

I have not used AI in this assignment

1. Section 1
2. Section 2
3. Section 3
4. Reference list

Section 1

To begin, the national curriculum was introduced to primary and secondary schools around Wales and England to ensure all schools are following the same process and teaching to the same standards (Gov.uk, 2014). Schools follow different curriculums to receive a higher expectation from the children and receive better results, curriculums also prepare children for their future (GOV.UK, 2016). A play-based curriculum has been brought into childcare settings to enhance learning through play. The play-based curriculum encourages adults and children to be involved in the play, and both have the opportunities to lead the activity (Right to Play, 2026). A play-based curriculum is beneficial for all children as it encourages holistic development and demonstrates different ways of learning catering to the children's age (McArdle, 2024). To agree with this, learning through play is an important approach settings follow as it excels in providing confidence for children and focusing on improving their development in different areas (Heathfields House, 2025). This assignment will be exploring the different aspects of the new curriculum and the foundation phases and comparing them both to find similar and different opinions and explore the reason the curriculum has implemented changes. In section 2 research will be used to understand what a unique child is and how assessments can support them. Finally, section 3 will be a blog to investigate whether outdoor learning is beneficial for children.

In 2022 the new curriculum was implemented into all schools around Wales. Before the settings implemented the curriculum, it was important the curriculum ensured it was accessible for all learners, including children with additional learning needs (Welsh Government, 2024). According to GOV.UK, (2022) the new curriculum was introduced into Wales, as the old curriculum schools were following was not providing children life lessons and a guide for success in their future. Agreeing with this, a website explains schools implemented the new curriculum to ensure the standards are met and children feel confident in particular areas, for example, numeracy and literacy. This is important as it supports children developing more skills (Welsh Government, 2022). According to Curriculum and assessment review (2025), the new curriculum intends on using subjects to support all children to thrive while moving year groups and schools. However, disagreeing with their opinion, the same article explains the new curriculum works for many children however, children with additional learning needs often struggle to meet the same expectations, which can lead them to fall behind in school and affect their wellbeing (Curriculum and assessment review, 2025). However, to prevent this problem from rising, a strategy introduced to overcome the issue was to increase staff members to provide support for the children (GOV.UK, 2026).

The new curriculum created four purposes for children and staff members to follow these purposes are “ambitious, healthy, enterprising and ethical”. This has been created to influence all aspects of the curriculum (Gatley, 2020). The four core purposes provide the children with a sense of accomplishment once they have completed one (Gatley, 2020). Throughout schools in Wales children are found to be more confident in particular aspects and are becoming more resilient when completing lessons (GOV. Wales, 2022). On one hand, since the new curriculum has been followed in school settings, children are developing more skills to support them in their later life, for example, critical thinking. Since the curriculum has focused on child-based play, children are embedded to critically evaluate and problem-solve (Welsh Government, 2020). This source supports this idea as it states when children are learning through play, it is more beneficial for them as they are learning and thinking in a more authentic scenario (Wentworthville, 2025). On the other hand, while children are experiencing play-based learning, it can become difficult for practitioners to assess the children’s literacy development, for example, reading and writing (Deluca, 2018). Going back to the point mentioned above, the new curriculum encourages children to be confident and resilient. This is done by focusing on children’s well-being. According to the Welsh Government, (2020) schools will support children in understanding how they feel and the importance of expressing their emotions and listening to others’ feelings. To agree with this, another article also explains when children’s wellbeing is being looked after, the children are found to have a more positive experience while they are in school (HWB, 2024). This links to the UNCRC, as article 3 states all children’s best interests should be focused on (UNICEF, 2019).

To add to this, another curriculum that will be researched is the foundation phase. The foundation phase is a mandatory curriculum all primary schools follow that was implemented in 2010 to develop children’s understanding of play and create different forms of learning. Adding to this, the foundation phase is used for children aged three to seven this displays the opinion that play provides young children an active learning experience to enhance children’s development (Welsh Government, 2015). The foundation phase focuses on learning through play and developing children’s skills while exploring. Agreeing with this statement, a source states a play-based approach not only supports the children’s learning, the children are also experiencing hands-on activities which support their problem-solving, risk play and communicating their findings with their peers (Waters, 2016).

