BUILDING A SCHOOL LIBRARY IN 2025

Your Step By Step Guide, 2025

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PLANNING

SETTING UP THE SPACE

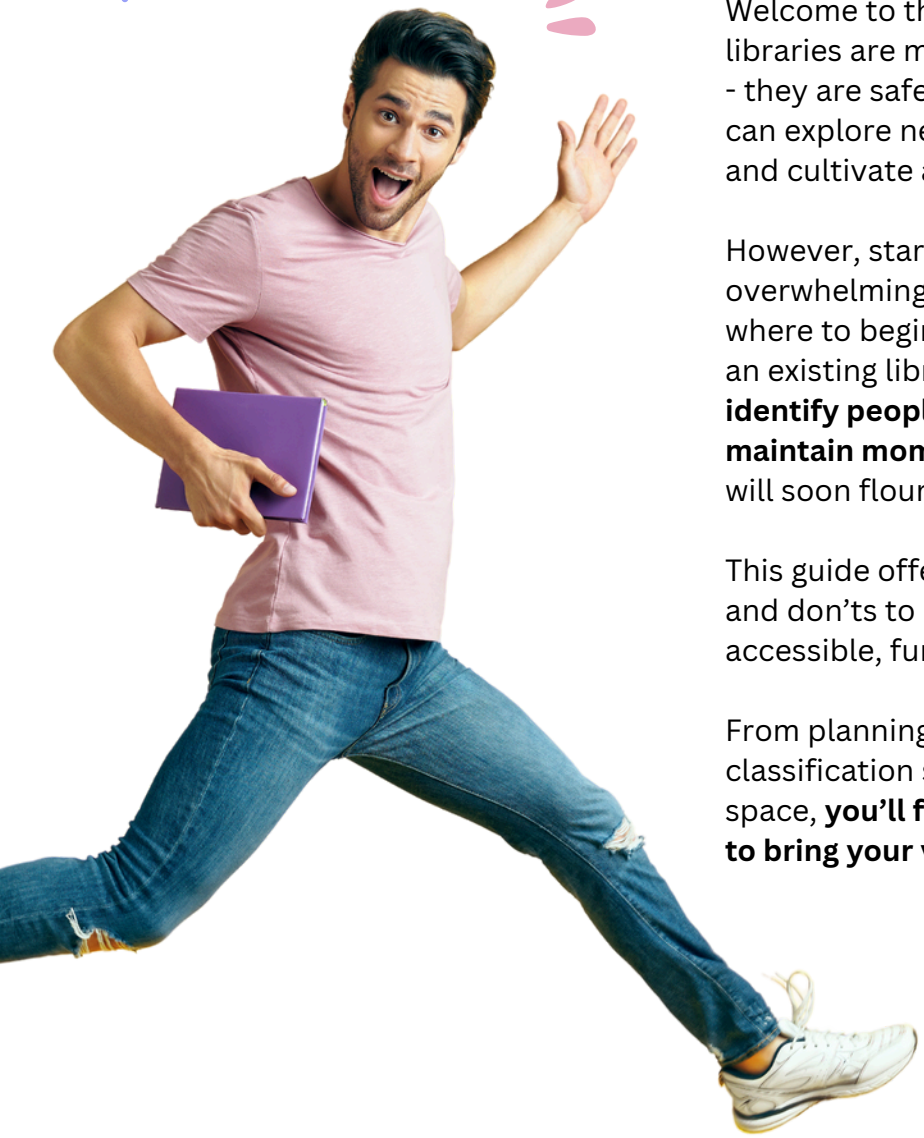
ORGANISING BOOKS

CHOOSING CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

CHECK LISTS

Simple
Little Library System

User-friendly and wallet-happy school library software celebrated by teachers, students, and librarians across primary, secondary, and further education. With our library system, managing a school library is a piece of cake!



INTRODUCTION

Where do I start": Your guide to establishing a school library

Welcome to the world of school libraries! School libraries are more than just a collection of books - they are safe, inspiring spaces where children can explore new worlds, develop critical skills, and cultivate a lifelong love of reading.

However, starting from scratch can feel overwhelming, especially if you don't know where to begin. Regardless of whether you have an existing library in place, you will need to **identify people and resources to generate and maintain momentum.** Stay calm and your library will soon flourish.

This guide offers **clear, practical advice** with do's and don'ts to help you create a vibrant, accessible, functional library for your school.

