

Section One

In this assignment, it will give a detailed vision of the importance of inclusive leadership with the early years' settings. The first section will evaluate the role of an inclusive leader giving a deep explanation on the barriers and opportunities that challenge them and how those challenges can affect children, families, professionals and the wider community. An example of a specific scenario will be given to gain a clear understanding of how the role of inclusive leadership works.

Inclusive leadership is defined by Booysen (2014) as a respectful relational practice, that enables individuals and collectives to be fully part of the whole, directed, aligned, and committed towards shared outcomes, for common good of all, while retaining a sense of authenticity and uniqueness, suggesting that the role of an inclusive leader has respect for individuals while enabling them and their collectives such as parents/careers, professionals and communities to be fully involved as well as to connect and communicate to receive a positive outcome together. Furthermore, Inclusive leadership is a crucial factor in efforts to improve education at local, regional, and national levels (Childhood Education International, 2021). Likewise, it has been described by RCVS (2022) that Inclusive leadership helps to create environments which foster the talents, skills and potential of people from diverse and underrepresented backgrounds. Furthermore, the aim of an inclusive leadership is to create, change and innovate whilst balancing everybody's needs (Childhood Education International, 2021). When it comes to inclusive practice, a manager's role is to make sure that they and their team create an environment where everybody feels welcome, valued and respected (Newstead and isles-buck,2019).

O'Mara (2021) states that "being an inclusive leader doesn't happen naturally. Inclusive leadership is a skill. It can be learned. And that learning requires studying the views of experts, practitioners, role models, and scholars. The chapter authors in this book have much to offer those who want to be an inclusive leader. And the world needs everyone to be an inclusive leader". Likewise, Ferdman (2020) states that effective leadership requires strong understanding of and skills for creating and catalysing opportunities to benefit from all types of diversity and to enhance these

capacities in oneself and others. Effective inclusive practice provides all children with access to opportunities and support during the earliest and most influential years of their learning and growing. It also helps enable children to be confident in who they are and what they aspire to in the future (Early Years Alliance, 2019).

The scenario discussed related to a 6-year-old girl. The girl comes from a wealthy family with both parents owning their own Veterinary Practice, it is expected that the girl takes over the business in future and both parents are pushing her to have a good education. However, she doesn't get to spend much time with her parents due to their work commitments, they pay a nanny to pick her up from school and care for her outside of school. Her parents do not attend any school events; such as parents' evenings due to work and it can be difficult to contact her parents the majority of the time. However, it has come to the concern that there could be a delay in her speech. It has been considered by the headteacher and as an inclusive leader it is their role to look into it further therefore, after closely monitoring and a statutory single assessment taken, it has further been discussed with her parents, however, there are barriers that the inclusive leader faces such as the parents cannot come to terms with it and they suggest there is nothing wrong with her speech. After some support from the staff of the school and the school nurse, the child has been referred to see a doctor, this allows everyone involved to discuss and plan the best way to reengage a young person with their education and has the support of the medical professionals involved (Torschool, 2021), this shows that inclusive practice is promoted within the setting as it is clear that they have been communicating and working together to meet the needs of the child. Likewise, it has been stated by Chemanais (2009) that engagement in every child matters is necessary because of intrinsic links between the educational setting, services, agencies and community help to improve the educational achievement, the health and social choices of children, young people and their families.

After the child has seen their doctor they were then referred to a speech and language therapist. A speech and language therapist provides life-changing treatment, support and care for children and adults who have difficulties with communication, eating, drinking and swallowing (NHS, 2015) however, another barrier that can come in the way here is that there is a waiting list to see a speech and language therapist with the current for an initial appointment is 10 months (Nhs, 2018). On the other hand, Morgan

(2022) is aiming to invest up to £1. 15m over two years (2022 - 2024) in SLC (Speech and Language communication) uplift funding for health boards and SLC specialist centres. This will help to reduce waiting lists. Having such a long waiting list also leads to another barrier as the inclusive leader does not have the training to give the correct support to the child this could also have a huge impact in that time on delaying other areas of development however it has been caught at a young age. It has been explained by NHS (2019) that communication is a critical skill for learning, reading, writing and thinking. Children with communication difficulties may experience problems, which lead to poor literacy skills and low academic achievement. Furthermore, it has been explained by RCSLT (2022) that speech and language therapists work directly with children, their families, and other education professionals to develop personalised strategies to support a child's individual needs. They also provide training to education professionals so they can identify the signs of speech, language and communication needs and support them appropriately.

