



INVESTING IN CHILDREN

Membership Evaluation

Date June 2006

PROJECT NAME Sir Charles Parson's School

PROJECT LOCATION Westbourne Avenue
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ASSESSOR Iftikhar Hussain

SUMMARY OF EVALUATION

Sector Special School
Ages 11-19 years
Area East
Ward Walkergate

Number of beneficiaries



investing in children

Evaluation for Investing in Children membership:

Sir Charles Parson's School

When I first visited Sir Charles Parson's School, I was taken aback by how relaxed the young people were and the general informal nature of the school.

Following conversations with staff and young people, I believe that dialogue/consultation is a key factor at the school.

'The School is committed to improving the quality of provision it makes for its students and their families. The School recognizes that provision can only be improved if the views of the major stakeholders within the school i.e. the students and their families, are sought and acted upon. Consultation with students, both generally and to address identified issues/initiatives, is now a formal part of the School's self-evaluation and development process.'

Nick Sharing (Deputy Head)

Over the course of this report, I intend to illustrate this practice of dialogue/consultation and change. Firstly, I will highlight the opportunities for dialogue, secondly, I will present the changes following this dialogue and then finally, I will provide an account of the discussions I had with young people attending Sir Charles Parson's School.

Opportunities for Dialogue

Annual Review Meeting

In these meetings, the young people are asked what they like/dislike about their school. Identified issues are then addressed. The information is collated and any patterns of issues/concerns are noted. Students are then further consulted about these common issues/patterns. Following this, steps are taken to address these issues (see 'Changes')

Lunchtime Activities

The students were consulted about the types of activities available to them at lunchtime. The consultation process was planned by the Curriculum Management Coordinators. The format and materials were presented to staff and the consultation was undertaken across the school during Personal, Health and Social Education lessons.

As a result the school has changed the number and range of activities available to students (see 'Changes')

Every Child Matters/School Development Plan

At the moment the staff are in discussion with their students regarding the Every Child Matters agenda. These consultations have been carefully planned and

delivered to ensure they were an accessible and meaningful exercise for all students. Thus far the students have been consulted about:

- What it means to be healthy and safe
- What it means to enjoy and achieve within School

The information gathered will then be fed directly into the next year's Development Plan.

Big Lottery

After securing funding from the Big Lottery, formal and planned consultations with students were conducted, the aim being to determine what activities the students would like to see provided. (See 'Changes' for activities requested)

Feeder Primary School

The school continues to consult with students from their feeder primary school (Hadrian School). The aim of these consultations is to gain understanding about views/ideas that the prospective new students have about their transition from primary school to secondary school.

New School Building

Within the next five years the school is hoping to move into a new building. The school has just begun an on-going process of dialogue with the students, discussing what they would like the new building to look like and what should be included in it. This consultation has been in collaboration with the architects responsible for the school design. The intention is that the students' views/ideas will directly feed into the consultation process and that the final design of the building reflects the needs and wishes of the students.

Agenda Day

Some of the students at Sir Charles Parson's School have also been involved with an Agenda Day. The Agenda Day was held at Thomas Bewick School (6th June). The aim of the Agenda Day was to look at access to leisure for disabled young people. There will also be a follow-up Agenda Day in the near future with the aim to work for greater choices of leisure activities.

Changes following Dialogue

Yard/Playground

Following requests from young people, new seating areas have been created in the yard, including a 'shed' for quiet discussions/chats. The young people also requested and planted new flowers/plants in their yard. A ramp for wheelchair access was also made. A number of new lunchtime activities were also introduced following suggestions from students.

After School Activities

The students identified four activities that they would like to see be developed for after school activities. These included football, swimming, rebound therapy and dance. All these activities will be provided weekly, after the next half term holiday. The young people also requested a trampoline.

Feeder Primary School

Following discussions with pupils from Hadrian School, they requested to take part in a science and food technology lesson, during one of their familiarization visits.

Trips/Visits

The students at Sir Charles Parson's have been on a number of trips and visits including:

- Hexham
- Keswick (twice for 3-4 days each time)
- Rising Sun Country Park
- Maths Trip (next week)
- Beadnell – In September some of the students will be organizing a residential at Beadnell. They will decide what food they'll be having, how much pocket money to bring and sleeping arrangements.

Young People's Views

I spoke to two sets of young people for the purpose of this evaluation. I firstly spoke to some members of the 6th Form. Daniel (17), Phillipe (17), Neil (18) and Phillip (17), with support from Trevor (Thanks Mate!)

