

ECEY6009

Section 1

There are many ways to define the word leadership. Cambridge dictionary (2023) describes leadership as the quality or the ability that makes a person a leader, or it is the position that makes a person a leader. There are different styles of leadership which will affect the way a team works under that leadership. Strait (2020) defines leadership as a person who is ambitious, skilled and possesses the right qualities to motivate and influence a team of people in order to reach a common goal. According to Douglass (2019) leadership involves influencing action or change in order to obtain a shared purpose or goal. A pedagogy leader is someone who leads the teaching and learning process (Baird, 2022). Pedagogy leadership is defined as supporting teaching and learning. It involves supporting the teachers in their role of implementing the curriculum (Abel, 2016).

Leadership in the early years uses both administrative and pedagogical leadership functions. Even though in an early years setting you may have one main leader the responsibility for leadership can be shared among others in the setting. When leadership is shared it is called distributive leadership (Douglas, 2019). According to Donley *et al*, distributed leadership is where the head will share certain leadership work with teachers to optimise the schools and student outcomes.

Cambridge Dictionary (2023) states a catalyst is an event or a person who creates great change. There are various sources which state an idea of what a catalytic leader is. Jay Conner (2013) describes a catalytic leader as a person being able to communicate across sectors and organisations. They talk about communities and how a catalyst inspires others to achieve high aspirations for communities through new ways of working. According to Wallace, Torres and Zaccaro (2021, p.4) catalysts enhance team learning, they do not represent team learning but rather they support others and they reinforce learning in a collective. This means catalytic leaders will

utilise others' knowledge to learn from each other. Jonathan Eckert (2022) describes a catalytic leader as someone who is confident in their own strengths but is also aware of their weaknesses in order to achieve a shared goal. Jay Desko (2017) describes catalytic leaders as having 6 characteristics. Some of these characteristics include bringing new ideas and initiatives, they make changes that ignite others to also make a change. They communicate with passion and stories that others can relate too and they also have a vision. They are able to see something others are yet to see.

Examples of catalytic leaders who include Ella Baker and the community form Reggio Emilia. Ella Baker was the inspiration behind many great influential organisations, one of these organisations was the movement lead by Martin Luther King Jr. Ella Baker was a leader behind the scenes (Carolyn Gibson, no date). She found out what the people wanted from the people themselves by being a bridge leader and having common knowledge with the community and working with other communities for resources (Parker, 2020, p.22). Bridge leadership is a grassroots movement that involves communities linking together and social movements (Parker, 2020, p.27). The Community of Reggio Emilia are catalysts as they wanted to make change, create a new culture after the devastating effects of world war 2 and the fascism that had taken hold during the period before the war (Ann Pelo, 2023). The townspeople wanted to make change by teaching their children the independence to think for themselves so they created schools for their children.

According to Cooperrider, D (2020) leadership does not require for a person to be in power in order for them to instigate change. For practitioners to be catalytic leaders it is not just their practice but how they approach leadership in an inclusive and social context (Cooper, 2014, p.86). In an early years setting a catalyst is someone who is able to bring about change and inspire change without the need of an authoritative figure to do so. This allows for practitioners to have the role of being a change agent (Toomer, 2018. and McDowall Clark, 2012, p.399). According to Brown, White and

Kelly (2021, P.3) a change agent is an individual who possesses the capacity to successfully change aspects of how an organisation works and operates. Change agents are therefore catalysts and are able to introduce perspectives and innovations to an organisation or establishment.

Not everyone in an early years setting will be suited to be a catalytic leader or a change agent. Brown, White and Kelly (2021.p3) state that not all teachers are equal in their ability to mobilise new ways of working, engaging teachers in being more or less productive will depend on their ability to adapt to the new ways of working. What this suggests is that not everyone who works in an early years setting is able to change the way they work and adapt to the new ways as quickly as others. Fullan (1993) explains this as on one hand practitioners are expected to keep up and engage with continuous renewals and changes, whilst on the other hand the way teachers were trained, how the school and the education system operates may be more likely to stay working the status quo. This is still relevant today as the curriculum has changed again, practitioners need to be adaptable and work with the change in order for the new curriculum to be successful and children get the best out of their learning experiences.

