

SECTION FOUR

THE STORAGE OF MATERIALS

Shelves for Books

Books should be housed on shelves in such a way that pupils can easily reach the top shelf. This means that for school libraries the overall height of shelving should be:

for younger children 1200 mm (or 4 feet)

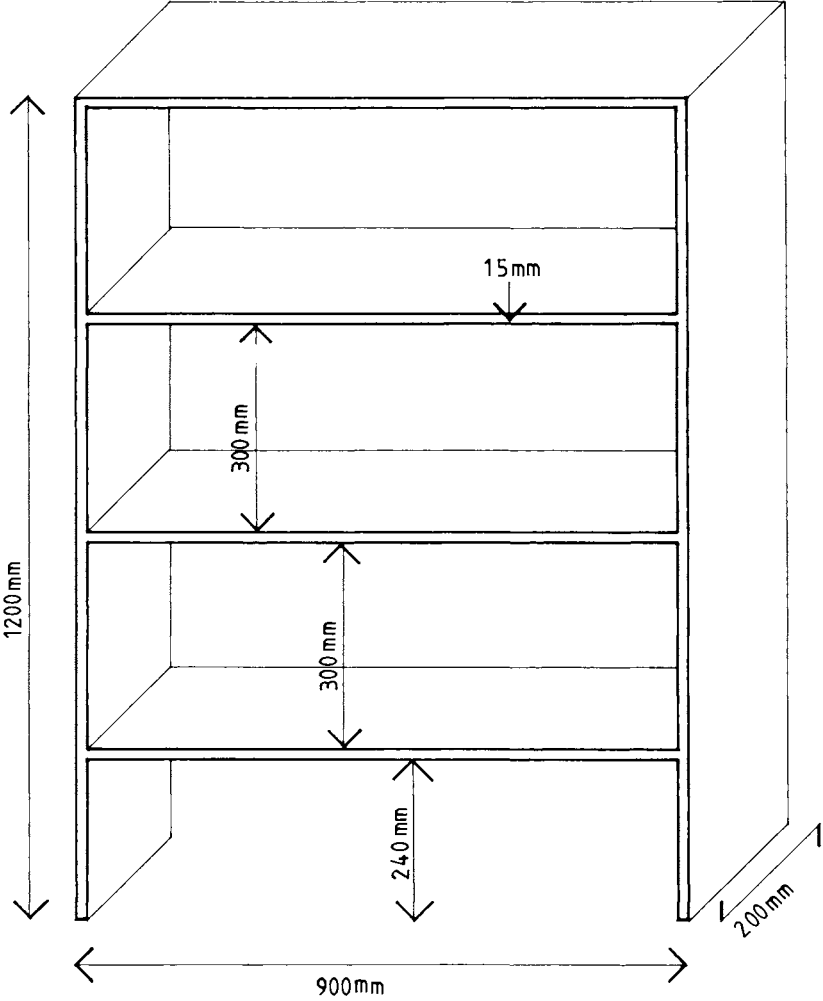
for older children 1950 mm (or 6ft. 6in)

It is a good idea, and will save trouble with later re-arrangements, if all shelving is made the same width and depth.

A suitable length of shelf is 900 mm (3 feet). If it is longer than this it will probably sink in the middle under the weight of books. From front to back of the shelf, a depth of 200 mm (8 inches) will house most books; but about 10-15% of the shelving should have a depth of 250 mm (10 inches) to hold larger books, such as encyclopedias and atlases. (See diagram 1). If the shelves are made of wood, the best paint to use on them is clear polyurethane paint.

Shelves are best made so that they can be moved upwards or downwards (adjustable shelving) to allow for changing needs as the library grows. (See diagram 2.) If this cannot be done, most books will fit on shelves which have a space of 300 mm (12 inches) between the surface of one shelf and the bottom of the shelf above. The bottom shelf should be well above floor level. This makes the books more accessible, helps to prevent them from being damaged, and makes the cleaning of the room easier. It is essential to clean the room and dust the shelves regularly so as to keep

down those insect pests which damage or destroy books. Where insect pests are common, shelves should be regularly sprayed with an insecticide.



*Diagram 1: Shelving
(for older children, increase height to 1950 mm)*

Many books will be more attractive to the reader if they are displayed so that the front cover can be seen. This is especially true of very thin books, which may be overlooked if shelved in the usual way. It is also true of periodicals.

