

ECEY6010

Intro-

The Welsh government as of September 2022 rolled out a new Curriculum for Wales in order to reform how children are being taught by the (Welsh government, no date). The way in which children are being taught has changed since the original document, which was designed in 1988 (Welsh Government, no date). The reform according to (Donaldson, 2015) states the importance of accessing the curriculum and assessment arrangements that will meet not only the present needs but the future needs of each child in Wales. (NAFW, 2003) is similar to Donaldson 2015 stating that a curriculum should be developed to strengthen the children's present and future citizens of Wales. (Maynard et al, 2013) recommends that the foundation phase needs to change the behaviour of practitioners to be able to adapt a better play based environment for children. This assignment will critically analyse barriers to the implementation of play based early years curricula. As well as critically evaluate methods of assessment, progress tracking and age or stage related development models within play-based curricula.

Section 1:

How successful were the implementations of the foundation phase. (WAG, 2008) claims that the foundation phase curriculum was to create a curriculum made up of seven areas of learning for children. The implementation of the foundation phase curriculum was a big change to how early years education was taught in Wales, because the foundation phase set out provisions for a single phase of education. In which play and experimental learning are the main priorities instead of a more mirrored approach where it is very repetitive and structured in the sense where children sit at desks to learn (WJE, 2015). However the stocktake identifies there were some tensions in Wales mainly for a successful implementation of the foundation phase it relies on a number of different people. Even so the independent stocktake states even though the foundation phase has well-established practices and principles, despite it will be irrelevant if not all staff enrol in these principles and practises the implementation are likely not to be effective. The stocktake also

suggests when there was poor implementation of the foundation phase it was because there was no clear and agreed view of the best way to implement the foundation phase. As a way forward many leaders and head teachers have needed to guide the practice themselves. Donaldson, 2014 states the foundation phase should have been designed in a way that offers flexibility for play and exploration allowing for space for pupils to develop all skills at the child's pace and ability giving opportunity for pupils to develop skills and knowledge as well as supporting those who develop at a slower pace. Donaldson, 2014 also suggests that pupils need to have wider skills that are in turn necessary for modern life and work in the future. The findings of the implementation of Wales is a positive one in that it improves children's outcomes for children between 7 and 11 years old when going into KS2, it also improves pupils' wellbeing and it increases pupils' attendance. Another positive is that there was no evidence to suggest inequalities in attainment at the end of the foundation phase. The WJE, 2015 suggests that for a better implementation of the foundation phase there needs to be a surge of theory and practical understanding of what is play and how children learn through play.

When implementing the foundation phase it is important that all staff are involved in the planning in order for a clear structured, successful implementation of the foundation phase because according to WAG, 2008 and WJEC, 2015 the main role of the practitioner within the foundation phase is to be a facilitator of learning, meaning the learning is to meet the needs of the individual children to facilitate progress. In order for the implementation of the foundation phase to be successful it requires teachers to take an active role with activities not simply to tell pupils however to show and support children's play as well as the ability to explore and seek to build on children's interests. This follows Bandura theory of controlled experiments Bandura states that practitioners behaviour within a class environment has a positive or negative impact on the behaviour of pupils. WJE, 2015 suggests that for the implementation to be successful all staff are in need of familiarising themselves with a new approach based on the theoretical understanding of the children, this has been informed by sociocultural theory. However, (Hopkins, 2013) recommended that by involving staff in the process it enhances not only the

structural changes at the same time the quality of the teaching resulting in an increased achievement in all for children.

Play-based learning is a new concept for many teachers therefore it is important to make sure all staff have the training and confidence to ensure a successful implementation of the curriculum. Maynard et al 2013, states the foundation phase required practitioners to change their behaviour to supply and support more child initiated and play-based learning. Further to that a challenge for practitioners was to identify what is meant by different types of play. Wood, 2004 along with Maynard, 2013 states that the role of the practitioner needs to be both proactive with the response of the children's interests, learning styles and the creation of the learning environment. The stocktake of the foundation phase, 2014 recommends that the welsh Government needs to develop training for all staff so that staff have the confidence and understanding of how literacy, language and numeracy develop through play as well as the best way to support development of children individually across the foundation phase. However, according to Kingston and Siraj, no date training alone does not support the confidence in implementing the curriculum successfully their also needs to be professional development plan in place for all staff from head teachers to teaching assistants, because the potential to impact all for strategic areas, inform, extend and build on training that is already in place, allowing for information on types of training that work and the types of training that needs to be developed as well as further opportunities to gain other qualifications such as teaching degrees and other child-related qualifications, allowing for a greater knowledge and understanding of children, how they learn and how best to implement the new curriculum. Professional development plan also gives awareness of new understanding as to knowledge, dispositions of effective educator possess and skills coupled with the quality of the classroom, children's learning and current literature points, therefore professional development is possibly the most powerful tool for improving teaching, learning and implementing the foundation phase curriculum across Wales (Kingston and Siraj no date).

