



Evaluation of the 2014 School Library Pack

April 2015

Sarah McNicol & James Duggan
Education and Social Research Institute, Manchester Metropolitan University

Contents

Executive Summary.....	3
1. Introduction	7
2. Methodology.....	8
3. Findings	10
The School Library.....	10
School Library Pack	23
Additional support Book Trust could provide for school libraries.....	34
4. Conclusions and recommendations.....	35
5. Good practice case studies	38
Budmouth College case study: Inter-school book award	38
New Charter Academy case study: Student-led reading groups	40
Wirral Boys' Grammar School case study: Book Award	42
Bourne Academy case study: Book club	44
Loreto High School Chorlton case study: Animated book trailer.....	46
Forest Hill School case study: Reading challenge	48
References	50
Appendix A: School Library Pack books (2014-15).....	51
Appendix B: Contextual information about schools.....	53
Appendix C: Exploratory interview questions.....	55
Appendix D: Case study framework.....	58
Data collected in case studies.....	60

Executive Summary

Book Trust's School Library Pack is a pack of books and resources available free of charge to any school or education provider in England with Year 7 students. Two different packs are available to schools, depending on whether they are a mainstream school or a special school. The 2014-15 School Library Pack for mainstream schools contained six copies of five future classics; six reluctant reader titles; and four graphic novels, plus support materials including posters, a guide to the pack and ideas for reading groups and book discussions. The School Library Pack for special schools contained ten books which aimed to address the diverse needs of readers, for example, a book with sounds and a book with very few words, along with a booklet introducing the titles and a selection of posters. In 2014-15, 4,718 schools signed up and received the pack (4,006 mainstream schools and 712 special schools).

The aim of this evaluation was to inform School Library Pack programme development and provide case studies of good practice in the use of the School Library Pack via feedback from librarians, plus other school staff and students. This was achieved through:

- 21 exploratory interviews with librarians (or other staff responsible for administering the School Library Pack) from a range of schools which have used the School Library Pack
- 6 case studies involving staff interviews, student focus groups, observation of activities and other data as appropriate.

The key messages from the research are as follows:

The School Library Pack is felt to be a good service providing high quality books and support materials

Overall, feedback on the 2014-15 School Library Pack was highly positive; it was universally felt to be a good service by interviewees. Particular praise was given for the variety and quality of the books provided and the fact that they had been carefully selected. Interviewees also appreciated the support materials offered alongside the books and the efficient administration of the service.

The School Library Pack materials are used in schools in diverse, and often creative, ways

In most cases, the School Library Pack books had been added to a school's library stock, but in a number of schools they had also been used for group reading activities. These took place both within lessons and as extracurricular activities and they might be staff-led or organised by the students themselves. As well as reading and discussing the books, reading groups had taken part in supplementary activities such as voting for their favourite book, writing reviews and designing alternative covers. Schools also organised activities such as book awards and reading challenges based on the materials in the School Library Pack.

The sets of Future Classics titles were welcomed as librarians felt that these allowed for alternative ways of using books, including activities that would not be possible otherwise in libraries that lacked sufficient budget to purchase multiple copies. The graphic novels and reluctant reader titles were also popular and most librarians felt both formats were valuable additions to the library stock and would be popular with students, especially those who were not such keen readers. It is worth noting that while the School Library Pack is available to all schools with a Year 7 cohort, librarians had used the books with students from Year 6 to Year 11.

The School Library Pack has an impact on the work of school librarians by providing both resources and support

School librarians felt that the School Library Pack impacted on their work in a number of ways. It can be invaluable to supplement stock at a time when budgets are very tight in most schools. It also allows reading group activities to take place, not only by making multiple copies available, but also by providing guidance to help run groups and lead discussions. The School Library Pack also helps to introduce librarians to new fiction they may not be aware of otherwise.

The School Library Pack has an impact on students by widening their reading experiences

Among students, the School Library Pack offers access to new titles, something which is especially important in less well-resourced school libraries. It can also encourage students to try different types of books they might not usually consider reading. Another way in which the School Library Pack can have an impact is by offering students a different type of reading experience: the chance to read books as a group and discuss their reactions to them. This may not only help students to develop as readers, but also offers potential for developing social interaction, reflective thinking and communication skills.

Librarians actively promote reading for pleasure, but expanding students' reading choices is a significant challenge for school librarians

While in most schools, a proportion of students can display negative attitudes to reading (sometimes shared by families and local communities), reading is clearly an important activity for many young people. However, even among frequent and confident readers, students' reading choices can be very limited as most prefer to read books by the same authors or in the same series rather than experimenting with different types of fiction. Many schools are now making use of Accelerated Reader (AR)¹ and overall, this appears to have encouraged student reading, but there are reservations among librarians, especially about the relationship between AR and reading for pleasure.

Librarians encourage reading and library use through activities such as author visits, displays and competitions, but there also needs to be one-to-one support from school librarians and others knowledgeable about literature for young people. In addition, school libraries need to have stock which is appropriate for the students and will capture their interest. Interviewees reported that this can sometimes be difficult to source especially for groups such as students with special education needs and with English as an Additional Language. However, perhaps the most critical point is that encouraging reading for pleasure needs to be a whole school activity, not just the responsibility of the librarian.

Introducing online resources and author input could offer further support for school libraries

In general, interviewees were highly pleased with the range of books provided in the School Library Pack. Suggestions for ways to improve the selection of books in the School Library Pack usually related to the particular needs of students in their school. However, no strong themes emerged overall. Nevertheless, there was more of a consensus on the ideas to improve the accompanying support materials. The most common suggestion was for the provision of online resources for both librarians and students, for example, additional support materials, links to authors, and discussion

¹ Reading progress monitoring software (see <https://www.renaissance.com/products/accelerated-reader>)

forums. Librarians also suggested that support for author visits could be another way in which Book Trust might help to strengthen their work in promoting reading for pleasure in schools.

School librarians face challenges due to a lack of time, resources and support

This research also identified wider challenges facing school libraries in England. It highlighted the disparity in library provision in schools in terms of the size and composition of collections; the space allocated as a library (if a central library exists); staffing provision and the role of the librarian; and activities taking place in the library. While a few school libraries were well-resourced, many reported that declining budgets were a challenge, making the School Library Pack a highly important resource.

The majority of interviewees were solo librarians, although during busy periods, an assistant was employed in some schools, and in a very small number of cases, there was a library team. Responsibilities elsewhere in the school, and solo working, often meant librarians were not able to get involved in supporting reading as much as they might like to. Although in most schools, there were strong links between the library and the English department, links with other subject areas were often less well-developed. A lack of time and curriculum requirements were mentioned as barriers to further engagement between the library and teachers.

In many regions, there has been a reduction in the use of Schools Library Services (SLS) in recent years. In most cases, this was not felt to have had a significant impact on the stock available in secondary school libraries, but it has often resulted in fewer networking opportunities for school librarians and a reduction in inter-school activities. This presents a further challenge, especially to those working as solo librarians.

Recommendations for Book Trust

To develop the School Library Pack in the future, Book Trust should consider:

- retaining the focus on quality books to widen students' reading experiences, and titles librarians may not always be aware of or choose for the library themselves
- including multiple copies of other genres of books (e.g. reluctant readers and graphic novels) in addition to Future Classics
- offering schools a choice of resources from a shortlist to allow them to select the titles most relevant for their students
- including materials for older students
- offering online support materials and discussion forums to allow librarians and students to share their experiences of the School Library Pack beyond their school
- including advice on using specific School Library Pack titles with teachers (e.g. lesson plans/teaching activities)
- investigating ways to involve students in the selection process for the School Library Pack.

In addition, to provide further support for school librarians, Book Trust should consider:

- facilitating contact between schools and authors, for example, support for author visits or online contact with authors
- providing advice to support librarians in working with subject teachers, for example, recommended fiction for teachers of different subjects

- supporting networking opportunities for school librarians (which have reduced since the decline of many SLSs)
- helping school librarians to identify resources for students with specific needs (e.g. SEN, EAL)
- conducting further research into potential types of support Book Trust might offer for special schools
- providing materials for parents of secondary school students to help them to support their child's reading and ideas to support schools to increase parental engagement.

Recommendations for schools

The school librarians (or other staff member with responsibility for the library) should consider:

- sharing ideas for using the School Library Pack, and promoting reading for pleasure more generally, for example, at local networking meetings or online
- using the School Library Pack to support transition, for example, through running joint activities with primary feeder schools
- stimulating wider interest throughout the school through celebrating activities carried out with the School Library Pack (e.g. presentation assembly, award ceremony)
- encouraging students to use the multiple copies to read in friendship groups (especially if it is not possible to organise a formal reading group in the school)
- planning a celebration activity around the opening of the School Library Pack to generate interest
- sharing the School Library Pack books with teachers
- reflecting on the [case studies](#) for ideas and inspiration on alternative ways to make use of the School Library Pack.

1. Introduction

The importance of reading for pleasure is becoming increasingly widely recognised. As well as improving scores on reading assessments (Twist et al, 2007), reading for pleasure has been found to foster positive reading attitudes, pleasure in reading in later life and increased general knowledge (Clark and Rumbold, 2006). However, between 2000 and 2009, internationally, the percentage of children who reported reading for enjoyment daily dropped by five percentage points (OECD, 2010) and in an international comparison, children in England reported less frequent reading for pleasure outside of school than children in many other countries (Twist et al, 2007).

Research by the UK National Literacy Trust found a very strong relationship between reading attainment and school library use (Clark, 2010). It also reported that school library users were more likely to say that they enjoy reading and to rate themselves as good readers. The importance of relevant books in encouraging students to use the school library is clear; the most common reason young people gave for using the school library was because it has books that interest them (Clark, 2010).

In this context, Book Trust's School Library Pack has a potentially important role to play in supporting librarians and other school staff in encouraging student reading for pleasure. The School Library Pack is a pack of books and resources available free of charge to any school or education provider in England with Year 7 students. Two different packs are available to schools, depending on whether they are a mainstream school or a special school. The programme is funded by the Department for Education and is supported by children's book publishers. In 2014-15, 4,718 schools signed up and received the pack (4,006 mainstream schools and 712 special schools).

The 2014-15 School Library Pack for mainstream schools contained:

- Six copies of five future classics
- Six reluctant reader titles
- Four graphic novels
- Posters to promote the pack and the school library
- A guide to the pack
- A sheet encouraging the running of reading groups
- A two-sided sheet on each of the Future Classics providing ideas for discussion.

The special schools pack contained:

- Ten specially selected books which aim to address the different needs of the readers in the school. These include: a book with sounds; a book with a CD; a book with no words; a book with very few words; a poetry book; a book with a puppet; two reluctant reader titles; a book showing diversity; and a book which encourages identification of pictures.
- A booklet including an introduction to the School Library Pack that includes a guide to each title in the Pack.
- Posters to promote the programme within the school.

See [Appendix A](#) for lists of all the titles provided in the 2014-15 School Library Pack.

The annual surveys of the School Library Pack and the independent evaluation in 2013 indicate it has been extremely well-received each year, with the majority of respondents reporting that students would enjoy reading the books, and be encouraged to read more frequently, to try new authors, and to engage in more discussions about books.

2. Methodology

The aim of this evaluation was to inform School Library Pack programme development and provide case studies of good practice in the use of the School Library Pack via feedback from librarians, plus other school staff and students. This was achieved through:

- 21 exploratory interviews with librarians (or other staff responsible for administering the School Library Pack) from a range of schools which have used the School Library Pack
- 6 case studies involving staff interviews, student focus groups, observation of activities and other data as appropriate.

a. Exploratory interviews

Twenty-one schools were identified from the list of those willing to participate, supplied by Book Trust. These included a range of different types of school, including special schools (3) and mainstream schools (18) and within this selection, there was representation from schools with a wide range of percentages of students: eligible for free school meals (2.3%-43.4%); with English as an additional language (0%-68.6%); and making expected progress in English (39-97%), as well as schools with a range of Ofsted inspection outcomes (1-4). While it was not difficult to secure representation from a wide variety of mainstream schools, engaging special schools proved more challenging as most lack the level of library resources and staffing common in mainstream schools. Contextual information about the schools selected is provided in [Appendix B](#). Librarians (or other staff responsible for managing the School Library Pack) from each of the selected schools were contacted and asked to take part in an interview lasting approximately 45 minutes. Interviews focused on:

- The actual and potential use of the School Library Pack in schools;
- The impact it has had (or might have in the future) on the work of the librarian, student engagement levels and the wider school community;
- Suggestions for improvements to the books and support materials provided and Book Trust support for school libraries in general (including what a 'good service' might mean in relation to the School Library Pack);
- Basic information about the school library e.g. size of collection; other resources and services provided; staff and student perceptions of the library; stock selection procedures; and use of the Schools Library Service;
- Wider questions relating to the work of the school librarian, for example, what attainment data they have access to and how they track reading progress and promote reading for pleasure; and how they work with teachers and other school staff.

The majority of interviews were conducted by telephone, but in three case study schools, interviews were conducted face-to-face. Short written or verbal feedback on the School Library Pack was also obtained from a further five schools unable to take part in a full interview.

The interview guide is provided in [Appendix C](#).

b. Good practice case studies

The overall aim of the case studies was to illustrate the range of ways in which the School Library Pack can be used effectively to support student reading and engagement with the school library. We conducted good practice case studies in six mainstream schools. Five were full case studies and one was a mini-case study conducted during a more informal visit. The case study schools were selected from those librarians who were felt to have used the Pack particularly well or in innovative ways. These were identified from the interviews and via Book Trust suggestions based on previous contact with schools. Final decisions about case study schools were made by the evaluation team in conjunction with Book Trust.