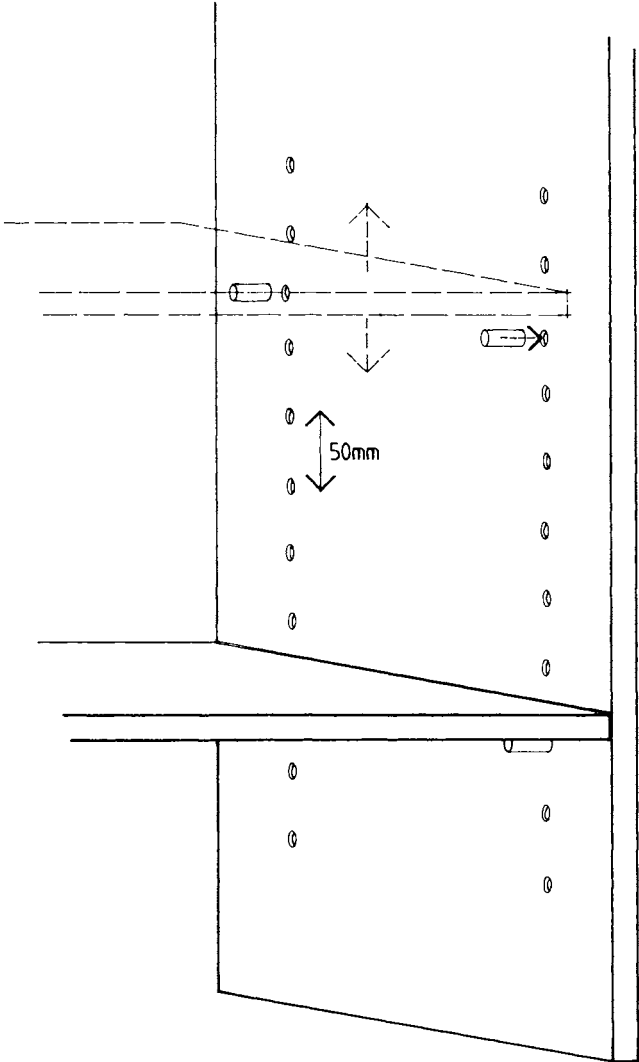


Diagram 2: Adjustable Shelving

It is therefore a good idea to have some shelves designed so that materials can be displayed in this way. Instead of each shelf being horizontal from front to back, display shelves are slanted, with the back higher than the front. A small lip is needed along the front edge to stop books and periodicals from slipping off. The same dimensions of the uprights can be used as for the other shelving, but because the display shelves are set at an angle, they need to be larger from front to back. Details are shown in diagram 3.

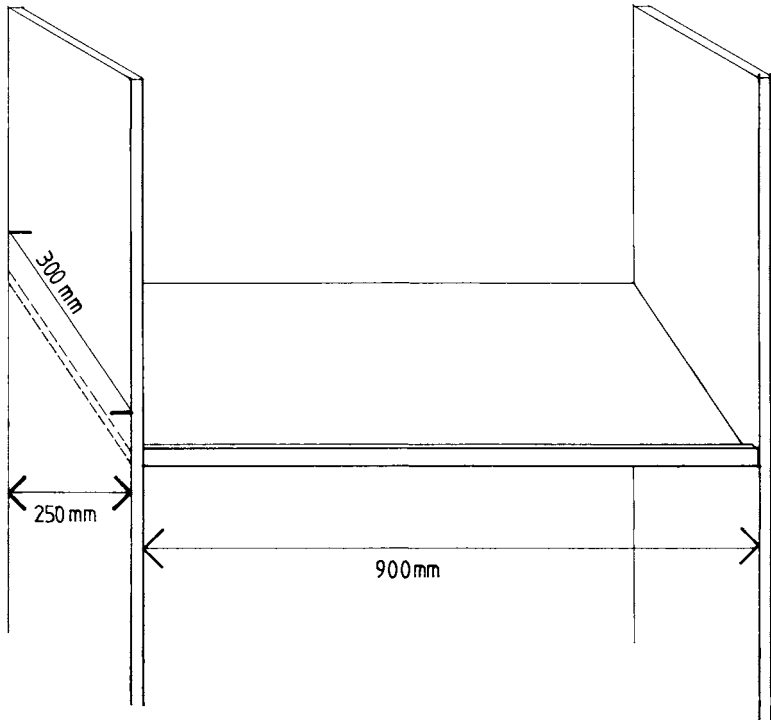


Diagram 3: Display Shelving

Before deciding to use this method, be sure that you have sufficient space in the library for your stock. Displaying books in this way takes up more space than the usual method, so only a small part of your stock can be shown like this.

Another good way of keeping thin books is to put them in a browser box. This is particularly useful for books for younger children. The box should be divided as shown in diagram 4, so that books do not fall into an untidy heap.

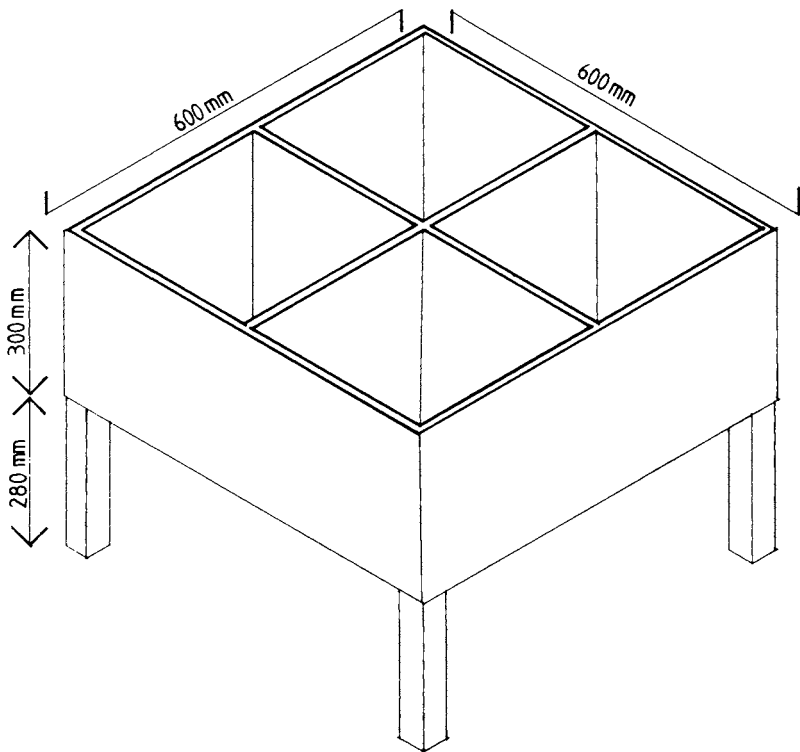


Diagram 4: Browser Box

Placing the Library Shelves

Two examples of ways in which shelves can be placed in a library are shown in diagrams 5a and 5b.

