



Re evaluation for Investing in Children Membership Shotton Library

I visited Shotton Library during April 2007 for the purpose of re-evaluating its Investing in Children membership. I met with Vi Holt, the senior library assistant and young people from the crafts club.

The crafts club meets every Friday and provides various craft based activities for up to 12 young people. The group is currently working on a number of projects to make the library more welcoming, young people are about to design a new sign plus a ceramic display. The young people I met are clearly very happy to be part of the club which is so popular there is a waiting list of people wishing to join (*see comments below*). The library also has an extensive program of activities planned for the summer which the young people are looking forward to. Clearly the library provides an excellent service to young people in terms of the craft activities. Vi has also attempted to encourage more teenagers to visit by providing popular magazines to promote reading. Teenagers are also permitted to use the library as a casual meeting place.

“it’s great here; I look forward to it all week”

“the only bad thing is that you have to wait all week to come here”

“I wish it was on every night”

“It’s nothing like school, we get to do what we want”

The young members of the craft club feel they are involved in decisions about the club, they have chosen a number of displays which have been exhibited at both Shotton and Seaham libraries. They have also requested and chosen equipment such as a playstation and computer games. Young people have also helped devise a booking system which can be used to record the most popular type of computer games so that future purchases can reflect their tastes.

Vi explained that the current crafts club was originally a decision making body but that the focus had shifted over the past year with emphasis now on providing craft activities. She also told me about some of the difficulties of engaging young people in a part-time library which only opens two days per week plus a Saturday morning, severely restricting opportunities for young people to use the service. Vi does have plans to revive the decisions group by inviting new young people to join, this she hopes to do after the summer holiday. The current arts club will form a new ‘*Clippy Club*’, another craft based club for young people.

During my second visit I suggested that perhaps it would be better to carry out a full evaluation when the new decisions group is in place. This would provide an opportunity to progress the work of the craft club to other areas of the library and open up decision making to a wider group of young people.

I do feel, that given the very limited time Shotton Library has to deliver a program of activities and to seek the views of young people, its past achievements are remarkable. I’m convinced that there is a clear commitment to involving young people in decision making at Shotton Library and would like recommend that it retains Investing in Children status until can be fully evaluated at the end of 2007 or the beginning of 2008.

B.Stock
May 2007