

ADHD in the classroom

In this personal project the writer will be exploring the different factors that affect children's behaviour within the classroom setting. Defining what behaviour is the writer will touch on different types of challenging behaviour including oppositional defiance disorder, attention deficit disorder but mainly speaking about a teenage girl diagnosed with ADHD. Recognising the challenges a teenager with ADHD faces and experiences on a daily basis in a learning environment and what coping strategies she has in place to get her through the day. This assignment will look at what interventions the school setting has to offer to make her and others with ADHD school experience more pleasant and manageable. Reflecting on the information gathered throughout the assignment the writer is hopeful to conclude whether enough is being done in schools to promote positive behaviour in the classroom.

What is behaviour? Behaviour is defined as everything a person does, such as, the way a person uses language, acts, reacts towards others, how we feel and think. So why do we regularly see children in the schools setting showing signs or using challenging behaviour such as verbal abuse calling names, mean or sarcastic comments. Physical abuse, hitting, punching, kicking, pinching or spitting at others. There is always one in every class who is the class clown who shows off and wants to be the centre of attention, some that display feelings of anger towards other pupils or staff members for unknown reasons, what are the causes behind this? A child's behaviour can be affected by internal factors such as speech and language delay, autism, ADHD or gifted children who aren't stimulated or challenged enough in the classroom. External factors such as a child's personal background for example drug or domestic abuse at home, poverty can have a major effect on a child's behaviour. Wear what you want days at school can cause a child to behave different because quite simply they are embarrassed that they don't have the modern or up-to-date clothes other children have. The weather can have an impact on the way children behave, if it has been raining all day and the children have been unable to go outside and burn off their energy this can cause some to behave differently. Other reasons for challenging behaviour could include self-esteem, race, learning disability or difficulty, gender, social class, new teacher or pupil, classroom management or size and many more. According to Albert Maslow (1943) an American psychologist best known for Maslow's hierarchy pyramid, he stated that unless children are having

their basic needs met such as water, food, warmth and shelter then they would not be able to go on and fulfil the next need. A child living in poverty and not having the basic three healthy meals a day, a warm home because his or her parents can't afford the bills is not getting the psychological needs he or she needs in order to develop and progress. A child having a nutritious breakfast before beginning school will perform better academically and have better concentration compared to a child who doesn't. If a child doesn't get the psychological needs met this will consequently have an impact on their behaviour. Behaviour problems can affect children at different stages in their lives such as when a child experiences bereavement for the first time or if the family unit as they know it breaks down. Child bereavement UK (2016) state that children find it difficult to put into words how they are feeling or thinking instead they will act out and their behaviour may seem concerning or inappropriate. Pervasive developmental disorders, when a child's behaviour is affected in different ways for example when a young person is going through adolescence or how children are raised by their parents/guardians. For example, a family living in a council house, claiming benefits and never worked a day in their lives who still manage to have holidays and expensive birthday or Christmas presents, this is no incentive for the next generation to stay in education and have a successful career. Disruptive behaviour disorder is when a child's behaviour needs investigation in order to help that child we need to get to the root of the problem. All children will experience disruptive behaviour at some point throughout their lives. Kids behaviour (2017) suggest that there is a difference between normal defiance behaviour and what kind of behaviour we would expect a child at a certain age to express, compared to a more serious condition known as oppositional defiant disorder commonly known as ODD. According to Kids Behaviour (2017) ODD is more commonly seen in children aged ten and younger who are defiant, provocative and disobedient.

What is ADHD? Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder commonly known as ADHD. The NHS (2016) state that ADHD can be separated into two categories of behaviour challenges which are, inattentiveness and hyperactivity and impulsiveness. Although many children with ADHD will fall into both categories some may not suffer with hyperactivity or impulsiveness, and only their inattentiveness will be affected. If this is the case then it could result in them being diagnosed with attention deficit

disorder also known as ADD instead of ADHD. The NHS (2016) suggest that ADD can sometimes go undiagnosed because the symptoms are less obvious and harder to recognise compared to ADHD. The most common signs to spot in a person who has ADHD are lack of concentration if any, being forgetful, daydreams, unable to follow simple instructions, unable to sit still, fidgets, no patience, can't take turns, interrupts conversations, quick temper, likes to talk a lot and unable to see the signs of danger. The NHS (2016) have found many children with ADHD will also have signs of other disorders including anxiety, depression, learning difficulties or Tourette's syndrome. Children with ADHD without a diagnosis can often be mistaken for naughty children, troublemakers who are undisciplined and disrespectful. UKAP (2017) state that children with ADHD are 100 times more at risk of being excluded from school compared to other children, with evidence showing that being excluded can lead to antisocial and criminal behaviour. Although ADHD is often found to run in families, the NHS (2016) say that there is not one gene that causes ADHD but evidence shows that it is more common in boys than girls. Children with ADHD can often be disruptive and their behaviour can have an impact on other pupils learning, Ofsted (2014) claim that most students lose an hour a day of learning because their teachers are dealing with misbehaved children.

