



## Re-evaluation for Investing in Children membership

### Tanfield School, College of Science and Engineering

For the purpose of this re-evaluation I met with Jennifer, Tammy, Lucy, Kathryn, Steven, Robert, Maggie, James, Chantelle, Laura, Simon, Tony, Michael, Sarah, Nathan and Carol.

Tanfield School continue to involve pupils in many aspects of decision making within the school. This helps to create new initiatives and projects through the positive relationship that exists between many pupils and teachers and this brings about changes at the school.

### Opportunities for Dialogue and Change

#### Eco-friendly Group

Some pupils at the school are part of a national school initiative to promote and develop an environmentally friendly school through different projects. Steven and Kathryn, who are members of the group, spoke about the positive changes and developments that are happening as a direct result of pupils coming up with ideas and the school responding to them. This has included developing an awareness campaign and researching environmental issues.

Kathryn, explained, “ **We set a group up to look at Palm Oil and the impact using this has on the environment**”, Kathryn enthusiastically also informed me, “ **We also checked with the school canteen to see if they used Palm oil products**”.

Steven explained, “**We also decided to make a video about the impact Palm oil is having on the rain forests**”. Steven added, “**We know this has an impact on the survival of orang-utans**”

This group continues to meet, including meeting with the school governors to discuss all their ideas. They have also worked with the canteen staff to stop using Palm oil at school. The group are also discussing further developments with teachers about developing a nature garden and discussing the potential of planting several trees to benefit the environment.

#### Enrichment Week

Jennifer, Lucy and Tammy told me about their involvement in Enrichment week which continues to take place twice a year allowing pupils the opportunity to get involved in lots of different activities. These young people got involved in a story making activity.

Lucy told me, “**It was really good and helped use with our ideas and allowed us to change things if we were not happy with how things were going**”

Jennifer explained, **“The school will ask you about what things you would like to do and try and put them on”**. Some pupils have asked for Wet and Wild and to have more music activities. This has taken place.

It was explained to me that young people are given a form explaining what activities are on during enrichment week, which young people can then sign up for.

Sarah told me how this could be developed further; **“There should be a box or something on the form asking about your ideas for the next enrichment week”**. Sarah added, **“It might be good if some young people and staff could then talk about the ideas”**. This might be something the school might want to explore.

### **Fundraising**

I also met with Tony and Michael who have been supported with their own idea to raise money for children and young people who have cancer.

Tony told me, **“We heard about this competition which is called ‘Music Means Life’ which aims to raise 1 million pounds towards a new teenage cancer unit at the Royal Victoria Infirmary in Newcastle”**

Michael explained, **“I think this school is ok and has listened to our ideas and has helped us out with stuff”**

The school supported Tony and Michael by allowing them time out of school and extra time with the music teacher to develop and record their song for the band they are both in. The band has successfully made it into the final and will be performing at Newcastle in May.

Tony informed me, **“Music is a big thing at this school and teachers are only now starting to realise this”**. Tony went on to explain, **“There is not enough space and equipment for everyone to use at the school”**. Some young people are meeting with school governors to discuss these issues to see if further developments can be made.

### **Environment Project**

The school came fifth in a national competition to design an environmentally friendly building. All young people were approached and asked to get involved in the project.

Steven told me, **“We were given a brief about what the project was about and the rest was up to us”**. Another young person told me **“We developed the design around the Eden Project in Cornwall”**. The group have decided to use the prize money to continue to pursue their design and build it. The group are in discussion with the school to look at how this might be achieved as more funding is needed and it is something they want to do.

### **Lunch Times**

There has been some changes made to lunch times based on some ideas that have come from some young people at the school. Robert explained, **“The school always tries to use our ideas instead of their own”**.

Robert added, **“Some young people met with Mr Lloyd about things to do on a dinner time”**. Since this discussion Year 7,8,9 now have their own music and TV and year 10, 11 also have their own individual music and TV area.

## **Library**

Young people choose books, puzzles and games. Nathan who helps out at the library told me, “ **You can just go to Miss Hall and tell her what you think about the library**”. Nathan told me how this works, “**The library has just got ‘Cirque Du Freak’ which is a series of 12 books and was a main request by young people**”

## **Conclusion**

Tanfield School tries to create many opportunities for young people at the school to get involved in decision making which continues to lead to some changes in the school. It would be good for all young people in the school to be aware of how the school responds and encourages young people to get involved in decision making. This seems to allow ideas to be generated by some young people at the school, which are then supported and implemented within the school.

I would like to thank everyone who helped me to write this evaluation. When I asked the young people if they agreed that the school should continue to have Investing in Children membership they all said yes! Therefore, I have no hesitation in recommending that Tanfield School, College of Science and Engineering continues to be an Investing in Children member. Well Done.

The following young people have read and agreed with this report. They are: - Kathryn, Steven, Tony, Michael, and Nathan

**Rob Johnson**  
**Investing in Children**  
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