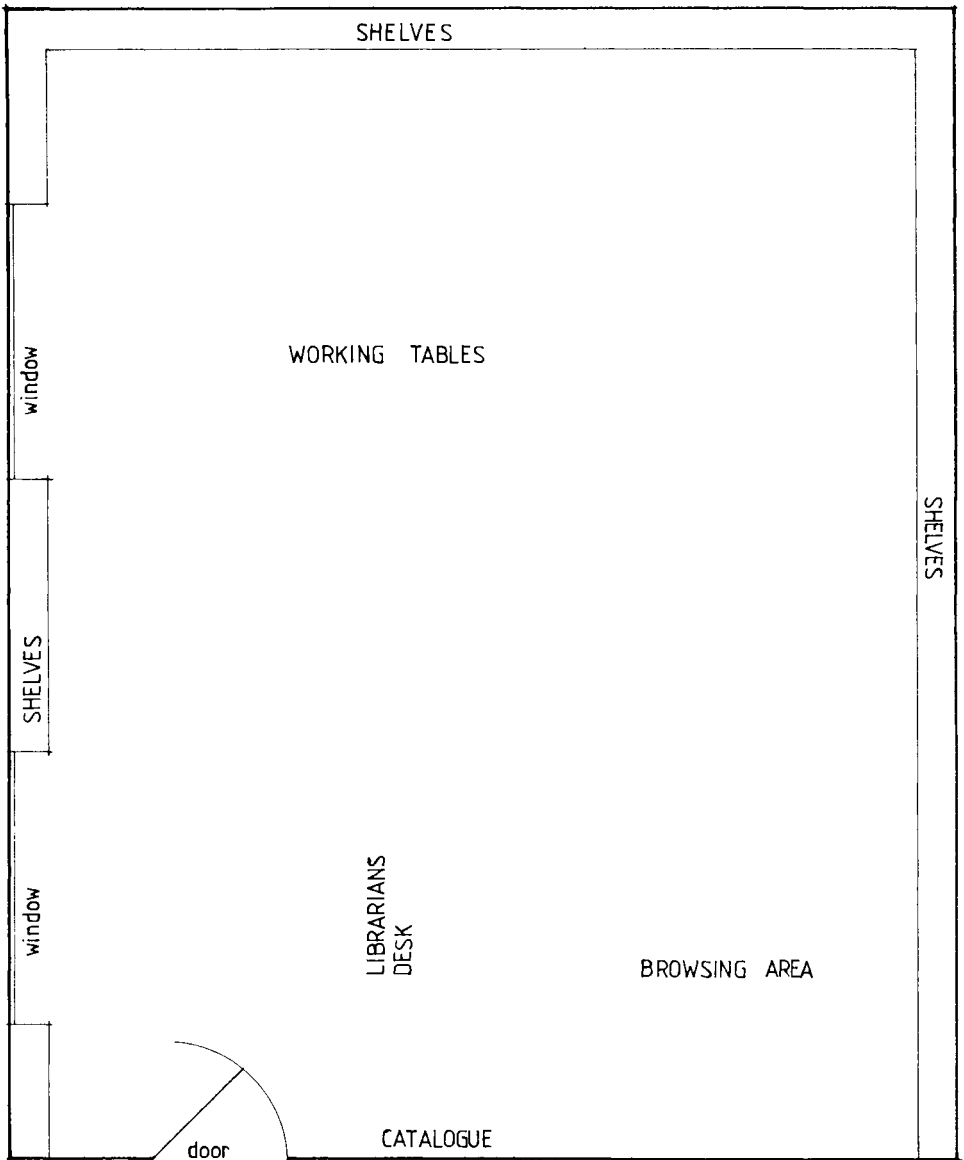


Diagram 5a: One Way of Placing Shelves in a Library

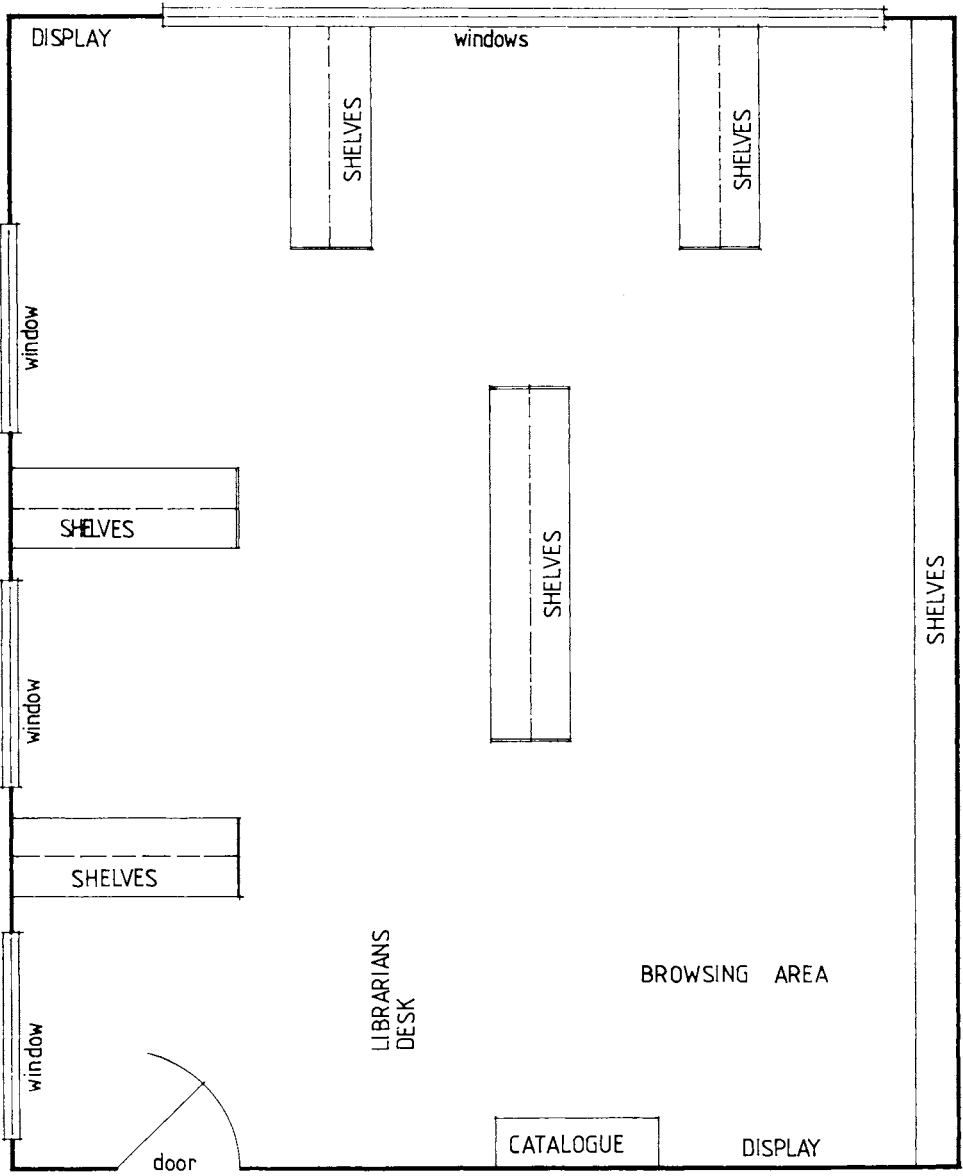


Diagram 5b: An Alternative Way of Placing Shelves

If the library room is suitable, place the shelves with their backs against the walls. This makes the best use of space, and leaves room for users to move about. The middle of the room can then be used for other purposes.

When this is not possible (e.g. in a room with many windows), one possibility is to put the shelves at right angles to the walls so as to form islands of shelving in the middle of the room. Any shelving used in this way should be at the lower height recommended (1200 mm) to ensure that all the library can be seen from the place where you work. Hidden corners are a temptation to misbehaviour and carelessness.

Although it is tempting to have runs of low shelving below big windows, avoid this if possible. Such shelves are likely to be cast in darkness by the sunlight through the window, and readers may ignore them.

Storing Non-Book Materials

Materials other than books require special provision for storage.

Storing Periodicals

Periodicals can be kept on sloping shelves as described for display shelving (diagram 3).

There are also special periodical display racks. One type, which is easy to make, is shown in diagram 6a. It allows periodicals to be shelved upright in rows, face forward. However, this design makes no provision for periodicals of different sizes. If the front of each row is made the right height for small periodicals (e.g. the size of this book), large periodicals will tend to fall forward. If the rows are made high enough to prevent this, small periodicals will disappear behind them.

A better type is shown in diagram 6b. In this case, a suitable number of flat surfaces, each 350 mm high by

