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SJIE 6003

Write a case study which critically analyses the Inclusive Intervention and support provided for a pupil in your setting. Refer to theory, policy and practice citing reputable and appropriate sources.

INTRODUCTION

The setting used for this case study is a primary school in West Wales. The school has ninety-three children and hosts an Autism teaching facility which holds thirteen children from across the local authority. The Autism teaching facility is a unit that is within the schools building and shares the features of the school.

Autism is a developmental disability which affects how they interact with others and the way that they perceive the world around them. It is a disability that is with them for life and with the appropriate and professional advice and support then people with autism can learn academically and can learn skills in order to live a fulfilling life. Autistic people share many difficulties, but it affects them in all different ways. Autism is defined as high functioning and low functioning Autism. Children with high functioning tends to be Asperger's and children who can access a mainstream class with support who have good language skills, Low functioning Autism is children who have very low basic skills and with little or no speech.

In the United Kingdom approximately 700,000 people may be Autistic, the amount is an estimate as there is no official data on the diagnosis of Autism. (autism.org.uk, 20180

Vygotsky (1896) developed a theory that language developed from social interaction. He noted that the experience of talking to others about everyday familiar experiences is crucial to development in building up knowledge of the language but also to be aware of ways of thinking and evaluating their own experiences. He believed that talking with others helps all forms of communication as children learn through

speech but also using their hands and eyes. He showed that children do not only respond to language spoken, they transcribe the context, body language and facial expressions to understand what is being said. Social interaction is a difficulty to some children with Autism and the theory Vygotsky has is key to develop these skills. (Pound, 2006)

The child is a five-year-old male who was diagnosed with Autism at the age of four years old. He was diagnosed with Autism after concerns being raised by his mother and health visitor. He was diagnosed by a different local authority and moved shortly after and was placed into the Autism teaching facility in the above school. The child has good language skills and displayed knowledge and understanding higher than his chronological age when entering the provision. Within a few months of being in the Autistic unit and after reviewing his P Scales and ABBLS data, it was decided by Therapists, Parents and the Education Psychiatrist that the child would benefit from being slowly integrated into a mainstream class with support from a teaching assistant to develop his social skills. This was done over a term with a session a day in the nursery/reception class until he came full time into that class. Due to the possibility of the child needing the provision of the Autism facility in the future he is still registered as a pupil in the Autism facility but has all his learning now in the mainstream class except for an hour a day on an ABBLS programme.

For the purpose of this case study, I will be asking the question of how transition from a specialist Autistic teaching provision to mainstream education is beneficial for a child, how it improves their language and social interaction with others and is this approach the best for the child.

METHODOLOGY

For the purpose of this case study I have taken ethical consideration into account and anonymised the child, the school and other members of professionals to which I have questioned and observed. My position in this case study is a participant researcher as I myself will be involved in the observations for my findings. This case study is Ethnographic as it involves me in a school environment to which I am familiar with and so is the child in the case study.

My methods to find out the answer to my question is to speak to the Autism facility manager to ask questions about the child when he was solely in the facility. I will ask questions about his social interaction with others, his language skills, his relationships with adults and peers. I will also question his teaching assistant and observe him in a playground setting and, in the class, setting.

The questions I will ask the teaching assistant and class teacher are how the child manages interacting with others, his social skills, how he manages in the class setting and how much support does he require in order to interact and communicate with others. I will observe the child at playtimes to watch him during non-structured sessions to see if he can easily interact with others without adult prompts. I will also observe him during CHATT sessions which he takes part in daily with his peers.

FINDINGS

I started the findings of this case study by firstly speaking to the manager of the Autism Teaching facility to have some background information of the child, his diagnosis and his experiences. The child had started at the age of four and immediately he showed very small amounts of traits of Autism and it was shown that it was his language skills, his social Interaction and toileting and eating issues were the reason for diagnosis. Immediately a toileting programme was put into place and within a month the child was fully toilet trained. Eating had been an issue as the child had only eaten a limited diet and would only eat foods from certain places. An eating programme was put in place and he started to try different foods and with the support of home a food diary was put into place for both sides to see what foods had been eaten.

The school has an Inclusive approach where all children within the school have access to all the provisions in place. The children from the Autism facility access playtimes, assemblies, outdoor classrooms and school events with the other children from the school. The headteacher who started his post in 2010, immediately made changes to the school to allow it to be inclusive. Before his post the school had more of a separate approach and apart from school events and at lunch times, the children

were more divided. In the years following his post, he made Inclusion an integral part of the school ethos. He alongside the senior management team which includes the Autism facility manager made the Autism facility included within the school. It is encouraged that mainstream children interacted with the children from the facility throughout the school day. Friendship partners are set up for playtimes and lunch times, younger children can access the foundation phase classes for sessions, staff throughout the school have experiences of working in both areas of the school to allow understanding of the different aspects of school life. All the practices in place reflect the values of the school which reflect the school's inclusion policy.