The format of the case study was flexible to allow data to be collected in different ways depending on how the School Library Pack has been used in each school. A case study typically involved the following activities over the course of a visit to the school.

- **Interview with the librarian** (and other staff if appropriate) focusing on the use of the School Library Pack and its impact. For those librarians who had not taken part in the telephone interview stage, we also asked this set of questions during the visit and included their responses in our analysis.
- **Focus group(s) with students** (between 6 and 15 students aged between 11 and 16 in each school) to gather feedback about the books, promotional materials and related activities they have taken part in. The focus groups were also an opportunity to explore broader issues around reading habits and library use. Schools were asked to ensure that, as far as possible, the groups included students with varying attitudes towards reading and different skill levels.
- **Observation of activities or outputs** related to the School Library Pack, for example, observing an activity/lesson or viewing a display.
- **Access to any additional data** collected by the school on the use of the School Library Pack e.g. photographs of activities, student reviews.

The case study framework is available in [Appendix D](#) along with an overview of the data collected in each school.

All interviews were recorded and detailed notes were made based on recordings (including the transcription of pertinent quotes). For the focus groups, facilitator notes were analysed. Notes were coded thematically using Nvivo (qualitative data analysis software). The initial analysis framework was based on themes from the semi-structured interview guide, but with additional codes added for unanticipated themes that emerged. As the data from the case studies was more varied, these are also presented as short standalone case studies reflecting the different themes to emerge from each visit. These will also be used in future in guidance and promotional resources to help give other schools ideas and inspiration on how to make the most of the pack.

3. Findings

The School Library

In order to set the use of the School Library Pack within a wider context, interviewees were asked to provide information about their school library and the ways in which it was used.

Library resources

Among the schools taking part in the evaluation, the size of the library collection varied hugely; while one library had only about 200 books, another had over 20,000. Furthermore, in a few schools (mainly special schools or new builds), there was no central library. For example:

Every class has its own library...a book corner for them [the students] to look at... (Business Manager, School D)

Interviewees explained how the library stock and resources met the needs of students with different interests and with a range of abilities. For example, quick reads and higher interest-lower ability books were felt to be important and many libraries also included a section of more adult reading materials for KS4 upwards.

Several interviewees commented that, while fiction loans had remained high, issues of non-fiction tended to be lower than in the past as students were now more likely to use the internet as an information source. This was particularly the case in schools where students had access to tablets or laptops. In some libraries, this had resulted in a change in the balance of fiction and non-fiction stock:

Every faculty has laptops so a lot of the non-fiction research that was done in the library tends to be done by laptop. This has affected non-fiction usage, so when we refurbished library we reduced non-fiction stock...we made a conscious decision to keep the fiction base, but we did reduce the non-fiction. (Librarian, School M)

The introduction of Accelerated Reader (AR) was also noted as a recent development that had shifted the focus of library stock away from non-fiction books:

AR has taken over and there's not a lot of non-fiction on there. (Librarian, School A)

However, one interviewee had deliberately maintained a large non-fiction section so students could find everything they needed without having access to computers and others had retained a stock of reference books, although other types of non-fiction had been reduced.

For most interviewees, ebooks were seen as a resource for the future although they were not widely used at present. Some of the difficulties associated with the introduction of ebooks included budget, pricing models, copyright concerns, breakages and unequal or limited student access outside school:

There are all sorts of grey areas, so until that's a lot more clear, it's not an avenue that I'm happy to go down. I think there's a great deal that's positive in there, but there's far too much unknown. (Librarian School O)

In addition to books, most libraries also provided access to computers. Other types of resources included: a careers section; newspapers and magazines; departmental textbooks; DVDs; comics; games; laptops/tablets for loan; e-readers; video and digital cameras; stationery packs; audio books; story sacks; staff CPD books; revision guides; babysitting packs for students who look after their siblings or other children, and online databases.

Selecting stock

In selecting fiction stock, interviewees stressed the importance of being current and reacting quickly in response to trends and being able to “strike while the iron’s hot” (Librarian School J):

Whatever is on sale at Waterstones, we have to have it here and I think that’s what keeps the library vibrant. (Librarian, School M)

In all schools, students were encouraged to contribute to choosing library stock, usually via a suggestion box/book or informal suggestions:

I’ve never not bought something that the children have requested...That’s the big factor, the children’s lead in the choice. (Librarian, School H)

In some schools, students who suggested a book for the library were allowed to borrow it first when it arrived. A few schools also made use of student librarians in stock selection. In one case, a small amount of capitation was set aside for World Book Day when student librarians met with a book rep and decided which books they would like to buy, based on recommendations from their form or year group. In another school, the librarian had worked with the English department on a World Book Day activity in which students selected the books they would buy for the library if they were the school librarian. The most popular titles across all groups were purchased for the library stock.

Other methods used to help select library stock included:

- Monitoring issues to identify popular authors, genres, series etc
- Browsing in bookshops
- Browsing online (e.g. Amazon)
- Book award short lists
- Book supplier recommendations
- Reading reviews
- Library staff recommendations
- Identifying books with AR quizzes
- Publisher rep visits
- Via Twitter and other social media.

There were also examples of more arbitrary methods of selecting stock. In one school, the library depended primarily on donations:

It’s a new school; we’ve only been open for a year, so we’re slowly building up the library...mostly depend on donations and second hand books...what we term an ‘eco-library’. (Librarian, School B)

Another interviewee ordered boxes of books on approval which they could choose to keep or return after perusing them as a way to identify popular books she might otherwise be unaware of:

...there's a huge range in there...I can't know everything so to fill up the shelves in a random way is just as useful to put some newer stuff on the shelf and I can see what's issuing out of that and what isn't and know what's worth buying. (Librarian, School O)

Most librarians also used recommendations from teaching staff to help select stock, especially curriculum-related books. In most cases, this was through ad hoc recommendations, but in one school, the librarian asked teachers from one subject department each year to inspect the library stock for their subject and identify gaps and areas in need of updating.

Use of Schools Library Services (SLS)

Four interviewees said they made use of the SLS in their area and found its support valuable:

...that's a great help...it gives me an idea of what new books are out that I think would be good for our library. (Librarian, School Q)

However, six said there was no SLS serving their area at present. However, in one locality, some of the functions of the SLS had been taken on by a school library network group that met every half term and organised a training programme for school librarians in the region. Another interviewee said they worked closely with the local public library to help to compensate for the lack of a SLS.

Seven interviewees said there was a SLS locally, but they did not feel the need to use it either because the stock available within the school library was sufficient to meet students' needs or they did not feel the SLS offered value for money for their school:

There is a SLS, but it only covers first and middle schools. High schools have to pay and the library has such a good selection of books anyway there's no need to. (Librarian, School I)

We don't particularly have a need to because we have quite a decent sized library already. (Librarian, School J)

There isn't a great provision for high school and what provision there is, they want quite a lot of money for it. (Librarian, School O)

A few of those who did not subscribe reflected on the disadvantages of this decision; these principally related to the reduction in networking opportunities and the chance to take part in book award programmes.

One interviewee was considering rejoining the SLS to help to fulfil ad hoc requests from teachers and the remainder of interviewees were unsure whether there was a SLS locally or whether their school subscribed.

The following quotes are some examples from librarians and students expanding on these themes.



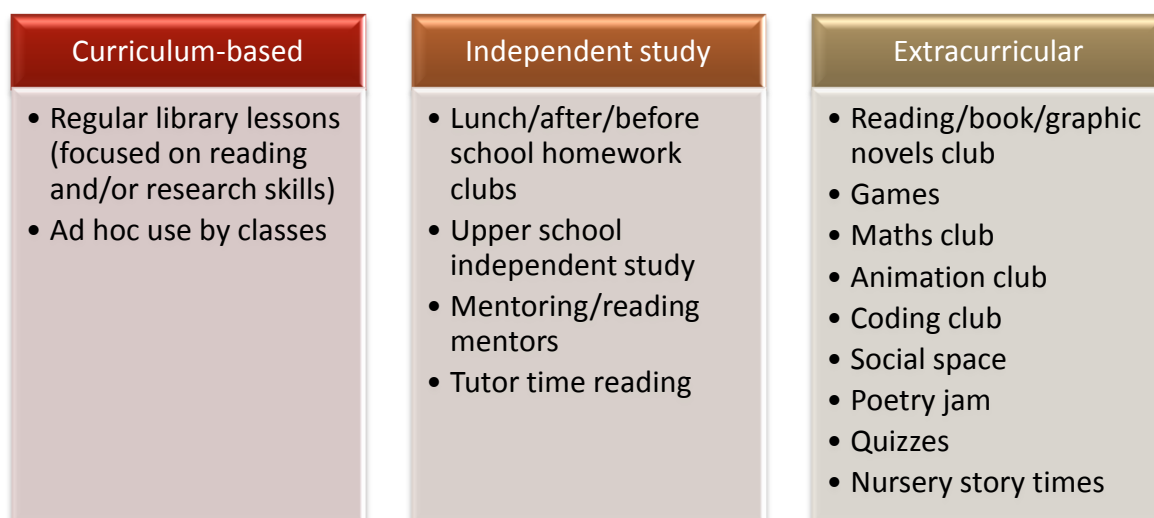
Library usage

Many interviewees felt that library use was fairly evenly spread throughout the school:

With it being so widely used, it's everyone. (Librarian, School B)

Some estimated the percentage of students who used the library. This was typically high: between 70% and 100%. However, in several schools, interviewees thought KS3 students tended to make more use of the library than older students. In some cases, interviewees thought this was partly because these students had to use the library as part of AR programmes. In other schools, students came to the library for regular library lessons and this had implications for the year groups most likely to use the library; again this was most common in KS3. Most interviewees felt there was little difference in library use between boys and girls. However, one commented that more vulnerable students tended to be regular library users and another felt that the library was a place where, "they feel happy and comfortable...they feel they can come in" (Librarian, School A).

A wide range of activities were reported to take place in school libraries, as indicated in the diagram below.



Libraries were, therefore, used for a wide range of activities, both curricular and extracurricular. In some schools, however, opportunities for extracurricular activities were limited by students not being able, or willing, to stay beyond the school day.

The role of the librarian

Key aspects of the librarian's role identified by interviewees included:

- General upkeep of the library and book issuing
- Sourcing new resources
- Supporting classes using the library (e.g. project-based learning)
- Leading research skills lessons with students
- Leading library lessons focussed on reading
- Supporting students using library before and after school and at lunchtime
- Advising students on book choice
- Supporting AR-related activities
- Supporting other reading interventions e.g. reading mentors, Drop Everything and Read (DEAR)²
- Running book award activities /reading groups
- Running competitions
- Providing topic boxes for teachers.

All the above were each mentioned by several interviewees. In addition, there were other activities which were less common but formed part of the librarian's role in particular schools, for example, attending parents' evenings; monitoring and loaning departmental text books; maintaining a staff

² Time set aside on a regular basis for the whole school (staff and students) to read.

library; leading the library team; contributing to policy and curriculum development; and leading INSET.

Offering such a wide range of services could obviously be challenging, especially as the majority of interviewees were solo librarians, although during busy periods (e.g. over break and lunchtime), an assistant librarian was employed in some schools. In a very small number of cases, there was a library team who each had distinct roles, for example, reading for pleasure, study skills and literacy. It was not within the remit of this research to explore the background and experience of school librarians, but it was clear that this varied widely. Interestingly, several interviewees commented that they had entered schools fairly recently having previously worked as public librarians. Whilst they had the challenge of adapting to working in schools, this could clearly have advantages such as experience of book and reading promotion and having local contacts to draw on.

In most cases, interviews were conducted with the school librarian, but in some schools, other staff were responsible for the administration of the School Library Pack, most commonly teachers or teaching assistants (See [Appendix B](#) for details). As the library was only one of a number of responsibilities they held, the amount of time these members of staff were able to devote to library activities varied. The following are examples of how some explained their role in relation to the library:

I'm an English teacher. I've taken it on myself as part of my performance management to increase reading for pleasure across the school. (Teacher, School C)

I'm a teaching assistant. The library is on top of those duties...I'm in charge; I have the budget for literacy resources and I'm responsible for using the SLS... and things like the School Library Pack. I look for things like that and order things as and when I can. (Teaching Assistant, School L)

Working with teachers

The extent of links between the library and teaching staff varied from school to school. In many, as might be expected, there were strong connections between the library and the English department, but often less so with other parts of the school. In schools where students had regular timetabled library lessons, this usually involved working with English teachers. However this was not universally the case; in one school, the librarian worked most closely with the geography department and it was in these lessons that library skills were taught in Year 7 through a research project that resulted in the students creating a mind map or PowerPoint presentation. Having strong links with a single department could have some disadvantages, for example, in one school it was acknowledged that other classes had little opportunity to use the library because it was timetabled almost continually for English lessons. Furthermore, as library lessons usually focussed on KS3, some interviewees felt that KS4 classes could miss out.

In a number of schools, although teaching staff were supportive, librarians acknowledged that they could not simply expect teachers to come to the library; it required time and effort to develop links: "you have to go out to them" (Librarian, School A). Other barriers to closer involvement with teachers included timetabling and curriculum requirements which could leave little room for library activities:

[The English Department are] very supportive of what I do. The problem we've got is curriculum time and the way the school is structured; it's not lack of will, it's lack of opportunity. (Librarian, School R)

As special schools tend to be smaller, staff here often worked together particularly closely:

Because we are a special school we all tend to work together... (Teaching Assistant, School L).

