Survey of secondary school library users

Helen Spreadbury and David Spiller
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Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank the librarians at the four schools which took part in the survey, without whose help the project would not have been possible. They would also like to thank the head teachers at these schools, for agreeing that the surveys could be conducted.

Thanks are also due to Claire Creaser, for advising on the presentation of the data, and to Mary Ashworth and Sharon Fletcher, who revised the graphs and tables and prepared the text for publication.
Section 1 Aims and methodology

Aims
This survey was first carried out as a Masters dissertation for the Department of Information Science at Loughborough University, under the supervision of the Library and Information Statistics Unit. The work was undertaken during the period March to August 1998.

The survey’s aims were to investigate key issues affecting the use of libraries in both state and independent secondary schools, by interviewing pupils in these sectors; also to compare provision in the state and independent sectors, and to compare findings by individual school, and by the age and gender of the pupils.

Methodology
The survey took the following steps:

- Identified what was known about key issues from the literature
- Selected four London schools - two state and two independent - with pupils from the same age ranges
- Piloted a draft questionnaire with the librarians and pupils of the four schools
- Used the questionnaire to interview approximately 100 pupils at each of the four schools, taking a stratified sample

by age - with pupils selected randomly within each age band (a copy of the questionnaire is included at Appendix 1)

- Analysed the completed questionnaires using SPSS software, and presented findings
- Made recommendations for future research in this area.

Interviews with pupils took place in the library, usually when they were using the library or studying there - although some younger pupils were taken out of lessons to be interviewed.

The surveys took place in May/June 1998 – ie just before examinations time (which may have influenced the responses).

The schools and their pupils
All four schools involved in the survey were in London - two state comprehensives and two independent schools. Both the comprehensives were mixed sex schools, and both the independents single sex (one boys and one girls). All the pupils at the independent schools were day pupils (ie there were no boarders). Key details of the schools, and their libraries, are shown in Table 1. The shorthand used here - school A, school B, etc - is used throughout the presentation of survey results. A detailed description of each school is in Appendix 2.

Table 1 Summary comparing schools that took part in the survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>No. of pupils</th>
<th>Size of library collection</th>
<th>No. of items per pupil</th>
<th>Material expenditure per annum</th>
<th>Material expenditure per pupil</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Comprehensive (mixed)</td>
<td>1,366</td>
<td>25,000</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>£8,500 + £3,500 for SLS</td>
<td>£6.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Comprehensive (mixed)</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>27,653</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>£5,000</td>
<td>£2.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Independent (boys)</td>
<td>870</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>£12,500</td>
<td>£14.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Independent (girls)</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>24,500</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>£14,500</td>
<td>£20.71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: SLS = Schools Library Service
All four schools took pupils from the ages of 10/11-18 years. The age ranges of pupils relating to the different school ‘years’ is shown in Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year group</th>
<th>Age of pupil</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 7</td>
<td>11 and 12 year olds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 8-9</td>
<td>12 to 14 year olds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 10-11 (GCSE)</td>
<td>14 to 16 year olds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 12-13 (A level)</td>
<td>16 to 18 year olds</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Section 2  Key issues

National curriculum
In the survey we wanted to see whether the new information needs generated by the National Curriculum were reflected in school library provision. The 1988 Education Reform Act brought in the biggest changes for schools since the 1944 Education Act - in particular the National Curriculum, which created a compulsory curriculum for state schools (not independent schools) in England and Wales. Though methods of teaching and learning were left to the schools, the curriculum structure, content and timetable were decided by the Act. There was also a significant shift away from the old priority of content, towards the skills and processes of learning - with obvious implications, in theory at least, for the role of the school library.

In 1995, an important report by the then Department of National Heritage - *Investing in children* (1) - concluded that an integrated strategy for the delivery of library services to children was necessary to support the needs of the National Curriculum, and that there should be a requirement upon schools to demonstrate how they will provide adequate learning resources to underpin National Curriculum teaching.

State and independent schools
The survey examined interesting issues concerning the differences in library provision between state and independent schools. Only 7% of children in the UK attend independent schools, and their performance - in terms of examination results - is generally better than that of the other 93%. This may be due to various factors - including the amount of funding available for independent schools, the quality of education provided, and the degree of parental support given to their pupils.

The Library Association’s 1997 survey of UK secondary schools (2) found that in many respects library provision was better in independent schools, particularly where funding was concerned. For instance, 36% of independent schools had a budget of more than £10 per pupil, compared to only 6% of state schools. But in some respects provision was inferior. For instance, 17% of independent schools had no computer workstations in their libraries, compared to only 4% of state schools. We felt that it would be interesting to have the pupils’ views on these issues. We also investigated the access that pupils had to materials at home - in addition to material from libraries.

School funding and Schools Library Services
There are also important issues to do with funding and support services for school libraries. The process of devolving budgets from local authorities to schools began to take place during the past few years, under the Local Management of Schools (LMS) initiative. Amongst the services affected by this move were Schools Library Services (SLS) - the operations provided by public library authorities to support state schools (and some independent schools) in their areas, particularly in terms of stock replenishment and professional advice. Claire Creaser, in her *Survey of library services to schools and children in the UK 1995-96* (3) wrote: *In London in particular the changes wrought by LMS and the delegation of budgets have brought a move towards Schools Library Services operating as independent business units, obtaining the largest part of their income directly from schools.*

The two state schools participating in the current survey exemplified the changes which have taken place. Both were previously heavy users of SLS but since the devolution of funding they had to decide if they wished to pay for the service. School A
now pays £3,500 per year, while school B can no longer afford to subscribe.

**Standards of service in school libraries**

There has been periodic discussion about what constitutes effective school library provision. The Department of Education and Science’s *Better libraries: good practice in schools* \(^4\) gave a government view, and in 1998 the Library Association drew up its *Guidelines for secondary school libraries* \(^5\). These documents tended to concentrate on expenditure, stock and other inputs. The current survey asked for the views of pupils about their library services. The process of asking children has been taken up in public libraries through the CIPFA PLUS children’s survey \(^6\), which became operational in 1998.

**Access and staffing**

The survey provided an opportunity to ask pupils about the length of time that they wanted the school library to be open, and the optimum times for use during the day. This was also considered in conjunction with staffed and unstaffed library opening.

On staffing, the Library Association’s *Guidelines for secondary school libraries* \(^5\) recommended that chartered librarians should be appointed to posts within all secondary schools in the UK. But the Library Association’s own survey of provision \(^2\) found that 30% of secondary schools are run without the full or part-time involvement of a librarian or teacher-librarian. It was therefore interesting to explore through the survey the pupils’ views about library staffing: their access to library staff, their need for help and advice, and the effectiveness of that advice. We also asked pupils whether they were effectively taught the information-handling skills which are essential both to their success at school, and subsequently in the life-long learning process.

**The curriculum and the library**

School libraries exist to serve the purpose of their schools, and an important section of the survey explored the connections between the teaching/learning process and use of the library. We wanted to know how often pupils were referred by their teachers to use the library, and for which subjects; what proportion of school library use was for schoolwork as opposed to general and recreational use; and how successful the library was in fulfilling schoolwork needs.

**Use of the library**

Little is known about the performance of school libraries, and few performance data are collected, beyond issue counts - and sometimes not even those. There is little information about the extent to which children use the school library as a place to study, or for access to the non-book services - audio visual and computer-based - which have developed in the past decade. The survey was a chance to ask children themselves about these features.

**Reading**

We asked pupils about their frequency of book borrowing and about reading tastes. Gender analysis of these responses was revealing. It was also possible to link types of book borrowing to different sources - school library, public library or home - and to explore the noticeable differences between state and independent school pupils in these respects.

**IT in the library**

The Library Association survey \(^2\) showed that most school libraries have some access to computer-based information: 53% of schools had between one and four workstations, and 39% had five or more. Less is known about how pupils use these resources. The survey asked about frequency and ease of use, and the various ways that pupils use CD-ROMs. There were also questions about the use of the computer catalogue.
Section 3  Findings

Profile of respondents

Gender of respondents
A total of 410 pupils were interviewed in all. Table 3 shows the breakdown by gender within each school. School C was an all boys school, and School D all girls.

Age ranges of respondents
Fig 1 shows the distribution of respondents by ‘school year’ (see Table 2 for the correspondence between school years and the ages of pupils). The overall totals were: 100 pupils in year 7; 110 in years 8-9; 84 in years 10-11; and 116 in years 12-13. The total for the ‘years 10-11’ group was lower in School A because year 10 pupils were away on work experience, and year 11 pupils were on study leave at the time of the survey.

Subjects studied by older pupils
Fig 2 shows the subjects studied by respondents in years 12 -13, based upon relatively small numbers of pupils (from 25 pupils in school B to 33 pupils in school A). There was a predominance of arts subjects studied in the two state schools, and of mixed subjects in the two independents. The numbers of respondents studying science subjects were relatively small, except in school D. This may indicate either that fewer pupils were taking those subjects or that pupils studying the sciences use the school library less.

