

Research Report

Lle Llais 2025 Report

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Lle Llais 2025 Report



Drawing of Ynys Mon by Ysgol Parc y Bont Pupil, 2025.

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List of Abbreviations

ACE	Adverse Childhood Experiences
LRA	Less Resilient Areas
LSOA	Lower Super Output Areas
PMP	Public Map Platform
TrACE	Trauma and Adverse Childhood Experience
WFGA	Well-being of Future Generations Wales Act
WG	Welsh Government
WIMD	Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation
WU	Wrexham University

1. Executive Summary

This research informed report for the Public Map Platform Lle Llais 2025 provides comprehensive insight to evidence the project's meaningful and positive impact on the well-being of children living on the Isle of Anglesey. The Lle Llais project is a leading example of how engaging children with Welsh culture, heritage, and language, through arts and nature-based activities, develops knowledge, skills, and social and cultural capital to positively influence feelings of belonging and wellbeing. The project actively promotes a place-based approach that fosters culture, heritage, and the Welsh language. Lle Llais 2025 was a bilingual project that adopted a compassionate and inclusive approach.

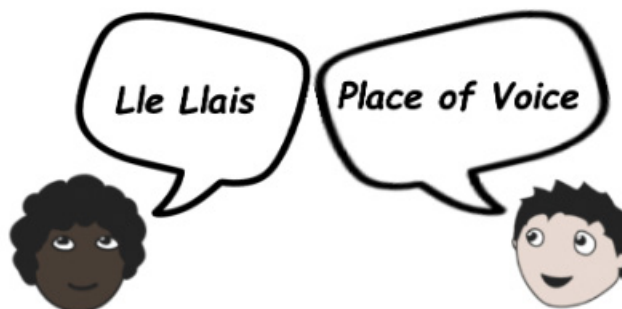
The insight data that informs the report comes from 253 children from across 8 schools on the Isle of Anglesey, all of whom engaged in trauma-informed arts and nature-based activities with Welsh Bards and Public Map Platform Mappers in July 2025. The report considers how children feel about the places where they live through a comprehensive analysis of quantitative and qualitative place-based data. This data draws our attention to place-based inequalities across the complex profile of communities on the Isle of Anglesey where children live.

The report details how engagement at Lle Llais developed meaningful connections that cultivated social and cultural wellbeing and develops a place-based understanding of this. The report shares a deeper understanding of the disparities of place when we consider what children gained from their engagement in Lle Llais. The report's findings reveal important insights into how places and the environment are important factors in children's feelings of belonging. The emotional language that children used to describe Lle Llais demonstrates that the project positively impacted their emotional security, developing feelings of belonging, and cultural identity.

Our findings provide evidence of multi-dimensional belonging across place, nature, environment, community, culture, heritage, and language. These findings provide us with an understanding of what social and cultural belonging means to children through the report concludes is a proud place-based collective identity. Trauma-informed approaches developed meaningful relational connections that cultivated children's feelings of belonging, happiness, kindness, and wellbeing. The natural environment in which the Lle Llais project took place, and the trauma-informed approaches used for engagement, are central to children's feelings of connectedness.

2. Introduction

This research-informed report of the successful project, Lle Llais (Place of Voice) 2025, funded by ACE Hub Wales, funded by the Welsh government and hosted by Public Health Wales, includes data that evidence the demographic reach and impact on children living on the Isle of Anglesey. The Lle Llais project was born out of the Public Map Platform (PMP), which is a research project led by Cambridge, Cardiff, and Wrexham Universities, with the primary aim of making the places where people live now and in the future better for the people who live there (PMP, 2023). The Lle Llais project is a leading example of how supporting children to engage with Welsh culture, heritage, and language, through arts and nature-based activities, can develop knowledge, skills, and the social and cultural capital to drive economic and environmental change (Well-being of Future Generations Wales Act (WFGA), 2015). Thus, actively enabling a place-based approach that works towards the achievement of A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language.



Throughout this report, we evidenced how children feel about place and belonging through analysis of quantitative and qualitative data derived from the Lle Llais 2025 project. Furthermore, this report evidences the positive impact of cultural heritage engagement with Welsh Bards through trauma-informed approaches. The report details how this engagement developed meaningful connections that enriched the social and cultural wellbeing of children living on the Isle of Anglesey.

2.1. Overview of Lle Llais

The Lle Llais project 2025 has been a culturally engaging local initiative for schools across the Isle of Anglesey, North Wales, through engagement with Welsh Bards in the natural setting of Newborough nature reserve. Designed around five distinct arts and nature-based activities, and supported by GeoMôn, Seawatch Môn, and the North Wales Wildlife Trust nature and arts-based practitioners, the project provided a creative and cultural experience for children. Using the concept of a rural roaming room, a collection of structures representing looms were codesigned by children from the Isle of Anglesey for the first Lle Llais project in 2024. The PMP commissioned the loom structures from Piers Taylor of Invisible Studio Architects and Owen Pearce of Pearce+. The concept originated from a creative play workshop held at Ucheldre in Holyhead, which engaged local children and young people in collaboration with The Onion Collective. The looms had been successfully used to creatively collect 'memories, hopes, and heritage' (Pearce, 2024) during the project and have been used again to connect cultural heritage with civic life through creative arts and nature-based participation. The looms were positioned as the home point for Lle Llais 2025 on Newborough Beach. The insights used to inform the report are determined by the project's key activities and adopted research methodology.



Drawing of Lle Llais Looms by Alec Shepley, 2025.

2.2. Aims and approach

The primary aim of the Lle Llais 2025 project was to deepen our understanding of children's place attachment through creative practice, cultural heritage, grounded narratives, and language, with the aim of inspiring and nurturing a more compassionate and equitable society. The project objectives required the enactment of trauma-informed, arts and nature-based engagement with children in a natural setting to capture meaningful data that would evidence the impact of the work on the well-being of participants.

Central to the project was an intention to create engagement approaches with inclusivity and diversity at heart. For this, trauma-informed approaches were developed by members of the PMP team using guidance and support from a dedicated inclusion consultant. The PMP team consisted of notable Welsh art practitioners deployed as Bards, who were selected to lead the development and delivery of Lle Llais 2025 arts and nature-based cultural heritage engagement activities, and skilled PMP mappers who supported the project's delivery. All of whom received training in trauma-informed approaches and were tasked with applying these approaches for the first time in the design and delivery of Lle Llais 2025.

In this report, we have undertaken a comprehensive review of the Lle Llais 2025 project's activity to detail the reach, participation, and engagement of children. Furthermore, the perspectives of participating teachers, Welsh Bards, and PMP Mappers contribute insight into the experiences of schools participating in the project. Reviewed literature, integrated throughout the report, considers existing knowledge related to our engagement with children, and more widely, trauma-informed approaches. This report grounds our findings to frame the intent and purpose of Lle Llais 2025. Approval for this research was granted by Wrexham University Research Ethics Sub-Committee; our research adheres to these guidelines.

