



investing in children

Re-evaluation for Investing in Children membership

Stanley Crook Primary School

Stanley Crook Primary School is a small school on the outskirts of Durham. For this evaluation, I had the pleasure of meeting with Mrs. Oswald the head teacher and some of the children who are on the school council, Billy, Elise, Liam, Jake, Harry, Georgia and Caitlin. I spent some time talking to the children and then had a wonderful tour of the school.

Evidence of Dialogue & Change

School Council

As Stanley Crook Primary is a small school, classes are of mixed year groups, and the school has three teams rather than classes. Each year group is represented at school council, apart from the reception class, as Billy said,

“They’re too little.”

Everyone has the chance to say that they’d like to be considered for school council; then everyone votes for a boy and girl to represent each year group.

The school council meets every half term with Mrs. Oswald and they talk through any ideas and suggestions they have from their classmates. There are suggestion boxes for each class and slips for the children to fill in. The slip asks for their name, year group and their suggestion, and they should be written in a well-mannered way. Once a week the councillors take the boxes along to a meeting to look at the suggestions, and, as Elise said,

“See if they’re a good idea.”

Mrs Oswald feeds back to the school during assembly. Liam said,

“She’ll talk about it, why it’s a good idea or a bad idea, and what we can do about it.”

New Fences

The school is in a very rural location and surrounded by fields. It has a stone wall around its perimeter; however, it is quite low, as Caitlin told me,

“Footballs kept going over the walls dead easily.”

This was a worry as the neighbouring field was home to a bull!

In other areas of the school, the wall was in disrepair, and Liam told me,

“Team 3’s fence was needed in the garden because part of the wall was falling down.”

As a result of this, new high fences were put up around the school yard, and also new boundary fences were erected around the rest of the school. The current school council was consulted on the colour of the new fences, and they chose green.

When I was shown around the school, we went into the yard to look at the fences and Liam also told me that there were plans for some new signs to go up around the school.

“Me and Jake have looked through some catalogues and picked signs for the yard.”

There are also new bins out in the yard for recycling, for children to put their fruit peelings in and then in the composter.

Team Room Refurbishment

The room for Team 1, which is the Early Years Foundation Stage, was in need of refurbishment and the children in Team 1 were asked to help decide how the room should look. Georgia told me,

“It started with school council and then the team picked the new colours, they’ve got new yellow and blue cupboards.”

The class also has new gym equipment in a part of the room, some rowing machines and pedal bikes.

Visits and Visitors to School

The children at Stanley Crook Primary made a request for more visits out of school and more exciting visitors to come into school. As a result of this, a number of visits and visitors have been arranged.

Teams 2 and 3 have been learning about the Romans and have been on a visit to Vindalanda and the Roman Army Museum. Liam said it was really good and school provided them with a packed lunch.

There has been a visit to Beamish for the whole school which everyone enjoyed, and the whole school was about to go on a visit to the Sea Life Centre and beach at Tynemouth and, the children were very excited about this.

Older children at the school get to visit Kingswood, which is a residential outdoor activity centre. The children in years 5 and 6 get to visit together, so all the children have the opportunity to visit twice during their time at Stanley Crook Primary School. Georgia told me,

“Everybody loves it, you get to sleep there.”

The school was visited by the Mini Beasts and Rainforest Experience, and the children were able to hold snails, millipedes, cockroaches and grass snakes. Some of the animals were too delicate or too dangerous to hold but they were able to look at them very closely.

Other visitors to the school were two men from West Auckland Football Club who famously won the World Cup in 1909 and 1911. The men came to talk the whole school and told the children the exciting story of the team's world cup wins. Liam especially enjoyed their visit and said he was really looking forward to them visiting again.

Disco Food

The school has regular discos with the children being able to buy refreshments.

Liam said, ***"There used to just be hot dogs, crisps and sweets."***

A suggestion of adding hamburgers to the menu was made so the whole school voted during assembly to decide whether this was a good idea. Caitlin said,

"We were asked during assembly, it was a big vote and we put our hands up."

Now hamburgers have been added to the menu and the consensus of opinion was that everybody loves them!

New Sports Equipment and Tracksuits

The school needed to buy some new sports equipment, such as javelins. Kirena told me,

"All the school got to choose; we all looked at different kinds of equipment that we thought would be good and wrote it down in a list."

The school has now purchased the new equipment, chosen by the children. They told me they now have foam javelins, some discuses and sashes for team games. The school has various sports teams and decided to purchase tracksuits for the children to wear when attending events. Georgia told me,

"The school council got to look in some catalogues to choose the tracksuits. We decided on ones that are the same colour as the school uniform – maroon, with white trims."

Car Parking Facilities

The school has very limited car parking facilities and although in a rural location, it is by a road which can have cars passing at high speeds. The children told me the parking needed improving and as Liam said,

"It needed zigzags outside the school to stop people parking there."

The children met with their county councillor to discuss the situation and as a result, there have been markings put on the road and the parking facilities have been extended. The children are pleased with the results.

It was clear from meeting with the children and being part of their tour that they are very proud of their school and feel very much a part of it. This is reflected in their choice in being called teams rather than classes.

Liam said, ***“We’re teams because - Together Everyone Achieves More!”***

Georgia added, ***“There’s no “I” in team!”***

When I asked if they felt that their school should receive Investing in Children membership, they all agreed it should.

Georgia said, ***“If we have ideas, they always listen.”***

And Liam added, ***“We do get our chance to speak in this school.”***

So along with Billy, Elise, Liam, Jake, Harry, Georgia and Caitlin’s recommendation, I propose that Stanley Crook Primary has another year of Investing in Children membership.

This report has been endorsed by the children I met.

Lisa Lines
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