

It could be suggested that social inclusion is currently a priority issue for all in education (Denham, 2007). At the start of the assignment, the author initially researched different types of primary school interventions and brainstormed ideas (Appendix One). With the initial ideas documented, the author then closely examined an intervention that was to be explored in more detail. After much deliberation, the author concluded Barnardo's Friendship Groups was the intervention that was to be examined in more detail. Friendships play a massive role on children's social and emotional development (Bierman, et al., 2017; Barnardo's, unknown date). Some children have difficulty forming friendships and maintaining them. The intervention would possibly help children who struggle to make friends help make and sustain friendships. As the OECD (unknown date) suggest social and emotional skills influence a wide range of personal and societal outcomes throughout a person's life.

The author has had then benefit of witnessing Friendship Groups first hand when working as a teaching assistant. The author believed that the first hand knowledge could potentially benefit the outcome of the assignment as the prior knowledge could be used to support and discuss the impact they can have on children's social development. It has been a priority of the author's own professional development to gain a better understanding of what could be done to help children who struggle with social skills, in order to help them develop and progress.

Ayers and Prytys (2002) suggest that friendship is a complex and demanding skill and schools can play an important role in facilitating friendships for the isolated and the vulnerable. Some may suggest that as children progress throughout the school, peer acceptance and peer rejection becomes more predominant. Arguably, one outcome that really matters for children is enjoying and achieving and developing skills for adult life (UK Government, 2003). Therefore arguably it is fundamental for primary schools to intervene if children are reaching the end of key stage two and are still struggling to form friendships. As arguably, friendships and relationships are a really important factor of adult life. I have chosen key stage two to specialise in for my next upcoming professional teaching experience. Thus, also demonstrating why key stage two was the selected phase throughout this assignment.

Harding (1986) suggested a long term prospect of lack of social skills could result in a lifestyle with few friends, a limited range of activities and possibly no work. Donaldson (2015) has envisaged a

curriculum where practitioners foster ethical, informed citizens understanding the consequences of actions that affect others and themselves and taking these into account in actions and decision and healthy, confident individuals who know how to develop and maintain positive relationships.

It could be argued that friendship groups are based on social constructivist principles. Throughout friendship groups, children would hopefully be making and understanding their own social perception through experiences and activities. Also, friendship groups encourages collaboration. Hypothetically, children with social interaction issue would have possibly low involvement on the Leuven Scale (Laevers, cited in Early Learning HQ, unknown date). Arguably, the friendship group intervention would help increase levels on involvement and raise levels of well-being. Within the scenario, the author has documented the outcomes and priorities on a school development plan. A school development plan suggestible should document the actions a school will complete in order to improve learner outcomes (Welsh Assembly Government, 2017b).

Llynfi Primary School is an English-Medium primary school located in the South-East Wales Valleys. The school belongs to Bridgend County Borough Council. The number of pupils on roll is two hundred and six. A small number of pupils come from ethnic-minority backgrounds. Very few pupils are fluent Welsh speakers. Around twenty eight percent of pupils are entitled to free school meals. StatsWales (unknown date) suggest that around four thousand and twenty two pupils are entitled to free school meals in Bridgend county. With this percentage of free school meals, the schools are entitled to additional funding also known as pupil premium (Welsh Assembly Government, 2015). Within this school, pupil premium is usually spent on resources and interventions that raise standards. Successful schools plan interventions that focus on improving children's attainment, especially those who are entitled to free school meals (Welsh Assembly Government, 2015). The average class size is twenty six. Around fourteen percent of the two hundred and six have an additional learning need.

The school has seven teachers, three higher level teaching assistants, three learning support officers and two relief special needs support assistants. The headteacher has been in post since September 2016. The headteacher is non class based. Schools should endeavour to provide continuous learning opportunities for all staff (Welsh Assembly Government, 2017a). Llynfi Primary School encourages staff to undertake continued professional development throughout their careers, to maximise their knowledge, therefore enhancing and arguably improving teaching and learning opportunities. In early 2017, the school has begun to implement Donaldson's Successful Futures curriculum (2015).

The school have embedded the principles of the curriculum within their school ethos and also now use areas of learning and experience.

Llynfi Primary School boasts a good board of governors who have a really good relationship with the school. Governors play a huge role in leading, supporting and improving schools. Governors act as a link between parents, the local community and the school and are expected to be impartial and make decisions that improve the school (Bridgend County Borough Council, unknown date).

