



Re-evaluation for Investing in Children membership

Newton Aycliffe Library

This report will identify the ways in which Newton Aycliffe Library continues to work in partnership with children and young people. This report highlights opportunities that exist for children and young people to engage in dialogue within Newton Aycliffe in order to make changes to the service.

For the purpose of this report I had the pleasure of meeting with Shannon, Hollie, Jamie, Hannah and Brittany during their Chatterbook session.

On my first visit to the library I noticed the relaxed atmosphere created by library staff. It is evident from the large children's section, colourful posters and drawings on the walls, that children and young people are at the centre of the library.

The library does not have a formal structure for dialogue to take place amongst children, young people and staff. However, it is evident that this takes place during the various sessions and is effective due to the informal nature of the sessions that take place. Via this approach, it is clear that children and young people feel comfortable giving their ideas and feedback to the staff for changes to be made. It is clear that by altering their approach, staff are enabling changes to occur. Shannon informed me that she '**really enjoys the library, I like the books and I like that I get to take them home**'.

Evidence of Dialogue and Change

Library staff, continue to work with local schools to provide the children and their families with the activities, books and resources to meet the demands of the school curriculum. Children from St Mary's school went along to the library for a class visit, to learn how a library is run, as they are currently setting up their own school library. During the visit the children worked with library staff to make changes to the children's library. "**We did not like the children's library, we were confused with how the library was set up. We did not like the books on the shelves they were in colour order. So we decided to change them and put the books into alphabetical order.**"

The Chatterbooks group continue to meet once a month on a Tuesday. The group were very excited to inform me of how they have been involved in changing the way books are ordered in the library. Hollie informed me "**We read books before they come into the library and help the librarians pick what they order and we decide if the book should go into the children's section or not.**" In the past, books were ordered and put straight into the library, now they are checked out by the young people first. Hannah continued to tell me about their role in the library "**we talk about each of the books, we read them, and then once a month we discuss the books we have read. We discuss different books every month**"

The suggestion box continues to be an important resource at Newton Aycliffe library. Jamie told me "**We have a suggestion box, we read through the suggestion box with the library staff and if we think we can change anything from the suggestion box then we do that. The library staff used to read through it themselves but now we do it.**"

The ideas from the suggestion box are incorporated into the planning and delivery of library programmes. This includes the re introduction of the magic show during school holidays and the children producing quizzes, word searches and games which are used in library competitions. As a result of the suggestion box the children decided that they wanted a wider range of books to read. Ben suggested that other children would like to read adventure books. Library staff secured extra funding and have purchased some adventure books which are now included in the children's section. Jamie was keen to tell me about the new section **"We have now got Northern Lights, Clockwork and Style School. I really like them and enjoy reading them."**

On the 14th April children and young people from the library went to the Sage in Gateshead for the launch of 'The secret life of Jamie B – Rap Star.' **"We asked if we could start to go out on activities, we went to the Sage and we are going to go to the head office to pick new books for the new building"**.

Library staff have included children and young people in making decisions about the new building. However, this process has been put on hold as the building project has been delayed. The library staff do not want the children to think that they are not listening to their suggestions so they have put the issue on hold for now. Staff have assured the children that their ideas will be put into action as soon as the building work continues.

Newton Aycliffe Library provides a safe environment for children and young people from a wide range of backgrounds, to come together in a friendly relaxed atmosphere. It is clear that they have ownership over the library and are keen to be part of the decision making process.

Newton Aycliffe Library has excellent dialogue with the children and young people that use their service. The children and young people involved in this report have agreed the content. In light of the continued commitment to dialogue and change, I would like to recommend that Newton Aycliffe Library once again receives Investing in Children Membership.

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Investing in Children
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