From planning and policies, choosing a classification system to designing a welcoming space, **you'll find the tools and advice you need to bring your vision to life.**

1. WHERE SHOULD I START?

School libraries come in all shapes and sizes, so the first step is to look at what you have (or don't have) already. It doesn't matter what you're working with. If you're starting with an empty room, a corridor, a corner of a classroom, these initial steps will set you on the right path.

Assessing your starting point:
Is there a library already?

YES

- **Evaluate the space:** Look at the size, layout, and current condition of everything. Walls, ceiling, lights, flooring, windows, etc.
- **Evaluate the resources:** Are the shelving, seating, and displays suitable? Look at the equipment and furniture to assess their condition. Decide what to keep, repair, or replace.
- **Evaluate the content:** Are there already books or materials available? Make a note to remove outdated items and replace them with new stock. Document gaps in the collection so that you can address these at a later date.

NO

- **Identify a potential location:** Work with school leadership to find a room or area that could serve as the library.
- **Identify your allies:** Be flexible and collaborate with all teachers, staff and external bodies. Set out all your arguments clearly and consider accessibility, lighting, and proximity to classrooms.
- **Identify your suppliers:** The list of helpful links at the end of this guide will get you started. Your school will have preferred vendors for shelving, and they will advise. Book stock can usually be obtained from schools' library services.

If there is no library at all, you will have to draft in extra (outside) hands because you cannot do this alone. Take advantage of expert advice from the local Schools Library Service, public library or local authority, Parent Teacher Association, and vendors.

Gather essential contact information

Make sure you have a list of important contacts readily available, including:

Internal contacts:

- Library team members, if applicable. If there are none, don't worry.
- Key school staff, such as the school administrator, caretaker, first aiders, and Health and Safety Officer, IT guru/go to person.

External contacts:

- IT/tech support.
- Technical support for library systems, computers, printers, and networks.
- Suppliers for books, library resources, and equipment.
- Local authorities, school library associations for support and advice. More helpful links in section 5 below.

Setting your initial goals

Every school library should serve the needs of its pupils and teachers, but those needs can vary widely. Remember, **starting small is perfectly fine**. You don't need to create a fully stocked library on day one - focus on building a strong foundation that can grow over time. This is why you need to set some goals and create a plan.

Before getting stuck into organising your book stock or even thinking about furniture, we recommend that you **answer some questions to help clarify your focus:**

- Who will use the library?
- Is it for everyone in the school?
- Pupils and school staff?
- What are the priorities?
- Is it about fostering a love of reading, supporting classroom activity, or a hub for clubs and events?
- What resources do you need?
- Do you want to focus on books, digital tools, or a mix of both?
- Are you replacing outdated stock?
- Have you considered other uses for the library?
- What about experimenting with Lego, makerspaces or games spaces?

💡*TOP TIP: Avoid getting overwhelmed – remember "Rome wasn't built in a day!" Take time to outline clear, achievable goals. Rather than try to keep everything in your head, we recommend Trello or some other simple project management tool. Write everything down, prioritise tasks, and create checklists to break everything down into bitesize chunks.*

Library policies and procedures

If there is an existing library service, there will most likely be a manual and a collection of library rules and regulations.

Check for a manual: Locate any existing library policy or procedure documents. If there isn't one, consider making a record so that going forward everyone is clear about how the library is run. This is especially important if current procedures are only communicated verbally.

Establish key policies: Make sure you know the rules for library usage, borrowing limits, overdue procedures, and holiday borrowing guidelines. One of the common challenges is scheduling access so the library is open when students need it most.

✅ ***Do's*** ✅

- *Assess everything before you start: Thoroughly evaluate the space, resources, and content to understand where you are exactly.*
- *Start small: Focus on essential goals that are achievable within your timeframe and budget.*
- *Collaborate: Work closely with staff, parents, external services, and leadership for support and ideas. Make it a community project. Reach out to library services, associations, or experienced colleagues when needed.*
- *Be flexible: Adapt to the space and resources available to you—creativity can transform even small areas. Don't be nervous about experimenting.*
- *Document everything: Keep a record of evaluations, plans, and decisions for future reference.*
- *Focus on your learners: Consider the needs of students and teachers when prioritising resources and layout.*
- *Use free tools: Employ project management tools like Trello to organise tasks and avoid being overwhelmed.*

