

Part 1

This critical analysis will evaluate the implementation of play, based on the early years curricula. Looking at the foundation phase and why Wales decided to set up a new curriculum. Following this, there will be an evaluation on the concept of the 'unique child' in early years and methods of assessment will be analysed.

The foundation phase was introduced and developed by the Welsh Government to help boost the basic skills of learners from the age of three until 7 years old through literacy and numeracy with their aim to get 'the best for Wales' according to Kingston and Siraj (2017). Welsh Government (2015a) states how it would help encourage children to be imaginative and creative through a more effective and enjoyable learning experience through play. Whilst Taylor *et al* (2015) described it as a play-based approach through the learners experimenting and learning through stimulating and outdoor and indoor environments after getting evidence from schools in New Zealand (Te Whariki), Scandinavia and Reggio Emilia which showed good early years programmes. The Welsh Government had reports made on the foundation phase suggesting that though outcomes in terms of the children's socio-emotional and cognitive development were recognised to be positive. However, concerns were raised on how consistent practices and pedagogies were implemented and understood by practitioners in the foundation phase resulting in a New Curriculum (Maynard *et al* 2013 and Siraj and Kingston, 2014).

The PISA scoring can be attributed in part for the driving force for change in Wales (Waters & McDonald, 2020). Wales were positioned a disappointing 40th out of the seventy-two participating countries in reading, 35th in science and 39th in maths (Wightwick, 2016). A report made by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) was published in 2014 and emphasised the continuing high proportion of children in Wales whose performance was low and concluded that current assessment and evaluation arrangements were unsatisfactory (OECD, 2014).

One of the recommendations in the 'Successful Futures' report done by Donaldson (2015) was to change teaching approaches. School teachers and others were given a guiding role in developing the new curriculum which went away from a specific

content to a more purpose-based framework with schools designing their own curriculum explains Dauncey (2022). Reflecting on the approaches that countries such as Finland did where they changed their curriculum method by removing separate subjects and having a more holistic approach (Murray, 2016). The impact of the Reggio Emilia approach is another influence on current practice as well as forest schools. The growing interest and inspiration of them has been a stimulus and highlighted the importance of outdoor spaces as 'enabling environments' for children suggests McDowall Clark & Murray (2012) & Welsh Government (2022c). Donaldson (2015) agrees and one of the recommendations from his report suggested this approach, where the use of time can be used more creatively, enabling greater depth of learning (Donaldson, 2015).

Ephgrave (2017) states that the best levels of engagement are seen when children have autonomy which advocates for 'in the moment planning'. However, stresses that as a profession, practitioners have a misplaced belief that documentation and physical evidence has to be used for everything. Suggesting for children not to be pushed into following the adults agenda but rather their own where their ideas can be realised and supported. Moreover, Wood (2014) explains a committed long term central pedagogical approach in the Western world has been free choice and play. However, some practitioners feel that the play based, child led approach in the EYFS cannot be implemented as they would like due to pressures of attainment at the setting (Campbell-Barr, 2016).

The design of the new curriculum acknowledges that practitioners are in the best position to choose topics and activities which will best support a child's learning says the Welsh Government (2021). Allowing children through a holistic approach to explore activities that are suitable to them individually, enabling the practitioner to drive their progress (Welsh Government, 2022b & ACECQA, 2014).

Play is essential for children in early years (Montessori, 1916 & Piaget, 1945 & McInnes *et al*, 2013). McInnes *et al* (2013) did research and found that practitioners need to value play from the child's view and to disregard the definitions of play where children use the cue of adults and where practitioners have more control of the interactions. As the study showed that children develop less when adults take control having less opportunities for open ended questions which affords choice and control

to the children. However, research done by Leggit & Newman (2017) showed that children that were left in long periods of undirected play or were left on their own were where they experienced the least learning. The report done by Siraj stated that the settings that did not support children in their learning by lack of structuring their environment resulted in classrooms being a chaotic 'free for all' play environment which she found did not work. Practitioners were found, in an effort to keep standards to revert back to the more formal processes. (Welsh Government, 2014). Which revealed that the need for a more conceptualised definition of play was in order to promote play based learning with practitioners enacting supervision in an agentic and participating manner (Leggit & Newman, 2017). McInnes *et al* (2011) argues that direct engagement with pedagogy is missing in early years as practitioners need to examine their own behaviour rather than the child's. Indicating that their understanding of play and their association to learning relate to the indifferences in their pedagogic collaborations with children. Activities that afford the child control and choice help their learning progression (McInnes *et al*, 2011). Vygotsky (1978) agrees, stressing the importance of the role of the adult in engaging in activities such as constructive and outdoor play and make-believe play.

The Welsh Government (2021) stresses that the new curriculum will 'engage learners to become curious and creative, encouraging them to develop their imagination.' Unlike the current curriculum , there will be no programmes setting out precisely what should be taught as it will be a more holistic approach says Dauncey, 2022).

