

A consideration of the opportunities and challenges for the development of a pedagogy to deliver the Curriculum for Wales (Successful Futures)

A review of relevant research and literature which has (a) informed your professional practice and (b) opportunities and challenges that should be considered by schools/practitioners/educational settings when developing a pedagogical approach to the Curriculum for Wales (Successful Futures)

Section 1 – Literature Review

This dissertation will attempt to offer an insight into the pedagogical principles highlighted in the Successful Futures report (Donaldson, 2015). It will analyse how some of the theories presented by Professor Donaldson can be employed by those within the education profession in order to deliver the new curriculum for Wales. The principles will be considered alongside theorists' visions for successful pedagogy, research from the field of education and experience of current practice in Wales and beyond.

In an open letter to the Welsh Minister for Education and Skills, Professor Donaldson explained that, following the publication of Successful Futures (Donaldson, 2015), his proposals were

“Radical and wide-ranging. They are interrelated and should be seen as an integrated set and not separately.” (Donaldson, 2015, P1)

The Successful Futures report considered the purpose and structure of the curriculum, assessment and pedagogy and implications for its continued development. A chapter is dedicated solely to pedagogy and Donaldson discusses twelve pedagogical principles:

“Good teaching and learning:

- 1. Maintains a consistent focus on the overall purposes of the curriculum*
- 2. Challenges all learners by encouraging them to recognise the importance of sustained effort in meeting expectations that are high but achievable for them*
- 3. Means employing a blend of approaches including direct teaching*

4. *Means employing a blend of approaches including those that promote problem solving, creative and critical thinking*
5. *Sets tasks and selects resources that build on previous knowledge and experience and engage interest*
6. *Creates authentic contexts for learning*
7. *Means employing assessment for learning principles*
8. *Ranges within and across Areas of Learning and Experience*
9. *Regularly reinforces Cross-curriculum Responsibilities, including literacy, numeracy and digital competence, and provides opportunities to practice them*
10. *Encourages children and young people to take increasing responsibility for their own learning*
11. *Supports social and emotional development and positive relationships*
12. *Encourages collaboration.”*

(Donaldson, 2015)

The first principle suggested by Donaldson (2015) is the need to focus on the overall purpose of the curriculum. The word ‘curriculum’ is derived from the Latin word ‘currere’ which means ‘to run’. Within the English language it has been used to explain the journey between the beginning and a destination, from one place to another. In educational terms, we can consider a curriculum to support the learner from a place where skills and knowledge are new, to a situation where they are increased and improved. Neither in life nor in education is the path straightforward, and so the idea of a curriculum is one which has opportunities for movement, chances to pull on the support of others and occasions where a person of experience should take the lead. I believe we can use this analogy in the classroom and within the field of education when considering pedagogy. It runs parallel to the curriculum and although the skills or knowledge requirements may be set clearly, an opportunity for supporting learning in the most appropriate way through high quality teaching that is specific to the group of learners, makes the path towards the educational destination a more meaningful journey.

The successful implementation of any given curriculum relies not only on the content but on the context in which it is being taught, the relevance to the students and its delivery, namely the pedagogical approach. In addition to the purpose of the overall curriculum suggested as

the first principle, I believe that using a blend of approaches to teaching, including direct instruction, as suggested in principle 3, run alongside each other. To this day, a clear explanation of ‘what is pedagogy?’ cannot be established and it seems that every individual involved within education has their own understanding of the word.

Stanley Hall (1905) and Radosavljevich (1911) shared the opinion that defined pedagogy simply as the science of education and the “general designation for the art of teaching”. A century later, Macleod & Golby (2003) claimed that learning is a complex matter whereby the theory and practice of teaching should be informed by our understanding of learning for all parties involved. They considered the necessity of quality teacher education and development in order to ensure that teaching approaches are sophisticated enough to deal with the changing society and needs of the students. I support their belief that the prescriptive policy context in England and Wales often acts as a constraint for professionals, and therefore those involved within the education sector must have a solid understanding of the elements of successful learning prior to practicing their art.

It is interesting to note that despite the great changes in education and the wider society over the past century, Professor Donaldson’s findings in the Successful Futures Document (2015) echo those of researchers of the past. He explains how “high quality teachers with a sound understanding of the ‘why’ and ‘how of teaching as well as the ‘what’” (Donaldson, 2015) are imperative if the new curriculum is to be effectively implemented. I feel this describes good practice as that of an art, knowing what teaching skills to apply when in order to be most efficient in developing the skills of the learners.

Quality teaching is essential if the education system and its learners is to thrive, this is an aspect considered as paramount by researchers and authors prior to Donaldson (Stones, 1994; Darling-Hammond, 1997; Pounder, 2014; Waring & Evans, 2014). I believe that high quality teaching and learning is an integral part of a successful education system within Wales and beyond. With the current changes to the Welsh curriculum taking place, practitioners will inevitably need to ensure that teaching strategies and pedagogical approaches match the requirements of the new policy documents. Donaldson (2015) discusses the importance of teachers as reflective practitioners, I feel this is detrimental to the delivery of the dynamic curriculum that Wales is at the point of publishing formally.