The school has recently had a visit from their challenge advisor and one of their recommendations is that the school needs to help a select group of children overcome their social interaction problems. The recommendation arose from a suggestion from a member of staff last term. Currently the school have an amber rating according to the Welsh Assembly Government. Categorisation is decided upon many factors which include self-evaluation by the school and also the school's capacity to improve learning and teaching (Welsh Assembly Government, 2018). The school has a school development plan (Appendix Four) documenting their priorities for the forthcoming academic year, and the first predominant priority is raising the levels of support for pupils with social interaction issues. The school have procedures on carrying out a priority and ensuring outcomes are met and these are documented on their school self-evaluation (Appendix Fourteen).

Overall, I am pleased at the outcome of this assignment. When I was working as a teaching assistant, I witnessed my selected intervention- friendship groups, first hand. The impact it had on children's well being and confidence was tremendous but it was not without its limitations. I believe this personal experience enabled me to create this assignment, as I have referred to aforementioned points throughout my assignment. Also, my personal research and wider reading allowed me to embellish and support any statements I made. One difficulty I had was clarifying how much the intervention training course cost so I had to use my professional judgements and research to approximate some figures.

I am quite pleased with how well I delivered the speech in the video. I also believe the manner in which I discussed the intervention was of a good level and showed willingness to provide an intervention that was suitable and relevant for the group of target children. I feel that my level of knowledge was accurately demonstrated throughout the clip and is hopefully reflected through the file. I feel the evidence in my file is fairly well collated. I have tried to carefully select the

information I placed in the file in order to demonstrate and reflect my understanding of the theory and background of the intervention. It was a little difficult not to overload the file with information however, I feel I carefully selected a good range of information to show the broad scope of research I perused. Also, I tried to demonstrate in my bibliography my range of wider reading.

Every practitioner in Wales has to ensure they meet a set of standards through their professional career (Wales Assembly Government, 2009). Throughout the assignment I believe I have addressed QTS standard 2.4, showing a demonstration of how I understand that learners' intellectual, linguistic, social, and emotional development can affect their learning. Also addressed was QTS standard 3.3.9. This standard shows that practitioners set high expectations for learners' behaviour and manage learners' behaviour constructively, and promote self-control and independence. Collaboration was also demonstrated throughout, therefore addressing QTS standard 3.3.13.

Overall, I have enjoyed the module and found it most beneficial for my professional development. Throughout this assignment, I have tried to embed the main themes explored throughout the module, where appropriate.

Hello, my name is Bethan Petty. Most of you probably know who I am already, but for those who don't, let me introduce myself, I am the year four class teacher and also I am on the senior leadership team. I am also in charge of the health and well-being area of learning within our school. I have been allotted enough time on the agenda to discuss how I believe it is necessary to introduce an intervention that helps improve the social skills of some of our pupils in order to enable their progression. Let me elaborate on this seemingly broad statement.

On our school development plan, which you all have received a copy of, point one highlights how we, as a school, intend on ensuring and providing more support for pupils with social interaction issues. This is an area I feel, and I am sure you would all agree, is something we as a school need to work on. Therefore, we have decided that there needs to be intervention at the earliest possible point, in order to help these children achieve their full potential. By the end of this part of the meeting, I hope you will all have a clear understanding of why we are implementing the intervention, who will be the 'stakeholders', what the benefits and limitations are, and how we intend upon implementing.

I am sure you would agree that our teachers do their utmost to ensure that our children's social skills and wellbeing are being encouraged while developing a broad and exciting curriculum. However, our challenge advisor has informed us that more needs to be done to help aid children who struggle with social interaction. This issue was raised at the end of last term, when children were tested by our additional learning needs co-ordinator and it was highlighted that most of them would benefit from an intervention. It was concluded that their lack of social interaction is detrimental and hindering their progression, and this needs to be addressed.

The responsibility for selecting a suitable intervention was put in the hands of myself and our additional learning needs co-ordinator in consultation with class teachers. We have reached some judgements through extensive research and consultation with our school's challenge advisor, and following local authority policies. After extensive searching we discovered multiple different interventions that could have been suitable. We examined a guide by Together for Children and Young People (Appendix Six). There were several interventions closely examined and explained in the guide. It was most beneficial when selecting out what we believe to be a suitable strategy. The intervention we ultimately concluded would be most beneficial was friendship groups by Barnardo's. Friendship groups are proven to help children to develop social skills in a focused and small group setting. It was our belief that this would be the most beneficial strategy to suit the group of pupils' diverse and complex needs. According to the guide, the programme has evidence of a long term positive impact with studies having evidence of improving a child's outcome lasting up to a year or longer.