2.3. Methodology

An explanatory sequential mixed method research design was used to explore the projects objectives and enable deep insight through the triangulation of qualitative and quantitative data. The framework for this project was designed to provide a comprehensive data set structured over three stages;

Stage	Activity
Stage 1	Pre-Lle Llais place-based classroom activity
Stage 2	Lle Llais creative and cultural heritage engagement
Stage 3	Post-Lle Llais school-based classroom activity

Quantitative data were derived using the Welsh Government (WG) official measure of relative deprivation for small areas in Wales, the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) 2019, to collate place-based data in stages 1 and 3. Postcode data was provided by schools using Lle Llais postcards, where children were asked to describe the place where they live using words and/or pictures. Participating schools were identified as gatekeepers to this research-informed activity, as all data were anonymous. Analysis of the quantitative data has provided this study with a WIMD profile for the Lle Llais 2025 pupil participant group.



Lle Llais pre and post event postcards, 2025.

Qualitative data were then collected at each of the three stages to facilitate deep, meaningful insights into children’s feelings about place in the first stage, engagement in creative and cultural heritage activities in the second stage, and what they learnt about the Isle of Anglesey in the third stage. The qualitative data used to inform this report were derived from conversations with teachers, reflections from the PMP team, and observations, documents and recordings from the Lle Llais project. This explanatory sequential mixed-methods design enabled a comprehensive set of data to be collated and used as the baseline to explore how creative cultural heritage engagement with place, enacted through Lle Llais trauma-informed activities, impacts the well-being of participating children.

3. Lle Llais

Building on the first Lle Llais project in 2024, the Lle Llais project 2025 has provided a creative, cultural, and environmentally engaging initiative for schools across the Isle of Anglesey. The insights that inform this section of our report come from 253 children, 8 schools, and engagement in 5 distinct creative and cultural arts and nature-based learning activities. We have used this data to detail the demographic reach of the project, engagement of children, and their feelings of place and belonging. We also consider the feedback and perspectives from teachers and the PMP Lle Llais delivery team to help inform our conclusions for the report.

3.1. Demographics

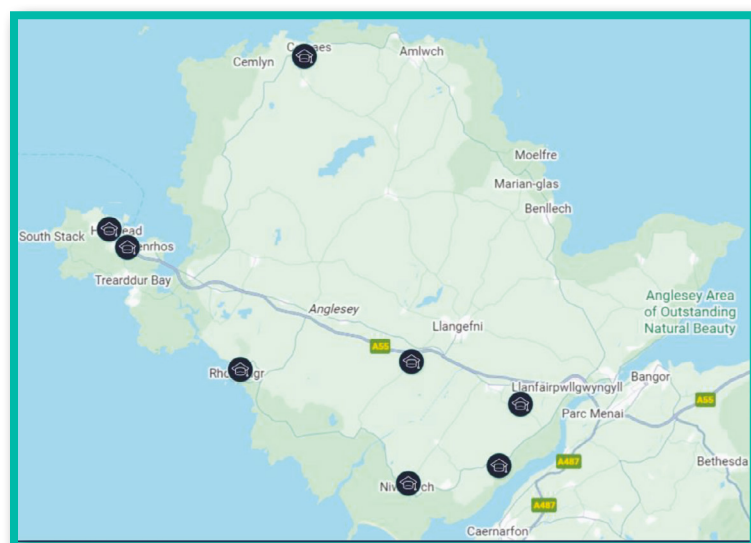
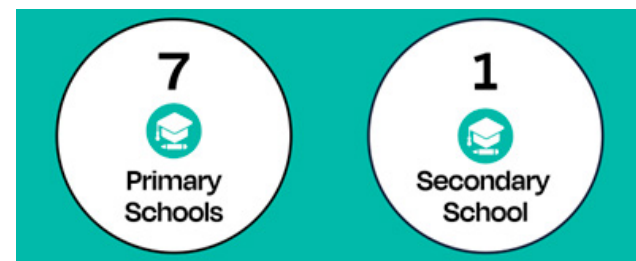
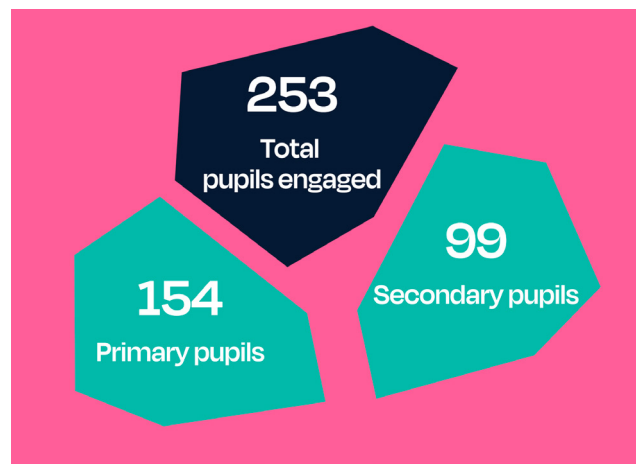
A total of 253 children engaged in the Lle Llais 2025 project, 154 were primary school-aged pupils, and 99 were secondary pupils in year nine. Eight schools across the Isle of Anglesey local authority (LA) area participated in the Lle Llais 2025 project. Of these eight schools, seven were primary schools, and one a secondary school. The schools are located across the island and listed below:

Primary Schools:

- Ysgol Brynsiencyn
- Ysgol Henblas
- Ysgol Cemaes
- Ysgol Gymraeg Morswyn
- Ysgol Rhosneigr
- Ysgol Parc y Bont
- Ysgol Sante Dwynwyn

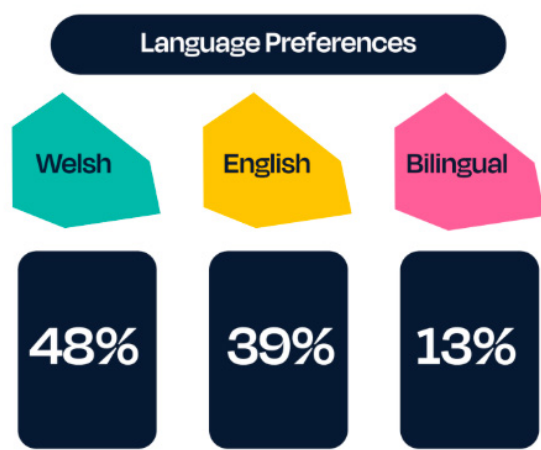
Secondary School:

- Ysgol Uwchradd Caergybi

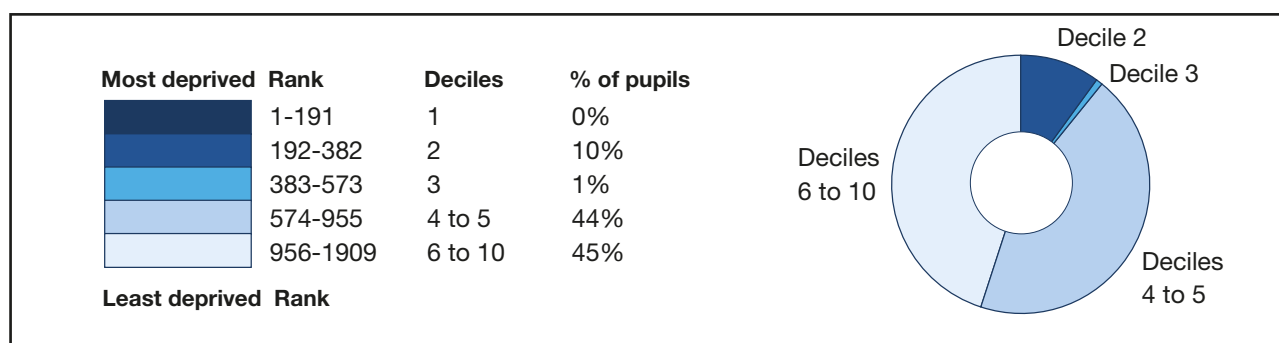


Geographic location of participating schools, Lle Llais 2025.

