



Re-evaluation for Investing in Children membership

Laurel Avenue Centre

The Laurel Avenue Centre is situated alongside Laurel Avenue Primary; the centre shares the schools facilities.

I visited Laurel Avenue in November; I met with Jackie Graham (manager) and the young men's group aged between 8-16 years of age: **Alex, Christopher, Reece, Liam, Brendan, Jake, John and Christopher.**

The young men's group takes place on a Thursday evening, the young people pay a small sub to help with the running of the club/trips/equipment etc...

Jackie explained the young people come in and decide exactly what they would like to do, Jackie and staff put out activities that are requested by the young people.

Jackie showed me around the centre, play stations, large pool tables and computers are available at all times to the young people.

Opportunities for Dialogue:

In the centre of the main room there is a flip chart board, Jackie explained that the young people write suggestions/activities that they would like to take part in/any problems they are experiencing/trips they would like to go on etc...

The young people have an opportunity to talk and present their views and opinions during every session either at the start or at the end.

Jackie was keen to emphasise that discussion and dialogue are core practice at the centre, but was also keen to add that the young people came to the centre for fun!

Laurel Avenue Centre is in the process of getting re-decorated, as the young people didn't like the decoration; the young people are re-designing the Centre.

Young people's views:

I spoke to the young people as they were participating in a variety of activities; I asked the young people why they liked coming to the centre? Are your views and opinions valued? What would you change?

Alex: *" I have been coming here for six months, like coming here I can do what I want to do, I like playing on the computers and playing basketball."*

" All of the staff listen to me."

Christopher: *" we pay our subs and go off and do what we want."*

Liam: *" Yes we get listened to, we have a suggestion box and flip chart boards, we put ideas of what we want in, like we went to Disney Land and Alton Towers coz of people putting things in the box and flip charts!"*

Brendan: *“ It’s like home here.”*

“Everything’s cool here I wouldn’t want to change anything.”

Change as a Result of Dialogue:

Liam told me:

“We wanted to organise pool tournaments, we talked to Jackie, she got us some proper pool tables and set up mini tournaments.”

Brendan told me:

“ It’s like home here, everything is cool, I wouldn’t want to change anything.”

Christmas:

Jackie explained the young people are deciding what they would like to do for Christmas; they have put together some suggestions, they are currently deciding between – a trip to the theatre, a meal or ice skating.

Tuck Shop:

Laurel Avenue has a tuck shop, the young people help with the rota that has been devised, the young people decide on what tuck they would like to see available, help with the preparation and serving.

Computers:

Jackie has received some unwanted computers from the local college; they have been given to the young people to take home to use within their families, Jackie arranged games to be installed for the young people.

While I was talking with the young people I noticed a strong relationship between the young people and staff, almost like a family unit.

Recommendations made by the young people:

✚ *“ Would like some new activities.”*

✚ *“ Archery would be good.”*

✚ *Table Hockey and Tennis.”*

In the view of the evidence and the positive endorsement from the young people, I recommend that Laurel Avenue Community Centre receives Investing in Children Membership.

I would like to thank the young people and staff for their time and warm welcome.

Well done!

Michelle Fenwick
Investing in Children
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