



Liking school, Participation

Bexley
**Engaging younger
children in care
about worries in
school through
Children in Care
Council sessions at
the homework club'**
September 2019

Using the format of an after school homework club, the Children in Care Council (CiCC) were consulted to find out about young children's worries concerning school.

Why?

Following school worries brought up from the Bright Spot survey, Bexley wanted to make sure the Children in Care Council (CiCC) were consulted, but struggled to keep the attendance of the CiCC up (because of clashes with after school clubs, etc.)

What difference is it making?

Children and young people's feedback was shared more regularly and widely as a result with managers in social care, Councillors and other professionals such as schools and foster carers etc.

What did they do?

The format of the CiCC was changed and built into an already existing homework club. The homework club included an optional home cooked dinner and a 'bite size' CiCC activity.

The CiCC activities used drama skills, role play, 'hot-seating' to help children explore their feelings through a fictional character ('worry dragon' – put your worries into his pouch).

Charlie was one of the fictional characters used for children to project their feelings on to, characters were used so that children could imagine how fictional characters may feel and experience scenarios without personalising them. Last term was a focus on Charlie's experience of school. What things could he be worried about? (e.g. relationships with teachers, Charlie excluded and going back to school, Charlie feeling bullied by a peer) Bexley asked the children: 'What happened for Charlie?' 'How did this make him feel?' 'What could adults have done differently?'

Children really identified with practices that felt alienating and uncaring. The children and young people came up with character 'Mr Trump' who represented some of the uncaring behaviours. The other character developed was a class teacher who is more caring. They identified scenarios where they felt angry/excluded. When discussing bullying, they came up with ways that children could support each other.

The homework club caused the attendance of CiCC to almost double and children were able to speak about their feelings more comfortably through depersonalisation.

The homework club facilitated a link between the existing group of young people in care and the participation service and managers. This allowed for more frequent bitesize dialogue, frequent discussions and feedback being shared through the Participation Leader with the wider service.