mrs Garcia is busy creating a timetable of workshops that will be launched in the Autumn Term. These workshops will cover reading, maths, home learning, on-line safety, RSE, well-being and lots more. Please keep an eye out in Mrs Reynolds' blog for dates.	September	Mrs Garcia
Parents/Carers requested a list of clubs and groups that their children could join in Penclawdd and the surrounding area	Great news – Mrs Beynon has been trawling local information to compile a list of local groups and clubs within the Penclawdd and surrounding area. The information is now on our school website https://www.penclawddprimary.co.uk/childrens-clubs/ If you know of any clubs in the local area that are not on our list, please feel free to let us know.	Immediately	Mrs Beynon
We had 5 parents interested in joining our parent council.	Many thanks for your interest and support – our parent council will be launched in the Autumn Term. We will be in touch early in the Autumn Term to arrange our first meeting and discuss the aims of the group and how you can help.	September	Mrs Percival



The biggest focus in the parental responses was the 'fun' element of being in school. There was a majority response supporting homework but there was less support for homework than we would have liked. We realised that we needed to go back a few steps and start rebuilding trust, communication and support on the ground before we could look to improve home learning support and ultimately positively impacting readiness to learn. We realised that despite our wealth of photos and updates via Twitter and Seesaw, the parents, more than anything else, just wanted to get into school and experience the day to day activities that they had missed out on throughout the COVID pandemic, e.g. sports day, concerts, visiting the classroom.



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Results – Our Actions



4.93 Average Rating

- ▶ Therefore, our enquiry took on a new focus and that was to engage parents through ‘fun’ opportunities to interact within the school community. We hope that in the new school year (2022-2023), by having spent time on rebuilding trust, communication and strengthening the partnership, we will have increased support and commitment resulting in improved readiness to learn both at school and home. Our actions included a parent picnic for the Jubilee, sports day and sharing the learning events in all classes to further engage with parents and rebuild relationships.
- ▶ <https://penclawdd-primary-school.primarysite.media/media/sports-day-highlights-2022>
- ▶ <https://penclawdd-primary-school.primarysite.media/media/a-right-royal-bash-our-platinum-jubilee-celebratio>



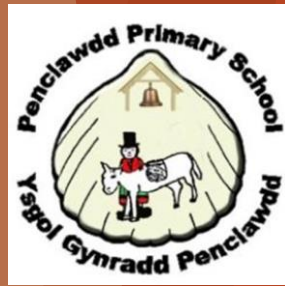
5.00 Average Rating

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"Excellent ❤️"

"Lovely community event, so lovely to all be back together again."

"I loved it ! It was great , lovely to be able to be with everyone again."



What are you learning, individually and as a school, as a result of the enquiry process?

- ▶ **Individually** – The process has allowed me to focus on a need, work towards meeting it and evaluate how effective the strategy was and then plan where to go next. It has reminded me that the answer is not always expected (and will often leave you with more questions) but will support us in our efforts to improve. It is a continuous process and is becoming ‘just the way we do it’. I am encouraged to take risks and trial new ideas and strategies and the enquiry culture is something that we are hoping to embed into everyday practice at our school. We want our staff to think in this way on a regular process – see a need, ask questions, research, action and evaluate. I have felt motivated and challenged by the enquiry process and by building this into my everyday, it will allow me to be innovative, self-improving and build understanding, to ensure the best possible outcomes for all learners.

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What are you learning, individually and as a school, as a result of the enquiry process?

- ▶ **School** – The enquiry process is enabling us to find out the answers to our questions and enabling us to make a difference. The enquiry process has shown us that we may not always get the answer to the question that we asked but has allowed us to shape our actions to ensure that we make the biggest impact. Based on the shift in the enquiry process, we have rebuilt relationships with our families to ensure we can move into the new school year with improved trust, communication and confidence. This will hopefully positively impact pupils readiness to learn in the future. We will continue to involve parents in the daily school activities via Seesaw and, as long as COVID restrictions permit, regularly invite parents to attend school based events which are deemed ‘fun’ by parents. We aim to further support parents with home learning via workshops and information leaflets.

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What's working well? Which aspects are most useful?

- ▶ The enquiry journey has been particularly rewarding so far. It is a process we will continue to implement in the coming terms in order to support our implementation of Curriculum 2022. The aim will be to further mentor and coach staff to develop their own enquiry projects, and to develop the pupils as enquirers to further develop pupil voice in the school. We have particularly enjoyed the sharing of research and have seen a change in practice from staff whereby they are actively seeking out and engaging with research for their own professional learning. We have seen a shift in the culture of enquiry whereby staff feel empowered to take risks and have a go at something they have seen or read about. Weekly staff briefings have a section for staff to share research that they have found useful/interesting and this has been particularly popular with staff.
- ▶ The use of Microsoft Forms was an excellent tool to record the opinions, views and ideas of the parents and supported the collation of data when writing this final report.
- ▶ The enquiry has supported the return to normality and has supported the reintegration of parents into school. Feedback from our events has been excellent and when asked, all parents want is more of the same which is excellent as we move into the new school year.

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What's been more of a challenge?

What will you do differently in future?

- ▶ COVID – The impact of the risk assessments implemented due to COVID has had a significant impact on the way parents interact with the school. Negative feedback often pointed to the fact that they were missing out on coming into school despite us being governed by the LA to keep visitors out of school. We sent lots of Seesaw photos to try and support parents but ultimately they wanted to be in school – to watch a concert, work with their children, support a fundraiser.

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How will you sustain and develop the culture of enquiry in your school?

- ▶ We hope to engage with NPEP again next year to further develop and sustain the culture of enquiry. We aim to further involve more staff across the school with the NPEP project and work further within our cluster of schools in order to share best practice.
- ▶ We aim to encourage the enquiry process cycle in becoming part of our everyday to motivate and empower staff. Staff well-being is a priority and we believe that the enquiry process way of working has positive benefits to how staff feel and contribute to good mental and emotional well-being.

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As a school, how are you evaluating the impact of enquiry?

- ▶ The well-being of staff is regularly evaluated via a staff well-being questionnaire. Staff feel that the encouragement of professional learning is excellent in the school, staff also feel that the acknowledgement of achievements is excellent and ultimately staff feeling happy in the workplace is also excellent. Developing a culture whereby staff feel motivated and supported will ensure best possible outcomes for all learners and I feel that the enquiry process contributes to this.
- ▶ We will further evaluate the impact of enquiry as we move into the new school year as we further develop the culture as 'the new normal' to further empower all staff to improve understanding and pedagogy.

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