

5

POLICY AND DEVELOPMENT

Muri ga toreba, dori ga hikkomu.

(When irrationality passes [by], reason withdraws.)

Japanese proverb

Policy and development determine our everyday working lives, that of the users of the library and of the institution itself. How many times do we hear each day ‘Our policy on this is . . .’ or ‘We need to consider our policy on . . .’? This chapter looks at the reality of policy and development for the secondary school library and how they are both management functions and tools for the school librarian.

What is policy and policy making?

Though policy is so all-pervasive, when we as librarians consider ‘policy’ in the formal sense, we may think of something that is divorced from reality or at least everyday events, and is codified and possibly fossilized in a written document. We may also consider that policy is developed or approved by others. This can be seen, for instance, in the general development of school policies on discipline, attendance and staff regulations.

Bureaucrats make decisions by processing information with reference to appropriate rules. Strategic managers make decisions by developing policies and

plans that then provide a point of reference for the information processing and decision making of others.

Morgan, 1998

Surely policy making is purely theoretical? It is theoretical, as issues need to be thought through and considered and ideas have to be communicated. The more complex or detailed a concept is, the more written communication is important, in order to aid reflection and clear understanding.

The mission statement and aims of a school should be basic concepts for inclusion in the library policy. If the library does not relate to these basic tenets of the organization, it shows it is divorced from the main business of the school. They are starting points. Of course, the library policy can and should develop these, and have particular or more detailed aims.

When developing library mission statements:

the school librarian should look to the statements of the parent body. . . . The library's mission statement follows from the school's . . . statement and has been approved. . . . It includes a concrete, attainable and understandable set of parameters for the library in the context of the overall school vision and philosophy.

School librarian, Australia (Yates, 1997, 176)

Ways of getting the organization interested in the library policy

In practice, who, in the organization, is interested in policy *for the library*? Should they, and should librarians and library managers expect them to be? Are librarians interested in policies affecting other parts of the school? Policy is a two-way process. Librarians should be aware of policies in other areas of school and reflect relevant aspects in the library policy and vice versa. Because the library is a central school resource and facility, it is logical to expect that the policy for the school library will be of interest to the school community at large.

A number of strategies to involve members of the school in developing library policy are possible:

- Ask faculties or departments to consider their own policy areas and suggest elements that the library needs to consider for the latter's policy.
- Involve relevant senior managers and governing body.
- Get advice from external contacts, such as schools library services.
- Relate to curriculum documents, perhaps issued by agencies on behalf of central government.
- Consider principles and standards advocated in published guidelines on library and information services in secondary or high schools, either those produced nationally or reflecting a local situation, e.g. those developed by schools library services.

The focus for the Trinity Grammar School Library is on the enhancement of the learning outcomes for all of the students. Because our focus is clear, it was relatively easy to develop the Vision and Mission statements for the Library policy. The Vision statement for the Trinity Grammar School Library is *to create a Library that is the learning and teaching centre of the school*. Add this to the Mission statement that says that *the Library aims to provide a learning environment that values the individual as a lifelong learner who possesses a repertoire of independent learning skills as well as a love of literature*.

The Purpose statements were then developed around the Vision and Mission statements. At all times in this process we were in consultation with the all of the Key Learning Areas in the school.

We want the students at Trinity Grammar School who use the library to:

- value the search for truth and the disciplines of scholarship
- understand that learning is a lifelong process
- possess a love for learning and literature
- value information skills as a tool in learning
- apply knowledge and skills through a set of key competencies

- value creative and critical thinking through the information skills process
- recognize their own learning styles
- be autonomous learners
- celebrate collaborative learning
- be confident in the use of a range of technologies.

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The policy's central tenet: the place of the school library in the school

A policy is absolutely crucial in helping to establish just what is the purpose and function of a library in a school. For library functions, there are many options, such as:

- academic support through a policy of centralized location of resources
- a study centre
- contribution to the school's social inclusion and equal opportunities policies
- a place for the 'sick and unruly' – a place for discipline and to locate pupils who are ill, to withdraw disruptive pupils from classes, a place for the exercise of detention
- an examination room
- a place for meetings of the governing body
- exclusive study place (and informal social area) for senior students, e.g. sixth form
- extra (timetabled) classroom.

