

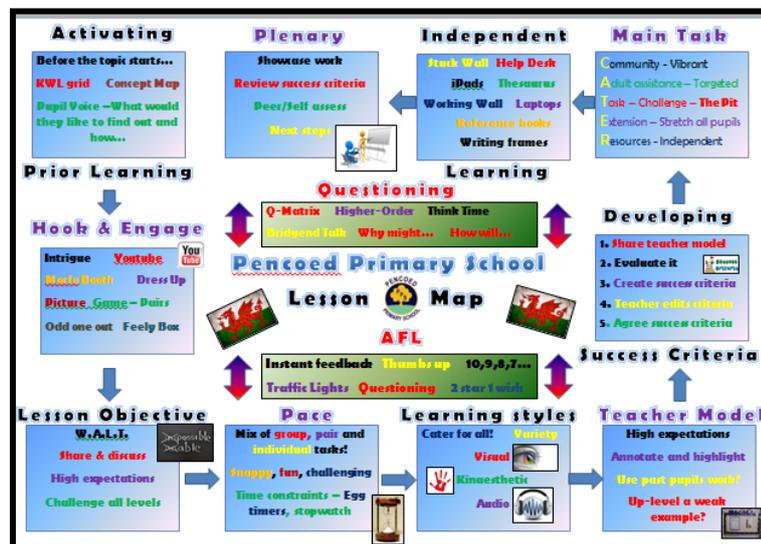
Stretching our most able has driven standards for all

In July 2016, we were awarded the NACE Cymru Challenge Award for our provision for more able and talented learners. A proud accolade and a new certificate for the school foyer of course, but much more importantly than that, the award has provided us with a genuine platform to improve standards and provision for all groups of learners...not just our most able.

Firstly, the self-evaluation matrix against the quality standards allowed us to critically reflect on our whole school provision. Whilst MAT-specific strategies such as identification of pupils, class registers and extra-curricular clubs are relatively quick and easy fixes, the audit allowed us to strip back our practice in its entirety, and allowed us to look at how we were catering for, and indeed challenging, all ability groups. What became clear from the outset was that setting the highest expectations for our more able and talented pupils meant that our overall expectations for everybody – pupils, parents and staff, had been elevated.

Curriculum planning and experiences

The framework allowed us to sharpen our focus on our day-to-day teaching and learning - *Were the children genuinely excited by their topics? Were our pupils given real-life contexts to explore and real audiences to perform, write and speak to?* The answer was certainly sometimes, but we wanted to make a conscious effort to reinvigorate this area of our work. We used Inset days to look at our topics with these questions in our minds, as well as using this valuable time to re-map LNF and more recently, DCF skills. We also spent considerable time looking at our teaching strategies, devising the *PPS Lesson Map*. The map gives all teaching staff a consistent base of pedagogical principals, including the importance of engaging hooks, independent learning environments, developing pupil-led success criteria and precise, higher order questioning.



Enrichment

A further area of our work that the framework allowed us to scrutinise closely was the out-of-class experiences we were providing for our pupils. We wanted to ensure we were giving our pupils rich opportunities that they may not encounter at home or on the weekends. Year group partners meet regularly to discuss and improve school trips, guest speakers and residential visits. Current experiences include a Roald Dahl theatre trip to London for Year 4 and a week in Normandy, France for our year 6 pupils – both linked to the topics they are studying in those terms.

Family & Community Engagement

The challenge framework also allowed us to think creatively about how we could further develop our work with families and the local community, and tap into the array of talent and wide range of resources we have outside our school gates. We also wanted to give our learners new and exciting opportunities that they didn't usually experience in school. This led us to our first *Community Skills Week*. After an initial audit and questionnaire, we invited interested family members and local businesses into school to run 25 different workshops for our KS2 pupils. These ranged from balloon making to weaving and dentistry to electrical engineering. Not everything can be captured by numbers and this was certainly an example of this – The impact was truly immeasurable.



What started as a targeted programme to drive standards for our more able & talented learners, has ended up providing us with a platform to enrich and extend every child's school experiences. It has also given us the ambition to continue to think outside the box and set the highest expectations for our whole school community.

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