Section 2

The post of Children's Commissioner for Wales was first created and introduced following the recommendation by Lord Laming in the Victoria Climbié inquiry. The role was first established under the Children's Act 2004, this allowed for the commissioner to have the responsibility for promoting awareness of children's and young people's interests and views (Children's Commissioner, 2023). The current children's commissioner for Wales is Rocio Cifuentes. She was appointed as the children's commissioner for Wales in April 2022 becoming the successor of the previous commissioner Sally Holland. Rocio Cifuentes will hold this role for 7 years (Children's Commissioner for Wales, 2023). The first minister of Wales, Mark Drakeford, has stated the children's commissioner role is an extremely important role. The role helps to shape the future for the generation of children in Wales. He goes on to say it is important to have a continuous strong voice speaking up for the children (Welsh Government, 2022). The role of the children's commissioner involves promoting and supporting and protecting the welfare and the rights of young people and children under the United Nations Convention Rights of the Child (Children's commissioner for Wales, 2023 and Welsh Government, 2022).

The role of the children's commissioner allows them to ensure the government and have policies and procedures in place that benefit the children and young people of Wales (Welsh Government, 2022). Children's Commissioner for Wales (2023) also states the role includes influencing the government and other organisations who promise to make a difference to children's and young people's lives to make sure they keep these promises. As well as protecting the rights of children and young people and working with the government and other organisations the role of the commissioner involves listening to children and young people to find out from them what they think is important and how they can best support children in Wales to make a difference and the commissioner can advise children, young people and their parents or carers if they believe they have been treated unfairly.

The children's Commissioner office released a report in 2021 called Building Blocks: inclusion in the Foundation Phase. This report was made after a phone call in 2018 from a parent came into the office after their child had been excluded from school for physically aggressive behaviour. The school had stated they could not accept the child back into school as they felt they were unable to meet the needs of this child. The local authority disputes this by stating the children should be allowed to return and remain at school with the support for behaviour by the local authority.

The introduction to this report mentions this phone call for the parent was not an isolated incident. The team found there was a rise in numbers regarding phone calls similar to the other phone call from other worried parents about their children being excluded from school, aged eight and under. These children were at the risk of being excluded from school or being taught in isolation from a young age. Some children were not receiving education at all (Children's Commissioner for Wales, 2020). By children not receiving any education that goes against article 28 of the UNCRC, which states children have the right to an education (Unicef, no date). Therefore the Building blocks report was written because the Children's commissioner office wanted to understand and find out to what extent children being excluded from school due to violent behaviour was in Wales. They wanted to know how schools and local authorities were responding to the issue in a way that ensures children are kept safe and providing these children with the appropriate assessments to support and enable them to have an education (Children's Commissioner for Wales, 2020)

In the recommendations for this report the children's commissioner stated immediate actions needed to be taken. The immediate actions include the distribution and promotion of the building blocks toolkit by the government. The toolkit was developed in collaboration with schools across Wales that have experienced some success in inclusive practices in the foundation phase. The tool kit was developed for practitioners to use to support children under 7 years of age with their well-being

(Children's commissioner 2020). The use of this toolkit can be very beneficial for practitioners as it helps them to gain an understanding of how best they can support the children. Toolkits can also promote the sharing of good practice (Oxfordshire county council, no date).

Section 3

Collins Dictionary (2023) defines sociological as dealing with sociological problems or questions, focusing on environmental and cultural factors rather than focusing on physiological or personal characteristics. APA (2023) states sociological factors are social conditions that have an effect on human behaviour. An example of a sociological factor includes the environmental circumstances people live in.

According to Moore, T *et al* (2015, p.ii102) children's health and development outcomes follow a social gradient. They state the further up a child is on the social economic spectrum the better their outcomes will be. This suggests that children who come from a more privileged background have a better chance of having better outcomes.

