

## Tools and information to help plan or improve your library

### Advice and resources from Booktrust

#### • Book recommendations

For help with a project or choosing books. Free database of over 2,000 independently selected and recommended books, searchable by age range, genre and theme, plus the Editor's Book of the Month, author interviews and features.  
[www.booktrustchildrensbooks.org.uk](http://www.booktrustchildrensbooks.org.uk)

#### • School library guidelines and resources

Find more information on recommended spending and stock levels and what makes a good school library.  
[www.booktrust.org.uk](http://www.booktrust.org.uk)

#### • Children's Book Week

Free activity pack for teachers including lessons and games related to books and reading.  
[www.booktrust.org.uk/Campaigns](http://www.booktrust.org.uk/Campaigns)

#### • Booktime

Free books for children entering Reception and resources for librarians and teachers.  
[www.booktime.org.uk](http://www.booktime.org.uk)

#### • Children's Laureate

Ideas and resources to promote a love of reading in your school.  
[www.childrenslaureate.org.uk](http://www.childrenslaureate.org.uk)

### Advice and resources from other organisations

#### • Good school libraries: making a difference to learning

Draws on data from Ofsted inspections at 32 schools.  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

#### • Improve your library: a self-evaluation process for primary schools

A model to help the school library meet the needs of the school.  
[www.teachernet.gov.uk](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk)

#### • Primary school library checklist

Adapted from materials for the 2003 DfES campaign School Libraries: Making a Difference.  
[www.berkshire-els.gov.uk](http://www.berkshire-els.gov.uk)

#### • Primary school library guidelines

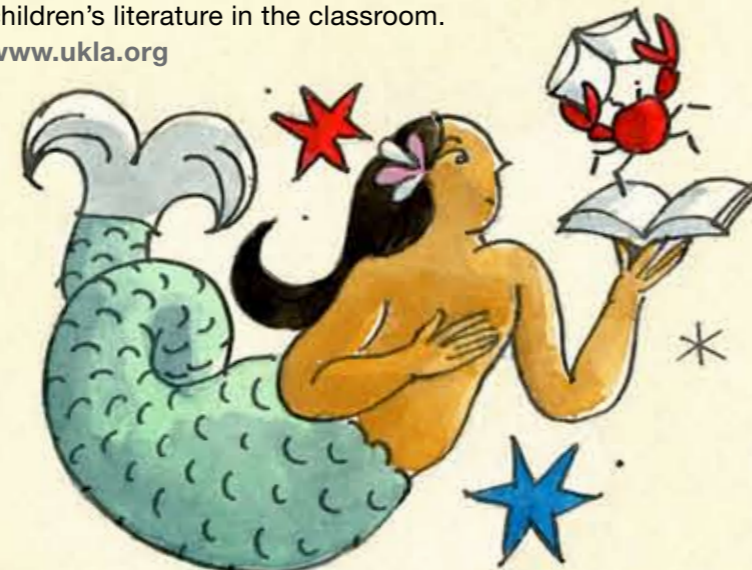
A CILIP publication offering practical support to everyone concerned with establishing, maintaining and developing dynamic primary school libraries across the UK.  
[www.cilip.org.uk](http://www.cilip.org.uk)

#### • School Library Association resources

The SLA has a series of publications offering practical help available for sale, as well as downloadable resources available to SLA members including a Pupil Librarian Toolkit.  
[www.sla.org.uk](http://www.sla.org.uk)

#### • Teachers as readers: building communities of readers

A report on a project aimed at promoting reading for pleasure in primary schools by developing teachers' knowledge of children's literature and the use of children's literature in the classroom.  
[www.ukla.org](http://www.ukla.org)



## Useful contacts

### Association of Senior Children's and Education Librarians (ASCEL)

National network and peer support group available to members; also a point of contact for Schools Library Services.  
[www.ascel.org.uk](http://www.ascel.org.uk)

### Booktrust

Provides resources for teachers, parents and librarians. Administers the Children's Laureate, book prizes and book gifting schemes.  
[www.booktrust.org.uk](http://www.booktrust.org.uk)

### Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP)

Offers training and development courses and guidelines on school libraries.  
[www.cilip.org.uk](http://www.cilip.org.uk)

### Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE)

Educational centre working in language, literacy and assessment.  
[www.clpe.co.uk](http://www.clpe.co.uk)

### National Literacy Trust

Promotes literacy in the wider community through a focus on empowering learners, supporting professionals and influencing policy and practice.  
[www.literacytrust.org.uk](http://www.literacytrust.org.uk)

### The Reading Agency

Works with public libraries to encourage reading for pleasure. Runs the Summer Reading Challenge and other initiatives.  
[www.readingagency.org.uk](http://www.readingagency.org.uk)

### Reading Connects

A DCSF initiative aimed at building whole-school reading communities.  
[www.literacytrust.org.uk/readingconnects](http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/readingconnects)

### School Library Association (SLA)

For anyone interested in the development of school libraries. Produces useful guidelines and booklists and sponsors the School Librarian of the Year Award.  
[www.sla.org.uk](http://www.sla.org.uk)

### UK Literacy Association (UKLA)

Promotes good practice in literacy and language teaching and research both nationally and internationally.  
[www.ukla.org](http://www.ukla.org)

### 'I am grateful that we have a library in our school.'

Pupil, Blue Gate Fields Junior School, Tower Hamlets, London

## Making the most of your primary school library

*'Our library looks small, but it is powerful.'*  
Pupil, Yeading Junior School, Hayes, Middlesex



This leaflet is based on quantitative research into school library provision and qualitative research into the factors that make a successful primary school library, including case studies of good practice. Both reports are available online.

