Going the Extra Mile: What Makes School Librarians Proactive?

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This paper reports on a second round of analysis (conducted in 2012-13) of the results of the national surveys of UK school libraries completed in 2010, involving self-reported activities and priorities of 803 school librarians. This further analysis highlighted four aspects of proactive school library manager behaviour relating to their approaches to: promoting reading for pleasure, information literacy development, collaborating with teachers, and actively exploiting ICT within the school. Various levers or drivers that are associated with proactive library managers were then identified from the survey findings. These are: supervision by senior managers and ready access to them; active development planning; the library manager's academic and professional qualifications. The relative strengths of each of these drivers were assessed from the data.

The Context

This piece of work was conducted in 2012-13 and grew out of a set of national surveys of UK school libraries completed in 2010. The surveys represented the first real effort to learn about the state of school libraries for more than twenty years and the first systematic attempt to find out what the librarians do and where they put their energies.

UK school librarians have never been well supported by central government in the UK. Unlike public libraries, they are not a statutory service and the school management can decide whether they want one or not. In the absence of a legal requirement, various efforts have been made by the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals in the UK (CILIP – see Barrett & Douglas, 2004) and other bodies such as the International Federation of Library Associations (Saetre & Willars, 2002) to promulgate standards for school libraries, but there is no requirement or even real expectation that schools will adopt these. Until recently, school

librarians in the UK have also been less than well served by the academic research community. They have had to rely upon anecdote and the occasional best practice example, backed up by sporadic national research forays (Streatfield & Markless, 1994; Williams & Wavell, 2001; Williams, et al., 2001, 2002), when trying to get a picture of what provision their colleagues are offering and how.

This situation improved somewhat when the survey results were published (Streatfield *et al.* 2011). This work was funded by the Wendy Drewett Bequest that is administered by the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP). The work was complex, involving:

- A baseline e-survey of secondary, middle, special and independent school libraries (together serving pupils aged 11 to 18)
- A follow-up e-survey of the activities of school library staff in secondary, middle, special and independent schools
- A targeted follow-up survey of secondary, middle, special and independent school library staff in 15 selected local authority areas, conducted by interview or by e-survey.[i]

The surveys were managed by Information Management Associates and commissioned by the School Libraries Group of CILIP. On completing the baseline survey focused on the library, respondents were invited to click through to a further activity survey and to provide more detailed information, through an exhaustive questionnaire or an interview, about what school librarians do. The interviews followed the same lines as the online survey but provided more opportunities for respondents to elaborate their answers. By April 2010 1542 schools had responded to the secondary etc. baseline survey and 1044 librarians had completed the activity survey.

As already noted, most of the activity survey respondents (n=803) were volunteers who replied to a general call to complete the questionnaire but the remainder (n=241) were actively targeted. There were minor differences in how questions were asked of this latter group, leading to the researchers assigning some answers to open-ended questions to categories rather than the respondents choosing their own replies. Since the researcher interpretations might influence the results of the analysis presented below, we have confined the analysis to the larger volunteer group (N=803).

In the remainder of this report we will draw attention to survey findings presented in the main project report that are relevant to consideration of proactive librarianship, before looking in detail at the data that shaped our views on this theme. In the main project report we distinguished between the activities and priorities of professionally and/or academically qualified library managers and the other library managers (a combination of former teachers, people with an academic qualification in a discipline other than librarianship and people without higher education qualifications). Since this distinction appears to have some bearing on whether library managers are proactive or not we have retained it at various points in reporting the main project findings below.

Overcoming the Limitations of the Survey Report

Although the main project report was extensive, we were aware that the unexpectedly high response from school librarians describing their work, priorities and approaches contained far more data than we were able to fully assimilate and report within the limited project timeframe. In particular, we felt that the replies received from more than 1000 library managers could throw light on to the question of what factors help school librarians to be proactive in engaging with teaching and learning in their schools, which could potentially be of interest internationally. Accordingly, we applied for a small additional grant to the administrators of the Wendy Drewett Bequest to undertake further data analysis and this was made available in 2012.

What is a Proactive School Library Manager?

Our earlier research report drew attention to a difference in approach between what we then characterised as proactive school librarians and those who undertook a more limited range of library-focused tasks.