“There is a technique of teaching, just as there is a technique of piano-playing. The technique, if it is to be educationally effective, is dependent upon principles...”

[Teachers] study books of pedagogy and attend teachers' institutes, yet unless they continue to be students of subject-matter, and students of mind activity... they cannot grow as a teacher." (Dewey, 1962)

Dewey (1962) suggested that high quality teaching relies on the ability of the practitioner to be dynamic in their approach, to continue to develop their practice through increasing their own subject knowledge and through being aware of the most suitable pedagogical approaches to employ in a learning situation. His research focused on the approach to learning, he considered the advantages of a curriculum led by practitioners versus a curriculum led by the learners themselves, and substantiated the pedagogy that both have in common. The curriculum currently used in Wales, and the similar policies in England and Scotland during the early 21st century, made use of both approaches. I believe that the fine balance between teacher led and pupil led curricula that was first discussed by Dewey in the early 20th century, is one that is still being refined in current practice. I feel that a consistent focus on the curriculum will see practitioners adapting their style of teaching more frequently as the nature of the curriculum itself is one that is dynamic and will become a bespoke document for each establishment. The purpose of the curriculum is to equip learners with skills for their lives in the future and this will require flexibility from schools and learning professionals to direct the learning effectively.

The first drafts of the curriculum for Wales have indicated that the curriculum will be broader in terms of skills and narrower in terms of knowledge compared to what practitioners have been used to in Wales to date. I am aware that final publications are still due to be approved, however, if the new curriculum is released as expected it will allow for more interpretation and therefore input with regards to its delivery by practitioners. I feel it is imperative that the professionalism of a teacher needs to be at the forefront in order to gauge the learners' current understanding then direct the learning experience in the most suitable way. The concepts of 'professionalism' and 'professionality' have been considered by theorists (Hoyle, 1974 and Whitty, 2000) and suggestions of key features of both run parallel to one's understanding of pedagogy, namely the "knowledge, skills and procedures employed by teachers" (Hoyle, 1974). High quality teaching will enable this 'dynamic' delivery to occur organically as the content of the new curriculum will be adapted and more suited to the setting and the learners. I am of the opinion that effective pedagogy will allow learners to grow through development of their prior knowledge and skills, thus reinforcing the purpose of the learning journey.

Evans (2011) considers the need for self-aware and motivated teachers who present the 'ideal' behaviours of a professional, versus the concept that government-imposed reform shapes and 'demands' a certain set of skills through the professional standards and accompanying performance management system that was introduced in 2007.

Often within the world of education, effective teaching has been identified by continuously improving school standards and individual pupil achievement. It has therefore been refreshing that the introduction of the 'Excellence in Teaching (ETF)' framework forced practitioners to become more reflective and consistent in their approach. This concept of effective pedagogy runs parallel to the notion that the curriculum is most successful when it is consistent.

"If you want to promote great teaching you need to understand what great teaching is." (Coe, Aloisi, Higgins, & Elliot Major, 2014) Coe et al. (2014) indicated the importance of practitioners knowing what makes their practice successful. The ETF acts as a toolkit for identifying and supporting the concept and ideals of quality teaching. There is discussion of how best to monitor teaching quality and its effectiveness and despite the successes of the ETF, it can be argued that assessment of the practitioner based solely on this framework would be imprudent. Just as we would expect a natural variation in approach for our learners, it is essential that teacher effectiveness is not judged on a grid or tick list such as the ETF, but through professional dialogue, student feedback, self evaluation and lesson observations if required. In order to determine a teacher's understanding and application of quality teaching, an honest and holistic reading of their daily practice needs to occur. This will inevitably create consistency within the teacher as an individual, and hopefully develop more stability across the profession with regard to delivery of the curriculum.

Although I agree with and understand the importance of a consistent approach to the curriculum, it cannot be discussed without some scepticism and consideration of the past and present ideals. Government policies are changed regularly, some would say too often for an effective impact or change to take place. If the new Curriculum for Wales, based on the Successful Futures (2015) recommendations, is to take effect and act as the cornerstone to a rich and balanced education system, then it is vital that time should be given to fully instil the principles and for teachers to grasp the concept of a more flexible 'syllabus'. From experience as a senior leader and working within the cluster of local authority schools, I appreciate the necessity for change and also for variation. The most successful of schools

allow teachers some individuality and trust within the classroom. Donaldson (2015) suggests that consistency is key; however I would argue that interpretations and alternative approaches should be encouraged. It will inevitably afford learners with a more valuable experience.