When we look at baseline assessments, research suggests that a teachers lack of training can affect results (Bradbury & Holmes, 2017). The Welsh Government (2017) recognises the importance of professional learning opportunities for LSA's and gives guidance in their workforce plan for annual performance reviews to take place. However, funding can be limited to send everyone, but practitioners are able to cascade information about the training back to the setting (Early Years Careers, 2017). Research also tells us that highly qualified staff ensure high quality practice (Early Years Careers, 2017 & Welsh Government, 2017). However, Campbell-Barr Leeson (2016) argues that practitioners have become characterised as low level , low paid and undervalued, going on to say that relationships between practitioners

and leaders are essential as when they reflect together, there is a recognition of learning and developing.

Cottle & Alexander (2012) did research showed that ongoing professional development was essential to quality in the early years. However, evidence showed that some settings declined to recruit newly qualified staff. The Welsh Government (2016) stipulates that all staff should have experience and qualifications that are appropriate with at least 80 percent of staff holding a level two or above. However, Nutbrown (2012) argues that all staff should be qualified to a level three as high-quality staff are key. Whilst also advocating a change as the current qualification system does not equip practice with the vital in-depth skills needed to progress high quality provision. As the new curriculum advocates outdoor learning (Welsh Government, 2022b), Davies & Hamilton (2018) did research that suggests that broader training opportunities are needed for practitioners whilst assessing children in the outdoors as it is not used to its potential.

It is found that one in five teachers buys classroom resources out of their own money, a survey by the NASUWT shows (Sellgren, 2019). Early Years Alliance (2019) does report that the government is planning to increase the level of funding in the 2023 budget which is welcomed though plans to relax practitioner ratios in class would be disastrous as more professionals would leave the sector it is feared. As Harris (2020) explains how LSA's are undervalued, underpaid, and also face an impossible workload for far too little pay. Being regularly asked to work with 'tricky children' when they have insufficient training or support. Though the Welsh Government (2019) explains it has done significant work to review professional standards for practitioners for the new curriculum, with practitioners being able to reflect on practice to identify areas of development to be improved. Aswell as the introduction of additional inset days to support with their professional learning to support the introduction of the new curriculum and to get ready for the new additional learning needs reform that has recently taken place (Welsh Government, 2022a).

Estyn (2011) stated that ineffective outdoor learning environments were a result of lack of training in Wales for practitioners. The three reports published for the Welsh Government all concluded that there was a lack of consistency in the Foundation

Phase (Welsh Government, 2014 & Welsh Government, 2015(b) & Donaldson, 2015). One report observed that funding for the outdoors was tough to fulfil, on top of staffing costs. With practitioners noting how the weather was dependant on how often they would go outdoors (Welsh Government, 2015b). The Welsh Government (2022c) does stress how important the outdoor environment is for learning. The exploration element being the key driver for a child's social, physical, and spiritual development. However, there has been a growth of interest and also concerns about a lack of outdoor provision and nature contact for children and young people (Moss, 2019). Moreover, Wilson (2012) states that the importance of the outdoors being used in education is not a new idea and has been advocated by theorists such as Montessori, Froebel and Dewey will all emphasising the experience leads to a child's well-being.

Research done by Ernst (2014) showed that a practitioners lack of experience in the outdoors themselves, may have limited their recognition of the potential opportunities that can be afforded for children's learning in the outdoors in early years. As the environment provides valuable and real opportunities to stimulate children's senses through what they hear, touch, see, and smell says Welsh Government (2022c). As according to the recommendation in the Siraj report (Welsh Government, 2014).

Risk averse practices can lead to an environment that does not provide sufficient challenges says Hanrahan & Duncan (2019) & Harper & Obee (2020). Research from Harper & Obee (2020) explains that though outdoor play provides a child with resilience, risk assessment skills and increased physical activity, Western society is classed as being too risk averse. Forest schools for children in the early years encourages an approach for outdoor play in unstructured environments similar to other education systems where the risks of bruises, sun exposure and falling are commonly accepted (Harper, 2017 & Humberstone *et al*, 2015). As forest schools spend nearly all day outdoors in al weathers, they have less of an emphasis on tests and scores yet still see much better results. Proving to improve skills in reading, maths, listening, critical thinking and writing. With Donaldson recommending on his report that a more connected and simpler curriculum was needed giving scope for more creative use of time (Donaldson, 2015).

Part 2

The curriculum recognises that every child is unique, and their development is more rapid between birth and five years old. The new curriculum supports a more holistic approach to learning and through guidance given, practitioners use along with their own knowledge and experience to reflect and respond to the individual needs of children (Welsh Government, 2022(c) & Birth to five matters, 2019). In accordance with article 2 of the UNCRC where it states that no child should be discriminated against (UNICEF 2019).

