

School Libraries: The Design of a Model for Self-evaluation

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Glossary

ASCEL:	Association of Senior Children's and Education Librarians
CILIP:	Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals
DfES:	Department for Education and Skills
EAL:	English as an Additional Language
GTC:	General Teaching Council
ICT:	Information and Communications Technology
INSET:	In Service Training
LEA:	Local Education Authority
NASEN:	National Association for Special Educational Needs
NAHT	National Association of Headteachers
OFSTED:	Office for Standards in Education
QCA	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
SCCC:	Scottish Consultative Council on the Curriculum
SOEID:	Scottish Office Education and Industry Department
SLIC:	Scottish Library and Information Council
SEN:	Special Educational Needs
SENCO:	Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator
SIP:	School Improvement Plan
SLA:	School Library Association
SLS:	School Library Service
SLWG:	School Libraries Working Group

1. Introduction

It is widely acknowledged that school libraries can make a valuable contribution to teaching and learning. However, in the past, there has been little attempt to develop a consistent way of providing evidence to support this belief. There is clearly a need for school libraries to be able to demonstrate to teachers, governors, OFSTED inspectors, parents, funders, pupils and other stakeholders the contribution that their services can make to formal and lifelong learning and to attainment levels.

It was in the light of these concerns that the School Libraries Working Group (SLWG), which was established following the *Empowering the Learning Community* report and managed by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), commissioned the Centre for Information Research (CIRT) at the University of Central England (UCE) to develop a model for the self-evaluation of school libraries.

The timeliness of this research is indicated by the fact that, from September 2003, OFSTED's *Framework for Inspecting Schools* will "take greater account of school self-evaluation to inform inspection" (OFSTED, 2002a). As the current OFSTED guidelines for inspecting school libraries point out, although inspection reports often mention the school library, "the text often gives too little emphasis to their role in the school's curriculum provision and their contribution to standards of attainment and to teaching and learning" (OFSTED, 2001).

Recently, Williams, Wavell and Coles reported that, "school librarians who take a professional and proactive approach to their role within the school can cite evidence of their impact on teaching and learning; and are more able to reflect, self-evaluate and develop further" (Williams, Wavell and Coles, 2002: 2). This project aimed to make this achievable for all staff managing school libraries in England.

1.1 Aim and objectives

This project aimed to produce draft self-evaluation models for primary and secondary school libraries, along with guidelines for their use. These were to be focused on learning and teaching outcomes and accessible to the broad range of staff who manage libraries in schools in England.

Within this aim, there were four objectives:

- to provide a framework to help school libraries to demonstrate their impact, on formal and informal learning and attainment levels, to teachers, governors, OFSTED, parents, stakeholders, funders and users
- to consider the particular needs of libraries in primary, secondary and special schools
- to use this framework as a focus to indicate how a school may raise the standards of its library provision
- to recommend ways of disseminating and piloting the models in schools.

1.2 Background

1.2.1 School libraries in England

It was acknowledged at the start of the project that the model produced would need to cater for the diverse range of school libraries which currently exist in England. The 1999 Survey of Secondary School Libraries indicates that library provision, within secondary schools alone, varies considerably in terms of:

- staffing
- opening hours
- stock
- budget
- ICT resources
- planning and policy documents
- co-operation with subject departments
- information skills teaching
- involvement in whole school issues e.g. attendance at meetings
- use of School Library Services (SLS).

To highlight just some of the discrepancies, over 30% of schools are run without full-time, or even part-time, teacher or librarian involvement and just less than one-quarter of schools had a full-time chartered librarian. 13% of schools spent more than £10.00 per pupil on library books or other resources, but more than one-fifth spent less than £2.00. Also, while 9% of schools had no computer workstations, 13% had ten or more (Library Association and SSRC, 1999).

1.2.2 School evaluation

According to OFSTED:

The school that knows and understands itself is well on its way to solving any problems it has...self-evaluation is the key to improvement (OFSTED, 1999).

As such, self-evaluation should be a regular part of normal school life which involves everyone. It should be a constant process in a cycle which includes identifying priorities for improvement; monitoring provision; and evaluating outcomes.

Possible starting points for an evaluation are:

- areas identified by SMT/governing body as a result of monitoring performance, evidence of problems, or a survey of parents/staff
- an area of interest to one or more staff which is being piloted for wider adoption
- known areas of strength or weakness
- the recommendations of an inspection report (OFSTED, 1999).

The Effective School Self Evaluation (ESSE) project found that, while 60% of primary and 90% of secondary schools carry out self-evaluation, only one-quarter perform well regarding self-evaluation. In this report the OFSTED Inspection Framework was strongly favoured, but other possible models for self-evaluation included: Investors in People, Chartermark, ISO 9000 and the European Business Excellence Model (European Commission, 2001).

1.2.3 The school library's contribution

As Tilke states:

A well used library promotes learning, raises achievement and enhances pupils' personal and social development (Tilke, 1998: 12).

He argues that library evaluation needs to take account of the aims of the school; the aims of the library; and minimum standards or externally set targets.

According to Gibbs (1997), there are five broad ways in which the school library can 'add value':

- Academic eg attainment
- Economic eg lifelong learning skills
- Political eg equality of access to learning resources
- Social eg pupils' attitudes and behaviour in the library
- Technological.

She identified the key issues as:

- Use of the library by staff and pupils
- Perceived role of the library
- The library's place in the school management structure
- The support of the headteacher and SMT
- Resourcing
- Information handling skills teaching across the curriculum
- The role of ICT.

In addition to contributing to teaching, formal learning and attainment, the school library plays an important role in informal learning, leisure and social development. However, these more intangible benefits of library use, such as personal development and enrichment are extremely difficult to measure.

1.2.4 Role of OFSTED

As David Bell reported in November 2002, from September 2003, "there will be a greater emphasis on schools knowing themselves through self-evaluation" (Bell, 2002). This echoed Mike Tomlinson's statement earlier in the year:

The development of robust, objective self-evaluation is central to the progress and improvement of schools (OFSTED, 2002b).

A search of OFSTED's Inspection Reports database covering the period 1st September 1999 to 31st August 2001 (undertaken on behalf of the SLWG) found that the school library was mentioned in 94% of all inspection reports for secondary schools. However, as the "Inspecting School Libraries and Resource Centres Update" reported:

The text [of the inspection report] often gives too little emphasis to their [libraries'] role in the school's curriculum provision and their contribution to standards of attainment and to teaching and learning.

Inspectors were urged to:

...continue to make reference to the library or LRC at any point in the report where it has a significant impact (positive or negative) on pupils' standards of achievement and the quality of their education (OFSTED, 2001).

This is likely to include references to the library's contribution to:

- meeting the objectives of the National Literacy Strategy and Key Stage 3 Strategy
- supporting subject studies
- reading for pleasure
- independent learning
- inclusion.

The comments collated from the Inspection Reports database related to various aspects of school library provision including:

- the role of the library in raising literacy skills and promoting interest in reading
- quality and range of resources provided
- extra-curricular activities eg reading clubs, paired reading, homework club
- opening times and other accessibility issues eg use as a classroom
- library accommodation
- library management
- use by pupils (including independent study)
- use by departments
- library staffing (number, qualifications and expertise).

It was hoped that self-evaluation models would be useful to OFSTED inspectors, both before and during inspections. They would provide a framework within which the inspection of the library could be carried out and would ensure that sufficient emphasis was placed on the role of the library in every inspection. In this way, OFSTED inspection teams would validate the self-evaluation process.

2. Methodology

The research started in mid July 2002 and was completed at the end of January 2003. The activities conducted by the research team during this period are described below.

2.1 Stage 1: Review of literature/current situation

The first stage of the research consisted of a short literature search and review to identify reports and other relevant documentation relating to the current provision and standards of school libraries in England and their impact on teaching and learning and attainment. It was intended that these would be used to help to identify the types of measures which would be appropriate for a self-evaluation tool.

The research team also considered similar work conducted in other sectors, for example, The *Inspiring Learning* framework (Resource, 2001), which is geared more towards learning in the public sector of museums, archives and libraries and *Quality in Study Support* which provides a framework for the evaluation of homework clubs and other forms of study support (QISS, 2000).

The research team also examined research conducted, and evaluation tools developed, outside the UK, for example, Lance's work in Colorado and elsewhere (Lance, 1994; Lance et al, 2000) and various US school library evaluation models based on the Information Power framework (eg Kentucky Department of Education, 2001; Rhode Island Educational Media Association, 1999). In addition to describing the types of self-evaluation measures that may be useful, these provided suggestions on methods of disseminating and piloting the draft models to be produced by this project.

2.2 Stage 2a: Initial consultation - Scotland

The research team proposed to draw on work done in Scotland to develop a model for the evaluation of school libraries. *Taking a Closer Look at the School Library Resource Centre* (SOEID/SCCC/SLIC, 1999) and *Best Value Quantitative Indicators* (Scottish Library and Information Council, 2002) were considered to be particularly useful tools to evaluate learning and teaching outcomes because, together, they place a strong emphasis on qualitative as well as quantitative indicators. These models were developed and produced by representatives from Scottish local authorities, with the assistance of HMI Audit Unit, the Scottish Library Association, the Scottish Library and Information Council and the Scottish Consultative Council on the Curriculum and was the subject of consultation across a range of Scottish authorities.

In order to discover how successfully the Scottish model has worked in practice, the research team contacted members of the *Taking a Closer Look at the School Library Resource Centre* and *Best Value Quantitative Indicators* working groups to discuss any issues which have been reported to them and to draw on their experiences in the drafting of the English models and guidelines.

2.3 Stage 2b: Initial consultation – England

It was acknowledged that the evaluation tools developed would need to reflect the concerns of OFSTED, the DfES and other official bodies from the education and library sectors. In addition, it must also take account of the concerns of teachers, librarians and other stakeholders. In order to achieve this, an initial round of consultation took place with teachers, headteachers, librarians and other interested groups in England.

This was carried out through contact with a range of organisations, for example:

- School Library Association (SLA)
- CILIP School Libraries Group (SLG)
- Association of Senior Children's and Education Librarians (ASCEL)
- National Primary Headteachers' Association
- Secondary Heads Association
- College of Teachers
- General Teaching Council (GTC)
- OFSTED
- DfES
- National Association for Special Education Needs (NASEN).

Many of these were represented on the SLWG. Questionnaires were also sent out to a sample of SLSs to obtain their views.

A data collection tool was developed and respondents were given the option of either completing in writing or as an interview. Representatives from these organisations were invited to comment, in writing or by telephone, on the types of measures they felt would be appropriate for their needs and to highlight potential problems. They were also asked to provide examples of any evaluation tools or techniques they were aware of which have been used by individual schools.

To broaden out the consultation process, a request for further contributions was posted on appropriate mailing lists eg. TEACHER-RESEARCH@jiscmail.ac.uk; sl_net@jimmy.qmuc.ac.uk. A questionnaire was devised which asked teachers and librarians for their views about a possible model and in particular, for details

of any evaluation currently being conducted in school libraries. This included questions about the reasons for evaluation; methods used; types of evidence collected; and ways in which the information was used.

A shortened version of this questionnaire was sent to headteachers at a sample of Beacon schools with expertise in self-assessment.

2.4 Stage 3: Development of draft models

Members of the SLWG gave initial comments on the approach to the project in July, outlining any concerns or requirements they had at this stage.

A sub-group of representatives of the School Library Association (SLA), CILIP, ASCEL, DfES, OFSTED and Resource was established. This group was actively involved throughout the research and in regular contact with the research team, commenting on two early drafts of the models, in September and October, then again on a later draft in December.

In addition, the research team worked with several SLSs in the south-west of England which had recently done some work on developing school library self-evaluation tools and expressed interest in this project.

The model was then redrafted in late October for presentation to practitioner workshops.

2.5 Stage 4: Practitioner workshops

The research team believed that it was crucial to involve practitioners at every stage to ensure that the models which were developed were practical tools that catered effectively for the needs of people working in schools.

In September, a small group of local practitioners from the Birmingham area was formed to comment on drafts of the model. This group met twice, in early October to comment on an initial draft and then in November to look at an amended version.

To involve practitioners from a wider geographical area, two small workshops of teachers and librarians were hosted by CIRT. Separate workshops were held for representatives from primary and secondary schools. Participants were identified from those practitioners who responded to the questionnaire at Stage 2b and from contacts provided by SLSs.

The workshop participants were asked to comment on the draft models; provide further information such as examples of good practice; and to identify any potential difficulties in the use and application of the models. An important role for the workshop participants was to provide an insight into ways in which self-evaluation might be built into current working practices to ensure that the process does not add greatly to the workloads of staff managing school libraries.

2.6 Stage 5: Revision and further development of evaluation tool and guidelines

Following the recommendations and comments from practitioners, the research team revised the draft models and guidelines. The revised model was then sent to the SLWG again and also to teachers and librarians for further comments. These individuals had expressed an interest in the research by contacting either the research team at UCE or the DfES. This final round of consultation also involved other organisations which had responded to earlier requests for input.

2.7 Stage 6: Final revisions and report writing

The comments and suggestions obtained in Stage 5 were used to further refine the models.

These final models are presented as part of this report which details the process and the results of the consultation and includes recommendations for ways to disseminate and pilot the models in schools.

In Chapter 3, the aspects of library provision which have been demonstrated to have an impact on teaching, learning and attainment are considered. The first section of this chapter deals with factors identified through previous research and the latter half details those factors which practitioners consulted as part of this project held to be the most crucial.

Chapter 4 presents an overview of existing evaluation models and describes some work in this area which is currently taking place in the UK.

The consultation process was critical to the development of the models and this is described in Chapter 5. The first section reports on the communication between the research team and those involved in the development of school library self-evaluation models in Scotland. The second part of the chapter deals, in broad terms, with the consultation process in England. Some aspects of this process have separate chapters devoted to them. Responses to the questionnaire for school library staff are analysed in Chapter 6 and responses from headteachers at Beacon schools are dealt with in Chapter 7.

