

Cleves Cross Primary School

Re-evaluation for Investing in Children Membership

Cleves Cross Primary school lies on the edge of Ferryhill, a small town in County Durham. There are currently 202 children aged four to eleven on its role. The school was built in 1973 and has had significant improvements made to it since then, not least the outdoor areas. There are seven classrooms, a main hall, library and an ICT suite. The outdoor area includes a substantial playing field, playground and a quiet courtyard area with sensory garden and story-telling area. There are also outdoor adventure trails, a large gazebo, growing areas including raised beds, a greenhouse and a poly-tunnel.

The school tries to be as sustainable as possible and have the *Green Flag* status. They have recently achieved the *Learning outside the Classroom* award which acknowledges the emphasis placed on outdoor provision to enhance children's learning.

Cleves Cross is proud to be a Rights Respecting Level 2 school and an anti-bullying accredited school and were also the first Durham school to be awarded the Young Carer's Charter.

The school's aim is to create a happy, secure and sustainable environment where children can explore, investigate, listen and discuss in order to become independent, mature and well-motivated learners who have positive attitudes and make valuable contributions as global citizens to our community and the wider world. Children's rights, taken from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child are central to everything they do in the school.

For the purpose of this year's evaluation I visited the school and met with several children who volunteered to share their experiences and vision of their school.

I would like to say a special thanks to Oscar, Katherine, Codi, Abigail, Georgia, Ben, Niall, Oskar, Tyler, Owen and Lydia for helping me gather the evidence to write this report.

Opportunities for Dialogue resulting in Change

School Council

There continues to be an effective school council at the school which is made up of one boy and one girl from each class. Children are voted on to the council by their classmates every year.

"We meet every month on a Friday"

"It's awesome on the school council. You feel powerful!"

"We feel like we have a say on everything!"

"We ask the pupils and then tell the teacher our ideas"

When I asked the children how other pupils in the school have a say they replied:

"We have a chart in each class for children to write on their ideas and we take them to the school council to discuss"

“All of the school councillors have badges so everyone knows who they are. We have our meetings and come back to the class and tell everyone what we discuss and change”

The council plays a big part in decisions made within the school including the following:

Clubs

“The school council gets to suggest and decide what clubs the school should have!”

“We can suggest things in our meetings”

Staff Appointments

Children have been involved in the appointments of new staff.

School Dinners

Pupils were asked their opinions about meals for schools lunches. The school now has healthy school lunches that the school council have had a say in choosing.

“We have been involved in this”

Suggestions

There is a suggestion sheet displayed in each class with the date of the next council meeting on so that pupils can write their suggestions/ideas on.

All the ideas are taken by the councillors to the next meeting for discussion.

A general suggestion box is also available so that everyone has the opportunity to have a voice. The children write things on a piece of paper and put it in the box and councillors empty the box and discuss matters every week.

“Anyone can write their ideas down on the sheet in each class, we then take their ideas to our meetings”

“Everyone knows about the suggestion box but most people use the sheets in each class to put down their ideas”

Equipment

Pupils are asked their views on what new equipment the school should buy/get. Over the year they have chosen new play equipment, changed school décor and chosen books.

In July 14 the school had a new wooden gazebo erected after suggestions made by the school council.

“Last year we got the new gazebo, we did an ice bucket challenge to open it!”

“It’s quite nice in the gazebo, we sometimes use it as an outdoor classroom”

“We have bought quite a lot of stuff for the school. We got the poly tunnel”

“I chose new skipping ropes!”

“We are getting new chairs for the library”

“We have ordered some new books!”

Rights Respecting School

As a Rights Respecting School (Level 2), Cleves Cross acknowledge the importance of children having a voice and knowing their rights, as well as the rights of others. Rights Respecting Ambassadors (children) participate in discussions and activities in school and also in the community.

The children participate in Rights Respecting mornings every half term where they get together in mixed age/abilities to enjoy activities and discussions around particular articles.

