



Libraries
ALL PARTY PARLIAMENTARY
GROUP

APPG
REPORT

THE BEATING HEART OF THE SCHOOL

Improving educational
attainment through
school libraries and
librarians

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FOREWORD

Every child growing up in the UK should have the chance to learn and develop through a good school library. Poor literacy skills stand in the way of children and young people achieving their potential. In an increasingly digital world, we need to teach young people how to evaluate and understand unprecedented amounts of information.

The ability of businesses to recruit people with the right skills and the success of our economy are underpinned by literate and knowledgeable people. Good school libraries build these skills.

I believe that school libraries and librarians contribute an enormous amount to educational attainment, but the case must be strengthened. We need to know how many schools have a library and librarian, currently we do not. We need to understand more fully the positive impact that school libraries have on children's literacy skills, education and well-being. To make sure we measure the impact school libraries have, Ofsted should include libraries in their inspections, currently they do not.

A whole range of people have the chance to improve school library provision across the UK. Head teachers, the Department for Education, Ofsted, school librarians, parents, teachers, school governors and politicians – we all have a part to play to make sure that the next generation is a smart generation. With one in six adults in the UK struggling with literacy, more must be done to equip young people with essential literacy skills.

I would expect the best schools to have a fantastic library; we need to ensure that every pupil across the UK has a library that is fit for purpose in their school.

This report sets out four clear, achievable recommendations to take us further on this path.

Lord Graham Tope CBE

Chair of the Libraries All Party Parliamentary Group



INTRODUCTION

‘LITERACY IS A HUGE ISSUE FOR THE NATION, OUR SOCIETY AND OUR ECONOMY, NOT JUST FOR SCHOOLS’

(All Party Parliamentary Group for Education, 2011)

School libraries and school library provision are at a critical juncture. In a time of educational reform, financial constraints and devolution of decision making powers, every aspect of school life has to demonstrate its value to the wellbeing and attainment of the pupils in school. The All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Libraries has commissioned a report into the issues facing school libraries and librarians and how the role that they play in educational attainment could be better clarified for government, local authorities and head teachers.

There is no complete picture on school library provision available to government, which makes attempting to improve it more difficult. Head teachers and governors have many important decisions to make and need good information to make that process easier. The report has a particular focus on England but the primary research within it covers all four nations of the UK and references are made to the differences between them. It explores the attitude of head teachers and the government to school libraries and librarians. It makes four key recommendations.

The report has been supported and brought together by the Chartered Institute of Library and Information professionals (CILIP), who provide the secretariat for the APPG. A charity established by Royal Charter, CILIP is the professional body for library and information professionals in the UK. It has around 14,000 members working in all parts of the UK economy, including in schools and for Schools Library Services.

This APPG report will focus on three key areas: the state of play, the importance of good school libraries and the role of head teachers.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1:

THERE ARE NO DEFINITIVE FIGURES SHOWING THE NUMBER OR PROPORTION OF SCHOOLS THAT HAVE SCHOOL LIBRARIES AND A SCHOOL LIBRARIAN. THE APPG RECOMMENDS THAT THE DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION ENSURE THAT THIS INFORMATION BECOMES PART OF THE ANNUAL DATA SUBMISSION FROM SCHOOLS.

RECOMMENDATION 2:

THE APPG RECOMMENDS THAT THE MINISTER CONSIDERS EXAMINING THE ROLE THAT SCHOOL LIBRARIANS AND SCHOOL LIBRARIES PLAY IN SUPPORTING PUPILS' LITERACY LEVELS, ENJOYMENT OF READING, INFORMATION LITERACY SKILLS AND ACCESS TO KNOWLEDGE, AS WELL AS ON THEIR SELF ESTEEM, CONFIDENCE, SENSE OF SAFETY AND WELLBEING IN THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY IN GREATER DEPTH.

RECOMMENDATION 3:

THE APPG RECOMMENDS THAT THE MINISTER WELCOMES THE DEMONSTRABLE CONTRIBUTION SCHOOL LIBRARIES MAKE TO EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AND DISCUSSES WITH OFSTED EMBEDDING THE SCHOOL LIBRARY INTO THEIR INSPECTION FRAMEWORK.

RECOMMENDATION 4:

THE APPG RECOMMENDS THAT THE MINISTER ENSURES THAT THE DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION HAS A MEMBER OF STAFF ACTING AS LEAD FOR LIBRARIES TO SUPPORT THE WORK OF HEAD TEACHERS AND SCHOOL LIBRARIANS IN DELIVERING POSITIVE OUTCOMES FOR PUPILS.



