

Section 1

The Oxford dictionary defines a catalyst as a person or thing that causes change. Zachery (2011) defines a good leader as somebody who creates, develops, and inspires improved performance or leadership abilities in others. Furthermore, Zachery (2011) suggests that when a person is a catalytic leader, they can influence others to achieving a common goal while improving the ability of others. In comparison, Bennis (2010) describes a manager as a person who is necessary to keeping an organisation on track. However, the difference between leaders and managers is being able to master and alter the context. It is vital to understand the demands and needs to deliver a successful future and while a leader should threaten to conspire against pre-conceptions and beliefs, managers accept the context without ever challenging it. Joiner (2017) highlights the difficulty of reaching a catalytic level of leadership and even though Joiner (2017) considers the catalyst level to be the most effect for today rapidly changing and complex environment, only around 10% of leaders can achieve it. Wilde (2017) argues that society has defines leadership as unattainable and people have lost confidence in showing their leadership abilities. Wilde states that society has made leadership about changing the world. However, Wilde (2017) believes that leadership is the opposite to that entirely. It is emphasised that it is crucial to think about leadership differently, especially with the everchanging forms of communications and levels of technology. Wilde fears, without change, the world will continue to serve the elite and limit the potential of the title leader.

York-Barr and Duke (2004) defined teacher leadership as: 'the process by which teachers, individually or collectively, influence their colleagues, principals, and other members of school communities to improve teaching and learning practices with the aim of increased student learning and achievement'. The Welsh Government (2018) emphasises how effective leadership is critical in implementing resources such as the Early Years Pupil Deprivation Grant (EYPDG) to help raise attainment in the most disadvantaged children in the early years. This guidance suggests that good leaders should maximise the use of support staff as well as encouraging collaborative working with agencies such as Flying start. A case study from Maes-y-Morfa Primary School, where 84% of their learners who have received Flying Start before entering school has provided positive information. It has shown that the

collaborative work with Flying Start has helped the school organise resources more effectively, as well as identifying and responding to issues more promptly. Providing an 'invaluable bridge' that allows learners and families to feel supported and prepared to access the curriculum of school. Even though the idea of collaborative learning through the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky 1978) is a recognised concept throughout early years practice, it can be restrictive to children's learning. Aubrey (2015) highlights the many challenges to effective collaboration such as lack of communication between professionals, complex social issues, value differences between professionals as well as the number of multi-agencies involved. Aubrey (2015) further acknowledges the complexity of working towards a shared philosophy, vision, and principles. It is crucial to identify the challenges and benefits of working collaboratively, in a multi-agency team when designing and leading a successful team for children and families. Marijar (2020) discusses the benefits of working as a collaborative team in an Early Years centre in Singapore. The article acknowledges the extensive time spent confronting their own thinking and their beliefs and critically reflecting and observing them, to invest in a shared vision in supporting their learners to become ambitious, capable learners. Dutta (2015) cited in Parker (2020) states that the strengthening of communication for collaboration requires multiple versions of power to be made legible through a 'decolonizing' approach that addresses the root causes of problems. This allows for organisation such as Early Years Education to be able to level the field of possibilities. McDowell Clark (2012) discusses the issues with the many Early Years professionals who considered leadership to 'being in charge' and were becoming insecure in their leadership role because of pre-conceptions of the practice of leadership rather than the meaning of it. McDowell Clark (2012) suggests that to improve leadership in the Early Years, critical reflection of their own experiences and continued support is required.

Sims et al. (2015) acknowledges that the international quality of early childhood education is being driven through the process of leadership. Hadfield et al. (2012) found that 87% of Early Years Professional Status (EYPS) graduates felt confident in their ability to mentor and support others to improve practice. Furthermore, it was found that those who have EYPS qualification have a significant impact on the delivery and quality of service, in both practitioner and leadership roles. Following an extensive evaluation of the implementation of The Foundation Phase (2015), The