❌ ***Don'ts*** ❌

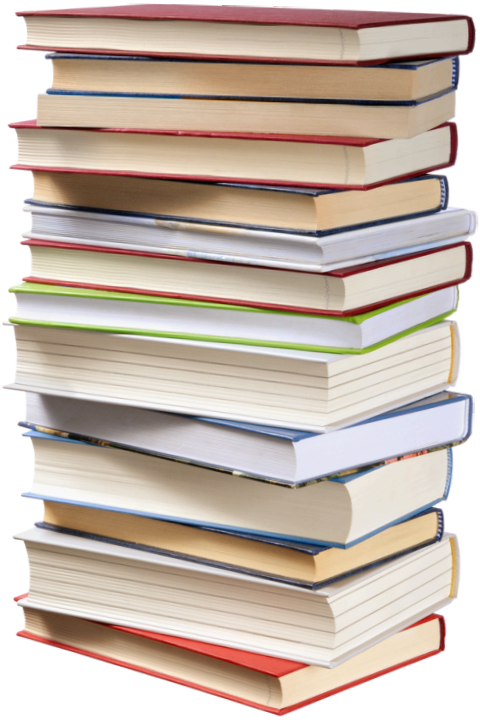
- *Don't rush into anything: Avoid trying to accomplish everything at once - it's a marathon, not a sprint.*
- *Don't hoard material just to fill up space: Remove outdated or irrelevant stock to create a more purposeful collection.*
- *Don't forget about accessibility: Ensure your library is inclusive and accessible to all.*
- *Don't get overwhelmed: Take breaks and revisit tasks with fresh eyes - progress is progress, no matter how small.*

2. CHOOSING A CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

Why should you classify your school library collection? It's a question worth asking, especially when embarking on the journey of setting up or rethinking a library space. A good classification system isn't just about keeping books tidy - it's about creating a **space that's intuitive, engaging, and tailored to the needs of your school community.**

In this section, we'll explore why classification matters, when and why you might consider reclassifying your collection, and the practicalities of choosing a system that works for your library. From alphabetical order to thematic organisation, we'll cover the pros, cons, and practical tips for implementing a system that suits your needs.

If you are starting from scratch, take some time to think about what would work best for your school community. School libraries often use simplified systems tailored to their audience's age and reading level.



Why should you classify your school library collection?

Organising is a human instinct - whether it's our homes, offices, hobby materials, or even the universe itself, we thrive on creating order. A library without a classification system is like Google Maps without a blue location dot - it's hard to navigate and easy to get lost. Classification transforms chaos into clarity, and we all need more of that!

A classification system helps learners, teachers, and staff quickly find the resources they need. It fosters curiosity, supports research, and encourages a lifelong love of reading. For school librarians, an organised system ensures the collection is accessible, supports the curriculum, and maximises the library's potential as a hub for exploration and learning

Why would you reclassify your school library collection?

Reclassifying your school library collection can make it easier for students and staff to find and enjoy resources while keeping the library organised and relevant. It's a chance to align with curriculum updates, help integrate new materials and simplify browsing for young library users.

It could also assist with a "glow up" of the library. Reclassification can make the library more engaging with clear labels and inviting new displays. Whether updating a cluttered setup or rebranding your library, a well-planned reclassification can transform it into a vibrant, user-friendly hub for learning.

But before you get started, consider the following:

- **Time and resources:** Reclassification is a significant project. Ensure you have the time, staff, and tools to see it through.
- **User impact:** Communicate changes to students and staff and involve them in testing the new system to minimise confusion.
- **Documentation:** Keep a record of the new system for consistency and future reference. By reclassifying your school library collection, you're not just reorganising books - you're creating a more effective, inspiring, and user-friendly space that better meets the needs of your school community.

Top Tip 💡 If there is a library manual, it might outline an existing classification system. Reclassifying everything can be a large task so consider working with the old one for a while to see if it functions. If you start moving around everything immediately, you might confuse existing users. Make a plan!

From A-Z - separating fact from fiction!

- In school libraries, **classification systems are often simplified** to suit the age and reading levels of the students. You could say that fiction is the easier category to organise. At the most basic level, this means dividing resources into fiction and non-fiction categories. From there, simply arrange books alphabetically by the author's last name.

- There are benefits to this method. For library people, it is a quick and easy way to organise books, useful when time is at a premium. You can obviously keep series/runs of books together and students can find their favourite authors. To encourage younger readers, consider placing oversize/picture books in bright, child-friendly display cases or boxes.

Goodbye alphabet, hello adventure: Organising fiction by genre

- **Organising your library by genre** (or genrefication!) can create an exciting and engaging experience for students, helping them find books that match their interests more easily. The National Literacy Trust highlights how a genre-based approach can mimic the layout of a bookshop, making the library feel familiar and accessible.

