Impact and effectiveness of school libraries

The following quotations, facts and statistics may be useful when pulling together a proposal for funding the school library budget or documenting the impact the school library has on learning.

Use of Library

• A whole-school approach to teaching critical literacy is essential to embedding critical literacy across the curriculum to combat Fake News, and the school library is best placed to assist with this.
National Literacy Trust 2018
https://literacytrust.org.uk/research-services/research-reports/fake-news-and-critical-literacy-final-report/

• School libraries have been found to impact pupils' general academic attainment, reading and writing skills, plus wider learning skills, as well as their scores in history, mathematics and science.
School libraries have also been found to have an impact on pupils' reading enjoyment, reading behaviour and attitudes towards reading. Motivation and attitudes in particular have been connected to school library use.
Several personal and interpersonal outcomes, such as self-esteem and the feeling of success and accomplishment, have also been associated with school library use.

https://literacytrust.org.uk/research-services/research-reports/school-libraries-literature-review-current-provision-and-evidence-impact-2017/

• Research provides compelling evidence that library usage is linked to reading levels among children and young people, and that library usage and reading, in turn, are important factors in literacy skill levels and general educational attainment.
Evidence Review of the Economic Contribution of Libraries, ACE 2014
https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/Evidence_review_economic_contribution_libraries_2014.pdf

• 'In the most effective primary and secondary schools visited libraries and well-trained specialist librarians had a positive effect on teaching and learning'
Ofsted Report HMI 2624, March 2006. Good School Libraries: making a difference to learning
https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/5792/1/Good%20school%20libraries%20making%20a%20difference%20to%20learning%20%28PDF%20format%29.pdf

- "The new peer to peer, project based, intensive, social, seductive and engaging pedagogies of the 21st century put the library pivotally at the heart of learning, with the librarian suddenly the most important person in the school – overtaking the school leader even."
Stephen Heppell, *Building Schools for the future Conference,* Sheffield. November 2006*.*

- "The school library is incredibly important – much more than it was in the past. It's a place where everyone comes to share, to learn, for challenge, for ambition, to inspire and be inspired, and the space around it has become crucial too."
Stephen Heppell, *Building Schools for the future Conference,* Sheffield. November 2006*.*

- "In the most effective primary and secondary schools visited libraries and well-trained specialist librarians had a positive effect on teaching and learning."

"The most effective head teachers had a vision for the library's key role in raising standards of literacy and making a difference to learning. They funded the library well and understood the importance of appointing well qualified staff"
Ofsted Report HMI 2624, March 2006. Good School Libraries: making a difference to learning

- "Lack of funds meant many school libraries were unable to deliver the wide range of up to date (resources) needed to support children's learning across the curriculum."
David Bell, Chief Inspector of Schools, 2005. The Independent, 7 February 2005.

- "Under funded poorly stocked and unattractive libraries do not support pupils' study and lack potential to encourage them to read more for pleasure."
David Bell, Chief Inspector of Schools, 2005. The Independent, 7 February 2005.

- "The school library is at the heart of a school which itself has learning at its core and good libraries can empower the learner. The resources in our library can allow imaginations to roam free, introduce us to knowledge and enjoyment."

"By supporting and giving access to a broad range of information sources the school library can motivate pupils and stimulate learning by providing the means to freely pursue subjects which fully engage them"
Charles Clarke, Secretary of State for education and skills, Good School Libraries; making a difference, 2003,

- "There was a body of research supporting the view that school libraries have a positive impact on academic achievement, particularly at the primary and secondary levels."
Williams, Wavell, Coles. The impact of school library services on achievement and learning. DfES 2001.

Reading

- "...research presents overwhelming evidence that literacy has a significant relationship with a person's happiness and success."   NLT
https://literacytrust.org.uk/research-services/research-reports/school-libraries-why-children-and-young-people-use-them-or-not-their-literacy-engagement-and-mental-wellbeing/   Dec 2018

- Young people who read fiction have significantly stronger reading skills than their peers who do not.
Institute of Education, October 2018
https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ioe/news/2018/oct/fact-or-fiction-novels-come-top-reading-skills

- Children who are the most engaged with literacy are three times more likely to have higher levels of mental wellbeing than children who are the least engaged
*https://literacytrust.org.uk/research-services/research-reports/mental-wellbeing-reading-and-writing/
Sept 2018*

