



Re-evaluation for Investing in Children membership

Sedgefield Primary School

On the 25th March 2008 I re-evaluated Sedgefield Primary School for Investing in Children membership renewal. Whilst on this visit I spoke to the Head Teacher Mr Philip Irvine who was delighted to have a visit from Investing in Children and introduced me to the young people and the groups that they were involved with.

On this visit I spoke to members of the following groups:

Butterflies
Buddies
School council
Youth council
Peer mediators
Road safety

The people I had the pleasure of speaking to were: Joe, Jay, Melissa, Jonathan, Adam, Alex, Craig, Oliver, Luke, Jessica, Tom, Joe, Alex, Craig, Rory, Jordan, Calem.

The School Council

The school council is a group of children involved in making changes to the school to suit the young people's wants. The school council meets up monthly to talk about changes that their peers would like, a member of the school council goes into the classes and asks people what they want, and there is also a suggestion box.

Tom – "I'm involved in school council. We get ideas from everyone on after school activities. There is also a school council box where any young people can put ideas into"

To be involved in the school council there is a fair system that doesn't force anyone to be part of it.

Craig – "for school council your name gets put into a hat"

Alex – "I think it's fair as you really find out who wants to be involved"

The school council created an area in one of the buildings called "huff and puff" which was up and running on the last visit. This is a store room run by the year fives where children can go on break times to borrow toys and games for use on break times. Since the last visit "huff and puff" has been updated and now provides a more varied selection of toys, **"the huff and puff has footballs, tail balls and now they have kites"**

Jonathan.

The boys toilets had been refurbished on the last visit and now the girls toilets have been finished, **"the year six girls decided on the colours, doors and tiles, the toilets are all pink now"** **Melissa**

The school council also organised fundraising for new laptops that were requested by a lot of pupils in the school. **“We have 15 new Toshiba laptops between year 3 and year 4”.**

The school council also had their breaks changed to suit the young people’s wants, **“the breaks were changed by adults and the young people didn’t like so it was changed to what young people wanted. They wanted more breaks and shorter breaks which was better for young people, they could fit in more activities”** Calem.

Road Safety

The road safety group are working on an ongoing project to make the young people’s walk to school safer. The project is ongoing at the minute and the young people understand that the outcome will take some time but they are happy with the work they are doing.

Alex – “people still double park and they shouldn’t” “there is a warning going up to stop people who aren’t disabled doubled parking”

Jonathan – “there are warning signs going up around Sedgefield about the parking. The youth council which I am part of is working with Sedgefield council to get traffic warnings and clamping involved because it’s not safe for the children”.

Alex – “Road safety group look at how to make it safer for children on the road at school. We did a walk to school week. To let kids know what we do we sent out a leaflet. This group has a mascot called Percy the Penguin and we did a Rap in assembly to let kids know about road safety. We are now working on a multi media project which was totally the young people’s idea. The project will be shown in assembly.”

Calem – “Peer mentors and Road Safety groups. The road safety group looked at the space between cars which were parking to drop kids off at school – it was dangerous. We now have a green pathway where kids can walk into the school safely.”

Butterflies Bunch

Butterflies is a newly run project some children are part of, where children in the school befriend new starters.

Luke – “we go to the office and look after new people”

Melissa – “we have lots of experience and make people welcome”

Jordan – “I’m on school council and buddies. We also have a scheme to welcome new people to the school and show them around – the Butterfly Bunch. Helps make new people happier.”

Peer Mediators and Buddies

These two groups work together to make sure everyone in the school is happy and work together to stop bullying. On the last visit the peer mediators were on training and I was told by Luke that they were now finished this training and the school was a nicer and happier place because of the anti-bullying.

Calem – “if the buddies don’t sort the problem they get sent to peer mediators”

Jessica – “Mini buds – they help solve problems in playground. They calm people down and help them become friends again”

Jordan – “juniors have buddies younger ones have mini buddies”

Alex – “buddies help out in the playground. They have special hats”

Examples of dialogue and change

Dialogue	Change
Break times were not suitable for young people – school council got involved	Break times were made shorter and more often to allow the young people to fit in more activities and enjoy the school day better
The road into school was deemed unsafe by young people who were having to pass between parked cars to get into school – road safety group got involved	A special green pathway (cars not allowed) was made for young people to walk into school safely
The two yards were old and the young people wanted them changed – school council was involved in the design.	An adventure playground has been made with paint on the ground and a new jungle gym.
The young people wanted new people to be happy.	The butterfly bunch was created.
The young people felt they needed new sport equipment.	There were new kits bought for the sports teams, cross country vests, football team’s kit for example.
There was a request for new laptops throughout the school.	15 new Toshiba laptops were provided.

I asked the young people if there was anything else they would like to tell me about and they were all very excited to tell me about their current survey on the activities they would most like. I think this shows good dialogue within the school and couldn’t leave it out; the young people told me the following:

Craig – “school council decide on what groups everyone will vote on such as having a cricket or baseball activity group. Whichever one wins the vote we will probably get. The teachers don’t vote”.

Jordan – “school council asks which activities are liked and what are the most popular. School council did a vote with everyone about the most popular things and football was most popular”.

Recommendations

I would recommend that the adults in the school should make sure that all of the young people are aware that the changes that happen within the school are because all the pupils decided collectively on them and celebrate their decisions. One young person said “only the people in loads of groups get listened to”, this is a possible chance to involve the children outside the school council more which I believe from the current survey on sports activities is in progress.

Endorsement

I would like to say thank you for the brilliant audience on my last visit to the school to read out the re-evaluation report, the young people were all very well behaved and looked excellent in their buddy hats. On my last visit to read out the re-evaluation report everyone agreed that their school should get the membership renewed and that everything stated in the report was correct. Again a big thank you to Sedgefield Primary School, Mr Philip Irvine and especially all of the young people I spoke to, carry on the good work. My apologies to Calem for spelling his name wrong so many times it has been changed.

I recommend Sedgefield Primary School should once again receive an Investing in Children membership as there is clear dialogue and change and the children seem to be very involved.

Rachael Punton
Investing in Children
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