Additionally, the school have provided the girl's parents with extra support to help them to come to terms of the situation. They have been provided with an information sheet of how a speech and language therapist can help and they have been invited to the first session that will take place in the school. The school also have an open-door policy to encourage open communication, feedback and discussion (Monnow Primary School, 2022) this suggests that any parent is welcome to discuss anything with the teachers to achieve the best outcome for their children. As well as Enable parents to have regular contact with the school and develop strong home-school relationships. To ensure that those needs are met parents will Have regular but controlled access to classrooms in the mornings this will give them the opportunity to see how the children do and what their interests are in the classroom as well as having the opportunity to discuss and share ideas with the classroom teacher. Secondly Parent Teacher Interviews will commence twice yearly. Thirdly, appropriate Information meetings will be arranged during the year as well additional meetings by appointment can be made if necessary (forge integrated primary school, 2016). Furthermore, it is the role of the inclusive leader to ensure that that parents/careers get important messages this could be by text message, email or letter for them to be aware of events happening in the school. It is important that parents are invited to events such as schools plays, Performing in a school event gives students an opportunity to present

their work to their parents in a unique way and it also allows parents to communicate with each other and the staff of the setting (The Jakartpost, 2019).

During the first speech and language session the therapist will firstly ensure that that the child and the parents/careers are is happy to have a 1.1 session and will start off by getting to know the child and the family to build a positive relationship with them, this all helps to build strong and solid foundations for their future growth development (gov.uk, 2021) furthermore, a positive relationship helps children and young people build secure attachments, develop self-confidence, self-esteem and self-reliance and contributes to a strong sense of identity and belonging (Fahlberg,1994; Ryan, 2012; Care Inquiry, 2013). As soon as the therapist ,child and family are happy they will continue with their session. It is the role to of the inclusive leader to ensure that everyone in the situation is happy especially the child. It is also important that the child is heard as described by OHCHR (1989) that children have a right to ‘ freedom of expression’ and ‘right to be heard’. Likewise, Cypcs (2022) states All children have the right to have their view heard and for it to be taken seriously. Once everyone is happy, the therapist will then assess the child’s speech, language and communication strengths and difficulties informally through play activities and formally through the use of assessment books to see what areas of development need working on and can then further make a plan to ensure that the child reaches the best of their ability. These sessions will be a 1.1 session with the pupil; however, the child’s parents will be allowed to attend these sessions with them. The therapist will use a variety of tasks and will try to make these as fun as possible. (Integrated Treatment services, 2014). Not at any point will the child feel like they are being tested therefore there will be no pressure. During the next steps it is important that the inclusive leader and the speech and language therapist will work closely together as well as working with the child’s parents to ensure that child gets all the support they need, this suggests that inclusive leadership is effective within this scenario as it has been described by Lee (2021) that Inclusion and inclusive practice in the early years is about practices which ensure that everyone “belongs”: the children and their parents and/or carers, staff and any other people connected with the early years setting in some way.

Furthermore, ITS (2014) states that every child is unique, it is impossible to list all of the options that a Speech and Language therapist may recommend. Some of the

recommendations may be: - Further assessment. The EYFS principle of the Unique Child reminds us that each child develops and learns in individual and distinct ways and so the starting point for planning must always be the child rather than the curriculum (Tapestry,2019) likewise, Hallet (2016) describes the unique child as a principle of practice in the eyfs curriculum. Dfe (2014) highlights the individual strengths and attributes of a young child and the diversity of children, parents and families with differing cultural heritages, family structure, gender, ability, social and economic status.