Welsh Government proposed The Foundation Phase Action Plan (2018) which has ensured that all higher education institution programmes awarding qualified teacher status, they must include delivery of child development. As well as ensuring that staff are continuously developing themselves professionally and sharing good practice with others across Wales and further afield. The Welsh Government (2018) in line with the new curriculum for Wales (2022) vows to display effective and inspiring leadership that is based on 'high expectations and a willingness to lead learning with others.' Much like, the principles of Te Whariki (1996) where promoting the continued professional development of Kaiako (teacher) is a prominent responsibility of educational leaders. Kaiako also have a significant role in providing enriching experiences for children which expand to the children gaining the confidence to contribute towards their own learning by acting on their own ideas to improve their knowledge and skills in areas that interest them. However, Sims et al. (2015) argue that even though highly qualified early years practitioners can provide quality care and education for children, they may not have the skills and knowledge to work with other adults. Even though, in the Foundation Phase Action Plan, Welsh Government (2018) is striving to improve the professional development of Early Years Practitioners. Waniganayke (2014) highlights that Australia has included leadership and management in their Early Childhood Education degree programmes since the 1990s. Adamson (2012) affirms that there is extensive research to show that providing high quality Early Years Practitioners is based strongly on a well-qualified workforce.

Waniganayke (2014) acknowledges the universal use of the word leadership, however this means that the meaning of the word becomes abstract and there is not a shared definition of what leadership is or how it can be understood. Hujala et al. (2013) define effective leadership and standing back and saying or doing nothing but also acknowledge that leadership is still plays an integral role in providing high quality early childhood provision. Cooper (2014) view is that the main feature of teacher leadership is their influence on others such as children, peers, and families. Furthermore, Bolden et al. (2011) state that effective influence can occur through positive working relationships. Robinson (2011) extends this view about exercising influence and argues that the influence comes from three main sources. The authority that is accepted by those who are influenced, a second source who is

attractive to those who are influenced and the third and final source, a person with the skills and knowledge to enable others to progress with their own skills and knowledge. Like Stamopolous (2012) who argues that effective leadership in Early Childhood Education requires 'knowledge of research, leadership and early childhood pedagogy'. Waniganayke (2014) summarises teacher leadership to be distinguished by influence that can be intentional as well as happening naturally in everyday practice.

Cooper (2014) considers the topic of teachers engaging in shared leadership is at the forefront of early childhood research and practice. A view that changes the pre-conceptions and historical views of the traits and qualities of leadership. Cooper (2014) highlights those leaders should not necessarily be in leadership roles but a person who can influence good practice and values. However, Cooper (2014) acknowledges the main challenge is to change the perspective of what a leader is and recognise the leadership should be part of their everyday practice. Keski-Rouska (2016) conducted a study on a joint leadership model in early childhood education in Finland. Harris and Spillane (2018) state that for distributed leadership to succeed, it requires extensive planning, organizing and continuous professional development. This study did not come without its challenges, specifically time resources, where the participants would have liked the directors to participate in more of the everyday practice. As Wilhelmson's (2006) study suggests that joint leaders support each other's development by common work processes. Thus, making the leaders more reflective and influencing personal development. The results of Wilhelmson's (2006) study showed the same development element in the directors personal and professional development. However, Keski-Rouska (2016) acknowledges that despite its challenges, the shared leadership model was worth developing.

Cooper (2014) also acknowledges the benefit of a community of practice and how it is helpful to understand how everyday leaders might emerge. The Welsh Government's Family and Communities Engagement Toolkit (FaCE) (2015) expresses how effective engagement with families and communities can have a profound influence on children's attainment at school and for schools to raise standards and improve the well-being of learners, engagement from parents, carers and the community is crucial. There has been suggestive evidence that indicates FaCE provides better results if it becomes everybody's responsibility, from the teaching

assistant to the receptionist. Although, it has been noted that some schools have taken separate leads on areas such as safeguarding, well-being and attendance to support the whole school approach. However, Welsh Government (2015) acknowledged the challenges that some schools face to achieve true home-school partnerships. The role of the school leaders and governors is to be non-judgmental and understanding of families suffering from social, economic or health inequalities. The FaCE toolkit (2015) suggests that leaders should understand that families play a vital role in a child's education and strong family and community partnerships can help to raise standards. Like the Reggio Emilia Approach (1998) where they describe their approach to learning and teaching as a 'pedagogy of relationships' by interacting with people within the surrounding environment. Parent and community participation is one of the key features of the Reggio Approach and is central to the schools Charter of Rights.

