

Great School Libraries Survey Findings and Update on Phase 1



Every child deserves a great school library

Run by:



Sponsored by:



Contents

Foreword	3
About the Campaign	4
Findings of School Library Survey	5
Executive Summary	5
Background	7
The Findings	8
1. Equality	
2. Access and Space	
3. Budgets	
4. Staffing	
5. Conclusion	
Recommendations	17
Case Study 1: Woolmer Hill School	18
Case Study 2: St Hilda's CE High School	19
Case Study 3: Oakham School	20
Case Study 4: Latymer Upper School	21
Next Steps	22
How to get involved	23
Acknowledgements	23

Foreword



"This report is an important step in ensuring that schools are maximising the potential of their school library, and in developing and measuring provision. The range of service and impact that is indicated is important to recognise and we need to ensure that every child develops in a school that is rich in resources, that is able to instil independent learning skills and develop literate, reasoned thinkers and researchers. School libraries are a central and under-utilised piece in the wellbeing jigsaw – providing a safe space with supportive resources and staff to talk to. Their role in providing an escape to be creative – both through reading and space – cannot be underestimated. I look forward to the campaign building on this research over the next few years."

Alison Tarrant, CEO, School Library Association.

"This report is one of the most important pieces of evidence in UK school librarianship that I have ever seen. The breadth and depth of information is invaluable and will inform our campaign going forward. We have had amazing support from school librarians both in taking part in the national survey, and in producing case studies about their work. It is the report that the profession has been waiting for, and it will give us the chance to step back and examine ourselves, and give the campaign group a steer for how we can help in the future. This is the start of the journey, not the end!"

Caroline Roche, MA, MCLIP, Chair of CILIP School Libraries Group and Librarian, Eltham College, London.



"We welcome this landmark report as the first comprehensive picture of the state of play in our school libraries. On the one hand, it is a testament to the Head Teachers, Teachers, Governors and Librarians that value and promote the importance of school libraries for learners and their school. On the other hand, the research paints a picture of inequality of access and opportunity and insecure employment that we cannot accept. The findings highlight the urgency of securing national School Library Strategies and investment in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, drawing on the example of Scotland."

Nick Poole, Chief Executive, CILIP.

About the campaign

The Great School Libraries (GSL) campaign is a three-year campaign launched in September 2018 spearheaded by CILIP (the library and information association), the School Library Association (SLA) and CILIP's School Libraries Group (CILIPSLG) and sponsored by Peters.

The campaign seeks to engage with stakeholders at all levels including school library workers, parents, teaching staff, senior leadership and decision makers. Through evidence-based research, this campaign advocates for every child to have access to a great school library. The campaign aims to show that adequately funded and staffed school libraries deliver enhanced and independent learning as well as reading and curriculum support; they contribute to building lifelong readers and support whole school initiatives promoting reading for pleasure.

As well as driving greater overall literacy and writing skills, school libraries deliver and teach essential information literacy skills to combat misinformation and disinformation in an age of fake news. Numerous studies, looking at the UK and more widely, have provided strong evidence to link school library provision with a range of positive outcomes for students and the school, including:

- ➔ Higher qualifications/attainment
- ➔ A better quality of life
- ➔ Improved results
- ➔ Greater independent learning
- ➔ Alleviated pressure on health and mental health services
- ➔ Alleviated teacher workload
- ➔ Increased efficiency for schools
- ➔ Delivery of a well-rounded education.

This evidence-based campaign seeks to demonstrate that school libraries are a vital part of every school, and that they should be cherished and maintained. Through the collection of quantitative and qualitative data, the campaign will showcase the substantive need for and impact of school libraries.

The Great School Libraries campaign is powered by the dedication and commitment of a volunteer working group of librarians and a network of valued supporters.

About the Great School Library Survey

The Great School Libraries campaign developed out of the work of the School Libraries Data Group (SLDG), a consortium of organisations committed to building the evidence base for school libraries. The SLDG scoped the survey and were instrumental in securing funding from the Foyle Foundation. With this funding, the campaign commissioned BMG Research to carry out and analyse a nationwide survey into school library provision.

In this paper, the Great School Libraries campaign share the key findings of this national survey along with case studies highlighting the positive impact of school libraries and librarians.

Findings of the School Library Survey

Executive Summary

In 2014, the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Libraries published a landmark paper, *The Beating Heart of the School*, which called for better evidence of the provision of school libraries across the UK. As Lord Graham Tope wrote:

"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."

This research is our response to that call. For the first time, this report presents a comprehensive overview of school library provision across England, Wales and Northern Ireland, based on evidence from 1,750 schools.

The insights provided by this research – particularly when set alongside the existing overview developed to support the *National School Library Strategy* in Scotland – are of profound importance in shaping the future development of the sector.

Key findings

We would like to highlight the following key findings from the full report:

- Just under 9 in 10 schools that participated in this survey reported having access to a designated school library space (87%), dropping to 67% in Wales and 57% in Northern Ireland.¹
- 95% of secondary schools in our survey and 38% of primary schools said that they have a designated member of library staff to run the library.
- There is clear evidence of a correlation between socio-economic status and access to a school library. Our results show that schools with a higher proportion of children eligible for free school meals are more than twice as likely not to have a designated library space onsite.
- The nature and use of school library spaces varies significantly, with primary schools less likely than secondary schools to have a dedicated library space (as opposed to an open plan/multi-purpose space). 59% of school libraries are used as classrooms for non-library lessons and 51% as meeting rooms for school business.
- More than half of the schools that participated in the survey (55%) indicated that their library is open for 6 hours or less daily. However, the staffed hours reported for these libraries was significantly lower, indicating that many school libraries are unstaffed for significant proportion of their opening times.
- Independent schools are nearly twice as likely to have dedicated budget for their library as non-independent primary and secondary schools (83% vs. 42%).
- The survey found evidence of insecure employment terms, low pay and a lack of investment in CPD for dedicated library staff.

¹ It is important to understand that the relatively high level of provision may reflect a bias in the survey group toward schools with a library.

Priorities for improvement

We believe that these findings point towards a clear set of priorities to improve school library provision. We must first celebrate the fact that many Heads, Governors and Leadership Teams are deeply invested in the value of school libraries and librarians and have continued to support provision despite a very challenging funding climate.

We should also celebrate and acknowledge the creativity and energy of school librarians and School Library Services (SLS), who have continued to innovate their services to meet the changing needs of learners and the wider culture of their school.

At the same time, our findings highlight the urgency of *National School Library Strategies* in England, Wales and Northern Ireland to sit alongside the existing strategy for Scotland. The evidence we have uncovered of significant inequality of provision in different Nations and between the independent and non-independent sectors points to a clear picture of inequality of opportunity – in turn, impacting on social mobility in disadvantaged communities.

Our findings also highlight a disturbing trend of undervaluing school library staff as an integral part of the life of the school. We need to work with Heads, Governors and Leadership Teams to ensure that school librarians are employed under better terms and that their skills are properly recognised in terms of salary. We also need to ensure that schools invest in the CPD of their library staff to ensure that they continue to maintain their professional skills.