The Welsh Government (2015a) states that the foundation phase acknowledges that 'children acquire and develop skills at different rates and must be allowed to develop at their own unique pace'. However, the Donaldson report stated that a change had to be made as the foundation phase was not enabling children achieve the standards that they should be able to and recommended that lessons to be interesting and fun and more holistic in its approach. (Donaldson, 2015). In the design of the new curriculum, topics and activities were decided by the practitioners who are best placed in knowing the child's interests and learning says the Welsh Government (2021).

The Donaldson report stated that one of the strengths of the foundation phase was the commitment to equity and inclusion in the settings of the early years (Donaldson, 2015). Huang (2018) explains that children growing up in different cultures are influenced by specific inputs from their environment, going on to say that practitioners need to assess how children coming from a different culture think and talk differently as that can help the teacher to be more aware of cultural differences. For example, Chinese children tend to be brief in initial responses to children, so the practitioner needs to allow time for narrative practice and to help prepare them to answer open ended questions (Huang, 2012). Alsubaie (2015) suggests that practitioners who learn more about the children's backgrounds, experiences and cultures, enables them to feel more efficient and capable in their work and helps to improve their teaching approaches. However, the report from Iram Siraj (Welsh Government, 2014) stressed that adaptations need to be made for numeracy,

language, and literature work as it was being delivered in an autonomous way and without adjustments made for individual children including those from different cultures. Guidance from the statutory framework for the early years foundation stage (Welsh Government, 2021a), states that if the practitioner has any difficulties when assessing children whose home language is not English, parents and carers can be involved to establish if there is a cause for concern in the child's skills.

Children from ethnic backgrounds were also found to be lacking the ability to develop in digital technologies and science in Donaldson's report (Donaldson, 2015). Through research (Alsubaie, 2015) it was found that teachers who learn about language and culture will unite classrooms and help boost pupil achievement. Critics of the EYFS reforms say that it is too formal and restricted for children with other areas of learning, being undervalued as the maths and science subjects took over other areas of learning (Gaunt, 2020). Lindon (2012) states that as young children in the UK are growing up in cultural diversity, practitioners should establish a learning environment that is positive. As young children of every ethnic and cultural background should create a positive and an assured sense of their own identity. Making sure diversity is viewed positively in the classroom, and practitioners need to be made aware of barriers that can face children from ethnic backgrounds (Birth to Five Matters, 2021).

Research done by Bradbury & Roberts-Holmes (2017) found that the baseline assessments used in reception class forced practitioners to engage more in data collection rather than being able to assess and 'tune' into their multiple and 'diverse' voices. Children with ASD who can be triggered by an unfamiliar classroom or with a new adult can have their scores affected by this. Research from Gaunt (2020) & Bradbury & Roberts-Holmes (2017) found that another aspect to affect scores was a child from an ethnic background struggling with English.

The new curriculum stresses how children can make progress at a pace relevant to them individually through assessments. With children at the core of the assessment (Welsh Government, 2022e). This was a result from one of the recommendations from the Donaldson report. A more simplified assessment which should support progression in learning rather than the practitioners being influenced with the

demands of duty (Donaldson, 2015). However, Waite *et al* (2017) concluded that although assessment has a judgemental aspect to it due to the 'process' and 'result' driven aspect to it. It is central to effective teaching and learning.

Research from Bradbury & Roberts-Holmes (2017) found that a one-off test cannot capture the fast-paced capability of a child aged four, as they change so rapidly at this age and so questions are raised on the appropriateness of the baseline assessment (Welsh Government, 2022). The report done by Iram Siraj (Welsh Government, 2014) emphasised that the introduction of the literacy and numeracy tests in year two, were found to be moving away from the foundation phase philosophy which again emphasised the ineffectiveness of the it. The baseline assessment unintentionally highlights on the range and skills of the child, the report by WIZERD found out (Welsh Government, 2015b). Whilst also being too time consuming, too detailed, and not useful for the tracking of children's progress. Learning Wales (2014) reported that practitioners found that the paper-based literacy and numeracy tests were over formal. However, others recognised the relevance to assess children's progress in this way.

The report done by Iram Siraj (Welsh Government, 2014) recommended that the scoring of these assessments should be reconsidered at the end of the foundation phase and that practitioners and teachers should be doing assessments of the children through observation. The report done by WIZERD (Welsh Government, 2015b) found that one in five year three teachers say that children are not prepared for written work when they reach their class and from lack of observations, children with additional needs are not being picked up on in the foundation phase. The Donaldson report (Donaldson, 2015) stressed that young children and peoples learning can be damaged if assessment becomes dominated by accountability. Teachers feared a dip in standards if they let go of the familiar, formal pedagogy's.