Section 2

The Lord Laming report (2001) significantly contributed to changing how children's services were structured in England and Wales. Lord Laming (2001) believed that moving forward, any persons who occupy a senior role in the public sector must be held accountable for any mistake or failure to protect children from harm. Following this, The Children's Commissioner for Wales Act (2001) created the first child commissioner for the United Kingdom. In 2001, the main aim for the Commissioner was to safeguard and promote the rights of children. Cook et al. (2008) acknowledge that Norway was the first country to appoint a commissioner for children in 1981. The role was called an 'ombudsman' from the root word, 'ombud' which means a representative to safeguard people's rights. Following the United Nations agreeing the Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (1989) other countries around the world began to establish Children's Commissioners also. Wales was the first country in the UK to have an independent Children's Commissioner. Following Wales, Northern Ireland was 2003, Scotland in 2004, Ireland 2004 and finally England in 2005. In the Welsh Government response to the annual Children's Commissioner for Wales report (2020) it acknowledges one of the key achievements as the Commissioner giving a voice to the voiceless. The Welsh Government (2020)

highlights the important work that the Children's Commissioner continues to do, to promote children's in Wales. However, The Welsh Government acknowledges that there is always more work to be done.

The Children's Commissioner for Wales (2019) published their three-year plan for all children and young people. It was clearly acknowledged that there is always work to be done, there is some positive evidence being shown in this report. There are certain aspects of the lives of children in Wales improving in areas such as health, dental health, and much lower rates of teenage pregnancy. However, the two areas that are raising the most concern are families living on a low income and causing larger social inequalities as well as the mental health and well-being of children. One of the main concerns from the children's point of view who took part in the survey were that the systems to access public services are too complex, specifically mental health services. The three-year plan from 2019-2020 stated that they would continue their work to challenge public services and work along side public bodies to provide the best support for children and young people. However, in the time since this report has been published, the children in Wales have experienced a global pandemic. Wales new Children's Commissioner for Wales (2022) expressed her concerns over the effect that Covid-19 has had on the children of Wales. The First Minister of Wales (2020) stressed how significant of the role of Children's Commissioner was to children and young people, even more so because of the impact that Covid-19 has already had on the lives of the children across Wales. The Children's Commissioner for England (2020) conducted a report on childhood in the time of covid. The report raises many concerns and amplifies any existing concerns. In the Early Years in England, one in three under five-year-olds are living in poverty which will affect their living conditions and access to services such as early years settings. The Children's Commissioner for England (2020) suggests that going forward, children should be at the forefront when planning any other restrictions or lockdowns and schools should focus on children's mental health and well-being before attainment.

In a review of the Children's Commissioner for Wales, conducted by Rees and Williams (2014) the differences in the appointment of the Children's Commissioners across the UK were highlighted. UNICEF (2013) state that the role should be independent from government control or interference as it allows a balance to be

able to respond to outside influence. Even though, UNICEF favours appointment by an executive branch rather than legislative, it singles out Scotland from the UK despite being appointment by the Crown. Related to the Ombudsman for Children in Norway, which states that ‘ The King in Cabinet shall appoint an Ombudsman for Children for a period of six year with no possibility of reappointment.’ In contrast to this, Rees, and Williams (2014) highlight the different approach that is taken in Croatia, who is held in high regard. Croatia’s Ombudsperson for Children much not be members of any political party or participate in any political events. There are also specific criteria for becoming Ombudsperson for Children in Croatia, such as 10 years work experience working with children’s rights and holding a law degree with 5 years practical experience in law.

The Welsh Government (2017) affirms that the policies and legislation in Wales is all underpinned by the UNCRC. For Example, The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015, The Rights of Children and Young Persons Measure 2011 and the Social and Well-being Act 2014. All which contribute to the promotions and implementation of children’s rights. According to Together Scotland (2022) even though Wales is often considered the development model on children’s rights in the UK, it criticises the Rights of Children and Young Persons Measure 2011 for being unable to enforce the UNCRC in court. However, Dr Hoffman (2018) supports the Welsh Measure and makes it clear that it still makes a significant impact towards supporting the UNCRC, giving children voices and putting children’s rights at the centre of service planning and activities. Although, Dr Hoffman (2018) acknowledges that the Welsh Government has not delivered on the promise to do so. Like Wales, the Children and Young People Act (Scotland) 2014 decided not to put the UNCRC through law. However, The Scottish Government (2014) has acknowledged Article 12 of the UNCRC and has placed responsibility on caregivers and courts to provide children with the opportunity to express their view, similarly with child education authorities Hoffman (2018) concludes that despite its limitations, the Welsh Government has gone further than the UK Government and any other in the UK to integrate the UNCRC into domestic law. The Children’s Commissioner for Wales (2019) affirms that they will continue to work with the government on opportunities to bring the UNCRC into Welsh domestic law. Their statements of what they want to achieve is

to ensure children all children in Wales are provided with many opportunities to be informs, involved citizens and that their rights are included in all public services.