STATE OF PLAY: PROVISION ACROSS THE UK

WHAT DOES THE SITUATION CURRENTLY LOOK LIKE AND WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT?

1.1. Provision across the UK

A young person's access to school library provision varies depending on which of the home nations they live in:

- School Library Services, rather than provision of a physical space, are statutory in Northern Ireland.
- There is no statutory duty to provide school libraries or school library services in England, Scotland and Wales. Whether children and young people have access to a school library and the benefits they bring is entirely dependent upon head teachers.

1.2. Levels of provision

There has been no recent, systematic quantitative evidence of the number of school libraries, or the nature of school library provision which makes monitoring and effectively managing the situation extremely difficult.

1.2.1. Primary schools

Recent surveys have shown that 40% of primary schools with designated library space have seen their budgets reduced. The UK National Survey of School Libraries in 2010 showed a 7% fall over three years in the number of school libraries with library space. It also showed that though relatively few had a designated school librarian, 90% accessed professional support via the Schools Library Service.¹

Access to library space and School Library Services will have an impact on attainment at a pivotal point in a child's educational life. Studies have shown that children who read for pleasure from a young age are much more likely to do well throughout their academic life.

¹ Streatfield, D, Shaper, S and Rae-Scott, S 2010 *School Libraries in the UK: a worthwhile past, a difficult present – and a transformed future?* London: CILIP

‘SECONDARY SECTOR PROVISION VARIES FROM EXCELLENT TO THE INVISIBLE.’

(The School Library Commission, 2010)

1.2.2. Secondary schools

There are no government statistics available that give a comprehensive picture of school library provision, which makes attempting to improve it more difficult. With the current revolution in secondary education, more and more decision-making is being devolved to head teachers, including around school libraries. It is vital that in order to manage this transition, head teachers, politicians, governors and parents have information about the importance of the school library to make the best decisions possible for the benefit of pupils.

1.3. Quality of secondary school libraries

The quality of library provision varies immensely. The UK National Survey of School Libraries² found that:

- More than 25% of secondary school libraries do not operate for a full school day
- Only 25% of secondary school libraries operate an extended school day
- Only 17% of the libraries have enough computers or laptops for an average class
- Almost a third of the libraries have insufficient space
- The number of books does not generally grow as student numbers increase
- Almost half the library budgets for books and other resources are frozen at the previous year's level; almost a third have been cut, some from a very low base.

The 2012 School Library Association Survey³ confirmed these figures with 34% of responding secondary schools reporting a reduction and 49% a freeze in budgets.

2 Streatfield, D, Shaper, S and Rae-Scott, S, 2010. *School Libraries in the UK: a worthwhile past, a difficult present – and a transformed future?* London: CILIP

3 School Library Association, 2012. *School Libraries in 2012 – the SLA Survey*. Swindon: School Library Association

I.4. Schools Library Service

Schools Library Services are support services delivered by local authorities providing primary and secondary schools with advice and training on managing and developing their own school libraries and teaching resources, on teaching information and digital fluency to enable children to become independent learners and on helping schools create a reading culture.

The Schools Library Service also lends, or makes available for purchase, carefully chosen resources to support teaching and learning in the classroom and to support wider reading for pleasure and enjoyment.

Schools Library Services are often a traded service to schools. When faced with tough budget decisions some schools are choosing to no longer use them, so children are missing out, and the school as a whole loses the added value and economies of scale.

Over the last decade the number of Schools Library Services has declined, and a survey of public library authorities in England, Wales and Northern Ireland between July and September 2012 suggests that one in five could be facing the possibility of closure.⁴

In a quarter of respondent authorities that deliver a Schools Library Service, the Service is being reviewed *and* closure is a possibility. Budgets are being reduced in 40% of respondent authorities.

I.5. School librarians

One of the most concerning trends has been the fall in the number of librarians in English schools. The Department for Education's School Workforce data for England has shown a reduction of 280 librarians in two years. In 2012 there were 2,979 full time equivalent librarians in English schools.

⁴ CILIP, 2012.
An Uncertain Future: Schools Library Services in England and Wales 2012 London: CILIP

Figure 1:

Full-time equivalent (FTE) librarians in publicly funded schools in England.
(see Annexe A for figures for the devolved nations)

PHASE	FTE librarians 2012
Local authority maintained nursery	1
Local authority maintained primary	247
Primary academies	20
Local authority maintained secondary	1,275
Secondary academies	1,394
Local authority maintained special	13
Centrally employed	29
Group Total	2,979

(Source: Department for Education Workforce Census, 2012)

In order to monitor these changes and ensure that there is a clear picture of levels of provision across all schools and trends around that provision, it would not be onerous for schools to report on this to government as part of annual statistical returns.

