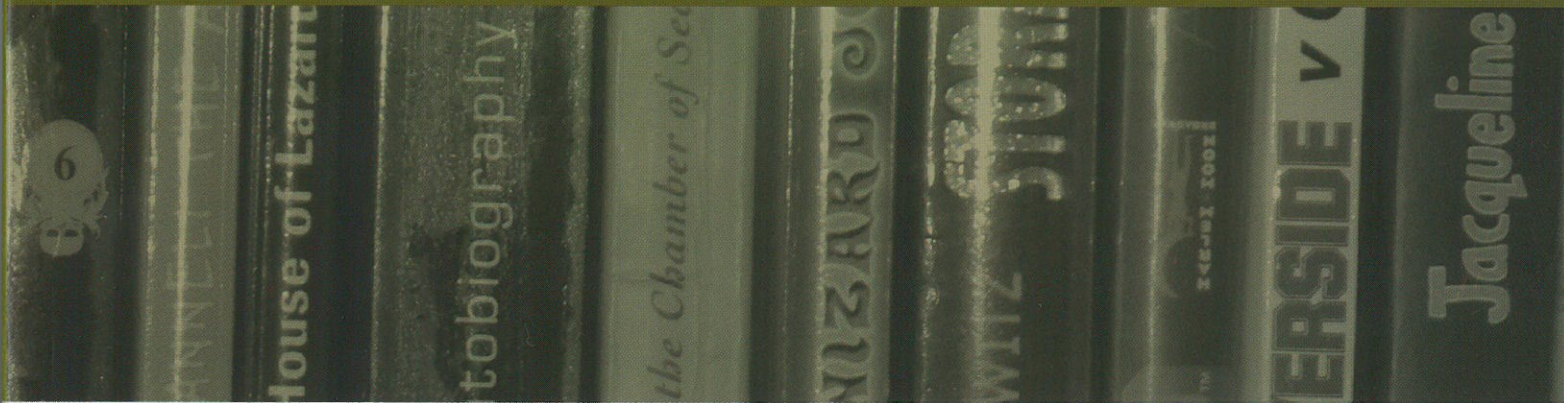


Room for Reading



The Junior Certificate School Programme Demonstration Library Project

Research Report
2005

The Junior Certificate School Programme



Demonstration Library Project

Evaluation Report

Nua Research Services

Edited by Bernadette Kiely, Aideen Cassidy and Margaret Bentley.

Collation and classification of reading test results
and preparation of tables by Bernard Nolan

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The JCSP Library Demonstration Project has come to the end of its first phase. The Project which began as a vision of JCSP students having access to state-of-the-art libraries in which to engage in learning in a new way, has become a reality that has far exceeded our expectations. In July 2001 when we submitted a proposal to the Department of Education and Science under the Early Reading Initiative we were conscious that these libraries would involve the development of new relationships between the profession of teacher and librarian. They would require change by both teachers and librarians as the libraries we envisaged were not going to be places for the quiet study of academic subjects only. They were to be new, exciting educational spaces that would lure reluctant readers through the doors and entice them to participate, to engage, to read.

This report shows the extent to which the 11 libraries have achieved the aims of the project.

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List of abbreviations:

CDU:	Curriculum Development Unit	LAI:	Library Association of Ireland
CDVEC:	City Of Dublin Vocational Education Committee	LCA:	Leaving Certificate Applied
CILIP:	Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals	NALA:	National Adult Literacy Agency
DES:	Department of Education and Science	OECD:	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
DepLIS:	Department of Library and Information Studies	PISA:	Programme for International Student Assessment
HSCLC:	Home School Community Liaison Co-ordinator	PLC:	Post Leaving Certificate
ILSA:	Irish Learning Support Association	RAI:	Reading Association Of Ireland
IAEEA:	International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievements	SLA:	School Library Association
JCSP:	Junior Certificate School Programme	SLARI:	School Library Association, Republic of Ireland
		TY:	Transition Year
		UNESCO:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

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CHAPTER 1:

Background to the JCSP Demonstration Library Project

1.1 Introduction

The Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP) is a national Department of Education and Science intervention for potential early school leavers. It is based on the concept that all young people are capable of success in school, and that they can have a positive experience of education if the conditions are favourable.

The Programme is an intervention into the Junior Certificate and is specially designed to help young people who have had a difficult experience of school. Teachers work as part of a team focusing on the strengths of the students and acknowledging their successes with the help of a profiling system, thus making the Junior Certificate curriculum and examination more accessible to students. An element of the Junior Certificate Programme framework is the development of a school-wide approach to literacy and numeracy.

In October 2001, the Minister for Education and Science announced the JCSP Demonstration Library Project as part of the Early Literacy Initiative. This Project is a significant undertaking by the JCSP support service and participating schools.

Starting in the summer of 2002, the JCSP Demonstration Library Project set up 10 high-quality school libraries in ten participating JCSP schools nationally (an eleventh library commenced at the beginning of the second year of the Project, in September 2003). From the outset, a full-time professionally qualified librarian staffed each library.

The JCSP Demonstration Library Project is located within the broad context of socio-economic and educational disadvantage that the JCSP seeks to address. The JCSP Support Service found from their contact with schools that the level of library provision in schools with high concentrations of disadvantaged students was poor. Many schools had no library at all, some had a room but few books, while others had book trolleys but no room. None had a full-time qualified librarian. As a result of a proposal from Bernadette Kiely and Aideen Cassidy, JCSP National Co-ordinators and Aidan Clifford, Director, CDVEC Curriculum Development Unit, funding was secured for the JCSP Demonstration Library Project under the Department of Education and Science, Early Literacy Initiative.

The Junior Certificate School Programme is supported by the JCSP Support Service. It is made up of two co-ordinators with a support team of five regional development officers. The support service is based in the CDVEC Curriculum Development Unit.

The JCSP Demonstration Library Project is managed by the JCSP National Co-ordinators, the Project Manager and the Director of the Curriculum Development Unit. The funding is administered through the City of Dublin Vocational Educational Committee's Curriculum Development Unit, Crumlin. An Advisory Committee is also in place.

1.2 Junior Certificate School Programme Literacy and Numeracy Strategy

Since 1997 the JCSP Support Service has encouraged schools to develop and evaluate new ways of working with the students. The JCSP Literacy and Numeracy Strategy involves schools putting in place a school-wide approach where every teacher is encouraged to use particular strategies and methodologies to support the literacy and numeracy aspect of their subject. Along side this in-class activity the school may implement a series of short-term interventions designed to motivate and accelerate improvement in literacy and numeracy. The JCSP Literacy and Numeracy Strategy aims to support those schools with a significant number of underachieving readers in developing a whole-school approach to literacy as a central part of their school development plan (Cassidy and Kiely, 2001).

1.3 Objectives and Evaluation of the JCSP Demonstration Library Project

The objective of the Demonstration Library Project was to demonstrate a good library, which caters for the needs of students with literacy difficulties, actually impacts on their learning experience and allows them to address and overcome literacy difficulties. Access to books is an essential element of a literacy development programme, and libraries can give a powerful message to students about the status of reading in a school. The Project aimed to establish the library as the place where students would come to:

- ▶ Enjoy reading for pleasure
- ▶ Learn information skills
- ▶ Find texts related to their subject areas
- ▶ Participate in literacy and literary events
- ▶ Research local studies
- ▶ Prepare for project and cross-curricular work
- ▶ Practise skills needed to become autonomous learners

The evaluation would *inter alia*:

- ▶ Determine the effectiveness of the Project from the perspective of the students involved, primarily the JCSP students, with a view to demonstrating how the Project impacted on their learning and literacy skills
- ▶ Examine how library-based strategies impacted on classroom practice, and helped support the curriculum in the school
- ▶ Assess the impact of the Project on the schools involved and look at the integration of the library and librarian into the life of the school
- ▶ Identify the main issues and highlight the areas of strength and areas for future development

The services of an independent researcher were engaged to evaluate the JCSP Demonstration Library Project and present two reports - an Interim Report at the end of the first year (presented in June 2003) and a Final Report here presented.

1.4 The Establishment of the Demonstration Library Project

1.4.1 Advisory Committee

In March 2002 the Advisory Committee to the Project was formed. Invitations were issued to representatives of key bodies from the wider community committed to promoting and supporting literacy initiatives for young people. The members of the group are listed in Appendix 1.

1.4.2 Selection Process for Schools

In early March 2002, a letter was sent to the principals of all schools participating in the JCSP introducing the JCSP Demonstration Library Project, and outlining the aims of the research. Interested schools with adequate space to house a library were invited to apply for an application form from the Project Manager.

Thirty-five applications were received. The management team drew up guidelines for selection and each application was considered in detail.

The criteria for selection of schools to take part in the JCSP Demonstration Library Project is included in Appendix 2 and details of the selected schools are in Appendix 3. A sub-committee of the Advisory Committee made the final selection and the successful schools were advised in late May 2002.

1.4.3 Contracts with the Schools

All of the principals in the participating schools agreed to the following:

- ▶ That the library be used primarily for the purposes of the JCSP Demonstration Library Project, which is to implement strategies to improve the literacy levels of the JCSP students. This excludes the use of the library for activities such as supervision in cases of absentee teachers, exam purposes, assembly, visiting medical personnel and similar activities.
- ▶ To facilitate in-service training for the librarian and teaching staff involved in the library project.
- ▶ To commit to the research aspect of the project, and to assist the researcher in the continuous monitoring and assessment of the work.

2.1 Introduction

An environment with easy access to books... is proven to enhance the likelihood of literacy competence.

Problems with literacy close many doors in modern society

Houses of the Oireachtas First Report of the Joint Committee on Education and Science on Literacy Levels in Ireland, 1998

The experience of learning to read shades, for most children, into a love of the stories, and later into a curiosity about books and what they might hold. Most young people are seized by the wonder of imaginative literature... what young people experience from books is the purest development of the artistic imagination.

The Arts Council/An Chomhairle Leabharleanna (1998)

2.2 Post-Primary Literacy in Ireland

By international standards, reading literacy among 15-year-old Irish students is high (Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), OECD, 2003). PISA, in line with most current theories on reading literacy, focuses on measuring the extent to which students are able to:

Construct, expand and reflect on the meaning of what they have read in a wide range of texts common both within and beyond school.

In their report, *Ready for Life: the Literacy Achievements of Irish 15 Year Olds with Comparative International Data*, Shiel et al (2001) discussed the issues surrounding low achievement in reading literacy. This OECD study found that smaller proportions of Irish students achieved scores at the lowest levels of proficiency on the combined reading literacy scale, and larger proportions achieved scores at the highest levels, compared to the OECD country average proportions. Nevertheless, the finding that 11% of Irish

students achieved a Level 1 or below on the PISA Combined Reading Literacy Scale is a matter of concern. Students scoring at Level 1 are capable of completing only the least complex reading tasks developed for PISA, such as locating a single piece of information, identifying the main theme of a text or making a simple connection with everyday knowledge. Those scoring below Level 1 do not have even these minimal skills.

There were a number of variables which were associated with levels of achievement on the PISA assessment tasks. These included home background, school type and reading habits and attitudes.

The study found that students who held positive attitudes towards reading, engaged in moderate amounts of reading for enjoyment (30 to 60 minutes per day) and borrowed library books frequently, did significantly better on the Combined Reading Literacy Scale than students who held negative attitudes, and were less likely to engage in leisure reading and borrow library books.

In 1994, Martin and Morgan's comparative analysis on reading literacy examined a number of key variables including gender, voluntary and leisure reading, and access to books. From these analyses the authors concluded that:

The most consistent finding ... relates to the association between access to books and children's reading achievement. Whether considered in terms of comparisons between countries or between schools within countries, the effects are strong and significant ... size of library, number of books, and access to other resources relating to reading are all associated with reading achievement.

Although the authors were very careful to point out that an association of itself does not establish a causal connection, they argued that there appeared to be sufficient substance in the findings to support the establishment of a pilot experimental programme with enhanced access to books for a selected sample of schools and with an appropriate evaluation of the outcomes. Such an evaluation, they proposed, could provide clear direction for policy development.

Cavanaugh and Whelan (1995), in a paper read to the 19th Annual Conference of the Reading Association of Ireland, observed:

Discouraged and defeated readers need our help just as much as encouraged and victorious readers. As educators we agree with this idea, but in reality, discouraged and defeated readers tend to become even more discouraged throughout their schooling and throughout their lives.

Cassidy and Kiely (2001), expanding on this theme some years later, noted:

Students who have difficulty with reading face a daily struggle both to catch up and to keep up with the class. For these students this means facing into a school day of panic and failure. Every lesson brings the possibility of exposure and ridicule;

even in a supportive or sympathetic environment these students are confronted by their own inability to read the same textbooks, or to write from the blackboard as quickly as, their peers.

Among the many causes (which these authors admit are complex) of reading failure identified by Cassidy and Kiely are:

Poor resources for literacy enhancement in schools

Lack of adequate access to books, magazines and other appropriate reading material

2.3 The Post-Primary School Library in Ireland

The library acts as a gateway to the world of knowledge for children ... it acts as a centre for literacy and information skills, sharpening reading skills and assisting children to gain information through reading ... it acts as a seedbed for culture by introducing children and young people to the world of arts and to the oral and material culture of their community

Department of the Environment and Local Government, 1998

Libraries have a major role to play in developing and enhancing children's literacy skills by working closely with schools and parents/guardians, providing a wide range of quality materials suitable for all ages and levels of ability and providing sufficient resources supported by realistic funding

Library Association of Ireland, 2000: Policy Statement on
Library Services to Children and Young People

In its 1999 report on *Delivering Libraries and Information Services in the Information Age*, An Chomhairle Leabharleanna pointed out that at second level, funding for school libraries tends to come from voluntary subscriptions and so is generally dependent on the goodwill of parents or donors.

Coghlan et al (1999), in their *Library File* report, noted that access to school libraries is unequal - some schools have well-resourced and managed libraries and others have no libraries at all.

The Library Association of Ireland (LAI), in its *Policy Statement on Library Services to Children and Young People (2000)* recommended that there should be a statutory obligation to provide libraries in schools at all levels of education. As part of furthering this recommendation, the LAI commissioned a national survey of primary school libraries in Ireland (Haslett, 2002).

This study made recommendations in a number of areas including policy issues, funding and resources, management of school libraries, children with special learning needs, the management of local authority school library services and links with public libraries. There is no doubt that many of these recommendations have relevance for the post-primary sector as well.

SLARI (The School Library Association Republic of Ireland) in its recent *Policy Statement (2004)* argued that there is a urgent need for the establishment of a comprehensive system of school libraries throughout the country. SLARI, in supporting the LAI Policy Statement (2002) and the Haslett (2002) report, has called on the government to legislate for the establishment of a nation-wide system of school libraries.

2.4 The Impact of School Libraries on Reading Attainment, Literacy and Learning

The school library provides information and ideas that are fundamental to functioning successfully in today's information and knowledge-based society. The school library equips students with life-long learning skills and develops the imagination, enabling them to live as responsible citizens.

UNESCO Manifesto for School Libraries, 2000

In a recent review of studies examining the impact of the school library on student achievement, Lonsdale (2003) looked at the evidence linking school libraries both with reading scores on state tests and with student achievement in terms of literacy.

Lonsdale concluded that in terms of the evidence linking school libraries with reading scores, the most influential body of research over the last decade, has been that done by Keith Curry Lance in the United States. The original Colorado Study, led by Lance and funded by the US Office of Education, was based on a "value-added" survey in the state schools in Colorado. The researcher examined a small sample of schools from all stages in both urban and rural areas using standardised tests. Although the sample was small, the study is regarded as reflecting distribution in the US as a whole (Lance, 1993).

The study found that:

- ▶ School investment in libraries affects educational attainment. Students at schools with better funded school libraries tend to achieve higher than average test scores regardless of whether the schools or communities are rich or poor, or whether adults in the community are well or poorly educated.

- ▶ The size of the library staff and the size and variety of the collection are also relevant. The overall level of funding is significant, but only with regard to expenditure on staffing and resources.
- ▶ Students whose school librarian plays an instructional role tend to achieve higher than average test scores. This is also dependent on collaboration between school librarians and teachers and the inclusion of the library materials in the curriculum.

Since then similar studies have been conducted in eight other US states and several researchers have replicated the Colorado Study findings (Lance, 2001).

With regard to evidence linking school libraries with student achievement in terms of literacy, Lonsdale argued that the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievements (IAEEA) Reading Literacy Study, carried out in 32 countries in 1990-1991, points to a clear link between school libraries and reading literacy (defined as 'the ability to understand and use those written language forms required by society and/or valued by the individual'). She stated:

The study identified several factors relevant to school libraries in explaining the differences observed between high-scoring and low-scoring countries, including large school libraries and frequency of book borrowing ... the policy of having large libraries was found to be one of the most important differential policies between high-scoring and low-scoring countries and not merely a function of affluence ... indeed, after adjustment for economic and social conditions, this factor gained rather than diminished in importance.

Scott (2001) in her guide to measuring the effectiveness of the school library resource centre, pointed out that, although the impact on learning is arguably the most important performance measure of all, it is often the most difficult one to measure. She outlined a number of reasons for this:

- ▶ The results of work done in the library or using library resources will be integrated into the pupil's final presentation and may be difficult to isolate
- ▶ The library contributes to and supports the work of teaching staff, but usually does not have a separate element in the final work
- ▶ A successful information skills programme or curriculum research activity will result in internalisation of these skills and evidence may be difficult to quantify
- ▶ There is little tradition or methodology for evaluating and measuring the library's impact upon learning in most schools.

2.5 The Role of the Teacher

In their study on the contribution of school libraries to teaching and learning, Streatfield and Markless (1994) concluded:

We were left in no doubt by the end of the project that the single most important factor leading to effective use of libraries in both primary and secondary schools, was a positive attitude by teachers - - - - they can provide a range of opportunities for children to use the library, work with the library staff in planning and delivering library-based topics, help children develop the information handling skills required to make effective use of the library resources, and encourage children to make active use of books, non-book materials and the school library (as well as local public libraries).

This finding was more recently confirmed by Williams and Wavell (2001). In their study on the impact of the school library resource centre on learning, these authors concluded that, although their research suggests that the school library resource centre does have an impact on a broad range of learning, if the learning potential is to be fully maximised, there is a need for greater dialogue between the teachers and the librarian.

Williams and Wavell argued that teachers and librarians together need to work at reaching a shared understanding of how the school library resource centre contributes to the whole learning picture and more specifically an in-depth understanding of the information handling process and how it relates to curriculum goals. This process will not simply happen - it needs to be planned.

The recent LAI report, *The Borrowers at School: A Report on Primary School Libraries* (Haslett, 2002) found that just over 30% of primary school teachers had, in the five years prior to the study, attended one or more courses/workshops in relevant areas such as library skills, school library organisation, choosing children's books, children's literature or the library as an educational resource. It is very unlikely that this statistic would be substantially higher for second level teachers and quite probable that it would be lower.

In further consultation with the teachers, Haslett reported that there was a strong agreement that teachers need professional development in library skills, in children's literature, and on selecting age- and skills-specific literature. Many teachers argued that training in these areas should be core courses at undergraduate level.

2.6 The Role of the School Librarian

With the exception of the detailed list of responsibilities itemised in the LAI handbook, *Library File: Making a Success of the School Library* (Coghlan et al, 1999), very little has been written about the role of the school librarian in Ireland.

Coghlan et al's list includes:

- ▶ evaluating the present level of resource provision throughout the school
- ▶ developing a plan for the future of the library and linking this to library policy
- ▶ being available to members of staff and pupils who wish to discuss the information requirements of various subject areas and courses
- ▶ in conjunction with the teaching staff, developing a programme for a cross-curricular information skills programme at all levels throughout the school
- ▶ selecting stock and building a collection.

The Librarians in the Demonstration Library Project took on a very particular responsibility not usually articulated in a librarian's brief. This is the role of supporting and developing literacy skills of educationally disadvantaged teenage students.

Ball (2002) examines some of the ways in which school library staff can identify and meet the curriculum and leisure needs of pupils with learning difficulties by creating a supportive library setting, giving help with accessing appropriate resources, and working closely with support staff, parents and pupil librarians. Clearly, close communication with teachers who have learning support responsibilities is important. She instances discussions about curriculum resources and projects, special facilities and equipment, ways to manage behavioural problems, and the successes and failures of individual users.

However, she also emphasises the importance of close communication between the librarian and all members of the teaching staff. She highlights the importance of teachers in all subject areas ensuring that curriculum information and knowledge are conveyed to the librarian.

2.7 The Project in Context

Although the focus of this particular Project is concerned with literacy issues in the disadvantaged post-primary sector, and more especially the JCSP, it is important to put this in context. The *National Development Plan for Ireland (2000-2006)* highlighted the fact that many studies have shown that educational disadvantage can:

become ingrained at a very young age and can result in early school leaving and ultimately unemployment and long-term social marginalisation... for this reason, the provision of comprehensive and diverse education and training facilities, which will cater for the needs of specific groups in society from early childhood through to adulthood, is a priority.

The *National Development Plan* gives support to a number of educational inclusion measures aimed at retaining people in the education system from early childhood through to adulthood.

It is within the spectrum of these initiatives that the present JCSP Demonstration Library Project lies.

3.1 Introduction

The JCSP Demonstration Library Project (henceforth referred to as the Project), was monitored from November 2002 until December 2004. This chapter briefly describes the evaluation philosophy which underpinned the study and the measurements and indicators used.

3.2 The Evaluation Process

Evaluation can take very many different forms. McNamara (1999) pointed out that evaluation can include any, or a combination, of at least 35 different types of measures and processes, such as needs assessments, accreditation, cost/benefit analysis, effectiveness and efficiency. Evaluation can be conceptualised as a continuum with three main types emerging:

- ▶ *descriptive evaluations*, which describe a programme's main structural components
- ▶ *review evaluations* which review the quality of a service's practice
- ▶ *impact evaluations*, which measure the effects of a programme

3.2.1 Descriptive Evaluation

Descriptive evaluation is perhaps the most fundamental step in all evaluation work. It is important to all those concerned with the development of programmes and practice, because the answers to all the other questions depend to some extent on knowing what is actually happening. Funders of services or programmes often find descriptive accounts useful both in demonstrating whether or not the resources have been used as agreed, and as a mechanism for monitoring expenditure.

Although descriptive evaluation often involves collecting and recording "hard facts" (for example, quantity of stock, numbers of books borrowed, numbers of visits to library and so forth) it also involves collecting and monitoring "softer" information about the nature of structural variables. Examples would be critical feedback from students and teachers regarding different types of media, or different genres, and so forth.

However, while descriptive evaluation can determine if a programme was carried out, it does not give any insight into whether it was worth doing. It can compile an inventory of services and activities, but may inadequately describe the commitment and enthusiasm which went into providing those service and activities. Alternatively, it may give those services and activities a status which they do not deserve.

For these reasons descriptive evaluation efforts can effectively document and describe the structure of a programme, but they do not by themselves indicate the effectiveness of the entirety of the programme. They do, however, provide a good basis for the other types of evaluations - that is, review evaluations and impact evaluations.

3.2.2 Review Evaluation

Review evaluations of the process variables are directed towards fully understanding how a service works - how does it produce the results that it does? There are an unlimited number of questions that might be asked in addressing in a process evaluation. For this reason these questions must be selected by carefully considering what is important to know about the various aspect of the process under evaluation such as: developmental aspects of the process, quality of process and appropriateness of the process. Examples of questions that may be asked when designing an evaluation to understand and/or closely examine the process, are:

- ▶ Is the library integrating into the life of the school?
- ▶ Are the library-based strategies impacting positively on classroom practice?
- ▶ Are the students enjoying reading for pleasure?
- ▶ Are they learning information skills?
- ▶ How well are they being prepared for project and cross-curricular work?

3.2.3 Impact Evaluation

An impact evaluation assesses the service in terms of what was achieved. Are there measurable and demonstrable benefits for the students and the school? Such an outcomes-based evaluation asks if the service being provided affects the people it serves differently than an alternative model of service or an older model of the existing service. In other words, are they better off than they were before they had the new library and the new librarian?

In the context of this study impact measures that should be examined include:

- ▶ Standardised Reading Test results
- ▶ Tracking individual students
- ▶ English Junior Certificate Results

3.3 Indicators Used in the Study

As described in Chapter 1, the main objective of the research was to establish whether a good library, which caters for the needs of students with literacy difficulties, actually impacts on their learning experience and allows them to address and overcome literacy. In order to fully evaluate this complex and innovative Project, and to provide an authoritative supply of evidence-based qualitative and quantitative data, a large number of indicators were used to monitor, record and evaluate the Project during its two year history. These indicators, which are described in more detail below, included:

- ▶ Training and support for librarians and teachers
- ▶ Librarians' monthly reports
- ▶ School visits at beginning and end of project
- ▶ School performance data
- ▶ Standardised Reading Test Results
- ▶ Tracking of individual students
- ▶ Book borrowing data
- ▶ Periodic questionnaires
- ▶ English Junior Certificate results

3.3.1 Training and Support for Librarians and Teachers

From the earliest stages of the Project training and support was provided, initially to the librarians and later to the teachers. These matters are discussed in Chapter 4.

3.3.2 Librarians' Monthly Reports

From the outset of the project, each librarian was required to keep a regular diary and, from these entries and recordings, to prepare a monthly report which was submitted as part of the research process. Each librarian was given a set of Guidelines on Report Writing (see Appendix 5). The monthly reports commenced in November 2002 for the initial ten libraries (September 2003 for the eleventh library) and continued until the end of the Project in December 2004. Feedback from the librarians, through their reports, is woven throughout this entire report.

3.3.3 School Visits at Beginning and End of Project

Between February 2003, and May 2003, a two-day visit was made to each of the ten participating schools in the order in which the libraries had been established. During these two days a number of objectives were met. These included:

- ▶ Interview with school principal
- ▶ Interview with JCSP co-ordinator
- ▶ Interview with librarian
- ▶ Interviews/focus group discussions with a cross section of teaching staff
- ▶ Focus group discussions with three groups of JCSP students from 1st, 2nd and 3rd year
- ▶ Observation of library classes and activities, including lunchtime and after- school activity.

This process was repeated towards the end of the Project. In September and October 2004, visits (lasting between one and one-and-a-half days) were made to each of the (now) eleven participating schools. The programme of activities the second time around was very similar to the first round of visits (see Appendix 6). The numbers of teachers and students consulted during both rounds of visits is shown in Table 1 below. The results of these consultations are found in Chapters 19, 20 and 21, and are also woven throughout the entire report.

Table 1: Numbers of teachers and students consulted during school visits				
	Teachers 2003	Teachers 2004	Students 2003	Students 2004
Totals	55	67	132	102

3.3.4 Standardised Reading Test results

In April 2003, the Group Reading Test 2 (6-14) Nfer Nelson was administered to 535 JCSP students in ten schools under the direction of the JCSP Support Service. A year later, in April 2004, the same test was administered to 572 JCSP students in eleven schools. These findings are discussed in Chapter 14.

3.3.5 Tracking of Individual Students

Because of the difficulties, particularly in the very short life span of this study, in demonstrating an association between possible found Standardised Reading Test gains and the role of the library, it was decided to describe individual students. These students, in the views of the JCSP co-ordinator, the librarian and/or other teachers, were improving in their literacy/learning skills while at the same time showing a demonstrable usage of the resources of the library. These data are discussed in Chapter 17.

3.3.6 Book Borrowing Data

Book borrowings for each school for 2002/2003 and 2003/2004 were recorded using the Heritage system, and classified by:

- ▶ JCSP/non JCSP
- ▶ Class (Junior cycle only) and year group
- ▶ Gender
- ▶ Fiction/non Fiction

These data are discussed in Chapter 16.

3.3.7 Periodic Questionnaires

During the lifetime of the Project, a number of standardised questionnaires were completed by librarians, JCSP co-ordinators and teachers. Feedback from these questionnaires is woven throughout the report.

3.4 Summary

In order to evaluate this complex and innovative Project, and to provide an authoritative supply of evidence-based qualitative and quantitative data, a large number of indicators were used to monitor, record and evaluate the Project during its two year history. These were:

- ▶ Training and support for librarians and teachers
- ▶ Librarians' monthly reports
- ▶ School visits at beginning and end of project
- ▶ School performance data: standardised reading test results
- ▶ Tracking of individual students
- ▶ Book borrowing data
- ▶ Periodic questionnaires
- ▶ English Junior Certificate 3.1 results

Training and Support for Librarians and Teachers

4.1 Introduction

It has been demonstrated that, when librarians and teachers work together, students achieve higher levels of literacy, reading, learning, problem-solving and information and communication technology skills

UNESCO Manifesto for School Libraries, 2000

4.2 Training and Support for Librarians

From the initial stages of the Project right through its lifetime, there was very considerable training and support for the librarians. At a very early stage in the life of the Project, the newly appointed librarians had a series of training days including:

- ▶ An introductory session to the Junior Certificate School Programme given by one of the two JCSP National Co-ordinators
- ▶ A two day in-service entitled “Whole School Literacy Approach”
- ▶ A training day outlining existing JCSP literacy and numeracy strategies.

As well as these initial training events, the librarians had a great deal of ongoing training and support from the Project Manager, the JCSP National Coordinators and the support team through regular school visits, monthly meetings of the librarians and conferences attended (see Appendix 7). These monthly meetings, as well as allowing for very important professional interaction between the otherwise potentially isolated librarians, also addressed issues such as:

- ▶ Devising and promoting literacy strategies and reviewing their impacts
- ▶ Exploring specific difficulties with a view to utilising the shared learning/experiences
- ▶ Keeping up to date with relevant developments, publications and conferences
- ▶ Comparing the effectiveness of visiting authors, storytellers, musicians and other groups
- ▶ Reviewing the progress of the research to date

The librarians greatly valued their training programme.

