Schools Library Service

Running a School Library

Produced by
Bedfordshire Schools Library Service
2009

INTRODUCTION

This booklet provides guidance for schools wishing to improve their existing library, or to create a new one. It contains a variety of useful ideas and practical suggestions and is part of the support provided by the Schools Library Service in Bedfordshire.

The Schools Library Service is a valuable resource for all schools, offering:

- a service tailored to each school providing specially chosen materials for class and project work

- help and training to create successful and effective school libraries

- training and support for the professional development of library staff

The services provided by the Schools Library Service are highlighted at the end of each chapter. If you are interested in subscribing to any of the services please contact the Centre.

Running the School Library

Chapter 1

Library Policy Guidelines

> *The purpose of the policy is to make clear, for the whole school community, the role, aims and objectives of the library.*

Why Have a Library Policy?

Use of the library is an integral part of the national curriculum and, like other subjects, should have its own policy. The library itself should be at the centre of a forward-looking policy for learning resources throughout the school.

The School Library Policy should:

- define the library's purpose within the school
- show how the library relates to other priorities within the school budget
- set a date for the next planned review (of library policy)

The School Library Policy should relate to:

- national educational initiatives
- other policies, ethos and aims of the school, eg School Improvement Plan
- local support services, eg
  ⇒ Schools Library Service
  ⇒ Public Library Service
  ⇒ other LEA depts
  ⇒ Education Action Zones if relevant
- the social and cultural environment of the school, the local community and other local initiatives, eg
  ⇒ out of hours learning
  ⇒ equal opportunities
  ⇒ social inclusion
  ⇒ partnerships with other organisations
  ⇒ liaison with feeder schools re library (learning communities)
  ⇒ cultural diversity
  ⇒ literacy policies

What Should the Policy Include?

The following points should be considered when producing a school library policy:

Aims and Objectives

- why have a school library?
- who and what is the school library for?

Staffing

- who will be responsible for co-ordinating library work, ordering new purchases and stock maintenance?
- who do they report to?
- how much time should be available to them for working in the library?
- what are the training needs?
- who else helps in running the library?
- what are their training needs?
- in what ways are parents and carers involved?

Finance
- what funding should the library have?
- what regular and adequate financial input will be needed?

Documentation
- is there a library policy?
- is there a library improvement plan?
- does the library feature in the School Improvement Plan?

Accommodation
- is the library in a suitable location within the school?
- are the space and resources exploited effectively?
- is the library furniture suitable?

Resources
- are the library resources sufficient to meet children's leisure and curriculum needs?
- is the balance between different types of resources appropriate?
- what is the relationship between library and classroom resources?
- what are the criteria for stock selection, maintenance and withdrawal?

Organisation (Non-fiction and Fiction)
- is the classification system appropriate?
- is there guiding and labelling to enable pupils to find resources independently?
- is the loan system appropriate?
- is there a subject index for children's use?

ICT
- is there a computer in the library for children's use?
- what software is provided?
- is the library computerised?

Use and Access
- when is the library available to pupils and in what ways?
- should it be open to the wider community - if so what are the implications?
- how often do classes visit the library?
- what are the visits for?

Reader Development
- how will reader development be delivered through the school library?
- how will reader development complement the National Literacy Strategy?

Library Skills Teaching
- what skills can the library support and are they taught effectively?
- how should library and information skills be taught?

Support for Teaching and Learning
- how can the library contribute to educational standards and children's achievement?
- what is the relationship between the library and the curriculum?
- what is the relationship between the library and the primary framework for literacy?
- what is the role of the library in supporting children's reading development and how can this be done effectively?
- should there be a progressive whole school library education programme?

Monitoring and Evaluation
- does the library need promoting within and /or outside the school?
- how should the library be monitored and evaluated?

Planning and Future Development
- how will you act on the results of library monitoring and evaluation?
- how will you ensure the role of the library is clearly defined?

The policy should be revised regularly alongside other school plans and should form part of the school cycle of reviews. Policy should be reported to the governing body and form part of the School Improvement Plan and INSET programmes.