Ahead stands a once-in-a-generation opportunity to build on our successes and address structural weaknesses in school library provision, ensuring that every child can benefit from a great school library, now and in the future.

"Many children in the areas I have grown up, lived and worked in are deprived of many things. One of them is access to reading and a love of books. Books don't just provide learning material, but a chance for us to escape our realities and allow us to dream of something brighter for our future. When I was younger, despite coming from an immigrant background, in a deprived area, I was given opportunities by my stepmum and sister to access books and my love of reading began there. Reading inspired me in so many ways. We need to ensure all children have this opportunity."

Background

School libraries play an integral role in supporting pupils' educational development. Numerous studies, looking at the UK and more widely, have provided strong evidence to link school library provision with a range of positive outcomes including improved literacy and writing levels, greater educational attainment in key subject areas such as maths and science, and the promotion of independent learning behaviours.

Indeed, the importance of school libraries has grown significantly in recent years due to the significant cuts that public libraries have faced since 2010. Between 2010 and April 2016 figures suggest that at least 478 public libraries were closed across England, Scotland and Wales, leaving 3,850. Yet, despite the increased importance of school libraries in light of this, data in this area has remained scarce.

Working with BMG

Following a tendering process, BMG Research was commissioned by the Great School Libraries (GSL) campaign to conduct a survey of schools in England, Northern Ireland and Wales to explore the scope and nature of school library provision.²

The research's main objectives were to:

- Establish a benchmark of the number of school libraries across the UK
- Develop an understanding of the accessibility, resourcing and staffing of school libraries
- Gain an insight into the wider role library staff and library spaces play in schools
- Ascertain the alternative provision in place in schools without designated library spaces

- Understand the reasons why some schools do not have designated library spaces.

Methodology

A survey invitation was sent to all primary, middle, secondary and all-through schools in England, Northern Ireland and Wales where an email address was readily available. Each invitation contained a unique link to an online survey, allowing for responses to be matched with publicly accessible demographic information about the school, with the respondent's permission.

The survey was promoted via social media and school networks, with schools able to contact BMG directly for their invitation. BMG noted that the survey was heavily promoted through school librarian networks because of their natural interest in the research and to help mitigate this, telephone-chasing was employed to encourage responses from underrepresented school types.³

Survey Reach

1,750 schools completed the survey. Results were weighted by BMG based on nation and school phase, reflecting school population data drawn from Gov.UK, Education-NI and Gov.Wales.

Key definitions

The following definitions were used in the survey and in this report.

Designated library area: A space that provides access to a curated collection of resources to benefit pupils' learning and development, which is separate to a classroom or other shared space.

Openly accessible: The library is available

² Scotland was not included in the research because a similar study had recently been conducted by the Scottish Library and Information Council to support the development of the National Strategy for School Libraries.

³ It should be noted that due to the approach taken, the sample population may have more schools with library provision in place than in the population as a whole. This should be kept in mind when considering the results.

“...a good school library gives all children regardless of social economic background equality of access to a range of high-quality resources. To be a great school library it has to have a professional school librarian managing it so that all the other things can happen which turn children into readers including clubs, competitions, literacy lessons, information skills, digital skills, book awards etc.”

for all students to use (with the requisite permission if needed), not just those who are timetabled to do so.

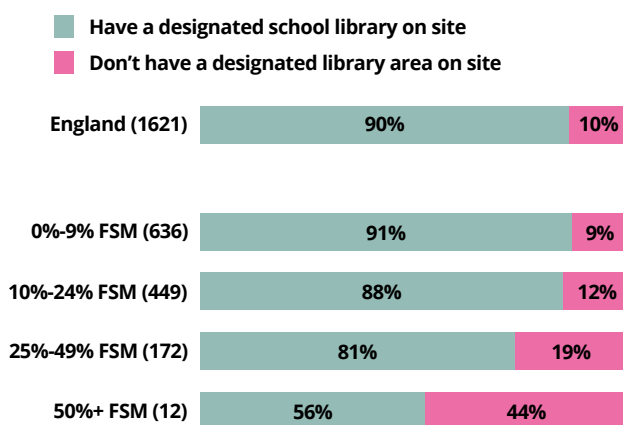
The Findings

1. Equality

While this survey found that just under nine in ten schools reported having access to a designated school library space (87%), it also revealed new evidence that indicates an inequality of access due to socioeconomic factors.

The survey found that provision differs significantly across England, Northern Ireland and Wales; pupils in schools in England are up to a third more likely to have access to a school library, with 90% of English schools indicating they have one. This drops to 67% in Wales, and, even further, to 57% in Northern Ireland. This disparity indicates the inequality of access and opportunities that pupils and teachers face across the nation.

Figure 1: Proportion of school libraries that have a designated library area on site, by % of pupils with free school meals.



Further to this, the survey shows that schools with a higher proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM) (25%-49%) are more than twice as likely than schools with the lowest rates of eligibility to not have a designated

school library space on site (19% compared to 9%); see Figure 1.⁴

The schools that do have a designated library space report lower levels of open access to the library, with just 14% of schools where 25% or more pupils are eligible for FSM reporting that there is open access to the library throughout the entire day, with an increase to 24% among schools where 0-9% of pupils are eligible.

Schools who have the highest level of FSM eligibility (more than 25%) are also significantly more likely than average to report that they have no digital device provision in the library than those with the lowest (0%-9%) (37% compared with 49%).

These findings indicate that pupils in schools with a higher proportion of free school meals are less likely to experience the range of positive benefits a school library can provide. Those benefits have been shown to include positive impacts on:

Pupils' general academic attainment, reading and writing skills, plus wider learning skills, as well as their scores in history, mathematics and science. School libraries have also been found to have an impact on pupils' reading enjoyment, reading behaviour and attitudes towards reading. Motivation and attitudes in particular have been connected to school library use. Several personal and interpersonal outcomes, such as self-esteem and the feeling of success and accomplishment, have also been associated with school library use.

(National Literacy Trust, 2017)⁵

This inequality of access can harden divisions for these pupils, further reducing their access to resources;⁶ restricting their options for working outside of class time, and reducing the additional support available to them. School libraries frequently run homework clubs – giving pupils the opportunity to complete their homework in a supportive

⁴ Free school meals are a commonly used proxy measurement of socio-economic disadvantage in education.

⁵ <https://literacytrust.org.uk/research-services/research-reports/school-libraries-literature-review-current-provision-and-evidence-impact-2017/>

⁶ One in 11 (9.4%) children and young people said they do not have a book of their own at home, rising to one in eight (13.1%) children from disadvantaged backgrounds. (National Literacy Trust, 2017, (<https://literacytrust.org.uk/research-services/research-reports/book-ownership-and-reading-outcomes/>))

"A good library is the heart of any school. As a writer who makes loads of visits every year to schools it's easy to gauge the state of the school from how their library - if they have one - is valued or not. It's not just a place for information or for reading for pleasure, for many students it's a vital safe space."

environment, with the required resources and with their peers, which is important not only to avoid stigma, but to due to the fact that peer to peer learning is so important. Without these spaces and the support they offer, these gaps in provision will continue to have an impact on the education and outcomes for these students.