Though the list above includes just a few of the possible functions or activities for a school library, there will be some that may cause librarians and others some disquiet, while they agree with others. Some are general,

worthy aims, others express specific use – and abuse. For instance, a quiet place seems the ideal place to send a pupil who is sick and cannot work in the classroom. But is it the best place from the pupil's point of view? It may be that s/he would prefer to see a nurse and to be under the supervision of an appropriately qualified and experienced person. The expediency in using the library for this function is surely not relevant in a health and safety conscious world. Once it is used in such a way, other variations on a theme follow.

Another example: it is logical for the governing body to want somewhere quiet to meet for meetings and it seems sensible to use the library facility for such a purpose outside of the school's operating hours. However, is the preparation of the library for the meeting done outside the normal opening period of the library and is it all cleared up in time for the normal time when the library opens again? If the answer is 'No', does this show a regard for an academic role for the library, or indeed a clear understanding of the library's function in a school?

But it is possible to take the list of functions further:

- a place to send classes when teaching personnel cover is not available
- a focus for the school's cultural values
- a place for research
- a centre for technological support
- a facility with intranet management and inputting functions
- support for teaching, team teaching, resource-based learning
- facility to support the school's teaching of literacy
- homework centre
- a place for parent–teacher meetings
- stock cupboard for resources and unwanted furniture.

Again, the list includes functions and roles that seem in keeping with the tenor of policy and the direction a particular school wishes to pursue. But it should be noted that there are other features above that individuals may have reservations about, if not downright disagreement with. Also, general

statements of intent are mixed with specific, practical uses. The examples given above range from those that are occasional and can be accommodated or accepted to those that occur regularly and constitute an abuse of the facility. But the list is by no means complete, for it is possible that the school library could also be an:

- archive and museum
- waiting room for visitors
- reprographic facilities centre
- a place for recreational reading
- venue for library-related after-school activities
- centralized (learning resources) ordering facility
- place to be photographed and to conduct interviews
- focus for learning skills teaching and learning.

There may indeed be more functions. It will be apparent that these activities and functions are listed in no real logical order. This is deliberate. From the list above, it can be concluded that there are several functions that most people would agree that a library *should* undertake. It will likewise be agreed that there are aspects that a library *should not* be expected to undertake. It may be admitted that the library is used for less relevant functions regularly or perhaps only from time to time. The point is that, over time, the library will be used and possibly abused.

How acceptable might such a state of affairs be? Let us explore one small example. Look in the educational or even general press to find photographs of head teachers or perhaps smiling students clutching certificates and awards. What can be seen in the background? Possibly, shelves of books. Look closely and it may be seen that they bear the hallmark of library-organized shelves and stock. Such an 'academic' background is considered appropriate for the image that the school wants to be portrayed. Did such a photographic session cause any disruption in the library? Was it an appropriate function for the library?

Multi-functional library facility

In reality, a school library serves a multitude of functions. As in any organization, there are times when library managers have no choice but to accept other people's wishes and orders. So, how will a policy for the library affect such uses and abuses of the role of the library?

A library policy is not a universal panacea. It is simply a management tool. It communicates ideas and values. What a policy can do is help others into a growing understanding about the function of the library in general terms. It will not and cannot be a safeguard for all eventualities.

In the small example given above, what would be the response of the librarian who has been asked or told that the library would be the venue for photographs? Intuitively, the librarian – as a manager – understands the situation. There may even be benefits that accrue to the library upon co-operation and other reasons for agreeing. In this situation, the library, by being a venue, may be taking part in the wider life of the school. It is all a question of balance. As Mortimore (1992, 154) noted, when looking at school effectiveness projects, 'there is no such thing as a free lunch' as there is always an agenda to be addressed.

Why does the school library exist?

The general aim is surely to maintain the library as a foundation for the curriculum, perhaps therefore moving it from the periphery of school life to be something of relevance to students and staff. Rather than asking what the library does and what the library functions are, is it not more appropriate to consider what the library is there for? Why does it exist? Addressing this question may narrow the options identified in the large list above to perhaps include the following statements, that a school library:

- supports the teaching and learning of the institution
- provides research opportunities for senior students
- offers a place for quiet, individual study
- is a facility for individual choice in selection of learning resources

- provides resources to support the formal and 'hidden' curriculum
- enables a school to provide a cultural focus
- appears as an imposing and impressive facility for the benefit of visitors.

A study about the impact of the school library on learning considered that:

the mission and goals of any SLRC [school library resource centre] indicate that support for the learning process is seen as central to the development of information and library services. SLRCs aim not only to provide a rich learning environment in terms of an appropriate range of resources but also in terms of developing the learning skills of pupils.