The Schools Library Service can:

📖   provide advice in developing your policy

📖   visit your school to discuss the library policy during a staff meeting

📖   provide a template for producing your own policy

Chapter 2

Library Budget

> *"The library should have a fair share of the total capitation because it is a whole school resource serving all staff and pupils".*
> Better Libraries, Department for Education and Science

General Guidelines
The school's budget must include an adequate amount for the library. The following factors should be considered:
- learning resources need to be regularly replaced in order to be relevant to the needs of the curriculum and the reading and information needs of children and teachers
- there also needs to be a budget for the library environment and for furniture and equipment
- adequate IT provision in the School Library is essential to enable access to on-line learning resources
- one computer with CD Rom and Internet access is a basic requirement
- for larger libraries a computerised library management system improves children's access to resources and improves stock management
- stationery and stock maintenance materials

Assessing Funding Needs
When assessing funding needs, the following should be considered:
- the cost of replacing stock which is outdated, worn out or in poor condition and filling stock gaps. Regular stock maintenance and annual monitoring will identify the items and areas to be replaced and/or developed
- the amount of funding required for new curriculum subjects
- the amount of funding needed for books and non-book material, eg tapes and IT resources

Number of Items Required
CILIP* recommends the following:
- Lower schools - 13 items per pupil (This includes a Schools Library Service bulk loan of three books per child)
- Middle schools – 14.5 items per pupil (This includes a Schools Library Service bulk loan of three books per child)
- 10% of stock is replaced annually

This will ensure a full range of resources covering the needs of the curriculum and reading materials for children of all ages and abilities. It should exclude all reading schemes and text books.

Resource Requirements for Your School
Use the following calculation to find out how much the library resources budget should be:

a) number of library resources (fiction and non-fiction but not reading schemes or text books) in stock =

b) CILIP* recommends 13 (Lower schools) or 14.5 (Middle schools) attractive, up to date items per pupil x school roll =
c) shortfall in library provision (b - a) =
d) recommendation that 10% of existing stock is replaced annually =(a ÷ 10%)
e) total annual resource budget (c + d x average resource price) =

Example for Lower school:
   a) = Total stock = 1,000
   b) = 13 x 100 (school roll) = 1,300
   c) = 1,300 – 1,000 = 300
   d) = 1,000 ÷ 10% = 100
   e) = (300 + 100)   = 400 x £13 (average resource price) = £4,000

If the figure in c is a large amount, a 3-5 year budget programme should be written into the library development plan.

* The Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals

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The Schools Library Service can:

📖 assess how many resources need to be replaced as part of a library audit

📖 identify the stock areas which need extra funding

Chapter 3

Staffing

> *All staff, pupils, parents and the governing body need to be involved in the school library, sharing in plans and helping to ensure that use is successful and effective.*

Why Appropriate Staffing is Essential

Running a school library involves more than day to day operational routines. The Librarian or Library Co-ordinator needs time for the management and strategic development of the library which includes:

- policy and development
- overview of resources selection
- organisation of library
- overview of use
- creating imaginative and confident readers
- development of skills programme for pupils

The Librarian/Library Co-ordinator should be supported by their line manager and the whole school staff to ensure the efficient running of the library and that procedures are adhered to.

It is also necessary to run the library on a day-to-day basis. The Library Co-ordinator can share the following tasks with additional helpers:

- preparing stock for use
- shelving books
- keeping the library tidy
- supervising access
- supporting pupil use
- organising displays, promotions and special events

School libraries can be managed in one of the following ways:

- a full time professional librarian – CILIP's* recommendation
- a professional librarian shared by a group of schools
- a teacher as Library Co-ordinator, line managed by the head teacher. Enthusiasm and experience are essential and the post should be open to all teachers
- a non-teaching assistant with special responsibility for the library

Key Tasks for School Librarian/Library Co-ordinator

- manage the school library and library resources throughout the school
- develop and promote the role of the library in support of the curriculum
- work closely with the teaching staff, planning and delivering the curriculum
- develop and support the information skills curriculum in consultation with the teaching staff
- prepare financial estimates for the school library and manage the budget
- supervise and train all library staff, volunteers and pupil helpers

- select, acquire, maintain and withdraw library stock ensuring a balance between subjects and ability levels
- organise and classify library resources, both electronic and print-based
- make full use of ICT in the library
- make the library attractive and accessible to all children and staff, including displays, guiding and publicity materials
- promote the effective and efficient use of the library and library resources
- encourage reading and enjoyment of literature
- create and organise reader development activities, eg Book Week, author visits
- work with the wider community, especially parents
- make full use of the Schools Library Service and other sources of information and support
- develop links with feeder schools to facilitate transition and a coherent approach to library skills
- keep the head teacher, school governors and parents informed about the needs and development of the library and information service in school

