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| **Case Study**  **Rumney Primary School**  **Using Therapies to support the social and emotional needs of Looked After Children**  Context  Rumney Primary School currently has 490 pupils on roll. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is 16%. The school has identified 24% of pupils as having special educational needs. 12% of pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds. No pupils speak Welsh as their first language. The school currently has 17 looked after pupils and 2 pupils under special guardianship.  Strategy  Rumney Primary School is committed to being fully inclusive and makes every consideration in accommodating pupils’ individual needs. For the looked after children, many of whom illustrate attachment disorders, the over-riding challenge is to respond in the most effective way to their specific emotional needs. All require nurturing to a greater or lesser degree and as such, need the school to engage with therapeutic activities to allow them to connect with their emotions in a positive way and move towards demonstrating more secure attachment behaviours.  The issues that are shared by all of our looked after pupils are the experience of trauma and that they are living away from their biological families. Every day they need to deal with issues such as ‘contact’, having ‘2 families’, living apart from siblings, movement across foster care homes, perceived rejection from parents and the feeling of being different.  Action  In response, the school has developed additional provision which includes assigned Key Workers for each pupil who ‘touch base’ with them each day, small group activities to address identified social and emotional aspects (ELSA), and free access to Lunchtime Clubs, as this can be a time where children feel most vulnerable.  The ‘Nurture Nest’ has become a base for such activities; a quiet, calm place, complete with sofas and a caring and familiar adult with whom they can speak as needed. Opportunities for more therapeutic work are also provided. Lego-based Therapy is one such programme, which is designed to develop and reinforce play skills and social skills, supporting turn taking, eye-contact and working towards a shared goal. There is a structure to each session as pupils take on specific roles in the process of building a model together. The adult supports positive interaction, suggests compromises and keeps the group on task.  In contrast, another way the school uses Lego to support these children is ‘Build to Express’, which involves a child using their own individual box of Lego to creatively communicate their thoughts and feelings. In small groups and individually, identified children have timetabled opportunities to create models to support discussion around their feelings, events and situations.  Outcomes  Entry and exit data for Lego Therapy, initial and later sociograms as part of the ‘Well-Being Project’ (NBAR) and evaluations of pupils’ responses during identified tasks, all demonstrate positive impact on pupils’ emotional well-being and self-esteem following interventions. Focused tracking systems for this group of pupils show that nearly all make good and often very good progress. However, the most significant of all evidence lies with the children themselves who have developed very good relationships with their significant adults, and respond well to the opportunities provided. They show trust in the school because the school respects their thoughts and feelings, and has the patience and passion to help them grow. |