



Re-evaluation for Investing in Children membership

Pelton Library

For the purpose of this membership I made 3 separate visits to Pelton Library. The first time I visited, I was attending a McMillan Nurse event.

I arrived just as the story time was beginning for the year 5 class from Pelton Junior School. The library had arranged for a story time session for all of the children at the school to attend in aid of the McMillan Nurse event. The librarian explained to me that the nursery and reception class were unable to come out of school and walk round to the library, so one of the librarians went to the nursery and reception classes to read to them, to make sure that they were all included in the reading sessions. This was a really positive thing for her to point out to me because it showed how they wanted the day to be as inclusive as possible.

When I arrived, the young people were in a room in the back of the library and everyone seemed to be enjoying the story session – obviously they were rather distracted when I walked into the room. I chose to observe during this session rather than interrupt their story.

After the first story, they were all given juice and biscuits to enjoy and it was then requested by one young gentleman that “Willy Wonker: Wonker’s Bite” (a poem) was read out by the librarian. This request was granted and again, everyone sat, fascinated by every line read out.

After the story and poem, the librarian asked the children some simple questions about the stories they had been listening too and the eagerness and excitement was amazing from the children wanting to answer. Needless to say, every question was answered correctly.

As the children were getting ready to leave I managed to ask a few of them whether they enjoyed the session and everyone I spoke to said yes. While I was doing that, the librarian was reminding all of the children that the library was open for them to visit after school until 4pm. One young man called Kieran asked if she would be able to keep it open until 4.15 because he had choir practice and the librarian said this wouldn’t be a problem because he was eager to visit.

Afterwards, I was speaking to the librarian who explained that they would like to have the children round for story telling sessions more often however; they struggle because the national curriculum doesn’t have designated time for it. They do however make sure that the children come round on World Book Day and also for a Christmas Session.

The next time I visited the library I met with Sarah, Sarah and Rebecca who are young people that have been coming to the library for over 3 years. The girls said the following about the library:

“The computers are good for doing our homework”

“I enjoy using the books for research for my homework, they’re really helpful”

“I come into the library 2/3 times a week just to sit and read”

“It’s nice just to be able to read a book and chill out here”

“It’s really good if my mam and dad are at work on a nigh time so I don’t have to go home in the dark”

Evidence of dialogue with children and young people.

The reading club

During the summer holidays the young people were involved in a national reading challenge. This involved reading 5 books over the summer and writing an evaluation after each of them. There was the chance to win an i-pod at the end of it.

Ordering books

I asked the young people what they would do if they couldn't find a specific book they were looking for. They all explained that they could order in books from other libraries and they would do this by speaking with the librarian.

Crafts

The library are involved in having craft events during the summer and the children and young people have the option of being involved in these too. An example of one of these events is the McMillan event that I visited at the library previously. The librarian explained to me that they only have events on during the school holidays because they can't compete with the after school activities.

Decorations

The young people explained that they have been involved in making Christmas and Halloween decorations that are used around the library. The young people then explained that they would like to be more involved in the decoration of the library though, for example: helping putting up the Christmas tree.

Recommendations by children and young people.

The young people who I spoke too said they would like to see the following things happen within the next year:

- The adult and children's section should be made separate with separate divisions. We discussed this for a while and the librarian explained that the building was 40 years old and therefore there wasn't quite the space to do something like that. There are however book shelves that divide the two sections off at the moment but the decoration doesn't really suggest the difference.
- "The scary books should be put into the adults section because they scare the younger children".
- There should be separate sections for things like: teen romance, younger readers and horror.
- There should be more Christmas decorations.

The librarian then explained that there has to be a happy balance because at the moment the library is so tight on their budget they cannot afford to do many changes and also have things like homework clubs, because the school offers this.

Conclusion.

Although this library seem to struggle with the competition of the children and young people choosing to go to after school clubs rather than to go to the library, I would encourage them not to give up the hard work they are doing and also give up what they have already achieved (for example: the wish lists). From speaking to the librarian it is very clear that the library believe strongly in having children and young people as part of the library, however just because they don't have a lot of children attending, doesn't mean to say that things have to change and their work with the children has to stop.

The children and young people that do use the library on a regular basis, who I had the pleasure of meeting, clearly really enjoy going along and taking part in the activities, when they are available.

Other libraries have structured systems that children and young people can use to feed in their views about what they would like to see in the library and any comments they wish to make. Perhaps this library might want to have a think about creating something like a comments box or emailing system.

Hopefully by this time next year, when the membership is up for renewal again, the library will have been able to work on at least one of the recommendations made by the children and young people that I spoke too.

The children and young people have agreed this report and the recommendations.

I would like to congratulate Pelton Library on another successful year and recommend them for IiC membership, however ask them to remember what I have written in this report for next year.

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Investing in Children
July 2007