Table 3  Gender of respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>All pupils</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School A</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School B</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School C</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School D</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Schools</td>
<td></td>
<td>202</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>410</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig 1  Percentage of respondents by school year

Total respondents 410
Section 3: Findings

Fig 2  Subjects studied by 6th form pupils at all four schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GNVQ</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sciences</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total respondents 116

Fig 3  Frequency of visits to library

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A month or more ago</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last week</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A few days ago</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yesterday</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can't remember</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can't remember</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total respondents 410

Pupils’ use of the school library

Frequency of visits

Pupils were asked: *When was the last time you visited the library?* Responses are depicted in Fig 3. Most respondents visited the library regularly. 35% had visited the day before, 16% ‘a few days ago’, and 35% the previous week. Only 7% had visited a month or more earlier. Since interviews were held in the library the survey did not pick up pupils who never visited, and those who visited infrequently will be under-represented.

Fig 4 shows frequency of visits to the library, broken down by ‘school year’ groups. Older pupils in years 10-13 visited the library more frequently - with 43% of years 10-11 and half of years 12-13 visiting ‘yesterday’. This was partly because they had a heavier workload than younger pupils, and more need to find materials for projects and essays. But the figures can also be misleading, since the older pupils had more private study periods, which many of them chose to spend in the library.

Fig 4  Frequency of visits to library, by year group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>0%</th>
<th>20%</th>
<th>40%</th>
<th>60%</th>
<th>80%</th>
<th>100%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 8-9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 10-11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 12-13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total respondents 410
**Purpose of library use**

Pupils were asked: *Are you using the school library for pleasure, schoolwork or both?*

Overall, schoolwork use predominated, with 51% saying ‘for schoolwork’, 18% ‘for pleasure’, and 31% ‘for both’. Use for schoolwork significantly increased with the age of the pupils, as shown in Fig 5. Just over a third of respondents said ‘schoolwork’ at year 7, but this had increased to over two-thirds by years 12-13. Correspondingly, the numbers visiting the library ‘for pleasure’ fell from 28% in year 7 to 9.5% in years 10-13.

**Library services used**

Respondents were asked: *Why are you using the school library today?* and 10 different services were prompted. The aim was to obtain a realistic picture of the use of library services, in the absence of detailed management information on school libraries. Responses overall are shown in Fig 6. A wide range of activities were undertaken, but two functions dominated: 48% used the library ‘for study’, and 39% ‘to borrow books’. The next highest responses were ‘to find books/articles’ (as opposed to borrowing them), and ‘to use the computers’. There were no takers at all for ‘using videos/cassettes’.

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**Fig 5** Percentage of pupils using library for different purposes, by year group

![Fig 5 Graph](image1)

**Fig 6** Percentage of pupils using different library services

![Fig 6 Graph](image2)
When responses are broken down by year groups they again show marked differences - as depicted in Fig 7. Use of the library as a place to study increased from a quarter of year 7 pupils to 77% of years 12-13. Use for borrowing books declined from two-thirds of year 7 respondents to a mere 13% of years 12-13.

One surprising finding was the diminishing use of computers by older respondents. 22% of year 7 respondents used the computers in the library, compared to only 3% of years 12-13 respondents. Observations made in the course of the survey suggested that much of the use of computers by younger pupils was for recreational purposes.

The school library and private study
There was a further question about one specific library use: *Do you use the library to study/do your home/coursework in?*
Overall responses are depicted in Fig 8. 48% of pupils said ‘sometimes’, and 18% ‘most of the time’. Many stated that they only use the library for homework if told to, and that they generally prefer to finish it at home or in a homework club - where it is quieter or more conducive to study. Others said that the school library was not open long enough to finish homework.
Fig 9  Percentage of pupils using library for study, by year group

Fig 9 breaks down responses by school year. Year 12-13 pupils use the library most for study, with 38% using it ‘all/most of the time’. This is likely to be a function of both increased work load and the use of the library during free study periods.

Public library use
Respondents were asked: Do you also use a public library? 56% said ‘yes’, 15% ‘sometimes’, and 29% ‘no’.

Use of a public library was much greater in the two state schools - as shown in Fig 10.

Comments indicated that this was largely a matter of geography. Most of the state school pupils lived locally, whereas many of the independent school pupils travelled long distances to school, and had less opportunity to visit their public library. Another factor was the wider availability of books at home for independent school pupils. A typical comment was: We have all the books I need at home and any other I might want I can easily get from school.
As a follow-up to the previous question, respondents at two of the schools - Schools B (state, mixed) and D (independent girls) - were asked: Where do you get most of the books you read? Responses to the five prompted answers are depicted in Fig 11. Overall, respondents mainly plumped for one source - rather than a combination of sources - with the school library (34%) marginally more popular than ‘home’ (29%), and the public library third (with 21%).

**Fig 11 Respondents’ main sources of books**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School library and home</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School library</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School and public library</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public library</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total respondents 208

Fig 12 shows the breakdown of this information by school. The ‘school library’ as a source of books attracted very similar numbers of respondents, but for other prompted options the responses from the state and independent schools were very different. For state school pupils the public library was confirmed as the main additional source. For independent school pupils, ‘home’ was the main additional source - attracting the highest percentage (41%) of any response. To a large extent this was likely to be the effect of socio-economic factors: pupils from the independent school came from relatively affluent backgrounds, where books were more likely to be found in the home, whilst pupils at the state school were less affluent - and often came from homes where English was spoken as a second language.

**Access and image**

**Opening hours**

Respondents were asked: Are there any times when the school library is closed but you would like it to be open? Overall, 28% of respondents said they were happy with the existing opening times, but large
numbers wanted increased opening: 27% all through lunch and break times, 26% longer before school, and 25% longer after school.

To be made more meaningful, responses need to be broken down by individual schools and related to the different opening times of the four schools (Fig 13).

Fig 13 Opening times, and preferences for increased opening hours, in the four schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School A</th>
<th>9 am – 4.30 pm</th>
<th>0% 20% 40% 60%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Closed at break</td>
<td></td>
<td>Longer before school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open at lunch</td>
<td></td>
<td>Longer after school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used for: reading lessons, meetings</td>
<td></td>
<td>During meetings etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School B</th>
<th>8.30 am – 4.30 pm</th>
<th>0% 20% 40% 60%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Closed at break</td>
<td></td>
<td>Longer before school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open 30 min at lunch</td>
<td></td>
<td>Through break and lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower school library used for lessons</td>
<td></td>
<td>Longer after school</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School C</th>
<th>8.15 am – 4.30 pm</th>
<th>0% 20% 40% 60%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Closed 8.40-9.10 am</td>
<td></td>
<td>Longer before school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open at break and lunch</td>
<td></td>
<td>Longer after school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No other uses</td>
<td></td>
<td>At weekends</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School D</th>
<th>8.30 am – 4.30 pm</th>
<th>0% 20% 40% 60%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Open at break and lunch</td>
<td></td>
<td>Longer before school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used for: library lessons</td>
<td></td>
<td>Longer after school</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

461 responses from 410 pupils
Broken down by school, responses suggested that pupils were keenly aware of the inconvenient features of existing library opening hours. 46% and 58% respectively of state schools A and B wanted the library to be open throughout break and lunch hours - which was not the case at the time of the survey. School B had the smallest percentage of students satisfied with existing opening hours, reflecting the fact that - on balance - their opening hours were the most limited of the four. School A’s pupils had the only significant percentage (12%) of pupils complaining about other uses of the library (for meetings, etc) - and again this matched School A’s actual situation.

The two independent schools had more generous opening hours than the state schools, but even so their pupils were more demanding - having the largest percentages requesting longer hours, both before and after school. Comments suggested that these requests were largely connected with parents driving their children long distances to and from school, and children having to wait about for their lift before and/or after school.

There was little enthusiasm for weekend library opening, from pupils at any of the schools.

Respondents’ attitudes to the library
In a question concerned with the library’s image, pupils were asked How would you describe the school library?, and given seven prompted statements - from which several could be selected. Responses overall are depicted in Fig 14. Only three of the prompted options attracted sizeable numbers of replies, with ‘a quiet place where I can concentrate and do my work’ most commonly mentioned (by 72% of pupils). The school library’s two main functions were highlighted by the two other most significant responses: ‘very important for helping me with my school work’ (43%), and ‘a place where I can relax and read’ (40%). Only 7% chose ‘a place I want to get out of as soon as possible’.

Fig 14  Pupils’ attitudes towards the school library

![Fig 14 Pupils’ attitudes towards the school library]

763 responses from 410 pupils
Section 3: Findings

Survey of secondary school library users

Fig 15 Pupils’ attitudes towards the school library, by school

803 responses from 410 pupils

Fig 15 breaks down these responses on image by individual schools. The most striking point was the higher percentage of pupils in the two independent schools who selected the option ‘quiet place where I can concentrate and do my work’ - a function of the fewer classes conducted in the independent school libraries, as well as their stricter rules of silence. There were complaints about the latter from a number of pupils at school C (They should relax the rules of silence, because at the moment I don't even feel I can ask a friend if I can borrow a pen or something). All the same many pupils - across all four schools - said that the library needed to remain a quiet place to work, because very often it was the only place in the school that was quiet.

At school B an exceptional number of respondents (35%) selected the option ‘a place where I can get together with friends and chat’, and school B’s library did seem to be a place where friends could meet - not least, as many of them indicated, to discuss school work. Despite this, only 6% of school B respondents marked the ‘noisy and frantic’ prompt.

