

West Kirby Residential School

Junior Librarian Case Study

West Kirby Residential School is a successful non-maintained Special Needs School offering education for day and residential pupils. The school provides education and care for pupils aged 5 – 16 plus and has just been awarded specialist school status by the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust, this is for supporting pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The Library was completely refurbished in October 2001 with new shelving, carousels, display areas and computer and listening stations. The Library did not have a computerised library system and because the Library was expanding and a vast amount of new stock had been purchased, it was decided that a Library Management System was required.

I consulted with other School Librarians through the School Library Association and researched a number of management systems and from this decided that Junior Librarian would be most appropriate for our needs.

The Junior Librarian software was straightforward to install and the documentation manual was comprehensive and easy to follow. Any difficulties I did encounter were soon rectified by the MLS helpdesk who were very patient and happy to supply step by step instructions. It was a straightforward procedure to catalogue all the Library stock

under relevant media types and to use the keyword facility which is excellent as it provides links to other resources to assist pupils when searching the database. This was followed by a simple exercise to enrol all the pupils and staff onto the system. The regular updates to the system are easy to install and ensure that constant improvements to the system are made.

A facility I have found to be extremely useful is the location feature. This allows books and resources from satellite Libraries around school to be catalogued and added to the Library database. e.g. Careers Library held in the careers room and books from Reading Support. By adding the location when cataloguing it is easy to see at a glance what resources are held and where. Junior Librarian also allows restrictions to be placed on borrowing which ensures that pupils can only access material that is age appropriate.

The numerous reports and statistics available on Junior Librarian give excellent feedback on the whole school use of the Library as well as individual borrower history of the pupils. The reports have also proved to be invaluable in evaluating the use of the School Library.



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The implementation of Junior Librarian has been extremely successful and all staff and pupils have found it to be beneficial.

Staff comments:

- Issuing and discharging of books during Library lessons is quick and easy.
- It is easy to ascertain the title of a book issued to a particular pupil if they have mislaid it.
- The “my book” feature offers a list of all books issued to an individual pupil and clearly shows which books are still on loan, giving each child an individual reading record.
- A list of pupil loans can be readily printed and issued to class teachers to follow up outstanding books.
- Pupils’ reviews can be printed and used for displays.
- Junior Librarian allows teachers the opportunity to check pupils’ borrower history to ascertain that they are reading a range of genre and enable them to encourage a wider choice if necessary.

Pupils’ comments:

- I enjoy scanning my own books.
- I am able to look under “enquiry” for a particular book and find out if it is in the Library and where it is shelved.
- I like to do a review on the computer when I have read my book.

Overall the Junior Librarian Management System has proved to be effective and easy to use. The pupils enjoy reviewing their books on the system and are able to use the enquiry feature independently to search for a particular book they would like to read. They are also able to find out at the push of a button, not only the books that they have out on loan but also all the books that they have ever borrowed! Junior Librarian works extremely well in conjunction with Accelerated Reader to provide an excellent reading management system.

In February 2007 following recommendations from other School Librarians it was decided that we would introduce Accelerated Reader into school. This is reading management software which is used in over 70,000 schools world wide. It is a whole school approach to reading as it covers all key stages and also incorporates Barrington Stoke books for more reluctant readers.

Once we had signed up for Accelerated Reader it was a simple procedure to contact the MLS helpdesk, who assisted me in matching up all books held in the Library to the Accelerated Reader quiz list and we found that we already had over 800 AR books, which was an excellent starting point.

The ordering of new books for the Accelerated Reader programme is also aided by Junior Librarian as a master quiz list can be found on the reports section of the system, showing all quizzes available together with their reading levels. It is then easy to order new books at the correct levels for our pupils’ needs.

