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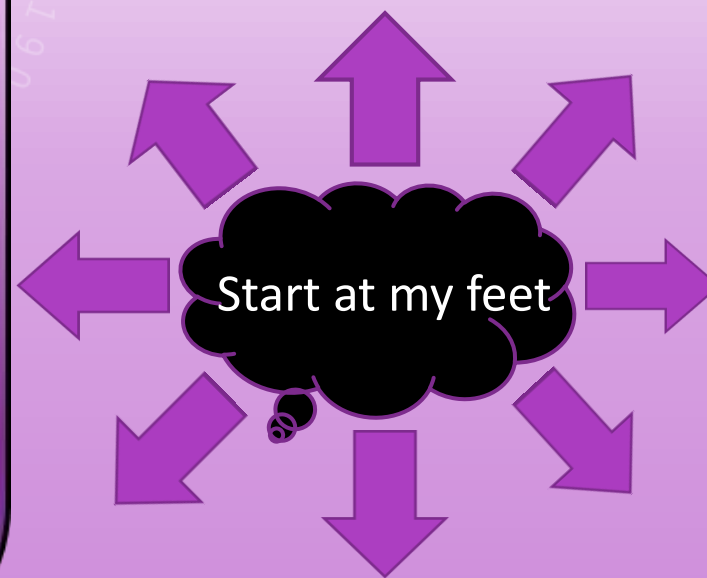
Community Engagement

According to Sustained Community (2019), 'Community engagement is a two-way street where the school, families, and the community actively work together, creating networks of shared responsibility for student success'. Estyn (2016) states that 'The school exploits many highly successful links with schools in the local cluster and further afield'. Bronfenbrenner (1979) would feel that this is important as he believes 'that the environment you grow up in affects every facet of your life'. Whilst completing my bridging days, I learned that the school are actively involved in activities within the community such as designing and constructing a mural to enhance the local war memorial and taking part in the summer festival. I feel that this is important because it allows the pupils to feel part of a community and will contribute greatly to their development.

Bronfenbrenner (1979) would agree with this as he believes 'the child's environment affects how a child grows and develops'. Another strong link that the school has with the community according to Estyn (2016) is that 'The school regularly welcomes staff from other schools who attend to observe aspects of good practice such as in providing extra support for literacy'. I believe that this is an effective strategy as it allows staff to share good practice by comparing and evaluating in order to learn from each other and try out new strategies to support their pupils in progressing further. This also gives staff the opportunity to share their systems for tracking their pupils' progress which can help them with setting pupils' targets more effectively. Estyn (2016) explains that 'These links are very effective in sharing good practice and have led to many improvements in aspects of the school's provision' and 'These have contributed successfully to improved pupils' outcomes and wellbeing' which goes to show that their strong community links are very beneficial for not only the staff but the pupils too.

My Placement School

My Placement School currently holds 187 pupils aged three to eleven years. Approximately 26% of the pupils are eligible for free school meals which is above the average of 20% for Primary Schools in Wales. Bronfenbrenner (1979) would say that this is an important factor to consider as he believes 'that a child's nature depends on the context they grew up in'. The school has identified about 28% of pupils as having additional learning needs, which again is slightly higher than the national average of 25%. All pupils speak English as their first language at home. Also, my placement school were awarded the 'Diamond' Standard for the investors in families award, the highest standard. The Investors in Families is a quality mark that recognises the work that schools and other settings undertake with families to improve outcomes for children and young people. (See image to left)

