

ECIE4003

Additional Needs in Context

Portfolio

Student Number: 2217692

SUPPORTING A CHILD WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

"The term "visual impairment" is used to describe sight loss that cannot be corrected using glasses or contact lenses" (Sense, 2023). Visual Impairment can be caused by an extensive list of conditions including

- Albinism
- Cataracts
- Glaucoma
- Stargardt Macular Dystrophy

It can range in severity from colour blindness, central or peripheral vision loss to total sight loss (Royal Society for Blind Children, 2020). Visual impairment is identified as being within the sensory and / or physical area of need by the Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales (2021).



VISUAL IMPAIRMENT DOES NOT CHANGE THE STAGES IN A CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT; IT ONLY CHANGES HOW HE OR SHE REACHES THE STAGES (BISHOP, 2004, P. 61).

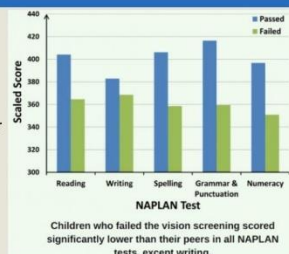
VISUAL IMPAIRMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Piaget (1951, quoted in Swallow, 1976), identified the impact of visual impairment on a child's development. He claimed that children had slower development of cognitive function.

Negative impact can be seen on

- Motor skills
- Language skills
- Emotional skills
- Social & cognitive skills

Resulting in a lower level of educational achievement. (World Health Organization, 2023)



(Children's Vision, 2021)
The link between vision and academic achievement can be clearly seen in this graph which looks at five key areas of learning.

As detailed in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) it is vital that children have

- the right to non-discrimination
 - the right of the disabled child to special assistance
 - the right to education
 - right to an adequate standard of education
- In order for these needs to be met educators must ensure that barriers to learning for visually impaired children are removed and that specialist support is given to enable children to achieve their full potential.

"CHILDHOOD VISUAL IMPAIRMENT HAS A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON THE EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT, CAREER CHOICES AND SOCIAL LIFE OF AFFECTED INDIVIDUAL" (ATOWA AND HANSRAJ, 2019).

VISUAL IMPAIRMENT IN THE CLASSROOM

Depending on the severity of the visual impairment, children may present in many ways including

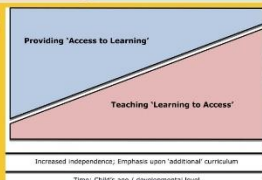
- Struggling to see objects at a distance, like on a whiteboard or blackboard
- having trouble reading (or learning to read) and participating in class activities
- not be able to focus on objects or follow them, may squint often and rub their eyes a lot, have chronic eye redness or sensitivity to light
- bump into things often or have trouble moving around independently. (Kids Health, 2021)

ACCESS TO LEARNING & LEARNING TO ACCESS

Most children with a visual impairment attend a mainstream education setting in the UK, and will receive support from

- mainstream staff
- specialist staff,
- family
- other organisations

In order for a child with visual impairment to be able to achieve their full potential those working directly with them must consider not only providing access to learning but also providing the child with the skills to enable them to access the curriculum themselves. Teaching "learning to access" should increase as the child moves through the levels of development (McInden et al., 2016).



USING VYGOTSKI'S SCAFFOLDING THEORY ENCOURAGES COLLABORATION WITH STAFF OR A PEER GROUP TO HELP SUBJENTS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT ACHIEVE INDEPENDENT LEARNING (MCLELLAND ET AL., 2023).

Barriers to learning

PHYSICAL BARRIERS

- Classroom and outdoor layout not accessible
- Correct learning aids/resources not available
- inappropriate lighting
- class activities not suitable for child's needs
- Visual fatigue

MENTAL/EMOTIONAL BARRIERS

- Lacking in confidence
- Need for support
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Poor communication skills

SOCIAL BARRIERS

- Struggle to make friendships
- lack of inclusion with extra-curricular activities
- lack of inclusion in sport.
- reduced ability to recognise body language and facial expressions



(CAIN, 2019)

As professionals working with visually impaired children it's important that each child's individual needs and specific barriers to learning are identified.

Collaborative working with other practitioners

- Access support from the local authority Specialist visual impairment teacher (QTVI), Habilitation expert and SENCO.
- Seek ways in which you can gain specialist training in supporting a child with visual impairment.

