

Start at My Feet

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The Learner

How is the curriculum shaped around the children?

My placement school they have made it one of their visions to have a 'Broad Curriculum' (Placement school website, 2017). Their broad curriculum included literacy and numeracy, physical and emotional well-being, the arts, bilingualism and respect for the environment. Estyn has recognised this and praised it in their report. Having this flexibility is beneficial and allows teachers to take any opportunities that arise. My placement school also get the children involved with their learning by using the C.O.O.L scheme. This stands for Controlling Our Own Learning. This is an excellent way to get the children engaged with their learning if they are having input of what they are learning. Moving into the future my placement school will have to adjust the teaching and learning to the new Curriculum for Wales. The new guidelines suggest that 'collaboration and cross-disciplinary planning, learning and teaching, both within and across Areas' (Welsh Government, 2020). Resulting in learners building links across their learning and combine different knowledge, experiences and skills.

How does the school create an inclusive community?

My placement school values all:

- Ethnicities
- Religions
- Genders
- Disabilities
- Backgrounds

To show their appreciation for these the school 'provides opportunities for pupils to appreciate their own culture and celebrate the diversity of other cultures' (Placement school Strategic Equality Plan policy, 2012). It is important to show the children that they can be all different but still have a sense of belonging. Within a community it is 'people who belong are more likely for people to participate and become engaged in their community' (Community health and wellbeing, accessed date, 07/02/2020). Therefore, when children feel they belong they can concentrate and cooperate in teaching and learning.

The Community

What the school does for the community?

My placement school has been specially designed with a community focus. Within the school grounds there are facilities such as the community library, community rooms, a multi purpose hall. 'Such facilities, which are primarily managed by the school, see the building used extensively outside school hours, by a wide range of community groups and over 300 users on a weekly basis.' (Placement school website, 2017).

What the school does in the community?

During my bridging days at my placement school I discovered that my school uses the local community to give the children a wide range of experiences. In the Well Being Policy (2014) it says 'Links with parents, community police, local churches and industry, such as Sainsbury's, ensure that children develop a sense of belonging from an early stage.' This indicated the passion the school has to work alongside the community to give their children a head start. The school has a really close relationship with the local church. The school often has assemblies where the Vicar comes to talk to the children but also the children have the opportunity to visit the church throughout the year.

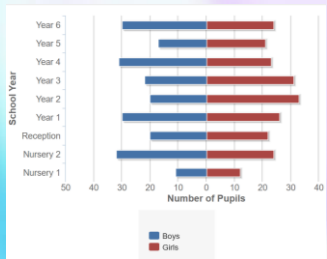
Three different programmes run from the school and are targeted to all year groups. These are:

- My school in the museum – a whole class will use the museum as their classroom for the week. They will have lessons from the staff at the museum and will have the time to explore the facilities throughout the week. On their last day the children also have the opportunity to bring their parents down to show them what they have learned.
- My school in the church – similarly, whole class will use the church as their classroom for the week. They will have lessons from different members of the church and will have the time to explore the facilities throughout the week. Learning about the religion and how working in the community can make a difference. Parents are welcome to join the children on the last day to also have some time out in their community
- Out and about – the children have the time to spend in the community to do daily tasks that they will be doing in their day to day lives. These may include walking in the parks, playing in the fields and buying from the local shops. All these activities are done under supervision so the children know boundaries whilst they are exploring. It is also such a great way for local shops to collaborate with the school and offer their support for the community.

The School

About the school.

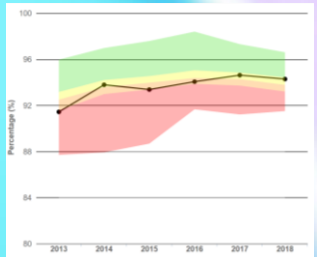
- My placement school is located in the East of Swansea;
- An English medium school that caters for pupils aged three to eleven;
- The number of pupils recorded in 2019 was 429;



This graph shows the total number of pupils, split into boys and girls, in each year group for the 2019 year. We can see there is an even mix of genders in each class showing an example of gender equality.