But what do we mean by proactive? We were helped in answering this question by the way in which response were probably skewed in favour of this group of library managers, since they were more likely to choose to respond to the general invitation to answer our questions. We expected that this would help in the current study by ensuring a good representation of initiative-taking respondents through whom to examine our questions about this version of school librarianship.

In trying to use the data to begin to define proactivity we looked at the general tenor of all the replies. Through this process we identified four main areas of difference in approach. Proactive library managers were more likely to:

- Promote reading for pleasure – where the more reactive librarians drew attention to new books and encouraged individuals to read for enjoyment, the more outgoing respondents undertook a range of school-wide activities, from organising reading clubs to introducing competitive reading schemes
- Engage in information literacy development work – not only providing information-seeking guidance sessions on request, but also collaborating with teachers to help develop the full range of skills needed by students to find, evaluate, use and manage information. In the proactive version, this work extended across all or most school years and subject areas, and might involve trying to achieve progression in skills development over time throughout the school
- Collaborate with teachers in planning and delivering lessons (building information awareness, access to a wide range of resources and appreciation of reading into the curriculum) rather than confining themselves to supporting teachers by assembling resources for use in their lessons
- Actively exploit ICT to provide systematic learning support via school websites, intranets or virtual learning environments (a disappointing number of respondents chose not to be involved in such activity).

These elements of proactive school librarianship are discussed more fully below. We then show what specific questions and criteria we used to identify these forms of proactivity. In order to statistically test differences in these criteria, using SPSS 21 chi-square analyses were used as most data in the statistical analysis were assumed to be non-parametric as they were derived from ordinal and categorical data points. The standard level of statistical significance was set at $p < .05$.

Finding Proactive Library Managers

The surveys gave us adequate information to identify proactive respondents by looking at their replies to particular questions. After further data analysis we chose to focus on answers to questions where people could choose amongst a range of responses, from the limited to the challenging.

Promote Reading for Pleasure

School librarians encourage students to enjoy reading in a variety of ways: most are involved in supporting the school literacy work, in many cases directly by working with teachers in the classroom or library and in most schools by obtaining and organizing resources to support literacy efforts. Again, most librarians take an active part in encouraging reading for pleasure, some through reading with groups or individuals, but also by promoting this work by various means. Our surveys showed that 79.5% of school library managers provided exhibitions and displays; and many organised reading clubs (57.0%) or author visits (57.5%), and engaged the school in awards for reading (40.3%), competitive reading schemes (23.8%), celebrating World Book Day, arranging quizzes and competitions, book fairs or other promotional activities. Asked if she actively promoted reading, one librarian said:

> *Absolutely. It's the main thing I do. Reading Week every year in October; author visits; a Readathon; Games; Carnegie [Award Scheme] shadowing; I attended the Carnegie party at the British Library. The Red House Award; the BBC Radio 4 Book Club programme; the Harry Potter launch at the Natural History Museum; I organise a Staff Reading Group and a Sixth Form [16 to 18] Reading Group. Reviews are sent to 'Booktime'. Anything I can get involved in – producing a Year 10 [14 plus] booklet of reviews to encourge others; organising a 'Whole School Reads' project (everyone reads the same book). In the first year we did 'The Boy in Striped Pyjamas', this was cross-curricular, it related to many departments. I organise author visits. Everyone is involved, staff pupils, governors, parents, nuns. This was used to raise money for charity. We participated in the BBC News School Report.*

Elsewhere library managers reported using information technology to support reading promotion in various ways such as making videos of library staff recommending books and 'good reads' as 30 second clips done by the Media Department and put on the school website, or creating videoblogs.

It was clear from many comments that all this promotional work is taken on in addition to the 'bread and butter' supporting teachers in developing literacy and wider reading, as well as giving one-to-one help and guidance to students.

We chose to represent proactivity by focusing on a selection from the main promotional activities reported to us, using replies to the question shown in the box:

In what ways, if any, do library staff actively promote reading for pleasure in your school?

      Reading clubs
      Competitive reading scheme
      Awards for reading
      Author visits

(Criterion – positive response to at least three of these.)