4.3 Library In-Service Programme for Teachers

4.3.1 Format of the Programme

The JCSP Support Team was aware from the outset of the Project that the introduction of a library, staffed fulltime by a professional librarian who would work alongside teachers in developing and supporting literacy strategies, would lead to enormous changes in the life of the school. They were aware of the need for training and support for both librarians and teachers in this new venture.

At the end of the first year of the Project, the JCSP Support Team and the Project Manager, with inputs from the JCSP National Co-ordinators, the school JCSP co-ordinators and the school librarians, designed a programme of library in-Service days for all members of the teaching staff in each of the participating schools. These in-service days began in November 2003 and continued until February 2004. A full account of the Library In-Service is found in Appendix 8 and is described briefly below. The programme was designed:

- ▶ To inform teachers about the background to the Project, and to outline the Project at national level
- ▶ To explain the role of individual schools within the Project
- ▶ To outline some of the more significant research findings to date
- ▶ To provide training to all staff on how the library is organised, with particular reference to individual subject areas and the computerised library management system
- ▶ To inform all staff about the library-based activities currently taking place in the library, and to explore further potential activities
- ▶ To assess staff engagement with, and knowledge of, the library, its aims, resources, facilities and services
- ▶ To get teachers' reactions and feedback.

A typical programme included:

- ▶ An introduction by a member of the JCSP Support Service
- ▶ A presentation of the overall Project by the Project Manager
- ▶ A review of the current work in the library presented by the school librarian and some members of staff
- ▶ A review by the school principal of the impact of the library and the librarian on the school
- ▶ Exploration of the three layers within the JCSP literacy strategy - ie classroom strategies, short term interventions and a whole-school approach within a context of access to books and reading materials
- ▶ An outline of the JCSP Readalong, paired reading, peer tutoring, Make-A-Book, reading challenge, word millionaire and numeracy interventions.
- ▶ Exploration of the implementation of the whole-school approach to literacy and numeracy in the context of the library

- ▶ A workshop, discussion and feedback session facilitated by a member of the JCSP Support Service
- ▶ Evaluation of the programme and the day's activities by all participants.

In their presentations to the teaching staff, the librarians described, *inter alia*:

- ▶ The goals of the library:
 - To support the curriculum
 - To develop reading skills among JCSP students
 - To support information literacy skills
 - To promote reading and a print rich environment
 - To promote a whole-school approach to literacy
- ▶ The current activities of the library, e.g.:
 - Time-tabled visits for JCSP students
 - Paired reading, Readalong, laptop work
 - Free-reading visits by non-JCSP classes
 - Cross-curricular project work, art work
 - Drama, music, storytelling workshops
- ▶ How the library is organised and managed (including an explanation of the Dewey Decimal and Heritage Systems)
- ▶ Examples of individual student progress
- ▶ School library policy
- ▶ Planned future activities.

4.3.2 Teacher Evaluations of the Programme

In each school the participating teachers came from across the entire curriculum including technology, mathematics, business studies, science, art craft and design, home economics and CSPE as well as English, languages, history and geography.

At the end of the sessions, teachers were asked to complete an evaluation form. Evaluations were positive from 99% of evaluations returned. Typical comments included:

Finding out about the impact of the library on the reading habits of the students - that so much could be achieved in such a short space of time

The vast amount of information received from the librarian about what is currently happening in the library

Hearing how other staff members were using the library as a resource

How pupils could be encouraged to use the library

The availability of additional resources for my subject in other sections of the library (in sections that I would never have associated with my subject up to now)

I was amazed to hear which students were using the library most frequently. I would never have associated these particular students with recreational reading.

4.3.3 Benefits as Noted by Librarians

Several of the librarians found that the library in-service day had an immediate positive effect on teachers and their levels of interest and involvement with the library. Typical observations by librarians included:

Reaped the rewards of in-service instantly – four classes came up with four teachers who had not previously visited the library. These sessions had not been planned in advance so they were free reading sessions and plans for future classes were discussed.

The reaction and feedback from Monday's in-service day has been quite remarkable all week. Teachers have been beating a path to the library door – organising class visits, ordering new stock, donating books and project files. Even the tea lady donated a set of encyclopaedias.

The following day received a lot of positive comments about the in-service from a number of teachers. The ones I was especially pleased about were made by those teachers who hadn't been users or regular users. Even more pleasing were the bookings made by two teachers (geography and woodwork) who hadn't brought a class group to the library before.

4.4 Summary of Findings

From the initial stages of the Project, and right through its lifetime, there was a comprehensive support and training programme for the librarians through a series of seminars, training days, monthly meetings, and other supports. The training and support programme for librarians was highly valued by the librarians.

During the second year of the Project, a library in-service programme was delivered to all members of the teaching staffs in each of the participating schools. This programme was positively evaluated by 99% of the 313 participating teachers. Many of the librarians noted that the Library In-Service had an immediate beneficial effect on teachers' levels of interest in, and involvement with, the library.

Growth of the JSCP Demonstration Library - from Conception to Integration

5.1 Introduction

From the detailed information gathered from the array of indicators described in Chapter 3, it was clear, *inter alia*, that the Project libraries went through three distinct developmental stages in the lifetime of the Project. These are referred to as *Early Days*, *Consolidation and Integration*. Because the libraries came on stream at different times¹ and developed differentially, these stages occurred *approximately* as follows:

Early Days: September 2002 to January 2003

Consolidation: January 2003 to April 2003

Integration: April 2003 to end of Project

5.2 Early Days

In the early stage, the first task for most of the librarians was to physically clear out the proposed library, as many of the rooms had been used as “storerooms” for non-library materials. Following this they:

- ▶ Put together a library design, with special consideration given to the type of project work planned for the JCSP students.
- ▶ Began to source carpenters/ woodwork teachers/ cabinetmakers to supply shelving and furniture.
- ▶ Investigated the installation of telephone/ISDN lines.
- ▶ Had the rooms painted. In many cases they painted the rooms themselves, sometimes with the help of JCSP students.
- ▶ Evaluated existing stock
- ▶ Commenced classification of existing stock.
- ▶ Began to meet with JCSP co-ordinators and JCSP teaching staff.
- ▶ Began to meet with JCSP students themselves, and to circulate questionnaires eliciting their interests and library perceptions.
- ▶ Sourced materials and suppliers of relevant stock, books, magazines and software
- ▶ Spent the allocation of €15,000 made available to each school for stock buys.

1 (School 11 was an exceptional case. It did not come on stream until October 2003. However, benefiting from the collective experience, and with enormous effort on the parts of the librarian, the school management, the Project Manager and the JCSP Support Team, this library, by the end of the Project (December 2004) was as well developed as most of the other libraries).

At this phase, many of the librarians relied on the active help of a huge range of people including members of the school staff (teachers and non-teachers), pupils, and even members of their own families. During the early stage, the librarians had to deal with a wide range of practical challenges, some of which were common to many of them and others which were school-specific.

5.3 Consolidation

In the second phase, the librarians began to organise their libraries, stocked the shelves, and commenced the process of cataloguing. They also began to meet with both their teacher colleagues and the students, and started a programme of library-based classes, strategies and activities. Several had their formal launches during this stage.

- ▶ Stock included:
- ▶ Young adult fiction
- ▶ Easy-to-read material
- ▶ Information books
- ▶ Reference books
- ▶ Books with tapes
- ▶ Videos and DVDs
- ▶ Careers material
- ▶ Teachers resource books
- ▶ Computers
- ▶ Printers

The libraries were well stocked with series appropriate to the interests and abilities of the school's students, with particular reference to JCSP pupils. Series included:

- ▶ 4u2read.ok
- ▶ Collin's Sound Bites
- ▶ Corgi Pups
- ▶ Heinemann High Impact
- ▶ Livewire Chillers
- ▶ Livewire Classics
- ▶ Livewire Myths and Legends
- ▶ Nelson's Premier Thrillers
- ▶ Plays with Attitude
- ▶ Simon and Schuster's 'Pocket Books'
- ▶ Young Corgi

5.4 Integration

In the recent DES (2004) consultation document, Your Education System, it was stated:

...in some ways the model of schooling has changed little. Schools are still seen as places where pupils are grouped by age, sit at desks and are taught by one teacher at the top of the classroom. This is how we imagine schools to be. But what of the future? Can the traditional model last for much longer?

During this final stage, as will be amply illustrated in the following chapters, this 'model of schooling' was challenged strategically and successfully in library after library. Principals and teachers graphically described their library, with its librarian, as increasingly becoming the heart and the hub of the school. As well as building on and developing the classes, strategies and activities begun in the consolidation stage, other events took place in the libraries including drama, music, and story-telling workshops, ENFO and other exhibitions, and inter-school debates. This stage saw the establishment of before- and after-school activities, the formation of reading clubs (for both students and teachers), chess clubs and homework clubs. It also saw the remaining libraries have their formal launches.

By the end of this stage, the number of stock items (including books, cassettes and videos) per pupil in the school libraries varied between 9 and 15. Coghlan et al (1999) recommended, as a minimum, 13 items per pupil for those aged 11 to 16 years, and 19 items per pupil for those aged over 16 years.

The following chapters deal with the Integration stage in more detail.

Before introducing any other findings the following should be noted. In nine of the eleven schools it has been repeatedly demonstrated, through the report, the project was highly successful. These nine schools achieved the outcomes hoped for when the project commenced. However in two schools difficulties arose. One of the schools had difficulties, which are outside the scope of this report to address. The second school had difficulties owing to the ill health of the librarian. These difficulties continued throughout the lifetime of the project.

5.5 Summary of Findings

The Demonstration Library Project libraries went through three distinct developmental stages during the lifetime of the Project:

- ▶ The early stage was dominated by the practical details of getting the physical library up and running

- ▶ In the second stage, the consolidation phase, the librarians began to organise their libraries, stock the shelves, catalogue the materials, get to know both their teacher colleagues and the students, and start a programme of library-based classes, strategies and activities
- ▶ In the final, integration, stage, the strategies and activities commenced in the consolidation stage were built upon, developed and expanded. At this stage many principals and teachers were describing their librarian-managed libraries as the centre of the school.

The JCSP Literacy Strategy

6.1 Introduction

How do you help a twelve year old who has serious literacy difficulties... how do you ensure that this student is not so frustrated and disillusioned with learning that, at age thirteen, she drifts further away from school life ultimately deciding, long before she turns sixteen, that learning isn't for her. These are age-old problems faced by schools up and down the country.

(The Literacy Programme, Larkin Community College, 2004)

The main aim of this research is to establish whether a good library, which caters for the needs of students with literacy difficulties, actually impacts on their learning experience and allows them to address and overcome these difficulties. Chapters 6 to 13 will look at library-based literacy support in the context of the Project.

6.2 The JCSP Literacy Strategy

The Junior Certificate School Programme Literacy and Numeracy Strategy promotes a whole-school approach to literacy and numeracy development at Junior Cycle. Central to this strategy is the belief that all teachers can support literacy development. Within the strategy schools are encouraged to put in place a literacy development plan which encompasses short term interventions with targeted students and the fostering of a reading culture throughout the school. The JCSP Demonstration Library Project aims to support those schools with a considerable number of underachieving students in implementing this approach as a central part of their school development plan.

The JCSP literacy strategy encourages schools to involve all subject teachers in adopting specific techniques in teaching the literacy demands of their subject area. It allows for subject-specific learning to take place more effectively while at the same time supporting literacy improvement. When several teachers use these strategies the students not only master subject content but also develop the skills necessary to become independent learners. There are three layers to the JCSP Literacy strategy:

- ▶ Classroom strategies
- ▶ Short-term targeted interventions
- ▶ Whole-school approach within the context of access to reading materials.

6.2.1 Classroom Strategies

Strategies are outlined to subject teachers during in-service by developing the notion that every teacher has a role in literacy development within the parameters of their particular subject. These strategies include:

- ▶ Oracy development
- ▶ Pairwork
- ▶ Keyword approach
- ▶ Directed activities towards text: deconstruction and analysis of text by students
- ▶ Writing frames
- ▶ Spelling strategies
- ▶ Numeracy strategies

These strategies are supported by guidelines for implementation and materials to be used in the classroom.

6.2.2 Short-term Interventions

Alongside these classroom activities students need to be provided with lots of opportunities to improve their literacy and numeracy. Students at second level have had many negative experiences of such work and the JCSP Support Service endeavours to provide schools with ideas and activities that will once again motivate their students to read. Many of these short-term interventions are based on international research but adapted to the Irish context. Other strategies have been developed by the teachers themselves, piloted to research the impact on literacy/numeracy acceleration and produced in such a way by the Support Service as to allow for implementation across many schools. The interventions include:

- ▶ Who Wants to be a Word Millionaire?
- ▶ The Reading Challenge
- ▶ Cross Age Paired Reading 2nd years with 2nd class
- ▶ Paired Reading with parents
- ▶ Paired Reading with senior students
- ▶ Peer Tutoring Paired Reading
- ▶ Paired Maths
- ▶ Numeracy interventions
- ▶ Readalong using audio tapes
- ▶ Readalong using laptops and books on CD ROM
- ▶ Keyword Literacy and Numeracy Notebooks

Schools are encouraged to pre- and post-test the students using standardised tests to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention and to develop the school's confidence in how it can support acceleration in literacy and numeracy development.

6.2.3 Whole-School Approach

This approach asks schools to develop a Literacy and Numeracy Policy setting targets for literacy and numeracy improvement. The approach includes the most appropriate elements of the JCSP strategy based on a needs analysis of their students and supported by whole staff in-service and materials.

6.3 Library-Based Literacy Programmes

During the second year of the Project, following on the consolidation stage described earlier, all of the school libraries began to extend and integrate their literacy support strategies. These strategies varied from school to school but they all had a number of key elements:

- ▶ They involved co-operation between the librarian and several members of the teaching staff
- ▶ They were library based
- ▶ They often had experimental and innovative aspects
- ▶ They were evaluated to ascertain effect on the participating students

The range of classes, events and activities was very considerable and included:

- ▶ Paired Reading (JCSP initiative)
- ▶ Readalong (JCSP initiative)²
- ▶ Make a Book (JCSP initiative)
- ▶ Project work
- ▶ Profile statements
- ▶ Borrowing books to take home for leisure reading
- ▶ Computers (educational software)
- ▶ Computers (other activities)
- ▶ Creative writing
- ▶ Dictionary/atlas/reference book work
- ▶ Displays of pupil work (eg art, woodwork)
- ▶ Free reading with Teacher in attendance
- ▶ Homework club with librarian in attendance
- ▶ Homework club with teacher in attendance

2 In the Readalong JCSP Literacy Initiative, schools are grant aided to purchase personal tape recorders (walkmans) and headphones along with a selection of audio books. Students listen to books on tape while following it on the text.

- ▶ Internet information seeking
- ▶ Literacy attack
- ▶ Numeracy strategies
- ▶ Reading for leisure in library
- ▶ Reading programme
- ▶ Shared reading
- ▶ Social school-related events, e.g. debates, quizzes, visiting speakers
- ▶ Understanding vocabulary
- ▶ Using library after school for leisure reading
- ▶ Using library at lunch time for leisure reading
- ▶ Using library before school starts for leisure reading
- ▶ Word searches
- ▶ Writer in residence scheme

The following three chapters will look in some detail at the first five activities listed above—Paired Reading, Readalong, Make-a-Book, Project Work and Profile Statements.

6.4 An Example of Good Practice

Between 1998 and 2001, one of the eleven Project schools (School 9) received an extensive literacy support programme provided by the JCSP Support Service. Following this, the school began a major Literacy Programme in September 2002 which is still ongoing.

The effectiveness of the programme during the first year was regularly monitored using feedback from teachers, students and assessment results. At the end of this year, the students were reassessed to determine their reading ages. While the results also showed that the programme did not produce changes in the reading ages of all of the students, the authors (Doyle and Holian, March 2004), in their interim report, state:

The results showed that a number of students did reach the goal of improving their reading by two years; in fact the reading ages of some students was boosted by more than this.

The school identified the library and the librarian as being two of the key elements in developing a successful literacy programme. In their summary the authors wrote:

It is evident from the findings dispersed throughout this report that the success of the Literacy Programme to date has been highly dependent on the following factors:

- ▶ *The wide range of interventions afforded by having a full-time librarian*
- ▶ *The existence of the library*
- ▶ *Regular review meeting of the Literacy Team*

- ▶ *The inherent flexibility of the Literacy Programme*
- ▶ *The support of management*
- ▶ *The responses of students to the Literacy Programme*

6.5 Summary of Findings

During the first year of the Project, all the school libraries introduced their literacy support strategies which included both existing JCSP initiatives (such as Paired Reading and Make-a-Book) and new initiatives on reading and literacy. These strategies were developed and expanded during the second year of the project. Although they varied from school to school, they had a number of key elements:

- ▶ They involved co-operation between the librarian and several members of the teaching staff
- ▶ They were library-based and often had experimental and innovative aspects
- ▶ They were evaluated to ascertain their effect on the students.

Just before the Project commenced, one of the eleven Project schools (School 9) had begun a major Literacy Programme which is still ongoing. As Stage Two of the Literacy Programme was coming to an end, an internal evaluation of the programme by the school's literacy team identified the school library and the librarian as being two of the key elements in its success.

Paired Reading, Readalong and Other Reading Initiatives and Strategies

7.1 Introduction

At an early stage in the Project, the majority of participating schools were not only involved in one or more JSCP reading initiatives such as Paired Reading or Readalong, but were increasingly using the library as the location for the implementation and monitoring of these strategies. These reading strategies expanded and developed very considerably during the second year of the Project.

7.2 Paired Reading

Paired reading strategies varied from school to school. Some involved 5th year with 2nd year students, others involved parents or community volunteers with 1st year students; in some the 'senior' partner had strong reading skills, in others not so. In one school the 3rd year JCSP students, after receiving some training from the librarian (how to read with expression, how to encourage young children) visited the local primary school library to do paired reading with 1st class children.

The librarians reported that library-based paired reading sessions worked well. For example:

The paired reading is going very well this year. The 5th years are working with 2nd years three mornings a week. The 5th years have been very co-operative and have worked well, even with 2nd years who would not normally be happy to do this kind of work. Some teachers have been pleasantly surprised at the sight of certain 2nd years reading. I have been able to encourage some of the students to move onto more demanding books when I have observed them racing through the books they picked.

Our school's paired reading video was shown to Transition Year students in the library so that they can start working with 1st year JCSPs on the programme immediately. There will be three sessions weekly in the library, overseen by the JCSP co-ordinator and myself.

The paired reading with community volunteers takes place in the library and is a great success – some of the students who are most difficult in class are really enjoying these one-to-one sessions ... one student whose literacy levels are very low has

become very excited by John Steinbeck's 'The Red Pony'³ and remarked that although some of the words were hard that it was a 'deadly book' and he couldn't wait to get to the end of the story.

Peer tutoring sessions between the 1st year JCSP class and a 5th year LCA(Leaving Certificate Applied) class commenced today. This has been organised in conjunction with the LCA co-ordinator and the 1st year English teacher. It will run for single class periods on 4 days per week until the end of term. Both groups are very willing to be involved.

(May) Peer tutoring sessions are going very well. The 1st years are reading more than they have ever read before – and enjoying doing so. I have put a display of 'Shared Reading' books from which they choose what to read. While some of these are quite easy, others are a little more challenging and I have asked the 5th years to encourage their 'partners' to choose the more challenging books, if they feel that they will be able to attempt to read them.

Sometimes, for logistical reasons, paired reading partners were not available and the librarians had to use their skills to fill the gap – for example:

During JCSP paired reading time, especially when TY partners are not available due to work experience placements, I have tried a new approach in helping them attack their book review sheets. I want to give the JCSPs additional vocabulary for describing type of book, and practise giving reasons for their 'like' or 'dislike' verdicts. We sit in a circle and each student talks about his/her book – is it a chiller, a thriller, adventure, horror and so forth. We ask questions of each other. I write the summary for each book on flip-chart. Sessions seem to work well.

On a lighter note, one school was selected by the JCSP Support Team to feature in the production of the "Everybody Reads" Paired Reading video. Rehearsals with the students featuring in the video got underway in April. The librarian reported:

One of the students who has been selected to demonstrate how paired reading should not be carried out has actually benefited from the exercise in that he has read more this month during rehearsals than at any time during the year. Ironically, he was reading so well that I had to instruct him to slow down his reading and make mistakes on purpose. He got a great kick out of being told he was reading too well!

3 This is a popular choice for paired reading in this school as the culture of horse ownership in the area is very strong

7.3 Readalong

As with paired reading, the librarians report that on the whole, the Readalong programmes went well. One librarian who had Readalong in the library last year as well as this year, was able to make a comparative observation:

(November) Readalong with 1st year JCSP is going great. They have taken to it very well. They are better at it than last year's 1st years although it may be that I am better!

In January, when these students had finished their Readalongs, the librarian made little booklets for the students to fill in. The students briefly described the main characters, their favourite character, the story, and what they liked about the story. Finally, they illustrated their booklets and put them on display in the library.

Two more schools also reported successful Readalong programmes. This was particularly important for one school which was participating in Readalong for the first time.

(February) We have started a Readalong session for the Special English Class 2 (JCSP). The school has not had Readalong before so it is quite a novelty for the students. These sessions have been very successful. By April the students were using Spin-Out Stories software to create their own stories. Their teacher is very impressed with their level of interest in their English class and their progress in reading

In another school, when the 1st year JCSP boys finished their Readalong programme in March, they commenced a paired reading programme with a group of PLC (Post Leaving Certificate) students who were doing a childcare course. The 'pairs' came to the library three times a week for 15 minutes paired reading and the librarian reported that both JCSP and PLC students seemed to benefit from the process.

Also in this school the 1st year class did a six-week Readalong in the library. The students were pre- and post- tested using the Young Cloze 3 Group Reading Test. Of the 13 students in the group, nine improved, one remained unchanged, two slightly regressed and one was not available for retesting. The teacher concerned, and her colleagues who were involved in JCSP teaching, were strongly of the view that the library, with its ambience and space, and its calming influence on the students, was fundamental in producing these and similar learning improvements.

7.4 Examples of Other Reading Strategies

Apart from these programmes that have their roots in JCSP initiatives, the librarians also introduced other reading strategies which were often designed for a particular class or particular child. A few of these are described here:

7.4.1 Shared Reading

Last year the librarian in one of the schools established a very successful shared reading programme in association with a nearby third-level College. This programme took place again this year in the library. At the beginning of the school year the College recruited 20 mentors, some staff members and some students, who undertook to come to the school once a week and read with 2nd year JCSP students.

At the end of the term, the views of the students on the shared reading programme were formally sought by the school's literacy team. The feedback indicated that this programme helped their reading more than any other strategy. Typical comments from the young people were:

You read lots of books but they don't rush you

They give you a chance and help you when you are stuck

It's not like a teacher – you don't feel under pressure

7.4.2 Graphic Novels

A teacher who was due to bring a group of 2nd years to the library spoke to me about her frustrations with them and how they are so badly behaved. She was looking for ideas. I gave her a great little book on Vampires. It has the story of Dracula in graphic novel form. This was a big hit. We went on to the internet and, with puzzlemaker.com, we created a word search using vocabulary from the Dracula story. Students loved the word search. (Librarians comment)

7.4.3 Understanding Vocabulary

We were doing some work (in the library) on birds with the 1st years. The word 'camouflage' came up. Many of the students did not understand the concept of camouflage. Their teacher was delighted to be able to take books from the shelves with clear illustrations of birds and animals in camouflage. The students left with an understanding of this concept. Their teacher felt that she would never have got this across to them with words alone. (Librarians comment)

7.4.4 Reading Programme

This month commenced a reading programme with two 1st year JCSP classes. All students choose a reader and a log is kept of their reading progress. They are all very anxious to get their books read – a number of them are coming in outside of their timetabled visits in order to change their books and update their logs. (By the end of the school year this Librarian was able to report that in one of these JCSP classes every child in the class is now reading regularly)

7.5 Library-Based Numeracy Support

In several schools there was considerable emphasis throughout the year on numeracy skills. This was particularly so in the final school to enter the Demonstration Library Project.

(October) we had another ‘Maths for Fun’ session in the library today. It was a great success. Parents come in and help the students in arranging geometrical shapes. This is an initiative of the Home School Community Liaison (HSCL) Scheme.

(February) in addition to the ‘Maths for Fun’ sessions, I purchased a numeric board game for the library, which is working very well. It is called Number Quest and involves the students throwing four dice and adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing to make the largest possible number under 100. this is proving very popular with both staff and students.

During the course of the year the teachers involved in these library-based numeracy support activities attended a numeracy in-service course organised by the JCSP Support Team. This was followed up by a numeracy week in the school with a cross-curricular emphasis centred on a soccer numeracy programme and a traffic survey.

At the end of the school year, presentation of certificates for ‘Maths for Fun’ took place in the library. Parents were invited in and the students baked cakes and buns in the shape and colour of traffic lights, to reflect the work done in the traffic survey. The librarian concluded that the numeracy in-service course provided to this school was ‘invaluable’ in providing inspiration for library-based mathematical and numeracy activities for JCSP students.

Other schools had numeracy sessions in the library for part of the school year. The librarian in one school, with the support of the resource teacher, introduced the students to both Wordshark 3 and Numbershark 3 (literacy/numeracy) software which were used extensively.

7.6 Teachers' Views of Reading Initiatives and Strategies

As reported in Chapter 3, consultations were carried out towards the end of the Project with 67 JCSP co-ordinators and teachers across the eleven participating schools. The vast majority of these teachers were strongly of the view, supported by numerous incidences from their own pre- and post-library experience, that outcomes from reading initiatives and strategies were strengthened and enriched by the library process. Teacher after teacher reported that not only had reading standards improved, but also levels of enthusiasm, concentration, ability to complete a task and constructive behaviour had improved.

7.7 Summary of Findings

During the second year of the Project, the numerous reading initiatives and strategies which had either begun prior to the Library Project or had begun in the first year, rapidly expanded and developed. Direct feedback from students, librarians and teachers (and indirectly from parents) confirmed that, through these library-based programmes:

- ▶ Reading standards had improved
- ▶ The students enjoyed these programmes and experienced learning in a non- traditional environment outside of the classroom creating new levels of enthusiasm.
- ▶ Constructive behaviour, concentration and the ability to complete a task had all improved.

CHAPTER 8:

Project Work: Make-a-Book and other Library-Based Projects

8.1 Introduction

An important part of the JCSP Framework is the encouragement and support of a cross-curricular approach to teaching and learning. The aim of cross-curricular work in the JCSP context is to provide students with an active, enquiring education which is grounded in the issues of everyday life and encourages links between all subjects of the curriculum. The methodology is intended to foster learning by first-hand experience and the active participation of students in planning, decision making and in evaluation. Library-based projects were being carried out in all of the libraries at a very early stage in the Project. This continued, developed and expanded in the second year to include Make-a-Book and other projects.

8.2 The Make-a-Book Project

The Make-a-Book project provides JCSP students with an opportunity to be involved in an imaginative and creative cross-curricular project that challenges them to express their voice in an original way. This project, which has now been running for six years, culminates each year in the national Make-a-Book exhibition at which the JCSP students display their work to a wide audience.

In all of the Demonstration Library Schools that participated in Make-a-Book, the library and the librarian were very involved at all stages of the development of the projects. Topics ranged from mathematical puzzles (pentominoes), to myths (Children of Lir), to animals facing extinction, to 'fishy' stories, to joke books. Media used included papier-mâché, cardboard, wood, water, and film. Curricular subjects included English, History, Mathematics, Woodwork, Science and Geography.

Many of the librarians reported the Make-a-Book projects as challenging, but fun and exciting as well. Typical observations included:

Make-a-Book has been the focus of work for the 1st year JCSPs. Today I spent the day out with them filming for their project – a modern day version of the Children of Lir. It was great fun. Our locations were the Grand Canal, Stephen's Green, the Garden of Remembrance and Mountjoy Square. This project is also part of their 'Pathways through Education' programme that first years do with DIT.

The second year JCSP class are spending a lot of time in the library working on their Make-a-Book project. They are working with their maths teacher to produce a book on pentominoes. This is very interesting. Some of those with quite poor literacy skills are getting on very well with this project. This shows that they have good spatial awareness. (March): We brought the first and second year JCSP classes to Dublin by train to see the exhibition. They were all so excited about the trip but they were very well behaved and we didn't lose any of them!

First years were taken to the Zoo this week. It was hoped that this would give them the motivation needed to complete the project. All of them enjoyed the experience. The research component for the project is now finished. Students used encyclopaedias, Internet and books. They are familiar with the following terms: glossary, index, table of contents. We also addressed the issue of giving credit to the resources used and compiled a basic bibliography. One student wrote a story in the first person. It was challenging for him but he persevered and completed the task.

The Make-a-Book projects are going ahead in the library. This is the first time the school has been in the project. There are three classes working on various projects in creative writing and history. Some of the first years who come up every day have decided to make a small library out of cardboard to put the various books in, and this is proving quite labour-intensive and time-consuming. March – the major event this month was a visit to the Make-a-Book exhibition. All three classes involved worked very hard on their projects to get them in on time. This involved a lot of extra curricular work in the library. The visit was very popular with the students. They got their photographs taken and were extremely proud to have their own projects on display.

8.3 Other Library-Based Project Work

Apart from the Make-a-Book projects, every school had other projects based in the library. Some of these projects were cross-curricular and all were 'cross-skilled'. Several Librarians observed that by the end of the second year, the library had become totally integrated into the thinking of both staff and students as the essential core of project work.