- To get started, analyse the themes in your fiction collection and think about children's interests. Ensure each genre is clearly labelled with eye-catching signage. Whether it's a mystery, historical, time-travel, or relationship, a genre-based system makes reading fun and intuitive.

- This method requires a little more effort than alphabetical order. The librarian must identify and classify each new book, but it means that children can immediately discover new stories in their favourite genres. They don't have to remember author names which can be a benefit to both them and the librarian!

Ideas for classification systems

Following on from fiction organised by genre, there are some options for your non-fiction. These are all variations on themes, so it just depends on how you label them.

Colour-coded organisation:

Many schools use **colour-coded stickers** or labels for each subject area. You could make this simple. For example, orange for history, blue for geography, green for science etc. **This visual approach is easy for children to navigate** and can be paired with simple shelf signage. Make the colours vibrant and accessible.

Number organisation:

Some schools use a **simplified numerical classification system**. You could follow the subject-orientated **Dewey Decimal System** as a guide but modify for your purposes. This might be **more appropriate for larger collections** for older children and young adults and not recommended for primary school libraries.

Thematic organisation:

Some schools organise books by **theme**. For example, animals, art, crafts, history, people, health, sports etc. These become the label on the book. If this is too complicated, try emojis as labels. There is a wealth of familiar images available. For example, ⚽ - sport, 🌍 - geography, 🌳 - nature, 🍽️ - food, 🎨 - art.

How to choose the right system?

Before committing to a system, test it out with pupils, volunteers and colleagues. Mentally walk through the library as a child would. Are the sections easy to navigate? Amend and adjust as needed.

- **Know your audience:** Younger children will benefit from simple, visual systems like colour-coding or emojis, mentioned above. Make finding books even more fun with themed shelving spaces like The Science Lab for all your science books, or Time Travellers HQ for history books. What about A Global Village, Legends Galore, or other relevant names from the curriculum or even popular shows/cartoons.

- **Consider your collection:** A small number of books only require a simple broad classification system. This allows you to be creative with your displays – you can say more with fewer items and make it engaging and fun.

- **Keep it consistent**: Once you choose a system, stick to it. Over time it might grow but consistency is key. This ensures that students and staff can learn the layout and rely on it over time. We can probably all still remember where the craft books were in our childhood public library!

How complicated should your classification levels be?

- The level of detail in your classification system depends entirely on your library's **size, resources, and the school's needs.** While a primary school history section might not be extensive, it could align with the curriculum by including categories like Ancient China, the Mayans, the Vikings, the Romans, Local History, the 20th Century, or cultural discussions around historical events.

- Similarly, geography and science can be tailored to reflect curriculum topics. For example, geography might include continents, ecosystems, and human geography, while science could cover animals, plants, forces, and space. **Breaking these subjects into smaller sections can makes for better browsing.**

- **If there is an entire bookcase about a topic, you might want to consider how you organise them within that section.** Books can be organised alphabetically by title or author for simplicity. Another approach is by reading level, especially for younger students, using coloured labels or icons to indicate difficulty.

- **Large books,** like oversized picture books, could be housed in child-friendly display cases or boxes to make them accessible and visible.

- For braille resources or other accessible formats, consider a separate, clearly labelled area to ensure they are easy to locate. Shelve these materials at an appropriate height for independent access, and include tactile or visual cues, such as embossed signs or contrasting colours, to assist users with visual impairments.

- Ultimately, the complexity of your system should be driven by what works best for your school. Keep it simple enough for students to navigate independently but detailed enough to meet curriculum needs and promote exploration. Remember, the goal is a user-friendly library that serves its community effectively.

Step-by-step: How to classify your collection.

- ***Step 1. Setting up your system :*** Document your process so that you can share the workload and get volunteers to help out at every stage – and going forward. Make it clear how your system works. Write everything down and underneath each heading, describe what it includes so that everyone understands it and reduce questions like “where does this go?!”.

- ***Step 2. Get to know your books:*** Divide the collection into fiction and non-fiction, then further sort those into your chosen system. Depending on the size of your collection, this will take a little time so do it bit by bit. This is a great opportunity to really examine every book, for wear and tear, appropriateness, and currency.

- ***Step 3. Label them clearly:*** Use clean labels or stickers to mark each book according to your system. You can use label protectors to ensure they stay on the item for longer. Make sure they are visible on the spine of each book or item.

- ***Step 4. Add shelf markers:*** Once the books are labeled and on shelves, use clear signs or markers to label them. Don’t forget to label your oversized books and book boxes with your chosen classification. Everything will look wonderfully organised so be proud of your work!

