



## Evaluation for Investing in Children membership

### Lanchester Endowed Parochial

Lanchester EP School changed its Head Teacher after eighteen years. Mrs. Davies came with new ideas and brought a new dynamic into the school, which has engaged the children and the staff team. A new Deputy Head, Mrs. Murphy joined the team a year later and now in 2007 I have it on good authority that 'The School Council run the school.' Dominic agreed and said, *"We (the children) have to agree with what's happening. In some places adults don't listen and here that is what we are trying to do to get adults to listen to children."*

After a short meeting with both Mrs. Davies and Mrs. Murphy I met with The School Council of Lanchester EP School 2007-2008 to talk about what they think they have achieved in school.

**Evidence of dialogue and change** is provided by the children whom I met with on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2007. Ben - Secretary (responsible for typing the minutes and negotiating changes with Mrs. Davies), Henry D. - Secretary (responsible for writing the minutes at the meetings), Helen and Millie - both with a responsibility for PR. Chloe - Chair of the School Council, Dominic - the Vice Chair and Jessica, Olivia, Sarah, Adam, Francis, Sam G., Bethany, Kaitlin, Leon, Thomas, Sam H., and last but not least Henry T.

After explaining who I was and why I was visiting the discussion opened and the children had this to tell me:-

**The School Council** has a structure and an order to the way they run things. The children have put a system in place to ensure that all suggestions are answered and that all of the children in the school have a chance to have their say.

**Class meetings** take place every Wednesday. The meetings are an opportunity for the school council representatives to ask for suggestions. Jessica showed me her 'School Council Business Sheet' where issues raised by the class are noted for the reps to take to council meetings.

**School Council** meetings happen on a Monday over lunchtime. Henry writes up the notes and then Ben types them. Ben and Henry have a meeting with Mrs. Davies after every meeting to discuss what might and might not be possible. Ben then includes responses to each suggestion and a copy is given to each class rep in time for their Wednesday meeting.

The children are responsible for themselves and have to remember to go to the meetings. Ben told me that they keep a register and if someone does not attend for three meetings then the children "assess the situation," talking about why someone might have missed the meetings and talk about what to do. The children did agree that this was fair.

Over the last two years these are just some of the things the children have had a say in:

**Pet Sponsorship** - some of the children wanted class pets in every class. After much discussion everyone agreed that this was probably not a good idea. However it could be that each class sponsored an animal at Hall Hill Farm, which is just over the hill from the school. Ben told me that they have gathered some information from Hall Hill Farm about which animals can be sponsored and at the moment the classes are choosing which animal they want to sponsor.

**Trim Trail** - the trim trail was a new addition to the school grounds last year. The School Council has just chosen some new pieces to add to the trim trail.

**The Fruit Stall** - The children were keen to tell me that already they have made £121.00 profit, just in one term! The group told me that they run the fruit stall. They have set up a rota so that different members of the School Council sort it all out every day. Ben told me that they do this to be a healthy school. All of the children were keen to tell me that they have a huge variety of juicy and lovely fruit such as, banana's, raisins; pears and "even cucumber" said Henry. Francis added "we had pineapple today and it was lovely." All fruit costs 10p.

**Clubs** - Lanchester EP School has many clubs, all suggested by the children in the school. Some clubs are led by the children and others are supported by staff

Chess Club - run by Ben O'Neill in Year 5.

Card Club - run by Mrs. Murphy but this was Henry D. and Owens idea

Cookery Club - Mrs. Allison

Music and drama clubs - happens Wednesday, run by Mrs. Startup.

Dance Club - run by Tiffany and Ellie.

Basketball Club - this has finished but was run by Ben.

Football - run by Mr. Stephenson, Mr. Taylor and Miss. Roffe for the girls.

Car Club - run by Jimmy Joe and Billy Dolan.

CC4G - Computer Club for girls. This club is run by Millie and two of her friends, Bethany Grimes and Ruth Auguard, three year 6's. Chloe told me "***Millie organised a nail art challenge the other week.***" Millie and her friends organise a challenge every two weeks. Millie told me "***we do it all, choose the challenge and I made the certificates.***"

Henry T. Told me about "***The breakfast club is good and the Dinner ladies are there to help you with your breakfast, you have it before you go to your class in a morning.***"

**Team Assemblies** - there are four 'houses' in Lanchester EP, the Normans, Romans, Saxons and Danes. Every Friday the 'team' for the week organise the assembly, working with the theme of the week the children choose the songs and what's included in the assembly. Millie said, "***the children plan it, the teachers are there to help.***" Ben said, "***it is the year 6 captains and vice captains plan it and all of the children who want to be involved do it.***"

Francis told me that "***this is where we get our merit marks for good work.***"

**Wake up Shake up** - The year 6's lead this aerobic wake up session every Monday for the infants and juniors. The School Council have recently requested that all of the staff join in!

**New music system** - "***We now have a microphone and the whole thing is much better***

*because you can hear.*” The children complained about the old CD player so a whole new sound system has been put in the hall.