Through observation and interviews some 'target children' (Appendix Five) were identified that would benefit from an intervention. Half of these children will be progressing onto comprehensive school next year, hence, we believe it is fundamental for these children to receive the intervention. The children make up a group of eight, and each of them would benefit from the scheme for their own personal reasons. However ultimately they all struggle with forming friendships and maintaining them. It is essential we get the 'whole team' onboard. What we mustn't forget is to explain to these children what this intervention is, and how they would benefit from it. We would liaise with the pupils identified to create individual action plans which would then be reviewed upon completion of the intervention. Their progression would also be tracked and monitored throughout using our school's provision mapping. We must explain to their parents, carers or guardians why their children would benefit from the intervention. Next, we will speak to staff and

make them aware of procedures and ensure the school development plan is followed through and everyone understands the outcomes.

There are some financial implications to this intervention, however, luckily our budget would allow us to implement the intervention in the forthcoming Spring term. We have agreed we could use our pupil premium as extra finance to provide for the intervention if needed. According to the guide I referred to earlier, the intervention is recognised as band one which highlights that the programme is low cost to set up and deliver. However, our school would have to get a days teacher supply cover at the approximate cost of £100 per member of staff and the training session itself costs £250 per staff member. It has been suggested that as wellbeing co-ordinator, I should deliver the friendship group and I will be willing to do so, as long as it does not affect my main role as class teacher. Also, I have worked with several of the target children throughout my career, so I have a fairly good awareness of their needs. One child who receives support from a relief needs support assistant will be attending the group so therefore, I would have the additional help from the assistant if necessary.

Children and young people need to experience social and emotional well-being to thrive and engage successfully with their education according to Donaldson (2015). According to Barnardo's (unknown date c) the intervention helps improves self-esteem, self control, emotional intelligence, classroom behaviour, conflict resolution and academic engagement. It also reduces aggressive behaviour, emotional distress, and conduct problems. There is a lot of positive feedback in regards to this intervention. According to key findings by Barnardo's (unknown date a), in Wales alone, there was a nineteen percent improvement in children's emotional regulation thanks to friendship groups. Our school would have to send our additional learning needs co-ordinator and myself on a training course, when we return, during the next appropriate staff meeting, we would allot sufficient time for us to feedback to our staff and inform how we successfully integrate this intervention into our school.

Now I would like to give a quick overview of the timeline of the intervention, which will last for ten weeks, at forty minute sessions per week. During each session there will be focus upon a different aspect of social skills. An idea would be to carry out this intervention during assembly time, and this motion has been given the go ahead by our headteacher. This would mean that it would not impact upon the children's learning time. Myself and our additional needs co-ordinator would create

a session plan to show how each activity links to the curriculum also. I also want our teachers to be more equipped with a better awareness of how to help children who have difficulty with social interaction skills. Therefore, I suggest to create a resource pack to leave in the staff room. This pack will remain in the staff room on the notice board for members of staff to examine, it will have the core aims and principles of the intervention. Also, I would always be able to advise if necessary.

To witness good practice, I along with our additional needs co-ordinator visited Fair Valley Primary School, which as you know is in our local consortia. This school was recently deemed by Estyn as being 'excellent' in regards to maximising pupils well-being and helping them reach their full potential. What we witnessed was of an immense help. The school actually implement Barnardo's PATHs scheme which is the foundation of which friendship groups is based on.

To sum up, we have a duty of care as a school to ensure children's needs are met. I am sure you will agree that our staff have high expectations for our pupils. As you know, we are a UNCRC rights respecting school, and one of the rights is that children are entitled to freedom of association, Every child has the right to meet with other children and to join groups. So therefore we will refer to this scheme as a 'friendship group' to ensure children don't feel stigmatised and just as if they are attending a club with some of their peers. We plan to incorporate the activities that Barnardo's suggest through fun activities that the children I am sure will enjoy. One of our targets on our school self-evaluation is to continue to enable progress for all learners. This intervention if successful should enable progress for the children involved and increase attainment and engagement. And we will regularly monitor progress to see whether the strategy is as suitable as we believe it to be. I sincerely hope this intervention does work to the full potential. Our headteacher has already approached me and suggested she would be interested in sitting in on one of the sessions to witness the impact first-hand. If this intervention is as successful as research suggests, it could be worth incorporating into our school's long term plan.

In our school's achievement, behaviour, and discipline policy (Appendix Thirteen), it states our aim is that our children should learn and achieve their full potential. It is so essential that we help raise the standards of these children and help them gain the skills they need. We will adopt Barnardo's principles and also embed our school ethos into the scheme. Please if you have any further questions about the intervention, do not hesitate to ask. I hope that you, our board of governors, will approve our plan and offer your support in raising the standards of children with social interaction

issues. To conclude this part of the meeting, according to Barnardo's the 'principle aim of their service is to increase pupils' emotional well-being in order to improve their learning potential'. This is exactly what we as a school, want for our children. Thank you.