Other Sources of Help
- all teaching staff should contribute to the selection of resources, the planning and monitoring of library use and implementation of the whole-school information skills programme
- classroom assistants can be trained to help with the routine tasks and library supervision at lunchtime, or before and after school
- pupil helpers can help promote the library to other children and carry out routine tasks
- volunteers, eg parents and governors, can provide valuable help with routine tasks as well as with library events
- one-off task groups can achieve a particular aim, eg stock checks

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The Schools Library Service can:

📖 help and advise in the organisation and management of library resources

📖 lend resources to support the school library and classroom work

📖 provide training for library staff in the day to day running of the library

📖 help and advise staff in the development and delivery of a Library Skills programme

Chapter 4

Library Layout and Design

> *The school library should be exciting and welcoming and identifiably different from classrooms. A multi-media, interactive learning environment motivates pupils to explore resources both for curriculum related work and for their own personal exploration of the resources.*

Before you start to create a new school library, you will need to:
- involve the whole school staff in a discussion of what the library will provide and define a common aim
- consider what range of stock will be available
- plan a welcoming atmosphere for the library
- assess the probable use of the library

Creating the Environment
Ideally the library should be:
- a resource for the whole school
- located centrally within the school
- easily accessible for all the children whatever their particular needs
- a single use area

A suitable location would be:
- a large separate room, a roofed quadrangle or a spacious foyer
- an area with adequate natural or artificial lighting
- warm enough for the children to use for long periods
- accessible - ideally the library should be on the ground floor

The size of the room is important, consider the following:
- the DfES building regulations
- the number of shelves to house the recommended number of books
- wall/floor space required to accommodate study, group and class activities

The library should contain the following:
- the central fiction collection
- the central non-fiction collection
- ICT - CD ROM, Internet and Office software
- study space
- enough seating for whole class
- informal reading area

Choosing Fixtures and Fittings
Draw a detailed plan of the site, remembering to include any permanent features such as radiators, windows, electrical sockets or deep skirting boards. Also remember to consider how many bays are needed per section of stock. The Schools Library Service can provide a list of recommended suppliers and could attend the meeting with the chosen supplier(s) if required.

Your brief should include:
- fittings for housing different types of stock, eg fiction, non-fiction, cassettes, videos and large books
- list of users - mainly the children but also teachers, parents and governors
- administration point
- number of seats and tables
- space for storage
- specific heights for shelves

Furniture and Decoration
- floors should be carpeted to reduce noise levels and provide an inviting environment. Rugs and cushions are comfortable and attractive extra features, ideal for storytimes
- walls should be of a suitable material and colour for displaying work and library signs
- curtains, blinds or other window dressings can reduce the effects of sunlight on books and help to create a welcoming environment

Shelving
A range of shelving is needed to store books of different sizes. It should be adjustable and can be wall fixed or free standing.
Other forms of shelving include kinderboxes for the picture books, big book storage and paperback carousels.

Amount of Shelving
A library should contain, on average, 13 books per child on the school roll for lower schools and 14.5 for middle schools. Each child will have approximately two books out at any one time, except, perhaps, at the end of term or school year. Sufficient shelving is needed to accommodate the recommended total number of library books in stock.

Shelf Accessories
Ranges are specific to wooden or metal shelves and can include shelf stops, back edge book supports and front facing display shelves.

Chairs and Tables
Space is often limited but where possible some tables and chairs for study are desirable as well as a more informal reading area.

ICT
IT is an important part of the school library. Remember to include space for the furniture and computer hardware when designing and planning your library. The school library needs ICT for the children to access information and, for larger schools, for the library computerised management system.
When deciding on the location of the ICT, it is important to consider where the electrical sockets and network connection points are positioned.

Library Signs (Guiding)
Clear signs and guiding will ensure the library is easily accessible and used effectively. They should include:
- directions to the library within the school
- a plan of the library
- wall charts showing subjects and colour coding - these can be provided by the Schools Library Service
- general signs on the bays - decide which subject headings you want to use

- shelf labels - these indicate broad groups of subjects showing colours and class numbers corresponding to your wall chart
- a "How to find a Book" chart - a large and simply worded chart which leads the reader from the subject index to the subject colour or number of the shelf
- a "How to take a book out" chart - a large and simply worded chart explaining how the issue system works

It is important to keep the signs simple, clear and bold.