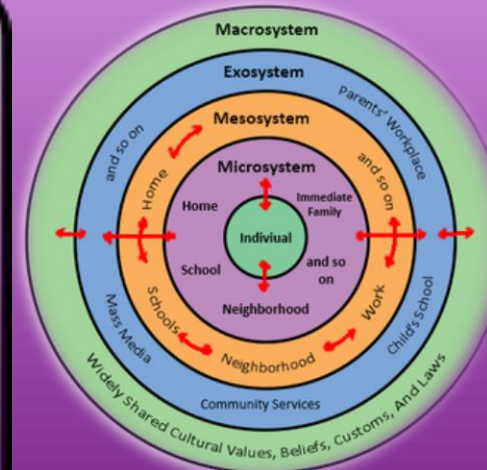


Parental Engagement

According to Stud Monk Tech (2017), 'parental engagement in schools is not only important, but also beneficial because 1) Involvement gives parents the chance to discuss their child's interests with the teacher and give input into the program, 2) Continuous and positive contact with staff can release parent stress, and 3) Children feel valued when their parents take interest in their lives'. Estyn (2016) expresses in the report that the school's 'partnership working with parents is excellent and this has a positive impact on pupils' standards and well-being'. Throughout my bridging days, I have learned the many links that are established between the school and parents. Firstly, my placement school has a parent council. I feel that this will allow for a strong link as this will grant the parents with an effective voice in the life of the school. Estyn (2016) explains that 'the council has influenced the school's policy with regard to homework and behaviour policy and it has produced helpful leaflets for other parents, encouraging pupils' regular attendance and good behaviour'. I believe that if these strong links are created between the school and parents, then the pupil will be more successful as they will be having that extra support from their parents at home as well as their teachers at school. Secondly, my placement school ensures that communication with parents is highly effective and as a result of this the school established a website which is accessible for all. Estyn specifies that 'the school website provides valuable up-to-date information, supplemented by the regular use of social media'. I feel that this is beneficial for parents and families as they do not have to be so reliant on letters being brought home by their child in order to obtain information, they can easily access the school website and discover all of the relevant information that they require instead. Lastly, another strong link that my placement school has with parents is annual reports and termly consultations. Estyn (2016) states that 'Annual reports and termly consultations with teachers provide parents with valuable information about their children's attendance, progress and achievements'. I believe that this is an effective way of communicating with parents because annual reports would give a good and solid overview of the pupil so that the parents can see their strengths and weaknesses, however, termly consultations will allow the parents to have one to one time with the class teacher to discuss exactly what can be done to help their child progress. According to First Discoverers (2019), Vygotsky would strongly agree with parental engagement as he believed 'children were apprentices who learned from and alongside those with greater experience who understood their abilities and needs' which implies that if parents are involved with their child's education, then there is a higher chance of the child progressing and achieving higher.

Inclusiveness

According to Study.com (2003), an inclusive classroom is a 'general education classroom in which students with and without disabilities learn together'. I feel that an inclusive classroom is especially important for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) as they need that extra support in a variety of areas, therefore, there are a lot of considerations that a teacher will need to ponder. For example, for pupils with visual or hearing impairments, the teacher will need to consider where they position themselves within the classroom in order to support those needs. Another example would be, for children who struggle with writing at length, a laptop or an iPad would be a useful resource to support their extended writing as they could type their work instead. During my bridging experience, I specifically observed a pupil in Year two who had ALN. I found that the pupil would become engaged with the planned activities if it was associated with something that they enjoy or find particularly interesting. For example, the class topic was dragons, and their task was to write a short story involving a dragon. This pupil loved dragons and so as a result of this, he was more than happy to complete the given task and did so with greater enthusiasm, where as he would usually not enjoy any writing tasks given. This goes to show that if the teacher makes an effort to engage with the pupils, then the pupils will engage with them too. Estyn (2016) states that 'The school is a caring and inclusive community where pupils feel valued'. This supports the idea that I said above that when the teacher makes an effort to discover what the pupils enjoy and links it to their planned activities and tasks, the pupils feel valued as they can see that the teacher has taken an interest in what will engage the pupils more. Estyn (2016) also explains that the school 'provides an inclusive environment where all pupils can take part fully in all aspects of its life and work'. This was something that I noted myself about the school whilst completing my bridging days as I observed several strategies being used in order to create that inclusive environment. One strategy that I noted was the Leonardo Effect. According to The Leonardo Effect (2012), it is a teaching methodology that 'stimulates autonomous learning, critically enabling children to make connections across the learning landscape'. I feel that this is an effective strategy to use in the classroom because it allows all pupils, regardless of levels of ability, to participate. Estyn (2016) expresses that 'pupils benefit from a welcoming and inclusive learning environment' which shows that children will progress in an environment where they feel valued and welcomed. Maslow (1943) supports this as he believes that 'Students need to feel that they belong to a class and that they are accepted members of the group if they are to reach the next level' which supports what I previously said above.



Bronfenbrenner ecological systems theory
Image belongs to: Psychology Wiki.

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