However, that is not to say that children who do come from affluent families do not face challenges to their life experience as stated by Bernard and Greenwood (2019, p.3). They state there is evidence to suggest that children who are from affluent families are subjected to challenges such as maltreatment including neglect. They mention neglect in affluent families is less visible to authorities than families from a disadvantaged social-economic background. Similarly Stevenson (2018) mentions a research study that looked at the challenges social workers face when trying to identify neglect in affluent families. The study mentions the research found factors to determine emotional neglect in affluent families were "not well understood" due to preconceived ideas associated with neglect, which is poverty.

The sociological factor this section is going to focus on is poverty. According to the Welsh government (2023) an estimated 31% of children in Wales were living in relative income poverty from 2018 to 2020. Poverty can have devastating impacts on children and their development, their life chances, their education and their overall health and well-being (Children in Wales, 2021). Children who live in poverty

experience many disadvantages, these disadvantages can impact their childhood and also go with them into adulthood (Public Health Scotland, 2021).

Children's Bureau (2019) state children are more vulnerable to the negative consequences of poverty than adults. All areas of a child's life are affected by poverty, their home life, education, friends and other areas. Poverty can have an impact on children's rights such as article 6 of the UNCRC which is the right to life and parties to ensure to the maximum extent possible the survival and development of the child. Article 19 states children are to be protected from all forms of abuse including mental and physical abuse. Protected from neglect or negligent and maltreatment and article 27 states children have the right to an adequate standard of living. This includes food, having the right nutrition, clothes (Unicef, no date).

Children's home life can be affected by poverty as low income could increase a parents stress level causing detriment to relationships and family dynamics, financial stress can cause a deterioration in the quality of parent-child relationships and the unfolding of child behaviour difficulties. (Child poverty action group, 2023 and Gibbons, Sprong and Chzhen, 2023, p.3).

Parents' money worries could be passed on to their children, if their child is of working age they may feel they need to get a part-time job alongside school to help out. However this could have further effects on them and affect their education. Even though there are laws in place for child employment and their working hours as article 32 of the UNCRC (no date) states children are to be protected from economic exploitations, legislations for organisations to follow regarding working hours and for children to be working during school hours as the UNCRC also states in article 28 children have a right to an education. If a child is working a job alongside their GCSE years this could cause the child to burn out, causing them to experience fatigue and have poor concentration and in turn could cause them to become ill. Poverty creates

a barrier between children and their education, holds them back and limits their life chances (The children's society, 2023. and national education union, 2021).

Children who have experienced difficulties in childhood are more likely to commit crimes in adulthood. These difficulties include poverty, maltreatment, abuse and others (Hay,2022). Young people may end up joining gangs as the gang members will take advantage of their vulnerability (The children's society, 2023). When children join a gang this could lead to them getting involved with drugs to bring in money for their family.

Poverty can often be carried on from one generation to the next (Leseman and Slot, 2014, p.316) this is known as the poverty cycle. World Vision (2021) explains the poverty cycle starts when a child is born into a poor family. It becomes a cycle when families do not have the resources, or they have limited resources, needed to help them create opportunities for themselves and step out of the cycle. Children's Bureau (2019) states the idea of the poverty cycle is when children growing up in poverty will also raise their own children in poverty.

In order to support and tackle child poverty the Welsh government has set child poverty objects that will be reported every 3 years to see if they have made an improvement. These objects have included setting up services for example, objective 1 is to support young people into decent jobs. So the aim of this objective is to reduce the number of people living in workless households as these families are at a higher risk of living in poverty and also being in persistent poverty, the cycle of poverty (Welsh Government, 2022). Working Wales is a service to help support people by providing them with advice on finding a job, writing a CV and interview techniques.

Unfortunately with the current circumstances (the cost of living crisis) this objective may not reach its goal as it has been reported that due to the cost of living there has

been a reduction in people's well-being and increased levels of stress and anxiety, especially to those who already have a low income. The increased cost is causing more households to fall into poverty (House of lords library, 2022. and Igeus, 2022).