Lle Llais 2025 was a bilingual project that adopted a compassionate and inclusive approach to engage all children with Welsh language, culture, and heritage. In our report, we consider the language preferences of primary school-aged children through analysis of their creative work. Our findings establish that 48% of primary school-aged children chose to use the Welsh language, 39% English language, and 13% adopted a bilingual approach to their work. Primary school-aged children living in identified rural areas mostly used the Welsh language to describe their place, whereas children from more urban areas used the English language and bilingual approaches. Furthermore, children living in Decile area 2 were more likely to use the English Language than others.



Using the WG measure of relative deprivation for small areas in Wales, the WIMD (2019), and postcode data provided by primary schools, we have profiled the primary school-aged children who participated in Lle Llais 2025 to understand the context of place, engagement and wellbeing in the Lower-layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in which they live. The figure below displays this profile.



Deprivation profile of children engaged in Lle Llais 2025 using Welsh Government’s measure of relative deprivation for small areas in Wales

Using the WGs’ most recent measure of relative deprivation for small areas in Wales (2019), we can determine that the majority of children who engaged in Lle Llais 2025 reside in the least deprived decile areas on the Isle of Anglesey (89% Decile Areas 4-10). Furthermore, our data confirms that 10% of participants were residents of the most deprived 20% of all areas in Wales. Whilst the Isle of Anglesey is one of twelve areas in Wales with no identified areas of deep-rooted deprivation, WIMD data presents a complex profile across the eight domains of deprivation for small areas (WIMD, 2019). A large proportion of the landscape across the Isle of Anglesey is rural. Research indicates that poverty and deprivation become more dispersed and hidden in rural areas (Woods, 2024). Furthermore, sustained deprivation in Less Resilient Areas (LRAs), such as the coastal area of Holyhead, results in sustained place-based inequalities which negatively influence the relative social and economic mobility of children who live in coastal communities (BCT, 2023). Thus, adopting a mixed-methods approach to our data collection enables consideration of social, economic, environmental, and cultural factors that influence the well-being of children and their communities.

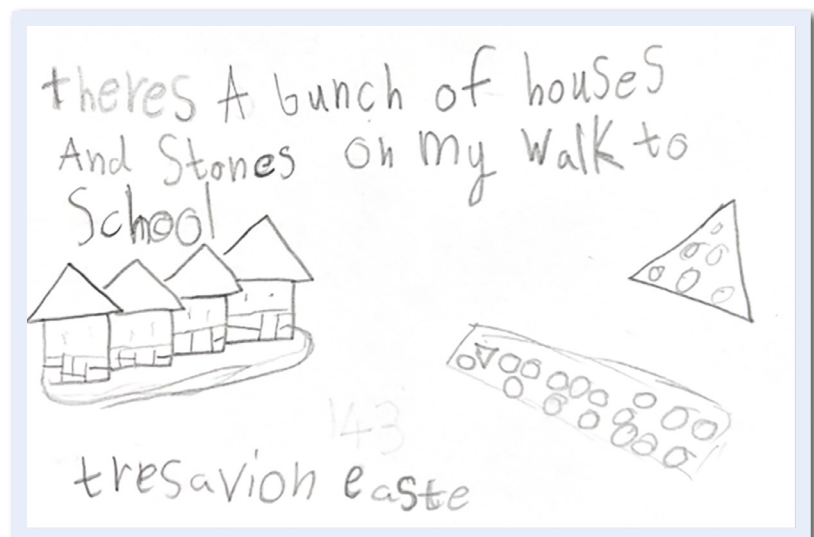
3.2. The Places where Children Live

Prior to attending Lle Llais 2025, children were asked about the place where they live. Typically, these places were found to be in the local vicinity of the schools they attend on the island in mostly rural or semi-rural communities. Many children describe being able to see natural environments from where they live, such as rivers, the sea and coastline, the Eryri mountain region, forests, fields and farmland. These children describe the local wildlife and other animals, such as birds, horses, squirrels and farm animals, which indicates that these places have a strong connection with nature and outdoor spaces. Many children reference local community assets when describing their place, these include parks, community centres, football fields, shops, chapels and churches. They describe through drawings and words that they mostly live in small communities across the island. Cultural and historic landmarks include Caer Leb, Halen Mon and Llanddwyn. Many children who live in rural and semi-rural areas describe these areas as quiet, peaceful and pretty. However, children who live in more urban and tourist areas describe their areas as noisy and busy.

When we consider the responses from children in line with the WIMD 2019 Deprivation Profile provided in 3.1, we develop a deeper understanding of the disparities of place. Children living in Decile areas 2 and 3, urban and semi-urban communities within Holyhead, often include descriptions of houses, roads, residential streets, cars, and local playgrounds. Nearly all the children living in Decile area 2 use English to describe their place, with little evidence of Welsh language or bilingual approaches. Whereas children living in Decile area 3 evidence bilingual approaches.

Dawel - quiet

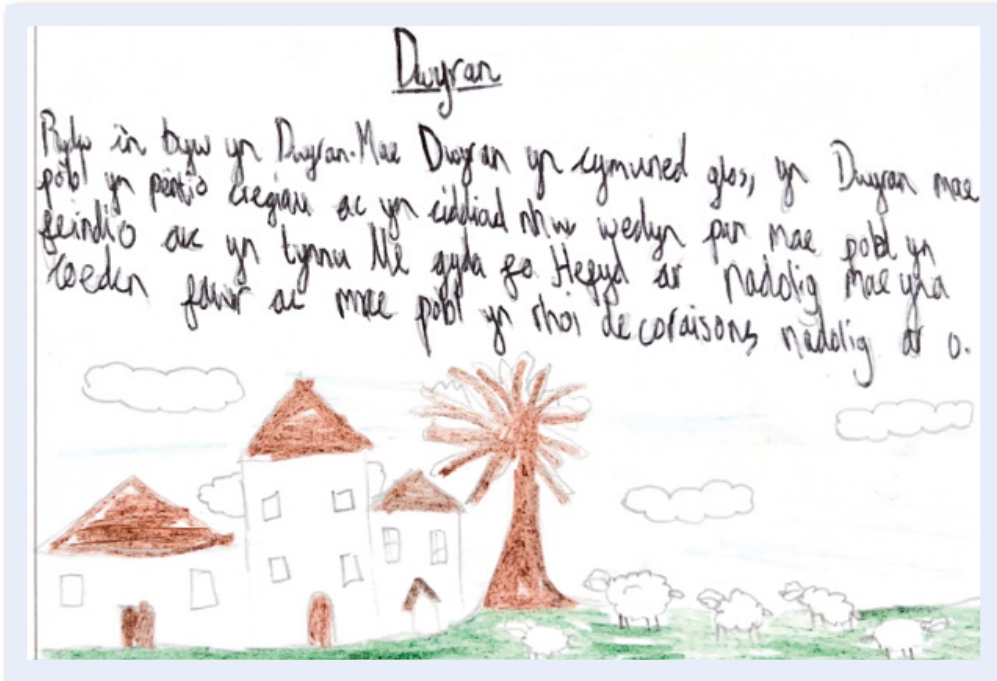
Description of place, WIMD Decile area 3.