In November 2014 Rights Respecting Ambassadors were involved in the unveiling of a new war memorial in our local cemetery, along with members of the local community.

“We have rights, respecting people. We talk about our rights and plan activities”

Eco School

The Eco Club meets each Wednesday after school and have responsibility for monitoring the usage of school resources (including water and fuel) as well as recycling waste products. Children look for ways in which they can improve sustainability as a school, as well as raising awareness of issues that concern the wider world. They have held assemblies advising the rest of the school on Eco matters and monitoring the use of the recycling boxes.

The school also has Fairtrade status, where Eco Club members regularly help to organise Fairtrade events.

Each class has two eco monitors who have the responsibility for turning off lights and electrical appliances and reusing waste water from water bottles.

“We are an Eco School. We have monitors one for bins, one for lights, one for electricity and another for water”

“I am the bin monitor, I make sure people use the right bins!”

“If someone drops something on the floor the bin monitor will tidy up and tell them what bin they should of put it in”

“We organise and run assemblies”

Buddies

At playtimes Buddies and LEAP Leaders (Y6) and Minibuds (Y2) have responsibilities to help ensure playtimes and happy and safe.

“If you want to be a buddy you have to write why and then you are chosen”

“Buddies play games with other children and talk to them if they are unhappy or have no one to play with”

“We have a friendship stop. If you need someone to talk to you go to the friendship stop and a buddy will come over!”

PSHCE

PSHCE continues to be an integral part of the curriculum in each year group (loosely based around SEAL) and circle activities are an important element of the sessions so children can explore their own thoughts and feelings as well as developing empathy and understanding by listening to others.

Every year they participate in Anti-bullying week as well as Show Racism the Red Card sessions in Years five and six.

“Every year we have two assemblies about anti-bullying”

School Fair

The children informed me that every year the school has a school fair.

“Each class decides what it wants to do for the fair. We all have a say!”

“We decided that we would have a loom band shop!”

Gardening Club

The Young Gardeners Club have an active role in maintaining and developing the growing areas and in sharing their ideas with everyone else. They enter local gardening club competitions and have enjoyed some success.

“We have gardening club. We decide what we grow and enter competitions.

“Daniel in year 5 won something last year and we have entered a leak competition were we came second”

Trips

Several trips take place throughout the year. ***“We get to choose what trips we go on”***

School Pet

The group informed me that children in the school had asked that the school gets a pet. ***“We talked about what we could get and today we got them. We now have four guinea pigs and now we are voting on their names!”***

“We decided all of it!”

Young Carers

After establishing a Young Carers group of children, which involves young carers and non-carers, the children worked hard to raise awareness of the challenges faced by young carers in our school community.

In 2013 the Young Carer’s Action group achieved the Young Carer’s Charter and were presented it by Tanni Grey Thompson as well as speaking on television and radio about what it involved and meant to them.

“We have a group that helps carers. We have asked for some money to go out on a trip away from our caring and are going”

“We talk about what it’s like to be a young carer. I care for my brother”

“It will be a nice break from caring and a nice trip out. We will decide where we go!”

Other comments

During our discussions I asked the pupils to describe in a few words what the school means to them and was told:

- Amazing
- Brilliant
- It’s awesome and you get to have lots of opportunities
- You get to do lots of things outside of school
- Fantastic
- Powerful
- Fun

- Spectacular
- Excellent

Conclusion

My report highlights the changes that have been made as a result of pupil's voice. Children have been involved in deciding new equipment for the school, running their own gardening club and choosing what to grow, planning an activity for young carers, choosing the school pet and deciding rights and responsibilities for the school.

All of the children I met with spoke highly of their involvement in school life. When I asked the group if the school should receive the award for another year everyone said: ***"Yes, definitely 110%"***

I therefore have no hesitation but to recommend that Cleves Cross Primary School becomes an Investing in Children Member once again.

Well Done!

Eleanor Seed
Project Worker
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A Hilton