Figure 1. Layout of librarians' survey question relating to reading for pleasure

Engage in Information Literacy Development

The extent of library staff engagement in information literacy development activities within the school is potentially important as an indicator of proactive support for students as learners. This is likely to be particularly true if the library staff adopt a reasonably sophisticated approach to their information literacy work. How seriously do school librarians take information literacy work?

Given the inherent complexity of information literacy development work it is not surprising that a significantly higher proportion of graduates and qualified librarians (89.3%) engaged with this work in the school than did the 'unqualified' librarians (77.4%). A chi-square test of independence was performed to examine the relation between qualification and information literacy development work. The relation between these variables was significant, X2 (1, N=734) = 18.471, *p* <.01. In order to enhance the readability of our findings, in the remainder of this text we report the statistical results as footnotes.

Qualified librarians were consistently more frequently involved in all aspects of information literacy delivery than the other categories of librarian, notably in conducting lessons in the library (reported by 64.2% of qualified librarians and 40.7% of the other groups,[ii] supporting teacher lessons in the library (65.8% of qualified librarians and 54.0% of others[iii]) and preparing guides for students (56.8% and 39.1%)[iv].

Aspects of Information Literacy Covered by Library Staff

Which parts of the information literacy cycle do library managers concentrate upon, and is the focus of the different categories of library staff consistent across these areas?

If we compare the qualified and dual-qualified librarians (i.e. those who have a librarianship and an education/teaching qualification) with all other respondents in relation to each phase in the information literacy cycle, the difference in emphasis becomes clearer. 87.3% of qualified and dual-qualified librarians focused some attention or had a major focus on

finding information compared with 77.0% of the others. The difference becomes more marked in relation to evaluating information (73.0% compared to 57.7%) and making sense of information (35.8% compared to 24.9%). The gap then narrows slightly when the focus turns to using information to answer questions (65.2% compared to 59.7%) and using information to solve problems (59.7% compared to 53.6%). A complication here is that other answers suggest that some of the unqualified librarians concentrated on answering questions and solving problems for their students rather than supporting them in doing so themselves.

A few respondents made it clear that they saw all of their efforts holistically as a campaign to encourage students to think for themselves:

> *It is vital that students learn how to think for themselves, so many library activities are geared towards methods of encouraging this skill, using all the resources available to me, including information literacy, collaborative learning and web 2.0 materials. It requires a lot of teaching and collaboration with teaching staff. While this is not specifically mentioned on my job description, I believe it is fundamental to my role.*

A few librarians reported that they could no longer get involved in IL work because of senior management changes leading to a shift in the school focus, erosion of curriculum time, diminution in their role as librarian or other changes.

When it comes to targeting efforts, the relatively easy option in IL work is to concentrate on the first year or two years when problems and issues around information are most evident (the option reported by 37.2% of the survey respondents), or on sixth formers (aged 16 to 18 years) who may be more receptive to ideas about effective researching and presentation of information. However, there is a growing view that effective information literacy work should be addressed progressively through the years at school, which offers a much bigger challenge and demands collaboration from teachers and senior management support. Co-ordinated progression clearly takes time to achieve. Equally clearly, to focus on IL progression through the years constitutes a major challenge for most schools and is well beyond the capacities of the school librarian alone.

For the current purpose, we again selected a cluster of positive responses from a longer list of options offered to identify proactive information literacy development work, as follows:

Do library staff undertake or contribute directly to this work in your school? If yes:

      Work with most years, or
      Work with all years, or
      Focus on progression through the years

(Criterion – positive response to one of these.)

Figure 2. Layout of survey item related to work responsibilities.

Collaborate with Teachers in Planning and Delivering Lessons

Library staff are most likely to be effective in developing information literacy work in the school (as well as reading promotion and various forms of curriculum support) if they collaborate with teachers, because otherwise the ratio of library staff numbers to students is very much against them.