Chapter 8 describes the development of the self-evaluation models, justifying the overall approach taken; considering how the models might be used in practice; and considering concerns such as the needs of different types of schools.

The production of a model is not sufficient in itself; steps need to be taken to ensure that the self-evaluation process is adopted by schools and Chapter 9 recommends ways in which this might be achieved.

3. Factors identified as having an impact on teaching, learning and attainment

3.1 Previous research

Research has indicated that school libraries can have a positive impact on academic achievement as well as playing a broader role in pupils' learning. The main factors which have been shown to have an impact on teaching, learning and attainment are described below.

3.1.1 Budget

Lance et al (1993 and 2000), Hall-Ellis & Berry (1995) and Baughman (2000) all found evidence that, in schools with better funded libraries, academic achievement is higher, independent of the economic status of the community or the educational background of parents. In the first Colorado study, Lance et al (1993) examined whether there was a relationship between expenditure on the school library and performance in state-wide tests. In 1999, this research was repeated with a younger age range. Hall-Ellis and Berry (1995) replicated the Colorado study in Texas schools, again demonstrating the relationship between library expenditure and academic achievement.

3.1.2 Resources

- Size of collection

The size of the library collection was another factor identified by Lance et al (1993 and 2000) as being crucial in helping to raise academic achievement. In a similar study, Smith (2001) set out to determine the impact that school libraries have on student performance, as measured by the percentage of students meeting the minimum expectations in the state-wide standardised test. At high school level, the size of collection was found to be among the most influential variables. Elley (1994) investigated the reading literacy of 9 to 14 year olds in 32 countries (although not the UK) and found that there was a relationship between the number of library resources and higher levels of achievement. A high book count was also one of the factors Baughman (2000) found resulted in higher test scores and Hall-Ellis & Berry (1995) concluded that, along with the number of staff, the size of the collection was the best predictor of academic achievement.

- Variety of collection

The variety of the library collection was identified as another factor which had an impact on attainment by Lance et al (1993 and 2000), Smith (2001), and the Kentucky Department of Education research (2001). In a study which focused on pupils with Special Education Needs (SEN), Evans and Heeks (1997) reported

that a wide range of stock, relevant to both the formal curriculum and to children's personal interests, had an impact on the broader aspects of learning.

- Networked computers

In their more recent work, Lance et al (2000) found that test scores rose with access to networked computers linking libraries with classrooms, particularly when these provided access to the Internet, licensed databases and library resources. This was reinforced by research carried out in Texas (Smith, 2001) and Kentucky (Kentucky Department of Education, 2001). In the Texas research, library Internet connection and software packages were found to affect academic performance.

3.1.3 Environment

The general library environment was identified as having an impact on teaching, learning and attainment in the research conducted by Evans & Heeks (1997), who reported that "a library environment which is both welcoming and stimulating" was crucial. The research conducted in Kentucky (2001) also found that an environment which was inviting, accessible and stimulating for both groups of pupils and individuals would have a positive effect on learning and attainment.

3.1.4 Staffing and the role of library staff

Research has identified a number of factors relating to library staffing that can have an impact on teaching, learning and attainment.

- **Staffing hours** were identified as an important factor in a number of studies, e.g. Lance et al (2000), Smith (2001), Farmer (2001), Hall-Ellis & Berry (1995), Baughman (2000), Markless & Streatfield (2000) and the Kentucky Department of Education (2001). Most pointed out the need for both professional staff and clerical support. Hall-Ellis and Berry (1995) identified the size of staff as one of the two best predictors of academic achievement and Lance et al (2000) found that test scores rose with professional staffing hours.
- **Staff qualifications** and professional development were found to be significant factors in the research conducted by Christensen (1991) and Markless & Streatfield (2000). In addition to the number of staff, the quality of support they were able to provide for pupils and teachers is clearly important.

- **The role of library staff**, in particular the instructional role of the librarian was highlighted in a number of research projects, including those conducted by: Lance et al (1993 and 2000), Smith (2001), Baughman (2000), Markless & Streatfield (2000) and Evans & Heeks (1997). Lance et al (1993) found that the instructional role of the librarian shapes both the collection and academic achievement. Baughman (2000) reported that test scores were higher in elementary schools when the library was closely aligned to the state curriculum framework and at middle and high school level, improvements were seen in schools where there was a library instruction programme.
- **Personal qualities**: a number of studies refer to the experience, attitude, personality and commitment of the school librarian, although there is little evidence directly relating these qualities to the impact on student attainment and learning. Murray (2000) found that those librarians with good managerial and communication skills delivered services successfully to students with disabilities. Christensen (1991) found that the length of a librarian's experience in the same school could have positive implications in terms of opportunities to develop their role and expertise and, therefore, enhance the impact of the library on learning.

3.1.5 Library usage

Lance et al (2000), Baughman (2000) and the evaluations of Library Power, a national program designed to improve teaching and learning by revitalizing library and media programs in public elementary and middle schools across the United States, (Tallman & Tastad, 1998; Tastad & Tallman, 1997; Kuhlthau, 1999; Oberg, 1999; Webb & Doll, 1999; and Zweizig & Hopkins, 1999) all found that a higher number of individual visits to the library or more generally 'increased usage', could impact on pupils' attainment. Baughman (2000) simply stated that schools with libraries open for a greater number of hours were found to have higher test scores. Lance et al (2000) reported that in middle schools where pupils made a higher number of individual visits to the library, test scores tended to be higher. The Kentucky research (Kentucky Department of Education, 2001) made particular reference to the importance of flexible scheduling ensuring easy access to the library.

3.1.6 Collaboration

Collaboration, both within the school and between the school library and the wider community, has been found to have an impact on teaching, learning and attainment levels.

Lance et al (1993 and 2000), Smith (2001) and the Library Power studies all suggested that collaboration between library staff and teaching staff was an important factor. In their more recent work, Lance et al (2000) identified a link

between test scores and increased library/teacher collaboration. He also found a connection between attainment levels and the involvement of the librarian in in-service training for teachers. School leadership was also found to be important in fostering collaboration between the library and teaching staff. Smith (2001) also reported that, in high schools, academic performance improved when librarians planned instructional units with teachers and provided staff development opportunities. Streatfield & Markless (1994) found that “the single most important factor leading to effective use of libraries...was a positive attitude by teachers”. The style of learning adopted within a school or within certain departments was found to be significant in terms of the impact the library had on teaching and learning. Murray (2000) pointed out the importance of collaboration not just with subject staff, but also between the library and the school’s learning support unit. Similarly, Evans and Heeks (1997) reported that staffing structures that support collaboration could have an impact on the learning experiences of children with SEN.

A relatively small number of studies, for example Christensen (1991), have commented on the need for school librarians to be proactive in the wider community in which the school operates.

3.1.7 Library management

A number of issues relating to the general management and planning of the library have been found to impact on teaching, learning and attainment.

Markless & Streatfield (2000) and Evans & Heeks (1997) claimed that a clear focus for development was important. This was one of the “levers for development” in college libraries identified by Markless and Streatfield (2000). Evans and Heeks (1997) found that a library development plan linked to the school development plan was important in supporting pupils with SEN. In particular, Lance et al (2000) found a correlation between higher test scores and a collection development policy. The presence of a School Library Council is another planning and development device which has been found to be effective in a number of studies (Lance et al, 2000, Kentucky Department of Education, 2001). Others, such as Markless & Streatfield (2000), found that library representation on wider committees, such as curriculum planning, also improves library effectiveness.

The readiness to accept change was a feature of the Library Power initiative which several evaluations found to have a positive effect on learning and attainment.

3.1.8 Conclusions

A number of the studies cited have limitations in terms of the applicability to the impact on teaching, learning and attainment which school libraries in the UK may

have. For example, Lance et al's 1993 study used a small sample and Smith (2001) relied on quantitative indicators. However, the main difficulty is that much of the evidence is from the United States, where there are a number of fundamental differences in school library provision. For example, there are differences in the training and qualifications of library staff; the school curriculum; and the regional organisation and management of school libraries in the US compared with the UK.

In addition, to a large extent, the issues researchers have focused on have been quantitative in nature, for example level of budgets; collection size; staffing hours; and number of library visits. There is less evidence to support the suggested links between school libraries and teaching, learning and attainment in areas such as collaboration, especially with agencies outside the school environment, and the personal qualities of the librarian.

3.2 Questionnaire responses

Respondents to the research team's questionnaire for library staff in the UK (see Chapters 5 and 6 for further details) were asked for their views on the aspects of library provision which they thought had the greatest impact on teaching and learning. The main areas referred to are described below.

3.2.1 Staffing

Almost all the questionnaire respondents emphasised the importance of library staffing and, for a number, this was clearly the most important factor:

The most crucial aspect has to be the employment of a fully qualified librarian who is committed to supporting the learning of the school. No matter how wonderful the collection of resources are in a school, without the mediation of a committed librarian to facilitate the access to those materials for youngsters and staff, the resources will never achieve their potential in supporting the curriculum.

Everything flows from the personnel involved. Stock and programmes are important in themselves and need to be identified but without full-time, appropriately qualified and experienced staff, who are motivated and persistent, nothing much will happen.

One respondent pointed out that there should be a librarian "whose job is just that", rather than someone running the library in addition to other responsibilities such as teaching or clerical duties. Adequate staffing was necessary to ensure that the library was open throughout and beyond the school day and that pupils and staff were supported in their use of the library. Some respondents expanded on what they believed to be the knowledge, characteristics and skills of a good school librarian:

Information management skills are not in themselves enough. The librarian must also have an understanding of the curriculum and of young people as well in order to work effectively in a school environment. I find that in order to serve my school community I need a broad understanding of most subject areas as I have to be able to switch from A level economics to KS3 geography and be able to provide reader guidance for all ages as well.

The ability to help pupils to use the library effectively was, perhaps, the most critical role for library staff. Communication skills and enthusiasm for, and knowledge of, children's literature were also mentioned.

The status of the librarian within the school was another factor which, it was argued, could impact on teaching and learning. Many respondents felt that,

ideally, the librarian should have Head of Department status and attend relevant meetings such as staff and head of department meetings.

In addition to professional library staff, one respondent referred to the need for technical and clerical support to ensure the smooth running of the library.

3.2.2 Information skills delivery

It was argued that library staff should have a central role in the delivery of information skills in the school. Some respondents had clear ideas about the best approach to information skills teaching in order to ensure the most effective learning:

Information skills delivery embedded throughout curriculum rather than isolated 'library lessons' which are not transferable. Information skills should be embedded in curriculum and taught jointly by librarian and curriculum staff. Staffing and resources are important, but need to be married to the information skills programme, which in turn is married to the curriculum.

3.2.3 Resource provision

This was mentioned by a number of respondents, many of whom stressed the role of the school library as a resource for those pupils with limited access to learning resources in their own homes. The provision of appealing, up-to-date reading materials was felt to be especially important. The importance of regularly examining stock to determine its relevance and appropriateness for pupils' needs was also mentioned. It was pointed out that there was a danger that too many unfulfilled requests might discourage future library use.

The level of resource provision was linked to library funding levels. Adequate funding is necessary to keep up to date with curriculum developments, provide new fiction and fund promotional activities.

3.2.4 Library promotion

Several respondents referred to various aspects of library promotion necessary to attract pupils and staff to the library. A central location, a welcoming atmosphere, relevant displays, booklists were all mentioned.

3.2.5 Co-operation

A number of respondents referred to the need to co-operate with teaching staff and to develop a whole school approach to library provision, which was supported by the SMT. It was thought to be important that the library was integrated in the schemes of work for all departments; that lessons were planned collaboratively; and that the librarian was involved in student assessment.

3.3 Implications for the development of a school library self-evaluation model

While research conducted to date has tended to focus on the quantitative aspects of library provision, questionnaire respondents were able to reflect in greater depth on the qualitative factors which might impact on teaching and learning. For example, while most researchers have considered staffing in terms of hours and number of staff, school library staff were able to refer to the characteristics and skills they believed to be important. A model for the self-evaluation of school libraries needs to combine the information gained from both.

4. Existing evaluation models

4.1 School library evaluation in the United States

Many of the existing models were developed in the United States. The majority are based around Information Power (http://www.ala.org/aasl/ip_implementation.html). The most common approach is to evaluate the library (often referred to as the school library media centre in the United States) in terms of:

- the role of the library media specialist
- the library media program (goals, budget, planning)
- the collection (range, selection procedures, organisation, accessibility etc)
- library personnel
- facilities (accommodation and access).

A number of states have developed their own evaluation methods based, to a greater or lesser extent, around these themes. Just a few examples are described below.

The ***School Library Media Evaluation Model***, developed by the Upper Valley of New Hampshire and Vermont (1999), considers the school library under the themes of:

- Philosophy
- Access (staffing, policies and procedures, collection development, budget and facility)
- Use (curriculum and outreach)
- Collaboration (integration and teaming)
- Professional development and support.

For each of these areas, there is a series of questions for which library staff are expected to evaluate their library using a four-point scale.

The ***Texas School Library Standards*** (Texas Education Agency, 1997) adopts a similar approach, but the themes included in this model are:

- Library program management (funding, staffing and environment)
- Library learning environment (collection, access, integration)
- Curriculum integration (collaboration with teachers, library skills teaching, individual assistance, attendance at meetings)

- Resources (collection size, electronic resources, periodicals and news sources)
- Facilities (access, space, professional collection, environment, displays, expansion).

For some indicators, such as staffing, there are recommended levels of provision. For each theme, there is an overview of a model school library program in addition to a breakdown of the features expected to be found for each indicator in a library judged to be at each of the four levels. This model is useful because it is one of the few that directly addresses the impact of library services on learners and attempts to relate these to aspects of library management such as resource provision, environment and curriculum integration.

New York State Education Department's ***School Library Media Program Evaluation*** (The University of the State of New York, 1998) is a simple model which has a series of target indicators relating to staff, facility, climate, collection scheduling, collaboration, automation, technology and networking. For each, the school library is evaluated based on a rubric which has descriptions of school libraries on a five-point scale from non-existent to exemplary.

