



The Future of the Schools Library Service

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Councillor for East Sutherland and Edderton on Highland Council

Background:

The Schools Library Service provides specialist professional support to librarians in schools.

This includes professional development, quality management, and the co-ordination of services across Highland.

For schools without librarians the service provides practical help with library development and management, and support and training in related areas such as web site development.

The Resource Centre provision plays a central role in the delivery of a consistent, high quality level of curriculum-related materials and advice.

This includes: materials to enrich topic work in primary schools; the sourcing and loan of specialist materials required by pupils studying for Advanced Higher; and the provision of books required for teachers' continuing professional development.

In addition to this the Highland Children's Book Awards and the Reading Webs at :

http://www.highlandschools-virtualib.org.uk/reading_webs.htm

both of which support literacy development, are likely to be lost as they are managed by the School Library Service.

The Resource Centre is crucial for teachers. e.g.

Primaries in particular require banks of resources for material for projects, worksheets etc. Smaller rural schools will be hit yet again.

We stand to lose Virtual Website which was recently voted the third best educational website in the country (*Daily Record*)

The Librarian at Golspie High was nominated for School Librarian of the Year – only 2 in Scotland got through.

Curriculum for Excellence

The Curriculum for Excellence focuses heavily on literacy so without the Book Awards and the Virtual Library Reading Websites this will be damaged.

Furthermore, primary schools will find it increasingly difficult to raise literacy levels without the support and resources that these initiatives provide.

The resource centre is a lifeline for primary schools, especially smaller rural schools, who are aiming to raise attainment because they can borrow material to support class projects and material which is vital for project work they may be undertaking as part of ACE. ‘

The Ind/SNP Administration is looking at implications of axing the posts and Resource Centre - ***after the deed has been done!***

They believe that Community Libraries and Librarians can pick up this specialist work.

Community Librarians however are not trained to deliver curriculum; they are extremely stretched as it is and have a much wider service to deliver to the wider community.

Being aware of the extent of the school library service, and its close relationship with curriculum delivery, I have real concerns about how these services can be delivered without a negative impact on future service delivery.

I have written to Bill Fernie, Chair of Education with my specific points:

In terms of future service delivery:

- Who will train new, inexperienced school librarians?
- Who will help school librarians prepare for HMle inspection?

- Who will organise and provide CPD for school librarians?
- Who will help school librarians with development planning?
- Who will mediate between school librarians / school managers when problems arise?
- Who will help primary schools to set up, organise and develop their libraries?
- How will the teachers' CPD collection be managed? How will it be maintained without a budget?
- How will primary schools access materials to enrich topic work? How will the stock be maintained without a budget?
- Who will manage the Highland Children's Book Awards?
- Who will provide line management for the maintenance and development of on-line resources through HVLC / Highland Schools Virtual Library?
- Who will provide leadership for the development of the reading webs and curriculum support areas of HVLC / Highland Schools Virtual Library?

We need to be asking the question, "What is the added value of axing these services?"

Websites :

Deirdre Mackay's website : www.deirdremackay.org.uk

Education CutsWatch : www.educationcutswatch.org.uk