



Prifysgol Cymru
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Trinity Saint David

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STUDENT NAME: Marli Lawrence

STUDENT NUMBER: 2303873

BA Primary Education with QTS

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Student name – Marli Lawrence

Student number - 2303873

AI Acknowledgement

I acknowledge the use of Chatgpt [chatgpt.com] on 28th April 2025 to proofread and structure my work. I used the prompts:

1. Please proofread this text to check for fluency, spelling, and grammar.
2. Using these notes please help to structure a SWOT analysis evaluation.

I confirm that I have not presented any AI generated text as my own work.

I confirm that I have copies of my drafts, notes, and other resources I used before and after the use of AI tools which I may be asked to provide in evidence.

Targets from previous assignment

Target	How I have addressed it in this work
Refine your referencing skills (when to provide access dates – reference list)	I used the Harvard referencing guide and reviewed past assignments to correctly include access dates for online sources only.
Engage with key policies and reports relating to education in Wales (Welsh Government, Estyn)	I included Estyn reports in this assignment and consistently referenced Welsh Government policies throughout to support and justify my project proposal.
Use your professional standards and relevant literature to guide next steps. What impact will your findings have on your own future teaching practice?	In my conclusion, I reflected on the Professional Standards and outlined specific steps to embed inclusive, community-based learning in my future teaching practice.

Written assessment: Project proposal for a school-community project
Create a community profile for your PTE1 school. Using relevant literature, suggest ways in which the school could make use of its location and community to support pupil learning.

Introduction (475 words)

This project proposal introduces a weekly real-life skills programme within a primary school environment. It is designed to offer pupils practical, hands-on learning experiences in collaboration with both school staff and members of the local community. The central aim is to strengthen connections between the school and its surrounding community, while enhancing pupils' education by providing them with valuable life skills that will support their future development and raise aspirations. The decision to focus on community involvement in real-life learning is grounded in a growing understanding of the importance of experiential, meaningful education, particularly within the framework of the Curriculum for Wales, which prioritises nurturing ambitious, capable learners and healthy, confident individuals (Welsh Government, 2020).

Policy guidance from the Welsh Government has supported the idea that stronger partnerships between schools and their communities can boost educational achievement and promote wider social benefits (Welsh Government, 2017). The Curriculum for Wales encourages schools to provide pupils with learning opportunities that are authentic, relevant to their lives, and rooted in their local environment, helping them to build practical skills alongside academic knowledge (Donaldson, 2015). By involving local professionals, such as chefs, gardeners, tradespeople, and healthcare workers. This project will enable pupils to learn from first hand experiences, broadening their understanding of different career paths and community roles in a way that inspires and empowers individuals.

The school I have focused on is a small rural primary school with strong ties to its local community but limited access to broader enrichment activities. This research proposal was chosen to offer pupils authentic, real-world learning experiences while strengthening community engagement, ensuring that education remains relevant, inclusive, and inspiring for all learners.

Recent literature highlights the significance of community-engaged learning as a strategy for building both cultural capital and life preparedness in pupils. Real-life learning has been shown to enhance pupil motivation, improve critical thinking, and develop resilience, particularly when pupils can see the relevance of their education beyond the school gates (Lucas et al., 2013). Moreover, these experiences can be especially beneficial in areas where children have limited access to such opportunities outside of school (Reed & Black, 2021). The proposed project directly addresses these challenges by offering structured, inclusive opportunities for all learners to access meaningful learning experiences.

Through integrating real-life skills into the routine of school life, this project aims to support key aspects of pupil development, including confidence, independence, practical knowledge, and a sense of belonging to the community. These aims resonate closely with the four purposes of the Curriculum for Wales, particularly the drive to develop enterprising, creative contributors and ethical, informed citizens who are prepared to play an active role in their communities (Welsh Government, 2020). As a student teacher committed to inclusive practice and preparing pupils for life beyond school, I believe this project represents an effective way to deliver both educational excellence and wider social value, supporting the long-term goals of education in Wales.

Literature Review (842 words)

The focus of this proposal is to embed real-life skills into weekly classroom sessions with the involvement of local community members. This focus was chosen in direct response to the evolving aims of education in Wales. The Curriculum for Wales places the development of practical, contextualised learning at the heart of its framework, emphasising the need for “authentic contexts for learning” that prepare pupils for life beyond the classroom (Welsh Government, 2020).

