

Information Paper

Provision of Libraries in Primary Schools

Purpose

This paper informs Members how library service is provided in public sector (i.e. government and aided) primary schools.

Library

2. To encourage the habit of reading and to pave the way for effective use of school libraries in secondary schools, a class library scheme for public sector primary schools has been in place since 1983. Under the scheme, every classroom of a school is furnished with a bookcase to accommodate a stock of about 400 books. All public sector primary schools have already been provided with class libraries under the scheme.

3. To further enhance the library service in primary schools, Government decided in 1993 that as part of the standard facilities, each public sector primary school should be equipped with a central library. The standard area of each primary school's central library is approximately 112m² or equivalent to two standard classrooms in size, which can accommodate a library stock of about 6,000 volumes. All

primary schools adopting the standard design and completed in 1996 or after are furnished with central libraries. Primary schools completed before 1996 will be equipped with the facility through the School Improvement Programme (SIP). So far, 192 public sector primary schools are installed with central libraries (including 156 which are provided with such facility through SIP). About 28 more existing schools will be provided with central libraries by the 2001/02 school year.

Library Grant

4. For central libraries, an one-off grant ranging from \$60,000 to \$150,000 are given to schools provided with central libraries through SIP to procure the initial library stock. The exact amount of the grant is determined with reference to the number of classrooms in a school. For new schools completed in 1996 or after, the library stock of central libraries is included in the furniture and equipment list. In accordance with established policy, school sponsors of new schools are responsible for the cost of furniture and equipment, including the library stock.

5. Schools receive a library subsidy, which is subsumed under the School and Class Grant, for purchasing the initial library stock for class libraries and for replacing outdated and tattered books and adding new titles to class libraries and central libraries (if available). The subsidy rate for the 1999/2000 school year is \$30 per pupil per annum.

Teacher-librarians

6. We started in the 1998/99 school year the provision of one additional Certified Master/Mistress (CM) post to each whole-day primary school with 3 classes or more and each bi-sessional primary school with 12 classes or more ^(Note 1), to act as teacher-librarian for strengthening library service and to support the Chinese and English Extensive Reading Schemes ^(Note 2). A total of about 630 CM posts will be created in four years from the 1998/99 school year to 2001/02 school year. So far, 347 such posts have been created.

7. The Education Department (ED) runs in-service training programmes for teacher-librarians regularly. To equip newly appointed teacher-librarians in primary schools with skills in managing library resources and in promoting reading including the Chinese and English Extensive Reading Schemes, a one-year tailor-made training course (one full-day training per week) is made available to them.

Improvement of Library Service through Information Technology

8. We fully recognise the need to capitalize on information technology (IT) to improve the library service. To this end, the

^(Note 1) For bi-sessional primary schools housed in the same premises, if their respective number of classes is less than 12 but their number of classes adding together is 12 or more, one teacher-librarian will be provided for sharing by the two schools.

^(Note 2) The Chinese and English Extensive Reading Schemes aim at maximising pupils' exposure to Chinese and English languages, cultivating their good reading habit and enhancing their reading ability through the incorporation of extensive reading activities into the curriculum.

following measures have been implemented -

- (a) under the wider IT in education initiatives, an average of 40 computers will be provided to each primary school. ED's advice to schools is that four computers should be installed in their central libraries. These computers will be linked up with those in staff rooms and computer-assisted learning rooms in the same school by a local area network. Schools can also connect these computers to the Internet;
- (b) libraries of primary schools completed in 1999 or after will each be equipped with a computerized circulation and cataloging system. Schools completed before 1999 will, on application, be provided with the system;
- (c) schools can make use of the one-off library book grant and the library subsidy for purchase of educational software; and
- (d) relevant IT elements have been incorporated in tailor-made training courses for newly appointed teacher-librarians (paragraph 7). Serving teacher-librarians can also enroll in the training courses to be provided under the wider IT in education initiatives.

Education Department

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