✅ *Do's* ✅

- ***Assess existing systems:*** *If there's already a system in place, evaluate its effectiveness before deciding to reclassify.*
- ***Plan first:*** *Map out your classification strategy before sorting or labeling to avoid confusion.*
- ***Know your audience:*** *Tailor the system to suit your school community, using simple, visual methods for younger children to encourage browsing.*
- ***Test and adjust:*** *Involve pupils, volunteers, and colleagues to ensure the system is intuitive and user-friendly.*
- ***Document your system:*** *Write down your classification method, including clear descriptions for each category, to ensure consistency and enable others to assist.*
- ***Label clearly:*** *Use bold, visible stickers or labels on books and shelves to make navigation easy for users.*
- ***Be creative****: Use engaging themes, colours, or emojis to add personality to your system and connect with children's interests.*
- ***Think accessibility:*** *Arrange books at appropriate heights for your audience, with special attention to younger readers and oversized books.*

❌ ***Don'ts*** ❌

- ***Don't use shelf location as your classification system:*** *If your collection grows and moves onto another shelf, you will have to reclassify (and move) everything.*
- ***Don't rush to reclassify:*** *Avoid changing an existing system without understanding its strengths and weaknesses - it may work better than you think.*
- ***Don't forget oversized books:*** *Ensure picture books or oversized items are clearly labeled and placed in child-friendly, accessible areas.*
- ***Don't neglect visual appeal:*** *Bland labels or inconsistent signage can make navigation harder—vibrancy and clarity are key.*
- ***Don't skip maintenance:*** *Regularly review and refine the system as your collection grows or changes to ensure it remains relevant and useful.*
- ***Don't ignore feedback:*** *If people struggle to find what they want, be flexible and make adjustments as needed. But make sure your decisions are final!*

3. CATALOGUING AND ORGANISING RESOURCES

Once your books are classified, the next step is to **catalogue** them. Although grouping books together by subject makes it easier for everyone to browse, a catalogue helps you find individual items quickly. A good catalogue makes it easy to track what's in your library, who has borrowed it, and what needs replacing.

First of all, do you have a computerised library catalogue (LMS)? If you don't, that is perfectly ok. If you're not ready to invest in an LMS yet, you can start with a simple spreadsheet.

Include columns for:

- **Book Title**
- **Author**
- **Genre/Category**
- **Location**
- **Status (e.g., On Shelf, Borrowed, Missing)**

Though less efficient than an LMS, a spreadsheet can serve as a temporary solution while you establish your library. Once you are ready to choose a LMS that fits your budget and needs, you can investigate what is available. Many schools use ***Simple Little Library System (SLLS)*** because it is so easy to use that even non-trained librarians and teachers that have never managed a library can pick it up easily.

Step-by step: How to catalogue your collection

Step 1. Get to know your computerised library catalogue

If you do have a library management system (LMS), find out how it works. Bookmark their help pages and get some training from the vendor and then write a quick start manual. You can then use this documentation to train your volunteers. Don't forget to use pictures and videos because people learn in different ways.

Step 2. Add each book (or item) to your LMS

An ISBN scanner speeds up the process of adding books to the system. It will pull in details like the title, author, and publication year. Customised fields will enable you to add extra details like reading level, genre, and location in the library. Use unique barcodes for tracking and add labels for classification.

Top Tip 💡 *Don't forget the admin and technical aspects of your LMS. Make a note of the login details, email address for enquiries, permissions and admin levels, and whether you can integrate with school systems (Wonde and Accelerated Reader). Your vendor will be able to help you with these questions.*

Best practices for cataloguing

- **Using ISBNs:** Scan the book's ISBN (usually found on the back cover) to quickly import bibliographic data. Avoid using ISBNs as barcodes since each copy needs a unique identifier.

- **Applying barcodes:** Place barcodes in a consistent location (e.g., the top left corner of the inside cover). Use barcode labels to track individual copies of each item.

- **Cataloguing templates:** Create a standard template for entering new items into the LMS, including title, author, genre, and classification code.

Handling donations and new items

- **Processing donations:** Review donated items to decide what fits the library's collection. Not every donation will be a good fit, and items might be damaged, out of date, or inappropriate. If you need to decline a donation, handle it diplomatically according to your library's policies.

- **New arrivals:** Prioritise cataloguing new resources quickly so they can be made available to students. Announce new arrivals through displays or library newsletters.

