

Sheldwich School Junior Librarian Case Study

Sheldwich School bought Junior Librarian from the Kent School Library Advisory Team in December 2005, and started using it across the school in term 4 (February 2006).

Before this there was no library catalogue, although there was an alphabetical and classified subject index, together with shelf labelling. Loans had been recorded in individual reading record books or in class library loans folders. There is no separate library space or room at present at Sheldwich; the junior books are kept on low-level shelves along the main corridor whilst the Infant library has a more defined space with a reading and group work table. As LSA/Librarian, I have one whole day per week allotted to library work; this includes all administration and library skills sessions with small groups, class by class. Although I have no hard statistics, I would say that since the introduction of Junior Librarian and the inevitable higher profile given to the library, interest in using it has increased dramatically. The excitement of (nearly) every child's thumbprint being registered for the thumbprint scanner and the smart new computer of course helped, but in addition, I would say that the system has

helped to give the library an entity and an identity which the books along the corridor lacked.

The children are impressed by the fact that they are allowed to use the library unaided (from year 3 upwards) and have responsibility for recording their own loans. I have noticed that they instruct and help each other with the Circulate and Enquiry facilities, which is particularly important as I am only in school 3 days/week. Buying Junior Librarian coincided with greatly increasing the fiction section (previously only held in class collections), and especially books for "reluctant readers". Although the novelty will naturally wear off, borrowing of fiction is especially popular with year 6 boys who are allowed to browse and borrow in their quiet reading slot.

All the junior children have been introduced to the basic workings of the system and have been shown how to search for a particular author or title, or for a particular subject using keywords (I check and alter/add keywords for each book I add to the system). In addition they can check their own loans record, and have been shown how to write a book review. This was so popular that I had to impress on them that circulating the books has priority!

"In addition to all the children learning to take responsibility for their own loans and developing their IT skills by using the catalogue as a research tool, the children in year 5 also have an opportunity to learn basic librarian skills."

Groups of "librarians" help in the lunchtimes using the system, scanning the returned books before re-shelving them, and helping me with the cataloguing of new books, being introduced to such concepts as the ISBN, publisher details, the imprint of the books and coming up with suggestions for keywords.

Of course Junior Librarian is a superb administration tool, allowing much more control over the books, but more importantly, it engages the children's interest for the library and for books and offers opportunities for learning that are only limited by my very limited exploration of the system.

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