

## Investing in Children Membership Award™

### Evaluation of ISP School



#### Introduction

ISP School is a Special Educational Needs School in Battle, East Sussex. The school believes each child, irrespective of age or background, has the potential to learn, the ability to 'grow' and the capacity to change. Through a process of nurture, guidance, safety and positive learning experiences, children are able to replace past experiences of failure and underachievement with successful and personally rewarding outcomes. They are empowered to reflect about themselves and their abilities in a more satisfying and healthy way thus offering real direction to their intellectual and personal growth. The school recognise that achievement entails much more than simply achieving academic status and that there has to be an appropriate balance between academic learning, exploration of effective social skills, developing strategies for behaviour self-management and opportunities for emotional growth and understanding. Offering children an empathetic, reflective, responsible, stimulating and enjoyable learning environment helps them gain these qualities for themselves, freeing them up to make full use of the many life-long learning opportunities they offer as a school.

For the purpose of this evaluation, I met with the following pupils to hear the ways they have a voice and the changes that happen as a result within their school. I would like to say a special thanks to Finley, Jayden, Nathan, Oscar, Joshua, Jensen, Ryan, James, Josh, Kyle, Seth and JJ who all did extremely well speaking to me for the first time.

#### Evidence of Dialogue and Change

##### **Evidence of Dialogue resulting in Change from Children and Young People**

###### Community Meetings

The school do not offer a school council mechanism as they want to ensure all children have the opportunity to have a voice, every day, through a community meeting model. Each day the whole school community, adults and children, meet up to four times to offer a safe, secure and 'emotionally holding' environment where children are supported to develop good enough achievements with adults - all aspects of school life are shared and developed.

During my discussions with the children they told me the following about the community meetings:

***"I think the school has a very good democratic structure. Everyone has a say and the whole community get asked their views. It is really efficient and really good. We have community meetings 3 to 4 times each day. We get to talk about the day, the school and the community. Anyone can come up with something to say, everyone has a voice!"***

***“We talk about the day, what is going to happen. In the morning we look at the morning timetable, then we have a lunch meeting and one at the end of the day. Children lead the meeting if they want to. I did a meeting on everything that happened including the ups and downs etc... They always try and help you if there is something you need support with!”***

***“In community meetings if you ever have a question, you just put your hand up and Caroline will come to you.”***

***“Sometimes we get to run lunch time community meetings!”***

***“I’ve run a community meeting before lunch. If you ask you get to do them. I’ve done it and so have others. I told everyone how my morning went, about going to 1066 and asked who was going to be on duty etc...”***

### Post 16 Provision

In November 2022, Ofsted inspectors reported that children would like to have post 16 provision on site. In January 2023, the headteacher applied for material change to increase provision age to 18 years. The young people told me that this was something they wanted.

***“This is something we asked for!”***

### Behaviour Chart

A behaviour chart is in place which has been developed by both the children and the staff team. The chart looks at ‘Your behaviour – Your choice’ and states that if there are two or more incidents each week, children will not be able to attend some of the activities. One child stated that they could be suspended and still go on a trip. In February the chart was amended to reflect the voice of each child with suspensions added.

***“We get to vote on the things we would like to do.”***

***“We adapted the chart.”***

***“We chose where we wanted to go last term... some of us chose the snake shack and others bowling.”***

***“We have school trips. There is a sheet on the wall with everyone’s names on and if you have two ticks each week or are suspended you don’t get to go.”***

***“We have a points system where we collect ‘DoJo’s’. There are different levels; Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum. If you get Gold, you get a £5 voucher of your choice or lunch with Caroline and if you get Platinum it’s a £10 voucher or lunch of your choice with Caroline (Headteacher).”***

## Houses

When setting up a house system, children were able to vote on names for the houses.

***“We got to choose the names.”***

## Meals

When the school first opened they purchased prepacked hot meals delivered to the school. Children stated that these weren't nice and could they make their own lunches in school. As a result of this, children are now able to do so and further requested various other hot meal options on various days.

***“We asked to make our own lunches and then we asked for different options of hot meals. Mondays and Wednesdays are now our choice days. When we first started school, we had a large choice on what we wanted.”***

***“I said to Zena can we please have another toaster and the next day we got it.”***

***“Oh yeah, Caroline asked if we had any ideas. Now Zena has started doing hot meals like burgers, jackets, wraps, baguettes, hot dogs and pizza. Basically, we now have a lot more variety.”***

***“We get to decide what we want for lunch. We get a choice of multiple fillings now for baguettes, sandwiches and wraps along with our new hot lunches.”***

## School Choices – Voting

In the early stages of the school opening, children were involved in voting on a variety of things such as the uniform, mobile phones and equipment such as chairs and mirrors. Recently they have been involved in choosing new gym equipment.

