



## **INVESTING IN CHILDREN**

### **Membership Evaluation**

**Date** June 2006

**PROJECT NAME** Throckley Primary School

**PROJECT LOCATION** Coach Road  
Throckley  
Newcastle upon Tyne NE15 9JN

**CONTACT NAME** Sharon Trundley  
**PHONE** 0191 267 5311  
**E-MAIL** sharon.trundley@throckleyprim.newcastle.sch.uk

**ASSESSOR** Glenys Newby

### **SUMMARY OF EVALUATION**

**Sector** School  
**Ages** 4-11 years  
**Area** North  
**Ward** Newburn

**Number of beneficiaries**



investing in children

## Evaluation for Investing in Children membership:

### Throckley Primary School

Throckley Primary School serves an area on the outskirts of Newcastle. On my visits to the school I met with Mrs Winlow and Mrs Trundle who gave me lots of background information about the school. However, for the purpose of this evaluation I also had the pleasure of meeting Charlotte, Victoria, Sophie, Shawn, Rebecca, Alex, Karl, Hayden, Lucy, Richard, Fay, Nathan, Daniel, Zak, Amanda, Erin, Bryony, Amy, Rickiah, Hollie, Laura, Jamie, Adam L, Catherine D, Carl, Leighvie, Stephanie, Alice, Jane, Nichola, Abbey, Samantha and Kayleigh.

### Evidence of Dialogue and Change

#### School Council

A notable feature of Throckley Primary School is the work of the School Council. The Council meet every month in the conference room. There are elections every year and each class democratically votes for a representative. The school council representative's photographs and names are clearly displayed in the reception area. Everyone who is on the school council also wears a buddy cap to show that they are approachable. This makes it easier for all the children to recognise and approach the councillors about issues that are important to them. This also helps the children who do not feel confident to speak in a group but who might want issues raised at council.

Nichola told me that she is the chairperson and Kayleigh is treasurer. Kayleigh added, **"Everyone on the council gets money to spend on healthy things and disco things."** Abbey informed me, **"We normally talk about what has been happening on the playground. When we have School Council meetings we report back to our class or in assembly, what has been happening in the playground and inside of school. School Council and other pupils decided on what would happen."** Jane added, **"Yes at every school council the representative reports back to class"** and Hayden said, **"And it gets announced in assembly"**

The children told me the idea behind the School Council is that the children come up with ideas for improvements for the school. Hayden said, **"We got new equipment for the playground."** Kayleigh continued, **"We got to look at catalogues and we decided on the things we wanted."**

Nichola also said, **"The school council members worked with Mrs Winlow to decide what we would like to change in the school's detention policy."** The school council voted on policy and practice and the changes were then given to the governors for approval.

#### Suggestion Boxes

All the children are actively encouraged and have the opportunity to put forward their ideas to improve things, put forward their opinions and make changes. Karl stated, **"There are suggestion boxes in everyone's classroom. Everyone puts their ideas in and we talk about them in Council. It works."** Adam added **"At School Council**

**you get suggestions from people who are not School Council. You will need to say it at the meeting that we have, you need to see that the suggestions stay or go.”**

By using suggestion boxes those pupils who may not feel comfortable talking about views directly to a councillor, still the opportunity to have their voices heard.

### **Questionnaires**

There is an ongoing process to find out what all the children at Throckley Primary School want and need. Hayden said, **“They send out questionnaires and you tick a box for what you like. We used to get a lot of homework, but after the questionnaires we didn’t get as much.”**

**Hayden continued to tell me about other ways the school listens to the children. “After we have been on visits and trips like to Whickham Thornes, we do a report on how you liked it.”** All the children agreed that the school listens to their views and this influences other trips and visits.

### **Peer Mentors**

The peer mentors are available on two days of the week for four sessions. They are based in a room where they are not disturbed and where there are blinds at the windows which are closed to maintain confidentiality. All the peer mentors attended sessions with Ann from the Behaviour Support Team, who offered advice and guidance.

Amy described her role as a peer mentor. **“I am a peer mentor who give advice to people who are getting bullied or who are worried about something. We get in partners and have appointments with the clients (pupils). Every month we have a meeting with Mrs Trundley but if any bullying occurs, we see her straight away. Our conversations with clients are kept confidential. We can’t always keep secrets if they are really bad.”**

The children devised the referral sheets themselves and included areas are important to them. Amy continued, **“There is an appointment sheet where people tick if they have any problems. They take a ‘Peer Mentor Pass’ which they show to lunchtime staff (which have the right to stay in the building while waiting for their appointment).**

All the pupils agreed that this was a really good idea. **One girl told me, “I was bullied in year 5. They didn’t really give me much advice. But this year we have peer mentors. I think I would go and see them and make an appointment if I needed to. I would use them.”**

### **Buddys and Dave the Dolphin**

Adam told me, **“Buddys are if someone is sad you need to go over and see what is wrong and cheer them up and play with them and make them happy then just look for more people to cheer up. We wear our buddy hats in playtime and lunchtime.”** Abbey added, **“My role as a buddy is to help people on the playground if they have a problem. I comfort people and they can confide in me.”**

However if a child does not want to talk to anyone about their feelings, there is also the opportunity for children to post a message or problem into Dave the Dolphin. Dave the Dolphin used to sit the school hall. Some children said they wanted him moved so they could post messages without anyone else seeing. Dave the Dolphin can now be found in the school’s reception area.

### **The Lord Mayors Cup**

Throckley Primary School has just recently won the Lord Mayors Cup. The cup, organized by the Newcastle City's Public Health and Environmental Protection Division, encourages schools in Newcastle to take part in work and activities, which focus on Environmental Health Issues.

All the children were involved in deciding on different themes and all were involved in designing their work. Reception Year won £250 for their "Keep Fit" display, year 1 & 2 won £100 for their "Jungle Boogie" and year 3 and 4 won £100 for their Throckley Olympics "Lord of the Rings" and finally year 5 & 6 won £500 for their Strictly come Salsa."

Mrs Trundley informed me that all the pupils are going to decide on what they would like to do with the prize money and I am looking forward to hearing all their ideas. Well done Throckley Primary School!

### **The New School**

All the children I spoke to are very excited about their New School. Nichola said, "**We are going up to our new school in September. So we have come up and thought of lots of ideas for it.**" Kayleigh added, "**We are working on a cover. We asked for it so when it rains we don't get wet. That's what we want.**"

Nichola also told me about another suggestion that has been taken on board. She said, "**Someone suggested that we have a reunion cos year 6 goes to Chapel House instead. It will be nice to keep in touch and see everyone.**"

On all my visits to Throckley Primary I was made to feel welcome. I would like to thank everyone for giving up their time to help me write this evaluation. The children and staff at Throckley Primary School work very hard at valuing ideas and opinions. The School Council is involved in many aspects of running their school and I am sure it will continue to be involved in decision making. After discussion with the school council and after further discussion with Mrs Winlow, it was agreed that the school council members could be given time on their own to raise and talk about issues that are important to them. I look forward to hearing how this develops.

However there is no doubt that the school provides the opportunity for all children to have a say and this undoubtedly brings about meaningful change. When I asked the children if they agreed with this evaluation, there was a unanimous YES! I therefore have no hesitation in recommending Throckley Primary School receives Investing In Children membership. Well Done.

**Glenys Newby  
Project Worker  
Investing in Children**

**June 2006**