At the end of each session the therapist will give parents and teaching staff additional advice that can further help with her development as well as being provided with a speech and language therapy programme for the school and reassurance and advice to parents. This is another barrier that can be faced in the setting as there can be no set goals however, it is the inclusive leaders' role to ensure that the advice and programme are continued to be supported outside the therapist sessions. However, Children only spend 14% of their time in school therefore the 86% of their time is spent somewhere else outside school (welsh government, 2016).

In this section some barriers have already been discussed however, there are many more barriers that the inclusive leader can face such as lack of funding; without funding the setting are unable to buy essential things such as extra support for the children and training for the staff. Another barrier that can cause trouble is that families/staff don't want to work together however, the role of an inclusive leadership to ensure that families are included but some settings use the term 'hard to reach' when discussing families, but parents take the view that it is the services and the professionals who are hard to reach not them (Wheeler and Connor,2009). Another barrier that the setting can face is that there may not be many agencies in the local area that work with the help they require, it depends on the area however, there are only 500 speech and language therapists covering the whole of Wales (Senydd, 2020).

To conclude the inclusive leader will continue to support the child by further receiving training from the therapist and following the programme provided. The inclusive leader will also continue to support the parents of the child and give them a written report

each week for them as they are unable to collect her from school as well as giving them a plan to work on at home.

Section 2

This section will critically evaluate a particular policy to see if it enables inclusive leadership. Policies and procedures are put in place to help and guide all staff working in the setting. They ensure and endorse the well-being of all families, children, staff, volunteers and everyone who is connected to the setting (Waltham Forest Council, 2019). Policies can vary on different levels depending whether the policy of macro or micro level (Ferdman, 2021). Macro level is defined by Greenfacts (2022) as a policy which affects the whole country [or region]. Whereas a micro level policy is on a lower level and can be created by the early years setting themselves.

The policy chosen in this section is the Equality and Diversity Policy (Greenacres, 2015) it is a committed policy to provide equality of opportunities and anti-discriminatory practice for all staff, children and families in accordance with the Equality act (2010.) Therefore, this policy enables inclusive leadership as the term 'equality' in childcare means to ensure that all children are treated fairly, protecting their rights and offering the same opportunities regardless of any protected characteristics. Though children may come from diverse backgrounds, they should be treated equally and inclusively at all times (Delta Net, 2022). However, to ensure that inclusivity occurs in the setting, it is important that the leader understands terms such as "diversity". Diversity is defined as "having a range of people with various racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and cultural backgrounds and various lifestyles, experience, and interests. Diversity is a group of people who are different in the same place" (UNC, 2013) and as an inclusive leader it is their role to respect diversity. This is important as it has been said by Church (2019) "now more than ever, organizations need to challenge their dominant leadership paradigms. The future of work lies in fostering inclusive leadership for all of our teams, organizations, and communities'. This outstanding volume, which brings together perspectives, insights and best practice from leading thinkers and practitioners in the field, provides the deep guidance that is needed to help learners develop these new skills and mindsets" suggesting that a guide needs to be provided which can be in the policy to help learners develop the

skills and mindset they need to enable the best practice which includes diversity. A clear vision on how to respect diversity should also be stated within the policy. The policy also states that they aim to recognise that all children are different and aim to identify how best to support each child and family, this shows that the policy includes inclusivity as it is described by Pacey (2020) that as a part of inclusive, childcare providers must treat all children and their families equally and with respect. Furthermore, the policy states that they aim to provide an inclusive environment recognising that as individuals, children and adults alike all require some form of support. However, we recognise that for some this may be specific and sometimes require the help of outside agencies (Greenacres,2015) this suggests that the childcare setting sometimes require further support this can include outside agencies such as speech and language therapists and many more. The policy further states that all staff members share the responsibility of ensuring that they provide a fully inclusive service for children and their parents/carers and families however, the policy does not state how they can support them.

