



## Evaluation for Investing in Children membership

### Felling Library

Felling Library had developed itself as a valuable resource which is based at the heart of the Felling community. The library has developed close links with the local primary school Falla Park. The library provides the opportunity for children, young people and the wider community to mix together who would otherwise not have the opportunity to do so.

Felling Library has an extensive children's library which caters for children and young people of all ages. The section is on a raised platform and is occupied by clearly labelled sections, notice boards, posters, cushions, toys and computers.

**Evidence of Dialogue and Change** within Felling Library is provided by the library committee Lauren, Kelsey, Meghan, Lauren, Ryan, Scott, Liam, and Lauren, Denise, Vicky and the rest of the children from year five of Falla Park Primary School.

#### **Library Committee**

The library committee is a new group that meets with library staff every two weeks. The children are voted on to the library committee by members of class five. I asked the children to explain what the purpose of the library committee was. Lauren informed me **“We meet in the library and give our ideas to make changes and make it better for other children”**. Liam added **“We don't just decide we check with the rest of our class what they want us to do and vote on it.”**

I asked the library committee to explain to me what changes they have made within the library since they have been meeting.

#### **Children's Survey**

The children informed me that they were involved in producing a survey which they asked other children to complete when they came into the library. **“We wanted to find out what other children wanted to happen in the library”**. The children felt that it was important to ask questions about the choice of books available, how to improve the library and what they would like during the school holidays.

#### **New Books**

The group discussed the choice of books in the library. The children felt that some of the books were old and that they would like some new books. **“We all voted on what books we would like to have in the library. We decided that we wanted Horrid Henry, Hannah Montana, Yu Gi Oh and High School Musical.”** The library committee discussed their ideas with the staff and the books requested are now stocked in Felling Library. It has been agreed that in the future the library committee will have the opportunity to choose and order the books themselves with the support of Denise and her team. Before the books are put onto the shelves class five read through the books and decide if they should be kept in the library.

## **Suggestion Box and Comment Board**

When you arrive into the children's section of Felling Library it is hard to miss the big silver suggestion box and comments board. The library committee thought that the suggestion box was the best way to get other children's ideas. **"We want to know what other children think of the library, so the silver box is here all the time. Denise reads the comments and puts answers on the board."** Scott informed me that children who accessed the library were unhappy that they could not access Runescape on the computers. Denise suggested that the library committee wrote to management at the civic centre about this. **"We found out that we are not allowed on runescape because it has a chat room. We have found out about another site called frugoscape that does not have a chat room. We are waiting for an answer about that."**

The ideas from the suggestion box are incorporated into the planning and delivery of library programmes, including fun days for the whole family during school holidays and poster and book mark competitions.

Felling Library provides a safe environment for children and young people from a wide range of backgrounds to come together in a friendly relaxed atmosphere. It is clear that they have ownership over the library and are keen to be part of the decision making process.

All the children and young people who I spoke to were happy with the service the library provides however they would like to work on a few changes which they recommend they work on with Denise and the rest of the library staff.

**"I find reading hard sometimes, so it would be good to have books with sounds, or a book that you could listen to in the library."**

**"The children's section needs to be more colourful, we should paint all the different sections different, maybe with peoples hand prints that would look really good."**

**"We should make an easier to understand book finder, so it's easy to find the book you want."**

**"Make a girls and a boy's book section."**

**"Have displays of what's going to happen and of prizes that can be won."**

**"Should make all the computers for everyone not separate ones for adults and children."**

**"Have some fun days and raise money for charity."**

Felling Library is creating the opportunity for children and young to be involved in real decision making, giving them a real chance to make changes within the service. By creating a link with Falla Park Primary School, the library provides the opportunity for children, young people and the wider community to mix together who would otherwise not have the opportunity to do so.

Felling Library is the first library within Gateshead to apply for Investing in Children membership. The library staff have created an environment and relationship with children and young people whereby excellent dialogue occurs on a daily basis with the children and young people that use their service. By forging a relationship with Falla Park Primary

they have made the library accessible to children and young people who have not accessed the library before.

An area of development that I would like to recommend for both the children and library staff to work on is to invite children and young people of different ages to be included on the library committee.

The children and young people involved in this report have agreed with the content and recommendations. It is with great pleasure that I on behalf of the children and young people recommend Felling Library becomes an Investing in Children member.

**Kim Kyle**  
**Investing in Children**  
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