When a child is deeply engaged whilst playing and using their autonomy, that is when observation should take place. Having the opportunity to 'teach' what is appropriate for that unique child (Ephgrave, 2017). With the new curriculum, assessments are looked on as an ongoing process, focussing on children's

strengths, and areas of improvement are observed into day-to-day practice (Welsh Government, 2022e).

Narrative observations are 'long' observations lasting around 20 minutes to half an hour. As much information as possible is recorded but as it is time consuming, it is used less frequently states Brodie (2023). Observations ensures that practitioners can plan suitably to meet the individual needs of the child whilst also highlighting any concerns that need support (Kimberly, 2016). Sancisi & Edgington (2015) feels that doing observations should be relevant to the child rather than matching observations to 'milestones' in guidance and should be used when more detail is required of the child, It is an observation with an outcome in mind and where the child is in self-initiated play whilst the observer is at a distance. Machan (2016) explains that by doing these observations, a more holistic picture is built of the child. A benefit being that as the narrative observations record everything whilst the observer is being objective, it provides a wealth of information on the individual child giving practitioners access to the child's emotional and social development.

To conclude, the introduction of the new curriculum can only be a good thing as the research looked at shows how vital outdoor play is to a child's wellbeing, social and emotional development. The focus on a child led approach of the curriculum stresses the importance that practitioners need to focus on their professional development and training to be able to cater for all aspects of the 'unique' child. From assessment, being outdoors, to language barriers with children from different cultures. Training helps practitioners to become more attuned to a child's uniqueness, needs and well-being which contributes to the child led approach.

Part 3

Is the new curriculum more beneficial for children with ALN?

As autism is a lifelong developmental disability, it affects children in different ways, but all have their weaknesses and strengths states National Autistic Society (2023). Wales is experiencing major system education reforms from professional learning, investments in practitioner-in-service training, to curriculum changes (Harris *et al*, 2020 & Welsh Government, 2020). The Welsh Government (2021b) says in its guidance for the new curriculum that everything a learner experiences is in pursuit of the four purposes set out in the curriculum. Guided by the practitioner whilst contributing to goals as a nation as set out in the well-being of future generations (Wales) Act 2015. Through the experience of learning, their rights are practiced too according to the UNCRC (UNICEF, 2019).

The new curriculum and what does it look like?

Seven and a half years after Professor Graham Donaldson's 'successful futures' review and curriculum change, a new 'purpose-based' curriculum is being taught in schools from September 2022 with more emphasis on teaching what matters and to help develop skills needed for adult life (Senedd Research 2022). Going on to say that schools, teachers, and practitioners played a leading role in developing it. The new curriculum went away from a prescribed content to a more purpose-based framework and with schools and practitioners designing their own framework, they are best placed to make decisions and choose specific topics which will best support the needs of their specific learners through a more holistic approach whilst being suitable for learners of different abilities, ages and aptitudes according to Welsh Government (2022b).

Similarly in comparison to the Montessori method of education, children of all abilities and learning styles are supported in a nurturing environment in a hands on and a multisensory way according to American Montessori Society (2022), going on to say how through that method of education helps to recognise and respect the individual learner as they learn at their own pace on their own path through each child's unique developmental learning style, interests and level.

The Vision to help ALN needs.

The new curriculum must be fulfilled in a way that supports each child to develop in accordance with the four purposes. Considering any child potentially with additional learning needs too with appropriate teaching and learning that assures appropriate progression for the child (Knight & Crick, 2022).

Alongside the new curriculum a new legislative support approach has been enacted from September 2021 in the development of the new ALN system (Welsh Government 2018). According to the Welsh Government (2019b):

The new curriculum creates a fair and proper system based on the foundation of the Additional learning needs Bill.

- Through person centred planning, learners are put at the heart of learning.
- Pedagogical approaches will be used.
- ALNCO's will contribute to in-service training and advise teachers about the varied teaching methods needed for each unique child with ALN.

How is it different?

Practitioners will be moving away from the traditional definitions of play and moving to a more child-led, individualised approach (Welsh Government, 2019b). Holistic, personalised learning will be proposed by teachers and ALNCO's for all individuals through an appropriate curriculum design and through the child having an Individual Development Plan (IDP) helps lead to adjustable opportunities to deliver 'what's important to them' (Welsh Government 2019b). As children have a right to be educated together with their peers whether they have specific needs or not (Mitchell & Sutherland (2020). However, it needs to be addressed if the setting has had the training which familiarises them with the new ALN system which in turn would enable them to identify, collaborate with fellow practitioners and to be more inclusive suggests Care Inspectorate Wales (2022). For example, practitioners with development in the knowledge and importance of speech and language would be able to recognise and refer to the relevant agency if a child needs support according to Welsh Government (2017).

