

## **Strengths of the school which support the principles of 'Investors in Pupils':**

- It is quite clear from meeting both staff and pupils that children are at the centre of the school. There is a very positive ethos of caring, and valuing self and others. It is a happy school where children have a good awareness of differing needs and of the use of strategies which can create positive change eg Anti-bullying Week which has now eliminated bullying to the point where no posts are being put into the Bullying box. One Befriender explained his role: 'Everyone in Year 6 can trust us.'
- Pupil voice is very well-developed, with the School Council working excellently and playing a key role within the functioning of the school, including within the recruitment process for new staff.
- There is a strong sense of the value of learning – both to take pupils forward in career terms, but also for personal fulfillment. 'If you just stopped learning... things would get boring,' is how one child described it. Attendance has in fact never been an issue within the school, but a number of people pointed out that Investors in Pupils has sharpened awareness of the importance of learning.
- Pupils at all levels have a very good understanding of the roles which different adults have within the school and of how various aspects of the school are funded. 'A Year 6 child is worth less than 7 or 8' was a provocative part of one display, making funding real and interesting! Students have produced a DVD of interviews with various key people which now works as a powerful classroom resource. There is a sense of great excitement about some of the new knowledge and power which pupils have been developing in these areas.
- There is a consistency across the school in terms of systems of target-setting and rewards and sanctions. Classrooms display class targets and Mission Statements clearly and children's own personal targets are drawn and displayed with enthusiasm. Academic targets are set by staff and there is a class behaviour-monitoring system which feeds into the central rewards system. Creative approaches to awards include the Burtons tokens which the school is particularly proud of and which can be earned by good behaviour or academic success and which can be spent at the Swap Shop for a carton of drink or a tasty (healthy) snack. The shop is run by pupils themselves and is very popular. Positive Post envelopes were on the wall in each year area for extra House Points for particular achievement.
- Pupils were very keen to show the class induction books which they have produced with information about themselves and about the systems in the school. This is part of the core of Investors in Pupils work which includes visits by current pupils to induct new ones coming up from First Schools, work to develop a sense of identity amongst classes when they start at the school in September, as well as induction for new staff.

- There is a strong sense that staff own the school and that they strive to make a contribution to its success – from academic attainment to systems to prevent problems in the lunch queue. They have enthusiastically embraced the Investors in Pupils work and have been very well-supported by the excellent preparation and planning systems of the coordinator. Teaching staff really valued the time across the year to get to know their class, which is especially important in a Middle school where tutors might not otherwise see a class except for a brief registration. They emphasised the benefits of listening to each other's opinions and working together as a class. Systems are being trialled for pupils to give feedback to staff both formally and informally on teaching and learning.
- The school is well-resourced and has very good facilities, particularly for sport – these provide a well-used community resource. The school environment is extremely well looked-after, with vibrant and stimulating displays, showing photos of School Council members and Befrienders, information on Investors in Pupils and how it works, as well as on other activities and areas of the curriculum. A range of excellent opportunities exist for curricular enrichment and extra-curricular activities which inspire and motivate pupils.
- Both governors and parents are fully involved in Investors in Pupils through reports, newsletters, displays, Parental Review Days and a range of activities. Parents commented that they liked pupils doing work together as a class in Investors in Pupils time: it inspired them to see what other classes had done and built a 'class identity', cemented friendships and enabled children to take greater responsibility, changing their relationship with the teachers. They felt that the different roles have definitely built esteem and a sense of responsibility – one parent described how her child 'loves to wear his Befrienders badge'. One governor described how since investors in Pupils has been established, 'We've started to think much more about decisions which affect them [the children] and which they can be involved in.' He explained the value of the School Council's part in the recruitment for Head of English: they understand the process, have greater confidence in asking questions, and 'are much more involved in what they are learning and why – this will stay with them for the rest of their lives.'

The school has an abundance of responsible and enthusiastic pupils. The School Council noticeboard says: 'We run the school together' and the richness and vibrancy which this creates is noticeable.

We would like to thank all the pupils and staff of Kirkburton Middle School for a very enjoyable visit and for the privilege of seeing such a positive school community in action.

I wish the school every success in the future.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Y. Armstrong', with a large, sweeping flourish underneath.

Yolande Armstrong

'Investors in Pupils' Assessor