School Library Recruitment Pack

This document has been created by the
School Library Association to assist HR managers,
Headteachers and teachers who line manage library staff
to maximise the impact of the library and recruit effectively.

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SLA
School Library Association

Recruiting a Library Assistant
Interviewing a School Library Assistant

The post of school library assistant is one that requires specific skills and abilities. It is a position of considerably lower responsibility than that of a Librarian (see the 'Which role do you need?' document) but they will be an integral part of the school library, implementing the vision, and instilling the correct atmosphere.

● The SLA recommends that the school library assistant interview consists of:

1. A tour of the school, and the school library – they will be a part of the school, and a tour instils this from the beginning. This should take place before the interview.

2. A pupil panel (possibly made up of library regulars or pupil library helpers) - how the candidate interacts with pupils is of the highest importance – to effectively manage and make recommendations with pupils they need to be able to build relationships in a professional way, while getting to know the individuals likes and dislikes.

3. An interview with the line manager of the library and a member of senior leadership. This should determine whether the candidate is capable of working as a team, and the level of their book knowledge.

● Ensure that the job description and salary abide by the standards.

● The library assistant is usually line managed by the librarian.

● Interview questions – there are some sample questions within this pack, but the questions you ask should cover at least the following bases:
  ● Behaviour management skills
  ● Knowledge of modern children's literature.

The rest should reflect the context of the school library – how does this role help the school library meet its aims? What are you expecting of the library assistant – ie will there be time when they are managing the library by themselves?

● The library assistant will be as much the face of the library as the librarian, and it is important the candidate understands what the library is trying to accomplish, and has the skills or abilities to contribute. Ie (contribute to a silent study library; help deliver lessons; help with homework).

Suggested Interview Questions for School Library Assistant

The SLA recommends that each candidate is given a tour of the school and library first.
Each candidate should be asked to do an activity with a group of pupils; this may be a pupil panel.

1. The Library is often a busy place with many demands on your attention at once. How would you handle the following during a busy lunchtime: The printer stops working; queue of pupils wanting to borrow books; a teacher comes in and needs something for the next lesson; a group isn't working or reading, but are chatting; a pupil needs help with their homework.

2. What are your strengths?

3. Why do you want to work in a school library? (peace and quiet is not the right answer!)

4. A group of Year 10 boys are sat in the library, and while they are working, they are getting increasingly noisy and animated. What would you do in that situation? (De-escalation)

5. How would you rate your ability to work as part of a team?

6. The role requires you to use a computer and Library Management System. Can you give us an example of when you have effectively used your computer skills?

7. A pupil comes to the desk and asks to read a book which has a content warning sticker on it – what would you do?

8. One of your main jobs will be (re-shelving/library displays/ helping children) – can you give us an example of a time that demonstrates your capability in this area?

9. Why do you want to work at [name of school]?

10. Which bit of the role are you most interested in developing?

11. What other skills could you bring to the role?

Recruiting a School Librarian/Library Manager
Interviewing for a School Librarian/Learning Resource Manager

The post of school librarian is one that requires specific skills and abilities. In recruiting a school librarian you want someone who is going to ignite a passion for learning and reading in young people, and help the school achieve its aims.

- The SLA recommends that the school librarian interviews consist of:
  1. A tour of the school, and the school library
  2. A task involving students – managing a break time/delivering a session on reading or information literacy/managing a book group
  3. A pupil panel (possibly made up of library regulars or pupil library helpers)
  4. An interview with the line manager of the library and a member of senior leadership. This could include a short presentation on a topic such as 'What would your priorities be in starting this role?' or 'You were given the school development plan – how would you ensure the library helps the school meet its aims?'

- The SLA recommends that each interviewee is given a tour of the school and library before the interview. Each candidate should be asked to do an activity with a group of pupils, and lead a lesson as when managing a space in free time for a large number of pupils behaviour management skills and how they engage with the pupils is important. You may also ask them to do a presentation about their priorities in starting at the school, or something specific to do with your specific context.

- Ensure that the job description and salary abide by the standards.

- Ensure that you know who is best placed to line manage the librarian – if it's not the senior leader with responsibility for the curriculum, who is it and why? Librarians should not be managed by another Head of Department without a very good reason – libraries span all departments, year groups and cohorts – this level of oversight can only really be effectively managed by a senior leader.

