



## Re-evaluation for Investing in Children membership

### Aycliffe Village Primary School

Aycliffe Village Primary School has had membership with Investing in Children for a number of years now. The school has a new head teacher Mr Gargan who is keen for the school to continue developing their Investing in Children membership. For this re-evaluation I had the pleasure of meeting with Mr Gargan and Emma, Ben, Joshua, Alex, Matthew, Flynn, Brooke, Georgia, Elise, Jack, Eve and Oliver.

#### **Evidence of Dialogue & Change**

##### School Council

The children I met were part of the newly elected school council who were voted for by the children in the school. Ben told me, **“We all voted.”**

Joshua is the chair of the school council, he said, **“I write all the minutes from the meetings.”**

The children told me that Mr Gargan comes to their meetings and although he has some good ideas for the school, he wants the children to have their say also. Georgia told me, **“He says, ‘I’m not going to tell you, use your own ideas.’”**

There is a suggestion box in the hall for all the pupils to put in their ideas and the school council look at these during their meetings. They meet once every two weeks, they ask their class for any ideas or issues they might have, to be discussed by the school council. Emma told me, **“Sometimes after the meetings we go and tell the class what has happened, or it might be that Mr Gargan tells people in assembly what will be happening.”**

##### Interviews

The previous school council were involved in the interviews to appoint a new head teacher at Aycliffe Village Primary. Eve who was part of the last school council told me, **“We met all the other people, the school council thought of questions to ask, and we put the questions on little strips of paper.”**

##### Willow Sculpture

When Mr Gargan became the head teacher at Aycliffe Village Primary he had the idea of developing the outdoor area. He asked the children on the school council how they felt about creating an outdoor classroom. It was decided that a willow sculpture would be a great idea and that children from year 2 and year 6 would work on the project with an artist. Jack is in year 2 and he told me, **“Our class worked on it, we talked about the design, it has two archways in it, then we’ll have another circle and we’ll put seats in the middle for a quiet area.”**

## Toilets

When I talked to the school council they were keen to tell me about their ideas for the toilets in the school. They feel that there are a number of issues that they would like addressing. They feel that the water is always cold, the taps are difficult to use as you need to push them down, Oliver said, **“We want turning taps.”** Other problems with the toilets are that the plugs have snapped off and **“the soap is horrible and the water is yellow.”**

As Matthew put it, **“The toilets need refurbishing.”**

These issues were taken to Mr Gargan and were quickly dealt with, new soap has been bought, and Mr Gargan is looking into the water problem, and he will work out the cost of fixing it.

## Blinds

The school’s hall is a very sunny place which can be lovely but also it can make it difficult to see things on the screen at the front of the hall. As Emma told me, **“I’ve had complaints about assembly, people can’t see the words.”**

The children told Mr Gargan about it and he thought that curtains would be a good idea, so with the help of the PTA they will be getting curtains put up at the windows.

## Gymnastics Club

The pupils at Aycliffe Village Primary told Mr Gargan that they would like to have a gymnastics club, and so Mr Gargan has applied for an ‘Awards for All’ grant to provide an instructor for the club. He is waiting to see if this has been successful.

## Magazine

An exciting opportunity for all the pupils at the school will be the production of a magazine in July. This will be made in conjunction with other schools in their cluster and it will promote the school. The magazine will be sent out with the Newton News and there will be 15000 copies made. The children at Aycliffe Village Primary will have the chance to write articles and have photographs and pictures published.

It is clear that the staff at Aycliffe Village Primary are committed to making sure that all the children at the school have opportunities to voice their views on how their school can be improved, and also to have the chance to be involved in making these changes. The children I met had plenty of new ideas that they will no doubt be passing on to Mr Gargan in the future. Emma, Ben, Joshua, Alex, Matthew, Flynn, Brooke, Georgia, Elise, Jack, Eve and Oliver all told me that they felt that they were listened to and felt that they made a difference in their school, and so with their endorsement I would like to recommend that Aycliffe Village Primary School receive Investing in Children membership once again.

**Lisa Lines**  
**Investing in Children**  
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