- Teenagers who read in their spare time know 26% more words than those who never read
http://www.ucl.ac.uk/ioe/news-events/news-pub/nov-2017/reading-teenage-vocabulary

- "According to one source, if you read for twenty minutes a day you'll encounter an estimated 1,800,000 words over the course of a year whereas reading for only one minute a day will result in only 8,000 words."
David Didau, Nov 2014
http://www.learningspy.co.uk/literacy/closing-language-gap-building-vocabulary/

- Social reading environments were seen to be key to creating richly reciprocal reading communities in the Teachers as Readers research. Physically engaging, the most successful environments tempted children into texts and offered spaces to relax, browse and read for pleasure
Research Rich Pedagogies, The Open University 2014
https://researchrichpedagogies.org/research/theme/social-reading-environments

- Evidence suggests that there is a positive relationship between reading frequency, reading enjoyment and attainment
  Clark 2011; Clark and Douglas 2011

- Regularly reading stories or novels outside of school is associated with higher scores in reading assessments
  PIRLS, 2006; PISA, 2009

- There is a positive link between positive attitudes towards reading and scoring well on reading assessments
  Twist et al, 2007

- "A deep engagement with storytelling and great literature link directly to emotional development in primary children."
  The Rose Review, 2008 Independent Review of the Primary School Curriculum.

- "Leisure reading makes students more articulate, develops higher order reasoning, and promotes critical thinking."
  National Endowment for the Arts in To read or not to read, 2007

- Children in England tend to report reading for pleasure less frequently than their peers in many other countries. There is a strong association between the amount of reading for pleasure children reported and their reading achievement."
  Progress in International Reading and Literacy Study (PIRLS); National Foundation for Educational Research, 2006, Twist et al. National Report for England.

- There is a growing body of evidence which illustrates the importance of reading for pleasure for both educational purposes as well as personal development
  Clark and Rumbold, 2006

- "Reading for pleasure is more important for children's educational success than their family's socio-economic status."
  Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Reading for Change, Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2002
  https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/284286/reading_for_pleasure.pdf

- Clark, C., and Rumbold, K. (2006). Reading for Pleasure a research overview. The National Literacy Trust identify several main areas of the benefits to reading for pleasure:
  - o Reading attainment and writing ability;
  - o Text comprehension and grammar;
  - o Breadth of vocabulary;
  - o Positive reading attitudes;
  - o Greater self-confidence as a reader;
  - o Pleasure in reading in later life;
  - o General knowledge;
  - o A better understanding of other cultures;
  - o Community participation;
  - o A greater insight into human nature and decision-making

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Impact of School Libraries – Notes from Dr Dorothy Williams' talk at Weavers of Dreams: Creativity and Imagination SLA Weekend Course, 22-24th June 2018

Research by Williams, Wavell & Morrison 2013, from Robert Gordon University found that school libraries contributed in these main areas:

➤ Higher test or exam scores equating to academic attainment: this includes academic attainment in the form of higher standardised test scores in reading, language arts, history and maths, and better grades in curriculum assignments or exams

➤ Successful curriculum or learning outcomes, including information literacy: this includes higher quality project work, the development and practice of information literacy, increased knowledge and reading development

➤ Positive attitudes towards learning: including increased motivation, improved attitude towards learning tasks, self-esteem, and wider reading for pleasure.

https://scottishlibraries.org/media/1211/impact-of-school-libraries-on-learning-2013.pdf

Attainment data:

Lance's statistical studies - over 25+ years: 34 studies, over 26 US states, a Canadian province, Australia… 100,000+ schools. Impact of school library on average scores in standardised tests: elementary, middle and senior school. Higher achievement with strong school libraries.

Strong school library programs lead to higher test scores. Typically 5-15% improvement in average attainment levels in reading, writing, English language arts (incl reading, writing, language, and research to build knowledge)

Reading and Literacy:
Clark 2010 UK survey of 17,000+ pupils: Strong correlation between reading, attainment and school library use.

British 1970 cohort study (Sullivan & Brown, 2013): Reading ability is the best indicator of academic success; Children who read for pleasure made more progress in maths, vocabulary and spelling between the ages of 10 and 16 than those who rarely read.

