

“Today it is widely accepted that inclusion maximizes the potential of the vast majority of students, ensures their rights, and is the preferred educational approach for the 21st century.” (History of inclusion 2020).

Within education it is important to have the right inclusive attitude when working with children and young people. Inclusion is an essential part of letting children and young people feel included and valued regardless of their background, religion, disability or race. “Educational inclusion ... is about equal opportunities for all pupils ... it pays particular attention to the provision for, and achievement of, different groups of pupils” (Ofsted 2001 cited Walton & Goddard 2009 pg56). Inclusive education is to ensure that all pupils within mainstream schools are accommodated so that they have the right access to a happy and successful education.

When looking at social inclusion and exclusion we are looking at the terms which are used when talking about the area and community that the individual is a part of. Social inclusion was first traced back to France in the 1970’s and is now widely used across the UK and the rest of Europe. There are a variety of definitions and they can be used in different ways. This is when we make sure that individuals are able to be equal within society, social exclusion is the term that is used when this is not happening, for example an individual with sight problems may not have access to reading materials with appropriate font size or braille print within a school lesson.

“Social exclusion goes beyond the issue of material poverty as it is also seen as encompassing other forms of social disadvantages such as lack of regular and equal access to education, health care, social care, proper housing. Causes for exclusion also go beyond material poverty and encompass a wide range of reasons why individuals or groups might be excluded, such as discrimination against immigrants, ethnic minorities, the disabled, the elderly or ex-offenders. In short one can be socially excluded in a multitude of ways, for a multitude of reasons.” (Incluso Manual).

Social inclusion is looked at when talking about poverty and deprivation and how people use social status to exclude others from society, this happens with children and adults. When looking at social exclusion, Pierson (2002 pg9) says that it “is a process that deprives individuals and families, groups and neighbourhoods of the resources required for participation in the social, economic and political activity of society as a whole”.

Theorist Ruth Levitas uncovered three different interpretations on social exclusion. These three different interpretations are RED (redistributionist discourse), which focuses on individuals who are living in poverty, this is the cause for them being excluded from activities within society. MUD (moral underclass discourse), this looks at how individuals are excluded from society and why this has happened, for example individuals can be on benefits, have life-long health problems or may have a criminal record, all these result in the individuals not able to undertake employment making them dependant on the Government. Then you have SID (social integrationist discourse) this is about inclusion in paid work through employment and how individuals integrate into society through working at different levels.

This assignment will look at inclusion within mainstream schools within the UK, personally I work within a secondary school that is in a high deprivation area and has a number of pupils in receipt of free school meals, Levitas' RED interpretation is evident in this area as many households are living in poverty. This can lead to some pupils becoming socially excluded. There is also evidence of her MUD interpretation, as the area is high of low-income family estates. Within educational settings there are different groups that fall into the social exclusion bubble. These groups being traveller community, refugees, disabled and forces children to name a few. Within the school where I work, we have pupils from all of these names groups, so we have to look at policies and procedures on how we include these pupils so that they can fulfil their success and achievement within school. We must look at Maslow pyramid of Hierarchy to make sure that all children within the educational setting are having their needs met from each level of the pyramid. Within school we have two pupils that have Cerebral Palsy and are in use of a wheelchair. They both attend the school on a mainstream level, but they are at risk of being excluded as they both fall into the disability category. Both pupils are supported daily by a Learning Support Assistant on a one to one interaction. They are with them for the whole day supporting them on an academic and personal level for example helping them with toileting. The school is a newly built premises so it has been built with the appropriate disabled toilets and lifts so that children of all disabilities can access the school at all levels. The inside and outside of the building are appropriate for these pupils with wide corridors and doors so that they can move about freely without any obstacles. There are ramps in place so that they can explore with their peers without restriction. The school also has well equipped classrooms with adjustable tables so that the wheelchairs can fit comfortably for the pupil to complete any written or practical work with ease, the food

technology room also has a hob that can be lowered so they can participate in cooking lessons.

Unfortunately, these pupils have experienced some exclusion when it comes to PE lessons, for example the teaching staff have not experienced or lack of experience within this subject, so they are unable to provide suitable activities for the pupils to participate in. This has a negative effect on the pupils as they are being excluded from the groups and unable to participate with their peers. Research into government guidelines outline that:

Schools and local authorities have a duty to provide reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils. This duty requires a school to take positive steps to ensure that disabled pupils can fully participate in the education provided by the school and enjoy the other benefits, facilities and services which the school provides. (Equality Act 2010).