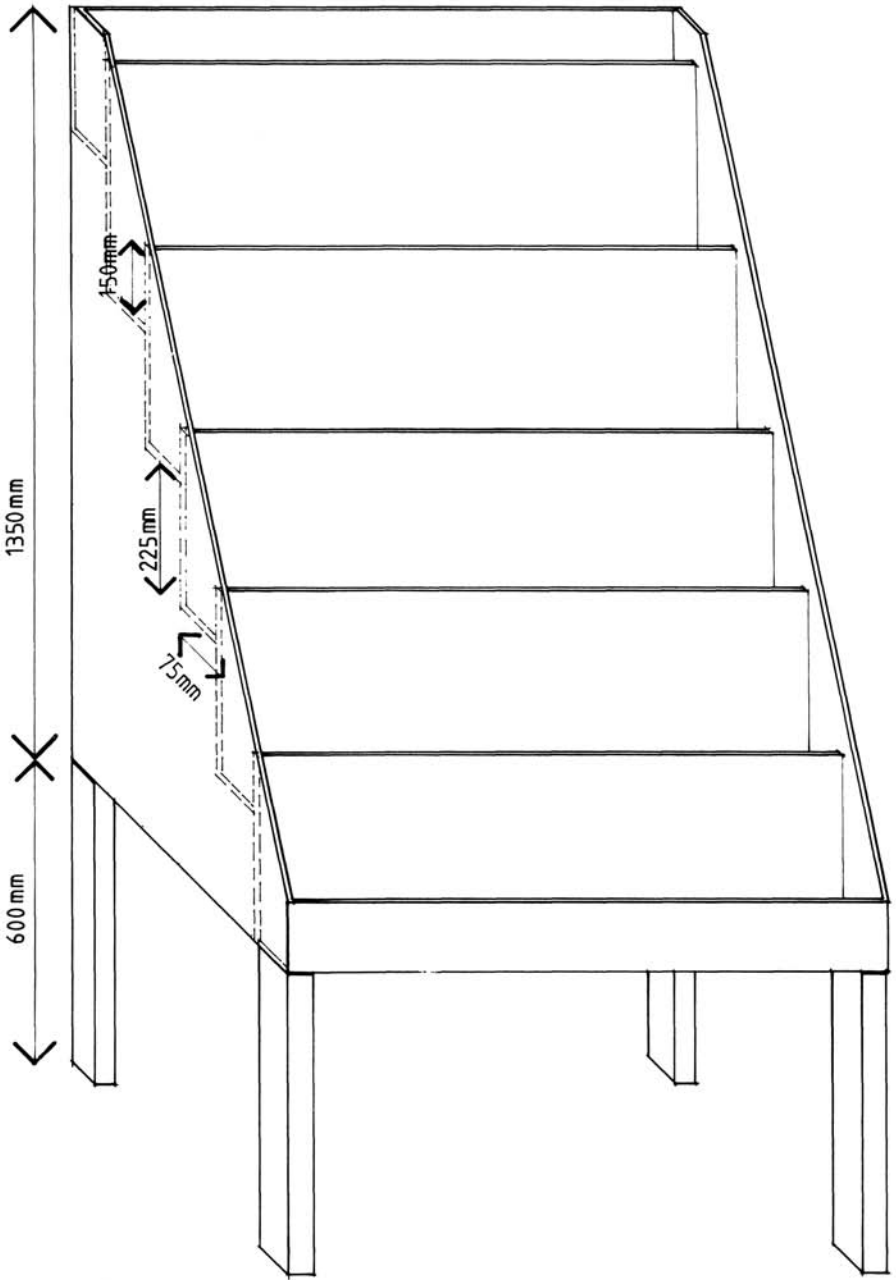


Diagram 6a: Traditional Type of Periodicals Rack

200 mm wide, are mounted on a backing board, at right angles to it. Each flat surface has a small lip at the lower end, and is mounted to a slight slope from the upright position. One periodical can then be shown, face forward, on each surface.