Suggested improvements to the library

Respondents were also asked: What do you think could be done to the library to encourage more pupils to use it? Eleven options were prompted, including an ‘other’ category. Fig 16 (page 14) shows the responses overall. Only 5% chose ‘the library is fine as it is’. The options most commonly selected were ‘more up-to-date books’ (by 52%) and ‘more computers’ (by 39%). 20% wanted more tables and desks.

‘Other’ comments included Advertising new books in the library within the school, and Allowing pupils to suggest new books.

There were also complaints from senior pupils at school A about having to pay a deposit in order to obtain a library card. Many pupils said they could not afford this expense (£5 per annum in years 10-11, £10 in years 12-13) and were deterred by it from borrowing books.
Fig 17, showing suggested improvements broken down by individual school, demonstrates pupils’ awareness of problems/limitations in their school library. There were higher percentages wanting ‘more up-to-date books’ in the two state schools, where book budgets were more limited than in the independent schools. 69% of respondents said they wanted ‘more computers’ in school B, where IT provision was poor, particularly in the lower school. 44% of respondents wanted more computers in school D, where there were already four work stations. This was largely because the school had recently introduced Internet access, which was proving very popular - especially with younger pupils. A year 12-13 pupil said: It is almost impossible to get onto a computer during break and lunchtime because the younger girls are always on it.

At school B, 19% of respondents wanted ‘more staff’ - and this was the school where there was usually only one member of staff available, compared to two at the other three schools. At school C, 15% of respondents selected the ‘librarians should be more approachable’ option.
Fig 17  Pupils’ suggested improvements to the library, by school

Staff and users

Finding information
Respondents were asked: *What do you usually do if you are having trouble finding something?* Responses overall are shown in Fig 18. Two-thirds of pupils asked the librarian, 35% checked the library catalogue, and 15% ‘browsed the shelves’. Only 2% ‘gave up’.

Fig 18  Pupils’ methods for finding information

Survey of secondary school library users
It is clear that a high proportion of school library users rely upon the library staff for advice - much higher, for instance, than is the case in public libraries. Observations made by pupils, especially in the state schools, indicated that during break and lunch times the librarians on duty were constantly followed about by pupils needing advice.

Fig 19 breaks down pupils’ methods for finding information, by individual schools. There is a noticeably different pattern of responses at school C, where only 40% of pupils ‘asked the librarian’ (compared to 69%, 75% and 82% in the other schools). On the other hand, 51% ‘checked the library catalogue’ (compared to 26%, 33% and 29% in the other schools). There were several probable reasons for the difference: first, the library staff at school C stood behind a high enquiry desk, which may have set up barriers between them and the pupils; secondly, a number of comments suggested that the librarians themselves were not particularly approachable; and thirdly, pupils at school C were actively encouraged to use the OPAC catalogue to help them to find material.

Fig 20 breaks down responses to the same question by gender of pupil. Girls were much more likely to ask the librarian for help than boys (82% to 51%), whilst boys were more likely than girls to consult the catalogue (41% to 29%).

Asking the school librarian
Respondents were asked: *Do you ask the library staff to help you?* - and prompted with five options indicating frequency.

Fig 21 indicates the responses overall, with nearly half the pupils asking ‘sometimes’. 26% asked ‘most of the time’ or ‘always’. Only 6% ‘never’ asked the library staff.
Section 3: Findings

Fig 20 Pupils’ methods for finding information, by gender

- Ask the librarian
- Check the library catalogue
- Browse the shelves
- Search on CD-ROM/Internet
- Give up
- Other

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ask the librarian</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check the catalogue</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Browse the shelves</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search on CD-ROM/Internet</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give up had to</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other methods</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

520 responses from 410 pupils

Fig 21 Frequency of pupils asking librarian for help

- Never: 6%
- Not very often: 19%
- Sometimes: 49%
- Most of the time: 18%
- Always: 8%

Total respondents 410

Fig 22 shows these responses broken down by school. Again there is considerably less consultation of the library staff in School C than in the other three schools - presumably for the reasons suggested above.

Fig 22 Frequency of pupils asking librarian for help, by school

- Never
- Not very often
- Sometimes
- Most of the time
- Always

Total respondents 410
Respondents were also asked: *Is there somebody available to help you if you need it?* Responses overall are summarised in Fig 23. They were positive, with 82% of pupils able to consult the staff ‘always’ or ‘most of the time’.

Fig 23  Availability of library staff to help pupils

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Availability</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most of the time</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not very often</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Only 2 respondents marked the ‘never’ prompt
Total respondents 410

Fig 24 breaks down these responses by individual schools. There is again a clear reflection of school B’s having one member of staff rather than two, and being closed for half of the lunch hour - with 39% of pupils saying the staff were ‘sometimes’, ‘not very often’, or ‘never’ available. Pupils’ comments reinforced the figures. (*She is so busy, she doesn’t have time to see everyone/ It depends how busy she is. You usually have to wait a long time at lunchtimes.*)

If we compare state and independent schools, the availability of staff was noticeably less good in the two state schools.

There was a further question on this theme: *What type of help do you need from the library staff?* Fig 25 depicts the responses, with 80% needing staff help for ‘finding things’, 32% for ‘using computers’, and 22% ‘help with projects’.

Fig 24  Availability of library staff to help pupils, by school

Total respondents 410
Fig 25 Type of help required from library staff

Fig 25 shows the percentage of pupils in each year group who needed staff help for using IT resources. Older pupils needed more help, even though they made less use of the IT resources. The most likely reason is that older pupils used the computers for more serious - and complex - purposes. It is also possible that many of the IT resources were only introduced in the past few years, and that older pupils were not taught how to use them.

One of the librarians observed that she had been given little training in the use of IT, and that she and her colleague had to find time to try and teach themselves, because "It reflects badly on us if we are unable to help the pupils."

Fig 26 Library staff advice on use of IT, by pupil year group

Fig 26 shows the percentage of pupils in each year group who needed staff help for using IT resources. Older pupils needed more help, even though they made less use of the IT resources. The most likely reason is that older pupils used the computers for more serious - and complex - purposes. It is also possible that many of the IT resources were only introduced in the past few years, and that older pupils were not taught how to use them.

One of the librarians observed that she had been given little training in the use of IT, and that she and her colleague had to find time to try and teach themselves, because "It reflects badly on us if we are unable to help the pupils."

Continuing the theme of library staff advice in general, respondents were asked: *Is the help offered useful?* Fig 27 shows that 85% of all respondents said help was useful ‘always’ or ‘most of the time’. Given that children are generally more honest than adults with this kind of question, the response reflects extremely well on the school library staff. Only 3% of pupils said the help was ‘not very often’ or ‘never’ helpful.

Fig 27 Percentage of pupils who found staff help useful

Fig 27 shows that 85% of all respondents said help was useful ‘always’ or ‘most of the time’. Given that children are generally more honest than adults with this kind of question, the response reflects extremely well on the school library staff. Only 3% of pupils said the help was ‘not very often’ or ‘never’ helpful.
Section 3: Findings

**Fig 28 Percentage of pupils who found staff help useful, by school**

![Bar chart showing percentage of pupils who found staff help useful by school:]

- School A: Always
- School B: Always
- School C: Always
- School D: Always

*Total respondents 394*

Fig 28 breaks down the responses on usefulness of staff help by individual schools. There was little variation in the findings between schools, despite the earlier finding that staff were less available for help in school B, and less approachable in school C. It seems to be the case that when help is given, it is effective.

**Teaching of information skills**

Finally, in terms of library staff involvement, respondents were asked: *Are you taught to find information in the school library?* Fig 29 depicts the overall responses. 26% of pupils said they had regular lessons, but over half had lessons only when they started at the school. Sixteen per cent had not had lessons at all.

**Fig 29 Percentage of pupils taught information skills**

![Pie chart showing percentage of pupils taught information skills:]

- Yes, we have regular lessons: 26%
- Only when you start school: 52%
- No: 16%
- Only if you ask the librarian: 6%

*Total respondents 410*

Fig 30 breaks down the responses by school, revealing considerable differences in approach. The two state schools had the larger percentages of pupils (36% and 39%) receiving regular instruction in information skills. On the other hand school A had the largest percentage (27%) receiving no instruction. About two thirds of the pupils in each of the independent schools only received instruction on starting school. But school D had the smallest percentage of pupils (3%) receiving no instruction.

The findings suggest that the pattern varies within years and/or classes - or that pupils forget about any instruction they have received. In comments, year 7 and/or 8 pupils in school B and D said they did have regular lessons in the library. At school D this was in the form of one and a half terms of library lessons for year 7 pupils, where they were taught to find materials and use a variety of sources. At school B this process formed part of their subject lessons, which the librarian normally led with the support of the subject teacher. At school A there were reading lessons in the school library, but these did not take the form of teaching pupils how to use different sources. At school C pupils said they were only taught when they started school, in year 7 – at which time they were shown where material was situated in the library and how to use the OPAC catalogue.
The curriculum and the library

Library use for different subjects
Respondents were asked: *For which subjects do you use the library to help you complete home/coursework?* Fig 31 depicts the responses. Overall about half of the respondents used the library for humanities work (52%) and the sciences (49%), and 39% used it for English. No other subject had responses from more than 18% of pupils.