Description of place, WIMD Decile area 2.



Children living in Decile areas 4 and 5 demonstrate a stronger identity with the Welsh language and culture throughout their descriptions of place. Nature and landscape, community life, and social and cultural descriptions are often referenced. Included in these descriptions are distinct community identities, local culture and heritage, and active community engagement.



I live in Dwyran. Dwyran is a neat close community. In Dwyran people paint stones and hide them and then when people find and take pictures of them. Also at Christmas there is a big tree and people put decorations on it.

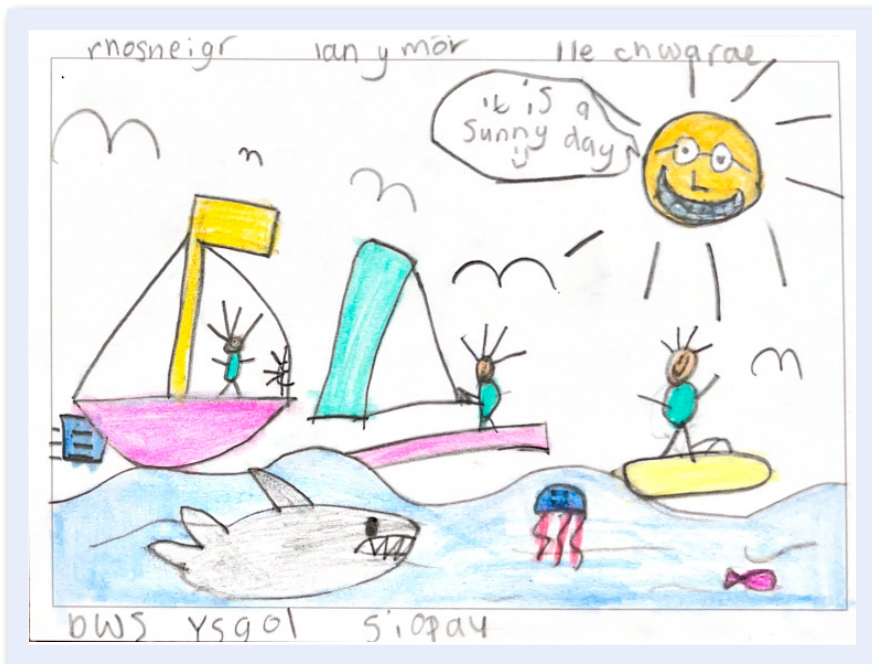
Description of place, WIMD Decile area 4.



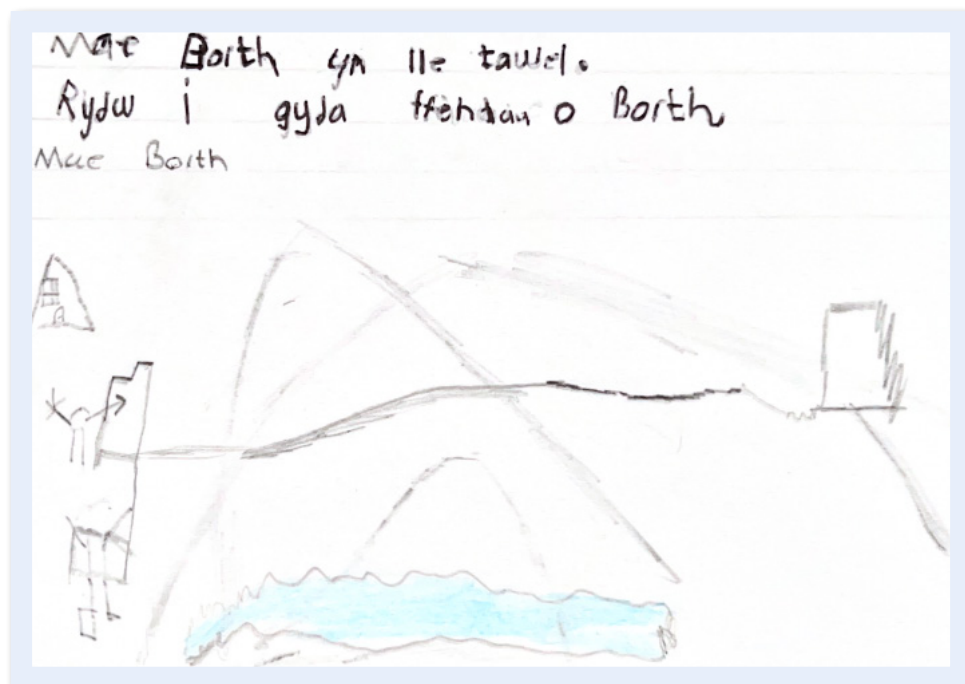
Sun, rain, clouds, beach, shops, houses, pub, lane/road

Description of place, WIMD Decile area 5.

Children from Decile areas 6 to 10 demonstrate greater language diversity, including bilingual approaches. Children from these areas describe social and engaging communities with access to cultural and historic places, as well as more diverse nature, and natural landscapes.



It's a sunny day, seaside, play area, bus, school, shops
 Description of place, WIMD Decile area 7.



Borth is a quiet place. I have friends from Borth.
 Description of place, WIMD Decile area 8.

Using children's descriptions of the places where they live on the Isle of Anglesey provides insight into the lived experience of their communities across the island. Through this methodology and data collection, we have been able to consider how children view the social, economic, environmental, and cultural factors that influence their place.

4. Lle Llais Event

Lle Llais 2025 provided children with unique opportunities to actively participate in creative arts and nature-based activities through cultural heritage engagement with Welsh Bards in the natural setting of Newborough nature reserve. Activities were co-created with Year 9 children from Ysgol Uwchradd Caergybi, the secondary high school in Holyhead, to provide themed engagement at the Lle Llais event. This collaboration was key to the success of Lle Llais arts and nature-based activities. It supported the engagement of children with local culture and heritage through creative arts and nature-based learning through the Welsh language, poetry, and Bardic traditions. Bringing creative Bards, Mappers, and children together to co-create activities would fundamentally determine how well children connected Welsh culture with local identity, and how this contributed to their feelings of belonging, place, and wellbeing.



Painting of Lle Llais by Alec Shepley, 2025.

The project centered around five distinct Lle Llais arts and nature-based activities. A carousel approach was adopted for project delivery, which involved children working in small groups rotating through different activities housed in Teepee-like structures. Creative arts and nature-based work were displayed using the Lle Llais looms that children from the island had co-designed for the first Lle Llais project in 2024. In this section of the report, we detail the main observations and reflections from children’s creative and cultural heritage engagement in each of the five distinct activities for Welsh poetic art, Creating the spoken word, Moving through sound, Re-imagining the forest floor through print and mark making, and Place-based mapping through animated symbology.



Children engaged in arts and nature-based Lle Llais activities, 2025.

