

John Buchan School BFPO 16

Junior Librarian Case Study

John Buchan School is a Middle School with a roll of just over 300 pupils aged between 9 and 13 (years 5 – 8). The school, built in 1975, is a Service Children's Education School, serving the children of British Army personnel and the attached civilian contingent of the Paderborn Garrison, situated in North West Germany.

SCE schools aim to provide a high standard of education for service children whose parents are serving outside of the United Kingdom – in Germany, Cyprus, Gibraltar and various other locations worldwide. The schools follow the English National Curriculum and are subject to inspection by HMI. Children are able to move between SCE schools and those in the UK with minimum disruption to their schooling.

Owing to the system of postings for Army personnel, the children at John Buchan have often been to 4 or 5 schools by the time they arrive here, and the turnover is very high in each year group, and throughout the school year.

The fact that the children are coming and going on a regular basis has several implications for the funding and running of the School Library, including the Library Software chosen, as is location of the school – a long way from specific training courses and any other establishments using English language school library software.

With very limited access to other English language libraries, and no access to English language bookshops, the children rely on the school library as their main source of reading for pleasure and information. A great deal has been invested in making the library a lively and bright place to visit, with a great stock of books to choose from. Part of that process has been making sure the Library is easy and inviting to use.

Junior Librarian was part of a conscious decision to make the library a welcoming place. Being a Middle school means that the system had to be user friendly to the youngest pupils – some only just turned 9 – hence choosing Junior Librarian as opposed to Eclipse. A further consideration was that the system chosen should be widely used elsewhere, and we do find many of the children arriving from other schools are already familiar with Junior Librarian.



John Buchan School BFPO 16 Junior Librarian Case Study

All the children in school can use the system to issue and return books and the regular library helpers are quite expert in using Junior Librarian to find and reserve books for other children. If, during class visits I ask for children to go on the issue desk while I work with groups of pupils, I am always trampled underfoot by volunteers!

With children and support staff arriving throughout the school year, it was important that the system chosen could be picked up easily. Although we have induction lessons at the beginning of the academic year, there can be as many as 10 or 12 new pupils a month. Using Junior Librarian can be explained quickly and simply and deals with adding new borrowers easily.

It is not just the Children who benefit from the system's ease of use. When I took over the running of the Library, I had to find my way around the system quickly. As with many school libraries, ours is a one-man operation, so this had to be done without any instruction from other staff members.

Despite not having worked in Libraries for 10 years, I found Junior Librarian easy to pick up and the helpline staff very

helpful and reliable. It has not been necessary to go on any specialist training courses, which would obviously be a considerable expense involving travel to the United Kingdom.

In addition to the basic system, I also use some of the add-on modules – Discovery, Label Print and Stock Check in particular have proved very useful. I find Discovery a bonus when children are quite sure they have never had a particular book currently showing as overdue. Being able to show them a picture of the front cover is usually all it takes to go from “I’ve never had that book” to “Oh yes, that book”.

The children are very keen on the Identikit Thumbprint Recognition facility, though initially we had had a few problems with the thumbprint scanners standing up to use by 9 – 13 year olds, all is well now.

We continue to develop and improve the school library. One forthcoming development is to increase the number of computers from which the Library Catalogue can be accessed.

“We are very happy with our choice of Junior Librarian and I would recommend it without hesitation to other international and BFPO libraries with a suitable age range of users.”

Ruth Priest
Librarian – John Buchan School
BFPO 16

