



## Evaluation for Investing in Children membership

### South Pelaw Infant School

Mrs Hales is the head teacher of South Pelaw Infant School in Chester-le-Street, and she was very keen that her school become members of Investing in Children. For this evaluation I had the pleasure of meeting with her and some of the children from the school. I met Courtney, Aaron, Sarah and Thomas from the reception class, Molly, Lauren, Aaron and William from year one, Olivia, Josh, Hannah and Jack from year two.

### **Evidence of Dialogue and Change**

#### School Council

The children I met with, were the representatives for the school council. The reception children were chosen to be on the school council by their class teacher because they are children who are good listeners to the other children. Thomas proudly told me, **“Miss McAdam chose me and Courtney to be on the school council because we were so good.”**

The children in the other classes were elected. Olivia told me, **“People vote for who they think should be on the school council.”** Hannah went on, **“It makes it fair.”**

Jack felt he knew what was important if you were a member of the school council. **“You have to know what other people want.”**

All of the school council have badges to show everyone in the school who they are. Olivia told me, **“We have books to write down questions and what we can do.”** Jack told me, **“Before the meetings we collect from the children what they want us to change.”**

Mrs Stevenson works with the school council and writes the minutes for them as they are all still working on their writing skills.

When they have met they **“come and tell Mrs Hales,”** as Josh told me.

Mrs Hales is fully supportive of the school council and hopes that she can promote a motto in the school. Josh told me about it, **“Every child has a voice that can be heard, and that can make a difference.”**

#### Interviews

Mrs Hales has recently been appointed as head teacher, and was acting head teacher for some time before this. Children in the school were involved in interviewing for the positions of head teacher and deputy head teacher.

Olivia said, **“We thought about the questions ourselves. We asked, can you be kind and caring, what would you do for our school, and why would you like to be our head teacher.”**

#### Lunchtimes

The children have made some big changes to lunchtimes in South Pelaw Infant School. Olivia proudly told me, **“We changed dinner time. It used to be packed lunches at the**

**top of the hall, dinners at the bottom. It was not good.”** Aaron added, **“You couldn’t sit next to anyone.”**

As well as having to sit away from your friends if they had a different dinner to you, there were a lot of times when the children had to queue up. They queued from their class into the hall, queued for their lunch, and then queued again to go out to play after lunch.

Lauren said, **“We talked about it in the meetings.”** Olivia went on to tell me that they had a meeting with the dinner ladies to discuss it. **“We asked the dinner ladies if we could change things so we could sit together.”**

As a result of these discussions, along with some extra help from Mrs Hales, a lot has changed at lunch time. New tables with seats attached have been bought. As Molly said, **“You don’t have to push the chairs in; they’re stuck to the table.”** Olivia was pleased about where the children can sit now, **“You can just go and find a seat and your friend can sit next to you.”**

Olivia went on to tell me, **“There’s no queuing to leave, you can just go out. It’s much better because some people fell over while they were in the queue.”**

It is clear that all the children are happy with the changes, and they told me that the dinner ladies are happy too.

Not only have the children changed the way lunchtimes run, they have also changed the menu. The cook made a special pie for everyone to taste, including some parents as there was a family learning event happening on the same day. Everyone voted for corned beef pie to be put on the menu as it was so lovely, so now on a Friday the children get to have it.

### Playground

The children at South Pelaw Infant School have been involved in making plans for their outdoor areas. Molly said, **“We had a meeting.”** Hannah went on, **“We talked about new things to play on like climbing frames.”**

The children did research on the internet, and looked at a plan of the yard to work out how it would work. Mrs Hales and the children showed me the plans that have been drawn up from their ideas. Molly told me, **“There’s a secret wood with a quiet area, you could go and read a book.”** Other ideas included a tree house, a slide, something to draw on, and a balancing beam.

Hannah told me the cost of all the work would be £60,000. Mrs Hales will be working with the children to decide how they can get some of the things they want for the playground, as the cost is very high.

### Impetus Award

When Mrs Hales was appointed as head teacher she knew about the Impetus Awards and felt that South Pelaw Infant School should enter.

The following is taken from the Impetus website to describe the awards.

*“Impetus aims to bring alive human rights and the shared ethical values that underpin them*

*Impetus certificates are given to all projects that demonstrate the following five Impetus criteria:*

- *EXPLORATION of human rights as a set of shared ethical values*
- *INNOVATIVE approaches to applying human rights to an issue of concern to the children and young people involved*
- *COLLECTIVE working on their project with others*

- *SHARING of their project more widely with the local and/or global communities*
- *REFLECTION on their experience and the impact of their project*

Mrs Hales put together an entry into the awards using the work the children have done around anti-bullying and their Mini-Buds project. The work they have done earned them an Impetus award in the Primary School category.

Some of the children and their parents went with Mrs Hales to London to collect their award; they have a wonderful file recording all of the exciting things they did whilst they were there. The school is featured on the Impetus website to give other projects inspiration for their work (see attached).

It is very clear from meeting with Mrs Hales that she is very committed to ensuring that South Pelaw Infant school listens to, and works with, all the children to ensure their motto of **“Every child has a voice that can be heard, and that can make a difference”** is carried out. The children felt very sure that they were making changes to their school for the better with the support of the staff, and so with their endorsement I would like to agree with them and recommend that South Pelaw Infant School becomes a member of the Investing in Children membership scheme.

**Lisa Lines**  
**Investing in Children**  
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