Family Links

Transforming Schools

Daniel and Jack, Lucy not pictured*

Daniel, Lucy and Jack* were Y6 pupils at Pegasus School, Blackbird Leys, Oxford when we spoke to them in Summer 2007

What do you like best about Circle Time?

Jack: We get to share what we feel
Daniel: Say if something happens to us when we're young and said it to someone at some other time then people laugh that would make you feel down and ashamed of yourself. I can't put it in good words of describing it but you would feel bad and ashamed of it. You can say stuff and like, without people gossiping about it.

How do you think things are different at your school compared to other schools?

Daniel: Some people behave more... If the teacher chooses you to speak, it's not like 'oh my god, here you go' you think I've got a chance to share something that's happened.
Lucy: Like if you're being bullied...
Daniel: Yeah, like if you're being bullied. You can say I'm….
Lucy: …having a really bad day today, someone's picking on me. You don't have to name them though, you can tell the teacher in quiet time at the end, after.
Jack: In Circle Time the naughtiest people are usually some of the best behaved.
Daniel: They're after a chance to say something that they've not said in Circle Time.
Well this one teacher said if you want to talk about Choices and Consequences it's what makes you good or makes you go through lots of bad things.
Lucy: They say Personal Power.
Daniel: Yeah, Personal Power. It's up to you.
Lucy: Apparently everyone's got their own Personal Power,
Daniel: They have to stop themselves being naughty. To use and say I'm not going to just do that because it's fun and it makes me look all hard. I'm going to use my Personal Power to say that I need to take myself away for Time Out or whatever to stop getting excluded. We have our own Time Out area but not in the classroom.

Do you think that the ideas in School, like Time Out, make you act differently when you're at home?

Daniel: Yeah and no … I get sent to Time Out on the stairs but then I still act naughty. I think it's cos I'm angry and that. But I think that Family Links in general, has helped.

Discipline and smacking

Daniel: Can I just say something? Your Mum can't slap you, cos that's…an adult can't hit you .
Lucy: They can.
Daniel: Even though they might be using it as a punishment, it's a form of violence and it can be abuse.
Lucy: I don't reckon so, I reckon sometimes slapping is the only way out of a situation.
Daniel: I don't mind if it was a child hitting me, I can always try to hit them back or go and I can tell the teacher. But if it's an adult and it's your parents you might be able to phone someone. Say if you had a Nan or someone who's close to you, you could go phone them.

In Autumn 2006, Daniel, Jack and Lucy joined the steering group for Family Links' project to train Cascade trainers in Oxfordshire. The steering committee met twice between then and June 2007.

What made you want to join these meetings?
Jack: We'd be going through Family Links and it would be quite exciting to do it.
Daniel: First we was on a Children's Panel, and then it started with the three boys but one boy dropped out, then Lucy came in. And then we basically went around, and the first breakfast meeting I weren't there, that's when they made the board, It was a snowy day.
Lucy: We had a snowball fight.
Daniel: So they made the board and drew on it. Then the next breakfast meeting when I was there I put my bit on it, this little square and I put in - I can't remember what colour it was - not sure about name and then…I put 'Daniel touched' cos of what they said.

Do you remember how you felt during the meeting?
Daniel: I felt good. For the first meeting cos there was mainly just us. I felt good. The second meeting I felt good, scared and worried. Good - because I was talking to adults that would probably understand me. Scared because they're bigger than me and I was the smallest and worried because I thought they would say 'oh no no, I don't like that idea'.
Lucy: I remember feeling a bit scared cos there was thunder and lightning at one.
Jack: The first meeting felt great, second meeting felt perfect.

Did you think those meetings were worth doing?
Jack and **Daniel**: Yeah
Lucy: Yeah, I reckon they were worth doing
Jack: I liked doing those meetings, cos it's not every day you see a kid doing something that a grown up would do, that's why I thought it would be a really great experience. I'd do it again.

Do you think children should be on more committees like the one you were on?
All: Yes
Daniel: It would help, you know when people go through puberty? You know when they have mood swings? Sometimes this would help them, in the same way as Circle Time but you're having more fun.

What else do you think Family Links should carry on doing?
Lucy: Doing puppets.
Daniel: When we was asked - I can't remember at what meeting it was…it was a practice meeting - we was asked by Julia or someone else 'what would you like to keep?' We definitely agreed on puppets. Say if they have mood swings, yeah, they could just play with it and like a stress ball.
Lucy: You never get too old for puppets I say.
Daniel: Cos puppets are good, some adults still like playing with puppets even if they're wooden.

Anything else that I haven't asked that you would like to say?
Jack: I want to do it again
Daniel: Yeah, I want to do it all again

*All names have been changed