

2011

Market Research



Literacy Resourcing in English Maintained Schools

Full report

Resources in Education Series
Published May 2011

>>	Contents	Page
0.1	Acknowledgements	2
0.2	Introduction	3
1.0	Level and interest in literacy by students	4-7
1.1	Differences identified from weak literacy	4-5
1.2	Level of literacy skills	6
1.3	Changes in literacy provision	7
2.0	Literacy resource provision	8-10
2.1	Literacy resource provision - primary	8
2.2	Literacy resource provision - secondary	9
2.3	Importance of literacy budgets	10
3.0	Funding of literacy	11-12
3.1	Literacy funding - primary	11
3.2	Literacy funding - secondary	12
4.0	Spending on literacy resources	13-16
4.1	Funding impact - primary	13
4.2	Funding impact - secondary	14
4.3	Changes in spending - primary	15
4.4	Changes in spending - secondary	16
5.0	ICT and literacy teaching	17-18
5.1	Use of ICT in literacy teaching	17
5.2	Provision of ICT hardware for literacy teaching	18

0.1 Acknowledgements

We acknowledge with thanks the support of all those schools across England who completed the survey questionnaire. We are also indebted to all those involved in the survey process and in this publication. Special thanks are extended to the National Education Research Panel (NERP) head teachers for completing the online survey.

BESA acknowledges ownership, by all companies concerned, of the various trade and service marks used in the body of this research report.

The opinions expressed in this report are those of BESA and not necessarily those of its members.

Richard Connor Research Consultant,
British Educational Suppliers Association
Managing Partner, C3 Education & NERP

National Education Research Panel (NERP)

The National Education Research Panel (NERP), managed by C3 Education, provides the educational community with a gateway to the data and commentary required to develop resource use in schools and colleges. Accurate, timely information and analysis allows providers of products and services, to best meet the challenges of resourcing education.

Our highly profiled network of respondents and innovative surveying solutions and techniques, provide a unique insight into the resourcing of schools and colleges across the UK.

Copyright

"No copying or other dissemination of the contents of this report may be made without the written permission of BESA."

Report written by
Richard Connor
19.04.2011

0.2 Introduction

This document provides analysis of a questionnaire issued to English maintained schools in March 2011.

An online questionnaire was used to collect quantitative evidence from a broad range of schools across English local authorities. Online questionnaires were issued to 1,860 named literacy leaders from the National Education Research Panel. Literacy leaders include head teachers, deputy head teacher, heads of English and literacy co-ordinators.

The driver for this research came about from an All-Party Parliamentary Group for Education request. The APPG for Education is a cross-party group of MPs and Peers that seeks to maintain dialogue between the education sector and Parliament. The APPG is holding an inquiry into the barriers to literacy and how these can be overcome. The findings from this requirement are contained within this report, along with information requested by education suppliers.

The aim of the research is to understand the views of primary and secondary schools on a range of issues relating to literacy and associated resourcing.

Key facts

Research conducted

Mar '11

Survey type

Pre-profiled Online

Directed to

Literacy leaders

Questionnaire sent to contacts (qty.)

1,860

Responses (verified)

584

Response rate

31.4%

Table 0.2 Sampling and population

	Sample	NERP members contacted	% Response	Population
Schools				
Primary	426	1400	30.4%	17,020
Secondary	158	460	34.3%	3,336
Total	584	1,860	31.4%	20,356

1.1 Differences identified from weak literacy

Literacy leaders are very likely to indicate that they identify a significant variation in view between primary school pupils with weak literacy skills and those with strong literacy skills. Teachers are most likely to identify a difference in the value of being able to read and write accurately. This attribute is likely to be of such significance given teachers' desire to ensure that pupils do read and write accurately.

In comparison, fewer teachers identify that there is a significant difference between weak and strong pupils when it comes to the importance of literacy to their future prospects. For some teachers (especially those teaching key stage one) there is more likely to be recognition of some difference rather than a significant difference.

