



Children's
Participation
in Schools

ESRC
Education
Research
Programme
Empowering educators



Children's Participation in Schools

Embedding children's participative rights
in pedagogical practice in lower primary classrooms
in Wales



Meet The Team



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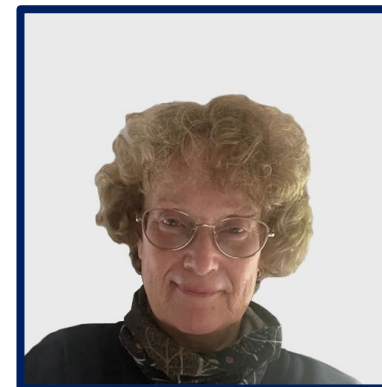
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Meet The Team



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What is research?



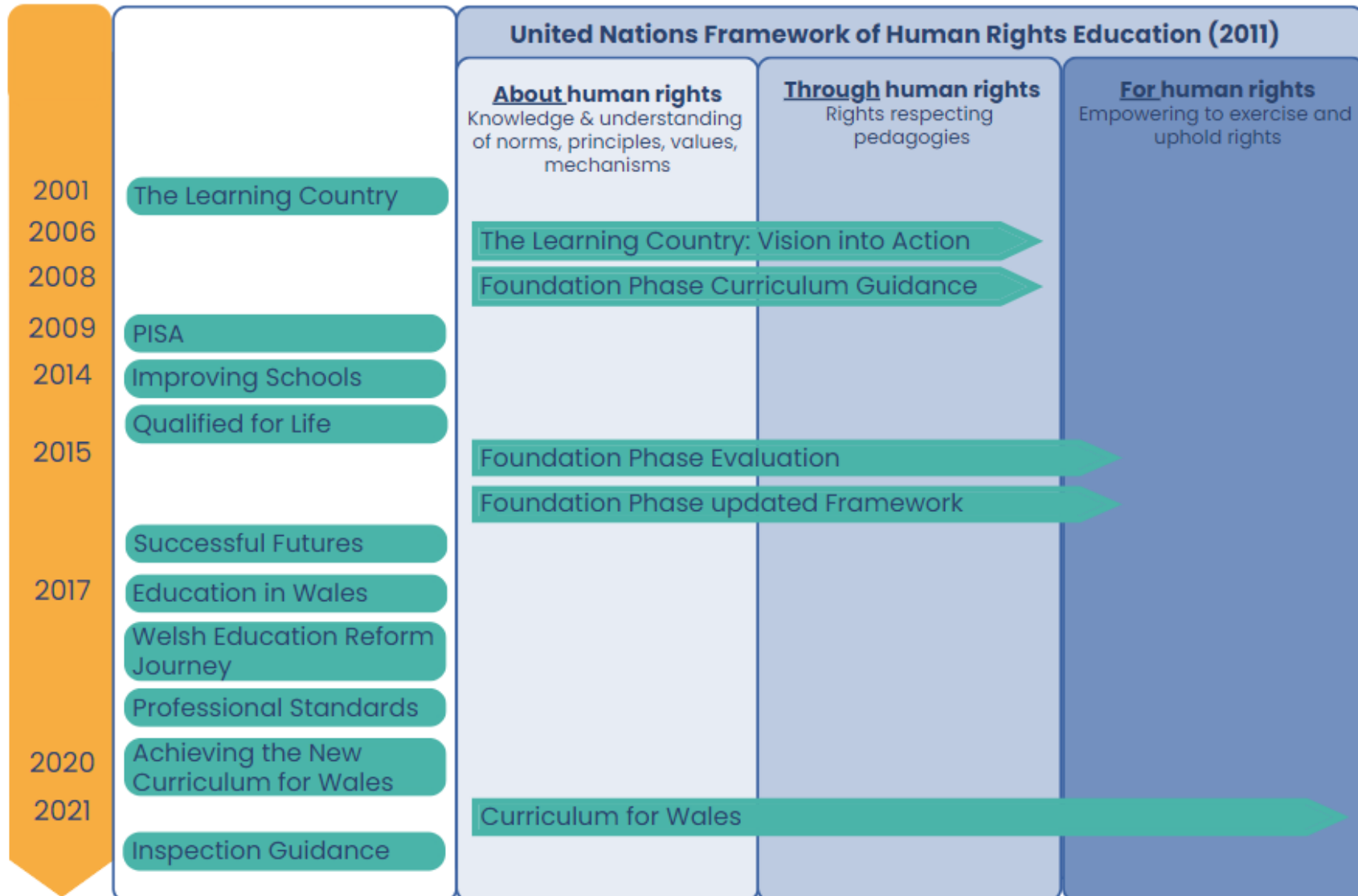
Where are the answers to our research questions?