- **Interview questions** – there are some sample questions within this pack, but the questions you ask should cover at least the following bases:
  - Behaviour management skills
  - Knowledge of modern children's literature
  - Information Literacy knowledge
  - Recent CPD/how they stay up to date

The rest should reflect the context of the school – what are your aims and priorities? Many school librarians also focus on areas such as: research; transition both primary to secondary and Year 11 to Sixth form/college; whole school literacy; HPQ/EPQ or IB provision.

- The librarian needs to be someone who will be able to present assemblies, talk to staff and students, and engage pupils in the library.

Suggested Interview Questions for School Librarian/Learning Resource Manager

1. Question relating to the presentation/task/tour.

2. The Library is often a busy place with many demands on your attention at once. How would you handle the following during a busy lunchtime: The printer stops working; queue of pupils wanting to borrow books; a teacher comes in and needs something for the next lesson; a group isn't working or reading, but are chatting; a pupil needs help with their homework.

3. What are your strengths?

4. Can you tell us about something that you have learned in recent CPD or something that has developed your practice?

5. How would you go about delivering information literacy/combatting fake news/delivering critical literacy? (Importance of content being embedded in lessons; assemblies; mentioning specific programmes)

6. A group of Year 10 boys are sat in the library, and while they are working, they are getting increasingly noisy and animated. What would you do in that situation? (De-escalation)

7. What would your priorities be in this role? (if not addressed in presentation)

8. Describe your management style.

9. The role requires knowledge of and delivering training on a variety of technological products and software. How do you feel about this? (Confident; experience of previous technology)

10. A pupil comes to the desk and asks to read a book which has a content warning sticker on it – what would you do? (Follow policy set out in Library policy, utilise knowledge of the book and student to make judgement; make sure culture is that they are able to return books they don't like)

11. How do you stay up to date with new books, and children's publishing? (SLA membership/reviews/Twitter/children's publishers etc)

12. You have a Library Assistant – how would you manage this member of staff?/You do not have a Library Assistant – how would you manage the range of duties you will be responsible for?

13. Could you give us an example of a time when you've led training to staff or a group of students.

14. Keeping the library fresh and engaging is vital – how would you do this? (involve pupils)

15. Why do you want to work at [name of school]?

16. You will need to present ideas, plans and generally contribute at Middle Leaders Meetings – how do you feel about this?

17. Are you a member of any professional organisation, and which memberships would you prioritise for the library? (Professional organisations: CILIP or SLA; library memberships: National Literacy Trust for example)

18. Which bit of your current role are you most interested in developing here?

19. Imagine there's no stock and you're starting from scratch. Which 3 books would you buy first? (What's the logic behind their answers? Accessible books like graphic novels/new books/ do the books they've suggested meet the needs of your cohort?

20. How would you handle a complaint from a parent or carer about a book their child has borrowed? (Reference the library policy; how books are bought; whether it was actually borrowed through the school system or not; consult with line manager etc.)

Potential questions from Librarian/Library Manager candidates

1. What's the budget for the school library?

2. What are the provisions for support when the library gets busy?

3. This is a term time +_____ contract – what was the reasoning behind this?

4. Do library lessons currently run? If so, for which year groups and how frequently?

5. How does the timetable work?

6. What are the opportunities/expectations in getting involved in the wider school life?

7. Do you currently have pupil library helpers?

8. What are your plans for combatting fake news/delivering information literacy?

9. What are the current plans for development of technology/e-resources?

10. What is the current cohort? (% Pupil premium/EAL/etc)

11. What cover would be provided to allow me to attend Middle Leaders meetings?

12. What's the school policy on provision of CPD? Would cover be provided or would the library be closed?

13. Which are the departments that have worked most successfully with the library in the past?

14. My line manager will be [SMT/Head] – what's the reasoning behind this?

15. The library is open 8am-4pm and during breaks/lunch. What's the provision for my lunch break?

16. Am I expected to attend Parents' Evenings/Open Evenings?

Librarians – Skills and Expertise needed

Librarians need a range of specialist and generic skills to successfully manage a library.

The skills below are a guide which will differ depending on the context and responsibilities of the librarian, but differ significantly from any administrator role.