Pedagogical principle 3, as referred to earlier, indicates the need for direct teaching when deemed appropriate. Studies across different settings and curricula, (Sarason & Banbury, 2004; Strow & Strow, 2006) have established the requirement of an active learning process. Both qualitative and quantitative data has been collected to support the findings that active learning is favourable. Where consistency in curriculum and a dynamic, less direct style of teaching are employed together, then it can be demonstrated that students in active learning sessions scored highly in their understanding of course material but did not perform as successfully in formal tests (Ebert-May, Brewer, & Allred, 1997).

Despite many professionals' aversion to formal testing as a means of assessment, it is inevitably part of the education system in Wales that will remain. Following Successful Futures (2015) and the introduction of the new Curriculum for Wales, there will need to be a shift in how formal testing will sit alongside the changes the system will face. Can understanding of single subjects still be examined at the end of an academic year or is there a requirement for a more general 'flavour' of knowledge, understanding and skills across broader subject areas (Areas of Learning Experience) to be taken? I am of the belief that the former will remain for the foreseeable and given that assumption, there will still be a need for direct teaching on occasion. Learners don't know what they don't know, and so, although the curriculum should be pupil led (Dewey, 1962) it can be argued that Popham's theory for the promotion of teacher led tasks and tests should also be considered. Popham (2003) suggests an approach whereby teachers take direction and instigate their own form of testing through assessment and guided learning activities, he claims this will inevitably prepare our learners better for the external, formalised examinations that will continue to be prescribed to our pupils. I support this notion and believe it links neatly towards Donaldson's (2015) ambition for more efficient assessment procedures.

Creating an authentic context for learning is the sixth principle proposed by Donaldson (2015). My understanding is that this is an intimation towards the need for more real life skills and learning, as opposed to prescribed knowledge from a narrow vein determined by past generations and the fact that it's 'what we've always taught'. Since the initial publication of Successful Futures (2015) academics have attempted to create parallels between

Donaldson's recommendations and theorists' views and findings from other relevant research. Most recently, Braslavsky (2012) described a curriculum as a clash between society's ideals and political desires, and the current education provided in that setting is then generally based on the mix of the two. It is in my experience that the changes in education in Wales, the curriculum and pedagogical transformations that are occurring, typify her thoughts. I envisage that once effectively implemented, the Curriculum for Wales will act as the cornerstone for conveying the mind-set and common values of the community it's set to serve. It will allow for adaptation of tradition teaching styles and variation of what skills will actually be taught and deemed most significant to the learners. Authentic learning that develops 'real' skills will always, in my opinion, far exceed the need for standalone, subject specific knowledge.

Roney (2001) considered the most effective teachers as those who possess characteristics and abilities to apply the necessary skills to create opportunities for authentic learning.

"[Teachers] adapt the curriculum and instruction to developmental needs, using varied activities and materials, asking varied questions, and promoting thinking."

(Roney, 2001)

I believe that these 'ideal' qualities correlate with Beane's desire for an integrated approach to the curriculum. Beane (1995 and 1997) indicated that success in education relies on the marriage of specific subject area knowledge and real life skills. Effective pedagogy should be flexible in employing skills to ensure that learning is authentic and meaningful, I feel that there is much scope for interpretation of learning skills in the Curriculum for Wales that will enable this to take place. Emdin (2013) shared a similar opinion and considered how teachers can "change lives and spark magic" through engaging learners, inspiring through talk and guidance and allowing them the experience new and unfamiliar contexts outside of the classroom that promote thinking and interest.

Miner & Finn (2003) conducted research in middle school settings and determined that, alarmingly, "between 16% and 41% of teachers modified students' working group arrangements, the type of product required of a student, and/or the content of learners' activities on a weekly basis." Further teacher training opportunities and reflection of practice would support and ensure this takes place far more commonly in Wales, but I do have

reservations about how smoothly this process can occur. A survey conducted by the Welsh Government in December 2017 highlighted that despite the forthcoming changes in the education system, only 26% of practitioners felt that they had full access to the professional development they needed to carry out their role effectively. This need for training and effective is something that needs to be supported 'top down' and I feel that the Welsh Government have a duty to ensure that all practitioners are suitably equipped to deliver the Curriculum for Wales. There is a great need for teachers to have opportunities to try new approaches and evaluate their success if the teaching and learning is to be authentic and worthwhile. I am of the opinion that time must be set aside for practitioners to trial unfamiliar teaching strategies and plan opportunities for learning outside of the classroom that benefits learners for life in 'the real world'. Hargreaves & Fullan (2012) support the notion that the government must work with teachers, not against, if improvements are to take place in the education system.

One can consider the theories of pedagogy throughout recent history and in Donaldson's *Successful Futures* (2015), however, substance must be given to the assimilation of research theories and the true reality of the classroom setting.