RECOMMENDATION 1:

THERE ARE NO DEFINITIVE FIGURES SHOWING THE NUMBER OR PROPORTION OF SCHOOLS THAT HAVE SCHOOL LIBRARIES AND A SCHOOL LIBRARIAN. THE APPG RECOMMENDS THAT THE DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION ENSURE THAT THIS INFORMATION BECOMES PART OF THE ANNUAL DATA SUBMISSION FROM SCHOOLS.



WHY IS GOOD SCHOOL LIBRARY PROVISION SO IMPORTANT?

‘I CAN TELL YOU IF A SCHOOL HAS A GOOD LIBRARY FIVE MINUTES AFTER ENTERING IT... IT IS IN THE EYES OF THE KIDS.’

(Anthony Horowitz)

Evidence shows that there is a positive correlation between a good school library and student attainment, achievement and motivation. There have been numerous reports and research projects both nationally and internationally that support this proposition.

2.1. The evidence: international research

“A school library program that is adequately staffed, resourced, and funded can lead to higher student achievement regardless of the socio-economic or educational levels of the community”.⁵

In 2008 Scholastic Library Publishing released *School Libraries Work!*, a paper that brings together findings from nearly two decades of empirical studies in 19 US states and one Canadian province that show that student academic achievement on standardised tests is higher in schools with well resourced libraries, managed by qualified librarians, than it is in schools where these conditions are not met.

Three studies in Colorado, conducted over two decades, also provide strong evidence of the impact of school libraries and librarians on student reading ability. The third study, published in 2010, found that more children scored “proficient” or “advanced” in reading tests in schools with a full-time, qualified librarian than those without.⁶

A study in Pennsylvania published in 2012 found that reading and writing scores are consistently better for students who have a full-time certified librarian than those that don’t.

The most vulnerable students, such as those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, were found to benefit proportionally more than students generally.⁷

A study using data from the American Government’s National Center for Education Statistics published in 2011⁸ found a correlation between lower numbers of librarians and lower reading scores in standardised tests. The data also reveals that that US states that increased the numbers of librarians in 2008–2009 showed significantly greater improvements in fourth-grade reading scores than states that lost librarians.

5 Scholastic, 2008. *School Libraries Work!* Research Foundation paper, 3rd Ed. Scholastic Library Publishing

6 Hovendick, K. B., Curry Lance, K., and Lietzau, Z., 2010. *School Librarians Continue to Help Students Achieve Standards: The Third Colorado Study*. Denver: Library Research Service

7 Curry Lance, K., and Schwarz, B., 2012. *How Pennsylvania School Libraries Pay Off: Investments in Student Achievement and Academic Standards*. Louisville: RSL Research Group

8 Curry Lance, K., and Hofschire, L., 2011. *Something to Shout About: New research shows that more librarians means higher reading scores*, School Library Journal

A review of research into the impact of school libraries on student achievement in Australia, undertaken in 2003, also found evidence that an adequately staffed, resourced and funded school library can lead to higher student achievement, regardless of the socioeconomic or educational levels of the adults in the community.⁹

2.2. The United Kingdom

‘School libraries are an under-utilised resource, often perceived by head teachers to be a low priority. What should be a vital ingredient of our schools system is marginalised and seems not to be connected with the acknowledged educational priorities of literacy and information skills supporting knowledge acquisition, which are their core business.’

(School Library Commission, 2010)

There is little quantifiable research on the impact of school library provision in the UK. However, qualitative evidence presented to the School Library Commission demonstrated the powerful impact an effective school library and schools library service could have on ‘pupils’ literacy levels, enjoyment of reading, information literacy skills and access to knowledge, as well as on their self esteem, confidence, sense of safety and wellbeing in the school community’. What we have are small pockets of evidence that demonstrate impact but not a piece of research of sufficient scale.

Research by the National Literacy Trust, published in 2011, found that **young people who read at or above the expected level for their age are three times more likely to be school library users than those who read below the expected level for their age**. Young people who use the school library were also found to hold more positive attitudes towards reading than young people who do not use it.¹⁰

The All Party Parliamentary Group for Education’s inquiry into overcoming the barriers to literacy, published in 2011¹¹, presented evidence showing how **libraries, both in schools and in the community, have a positive effect on reading**, a finding that was echoed in the same year by Ofsted in its report *Removing Barriers to Literacy*.