Skills Base
PROFESSIONAL EXPERTISE

Resource Management & Development

Cataloguing and classification

Knowledge of current children's and young adult fiction

Development of policies for stock selection, withdrawal and disposal

Financial management

Resources on careers and HE

Research Skills

Knowledge of research methods

Ability to assess the research needs of a student or teacher

Copyright, Plagiarism and referencing

Internal and external resource knowledge

Literacies & Learning

Information literacy

Digital literacy

Encouraging reading for pleasure

Teaching & learning skills

Educational Context

Curriculum knowledge

Educational systems

Behaviour management

Awareness of SEND issues

Awareness of safeguarding

School Specific

Awareness of PP pupils, including promoting the library as a safe place to study

Knowledge of individual pupils' reading ability

Skills Base
GENERIC SKILLS

Advocacy

Building relationships within the organisational context

Demonstrating value

Working with decision makers

Strategic thinking

Planning & Management

Planning in line with organisational aims and ethos

Policy development

Financial management

People management

IT & Communication

ICT skills

System development

Social media knowledge

Communication skills

Networking skills

Many school library staff enter the profession from other jobs or careers. This grid explains the skills they may already have or need.

Previous Experience	Knowledge/Skills Acquired	Knowledge/Skills Needed	Potential Training	Potential SLA Training/Publications
Library (educational) FE Libraries Graduate Traineeships	How to learn Behaviour management Educational systems Cataloguing & Classification Ethics Information Literacy Research skills	Book Knowledge Budgeting	PG Cert Children's Literature CILIP Certification CILIP Chartership	Riveting Reads series Train to Gain Academic Honesty
Library (non-educational) Public libraries Graduate Traineeships	Cataloguing & Classification Ethics Customer service Research skills	Behaviour management Educational systems Information Literacy Book Knowledge	PG Cert Children's Literature CILIP Certification CILIP Chartership	Behaviour management Progress 8 IL Book Guides Train to Gain
School TA Teachers Other support staff	Behaviour management Educational systems	Cataloguing & Classification Ethics Information Literacy Book Knowledge Budgeting Research skills	Masters CILIP Certification CILIP Chartership	Cataloguing Information Literacy Book Guides Train to Gain Help I'm in Charge of the Library Learning about Libraries
Book Industry Booksellers Publishing	Book Knowledge	How to learn Behaviour management Educational systems Cataloguing & Classification Ethics Information Literacy Budgeting Research skills	Masters CILIP Certification CILIP Chartership	Behaviour management Progress 8 Information Literacy Train to Gain
Other Project Manager	Organisation Multitasking Budgeting	How to learn Behaviour management Educational systems Cataloguing & Classification Ethics Information Literacy Book knowledge Research skills	Masters CILIP Certification CILIP Chartership PG Cert Children's Literature	Behaviour management Progress 8 Information Literacy Book Guides Train to Gain
Education Masters	Behaviour management Educational systems How to learn	Cataloguing & Classification Ethics Information Literacy Research skills Budgeting	CILIP Certification CILIP Chartership	Behaviour management Progress 8 Information Literacy Book Guides Train to Gain

School Library Staff Progression Framework

- This is a guide as there is currently no statutory requirement for a school to have a library or librarian, and therefore there is no one route for career progression and each local authority, school or Academy Trust will differ.

- There are ample opportunities for the school librarian to take on additional roles, such as EPQ Co-ordinator, or literacy co-ordinator, but any such roles should be offered with additional pay and with an understanding of the impact this will have on the running of the library, and whether additional support is needed.

- School librarians should have the opportunity to undergo CPD in the same way as any teaching staff in a school or academy. This could either be a formal qualification, professional accreditation, or ongoing CPD provided by others.

- There are a range of roles for MATs or groups of schools which allow for the consolidation of procurement, collection management and engagement, and consolidation of digital resources. The larger the budget the larger the buying power, so this collaboration may result in savings. If you would like further guidance on an arrangement that would work for your group of schools or MAT, please get in touch.

Job Title	Main Job Roles	Qualification Framework	Suitable for...	Equivalence
Library Auxiliary	Keeping the library and resources tidy, photocopying, helping to maintain discipline, cleaning & tidying.	Literacy & Numeracy Key Skills Level 1	Support in any school	Lunchtime Supervisor
Library Assistant	Issuing / returning / renewing resources. Preparing resources (labelling / covering etc.). Keeping resources organised. Helping students and staff locate resources. Creating & maintaining displays.	Apprenticeship or NVQ 2 Library & Information Skills or Administration Literacy / Numeracy Key Skills Level 2	Support in Secondary Schools or High Performing Primary / Middle Schools	Admin Assistant
Senior Library Assistant	Issuing / returning / renewing resources. Preparing resources (labelling / covering etc.). Keeping resources organised Helping students and staff to locate resources. Creating & maintaining displays. Supervision of library assistant or auxiliary. Data entry into catalogue. Preparation of worksheets and other materials for learning (directed by Librarian or Teacher). Supporting individual students using the library	Apprenticeship or NVQ 2 Library & Information Skills + significant experience 5+ GCSE A*-C (or equivalent) including English & Maths. Working towards Certification.	Support in Secondary Schools or High Performing Primary / Middle Schools or across multiple schools	Teaching Assistant; Lead IT Technician