Overall teachers consider there to be at least some differences between pupils with weak and those with strong literacy skills. On average only 6% of literacy leaders suggest that there is no real difference for any of the characteristics listed in Table 1.1.1.

Table 1.1.1

For each of the following characteristics, what level of difference do you feel there is between pupils you teach with weak literacy skills and those with very good literacy skills?

Primary school	No real difference	Some difference	Significant difference	Hard to say
The value of being able to read and write accurately	4%	12%	83%	2%
The value in being understood by adults	8%	42%	46%	4%
Their enjoyment of literacy	6%	24%	67%	3%
The importance of literacy to their future prospects	5%	35%	59%	1%
Understanding the importance of literacy in developing other skills	7%	21%	69%	3%

Key facts

Primary schools

No real difference

4%

indicate no real difference in the value of being able to read and write accurately

Significant difference

83%

indicate a significant difference in the value of being able to read and write accurately

1.1 Differences identified from weak literacy

When secondary school literacy leaders were invited to answer the same set of questions it became clear that there is a diversity of opinion. Thirty percent of teachers indicate that there is no real difference in the value of being understood by adults – compared to only 8% when focusing on primary pupils. There is also some indication that pupils in primary schools are less likely to show differences in their enjoyment of literacy based on either weak or strong literacy skills.

The differences are most likely to come about in understanding the importance of literacy in developing other skills, where two-thirds of secondary teachers note a significant difference. A similar percentage of literacy leaders see a significant difference between the groups when it comes to the importance of literacy to their job prospects.

Key facts

Secondary schools

No real difference

30%

indicate no real difference in the value of being understood by adults

Significant difference

60%

indicate a significant difference in the value of being able to read and write accurately

Table 1.1.2

For each of the following characteristics, what level of difference do you feel there is between pupils you teach with weak literacy skills and those with very good literacy skills?

Secondary school	No real difference	Some difference	Significant difference	Hard to say
The value of being able to read and write accurately	14%	26%	60%	0%
The value in being understood by adults	30%	36%	32%	2%
Their enjoyment of literacy	21%	35%	42%	2%
The importance of literacy to their future prospects	21%	14%	65%	0%
Understanding the importance of literacy in developing other skills	18%	17%	65%	0%

1.2 Level of literacy skills

When responding schools were asked what percentages of pupils in their school have very good literacy skills, only 22% of primary and 16% of secondary schools gave a positive response. In addition to those with very weak literacy skills, a further quarter of primary and a third of secondary school pupils are considered to have weak literacy skills.

No parameters were considered in determining weak or good literacy skills, with the results being teachers' own view of pupil capability. Therefore, results may not relate to any formal assessment.

Overall, teachers from secondary schools are more likely to identify that pupils have weak or very weak literacy skills. Table 1.2 shows that 57% of pupils in secondary schools are classed as having weak or very weak literacy skills. In comparison, only 39% of pupils in primary schools are considered to have weak or very weak literacy skills. The results provide some insight into the age-range in which pupils increasingly begin to be identified as having weak literacy skills.

Table 1.2

What proportion of your students would you describe as having...

School type	Primary	Secondary
Very good literacy skills?	22%	16%
Good literacy skills?	39%	27%
Weak literacy skills?	24%	34%
Very weak literacy skills?	15%	23%
<i>Averages</i>		
Above average literacy skills	61%	43%
Below average literacy skills	39%	57%

Key facts

Primary schools

Very good literacy

22%

of pupils have very good literacy skills

Very weak literacy

15%

of pupils have very weak literacy skills

Secondary schools

Very good literacy

16%

of pupils have very good literacy skills

Very weak literacy

23%

of pupils have very weak literacy skills

1.3 Changes in literacy provision

If teachers had the opportunity to make a single change to the way literacy is provided, what would it entail? This is the question asked of teachers and rather than describe the change, respondents were offered a list of potential changes (see Table 1.3).