Section 2 – SWOT Analysis and Strategic Plan

In order to ensure an efficient and successful transition to the Curriculum for Wales in our setting, a staff meeting was held where discussion of positive aspects and concerns were discussed openly. This was conducted in order to support the journey forward of the school. All staff were involved including senior staff, middle leaders, class teachers and support staff. If the implementation of Successful Futures' recommendation through the Curriculum for Wales is to be realised in our school, then it was deemed to be a priority that all stakeholders were involved from the outset. Bryk and Schneider (2003) ascertained that “collective decision making with broad teacher buy-in is a crucial ingredient for reform”, thus emphasising the importance of all stakeholders having a part to play within each setting, the need for relational trust and respect, and the knowledge that their opinion and needs matter in the journey towards successful curriculum transformation.

A SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) was conducted to formalise the common viewpoints and this assisted in the generation of an action plan in order to accomplish the effective implementation of Curriculum for Wales over the next two years. The action plan focuses on driving forward the needs of our school setting alongside Donaldson's (2015) recommendations 4, 34, 38 and 58 from Successful Futures.

SWOT Analysis – Implementation of Curriculum for Wales (Successful Futures) in school setting

Strengths • Partner and cluster working with Pioneer Schools – sharing good practice and opportunity to explore new concepts and philosophy • Senior staff professional development – partaking in PGCert (Leading Effective Learning and Teaching), Donaldson Conferences and training • Up to date knowledge of current changes in Wales’ education system– all relevant news shared in staff meetings for all staff (teachers and support) • Appetite for change and willingness to improve • Flexible teaching and learning structure – time set aside to focus on areas of learning and enable integrated, dynamic learning experiences • Successes in learning are celebrated and shared in order to further improve self and others • Staff open to challenge	Opportunities • Prospect for further professional development – deepen understanding and gain additional qualifications • Chance to trial, change and succeed – staff will be supported to evaluate and share their experiences openly with colleagues • Bespoke learning experiences that are purposeful and relevant to our pupils. Chance for real life skills to be developed early in their education journey through the six Areas of Learning and Experience (AoLE) then transferred into future work • Opportunities to work with the community – consider what pupils need or want to learn about and how our local and wider communities can support that • Further collaboration across phases within our school, and with partner and cluster schools • Staff and pupils will feel more ownership of learning opportunities – this could increase confidence and interest in areas of learning for staff and pupils involved
Weaknesses • Professional development of class teachers and support staff • Curriculum overhaul and/or total change – uncertainty of what this will mean for our school and how we approach learning • Documents not yet finalised – how will these be interpreted and time set aside to understand then implement successfully? • Staff confidence and/or ability to change • Uncertainty about how learning will be formally assessed • Staff perceive draft documents as ambiguous – how will we ensure staff are secure in deducing what needs to be delivered in order to enable deep, purposeful learning? • Possibility that introduction of Curriculum for Wales and the changes it will bring along may be overwhelming – will this impact on staff and pupil wellbeing?	Threats • School categorisation and Estyn inspections • Staff wellbeing • Pupils ‘miss out’ on parts of general knowledge (old style subject specialism) in favour of wider skill development • Financial implications involved with further training and implementation • Formal assessment and testing – what will it look like and how can we ensure our pupils are best prepared whilst maintaining philosophy of the new curriculum? • Time scale and successful implementation – what will be expected by Local and National Government? • Parents and/or community unwilling to support change – consideration of ethics that there may be a generation of pupils constantly subjected to change – they should be entitled to an established and successful education

Action Plan

Main Priorities	Successful Futures Recommendation
Ensure school curriculum provides opportunity for skill development and a broad depth of knowledge that is widely transferable and purposeful to our pupils	4
Ensure that opportunities are provided for pupils within their community, learning and building on knowledge of professionals and experts, and providing pupils with opportunities to manage projects that will benefit their community	34
Ensure that suitable and wide ranging teacher assessment techniques are employed effectively to drive forward learning, this includes formal recording of assessment	38 and 40

Priority 1	Ensure school curriculum provides opportunity for skill development and a broad depth of knowledge that is widely transferable and purposeful to our pupils		
Action	Expected Outcome	Staff involved	Time/Resources
1. Share draft publications of Curriculum for Wales and AoLEs	All staff have clear and current understanding of curriculum for Wales. Staff are confident in the defined AoLEs. This will be discussed during each staff meeting as appropriate.	SMT Class Teachers Support Staff	Twilight Staff Meeting (Autumn Term 2018) Copy of up to date Curriculum documents
2. Establish AoLE teams across the school (cross-phase and combination of roles)	Every member of staff will form part of at least one AoLE team led by a member of SMT. Team meetings will be held fortnightly during Autumn Term to share findings and modify actions. SMT to monitor and record progress.	SMT Class Teachers Support Staff	Sept 2018 Fortnightly meetings Supply cover for SMT (6 x 1 day @ £160)