The ***Beyond Proficiency*** evaluation rubric, produced by the Kentucky Department of Education (2001) is similar to the models referred to above, but divided into themes of:

- Accessibility
- Support for student learning
- Collaborative planning
- The ethical use of information
- Collection
- Planning
- Promotion.

Perhaps the most original aspect of this document is the fact that it identifies a number of essential aspects of a "Distinguished Library Media Program": flexible scheduling, resources, staffing, information literacy (the access, evaluation and use of information), technology, environment and governance/management. For each of these, the model indicates why this is necessary for student achievement and how it can be brought about.

The ***School Library Media Standards Handbook*** produced by Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (2002) follows the Information Power scheme outlined above closely, but it includes more information than most guides about the ways in which evidence might be

collected. For example, it lists the documents which should be available; and suggests possible survey questions for teachers and students.

The approach adopted by the **Colorado Department of Education** (1998) differs somewhat as it concentrates on information literacy; this focuses attention on students as knowledge seekers, producers, self-directed learners, group contributors and responsible information users. It also considers how the library collection should be matched to the needs of users in terms of interest, ability, learning styles etc.

Kuhlthau (1999) suggest a slightly different approach to school library evaluation which takes account of:

- Inputs (emphasis on what the library staff did eg collection development, lesson planning)
- Outputs (quantitative measures of student use eg number of visits, issues)
- Attitude of students towards library activities
- Skills gained (progress in information literacy skills)
- Utilisation of skills eg engaging in independent research, transferring skills learnt.

The school library self-evaluation models developed in the US each have their strengths and weaknesses; it is interesting to note the number of alternative models which have been based on the Information Power structure. The differences between school library and education provision in the US and the UK must be borne in mind when considering the applicability of these models, but they did provide a useful starting point for the research team, particularly in terms of the overall structure of a self-evaluation model and the varying amounts of support provided to assist library staff in the implementation of the model.

4.2 Evaluation in the UK

In addition to *Taking a Closer Look at the School Library Resource Centre* and *Best Value Quantitative Indicators*, which are discussed in Chapter 5, there were a number of other models developed in the UK which were found to be relevant to this research.

Williams and Wavell (2001) attempted to measure the impact of the school library on learning. They approached this by dividing learning into four themes:

- Motivation (enthusiasm, absorption, continuation, attitude)
- Progression (library and information handling skills, ICT skills, study skills, reading skills, new knowledge, achievement and application of skills or knowledge)
- Independence (confidence, awareness of need for help, independent study, transference of skills, self-esteem and initiative)
- Interaction (discussion, co-operation, friendships and behaviour).

The methods used to collect evidence for each of these aspects included: observation, questioning and examining both finished work and work in progress.

The Difference We're Making, produced by Birmingham Advisory and Support Service and Schools Library Service (2002), also focuses more directly on the impact of the library on pupils' learning than is the case with many models. The themes considered are:

- Motivating pupils
- Supporting the development of reading skills
- Supporting learning in curriculum subjects
- Support for independent learning.

However, more traditional aspects of library evaluation, such as access, staffing and resources and management, are also dealt with.

The ***Inspiring Learning*** framework devised by Resource (2001) is intended, primarily, for use by public libraries, museums and archives. The approach is based on four principles which are then broken down into outcomes. For each outcome, there are a number of indicators which suggest what the organisation and its staff need to do to deliver these outcomes, along with examples of the types of evidence they may wish to collect and examples of good practice.

Another model which proved useful was the ***Framework for Study Support*** (Quality in Study Support, 2000). Being originally devised in 1997 and revised in 2000, there has been more time to be adopted by schools. It has a series of indicators, for each of which, there is a description of a typical centre at the three prescribed levels; space for a 'centre statement' indicating the evidence which it has collected to justify its claim to be operating at a particular level; and future actions it intends to take to improve further. This model also looks at ways in which evidence such as policy statements can be tested in practice to prove the decision is sound. The person conducting the evaluation is encouraged to summarise the benefits to young people and communities; particular strengths and weaknesses; and plans to tackle weaknesses.

4.2.1 Ongoing work in England

At the time this work was commissioned by the SLWG, there were a number of groups in England involved in the development of school library evaluation tools. In addition to the work of Birmingham SLS, SLSs in Dorset and Devon had also shown a keen interest in this area and contacted the research team.

The model developed by Dorset SLS was closely based on *Taking a Closer Look at the School Library Resource Centre*. However, the model had been adapted to cater for the needs of each phase of school served by the SLS: primary, middle and secondary and to reflect differences between the two education systems. The SLS reported that teachers and librarians had used these tools to prepare for OFSTED inspections or simply as a way of thinking in greater depth about the ways in which they contribute to teaching and learning.

In March 2002 Devon School Library Service held a training day which focused on developing performance indicators for self-assessing secondary schools. Delegates included nineteen librarians and teachers from schools in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay, and nine SLS staff (six from Devon and one each from Bristol, Dorset and Somerset). During workshop sessions they attempted to develop indicators based on the Scottish model. Although it became clear during the feedback session that this was too ambitious a project for a single workshop, there was great interest in taking things further via a small working group. The group members are librarians from two Devon secondary schools and SLS librarians from Bristol, Hampshire and Devon.

By July 2002 they had begun to develop the work started at the INSET day and had drafted a series of evaluation tools looking at areas such as the impact of the library on learning; encouraging reading and reader development; impact of the library on teaching; resource provision; accommodation and facilities; and meeting the needs of all students. Two meetings were held between this group and the UCE research team. In addition to contributing to the consultation process, the working group agreed to look at developing tools such as checklists which would help schools to use the final model more effectively.

4.3 Other models consulted

Basic Skills Agency (1996), *Basic Skills Quality Mark for Secondary Schools*, London: Basic Skills Agency.

Department for Education and Employment (2001), *Literacy Across the Curriculum Module 10: Using the Library/Learning Centre* (Handouts 10.1 and 10.2), [available at <http://standards3-virtualhosts.dfesstandardssite.net/keystage3/latcmd10.PDF>].

DCMS (2001), *Comprehensive, Efficient and Modern Public Libraries -Standards and Assessment*, London: DCMS.

EFQM (1999), *EFQM Excellence Model* [available at http://www.efqm.org/model_awards/model/excellence_model.htm].

Maryland Department of Education School Library Media Services (1986), *Standards for School Library Media Programs in Maryland*, Maryland: Maryland Department of Education School Library Media Services.

Ohio State Department of Education (1985), *Quality Library Service K-12*, Ohio: Ohio State Department of Education.

Rhode Island Educational Media Association (1999), *School Library and Information Literacy Framework*, Rhode Island: RIEMA, [available at <http://www.ri.net/RIEMA/infolit.html#prog.qual>].

Sitter, CL, and Matthis, D (1995), *Evaluation Guidelines for the Alaska School Library Media Program*, Alaska: Alaska Department of Education.

5. Consultation

5.1 Initial consultation: Scotland (Stage 2a)

Interviews were conducted with seven individuals who had been involved in the development of school library evaluation tools in Scotland. Three had been members of the working group responsible for *Taking a Closer Look at the School Library Resource Centre* and five had been members of the group which had developed *Performance Information in School Library Resource Centres* (two had been members of both groups). The majority of these were senior staff from local authority Education Services and Library Services, although one was a practising school librarian who had been brought onto the *Performance Information in School Library Resource Centres* working group. A further interviewee had not been a member of either working group, but had done a considerable amount of work to adapt the models for use in primary schools.

5.1.1 Taking a Closer Look at the School Library Resource Centre

Taking a Closer Look at the School Library Resource Centre is a support pack developed to be used alongside *How Good is Our School? Self-evaluation Using Performance Indicators (HGIOS)*¹ (HM Inspectorate of Education, 2002). It was published in August 1999 and was intended as a toolkit for senior managers and for teaching and library staff to use in evaluating the quality and effectiveness of their library resource centre. The indicators identified good practice and outlined a framework of provision that schools and authorities could work towards, helping to identify priorities for library development.

The document identifies the indicators from HGIOS that are most relevant to the context of school libraries and sets out illustrations for each key indicator, together with practical examples of how each might be applied. It is suggested that libraries focus on an area for review and apply the appropriate indicators to evaluate the effectiveness of library provision across the school in relation to particular library aims or a whole-school focus for evaluation.

Background to the work

Taking a Closer Look at the School Library Resource Centre was inspired by the work done by Liz Knowles in Tayside, who had been developing indicators over several years. The appearance of HGIOS in 1996 stimulated Moyra Hood from Angus Council and Caroline Beaton, then at Dundee Council, to discuss the need for a practical tool to evaluate school libraries. When a set of indicators relating to Education and Industry Links was published, this acted as a catalyst; they realised that “if this type of thing was being done for different subject areas,

¹ Published by HMI to help headteachers and teachers in school self-evaluation and to assist education authority officials in discharging their responsibilities for quality assurance

it should be done for libraries”. The idea was not, therefore, something imposed from above; it was developed by librarians who believed that there was a real need for this type of tool.

HGIOS was a major influence on the format and structure of *Taking a Closer Look at the School Library Resource Centre*; the library self-evaluation model was designed to mirror the whole school approach. The working party decided to relate library self-evaluation closely to educational processes and documents to ensure it would be readily accepted by the education world. It was felt that teachers are sometimes less amenable to ideas obviously outside education, so the model needed to be related to concepts that they know about and be familiar in terms of the look and phrasing. A model using “library terms” may not have been as easily accepted. The working party believed that, if *Taking a Closer Look at the School Library Resource Centre* mirrored HGIOS, people working in schools would be used to the concepts and teachers should find it easier to cope with.

The consultation process

The development process for *Taking a Closer Look at the School Library Resource Centre* was intended to be “as inclusive as possible”. Volunteers to be members of the working group were sought at the Scottish Library and Information Council (SLIC) Heads of School Library Service meetings. Draft documents were circulated to every Head of Service for comment, and they were free to distribute the drafts to teachers and librarians in their local schools for comments and trialing.

Librarians and teachers in schools in each of the areas where the members of the working group were based were consulted, on an informal basis, about development of the draft model. This represented approximately one-third of Scottish local authorities. The focus was on secondary schools because librarians are rarely employed in Scottish primary or special school libraries, although in some cases, more ‘forward thinking’ headteachers were consulted.

HMI, the Scottish Library Association, the School Libraries Groups (SLG) of the Scottish Library Association were also involved in the consultation process as the model neared completion and as a result of comments from HMI, the number of Performance Indicators (PIs) was reduced. It was felt to be vital to get the approval of the Audit Unit for the final model and having the document published by the Scottish Consultative Council on the Curriculum (SCCC) helped to situate it firmly within the education sector.

In addition to the informal consultation, *Taking a Closer Look at the School Library Resource Centre* was piloted in the three former Tayside Region authorities (Perth & Kinross, Dundee City and Angus Councils) and in North Lanarkshire Council.

How does the model cater for the needs of different types of school?

One interviewee argued that, as all schools in Scotland use HGIOS as the basis for their self-evaluation, they are very familiar with the use of PIs, now Quality Indicators (QIs). This means they are comfortable with the format of *Taking a Closer Look at the School Library Resource Centre*, and although some PIs are more relevant for secondary schools, primary and special schools are able to adapt them for their particular situation and stage of development.

Members of the working party were working with primary and special schools, as well as secondary schools, so were aware of the problems faced by staff in these schools. They considered how the model might work in the different schools and situations with which they were familiar.

The working party were aware that they needed to make the model easy to apply for people in all positions. For example, in schools without a school librarian, there was usually a member of the SMT with responsibility for the school library, however, their level of involvement varied; for some it was just a nominal role, while others “threw themselves into it”. Another common occurrence was for secondary school librarians to work closely with a number of local primary schools. Principally, the model was targeted at secondary schools because these have the staff available to carry out evaluation. In primary schools, although teachers have recognised and read the document and many acknowledge it may be useful, few have actually used it in practice. They claim this is because of a lack of time, but may also be due to the outlook or priorities of some teachers who see the library as “an add-on” rather than a central resource to support the curriculum. However, members of the working group were aware that some people had refined the model, for example, Glasgow City Council, and Moray Council and others have “rewritten it as they use it”, on an informal basis. Having a standard model devised for primary schools would lead to greater consistency and also reduce duplication of effort.

In Moray, the Education Library Service is creating a toolkit for primary school libraries. No primaries in this authority have professional input on a daily basis; most rely on classroom assistants, volunteers and parents who are often unpaid. The key elements from both *Taking a Closer Look at the School Library Resource Centre* and *Best Value Quantitative Indicators* have been extracted and examined for their relevance to the situation in primary schools. They were then adapted where necessary, for example, references to a dedicated member of staff were removed. Care was taken to retain the phraseology however. In addition, slight changes in emphasis were introduced to reflect local initiatives and priorities, for example resource sharing. These documents are currently at the consultation stage. A user group of representatives from each school, in most cases the headteacher, was established to feed into the development of the models and conduct pilots.

Feedback from schools

In general, the interviewees reported that schools are pleased that these documents have been published to support them in their self-evaluation; they are supportive of anything that they see as a way to help them to improve. With HMI looking more closely at the school library resource centre as part of a school inspection, particularly in secondary school inspections, it is important that support and guidance is available. The catalyst for starting to evaluate the school library was often a HMI inspection.

Although some librarians have complained that the introduction of self-evaluation has led to a heavier workload, interviewees argued that most have seen benefits, for example gaining clerical assistance in the library or securing a larger budget. For most, therefore, it had been a positive experience.

Since the launch of the document, at least one authority has held INSET sessions. The first was for librarians who may not have been familiar with teaching terms, but would be comfortable discussing evaluation among their peers. This was followed by a joint INSET for school librarians and their line managers to give them an opportunity to work together to look at what would work in their school; what targets should be set; which PIs should be tackled and so on. By working through the process together, school librarians and their line managers could forge new working relationships, which it was believed would benefit librarians.