Getting to know the child as an individual learner

- Learn about the child's specific eye condition and how it affects their sight
- Don't make assumptions
- Focus on their strengths, not what they can't do
- Acknowledge a learners needs can change over time

Inclusive environment adjustments

- Ensure learning spaces are clutter free and safe so the learner can move freely
- Ensure lighting is suitable
- Use of tactile signage and flooring to assist learner

Inclusive classroom practice

- Provide learning resources in a format that is suitable
- Adapt tasks such as PE and Art to be more accessible
- Adapt language and communication to be more descriptive
- Use a multisensory approach where possible
- Use peer support to aid learning

BEST PRACTICE IN SUPPORTING THE LEARNER WITH A VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

Facilitating Independence

- Don't do everything for the learner
- Support the child to use assistive tools independently
- Promote self-advocacy to help with future independence
- Adapt expectations when a child works independently as tasks may take longer.

(UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM, N.D)

It is key that staff working with children with visual impairment are familiar with current policies relating to Additional Learning Needs including The Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales (2021) and the Curriculum Framework for Children and Young People with Vision Impairment in Wales (2022). These must be considered alongside the standard curriculum and the education settings own additional learning needs policy to ensure a child's educational needs are met.

SENSORY LEARNING

In order for a child to overcome the limitations that exist for a child with visual impairment as hypothesised by Lowenfeld (1952) Children must be encouraged to discover their surrounding world using their other senses through

- sensory play
- activities that encourage 3d exploration
- audible cues to learning

"THESE SKILLS HELP INDIVIDUALS WITH VISION IMPAIRMENTS TO CONNECT TO AND INTERACT WITH THE WORLD AROUND THEM. TO BE ACTIVE LEARNERS AS CHILDREN AND ADULTS; AND TO APPROACH ACTIVITIES WITH A SENSE OF SECURITY, CONFIDENCE, AND UNDERSTANDING" (PERKINS SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND, 2023).

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[impairment#:~:text=Impact%20of%20vision%20impairment&text=Young%20children%20with%20early%20onset,lower%20levels%20of%20educational%20achievement](https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/blindness-and-visual-impairment#:~:text=Impact%20of%20vision%20impairment&text=Young%20children%20with%20early%20onset,lower%20levels%20of%20educational%20achievement)

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Element 2

Essay - Explore the wide and complex spectrum of additional needs

There have been some significant changes in legislation when looking at the needs of learners in recent years. Historically, any child who had a special educational need (SEN) would be categorised as either having difficulties with communication and interactions; cognition and learning; social, emotional and health or having sensory or physical needs (*Special educational needs code of practice*, 2013). In 2021 the Welsh Government introduced the *Additional Needs Transformation programme*, which would result in guidance for the support of any child with an additional learning need (ALN) being covered by the *Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales* (2021). This Essay will look at not only the change in educational provision for children with ALN but also at the models of disability and how they have shaped the way in which support is provided to pupils within the education system in Wales.

The definition of ALN refers to children and young people who have learning, physical or sensory needs which make it harder for them to learn than most children of the same age (Dewis Wales, no date). This need could be temporary or could be present across the whole of the child's educational life. They could be affected in one or multiple areas of learning. The local authority, school or education setting must provide inclusive education to all children regardless of any ALN.

In order to understand the transformation introduced in Wales it is important to understand how attitude to disability has progressed over recent years. The medical model of disability historically focused on an individual's impairment and what it prevented that individual from doing. This model saw the disability as something that needed to be fixed or cured and often resulted in exclusion from mainstream society. This model also impacted how an individual perceived their own rights to inclusivity. Within education the focus on labelling a pupil with a specific diagnosis would result in pupils with the same condition being offered the same level of support and intervention regardless of their individual needs (Booth, Nes and Strømstad, 2003, p117-p131).

To avoid the discrimination caused by the medical model there has been a transition towards the social model of disability developed by disabled people, emerging from The Fundamental Principles of Disability (Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation and Disability Alliance, 1976). This model identified that disability is created by the physical barriers within our environment and the attitudes of the individuals and organisations within it preventing inclusion of individuals with additional needs. The social model looks at the need for change within society to enable inclusion. In 2014 this model was endorsed by the Government Equalities Office who recommended the model for use by all government departments including education (*Introduction to the Social and Medical Models of Disability*, 2015).