There is a growing body of literature that supports the integration of real-life learning within the primary curriculum. Lucas, Claxton and Spencer (2013) argue that real-world learning promotes transferable life skills such as problem-solving, communication, and resilience. These skills are increasingly regarded as essential in preparing young people for uncertain and rapidly evolving career paths (Schleicher, 2018). Moreover, the development of such

competencies is a key aim of the Curriculum for Wales, which encourages the creation of “meaningful learning experiences rooted in real-life situations” (Welsh Government, 2020).

Research further shows that when schools collaborate with their communities, pupils benefit from an enriched learning environment that enhances both academic engagement and social development (Edwards & Saltmarsh, 2018). Involving local community members, such as chefs, farmers, or health professionals in the learning process introduces pupils to a variety of perspectives and careers, expanding their understanding of the world of work and encouraging aspiration. This aligns with the Welsh Government’s emphasis on developing ethical, informed citizens who are “ready to be citizens of Wales and the world” (Welsh Government, 2020).

However, the implementation of community-engaged learning is not without challenges. One concern is the variability in community resources and expertise, which can lead to inconsistencies in the quality of educational experiences. As noted by the Welsh Government (2022), developing effective community partnerships requires careful planning and sustained effort, which may be difficult for schools with limited staff or funding. Another critical consideration is the need for professional development to equip teachers with the skills necessary to facilitate community-engaged learning effectively. Without adequate training, educators may struggle to manage external partnerships or to align community activities with curricular goals. This gap highlights the necessity for systemic support and resources to enable successful implementation.

The need for such community-linked learning is especially pertinent in rural or economically disadvantaged areas. According to Estyn (2022), schools in these settings often face challenges in offering broad enrichment opportunities due to limited resources and geographic isolation. This project addresses such limitations by making use of the wider community of Pembrokeshire’s existing knowledge and skills, enabling access to cultural and vocational capital without extensive financial or logistical burden. This supports Bourdieu’s theory of cultural capital (1977), which underlines the importance of non-academic knowledge and skills in supporting pupil achievement and social mobility.

Contemporary literature also supports this approach from a wellbeing perspective. Robinson (2020) argues that connecting learning to real-life situations helps learners to make sense of their place in the world, which contributes to emotional security and personal development.

This is echoed in the Curriculum for Wales' emphasis on developing healthy, confident individuals who “form positive relationships and make healthy lifestyle choices” (Welsh Government, 2020). Real-life lessons—such as cooking, budgeting, and gardening, equip pupils with skills that directly enhance their ability to live independently and confidently in the future.

The involvement of the community in school-based learning also supports teacher development and school improvement. A study by Schleicher (2018) found that schools which adopt a community-centred approach are more likely to report positive school culture, enhanced pupil behaviour, and increased staff satisfaction. Furthermore, community participation has been shown to strengthen the sense of collective responsibility for children's learning and wellbeing (Harris & Goodall, 2008). This resonates with Welsh Government policy on “co-constructing the curriculum,” in which schools are encouraged to collaborate with a wide range of stakeholders, including parents, carers, and the wider community in shaping meaningful educational experiences (Welsh Government, 2020).

In choosing this focus, consideration has also been given to the specific needs of the school and its surrounding community. Many schools report a desire to broaden their curriculum while still meeting national expectations (Estyn, 2022). This project provides a practical way to extend learning beyond the constraints of a traditional classroom, while still contributing to cross-curricular responsibilities such as literacy, numeracy, and digital competence. It also responds to the recent emphasis on pupil voice and learner agency in curriculum design. By allowing pupils to engage in practical, hands-on activities that reflect their interests and aspirations, the project embodies a learner-centred approach in line with Donaldson's (2015) vision for education in Wales.

The proposed focus of weekly real-life learning sessions facilitated by community members is grounded in a wide body of literature that supports the benefits of experiential, authentic, and context-based education. It reflects the principles and values embedded within the Curriculum for Wales and offers a meaningful response to the needs of both learners and the wider school community. Through this project, pupils will not only gain important life skills but also develop a stronger sense of identity, responsibility, and connection to the world around them.

