

‘Supporting pupil progress: a detailed analysis of one child’s holistic development, with justification for the next steps in learning.’

Introduction

My current teaching practice is taking place at a primary school in Cardiff, which has over 700 pupils on roll with 3 form entry. Approximately 11% of pupils receive free school meals which is below the national average of 18%. Additionally, 13% of pupils have additional learning needs, which is again below the national average 22%. Most pupils are white British and speak English.

In this school I am currently responsible for teaching a Year 3 class, where I have identified one target child, who is a middle to high ability female learner. For the purpose of this assignment, she will be identified as Pupil A. This pupil is in the middle group for mathematics and literacy, however when challenges are set in topic/context lessons she often chooses the hardest challenge to complete.

This assignment will consider Pupil A’s holistic development which will take into account her skills, knowledge, understanding attitudes and how these impact upon her learning. This will be in relation to the ASK model introduced by Nottingham (2013).

Data Collection

The Mosaic Approach was used to collect data, with observations, photographs, verbal map making and an interview being conducted. The Mosaic Approach developed by Moss and Clarke (2001) is an approach which puts the child at the centre of their own experiences and listens to their perspective about their lives. The first piece of the Mosaic Approach is observation. Several observations have been made about Pupil A whilst on teaching practice which will be discussed in the next section. Observations do have advantages and disadvantages, advantages include being able to observe the child’s behaviour in a naturalistic setting rather than an artificial laboratory (Coolican, 2014). However, one disadvantage is reactivity effects,

where the child knows they are being observed so change their behaviour accordingly (Coolican, 2014). To overcome this limitation, these observations would take place randomly throughout the school period. The next stages in the Mosaic Approach are photographs and mapping. These two approaches were combined into one, where Pupil A took me around the school on a tour whilst taking photographs of her favourite places in school to learn. Finally, an unstructured interview took place with Pupil A who discussed more in depth her likes, dislikes and favourite things in school. An unstructured interview was chosen as this allows there was not a set question to be explored, allowing the interview to be flexible and broad, with the questions dependent on the child's responses (Holloway and Wheeler, 2010). One difficulty of unstructured interviews is that it requires the interviewer to listen actively noting any interesting data and asking more questions on this to gather further data. This means that the interviewer must be a good communicator with excellent conversation facilitation skills (Doody and Noonan, 2013).

Many ethical considerations were taken into account prior to beginning this assignment in line with BERA (2018) guidelines. Firstly, the trainee teacher spoke to the class teacher about this assignment and obtained permission about collecting data from a child (see appendix A). Once this permission was obtained, a child was selected by the class teacher to complete this project. The trainee teacher talked to Pupil A about the requirements of this assignment and the need to work closely with one child in the class. Once Pupil A gave her assent to this a letter was sent out to the child's parents explaining this project and a consent form for them to return (see appendix B). Other ethical considerations for this project included informing Pupil A she could withdraw from being the target child at any time, as well as all data being collected being confidential and anonymous. This was done by anonymising the child's identity and referring to her as 'Pupil A' and keeping the data shared with the trainee teacher private. Any physical notes made by the trainee teacher about the target child were kept in a locked cupboard. Typed data was kept on a password protected computer. Lastly, the photographs taken by the child were also kept on a password protected iPad. Once these photographs were taken they were transferred onto another password protected computer, where the originals on the iPad were deleted. Once the images were transferred onto this document they were deleted off the computer.

Analysis of Learner

Observations

The first learner observation record that was made against Pupil A was in mathematics. This observation noted that she was a quiet conscientious learner who was fairly independent. She was well behaved and listened intently to the teacher, correcting all her work as appropriate. I observed that a need to build her confidence and develop her ability to be able to express her opinion to the class was something which was needed, as this would facilitate conversations with her peers allowing both parties to learn from each other. My second observation form was completed in another mathematics lesson, where I noted Pupil A working very closely with her partner. She enjoyed working with a partner and discussing the questions and how to answer the questions. Once again, I noted the need to develop this learner's confidence to be able to work independently and sharing her thoughts with the whole class as opposed to her partner. My final learner observation form took place in a music lesson. Pupil A thoroughly enjoyed the music lesson where she engaged fully in the lesson and was able to give her opinion confidently to the class. I believe that Pupil A was able to share her opinion in music as she plays the violin. This means she has extra knowledge which the class do not know. I believe the next steps in music is to develop the performing aspect of learning, as being able to perform in front of the class will develop her confidence. This is something which will help in other subjects, as the need to build her confidence is apparent in other subjects.