Also, the foundation phase has aims for schools which have to be surrounding the children in order for them to explore. Some of these key areas are the Welsh language and personal and social development. There are also five other aims that children need to explore (Daynurseries, 2026). The foundation phase is beneficial for children as they are able to investigate indoor and outdoor provisions while holistically developing and focusing on each other’s wellbeing (Maynard et al., 2010). This links to Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, as Maslow states all children should receive safety and love everywhere they go (Maslow, 1943). Many childcare settings have expressed their opinion on the foundation phase framework. According to Greier, (2025), the foundation phase framework settings explained that the framework has understood the needs of the children and adults and has supported the adults in creating a positive outcome for the children. However, according to the BBC, (2014), a worry adults are concerned about is children being unprepared when moving year groups and eventually completing tests. Another concern that was

brought to the researchers' attention was children relying more on adult support and being unable to independently complete activities, as there are more adults needed in order for the scheme to successfully work. According to the Department of Education, (2021) it is important all childcare practitioners have some childcare qualifications to ensure they can provide the best support for children in their care. These qualifications can be level 2 or 3 and a qualification in literacy and numeracy (GOV.UK, 2022). Another source that agrees with this is GOV.UK, (2025) this website explains having qualified staff in a childcare setting encourages the children as they feel secure and have a more significant chance of succeeding in different areas. This links to the early years foundation stage as the framework clearly states all staff working with children should have the correct qualifications to support the children and their needs (GOV.UK, 2014).

In addition, the foundation phase framework has multiple similarities to the new curriculum. One similarity is children's well-being, the framework and the curriculum both believe well-being is an essential part of children's school experience. It also supports children's learning as they feel protected in their setting (HWB, No date). To agree with this, another source also states the curriculum and the framework are also supporting the children's resilience by caring for their wellbeing. The children are able to understand how they manage their emotions and how it is important to express them (ME respect, 2022). A theorist that links to well-being is Bandura. Bandura's theory is focused on behaviour which links to the children being resilient (Reach Link, 2025). Adding to this, the framework and the curriculum both believe in a play-based approach. Both of these approaches support play-based learning, according to Preidyte, (2025). Explains play-based learning is used to encourage children to develop their skills and holistic development. However, these approaches do not support all their opinions for example, the foundation phase framework has specific targets for the children that are expected to succeed, however, the curriculum for Wales does not believe in specific targets, as they believe all the children are working towards the four purposes (HWB, 2020). To include both approaches' focus on all children being included in education. It is important for all children to be treated the same because it encourages everyone to celebrate all children and make them feel safe and comfortable (Early Years Alliance, 2026). This is supported by the Equality Act, as the Equality Act ensures all children are protected and no one is left out (GOV.UK, 2013). However, according to the Welsh Government, (2026) even though ensuring discrimination is not happening in settings, children are at different stages, and children with additional learning needs may require other types of support.

To conclude, the new curriculum is beneficial for all children in Wales as it supports them in preparing for their future through play-based learning while developing their holistic development. In addition, the foundation phase supports the similar aspects of the new curriculum as well as providing children with targets to encourage them to support themselves, therefore the new curriculum and the foundation phase framework both support play-based curricula and find it important to follow it throughout their practice.

Section 2

In this section, the unique child will be explored, and programmes to support this. The unique child is a principle in early years and works alongside the early years foundation phase that emphasises all children are different (Leach, 2025). Adding to

this, another source also states when children are younger it is important because it is their time to experience new stuff and take time to enjoy themselves (Welsh Government, ND). It is important unique children are respected, as all children have different personalities, and each child should be treated individually (Nutbrown, 2019). In childcare settings childcare practitioners complete many different assessments on the children in their care. An assessment directs the practitioners in showing them the level the children are at and where the children may need more support in (Smith et al. 2001). This book also explains that when assessing children, it is beneficial as you are able to provide children with targets which can encourage the child to independently reach that target too (Smith et al. 2001). The unique child should experience assessments, as all children should individually have the chance to have strategies put in place to support their needs and experience an independent learning goal (Department for Education, 2024).

Adding to this, unique children all have different abilities and can find schools challenging or find themselves progressing quickly however, children from different backgrounds can experience school differently. According to Parekh, (2017) children with a different background and a low-income family can automatically be placed into a low-ability group while being judged on their upbringing, this can be damaging to a child's mental health as the child is unable to display their true capability. Research has shown the effects of grouping children based on their ability however, schools are found to continue doing this. This does not support the UNCRC, as article 2 states all children should feel included (UNICEF, 2019). Further support is required so all children are treated the same and experience the same respect.

