

## Investing in Children Membership Award™

### Re-evaluation of Nettlesworth Primary School



#### Introduction



Nettlesworth Primary is a small village-based school that meets the educational needs of children aged 4 to 11. Pupil voice is valued in many areas of the school, which is further demonstrated by its achievement of UNICEF Rights Respecting School Gold level.

Nettlesworth Primary is also accredited by the National Association for Able Children in Education (NACE) for its work in providing for more able, gifted, and talented children. NACE works to improve provision for more able learners and increase challenge for all, developing their abilities without limits, regardless of any barriers to learning they may face. The school is also proud to be an Association for Physical Education (AFPE) school.

Nettlesworth Primary has embedded Fairtrade into the daily life of school and has been awarded four FairAchiever awards for raising awareness both in school and the community.

There are currently 104 children registered at the school.

For the purpose of this membership Kate (Sessional Project Worker) and Louise (Senior Practitioner) met with various children in school. They provided suggestions for the photographs used in this report, and we would like to thank Luke (9 years old), Archer (8 years old), Jessica (11 years old), Harry (10 years old), Hester (7 years old) and Mrs Lee for their time and contributions of views and experiences, which provided the evidence for this report.

## Evidence of Dialogue and Change

There were a number of recommendations from children and young people in the previous report in February 2024. Please see below the suggestions and updates:

- Peer Mentors to wear a high-visibility vest rather than a lanyard so they can be easily identified.
  - Lanyards are still used. The children still like a lanyard with the ID badge as they feel proud wearing it in the classroom too.
- A separate private library for children as the area in classroom can be distracting.
  - All classrooms have their own library areas so that the contents are bespoke with relevant books to the ages/interests. There is a reading book area in the hall that is central for all children to access their reading books. The central library is now the ICT suite/Computer room.
- Create a timetable for toilet use as they can be very busy at certain times of the day.
  - A timetable has not been introduced, however a system where children line up has managed to make this better. This was put in place as some children might need the toilet before or after the timetable states.
- More equipment like bouncy balls and outdoor equipment on the field. Karen said “**Some of the stuff on the field is worn.**”
  - The school has since purchased more equipment and informed us that more is on order. Hester said “**we have different coloured containers for different coloured items**” and Luke said “**there’s new equipment, including bouncy balls of different sizes**”. The children spoke about a big cupboard with cones, parachutes and all sorts of other play equipment which is available to use. Harry said sports leaders and class 5 made the decisions about what equipment should be bought.
- Security cameras outside if anyone tries to steal anything.
  - Security cameras have been installed.



We feel the above actions/changes is also evidence that the children have a voice and staff listen and make changes where possible.

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

### Children's Voice

The School Council and Rights Respecting council meet regularly, giving children opportunities to have their voices heard and share suggestions for change. These suggestions are fed into the Pupil Improvement Plan (PIP), see below for further information.

In addition to these councils, the school also has:

- Sports Leaders,
- Reading Buddies (Year 6),
- Art Leaders/Masters
- Ambassadors in subjects such as science and history.

Jessica said, ***“School council meet up a lot and have sports leaders who are buddies who help children in sports”.***

School council meetings have discussed and planned art days, celebrations, and events such as Red Nose Day.

The school also has a Rights Respecting Council, Ambassadors for Fairtrade, a newsletter contributed to by children, and Fairtrade Tuck shops at events.

Luke spoke about Waste Warriors who meet at lunchtimes and discuss how much waste there is, review the types of waste, and talks about reducing waste. Archer said ***“we have special bins”*** and Jessica added ***“the classes compete to reduce waste”***.

There are many opportunities to be involved in school life, and the Ambassadors help in the younger classes. The school also has Peer Mentors, who help at playtime, and First Aid Ambassadors. Luke said ***“Key Stage 2 get to be ambassadors for subjects and help Key Stage 1”*** and Jessica said ***“sometimes we put ourselves forward...for art and history we are picked if we’re good.... but we don’t have to be an ambassador if we don’t want to”***.

### Sports Day

On 18.06.24, Louise and Rebecca, Assistant Project Worker, attended the school sports day. At the end of the event, Sports Leaders chose which children they wanted to receive awards linked to the six school values: respect, determination, honesty, passion, self-belief, and teamwork. This is evidence that the young people are involved in various decisions across the year within school.

## Sensory Areas

In evidence provided by the school before this visit, it showed that children had asked for easy access to sensory areas. The school now has new sensory areas in every class and a “Cosy Cove”, which is a small room containing sensory equipment. This space is also used for interventions including ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support) and SLT (Speech & Language Therapy). The children are very happy with the new areas and the fact that anyone can use them. Harry said “**there are fidgets and sensory toys and if people need to calm down, they can just use the sensory area**”. Jessica added that there are blankets and chairs and “**the sensory areas are all different**”. Children chose some of the sensory equipment and design/theme and staff helped to make it bespoke to the children who access it.



Later we discussed what happens if children are upset and Jessica said “**sensory areas can be used to calm down and be less overwhelmed which can happen when things are competitive**”.