A 2018 report into free school meals eligibility and the attainment gap indicates that *'a majority of 19 year-olds who have been eligible for free school meals leave education without a good standard of recognised qualifications in English and maths.'*⁷ The National Literacy Trust 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. There is a clear indication that access to a school library could greatly benefit the learning and education of pupils at these schools and help to close this attainment gap.⁸

2. Access and Space

Access to a school library is important for many reasons; they provide respite for children who find the full-on nature of schooling demanding, they provide a place to be creative, or to work – with peers or individually. They supplement resources for the curriculum, and add new pathways for learning for capable or interested pupils. The school library is by its nature inclusive – it provides a welcome space for all year groups, cohorts and subjects – being quite often the only place in a school to do this.

Schools surveyed were asked if they had a space, which fitted the description below:

A space which provides access to a curated collection of resources to benefit pupils' learning and development which is separate to a classroom or other shared space.

As is often the case in education, the results show that provision varies between school phase. 96% of secondary schools indicated they had a school library, but the space itself differs across schools – 19% said their school library space was open plan, while 81% said it was a designated library in a separate space. In primary schools, only 85% reported that they had a designated library space that fitted the description. Open plan provision is far more likely to occur in a primary school than a secondary; with 38% indicating their library is open plan, and 61% in a separate space.

a. Seating

As may be expected, the capacity for seating within the school library increases with the number of pupils. However, the average capacity for schools with 1-100 pupils is only 12, and while this does increase steadily, it indicates that the some school libraries cannot seat even 10% of their school's population.

Table 1: Seating capacity of survey respondents.

Number of pupils	Average seating capacity
1-100	12
101-200	16
201-300	20
301-500	25
501 +	49

Most primary school libraries can seat under 20 pupils (53%)⁹, while 40% can seat 21-40 pupils. School libraries seem to be significantly larger in secondary schools, with the majority being able to seat 41 or more pupils (73%)¹⁰.

b. Opening times and staffing presence

Across all schools, over half (55%) typically have their library open for six hours or less

⁷ https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Annual_Reports/EEF_Attainment_Gap_Report_2018.pdf. See also <https://www.tes.com/news/attainment-gap-long-term-disadvantaged-pupils-getting-worse-study-shows>

⁸ For more information about the specific difficulties of children who live in poverty face, and the role school libraries can play see: <https://www.sla.org.uk/article/alison/development-and-discussion-2019-5-child-poverty-in-schools>

⁹ This is less than the average class size which means teachers will be unable to take a full class to the library at the same time. See <https://fullfact.org/education/primary-class-sizes-england-and-wales/>

¹⁰ Given the increased size of secondary schools (77% of secondary respondents have more than 500 pupils) some further research would need to be conducted to see if the majority of secondary schools can seat 10% of their school community.

"I'm a children's author (YA), a Patron of Reading (Secondary School) and an HLTA with a specialism in reading support (Primary School) so my work takes me in and out of school libraries pretty much every day of the week. And when I'm not in a school library I'm writing, most often at the British Library. Access to books for all is the key to so many very varied things - enjoyment, escapism and education. A library is a vital space in a school. School is an often hectic and pressurised environment, and libraries provide a much needed safe space within them."

daily, but opening hours vary considerably. 64% of primaries open for six hours or less daily but this figure drops to 11% among secondary schools which are more likely to be open for between six and eight hours daily (60%).

In terms of open accessibility, Local Authority (LA) maintained schools and special schools are significantly less likely to report having open access throughout the day (16%) than the average (24%) while academies report above average open accessibility at 31%, which increases further for independents at 42%.

While the survey found that school libraries are open on average 6 hours a day, the staffing presence does not match these hours: 95% of primary schools indicated that their library was open for up to 6 hours, while only 4% indicated it is staffed for 6-8 hours. This shows that for the majority of primary schools there will be time where the school library is unstaffed; see Figure 2.

On average, primary school libraries are usually attended for one hour a day but in

On average, primary school libraries are usually attended for one hour a day but in secondary schools this increases to seven hours a day.

Schools that do not have staffing in place were asked why. The most common reason given was a lack of available budget (64%), followed by a feeling that an appropriate level of staffing is achieved without this (34%); which raises some questions for the school library sector about how to better convey the outcomes that can be achieved by having school library staff in place.

Contrary to the stereotype that a school librarian is purely a 'guardian' or someone who simply 'stamps books', school librarianship is about guidance and facilitation – helping children find the right resources, in the right format and at the right level, for them to continue their learning and reading journeys.

School librarianship is much more than being a 'reading enthusiast' and without consistent, trained staffing libraries risk simply deepening the 'Matthew Effect' – a term to describe the phenomenon where students who begin their literacy education successfully continue to do well later in school, while those who begin poorly do worse. Without the support and guidance of trained school library staff there is a risk of widening the gap between the advantaged and the disadvantaged.

Current research from the Educational Policy Institute¹¹ illustrates the experiences of two children: one who comes from a socio-economically disadvantaged family and the other from a more affluent family. Figure 3 shows that by the time of GCSE's, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils is 18.1 months behind that of their non-disadvantaged peers.