‘The primary and secondary schools visited emphasised the school library as contributing markedly to improving literacy skills... The enthusiasm and responsiveness of the librarian generally had a direct impact on the attitudes of the students towards the library and reading’¹²

9 Lonsdale, M 2003 *Impact of school libraries on student achievement: a review of the research Report for the Australian School Library Association*

10 Clark, C., and Douglas, J., 2011. *Young People’s Reading and Writing. An in-depth study focusing on enjoyment, behaviour, attitudes and attainment*. London: National Literacy Trust

11 All-Party Parliamentary Group for Education, 2011. *Report of the Inquiry into Overcoming the Barriers to Literacy*

12 Ofsted, 2011. *Removing barriers to literacy*

More recently Ofsted reported that **‘many of the imaginative programmes to encourage reading that inspectors see are inspired by a good librarian’**.¹³ Despite the evidence that school libraries and librarians can play an important role in supporting educational attainment, the School Library Commission’s report concluded that many school libraries in the UK are not fulfilling this potential.

The Commission identified several reasons for this, including the failure to integrate library activities within a school’s plans for teaching and learning, head teachers omitting to consider libraries as strategically useful resources, ambivalence about the role of the library and school library services in delivering educational outcomes, and a lack of understanding of pedagogy amongst some school librarians.

RECOMMENDATION 2:

THE APPG RECOMMENDS THAT THE MINISTER CONSIDERS EXAMINING THE ROLE THAT SCHOOL LIBRARIANS AND SCHOOL LIBRARIES PLAY IN SUPPORTING PUPILS’ LITERACY LEVELS, ENJOYMENT OF READING, INFORMATION LITERACY SKILLS AND ACCESS TO KNOWLEDGE, AS WELL AS ON THEIR SELF ESTEEM, CONFIDENCE, SENSE OF SAFETY AND WELLBEING IN THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY IN GREATER DEPTH.



**WHAT
DOES
A GOOD
SCHOOL
LIBRARY
LOOK LIKE?**

‘The library has an impact on learning across the curriculum, encourages independence and is particularly important in the vital task of promoting pupils’ reading and improving their information literacy skills. The library also caters for the varied personal interests of the whole school community – education in its widest sense. We all hope that, by enjoying using our school library, our pupils will visit libraries all their lives. For these reasons, our library resource director is a key member of our staff, carrying out a wide range of important roles.’

(Good school libraries making a difference to learning, Ofsted 2006)

3.1. The professional view

In School Libraries: a Right CILIP sets out the core entitlements that every child, school’s teaching team and wider school community should expect to receive. It provides the case for a properly resourced and, crucially, a professionally staffed school library. It makes the case below:

- Good school librarians know the education system and the changing needs and demands of the curriculum, have an understanding of pedagogy, a wide and current knowledge of available books and online sources, and have the skills to develop and deliver information literacy teaching.
- A good school library is managed by library professionals who understand, and have the resources to support, the curriculum. The new National Curriculum for England Framework Document states that every school should provide library facilities. This can be best achieved if there is a library at the heart of every school, and the unique role and contribution of the library and librarian is recognised and championed.

3.2. Supporting the curriculum

‘The national curriculum is just one element in the education of every child. There is time and space in the school day and in each week, term and year to range beyond the national curriculum specifications. The national curriculum provides an outline of core knowledge around which teachers can develop exciting and stimulating lessons to promote the development of pupils’ knowledge, understanding and skills as part of the wider school curriculum’

(Aims of the new National Curriculum for England, 2013)

The school librarian is uniquely placed to support teaching and learning in all areas of the National Curriculum, not just English, as well as the wider school curriculum. Through the librarian's knowledge, expertise and skills, children are taught how to access and explore for themselves all the school curriculum subject areas and beyond. This is particularly important for the large number of pupils who still do not have access to books and/or the internet at home.

'When I start something from scratch I would go the librarian and ask their ideas on how I can achieve the learning outcomes. I would say that it is the librarian rather than the physical space that is important in my teaching.'

(Andy Pearce, Head of History, George Abbot School, Surrey¹⁴)

The new curriculum aspires to free up teachers to deliver engaging programmes of study. To achieve this, teachers need access to high quality and current literature and information resources. School librarians can access resources that are available, not only in school libraries, but in public libraries, archives, museums and local studies centres, as well as the resources for loan from the Schools Library Service. They are able to link these resources to the curriculum, helping teachers to introduce children to new learning experiences based on access to a wide range of content. The librarian will also support the teacher in developing and/or refreshing their own knowledge of a subject.

Where the library is fully integrated into the life and ethos of the school, the potential benefits that a good professional partnership with the teaching staff can bring to the quality of teaching should not be underestimated.