4.1. Creative Cultural and Heritage Engagement

Lle Llais 2025 developed an understanding of children’s sense of place through creative cultural heritage engagement using trauma-informed approaches. We detail the five distinct arts and nature-based activities that created the conditions for children to develop meaningful place-based connections and feelings of belonging.



Welsh poetic art

Poetic art and nature-based activities were designed around the 14th Century Welsh poet Dafydd ap Gwilym’s poem, May and January. Using an oral tradition, the poem was recited by Bard Dr Rhys Trimble. The children reflected on the poem, created paper chains, and decorated fabric with words, lines, and drawings that they associated with the poem. Natural objects were collected from the forest floor and used to decorate two capes, one to depict May and the other January, that reflected the contrasts described in Dafydd ap Gwilym’s poem.

Children dressed up in the capes and acted out parts of the poem, enthusiastically calling out “*Hawddamor*” when greeting one another. They later shared how one of their “*favourite things was decorating the cloaks*”. Teachers shared how pleased they were with the engagement of boys in this activity; they demonstrated freedom to express cultural and environmental awareness through poetry, creative art, and nature-based activity. These activities connected children and young people, grounding place and belonging, through Welsh poetic art.





Creating the spoken word

Lle Llais memories from Newborough were collected through the themed activity Memory Catchers, where examples of Welsh literature were used to create spoken words in nature. Bard Gillian Brownson recited a Canu Llywarch Hen early Welsh englyn-poem for children, then asked them to reflect on the words using their experiences of place, embracing their senses to see, hear, smell, feel, and touch the environment around them. Immersing the group in Welsh language, culture, and heritage, children were supported through an appreciation of the context of words, and recreated the spoken word using their experience of Lle Llais.

Using literature prompts that reflected on their memories and helped find their words, children responded by writing their words on luggage labels or recording their spoken words. Children shared how this activity “*was so quiet, and quiet within, I felt happy, safe, relaxed, quiet, and peaceful*” and how “*listening to the birds ... and the sea helps me relax*”. Observations included how secondary school-aged boys released their initial gender-dominant behaviours as they were enveloped by calm, gentle praise and positive reinforcement. This activity captured the essence of listening with kindness, of being held and being heard through trauma-informed approaches that led to kind and compassionate behaviour within the group.





Reimagining the forest floor through print & mark making

Natural objects from the forest floor and shoreline were collected for children to explore the connectedness between the local environment and place. Children were supported to identify the species of wildlife and to consider the importance of the relationship between the forest and the natural shore environment at Newbrough. Working in the natural environment with Bard Lisa Hudson, the activity focused the imagination of children, captivating creative thoughts, feelings, and emotions.

The collected objects were used as sensory elements where children were encouraged to feel textures, smell scents, consider form, and express these elements through creative print and mark-making on calico panels. Children added words to their work to share their thoughts, feelings, reflections, and emotions in response to their Lle Llais experience at Newborough forest. Children shared how this activity was “fun”, helping them to “feel very relaxed and peaceful in nature”, and how engagement enabled them to feel “equal, alive, observant, joyous and known”. These contributions were powerful words used by children and young people that demonstrated feelings of acceptance and connection, words that strongly indicate feelings of belonging.





Place-based mapping through animated symbology

The place-based mapping with animated symbology activity invited children to think about belonging and create a symbol that represented their connection to the island. The intention of the activity was to create animated symbols using digital technology to bring the map of the Isle of Anglesey alive. Children engaged thoughtfully when developing skills to animate symbols that reflected their sense of place. Children shared how this activity helped them feel “*quiet inside*”; it encouraged them to think deeply, reflect on their culture and heritage, and use personal place-based experiences to design the symbols.

Animating their symbols brought sensory experiences to life and digitally narrated children’s place-based attachments to the island. Described as a “*cool experience*”, this was a very popular activity with the children as it enabled them to advance their digital skills in a creative and meaningful way. Teachers shared that they had not observed digital skills used in this way before and were inspired to explore ways of using sensory techniques like this to support cultural learning back in the classroom.



Image by Play Disrupt 2025.

The five distinct arts and nature-based activities created the conditions for children to develop meaningful place-based connections and feelings of belonging (Blood and Zatorre, 2001.; Cherry, 2025.; Fancourt, 2017.). Working together, children demonstrated acts of kindness to one another and the natural environment around them. Developing social connectedness through creative expression, and a shared kinship through deeper interconnectedness with all forms of life (Morton, 2019).

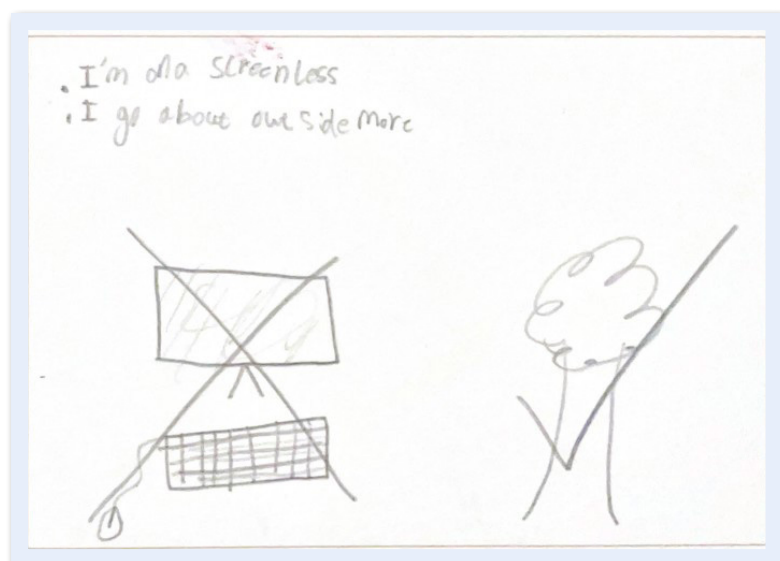
4.2. What children learnt about the Isle of Anglesey

Following Lle Llais 2025, teachers were asked to undertake a post-event activity with their pupils where children were asked to reflect on the experience and describe, using words and/or pictures, what they had learnt about the Isle of Anglesey. We profiled this information to develop an understanding of what children value most about their island, and in doing so, provide this report with valuable insights about place, belonging and wellbeing.

Findings demonstrate children's strong connections to nature when engaging in arts-based activities outside the classroom. Children shared how breathing in air and being in nature support their mental health. Some children shared the positive wellbeing changes they were making as a result of attending Lle Llais. Many children associated arts and nature-based activities with feeling relaxed, calm and peaceful. Engaging in arts and nature-based activities in outdoor spaces correlates with happiness, awareness of mental health and a promoted sense of children's wellbeing.



Being in nature, Being in the fresh air relaxes me



Descriptions from children after being outside in nature at Lle Llais.

There is a direct correlation between children's engagement at Lle Llais, the fluid nature of the event, and children's cultural and environmental awareness. Their interest in environmental and local heritage aspects of the project indicates an impact on cultural and environmental awareness. Furthermore, using Welsh language, culture, and heritage to frame arts and nature-based activities develops a collective sense of pride and a genuine sense of identity to place and belonging. Children shared how many of the activities promoted feelings of community and friendship. Children described how they enjoyed making music together and having fun with friends. This was further evidenced in their application of animated symbology, where children demonstrated strong social connections with friends on the island. Lle Llais activities encouraged social connection through creative expression, and children shared how this enhanced their feelings of belonging, happiness, and well-being.

