



Re-evaluation for Investing in Children membership

St Anthony's Children's House – NCH

I visited St Anthony's House in Walker on 10th October 07, I met with some young people from the Helpful Kids group: **Chloe, Sophie, Gary, Beth, Stacey, Caitlin**. I also talked with June McHale the senior project worker.

This group is the Sun group aged 7-9.

I spoke with June first of all. Since their last evaluation June has collected and filed evidence of dialogue and change.

Helpful Kids: Are aged 7-11+ years old. The group are facilitated by St Anthony's staff and the Voices project, giving children and young people a voice and a say in what happens within their area.

Helpful kids have recently written an article in the Walker Eye about what it is like to live in Walker, concentrating on safety, please see appendix 1.

I visited the young people in the Sun group while they were busy in their session. June asked the young people if it was ok if I joined the group and the young people agreed.

The children were eating pasta and garlic bread and talking amongst themselves, Caitlin told me: **" I am eating pasta, it's nice and we have garlic bread, we chose what snack we have each week, we have fruit after and take it in turns to hand the fruit out, we have made a rota."**

I asked the young people why they enjoyed coming here and what activities they enjoy:

" We can chose what we like to do."

" Like doing art, and like coming here because I like Jay he's always kind to me, I like June as well she plays top cards with me and is always kind."

" Staff have good ears and always listen to us."

All sessions are relaxed and informal. The children enjoy a snack, help clear away then play. All of the resources are set out for the children to choose what to do.

After the young people had, had their tea they filled out planning sheets in their own time. These state exactly what the young people would like to participate in throughout the session. Staff are available to help if they need them.

The children and young people at St Anthony's are provided with a range of opportunities, because of the groups and the activities available as well as donations and grants they are given from the Children's Fund.

It is very important to highlight that the children participate fully in the planning and organising, ranging from choosing where they would like to go/when/how they are going to get there etc...

June showed me a file of evidence; work sheets that the children and young people have completed stating where they would like to go on trips. Please see appendix 2.

Review sheets clearly highlight what opportunities are offered to the children and young people throughout the year. See appendix 3.

Group work is almost the same as last year apart from the odd few:

Shooting Stars:

June explained that due to staff problems/changes this group is no longer running, June expressed her disappointment as a lot of positive work has been done with the children and young people to raise self confidence, June stated parents had noticed a big change in their children's self confidence.

Although this group is no longer running ideas that shaped Shooting Stars have been incorporated within other groups.

9-11 Group:

This group is mixed gender as this is what the young people wanted, June and staff went along with their recommendation.

Trips:

Trips in the summer/Easter/Christmas are all decided by the children and young people, they decide where they would like to go and narrow it down by a voting system. Young people are responsible for booking taxis/making reservations etc...

Stacey told me:

“ On Wednesday we are going to the discovery museum, we choose to go here, I am excited.”

Family Trips:

Giving families an opportunity to take part in trips, children and parents decide where they would like to go, this is also done by the voting system.

Before their trips children and young people are involved in discussions around risk assessments. The young people ask questions and write solutions relating to what's safe/unsafe. Once the trip has taken place the young people make a display of their chosen photographs and captions of their views/opinions.

Staying Safe Project:

This project is around domestic abuse. Sessions were help to provoke conversations about what services are available to help children and young people who are experiencing domestic abuse within the home.

Early Warning signs were discussed and posters were designed to help children and young people express their feelings and concerns.

St Anthony's House have invested in 50 car seats to safeguard smaller children also to enable them to participate in trips.

Management Committee:

Last year the management committee agreed to open up two seats for children and young people. This was hoped to give young people a stronger voice within their community and in time they will be able to influence what happens next when they leave St Anthony's House. This has been put on hold due to difficulties within the committee.

The children and young people clearly enjoy their time at St Anthony's Children's House; they are encouraged to participate in making their sessions better for themselves, with the endorsement of the children and young people I would most definitely like to recommend that St Anthony's Children's House remains an Investing in Children member.

Michelle Fenwick
Investing in Children
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