3.3. Literacy

'If smart growth is about knowledge and innovation, investment in literacy skills is a prerequisite for achieving such growth... Ultimately, literacy is about whether a society is fit for the future'

(Final report of the EU High Level Group of experts on literacy, 2012)

One in every six adults in the UK struggles with literacy, with a literacy level below that expected of an eleven year old.¹⁵ In 2011 more than four in every ten employers surveyed by the Confederation of British Industry said they were dissatisfied with the low standards of basic literacy demonstrated by many school and college leavers.¹⁶ Sixty percent of the prison population has difficulties with basic literacy skills.¹⁷

¹⁴ From CILIP, 2010. Response of the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) to the School Library Commission's Lines of Enquiry London: CILIP

¹⁵ Jama, D., and Dugdale, G., 2012. *Literacy: State of the Nation*. London: National Literacy Trust

¹⁶ CBI, 2011. *Building for growth: business priorities for education and skills*. Education and skills survey 2011

¹⁷ Clark, G., and Dugdale, G., 2008. *Literacy Changes Lives. The role of literacy in offending behaviour*. London: National Literacy Trust

The new national curriculum framework states that the development of literacy skills is an integral aspect of the teaching of every subject, and the overarching aim for English in the curriculum is to promote high standards of literacy. A good school library and librarian have a proven and significant positive impact on literacy standards.

Most librarians are involved in literacy work, either directly in the classroom or by obtaining and organising useful resources to help teachers with their literacy efforts. Many are finding innovative ways to develop literacy skills, especially amongst pupils who have low levels of prior attainment, in collaboration with teaching staff:

‘Our school library has been fundamental to developing the way we work with boys. We recognised many years ago that boys who arrived at secondary school with literacy needs felt alienated and found it difficult to access lessons. Research showed us the need to put into place a programme to raise literacy levels and provide a framework of behaviour interventions. The library spearheaded a reading trail structure for English lessons. We empowered the staff to take a lead, provided the resources and the library went from strength to strength.’

(Librarian at Forest Hill School, Lewisham, London)

‘Making full use of the library and librarian’ is one of ten principles of good practice for raising literacy levels that have been set out by Ofsted in its 2013 report *Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools*. Following visits to seven English secondary schools identified in inspections as effective in delivering cross-curricular improvement in literacy in schools, Ofsted concluded that:

‘In every school in the survey there were successful measures to involve the library and ensure that the librarian had an important role in developing reading. This is common sense, building on the specialist knowledge that librarians possess. Where librarians are fully integrated into the management structure of the school, they have an opportunity to influence debate and to enhance the library’s contribution to pupils’ progress.’

(*Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools*, Ofsted, 2013)

3.4. Reading for pleasure

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has concluded that reading for pleasure is even more important than social class in determining academic skills and that finding ways to engage students in reading may be one of the most effective ways to bring about social change.¹⁸

¹⁸ *Reading for change: a report on the programme for international student assessment*, OECD, 2002.

The 47th PISA in Focus Report, published by OECD in 2011, ranked the UK 47th out of 65 nations based on how many children read for pleasure.

An overarching aim for English in the new national curriculum is the development of pupils' love of literature through reading for enjoyment. A good school library provides a safe haven for recreational reading and the professional librarian has the knowledge, skills and expertise to match pupils to reading materials that satisfies their curiosity and extends their reading habits.

School librarians take an active role in encouraging reading for pleasure, through reading with individuals or groups and by promoting reading by organising exhibitions and displays, arranging author visits, running reading clubs, or involving pupils in initiatives such as the CILIP Carnegie and Kate Greenaway shadowing scheme.¹⁹

'The Year 8 reading interviews involve each pupil having a conversation with the librarian about their reading history. Recommendations for future reading are then made by the librarian. This is extremely powerful, especially when the librarian is able to share with each pupil, through the use of reading records and data, the use they have made of the library since they moved to secondary school... Feedback from pupils has been positive; they feel special having guaranteed time with the librarian and have been keen not to miss out on their interviews. Many have taken the recommendations seriously and have been eager to discuss their views on the books they have been reading and the new authors they have encountered.'

(Stewart Pinnock, Head of English, The Broxbourne School, Hertfordshire)

Boys' underachievement in reading is a significant concern for schools across the country. A National Libraries Trust survey carried out for the All-Party Parliamentary Literacy Group in 2012, found that 76% of UK schools said boys in their school did not do as well in reading as girls.

However, the Trust received compelling evidence of the role of school and public libraries in engaging boys in reading. Many school librarians talked about how they made use of activities, for example Accelerated Reader, which quizzes children on books they have read. The competitive nature of this activity was seen as very attractive to boys.²⁰

UK Literacy Association research carried out in schools in 2009, showed that teachers do not have the up-to-date knowledge of children's books required to encourage wider reading and cannot always recommend titles that match a child's interest and/or ability.²¹ Teachers who may have the required knowledge do not always have the time to put this into practice. This is a core role of the librarian.

