Reflections on Placement

During my placement in a Primary School, I interacted and engaged in many activities with the children and staff. I also observed the staff in the classroom and the different ways in which they worked with the children. By doing this I learned many features of teaching.

I completed my placement in a large, more privileged school which held around 300 pupils and 15 teaching staff. I was placed in a Primary 1 / 2 class where the pupils were of higher ability than others. It was interesting to witness how much the Primary 2’s help the Primary 1’s by setting an example of good behaviour. I think that being placed in the one class for the full week was a good experience because it allowed me to interact with the teacher and children every day and engage in all their activities with them. The room was open planned with two other Primary 1 classes. For literacy and numeracy the children split up and moved to different classes, depending on how able they were, so this was a good chance to work with other pupils. On one morning, the other student and I were asked to take another class whilst their teacher had a meeting and we were please to do so. However, trying to take a primary 1 class on our own was quite difficult as the children got distracted very easily and not sticking to the task. This allowed me to compare the behaviour between them and the primary 1 / 2 class and how having older ones in the class does actually help the primary 1’s to look up to them and behave in the way that they do. I regularly engaged with them by taking small groups to practice their reading, writing and numbers, which also helped me in a way because I was able to get a grasp on exactly what language needed to be spoken to them in order for them to understand. I presented welcome time to the pupils one morning, which is where they sit in a circle and tell the other pupils how they are feeling and any other news that they wish to share. It also involves doing the register and writing down what each pupil would like for their school lunch. The day and the date are also revised at this time. I used this time to be observed by my peer in order to indentify my strengths and weaknesses.

**Strength**

I am aware that a main strength of mine during placement was ensuring that I maintained eye contact with the children when I was speaking to them, either as a group or with an individual. When I was speaking to the children as a class or in a large group, I made sure that I was looking around making eye contact with them all which allowed me to know if they were paying attention to what I was saying. I also ensured a great detail of eye contact when working with an individual. This is important as this lets the child see that you are engaging with them and listening to what they have to tell you.

**Area of Development**

When taking the welcome time in the morning, I was able to identify room for improvement in myself which was ensuring that only one person was telling their news at a time and that other children didn’t just see it as a chance to carry on. The children were all so eager to tell me and the rest of their classmates their news and what they were doing at the weekend. At first, they all began to speak at the same time and I was able to tell them that only one person is allowed to share their news at a time. This went well for around 5 minutes until the ones who had already spoken started to get restless and talk over the speaker, although I tried numerous amounts of times to gain their attention.

**Action Plan**

When taking lessons, I should ensure that I speak louder because I feel that this may have been one of the factors why the children weren’t really paying attention. By doing this, I think that the pupils would take me more seriously meaning that they will have to pay more attention and not have a carry on with their neighbour. Overall, when dealing with a group of children I should ensure that they are all seated where they are able to see all of their peers, including me. This means that I will also be able to see all of them and know who is not being fully concentrated. To conclude, this will allow me to take groups like this again that will run smoothly without having to tell children to stop talking over their friends.