After explaining who I was and why I was here I asked what they liked about Sir Charles Parson's School.

'The girls' – Daniel

(This first comment set the tone for the remainder of the discussion and put everyone at ease!)

'...and staff's listening skills are good – Daniel

'Lessons are good, I like ICT – Neil

'I like the 6th Form Council, cos I'm in charge' – Neil

I then asked the group if there was anything that they didn't like

'I don't like Maths' – Phillip

'I don't like French' – Daniel

I dont like school dinners' – Phillipe

'I like em, I think they're scrumptious' – Daniel

Following this I asked the group what they would do if they were unhappy about something at school

'I'd tell a teacher, probably Miss Loraine' – Phillipe

'I'd tell Trevor' – Daniel

'They can tell me cos I'm the Chairman (6th Form Council) and I would then discuss it with the 6th Form Council Members, and after this I'd talk about it with Miss Oliver (Head of 6th Form). – Neil

I then asked them if they'd been involved in any changes in the school

'We've been to lots of meetings about designing the new school, we split into groups and thought about things like what would be the ideal school, should the 6th be separate or part of it, how many levels should there be? Then we gave this information back to the Teachers' – Phillipe

'We also designed/decorated the new swimming pool' – Daniel

'Some pupils came from Hadrain School and we helped them to decide what sort of things they liked at the school' – Phillip

I finally asked if they felt that Sir Charles Parson's School should receive Investing in Children membership, which would have to be renewed next year?

'Yeah' - Phillip

'Yeah' – Daniel

'Yeah give it to them'- Neil

'Yeah, so someone will come back to check, next year? We like that – Daniel

I then spoke to a group of Year 9's, Amber, Amy, David, Connor, Chris, Billy and finally Samina with support from Susan. I began with the same question, what they liked about Sir Charles Parson's School

'The lessons, I like P.E.' – Samina

'Well, I like the lessons as well, sometimes they're hard, sometimes easy and you can have a drink if it's hot' – Billy

'I like football and dinnertime – Chris

'I like swimming and I'm looking forward to the new pool' – David

'The yard, we play 'Tuggy' – Connor

'I like it at lunchtime, when you can sit where you want, go to ICT, play football, or go to the yard/quad' – Amy

'I like to learn to read and write, I like English, we've been making holiday brochures – Samina

I then asked what they didn't like

'I don't like P.E.' – Amber

'I don't like English' – Amy

'I don't like P.E'. – David

Following this I asked the group what they would do if they were unhappy with something at school

'I'd tell a teacher, Mr Stewart'(Pastoral) – Connor

'I would tell staff that were on yard duty – Amy

'I would tell then tell Miss Cooper or Susan' (Learning Support Assistant) – David

'I would tell my friends or Helen – Samina

'I would tell my Learning Support Assistant' (Jackie) – Billy

I then asked if they could remember any specific things they had requested
'We're having a swimming pool, and we asked for new things in the yard/quad, we also asked for different after school clubs' – Samina

'We've got a shed in the quad, we asked for it so we could relax and sit and chat with out mates' – Billy

'Asked for after school clubs for football, swimming and dancing' – Chris

'We had plants, planted in yard' – Amy

'I asked for a Café in new school building' – David

'We asked for things to play with in the pool' – Connor

'We went to Hexham' – Amy

'We were planning a day out and decided to go to Rising Sun Country Park' – Amy

'Next week we're going out for a Maths trip so we can see different shapes' – Samina

I finally asked the group if Sir Charles Parson's School should receive its Investing in Children membership. The response was a unanimous 'Yes.' The group also requested that they could thank and acknowledge the following staff: Miss Boquet, Mr Johnson, Miss Warren, Mr Preston, Mr Sharing, Miss Cooper, Mr Stewart, Mr Isaac, Miss Roberts, Miss Arlee, Louise, Jackie and Susan.

Over the course of my numerous discussions/visits with staff at Sir Charles Parson's School, it has been demonstrated that there exist various opportunities for dialogue and numerous changes following such discussions, and in light of the positive endorsement from the young people, I recommend that Sir Charles Parson's School receives Investing in Children membership.

I would like to thank all the young people for their input and time. I hope to see you all on the 14th July for 'Leaver s Assembly' to present your certificate.

Congratulations and Well Done!

Iftikhar Hussain
Project Worker
Investing in Children

June 2006