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foundation phase because according to WJE, 2015 in order for the implementation of the foundation phase to be successful it requires teachers to take an active role and activities not simply to tell pupils however to show and support children's play as well as the ability to explore and seek to build on children's interests. WJE, 2015 suggests that for the implementation to be successful all staff are in need of familiarising themselves with a new approach based on the theoretical understanding of the children, this has been informed by sociocultural theory. However, Hopkins, 2013 recommended that by involving staff in the process it enhances not only the structural changes at the same time the quality of the teaching resulting in an increased achievement in all for children.

The general understanding of what the terminology means according to the new curriculum, for example play-based learning. As this is a main focus of the new curriculum it is vital for the new curriculum to be successful that all staff in the setting understand these terms in order for a successful implementation. Wood and Attfield, 2005 highlights the range of different types of play from free-play well-planned play and play that is structured with clear aims for children learning. It is difficult to put into the meaning of how each section of play is defined therefore it is hard to define play specifically. This means further challenges for practitioners who are seeking to implement the foundation phase correctly. Siraj, 2014 also states that with fundamental change in culture and the society of today requires staff working within the foundation phase to adjust how previous lessons were taught. OECD, 2012 has also highlighted that there needs to be a high level of consistency with regards to different play varieties in the early years, and therefore the understanding needs to be clear and understandable for all working in the foundation phase. However, Sylvia et al, 2010 argues that the better understanding and the better the adults are qualified when working with early years the better the outcome for children and the better the outcome for the implementation of the foundation phase. The WJE, 2015 states it is important to remember that effective early years pedagogy includes instructional, demonstrative, explanatory, questioning and modelling as well as lots of opportunity for children to initiate and playful activities as well as the engagement of adult and child. As a result both stocktake and foundation phase recommends that

training and guidance for staff and inspectors on terminology and understanding what play is crucial to further development of the foundation phase.

Therefore there is plenty of evidence above to suggest the implementation was a success to a degree however there is also plenty of evidence to suggest that there needs to be improvements of the implementation of the new curriculum to be a biggest success.

Section 2:

Children are born with the ability to be ready learners. Montessori's idea was that by educating the senses first and then educating the intelligence the child would be more academic and have a greater social potential, giving children greater opportunities in the future. Malaguzzi built on this by arguing that children are capable of constructing the learning on their own. Children are motivated by their own interests to understand. Therefore wanting to know more because they are interested in the subject. Children also understand themselves and their place within the world through interaction with others as well as using communications as a way of discovering new things by asking questions and talking to other peers essentially using language as play. Reggio Emilia further built on this by saying that children use a number of different ways when showing their understanding and expressing their creativity and thoughts meaning that children have so many ways of discovering, learning and thinking, therefore all these different ways need to be valued and nurtured by all practitioners.

Children start to interact with others from an early age by reaching out to them, by crying and communicating, however development is not a process which happens automatically, being that it may depend on the environment the children are in and each child individually having the chances to interact with positive relationships and the environment Early years education, 2012 and welsh government no date states that every child is unique and all will develop at their own pace and in their own way. Flying start, no date, believe by understanding the meaning of Unique child we as practitioners facilitate areas for children to explore based on the child's interests and ability as well as develop skills and understanding for progression into primary school. Therefore it is important to remember to think carefully about planning for the start of each term more so to ensure pupils have the opportunity to have routines,

relationships, interactions and learning opportunities to encourage a positive self-image and a sense of self-belief in all children (Levy, 2015). In doing so children will aspire to have confidence to voice their skills and wisdom by allowing them to lead the learning all this happens when children are affirmed and knowledgeable (Stafford, no date).

Now looking at two different types of assessment:

What are learning stories? Learning stories according to Carr and Lee 2012, 2019 and NAEYC, 2019 is a document form allowing parents and guardians to see strengths and areas for improvement based on instructions of the child's talents, expertise and interest of the individual, Wang and Hou, 2021 claims that learning stories have over time been adapted as a form of early years education assessment. The learning story according to Wang and Hou, 2021 assess children's learning dispositions, learning processes as well as wellbeing. Reese, Gunn, Bateman and Carr, 2019 propose that learning stories create a formative assessment, this documents the learning goals and achievements of pupils over time. The assessments of this type works well with the foundation phase and the new curriculum for Wales framework, reflecting the dispositions and the unique child giving greater opportunities to support progression for learners. Education Wales, 2021. Allowing for children, families and practitioners to revisit and see visible progress Carr 2011). Following this in line with the GPDR guidelines making sure that all information stored is safe and protected (Irwin 2022). With modern technology it seems easier to do a learning story, however many believe that keeping a hard copy is essential to ensure staff can retrieve the information needed at the time of needing the information if there is only an online copy and the internet goes down there retrieving the information becomes challenging (Goodman, 2015). A physical and digital portfolio are easy to transfer between different other staff within the school environment for example if a child moves between classes or if there is an intervention taking place for that pupil, those practitioners may need the information. As the portfolio gets shared with families it creates a school and home environment. Learning stories help to form a communication between parents/ guardians and teachers to work together for the common goal of supporting the child's learning (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). However, one issue identified by Li and Grieshaber, 2018