Many pupils from independent schools said that they did not use the library to help with homework, the most common reason being that they used textbooks they were given in class - whereas state school pupils were less likely to have been given textbooks.
**Teachers' encouragement of library use**

There were two questions intended to find out how far library use was encouraged by teachers. We saw teachers’ support as essential if the library was to carry out its main function of supporting the curriculum. Respondents were first asked: *Do teachers ask you to use the library to help you with your schoolwork?* Responses overall are summarised in Fig 32. A quarter of pupils said teachers did this ‘always’ or ‘most of the time’, whilst 43% did so ‘sometimes’. But 32% of teachers did so ‘not very often’ or ‘never’. Since most of the respondents in the survey were regular library users, it seems that many pupils use the library whether or not they are encouraged to do so by teachers.

Fig 33 breaks down these responses by school. The practice of teachers referring pupils to the library was more common in the two state schools - where 35% and 37% respectively referred ‘always’ or ‘most of the time’ (compared to 4% and 20% in the two independent schools). School C was easily the least likely to have teachers referring pupils to the library, with 64% doing so ‘not very often’ or ‘never’. It seems likely that referral is not only a matter of individual teacher preference, but also a matter of school practice - with some schools concentrating on more traditional didactic practices, and others on the resource-based approach.

![Fig 32 Percentage of pupils directed to library by teachers](image_url)

*Total respondents 410*

![Fig 33 Percentage of pupils directed to library by teachers, by school](image_url)

*Total respondents 410*
Fig 34 shows the percentage of pupils in each year group who were ‘never’ referred to the library by teachers. A higher proportion of them were older pupils. One commented: *Teachers expect us by this stage to know that we should use the school library to help supplement our learning.*

Respondents were further asked: *For which subjects do teachers encourage you to use the library?* Responses overall are summarised in Fig 35, and were similar to those reported in Fig 31, summarising the subjects pupils actually used the library for (as opposed to the subjects teachers referred them for). Again humanities had the largest percentage of pupils (45%), and English and sciences were the next largest percentages - although this time English had slightly more than sciences. Comparing the two sets of responses seems to indicate that pupils are more likely to use the school library for a subject if encouraged to do so by their teacher.

Fig 34 Percentage of pupils never directed to the library, by year group

![Graph showing percentage of pupils never directed to the library, by year group](image)

Responses 52 from 410 pupils

Fig 35 Percentage of pupils directed to library for different subjects

![Graph showing percentage of pupils directed to library for different subjects](image)

650 responses from 410 pupils
Section 3: Findings

Fig 36  Percentage of pupils using library for religious education, and percentage encouraged to use, by school

The links between library use and the teachers’ encouragement of library use are further emphasised by Fig 36, which depicts these two features for the subject of religious education (RE). For instance, in school B no pupils are encouraged to use the library by teachers, and none do so. In school D 28% of pupils are encouraged by RE teachers to use the library, and 35% do so.

Availability of curricular information
There were three questions designed to discover whether pupils could find the books/information they wanted in pursuit of their studies. First they were asked: Can you find useful information in the library to help you with your school work? Overall responses were extremely positive, as depicted in Fig 37. Eighteen per cent ‘always’ found information, and 56% ‘most of the time’. Only 5% said ‘not very often’ or ‘never’.

Fig 38 breaks down these responses by school. 83% of pupils found useful information ‘always’ or ‘most of the time’ at school D, compared to almost three quarters at schools A and C, and 64% at school B.

Given the larger materials’ budgets at the independent schools one might have expected the difference to be greater. It is possible that school A’s performance was relatively better than school B’s because it subscribes to the Schools Library Service (whereas school B no longer does). There were several comments from school B pupils that the information found was useful, but ‘old’ or ‘out of date’.

Fig 37  Availability of curricular books in the library

Total respondents 410
Respondents were also asked: *Are the books that you find in the school library generally too easy, too difficult, or about the right level?* Responses overall are depicted in Fig 39. Sixty per cent of all respondents said that they could find information at the right level. Twenty-one per cent said that information was generally too difficult. Amongst comments were:

*A lot of the books in the sixth-form collection are quite detailed and long-winded, which makes them difficult to understand* (from year 12-13 pupil).

*Quite often the information I find is too complicated for me* (from year 8-9 pupil).

*Sometimes there is not really enough A-level material available, and what is, is really popular* (from year 12-13 pupil).
Section 3: Findings

A further question was: *Are you able to get hold of popular books when you need them?* This referred to reading for both school work and recreation. Fig 40 summarises the responses, which were mixed. Overall, just over a quarter of pupils said they could get hold of popular books ‘most of the time’, but just under a third said ‘not very often’.

Fig 40 Percentage of pupils able to obtain popular books

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not very often</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most of the time</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total respondents 410

Fig 41 breaks down these responses by school. The two state schools had larger proportions of students reporting that they could find popular books ‘not very often’ or ‘never’ (40% and 43%) - perhaps because their book budgets are lower than those of the independent schools. Comparing the two state schools, it was easier to find popular books in school A than in school B - possibly because school A subscribed to the Schools Library Service. Of the four schools, it was easiest to find popular books in school C.

Recreational reading

Frequency of recreational reading

Respondents were asked: *How often do you borrow books from the school library to read in your spare time/at home?* Fig 42 summarises the overall results. Over half of the pupils borrowed books at least once a month, and 18% borrowed every week.

A fifth of pupils never borrowed recreational reading at all. Partly, this seemed to be disinclination (*I don’t like reading much because it’s boring*/I get most of them from my English class - *I don’t read many others.*) There was also a perception - particularly amongst older pupils - that better sources of recreational reading were to be found elsewhere. An A-level pupil from an independent school said: *I have never borrowed a book - I get them all from home.* A year 12-13 pupil from a state school said: *The selection of books is not very good - they should have more popular stuff like at the public library.*
Section 3: Findings

Survey of secondary school library users

Fig 42 Percentages of respondents who borrow books to read for pleasure

There were other critical comments:
- A year 7 pupil at school A said that not enough horror books were being stocked.
- A year 10-11 pupil from school B said, unequivocally: The choice of books is appalling.
- A year 12-13 pupil at school B said: I like to read books by James Herbert but they don’t have nothing like that here.
- A year 7 pupil at school C said that he was never able to find books he enjoyed because he always ran out of time.
- A year 10-11 pupil from school D observed: There’s nothing good in here - it’s all classics and no modern stuff.

Fig 43 shows the findings on borrowing for recreational reading broken down by year groups. It is very clear that recreational reading declines steadily as the pupils get older and the pressures of the curriculum begin to bite. Whilst 37% of year 7 pupils borrowed recreational reading ‘every week’, only 3% of year 12-13 pupils did so. Correspondingly, there were few pupils in year 7 who ‘never’ borrowed recreational reading, whilst 37% of pupils in years 12-13 never borrowed.
Availability of recreational reading
Respondents were asked: *Can you find books in the school library that you enjoy reading in your spare time*, and shown several prompts on different frequencies of borrowing. Fig 44 depicts the responses overall. Over half of the respondents could find books ‘always’ or ‘most of the time’, and only 13% ‘not very often’ or ‘never’.

Fig 45 shows the responses on finding recreational reading analysed by year groups. There was a slight downward trend in the frequency with which pupils could find reading, which is not entirely accounted for by the numbers of older pupils who ‘hadn’t looked’, because they no longer read for recreation.

Types of recreational reading
Respondents were then asked: *What types of books do you enjoy reading in your spare time?*, and asked to choose from a prompted list. Fig 46 depicts these responses broadly classified into fiction and non-fiction, and analysed by the gender of pupils. There were very obvious gender differences in reading tastes, with girls reading much more fiction, and boys much more non-fiction: amongst girls, 67% read ‘mostly fiction’, only 2% ‘non-fiction’, and 31% ‘a mixture; amongst boys, only 18% read ‘mostly fiction’, 17% ‘non-fiction’, and 64% ‘a mixture’.
Fig 46 Pupils’ preferences for types of recreational reading, by gender

Fig 47 shows which types of fiction were read by pupils, again analysed by gender. There were some distinct gender differences, with romances and family/friendship novels more favoured by girls, and science fiction and adventure/fantasy by boys. The top three preferences for girls were a cocktail of horror, thrillers, and family/friendships, and for boys a more homogeneous mixture of science fiction, horror and adventure/fantasy. Thrillers and detective stories received almost equal billing from the sexes.

Fig 47 Fiction genre preferences, by gender
Fig 48 Non-fiction recreational reading preferences, by gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Real life stories</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comedy/humour</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music/films</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cartoons</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factual books</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computers</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cars (v'cles)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1,583 responses from 410 pupils

Fig 48 similarly analyses non-fiction recreational reading by gender of pupils. The gender differences here were even more pronounced, with boys much more interested in sport, computers, cars and factual books. The only non-fiction area in which girls expressed more interest was ‘real life stories’. Both boys and girls were interested in comedy/humour books.

Information technology and the school library

Use of the library catalogue

Respondents were asked: *Do you use the library catalogue (OPAC) to find books in the school library?* Fig 49 summarises the responses overall. 34% of pupils said they used the OPAC ‘always’ or ‘most of the time’, and 26% said ‘sometimes’. On the other hand, 39% said ‘not very often’ or ‘never’. (Pupils at the lower school in school B do not have access to an OPAC and so were not asked about its use.)

