

**THE PRIMARY SCHOOLS LIBRARY
SERVICE IN COUNTY WEXFORD:**

**STATUS REPORT, January 2009
&
SERVICE REVIEW 2004 - 2008**

Fionnuala Hanrahan

Wexford County Council Public Library Service

2009

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Fionnuala Hanrahan, BA, DipLib, MLIS, ALA, ALAI, is County Librarian, Wexford County Council. Within the Library Association of Ireland she was a founder member of the national Children's Book Week in the early Eighties. Her interest in schools library development is of long-standing and has included involvement in research and publication for "Library info-pack for second level schools" (1993), "School libraries: standards for good practice" (1994), "Library development in second level schools" (1994), and "The borrowers at school, a report on primary school libraries" (2002).

Under the auspices of Branching Out, the government national planning structure for public libraries, she was a member of the inter-departmental committee that submitted a report to the Minister for Education and Science in 2002 offering a model for the development of Primary School Library Services. Within a Public Library Research Programme, she is on a consultative committee supporting Dublin City Libraries' current research on primary school library services.

INTRODUCTION

Since the late Sixties, library service in primary schools has been provided on a shared services basis by the Department of Education and Science and local authority public library services. As a minimum every child in the State, regardless of circumstances, had access to quality books to improve his or her literacy skills and to support research interests.

The shared services model was a good one in principle. School libraries support formal education and the curriculum. Public libraries support the full development of the human personality throughout his/her life. School libraries and public libraries, working together, are a powerful force, contributing to a secure future for children and sustainable economic prosperity for the country.

Unfortunately the Schools Library Service was never funded adequately. In the absence of sufficient support, different mechanisms for service delivery developed in different local authorities. These harnessed the infrastructure and resource strengths in place locally to best effect. Inequalities resulted from unevenness of service provision around the country. Nonetheless a schools library service continued to be provided, countrywide.

The Department of Education and Science Grant was increased in 2005 and remained stable until 2008. However the 2009 Grant was cut completely.

Attempts by librarians and other educators over the years to focus on policy requirements and service development have failed to date. Most recently in 2002, an inter-departmental committee reported to the Minister for Education and Science proposing a model for library development in the primary school sector.

School libraries are part of the core infrastructure of education in developed countries. Library Service to schools in the Republic of Ireland requires commitment from the Department of Education and Science at national level in the area of policy. Commitment is also needed from the Department of Education and Science towards the management of school library services at local level countrywide.

The three general aims of primary education are

1. To enable the child to live a full life as a child and to realise his or her potential as a unique individual
2. To enable the child to develop as a social being through living and co-operating with others and so contribute to the good of society
3. To prepare the child for further education and life long learning

Primary School Curriculum : Introduction. Specific aims and general objectives.
Department of Education and Science (1999)

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1. COUNTY WEXFORD PRIMARY SCHOOLS LIBRARY SERVICE:

STATUS REPORT & FUTURE ACTIONS

No funding for the national primary Schools Library Service for 2009 was allowed in the Department of Education and Science Budget in autumn 2008.

This Funding Grant, paid annually on a per capita basis, for the delivery of a library service to primary schools, is essential to the maintenance of the service. In the absence of the Grant, County Wexford's Primary School Library Service is suspended from January 2009.

However, Wexford County Council remains committed to supporting the education of our young people. Its PUBLIC LIBRARY services will continue to serve primary school students and teachers through its network of community libraries and mobile libraries.

Action 1

From 1st February 2009, the Schools Library Service Centre in Library HQ, Ardavan is closed. Service from the Centre is ended.

Action 2

In the area of continuing professional development for teachers, the specialist Educational Resources Collection will continue to be available via

1. the library catalogue which can be accessed 24/7 online. Materials can be ordered from school, home or the local branch library and can be borrowed from the local public library
2. the local public library where staff can assist with access to the specialist Collection and with research enquiries in general.

Action 3

Each primary school in the county is now assigned to a local public library.

Public library services available to primary schools include

- "block" loans of classroom collections to support literacy development
- Small project collections on nominated subjects for classroom use
- Class visits to the library to select reading and other materials & thereby build a library habit
- Workshops in the public library for children on research related to projects
- Participation in library programming e.g. author visits and storytelling

The nature & extent of service can be developed, within resource limitations, by the local public library staff and school management & staff. Schools must plan their use of public

library services in advance. Service development countywide will be mapped by library management. Over time, opportunities for more effective public library service delivery will be sought.

Action 4

The Classroom Novels Scheme, [multiple copies of c. 50 quality children's titles - see the list of titles at Appendix A] that was run for class reading and discussion, will continue to be administered from Library HQ until the end of June 2009. This is public library service: it will be reviewed over the summer.

Action 5

The mobile library service to rural and disadvantaged schools will be retained. This is a public library service

Wexford County Council regrets the loss of the Schools Library Service. Its library staff have worked creatively and diligently to sustain and develop it.

In 2008 Wexford County Council made a significant investment in additional opening hours and in an enhanced management structure for its public libraries. Last September¹ primary schools were informed of plans, arising from this investment, to focus literacy development and reading practice work with schools through the public library network. Capacity within the Schools Library Service was being freed to focus more specifically on the research and information skills development areas of the curriculum. The loss of the Schools Library Service at a time of potential development locally is therefore all the more disappointing.

School libraries support formal education and the curriculum. Public libraries support the full development of the human personality throughout his/her life. School libraries and public libraries, working together, are a powerful force, contributing to a secure future for children and sustainable economic prosperity for the country.

In circumstances where the Department of Education and Science has withdrawn its support for School Libraries, the actions outlined above offer the best model to continue to support education for young people within the parameters of public library service.

Should the Department of Education and Science renew the Schools Library Service initiative with local authority involvement, Wexford County Council will be enthusiastic in its support again.