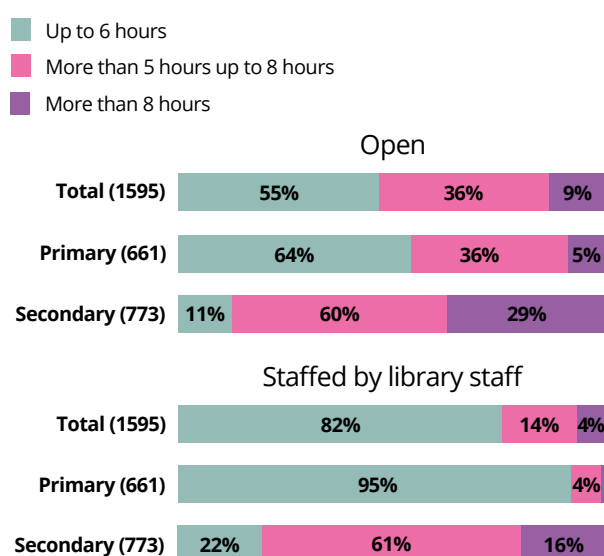
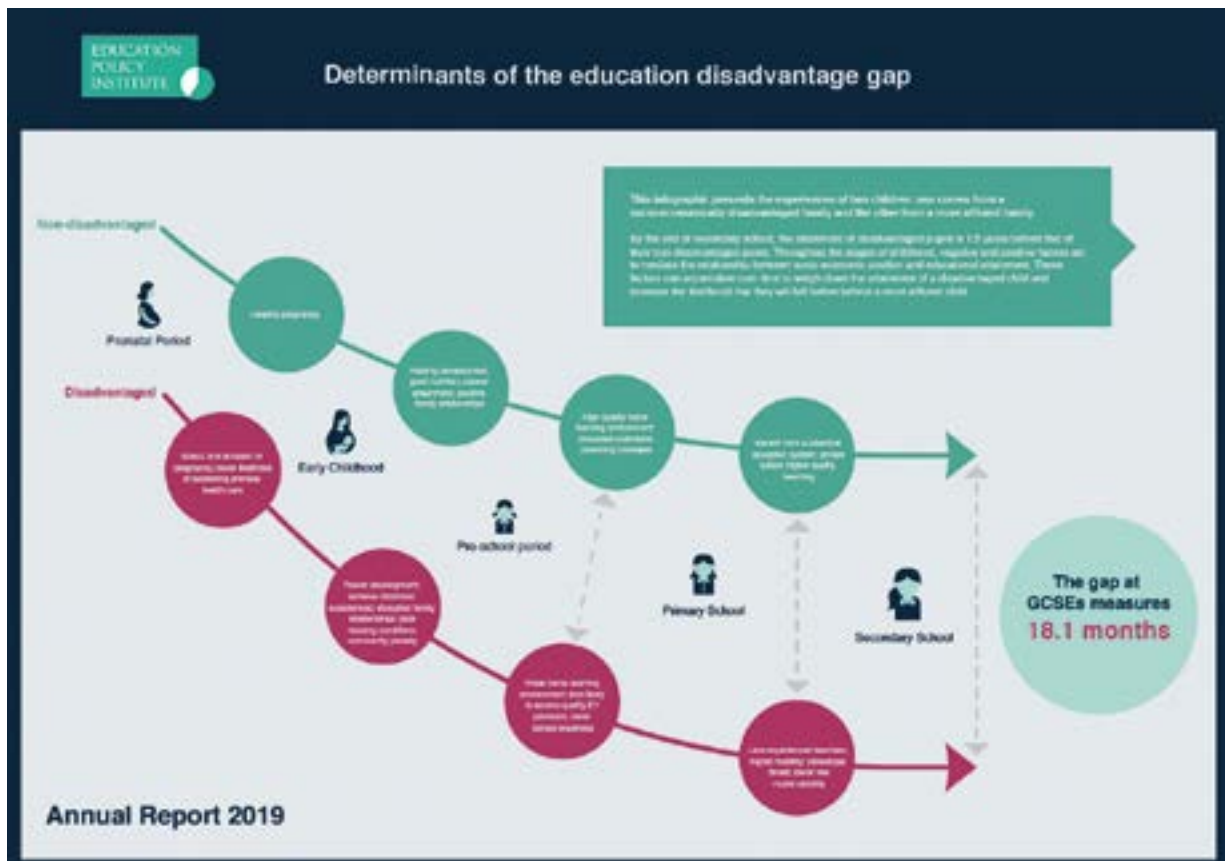


Figure 2: Total number of hours library is open / staffed by library staff by day (Monday-Friday)

¹¹ EPI Annual Report 2019, <https://epi.org.uk/publications-and-research/annual-report-2019/>

Figure 3: Education Policy Institute Infographic: What are the causes of the education disadvantage gap?



It is not only disadvantaged pupils who suffer from a lack of school library staffing – without library staff, initiatives that encourage pupils to try new things or discover talents do not happen. For instance, clubs designed to push and challenge ‘able’ readers do not run; resources that could take a child’s curiosity and build it into an interest go unread and unfound.

Furthermore, teachers who could benefit from up to date and personalised recommendations will not get them, and research projects go ahead without the proper support or scaffolding. Visits by authors, illustrators, storytellers and expert speakers of all kinds are reduced, lessening the exposure to a huge variety of topics, experiences and potential for all pupils.

c. Open accessibility

Having a library space is a good start, having it staffed adds a range of possibilities. However, if that space is not available for use, it impacts the way children engage with the space, and what the staff members can do.

An openly accessible library is defined as being open for pupils to use (with the

requisite permission, if required) and not just those who are timetabled to do so. Just 24% of schools reported having an open access policy at all times of the day; this is 15% among primary schools and 63% among secondary schools.

In addition, schools in the East of England (21%) and Yorkshire & the Humber (17%) are significantly less likely than average to have open access throughout the day while schools in the South West (32%) and East Midlands (28%) are significantly more likely to. This demonstrates the wide variation in school library experiences for the current generation of pupils. In some rural areas, this may be down to practicalities such as timing of school buses – which can drastically reduce the practicality of having the school library open after this point – however, it would be interesting to see the extent to which these areas overlap with areas of rural deprivation.

Primary school respondents indicated that they are significantly less likely to be open before school, during breaks and lunchtime or after school (15%) while secondary schools are more likely (63%) to be open at all of

"Great school libraries provide safe spaces where young people can explore the universe of human knowledge online and in print. Great school libraries nurture young people's health and well being through providing opportunities to read for pleasure and develop critical thinking skills. With the help of a trained librarian, great school libraries can improve young people's life chances."

these times. This will have a significant impact on pupil engagement with the library, and restricts the outreach work that members of staff can do with parents and the community, making it much harder to build a whole community reading culture.

d. Staff contracts

It is not only the hours per week that the school library is staffed that make a difference; there are significant variations in the number of weeks per year school library staff are employed, as can be seen in Figure 4.

Contracts for 'term time only' and 'term time only plus inset' can have a significant impact on library services, leading to a lack of time to prepare across all areas of the library. This directly impacts the provision for pupils in a number of ways:

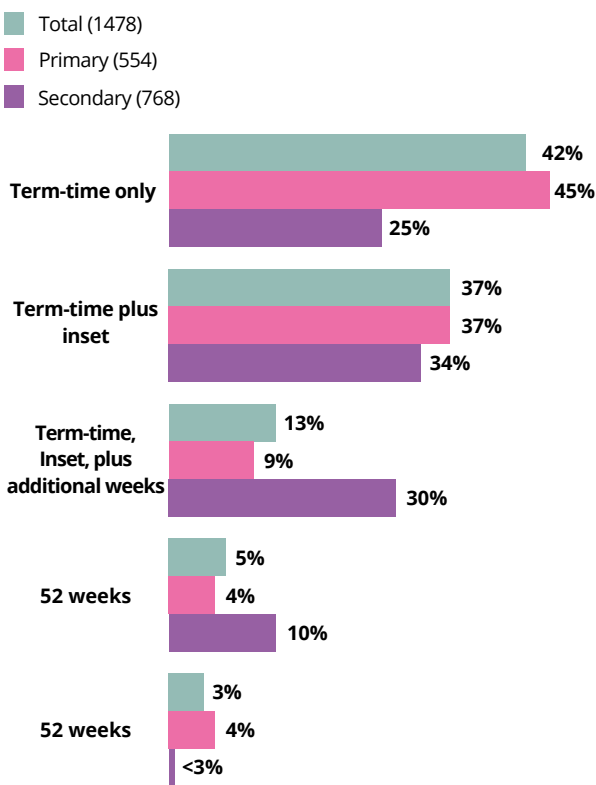
- schemes of work cannot be planned;
- meetings with teaching staff are harder to organise;
- sourcing and preparing stock have to be done during the day while pupils are using the library and engaging with staff;
- completing a stock-take and weeding stock is significantly harder to complete while the library is being used, and has a sizeable effect on the look and feel of a school library.

e. Alternative uses – Frequency and uses

The majority of schools surveyed also use their library space for other purposes; this includes some library related activity such as small group activities (6%); clubs (5%) or SEND/Learning support (5%) but the majority reported alternative use, such as detention (7%); exams (2%) or event hosting (3%).

