



Re- Evaluation for Investing in Children membership:

Escomb Primary School

Escomb Primary School is situated just outside the town of Bishop Auckland in County Durham. The school serves the villages of Escomb, Witton Park, Low Etherley and Etherley Grange. The school admits pupils aged 4 to 11. Again on all my visits to the school I was made to feel welcome by the staff and the children. As well as meeting with Mr Taylor, I have also had the pleasure of meeting with David, Rachel, Jessica, Lucy, Lucy M, Matthew, Leon and Benito.

Evidence of Dialogue and Change

School Council

The School Council continues to give the children at Escomb Primary School the opportunity to be involved in decisions on how their school is run. Rachel told me, **“People in your class suggest you and they put you forward for School Councillor.”** David added, **“Then people vote for a girl and boy from each class.”** Matthew continued, **“Then Mr Taylor sees who gets the most votes. I chose Lucy. It’s a good way of choosing people, better than pulling names out of a hat.”** Ben said, **“Everyone gets to vote and that’s fair.”**

Rachel explained how the School Council works. She said, **“We meet when we want to. We can meet every two weeks or more if there is a problem.”** The School Council is run by the children for the children. David told me everyone’s role. **“Me and Rachel run the meeting. I’m the Chairperson and Rachel is the Secretary.”** Rachel added, **“I look after the paper and take notes. If I am off them Jessica does it.”** Lucy told me she was the Vice Chair, Benito is the Treasurer and Lucy M is the Vice Treasurer, Matthew and Leon are both Council Members. Lucy M said, **“It’s nice to make decisions and sort things out and make things better.”**

Suggestion Box/Worry Box

Rachel said, **“It’s the same box, but it has two sides. One side says Suggestions and the other says Worry Box.”** Benito told me, **“It’s a really good idea. It was another Councils idea and they got it, but we have decided to still use it cos it’s a good way for other people to tell us what they want.”** Jessica said, **“People write on a piece of paper if they are worried or have an idea. The box is just in the hall so everyone can get to it and everyone knows where it’s at.”** David finished by saying, **“People get a say through the Suggestion Box.”**

Sports and Play Time Equipment

David explained, **“From the Suggestion Box someone said they wanted more sports equipment and more play time equipment. So we got some money off Mr Taylor. We got £300 to spend but we haven’t spent all of it. So far we have bought two bags that are about one and half meters long with stuff in them.”** Matthew added, **“Mrs Collins asked what we wanted and we got a big list from people.”** The School Councilors told me the bags are full with skipping ropes, bats and balls, towering blocks, stilts and Frisbees.

Benito also told me, **“We sorted out the goal posts. Cos we first had wooden goal posts they kept getting vandalized on a weekend. So we asked for metal ones and got them. They’re kept in a shed now.”**

Buddies

The children at Escomb Primary School still find the Buddy system helpful. The Anti Bullying Service supports this scheme. David explained, “We do Buddy training. This woman came in and she was teaching us how to solve problems like what to do if someone falls over.” Leon said, “All year 6 are Buddies. They wear yellow bibs with big Buddy signs on them.” The ethos of the Buddies seems to be based on mutual respect and understanding.

There is also a quiet bench in one of the play ground areas. Matthew told me, “If you have a dilemma you go over to the Buddy Bench and then a Buddy comes over and sorts things out.”

School Changes

David told me that the new toilets that the previous Council worked so hard to get, were finished during the last summer holidays. Rachel added, **“But someone has wrote on the walls so we are going to sort that out.”**

David went on to tell me about the issues that this Council has tackled. **“There were also complaints about the toilets smelling. So we brought it up with Mr Taylor. He got some air fresheners for the toilets. When you use the toilet they change colour and stuff.”** Matthew added, **“Like a little friendly poodle that changed to a guard dog!”**

School Meals

Benito started telling me how the children decide on their lunch menu. David continued, **“Each class gets to pick a menu for lunch. You get to change meats and stuff and you get a good choice. When it was my turn I had the choice of roast chicken, corn beef pie or cheese and tomato pizza. I picked the roast chicken. Then there was the choice of sunshine salad, sweet corn or baked beans. I picked sweet corn and sunshine salad.”**

Rachel then proudly informed me that she came up with a good idea for those with packed lunches. She said, **“We have a programme for healthy eating. I thought it was a good idea that if someone has really healthy food in their packed lunch they can have a sticker. So I told Mr Taylor.”**

In the Garden

Things are growing well in the garden. Rachel said, **“We all help in the garden. Each class does a different bit.”** Matthew said, **“We choose what we grow but I definitely didn’t choose the brussel sprouts!”** Leon told me, **“We will probably eat everything we grow.”**

The Wildlife and Bird Watching Areas are still very popular with the children at Escomb Primary School, as is the Maze. Rachel said, **“We have started a Maze and its growing. But we don’t want it to grow too high, so the little people don’t get lost.”**

On all my visits to Escomb Primary School I was made to feel welcome. I would like to thank everyone for giving up their time to help me write this evaluation. It is a pleasure to witness how all the children and staff work very hard at valuing ideas and opinions. The School Council is involved in many aspects of running their school and I am sure this will continue. There is no doubt that the school provides the opportunity for all children to have a say and this undoubtedly brings about meaningful change.

When I asked the children if they agreed with this evaluation, there was a unanimous YES! I therefore have no hesitation in recommending Escomb Primary School once again receives Investing In Children membership. Well Done.

Glenys Newby
Investing in Children
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