



Evaluation for Investing in Children membership

St Chad's RCVA Primary

St Chad's is a small school in the village of Witton Park, near Bishop Auckland. The school has 91 pupils, with Mrs Holborn as Head teacher, and she is supported by four teachers, four teaching assistants, a secretary, a caretaker, two dinner ladies and a technician. Also at the school there are a cook and a kitchen assistant employed by Scholarest, and also two learning support assistants employed by the County Council to support pupils who are visually impaired and attend St Chad's. The school is small and has a very friendly and happy atmosphere.

For the purpose of this evaluation I had the pleasure of meeting with Mrs Holborn, and members of the school council, the SNAG group and other pupils who are organising fund raising events, they were Matthew, Talia, Lucy, Kristian, Jed, Olivia, Anna, Joe, Jack, Kaitlyn, Alice, Thomas, Charlie, Edward and Abbey-Marie.

Evidence of Dialogue and Change

The pupils at the school are very busy with lots of ideas and plans for the future both for themselves and others with lots of fundraising at the heart of the school.

School Council

The school has four house groups, St Matthew, St Mark, St Luke and St John, and the school council has 2 representatives from each house group. The children were nominated by their friends, and then elected by pupils by them standing behind if they wanted them to be their representative.

The council meets on the first Wednesday of every month. Each house group meets to prepare ideas for the representatives to take forward. Each group has a book which they keep notes in. Matthew showed me a page from the St Mark book which had some suggestions for the SNAG group.

Joe told me **"There's a board next to the bench to say when the next meeting is. We've got our photos on the board, so if anyone wants anything said at a meeting they can tell us."**

Jed said, **"We go into our group and report back to the teacher and children in our group."**

The school council are very keen fund raisers, Jack told me, **"We did some disco's last year and auctions."**

At the moment each house group has a different fundraising event they are working on. Kristian said, **"We've voted on a special thing to raise money for CAFOD."** Anna told me, **"St Luke's are doing a fancy dress."** Jack said, **"St Matthew's are doing a sponsored walk."**

Olivia said, **"St John's idea is a crazy hair day."**

Edward told me how he and Thomas and Charlie are working with Jed from the school council on their idea. **"We're having a DVD day, using the smart board."**

The school have had new markings put on their yard and they chose what they wanted. Kristian told me, **"We've had a new snake painted, a number square and a shuttle run, and snakes and ladders."** Edward added, **"We thought it should be to do with maths."**

Lucy told me that when they asked other pupils what they wanted **“people asked for cooking.”** The children decided to advertise, so they made a poster asking if anyone could help them with their request. Luckily a parent, Edward’s mum wanted to help. Lucy went on to say, **“so every Monday Mrs Stringer does cooking in the afternoon, then we sell what we’ve made on the Tuesday at break time.”**

SNAG

This is the Schools Nutrition Action Group, which was formed last year, and has a representative from each house group, and they have been very busy. Since the group formed they have had the very important job of helping to appoint a new cook for the school. They worked with Scholarest to choose a new cook. Talia told me, **“We each got a question to ask her. We decided on the questions.”**

A big issue at the school about the dinners has been the way in which the vegetables have been cooked, there were a lot of complaints about the broccoli in particular, Matthew told me, **“We used to have broccoli covered in water. It was horrible.”** Joe added, **“And a bread thing soaked in cream.”**

Because the broccoli was such a burning issue one of the questions the children put to the potential cook was how would they cook broccoli.

Lucy told me, **“We have a SNAG book and we ask the children if they like the dinners and if they’re improving. We read them and have a meeting with the teachers and tell them what the children think of school dinners. We go in the staff room and set it up ourselves, putting out drinks of water ourselves.”**

The SNAG group have also devised their own questionnaires that they asked all the pupils to take home and complete (see attached). Talia said, **“We made it up and sent it home to everyone in school.”** Lucy told me, **“We asked the children and they said they didn’t like the way the vegetables were cooked so we met with Scholarest. Then we asked again and most of the children said they liked them.”**

Matthew told me, **“We said we should have a new table layout, so Mrs Holborn tried out a new layout and we liked it.”**

Charlie added, **“The tables have improved, they’re longer, you can get more people on. It used to be about 8, but now you can get about 16 on it.”**

10 Minute Tuck

Talia told me about the tuck shop they have at St Chad’s. **“We get toast, hot chocolate or orange juice every morning.”**

An issue that is about to be tackled by the school council is the milk. Previously, the children got their milk at morning play time, but recently it has been changed to lunch time. The children don’t like this, as they think it’s better to get it in the morning as they already get a drink at lunch time. They have decided to raise this at their next meeting as they feel strongly about it. Thomas said, **“We’ve tried it for about three weeks now. We’ll tell people it’s not working.”**

Buddies

Joe told me about times when they have experimented with buddies. **“We used to go in partners, a junior and an infant, and walked around the field and talked. We sang B.I.N.G.O.”** he went on to say, **“it wasn’t a good success but we tried it out.”**

All of the children agreed that because St Chad’s is a small school they knew everybody so they didn’t really need buddies.

When I asked the group about whether they thought their school listened to them, they all said yes, and that they might not always get everything they suggest, they are always told why and try to work out something else. When they were asked whether their school should receive Investing in Children membership the answer was a resounding “Yes!” and I have no hesitation in agreeing with them.

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