Weeding and stocktaking

- **Weeding outdated items:** Weeding is essential. Regularly review the collection and remove damaged or outdated books. Follow your school's policy on withdrawing items and ensure they are properly recorded in the LMS.

- **Stocktaking tips:** Schedule an annual stock take to verify your inventory. Use your LMS's reporting features to generate a list of all items and cross-check with the physical collection. Check whether weblinks are still accurate and make sure any notes or observations are current.

✅ *Do's* ✅

- ***Start simple:*** *Use a basic spreadsheet to track books if you don't have a LMS yet. Include essential details like title, author, genre, location, and whether it's on loan.*
- ***Get to know your LMS:*** *If you have an LMS, take time to understand its features. Bookmark help pages, get training from the vendor, and create a user-friendly quick start guide with visuals for volunteers.*
- ***Use ISBN scanners:*** *Invest in scanners to pull in bibliographic data quickly and reduce manual entry errors.*
- ***Be consistent:*** *Apply barcodes in the same location for all books and use a standard template for cataloguing new items.*
- ***Track donations thoughtfully:*** *Review donated items carefully, accepting only those that enhance your collection. Handle rejections diplomatically and in line with library policies.*
- ***Prioritise new arrivals:*** *Catalogue new resources promptly and promote them with creative displays or newsletters to generate excitement.*
- ***Weed regularly:*** *Remove outdated or damaged items to keep the collection relevant and appealing. Document withdrawals in your LMS.*
- ***Stock-take annually:*** *Schedule an annual inventory check to ensure records match the physical collection. Use LMS reports to streamline the process.*

❌ *Don'ts* ❌

- ***Don't use ISBNs as barcodes:*** *Each copy needs a unique identifier for proper tracking. ISBNs alone won't suffice.*
- ***Don't ignore LMS management tasks:*** *Document LMS login details, permissions, and integration capabilities. Keep this information accessible but secure.*
- ***Don't put off your cataloguing:*** *Letting items pile up before adding them to your system can create unnecessary backlog and confusion.*

4. SETTING UP THE LIBRARY SPACE

The design of your school library plays a pivotal role in how pupils and teachers engage with it. A well-thought-out space can inspire curiosity, foster a love of reading, and create a welcoming environment for everyone in the school community.

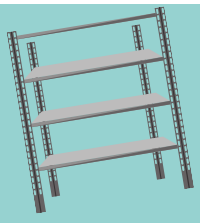
Whether you're setting up a library from scratch or reimagining an existing space, the l**ayout, accessibility, and overall feel** of the library are crucial to its success.
The library isn't just a storage room for books; it's a dynamic, multi-functional space where learning happens. From group projects to independent reading, it should cater to various school and community activities while remaining flexible and adaptable. The first step? Start with a clear vision!

Be prepared to share your thoughts

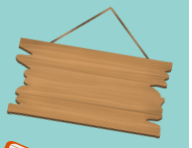
Ideally, you would sit down with a group of relevant people and a designer to bring everything together. You should come to meetings prepared to discuss your needs, with a mood board and your 3D plan! Everyone knows a picture says 1000 words. Have your wishlist ready and be ready to defend your choices.

Non-negotiables

- ***Shelving***



- ***Signage***



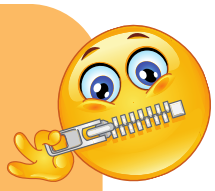
- ***Returns box***

- ***Stationery storage***

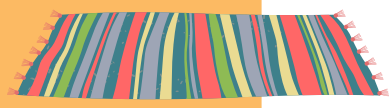
- ***Library trolley***

Nice to have

- ***Quiet reading space***



- ***Soft flooring***



- ***Tables, chairs, beanbags***

- ***Computers***

- ***Murals and artwork***

Top Tip 💡 *Have you ever played with floor planning software like Floorplanner? Take your measurements and design a space, complete with doors, windows and flooring. Then you can start having fun with furniture and plants to see how it looks. There are lots of items to choose from so you can create a reasonably accurate representation. Share your creation with others in a 3D walk-through. Have fun!*

Finding inspiration

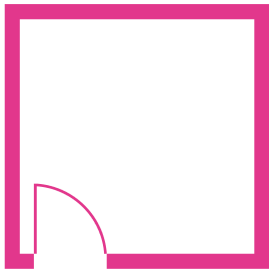
Inspiration for library design is everywhere. Blogs, YouTube channels, and Pinterest boards are full of creative ideas to explore. Don't forget to tap into your professional network—sharing ideas with other school librarians can spark new approaches for your space.

