

START AT MY FEET

ECAD4009-C Emelia Thomas – 1902818.

THE SCHOOL

Strong community links is a fundamental element of my placement school. One of the primary schools key aims is to ‘ensure that our pupils, staff and governors are recognized as part of the local and wider community.’ The school values the importance of developing strong links between the school, the community, parents and other stakeholders. Furthermore, community links is a principle which is embedded into the foundations of the schools practice through utilizing the community as a teaching and learning resource, taking many lessons within the community and also inviting the community into schools.

The primary school is an English medium school with

- 383 pupils on role.
- 34.9% of children within the school are eligible for free school meals, which is above the national average of 18% (mylocalschool, 2019)
- 11% of children speak English as a second or additional language
- 14% of pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds.
- The school has identified around 52% of children as having additional learning needs with few pupils educated in the schools special teaching facility. (Estyn, 2014).



THE COMMUNITY

Parents/Carer

Parents’ involvement in their child’s learning process can offer many opportunities for children's success. Parental involvement doesn’t only improve children’s morale, academic achievement and attitudes, but also encourages better behavior and social adjustment (Centre for Child Well-being, 2010). Furthermore, parental involvement helps children to become productive, responsible members of society. The Welsh Government highlighted a statement by Goodall and Vorhaus (2011) stating that “ Building home–school links through out of hours clubs, parenting classes, extended schools and outreach work can lead to improvements in completion of homework, learning behaviours and improved attendance.” An example of parental involvement used within my placement school which also supports learning on culture and religion is ‘Cultural Diversity Day’. The school takes part in Cultural Diversity day and invites parents into school. Children's families from ethic minority backgrounds or other religions are invited to tell children about their life and why it might be different to theirs. Parents bring in foods and items from their culture (e.g. Indian Sarees) to inform children of the diverse cultures and religions. This practice strengthens links with parents and helps children to be more informed about traditions, practices and values in our society; thus encouraging a better understanding and greater community cohesion (Welsh Gov, 2009).

Another link the school has that support parents is the schools second hand uniform shop which allows for families from economically deprived backgrounds to have the opportunity to access affordable uniform for their children.

An example of effective/innovative practice highlighted by Estyn is where a family engagement officer (FEO) of a primary school further developed the links between the school, pupils, families and the community through ‘The Generations Games’ programme. This promotes intergenerational learning and is based in a local care home, pupils, teachers and family members visit the home and are buddied up with residents completing activities linked to the needs of the pupil and residence developing communication, social, physical and personal skills. This practice developed social cohesion within the community (Estyn, 2019).

Community

Hirsch (2007), suggested that only a limited fraction of a child’s success in life are attributable to activates within school and majority of factors are linked to social contexts and family arrangements (West-Burnham et al. 2007). The Welsh Government suggests that school links to the wider community can strengthen schools, bring in resources and enrich the curriculum as the community contributes expertise, new ideas and useful networks (Welsh Government, 2016). Furthermore, community partnerships can make a positive contribution to community life, developing cohesion and social capital (Welsh Government, 2016).

One of the four purposes of the new curriculum for Wales 2022 is for all children to be ethical, informed citizens who ‘are knowledgeable about their culture, **community**, society and the world, now and in the past’ and ‘show their commitment to the sustainability of the planet’ (Welsh Government, 2015). Examples of my placement school encouraging children to become ethical, informed citizens include their community litter picks, being a centre for recycling and the activities organised by the schools eco committee.

The school has a strong link with the local church and its reverend and classes throughout the school participate in visits to the church as well as the reverend visiting the school. The school also has a link with the local mosque where they visit when studying Islam.

Other excellent links my placement school has with the community include links with the local communities PCSO, the mobile dentist and the community farm.

THE LEARNER

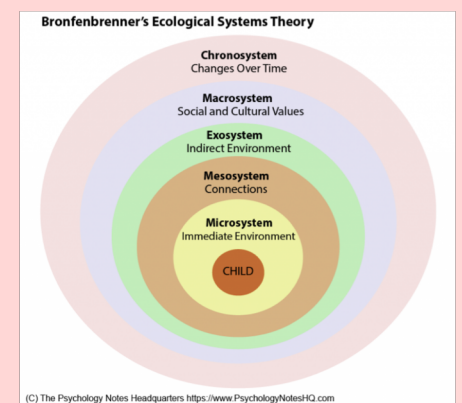
The Welsh Government quoted within a document the African Proverb quote;

“It takes a whole village to raise a child.”