Objective 3 to try and tackle child poverty is addressing the inequalities associated with poverty. To help this the government by setting up early years child care which provided children with the best start to life. Flying start settings were introduced to Wales in 2006/7. The aim of these settings were to provide children and their families who come from deprived areas the opportunities to receive support. Families can attend parenting courses, language based play programmes and enhanced health visiting support. This is to help improve the outcomes of children who come from deprived areas (Welsh Government, 2011, p.3). While flying start is trying to tackle the issue of poverty by providing free childcare for two and a half hours a day, 5 days a week, and supporting the parents with health visits and courses, unfortunately there are some disadvantages to the scheme. For example, according to South Wales Argus, (2018) there are nearly two thirds of the people who are from low income families living outside geographical areas that are defined as deprived, there are a significant number of children living in poverty outside the catchment areas that are likely to be excluded from the scheme. Therefore there needs to be more flexibility for these children and families to also receive the support of a flying start setting.

To conclude, poverty is still a problem and is unlikely to go away anytime soon however, the Welsh government has put schemes and services in place to try to help children, young people and their families through these difficult times. Whether that be through job seeking support, childcare support or mental health support after the pandemic. The Children's commission role is indeed an important role with a lot of responsibility to support children across Wales with issues they feel need to be addressed, the children's commissioner is a voice and an advocate for the children of Wales, ensuring their rights are being obtained And catalytic leadership. Anyone is

able to be a catalytic leader especially in an early years setting, like the children's commission early years practitioners are there to support the children they work with in the best way they can and they are confident and passionate in what they believe in.

Reference List

Abel, M. (2016) *Why Pedagogical Leadership?*.

Available at:

<https://mccormickcenter.nl.edu/library/why-pedagogical-leadership/#:~:text=Pedagogical%20leadership%20is%20about%20supporting.and%20functions%20in%20learning%20organizations.>

(Accessed: 5 March 2023).

American Psychological Association (2023) *APA Dictionary of Psychology*.

Available at: <https://dictionary.apa.org/sociological-factors>

(Accessed: 27 February 2023).

Baid, M. (2022) *An Approach to Begin with Others*.

Available at:

<https://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/ed/pdf/ELCC/pedagogical-leadership.pdf>

(Accessed: 5 March 2023).

Bernard, C. and Greenwood, T. (2019) 'We're giving you the sack'—Social Workers' Perspectives of Intervening in Affluent Families When There Are Concerns about Child Neglect', *British Journal of Social Work*. 0, pp.1-17.

Available at:

<https://chscp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Paper-Prof-C-Bernard.pdf>

(Accessed: 25 February 2023).

Brown, C., White, R. and Kelly, A. (2021) 'Teachers as educational change agents: what do we currently know? findings from a systematic review', *Emerald open research*. P.1-15.

Available at:

https://eprints.soton.ac.uk/452325/2/Teachers_as_educational_change_agents_PROOF.pdf

(Accessed: 5 March 2023).

Cambridge Dictionary (2023) *Leadership*.

Available at: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/leadership>

(Accessed: 5 March 2023).

Cambridge Dictionary (2023) *Meaning of Catalyst in English*.

Available at: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/catalyst>

(Accessed: 12 February 2023).

Children's bureau (2019) 'children in poverty-poverty and its effects on children', *children's bureau* [blog]. 28 January.

Available at: <https://www.unicef.org.uk/what-we-do/un-convention-child-rights/>

(Accessed: 4 March 2023).

Children's Commissioner for Wales (2023) *About us*.

Available at:

<https://www.childcomwales.org.uk/about-us/#:~:text=Who%20is%20the%20Children's%20Commissioner,Welsh%20Government%2C%20affect%20children's%20rights>.

(Accessed: 28 February 2023).

Children's Commissioner (2023) *History of the children's commissioner*.

Available at:

<https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/about-us/the-history-of-the-childrens-commissioner/>

(Accessed: 28 February 2023).

Children's Commissioner for Wales (2023) *The Commissioner*.

Available at:

<https://www.childcomwales.org.uk/about-us/the-commissioner-rocio-cifuentes/>

(Accessed: 28 February 2023).

Children in Wales (2021) *Child Poverty*.

Available at: <https://www.childreninwales.org.uk/professionals/our-work/child-poverty/>

(Accessed: 4 March 2023).