Mrs Lee added in evidence provided prior to the visit that each classroom’s sensory area has been adapted to the needs of the children in the class.

Jessica spoke about Feeling Fans and explained that you can pick a card and talk about feelings “**and talk privately to a teacher if we want**”. She went on to talk about worry cards where children can write something and post it in a box so it’s private. “**Miss Gallagher looks at them and will pull us aside to talk if we want**”. She said “**If it’s about school it might help if you’ve fallen out with a friend or you can talk about something at home**”.



## Pupil Improvement Plan (PIP)

All children have the chance to contribute to the PIP either through their young person representative or by being members of the various councils. The children we met spoke about recent requests, such as more cooking opportunities, doing something for charity and having visitors come to school to talk about interesting topics, e.g., careers and trips. The children explained that when teams have a good idea, it's put on the PIP, and a choice is made from the list.

The PIP is a dynamic document, constantly changing, and is displayed in the main school corridor so pupils can see a record of their requests and the actions being taken as a result.

This shows evidence of children's wishes and views, alongside photos of the items from the team lists that have been taken forward and implemented.

Harry said "**we have teams in different colours and we decide what we want to do and that goes on the PIP**" and Jessica said "**we've asked about clubs and dance club went on the plan**".

The children went into more detail about some of the things they had asked to be added to the PIP and had later happened, such as fundraising and visits into school by interesting people.



The pupil ideas are displayed in the school corridor alongside the changes that have been made to the PIP. Examples of such changes can also be seen on the school website and include:

- **Blue team** – opportunities for the children to make their own food (making dishes in DT) and for the school to participate in World Food Day. Food has also been added to the Science curriculum.

- **Yellow team** – more whole-class trips throughout the school year. These will be in the local and wider community and give children real-life, memorable experiences.
- **Red team** – to include a range of art techniques in class and develop more understanding by hosting an art morning with a local artist.
- **Green team** – to host a visit from a scientist to widen the range of careers children could choose in the future.



## NETTLESWORTH PRIMARY SCHOOL

### Pupil's School Improvement Action Plan



#### Green Team

September 2025 – July 2026

Issue:	To promote a wide range of careers to all children in school.
Aim:	To have a visit from a Scientist.

What we want to do this year.	Who will do this?	When will we do this?	Who will help?	What do we need to do this?	What will the impact on school be?
To continue to expose all children in school to the wide range of future careers they could possibly choose.	Pupils and staff at school  Mrs Aspinall – Science Lead	Teachers will aim to plan at least two visits for their class this academic year.  Mrs Aspinall will plan a wow day with a visit from a Scientist.	Teachers  Parents / Carers  Governors	Teachers will use their PPA time and links previously established.	Children's knowledge of future careers will be broadened.  Children's love of science will love.
To work with a scientist to learn about a variety of topics, including taking part in investigations.	All class teachers when planning their memorable experiences.				

As the Green team PIP example shows, as a result of dialogue, children have the opportunity to influence the choice of visitors to school for carers talks.

### Visitors & Career Encounters

Children in every class will have career encounters twice a term to encourage and inform career pathways.

It is clear from the discussions we had with children that career encounters are very popular, and they mentioned wanting more visits.

Sometimes children ask for particular visitors to come into school, and one of those was mentioned by Jessica, who spoke about an artist called Kate; **“she was in a wheelchair and talked about her life”**.

Careers talks are popular (Careers Encounters) and feature in the PIP. Jessica said: **“There have been firefighters, a Metro driver, a singer,”** and the group we met explained that sometimes children say that when I grow up, they want to be.... (and give an example) and school has arranged for someone to come in and talk to them.

The children mentioned that Mrs Hill's son, who is in the army, comes into school to talk about it, but that they had not seen him yet.

Children enjoyed taking part in the Durham Business Enterprise project. Years 5 and 6 took part in a project where they designed, made, and sold a product. The children went onto sell their choice of packaging for gifts at Durham Market. The children we spoke to didn't know how much money they made or what happened to it. We would suggest that this could be followed up with the young people.

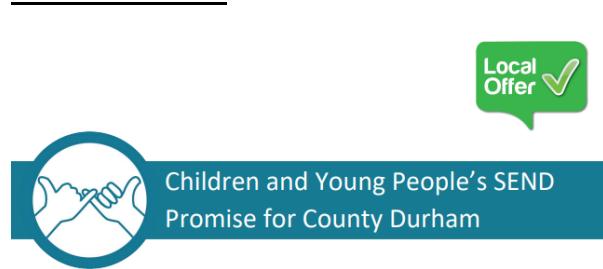
### Fundraising

It is clear that fundraising remains an important part of life at Nettlesworth Primary and is also an item on team requests for addition to the PIP. One request to do something more for charity resulted in a Macmillan Coffee Morning and a Fairtrade Tuck Shop as part of Parliamentary Week. Both charities were chosen by the children, and events such as these are supported by teachers who bring cakes in and the wider school family. Jessica said "**We get our parents and carers to come too**".

