

# WHEN THE ADULTS CHANGE

**COGAN SCHOOL**

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When The Adults Change  
Behaviour Review



# OBSERVATIONS:

## **Arrival and start of the day:**

I was greeted warmly by the Head and senior team, who all spoke with passion and pride about the work they have been doing, over a number of years, on wellbeing and behaviour. I was then given a tour by the Head of this wonderful school. Everything shouts out Inclusion from the amazing Mosaic Art displays in the reception area to the children's books that have been donated by authors for the school's diversity work. Art and children's work feature everywhere both inside and out.

At the start of the day, the Head opens the gate and greets every pupil and parent warmly as they enter the grounds. SLT are strategically placed at different points and children are again greeted as they enter each building. I wondered if an opportunity was missed for all class teachers to greet each pupil at the classroom door and this might increase a sense of safety and social engagement. Having said this, the first contact with every staff member is warm, calm, polite and relational.

# WHOLE SCHOOL CONSISTENCIES:

I saw lots of great examples of authoritative consistent language from staff. "Looking this way thank you" "Eyes on me thanks". The children were impeccably behaved and it is obvious that a lot of work has gone in to get them to this point. The missing element was reinforcing the fantastic behaviour by positively acknowledging it and showing that it was noticed. The children were perfect but no one told them they were. Imagine what this school would look and feel like if that was done. It would be the icing on the cake.

The meet and greet procedures which were done so well at the start of the day were not repeated after break or at transitions. Some children would benefit from the protection, safety and regulation this would bring.

There are lots of values and rules. There is a focus on some of them at different times and they are also translated into Welsh to add another dimension. I asked lots of children what the rules were and they all mentioned keep your hands to yourself but then there were variations on a theme. They could not remember them and they are not used to guide teaching and learning or behaviour. The school might benefit from simplifying the rules, values and expectations to 3 simple words which sum up the school and how they want everyone to experience it. In one class for example Ready Respectful Safe was used to teach behaviour and acknowledge pupils who were doing those things. If this could be consistently modelled across the school this simple tweak would create ripples of positivity.

# PRACTICE TO BE CELEBRATED:

There is so much practice to be celebrated that it would be impossible to list it all. These are the main highlights.

There is an atmosphere of positivity, calmness and kindness that permeates the school. The well-being lead has created a document that pulls together all the different strands of the school's work to show how each strand builds on the others and the links to teaching, learning and well-being. This document is a model that others could use. It is strategic as well as practical with clear examples of best practice.

The well-being lead is a fantastic teacher. His relational practice is a joy to watch. Leaders model the behaviour and routines that they wish to see in others and this can be seen and heard across the school.

Raffle tickets are used to mark those who are going over and above. Stickers are given to children for best behaviour linked to school rules. Play-based learning in reception and in older years where it was appropriate all within an atmosphere of calm and love.

The support staff are an incredible asset to the school and it was almost impossible to tell who was a teacher and who was a TA. They are exceptionally skilled both in terms of individual 1:1 work with pupils that need it but also group work and supporting the whole class. I watched one boy who had attention needs being dealt with calmly, assertively and with kindness using his fiddle toy as a soothing regulatory activity and enabling him to reflect on his behaviour.

The breakout spaces are used well; they blend seamlessly into what is happening in the classroom.

Assembly was a joy to watch. It was model practice. Lots of positive noticing and children basking in the glow of it. This could be modelled across the school, particularly in the later Primary classrooms.

Questioning was used well across the school to engage children and enable them to think. The enquiry-based learning linked to the new curriculum is exciting, well-planned and focused.

# PREVENTATIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING:

Pupils are totally engaged, and their behaviour is impeccable. One recurring theme throughout this report is the lack of positive noticing. A lot of work has gone into building classroom routines that enable calm learning spaces. The children listen attentively whenever the teachers and support staff get their attention. They stop what they are doing straight away. The issue is that they are not told enough how brilliant they are. I wondered if because they “just do it” then teachers think they don’t need to teach those behaviours at all times. Behaviour is expected rather than taught explicitly.

For example, staff deal calmly and promptly with any low-level disruption but once the behaviour is back on track the children are not acknowledged enough and praised for doing so.

# CLASSROOM ROUTINES:

Well-established routines run like clockwork. Children know what to do at times without even being told to do so. In the best practice, children are given responsibilities for leading each other in this. Book monitors and children choosing who is ready to go out first etc.

Staff language is mostly authoritative rather than passive. “Year 3 show me you are ready thank you”. In some classes, shushing is used to get the class to focus. This is not an effective technique. In others counting down is used really well but lacks the positive noticing to accompany it. In the main opportunities are missed to catch children being amazing and telling them they have been so.