3. Teams to explore, define and develop areas of the curriculum that will be further implemented across our setting through creation of midterm plans alongside Curriculum for Wales document	Teachers and support staff to trial pedagogical approaches and learning opportunities within their class. Informally record findings and share good practice (evidence of work or approach to learning used). Lead teacher will work with SMT to begin to create mid-term overview of how to implement across the school alongside Curriculum for Wales document.	SMT Class Teachers Support Staff	Throughout Autumn Term 2018 Supply cover for lead class teacher to work with SMT (6 x ½ day @ £90)
4. Review findings of each team, discuss and create bank of ‘real life’ learning opportunities for all pupils	All evidence and experiences to be shared in twilight staff meeting in Spring Term 2019. Recommendations to be generated by whole staff. SMT to work with Lead teacher to create portfolio of learning opportunities to correspond with Curriculum for Wales draft document – this will act as a working document to be adapted as appropriate and implemented on a trial basis for the rest of the academic year.	SMT Class Teachers Support Staff SMT Lead Teacher SMT Class Teachers Support Staff	Twilight Staff Meeting (Spring Term 2019) Supply cover for SMT and Lead Teacher (12 x ½ day @ £90) Shared with all staff by February 2019

Justification

I believe the inclusion of all staff in the generation of opportunities and mid-term plans that parallel the new Curriculum for Wales will best drive its success in our setting. It will enable practitioners to build on their own skills and take ownership of the learning within their class. Watkins, Carnell, & Lodge (2007) considered the importance of practitioners’ involvement in driving change and improving performance within the classroom. Pedagogical principles 4, 5 and 6 referenced by Donaldson (2015) consider the value of quality provision where practitioners utilize a range of approaches to enable learning to occur in authentic contexts where pupils are engaged and empowered.

There has been much discussion of the significance of ‘learning-enriched’ schools that equip pupils with the necessary skills and the proposal to ensure that all staff within our setting are engaged in creating a school that enriches learning through many varied experiences. Active learning, through real-life opportunities has been proven to contribute most effectively towards successful education and sound understanding. The intention to develop a school curriculum that ensures the six Areas of Learning and Experience in the Curriculum for Wales, prompted by Donaldson’s report recommendations (2015), are fully realised in our establishment is a key foundation to its success. Many have considered the need for real-life, situational learning experiences such as Dewey (1962), Watkins, Carnell, & Lodge (2007) and Rutherford (2012). I support their views and accept that learning is most valuable when it engages the learner in a purposeful and relevant educational experience that deepens skills and knowledge for use outside of a static classroom setting.

Kolb’s experiential learning model aligns neatly with Donaldson’s (2015) pedagogical principles 4, 5, 6, 8, 11 and 12. The aim is for learning to be meaningful in a authentic contexts and for skills to be embedded that are transferable. Experiential learning, in essence learning by doing in the right situation, has a profound effect on the retention of those skills and understanding learnt. Only 20% of knowledge or skill development is retained through passive learning, where a pupil merely listens, reads or copies. Whereas, in contrast, >75% is retained when pupils learn through doing, with coaching and opportunities to practice, adapt and perfect during the learning experience.

Within the SWOT analysis it was indicated that staff have access to up to date information on the curriculum reform in Wales and are eager to assist that change and improve the experiences within our setting. It is therefore essential to capitalise on the positive attitudes demonstrated and allow for trust in the professionals within our school to develop a purposeful and relevant education. Further on in the action plan, teacher development will be expanded upon.

It is believed that the curriculum reform will allow for more breadth in the curriculum and that is an aspect we wish to ensure in our school with immediate effect. We are

confident in our provision of the current curriculum for our pupils, through use of a wide range of pedagogical approaches, but the priority to allow for AoLE teams to trial and refine practice in the six areas will undoubtedly aid in the navigation of the Curriculum for Wales once it becomes statutory. Pounder & James (2014) convey the advantages for all practitioners of working together towards an end product. I support the belief that a team approach to trialling pedagogical approaches and an integrated, real life curriculum will be most effective when colleagues can call upon the experience and support of others around them. All members of staff want to feel prepared and this opportunity affords time to develop the provision in these areas in a manner that is in line with pedagogical principles highlighted by Donaldson (2015).

Beane (1997) and Hattie (2011) examined and supported the notion of providing pupils with opportunities to express their wishes for the direction of learning and the prospect of integrated learning. The initial trail within our school towards curriculum development will be teacher led, but we believe that if our practitioners maintain effective roles within the class then this will inevitably assure that the learning is directed discreetly, initially by the teacher but with the learner at the forefront of how the journey proceeds. This links to Hattie's (2014) concept of child centred and enquiry based learning. As opposed to standalone subjects, which rarely in real life are we required to pull on, an enquiry based approach will enable integration of more than one specialism and therefore aim to 'answer' or 'solve problems' across a wider realm.