Children's poverty action group (2023) *'The effects of child poverty'*.

Available at: <https://cpag.org.uk/child-poverty/effects-poverty>

(Accessed: 4 March 2023).

Collins Dictionary (2023) *'Definition of Sociological'*.

Available at: <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/sociological>

(Accessed: 4 March 2023).

Conner, J. (2013) 'Be your community's catalyst leader', *Working Differently* [blog]. 13 May.

Available at:

<http://www.workingdifferently.org/working-differently-blog/be-your-communitys-catalytic-leader>

(Accessed: 12 February 2023).

Cooperrider, D. (2020) 'Leadership as a catalyst for change', *Leadership as a catalyst for change* [blog]. 17 May.

Available at:

<https://davidcooperriderai.co/leadership-as-a-catalyst-for-change/>

(Accessed: 4 March 2023).

Cooper, M. (2014) 'Everyday teacher leadership': A reconceptualisation for early childhood education', *Journal of Educational Leadership, Policy and Practice*, (29)2, pp.84-96.

Available at:

<https://search.informit.org/doi/10.3316/informit.967638646549788>

(Accessed: 4 March 2023).

Cox, B. (2022) '57 Examples of Social Factors', *Live by example* [blog]. 29 April.

Available at:

<https://www.livingbyexample.org/57-examples-of-social-factors/>

(Accessed: 27 February 2023).

Desko, J. (2017) '6 Characteristics of a Catalyst Leader', *The Center Consulting Group* [blog]. 29 August.

Available at:

<https://www.centerconsulting.org/blog/6-characteristics-of-a-catalyst-leader>

(Accessed: 12 February 2023).

Donley, J., Detrich, R., States, J., & Keyworth, (2020). *Distributed Leadership*. Oakland, CA: The Wing Institute.

Available at: <https://www.winginstitute.org/leadership-models-distributed>

(Accessed: 5 March 2023).

Douglass, A. (2019) 'Leadership for Quality Early Childhood Education and Care', *OECD*. p.1-31.

Available at:

<https://www.oecd.org/officialdocuments/publicdisplaydocumentpdf/?cote=EDU/WKP%282019%2919&docLanguage=En>

(Accessed: 5 March 2023).

Eckert, J. (2022) 'Collective Leaderships: A Catalyst for Flourishing Schools', *Converg* [blog]. 4 January.

Available at:

<https://converge.education/collective-leadership-a-catalyst-for-flourishing-schools/>

(Accessed: 4 March 2022).

Fullan, M. (1993) *Why Teachers Must Become Change Agents*.

Available at:

<https://www.ascd.org/el/articles/why-teachers-must-become-change-agents>

(Accessed: 5 March 2023).

Gibson, C. (no date) *Ella Baker by Carrie Gibson*.

Available at: <https://faculty.wagner.edu/lori-weintrob/ella-baker-by-carrie-gibson/>

(Accessed: 19 February 2023).

Hay, K. (2022) 'Children exposed to poverty and trauma more likely to offend as adults – study', *Independent*, 9th March.

Available at:

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/people-children-research-university-of-edinb-urgh-b2032202.html>

(Accessed: 4 March 2023).

Knowledge at Wharton (2018) *How catalyst leaders lift team spirits*.

Available at:

<https://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/article/how-catalyst-performers-lift-teams-to-excellence/>

(Accessed: 21 February 2023).

Leaseman, P. and Slot, P. (2014) 'Breaking the cycle of poverty: challenges for European early childhood education and care', *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, (22)3, pp.314-326.

Available at:

<https://www.tandfonline.com/action/showCitFormats?doi=10.1080%2F1350293X.2014.912894>

(Accessed: 5 March 2023).

Mcdowall Clark, R. (2012) 'I've never thought of myself as a leader but...': the Early Years Professional and catalytic leadership', *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, 20(3), pp.391-401.

Available at:

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1350293X.2012.704762?needAccess=true>

(Accessed: 21 February 2023).

Moore, G. et al (2015) 'Early childhood development and the social determinants of health inequities', *Health Promotion International*, 30(2), p.ii102-ii115.