¹ Circular letter to school principals, entitled "Support from the Public Library Service" dated 1st September 2008

2. COUNTY WEXFORD PRIMARY SCHOOLS AND THEIR LOCAL PUBLIC LIBRARY CONTACTS

These assignments can change. If you would prefer to link your school with another library contact the library to which you have been assigned here first. The librarian there can arrange the transfer

| School name, address | local library |
|-------------------------------|------------------|
| A – B | |
| Adamstown | New Ross |
| Ballaghkeen | Enniscorthy |
| Ballindaggin | Bunclody |
| Ballycanew | Gorey |
| Ballycullane | New Ross |
| Ballyduff | Gorey |
| Ballyellis | Gorey |
| Ballyfad | Gorey |
| Ballygarrett | Gorey |
| Ballyhack | New Ross |
| Ballyhogue | Enniscorthy |
| Ballymitt | Wexford |
| Ballymurn | Wexford |
| Ballyoughter | Bunclody / Gorey |
| Balyroebuck | Bunclody |
| Ballythomas | Gorey |
| Barntown | Wexford |
| Blackwater | Wexford |
| Boolavogue | Enniscorthy |
| Bree | Enniscorthy |
| Broadway | Wexford |
| Bunclody, Our Lady of Lourdes | Bunclody |
| C | |
| Caim, Sacred Heart | Enniscorthy |
| Camolin | Gorey |
| Carrigduff | Bunclody |
| Carrowreigh, St. Garvan's | Wexford |
| Castlebridge, St Ibar's | Wexford |
| Castledockrell | Bunclody |
| Castletown, Inch | Gorey |
| Clohamon, St Ibar's | Bunclody |
| Clologue | Enniscorthy |
| Clongeen | New Ross |
| Clonroche, St Aidan's | Enniscorthy |
| Clonroche, Donard | Enniscorthy |

Your local library

Bunclody library

Tel: **053 93 75466** Executive Librarian: Trish Keenan, Senior Library Assistant: Máire Browne

Enniscorthy library

Tel: **053 92 36055** Executive Librarian: Jarlath Glynn, Senior Library Assistant: Joan Lambert

Gorey library – Opening summer 2009: Executive Librarian: Sinéad O’Gorman

Gorey library centre Tel: **053 94 21488**
Branch librarian: Barbara Nolan

Mobile Library – North

Tel: **087 417 5810** Senior Library Assistant: Therese Kelly

Mobile Library – South

Tel: **087 417 6014** Senior Library Assistant: Michael Dempsey

New Ross Library

Tel: **051 421877** Executive Librarian: Rosemary Higgins, Senior Library Assistant: Nicola Buckley

Wexford town library

Tel: **053 91 21637** Executive Librarian: Hazel Percival, Staff Officer: Susan Kelly, Senior Library Assistant: Celestine Rafferty

| School name, address | local library |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| Coolcots, Scoil Mhuire | Wexford |
| Coolgreany, Scoil Iosagáin | Gorey |
| Court | Gorey |
| Craanford | Gorey |
| Crossabeg | Wexford |
| Curracloe, St Margaret's | Wexford |
| Cushinstown, Foulksmills | New Ross |

D – F

| | |
|----------------------------|-------------|
| Danescastle | New Ross |
| Davidstown | Enniscorthy |
| Duncannon | New Ross |
| Enniscorthy, St. Aidan's | Enniscorthy |
| Enniscorthy, St. Mary's | Enniscorthy |
| Enniscorthy, St. Patrick's | Enniscorthy |
| Enniscorthy, St. Senan's | Enniscorthy |
| Ferns, St Edan's | Enniscorthy |
| Ferns, Scoil Naomh Maodhog | Bunclody |

G – J

| | |
|--------------------------|-------------|
| Gaelscoil Loch Garman | Wexford |
| Gaelscoil Inis Corthaidh | Enniscorthy |
| Gaelscoil Mhoshiolog | Gorey |
| Galbally, Enniscorthy | Enniscorthy |
| Glenbrien | Enniscorthy |
| Glynn | Wexford |
| Gorey, Central | Gorey |
| Gorey, CBS | Gorey |
| Gorey, Educate Together | Gorey |
| Gorey, Loreto | Gorey |
| Gusserane, New Ross | New Ross |
| Horeswood, Scoil Mhuire | New Ross |

K – M

| | |
|----------------------|-------------|
| Kilanerlin | Gorey |
| Killegney, Clonroche | Enniscorthy |
| Killmore | Wexford |
| Kilmuckeridge | Gorey |
| Killmyshal | Bunclody |
| Kilnamanagh | Gorey |
| Killrane | Wexford |
| Kiltealy, Killane | Enniscorthy |
| Marshalstown | Bunclody |
| Mayglass | Wexford |
| Monageer | Enniscorthy |
| Monaseed, Gorey | Gorey |
| Murrintown | Wexford |

| School name, address | local library |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|
|-----------------------------|----------------------|

N – R

| | |
|-------------------------|-------------|
| New Ross, Ballycullane | New Ross |
| New Ross, CBS | New Ross |
| New Ross, St. Joseph's | New Ross |
| New Ross, Michael St. | New Ross |
| Newbawn | New Ross |
| Oulart | Gorey |
| Oylegate | Wexford |
| Piercestown | Wexford |
| Poulpeasty | Enniscorthy |
| Raheen | Enniscorthy |
| Ramsgrange | New Ross |
| Rathangan | Wexford |
| Rathgarogue | New Ross |
| Rathnure | Enniscorthy |
| Riverchapel | Gorey |
| Rosbercon, St. Canice's | New Ross |
| Rosslare | Wexford |

S – Z

| | |
|----------------------------------|----------|
| Screen | Wexford |
| Sheilbaggin | Wexford |
| St. Leonards | New Ross |
| Taghmon | Wexford |
| Tagoat | Wexford |
| Tara Hill | Gorey |
| Tombrack | Bunclody |
| Wexford, CBS | Wexford |
| Wexford, Faythe, St John of Gods | Wexford |
| Wexford, Kennedy Park, | Wexford |
| Wexford, Mercy Convent | Wexford |
| Wexford, Our Lady of Fatima | Wexford |
| Wexford, St. Iberius | Wexford |