Individual Development Plan

Regardless of the complexity or severity of a child's disability or learning need, all children with ALN are entitled to one of these support plans and are prepared by schools and the individuals will receive support called Additional learning provision states guidance in the document by the Welsh Government (2022d). With Care Inspectorate Wales (2022) stating that a child who has suspected ALN, the setting where the child is at can refer the child to the local authority. A child-centred approach is advised, and the family is also involved in any decision-making measures necessary with the aim to work with the individual and to cater for their needs (Kattari *et al*, 2017).

Inclusive education is seen as more than differentiation and includes the practitioners understanding of the factors that create the variances between children which in turn depends on their beliefs, attitudes, and values to deal with the inclusivity (Kershner, 2015).

WIZERD (2017) are currently doing research to see 'In what ways are ALN's being considered in the process of curriculum development', and results will be published when ready.

Reference List

Alsubaie, M, A. (2015) 'Examples of current issues in the multi-cultural classroom,' *Journal of Education and Practice*. 6(10). Available at:

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1081654.pdf> (Accessed: 31 March 2023).

American Montessori Society (2022) *Montessori for children with special needs*.

Available at: <https://amshq.org/About-Montessori/Montessori-for-Children-with-Special-Needs> (Accessed: 9 January 2023).

ACECQA (2014) *Responsive, respectful relationships*. Available at:

<https://www.acecqa.gov.au/latest-news/blog/responsive-respectful-relationships>

(Accessed: 30 March 2023).

Birth to 5 Matters. (2021) *Birth to 5 Matters: Non-statutory guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage*. Available at:

<https://birthto5matters.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Birthto5Matters-download.pdf> (Accessed: 5 March 2023).

Bradbury, A. and Roberts-Holmes, G. (2017) *Data in the early years and the problems of assessing young children*. Available at:

https://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/10041320/1/Roberts-Holmes_Nursery%20World-%20Datafication%20article%20Nov.pdf (Accessed: 13 January 2023).

Brodie, K. (2023) *Observations in early years- different types, why they are important and examples*. Available at: [Observations in early years – Different types, why they are important and examples | Early Years Management | Teach Early Years](#)

(Accessed: 12 April 2023).

Campbell-Barr, V., & Leeson, C. (2016) *Quality and Leadership in the Early Years. Research, theory, and practice*. London: Sage Publications.

Care Inspectorate Wales (2022) *Supplementary guidance for inspecting Additional Learning Needs in non-maintained settings*. Available at:

<https://www.careinspectorate.wales/sites/default/files/2022-10/221010-Supplementary-guidance-for-inspecting-Additional-Learning-Needs-in-non-maintained-settings-en.pdf> (Accessed: 25 March 2023).

Cottle, M. and Alexander, E. (2012) 'Quality in Early Years Settings: Government Research and Practitioner Perspectives', *British Educational Research Journal*. 38, (4) pp635-654. Available at: <https://www-jstor-org.ezproxy.uwtsd.ac.uk/stable/23263908?seq=> (Accessed 30 March 2023).

Dauncey, M. (2022) *Senedd Research*, 'Going live: Rolling out the New Curriculum from this September'. Available at: <https://research.senedd.wales/research-articles/going-live-rolling-out-the-new-curriculum-from-this-september/> (Accessed: 25 March 2023).

Davies, R., & Hamilton, P. (2018) 'Assessing 'play' learning in the early year's outdoor classroom: examining challenges in practice', *International Journal of Primary, Elementary and Early Years Education*. 46(1). Pp117-129. DOI:10.1080/03004279.2016.1194448.

Donaldson, G. (2015) *Successful Futures*. Available at: <https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-03/successful-futures.pdf> (Accessed: 12 February 2023).

Early Years Careers (2017) *Ways to develop ongoing training for early years staff*. Available at: <https://www.earlyyears-careers.com/eyc/ways-to-help-continuous-improvement/ways-develop-ongoing-training-early-years-staff/> (Accessed: 27 March 2023).

Early Years Alliance (2018) *Minds matter: The impact of working in the early years sector on practitioners' mental health and wellbeing*. Available at: www.eyalliance.org.uk/sites/default/files/minds-matter-report-.pdf (accessed 22 January 2023).

Early Years Alliance (2023) *Budget 2023: Alliance responds to reports of early years funding increases and ratio relaxation*. Available at: <https://www.eyalliance.org.uk/budget-2023-alliance-responds-reports-early-years-funding-increases-and-ratio-relaxation> (Accessed: 30 March 2023).

Educheer (2023) *The advantages of narrative observations*. Available at: <https://educheer.com/essays/the-advantages-of-narrative-observations/> (Accessed: 10 April 2023).

Ephgrave A (2017) *Planning next steps in the moment. The Foundation Stage Forum*. Available at: <https://eyfs.info/articles.html/teaching-and-learning/planning-next-steps-in-the-moment-r217> (Accessed 22 January 2023).