Williams and Wavell, 2001

How to arrive at an agreed statement about the library's function

First of all, a central idea or concept needs to be developed and stated. The ideal is to arrive at a concept agreed to by the whole school community. Although this seems straightforward, practically speaking, however, it may be quite difficult to achieve. The most democratic and quickest means may be to invite the whole staff to suggest ideas, perhaps at a general staff meeting. However, if you are launching 'cold' or without advance notice, possibly the worst thing to do is to ask a whole-school staff meeting for ideas. Progress of the idea will be limited by this means because of too many different perceptions in what is inevitably a large group of people. In addition, individual or sectional (hidden) agendas may exist so that it may be difficult to synthesize views on a single occasion. If using such a method, however, the issue being discussed needs to be tightly focused, both in terms of time allowed and the object of the exercise. Ideally, colleagues should receive some notice before the meeting, so that they are aware that comments and thoughts about the role of the library will be required.

Far more helpful will be for the school librarian to explore the following options:

- Arrive at a definition and circulate a statement to staff for discussion and comment.
- Invite all areas of school to separately contribute comments and views, which are then discussed, collated and synthesized.
- Encourage a library steering committee to consider the issue and agree a draft definition.
- Ask for the issue to be considered by senior managers, perhaps also providing a briefing paper for their information and guidance.
- Promote the need for an agreed and formalized policy to be ratified by governors or trustees of the school, as should be standard practice for whole school policies.

These options require time as consultation and communication are involved – perhaps through questionnaires or meetings – but arguably are more effective in the long term. Once it is clear why the library exists (and for whom), it is then possible to communicate this idea and effectively work towards the ideal.

Aspects of a school library policy

Once a basic understanding of the role of the library has been established, it is important to develop policy for different aspects of the function of the facility. Significant statements about the library should be made in the policy. These may include:

- *Access.* This may seem straightforward enough, but there may be implications to be highlighted. Not only should access to the facility in a physical sense be identified, but by implication, the security that exists for the facility and its resources. Also to be considered will be whether the same levels of access to resources will be offered to all users of the facility. It may be useful to identify policy guidance regarding any sen-

sitive materials and the needs of adolescent users vis-à-vis pre-adolescent users. Particular examples would be access to use of the internet and sex education materials.

- *Censorship*. This is more of an issue in the USA as, for instance, perusal of US school librarianship journals shows. Nevertheless, a statement about the freedom of access for individuals in a school setting may be a valuable aspect to include in a school library policy. (See also Appendix I).
- *Services*. The library and information *service* is more than a static collection of resources that miraculously opens its doors at the beginning of the day and closes them again at the end. An identification of core services may be helpful. (These services are discussed throughout the book.)
- *Stock development*. This will follow on from and develop a basic understanding of the role of the library. Users may well benefit from knowledge of the strengths of the library and how collections are selected, maintained and edited.
- *Learning inputs and outputs*. Here, it may be appropriate to identify any teaching role taken by the school librarian and any learning outcomes/processes that students may expect from constructive use of the library.

We believe that free communication is essential to the preservation of a free society and a creative culture. We believe that these pressures towards conformity present the danger of limiting the range and variety of inquiry and expression on which our democracy and culture depend. We believe that every American community must jealously guard the freedom to publish and to circulate, in order to preserve its own freedom to read. We believe that publishers and librarians have a profound responsibility to give validity to that freedom to read by making it possible for the readers to choose freely from a variety of offerings.

From the American Library Association statement: *The Freedom to Read*,
American Association of School Librarians, 1998b, 157

How detailed should policy be?

A policy should be comprehensive, though it is impossible to cover everything. Indeed, the longer a policy document becomes, the more difficult it is to communicate effectively its main tenets. It is useful to consider just what it is necessary to communicate. That, and that alone, should be the content of the policy. If there is a need to provide more detail, such ‘subsidiary’ policy could be relegated to a manual of practice. For instance, when outlining the main elements of stock selection, this could be done in a sentence in the main policy statement, with a rider that further information could be found in a manual. Other examples may include a policy for donations to the library (an example of which may be found at Appendix D) and one for dealing with complaints (see Appendix I). It may be sufficient to say in the policy that these exist, and place the detail somewhere elsewhere. Naturally, any such manual should be kept up to date and be available in several places where it may be consulted freely (perhaps even on a school library’s web page).

