

Homework Club December 2012

I have actively been involved in the homework clubs for a few years now and have seen the clubs evolve into exciting place. The clubs has a large age range and we have a wide range of learning materials that we have acquired over the years. So instead of a typical classroom style set up, we have one worker to each table. This usually covers everything very well. Unlike most clubs the younger ones are very happy to mix with the oldest ones.

At some points we've had to borrow chairs from other parts of the building to seat the attendants. The homework clubs are becoming more popular than the evening youth clubs. It's the first time I have seen kids enthusiastic about homework. There is a real camaraderie within the group when the younger members haven't finished their work the older ones go and help them and when the younger ones are finished they often go over to the older ones to help them any way they can.

The children come in, mostly always, ready with their own homework, but sometimes asking for something we can give them (which we always have ready) and they are keen to get it done. We try to make it as fun as we can and this relaxed atmosphere allows for the children to ask questions and play with ideas and have conversations around their work that they may be too scared to do at school. The children know they will get a reward on the skate park after, and because of this they do tend to work hard.

Sometimes a few individuals come in distracted, or keen only to get onto the park, I can think of a few examples where parents have even spoken to me upon dropping of their children and warned me that they might chance it with their homework and to keep an eye on them. The great thing is that there are three tables, that are almost always full during homework club, and there are enough youth

leaders to work with their own table, so children are never left alone to skive unnoticed, they are observed, encouraged and helped at all times and to see them flourish and work through difficulties with this support is rewarding, especially as you see their confidence grow and their dialogue with you continue regarding their work when they return the next week, and the week after. I have seen a lot of the confidence children have found in me has been based on the foundation built with me helping them work through something in homework club.

With the introduction of young helpers, members who have moved on to Secondary school, the clubs are running smoother than ever and results in there being a general increase in confidence, self esteem with the group members as well as the helpers.