Collaboration will also help to bridge the gap in librarian understanding of current teaching issues (unless of course the librarians are also teachers). The need for a strategic approach to fostering collaboration is well illustrated by the following quote from a dual-qualified librarian:

> *I talk to teachers about teaching and learning, then, when I know their interests, I pass things their way and link them up with other teachers. I participate in academic meetings so I know the priorities and what people have to do. Most of my success comes from being proactive in supporting individual teachers and continuing to engage with them. Teachers are often isolated (not all departments are cohesive) and when in the classroom they are on their own. Collaboration depends on relationship building - trust, feeling safe, ways to bond, such as talking though commonalities of problems.*

The extent and forms of collaboration undertaken vary substantially, from relatively passive support, such as assembling materials for teachers (68.2% of all respondents) and responding to teacher invitations to talk about, for example, information seeking or books (33.9%) to more dynamic engagement in joint planning of lessons with teachers (22.1%) and joint delivery of lessons (30.3%).

Professionally qualified librarians again more frequently engaged with all of these activities than did the other groups of library staff.

This kind of collaboration does not occur without effort and it requires an opportunistic approach at least at the outset. A qualified librarian described her response to such an opportunity:

> *You have to be very pushy if you want to be included in planning. For example, Year 8 [aged 12 plus] did a two-day racism-awareness event run by an outside organization. I was told what was happening and asked if they could use the library for part of it, but they had no awareness of the potential of the library so I inundated them with lots of relevant photos and poems. This did develop into joint planning and they were pleased afterwards, but surprised at the time.*

The imbalance in status and employment terms of teachers and librarians can be a stumbling block to development of collaborative working. A qualified librarian reported her salutary experience of joint working which involved:

> *An IT year 8 project on astronomy – it was team taught, but died a death because the teacher assumed I would do half of the marking, I raised it with the trades union (I did not have an academic contract)- now I would play it differently, because it was an opportunity lost. This is one reason why librarians should be dually qualified.*

As noted earlier, some librarians choose to operate more strategically by engaging teachers with information literacy issues rather than working with individual teachers in lesson delivery. Several of the interview respondents reported that they provide staff in-school training on information literacy, Internet searching and Web 2.0, or target training at newly-qualified teachers or those who are training to be teachers at the school – "I open up questions about how students go about their learning."

Since we have already mentioned the more dynamic forms of collaboration with teachers, our choice of proactive indicators should come as no surprise:

In what ways, if any, do library staff collaborate with teaching staff?

     Joint planning of lessons or assignments
     Joint delivery of lessons or assignments

(Criterion – positive response to at least one of these.)

Figure 3. Layout of survey question relating to joint planning

Actively Exploit ICT

In what ways do library staff guide students towards the most appropriate electronic resources? Only around a quarter of library staff were active in this area, partly because in some libraries electronic access has not kept pace with its expansion elsewhere, and also because keeping up with e-resources is a substantial and time-consuming job in itself. 50.9% of the people replying created links to other relevant resources beyond the library, 53.7% bookmarked appropriate sites and resources (often using library management system software), 54.9% reviewed websites for their suitability in teaching and learning and 34.4% identified information portals for students. Compared to other library staff, qualified librarians engaged more in bookmarking sites (60.7% to 39.9%)[v] and creating links to resources (60.5% to 39.5%)[vi]. Going further down the route towards active engagement in supporting teaching and learning, 50.3% of respondents actively contributed to the school website, Intranet or VLE and 24.0% helped to manage (or managed) the website, intranet or VLE.

We chose to tease out the answers to our question about website work as the best indicator of dynamic ICT engagement:

[Do you] help to manage any or all of these: school website/Intranet/virtual learning environment
Actively contribute to any or all of these: school website/ Intranet/ virtual learning environment

(Criterion – positive response to at least one of these.)

Figure 4. Layout of survey question relating to work activities

Having corralled these four sets of replies we proceeded to define proactive library managers as anyone who met the criteria shown above for two of these themes. We then defined an

"ultra-proactive" group as anyone who met the criteria for at least three of these themes. This gave us 199 proactive library managers and 182 ultra-proactive managers.

Finding Levers or Drivers that Support Proactive School Library Work

We then turned our attention to factors that are likely to help library managers to be proactive. Several of the factors listed below have already been identified in the UK school libraries research (see Streatfield & Markless, 1994; Williams, Wavell & Coles, 2001) and have been built into school library evaluation (Markless & Streatfield, 2004) and practice (e.g. Barrett & Douglas, 2004; Markless, 2009). However, before this work was conducted we did not have the means to assess the relative importance of these factors.

