

Working with our TAs

We recognise as a school how important our TAs are. External changes suggest that it is time for us to review their deployment.

Why we need to review our practice

- Research into the effective use of TAs
- Changes to the funding arrangements for HLTA training
- The budget squeeze
- Concerns about the use of TAs for cover

The research

- The Deployment and Impact of Support Staff Project (DISS)
- Teachers concentrating on pupils without learning needs
- Increased time spent with a TA meant less time spent with a teacher
- Concerns over the practice of TAs when working with pupils

Research - recommendations

- Schools should examine the deployment of teaching assistants
- Pupils with most need should get more, not less of a teacher's time
- Teachers should have lesson planning responsibility
- TAs should be appropriately trained for the tasks they are expected to do

In addition...

- ... the TDA will no longer be funding the training and development of teaching assistants to become Higher Level Teaching Assistants
- ... the introduction of legislation which means that teachers cannot be called to cover for absent colleagues except in emergencies
- ... the likely impact of budget cuts

Reviewing our practice

- How are our TAs working?
- Is this method of working the most valuable for pupils?
- How do we know?
- How can we improve our provision?

Reviewing our practice (2)

- Audit what our TAs are currently engaged with
- Consult our TAs and the classteachers they work with
- Look at the evidence
- Produce a new TA policy which matches best practice with our school

The audit

- What percentage of TA time is spent working directly with pupils?
- What percentage of TA time is spent working outside the classroom?
- What percentage of TA time is spent working with individuals/ groups/ the whole class

The audit (2)

- Do our TAs support using the task given by the classteacher?
- Do TAs support with a similar task?
- Do TAs support with a completely different task?
- Are TAs involved in planning this task?

Audit (3)

- Are TAs responsible for planning the work?
- Are TAs responsible for preparing the work?
- Do TAs have sufficient training to enable them to carry out their role?
- Do TAs encourage the children they work with to be independent?
- Are there opportunities for liaison with the class teacher?

Consult with TAs

- Are TAs happy with their current role?
- Do they feel they have the necessary training to be able to do it well?
- What aspects of their role do they feel are most effective/ least effective?
- Do they have any suggestions for ways in which the effectiveness of their work might be increased?

The evidence

- Observations and work trawls
- Data analysis
- Pupil comments
- Parent comments
- Information from external sources – School Improvement Partner, LA, SEN support services, Ofsted
- Discussion with teachers and the SLT

Developing our policy

- Aims and objectives
- Deployment principles
- Communication and liaison
- Roles and responsibilities
- Training development
- Performance review
- Monitoring and evaluation