Regarding education, The Welsh Government (2017) has acknowledged the significant impact that investing in the UNCRC has for educational settings. It supports children to take ownership of their learning and decision making by giving them a voice. A Children's Right Approach for Education in Wales, The Right Way (2017) states that human rights should empower children. Holland (2017) states that by empowering children, increasing their confidence, and raising awareness of their rights, children can take advantage of their rights and hold people and organisations accountable that directly affect their lives. Article 6 of the UNCRC acknowledges that when adults hand over or share the decision making with the child/children it is affecting, it will be an important contribution to their development. Hargraves (2020) discusses one of the principles of the New Zealand Curriculum, Te Whariki which is empowerment. In Te Whariki, it focuses on the Mana of the children, Mana is a Māori concept for the power of being. Empowering children and families to the best they can be by being respectful and supportive to reach their potential. Hargraves (2020) acknowledges how the Mana incorporates children's rights, specifically to have their health and well-being nurtured, access to an education as well as recognition of their language, culture and identify. The New Zealand Government (2022) discuss how Te Whariki put Bronfenbrenner's theory into action by responding to the UNCRC by working hard to protect children's rights and preserving children's dignity whilst building their Mana and support them to build the Mana of others.

HWB (2022) states that for the New Curriculum for Wales (2022) the development of the curriculum should be at the centre for the practitioner, school, and Wales overall to improve standards for all and close the attainment gap. The development of the new curriculum also highlights the importance of achieving the goals set out in the Well-being for Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. It plays a vital role in giving children the adequate understanding of their rights and helps to embed the UNCRC into their experience and learning. Estyn (2019) stated that by giving pupils a strong voice and involving them in decision making has 'developed an effective approach to improving engagement and attitudes to learning.' West Park Primary, Estyn (2019) have designed their curriculum aligned with Article 13 of the UNCRC where every

child has the right to express their thoughts and opinions and Article 12 where every child has the right for their views to be considered and taken seriously. Estyn (2019) noted that they have achieved this by encouraging the pupils to be responsible for their own learning as well as instilling the belief that their voice can be effective, providing ample 'pupil voice' opportunities. The findings from this inspection were that all pupils showed excellent attitudes to learning which has improved standards as well as having a positive impact on the behaviour. Estyn (2019) affirmed that the pupil voice groups were a significant contributing factor. Jones and Walker (2011) question whether children who experience Additional Learning Needs such as autism, speech and language or hearing impairments are not able to exercise their rights to be listened to. They argue that they are not able to as often as they should be but the reasons for this is in with the adults rather than the children, depending on the communication environment that adults create around them. However, there are available resources for children with ALN to support this via the Child Commissioner for Wales website.

The Children's Commissioner for Wales (2021) conducted a review relating to the policy areas of home education and independent schools while considering the UNCRC. One of the main findings from this review that there has been insufficient consideration of children's rights and extraordinarily little progress has been made in either of these areas since 2015. The Children's commissioner has accepted responsibility for their own failing as well as concluding that the Welsh Government have failed to adequately respond to safeguarding incidents such as the death of Dylan Seabridge 2011 and the concerns surrounding safeguarding in independent schools between 2014-2016. Moving forward, the Children's Commissioner (2021) acknowledges that the Welsh Government has not complied with the Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011 and Article 4 of the UNCRC.

UNICEF (2022) The Rights Respecting School Award (RRSA) supports children, schools, and the wider community to understand children's rights and putting them in to practice every day. According to Hooke (2013) The Welsh Government has states that all work conducted with children in Wales should be based upon the UNCRC. The Children and Young People: Rights into Action Framework (2004) has seven core aims for children, all of which are linked to the articles in the UNCRC. Getting it Right (2009) identified a further sixteen priorities to work on. Hooke (2013)

argues that RRSA could play a significant role in supporting schools in Wales to work towards these goals. Hooke (2013) affirms that RRSA could significantly encourage cultural impact on Wales and allow children, families, and communities to develop an understanding of the UNCRC. UNICEF (2022) defines a Rights Respecting School as a place where children feel confident and use their voice.

Section 3

According to Addae-Korankye (2019) poverty is arguably one of the most prominent social problems in the world today in both developed and developing countries. JRF (2013) and David and Sanchez-Martinez (2014) defined poverty as inadequate material resources available to a person or group. However, The World Bank (2004) extends this definition by acknowledging the profound affect that poverty has on well-being and quality of life. It argues that the result of a low-income can deprive access to services and the inability to acquire basic needs. Therefore, impacting good health, education and limiting opportunities to improve their quality of life.