Display
This helps to create an attractive environment and encourages children to use the library. It falls into two categories:
- promotion of stock
- display of book related children's work

Safety Tips
All the plans for the development or reorganisation of the library including the furnishings, staffing, use and movement of pupils must conform to the school's, and other recognised authorities', Health and Safety documents. Regular consultation with the Health and Safety representative is advised.

Consider the following:
- rooms with little space or thoroughfares should be avoided
- the shelving should be purchased from a specialist library supplier, please see insert for list of local suppliers. DIY shelving is not recommended
- shelves should be strong enough to take the weight of the books
- shelves should not have sharp edges
- bean bags and other soft furnishings must be flame resistant and have removable covers
- mobile shelves must have lockable castors
- a minimum of 1metre circulation space is needed in front of and between shelving units (this is a Health and Safety requirement)

The School Library Service can:

 🕯   provide advice and support on planning library layout

 🕯   attend and support you during meetings with furniture suppliers

 🕯   provide advice on suitable shelving

 🕯   provide advice on furniture, fixtures and suppliers

 🕯   provide a list of suggested subjects for your guiding

 🕯   provide wall charts on request

 🕯   provide a list of schools who have recently updated their library and are willing to share experiences

Chapter 5

Selecting Resources

> *Selecting the right resources for the library is the key to success. It will enable the school library to inspire a child's imagination, provide for a child's information needs and create life-long learners.*

Why is Selection Important?

The stock should reflect a balance between supporting the curriculum and providing resources to meet individual needs and interests.

The school library will stand or fall on its stock. Children (and teachers) who find what they want will return to use the library and will trust the library to meet their needs.

Selection is not just responsive to curriculum need; its role is also to inspire and challenge. Where better to discover new resources, new authors, genres and interests, than in the school library?

Selecting resources needs to be systematic to ensure currency and relevance. A regular routine needs to be established.

Selection Policy

The library policy should complement the whole school policy on resource provision, ie in the context of core book provision in classrooms, home reading schemes, resources for the Literacy Hour, and ICT. The selection policy is therefore part of the library policy; creating a context for stock management in terms of acquisition, promotion and use.

Who Selects?

One member of staff should have overall responsibility for the selection of resources. The following issues should also be considered:

- do all staff have opportunities to recommend titles?
- are specialist curriculum and interest areas recognised?
- can parents, carers and other adults also recommend titles?
- how can children contribute to the process?
- is the special expertise of both adults and children recognised, eg in the area of languages other than English?
- does the collection reflect the cultural diversity of the community?

General Principles of Selection

The range and balance of stock in the library should follow an agreed plan that is a part of the school's library policy. The following should also be considered:

- the ratio of non-fiction to fiction – the recommended ratio is 3:1
- the proportion of curriculum resources to leisure reading
- the proportion of stock for each key stage
- the relationship of classroom collections and literacy resources to the central library
- equal opportunities, including multicultural provision and special needs provision

Sources of Supply
Assessment of resources can be time consuming. The Schools Library Service and library suppliers can offer support by:

Schools Library Service
- providing a cost effective way of exchanging and acquiring up-to-date stock
- providing impartial and informed advice on suitable material for loan and purchase
- assisting schools with the purchase of new resources through library supplier's internet site or showroom visit
- providing the contact details of library suppliers

Library Suppliers
- offering a wide range of materials which can be viewed in showrooms, catalogues or on the Internet
- processing stock, ie classify, jacket and label stock ready for immediate use
- offering negotiated discounts

Consider Carefully
- Internet recommendations – many sites are commercial and may not be impartial
- sales representatives tend to sell discontinued series rather than individual books. Some series have weaker books, so check carefully to avoid spending money on books you don't want. The Schools Library Service or a library supplier will display a wide range of resources for comparison
- remainder companies take end of range books from publishers and sell them at attractive discounts. Consider carefully the value of the book to your school library as well as the cheap price
- donations may be out of date or unsuitable - only add to stock if the quality, currency and content are relevant to children's needs
- public library book sales – books that are no longer suitable for the public library should not be bought for the school library, due to age and condition

Guidelines for Assessing Books
The Schools Library Service can help schools to select resources to purchase resources which are up to date and relevant to their needs.
The following guidelines will help you to assess the suitability of a resource for your school:

For all Resources
- assess the item in the school context, eg relate current stock to the School Improvement Plan and the curriculum, how will the item make a difference?
- interest age/reading age – are they appropriate?
- standard of production, eg quality of paper and binding
- appeal – will it appeal to the target age group?
- illustrations – are pictures/photographs attractive and informative?
- style – is it well written?
- format – is the format appropriate for the age group?
- value for money – is it better to buy or borrow from the Schools Library Service?

