



Evaluation for Investing in Children membership

Acre Rigg Infant School

During my visit to Acre Rigg Infant School I met with the children from the school council.

Members of the school council are chosen through a voting process which normally takes place during class. The council is made up of two children from each of the classes and selected on a yearly basis.

The council meets every two weeks to discuss issues in and out of school.

I met with the following pupils and I would like to say a special thanks to them for their help with this application.

They are:-

- Shane (6)
- Katlin (6)
- Shannon (6)
- Megan (5)
- Reece (5)
- Ethan John (5)
- Kieron (6)
- Sophia (7)
- Erin (7)
- Dylan (7)
- Thomas (6)

Opportunities for dialogue and change

Over the past year the following topics have been discussed at the school council and it is evident lots of changes have taken place in and around the school.

Healthy Eating/Healthy Snacks

This is a project that the school council are currently working on. The council have discussed the importance of eating healthily and want to make other pupils aware of what's good to eat etc. So they have come up with the idea of designing posters which will be displayed around the school telling other children what a healthy snack is. They also invited the dental nurse in to talk to them about the damage unhealthy food does to your teeth.

Following my discussions with the children they all told me how important this topic is to them and how they were very pleased that their posters would be put up and they would be helping other children.

Improving the school grounds

At one of the previous meetings the children and the head teacher went around the school to look at what they thought of the school and what they would like improving in the school grounds.

From this it was identified that there was lots of litter, the bushes needed tidying and cutting and there needed to be more planting and flowers. So a meeting was set up with the school caretaker to see if he could help. They also wrote to the parish councillor and managed to get some flowers and plants for the school yard.

It was also discussed in assembly about the rubbish and *'it has now improved and the school is a much nicer place now'*.

Buddies

A friendship stop was created so that the children can go to this if they haven't got any one to play with or have a problem. Also in the school yard there are several children who act as buddies and they wear yellow hats that say buddy on them so that other pupils know who they are.

Bringing dogs onto the school grounds

A pupil had asked a member of the school council to raise this issue as he felt it was a problem when parents would bring their dogs into the school grounds when dropping their children off.

It was discussed and the council also agreed and decided that it would be brought up in assembly and a letter would go out to parents telling them not to bring their dogs onto the school premises. This is no longer a problem.

Safety in school and out of school

The council looked at how they can be safe in school and the importance of school rules and whether or not they are fair and right.

Following discussions at the school council it was decided that the lolly pop lady should come in and speak in assembly.

Being Healthy

The council decided that sugary drinks should not be allowed in the school. The council asked Mrs Laws if the school could provide water during lunchtime for all children. Instead of this each class now has a water drinks machine in the room so that pupils can have water throughout the day.

Pedal Cars

Pupils asked if they could have some pedal cars for the playground. Following this Mrs Laws bought some rickshaws so that the children could drive each other round.

Other topics that have been discussed at the school council are:-

- A fundraising event/red nose day
- Picture Gallery
- Paintings at the school
- Every child matters

Young People's Views

During a discussion with the school council about how they were chosen to be on the council. Ethan John told me 'When we have the class vote it's really exciting'.

We then went on to talk about why they all wanted to be on the school council and they told me.

'Because you get to do good work' Katlin

'You get to do loads of work that's hard' Shane

'You get to put posters up on the wall. We made posters to stop people throwing rubbish'

'I wanted to be on the school council to stop people being nasty to each other' Ethan John

We then talked about some of the projects/discussions they had had at the school council meetings. They said:

'We asked for water to be put into every class and now we have it'

'Its good because we should drink water everyday and I don't think you should drink it fast because it gives you the hick ups' Shane

'We looked at all the rubbish in the bushes and stuff. There were new plants and people kept pulling them up, so we took it to assembly and asked the caretaker to get rid of the rubbish and cut down the bushes and trees and tidy up the path because it really wasn't safe'

We then went onto have a discussion about why it is important to have a school council and why the children wanted to be involved. They said the following comments:

Shane *'So we can have fun and there will be no fighting and there can be nice plants and the school wouldn't be called rubbish'*

'It would be a dump ground without the school council' Ethan John

'Because if it wasn't for the school council it would be dirty and unhealthy and the people would be nasty. It would not be a very nice place.'

'We can stop year 2's from being nasty' Shane

'Children would not know what is healthy and unhealthy if it wasn't for us.' Ethan John

'It's good to have a school council because if we don't people won't know anything about the school but we can tell them' Katlin

'It stops people being cruel' Shane

Following my visit there is ample evidence of dialogue and change. Minutes are taken from all meetings.

The school is excellent at involving children in decision making. I have no hesitation but to recommend there membership is renewed for another year.

Well done!

This report has been endorsed by children involved in the school council.

Eleanor Seed
Investing in Children
October 2007