ECEY6010 Section 1

The Foundation Phase was the statutory curriculum for all three- to seven-year-olds in Wales, which was introduced in September 2010. It encourages children to be creative and imaginative, and makes learning more enjoyable and more effective gov.wales (2015).The Foundation Phase was introduced as a replacement for Early Years education in schools in Wales gov.wales (2019).The Early Years Foundation Phase is a framework which can be built on through the seven areas of learning (education.gov.uk) (2021).However both Bruce (1947) and Bruner (1915) agree that the reason for the early years foundation stage not working is that the national curriculum was not play based and children learn and develop better through play rather than formal learning (eyfs pros and cons 2021) .On reflection and feedback about the old from the eyfs not being a success, that is how and why the government decided to change it to the foundation phase because it allows children to learn through play and it keeps parents up to date about their child's progress on a regular basis (eyfa 2021).

Macdonald (2003) states that the Foundation Phase Wales focuses on the overall education system internationally, and looks at the different areas of learning that be expanded beyond the main subjects which are taught. There are seven areas of learning in the Foundation Phase Framework. This helps with the holistic approach within the curriculum, it is based on a child centred approach, which will help with the child's development. (Aasen and Waters 2006; DCELLS 2008a, 6; Maynard 2007). Aasen and Waters (2006, 126) suggest that there needs to be a change in the way the teachers and practitioners promote this new way of learning for 3- to 7-year-olds, and the way it is taught, for it to be successful and have a positive impact on the child's education and well-

being. Welsh Government (2015) states, learning through play is important help with a child's all-round development and can play an important part in a child's learning. It also helps them to develop their language and literacy skills, help them to become more confident, take risks and allow them to make mistakes and form good relationships with the other children. The Foundation Phase is a good basis for a child's learning, and by them having lots of opportunities and being able to experiment through play, and having access to various resources and materials will help with their development and better future outcomes.

The Foundation Phase is based on the principle that a developmentally appropriate curriculum should offer good foundations for a children's learning estyn.gov.wales (2020).

Key stage 1 national curriculum was designed to provide a developmental, experiential, play-based approach to teaching and learning. Some countries such as New Zealand (Te Whariki), Scandinavia and Reggio Emillia adopted the early years programme and from this research shows the extensive formal teaching before the age of six or Severn years can result in lower standards of attainment in the longer term. The play-based approach is very much emphasised on the wellbeing of the child, but there also needs to be a balance of input from the child and the practitioner. Welsh Government (2013/14)

According to estyn.gov.wales (2020) the reason the foundation phase was introduced in Wales is because it was designed to meet the developmental needs of all children.

Wales decided to change the national curriculum from early years education to the foundation phase, because it wanted to promote and encourage children's imagination skills and for them to use their initiative, so learning will be more effective and more fun, gov. Wales (2020).

Over the last ten years, Wales has gradually been involved and participated in the improvement plan for the introduction of the Foundation Phase. The different strategies and processes which were introduced, were designed to support and be applied in the Foundation Phase, which are evidence based from observations. From the research and practice within the Foundation Phase it has shown to have a positive and productive impact on teachers' and practitioners, 'which will lead to better quality of provision in the early years for children and their families (Sylva et al, 2004; Siraj-Blatchford et al, 2006). Research and evidence show the significance of improving lives of children and families who are living in poverty, and the importance of them being supported to help them with their education and learning. This is particularly important for Wales (Siraj-Blatchford and SiraJ-Blatchford, 2010; DfES, 2013a).

However, it requires time and foundational changes in culture in maintained and non-maintained settings and schools. For the foundation phase to be effective in Wales. (Mitchell and Cubey, 2003). UNESCO (2004) states the quality of the improvements which need to be considered across the world, they conclude by saying it requires a strong lead from the government and the importance of a long-term vision plan. They also state the significance of adequately, productive and well supported staff. Further, they noted that the impact of an education policy may not be evident until several years after it has been

implemented. 1.3. Welsh context: The findings of this independent Stocktake are in line with UNESCO's (2004).