Project aims (489 words)

This project aims to embed real-life, community-led learning experiences into the weekly curriculum of a primary school, providing pupils with hands-on skills that build independence, curiosity, and community awareness. It reflects the vision of the Curriculum for Wales, which places pupil agency, authentic learning, and local relevance at the core of educational practice (Foster, 2021). The project will involve local professionals and skilled volunteers in the delivery of weekly lessons designed to teach essential life skills, such as cooking, budgeting, planting, first aid, and basic DIY skills, introducing potential jobs and carers within the community. One of the primary goals of this project is to ensure that education becomes more relevant and connected to pupils' lives beyond the classroom. Research by Biesta (2010) highlights the need for schools to provide more than academic knowledge by promoting *subjectification*- that is, helping pupils become responsible, reflective individuals capable of navigating the complexities of society. Real-life learning, particularly when community-led, supports this by grounding education in the real world, thus helping children make sense of their experiences and understand their role in society (Kraftl, 2020).

Another key outcome is to encourage deeper links between schools and their surrounding communities. The Welsh Government (2022) continues to emphasise the importance of community involvement in curriculum design and delivery, encouraging schools to develop partnerships that support local citizenship and cultural identity. This project offers an avenue for schools to meet that expectation by bringing the voices, experiences and skills of the community into the learning space. Moreover, research suggests that such collaborations increase social capital for both pupils and community members, leading to more inclusive and participatory models of education (Warren et al., 2009).

From an implementation perspective, this project will require collaboration between staff and the wider community. A member of the school's senior leadership team or a dedicated community liaison officer would coordinate scheduling, communications, and safeguarding procedures. The school will maintain a community directory of local professionals willing to contribute—such as caterers, carers, tradespeople, and artists. Lessons will be planned in partnership with teachers to align with topics being covered in each year group. This co-construction approach ensures alignment with curriculum goals and promotes consistency in learning (Leat, Lofthouse & Towler, 2012).

Budgeting will be kept intentionally minimal, to promote sustainability and equity. Funding requirements will primarily cover materials (such as ingredients or basic tools) and refreshments for visitors. Many of the sessions can be run on a voluntary basis or in partnership with local businesses seeking to engage in corporate social responsibility. Additional resources may be secured through local council schemes, education grants, or community fundraising. This approach mirrors successful models of community learning that have a high impact at low cost (Mann, 2022).

This project offers a holistic response to the aspirations of the Curriculum for Wales. It develops the whole child emotionally, socially, and practically, while reinforcing community cohesion. It provides a replicable and inclusive model for making education more meaningful, memorable, and rooted in lived experience.

Measuring impact (308 words)

Evaluating the success of this real-life learning project is essential to understanding its contribution to pupil development and school-community collaboration. A mixed-methods approach will be used, combining both quantitative data and qualitative feedback to ensure a balanced picture of impact. This reflects MacBeath's (2006) recommendation that school self-evaluation should be ongoing, inclusive, and embedded within teaching practice. However, some caution that internal evaluation can become too insular if not paired with external perspectives (Reeves and Robinson, 2020).

Pupil voice will be a central feature of the evaluation. Weekly exit slips or reflective journals will allow pupils to record what they learned and how they felt. This supports Fielding's (2012) emphasis on valuing pupil perspectives in shaping educational practice. However, while Fielding promotes long-term cultural shifts through student voice, in this context pupil voice will be used more pragmatically to assess short-term engagement. Focus groups held termly will offer deeper insight into pupils' evolving confidence and interest.

Staff feedback will also be collected through observation forms focusing on pupil engagement and cross-curricular links. These will help identify soft skill development and curriculum integration. While useful, teacher-led evaluation may introduce unconscious bias, highlighting the need for occasional peer observations to increase validity. Community

contributors will complete short evaluations after each session. Cox and Robinson-Pant (2021) advocate for treating community members as co-educators whose input is essential, though not all may feel confident evaluating classroom impact. To support this, prompts and clear guidance will be provided.

Quantitative measures such as attendance, punctuality, and behaviour logs will help identify trends in engagement. To complement these, case studies of individual pupils or groups will offer richer, narrative insights, following Yin's (2018) model for exploring deeper impact beyond surface metrics.

This mixed approach will ensure the project remains inclusive, responsive, and aligned with the self-improving ethos of the Curriculum for Wales (Welsh Government, 2022).

Evaluation (485 words)

A SWOT analysis has been used to evaluate the proposed real-life learning project, offering a structured way to examine the internal and external factors that may affect its success (Ghazinoory, Abdi & Azadegan-Mehr, 2011). This approach allows for a balanced and evidence-informed reflection on the project's feasibility and potential impact.