3. SERVICE INDICATORS AND EXPENDITURE, 2008

3.1 € 76,600 Grant Funding bought the Department of Education and Science

- 11,276 new books and other items distributed to 105 schools
- Specific request service used by 51 schools
- 3,400 loans of specialist materials to support teachers continuing professional development

3.2 Less tangible but equally important the service provided

- A local School Library Service management structure
- A contract of service
- A formal mechanism for collaboration between schools and the public library services, delivering a range of additional services such as
 - Class visits
 - Talks and workshops for parents and teachers
 - Block loans for project work
 - Mobile library service once a fortnight to 41 primary schools
 - Access to library events
- Priority access to specialist public library services e.g. history and local studies, reading guides and bibliographies
- An additional 25 titles [30 copies of each title] added to the Classrooms Novels Scheme bringing the collection to 50 titles total. Usage of the Classrooms Novels Scheme by 46/105 schools, many borrowing several titles

3.3 Wexford County Council paid €105,000 as its contribution to the Schools Library Service in 2008.

4. THE NATIONAL PRIMARY SCHOOL LIBRARY SERVICE: BACKGROUND AND RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Background

4.1 Established by the late Sixties, Ireland's primary schools library service was a partnership between the Department of Education and Science and local authority public library services. Initially the Department of Education and Science provided reference books. In time this extended to a grant which had a per child per annum allowance towards the purchase of books and learning materials and a small allowance towards administration costs.

4.2 In this way, regardless of circumstances, every school-going child in the State had a minimum access to some reading materials to support his or her literacy development and general education. The initiative actioned the Department's policy as expressed in the new primary school curriculum (1971) which stated

"In the primary school the library is not only valuable, it is essential - ... precisely because it enshrines the child's title deeds to a part in his own education, the library dominates the whole area of school equipment²."

4.3 Over time as the Department of Education and Science grant continued to be inadequate, many public library services absorbed all management and administrative costs.

4.4 Piggybacking the schools library service onto the public library service provided a shared services management model that was cost effective for the Department of Education.

4.5 In 2008, the national spend was estimated at 34%: 66% :: Department of Education and Science : local authorities³

4.6 The schools library service accessed, for free, public library infrastructure and expertise such as

- Learning materials research and acquisition
- Cataloguing
- Collections management systems
- Discounts and additional purchasing power, by association with public library book-funds
- Distribution networks
- Other public library specialist services, particularly in the area of local history

² Ireland, Department of Education, **Primary school curriculum teachers handbook, part 1**. Dublin. Browne and Nolan, 1971 p94, 95

³ **Branching out: future directions**, [2008 – 2012]. Ireland, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2008 ISBN: 9781406421323. p 53

- Financial management and administration
- Expert advice and research support for teachers

4.7 The current Revised Primary School Curriculum (1999) states that “the ready availability of a wide variety of suitable books is essential in all schools. Such a resource will cater for the needs of every area of the curriculum and should be provided through the establishment of a well-stocked library in every school. It should be organised in such a way as to ensure that maximum use is made of the entire range of reading resources available and that these resources at all times meet the requirements of the school in general and of individual teachers and pupils. In larger schools it will be possible to organise the school library in a central position. It is essential, however, that such a facility is complemented by well-stocked and regularly supplemented classroom libraries...⁴.”

4.8 Nationally the Schools Library Service Grant cost the Department of Education and Science €2.129 million in 2008. An equivalent amount was added to the general per capita grant fund for schools for 2009. This funding transfer provided additional €€ to individual schools to address local priorities. It undermined the existing Schools Library Service’s countrywide, its management and networking structure and the focus it offered on library provision. It also undermined the Department of Education and Science statement on resourcing the revised primary school curriculum (4.7) above.

Recent Research

4.9 In 1999 the Department of Education and Science provided a research grant to investigate the state of primary school libraries countrywide and to make recommendations for future action. The results were published by the Library Association of Ireland⁵. The research took three years and had involved interagency co-operation that had included all the major stakeholders – parents, teachers, librarians and the State. It found that almost all aspects of the primary school library service were regarded as unsatisfactory by all parties. Serious inequalities resulted from unevenness of service provision around the country. The report recommended

- I. A statutory obligation upon the Department of Education and Science to arrange comprehensive library services in all primary schools
- II. Retention and strengthening of the existing management and administration roles of the local authority library services
- III. Two funding streams (1) the existing per capita scheme increased, supplemented with (2) an annual budget paid directly into individual schools
- IV. Library rooms and areas in all new schools
- V. School library requirements as an essential element of all school plans
- VI. Training in school library operations to be made available to teachers.

⁴ Ireland. Department of Education and Science, **Primary school curriculum: English –Teachers guidelines**. Dublin, Stationery Office, 1999. p.17 ISBN: 978070766333 4

⁵ Deirdre Haslett, **The borrowers at school: a report on primary school libraries**. Dublin. Library Association of Ireland, 2002. ISBN: 0 8946037 40X

4.10 In 2000, a Schools Library Working Group, drawing representatives from the Department of Education and Science, the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, and library interests was set up. Its terms of reference focused on the roles of the key partners, finance, operational issues and quality concerns. Its report, submitted to the Minister for Education and Science, recommended to the Department of Education and Science a model for primary school library development. It proposed a 50:50 sharing of full costs of service delivery between the Department of Education and Science and local authority public library services, a management mechanism at national level and minimum standards in relation to service provision and access to professional librarians.

Creating resources to support the curriculum

4.11 Partly towards support for primary and secondary school studies, a website, Ask About Ireland [www.askaboutireland.ie], was initiated by An Chomhairle Leabharlanna, the Irish Library Council⁶. Heretofore unrelated resources within public library services countrywide are united and relevant materials are refined.

A dedicated Students Zone supports the revised primary school curriculum. The development work for this element of the site was supported by educational agencies such as the National Council for Curriculum Assessment, the National Centre for Technology in Education and the Primary Curriculum Support Programme.