Is there a blueprint policy?

Policy writing may appear a cumbersome process and possibly tedious. However, while the product, i.e. the written policy, is important, the process of communication, debate and dialogue that should occur during the preparation period are even more so. It is tempting to reproduce a policy document from another institution that looks helpful, but it is impossible to replicate the process of arriving at a *relevant* policy that is suited to the needs of the *individual* school.

However, it is possible to utilize good practice so it is not necessary to start entirely from scratch. National, professional and other school library guidelines have been produced and may be helpful starting points. Indeed, the UNESCO School Library Manifesto, reproduced in abridged form below, should engender much thought and debate, as it has been developed after much thought and consultation among groups and organizations in a number of countries. Support for school librarians may also be available

from focus groups of colleagues, listservs and organizations such as schools library services. In fact, there will be so many stimulating ideas and so much material available that the issue will be more to select what is relevant, realistic and aspirational, rather than to hunt for concepts.

In addition it may also be possible to work together with school librarians in a given area, or from like-minded schools, to work on 'subsidiary' policy. The ideas and text that result then could be taken back to individual schools for comment and amendment, as may be appropriate. A good example of such co-operative working might be policy for stock selection or that for donations to the school library.

This is an abridged version of the UNESCO School Library Manifesto:

The School library in teaching and learning for all:

IFLA/UNESCO School Library Manifesto

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 lifelong learning skills and develops the imagination, enabling them to live as responsible citizens.

The Mission of the school library

The school library offers learning services, books and resources that enable all members of the school community to become critical thinkers and effective users of information in all formats and media. School libraries link to the wider library and information network in accord with the principles in the UNESCO Public Library Manifesto.

Library staff support the use of books and other information sources, ranging from the fictional to the documentary, from print to electronic, both on-site and remote. Materials complement and enrich textbooks, teaching materials and methodologies.

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.

Library services must be provided equally to all members of the school

community, regardless of age, race, gender, religion, nationality, language, professional or social status. Specific services and materials must be provided for those who are unable to use mainstream library services and materials.

Access to services and collections should be based on the United Nations Universal Declaration of Rights and Freedoms, and should not be subject to any form of ideological, political or religious censorship, or to commercial pressures.

Funding legislation and networks

The school library is essential to every long-term strategy for literacy, education, information provision and economic, social and cultural development. School libraries must have adequate and sustained funding for trained staff, materials, technologies and facilities and be free of charge.

The school library is an essential partner in the local, regional and national library and information network. Where the school library shares facilities and/or resources with another type of library, such as a public library, the unique aims of the school library must be acknowledged and maintained.

Goals of the school library

The school library is integral to the educational process. The following core services are essential to the development of literacy, information literacy, teaching, learning and culture:

- Supporting and enhancing educational goals as outlined in the school's mission and curriculum;
- Developing and sustaining in children the habit and enjoyment of reading and learning, and the use of libraries throughout their lives;
- Offering opportunities for experiences in creating and using information for knowledge, understanding, imagination and enjoyment and in learning and practising skills for evaluating and using information;
- Providing access to global resources that expose learners to diverse ideas and experiences;
- Working with students, teachers, administrators and parents to achieve the school's mission;

- Proclaiming the concept that intellectual freedom and access to information are essential to effective and responsible citizenship and participation in a democracy;
- Promoting reading to the whole school community and beyond.

The school library in teaching and learning for all [2001]

On-going review of policy

The process of policy making is, as indicated above, important and valuable. As the process itself is intangible and needs to be experienced, the value gained from it – i.e. a widespread common understanding of the role and potential of the library – may become diluted over time. (This may be because of significant changes in staffing personnel and new pressures and initiatives. Also the passage of time makes us all forget, to a certain extent.)

In order to counter such an eventuality, a librarian will be able to develop other strategies to promote common understanding about the role of the library, as policy is only one instrument in management. Nevertheless, it may be useful to re-visit policy from time to time, looking for continued relevance or the need for adjustment, and again an appropriate process (not perhaps to the same extent as at first) may provide motivation and common understanding among the collegiate body of the school staff.

Development of the school library and information service

If a policy identifies what a library in a school exists for, a development plan formulates the means of achieving the goal and maintaining or improving yet further the standard of service.

