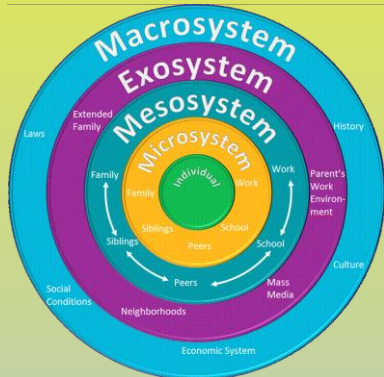


Introduction

According to Urie Bronfenbrenner, “the environment you grow up in affects every facet of your life.” (Exploring your mind, 2019) This suggests that the learner, school, home and community are all essential in the teaching and learning a child receives.



(Addley, 2012)

My placement school is an English Medium School, with the majority of the pupils, their families and the community speaking English as their first language. This coincides with Bronfenbrenner's theory as the pupil's first language has been influenced by their home and community. However, the school ensures to do daily welsh drills with the pupils so they can learn basic welsh alongside improving their English.

The school has strong links with the community, parents and pupils which became evident throughout my observations. Each interlink to ensure the successful development of each individual pupil.

Parent and Carer Links

My placement school works in partnership with the parents and carers in several ways. The school maintains excellent contact through their school website, where the parents and carers have access to guides and leaflets, including information on healthcare, national tests and information from South Wales Police. This enables the parents and carers to have easy access to advice and further educate their children on important topics at home. This highlights a clear link between the school and home and how they both have an influence on one another. The school website gives parents and carers the opportunity to voice their opinions, concerns and ideas through surveys and questionnaires, this being an effective way for parents and carers to have a say in the organisation of the school.

Furthermore, to ensure good engagement is received from the parents and carers, the school holds parent teacher meetings during the Autumn Term and parent teacher consultations during the Spring Term, where the parents and carers are invited in to discuss any concerns, as well as the progress their child is making. This ensures a link between the school and parents is maintained and means they can contribute to improving teaching within the school. Letters are also sent out to parents and carers to keep them updated on what their children will be learning during the term and if their contribution is needed with assisting them on local visits. (PlacementSchool, 2020)

Parents contribute to helping the school community by completing jobs around the school. They participated in painting murals on the front of the school, which not only links the school to the parents and carers, but also to the community as it involves people coming together to improve the school.

The school's recent ESTYN report recognises the “very good home-school relationships” (ESTYN, 2019) indicating that the methods used to maintain a link between school and parents and carers is effective.

Community Links

My placement school has several close links with their local community. The school has regular visitors including; Police, Fire services, Vicars, music teachers, reading companies, Zoolab, and NHS dentists. These visitors all contribute to educating the pupils and improving the teaching and learning which the pupils receive. In particular, the Police play an important role in ensuring the pupils learn correct road safety and the NHS dentists visit to teach the pupils and the teachers the correct methods to brushing teeth.

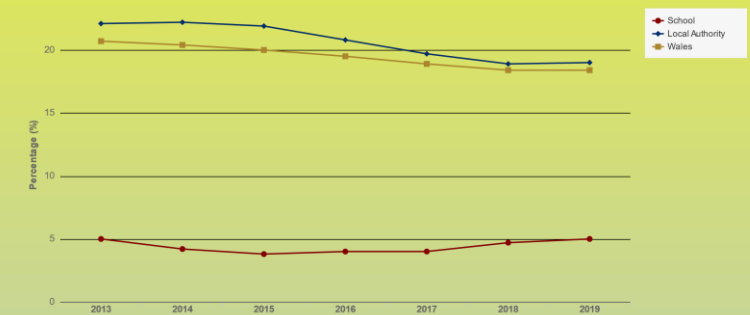
The pupils use their local community to develop their learning and also contribute to improving the community. The pupils complete litter picking on the beach and around the area in partnership with their local council, which contributes to their learning about recycling and also enables them to learn about looking after their local community. The pupils visit the local church for learning, as well as use the Church for their Summer and Christmas concerts, indicating a clear link between the school and community.

My placement school has several lunchtime and after school clubs, some of which are in collaboration with clubs from the community. A popular after school club is Simply out of School, which “offers a child centred environment meeting the social, physical, intellectual, creative and emotional needs of children” (Simplyoutofschool.co.uk, n.d.) Using a club from the community appeared to be effective and maintained a link between the community and school.

Ultimately, the school has an excellent link with local businesses within the community, which are helping to better the school and the teaching the pupils receive. Brace's Building Merchants contributed to the development of the construction area within the foundation phase and Lloyd's Bank helped to develop areas of the school as part of their community project.

Learner Links

The learners within my placement school have links with the school, community and home which are suited to their individual needs. The school's well being officer runs a programme called Achievers For All, which primarily focuses on those learners who are on free school meals, dislike coming to school or whose parents do not encourage them to come to school. According to My Local School, my placement school has an average of 5% free school meals, compared to the average of 19% free school meals across Wales (Mylocalschool.gov.wales, 2019).



(Mylocalschool.gov.wales, 2019)

This programme effectively links the learners with the school, community and home particularly through foundation phase coffee mornings. This enables those on the programme to work collaboratively with other pupils to create posters and invitations, which are then placed around the school and sent home to parents. This provides the learners with the opportunity to communicate with visitors from the local community, their parents and their peers, while helping them to overcome their personal issues.

Furthermore, my placement school has a communal area where all pupils are able to further develop skills such as reading, writing and creativity, either independently, with peers or as part of an after school club. A reading group from the local community comes into the school every month to read stories with the pupils and give the pupils the opportunity to take books home to read. This creates an initial link between the learner and community, which is further extended to a link between the learner, community and with parents at home, as the pupils are able to continue developing their skills from this club at home.



Image belongs to Jordanna Tregoning.

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