



## St John Lloyd RC Primary School Professional Learning & Inquiry Case Study- 2025

### ‘Developing Pupil Ownership of Learning to Improve Independence and Skills Across the Curriculum’

#### Context and Background

Fundamental to St John Lloyd RC Primary School’s vision is the belief that pupils should be actively involved in shaping and directing their own learning. We strive to provide meaningful opportunities for learners to make decisions that affect their learning, take responsibility for next steps, develop individuality, and acquire the essential skills required to become confident, capable, lifelong learners.

As part of our work to align practice with the **Curriculum for Wales**, we recognised that pupils needed richer opportunities to independently apply and transfer their **literacy, numeracy and wider skills** across a range of authentic, thematic contexts. Staff identified that a progressive, whole-school approach to developing independence would be key to supporting pupils to plan, take ownership of, and evaluate their learning effectively.

This case study outlines the school’s professional inquiry over a two-year period, focusing on **pupil voice, metacognition, and high-quality provision** to improve independence and transferable skills across the curriculum.

#### Stage 1 – Review of Current Provision and Opportunities

In line with Curriculum for Wales principles, staff across both the **Infant and Junior Phases** worked collaboratively to review existing curriculum arrangements. The purpose of this review was to evaluate whether pupils were sufficiently supported and challenged to:

- Apply literacy and numeracy skills independently
- Transfer skills across Areas of Learning and Experience
- Take ownership of how and what they learn

Through learning walks, book scrutiny, pupil voice activities and professional dialogue, it became evident that although literacy and numeracy skills were taught effectively in discrete lessons, opportunities for pupils to **apply these skills independently within thematic learning** were inconsistent.

Staff also identified that:

- Independence was often *too heavily scaffolded by adults*

- Pupils relied on teacher direction rather than self-regulation
- Decision-making opportunities for learners were limited

As a result, the development of **pupil independence** was highlighted as a key priority for school improvement, to be developed alongside curriculum design rather than as a standalone skill.

It was agreed that placing **pupil voice, metacognition and choice** at the centre of learning would be researched, trialled and embedded through a **two-year, whole-school rollout**.

## **Stage 2 –Introducing & Embedding New Strategies, Thinking and Theory**

Staff engaged in a range of professional learning activities, including:

- Research into **metacognition and self-regulated learning**
- Collaborative planning and peer-to-peer reflection
- Trialling evidence-informed approaches across phases

### **1. Metacognitive Approach**

A metacognitive approach was introduced to support pupils in understanding:

- *What* they are learning
- *How* they are learning
- *Why* particular strategies are effective to present their own work independently

Teachers explicitly modelled thinking strategies using:

- Planning prompts
- Success criteria co-construction
- Reflection questions before, during and after learning

Pupils were encouraged to independently:

- Choose strategies to solve task
- Evaluate which approaches were most effective for the task
- Explain their thinking verbally and in written forms

This enabled learners to take greater ownership of how they approached tasks and to become more confident in working independently.

### **2. 'Wonderwall' Approach (Pupil Voice)**

To further strengthen pupil ownership, a **'Wonderwall' approach** was introduced across the school. This provided a structured, visible system for pupils to:

- Pose questions
- Suggest areas of interest to inform planning
- Influence learning directions within themes and topics

The Wonderwall became a working tool rather than a display, allowing teachers to:

- Adapt planning responsively
- Build learning around pupils' natural curiosity and involvement in their learning
- Ensure curriculum coverage while valuing pupil voice

This approach supported pupils in understanding that their ideas and questions directly shape learning experiences.

### **3. High-Quality Provision for Transferring Literacy and Numeracy Skills**

Staff focused on creating environments and tasks that naturally encouraged the application of Mathematics and English skills into Literacy & numeracy tasks. This included:

- Open-ended challenges
- Real-life problem-solving opportunities linked to themes
- Purposeful writing across themes
- Practical numeracy embedded into investigations

In working parties, provision was carefully planned to reduce over-scaffolding and promote independence, ensuring pupils were expected to draw on prior learning without immediate adult intervention.

### **Stage 3. Impact on Provision and Pupil Standards**

The impact of this inquiry has been significant across the school.

#### **Impact on Pupils**

- Improved independence and confidence in learning
- Increased ability to apply literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum
- Stronger metacognitive awareness and reflection skills
- Enhanced engagement, resilience and motivation

Pupils are now more willing to:

- Take risks in learning
- Persist with challenges (attitudes to learning)
- Explain and justify their thinking

## **Impact on Provision**

- A more responsive, pupil-centred curriculum
- Improved consistency in approaches across phases
- Stronger alignment with Curriculum for Wales principles
- Enhanced professional dialogue and collaboration among staff