To begin, the assessment tool that will be focused on is the foundation phase profile. As part of supporting the children's development, the foundation phase profile develops children's learning and holistic development while they are in the foundation phase, the assessment ensures the progress of each child to receive positive outcomes (Welsh Government, 2017). Adding to this, the main purpose of this profile is practitioners preparing children for their transition out of early years and into year one. The results will go towards the support the child may benefit from while they are in year one. Also, the assessment is helpful for parents to have a view on where their child is at and how they can provide support for them while at home (Department for Education, 2021). In order for staff members to see progress in the children's work, childcare practitioners complete the assessment in the first term of the child entering reception and the last term of the academic year (GOV.UK, 2025). Adding to this, there are many benefits to the foundation phase profile, one of these benefits is the foundation phase profile provides childcare practitioners with advice and support on creating activities to support the children (Welsh Government, 2015). This source also states another benefit of the foundation profile is children are able to be themselves and have work specialised for them ensuring the children can complete it in their own time this links to the unique child as the assessment ensures all children have their own target to succeed in (Welsh Government, 2015). However, research has also suggested a weakness of the foundation phase profile is the assessment is too time-consuming and precise, which can make children withdraw from the assessment (Welsh Government, 2022). Adding to this, another challenge that is faced with the foundation phase profile is that the profile creates an excessive amount of paperwork for the childcare practitioners, which is causing the practitioners to miss out on teaching and providing support in other areas, for example, playing (Siraj-Blatchford et al. , 2007). This does not respond to Vygotsky,

as his theory is focused on how important play is for children and how important play-based learning is for children (Mathias. L, 2019).

Adding to this, another assessment tool that is often used is progression steps. Progression Steps is an assessment for children aged three to sixteen to support them in improving the child's abilities and developing their knowledge (HWB, 2019). This assessment supports the unique child, as it does not focus on the age of the children it focuses on the children's ability and provides each child with an opportunity to complete work at their level and at their pace (HWB, 2019). Agreeing with this, another source explains the progression steps also provide children with an opportunity to implement changes to their learning at their own pace (HWB, 2020). To add to this section, another source believes The progression steps accommodate the unique child as the programme supports practitioners in creating activities for children based on their current knowledge. This also provides the practitioners to plan the child's next steps, ready for future activities (HWB, 2020). Agreeing with this, another source displays staff members creating individual work for children and describes them as competent staff members (Every child matters, 2011). This is related to the child-centred approach, as the child-centred approach explains all children deserve a voice, and practitioners should examine situations from a child's perspective to ensure the child's best interests are thought about (Kallinen et al. , 2026). Also, there are five different areas the childcare practitioners focus on. This is a benefit because all children are able to have the experience of developing themselves in all areas (Welsh Government, 2021). Another benefit to the progression steps is, unlike the foundation phase profile, progression steps is a whole school programme from the beginning of children's primary experience to adolescents in secondary school (HWB, ND). A problem that was brought into consideration was teaching staff not following the same procedure, which can confuse the children when completing the assessment. Concerns regarding this issue has been raised and now to ensure this is not going to happen the programme has ensured all teaching staff are collaboratively working together to evaluate scores and support children in succeeding (Singh et al. , 2020). Another challenge of using progression steps is some children, specifically those with additional learning needs, may find it harder to develop using the same patterns of progression as their class peers (Welsh Government, 2021). This can be conflicting with the additional learning needs policy, as it states children's individual needs and pathways are supported and adapted to support them (Welsh Government, 2021).

Also, the two programmes that have been discussed throughout this show numerous similarities, for example, child-centred learning. Both of these assessment tools ensure a child-centred approach is followed, as child-centred learning is a safeguarding responsibility to ensure all children are protected and feel respected in all areas (High-speed training, 2025). To support this, according to Safeguarding Wales, (ND) it is important staff members know the experiences of the children. Both assessments also agree on holistic development. Practitioners focus on children's development as it facilitates the whole child and ensures each part of the child is developed to the best of their abilities (Birth to 5 Matters, 2023). However, a disagreement the two assessments have is the way they explain to practitioners how to assess the progress. They use the same form to explore what the children can do, this is known as 'observation'. However, the foundation phase profile mainly observes children's current knowledge, while the progression steps suggest recording next steps and observing children's development in all key areas.

Observation is a reliable source that provides practitioners with a view on the children in a different environment, focusing on the children's understanding and interests (Louis, 2022). Another disagreement between the two assessment programmes is that they focus on different ages. The foundation phase profile focuses on children aged three to seven as it encourages them to take notice of how important developing their independence is and experience play through learning (Waldron et al., 2014). However, the progression steps are an assessment programme for children aged three to sixteen. This is because progression steps focus on the progression of the child rather than the age of the child. Even though there are five different steps, these steps are based on guidance to support the practitioners to know where the child is at (My Progression, 2026).