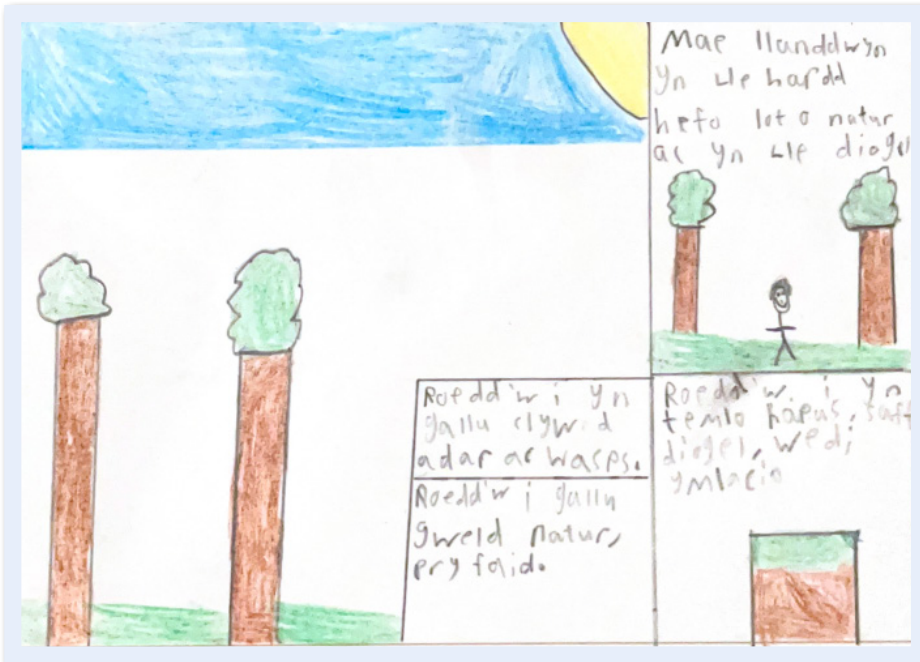
When we consider the responses from children in line with the WIMD 2019 Deprivation Profile provided in 3.1, we develop a deeper understanding of their connection to place. Children living in Decile areas 2 and 3, urban and semi-urban communities within Holyhead, reference strong connections with nature and emotionally positive descriptions, indicating strong place attachment and connection. They describe Lle Llais as a "happy place", demonstrate more environmental awareness, and reference more nature-based learning at the event. Notably, there were more bilingual responses provided by children in this area after their engagement at Lle Llais.



A happy place, a lot of nature, beautiful place, a huge forest

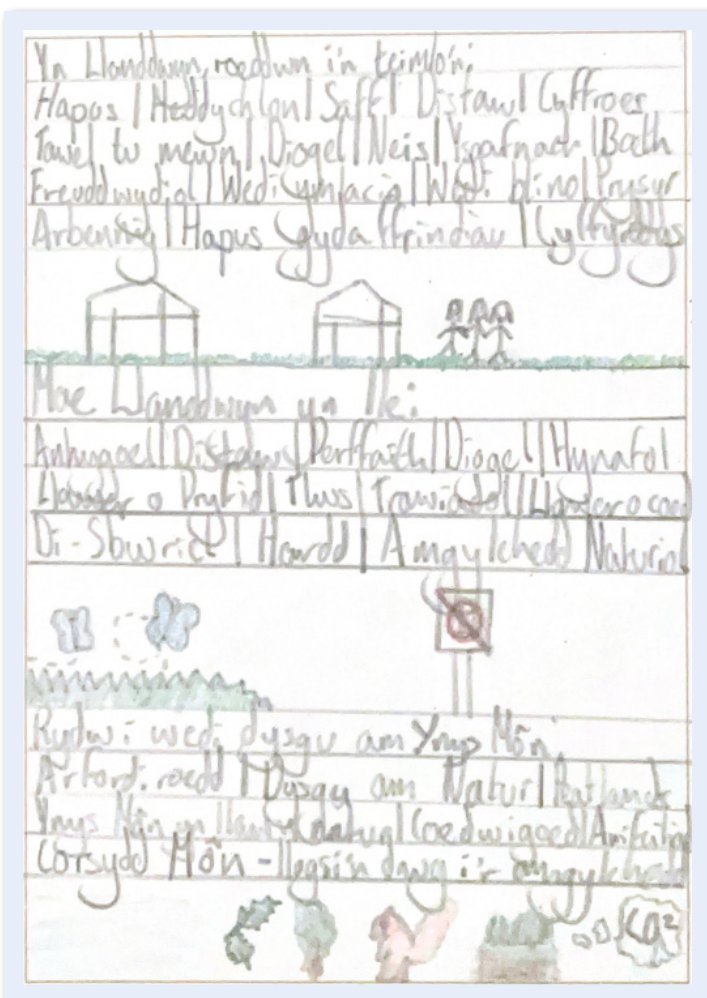
Description of what a child learnt about the Isle of Anglesey from WIMD Decile area 3

Children living in Decile areas 4 and 5 demonstrated cultural and historical awareness after the event. Many children were interested in sharing information about Santes Dwynwen; their descriptions identify a deep cultural connection to place. Using words like beautiful, perfect, safe, happy, peaceful, and quiet inside, children described how Lle Llais experiences promoted feelings of well-being and belonging.



Llanddwyn is a beautiful place with a lot of nature and a safe place. I can hear birds and wasps. I could see nature and creatures. I felt happy, safe and relaxed.

Description of what a child learnt about the Isle of Anglesey from WIMD Decile area 4.



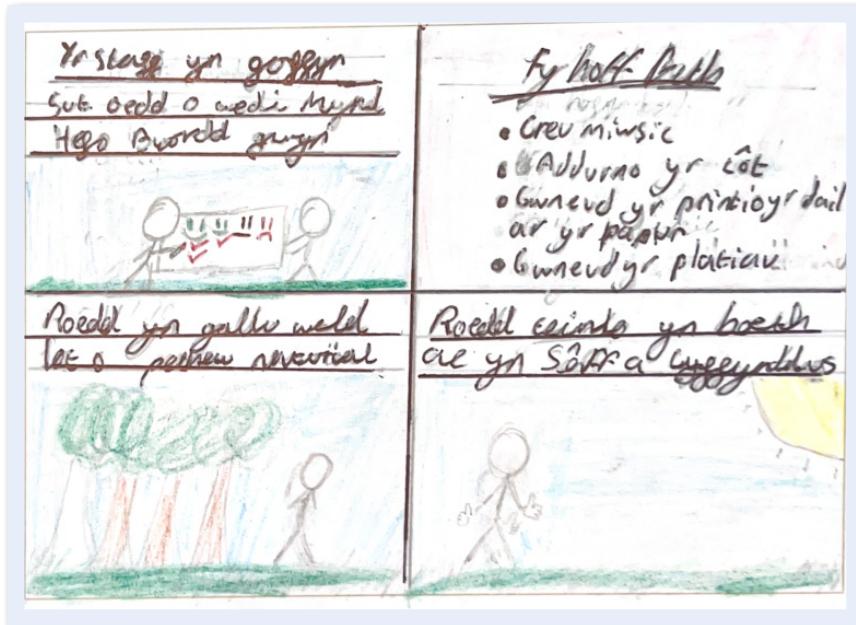
In Llanddwyn I felt happy, peaceful, safe, quiet, excited, quiet inside, nice, lighter, warm, dreamy, relaxed, tired, busy, special, happy with friends, confident.