19 S Streatfield, D, Shaper, S and Rae-Scott, S 2010 *School Libraries in the UK: a worthwhile past, a difficult present – and a transformed future?* London: CILIP

20 Cremin, T., Bearne, E., Morrtam, M., and Goodwin, P., 2009. *Teachers as Readers: Phase I Research Report for UKLA Web*

21 Cremin, T., Bearne, E., Morrtam, M., and Goodwin, P., 2009. *Teachers as Readers: Phase I Research Report for UKLA Web*

3.5. Information literacy

CILIP defines information literacy as ‘knowing when and why you need information, where to find it, and how to evaluate, use and communicate it in an ethical manner’. Children need to be taught information literacy skills to enable them to access and use information in all media, for learning and for life. Without developing such skills today’s children run the risk of being excluded and disenfranchised from day-to-day life as adults.

Librarians are contributing to essential information literacy work in the school. Librarians contribute to cultivating a capacity for effective lifelong learning by providing pupils with a diverse range of information resources, motivating independent inquiry, and promoting critical and creative reading and thinking.

The International Baccalaureate Organisation recognises this and requires any school it endorses for the International Baccalaureate Diploma to have a library and expects a qualified librarian to play a role in teaching information skills.

3.6. Digital fluency and e-safety

‘Digital fluency relies on understanding how websites are made (and copied), how to check who hosts a website, how search engines apply non-neutral processes to find you information, how to recognise authentic websites from inauthentic ones, how pictures and video footage can be manipulated and how the provenance of user-generated content can be traced.’

(Demos, 2012)

The Demos report, *Truth, Lies and the Internet*, warned that many teenagers believe online conspiracy theories and are unable to see through hate or extremist websites.²² Children and young people have to be equipped with digital fluency skills that enable them to navigate the internet safely if they are to grow into well-rounded citizens. Knowing how to use technology is not enough.

Research into the perspective of teachers on the digital literacy competencies of their pupils found that the teachers surveyed rated these competencies as, on average, poor (understanding how search engines operate was the only skill rated above average). The researchers concluded that:

‘When asked in what subject digital fluency might be taught, there was a remarkable array of different subjects proposed. This suggests that teachers felt that digital fluency is a core competency, one that should be taught across several subjects.’

²² Bartlett, J and Miller, C., 2011. *Truth, lies and the internet*. London: Demos.

This is why school librarians and the IL [information literacy] community are so important to the future of digital fluency: they sit atop any specific subject area, and can see opportunities in each.'

(Demos, 2012²³)

A recent Ofsted briefing paper, *Inspecting e-Safety*, sets out what inspectors will be looking for in terms of safe internet use in schools. There is an explicit expectation that 'all teaching and non-teaching staff should be able to recognise e-safety issues' and that a progressive e-safety curriculum and rigorous e-safety policies and procedures will be in place.²⁴

E-safety issues are part of the wider remit of teaching information literacy skills and school librarians are educating pupils and the wider school community about internet safety, including the safe use of social media. School librarians often contribute to written internet safety policies for their schools, recognising that children are best protected when they are given access to the internet, whilst at the same time being taught how to differentiate the good from the bad.

3.7. Support for children's emotional, cultural, leisure and wider needs

'One girl's parent told me that the library and the relationship I have with her daughter is of utmost importance in her daughter developing her confidence in herself and her place in her new school. Her daughter knows that she can be herself, challenge herself and try new things in the library and her enthusiasm is never dampened.'

(School Libraries in the UK, 2010)²⁵

The National Curriculum programme of study and attainment targets for English recognises that pupils have a chance to develop culturally, emotionally, spiritually and socially through reading in particular. Most importantly in a school environment, a library is a neutral space where children are valued as individuals and where they can access reading materials that supports their diverse needs and interests. The library is often a place where heritage and culture is celebrated and through activities organised by school librarians, such as author visits and reading clubs.

23 Miller, C. and Bartlett, J. 2012. 'Digital fluency': towards young people's critical use of the internet. *Journal of Information Literacy*, 6(2), pp. 35-55

24 Ofsted, 2013. *Inspecting e-safety*

25 Streatfield, D, Shaper, S and Rae-Scott, S 2010 *School Libraries in the UK: a worthwhile past, a difficult present – and a transformed future?* London: CILIP

3.8. A safe and secure environment, open during and outside school hours

‘My library is a haven of safety for a large number of students who find it difficult outside in the corridors and playground/field.’