The child in September 2017 started coming up to the nursery/reception class for a session a day with a teaching assistant. He came up for a phonics session to begin and after questioning the teaching assistant on his transition it was clear that the child immediately sat among the other children and flourished by being there. He spoke to the other children and joined in with the activities. There had been an expectation that the teaching assistant would have to support him with interacting with others, but this was not needed. He spoke at the same level as the others, although sometimes needed prompting in appropriate time to talk. He continued coming up for this session and would stay to explore the enhanced areas of the classroom. The teaching assistant did note that he would always go to the construction area and would play alongside others but not with them.

The school has an approach of supported inclusion when a child is integrated into mainstream. The purpose of supported inclusion is to transfer the control and teaching of the child to the classroom teacher from the teaching assistant. The aim of this is that the child eventually can respond solely on the teacher without the need of a constant support person. This view and the success of this will solely depend on the child, the teacher or the classroom. A 2012 survey by the NASUWT, highlighted that over 70% of teachers felt unsure and did not have enough knowledge to teach autistic teachers as they did not have enough experience and their initial teaching training did not prepare them for teaching pupils with a range of special educational needs in a mainstream class. A teaching assistant was always with the child in the class but remained as a `shadow`. Her role was to foster success by prompting and fading, modifying the task, reinforcing, preventing behaviour and managing behaviour. She had to create opportunities for

the child in the social environment and to advise the teacher of the child's skills, goals, and effective strategies. The school has only recently taken part in the autism pledge where all staff and pupils have watched a video and have pledged to be an Autism superhero. The video explained to pupils what autism is and why children with autism are superheroes. This allows children to understand others even though the children always involve the children from the autism teaching facility and do not treat them any differently.

The Autism Bill for Wales was proposed by AM Paul Davies to introduce a strategy for meeting the needs of children and adults with autism. It involved promoting best practice in diagnosing Autism and for the care needs, strengthen support for families and ensure that all staff are suitably trained and have up to date training. This Bill was rejected in January 2019. (national assembly for wales, 2019)

In the Spring term of 2018, the child was going to access the class for the full day. The reason for this decision was that it was felt that the child would have a more enriched curriculum and a learning environment and allowing him to develop his social skills and language skills by having peers to act as role models for him. It was felt that he was not getting enough opportunities for social interaction with peers as many of the children in his class within the Autism facility were low functioning. It was agreed with his speech and language therapist and his parents. Due to his statement stating he needed a teaching assistant; a teaching assistant was employed to support his transition and to deliver his ABLLS programme.

ABLLS is an assessment of basic language and learning skills. It's a curriculum that is followed in the Autism facility that. It is an assessment tool to assess children on different categories of language and learning. The skills that they assess on are preschool skills for typically developing children. The children are then taught the skills. This is still delivered to the child as there are still some aspects that the child cannot do. The child follows this programme daily and goes out of class for an hour a day to follow it, he does sometimes get distressed about doing this programme as he does not like leaving class and his peers and will sometimes ask the question of why he needs to leave class.

I observed the child over a fortnight on the playground at lunch time and observed him initiating play with others and deciding on a game which always involved a

superhero. I noticed that if any of the children tried to change the game or if they suggested an idea then the child would immediately get distressed and walk away. He was not happy to adopt any ideas or a change and would take himself off to the corner of the playground, observe the others playing the game and each time within 5 minutes would go back to the game and join in.

I questioned the teaching assistant and the class teacher on the child's transition into mainstream and how they felt it was going. He was continuing to only want to access the construction area and in independent play would parallel play, so it was felt that more encouragement and modelling was required to encourage play with others. It was also felt that because his main interest was building, construction and superhero`s and he only wanted to access those and was not gaining the experiences of other areas within the class. It is being discussed by the class teacher of ways to encourage all the children to access all areas of the classroom. His language skills have improved significantly since being full time in a mainstream class and his interaction with his peers is age related and has learnt to take turns and is beginning to realise when is appropriate to talk and when not to. It has been noted that he follows the structure of the classroom routine well and has integrated well with others more so in teacher led activities. I observed him in a CHATT session, and he joined in with the rhymes and all of the games that were played. He was able to share the cards in the game. I looked at his CHATT screen and compared it from the one that was taken when he first went into the classroom full time and he has made an improvement in line with his peers. (APPENDX 4)

CONCLUSION

From taking part in this case study I have seen many positive aspects of the transition of the child. I have seen in the classroom the way he interacts with others, his enthusiasm to be a part of the class and the enjoyment he shows. His language skills have improved, and he speaks more to children than he did before as he has got someone he can relate to and share similar experiences with. He benefits by not having anyone one to one with him as his independence has improved even though he has a teaching assistant, she is always not by his side. This is something that I had never really understood until I witnessed it. He can copy other children and he

thrives to be like them. Now there is full intention for this child to remain within a mainstream class, but this will be reviewed every year in his annual review as there is a view that later in his education the gap between himself and his peers will be greater, and that mainstream may not be the best option for him. I have learnt that mainstream may not be the most suitable option for every child and this decision should be based on the individual child. Specialist units and schools have experienced and suitably trained staff in order to give the child the best possible outcome.

REFERENCES

National Autistic Society (2018) Autism facts and history. www.autism.org.uk (accessed 21st February 2019)

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