How big a space do you need?

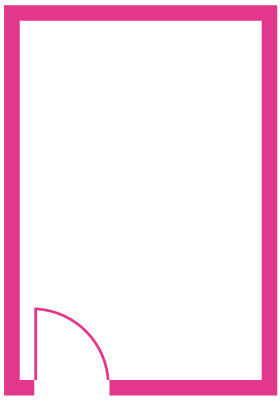
In the UK, there is no statutory requirement for schools to have a library. Therefore, the existence of a school library depends on the head teacher. But how big should your library be?

According to an archived government document, “Area guidelines for mainstream schools” (June 2014) it recommends “at least one library or learning resource centre (LRC) with a total area of at least **9m2 plus 0.05m2 for every primary pupil place and 0.12m2 for every secondary pupil place”.**

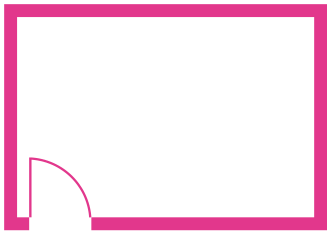
What does this look like in reality? For **200 pupils in a primary school, I worked out that the minimum size would be 19 square metres**. This could be:



Square room:
4.36m x 4.36m



1:2 rectangle:
3.08m x 6.16m



1:1.5 rectangle:
3.56m x 5.34m

I drew a 1:1.5 rectangle on Floorplanner and dropped in some low level shelving, child-friendly table and chairs, book display boxes. It is very small and could feel cluttered. A teacher/librarian desk would take up valuable space and might not be appropriate for your purposes. Would you want to catalogue or do admin in a hallway etc? Food for thought.

What else do you need for a welcoming environment?

There is inspiration everywhere! There are some great blogs and videos with some great ideas. Social media, for example, Pinterest is great for browsing and collecting images. Don't forget you can speak with colleagues and share your best ideas!

Seating areas:

Include a **mix of seating options:** soft cushions for relaxed reading, tables and chairs for group work, and quiet corners for independent study. Beanbags, low stools, or floor mats can make the space more inviting for younger children – not to mention soft furnishings help dampen noise.

Displays:

You don't have to stick with boring wall shelving. For instance, I found a wonderful tree display which would look great in a nature themed primary school library – pair it with toadstool seating, animal cushions and a textured mural for a wow effect.

Creative displays will allow you to highlight **new books, seasonal themes, or student-recommended titles**. Consider interactive elements, like a "What's your favourite book?" board where pupils can add their own suggestions. What about illustrations and reviews? Allow students to personalise the space through artwork, book recommendations, or co-creating displays.

The possibilities are endless.

Colours and lighting:

We all know that colour and light can make or break a space. **Choose colours that will inspire your pupils** and fit with your scheme! Pastel colours will create a soothing, calming effect, whilst primary colours will bring their own benefits. Don't overwhelm a small space with colour, sometimes less is more.

Ensure the library is well-lit, with a mix of natural light and soft artificial lighting. Natural light is always best, but we appreciate that isn't always possible. Some display shelving will have lights, and you can illuminate corners with colours and more gentle mood lighting.

How do you comply with accessibility considerations?

Although libraries aren't a legal requirement, schools have a legal obligation under the **Equality Act** to support pupils who are disabled with reasonable adjustments, making sure they can benefit from what the school offers in the same way as a pupil who isn't disabled. If there is a library space, then you have to ensure it's accessible.

Physical accessibility

- **Physical layout:** Keep pathways wide enough for wheelchairs and ensure furniture placement allows for easy navigation. Consider adding tactile floor indicators for visually impaired students.

- **Entrances and exits:** Ensure doorways are wide enough for wheelchairs and that doors are lightweight or have automatic mechanisms.

- **Seating options:** We've already discussed seating but consider how you can accommodate different physical needs. Include height-adjustable desks or tables spaces for wheelchairs or mobility aids at tables.

- **Quiet zones**: Dedicate an area for silent reading or mindfulness activities, separated from group workspaces. Some people experience sensory issues with light so ensure lighting – and noise – is at the right level to make everyone comfortable.

Visual accessibility

- **Signage**: Use large, clear fonts with high-contrast colours for all signs. Incorporate braille and tactile elements where possible.
- **Book labelling**: This is why classification systems are so important! Use colour-coded or symbol-based labels for age groups or genres to support neurodiverse students or those with learning difficulties.
- **Lighting**: Use adjustable lighting to avoid glare and ensure all areas are well-lit. Natural light is ideal but should be supplemented with warm, even artificial light.