- Gap between WG policy ambition and policy enactment in relation to young children's participative rights in school
- This project looks at some of the critical points in that policy implementation journey including
 - ❖ Policy analysis
 - ❖ Initial Teacher Education (ITE) and Continuing Professional Learning and Development (CPLD) for teachers and educators
 - ❖ In-service teachers' understandings of children's participative rights and how they can be supported in their classrooms
 - ❖ Young children's understandings of their rights and experiences of participation

Policy Analysis

- Range of legislative and policy documents from Welsh Devolution in 2000–2022
- Cardno's (2018) method of policy analysis
- Looking for UNCRC / Human Rights Education (HRE) / participation / child voice
- These words / concepts were:
 - ❖ Entirely absent
 - ❖ Referenced with no detail or further explanation
 - ❖ Explicit and contextualised
 - ❖ Containing differing understandings of participative rights

Welsh education policy and HRE



Successful Futures (Donaldson, 2015)



Dominant themes

Improving literacy, numeracy, digital skills

Reducing the impact of deprivation on educational outcomes

Skill acquisition, preparing future citizens, full 'participation' in society

Participative rights

Cites WG commitment to UNCRC as a positive aspect of Welsh Education.

One of the four purposes for pupils to be "ethical informed citizens of the world"...

...but there is very limited detail of what is meant by an ethical informed citizen

Within 68 recommendations - no references to UNCRC / HRE / participative rights

Lemke and Zhu (2018)

Technocratic and performance-oriented language, fundamentally future-oriented

Doesn't address necessary reworkings of curricula and pedagogy required to enact transformational change

Successful Futures (2015) fails to engender child rights consonant with the spirit of the UNCRC

CfW: United Nations Framework (2011)

Experiencing rights through education

Children's rights approach

The right to participate in decisions

Collaboration

Equality, dignity, respect, non-discrimination

Both practitioners and learners

Duty bearers accountable



Education
about human
rights

School leaders responsible for ensuring
knowledge and understanding of the UNCRC



Education
through
human rights



Education
for human
rights

Motivation of social action

Empowerment of active citizenship

Advance respect for the rights of all

What it means to be an ethically
informed citizen of Wales and the
world

Survey of ITE providers: Findings

- Only 2 of 9 programmes had specific aims or learning objectives around children's participative rights
 - ❖ "recognising the needs and rights of all pupils"
 - ❖ "Familiarise students with the most recent national guidance on...UNCRC...."
- Only 8 of 24 modules had specific aims or learning objectives around children's participative rights
 - ❖ develop skills of listening to learners and valuing pupil voice
 - ❖ the use of learner voice
 - ❖ appreciate and accommodate the role of the learner's voice in the development of effective learning and teaching
 - ❖ consider the voice of the teacher and the learner in relation to co-shaping school experiences and curricular experiences
- No content sits within education *for* human rights