As well as supporting teachers through involvement in project-based learning, librarians in some schools supplied reading lists related to curriculum topics. Several interviewees mentioned the use of fiction by other departments, for example, using *Private Peaceful* to teach history and *The Fault in our Stars* to examine social issues in RE. One interviewee described how the librarian's expertise in young adult fiction could be of real value to teachers:

They do not have time to read the literature to survey resources to identify things that are suitable for different ages in an in-depth way. I can fulfil that role for them with ease.
(Librarian, School E)

Another interviewee reflected on how the introduction of technology had both positive and negative effects on links with teachers: while it might mean less contact with some departments as they used the internet rather than non-fiction stock with classes, the fact that the library held the iPads for the school meant that other departments became more interested in working with the librarian.

Student reading habits

During the focus groups, students often discussed why they enjoyed reading:

*I've had lots of stress at home and I've always found that books are a way to relieve that...I love the feeling it gives you; I think it's brilliant
Yeah, step out of your own shoes and step into somebody else's* (Students, School U)

However, some students felt they had less time to read than they had done when they were younger because of the pressures of school work, other hobbies or because they had more freedom to spend time with their friends now they were older.

Words students commonly used to describe reading included useful, fun, escape, imaginative and entertaining. However, there was a difference between reading for pleasure and reading as a set task:

...when we have to do comprehension, I find it ruins the book...You have to read it at a much slower pace and it just gets very annoying. (Student, School R)

According to students who took part in focus groups, science fiction, fantasy, horror, adventure and mystery were popular genres. Historical fiction was also mentioned by some older girls and humorous books were enjoyed by younger students, especially boys. Graphic novels and manga were also mentioned as types of books students enjoyed reading. Authors mentioned included JK Rowling, Rick Riordan, Lemony Snicket, Michael Morpurgo, James Patterson and Chris Ryan. Several students said they disliked horror fiction and books labelled as 'teen fiction' were also regarded unfavourably.

Students said they usually chose books by looking at the cover and the blurb. The power of an attractive cover appeared to be important across ages and abilities:

It's probably what's on the cover that entices them most, we have children with quite limited reading skills, so it's mainly the cover that attracts them. (Teaching Assistant, School L)

For me, it's the blurb and the cover combined because if the blurb's good and the cover art's good I'll read it. (Student, School R)

Among some students, series' were popular:

If I've got a series, I'll finish that series...unless I get bored of it which has happened occasionally. (Student, School R)

However, word of mouth could also be important as librarians or teachers could recommend books and students said they sometimes discussed books with friends and family:

I have an older sister and she reads quite a lot so I ask her what books I should read (Student, School E)

[I talk about books] with people I know who read quite a lot. You say to them, "Have you read this?" and ask for their opinion on it as well. (Student, School R).

Students said they got most of their books from the school library, but they might also occasionally use the public library, buy books or receive them as presents.

A number of librarians and teachers commented on the differences in reading patterns between male and female students, identifying crime as 'boy' books and love stories and illness narratives as 'girl' stories for example. However, reflecting on the perceived differences between girls' and boys' reading habits, one librarian felt that the differences were not as great as was often claimed:

I think boys read...everyone talks about boys not reading...boys do read. A lot of boys will read an awful lot...My fiction issues are higher in a boys' school than they were in a girls' school...I've definitely got far more enthusiastic readers that are boys than I had that were girls, but I've got far more reading refusers in boys than girls as well...more extremes really ...they either read one book a fortnight at least or they don't read at all... (Librarian, School R)

Although this did not feature as a strong theme, a few librarians said they felt that student reading habits were changing as a result of new media: "some of them really like reading off their phones" (Librarian, School F).

Challenges of encouraging reading for pleasure

Librarians reported a number of challenges to encouraging greater library use and reading for pleasure among students. Negative attitudes towards reading among some students were frequently mentioned as a barrier:

The biggest problem we have is engaging the reluctant readers. We've got pupils who think reading is really geeky and so they won't do it. (Teacher, School C)

In some schools, parental and community attitudes towards reading were a further challenge:

If they've got parents who don't read at home or don't buy them books or have never taken them to the library or read to them, that's quite a barrier and it means that the school has to work harder to get the students to read, especially when they get older...because they don't see it as a cool thing to do...especially boys. Some parents can have a negative attitude to reading as well, that it's a bit of a girly thing to do or a nerdy thing to do... (HLTA, School N)

AR was reported to have had a noticeable impact on student reading habits in schools where it had been introduced. In general, it encouraged students to read more frequently. However, this was not an unequivocal benefit as librarians described how it could result in a complex relationship between reading for reward and reading for pleasure:

...they're using the pleasure of books to gain rewards in school...they don't come in to pick a book for pleasure generally speaking; it's all geared towards the Accelerated Reader, but with that...when they've got the book level from their assessment, that helps them focus on what they should be reading...so there is the pleasure there, but it's not totally geared for pleasure... (Librarian, School A)

...students are all reading now, but they have got to read and if you have got to read then I don't think that they always spend as long selecting something that they really want to read...so can be a chore. Finding the right balance is one of the biggest challenges... (Librarian, School J)

Among students who did read regularly, one of the greatest challenges was to encourage them to widen and progress their reading choices and try unfamiliar authors and genres rather than simply re-reading books or sticking to authors, genres or series they were familiar with. This was partly due to students' attitudes, but also sometimes a lack of suitable books:

...students set in ways – read same authors...difficult to get any except most able readers to try new types of books (Librarian, written feedback)

...although I would like [them to] diversify...that's difficult. (Librarian, School J)

The biggest challenge for me is when they start getting bored of the teen books, getting them to move on. Boys read teen fiction books and don't move on so 16 or 17 year olds are still reading books they read when they were 12...If they're not wanting the fantasy/science fiction, there is so little out there to get their attention as an adult book rather than a teen book. (Librarian, School R)

...it's quite hard sometimes to wean them off [Wimpy Kid] to actually move onto reading a book that's not got lots of pictures in it...so pushing students on I think [is a challenge]. (Librarian, School M).

Finding resources to meet the needs of all students was a common challenge. For example, in a school with a large number of EAL students, the librarian sometimes struggled to find ways to support this group and in special schools, finding appropriate resources for students with particular needs was a key challenge.

Another type of challenge could be the location, or physical structure, of the library. Several interviewees described libraries that were overcrowded or poorly-located:

...we are using the library and the books as much as we can but until we move into the school library I'm not sure there's anything that can be done. (Teaching Assistant, School L)

The library is very full all the time and space is an issue. (Librarian, School R)

...if it was relocated close to dining hall where students could access it [more] easily. (Librarian, School A)

Other challenges included behaviour management, isolation, limited contact time with students and lack of time. Even in libraries with more than one member of staff, finding time to do everything was a challenge.

Methods of promoting reading

As several interviewees pointed out, promoting reading and library use required ongoing efforts and constant change was crucial to maintain students' interest:

Just keeping a buzz going really, slowly drip-feed them into the library. (Librarian, School F)

It's a case of constant change...constant stimulation. You need to keep coming from all sides. (School R)

Many interviewees used posters around the school, as well as in the library, to promote reading as well as notes in registers announcing new titles; information in student planners; use of the school website or intranet; social media; displays and activities; inclusion in newsletters; and competitions.

The library itself could be an important factor in promoting good use of the space and reading for pleasure. An interviewee spoke about the 'wow factor' needed to entice students into the library and the need to ensure that there were different types of space available: places to sit and read quietly and places to discuss books with friends.

One-to-one support was also critical; as the librarian got to know students in the school, they were able to identify and recommend books which might match their interests. However, this required staff to have in-depth knowledge of a wide range of books, as well as enthusiasm for reading:

It's just finding the right book for them. Once you've got something they're actually interested in you're okay. (Librarian, School F)

You need to have enthusiastic staff; that is the absolute key to it. I think the staff have got to read...I think you've got to have a really good book knowledge [to advise students]. And you've got to know what's popular with the students...knowing the books; knowing what's out there; knowing your students, but I think enthusiasm; if the staff are keen and enthusiastic, that comes over to the students. (Librarian, School M)

Having the right stock available was also important of course if librarians were to promote books to match the interests of all students:

I think it's having a wide selection, I think ultimately that's what it comes down to. Unless you've got a significant, strong collection...I think it's very difficult to promote reading for pleasure because you need to have the books which students want to read. (Librarian, School K)

Author visits were frequently mentioned as an effective way to stimulate greater interest in reading among students:

From my experience working in schools, what will get boys reading is authors...When we've had authors coming in promoting books...the amount of books we will sell and then all their books will go out, so you know the impact that actually hearing the authors is having. (Librarian, School R)

One thing that really worked was author visits because it created excitement and it gets the students to see that an author is a normal person and it's something that they can aspire to. (HLTA, School N).

Competitions and reading challenges were also popular ways to promote reading. One school organised a Reading Safari for KS3 students. Students filled in cards about the books they had read and when they had reached a certain number they would receive a toy animal as a reward. Other schools organised similar schemes with certificates and other rewards for the number of books read. One school had a 'library trophy', awarded termly to the person who has used the library best and made a consistent effort with reading.

As interviewees pointed out, however, promoting reading for pleasure was not just the librarian's responsibility, it required support from everyone at the school:

So we do anything and everything to raise the prestige of reading in the school... A whole-school assembly, you have the whole school in front of you, over 1000 people, so that's very important. It's also good to get different voices and teachers talking about the importance of reading, especially the head teacher – that's critical. (Librarian, School E)

A number of schools had adopted DEAR, or similar whole school schemes, and this was mentioned as a positive step in encouraging students to read a book they had chosen themselves and stimulating increased use of the library among all students, not just those who identified as readers. In a few schools, the librarian had provided DEAR boxes in classrooms for Years 7 to 10. These had a selection of books, including a lot of non-fiction and "things to dip into...really popular with the ones who aren't keen on reading" (Librarian, School F). In one school, students all read the same book, but again the emphasis was on reading for pleasure:

...it's almost something that comes naturally; instead of form time, they have their book club every week and I've never heard a single complaint about that. And because they're all sharing the same book, it creates discussion... (HLTA, School N)

Interviewees referred to the need to promote reading not only to students, but also to their parents to ensure they encouraged reading at home too. As part of this, one school was hoping to start opening the library after school so parents could share books with their child in the library. Community reading mentors could act as role models too, but as an interviewee pointed out, it

could be more difficult to persuade members of the community to take on this role in a secondary school than at primary level.

An important point made in one interview was the need to be careful that promotional activities did not become so intense that they ran the risk of actually deterring students from reading:

I'm careful with how I try and plug books at students...I became a reluctant reader myself from people ploughing too hard so I do try and encourage reading of any form; I'm happy for them to have a magazine... just picking up something and reading text, that's crucial, so I don't ever want to push them too hard. (Librarian, School O).

Monitoring reading progress

Interviewees made use of a wide variety of data including reading age tests, SATs results, reading schemes and general attainment data to monitor student progress. However, in many schools AR data was now the main source used to track reading progress and identify students who required additional support. Some schools, in particular special schools, used other schemes suited to their students such as Read Write Inc..

The degree of involvement library staff had in monitoring students' reading progress varied from school to school. In some, it was the responsibility of the English or Learning Support department while the library focussed on reading for pleasure and reader development, but in other schools, library staff had a more active role in monitoring progression:

My colleague [another librarian] has a weekly meeting with the literacy co-ordinator to discuss what they can do to impact on improving progression in reading. (Librarian, School K)

...from the testing we do when they first arrive so we can figure out problems like dyslexia and so on. We have a meeting with them, ask them about their reading habits and what they like to read and then we develop personal learning targets, so they can meet a target and get a reward very quickly. (Librarian, School E)

Interviewees also referred to the use of library management system data, for example, looking at the number of items borrowed and which students were using the library regularly. In one school, the librarian used this data to create a 'wall of fame' of those students who had borrowed the greatest numbers of books. In another school, students kept their own reading log recording the books they had read:

Their logs are available to them in the library and when they come to the library they can look at their log, check out a book and then add it. (Librarian, School E)

In some schools, as well as measuring reading ability, there was also an attempt to monitor students' attitudes towards reading. In one case, students were asked to complete a questionnaire which included questions about the number of books they read; how confident they felt about reading; how they compared themselves to their peers and so forth. This was repeated at the beginning and the end of the year.

School Library Pack

Contact with Book Trust

The majority of interviewees had received the School Library Pack for several years. Most said they had found out about it through email and felt this was the most effective form of communication. Two librarians said the information had not come directly to them, but had been forwarded from the English teacher or Deputy Head teacher. A librarian who was new to the role said they had found out about the School Library Pack through internet searching.

Reactions to the School Library Pack

General reactions to the School Library Pack were highly positive:

I think it is such a positive service and really, really good...what they do is fantastic.
(Librarian, School O).

Our library is purely reading for pleasure, so the material that is sent is perfect for our environment and works extremely well. (Librarian, Written feedback)

I thought it was impressive; I thought it was really good. (Librarian, School G).