Priority 2	Ensure that opportunities are provided for pupils within their community, learning and building on knowledge of professionals and experts, and providing pupils with opportunities to manage projects that will benefit their community		
Action	Expected Outcome	Staff involved	Time/Resources
1. Create bank of ideas and opportunities for learning outside the classroom	Questionnaire to be sent home to parents and shared in the community to request if experts and local businesses are able to offer their time to support 'real-life' learning.	SMT Class Teachers Support Staff Parents Governors Local businesses	Questionnaire to be sent during first week of Autumn Term 2018
2. Develop effective working	Opportunities will be provided regularly for	SMT Class Teachers	Ongoing Supplies for

relationships with local business, professionals and experts	pupils to learn within their community, to create a product or provide a service for the community. Learning will take place in the community and members will be invited in to our school.	Support Staff Parents Governors Local businesses	creation of products may be purchased using class budget (£300)
3. Topics and themes are geared towards community-based learning	AoLE teams will work to create links between topics and consider how these can be developed within the community. Learning that takes place within the community will be celebrated and shared through newsletters and social media. This will create a constant link between community, school and parents.	SMT Lead Teacher SMT Class Teachers Support Staff Digital Leaders	From Autumn Term 2018 Review in Spring Term 2019 by SMT SMT Supply Cover (6 x 1 day @ £160)

Justification

Learning within the community in which our pupils reside is, I believe, the most purposeful way that we can provide an education for our pupils. The local area and the people within it are what our learners are most familiar with. Therefore, it makes sense that utilizing our most ‘on hand’ resources will be both beneficial to all community members and enable our learners to have purposeful, relevant experiences that they can feel ownership of. Sobel (2004) examined the positive effects of a ‘place-based’ education where pupils are removed from the constraints of the classroom to learn their craft in the place it is best intended; in a forest, in a factory or in a theatre, for example.

“This approach to education increases academic achievement helps students develop stronger ties to their community and creates a heightened commitment to serving as active, contributing citizens.” (Sobel, 2004)

This concept corresponds to Donaldson’s (2015) recommendation of the four core purposes where he discusses learners as being enterprising, ethically informed and are ready to be citizens within their communities and the wider world.

There is extensive appreciation and evidence that effectively planned and delivered curricula, that include opportunities for school, family and community partnerships, benefit school, family, community and the workplace more than any static classroom only based experience can afford. From my experience, the most enjoyable and beneficial learning experiences for pupils are the ones in which they ‘get stuck in’ and have opportunities to meet new people in alternative surroundings. It can be argued that there will always be a need for pen and paper exercises to practice the foundations of education but to further consolidate, I feel that applying their skills in a meaningful manner that is real for them, will be more significant in their learning journey.

Priority one of the action plan indicated the need to ensure all staff have a solid understanding of the principles Donaldson (2015) indicated in Successful Futures. I believe that for community and family working to be most worthwhile, then we need to provide parents with a solid awareness of how the Curriculum for Wales will change current practice, provision and shift the philosophy of our education system. Epstein (2018) highlights the concept of ‘shared responsibilities’ whereby two institutions work together to achieve the distinct goal of quality academic and life education. I would argue that in the case of the Curriculum for Wales, there are in fact three institutions that will develop our learners; school, family and community. It is acknowledged widely that more can be achieved when there are solid home-school links, where parents are informed and positively involved. It is therefore imperative that these act as a foundation for learning outside of the classroom. If parents and the local community understand the ultimate goal of the new curriculum and the approaches to learning, then education for our pupils will become more fluid, dynamic and more meaningful.

The review undertaken and subsequent toolkit created by the Sutton Trust (2013) indicated that parental involvement can result in 3-6 month average additional gain for pupils’ educational outcomes. It can be argued that if not correctly structured or presented, that there may be negligible effect, but the focus within our school is to support families and the community in mirroring the principles outlined by Donaldson (2015). Teachers and support staff are the practitioners that our learners are most familiar with and ultimately the professional educators, it will be our role to therefore

plan out community and family learning in the most suitable way.

It was indicated on the SWOT analysis that parents or a community that is unwilling to support the change of the new curriculum may pose a threat, for that reason we should be mindful of how best to engage with these parties. Our school is located in an area that has contrasting pockets of social deprivation and highly skilled professionals. 23% of our pupils are entitled to Free School Meals (eFSM). It is therefore vital that we are mindful of the manner in which we engage most suitably with our community. The education journey needs to be worthwhile for all of our pupils, and so planning opportunities that encompass life and its necessary skills to become active members of society will differ depending on their own family experience. We should aim to keep ambition and success at the forefront of our plans and educational provision for all pupils. Piaget's theories indicated that every experience impacts in some way on learners. This means that how we teach our pupils within the community must be well organised, conscious and worthwhile, and not purely an add-on to 'tick a box'.

