

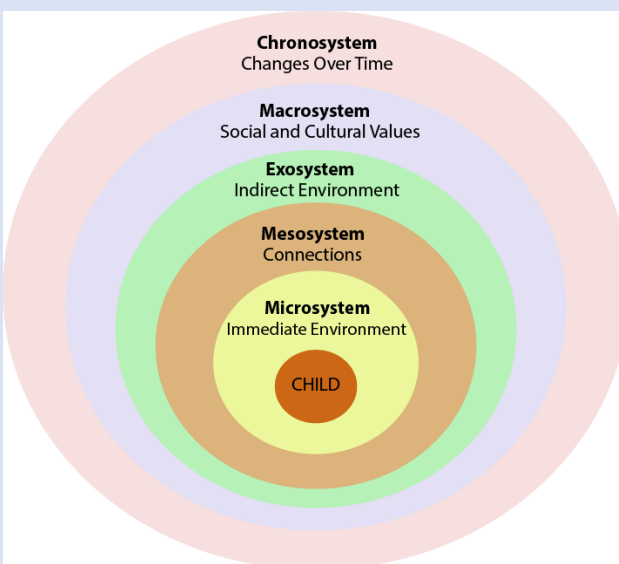


Figure 1 (Psychology Notes, 2017).

Employment and health – The school have ‘springboards’ providing parents with different skills that ensure better opportunities for both themselves and their children. One springboard provided healthy cooking lessons (School x, No Date). This provided the parents with a new set of skills that could be used to find a job and a greater probability of the child having a healthy diet. This is significant as it has a direct affect on health and an indirect affect on employment. Studies shows that a healthy diet often leads to better academic achievement (Burrows et al, 2017). Thus, the pupils may achieve better qualifications, consequently, broadening job opportunities, as it makes a person more employable (The College for Adult Learning, 2014 and Cole, 2014). Therefore, both the parents and pupils employability are influenced, affecting the communities employability rates.

Language - Most pupils are from homes with English as a first language with very few who speak Welsh at home (Estyn, 2016). This is because just 19% of the county speak Welsh (PACEC, 2015). The Welsh Government have devised a strategy to have one million Welsh speakers by 2050 and plan to achieve this by increasing Welsh in the classrooms to encourage fluency (Welsh Language, 2017). This should prove successful according to Rinaldi of Reggio Emilia’s beliefs; a school is generated by its community, yet, the community’s future is created by the school (2005, cited in Hall et al 2010). To support this strategy, the schools curriculum creates a stimulating experience of Welsh to spark interest. For example, year 1 take it in turns to take home Bleddyn the dragon. In Welsh, they write and read aloud about what they did with Bleddyn. The class also have a points system to see who used the most Welsh throughout the week. The top two pupils are then chosen to be the Heddiw heroes for the week. This involves changing the date and weather. I witnessed the pupils be reminded about the points system and it immediately encouraged them to speak more Welsh. Thus, the schools approach to the 2050 plan incorporates the curriculum through these approaches, such as pupils Welsh oracy skills (Education and Skills, 2015) in the Bleddyn activity, as well as encouraging the use of Welsh outside of lessons.

Start At my Feet

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The Learner, The Home and The Community

The community and learners families are well considered in the schools approach to the curriculum. There is a clear understanding of the influence the learner, home and community have on one another, which can be explained by Bronfenbrenner's ecological system theory (Gray and MacBain, 2015 and Boyd and Bee, 2014); different environmental influences are related and will affect a child's development's (Figure 1). Malaguzzi (cited in Whalley, 2007), creator of the Reggio approach, similarly highlighted the importance of parent-teacher partnerships explaining that it can become a complementary relationship which creates further opportunities for learning. Reggio school willingly share their good practice, however, they stress that their approach to education will not be easily successful in different cultures. Thus, schools should focus on their social and cultural context and build a curriculum based on this rather than just relying on the Reggio approach (Hall et al, 2010 and Alidina, 2010). The school have successfully developed their curriculum to suit their learners, families and community using the Reggio's approach's emphases on partnerships. Curriculum reform is evident within their practice as they are a pioneer school for wellbeing as a part of the 2022 curriculum (School X, No Date). The school establish links with associated schools to ensure good transitions for pupils going to secondary school so that they are less anxious (School X, No Date)

