

Investing in Children Membership Award™

Re-evaluation of ISP School – Battle

Introduction

Situated on the lovely setting of Glengorse Estate in Battle, East Sussex, ISP school provides specialist education for 7-18-year olds with social, emotional, and mental health difficulties (SEMH), communication and interaction, cognition, and learning needs.

For the purpose of this re-evaluation, I had the pleasure of meeting with Chanel, Alice, Livvy, Kyle, Paddy, Mikey and Tulisa online. They were able to tell me the ways they have a voice and the change that has been made. I would like to say a special thanks and well done for helping me gather the evidence for this report.

Evidence of Dialogue and Change

Evidence of Dialogue resulting in Change from Children and Young People

We started off our discussions by asking them to tell me in a few words ‘what the school means to them!’ I was told:

“They understand you and make you feel safe in the school”

“You get to go out to nice places and on school trips”

“Education and fun!”

“The teachers!”

“On a Monday I go to 1066 and on a Thursday, I go horse riding. I like this!”

“One of the only special schools that does GCSE’s”

Community Meetings

The school runs four community meetings each day which is a forum to enable adults and children to have a voice, be listened to and be heard.

“We have them four times a day. One on the morning, one just before lunch, another after lunch and one at the end of the day.”

I asked the pupils who chooses what they talk about: ***“Caroline... but the children get a really BIG say”***

“It feels safe to have a say at the meetings.”



I asked the pupils to tell me about the things that pupils have raised and changed following discussions at these meetings. I was told the following:

Independence

One pupil, Kyle, requested more independence so is now able to walk around the middle island independently. ***"I lap around the island now whenever I need too."***

Another pupil stated; ***"If you have independence on your plan and struggle, you can ask and go for a walk. Sometimes you can go on your own, other times with the teacher."***

Chanel said; ***"I go with Alice. You get to walk around the island once and it helps you calm down. It is just the two of us but also sometimes on your own."***

"You can just ask at any time to go for a walk. If you don't want to go on your own you can ask a teacher!"

Bikes

Requests were also made by the pupils ***"We wanted Build a Bike to run again"***. Three groups have now completed Build a Bike. ***"It was good as we took bikes that we made, helmets and locks home with us."***

"I am doing build a bike on Thursday!"

Helping in the Community

"People asked for Albion in the community to run again. We are now doing this again with a STEM session then a stadium tour."

Bean Bags

Livvy said: ***"Lots of children asked for bean bags in the Community Meetings. We now have them!"***

Sensory Room

"Children chose what they wanted for the sensory room. We got bean bags, lights, vibrating pillows, tactile pads that you walk on, led lights and a bubble tube."

Following our discussion on community meetings we went on to discuss the following other changes:

Uniform

Pupils said they wanted to re-evaluate the uniform policy. A group of pupils met with Caroline to review the policy and adjust, adding in a grey.

“We now have black, white and grey as our uniform. You can wear grey leggings, trousers or jumpers.”

Children are able to wear any of them colours for school now any way round they like.

Lunch Menu

Pupils asked for croissants and bagels to be added to the lunch menu. These have been added and have proved very popular.

Liv told me that she had asked for the croissants and another pupil had requested bagels.

“P** used to get crackers and a tuna bowl.”***

Cooking

Another discussion took place regarding cooking when the children are struggling as this is something that helps them regulate. ***“You can ask the teacher to go to the Tesco Express if you are struggling and when you get back you can cook things like pizza.”***

“Next week we were going to make spaghetti bolognaise but we didn’t want to do that so asked to make millionaire shortbread and doing it this week!”

Hair and Beauty

Pupils also asked to study hair and beauty. An amazing salon is now in place.

“This is the first year we are running it and have a salon set up”

Computers

Requests were also made for new computers in the IT room. New gaming computers have been purchased and available to use.

“We now have sensory key boards. (Keyboards that are quite sensory – light up and click when pressed) They make you want to do more work when you use them!”

Sign Language

Children asked to learn sign language. Language and communication have now been added to the school curriculum.

A variety of languages have also been introduced to the pupils such as Braille and German.

“I liked the Braille.”

Pool

They also asked for the opportunity to play pool at breaktime. Two new pool tables were purchased for the games room.

“The boys asked for this!”

Absence of staff

The adults asked pupils how the school could manage covering staff absence. Pupils helped to set the next day timetable.

Caroline told me that she had a chat with the pupils. ***“So, lots of teachers were off for drop down day. We decided to do some of our lessons in tutor times instead of all day.”***

Toothpaste

Pupils asked to make ‘Elephant Toothpaste’. A risk assessment was made and pupils were able to make it in a Science lesson.

“We did it in the bottom car park. You use a mixture of chemicals and it makes a foamy mess!”

Tutor Groups

In keywork sessions, some pupils asked to change tutor groups. As a result, two tutor group changes occurred.

“I asked to go into Alice’s tutor group!”

Pupils in year 9 asked for Gemma (PEG) to follow them into year 10 with them. This is happening.

Chanel said: ***“I wanted Gemma to stay as my PEG.”***

Additional Changes

On the following page is a picture of additional dialogue that has led to change.

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So What?

What ways have you had a SAY?

Can the gym be more accessible.
Children asked to go fishing as part
of landbased curriculum.
Children asked for Build A Bike to run
again.

What changes have happened based on your VOICE?

Gym moved downstairs
Children go fishing every Thursday.
Three groups of children have
completed build a bike.

- Evidence of DIALOGUE
- Evidence of Change
- CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE agree

So what do you think of the changes that have been MADE?

It is better having the gym
downstairs.
We love going fishing
It's good as we took bikes
that we made, helmets and locks
home with us.



Gym Changes

Pupils asked for the gym to be more accessible. The gym was moved downstairs and pupils state it is better now.

“I didn’t like climbing so I asked to go to the gym instead.”

Fishing

The boys asked to go fishing as part of land-based curriculum. This now happens every Thursday. ***“We have been going fishing.”***

Change that morning

During my time online, another young person ‘Mikey’ had expressed his voice regarding forest school that morning.

“I couldn’t do Forest School this morning as I hate Forest School. I asked to do English instead.”

This is a perfect example of change that happens on a daily basis.

Options

Another young person (Tulisa) wanted to chat with me regarding next year’s plan. ***“I am currently in year 8 and should be moving to year 9 but I am going to follow the year 10 class and am doing my options!”***

“We both decided this as my tutor group was going to be in key stage 4 (which is usually year 10). I said I wanted to go with my tutor group.”

“I spoke with my mum and decided I want to choose my options. I chose Hair and Beauty, Health and Social Care and Psychology.”

Recommendations

Recommendations from children and young people

The only recommendation that was made was during a discussion regarding the computers which was the following:

“We should get pens that light up... it will make people want to write more!”

liC recommendations

I have no further recommendations.

Conclusion

My report clearly demonstrates the ways in which pupils play an active part of school life. When speaking to the pupils they were able to tell me about the ways their voice makes changes happen and this is evident within my report.

Pupils are active in all aspects of decisions regarding their school and there is a clear mechanism for pupil voice and decision making.

When I asked all the pupils if they felt the school gives them a voice and makes a change based on their voice and the school should get the award, they all said Yes!

“There has been loads of times that people have listened to me in this school!”

I therefore have no hesitation but to recommend that ISP School – Battle has its Investing in Children Membership Award™ renewed.

Well Done!

Endorsement by Young People

Caroline read the document to the children involved who were very happy with the report.

Eleanor Scharschmidt-Seed
Awards Manager
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