Fig 49 Percentage of pupils using the library OPAC catalogue

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most of the time</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not very often</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know if there is one</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total respondents 354

Fig 50 broke these responses down by year group. Use of the OPAC diminished steadily as pupils got older. For instance,
48% of year 7 pupils used the OPAC ‘most of the time’ or ‘always’, compared to 22% of year 12-13 pupils. Only 17% of year 7 pupils ‘never’ used the OPAC, compared to 30% of year 12-13 pupils. It is hard to be sure why use diminished in this way, though the response of a girl from school D - *I don’t need to use it because I know where all the books are for my courses, so I just browse the shelves for the one I want* - was probably characteristic of many of the older pupils who had been using the library for several years. All the same, one might have expected older children to have more complex projects, and so to make more use of the OPAC.

A number of older pupils claimed that the OPAC had been introduced after they started at the school, and that they had not been taught how to use it. User instruction was clearly important. Several pupils admitted that they did not listen when taught how to use the OPAC, or had forgotten what they were taught. Another said *I was away when my class was taught how to use it, so now I don’t know how to look for things on it*. However, a pupil from school A said *It’s quicker to ask the librarian, so I just ask her.*

**Fig 50 Percentage of pupils using the library OPAC catalogue, by school year**

![Diagram showing percentage of pupils using the library OPAC catalogue by school year]

Total respondents 354
Fig 51 breaks down the same responses by individual schools. There were very considerable differences between state and independent schools. In the state schools, 42% and 40% of respondents ‘never’ used the OPAC, compared to 14% and 18% in the independent schools - whilst 19% and 12% used it ‘most of the time’ or ‘always’, compared to 56% and 42% in the independent schools. A couple of features may have accounted for the lower use in the state schools: they both still had card catalogues in place, in addition to the OPAC, and school B had only installed the OPAC six months earlier. Whatever the reasons, the majority of pupils at the independent schools appeared far more at ease using the OPACs than their state school counterparts.

There was also a question about pupils’ ability to use the OPAC: *Can you use the library computer catalogue or subject index without help?* Overall, 71% of pupils said they could, whilst 7% said ‘no’, 6% said ‘sometimes’, and 16% said ‘don’t know’. The responses were surprising, given the 27% who ‘never’ used the OPAC. One must assume either that there are pupils who know how to use the OPAC but choose not to use it, or that there was a degree of bravado in the ‘able to use’ responses.

Broken down by age of pupil, the responses on ‘using the OPAC’ were very similar for each year group - although larger numbers of older pupils ‘didn’t know’ whether they could use the OPAC (for instance, 20% of year 12-13, compared to 12% of year 7).

Fig 52 breaks down the responses about OPAC use by individual school. The difference between independent and state schools was again pronounced - presumably for similar reasons to the ones suggested above. In the state schools, 55% and 51% of
pupils said unequivocally that they could use the OPAC - compared to 85% and 82% in the independent schools - whilst 30% and 28% said that they ‘didn’t know’ whether they could use it, compared to 4% and 8% in the independent schools.

Fig 52 Percentage of pupils who can use the OPAC, by school

Computers used for schoolwork presentation
Table 4 shows the numbers of computers available in each of the four school libraries for different purposes.

Table 4 Availability of computers for different functions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>No. of computers in the library</th>
<th>No. with CD-ROM access</th>
<th>No. with access to school network</th>
<th>No. with access to the Internet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Respondents were asked: **Do you use the computers in the library for typing up your work?** Analysis of the responses excludes pupils in school A, where computers were not available for this function. Fig 53 depicts responses for the remainder. Only 17% said they used the library computers for typing up work all or most of the time. 40% never used them for this purpose. A number of reasons were given for not using, the most common being that computers were used elsewhere - either at home or at other school locations. Another factor was that the libraries had limited numbers of computers, and that their most important functions were for access to CD–ROMs and the Internet.

When the same responses were broken down by year groups, there were no major differences between the years, except for greater use by year 7 pupils. 22% of year 7 pupils used computers for typing work most or all of the time, compared to 11% of year 12-13 pupils. Only 28% of year 7 pupils ‘never’ used them for this purpose, compared to 42-43% of years 8-13.

Fig 54 shows a breakdown of the same responses by individual school (excluding school A). 30% of pupils at the state school used computers all or most of the time for typing schoolwork, compared to 17% at school C and 12% at school D. This was mainly because there were relatively few computers in school B as a whole, which put more demand on its library resources. Also, fewer of school B’s pupils had computers at home than was the case in the independent schools. The relatively low use for typing in school D, compared to school C, was because school D had fewer computers - and more applications for them.

**Fig 53  Percentage of pupils using library computers for typing schoolwork**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Most of the time</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Not very often</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total respondents 255

**Fig 54  Percentage of pupils using library computers for typing schoolwork, by school**

Total respondents 255
Use of CD-ROMs
There were a number of questions about CD-ROM use - put to all pupils except those at the lower school in school B, where a CD-ROM service was not available. First, respondents were asked: Do you use the CD-ROMs provided in the library? Responses overall are depicted in Fig 55. 31% of pupils said ‘yes’, and 32% ‘sometimes’. A quarter of respondents said ‘no - but I use them elsewhere’, either at school or at home. Only 12% said that they never used them.

Fig 56 shows the same responses by year group. The lower years used the CD-ROMs more than older pupils. Almost half of year 7 pupils (47%) used them, compared to about one fifth of year 10-11 (21%) and year 12-13 (22%). There were likely to be several reasons for the difference, some of which will be clarified by later questions.

Above all, it seemed likely that younger pupils liked to play with the technology, whilst older pupils found CD-ROMs ‘too easy’ for their requirements, and lacking in detail.

Fig 55 Percentage of pupils using CD-ROMs in the library

Fig 56 Percentage of pupils using CD-ROMs in the library, by year group
CD-ROMs and ease of use
Respondents were asked: Do you think CD-ROMs are easy to use? Nearly three-quarters thought they were, with only 9% saying ‘no’, and 18% ‘it depends upon the CD-ROM’. The majority of pupils who thought CD-ROMs difficult admitted that they had not used them very often. There were a number of comments to the effect that the use of CD-ROMs should be taught - including comments from those who found the medium easy. (You need someone to show you how to use it at the beginning because otherwise it gets confusing/The language used on a lot of CD-ROMs is very formal, which can make them difficult to understand.)

Fig 57 analysed these responses by individual school, and found sharp differences between them. More pupils in the two independent schools (76% and 91%) found CD-ROMs easier to use than in the two state schools (54% and 69%).

Level of CD-ROM information
Respondents were asked: Do you think the information you find on CD-ROM is generally too easy/too difficult/about the right level/don’t know? Nearly two thirds (64%) found the information ‘about the right level’, and over a quarter (27%) ‘too easy’. Only 8% found it too difficult, and 1% ‘didn’t know’. These findings were noticeably different from those relating to the earlier question on the level of printed information - which 7% found ‘too easy’ and 21% ‘too difficult’ (page 25).

Fig 58 shows these responses broken down by year group. As one would expect - given the overall response - the percentages of pupils finding CD-ROMs ‘too easy’ increased with the age of the pupils: 46% of year 12-13 pupils found them ‘too easy’ compared to 14% of year 7. This was no doubt because many of the CD-ROMs in use were of a fairly basic standard. A number of older pupils commented that they usually used printed sources in addition to CD-ROMs, because they often found the information on the latter too superficial for their needs. (CD-ROMs are too brief and leave out important points, so you have to be really selective.) It was also the case that the school libraries did not have as big a selection of CD-ROMs as of printed materials.
Section 3: Findings

Survey of secondary school library users

**Fig 58** Pupils’ comments on the level of CD-ROMs, by year group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 7</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 8-9</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 10-11</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 12-13</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

64 respondents in year 7; 70 in years 8-9; 75 in years 10-11; 95 in years 12-13

**Pupils’ methods of using CD-ROMs**

The next question attempted to discover how pupils went about using CD-ROMs in the library. Respondents were asked: *When you have found a useful document on CD-ROM, what do you do?* - and a number of options were prompted, as shown in the summary of responses in Fig 59. The two courses of action most commonly taken both involved printing out: ‘scan the document and print out’ (by 30%) and ‘print out everything I find’ (by 24%). 16% ‘read the document properly before printing’. In all, 33% used the CD-ROMs without printing out: 18% ‘read the document and made notes’, and 15% ‘scanned the document and made notes’.

Use was sometimes determined by the time available. One pupil commented: *I prefer to scan the document and print it out, but if I’m in a rush I just read the title, print it and read it later when I get the chance.*

Concerns that pupils tend to use CD-ROMs automatically, without checking for relevance, seem to be justified - and this problem is likely to intensify as more pupils use the Internet. There is a need for more pupil instruction on the skills of selecting, editing and synthesising information - as a component of the user instruction function discussed earlier.

**Fig 59** Pupils’ approach to using CD-ROM information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scan the document and print out</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Print out everything I find</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read the document and make notes</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read the document properly before printing</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scan the document and make notes</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read the titles only and print out</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highlight bits of the document and print out</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total respondents 313
Comments above on user instruction are relevant to Fig 60, which breaks down the same responses on using CD-ROMs by individual school. School B had a policy of giving very thorough computer instruction to pupils in the lower school, and it was here that 53% of pupils either ‘read the document properly before printing’ or ‘read the document and make notes’ - a much higher percentage than in any of the other three schools. However there was another factor, because until the previous year school B pupils had had little access to a printing facility from CD-ROMs - partly to encourage proper use, and partly to save on the expense of printing.