In March 2024 the Welsh government asked Professor Donaldson to review the curriculum and assessment arrangements in schools. Donaldson states the aims are to "shape a successful and exciting future" for the children and young people in Wales. Donaldson visited around 60 educational settings and talked to staff, children, parents and carers to get their views and opinions on the new curriculum and they also looked at the estyn reports, Welsh government policies and other reports. The feedback from the discussions were positive, however teachers told Donaldson what was working well and was not working well and that they would like the authority to make their own decisions with what they teach. There was also feedback from teachers regarding assessment's and how it wasn't working well to support the children's learning. There was also greater focus on career advice, basic skills, life skill, confidence and health and wellbeing. Donaldson (2014)

The report suggests that there should be four purposes of the curriculum in Wales and these are: Ethically informed citizens, Healthy, confident individuals, Enterprising, creative contributors and Ambitious capable learners, Donaldson (2014).

The report suggests there should be 'six Areas of Learning and Experience'. All six areas are equally important and will contribute in a different way to the four purposes. Learning should be a continuous progression for young children to help them grow and mature. Therefore, there is no ned for the key stages to be separated into sections. The progression steps will be identified within the areas of learning and

experience and this is designed to help children develop knowledge and skills. Donaldson (2014)

Research shows one reason why the curriculum was changed in Wales was due to the assessment arrangements. There were a number of issues with the current curriculum. There was a report published in 2014 and it highlighted that there was a high percentage of young people in Welsh schools with low performance. Due to the results of the current assessments, these are now classed as unsatisfactory (Welsh government (2014). There has now been an independent review of the curriculum and the assessment and an educational improvement plan has been put in place for 3–19-year-olds in Wales. It has been highlighted that continuity and the points of transfer are key elements in primary education Welsh government (2014)

International surveys such as OECD PISA states the performance between countries about loss of global competitiveness, if their education systems are seen to be weak. Research by the PISA states Wales is performance is still disappointing and that there is significant room for improvement. It is essential that that the curriculum is designed in the best interests of the children and that they are given the opportunities to achieve their goals.

ECEY6010 Section 2

Research by porter (2021) states that babies and young infants develop and mature at different rates. Therefore, parents and practitioners should not assume that all children develop at the same stage and rate especially whilst in early years settings. Children should be taught on their individuals needs and ability, not a one size fits all. By the children

having their individual needs met, this helps to ensure positive learning and experiences and will help when it comes to assessing the child that they will be included in the overall Framework.

Thankfully we live in a culture that celebrates diversity and uniqueness. This will provide young children with the confidence and self-respect necessary to overcome future obstacles and to respect their peers. Which will have positive effect and impact on a child's development porter (2021).

Children are unique and individual and they learn and develop at different rates. It is important that all children have the opportunity to do so and are allowed to. Children should be given opportunities of experiencing different situations and are allowed time to reflect on their work. In all areas of learning children should be encouraged, valued and respected for their originality Foundation phase (2015).

According to Early Years Assessment (2019) Assessment is carried out by practitioners to see what children know, understand and what they can do. Assessment is used for tracking progress, planning next steps, reporting and involving parents and children in learning and it is an important part in assessing recording. The following steps are what teachers and practitioners use to assess children's learning and monitor their progress. These are: recognising children's performance and what they have accomplished through their schooling, school reports to parents and carers and parents' evenings to discuss children's progress and what they can do to help their child's learning and formal recognition of their achievements through profiles and qualifications.

Data which has been collected from the assessments is used to plan lessons and activities for the individual child. It is designed to meet the

child's individual needs, which will help to identify their strengths and the areas that need improvement, and it needs to be used at the classroom level to find out how appropriate and effective the programme is. Practitioners and parents are the main audiences for assessment information gathered to advise direction. Practitioners need adequate time to review assessment information on how to improve the children's learning and reflect on its implications for practice. It is recognised that planning and monitoring plays a vital part in what children are learning, and this needs to be the main focus for staff and practitioners working in the Early Years Settings. Criterion-referenced or curriculum-based measures are used to help with children's learning through planned activities, activities with instructions, monitoring and observation. Assessment data can be collected through examples of children's work, observation and talking to them (Dodge, Heroman, Charles, and Maiorca, 2004).

There are recommendations by The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the Division for Early Childhood (DEC) regarding the use in education progress monitoring and planning in relation to assessments. Teachers and staff are expected to attend the relevant training courses they need to ensure sure that they are up to date.

Campbell, 2003; Jackson, Boostrom, & Hansen, 1993; Shulman, 1987/2004) state that Fairness is common practice in the classroom. It involves taking turns, shared beliefs, reflection, raising of hands and fairness considered quality when assessing the individual child and their learning needs and recognising their achievements.

