



Re-evaluation for Investing in Children membership

West Cornforth Library

This report will highlight and identify the positive relationship that exists between the children and library staff of West Cornforth Library to bring about changes. West Cornforth Library is at the heart of the community and is as a valuable resource for those who use the service. When you walk into the library you get an instant understanding of how reliant the community is upon the library. The children I met with are children of those who accessed the service themselves as children. The library provides the opportunity for children, young people and the wider community to mix together who would otherwise not have the opportunity to do so.

Evidence of dialogue and change is taken from discussions I had with Alex, Bailey, Max, Heather, William and Hannah. For the purpose of this re-evaluation Marion and Margaret provided a file which highlights the ongoing dialogue between staff and young people throughout the year.

Unfortunately it has not been possible for the library to continue with the library committee due to the school changing its timetable. However, the library does have nine class visits a week. The library staff were determined to continue the process of dialogue with the school children and incorporated the opportunity for the children to give their views and bring about change into the weekly sessions.

The children informed me that they were involved in producing a survey that they asked other children to complete when they came into the library. **“We wanted to find out what other children wanted to happen in the library”**. The children felt that it was important to ask questions about the choice of books available, how to improve the library and what they would like during the school holidays. Hannah informed me of the changes to the library cards. **“We get to choose from five different cards and we can get out 3 books. The best things is that we now have free time on the computers which is what a lot of people asked for.”**

The children worked alongside Marion and Margaret to produce a programme of activities during the school holidays. **“We have done quizzes and days for the whole family. We made cards, humpty dumpty and Mr Ollie puppets”**. The children also gave their ideas about which entertainers they would like during the school holidays. **“From asking people what they wanted we decided to book Mr Twister, Funky Monkey, Mr Ollie and the Zoo Lab”**.

As a direct result of the questionnaires the library staff have provided more activities for younger children, including story time. Each story time has a theme and incorporates song and crafts sessions.

The suggestion box is still available for the children and young people. A suggestion was made to **“make the library more comfortable”**. Library staff secured funding, which has led to the purchase of two new sofas, which were hand picked by the children. The sofas take pride of place in the junior library.

All of the group regularly take part in the activities and have in the past been members of the management committee. They are well aware of the opportunities that exist for them to make changes in the library and take part in the development of the service.

Marion and Margaret continue to work with the school to provide the children and their families with the activities, books and resources to meet the demands of the school curriculum. Heather was very keen to tell me about the support she has received from the library with her homework. **“I don’t have a computer, so I asked Margaret if I could come into the library to do my homework. When I need help or different books, they change what they are doing in the library and me. They also ask us how we want the books and furniture and things to be. They listen to what we want and make the library a good place.”**

West Cornforth 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. West Cornforth Library has come along way in recent years and has established itself as a crucial part of the community. For a local library that is only open part time, the children, young people and the wider community achieve a great deal with the support of Marion and Margaret.

West Cornforth 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 and recommendations. It is with great pleasure that I on behalf of the children and young people recommend West Cornforth Library remain Investing in Children Members.

Kim Kyle
Investing in Children
January 2008