The topics were wide ranging and crossed the entire curriculum. They included:

- ▶ Building an Aquarium
- ▶ Chernobyl (and other CPSE projects)
- ▶ Cushions (and other home economics projects)
- ▶ Designing Surveys and Brochures (and other business studies projects)
- ▶ Drugs in the Community (and other SPHE projects)
- ▶ Earthquakes and Volcanoes (and other geography projects)

- ▶ Egypt, Mummies and Pyramids
- ▶ Family Crests and Surnames (and other woodwork projects)
- ▶ Favourite Animals
- ▶ History of Smallpox
- ▶ IT Projects on European Countries
- ▶ Irish Famine (and other history projects)
- ▶ Junior Certificate Art Projects (and other art projects)
- ▶ LINK Projects
- ▶ Local History
- ▶ Medicinal Benefits of Worms
- ▶ Photographic Project on Life in School
- ▶ Role of Women in Hamlet
- ▶ UCD New Era Achievement Awards
- ▶ Whales
- ▶ World Religions

In a typical example of library-based project activity throughout the school year. A particular librarian felt that in the previous year she had personally instigated and carried too many projects herself. At the beginning of the second year of the project she decided that, although she was prepared to help, support and advise, the impetus for project work must come from the teachers. This seems to have worked very well. She reports:

September: LCA class doing a project on Special Needs. Before they came in I looked up websites with their teacher. It went well.

October: Art continues to be the reason so many students are visiting the library. They are all wonderfully enthusiastic about researching their art projects. Resources like old National Geographics that can be cut up are invaluable, as is the image search function of Google.

November: History teacher asked about bringing her second year JCSP history class to the library. She has them for one class a week and wants to do a project. She was going to choose their topics but I suggested some topics to her where we have books and manageable resources in the library. She was happy with that.

December: Another exciting project is kicking off in the new year, looking at Myths. This is really a Pathways project but it will centre a lot in the library.

January: Home Economics teacher wants material on crafts for the third year's Junior Certificate projects. She told me how much she appreciates the resources of the library

February: the JCSP co-ordinator organised a cross-curricular project on the theme of St. Valentine for the second year students. Their history teacher brought them to the library and we made a cartoon story of the Roman St. Valentine. We continued the theme in library time by copying out love poems and decorating them.

March: *Everything is ticking away nicely at the moment – at the present moment I have a group of students with sight problems working with their support teacher, four students working on various projects, a JCSP student getting extra help, and two teachers in doing their own research. The atmosphere at times like these is particularly nice.*

April: *Big news – wonderful news – five of our girls entered a competition to represent Ireland in a multicultural project whereby students get to travel to a foreign destination. They had to submit a piece of writing and a piece of art (drawing, song, poem) inspired by the country they wanted to go to. All of their research was done in the library. Three got through to the interview stage. One girl has won a summer in Ecuador and one a ‘consolation’ prize of ten days in Japan.*

The librarian in another school, at the end of the school year, summed up the overall effect of the library on project work in her school in the second year of the Project:

One of the key activities in the library this year has been project work for the Junior Certificate exams. There has been a fantastic buzz of energy in the library when students have been working on their projects. At the beginning of the year the third year classes were brought in by teachers to research topics. These class visits were very busy as every student was intent on receiving help from the librarian. After this initial bombardment, things started to calm down for a while. The students began to trickle in by themselves in order to look for resources and information, get help with using WORD and the Internet, or just looking for advice. These students will have a heightened awareness of the possibilities of the library when they go on to fifth and sixth year. The library will be the natural place for them to do research and work on projects and they will be comfortable in seeking help and advice from the librarian.

One librarian made a very interesting observation on project work in the library this year compared to last year. In her school, about 30 students had entered projects for the UCD New Era Achievement Awards. The teacher who was judging these projects asked the librarian to come to her office to look at the projects because she was so pleased with the very high standard this year. The librarian reported:

(April): I was delighted to see that out of the 30 projects, nearly every one of them was based on material from the library. The library input ranged from loaning books, providing internet information, pictures and photocopies, to providing materials such as paper, glue and cardboard. What really amazed me was that I had no idea that these 30 students were gathering materials for this particular project. Compare this to the year before when I was so well aware of the TWO students who were working on this project (and even now I could name them) - but now so many students are using the library for enquiries, projects, homework and personal investigation that this activity no longer stands out. It really shows how library use has developed.

8.4 Whole Class Progress

Several teachers reported 'whole class' progress in library-acquired skills for successful learning. This was well documented by a history teacher in School 11 who brought his second year class to the library every Friday for the purpose of researching information for project work. He followed this up with a class test on the following Monday. Over the two month period (September – November 2004), in which, as described by the teacher, these students' research, analytical and critical skills were being advanced through library usage, the mean score for history increased from 34 to 56, with minimum and maximum scores increasing from 10 to 21, and 65 to 94 respectively (Table 2):

Table 2: Example of library-based 'whole class' progress

Class Test	Mean Score	Min. Score	Max. Score
September	34	10	65
October	45	10	83
November	56	21	94

8.5 Summary of Findings

Library-based projects were being carried out in all of the libraries at a very early stage in the Project. This continued, developed and expanded in the second year. Some of these projects were cross-curricular and all were 'cross-skilled'. The topics were wide ranging and embraced the entire curriculum.

Librarians observed that, by the end of the second year, the library had become totally integrated into the thinking of both staff and students as the essential core of project work. They reported the students as not only challenged by their projects, but also finding them fun and exciting.

Teachers reported 'whole class' progress in library-acquired skills for successful learning.

CHAPTER 9: Profiling

9.1 Introduction

The focus of the JCSP is on the process of education rather than on the product
(Junior Certificate School Programme)

One aspect of this ‘process of education’ is the Student Profiling System which allows JCSP students to work on short term, achievable goals in social as well as in academic areas. Central to the Profiling System is the completion of a group of statements that reflect the syllabi of the Junior Certificate. The statements describe an area of knowledge, a concept or a skill. As the Profile of their achievements, through their completed statement, is built up, the students’ self-esteem grows.

9.2 Library-Based Statements

Towards the end of the first year of the Project a sub-committee of librarians was set up to develop provisional JCSP Library Statements. Throughout the second year of the Project, both librarians and JCSP co-ordinators worked towards introducing and completing library-based statements (Appendix 9) in areas such as:

- ▶ Library lay-out
- ▶ Being a good library user
- ▶ Fiction
- ▶ Non-fiction
- ▶ Reference
- ▶ The library catalogue

Feedback from both teachers and librarians was positive. In School 1, for example, the librarian, in partnership with one of the JCSP teachers, piloted draft statements through a “Reading Race” format. Following a series of incremental ‘tasks’, the JCSP students progressed from explaining what an information book is to writing a review of a book read in the library.

Throughout the year the librarian reported:

January: the cards were well received and work started on them immediately. Over the next weeks they turned out to be a great success. The students are progressing quicker than we expected... certain students who have been hard to engage have responded well to this format of doing things which is great news for myself and the teacher involved.

February: more students completing their JCSP statements through the "Reading Race" – I even got stopped in the corridor by a student who wanted me to run over what 'fiction' meant so that he could be sure to complete his task in the library the next day.

April: teacher and I took a second year JCSP class bowling and for lunch as their reward for finishing the "Reading Race" first as a class. Both of us have noticed a marked improvement in the attitude and reading behaviour of this class in the last few weeks. They are gaining in confidence, developing new skills and receiving credit and appreciation for their achievements in the library. They now come into the library and settle immediately and stay interested in what they are doing until the end of the class.

In other schools the librarians, in association with teachers, designed library worksheets which were used to test that the learning targets for library-based statements had been met.

9.3 The Role of the Library in Profiling in General

At the beginning of the academic year, each JCSP student is given a folder for each of their subjects. These folders contain the JCSP statements relevant to each subject. In several schools, these folders are now shelved in the library, with benefits for students, teachers and librarians.

In one school, for example, the JCSP co-ordinator, along with teachers and the librarian, felt that the library has brought a sense of structure, organisation and ease to the JCSP programme. She reported

Each JCSP student has a brightly coloured folder for each of his or her subjects. These folders contain the JCSP statements relevant to each subject and are shelved in the library. There is now easy access for teachers when they want to fill in statement sheets, and by having the folders in a central location they are easily accessed by the co-ordinator when needed. The teachers bring a class to the library and they sit in a group working through the statements. The librarian is available to assist with this activity. This approach offers both teachers and

students a break from the classroom and ensures that these folders are readily available when needed. The students have a greater sense of pride in their work since this system was introduced.

In some of the schools Leaving Certificate Applied teachers also used the resources of the library to enable their students to work on their statements.

9.4 Summary of Findings

The Student Profiling System allows JCSP students to work on short-term, achievable goals in social as well as in academic areas. The statements describe an area of knowledge, a concept or a skill. Towards the end of the first year of the Project a sub-committee of librarians was set up to develop provisional JCSP library statements. Throughout the second year of the Project, both librarians and JCSP co-ordinators worked towards introducing and completing library-based statements. These statements were piloted, and feedback from both librarians and teachers was positive.

CHAPTER 10: Profiling

10.1 Introduction

Literacy is not simply the ability to read and write, but encompasses all aspects of communication and understanding.

Baldwin and Fleming (2003)

Reading, drawing, talking, physical activity, music, writing and visual aids will help everyone learn.

Cassidy and Kiely (2001)

During the first year of the Project (2002/2003), as well as the curriculum-based classes and activities, other literacy support events began to take place in the libraries. These events, which included drama workshops, storytelling, musical activities, multi-cultural activities, and recreational activities such as chess clubs and board games, flourished in the second year of the Project. Many of the librarians were very aware that speaking, listening and reasoning are important communication skills, integral to the understanding and interpretation of written and read text.

10.2 Library-Based Activities

Baldwin and Fleming (2003) in their report on teaching literacy through drama, argued that definitions of literacy are now expanding across a myriad of social, intellectual and cultural contexts.

Drama, dance, music and art, all offer ways for children to respond to and express their individual and shared understanding of a text in ways that give opportunity for an energised, yet reflective, individual, group and class-collective response.

During the second year of the Project (2003/2004) these activities and events continued to grow in the libraries. Appendix 10 shows the list of storytellers, poets, writers, musicians, artists and other visitors to the libraries.

Examples are presented here:

Julia Sweeney visited the school today. Julia has written three books based on Traveller culture. She read some of her stories and talked about things such as the importance of horses in the Traveller's life. Each of the three separate sessions with the JCSP students went very well. In the first group there was a good mixture of students from both the settled and the Traveller communities. The second group was not quite as talkative but did ask Julia some questions about how her stories came about. The final group was really engaged. These students read some of their own stories and poems for Julia. Many of these were written during the visit of poet, Geraldine Mills, to our library.

'Irish History Live' visited the school on Thursday. It was a great success. Students loved dressing up and were fascinated by the weapons. Michael Moylan was great with them and they warmed to him very quickly. These students are so self-conscious, they don't normally take risks which put them in the spotlight. It was great to see them participate fully.

We had a Wire Sculpturing workshop. Initially I felt nervous. It is most unusual to have the three JCSP year groups together at the same event. Was I brave in organising this? It was too late to backtrack now. The sight of pliers and wires brought on a queasy feeling. Thirty plus unruly teenagers and the aforementioned could prove a deadly combination. My fears were unfounded in the main. The students made wire Rudolfs, Christmas trees and stockings, and used coloured beads to decorate the wires; some even invented their own designs.

This year we have had a variety of events ranging from storytellers to an animal workshop. The purpose of these events is to open up new experiences to the students and to bring the curriculum to life. The library is an active learning space and these workshops support this approach. We had visits from a Jamaican percussionist, an archaeologist, an opera company, and two storytellers. The storytellers, in particular, made a wonderful impression on the students.

10.3 Extra-School Activities Organised by Librarian

Extra-school literacy support activities were organised by the librarians and supported by members of the teaching staff. Typical examples include:

We went to Limerick for a Darren Shan Book Signing. The trip was really worthwhile. The five JSCP students who are all Darren Shan fans were delighted to meet him. The hour long queuing really tested their patience but they seemed to enjoy the excitement of the event and didn't complain to any great extent. This trip was made possible as I was accompanied by the HSCLC who is incredibly supportive of the Demonstration Library Project.

I took five second year students to see Double Act at the Helix Theatre. Although for the first 10 minutes they were sceptical, by the end they were leaning forward and two were crying! They seemed to really enjoy the experience, being very impressed by the theatre and involved in the play. One of the English teachers has now started studying the book with her class after a student (the only boy on the visit) kept talking about how good the story was.

The students made a presentation of our Aquarium Research Project to the Principal. The plan was that if he was duly impressed with their work and their presentation he would release money for them to buy fish and also to go on a trip to the Sea Life Centre. The presentation was great success, the class excelled and, needless to say, the money was granted. At the Sea Life Centre, the staff member gave them a talk on setting up an aquarium. She told them to fax the Centre with a list of the fish they would like, and she would reply with an indication of which fish successfully share a tank. We drew up our list in a subsequent library session, faxed it, received a prompt reply and shortly afterwards took our list to the local fish shop and stocked our tank.

We attended Writers in Residence Master Classes – a teacher, 6 students (3 JCSP) and myself. Some of the schools had selected their 'high flyers'. Despite this, I felt that our students did very well and did not allow themselves to be intimidated. We attended classes with Neville Thompson and Maeve Ingoldsby. The students also got the opportunity to hear all of the other authors speak and read from their work. The feed back from the students was very positive and they all enjoyed and gained confidence from the day. I have no doubt that JCSP students would not have been given the opportunity to attend these Master Classes if the JCSP Demonstration Library Project with a librarian, had not been in place.

10.4 Disappointing Reactions

Although it is the case that most of the arts and culture based workshops organised in support of literacy in its widest sense were highly successful, very occasionally the librarians did report disappointing results. These were useful learning exercises, however, for future planning.

School 5: (January) Ezeke, a Jamaican percussionist, presented four one-hour sessions to first second and third year students. The students thoroughly enjoyed their time spent with this energetic performer. The third years, however, were not as co-operative with Ezeke as the other groups. A couple of the students wouldn't participate and were inclined to sneer and make fun of Ezeke's efforts. I feel in hindsight that this group was too big and it would have been better to have divided it.

10.5 Lunchtime/After School Recreational and Cultural Activities

In several of the libraries, the range of recreational and cultural activities which take place, often during lunchtime and after school, has expanded very considerably, due to the interest and enthusiasm of the students and the positive responses of the librarians.

Three libraries had chess club competitions and tournaments. The librarian in School 1 reported on her chess club:

January – a student who regularly uses the library had a chess set for Christmas and borrowed a book so that he could learn to play. When he brought the book back the next day saying he ‘couldn’t make head nor tail of it’, I offered to show him and a friend how to play at lunchtime. This proved to be popular, and later this month more students joined in so it seems this will be a regular lunchtime chess club.

February - chess club going well on Monday lunchtimes

March - expansion of chess club planned. A teacher approached me to say that he would be interested in helping with the chess club. I have some chess sets which have been brought in by students and will buy some more. Nearly 20 students have signed up so far. We will limit the group to 30. The club will be held in the library at lunchtime

Several libraries had other board game sessions, including Draughts, Monopoly, Connect 4, Scriptogram and Scrabble. One librarian reported on the popularity of a numeric game with both staff and students.

In one school an ‘After School Club’, introduced following a proposal drawn up by the librarian and the international student teacher and funded under the School Completion Programme, was very successful.

November: The students (10) are mostly on the School Completion Programme’s list so it is very good. The format we have established is to begin with circle time. We then have an activity (e.g. drumming workshop, making scrapbooks) followed by sharing food around a table. The food sharing has proven really popular. We aim to keep it healthy and every week we introduce a new food they are unfamiliar with (such as papayas and mangoes). It is really good fun.

Sometimes there were temporary setbacks, as the librarian in School 5 reported:

The playing of board games is very popular at lunchtime opening. The board games provide an important source of social interaction and requires concentration. However, during the last week of the month (February), I banned the playing of board games as a result of game pieces being thrown around and unruly behaviour associated with it. The male students involved were barred for a week. Their tutor spoke to them and all gave me written apologies.

10.6 Exhibitions in the Library

During all phases of the Project the libraries were decorated with a wide range of both student work and other exhibitions (see Appendix 11). Many of the librarians and teachers reported that having the space and opportunity to display their own work – whether this be poems, cushions, papier-mâché castles, photographs, wooden boxes – was a source of great pride and satisfaction to the JCSP students and to visitors to the libraries, including parents.

10.7 Summary of Findings

During the second year of the Project, literacy support events, such as drama workshops, storytelling, musical activities, recreational clubs and library exhibitions, developed and flourished. These library-based activities opened up new learning experiences in an active learning space, and brought the curriculum to life for JCSP and other students, staff, parents and visitors to the libraries.

Library Support for the Laptop Initiative

11.1 Introduction

The Laptop Initiative is part of the 'ICT in Schools' programme of the Department of Education and Science, and is implemented by the National Centre for Technology in Education. It aims to identify how laptop computers can best be used to support students with dyslexia or other reading and writing difficulties in a manner that facilitates learning. Some of the Project schools are also Laptop Initiative Schools.

11.2 Examples of Library Support for the Laptop Initiative Project

A number of schools are both Project schools and Laptop Initiative Schools. In a recent article written by Kate Plested (Plested, 2004), one of the Laptop Initiative teachers from one of these schools, it is apparent that the Laptop Initiative is getting very considerable support from the school library and in some cases has been revitalised by library supports. Plested described, for the purposes of her case study, the considerable progress of 'Patrick', a 13 year old boy with ADHD and poor reading, writing and spelling skills. Patrick's specific curriculum task to be addressed by ICT was writing an essay on *Being a Rally Car Driver for a Day*.

Plested described the library support:

Patrick is very interested in how things work, be it computers, engines, or musical instruments. He will take books out of the library on these topics and has completed a PowerPoint presentation on engines... (supports include) the library with its own laptop, the classroom teacher, the resource teacher and the librarian...some ranges of books in our library are very useful when thinking of lessons ideas/essays/projects: e.g. Livewire Investigates series (such as Being a Model, Being a Stuntman) and Livewire Real Lives (profiles famous people such as Victoria Beckham).

The librarian in this school noted in January:

I displayed the 2nd year JCSP poems. These had been written during their laptop session in the library and printed out by themselves on the library PCs. They seem to like writing poetry more than prose and all were very entertaining. It's amazing the work they can do when the conditions are right – i.e. laptops and poetry are a winning combination in the fight against disruptive and unproductive behaviour.

In another school with a strong emphasis on both literacy and numeracy support, one of the main manifestations of this is a two-hour block of literacy and numeracy activities every morning in the library for 1st and 2nd year JCSP students. Heather Keane, leader of the Laptop Initiative team, wrote (Keane, 2004):

This system seems to have a number of advantages when it comes to ICT use. For example, the two hour block offers time and flexibility for the use of laptops; the team teaching allows for good monitoring and student support; the team approach helps greatly; the JCSP methods are responsive to ICT use.

Initially, as the librarian reports below, these two-hour sessions were not without their difficulties, but these were resolved as the school year proceeded. It was decided to split the students into small groups based on their ability and needs. A variety of activities such as paired reading, creative writing and comprehension were introduced. Each activity took approximately 20 minutes to complete and each group moved from activity to activity. The intention was not only to give variety to the learning process, but also to make it possible to target the needs of individual students.

September: the library is block-booked Monday to Friday from 9-11am. This time is reserved for first and second year JCSP classes who have literacy at this time every morning (numeracy will be introduced later). Two to three teachers, three HDip students and myself take the session – they are very intense and interactive... these particular students have short attention spans... the two-hour session is very long... we need a proper planning meeting with the staff involved in order to make the best use of these sessions.

October: the 9-11 slot for literacy is continuing to operate. We had a meeting on how to restructure the sessions as the two hours (as presently structured) is too long for both the students and the teachers.

November: the morning sessions have a new structure to them, in an effort to maintain the interest of the students for what amounts to three class periods. The mornings usually begin with some type of whole class work, such as comprehension. The class then breaks into a number of groups. Each group does a different activity, some focusing on written skills and some on reading. I have found these morning sessions particularly good for building up relations with the

students. In both the first year and the second year group I have found myself working well with certain students who are usually, for one reason or another, difficult in class. This allows the teachers to give their time to the class as a whole.

When the laptops were introduced, the team in this school found that they made teaching somewhat easier and more productive, undoubtedly assisted by the very considerable efforts that were ongoing in library-based literacy and numeracy supports.

By the end of the school year, the librarian in this school reported:

The second year literacy classes have been a huge success. The two English teachers involved feel that a good portion of the class could actually do Ordinary level for their Junior Certificate next year instead of Foundation. This is a huge development – normally this class would not be considered for Ordinary Level.

11.3 Summary of Findings

The Laptop Initiative is part of the 'ICT in Schools' programme of the Department of Education and Science and is aimed at identifying how laptop computers can best be used to support students with dyslexia or other reading and writing. Some of the Project schools, such as Schools 3 and 4, are also Laptop Initiative Schools. In both of these schools, the Laptop Initiative teachers and the librarians reported on the importance of the contribution of library support towards the successful implementation of the Laptop Initiative. It also became clear that the library has become the natural home within schools for centrally locating, and often revitalising existing initiatives, particularly those to support students at an educational disadvantage.

CHAPTER 12: Reading Group

12.1 Introduction

In addition to the timetabled literacy support classes, a number of librarians organised reading activities for students outside timetabled activities. Some examples are described here.

12.2 Lunchtime Reading Groups

At the beginning of the school year (September 2003) the librarian in one school organised lunchtime reading groups in the library. This particular librarian had facilitated reading groups for adults in a public library setting and had experienced their effectiveness. She was keen to organise a similar initiative in her school library.

She discussed this with the English teachers and the students and both were enthusiastic. Here are some of her reports during the year on the 2nd year boys' group:

(September): I have three groups ready to begin. I want to see students, particularly the boys, reading more novels. The members of the reading group will read a novel of their choice and discuss what they have read at the next meeting.

(October): On Thursday lunchtime, the second year boys' reading group met in the library. There were 12 boys present and they discussed their favourite book and selected another for reading before our next meeting. I was very pleased with this session

(November): At lunchtime the second year boys' reading group met. This group is really keen; some are avid readers. Two of these students missed the last meeting due to a disciplinary incident. It was wonderful that they made sure not to miss the second meeting. Both of these boys have behavioural problems, yet were very attentive during the group meeting.

(February): The second year boys are making excellent progress. The reading material ranges from Darren Shan's vampire series to the Wind Singer by William Nicholson. I try to suggest good quality reading material but ultimately the choice is theirs. It is their reading group and I will not dictate reading choices

(March): Today I distributed World Book Day vouchers to the second year boys group and we had sweets to celebrate World Book Day.

(May): Today was our last meeting of our lunchtime reading group before the summer holidays. All the boys were keen to continue meeting in September.

Similar to this was a Reading Programme introduced by the librarian into another school. This involved both 1st year JCSP classes choosing a book and keeping a log of their reading progress. The librarian reported in March:

The Reading Programme is continuing to go very well and every child in this JCSP class is now reading regularly

In April, the librarian began a Book Club known as the “Rapid Readers” which met weekly at lunchtime. Each member chose a book to read between meetings. At the meetings the students read aloud to each other, beginning with ‘Hanna’s Suitcase’ by Karen Levine. They also organised a ‘Rogues Gallery’ competition in the school which involved matching teachers to their favourite books.

At the end of the school year, the librarian reported:

This club has been very successful even though it has been running for only a short time. The members from the JCSP classes were the most regular attenders. I hope to have the club up and running again from September. This should allow for a wider range of activities to take place.

12.3 Reading Groups for Teachers

Another successful initiative was reading groups for teachers. This might seem peripheral to the purpose of the library, but essentially confirms the integration of the library into the entire school community. In the longest established reading group for teachers the librarian reported:

November: I had a request from staff to set up a Reading Group. I think this idea has come from the BBC programme on the Big Read. I have put up a notice in the staff room and will propose a meeting shortly.

*December: This week saw the first meeting after school of the staff reading group. Eight of us met and discussed how we would like to arrange the group meetings. We chose *The Lion*, *The Witch* and *The Wardrobe* to read over Christmas. It was a good first meeting and the group has stimulated a lot of talk about books in the staff room!*

March: *Staff reading group met at the end of the week. We discussed our latest read, Star of the Sea by Joseph O'Connor. Everybody had enjoyed the book and it provoked plenty of discussion. One member has been using it with a History class. Our next book is The Lovely Bones by Alice Sebold.*

May: *This month we have decided to read The Corrections by Jonathan Franzen. Our final meeting will be at the end of this month and we have decided to bring along suggestions for a summer holiday list of reading to discuss when we get back in September.*

12.4 Summary of Findings

In addition to the timetabled literacy support classes, a number of librarians successfully organised lunchtime and after-school reading groups and reading activities for students and staff. These activities made a significant contribution to the integration of the library into the entire school community.

The Library as a Safe Haven

13.1 Introduction

Bush (2003) in her article on the library as a safe haven for difficult and vulnerable teenagers, described the reactions of one of her school colleagues on learning about the role the school library played in the lives of some children:

My colleague stood dumbstruck, staring at me, seeing in my expression what we librarians know in our hearts. Our libraries are safe havens - - - we provide a sanctuary not only for language and mutual respect, but constancy and openness and acceptance and tolerance - - - our purpose goes far deeper than information literature and technology.

13.2 The Library – A Source of Refuge

'Mrs Brown, I wish someone else could run the library when you're away at a meeting'

'Why, John?'

'Because it is a cool place and I don't get bullied when I'm in here'

For many students the library was often seen as a particularly safe and secure place. The librarians reported:

A third year girl had missed a lot of school this year. For various reasons, including bullying, she was not coping with school and was having panic attacks... there can be no doubt that this student found the library a safe place to be and that she received here the support and motivation she needed to submit her projects and sit her first exam ...the library in this college has provided a safe haven for those who need it.

I notice again this year that first year students who are finding it that bit more difficult to 'fit in' are gravitating towards the library. One particular first year, who is not in a JCSP class but who has Asperger's Syndrome, has come in at every opportunity. He is not mixing well with the rest of his class and I think that he sees the library as a place of sanctuary – he feels 'safe' here.

(January) The first year boy with Asperger's Syndrome still comes into the library at every opportunity. I think he sees it as a place of sanctuary as he gets a hard time

from the other students because he is 'different' ... he is always alone and I know he is afraid to face the hordes out in the corridors.

My current little shadow is a girl from a difficult home who brought in friends today and announced "I'm important 'cos I come in here everyday!"

'Mary' is a fifth year student who is employed a few hours per week to work in the library – she is invaluable. She is paid via the after-schools fund - the teacher in charge of this fund suggested that I take her on to improve her confidence and it's certainly had a great impact on her. She tidies the shelves three days a week – a job that I can never get around to. I've also shown her how to issue and return books.

The JCSP co-ordinator in this school spoke about the importance of the library in reflecting and promoting the learning needs of a group of students with special needs such as: facilities for a traveller students to record his own stories onto CD (with the assistance of a visiting story teller who took an interest in this young student).

As well as the library being a safe haven for vulnerable children it can also be a special place which can contribute towards the development of 'vulnerable' and 'difficult' classes. The librarian in one particular school reported:

December: the first year special needs JCSP class came up for the first time this month. Their teacher was very reluctant to bring them as they are a very difficult class to deal with.

January: this class is now coming up on a regular basis. It is an extremely difficult group to work with as at least four students cannot read at all and have severe behavioural problems.

February: the later classes with the special needs group have been much more successful ... one student has now read seven of the Livewire Real Lives series by coming up regularly after school and has borrowed a Jacqueline Wilson book on which she gives me regular updates.

Finally, the library as a special place to be!

It is now 5pm on Friday evening. As I write this I am looking across at two first years who are sitting on one of the couches. He has his arm draped around her and they are both seemingly oblivious to the world. She has a book of love poems in her hand. The school library - where love blossoms!

13.2 Summary of Findings

During the course of the Project many librarians, teachers and principals reported that for many students, the library was very often seen as an especially safe and secure place.

CHAPTER 14:

Measured Learning Outcomes: Standardised Reading Tests

14.1 Introduction

The main aim of the research is to attempt to establish whether a good library, which caters for the needs of students with literacy difficulties, actually impacts on their learning experience. The learning experience is complex and multifaceted; equally so its evaluation.

Chapters 6 to 11 have examined the impact of library-based literacy strategies and supports on perceived experience of learning as described variously by librarians, teachers and students. Chapters 14 to 16 attempt to assess the library-based learning experience through its 'translation' into measurable outcomes. These measures of student 'learning' and 'impact' outcomes were:

- ▶ Standardised Reading Tests
- ▶ Tracking of Individual Students
- ▶ Book Borrowing Data
- ▶ Junior Certificate English results

This chapter examines the findings from Standardised Reading Tests.

14.2 Standardised Reading Tests

In April 2003, the Group Reading Test 2 (6-14) Nfer Nelson was administered to 535 JCSP students in the initial 10 schools under the direction of the JCSP Support Service. A year later, in April 2004, the same test was administered to 525 JCSP students in the 10 schools, again under the direction of the JCSP Support Service.

Before discussing these findings a number of caveats must be made with regard to:

- ▶ The limited sequence
- ▶ The test used
- ▶ The numbers of JCSP students

The sequence, involving as it does only two sets of measures, 2003 and 2004, is clearly very limited. In order to determine definite trends, at *least* one further set (in April 2005) would be needed in order to test the hypotheses generated.

With regard to the test itself, it has a number of limitations. It was developed for use as a short monitoring test for groups of students rather than as a means of obtaining detailed assessment information about individuals. Consequently, it works best for the majority of children and less reliably at the extremes of ability. The test is standardised on British norms. There is no equivalent test available based on Irish norms.