Ernst, J. (2014) 'Early childhood educators use of natural outdoor settings as learning environments: an exploratory study of beliefs, practices and barriers', *Environmental Research*. 20(6) pp735-752. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13504622.2013.833596> (Accessed: 1 April 2023).

Estyn (2011) *Outdoor learning: an evaluation of learning in the outdoors for children under 5 in the Foundation Phase*. Available at: <https://www.estyn.gov.wales/system/files/2020-07/Outdoor%20learning%253A%2520%2520an%2520evaluation%2520of%2520learning%2520in%2520the%2520outdoors%2520for%2520children%2520under%2520five%2520in%2520the%2520Foundation%2520Phase%2520-%2520September%25202011.pdf> (Accessed: 25 march 2023).

Gaunt, C (2020) 'Row breaks out between critics of the revised early years curriculum and DFE. *Nursery world*. 22 July 2020 [Blog]. Available at: <https://www.nurseryworld.co.uk/news/article/row-breaks-out-between-critics-of-the-revised-early-years-curriculum-and-dfe> (Accessed: 10 March 2023).

Grenier, J. (2021) 'Assessment Beyond Levels in the Early Years' *Impact*. 12 May 2021 [Blog]. Available at: https://my.chartered.college/impact_article/assessment-beyond-levels-in-the-early-years/ (Accessed: 12 January 2023).

Hanrahan, V., & Duncan, K. (2019) *Risky outdoor play in early childhood: feel the fear and learn from it*. Available at: <https://www.hekupu.ac.nz/article/risky-outdoor-play-early-childhood-feel-fear-and-learn-it> (Accessed: 2 April 2023).

Harris, C. (2020) *LSAs: underpaid, undervalued, and irreplaceable*. Available at: <https://www.tes.com/magazine/archive/lisas-underpaid-undervalued-and-irreplaceable> (Accessed: 4 April 2023).

Harper, N, J. (2017) 'Outdoor risky play and healthy child development in the shadow of the risk society: A forest and nature school perspective'. *Child & Youth Services*, 38(4), 318–344. DOI: 10.1080/0145935X.2017.1412825.

Harper, N, J. (2020) 'Articulating outdoor risky play in early childhood education: voices of forest and nature school practitioners', 21(2) pp184-194. Available at: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14729679.2020.1784766?scroll=top&needAccess=true&role=tab> (Accessed: 2 April 2023).

Harris A., Jones M., Crick T. (2020) 'Curriculum leadership: A critical contributor to school and system improvement.' *School Leadership & Management*, 40(1), 1–4. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13632434.2020.1704470> (Accessed: 2 April 2023).

Hathway, O. (2014) 'Call for calm amid concern Foundation Phase is being threatened by pupil testing', *Wales Online*, November 1st, 2014. Available at: <http://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/call-calm-amid-concern-foundation-8039288> (Accessed: 25 march 2023).

Huang, C. (2018) *How culture influences children's development*. Available at: <https://theconversation.com/how-culture-influences-childrens-development-99791> (Accessed: 5 April 2023).

Humberstone, B. et al (2015). *Routledge international handbook of outdoor studies*. London: Routledge.

Kattari S. K., Lavery A., Hasche L. (2017) 'Applying a social model of disability across the life span.' *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*, 27(8), 865–880. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10911359.2017.1344175> (Accessed: 2 April 2023).

Kimberly (2016) *Examples of observation tools in early years*. Available at: <https://www.earlyyearscares.com/eyc/learning-and-development/examples-observation-tools-early-years/> (Accessed: 10 April 2023).

Kingston, D. & Siraj, I. (2017) 'Supporting the Implementation of the Foundation Phase through effective Professional Development.' *Welsh Journal of Education*, 19 (1) pp. 39-68. <https://doi.org/10.16922/wje.19.1.3>. (Accessed: 22 January 2023).

Kershner, S, R. (2015) *Inclusive Education*. Available at: http://dslcedu.in/Downloads/20KIRSCHNER-INCLUSIVEEDUCATION-SageEncycofCImgmt_2015.pdf (Accessed: 10 April 2023).

Knight, C., & Crick, T. (2022) 'Inclusive Education in Wales: Interpreting Discourses of Values and Practice Using Critical Policy Analysis.' *ECNU Review of Education*, 5(2), 258–283. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1177/20965311211039858> (Accessed: 1 April 2023).

Learning Wales (2014) *National Reading and Numeracy Tests*. Available at: <http://learning.wales.gov.uk/improvementareas/assessment-and-target-setting/national-reading-and-numeracy-tests/?lang=en#/improvementareas/assessment-and-target-setting/national-reading-and-numeracy-tests/?lang=en> (Accessed: 15 March 2023).

