



Evaluation for Investing in Children membership

Toxteth Education Trust Reading Club

The Reading Club works with children to improve their reading, writing and communication skills. Children from the age of 5 to 11 years meet on a Tuesday, after school. The aim of the Reading Club is to:

- Improve communication between parents/carers and children
- Help children improve their literacy skills through inventive and vibrant activities
- Help children/families work through life issues through the use of literacy.

On my recent visit to the Reading Club I was made to feel very welcome and I had the pleasure of meeting with Zakiyyah, Esta, Ayesha, Melissa and Faz.

Evidence of Dialogue and Change

Developments

Ayesha told me *“When we first used to come here we would pick a book and we would rent it out for about two weeks.”* Melissa added, *“And we used to do activities like games and stuff.”* Zakiyyah said, *“Yeah that’s right, that’s when I started to come, cos my cousin told me about it.”* Melissa explained how the Reading Club has changed *“When Jan and Sasha started coming from the University they asked us what we wanted to do. We told them we like to do arts and crafts, so that’s what we do.”* Zakiyyah told me, *“I don’t know why they call it the Reading Club cos we mostly do arts and crafts.”*

Suggestion Box

Esta showed me the Suggestion Box in the hall. *“This is where we make suggestions or comments about our club.”* Ayesha added, *“I have suggested loads of stuff that we have done. My suggestion now, is that we have a pyjama party.”* Faz interrupted *“I put, that people should have more fun and there should be more rules.”* Esta disagreed. *“No, we don’t need more rules. We have rules and everyone decided on the rules. We all sat down and talked about what rules we wanted, like, no bullying and always listen carefully.”* Faz said, *“And there’s no hitting or chasing.”* The Suggestion Box is a good way of ensuring that everyone is listened to, especially those children who don’t feel comfortable speaking in a group.

Trips and Outings

Esta and Melissa enthusiastically told me about all the trips they have been on. Esta said, *“We have been to museums like the new one, the World Museum, and Knowsley Safari Park.”* Melissa added, *“And we went to see Cats the musical. That was good, we went to the Empire Theatre.”* Melissa explained how the group decide where to visit. *“We put down loads of ideas and then everyone decides. It’s the fair way to do it.”* Faz said *“I would like to go to Gullivers World next.”* While Esta said, *“If we ask to go there we*

would research it, cos some of the rides might not be suitable for the younger ones, so it wouldn't be fair."

Esta finished by telling me, "We go away about twice a year, but it's really, really good!"

Questionnaires

Melissa informed me, "*Sometimes we get evaluation forms (see attached). They have a big box with smiley faces. Number 1 is bad and 5 is brilliant. They ask things like, did we enjoy the day? then the adults read our comments. If anything is bad, they ask us what would make it better.*" Esta joined in, "*Like, when I wrote, that it would be better to have an older group. They listened to me cos, I thought it was a bit kiddyish, cos we were doing cut outs. So when I told them, they started to split the group, so there's an older group now.*"

Faz added, "*On my forms I put my ideas, and we have done things around here like drama and fashion, and those were my ideas.*" Esta said, "*Me and Faz came up with the idea for Museum Day, so they said we will do that. And we are.*"

The Questionnaires also ask, which books the children would like the Reading Club to buy. This ensures all the children have a say and makes their club even more enjoyable.

The Reading Club is an informal and friendly group. It was very obvious from my visit that there is a mutual respect between the adults and the children. I asked the children if they think they are listened to, and there was an overwhelming YES! I also asked if they would like a 'Club Council' where they could talk about ideas and changes. Melissa explained why such a formal group would not work for their club. She said, "*the Reading Club, it's something to do and like you make real mates. Jan and Sasha are not like normal adults, they are just big kids. That's good cos they understand us more. They treat us with respect, they really interact with us.*" Esta agreed, "*Jan and Sasha are really good friends.*"

I would like to thank all the children who helped me to write this report. As the children all agreed unanimously with the report, I have no hesitation in recommending that Toxteth Education Trust Reading Club receives Investing in Children Membership. Well Done!

Glenys Newby
Investing in Children
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