



Evaluation for Investing in Children membership

Ramshaw Primary School

Ramshaw Primary School is a very busy school going through a lot of changes. The atmosphere created by staff and children is very welcoming and warm it was apparent that the children are at the centre of all that occurs within the school. On my first visit to the school I met with Mr Brown who gave me lots of background information about the school. However, for the purpose of this report I also had the pleasure of meeting Chloe, Aidan, Jack, Phillip, Katie, Jack and Charlotte who are all members of the school council.

This report will highlight and identify the positive partnership that exists between the children and the teachers to bring about changes within the school. Changes have been made and projects developed as a result of the ongoing dialogue between staff and children. The council continue to meet on a regular basis. The school council members hold class councils before they meet, to gather the issues that other children want to discuss. **“We ask people in our class during class meetings what they would like us to do on the school council; we then talk about it at these meetings.”**

The children told me that the idea behind the school council is so that the children come up with ideas to improve the school. Charlotte informed me of how they are voted onto the council. **“Every year we vote in class for who we want on the school council.”** Jack added **“After every school council meeting we tell our classes what has been decided to make school better.”**

The importance of the suggestion box to the children on the school council is clear. Katie said **“I like the suggestion box, its great to have that choice, but because we are such a small school, people just come and talk to us, we are the suggestion box sometimes”** The process of dialogue the children have set up works effectively for them. They have put mechanisms in place whereby as many children as possible can be included in improving the school.

The school tries to promote a sense of caring and security for all its pupils. Mr Brown and the teaching staff encourage the children to have respect for others and themselves. All pupils are encouraged to have a sense of belonging to the wider community as well as the school community. The school often participates in events outside of school and links into other agencies in order to ensure that the children have a say in issues affecting them outside of school. The school recently linked with the local chapel to look at providing a nursery for children who would soon become pupils at the school. Phillip and Shannon met with children and parents from the chapel nursery to see how they could help. **“The nursery children now come down to our school and play on the new equipment. We have done a lot of fundraising to get things for them to play on.”** Aidan also informed me that the school has their very own newsletter which is circulated to all of the children, parents and people in the community. **“The newsletter used to be really boring, we said we wanted our own section, we have two sections, written by us called KidShout. It’s much more fun.”** Chloe added **“It’s important to put what we want in the newsletter because it makes it more fun.”**

Evidence of dialogue and change

Playground

The school council were asked on numerous occasions to improve the school yard and provide games to play with during playtimes. The council members took this to Mr Brown who allocated a budget of three hundred pounds. The council were responsible for this money and how it was spent. **“We asked people in our classes to write down ideas on what they would like in the yard, from the ideas we got back we have bought swing ball, volley ball, space hoppers, ten pin bowls, carry stacks, bats, balls and stilts.”**

The children also wanted to paint the walls in the yard **“we asked a local artist to come into school because we wanted to make the yard look happier. We were involved in the planning, designs and painting of the drawings.”** The school yard looks fantastic with its new football scene, fish and netball posts.

As a lot of time has been spent on re-designing the playground the school council asked the children what they thought of the new games. Phillip told me **“a lot of people didn’t know the games and wanted to be shown them.”** As a direct result of this request the school council spoke with the buddies and asked them to show people how to play the games.

The school buddies highlighted that it was sometimes difficult to communicate with each other when they are busy in the yard. The children decided that they should buy walkie talkies. Jack informed me **“it helps the buddies to do their jobs and we can get in touch with teachers if we need them.”**

School Dinners

There is an ongoing process to find out what the children at Ramshaw Primary want and need. Jack said **“we send out questionnaires to see what other children in school would like.”**

Phillip continued to tell me about the changes made to lunch times as a result of questionnaires. **“We asked what people thought of lunch time because a lot of children didn’t like dinners.”** Adian was very excited to tell me of the changes they made as a result of the questionnaire. One issue that stood out to the school council was that children were very unhappy with the choice of dinners. Being such a proactive group the school council took this issue to the head teacher and the kitchen staff. The children decided to change things. **“The whole school got involved. Everyone picked their favourite meal and it was put on the school menu.”** Jack added **“we also have favourite Friday and we have things like pizza, fish fingers, chips, sausages and cakes.”** Katie added **“we always know that’s its going to be nice, because we were involved in deciding.”** Phillip also informed me that, those children who just want to have school dinners on favourite Friday can just pay on the day, **“that way it’s a treat for everyone, it does not matter if you are on school dinners or packed lunches.”**

The children also highlighted that the dinner tables were not very nice and needed updating. Jack informed me **“when we changed the school dinners we all decided that we needed new tables, they fold away and have seats around them.”**

I Pod

The children of Ramshaw Primary School were very excited to show me their very own I Pod. The children have the music playing during play and lunch times. As an incentive to

improve behaviour the student of the week picks a song to be added to the I Pod play list. **“It’s great, it’s got all of our favourite songs on it and we listen to them when we are playing.”** As well as the I pod each class also has their own cd which they play.

After School Clubs

The class councils and questionnaires helped the council to find out that a lot of the children were unhappy with the after school clubs and wanted to improve the options available to them. The school council produced a questionnaire that they took around the whole school to find out what the after school clubs should be. **“People told us that they wanted different options, we asked people to tell us what options would make them attend the after school clubs. Everyone voted and the clubs are; football, rounders, computers, cricket, sword fencing and art.”** The after school clubs are going to be re-viewed in the new school term, the council believe that this is really important **“it’s just to check that everyone is happy.”**

During my visits to Ramshaw Primary School I was made to feel welcome. I would like to thank everyone for helping me write this evaluation. The children and staff at Ramshaw Primary work well together ensuring that everyone feels safe and comfortable to express their valued ideas and opinions. Members of the school council are involved in running their school and make real decisions about issues that affect them.

There is no doubt that Ramshaw Primary provides the opportunity for all children to have a say and bring about meaningful change. When I asked the children if they agreed with this evaluation, there was a resounding **“YES!”** I therefore have no hesitation in recommending Ramshaw Primary School receives Investing in Children membership. Well done!

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