The community and parents play an important role in ensuring the quality of education in schools for children and such involvement makes a difference to a child’s growth and development (Aronson, 1996).

Learning can take place in many environments including the home, the school and the community. Theorist Bronfenbrenner developed the **Ecological Systems Theory** detailing how everything within a child’s environment affects how they grow and develop. His theory emphasizes the importance of children learning in multiple environments (ecological systems) and how each of the ecological systems interact and influence each other in many aspects of a child’s life.

Bronfenbrenner’s system is organized into five levels of external influence, ranging from the most intimate such as the home to the broadest such as the parents workplace. Below is a diagram of the systems within the theory.



Bronfenbrenner’s theory highlights the importance of children learning and exploring different environments within the school and the community in order to grown and develop.

The Welsh Government stated within an educational document that it is our duty as teachers to provide future generations with the skills and knowledge they need to play a full and active role in their communities (Welsh Government, 2017). And one of the four aims of the new curriculum for Wales highlights the need for children to ‘take part in their community.’

Reference List

Alam, S. (2015) *Effect of Community on Primary School Learners' Achievement in Rural Bangladesh*. Available at: <https://jl4d.org/index.php/ejl4d/article/view/42> (Accessed 9th February 2020).

Cadle Primary School. (2020) *Community Links*. Available at: <https://www.cadleprimaryschool.co.uk/community-links/> (Accessed: 12th February 2020).

Estyn. (2014) *A report on .. Available at:*

[illegible]

Estyn. (2019) *Involving Parents in Education*. Available at: <https://www.estyn.gov.wales/effective-practice/involving-parents-education> (Accessed: 9th February 2020).

Hirsch, D (2007) *Experiences of Poverty and Educational Disadvantage*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

MyLocalSchool. (2019) *My Local School*. Available at: <http://mylocalschool.gov.wales/School/6702008?lang=en> (Accessed: 10th February 2020).

National College for leadership of schools and children's services. (2011) *Research Associate Full Report. Schools, communities and social capital: building blocks in the 'big society'*. Available at: <https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/2981/1/download%3Fid%3D147205%26filename%3Dschoools-communities-social-capital-full-report.pdf> (Accessed: 9th February 2020).

Oxford Primary. (2018) *4 things you need to do to prepare for Curriculum Change in Wales*. Available at: <https://educationblog.oup.com/primary/4-things-you-need-to-do-to-prepare-for-curriculum-change-in-wales> Accessed: 9th February 2020).

Psychologynoteshq. (2019) *What is Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory?* Available at: <https://www.psychologynoteshq.com/bronfenbrenner-ecological-theory/> (Accessed: 9th February 2020).

Sapungan, G & Sapungan, R. (2014) 'Parental Involvement in Child's Education: Importance, Barriers and Benefits', *Journal of Management Sciences & Education*, 3(2), pp. 42-48. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/283539737_Parental_Involvement_in_Child's_Education_Importance_Barriers_and_Benefits (Accessed: 10th February 2020).

Welsh Government. (2009) *Religious Education Guidance*. Available at: <https://hwb.gov.wales/storage/05b03928-a9c6-41d8-acf3-c206813dcd34/religious-education-guidance-for-14-to-19-year-olds.pdf> (accessed: 10th February 2020).

Welsh Government. (2016) *Theme 5: Developing community partnership and multi- agency working*. Available at: <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-12/theme-5-developing-community-partnerships-and-multi-agency-working-resources-1-2.pdf> (Accessed: 12th February 2020).

Welsh Government. (2017) *Education in Wales: Our national mission*. Available at: <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-03/education-in-wales-our-national-mission.pdf> (Accessed: 12th February 2020).

Welsh Government. (2020) *A new curriculum in Wales*. Available at: <https://hwb.gov.wales/storage/016a744a-d1f4-4d61-8b35-0fe1648c1009/a-new-curriculum-in-wales.pdf> (Accessed: 9th February 2020).

West-Burnham, J, Farrar, M & Otero, G. (2007) *Schools and Communities: Working Together to Transform Children's Lives*. London: Network Continuum.