One interesting indicator of how the school sees its library is who supervises the library manager. 60.9% of the respondents reported to the Head or to a Deputy or Assistant Head (who was often the Director of Curriculum or of Teaching and Learning). 64.0% of all the qualified librarians reported at these levels, compared with 49.2% of other categories of library manager[vii]. 14.1% of the respondents reported to another member of the Senior Leadership Team, usually one with an area of curriculum responsibility, but 10.4% reported to the Bursar, Finance Director or Business Manager, which is likely to weaken the librarian's scope for engaging with curriculum matters. Interestingly, several people reported to a Deputy or Assistant Head on curriculum-related matters and to the Bursar for administration. The relatively low status of the library in the school is signalled in the 101 cases (13.8%) where the librarian reported to someone (frequently an English teacher, but in one instance the Head's personal assistant) who was not a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

The Senior Management Levers

When we turn our attention to a comparison of the ultra proactive and proactive library managers with the others, the effect of the 'senior management lever' begins to appear in Table 1, where the chi-square analysis under Table 1 indicates significant differences in the relation between senior management supervision and the levels of proactivity.

Table 1. Senior management supervision

Role	Ultra Proactive (%)	Proactive (%)	Proactive and ultra-proactive (%)	Other librarians (%)
School Head	20 (11)	23 (11.6)	43 (11.3)	45 (10.7)
Deputy Head	64 (35.2)	62 (31.2)	126 (33.1)	100 (23.8)
Assistant Head	40 (22)	44 (22.1)	84 (22)	74 (17.6)
All Heads/ Deputy/Assistant Heads	124 (68.1)	129 (64.8)	253 (66.4)	219 (52)
Others	57(31.3)	68 (34.2)	125 (32.8)	184 (43.7)
Not specified	1(0.5)	2 (1)	3 (0.8)	18 (4.3)
Totals	182 (100)	199 (100)	381 (100)	421 (100)

$\chi2$ (df =14 N=803) = 29.280, p < .01

More than two-thirds of the two proactive groups reported to an Assistant Head or higher level compared with a little over a half of the other respondents, which again was significantly different using chi square analysis[viii]. Whatever the level of reporting, this is of little use without adequate access to the designated person.

Access was fairly consistent across the different types of librarian. One typical Deputy Head was described as *"Very easy to contact. We have performance management twice a year and half-termly link meetings. I'm very satisfied."*

But do proactive library managers have better access to supervisor support and performance review? Table 2 compares the levels of access and review reported by the proactive and other groups:

Table 2. Access to senior management and review meetings

Access Level	Ultra-Proactive (%)	Proactive (%)	Proactive and Ultra-Proactive (%)	Other librarians (%)
Adequate access incl. regular review meetings	73 (40.1)	57 (28.6)	130 (34.1)	85 (20.1)
Adequate access incl. occasional review meetings	55 (30.2)	72 (36.2)	127 (33.3)	104 (24.6)
Subtotal	128 (70.3)	129 (64.8)	257 (67.5)	189 (44.8)
Adequate informal access	35 (19.2)	30 (15.1)	65 (17.1)	110 (26.1)
Sporadic/little/ no access	19 (10.4)	38 (19.1)	57 (15)	109 (25.8)
Not specified	0 (0)	2 (1)	2 (0.5)	14 (3.3)
Total	182 (100)	199 (100)	381 (100)	422 (100)

χ^2 (df = 8 N=803) = 57.120, $p < .01$

The contrast between the proactive groups (and particularly the ultra proactive respondents) and the other library managers is striking here (χ^2 = 41.663, p < .001). Clearly, accessible school senior managers are an important element in encouraging school librarians to "be adventurous."

The Planning Levers

How strategic are the managers of school libraries in their own right? A possible indication of aspiration beyond the operational level might be whether policy and development documents are in place. However, there was no statistically significant difference between the qualified librarians and the others in whether an active library policy was in place that had been approved by the Senior Leadership Team or governors and was used to guide the library strategy.