According to Maryville university (2023) From the moment children are born, cultural influences can have an impact on how children grow and develop, it can affect their understanding, beliefs, values, language and how they see themselves as members of society.

Cultural backgrounds give children a sense of who they are. The unique culture influences the child's responses from a young age, including beliefs, food and diet, artistic language, expression and religion, it may also impact the way they develop holistically for example: emotionally, socially physically, and intellectually. When a child's self-identity is in conflict with the social environment due to lack of cultural diversity. It can have an impact on their learning. Educators of different cultural backgrounds learn by understanding and showing acceptance of diverse cultures and of the unique child. Practitioners need to understand the cultural influences on a child, and this can help professionals to be successful in their roles. By the practitioners having an insight into their background they can also help and support the families Maryville.edu. An awareness of the beliefs, values and attitudes can reduce the possibility of misunderstandings. However, it is important to note that not all families, even from the same backgrounds and culture will act the same.

According to Norfolk.gov, here are some examples of implications for cultural differences: Some children have access to different languages but not English which could be a barrier for their learning, there may be a dress code to adhere to, within Jewish and Muslim countries certain foods are forbidden such as pork, some children use their hands to eat instead of a knife and fork, sometimes children could be overwhelmed with the freedom and range of activities and children are more likely to become more tired by being surrounded with unfamiliar language.

At key stages, periodical assessments will take place whilst delivering education, teaching and learning. Children are individually assessed by observation in the classroom, whether that is the indoors or outdoors. Children are observed on day-to-day basis through learning. The evidence that is gathered by the practitioners is recorded and used for progress and achievements. The children will be assessed on their skills such as reading, writing, practical investigation, listening and answering questions art and discussion. Other evidence could also include various electronic format, such as photographs, Images, video or audio clip, as part of a particular style of learning experience, and the children will be involved in the planning and next steps in their learning and that is according to education.gov (2023).

Observation is a very important part in the Early Years Foundation Stage. It is the main basis for recording information about what stage the child is at and where they need to improve. Observation is used every day in the Early Years Foundation setting and practitioners are the ones that observe the children, and this helps them to fully understand the child's ability and their progress. Observation is also used for getting to know the child, building relationships, who their influences are which surround them and shape their lives and to build relationships with them. By using observation, it helps the practitioner to reflect, plan and provide relevant opportunities and support to the child.

The assessment and planning cycle below explains observations and assessment of the unique child and that is based on Bronfenbrenner's (1977) Ecological Systems theory.

They curriculum sets the structure for observations, assessment and planning, to give the child the best opportunity to progress. Practitioners need to ensure that all children are supported within the curriculum so they are able to have the opportunity to succeed. The curriculum is constructed by the influence of the child, the parents, families, culture and diversity. Each child will experience the curriculum in a unique way, which will be recognised through the adult's observation, assessment and planning. However, is a curriculum that is shaped by the EYFS Themes and Principles effective for the child's learning and are the learning environments allowing good opportunities for their development. The quality of the curriculum will be set by the way in which all these aspects are linked together in meaningful and relevant ways to support children's development, learning and progress learning and development (2021).

The main reason for tracking a child's progress is to check their overall development in the EYFS.

Practitioners in Early Years Settings should be able to evidence the children's progress and development in order for them to reach their targets and full potential. It needs to be tracked and reviewed on a

regular basis. The importance of tracking regularly is that it allows staff to notice if children need extra help and support in certain areas to catch up. It can also be shared with the parents so they understand and help with their child's learning. If a child was falling behind, there might be concern for developmental disabilities further down the line.

If regular tracking is carried out in the EYFS then the developmental disability should be less. Early intervention is the key and often if there is an issue on the whole most children will catch up with their peers.

Before starting school only half of children are identified with having a developmental disability. Figures show that every one in six children have a development disability. Research shows that children with developmental issues are more likely to have poor health and low performance in school. Nursery resources (2019).

The practitioners have worked alongside Welsh government to construct the new curriculum for funded non-maintained nursery settings for practitioners. It looks at how practitioners can embrace it, for children to have a sense of belonging and pride. It celebrates the diverse culture of modern Wales.Hwb.gov (2022).

From birth to five years the new curriculum assists with children's holistic needs and their development. It states the uniqueness of the child and the rapid development between those ages and stages and also states that children are at the forefront of pedagogical practice.Hwb.gov (2022).