A common theme was praise for the variety of books provided in the School Library Pack:

I like that there was a real variety... (Teacher, School C)

I think it's a really good selection because there's something for everyone there... (HLTA, School N)

...because everybody has such different likes and dislikes when it comes to reading...as long as it's a really good, diverse selection of material, that's the most important thing. (Librarian, School G)

Having books with attractive covers and by authors students would be familiar with was seen as crucial. A further important consideration for some schools was that most titles had an associated AR quiz. In many libraries, budgets were extremely stretched, so the School Library Pack was a welcome addition, especially as the titles may be different to those librarians would have purchased themselves:

Because the budget is tight, I tend to choose popular fiction rather than more experimental contemporary fiction...something different, something fresh and interesting; that was a big bonus for me. (Librarian, School J)

It's been an injection of quality books at a time when budgets are stretched, strained and stressed; it's been a capital investment from an outside agency. It's been very useful.
(Librarian, School E)

Interviewees from both mainstream and special schools praised the quality of the selection provided and they were reassured by the fact that the books had been carefully selected and felt this would be seen as a positive feature by students and parents too:

I think the nice thing about Book Pack is that it's selected for you and it's not just selected at random...You know they're well written...It helps when promoting books to students to say it's not just your suggestion, but someone else has chosen these as good books. (Librarian, School B)

...if we know it has been selected responsibly then we know that we can trust it...we are very, very conscious of what we are putting out in the library. (Librarian, School M)

The fact that all, or the majority, of the books provided in this year's School Library Pack were new to most libraries was viewed positively and several librarians remarked on this as an improvement from previous years. As well as giving students an opportunity to try new books, the School Library Pack also helped to make librarians aware of some titles which were unfamiliar to them:

They're all new to our library this year, and to me as well. (Teaching Assistant, School L)

...odd ones you might have heard of, but a lot you've not heard of, so it's quite nice to have something thrown at you as a challenge from somewhere else. (Librarian, School F)

The fact that they were new books was really important to us...a lot of them weren't resources that we already had. (Librarian, School G).

All interviewees said they felt the School Library Pack was a 'good service'. When asked to explain what made it a good service, common themes included: receiving high quality books for free; efficient organisation; new, carefully selected titles; multiple copies; and the encouragement offered to try new approaches and activities:

It's given us the opportunity to have brand new books...books are so expensive and I only have a certain amount of money to spend each year...(Librarian, School Q)

...it does give more encouragement...not every librarian is [keen to pick new things]...so giving them some new ideas and encouragement and it does come across really friendly, the information that comes with it; it's positive, upbeat...peppy and encouraging and for people who might be going, 'I don't know what to do next or what I should buy next', it can be a really good starting point. (Librarian, School O)

That it's a quality book list, someone has been really thoughtful in putting it together and then getting it out to us. (Librarian, School E)

Not having to jump through hoops in order to access materials...that's what's important to me because I don't have the time to fill in multiple forms. (Librarian, School K)

A good number of those books would probably have passed us by and if we'd have bought them, it would have only been one copy, so I don't think it would have had the impact. (Librarian, School J).

Responses to the Future Classics titles

The age group the Future Classics titles were felt to suit varied from school to school depending on the ability and reading habits of the students. In many schools, they had been popular among Year 7, but some librarians believed some of the titles were quite challenging for younger students and

were better suited to older year groups, for example, in one school, *Binny for Short* had been popular with Year 8 girls and *The Terrible Thing that Happened to Barnaby Brocket* had been read mainly by Year 9 students. On the other hand, other librarians felt the latter book would be more likely to appeal to younger students because of the cover and title. The inclusion of a new title by Berlie Doherty was viewed particularly positively by a librarian who reflected that this author had “fallen off the radar in recent years” (Librarian, School R), but if students enjoyed *The Company of Ghosts*, they may be encouraged to read her earlier books which were already in the library.

Among students who had read the books, there were different opinions about which was their favourite:

I really liked the book ‘Runners’...it’s really mysterious; it’s something to do with global warming and everyone has just gone...it doesn’t tell you that much about what happened before, but I really liked that. (Student, School S)

I think the best one was ‘The Company of Ghosts’ or ‘Into that Forest’. (Student, School S)

I liked ‘Into that Forest’. The language is quite strange, but it’s such a good story. It’s really interesting. (Student, School U)

Students who had not read the books prior to the focus groups responded to the titles based on the covers, blurbs and similarity to other books they had enjoyed:

‘Into That Forest’ I’d like to have a read of because from the blurb, it seems to be very interesting, a survival story. (Student, School R)

I want to read this because it reminds me of ‘Dogs of Winter’. (Student, School R)

Receiving sets of books for the library was novel for some schools and allowed the books to be used in more innovative ways:

I liked that there were several copies of the books because if we’re going to promote them...if we get five or six people who want to read the same book, it’s perfect; they can all read the same text. (Librarian, School G)

Several librarians indicated that the books chosen as Future Classics were well-suited to the types of discussion activities that took place in reading groups.

Responses to the graphic novels

Almost all interviewees reported that graphic novels were a popular format among students and, as they were often expensive to purchase, their inclusion in the School Library Pack was particularly welcome:

Graphic novels are popular in this school...they’re not cheap, so it’s good to have these, especially as there are different ones, not just DC and Marvel (Librarian, School J)

In a small number of schools, interviewees said that while graphic novels were popular among students, the same was not always true among staff. Some interviewees viewed graphic novels as being best suited to students who were less able readers:

I like them to read the graphic [novels], but obviously as a platform to reading... they probably don't even realise they're reading the whole book. (Librarian, School B)

However, as an interviewee from a special school pointed out, when speaking more generally about student reading habits, graphic novels could, in fact, be highly complex texts which some students might struggle with:

...because we're a severe learning difficulties learning school, graphic novels aren't good for us because it's quite confusing for our students, just in terms of finding the direction of the text, where to go next. (Teaching Assistant, School L)

In fact, in one school, the librarian had chosen to shelve *Line of Fire* in the sixth form section as they felt it was most likely to appeal to this age group.

As with the Future Classics, the year groups most interested in the graphic novels varied from school to school. Some interviewees felt they were particularly appealing to boys and an interviewee from a girls' school felt there was limited interest in graphic novels; on the other hand, *Beautiful Creatures* was reported to be popular among girls in several schools. The boundary between graphic novels and picture books was sometimes a difficulty for librarians in deciding how to use the School Library Pack materials. For example, an interviewee said they had found it difficult to decide on the best way to make use of *Azzi in Between*:

I don't know where to put it in my library. Maybe in my graphic novels? But it is more of a picture book, so I've offered it to SEN who deal with EAL students...perhaps it's better suited to them and will get more use... (Librarian, School O)

Responses to the reluctant readers

The inclusion of books for reluctant readers was viewed positively by interviewees:

I'm always looking out for books for reluctant readers. We have huge stock and always looking for more. (Librarian, School M)

However, interviewees from schools where most of the students were strong readers felt that these titles were less relevant for their schools and that students may be reluctant to be seen reading some of the titles:

...the big cartoony ones...they don't like to be seen to be taking them because they look as they're too easy although they're quite hard, the words inside. (Librarian, School T)

This was a view confirmed by some of the more able students in the focus groups:

Quick reads are for people who find it [reading] difficult... (Student, School S)

Several librarians also commented that they preferred to refer to these type of books as 'quick reads' as 'reluctant reader' was likely to be interpreted negatively by students.

Interviewees mentioned *War Dog* as one of the most popular books among the reluctant reader titles due to its theme and being written by an already popular author. A controversial title in this year's pack was *PIG and the Talking Poo* which prompted mixed reactions:

...things like that are brilliant. (HLTA, School N)

...as a librarian I want them to challenge themselves and push themselves, so it's a little bit disheartening when you get ones like 'The Talking Poo'. (Librarian, School B).

In one school, the librarian was planning to use this title as a teaching resource as she felt reading an extract from this would help to persuade reluctant students that books were not boring.

Using the School Library Pack

In many libraries, the School Library Pack books had simply been added to stock (and the AR database where relevant) as normal acquisitions, although this was often accompanied with special publicity such as displays, notices or the accompanying posters. Some interviewees had made one or more of the School Library Pack books a focus as part of ongoing promotional activities such as 'Book of the Month' or thematic displays (e.g. First World War or Hallowe'en).

Some librarians had chosen to add the titles to the general stock because they felt it was important to make the books available to students rather than holding them back for special events:

The majority have gone straight onto the shelf...so the main thing is getting out to issue, getting to as many people as possible. (Librarian, School O)

Whenever I get new books I would always generally add them to stock. I don't like to have any books around which aren't available to students, so I don't like to hold them back with a particular use in mind. (Librarian, School K)

In schools which did not have a library (usually special schools), the books had been distributed to class teachers most likely to make use of them:

The books that were aimed at our younger readers, I just passed them to the teachers...the ones that were younger I gave to him and the ones that were older I gave to the teacher I thought were suitable. The other ones have stayed in my class and I've added them to my shelf. (Teaching Assistant, School L)

However, in a number of schools, the School Library Pack had been used as part of wider activities to help encourage interest in reading. In several schools, the books and reading guides had been used by reading groups. In most schools, these groups were already in existence, but one librarian had used the books to trial a reading group for young students as the existing reading group was only for sixth formers and staff. In another school, the books were used for the '6Up' book club for Year 7 and high ability Year 6 students from local middle schools who visited the school twice a year. Another librarian had also involved local primary schools, sharing the books with librarians in these schools as part of a local book award. Elsewhere, the titles had been used as part of 'book club' time when small groups of students got together with a member of staff to read a book aloud together. In yet another school, a trolley for group reads had been introduced. Students were encouraged to borrow the same book as their friends, enabling them to talk about the book and share their

experiences less formally than in a book group organised by a member of staff. Another librarian had used the books as part of a 'Book Doctors Club' and promoted them via a blog which included student reviews and YouTube book trailers. Students were also encouraged to create their own book trailers using iMovie. In some cases, the School Library Pack had been used within lessons. For example, in one school the books had been used in Year 8 English lessons. Students had read the books and completed activities based on the reading guide materials. They then voted for their favourite on a score sheet on the wall.

For further in-depth examples of creative uses of the School Library Pack, please see case studies in [section 5](#).

Potential future uses of the School Library Pack

The timing of this evaluation, a relatively short while after schools had received the School Library Pack, meant that some interviewees had plans to use the Pack, but had not been able to implement them at that point. Several intended to set up reading groups, or thought the books might be used by existing reading groups in the future. One interviewee thought there was potential to run a book award activity: students would read the books, write reviews and vote for their favourite. In another school, the interviewee described plans to introduce a choice of readers for students in English as an alternative to the whole class readers that were used at present. The School Library Pack titles could be used as options for this initiative. Similarly, another interviewee also thought the books could be used as 'free readers' by Year 6 students who had completed the reading scheme books and had a free choice of books to take home to read. Interviewees also thought the books could be used by teaching assistants or by Year 11 'buddies' who work with younger students. Book in a Bag was another idea: the librarian would put the books into paper bags so students couldn't see the cover and chose a book randomly.

Support materials

Most interviewees had made use of the posters provided in the School Library Pack, either in the library, or around the school, to encourage students to visit the library. These were often used as part of a display of the School Library Pack books. A lack of display space or strict rules about display materials limited the use of the posters in some schools. In a few cases, the librarian had passed the posters to the English department.

The reading group and book discussion guides were well-received among those interviewees who had read them:

I thought it was fantastic, tells you everything you'd want to know about the book.
(Librarian, School B)

Interviewees described these materials as "a great springboard" (Librarian, School O) to start discussions and to design activities to run with students. In one school, the librarian planned to use sections from the guides in review card placards to display in front of the books. In another, students had been encouraged to make use of the reading guides themselves to help with book selection:

All the reading guides are out on the trolley with the group collections. We show students the book guides and quite often they read them if they come in in an English lesson before they take the book...they browse through the book guide and it helps them to choose I think...I

think sometimes choosing a book can be very intimidating for students; they come in and they're faced with 20,000 books and I think that anything that helps them to make a choice is useful...I do think the book guides help. (Librarian, School M)

In yet another school, students used the reading guides to lead their own book group discussions:

They've got one of them [the students] leading the discussion and the children love that sheet because they use it to guide them, they've got the topics to discuss and things to prompt them that they want to talk about. (Teacher, School C)

However, one interviewee felt that the guides gave away too much about the plot lines of the book and another said they would like more ideas for questions and activities to use at various points in the book, rather than when students had finished the book.

When asked about support, a small number of interviewees mentioned the regional information days they had attended where they had enjoyed the opportunity to meet and talk with their counterparts from other schools, as well as sharing ideas for ways to use the School Library Pack.

Impact of the School Library Pack on the work of librarians

The provision of free books to add the library stock was welcomed by all interviewees. Inevitably this had a more noticeable impact in some schools than others depending on the size of the library, but for the majority, it was important as budgets were tight:

We're cash-strapped so being able to add to the stock, to put books on the shelves for the students at the right level and I did feel they gave us that. (Librarian, School A)

It's had a massive impact because the school didn't have any books and with there being only 95 students there's not a lot of money to spend on things like that, so just to have the copies in the School Library Pack, it's been amazing. (HLTA, School N)

Not a massive amount [of impact], but that's partly because we're not dependent on getting hold of free or cheap books really. I imagine it would have more of an impact on somebody if you've got a particularly tight budget and you couldn't access multiple copies of books, but we're not really in that position... (Librarian, School K)

One of the most important benefits of the School Library Pack for a number of librarians was finding out about new titles they would not otherwise have been aware of:

There were some texts [in the School Library Pack] which I didn't know of and I wouldn't have bought otherwise, simply by not knowing about them, so that is quite good. (Librarian, School K).