**Learning from CD-ROMs versus books**

Respondents were asked: *Do you find it easier to learn from CD-ROM than from books?* Responses overall are depicted in Fig 61. Slightly more pupils (42%) found it harder to learn from CD-ROMs, than found it easier (37%).

As one could anticipate from earlier responses, the numbers of pupils who found it easier to learn from CD-ROMs diminished with age: 55% of year 7 pupils found it easier, compared to 26% of year 12-13. The point about the more complex needs of older pupils came up again. An A-level pupil at school B said: *I tend to refer to books after searching on CD-ROM, because the CD-ROM usually doesn’t go into enough detail.* However, a year 12-13 pupil at school D said: *I suppose I’ve just been brought up on books, so now that’s what I’m used to.*
Fig 62  Pupils’ responses on learning from CD-ROMs cf books, by year group

Fig 63 shows the same responses analysed by gender of pupil. About 10% more boys than girls found it easier to use CD-ROM sources.

Fig 63  Pupils’ responses on learning from CD-ROMs cf books, by gender

Respondents were then asked to give their reasons for preferences - for learning from CD-ROMs or from books. Fig 64 depicts the four main reasons given for preferring CD-ROMs. The most common reason - given by 29% - was that it was ‘easier to search for information’. An observation typical of many was that on CD-ROMs you can just type in a keyword and then all the relevant information will be displayed. Another 27% said it was more fun/interesting to use CD-ROMs because of their interactive nature, and the use of sound and graphics.

Fig 64 Reasons given for preferring to learn from CD-ROM

Survey of secondary school library users
When responses are analysed by gender, 65 boys (61% of 107 respondents) preferred CD-ROMs, to 42 girls (39%). By comparison, 58 girls (55% of 105 respondents) preferred print to 47 boys (45%). Fig 65 gives a breakdown by gender of the reasons for preferring CD-ROM.

**Fig 65 Reasons for preferring CD-ROMs to print, by gender**

![Pie chart showing reasons for preferring CD-ROMs](image)

**Fig 66 Reasons given for preferring to learn from printed material**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More detailed information is given</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easier to understand</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easier to search</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More fun/interesting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quicker</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total respondents</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig 66 shows six reasons given for preferring books to CD-ROMs. The one given by most pupils was the familiar ‘more detailed information is given’ (by 31%). Several of the reasons referred to the ease of using books: ‘easier to read’ (by 23%), and ‘easier to find what you want’ (10%), ‘can take a book anywhere’ (10%), and ‘easier to turn back to information already read’ (7%). Nearly a fifth of pupils (19%) referred to habit - ‘more used to books’.

**Availability of computers**

The last question asked was: *Is there a computer free in the library when you want to search on CD-ROM?* There was quite a mixed overall response, shown in Fig 67. 42% of pupils said there were computers free ‘most of the time’ or ‘always’, while 26% said ‘sometimes’. But nearly a third (31%) said ‘not very often’.

**Fig 67 Availability of computers for accessing CD-ROMs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Availability</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most of the time</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not very often</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total respondents</td>
<td>283</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When findings were broken down by year groups, there was little variation between years - although 54% of year 12-13 pupils found computers available ‘most of the time’ or ‘always’, compared to 37% in year 7, 41% in years 8-9, and 33% in years 10-11. This appeared to be because year 12-13 pupils had study periods throughout the day, when they could use the library and when the workstations were free.

Finally, Fig 68 shows these responses broken down by individual schools. In school C, 70% of pupils found a computer free most or all of the time, compared to 46%, 26% and 22% in schools A, B, and D respectively. The differences were largely due to the existence of stand-alone CD-ROM workstations in schools A and C (two and three workstations respectively) - whereas the four workstations in school D were also used for the Internet and email, and the three workstations in school B were used for a variety of purposes, including word-processing.

**Fig 68  Availability of computer for accessing CD-ROMs, by school**

![Graph showing availability of computer for accessing CD-ROMs by school](image_url)
Section 4 Conclusions

The survey revealed much information about pupils’ use of and attitude to school libraries. There were some striking differences in library use by different age groups, and between state and independent schools, and these are described further below. Use was also much influenced by differences in services offered by individual schools - and pupils showed that they were very aware of these strengths and weaknesses in provision.

Interviews with pupils took place in the libraries, so the views summarised below are those of library users. To get the full picture we should need to supplement these by interviews with non-users.

Overall findings

Access to the library
There are particular problems about access to school libraries, since many pupils only have opportunities to visit during breaks and lunch hours, and at both times there are other attractions - not least, the need to eat. The problems are compounded by the minimal staffing of many school libraries. Three of the four survey libraries had the generous (in national terms) complement of two members of staff, yet still found it difficult to keep the library open whenever pupils wanted it. We found that pupils were very aware of access limitations in their school. For instance, school B’s opening hours - the most limited of the four, because they had only one member of staff - generated the most adverse comments. School A’s library was the one most used for non-library purposes (eg meetings), and this feature generated most complaints from school A pupils. In all, only 28% of pupils said they were happy with existing opening hours. To some extent the problem was mitigated for older pupils by their study hours in the library, when they used services - especially the computers - which were difficult to access at busier times.

Given the heavy dependence upon advice to pupils from library staff, described below, arranging unstaffed access to the library is unlikely to be an answer to the problem. The key requirement seems to be to keep the library open throughout breaks (including the lunch hour), and to ensure that staff are present during those times – notwithstanding the need for staff to eat.

School library use
There were questions about the use of the school library vis a vis the public library and - for pupils from two of the schools - about the part played by books in the home. Only 29% of pupils said that they made no use of their public library. Geography played a big part in this, with the state school pupils using their public library much more than their independent school counterparts. Use of materials at home were brought into the picture when school B and D pupils were asked where they obtained most of the books they read. Sources were fairly evenly spread between school library (34%), ‘home’ (29%), and the public library (21%) - though in practice most pupils appeared to plump primarily for one source.

Several aspects of school library use were explored: its frequency, the reasons for use, and the types of services used. Most pupils interviewed used the school library frequently, with 86% having visited in the same or the previous week - though here we must remember that infrequent users were less likely to have been interviewed, and non-users were not interviewed at all.

Library use connected with the curriculum predominated, with just over half using ‘for schoolwork’ against 18% ‘for pleasure’ - and 31% ‘for both’. 22% said they went to the library specifically for help with projects. These responses were encouraging for those believing that the school library’s main function is to support schoolwork. In
another question, about image, 43% saw the library as ‘important for schoolwork’.

More detailed questions about library services used revealed two key library functions: nearly half of all pupils used the library ‘to study’, and 39% ‘to borrow books’. Beyond these, there was a range of other activities, with in-house use of printed materials and use of the computers the most popular. No-one seemed to use the videos/cassettes collections. Given the shortage of performance data for school libraries, these findings were revealing, and have a practical use for school managers planning the development of services and the funding allocated to different functions.

The importance of the library as a place to study is echoed by surveys of higher education libraries, and is perhaps an aspect of services to which too little attention is given. 48% of pupils said they ‘sometimes’ used the library as a place to do home/course-work, and another 18% did this ‘all or most of the time’. Asked how they would describe the school library, by far the largest percentage (72%) responded to the prompt ‘A quiet place where I can concentrate and do my work’ - though there was much discussion of just how quiet a library should be. When asked what improvements they wanted in the library, 20% said ‘more tables and desks’.

The school library and the curriculum
If the school library’s key role is to support learning through the curriculum, links with the school’s teaching staff are important. A quarter of pupils said that teachers ‘always’ or ‘most of the time’ urged library use, and 43% said ‘sometimes’ - but 32% said ‘not often’ or ‘never’. When pupils were asked which parts of the curriculum they used the library for, three subjects predominated: humanities (52%), science (49%), and ‘English’ (39%). The same three dominated when pupils were asked which were the subjects for which teachers encouraged them to use the library. The implications seem very clear, and were further reinforced by the very close correlation between library use and teacher referral in the area of religious education. There seems to be a need for much closer links between school managers, teaching and library staff, to tie library use in more closely to the teaching of the curriculum.

When pupils did use the library for curricular information, their success rate was quite high: 18% said they ‘always’ found information, and 56% found it ‘most of the time’. There was more of a problem with ‘popular books’ (for study and recreation), which a quarter of pupils said they could find ‘most of the time’, but a third ‘not very often’. Asked about level of printed information, 60% found it ‘about right’, but 20% ‘too difficult’.

Library staff
Of the four schools surveyed, one - school B - had only one member of library staff, whilst the remainder had two. It became clear during the surveys that the staff played a central role in helping pupils to use the library and find what they needed. Asked what they did when they had trouble finding material, two thirds of the pupils replied ‘ask the librarian’ - many more than used the catalogue or browsed on the shelves. 82% of pupils said that they could find someone to consult ‘all or most of the time’, though this fell to 61% for the library with only one staff member. There was heavy pressure on the library staff during school breaks. ‘Finding things’ was the reason that staff were most often consulted, although 32% of pupils asked for help with ‘using computers’. An encouraging finding was that staff help was found to be useful by 85% of pupils ‘most or all of the time’ - a really excellent response given the bluntness of children in responding to questions of this kind.
A lower proportion of pupils asked the library staff for help in school C, and it appeared from a number of comments that staff in this library were less approachable - and that access to staff was discouraged by the layout of the library. All the same, the proportion of responses found to be helpful in school C was no less than at other schools, so it seemed that pupils were put off by the staff’s manner, rather than by the quality of service.