Estyn has an expectation that effective community partnerships should be developed to assist in the delivery of a 21st century curriculum that equips pupils with the most necessary academic and life skills. As a result it has published case studies about establishments that have effectively nurtured working links between the school and the local community. School A has 26% eFSM and reports an improvement in attendance and in the support and involvement from parents. School B is an independent establishment, situated in an affluent area with 0% eFSM. Although contrasting in locality and intake of pupils, they reported a similar effect with regards to interest from parents and opportunities for pupils to foster working relationships with local businesses, thus equipping them with skills for their working life and offering opportunities to network prior to moving on to higher education. The endless positive evidence in favour of this type of collaborative working with the local community highlights the requirement for it to become more established in our school if the Curriculum for Wales is to reshape the future for our learners.

Priority 3	Ensure that suitable and wide ranging teacher assessment techniques are employed effectively to drive forward learning, this includes formal recording of assessment		
Action	Expected Outcome	Staff involved	Time/Resources
1. Review current methods of informal and formal assessment in our school	SMT will use Autumn Term lesson observations and Performance Management meetings to ascertain current assessment practices used alongside formal recording of teacher assessment data.	SMT	SMT Supply Cover (2 x 1 day @ £160)
2. Agree the necessary assessment information required and how it will be formally recorded	Staff meeting time will be set aside to discuss National and Local requirements of formal assessment data. Teaching and Learning and Marking policies will be circulated to new staff.	SMT Class Teachers Support Staff	Staff meeting time (September 2018)
3. Ensure that effective Assessment for Learning (AfL) strategies are employed in all lessons	Teachers requiring basic or update training in AfL strategies to attend session in October. Lesson observations conducted in Spring Term should evidence effect assessment practice.	(Staff indicated during Perf. Management) SMT	Teacher Supply Cover (3 x 1 day @ £160) AfL Course (3 x £150)
Justification			
Pedagogical principle 7, suggested by Donaldson (2015) indicated the need for Assessment for Learning approaches to support good teaching. Although similar in some ways, assessment <i>for</i> learning should be considered against assessment <i>of</i> learning. The first acts as the formative method of identifying gaps in learning that drive the next step, meanwhile, assessment of learning is what we recognise as the formal teacher assessment process of a summative or quantifiable explanation of the learning. Findings from the OECD provided evidence of how many assessment systems fail due to the opposing nature of the two approaches discussed here. As pupils' learning is proven best when integrated and skills from a broad bank are drawn upon, then surely good teaching will also see teachers assessing learning in more than one manner.			

In our establishment we strive for consistency in approach but encourage individuality and the characters of our practitioners to be at the fore. I believe that by reviewing and the aligning assessment processes in our school, we revitalize our practitioners' use of those deemed most effective. Training is scheduled to support and offer a taste of what could work best for our learners. The ultimate goal is for the whole school community to strive for excellence, and it is therefore the teachers and support staff that are at the helm in directing that. Assessment is key in its delivery.

Donaldson (2015) questioned the reliability of end of key phase and key stage results. With the fact that published school results are commonly used as a 'beating stick' then the results improve on the surface but it can be argued that this is not the reality. Recommendation 68 of Successful Futures (2015) indicates that teacher assessment outcomes should not be reported to Welsh Government once the Curriculum for Wales is introduced. As an education professional I approve of this move, however, from a cynical viewpoint, I believe that consortia and local government will still require an element of quantitative reporting as a means of proving that learning is being driven forward.

Whitty (2000) believes that if teachers are trusted professionals, then they should be relied upon to deliver an education that is suited to their pupils and ultimately results in improvements and success, not just through measurable tests, but through skill development and confidence in their application.

Khan (2016) discussed the concept of teaching for mastery and mindset during his TED Talks seminar. He believed that traditional academic assessment methods constrain creativity and skill and forces artificial learning to take place just to satisfy expectations of local or national government. He uses the analogy that creating solid foundations in education are like that of house building. It would be foolish to proceed with the next storey if the groundwork has not been completed and reviewed. The structure of education could ultimately collapse if we continue to force learning to fit into this ideal. Learning, pedagogical approaches and assessment methods employed should be variable to suit the task ahead and the pupils we serve. By integrating effective assessment processes into every element of learning, then we as teachers can take

agency over what we do. This, in due course, will allow our learners to do the same.

The difficulty we will face, as indicated in the SWOT analysis, will be how best we can prove that our pupils are making good progress. Practitioners will still be held accountable for the progress shown by pupils in their classes. School leaders will be accountable to Estyn. How this will be conducted to ensure that the system doesn't become further distorted with 'unreliable' data is yet unknown. A measurement of pupil progress must still be ascertained and we must therefore strive, as a school, to ensure our processes are tight and effective. The best evidence for progress is through listening to learners' experiences and observing their work and activities. In an ideal world this would be the judgement of a good school, but until then, we should ensure that we are using approaches that are current and proven to enable 21st century learning to flourish in our school.

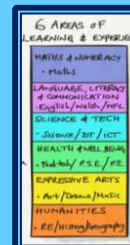
Section 3 – Academic Poster

How will we deliver the Curriculum for Wales?



What is the Curriculum for Wales?