In primary schools there is some level of interest in the majority of opportunities; however, one-to-one support for struggling pupils is the choice of over a third of teachers. Teachers would also like to change the way literacy is taught, supported and assessed.

Around 12% of primary school teachers also suggest that there needs to be change in the extent to which literacy development is incorporated into lessons. Across secondary schools only 6% indicate that there needs to be a change in the extent to which literacy development is incorporated into lessons. Rather than change the way literacy is taught and supported, secondary school teachers are more likely to prefer the option to have one-to-one support for struggling pupils.

Secondary schools are more likely than primary schools to identify that there needs to be a change in the resources that are used. Overall, 10% of primary and 18% of secondary school literacy leaders would like to see changes in resourcing literacy.

Table 1.3

Given the opportunity, which of the following would you most like to change? (select one option only)

School type	Primary	Secondary
Extent to which literacy development is incorporated into lessons	12%	6%
The way that literacy is taught and supported	15%	7%
One-to-one support for struggling pupils	36%	47%
Gifted and talented support	11%	8%
The resources used	10%	18%
The way that literacy is assessed	15%	14%

Key facts

Primary schools

36%

indicate 1-1 support for struggling pupils

10%

indicate resources used

Secondary schools

47%

indicate 1-1 support for struggling pupils

18%

indicate resources used

2.1 Literacy resource provision - primary

When primary school teachers are asked questions referring to the adequacy of time, support, training and funding, it is rare that respondents will indicate a positive outcome. Therefore, for this question, it is the relative difference in views that is important in determining the sufficiency of provision.

Primary teachers are significantly more likely to conclude that budgets for resources are completely insufficient, than identify an insufficiency in training and continuous professional development or interaction with and support from other staff. The finding is interesting as in the previous section (Section 1.3) primary school teachers were least likely to identify resources as an opportunity they would most like to change. The outcome from these questions may be that teachers are happy with the types of literacy resources being used, but there is a significant need for more provision and access for pupils.

While 45% of primary literacy leaders believe that the interaction with and support from other staff is at least about right, that leaves more than half of all teachers suggesting that it is not enough, or that it is completely insufficient.

Key facts

Primary schools

About right or plenty

45%

indicate about the right amount or plenty of interaction with and support from other staff

Not enough or completely insufficient

83%

indicate that the level of budget for resourcing is not really enough or is completely insufficient

Table 2.1

Are your literacy resources for the year ahead sufficient to meet your school's needs?

Primary	Plenty	About right	Not really enough	Completely insufficient
Time allocated to literacy co-ordination	2%	36%	50%	12%
Interaction with and support from other staff	4%	41%	46%	9%
Training and continuous professional development	4%	38%	49%	9%
Budget for resources	2%	16%	55%	27%

2.2 Literacy resource provision - secondary

Secondary school teachers provide a similar view on literacy resourcing as primary schools. However, there are some differences. Secondary school teachers are significantly less likely to feel that there is the right amount of time allocated to literacy co-ordination. While more than a third of primary school literacy leaders consider the time allocated to literacy co-ordination to be about right, only 16% of English teachers in secondary schools feel the same. Thirty percent consider it to be completely insufficient.

As with primary schools, training and CPD is a concern in over half of schools. Of greater concern is the level of resource budgets. Few secondary schools consider budgets to be about right. Overall, 90% of secondary schools indicate that the level of budget for resourcing of literacy skills is either not enough or is completely insufficient. The results indicate that about a third of schools have great concerns over the sufficiency of time and resources to meet the needs of improving literacy skills.

In relative terms there appears to be more pressure from resource constraints in the secondary sector than in the primary sector.

Key facts

Secondary schools

About right or plenty

40%

indicate about the right amount or plenty of interaction with and support from other staff

Not enough or completely insufficient

90%

indicate that the level of budget for resourcing is not really enough or is completely insufficient

Table 2.2

Are your literacy resources for the year ahead sufficient to meet your school's needs?