Llanddwyn is a place that's amazing quiet, perfect, safe, ancient, lots of creatures, pretty, impressive, lots of trees, no rubbish, beautiful, natural environment.

I have learnt about Anglesey, about the coast, about nature, peatland, Anglesey is very natural forest, animals, wetlands that burning is bad for environment, creating carbon dioxide.

Description of what a child learnt about the Isle of Anglesey from WIMD Decile area 5.

Children living in Decile areas 6 to 10 demonstrated stronger environmental learning and shared a deeper connection to nature, environmental wellbeing, and responsibility. Children referenced nature, beautiful beaches, and having fun outdoors. Children from decile area 6 demonstrated more learning from creative engagement than those from areas 9 and 10, as these children focused more on social connections than creative activities.

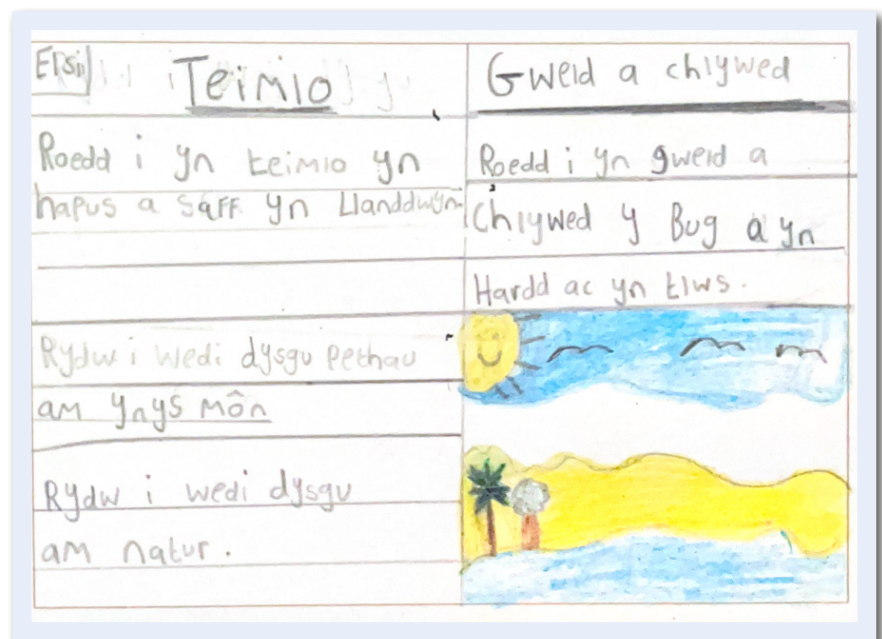


The staff asked how it went with a whiteboard. I could see a lot of natural things. My favorite thing was creating music, decorating the coat, doing the leaf printing on paper and making plates. It felt warm and safe and comfortable.

Description of what a child learnt about the Isle of Anglesey from WIMD Decile area 7.

It was a family and a happy and safe place. I have learned about things about Anglesey. I have learned about nature. I have seen and heard a bug and it is beautiful and pretty.

Description of what a child learnt about the Isle of Anglesey from WIMD Decile area 10.



The findings reveal important insights into children’s feelings of belonging. Children shared how engaging in cultural and creative arts and nature-based activities made them feel happy, safe, quiet inside, and peaceful. The emotional language that children used to describe Lle Llais demonstrates that the project contributed to their emotional security, feelings of belonging, and cultural identity. The natural environment where activity took place is central to children’s feelings of connection and belonging.



Examples of children's words that described their thoughts, feelings, and emotions at Lle Llais, 2025.

Children's understanding of Welsh culture and heritage, in addition to Welsh words, deepened their feelings of attachment to the environment and understanding of place. We believe this is evidence of children's multi-dimensional belonging across place, nature, environment, community, heritage, language, and culture. These findings provide us with an understanding of what social and cultural belonging and connection mean to children, through what we conclude is a collective, proud, place-based identity. Through Lle Llais 2025, we have identified the following six descriptors that inform our understanding of what place, belonging, and well-being mean to children living on the Isle of Anglesey: Happiness, Friendship, Nature, Quiet Inside, Safe, and Creative.



The six descriptors used by school pupils that inform our understanding of what place, belonging and wellbeing mean to children living on the Isle of Anglesey from Lle Llais 2025.

4.3. Using Trauma-Informed Approaches

Central to Lle Llais 2025 was the aim to inspire and nurture a more compassionate and equitable society through trauma-informed approaches. This required the Lle Llais delivery team to create engagement approaches for arts and nature-based activities that were inclusive, diverse, kind and compassionate. Essential to this was the staff training delivered by Wrexham University's (WU) Trauma and Adverse Childhood Experience (TrACE) team, Trauma, and Trauma-Informed Approaches (Brierley-Sollis and Roberts, 2024). Through this training, the PMP Lle Llais team was introduced to Trauma-Informed Practice and Vicarious Trauma, which enabled a trauma-informed approach for the project.

The staff training was an important step towards becoming trauma-informed, as this enabled a consistent and person-led approach to the project. Using Walker et al., (2021) example of interrelation lenses to becoming trauma-informed, the team required consideration of the reciprocal influences of being child, gender, attachment, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE), and culturally informed, all of which featured in the planning of Lle Llais 2025. The PMP Lle Llais team worked to understand the impact of vicarious trauma on children and considered how trauma-informed approaches could support the delivery of the arts and nature-based activities at Lle Llais. Through these considerations, the team adopted a kind and considerate approach to ensure the well-being of children (Cherry, 2021). Furthermore, the natural environment of Newborough was carefully considered to provide a welcoming, safe, and culturally safe space where children could experience a sense of belonging (Walker et al., 2021).

The definition, principles and practice levels set out in the Trauma-Informed Wales Practice Framework (ACE Hub Wales and Traumatic Stress Wales 2022), and the definition of trauma by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA, 2014), created a foundation baseline of understanding in which the PMP Lle Llais delivery team built their approaches. WUs TrACE training introduced the PMP Lle Llais delivery team to ways that they could enhance compassionate communication (Rosenberg, 2015), use modelling for co-regulation (Murray et al., 2015), create experiences that provide space for self-regulation (McClelland and Tominey, 2014) and consider attachment representations in new social situations (Feeney et al., 2008) in their trauma-informed activities. These trauma-informed approaches proved to be a key enabler in developing meaningful engagement that enriched the social and cultural well-being of children living on the Isle of Anglesey.

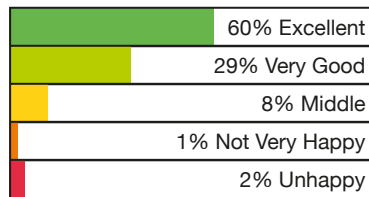
To help evidence the impact of these trauma-informed approaches, we have used the six descriptors that informed our understanding of what children learnt about place, belonging, and wellbeing at Lle Llais 2025 and applied these to the main concepts delivered in the Trauma and Trauma-Informed Approaches Training delivered by WUs TrACE team.