However, in some areas a significant number of schools had not used the model. Some librarians did not see evaluation as part of their job, although this attitude is gradually becoming less common. In other cases, library staff have not used the model because they have not yet received training. Librarians need to be reassured about evaluation and encouraged to recognise the benefits of measuring what they do as professionals. It was always intended that authorities and schools would use *Taking a Closer Look at the School Library Resource Centre* "as they saw fit"; it was only a guide and not meant to be prescriptive. The working group was keen to stress that self-evaluation should not be a burden or something that creates additional problems or work.

In many cases librarians reported that the models have been readily taken on board by their line managers (senior management). The fact that they are familiar with the approach from HGIOS has meant that *Taking a Closer Look at the School Library Resource Centre* has "not disappeared into a black hole". It means that the library can be compared with other departments which are also evaluated using the HGIOS framework.

Interviewees believed that evaluation puts librarians in a powerful position to argue that if the library is not delivering everything expected, it is not necessarily the librarian's fault; it is likely to be because of a lack of support, money or other

assistance. *Taking a Closer Look at the School Library Resource Centre* has helped to make headteachers realise that they have a responsibility to make sure the library measures up; as one interviewee said, “schools have started to take the library more seriously”. This can only benefit librarians and help them to do their job more effectively.

How has the information been used?

If *Taking a Closer Look at the School Library Resource Centre* was to be widely adopted, the working party realised that librarians and other staff in schools needed to be able to see clear benefits that would result from self-evaluation.

One of the most common ways in which the model has been used is in the development planning cycle. As the self-evaluation process becomes embedded within school development planning, it is hoped that school librarians will use PIs and QIs as a matter of course when formulating their Library Development Plan. *Taking a Closer Look at the School Library Resource Centre* feeds in easily because it is written in “education speak” and uses the type of language that librarians need to adopt if they are to be taken seriously in their schools. HMI now expect to see a Library Development Plan and evidence of self-evaluation being carried out. As one interviewee pointed out that if libraries are already undertaking regular self-evaluation, they are likely to be less fearful when facing the inspection process.

Interviewees were able to refer to cases of when self-evaluation had been used to raise the profile of the library. In some cases, librarians had used it to good effect to enhance their position and gain extra money and a higher status within the school. In other cases, it has been used to gain additional library funding and to improve services.

If evaluation is carried out on a regular basis, schools and librarians can use the information year-on-year when reviewing their development plans, identifying areas for improvement, and constructing budgets, including arguing for more resources.

Transferability

In general, the working group felt that the model was flexible enough to suit any school, although the range of information collected may need to be adjusted slightly to meet the differing demands of school inspections in England. They also pointed out that an English version would need to tie-in to the English National Curriculum.

However, a crucial difference between the two counties is the fact that most Scottish secondary schools have a full-time qualified, chartered librarian. In schools where this was not the case, for example primary schools, it had proved

much more difficult to introduce self-evaluation. It was felt that the person conducting the evaluation needed to have an overview of whole school issues; for this reason a teacher-librarian based in a particular department may be tempted to sway the model towards one aspect of the curriculum rather than ensuring it was applicable to the whole school.

Another difference is that special schools are less common in Scotland than in England; the preferred approach is to teach children with SEN in mainstream schools, some of which have units for children with behavioural problems.

Plans to review the model

Taking a Closer Look at the School Library Resource Centre is currently being reviewed because a new edition of HGIOS has been produced. Interviewees argued that the document must be kept current so school libraries are not left behind other areas of the education system; any new model, therefore, has to fit in with current teaching documents.

5.1.2 Performance Information in School Library Resource Centres

Performance Information in School Library Resource Centres was developed to complement the qualitative indicators in *Taking a Closer Look at the School Library Resource Centre* with a small range of 'hard' quantitative indicators covering expenditure, resource provision and levels of use. These were intended to give schools a broad view of their library service and to enable them to make year-on-year comparisons as well as providing evidence to managers and inspectors about the contribution which school libraries can make to pupils' achievement and attainment. Some of the information is collected by individual schools, but other contextual information is provided by local authorities.

Background to the work

After the publication of *Taking a Closer Look at the School Library Resource Centre*, it was decided that a small number of quantitative indicators should be identified and developed to supplement the qualitative information. Another working group was therefore established. Interviewees stressed that having practising school librarians in this working group was especially useful as they were aware of the sorts of information that was already being collected and the practical problems that may be faced. In general terms, the development of this model followed a similar route to that of *Taking a Closer Look at the School Library Resource Centre*.

The working group drew on quantitative indicators in academic libraries as this was seen as the closest parallel to school libraries. Although the tools used in academic libraries were more complex than would be needed for school libraries, many of the principles were the same. The working group also looked at

performance evaluation in US school libraries and academic libraries and evaluation of public library services in the UK.

The consultation process

The consultation process involved the whole of the profession in Scotland; unions, librarians, Heads of Service and interested organisations were invited to comment. Members of the working group worked in, or had contacts with, SLSs, school libraries or community libraries (joint public and school libraries); their links also covered primary, secondary, nursery and special schools. Each member of the group showed the drafts to a number of people within their authority who had expressed an interest. Feedback from across Scotland was given to the working group, and after discussion some amendments were made.

The interviewees described the form this process had taken in their particular authority. In one authority, the indicators were informally piloted in ten secondary schools, allowing staff to develop an understanding of PIs and in another, the measures were piloted more formally, being trailed twice in secondary schools and also in two primary schools.

How does the model cater for the needs of different types of schools?

The model was deliberately designed to be very general. It asks about staffing arrangements and other contextual information to allow the rest of the information gathered to be put into perspective. One of the main problems the working group faced was having to agree on definitions of terms such as “a transaction” which could be applicable to all types of school.

Again, the main difficulty identified was the fact that most primary schools did not employ a school librarian, so there were difficulties in actually collecting the information. Where there was no dedicated member of staff, the data could only be collected when a member of the SLS was in the school; it could not be measured throughout the year.

One interviewee thought that, with hindsight, a better approach may have been to have a more developed model for secondary schools which provided more depth of information, with a more simplified model for primary schools. The decision to opt for a catchall meant that compromises had to be made. However, the model is seen as a base for people to develop to suit their own circumstances.

Feedback from schools

Interviewees reported that all the feedback from the secondary schools had been positive. Although some data was already collected from automated library systems, the evaluation allowed other operational information, such as number of

classes/individuals, information skills support and staff time to be measured, thereby giving a more rounded picture of library activity.

However, there was some criticism from librarians who were reluctant to evaluate more than once a year, while others saw the tools as “just another form to fill in”. In primary schools, headteachers commented that, while the data is useful, there is little point if it cannot be collected regularly.

How has the information been used?

Performance Information in School Library Resource Centres has not been fully used yet; the supplementary counting grids for the quantitative information will be used officially for the first time in 2001-02. However, interviewees hoped that the model will allow librarians to compare their performance with schools of a similar size and catchment area.

In the pilots, the quantitative measures have been well received because they provided “hard and fast data” which help to secure funding. Many librarians have used the evaluation as a basis for discussions with their line manager and for development planning purposes. The statistical data has been used to argue for increased budgets and specific developments, such as the introduction of automated systems. In some cases, interviewees reported that it has made a difference to the position of the library in the school or the structure of the resource centre.

As a local management tool, *Performance Information in School Library Resource Centres* is felt to be potentially very useful. SLSs can use the information to gain an overall perspective of the authority, for example to see which schools are well supported and which are not; to monitor spending in relation to school libraries; and to reflect on the use made of them as a whole-school resource. In addition, it is intended that the quantitative information will be submitted to the SLIC annually to allow a national picture of school library improvement to be drawn up over time.

Transferability

The interviewees believed that *Performance Information in School Library Resource Centres* should be relatively easy to transfer because it needed to be a general model to allow for differences between the authorities in Scotland. Although there may be different legislation and the terminology may need to be altered, generally, it could be applied to other countries.

Plans to review the model

The working group continues to meet regularly as part of a larger group and intends to review and develop the model as necessary, in response to changing demands from HMI for example. There is a commitment to review the working document every two years, so changes will be able to be made in the light of continuous use and feedback.

5.1.3 Conclusions

A number of important issues for the English model were raised by the consultation with members of the Scottish working parties.

- The model needs to reflect the central concerns of schools and the education sector generally e.g. the National Curriculum, other legislation, the OFSTED inspection process. As far as possible, it should adopt a language and structure which is familiar to teachers, inspectors, governors etc.
- The model needs to be designed in a way that allows it to cater for the differing staffing arrangements that exist in school libraries. Guidance is needed on issues such as who should be responsible for conducting the evaluation and how it can be established as part of working practice.
- The model needs to be flexible enough to allow it to be adapted easily to meet local circumstances and the needs of individual schools.
- It is important that the model is not viewed negatively, as an extra burden; the potential benefits must be well understood by library staff and their line managers. Librarians should be provided with guidance on the ways in which the findings of self-evaluation might be used, for example to secure additional funding or greater recognition/status.
- The support of headteachers is crucial in implementing school library self-evaluation; the model will need to be promoted and explained effectively to secure their backing.
- Self-evaluation should be seen as an integral part of the development planning process; librarians should be encouraged to build on findings to develop and improve the services they offer.
- In addition to written guidance, there will almost certainly be a role for SLSs to provide support or training for schools in carrying out self-evaluation and subsequently developing their services.
- It may be useful to collate the data at either local or national level, to assist with planning or lobbying for example.
- Arrangements should be made to review the model and guidelines on a regular basis.

5.2 Initial consultation: England (Stage 2b)

5.2.1 School staff

Forty-six questionnaires were requested by staff working in school libraries. These were sent out in August and returned, either by post or email, by mid September. The majority were completed by staff in secondary schools. To encourage further input from primary school staff, requests were sent to a number of SLSSs, who responded with names of individuals they thought may be interested. Information about the project was sent to the Staffordshire branch of the SLA for distribution at a meeting they were holding for primary school staff. In addition, questionnaires were sent to a sample of 36 school library services and the same number of Beacon schools. Details of the responses from school library staff and Beacon schools are described in Chapters 6 and 7.

5.2.2 Education and library organisations

At the same time, questionnaires were also sent to the following organisations:

- School Library Association (SLA)
- CILIP School Libraries Group (SLG)
- CILIP Education Librarians Group (ELG)
- Association of Senior Children's and Education Librarians (ASCEL)
- National Primary Headteachers' Association
- Secondary Heads Association
- Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL)
- NASUWT
- College of Teachers
- General Teaching Council (GTC)
- National Association for Special Education Needs (NASEN)
- Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED)
- Department for Education and Skills (DfES)
- Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA)
- Reading Volunteers
- National Association of Headteachers (NAHT)
- National Literacy Trust.

The response from these organisations was disappointing: only ASCEL, the GTC and the SLA replied.

They stressed that the model has to be acceptable to OFSTED and to conform to the requirements of the National Literacy Strategy, Key Stage 3 Strategy and National Curriculum. It was therefore suggested that the starting point should be the OFSTED framework.

Several respondents were familiar with *Taking a Closer Look at the School Library Resource Centre*. It was felt that one of the key strengths of this model was that it allowed library staff to choose a focus each year which closely reflects the school or national priorities. It was also pointed out that there were a number of existing tools and measures, such as CILIP and SLA Guidelines, which might be drawn together under a new framework.

Nationally, ASCEL hoped to use the evidence collected through self-evaluation to draw together comprehensive information about school library provision to use to make cases to government. At a local level, ASCEL saw self-evaluation as a tool to help it to support individual schools and provide an overview of school library provision within a LEA. The SLA hoped the process would be useful “to support any advice we may give to schools, local or national government, European Union bodies etc”

Several SLSs also responded to the request for information about current school library evaluation practices.

- Dorset SLS sent details of models they had developed for primary, middle and secondary phase schools. These were closely based on *Taking a Closer Look at the School Library Resource Centre*.
- Sheffield SLS sent a copy of the form they currently use to assess school libraries. This was a checklist examining various areas of library provision including policy, budget, resource provision, accommodation and staffing. For each, school practice is compared with best practice.
- Contact was also made with librarians at Birmingham SLS, who provided further information about their recent work on school library evaluation.

5.3 Stage 3: Development of draft models

At the start of the project, members of the SLWG were invited to give their initial thoughts on the research team’s proposal and on the general development of a school library evaluation model.

They outlined the following criteria for the model.

- It should be based on the OFSTED approach to evaluation.
- It should reflect the particular needs of English schools and should not be based too heavily on *Taking a Closer Look at the School Library Resource Centre* which was design for schools in Scotland.

- It should focus on measuring outcomes in learning.
- It should be robust enough to persuade DfES and OFSTED of its value.
- It should be simple to use and clear.
- It should ensure standards are set sufficiently high and do not just reflect current practice.
- It should be convincing to teachers, headteachers and governors as well as library staff, for example, by being expressed in educational, rather than library, terminology.
- There should be separate models for primary and secondary provision.

In September, an initial draft outlining the overall approach of the proposed evaluation model was circulated to the DfES, OfSTED, ASCEL, the SLA and CILIP for comments. The main points raised were:

- concern about the overall length
- suggested changes to the scale and level descriptors, in particular more detail about how libraries might progress between levels.
- the need to relate the indicators more closely to library activity
- the need to give a higher profile to talking to pupils in the collection of evidence.

At the second round of consultation with this group in October, a full model for secondary schools was circulated to the sub-group. The main comments relating to this draft were:

- The length needed to be reduced; some members of the sub-group felt this was not a serious problem, but others thought it was an important concern. Including the level descriptors as an appendix was suggested and there were a number of comments about structuring the document to make it appear less daunting, for example, by the use of dividers.
- The questions for pupils and staff needed to be sharper.
- The theme devoted to working with parents might be conflated with community links.
- There should be more references to the possible role of a 'critical friend' to ensure objectivity and comparability.
- The model needed to include references to progression to FE and HE.

In addition to general comments, a number of working group members also recommended changes relating to detailed aspects of the model.

