

Investing in Children Membership Award™ Evaluation



Caged Beastie

'Art Projects for Advocacy and Social Change'

For the purpose of this evaluation I met with Ali, Abbie, Leah, Jade, Kieran, Jasmin, Catlin and Leah who worked with Caged Beastie on the production of a film. The film presented their research findings on what some young people thought about the Education System in North East of England and Scotland.

Caged Beastie seem to develop and deliver creative engagement opportunities for children and young people to direct what they want to *'tell the world'* about the social changes they want to see. They use creative and digital media as a means for children and young people to express their social and political opinions for change.

This involves them working in partnership with schools, museums, local authorities, community organisations and various other non-governmental organisations. To achieve this the project focused on the ideas that children and young people have regarding social change messages and communications with the world. Caged Beastie then will advocate their ideas and approaches to partners so that there is a clear focus that allows children and young people to direct the messages for social change.

The young people with whom I met explained that they had many opportunities to achieve by coming together with the project, engaging in dialogue and expressing to the project their key findings from their research and how it is they wanted their message presented, based on what they found out from some young people about the education system in the North East of England and in Scotland.

This report will highlight opportunities young people have to participate in decision-making and will identify any changes that have taken place.

Opportunities for Dialogue and Change

Developing the Research Message

All young people spoke about how they had the opportunity to discuss their findings with Caged Beastie and how they were given the opportunity to fully express the nature of the things and how best they could be presented.

“Martin really wanted to know what we had found out and our ideas we had to develop the messages about schools.”

“Caged Beastie were great they met with us and asked us loads of questions about the research project we were involved in and what was said.”

“They want to know all about it [the research] and we told them the main things that was said like being able to say what young people think about your experience of education in schools.”

“We talked about making short clips that would work well for social media as people like short and to the point stuff these days.”

“They wanted to know about the key messages and really help us focus on the key findings from the young people.”

All the young people also spoke to me about how they felt in charge of setting the key messages from their findings and were encouraged by the project approach to achieve this.

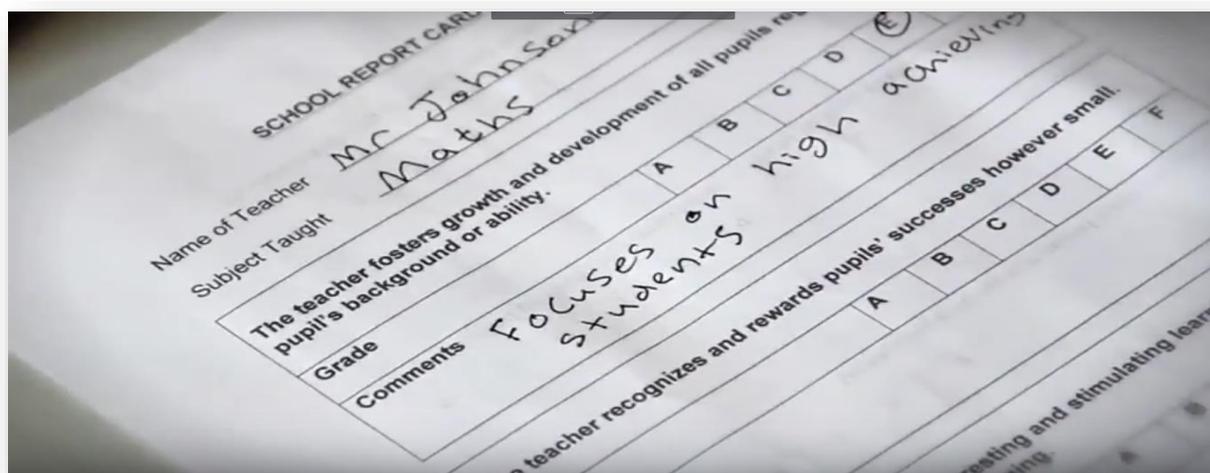
Creating the Research Messages

The young people identified about how they were then given the opportunity to think about how best their findings could be presented and in what format.

“We spoke about schools shots and uniforms and whether we wanted to be in it and not.”

“One of the things I spoke to them about was how lots of young people explained the need to be able to say how they felt about their education.” The young person added, ***“We agreed to come up with a school report card shot filled in by a young person and one of us talked about the findings.”***

Below is screen shot taken from one of the group’s short social media films:



“I spoke to them about what so many young people said which was about who you were and where you came from affected your education so we decided to film poor and posh areas people live in to get this message across.”

“We wrote down the key findings and just had a big competition about how things could work.”

“It was good how they listened to us and then they came back with ideas, like picture shooting some of us with background shots with school books, which we liked.”

Below is a picture regarding what the young person spoke about above:



“Basically we developed the ideas from how we seen it first then they came back with ideas about how best this could be done.”

Producing the Message

The young people expressed how they then had full control developing the films and what they wanted to say.

“They knew I did not want to be in the film but wanted to explain about how we talked to young people and what they said and why our ways were used and they supported me with my ideas to achieve this.”

“I spoke about the different shots between myself in school clothes and none uniform to express the issues many young people have had with how strict schools are with them and we did this really well for the films.”

“We wanted to develop short films for social media and managed to do that and even shot some of the films in a classroom which was part of the plan and we were supported to achieve this.”

“I made some changes to what I wanted to say and could do that and also came up with ideas with them about how to film the Postcode Lottery scene by discussing the best way to do this which was about filming poor and posh areas.”

It was very encouraging to discover how much control and the direction the young people had over the production of their material and expressed the importance this had in them being able to express their research findings confidently and accurately.

Reviewing the Produced Message

Once the film was produced the young people explained that they were given the option to review the material.

“We had the change to look at the short films and had the final say on what we thought about them and whether anything needed changing.”

“I thought it was great how it was not finalised until we all agreed with them.”

Recommendations

All the young people throughout the conversations clarified how they were completely happy with the partnership they had with Caged Beastie and only the following recommendation:

“I think more young people need to know about them as they really want to help young people get message out about things they want to change.”



Conclusion

Caged Beastie is structured to offer support both on an individual basis and at a group level to young people and partners so that they can create social and political messages for change.

There is evidence that the project achieves this by encouraging and developing opportunities for young people individually or within groups to develop and implement such messages through what seems to be energetic and inclusive approaches that allows all young people to engage in the development of such messages.

The project ethos is also to develop and enhance the skills of young people so that they take charge of their messages for change. This was evident when meeting with the young people as they did explain that they had full ownership of what it was they wanted to say and how it was achieved with changes made throughout in the complication of their work.

For the above reasons I would like to recommend that Caged Beastie receives the *Investing in Children Membership Award*[™] and I look forward to further developments and changes made by young people when coming to re-evaluate the project for the award in the near future.

Congratulations.

***This report has been endorsed by the following young people, they were:
Ali, Abbie, Leah, Jade, Kieran, Jasmin, Catlin and Leah.***

**Robert Johnson
Senior Project Worker
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