and Zhang and cheng, 2016 is that if there is a great number of pupils in the class it can become very time consuming for teachers. When too much time is consumed this can lead to teachers working over their contracted hours or lack of learning within class, also the quality of the learning stories can be compromised as it relies on a qualified teacher to write each individual story (Karlsdottir and Garoarsdoittr, 2010). Therefore learning stories can help towards a smooth transition between early years and primary school (Peters, 2012 and Peters et al, 2009) and help promotes a child's engagement and belonging in education (hartley et al, 2012, Peters et al, 2009), additionally Clarkin-phillips, 2012, Clarkin-Phillips and carr, 2012, Gunn and DeVocht Van Alphen, 2011 identifies stories to have the opportunities to transform the knowledge and understanding of the parent/ Guardian about the pupils enabling the parents/ Guardians to further develop these skills.

What is the foundation phase profile? The foundation phase profile according to the Welsh Government, 2017 a key part of the Welsh Government Early Years development and assessment framework. The profile is a form of assessment where it provides a baseline assessment across Wales. A formative approach according to Black and William, 1998 the standard of what children will achieve will rise across Wales as well as raising the benchmark for everyone. However, Brown et al, 1996 argues that the principles of the learners needs to understand what is expected of them and that pupils can relate the outcome to real life not just how to do it on paper, therefore an assessment needs to understand how learners learn, be clearly explained, play a positive part in the learning experience and to be individual to all pupils. The profile was designed to line up with assessments that were carried out by health professionals identifying support needed for those pupils (Welsh Government, 2017). The profile was designed as an assessment tool to build a picture of children's development and abilities in key areas (Welsh Government, 2017), allowing to build a holistic picture of the child's development. However, May and Carr, 1993 state that holistic is where they learn Intellectual, social, cultural, physical, emotional and not only in key areas yet throughout the whole child, Therefore the foundation phase can not develop a holistic approach if it is only looking at key areas. The foundation phase profile states that planning should support children working towards mastering a skill, However, Loiancono and Allen, 2009 states that lack of planning time makes it a challenge for staff to create a plan and implement

the plan allowing each child to have an individual lesson to master the skill needed. Therefore where the foundation phase has a good baseline in place followed by all staff to enable a structured assessment is in place giving pupils the opportunities to learn from the most knowledgeable other (Vygotsky, 1934) and understand new things from peers by observing and talking to their peers (Bandura, 1925) however, because there is a standard across the country can disengage some children, consequently Baseline assessment may not be the way forward with the new curriculum as each child learns in a unique way and at their own pace therefore a child may complete part of the baseline however may jump up in other areas.

Whereas these two types of assessment have similar beliefs that both have the child at the centre of the process, Learning stories according to Carr and Lee 2012, 2019 and NAEYC, 2019 is a document form allowing parents and guardians to see strengths and areas for improvement based on instructions of the child's talents, expertise and interest of the individual. Whereas the foundation phase profile is a form of assessment where it provides a baseline assessment across Wales and not individually. However, The learning story according to Wang and Hou, 2021 assess children's learning dispositions, learning processes as well as wellbeing. On the other hand the foundation phase profile concentrates on key areas restructuring the flow of development slightly because the freedom to learn different things as the pupils can not go up the ladder until the pupils has completed the first step whereas with the Learning stories allow children to see all the progress they are making and is writing in a slightly less formal way where the pupils see what they need to work on, not what they can not do such the foundation phase profile. With the evidence above there are strong suggestions that both have successful outcomes in different ways. For the successful implementation of the new curriculum there needs to be a clear assessment plan like the foundation phase profile with the flexibility of learning different outcomes in a broad aspect of school life.

