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7003 Script.

I am here to talk to you about a wonderful educational experience that a year 5 class from an area deprivation in Swansea had last Christmas time. The student had the opportunity to visit an old person's residential home and spread some festive cheer to the residents including creating crafts, exercise routines, dancing and singing Christmas carols.

Before I delve into the details of the visit, let me first explain the recent update of Welsh Education. In Wales, there was a recognition that the previous curriculum was not adequately preparing young people for the challenges of the modern world.

The Welsh Government conducted a national review of the curriculum, engaging with stakeholders and experts to identify areas for improvement. The review identified several key areas where the curriculum needed to change, including a greater emphasis on digital literacy, health and well-being, and citizenship.

The driving factors in the new curriculum for Wales has been broken down in the desire to create:

1. Ethically informed citizens
2. Enterprising and creative contributors
3. Healthy and confident individuals
4. Ambitious and capable learners

There was a need for a curriculum that was more relevant, engaging, and empowering, and that would enable learners to become more rounded individuals. The visit to the old person's home aligns with the first purpose of creating ethically informed citizens.

Ethical citizens are those who have a sense of **social** responsibility and **respect** for others. By visiting the residents of the old person's home, the year 5 class was able to develop **empathy** and a **sense** of compassion

towards the elderly, which are key ethical values that need to be nurtured in our children.

Diving deeper behind the headlines of the ethically informed citizens additional information is given. Respecting the needs and rights of others, as a member of a diverse society gives us the need to teach young people to have an understanding of all people from all walks of life, who are able to think critically, participate fully in society, and make a positive contribution to the world around them. (Donaldson, 2015)

Research has shown that visiting old person's homes can have positive effects on children. A study conducted by Kwak (2018) found that students who visited old person's homes had increased levels of empathy and prosocial behaviour towards the elderly. Another study conducted by Lee. (2018) found that students who visited old person's homes had a greater understanding and appreciation of the elderly and their life experiences.

One book that discusses the development of ethical children in the United Kingdom is From my Heart : Teaching Values and Citizenship Across the Curriculum in Primary Schools" by Dr. Neil Hawkes (2015). According to his research Hawkes argues that children should be taught to develop their own values and principles, rather than simply being taught a set of rules to follow. He suggests that a values-based approach to education can help children to develop a strong sense of ethics and responsibility, and to become active and engaged members of their communities.

The author emphasizes the importance of creating a supportive and inclusive school culture, where children are encouraged to express their ideas and opinions, and to work collaboratively with others. They also suggests that children should be given opportunities to practice ethical behaviour in real-world situations, such as through community service projects or peer mentoring programs. This is something that aligns with the pupils trip to spend time engaging and assisting older people.

Additional research has been conducted with similar views on the development of ethical and informed children. "Teaching Character Education in Primary Schools" by Tom Harrison, Ian Morris, John Ryan (2016). In this book, The authors argue that character education is an essential component of primary school curricula, and that it can help children to develop a range of ethical and social skills.

The authors suggest that children should be taught to develop virtues such as **honesty**, **empathy**, and **respect**, and that they should be given opportunities to practice these virtues in real-world situations. They also emphasize the importance of creating a positive and inclusive school activities where children feel valued and supported and able to practice these virtues.

The authors argue that ethical children are those who are able to make sound judgments based on their own values and principles, and who are motivated to act in ways that are just, fair, and compassionate. They are able to empathize with others, and to recognize the impact of their actions on the wider community. The authors suggest that character education can help children to develop these skills, and to become responsible and ethical members of society.

Young people being ethically informed is crucial because they will soon become the leaders and decision-makers of our society. Ethical decision-making is essential for creating a just and fair world for everyone. In her book **"Ethics for a Digital Era" (2018)**, Dr. **Denielle** Elliott argues that ethical decision-making is especially important in today's digital age, where technology is rapidly transforming our world.

Elliott points out that young people are at the forefront of this digital transformation, and they need to be ethically informed to navigate the complex ethical dilemmas that arise in this new era. For example, they need to understand issues such as online privacy, cyberbullying, and the impact of social media on mental health.