To conclude, the unique child should be protected in all settings as they experience their activities designed for their ability. As mentioned previously, the foundation phase profile is an ideal assessment for children aged three to seven to support their development. The progression steps are also a beneficial assessment as it focuses on all children in education and focuses on how they are developing and not basing their activities on their age. As displayed previously both assessments have many areas the same and some that they have differently.

Section 3

Introduction

This blog will be focused on the question: have all schools got access to an outdoor provision all day? I have chosen to explain this topic because outdoor provision has become an important part of children's education however, many researchers have found some schools have not got as much access to the outdoors compared to others. This blog is going to find out the real reason for this. Before this blog begins it is important to know what outdoor learning actually is. According to Bilton, (2025) outdoor learning is described as a planned experience for opportunities of observing the children in a different environment, ensuring there are opportunities for independence and problem-solving.

Main Body

When children are outside, there is more of an opportunity to assess how their holistic development really is. So after finding out what outdoors can do for both practitioners and children, why are there still some schools that have not got access to their outdoors all day? Research has shown a main reason some schools do not have access to outdoors is because of funding and lack of training (Patchen, 2022). Research has shown that "almost a third of children spend less than thirty minutes outside each day" (Machan, 2016). Do you think children should spend their school hours inside when outdoors provides children with such great opportunities?

Is the outdoors really beneficial for children? According to Tinney, (2023) outdoors provides children with an opportunity to spark their curiosity and support social and emotional development as well as focus on children's gross motor skills. Outdoors also provides children with the chance to question the world around them and learn about the importance of nature. To support this, UNICEF, (2025) explains outdoors supports children's risky play as well as encourages free play however, research from this source has explained children from countries globally and girls are found to not go outside as much. However, there are some barriers to children playing

outside. For example, there are many safety cautions that can put the children in danger, for example, traffic and children hurting themselves outside this is often the reason teachers and parents find outdoors concerning. Another problem that can affect outdoors is school settings not having enough grass area this can stop children from accessing their independence (Forest school learning initiatives, 2025). In my opinion I disagree with this barrier, as I believe having children outside will allow the children to learn what can possibly hurt you and allow the children to use their initiative and imagination to create fun activities to do while outside.

In disadvantaged areas most schools have been there for many years, causing them to have funding problems, leading their outdoor area to not be used as frequently as it should. The Welsh government has made a decision to provide the schools in these areas a grant to support their outdoor facilities (GOV.UK, 2023). The slow implementation of the outdoor funding has caused children to be restricted from experiencing play-based learning.

For example:



(Central primary school, 2020)

This is a picture of an older school, as shown in this image, the children are unable to have access to the yard all day, as the yard is not connected to any classrooms. There are no different areas for the children to explore, and there is no equipment for the children either. The children are able to use their imagination while playing in this yard however, there is not much for the children to explore and question. This school is not supporting the children's curiosity, the children in this setting may find it harder to express themselves and could struggle to burn off their energy, making it harder to concentrate.

However, new school buildings have designed their schools to ensure the outdoor provision is attached to the indoor provision to allow children to have that indoor-outdoor freedom (Architype, 2020). From a critical point of view children accessing an outdoor provision should not be based on the area of their school. Research has shown that children attending a newer school are found to be happier in their setting and develop more with the facilities they have been provided (Welsh Government, 2025).

For example:



(HWB, ND)

This picture is displaying a modern school that allows the children to receive an indoor and outdoor free flow. The children attending this school will have the opportunity to explore an indoor and outdoor provision at all times of the day. The image displays areas where the children can focus on gross motor skills, being creative and enhancing their risky play. All schools should be providing children in their setting with the opportunity to make a decision on where they want to learn throughout their school day.

To conclude, this blog has shown multiple benefits to an outdoor space as well as some negatives. The main issue for schools having access to the outdoors all day is the area of the school and the length of time the school has been built for. In order to change this, all schools in all areas should have an opportunity to collaboratively work together to receive training and resolve their outdoor provision. Adding to this, a key step that should be adopted is all child care settings having a grant to create a positive learning environment for children to have access to a supportive free-flow space between indoors and outdoors. As I question if an outdoor environment can provide children with progress and positive well-being, why are only wealthy areas allowed to provide this for their children? Children should experience equal learning opportunities regardless of the school they attend and decisions that are out of their control.

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