(cited in School Libraries in the UK, 2012)

A child needs to enjoy learning in a safe and stimulating environment. The role of the school library as a safe place for children figured prominently in the evidence presented to the School Library Commission. This evidence suggests that the school library has a significant role to play for children who, for a variety of reasons, find the school environment particularly unwelcoming.

3.9. Extended school provision

‘The library should provide access to resources before school, after school and in the lunch hour.’

(The School Library Commission, 2010)

School libraries have a key role to play in extended school provision. A good school library has the resources and staffing to allow it to provide after school clubs, homework sessions and reading groups.

These activities can be targeted at specific groups, such as pupils with English as an additional language, Gifted and Talented, looked-after children, carers and teenage parents.

Library professionals can also develop the school as a hub of the community by building links with the public library service to support children’s learning outside the classroom.

3.10. The role of Ofsted

‘Get Ofsted involved. Make it clear that Ofsted are interested and will be inspecting the role of the library in the school.’

(NFER survey of UK Head Teachers, 2013)

Ofsted, the Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills, is responsible for inspecting schools in England and ensuring standards. Ofsted acknowledges that school libraries are an important resource in schools and should be used effectively.²⁶ Despite this, Ofsted is no longer required to look at a school’s library provision when inspecting a school. A school can be judged as outstanding, but not have a school library.

RECOMMENDATION 3:

**THE APPG RECOMMENDS THAT THE MINISTER
WELCOMES THE DEMONSTRABLE CONTRIBUTION
SCHOOL LIBRARIES MAKE TO EDUCATIONAL
ATTAINMENT AND EMBED THE SCHOOL LIBRARY IN
THE OFSTED INSPECTION FRAMEWORK.**



SCHOOL LIBRARIES AND EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT:

THE VIEWS OF HEAD TEACHERS

**‘OVERWHELMINGLY,
THE MOST SIGNIFICANT
ELEMENT IN BRINGING
ABOUT IMPROVEMENTS
(TO A SCHOOL LIBRARY)
WAS THE COMMITMENT
AND SUPPORT OF EFFECTIVE
HEAD TEACHERS.’**

(Ofsted, 2006²⁷)

4.1. The survey

‘Every head teacher should have an inherent love of literacy and enjoy reading. The libraries in my school are vibrant learning areas that we all cherish.’

(NFER Survey of Head Teachers, 2013)

The National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) was commissioned by CILIP to design and administer a survey of secondary head teachers in UK schools to gather evidence of their attitudes to, and understanding of, the role of school libraries and school librarians. A self-selecting survey, it was completed primarily by heads that have school libraries, which is reflected in the significant number of more positive responses.

The questions and responses are attached as Annexe A.

The key findings include:

- The overwhelming majority of head teachers who responded consider that school libraries have a positive impact on teaching and learning.
- The overwhelming majority of head teachers who responded consider school libraries as important or very important to their school.
- The most important functions of a school library are to provide high quality and wide ranging books and electronic resources to support the whole curriculum.

Taking a lead role in information literacy, research and enquiry skills also scored highly, as did providing a suitable environment for group and independent research.

27 OFSTED., 2006 *Good school libraries: making a difference to learning*

- School librarians or the person running the library tends to report to a member of the senior team, the deputy head or the head themselves.
- Not all schools ensure that the school library staff have an input into the strategic direction of the school. Only 37% of responding head teachers acknowledged a role for the library, 32% have only a limited input and 24% none at all.
- Two thirds of schools have collaboration between library staff and teachers in planning and developing the delivery of the curriculum. This collaboration is essential to ensuring that libraries maximise their contribution to learning in school.

4.2. What could be done to help head teachers to look again at school libraries?

When asked what head teachers felt could be done to encourage head teachers to support school libraries, several commented that the library needs to become more visible. Head teachers should frequently visit the library, be invited to library events, be kept abreast of how the library is developing and how it is performing.

The emphasis should not be placed on the head teacher alone. School librarians, teaching staff, the Department for Education and organisations such as CILIP and the National Literacy Trust have a place in helping to promote the value of school libraries and school librarians.

‘The library should be included as an integral part of the School Development Plan.’

(Head teacher, NFER Survey of UK Head Teachers, 2013)

For school libraries to thrive, school librarians should have input into the strategic direction of their schools. A formally approved library development plan should be in place and this should be embedded in the school’s own improvement plans. Streatfield et al (2010) found that qualified librarians are more likely to have a library development plan, usually linked to the School Development Plan.²⁸

Clear leadership at the Department of Education would facilitate the strategic development of school libraries. A member of the Department’s team who is able to liaise with relevant stakeholders as well as moving forward the school library agenda would be invaluable. They would be able to ensure that schools are making the most of resources that are already available to them, as well as encouraging and monitoring the development of school libraries and gathering data on this important work.

