



Re- Evaluation for Investing in Children membership:

Newcastle Bridges School

The Newcastle Bridges School is a service for children and young people accessing education in hospitals and health services in Newcastle.

There are now nine departments within the school including the Roycroft Unit. There are three teaching teams at the RVI site and one teaching team for the Freeman Hospital and the General Hospital. Each team includes one teacher and one teaching assistant. There are also other teams covering the Ashlyns Unit which is attached to Stocksfield Avenue School, Harbour West attached to All Saints School in West Denton and also two units at the Fleming Nuffield site.

Newcastle Bridges School provides a service for all children and young people who are staying in hospital for more than five school days.

On my visit I met with Sue and other members of the teaching team at the RVI. The team is dedicated to providing a supportive and sensitive service which is guided and shaped by the children and young people they work with.

For the purpose of the evaluation I had the pleasure of meeting with Liam, Rhys, Phillipa and Johnathon.

The classroom of the future

There has been lots of dialogue with children and young people about the new "classroom of the future". This new classroom is planned for Newcastle Bridges School at the new extension at the RVI Hospital. It is hoped that children and young people will be brought to the one site, rather than teaching on the wards although it will be necessary for this still to happen.

The staff are really eager to find out how children and young people wanted the room to look and what they felt was important.

The children and young people are asked if they wanted to take part in an Art Project and paint what they would like to see and use.

Equipment

Suggestion boxes are in place on all of the wards. This ensures that everyone has the opportunity to put their issues forward.

Dialogue takes place regularly with children and young people about what equipment to buy for the school. For example Clare helped the team decide what educational toys to buy. She asked Sue if she could be involved in picking and choosing the equipment. Sue took a catalogue for Clare to look at and Clare put a tick beside all of the toys she liked. These were then purchased and put onto the wards for everyone to enjoy.

Lesson Planning

Sue explained “we are involved with children and young people on a personal level because most of our work is one to one. It is rare that we work in a big group. We try to find out a lot about what children and young people like, what their favourite lessons are and what they like to do”. This way the staff can work with the children and young people and together meet their needs and wants as well as taking into account how they may be feeling on that day or their physical capabilities. The staff and young people evaluate the lessons, any identified problems and how these problems have been resolved (see records attached). For example, some children said their fingers and hands were sore due to the treatment they were receiving. As it was difficult for them to hold a pen, a lap top was provided so they could work from a disc or word process their work.

Rhys told me “It’s good doing work here. I like doing Art stuff and I like Math’s”. Liam said” They always ask us what we like to do”. Rhys continued, “It’s a good idea that we get medals. If you get bronze, silver and gold you get a plaque with your name on. Then a trophy and then a cup!”.

Liam agreed wholeheartedly with Rhys “Rhonda definitely listens to us; she tries her best to do what we want. Like I was doing my literacy homework and I had to write about a shelter. I talked to Rhonda about it and we thought it would be a good idea if I made it. You know, like a model. I made it out of clay, kebab sticks and little stones. It was class. Really it was my idea and they let me do it.”

Rhys added “Yeah and we were writing about plans and instructions and my idea was to build a robot. I did it on PowerPoint and then I actually built it”. Rhys pointed proudly to a magnificent robot on the end of his bed. Very impressive!

The staff at Newcastle Bridges School work very hard at listening to what children and young people say. The children and young people they work with have a many different needs and they range from those only in hospital for a short period to those who have reoccurring longer visits. It is therefore essential and evident that Newcastle Bridges School adapts and changes in order to provide the supportive and effective service that the young people are asking for.

As part of this process it was recommended that I visit the teaching unit in the Fleming Nuffield. However I have been unable to gain access so far, due to issues of protocol. Newcastle Bridges School have been able to clearly demonstrate their continued commitment to dialogue and change with the young people they work with and I would like to thank everyone who gave up their time and helped me to write this report. The children and young people I spoke to very much agreed that Newcastle Bridges School should once again receive Investing in Children Membership.

However I would like to recommend that the staff within the school service ensure that young people’s views receiving teaching services at the Fleming Nuffield Unit are able to inform next year’s evaluation.

Well Done!

Glenys Newby
Investing in Children
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