We all make lists – things to do, things not to forget. We may prioritize these lists. A development plan may be thought of just as a (albeit big or sophisticated) list. A list reminds us to do things. A development plan does the same. It reminds us to take action. It also indicates to others the sort of action required in order to achieve a goal. For this reason alone, it is important that a library development plan, just like a policy, is communicated to

others in the school community. Therefore a library development plan should be couched in the language of the school: by this is meant expressing outcomes in terms understood by and of relevance to the school as an organization.

For example, an item in a library development plan may be the installation of a computerized library management system. The benefit is not to make it easier to lend or issue library resources or send out reminders about items that have been kept past the date for return, or even that a system will show that a library is technologically advanced. Rather, benefits should be expressed in the following manner:

- Pupils experience real use of technology in their everyday school lives.
- Pupils develop useful IT skills through searching an automated catalogue.
- Compilation of a catalogue may maximize use of a school's existing resources.

This therefore continually relates the library to the aims and service of the school as a whole, by identifying a benefit to the school community.

UK secondary school guidelines (Tilke, 1998a, 14) have succinctly identified the salient points when development planning:

- The plan must relate to the policy for the school library.
- The plan needs to relate to the school's overall development plan.
- The process will involve auditing present resources and then looking at the library's list of priorities in the light of the audit; setting targets with deadlines; identifying relevant costs; implementation; evaluation.
- Typically, any such plan will cover a period of time between three and five years. It is helpful to identify short-, medium- and long-term developments, i.e. something that can be achieved within the present academic year, a project necessitating one to two years and an aim that may only be partially met during the period of the development plan.
- It may be useful to set up or reconvene a library steering committee to help with this process.

Justification of development funding

The days when Gervase Phinn, a local authority inspector who had responsibility for school libraries, could be told ‘The head wants me to develop the library and has persuaded the Governors to release some capital to improve things’ (Phinn, 1999) may be long gone. There is more likely to be an expectation that bids for development funds need to be justified, with advantages being clearly identified. A development plan allows that to occur. Far from being a bureaucratic exercise, a development plan can crystallize thinking and enable the librarian and others to prioritize development so that it is realistically planned. It is helpful to involve others in the planning and it is certainly necessary to communicate the contents of the development plan to staff and others in the school in order for realistic expectations to be made.

Planning ahead

Development plans may be cyclical and have a life-span of several years. It may be easy to identify development for the first year, often in some detail, but may be progressively harder for further years. Rather than seek to add detail for the future, it is better to edit detail in the first year, so that the overall plan and action required is clear and comprehensive.

Indeed, the school may have an overall procedure that heads of department need to work to. This may involve a written audit of the past year to aid thinking and support development plans, targets and priorities for the future. Areas for an annual departmental audit (Jones, Jenkin and Kirkham, 1996, 8) include:

- curriculum
- assessment and achievement
- resources
- staffing and staff development
- public examinations
- organization
- liaison and communication.

The areas identified about relate to a subject department but there is no reason why the library and information service should not use the same headings. The benefit in so doing is that the library works more and more as an academic department. That can be important, as one reason why the library is sometimes left out of or at least not fully integrated into the planning and development cycle is because it does not easily fit into the way that things are done in a school.

Does a plan deny flexibility?

It is important that a school library relates to its users effectively and efficiently. In a changing arena such as education, that means that a librarian needs to be flexible. Not only may educational policy (with its own priorities and time-scales) change, but local conditions alter and the users change too. Resources emerge, change and improve, sometimes without much advance notice. The librarian needs to capitalize on current events and changing needs and priorities. Flexibility therefore needs to be built in or remembered in development planning, in terms of finance and (staff) time. In other words, carefully estimate the amount of time and resources needed to achieve stated goals, building flexibility (possibly for other things) into the planning.

Nevertheless, a library development plan needs to have targets that are:

- specific
- measurable
- achievable
- realistic
- timelined (Jones, Jenkin and Kirkham, 1996, 12).

Reduction of library provision

Development does not always mean expansion. Reduction in library provision may occur. In the same way as national economies ebb and flow, a

library, or perhaps any facility in a school, cannot expect to always be apportioned funding for expansion. Maintenance is also development. Reduction is also development, unwelcome though it may be to the librarian and others. Management is about learning from such situations, understanding them and operating a service as efficiently and effectively as possible under new conditions.

