



Re-evaluation for Investing in Children membership

Pelton Library

Pelton Library benefits from a warm, welcoming staff team. Children and young people are free to come in and enjoy the books, join a group, go on the computers or join in the activities. Previously Investing in Children membership was achieved by young people being involved in talking to staff in the library and bringing about changes to improve the service.

For the purpose of this evaluation I had the pleasure of meeting with Liam, Jordan, Kieran and Mark. They all told me how children and young people have continued to be involved in dialogue and change as follows:

Evidence of Dialogue and Change

Various groups of children and young people have helped make decisions about the way the library looks, resources such as books, use of computers, and activities/events.

The Summer Reading Group

During the summer holidays children and young people can be involved in a reading group. This year the group are reading books that tie into the theme of "teams". On my visit I saw the group looking at the 2008 Olympics and enjoying making flags for the occasion. Kieran said, **"I love the things we do here. We sometimes tell the librarians what we want to do and sometimes they suggest things. It's good."**

Kathryn aged 10 wrote, **"You make mega stuff. You can just come to the library and you don't have to pay. I really enjoy coming."**

Ordering Books

I asked the young people what they would do if they could not find a specific book they were looking for. Kieran said, **"It would be nice if there were more books for like 6 to 7 year olds. More Disney books."** Jordan added, **"But there are some over there anyway. Anyway if we want anything we would just ask the librarians."** Kieran agreed. **"I love the Goosebumps stories. The librarians know where everything is. And you can order books, so you just ask. We just feel free to ask, everyone is easy to talk to."**

Decorations

The young people explained that they are involved in making Christmas and Halloween decorations which are used around the library. The librarians explained that they cannot hang decorations from the ceiling because of the alarm system. One of the recommendations from last year's evaluation was around young people wanting more Christmas decorations. However when I spoke to Kieran this was no longer an issue. He said, **"The library is not about decorations, it's about books. That's what is important to us."** Mark added, **"It's a peaceful place to come and have a quiet time. That's what is important to me."**

Library Layout

Also in the previous evaluation young people said they would like to see the adult and children's section made separate with separate divisions and the scary books should be put into the adults section because they scare the younger children.

In the library adult's and children's books are separated by book boxes, and in the children's area there are tables and settees. I asked the group if any changes had been made. Jordan said, **"I'm happy with where the books are. All the signs are up to tell you where things are, like novels."** Kieran added, **"The scary books for kids should be in the children's book section."**

Conclusion.

From speaking to the library staff it is very clear that there is a strong belief in having children and young people as part of the library. (see letter attached) It was very obvious from my visits to Pelton Library that everyone tries to value the principle of mutual respect. Lynn (the senior library assistant) told me, **"I like to treat people how I would want to be treated myself. I treat children and young people the same way as I treat adults. I listen to what children tell me and talk to them about what they want. Children are our future users."** The library tries to ensure the inclusion of all children in every aspect of its work and everybody works hard together to care for and expand the clubs and groups they have created.

There is an informal openness and support network which is very strong between the library staff and young people. Mark said, **"Everyone here is canny and nice."** The group are comfortable with all of the team and said that they did feel listened to. The staff at the library might want to talk with children and young people about whether they think a more structured way of collecting views and opinions would be helpful. For example the opportunity to write on comment cards or send emails.

I would like to thank Kieran, Mark, Jordan and Liam for helping me in writing this report. As these young people agree with this evaluation I have no hesitation in recommending that Pelton Library once again receives Investing in Children membership. Well done.

Glenys Newby
Investing in Children
August 2008