Unfortunately, 59% of school libraries are reported to be used as a classroom for non-library lessons, and 51% are used for meetings. While having a lesson in the library can be a valuable opportunity

Figure 4: Main member of library staff's contractual arrangement



to deliver information literacy skills and ensure resources are up to date, if not done collaboratively with a librarian it can start to erode the culture and activities of the school library.

A third of schools indicated that pupils can continue to have access to the space while 'alternative uses' are in action. While 1 in 3 stated that the alternative uses mean the library is not accessible to pupils (31%) and a further third indicated that these uses make the library only 'occasionally' accessible to pupils (36%).

In addition, schools with higher percentage of pupils eligible for FSM (25%+) are more likely to say that the library is not openly accessible when being used for other purposes (44% compared with 28% for schools with 0%-9% of pupils eligible for FSM). This indicates that as well as being more likely to use the space for alternative uses, pupils in these schools are more likely to face disruption and a lack of access.

3. Budgets

Of the 87% of schools that indicated they have a school library, only 34% of primary schools, and 88% of secondary schools have a designated school library budget. There is also a disparity between nations, with schools in Northern Ireland (27%) and Wales (9%) found to be less likely to have a library budget than schools in England (64%).

The survey also found that in England, 83% of independent schools have a school library budget, which is nearly twice the figure for non-independent primary and secondary schools (42%). The average budget in the last year for primary schools was £2,021, while for secondary schools it was £5,448. Independent school libraries are likely to have a more generous budget (averaging approximately £7000). The survey did find, however, that budgets have decreased across all categories of school over the last year.

Of those schools that do have a designated budget for the library, the budget itself is variable with significant differences between phases. The impact that this will have on the level of service cannot be overstated. It is not simply a case of some pupils having access to a wider range of books, but the pervasive effects of an under-funded school library can cause substantial issues; for example:

- The inability to respond to changes in curriculum, leaving topics unsupported, and an inability to respond to developments and themes in publishing – for example, the recent increase in books about mental health and teenage wellbeing
- Older texts are not removed (weeded) as that would cause gaps in provision. This impacts on the overall feel of the

library and risks being off-putting for learners; it also risks inaccurate/inappropriate books being left on shelves (all books reflect the context and culture in which they were written)

- Library services are not equally accessible by certain groups – technology can be a reading aid for some, but this relies on having the technology and content (for example, e-readers and e-books; the provision of which is explored more in Section 3b)
- The range of resources is severely limited – teaching research skills in a modern context requires digital search (information retrieval) techniques. Without supplying access to published online resources we risk re-enforcing the idea that all information is free online, and an over-reliance on free information sites such as Wikipedia and BBC Bitesize
- Smaller cohorts are less likely to be catered for, as decisions have to be taken to appeal to the majority – this means those with reading ages either side of the average; those with more specific interests and those who are not represented within best-selling, main-stream publishing are all less likely to have content that speaks to them and encourages them to become ‘readers’.¹²

In comparison, a well-funded library can be both pro-active and reactive. They can buy diverse and inclusive resources to suit every reader; support topics with a range of resources and run community events. They can invite speakers, authors, illustrators and storytellers in to generate and encourage curiosity, knowledge and passion.

A lack of library budget can indicate a lack of support for those running the library. Unless the budget is supplemented from elsewhere, this will also negatively impact the educational experience of the pupils.

a. Purchasing habits

The impact of budget can also be seen in how frequently resources are purchased. Most schools who responded to the survey purchase stock on a termly (27%) or yearly (22%) basis.

¹² The significance of children not seeing themselves reflected in the books they read is explored in the recent Arts Council funded studies by CLPE: Reflecting Realities (2018) and BookTrust: BookTrust Represents (2019).

The disparity between primary and secondary schools is significant in this area. Nearly a quarter of secondary schools typically have stock added at least weekly (24%) or monthly (27%). In stark contrast the most common frequency for primary schools is termly (29%), followed by yearly (26%).

Variations in purchasing across England, Northern Ireland and Wales are also worth noting, with schools in Northern Ireland and Wales nearly twice as likely to add stock on a yearly basis. This is potentially an impact of limited budgets, and is in no way ideal as this leaves limited recourse for the library staff to purchase resources and new titles to keep the stock refreshed and appealing for new pupils who arrive throughout the year, or for those who develop a passion, or fall in love with a series. The impact on able readers is also significant as libraries may be unable to cater for them sufficiently to allow stretch and progress.

The survey suggests that independent schools are the most likely to add frequently to their stock, with 48% saying they add stock weekly or more frequently, (non-independent schools were all under 8%) and they are also twice as likely to have their stock added to fortnightly.

The greater budgets that appear to be available in these schools and the increased staffing are likely to enable independent school libraries to respond to requests from staff and pupils far more readily than may be seen in other schools.

b. E-books and E-resources

Provision of e-books in a school library setting is limited across the board, with 3 in 5 schools reporting they have none (59%) while 8% report they have under a hundred, and 4% have more than a hundred (it should be noted this question excluded subscription resources).

On the surface, this could be attributed to school libraries engaging less with technology, but the reality may be far more complicated. Technology policies differ hugely by school, meaning a disparity between how school libraries utilise digital resources. There has also been a significant lack of engagement by the majority of publishers to provide an adequate solution to the lending of e-books in a school context. This has meant that lending terms and payment

terms vary significantly between providers. The associated challenges of lending e-books are by no means limited to the school context; they are a problem facing the library sector as whole.

To gain a holistic picture of learning resources, schools were asked which e-resources the library or the school subscribes to. In total, 33% of schools or libraries provide access to at least one e-resource while 53% do not and the remaining 15% don't know.

Looking at this by school phase, 59% of primary schools indicated they don't have e-subscriptions compared to 24% of secondary schools.

It should also be noted that independent schools (28%) seem to be less likely than average (53%) to not have any e-resource subscriptions.

c. Device

The survey also found a variation of access to digital devices; with 43% of school libraries providing access to desktop computers, and 37% providing no access to any digital devices.