4.12 Over the past few years, other educational resources have also been made available to teachers and students through the development of the Ask about Ireland website

- Archive film footage on the history of Ireland
- Griffiths Valuation
- Irish Times Newspaper Digital Archive

4.13 Led by An Chomhairle Leabharlanna, the national public library service network is paralleling provision of electronic reference materials e.g. Britannica On-line. Resources being made available in schools by the DES are also available to students outside school opening hours in the local public library.

⁶ www.librarycouncil.ie

5. WEXFORD'S PRIMARY SCHOOLS LIBRARY SERVICE 2004 – 2008

Summary

Service was provided to 105 primary schools. The total Department of Education and Science grant was committed to books and learning materials deposited permanently in schools, while the management and distribution costs were paid by Wexford County Council. The number of items distributed varied annually in the range of 9,200 – 11,300 items. The Department of Education and Science per capita allowance for stock purchase increased by 1/3 in 2005 and remained unchanged thereafter.

Needs were surveyed every autumn. Teachers were invited to selection meetings or deliveries were made based on survey responses.

Service improvements over the period of this review were

- (a) better accommodation including a dedicated e-learning suite, within a purpose-designed new library HQ, from summer 2007,
- (b) the introduction of a specialist stock ordering service and a take-up increase from 32 – 51 schools,
- (c) the class reading Novels Collection was increased from 20 – 50 titles,
- (d) loans to teachers from the Educational Resources Collection increased by 158% to 3,400 in 2008,
- (e) Research work for teachers in educational practice increased from 34 queries in 2004 to 247 queries by 2007.

Management Model

5.1 To optimise economies of scale, in Wexford the public library Children's Library Service and the Schools Library Service was integrated.

5.2 In summer 2007, within the Public Library HQ, the Children's & Schools Library Department was transferred to improved accommodation. This included a dedicated e-

learning suite, where teachers could be introduced to electronic resources developed in-house and available from external sources.

5.3 In Wexford, the total Department of Education and Science grant was spent on books and other learning materials for schools: all discounts achieved through association with the public library book-fund were invested in school library materials. This provided an additional 25% funding to school libraries.

5.4 Wexford County Council paid the cost of all management and administrative costs. These included

- Staff costs
- IT support
- Learning materials research and acquisition
- Cataloguing
- Collections management
- Distribution & circulation
- Access to the public library specialist services, particularly in the area of local history
- Financial management and administration
- Expert advice and research support for teachers
- Management of reading & research development programmes with school elements, e.g. Children's Book Festival, Stories from the Hearth storytelling season, Science week, Seachtain na Gaeilge etc.

Service delivery

5.5 Schools were surveyed every year with regard to their resource needs. Teachers were then scheduled to visit the Schools Library Service to select materials and discuss needs with the Schools Librarian. Where teachers did not avail of this service materials were delivered to the school based on survey information.

Community Profile

5.6 There are 105 primary schools in County Wexford. 20 are included within the DEIS [Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools] stream. Many schools are small: 38% have 4 classrooms or less, 2/3 has six or less classrooms.

5.7 In the period 2004 – 2008, the primary school student numbers countywide increased from 14,624 to 16,949. Analysis of the 2006 Census of population suggests that c31 nationalities are represented in the student body by 1,200+ children. The numbers of children in primary education is expected to increase to 21,000 by 2011 and to 23,000 by 2016.

5.8 732 full-time teachers were employed in early 2008. There were 215 resource teachers. According to the Department of Education and Science there were 275 special needs assistants⁷.

Funding

5.9 From 2004 – 2008, the Department of Education and Science per capita Schools Library Grant in County Wexford increased from €52,047 to €76,609. This represents a per child increase from €3.40 in 2004 to €4.52 in 2005, retained at that level thereafter.

Collections Development

5.10 Books and print materials dominate the Schools Library Stock Collection in County Wexford. Non-print materials are represented poorly, a response to inadequate funding. Over the period 2004 – 2008, collections grew as follows:

| Year | Per child | total € | items bought ⁸ |
|-------------|-----------|---------|---------------------------|
| 2004 | €3.40 | 52,047 | +13,000 |
| 2005 | €4.52 | 69,942 | + 9,802 |
| 2006 | €4.52 | 71,447 | +10,010 |
| 2007 | €4.52 | 73,468 | + 9,679 |
| 2008 | €4.52 | 76,609 | +11,276 |

Stock was distributed to individual schools to the value of the per student allowance and were left there on a permanent basis.

5.11 From 2002, an Educational Resources Collection was introduced to support the continuing professional development of teachers. Materials were added on an on-going basis.

Services

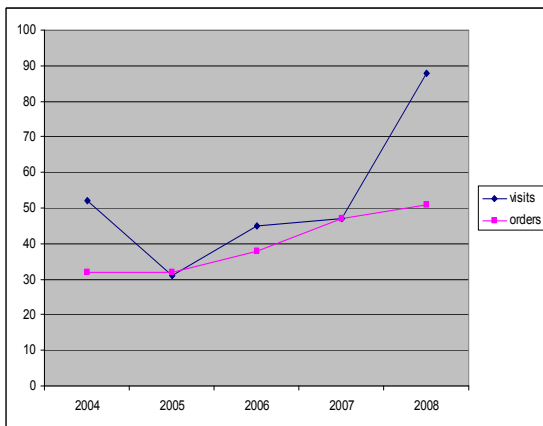
5.12 Development was primarily by collaboration with the principal or designated teacher(s) in each school. However the service was provided to all teachers and was used by many.

⁷ Siobhan O'Neill, **County Wexford Primary Schools Research**, Wexford. County Wexford Development Board, 2008. unpublished. p19- 25

⁸ Where reading schemes with multiple books per scheme are purchased, these are counted as one item from 2005. This explains the apparent discrepancy in units purchased in 2004/2005 and the years following. The same investment in reading schemes did not occur every year

5.13 Schools were surveyed every year with regard to their resource needs. From 2004, in addition to the Schools Librarian recommending material in response to subject and comprehension levels sought, teachers were also invited to identify specific materials for acquisition. Teachers were then scheduled to visit the Schools Library Centre to select materials and discuss needs with the Schools Librarian. Where teachers did not avail of this service materials were delivered to the school based on survey information. Every school received service every year.