The reading group guides were mentioned by several interviewees as an important part of the School Library Pack which helped staff to make the most of the books and to try new approaches:

It gave me a lot of food for thought...thinking about different ideas that we can do...and it made me think about...getting a larger selection of books as a set of books as well. I've really been pleased with how that's worked. (Librarian, School J)

These reading packs have been great; they've kick-started me into doing work with the groups...different from just telling them how the fiction books are and this author and that author. (School T)

In addition, an interviewee commented that the guides could also spark ideas for similar activities with other books.

The School Library Pack could also have an impact at a strategic level. At one school with a poorly developed school library, the interviewee had used School Library Pack materials in discussions with senior managers about the future development of the library:

It's been useful for me to go to our senior leadership team and say, "These are the kinds of things I would like to use more money for and look at the results, these are the things we need to invest in"... so it's been a little bit of a life saver for me when I go into meetings and am able to set out what we want the money for, what kind of books we should be buying in. (Teacher, School C).

In another, the interviewee felt that that School Library Pack had helped to raise their profile with teachers by demonstrating how the library could support teaching:

[The books] raise my profile with the teachers because instead of saying, "What do you feel like doing?"...I can give them something that's going to be good and it's pushing the kids on a bit further. (Librarian, School T)

Impact of the School Library Pack on students

In schools with very limited resources, the School Library Pack could have a noticeable impact by providing access to new titles which would not otherwise be available to students:

...a lot of the books we have in the library are the ones we've had for donkey's years. Their reaction to newer books is much more positive. A lot of our older books are very dull. (Teaching assistant, School L)

In libraries with larger collections, however, librarians felt that, while the books were welcome, it would be disingenuous to claim they had a significant impact:

...they have gone into a collection of about 20,000 books, so probably not an enormous impact just from those books because they are part of such a large collection. (Librarian, School K)

Students appreciate them, but they're not likely to make a special effort to come to library because they've arrived. (Librarian, School B).

However, some interviewees commented that the arrival of new books, in itself, had an impact on students, helping to generate interest in reading:

It creates excitement and intrigue...it makes them think what's in the box and what's within the pages and start getting excited and that's what we want to do, we want to enthuse our students. (Librarian, School O)

Several interviewees said they thought the School Library Pack had encouraged students to try different types of books:

...it's diversified what people have read, rather than reading four 'Diaries of a Wimpy Kid' in a row or the whole of Harry Potter, they read something different and I think that's been really positive. (Librarian, School J)

It will introduce them to genres that are out of their comfort zone. (Librarian, School E)

This was something that was also mentioned by students themselves:

They introduced me to books that otherwise I probably wouldn't have read... (Student, School S)

...there are certain books you wouldn't imagine yourself reading, but then...once you've read it, you really like it. (Student, School E)

Some librarians felt that the quality of the books provided helped to promote discussion among students:

...because of the quality of the books that we get, it really does encourage the kids to talk about the books. (Librarian, School S)

Several interviewees said there had been demand for further copies of the books, or similar titles, indicating the impact the School Library Pack had on students:

...they wanted to read the rest of the series [of 'PIG and the Talking Poo']... (HLTA, School N)

There were also examples of the School Library Pack having an impact on individual students:

I've had feedback from one parent whose son had been off track and it had been very important in getting him reading... (Librarian, School E)

One boy who wasn't keen to read something outside his usual range...he came across this one book, Barnaby Rookett and he said, 'Brilliant' and he also read Into that Forest and he said, "This is the best book I've ever read"...so they can surprise themselves. (Primary school librarian³, School S)

Several interviewees thought the graphic novels had made an impact on boys, especially those who might be reluctant to read other types of books. On the other hand, some felt that the multiple copies of Future Classics were more popular with girls because they could read the books together and talk about the books with their friends. It is noteworthy that, in several of the schools visited, there was evidence that School Library Packs from previous years were continuing to have an impact as they formed part of displays or were mentioned by students in the focus groups.

³ The School Library Pack was used within a local educational partnership of primary and secondary schools (see [Budmouth College case study](#) for further details).

Of course, the ways in which the School Library Pack might impact on students depended on the ways that it had been used in each school. For further examples of the impact on students in relation to particular activities, see the case studies in [section 5](#).

Impact of the School Library Pack on teachers and teaching assistants

Several interviewees said they had shared School Library Pack information and resources with teachers, usually those in the English department. For instance, in one school, two Australian visiting teachers had been particularly interested in *Into that Forest* and one had used it as a class reader. In another school where the School Library Pack had been used in lessons, the librarian felt that teachers had greatly appreciated the reading guide materials as they had been able to use these as the basis for activities with students:

I think it's great because I can say to a teacher, "I've got a class set of books...we're going to do it for half a term..."...They are keen to come in, but it is nice when they don't have to think about what they've got to do in here... it's quite good to have something you can get them a bit stirred up with... (Librarian, School T)

However, in a number of schools, librarians said they would have liked more support from teachers to help them to promote the School Library Pack more effectively:

If I could get somebody on the English side to promote it more it would be great. (Librarian, School A)

Suggestions for improvement

Some interviewees found it difficult to identify ways to improve the School Library Pack, saying they were extremely happy with the existing service. One interviewee warned against trying to tailor the School Library Pack to the perceived needs of schools too much; they felt it was important that the material was open enough for people to be able to use the School Library Pack in different ways:

...the thing that's difficult is making sure most people can get the best use...if you tailor it too much, you start to become exclusive from others...the variety that's in there and the resources in there are really good... (Librarian, School O).

Among those who did make suggestions, there was a wide range of ideas related to both the books and the support materials provided.

Suggestions for improvements to book selections

- Include titles for older readers and books "to push more able readers"
- Allow librarians to select the books most suitable for their school from a 'shortlist'
- Include multiple copies of some reluctant reader and graphic novel titles so more students can take part in book groups/discussions
- Increase the diversity (authors and characters of different ethnicities)
- Provide more graphic novels
- Include more very recent titles
- Include some obviously gender-specific books (rather than mainly gender-neutral)
- Include more books for students with lower reading age than their chronological age (for girls as well as boys)

- Include fewer copies, but of a greater number of titles
- Ensure titles have AR quizzes
- Offer a non-fiction pack (e.g. biographies, travel and popular science or older graphic novels), including support materials
- Offer a pack for primary schools.

Suggestions for improvements to support material

- Offer more support materials online (e.g. additional ways of using the School Library Pack)
- Develop an online discussion area for students to share experiences of reading the books with those at other schools (locally and nationally)
- Create videos of authors selected for School Library Pack talking about their book
- Provide other digital resources for students to supplement the books (e.g. YouTube clips)
- Provide online resources for use by parents
- Include resources to support work on cover design
- Avoid 'spoilers' in the reading guides
- Provide display materials (e.g. cardboard display case for books)
- Follow up few months after the School Library Pack has been delivered to encourage/remind librarians to use (or re-use) it
- Provide ideas for activities (e.g. wordsearches) and games related to reading
- Include bookmarks for students.

In a small number of cases, interviewees said they would have preferred to receive the School Library Pack at a different time of the year, perhaps the previous summer or earlier in the school year so they could plan activities for the upcoming school year.

Additional support Book Trust could provide for school libraries

In addition to suggestions for ways to improve the School Library Pack, some interviewees identified additional ways in which Book Trust might support school libraries or librarians. Author visits or other contact between students and authors, for example through Skype, was the most common suggestion:

Anything for us which puts students in contact with authors is really positive...they don't get to see people working in those sorts of jobs really... that's really positive for us because our students don't meet those people otherwise. (Librarian, School K).

Other ideas included organising networking activities for school librarians; facilitating links with publishers to allow schools to negotiate discounts on books; and providing reading lists for students suggesting titles to expand their choice of books (For example, "If you like..., read... next").

Awareness of other Book Trust programmes

Bookbuzz was the most widely recognised of the other Book Trust programmes. Most interviewees were aware of this and some subscribed or had done so in the past. Budgets were frequently mentioned as a barrier to involvement. Those who did subscribe, expressed highly positive views of this scheme. Beyond Booked Up was recognised by fewer interviewees.

Comparing other Book Trust programmes to the School Library Pack, an interviewee commented that the advantage of the School Library Pack was that the resources remained in library so they were able to ensure they were all well used. Conversely, another interviewee felt Bookbuzz may have more impact as all students received a book of their own.

4. Conclusions and recommendations

School libraries

This research has highlighted the variation in school library provision in schools in England in terms of the size and composition of collections; the space allocated as a library (if a central library existed); staffing provision and the role of the librarian; and activities that take place in the library. Ebooks are not widely used at present; there was interest in these, but they were seen as a development for the future. However, two changes related to library provision in recent years were the decline in the use of non-fiction in many school libraries, due to increased use of the internet for research, and a reduction in the use of SLSs. The former has often resulted in a greater focus on fiction stock in school libraries. In most cases, the latter was not thought to have a significant impact on the stock available, but it frequently resulted in fewer networking opportunities and inter-school activities.

While in all schools, the person responsible for the School Library Pack had a role in supporting reading both within the curriculum and through extra-curricular activities, other responsibilities and solo working often mean they may not be able to get involved in as many activities as they might like to. In most schools, there are strong links between the library and the English department, but links with other subject areas are often less well-developed.

Student reading and library use

Both staff and students highlighted the welcoming, safe atmosphere of school libraries; social, welcoming, comfortable, peaceful and well-used were among the words most commonly used to describe the school library. While a proportion of students in most schools can display negative attitudes to reading (sometimes shared by families and local communities), reading is clearly an important activity for many young people. However, even among frequent and confident readers, students' reading choices can be very limited as most prefer to read more of the same authors or the same series rather than experiment with new genres. Many schools are now making use of AR and overall, this has encouraged student reading, but there are reservations among librarians, especially about the relationship between AR and reading for pleasure.

Librarians encourage reading and library use through activities such as author visits, displays and competitions, but there also needs to be one-to-one support from people knowledgeable about literature for young people. School libraries also need to have stock which is appropriate for the students and will capture their interest. Librarians stressed the need to ensure the library's fiction stock was current and reflected the preferences of students in their school. They reported that this can sometimes be difficult to source especially for groups such as students with special education needs and with English as an Additional Language. However, perhaps the most critical point is that encouraging reading for pleasure needs to be a whole school activity and not just seen as the responsibility of the librarian.

The School Library Pack

Overall, feedback on the 2014-15 School Library Pack was highly positive; it was universally felt to be a good service by interviewees. Particular praise was given for the variety and quality of the materials and the fact that they had been carefully selected. Interviewees also appreciated the support materials offered alongside the books and the efficient administration of the service.

While the School Library Pack is available to all schools with a Year 7 cohort, interviewees had used the books with students from Year 6 to Year 11, reflecting the differing abilities and interests of students in each school. The sets of Future Classics were widely welcomed as they allow for different types of use and activities that otherwise would not be possible in libraries without sufficient budget to purchase multiple copies. The graphic novels and reluctant reader titles were also popular and most librarians felt both formats were valuable additions to the library stock.

In most cases, the School Library Pack books have been added to library stock, but in a number of schools, they have also been used for group reading activities both within lessons and as extracurricular activities, which might be staff-led or organised by students. As well as reading and discussing the books, groups have taken part in supplementary activities such as voting for their favourite book, writing reviews, designing alternative covers and so forth.

School librarians felt that the School Library Pack could impact on their work in a number of ways. It is invaluable to supplement stock at a time when budgets are very tight in most schools and it allows reading group activities to take place, not only by making multiple copies available, but also by providing guidance to help run a group. The School Library Pack also helps to introduce librarians to new titles they may not have been aware of otherwise.

Among students, the School Library Pack offers access to new titles, which is especially important in less well-resourced schools. It also encourages some students to try different types of books they might not usually consider reading. Further, it offers students different types of reading experiences. The chance to read books as a group and discuss their reactions to them may not only help students to develop as readers, but also offers potential for developing social interaction, reflective thinking and communication skills.

Although interviewees presented an array of suggestions for ways to improve the selection of books in the School Library Pack, often based on the particular needs of their school, no strong themes emerged overall. There was more of a consensus on the ideas to improve the accompanying support materials however. The most common theme was the provision of online resources for both librarians and students, for example, additional support materials, links to authors and discussion forums. Librarians suggested that author visits could be another way in which Book Trust might help to support their work in promoting reading for pleasure in schools.

Recommendations

The findings of this research have resulted in a number of recommendations for Book Trust and for schools which receive the School Library Pack.

Recommendations for Book Trust

To develop the School Library Pack in the future, Book Trust should consider:

- retaining the focus on quality books to widen students' reading experiences, and titles librarians may not always be aware of or choose for the library themselves
- including multiple copies of other genres of books (e.g. reluctant readers and graphic novels) in addition to Future Classics
- offering schools a choice of books from a shortlist to allow them to select the titles most relevant for their students

- including materials for older students
- offering online support materials and discussion forums to allow librarians and students to share their experiences of the School Library Pack beyond their school
- including advice on using specific School Library Pack titles with teachers (e.g. lesson plans/teaching activities)
- investigating ways to involve students in the selection process for the School Library Pack.

In addition, to provide further support for school librarians, Book Trust should consider:

- facilitating contact between schools and authors, for example, support for author visits or online contact with authors
- providing advice to support librarians in working with subject teachers, for example, recommended fiction for teachers of different subjects
- supporting networking opportunities for school librarians (which have reduced since the decline of many SLSs)
- conducting further research into potential types of support Book Trust might offer for special schools
- helping school librarians to identify resources for students with specific needs (e.g. SEN, EAL)
- providing materials for parents of secondary school students to help them to support their child's reading and ideas to support schools to increase parental engagement.

