



Re-evaluation for Investing in Children membership

St Hild's College CE Aided Primary

Evidence of Dialogue and Change

School Council

The school council continues to be an integral part of the school community and meets fortnightly. It is democratically elected annually in October of each year and ensures that every pupil has a voice. Niamh proudly told me, **"I am the secretary on the school council."**

The school council takes forward many issues that are raised by the children and they work with pupils and staff to make changes.

Something that was important to the children was the celebration of birthdays of the older children in school. After discussions a decision was made. Michael told me, **"We've got a key stage 2 birthday book."** This book is used in the Collective Worship session which takes place on Tuesdays.

Suggestion Boxes

Suggestion boxes are a way in which all of the pupils at St Hild's can have a say in issues which affect them.

Jo-Kate told me about the suggestion boxes. **"There's one in each classroom. You can put ideas in the box for the school council."**

She went on to say, **"We go round the classes and get the suggestions to make the agenda for the school council."**

Michael said, **"It's easier that way, it's confidential, you don't have to put your name on."**

School Forum

Another way that children can have their say is the school forum. This is a new development in the school and has been running since last September. All children from year 1 to year 6 meet weekly. The children decided some rules and how they wanted to be seated for the meetings. All of the children have the opportunity to have their thoughts and ideas listened to and raise questions to others. Minutes are taken at every meeting and the role of secretary changes so that many children can have a turn. Emma said, **"We discuss issues in the open."** Glenn told me, **"The children decided what topics to talk about."** Christopher said, **"We've talked about global warming."** Glenn added, **"We do get good suggestions."**

Fruit Trolley

Jo-Kate was keen to tell me about her involvement in fruit for the children at school. **"We have a fruit trolley, there are four of us that do it, a pair one day and we swap over on alternate weeks. Melissa and Aimee, and Rebecca does it with me."**

Michael said, **"It's at playtimes, we pay 10p."**

Emma told me, **"The school council put the suggestion forward."** Michael added, **"The infants get free fruit and we decided the juniors should have the chance to buy some."**

Milk and Cold Water

The school council had discussions about the access to fresh cool water during the day, and as a result of this new cool water dispensers have been bought for the school.

The milk routine in the school has been changed after children felt it wasn't working for them. Christopher told me, **"It was inside, now we have it outside. It's better."**

Emma added, **"It's colder."**

Outdoor Play

The children have been involved in making suggestions for a number of changes to their outdoor play areas and the equipment. Children asked for bike racks to be installed in the school yard so that there was a secure place for the bikes to be stored if they chose to cycle to school. The senior management team have priced this and provision has been made in the present school budget. Michael told me, **"Mrs Katsambis is looking into prices, they will be here soon."**

The children asked for more playtime equipment. The 'Friends of St Hild's' gave the school council £350 to spend. The children were clearly involved in the whole process. The council discussed needs at class councils for both indoor and outdoor equipment. They audited what was already in the playtime boxes and cupboards. They looked through catalogues and listed what they wanted. They priced and reviewed their list before ordering, and when the equipment arrived they opened and distributed it.

The children have asked for more plants and flowers in school, and they have instigated a flower sponsorship to make money for this.

Green Beans

Fiona and Jo-Kate are part of the Green Beans group and they explained what it involves. **"We are an eco-school, we do re-cycling, and we have compost bins. We had re-cycled cans and grew plants in them."**

A current issue for them is finding an environmentally friendly way of drying their hands. Fiona told me, **"We want to know whether hand driers are better than paper towels."** The group will be investigating this further and will take their findings to the school council and school forum.

Guinea Pigs

The school had two much loved guinea pigs, Patch and Jet, who very sadly died. There was a great deal of discussion around this, with a decision that two new guinea pigs should be bought. Emma told me, **"When the guinea pigs died we had to decide on new pets. Everyone in school voted, you had to put your hand up."**

Josh went on to say, **"Then we picked names."**

Jo-Kate told me how this happened. **"You had to pick two names that you wanted, then fold them up. Then they were counted to find the most popular. Our new guinea pigs are called Fudge and Dougal."**

Buddies, Mini-Buds and Mediators

The school operate a buddy system, and the children I met were keen to talk about it as they felt it was very positive. Ellen said, **"When there's a problem you've got to tell the buddies or mini-buds."**

Michael told me what they deal with, **"Arguments, bad behaviour, no-one to play with. Friendship problems get passed to the mediators."**

Zoe talked about a new development from the buddies. **"We've started the playground watch certificate. We realised that we look at bad things and the people being good weren't being recognised. It's about looking after new people, making friends. If people notice you're being kind."**

Elli told me about the mediators. **"We solve friendship problems, we sort it out, we mediate and see if they want to be friends."**

Josh added, **"I've been to a meeting and it's good, it really helps."**

A number of the children at the school have been recognised for their anti-bullying work, two children nominated for the Karl Peart Award, and two year 6 pupils were nominated and won the national Diana Award. Other children have been nominated for the Shining Through Awards for good citizenship, and for personal achievement.

The children who are mediators have also been recognised and rewarded with the Shrievality Award from the High Sheriff of Durham. The school are very proud of these achievements.

There are many opportunities for the children of St Hild's to take part in a range of activities and clubs and I heard about the breakfast club, the school newspaper, topic days, the new toilets and the poster competition to encourage pupils to wash their hands.

The children I met with were all enthusiastic about the ways in which they are involved in putting forward suggestions and making changes to their school. It is clear that there are many ways in which the whole of the school can have an input, and also ways in which smaller groups can look at particular issues. All of the children I met were in agreement that St Hild's should continue to have Investing in Children membership and I fully agree with their recommendation.

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