The shift from the medical model to the social model of disability was a catalyst in the transformation to the *Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales* (2021). This new code brought with it a more inclusive system that results in any young person from 0-25 years old with ALN being offered the support they require through an individual development plan (IDP) that would consider the learners opinion, identify their specific needs and provide them with strategies that would enable them to fulfil their right to education as stated in Article 28 of the *United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child* (1989). This inclusive approach also meets the requirements set out by The *UNESCO Salamanca Statement* (1994) which called for inclusion to be the norm.

The benefits of using the social model by professionals in education are extensive. There are social benefits for the individual such as better friendships, social initiations and improved behaviour skills. The use of peer role models in mainstream education supports Vygotski's (1978) theory of the zone of proximal development. The model also allows for higher expectations, increased school staff collaboration, community integration and greater access to the general curriculum. These benefits lead to increased achievement in the individuals learning goals as set out in their IDP (Kids Together, 2021). Hunt (2020) found positive results for all students when an inclusive approach was taken within an education setting concluding that "academic benefits for general education students include having additional special education staff in the classroom, providing small-group, individualized instruction, and assisting in the development of academic adaptations for all students who need them".

Al-Shammari, Faulkner and Forlin (2019) concluded that best practice for an inclusive education needed to include practices based on the theories of behaviourism, cognitivism, and

constructivism. Best practice should be incorporated into each school's ALN policy, ensuring that the whole school is not only environmentally appropriate for every child regardless of their needs, for example clear signage for learning areas and clutter free classrooms, but that it should also be a positive and supportive environment with an emphasis on promoting wellbeing and positive relationships. Teaching should be of a high quality with activities differentiated for individual learners ensuring that their specific needs are met using suitable resources and any required support with learning aids and technology (Watts, 2023). Good communication should be encouraged replacing negative or medical language with more positive language that sees individuals as human beings (Disability Rights UK, 2020). The school must put the learner at the heart of everything that happens and through a person-centred approach, must allow them to make decisions for themselves. There must be good multi-agency working with other professionals and charities to ensure those with expert knowledge not only support the child but educate other professionals too.

In conclusion, changes in the ALN system in Wales have resulted in the social model of disability being adopted within the education of all children, providing children with additional learning needs the opportunity for early intervention and an individual development plan that, along with reasonable adjustments within the learning environment, can ensure children with additional learning needs are able to work their way up through the hierarchy of need as identified by Maslow (1943) and reach self-actualization. "Through inclusive education children with disabilities remain on a path that leads to adult lives as participating members of society. Meeting all their needs together increases their ability to achieve academic and physical growth to their potential, and it enhances their overall quality of life" (Tomko, 1996).

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Element 3

Explore and summarise the additional learning needs of a pupil using a person centred planning approach.

(Based upon Section 1C IDP : Profile (About me)

and

2A IDP : Description of the child or young person's additional learning needs (ALN))

Section 1C: Profile (About me)

- **What is important to the learner**

My friends are really important to me. I like it when they sit next to me in class and do the same work so we can share ideas because they understand me.

I love music, I'm having drumming lessons in school and I find it helps me to relax and express myself. I am learning to play by listening to the music rather than reading sheet music and I'm really happy with how well I'm doing.

I really want to do well in my school work I like Maths a lot more than reading and writing.

I like stories but I'm really scared to read in class because I worry I might be getting words wrong. I would like to learn braille but am worried I might find it hard and people will laugh.

I really like to be independent and am really keen to do more things without the help of adults. I like my classroom because I know where everything is and I can move around when I need to get something, I really want to get more familiar with other areas in the school this year so I can move around without my LSA.

I really like to have quiet time. Sometimes I find all of the noise in the classroom overwhelming as my hearing is very sensitive this can make me very upset.

I really like to touch and feel things that I can't see, it help me to get an idea in my mind of what we are learning about.

I really like animals, I have a dog at home and he makes me feel really happy, I like how he feels when I stroke him and I like spending time with him because I don't have to explain anything to him, he seems to know how I feel.

• **What is important for the learner**

It is important for child A that staff are aware of what he is able to do independently and only assist when needed.

Child A regularly needs time away from the classroom in the library or the snug if he needs some quiet time.

Child A is happier working in very small groups and likes staff to put him in groups with children he knows well.

It's important for child A that he receives praise and encouragement when he reads as he finds this very difficult.