There were different opinions regarding the level descriptors, while some felt they were too ambitious to engage all schools, others were happy with them, feeling they gave schools something to aim for. There were also different viewpoints on the adoption of a system which allowed only part of library activity to be evaluated. Although some felt that this was a strength because it allowed schools to focus their resources on a particular area, others thought it might lead to schools avoiding addressing areas they knew to be weak.

5.4 Stage 4: Practitioner workshops

5.4.1 Local practitioners

Five library staff from schools in the Birmingham area attended the first meeting of the local practitioner group in early October; four were from secondary schools and one from a primary school. A further five library staff were unable to attend, but asked to be kept informed about the development of the project.

The group were generally happy with the approach taken, having found the size of the document initially daunting, but finding it straightforward to use in practice as well as being a helpful and supportive tool. They were able to offer ideas for examples of good practice. They also suggested a number of changes to reflect the needs of different types of schools.

Three of these librarians, and one who was unable to attend the first meeting, were able to attend a further meeting at the end of November to discuss a revised draft. This group felt that the model was a useful tool which they could use to help them to assess the impact of the library on teaching and learning. They felt that the examples of good practice were helpful and they also like the idea of selecting a particular theme to concentrate on. They agreed that it was better to have all the documentation for a theme together, although dividers or colour coding would help to break it up and putting the summary sheets at the beginning of each section would help to give an overview. They also suggested including blank forms at the end of the model to allow schools to tailor the model to particular needs; it was thought that this might be especially useful for special schools and others whose requirements might not be met through the basic model.

5.4.2 Secondary workshop

Eleven practitioners attended the workshop for secondary schools, held at UCE on 8th November. These were all library staff, but represented a variety of schools in terms of size, pupil intake, age range and locality.

In the main, those attending agreed that the model was an extremely useful document which would have a distinct role as a starting point for strategic plans and library improvement plans, OFSTED and justification for further funding.

Basing the overall structure on the OFSTED inspection framework was thought to be a sensible approach, which would encourage schools to take up the model.

The length of the document was not felt to be overly daunting. However, for a number of Key Questions, practitioners suggested changes to wording or the inclusion of different indicators. This was particularly true for Key Question 1. It was also suggested that the two themes under Key Question 7 could be amalgamated and the library's links with parents and the community considered as one theme. Otherwise, the overall structure was felt to be sound.

Regarding the layout of the model, the general consensus was that all the supplementary materials such as pupil and staff questions and observation checklists should be included under the relevant Key Question.

Practitioners were happy with the level descriptors in general, as they felt they would help to give schools a good idea of the standards of provision they should be aiming for. However, they felt that it should be made clear the descriptors were just examples of a typical library and that a school would not necessarily have to be doing everything described at each level to achieve a particular level, but rather it would be expected to choose the level which corresponded to the best fit.

Participants also thought that it would be useful to indicate more clearly areas where external observation could be usefully employed.

5.4.3 Primary workshop

Throughout the project it proved much more difficult to get input from primary schools because so few have a librarian or other member of staff dedicated to the library. In addition to the general requests for help outlined in Chapter 2, the research team contacted several SLSs to ask for contact details of people working in primary schools they thought would be interested in the research and also to ask SLS staff for their own opinions about the model. It was anticipated that SLSs would play an important role in the introduction of the model, especially in primary schools.

There were just four attendees at the primary workshop held at UCE on 11th November; three from schools and one from a SLS. Several others had hoped to attend, but had to cancel at short notice. In all, eight further practitioners asked to be kept informed about the development of the primary model.

The primary workshop suggested a slightly different direction for the development of the model. One of the main concerns was the fact that primary libraries vary even more widely than secondaries in terms of accommodation, resourcing, staffing and so forth, but the model needed to be able to cater for the needs of all.

It was suggested that the themes for each Key Question could be amalgamated under a single heading. Practitioners felt that the most useful types of evidence, and most easy to collect in practical terms, were likely to be: questions for pupils, questions for staff (if directed time/INSET was allocated) and documentation. The group suggested a number of additional questions for both pupils and staff and recommended that the person evaluating the library be encouraged to select from a bank of questions and to adapt questions to meet the needs of their school. Unlike the secondary model, it was suggested that the descriptors and suggestions for improvement might be better presented as a separate document for primary schools. Key Questions 4 and 7 were seen as the least important sections and it was suggested that schools should be encouraged to concentrate on more fundamental Key Questions in the first instance. It was felt that the role of the SLS could be flagged up more throughout the document.

Like the secondary workshop participants, this group provided a number of useful examples of good practice and suggestions for improvement and discussed ways in which the model could be introduced to ensure maximum take-up in schools.

5.5 Stage 5: Revision and further development of evaluation tool and guidelines

Based on the recommendations of the practitioner groups, the models were then revised and copies of the amended versions sent to members of the SLWG and also to practitioners who had said they would be prepared to comment on a draft model. The secondary model was sent to 38 individuals; the majority (29) were library staff. However, members of the SMT, Heads of English, SENCOs and other teachers were also represented. The primary model was sent to fourteen individuals, eight of whom were library staff, and the remainder headteachers. Copies of both models were also sent to nine SLSs. The models were also sent to groups such as the GTC and NASEN which had expressed interest in the project previously. In total, 69 individuals were consulted at this stage. Seven responses were received from the SLWG and related organisations; these represented the DfES, OFSTED, the SLA and ASCEL. A further eleven responses were received from individuals. Again, the majority (9) were from library staff, although it was clear that in a number of cases, librarians had shared the document with their line manager before responding. Two SLSs made comments. Some responses were fairly general, but others provided detailed suggestions, for example about the terms or language used (e.g. the most appropriate term to use for the person responsible for the library and the convention to adopt for SLSs). Most respondents appeared to be enthusiastic about the document overall. Comments included:

...would give any school librarian an extensive evaluation of their LRC...would provide the librarian with support in writing an action plan.

I think that it will be a useful tool, sufficiently flexible to be useful in different school libraries/LRCs. It seems to cover many important issues in some depth.

A number of respondents said they thought the examples of good practice were particularly useful. Others made positive comments about the inclusion of checklists and other tools which would save time and work for library staff.

The main areas where the respondents suggested improvements could be made are detailed below.

- **Length of the models**

The majority of school staff acknowledged that the model appeared daunting at first sight, but once they had read the introduction and realised that they were not expected to use the whole document, they thought it was manageable. Typical comments included:

It looked rather daunting when I first saw it...but I actually found it quite easy to read.

At first, the size of the document seemed a bit daunting, but once I had discussed it with one of the Deputy Heads and read it properly, I could see that it is a comprehensive, practical tool for the LRC staff to use selectively.

As a member of the SLWG commented, although the models may appear long and complex, they would be poorer and less comprehensive if any elements were omitted. A number of respondents thought that the design of the final document would make it easier to use.

- **Design**

A number of library staff thought that it would be useful to present the model in a ring binder to allow relevant sheets to be photocopied easily. Colour coding was agreed to be a good idea to make the model easier to handle and navigate.

One suggestion was that each Key Question could be supplied on a floppy disk so schools could just print out the section they intended to use.

Despite the fact that the secondary practitioner workshop and a number of individuals practitioners who commented had argued that all the documents required for each Key Question should be presented together, the SLWG decided that, for both models, it would be better to present the basic framework as a shorter document with the other materials as appendices. Although the final models have been presented in this format, the research team have concerns that this may make the self-evaluation process less robust. For example, the

level descriptors, which enable the person conducting the evaluation to determine the current level of their library, are not located in the main document. There is also a danger that, if library staff do not realise the significance of the materials provided in the Support Booklet, they may waste time and effort duplicating work already done.

- **Introduction**

At least one respondent felt that the introduction was too long and that the description of how to conduct an evaluation needed to be presented nearer to the beginning of the document. The rearrangement of the model into a shorter main document with appendices necessitated the rearrangement of the introduction, thus shortening the initial introduction and presenting the practical information earlier.

It was felt that more direction was needed to inform schools of who was expected to be responsible for the evaluation of their library. The guidance provided should reflect the fact that library staff should not be expected to conduct the evaluation alone, but should work with teachers to raise standards. For instance, the library manager needs to raise issues with the SMT in the context of whole school improvement to ensure that evidence from the evaluation feeds into the school improvement plan. One respondent suggested that the ideal arrangement would be to establish a working group to evaluate the library. It was also thought that the role of a critical friend needed to be given a higher status to provide a neutral perspective and allow comparative assessment.

- **Levels**

There was some debate about the scale and descriptors used. However, as the scale was linked to that used by OFSTED and was intended to be manageable, while allowing schools to see how their library might progress, it was decided to continue with the levels as they stood for the pilot version of the model.

One respondent thought that the model might indicate which elements of library provision were most important at each level, but this would be extremely difficult given the varying needs and circumstances of schools.

- **Key Question 1**

One respondent was unsure of the purpose of Key Question 1 as they already provided this information for their SLS's annual survey and thought it would only be useful if the information was to be presented to an external assessor or inspector. However, much of this quantitative information relates to the factors which have been shown to influence the library's impact on teaching and learning (see Chapter 3). This information would also be useful for school libraries

themselves to compare provision year-on-year and to compare budgets, staffing and so forth and support decision-making.

- **Key Question 2**

One respondent thought that a set of criteria should be taken from the 'reading for meaning' section of the Framework for Teaching English as well as reading for information and research and study skills. As a result, themes 2b and 2c were amalgamated and a new theme introduced to allow the school to evaluate the impact of the library on pupils' literacy skills. This also reduced some repetition in the model.

- **Key Question 3**

It was suggested that themes 3a and 3b might be combined to shorten the model and avoid repetition. As a result, the indicators from theme 3a were incorporated into 3b and 3c.

- **Key Question 6**

One respondent thought that themes 6a and 6b should not be subsumed into one Key Question. As many of the indicators in 6b were either repeated elsewhere in the model or could be easily incorporated into other themes, it was decided to remove this theme. However, for schools who wished to look at the support and guidance offered by the library, a list of relevant indicators across a number of Key Questions were included in the appendices.

- **Key Question 7**

A few respondents felt that Key Question 7 was probably the least relevant for school libraries at present and most schools would probably choose to focus on a more central theme in the first instance.

- **Repetition**

There were a few comments that certain parts of the document were a little repetitive. However as, in practice, schools would only be using one theme at a time, this would be unlikely to present problems. The amalgamation of themes 3a and 3b and the removal of theme 6b help to reduce this problem.

- **Implementing the model in primary schools**

It was felt that the document implied that primary school libraries would be staffed, when, in practice, this was rarely the case; most would be run by a teacher with full-time teaching commitments, a clerical assistant or a parent volunteer. One respondent felt that an adapted version of the secondary model

would not be achievable for all primary schools, certainly not without the support of a SLS. Another pointed out that while the document would be very useful as a tool for evaluating information skills teaching in the school, in many primaries, the library would play a fairly minor role in this.

Respondents suggested a number of changes to phrasing, terms used and level descriptors to make the model more applicable to primary schools.

From the experience of Beacon schools and comments made by practitioners, it would seem that the incorporation of the library into other elements of whole school evaluation may be the most realistic approach given the type of library provision in many primary schools at present. This model will be a useful tool to assist schools in doing this as it provides indicators which schools should consider under each section of the OFSTED framework to ensure that the library features throughout a whole school evaluation. The model also serves those primary schools with more well-developed library provision and adequate staffing by allowing a particular aspect of the library's contribution to teaching and learning to be evaluated in greater depth and specific actions for improvement to be identified.

The research team acknowledges that there has been less input from staff in primary schools through the project and it is hoped that this can be addressed more thoroughly at the piloting stage.

6. Library staff questionnaires

6.1 Background

The 27 school library staff who responded to the research team's questionnaire worked at schools which varied in size from 137 to 1750 pupils. The majority (24) were from secondary schools, eighteen of which had sixth forms. The exact age range of schools varied, for example, two took pupils from 14 to 18 and one was a 12 to 16 school.

Respondents had a range of job titles. Not surprisingly, the most common was librarian; eleven had this title and a further four respondents were Learning Resource Centre Managers. The range of other job titles to feature included: Library Assistant, Resource Librarian, Information Services Manager, Head of Learning Resources and Director of Learning Resources. Just two were teachers as well as librarians. Some library staff had additional roles in the school; one was the school's publicity officer and another was also the Literacy Co-ordinator.

The library staff who completed the questionnaire were employed between 20 and 40 hours a week, the majority worked between 35 and 37.5 hours. One post was a job share and two people were employed during term time only. One respondent (a teacher) did not have a set number of hours devoted to library work. The most amply staffed library had an Information Services Manager who worked 37.5 hours per week, plus a further qualified librarian and two library assistants. Interestingly, this was not the largest school. In contrast, fourteen respondents said they were the only member of staff in the library. A number had part-time help from a library or clerical assistant, or in one case, a classroom assistant. However, in many cases, this extra support was provided during term time only.

6.2 The importance of evaluating the school library

Respondents were asked for their views on whether the evaluation of the school library was a worthwhile activity. Although a small number thought that evaluation was not worth the time and effort involved as their line managers took little notice of the findings, the vast majority believed that evaluation was important. A number identified particular reasons why this was so.

As one respondent pointed out:

Evaluation is crucial. The purpose of any library service is to serve the information needs of the community in which it functions. Without evaluating the impact of that service, you have no way of knowing whether or not your service is effective in providing what is needed.

Another linked this to the need for all aspects of the education system to actively demonstrate the contribution they make to teaching, learning and attainment:

For a long time the school library has been regarded as a 'good thing' but subject to cuts in funding and variable use. It needs to be seen as a firm curricular support. As with virtually everything else in education, this needs to be measured or identified.

6.2.1 Inspection

An impending OFSTED inspection was often the main reason for evaluation. Although evaluation was seen to be valuable for other reasons, the pressure to convince external inspectors of the contribution made by the library was often the driving force behind evaluation.

