

UNICEF- childhood poverty report

Educational well being



investing in children

April 2008

Introduction

We are a group of young people from County Durham, and we've been involved in researching what young people want and need from their time in education in relation with the UN convention on the rights of the child. As a result of this we are hoping to help improve young people's experiences within school and education.

Why we got involved

As a group we were interested in improving young people's education and thought Investing In Children we were able to do this.

Research

When beginning the research into young people's education, we tried to go into various schools to get a wider range of opinions on how the young people felt in the school environment. However, none of the schools would let us go and talk to the young people about this. We felt that this may have been because of the Education well-being report's negativity leading to schools having concern over what issues could be raised. Following this speculation we decided that the only viable option was to hold an agenda inviting young people to the Investing In Children office who were also involved in Investing In Children

These are the issues we found in our agenda day:

What makes you feel happy within school?

Happy:

- Break times
- Vending machines/ facilities
- When teachers listen to you
- Getting rewards for good behaviour, attendance and achievement
- Sitting next to friends in lesson

Unhappy:

- When teachers have favourite pupils
- When teachers don't listen to your opinion
- Working in silence
- Wearing school uniform
- When teachers complain about grades, when pupils have generally tried their hardest
- When pupils are kept back after last lesson and they miss the school transport.
- Uncaring and Unsympathetic teachers

Do you get enough support within school?

- A general consensus that there is not enough support
- If pupils do not understand something, teachers are not willing to explain further
- If you need support, you don't feel like you can approach teachers
- Connexions were recognised to help some people, but not others
- There are some classes provided for extra help on coursework
- Long list of what to revise, feel like these are unhelpful and makes school feel "mindless"
- If you are been bullied told to ignore the bully's and this isn't very helpful

Do you get enough encouragement within school?

- Encouragement is given in some lessons but other teachers try to force pupils rather than saying they can do it.
- Depending on different teachers and how they are feeling on the day, encouragement varies.
- Some teachers use blackmail instead of encouragement towards the pupils
- Would be better if teachers made lessons more fun and interesting as this would encourage them to work harder.
- Rewards for doing well would be an extra incentive

Do you feel safe within school?

Safe

- Friends
- Some kind teachers
- Fences
- Locks within school

Not safe

- Bullies (policies against bullying can be a joke-not taken seriously and ineffective)

What makes lessons interesting and engaging?

Interesting

- Computers
- Games
- Working in groups
- When teachers are in a good mood
- Activities

Boring

- Copying out of books
- Constant note taking
- When teachers are in a bad mood
- Working in silence

What could be done to improve schools?

- More windows that are well looked after
- More equipment such as computers
- Good quality building
- Clean building
- Better toilets
- Implementing strategies to make lessons more interesting (as highlighted earlier)
- Pupils listened to and asked about issues such as uniform
- Treated more like people are treated who attend college
- Topics within lessons fully explained so that they understand as much as they can
- Opportunities for the future fully advised and explained such as better preparation for further education
- More activities within school time and outside of school/extra-curricular
- Greater involvement of young people is ESSENTIAL

Conclusion

In conclusion we have found from our research that a lot of changes need to be made within schools to make each child feel happy and secure. To achieve as best they can a more friendly and interesting environment needs to be developed for young people. Perhaps teachers should be advised in the social side of their work alongside the educational. Many of the young people we asked were disillusioned with the education their school was providing and the environment they were forced to work within. Our assessment however was very small scale and perhaps simply implies that further, more in depth research needs to take place, leading to an evaluation of the education system.