Attainment Gap:
South Carolina 2014: Demographics such as gender, ethnicity, disability and poverty status… did not explain away relationships between libraries and student performance

Pennsylvania 2011: Students who are economically disadvantaged, black, Hispanic, and have IEPs (… students with disabilities) benefit proportionally more than students generally…

Washington State, 2015: One key factor distinguishing high-performing high-poverty schools from low-performing high-poverty schools is a quality library program.
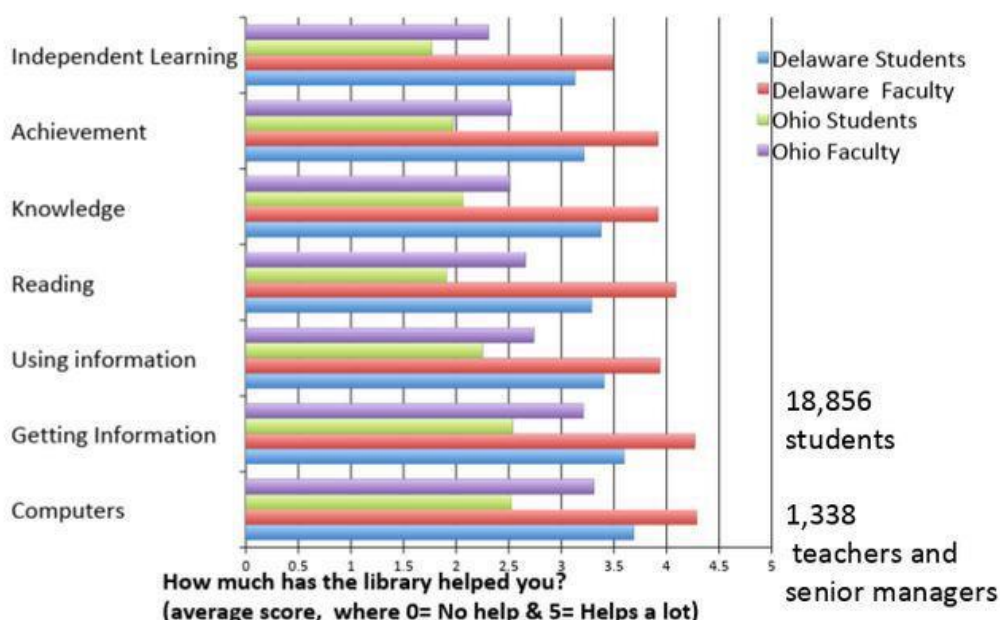
Are libraries felt to help?
The perceptions of learners and teachers - Todd (USA, 2004-5), Hay (Australia, 2005-6)
➤ 7 key indicators: finding information, using information, general reading interests, using computers in home or school, developing knowledge, independent learning, achievement
➤ Scaled answers to "help" statements. e.g. The school library has helped me put ideas in my own words; enjoy reading more; be more careful about information I find on the internet; get the first facts about my topics; figure out my own opinions on things; feel more confident about doing my school work

The perceptions of learners and teachers
Todd & Heinstrom, 2006; Todd & Kuhlthau, 2005

How much has the library helped you?
(average score, where 0= No help & 5= Helps a lot)

18,856 students

1,338 teachers and senior managers

Do all school libraries do this?
Washington State, 2015: "it is the quality of the library facility and related instructional services rather than its presence or absence that makes a difference for student achievement"

Consistently
➤ The most substantial and consistent finding is a Positive relationship between full-time, qualified school librarians and scores in standardised tests of reading, writing, Eng language arts
➤ Higher and stable library staffing linked to higher performance in a range of subjects (Kansas, 2012)
➤ "The mere presence of a librarian is associated with better student outcomes, but what librarians do also has positive effects." Lance, 2018

Professional staff are:
Instructing students, both with classroom teachers and independently;
Planning collaboratively;
Providing professional development to teachers;
Meeting regularly with the HT/principal;
Serving on school committees;
Facilitating the use of technology by students and teachers;
Providing reading programs.

Studies:

➢ Teravainen, A & Clark, C. School Libraries : A literature review of current provision and evidence of impact. National Literacy Trust, 2017
https://literacytrust.org.uk/research-services/research-reports/school-libraries-literature-review-current-provision-and-evidence-impact-2017/

➢ The Lance studies - https://www.lrs.org/data-tools/school-libraries/impact-studies/

➢ The Todd studies - https://cissl.rutgers.edu/research/impact-studies/

➢ Overview of USA studies - https://antiochlis.libguides.com/schlibcert/research

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