Finally, it should be noted that in some schools the number of JCSP students tested is small. Smaller numbers can have a disproportionate effect on averages and are thus not so valid when looking at comparative data.

14.3 Reading at Second Level

These tests show the reading ages of the students that serve to give us an indication of the standard of their reading. It is a useful way to draw comparisons across schools. 'A reading age is a type of age-equivalent score based on the age in the test standardisation population at which the average pupil earns a given raw score'. Pg 106, *Learning Support Guidelines*, Stationery Office Dublin (2000). Reading age does not necessarily correspond to chronological age and indeed the majority of the students involved in this project entered second level with a reading age significantly below their chronological age. The 535 JCSP students who were tested in 2003 showed the average reading age to be significantly below the chronological age. The average JCSP 1st year students tested in 2003, aged 12, would have a reading age of approximately 9.03 years.

Reading age does not automatically improve year on year.

Clear evidence has been seen of a dip in aspects of English in the early years of secondary school... in this context we might also expect that the strains of transition would be most severe for pupils whose literacy would be least secure on arrival in the secondary school.

(Bridges for Literacy, Basic Skills Agency 2001)

14.3.1 Reading Test Results

A total of 535 JCSP students were tested in April 2003. A year later, in April 2004, the same test was administered to 525 JCSP students. A core group of 297 students was tested on both occasions.

Table 3: Numbers of students tested

Number of JCSP students tested in April 2003	535
Number of JCSP students tested in April 2004	525
Core group of students tested on both occasions	297

Significant findings

Out of the 297 core group tested

- ▶ **69%** of the students tested increased their reading ages
- ▶ The greatest increase occurred between 1st and 2nd year where **74%** improved reading ages
- ▶ Of this 74% the average reading age increase was **19 months**
- ▶ There was an increase between 2nd and 3rd year where **65% of students** improved reading ages
- ▶ Of this 65% the average reading age increase was **20 months**
- ▶ **72%** of boys increased their reading ages compared to **65%** of girls

For All Students tested

- ▶ Average reading age improves year on year for all schools between 2003 and 2004.
- ▶ As each class cohort (first year to second year and second to third year) moves from 2003 to 2004 there is an overall trend towards increase.

14.3.2 Reading Test Results for Core Group of Students

As pointed out above, the first reading test was administered to 535 JCSP students in April 2003. A year later, in April 2004, the same test was administered to 525 JCSP students. However, a core group of 297 students was actually tested on both occasions. These students, by virtue of forming their own controls, eliminate many of the 'noisy' variables which are apparent in the comparisons across schools. The most reliable findings come from an examination of this 'core' group. Appendix 13 details the differences in the reading results for these students in a number of different ways and Table 4 below summarises these findings.

Table 4: Summary of the increases, maintenance and decreases in reading ages of the 297 students tested

Total Students Tested and Re-Tested	297	Percentages
Number of students whose reading ages increased	206	69%
Number of students who maintained the same reading age	23	8%
Number of students whose reading ages decreased	68	23%

Table 5: Percentage of increases, decreases and maintenance for male and female students and students who moved from 1st to 2nd year and from 2nd to 3rd year

Category	Number	% Increased	% Decreased	% Same
All Students	297	69%	23%	8%
Males	200	72%	21%	7%
Females	97	65%	26%	9%
Students who moved from First to Second Year	153	74%	19%	7%
Students who moved from Second to Third Year	144	65%	27%	8%

77% of students in this group increased or maintained their reading ages.

81% of the students who moved from first year to second year increased or maintained their reading ages.

Of the 297 students who were tested both in April 2003 and again in April 2004, as Table 5 above shows, 69% (n=206) showed increases in their reading test scores. Of these improving readers, as Table 6 below shows, 80 increased between 1.07 and 3.06 years and a further 14 increased more than 3.06 years. For hesitant and reluctant readers, an increase of more than 1.06 years is regarded as very significant (Basic Skills Agency, 1998).

Table 6: Levels of increases in improving readers

Level of Increase	Number	%
0.01 to 1.06	112	54%
1.07 to 3.06	80	39%
More than 3.06	14	7%
Total who increased	206	

14.3.3 Male and Female Comparisons

There were 97 girls and 200 boys tested, reflecting the proportion of girls and boys in the Junior Certificate School Programme.

The greatest improvement occurred among the male students (72% increased compared to 65%) running contrary to the general trend at second level.

Male Students

Of the 200 male students who were tested both in April 2003 and again in April 2004, 72% (n=143) showed increases in their reading test scores. Of these students, as Table 7 below shows, 57 increased between 1.07 and 3.06 years. As Appendix 13 details, of those male students who decreased, the largest group (n=18) decreased by 6 months or less.

Level of Increase	Number	%
0.01 to 1.06	75	52%
1.07 to 3.06	57	40%
More than 3.06	11	8%
Total who increased	143	

Female Students

The increases for female students were not as great as those for male students. Table 5 above shows that, of the core group of 97 female students, 65% (n=63) of them showed increases compared with 72% for males. Table 8 below shows that of these 63 students, 23 (36%) increased between 1.07 and 3.06 years. In other words, both the 'increase' rates and the 'degree of increase' rates were somewhat higher for males than females in the core group.

Level of Increase	Number	%
0.01 to 1.06	37	59%
1.07 to 3.06	23	36%
More than 3.06	3	5%
Total who increased	63	

14.3.4 Students who Moved from First to Second Year

Table 9 below shows that 153 of the core group of 297 students were first years at the first round of tests in April 2003 moving to second years in the following year. The increase for this group, at 74%, was higher than for any other segment. This finding is particularly interesting in that the librarians, during their training sessions, were instructed to specifically target first years through their library-based literacy support strategies.

Table 9: Summary of number and percentage of students that increased, decreased and maintained their reading ages from 1st to 2nd year		
Total 1st Year - 2nd Year Students	153	%
Number of students whose reading age increased	113	74%
Number of students whose reading age decreases	29	19%
Number of students whose reading age remained the same	11	7%

Out of a total of 153 students who moved from first year to second year **124** either maintained or increased their reading age (**81%**).

The table below details the number of students who increased their reading ages from 1 month to 4 years 8 months.

Table 10: Numbers of students who showed increase by monthly increment									
Increases					N.B. 1.01=1 year, 1 month				
Increase by month	No. of Students	Increase by month	No. of Students	Increase by month	No. of Students	Increase by month	No. of Students	Increase by month	No. of Students
0.01	2	1.01	1	2.01	2	3.01	-	4.01	-
0.02	6	1.02	2	2.02	4	3.02	-	4.02	1
0.03	5	1.03	3	2.03	2	3.03	-	4.03	-
0.04	3	1.04	1	2.04	-	3.04	2	4.04	-
0.05	0	1.05	1	2.05	3	3.05	1	4.05	-
0.06	3	1.06	5	2.06	2	3.06	4	4.06	-
0.07	9	1.07	3	2.07	1	3.07	-	4.07	-
0.08	6	1.08	2	2.08	1	3.08	-	4.08	1
0.09	4	1.09	3	2.09	-	3.09	-	4.09	-
0.10	6	1.10	1	2.10	3	3.10	1	4.10	-
0.11	3	1.11	4	2.11	1	3.11	-	4.11	-
1.00	3	2.00	2	3.00	3	4.00	3	5.00	-

Of the 113 students who increased their reading ages the average reading age improvement was **19 months**.

As Table 11 below shows, of the 113 students in this segment who showed increases, **43** increased between 1.07 and 3.06 years. **(38%)**

Table 11: Levels of increases in improving students who moved from first to second year

Level of Increase	Number	%
0.01 to 1.06	63	56%
1.07 to 3.06	43	38%
More than 3.06	7	6%
Total who increased	113	

14.3.5 Students who moved from second to third year

Table 12 below shows that the rate of increase for the 144 second-to-third year students, at 65% (n=93), was not as high as that for first-to-second years (74%).

Table 9: Rate of increase, decrease and maintenance of the reading ages of students who moved from second to third years

Total 2nd Year - 3rd Year Students	144	%
Number of students whose reading age increased	96	65%
Number of students whose reading age decreases	39	27%
Number of students whose reading age remained the same	12	8%

Of the 93 improving students, as Table 13 below shows, **37** increased their reading age between 1.07 and 3.06 years **(40%)**.

Table 13: Levels of increases in improving students who moved from second to third year

Level of Increase	Number	%
0.01 to 1.06	49	52%
1.07 to 3.06	37	40%
More than 3.06	7	8%
Total who increased	93	

105 of the students in second year to third year increased or maintained their reading ages. **(73%)**

Table 10: Numbers of students who showed increase by monthly increment											
Increases						N.B. 1.01=1 year, 1 month					
Increase by month	No. of Students	Increase by month	No. of Students	Increase by month	No. of Students	Increase by month	No. of Students	Increase by month	No. of Students	Increase by month	No. of Students
0.01	2	1.01	2	2.01	1	3.01	-	4.01	1	-	-
0.02	4	1.02	3	2.02	-	3.02	-	4.02	-	5.09	1
0.03	5	1.03	-	2.03	2	3.03	1	4.03	-	-	-
0.04	2	1.04	1	2.04	1	3.04	-	4.04	-	6.03	1
0.05	1	1.05	2	2.05	2	3.05	1	4.05	-		
0.06	3	1.06	2	2.06	5	3.06	2	4.06	-		
0.07	5	1.07	2	2.07	1	3.07	-	4.07	1		
0.08	1	1.08	2	2.08	2	3.08	-	4.08	-		
0.09	4	1.09	3	2.09	-	3.09	-	4.09	-		
0.10	2	1.10	4	2.10	2	3.10	2	4.10	1		
0.11	6	1.11	2	2.11	-	3.11	-	4.11	-		
1.00	4	2.00	2	3.00	2	4.00	-	5.00	-		

Of the 144 students who increased their reading ages the average reading age improvement was **20 months**.

14.4 All of the students tested across the schools

Beyond the core group of 297 students tested, a wider group of students were tested and re-tested. In April 2003, reading test was administered to 535 JCSP students and again in 2004 the same test was administered to 525 JCSP students. The results from this group also shows some interesting school trends while bearing in mind that only the core group of 297 students are the same students being retested.

- ▶ Increase occurred in the average reading ages of each of the 10 schools and in each year group.
- ▶ The average increase from year one to year two was **11 months**
- ▶ The average increase from year two to year three was **13 months**

The greatest average increase from year one to year two was **2 years 5 months** rising from on average 7.09 to 10.02.

Table 15: Average increase in reading ages between year 1 and year 2 in April 2003 and April 2004

School	2003 Average Reading ages for the class group	2004 Average Reading ages for the class group	Difference in months
School 1	9.05	10.03	+8
School 2	9.02	9.11	+9
School 3	9.05	10.03	+10
School 4	9.00	9.08	+8
School 5	10.06	12.04	+22
School 6	8.09	9.07	+10
School 7	8.09	9.02	+5
School 8	10.06	11.05	+11
School 9	7.09	10.02	+29
School 10	9.04	9.05	+1

Average increase across the schools between year 1 and 2 is **11.3 months**.

Table 16: Average increase in reading ages between year 2 and year 3 in April 2003 and April 2004

School	2003	2004	Difference in months
School 1	9.09	11.09	+24
School 2	9.11	10.00	+1
School 3	10.05	11.06	+13
School 4	9.00	9.07	+7
School 5	9.09	11.04	+19
School 6	9.02	11.06	+28
School 7	9.05	9.07	+2
School 8	11.05	11.09	+4
School 9	10.04	11.02	+10
School 10	10.01	12.00	+23

Average increase across the schools between year 2 and 3 is **13.1 months**.

14.4 English Junior Certificate Results

In order to look for possible associations between the library and Junior Certificate results, each of the ten initial participating schools was asked to return its Junior Certificate results in English, for each of the years from 2000 to 2004. The Study examined these series but findings from this analysis are not very conclusive. It is the view of substantial numbers of teachers consulted in this study, that the timescale of the project was too short to allow it to impact in any meaningful way on the English Junior Certificate results.

14.5 Summary of Findings

In April 2003, the Group Reading Test 2 (6-14) Nfer Nelson was administered to 535 JCSP students in the initial ten schools under the direction of the JCSP Support Service. A year later, in April 2004, the same test was administered to 525 JCSP students in the ten schools. A core group of 297 students was tested on both occasions. A number of important observations were made.

An examination of the core group of 297 students tested on both occasions indicated the following main findings:

- ▶ Of all students (n=297) **69%** showed increases in their reading test scores. (N=80) 39% students increased between 1.07 and 3.06 years and a further (n=14) 7% increased more than 3.06 years. For hesitant and reluctant readers, an increase of more than 1.06 years is regarded as very significant
- ▶ Of the core group of 297 students, 153 were 1st years at the first round of tests in April 2003 rising to 2nd years in the following year. The increase for this group, at **74%**, was higher than for any other segment. This finding is particularly interesting in that the librarians, during their training sessions, were instructed to target first years through their library-based literacy support strategies.
- ▶ Of this 74% the average reading age increase was **19 months**
- ▶ There was an increase between 2nd to 3rd year where **65% of students** improved their reading ages
- ▶ Of this 65% the average reading age increase was **20 months**
- ▶ Of the core group of 200 male students, **72%** (n=143) showed increases in their reading test scores.
- ▶ Of the core group of 97 female students, **65%** (n=63) of them showed increases compared with 72% for males.

Tracking Individual Students

15.1 Introduction

Because of the difficulties in demonstrating a causal or even an associative relationship between possible Standardised Reading Test gains and the role of the library, it was decided to describe a number of students who, in the views of the JCSP co-ordinator, the librarian and/or other teachers, were improving in their literacy skills and were showing a demonstrable usage of the resources of the library.

Over the course of the Project the librarians in most schools, in conjunction with the JCSP co-ordinator and/or other teachers, identified students who clearly benefited very considerably from the school library. Four students, from four different schools, are presented here as described by their school librarian. Appendix 14 illustrates several further examples.

15.2 Progress of Students

'Cian'

- ▶ *When Cian entered secondary school in September 2003 his reading was tested using the Neale Analysis Reading Test. He registered at age 9.09 for reading accuracy and 10.06 for reading comprehension. From the very beginning of 1st Year, Cian was an avid library user. As the lowest 1st Year JCSP class, his class regularly used the library for a variety of purposes, including regular sessions for quiet reading, laptop use, Make-a-Book project work, peer tutoring sessions (with 5th Years), reading aloud, maths (pentominoes and tanagrams), and project work. Cian was always eager and enthusiastic to take part in everything.*
- ▶ *Cian was a regular library borrower throughout the year. However his borrowing record does not show the whole picture as Cian would also have browsed through and/or read quite a lot of additional books and magazines throughout the year. He regularly used the library during break and lunch time, during free classes, and after school.*
- ▶ *In April 2004, Cian's reading was retested using the Neale Analysis Reading Test. His reading accuracy had increased to 13+ (from 9.09 in September) and his reading comprehension had also increased to 13+ (from 10.06 in September). This was an*

amazing improvement in reading ability in just 9 months (+39 months in accuracy and +30 months in comprehension). While a range of factors and individuals contributed to this improvement, there is no doubt that the school library contributed greatly.

'Timmy'

- ▶ *Timmy commenced 1st year JCSP in September 2002 aged 12 years, 11 months. Prior to entry during 6th Class his reading was tested using GRT (B). He registered at 9:11. Timmy proved himself an enthusiastic participator in Readalong and progressed quickly from Readalong to reading books without cassette accompaniment.*
- ▶ *From the opening of the school library Timmy has been the most consistent borrower. His borrowing has always been self-motivated. He has a keen interest in history and is continually drawn to the non-fiction collection of history books. Timmy however has also read widely from the fiction section. He has read the entire Alex Rider series. He reverted to Readalong to read the entire Harry Potter series and Tolkien's Lord of the Rings. He has also read a number of fiction books based on Second World War experiences. Timmy's interest in reading has been commented on by teachers. His technical drawing teacher recounted being quizzed by Timmy on facts and figures he has garnered from library books pertaining to the World Wars e.g. How many soldiers died in the Battle of the Somme? Reading is helping Timmy develop social skills with adults.*
- ▶ *Outside of scheduled class visits Timmy also makes use of the library before school, during lunchtime and after school. He has developed library catalogue search skills using the OPAC (Online Public Access Catalogue) and is also able to check his reader account. He is an independent user, comfortable in using the library with or without the companionship of his pals.*
- ▶ *Timmy's mother has commented to the JCSP coordinator that she is delighted that Timmy has taken such an interest in reading and knowledge. She feels that the school library has directed him on a path that has developed areas of interest and triggered a self-confidence in her son that will keep him out of trouble.*
- ▶ *On the 25th of September 2003 Timmy's reading was tested again using GRT(A) and registered the max possible on this test at 12:03 (max). Six months later on the 3rd of March 2004 Timmy was again tested using GRT (D). On this occasion he registered the max again at 15+.*

'Seamus'

- ▶ *This student began secondary school with a reading age of 7 years 9 months in March 2002 according to the NFER Nelson reading test. This student has dyslexic tendencies.*

He continues to have behaviour difficulties and is regularly in trouble in school. He participated in the Shared Reading Programme over two years and was withdrawn from class for paired reading sessions with staff. Both of these events took place in the library.

- ▶ *Again it took this student a considerable period of time to find that the library could be beneficial to him. We had to negotiate acceptable behaviour on several occasions and the turning point came when we read in a one-to-one sessions on a weekly basis over the course of a month. This student responds best to lavish praise and encouragement. While he would continue to cause trouble outside the library, during the library sessions he excelled. His efforts culminated in his making a speech in front of all of his classmates about how his reading had improved over the course of the year and how he had enjoyed being involved in the paired reading programme.*
- ▶ *This student now comes daily to the library, although he rarely borrows books he will read the newspapers and often becomes engrossed in books on animals. He will regularly seek attention to share in what he is reading. As of May 2004, he now has a reading age of 10 years 4 months – an improvement of 2 years 7 months.*

‘Brian’

- ▶ *Brian entered secondary school in September 2003. In January 2004 his reading was tested using the Neale Analysis Reading Test. He registered at age 9.04 for reading accuracy and 8.01 for reading comprehension. He was in the J.C.S.P. class, which is the lowest first stream. Throughout the year, Brian’s class participated in many varied activities within the library - paired reading with Transition years, Make a Book using computer literacy skills, Readalong, local author visits from Arthur Flynn and Peter Regan.*
- ▶ *Brian’s confidence has benefited enormously from these activities. He even represented the J.C.S.P. classes during the official opening of the library by making a presentation to Minister Noel Dempsey. Brian is a regular library borrower and has borrowed a mixture of fiction and non-fiction titles. He often makes positive comments about books he’s returning. I think he epitomises good library usage and maximises his visits every time. He reads magazines and the local newspaper on a regular basis and is confident using the Internet, Word documents, floppy disk and printer.*
- ▶ *In December 2004, Brian’s reading was retested using the Neale Analysis Reading Test. His reading accuracy remained similar (9.00). However his comprehension improved by 13 months (9.02). I feel that the impact of the library has contributed greatly to this improvement; there has also been a very substantial rise in the self-esteem of Brian.*

15.3 Summary of Findings

Over the course of the Project the librarians in the schools, in conjunction with the JCSP co-ordinator and/or other teachers, identified students who clearly benefited very considerably from the school library. Enthusiastic JCSP library users such as 'Cian' (whose reading accuracy had increased to from 9.09 in September 2003 to 13+ in April 2004), and 'Brian' (increasing from 8.01 for reading comprehension in January 2004 to 9.02 in December 2004) were typical of a number of students in every school.

CHAPTER 16: Book Borrowing

“The borrowing statistics for our school do NOT reflect the use of the resources of our library. While the students are growing in confidence in their use of library resources, they are still reluctant to carry these books home with them... it is hoped, in conjunction with the HSCLC, to work in raising parents’ awareness of the benefits of borrowing books.”

(Observation by one librarian)

16.1 Introduction

It is important to remember that book borrowing is one area of the Project where the benefits of having a well-stocked, professionally staffed library are immediately obvious. Book borrowing by JCSP boys, for example, increased by 740% between the first and second year of the Project. During the lifetime of the Library Project, book borrowings were recorded using the Heritage system.

Table 16: Book borrowing levels

	2002/2003	2003/2004
JCSP Boys	386	2856
JCSP Girls	348	2026
Non JCSP Boys	701	1523
Non JCSP Girls	1061	2909

Table 16 shows that:

- ▶ Over all schools, in 2002/2003, JCSP boys borrowed a total of 386 books rising to 2856 in 2003/2004, an increase of 740%
- ▶ Over all schools, in 2002/2003, JCSP girls borrowed a total of 348 books rising to 2026 in 2003/2004, an increase of 580%
- ▶ Non JCSP boys, over all schools, borrowed a total of 701 books in 2002/2003, rising to 1523 in 2003/2004, an increase of 210%
- ▶ Non JCSP girls, over all schools, borrowed a total of 1061 books in 2002/2003, rising to 2909 in 2003/2004, an increase of 270%

Before discussing the findings please note that these data do not show:

- ▶ The numbers of books borrowed before Heritage was up and running (therefore first year borrowings are possible slight underestimates in the case of some schools)
- ▶ The number of students who read additional resources such as magazines and newspapers
- ▶ The number of students who read books in the library but do not borrow them
- ▶ Borrowing for senior cycle students
- ▶ The use of reference books such as dictionaries, atlases and encyclopaedias
- ▶ The use of computer packages such as Word, Publisher, Paint and PowerPoint

16.2 Across-School Observations

Even with these caveats there is a very real increase in borrowing levels in many of the libraries (Table 16).

16.3 Within-School Observations

Because of the considerable differences between the Demonstration Library Schools (eg single sex only, all students doing JCSP, a small minority of students doing JCSP) it is important to look at comparisons within as well as across schools. Appendix 15 gives detailed figures. A selection of findings from these data is presented below, bearing in mind the caveats outlined above.

- ▶ In a girls-only school, the 2nd year JCSP students borrowed a total of 17 books in the first year of the Project. In the next year these same students borrowed a total of 80 books. This is a typical finding in a number of schools.
- ▶ In a mixed school, where all students do JCSP, has very successfully encouraged borrowing. In the second year of the Project, 69 JCSP boys between them borrowed 944 books and 41 JCSP girls borrowed a total of 650 books.
- ▶ In a mixed school (predominately boys) with both JCSP and non-JCSP students, clearly shows the importance of timetabling library visits for students. In this school, all 19 1st year JCSP boys (class timetabled) have borrowed at least once, whereas only one 3rd year student (class not timetabled) has borrowed. Similarly, among non-JCSP boys, almost all 1st and 2nd years (timetabled) borrowed compared to only 8 out of 20 3rd years (not timetabled).

- ▶ In a mixed school with both JCSP and non-JCSP students, has shown a considerable improvement in borrowing over the course of the Project. For example, JCSP boys, in the first year, borrowed a total of 25 fiction books. This rose to 80 in the second year.
- ▶ In a mixed school with both JCSP and non-JCSP students, also shows very healthy levels of borrowing for both JCSP boys and girls. In the second year of the Project, 52 boys borrowed a total of 454 books and 15 girls borrowed 96 books.
- ▶ In a mixed school with a minority of JCSP students, the total JCSP borrowing rose from 17 books in first year to 262 in second year. Only one 1st year JCSP girl (out of 7) borrowed rising to 10 (out of 13) in 2nd year.

Overall, however, these data strongly indicate that borrowing is increasing steadily in most libraries. The findings for JCSP boys, in particular, are interesting and most encouraging.

Appendix 15 shows the numbers of books borrowed for each school in 2002/2003 and 2003/2004 classified by:

- ▶ JCSP/non JCSP
- ▶ Class year (Junior cycle only)
- ▶ Gender
- ▶ Fiction/non Fiction

16.4 Summary of Findings

During the lifetime of the Library Project, book borrowings were recorded. These data strongly indicate that borrowing for pleasure and independent research have increased hugely in most libraries. The main findings were:

- ▶ Over all schools, in 2002/2003, JCSP boys borrowed a total of 386 books rising to 2856 in 2003/2004, an increase of 740%
- ▶ Over all schools, in 2002/2003, JCSP girls borrowed a total of 348 books rising to 2026 in 2003/2004, an increase of 580%
- ▶ Non JCSP boys, over all schools, borrowed a total of 701 books in 2002/2003, rising to 1523 in 2003/2004, an increase of 210%
- ▶ Non JCSP girls, over all schools, borrowed a total of 1061 books in 2002/2003, rising to 2909 in 2003/2004, an increase of 270%

Library-Based Activities Involving the Community

17.1 Introduction

This chapter reports on a range of interactions between the Demonstration Libraries and the wider community including:

- ▶ Parents and families
- ▶ Local primary schools
- ▶ Public libraries
- ▶ International students and their cultures

17.2 Parental Involvement in Children's Literacy

Shiel et al (2001) reported on the importance of home background variables on literacy assessment in Irish school children. Home educational environments and resources (such as the number of books in the student's home, access to a place to study, access to textbooks and reference books) as well as parents' educational and socioeconomic status, were correlated with achievement in reading, mathematical and scientific literacy.

In a number of the Project libraries, specific initiatives aimed at involving parents in their children's reading were introduced. Many of these parents themselves have literacy difficulties. The initiatives included shared reading, paired reading and book clubs involving both parents and students. Only a few examples are illustrated here:

In one particular school, the HSCLC, with the support of the librarian and the library, organised a Parent/Child Reading Initiative. The librarian reported:

- ▶ *October: the HSCLC starting to bring parents of 1st years into the library in small groups to introduce them to the idea of shared reading. The parents and students are shown a video on this approach. The parents commit to reading with their child for 20 minutes 5–6 days a week for a period of 6 weeks. There will then be a follow up visit. The students picked books that they would like to read at home with their parents. One chose the latest Harry Potter book, another the latest Darren Shan book that he purchased recently at the book signing in Limerick. The mothers were pleased with the session and expressed that it would be nice to spend the time reading with their teenagers who are beginning to distance themselves from their parents.*

- ▶ November: *we had the follow up to the Parent/Child Reading Initiative. Four students came in with their parents and we discussed the books that had been read. Feedback from the parents was positive and they enjoyed spending the time reading with their children. They voiced an interest in continuing with the initiative.*

- ▶ January: *the HSCLC introduced a new parent into the reading initiative. On this occasion it was a father reading with his daughter. The HSCLC was very pleased because this particular father would have certain reading difficulties himself. At the official Library Launch this month, one of the parents spoke warmly of how the library had been of great benefit to her son and encouraged other parents to get involved in the parent/child shared reading.*

Several libraries encouraged programmes of paired reading involving parents. For example in one school:

- ▶ March: *With the help of the HSCLC we got a number of parents to volunteer for our paired reading programme. These parents tutored 1st year JCSPs on Tuesday and Thursday mornings. The programme began after mid-term and continued for six weeks. This was the first attempt to involve parents in the library and it proved successful. After an initial reluctance to read aloud, the students soon settled into the paired reading routine and many were disappointed when the sessions ended. The JCSP co-coordinator noted that one girl in particular, a dyslexic girl from the Traveller community, dramatically improved her attendance during paired reading. The parents proved reliable in their attendance and gave their full effort to the programme. They are willing to be involved again and we are looking at how we will develop this programme.*

In another school the librarian and the HSCLC set up a weekly book club in the library for both parents and teachers. This followed on the school's successful paired reading programme in the library with parents.

The Home School Community Liaison Scheme's 'Maths-for-Fun' programmes in two schools involved partnerships between teachers, HSCLCs, librarians and parent volunteers. The parent volunteers received training in the numeracy strategies being used. The classes were divided into small groups of three or four students. Each group worked with an adult, using a variety of mathematical materials. Both librarians and teachers in these schools reported positive feedback from all the partners including the parents and the students.

Apart from these formal strategies involving parents, the librarians reported many instances of parental involvement with, and parental support for, library activities – for example:

- ▶ *March: As Marita Conlon-McKenna was giving a talk at the Wexford Book Festival, I thought it would be nice for the 1st years to attend as they have been reading her book “Under the Hawthorn Tree”... a parent who has been participating in the paired reading with her son was more than willing to come along.*
- ▶ *May: the library was the location for the JCSP Awards Ceremony. There was a terrific turnout of parents.*

17.3 Interactions with Local Primary Schools

A recent study published by the Educational Research Centre (Eivers et al, 2004) reported that almost 30% of primary school children from disadvantaged schools have severe reading difficulties. Many of these children, like so many of the young people who are the target of this study, come from homes where there is little or no culture of reading.

A second recently-published report (Smyth et al, 2004) pointed out that having contact with the post-primary school before students start school and having a good idea what to expect, helps reduce student anxiety about moving to a new school. Schools should, where possible, develop links with feeder primary schools so that students become familiar with their new school.

These were issues that the librarians in the Demonstration Library Project were very aware of, and many of them initiated programmes to help counter these literacy and learning difficulties by establishing library-based contacts with their local feeder schools.

One particular school established links with two primary schools. Sixth class from both schools came to the Demonstration Library on several occasions. The aim of this programme was:

- ▶ To help ease the transition from primary to secondary through familiarity with the staff and school.
- ▶ To encourage a love of reading and books.
- ▶ To let the students establish the library rules and then follow them.
- ▶ To teach students that the library is a fun place to be.

The Principal of one of these primary schools reported as follows:

30 September 2004

Our school, Rutland St NS, was one of the lucky ones to become part of the School Completion Programme. We decided to target our 6th class and work with them to make the transition from primary school to secondary school a less daunting prospect. With this in mind we set up a grind school for after school where children would do their homework and receive extra tuition.

Larkin College offered us the use of their library as a means of improving the children's literacy and familiarising themselves with the building and its resources. Twice monthly the 6th class spent an hour in the library. The librarian showed them how the library operates and engaged them in a variety of literacy activities. There were incidental conversations about how the College operates in general terms.

