

## **Inquiry into school libraries and teacher librarians in Australian schools**



This submission has been prepared by the teacher librarians at Ogilvie High School, Tasmania.

Submitted by

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The following submission focuses on the current situation at Ogilvie High School. In this submission will address reference point 2.

### **Summary**

Ogilvie High has a well staffed and well resourced school library that is well used by the school community. Our above average NAPLAN results in all areas of literacy in both Grade 7 and Grade 9 aligns with the research that has demonstrated that qualified staff in a well resourced and active library increase student achievement.

### **Reference point 2: the future potential of school libraries and librarians to contribute to improved educational and community outcomes, especially literacy;**

Ogilvie High School has a vision of Creating Futures Together. The school was founded in 1937 and is an inclusive girls' government school located in an older inner city suburb of Hobart with a population of approximately a thousand students and staff. It is the largest high school in Tasmania, catering for Grade 7 to 10. We are proud of our heritage of academic, sporting and cultural excellence and strive to prepare young women for the 21st Century. The school's mission is to provide a positive and supportive environment which challenges all girls to maximise their educational opportunities, enabling them to be courageous, compassionate and confident women in a global society. We are committed to working in partnership with parents, teachers and students to

create a learning environment that focuses on individual needs while maintaining high expectations for all learners. The school's curriculum is rigorous but also offers students a wide range of choices to ensure their learning is personalised and relevant. Our School fosters strong community support including an active Alumni and School Association.

The library at Ogilvie High School is well supported by the school Principal, staff and students. The library is well staffed with two trained teacher librarians, two paraprofessional library technicians and a library aide. In addition the library is well funded and was recently upgraded with money provided by the parent association.

Research has shown that Student achievement is higher in schools with adequately staffed and resourced libraries and strong library programs. This is regardless of other socio-economic factors (Lonsdale, 2003) At Ogilvie the teacher librarians provide a strong program and a wide range of services to support the teachers and students. This includes:

- Reading Game – an activity to assist students choose novels they would like to read
- Library orientation for Grade 6 in the year before they attend High school
- Library orientation including ICT instruction for all Grade 7
- Online database instruction for all students and teachers
- Correct bibliography writing for all grades
- The Readers' Cup for the whole of grade 7 – a competition based on reading 6 novels and answering quizzes and interpreting the novels through a creative response
- Ad hoc help for students and teachers in the library
- Online help for students – any student can email a question to the teacher librarians for an answer within 24 hours
- Provision of resource collections on particular topics as required
- Lunchtime activities for students which regularly bring 70-90 students using the library every lunchtime
- The Library and teacher librarians have a role in the Literacy plan developed by Ogilvie High.

At Ogilvie we have a wide range of students from different backgrounds and abilities and as teacher librarians we make every effort to select age and

ability appropriate resources that match the curriculum in print, media and digital formats. In addition we try to read most of the fiction purchased in order to facilitate recommending reading to students and assist teachers in selecting appropriate books for students. We are proud of the quality of our collection, non-fiction, fiction and digital and are continually assessing relevance, currency and suitability. The students have high rates of borrowing, especially fiction.

The teacher librarians work collaboratively with all teachers in all subject areas. In addition we are key people in the provision of professional learning within the school. We are leaders in the areas of ICT and Information Literacy. We regularly present sessions at school professional learning meetings or to wider audiences including other teacher librarians, library technicians and other schools' teachers.

We believe that our work in all these areas has significantly contributed to our excellent Literacy results at Ogilvie. The table below was taken directly from the MySchool website. This demonstrates that our literacy results are above average in all areas in Grade 7 and all areas except spelling in grade 9 (the spelling result is average).