7% of schools operate a 'Bring your own device' policy, but this drops to 5% of school libraries, which seems to indicate a separate policy occurring within the library. This disparity between the school and the school library is apparent in many areas: access to laptops (76% of schools compared to 22% of school libraries); tablets (77% compared to 18%) and smart boards (82% compared to 16%). It is interesting to note that 37% of school libraries indicated that they provided no access to digital resources compared with only 2% of schools. This indicates that for some reason, even where schools are investing in digital devices, the library is not benefiting from this investment – this may be due to space, budget or staffing constraints. There is a risk that this disparity reinforces the stereotype of school libraries not engaging in 21st century technology among staff, pupils and visitors.

Further to this, as previously noted, the schools who have the highest level of FSM eligibility (more than 25%) are significantly more likely than average to report that they have no digital device provision in

"When I first came here as a young boy, I had never before had the pleasure of being in a library – and thus when I found myself in the School's Library, I was astonished by the sight which struck me – books, gateways into alternate realities, glimpses of the future, examinations of the past, fact, fiction, all of it a sea of wisdom pouring into my eyes [...] How does one thank something for being so meaningful? I could write a million pages [...] and still not be able to express my gratefulness." – Y11 pupil.

the library. The impact of this may be significant and raises the question as to how children in receipt of FSM access technology beyond direct teaching hours and what impact this has on their ability to complete homework, explore resources and progress their learning (and revision) journey beyond the classroom.

4. Staffing

This survey sought to reflect not only on the importance of access to school library space, but also on the presence of designated school library staff. Given the ever-evolving areas of expertise needed to efficiently and effectively run a school library (education; publishing; technology; pedagogy; librarianship) it may lead to many pupils and teachers not feeling the full benefit that their school library could be providing. In the current educational landscape of teacher workload and wellbeing this is something that needs addressing.

Not having library staff also reduces the likelihood of the library contributing to:

- 'prepar[ing] learners for future success in their next steps' (information literacy and research skills)
- 'the teaching of reading develops learners confidence and enjoyment' (promoting reading for pleasure)
- 'equipping them to be responsible, respectful, active citizens... and developing an understanding and appreciation of diversity' (cultivating and promoting a wide and varied range of resources)
- 'creat[ing] an environment that allows the learner to focus on learning' (managing the library space).

(Ofsted Inspection Framework, 2019)

Of the primary schools who reported that they had a designated library space only

38% said they had a designated member of library staff, with 30% reporting that the space was managed by another member of staff. In secondary schools 95% of school libraries have a designated member of staff.

The main reason provided for not having a designated member of staff for the library was budget (64%) while 43% felt appropriate levels of staffing were being achieved without a designated librarian or library worker.

Nearly a quarter of respondents indicated that there were volunteers in the library (23%) though this was found to be more likely in primary schools (27%) than secondary schools (8%). This factor also changes with the percentage of FSM eligible pupils – volunteers are more likely to be found in schools with a high percentage of FSM eligible pupils. Respondents also indicated that the majority of schools do not provide formal training for volunteers, and this is the case across both primary and secondary schools.

a. Experience

Where there was a designated member of library staff, the level of experience differed significantly:

Years' experience	% of respondents
Less than 3 years	18%
3-10 years	34%
More than 10 years	38%

Interestingly, respondents in Northern Ireland were more likely to have staff with in excess of 10 years' experience than those in England (63% compared with 37%).

Schools who do have a designated member of library staff indicated that just over half (51%) had training or qualifications in this area, while a quarter (26%) indicated that the main person in charge of the library

had no training or qualifications related to school librarianship. Designated staff in primary (65%) and LA maintained schools (68%) are significantly less likely than average to have relevant training or qualifications, while staff in secondary schools and independent schools are more likely (both 87%).

The survey also explored the levels of CPD library staff had received or been offered in the last year. The responses for this question indicate that the majority of library workers had not had sufficient access to training and CPD opportunities within the last year:

- More than 50% of library staff (including volunteers) had not received training.
- 41% of designated members of library staff had not been given opportunities for CPD (free or paid).
- Of those who had undertaken CPD, only a third had access to paid opportunities (36%).
- 40% engaged in free CPD (which included reading blogs, professional use of social media and networking events).
- 74% of volunteers received no training.

The impact of limited budgets can also be seen here, as schools with a designated library budget are more likely to provide access to CPD (38%) compared to those without (20%).

With the majority of school library staff having mid-level experience (34% have 3-10 years) and no access to CPD, there are questions to explore concerning how library staff can

be properly trained/supported and provided with access to support networks, which can be particularly vital for those that are the only library staff member in a school.

b. Responsibilities

Respondents indicated that the main member of library staff was responsible for a variety of activities, which differ significantly by phase. In primary schools, only 20% said that the library is their sole responsibility, while in secondary schools this increases to 42%.

Most secondary respondents indicated that pupils have regular timetabled library lessons (58%) and 62% also deliver ad-hoc library lessons. 44% of library staff were reported as having a teaching role, delivering a reading programme (40%); a research programme (16%) and assemblies (27%).

For primaries a third said they had regular timetabled library lessons (33%), 21% delivered ad-hoc library lessons, 16% delivered a reading programme, and only 2% delivered research skills lessons. Again, 44% said they had a teaching role.

In secondary schools, the main library staff member is most likely to be line managed by a member of Senior Leadership who holds responsibility for the curriculum (34%); in 27% of cases the line manager will be the Head of English. This may indicate that these libraries are seen as part of the English department rather than a whole school resource.

Conclusion

The survey findings have shown that school library provision varies significantly across England, Northern Ireland and Wales. The data indicates that school libraries are not being properly invested in or utilised to their full capability to create solutions to the problems that face, not only the current education system, but also society. There is a high proportion of schools that have school libraries that are not funded or run by trained library staff, which hugely reduces the benefits that a school library can provide.

It could appear that a 'model' school library system is functioning in independent schools, but this survey found a much more complicated picture, with school libraries in independent schools also facing budget restrictions and a lack of school library space, showing that school libraries cannot be taken for granted anywhere.

Recommendations

Following initial analysis of these findings, the Great School Libraries campaign proposes the following recommendations.

Recommendations to Policymakers

Based on our findings, we make the following 3 evidence-based policy recommendations to the Department for Education and the Schools Minister:

- To work with the school library community and educators to implement national School Library Strategies in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, drawing on the example of the National School Library Strategy in Scotland.
- To recognise the value and impact of school libraries, librarians and SLS in national frameworks for schools inspection and improvement.
- To work with school leaders and the school library community to develop new investment in School Libraries with the aim of balancing inequality of access and provision.

Recommendations for School Leaders

- To continue to recognise and invest in the value of school libraries, librarians, library staff and SLS as an integral part of delivering outstanding schools, including building reading cultures, empowering reading for pleasure, promoting media and information literacy and supporting inquiry-based learning.
- To work with your school librarian, library staff or SLS to explore how the school library can do more to promote excellence, to improve learning outcomes and school performance and contribute positively to the life of the school.
- To recognise the importance of school librarians and library staff in delivering excellent teaching and learning, ensuring that they have access to secure employment, stable terms and conditions, ongoing CPD and training and fair pay relative to national benchmarks.

