



Re-evaluation for Investing in Children membership

Annfield Plain Library

The staff at Annfield Plain Library prepared the following statement to support their application for their re-evaluation for Investing in Children membership:-

“At Annfield Plain Library we are committed to providing, not only what we feel to be an excellent service for everyone in our community, but a library service which covers the needs and desires expressed by our junior members.

We aim to maintain the library as a safe and pleasant place to be, and a place that has a friendly and welcoming atmosphere.

Throughout the year we have maintained our strong links with Catchgate Primary School; encouraging weekly class visits and story times. We feel these sessions are vitally important, for many children this is the only time they come to the library. It is so important that they see the library as an interesting and fun place to visit, a place that has something to offer them, not only for the books but for all the other things that now happen in libraries.

We are working with Mrs Clarke and Mrs Ellwood from Greencroft Comprehensive School to bring students from the school to the library; these are students who are involved in the Library Training Scheme run jointly by DLR and the school. These students are trainee librarians in the school library, as part of their course they wish to experience other types of libraries. We have jointly put together a questionnaire which will be used with students at the school; the results should be helpful in understanding how we are perceived by young people in our community. (Please find copy attached.)

During the summer holiday our junior borrowers participated enthusiastically in the Wild Read, a fun, summer, reading scheme designed to encourage them to read lots of books. The success of the scheme was celebrated by everyone at a party held at South Moor library at the beginning of October.

We were again fortunate this year, to receive funding for summer activities in the library. Keeping to the Wild Read theme, we had Music with Mummy jungle session, a craft event working with seed heads, a demonstration of wild medicine by a local Herbalist. A second craft session making dough craft dragonflies and we ended with an afternoon story time with local children's author Lyn Huggins-Cooper.



Some events were better attended than others, but everyone who joined in had a fun time.

We have an excellent relationship with our local Surestart team and their regular Thursday afternoon sessions in the junior library are very well attended. We have gained many new members, both adult and junior, from their clients. Catchgate now has its own Surestart centre, based in Catchgate Primary School, an excellent resource for the local community.

We continue to be a meeting place for young people in the area, those who call in have an easy and friendly relationship with the staff, and they enjoy themselves socialising with their friends (mostly) and working (sometimes) in a safe and welcoming environment.”

I was very thankful for this prepared report, but as with all Investing in Children membership we evidence dialogue and change with the children and young people who use the service. I visited Annfield Plain Library on Monday 21st of April to meet the children and young people who could support Jean’s statement.

Evidence of dialogue and change is provided by the young people I met with. They all felt that at the moment there is nothing that they would like to change, but do feel that their relationship with the staff is really good and they all agreed that they feel confident enough to be able to ask for books they want, activities they would like to see, and to help out if and when they can.

When I first went into the library I sat with 5 young people who were just ‘hanging about’ in the Junior section of the library. Connor, Amy, Christa, Caitlin and Daniel:-

Amy told me, ‘the library has interesting books.’
Christa said, ‘lots of educational books.’

Chitin said, 'it's like a chill out zone.'

Amy, 'It's really fun, and you get to go on the computers.'

Christa, 'We had a circus workshop in the summer and lots of arts and crafts, I wish there was more arts and crafts.'

We chatted about what the young people would do if they did want more arts and crafts or if they wanted anything?

Amy replied, 'You just ask for help and they will give you it.'

Christa added, 'If you haven't got the book you want, they will go away and find it for you, even order it. In here (junior section) there is always paper and pens, colouring stuff for all the little ones to use.'

Daniel told me 'I come in to go on the computers, play games and go on MSN, Bebo and Facebook and stuff.'

All the young people said that, 'they come in and check on us and ask if we are okay, they listen to us a lot.'

Daniel said, 'You can get a drink if you want one and you can use the toilet as well.'

The group said if there was an activity on 'they will send notes to school and they will advertise special events on the notice board as you come in, in the entrance of the library.'

Caitlin also told me that 'if you have a book out and it's due back they will just renew it if you ask.'

I then met with three young people who were using the computers, Tommy, Sandra and Amanda.

Sandra told me 'Its something to do when the schools are off.'

Amanda said 'I come to go on the computers and read books.'

Tommy told me that he comes in to help. 'I like to help put the books away and stuff, I have just changed all the information so it's all up to date. They do loads of stuff during the holidays, arts, crafts, puppet shows and stuff. If you had any ideas you could just tell them.' Amanda agreed.

Tommy continued to say, 'they ask if you have any ideas of what books people like. They have also asked us for our ideas for the 100yrs celebration, I have suggested a powerpoint presentation of all the photographs that they have.'

"It's also somewhere to come if it's raining." All three young people agreed that the library is dry, safe, warm and comfy. I think this clearly demonstrates the relaxed atmosphere in the library and highlights that children and young people are always welcome.

Tommy, Sandra and Amanda also told me that the staff will renew books for you if you forget to bring them in. Activities and events are well advertised. They think the library "is for all ages, there is loads of stuff, adults use the computers too."

Conclusion

As in past evaluations I have been able to walk into Annfield Plain library on a random day and talk to quite a few young people. The library is always busy and always has some young people in, either accessing the computers or just hanging about. Although there is no formalised set up for dialogue and change, I would say informally it happens on a daily basis. All the young people agreed that they do get listened to and that they can ask for 'stuff.'

Therefore on behalf of the young people I met, and with their endorsement (signatures provided) I would like to recommend that Annfield Plain Library do remain Investing in Children members.

Signed:

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