When observing the literacy work completed by this learner, she has a high ability for reading and comprehension skills. What needs improving is her handwriting and spelling skills. One example of this is her comprehension answers of a cloze procedure. Whilst she got the answers correct, the spelling was inaccurate, for example spelling leopard as "leopod".

When listening to this learner read and completing a reading record it was discovered this learner is an excellent reader. At the end of foundation phase, she had a reading age of 9 years. Observation notes on this learner includes her enjoyment for reading and reading with enthusiasm. Pupil A is able to decode and segment words well, although I have noted that she does occasionally read too quickly, where she will skip letters out altering the word that is on the page. This

learner needs to self-assess her own reading skills, for example, realising that the word or sentence she has just read does not make sense and needs to self-correct herself. This is something she is occasionally doing but relies on the teacher to correct her. After listening to Pupil A read I test her comprehension skills to see how much information she is understanding and retaining. Pupil A is always able to confidently answer these questions I pose to her, demonstrating a good knowledge which is comprised of facts, figures, concepts or ideas that she has just read about. When comparing this learner to the national curriculum expectations for reading, Pupil A is currently a Level 3. She is able to read a range of texts fluently and accurately whilst understanding the main points and expressing preferences. To move onto a Level 4, Pupil A needs to begin to use inference and deduction.

Due to the 3 week period of national tests, the trainee teacher has been unable to observe many subjects excluding mathematics and literacy. However, one session was observed in PE and two sessions of music, and so it is these sessions which will also be focused on for this assignment. The PE session that Pupil A participated in, it was observed that Pupil A thoroughly enjoyed the PE session and was confident in this lesson to converse with other children and complete the activities with these children. When asking about her attitudes towards PE, it was revealed that the child enjoyed activities which were practical and physical, as this was enjoyable.

During the 2 music lessons which the trainee teacher delivered, it was also observed that Pupil A was highly engaged throughout these lessons too. Following the music lesson, Pupil A stated she enjoys music and plays the violin. Furthermore, it was stated that this is a hobby of hers as music offers practical activities, such as playing instruments or singing. During this music lesson, I observed Pupil A's confidence as being heightened in this lesson compared to other lessons. This was particularly apparent in the more obscure creative music activities, for example, getting up and having to move to the tempo or dynamics of the music. This is something which many children were unsure about due to the ambiguous nature of the task, however Pupil A took this in her stride. This enjoyment for music and moving around making activities physical and practical has been supported by research, for example Temmerman (2000) found pre-school children responded favourably towards music lessons, particularly if they involved moving or playing based activities.

Regarding Pupil A's wellbeing, I have observed her for four weeks and she has always seemed a very positive, happy child. She faces each lesson with an open mind and displays resilience when faced with challenges. Even in her least preferred subject (as discussed in the interview subheading title), she is still very positive and enjoys learning. Her wellbeing is positively impacted by her friends, as she is surrounded by many friends due to her good social skills. She is able to seek support from these friends if she is struggling with some aspect of school life, such as a difficult piece of work.

Finally, I have observed this child out of the classroom, such as play times and lunch times. Her behaviour here is consistent with her classroom behaviour, for example, she shows prosocial behaviour, good friendships and a positive state of mind.

Photographs/Map Making

Pupil A took the trainee teacher around the school to take pictures of her favourite places to learn. One photograph that Pupil A in the classroom was of the book corner (see figure A). When asked why this image was important to her, she expressed her love of reading. This opinion has been backed up when I have listened to Pupil A read, as it is clear she thoroughly enjoys reading. She reads with expression and with enthusiasm. When asked if there was anything Pupil A would like to change about the book corner, she expressed a desire to use it more. Whilst on my time on teaching practice I have not yet seen the class teacher let children use the book corner. This is something that will be changed whilst I am on teaching practice, for example if the children finish their work early, I will send them to the book corner. Another change that Pupil A expressed about the book corner was to make it more comfortable, as there are only two cushions in the book corner. Pupil A would like to use the book corner more frequently and be comfortable in this area.