It proved to be a hugely successful project. The children loved their library sessions and became very confident and comfortable using the school's facilities. The librarian worked very hard with the class and it paid huge dividends. They are developing a love and curiosity about books, feelings of self-worth, and an increasing desire to learn.

The children involved with this project are now in 1st year. The librarian continues to monitor their progress. The present 6th class have already started their sessions and they love every minute of it. Our past pupils (6th class of 2003/2004) welcomed them to Larkin College and the library. They gave a wonderful account of their first few weeks in the College to a very receptive audience. They talked about the differences between primary school and secondary school, they performed a 'rap' that they had written about the library, they spoke about sports, arts, their new classes and their new friends. They introduced the librarian to the new 6th class students and they showed them around the library, directing them to books and elaborating on the library rules.

In one school, the librarian set up a programme whereby the 3rd year JCSP students would do paired reading with 1st class children from the neighbouring primary school. The librarian taught the JCSP students how to read picture books with expression. Both librarian and primary school teachers regarded this as a very successful venture.

A similar programme in another school involved paired reading between 2nd class primary children and JCSP students. The primary school teacher involved with this programme reported (see full report in Appendix 16):

The older students encouraged our young pupils by participating with them in a supportive reading approach that was fun and relaxed... the project resulted in definite improvements in literacy levels and in self-esteem.

17.4 Contacts with Public Library

The librarians established good relationships with the public library service. Many of them have visited their local branch with groups of students over the course of the Project, and some of the students have begun to utilise the public library in their own time.

Local public libraries have been generous in supplementing the stock and services of the JCSP libraries. In one school, for example, the librarian, through institutional membership, was able to borrow large numbers of books and CD ROMs to assist with various library-based projects. She was able to retain these bulk borrowings (block loans) for up to a term and she found that this greatly enhanced the amount of material she was able to make available to both students and teachers.

In another school, the local library was helpful in lending a collection of appropriate picture books to be used in the shared reading programme between the JCSP students and children from the local primary school referred to above. Strong links have been established with the Library Council and the Library Association of Ireland, and members of the support team and librarians have been invited to speak at a number of conferences and other events in order to share the learning that is taking place.

17.5 International Students and their Cultures

An African girl who joined the school in September with very little English has been telling her father about the library. He came in today to visit and asked me to recommend easy books on Irish history for his daughter. He was very excited and went away with books for himself too. Librarian

Many of the Demonstration Library Schools have a number of international students, from several African, Asian and East European countries. Through the Project libraries and the librarians, the schools were enabled to reach out, both for learning and social reasons, to these children and their communities.

One particular school was a good example. One of the highlights of the school year in this library was the One World Week 2004 (see full programme below). Most of the work for this very successful week was done by the HSCLC, the resource teacher and the librarian, supported enthusiastically by many of the staff and students. Participation by the international students was crucial to the success of this venture. They became actively involved in demonstrating aspects of their culture, and teaching about their customs and traditions in an exciting interactive experience for all the students. The week was sponsored by the Education Office of the religious order associated with the school, through a fund for projects under the heading 'Challenge for Change'.

One World Week January 2004

Monday 26th

The atmosphere in the school is magic. An announcement was made about the week and a thought for the day was read out.

Today was for dancing. Belly dancing and modern dance. Belly dancing was in the library and modern dance in the hall. Six classes got to do a session of either.

At lunch time the second year JCSP class sent down three dishes from around the world for the staff to eat. We had a biriyani and a tortilla. They were very proud of their dishes and were hanging around outside the staff room to ask if we liked them.

They had found the recipes in the library last week.

Tuesday 27th

It was great seeing the teachers getting stuck in to drumming and Aikido with the students.

Wednesday 28th

We turned the library into a market place, with dressing up, henna tattoos and musical instruments. The atmosphere is great, we have had lots of visitors from outside the school. An old nun who is off to Zambia next week came in and tried on a Zambian outfit. Everyone loves dressing up!

Thursday 29th

We had storytelling with Niall de Burca for first years. He told Irish legends to fit in with the project they are doing. After school he did a session for staff. He brought along an uilleann piper. It was a lovely evening.

There were drama workshops today also. I sat in on one with the second year JCSP class. They seemed to get right into it. One girl in particular was really good. She is always in trouble so it was great to see her being good and positive.

Friday 30th

We had a food fair in the hall at lunch time. The students brought in loads of dishes. There was so much food and it was very exotic.

In the afternoon we had a concert. Two Muslim girls danced and the second years all sang three songs, one taught to them by a Romanian classmate. The finale was very special. We had a group of musicians from Nigeria, all unaccompanied minors and students at O'Connells CBS. They were great, they really got the crowd going.

It was a wonderful week, very hectic and busy but so full of energy.

17.6 Summary of Findings

During the lifetime of the Project, many of the libraries developed important interactions with the wider community including:

- ▶ **Parental Involvement in Children's Literacy**
In a number of the Project libraries successful initiatives aimed at involving parents in their children's reading were introduced. These included shared reading, paired reading and book clubs involving both parents and students. Librarians reported many instances of parental involvement with, and parental support for, library activities.

- ▶ **Interactions with Local Primary Schools**
Several of the Project librarians initiated programmes to help counter literacy and learning difficulties by establishing library-based contacts with their local feeder primary schools. This initiative was particularly successful in a number of schools.

- ▶ **Contacts with Public Library**
A number of librarians established good relationships with their public library network. These contacts were particularly beneficial in the context of block loans for specific project work, and also for sharing knowledge and resources.

- ▶ **International Students and their Cultures**
Some of the Demonstration Library Schools have a number of international students. Through the activities of the Project library and the librarians, the schools were enabled to reach out, both for learning and social reasons, to these children and their communities.

The Project Librarians

18.1 Introduction

For many of the librarians, establishing and running the Demonstration Library was the most challenging and rewarding project they had ever undertaken. Typical reactions from the librarians include:

- ▶ *My job satisfaction is at 110%, something I've never experienced before. To give the gift of reading is truly appreciated here and being involved in a project that empowers students is a great privilege for me. This project is a winner because the library is very much part of the school day.*
- ▶ *I have enjoyed the challenge of working with these students and indeed have felt honoured to be part of the project ... I have never found a job so rewarding or so emotionally draining.*
- ▶ *Most of our students with literacy difficulty are now able to sustain independent quiet reading and writing activities over a forty-minute period without breaking concentration. When I introduced the library the same could not be said of any class in the school.*
- ▶ *The library project has been a great success because the various partners involved – students, teachers, parents and librarian – have worked together to make the most of the resource they have been given. The project has laid strong foundations. The true beauty of what it is capable of building will be realized in years to come if resources and support continue to be put in place.*

Placing the libraries in a structured programme with a very strong support system in place, combined with clear aims and research objectives has clearly been a major strength of this project, and been crucial to the work of the librarians. Recognition for the Project internationally has come in the recent inclusion of one of the participating librarians in the School Library Association (SLA) Honours Librarians List.⁴ From the collective experiences of the librarians, many lessons have been learned which will contribute enormously to the successful rolling out of this project to additional schools. Librarians have been involved in training days for co-ordinators and teachers, and are working on producing resource packs for all participating JCSP schools. Without any doubt, the most important challenges for librarians were relationships with staff and relationships with students.

4 This is an award of excellence in recognition of the crucial role that school librarians play in raising attainment, creating readers and developing skills for life.

18.2 Relationships with Staff

At the beginning of the Project we thought she was very territorial – we were only allowed to use the library for the things that she approved of. Now we see clearly that she was absolutely right – this library is the heart of successful learning in this school and it is all due to the way she stood her ground and brought us all round

Extract from Interview with a Principal

From the beginning of the Project most of the librarians had very good relations with most members of the teaching staffs at a personal level, and these relationships grew and matured as the Project continued.

At the professional level there was perhaps more of a hill to climb. Initially, many of the teachers, while very pleased to see the new library and certainly wishing it well, were perhaps a little uncertain as to what the roles of the library and librarian were. Several of them felt that it was of relevance primarily for English teachers and English teaching. Many teachers saw it only as a place for borrowing books and reading for leisure, and the librarian as the pleasant person who kept it tidy and in good order. The concept of a library that was a functioning learning space was unfamiliar to many of them. The concept of the librarian as a partner in education and learning was new to many teachers.

Very rapidly, many of these hills (which often turned out to be no more than molehills) were conquered. For some of the librarians, the important key was the support of a particular teacher:

- ▶ *During the early stages the cooperation and support of the JCSP co-ordinator got me through... she introduced me to the students, the resource team, the timetabling and overall running of the school... we've come through this Project together and are firm friends as a result of it.*

For others, the turning point came later with the teacher in-service organised by the JCSP Support Team (see Chapter 4)

- ▶ *The staff workshop on the library was instrumental in introducing staff to the resources of the library and dispersed much of the apprehension where present. The library is not seen as a threat to their professionalism but rather an enhancer. There is not now a single staff member who has not availed of a library service. It is regarded as the source of information and resources for class work and projects. The curricula of all Junior Certificate subjects are reflected in the stock; books, magazines, DVDs and videos.*

During the final year of the Project, the Integration stage, the librarians' relationships with members of the teaching staff were, on the whole, excellent.

18.3 Relationships with Students

Perhaps one of the most surprising findings in this study was that the librarians' relationships with their students were not as challenging as might have been expected. Although very few of these school librarians had had much interaction with school students before this Project, from the outset, in most schools, their relationships with students were very positive. This is not to minimize the difficulties that individual students occasionally posed. The librarian in one school, in discussing difficult students and difficult situations, articulated this well:

I was thrown into the deep end and had to find my own way. This was daunting and I made plenty of mistakes. Handling difficult situations or difficult students badly is draining, demoralizing and stressful. Two years on ... (and) I am far more confident and equipped to deal with such situations.

It was clear from the librarians' monthly reports and consultations with the students during the course of the Project that there was not only a great deal of respect and regard between librarians and students, but also a great deal of love and affection. The librarian's comment below is typical:

I have a captive and captivated audience – apathy has been replaced by enthusiasm. It is true to say that the Demonstration Library Project has encouraged and complemented the whole education process and has given immense enjoyment to everyone involved, most of all the JCSP students.

18.4 Practical Issues

During the Project, a number of practical lessons were learned which have implications for improved practice in the future. These included:

- ▶ Library Shelving
- ▶ Book Selection
- ▶ Cataloguing
- ▶ IT Support

18.4.1 Library Shelving

Several of the librarians reported great frustration in getting their library shelving installed. The requirement to find three quotes from local craftsmen was almost impossible to fulfil in an economic climate where there was no shortage of work. Two of

the librarians now find their shelving seriously deficient in terms of load bearing. Because of these and similar experiences, several of the librarians recommended that future shelving should be purchased from established businesses with track records in supplying library shelving.

18.4.2 Book Selection

Given the innovative nature of the work most of the librarians included the students in the book selection process, through initial questionnaires and continuous consultation. They found this to be a very successful process. In non-fiction, in addition to books relevant to subjects taught in individual schools, books reflecting students' hobbies and interests – soccer, fishing, motorbikes, wildlife, horses, pop stars, boxing – were purchased. In many cases, the librarians reported that a reluctant reader's initial breakthrough into becoming a regular reader came through a book which engaged the student's interest.

In fiction, authors requested included Jacqueline Wilson, Roald Dahl, Darren Shan and Anthony Horowitz. *Barrington Stoke* books and similar series were very popular. The librarians, in consultation with teachers, put a great deal of thought into the purchase of magazines and newspapers which would appeal to reluctant and hesitant readers.

18.4.3 Cataloguing

For all of the librarians, cataloguing the books on the computer system was a major task in the initial stages of the Project, and for some continued to be an ongoing burden. In addition to all the other tasks which had to be done, many of the librarians felt that cataloguing was something that was hard to get on top of. Most of the librarians found the Heritage system user-friendly for both librarians and library users. The interface and options were clear and simple to understand. However, several commented that it was probably over-sophisticated for schools.

Librarians' criticisms of the Heritage system included:

- ▶ Difficulties in making contact with the Users Group
- ▶ It doesn't allow a short catalogue record to be added on the spot if an uncatalogued book is presented at the desk

18.4.4 IT Technical Support

The lack of IT technical support was a serious issue for several librarians. This continued throughout the lifetime of the project and not just at the initial stages.

- ▶ *The one frustration that remains relates to the IT side of things. The school does not have an IT person that can be called on when problems arise*
- ▶ *IT problems take up a lot of my time and if I had one person on call it would have been very handy*
- ▶ *A lack of IT help often meant that PCs were out of action for longer than should have been necessary*

The librarians felt very strongly that IT technical support should be available to new libraries from the earliest stage of development - several months before the library is available to the school and the students.

18.5 Summary of Findings

It is clear that for many of the librarians, establishing and running the Demonstration Library was the most challenging and rewarding project they had ever undertaken.

Relationships with staff:

Initially, many of the teachers were a little uncertain as to what the roles of the library and librarian were. Many of them saw it only as a place for books and reading for leisure, and the librarian as the pleasant person who kept it tidy and in good order. The concept of a library that was a learning space was unfamiliar to many of them. Many did not accept the concept of the librarian as a partner in education and learning at the beginning. However, by the final year of the Project, relationships between librarians and members of the teaching staff were, on the whole, excellent.

Relationships with students:

Relationships with students were very positive.

Practical Issues:

During the Project a number of practical lessons were learned which have implications for improved practice in the future.

Consultations with Teachers

19.1 Introduction

From the outset of the Project it was anticipated by the JSCP Support Team that the introduction of Demonstration Libraries, managed by full-time professional librarians, would be a challenging development for many teachers. During the lifetime of the Project, consultations with teachers were carried out using a number of formats:

- ▶ Consultations at the early stage of the Project
- ▶ Feedback from the teacher survey in the final stage of the Project
- ▶ Consultations at the end of the final stage of the Project

19.2 Consultations at the Early Stages of the Project

During the initial visits to each school, interviews/discussion groups were carried out with a cross-section of the teaching staff (n=55) either individually, in pairs or in larger groups up to a maximum of six. The varying formats were designed to accommodate the differing timetable restrictions in each school. Most of the interviews/discussions took place in the school library. The teachers were both JCSP (including all the JCSP co-ordinators) and non-JCSP teachers, and represented a wide range of departments including English, Irish, Maths, Science, CSPE, ESS, Woodwork, Metalwork, Home Economics, Art, Physical Education, History, Geography, and Religion. During the interviews a number of topics was discussed (see Appendix 6).

In the first round of consultations the teachers were, almost without exception, very pleased with their new library. The one thing that almost all of the teachers were agreed on was the role and importance of the librarian in the success of the library.

For most of them, however, there was an awareness that the main challenge for them was how to use this very valuable resource in a planned and strategic way, one that would contribute to the students' literacy and learning.

19.3 Feedback from Teacher Survey in the Final Stage of the Project

During the final stage of the Project a survey of 55 JCSP co-coordinators and teachers (5 from each of the 11 participating schools) was carried out (Appendix 17). Key findings included:

- ▶ Over 90% of teachers agree that, overall, the school experience for JCSP students has improved since the introduction of the School Library
- ▶ Almost three quarters agree that the overall enjoyment of reading for JCSP students has improved.
- ▶ The majority of teachers see improvements in reading levels. They are less certain about overall improvements in writing and spelling levels. Very few teachers have observed any impact on numeracy levels*
- ▶ The majority of teachers feel that the interest of students in their own learning has improved.
- ▶ 35% of teachers agree that, overall, creative thinking in JCSP students has improved.
- ▶ Almost 30% of teachers agree that, overall, verbal communication has improved.
- ▶ Almost 30% of teachers agree that student behaviour has improved.
- ▶ Almost 85% of teachers agree that the library has helped them in their role as JCSP teachers.

Additional voluntary comments from the teachers included:

- ▶ *The library has been a fantastic resource both to me as a teacher and to the students - a fantastic support for JCSP and 3rd and 6th year students. Independence has increased and homework has improved greatly. A sense of achievement can be felt in the students and their ability to work harder has improved.*
- ▶ *Students really enjoy library time, be it for reading books/magazines, project work, books on tape, working on computers or writing their own stories. There is more of a positive attitude to 'books' by most of the students in my class – i.e. not all books are school/text books.*
- ▶ *The interest in students in their own learning has improved, particularly for 1st year JCSP. As a JCSP teacher, the library has helped me immensely - time wise/ideas/resources - and, of course, the excellent help from our librarian.*

- ▶ *The students haven't learnt yet the enjoyment of reading while keeping silent. this could be improved.*
- ▶ *The library is a place where they feel at home. I have never seen JCSP students so keen to go to the library after school. Also they like to tell the librarian about what has happened to them. They get a listening ear and overall I would say the library is a very affirming place for them.*
- ▶ *Student behaviour in the library is generally excellent. Respect for everything in the library is wonderful. Sense of 'student ownership' is very encouraging but it cannot work or develop without the librarian.*

19.4 Consultations at the Final Stage of the Project

As with the early visits to each school, during the final visits interviews/discussion groups were held with a representative cross-section of the teaching staff (n=67) using formats similar to those described above.

During these consultations, the vast majority of teachers testified to many learning, social and behavioural improvements since the introduction of the school library, the librarian and the programmes of library-based activities. Improvements included:

- ▶ Reading levels and reading enthusiasm
- ▶ Oral (ability to express) skills
- ▶ Ability to reflect and consider, with a noticeable decline in frustration levels
- ▶ Overall enjoyment of school
- ▶ Overall behaviour

By the end of the Project, the level of informed and considered support from the teachers for the role of the library and the librarian as the hub of student-centred learning was high. Here are some of their representative comments:

- ▶ *Teacher: The impacts on their reading, concentration, social skills, care for their books, ability to express themselves – I could go on and on - the library and the librarian are an oasis of calm, warmth and joy. Please don't take them away.*
- ▶ *Teacher: There is huge support throughout this school for the librarian, her skills, her professional training and her personality. We can all see that the library is such an enjoyable and rich learning experience for our students.*
- ▶ *Teacher: My entire teaching life now revolves around the library.*

- ▶ *Teacher: Improvements have come about in reading levels and reading enthusiasm, their ability to express themselves, their ability to reflect and consider, their overall enjoyment of school and, indeed, their behaviour.*
- ▶ *Teacher: The library has had a hugely positive impact on me as a teacher. When you work in a disadvantaged area and you have a high percentage of pupils with poor self-esteem, it is a constant struggle to motivate and encourage pupils; some days it is a struggle to motivate oneself... and then I see all these students heading to the library at four o'clock when normally they would be rushing out the door and I think 'we are doing something right.' To experience this gives me a lift and encouragement to try harder and do better.*

19.5 Summary of Findings

Consultations with JCSP teachers in the final stages of the Project indicated that:

- ▶ Over 90% of teachers agreed that, overall, the school experience for JCSP students had improved since the introduction of the School Library
- ▶ Almost 85% of teachers agreed that the library had helped them in their role as JCSP teachers.
- ▶ The majority of teachers saw improvements in reading levels

By the end of the Project there was almost unanimous support from the teachers consulted with and interviewed, both JCSP and non-JCSP, for the role of the library and the librarian as the hub of student-centred learning in their schools.

CHAPTER 20: Views of Principals

20.1 Introduction

Improving student achievement is a vital principal interest, but many principals overlook libraries and librarians as potentially powerful instruments in that work... consequently, principals often leave library potential untapped despite fifty years of research evidence that effective library media programs - when led by active, involved librarians - can have a discernible positive impact on student achievement regardless of student, school and community demographics.

Hartzell G (2002)

During the lifetime of the Project, consultations were carried out with all principals in both the early and final stages. The major topics discussed are found in Appendix 6. There is no doubt that by the end of this Project, the principals were strongly of the belief that effective library strategies and programmes - do have a discernible positive impact on student achievement.

20.2 Impact of the School Library

From the perspective of the school principals, their new school libraries have had, and are continuing to have, major impacts on pupils, staff, curriculum, the whole school and, in a growing number of schools, the outside community. Several principals described their library as 'the heart of the school', 'the hub of the school', 'the most successful initiative in 20 years of initiatives'. The impacts noted and valued by principals included:

- ▶ Improved reading and oracy skills in even the most hesitant readers
- ▶ Invaluable resource for class work, project work, cross-curricular modules and homework
- ▶ Innovative learning programmes and strategies for all abilities
- ▶ The acquisition of lifelong library and research skills
- ▶ Expert resourcing of cross-curricular reading and information materials suitable for reluctant readers
- ▶ Access to materials that are very relevant to pupils' lives and their life experience
- ▶ The discovery of new worlds in a pleasant, safe and comfortable environment
- ▶ Resources for both personal enjoyment and self development for both students and staff
- ▶ The love and respect that many students had for the librarian and for library-based learning

20.3 The Role of the Librarian

For the principals the success of their school libraries was attributable to the fact that they were staffed by fulltime, professional, energetic and enthusiastic librarians who, were able to engage students and teachers in innovative literacy strategies and programmes. These programmes and projects often had the effect (in the past an all too rare one) of enabling the pupils and their teachers to enjoy learning in many different ways. From the perspective of principals, if fulltime professional librarians are discontinued, then not only will there be the obvious impacts with regard to depleted, out-of-date resources and difficulties in routine maintenance but, much more significantly, the innovative literacy strategies and programmes which have been so successful will not survive.

20.4 Summary of Findings

Principals described their library as 'the heart of the school', 'the hub of the school', 'the most successful initiative in 20 years of initiatives'.

It is clear from their comments that, by the end of this Project, the principals were strongly of the belief that effective library strategies and programmes - when led by active, involved librarians. All of the principals strongly argued in favour of the school library becoming a permanent resource organized and directed by a fulltime professional librarian, who in association with the teaching staff, would continue to develop the school library as the centre for innovative, positive, and successful learning.

Voices of the Students

21.1 Introduction

*The library is so big
It is filled with knowledge
So when you grow up
You can go to college*

Extract from 'School', a poem by 'Paul' a JCSP student.

If it wasn't for our librarian, I would not now be a great storyteller, author and poet

Extract from Letter to the Minister by 'Andy' JCSP student.

Throughout this Project, there has been a commitment on the part of all concerned to focus on the needs of the students in considering the nature of the services offered and to facilitate the real involvement of the students in planning the activities. Young JCSP students, like 'Paul' and 'Andy', were at the centre of this initiative. During the lifetime of the Project their views and their voices were recorded in a number of different ways, including:

- ▶ Direct consultation at the beginning and the end of the Project
- ▶ Through informal conversations with librarians
- ▶ Through their poems, their stories and their essays

21.2 Direct Consultation

21.2.1 Consultation at the Beginning of the Project

Focus group discussions were carried out with JCSP students from 1st, 2nd and 3rd years in spring 2003. In so far as it was possible, these discussions took place in the library. A total of 132 students from ten schools took part in these consultations (one school was not up and running during the first set of consultations).

The students who participated were selected by the JCSP co-ordinator and the librarians, in consultation with other colleagues. The students were chosen to represent both sexes and a range of interests. The topics which formed the focus of discussion are in Appendix 6.

The initial set of consultations found that the young people, on the whole, were very pleased with, and proud of, their library.

Typical comments were:

It's brilliant, you can learn more and learn about things you know nothing about and it helps with project work. Easier to learn and it is very relaxing.

It's a cool place to work in - the old one was a dump.

We have important people coming to our library {student referring to recent visits by authors John W Sexton and Siobhan Parkinson} - they would have been too ashamed to invite these people before this.

From the earliest beginnings the majority of the young people loved coming to the library both for classes and for relaxation:

The books are new and clean - not like last year's old yokes.

In the old library there was nothing worth borrowing but here they have Horrible Histories - good books.

It is good to come in here to do work and the teachers love it because everything is here, books, computers, scanners. It is very comfortable and clean.

For some of the students, a small minority, the new library had not really engaged them so far:

Don't think much of it, suppose it's okay for quiet reading.

The computers are boring.

Too many girls' books - should have more books on dogs, greyhounds, ferrets - and hurling.

Almost all, of the students, whether they had a personal interest in the library or not, had an awareness of the importance of having a full time dedicated librarian to guide and help them.

She is very important because she helps us out and tells us where the interesting books are

21.2.2 Consultation towards the End of the Project

By the time of the second consultations which took place with JCSP students from 1st, 2nd and 3rd years in autumn 2004, the young students, if anything, were even more enthusiastic about both their library and their librarians. A total of 102 students from ten schools (School 8 did not offer any students for consultation at the second visit) participated. Again, the students were selected by the JCSP co-ordinator and the librarians, in consultation with other colleagues. Here are a few, representative, voices:

We did brilliant projects about explorers – his (his friend's project) was about Christopher Columbus and mine was about Mungo Park – he was Scottish and he told everybody about the river in Africa called the Niger.

My brother published a book last year (referring to the Make-a-Book initiative) and I am nearly finished my book of poems ...I come to the library everyday and she (the librarian) helps me ...we are going to laminate it when it is finished

My da didn't want to get me a gecko but then we found out in library that they eat crickets... we were able to get the crickets in a pet shop... we are going to get an iguana next... the book says they like lettuce

I love reading now... when I leave school I am going to college for seven years... our librarian is great – she (the librarian) has loads of tapes and great books

I come to school at half eight every morning as soon as the library opens ...I live in those flats over there and I just tear over – me granny thinks I'm mad!

21.3 Informal Conversations with Librarians

During the lifetime of the project, the librarians kept monthly diaries, in which they reported, inter alia, on interactions between themselves and the students. A small sample of these interactions are presented here:

- ▶ *'Tony' told me things are very bad at home. His mother has cancer and his brother is a drug addict. He is so stressed out ...I'm glad the library is a distraction for him and that he enjoys being in here so much.*
- ▶ *At the beginning of the year, 'Peter' said he was not a reader and consistently refused to read in class. He then discovered fishing books and realized that there were books that he wanted to read. His interest and enthusiasm increased tenfold and he became one of the biggest borrowers in first year.*

- ▶ *I noticed that one of the students was interested in James Bond so I introduced him to the Alex Rider books that were newly in. He loved these books. He read the four books in a month and enthused about them greatly. He also did a book review that we put on the library window.*
- ▶ *'Daniel' is a second year JCSP student who is known to be quite difficult to deal with. His main interest is fishing so I have been directing him towards fishing books. He told me today that his dad was able to learn how to make flies from one of the books. Daniel was very excited about this because flies are expensive. He has also promised to catch me a trout so I had better keep the fishing books in good supply!*
- ▶ *One of the students came in to find information on the fire service. His ambition is to be a fireman and he was really excited at the prospect of one day being able to join. I contacted the local Duty Officer and she suggested that we write a letter asking if we could visit the local station. Since then, 'Matthew' has been in the library every morning, lunchtime and evening. All his teachers have noticed the change.*

21.4 Creative Writing – Poems, Stories and Essays

During discussions with teachers, several of them pointed out the beneficial effect of the library in encouraging and facilitating creative writing in a group of students who normally would find this process very difficult. Some examples of JCSP students 'finding their voices' through their writings are presented here.

In one school the second year JCSP students, many with very poor literacy skills, were persuaded by their teacher and the librarian to enter for the national Patrick Kavanagh "My Place" Poetry Competition for secondary students. As Appendix 18 shows, several students were able to produce poems of up to four and five stanzas describing their homes, their street, their communities – their place. Both they and their teacher were very proud of their work, and attributed their success to the calm and creative ambience of the library.

In another school several third year JCSP boys, through the encouragement of both teachers and librarian, have produced both poetry and essays. Having written their works in longhand during class time in the library, they have then used the facilities of the library during lunch and after school, to type, print and laminate their works. One boy has produced a book of poems and another has written his own story – see Appendix 18.

Creative writing is being actively encouraged in another school. Building on the writing that the second years did for Halloween 2003, a group of them took a Christmas theme and wrote short stories. The librarian displayed these on one of the library notice boards. One of the first year boys has taken a particular interest in writing poetry which he types up on the PC and displays on the library board (see 'Bully' - Appendix 18).

One librarian organised a visit by a local poet. She reported:

The students interacted extremely well with her and asked her lots of questions. She asked the 1st year JCSP boys to write a poem based on some props she had - including things like an orange, a scarf, a feather (see Appendix 18 for some of the poems composed by the students at these workshops)

Several librarians introduced writers and poets to the JCSP students (eg Dermot Bolger, Geraldine Mills, John W Sexton and Martina Murphy). In one school, John W. Sexton was Writer in Residence over an 8-week period. Through team teaching sessions, with the librarian and two teachers, and using the Process Approach to Writing, Sexton encouraged the young people to produce their own creative work. Appendix 18 ('When I went to Scotland') is an example of the written work of a 2nd year JCSP student. These works typically went through three drafts. The first draft was presented to classmates for suggestions for improvement, the second draft incorporated the suggested changes, and the final draft was checked for spelling and typed out using the library laptops. The librarian, the teachers and the students were all delighted with what was regarded as a very successful residency. As one young pupil wrote:

I really enjoyed the work we did with John I learnt a lot about righting storyes and I enjoyed the ones he told us it was grate

21.5 Summary of Findings

During the lifetime of the Project the students' views and voices were recorded in a number of different ways:

- ▶ Direct consultation at the beginning and the end of the Project
- ▶ Through informal conversations with librarians
- ▶ Through their poems, their stories and their essays

From the start of the Project, the young JCSP students, on the whole, were very pleased with, and proud of, their library. The majority of the young people loved coming to the library both for classes and for relaxation.