Recommendations for the Library Profession

- CILIP, the School Library Association (SLA) and CILIP School Libraries Group (CILIP SLG) should ensure that the focus of Phase 2 of the #GreatSchoolLibraries campaign draws on the evidence, priorities and recommendations arising from this research.
- CILIP, SLA and CILIP SLG should improve their support for and provision of access to CPD, training and other development resources for school librarians and library staff, including supporting them in making an evidence-based case for their impact on the school.
- CILIP, SLA and CILIP SLG should proactively engage with other stakeholders to lobby Government to implement the recommendations set out in this report and to provide ongoing evidence of provision (potentially including further surveys).

Case Study 1: Elspeth Ewing, Librarian at Woolmer Hill School

Research and creativity

Librarian, Elspeth Ewing, provided research support to a Year 9 Religious Education (RE) class project intended to explore and raise awareness of the Holocaust. After researching various ideas they decided to base their work on The Butterfly Project, an initiative by the Holocaust museum in Houston, Texas to remember the 1.5 million children who perished in the Holocaust. Pupils were required to research and create a memorial for a child lost in the Holocaust inspired by the poem "The Butterfly" by Pavel Friedman. Elspeth researched and found relevant websites to add to the library catalogue, demonstrated to pupils how they could access the catalogue, and how to use search parameters and keywords to find the information that they needed. The project was very successful and many

pupils were also inspired to borrow books from the library to read more on the subject of the Holocaust.

The project reinforced and built on pupil's research skills and ability to learn independently. It contributed to the library's aim of developing independent learners who can organise their own learning and grow in maturity in terms of their ability to self-regulate their motivation, emotions, behaviour for learning and time management.

It demonstrated how teachers can collaborate with the librarian in order to provide relevant resources and how to access them, as well as how planning lessons together can help to produce work of a high standard. It has raised the profile of the library and this teacher is keen to collaborate again.



A collection of the finished projects displayed in the library. Other projects were displayed in the classroom.

Case Study 2: Jacqueline Hale, Librarian & Literacy Coordinator, St Hilda's CE High School

Outreach for vulnerable pupils

Librarian and Literacy co-ordinator, Jacqueline Hale, started a book club for vulnerable pupils following an interest in how the library, and reading, can help to tackle mental health issues in young people.

After discovering that the Liverpool Families Program were funding similar reading clubs across the city, Jacqueline looked to set up the group in-keeping with the funding parameters; this required that 70% of the group were Looked After, on a Child in Need or Protection Plan, on an Early Help Assessment Tool or with attendance below 95%. Of the 30 pupils chosen, 20 of them had attendance below 95%, 3 were Looked After and the others were going through issues including bereavement, sexuality issues, anxiety, depression and other mental health issues.

The pupils were introduced to each other at a "book tasting". They were brought out of lessons, to the library, where a table full of drinks and snacks were waiting for them. They filled their plates, got comfortable and started chatting to each other. While they ate, Jacqueline read them the first chapter of several different books, which had a main character dealing with issues such as eating disorders, anxiety, sexual orientation, self-harm, suicide, family breakdown and other issues. Most left the session having borrowed a book – when many of them hadn't borrowed anything for years, if ever.

When the Scholastic Book Fair was in school each member of the group chose a book they liked, which Jacqueline paid for with the funding from Liverpool Families Program. Many of these pupils had never owned a book before and were thrilled to have one to take home with them – even the pupils who hadn't seemed as interested in the group as others. Many of them decided to take the same book, so that they could all talk about it when they had finished reading.

Jacqueline also introduced a reward scheme with loyalty cards with pupils receiving a



Library book club zone, "a quiet place to get away from everything."

stamp each time they attended a meeting, borrowed a book and once their card was full they chose a book to keep, purchased for them by the library.

The book club sought to give pupils books of their own, with recent research from the National Literacy Trust demonstrating that children who say they own a book are 15 times more likely to read above the level expected for their age.

The improvement in attendance and reading / literacy levels of the pupils involved benefitted the whole school and the personal benefits for the individual pupils were far reaching. Of the 20 pupils with poor attendance, 17 of them increased their attendance, some of them considerably, and 2 of them moved up above 95%. 18 of the 30 had increased library borrowing rates during the two months and 11 of them continue to borrow books regularly.

Providing a place to go and a group of people who had an idea of what they were going through was just what some of these pupils needed, and something they hadn't realised was there until the library reached out to them with this book club. They knew they weren't alone and they knew they could come to the library when they needed a place of refuge, which made them more likely to come into school.

Since the introduction of the book club many more pupils have started to recognise the links between reading and improved mental wellbeing.

Case Study 3: Darryl Toerien (Head of Library), Lucy Breag (Librarian), Jenny Toerien (Library Assistant), Oakham School

Towards an inquiry-based curriculum

Oakham School Library sought to develop an inquiry-based curriculum for Year 6, teaching pupils to follow a modelled inquiry process: FOSIL (2.0) (Framework for Oakham School Inquiry Learning), which later became FOSIL (3.0) (Framework Of Skills for Inquiry Learning). Their ultimate aim was to build on this foundation as pupils progressed through the school in order to develop a coherent, collaborative and embedded approach to inquiry learning across all disciplines and year groups.

The library aimed to collaborate with the Year 6 teacher to embed essential inquiry skills into the curriculum, enabling students to engage with curricular material at a deeper level and encouraging a greater independence of learning. Through this collaboration the library also aimed to demonstrate the value of an interdisciplinary, inquiry-based approach and to equip the teacher with the skills to carry this approach forward. In so doing, the library was able to produce a powerful case study which it then used as an advocacy tool within (and outside) the school to promote and advance the academic vision of the school both amongst individual classroom teachers and those involved in curriculum design.

"The strategic vision of the school is highly focused on offering an education that prepares students for the life they will face in the 21st Century. They must appreciate and be successful in the facets of learning that will be demanded of 'Citizen 2030'. We put inter-disciplinary learning and its related skills and habits at the very centre of our academic vision for Oakhamians. This places the library at the heart of school as a true centre of learning given how instrumental it is in continuing to help shape and realise this vision." (Jon Andrews, Director of Teaching and Learning, March 2018)

Working with the Year 6 teacher, the library staff developed, planned and resourced an

inquiry unit. This involved coming up with a suitable question, planning the course of the inquiry, producing a workbook to support the pupils in structuring their inquiry and assisting with the delivery. Students enjoyed the opportunity to work independently using library resources, and both the teacher and the students found the structured approach to inquiry much more productive than the "go away and find 3 facts about" approach that is often taken, particularly with this age group.

The class teacher reported that the level of the final presentations (which she videoed) was of a much higher standard than in previous years, particularly in terms of appropriate use of PowerPoint to convey information. The teacher also felt that the level of student engagement with and understanding of the topic was much greater, as demonstrated through written essays following the presentations. The teacher was so pleased with the outcomes of the inquiry that she has continued her development of an inquiry based-curriculum, and has confidently begun to adapt and develop her own resources in line with the FOSIL framework.