Figure A – a photograph Pupil A took of the book corner in the classroom.

Other photographs that Pupil A taken were of the school field and the play area (see figure B). These places were significant to the child because of her enjoyment of doing practical and physical activities. Pupil A expressed a desire to learn outdoors more frequently, as this is something not done regularly. This is something the trainee teacher will consider- how to take lessons outdoors and make them outdoor learning as opposed to being inside the classroom. This will help children like Pupil A who are naturally curious and have a desire to be active and engaged outdoors.



Figure B – photographs Pupil A took of the school field and play area.

Similar to the above, more photographs were taken of the outdoor yard area (see figure C), again due to Pupil A's curiosity and excitement of being outside. Whilst taking these photographs she recalled the games that is played with these yard designs, most of them being mathematical of some kind. For example, Pupil A enjoys posing addition or subtraction sums to her peers to stand on the correct answer on the dartboard. This shows her social, communicative and intellectual skills are being developed during play times, and demonstrates her enjoyment of being outside involved in practical activities.



Figure C – photographs Pupil A took of the school yard.

Interview

Once the photographs and mapmaking aspect of the Mosaic Approach was completed, Pupil A was interviewed to discuss her photographs and areas of interest in the school. This interview was unstructured (see data collection subheading for justification), and discussions took place surrounding Pupil A's liked and disliked subjects as well as the photographs and tour of the school. When asked about her favourite subjects, Pupil A stated her favourite subjects were art, music and ICT. When questioned more about this, it was revealed she enjoyed the practical nature of these subjects. It was also revealed that Pupil A's mother is an artist, which is why

the child enjoys art, as she has many opportunities at home to be creative and use her mother's materials.

When asked about her disliked subjects, Pupil A only gave one answer for this-mathematics. She stated she found maths boring as it simply requires her to sit down and write. When asked about if maths became a practical subject which would involve her doing more than simply writing, she stated she would then enjoy maths significantly more.

When making a judgement on Pupil A's attitudes (in relation to the ASK model), her desire to want to get involved in physical and practical activities reveals she is curious in nature, and wants to explore and get involve. She does have a desire to succeed in school life, for example, she chooses to pick the hardest challenge piece of work in literacy/topic lessons. Pupil A also displays resilience in school, where she will always reattempt a piece of work if it is incorrect. She also displays self-regulation of her emotions, as Pupil A is able to control her emotions and behaviours, always being excellently behaved in class and kind to her class mates. Lastly, Pupil A is very open minded, where this has been displayed in music classes. For example, when the class has been given as slightly ambiguous activity (such as move your body to the dynamics or tempo of the music), Pupil A carefully considers what she needs to do and will always attempt the presented activity with an open mind.

When considering this learners skills, Pupil A displays good intellectual, social, communicative and physical skills. She enjoys participating in physical and practical activities (as revealed through each aspect of the Mosaic Approach), as well as possessing communicative and social skills to build good relationships with her peers. Her good intellectual skills have been demonstrated all subjects, having the ability to execute the instructions given by the teacher. Furthermore, she chooses to complete the complex challenges in literacy/topic lessons.

Next Steps

One way forward for this learner which was repeatedly observed and identified in the above section was the need to develop this learner's confidence. One way in which this could be done is through music and the delivered music lessons by the trainee. Pupil A is a violin player with no performing history. This is something which could be incorporated into music lessons- the less confident children having the opportunity to warm the class up by listening to some music played by the children. This is something which would develop Pupil A's confidence, which would initially begin to build in music lessons but then would transfer to all other subjects and lessons. This would give Pupil A the confidence she needs to speak up more in lessons and give her the opportunity to learn from others as they would also learn from her.

Considering how this could be implemented into music lessons, the trainee teacher could ask Pupil A to play a song she has learned incorporating the different musical elements that the class are learning about, such as dynamics or tempo. Developing confidence through performance has been supported by research, for example, Hannell (2012) wrote that confidence only develops through performance and action. This is something which may be unsettling to Pupil A to begin with, although Hannell (2012) stated that once this first step of performing has been taken then that is when a child can begin to build their confidence.

