



PEN PICTURE: Children's Parliament

"Being part of the project has helped me be more talkative, even my Gran mentioned it. And at school I think I've been more willing to read out readings and stories. I think my teachers have noticed it, they say I've been talking a bit more. It's a good thing. It really helps my relationships, 'cause I get to know people a bit better." Project Participant

Peter was a participant on a Children's Parliament programme designed to increase confidence, enhance peer relationships and improve engagement in learning. The programme was made possible by funding from the Big Lottery's Realising Ambition Programme and allowed Children's Parliament to work in partnership with selected primary schools across East Glasgow. Participants like Peter, referred to the programme after the death of his friend left him struggling to cope in school and at home, were given the opportunity to work alongside a small group of peers to identify and express their future ambitions.

Through shared meal times, interactive arts activities and nurturing support from adults, participants were encouraged to work at their own pace to express ideas and share dreams for the future. The short-term programme incorporated group work, individual support and creative play. To conclude the project, community celebration events were organised. These were dedicated exhibition spaces where project participants had the opportunity to share their dreams for the future with their friends, family, school and project staff.

"My goals for the week were to grow my confidence, the project definitely helped me. It helped by making me speak out loud and share my views, and make the models." Project Participant

Children's Parliament invests time in working alongside children as co-creators of their own safe space. These spaces are nurtured through relationships that celebrate the strengths that children bring into a group. Challenges are created to support learning and extend children's horizons about what they may expect of themselves now and in the future. Through engagement in a learning space beyond the confines of a traditional classroom, vulnerable children are given an opportunity to find their voice. Training for staff in participating schools seeks to ensure that teachers are able to support participants on their return to the classroom.

Children's Parliament believes that it is through the provision of opportunities like this that vulnerable children can grow in confidence, build their aspirations, reach out to others and reconnect with the world around them.

This short film brings the project to life: www.youtube.com/watch?v=kMNdwg8OseM

Listen to the reflections of a class teacher who referred 2 of her pupils:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gre0djDa0d0

Scotland's former Chief Medical Officer, Sir Harry Burns, reflects on his observations of the programme: www.youtube.com/watch?v=bpR18VXdawM