If having a library policy in place was not significant, it was important to have a formally approved library development plan in place, usually linked to the school improvement plan and being used to drive the development of the library. Over 55% of the qualified librarians had such a plan, compared with 43.1% of the other categories[ix].

The proactive groups stood out even more in contrast to the reactive group in exploiting both library policies and development plans, as shown in the next two tables:

Table 3. The School Library Policy

Policy Type	Ultra Proactive (%)	Proactive (%)	Proactive and Ultra-Proactive (%)	Other librarians (%)
Policy in place and approved by school senior management team/governors	80 (44)	65 (32.7)	145 (38.1)	106 (25.1)
Policy in place and used to guide library strategy	65 (35.7)	60 (30.2)	125 (32.8)	90 (21.3_
Subtotals	145 (79.7)	125 (62.8)	270 (70.9)	196 (46.4)
Policy in place but not implemented/not fully implemented	23 (12.6)	35 (17.6)	58 (15.2)	104 24.6
None/Not specified	14 (7.7)	39 (19.6)	53 (13.9)	122 (28.9)
Totals	182 (100)	199 (100)	381 (100)	422 (100)

$\chi 2$ (df= 6 N=803) = 62.377, $p < .01$

More than three-quarters of the ultra proactive group were being aided by an active school library policy, compared with less than half of the "other librarians".

Table 4. The school library development plan

Development Plan Type	Ultra Proactive (%)	Proactive (%)	Proactive and Ultra-Proactive (%)	Other librarians (%)
Plan in place and approved by school senior management team/governors	41 (22.5)	33 (16.6)	74 (19.4)	41 (9.7)
Plan in place and linked to school improvement plan	65 (35.7)	37 (18.6)	102 (26.8)	52 (12.4)
Plan in place and used to drive the development of the library/LRC	31 (17)	42 (21.1)	73 (19.2)	62 (14.7)
Subtotal	137 (75.3)	112 (56.3)	249 (65.4)	155 (36.8)
Plan in place mainly to meet external inspection requirements/not fully implemented/ not implemented	12 (6.6)	29 (14.6)	41 (10.8)	91 (21.6)
None/Not specified	33 (18.1)	58 (29.1)	91 (23.9)	175 (41.6)
Total	182 (100)	199 (100)	381 (100)	421 (100)

$\chi 2$ (df= 8 N=803) = 94.468, p < .01

As Table 4 shows, more than twice as many of the ultra proactive group had fully embraced the school library development plan than had reactive library managers.

The Library Manager's Vision Lever

School librarians have many roles of course, from liaising with teachers or exploiting ICT and Internet access to information, to deploying resources to support teaching and learning or basic organization of the library and its environment.

When we asked respondents what they thought was the most important aspect of their role as librarian, the two most frequently mentioned activities were promoting reading for pleasure and developing information literacy work in the school. More than twice as many of

the qualified librarians mentioned information literacy work than did other categories of respondent (33.1% as compared to 15.9%).

How closely does the library manager's vision of their main role reflect any tendency to be proactive in practice?

Table 5. The library manager's vision of the job (N=803)

Role	Ultra Proactive (%)	Proactive (%)	Proactive and ultra-proactive (%)	Other librarians (%)
Information Literacy (IL)	23 (12.6)	13 (6.5)	36 (9.4)	16 (3.8)
IL then Reading	10 (5.5)	9 (4.5)	19 (5.0)	13 (3.1)
Both Equally	10 (5.5)	7 (3.5)	17 (4.5)	12 (2.8)
Reading then IL	9 (4.9)	13 (6.5)	22 (5.8)	19 (4.5)
Reading	34 (18.7)	46 (23.1)	80 (21.0)	101 (23.9)
Reading/Information Literacy (five categories above)	86 (47.3)	88 (44.2)	174 (45.7)	161 (38.2)
Learning support	48 (26.4)	50 (25.1)	98 (25.7)	83 (19.7)
Other	31 (17.0)	32 (16.1)	63 (16.5)	89 (21.1)
Not specified	17 (9.3)	29 (14.6)	46 (12.1)	89 (21.1)
Total	182 (100.0)	199 (100.0)	381 (87.9)	422 (100.0)

$\chi 2$ (*df* = 18 N=803) = 40.939, p < .01

Compared with the other levers reviewed here, identifying reading for pleasure and information literacy as the most important roles does not strongly differentiate between proactive and reactive library managers. This may be because the chosen categorizations reflected in table 5 do not sufficiently distinguish between a wide range of complex individual responses to an open question.

