



Introduction

Cockfield Primary School is located in a small village on the outskirts of Bishop Auckland, County Durham and it's a relatively small school with around 120 children attending. The school aims to give every child a happy and enjoyable journey through school where everyone can reach their full potential.

Evidence of Dialogue and Change

When we visited the school we met with children from the Pupil Task Force who told us about the different ways that they have a say in school and what has changed because of their ideas and suggestions. The children that we met with were called Amber, Ruby, Kate, Adam, Bailey and Ava.

Having a Say

One of the main ways that children have a say in school is via the Pupil Task Force. The children told us that there is usually a class vote to decide which children were in the Pupil Task Force but some children said that this wasn't fair as people mainly just voted for their friends. Therefore, there was a discussion about how it could be different and this year children who wanted to be on the Task Force wrote a letter to their teacher explaining why they wanted to join and what they would do to improve the school and then the teachers chose who they thought would be good for the role. The children said: ***"It's a good way to choose as people who might normally be chosen got a fair chance. People put lots of effort into their letters."***

If any child has a suggestion, they can let anyone from the Task Force, the Head Boy / Girl or a teacher know and their idea will be discussed. The children said: ***"You can tell your suggestion to a Head Boy / Girl or a teacher. Everyone is open."***

Charity & Awareness Work

The children were part of 'make a difference day' at a local community centre along with other local primary schools. Children were able to nominate different causes that they wanted people to know more about such as pollution, drug abuse and various environmental issues

and everyone voted on the topic they wanted to research. Protecting hedgehogs won the majority of votes and children were involved in researching more about the issue and creating a presentation which was shown on the day to different schools. As part of the research the children had a visit from a local hedgehog charity, 'Bernie's Hedgehog Charity' where they got to meet some real hedgehogs and learned more about caring for them. The children decided to hold a bake sale to raise money for them and all classes made cakes to sell as well as reception children making bracelets. The children also made hedgehog hotels which they have placed around the school grounds. The children are going to invite the charity to an assembly so they can give them the fundraising money. One child asked if they could bring their hedgehog hotel into school to show everyone what they had made – this happened and they were able to show and tell everyone about it during an assembly.

When the children voted for topics that they wanted to learn more about, climate change was also very popular. As a result of this a film maker, Rio, came into school to help children learn more about it. Everyone worked in small groups and chose what aspect of climate change they would like to research and what film type they want to make. Everyone made lots of creative films including drama, news and giving facts. All of these videos were shown in assembly and everyone really enjoyed this activity and learned a lot.

The children wanted to continue taking part in LGBT+ awareness and everyone was given the opportunity to enter a local bake off competition. The Pupil Task Force ran an assembly to tell everyone about it and then children baked various rainbow cakes and biscuits and competed against other schools. The children said: ***“A child from our school was a finalist!”*** The children are proud of this work and said: ***“We, as a school, have now raised more awareness of LGBT+ and how it is OK to be different”*** and ***“I think that the LGBT+ bake event was my favourite thing this year”***.

The children have been working with NSPCC including taking part in an assembly and workshops run by them. The children wanted to raise money for the NSPCC as they thought that their work was really important and they decided to organise a sponsored danceathon that all children could take part in. Everyone took part and it was enjoyed by all. One child commented: ***“Helping charities was very fun and made me feel kind”***.



The children told us about other fundraising they wanted to support. ***“For Red Nose Day we volunteered to set up all of the equipment in the hall and we had a musical spots day”***. The children also decided to sell merchandise and built a Red Nose Castle in the school hall to mark the day.

The children also commented: ***“We write the letters to thank charities for coming to meet with us”***.

Outdoor Areas

Children in KS1 wanted more equipment on their yard and so children planned activities to raise money at the Christmas fayre. The children organised various stalls for the fayre

including an ice cream stall, making and selling glass decorations and a bric-a-brac stall. The children really enjoy role play and so decided to purchase a playhouse that encourages everyone to play together using the kitchen equipment and dolls. The children said: ***“Everyone was so happy with the house!”***

Everyone was involved in discussing what new equipment should be purchased for the bottom pitch and children chose outdoor gym equipment including a walker. The children said it’s great to have this equipment as you can get fit while having fun.

Some children noticed that the top pitch wasn’t well used and asked the question: ***“What could we do with this area?”*** The children wanted to be able to do something adventurous and suggested having a den building area. There is now a den building area with lots of materials including tyres, crates and tarpaulin.

The school have an outdoor classroom and there were discussions about using it more. Ruby and Kate volunteered to help decorate it and were able to choose how they wanted it to look. Ruby and Kate also run regular activities in the kitchen over playtime and said: ***“We ask the other children what they want to do. We have done drawing, football, giant board games and a talent show. We give up our playtime to volunteer in the outdoor classroom as everyone loves it so much!”*** Ruby and Kate are really pleased that the school supports them to be able to do this. One child commented: ***“We have ownership over the outdoor classroom and take part in lots of competitions there”.***