According to the most recent data from the Welsh Government (2021) it has shown that 31% of children are living in poverty. Unfortunately, this is the highest percentage of children living in poverty in the last decade. The data published by The Welsh Government (2019) shows that from a three-year period ending in 2016 there were 28% of children living in poverty rising to 29% in 2019. However, the Welsh Government (2021) emphasises that the Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the economy and our communities as well as worsening existing inequalities and impacting the most vulnerable in society.

The Ontario Child Health Study (2007) concluded that there is a 'direct link between lack of income and chronic health problems, psychiatric disorders and social and academic functions.' Leon (2016) acknowledges that children from lower income families have shown to score lower on Language, literacy, and communication as well as their knowledge of number and ability to concentrate. Supporting this view, Molloy (2019) affirms that the impact that poverty has on children and their long-term development can be detrimental. A study conducted by Law et al. (2017) shows how economic disadvantage can negatively impact children's academic performance, which can be seen from reception through to the end of their school life at GCSE

level. The study acknowledges how economic hardship can restrict children's enriching learning experiences outside of school. As well as sometimes creating a stressful home life which can have a negative impact on a child's sense of security and the ability to regulate their emotions. Like Jensen (2009) who states that even though children raised in poverty do not choose to behave differently, poverty affects their learning as they face challenges that are unseen in affluent households. Jensen (2009) further suggests that the brains of children have had to adapt to adverse conditions in ways that affect academic performance. Maslow's hierarchy of needs cited in Aruma and Hanachor (2017) states that meeting the seven needs will provide courage and confidence to contribute to community development to improve their living conditions.

It can be argued that the causes of poverty are overly complex. The theory of individual deficiencies, Gans (1995) cited by Sameti et al (2012) believed that the factors such as individual attitude, income and welfare participation caused their own poverty. Bradshaw (2006) also blames the individual by arguing that arduous work and better choices could solve their problems. Lewis (1966) cited in Addae-Korankye (2019) theory of culture of poverty, believes that poverty is created over generations of set beliefs and values. Lewis (1966) argues that the poor and rich have different patterns of values and beliefs. Despite the many contrasting ideas and assumptions regarding the cause of poverty, Addae-Korankye (2019) acknowledge the importance of taking care when deciding the most appropriate and effective measures to tackle it. Molloy (2019) suggests that there is considerable evidence that shows the benefits of intense early interventions in tackling the impact that poverty had on children's development. A recent trial conducted by Schaub et al (2019) in Zurich, showed consistent evidence that twice monthly home support visits from birth until three, significantly reduces the learning gaps which can be associated with poverty.

Katz et al (2007) acknowledge the many barriers to inclusion and successful engagement from parents, three of the main factors were physical and practical, stigma and awareness. The Child Poverty: income maximisation action plan (IMAP) (2020) is aiming to maximise the income of families living in poverty. The Welsh Government's Child Poverty Progress Report (2019) acknowledges the challenging work that still needs to be done to improve the lives of disadvantaged children in

Wales. However, there are many programmes that are working towards improving the lives of families in Wales. Such as, an investment of £190 million to support schools in Wales to improve outcomes for disadvantaged learners. As well as the Pupil Deprivation Grant (2015) which has already supported 530,000 children to reach their potential. Childcare can often be the reason for parents not working or limiting where they can work. The Childcare Offer for Wales has acknowledged the pressure on working families who are unable to meet childcare costs and how the offer can support families access to wider employment choices.

The Flying Start Programme was introduced by the Welsh Government in 2007. National Assembly for Wales (2018) state that Flying Start has consistently been recognised as one of Welsh Government's prominent programmes for tackling poverty. The four main elements: enhanced health visiting service, parental support, access to early language development support and most importantly the programme is free part-time childcare for two to three-year-olds. In an evaluation conducted by the Welsh Government (2017) it suggested that Flying Start is directly increasing levels of attendance and lowering the age of ALN identification which are both strong predictors of attainment. Even though there are many positives, the inquiry conducted in (2018) highlighted the limitations of the programme, such as its geographical targeting. It was found that there is a potential risk of creating further inequalities by excluding many children living in poverty. However, despite its limitations, the data collected by an evaluation conducted by Welsh Government (2019) shows that flying start has led to improved educational outcomes.

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