

On 21 May 2014 Mike Preston went to Ellistown Primary School

There he spoke with the year six class - nearly all of whom are now 11 years old

There are 34 children in the class. Next year they will be going to their secondary school - one child will be going to Ashby two will be going to Newbridge and all of the others will be going to Ibstock.

We spoke about their very clear and forthright opinions. When asked how old someone needs to be before their voice should be heard, they said seven or eight - as soon as someone has a good idea about something which affects them. Then Ryan Toby said, **'Any age should be heard if they have a good idea.'**

Parks and safe places to play

The class felt that they have, on occasions, been let down by adults who have promised them things which haven't happened.

South St

For example, they believe they were promised a BMX track on South Street. They believe that it was designed and permission received for it to be built but it hasn't happened and no one has told them why not.

'I saw someone do graffiti in South Street and I called the police and the police came but the people doing graffiti had gone'. Graffiti is a big problem in Ellistown the class thinks.

South Street: 'Teenagers don't let us on there sometimes and they do smoking and even do drugs there. Sometimes there are cars with people in doing drugs.'

St Christopher's Park

Also on St Christopher's Park, they believe they were to be promised an astro-turf pitch but it is still concrete, uneven and glass and nails have been left there and not cleaned up. It is full of litter that no one cleans up.

The alley way to St Christopher's Park is overgrown and not properly lit. It is scary. There is a person there, who everyone knows about, who threatens people with a knife. There is another way to St Christopher's Park but this is an alley way too!

Other Parks

On Rushby Park several of the group supported the belief that 'they' have put 'random benches where we played football so that we can't play football and there were already benches there. No one sits on them'.

At Pickering Drive there are only three things to play on and it has been like that for years. 'Nobody cares about that place'.

When asked whether they would like to help design their own playground, the class was extremely enthusiastic and excited by the idea.

The class felt that evidence of caring about a place - by everyone - is the only way it will be a good place to be and won't become damaged.

It was pointed out that when people come to put grit on the roads, it gets everywhere and stops them from being able to skateboard. They very desperately want a skate park, made of concrete. Half of the class would use the skate park and they all have skateboards or scooters etc. They felt it should either be at St Christopher's Park or South Street.

The class said that there are speeding cars where they play in the streets so parks are places where it must be fun and safe to play in. They also mentioned noisy neighbours and the noisy club which can keep them awake late at night. The class was clear in believing that extra houses in Ellistown would be a bad thing and that Ellistown is about the right size now.

Other things the Class likes to do

Seven people in the class have been in the scouts. Most of them didn't really enjoy it but one girl defended it with some passion and said it is really good and has got better.

People in the class used to go to Scalawags in a neighbouring village it was an indoor play area. But it is now burned down and is not being replaced.

There is a dance club at the working men's club run by Miss Susie and Miss Ellie. Those who go there really enjoy this. But not even everyone in the class knew about it.

A list of wishes

With no time to spare we abandoned our one-at-a-time etiquette and shouted out the thing we most wanted to see in Ellistown! Here is the list:

A motorbike club and track
Cricket cage
McDonald's
A maze on the park
Cinema and theatre
Mini gym indoor or outdoor
Swimming pool (the nearest one is Ibstock)
Bouncy castle
Play area like Twin Lakes
Go-karting
Water World
Trampoline
Nitro RC track (remote control cars)
Mini supermarket
Improve the Church
Toilet on the park

The class was lively

The class was thoughtful

The class was enthusiastic

The class was optimistic

The class was great

Special thanks to Jordan for her outstanding writing on the interactive board