

The role of School Libraries in supporting A Curriculum for Excellence

Libraries are vital resources for school pupils across the country. They are places that bring learning to life and encourage the development of vital research and study skills that pupils can take with them to further and higher education and into the workplace. Good experiences in the school library can stoke enthusiasm for learning that can last a lifetime.

Graham Donaldson, Senior Chief Inspector at HMIE, May 2004.

School library resource centres support the development of successful learners and confident individuals. Promoting skills for lifelong learning encourages pupils to grow as responsible citizens who make an effective contribution to society. It is in the school library resource centre that all pupils have the opportunity to exercise their entitlement to access information and to develop comprehensive literacies in a supportive environment.

School librarians offer:

- access to a wide range of information
- support for attainment across the school community
- support for the development of literacy, including increasing reading confidence and fluency
- expertise in the development of information literacy
- assistance with the effective use of ICT in learning and teaching
- knowledge and skills in promoting reading for enjoyment
- support for personal and social development

Supporting ACfE

- Librarians are uniquely placed to work beyond subject boundaries.
- Many of the working practices librarians already employ embody values, purposes and principles of ACfE.
- Access to structured information skills programmes, run by professional librarians and well-developed libraries in primary school will help to development critical thinking skills.
- Libraries offer the type of flexible learning environment which can encourage independent learning and empower pupils to take responsibility for their own learning.

It must be a mixture of challenge and support, with a celebration of achievement by pupils.

- Librarians are skilled and experienced in promoting and developing literacy skills for the C21st.
- Librarians are in the fore front of having media/ICT knowledge so well placed to offer assistance with information and media literacies, as well as ICT access and help for staff and pupils throughout the day. Having librarians included as Glow mentors and trained in the use of Glow at an early stage will support its roll-out. There are opportunities in Glow for identifying and streamlining organisation and access to online resources, which librarians can contribute to. This includes working across the intranet to identify quality resources in print and online environments on a national scale.
- Librarians should be seen as having a management role in the in the co-ordination and delivery of core skills. Librarians would welcome involvement in developing the definitions of literacy (as a cross-cutting theme), so that it encompasses traditional literacy and information, emotional media literacies.
- School librarians have been identifying and promoting health and well-being across school departments for many years. This can be further developed within ACfE.
- School libraries also offer help to pupils and staff in the development of searching skills, across books, journals and electronic resources. Many school libraries have excellent collections for teachers' CPD.
- There are professionally qualified librarians in nearly 90% of Scottish secondary schools. This means they will usually have an honours degree in a subject, a post-graduate diploma which gives them theoretical knowledge of professional practice and Chartership which is benchmarked competence in professional practice. Their competencies are clearly demonstrated in supervision, leadership, training and supporting learners in school libraries, in particular helping to improve literacy and numeracy.
- Contribution that can be made by library service needs to be embedded in strategic ACfE documents. We would like the Engagement Team to encourage, through documentation and presentations, an awareness that librarians are professional partners who should be involved in school and authority working groups on ACfE.
- School librarians need to be included in any whole-school CPD based around ACfE so they can act on opportunities for partnerships with teaching and other staff.