### Local Parks

Children continue to be involved in the local area and have worked with Durham County Council to improve three local parks by voting for new equipment, which is now in place. The children I met spoke about the new slide in the park. Jessica said, "**We voted for that!**" and Harry said "**We went into the hall and could vote for a slide or roundabout.**"

### SEND Promise



#### Education

**We promise** to provide a high standard of education that is fun and engaging in a safe learning environment.

**We promise** to provide the best support from qualified staff so that young people can succeed in education.

**We promise** that all young people are fully involved and prepared during transitions in education e.g. moving from secondary school at the end of year 11 to college or an apprenticeship.

**We promise** to provide young people with choices within education to support the goals and aspirations of children and young people.

**We promise** to provide young people with choices to take part in fun and challenging sports and activities within education.

As part of the Investing in Children eXtreme group for children and young people with Special Education Needs and/or Disabilities, they have created a Promise which they feel should be included in the Membership process.

We looked through and discussed the Education section of the SEND Promise. All of the children said they feel that Nettlesworth Primary offers:

- A high standard of education, and
- that it was fun, enjoyable and safe.

They said that there was good support in school and that children are given choices around goals and aspirations, as well as opportunities to take part in fun and challenging activities.

## Written Evidence from Children

Staff completed an evidence sheet with some children prior to our visit. This was their feedback:

*What ways have you had your say?*

- Asked for visits from Liz Million, Adam Bushnell and Kate
- Team choices at assembly
- Pupil Improvement Plan – we asked for new experiences
- Sensory areas – easy access
- Sporting activities, school trips and help with careers
- Mini police, Melanie (Enterprise work) and lots of chats from people with lots of careers
- Mrs Edwards brought in singer, fire fighter and metro driver
- Mrs Hills – son in the army
- Enhance our skills on trips e.g. Durham Dash/KS2 Cross Country

*What changes have happened based on your voice?*

- New sensory areas
- Different fitness coaches
- New slide in local park
- People outside of school listen to our voices – Kevan Jones and Mayor of Durham
- Play areas on field
- New reading areas in classes
- Bin in park

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

- We are proud that we help the environment
- It's fun to know that our voice is listened to
- Sensory areas help people to regulate
- Got loads of ideas about future careers

## **Additional evidence of Dialogue resulting in Change provided by the organisation**

Prior to our visit, Mrs Lee provided us with some evidence of dialogue and change. This was all discussed with the young people, and the evidence is included in the section above.

## Recommendations

### **Recommendations from children and young people**

The children raised the following things that they would like to see as future changes in school:

- A tea/after school club like breakfast club.
- A reading area in the yard. Jessica said “***we would need a waterproof case for the yard to keep the books safe***”.
- An area to put laptops with a charging point.

### **LiC recommendations**

We would recommend that the young people are informed about outcomes following events and discussions, e.g., Durham Business Enterprise project.

The school has access to an off-site forest school area, but unfortunately, it has recently been vandalised. Jessica said “***Teens destroyed it. We've worked on it using protective gear and tidied it up and made it safer***”. Investing in Children recommends that young people are involved in the development of this space and look forward to hearing more about this in our next re-evaluation visit.

### **Conclusion**

There is a lot of evidence provided by both children and staff showing that dialogue and change are a permanent characteristic of Nettlesworth Primary School, seen both at pupil and whole-school levels.

Children believe that staff at school listen to them and act on the good ideas they have, including making changes where they think they are needed. They regard themselves as part of the decision-making process within school, with chances to vote when there are several options to choose from. Not only do children know that their views and opinions are important and are taken seriously, but they also either have experience of carrying out a role, such as Ambassador or Leader, in school or have the knowledge that such opportunities exist.

Children know they can contribute to existing systems and strategies within their school and the use of the Pupil Improvement Plan is a fully integrated method of recording dialogue and change. All the children we spoke to were aware of the Plan's existence and how to feed into it. We also like that these are uploaded onto the school website for everyone to see how the plans are followed and updated each year.

For these reasons, we recommend that the Nettlesworth Primary School receive the Investing in Children Membership Award™. All of the young people agreed that Nettlesworth Primary School should receive the Investing in Children Membership Award™.

### **Endorsement by Young People**

The young people have read the report and agree that Nettlesworth Primary School should receive the Investing in Children Membership Award™.

Jessica said “***Everyone respects each other and keeps kind***”.

***Kate Ferguson, Sessional Project Worker***  
***Louise Frost, Senior Practitioner***  
***December 2025***

---

**Investing in Children**

Investing in Children Membership Award™ is a registered Trademark™.  
Investing in Children is a charity (number 1213379) registered in England and Wales:  
The Sjovoll Centre, Front Street, Framwellgate Moor, Durham, DH1 5BL  
Tel: 0191 307 7030.  
[info@investinginchildren.net](mailto:info@investinginchildren.net)  [www.investinginchildren.net](http://www.investinginchildren.net)

---