6.2.2 Planning development

Evaluation was believed to be valuable as it could help the library to be seen as a professional department. Evaluation was acknowledged to be good practice which would place the library in a similar position to subject departments, all of which need to demonstrate their effectiveness. Several respondents pointed out that evaluation was just one aspect of the development planning cycle and the findings were used to formulate the annual library improvement plan. One librarian described how evaluation carried out shortly after she joined the school had helped her to “see where the library was and how to move it forward”.

Another respondent felt that evaluating the library had helped to “take a fresh look at the library” and thus to decide on foci for development. The theme of identifying where improvement was needed was one which was developed by a number of respondents.

6.2.3 Improving working practices

In addition to having a strategic role, evaluation was seen as a practical tool which allows library staff to “assess how different strategies are working on a day-to-day basis” and continually make improvements to improve the services offered to staff and pupils.

As well as identifying those areas where improvement is needed, evaluation can allow library staff to “appreciate the things we are doing well”. A number of respondents referred to the personal satisfaction they got from identifying the

contribution they were making to school improvement. Many saw evaluation in terms of their own professional development; as one said:

I want to know if I'm doing something useful. I want to contribute to the teaching and learning in the school in general and specific ways.

6.2.4 Awareness raising

Although library staff might feel, instinctively, that the library made a significant contribution to school improvement, evaluation was seen as a way to prove this to themselves and to others. A number of respondents used phrases such as: "to see if I was getting it right" and "to demonstrate success".

It was thought that by demonstrating success and highlighting effective use of the library, library staff could raise the profile and status of the library. As one put it, "evaluation is a method to change minds".

Evaluation, therefore, was seen to have an awareness-raising, almost an advocacy, role by demonstrating the importance of the library within the school, to pupils, teachers, the headteacher and governors. Many respondents thought that, if the impact of the library was not clearly defined, it was not likely to be valued and this may well result in a lack of funding; lack of recognition for library staff; improper use of the library; and other difficulties. Some respondents reported that evaluation findings could be used to justify previous funding and also to put a case for additional funds or increased staffing levels.

Some thought that, by aggregating evaluation data, the profile of school libraries might be raised within the wider education and library communities and beyond, for example, within the government. One commented on the role of evaluation in the development of the profession as a whole.

6.3 Themes for evaluation

Most respondents chose to focus on a particular theme to evaluate, feeling it was necessary to limit the scope of the evaluation due to a lack of time and staff.

In most cases, they selected particular areas for evaluation which were known to be in need of attention and, in some cases, had been explicitly identified in school or library improvement plans. Unsurprisingly, OFSTED was mentioned on a number of occasions as a catalyst for evaluation and the type of evidence collected was tailored to the requirements of inspectors. In other instances, themes were chosen largely for reasons of convenience, for instance, it was thought that the data which would provide evidence for a particular area would be fairly easy to access. Sometimes, a focus was chosen for 'traditional' reasons, for example because it was referred to frequently in librarianship literature or had formed part of the librarian's initial training. As evaluation was seen by many

library staff as a non-essential aspect of their job and something they did in their own time, a number said they chose a topic “just out of interest”.

The most frequently mentioned themes for evaluation are described below.

6.3.1 Impact on teaching and learning

This was clearly important, especially when considering how to demonstrate the value of the library to teachers and others in the education community. As one respondent said:

When it is possible to demonstrate an impact on someone’s reading or learning this is the most powerful argument of all because it is most valued by other educationalists.

The impact of the library on reading attainment was mentioned by several respondents, as was its contribution to developing information skills. However, the difficulties of evaluating impact on teaching and learning were widely acknowledged. While this was seen to be crucial if libraries were to be valued within the education community, respondents had found it difficult to collect evidence which would adequately demonstrate the contribution of the library. In one school, the librarian had attempted to measure impact in relation to a specific piece of work. She had tried to investigate whether pupils were borrowing more meaningfully after taking part in a reading project, for example, by asking whether they had read to the end of a book they had borrowed.

6.3.2 Library management

Library management was seen as a topic which the library staff might evaluate, essentially, for their own information, to identify ways to improve services and working practices. As one respondent said:

I don’t expect colleagues to be interested in library management.

This meant that this type of evaluation was often carried out on an informal basis. However, such information might also be used to demonstrate to school managers that the library had made effective use of resources. The specific areas of library management most frequently referred to were:

- Stock provision and services

A number of respondents had chosen to evaluate the way in which library stock and services support the curriculum and other library activities such as reader development. A common approach was to examine the quality of resources and their relevance in order to tailor stock to pupils’ needs.

- Budgeting

Evaluation which would demonstrate value for money was identified as an approach which was likely to be well understood and acted on by school managers.

- Library use

Evaluation which would demonstrate the level of library use was seen to be valuable in proving the value of the library to pupils and staff. One respondent mentioned breaking this down into use for various purposes such as studying and browsing and another collected figures of use in and out of lessons.

6.4 Practical organisation of evaluation

While in many cases, evaluation was an activity which was undertaken by library staff simply when they happened to find the time, in several schools, it formed part of the librarian's annual performance review. However, one respondent pointed out that most library staff continually carried out informal evaluation, even though more formal approaches are adopted less frequently.

While some data, such as issue figures, was collected on a regular basis, perhaps daily or weekly, other types of evaluation were conducted more intermittently, often taking the form of an intensive study conducted over a short time scale. For example, one respondent mentioned that the library's Homework Club was the subject of an action research project. In a few schools library staff referred to sampling to collect data about a certain aspect of library provision, for example, collecting figures once a term rather than carrying out continuous monitoring.

6.5 Difficulties

By far the most frequently mentioned difficulty faced by staff wishing to evaluate the library was lack of time. One respondent summed up the feelings of many:

The biggest problem for me, and I think for many librarians, is the solo nature of the job. Without adequate assistance it is impossible to find the time to spend on a proper evaluation of the service. It is hard enough to carry out the present activities required to do the job properly when I am on my own, without any additional tasks.

Various other practical difficulties identified, for example, lack of space and difficulties recording anecdotal evidence.

Lack of training was another problem, especially in relation to the use of qualitative methods. One respondent pointed out that a good understanding of evaluation methods can, in itself, save time. However, some library staff did not

feel lack of skills was a problem as local or national training courses and various guides to evaluation were readily available.

A lack of understanding of the role of the library by the audience for the evaluation was another difficulty. Some respondents complained about limited interest from OFSTED inspectors or headteachers. One felt that evaluation was, largely, a waste of time because:

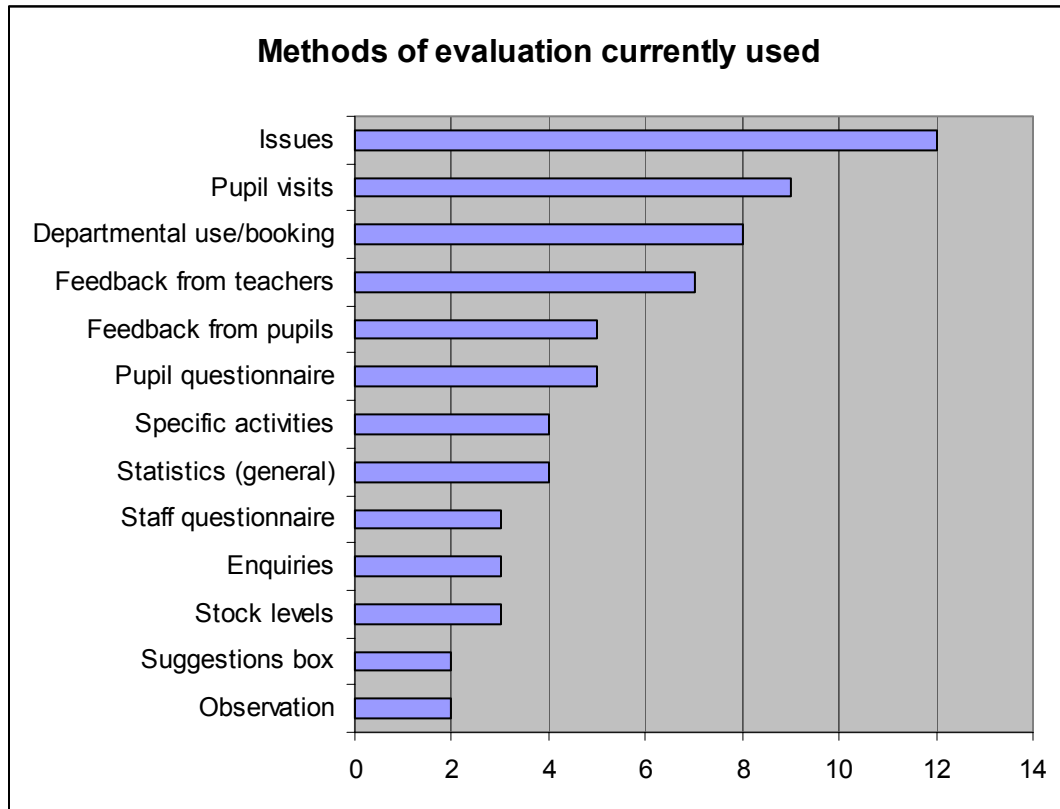
I have often found that I produce data that no one reads or acts on.

Another referred to the lack of motivation to evaluate from the school's SMT. Teaching staff were also criticised for their lack of support for school library evaluation. This might be an unwillingness to discuss pupil progress and other matters with library staff or denying staff adequate access to groups of pupils to conduct focus groups or other evaluation activities.

Perhaps the most difficult problem to overcome, however, is isolating the role of the library. Some argued that this was impossible and, indeed, inappropriate, because library staff worked as part of a team with teaching staff to secure improvement.

6.6 Methods of evaluation

Questionnaire responses indicated a variety of methods are currently being used to evaluate school libraries.



6.6.1 Statistical methods

Of the 21 library staff who said they currently carried out some form of evaluation, collecting issue statistics was the method most frequently referred to, being mentioned by twelve. In some cases, issues were analysed by pupil categories such as year group or gender, in others by resource category, such as non-fiction/fiction stock or subject. One respondent reported that he/she analysed numbers such as issue figures in ways which corresponded to other types of analysis taking place in the school, for example, by ethnic groups and gender; an advantage of breaking down issue figures in this way was that the librarian was able to target specific groups. Similarly, a number of respondents also kept records of ICT usage.

Nine respondents mentioned counting the number of individual pupil visits to the library; this was usually carried out at lunchtimes, but might also refer to use during lessons or study periods or before and after school. In some cases, use was monitored by asking pupils to sign in when they arrived at the library. These figures were generally collated on a daily or weekly basis and could be used to

identify patterns in library use. However, as some respondents pointed out, without an electronic counter, it was not practical to carry out a headcount regularly, especially at times when the library was at its busiest. In one school, the librarian overcame this difficulty by keeping a count of everyone using the library during just one week each term. However, she was aware that this week may not be representative of general library use for a variety of reasons. Eight respondents also kept records of the library bookings made by each subject department. It was argued that these could be used to identify those departments which the librarian might wish to target to encourage greater library use.

In some schools, staff also kept records of the number of enquiries and stock levels, with some comparing stock levels to local or national recommended figures in order to assess provision. A further four respondents referred to collecting general statistics.

This type of statistical data was seen as easy to collect, especially if it was available from a library management system, and also easy for others, such as managers, teachers and governors, to understand. Some respondents attempted to use such statistics to measure improvement, for example by comparing year-on-year figures.

However, library staff were clearly aware that statistics only provided a partial picture; as one said:

More effective change comes through talking about the effects on individual students, so qualitative methods can be helpful.

There are clearly problems in simply collecting issue figures or other statistics, for example, as one respondent pointed out, they would not provide information about how well pupils had used the information or about impact on learning. In the light of these considerations, several respondents referred to the need to include verbal feedback and other more qualitative methods to determine the 'value added' by the library.

6.6.2 Qualitative methods

Feedback from teachers and pupils were the most frequently mentioned types of qualitative evaluation. In many cases, this was done on a fairly informal basis, for example through a suggestions' box or by noting anecdotal comments from pupils and staff. However, some respondents had used pupil, and in a few cases staff, questionnaires. One argued that questionnaires were useful because, being anonymous, they allowed users to give feedback more freely. Another saw them as a way to involve pupils in the development of the library:

Evaluation by students provides valuable qualitative input and its strength is that they are given a say in library management.

While qualitative analysis was clearly time-consuming, some library staff argued that it was possible to carry out this type of evaluation in relation to specific activities or projects, linked to library or whole school priorities. However, one respondent raised the concern that this type of data would be “rather subjective”.

Other methods used to evaluate library use in a small number of schools included:

- Observation
- Interviews with pupils
- Self-assessment
- ICT audits
- Budget monitoring
- Photographs
- Examples of pupils’ work
- Feedback from library staff
- Open meetings.

As one respondent pointed out:

No one method can give an accurate picture. Each has its own strengths.

6.7 Support for library staff

Several respondents felt that it was helpful to have support in evaluating their own library, whether this was from a colleague at another school or the SLS. As one respondent said:

Sometimes objectivity is lacking; it’s almost as if I know my library too well.

Links with other schools were seen as important to share ideas; this might be on a local basis or by sharing good practice through national case studies. As one respondent pointed out:

Being a school librarian is quite lonely – you need to find ways to mesh in with the curriculum departments and to form partnerships with other libraries in the area. It is very important to share information and experience and to do so often.

A few respondents mentioned types of support the SLS could provide, for example courses on evaluating the library or benchmarking exercises. A number of respondents would like to see more benchmarking exercises to allow them to measure their provision against schools in similar ‘families’ in terms of size, intake, funding and so forth. It was thought that comparative figures would be useful to present to headteachers and governors.

6.8 Uses of evaluation

6.8.1 Use by library staff

All questionnaire respondents were keen to use evaluation findings to improve library provision, or, as one said, to “drive the next phase of development”; several mentioned that the evaluation was used to inform the following year’s library improvement plan. The most frequently mentioned uses for evaluation findings are listed below.