Any changes to the layout of the classroom need to be discussed with child A to allow him the opportunity to remain independent.

• **What is working and should be built on**

Music lessons have really helped to build Child A's confidence, he is always positive after his drumming lessons and is more likely to engage with activities that he would otherwise lack confidence in. His peripatetic teacher has developed a good system of teaching to play by ear. His musical ability should be recognised and he should be given access to further opportunities

Child A has been working with his LSA to develop his independence within the classroom and now confidently moves around without assistance.

The use of large print books has meant that child A is now beginning to read more fluently. This needs to be developed to encourage confidence and to develop his skills further.

- **What is not working and needs to change.**

Although reading skills are improving child A's reading age is significantly below that of his peers, additional strategies and support needs to be considered for his progress.

Although child A is now able to move around the classroom with confidence, he is very nervous with his mobility around the school site, he is reluctant to have his LSA with him in the playground at break so spends a lot of time in class. Strategies to support his independence need to be introduced.

Section 2A: Description of the child or young person's additional learning needs (ALN)

Cognition and Learning

Communication and Interaction

Sensory and/or Physical

- Optic Nerve Hypoplasia
- Present since birth
- Severely sight impaired
- Poor distance vision
- Can read large sized print with magnification
- Low confidence with own ability to learn
- Reading age currently 5 years lower than peers of same age
- Does not currently use any aids to assist with mobility
- Has a Certification of Visual Impairment

Behaviour, Emotional and social development

Element 4

Discuss the potential support provided to your chosen pupil (utilising the key principles, approaches and policies that guide inclusive practice).

Based upon Section 2B IDP : Description and delivery of the child or young person's additional learning provision (ALP)

Section 2B1: Description and delivery of the child or young person's additional learning provision (ALP)					
2B1.1) Intended outcome: These outcomes should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timebound).		To learn Grade 1 braille, recognising correct hand posture and letter recognition for the whole alphabet and to be able to recognise his own name and read basic cvc words.			
2B1.2) ALP to be provided: <i>This should include how often (daily, weekly); the type of support; who provides the support. The description of the Additional Learning Provision (ALP) should be very clear and precise, the above could then be split into smaller goals and targets.</i>		2B1.3) Should the ALP be provided in Welsh?	2B1.4) Organisation/ Service to provide the ALP, (e.g. NHS, Inclusion Service, Specialist Teacher, etc.):	2B1.5) Start date:	2B1.6) End / Review date:
Twice weekly 1:1 Braille lessons to introduce letter recognition accompanied by daily sessions from trained LSA to reinforce and revise what Child A has learnt that week. Simple braille to be introduced to the classroom environment through name tags on pegs for every child to reinforce learning and encourage inclusion. Fine motor skills to be developed through sorting, matching and categorising activities.		No	Qualified Teacher of Children and Young People with Vision Impairment (QTVI) to visit school for 1:1 sessions. Trained LSA to support daily revision. Class teacher to introduce braille into school day.	10/09/2023	02/04/2024
2B1.7) Rationale for the ALP listed above: <i>If there is a difference of opinion it should be recorded here e.g. a difference of opinion between the child, child's parent or young person and professionals. The section could explain how different opinions have been taken into consideration before a particular decision was reached.</i>		Child A's parents have in the past been reluctant to introduce braille however the progress with Child A's reading ability using large text and magnifying device has been slow and caused frustration for child A. He currently has a reading age 5 years lower than his actual age. Child A has also expressed great interest in learning braille.			

