



Re-evaluation for Investing in Children membership

Lanchester Library

I visited Lanchester Library on Thursday 12 July 2007, I met with some young people who attend the library – **Rebecca, Josh, Rebecca P, Sophie, Simon and Domonic**. I also met Monica and Janice two of the librarians.

As I entered the library Monica told me all about the library refurbishment and showed me around, the library is brightly decorated with children's art work and book reviews displayed on the walls. The environment feels very warm and friendly.

As I was waiting to talk to the children I noticed they had a good relationship with the staff, staff have a friendly manner with the children, the children wandered around the desk where the staff were busy working and chatted about school and various books they wanted ordering, staff were eager to help.

The children took me to one of the rooms where all of their art work is stored, they were keen to show me their photo album of all of the activities and events they have been involved in, **and the children play an active role in deciding what activities take place.**

I asked the children to tell me all about their library and why they liked coming, the children also explained the various events they have been involved in.

Josh stated –

“ I like coming here because there's loads of good books to read.”

Simon told me about world book day –

“ World book day was really good, we dressed up as book characters, we choose our own costumes!”

“Its loads of fun coming here.”

Domonic told me about the book reviews they write and why he enjoys writing them:

“ We can write what we think of the books we have read, it's a chance to tell everyone what we think of them.”

Children's questionnaire:

The children told me that they wanted to make a display of children's favourite books, they wanted to ask everyone within their school, staff assisted the children to devise a questionnaire, once the questionnaires were returned back to the library the children sorted through them and made a display of a chart. **The children decided where the chart should be displayed.**

Coffee Morning:

Lanchester Library decided to arrange a coffee morning, the children and staff decided to raise money for the McMillan charity, the children were very involved with the arrangements, helping to sell cakes and drinks, and they managed to raise £122.54!

Chatterbooks:

Chatterbooks is a group where a lot of the decisions are made, although all children and young people who attend the library have a say in changes, for example the children have a say in what personal books they would like ordering in each week.

“ We chat about books that’s why its called ‘Chatterbooks’ I like talking to Monica about the books I read, we can decide what books we want ordering in and Monica makes sure we get the books we want.”

Within the chatterbooks’s sessions, the children wanted to have a general knowledge quiz, the children talked to the staff about their idea, the staff acted upon their request and made it happen.

“ We have a quiz, girls against boys, general knowledge questions, its great fun, we get a drink and a biscuit as well! We decide who reads the questions and answers out, it’s up to us.”

Author of the month:

The children decide who they would like to have as author of the month, they create displays of their reviews and drawings of books from their chosen author, the young people research their favourite author on the internet and print off information which interests them, and they then display this on the window for everyone to see.

Learning how to be a Librarian:

The children told me that they have been learning how to become a Librarian:

“ We scan the books and stamp them, place them on the correct shelves in order, its fun and it’s our own job.”

All of the children I talked to seemed to enjoy learning the roles and responsibilities of a Librarian.

I asked the children if they thought they are listened to within their library:

“Yes they listen to us.”

“ Monica is easy to talk to.”

“ We are nice and warm in the library, I feel safe, I like coming here.”

“We tell them all about our books and they listen a lot.”

Monica explained that it is important to find out the children’s views on the library and the books they read, staff asked the children to write or draw what they thought of the library, depending on what the children say, staff will do their utmost to act upon this, **for**

example staff wanted to know what the children wanted to do for Easter, the children were keen on decorating eggs, this was arranged.

Although the children love coming to the library they were quite disappointed about one issue:

‘‘ We are disappointed because normally Monica and Janice take us to the park, but we haven’t been for ages.’’

Monica explained that the weather has been quite miserable and wet these last few weeks, they hadn’t had a chance to play at the park, Monica assured the children that as soon as the weather picks up their first stop will be the park!

Children and young people have a good relaxed relationship with staff so therefore there is an ongoing dialogue, staff have adopted an inclusive method of dialogue and change, for example:

Dialogue	Change
The children wanted to devise a survey to find out other children’s favourite books.	Staff helped the children to distribute the survey within their local school, staff asked the children where they wanted to display the chart within the library.
Children wanted to be fully involved within the coffee morning.	Staff asked the children to decide what charity they would like the Library to raise money for.
Children wanted to decide every month who author of the month will be.	This takes place. The children create displays and write reviews on their favourite author each month.

It is very obvious that the children are very involved and valued within the library, therefore I recommend that Lanchester Library receive Investing in Children Membership.

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