## Uniform

***“We voted on the uniform and what we wanted.”***

## Gym Equipment

Children requested gym equipment for the school. They were involved in meeting with companies to look at the various equipment which will be erected in the second car park.

***“We do get listened to. We asked for gym equipment and chose what we wanted. It's here now and getting fitted soon. We chose it and got it.”***

***“Me and Andrew took the table tennis down there as we wanted to play.”***

***“We had options on the colours. We were deciding between blue and green. Most of us picked green as it would go with the environment. It's coming next week!”***

## Clubs

One young person told me about the 'computer club' that the children voted on a couple of months ago. **"Quite a lot of us like to do it, we voted on it!"**

**"Children vote at the beginning of term to what they want!"**

## Trips

Children are involved in choosing options for school trips. **"At the end of the term we have trips that students are allowed to mention. Caroline picks a couple from what is suggested and we get the choice in groups." "I went to the Snake Shack last term and the older group chose bowling. After that we went to McDonalds and the others chose to go for pizza. Most of us chose that!"**

**"We have chosen trips like Blackberry Farm, Drusilla's Zoo and the Snake Shack!"**

## Library

**"Children get to choose the books in the library."**

## Bike Ability

The young people told me how a lot of them had missed out on doing bike ability in their other schools so wanted the opportunity to do it at ISP. **"We are getting brand new bikes that we have to build and we get to take them home."**

**"Caroline came and brought it up to two groups. Quite a lot of us missed out so we are now getting to do it. We missed out in Years 5 and Years 6."**

## Key Worker/Time out

Children have a 1 to 1 key worker which enables the children to further develop their voice.

**"We have a key worker in our room, you can speak to them!"**

**"If you are struggling in lessons, you can go for a walk or do something different. It's really good to have more freedom when you need it. There is always someone there to talk to if you need it!"**

**"They try and help you."**

**"We have 1 to 1 rooms and sensory rooms. They are quite good, if you are finding it tricky in class or not in the right space to learn, you can go out at any point to get in the right space. There are lots of options you can do. It's your choice!"**

***“You can take time out to calm down and if it gets too loud in the games room you take a bit of a break from shouting.”***

#### Other comments

***“If you have any concerns you can speak to any of the staff. You have 1 to 1’s and every class has people that will listen if you want to have a say.”***

***“In the lessons we don’t have to take part if we don’t want to, we can use our strategies to help us back into the lesson!”***

***“Where I have a voice is when I get worried, I speak to workers as I trust them to help me!”***

***“Caroline is a good person to cheer you up!”***

***“I got suspended then had a meeting. I explained what had happened and Caroline tried to help me sort stuff out!”***

#### Few words

I asked the young people to describe in a few words what the school means to them and was told the following:

***“Educational, enjoyable, flexible, a nice environment to be in.”***

***“My favourite thing is that we have different teachers for each thing like mainstream school. We aren’t stuck in the same room with the same teacher all day long.”***

***“School... you learn multiple things here! You are here to learn and get an education and a job. It’s an opportunity to catch up on lost years of moving and being expelled. I’ve learnt more here in the last 6 weeks at this school than being at any other!”***

***“You have a voice, a lot.... Lots of choice in what happens.”***

***“From what I have heard, pupils have had a voice in uniform choice and timetable choice.”***

***“We have a voice when we sit in meetings. When we have any issues, the teachers listen. They always ask children’s opinions and when decisions are being made they involve us!”***

***“It’s good for your education and really fun!”***

***“From moving to this school, they have had a good impact on me and helped me a lot. If I wasn’t here, I wouldn’t be the person I am today. I have literally changed in a big way and would not be the person I am today! The school has helped me in the best possible way!”***

## Recommendations

### Recommendations from children and young people

Music Club - *"I would really like to see a music club zone at lunch time. You get to pick media or performing arts. I really like music but we only get to do it in lessons."*

Doors – One young person mentioned about the doors in the school being heavy and low. A discussion then took place regarding the age of the building and the structure of the doors/door frames. Everyone agreed that it was not possible to do anything about this but I wanted to capture it within the report.

### liC recommendations

I have no recommendations.

## Conclusion

I was extremely impressed with the school and the mechanism they have established for children's voice. It was clear to see that the 'Community Meetings' offer opportunities for children to shape, lead and influence decisions about school life. Additional to the meetings, young people have a voice that leads to change through a variety of ways detailed within my report.

I therefore have no hesitation but to recommend that ISP School, Battle receives the Investing in Children Membership Award™.

Well Done!

## Endorsement by Young People

All of the children I met with have approved this report and signed below:

Kyle PGLE

Jayden 

Josh S — JSnapes

Oscar — OSCAR

Joshua 

JJ 

Jensen 

Finley 

Seth 

**Eleanor Seed**  
**Awards Manager**  
**April 2023**

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