Secondary	Plenty	About right	Not really enough	Completely insufficient
Time allocated to literacy co-ordination	2%	16%	52%	30%
Interaction with and support from other staff	2%	38%	48%	12%
Training and continuous professional development	8%	40%	47%	5%
Budget for resources	2%	8%	58%	32%

2.3 Importance of literacy budgets

In the previous sections (2.1 and 2.2) the majority of schools believe that there is not enough resourcing for literacy skills. The next part of the survey asked which of four resource types they would like to see increased. It is clear that secondary schools would like to see greater budget for resources, as opposed to a requirement for more training and CPD courses. Around a quarter of secondary school literacy leaders would like to see more time allocated to literacy co-ordination.

The requirement for primary school literacy leaders is more likely to be focused on training and CPD, rather than time allocated to literacy co-ordination. Even so, as with secondary school responses, there is a requirement for a greater budget for resources.

Those schools choosing budgets for resources identified a wide-range of potential purchases from the general renewal of resources, to new interactive media and specialised programmes for reading recovery. The general consensus is the need for more resources that cover a broader spectrum of ability to ensure that all abilities are catered for.

Table 2.3

If you could increase availability of one of the following, which would you choose? (select one option only)

School type	Primary	Secondary
Time allocated to literacy co-ordination	16%	24%
Interaction with and support from other staff	28%	20%
Training and continuous professional development	19%	8%
Budget for resources	37%	48%

Key facts

Primary schools

37%

prefer budget for resources

16%

prefer time allocated to literacy co-ordination

Secondary schools

48%

prefer budget for resources

8%

prefer training and CPD

3.1 Literacy funding - primary

When primary school literacy leaders were asked to identify if funding for literacy learning resources would be adequate in 2011/12, there was a general consensus that provision will be inadequate. This type of finding is usual when teachers are asked about funding. It is the relative differences that can identify where there are more likely to be particular concerns over funding. In the case of primary schools it is in funding for special needs resources.

Only 15% of respondents record that funding for 2011/12 will be about right, while only 2% indicate that it will be entirely adequate. Overall, more than half of primary schools note that funding will be inadequate across all the areas identified in Table 3.1. However, a significantly higher percentage of primary literacy leaders believe that funding for special needs will be entirely inadequate. In comparison, significantly fewer schools note that funding for the foundation stage will be entirely inadequate.

Key facts

Primary schools

FS
7%
indicate entirely inadequate

SEN
28%
indicate entirely inadequate

Table 3.1

Do you anticipate that in 2011/12 funding for literacy learning resources will be adequate in the following areas?

Primary school	Entirely adequate	About right	Inadequate	Entirely inadequate
FS	3%	34%	56%	7%
KS1	2%	18%	65%	14%
KS2	1%	23%	63%	13%
Gifted and talented	2%	29%	53%	16%
Special needs (SEN)	2%	15%	56%	28%

3.2 Literacy funding - secondary

In secondary schools the findings indicate that it is in key stage 3 that there is most likely to be an inadequacy of literacy resources – rather than in special needs, as identified by primary schools.

Overall, secondary schools are more likely than primary schools to identify that funding for learning resources is adequate. However, it remains the case that the majority of secondary schools consider funding to be inadequate, with over a fifth indicating that funding is entirely inadequate in most areas of literacy teaching.

Key facts

Secondary schools

KS3

27%

indicate entirely inadequate

SEN

8%

indicate entirely inadequate

Table 3.1

Do you anticipate that in 2011/12 funding for literacy learning resources will be adequate in the following areas?

Secondary school	Entirely adequate	About right	Inadequate	Entirely inadequate
KS3	4%	21%	48%	27%
KS4	12%	42%	26%	20%
A-level	17%	42%	21%	20%
Vocational	9%	32%	37%	22%
Special needs (SEN)	11%	40%	41%	8%

4.1 Funding impact - primary

Primary schools were asked to identify if any anticipated spending re-assignments or cuts in 2011/12 might impact on their ability to purchase resources directed towards literacy. When teachers are asked this type of question involving the projection of funding cuts, there is a tendency to be concerned that all resources will be impacted. Therefore, for the purposes of reading the results in Table 4.1 it is important to review the relative differences in the resources. These differences can become more pronounced if funding cuts are realised and spending needs are to be reduced from that planned.