Leggit, N., & Newman, L. (2017) Play: Challenging educators' beliefs about play in the indoor and outdoor environment', *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood*. 42(1) DOI:10.23965/AJEC.42.1.03

Lindon, J. (2012) *Cultural Diversity in the early years*. Available at: <https://www.communityplaythings.co.uk/learning-library/articles/cultural-diversity-in-the-early-years> (Accessed: 2 April 2023).

Llewellyn, M. (2018) *Research on experiences of service families with children with ALN in education in Wales. Final Report*. Available at: <https://www.sscecymru.co.uk/files/RESEARCH%20ON%20EXPERIENCES%20OF%20SERVICE%20FAMILIES%20WITH%20CHILDREN%20WITH%20ADDITIONAL%20LEARNING%20NEEDS%20IN%20EDUCATION%20IN%20WALES.pdf> (Accessed: 25 March 2023).

Machan, M. (2016) *Everything you need to know about observations and why we do it*. Available at: <https://eyfs.info/articles.html/observation-hub/everything-you-need-to-know-about-observation-and-why-we-do-it-r213/> (Accessed: 10 April 2023).

Maynard et al (2013) *Evaluating the Foundation Phase: Policy Logic Model and Programme Theory*. Welsh Gov social research number. 37/2012. Available at: https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/18414/20/130318-evaluating-foundation-phase-policy-logic-model-programme-theory-en_Redacted.pdf (Accessed: 12 February 2023).

McDowall Clark, R. & Murray, J. (2012) *Reconceptualizing Leadership in the Early Years*. Berkshire: Open University Press.

McInnes et al (2011) 'Differences in practitioners understanding of play and how this influences pedagogy and childrens perceptions of play', *Early Years*. 31(2) pp121-133. DOI:10.1080/09575146.2011.572870.

McInnes et al (2013) 'The nature of adult child interaction in the early years classroom: Implications for children's perspectives of play and subsequent learning behaviour', *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*. 21(2) pp268-282. DOI:10.1080/1350293X.2013.789194.

Mitchell D., Sutherland D. (2020) *What really works in special and inclusive education: Using evidence-based teaching strategies*. Routledge.

Montessori, M. (1916) *The Montessoria Method*. New York: Schocken Books

Moss, S. (2019) *Natural Childhood*. Available at: <https://www.outdoor-learning-research.org/Research/Research-Blog/ArtMID/560/ArticleID/24/Natural-Childhood-by-Stephen-Moss-2012-National-Trust-Report> (Accessed: 2 April 2023).

Murray, J. (2016) *Finland will become the first Country in the world to get rid of all school subjects*. Available at: <https://truththeory.com/2016/11/16/finland-will-become-first-country-world-get-rid-school-subjects/> (Accessed: 25 March 2023).

National Autistic Society (2023) *What is autism?* Available at: <https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/what-is-autism> (Accessed 9 January 2023).

Nutbrown, C. (2012) *Foundations for quality. The independent review of early education and childcare qualifications, Final Report*. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/175463/Nutbrown-Review.pdf (Accessed: 30 March 2023).

OECD (2014) *Improving schools in Wales. An OECD perspective*. Available at: <https://t4.oecd.org/unitedkingdom/Improving-schools-in-Wales.pdf> (Accessed: 1 April 2023).

Piaget, J. (1945) *Play, Dreams, and Imitation in Childhood*. New York: Norton.

Sancisi, L. and Edgington, M. (2015) *Developing High Quality Observation, Assessment and Planning in the Early Years, Made to Measure*. Oxon: Routledge.

Sellgren, K. (2019) 'Teachers paying for resources out of own money'. *BBC News*, 18 April. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-47964154> (Accessed: 26 March 2023).

Senedd Research (2022) '*Going live: Rolling out the new curriculum from this September*'. Available at: <https://research.senedd.wales/research-articles/going-live-rolling-out-the-new-curriculum-from-this-september/> (Accessed: 8 January 2023).

UNICEF. (2019) *United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child*. Available at: <https://www.unicef.org.uk/what-we-do/un-convention-child-rights> (Accessed: 18 March 2023).

Vygotsky, L., S. (1978) *Mind in Society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Waite, S. et al (2017) 'Diverse aims, challenges and opportunities for assessing outdoor learning: a critical examination of 3 cases from practice', *Education*. 45(1) pp51-67. DOI:10.1080/03004279.2015.1042987.

Waters, J. & McDonald, N. (2020) *Exploring the use of a rating scale to support professional learning in early years preschool staff: the experience of one local authority in Wales*. Available at: <https://repository.uwtsd.ac.uk/id/eprint/1254/1/Waters%2C%20J.%20and%20McDonald%2C%20N.%282020%29Exploring%20the%20use%20of%20a%20rating%20scale.pdf> (Accessed: 26 March 2023).

Welsh Government (2014) *An Independent Stock take of the Foundation Phase in Wales*. Available at: <https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-03/an-independent-stocktake-of-the-foundation-phase-in-wales-final-report.pdf> (Accessed 12 January 2023).