- equal opportunities
    - how cultures, religions, ethnic diversity, gender and disabilities are presented in text and images
    - the provision of dual-language and mother-tongue material

Fiction
- plot – is it a good story?
- style – is it well written?
- characterisation – are the characters well presented and plausible?
- style and language – is the language level suitable for the intended reader?
- illustrations – will the cover and pictures appeal to the intended reader and do they reflect the nature of the story?

Non-fiction
- content – is it at an appropriate level for the intended audience?
- style and language – is it clear and grammatically correct? Does it match the reading abilities and interests of the intended audience?
- information accuracy – is it correct, current and unbiased?
- safety – are instructions for activities or experiments workable and safe?
- illustrations – do they interact well with the text? Are the captions written at the same reading level as the text?
- access – does the contents page assist in using the resource? Does the index contain relevant terms?

The Schools Library Service can:

- provide a cost effective way of exchanging and acquiring up-to-date stock

- provide impartial and informed advice on suitable material for loan and purchase

- assist schools with the purchase of new resources through library supplier's internet site or a showroom visit

- help schools to select resources to purchase which are up to date and relevant to their needs

- offer advice on maintaining a well balanced stock

- provide contact details of library suppliers

- provide booklists of popular subjects via the Schools Library Service website

Chapter 6

Classification

> *Simple procedures are essential for the effective organisation and use of the library. Books and other resources need to be arranged in a logical sequence and clearly labelled.*

Library Arrangement

In order for children and teachers to locate resources on any subject, they need to know where to look. The school library should hold both the central non-fiction and fiction collections, which should be arranged separately.

It is important that all resources are clearly signposted to help children locate them. Please see Chapter 4 for further information.

Non-Fiction
Dewey Decimal Classification

Non-fiction resources should be classified according to the Dewey Decimal Classification System. This is an international system, used in most public and school libraries in the UK. The scheme is based on three figure numbers from 001 to 999, with the addition of further subdivisions using a decimal point and subsequent digits for more specific subjects.

Lower Schools - three figure Dewey plus colour code
Middle Schools - three figure Dewey plus two decimal places

The main categories of the Dewey scheme, based on an abridged edition, are as follows:

	Category	Examples	
000-099	General Knowledge	032	Encyclopedias
100-199	Philosophy	152.4	Feelings
200-299	Religions	297	Islam
300-399	People and Places	307.76	Towns and Cities
400-499	Words and Language	411	Writing
500-599	Maths, Science, Nature	599	Mammals
600-699	How Things Work	621.8	Machines
700-799	Arts and Sport	759	Painters
800-899	Poetry, Plays (Literature)	821	Poetry
900-999	Geography and History	937	Romans

Colour Coding

The addition of colour coding helps children with limited reading skills to locate resources. Up to 20 colours are used, singly and in combination, to complement classification numbers. The Schools Library Service can provide a recommended colour chart.

Subject Index

The Subject Index produced by the Schools Library Service is an alphabetical list of subjects with the appropriate Dewey numbers. This can be used by the children for retrieval purposes and by the Library Co-ordinator when classifying books, to ensure consistency.

A shorter, more child friendly version of the Subject Index for lower schools can also be provided by the Schools Library Service.

