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Case Study
Ysgol Cynfran Llysfaen

Ysgol Cynfran is a bilingual primary school in the county of Conwy. It is a one-form entry school built in 1993 with 170 full time pupils and 18 part-time Nursery pupils (rising three year olds).

The school library

The school had attempted to establish a mini library in the atrium, where fiction books were classified alphabetically according to author, and restricted to junior pupils. Systems were not in place to record or catalogue books nor to regulate loans to pupils. Most of the fiction and nonfiction books were to be found within year group classes. There was need for a system, which would provide a detailed knowledge and an overview of the depth, breadth and coverage (or lack of) on fiction or non-fiction books.

The school library

Teachers had their own resource of books that had been built up over the years to support the curriculum and reading requirements of their particular age groups. The North East Wales School Library Service provided the school with loan books to support particular project needs, as well as enabling older pupils to loan books from the circulating mobile library van.

I was fortunate to attend an INSET course arranged by the NE Wales Library Service to view Junior Librarian from Micro Librarian Systems. The course provided me an overview of a manageable system that would address many of the problems I'd had in establishing a school library. I am not a trained librarian but an enthusiastic IT person who could see many possibilities in using Junior Librarian to deal with many issues we had at our school. The presentation also covered the use of the thumb print recognition module, Indentikit, a much quicker and bureaucratically easier way of using a loan recording system, dispensing with the need for a card system.

There are many aspects to the software that require whole school involvement, the initial one being building up a database of pupils, staff, governors and others who might need access to the resources. Putting the pupils on the system was easily done by importing a file from our school admin system. The staff, etc. were manually put onto the system.

> **A good library system will help you keep track of resources so you know what you've got when you have less money in your budget for your library and you're not then spending it on things you don't need**

Identikit was purchased and letters were written to parents to explain that all pupils would have their thumbprints scanned to facilitate quick book loans. Those who cared to know more were invited into the school to see how the process of registering the thumb prints took place and to explain that a biometric pattern was taken and not a copy of their fingerprint. One parent only visited the school and was reassured that we did not store 'finger prints'.
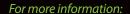
Support was readily available from the NE Wales Library Service to assist us to catalogue all the books and to prepare them to be placed on the shelves. Prior to entering the books into the PC, all the books needed to have a barcode, these were provided by Micro Librarian Systems. The MagiCat software in Junior Librarian was invaluable in saving input time, books with barcode ISBN numbers were easily inputted and categorised. Over 3,000 books were gradually entered on to the database.

The number of books placed in the library increased from a small core number to 3,324. For the first time, the school could account of the number of fiction and non-fiction books in stock, located in one place and accessible to all the pupils and staff. Junior Librarian could provide us with search as well as review facilities for books read.

Introducing pupils to the fiction sections was relatively easy; the Year 4 class where I teach part-time was the first to use the loan facilities. Pupils felt proud to be the guinea pigs to select their fiction reading book from the display units. They came to the library in small groups of four at a time. Having chosen their book they were then showed how to scan the barcode on the inside of the front cover of the book, then to enter the first letter of their surname and to have their left thumb scanned. All were amazed to hear the speech direction provided by the software. The process was completed for the whole class in a relatively short time.

Pupils were eager to complete their first book loan and several returned the next day to loan another. The returns process was even easier, they merely scanned the bar code inside the book and the software recognised and acknowledged the pupil and the book loaned. The library is now embedded in the junior classes and year 2 pupils are happy to borrow and return books. Year 1 will follow suit in due course.

Reports

A whole range of reports can be printed out which can provide detailed data on number of loans by gender, most popular author or least popular etc. Analysis of the data is very illuminating on the use made of the library, data which was previously unavailable. On the 5th of June 2006 the number of loans per year group was:

Year Group	Number of Loans
Early Years	70
Year 1	80
Year 2	89
Year 3	220
Year 4	255
Year 5	398
Year 6	238
Staff 83	

Enthusiastic pupil volunteers in each year group have been shown how to bar code and input books into the library database and given their own privileged password. Entering data on to the database is restricted to certain users; each category user is given their own unique password and an appropriate level of access to the database. The school has promoted this approach and pupil librarians have been awarded prestigious librarian badges which bring additional privileges, such as additional house points, more 'Golden Time' on a Friday afternoon and additional access during play periods to the school's adventure playground.

We have over 3,300 books available to loan and pupils are happy to select and return books on their own. Teachers have minimal administrative work. Pupil librarians were trained to use the Junior Librarian so a small number of pupils in each year group can supervise and assist their peers with their returns and loans. Involving staff and pupils is very important to the continuing success of the library.

Updating the Software

Updating Junior Librarian happens on line or through the provision of a CD. Support is readily available over the phone from Micro Librarian Systems to support staff should we need their assistance. The library is in constant use by the pupils with minimal intervention or support from staff. Our staff, student teachers and pupils have found the non-fiction sections extremely useful to provide resources to support their teaching. Books can be loaned out for specific projects and tracked to ensure that they are returned.

R Geraint Williams . *Headteacher*

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