A somewhat different picture emerges if we focus on information literacy responses by looking at the first three lines of data in this table. Forty-three ultra-proactive respondents (23.6%) identified information literacy as the most, or one of the two most important aspects of their role. This was almost twice the proportion of proactive respondents (14.6%) and two and a half times the proportion of the "reactive" library managers (9.7%). However, we did not feel able to argue that information literacy development is more important than promoting reading and only 113 people offered information literacy as a 'most important aspect of their role' (14.1% of the total respondents). Even if the respondents who identified information literacy development as their second priority after reading for pleasure are included this only accounts for 19.1% of all respondents.

The Professional or Academic Qualification Lever

Three hundred and fifty two of the survey respondents (43.8%) were qualified librarians, 47 (5.9%) held dual qualifications in education and librarianship, 27 (2.6%) were teachers who had been assigned additional responsibility for day-to-day management and operation of the library, 87 (10.8%) had a higher education qualification in another subject discipline (i.e. not librarianship or education) and 248 (30.9%) were neither qualified librarians nor graduates. 69 respondents (8.6%) did not respond to this question.

Qualified librarians, for the purposes of our reports, are people with a current or former qualification from the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals or its predecessor the Library Association, and/or a university degree in Library and Information Studies (or equivalent). The argument for including lapsed members of CILIP (or of the LA) is that the professional training, continuing professional development and awareness raising of these bodies should have sensitized current and former members to the main issues and professional approaches in school libraries.

We have already drawn attention to various differences between qualified librarians and other library managers earlier in this report. What is the relationship between being a qualified librarian and a proactive one?

Table 6. Academic and professional qualifications for the job and proactivity (N=803)

Qualification	Ultra Proactive (%)	Proactive (%)	Proactive/ ultra-proactive (%)	Other respondents (%)
Professionally/ academically qualified librarian	100 (35.5)	96 (48.2)	196 (40.7)	156 (37.0)
Dual-qualified (as teacher and librarian)	14 (5.0)	16 (8.0)	30 (6.2)	17 (4.0)
All qualified librarians (both categories above)	114 (40.4)	112 (56.3)	226 (47.0)	173 (41.0)
Librarian with non-library academic qualifications	17 (6.0)	28 (14.1)	45 (9.4)	42 (10.0)
Unqualified library manager	147 (52.1)	54 (27.1)	201 (41.8)	147 (34.8)
All non-library qualified library managers (two previous categories)	164 (58.2)	82 (41.2)	246 (51.1)	189 (44.8)
Not specified	4 (1.4)	5 (2.5)	9 (1.9)	60 (14.2)
Total	282 (100.0)	199 (100.0)	481 (100.0)	422 (100.0)

χ2 (*df* = 8 N=803) = 55.537, *p* < .01

Thirty of the 47 dual-qualified librarians (63.8%) were classified as proactive or ultra-proactive. Expressed somewhat differently, 226 of the 399 qualified librarians (56.6%) who responded to the surveys were categorised as proactive or ultra proactive, compared to 41.0% of other library managers.

Summary of the Key Findings: How Well Did the Levers Work?

Earlier parts of this report have shown that qualified or dual-qualified as librarians tend to be more proactive in several of the areas addressed in this research. Is there a single defining characteristic of proactivity? Apparently not, if we look at the percentage differences between the proactive groups and the other respondents in Table 7 below – five out of six levers show a greater statistically significant difference between the proactive respondents and the reactive respondents.

If we compare the responses from the library managers who we have categorized as proactive or ultra proactive with the other responses, four out of five levers (except vision regarding reading/information literacy) appear to be relevant, as Table 7 illustrates.