Inclusive resources

- **Accessible OPAC:** Library vendors will provide you with an accessible library catalogue. Everything you need to know about accessible OPACS can be found on the SLLS site.
- **Diverse formats:** Include audiobooks, large-print books, braille materials, and dyslexia-friendly texts.
- **Assistive technology:** Work with the school admin team to provide tools like screen readers, text-to-speech devices, and adjustable e-readers.
- **Inclusive representation:** Ensure book collections, education programmes, magazines, music reflect diverse characters, cultures, and abilities to promote inclusivity and empathy.

Training and policies

- **Staff awareness:** Train library staff and volunteers to assist students with disabilities and operate assistive technologies.
- **Feedback mechanisms:** Regularly seek input from children, parents, and teachers on accessibility improvements.

Recap: Setting up the space

Starting a library from scratch can feel overwhelming but keeping a few key principles in mind will help you stay focused and avoid common pitfalls.

✅ *Do's* ✅

- **Prioritise flexibility:** Choose modular furniture that can be rearranged to adapt to different activities, such as storytelling sessions, group work, or quiet study.
- **Involve everyone:** Actively engage pupils, teachers, and parents in the design process to create a library space that meets everyone's needs.
- **Invest in quality:** Opt for durable, easy-to-clean materials for furniture and flooring, especially in areas with high foot traffic.
- **Think beyond books:** Incorporate interactive features like activity zones, multimedia stations, or maker spaces to broaden the library's appeal.
- **Plan for growth:** Leave space for future collections, technology, or new initiatives to ensure the library remains relevant.
- **Keep it interesting:** Create themed or topical "spotlight on" displays to create a buzz and highlight new arrivals. Create a calendar ahead of the school terms so you never run out of ideas.

❌ *Don'ts* ❌

- **Overfill the space**: Avoid cramming too many shelves or furniture items into a small library – it will feel cluttered and uninviting.
- **Ignore acoustics:** Don't forget to factor in soundproofing or noise-dampening solutions to maintain a calm environment, especially in busy schools.
- **Skimp on signage**: Clear, accessible, visually appealing signage is essential; don't assume eveyone will instinctively know where everything is.
- **Neglect maintenance:** Avoid choosing designs or materials that are hard to clean or maintain, as this could deter regular use.
- **Use the library as storage:** Keep the space dedicated to reading and learning, not extra supplies or classroom overflow.
- **Forget to celebrate:** Launch your library with a small opening event to generate excitement and showcase what you've accomplished.

5. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND USEFUL LINKS

To make the most of your school library, take advantage of these helpful tools and networks. If you have additional recommended networks or websites, we'd love to include them.

- **Accessibility matters**
  - Diversity and inclusion in the school library
  - Practical tips for equality, diversity and inclusion in libraries

- **Grant opportunities and funding:**
  - National Literacy Trust Grants
  - Local Education Authority Funding

- **Online resources for books and cataloguing**:
  - Book Trust Book Finder
  - School Reading List
  - Primary School Guidelines
  - Schools Library Service
  - A Library Lady

- **Professional associations:**
  - CILIP Website - CILIP School Libraries Group
  - SLA Website - School Library Association
  - Elizabeth Hutchinson - an expert in engaging and empowering school libraries

- **Simple Little Library System resources:**
  - Follow our SLLS blog for hints and tips
  - Download our SLLS glossary to get to grips with unfamiliar library jargon

Why Simple Little Library System from Bailey Solutions?

25
YEARS OF EXPERIENCE

1000+
LIBRARIES

99%
CLIENT RETENTION

20+
COUNTRIES

“What started as a working tool for me, became the working tool of other librarians.”
Penny Bailey

Bailey Solutions was born from a desire to **solve the practical problems faced by librarians**, and this philosophy is at the heart of each of our library systems. Our founder, **Penny Bailey**, has poured her heart and soul into creating **Simple Little Library System (SLLS)** – a browser-based system designed to be user-friendly and accessible not just for librarians, but also for teachers, receptionists, lawyers, and anyone else managing libraries and collections in schools and offices.

We truly value the **feedback and insights from our clients**, and we strive to incorporate their best ideas into our software updates. This continuous improvement ensures that our system is always top-notch, perfectly tailored to meet the needs of its users, and aligned with our founding philosophy. After all, when our clients are happy, we’re happy too! Our commitment to excellence has been recognized with the BIALL **Supplier of the Year award in 2022**.

Simple
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