Available at:

https://academic.oup.com/heapro/article/30/suppl_2/ii102/643035

(Accessed: 27 February 2023).

National education union (2021) '*child poverty-the facts*'.

Available at: <https://neu.org.uk/child-poverty-facts>

(Accessed: 4 March 2023).

Oxfordshire county council (no date) *Early Years toolkit-promoting well-being*.

Available at:

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/business/information-providers/childrens-services-providers/support-early-years-providers/early-years-toolkit/promoting-wellbeing#:~:text=To%20support%20a%20self%2Dassessment,of%20good%20practice%20among%20settings>

(Accessed: 5 March 2023).

Parker, P.S. (2020) *Ella Baker's catalytic leadership : a primer on community engagement and communication for social justice*. Oakland, California: University of California Press.

Pelo, A. (2023) *rethinking schools*.

Available at:

<https://rethinkingschools.org/articles/embracing-a-vision-of-social-justice-in-early-childhood-education/>

(Accessed: 21 February 2023).

Public Health Scotland (2021) *Child Poverty Overview*.

Available at:

<https://www.healthscotland.scot/population-groups/children/child-poverty/child-poverty-overview/impact-of-child-poverty>

(Accessed: 4 March 2023).

Scott, E. (2022) Cost of living-impact on public living.

Available at:

<https://lordslibrary.parliament.uk/cost-of-living-impact-on-public-wellbeing/#:~:text=The%20rising%20cost%20of%20living,households%20already%20on%20lower%20incomes>.

(Accessed: 5 March 2023)

South Wales Argus (2018) 'More flexibility' needed Flying Start scheme in helping children in deprived areas, Welsh Assembly committee finds', *South Wales Argus*, 23rd February.

Available at:

<https://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/16042372.more-flexibility-needed-flying-start-scheme-helping-children-deprived-areas-welsh-assembly-committee-finds/>

(Accessed: 5 March 2023).

Strait, D. (2020) *What is Leadership?*.

Available at:

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/340656122_What_is_Leadership

(Accessed: 5 March 2023).

The children's society (2023) '*What are the effects of child poverty?*'.

Available at:

<https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/what-we-do/our-work/ending-child-poverty/effects-of-living-in-poverty>

(Accessed: 4 March 2023).

Towler, K. (2013) *Children's Commissioner for Wales*.

Available at:

<https://business.senedd.wales/documents/s16637/EHR%2024%20-%20Childrens%20Commissioner%20for%20Wales.pdf>

(Accessed: 28 February 2023).

Unicef (no date) *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*.

Available at:

<https://www.unicef.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/unicef-convention-rights-child-uncrc.pdf>

(Accessed: 4 March 2023).

Wallace,D.,Torres,E. and Zaccaro,S. (2021) 'Just what do we think we are doing? Learning outcomes of a leader and leadership development', *The Leadership Quarterly*, 32(5), pp. 1-13.

Available at:

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1048984320301211>

(Accessed: 12 February 2023).

Welsh Government (2022) Child Poverty Strategy: 2022 progress report.

Available at:

<https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/pdf-versions/2022/12/3/1671008541/child-poverty-strategy-2022-progress-report.pdf>

(Accessed: 5 March 2023).

Welsh Government (2011) Evaluation of Flying Start.

Available at:

<https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/statistics-and-research/2019-04/evaluation-of-flying-start-findings-from-the-baseline-survey-of-families-summary.pdf>

(Accessed: 5 March 2023).

Welsh Government (2022) *New Children's Commissioner for Wales announced*.

Available at:

<https://www.gov.wales/new-childrens-commissioner-for-wales-announced>

(Accessed: 28 February 2023).

Working Wales (No Date) *Work Advice*.

Available at: <https://workingwales.gov.wales/how-we-can-help/work-advice>

(Accessed: 5 March 2023).

World vision (2021) *What is the cycle of poverty?*

Available at:

<https://www.worldvision.ca/stories/child-sponsorship/what-is-the-cycle-of-poverty#:~:text=These%20families%20often%20have%20limited,for%20at%20least%20three%20generations>.

(Accessed: 5 March 2023).