# BEHAVIOUR AROUND THE SITE:

Playtime and lunchtime in the yard were joyful. I have never been in a school where so many children wanted to come and talk to me spontaneously. I was even given a drawing by one pupil as a present. This shows that they feel safe with adults and relationships are strong.

At the end of break and lunchtime, there is a routine of lining up to go back inside. This would be further enhanced by a meet and greet procedure at the door. For each child. Some children need a buffer moving from the freedom of playtime back into the classroom and a friendly socially engaged meet and greet would provide this.

I watched children supporting other children who felt isolated and upset at break time. They did this without being prompted to do so. It was a delight to see.

## RELATIONSHIPS:

Relationships are a huge strength of the school; it is a beacon of good practice for others to follow. A relationship policy is being developed which is central to the schools developmental priorities. School leaders model the values they wish their staff to model for pupils. The staff feel supported by SLT and love working at the school.

Staff model kindness and compassion for each other as well as the pupils, and pupils respond in kind. All staff are kind and considerate. In some classes, there is a calmness which could be enhanced with a little more energy.

## USE OF CONSEQUENCES:

Consequence systems are proportionate and supportive. They are not used in a shaming or punitive way and are well understood. They would be enhanced further by a classroom support plan which flips the language to what do you need rather than what have you done. Restorative conversations are prioritised across the school.

## STUDENT PERSPECTIVE:

Pupils love the school. They feel safe, supported and well looked after. They talk with warmth and fondness for the staff and say that they are told it's okay to make mistakes. They are really enjoying the new curriculum.

Every pupil I spoke to said they could talk to their class teacher and support staff if they had an issue or felt upset about something. They feel that behaviour in school is good and the year 6 pupils mentioned how well the transition was run to the next school. They said they were looking forward to secondary school but that they will miss Cogan very much.

There are well-established Llais (voice) groups which are student-led focus groups suggesting how the school can improve. These feed into many aspects of school life and are included in the strategic well-being plan.

## **POSITIVE NOTICING AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:**

This is an area of development for the school and tweaking this issue slightly would make this amazing school even better. Praise is heard everywhere but it is general and not specifically targeted and “sticky”. “Well done everyone” rather than “That is amazing listening Kenny thank you I appreciate that.”

As already mentioned, the children are impeccably behaved and there are high expectations. The issue is that they are not told enough and there is a lack of positive noticing. Desired behaviours are not always acknowledged. There is some great practice in early years, but this is not carried on as children get older. Perhaps there is a view that they don't need it.

## **PROCESSES FOR PUPILS TO RECEIVE SUPPORT:**

Support staff are excellent and utilised well. The breakout spaces are busy and focused. The Hearing Impaired Base is a beacon of excellent practice and these pupils are fully integrated into the life of the school and supported admirably.

There is a Speech and Language Therapy programme targeted at pupils in nursery who need it. These pupils are now being tracked into Primary and the transitions and links between nursery and Primary are really strong and growing.

# RECOMMENDATIONS:

## **Use the online course to:**

The Online Course is 7 hours of practical learning that is split into three sections; What to say, What to do & How to be. You will have access to the course from January 2023 through to the end of the academic year and we recommend consuming the course in bite-size chunks to create an appropriate pace of change and consistency across the whole school.

Where possible we recommend working in school groups - ideally cross-sectional so that people are able to learn from staff that work within different areas of the school and create a wider sense of community. It is also useful to blend resistant adults among the groups.

Our suggestion is to study for 30 minutes at a time, once a fortnight. We have added some guidelines to the course around how you can best split the course. Be mindful that the most learning happens in your day-to-day practice, adapting, trying and developing the skills that we discuss, share and showcase in the course.

For Cogan Primary, the course will be useful to develop a whole school understanding of relational practice and develop a behaviour management system that supports and underpins the kindness, compassion and love that sits at the heart of the Cogan community.

# COACHING OPPORTUNITIES:

Despite children being impeccably behaved at Cogan Primary, there is an opportunity to underpin the already brilliant work with relational practice helping ensure each child at Cogan is able to bank emotional currency, develop their self-esteem and grow their aspirations and ambitions independently - whilst at Cogan and beyond.

# IMPLEMENTATION SUMMARY:

Working through the Online Course should enforce the benefits of simplicity, consistency and predictability. We would encourage Cogan to reduce school rules to 3 and build them into the daily language and systematic operation of the school.

We would also encourage all staff to focus on positive noticing and deliberately increase this in school. Recognition systems would also be a valuable addition to every classroom - they should not be linked to points-based systems for maximum impact.