Section 2B2: Description and delivery of the child or young person's additional learning provision (ALP)				
2B2.1) Intended outcome: These outcomes should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timebound).	Child A to develop their musical ability and extend peer group through taking part regularly in the school orchestra, cluster of schools orchestra and music transition days with secondary school.			
2B2.2) ALP to be provided: <i>This should include how often (daily, weekly); the type of support; who provides the support. The description of the Additional Learning Provision (ALP) should be very clear and precise, the above could then be split into smaller goals and targets.</i>	2B2.3) Should the ALP be provided in Welsh?	2B2.4) Organisation/ Service to provide the ALP, (e.g. NHS, Inclusion Service, Specialist Teacher, etc.):	2B2.5) Start date:	2B2.6) End / Review date:
Child A to attend school orchestra sessions weekly, and cluster orchestra monthly with support from LSA and staff from Local Authority Music Services. Ensure music played within orchestra is covered within weekly peripatetic sessions so that child A can learn pieces by ear in advance of orchestra sessions. School staff to work with music services to ensure the orchestra sessions are accessible for child A and to take child A on some familiarisation sessions to the venue in advance.	No	Local Authority music coordinator LSA Peripatetic music teacher	10/09/2023	18/12/2023
2B2.7) Rationale for the ALP listed above: <i>If there is a difference of opinion it should be recorded here e.g. a difference of opinion between the child, child's parent or young person and professionals. The section could explain how different opinions have been taken into consideration before a particular decision was reached.</i>	Child A, his parents and school staff have all identified the increased confidence shown by child A when he takes part in musical activities, all parties agree that this added confidence will assist Child A in forming new friendships with his peers at school and with children from other schools within the cluster in preparation for his transition later this year. The monthly cluster of schools orchestra is held at the secondary school, these sessions will allow Child A to begin to familiarise himself with the school site in advance of the planned transition activities later this academic year.			

Section 2B3: Description and delivery of the child or young person's additional learning provision (ALP)				
2B3.1) Intended outcome: These outcomes should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timebound).	For Child A to be able to move from the classroom to the playground independently and to be able to navigate the playground without the support of his LSA using a cane.			
2B3.2) ALP to be provided: <i>This should include how often (daily, weekly); the type of support; who provides the support. The description of the Additional Learning Provision (ALP) should be very clear and precise, the above could then be split into smaller goals and targets.</i>	2B3.3) Should the ALP be provided in Welsh?	2B3.4) Organisation/ Service to provide the ALP, (e.g. NHS, Inclusion Service, Specialist Teacher, etc.):	2B3.5) Start date:	2B3.6) End / Review date:
Specialists to begin cane training with child A to develop independent living. Twice weekly sessions to be held at school and at home to develop the use of the cane in familiar surroundings and to then widen those skills to other parts of the school including the playground. LSA to receive training in how to support the development of these skills.	No	Local Authority Habilitation Officer Qualified Teacher of Children and Young People with Vision Impairment (QTVI) LSA	05/09/2023	05/01/2024
2B3.7) Rationale for the ALP listed above: <i>If there is a difference of opinion it should be recorded here e.g. a difference of opinion between the child, child's parent or young person and professionals. The section could explain how different opinions have been taken into consideration before a particular decision was reached.</i>	Child A's parents are currently waiting for a consultation with the Guide Dogs for the Blind organisation but have been advised that this process may take up to 12 months to be completed. It has been mutually agreed that not only will the use of a cane help to develop Child A's independence in the short term while they are assessed for a guide dog but that it will also complement the use of a guide dog in the future.			

Section 2B4: Description and delivery of the child or young person's additional learning provision (ALP)				
2B4.1) Intended outcome: These outcomes should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timebound).	To increase Child A's confidence with reading, particularly reading aloud to enable him to read text that he is familiar with to his LSA.			
2B4.2) ALP to be provided: <i>This should include how often (daily, weekly); the type of support; who provides the support. The description of the Additional Learning Provision (ALP) should be very clear and precise, the above could then be split into smaller goals and targets.</i>	2B4.3) Should the ALP be provided in Welsh?	2B4.4) Organisation/ Service to provide the ALP, (e.g. NHS, Inclusion Service, Specialist Teacher, etc.):	2B4.5) Start date:	2B4.6) End / Review date:
Weekly sessions with the reading dog from the "Paws & Read" programme to be held in school. Child A to be encouraged to read text that he is familiar with to develop his confidence with reading using large print books and his magnification device. As his braille skills develop this will also be introduced to the sessions. These sessions will be held in the nurture room where noise and interruption are kept to an absolute minimum.	No	Therapy Dogs Nationwide – Paws & Read programme.	05/09/2023	02/04/2023
2B4.7) Rationale for the ALP listed above: <i>If there is a difference of opinion it should be recorded here e.g. a difference of opinion between the child, child's parent or young person and professionals. The section could explain how different opinions have been taken into consideration before a particular decision was reached.</i>	Child A has a very positive relationship with his pet dog. His parents report that he regularly chooses to spend time with his dog when he is struggling with his confidence and emotions. Therapy dogs can improve a child's confidence with reading aloud and sessions are shown to improve the child's reading standard and overall self-confidence.			