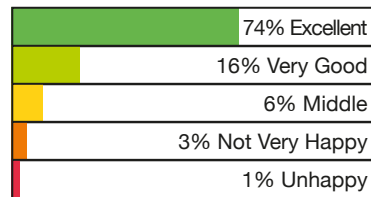
Children enjoyed Lle Llais; they described Lle Llais as a happy place and engaged enthusiastically in all the activities. The PMP team trialed a fun and welcoming wellbeing check with children when they arrived and departed Lle Llais. There was a notable increase in children’s happiness after they had engaged in Lle Llais activities. However, a small percentage said they were not very happy because they did not want to leave. These children were unhappy to return to school; they had enjoyed being outside in nature, engaging in creative activities with Welsh Bards. Relational engagement in this new social situation was strong. The trauma-informed approaches were a key enabler in developing meaningful engagement that enriched children’s social well-being and increased feelings of happiness.



On Arrival



On Departure



The trauma-informed approaches at the heart of Lle Llais created a safe, compassionate, and thoughtful environment for children to engage, create, and collaborate. Children described feeling happy, alive, known, and equal at Lle Llais. They described having fun with friends and developing new friendships where they were able to identify with the natural environment to connect with others. When children engaged in the place-based mapping activity, they created symbols for friendship and located these in specific areas on the island. Children used emotional language, indicating their emotional safety at Lle Llais. These descriptions evidenced calm and compassionate engagement with others, which contributed to children’s feelings of happiness and belonging.



The natural environment of Newborough was carefully considered to provide a welcoming and culturally safe space where children could experience a sense of belonging. This natural environment and the trauma-informed approaches in which the activities were delivered were central to children's feelings of connectedness. Using natural objects from the forest floor and shoreline, children explored connections between the natural environment and place; this grounded their thoughts, feelings, and emotions. Children were supported to notice the environment around them and use arts-based activities to express their thoughts and feelings. Using trauma-informed approaches, children's thoughts and feelings were heard, seen, and noticed, which positively supported their emotional self-regulation and feelings of self-worth. Children described being able to breathe outside, whilst some descriptions were physical; others were more philosophical, describing nature as a space to become relaxed and lost in thought.



Many children described Lle Llais as helping them to feel quiet inside. These descriptions correlate with children's feelings of calm and peace, indicating that the trauma-informed approaches and activities helped them to feel grounded and emotionally balanced. Through compassionate communication, the Lle Llais team demonstrated empathy and patience with children, allowing them to be themselves with no prior judgement or expectation. Meeting children where they were at demonstrated relational and inclusive approaches that supported the development of social and cultural well-being and belonging.



Many children shared how they felt safe engaging in arts and nature-based activities at Lle Llais. The emotional language that children used to describe their experiences indicates that the trauma-informed approaches contributed to their feelings of emotional safety. Many children had not visited Newborough before, nor had they engaged in arts and nature-based activities, both of which could have presented threats and uncertainty to children. However, trauma-informed approaches were gentle and kind, and children were able to express themselves through the inclusive approaches and authentic connections of the Lle Llais team. Positive relational engagement through these approaches resulted in children feeling safe, valued, and accepted for who they are. Children also indicated that they felt safe on the island, as when they engaged in the place-based mapping activity, they created an animated symbol for danger and located this outside the island.



Bards modelled thoughts, feelings and behaviours through poetry, literature, sounds, print and mark making. These initiations were calm, intentional, and supportive gestures of co-regulation which resulted in respectful connections for arts and nature-based engagement. Children were encouraged to be curious, expressive, and authentic in their engagement through inclusive and compassionate approaches from the Lle Llais team, who noticed, heard and validated their contributions. When reciprocal influences presented barriers, e.g. gender-dominant perceptions of cultural and creative engagement, supportive acts of listening with kindness, through trauma-informed approaches, led children to consider their thoughts and consciously adapt behaviours within their group.

Trauma-informed approaches used in Lle Llais 2025 successfully developed meaningful connections that positively impacted the social and cultural well-being of children living on the Isle of Anglesey. The Lle Llais 2025 project has developed a place-based understanding of children's social and cultural well-being through arts and nature-based engagement using trauma-informed approaches. These trauma-informed approaches promoted co-regulation and emotional safety through compassionate engagement.

5. Conclusion

The Lle Llais 2025 project successfully engaged 253 children from across eight schools on the Isle of Anglesey with Welsh Bards in the natural setting of Newborough nature reserve. Through development and enactment of trauma-informed, arts and nature-based activities, we have captured data that evidences meaningful impact on the social and cultural well-being of children living on the Isle of Anglesey. Our research deepens understanding of children's place attachment through creative practice, cultural heritage, grounded narratives, and the Welsh language.

In section 3, we detailed the demographic reach of the Lle Llais project and developed a place-based understanding of how children's perception of place is influenced by social, economic, environmental, and cultural factors within their communities. Our data identified that the majority of children engaged in Lle Llais 2025 were residents of the least deprived communities on the Isle of Anglesey and lived in rural/semi-rural areas.

In section 4, we reviewed the project's arts and nature-based activity to detail the reach, participation, and engagement of children. Our findings demonstrate a direct correlation between children's engagement with Welsh Bards enacting trauma-informed approaches through arts and nature-based activities and cultural and environmental awareness. Furthermore, we share how Lle Llais activities encouraged social connectedness through creative expression which cultivated children's feelings of belonging, happiness, kindness, and well-being.

These findings reveal important insights into children's feelings of belonging through the emotional language used by children. These insights shared by children demonstrate that the project contributed to their emotional security, feelings of belonging, and cultural identity. In conclusion, our report evidences the positive impact of Lle Llais 2025 on the social and cultural wellbeing of children living on the Isle of Anglesey. The natural environment in which Lle Llais engagement took place, and the trauma-informed approaches used for engagement, were central to children's feelings of connectedness and belonging.

Future Research

The success of Lle Llais 2025 in the natural setting of Newborough nature reserve presents compelling opportunities for future research to explore how trauma-informed, arts and nature-based cultural heritage engagement might translate to urban contexts. The findings also present important opportunities for future research to explore how trauma-informed approaches build relational connectedness for educational engagement.

With appropriate funding, a comparative study could be developed using the Rural Roaming Room looms in an urban setting such as Ty Pawb in Wrexham, a purpose-built arts and community hub serving diverse urban communities. This would enable exploration of whether the six key descriptors identified through Lle Llais 2025; Happiness, Friendship, Nature, Quiet Inside, Safe, and Creative, manifest similarly in children from urban environments with different demographic profiles, including higher

concentrations of deprivation and greater linguistic and cultural diversity. Such research could investigate how place-based cultural heritage engagement adapts to urban spaces where children's relationships with nature, community, and Welsh language may differ significantly from those in rural Anglesey.

Additionally, this would provide valuable insights into the scalability and adaptability of trauma-informed approaches across different geographical and socio-economic contexts, ultimately contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of how creative cultural heritage engagement can nurture belonging, identity, and wellbeing for children across Wales's diverse communities.

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