Table 7. Comparison between levers for Proactive and Reactive library managers (N=803)

Lever	Proactive and Ultra-proactive (%)	Reactive respondents (%)	Difference (%)	x^2
Library Planning Plan in place and approved/ linked to SIP/used	249 (65.4)	156 (37.0)	28.4	64.546***
Policy in place and approved/ used	270 (70.9)	196 (46.4)	24.4	49.029***
Access to Senior Management Adequate access with regular/ occasional review meetings	257 (67.5)	189 (44.8)	22.7	41.663***
Librarian Qualifications Professionally/academically qualified librarians	271 (71.1)	215 (50.9)	20.2	14.851***
Senior Management Supervision Report to Heads/ Deputy/ Assistant Heads	253 (66.4)	219 (51.9)	14.5	17.395***
Librarian's Vision of the Role Vision has focus on Reading/ Information Literacy	211 (55.4)	221 (52.4)	3.0	0.802

*** $p < .001$

In other words, as illustrated in Table 7, in comparison to reactive respondents, proactive and ultra-proactive library managers have more library plans in place, more access to senior management, have specific librarian qualifications, and report to senior management. An even stronger contrast shows through if the ultra proactive responses are singled out and compared with the reactive replies:

Table 8. Planning, management, qualifications and vision: comparison between ultra-proactive and reactive library managers (N=803)

Lever	Ultra-proactive (%)	Reactive (%)	Difference %	x^2
Library Planning Plan in place and approved/ linked to SIP/used	137 (75.3)	156 (37.0)	38.3	74.708***
Policy in place and approved/ used	145 (79.7)	196 (46.4)	33.2	57.100***
Access to Senior Management Adequate access with regular/ occasional review meetings	128 (70.3)	189 (44.8)	25.5	33.268***
Librarian Qualifications Professionally/academically qualified librarians	131 (72.0)	215 (50.9)	21.0	10.457***
Senior Management Supervision Report to Heads/ Deputy/ Assistant Heads	124 (68.1)	219 (51.9)	16.2	13.660***
Librarian's Vision of the Role: Vision has focus on Reading/ Information Literacy	103 (56.6)	221 (52.4)	4.2	0.912

*** $p < 0.001$

The same rank order appears in Table 8, but with a more marked difference between the 'ultra-proactive' group and the non-proactive respondents (notably in relation to having a library development plan in place/ approved by senior management/linked to the school improvement plan – reported by twice as many Ultra-proactive respondents as Reactive respondents). This suggests that the main levers identified here are of even greater importance in supporting the more proactive library managers.

The librarian's vision might be taken to be of lesser importance from this evidence but this may be because the chosen indicators were not sufficiently nuanced to distinguish between levels of proactivity signalled in what respondents say about reading or information literacy. Similarly, it was difficult to gauge from people's comments about other aspects of their roles that they nominated as "most important" whether such comments were likely to translate into proactive action.

Conclusions

In general, the questions asked in our surveys were sufficiently specific to enable us to begin to begin to distinguish between aspects of proactive and reactive library work. In particular we were able to show that the ultra proactive and proactive respondents did tend to engage more in specific types of activity.

One key issue here is that, although we were able to show relationships between proactive library managers and, for example, aspects of library planning or accessibility to senior management when needed, we were not able to demonstrate causal relationships. We cannot say from our evidence that if schools ensure that their library managers are professionally (or dually) qualified, produce library plans and development policies, are managed by senior school managers and have adequate formal and informal access to them, this will result in the library manager being proactive. We are also unable to say whether proactive library managers look for these conditions and introduce them or whether these are amongst the attributes of good schools. What we can show is that if all these features are in place school library managers are more frequently proactive than if they are not. We think that this is an important step forward and one which should be of interest to school library developers around the world.

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Acknowledgements

Endnotes

[i]   A baseline e-survey of primary school libraries (5 to 11 age group) was also conducted but is not reported on here.

[ii] $\chi2 = 36.764$, $p < .001$

[iii] $\chi2 = 9.709$, $p < .001$

[iv] $\chi2 = 20.530$, $p < .001$

[v] $\chi2 = 10.131$, $p < .01$

[vi] $\chi2 = 22.785$, $p < .001$

[vii] $\chi2 = 14.864$, $p < .001$

[viii] $\chi2 = 17.395$, $p < .001$

[ix] $\chi2 = 10.232$, $p < .05$