Another way forward that was identified for this learner was to improve her handwriting skills. Although there is a rapid increase in the use of technology and the reliance on this technology for writing, it is still important that children learn this key life skill which is legible handwriting. Having neat handwriting is important as research has found that having poor handwriting can affect academic success and self-esteem (Feder and Majnemer, 2007). This is something which has been identified for the whole class in which the trainee teacher has put into place handwriting lessons. This takes place in the form of children having their own handwriting books with them being explicitly taught how to write neatly. For example, all children will sit on the carpet whilst the teacher models how to write neatly. Children will identify why the writing is neat and copy this onto whiteboards whilst on the carpet. The trainee teacher will also display writing which is untidy, where the children will have to specifically point out why it is untidy. Once this has been modelled on the carpet, children have to go off and use their handwriting books

(which has different lines in the book to practice handwriting) to practice handwriting. This is something which has been benefiting Pupil A to have these explicit lessons in handwriting. Her handwriting still needs improvement, and these handwriting lessons will continue throughout the teaching practice. Evidence suggests that handwriting difficulties do not resolve without an intervention (Feder and Majnemer, 2007) and thus it is important to put something into place in the classroom to help the children improve their writing. One survey which took place investigating how teachers taught handwriting revealed the most common way of teaching handwriting was by the teacher explicitly modelling letter formation, with 97% of teachers using this method (Graham et al, 2008). Other methods included having children trace or copy letters, children verbally identifying best formed letters or malformed letters. These findings are something I am basing my practice on, as a combination of these approaches are being used when I teach handwriting.

The spelling of Pupil A also needs improving. This has been identified in literacy lessons and some steps have been taken to improve this. Firstly, the trainee teacher now identifies a spelling error by underlining this. The child will then try and find the correct spelling in a dictionary. This approach has been taken for Pupil A due to her being middle to high ability, and having the ability/independence to be able to try and correct the spelling herself. Another recommendation for Pupil A will be to continue reading regularly, as research has demonstrated that being exposed to correct spellings significantly improves children's spellings (Dixon and Kaminska, 2007). The trainee teacher has looked at some approaches which other schools have used to support children with spellings. Spensley St Primary School states students must be explicitly and systematically taught spellings, one way to do this is by the teacher modelling the correct spellings and sounds. Barnes Primary School suggests 'Rainbow writing', a method which says a link between the brain and the writing hand is key. This link is made by children saying the word before writing it and again saying the word after writing it. This process should be repeated twice more using a different colour pen. This then produces distinct visual image of the word which enhances the effect on a child's memory. Another approach used by Barnes Primary School is using the segmentation technique. Here they suggest segmenting the words rather than looking at individual letters. This way children can get a feel for the word and see if they recognise any of the segments they have just verbalised. They

can then write down these sound segments. Barnes Primary School go further with this telling the children to leave blank a segment they do not know and ask a partner (or parent) for help to fill in the segment sound they were unsure of.

To move Pupil A onto Level 4 for her reading, she needs to begin to use inference and deduction skills. A literature review has been conducted on these skills and how to teach these effectively (Kispal, 2008). One method of teaching these skills is by the teacher modelling it. For example, the teacher can think aloud whilst reading and ask themselves questions in front of the children to demonstrate how they work out comprehension questions and develop inference. By doing this, the teacher makes it explicit to the children how to use inference and deduction skills. Another way of developing these skills is the teacher questioning the children. By asking questions such as *“how do you know this?”* challenges the children to explicitly make this connection and generates discussion of a book. Furthermore, by asking detailed questions about the book (such as about characters, motivations and relationships) it makes the children consider more in depth the text, allowing them further opportunity to make inferences and deductions. Lastly, Kispal (2008) wrote that choosing the correct difficulty of text is important, as choosing too easy books that are more explicit in inferences will not challenge the children or provide them with the opportunities they need to make such inferences. These suggestions made by Kispal (2008) will be implemented in class to help move Pupil A on with her learning, as well as other children who need to be moved onto Level 4 using these skills.

