

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.

Throughout this assignment I will be exploring the location of a school and its surrounding community using relevant and up to date resources. Throughout this assignment I will be referring to my school as School X remaining anonymous to ensure all ethical considerations are being followed under the BERA guidelines (BERA, 2024). I will be focusing on three areas giving suggestions and strategies which are; engaging parents and carers in the community, how the immediate local area supports learning and supporting a diverse and bilingual community, highlighting the transformative impact of parental involvement on pupil outcomes and overall school culture. Drawing on research, considering the challenges posed by socio-economic diversity, cultural and linguistic barriers and hard-to-reach families, proposing practical and inclusive solutions tailored to the school's context. As well as delving into the school's role in supporting a diverse and bilingual community, acknowledging the unique opportunities and responsibilities this entails, suggesting strategies and ideas for the school to celebrate cultural diversity, enhance bilingual communication, and empower parents through active participation are critically evaluated. These initiatives reflect the school's commitment to inclusivity, equity, and the development of a cohesive, supportive environment demonstrating how the school can enhance pupil outcomes, strengthen community ties, and promote holistic development.

School X is situated in a semi-urban area, within the local authority of Carmarthenshire. School X benefits from being part of a community that blends urban convenience with some rural characteristics (School X, 2024). School X's location has significant implications for its functioning. Being in a suburban setting allows School X to engage with diverse community resources while also facing challenges such as catering to a mix of socio-economic backgrounds (Street Checker, 2024). Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (Aubery and Riley, 2022) highlights the interconnectedness of community, family, and societal influences on child development. For instance, children growing up in communities with strong support systems, such as youth clubs and local initiatives, tend to have better social outcomes (Antony, 2022).

School X currently has over 200 children aging from 3 to 11 in Nursery to Year Six across eight full-time teachers and additional part-time teacher and staff during PPA time. (Welsh Government, 2022) This structure enables close monitoring of pupil progress although it can pose challenges in effectively allocating resources and addressing the needs of the children. According to their most recent Estyn report (Estyn, 2022), many pupils join the school with attainment levels below age-related expectations. However, throughout their time at School X, most pupils demonstrate significant progress across a range of skills. By the end of Year 6, most

children, including those with additional learning needs excel in speaking, listening, reading, and digital literacy.

School X offers a range of facilities that support both educational and recreational needs. (School X, 2024) School X has outdoor learning areas for each of the Foundation Phase classes as well as a range of playgrounds and outdoor Learning Villages in the School. School X also has nearby parks in walking distance of 8 minutes which provide safe outdoor spaces for play and physical activity. Surrounding the school local youth clubs offer extracurricular programs that promote social interaction and skill development. Additionally, the presence of small businesses, such as cafes and shops, fosters a sense of community and provides opportunities for educational trips. School X also benefit from the local leisure centre, which work closely with the school, offering swimming lessons and team sports, playing a vital role in enhancing the school's ability to deliver a holistic education (School X, 2024). This creates opportunities for experimental learning and community engagement, aligning with Bronfenbrenner's theory emphasises the role of the community in child development (Aubery and Riley, 2022). School X also hosts various community activities, including seasonal fairs, family workshops, and after-school clubs. It also has a well-established Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) that organises fundraising events and fosters collaboration between parents and staff (School X, 2024). (Bond, Moore and Hawkins, 2024) Research by Goodall and Montgomery highlights the impact of parental engagement on pupil achievement, emphasising the importance of initiatives like the PTA.

Between 2014 and 2022, School X sustained its commitment to high standards and effective teaching. The 2022 Estyn (Estyn, 2022) report highlights advancements in digital literacy and independent learning, reflecting the school's responsiveness to evolving educational demands. Leadership remained a consistent strength, with the 2022 inspection noting proactive adaptations to new curricula and challenges. Pupils' well-being continued to be a priority, with ongoing initiatives contributing to a supportive learning environment. indicating that School X has not only maintained its strengths over the years but has also embraced new educational developments to enhance pupil outcomes. (Estyn, 2022) Recommendations from the 2022 report include refining assessment practices to ensure consistency and accuracy, further developing ALN provision to meet the needs of all learners and enhancing outdoor learning opportunities to support experiential education. These targets, achieved by the interim visit in September 2024 (Estyn, 2024), reflect School X's ongoing commitment to continuous improvement. Additionally, School X's development plan emphasises enhancing literacy and numeracy outcomes through differentiated teaching, promoting staff professional development in inclusive practices, and increasing parental involvement through workshops

and communication platforms (School X, 2024). This demonstrates School X's dedication to addressing both academic and social dimensions of education.

Parental engagement is widely acknowledged as a fundamental aspect of successful education. Research by Epstein (Epstein, 1987) in her framework of six types of involvement underscores the importance of schools and families working together to support student achievement. (School X, 2024) For School X, where a significant proportion of pupils enter with attainment levels below age-related expectations, engaging parents and carers can provide essential support to pupils' academic and emotional development.

