



Re-evaluation for Investing in Children membership

Cestria Primary School

Cestria Primary School is in the town centre of Chester-Le-Street and has had Investing in Children membership since 2002. For this re-evaluation I met with Hannah, Alexander, Adam and Francesca from the school council, and Mr Hood who works with the school council.

Evidence of Dialogue & Change

Class Council & School Council

Each class has two representatives elected. Alexander told me about this, **“There’s two from each class, a boy and a girl.”**

Adam told me how the children nominate themselves to be on the council. He said, **“If you want to do it you do a poster on a card.”**

Francesca told me, **“You put on bullet points of why you’d be good.”** Adam added, **“We had to say what we think we could do for the class.”** The children then told me about how the voting works.

Francesca went on, **“All the class votes, we’ve got a ballot box. You get two votes, one for a boy and one for a girl.”**

Once elected by their classmates the school council meet every week with their class. Adam told me, **“Every Wednesday there’s a class meeting.”**

Hannah said, **“We write down on paper what the class want and their ideas.”**

Alexander added, **“They ask for all sorts of things.”**

The members of the school council have their lunch earlier on a Wednesday and then meet during the lunch break. Hannah told me that the school councillors feed back straight away to their classes. **“After lunch when you come back, if there was new stuff you’d tell them what’s going on.”**

Each school councillor has a badge to show everyone who they are and they also have new files to keep the notes from their class and notes from the meetings.

In the Junior Hall there is a great display with photographs of all of the school councillors. Hannah told me, **“I took everyone’s picture and then Alexander took mine.”** The whole school can see the display and know who to speak to if they have anything they want the school council to discuss.

Any issues that are raised by the school council are passed on to the teachers and governors by Mr Hood.

Hannah told me about some of the ideas that the children have. She said, **“Sometimes they ask for silly things. Jordan said he wanted a Jacuzzi and a slide off the roof!”**

All of the children said they knew this wasn’t a sensible idea, so I asked if they had ever made suggestions to the staff and hadn’t got what they’d asked for. Adam told me, **“We asked for football nets on the yard.”** This idea wasn’t successful so I asked why. Adam said, **“It was because they could fall over and hurt someone.”** All of the children felt that this was fair and thought it was good that this had been explained to them.

Game Shops & Game Zones

The school now has two Game Shops. These are sheds in the school yard, one in the infants and one in the juniors. Children in the school said that they wanted play equipment on the yard, and so the game shops were developed. Lots of equipment was chosen by the children. Hannah told me, **“We’ve got things like hula hoops, tennis bats, cricket bats, hockey things, skipping ropes and there’s a ball that goes on your ankle.”**

When the children borrow some equipment they are given a red band to show that they have something to return at the end of playtime.

There are circus toys like Diablo’s and juggling balls which children requested after they had a circus skills workshop.

The children raised that there was a problem on the playground because different games crossed over into others. They decided that having zones for different activities would help. The playground has been marked out with different zones, painted on the ground, for different activities, and some areas are marked with cones.

The children all agreed that the zones were working well. Hannah told me, **“We have a music and dance zone, with a CD player, anyone can go and dance.”** There is an outdoor socket for the CD player and this zone is very popular.

There is a quiet zone too for children who don’t feel like joining in with activities and would prefer a quieter playtime.

Some children, mainly from year 5 are sports leaders and they help to set up the cones and also show the children how to use the equipment if they need help.

Adam told me about the buddies at Cestria Primary School. **“If you are upset they come and help you.”**

Alexander went on, **“They wear yellow jackets so you know who they are.”**

The children at Cestria Primary School have lots of interesting things happening and everyone was keen to tell me about them. Some of the highlights of the past year have been an X Factor competition. Each class had an entry voted by the class and then the final found a winner from the infants and one from the juniors. The teachers dressed up and performed for the children and this was a big hit with them.

The school has taken part in Comic Relief and World Book Day and there have been lots of competitions and fun activities throughout the year. Coming up next year will be a “Cestria’s Got Talent” competition and the children are really looking forward to this.

I asked the children I met what they thought was good about being on the school council. Francesca told me, **“I like suggesting the ideas because it makes good changes to the school.”**

Alex said, **“We get new stuff for the yard.”**

Adam went on, **“We get to plan stuff and make stuff.”**

And Hannah finished by saying, **“I like being on the school council because I like suggesting ideas for the school.”**

All of the children were in agreement that they definitely got listened to and that their school should receive Investing in Children membership for another year, and based on what they have told me I can see a great deal of evidence of dialogue and change and would like to recommend that Cestria Primary School is awarded Investing in Children membership once again. Well done.