My local school (2019)

- The schools budget per pupil was £3331;
- From 2018 the attendance of my placement school was recorded as '94.3%' (My local school, 2019).



My local school (2019)

The diverse community within the school.

- My placement school has 47 pupils with English as an additional language (EAL). Making up 12% of the total school population.
- 10.5% of the schools community has an ethnic background that is not White British.
- My Local School (2019) states '24.4%' of the children within the school have free school meals.

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
School	34.6 %	34.5 %	33.1 %	28.5 %	26.6 %	24.5 %	24.7 %
Wales	20.7 %	20.4 %	20.0 %	19.5 %	18.9 %	18.4 %	18.4 %

My local school (2019)

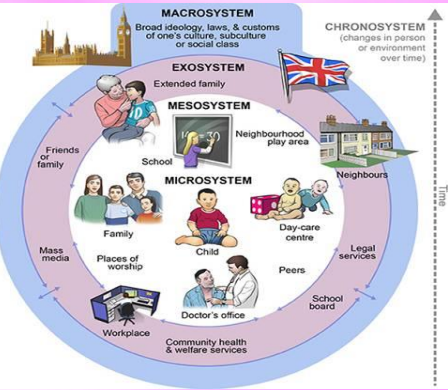
This table shows the decrease in the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals. Over the last 6 years the percentage has dropped by 9.9%. This could be an indication that the families of the children at the school are becoming more financially stable. However, comparing the statistics to the whole country shows dramatic differences in the percentage. My placement school has always been above average in Wales. This could be the result of the school being located in a deprived area. According to the Welsh Government (2019) the area the school is located in was 'ranked 23rd in Swansea and 269th in Wales'. These figures indicate the deprovision ranking of the area is fairly high. This can also be supported with the fact that the school has a Flying Start as only areas of deprovision are allocated a Flying Start.

The Parents

Why are parents included by the school?

My placement schools links with parents is seen as a vital piece of the whole school ethos. They understand that parent involvement is key to a successful school community. Pr. Alma Harris et.al (2007) says that 'parental engagement is a powerful lever for raising achievement in schools. Where parents and teachers work together to improve learning, the gains in achievement are significant.' Supporting the reason for my placement school creating strong relationships between themselves and parents to enhance their children's development. Creating an open relationship with parents allows honest feedback and co-operation.

Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory can be used best to support the importance of a school and parent bond. The inner circle, known as the microsystem, is child centred. It focuses on the child and the immediate environment surrounding the child. Next, the mesosystem that 'describes how the different parts of a child's microsystem work together for the sake of the child (Fostering and adoption, 2014). An evident example of this could be a teacher-parent meeting. These meetings allocate time for both parties to highlight the positives, raise any issues and ask any questions. In most cases these are successful and things go on to benefit everyone involved. However, if the teacher and parent disagree, at any point, then the child could be receiving mixed messages. This could end up hindering the child's progress.



Fostering and adoption (2014), Bronfenbrenner ecological theory.

What opportunities does the school provide for parent?

To help parents support their children my placement school provides:

- tailored sessions to give parents the knowledge and strategies to help their personal learning and their children's learning;
- For parents of the younger children in the school the opportunity to work with their children within school facilities to develop p their children's language and numeracy skills through play;
- My placement school took part in a project called FAST – Families and Schools Together. This was an opportunity for chosen families to come into school and bring food associated with their cultures to share with other families. This was a great way to bring parents together so that they could feel a sense of community in their local areas. This project was a success and the school is looking to repeat the project in the near future;
- Children's parents at my placement school have many useful opportunities to visit classes alongside their children. As a result, parents have an improves understanding of what their children are learning in school and become more confident in supporting their learning at home;
- Estyn (2014) highlighted that my placement school 'provides very good opportunities for parents to improve their own skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology.'

References

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