The opportunity for the teacher and the library staff to work closely on the development and delivery of the inquiry was very valuable for all involved, developing relationships, skills and understanding on both sides. An unexpected benefit of increased involvement with teaching staff across the school is that this work has also encouraged the library staff to deepen our own understanding of inquiry into controlled, guided and open inquiries.

Evidence gathered from this and similar inquiries has proved to be a vital advocacy tool for encouraging colleagues and senior leadership to embrace an inquiry-based approach to learning within the school, and huge progress has been made at all levels throughout the school and beyond since this case study was originally written in March 2018. See www.fosil.org.uk for details.

Case Study 4: Terri McGarger, Librarian, Latymer Upper School

Information literacy skills

With an increasing focus on health & wellbeing at the school, the Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education (PSHCE) curriculum was expanded from a series of assemblies to include a fortnightly timetabled lesson in Year 7. The Head of PSHCE & Wellbeing approached Terri, the librarian, to request to hold lessons in the Library. Pupils would work in small groups to research a BOUNCE topic (the school's internal term for health & wellbeing: Brain, Optimism, Unwind, Nutrition, Connect and Exercise) of their choice, and develop a campaign (e.g. Eat Five-a-Day) as a simple website.

As Year 7 has no timetabled library lessons, Terri had been looking for an opportunity to teach students information literacy skills. This seemed an ideal opportunity to support the PSHCE curriculum while also teaching students transferable research skills.

Terri was able to deliver two lessons: 1) finding good academic sources online and 2) a library-based lesson on finding information in books, plus a brief overview on using images responsibly and creating a simple bibliography. Pupils spent the next 2–3 lessons (4–6 weeks) researching and writing their projects, and there was a spike in loans and reservations of relevant PSHCE books during this time.

Pupils were asked to share the link to their published Google Site with their teacher; the Library team would add marks for Research Skills using the mark scheme developed in collaboration with the Head of PSHCE.

The quality of the research varied enormously. While most groups referenced at least one book and one online source, they struggled with synthesizing the “facts” they had learned into the persuasive writing for their campaign. The bulk of many campaigns relied on pupils' own opinions with little or no link to their research. They fared much better with the images, which were generally well chosen and referenced.

Terri had previously worked with teaching staff to develop the School's Academic



Year 7 pupils find sources of information for their PSHCE campaign.

Honesty Policy, which states the expectation that pupils use a range of sources and list them in a bibliography, acknowledge any words, ideas or concepts originally produced by someone else that have been used through referencing and follow the referencing style recommended by their teacher. As Terri suspected these skills were not routinely expected or taught in the lower school, and that many teachers feel less confident in teaching/assessing these skills, teaching all Year 7 pupils how to reference sources (including images) in a simplified bibliography was a great first step towards addressing this. Doing so in the context of a PSHCE project, where the teachers were drawn from different departments (Religious Studies, Classics, English, Biology and Mandarin) and none was a subject specialist, had the added bonus of reinforcing – for both teachers and students – a skills-based approach that is transferable to any subject.

The development of the PSHCE programme is an important part of the five-year strategy for the school. The Library's involvement reinforced its central role in supporting the teaching & learning at school. Terri found it was helpful (and ultimately reassuring) to see the variety of teaching styles and approaches; the more individual teachers she works with, the more she learns from them and the more they see how the Library can support teaching and learning in a variety of ways.

Next Steps

CILIP, the School Library Association (SLA) and CILIP School Libraries Group are proud of the progress achieved already under Phase 1 of the #GreatSchoolLibraries campaign. Working together, with the support of an expert and dedicated network of volunteers, we have been able to raise the profile of and engagement with the need for every child to benefit from a great school library.

The evidence presented in this report marks a key milestone in our advocacy on behalf of the sector. It is the first comprehensive overview of school libraries provision in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and provides an important companion to the excellent work already done in Scotland.

It also creates a clear roadmap and priorities for the next steps in this process. We know that achieving real and lasting change for school libraries means securing support of both national policymakers and school leaders. It also means empowering school librarians to advocate for their transformative impact on school life, while showcasing exemplars of best practice.

We will reflect on the insights of this report and use them to define the tactics and priorities for the next phase of our campaigning. These will include:

1. Direct representation to and engagement with policymakers through the Libraries All-Party Parliamentary Group;
2. Widespread promotion of this report, the findings of our research and the recommendations to policymakers, school leaders and the profession;
3. Creating a hub of resources through the #GreatSchoolLibraries campaign which can be used by school librarians and library staff to demonstrate their impact to school leaders;
4. Telling the story about the value of great school libraries for teaching and learning, educational attainment, school performance and improvement, and wellbeing in the school;
5. Getting more people involved in the #GreatSchoolLibraries campaign as supporters, ambassadors and champions.

How to get involved

- Follow @GreatSchLibs on Twitter
- Share stories, photos and videos of your great school libraries and the impact they make on your students and school to #GreatSchoolLibraries
- **Sign up** as a supporter for the campaign at www.greatschoolibraries.org.uk and encourage others to get involved.
- **Submit a case study** – as a supporter for the campaign at www.greatschoolibraries.org.uk and encourage others to get involved.

Acknowledgements

The Great School Libraries campaign wishes to thank everyone who has shown their support for the campaign so far by signing up to the Campaign, sharing their great school library stories and messages of support through social media and submitting case studies.

Our special thanks to the campaign sponsor, Peters Books and Furniture, for their tireless energy and support.

The Foyle Foundation provided the grant that enabled the Great School Libraries campaign to carry out the first national survey into school library provision, so our sincere thanks to them.

A massive thank you to members of the School Libraries Data Group and Campaign Working Group who have dedicated their time and much enthusiasm and passion to this campaign.

A thank you also to all of the supporters and advocates who are championing Great School Libraries and who have supplied quotes demonstrating their support. This includes:

Tom Bennett, Founder and Director of Research Ed; **Sonia Blandford**, Achievement for All; **Martin Burrett**, Author and Teacher; **Teresa Cremin**, Open University; **Liz Free**, International Leadership Academy; **Richard Gerver**, Educationalist; **John McCarthy**, Teacher and Consultant; **Geraldine McCaughrean**, Author; **Miranda McKearney**, Empathy Lab; **Jackie Morris**, Author and Artist; **Mary Myatt**, Educational Advisor and **Sue Riley**, National Association for Able Children in Education.

The campaign is proud to have the support of the following organisations: Association of Senior Children's and Education Librarians (ASCEL), National Literacy Trust, The Reading Agency, Read for Good and BookTrust. We would particularly like to thank Dr Christina Clark for all her time, energy and expertise which she has donated so selflessly to the campaign and survey.

And finally thank you to all the school library staff who are making a difference in children and young people's lives every day; and all the Headteachers, Senior Leaders and line managers who support, encourage and promote their school library staff.





nina miller

Published by the
Great School Libraries Campaign.

**Great
School
Libraries**