Recommendations for schools

The school librarians (or other staff member with responsibility for the library) should consider:

- sharing ideas for using the School Library Pack, and for promoting reading for pleasure more generally, for example, at local networking meetings or online
- using the School Library Pack to support transition, for example, through running joint activities with primary feeder schools
- encouraging students to use the multiple copies to read in friendship groups (especially if it is not possible to organise a formal reading group in the school)
- stimulating wider interest throughout the school through celebrating activities carried out with the School Library Pack (e.g. presentation assembly, award ceremony)
- planning a celebration activity around the opening of the School Library Pack to generate interest
- sharing the School Library Pack books with teachers
- reflecting on the case studies in [section 5](#) for ideas and inspiration on alternative ways to make use of the School Library Pack.

5. Good practice case studies

Budmouth College case study: Inter-school book award

Sharing the School Library Pack within a primary-secondary partnership as part of an inter-school book award to encourage reading and discussion about books across a locality.

How are you using the 2014 School Library Pack in your school?

Within this school, we use the School Library Pack with our library-based reading group. Because we get so many copies of the books in the Pack, within the reading group we can actually start a discussion, getting the kids to talk about what they think of the books.

We also use the School Library Pack with other schools. As part of the local partnership in the area, the Chesil Education Partnership (CEP), we have devised a CEP book award and we use the School Library Pack Future Classics as the 'nominations' for the award. There are four secondary schools in the area and we've got about 12 primary schools, so between us we share the books out so that the primary schools can read the books at the same time as us. When they've read them and reviewed them, we vote on our favourite



book for each school and then we collate the results and produce a certificate to show the overall winner. This is the third year we've been doing it and it's really successful. I find it's really good working together with the other schools. At the end of the award, we ask each school to produce a creative review and that goes on display in the public library for the summer holiday which is really nice because parents and grandparents can go into the library and see their child's work on display in a public gallery.

What impact has the School Library Pack had on Budmouth College students?

The School Library Pack books are books that perhaps students wouldn't pick up normally; maybe if it's a certain genre they wouldn't normally read. But because they're part of the reading group and they're hearing everyone talking about it, it does encourage them and make them want to pick them up. It's great to give the students the option to expand their reading habits and because of the quality of the books that we get, it really does encourage them to talk about the books. It's a shared experience in the reading group; the students love sharing what they've read.

It's introduced me to books that otherwise I probably wouldn't have read (Student).

How have primary schools responded to the School Library Pack and CEP Book Award?

I think the biggest impact is the sharing of the books with the primary school librarians; they love to get the books. One primary co-ordinator said her literacy co-ordinator's really embraced the CEP book award and she's going to buy extra copies of the School Library Pack books so they can use them with their reading groups in school. I think that's fantastic. The primary schools love it because they're involved with the senior schools. It's not just our school reading the books; it's the whole Weymouth and Portland area.

As school librarians usually work alone, it's really great to get together as a group to work on the CEP Book award and to share good practice within the partnership.
(Librarian)

What impact has the School Library Pack and Book Award had on primary school students?

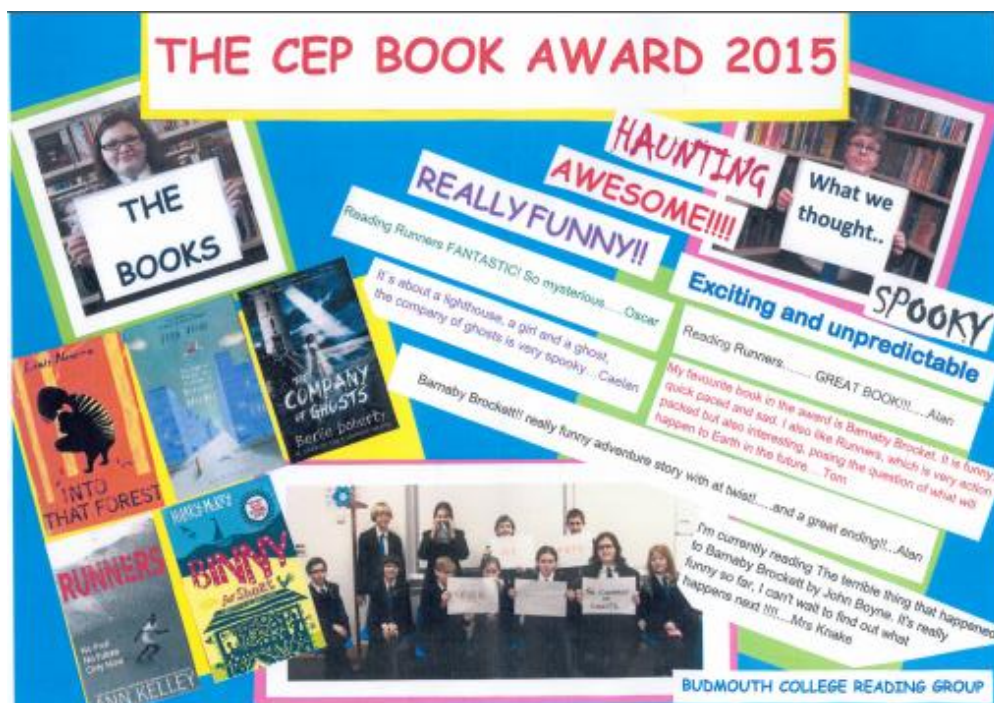
Primary school students really like it and they like being able to choose a winner for their school. For instance, one boy who wasn't keen to read something outside his usual range came across, *The Terrible Thing that Happened to Barnaby Rickett* and he said, "Brilliant!" and he also read *Into that Forest* and he said, "This is the best book I've ever read", so they can surprise themselves.

What challenges have primary schools faced and how could these be overcome?

Lots of primary school children wanted to be involved, but maybe they don't read that quickly and when you've only got one copy of each book you do need children to turn it round quite quickly. Also they can find the content a bit disturbing. I was surprised one child found *The Company of Ghosts* scary, so that's a

signal that they are only 10 or 11; they are quite young still.

It would be great to have a similar pack designed for primary schools, or to have more copies of the graphic novels and reluctant reader titles so we can open it up to more children, including those who aren't such strong readers.



Based on interviews with librarians and students from Budmouth College in Weymouth and librarians from Chickerell Primary School, Holy Trinity Primary School and Radipole Primary School. Budmouth College is an 'outstanding' 11-18 Foundation school in Dorset with approximately 1,850 students. The library is spread over two locations (with two members of staff), has around 20,000 books and was a finalist in the Secondary School Category for the School Library Association's Inspiration Award in 2014.

New Charter Academy case study: Student-led reading groups

Using the School Library Pack in English lessons to encourage students to read more independently and to take responsibility for organising group reading activities.

How are you using the 2014 School Library Pack in your school?

We have a special 'Group Reader' section in the library, so we've added the Future Classics titles to this section which already has School Library Pack titles from previous years along with other books we have multiple copies of. Each Year 8 English class spends one lesson every fortnight in the library using the books as part of the Book Club Group activity. The students are divided into groups of approximately six and they appoint a group leader. Together, the group chooses a book from the Group Reader section to read together. The group leader sets homework 'targets' so everyone is at the same point in the book during the lesson. In the lessons, students discuss the books in their groups and complete activities for each book, including an Accelerated Reader quiz and a written activity such as designing an alternative book cover or writing a letter to the author. The group leader takes responsibility for leading the discussion and has the final say on which written task the group should do.



How have students responded to the activity?

Most students have responded really well, although naturally some groups are more organised than others. The groups are really competitive! They compete with each other to read the longest book, the most books etc. In many cases, the group leader has managed the group really well and they're extremely efficient.

It's good reading a book together because if there's something you don't understand, we can talk about it and someone will explain.
(Student)

What problems have you faced and how have you dealt with them?

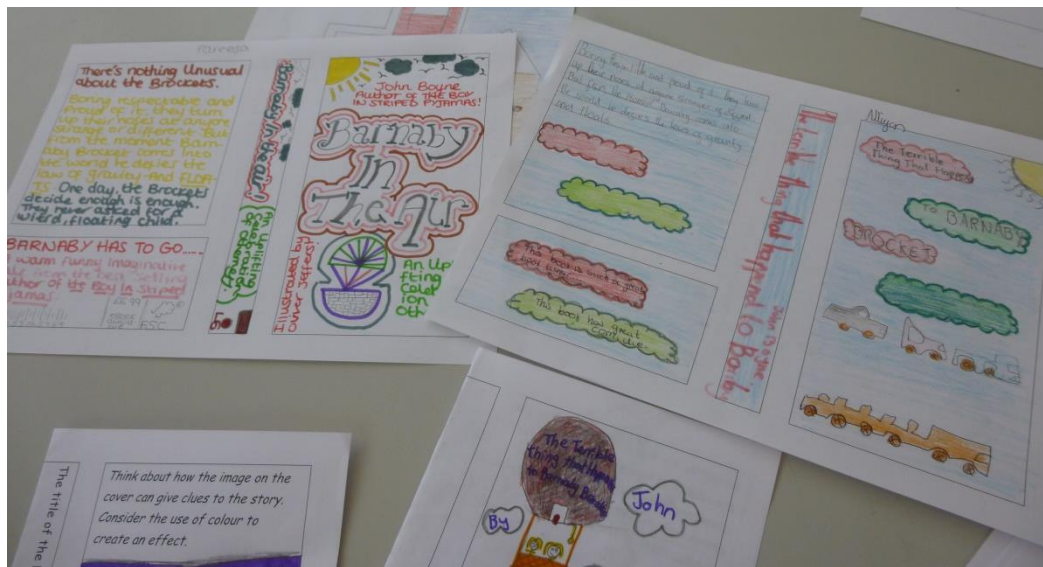
Of course, when a group chooses a more challenging book, they can struggle. If that happens, the teacher will help the group by answering questions and helping to guide their discussion.

In some classes, a proportion of the students have struggled to work in groups; they don't have the maturity yet to manage themselves as they need to for this activity to succeed. In these classes, we've moved towards paired reading for those students who are struggling.

What impact has the Book Club activity had on students?

Students are definitely reading more. They all have an individual reader as well as their group reader and since we've been running the Book Club activity, they've been reading as many books individually, but they're reading the group books in addition.

When a whole class reads the same book in an English lesson, it can be really difficult to find a book that everyone will enjoy. This way, students get to choose the books themselves, but because they choose in groups, individuals can be challenged to read titles they wouldn't normally consider.



Book Club Group activities: redesigning a book cover for *The Terrible Thing that Happened to Barnaby Brocket*

How does the School Library Pack help you to run the Book Club activity?

We started off two years ago running the activity with one class, but this year we're running it with the whole of Year 8. To do this we obviously need a large number of group reader collections so the School Library Pack is invaluable. Each year, we've added the School Library Pack books to our Group Reader section and it's helped us to build up a really diverse collection for students to choose from.

Based on observation and informal discussions with students, English teacher and the school librarian at New Charter Academy, Tameside (Greater Manchester), a sponsor-led academy with high proportions of students with English as an Additional Language and eligible for Free School Meals. There are approximately 1,500 students at the school and the library, which is run by a solo librarian, has around 12,000 books.

Wirral Boys' Grammar School case study: Book Award

Incorporating the School Library Pack in a Book Award to encourage enthusiasm for reading and book discussions throughout a school.

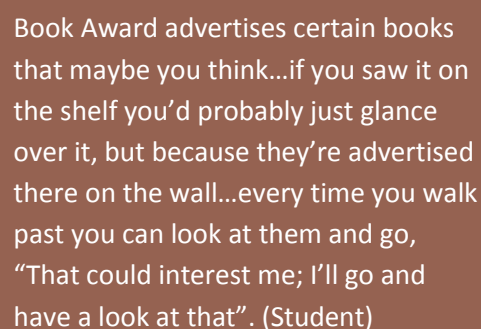
How are you using the 2014 School Library Pack in your school?

We're planning to use the School Library Pack as part of the shortlisted books for a scheme called Book Award. Book Award was started two years ago in an attempt to encourage boys to read different authors and different genres. I have six or seven different book awards, one for each genre, for example, the best science fiction; the best horror; the best fantasy. I've used some School Library Pack titles as part of the award in previous years too. It works very much like a film award: the boys read the books throughout the year then vote for their favourite. At the end of the year, there's an awards ceremony at the end where the winning authors send in video clips of their 'acceptance speeches'.

We've already used one of the 2014 School Library Pack books, *The Company of Ghosts* with a reading group, to try to encourage boys in Year 8 to become more enthusiastic about reading and to get involved in Book Award. This is done with the English department. The teacher finds boys who she thinks aren't reading as much as they used to...the whole idea is to keep them reading rather than losing them along the way. The idea is that when they see this title shortlisted for the Book Award, they're going to think, "I've already read one of those books in that category and I enjoyed that book," so they'll be inclined to read more of the books. They'll be more motivated to take part.

How have students responded to Book Award and the School Library Pack?

The students generally are very enthusiastic. I've found a lot of boys who weren't reading before Book Award are now reading more. They might only read three or four of the books over the course of the year, but that's three or four books they weren't reading before. I've also noticed a lot of the boys who do read, but are reading the same authors again and again will start to read these books and they will talk a lot amongst themselves and talk to me about the books. So it generates conversation; it generates interest.



Book Award advertises certain books that maybe you think...if you saw it on the shelf you'd probably just glance over it, but because they're advertised there on the wall...every time you walk past you can look at them and go, "That could interest me; I'll go and have a look at that". (Student)

What impact has Book Award and the School Library Pack had?

