



## Re-evaluation for Investing in Children membership

### Behaviour Support Service

The Behaviour Support Service supports inclusion, children's access to education and the prevention of exclusions from school. The team are based at Broom Cottages in Ferryhill and support children all over county Durham.

For the purpose of this evaluation I had the pleasure of meeting with Margaret Currie who works for the service and also Bobby, Dylan and Daniel who have received support from the team.

Margaret explained that children can be referred by anyone who feels they need support with their behaviour, such as parents, grandparents, school staff, education psychologists, or education welfare officers.

An advisory teacher assesses the child and a support worker is then allocated if needed. In the last year 15 support workers have supported 402 primary pupils in addressing their problems.

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

Once a worker is allocated to a child an individual programme is designed to fit in with each child's needs. Sometimes the worker needs to be in school for the first hour of the day, or lunchtime, if that is when the child is having difficulties. The programme usually includes elements of anger management, social skills, listening skills, mentoring and counselling. Another variable is the amount of time a worker may need to spend with a child, ranging from an hour a day to full days if necessary. Also the places where the child needs support can vary; it may be that the support is in the classroom or the playground.

To get the programme started the worker and the child spend time completing a booklet called "All About Me" (see attached sheets). This focuses entirely on the child and they lead the discussions. It looks at what the child thinks they need to have help with, what they themselves see as needing to be improved, and they set the targets they'd like to work towards. They also talk about the things they enjoy to agree the rewards that they should receive for achieving their goals.

### Bobby

I met with Bobby at his school. He told me about working with Miss Francis. He said, **"We used to go to the blue tables on Wednesdays and Fridays. We did posters and sheets and a sticker chart. I told Miss Francis that I liked motorbikes, skateboards, the Simpson's and cars."** See attached reward chart for Bobby.

Bobby went on to tell me about the rewards he received. **"I said I'd like to have colouring sheets. If I got all my stickers on the chart I got a prize at the end of the week, like rubbers and pencils and little toys, I liked getting them."**

Bobby told me about Miss Francis. **“She was nice; she used to tell me about other people she went to see. We did stories and answering questions. We did angry stories, how people managed to not get too angry. She listened to what I had to say.”**

Bobby’s work with Miss Francis has ended now but he still gets to see her from time to time, and his good work has continued. **“She still comes to visit me sometimes; she checks how I’m doing. I feel proud that I’m working hard and behaving. Miss Griffin (class teacher) tells me I’m being good and getting better. And Mr Dobson (head teacher) says I’m getting better, I’m not in his room as often.”**

Bobby also feels he is doing better at home and when he’s out playing. Work at school has continued. **“I go every Wednesday at one o’clock to see Miss Hunter (mentor), sometimes with other children, sometimes on my own. We have a chat and do a blobby man sheet. It’s got lots of pictures of people on and you colour in the people who match how you feel. I can go and see Miss Hunter when I feel like it.”**

I met with Bobby’s head teacher, Mr Dobson, after I spoke to Bobby. He felt that the intervention that Bobby had received has been successful. He is aware that there are many factors affecting Bobby’s behaviour and that school can address some of them. He told me that he and the class teacher had noticed a change in Bobby’s behaviour and coping techniques and that the school are continuing the work started by Miss Francis.

### Dylan

Dylan has spent time with Mrs Collins from the behaviour support team, and he kindly spoke to me about his experience. He told me about how they started working together. **“She talked me through “All About Me”, about what I like, who I like. We just had a bit of chat. She suggested some things that could help me, like the chart. I said I wanted to be on my own to work with her, we played games, we done some sheets and I wrote down targets for myself.”**

Dylan went on to tell me about what happened. **“She worked with me on my own for a term. Then we talked about having a social group with my friends so we picked Jack, Chloe and Callum. In the group we played games and talked about how to act with your friends.”**

Dylan’s rewards were stickers and games which he chose. **“Sometimes if I got stickers for all the week we’d have a session playing a game I want to play with Mrs Collins.”**

It was clear from talking to Dylan that he was pleased with the progress he has made. **“Mam and dad were pleased, they didn’t used to believe me, then I showed them the chart and they were like “whoa!”. I can carry on well, sometimes I get a bit annoyed, but the things Mrs Collins showed me help me deal with it. She showed me all the methods. She listened to me, she used cars and motorbike pictures – not things like Bratz, so that I was interested.”**

Dylan went on to reflect about how things would be for him had he not seen Mrs Collins. **“I’d be really angry and always starting fights. I feel really good about myself. She definitely deserves a certificate!”**

### Daniel

I met Daniel at his school and he was very keen to tell me about working with Mrs Williams. Daniel worked on a traffic light system, beginning on a green light for each session and trying to keep it. Daniel showed me his book of traffic lights to show how well he had managed. Daniel said, **“Mrs Williams found out I liked dinosaurs and what was tough at school.”** He went on to say, **“The traffic lights help me, you have to stop, think and go.”**

Mrs Williams developed a game just for Daniel called 'Dino Dan, Fearless Follower of Rules' and it was a game with counters made from members of the social skills group members photographs. The theme of the game was 'a day in the life of...' and consisted of problems that Daniel might encounter with people and situations at school. Question cards were made with dinosaur images on the back. Daniel invited me to have a game with him to try it out for myself.

Daniel told me about a book which he had to go between school and home, he told me it said how his day had gone and he thought it was good, and he liked the fact that his Nana wrote in it to say how he was at home.

When I asked Daniel how he felt about his time working with Mrs Williams he said, "She's helped me. She told us how to be friends, we all learnt together."

Mrs Williams worked with Daniel and a small group of his friends to look at social skills which Daniel told me he enjoyed doing.

When meeting all of the children who have worked with the Behaviour Support Service it is clear that their personalities have been key in developing each individual programme. Every child felt like their worker knew them, what they were interested in and what motivated them. They knew that if the worker didn't understand them then their work would not have been interesting and therefore successful, as Dylan said about Mrs Collins, "**She listened to me, she used cars and motorbike pictures – not things like Bratz, so that I was interested.**"

Investing in Children Membership requires evidence of dialogue and change. It is obvious from the testimony of the young people that the Behaviour Support Service works on the basis of creating *negotiated* programmes, which demand the participation of the young people in an active dialogue. Basing the programmes on the interests and stated preferences of the young people allows them to *shape and change* from the start the nature of their individual arrangements. This practice clearly meets the required standards of dialogue and change.

When I asked the children if they felt that they were listened to by the Behaviour Support Service, they all wholeheartedly agreed and also felt that they should receive Investing in Children membership, and so with their endorsement I propose that the Behaviour Support Service receive Investing in Children once again.

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