



## Evaluation for Investing in Children membership

### Gosforth Library

This report will highlight and identify the positive relationship that exists between the children, young people and library staff of Gosforth Library to bring about changes.

Gosforth Library has recently moved into a new building which is based in the heart of the Gosforth community and is a valuable resource for those who use the service. When you walk into the new library you get an instant understanding of how reliant the local community is upon the library.

On the two occasions that I visited the library the atmosphere was electric, with all the members of the community mixing together. The layout of the building 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 Patrick, Kate, Robin, Erin, Bradley and Lilly. The children informed me that they are part of a group who have been working alongside library staff to make the new library more accessible for children and young people. The children have been supported by Fiona Hill for the past year and have made numerous changes within the library. Patrick informed me that he became involved in the library as a result of the libraries relationship with the play and youth service.

The children and young people worked alongside the architects to design the best way to have the lay out of the children and young peoples sections. Erin informed me **“we wanted to make it clear which section was which.”** I was given a tour of the different sections by Lilly and it is very clear which section belongs to which group. **“We thought that the children’s section should be about playing, all the furniture is for playing on. We have the reading tower, picture tunnels and a reading hideaway that you can climb on.”** The children have designed this area very well and on both my visits, it was evident that the play theme has taken hold. Patrick informed me that they wanted to make a chill out zone for teenagers. **“Its great, we have the teenage section, with sofas, a coffee table, computers and the teenage books, it just how we said we wanted it.”**

Kate informed me that the children and young people asked the library staff if they could buy new books as the books from the old library were **“boring.”** Nine children and young people were given £2000 to spend at Borders. **“We went with Fiona, it was great.”** I asked the group how they chose which books to buy. Bradley informed me **I asked people before we went to Borders what books they would want. I also chose books which I had already read which I knew were really good.”** The books have labels on them so people can see that they have been bought by the group, they are the most popular books in the library. Lilly showed me the labels on the books in the children’s section. The book buy was such a success that the process for buying new books across the city has changed as a result. Children and young people are now included in all purchases.

All the children and young people who I spoke to were happy with the service the library provides however they would like to work on a few changes which they recommend they work on with Fiona and the rest of the library staff.

- **“Have a young person’s library committee, like we do at school. We could look at ways of involving other young people in the library. We could meet and look at the books again and pick new ones.”**
- **“Write a newsletter, we could have competitions in it. We could also give the newsletter to local schools so people new what was happening in the library.”**
- **“Have more activities in the school holidays for older children, there are lots for the smaller kids, should make it fair.”**
- **“Could have suggestion boxes in each area of the library that we could read at the library committee meetings and then put what we have done about things on a notice board.”**
- **“We think that we should try and get the library re-named. The Gosforth Customer Centre and Library is boring. We should have a re-naming competition.”**

Gosforth 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 the children I met with have ownership over the library and are keen to involve more children and young people in the decision making processes within the library.

The library has had a very busy year; the children I met with are passionate about the library and the service it offers to local children and young people. The positive relationship that now exists between the group and staff is an excellent foundation to take forward and progress with the recommendations highlighted in this report as Kate highlighted **“we have helped the library be a better place, this needs to continue and more children need to put their opinions across.”**

Gosforth Library has excellent dialogue with children and young people. The children and young people involved in this report have agreed the content and recommendations. It is with great pleasure that I on their behalf recommend that Gosforth Library becomes an Investing in Children Membership.

Well done and keep up the hard work!

**Kim Kyle**  
**Investing in Children**  
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