Teachers are most likely to identify a significant impact on library resources if there is a contraction in spending. However, once those indicating some impact are included, nearly all teachers think that there will be an impact on teacher resource spending from any contraction.

It is interesting to note that the views on printed classroom materials and digital content are broadly similar. Historically it has been noted that digital content is more likely to be impacted. These results indicate that teachers have integrated digital content into the teaching and learning process and value the resource as much as printed classroom materials.

Key facts

Primary schools

Teacher resources

94%

indicate some or significant impact

Library resources

91%

indicate some or significant impact

Digital content

78%

indicate some or significant impact

Table 4.1

Will any anticipated spending re-assignments or cuts in 2011/12 impact on the ability to purchase items in the following areas?

Primary school	Significant impact	Some impact	Little impact	No impact
Printed classroom materials	30%	53%	15%	2%
Teacher resources	47%	47%	5%	1%
Library resources	52%	39%	9%	1%
Digital content	32%	46%	21%	1%

4.2 Funding impact - Secondary

Secondary schools were asked to indicate if spending re-assignments or cuts will impact on literacy resources. In comparison to primary schools, secondary schools are more likely to be concerned about the impact on digital content resources from any re-assignment or cut in funding during 2011/12. Over a quarter indicate a significant impact on digital content spending from anticipated spending re-assignments or cuts in 2011/12. While a fifth of teachers also indicate a significant impact in spending on printed classroom materials, relatively few schools indicate some impact.

Secondary schools are also much less likely than primary schools to identify a significant impact on library resource spending. Table 4.2 shows that more than half of secondary schools anticipate little or no impact on printed classroom material spending from any cuts in 2011/12. In comparison only 11% of teachers expect little or no impact on digital content spending in 2011/12.

The results suggest that while digital content use for literacy purposes is well-embedded into the curriculum there are clear concerns that spending re-assignments or cuts in 2011/12 will impact on the ability to provide digital content for literacy.

Key facts

Secondary schools

Digital content

89%

indicate some or significant impact

Library resources

66%

indicate some or significant impact

Printed classroom materials

46%

indicate significant impact

Table 4.2

Will any anticipated spending re-assignments or cuts in 2011/12 impact on the ability to purchase items in the following areas?

Secondary school	Significant impact	Some impact	Little impact	No impact
Printed classroom materials	20%	26%	30%	24%
Teacher resources	25%	32%	16%	27%
Library resources	14%	52%	23%	11%
Digital content	27%	62%	7%	4%

4.3 Changes in spending - primary

In addition to asking teachers about the potential impact on literacy resources from any anticipated spending re-assignments or cuts, literacy leaders in primary schools were asked to identify any changes in spending on literacy resources during 2011/12, when compared to spending in 2010/11. The results in Table 4.3 indicate that, across all the product categories, a third of teachers anticipate much less spending in 2011/12.

As previously indicated in Chapter 4.1 teachers do tend to be overly pessimistic about projected spending. The most relevant indicator is in the differences between the product categories. It is interesting to note that teachers are more likely to identify less spending on teacher resources. The finding corroborates the indication in Table 4.1 that literacy teachers anticipate a greater impact on teacher resources from any spending cuts.

Overall Table 4.3 indicates that few teachers are expecting to be in a position to spend more on literacy resources in 2011/12 than achieved in 2010/11.

Key facts

Primary schools

Library resources

53%

much less or no spend

Digital content

45%

much less or no spend

Printed classroom materials

41%

much less or no spend

Table 4.3

For the following resources, indicate the anticipated change in spending in 2011/12 compared to last year (2010/11).