The children talked about other changes that have happened in the outdoor areas and said they were able to choose more equipment and decided to get go karts, a track and petrol station, hop scotch and a painted basketball and netball court. One child said: ***“We now have more equipment outside and so there’s more things for everyone to do at playtime”.*** Two children worked with the Caretaker to measure the lines for the courts. In addition to this, some older children said that they would like more go karts and scooters as they are too big to use the bikes. These have now been purchased and everyone is enjoying the new equipment. ***“I like the new equipment outside as everyone had asked for the basketball and netball courts and football pitch”.*** The children have also been discussing future plans and said that they are getting a new climbing frame and a mini football court, which should be installed next term. ***“I’m excited for the new climbing frame”.*** One thing the children would like to talk about next term is: ***“Getting new football goals and getting some bigger equipment for KS2”.***

Sports & Activities

Children asked to be involved in more sporting events and have been given the opportunity to be involved in more including netball competitions, basketball and boy’s and girl’s cricket. The children told us that there has also been a focus on encouraging younger children to get more involved and they have been offered more clubs including football, rounders and multiskills. Some children felt that only those who had a good ability in sports got to go to sports tournaments and so because of this:



“We have started to go to more festivals so everyone can get involved and it’s not based on ability”.

The children were also keen to embed an ethos of everyone taking part and trying rather than winning at sports day. Therefore, this year everyone who takes part will get a sticker and ice lolly rather than just the winning children getting a medal. The children told us that Year 6 helped to plan and run the Nursery sports day which they enjoyed.



The children said that they received a suggestion to play tennis and that happened today! Everyone could sign up to join in the tennis tournament, but:

“If you chose not to join in you could still do something fun.”

As part of an after-school club review the Pupil Task Force asked children what clubs they would like. They gave their ideas to the teachers and are pleased to now have extra clubs including cookery, drama, film, football and outdoor fun.

Other Areas of School Life

Every year some children are involved in reviewing school lunches where they give feedback and ideas about new things they would like to try. This year the children said that they asked to change the quiche, vegetables and beetroot cupcakes, which has happened. The children told us that the cooks now do a ‘Vegetable of the Week’ which makes lunches more interesting.

Some children have been involved in organising and running the annual book fayre. The children told us: ***“Some children came to school early to run the book stalls for a week. We kept a note of the most popular books and the school bought some so everyone can read them and we can take them home over the summer holidays.”***

Children in KS2 asked if they could have more assemblies and there is now an extra assembly every Thursday where children asked to have stories and singing. Everyone enjoys having this extra time together and said: ***“There is always a moral each week, it makes you think and relax.”***

A community event was planned to take place at Cockfield Primary School where local people could come and watch a film to commemorate Remembrance Sunday. The children asked if they could be involved and do something to welcome visitors to their school. The children decided that each class should make poppies and these were decorated and displayed outside of the entrance of school.

The children talked about their lessons and said that the teachers try to make them really fun. Children in Year 6 particularly enjoy doing plays and watching short films and so the teacher tries to incorporate this as much as they can into learning. The children talked about other experiences that they have enjoyed including fitness workshops, going to a pantomime, learning musical instruments. They also said: ***“Having work experience students makes***

school more interesting.” The children told us that one of their teachers is from Ireland and asked if they would like to celebrate St Patrick’s Day which everyone wanted to do. They made shamrock shakes and biscuits, learnt Irish dancing and sang Irish songs.

Everyone was excited to tell us that all children’s poems and rhymes were sent to Poetry Wonderland who publish poetry books and all of class 3’s poems were published!

Previous Recommendations

“Children to run a full assembly”.

Children have been involved in running various assemblies this year about topics including climate change, E-Safety, St Patrick’s Day and India. Parents have also been invited to watch assemblies that children are involved in.

“Change school PE kits”.

There are now new tracksuits for PE in both KS1 and KS2.

“Children to design display boards in the corridors”.

This has happened in every classroom and the children have been involved in designing the display and the art club even made some decorations to enhance the displays.

“Request for a zip-line”.

Unfortunately this hasn’t happened due to funding.



Recommendations

The children talked about things that they would like to discuss over the coming year:

Continue to look at equipment in school.

The children commented: ***“I think that we should have more science equipment and maybe a Chemistry set”*** and ***“We want to get a new football goals and getting some bigger equipment for KS2”.***

Children to be involved in designing display boards around school.

The children said ***“We want our work to be displayed more in corridors and the hall so visitors and parents can see how hard we work. We could design the display boards and make them interactive with different textures and smells to get everyone involved”.***

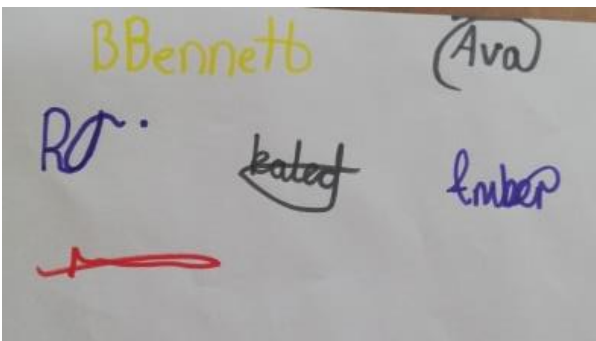
Make changes to the breakfast club & afterschool room.

“We could have different decoration and set up some different sections”.

Conclusion

The children were, once again, able to highlight many changes that have happened because of their ideas and suggestions. The children could really identify ideas that had been made and the ways that children were involved in planning and implementing these ideas, with children really being involved from beginning to end. For these reasons we would like to recommend that Cockfield Primary School should remain a valued member of the Investing in Children Membership Award Scheme™.

The children agree and have endorsed this report, their signatures are included.



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August 2019

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