Working with student teachers and teacher educators

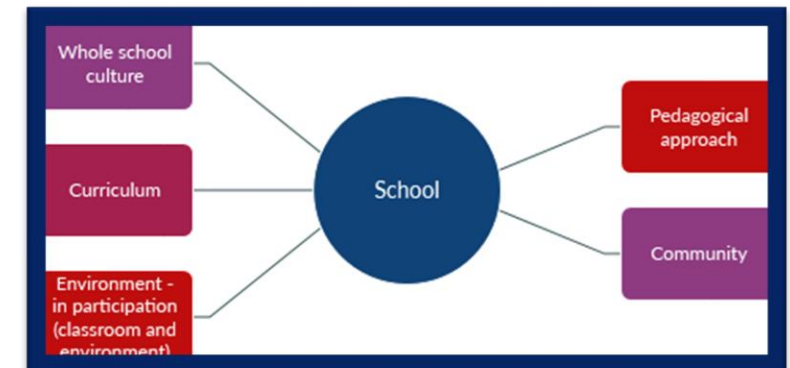
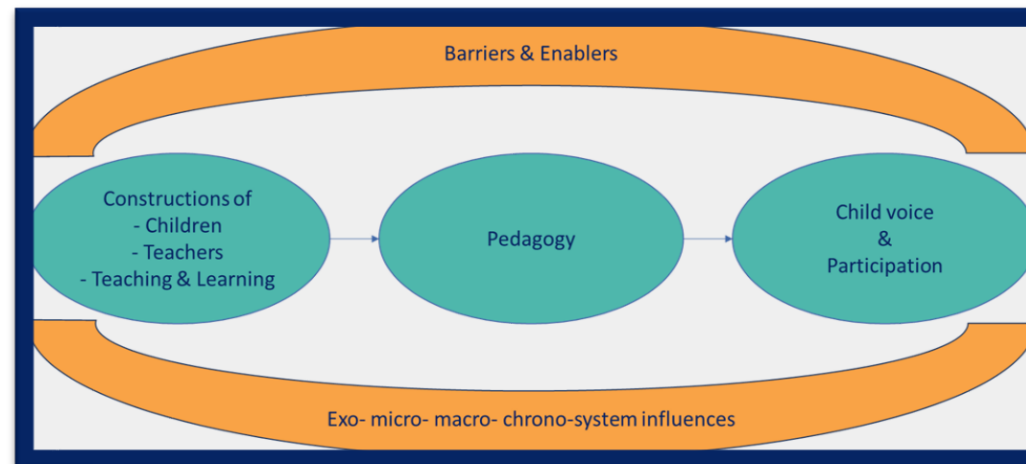
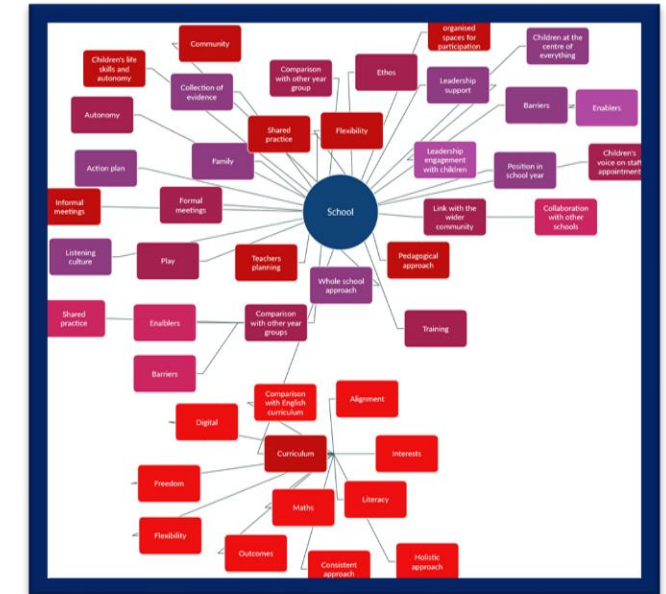
- Focus groups
 - With ITE and PGCE student teachers
- Discursive workshops
 - With teacher educators

Working with primary school teachers

- Semi-structured interviews with 14 teachers across 7 schools across Wales
- Reggio Emilia inspired workshops to surface understandings of participative rights and barriers and enablers to embedding them in lower primary school classroom practice in Wales
- Class projects
- Second reflective semi-structured interviews with teachers

Working with primary school teachers

Reflexive Thematic Analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006)



Working with children

- Children's Advisory Board
 - Co-producing research methodologies with children
- Classroom visits to participating schools
 - Using creative methodologies informed by our CAB to find out about
 - Children's understandings of their participative rights
 - Children's experiences of their participative rights

- Network
- Conferences
- Policy-makers
- Practitioners
- Academic papers
- Accessible and child-friendly outputs
- More funding!



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😊 Thank you for listening 😊