

Investing in Children Membership Award™

Re-evaluation of Burnopfield Primary School



Introduction

Burnopfield Primary School is located in a village on the outskirts of County Durham; it is a fairly large school and has over 400 children plus a Nursery with just over 52 places. The school's ethos is **"we inspire, challenge and care"** and they are passionate to support every child to find what their individual strengths and talents are.

Evidence of Dialogue and Change

When I visited the school, I met with re Sophie, Evie, Sam, Carys, Imogen, Joshua, Zane, Ellie, Hannah and Phoebe, who are representatives from different groups in the school. .

SNAG (School Nutrition Action Group)

Every child was asked to fill in a questionnaire to get feedback about lunchtimes and SNAG met with the school cooks and lunch providers to talk about feedback. The children wanted more variation at meal times and different bread for sandwiches. The children told me that there is now an extra option for their main meal and pudding and there are also homemade bread rolls for their sandwiches.

The questionnaire also showed that children thought they had to wait too long in queues in the dinner hall and this was wasting their playtime. Lots of children often left some of their food which meant it took a long time for them to return their trays as they had to dispose of their food. SNAG discussed these issues and have introduced a new fast track system, which means the children who finish all of their lunch get to go to the front of the queue and put their tray away. The children said that everyone liked this new system and there are sometimes competitions to encourage everyone to eat all of their lunch, which they said was important. The children wanted to make up a song and designed the 'fast track rap' which they preformed in assembly to introduce this idea to everyone.

The chef talked to the group about how some children didn't have very good manners when getting their lunch. In response to this, the children created a 'Garden on Good Manners' which they put on a display board in the dining room. The children said that

this has made a huge change as now the kitchen staff and children talk to each other more. The children said: ***“Because we have better communication we talk now and we know their names and they know ours. We talk to each other and they ask us questions about ourselves.”***

In the past, the children in KS2 were able to bring in any snack they wanted for breaktime. However some children noticed that some snacks weren't very healthy and wrappers were also contributing to the problem of litter in the playground. Therefore the children in SNAG decided that on a breaktime, children should have fruit or vegetables only. This is also in line with the guidelines for KS1.

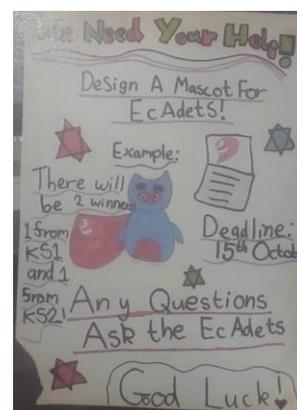
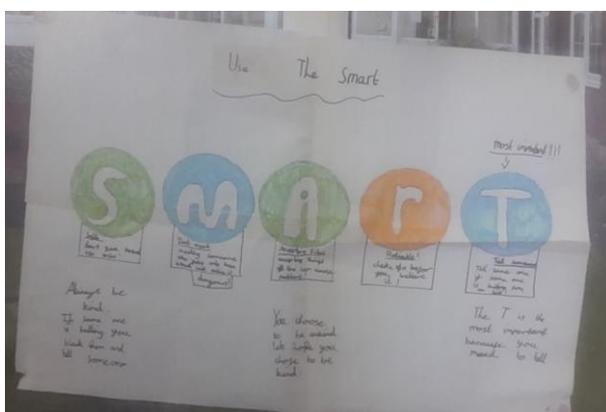
Eco Club

The Eco Club in school wanted to do some research about litter and tell everyone about their findings. They did research about this and presented a whole-school assembly to tell everyone about their findings and how litter affects the planet and wildlife. The children designed a colouring competition to raise awareness of these issues. As well as these things, the children looked at how much litter was in school and worked with the school council to create a Litter Squad – where children can sign up and take part in a litter pick on school grounds several times a week.

E-Cadets

The E-Cadets are a group of children in school who look at staying safe online. Each term they look at three different tasks (topics) and meet up once a week to plan their projects, which they deliver in class, and each term they also plan and present an assembly. Some of the tasks that the children have looked at are; how to make safe friendships online; and what is a safe amount of time to use technology. The children told me that they try to plan creative things to do in class, such as doing research to see how much time each child spends looking at screen and what type of technology they use the most.

The E-Cadets organised a competition to design an E-Cadets Mascot and gave advice about what a good mascot should look like. Everyone was welcome to enter and a winner was chosen – Olly the Dog.



Sports & Activities

The PE Co-ordinator, Mrs Gray, had a conversation with a group of children to find out what they thought about sports and after school clubs in school. The children said that they would like to take part in more competitive sports and have more sports-based after-school clubs. In the last year, children have been given the chance to take part in competitive cross country - **“we go to other schools to take part in running and races.”** The children told me that they now have running, athletic and football clubs.



Through a discussion with the whole school, children said that the school yards were often congested and KS2 said that they would like an all-weather pitch. Mrs Gray worked with the children to see if this could happen and everyone was happy that a MUGA (Multi Use Games Area) was built in Summer 2018. As well as this, the children were really pleased a new trim trail has been built. This was lots of children's favourite thing to have happened, the children said **“My favourite change from last year is the trim trail,”** **“The best things are the all-weather pitch and the trim trail”** and **“The all-weather pitch is good as it gives us things to do on break and lunch.”**

The KS2 school council asked for more footballs and play equipment for breaktimes. They decided to have a Sportswear Day to raise money to buy new equipment. The council decided on what they would like to buy and decided to get footballs, soft balls, tennis balls and rackets. A new shed was bought to keep all of the equipment in.