5.14 A trend had begun emerging. While some schools used all services, others either ordered specific materials or availed of the visit opportunity to select from materials acquired in response to the survey and identified needs.

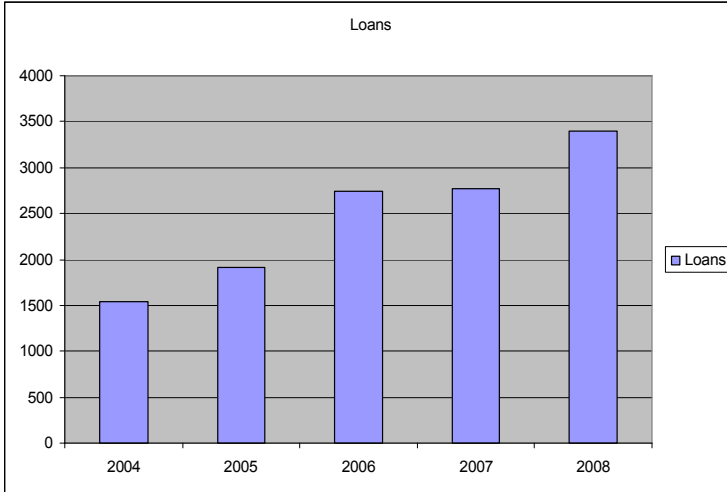


| | Visits⁹ | ordering specific items |
|------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2004 | 52 | 32 |
| 2005 | 31 | 32 |
| 2006 | 45 | 38 |
| 2007 | 47 | 47 |
| 2008 | 88 | 51 |

5.15 The number of new items for children distributed across the 105 schools annually has remained relatively stable over the past 5 year period.

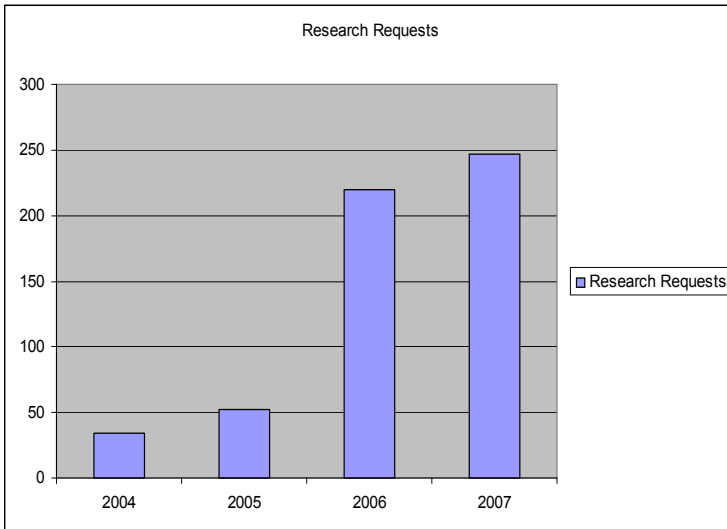
| | New books |
|-------------|------------------|
| 2004 | 11,296 |
| 2005 | 9,802 |
| 2006 | 10,010 |
| 2007 | 9,679 |
| 2008 | 11,276 |

⁹ Figures 2004 – 2007 count visits to select stock only. They do not include research visits



5.16 Loans to teachers from the Educational Resources Collection increased by 158% between 2004 and 2008.

| | Loans |
|-------------|--------------|
| 2004 | 1,545 |
| 2005 | 1,915 |
| 2006 | 2,741 |
| 2007 | 2,766 |
| 2008 | 3,398 |



5.17 Research work for teachers in educational practice increased well.

| | Research Queries |
|-------------|-------------------------|
| 2004 | 34 |
| 2005 | 52 |
| 2006 | 220 |
| 2007 | 247 |
| 2008 | Not available |

5.18 Other work such as visits to individual schools, help with creation or improvement of school library facilities, integration of school segments within public library learning programmes is more difficult to quantify. It occurred on an on-going basis as resources allowed and in response to requests to schools.

6. WEXFORD TEACHERS ASSESS THE SERVICE: 2008 SURVEY RESULTS

Summary

Most teachers use the schools library service; many use it frequently. They are happy with the quality and range of materials on offer. Library materials are used mainly for reading development, and also for project work and classroom research. More materials, particularly electronic, would be useful. Teachers also want more guidance in library services and resources available. The public library, where it is available locally, is recognised as a further useful support for childrens' education.

Introduction

6.1 In summer 2008, Dublin City Council Public Libraries began research on primary school library services and the nature and range of co-operation between primary schools and public libraries in the area of curriculum delivery¹⁰. The research report will be published in 2009. Its workplan includes

- A survey of school library service as provided by local authority public library services
- Assessment of that service by teachers across five representative local authority areas.

6.2 With regard to service evaluation by teachers¹¹, County Wexford was one of the five areas selected for assessment. In September 2008 a questionnaire was sent to a representative number and range of schools to meet the validity requirements of the national project. Sixty eight responses were received from County Wexford.

6.3 The survey researched approaches to Schools Library Service delivery in relation to the following aspects:

- usage
- Choice of materials
- Satisfaction rating for choice of resource formats
- Collection arrangement with your SLS
- What sources are used to find SESE information
- Views on advisory services

6.4 Some preliminary results from Wexford are listed here. It must be emphasized that this work is incomplete and the responses below are indicative.

¹⁰http://www.dublincity.ie/RECREATIONANDCULTURE/LIBRARIES/ABOUT%20US/PROJECTS/Pages/public_libraries_supporting_primary_schools.aspx

¹¹ The five local authority areas are Dublin city : Longford : Wicklow : Kerry : Wexford

SURVEY RESULTS

Schools library service

6.5 98% had contact with the Schools Library Service in the last year. 56% used it at least once a term. 20% used it at least once a month.

6.6 56% collect their stock allocation from the Schools Library Centre. Otherwise it is delivered. 96% were happy with the arrangements in place.

6.7 43% had requested materials for purchase.

6.8 96% rated fiction selection as very good [70%] or good [26%].
91% rated the non-fiction stock as very good [58.5%] or good [32.5%].