Job Title	Main Job Roles	Qualification Framework	Suitable for...	Equivalence
Library Manager/ Librarian **Unqualified/ Inexperienced** **(recommended minimum level for day to day management of a school library)**	• Management of the library space, resources and staff • Selecting and purchasing resources as requested • Cataloguing and classification of resources • Maintaining discipline • Assisting students and staff to locate relevant resources to support teaching & learning • Working with teaching staff to deliver information literacy and research skills • Promoting and encouraging reading for pleasure • Writing and updating library policies and improvement plans in line with whole school targets	• GCSE English A*-B & Maths A*-C (or equivalent) • Level 3 Academic Education equivalent to 2 A Levels • NVQ Level 3 Information & Library Services • Working towards Certification or Chartership through CILIP • Experience of working in a school library in an assistant or technical role • Experience of working in a school as a TA or Teacher	Large or High Performing Primary School Middle School Small Secondary School	Head of Department; IT Manager
Library Manager/ Librarian **Qualified/ Experienced**	• Selecting and purchasing resources to support teaching & learning across the curriculum • Budgetary responsibility for the library • Working in partnership with teaching staff to develop Schemes of Work, resources, lessons and activities to enhance literacy & research skills • Working in partnership with teaching staff to support topic work • Delivering sessions on information literacy to students and staff • Writing and updating library policies and improvement plans in line with whole school targets	• Information & Library Studies Degree **OR** • Other Level 4 qualification + Postgraduate Diploma **OR** • Masters in Information & Library Studies **OR** • CILIP Chartership • 5 years or more of working in charge of a school library	Secondary School High Performing Middle School Primary School Consortium	Head of larger Department; IT Manager
Teaching Librarian/ Library Manager	As above with solo teaching responsibility	As above with training in teaching or teaching/education qualification	Secondary School. High Performing Middle School. Primary School Consortium	Head of Department; IT Manager

Job Title	Main Job Roles	Qualification Framework	Suitable for...	Equivalence
Digital Librarian	Providing specialist advice to senior management on ICT development policy. Responsibility for development and/or maintenance of whole school Website, Learning Platform or Software Evaluation & Selection. Providing training for teaching staff in ICT related areas, e.g. website evaluation, computer skills, software use. Creating & maintaining links between local consortia schools, external agencies or community groups .	Qualification in ICT related area or significant relevant experience. CILIP Chartership / Fellowship Experience of working closely with teaching staff	Large or High Performing Secondary School Learning Area Consortium Federation of Schools	Head of Department with additional responsibility; leading practice across the Trust
Curriculum Librarian	Providing specialist advice to senior management on literacy, research skills policies. Developing schemes of work for use across departments or year groups relating to literacy, research or thinking skills. Advising and training teaching staff in related areas. Creating & maintaining links between local consortia schools, external agencies or community groups .	CILIP Chartership / Fellowship Experience of working closely with teaching staff Ongoing CPD in Education and teaching	Large or High Performing Secondary School Learning Area Consortium Federation of Schools	Head of Department with additional responsibility; leading practice across the Trust
Development Librarian	Responsibility for group/MAT wide development of Literacy, Research Skills or Cross-Curricular ICT. Working in partnership with senior management on the development of related school wide policies. Providing systematic training for teaching staff in the related area. Creating & maintaining links between local consortia schools, external agencies or community groups .	CILIP Chartership / Fellowship Experience of working closely with teaching staff Ongoing CPD in Education and teaching	High Performing Secondary School Learning Area Consortium Federation of Schools	Head of Department with additional responsibility; leading practice across the Trust
Research Librarian	Responsibility for group/MAT wide development of Research. Working in partnership with Trust management on the development of related Trust wide research policies. Providing systematic training for teaching staff on research and inquiry, including disseminating research and supporting those who are undertaking research. Creating & maintaining links between local consortia schools, external agencies or community groups .	CILIP Chartership / Fellowship Experience of working closely with teaching staff Ongoing CPD in Education and teaching research	High Performing Secondary School Learning Area Consortium Federation of Schools	Head of Department with additional responsibility; leading practice across the Trust

School Library Staff Progression Framework

Digital Librarian   Development Librarian   Curriculum Librarian   Research Librarian

Librarian/Library Manager
with professional level of expertise, gained through experience and/or training