Conclusions

To conclude, this report has considered one target child's holistic development. This was done by using the Mosaic Approach developed by Moss and Clarke (2001) to gather different tiles of information about the child. These tiles included observations, photographs, map making and an interview. Ethical considerations of this study were put into place before commencing this research, such as gaining consent off the class teacher for collecting data, assent off the child and consent off the child's parent to participate in this project. This project then stayed in line with BERA (2018) ethical considerations. When analysing this learner, the trainee teacher identified several areas during the observation phase which kept reoccurring- her confidence.

Increasing Pupil A's confidence would benefit her in all areas of learning, as this would give her the ability to be able to confidently share her opinion with the class, and allow them to learn from her and her to learn from them. One suggestion for improving her confidence was through music lessons. Pupil A displays the most confidence in music lessons due to being a violinist, therefore attempting to improve her confidence in this lesson by the means of performing would be in Pupil A's best interests. This confidence would then be transferred into the area subjects. Another suggestion that was made was to improve her handwriting skills. Steps have already been made to improve this by having handwriting lessons in class. A survey revealed teachers most common practise for improving handwriting is by modelling their writing, questioning good and bad handwriting and tracing and copying letters (Graham et al, 2008). Furthermore, a need to improve Pupil A's spelling has been identified. Several suggestions were made, including the need for her to continue reading to be exposed to correct spellings (Dixon and Kaminska, 2007). This report has acknowledged other spelling approaches which have been successful, such as Barnes Primary School and Spensley St Primary School. These schools use techniques such as modelling and 'Rainbow writing'. These school approaches will be considered for integrating aspects of them in my own personal practice. Finally, the need for Pupil A to begin to use inference and deduction was identified. A literature review revealed that modelling the skills needed for inference is effective, as well as questioning the children thoroughly to allow them to make inference connections (Kispaal, 2008). Each of these next steps identified will be considered in my own teaching practice, incorporating specific elements from the research into my lessons to help move Pupil A and the rest of the class on with their learning.

References

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Appendices

Appendix A – permission from the class mentor to collect data from a pupil.



RE: Primary PGCE student assignment: permission and confirmation that work has been undertaken in school for assignment 'School Development and Pupil Progress', Summer 2019

Dear class/senior mentor,

For the university module named above, trainees are required to identify one learner within the class in which they are based and, over the course of the Professional Teaching Experience, explore their learning in detail. The evidence that they need to gather could include:

- observation;
- asking the learner to identify places/things that help him/her learning;
- discussing what helps the pupil learn and how they feel about learning with the pupil and/or teacher;
- collecting samples of work which might show something about the learner's progress and development.

They are asked to focus on knowledge, attitude and skills in language, mathematics, wellbeing and at least two other areas of the curriculum to gain an holistic picture of the child. They then suggest the next steps for the learner, and indicate how these will be achieved. Trainees are expected to undertake this work independently wherever possible, and have been given ethical guidelines to follow (although undertaking the work above would be in line with typical classroom practice). The trainees have been asked not to reveal the identify of the learner or the school within their assignment.

Students have been asked to:

1. Seek permission for this work (by consulting with the class teacher and learner)
2. Provide verification that the work has taken place.

We would therefore be grateful if you could confirm that permission has been sought and that tasks have been undertaken by signing below:

STUDENT NAME (PLEASE PRINT): JESSICA GRIFFITHS

SCHOOL NAME (PLEASE PRINT): WHITCHURCH PRIMARY

SENIOR MENTOR/CLASS MENTOR NAME (PLEASE PRINT):

RHIAN TROTMAN

SENIOR MENTOR/CLASS MENTOR NAME (PLEASE SIGN):

R. Trothman

If you have any queries regarding this, please contact the module lead, Mr Mathew Jones.
M.Jones@uwtsd.ac.uk

Many thanks in advance

SIGNED COPY TO BE INCLUDED IN APPENDIX OF ASSIGNMENT

Appendix B – permission off the target pupil's parent to take part in the project.

As Parent/Guardian of..... (pupil name),
I do / ~~do not~~ give consent (please delete) for my child to take part in this project.

Signed..... (Parent/~~Guardian~~).

Date..... 3.05.2019