



## Re-evaluation for Investing in Children membership

### Silver Tree Primary School

For the purpose of this re-evaluation I met with; Lindsey (Year 5), Leon (Year 2), Ben (Year 1), David (Year 1), Leah (Year 3), Andrew (Year 4), Jessica (Year 4), Chloe (Reception), Ellis (Reception), Dominick (Year 5), Page (Year 6), Abbey (Year 2), Leanne (Year 2) and Jack (Year 3). They are members of the school council.

Since the previous evaluation the school has seen many changes. The main developments are the creation of a new school building and a new name for the school. Ushaw Moor Infant School and the Junior School have merged to become Silver Tree Primary School in October 2006.

The children on the school council continue to be voted on democratically by their class. Since the schools merged Mrs. Cummings has made some positive steps to encourage all classes to have two representatives on the school council, which now also includes representatives from the infant classes.

This report will highlight and identify the positive partnership that exists between the children and the teachers to bring about changes within the school. The council continues to meet every two weeks. The school council members hold class councils before they meet, to gather together any issues that other children want to discuss. Dominick explained to me, **'We ask people during class meetings what they would like us to do on the school council; we then talk about it at these meetings.'** All classes in the school have books to write ideas down so school council members can take them into meetings and address all issues. Lindsey added, **"All the classes have a school council year book, and we all meet with our class to write down all the ideas"**

This report will identify opportunities young people have to participate in decision-making and will identify changes that have occurred through this process.

### School Name and Sign

Members of the school council met with a local artist and the classes they represent were asked to come up with some ideas for the school name and sign. Children and staff decided to call the School **'SILVER TREE PRIMARY SCHOOL'**.

Lindsey told me, **"We have been down to the school gate and decided that we wanted the school sign to be big so people can see it"**.

Jessica told me, **"The school listened to lots of our ideas and gave us time to draw different things"**.

Leon added, **"We have also had two meetings with Miss Harper to look at the drawings"**.

## **Play Ground Design**

Pupils have been working in partnership with Mrs Cumming and other teachers to come up with some ideas for the new playground. Pupils have been allowed to visit the building site to view the development of the school prior to the opening. Chloe told me, **“We also looked at pictures of the new school when it was being built”**.

Members of the school council came up with an idea to have two playground areas because, **“Not all pupils like playing football”**. The school council are also in discussion with the school about developing a quiet area on the playground. Some pupils at the school have also asked for sports equipment for the new playground, which would include footballs, cricket gear, basketballs and tennis equipment.

The school is also looking to develop a chess area on the playground, which has been suggested by some pupils and then discussed at the school council meetings.

## **School Toilets**

Pupils have been concerned with the toilet doors not providing enough privacy. This was brought up and discussed at a school council meeting. As a result of these discussions the school have started to make some changes.

Jessica explained, **“We don’t think the toilets give us enough privacy.**

Jessica went on to add, **“We have had one of the girl’s cubicle doors made bigger”**. The school are trying to make further improvements to the toilets and are keeping young people informed.

## **Activities**

The school council has lots of ideas for after school activities and some of them have been put into place already. They are: a chess club, choir and a football club. Pupils and staff at the school are in discussion about developing other activities at the school. The young people with whom I met shared with me some of their ideas for future projects and activities. This is a credit to how Mrs Cummings and the school are trying to develop the school council at Silver Tree School.

It is evident from meeting with the school council that the children at Silver Tree Primary School are given the freedom to develop their own ideas and, as a result of this, they make changes to school life to meet their needs.

It was highlighted in last year’s report that it would be encouraging to see how the school council incorporates the children’s ideas to help improve the new school building. This has certainly occurred with the changes that the school council has put in place. It was noticeable that Silver Tree Primary School is supporting children and young people to become actively involved in decision-making. It will be interesting to see further developments made to the school by young people and staff working together next year.

The young people involved in this report agree with the content and recommendations made. It is on their behalf that I would like to recommend that Silver Tree Primary School continue to be an Investing in Children member.

**Rob Johnson**  
**Investing in Children, January 2008**