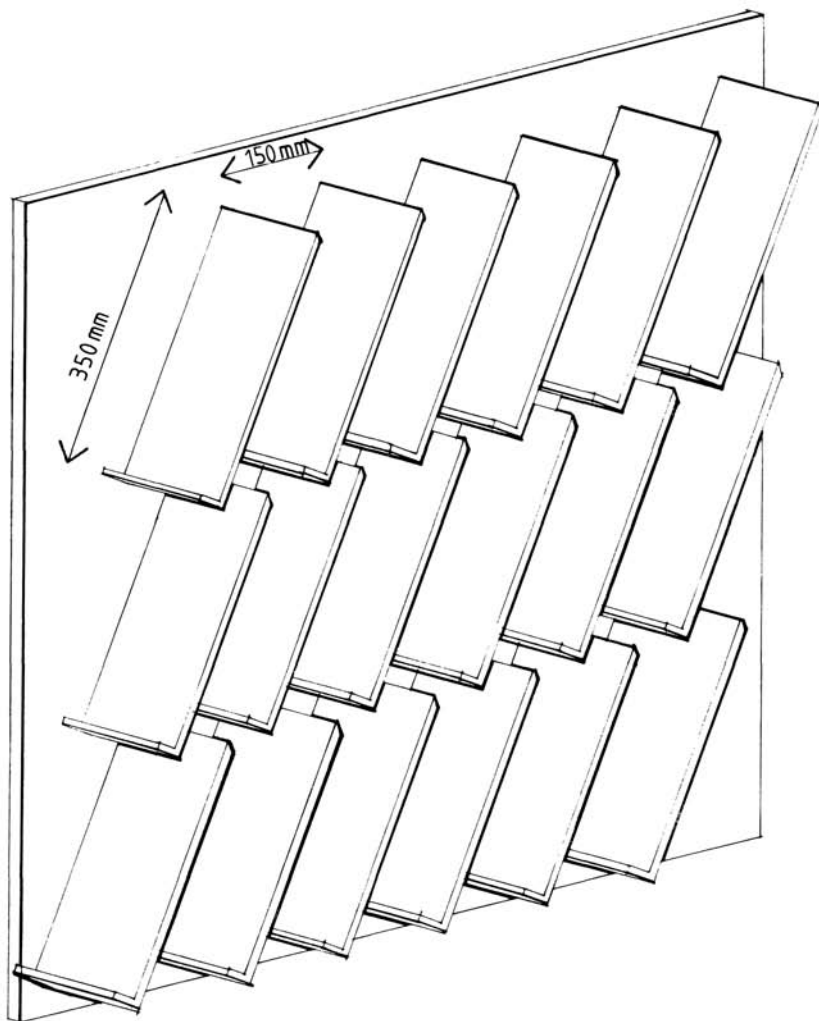


Diagram 6b: More Modern Type of Periodicals Rack

Storing Audio-Visual Materials

These present special problems according to their type, size and packaging. You may find it helpful to limit the forms in which non-book materials are kept. Some school libraries cut up and mount separate frames of filmstrips so as to make them into slides. Some library bookbinders produce book-shaped containers which accommodate slides, filmstrips and/or cassettes, and accompanying notes. These can be shelved like books. (See diagram 7).

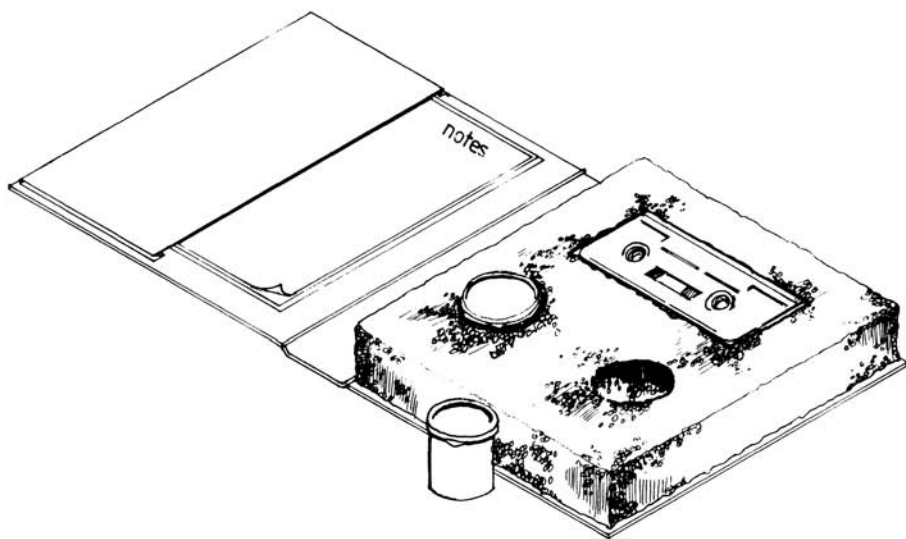


Diagram 7: Audio-Visual Materials Pack

When readers want to glance quickly through a book to see if it meets their needs, they can take it away from the shelf and look at it in comfort. Most non-book materials cannot be glanced through in the same way. An audio-tape cassette, for example, can only be judged by playing it on a machine. So it does not matter if a user cannot take it from a shelf. Keeping such material in a more secure form of housing is unlikely to cause great problems.

Filmstrips are normally packed in small metal containers. They may be filed in shallow drawers of metal office cabinets. (See diagram 8).

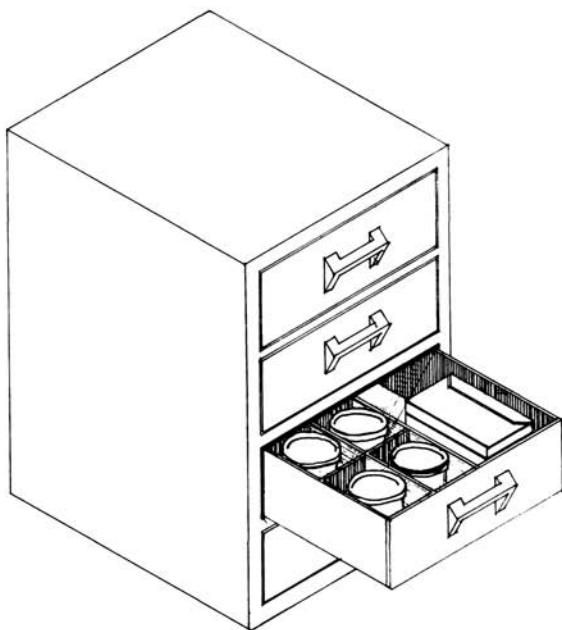


Diagram 8: Filmstrip Storage Cabinet

Slides are best inserted in special transparent holding sheets (each with a capacity of 10 or 20 slides) and stored in a binder (diagram 9) or filing cabinet (diagram 10).

Pamphlets, single sheets and illustrations can be kept in manilla (stiff card) wallets or pamphlet boxes, grouped by subject matter. The wallets can be housed in filing cabinets, or shelved like books.

Filing cabinets or other specialised storage furniture for non-book materials should be placed within sight of the librarian's desk so that these materials can be given special care against damage or loss.

