

Start At My Feet

	Target	What I have done in this assignment
Target 1	Engage in wider and deeper background reading to ensure greater support from academic literature.	I looked at a range of sources – books, videos, articles, websites, government reports.
Target 2	Try to support your key messages with research.	I made notes of the information I found, from a variety of sources, before starting my commentary.
Target 3	Provide supported counter arguments for recommendations made and critically evaluate aspects to be cautious with.	N/A I did not make any recommendations in this piece of writing as it was not needed.
Target 4	Use even more appropriate sources.	I looked at a range of sources that covered the topics that I needed.

Within School A's community, there are numerous opportunities and challenges that influence different aspects for the pupils. For instance, their teaching, learning and well-being. School A has acquired myriad links with the community around them, hence creating several opportunities for children to learn. However, where there are benefits, there are also drawbacks.

A substantial part of any community is the people within it. School A has strong connections with the people in the community. This is due to the fact that the teachers of the school work hard to build and maintain positive, trusting relationships

with the parents and carers of the children in their class. Because of this, it has created many opportunities for the children to develop, not only in the classroom but out in the community as well. As a teacher, having a healthy relationship with a child's parents is beneficial as it benefits the child when it comes to their learning. Children tend to be more attentive and ambitious if their parents have a good relationship with their teacher. This is because once a strong relationship is formed, a child's parent becomes more engaged with their child's learning. This is why the school has outlined the importance of having strong relationships with parents and carers in their behaviour and relationships policy. It mentions that the school holds biannual consultations with parents, which focuses on discussing the child's progress (■■■■, 2023). Teachers are also able to learn more about the child and their hobbies, likes and dislikes, as well as their home environment. Subsequently, this means that the teacher is then able to adapt and customise the child's learning to suit that child more (Extramarks Education, 2023). This links in with Assessment for Learning. Assessment for Learning is when teachers continuously assess children as they are completing their work to see what they need to improve on and how they can assist the child in getting there. The Assessment Reform Group define Assessment for Learning as 'the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go next, and how best to get them there.' (The Assessment Reform Group, 2002). Using Assessment for Learning strategies means that the teacher can help the child as soon as they need help. For instance, if a child does not understand their work and is struggling to keep up with the rest of the class, then the teacher is able to help that child by adapting the way that child completes their work. In School A, teachers work hard to build positive relationships with the parents of the children in their class. One way they do this is by being proactive, rather than being reactive. Teachers in the school have found this useful as it

leads to the parents trusting the teachers more. Additionally, the teachers at the school also make the time at the start and end of the day to be available for parents. Good communication is key when it comes to building relationships. Parents need to know that the teachers are on their side, they are a team – both parties working towards the best interests of the child. This also aids in improving the child's wellbeing. Looking after the wellbeing of children is of paramount importance. Children attend school five days a week - it is vital that school is a place where all children can feel safe and heard. Any child should be able to talk to a teacher if they are having problems with their mental health. This prevents the problems from continuing into that child's later life. Not only this but looking after a child's wellbeing also means that the child is going to feel happier in school, hence working harder and developing their desire to achieve success (NSPCC, 2023). Additionally, as a whole school, School A utilise several methods to work with parents. One of these ways being information sharing. The school communicates information to parents via several ways. For example: school gateway, termly class newsletters (which are accessible online), Google Classroom, parent guides and information evenings. In doing so, it benefits the child's teaching and learning. This is because when both the teacher and parents work together and collaborate, it creates a consistent approach in which preferred methods of teaching can be exchanged. Collaboration between parents and teachers also promotes academic and personal success of children; it encourages them to learn at home, by reading books for instance (Almeida and Esteves, 2022).

On the other hand, not all parents are able to play an active role in their child's education, which could be down to many reasons. For School A, the main reason is that majority of the parents at the school are in full-time jobs. Consequently, resulting in them not having enough time to focus on their child's education. This

creates challenges for numerous children regarding their teaching, learning as well as wellbeing. Urie Bronfenbrenner, a Russian-American psychologist (Gilstrap and Zierten, 2023), explains in his theory that the environment a child lives in has the most vital impact on their teaching and learning, as well as behaviour. In Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, there are four systems in which include a child's environment and interactions with the world. The first system (the microsystem) contains the child's immediate family, thus referring to their house, is where the most impact occurs. The experiences and interactions a child has while in the microsystem shapes how that child behaves and thinks (Crawford, 2020). For instance, a child who has supportive parents, who read to them and are involved with their school life is going to be more developed intellectually, than a child who does not get that at home. Subsequently, this also impacts a child's wellbeing. Studies show that children who feel unloved and unsupported at home go on to have difficulty with forming and maintaining relationships when they are older. Having a lack of attention at home results in children acting out at not just at home, but at school too (Hetherington, 2023). If a child displays signs of disruptive behaviour in school, it affects their learning. This is since they become distracted – distracting the other pupils in the class as well as distracting themselves from their own work (Gutman and Vorhaus, 2012). Adding to this, a child whose parents are not supportive results in a negative parent-teacher relationship. This vastly affects the child's teaching and learning as there is no consistency between their house and the school. Children need consistency to reach their full potential with their intellectual development. If a parent has a negative relationship with their child's teacher, there could potentially be miscommunication issues resulting in the child's education being at risk. Children need consistency to feel safe. Not having this can impact a child's wellbeing as it can lead to anxiety (Orlick, 2023).

