



Evaluation for Investing in Children membership

Belmont Youth Centre

I visited Belmont Youth Centre on Thursday 14th June 2007, I met with Monica Taylor, one of the youth workers and some of the young people – **Laura, Rosie, Hayley, Melanie, Helen, Lauren, and Rachel**, also some young people from the Lunch Time Drop in Centre on the 14th November – **Kate, Caroline, Jack, Billy, Melanie and Ben**.

Belmont Youth Centre has been running for over a year, 135 young people are involved. One of the reasons why a youth centre was developed within Belmont was down to the young people identifying the lack of youth provision.

Monica was asked to carry out research throughout the school asking young people what they wanted. She worked closely with the school council.

The young people developed a survey which they distributed to all young people within Belmont Comprehensive School. The survey asked a variety of questions chosen by the young people, asking if they wanted a youth centre, what they would like to do within their youth centre, and what days and times would be most suitable.

A result of the work of developing the survey and researching other people's views and opinions the young people received a Youth Achievement award.

The young people who wanted to be involved came up with some agreements staff and young people would follow once the youth centre was up and running, they decided to call them agreements instead of rules!

The youth centre first opened on Thursdays from 3.30 p.m till 6.00 p.m. Through the surveys young people completed it was apparent that sports activities were needed. Also the young people wanted to learn about looking good and feeling good through healthy eating.

The youth centre receives funding from various organisations such as Connections. Monica explained that they had recently received a grant of £500. The young people planned something they wanted to do within the summer holidays.

Monica explained the different activities that take place:

Cricket

Young people were very keen to play cricket during the summer holidays, this was arranged along with mountain biking as this was also expressed as something the young people would like to take part in.

Under 16's Weight Lifting

Sean Clough a qualified under 16's weight trainer carried out an induction and set up a successful programme at Meadowfield Sports Centre, Anthony Taylor carried on the programme at Sherburn Sports Centre with the young men.

Trips

The young people like to get together and have a think about what trips they would like to go on. They put their ideas on flip chart paper after answering - "If you had the opportunity what would you like to do?"

The kind of trips the young people have been on consist of- Rock Climbing, Extreme Sports, Fashion Shows, Light Water Valley etc...

Young people pay a 50p sub which contributes towards trips such as Wet n Wild, Socerena, sports equipment etc...

YOF & YCF

Young people are actively involved in having their say in which organisations/services receives funding.

Dialogue and Change

I asked the young people why they liked coming to the youth centre and what type of things they got involved with.

"We had put our ideas forward in the summer, we wanted to do a fashion show and that's what we did!"

"I enjoy coming here, I've been coming for 2 months."

"We are never made to do anything we don't want to do."

"We get totally listened to all of the time."

Melanie and Helen told me:

"We wanted to do a East West project, we planned what museums we wanted to go to, made dresses, choose where we wanted to buy the material from which were all our own ideas,"

"We also did a 'look good feel good' project, we wanted to learn how to apply make up, we went to boots in Durham and picked what make up we wanted!"

Helen told me:

"I didn't want to do football outside, so Monica set me up a circuit and obstacle course instead, if you ever don't want to do something Monica will change things to suit you."

Hayley told me:

“ Last week I didn’t want to play cricket, so I said to Monica I didn’t want to play, she said I could do whatever I wanted, so I went inside and made some toast!”

Recommendation from the young people for the Youth Club

“Would like to go camping.”

“More cultural activities so we can research different cultures.”

Drop in and Deric Bus

Belmont Youth Centre also has a lunch time drop in and the Deric bus parks up on the school bus park once a week for an hour. Young people can come and go as they please. I visited the Deric bus on Wednesday 14th November 2007.

Staff are on the bus for safety reasons. Towards the back of the bus fresh fruit and vegetables are available for the young people to try; this was identified by some young people.

Monica explained that this was totally new, the bus has only been coming onto Belmont Campus for a few weeks. It has been really popular and around eighty young people access the bus every week.

I spoke to some of the young people on the bus:

Kate, Caroline, Jack, Billy, Melanie, Sarah and Ben

I asked the young people why they thought of the bus and why they liked coming.

“It’s fun, we can be creative, make what we want.”

“It’s nice to be with my friends.”

“We have choices, we made fruit smoothies coz that’s what we wanted to do, we decided what we put in them as well.”

“ It’s mint, see all your friends, without any teachers, good to try new stuff.”

Do the staff listen to you?

“ We listen to them and they listen to us.”

“Yes I feel like I am listened to and taken seriously.”

I asked the young people how the activities that are on the bus chosen?

“ We get to chose the activities; we put what we want to do on the quiz sheets. “

Ready or Not?

'Ready or Not' is a virtual baby that is on the bus. Young people can look after the baby in lunch times or take it home for longer periods of time, such as weekends. Melanie told me that she was looking forward to having the baby at the weekend.

Evidence of Dialogue and Change

The young people told me:

“ There was computers at the back of the bus, we wanted different things there like fruit to eat, that's why we have fruit at the back now.”

Melanie told me:

“The staff always try and accommodate everyone's needs, they are always changing things to make people happy.

Recommendations from the young people

Some of the young people would like to have a new CD played on the bus instead of the same one all of the time.

Conclusions

I feel Belmont Youth Centre and Lunch Time Drop In involve young people in the development and improvement of their service very well and take into consideration of what the young people want. On the two occasions, I have visited the youth centre I have observed very strong relationships between young people and staff, I would like to say a big thank you to the young people for all their input within this report, also thank you to all the staff especially Monica Taylor.

I have visited the Belmont Youth Centre for a third time to discuss my report with the young people; with their endorsement I request that Belmont Youth Centre receives Investing in Children Membership.

Well done!

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