- **Successful Futures** report published by Professor Graham Donaldson in **February 2015**.
- His findings and **68 recommendations** prompted the commencement of the development of the new curriculum.
- **Pioneer Schools and Network** established in **early 2016**.
- AoLE groups working on creation of **'What matters' statements and frameworks** during **2017 and early 2018**.
- **Summer 2018** has seen the publication of **draft AoLE achievement outcomes** and testing of progression frameworks.
- **April 2019** will see the **new curriculum and assessment arrangements** made available. These will be **finalised by January 2020**.
- Schools to use **new curriculum** for pupils up to Year 7 from **September 2022**.



What do we already do in our school that will enable successful implementation of the Curriculum for Wales?

- Promote team work ethos for staff across phases and linking subject specialism.
- Creative Schools funding from 2015 enabled us to begin creative approach in Upper Key Stage 2 – now budgeted for through school fund for provision in all year groups.
- Strong Welsh culture and development of language skills. Cymraeg Campus awarded in early 2018.
- Provide opportunities for enterprising activities each term e.g. Summer fete, Christmas crafts.
- 'Stage not age' approach – learning is not limited by year group but driven by ability, achievement and potential.
- Opportunities for 'real life' experiences to learn e.g. Outdoor pursuits, Forest Schools, School newspaper, Market stall, School council work with local MP, Marketing circus performance, Art council project.
- Teachers and LSAs encouraged to develop own areas of the curriculum through 'blended learning' approaches.

Sutton Trust conducted research alongside Durham University in 2011. This resulted in the publication of a toolkit to advise how best to use the pupil premium funding. We have 23% eFSM and are anticipating this figure to increase once amalgamation occurs.

- *How can we ensure the best 'value for money' for our learners?*
- *What has Donaldson recommended that aligns with the toolkit?*

Evidenced in Self Evaluation Report and School Development Plan (✓)

Highlighted as priority by Donaldson (2015) (✓)

Toolkit findings



What do the experts say?

"[Wales] is approaching a fulcrum where it tips away from its past and into an unknown, but distinctive future with implications for both learners and providers... As the largest and most far-reaching changes ever to education in Wales [take place]." (Beauchamp & Jephcote, 2015)

This could be the biggest turning point in the way education is provided in Wales. Will time be set aside to truly embed the new curriculum and allow teachers to embody the pedagogical principles indicated by Donaldson? Or will political policy turn too soon before change can progress into a substantial, high quality education system that will stand the test of time?

"Across the sector and beyond, there is broad agreement that excellent teachers make a difference to children's progress and prospects... The new ITET centres in Wales must ensure they produce the best teachers for the profession" (Jones & Lewis, 2016)

There is parity between Furlong's (2015) report findings into ITET in Wales and Donaldson's (2015) research of the curriculum in Wales. Although discussion here is primarily of the training of new teachers, the 'New Deal' instigates consideration of how ALL teachers should be their best when providing an education fit for the 21st century. **What pedagogical approaches will you adopt in your practice? How will you ensure that you make a positive difference to our learners' progress?**

How can we make this into reality?



Rationale

The purpose of this dissertation is to gain a deeper insight into pedagogical approaches and theories, from past and present, that can be employed most successfully by teachers in Wales in light of the Curriculum for Wales' introduction into the system. The literature review has shown consideration of the theories of Stanley Hall and Radosavljevich from the early 20th century and evaluated the similarities emphasised in more recent research by the likes of Donaldson, Roney and Braslavsky.

What is most evident from the review of literature, is that despite theorists references to different times in education, varying establishments and diverse communities and countries, the root of their findings remain the same. In essence, the majority agree that pedagogy should be fluid and be applied not by means of direct instruction, but rather in a manner that ascertains the needs of the learners, engages their interest and supports them in reaching their potential. I hold the opinion that effective teachers should possess a 'kit bag' of strategies to employ in their practice, and the most experienced and proactive practitioners do this without thought. Teaching with excellence can be considered a gift to some, but if professional development is led as a priority within the profession by all involved, as agreed by Hoyle, Whitty and Donaldson, then the process of high quality teaching is something I believe all can aim to achieve if they are willing to strive for the best.

Dylan Wiliam, an academic whose ideals are highly regarded within the education sector, makes frequent reference to his belief that the 'how' of teaching far exceeds the 'what'. This is something I consider will assist practitioners in Wales when embarking on the planning and delivery of the Curriculum for Wales. Donaldson's recommendations are by no means radical in my opinion, but the publication of Successful Futures will act as a force for positive change. The recommendations will encourage education professionals to realign their skill set, to take charge of learning, to step away from schemed and most importantly, to empower our learners.

I believe that we should heed the advice of the likes of Donaldson and Wiliam. The profession must ensure that teachers are highly skilled and adaptable in their approach. It is imperative that the new change in curriculum is delivered as it is intended, not as a remodelled version of 'what we have always done' but as a refreshing and distinct

education for our pupils that is current, relevant and equips them with skills for their journey through schooling and work life.

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