#### **Decoration -**

- Infant toilets - the children chose the colour of the walls, the new doors.
- Junior corridors - the children chose the colour of the floors, doors and walls in the Lower Junior Corridor and the Infant Corridor. The junior toilets have also been redecorated and once again the School Council were involved. The juniors have also requested some pictures for the walls like the infants. These have now been stuck on the wall.
- School Council Secretary discussed toilet locks, this is an on-going discussion because the toilet doors are old and may not be able to be changed.

**School grounds** - Ben said that the children have been involved in redesigning the school grounds. “We have helped with what goes where, building an outdoor classroom and creating a quiet area.”

Other suggestions, events and activities include:

**Dinners** - The children have asked for Foreign Food Themed Days - *staff have negotiated with Scholarest and are looking forward to these happening from 29<sup>th</sup> January.* The children also complained that children on packed lunches could bring in juice and school dinner children could only have water. *Mrs. Davies is discussing other options with the cook perhaps juice and milk.*

**Young Leaders** - Year 5 children are trained as Young Leaders and now initiate games with the younger children. Henry T. also told me “**children from reception go to the nursery to play games with the children.**” Jessica added “**the nursery children come up and share their work too.**”

**Wacky Hair Day** - *suggested and organised by year 6 children in aid of the Madeline McCann Appeal. They received support and funding from local hairdressers.*

**Talent Show** – *Last year the children requested a Talent Show, again some year 6 children organised the show and led the event. The children hope to organise one this year too.*

**Football Goals** - *children requested goals for use of playtimes and lunchtimes, this has now been organised and a rota is in place for shared use. However there are no nets!*

**Teddy Bear Parade** - *at the request of some children the PTA organised a Teddy Bear Parade.*

**Prayer** - *a year 1 child asked if they could sing a prayer at the end of assembly rather than always saying one, this has now taken place.*

**Shoebiz Appeal** – Last year, year 3 and 5 children asked to take part in the Blue Peter Shoebiz Appeal, the children wrote to parents and children to ask for their support and organised the shoe collection. This year the children also organised some Blue Peter bring and buy sales, all were a huge success. The children raised £172.00 – Well done.

**SNAG** – The SNAG group meet regularly to discuss the menu, what the children like and more importantly what they don't.

**Flowers** – some of the children complained that there was no colour in the school grounds. The Head Teacher took some of the School Council to choose flower tubs and plants to go in them.

**Swimming** – Years 5 and 6 have complained that they do not get to go swimming. The children will be given the opportunity in fun and fitness week.

**Village Partnership** – children from the School Council are supported in meeting with the local Village Partnership in order for the children to be involved in what happens in the village.

**Governors** – Mrs. Davies told me two of the children are going to the next governors meeting to talk about whether this is something that the children want to be involved in. At this point in time it has not been decided if some of the children will become governors so it's a case of watch this space.

**School Travel Plan** –

- Although this was a suggestion, the children discussed with Mrs. Davies why it was not possible to have a cycle track around school.
- The children would like some cycle racks but the school are still negotiating with County. They are working with the School Travel Planning Officer.
- School Council are going to write to parents to ask them to think about parking safer outside of the school gates in a morning and at hometime.

Our session proved quite chaotic as the children struggled to cope with the room becoming hotter and hotter and the impending breaktime, however we did have a lot to talk about and hopefully I have managed to include everything that I was told.

Some of the children wanted to include their own personal comments about school in my report and here they are:

**Millie** – “It's very good, we get listened to a lot and we get our say in everything.”

**Dominic** – “we are very lucky and make money fast by fruit and fayres.”  
£1200 was raised at last week Christmas Fayre.

**Sarah** – “I am very happy with School Council because it is fun!”

**Sam** – “I like this school, it's very nice.”

**Kaitlin** – “I think we are lucky and I like being in the School Council.”

**Ben** – “It's really good.”

Lanchester EP is a very busy school, the children are busy learning, busy planning, busy doing and busy having fun. When I arrived a little lad had fallen and was sitting in reception but he was well enough to explain who everyone was on the photographs in reception and also where all the Christmas trees are in school!

As Mrs. Davies approached children were running from all directions with new

suggestions for clubs in school, Mrs. Davies told them to see their School Councillors, and I am sure that the School Councillors will listen and 'sort it out'

Hopefully my report clearly demonstrates the changes in Lanchester EP that have been effected by the School Council both this year and last year. As I was told in the beginning: "The School Council run the School." With this in mind and in respect of the commitment of the Head Teacher, the Deputy Head and the staff team to listen and include the children, and in light of ALL the hard work of the School Council, it is on their behalf that I definitely have no hesitation in recommending that Lanchester Endowed Parochial becomes Investing in Children members.

Dominic, Sam G. Francis, Ben, Helen, Sarah, Olivia and Henry D. all agreed with my report (the necessary changes have all been made) and Dominic said, "*All School Council is about is the children getting their say!*"

Well done and keep up the good work.

**Helen Mulhearn**  
**Investing in Children**  
**December 2007**