



Re- Evaluation for Investing in Children membership:

Stanley Library

Geographically, Stanley Library finds itself in quite an unattractive location and is not a welcoming place for children and young people to access. It stands on the corner of a huge roundabout in Stanley and is surrounded by very busy roads. However once inside there is a warm welcoming environment for both children and young people, an area which has been refurbished with their views and ideas shaping the environment they find.

The work with children and young people is led by Geraldine Spoors and supported by Les Storey the Group Manager and the rest of the team. I do feel that it is important to give recognition to Gerry for all of the hard work that she does because she just doesn't give up! Gerry is always thinking of new ways to meet with children and young people and new ways to involve them, but after a few months, interest often wanes because the library is in such an awkward place. Even though this is the case, Stanley Library has probably worked with more children and young people over the last year and half than some of the more accessible libraries in Co. Durham.

Evidence of dialogue and change is provided through my conversations with some of the children and young people who use the library, at some of the activities they attended over the last few months:

School Visits – The library still accommodate the two local schools by arranging activities, which relate to subjects they are doing in school. The library also sends out invitations for special events. One invitation was to celebrate 'Children's Book Week.' Pirates were the theme of the week when St. Josephs School visited the library on the morning of 28th September 2007. I joined the children to hear their pirate story and later I chatted with them when they coloured in.

The children listened to a pirate adventure story, which was actually written by one of the local librarians, Kay Wilson, as shown in the picture:



After that they had a creative session where they coloured in pirate pictures, pirate door hangers and bookmarks. Gerry had created the pictures for the children to choose. Finley told me "I am going to do one of these door things. Did you know we had a choice? We had anchors or pirates." Zak said, "I think this is good." Daniel agreed. He also went on to say that "I have been to the library, I have a card." Jak, Caitlan, Leon, Joshua, Jasmine and Hannah all enjoyed the story and the colouring in. Kate told me "I am colouring this one for my Mam, so she can hang it on her door

Brandon and Ayesha wanted to take books with them and they asked if Gerry could save the books for them. Gerry put the book behind the counter for the children to collect at a later date with their parents.

Activities/Events – The library staff team continue to provide, art and craft sessions, storytelling sessions etc during every holiday. The summer theme revolved around the summer reading challenge, this year it was the Big Wild Read. To work within the theme the library staff organised activities to do with nature:



Wild Medicine making with Mary Tassell

Making pots.....ready to grow.



Games, games and more

Games!



Making birds – these are now displayed on the wall in the junior section of the library.



On the 6th of October 2007 I joined some children and young people for their certificate presentation celebration. The above picture shows the young people who successfully completed the Big Wild Read Challenge. To celebrate they spent a morning with Zoolab. **The children and young people have had Zoolab before and they asked for it again.** Snakes, rats, hamsters, guinea pigs and rabbits, cockroaches, spiders and other creepy crawlies! Can't see the attraction myself, so I just watched. I chatted with Matthew, Morgan, Rachael, Sean, Anna and Zak at the end of the session. **They were more than happy to tell me that they feel they definitely get listened too. They can ask for activities, they enjoy taking part in activities when they happen. We also talked about the library being hard to access on a night because they have to rely on parents and it's so far away from anywhere, but it doesn't stop them coming during the holidays. They love Zoolab and they all think the library is very comfortable for children and young people.**

As mentioned in my evaluation last year, the following sessions still happen:

Clarty Tots – A session on a Thursday every week for children to be creative and get clarty!

The library team still support individual young people using the computers for homework, finding resources and other things they need. As I said earlier Gerry is always thinking of new ways to engage with more children and young people. The latest idea is to provide a pick up service from the schools to enable the children to take part in an after schools club. I think this highlights the continued commitment of the library staff and for this I think they should be commended because lots of the libraries in Co. Durham appear to have 'given up' on the idea of children's participation in the service they deliver. Therefore with this in mind and with the endorsement of the children and young people I met with, I certainly would like to recommend that Stanley Library remains an Investing in Children member.

Helen Mulhearn
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