Primary school	Much more	A little more	Same	A little less	Much less	No spend
Printed classroom materials	3%	7%	13%	37%	33%	8%
Teacher resources	5%	3%	13%	32%	40%	7%
Library resources	5%	4%	10%	27%	39%	14%
Digital content	4%	7%	11%	34%	32%	13%

4.4 Changes in spending - secondary

When secondary school teachers were asked to identify anticipated spending levels in 2011/12, a significant proportion indicate the same level of spending as in 2010/11. However, across all categories teachers are more likely to suggest less spending rather than more spending.

The greatest change is anticipated to be in digital content. Table 4.4 records only 18% of secondary schools anticipating spending the same or more on digital content for literacy during 2011/12.

Key facts

Secondary schools

Digital content

45%

much less or no spend

Library resources

33%

much less or no spend

Printed classroom materials

26%

much less or no spend

Table 4.4

For the following resources, indicate the anticipated change in spending in 2011/12 compared to last year (2010/11).

Secondary school	Much more	A little more	Same	A little less	Much less	No spend
Printed classroom materials	3%	5%	36%	30%	22%	4%
Teacher resources	8%	6%	38%	20%	17%	11%
Library resources	2%	2%	32%	31%	12%	21%
Digital content	6%	5%	7%	37%	28%	17%

5.1 ICT in literacy teaching - primary

The majority of primary schools use the ICT hardware listed in Table 5.1 in literacy lessons. It is also the case that the majority of teachers with access consider themselves to be well-resourced with the technology. In the case of laptop computers there are some that consider themselves under-resourced.

In comparison, very few literacy teachers with the technology indicate being under-resourced with desktop computers, interactive whiteboards (IWBs) or visualisers. Of all the listed technologies it is visualisers that literacy teachers are least likely to use. The results indicate that around 30% have no access to this technology in literacy lessons.

Key facts

Primary schools

IWBs

96%

make use in literacy lessons

Laptop computers

90%

make use in literacy lessons

Visualisers

71%

make use in literacy lessons

Table 5.1

Do you make use of the following ICT hardware during literacy lessons, and if so how well-resourced are you?

Primary school	Make use	Of which	Well-resourced	Adequately-resourced	Under-resourced
Desktop computers	84%		54%	42%	4%
Laptop computers	90%		67%	21%	12%
IWBs	96%		85%	13%	2%
Visualisers	71%		82%	16%	2%

5.2 ICT in literacy teaching - secondary

Literacy teachers in secondary schools are very likely to make use of computers and interactive whiteboards (IWBs) for teaching and supporting literacy. Compared to primary schools there is less use of visualisers. Just over half of literacy teachers indicate making use of the technology. In addition only half of those making use of the technology indicate being well-resourced with the technology.

Use of computers (both desktop and laptop) is almost universal, although teachers are more likely to feel well-resourced with desktop computers than laptop computers. A third of teachers expressly indicate being under-resourced with laptop computers. In comparison only 9% of teachers hold the same view when it comes to desktop computers.

Key facts

Secondary schools

IWBs

92%

make use in literacy lessons

Laptop computers

94%

make use in literacy lessons

Visualisers

53%

make use in literacy lessons

Table 5.2

Do you make use of the following ICT hardware during literacy lessons, and if so how well-resourced are you?

Secondary school	Make use	Of which	Well-resourced	Adequately-resourced	Under-resourced
Desktop computers	92%		65%	26%	9%
Laptop computers	94%		45%	22%	33%
IWBs	92%		71%	15%	14%
Visualisers	53%		51%	32%	17%

END

2011

Market Research



Literacy Resourcing in English Maintained Schools

Full report

Resources in Education Series
Published May 2011

Website: www.besa.org.uk
Media enquiries: Ray Barker - ray@besa.org.uk
© BESA 2011

£350 NET

Published by:
British Educational Suppliers Association
20 Beaufort Court
Admirals Way
London E14 9XL