Booktrust would like to thank the staff and pupils at Blue Gate Fields Junior and Infant Schools, Elland C of E Junior and Infant School, High Ercall Primary School, Stow Heath Junior School, Yardley Hastings Primary School and Yeading Primary School for participating in the research.

## Why invest in the school library?

A good school library is an excellent way to give all children the opportunity to enjoy reading and one of the simplest and most effective ways to get books into homes.

*'Before, we didn't have a working library. Now it's there, being used. One hundred percent of pupils are accessing the library and more books are getting into homes.'*

Freda McGowan, Headteacher, Elland Church of England Junior and Infant School, West Yorkshire

Children who read for pleasure benefit both socially and academically. Research shows that enjoyment of reading is a more important indicator of academic achievement than family background.

*'The best thing about the library is the amount of books that it has, because they're both helpful for homework yet they're still fun to read at the same time because they're good books all the same.'*

Pupil, High Ercall Primary School, Telford

A good library can also help to improve a school's overall standards.

*'The library has had a real impact on standards and the confidence levels of children.'*

Lin Jackson, Headteacher, High Ercall Primary School, Telford

Schools often have to cope with limited space, time and funding. In such circumstances it can be a challenge to devote resources to the library. However, Booktrust research has found that with commitment and creativity, obstacles can be surmounted and schools can build a thriving reading community.

*'The library doesn't have to have a lot of money. You can overcome space and financial considerations.'*

Jill Gardner, Headteacher, Yardley Hastings Primary School, Northampton

*"School libraries should be a focal point for a school. In a school library there should be the resources to support every aspect of school life: every project, books to support sport, dancing, art, music; and it should also be the place to go for stories and poems. It should be an unmissable, unavoidable place."*

Michael Rosen, Children's Laureate 2007 – 2009

## What makes a successful school library?

Over and over again, research has found that the same key components add up to a successful school library:

- **Strong leadership by the Headteacher**

*'I am proud of the library. It echoes the ethos of the school – we want children to love learning and we want it to be fun.'*

Jill Gardner, Headteacher, Yardley Hastings Primary School, Northampton

- **Designated, knowledgeable library staff**

*'One key thing you must do to promote literacy through the library – know the books and know the children.'*

Pam Girdwood, Librarian, Blue Gate Fields Junior School, Tower Hamlets, London

- **A wide range of good quality stock**

- **Collaboration between library staff and teachers**

- **Maximised opening hours**

*'The best thing about the library is you can read in the library at dinner time and you can borrow one or two books.'*

Pupil, Stow Heath Junior School, Wolverhampton

- **Pupil involvement in the development and running of the library**

- **Good management and regular evaluation of the library's effectiveness**

- **Creative use of space**

*'It's a small space, but an exciting space.'*

Carole Jones, Headteacher, Yeading Junior School, Hayes, Middlesex

## Ten tips for a good school library

### 1. **Subscribe to your Schools Library Service**

SLSs are great value for money, particularly if you can't afford a qualified librarian of your own. The SLS will work with you to ensure that the library supports the aims and ethos of your school.

### 2. **Allocate a proportion of the school budget to the library each year**

A small amount is better than nothing. Ask parents to donate a book to the library on their child's birthday if they can, and raise additional funds through book fairs and PTA fundraising events.

### 3. **Expand your knowledge of children's books**

Browse the Booktrust website, read reviews in the Guardian or the Times on Saturday and in the specialist journals Books for Keeps and Carousel. Consult your SLS – they are experts in children's literature. Give staff the time and training to develop their knowledge.

### 4. **Open the library before and after school and at break times**

Give pupils access to the library for a range of activities such as book clubs, board games, independent research and, of course, reading and book borrowing. Longer opening hours can allow for activities that encourage family learning.

### 5. **Make use of pupil librarians**

Apart from the obvious practical benefits of having pupils help in the library, the status that comes with the job builds confidence and develops valuable skills.

### 6. **Let children choose their own library books and take them home**

Independent use of the library leads to independent learning. Letting children borrow books means more books get into more homes and can help families to support children's reading.

### 7. **Make the library fun**

Schedule author visits, have competitions and themed book events, make story sacks, get the children to dress up as characters. Have a comment box and a recommendations board, and maintain an up-to-date pupils' wish list. Operate a library buddy system. Paint the library in welcoming colours, hang pupils' artwork on the walls and get some comfy cushions.

### 8. **Manage your library**

Gathering statistics about library usage can help with decisions about stock selection and can also help identify children who are not using the library.

### 9. **Make the best use of your space**

Pupils benefit from having a dedicated room for the library, but few primary school libraries are big enough to accommodate a whole class. Careful timetabling of small group visits, and opening the library at break times, can help to get around this problem.

### 10. **Take it one step at a time**

Building a good library takes planning, flexibility, patience and time.

*'We have a comfy cushion snake to sit on and it is quiet. I love reading!'*

Pupil, Yardley Hastings Primary School, Northampton

Booktrust is an independent national charity dedicated to encouraging people of all ages and cultures to engage with books and the written word. The written word underpins all our activity and helps us to fulfil our vision of promoting a lifelong love of reading for all.

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