The Library Development Plans

22.1 Introduction

Essentially a whole school approach is needed to the planning, financing, organising and evaluating of the library... which will enable the school to make full use of the library, set standards and plan for future development

(Charlton, 2002)

22.2 Strategic Planning

Coghlan et al (1999), in *Library File: Making a Success of the School Library*, made an observation which resonated with the experiences of many of the librarians in this Project:

Strategic planning is often neglected in school libraries. Providing a service takes precedence over any attempt to stand back and look at where the library is now and where it might be going in the future

In the first year of the project, although the librarians were aware of the need to spend time (and also to encourage others in the school community including management, teaching staff, students and parents to spend time) in drawing up a Library Development Plan, they found themselves so engrossed in the day-to-day operational running of the library, that these plans did not really develop to any great extent.

In order, therefore, to consider issues such as an effective planning process, rationale for planning, drawing up the actual plan, evaluating it and making it accountable, a sub-committee of three librarians was established to produce a template which could then be modified by the other librarians to suit the particular needs of their schools.

22.3 Library Development Plan

The sub-committee drew up a draft plan in June 2003. By mid-year (February 2004) progress on developing the Library Development Plan in individual schools was slow. Part

of the difficulty was that only three of the schools had a School Development Plan (with a further four working on a Plan) and some of the librarians found it difficult to devise and implement a Library Development Plan in the absence of an overall School Development Plan. Of the three schools that had a School Development Plan, two had the library featured in their plan.

In spite of these potential setbacks, the sub-committee continued to work on the Library Development Plan. In September 2004, a modified version was adopted by all the Demonstration Libraries as policy for the duration of the project (Appendix 19). The areas covered in the current plan include:

- ▶ School mission statement (individual to each school)
- ▶ School library philosophy
- ▶ Aims/objectives of school library
- ▶ Users
- ▶ Staffing
- ▶ Library committee
- ▶ Resources
- ▶ Stock selection policy
- ▶ Literacy strategies
- ▶ Librarian and teaching staff working together

22.4 Establishment of Library Committees

The Library Plan proposed that each school would have a Library Committee, consisting of librarian, staff and students, meeting twice a term or according to the literacy needs of students. By the time the Project came to an end, four schools had established a Library Committee, with a further two schools planning to do so.

22.5 Need for Evaluation Strategies and Annual Report

Two important areas that were not referred to in the Library Development Plan are the area of evaluation of the school library's strategies and the production of an annual report. These are areas that need consideration in the future development of this Project and are areas that could be incorporated into the activities of the Library Committee under the direction of the school librarian.

Scott (2001) in her report on measuring the effectiveness and success of the school library, states:

Initially seen as demanding and perhaps even a little threatening and time consuming, measuring success can be enlightening and invigorating and a catalyst for change ...it should be focused on providing evidence to support the library's contribution as a major player in school learning and teaching.

Producing an annual report for a library, especially a school library catering for the needs of students with literacy difficulties, is a great deal more than a statistical exercise. It is important, not only for the purpose of accountability (see Coghlan et al, 1999) but equally important, if it is done well, it could act as a resource for other school libraries. It could assess which strategies worked and which needed modification or rejection.

22.6 Summary of Findings

In the first year of the project, the librarians found themselves so engrossed in the day-to-day operational running of the library in the context of the school literacy strategy, that Library Demonstration plans did not really develop to any great extent.

At the end of the first year (June 2003), a sub-committee of three librarians was established to produce a template for a Library Development Plan which could then be modified by the other librarians to suit the particular needs of their schools.

By September 2004, a modified version was adopted by all the Demonstration Libraries as policy for the duration of the project.

Two important areas that were not referred to in the Library Development Plan are the area of evaluation of the school library's strategies and the production of an annual report. These are areas that need consideration in the future development of this Project.

Main Findings and Recommendations

23.1 Introduction

The JCSP Demonstration Library Project was announced in October 2001 by the Minister for Education and Science as part of the Early Literacy Initiative. The evaluation of the Project began shortly after it commenced in the selected schools (November 2002) and continued until December 2004. The main aim of the Project was:

- ▶ To establish whether a good library, which caters for the needs of students with literacy difficulties, actually impacts on their learning experience and allows them to address and overcome literacy and learning difficulties.

Additional objectives were to:

- ▶ Determine the effectiveness of the Project from the perspective of the students involved, primarily the JCSP students, on their learning and literacy skills
- ▶ Examine how library-based strategies impacted on classroom practice and supported the curriculum
- ▶ Assess the impact of the Project on the schools involved and look at the integration of the library and librarian into the life of the school
- ▶ Make recommendations for future development

It is the overwhelming conclusion of this report that nine of the eleven Demonstration Library Project school libraries, with the essential presence of the fulltime professional librarians, have fulfilled and in many places exceeded both the main aim and the associated objectives of this Project.

In two schools difficulties arose. These difficulties continued throughout the lifetime of the Project. One of these schools had difficulties that are outside the scope of this report to address. The second school had difficulties owing to the ill health of the librarian.

23.2 Fulfilment of the Main Aim of the Project

Over a two-year period, with the cooperation of the principals, teachers and pupils, the support of the Advisory Committee, the JCSP Support Team and the Project Manager, and the commitment of the librarians, a major evaluation of this Project was carried out. The impact of the library on the learning experiences of JCSP students, the learning experiences of other students, the teaching experiences of staff, the expectations of principals and the reactions of the wider community, have been examined and analysed in considerable detail throughout this report.

The Demonstration Library Project libraries went through three distinct developmental stages during the lifetime of the Project:

- ▶ The early stage was dominated by the practical details of establishing the library.
- ▶ In the second stage, the consolidation phase, the librarians began to organise their libraries, stock the shelves, get to know both their teacher colleagues and the students, and start a programme of library-based literacy support classes, strategies and activities
- ▶ In the final, integration, stage, the strategies and activities commenced in the consolidation stage were built upon, developed and expanded.

From considerable analyses of these three phases, there is a great deal of evidence to support the hypothesis that a good school library, which caters for the needs of students with literacy difficulties, impacts positively on their learning experience and allows them to address and overcome literacy difficulties.

- ▶ **Standardised Reading Test results** for those core students who were tested in 2003 and again in 2004 show that 69% of all core students, rising to 74% for first-to-second year students, increased their reading scores between testings. More significantly, in those groups of students who showed reading increases, between 36% and 40% of each group increased their reading age between 1 year 7 months and 3 years 6 months. In the context of students with low reading ages, these would appear to be quite outstanding findings (Basic Skills Agency, 1998).
- ▶ One of the most directly measured impacts of the library can be seen through **book borrowing** data. Between the first and second years of this Project, book borrowing (i.e. self-motivated borrowing from the library for pleasure, for interest, for curiosity, for independent learning) increased almost 6-fold for JCSP girls and more than 7-fold for JCSP boys. As both librarians and teachers repeatedly pointed out, these highly successful findings apply to students who traditionally do not read, do not own books, and come from communities where there is little or no tradition of reading, borrowing or buying books. Many of these students, even if they live in the vicinity of a public library may never have used the library.

- ▶ **Tracking of individual students** clearly identifies students in every school who benefited very considerably from the school library in reading accuracy and comprehension and also in confidence building. The stories of these students are very significant because they indicate not only improvements in reading age (and in some cases very substantial improvements) but describe how weak, reluctant and hesitant students, through their library usage, fulfilled many of the objectives of this Project. For these students the library did become the place where they enjoyed reading for pleasure, learned information skills, prepared for project and cross-curricular work and practised the skills needed to become autonomous learners. Through the structured library programmes these students accessed books, knowledge, information in a warm, colourful, welcoming and encouraging environment that has encouraged a love of reading and improved literacy levels, and hopefully will pave the way for lifelong learning.

- ▶ Over 90% of **teachers** agreed that, overall, the school experience for JCSP students has improved since the introduction of the School Library, almost three quarters agreed that the overall enjoyment of reading for JCSP students has improved and almost 85% agreed that the library has helped them in their role as JCSP teachers. The majority of teachers observed improvements in both reading levels and in the interest of students in their own learning . By the end of this Project there was almost unanimous support from all teachers consulted with and interviewed, both JCSP and non JCSP, for the role of the librarian and library as the hub of student centred learning in their schools.

- ▶ **Principals'** were strongly of the belief that the effective library strategies and programmes demonstrated in this Project - when led by active, involved librarians - do have a discernible positive impact on student achievement. All of the principals strongly argued in favour of the school library becoming a permanent resource organized and directed by a fulltime professional librarian, who, in association with the teaching staff, would continue to develop the school library as the centre for innovative, positive, and successful learning.

23.3 Secondary Objectives

23.3.1 The Effectiveness of the Project from the Perspective of Students with Literacy Difficulties

As this report has richly demonstrated, the librarians - in cooperation with the JCSP Support Team, the Project Manager, the JCSP co-ordinators, HSCLCs, resource teachers and other members of the teaching staffs - introduced, encouraged, managed and evaluated an extensive range of library-based literacy support strategies which catered for the literacy, learning, social and emotional needs of students with literacy difficulties. As a result the responses of the students were positive and, at times, overwhelming in their enthusiasm.

Supportive findings include:

- ▶ **Student ownership of the library:** From the earliest beginnings of the Project, the young JCSP students, on the whole, were very pleased with, and proud of, their library. The majority of the young people loved coming to the library both for classes and for relaxation.
- ▶ **Library-based strategies:** Strategies such as paired and shared reading schemes, project work initiatives, arts and culture programmes, computer-based and numeracy schemes, and lunch-time and after school reading clubs, evoked high levels of support from pupils and the wider school community. Direct feedback from students (and librarians and teachers) confirmed that, through these library-based programmes:
 - Reading standards had improved
 - The students were able to establish links with the curriculum while enjoying these programmes and new levels of enthusiasm were observed
 - Concentration, the ability to complete a task and constructive behaviour had all improved.
- ▶ **Project work/Cross-Curricular:** Library based projects, both cross-curricular and ‘cross-skilled’, which began in almost all of the libraries at a very early stage in the Project, continued, developed and expanded. By the end of the second year the library had become totally integrated into the thinking of both teachers and students as the essential core of project work.
- ▶ **Creative Writing:** Well stocked, well managed school libraries, with access to books through structured library programmes that are directed towards the learning needs and interests of even the most reluctant and hesitant readers, can have learning impacts that are very significant. The library was central to encouraging and facilitating writing.
- ▶ **The library as a new educational space:** Literacy support events, such as drama workshops, storytelling, musical activities, recreational clubs, reading groups and library exhibitions, developed and flourished. These library-based activities opened up learning in a stimulating and interactive way and gave great satisfaction both to JCSP students and to other students, staff, parents and visitors to the libraries.
- ▶ **Safe Haven:** Librarians, teachers and principals reported that for many students the library was very often seen as a particularly safe and secure place.
- ▶ During the lifetime of the Project, many of the libraries developed important **interactions with the wider community** including parental involvement in children’s literacy and reaching out to international students and their cultures
- ▶ Schools developed **links with feeder primary schools** so that future students would become familiar with their new school library. These links were highly valued by primary teachers.

23.3.2 Impact of Library-Based Strategies on Classroom Practice and Support for the Curriculum

At the outset of the Project, many teachers, while interested and supportive, were a little uncertain as to what the roles of the library and librarian were. Several of them felt that it was of relevance primarily for teaching English. Many of them saw it only as a place for borrowing books and reading for leisure, and the librarian as someone who kept it in good order. The concept of a library that was a functioning learning space was unfamiliar to many of them.

For many schools and teachers, a turning-point came following the Library In-Service programme which was delivered to all members of the teaching staffs in each of the participating schools. In each school the participating teachers came from across the entire curriculum including technology, mathematics, business studies, science, art craft and design, home economics and CSPE as well as English, languages, history and geography. This programme was positively evaluated by over 99% of the participating teachers.

Following the Library In-Service programme, many of the librarians noted an immediate beneficial effect on teachers' levels of interest in, and involvement with, the library both as a support for classroom-based work and for project work, in every aspect of the curriculum.

Supportive findings include:

- ▶ Library-based strategies were developed and expanded during the second year of the project. Although they varied from school to school, they had a number of key elements:
 - They involved co-operation between the librarian and several members of the teaching staff
 - They were library-based, rather than classroom-based, and often had experimental and innovative aspects
 - They were evaluated to ascertain their effect on the students.

- ▶ From the perspective of principals, these innovative literacy strategies and programmes have been very successful. They are of the opinion that the fulltime professional librarians are central to this success. One principal described his school library as 'the most successful initiative in 20 years of initiatives'

23.3.3 Impact of the Project on the Schools Involved and the Integration of the Library and Librarian into the Life of the School

In order to manage the impact of the Project on the schools involved and to facilitate the integration of the library and librarian, a great deal of effort was put into the establishment of strong managerial supports for the Project in all its dimensions.

An Advisory Committee under the auspices of the JCSP Support Team was established, a Project Manager (who is a professional librarian) was appointed, criteria were established for the selection process for schools and for the physical dimensions of the library, and a contract with the school principals was drawn up. Training programmes for both librarians and teachers were put in place.

Supportive findings include:

- ▶ These supports were vital in ensuring that, from the outset of the Project and throughout its lifetime, the integrity of the initiative was preserved. Indeed, it can be argued with justification that the undoubted success of the pilot Project is due, in large part, to the strong management structure within which it operated. It allowed an initiative, which many principals and teachers subsequently described as one of the best initiatives ever introduced, to flourish independently of school management, thus ensuring that its aims and objectives were allowed the environment in which to succeed.
- ▶ An integral part of the Project from the outset was the appointment of fulltime professional librarians to establish, design, stock and manage the new libraries. The belief of the JCSP Support Team, that the success of the school library, particularly one with a mandate to address and overcome literacy problems, was dependent on a fulltime, professional librarian was fully borne out by the achievements of the librarians in this Project.
- ▶ From the initial stages of the Project, and right through its lifetime, there was a comprehensive support and training programme for the librarians through a series of seminars, training days, monthly meetings, and other supports. Feedback from the librarians throughout the life of the Project testified to the importance of these supports in both professional development and social networking.
- ▶ The process of integrating the library and the librarian into the life of the school was hugely facilitated by the library in-service programme which prepared teachers for the role of the new library, and their roles in working with the librarians in the development and support of library-based literacy programmes. The feedback from both teachers and librarians confirmed the important impact that the programme had on teachers.

- ▶ During the lifetime of the Project, many of the libraries developed important interactions with the wider community including parental involvement in children’s literacy, adult literacy, interactions with local primary schools, contacts with public libraries and contacts with international students and their cultures.

- ▶ The Project Librarians learned much about how to establish the library as the hub of the school. From the collective experiences of the librarians, many lessons have been learned which will contribute enormously to the successful rolling out of this project to additional schools. The most important of the challenges were:
 - **Integrating a new professional onto the staff:** By the final year of the Project, the Integration stage, the librarians’ relationships with members of the teaching staff, personal and professional, were, on the whole, excellent.
 - **Relationships with students:** It was clear from the librarians’ monthly reports and consultations that these relationships were very positive.
 - **Practical Issues:** during the Project a number of practical lessons, in areas such as shelving, book selection, cataloguing and IT technical support, were learned which have implications for improved practice in the future.

23.4 Recommendations for Future Development

Following a detailed evaluation of this multidimensional Project, the findings demonstrate over and over again, that well stocked, well managed school libraries, with access to books through structured library programmes that are directed towards the learning needs and interests of even the most reluctant and hesitant readers, can have impacts that are very significant.

The challenge for the future development of these libraries will be to maintain these high levels of constructive and innovative literacy programme development after the pilot phase is over. There is a danger that when the research and evaluation phase is completed the stimulus for creative activity and programme evaluation may be reduced.

On the basis of the findings presented in this report, the following recommendations are made.

Recommendations

- ▶ It is recommended that all Project Libraries be managed by a fulltime professional librarian

- ▶ It is recommended that the current network of Project Libraries be supported by the JCSP Support Team for at least the next three years

- ▶ It is recommended that the Demonstration Library in School 8 be suspended until the management issues in this school have been addressed
- ▶ It is recommended that a new librarian be appointed to the school where difficulties arose due to the ill-health of the librarian and that special supports be given to this school in order to allow it to reach the same level of integration as the other nine schools
- ▶ It is recommended that future Project Libraries be supported by the JCSP Support Team for at least five years
- ▶ It is recommended that the current training programme for librarians, which is developed by the JCSP Support Team, in association with the librarians themselves, be continued
- ▶ For future Project Libraries it is recommended that in-service training for teachers take place within the first six months of the establishment of the library
- ▶ It is recommended that whole-school in-service training, on the role of library-based literacy strategies, take place at least once every three years.
- ▶ The library-based literacy strategies must be constantly reviewed and evaluated in order to ensure that the literacy needs of reluctant and hesitant readers are being met.
- ▶ These review and evaluation procedures should be incorporated into the Library Development Plan and reported on in Annual Report form by the Librarian in partnership with the School Library Committee
- ▶ Furniture for new school libraries should be purchased from suppliers with proven track-records in supplying library furniture
- ▶ It is recommended that in order to independently test several of the validity and reliability issues arising from the impact measures of this study that:
 - A further round of Standardised Reading Tests are carried out in each Project school in April 2005
 - The librarians, in their Annual Reports, produce book borrowing data
 - The Librarians, in their Annual Reports should continue to track student progress
- ▶ School libraries should, where possible, be encouraged to develop links with feeder primary schools so that students become familiar with their new school
- ▶ Several of the Demonstration Library Schools have a number of international students, from several African, Asian and East European countries. School libraries should, where possible, be encouraged to develop links with these children and their communities, both for learning and social reasons

- ▶ IT technical support should be available to new libraries from the earliest stage of development - several months before the library is available to the school and the students
- ▶ New software systems should be identified, if possible, that are better suited to the needs of school libraries

23.5 Conclusion

The library project has been a great success because the various partners involved – students, teachers, parents and librarian – have worked together to make the most of the resource they have been given. The project has laid strong foundations. The true beauty of what it is capable of building will be realized in years to come if resources and support continue to be put in place.

(Librarian)

As discussed in the introduction to this report, the JCSP Demonstration Library Project can be seen as an initiative within an initiative.

It is located within the broad context of socio-economic and educational disadvantage that the JCSP seeks to address. Since 1997 the JCSP Support Service has encouraged schools to develop and evaluate new ways of working with students. Through the JCSP Literacy and Numeracy Strategy it aims to support those schools with a significant number of underachieving readers in developing a whole-school approach to literacy as a central part of their school development plan.

The objectives of the Demonstration Library Project were to demonstrate that access to books through a structured library programme would encourage a love of reading and improve literacy levels, and pave the way for lifelong learning. From this detailed evaluation it can be seen that these objectives have been met.

The Demonstration Libraries have become places where all students, including the most vulnerable, can successfully come, for both curricular and non-curricular activities, to enjoy reading for pleasure, learn information skills, prepare for project and cross-curricular work and practice the skills needed to become autonomous learners.

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Appendix 1

Advisory Committee

In March 2002 the Advisory Committee to the Project was formed. Invitations were issued to representatives of key bodies from the wider community committed to promoting and supporting literacy initiatives for young people. The members of the group were:

- ▶ Aidan Clifford, Director, CDVEC Curriculum Development Unit.
- ▶ Aideen Cassidy, National Co-ordinator JCSP.
- ▶ Bernadette Kiely, National Co-ordinator JCSP.
- ▶ Brendan Teeling, Assistant Director, The Library Council.
- ▶ Caroline Barry, Alternative Entertainments Arts Group.
- ▶ Gabriel Martin, Senior Inspector, Department of Education and Science.
- ▶ Ita Greene, Vice Chair, City of Dublin VEC.
- ▶ Margaret Bentley, Project Manager JCSP Demonstration Library Project
- ▶ Mary Carleton Reynolds, County Librarian, Longford.
- ▶ Sandra Humes, Senior Library Manager, Belfast Education and Library Board.

Over the course of the Project Ita Greene, Gabriel Martin, Sandra Humes and Caroline Barry retired. In October 2004 James Malone, HEO, Department of Education and Science, and Jane O'Hanlon, Poetry Ireland, joined the Committee. The Advisory Committee met on seven occasions.

Appendix 2

Selection criteria

The criteria for selection of schools to take part in the JCSP Demonstration Library Project were as follows:

- ▶ Room size. The recommended room size as designated by international and Irish standards is 130sq.m. (1400sq.ft.). Because of the nature of the cross-curricular project work envisaged as an integral part of the library-based literacy strategies, schools well under the recommended size were not considered.
- ▶ The number of students participating in the JCSP within a school. Priority was given to schools with higher numbers, with a spread over the three-year cycle.
- ▶ The number of years a school had been participating in the JCSP.
- ▶ Current literacy initiatives in schools.
- ▶ Geographic spread.
- ▶ School type, i.e. community/secondary/vocational.
- ▶ The number of timetabled Resource/Learning Support teachers in a school.

Each application was considered under these headings, and short listing then took place. The Project Manager visited those schools to meet with principals and school JCSP co-ordinators, and to see the proposed rooms. A sub-committee of the Advisory Committee made the final selection and the successful schools were advised in late May 2002.

Appendix 3

Selected schools

The schools selected for the project were:

- ▶ Colaiste Eoin, Finglas. (started June 2003)
- ▶ Collinstown Park Community School, Clondalkin, Dublin 22.
- ▶ Community College, Moinin na gCiseach, Galway.
- ▶ Kilkenny City Vocational School, Kilkenny.
- ▶ Larkin Community College, Cathal Brugha St. Dublin 1.
- ▶ Pobalscoil Chloich Cheannfhaola, Falcarragh, Co. Donegal.
- ▶ Presentation Secondary School, Warrenmount, Dublin 8.
- ▶ St. Kilian's Community School, Bray, Co. Wicklow.
- ▶ St. Paul's Community College, Waterford.
- ▶ Technical College, Dungarvan, Co. Waterford. (Coláiste Cathail Naofa)
- ▶ Terence MacSwiney Community College, Cork.

It was decided to include Technical College, Dungarvan in the initiative, because a purpose built school with a purpose built library was due to open in January 2003. For the purposes of inclusion in the research, the Project agreed to pay the salary of a professional librarian for the duration of the Project, and to contribute additional funding in order to bring the library to the standard of the other participating libraries.

Appendix 4

Computerised Library Management System

The Project Manager and the Librarian at the CDU investigated a number of computerised library management systems on the market. They shortlisted two systems, and the librarians spent a day with the Librarian and the Project Manager looking at both systems in detail. The Heritage system was chosen.

A representative from the Heritage system demonstrated ways in which this system can be used to produce reports on age/sex/gender which would form part of the research. The system was also sympathetic to students with literacy difficulties sourcing information, and had built-in devices such as a library map, which could be easily followed by students.

Appendix 5

Guidelines for Librarians' Report Writing

The research elements of this project, including tracking, monitoring, assessing and evaluating, will rely to a very large extent on the quality and quantity of the information and communication strategies which are set up between the librarians and the researcher.

These information and communication strategies will include:

- ▶ Diary entries
- ▶ Monthly summaries or reports based on the diary entries
- ▶ Gathering data through HERITAGE to be processed at a later date
- ▶ Monthly meetings with the researcher
- ▶ Questionnaires or surveys, quantitative or qualitative, carried out with students, staff, parents and any other groups
- ▶ Regular telephone communication with the researcher
- ▶ Researcher's two day visits to schools beginning in the New Year

Good Practice: ideally each librarian will write a short report at the end of each day on the main happenings for that day. This would include reporting on:

- ▶ Factual events to do with accommodation, resources, library organisation and systems eg new furniture, new stock, new computers, AND any frustrations or irritations that you may be experiencing with regard to delays, difficulties and so forth
- ▶ Interactions with the Students. A brief account of the classes and students met that day, highlighting student reactions, comments, real or anticipated difficulties. Anecdotal comments from the students very important here. It is essential that the students' perceptions, views, attitudes be recorded as faithfully as possible. Clearly, it may not be possible for you to record every single comment and attitudinal position from every single student or every single class, but if you could try to convey the main occurrences, that would be important.
- ▶ Interactions with Staff. Brief accounts of both formal and informal interactions with staff - this would include both positive and negative interactions. Reporting on negative interactions may be difficult but this is an important area. For the purposes of writing your entries, I have no interest in staff names. Where there are formal meetings with staff, it is very important that any decisions agreed on or any differences of opinion, approaches, strategies and so on, are included in your entries.

- ▶ Interactions with parents and other groups. Again, where these take place, either formally or informally, please report them. Don't forget to report events that don't happen - for example, if you plan a meeting and it is cancelled, or no one turns up, these outcomes are important to record.

- ▶ Library based strategies: From now on, and for some of you will already have happened, you will be beginning to introduce library based strategies. This would include various means of promoting library use, organising library displays and events, playing an active role in delivering the curriculum, instruction in information literacy and technology literacy skills, and so forth. It is important to document these strategies from the rationale behind introducing them through their progress development to their outcomes. Could you also record the rationale behind the reasons for your selection of choice of books for your library.

- ▶ Your own positive and negative feelings, perceptions, views, frustrations! Threaded through all of the above areas, will be your own feelings. You will have up days and down days; you will feel it is three steps forward and two steps backwards (or worse). It is vitally important that you document these feelings and reactions. Any triumphs, small victories, breakthroughs and achievements, no matter how trivial, should be recorded.

Appendix 6

Themes for School Visits

1. Themes for Brief Semi-Structured Discussion with Principals (to last between 10-15 minutes)

Since the project started, what has been the impact of the school library on?:

- ▶ Pupils
- ▶ Staff
- ▶ Curriculum
- ▶ Whole school
- ▶ Parents and local community

What has it meant to the school to have a full time professional librarian in the school library? What would it mean if the librarian was no longer available to the school?

How do you see the future of your school library?

2. Themes for Semi-Structured Discussion with JCSP Co-ordinators (to last between 25-30 minutes)

The impact of the library on JCSP students' levels of literacy eg

- ▶ Overall reading level of students
- ▶ Overall writing level of students
- ▶ Overall spelling level of students

The impact of the library on JCSP students' school experience eg

- ▶ Overall enjoyment of reading
- ▶ Interest of students in their own learning
- ▶ Impact on school attendance
- ▶ Overall school experience for JCSP students

Other impacts on JCSP students eg

- ▶ Creative thinking
- ▶ Verbal communication
- ▶ Ability to reflect and consider
- ▶ Independent learning
- ▶ Student behaviour

The impact of the library on your teaching role as a JCSP teacher

Overall impact on the school as a whole

Overall impact on the local community

If the library continues to function without a fulltime professional librarian, what impacts will this have?

3. Themes for Semi-Structured Discussion with Teaching Staff (to last between 15-20 minutes if one-to-one, 30-40 minutes if group format)

The impact of the library on JCSP students' levels of literacy eg

- ▶ Overall reading level of students
- ▶ Overall writing level of students
- ▶ Overall spelling level of students

The impact of the library on JCSP students' school experience eg

- ▶ Overall enjoyment of reading
- ▶ Interest of students in their own learning
- ▶ Impact on school attendance
- ▶ Overall school experience for JCSPs

Other impacts on JCSP students eg

- ▶ Creative thinking
- ▶ Verbal communication
- ▶ Ability to reflect and consider
- ▶ Independent learning
- ▶ Student behaviour

The impact of the library on you as a teacher

Overall impact on the school as a whole

Overall impact on the local community

If the library continues to function without a fulltime professional librarian, what impacts will this have?

4. Focus Group Discussions with Students - Design and Themes

Design of Focus Group Discussions with JCSP Students

It is hoped to carry out three separate focus group discussions with students in each school - one group each from first, second and third year JCSP students.

Each group will consist of 3 to 4 students (no more than four – previous experience shows that larger groups are not effective). Ideally it will take place in a quiet place, around a table where both students and facilitator are sitting as equals.

Themes for Focus Group Discussions with Students (modified according to year of student)

- ▶ Is it a good idea to have a school library?
- ▶ What are the good things about it?
- ▶ What are the things that could get better?
- ▶ How many classes a week do you have in the library?
- ▶ What sorts of things do you do in these classes?
- ▶ Have you done any projects in the library?
- ▶ Do you go at lunch time or after school?
- ▶ Do you think the library has helped you with reading and school work?
- ▶ Do you think every school should have a library?
- ▶ Would you prefer to see something else instead of a library?
- ▶ Do you ever go to the public library?

Appendix 7

Training Events Attended by Librarians

September 2002	Workshop JCSP – <i>Literacy and the potential Early School Leaver: A whole school approach to literacy</i> – Dublin
December 2002	Heritage Library Management System – training day (All Librarians)
May 2003	Workshop <i>Team Teaching</i> , JCSP in-school in-service
January 2004	JCSP Numeracy Modular National In-service, Dublin
February 2004	Workshop <i>Critical Incident</i> by school psychologist
April 2004	Workshop <i>Suicide – an overview</i> in-school in-service, Suicide Resource Office of South Eastern Health Board
May 2004	Children’s Books Ireland Summer School, Pearse St. Public Library.
May 2004	Library Association of Ireland Youth Library Group Seminar.
October 2004	JCSP Literacy Modular National In-service
November 2004	Family Literacy seminar, National Adult Literacy Agency, Ennis. (Siobhan Arkins)
December 2004	Training day: VEC Psychological Support Service

Conferences Attended by Librarians

April 2002	<i>Libraries for All: Towards Social Inclusion</i> . Library Association of Ireland and Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals Annual joint Conference
October 2002	Department of Library and Information Studies University College Dublin 25th Anniversary Research Conference

March 2003	School Library Association Republic of Ireland, AGM, Blanchardstown Public Library
May 2003	Members Day of County and City Librarians Conference, Galway
June 2003	School Library Association National Conference, Leicester, England
July 2003	Regional AGM of Western Regional Section of Library Association of Ireland, Galway (Siobhan Arkins)
October 2003	School Library Association, Republic of Ireland regional meeting hosted in Dungarvan (Jane O' Loughlin)
October 2003	<i>Children of all ages, Libraries of all stages</i> Assistant Librarians' Section Library Association of Ireland, Clonakilty, Cork
March 2004	School Library Association, Republic of Ireland AGM, Terence Mc Swiney Community College, Jane O' Loughlin and Eadaoin Quinn elected to Committee
June 2004	Irish Learning Support Association / School Library Association Conference, "From Aesop to e-book" Trinity College.
April 2004	Library Association of Ireland / Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals Joint conference Digitisation, Wicklow.
October 2004	<i>C'mon everybody - Libraries and Interculturalism</i> Library Association of Ireland Public Libraries' Section, Sligo
October 2004	Writers in Residence forum, Poetry Ireland Larkin College, Dublin
November 2004	<i>The School Library in the 21st Century</i> School Library Association, Republic of Ireland policy statement launch and seminar, Larkin Community College, Dublin

Presentations Made by Librarians

Libraries For All: Towards Social Inclusion. Organised by the Library Association of Ireland & Clip for their annual joint conference in the Stormont Hotel, Belfast in April 2002, joint paper presented by Margaret Bentley and Bernadette Kiely

Department of Library and Information Studies (DepLIS), Conference on research in library and information studies October 2002. Presentation on the Project by Margaret Bentley.

