

Start at My Feet

Context of the School

My placement school is a large town school situated in the centre of Haverfordwest. The school is very near to the local hospital which provides employment for many parents.

It is an English-medium school with the majority of children being of White British ethnicity (Estyn, 2017); however, the school considers itself to be a multicultural school. (Placement School, 2019).

The school practices Collective Worship predominantly in the Christian form, however, parents are able to remove their children from these sessions if they wish. (Placement School, 2019).

Parents and Families

The school works to create a "School Family" and cares for the wellbeing of all pupils and their families. Written in it's Vision Statement, the school strives to be *"a true community school where all stakeholders are actively involved."* (Placement School Website, 2020).

- They hold weekly drop in clinics for wellbeing, ALN children and MOD families as well as having an 'open door' policy. (Placement School, 2019).
- A community playgroup is also held each week and is open to the wider community as well as prospective pupils. (Placement School Website, 2020). This creates a place for new parents in the community to integrate and begin to make links with the school.
- The school runs family learning events which give parents an idea on what their children are learning in school, as well as support in what they can be doing at home to aid this learning. (Placement School Website, 2020). These events can range from arts and crafts, phonics classes and use of the reading café.
- There is also a free breakfast club every day for full time pupils of the school. (Placement School, 2019).

Diversity

The school focuses on inclusion and celebrating diversity as part of the curriculum and utilise the range of cultures present in the school as an opportunity to educate the pupils (Placement School, 2019). During my bridging tasks, I observed a display from when the children learnt about Diwali. Through pupil choice, the children then investigated the Hindu culture further by looking at Rangoli patterns. The school used this as an opportunity to invite some parents in that were of Hindu faith to talk to the children. The celebration of diversity is embedded throughout the school's Values system and with the use of a mascot designed by pupils, 'Ethical Ewan' based on one of the four purposes of the new curriculum, to produce *"ethical, informed citizens."* (Welsh Government, 2020).



'Ethical Ewan' Placement School's Four Purpose Mascot. Available at: <https://www.prendergastcpschool.org.uk/four-purposes-of-the-new-curriculum/> (Accessed: 10/02/20)

A strong partnership between parents and the school helps to support the children in their education. *"Through working together, parents and teachers should develop a greater understanding of what each contributes to the child's learning."* (Sullivan, p53, 1988). My placement school strives to create a good partnership with parents, keeping a clear line of communication open. Each child has a Home School Communication Book in which parents can communicate with teachers directly. (Placement School, 2019).

Inclusivity

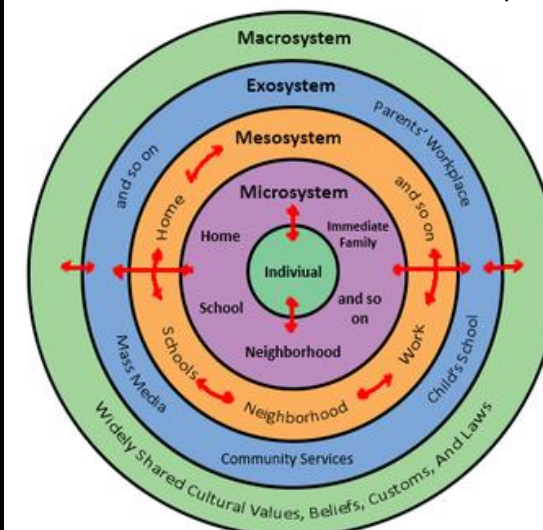
The school endeavours to provide inclusion for all children, including pupils who have Additional Learning Needs and will require further support. They hold ALN drop in clinics for parents to voice any queries or concerns as well as intervention nurture groups where necessary and extra support in class. (Placement School, 2019).

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory. Available at: https://psychology.wikia.org/wiki/Bioecological_model (Accessed: 10/12/19)

Community and Wider Links

- During my bridging days, we saw evidence of the children planning and attending a career's fair. The children had written to local workplaces such as the hospital, the police station and the post office asking them to come and talk to them about their career paths. This gave the children a chance to learn in an authentic context with their own community which is one of the pedagogical principles set out in the new Curriculum for Wales. (Welsh Government, 2020).
- The school has links with the Haverfordwest High V.C family of schools with which they attend In-Service Training Days to work collaboratively on the transition from primary education to secondary, as well as curriculum development amongst the schools. (Placement School, 2019).
- The Ministry of Defence children within the school were involved in a project to create digital stories within a film alongside another school to raise awareness of what life is like for armed forces children in school in Wales. (Placement School Website, 2020). Working together with another school encompasses another of the pedagogical principles in the Curriculum for Wales, encouraging collaboration. (Welsh Government, 2020).
- I also saw displays on my bridging days of the military visiting the school with tanks and other equipment to help educate the pupils and raise the profile of the life MOD families live.

It is important to recognize that a child's community and wider links with the outside world have a part to play in their development, as outlined by Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory. (Gray and MacBlain, p98-99, 2012). My placement school recognizes this and provides support for children whose links within and to their environments may have been hindered. The MOD children for example, are supported with integrating into the school community, and are given a sense of stability with a specific MOD Keyworker. (Placement School Website, 2020).



References

- Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales (2017) *A Report on My Placement School* Available at: <https://primarysite-prod-sorted.s3.amazonaws.com/prendergastcommunityschoolhaverfordwest/UploadedDocument/9211b641ee5c40ceaab3bffc2b8e7ad5/estyn-report-2017.pdf> Accessed on: 10th February 2020
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