Furthermore, the links that School A have with the community also creates another opportunity for the pupils. This is due to the strong bonds that the staff hold with the members of the community. A child's parent from the school works for the company Sony. Therefore, a link has been established resulting in the children's learning and teaching improving. Staff members from the company visit the school and aid the children with their digital competency framework, which is of vast importance in the new Welsh curriculum. As well as this, the school choir also visits the store itself and performs a variety of songs. This means that not only are the children's knowledge of technology becoming refined, but that it aids their development regarding the Expressive Arts Area of Learning and Experience – making this a cross-curricular link. Singing is also known to improve someone's wellbeing as when somebody sings, endorphins and dopamine are released from their body. This results in a happier, more uplifted mood (Welsh National Opera, 2023).

On the contrary, not all parents of children in School A have jobs. In Bridgend, the unemployment rate is currently 3.2%, which is an increase from the year previously. In 2022, the unemployment rate was 3.1% (Office for National Statistics, 2023).

Hypothetically, this should result in a positive impact on the teaching and learning of children in the school. However, one reason that parents are unemployed in the area is due to their lack of qualifications. Subsequently, meaning that a minority of parents in School A's community lack the knowledge needed to support and assist their children with their schoolwork and homework. Studies have shown that approximately two thirds of parents (of primary aged children) across the United Kingdom do not feel confident in helping their children with their homework. Adding to this, 31% of parents feel self-conscious and ashamed when they are unable to answer a question from their child's homework. This all links back to the fact that not all parents

achieved qualifications while they were in school. The study also showed that parents between the ages of 18 and 24 were more capable of answering the questions in comparison to parents aged over 35 (Open Access Government, 2019). In Wales, 8.3% of adults, who have a job, do not have any qualifications (Welsh Government, 2023). Therefore, for adults who do not have a job, the number of qualifications achieved is even less. This impacts on a child's teaching and learning as it means that the support they may need to progress in their learning, is not being given.

Moreover, another challenge that affects pupils in School A is the lack of use of the Welsh Language. In Bridgend, the number of Welsh speakers is decreasing each year. In the last census, which was in 2021, the percentage of Welsh speakers was 9.2% - decreasing by 0.5% from the previous census (Office for National Statistics, 2023). This means that 90.8% of people, living in Bridgend, do not speak Welsh. Consequently, this impacts the teaching and learning of pupils in School A. If a child's parents do not speak Welsh, then that child is going to find speaking the language difficult. This is then going to affect the child's teaching, learning and well-being. Speaking and understanding Welsh is a key aspect in the new Welsh curriculum. The aim is for Welsh to be embedded throughout the curriculum, so that learners pick it up quicker. Within Wales, there is an initiative called Cymraeg 2050. Cymraeg 2050 is a strategy put in place by the Welsh government, in which the objective is to achieve 1 million Welsh speakers by the year 2050 (Welsh Government, 2018). Adding to this, improving Welsh language skills is also one of the recommendations made for the school by an Estyn inspector, when the school was inspected in 2018 (Estyn, 2018). Living in a community that speaks little to no Welsh affects a child's learning as it limits the amount of Welsh they are exposed to. Learning a new language is something that requires consistency. Therefore, if a child does not have a consistent approach to learning the

Welsh language, then their skills are going to be restricted – eventually affecting their teaching and learning. If a child is not interested in learning Welsh, then they are not going to be paying attention in school to the lessons they are receiving. Not only this, but it can affect a child's wellbeing since other pupils in their class may be more advanced when it comes to Welsh language skills, which in turn could make the child feel like they are inadequate at the subject.

To conclude, School A's community creates both opportunities and challenges for the pupils within the school. It is evident that the school focuses on building positive relationships with the people in the community, which creates myriad teaching and learning opportunities for the children. It aids in improving their self-esteem and confidence, which is linked to their wellbeing and mental health. As well as this, the challenges that School A face can be worked on if the school maintains links with the parents and the community surrounding the school. For instance, working with families to ensure that parents feel confident in helping their child with homework. Accommodating for a child's family is just as vital as accommodating for the child. Sustaining this will benefit the child in the future.