Non-fiction resources should:

- be classified according to the Dewey Decimal Classification System using the current Schools Library Service Subject Index
- be spine labelled with the Dewey number (and colour coding if required)
- have shelf guides, wall charts and a children's subject index which show the Dewey number, colour and subject wording
- be shelved in a single sequence, in numerical order, from left to right within bays (a separate section can be designated for Reference resources)
- have a quick reference guide to the main subject areas in the form of an *alphabetical* wallchart showing appropriate numbers and colours for each subject
- have a complementary chart in *number/colour* order

Fiction

Fiction resources can be shelved in a number of ways:
- one straight, alphabetical sequence of all fiction stock arranged by the author's last name, left to right, within bays
- divided by ability or format and then alphabetically by author
- in Middle schools, books which have contents suitable for teenagers should be kept in a separate Year 8 collection
- picture storybooks are usually separated from the main fiction sequence(s), often displayed in kinderboxes, in no special order

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The Schools Library Service can:

  📖   provide help, training and advice on how to classify resources

  📖   classify and process your books for you

  📖   provide both versions of the Subject Index for your school library

  📖   provide quick reference guide wall charts with main subject areas and colour coding

  📖   provide a separate booklet showing how to process your stock

  📖   provide a chart of recommended colour coding

Chapter 7

Stock Maintenance

> *It is important to assess the library stock on a regular basis to ensure that resources remain relevant and attractive.*

Reviewing Stock

All library materials need to be edited on a regular basis. Information dates; books become worn; reading tastes change; the curriculum alters and new areas of stock, such as audio-visual media, become more important.

Stock checks not only prune out items which are no longer relevant but also highlight gaps and deficiencies where heavy use indicates a special need.

HM Inspectorate recommend 10% of library stock should be replaced every year and ideally no library stock should be more than ten years old.

Stock Weeding Criteria

It is important to establish criteria for the removal of resources. The following should be considered:

- equal opportunity issues
- physical condition – yellow pages, damaged spines, torn pages
- currency of information – is it still up to date and relevant?
- attractiveness to pupils – does it look tired and dated?
- relevance to curriculum and other children's needs

Stock Gaps and Deficiencies

- the stock editing should include an assessment of stock deficiencies
- an improvement plan should be drawn up so that, over a period of four to five years, most subject areas can be targeted for replenishment

Cleaning and Mending

It is very important to maintain a regular programme of cleaning and mending library stock.

- books should be repaired as soon as they show signs of damage in order to prolong their lives
- reinforcing the spines and corners of new stock before it is used can lengthen the books' life even more.
- the covers of books should be wiped clean regularly to make them more appealing

Disposal of Stock

- decide on methods of disposal, remembering that stock no longer suitable for the library is unlikely to be useful elsewhere
- resources which are outdated, offensive or in poor physical condition should be pulped or binned

The Schools Library Service can:

-     provide training on all aspects of stock maintenance

-     assess stock to identify subject gaps

-     weed stock to remove material which is out of date or in poor condition

-     provide a Stock Processing and Maintenance booklet showing how to maintain your stock which is available on the Schools Library Service website

Chapter 8

Loaning Resources

> *Simple and easy procedures are essential for the effective organisation and use of the library.*

Issuing Resources
An issue system can be useful in order to:
- keep track of items as they are borrowed
- record and assess children's reading habits
- facilitate the issuing of bulk loans from the library to classroom book corners
- familiarise children with library routines and help them to understand how all libraries work
- monitor and reduce loss of stock

Issue systems, however:
- can be time consuming
- need dependable people to operate them
- require children and staff to be trained to use them

Manual Issuing Systems
There are various ways of recording loans, eg:
- an exercise book in which the children write their names and the books they have borrowed. Many schools allocate a page for each child. When the books are returned, the child ticks the record of the loan
- a book card for each child, which is used to record items borrowed. The book title(s) is written on the card, with the issue date. The cards are kept in book pockets in the classroom, arranged by the children's names. When the books are returned the child ticks the record
- a book card for each book, which is removed from the book and placed in the reader's pocket and filed in an issue tray in child or class order. Date labels can be purchased for schools wishing to record issue dates in each book (these can incorporate a pocket to hold the book card)

Details of the stationery required can be found in the library suppliers' catalogues (see list of addresses in the additional pages enclosed)

Computerised Library Management Systems
Larger schools may wish to use a computerised management system, which will include cataloguing and loan functions.
When assessing different systems, cost, installation, operation and maintenance all need to be considered.

Costs involved
Hardware
- number of computers – at least one dedicated computer is needed
- networking costs, if more than one computer
- printer
- barcode reader

Software
Assess the software packages on offer and decide which modules are needed.

CILIP* recommends that schools use one of the specialist computerised library management systems available.