6.9 Teachers said they used the library collection in the school for

- Reading Development (42.5%)
- Classroom Project Work (26.7%)
- Finding Information (23.3%)
- Homework Research (5.8%)

6.10 79.2% of Wexford schools expressed a wish for future collections development to include DVDs. 84% sought collections development in the area of computer software. Provision of magazines was recommended strongly in 47.4% cases. Not surprisingly, Reading Schemes were considered very important among most schools (96%).

6.11 Schools expressed high interest in the following services

- Current awareness services [82%]
- On-line access to research materials [85%]
- Guides to school library services materials [73%]
- Workshops for students on information skills [62.2%]
- Advise on setting up / managing library [66%]
- Training courses for teachers [55%]
- Talks to teacher groups [62%]
- Talks to students [77%]

6.12 36% of schools said they had a library room. In those cases the library was run by a teacher with a post of responsibility in 23% of cases and by a volunteer [2%].

Public Library Service support for the Social, Environmental and Scientific Education area of the curriculum

6.13 In line with the overall research topic, further questions referred to the public library service and to support for the Social, Environmental and Scientific Education area of the curriculum

Teachers said their students find information for the Social, Environmental and Scientific Education area of the curriculum from

- Public library [15%]
- Public library website [4%]
- Ask about Ireland website [7%]
- Internet search engines [26%]
- The teacher [20%]
- Other [4%]

6.14 Class visits to the local library were organised by the responding teacher

- One or twice as term [11%]
- Monthly or more frequently [21%]
- Never [41.5%]

The three reasons for non-use were distance, alternative use of mobile library and children using the library on an individual basis.

6.15 In 41.5% of cases, the classes of the responding teacher participated in activities organised by the local public library.

6.16 Responding teachers were teaching the following classes

- 5th / 6th : 34%
- 3rd / 4th : 23.5%
- 1st / 2nd : 12%
- Jun / Sen infants : 3%
- Special needs : 19%

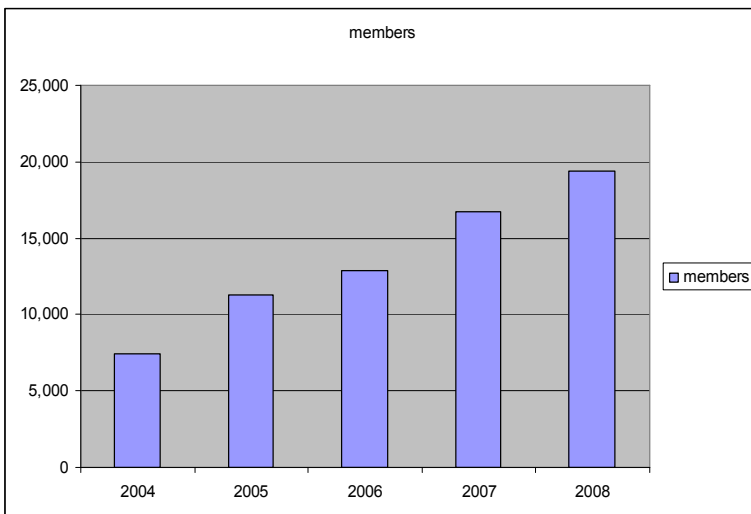
7. PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICES SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S EDUCATION

7.1 "Children should be encouraged to become members of the public library, thus giving themselves access to an even wider range of reading material and a valuable resource for independent reading experience."¹²

School library services for children support the needs of formal education. Beyond that public libraries also assist the full development of the individual personality throughout his or her life.

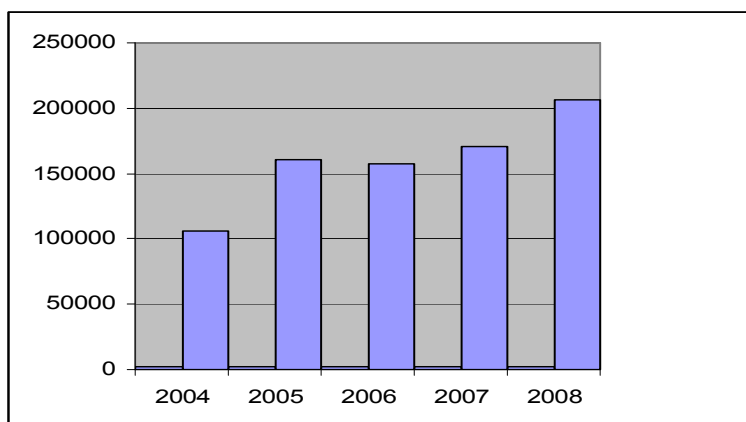
Public Library Usage by children

7.2 Throughout County Wexford, membership of the children's libraries and loans of children's materials have been increasing steadily.



Membership

| | |
|-------------|--------|
| 2004 | 7,423 |
| 2005 | 11,282 |
| 2006 | 12,866 |
| 2007 | 16,706 |
| 2008 | 19,434 |



Loans

| | |
|-------------|---------|
| 2004 | 106,018 |
| 2005 | 160,944 |
| 2006 | 156,883 |
| 2007 | 170,656 |
| 2008 | 206,440 |

¹² Ireland. Department of Education and Science, **Primary school curriculum: English –Teachers guidelines**. Dublin, Stationery Office, 1999. p.53 ISBN: 978070766333 4

Wexford County Council's investment in its public library service is showing positive results.

Public Library Services to Primary Schools

7.3 Public library services to schools include

- “block” loans of classroom collections to support literacy development
- Small project collections on nominated subjects for classroom use
- Class visits to the library to select reading and other materials & thereby build a library habit
- Workshops in the public library for children undertaking project research

The take-up of these services varies from library to library depending upon local priorities and resources available. The improved management structure and opening hours introduced in 2008 is allowing more work in this area.