The Book Award's really good because it gives us a range of different types of books to read. (Student)

I think the biggest thing is it's talked about all the way through. The boys will come in really excited saying, "I read that one and it did make me cry", or "it made me scared". Then when the awards ceremony happens and when so many authors send video clips, then the students get really enthusiastic and excited for the next year.

I like to avoid using authors I know are going to be read anyway. It's a case of trying to give them new authors and the books that win the categories then stay popular. They can become our most popular authors, which means the boys have found the book, liked it, then carry on reading that author. With some of the authors from previous years, their books had stayed on the library shelves untouched and now all their books are being read. So it's introducing them to new authors.

I think there's a wide range of enthusiasm for reading. You've got boys who just will not read at all, then boys who read lots and lots. There are also those who used to read, but have lost their way, particularly in the transition from primary school books to the next level up. So a lot of our focus is to find age appropriate books that are going to encourage them to read through the next few years.

What lessons have you learnt from running Book Award in previous years?

The first year, a lot of the boys felt intimidated by the fact I said, "You've got to read at least three of the four shortlisted books". They thought, "I am never going to read three of those books...". That's why I changed it the second year because it's better to get boys to read one or two books and feel that they can still have a vested interest and vote than try to force them to read all of them. It's meant to be a fun thing, so I relaxed it a lot.

What's the biggest challenge of organising Book Award and how has the School Library Pack helped?

It's trying to get a shortlist of books that go from a reading age of 9 or 10 all the way to a reading age of 15, 16, 17, that's really the biggest challenge. Last year I included *Fortunately the Milk* by Neil Gaiman, which is more or less a picture book, because I was trying to draw in the boys who haven't got beyond the *Wimpy Kid* books, who otherwise will not take a book. On the other hand, I've got a lot of boys who are very able readers, who are moving into adult books when they're only in Years 8 and 9. So it's trying to get books that are going to maintain their interest and be at a level for them as well.

It gives me something to read because quite often when I just look at books I can't find anything interesting. So it suggests something to read. (Student)

Obviously the School Library Pack is very useful when I'm compiling the shortlist because the titles are already pre-selected so I know they're going to be good and interesting books. I already know these are going to be popular books. Having six copies of the books is useful because it takes a lot of my budget to buy multiple copies of all the books I'm shortlisting.

Based on discussions with students and the school librarian at Wirral Boys' Grammar School, an 'outstanding' academy convertor school in Merseyside with approximately 1,050 students. The library has two members of staff working on a job-share basis.

Bourne Academy case study: Book club

Using the School Library Pack in an extra-curricular reading club to widen students' reading choices.

How are you using the 2014 School Library Pack in your school?

I use it with the Book Club. We meet as often as we can at lunchtime and I've got students from Year 7 to Year 11. Several of the Year 11 girls have been with me right from when they were Year 7. This year we've got the most students we've ever had; it's usually around 10-12, but this year it's over 15. It's very informal in the Book Club because I think the students have enough to do in their day time working in school, so I very rarely give them anything to do.

We're called the Munch Bunch; they all bring their food. We sit around and I might tell them about one or two books, like those from the School Library Pack, that I might want to show them, but generally speaking they lead it. They talk about the books they've read and whether they've enjoyed them or not. It's just a coming together to enthuse about reading and books and we're always open for anybody new who wants to come. Sometimes we get members of staff coming. There's a local lady that writes, she's been in to tell us about her books. It's lively, but informal. We never ever have enough time! All they want to do is sit and talk about books.

We all like different kinds of books and the good thing about book club is that we get to read a book that someone's recommended to us that we wouldn't just pick up. We get to read a range of different books. (Student)

It's nice to see other people's interests in books and if they're interested in a certain author that you may not have heard of then..."Oh that interests me". That's when you go away and read it for yourself. (Student)

...it broadens your scope of what is out there and might possibly interest you in different books that might open you up to new authors. (Student)

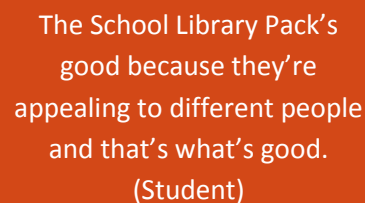
I like Book Club because I can read books I've never heard of and would never think of reading. (Student)

How does the School Library Pack help you to run the Book Club?

It's fantastic for me because it gives me those multiple copies that I can't afford to buy out of my budget. At the moment, we've got two or three of the students reading the same book at the same time and eventually, in the summer term, we can sit down to discuss the books and I can use the questions in the support materials. Those are excellent for me as support for talking to our book group and getting them to talk about the books. We can discuss it as a group and we usually end up with a winner. We have our own little award scheme and we award a winner.

How have students responded to the School Library Pack each year?

This year, I think they've found some of them a challenge, but I say to them, "Part of this group is to make you read something that you wouldn't pick up". *Into that Forest* is one I hope we can discuss at length. Lots of the students are enjoying *The Terrible Thing that Happened to Barnaby Rickett* and *Beautiful Creatures* was loaned out within minutes of me putting it on the shelf!



The School Library Pack's good because they're appealing to different people and that's what's good.
(Student)

There's a lasting impact from the School Library Pack because the students are still talking about books from previous years' Packs, like *Oranges in No Man's Land* and *A Monster Calls* and some have even bought their own copies.

How do you encourage students who aren't in Book Club to read the School Library Pack books?

We have a display of books read by Book Club in the library, so that's how we encourage other students to go out and read them. I advertise it as 'Read by Book Club; give it a try' and that's how we encourage other students to take them out of the library – and they do!

The School Library Pack can also help me to engage teachers. If I can reach out through these books to members of staff and they can talk about the books in the classroom, that's what it's all about.

In what other ways are you planning to use the School Library Pack books?

I'm planning to use *Pig and the Talking Poo* in my library lessons as teaching resource. The thing I find works best is reading to the kids...they're mesmerized. So I'll cover it with brown paper so they can't see the title and read it aloud to show them books aren't boring.

I could also use the School Library Pack books for Book in a Bag. When I do that, I cover the books with brown paper; the students borrow them and they don't know what they borrow, they haven't read the blurb or the cover. That's something I might try in the new academic year with the new Year 7s.

Based on discussions with students and the school librarian at Bourne Academy, an academy-convertor with approximately 1,200 students in a small town in Lincolnshire. The library has two members of staff, one full-time and the other part-time, and has a stock of around 9,000 books.

Loreto High School Chorlton case study: Animated book trailer

Creating an animated book trailer to promote the School Library Pack to a wide range of students.

How are you using the 2014 School Library Pack in your school?

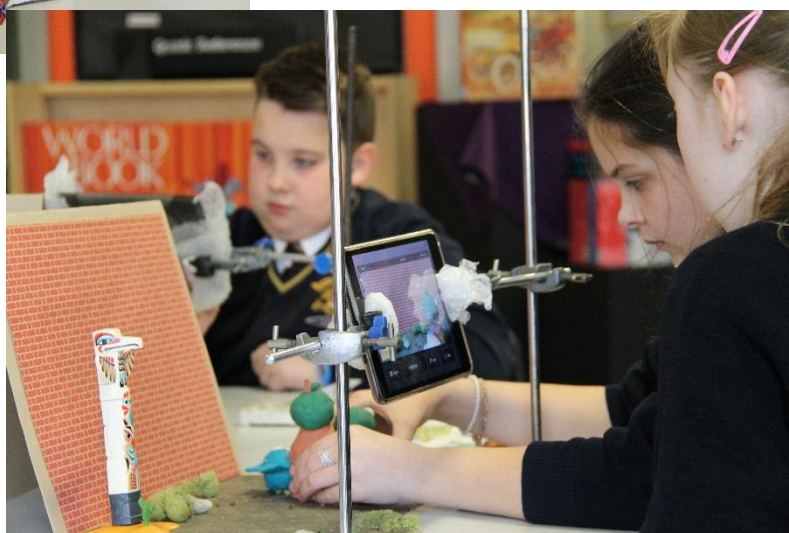
We used *Fish Head Steve*, one of the graphic novels from the School Library Pack, as the basis for a whole day's activity based around making a book trailer to promote the book. We started off talking about what the students thought would make a good book trailer and the skills they thought they would need. Then they each read a couple of the chapters from the book. I choose to use *Fish Head Steve* for the activity because it's a book that's accessible for the students and they don't have to read the whole book. We only had a very short time to complete the book trailer so it was important they could get the gist of the story quite quickly. Once we'd discussed the chapters they'd read and the characters, they worked in pairs to create storyboards for their trailers. They made their characters using plasticine and created a film using iMotion stop-motion app on the schools' iPad minis. Over the next few days, I worked with the students to add speech bubbles in Paint, and then add sound and edit their films into a single book trailer.

How are you planning to use the trailer in the school?

The trailer is available at <https://vimeo.com/124521907>. We'd like to do an assembly and include the book trailer in that. The students' form teacher has been very involved; she came in to see how they were doing throughout the day and she's hoping to show the finished book trailer during form time.



Our book trailer could start helping people to read books. It's funny and it shows them about the book, so it might persuade them to read it. (Student)



How have the students responded?

Some of the students are regular library users, but others I only normally see during library lessons, so it's widening the group of students I get to work with outside lessons. They've all been really, really focused. More so than I expected them to be! They really set to the task, so I was very pleased. Some of them have already asked whether they can borrow the book so they can read the rest of it.

I'd like to read the rest of the book. I like the characters and it's funny. It looks like a kids' book, but the humour's for our age. (Student)

At the start of the day, I asked the students what skills they thought they needed to make a good book trailer and they struggled to think of answers, but by the end they had a much clearer idea. Among the skills they thought they'd used were: teamworking and communication; creativity and imagination; fine motor skills (steady hands); patience and resilience; literacy skills; and timekeeping skills.

Have you done similar activities before, and would you do it again?

I would definitely do this activity again. It's not an activity that I would normally do, but it would be good to do more book trailers, maybe one a term and get a particular group of students to work on it. I think that would work well.

If we had more time, we would have been able to add more details. If this was an after school club, I would come and I think some of my friends would too. (Student)

Next time I would change some of the technical aspects, such as checking the iPads fitted onto the clamps and setting them up beforehand. There's probably not much else I would change, but I might make the storyboarding a bit simpler. You could experiment with different ways of making the trailer too; it doesn't have to be plasticine; you could use other things like Lego or Playmobil.

What advice would you give to someone who wanted to run a similar activity in their school?

There was a good variety of titles in the School Library Pack, so some students and some librarians would be interested in other books, but you could do a book trailer for any of them really. I think it would work well with any level of students, but it's particularly good for those who prefer practical activities and are less likely to take part in a reading group. You just need to make sure you have all the equipment: a Mac with iMovie and so on. It's quite easy to use though, so you don't need a lot of technical skills.

I asked the students to come up with a list of 'top tips' for creating a book trailer at the end of the session and they suggested: "be patient"; "don't rush"; "stay positive"; "be fair and make sure everyone does their share of the work"; and "work together and share your ideas".

Based on discussions with students and the school librarian at Loreto High School Chorlton, a voluntary-aided school in Manchester with a high percentage of students eligible for Free School Meals. The school has approximately 750 students and the library has around 5,000 books. The solo librarian at this school was School Library Association School Librarian of the Year in 2010. The book trailer is available at <https://vimeo.com/124521907>.

Forest Hill School case study: Reading challenge

Using the School Library Pack in a Year 8 reading challenge to provide students with a pathway to more demanding books.

How are you using the 2014 School Library Pack in your school?

This year we're targeting Year 8 with the School Library Pack. Every year we offer a Year 8 reading challenge but this year we've used those books. We give the pupils a menu; there are two reading lists which are differentiated. So the main list has usually got four books on it that you would expect a Year 8 to be able to read, and underpinning that is a stepping stone list for those boys who don't yet have reading stamina.

The reading challenge is something the whole school is involved in. You have lots of people browsing through the shelves looking for books to read and understand. The reading challenge is all about getting you into the library to read more. (Student)

There's a selection of different types of books, some are more challenging than others, there's different genres of books, and the whole school takes part. (Student)

How does the School Library Pack help you with this activity?

This year there are eight books in our challenge and five of them are from the School Library Pack. This provides a menu from which they choose four to complete their own challenge. The School Library Pack books are engaging; they provide a range of stories that are thought-provoking and heart-warming that appeal to different individuals. One or two of the books, like *Binny for Short* by Hilary McKay, have drawn the students in and made them willing to read the rest of the books in the challenge and that's wonderful.



What impact has the School Library Pack had on students?

Well, it can only be positive really. The boys who have read the titles last year have been introduced to writers they haven't read before. It will also introduce them to genres that are out of their comfort zone. It's making a difference to the boys with the weakest motivation, the least stamina and the boys in the middle range. The books can be quite demanding reads. They are what you would hope boys aged 12 would be reading but this allows us to, perhaps, give them a pathway.

It's a good way of finding books, because if you read one book you might find more books that you might want to read; if you like a genre then there might be more books in that genre that you might like. (Student)

It's a good way of reading different books. You might not normally pick a book but then if it's on the challenge reading list you might. (Student)

Sometimes you read at a slow pace but the challenge it makes you want to read faster, maybe start another... you want to beat your friends. (Student)

How have you used the School Library Pack in previous years?