There were varied responses from pupils about the teaching of information skills, which was usually done by library staff - sometimes in association with teachers. Only 26% of pupils received ‘regular’ instruction, whilst about half received instruction only when they started at the school, and 16% no instruction. The need for more instruction surfaced regularly in comments made during the surveys - particularly vis a vis the use of CD-ROMs and the OPAC catalogue. There were no questions on the more complex skills of synthesising and interpreting information from a range of media, though it is likely that these functions too warrant more user orientation.

It was clear that help from library staff was much sought after by pupils, and much appreciated when received. Given the importance of information skills in the world which pupils will move into when they leave school, this particular function is fundamental to the overall aims of any school. There were several different messages here for school managers: school libraries need to be properly staffed rather than minimally staffed; there must be adequate staff available during breaks, when pupils most need them; programmes of regular instruction in library use should be carried out for pupils, and should be closely related to curriculum needs; recruitment procedures for school library staff should place ‘approachability’ high on the list of required qualities.

**Reading for pleasure**

Although the survey concentrated mainly on curriculum-linked library use, there were also some questions about reading for pleasure. Over half of the pupils interviewed borrowed books for recreational reading at least once a month, and 18% borrowed every week. A fifth said they did not borrow from the school library - though some of these borrowed from elsewhere. Over half of the pupils said they could find something to read ‘always, or most of the time’. There were very distinct differences in reading taste between the sexes, with girls concentrating heavily on fiction, and boys more inclined to borrow non-fiction, or a mixture of fiction and non-fiction. Beyond these broad categories, there were still differences in taste between the genders.

Girls liked thrillers and ‘family/friendships’ fiction, whilst boys preferred science fiction and adventure/fantasy. Both sexes ranked horror stories highly - a fashion which has projected R L Stine into the top ten authors listed by Public Lending Right. In non-fiction recreational reading, boys were interested in factual books, including sport and computers, whilst girls preferred ‘real life stories’.

**Automated information sources**

Questions on automated sources concentrated on CD-ROMs, word-processing, and the library (OPAC) catalogue. Access to the Internet had only been recently introduced in one of the schools, and was not covered in this survey.

Overall, 31% of pupils used CD-ROMs in the library regularly, and 32% ‘sometimes’, whilst a quarter of pupils said they only used them elsewhere, and 12% ‘never’ used them. Nearly three-quarters of pupils thought CD-ROMs were ‘easy to use’, though when asked elsewhere in the survey why they needed help from the library staff, 32% mentioned help in using computers. 18% of pupils said (rather sensibly) ‘it depends upon the CD-ROM’. Nearly two-thirds of pupils...
found the level of CD-ROMs ‘about right’ - although over a quarter thought them ‘too easy’ (about the same percentage that found the level of printed material ‘too difficult’). Slightly more pupils (42%) found it harder to learn from CD-ROMs (compared to print) than found it easier (37%).

There were questions about the advantages of the CD-ROM format over books, and vice versa. Amongst younger pupils there was a strong element of play in CD-ROM use. Many pupils found CD-ROMs easier to search for information - although this was also a comment made about books. The most frequently recurring comment about books, throughout the survey, was that they contained more detailed information suitable for projects.

Only 17% of pupils regularly used school library computers for typing up schoolwork, while 40% ‘never’ used them for this purpose.

One of the pupils’ main gripes about computers was the difficulty of getting access to them. Although 42% of pupils said that computers were free ‘always or most of the time’, 31% said ‘not often’. When asked how their school libraries could be improved, 39% overall said ‘more computers’. For school library managers decisions on these matters are complex, because use is influenced by a number of factors. Two of these are the availability of computers elsewhere in the school, and in pupils’ homes - where, on the whole, independent school pupils were more likely to have access than those from state schools. These factors could in themselves affect how computers were used. For instance in school B there was a lot of use for typing up schoolwork, which affected the availability of machines for CD-ROMs. School D had more machines than elsewhere, but recent provision of the Internet had made it difficult to get onto the machines at all.

In the use of CD-ROMs, there was a great deal of printing out of material, often without proper scanning of it first. In school B, where there was a thorough training programme on how to use CD-ROMs, the approach to the medium seemed more sensible.

There were various messages from these findings for school managers. Obviously there was an overall need for more machines - but a balance had to be struck between expenditure on IT and on other materials, because both types of resource had their advocates. Managers also needed to identify which IT sources were the most valuable for the schools’ purposes, and to improve access to those sources. This may have meant - as happened at one school - dedicating machines for one purpose (eg for CD-ROM use). There were also messages about user instruction in the more complex uses of IT resources - and this applied not only to pupils but also to the staff (who appeared to receive little training on this aspect).

Finally the use of the OPAC catalogues was investigated. A third of pupils used the OPAC ‘always or most of the time’ and 26% ‘sometimes’, but 39% said ‘not very often or never’. However most pupils said they knew how to use the OPAC - although this must have included some who said they never used it.

**Independent and state school differences**

We attempt here to summarise the main differences uncovered in the survey between the two state and two independent schools.

Pupils at state schools made more use of public libraries - 63% and 71% of state school pupils, compared to 45% and 47% of independent school pupils. This was partly a function of geography, with many independent school pupils living further away from the school. On the other hand,
independent school pupils were much more likely to use books obtained from home.

Independent school pupils wanted the library to be open longer before and after school. One reason was that they had more time to burn at the beginning and end of the day, having been deposited at the school early by parents, or having to wait to be picked up again.

Pupils attending the two state schools were more likely to be encouraged to use the library by their teachers. At the independent schools it seemed that pupils were expected to use the library on their own initiative.

Higher proportions of pupils in the two state schools wanted to see ‘more up-to-date books’ - a function of the state schools’ lower book budgets. By the same token, the two state schools had the larger percentages of pupils reporting that they could ‘not very often’ or ‘never’ find popular books.

Library staff were more available to help students in the two independent schools, compared to the state schools.

The two state schools had larger percentages of pupils (36% and 39%) receiving ‘regular instruction’ in information skills than in the two independent schools.

Pupils in the independent schools were more likely to use the OPAC catalogues - and were more likely to be able to use them properly. They also found CD-ROMs easier to use.

**Year group differences**

There were major differences by age in the purpose, frequency and use of the school library. If it were necessary to summarise these in one sentence, we would say that younger pupils used the library for recreational reading and to play on the computers, whilst older pupils eschewed frivolity and used it very largely for schoolwork. 77% of year 12-13 pupils were using the library as ‘a place to study’.

Older pupils visited the library more frequently - with half of year 12-13 pupils having visited ‘the day before’. This was partly because they had more study periods which took place in the library.

For younger pupils the most common purpose of a library visit was to borrow books (66% of year 7 pupils), followed by ‘private study’ (25%) and use of the computers (22%). Younger pupils were much more likely to borrow books for recreational reading.

Younger pupils were more likely to use the OPAC catalogue. 48% of year 7 pupils used it ‘all or most of the time’, compared to 22% of year 12-13 pupils. This was partly to do with older pupils being more familiar with the library’s resources.

Use of library IT resources diminished with age. In part this was due to younger pupils using computers to play games, and older pupils being less able to find the detailed materials they needed for their coursework. But older pupils also seemed generally less at ease with computers.
References


Appendix 1  Survey questionnaire

1.0  General information

[ ] Female
[ ] Male

What year group are you in?
- Year 7
- Years 8-9
- Years 10-11
- Years 12-13

Please state which subjects you are studying

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 7</td>
<td>Years 8-9</td>
<td>Years 10-11</td>
<td>Years 12-13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. When was the last time you visited the library?
- Yesterday
- A few days ago
- Last week
- A month ago
- A few months ago
- Can’t remember

2. Are you using the library
- For pleasure/personal interest?
- For school work?
- Both?

3. Why are you using the library today?
- To borrow text/story books
- To use videos/ Cassettes
- To read newspapers/ Magazines
- For reference books
- To find books/ articles
- To study
- To browse around
- To attend a lesson
- To use the photocopier
- To use a CD-ROM

4. What do you usually do if you are having trouble finding information?
- Ask the librarian/ assistant
- Browse the shelves until I find something useful
- Check the library catalogue/computer
- Search on CD-ROM
- Give up
- Other: ........................................

5. Do you also use a public library?
- Yes
- Sometimes
- No

6. Where do you get most of the books you read?
- School library
- Public library
- Home

2.0  Reading

7. How often do you borrow books from the school library to read in your spare time/at home?
- Every week
- Every month
- Once a term
- Once a year
- Never

8. What type of books do you enjoy reading in your spare time?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiction</th>
<th>Non-fiction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Horror</td>
<td>Sport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thrillers</td>
<td>Computer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detective</td>
<td>Cars (vehicles)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adventure/fantasy</td>
<td>Music/films</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romance</td>
<td>Comedy/humour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science-fiction</td>
<td>Real life stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classics</td>
<td>Cartoons</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Family/friendships | Other: ........................................