The structure and wording of the policy needs to be taken into consideration and used more carefully. Within the policy Greenacres (2015) the word “should” is stated, this can cause confusion to staff members as well as parents/careers. The definition of should is described in the dictionary as a verb, You use should when you are saying that something is probably the case or will probably happen (Collins, 2019) therefore, it should be used with caution as it may not be able to happen for example if a new practitioner was to read the word “should” in the policy they may think that they have to do something that may not be a priority. Other words such as “will” should also be used with caution as the sentence in the policy ‘We will identify and make ‘reasonable adjustments’, provide additional resources and support for individual children, where needed’ should have been taken into consideration before using the word “will” in it as it is defined by Cambridge Dictionary (2022)that ‘will’ is used to talk about what is going to happen in the future especially things that are certainly going to happen and that sentence of the policy cannot certainly predict that they can always make adjustments when they need to as in some situations they may have to go through referral before making any changes.

However, there are still barrier that an inclusive leader face in a childcare setting, it has been described by eyelliance (2019) that to be an inclusive provider, early years settings should be proactive at addressing barriers to inclusion such as negativity, conscious and unconscious bias, and stereotyping. Settings need to be confident, committed, and competent in their ability to be equal and inclusive. However, if the policy is followed correctly the inclusive leader wouldn't face barriers as stated in the policy they aim to provide a positive and loving learning environment free from prejudice, discrimination and fear, in which all staff, children and their families feel accepted, respected and valued which suggests that they an inclusive practice. However, some Inclusive leaders faces common barriers such as the leader themselves lacking the skills required, it has been described by UAGC (2022) that an effective leader in ECE is someone who has the ability to create a positive, nurturing, and stimulating environment for children to learn and grow. However, the policy chosen is clear that they aim to provide a secure environment in which all children can flourish and in which all contributions are valued as well as encourage children through play equipment and activities that explore, acknowledge and value similarities and differences between themselves and others.

Section 3 - Blog

Inclusive leadership is essential in the early years setting. It is important to ensure that all individuals and parents/careers feel included in everything. Childcare providers must ensure that every child at their setting is included. Every child is unique and will develop at their own pace, so it's not about treating all children in exactly the same way but treating each child fairly and paying attention to their individual interests and needs (Pacey,2020) furthermore it states that childcare providers must include and support every child regardless of ethnic background, culture, language, gender, socio-economic background or disability. Likewise, Research from the National Coalition for parent involvement in education shares that "no matter their income or background, students with involved parents are more likely to have higher grades and test scores, attend school regularly, have better social skills, show improvement behaviour and adapt well to school (Rasmussen University,2019). To ensure that the setting include and support these it is important that inclusivity is

promoted in the environment, this can be supported by adding resources such as books to the classroom as well as posters about different backgrounds and cultures. It is also important that children get the opportunity to speak or celebrate their culture and their beliefs. Events such as Chinese New Year and other countries can be celebrated to help children understand culture and other backgrounds. To ensure that parents feel included it is important that they feel listened to this can be encouraged by having an open-door policy which is a policy to work with parents and careers for the best outcomes for the children. Involving parents in events that go on in the school is also an important role of the inclusive leadership, when parents are involved in their education, children do better on a wide range of measures. These positive effects include: Better behaviour. More confidence and greater self-esteem (Parent Kind, 2022). However, children reach their best ability when they have a positive relationship with their classroom teacher it has been stated by Welsh Government (2015) that focusing on what is important to an individual, allowing them to understand what matters to them, and to discover the best ways to support them, this can be done in many ways such as creating a work sheet for the children to describe themselves and what they like and dislike. It's important to take a child's likes and dislikes into consideration in order to facilitate their learning (ACN, 2012) If a child is interested in something or likes to a certain activity it's important to offer it to them to enable the child to progress in their learning and understanding. It is also important to allow children to have 'circle time' allowing them to speak about whatever they want to talk about. Other activities such as flags can be provided for the children to colour in and hang on the wall. Classroom stories can be changed to support diversity for example change the colour of character, voice or even gender of the character, this can make the children feel included.

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