Librarian/ Library Manager
Untrained and/or inexperienced

Senior Library Assistant

Library Assistant

Library Auxiliary

Staffing Structure Case Studies

High Performing Secondary School with 1500 students and a split site library	Secondary School with 900 Students	Middle School with 450 students	Primary School Consortium (4 Primary Schools, with rolls from 70–250)
Leading the Library	**Leading the Library**	**Leading the Library**	**Leading the Libraries**
Development Librarian responsible for thinking skills development with a Teaching Studies Degree, a Masters in Information & Library Studies and a CILIP Chartership	Curriculum Librarian working on literacy development with a degree in English, a Postgraduate Diploma in Information & Library Studies and a CILIP Chartership	Library Manager with NVQ 3 in Information and Library Skills and 3 A Levels	Librarian/Library Manager (shared between the 4 schools) with a degree in Information & Library Studies (42 weeks per year)
Assisting	**Assisting**	**Assisting**	**Assisting**
Library Manager with a degree and NVQ 3 in Information & Library Skills Library Assistant with Apprenticeship Part time Library auxiliary employed for 10 hours per week	Senior Library Assistant with NVQ2 Library Assistant's Certificate and 15 years' experience Part time Library assistant who is undertaking training (15 hours per week – term time only)	Part Time Library Auxiliary (10 hours per week – term time only) with Key Skills level 2 in Literacy & Level 1 in Numeracy)	Each of the 3 smaller schools employs a lunchtime supervisor as a library auxiliary for 3–5 hours a week term time only The largest school employs an admin assistant, who spends around 12 hours a week in the library and is undertaking training

Salary Recommendations for School Library Staff

Please note: the recommendations are based on a standard 35 hour week and a full time contract. Term time only contracts will be pro-rata.

If library staff are not employed for 52 weeks per year, the SLA recommendation is that two to three weeks paid employment during school holidays is included to allow for stock-checks, planning and report writing, cataloguing, refreshing the space etc.

a) Senior Librarian/Head Librarian

with Head of Department status and managing library staff - recommendation: SCP 43 - 49+. This equates to a salary between £39,002 - £58,096.

b) Professionally qualified Librarian

with first degree or Masters degree in Library and Information Science - recommendation: SCP 29 - 44. This equates to a salary between £26,470 - £39,961.

Minimum of SCP 31 if chartered MCLIP or £ 28,221.

If teaching duties added to above, e.g. information skills programme - recommendation: SCP 37 - 49. This equates to a salary between £33,136- £44,697.

c) Library Manager (unqualified) or recently qualified librarians

with day to day responsibility, including managing budget, development planning etc. - recommendation: SCP 25 - 30. This equates to a salary between £23,111 - £27,358.

d) Senior Library Assistant

working with professional librarian - no strategic role but to include areas of responsibility - recommendation: SCP 18 - 22. This equates to a salary between £18,870 - £21,074.

e) Library Assistant

working with professional librarian - no strategic role - recommendation: SCP 15 - 18. This equates to a salary between £17,972 - £18,870.

Minimum of SCP17 (£18,672) if City and Guilds or NVQ level 3 library assistants' qualification held.

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SLA

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About the SLA

We believe that every pupil is entitled to effective school library provision. The SLA is committed to supporting everyone involved with school libraries, promoting high quality reading and learning opportunities for all.

As part of this we provide a range of support:

• A quarterly journal full of best practice for primary and secondary, ideas for activities, tips; book and digital reviews across all ages from 0-8 through to 16-19 enabling educationalists to stay up to date with the latest in children's publishing and maximise their budget

• Access to an advice line; you can email or call and ask about any issues/best practice/guidance and get realistic, personalised advice

• Training – online and day or weekend courses, run to an extremely high standard but maintaining affordability

• Publications – lively and practical they are easily readable whether you're new or experienced, on a range of topics and across all school stages

• A mentoring service for anyone with responsibility for running the library

• Exclusive member only resources and guidance on the website to access as and when you need them, from promoting reading for pleasure, combatting fake news, library design, recruitment and much more

• Run three Awards: the Information Book Award; the School Librarian of the Year and the Inspiration Award (for Library design). We also support the Pupil Library Assistant Award

• We support regional branches to organise their own training days and run network events, bringing training to you, and ensuring a local support network. We also support networks for non-members

• Members also benefit from competitions, give-aways and discounts from publishers, and exclusive discount on other products including DLT magazines, Peters and The Literary Gift Company; as well as discounts off all SLA publications and training

• We also aim to have a significant voice and regional and national level, through advocacy and engagement.