



Evaluation for Investing in Children membership

Byker Primary School

Byker Primary School is situated in the west end of Newcastle. Two hundred and forty eight children attend the school from nursery age through to year six. Mrs Bradley is the head teacher and is supported by thirteen other teachers, fifteen teaching assistants, ten lunchtime assistants, four catering staff, five cleaning staff and two secretaries.

For the purpose of this evaluation I had the pleasure of meeting with Mrs Bradley and members of the school council along with some young people who are part of the 'Buddy' project as well as some other children who attend the school. They were Josh, Jamie, Rebecca, Page, Sophie, Danny, Jack, and Milly.

This report will highlight some of the opportunities children have had to be active members of the school in decision-making. It will also identify any changes that have occurred within the school as a result of the participation of children at Byker Primary School.

Evidence of Dialogue and Change

School Council

The school council is made up of representatives from all different age groups. The children are nominated by their friends and meet most Friday afternoons. Council meetings are attended by children from different year groups who represent each class. They discuss different ideas and opinions that are given to them by their peers. All year groups have a school council file so everyone in each year knows what is going on in the meeting. The representatives bring different ideas to the meeting and then report back to their class about what has been said at the meetings. I was able to observe one of the school council meetings and was surprised by the ways in which all the children contributed to the meeting with different year groups wanting different things. Mrs Bradley explained what could be done about the ideas, which were raised.

Jamie, from year one reception class, asked, "Could we have a bowl of fruit on the morning?"

Milly, from year two, asked, "Can we play outside in fancy dress and then change at wet play time?"

Danny, from reception, asked, "Could we have Smoothies?"

Mrs Bradley responded to all of the requests and explained what the school could do about these ideas. Mrs Bradley explained she could introduce the Smoothies after the Easter Holidays and allow children to play outside in fancy dress and introduce fruit bowls to classes.

Mathew told me, “Sometimes Mrs Bradley cannot always make our ideas happen but she always tells us why not, and then we tell our class and try and come up with other ideas”.

There are many things that have been changed within the school as a result of the school council meetings, such as children can now feed the birds at school, and children with packed lunches can now have their lunch with children who have school dinners.

Josh told me about a big project the school council have been working on. “We have been drawing a play area outside and have planned a new play area, because lots of children have been asking for better play equipment”. The school council have been working with a company who specialise in children’s play equipment and are designing a giant tyre play area for the school. Dylan told me, “All the children have been involved saying how we wanted the toilets to look. Girls decided on pink as a colour with unicorns and princesses on the walls, and the boys went for blue with ships and boats on the walls”.

These are just some of the things the school council are campaigning to change. The school positively encourages its pupils to think independently and respects their views and opinions. They encourage the pupils to fundraise for a trampoline and football goals outside in the play ground and took account of their wish for longer play times and longer swimming lessons.

Classroom choices

All children at the school are given different options for subjects in the classroom to make them more interested in learning. Children from year three have been taking turns to choose something they would like to do and, so far, drumming and learning about Egyptian Mummies have been introduced.

Christmas Tree/Football Strip

Every year the children go to Chopwell Wood to choose a Christmas Tree and spend time choosing decorations and designing the tree. Children have also been asking for a football strip and to have a football team for both boys and girls. This has been introduced and some new football strips were bought and were presented to the pupils at Christmas.

Byker Primary Newsletter

All children are encouraged, with the support of the teaching staff, to write items for the newsletter regarding their individual experiences at the school. They say what things they like and why they like them, such as what Callum Gallon from year two wrote in the July news edition, “Every Tuesday afternoon year 2 play golf in the gym. Mr Smith put us in four teams and taught us how to play golf. We ended up standing like the shape of a triangle. My team came second. I think all year 2 had a really good time and it was fun”.

When attending the school to meet with pupils and members of the teaching team it was clear to see that both children and adults worked well together. The children seemed to be respected in their own right and contributed positively to make changes to their school life. The children are listened to and some changes do happen. For these reasons I would like to recommend that Byker Primary School becomes an Investing in Children member. I look forward with anticipation to further developments made within the school as a result of the positive dialogue that takes place between the children and adults at the school.

This report has been read and agreed by the following young people who attended Byker Primary School. They where :- Katie, Jordon, Sophie , Ashleigh, Connor, Shinice, Liam, Benedicta, Danny, Barbara, Meryem, Danny, Kelly, Jordan, Shelly, Rachel , Jack and Rebecca.

Rob Johnson
Investing in Children
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