Many of the symptoms as mentioned above are recognisable with the teenager the writer has chosen to speak about in the personal project. The teenager has very low self-esteem and opinion of herself, unhappy with her appearance and self-image she will often say mean things about herself to others. Craves attention regularly even if it is the wrong kind which has got her into serious trouble, in the past she has previously posted inappropriate pictures of herself on social media and has asked others to send pictures of themselves to her. In this instance the school police liaison officer went out to the home to speak to her and the family about her actions and what the consequences of the law are as you get older. Unfortunately, unable to see the consequences or the danger she could be putting herself in, a few weeks later she repeated the same mistake again and got into serious trouble after the first warning. Unable to hide or control her emotions and feelings the writer thinks of her as an honest person who will openly admit to when she has done wrong. Fearing that nobody likes her and that the whole world is against her, she will go from one group of friends to the next. Although she is able to form friendships quickly and is

chatty she is unable to stay friends with the same group of girls for very long. Often finding herself in the middle of the arguments or the one causing trouble amongst the circle of girls. Passing by the classroom you will often see her sitting alone, fidgeting, not able to sit still for very long on other occasions she may be daydreaming and staring out the window in her own little world. Very impatient and doesn't like to be told what to do she gets restless, loses concentration and gets bored quickly in class. Lack of confidence, she uses techniques she has developed to get herself out of what she sees as an uncomfortable situation, for example asking to go to the toilet just before the teacher asks her to read or answer a question in front of the rest of the class. Occasionally she will forget a conversation you may have had with her a few hours previous or is unable to follow instructions you have given her. In the past she has forgotten to go to the toilet and has had a few accidents within school which has led to her being name called and embarrassed in front of the whole class.

Identifying and then managing challenging behaviour in the classroom is important in ensuring all children are included in the school system. There are many interventions already in place within the classroom setting that teachers and other members of staff have put in place to help promote positive behaviour within the classroom for children with ADHD. Fidget spinners became a huge novelty in schools a few months ago where we saw nearly every child have one, unfortunately many schools have now banned them due to their misuse. Luckily the school setting the writer works at has allowed children with a diagnosis of ADHD to bring fidget spinners or stress balls into school and into the classroom environment. Breaks and dinner have scheduled times which are at the same time every day, staff encourage her to eat healthily and drink plenty of water. She has been given permission to have a bottle of water in class providing she doesn't use it as a distraction, which is immediately taken off her if she does. An appointment with the school nurse when she was first diagnosed with ADHD to discuss healthy eating was made and follow up check-ups are done. The school's counselling service which has an open-door policy has been made available to her at any time if she wishes to take up the service. All instructions made by the teacher to the child are to be made clear and simple, the day's routine is structured and stuck to on a daily basis. Nevertheless, on occasions the day's timetable has to be changed, simply a teacher may phone in unwell and a cover teacher is brought in to supervise the class, this would be enough

to upset the child with ADHD for the whole day. However, the school the writer works in has an alternative for the child spoken about in this assignment, she has the option of going to the nurture room known as the 'Hafan'. The teenager has a 'Hafan' card and is allowed access in there at any given time throughout the school day without being questioned by members of staff, this is a great safe place for the child to feel happy, secure and comfortable. An individual development plan known as an IDP has been out together for her. It is a one-page profile which supports the needs of the pupil, put together by the people working closely with her. It offers support and guidance to the staff in accordance to what works and what doesn't work for the teenager. Every teacher has a seating plan, making sure that she without drawing attention to the fact she is put in a quiet area at the front of the classroom away from distractions and windows so that the teacher can try and have her full attention at all times. The school offer a homework club at every lunch time which the teenager regularly goes to, the club offers her the additional support she sometimes needs within certain subjects. Regular meetings with the school's inclusion officer and the teenager are made on an informal basis. This gives the teenager an opportunity to talk and express any feelings of worry or concern and as a result has allowed the two to build a good relationship, where the child trusts the staff member and will go and see her for advice, guidance or support. Recognising, praising and occasionally rewarding good behaviour is important equally important is making sure, she knows the consequences and punishments of unacceptable behaviour. The school has a behaviour policy which is to be followed by every pupil and staff member. The schools behaviour policy can be found on an A3 poster in every classroom which clearly states the punishment for unacceptable behaviour which varies according to the behaviour performed. Disciplinary could result in a lunch time or after school detention, internal exclusion, phone call home, police involvement or external exclusion. Distributive behaviour in classroom after three warnings will result in being sent to the detention room known as the 'Encil', where pupils have to stay until that lesson is over. A consistent approach to behaviour management and making her aware of the consequences will hopefully make her think before acting. Regular contact with the child's home is important and done every term via the school's inclusion officer, updating the family on the child's progress and them with the school is important in order to continue to help the child. Incentives such as certificates or prizes are offered not only to her but to all children,

which sometimes depending on the school's budget offer a day trip to a theme park or a visit to the cinema for children who receive a 100 percent attendance. On the whole with the effective interventions and support in place already proving to help the child, the writer is hopeful she will go on to manage the condition and challenges of ADHD and be happy and successful.

To conclude the writer feels that every school should have a clear and consistent behaviour policy which should be followed by every member of school staff and all the pupils. Every pupil should be aware and have access to the school behaviour policy, someone they can turn to for help or advice at any time and of the consequences of their actions. Unfortunately, schools will always be faced with challenging behaviour as there will always be internal and external factors that will influence children's behaviour within the classroom. The Welsh government should be providing more opportunities for staff working with children and young people with challenging behaviour to have better training and understanding on the reasons behind challenging behaviour. Staff working with children need to be patient and empathetic because not every child has a diagnosis. Raising awareness on different types of behaviour and promoting positive behaviour in the classroom, schools and families working closely together there is no reason why children with ADHD can't flourish and succeed in school.

Reference list

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