Start At My Feet

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General

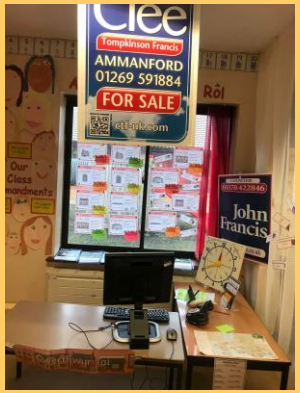
My placement school has 13.3% of free school meals which is relatively low for a school, implying that it is in a middle-class community. A community that has a weak socio-economic context will have a negative effect on children as the school will not be able to offer as many opportunities. For example, children will have less resources and will be less likely able to go on school trips. Schools that reach out and actively engage the community have a positive impact on educational outcomes (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Observation

My placement school has a Pupil Deprivation Grant (PDG) Statement for those in the community that come from low-income families (Model Primary School, 2020). During bridging, I observed a pupil with Additional Learning Needs (ALN) that is entitled to the PDG. From this observation, I found out that the school has links with a lot of medical professionals which allows the pupils in the school to access a range of therapies inside and outside of school. For example, the pupil I observed has Fine Motor Skills Therapy once a week, CHATT 3 times a week, Speech & Language Therapy once a week and Gross Motor Skills Therapy once a week. From the links the school has with the community and the professionals within this community, the pupils can receive the support that they need to strive in the classroom. In my previous experience, I have also observed schools that have taken children out into the community to sing. For example, my placement school takes the choir to a local care home in the community therefore providing an inclusive and nurturing learning environment for its' pupils (Estyn.gov.wales, 2020).

Experiences

The class I was placed in at my placement school is currently on the topic of houses and homes and they went on a school trip to a local estate agent. This was beneficial for the pupils as it allowed them to go into their local community to see what the job entailed to later be able to roleplay as an estate agent in class. During bridging, I set up this roleplay area for the children, ensuring I used some welsh to enhance their language skills.



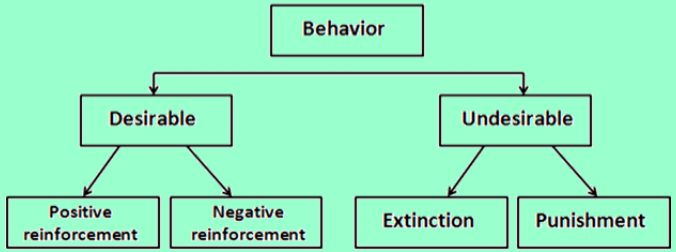
(Personal Images)

The Curriculum

The Foundation Phase Framework states 'We aim to ensure that all children and young people have a safe home and a community that supports physical and emotional well-being'. This emphasises how important the community is to children's development as being part of a community opens many opportunities to connect with people and to feel a sense of belonging in the area the child grows up in (Hwb.gov.wales, 2020).

Beyond the School Gate

My placement school engages the parents and guardians of the pupils through a book folder. This is where both parents and teachers can communicate how the child is progressing with their reading as this is important to develop children's language and listening skills (Reading Rockets, 2013). My placement school believes that teacher-parent communication is mandatory to the improvement in behavioural issues in children. This is suggested as the school has a behaviour record for specific pupils, which is sent home with the children at the end of the school day. The children also get a sticker leaving the school, portraying how their day went to their parents. For example, if it has been a good day, they will get a green smiley face but if it has been a bad day, they will get a red dot and then the parent knows to check the behaviour record to see what needs to be improved. If the child achieves 5 good stickers, they get a reward at the end of the week (Skinner, 1938). Other ways my placement school engages parents is through letters sent home, regular social media updates, assemblies which parents are invited to and parent workshops. This is where families are invited to come into the school and learn how to best academically help their children at home such as how to effectively read books with them. This will not only improve the children's learning, but it will also allow parents to meet other parents that they can relate to therefore bringing together the school community (Model Primary School, 2020).



(Anon, 2020)

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