Music on the brain by Arlene R. Taylor, PhD (2020), Research suggests that music therapy can decrease **agitation**, **depression**, and **anxiety** in patients with Alzheimer's disease. By playing music or singing for the older adults, pupils can evoke **feelings** of nostalgia and provide **emotional** stimulation, leading to **improved** social interaction and mood.

Interactions between the older residents and pupils also promoted physical health and the need to maintain throughout life. A study

published in the *Journal of Geriatric Physical Therapy* found that exercise programs tailored to older adults can improve physical function and reduce the risk of falls. *Intergenerational Programs: Understanding What We Have Created* (Kuehne, 2013) Research notes that intergenerational programs that involve physical activity can benefit both the older adults and the children involved. Whilst attending the home, pupils led light exercise routines or participate in games that are modified for older adults with mobility limitations, providing physical stimulation that can improve overall health and well-being. During the visit the carers and nurses noted that the residents displayed a noticeable increase in mood for days to come with many asking when the pupils would return for an additional session.

The experience of visiting the old person's home was not only beneficial to the residents, but also to the students. It provided an opportunity for the students to learn about the needs of the elderly and how they can be met. It was also an opportunity for the students to develop their social skills, such as communication and listening, as they interacted with the residents. This again adds emphasis on the Ethically informed citizens

Furthermore, according to an article published in the *Journal of Applied Gerontology* (Yeh, 2007), the benefits of intergenerational programs such as visiting old person's homes include the promotion of intergenerational solidarity and the reduction of ageism.

According to research "Ageism: Stereotyping and Prejudice against Older Persons" by Todd D. Nelson, ageism is defined as "the societal tendency to define people on the basis of chronological age and to attribute to them characteristics and traits based solely on their age" (Nelson, 2002, p. 2).

This definition suggests that ageism involves making assumptions and judgments about individuals based solely on their age, rather than their individual qualities, abilities, or experiences. Ageism can manifest in many forms, such as discrimination in employment, health care, and housing, as well as negative attitudes and stereotypes about older people in media and popular culture.

Intergenerational interactions can promote empathy and understanding between generations. In "Sticking Points: (Shaw, 2013,) Understanding generational differences can help bridge gaps and promote healthy communication between generations. By interacting with older adults, pupils can gain a greater understanding of the challenges and

experiences of aging. This understanding can **foster** empathy and encourage students to form more **positive** attitudes towards older adults **creating** lasting ethics within their personalities.

Ageism can have harmful effects on the well-being and quality of life of older people. Addressing and challenging ageism is an important aspect of promoting social justice and equity for all individuals, regardless of their age, something that these visits addressed.

Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory suggests that individuals are influenced by multiple, interconnected systems within their environment, ranging from the individual's immediate family and community to broader cultural and societal factors. This theory emphasizes the importance of understanding the various systems and how they interact with each other in order to better understand individuals and their development.

When examining young people engaging with elderly people, Bronfenbrenner's theory is particularly relevant as it helps to highlight the various systems that impact this relationship. For example, young people's engagement with elderly people may be influenced by factors such as their **family's attitudes** towards aging and the elderly, their **school's curriculum** and their experience with intergenerational engagement, and broader societal attitudes towards aging and their personal intergenerational relationships.

Research conducted **(Kendig et al., 2017)** using Bronfenbrenner's theory to investigate how intergenerational programs, such as residential home visits, affected young people's attitudes towards the elderly. The research discovered that various factors at different levels of the ecological system, including the individual, family, school, and community, had an impact on shaping young people's attitudes towards the elderly and their willingness to engage with them. Another study conducted **"A Pedagogical Strategy for Attitude Change Amongst Young People and Older Adults"** by Grace M. Mwaura and Michael Christie **(2018).** also employed Bronfenbrenner's theory to explore the effects of an intergenerational learning on the attitudes and perceptions of both young people and elderly participants. The study revealed that the

intergenerational program had a positive effect on both groups, and that factors at different levels of the ecological system, including the individual, family, school and community, played a vital role in facilitating the program's success.

The visit to the old person's residential home by the year 5 class was a wonderful opportunity for the students to develop their social skills, while also promoting ethical values such as empathy and compassion. It aligns perfectly with the purpose of Welsh Education, creating ethically informed citizens.