With this occurring regular, again it has a negative effect on pupils which has a knock on negative affect with their school work, with this happening pupils are getting upset and not wanting to attend school on the days that they have PE lessons. This is proof of a school not working in an inclusive way, adjustments need to be made for these pupils to feel included and to enjoy and take part in lessons with their peers. All educational settings have policies and legislations in place to prevent exclusion from happening, unfortunately it still happens in some settings, not only in the UK but worldwide. The two pupils in my setting are in different year groups but they both want the same thing and that is to be sociable and go through their school career happy and able to experience things the same as their peers. This shows a good example of how children with physical disabilities can find themselves at risk from exclusion while attending school. Inclusion in schools has mixed emotions to whether it is a good idea or not? Some educators and parents/carers believe that inclusion has a negative impact on other children's education with the belief that there is a bigger emphasis on children who have additional learning needs while the more able student is left in the shadows.

“The first significant UK policies that emphasised inclusion in education were Excellence for All Children: Meeting special educational needs (DfEE, 1997) and the Subsequent Meeting SEN: A programme of action (DfEE, 1998). It was these particular UK policies that called for greater moves towards inclusion and for an increase in the number of TA's working in schools to assist teaching and learning to meet learning needs” (Goddard & Walton 2010 pg 54)

Another group that experience exclusion within schools are armed forces children. There are at least 6 members of this group within the school that I work and “Over 130,000 children in the UK have a parent serving in the British Armed Forces” (teacherwire 2018). Children within the Armed Forces bubble can move schools 2 to 6 times if not more within their academic career. The school that I work in has recently employed a member of staff to be an Armed Forces Service Family Liaison and Support Officer (SFLSO), the job role is to be there for forces children to support them emotionally and educationally making sure that they are getting everything that they need to complete their tasks within school. They are there to help to promote the inclusion and acceptance of all pupils within the classroom. They help these pupils to connect with other service children (although not all will want this) who understand what it’s like to be in a military family. One major advantage of this new work role is that the named person they talk to ‘gets’ the military and understands the issues as she herself was an ex-serving soldier. Unfortunately, this has been a short-lived post due to current pandemic, but it has been reported that the children have found this helpful as they are able to discuss how they are feeling with mum/dad being away. I personally have offered help with this position as I am an armed forces wife and have 2 children.

“Service children may move home frequently, with all the disruption to education, friendships and social networks that this can imply. Leaving behind old friends and making new friends is one of the biggest challenges service children say they face. Educationally, they can miss key parts of the curriculum and unwittingly re-do other parts.” (Kelsi 2020)

Over the years my children have found it difficult and nerve wracking starting a new school and having to make new friends when they have just left their best friends behind. This again has a negative effect on their education and their emotional state, as they are dealing with new surroundings and the point that serving parent is away. Again, I believe that the school has done well in providing this provision and that they are looking into funding to restart this position.

When looking at inclusive education it is thought to be the way forward within mainstream schools, but this is not the case for every pupil with needs, as their needs are greater than the support that mainstream schools can provide, this is when special schools that are more equipped with staff and equipment would be more appropriate for the pupil. Within the

county there is 1 SEN school for that can cater to these needs. Rachael Sharman (2015) wrote in an article about how inclusion can sometimes cause more negatives than positives. In said article she says:

The inclusion philosophy is based on the contact hypothesis – that by repeated contact/exposure to children with a disability, the general student population will be accepting of diverse needs and build friendships. However, research suggests this is not necessarily the outcome. In fact, on-site inclusion of children with certain types of disability may increase negative attitudes in the general student body.

When looking at disabilities in mainstream education we find that some disabilities can cause children to react in different ways that can affect the classroom and other pupils. Different SEN's can react differently in the classroom, they can have different triggers that can have them act or react in different ways. For example, when working with children who are on the autistic spectrum, these pupils can become violent and this can progress and get extremely violent. This can show that a mainstream school is not suitable, and, in these instances, a special school would be more appropriate as it can cater better for the pupil's complex needs. Making sure the safety of the school and the pupils within the school are met. When suggesting the transfer of a SEN pupil it needs to be discussed with the pupil, the family and the school first before any decisions can be made. This is because the decision needs to be correct and the needs of the child and the child's learning need to be met appropriately. With this in mind, we are aware that some schools may not always get things right, over time inclusive education has come a long way. The education of disabled children within mainstream school did not happen back in the early years, there has always been a divide between disabled children and more abled children, this was when disabled children were labelled stupid/thick. In 1994, there was a new framework introduced which was called the Salamanca Statement. This encouraged inclusion within schools internationally. 94 countries took on this approach with 25 organisations. In Wales, the government are ensuring inclusion is happening within schools by taking on an active role.