Welsh Government (2015a) *Foundation Phase Framework*. Available at: <https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-02/foundation-phase-framework-revised-2015.pdf> (Accessed: 1 February 2023).

Welsh Government (2015b) *Evaluating the Foundation Phase: Final Report*. Available at: https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/statistics-and-research/2019-07/150514-foundation-phase-final-en_0.pdf (Accessed: 10 January 2023).

Welsh Government (2016) *National Minimum Standards for Regulated Childcare for Children up to the Age of 12 Years*. Available at:

<https://careinspectorate.siteswales/default/files/2018-01/160411regchildcareen.pdf>

(Accessed: 26 March 2023).

Welsh Government. (2017) *Childcare, Play and Early Years Workforce Plan*.

<https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2022-12/early-years-workforce-plan.pdf> (Accessed: 25 March 2023).

Welsh Government (2018). *Additional learning needs and education tribunal (Wales) act 2018*. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2018/2/contents>

(Accessed: 1 April 2023).

Welsh Government (2019a) *Professional standards for teaching and leadership: National approach to professional learning*. Available at:

<https://hwb.gov.wales/professional-development/national-approach-to-professional-learning/professional-teaching-and-leadership-standards-national-approach-to-professional-learning/> (Accessed: 1 April 2023).

Welsh Government (2019b) *Additional learning needs in the context of Curriculum for Wales 2022*. Available at:

<https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.gov.wales%2Fsites%2Fdefault%2Ffiles%2Fpublications%2F2019-02%2Fadditional-learning-needs-in-the-context-of-curriculum-for-wales-2022.ppt&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK>

(Accessed: 10 January 2023).

Welsh Government (2020) *Education in Wales—Our national mission: Update*

October 2020. Available at: <https://gov.wales/education-wales-our-national-mission-update-october-2020-html> (Accessed: 2 April 2023).

Welsh Government (2021) *Introduction to Curriculum for Wales guidance*. Available

at: <https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/introduction/> (Accessed: 9 January 2023).

Welsh Government (2021a) *Statutory framework for the early year's foundation stage*. Available at:

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attach>

[ment_data/file/974907/EYFS_framework_-_March_2021.pdf](#) (Accessed: 5 April 2023).

Welsh Government (2021b) *Additional learning needs (ALN) system: parents' guide*. Available at: <https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/pdf-versions/2022/1/2/1642504560/additional-learning-needs-aln-system-parents-guide.pdf>. (Accessed: 25 January 2023).

Welsh Government (2022a) *Additional national professional learning in service training (INSET) days 2022 to 2025*. Available at: <https://www.gov.wales/additional-national-professional-learning-service-training-inset-days-2022-2025.html> (Accessed: 3 April 2023).

Welsh Government (2022b) *principles of curriculum design*. Available at: <https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/designing-your-curriculum/principles-for-designing-your-curriculum/#statents-of-what-matters> (Accessed: 9 January 2023).

Welsh Government (2022c) *Curriculum for funded non-maintained nursery setting*. Available at: <https://hwb.gov.wales/api/storage/b1801d78-38c3-4320-9818-d9996c21aef8/220914-a-curriculum-for-funded-non-maintained-nursery-settings.pdf> (Accessed: 22 March 2023)

Welsh Government (2022d) *The additional learning needs transformation programme: frequently asked questions*. Available at: <https://gov.wales/additional-learning-needs-transformation-programme-frequently-asked-questions.html> (Accessed: 10 January 2023).

Welsh Government (2022e) *Supporting learner progression and assessment guidance*. Available at: <https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/assessment-arrangements/supporting-learner-progression-assessment-guidance/> (Accessed: 1 April 2023).

Wightwick, A. (2016) 'Full PISA results 2016 show Wales's schools are still adrift of the rest of the world'. *Wales Online*, 6 December. Available at: <https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/education/full-pisa-results-2016-show-12278551> (Accessed: 25 March 2023).

Wilson, R. (2012) *Nature and Young children: Encouraging Creative play and Learning in Natural Environments*. London: Routledge.

WIZERD (2017) *Meeting ALN in mainstream education in the development of the new curriculum for Wales*. Available at: http://dslcedu.in/Downloads/20KIRSCHNER-INCLUSIVEEDUCATION-SageEncycofCImgmt_2015.pdf (Accessed: 5 April 2023).

Wood, E. (2014) 'Free choice and free play in early childhood education: troubling the discourse'. *International Journal of Early Years Education*. 22(1) pp4-18.

Available at:

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09669760.2013.830562?journalCode=ciey20> (Accessed: 25 March 2023).

Wood, J. (2017) *What can we learn from Finland's 'Forest Schools'*. Available at: <https://theculturetrip.com/europe/finland/articles/what-we-can-learn-from-finlands-forest-schools/> (Accessed: 2 April 2023).