One of the project's most notable strengths is its clear alignment with the Curriculum for Wales, which prioritises authentic, community-connected learning experiences that support the development of ambitious, ethical, and confident learners (Welsh Government, 2020). The integration of local professionals into weekly sessions offers rich, hands-on opportunities that promote transferable skills and foster real-world relevance. Research by Lucas and Claxton (2010) supports this, identifying experiential learning as a key driver of pupil engagement and motivation. The low-cost, flexible structure also enhances its scalability across year groups. However, while flexibility is a strength, it could also create inconsistencies in delivery if not carefully coordinated. This should be acknowledged and addressed in planning.

The project's reliance on community volunteers introduces potential issues related to quality assurance and continuity. Not all visitors will have pedagogical experience, which may affect the depth of learning or classroom management. All adult community members will be accompanied by a teacher or staff member that holds a full DBS check. This echoes Busher's

(2022) concern around safeguarding and logistical oversight, particularly when working with external adults. Additionally, if administrative responsibilities are unclear, teachers may experience added pressure, potentially undermining staff buy-in. While community involvement is a core strength, it may become a logistical weakness without clear systems of support and accountability.

This initiative offers a genuine opportunity to foster a stronger school-community identity and encourage reciprocal learning. Involving families and local businesses can lead to improved parental engagement, which Warren et al. (2009) suggest is a key driver of school improvement. The project could also connect with Welsh Government priorities around community-focused schools (2022), positioning the school as a hub of learning and civic participation. Moreover, success in early implementation could unlock access to grants, sponsorships, or local enterprise partnerships. Still, these opportunities are only attainable with sustained commitment and clear impact evidence.

One of the most significant external threats is the risk of limited access to suitable volunteers, especially in rural or economically deprived areas. A lack of available professionals may lead to a narrow pool of expertise, limiting the diversity and richness of learning experiences. Wilkins (2020) also warns of tokenism, where external contributions appear superficial or poorly integrated within the curriculum. If the project becomes a hassle rather than a meaningful part of teaching and learning, its long-term value could be undermined. Furthermore, external disruptions such as staffing changes or policy shifts may interrupt the consistency needed to embed the programme effectively.

While this project has strong educational and social potential, it is not without challenges. The key to success lies in intentional planning, training, and sustained collaboration. If managed strategically, the initiative could transform both classroom learning and wider community engagement, delivering meaningful, long-term benefits for all involved.

Conclusion (381 words)

This project has explored the potential of a real-life skills programme to bridge classroom learning with wider community knowledge and experience. Grounded in research and Welsh Government policy, it has shown how community-based education can enhance pupil engagement, build life skills, and promote wider goals such as inclusion, wellbeing and

equity. At its core, the project draws on Dewey's (1938) concept of education as a lived, democratic experience, emphasising that learning should be rooted in real-world contexts that reflect pupils' identities and everyday realities. The proposal is closely aligned with the four purposes of the Curriculum for Wales and supports the national mission to create ambitious capable learners, ethically informed citizens, healthy confident individuals and enterprising creative contributors (Welsh Government, 2022). Literature from Mann (2022) and Kraftl (2020) supports the benefits of community-linked education, particularly in helping pupils connect their learning to future pathways. These findings are especially relevant post-pandemic, when learners may need renewed motivation and accessible enrichment opportunities that respond to disrupted learning experiences.

This project has also deepened my understanding of the Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership in Wales, specifically the expectations around pedagogy and professional learning. As the standards highlight, teachers should "inspire and motivate learners to achieve their potential" and "work with the wider community to enrich learning" (Education Workforce Council, 2017). This project has given me a clearer sense of how to bring that standard to life in practical terms. Going forward, I aim to prioritise inclusive, collaborative planning that actively involves the community and offers learners experiences that extend beyond the classroom.

Critically, my reflection has also been shaped by Social Justice Re-Examined (Arshad, Wrigley & Pratt, 2020), which calls on educators to see the classroom as a space where all pupils feel valued and seen. This reinforces the need to integrate voices and perspectives from diverse backgrounds and communities in curriculum planning. As a next step in my own development, I will work to ensure that real-life learning is not just an "add-on," but woven meaningfully into my teaching, particularly in supporting those at risk of marginalisation.

This project has enhanced the way I view teaching. It has reinforced that effective practice goes beyond subject delivery, it must be responsive, rooted in the community, and committed to preparing pupils not just for exams, but for life.

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