



Peer Listening Training

Case Study 2014



St Aidan's Primary School

Lead: Rob Crosby

Introducing peer listening

To help develop personal and resilience skills in Year 5 pupils, create a team ethos and further enhance the playground so that children report feeling safe, the school recruited 17 Peer Listeners. The Peer Listeners went through a recruitment process including an interview and the pupils were selected on a variety of strengths and qualities.

Julie Dunning from the Healthy Schools team provided the training, which took place in September 2013 for the Peer Listeners.

All pupils positively received the peer listening training and expressed how it has helped them to feel more confident about their forthcoming role as 'Listeners':

"It has helped me to know exactly how to be a peer listener"

"This helped me more to walk over and sort things out"

"It has made me confident about helping people"

"Because it is fun to help others"

"It has made me know what is good listening and bad listening"

"It has made me stand up and communicate with different children"

"Recognise different listening skills"

"I recognise certain things you can't do"

"It has helped me to know how other people feel"

After the training, we continued to work with the Peer Listeners to prepare them for their role, these included:

- We decided on a rota to be displayed in every class
- We organised our equipment
- We did a big assembly
- We developed a display which included all of our photos
- We got to know how to use our Peer Listening log book

Follow-up evaluation with the pupils

What has worked well? They reported:

- We sort things out now rather than the teachers
- It was good to make Year 6 jealous because we had responsibility
- We are definitely stopping the teachers from getting mithered
- The Peer Listeners got to do their jobs quickly
- We are an extra pair of eyes on the playground
- We were happy to share the responsibility between the infant and junior playgrounds.

What difference have the peer listeners made?

School:

- The Peer Listeners are getting to know more people in the playground
- They have developed more maturity and a real sense of responsibility
- At our recent RE Inspection, the inspector commented on how effective the Peer Listeners are and the contribution they play in the safety of children within the school: “Children’s wellbeing and personal development is consistently prioritised. Children are committed to playing their part in ensuring that the school is a happy and safe place. This is demonstrated in the work of Peer Listeners who are available at playtimes to discuss playground concerns.”
- The Peer Listeners are less likely to ‘fuss’ over their own minor problems and have become much more solution focussed.
- They are able to see both sides of the story and can take an impartial approach to conflict resolution.
- They have contributed significantly to strengthening the values of the school.

Pupils:

“The atmosphere on the playground has changed”

“I like it that people trust me”

“The children are playing nicely because there is no pushing and shoving”

“We use play to help solve problems”

“I feel responsible to be part of a team”

“It has helped me to deal with my shyness”

“I feel respected and feel good that I can help children with their problems”

“It has been good to listen to the good news”

“The playground feels like a better place, less lonely”

“It has helped me be more confident”

“Gets me ready for Year 6 jobs”

What changes are we going to make?

The peer listeners reported some initial challenges to overcome and the next steps to overcome these and to make their peer listening stronger. These included:

- People not talking at first
- People hiding problems
- Getting problems near the end of playtime
- Support on 'rainy' days

To make our peer listening programme stronger, our next steps are:

- Develop a formal 'handover' system so end of play problems can be sorted out.
- Agree a 'rainy day' plan so we can still continue our Peer Listener role.
- Encourage more Year 5 pupils to become Peer Listeners
- Develop a Peer Listeners 'Blog' on the school website
- Arrange to have monthly Peer Listener team meetings to plan and review.
- Organise and do a reminder assembly for the pupils and staff.

Comments from Head Teacher

I believe this has been one of the best initiatives that we have ever introduced at Billinge St Aidan's. The children have had fantastic training from Julie and her team and without doubt the pupils have learnt skills for life. I am also incredibly impressed with the dedication of our peer listeners and the mature approach they have had to dealing with conflict and resolving problems.

Photos of the listeners in action