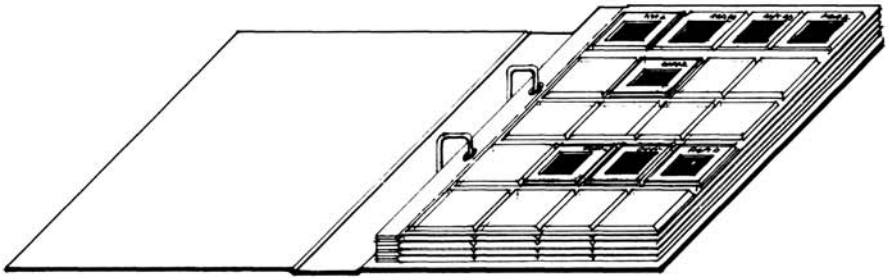


Diagram 9: Slide Storage in Binder

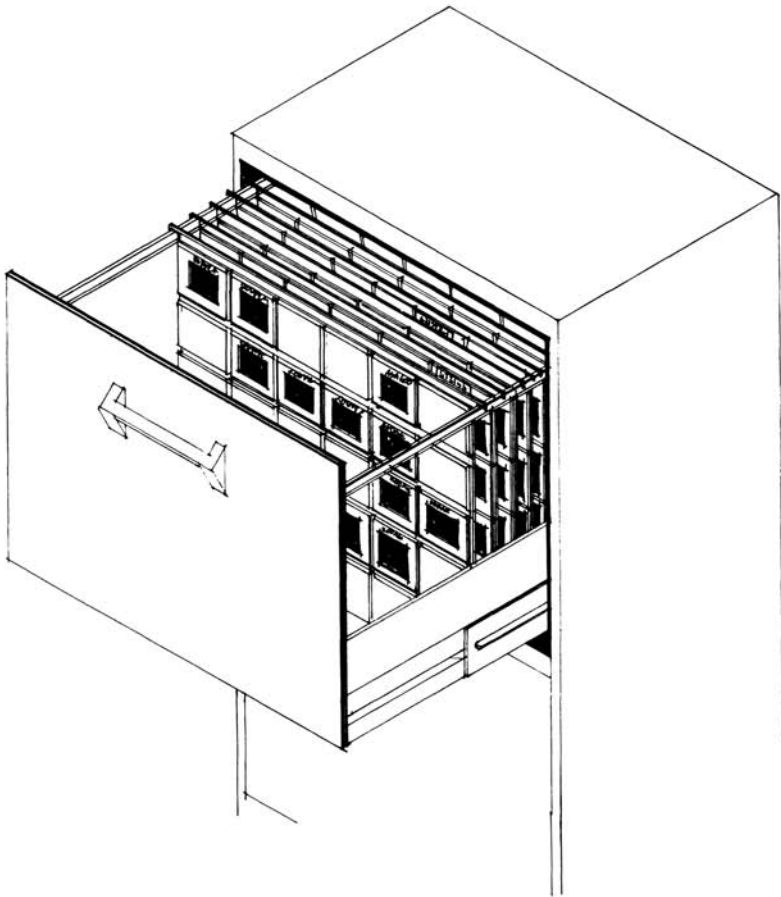


Diagram 10: Slide Storage in Filing Cabinet

Other Furniture

Display

In order to attract the reader, the school library should make provision for displaying books, sometimes alone and sometimes together with posters and other attractive material. Sloping shelves of the type used for picture books and periodicals will house books "face forward" for display. But small spaces otherwise unused can be fitted with a display board, sometimes with a shelf in front, so that books can be displayed as well. The display board - perhaps on a spare part of the wall, or perhaps surrounding a pillar - must have a surface onto which posters, pictures or other material can be pinned easily. Display boards made of "pegboard" will allow the display of books on special fittings which hook into the holes. (See diagram 11).

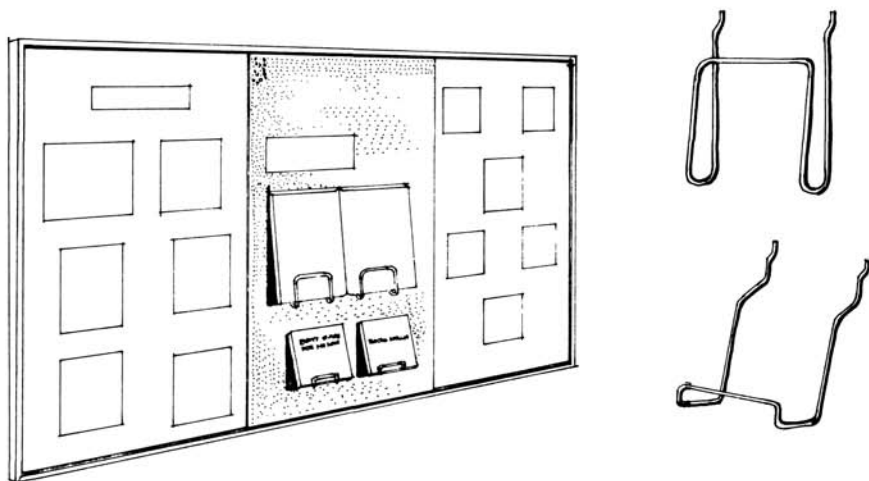


Diagram 11: Pegboard Display Panel and Mounting Clips

Housing the Catalogue

As will be seen in Section 7, the library will require a catalogue of its stock.

Once the library has begun to grow, the catalogue will

need drawers to house it. A range of cabinets to hold such drawers is available from manufacturers. Some are designed so that additional units of drawers can be added to those first purchased.