Other: ........................................
Appendix 1: Survey questionnaire

Survey of secondary school library users

9. Can you find books in the school library that you enjoy reading in your spare time?
   - Always
   - Most of the time
   - Sometimes
   - Not very often
   - Never

Why not? _________________

3.0 The library and services available

10. Are there any times when the library is closed but you would like it to be open?
   - Longer before school
   - All through break and lunch times
   - Longer after school
   - At the weekend
   - No, I am happy with the opening times

11. Do you use the library to study/do your homework/coursework in?
   - Always
   - Most of the time
   - Sometimes
   - Not very often
   - Never

12. How would you describe the library?
   - Very important for helping me with my school work
   - A place I want to get out of as soon as possible
   - A quiet place where I can concentrate and do my work
   - A place where I can relax and read
   - Noisy and frantic
   - Hot and stuffy
   - A place where I can get together with friends and chat

13. What do you think could be done to the library to encourage more pupils to use it/to improve it?
   - Better signposting
   - More computers
   - More up-to-date books
   - More help through leaflets/posters, etc.
   - Improve the appearance/look of the library
   - More staff
   - More tables/desks
   - Other: _________________

14. Are you taught how to find information in the library?
   - Yes, we have regular lessons
   - No
   - Only if you ask the librarian
   - Only when you start school
   - I don’t know

15. Do you ask the library staff to help you?
   - Always
   - Most of the time
   - Sometimes
   - Not very often
   - Never

Why not? _________________

16. Is there always someone available to help you if you need it?
   - Always
   - Most of the time
   - Sometimes
   - Not very often
   - Never
## Appendix 1: Survey questionnaire

### Survey of secondary school library users

17. What type of help do you usually need from the library staff?
- Finding things
- Recommending books/magazines/etc.
- Using the library catalogue
- Using CD-ROMs
- Help with projects
- Ordering books to borrow from other libraries
- Other: ___________________________

18. Is the help offered useful?
- Always
- Most of the time
- Sometimes
- Not very often
- Never
Why not? ___________________________

### 4.0 The curriculum and the library

19. For which subjects do you use the library to help you complete homework/coursework?

20. Do teachers ask you to use the library to help you complete homework/coursework?

21. For which subjects do teachers encourage you to use the library?

### 22. Can you find useful information to help you with your school work?
- Always
- Most of the time
- Sometimes
- Not very often
- Never
Why not? ___________________________

### 23. Is the information that you find in the library generally:
- Too easy?
- Too difficult?
- About the right level?
- Mixture

### 24. Are you able to get hold of popular books whenever you need them?
- Always
- Most of the time
- Sometimes
- Not very often
- Never

### 5.0 I.T. resources in the library

25. Do you use the library catalogue on the computer (OPAC) to find books in the library?
- Always
- Most of the time
- Sometimes
- Not very often
- Never
- Don’t know if there is one

26. Can you use the library catalogue on the computer (OPAC) without help?
- Yes
- No
- Sometimes
- Don’t know

27. Do you use the computers in the library for typing up your work?
- Always
- Most of the time
- Sometimes
- Not very often
- Never
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you use the CD-ROMs provided in the library?</td>
<td>Yes ☐ No ☐ Sometimes ☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think CD-ROMs are easy to use?</td>
<td>Yes ☐ No ☐ It depends on the CD-ROM ☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think the information you find on CD-ROM is generally:</td>
<td>Too easy ☐ Too difficult ☐ About the right level ☐ Don’t know ☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When you have found a document on CD-ROM, what do you do?</td>
<td>Read the whole document properly before printing it out ☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Read the whole document and make notes of the most important points ☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scan the document and make notes of the most important points ☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scan the document and print it out ☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Read the title only and print it out ☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Print out all documents found ☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other: _______________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you find it easier to learn from information found on CD-ROM than from books? Please state reasons why:</td>
<td>Yes ☐ No ☐ Sometimes ☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there a Computer free when you want to search on CD-ROM?</td>
<td>Always ☐ Most of the time ☐ Sometimes ☐ Not very often ☐ Never ☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2 Descriptions of participating schools

School A
School A is a mixed comprehensive situated in the borough of Westminster. The school has approximately 1,366 pupils from the ages of 11-18. The school is situated on one site and has many pupils from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

The library is relatively large and is situated centrally very close to the main entrance in the school. The library is open from 9 am until 4.30 pm during the week. It is closed at break but open all through lunch. The library is used throughout the day by years 12 and 13 and there is an area designated for their collection of books and for private study. However, it is also used fairly frequently for reading classes for years 7 and 8. They are also brought to the library for a variety of subjects to help with projects. Other pupils are sent from classes to the library to look for information. Pupils at school A have a general induction session to the library in an English class in year 7; however, at present this is found to be ineffectual.

School A has two full-time time members of staff: one professional librarian and a library assistant. The library management system in place at present is SIMS, but they are planning to change to ALICE in the near future. Whilst the annual budget is relatively low, they also have the use of the local Schools Library Service (SLS). They borrow approximately 3,000 items per annum from the SLS. They also buy/receive as donations between 2-3,000 new books per annum.

There are two OPACs in the school library and two stand-alone CD-ROM terminals. There are over 50 titles available on CD-ROM. There is also a paper subject index available for use. The workstations must be booked in advance.

School B
School B is a mixed comprehensive in the borough of Westminster. The school has approximately 2,000 pupils and is split into three separate sites. Two of the sites accommodate years 7-9, and the other site years 10-13. The school has many children from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, with a high number of Bengali and Muslim children. There is also a large number of transient children, which means that many pupils at the school have learnt English as a second language.

The survey was carried out at two of the three sites. Both the libraries visited were situated on the first floor and were quite centrally located. The libraries are open from 8.30 am until 4.30 pm; however, they are closed during break and half of lunchtime. They are also closed on Monday morning before school. There are approximately 29 study places in the lower school library and 50 in the upper school library. There are approximately 15.5 study spaces per pupil in the lower school library and 22 pupils per study space in the
upper school library. The lower school library is used frequently for different lessons that the librarian usually leads and the teacher supports, in order to make sure the best use is made of the resources available. The upper school library is used mainly by years 12 and 13 during lessons, although a number of other pupils are sent down from time to time to help research projects. Year 7 pupils have 5-6 induction lessons in the library and then have a number of subject lessons there. Year 10 pupils have 3 induction lessons and Year 12 pupils have an induction lesson for each subject they study. Heavy emphasis is placed generally upon teaching information skills, particularly in the lower school.

School B has two full-time librarians and one full-time and two part-time library assistants. One of the professional librarians always works in the upper school library together with the part time assistants, and the other librarian divides her time with the other assistant between the two lower schools. The annual budget is very low, which means they are not able to afford to use the Schools Library Service, although before the introduction of LMS they were heavy users. There are approximately 13,386 items at the upper school and 7,060 and 7,207 respectively at the lower school sites.

School B upper school library has three networked workstations, and one of these is a standalone. The pupils are able to word process and use CD-ROMs at these terminals. There is also an extra workstation in the librarian's workroom that can be used by years 12 and 13. The workstations must be booked in advance. They have had an OPAC since last autumn and they also have a card index. The library management system in place is SIMS. In the lower school the situation is very different, as the library is not yet automated and the computers that are available are very outdated, and used to play maths and word games. Once again, there is a card catalogue in use here.

School C
School C is an independent day school for boys aged between 10 and 18, and is situated in central London with approximately 870 pupils. The school moved to this particular site in 1988; therefore the library is very modern, with designated areas for private study, I.T. work, and quiet reading.

The library is open during the week from 8.15 am. until 4.30 pm, although it is closed during registration, which is between 8.40 and 9.10 a.m. The library is used mainly by years 12 and 13 during lesson time, although other year groups do have some private study periods, which they usually spend in the library. It is not used at all for classes, except during the induction course when the boys first join the school.

School C has two full-time professional librarians to run the library and also has a library committee, which meets periodically to discuss development strategies. The library management system in place at present is HERITAGE. Boys in year 7 have four lessons in the library to show them how to use it effectively.

The library has a separate room for I.T. resources. There are six workstations on the school network and three stand alone workstations for CD-ROMs. The library does not have Internet access at present for the boys, but it will be introduced in the near future. Access to the library catalogue is through the OPAC, for which there are two machines.

There are approximately 60 study places in the library and a number of easy chairs located near the newspapers and journals. This amounts to 14.5 pupils per study
space. The subject books are organised according to Dewey, and the fiction alphabetically by author. Every half term a booklet is produced on a certain subject advertising what books are available in the library (e.g. science-fiction, the World Cup).

**School D**

School D is an independent day school for girls from the age of 11-18, situated in south-west London. Approximately 700 girls attend the school.

The library is centrally located in the school on the first floor. It is officially open from 8.30 until 5.30 during the week, but very often opens earlier and closes later. The library is used most frequently throughout the day by years 12 and 13, and for private study periods by other years, as well as pupils being sent from lessons if they need to use the library resources. The library is also used to accommodate library lessons for year 7, which take place during the first term and the last half of the summer term.

School D has two full-time professional librarians. The library management system at present is HERITAGE, which has been in place since December 1995. Prior to this, Bookshelf was used. The school will be upgrading to the Windows version in autumn 1998. There are four workstations, which have access to the school network, including e-mail and the Internet. Three of these workstations can be used to access CD-ROMs available in the library. There are two OPAC terminals available in the school library for searching the library catalogue.

There are 58 study places available in the library, which amounts to 12 study spaces per pupil. Subject books are organised according to Dewey, and the fiction is arranged alphabetically by author. The junior fiction section and senior fiction are kept separate from each other.