Without inclusive education developing over the last few years pupils who fit into the exclusion bubbles would not be able to access mainstream schools, they would have to access establishments adapted for their needs. The school where I work is equipped for these pupils with a Learning Resources Centre (LRC), this is where pupils with autism and other complex needs can attend. They have access to their own classrooms and lessons provided by a High-

level Teaching Assistant (HLTA), but they also have the choice to attend mainstream lessons in the rest of the school. There is appropriate access with lifts and ramps, staff are employed to help with interpretation lessons and extra Emotional Support Officers (ESO) are available. These are just to name a few of the inclusion practices in place. We can agree that inclusion has come a long way over time but there is still work that needs to be done. This may mean teachers need to look at adapting their skills, so they are aware of the different needs and abilities of the pupils in their classes, this is not easy as some teachers are stuck in their ways.

With this facility in place pupils of all needs, social or medical are able to attend mainstream schools, if these facilities were not available these pupils would be segregated in special schools. The Childrens and Families act (2014) aims to make sure all children in the UK along with their families all have access to the right support and provision to meet their needs.

To conclude, social inclusion is a positive thing that is happening more and more in schools today. But we know that some countries have taken longer to adapt to this. Some developing countries have found it hard to understand the concept of inclusion, this is due to the lack of knowledge and understanding to the variety of disabilities that the world is presented with today. This makes it hard for them to practice inclusion within education. Another downfall for these countries is the lack of funding, here they are unable to provide teachers with relevant training which would provide the correct knowledge and understanding of the child's needs. There is also no funding available for extra support staff to give the child the one to one interaction and support they need. The school in which I work claims to be a fully inclusive mainstream school, but it is found that there are still issues with regards certain pupil bubbles that still need to be addressed and resolved for example PE lessons for the 2 pupils that have Cerebral Palsy. The department is trying to accommodate them by including them within games by providing adequate equipment for them to use to participate. They are also seeking advice from outside agencies for support within this subject. The school also provides training to help with other subjects, updating knowledge as things progress forward, as support staff we receive training fortnightly and we have just started a Onestep programme which helps us with strategies on how to deal with a variety of situations in and outside the classroom.

/

References

- Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education. (2018) The UNESCO Salamanca Statement. <http://www.csie.org.uk/inclusion/unesco-salamanca.shtml> (accessed 04/09/2020)
- Goddard, G. Walton, A. (2009) Supporting Every Child. Learning Matters
- History of Inclusion (2020) <https://fullinclusionofcatholicschools.org/about-inclusion/history-of-inclusion/> (accessed 01/09/2020)
- How to support the children of military families in your primary school (2018) Litte Troopers <https://www.teachwire.net/news/how-to-support-the-children-of-military-families-in-your-primary-school> (accessed 04/09/2020)
- Inclusion and Pupil Support (2016) The Welsh Government. https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-05/guidance-inclusion-and-pupil-support_0.pdf (accessed 01/09/2020)
- Knowles, G. (2006) Supporting Inclusive Practice. David Fulton Publishers
- Pierson, J. (2010) Tackling Social Exclusion. 2nd Edition. Routledge.
- Sharman, R. (2015) The Conversation ‘Can Inclusive Education do more harm than good?’ <https://theconversation.com/can-inclusive-education-do-more-harm-than-good-> (accessed 04/09/2020)
- Social Inclusion and Social Exclusion. Inluso Manual. <http://inluso.org/manual/social-inclusion-and-social-exclusion-explained> (accessed 28/08/2020)

- Supporting Children of armed forces personnel in school (2020) Kelsi Kent County Council <https://kelsi.org.uk/support-for-children-and-young-people/supporting-children-of-armed-forces-in-personnel-in-school> (accessed 04/09/2020)
- The Children and Families Act (2014). <http://www.aettraininghubs.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/AET-children-and-families-act.pdf> (accessed 04/09/2020)