



Re-evaluation for Investing in Children membership

Trinity School

Trinity School is in Newcastle, and as the name suggests it is split over three sites, Deneview, Kenton Lodge and Oakfield. Trinity School is a special school for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Last year one of the sites, Kenton Lodge was successful in achieving Investing in Children membership, and following that the school were keen for all three sites to be recognised for their involvement of their pupils in the development of the school.

For this evaluation I have had the pleasure of meeting with Jason, Zoe, Stephen and Billy.

Evidence of Dialogue and Change

DENEVIEW SITE

Jason attends Trinity School at the Deneview site. He is part of the student council and told me about it. **“I volunteered to be on the school council, so we had votes in the class. There are four on the school council, including me.”**

The student council at Deneview meet every week, and Jason told me he found what was important to his class, **“I ask them or they just tell me.”**

The student council at Deneview meet once a week and they have worked together to make changes to the school.

One of the members of the student council, Keith, suggested that they have a notebook to record the views and ideas put forward by their class.

Break times

Jason told me about the way that break times have changed at Deneview following suggestions made by the students. **“We used to just get two breaks, but now we get three, one in the morning, one in the afternoon and one after lunch.”**

Swimming costumes

Jason said that a lot of people asked the student council to ask about the swimming costumes that were provided by the school for student to wear. Many people felt that they were “worn and washed out.” The student council put this forward and new swimming gear has been bought.

Pool balls

The school has pool tables for the student to use in their free time, and it was raised in the student council meetings that all the balls were not there, so the games were not played properly. This was brought to the caretaker’s attention and new sets were bought.

Activity Afternoon Survey

The student council conducted a survey, asking all the students for ideas about the activities they would like to take part in, for the activity afternoons.

School Assemblies

The staff at Deneview site have used the assemblies in school to give feedback to the whole school about the student council. They feedback the discussions and let all the students know about the process of requesting things and how they get dealt with (see assembly minutes).

The student council have also been asked to look at and comment on proposed plans for the school, such as a new token system to reward behaviour, which they have then passed on to their classes for comments.

The council also instigated fund raising for a cat and dog shelter as they felt strongly that this was a good cause (see letters attached).

KENTON LODGE SITE

I met with Zoe, a representative on the student council at the Kenton Lodge site. She told me that the council meet around twice a month. She told me, **“We have a meeting on a Friday afternoon, if someone wants something we’ll ask for it in student council.”**

The meetings are usually attended by a teacher, as Zoe told me, **“to make notes.”**

Water coolers

A suggestion put forward to the student council was to have water coolers available round the building so that the students have access to fresh drinking water. As a result last September a number of water fountains have been installed around the school.

Tuck shop

One of the students suggested that the school should have a tuck shop, and this was passed through the student council. It was agreed that this should go ahead and a healthy eating tuck shop was opened. Zoe agreed that the tuck shop was a good idea although she thought some of the food could be healthier, as she is concerned about her health.

School garden

One of the members of the student council, Darren, suggested that, as an option for activities, the school garden should be restored. Following this, staff looked into it as the garden had been taken over by Oakfield Solutions. As a result, shared ownership of the garden was agreed and the garden restoration has begun.

The student council were asked to look at the racial harassment policy and give feedback and amend the policy if it was necessary.

OAKFIELD SITE

I met with Stephen from the Oakfield site of Trinity school, and he told me about being on the student council. **“We meet every Friday morning, and we just say what we want to say.”**

Reward system

Through the student council the staff at Oakfield have asked the students to develop and change the school reward system.

It was raised by a student that he felt it unfair that “badly behaved students were apparently being rewarded for their poor behaviour, in that they were seemingly the ones picked for the ‘good’ activities like motorbikes and karting.” (Taken from student council minutes).

The top merit earners were rewarded at Christmas as a result, and the head teacher, Chris, asked for more suggestions from the student council. The student council came up with the idea of a rewards room for those students who were behaving well. The students drew up a proposal for a rewards room and a list of suggested equipment (see attached) for the room. One student, Alan, volunteered to meet with Chris. The idea was agreed and the room was ready to be used by half term this year. Stephen told me that room was great. **“It’s got a pool table; computers, a Wii with games, a play station 3, and we’ve got a fridge with drinks in. You can use it every day, break times and dinner times.”**

He told me how students got access to the room, **“We earn points on positive person performance. The teacher writes it down and you take it to Chris, the head teacher.”** It appears that the students agree with this reward system and so far it is running well.

Worry box

A suggestion for a worry box was raised by the student council. This was considered a good idea and a design for the box has been made, and also the idea that the box could be used for suggestions too. A number of discussions about where the box could be placed and how they could attach a pen to it; have taken place.

Boy’s toilets

The state of the toilets has been raised by many students for the council to address. As Stephen told me, **“They stink, they’re rotten, disgusting, the smell is awful.”** This is a long term problem and the issue has been taken to Chris, the head teacher. Although nothing has happened yet, Stephen is confident it will be addressed by Chris, as he told me, **“He sorts it out.”**

Having met with students from the three sites it is clear that although they run their student councils in different ways, they have all found a way that suits their particular site. Students are able to tell the council what they feel could be changed or improved, and the council feel that they have the support of the staff to make changes.

Stephen told me, **“I like being on the student council, we change things, get stuff done.”**

Zoe said she liked being part of the student council, **“People listen to you, we really have made changes.”**

Jason added, **“We get listened to.”** Both Zoe and Stephen agreed with him. With their endorsement I would like to recommend that Trinity School, all three sites, receive Investing in Children membership.