

## Bradwell Village Middle School Learning Environment

Who is involved? How many pupils?

There have been two stages to this inquiry:

The first stage involved all the members of the SIG along with 8 pupils in their classes in a pilot of the Hay's Group 'Transforming Learning' evaluation tool, which is an online system. This evaluation tool looks at 9 areas of the learning environment of an individual teacher's classroom- clarity, order, standards, fairness, participation, support, safety, interest, and environment. The evaluation tool asks both the teacher and individual pupils their perceptions of the learning environment within their class. The system then collates and compares the two sets of perceptions.

The second stage involved inviting all members of the teaching staff and 8 pupils in their class to take part in the 'Transforming Learning' evaluation tool.

What are the pupils doing? *How are their voices being heard and responded to?*

The pupils answered the same online questionnaire as their teacher. This questionnaire consisted of 28 questions with the children having to make one of four responses to the questions. These responses were 'Always', 'Usually', 'Sometimes', 'Never'.

How is this changing the classroom?

In the first stage it was found that pupil and teacher perceptions of the learning environment in classrooms were very closely matched. In fact, the children's perceptions were sometimes higher than that of their teacher. Teachers were 'hedging their bets', so to speak. With this data the SIG members decided not to action plan any changes in their classroom, present the 'Transforming Learning' evaluation tool to the rest of the school and revisit the questionnaire with the same pupils later in the year.

In the second stage most members of the teaching staff have used the 'Transforming Learning' evaluation tool with similar results to those of the SIG members.

The retest by all SIG members has still to be completed.

How is this changing the management and decision making processes in school?

Using the 'Transforming Learning' evaluation tool has raised questions about the reliability of the data, e.g. only asks 8 pupils, some questions seemed unclear or ambiguous, teachers are cautious about their responses because they are asked their perceptions concerning **all** the children in their class. Examples of questions teachers were concerned about: *'Do children behave well in X's class?'*, *'Does everybody listen in X's class?'* *'Are children friendly to each other in X's class?'* Questions have also been raised about the usefulness of the data, e.g. if both sets of perceptions match where does one make improvements?

Using this tool has clarified the need to produce one's own resources that are tailored made for the school, that provide more qualitative data and that accesses more pupils.

Our future plans

With the above in mind we hope to look more closely at the learning environment within individual classrooms, by coming up with our own questionnaire which will be done with all pupils in individual classrooms. This will be done in the classrooms of the SIG members to start with and then within those of all the teaching staff.