Last year we used the pack as a reading challenge in the summer term, suggesting books for students to read over the summer. I was using the activity as a substitute for the local library's reading challenge. The boys would have been used to that, but it is mostly aimed at primary schools. If they don't keep up their reading over the long break, you can tell the difference in September. So I wanted to offer the books as a challenge over the summer, with a money prize to lure them into reading them. There were five in the short list; if they read all five they got a £5 cash prize when they returned to school. Every book they read could be logged on their log sheet which is the main monitoring tool and for every book they read. They got points and a cash prize if they read them all.

Now is the Time for Running, which was in a previous School Library Pack, has been a really useful title. I've used that book for an intervention with various boys who have hardly been reading at all. I've used it to set them little stepping stone targets, pages to read week-by-week. Because the story is so good, the boys really get into it and just exceed any target I set them.

Based on discussions with students and the school librarian at Forest Hill School, a Community School for boys in Lewisham, London with approximately 1,350 students. The library has a stock of around 26,000 books. The librarian was School Library Association School Librarian of the Year in 2011 and works in a team with two assistants.

References

Clark, C. (2010). *Linking School Libraries and Literacy: Young people's reading habits and attitudes to their school library, and an exploration of the relationship between school library use and school attainment*, http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/assets/0000/5760/Linking_school_libraries_and_literacy_2010.pdf

Clark, C., and Rumbold, K. (2006). *Reading for Pleasure a research overview*. The National Literacy Trust, http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/research/nlt_research/271_reading_for_pleasure_a_research_overview

OECD (2010) *PISA 2009 Results: Executive Summary*, <http://www.oecd.org/pisa/pisaproducts/46619703.pdf>

Twist, L., Schagan, I. and Hogson, C. (2007). *Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS): Reader and Reading National Report for England 2006*. NFER and DCSF.

Appendix A: School Library Pack books (2014-15)

Mainstream school pack

Future classics

Six copies each of:

- *The Terrible Thing that Happened to Barnaby Brocket* by John Boyne
- *The Company of Ghosts* by Berlie Doherty
- *Runners* by Ann Kelley
- *Binny for Short* by Hilary McKay
- *Into That Forest* by Louis Nowra

Graphic novels

One copy each of:

- *Fish Head Steve* by Jamie Smart
- *Azzi In Between* by Sarah Garland
- *Beautiful Creatures* by Kami Garcia and Margaret Stohl
- *Line of Fire Diary of an Unknown Soldier* by Barroux

Reluctant reader titles

One copy each of:

- *A Lily, A Rose* by Sally Nicholls
- *Klaus Vogel and the Bad Lads* by David Almond
- *Milo and One Dead Angry Druid* by Mary Arrigan
- *Pig and the Talking Poo* by Barbara Catchpole
- *Mad, Bad and Just Plain Dangerous World War II* by John Townsend
- *War Dog* by Chris Ryan

Special school packs

- *Mad, Bad and Just Plain Dangerous World War II* by John Townsend
- *Cheese Hunt* by Kathryn White and Corinne Bittler
- *The Dragon with a Big Nose* by Kathy Henderson
- *Journey* by Aaron Becker
- *Klaus Vogel and the Bad Lads* David Almond
- *Max the Champion* by Sean Stockdale, Alex Strick and Ros Asquith
- *Shh! We have a Plan* by Chris Haughton

- *Spot the Shark in the Ocean* by Stella Maidment and Joelle Dreidemy
- *The Hueys in The New Jumper* by Oliver Jeffers
- *The Noisy Middle Ages* by Rob Lloyd Jones and David Hancock

Appendix B: Contextual information about schools

School	Position	Pack received	Region	Type of school	Ofsted ranking	Free School Meals %	English as an Additional Language %	% KS4 making expected progress in English
School A	Librarian	Mainstream	North East	Voluntary Aided	3	31.1	0.8	39
School B	Librarian	Mainstream	West Midlands	Free School-Mainstream	1	11.7	25.6	NA
School C	English teacher	Mainstream	North West	Voluntary Aided	2	10	0.8	63
School D	School Business Manager	Special	South East	Non-maintained Special	2	40.4	27.7	
School E	Librarian	Mainstream	South East	Community	2	21.4	17.4	69
School F	Librarian	Mainstream	North West	Academy Converter	1	20.5	4.6	55
School G	Librarian	Mainstream	York & Humber	Community	3	20.4	19.6	59
School H	Librarian	Mainstream	York & Humber	Academy Sponsor led	3	33.4	11.4	42
School I	Librarian	Mainstream	South East	Voluntary Controlled	2	7.5	7.1	62
School J	Librarian	Mainstream	North West	Academy-Sponsor led	4	30.7	24.2	51
School K	Librarian	Mainstream	York & Humber	Academy-Sponsor led	3	32.3	68.6	64
School L	Library Coordinator	Special	York & Humber	Community Special School	2	32.4	0	NA
School M	Librarian	Mainstream	South East	Academy Converter - Mainstream	2	6.1	2.9	73
School N	HLTA	Mainstream	York & Humber	Free School - Mainstream	New school			
School O	LRC Manager	Mainstream	South East	Academy - Converter Mainstream	2	9.9	3.5	77

School P	Librarian	Mainstream	North West	Independent				
School Q	Library Coordinator/TA	Special	South East	Academy Converter Special	2	43.4	0	NA
School R	Librarian	Mainstream	North West	Academy Converter - Mainstream	1	2.3	2	97
School S	Librarian	Mainstream	South West	Foundation School	1	11.9	1.8	83
School T	Librarian	Mainstream	York & Humber	Voluntary aided	New school			
School U	Librarian	Mainstream	East of England	Academy Converter - Mainstream	2	6.8	3	64
School V*	Librarian	Mainstream	North West	Academy Sponsor led	3	32.4	30.4	75
School W*	Librarian	Mainstream	North West	Voluntary Aided	2	32	22.8	71

* case study only

Appendix C: Exploratory interview questions

A. *Your school library*

Please tell me about your school library, for example:

1. **Perceptions:** How do you think students and teachers would describe the library?
2. **Your role:** What are the main aspects of your job?
 - How much time do you spend working with students and in what types of activities (e.g. lessons, breaks/lunchtimes, extra-curricular activities)?
 - How do you work with other departments/teachers/SMT? How effectively does this currently work, and how could it be improved? (Who is your line manager?)
3. **The collection:** how large is the collection (in total and books per student)? What other services and resources do you provide apart from books (e.g. digital resources)?
4. **Stock selection:** How do you select stock (e.g. involving students, teachers, websites, reviews)? What are the most important factors for you when selecting stock (e.g. gaps in collection, books which will appeal to students)?
5. **SLs:** Do you make use of a Schools Library Service? If so how? If not, why not?
6. **Space:** What types of activities take place in the library (lessons, clubs, independent study, group work, reading etc)?
 - What types of, and how many, students take part in these activities? (Note: types might be year groups, gender, ability...)

B. *The School Library Pack*

7. Have you requested the School Library Pack in previous years?
 - If so, for how many years?
 - If not, why did you request it this year?
 - How did you find out about the SLP? How could communication about the SLP be improved (e.g. timing, methods of communication?)
8. What was your initial reaction to the SLP?
 - Were the titles new to you/to the library
 - How would you rate the quality? (How does the content of this year's Pack compare to other years?)
 - What do you think the different categories of books (future classics, reluctant readers, graphic novels) can add to students' reading experiences?
9. In what ways have you used the SLP books (e.g. add to stock, with reading groups, special promotion/event, class reading, cross-curricular, extra-curricular)?
 - Did you use all the books in the same way?
 - Why did you decide to use them in these ways?
 - Did you consider... (suggest other ways of using)?
10. Which of the support materials have you used (e.g. posters, reading group guide)? And how have you used each resource?
 - How useful did you find each of these? How well did they work in your school?
 - (If you didn't use them, why not?)
 - Did you use the SLP in conjunction with other programmes/promotions/activities?

11. In what ways has the SLP impacted on you and your work? (E.g. running reading groups; awareness of new titles/authors; working with teachers)
 - Are there other ways the Pack could impact on your work which you haven't explored yet?
12. How has the SLP impacted on students? (e.g. their use of the library; attitudes towards the library; book discussions; or attitudes towards reading)
 - Are certain titles more appealing than others?
 - Which types of students do you think the SLP has had the greatest impact on (year group, gender, reading ability, previous patterns of library use)? And the least? Why is this?
 - Do students' reactions to the SLP books differ in any way from their reactions to other (newish) books in the library? (e.g. general interest, borrowing figures, are different students coming in to the library as a result of the pack?)
13. Has the SLP had any impact on the wider school community? E.g. use by teachers, parents, TAs, SMT.
 - If so, please give details
 - If not, how might the pack have an impact on these groups?
14. In what ways could the SLP be improved?
 - The selection of books (e.g. different age groups, genres, mix of genders)
 - The support materials? (e.g. other types of resources)
 - Other types of materials (e.g. digital)
 - Other changes to increase the impact of the SLP (e.g. timing, events/support offered)
 - What difference could these improvements make (e.g. use by a wider range of student; impact on reading for pleasure; impact on your work as a librarian)?
15. What does 'good service' mean to you in relation to the SLP?
 - Does the current service meet your definition of a 'good service'?
 - If not, how might it be improved?
 - How does the SLP service compare to other services you receive (from Book Trust or other organisations)?
16. What do you think has been the most significant impact of the SLP? Why?
17. Are you aware of any other Book Trust programmes for secondary schools? (Bookbuzz, Beyond Booked Up)? Have you taken part in these?
 - Do you see these programmes as connected? Were they aware that Book Trust ran these programmes?

C. Library use

18. Do you track student's reading progress? If so, how (what types of data do you use?) If not, how might you do this?
19. Do you use student data (e.g. attainment data) in other ways? If so, how? If not, why not?
20. What percentage of the school's students use the school library (to borrow books/do homework/read/class visits/independent study/extra-curricular clubs)? (And how do you know?) How frequently do different groups of students make most use of the library for these purposes (e.g. year group, gender, ability)?

21. What methods do you currently use to promote school library use and reading for pleasure to students? And which methods do you feel are most effective?
22. How could engagement levels in library use and reading be improved?
23. What are the most important challenges you face which you think Book Trust could help to address (through the SLP or otherwise)? How could it do this?

Appendix D: Case study framework

Student focus groups

School library

1. What words would you use to describe the library? (post its/flipchart) (eg welcoming, boring, fun, peaceful, noisy)
 - a. Follow up: why have you chosen that word?/Can you explain why the library is...?
2. What do you do in the library? (and how often) eg library lessons, other lessons homework, reading, borrow books, computers, activities
3. How important is it to have a school library? Why? Do all students use the library?
4. If you could design your ideal school library, what would it look like? What would it have in it?

Reading

5. What words do you associate with 'reading'? (post its/flipchart) (eg fun, boring, hard, easy)
6. What types of books do you like – favourite authors, titles, genres? Do you like to read other things eg newspapers, comics, online
7. What types of books do you like least?
8. Where do you find the books you read? (school library, public library, bookshop, presents...)
9. How do you choose a book? (cover, AR recommendation, teacher/librarian/friend recommendation, displays...)
10. Do you talk about books? In class/reading groups, informally?

Book Trust books

11. Have you seen any of these books before? (Have you heard of the SLP (Tell me what you know about it)?
12. If you've read any, what did you think of them?
13. Which books would you be most likely to want to read? Why?
14. Which (titles/types of books) are you least likely to want to read? Why?

SLP activities

15. Tell me what happened?
16. What did you enjoy about these activities?
17. Anything you didn't like?
18. Would you want to do again? And would you encourage other students to?
19. Are there any other resources you would like to be provided or activities you would like to do with the books?

Additional librarian questions

1. Describe what happened in the activity.
2. How did you publicise the activity around school?
3. How did you select students to be involved? Or which types of students chose to get involved?
4. Did you work with other staff? Who? How? (Was this helpful?)
5. Did you use all the SLP books for this activity? If not, how did you select them? Did you use other books as well?

6. How did you use the support materials as part of this activity?
7. Could you have done this activity without the SLP? How would it have been different?
8. How have students responded to the activity? (Have certain types of students responded differently? Eg year group, gender, ability)
9. What has worked well?
10. What has worked less well?
11. What advice would you give to someone planning to run a similar activity?
12. Would you do the same activity again? What changes would you make?
13. What lasting impact do you feel the activity will have?
14. Could Book Trust provide any additional support to help you run this type of activity, or another type of activity?
15. How does this activity fit into the wider work of the school library?
16. Is there a potential conflict between reading for pleasure and the teaching of literacy skills in schools? How does the school library fit into these debates?
17. How closely do you work with the English department? What advice would you give to librarians who want to work more closely with their English department?
18. Can the SLP help the school to meet Ofsted requirements in any way? If so how?

Data collected in case studies

	Library staff interviews	Student focus groups	Observation	Additional data
Wirral Boys' Grammar School	1	1 group of 7 students (Y8-11)	Brief tour of library	Photos, posters etc from previous year's activity
Budmouth College, Weymouth	2 secondary 3 primary	1 group of 7 students (Y7-9)	Tour of resource centre and hub library	Photos of displays, posters
Bourne Academy	1	1 group of 2 students (Y11) 1 group of 13 students (Y7-11)	Brief tour of library	
Forest Hill	1	1 group of 10 students (Y7-8)	Brief tour of library	
Loreto High, Chorlton	1	1 group of 6 students (Y7)	Observation of the animation session.	Involvement in the activity planning session. Informal discussions with the librarian.
New Charter Academy (mini case study)			Observation of a lesson and informal discussions with students and the teacher.	Informal discussion with the librarian. Copy of the student activity booklet.