Other Costs
- barcodes
- processing stock
- initial input of records: many systems allow data to be imported, requiring only the addition of a class number, which saves both time and money
- ongoing maintenance and upgrades
- helpline support
- staff training
- staff time

System Consideration
- is the screen layout clear and user-friendly?
- does the catalogue offer all the fields you need: author, title, Dewey classification number, price, resource type, keywords, notes?
- can you insert your own classification numbers and colours? (If system provides class numbers they may not correspond to yours)
- is searching by keywords simple?
- is there a limit to the number of keywords which can be applied to a resource?
- can information be printed?
- what reports and statistical information can be produced, eg top ten use, books borrowed by boys, books not issued for a long time or at all?
- are issuing and discharging straightforward?
- can the system be networked across the whole school?
- is the system easy to manage?
- does it offer an interactive element, eg children adding their own reviews?
- is the system easy to backup?
- what systems are other schools using?
- can you visit another school to see the system in use?

Company Information
- does the company have a good reputation?
- is there a user group?
- can demonstrations be organised?
- is the manual easy to use and comprehensive?
- what technical support is offered?

It is advisable to compare several system providers before deciding which one to purchase.
The role of the Schools Library Service is not to recommend any system but to advise schools of systems already in use by Bedfordshire schools.

   *The Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals

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The Schools Library Service can:

📖   provide addresses and contact numbers of a variety of system providers

📖   advise on loaning resources

📖   provide a list of schools, together with the systems they use, for you to contact

Chapter 9

The Library as a Focus for Literacy

"Enjoyment of reading at the youngest possible age sets us up for life as full members of a literate society" - Liz Attenborough (Project Director – The National Year of Reading)

Identifying Readers
Children of all ages and abilities (including less able and reluctant readers) need a variety of choices to develop and broaden their reading and interests.

The Youngest Readers
The school library should have picture books, novelty books, board books and nursery rhymes to encourage parents and young children to read together.

Developing Readers
There are many first reading series which offer familiarity and challenges to children but are not devised as reading schemes. Children should feel that they are reading 'real books' from both the library and the classroom. It is important to keep the reading scheme books separately in the classroom. Poetry, short stories, picture books and storytapes all appeal to new readers. The short paragraphs of text in simple non-fiction books can also be interesting for new readers.

Reluctant Readers
Ensure there is plenty of choice for reluctant readers; the library could include picture books, graphic novels, short stories, jokes, simple non-fiction, comics and ICT.

Confident Readers
All readers, including confident readers, need support. The main fiction collection should include anything from quick reads to more in depth stories, to allow them to enjoy all types of books.

Reader Development
Children should be given the opportunity to read:
- a variety of genres
- a wide range of authors
- different series
- different publishers

The school library should encourage reading exploration. Some suggested reader development activities are:
- storytime for children of all ages
- private reading time
- author/illustrator visits
- book weeks
- shadowing national book awards, eg Carnegie and Greenaway Medals
- celebrating national reading initiatives, eg World Book Day
- promoting public library activities, eg Summer Reading Challenge
- family literacy
- linking with whole school events, eg celebrations of key festivals

Reading Groups

A reading group starts with the interest of the children and allows them to develop the identity of the group and the nature of the activities. Suggested activities are:

- using book related web sites
- producing book reviews
- recommending books to the whole school
- involvement in selecting books for the school library
- involvement in the planning of the book week

Storysacks

These combine a book (fiction or non-fiction) with activities and a collection of objects in a bag. The sacks can be produced by parents or borrowed from the Schools Library Service. They can be used in the classroom or taken home to be used with parents. Storysacks work well with children of all ages and children with special needs. They involve parents in supporting their children's literacy and stimulate book sharing.

The Schools Library Service can provide:

- loans of fiction and non-fiction for the school library

- picture books, board books, novelty books, nursery rhymes, poetry, short stories, storytapes, jokes, suitable graphic novels

- storysacks

- advice on Reader Development

- advice on planning an author visit

- a new book promotion session with the children or staff

- advice on setting up Reading Groups

- provide booklists via the Schools Library Service website

Chapter 10

Information Literacy

> *In a world of global information, the ability to handle information effectively has never been more vital. The school library is much more than a gateway to information sources. It is where pupils learn to make sense of what they see and acquire the essential building blocks of information skills - the key to the lifelong learning process.*

It is important that a whole school approach to teaching information skills is implemented. This will ensure that skills are not taught out of context but are reinforced in the classroom and the library as the curriculum requires.