- To introduce new courses

In one school, the information skills programme for Year 7 had been revised and expanded in the light of evaluation findings and in another, the whole school information skills programme had been restructured.

- To argue for additional funding

Several respondents had secured small amounts of additional funding as a result of presenting their evaluation to the headteacher or governing body. In most cases, this was simply an increase in the overall library budget. However, others had received extra funding for specific resources or equipment such as shelving, a security system or ICT resources.

- To lobby for additional staffing

One respondent had used the evaluation findings to demonstrate that extra support was required in the library during busy periods. In another school, the evaluation report had helped to argue the case for the library assistant’s contract to be extended by two weeks per year.

- To lobby for higher salaries for library staff

Several respondents had managed to have their position regraded as a result of demonstrating the value of the library and their role in school improvement through evaluation.

- To tailor stock to pupils’ needs

Evaluation had helped several library staff to make decisions about the purchase of new titles. One commented:

I frequently act on the comments and suggestions of the pupils. The stocktake is always used in relation to buying new stock.

- To target those pupils or subject departments who do not make good use of the library

One librarian decided to target the promotion of fiction to Year 10 pupils following an evaluation which identified this as an area in need of improvement. Another said:

I'm planning to target Years 8 and 9 through their English lessons as they need to be encouraged to read more and I have a very up to date fiction section.

Based on evidence of departmental use, other respondents had focused on subject areas which were thought to be under-using the library. One reported they had particular success after using this approach to compare use by various departments.

- To change library practices and procedures

Changes to everyday working practice were often introduced. These included increased or altered opening hours; setting up a quiet reading area; and welcoming pupils to the Homework Club in a different way. One respondent commented that “subtle developments”, for example, working with individual teachers, had proved more beneficial than trying to introduce whole school improvements based on evaluation findings because some staff were more willing than others to take the information on board.

6.8.2 Use by the school

In the majority of schools, the evaluation findings were presented in the form of a report to the SMT and governors. In some cases, the information was shared with Heads of Department, the Library Committee and other school staff.

Respondents identified a number of ways in which these groups might use evaluation.

- To support decision making

This was mentioned with reference to a number of areas, including information skills policy; the modification of teaching practice; the role of the library in supporting the curriculum; and funding decisions.

- To encourage better use of the library

Teaching staff might draw on evaluation findings to review the ways in which they currently use the library and consider new ways in which they might make use library services and resources as part of their teaching.

- Accountability

Evaluation reports were sometimes requested by headteachers to justify decisions regarding the allocation of funding or staffing.

- Promoting the school

Some types of evaluation might be used to promote the school to parents, potential parents, the local community and beyond. In this way, it could help to attract pupils to the school.

- Comparing library provision between schools

It was thought that evaluation could allow headteachers to compare how library provision in their school compares with others locally and similar schools nationally.

6.8.3 Use by professional bodies

It was suggested that evaluation could be used to assist organisations which represent library professionals in determining the impact of school libraries in order to provide evidence for good practice in supporting pupil attainment.

By collating evaluation data, SLSs and groups such as the SLA, CILIP School Libraries Group and ASCEL could build up a national picture of school library provision and also to compare provision between schools and localities.

Another possible use for evaluation is to provide the profession with examples of good practice which the professional bodies could then highlight and promote to raise awareness of the contribution made by school libraries and to lobby for better provision, increased salaries and other improvements. Evaluation could help these bodies to provide evidence which would be persuasive to government and other institutions. It would also assist them in their role in providing advice and assistance, for example, by identifying possible new ways of working.

6.9 Requirements for an evaluation model

Several respondents felt that the methods they currently used were not sufficiently robust to be used to argue for funding or other aspects of library development. It was therefore argued that a set of standard, widely accepted methods of school library evaluation would be valuable.

In addition, the importance of linking the library to whole school evaluation was highlighted by a number of respondents. One commented:

I would like a more formal self-evaluation which tied in with teaching methods of evaluation.

Respondents thought that methods of evaluation needed to be widely accepted by the educational community as well as library organisations; the former included the GCTE and headteachers' organisations as well as staff in individual schools. As one librarian pointed out:

Too many senior managers and teachers still see the library as a nice addition to the school, but do not see it as crucial to the delivery of the curriculum.

Evaluation was seen as one way to overcome this problem. Evidence of the impact of the library on learning was clearly the most important area for most library staff, but also clearly the most problematic. While it was crucial in order to secure the support of teaching staff for library use and development, the difficulty of isolating the role of the library from other influences on learning was widely acknowledged. At least one respondent was anxious that the emphasis should be on the contribution of the library to learning in general terms rather than linked to specific curriculum structures which might change over time and make longitudinal comparison meaningless.

It was thought that qualitative methods might go some way towards demonstrating the impact of the library. One respondent suggested interviewing staff to find out how the way in which students handled information changed over time. Another possibility was to track the progress of individual pupils.

In terms of guidance on the use of self-evaluation tools, qualitative methods of evaluation were seen as an area where more support was needed. In general, library staff were used to collecting statistics, but had less experience of dealing with qualitative data.

6.10 Future research

A number of respondents referred to areas where they would like guidance regarding best practice or types of evidence to present a case to their line manager. Some of these issues cannot be addressed through self-evaluation alone and may require additional research:

- The position of the librarian in the management structure of the school
- The effect of the employment of a qualified librarian
- The impact of different methods of information skills teaching
- The links between library funding and attainment levels
- The impact of resource provision on attainment levels.

7. Beacon School questionnaires

Thirty-six questionnaires were posted to headteachers at Beacon schools with expertise in self-assessment/self review. This represented approximately one-third of the total number of Beacon schools with expertise in this area. The sample was selected to include schools at all levels (nursery, primary, junior, middle, secondary) and a range of geographical areas. Eleven headteachers responded; these included infant, nursery, primary and high schools. The majority chose to return the questionnaire by post, but two took advantage of the offer to complete the questionnaire by telephone interview.

7.1 The part played by the evaluation of the school library in overall school evaluation.

Just three respondents said that the school library did not form part of the whole school evaluation at present, in one case the reason given was that the school had only had a library for a short time and another said that the new library, which was due to open shortly, would be evaluated in the future.

In one case, it appeared that the questionnaire had led the headteacher to reflect on the possible future evaluation of the library:

So far, evaluation has focused on progress, results, effectiveness of teaching techniques etc. Perhaps impact of library use on independent learning should be evaluated.

However, many schools were clearly already well aware of the importance of evaluating the library:

Overall school evaluation determines the needs of the children in the school in every aspect of academic life. An evaluation of the school library will ensure we have suitable books to meet those needs. Eg if assessment results, discussions with staff and observation reveal a need for more suitable literature for boys this will be a focus when the library is next stocked. This ensures we have a suitable balance of books that are in line with the NC requirements and our SDP [School Development Plan].

In one school, evaluation of the library fell under the area of literacy. Therefore, it was regularly evaluated, both formally and informally by the Literacy Co-ordinator. However, in another school, the school library was included under almost all the heading used for the whole school evaluation including community (how the school library works with parents); premises (the library environment); and quality of teaching and learning (how staff use the library). In yet another school, the school self-evaluation process focused on curriculum issues as well as thematic issues such as leadership and management. An audit of the library

is carried out by the member of staff responsible for the library and any outstanding issues would feed into the School Improvement Plan.

The formality of the evaluation varied between schools. One headteacher reported that the library has agreed annual targets which form part of the school's development plan. The targets have direct links to the whole school priorities: curriculum and community education. Targets are reviewed termly in line with school policy and there is an annual review report at the end of the academic year. Another headteacher reported a similar process, whereby the library evaluation process is linked to the cyclical school strategy planning process. An annual evaluation is based on the strategic plan and outcomes of this evaluation forms part of the ongoing strategic planning process. Others evaluated the library less frequently; for example, one headteacher said that evaluation was conducted just once every three years.

One headteacher reported that, although the library is not evaluated as part of the school evaluation, it did form part of the evaluation conducted by the SLS. Another school also mentioned the involvement of the SLS:

We have recently (Summer 2002) evaluated the effectiveness of our school library in supporting attainment across the curriculum. We have liaised closely with the school library service to draw up an action plan relating to this. We are just starting to implement the plan.

7.2 Responsibility for evaluation

Unsurprisingly, in many cases, the school librarian was responsible for the evaluation of the library. However, while this was sometimes a qualified librarian, in other schools, this term denoted a Classroom Assistant who was responsible for the day-to-day running of the library. In schools without a librarian, there was often more than one person with a degree of responsibility for library evaluation. For instance, in one a nursery assistant worked in partnership with a teacher with responsibility for communication, language and literacy; in another the Literacy Co-ordinator and headteacher shared responsibility. One headteacher mentioned the involvement of librarians from the local SLS.

7.3 Types of data/evidence collected

A number of headteachers mentioned that the types of data collected would change depending on current school priorities. However, the types of information commonly collected fell into four broad areas.

7.3.1 Information about stock

This type of data was the most frequently mentioned. In most schools, the library stock was evaluated in relation to the needs of pupils (age, ability, gender,

interests); the demands of the National Curriculum; and more general considerations, such as the balance between fiction and non-fiction. Some responses in this category are given below:

range of books available, whether suitable for age, ability and interests of children e.g. boys, reluctant readers, SEN

books in line with NC requirements and cover suitable topics

an audit of the fiction and non-fiction sections, identifying gaps/replacements as necessary

teacher resources

how stock relates to subject content

are there resources for all year groups?

use of particular books at particular times

how the stock meets children's needs

the quality of books. This is evaluated regularly (2 or 3 times a year). The range of books is compared with the areas the school is currently looking at in terms of school improvement eg speaking & listening, Maths.

7.3.2 Library use

Most schools considered the use made of the library and its resources, for instance by looking at:

records of book issues and usage

use of Internet

book loans per week

use of library for reading and research, including use of ICT and other information systems

departmental use (project boxes etc).

7.3.3 Information about pupils

In addition to aggregated data regarding use of the library, there were also examples of schools collecting information about individual pupils to help to evaluate the impact of the library on individuals. Examples included:

reading habits of individual pupils

use of library management system to track individual pupils' reading records

who uses the library (parents and children).

7.3.4 Strategy/planning

Although a number of headteachers had explained the role of the library in whole school evaluation, there was little reference to more strategic considerations when they were asked about the types of information collected. However some examples were mentioned:

links with departments

the effects of structural/organisational change

value for money studies

wider contribution to school life.

7.4 Actions taken as a result of evaluation

Around half the respondents could cite examples of developments in the library which had taken place as a result of evaluation. Several linked evaluation to budget setting and the purchase of stock. The purchase of computerised library management systems was another development which had often occurred following an evaluation. In other instances, changes to physical environment of the library were an upshot of evaluation. For instance, in one school an evaluation of the library led to planning to expand its scope to incorporate a learning resource centre and cinema.

7.5 Use of information collected by external bodies

This was a much rarer occurrence. Although in some schools, the whole school evaluation had been shared with other schools or presented to OFSTED for instance, this activity was not specifically related to the evaluation of the library. The most frequently mentioned outside agency was the SLS or public library service. Other respondents mentioned the LEA and the National College for School Leadership.

7.6 Conclusions

There is clearly wide variation in the approach towards self-evaluation of the school library even within Beacon schools with expertise in self-evaluation. While some had clearly given a great deal of consideration to the evaluation of the library, others acknowledged that there was still much to be done in this area. The responses of the headteachers highlight the importance of considering library self-evaluation as an integral part of whole school self-evaluation and also of using the findings to inform future planning to ensure that the library has maximum impact on teaching and learning.

8. Development of the models

8.1 The need for a standard approach to school library evaluation

Many of the library staff who responded to the research team's questionnaire thought that a set of standard, widely accepted methods of school library evaluation would be valuable. From the responses from Beacon schools, it was clear that there was no consistent approach to the evaluation of the school library, even in schools with expertise in this area. Indeed, the importance attached to the evaluation of the library varied considerably from school to school. Many headteachers were unsure how to incorporate the evaluation of the library into the whole school evaluation. The model developed will provide useful guidance in this respect as well as helping schools to examine the contribution the library makes to teaching and learning.

8.2 The overall approach

In the development of the model, the research team reflected on the various other models available for the evaluation of school libraries and other services. Aspects of these were incorporated in the overall design in numerous ways. For example, the model takes account of each of the aspects of evaluation referred to by Kuhlthau (1999), but with an emphasis on those which are more concerned with the impact of the library on pupils' learning: attitude of students; skills gained; and the utilisation of skills.

This evaluation process outlined in the model is closely related to the method adopted by *Inspiring Learning* (Resource, 2001). The summary sheets produced as part of the model are based loosely on those provided in the *Framework for Study Support* (QISS, 2000).

The Scottish school library evaluation model, *Taking a Closer Look at the School Library Resource Centre*, is closely allied to the overall school evaluation process in Scotland (*How Good is Our School?*) and although some have argued that this can be a drawback in some respects (e.g. Williams, Wavell and Coles, 2002), this approach does have the distinct advantage of being familiar in many ways to other documentation and procedures which teachers and librarians working in schools are used to dealing with. This may mean that such a framework more readily gains the respect of teachers, headteachers, OFSTED, governors and others in the education sector.

The overall framework for both the primary and secondary self-evaluation models was based on the OFSTED *Framework for Inspecting Schools in England* (Pilot version, July 2002a). Both models use the first eight key questions of the *Framework*, although some of these were adapted slightly to ensure they directly addressed the needs of the school library. It was decided to change the title of

Key Question 1 to make it clear that this section was, essentially, contextual information. The themes developed for each key question reflect the areas which the Framework states “inspectors must evaluate”, with issues of particular concern to the work of the school library being included under the most appropriate Key Question. For example, promoting reading for pleasure is included under Key Question 6: How well are pupils guided and supported?

The language and terms used in the models reflect those familiar to teachers and other educators through contact with the OFSTED *Inspection Framework* and the National Curriculum. This was felt to be important to ensure that the audience for the findings of any self-evaluation clearly understood the language and structure used.