The Reggio Emilia (2022) approach to assessment focuses on a child's natural progress and development to make sure that all children have plenty of opportunities and are helped and encouraged to make sense and understand the world around them. Also, it is important to get to know and learn about the individual child, their needs and interests. The

heart of Reggio inspired encouraged staff and practitioners to focus on telling stories, making learning visual and displaying children's work.

ECEY6010 Blog

How does outdoor play benefit children based on the new curriculum?

The outdoor learning environment is significantly beneficial to children's overall development. Children who already have these skills are better at learning and retaining information. It is a valuable resource and should be used to its full potential. There are lots of benefits to being in the outdoor environment and is a very important to make good use of the outdoors. It is very beneficial for children's health, wellbeing and education. The outdoor setting gives children freedom and the chance to explore the outdoors such as using toys and equipment that cannot be used inside and physical activities. By children being given the opportunity access the outdoors it helps them to learn and experience nature, different weathers, how the different seasons effect the animals and plants and problem solving for example: how to move logs from one to another and that is according to gov.Wales (2022)

According to the Foundation Phase Outdoor Learning handbook (2009), there are many benefits of outdoor learning. It states the benefits it can have on a child's holistic development It also gives children the chance to explore nature, problem solve with peers and can help with their social development. The aim of the Four Purposes (2008) is to create healthy, confident individuals ready to be valued members of society and to lead fulfilling lives. The outdoors has many opportunities the children to do this can help them to achieve their goals with the best outcomes.

The aim of The Foundation Phase curriculum looks at the best approach for the health and wellbeing of the child and also their personal and social development. Maynard (2007) states cultural diversity is the main core. Government documentation promotes play for children through first hand experiences. approach where 'children learn through first-hand experiences and opportunities. (DCELLS 2008a, 4), A representative from the foundation phase for the local authority was interviewed in relation to children's learning. He stated it must have factors that the children recognise. All the resources in the classroom must be at the appropriate level for the child, and these need to be easily accessible. Practitioners also explained how this method is positive for children, and they learn through experience. The children were able to make their own decisions about what they wanted to play with and what resources to use, and this was acknowledged as being child led which was seen as a positive. (T5, 48). Results show from a documentary survey, interviews with teachers and the advisory service that both schools recognised the importance of the open curricula and how this contributes to the foundation phase.

The main features in the foundation phase are play based Learning. Scandinavian countries state the importance of the outdoor area and how they as countries are using the outdoors increasingly. And is an integral part of learning and it is a part of a child's essential learning. Studies in Norway show how the outdoor environment has a positive effect on children's physical health. (Björklid 2005; Fjørtoft 2001; Grahn et al. 1997).

The foundation phase settings emphasise the importance of using the outdoors, and encourages practitioners to use it like another classroom, just as much as using the indoors, and is recommended that the practitioners use it on a daily basis. (M1). Waller (2007) states the outdoors is fundamental to the new curriculum and the importance of

organised activities both the indoor and outdoor learning environments, and how it links into the seven areas of learning. Research and documents show how much emphasis is on outdoor learning. By being outdoors all aspects of a child's learning and development can be experienced (ACCAC 2001). However, the Foundation Phase framework requires the outdoor learning environment to be seen as a resource for children's learning and children should be given the opportunity to take risks both indoors and outdoors so that they can gain confidence and experience in what they are learning. 518 N. WAINWRIGHT ET AL. (DCELLS 2008a, 16). If there are not these opportunities, then children won't have the best possible experience of what he outdoors can provide. There needs to be a good balance of cognitive and social and emotional development and the environment should promote child centred activities so that they are able to explore and that is according to the former Minister for Education. Guidance from the local authority states there needs to be more emphasis on outdoor learning and play. It states children are more involved and active in their learning whilst having the opportunities to do so, rather than indoors doing work sheets. The feedback regarding the Foundation Phase curriculum, states from research that outdoor education is the key to a child's learning and future.

Research by Early Childhood Education and Care (2012) demonstrates the positive impact that the new curriculum has had on children's development and learning, however this can only happen if the standard of care is maintained at a high level. Research shows if the standard of education is low it can have long term negative impact on the child's development. According to Kelly (2016) it is vital that educational settings are of a high-standard as this can have a positive impact on the child's development and progress and it will help them to reach their full potential.

To conclude playing outdoors allows children to develop self-confidence, self-esteem and independence. They also become aware of boundaries, limits, challenges and trying new activities, that is according to play matters.gov.

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