JCSP Co-ordinators Meeting Dublin, February 2003 Presentation on Demonstration Library Project – Siobhan Arkins

Library Expo Exhibition in the RDS in October 2003, presentation by Project Manager Margaret Bentley.

Children of all ages, Libraries of all stages, Library Association of Ireland National Conference in Clonakilty in October 2003. Presentations by Margaret Bentley and Jane O'Loughlin

JCSP Co-ordinators Meeting, February 2004 Cork, presentation on Book Selection – Jane O'Loughlin

Presentation to Co. Waterford VEC on the Library Project at Coláiste Cathail Naofa April 2004– Jane O Loughlin

From Aesop to e-book: the story goes on, joint conference Irish Learning Support Association and School Library Association in Trinity College in June 2004. A joint paper on the project was presented by Margaret Bentley and Eileen Holian.

C'mon Everybody - Libraries and Interculturalism Library Association of Ireland Public Libraries' Section, Sligo, presentation by Eadaoin Quinn.

School Library Association, Republic of Ireland Conference, Larkin Community College, November 2004 Presentation on Book Selection by Jane O' Loughlin.

Appendix 8

Report on Library In-service Evaluations Prepared by Project Manager

The JCSP Support Team was aware from the outset that the introduction of a fully staffed library in a school could lead to enormous changes in the life of a school, where the librarian would be working alongside teachers supporting and developing literacy strategies and cross-curricular activities, and providing a fantastic source of information.

Staff development for all subject teachers in the Demonstration Library Schools, on their role in integrating this resource into their curricular activities, became a priority for 2003 - 2004.

As a result, staff training for all subject teachers took place in the participating schools, and to date all 11 participating schools have had in-service training around the Demonstration Library Project. The in-service has included information about both the background to the project and national picture, and also the national and international research to date. All of the librarians have been involved in their own school in-service, and have provided considerable training for all staff on library based literacy strategies, both current and planned, and also training for individual subject areas. Short workshops were also conducted on current library usage of each teacher in their subject areas, and ways of addressing further linkages. The JCSP Co-ordinators and JCSP Support Team ran these in service days. A great deal of prior planning took place on the individual requirements of each school, and the format of the days was tailor made to these requirements. In a number of cases, the JCSP Support Team also provided training on "Whole School Approach to Literacy", and other literacy/numeracy/ related topics, as requested.

The in-services intended:

- ▶ To inform about the background to the Project, and to outline what is happening at national level.
- ▶ To explain the role of individual schools within the Project.
- ▶ To outline some of the most significant research findings to date.
- ▶ To provide training to all staff on how the library is organised, with particular reference to individual subject areas, and also the computerised circulation system.
- ▶ To inform all staff regarding the wealth of library based activities currently taking place in individual libraries, and to explore further potential activities.
- ▶ To assess school staff engagement with and knowledge of the library, its aims, facilities and services.
- ▶ To get teachers' reactions and suggestions for improvement.

The in-services were presented through a combination of presentations and workshops. Contributors included JCSP National Co-ordinators, members of the JCSP support team, the Project Manager and the school librarian, and school JCSP co-ordinator.

Eleven school in-services were held from November 2003 to March 2004. 313 school staff members responded to the evaluations.

Of the respondents to the Evaluations

- ▶ 72.4% found the in-services very helpful,
- ▶ 27.3% found the in-services helpful
- ▶ and 0.3% found the in-service unhelpful.

All of the librarians have reported a very supportive response to the in-service, resulting in greater use of the library. The response of those teachers who experienced difficulty establishing a link between the library and their particular subject has been particularly encouraging across all of the schools.

Summary of Evaluation Responses

What was the most useful part of the session?

1. Librarians' Presentations

The teachers welcomed the information on their own particular school library, increasing their familiarity with the library, with the diversity of resources available, and with the role of the librarian. The presentations on what is going on, both in their own school library, and in the other libraries within the project opened the teacher's eyes to the possibilities and potential of such a resource, particularly when it is staffed by a fulltime professional librarian. In particular they were made aware of how useful the library was to their own specific subject area. "It made me decide that I should find ways that my class can use the library". The teachers also responded that they were made more aware of the positive attitudes among students to the library, and library based activities.

2. National Picture

The presentation on the national picture was also warmly received by the teachers. It made them aware of the impact of the libraries on the schools as a whole and gave a deeper knowledge of the whole picture. Again they responded that it stimulated them to develop their own use of the library further. It was a useful session in which to remind teachers and principals that their school is part of a national research project, and that all of the work is being assessed for research purposes working towards expanding and developing school libraries with an emphasis on literacy.

3. Teachers' experience and discussion with other teachers and feedback of student usage and attitudes

The teachers found the formal opportunity to exchange views with other teachers about the library extremely useful. They welcomed the chance "just to get the time to have myself challenged about the resource we have at our disposal. A challenge to attitudes".

The teachers "anecdotal evidence of success" and "finding out how much it means to pupils and the security it offers to students" made them think differently about the library.

One good idea you picked up

Most of the teachers highlighted the fact that their own imaginations and creativity in regard teaching methods were stimulated by the presentations and discussions. A lot of the teachers mentioned that they would now try to liaise closer with the librarian. Now that they were aware of the extent of the resource they wanted to make more use of it. Many responded that they would make more of an effort to integrate the library with "regular" class work. Also that they would make more use of the variety of resources available. They responded that they would use more literacy enhancing techniques and methods as they saw them more relevant to their own subject areas. They also mentioned the fact that while not a classroom the library was still a valuable learning environment.

Requests for future in-service

A main theme of teacher's requests was for a focus on specific subject areas, including workshops and practical demonstrations of how to use the library with a large class group.

Another was requests for practical usage tips for the library including tours of the resources and facilities available in the library, teacher/student research workshops, and General training on the use of the library. Training for the internet and computers was also requested.

Many of the teachers would like more information/training on how to collaborate better with the librarians and how to integrate the library and its possibilities better into their "regular" class-work.

Many also requested information/workshops on how to involve parents more. Continued updates on what is going on in the other libraries in the project was also a popular request.

What was working well/not working well

The subject areas that were having a lot of success using the library in general were English, Art, History, Geography, Religion, Civic Social and Political Education, Social Personal and Health Education, Home Economics, and Science. More mixed were European Languages and Maths. Subjects that were not having a lot of success or much use of the library at that time were Gaeilge, Metalwork and Woodwork, Business Studies, Engineering and Physical Education.

Things that were working well and lent themselves easily to work in the library were project work, displays of students work, cross curricular activities. Teacher research for their subjects and classes was also something that came up a lot. Many of the teachers cited the wealth of resources available and the resource of the librarian as a factor in successful use of the library. The relaxed and different atmosphere classroom was also mentioned as a factor conducive to work.

Some subject teachers, especially in the practical areas perceived that there was a lack of resources directly relevant to them and their classes. For others, especially maths, the thought hadn't crossed their minds that the library could be used for their subject areas.

A limited amount of time came up as a restricting factor, especially when teaching exam classes, pressures to complete the syllabus. Teachers also mentioned that their own lack of familiarity with the resources available also impinged on their ability to work well in the library

Some of the factors that impinged on work in the library were:

- ▶ Discipline: Because the classes were not being held in the classroom, some classes/students went into "free class mode" and were more difficult to motivate. Larger class groups were found to be more difficult to work with in the library especially as there are limited numbers of computers.
- ▶ Time: A limited amount of time came up as a restricting factor, especially when teaching exam classes, pressures to complete the syllabus.
- ▶ Unfamiliarity: Teachers also mentioned that their own lack of familiarity with the resources and facilities available also impinged on their ability to work well in the library.

Suggestions for improvements

A main theme of the suggestions for improvement was more long-term planning was needed. It was mentioned in two regards

- ▶ More planning at start of the year to incorporate it more into the regular school timetable
- ▶ More long term planning of their own work would also improve the situation.

A main feature of the suggestions was the recognition by the teachers that they had to improve their own personal engagement with the library and librarian to incorporate it more fully with their other teaching and “order books more relevant to their own subject area”. Other suggestions included raising their own computer literacy levels and a photocopier in the library. In general the theme seems to be “you get out what you put in”. The teachers that invested time and effort into working with the library appeared to get much more out of it. For improvements many of the teachers mentioned that they themselves would have to work harder at it to get more out of it.

Appendix 9

Draft Library Statements

Student: _____

Class: _____

At Junior Certificate level the student can:

Understand how materials are organised in the library and actively identify and locate materials for their interests and needs.

Date Commenced: _____

Date Awarded: _____

Learning Targets

This has been demonstrated by your ability to

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Explain what a fiction book is | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Explain what an information book is | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Find a fiction book | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Find an information book | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Find a book in alphabetical order by the author's last name | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Find an information book on things I am interested in | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Choose a fiction book and explain why I choose it | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. Find the newspaper, magazine, Internet computer sections | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. Find the reference section, i.e. where dictionaries, encyclopaedias are kept | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. Find the section where non-book materials are kept | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

- Work begun
■ ■ Work in progress
■ ■ ■ Work Completed

Student: _____

Class: _____

At Junior Certificate level the student can:

Be a regular library user who has developed the awareness and skills to avail of some of the wide range of resources there.

Date Commenced: _____

Date Awarded: _____

Learning Targets

This has been demonstrated by your ability to

- | | | | | |
|-----|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. | Can name an author | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. | Can name a title | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. | Explain why information books have numbers | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. | Can find another book by a particular author | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. | Can find another book in a series | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. | Can locate a book by using author or title or subject in the library catalogue | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. | Can locate a book on the shelf as a result of looking up the library catalogue | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. | Know how to become a member of the library | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. | Can borrow a book and return it according to the rules of the library | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. | Can look after books in my care | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

■ Work begun

■ ■ Work in progress

■ ■ ■ Work Completed

Appendix 10

Visitors to the Libraries 2003/2004

Storytellers, Writers and Poets

- ▶ Ann Farrell
- ▶ Declan Lucey
- ▶ Dermot Bolger
- ▶ Geraldine Mills
- ▶ John W Sexton
- ▶ Julia Sweeney
- ▶ Martina Murphy
- ▶ Niall de Burca
- ▶ Pat Speight
- ▶ Peter Regan

Musicians and Artists

- ▶ Dermot Quinn – artistic director of Spraoi
- ▶ Ezeke Gray - percussionist
- ▶ Grainne Doyle – wire sculpture
- ▶ Liam Merriman and Dave O'Brien - songwriters
- ▶ Local artist (Cork – Oct) made haunted houses from shoe boxes
- ▶ Stomp – rhythm group

Other Visitors

- ▶ Animal Magic – live snakes and spiders
- ▶ Archaeologist - Wyatt Yeager
- ▶ Chris Doran – You're a Star contestant
- ▶ 'Chrisso' from Fair City – Anti-Bullying Workshop
- ▶ City Archivist – Donal Moore
- ▶ County Archivist – Joanne Rothwell
- ▶ County Council Environmental Awareness Officer
- ▶ Development Officer, City Council – Honor Murphy
- ▶ Irish History Live – Irish history with full costume and weaponry
- ▶ Journalists and photographers from various local papers
- ▶ Juggling Workshop
- ▶ Local Councillors - invited by 3rd year JCSP as part of CSPE studies

- ▶ Local gospel singer and past pupil – spoke on drugs and depression
- ▶ Local journalist and past pupil – gave talks to 4th and 6th years on Launch Day
- ▶ Local successful engineer and past pupil – spoke to 1st years about reading.
- ▶ Michael D Higgins – launched EU Exhibition
- ▶ Past pupil – spoke on realities of single parenthood
- ▶ Ronnie Condon – spoke on life with a disability
- ▶ Speaker from ISPC – John O'Mahoney
- ▶ Speaker from Naval Reserve Service
- ▶ Speaker from University of Limerick
- ▶ Veterinarian nurse – spoke on caring for dogs and puppies
- ▶ Wildlife Ranger – John Downey

Appendix 11

Sample of Exhibitions of Students' Work in the Library 2003/2004

- ▶ Display of 1st year JCSP girls' project on Irish wildlife
- ▶ Display of project on Chernobyl by 2nd year students
- ▶ Woodwork projects completed by 2nd year JCSP class
- ▶ Projects on Earthquakes and Volcanoes completed by 4th year geography class
- ▶ Display of Irish language posters completed by a 1st year class for Seachtain na Gaeilge
- ▶ Display of sculptures completed by a 1st year art class
- ▶ Display of cushions and quilts completed by 3rd year home economics class
- ▶ Display of Halloween decorations done in art classes
- ▶ Mobiles of Halloween 'Skeleton' book reviews
- ▶ Display of 2nd year JCSP Christmas Theme creative writing stories and poems
- ▶ 2nd years' fashion show using younger brothers and sisters modelling the clothes they had made
- ▶ Swedish Christmas Decorations made by the members of the After School Club
- ▶ Decorations for One World Week – dolls from around the world, musical instruments and costumes from all around the world
- ▶ Results of Survey on Attitudes to Diversity
- ▶ Christmas decorations made by the students during the Wire Sculpturing workshop in the library
- ▶ Woodwork projects completed by 3rd year JCSP class
- ▶ Display of posters for Religious Art competition
- ▶ Display of JCSP Statements
- ▶ Posters for St Patrick's Day
- ▶ Silhouettes of pupils for art class carried out and displayed in library
- ▶ Poems written for World Poetry Day were mounted and displayed on Library window
- ▶ Library decorated for Awards Ceremony by 1st, 2nd and 3rd year students with art and home economics teachers
- ▶ Wooden Spoon Spooks made by 1st year art class
- ▶ Display of masks made by 2nd year art class
- ▶ Creative writing display by 2nd year JCSP students
- ▶ Display of Make-a-Book project in library
- ▶ 1st year JCSP project on animals
- ▶ 1st year JCSP photographic project on school life
- ▶ LCA class business study display for retail studies
- ▶ Display of art by visiting Italian exchange students
- ▶ Display of ghost stories written by 1st year JCSP
- ▶ Display of JCSP woodwork projects
- ▶ JCSP Junior Cert projects
- ▶ Display of Traffic Survey carried out by 1st year JCSP students

Sample of Other Exhibitions

- ▶ Waste Management Exhibition in association with the local environmental officer
- ▶ Display of photographs of 1st year JCSPs receiving their Maths for Fun certificates
- ▶ ENFO exhibition on recycling
- ▶ Photographs of the JCSP students and the “Animal Magic” workshop
- ▶ Display of love poems for St Valentine’s Day
- ▶ Special book display for World Book Day
- ▶ Library window display used by Irish teachers to promote an Irish signage quiz for Seachtain na Gaelige.
- ▶ Parents Association Flower Arranging Demonstration
- ▶ Framed illustration from ‘Traveller Stories’ donated by the HSCLC
- ▶ “Time Capsule” (into which hundreds of students and staff placed letters in 1994 was opened ten years later on Friday 28 May 2004 in the library)

Appendix 12

Reading Test results for 2003 and 2004

Tables showing increase in reading ages in 10 schools between April 03 and April 04.

SCHOOL 1	Number of Students Tested	Average Reading Age	Average Improvement in Months
Year 1 Class in April 03	59	9.07	
Same Class in April 04	46	10.03	+8
<hr/>			
Year 2 Class in April 03	38	9.09	
Same Class in April 04	12	11.09	+24

SCHOOL 2	Number of Students Tested	Average Reading Age	Average Improvement in Months
Year 1 Class in April 03	8	9.02	
Same Class in April 04	10	9.11	+9
<hr/>			
Year 2 Class in April 03	13	9.11	
Same Class in April 04	14	10	+1

SCHOOL 3	Number of Students Tested	Average Reading Age	Average Improvement in Months
Year 1 Class in April 03	20	9.05	
Same Class in April 04	24	10.03	+10
<hr/>			
Year 2 Class in April 03	28	10.05	
Same Class in April 04	26	11.06	+13

SCHOOL 4	Number of Students Tested	Average Reading Age	Average Improvement in Months
Year 1 Class in April 03	13	9.00	
Same Class in April 04	9	9.08	+8
<hr/>			
Year 2 Class in April 03	10	9.00	
Same Class in April 04	5	9.07	+7

SCHOOL 5	Number of Students Tested	Average Reading Age	Average Improvement in Months
Year 1 Class in April 03	38	10.06	
Same Class in April 04	30	12.04	+22
<hr/>			
Year 2 Class in April 03	31	9.09	
Same Class in April 04	27	11.04	+19

SCHOOL 6	Number of Students Tested	Average Reading Age	Average Improvement in Months
Year 1 Class in April 03	19	8.09	
Same Class in April 04	16	9.07	+10
<hr/>			
Year 2 Class in April 03	22	9.02	
Same Class in April 04	22	11.06	+28

SCHOOL 7	Number of Students Tested	Average Reading Age	Average Improvement in Months
Year 1 Class in April 03	11	8.09	
Same Class in April 04	10	9.02	+5
<hr/>			
Year 2 Class in April 03	17	9.05	
Same Class in April 04	7	9.07	+2

SCHOOL 8	Number of Students Tested	Average Reading Age	Average Improvement in Months
Year 1 Class in April 03	6	10.06	
Same Class in April 04	16	11.05	+11
<hr/>			
Year 2 Class in April 03	18	11.05	
Same Class in April 04	21	11.09	+4

SCHOOL 9	Number of Students Tested	Average Reading Age	Average Improvement in Months
Year 1 Class in April 03	28	7.09	
Same Class in April 04	36	10.02	+29
<hr/>			
Year 2 Class in April 03	48	10.04	
Same Class in April 04	48	11.02	+10

SCHOOL 10	Number of Students Tested	Average Reading Age	Average Improvement in Months
Year 1 Class in April 03	11	9.04	
Same Class in April 04	8	9.05	+1
<hr/>			
Year 2 Class in April 03	16	10.01	
Same Class in April 04	8	12	+23

Table Average Improvements in Reading Ages between year 1 and year 2 in April 2003 and April 2004			
	2003	2004	Difference
School 1	9.07	10.03	+8
School 2	9.02	9.11	+9
School 3	9.05	10.03	+10
School 4	9.00	9.08	+8
School 5	10.06	12.04	+22
School 6	8.09	9.07	+10
School 7	8.09	9.02	+5
School 8	10.06	11.05	+11
School 9	7.09	10.02	+29
School 10	9.04	9.05	+1

Average improvements across the schools between year 1 and 2 is **11.3 months**

Table Average Improvements in Reading Ages between year 2 and year 3 in April 2003 and April 2004			
	2003	2004	Difference
School 1	9.09	11.09	+24
School 2	9.11	10.00	+1
School 3	10.05	11.06	+13
School 4	9.00	9.07	+7
School 5	9.09	11.04	+19
School 6	9.02	11.06	+28
School 7	9.05	9.07	+2
School 8	11.05	11.09	+4
School 9	10.04	11.02	+10
School 10	10.01	12.00	+23

Average improvements across the schools between year 2 and 3 is **13.1 months**

Appendix 13

Reading Test Results for Core Group

Comparison of students' reading ages over two rounds of testing.

Summary		
Total Students	297	
Number of students whose reading age increased	206	69.36%
Number of students whose reading age decreased	68	22.90%
Total Equal	23	7.74%
Average Increase	1.07	
Average Decrease	1.00	

Students who showed increase/decrease presented in bands of 6 months

Increases	
Increase	Number of Students
up to 6 months	36
0.07 - 1.00	53
1.01 - 1.06	23
1.07 - 2.00	30
2.01 - 2.06	23
2.07 - 3.00	16
3.01 - 3.06	11
4.01 - 4.06	6
4.07 - 5.00	2
5.01 - 5.07	4
over 5.07	2

Decreases	
Decrease	Number of Students
up to 6 months	29
0.07 - 1.00	16
1.01 - 1.06	13
1.07 - 2.00	2
2.01 - 2.06	4
2.07 - 3.00	1
3.01 - 3.06	1
4.01 - 4.06	1
4.07 - 5.00	-
5.01 - 5.07	-
over 5.07	1

Table Numbers of students who showed increase/decrease by monthly increments											
INCREASES						N.B. 1.01=1 year, 1 month					
Increase by month	No. of Students	Increase by month	No. of Students	Increase by month	No. of Students	Increase by month	No. of Students	Increase by month	No. of Students	Increase by month	No. of Students
0.01	4	1.01	3	2.01	3	3.01	-	4.01	1	5.01	-
0.02	10	1.02	5	2.02	4	3.02	-	4.02	1	5.09	1
0.03	10	1.03	3	2.03	4	3.03	1	4.03	-	6.03	1
0.04	5	1.04	2	2.04	1	3.04	2	4.04	-		
0.05	1	1.05	3	2.05	5	3.05	2	4.05	-		
0.06	6	1.06	7	2.06	6	3.06	6	4.06	-		
0.07	14	1.07	5	2.07	2	3.07	-	4.07	1		
0.08	7	1.08	4	2.08	3	3.08	-	4.08	1		
0.09	8	1.09	6	2.09	-	3.09	-	4.09	1		
0.10	8	1.10	5	2.10	5	3.10	3	4.10	1		
0.11	9	1.11	6	2.11	1	3.11	-	4.11	-		
1.00	7	2.00	4	3.00	5	4.00	3	5.00			

Table Numbers of students who showed increase/decrease by monthly increments									
DECREASES					N.B. 1.01=1 year, 1 month				
Increase by month	No. of Students	Increase by month	No. of Students	Increase by month	No. of Students	Increase by month	No. of Students	Increase by month	No. of Students
0.01	5	1.01	2	2.01	1	3.01	-	4.01	-
0.02	6	1.02	3	2.02	1	3.02	-	4.02	1
0.03	4	1.03	4	2.03	-	3.03	-	4.03	-
0.04	5	1.04	1	2.04	1	3.04	-	4.04	-
0.05	2	1.05	3	2.05	1	3.05	-	4.05	-
0.06	7	1.06	-	2.06	-	3.06	1	4.06	1
0.07	4	1.07	1	2.07	-	3.07	-		
0.08	3	1.08	1	2.08	-	3.08	-	7.07	1
0.09	3	1.09	-	2.09	-	3.09	-		
0.10	3	1.10	-	2.10	1	3.10	-		
0.11	1	1.11	-	2.11	-	3.11	-		
1.00	2	2.00	-	3.00	-	4.00	-		

Comparison of students who moved from **First Year to Second Year** between the two rounds of testing.

Summary		
Total 1st Year - 2nd Year Students	153	
Number of students whose reading age increased	113	73.86%
Number of students whose reading age decreased	29	18.95%
Total Equal	11	7.19%
Average Increase	1.06	
Average Decrease	1.00	

Students who showed increase/decrease presented in Bands of 6 months

Increases	
Increase	Number of Students
up to 6 months	19
0.07 - 1.00	31
1.01 - 1.06	13
1.07 - 2.00	15
2.01 - 2.06	12
2.07 - 3.00	9
3.01 - 3.06	7
4.01 - 4.06	4
4.07 - 5.00	1
5.01 - 5.07	2
over 5.07	-

Decreases	
Decrease	Number of Students
up to 6 months	14
0.07 - 1.00	5
1.01 - 1.06	7
1.07 - 2.00	2
over 7 years	1

Table Numbers of students who showed increase/decrease by monthly increments									
INCREASES					N.B. 1.01=1 year, 1 month				
Increase by month	No. of Students	Increase by month	No. of Students	Increase by month	No. of Students	Increase by month	No. of Students	Increase by month	No. of Students
0.01	2	1.01	1	2.01	2	3.01	-	4.01	-
0.02	6	1.02	2	2.02	4	3.02	-	4.02	1
0.03	5	1.03	3	2.03	2	3.03	-	4.03	-
0.04	3	1.04	1	2.04	-	3.04	2	4.04	-
0.05	0	1.05	1	2.05	3	3.05	1	4.05	-
0.06	3	1.06	5	2.06	2	3.06	4	4.06	-
0.07	9	1.07	3	2.07	1	3.07	-	4.07	-
0.08	6	1.08	2	2.08	1	3.08	-	4.08	1
0.09	4	1.09	3	2.09	-	3.09	-	4.09	-
0.10	6	1.10	1	2.10	3	3.10	1	4.10	-
0.11	3	1.11	4	2.11	1	3.11	-	4.11	-
1.00	3	2.00	2	3.00	3	4.00	3	5.00	-

Table Numbers of students who showed increase/decrease by monthly increments									
DECREASES					N.B. 1.01=1 year, 1 month				
Increase by month	No. of Students	Increase by month	No. of Students	Increase by month	No. of Students	Increase by month	No. of Students	Increase by month	No. of Students
0.01	1	1.01	1	2.01	2	3.01	-	4.01	-
0.02	5	1.02	2	2.02	4	3.02	-	4.02	1
0.03	1	1.03	3	2.03	2	3.03	-	4.03	-
0.04	4	1.04	1	2.04	-	3.04	2	4.04	-
0.05	-	1.05	1	2.05	3	3.05	1	4.05	-
0.06	2	1.06	5	2.06	2	3.06	4	4.06	-
0.07	2	1.07	3	2.07	1	3.07	-	4.07	-
0.08	1	1.08	2	2.08	1	3.08	-	4.08	1
0.09	1	1.09	3	2.09	-	3.09	-	4.09	-
0.10	-	1.10	1	2.10	3	3.10	1	4.10	-
0.11	1	1.11	4	2.11	1	3.11	-	4.11	-
1.00	-	2.00	2	3.00	3	4.00	3	5.00	-

Comparison of students who moved from **Second Year to Third Year** between the two rounds of testing.

Summary		
Total 2nd Year - 3rd Year Students	144	
Number of students whose reading age increased	93	64.58%
Number of students whose reading age decreased	39	27.08%
Total Equal	12	8.33%
Average Increase	1.08	
Average Decrease	1.00	

Students who showed increase/decrease presented in Bands of 6 months

Increases	
Increase	Number of Students
up to 6 months	17
0.07 - 1.00	22
1.01 - 1.06	10
1.07 - 2.00	15
2.01 - 2.06	11
2.07 - 3.00	7
3.01 - 3.06	4
4.01 - 4.06	2
4.07 - 5.00	1
5.01 - 5.07	2
over 5.07	2

Decreases	
Increase	Number of Students
up to 6 months	15
0.07 - 1.00	11
1.01 - 1.06	6
1.07 - 2.00	0
2.01 - 2.06	4
2.07 - 3.00	1
3.01 - 3.06	1
4.01 - 4.06	-
4.07 - 5.00	1
5.01 - 5.07	-
over 5.07	-

Table Numbers of students who showed increase/decrease by monthly increments											
INCREASES						N.B. 1.01=1 year, 1 month					
Increase by month	No. of Students	Increase by month	No. of Students	Increase by month	No. of Students	Increase by month	No. of Students	Increase by month	No. of Students	Increase by month	No. of Students
0.01	2	1.01	2	2.01	1	3.01	-	4.01	1	-	-
0.02	4	1.02	3	2.02	-	3.02	-	4.02	-	5.09	1
0.03	5	1.03	-	2.03	2	3.03	1	4.03	-	-	-
0.04	2	1.04	1	2.04	1	3.04	-	4.04	-	6.03	1
0.05	1	1.05	2	2.05	2	3.05	1	4.05	-		
0.06	3	1.06	2	2.06	5	3.06	2	4.06	-		
0.07	5	1.07	2	2.07	1	3.07	-	4.07	1		
0.08	1	1.08	2	2.08	2	3.08	-	4.08	-		
0.09	4	1.09	3	2.09	-	3.09	-	4.09	-		
0.10	2	1.10	4	2.10	2	3.10	2	4.10	1		
0.11	6	1.11	2	2.11	-	3.11	-	4.11	-		
1.00	4	2.00	2	3.00	2	4.00	-	5.00	-		

Table Numbers of students who showed increase/decrease by monthly increments									
DECREASES					N.B. 1.01=1 year, 1 month				
Increase by month	No. of Students	Increase by month	No. of Students	Increase by month	No. of Students	Increase by month	No. of Students	Increase by month	No. of Students
0.01	3	1.01	1	2.01	1	3.01	-	4.01	-
0.02	1	1.02	1	2.02	1	3.02	-	4.02	-
0.03	3	1.03	2	2.03	-	3.03	-	4.03	-
0.04	1	1.04	1	2.04	1	3.04	-	4.04	-
0.05	2	1.05	1	2.05	1	3.05	-	4.05	-
0.06	5	1.06		2.06	-	3.06	1	4.06	1
0.07	2	1.07	-	2.07	-	3.07	-	4.07	-
0.08	2	1.08	-	2.08	-	3.08	-	4.08	-
0.09	2	1.09	-	2.09	-	3.09	-	4.09	-
0.10	3	1.10	-	2.10	1	3.10	-	4.10	-
0.11	-	1.11	-	2.11	-	3.11	-	4.11	-
1.00	2	2.00	-	3.00	-	4.00	-	5.00	-

Comparison of **Female** students reading ages between the two rounds of testing.