Equally, a reduction in funding for the school library does not necessarily mean that it has to work ‘adversely’ for the library. The situation may have occurred for a number of reasons, some of which may not have anything to do directly with the library. However, if the library service in the school has been seen to be inadequate and the response from senior decision makers is in fact to continually reduce funding, re-apportion library accommodation to other uses or even to re-distribute resources among departments, it would be most advisable to reassess the situation.

This could be achieved by looking at the policy and/or development plan (or, more likely, the absence of these), assessing conditions, both pro and con. Indeed, analysis of such a situation is really the starting point for library development (in the long term) rather than the reverse. In this scenario of terminal decline, everything should be (re-)examined. For such a situation, what is needed is a catalyst: it is possible that circumstances have arisen because of the absence of a full-time, experienced and qualified librarian to manage the library. External agencies, such as schools library services, could suggest and encourage change, especially to concerned individuals in the school community, be they teachers, parents, governors (or trustees) and pupils. The catalyst could therefore be someone to reassess and revamp library provision in the school.

Role of a library steering committee

A useful method of debating library policy and examining library functions is a library steering committee (Tilke, 1998b, 37). Ideally, a committee should be representative of most if not all areas of school life – staff from different subject and pastoral areas of the school, as well as students and pos-

sibly parents – with appointments to the committee being made by the head teacher or principal of the school. Action of this sort by the head teacher indicates the seriousness of the exercise. For this reason, too, the brief for the committee should be outlined by the head teacher, who ideally should chair the committee. If this is not possible then a member of the inner senior management team should be appointed to this position.

Library committees sometimes suffer criticism because they are seen as not producing anything worthwhile or consistently engage in negative criticism. Indeed, it has been known for a library committee to concern itself with the day-to-day running of the school library and adjust administrative routines rather than concentrating on policy and overall direction. These concerns indicate the necessity of a good brief for a committee and also, perhaps, for a time-scale for such a group. With a clear focus and brief, a committee can produce meaningful results and be disbanded, with a job well done.

If a standing or on-going committee is preferred or needed, then its meetings should have clear focus and membership be refreshed from time to time. The minutes of the meetings – and minutes or at least a record of meetings should be kept – could be disseminated to the school community, in whole or at least in summarized form.

If, however, what is really wanted is some form of on-going voice or opinion about the library and its role in the school, it may be possible to do this by different means – a library steering or standing committee is after all only one option. Good practice can be replicated but it is not a good idea to institute a committee just because another school has found it useful. It should only be used if it suits the needs of the school in question. Nevertheless, perhaps the greatest contribution a library committee can make is by looking at library provision in a school that has suffered from inadequate library provision over a period of time. This is because a committee's membership should reflect users and provide a distinct viewpoint. From this, it may be concluded that a library steering committee has a useful role at a certain stage in the development of a secondary or high school library.

Conclusion

Developing policy for the school library is an essential step in progress. It is not a starting point, or rather, it is not *only* a starting point. It is a management tool that is on-going. A survey of secondary school libraries (Sheffield Hallam University, 2000, 78) indicates that a significant proportion of secondary schools in the UK (60%) have found it useful to formulate a library policy document. A similar number of schools have a library development plan, while 61% of libraries in the survey appeared in an overall school development plan.

Nevertheless, school libraries are not the same everywhere. As Mortimore (1992, 154) pointed out, 'It is tacitly assumed that all schools have an equal chance of improvement, the reality is that schools in all countries vary enormously in their conditions The acceptance of this reality is not to condone a defeatist attitude . . . but merely to note that judgements of school effectiveness have to be carried out in sensitive ways.' School library development in the UK alone has been found to be variable (Office of Arts and Libraries, 1986) and the same is true for other parts of the world. By development is meant the different ways that school libraries have changed in the last 50 years or so, whether in terms of funding, staffing, buildings, technology and information skills and even in terms of differing policy statements. Surveys (not least Sheffield Hallam University, 2000) have shown that libraries within the same country have evolved in different ways and at varying paces and this piecemeal development of school libraries is mirrored in other countries too.

If the starting points are not the same and – arguably – the (realistic) goals or aims are different, nevertheless the process for development is remarkably similar. In this process, the need for clear analysis and in particular an awareness of user needs is imperative, and the management tools of policy and development planning are essential for any meaningful development.

In order to cater the library to the needs of an individual school, it is important to have a good understanding of the school's development plan, any education initiatives being addressed by that plan, the curriculum, and any special inter-

ests of the school. The more the librarian can work to meet the needs of the users, the more indispensable the library will become to the school.

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