7.4 Bunclody library is offered as an example of public library liaison with local schools.¹³ This library was opened in June 2007 and is building sustainable links with 12 local schools on a planned basis. Schools in the library catchments area are small: 2/3 has less than 100 students. In 2008, 7 primary schools used the library on 28 occasions. The most local school, which is within walking distance, visited 8 times. Four other schools made 3 – 5 visits each and two schools visited once and twice. Class visits were for

- 6 library tours [how to use library] and project research
- 13 storytelling and reading development [7 from local school]
- 9 visits to meet an author

983 children are members of Bunclody library. They borrowed 10,262 items in 2008.

7.5 Regular mobile library visits to primary school, usually once each fortnight, are in place since 2002. Rural and disadvantaged schools are prioritised. Currently, 41 primary schools get service.

7.6 Local schools were consulted with regard to resources and services needs in advance of the opening of Bunclody library (2007) and Gorey library¹⁴ (2009). In Bunclody local school-children were registered as members before the library opened so they could use it from Day one. The same prioritisation is planned for Gorey library later this year.

¹³ Trish Keenen, **Bunclody library annual report 2008**. Wexford County Council, Internal report, January 2009

¹⁴ **Help us to help you : pre-service consultation survey for Gorey library**. Wexford County Council, 2009 [brochure] no ISBN. Survey is in progress and a report will issue

Group reading support

7.7 The Novels Collection¹⁵ as introduced in 2004. 26 schools contributed to the selection of the original collection of 20 titles. 30 copies of each title were purchased and loaned to schools for group work in the classroom. The Collection was increased to 25 titles in 2005 and to 50 titles in 2008. In the holiday periods, this collection is used for public library community reading initiatives.

Information about Wexford

7.8 In 2004, the Local Studies Department surveyed primary schools regarding their priorities for local history information. The results were fed into the Public Libraries 2nd IT Plan¹⁶ and influenced the prioritisation applied to the digitisation programme. The most relevant full-text articles and photographs, posters etc. were made available to schools via the library catalogue.

7.9 In autumn 2008, following the launch of the County Wexford Oral History Recording Programme^{17, 18}, all primary schools were invited to nominate local people for interview. In this way, very local material was being created to support the needs of the revised curriculum.

Informal learning

7.10 Library programming for children, outside holiday periods usually has a school library component. This is organised by local public library staff and the Children's Library Service. The general aim is to encourage communications skills, reading development and practice in research.

7.11 The major programmes annually that involve class visits to the local library or the provision of outreach library programming into the classroom are

- Children's Book Festival – October
- Stories from the Hearth – November

Storytelling is an important element of the English curriculum. The craft is strong in County Wexford. As well as provision through in public libraries there are eight community storytelling houses and storytelling features frequently in community events.

¹⁵ Ireland. Department of Education and Science, **Primary school curriculum: English –Teachers guidelines**. Dublin, Stationery Office, 1999. p.66 ISBN: 978070766333 4

¹⁶ **Whatever IT is, your local library has it. Wexford Public Libraries Computerisation Plan 2005 – 2008**. Wexford County Council, 2004. [brochure] no ISBN

¹⁷ **County Wexford Oral History Programme: join us for the story of our lifetime**. [brochure] Wexford County Council, 2008. no ISBN

¹⁸ Blast from the past, in **Public library matters**, (3) 2009, p 6 – 7. ISSN: 2009-1745

Stories from the Hearth, a month long season of storytelling provided professional storytellers into primary schools as follows

| | | |
|-------------|-------------|-----|
| | 2004 | 45 |
| | 2005 | 33 |
| | 2006 | N/A |
| 2007 | 24 | |
| 2008 | 24 | |

This is additional to visits to the public library made by local schools.

Programmes that offer some but less extensive cooperation between the local library and primary schools include

- Library Ireland week – March
- Féile na Gaeilge - March
- Bealtaine Festive of Creative Arts for Older People - May [cross generational work]
- Science Week – November

7.12 Public libraries always organise informal learning activities for children during holiday periods and mid-term breaks. In July and August 2008 for example, 99 children's and family events were organised across 4 public libraries in County Wexford.

8. CONCLUSION

Primary school teachers in Wexford used the schools library service well. The full range of school library services, in line with international best practice, were provided to varying extents within limited resources.

Support for teaching practice and professional development had received extra attention recently and use of these services had been growing, year on year.

Reading materials and learning resources were deposited in every primary school in the county every year. Therefore all children, regardless of geography and other circumstances, have had at least minimal access to current quality publications, to improve their literacy and research skills.

As a rural county with a dispersed population, the Schools Library Service afforded the local authority a mechanism to deliver public library services for children who otherwise might be dependant upon parents or other carers to use the local community library. Wexford County Council's commitment in the past reflected its recognition of the equal right of children to public library services and the development stage of its public library network.

However the Schools Library Service requires commitment from education at policy and delivery levels. Wexford County Council cannot run the service alone.

At a national level, the shared services model for Primary Schools Library Services delivery has been in place since the nineteen sixties. It has suffered from a lack of strategic development and adequate funding. In this environment different models for service delivery apply in different local authority areas. However the Department of Education and Science / local authority core is common.

The Primary Schools Library Service in County Wexford has delivered good value for the Department of Education and Science.

The Department's action in transferring the Schools Library Grant to the general management grant applied to each school individually in effect collapses the Primary Schools Library Service here.

Any school that may be in a position to commit funding to library services will do so without access to library expertise, knowledge of the full range of publications and formats available, acquisition mechanisms and economies of scale. Support for teachers continuing professional education and teaching practice locally is undermined also.

The partnership between teachers and public librarians not only supported formal education but also embedded a public library habit and the application of taught skills to a total life-experience. This is weakened.

The loss of the county-wide structure includes a loss of focus and of co-ordinated action.

School libraries are part of the core infrastructure of education in developed countries. Any coherent plan the Department of Education and Science may have for this area will

be welcomed. Meanwhile, educational opportunities for young children in Wexford are weakened by the closure of the Schools Library Service here.