	Reading		Writing		Spelling		Grammar & Punctuation	
Year 7	<b>571</b>		<b>560</b>		<b>559</b>		<b>571</b>	
	SIM <b>540</b>	ALL <b>541</b>	SIM <b>534</b>	ALL <b>532</b>	SIM <b>538</b>	ALL <b>540</b>	SIM <b>540</b>	ALL <b>539</b>
Year 9	<b>602</b>		<b>585</b>		<b>579</b>		<b>588</b>	
	SIM <b>580</b>	ALL <b>580</b>	SIM <b>567</b>	ALL <b>569</b>	SIM <b>575</b>	ALL <b>576</b>	SIM <b>574</b>	ALL <b>574</b>

The Ogilvie High School 2009 NAPLAN literacy results taken from MySchool Website  
<http://www.myschool.edu.au/Main.aspx?PageId=0&SDRSchoolId=TASG000000237&DEFWRId=6786&CalendarYear=2009>

In addition our value to the school community can be seen in the following comments made by teachers and students at Ogilvie

As an English teacher at Ogilvie High School, I'm very appreciative of the knowledge of literature for young adults that our teacher librarians share and I enjoy discussing teaching and learning opportunities that may spring from engagement with particular books. I have valued the planned sessions that our teacher/librarians have run focused on genre and broadening the girls reading interests. I have been well supported as a teacher of history with locating reliable sources of information and I have called upon their expertise when teaching about verifying online sources of information in particular.

The students are fortunate to have the expertise and experience of two qualified teacher/librarians in the school. Girls have been well directed to new fiction, fiction by the same author or fiction of the same genre. They receive one-to-one help using TALIS to locate both fiction and non-fiction. The library is well used at recess and lunch times and there is a program of lunch time activities organised by the teacher librarians to keep them purposefully engaged in either projects or discussions. Many students also seek guidance with the use of technology such as the cameras and scanner.

**Janet Austin (English teacher)**

The Librarians and Library Staff always readily assist me in searching for items I need for preparing teaching and learning activities. These have included books, DVDs, audio/video equipment and most importantly a wealth of knowledge. Without someone willingly taking on the responsibility for recording important off air broadcasts, many of my most useful visual resources would not be available. I know I can always rely on one of your staff to assist me with both long term planning and those urgent requests which come from the reality of day to day teaching in a high school. Thank you again for always being so responsive to teachers needs. The Library staff are such a valuable resource in this school.

**Lesley Graham (Dance teacher)**

Working in tandem with you as a teacher librarian has deepened my students' awareness of themselves as readers and for those who find reading tough you have enabled them in a lovely way through this clear and very well prepared challenge.

The individual follow-up you provided the students will make a significant difference for the students' development as e-mail users and readers.

**Ros Teirney (English teacher)**

The Library Resource Centre is the hub of all activity at Ogilvie. It offers an enormous range of electronic and paper resources that are organised in such an efficient way as to make them easily accessible to staff and students alike. This accessibility is enhanced by the professional, dedicated, highly trained staff who are committed to student learning. They are innovative, constantly seeking new ways of engaging students and supporting staff, sensitive to the needs of students and inclusive of them in planning and organisation. During class times and breaks the library is a beehive of activity, but like all productive learning environments, this activity is controlled by good management and well established rules and procedures.

As an educational community we value continuous learning as an educational community and are fortunate to have librarians who take a leadership role in providing professional learning opportunities for staff. Not only do they contribute to the learning of others, but also model good practice by keeping their own learning current, thereby enhancing the benefit of their work in the School. We are indeed fortunate to have such a hard-working, enthusiastic and capable team organising our resources.

**Yvonne Bennett (Assistant Principal)**

I would like to say thank you for the library running the reading game. I am reading a book named "Boy meets girl" by Meg Cabot, it is a great book. It has lots of different people in it and they are talking over an e-mail system. I have never read a book before because I hated reading until I read this book. Now I really enjoy reading. Thank you so much

**Kylie (Grade 8)**

I enjoyed the library game today. It helped me look at new books that I had not thought of reading before. The books looked interesting and I look forward to getting them out

**Nina (Grade 8)**

I loved the game we played today, it was delightful to see everyone working together to finish before the time runs out. Thankyou again

**Kate (Grade 9)**

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Jill Budge

#### References

Lonsdale, M, (2003) *Impact of School Libraries on Student Achievement: a Review of the Research* <http://www.asla.org.au/research/Australia-review.htm> Sighted 14/4/2010