Summary		
Total Female Students	97	
Number of students whose reading age increased	63	64.95%
Number of students whose reading age decreased	26	26.80%
Total Equal	9	9.28%
Average Increase	1.11	
Average Decrease	0.08	

Female students who showed increase/decrease presented in Bands of 6 months

Increases	
Increase	Number of Students
up to 6 months	15
0.07 - 1.00	15
1.01 - 1.06	7
1.07 - 2.00	8
2.01 - 2.06	8
2.07 - 3.00	3
3.01 - 3.06	4
4.01 - 4.06	1
4.07 - 5.00	0
5.01 - 5.07	2
over 5.07	0

Decreases	
Increase	Number of Students
up to 6 months	11
0.07 - 1.00	9
1.01 - 1.06	6
1.07 - 2.00	0
2.01 - 2.06	0
2.07 - 3.00	0
3.01 - 3.06	0
4.01 - 4.06	0
4.07 - 5.00	0
5.01 - 5.07	0
over 5.07	0

Table Numbers of students who showed increase/decrease by monthly increments									
INCREASES					N.B. 1.01=1 year, 1 month				
Increase by month	No. of Students	Increase by month	No. of Students	Increase by month	No. of Students	Increase by month	No. of Students	Increase by month	No. of Students
0.01	2	1.01	2	2.01	2	3.01	-	4.01	-
0.02	7	1.02	3	2.02	1	3.02	-	4.02	-
0.03	4	1.03	2	2.03	3	3.03	-	4.03	-
0.04	1	1.04	-	2.04	-	3.04	-	4.04	-
0.05	-	1.05	-	2.05	2	3.05	1	4.05	-
0.06	1	1.06	-	2.06	-	3.06	3	4.06	-
0.07	1	1.07	1	2.07	-	3.07	-	4.07	1
0.08	1	1.08	1	2.08	2	3.08	-	4.08	-
0.09	5	1.09	3	2.09	-	3.09	-	4.09	1
0.10	2	1.10	2	2.10	-	3.10	1	4.10	-
0.11	4	1.11	1	2.11	-	3.11	-	4.11	-
1.00	2	2.00	-	3.00	1	4.00	-	5.00	

Table Numbers of students who showed increase/decrease by monthly increments									
DECREASES					N.B. 1.01=1 year, 1 month				
Increase by month	No. of Students	Increase by month	No. of Students	Increase by month	No. of Students	Increase by month	No. of Students	Increase by month	No. of Students
0.01	3	1.01	1						
0.02	1	1.02	1						
0.03	2	1.03	1						
0.04	1	1.04	-						
0.05	2	1.05	3						
0.06	2	1.06	-						
0.07	2	1.07	-						
0.08	2	1.08	-						
0.09	1	1.09	-						
0.10	1	1.10	-						
0.11	1	1.11	-						
1.00	2	2.00							

Comparison of **Male** students reading ages between the two rounds of testing.

Summary		
Total Male Students	200	
Number of students whose reading age increased	143	71.50%
Number of students whose reading age decreased	42	21.00%
Total Equal	15	7.50%
Average Increase	1.08	
Average Decrease	1.02	

Male students who showed increase/decrease presented in Bands of 6 months

Increases	
Increase	Number of Students
up to 6 months	21
0.07 - 1.00	38
1.01 - 1.06	16
1.07 - 2.00	22
2.01 - 2.06	15
2.07 - 3.00	13
3.01 - 3.06	7
4.01 - 4.06	5
4.07 - 5.00	2
5.01 - 5.07	2
over 5.07	2

Decreases	
Increase	Number of Students
up to 6 months	18
0.07 - 1.00	7
1.01 - 1.06	7
1.07 - 2.00	2
2.01 - 2.06	4
2.07 - 3.00	1
3.01 - 3.06	1
4.01 - 4.06	0
4.07 - 5.00	1
5.01 - 5.07	0
over 5.07	1

Table Numbers of students who showed increase/decrease by monthly increments											
INCREASES						N.B. 1.01=1 year, 1 month					
Increase by month	No. of Students	Increase by month	No. of Students	Increase by month	No. of Students	Increase by month	No. of Students	Increase by month	No. of Students	Increase by month	No. of Students
0.01	2	1.01	1	2.01	1	3.01	-	4.01	1	-	-
0.02	3	1.02	2	2.02	3	3.02	-	4.02	1	5.09	1
0.03	6	1.03	1	2.03	1	3.03	1	4.03	-	-	-
0.04	4	1.04	2	2.04	1	3.04	2	4.04	-	6.03	1
0.05	1	1.05	3	2.05	3	3.05	1	4.05	-		
0.06	5	1.06	7	2.06	6	3.06	3	4.06	-		
0.07	13	1.07	4	2.07	2	3.07	-	4.07	-		
0.08	6	1.08	3	2.08	1	3.08	-	4.08	1		
0.09	3	1.09	3	2.09	-	3.09	-	4.09	-		
0.10	6	1.10	3	2.10	5	3.10	2	4.10	1		
0.11	5	1.11	5	2.11	1	3.11	-	4.11	-		
1.00	5	2.00	4	3.00	4	4.00	3	5.00			

Table Numbers of students who showed increase/decrease by monthly increments											
DECREASES						N.B. 1.01=1 year, 1 month					
Increase by month	No. of Students	Increase by month	No. of Students	Increase by month	No. of Students	Increase by month	No. of Students	Increase by month	No. of Students	Increase by month	No. of Students
0.01	2	1.01	1	2.01	1	3.01	-	4.01	-	-	-
0.02	5	1.02	2	2.02	1	3.02	-	4.02	-	7.07	1
0.03	2	1.03	3	2.03	-	3.03	-	4.03	-		
0.04	4	1.04	1	2.04	1	3.04	-	4.04	-		
0.05	-	1.05	-	2.05	1	3.05	-	4.05	-		
0.06	5	1.06	-	2.06	-	3.06	1	4.06	1		
0.07	2	1.07	1	2.07	-	3.07	-	4.07			
0.08	1	1.08	1	2.08	-	3.08	-	4.08			
0.09	2	1.09	-	2.09	-	3.09	-	4.09			
0.10	2	1.10	-	2.10	1	3.10	-	4.10			
0.11	-	1.11	-	2.11	-	3.11	-	4.11			
1.00	-	2.00	-	3.00	-	4.00	-	5.00			

Chart displaying amounts of students whose reading ages increased, decreased and maintenance of reading ages sorted by their reading age from the first round of testing

Reading age result from 1st test	Total number of Students	Number of Students who increased	Number of Students who decreased	Number of Students remaining the same
6.00 -	3	3	0	0
6.05 -	1	1	0	0
6.08 -	1	1	0	0
9.00 -	16	6	0	10
6.00 - 6.05	3	3	0	0
6.06 - 6.11	4	3	1	0
7.00 - 7.05	14	12	1	1
7.06 - 7.11	8	7	1	0
8.00 - 8.05	23	18	3	2
8.06 - 8.11	18	10	8	0
9.00 - 9.05	36	22	9	5
9.06 - 9.11	26	22	4	0
10.00 - 10.05	28	23	5	0
10.06 - 10.11	16	11	4	1
11.00 - 11.05	39	27	11	1
11.06 - 11.11	20	12	5	3
12.00 - 12.05	21	16	5	0
12.06 - 12.11	8	6	2	0
13.00 - 13.05	2	0	2	0
13.06 - 13.11	4	2	2	0
14.00 - 14.05	3	1	2	0
14.06 - 14.11	2	1	1	0
15.00 - 15.06	1	0	1	0
	297	207	67	23

Appendix 14

Tracking

'Tony'

- ▶ Tony started life in our school with a reading age based on the Nfer Nelson Test of 8 years 3 months in March 2002.
- ▶ This student was very sceptical about the library at the beginning. He would boast of how little he read and he refused to borrow any books. He was a rare sight in the library in his first year. He was regularly in trouble. He found himself in detention most evenings and was frequently sent home.
- ▶ This began to change dramatically when I began opening outside of class time. He started to take on little jobs in the library. Although there were frequent outburst of temper and tantrums these began to subside with time. Although they still occur occasionally he is proud of the fact that he is now rarely in trouble.
- ▶ This student participates in everything the school has to offer. He will now regularly bring home books and is one of the best borrowers in the school. At the beginning he would only read factual information in short spurts, however he can now sustain reading through long periods of time and is more open and responsive to my suggestions of what he might like to read. At the beginning everything was "crap" regardless of what it was about.
- ▶ Tony will come and get help with homework or project work and often uses the library resources to find any information that he decides he might need, for example to email the President to ask when his class can go visit the Aras!
- ▶ This student will sit Junior Certificate exams this year and now has a reading age of 10yrs 6 months.

'Dominic'

- ▶ Dominic entered first year J.C.S.P. in September 2003. The Neale Analysis of Reading Ability placed Dominic with an accuracy score of 6.11 and a comprehension score of 8.01. Teachers commented on his level of reading. He was determined to improve himself and was an enthusiastic participant in Make a Book, computer literacy skills, read along, local author visits and paired reading.

- ▶ Dominic is a regular library borrower and has borrowed 20 books since Sept. 03. These are a mixture of fiction and non-fiction titles and he has a particular interest in Music.
- ▶ In December 2004, Dominic's reading was retested using the Neale Analysis Reading Test. His reading accuracy improved by one year and 4 months, a substantial increase for an 11-month period. His comprehension level also improved, moving from 8.01 in 2003 to 8.07 in 2004. I feel that overall that Dominic has improved in all aspects of literacy including computer literacy and the varied activities and resources available in the library to both teachers and students have assisted this.

'Peter'

- ▶ Peter commenced 1st Year in Sept. 2001 so when the school library opened in early 2003 he was mid-way through 2nd Year.
- ▶ Peter comes from a troubled background.
- ▶ Immediately on opening of the school library, Peter became a very regular user. Indeed he spends all his free time here. In addition, on occasions when he is having difficulty with other students in his class, he will come to the library for the duration of that class – Peter is very quiet and tends to keep to himself and he sometimes becomes the target for some of his more boisterous class-mates because of this. However he regards the library as his space and his place of refuge and he is obviously comfortable here.
- ▶ Peter has become an avid reader since the opening of the school library. He says that while he always liked to read "a little bit", he now reads much more because of the easy access to such a wide range of books in the school library. He borrowed more books from the library than any other student during the year 2003/2004. To acknowledge this fact, he was the first recipient of the "Reader of the Year". Peter was so very proud of this achievement and the widespread praise that went with it.
- ▶ Peter worked in the library as a 'Library Assistant' throughout the year. He was always willing to help and made himself available at every opportunity.
- ▶ Peter was the first student to join the Library Reading Club and he attended every meeting. He read aloud to the other members and was always very willing to discuss the books he had read.
- ▶ Peter came to the library at every opportunity – before school, at break and lunch times and after school. He stayed in the library every evening after school and only left when I had to put him out at 5.15pm. He said that he was made to spend 2 hours at study at home each evening. Therefore he tended not to do his homework in the library after school but used the time to either read or use the library computers. He rarely

wanted to play games on the computers but rather used the various databases / CD ROMs available in the library.

- ▶ Peter is doing his Junior Cert. Exams at the moment. He calls in to me in the library before and after each exam. He loves to discuss the exams he has done and how he thinks he has preformed.
- ▶ Of all of the students in the school, I would say that Peter is the one who has benefited most from the availability of the school library. It has become his refuge and the place where he feels most comfortable. Without the library Peter would be 'hanging around' on the outside of the general student community. But the library has given him a sense of belonging and a place where he can 'fit in'.

'Martin'

- ▶ Martin entered 1st Year in 2002 aged 13 with a reading age of 7 years 10 months according to the GRT 6 – 14 test administered in his primary school in April 2002. He was a willing participator in Readalong, a reading strategy adopted for JCSP students in their first months of 1st Year. Martin would get so involved following the book on tape that he would be the last student to pack up at the end of the class. He read a number of other books using this method in his first year.
- ▶ In March 2003, just eleven months after registering his previous R. A. score Martin showed a reading age of 11 years 6 months using the GRT (A/B).
- ▶ Before the end of his first year Martin was reading the Harry Potter series using the Readalong approach. Although confident to read at this stage without the audio accompaniment he said he enjoyed listening to the voice of Stephen Fry.
- ▶ During the summer holidays he availed of the services of the local Public Library to keep up his reading.
- ▶ In his second year Martin progressed to reading Phillip Pulman's "Dark Materials Trilogy" unaccompanied by audio. By March 2004 he was registering at a reading age of 13 years 11 months.
- ▶ Martin visits the library on a number of occasions every day, before school, during lunchtime and after school. His interest does not lie in fiction alone. His keen interest in football directs him to the non-fiction area. Also he will read the monthly soccer magazines subscribed to by the library. He is very much an independent user of the library, able to access the OPAC and Internet when required.
- ▶ After watching the last Harry Potter film on its release he related the following day how disappointed he was that so much of the book had been omitted. He truly felt the film hadn't done the book justice.

- ▶ He participated in the making of a Paired Reading training video for the CDU. When interviewed during filming he said he was reading a lot more than before because of the presence of the school library.
- ▶ Martin has developed into a self-confident young student. He has become a reflective and opinionated youth with the ability to express himself using a rich vocabulary. Many facets have resulted in this personal development, from his primary educator at home to the teachers in school. The library can be credited with exposing this pupil to high quality reading material that has held his various interests and in so doing has played a significant role in developing his vocabulary and skills of self-expression.

Appendix 15

Book Borrowing for 2004

2004 – Heritage Summary Statistics

JCSP Boys	Total Members 81	Fiction	Non Fiction	JCSP Girls	Total Members 46	Fiction	Non Fiction
1st Year	29	21	46	1st Year	14	64	34
2nd Year	31	37	81	2nd Year	22	128	45
3rd Year	21	22	42	3rd Year	10	44	3
Non JCSP Boys	Total Members 112	Fiction	Non Fiction	Non JCSP Girls	Total Members 96	Fiction	Non Fiction
1st Year	31	40	82	1st Year	34	119	118
2nd Year	32	23	14	2nd Year	26	103	51
3rd Year	49	23	14	3rd Year	36	179	48

JCSP Boys	Total Members 39	Fiction	Non Fiction	JCSP Girls	Total Members 125	Fiction	Non Fiction
1st Year	-	49	11	1st Year	-	206	72
2nd Year	-	149	34	2nd Year	-	403	71
3rd Year	-	21	59	3rd Year	-	97	172
Non JCSP Boys	Total Members	Fiction	Non Fiction	Non JCSP Girls	Total Members	Fiction	Non Fiction
1st Year	-	-	-	1st Year	-	-	-
2nd Year	-	-	-	2nd Year	-	-	-
3rd Year	-	-	-	3rd Year	-	-	-

JCSP Boys	Total Members 75	Fiction	Non Fiction	JCSP Girls	Total Members 35	Fiction	Non Fiction
1st Year	28	35	91	1st Year	7	21	9
2nd Year	25	17	25	2nd Year	8	3	0
3rd Year	22	0	10	3rd Year	20	8	17
Non JCSP Boys	Total Members 50	Fiction	Non Fiction	Non JCSP Girls	Total Members 34	Fiction	Non Fiction
1st Year	13	2	28	1st Year	15	81	65
2nd Year	18	4	11	2nd Year	9	29	12
3rd Year	19	0	2	3rd Year	10	8	13

Librarian Notes:

The borrowing statistics do not yet reflect adequately the use of resources. While students are growing in confidence in their use of library resources they are still reluctant to carry these books home with them. It is important to remember that we are trying to break a negative attitude towards books that has been reinforced over generations. With this fact in mind, even the low borrowing we have can be viewed as a success. The group who borrowed most this year was the first year group, when looking at both JCSP and non-JCSP classes. These are the students who have had a fully functioning library since their first day at secondary school. It is hoped, in conjunction with the Home School Liaison Co-ordinator, to work on raising parents' awareness of the benefits of borrowing books. Getting parents interested in the library may well be an important key to getting students to borrow books.

JCSP Boys	Total Members 22	Fiction	Non Fiction	JCSP Girls	Total Members 13	Fiction	Non Fiction
1st Year	7	16	19	1st Year	7	33	25
2nd Year	10	19	47	2nd Year	4	14	3
3rd Year	5	6	40	3rd Year	2	18	22
Non JCSP Boys	Total Members 116	Fiction	Non Fiction	Non JCSP Girls	Total Members 173	Fiction	Non Fiction
1st Year	54	131	101	1st Year	53	87	50
2nd Year	50	44	61	2nd Year	63	154	84
3rd Year	62	18	52	3rd Year	57	53	16

The borrowing statistics include laptop borrowing

JCSP Boys	Total Members 73*	Fiction	Non Fiction	JCSP Girls	Total Members 43**	Fiction	Non Fiction
1st Year	24	53	173	1st Year	19	98	134
2nd Year	26	135	328	2nd Year	15	96	191
3rd Year	23	19	236	3rd Year	9	13	118
Non JCSP Boys	Total Members	Fiction	Non Fiction	Non JCSP Girls	Total Members	Fiction	Non Fiction
1st Year	-	-	-	1st Year	-	-	-
2nd Year	-	-	-	2nd Year	-	-	-
3rd Year	-	-	-	3rd Year	-	-	-

* Included in total members are 3 boys (1 from 1st year and 2 from 2nd year) who left school during the year. None of these were borrowers.

** Included in total members is 1 girl from 2nd year who transferred to another school early in school year.

JCSP Boys	Total Members 77	Fiction	Non Fiction	JCSP Girls	Total Members 10	Fiction	Non Fiction
1st Year	-	-	-	1st Year	-	-	-
2nd Year	-	-	-	2nd Year	-	-	-
3rd Year	-	-	-	3rd Year	-	-	-
Non JCSP Boys	Total Members 45	Fiction	Non Fiction	Non JCSP Girls	Total Members 42	Fiction	Non Fiction
1st Year	19	67	36	1st Year	12	93	42
2nd Year	23	50	41	2nd Year	14	20	12
3rd Year	20	2	6	3rd Year	16	4	5

3rd year JCSP boys not timetabled for library visits.

Only 1st year girls in JCSP programme. Prior to 2003/2004 girls were not permitted to join JCSP programme

3rd year non JCSP boys not timetabled for library visits.

Librarian Notes:

Borrowing of books is not the sole indicator of library usage. Many students may never borrow a book, but read magazines and newspapers, and will read parts of books that interest them, while they are in the library. An additional point of relevance in terms of the accompanying statistics, is the fact third year JCSP and non JCSP students were not timetabled for library visits. This is probably because it is an examination year with extra time pressures on teachers and students to get the curriculum covered. However, for the next academic year, I will be encouraging a rethink on this policy.

JCSP Boys	Total Members 86	Fiction	Non Fiction	JCSP Girls	Total Members 20	Fiction	Non Fiction
1st Year	26	138	201	1st Year	7	55	8
2nd Year	32	4	31	2nd Year	3	10	7
3rd Year	28	52	28	3rd Year	10	15	1
Non JCSP Boys	Total Members 157	Fiction	Non Fiction	Non JCSP Girls	Total Members 44	Fiction	Non Fiction
1st Year	54	144	93	1st Year	18	55	13
2nd Year	67	59	37	2nd Year	12	21	7
3rd Year	36	2	2	3rd Year	14	3	0

JCSP Boys	Total Members 38	Fiction	Non Fiction	JCSP Girls	Total Members 16	Fiction	Non Fiction
1st Year	10	28 *	40	1st Year	3	12 *	10
2nd Year	13	5	18	2nd Year	4	8	5
3rd Year	15	8	22	3rd Year	9	26	28
Non JCSP Boys	Total Members	Fiction	Non Fiction	Non JCSP Girls	Total Members	Fiction	Non Fiction
1st Year	-	-	-	1st Year	-	-	-
2nd Year	-	-	-	2nd Year	-	-	-
3rd Year	-	-	-	3rd Year	-	-	-

* Books used during paired reading included in this statistic.

JCSP Boys	Total Members 93	Fiction	Non Fiction	JCSP Girls	Total Members 50	Fiction	Non Fiction
1st Year	21	216	35	1st Year	6	121	30
2nd Year	26	265	45	2nd Year	17	90	8
3rd Year	46	67	56	3rd Year	26	24	44
Non JCSP Boys	Total Members 44	Fiction	Non Fiction	Non JCSP Girls	Total Members 35	Fiction	Non Fiction
1st Year	27	42	68	1st Year	30	209	101
2nd Year	17	17	3	2nd Year	5	5	1
3rd Year	-	-	-	3rd Year	-	-	-

Librarian Notes:

These statistics (from 1/10/03 to 9/03/04) are based on the numbers of books that the students have read during the library classes and numbers of books borrowed from the library. When scheduling library time priority is given to JCSP classes, in particular those following the Literacy Programme, and facilitates other groups upon request.

JCSP Boys	Total Members 46	Fiction	Non Fiction	JCSP Girls	Total Members 23	Fiction	Non Fiction
1st Year	21	0	15	1st Year	7	2	3
2nd Year	15	1	7	2nd Year	10	4	7
3rd Year	10	5	3	3rd Year	6	3	1
Non JCSP Boys	Total Members 71	Fiction	Non Fiction	Non JCSP Girls	Total Members 52	Fiction	Non Fiction
1st Year	17	0	1	1st Year	19	6	9
2nd Year	29	3	0	2nd Year	17	7	5
3rd Year	25	0	1	3rd Year	16	0	0

Appendix 16

Report of Primary School Teacher involved in JCSP Peer Tutoring research project with Coláiste Chathail Naofa*

The librarian from Coláiste Chathail Naofa spearheaded the paired reading project between the two schools. She and her pupils brought an infectious enthusiasm for reading to the pupils where the positive was accentuated.

The secondary pupils were terrific role models for a number of our Second Class pupils who needed some encouragement with their reading. The older students encouraged our younger pupils by participating with them in a supportive reading approach that was fun and relaxed. Our pupils looked up to these older students who shared their reading skills with them. The project resulted in definite improvements in literacy levels and also in that of self-esteem. It made our students feel important to be reading with an older secondary school student.

When our pupils visited the library at Coláiste Chathail Naofa they commented on the brightness, the comfort and colour of the space. It was a space that appealed to them, where they could focus on themselves and find books that reflected their interests. They delighted in the various reading resources that were available. The library introduced me to certain books that were available for learning support eg Livewire and audio books. I also sensed that it was more than just a reading and research space. It was a space where the students seemed to have ownership. Their art-work was on display and there were happy photos of the students interacting with visitors to the library. It struck me as a space for the Arts, the type of which would benefit all schools.

At a personal level I found the paired reading project to be a positive link between the two schools. The exchange of professionalism the project generated was refreshing. It was also a good community link, both schools had a positive experience of each others pupils and staff. The experience would make me more open to further links.

* This research was exploring the impact of peer tutoring on the literacy levels of young tutors, in this instance, 2nd year JCSP students. It was a joint project between the JCSP co-ordinator, the HSCL co-ordinator and the librarian.

Appendix 17:

Survey of 55 JCSP teachers – January 2004

	Definitely Agree	Probably Agree	Uncertain	Probably Disagree	Definitely Disagree	No Opinion
The overall reading level of students has improved	40	44	16			
The overall writing level of students has improved	18	49	29	4		
The overall spelling level of students has improved	16	27	46	11		
The overall numeracy level of students has improved	2	6	76	5		11
The overall enjoyment of reading has improved	74	22	4			
The overall enjoyment of writing has improved	25	42	24	7	2	
Overall, creative thinking has improved	35	49	13		3	
Overall, verbal communication has improved	27	56	13	4		
Overall, ability to reflect and consider has improved	22	36	36	6		
The interest in students in their own learning has improved	43	42	11	2		2
Overall, student behaviour has improved	29	36	26	7		2
Overall, student attendance has improved	24	36	27	13		
As a JCSP teacher, the library has helped me in my teaching role	84	11	2	3		
Overall, the school experience for JCSPs students has improved since the introduction of the school library	91	5	4			

Appendix 18:

Creative Writing

Four Poems from School 6

When I went inside a Fether

*when I went inside a fether
and all I saw was walls
like a bone I walked ferther into the fether
and the walles got smaller and smaller
when i got to the end I was not abute to find a way out
so I looked around and on the walls
there was some cinde of stiching
but I remembered on the outside the fethers
rimes look like stiches to on the rook
I broke open a crack*

When I went inside the Bunker *

*when I went inside the bunker
it was very soggy and weath
and it was like weath spunsh
and I went into a load of seed
like tomato seed
they smelld horibal*

I went inside the Scarf

*I went inside the scarf
And it smelled like perfume
It felt like a soft blanket
And its blue and pink
But when I was inside it was seethrough
It had no taste
You could wrap it round your neck
Or you could use it like a belt*

I went inside in a House**

*I went inside in a house
I was happy because I was nothing around
I jumped over walls and fences
and won races*

* pumpkin

**horse

Appendix 19:

Library Development Plan

(X School)

Junior Certificate School Programme

Demonstration Library Project

Policy

School Mission Statement

The School Library Philosophy

The JCSP Library at (School X) supports the JCSP concept that all young people are capable of real success in school, and that they can have a positive experience of education. The School Library facilitates access to and use of information and ideas to support the educational objectives of the school. The individual needs and abilities of all users are recognised and catered for in an open and equitable environment. The library is accessible to all.

Aims/Objectives of School Library

- ▶ To encourage reading and improve literacy amongst JCSP students.
- ▶ To initiate and promote a variety of reading strategies. appropriate to under confident readers.
- ▶ To provide reading materials that are relevant and appealing and aid reading progress.
- ▶ To develop students literacy, research and literature appreciation skills.
- ▶ To provide all students with a stimulating learning environment with access to up to date resources in a variety of formats that meet the students academic, social and creative needs.
- ▶ To provide the teaching staff with a variety of teacher resources to support their classroom programmes.

- ▶ To manage the resources of the library effectively and to actively promote their use.
- ▶ To develop students information handling and information seeking skills.
- ▶ To host visiting authors and speakers on a wide variety of subjects.
- ▶ To facilitate the display of students' work and achievements in the areas of art, literature, sport, etc.
- ▶ To support and encourage a cross curricular approach to literacy development.
- ▶ To foster parental involvement in their child's literacy development through shared reading initiatives, parenting workshops, etc.
- ▶ To promote student ownership of the library and to encourage them to express their opinions and views on the library and its services.
- ▶ To establish and maintain links with other agencies (both local and national) dealing with the needs of young people. Agencies in this category would include the public library services, cultural and environmental groups, educational groups, etc.

Users

The priority target group will be the students and staff involved with the Junior Certificate School Programme. However, the resources of the library will be available to all students and staff of the school.

Staffing

The library will be staffed by an experienced professional librarian who has an active interest in and knowledge of the educational needs and achievement potential of the JCSP students. The librarian will liaise with the teachers of the JCSP students to ensure effective library provision.

Library Committee

A Library Committee (of staff and students) will be set up which will meet twice each term or according to need.

Resources

Resources will be available in the following formats:

Books

DVDs

Videos

CDs for music and the spoken word

Cassettes

Daily and weekly newspapers

Periodicals

CD ROMS

Computers (with Internet access)

Laptop computers (for student and staff use)

Games

Reports

Maps

Student projects/work

Information files

Listening stations

Literacy software

Stock Selection Policy

The needs and interests of the students participating in the Junior Certificate School Programme shall be foremost in influencing stock selection. A significant portion of library stock will consist of books with a high interest, low literacy ability format. This is consistent with the aim of the JCSP Demonstration Library Project to encourage reading and improve literacy.

The needs and interests of the whole school community will also be considered in stock selection.

Suggestions for new stock items from staff and students will be welcomed.

Literacy Strategies

The library will promote a wide range of literacy strategies, including:

Readalong

Shared Reading

Paired Reading

Silent Reading

Exposure to various forms of text outside the traditional print format e.g. lyrics of songs, poetry, jokes, quizzes, advertisements

Sharing of student writing

Drama

Role Play

Cloze tests

Fact finding e.g. newspapers, treasure hunts, quizzes, etc.

Revision skills and exam techniques e.g. selecting and understanding key words from questions using the techniques of skimming and scanning.

Capitalising on student interests and hobbies.

IT and information skills

Life skills e.g. interview techniques, completing forms and applications, etc.

Author visits

Visiting speakers e.g. Environment Information Officers, County Council Archivists, Health visitors etc.

Librarian and teaching staff working together

For the library to function effectively, staff are asked to inform the librarian:

- ▶ When they wish to book a class in for teaching or research work within the library and what resources/materials/equipment etc. will be required for this class period.
- ▶ When they wish to cancel a library class visit or event.
- ▶ When they are planning a research project so that resources can be acquired for the library.
- ▶ When stock items are likely to be in high demand for a short period of time.
- ▶ When there are changes in set texts within a course.
- ▶ When curriculum changes affect the library holdings.
- ▶ What items they would like to see added to the library stock or removed from it.

All classes must be accompanied by their teacher during library periods. Classes must wait outside the library door until their teacher arrives. The last few minutes of class visits should be given over to the gathering up of materials, tidying up, etc. so that the library is left ready for the next class.

Help in encouraging students to return overdue items, in treating the library with respect and in the promotion of reading for pleasure is always appreciated. Staff are asked to contribute to the library any topic work that they no longer require e.g. books, displays, information files, photographs, etc. Staff are also encouraged to use the library themselves – to check new items, to read the newspaper etc. and to identify with and promote the library as the information centre of the school.

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