

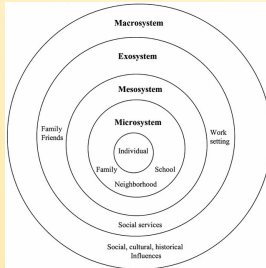
Start at My Feet

ECAD4009
Student 1903950

The placement school is a large, town based primary school, with 671 pupils on roll from Nursery to Year 6. Around 30% of pupils are eligible for Free School Meals, which is above the national average of around 18% (Estyn, 2016). Pupils are predominately from a white British background and speak English as their main language. Approximately 3.5% of pupils have English as an Additional Language. There are around 23% of pupils identified as having Additional Learning Needs (MyLocalSchool, 2020).

The Learner

At the heart of everything is the learner. The experiences they have at home, in school and across the broader community interlink to have an impact on the individual, as detailed in Bronfenbrener's Ecological Systems Theory (Pound, 2009).



Bronfenbrener's Ecological Systems Model (Research Gate, 2003)

In turn, this means that when planning the curriculum and the teaching and learning activities that will be offered to the children, consideration must be given to their individual circumstances, developmental needs and the level of support available to them outside of the classroom. Furthermore, it is essential to provide opportunities and experiences that respect the rights of the children as detailed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNICEF, 2020).

Each child will have different attitudes and approaches to learning, and different learning styles (Pritchard, 2014). As such the teacher will need to ensure that learning opportunities are presented to maximize the opportunities for all learners to make progress. The introduction of the Curriculum for Wales (Hwb, 2020) with a clear focus on cross-curricular learning combined with six Areas of Learning and Experience will create many more opportunities for learners and allow greater application of pupil voice in shaping their learning (Hwb, 2020).



Credit: Hwb Website, 2020

Some learners in the school have additional learning needs, and others have English as an additional language. These children require additional support in order to reach their full potential, and this comes in via 'The School' section.

The School

The school is a 'pioneer school' meaning it has been working with the Welsh Government and other pioneer schools to develop the new Curriculum for Wales. The focus for this work has been the AoLE of Health and Wellbeing (Hwb, 2020). The school also holds a Gold Award as a Rights Respecting School (UNICEF, 2020).

There is a well-established range of ways in which pupil voice is asked for and heard. For example, the school operates a school council, an eco council and a 'Rights Respecting Group' with children from all year groups taking part. Immersive learning days provide opportunities for pupils to determine what they will learn (Estyn, 2016). Teachers collaborate across each year group and identify children who will benefit from intervention programmes.

As well as providing a broad and varied range of extra curricular clubs for pupils, the school also provides activities for parents and other members of the local community to participate in. A community choir is one example, with children, staff, parents and local residents taking part. Parents are encouraged to take part in workshops and events days at the school (School Website, 2020).

Prior to children joining the school, families are encouraged to visit. Home visits can also be made to facilitate greater family engagement. It is understood in the school that strong, supportive family engagement plays a significant role in children's progress and achievement. This does not have to manifest as parents spending time working in school; this is not shown to have significant benefits (Desforge and Abouchaar, 2003). However providing opportunities for parents to gain understanding about what the children do in school and how they can support them is known to be of benefit (Barger et al, 2019).

'Find out Fridays' events hosted by the school allow parents and carers to meet with external agencies such as the police, child services and health professionals, giving access to support that vulnerable families may not otherwise have had (Estyn, 2016), and strengthens links with 'The Community'. These events are often shared under a banner of T.E.A.M. – Together Everyone Achieves More (School Website, 2020) helping to reinforce the idea of pupils, school, parents, carers and community all working together.

Credit: PSE Classified, 2019

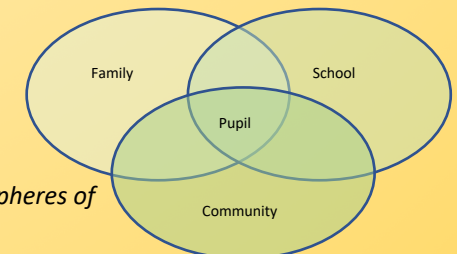


The Community

The socio-economic circumstances of the community around the placement school are known to feature high levels of unemployment and economic inactivity (StatsWales, 2019). The county has an unemployment rate of 6.4%, compared to the Wales average of 4.1%. Average (provisional) weekly earnings in 2019 were £485, £50 behind the national average (StatsWales, 2019). This background has led to the school having an on-site partnership with Flying Start, which in turn offers access to additional support for vulnerable and low-income families (Pembrokeshire County Council, 2020). The school also hosts a TimeBank initiative where members of the local community come into the school to take part in activities that benefit both the school and themselves as individuals (TimeBankingUK, 2019).

Partnership working with other organisations including the local further and higher education institutions allows the school to offer vocational training programmes for members of the local community, several of whom have subsequently secured employment in the school. Visits are often hosted for other schools and education providers enabling sharing of best practice and learning opportunities including in literacy, numeracy and ICT (Estyn, 2016).

Community is a strong theme in the school; it is acknowledged and understood that the three areas of school, family and community overlap and influence the development of the pupil (Epstein, 1995, p. 701).



Based on Epstein's overlapping spheres of Influence model (Epstein, 1995)

Equally, through pupil voice, the children choose to learn more about their community, how it shapes them, and how they can shape it. Whilst across the county only 7% of school aged children speak Welsh at home (StatsWales, 2019), the school promotes the Welsh Language effectively and uses local heritage sites to extend the learning and knowledge of pupils (Estyn, 2016). As such the pupils and school are playing an active part in working towards the Welsh Government vision of having a million Welsh speakers by 2050 (Welsh Government, 2017).

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