The models are designed to cover all aspects of school library provision which schools might wish to evaluate. Schools are not expected to use the whole model, rather to select the theme(s) that are most relevant to their needs and concerns and to the priorities of the school as a whole. The models are intended to allow schools to evaluate their library with any of the purposes identified by questionnaire respondents in mind, for example, to plan improvement; prepare for inspection; improve working practices; or raise awareness.

Collecting evidence which demonstrates the impact of the library on teaching and learning was identified as the most problematic area by respondents to the questionnaire for library staff. It is hoped that the models will provide a structure and sufficient guidance to allow such evaluation to take place.

The main factors which impact on teaching and learning, identified from previous research and questionnaires completed by school library staff (see Chapter 3) have been incorporated into the model as follows:

Information skills teaching	Key Questions 2 and 4
Co-operation	Key Questions 4 and 7
Staffing	Key Question 8
Resources	Key Question 5
Environment	Key Question 5
Budget	Key Questions 5 and 8
Library management	Key Question 8
Promotion	Key Questions 5 and 6.

In addition, the model provides the tools needed to evaluate the wider benefits of school libraries, for example their contribution to developing pupils’ personal qualities (Key Question 3).

8.3 The self-evaluation process

The models are designed to be used by the person responsible for the management of the library, in conjunction with the headteacher or another senior member of staff. Where appropriate, other school staff should be involved in the evaluation process and the expertise and neutral perspective of a critical friend, such as a SLS librarian or a library manager from another school should be sought if at all possible.

The person responsible for the evaluation of the library should complete Key Question 1 (Characteristics of the school and its LRC?) at the start of the evaluation process to provide contextual information.

In the secondary model, each of the remaining seven Key Questions are divided into between one and three themes to break down the general area for evaluation into more manageable sections. Schools are advised to select just one theme at a time to focus the evaluation process. The Key Question (and theme) chosen is likely to reflect the aims and objectives of the library, as set out in the policy documentation, which, in turn, reflect the concerns of the whole school, as stated in the school improvement plan. The Key Question (and theme) chosen may relate to an area which has been targeted for improvement as a result of a previous evaluation or an inspection report; areas the school believes to require improvement; where new initiatives have been introduced which the library staff want to evaluate; or simply where the school is not sure how good the standard of provision is. It could also reflect more widespread concerns highlighted by local school library services, the LEA or national bodies such as the School Library Association, CILIP, OFSTED or the DfES.

In the secondary model, each theme is divided into between four and ten indicators; in the primary model, each of the wider Key Questions are divided into between six and thirteen indicators. For each theme, there is a summary sheet to present an overview of the evaluation findings and to indicate further improvements which have been found to be necessary. This consists of a list of the indicators to consider for each theme and space to record:

- the level the library achieves for each indicator
- brief details of the evidence collected
- the actions the school intends to take to secure improvement.

For each Key Question, library provision can be described as being at one of four levels: excellent, good, satisfactory or poor.

Scale	Description
1: Excellent or very good	The LRC is very strong in this area.
2: Good	The LRC addresses this area well, but some improvement is possible.
3: Satisfactory	Work has begun to develop the LRC in this area, but further improvement is required.
4: Unsatisfactory or poor	Little or no action has been taken in this area and provision lacks impact; urgent intervention is required.

A four-point scale was decided on to make the model manageable for schools while providing a route to progress along.

Although many of the practitioners consulted felt that having all the materials relating to a particular theme together was the best approach for secondary schools, under the guidance of the SLWG, it was decided to present both basic models as shorter documents and to provide the additional materials as appendices. The additional resources provided for each theme are:

- a chart providing suggestions of ways in which evidence can be collected to discover how good the library is at present
- data collection tools to help to collect the evidence needed to evaluate the library e.g. questions for pupils and staff, observation checklists.
- descriptions of a typical LRC at each level
- suggestions for ways to improve LRC provision.

The existing models examined were useful in terms of suggesting types of evidence which might be collected. The main approaches were:

- observation
- surveying staff (using questionnaires, interviews and informal comments)
- surveying students (using questionnaires, interviews, informal comments and suggestions' boxes). This was felt to be particularly important because, all too often, children's own views are not sought when services intended for them are being evaluated; they are not seen as stakeholders or contributors (Alderson and Schaumberg, 2002).
- policy and planning documents eg annual report, library policy, department and whole school policies, minutes of meetings

- other written evidence, eg reading lists, pupils' work, booking sheets, induction programme documentation
- other types of evidence including displays of work, photographs, and headcounts.

According to the OFSTED *Inspection Framework* (OFSTED, 2002a), during their time in school, inspectors should:

- observe lessons in progress and undertake other observations elsewhere;
- analyse samples of pupils' current and recent work;
- hold discussions with pupils, staff (especially those with management responsibilities)
- analyse documents provided by the school, including teachers' records of pupils and their progress.

The advice on collecting evidence suggested in the models mirrors this approach.

For most indicators, there is more than one possible way to collect the evidence needed. Schools are encouraged to collect some evidence for each indicator, choosing the methods that best suit their needs and fit in with existing working practices, while attempting to include a range of different types of evidence e.g. observation, examples of work, talking to pupils, talking to staff and policy documents. A number of tools such as observation checklists and questions for pupils and staff are provided within the appendices to help the person conducting the evaluation to collect evidence to demonstrate what impact the library is having on teaching, learning and attainment and which level current provision most closely matches. The inclusion of such tools means that the model should be able to be used by most school library staff without the need for additional training and should also minimise the work involved for library staff in planning the evaluation. These tools are intended to support staff in using qualitative methods of evaluation which a number of questionnaire respondents acknowledged were a weakness. However, it is acknowledged that the school will need to adapt these to take account of the age and ability of pupils, for example, by selecting appropriate questions or changing the phrasing of questions.

Level descriptors give four descriptions of typical libraries, one for each of the levels. These are intended help schools to decide which best matches the situation in their library and to allow them to see how they might improve provision and move up to the next level. When they have collected the evidence, schools should decide on a level which best fits their library. The input of a critical friend, a member of the teaching staff; a colleague from another school; or a SLS librarian might be particularly useful at this stage to help make an objective decision based on the evidence. If the evidence from the indicators is not conclusive, for example, for some indicators, the evidence suggests the LRC

is at Level 2, while for others, Level 3 is indicated, the person or group conducting the evaluation should choose the best fit by looking again at the descriptions of typical libraries at each level. They should highlight any areas which do not fall within this level which could be considered to be noteworthy strengths or weaknesses to build on or improve. The latter will be reflected in the resulting action plan and should also feature in the SIP.

The actions for improvement indicate some ways in which a library might perform better if it is found to require improvement. Some of the suggestions can be implemented by the library staff, but others will require input from other stakeholders, for example, the headteacher, teachers, governors or SLS. In the secondary model there are also examples of good practice for each theme showing how a library might be improved in practice and, in both models, there are further references to follow up if more detailed information is required.

8.4 Catering for all types of school

The models are designed to be adaptable enough to allow them to be tailored to meet the needs of different schools, for instance, in terms of staffing arrangements, pupil intake or focus for school improvement. The two models developed are intended to reflect the differing nature of library provision common in primary and secondary phase schools. However, by taking a common overall approach, it is hoped that the self-evaluation process will come to be understood and adopted by library and other staff in all types of schools. It is anticipated that schools not obviously covered by either of the models, for example middle schools, will be able to choose the model which best suits their needs. Blank summary sheets and suggestions for further themes which schools may wish to consider are provided in the appendix to the secondary model to assist schools in tailoring the model to their needs.

8.4.1 Special schools

Library provision in special schools is often classroom based, but with a central collection to introduce pupils to the idea of a dedicated library. The exact needs of the library will depend on the needs of pupils in a particular school but it is likely that the following features will be important:

- atmosphere eg bright, attractive, welcoming
- access eg room for wheelchairs
- furnishing eg height of shelves
- guiding
- stock eg large print, audio books
- special equipment eg touch screens, voice activation.

Essentially, considerations are the same as for any library ie the facilities and stock should be carefully tailored to meet the needs, interests and abilities of pupils. As in any school, the impact of the library on teaching and learning should be at the centre of library self-evaluation.

It is likely that the majority of special schools will be able to use the Primary School Library Evaluation Model, possibly with some adaptations to reflect the particular needs of their pupils.

However, the research team acknowledge that special school involvement in the project was limited. In an attempt to get more input into the development of the guidelines from teachers and library staff in special schools, a request was posted on SEN mailing lists and the NASEN was asked to comment on the models. It is hoped that the piloting process will provide further opportunities to investigate the applicability of the models in special schools.

9. Recommendations for ways of disseminating and piloting the models in schools

Previous experiences of attempting to introduce school library self-evaluation models in Scotland and the US provide valuable insights into ways to ensure that the process is widely adopted in schools. In addition, those involved in various stages of the consultation process for this project provided a number of useful suggestions.

9.1 Library staff need to be convinced of the value of self-evaluation

While some school library staff are clearly keen to evaluate the library and have a clear appreciation of the value of doing so, others may be more reluctant to regard this as an integral part of their job. There is, therefore, a need to persuade all library staff of the benefits of carrying out evaluation, for example, to improve working practices; to plan library development; to bid for additional funding; or to prepare for inspection. There is no doubt that 'word of mouth' will be important, but at a more formal level, articles in the professional press and advocacy by the SLA, SLG, ASCEL, SLSs and others will be valuable.

9.2 Headteachers and other educators need to be convinced of the value of self-evaluation

It is not sufficient that the library community alone is convinced of the benefits of evaluating the school library; those in the education community need to be persuaded as well. This includes various stakeholders such as teachers, inspectors and LEAs. However, perhaps the most important group to convince are headteachers; without their backing, the effect of any self-evaluation is likely to be limited. As one practitioner said:

Presentation and direction to and from senior management will be the key as to whether the model will be widely used in schools.

It is vital that headteachers are persuaded of the importance of an effective school library which is adequately staffed and funded and is an integral part of the school evaluation process. It is hoped that the self-evaluation process itself will help to convince all teachers of the essential role played by the library by demonstrating the many ways in which it can contribute to teaching and learning.

The support of bodies such as DfES, OFSTED, NAHT, GTC and QCA will be helpful in trying to persuade headteachers of the value of school library self-evaluation. In addition, promotion of the models in journals, circulars and other

documents read by headteachers, along with opportunities for discussion at conferences and meetings, will help to secure their interest and support.

9.3 Library staff need support to help them to evaluate

One of the reasons why it is so important that headteachers back the self-evaluation process is that library staff will undoubtedly need support to carry out an evaluation; it is not an activity which library staff should be expected to do alone. The active involvement of the SMT will be crucial in ensuring that the self-evaluation can be conducted effectively and the findings feed into whole school planning. The support of other staff, such as the Literacy Co-ordinator and SENCO, are also likely to be required.

Although the self-evaluation process is designed to be carried out without the need for a significant level of additional support, it is likely that some library staff, especially those for whom evaluation is a new area of work, may require training or perhaps more informal support from another member of staff or librarian. SLSs are likely to be called on to act as 'critical friends', supporting school library staff and ensuring the self-evaluation is conducted objectively. SLSs could also provide training in evaluation for school library staff and perhaps collate data and co-ordinate benchmarking activities. SLSs are likely to be particularly important in supporting primary schools, as few are likely to have staff with sufficient time or expertise to carry out a self-evaluation without assistance.

Whether it is through SLSs or more informally, it is important that school librarians have opportunities to support each other in conducting evaluation, for example, by sharing good practice and acting as critical friends.

9.4 Evaluation of the library needs to be incorporated into whole school assessment

If the value of the library in supporting teaching and learning is to be fully appreciated, the evaluation of the library should be seen as an integral part of whole school self-evaluation. For this reason, there are numerous references in the models to the ways in which the library interacts with other parts of the school. Similarly, it is recommended that references to the use of the library are included in departmental and whole-school self-evaluation documents.

The impact of library provision on teaching and learning should therefore be routinely evaluated in any whole school self-evaluation and should feature strongly in the evaluation of related aspects of the school such as literacy or ICT. The responses from headteachers from Beacon schools give some indication of the variety of ways in which the library can impact on the work of the school. The indicators for each Key Question and theme in the school library evaluation models will give schools guidance regarding the types of issues they may wish to

consider when assessing the contribution made by the library for each Key Question in the OFSTED evaluation schedule.

In some schools, for example, those primary schools with less well-developed library provision and limited staffing, the incorporation of library issues into whole school evaluation in this way may be all that is realistically feasible. However, in secondary schools and primary schools with better-developed library provision and higher levels of staffing, these models allow a particular aspect of the library's contribution to teaching and learning to be evaluated in greater depth and specific actions for improvement to be identified. The models would also be particularly useful for those schools where library provision is known to be inadequate, but there is a wish to examine this feature of the school in greater depth, with a view to raising standards.

9.5 The models need to be piloted to investigate how effectively they work in practice

The models are to be piloted by ASCEL in several primary and secondary schools in Spring 2003. The findings from this, and further piloting during the following term, should be used to amend the models as necessary to ensure that they are practical tools which cater for the differing staffing arrangements and types of library which exist in schools in England. It is hoped that the piloting process will suggest ways in which school library self-evaluation can be smoothly incorporated into working practices and ensure that the models are adopted widely. The research team acknowledges that there has been less input from practitioners in the drafting of the primary model and it is hoped that this can be addressed by a high level of input from primary schools at the piloting stage.

9.6 Professional bodies should be involved in awareness raising

To support the introduction of the self-evaluation models, professional bodies, for example, CILIP, SLA, ASCEL should play a role both in terms of awareness raising generally regarding the role of libraries in the educational process and in terms of the staffing of school libraries and the professional development of school librarians. They should take the initiative in raising the profile of school librarians and in lobbying government in areas of policy initiatives.

9.7 The models should be reviewed regularly

Finally, the SLWG need to ensure that arrangements are made to review the models on a regular basis to ensure that they remain current and incorporates significant new educational initiatives.

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