28 Streatfield, D, Shaper, S and Rae-Scott, S 2010 *School Libraries in the UK: a worthwhile past, a difficult present – and a transformed future?* London: CILIP

‘Where librarians are fully integrated into the management structure of the school, they have an opportunity to influence debate and to enhance the library’s contribution to pupils’ progress.’

(Ofsted, 2013, Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools)

RECOMMENDATION 4:

THE APPG RECOMMENDS THAT THE MINISTER ENSURES THAT THE DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION HAS A MEMBER OF STAFF ACTING AS LEAD FOR LIBRARIES TO SUPPORT THE WORK OF HEAD TEACHERS AND SCHOOL LIBRARIANS IN DELIVERING POSITIVE OUTCOMES FOR PUPILS.

ANNEXE - A

Devolved nations information

Scotland

Freedom of Information requests to all 32 Scottish Councils, made in May 2013, found that all but 1 of the 21 that responded employ professional librarians in their school libraries.²⁹

Wales

In 2011/12 there were 151 FTE librarians and library assistants working in maintained schools in Wales.³⁰

Northern Ireland

Figure 2:

In 2011 there were 216 library assistants in 1,210 grant aided schools in Northern Ireland. “Library assistant” is not defined.

Library Assistants	
Nursery	0
Primary & Prep	12
Secondary	129
Grammar	75
Special	0
Total	216

Source: DENI survey of all grant aided schools in Northern Ireland (as at 30 September 2011)

29 Ritchie, C., 2009. *How much is a school librarian worth?* Library and Information Update May, 2009, edition, pp. 48-9

30 Statistics taken from Schools Library Service in Wales survey 2011/12

ANNEXE - B

Results of the NEFR survey of head teachers

Figure 3:

To what extent do you agree with the following statement: 'school libraries have a positive impact on teaching and learning'?

	Number	%
Strongly agree	410	77
Agree	105	20
Neither agree nor disagree	10	2
Disagree	5	1
Strongly disagree	1	0
Total	531	100

(Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100.)

Source: NFER survey of UK Head Teachers, 2013.

Figure 4:

How important is the library to your school?

	Number	%
Very important	361	69
Important	141	27
Neither important nor unimportant	5	1
Not very important	6	1
Not at all important	3	1
Don't know	2	0
No response	5	1
Total	523	100

(Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100.)

Source: NFER survey of UK Head Teachers, 2013.

Figure 5:

What is the most important function of a school library?

	Number	%
To...		
Provide an environment suitable for group and independent research	80	15
Provide high quality and wide ranging books and electronic resources to support the whole curriculum	226	43
Provide access to a wider cultural offer through live events (authors, illustrators, poets or other artists)	8	2
Provide access to reading materials which support the emotional, leisure and wider needs of students	29	5
Provide a safe space before, after and during school hours	4	1
Take a lead role in teaching information literacy, research and enquiry skills	65	12
Promote and encourage reading for pleasure	117	22
Host homework clubs and reading groups	1	0
No response	1	0
Total	531	100

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100.

Source: NFER survey of UK head teachers, 2013.

Head teachers were asked to rank, in order of importance, the three main functions of a good school library. The table above illustrates first choices.

Figure 6:

Who does the person running your library report to?

	Number	%
You	80	15
Deputy Head	141	27
Other member of the senior leadership team	211	40
Teacher	24	5
Administration staff	22	4
Other - please specify	37	7
No response	8	2
Total	523	100

Source: NFER survey of UK headteachers, 2013.

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100. A filter question: all those who answered [Q5=1].

Figure 7:

To what extent do your library staff have input into the strategic direction of your school?

	Number	%
To a great extent	38	7
To some extent	187	36
To a small extent	167	32
Not at all	124	24
Don't know	6	1
No response	1	0
Total	523	100

Source: NFER survey of UK headteachers, 2013.

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100. A filter question: all those who answered [Q5=1].

Figure 8:

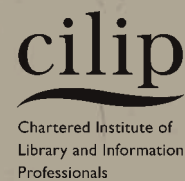
Does the person running your library or a member of their team collaborate with teaching staff in the planning, development and delivery of the curriculum?

	Number	%
Yes	353	68
No	159	30
Don't know	9	2
No response	2	0
Total	523	100

Source: NFER survey of UK headteachers, 2013.

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100. A filter question: all those who answered [Q5=1].

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The Libraries All Party Parliamentary Group provides information and opportunities for debate about the important role libraries play in society and their future. The APPG highlights the contribution that a wide variety of library and information services make, and promotes and discusses themes in the wider information and knowledge sector.

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