Introducing Learning Skills
- reading for information is a skill that needs to be taught, using printed forms and a computer screen
- start with a basic introduction to the layout of the library, the range of resources and how to find them
- move on to information handling skills that help children make sense of the information available
- with a strategy for searching and evaluating information, children will be equipped with lifelong skills

Reinforcing the Learning Sequence
- children need time and opportunity to learn how to make full use of the library and to handle information efficiently and effectively
- information literacy must be taught and reinforced throughout children's school careers across the curriculum
- children need guidance and experience in the selection and use of information books and other sources
- the seeking of information needs to be within the demands of each curriculum subject
- as with all newly acquired skills, children's progress needs to be recorded to maintain and ensure continuity and development
- carefully planned homework activities provide opportunities for children to reinforce and extend reading for information outside of the curriculum

The Schools Library Service can:

📖   assess your current programme and recommend future developments

Chapter 11

Judging Success

> *Effective libraries must be responsive to educational and technological change, and contribute to school improvement and pupil's learning. This requires a continual process of self review and evaluation which is both qualitative and quantitative. Evaluations are only successful if their outcomes are efficiently disseminated and used effectively to inform future action.*

Key Questions

- Are there sufficient resources in the library to meet the needs of the various curriculum subjects and cater for pupils' personal and leisure interests?
- Do resources meet the individual learning needs of pupils of all ages and abilities?
- Are the library and its resources easily accessible to pupils?
- Are these resources relevant and of good quality?
- What use do pupils and staff make of the library and its resources?
- How does the library ethos contribute to educational standards within the school?
- How does the library affect school improvement, including pupil achievement?

Performance Measures

Strengths, weaknesses and areas for development will be identified by judging the service against the following quantitative and qualitative measures. Targets for raised standards should then be set.

Service Input – Quantitative Measures

- size of bookfund
- spending per pupil
- number of books in library
- number of multimedia items
- book ratio per pupil (minimum 13 books per pupil)
- school community involvement:
  - teachers
  - parents/volunteers
  - pupils
  - primary helpers/classroom assistants
  - governors
  - other adults
- number of hours the library is open/accessible
- number of computers in the library
- internet access
- accommodation:
  - space for shelves
  - reading space
  - shelving: accessibility, flexibility, height, guiding facilities
  - display space
  - chairs/tables

- lighting
- power sockets
- floor covering

Service Input – Qualitative Measures
- quality of stock
- range of stock
- appropriateness of stock
- range and quality of displays and book promotion activities
- training for teachers and pupils
- effectiveness of the information skills programme
- inclusion of library in curriculum plans
- input into the school's Annual Report

Service Output – Quantitative Measures
These can be easily retrieved from a computerised library management system.
- number of books issued
- number of classes using library regularly
- percentage of books on loan at any one time
- number of pupils using library
- breakdown of users by pupils (age and gender) teachers, class/year groups

Service Output – Qualitative Measures
- how easy is the library to use by classes and individuals?
- who is not using the library and why?
- quality and effectiveness of book promotion activities
- contribution of library to achievements and school standards
- impact on pupils
- profile of individual pupil's reading development
- pupils' confidence in using information and learning skills
- ways in which the library is used to support teaching and learning in the school

Key questions which could be asked by an Inspector
- "who uses the library – and who doesn't?"
- are learning resources accessible for the school's curriculum and range of pupils?
  - is the library adequately resourced?
  - what is the quality and diversity of the resources?
  - do the resources match the differentiated learning needs of the pupils?
  - how suitable is the layout of the library: its organisation, use and accessibility?
- What is the library's contribution to:
  - raising standards and individual progress?
  - supporting behaviour and personal development?
  - supporting teaching and the curriculum?
  - assessment?
  - supporting spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and pupil welfare?
  - supporting partnerships with parents, the community and leadership?
  - supporting the management and efficiency of the school?

Documentation to support performance measures
- library policy, including book selection and stock review guidelines
- library improvement plan
- material demonstrating how information literacy is taught across the curriculum, including the school's curriculum planning documents
- facts and figures about the library, eg from a computer database

- details and photographs of any special library based events
- comments on the library's contribution to whole school policies
- examples of pupils' work produced using the library, eg project work

CILIP recommends that the school library is evaluated on a regular basis and that reports are shared with the Head Teacher, other staff, governing body and parents.

The Schools Library Service can:

    📖   audit the school library to identify strengths and areas in need of improvement

Index