



Re-evaluation for Investing in Children membership

West Cornforth Primary



West Cornforth Primary School is in the village of West Cornforth which is in the middle of the old South Durham coalfield. It is a friendly school and for this evaluation I had the pleasure of meeting with Mrs Sarsfield, the head teacher, and some of the children – Jordan, Ryan, Georgia, Zalinka, Kieron, Chloe, Liam, Christopher, Ben, Heather, Jade and Carylanne.

Evidence of Dialogue and Change

School Council

The school council continues to be an important part of the school and the way in which the children are able to have their say.

There are two children elected from each class in the school. Jordan told me, **“People voted.”** Chloe went on, **“We got a piece of paper in class.”** Liam added, **“You had to write down a girl and boy’s name.”** Chloe finished by saying, **“There’s a boy and girl from each class with the most votes.”**

The children who represent each class find out what their classmates want to be discussed at the school council, by having a class meeting. Chloe told me, **“We have minutes from the meeting, we tell the teacher and ask people in the class in a class meeting.”**

The school council have been involved in lots of decisions and planning for the school.

The Stage

Mrs Sarsfield told me about the stage. The children were very keen to have an area in the yard to perform in. They came with the idea of a stage and this has been really successful. It is an area of decking in the school playground which makes a perfect stage for the children. Mrs Sarsfield told me just how popular it was when it was first built. She said that just about every child in the school was trying to get on the stage to perform! Obviously this didn’t work so the school council worked on a solution. They came up with the idea of each class having a turn at break times to make sure it was fair and safe.

This has been working very well and Mrs Sarsfield says that she gets to see some fantastic dance routines!

Fruit Stall

There is a fruit stall at break times for the children. Liam told me about it. **“There’s apples, raisins, pears, oranges and flavoured water. It costs 10 pence or 20 pence.”**

Jordan added, **“There’s apple juice and orange juice as well.”**

Chloe told me how the children can have a say in the fruit stall. **“We sometimes go round the classes and ask what they want on the stall and try it out. Sometimes it doesn’t work, but other times it does and we keep on getting them.”**

Outdoor Play

The children at West Cornforth Primary raised money for outdoor equipment for playtimes. Heather told me, **“We asked all the classes what they wanted. There were lots of different suggestions.”**

The children told me that it was very difficult to find equipment to please everyone because they’d had so many different ideas from the children. They looked at a set called Huff and Puff. Jordan told me, **“It’s got loads of different things like Diablo’s and noughts and crosses.”**

The idea of the Huff and Puff set was put to the children and a decision was made. Jordan said, **“It was fairer to get the Huff and Puff set. We like playing with it.”**

The children are also very pleased that they now have a trim trail at the school, built in the last year. They told me they all like to go on it at playtimes when it’s not raining.

Buddies, Mini Buds & Smiley Faces

The school continues to have buddies and mini buds and they now also have Smiley Faces. Carylanne told me about the role of the buddies and mini buds. **“They help of someone’s fallen over or feeling left out.”** Kieron told me how someone can be a buddy or a mini bud. **“You put your hand up if you want to do it. We got through training, it’s about an hour. We wear caps so people know who we are. The mini buds wear blue caps and the buddies wear yellow.”**

There are now children in the school who are Smiley Faces. Chloe told me about her job as a Smiley Face, **“If someone’s new we go and play with them. We give a tour of the school. If someone’s upset we take them inside.”** To show other children who they are they wear badges.

Gardening Club

The school has a successful gardening club and Liam is the head gardener. The children have chosen the plants that they like and have decided where to plant them around the school.

Fundraising

There are lots of fundraising ideas going on at West Cornforth Primary, and the children I met are all very proud of their achievements, and were keen to tell me about them.

There are different fundraisers for various items the children want. Chloe, Jordan and Carylanne told me about the raisin box fund. **“You get a little raisin box, eat the raisins and fill the box with 2p’s. It’s for school funds to get more sports equipment.”**

Jordan also proudly told me, **“At the skipathon we raised £37.”**

The school is running a Sunflower Challenge. Jade said, **“You grow a sunflower and every time it grows a centimetre you get sponsored for it.”**

Some of the money raised at school is going to buy new footballs. Chloe told me about the old footballs. **“All of them got popped on the yard, we need soft ones for the yard. We can’t go on the field because of the rain so we need new soft balls to play on the yard.”**

Chloe also went on to tell me that the school council were hoping that some money raised by the school can help to improve the toilets.

“The girls don’t like the mirrors and the boys don’t have any mirrors.”

Carylanne added, **“There’s only one lock.”** And Heather said, **“They smell.”**

Chloe told me, **“The school council is discussing it. We’re trying to raise money to get new doors and mirrors. Mrs Sarsfield thinks it’s a good idea.”**

When I asked the children if they thought their school should have Investing in Children membership for another year there was a resounding **“Yes!”** Jordan said, **“We get most of the say in our school.”** Chloe went on, **“What we do get a choice in, we usually get what we choose, unless it’s something really silly – like someone said get a giant trampoline on the field!”**

It is clear that there is a great deal of respectful dialogue at West Cornforth Primary and as the children have told me, lots of things have changed for them, and so I have no hesitation in recommending along with all the children I met that West Cornforth Primary receives Investing in Children membership once again. Well done!

Lisa Lines

Investing in Children

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