By fostering a stronger connection with parents and carers, School X can benefit from enhanced communication, improved attendance rates, and greater participation in school activities. Goodall and Montgomery argue that parental engagement, particularly when focused on learning rather than simple involvement, has a direct and measurable impact on pupil outcomes (Sarjeant, 2020). For example, parents who understand School X's literacy and numeracy strategies can better support their children at home, reinforcing classroom learning and improving academic progress.

Moreover, engaging parents as partners can help School X address some of its challenges related to Additional Learning Needs. (Florian and Black-Hawkins, 2019) Florian and Black-Hawkins highlight the value of inclusive practices that involve families in planning and supporting interventions for pupils with ALN. Workshops and training sessions could empower parents to play a more active role in their children's education, aligning home and school efforts.

However, achieving meaningful parental engagement is not without challenges. (Desforges and Abouchaar, 2003) Desforges and Abouchaar note that socio-economic barriers, such as limited time, lack of confidence, or prior negative experiences with education, can hinder parents' willingness or ability to engage. For School X, which serves a diverse community, these barriers may be particularly pronounced.

To address these challenges, School X could adopt a flexible approach to parental engagement. Offering virtual workshops or using digital platforms for communication can accommodate parents who cannot attend in person. Additionally, establishing a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere is crucial. (Kelty and Wakabayashi, 2020) schools must actively counteract any perceptions of hierarchy or exclusion, ensuring that all parents feel valued and respected.

School X could also host regular workshops on topics such as literacy, numeracy, and digital skills. These sessions should be designed to be practical and accessible, with materials

translated into multiple languages if needed to support bilingual families. The school's existing PTA could be expanded to include a focus on educational initiatives, encouraging parents to take an active role in shaping the curriculum and extracurricular activities.

By implementing these strategies, School X can create a partnership with parents that supports pupil outcomes and strengthen the school's role in the community.

Aswell Incorporating the local area into learning activities can make education more relevant and engaging for pupils. As Siraj-Blatchford (Iram Siraj-Blatchford, 2010) notes, contextualised learning where pupils can see the real-world applications of their knowledge can significantly enhance motivation and retention. For example, a visit to a local business could provide insights into mathematics and teamwork while exploring nearby parks could support science and geography lessons.

For School X, this approach could also help address the gap in outdoor learning opportunities identified in its recent Estyn report (Estyn, 2024). Experimental education in the local environment can foster creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. (Bilton, 2010) Helen Bilton argue that outdoor learning promotes both cognitive and emotional development, offering a holistic approach to education.

Despite these benefits, integrating the local area into the curriculum requires careful planning. Risk assessments, arrangements and alignment with learning objectives are essential to ensure that such activities are both safe and effective. Additionally, School X must consider the varying levels of access and familiarity that pupils may have with local resources, particularly in a diverse community where some families may not regularly engage with these facilities. School X could develop projects that use the local area as a learning resource. For example, pupils might conduct environmental studies in the nearby parks or collaborate with local businesses on entrepreneurial initiatives. These projects should be tied to specific curriculum objectives, ensuring that they complement classroom learning. Regularly scheduled outdoor learning days could encourage pupils to engage with the local environment in structured and meaningful ways. These learning days could focus on themes such as sustainability, physical fitness, or cultural heritage, aligning with both academic and social goals. By leveraging the resources available in its immediate surroundings, School X can enhance its curriculum, promote active learning, and strengthen its ties with the community.

Also, School X's diverse community presents both opportunities and challenges for fostering engagement. (School X, 2024) With 5.4% of pupils speaking English as an additional language and a growing number of families from various cultural backgrounds, supporting a bilingual and multicultural community is essential for creating an inclusive learning environment.

School X could organise cultural celebration events, such as multicultural fairs or language appreciation weeks, to honour the diverse heritages represented within the school or within the PTA. Research by Nieto (Nieto, 2018) highlights the importance of affirming students' cultural identities as a way to enhance their sense of belonging and academic motivation. By inviting families to contribute to these events through food, music, or storytelling, the school fosters a two-way exchange that values the contributions of all community members.

Providing bilingual resources and translation services School X can bridge communication gaps and ensure that all families feel informed and included, such as newsletters and parent-teacher conference information, into multiple languages demonstrates School X's commitment to accessibility. Studies by Cummins (Petrovic and Olmstead, 2001) suggest that supporting home languages alongside English can enhance cognitive and academic outcomes for bilingual students.

Establishing parent-led clubs that focus on language learning or cultural exchange can empower families to take an active role in the school community. These clubs could serve as informal learning environments where parents share their linguistic and cultural knowledge with others, fostering mutual understanding and respect. Such initiatives align with (Epstein, 1987) framework, which emphasises the value of parent-to-parent and parent-to-school interactions.

Supporting a diverse and bilingual community benefits both School X and its wider environment. For School X these efforts enhance pupil engagement, fostering a sense of belonging, and improve academic outcomes as well for the community, celebrating diversity and promoting bilingualism strengthen social cohesion and mutual understanding.

By engaging the parent and carer more in School X and the wider community can lead to higher academic achievement, better attendance, and improved behaviour among pupils as studied by (Desforges and Abouchaar, 2003). As well as equipping parents with the skills and confidence to support their children's learning, School X contributes to the development of a more informed and proactive community.

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