It may seem at first that the purchase of this item can be postponed or avoided. But the catalogue is so important in the school library that housing it is a high priority.

As a rough guide, one drawer of a cabinet will be needed for every 1000 books in the library. Separate drawers will be needed for the author catalogue and for the subject catalogue. To this you must add at least one drawer for the subject index. (See page 74).

The type of catalogue drawer which has a rod from front to back is best. Each catalogue card will have a hole punched near the bottom through which this rod passes. This will discourage readers from removing cards from the catalogue. It will also help to prevent accidents, since the cards will not fall out if the drawer is upset. (See diagram 12).

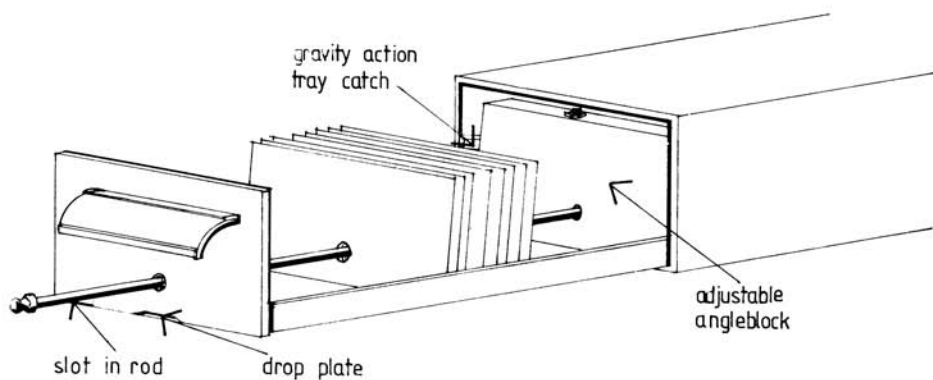
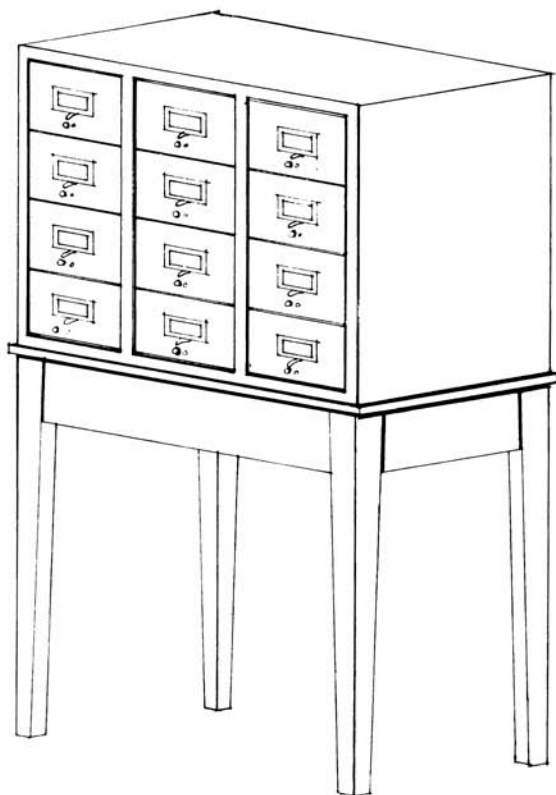
Working Furniture for the Pupils

Tables and chairs will be needed so that pupils can work with books in the library. The best tables are those at which no more than four pupils can sit. They are good to work on and they can easily be rearranged when necessary.

It is a good idea to have some less formal seating, such as cushions, to encourage use of the library for relaxation and recreation.

Working Furniture for the Librarian

The library will need some furniture for its own work. A table - or better, a standard office desk with drawers - should be provided to house the records of books on loan. It will also be the point at which the processes of lending are carried out. Place it near the entrance to the library so that you can see pupils as they come and go. This helps to discourage them from taking books out of the library without the loan being recorded.



*Diagram 12: Catalogue Cabinet and
Detail of Catalogue Drawer*

Suitable furniture for the "backroom" work of the library (e.g. the preparation of materials) is also needed. You will need space and furniture for:

1. Materials you have just received and which are awaiting unpacking and adding to the library.
2. Shelves for materials awaiting the processes necessary before they are put into use.
3. Shelves for books awaiting repair.
4. Accommodation for the library's stationery - forms, cards and so on.
5. Storage of audio-visual equipment not in use.
6. A working surface or table for those tasks which are best not undertaken in the library itself - repairs to books, typing (because of the noise) and so on.
7. A sink and water supply are very useful. Many of the tasks to be carried out will call for washing hands and equipment afterwards.

Audio-Visual Equipment

If audio-visual materials (e.g. cassette players, slide projectors) are used in the library, electrical outlets may be needed. Some projectors and players are battery-operated, but it is desirable, if at all possible, to have a mains supply.

Where possible, choose equipment which can be used with either battery or mains supply. This will give the greatest flexibility of use. Even if such equipment is not available at present, it is wise to make provision for its use in future times.

Audio-visual equipment may be stored in the library. If it is to be used in the library, it must be kept there or conveniently nearby.

In schools where this equipment is used only in class-

rooms (and not in the library) it is important to keep it in a central store. This will help to keep it safe from damage or theft, and all users will know where to find it. A central store of this kind may be under the supervision of the school library.