



## Evaluation for Investing in Children membership

### Pupil Advocacy Service

The Pupil Advocacy Service is part of the Liverpool Authority Children's Service. PAS works to enable young people with special educational needs and disabilities to actively participate in decisions made about their education. They work closely with individuals and groups to develop good practice which supports the young people to be involved in:

- Peer Support Training
- School Council Training and Support
- Transition planning and support
- Delivering training to adults in schools and services
- Supporting local authority services in planning and delivery

To help me write this evaluation, I had the pleasure of meeting with Craig, Kath, Jo, Mike, Michelle and David.

### Evidence of Dialogue and Change

Craig told me, *"Radha works for the Pupil Advocacy Service and she came into our school for the first time last year."* Michelle added, *"We have worked with them twice, no, three times since then."*

### **Pupil Advocacy Forum**

The group enthusiastically told me about attending a forum in October where they addressed 200 people about the issues surrounding disabilities and things they thought people should know. Michelle explained, *"We did a Powerpoint presentation at a centre in Kensington (see attached). It was to social workers and people like that, about how we want to be treated. You know, like how people talk to us, and how we want them to talk to us"*

Mike told me, *"There were social workers, community police officers, teachers and carers there."* Jo added, *"People in authority had to listen to us, and couldn't think, oh, you're just kids."*

Craig explained more about the day. *"We were there all day. We had to listen to a couple of presentations from adults and then we did ours."*

David said *"I was a bit nervous but our presentation was the best."* Michelle added, *"Everyone took notice. At the end they said they understood now, and know what they do wrong."*

I asked the group how they decided what their presentation was about. Craig told me, *"Radha came into school and asked if we would like to do it. And we all said yeah. We did different activities, like we drew a stick man and put different things on to show how*

*people talk to us, and then we did a different one to show how they should talk to us, with respect.”*

It sounds as though the group really got their message across.

### **Peer Mentoring and Anti-Bullying Training**

*Jo said “This year we have done Peer Mentoring. Radha came to talk to us and we all sat in a group. But she doesn’t just come in and talk at you.”*

*Craig added, “so it’s never a lecture, she wants to know what we think.” Jo continued, “And she is so organised. I have never met someone so well organised, seriously. She came in for three weeks and did Peer Mentoring and Anti Bullying training with the school council. They made the training really enjoyable. It’s all hands on.”*

*Mike added, “she really makes it fun. But if you don’t feel comfortable doing things, then you just say.” Michelle agreed, “We got to say how things were going, what we wanted to do and what we didn’t. It was what we wanted to know about.” Craig said, “things I wanted to know she taught us, like how to sit down with two people and listen to both sides.” Jo told me, “Neither Gail or Radha force us to do things, it’s always our choice.” David finished by telling me, “If you don’t understand anything, they always explain it. So you know you are making the right choices.”*

### **Interviewing**

Jo explained how they recently got involved in interviewing for new PAS workers.

*“Radha came and asked us if we wanted to go on an interview panel. It was for a secondment to the Pupil Advocacy Service. Me and Michelle went to the Fairfield Centre.” Michelle added, “They would be doing the job for 3 months. We thought of the questions. We thought about what we would like the person to be like.”*

*Jo said, “Before we went to the interview the whole group talked about what we should ask.” Michelle continued, “Like what do you think makes a good sense of humour, and what other qualities should a person working with young people have.” Craig explained, “You see, a person with only a good sense of humour doesn’t make a good carer, they need other things as well.” I asked how well the interviews had gone. Jo said, “At the beginning of the interview they gave us a presentation. We marked them out of 5, then we also marked them out of 5 for the questions.” Michelle added, “There were 3 adults and two of us on the interview panel, but we all did the same job.” Jo continued to describe their job as interviewers. “Before the interviews started, Radha said we didn’t have to stick to the questions and we could ask whatever we wanted. We interviewed a man and a woman.” Michelle said, “The man at first seemed to look only at the adults, but once Radha explained why we were there, and that she wanted us there, he was fine. They were both really nice people.” Jo told me, “Then after each interview we would discuss each person. We talked about why we give the marks we did. And they listened to what we had to say. We decided together who got the job.”*

The group explained why they enjoy working with the Pupil Advocacy Service so much. Michelle stated, *“Nothing is ever boring and our opinions count.”* Jo stated, *“They really understand young people and they are always there to help. You don’t have to keep asking them to do things, they just do. They treat us with respect and value what we have to say. We all have more confidence since working with them. We are able to talk in front of people and ask them to change things. Radha makes you feel that everyone’s opinions count.”*

Thank you to everyone at Sanfield Park School for making me feel very welcome. A special big thank you to all the young people for helping me to write this evaluation (and

for missing their very popular Art lesson). I have been left in no doubt that the Pupil Advocacy Service is a valued and creative service that actively enters into dialogue with young people and this brings about meaningful change. I have no hesitation in recommending the Pupil Advocacy Service for Investing in Children Membership. Very well done. This report has been agreed with the young people.

**Glenys Newby**  
**Investing in Children**  
**February 2008**