Fundraising

Every year each class designs a pitch for the charity that they would like the school to support. They then present it in assembly and the Governors decide which charity they want the school to support. This year the school supported CHUF (Children's Heart Unit Foundation) in Newcastle. The children did lots of research about CHUF and decided on a huge range of fundraising activities. They found out that Ant and Dec were the Patrons of the charity and so designed a 'I'm a Teacher get me out of here' event where Teachers had to eat chocolate covered insects and put their heads in a bowl of baked beans! The children also designed an obstacle course which they set up and helped to run on the day; they also decided to have a Dress in Hearts Day, tuck shop, football tournament and sold Christmas themed crafts. Everyone really enjoyed planning, running and taking part in these events and raised a great £2,632.70 for CHUF.

Awards in School

The children told me that in the past, children were given a VIP Award for good work. However, the children wanted to focus more on a growth mindset so that an award was also given out for this. Everyone decided that most children did good work and the school should focus much more on growth mindset. Now there is no VIP Award but a Bright Sparks Award is given. The children prefer this new award and said that it challenges them more. The children also talked about how much they enjoyed 'Growth Mindset Week' this year and said that they hope they can do it again this year.

Children who received 100% attendance throughout the year used to have a party before summer and get a trophy. However lots of children said that getting 100% attendance was too hard and so this has now been lowered to a target of at least 97% throughout the year. The children said that this new target is much better and the school council are discussing more ways in which children with a high attendance can be rewarded.

Lots of children wanted to try more sports and be more active and so there was a 'Start Sport Soon' competition that children got entered into if they tried a new sport or activity. The children said this was exciting and there were some big prizes: **"Someone won an iPad!"** and **"I won a trip to a waterpark."**

The children really enjoy these awards and said: **"My favourite part of school is all of the competitions."**

Other Areas of School Life

In the past, the toilets have been dirty and messy and children have been involved in reviewing this. The girls toilets have significantly improved, but the boys toilets sometimes still got quite dirty. The children led a poster competition and decided on the best posters. These were carefully displayed in the toilets and the children said that this has made a big difference. The only thing that could be improved now is **"the floors still get a bit muddy"**. The children suggested that a doormat could be placed near the toilets so people can wipe their feet before going in.



Some children said that they would like to promote Twitter more widely in the community so everyone could find out what happens in the school. In pursuit of this, the children designed and ran a poster competition and chose the winners; which were then promoted in the newspaper, local shops and community. The children said that this is good as family members can see what they have been doing and good for when the

children use Twitter for communication when they go on their residential trip. A child commented: **“My favourite thing about school is Twitter because you can see the things that you have been doing.”**

KS1 School Council said that they thought some children in reception class needed extra support at playtimes and said they might not understand the buddy system. To address this problem, the children from School Council did a school assembly to tell everyone about buddies and the buddy bus stop that they can use. The children said that this is now used and everyone enjoys playtime with the motto: **‘Don’t be a bully, be a buddy!’**



Children in Year 6 told me about their Young Leader system which encourages older children to support younger children by helping support clubs, at lunchtime, on the all-weather pitch and trim trail and organising games for playtime. Everyone told me: **“Our favourite thing is helping on the infant yard!”** The Year 6 children said that having this responsibility was really important to them.

Evie told me that one of her favourite things in school is the Library as she loves reading. At her local library she saw a system in which librarians recommended books, and she wanted to do this in school. She spoke to a teacher about this who said she could do it. Evie designed ‘Recommended’ labels put in all of her favourite books. She said: **“I made some posters as well and put them around school to tell people the library times and I also gave one to each classroom. I thought that if I put recommended bookmarks more people wouldn’t pick just any book without any evidence that it is really good.”**

Previous Recommendations

Last year the children made two recommendations:

Design and get badges for School Council

The children told me that this has happened. Everyone was originally given a plain ‘school council’ badge but these have now been redesigned and they’re ‘more colourful and bright’ which everyone can wear. The children also said that the Librarians also now have badges to wear.

Explore ideas to encourage everyone to put their rubbish in the bin

This has been achieved in several ways. The Eco Club and School Council looked at this and have introduced the ‘litter squad,’ the KS1 Yard now has more bins and also there is now less waste as children in KS1 only have fruit or vegetables at playtime, so there are no wrappers.

Recommendations

The children had two main recommendations that they want to explore over the coming year:

Make lessons more fun, varied and interactive

The children told me their ideas for this - **“I would like more outdoor lessons,” “I think that the older people should be able to have lessons in the forest school,”**

“More subjects in school” and “Every week to have a lesson of our choice.”

The children said **“I think using the trim trail could be fairer as Year 5 and 6 use it the most.”**

Conclusion

The children that I met talked to me enthusiastically about the many times that they are involved in decisions in school and the times when all children in school are involved. This dialogue has led to great changes in school, such as the improved communication with kitchen staff, E-Cadets taking on lead roles to help other children learn and adjustments to the attendance award targets. For these reasons I would like to recommend that Burnopfield Primary School remains a valued member of the Investing in Children Membership Award Scheme™.

The children have endorsed this evaluation and their signatures are included.

Chloe Brown
Project Officer
January 2019



Hannah
Sam
Phoebe
Sophie
Luis
Imogen H
Ellie MC
Joshua R
Zane
Cogs

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