Section 3:

The use of Welsh language in the early years:

As a Welsh speaker myself, I have had a passion for the Welsh language, while feeling a sense of belonging to a country (Welsh Government, 2008). Having enjoyment and experience of the Welsh language. Did you know that only 17.8% of adults speak Welsh according to the Census 2021 for Wales. Because of this the Welsh Government has put a plan in place to encourage growth of the language in Wales. The strategy is for children in English-medium schools to access and benefit from a number of different opportunities to develop the language skills enabling children to experience life in a bilingual country. Due to this programme 1-10 schools have excellent outcomes of the Welsh language (Estyn, 2013). However there is still a great concern that children lack confidence in using Welsh outside of the working area. Therefore one way to encourage more pupils to communicate in Welsh was to encourage each class to have a Welsh corner where pupils enjoy play-based activities with only the Welsh language being spoken in that area with exception to asking what something is in Welsh. This has given pupils loads of confidence in trying to speak Welsh outside of these areas many now speak Welsh on the yard while playing with their friends with no prompting for staff, which I'm sure you will all agree is lovely to see and hear. This goes along with Piaget, 1980 theory saying that the development is increased through active learning. Another way that was found successful was to bring parents into Welsh lessons, allowing parents to have an insight into and allowing the children to work with and help their parents to learn new language. In line with the UNCRC children have the right to be supported by parents or guardians. Sammons, Toth and Sylva, 2015 states that parents have a crucial role in promoting a positive experience for pupils. Bandura, 1975 underpinned his role modelling theory by stating that the behaviour of parents and how they promote a positive experience for their children has an impact on the behaviour of the child.

Estyn, 2013 states that when the practitioner is a fluent Welsh speaker, the progress of the child is greater. With this in mind the Welsh Government 2022 has a vision that there will be 1 million Welsh speakers and there will be double the daily use of Welsh within all classes across Wales by 2050. To achieve this the Welsh Government 2022 have announced that they will be making Welsh language lessons that are delivered by the national centre for learning Welsh free for everyone from

September. This is a great opportunity for all staff to gain some confidence and understanding of the Welsh language.

During play activities out-door is an area in which estyn 2013 has identified this an area when welsh is used least within school life. This is due to a focus on understanding of outdoor vocabulary (Welsh Government 2022). However when children are writing for 'real reason' they are highly engaged and make progress for example writing a list of equipment needed to go camping after the list is complete and items collected go down to an area and have a go at setting up a camping area using welsh words bringing the 'real reason' into play.

One major issue with the development of the Welsh language according to Welsh Government 2017 is that it is not compulsory that schools have to record children's individual progress. There is no formal data of assessment available and level from school to national. This means the child's progress from beginning of the child's education to the end of foundation phase and onwards to key stage 2 is not tracked. This lacks motivation to carry out Welsh lessons because without a tracked progression system there is no way to see the progress of the individual.

With all the evidence based on the use of Welsh language within the Early years there is evidence to suggest that the Welsh Government are doing everything within their abilities to make their vision a reality however there is some evidence that suggest for the Welsh Government vision of having 1 million welsh speaker by 2050 there needs to be some more progress on implementing the development of the welsh government. One of the main tasks I believe the Welsh Government has to look at is the recording of the progress of children, because with a progression tracker in place there will be more opportunity to track and guide the development of the Welsh language allowing for opportunities for further develop and guide the development of the Welsh Language programme to be able to create a successful powerful welsh language throughout the whole of Wales. For all practitioners out there looking to develop the understanding of the Welsh language please go check out the national centre for learning Welsh here's the link go check it out help keep the Welsh language alive

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/472867/RR472A_Pre-school_and_early_home_learning_effects_on_A_level_outcomes.pdf . For all parents and guardians out there who want to help their children or even learn and understand Welsh themselves start off simple watch S4C with your child so there are opportunities to hear the language, listen to simple songs online trying to pick up simple words, learning how to use simple language of Welsh for example goodnight in Welsh this allows your vocabulary to slowly grow giving you and your a child a unique bond together.

Finally to conclude This assignment has critically analysed barriers to the implementation of play based early years curricula. As well as critically evaluate methods of assessment, progress tracking and age or stage related development models within play-based curricula in addition to this the use of Welsh language in the early years. The findings of the implementation of Wales is a positive one in that it improves children's outcomes for children between 7 and 11 years old when going into KS2, it also improves pupils' wellbeing and it increases pupils' attendance. Another positive is that there was no evidence to suggest inequalities in attainment at the end of the foundation phase. The WJE 2015 suggests that for a better implementation of the foundation phase there needs to be a surge of theory and practical understanding of what is play and how children learn through play accompanied by the recommendations that by involving staff in the process it enhances not only the structural changes at the same time the quality of the teaching resulting in an increased achievement in all for children Hopkins (2013). With the evidence above there are strong suggestions that both assessments as spoken about earlier have successful outcomes in different ways. For the successful implementation of the new curriculum there needs to be a clear assessment plan like the foundation phase profile with the flexibility of learning different outcomes in a broad aspect of school life. With all the evidence based on the use of Welsh language within the Early years there is evidence to suggest that the Welsh Government are doing everything within their abilities to make their vision a reality however there is some evidence that suggest for the Welsh Government vision of

having 1 million welsh speaker by 2050 there needs to be some more progress on implementing the development of the welsh government.

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