As I progress and become a teacher, one aspect I will take from this is that collaboration between the parents and teacher plays a significant role. This ties in with the QTS standard of 'The teacher in a formal leadership role builds a climate of mutual support in which effective collaboration flourishes within and beyond the school to spread effective pedagogy.' (Welsh Government, 2019). I would like to work on this as I go through my career, as building links with the community can advantage a child in a plethora of ways.

Reference List

Almeida, A.P. and Esteves, S. (2022) *Modern Reading Practices and Collaboration Between Schools, Family, and Community*. 1st edn. Hershey: IGI Global

Crawford, M. (2020) *Ecological Systems Theory: Exploring the Development of the Theoretical Framework as Conceived by Bronfenbrenner*. Available at:

<https://gexinonline.com/uploads/articles/article-jphip-170.pdf>

Estyn (2018) *A report on [REDACTED] Primary School*. Available at: [https://www.estyn.gov.wales/system/files/2020-](https://www.estyn.gov.wales/system/files/2020-08/[REDACTED]%2520[REDACTED]%2520[REDACTED]%2520Primary%2520School.pdf)

[08/\[REDACTED\]%2520\[REDACTED\]%2520\[REDACTED\]%2520Primary%2520School.pdf](https://www.estyn.gov.wales/system/files/2020-08/[REDACTED]%2520[REDACTED]%2520[REDACTED]%2520Primary%2520School.pdf)

Extramarks Education (2023) *5 Key Benefits Of A Strong Parent – Teacher Relationship For Student Learning*. Available at:

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/5-key-benefits-strong-parent-teacher-relationship-student>

Gilstrap, L.L and Zierten, E.A (2023) *Urie Bronfenbrenner*.

Available at: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Urie-Bronfenbrenner/additional-info#contributors>

Gutman, L.M. and Vorhaus, J. (2012) *The Impact of Pupil Behaviour and Wellbeing on Educational Outcomes*. Available at: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a747ef340f0b604dd7ae609/DFE-RR253.pdf>

Hetherington, C. (2023) *How Does Lack of Attention Affect Child Development?*. Available at:

<https://www.familyeducation.com/kids/development/how-does-lack-attention-affect-child-development>

██████████ (2023) *Behaviour & Relationships Policy*. Available at: <https://primarysite-prod-sorted.s3.amazonaws.com/██████████-primary-school/UploadedDocument/a8e1fab6-77c1-41b6-96cc-e8103ea476c1/██████████-behaviour-relationships-policy-dec-23.pdf>

██████████-primary-school/UploadedDocument/a8e1fab6-77c1-41b6-96cc-e8103ea476c1/██████████-behaviour-relationships-policy-dec-23.pdf

NSPCC (2023) *Supporting children's mental health and wellbeing in schools | NSPCC Learning Podcast*. [video] Available at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MIkcqEtJO4E>

Office for National Statistics (2023) *Employment, unemployment and economic inactivity in Bridgend*. Available at:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/labourmarketlocal/W0600013/>

Office for National Statistics (2023) *How life has changed in Bridgend: Census 2021*. Available at:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/censusareachanges/W0600013/>

Open Access Government (2019) *Parents lack confidence in helping their children with homework*. Available at:

<https://www.openaccessgovernment.org/parents-helping-children-with-homework/60670/>

Orlick, J. (2023) *Why Structure and Consistency Are Important For Kids*. Available at: <https://www.kidscreektherapy.com/why-structure-and-consistency-are-important-for-kids/#:~:text=Consistency%20allows%20boundaries%20and%20>

[kids/#:~:text=Consistency%20allows%20boundaries%20and%20](https://www.kidscreektherapy.com/why-structure-and-consistency-are-important-for-kids/#:~:text=Consistency%20allows%20boundaries%20and%20)

[0expectations,is%20impacted%2C%20sometimes%20causing%20anxiety.](#)

The Assessment Reform Group (2002) *Assessment for Learning: 10 principles*. Available at:
<https://www.storre.stir.ac.uk/bitstream/1893/32458/1/Assessment%20for%20learning%2010%20principles%202002.pdf>

Welsh Government (2018) *Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers*. Available at:
<https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-12/cymraeg-2050-welsh-language-strategy.pdf>

Welsh Government (2019) *Professional standards for teaching and leadership*. Available at:
<https://hwb.gov.wales/api/storage/19bc948b-8a3f-41e0-944a-7bf2cadf7d18/professional-standards-for-teaching-and-leadership-interactive-pdf-for-pc.pdf>

Welsh Government (2023) *Levels of highest qualification held by working age adults: 2022*. Available at:
<https://www.gov.wales/levels-highest-qualification-held-working-age-adults-2022-html>

Welsh National Opera (2023) *The mental health benefits of singing*. Available at: <https://wno.org.uk/news/the-mental-health-benefits-of-singing#:~:text=Researchers%20have%20found%20that%20music,boost%20for%20your%20mental%20health>