Appendix A
CLASSROOM NOVELS: 50 TITLES AVAILABLE FOR BLOCK
LOAN FROM
PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICE, WEXFORD CO. COUNCIL

(30 copies of each title available)

| Author | Titles |
|------------------------|---|
| A-E | |
| Janet AHLBERG | It was a Dark and Stormy Night |
| Laurence ANHOLT | Daft Jack and the Bean Stack |
| Michael BROAD | The Robot Dinner Lady |
| Eoin COLFER | Artemis Fowl : Artemis Fowl and the Lost Colony Artemis Fowl :The Artic Incident Artemis Fowl Benny and Omar The Legend of Spud Murphy The Wish List |
| Marita CONLON MC KENNA | Fields of Home Safe Harbour Under the Hawthorn Tree Wildflower Girl In Deep Dark Wood |
| Roald DAHL | The BFG Fantastic Mr Fox Georges Marvelous Medicine The Twits The Witches |
| Ellis DILLON | The Five Hundred |
| David DONOHUE | Walter Speazlebud |
| John DOUGHERTY | Bansai O Hara and the Bloodline Prophecy |
| Roddy DOYLE | The Giggler Treatment |

| Author | Titles |
|-------------------|--|
| F-L | |
| Anne FINE | The Angel of Nitshill Road Bill's new frock On The Summerhouse Steps |
| Aubrey FLEGG | Katie's War |
| Eva IBBOTSON | Journey to the River Sea |
| Judith KERR | When Hitler stole Pink Rabbit |
| Dick KING SMITH | George Speaks |
| C.S.LEWIS | The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe |
| M-S | |
| Michelle MAGORIAN | Goodnight Mister Tom |
| Gregory MAGUIRE | Seven Spiders Spinning |
| Michael MORPURGO | The Wreck of the Zanzibar: Kensukes Kingdom Waiting for Anya |
| Edith NESBITT | Five Children and It |
| Jenny NIMMO | Midnight for Charlie Bone |
| Gillian PERDUE | Adam's Starling |
| Siobhan PARKINSON | Four Kids, Three Cats, Two Cows, One Witch (maybe) |
| Louis SACHER | Holes: Someday Angeline |
| Jeremy STRONG | The hundred mile an hour dog |

Author**Titles****T-Z**

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| Marilyn TAYLOR | Faraway Home |
| Mildred D TAYLOR | Roll of Thunder hear my cry |
| Gerard WHELAN | A winter of spies The Guns of Easter |
| E.B. WHITE | Charlotte's Web |
| Jacqueline WILSON | Mark Spark in the Dark |
| Elizabeth WINTHROP | Castle in the Attic |

END

Appendix B

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Appendix C

Notification of service closure to each school principal

To each principal

Primary Schools Library Service Status Report & Future Actions

No funding for the national primary Schools Library Service for 2009 was allowed in the Department of Education and Science [hereafter DES] Budget in autumn 2008.

This Funding Grant, paid annually on a per capita basis, for the delivery of a library service to primary schools, is essential to the maintenance of the service¹⁹.

Without the Grant, County Wexford's Primary School Library Service is suspended from January 2009.

However, Wexford County Council remains committed to supporting the education of our young people. Its **PUBLIC LIBRARY** services will continue to serve primary school students and teachers through its network of community libraries and mobile libraries.

Action 1

From 1st February 2009, the Schools Library Service Centre in Library HQ, Ardavan is closed. Service from the Centre is ended.

Action 2

In the area of **continuing professional development for teachers**, the specialist Educational Resources Collection will continue to be available via

3. the library catalogue which can be accessed 24/7 online. Materials can be ordered from school, home or the local branch library. They can be collected from the local public library.
4. the local public library where staff can assist with access to the specialist collection and with research enquiries in general.

Action 3

Each primary school in the county is now assigned to a local public library. Your school is linked with:

Library name, address, tel no:

2 staff contact names and emails:

(1.) _____

¹⁹ The County Council ran the service on an agency basis. The DES grant in total was spent in books and learning materials. Heretofore due to the inadequacy of the grant, Wexford County Council had picked up all staffing, IT, management, administration and distribution costs.

(2.)

Public library services available to primary schools include

- “block” loans of classroom collections to support literacy development
- Small project collections on nominated subjects for classroom use

- Class visits to the library to select reading and other materials & thereby build a library habit
- Workshops in the public library for children on research related to projects

- Participation in library programming e.g. author visits and storytelling

The nature & extent of service can be developed, within resource limitations, by the local public library staff and school management & staff. Schools must plan their use of the local library services with the library staff in advance. Service development countywide will be mapped by library management. Over time, opportunities for more effective public library service delivery will be considered.

Action 4

The **Classroom Novels Scheme**, made available for class reading and discussion, will continue to be administered from Library HQ until the end of June 2009. This was a public library service: it will be reviewed over summer 2009.

Action 5

The **mobile library service** to selected rural and disadvantaged schools will be retained. This is a public library service

Wexford County Council regrets the loss of the Schools Library Service. Its library staff has worked creatively to sustain and develop the service.

In 2008 Wexford County Council made a significant investment in additional opening hours and in an enhanced management structure for its public libraries. Last September²⁰ primary schools were informed of plans, arising from this investment, to focus literacy development and reading practice work with schools through the public library network. Capacity within the Schools Library Service was being freed to focus more specifically on the research and information skills development areas of the curriculum. The loss of the Schools Library Service at a time of potential development locally is therefore all the more disappointing.

School libraries support formal education and the curriculum. Public libraries support the full development of the human personality throughout his/her life. School libraries and public libraries, working together, are a powerful force, contributing to a secure future for children and sustainable economic prosperity for the country.

In circumstances where the DES has withdrawn its support for School Libraries, the actions outlined above offer the best model to continue to support education for young people within the parameters of public library service.

²⁰ Circular letter to school principals, entitled “**Support from the Public Library Service**” dated 1st September 2008

Should the Department of Education and Science renew the Schools Library Service initiative with local authority involvement, Wexford County Council will be enthusiastic in its support again.

Fionnuala Hanrahan
County Librarian, Wexford County Council
Fionnuala.hanrahan@wexfordcoco.ie
3rd February 2009

Encl: library opening hours in **Public Library Matters No. 2, 2008 ISSN: 2009 1745**