Socio-economic Context

Although school X's language, culture and religion influence how they implement the curriculum, the socio economic context of the area has the most significant influence. In the Welsh index of multiple deprivation, the schools postcode is ranked 62 on a scale of 1 being most deprived and 1909 being least deprived (Statistics and Research, 2019). The schools town has areas of deprivation with low income, employment, health, education, and housing (PACEC, 2015). The community's economic state is reflected through the amount of pupils in school X eligible for free school meals (e-FSM). The average amount of e-FSM pupils in Welsh schools is 18.4%. However, school X has an average of 30.6% (Education and Skills, 2019). The school were provided with a £167.076 'Pupil Development Grant' which is allocated to children e-FSM or who are looked after continuously (School X, 2019). Thus, the grant is used to target the socio-economic difficulties faced by the community through: enhanced curriculum opportunities, partnerships such as springboards, family learning and family support officers. This is because social class has a significant impact on educational achievement so school X must support these families as well as possible (West-Burnham et al, (2007).

Religion and Ethnicity

- In 2011 61% of the towns population were Christian and just 2% of residents were not of white ethnicity (as shown in figure 2) (Brinkhoff, 2019). Thus, my placement school is visited once a week by religious educators from the local church as the majority of pupils are Christian. They provide information about Christianity and make it engaging for the children by, for example, using actions for parts of the bible and singing. However, parents of children with other religious beliefs or no religion have the option to come in and educate their children on their beliefs or a subject of their choice. Successful Futures and the county's Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education states that the role of religious education should develop the pupils awareness and respect for other faiths rather than a promotion of one particular faith (Donaldson, 2015 and WASACRE, 2008). My placement school provides this through an outside agency who visit the school and teach about a range of religious practices. In 2016 96.2% of foundation phase pupils achieved an outcome of 5+ in personal and social development, well-being and cultural diversity, putting the school in benchmark quartile 2 (Estyn, 2016). The quartile compares the school against others with similar numbers of FSM. This indicates effective teaching of religious education that suits the learners.

Education – The teaching and learning in school X is significantly focused on developing partnerships with parents and the community. Estyn (2016) noted the schools exemplary partnerships with parents, local schools and the community and it's benefits to pupils learning. School X create strong links with the community through providing a leader and a space for a community choir. This benefits residents learning to sing, and the school as it creates opportunity for sharing of expertise and resources to enhance teaching and learning (Sullivan, 1988). Additionally, parental engagement workshops on phonics, literacy and numeracy are held so they can continue teaching their children at home. Parental engagement has been praised in the Rumbold report, *Starting with Quality* (DES, 1990, cited in Nutbrown et al, 2006) as it claimed parents are the child's most important educators, thus they should be involved in their learning experiences. As well as this, family support officers provide support to families with short and long term difficulties such as housing issues. These strategies have proven successful in an Estyn (2017) case study which successfully developed effective relationships with families, enabling them to intervene early in attendance or behavior problems. However, one study suggested that pupils achievement improved more from parents implementing more quality conversation rather than home learning (Burnham et al, 2007). School X (No Date) also provides pupils with a breakfast club. Breakfast has proven to improve cognitive function allowing them to learn more (Wesnes et al, 2003), it provides opportunity for parents to seek jobs they may not have before due to childcare difficulties. The school implements an inclusive approach to additional learning needs (ALN) (school X, No Date). 25% are recognised as having ALN so the school have a special unit to provide the support they need under Article 24 of the UN Conventions On The Right of the Child (Allfie, 2020): "Persons with disabilities receive the support required, within the general education system". They are then put into mainstream classes when and where they feel comfortable. Frederick (2005, cited in Smith, 2012, p. 80) would approve of this approach, stating "all our children need to be part of their community and to separate them out of that community in special schools is too simple".

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